

MINUTES
PLANNING COMMISSION WORK SESSION
Tuesday, January 27, 2015
5:00 – 7:00

I. PLANNING COMMISSION WORK SESSION

Location: NDS Conference Room, Charlottesville City Hall, 2nd Floor

Members Present: Chair Dan Rosensweig; Commissioners Taneaia Dowell, Kurt Keesecker, Genevieve Keller, Jody Lahendro, and John Santoski; UVA representative Bill Palmer

Call to Order: the meeting was called to order by Chair Rosensweig at 5:00 p.m.

AGENDA

2. Unified Development Review Code

Missy Creasy, Assistant Director of NDS, gave a detailed definition of the Unified Development Ordinance (UDO) and explained that it is a local ordinance that combines zoning and subdivision regulations, traditionally set forth within two separate chapters of the City Code, into one location in the City Code. By combining these regulations in one location, the intention of the UDO is 1) to make it simpler for property owners and staff to identify applicable regulations and submission requirements, 2) to remove inconsistencies between two sets of development regulations, where there is no policy or substantive reason for those differences, and 3) to make process and procedure simpler for decision-makers to identify and followed.

Ms. Creasy explained the concept is to merge the development regulations and subdivision ordinances and refer to the consolidated requirements as a “Unified Development Ordinance” (UDO). The present state code will no longer allow localities to mandate a preliminary submission. The City Code will define the requirements for subdivision and zoning final plans in one ordinance.

Lisa Robertson, Chief Deputy City Attorney said now was not the time to discuss substantive provisions of the two ordinances being merged. She said that many of concerns raised by the public and the Commission regarding the UDO relate to existing provisions of the City’s zoning ordinance or subdivision ordinance and are not new within the draft UDO.

Mr. Keller said she was inclined to support this but is concerned about what the submission requirements look like and if it is a really involved process. She asked Ms. Creasy and Ms. Robertson to identify what they envision a submission would be.

Ms. Robertson said she would like to put in a chart without changing substantive requirements or adding something new. She wants to give something that is an easy visualization of what the requirements are now for a preliminary subdivision/final subdivision and preliminary site plan/final site plan and present it in a way that the Commission can see where it overlaps and where it differs. She said it is possible to keep the same submission requirements and just bring everything together.

Ms. Keller said she has concerns with linking this to the Standards and Design Manual because the Commission has talked about revising the manual and it seems to her that that should be done in a comprehensive way and not slide it in a unified ordinance. She felt like that would be premature.

Mr. Rosensweig said he would like to see what it looks like if we vote as a commission.

Ms. Keller said most of the sites that are left in the City are challenging sites which is why she would like to take a look at the Standards and Design Manual.

Ms. Robertson said she wanted to show them that the concept of this could be done without changing any substantive requirements right now. She will give them the second piece which is the submission requirements without necessarily proposing to change anything but try to bring it together to something that is easily reviewed.

Mr. Rosensweig said it might be more productive if commissioners go through and send staff a list of things where they think there may be some substantive changes and have staff respond about whether or not it was where there was discrepancy.

Ms. Creasy thought this was a good idea.

Mr. Santoski asked about what the process would be before the item was publicly advertised.

Mr. Rosensweig concluded with the commissioners will go through and flag substantive details and send those to Ms. Creasy.

Public Comment

Heather Walker, 603 Shamrock Road said whenever the City is creating this matrix or guidelines for the developers that outreach to the surrounding neighborhoods should be done much earlier in the process, perhaps before the first site plan is submitted.

Neil Williamson thanked staff for answering a number of questions from Blue Ridge Home Builders Association. If the Planning Commission decides now is the best time to push forward an UDO, he said this will yet be another outside consultant exercise where local understanding of the regulations and policies regarding development operations may become lost in the mirage of charettes and renderings of other localities. It is rather sad that rather than dealing with the substantive issues raised by the very people impacted by the ordinances, the Chief Deputy City Attorney was dismissive of their concerns.

