

Vision

Urban design and historic preservation contribute to the character and quality of neighborhoods, and to the aesthetic value of the entire community. The City of Charlottesville will be a well- designed community with neighborhoods, buildings and public spaces, including the Downtown Mall, that are human scaled, sustainable, healthy, equitable and beautiful. The City must recognize each neighborhood's sense of community—its unique and diverse sense of place--and take steps to integrate new buildings, development and uses into their neighborhoods.

Urban Design

Goal 1: Continue Charlottesville's history of architectural and design excellence by maintaining existing traditional design features while encouraging creative, context-sensitive, contemporary planning and design.

1.1: Promote a sense of place by emphasizing the importance of public buildings, public spaces, and other public improvements as opportunities to promote a distinctive, contextually integrated and a welcoming environment for residents and visitors.

1.2: Promote Charlottesville's diverse architectural and cultural heritage by recognizing, respecting, and enhancing the distinct characteristics of each neighborhood, historic district, individually designated historic property, and community node.

1.3: Recognize the value of blending new with old; encourage context-sensitive planning and contemporary design; incorporate preservation into urban design and urban design into preservation.

1.4: Encourage where the development of higher intensity and vitality in the City's Mixed Use places occurs, it must respond to the scale and character of contiguous historic buildings and neighborhoods, and encourage vibrancy, pedestrian movement, and visual interest throughout the City.

1.5: Develop pedestrian-friendly roadways and paths that connect neighborhoods to community facilities, to commercial areas and employment centers to the City's historic, cultural, and natural assets; and that connect neighborhoods and residents of all ages to each other, to promote a healthier community.

1.6: Encourage community vitality, and interaction through the incorporation of both private and publicly-funded art into public spaces, neighborhoods, signage, gateways, and nodes of development.

1.7: Encourage the incorporation of meaningful public spaces, defined as being available to the general public, into urban design particularly at nodes of development.

1.8: Promote design excellence for public projects and installations at all scales.

1.9: Assure that Small Area Plans account for and take steps to safeguard the City's historic sites, structures, and landscapes.

1.10: Improve ways and methods of informing residents in historic districts about new development and construction projects within their neighborhoods and communities, as well as about local policy and regulatory changes that might impact those neighborhoods and communities.

1.11: In the development of a form based code, fully account for the goals and principles of Historic Preservation and Urban Design.

1.12: Maintain on the City staff the position of a Preservation and Design Planner, and support their efforts to implement the goals and strategies of this chapter.

1.13: Continue to support the Board of Architectural Review (BAR) in its efforts to guide historic preservation and urban design within the Historic Preservation & Architectural Design Control (ADC) Districts, or Historic Conservation (CV) Districts, and ensure cooperation between the BAR and City departments.

1.14: Transition Entrance Corridor Review Board to the Board of Architecture Review and review existing corridors.

1.15: Charlottesville will seek to preserve its historic resources through education and collaboration to maintain the character of our neighborhoods' core historic fabric, our major routes of tourism and our public spaces.

Educational Programing

Goal 2: Educate property owners and potential property owners of historic resources about the significance of their properties.*

2.1: Continue to improve the City's ongoing education program to notify property owners and potential property owners that their property is situated in a Historic Preservation & Architectural Design Control (ADC) District, or Historic Conservation (CV) District, or is designated as an Individually Protected Property (IPP).

2.2: Continue to support the Charlottesville Historic Resources Committee's efforts to promote understanding and appreciation of local historic and cultural resources.

2.3: Continue to interpret historic and cultural resources to the community through markers, publications, events and other means. Strive to include the narratives and resources of underrepresented groups and areas significant in our local history. Coordinate this interpretation of historic resources with City improvement projects and other City initiatives.

2.4: Continue to support Preservation Piedmont and its partners in the Piedmont Area Preservation Alliance (PAPA) in efforts to coordinate communication among local, regional, and state preservation organizations.

2.5: Continue to support participation of staff and elected and appointed officials in regional and statewide preservation and design educational opportunities.

Incentives & Tools

Goal 3: Continue to identify and make available incentives to encourage historic preservation.

3.1: Continue to disseminate information to property owners regarding federal and state rehabilitation tax incentives, including Virginia's rehabilitation tax credit program and help promote and defend these programs at the General Assembly.

3.2: Pursue National Register and Virginia Landmarks Register status for all future, local historic districts.

