

Streetscape Taskforce Minutes

Tuesday, August 23, 2016 7:10 pm - 9:30 PM



Attendance

Taskforce Member	Present
Bill Ackerman	No
Rachelle Barimany	Yes
Kathy Philpott Costa	No
Barb Cram	Yes
Kwafo Djan	Yes
Diane Duggan	Yes
Steve Knight	Yes
Anne Norloff	Yes
Mike Novotny	Yes
Andrew Painter	No
Ruth Rodgers	No
Tim Stevens	Yes
Dan Sze	Yes
Dennis Szymanski	Yes
Dave Tarter	Yes
Keith Thurston	Yes
Bob Young	Yes
Cory Firestone Weiss	No

Staff Member	Present
Carly Aubrey	Yes
Paul Stoddard	Yes

Others Present

- Adam Steiner, Kimley-Horn

Agenda

1. Street Cross Sections and Tree Pits
 - a. Continue discussion from August 16, 2016 meeting
2. Street Furniture
 - a. Review and discuss street furniture options
3. Begin detail of differences by Street Type (Broad-type, Maple-type, Park-Ave-type)
4. Review Draft Guidelines
5. Administration
 - a. Approval of Walking Tour Minutes
 - b. Approval of August 16, 2016 minutes
6. Information Items
 - a. Zoning Ordinance and Potential Setback Guidelines, courtesy Mike Novotny

1. Street Cross Sections and Tree Pits

Mike Novotny presented new draft cross sections with varied tree spacing and planter dimensions. The tree spacing ranged from 24 feet to 28 feet. The cross sections generally allowed for 4 feet of building/dining space, 9 feet of pedestrian clear space and 7 feet of amenity space.

During the discussion, Mr. Novotny also introduced a concept to mandate undulation/articulation of the first floor of new buildings. The concept would require an average setback of 21 feet for any building with a frontage greater than 50 feet. The idea is to allow for some areas with deeper setbacks to provide visual interest and deeper areas for sidewalk dining.

The group discussed various aspects of the cross sections and their functionality. The following issues were discussed.

ABC Requirements:

- Does Virginia ABC law require the use of railings for alcohol service at sidewalk dining?

Sidewalk Dining:

- 4 feet of building space may not be sufficient for sidewalk dining accounting for building shy space and railings
- The guidelines will apply to new spaces, but how will existing spaces be treated? Will these guidelines/standards be applied for apportioning/allowing sidewalk dining?
- For reasons of economics and vibrancy, sidewalk dining should be encouraged

Pedestrian Space:

- Can the Pedestrian space be narrowed to 8 feet to allow more space for sidewalk dining?

Tree Planter Edging:

- Replacing the raised planter edge with a flush planter edge would add 16 inches of functional space, because the raised bricks are 8 inches wide on each side of the planter
- Regarding the balance of consistency, functionality, and flexibility:

- Should the planter edging be raised because that's what's already in place?
- Should the planter edging be flush to allow space for addition features?
- What about flexibility with some planters raised and some planter flush?
- How can trees be protected against salt damage? Three side planters, with the open side toward the curb or fencing with a solid base to limit runoff are options.
- Some planters in front of the Pearson Square development have compacted soil and lack of plantings. Is that because the City is maintaining them? What if the business owners were allowed to maintain them?
- Flush planters allows for cross sections that show a 10 foot pedestrian clear width, which is consistent with Council policy.

Setbacks:

- Can the proposed setback be expanded to 24 feet? The dimensions should generally be consistent with the 20' setback because that's what the City has to work with right now, accepting that some variations can be shown for building undulation/articulation.
- The idea of an average 21 foot average setback on the first floor only is workable from a developer standpoint because it does not impact the building space available on higher floors.
- Should zoning changes maintain flexibility for City Council and/or Planning Commission to waiver strict 21 feet average setback requirement?

Planted Medians:

- Are planted medians a place to add color to the streetscape?

Street Furniture:

- Does too much furniture clutter the streetscape?
- What's the balance between furniture/features and clear space/pedestrian functionality?

Maintenance:

- Should the developer be responsible for maintenance?

For Referral to Boards and Commissions:

- The group agreed (not unanimously) that draft materials needed to be distributed to Boards and Commissions for review and comment
- The group agreed (not unanimously) that the draft materials should show one or two options. It is the responsibility of the Taskforce to make suggestions among all of the options available.
- The group agreed (not unanimously) to show two options for cross sections – one with a flush planter and one with a raised planter. In both cases the planter would be 8 inches from the curb.

2. Street Furniture

Paul Stoddard presented options for street furniture to be included in the updated streetscape designs. The group discussed the options and provided direction for which options to include in the referral to Boards and Commissions.

Streetlights:

- What is the right color for the lights? Should they be grey, which is consistent, or black, which would put a fresh face on the lights?
- For referral to Boards and Commissions: continue to use the Broad Street light, show the lights in black

Benches:

- Should the benches include a middle rail? To maintain a friendly, inviting appearance, no.
- For referral to Boards and Commissions: include the new black bench being used along West Broad Street and the Pearson Square bench. Also include dimensions and length options.

Trash Cans:

- For referral to Boards and Commissions: show the black cans.

Bus Shelters:

- For referral to Boards and Commissions: show the bus shelters currently being installed.

Bike Racks:

- Can the bike racks take up less space? Yes, the important part is that racks provide two points of contact with the bike frame to properly support the bike.
- For referral to Boards and Commissions: show a post and loop design with the Little City logo. Also include the green bike racks.

Color Options:

- Staff agreed to look into the shiny-ness of street furniture and whether less reflective color options are available.

3. Begin detail of differences by Street Type (Broad-type, Maple-type, Park-Ave-type)

Not covered due to timing limitations.

4. Review Draft Guidelines

The group agreed to the following:

- Staff should update the draft guidelines with the feedback from the group
- Staff should distribute the updated guidelines with the next meeting packet, approximately one week before the September 13 meeting
- Staff will look for elements from Andrew Painter's draft that can be incorporated in the draft guidelines
- Taskforce members will review the draft in advance of the September 13 meeting
- The Taskforce will make edits to the document at the September 13 meeting with the intent of making a referral to Boards and Commissions that night

5. Administration

Approval of Walking Tour Minutes

- The minutes were not available for review and action

Approval of August 16, 2016 minutes

- The minutes were approved with the correction of a typo.