3. Small Area Plans

Small Area Plan – Ms. Creasy stated that there was a sub-committee made up of members of the Planning Commission and the PLACE Task Force who met and talked about this item but it was

determined that a broader discussion was needed to take place outside of the smaller group and it made sense to come back to the Planning Commission to talk about it further. There were a number of areas designated in the comprehensive plan as areas for consideration of additional review. Staff has some outlines of some of those areas and why the area was put on the map. In some places it was for more detailed planning and studying the specific area and in some cases it was looking at zoning consideration or a use consideration or something that didn't necessarily require a large project. She stated that there were a number of these things in the plan, some for quite a while, and that people are interested in having the plans move forward. She stated that staff has limited resources with which to work on the small area plans. She mentioned some of the planning effort ongoing currently: the Rivanna River work is definitely getting some traction. There is a group set up as part of a discussion between the City Council and the County Board of Supervisors that is really taking a look at all the many aspects affecting the river area. That group is in the early phases of info gathering, but they have a strong interest in doing something and they haven't pinpointed what that will be yet. In the Hydraulic Road area there is interest in the Planning District Commission in assisting with planning activities there. Staff has a memo from December that outlines some proposals for where staff felt we could go. She stated that the staff is doing quite a bit of regrouping at this point and time, with Mr. Tolbert leaving. She said that the staff will have to step back and look at all of the different things going on right now and that it would be a challenge just trying to manage the things going on and under way right now.

Ms. Keller said she is concerned about the Small Area Plan for the Strategic Investment Area (SIA). She said that the City has endorsed that and while the City cannot move ahead with full scale implementation, it would seem to her that something like the SIA needs to start informing planning decisions and the Commission so when a proposal such as 201 Garret Street comes forward, the SIA should be referenced in the staff report. She said if the City has more info about the Hydraulic area north of 250, if the City has a proposal that whatever information the City has collected at that point, staff should start informing and guiding the staff report and the discussion as a Commission. She said she is concerned that the City has put off too many things and the City won't take advantage of the most up to date information available.

Ms. Creasy stated there is an effort from the SIA standpoint that Economic Development is working on, and staff is trying to keep all of these things going.

Ms. Keller said in terms of suggested heights, if something comes before the Commission and it is a discretionary review for a Special Use Permit or a Planned Unit Development, the most recent information (she hopes) would be pointed out to the Commission.

Mr. Rosensweig said he noticed a difference between what is in this document and what the subcommittee recommendation was north of the bypass. He said he felt there was a "fire burning" on Hydraulic Road in that there is a lot of development pressure there and some transportation initiatives that are going to affect how that area wants to develop. He said that it seems to garner clear consensus that the Commission would like to see the small area plan development there. The Commission wanted to see movement on the River, Preston and Cherry areas. He said the thought process was because West Main is going become something different, the quality of travel is going to be different. He said ultimately it is going to change circulation patterns in the core of town where the western part of the core of town as will the opening of the Meadowcreek Parkway (John Warner Parkway).

Ms. Keller said she thought the first priority was to do growth scale look at Small Area Plans and how they might inter-relate, the connectivity of them and the different characters. She said that it should be

done with a very broad brush, and then focus in on the others. She thought that Hydraulic was at the top of the list because of known transportation improvements there and the perception that there would be redevelopment opportunities there and those could be taken advantage of. She said the Commission thought that Cherry and Preston were important because of their relationship with the opening of the Parkway and the possible changes on West Main. She said there was a connection between the River and Woolen Mills.

Mr. Keesecker commented that he wanted to put a book together to detail some criteria The Commission could use and argue about. After going through the discussion with the subcommittee, it seemed the recommendations were based more on intuition since no objective criteria for comparing priority small area plans has been identified, the booklet he created, 5 easy pieces, asked if we can view the city through a simplified lens with just five easy-to-describe pieces, each playing an important role in helping to shape the city and organize the conversation regarding efforts to improve it. Mr. Keesecker gave a summation of his second booklet for the work session as follows:

1. Complex issues have often been simplified to allow discussion and debate. Once broad concepts are agreed upon the implementation of the ideas can once again be complex, but each step can be guided by those original simple ideas. It worked for our Constitution, Sherman's March, and Einstein's Theory and this approach can also be applied when considering Charlottesville's future physical organization and planning efforts.
2. We should consider the City as an organized web of both points/places and connections between them, this viewpoint helps one understand the importance of directing and guiding future development to the "points" which will facilitate the preservation of the neighborhoods between these identified points.
3. There are 21 points we should focus our attention toward, each with its own character, economy, positive attributes, and negative attributes.
4. These 21 points can be compared and contrasted by a variety of criteria to help establish priority for application of planning and implantation resources.
5. These 21 points and their relative importance in the City is not a new idea. In each case, these 21 points have already been included in a mixed use zone, a design control district, a small area plan, or some combination of the three.
6. These 21 points should be considered places with definitive center or known location. This will allow energy to be focused and hierarchy to be established in and around each of the 21 points.
7. The connections between these 21 points are equally important (look at Settlers of Catan as example of this dual importance of point and connection) and should be enhanced in terms of enjoyable travel between the 21 points whether by foot, bike, bus or car.
8. These ideas are a point of beginning and meant to help establish consensus around establishing priorities and vision.

Ms. Creasy said that the rights of the people who own property and is something that can't be left behind. She said some things are coming forward for discussion to the Planning Commission concerning pre-application meetings and there are pros and cons to that proposal. She said that staff cannot get the neighborhood involved before it has something to show them. As soon as the City get applications in it has a process to get notifications out.

Ms. Keller said we are seeing a different type of development, she is not sure that we know who our development community is.

Public Comment

Mr. Emory said he thought the outcome of meeting would be a recommendation to prioritize the Small Area Plans for Council. In 1988 he gave the Planning Commission an article where Sue Harrison Lewis told the Woolen Mills to get involved with the City's Comprehensive Plan process. Every five years the neighborhood has been bringing items to the City for implementation or planning items and they haven't been able to get any of them done. He said his neighborhood would like for the Commission to plan in the Woolen Mills or the River or between the World Heritage Site bookends. He said that this is a really great area potentially for the City of Charlottesville. The Rivanna Water and Sewer Authority (RWSA) just committed to spend 9 million dollars on odor control down there. He said that we have no corridor or planning. He asked why the City hasn't done an inventory on the properties along the river that we have left. He said we have no vision. He said that we need to at least get some protective land use or zoning on the ground so bad things won't happen. He said he was sorry to see Jim Tolbert leave after 15 years. Everyone has given their rendition of this meeting and the one in the staff memo was Jim's rendition and that he actually has recordings of each meeting if anyone wants a copy. He said he hoped that we can make a unified planning effort. He also asked that the County and the City advocate for lowering of the flood elevation along the river so that it would help a lot of residents who are currently paying flood insurance and would open up new possibilities.

Public Comment Closed

Mr. Fenwick said to Mr. Keesecker that this something new and he likes it but be careful because Ms. Creasy has her hands full and we don't really know for how long. We do have tools and justification in the Comprehensive Plan for anything. When neighborhoods bring up an objection, we have a Comp Plan, we have many meetings and a whole lot of public input but the Comp Plan is being used in a way where it wasn't expected to be used. If we have the tools in place, the Planning Commission, BAR and City Council are responsible for that. Preston Avenue is starting to blossom by itself with the Region 10 and the Coke Building. He said that we're here in this city because what we found here was in place with very little process in place. He said people came here because they liked it and now we're going to change it. He said be very careful in changing it. He said he will be more than happy to do anything to help. He is looking forward to Mr. Keesecker book. Mr. Fenwick said the Planning Commission is more of an approval commission and he encourages better plans and stick to the plans and make the special use permit really special.

Ms. Keller asked if there is an expectation to follow-up on Mr. Emory's comment. Is there an expectation that the Commission would endorse the small area plan?

Ms. Creasy said she didn't think the commission is there yet.

Mr. Keesecker said he though a larger conversation with Council would seem productive.

Ms. Keller said they should get a time table for that.

Ms. Galvin said there is no rush for all the reasons they have all talked about but the City does need to build in a lot more interaction.