3.3: Continue the Planning Commission's and Board of Architectural Review's annual awards that may include recognition of exceptional Entrance Corridor designs and the best examples of preservation and design in the community, especially in ADC Districts.

3.4: Provide technical assistance to property owners and/or provide referrals to other sources of information regarding architectural, historical or financial questions.

3.5: Continue the City's participation in and eligibility as a Certified Local Government; support staff efforts to seek annual, matching-fund grants that contribute to the implementation of this chapter.

Resource Inventory

Goal 4: Systematically inventory and evaluate all historic, cultural and natural resources, landscapes and open spaces as critical and historic elements that make the City special. Develop context narratives that provide the historical and architectural basis for evaluating their significance and integrity and provide the funding and resources necessary to conduct that work.

4.1: Work with neighborhoods to develop interest and participation in documentation of neighborhood buildings and history through architectural and historic surveys. Priorities are un-surveyed older neighborhoods, such as 10th & Page, Little High, south Belmont, and portions of the Strategic Investment Area (SIA).

4.2: Continue to identify and survey additional significant, individual properties located outside historic districts. In addition to historic buildings, consider significant buildings from the recent past (less than 50 years old), structures such as sculptures, landscapes such as public spaces and cemeteries, and archaeological sites.

4.3: Encourage developers contemplating land-disturbing activities in areas likely to reveal knowledge about our past to undertake archaeological studies prior to development. Help identify financial incentives or funding sources for such studies. Encourage where warranted, archeological assessments for rezoning and special use permit requests and for all projects on City-owned parcels.

4.4: Conduct additional survey work as needed to reevaluate existing ADC district boundaries.

4.5: Survey and evaluate all City-owned property, including schools and parks, for historic and design significance and integrity.

4.6: Systematically re-survey neighborhoods state- and national-registered historic sites and districts, ADCs and IPPs to update older survey information, beginning with Downtown and North Downtown areas.

4.7: Generate a Cultural Landscape Study and Management Plan for the Lawrence Halprin-designed Downtown Mall, to identify character-defining historic features, and prepare a treatment and maintenance plan to protect the Mall's historic character and features while supporting its current use.

4.8: Promote the history of the Downtown Mall through the use of art, technology, public events, and marketing promotion.

Neighborhood Conservation

Goal 5: Protect and enhance the existing aesthetic amenities of the City's older neighborhoods while promoting diversity in our community.*

5.1: Monitor the effectiveness of the Conservation District as an alternative, more flexible type of local historic district in designated neighborhoods. Monitoring techniques may include resident surveys and tracking demolition permits.

5.2: Recognize and respect cultural values and human resources, as well as built resources within the City's older neighborhoods.

5.3: Identify opportunities to increase intensity of use and flexibility of design in targeted areas to allow for more vibrancy and creative reuse of existing buildings.

5.4: Study the urban forms in historic neighborhoods and consider allowing similar design standards in new neighborhoods.

5.5: Provide property owners with information on historic rehabilitations, financial incentives, and context-sensitive design.

5.6: Identify higher-intensity mixed-use and commercial areas that abut existing neighborhoods and work to provide adequate transitions to mitigate impacts.

Resource Protection

Goal 6: Provide effective protection to the City of Charlottesville's historic resources.*

6.1: As requested by specific neighborhoods or when otherwise appropriate, consider additional neighborhoods or areas for designation as local historic districts (either Architectural Design Control Districts or Historic Conservation Districts) based on architectural and historic survey results.

6.2: On a regular basis, consider additional properties outside existing ADC Districts for designation as Individually Protected Properties, based on architectural and historic survey results.

6.3: Consider including resources from the more recent past (less than 50 years old) as Individually Protected Properties, especially those of significant architectural value and those that are becoming rare surviving examples of their type or period of construction.

6.4: Consider amending the existing ordinance to address protection of archaeological resources.

6.5: Designate Maplewood, Oakwood, and Daughters of Zion Cemeteries as ADC districts to ensure their protection and maintenance.

6.6: Continue to protect the environs of our World Heritage Site, the Academic Village of the University of Virginia

6.7: Monitor state and federal level policy and legislative changes impacting historic preservation. Advocate both for positive changes and against those that threaten the existing policies, programs, policies and regulations.

6.8: Recognize and protect the Rivanna River as a historic, living resource that has played a crucial role in the history of the City, and that continues to serve as an important water supply, aquatic habitat, and recreational resource for our community.

Comprehensive Approach

Goal 7: Coordinate the actions of government, the private sector, and nonprofit organizations to achieve preservation and urban design goals.

7.1: Facilitate periodic meetings with Board of Architectural Review (BAR), City Council, Entrance Corridor Review Board (ERB) and the PLACE (Placemaking, Livability, and Community Engagement) Design Task Force to ensure an excellent and consistent design vision for the City.

7.2: Consider the effects of decisions on historic resources by all public decision-making bodies. Priority areas are the Downtown Mall, Court Square, West Main Street, and The Corner.

7.3: Evaluate transportation decisions for their effects on historic districts, such as the Ridge Street District, and on Individually Protected Properties. Encourage policies that minimize automobile usage in historic districts.

7.4: Evaluate current zoning map districts and current zoning allowances, as well as proposed and amendments to the zoning map and zoning text for their consistency with preservation goals, and impacts on the historic character of City neighborhoods.

7.5: Review the historic preservation plan, historic district ordinances, entrance corridor ordinance and design guidelines every five years to ensure that goals for preservation and compatible new construction are being addressed.

7.6: Encourage sustainable energy efficient, building designs and low impact development as complementary goals to historic preservation. Support the implementation of solar photovoltaic systems.

7.7: Coordinate with other City programs, such as affordable housing initiatives, to encourage preservation of character and rehabilitation of historic resources, including low income housing in structures more than 50 years old.

7.8: Coordinate with the Public Works and Parks Departments regarding maintenance and construction that would affect historic features of the City's neighborhoods. Where possible, maintain and repair granite curbs, retaining walls, distinctive paving patterns and other features instead of replacing them.

7.9: Adopt a policy of applying the Secretary of the Interior Standards for Historic Rehabilitation for all City-owned property more than 50 years old, and apply appropriate preservation technologies in all additions and alterations, while also pursuing sustainable and energy conservation goals.

7.10: Investigate the feasibility of protecting an unobstructed sightline, as shown on the attached map, between World Heritage Sites Monticello, located in Albemarle County, and the Academic Village at the University of Virginia.

7.11: Encourage retaining and replenishing shade trees, particularly large trees where possible, in all historic neighborhoods as we strive to make the City more walkable.

7.12: Coordinate with the Planning and Coordination Council (PACC) on historic preservation and urban design issues that implicate Albemarle County and University of Virginia resources.

Entrance Corridors

Goal 8: Ensure quality of development in the City's designated entrance corridor overlay districts compatible with the City's historic, architectural, and cultural resources.

8.1: Emphasize placemaking elements and examine opportunities to create destinations.

8.2: Encourage site designs that consider building arrangements, uses, natural features, and landscaping that contribute to a sense of place and character that is unique to Charlottesville.

8.3: Ensure that new development, including franchise development, complements the City's character and respects those qualities that distinguish the City's built environment of the City.

8.4: Use street trees, landscaping, and pedestrian routes to provide shade, enclosure and accessibility in streetscapes.

8.5: Protect and enhance access routes to our community's World Heritage Sites, the University of Virginia and Monticello, to recognize their significance as cultural and economic assets of the local heritage industry.

8.6: When appropriate, coordinate the City's Entrance Corridor Design Guidelines with Albemarle County's Design Guidelines. Encourage continuity of land use, design, and pedestrian orientation between contiguous corridors in the City and County.

8.7: Evaluate Entrance Corridor (ERB) review process to: a) identify sites where ERB and BAR review overlap and determine which review body should prevail; and b) determine if there are other circumstances under which review by the BAR would be better suited; in lieu of ERB review.

Sustainable Reuse

Goal 9: Capture the embodied energy of existing buildings by encouraging the adaptive re-use and more efficient use of existing structures.

9.1: Develop an inventory of underutilized properties within City limits and develop strategies (such as rezoning, rehabilitation, removing off street parking requirements, and development incentives) that will move these properties back into productive uses that will support increased commercial or residential uses.

9.2: Collaborate with local organizations to steward the movement of underutilized properties back into productive and sustainable uses. As appropriate, create policy and financial incentives to encourage this process.

9.3: Encourage adaptive re-use of historic buildings as a strategy for historic preservation. Recognize that historic preservation is the ultimate form of recycling.

9.4: Support the rehabilitation of low income owner-occupied housing for energy efficiency and preservation of neighborhood character.

9.5: Evaluate and incorporate into the architecture design guidelines recommendations appropriate for historic structure improvements that increase energy efficiency and promote sustainability.