Mr. Keesecker said about a year ago discussion was how would the City evaluate which of these areas would be a priority over the next. He said first we need to list how we are going to prioritize our valuing

of these different points in the city. He said first we need to agree that there are points in the city that are worth concentrating effort on and then you can ask what are the qualities of each of those to make them more or less desirable for resources for either Planning, Structural Improvements, Marketing efforts or Economic Development.

Ms. Galvin said this is not only a planning question. She said the City will have to talk to people about stormwater and environmental concerns. It would inform the level of investment that is needed or intensity and focus. Virginia has small area planning all over the place and they have processes and methods and criteria for identifying these areas.

Mr. Lahendro thanked and commended Mr. Keesecker for the information stating it is a great composition.

Work Session adjourned at 7:50 pm

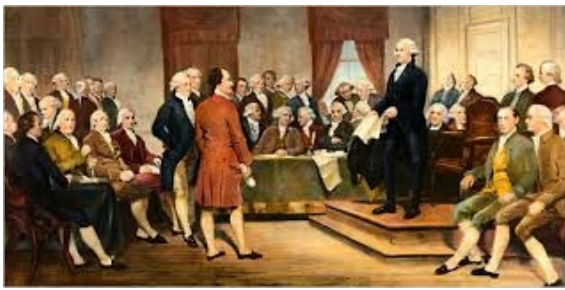


**Very
Simple
Charlottesville
version 2.0**

**(in anticipation of
all necessary future complications)**

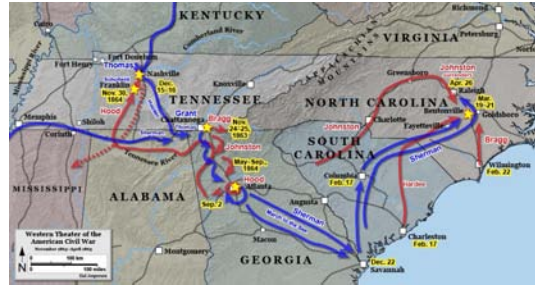
**a point of beginning
for discussion and
a first attempt at prioritization
of various potential small area
planning districts within the City**

**-agree? disagree?
please direct any comments or questions
to Kurt K
(fortunately, there are no others to blame here)
kurtkees@gmail.com**

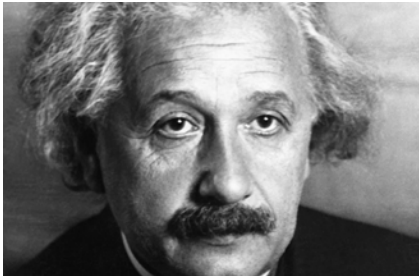


Introduction

The history of addressing complex issues with simple, easily communicated and debated concepts is long and varied, with mixed results. Eventually, those 'simple' concepts are translated to more complex actions, and so one must look at both



concept and the needed details undertaking such an effort. Attempting to 'stand our City on its own' is no different...



value

energy | mass | speed of light

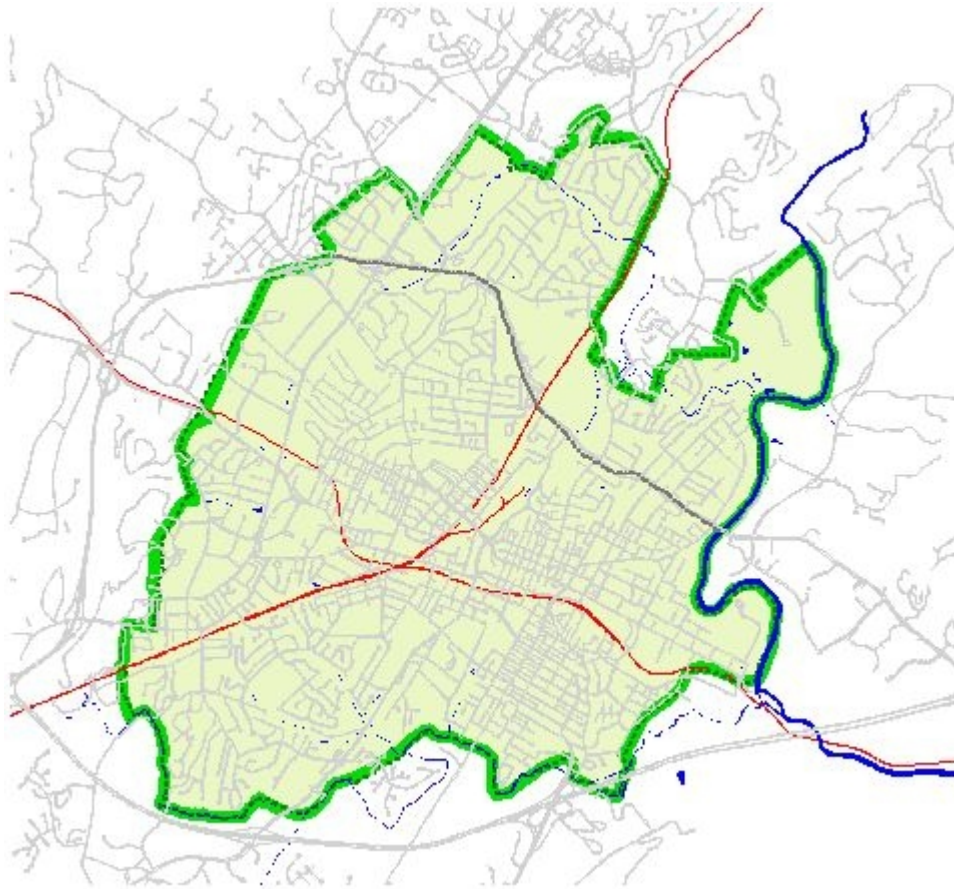
$$E = mc^2$$

J | kg | 299,792,458 m/s

units

$c^2 = 89,875,517,873,681,800 \text{ m}^2/\text{s}^2$



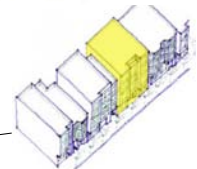
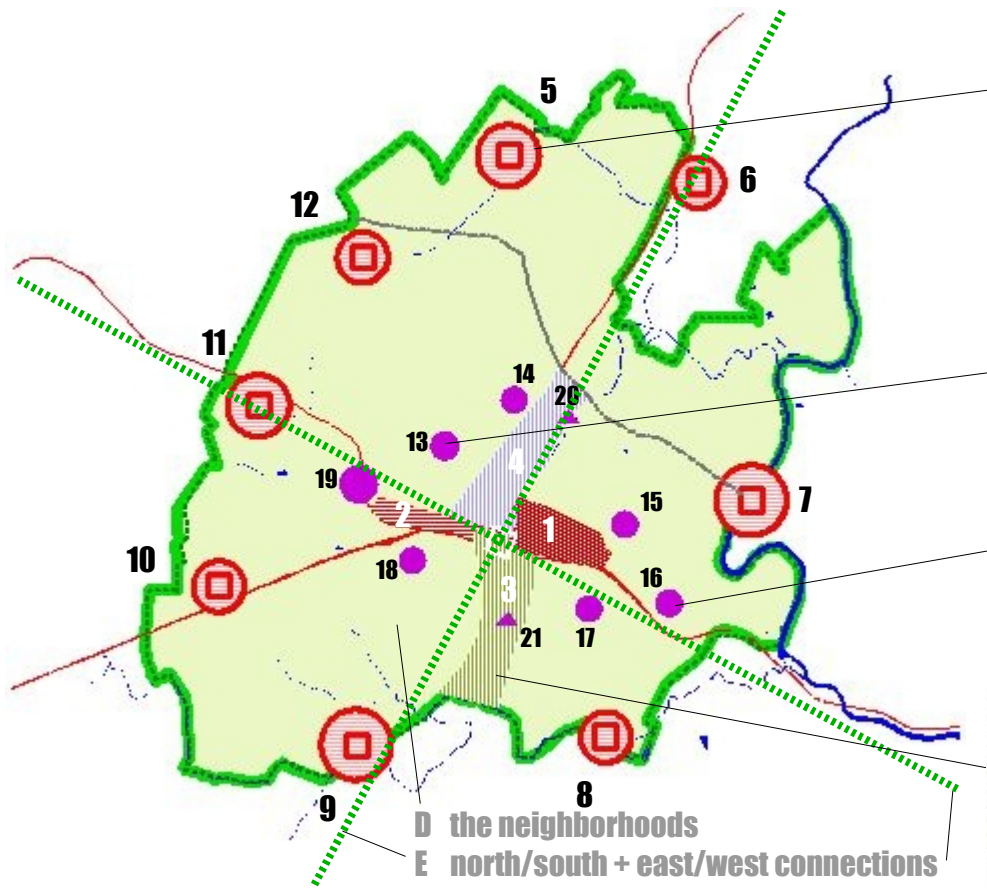


Introduction

How can we begin to look at our City with an eye toward identifying and prioritizing those areas that give us a good head start and help create places for diverse, healthy, accessible, interesting and memorable experiences and opportunities for our neighbors and visitors alike?

Begin by simplifying, grouping, and sorting...

Five 'Easy' Pieces (revisited)



A heart

- 1 downtown
- 2 west main
- 3 s.i.a.
- 4 new north

B points of interest

- 5 hydraulic
- 6 catec
- 7 free bridge
- 8 rt 20 / quarry
- 9 5th street ext
- 10 fontaine/frys
- 11 ivy / alderman
- 12 barracks

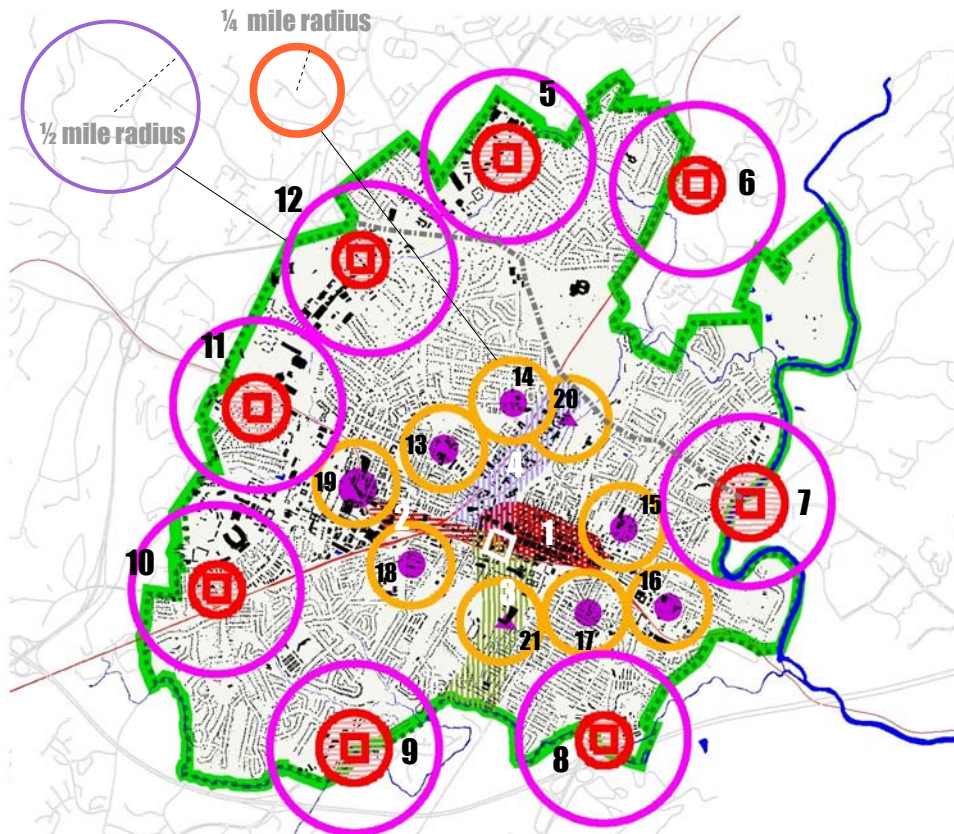
C gathering

- 13 preston / grady
- 14 rose hill
- 15 locust/high
- 16 east market
- 17 d'town belmont
- 18 cherry/roos blvd
- 19 the corner
- 20 mcintire plaza
- 21 IX

D the neighborhoods

E north/south + east/west connections

Five 'Easy' Pieces



neighborhoods where the emphasis is on enhance and preserve quality of life
connections giving priority to an enjoyable network of access within public realm

heart

is the cultural and business core of the City, where ideas are heard and made real. Each area has its own individual urban character based on history and present.

points

are the areas at the City's edge that announce arrival while providing varied opportunities for commerce, housing, and recreation in a mix distinct to each point

gathering

where one can gather with friends to experience unique neighborhood character

A heart

- 1 downtown
- 2 west main
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- 4 new north

B points of interest

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- 21 IX

Primary roles...moving toward center

Outer – extroverted, sense of arrival

Inner – introverted, intimate

Heart – intense, anchored

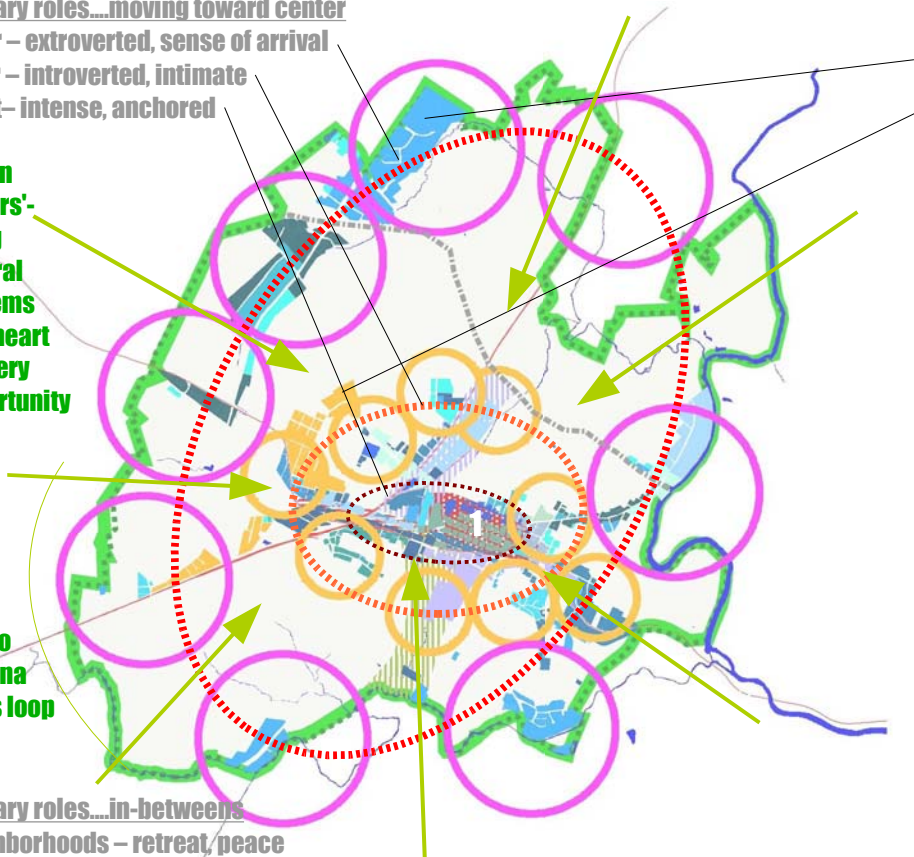
**'green fingers'-
bring
natural
systems
into heart
at every
opportunity**

**link to
rivanna
trails loop**

Primary roles...in-between

Neighborhoods – retreat, peace

Connections – access, movement



The blue areas on this map are our current mixed use zones.

The orange areas are our high density housing zones. These zones are primarily based on corridors.

They each generally align with the “five easy pieces” groupings previously identified, but have no ‘center’. As a planning element, they are ‘lines.’

The ‘five easy pieces’ concept seeks to identify these areas as ‘places’, each focused on a particular destination (either an intersection or a landmark) with unique qualities / character and mix of uses at each.

Five 'Easy' Pieces

A heart

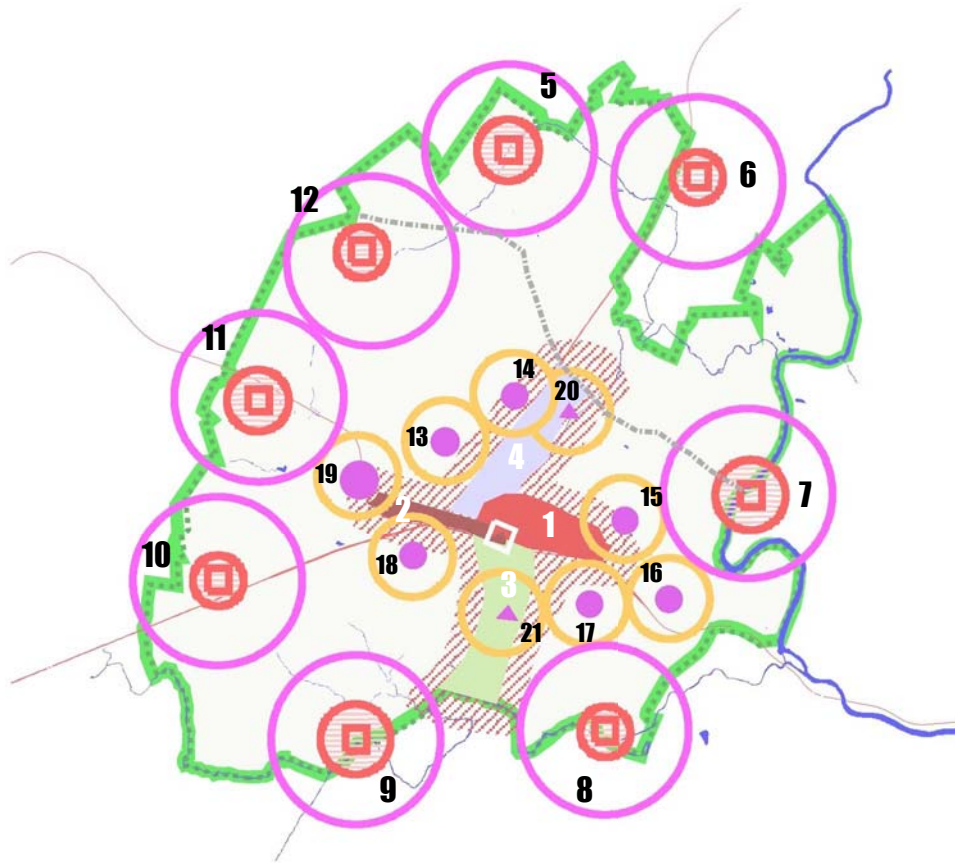
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- 21 IX



What criteria can be used to understand which areas might need immediate consideration and which areas can be viewed from a more distant perspective?

Having established the places where resources might be focused, can we begin to sort these places by a series of attributes that help distinguish one from the next in terms of opportunity, urgency, and impact?

What are the milestones of any process that begins to engage neighbors and businesses in an ongoing dialogue regarding the application of public resources to leverage private participation?

Five 'Easy' Pieces

A heart

- 1 downtown
- 2 west main
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PLACES	NEEDS IMPROVEMENT....										PRIORITY STAGE	ATTRIBUTES FOR CHANGE	ONE WORD (OR 2!)				
	INFILL	INFRASTRUCTURE	CENTER	ENCLOSURE	"SOCIAL" ENERGY	ECONOMIC ENERGY	USE MIX	RECREATION NETWORK	NATURAL / OPEN NETWORK	TRANSPORT NETWORK				BIKE/PEID NETWORK	MAINTAIN / MONITOR	STUDY/DISCUSS	ENGAGED PLANNING
1 DOWNTOWN																	HEART
2 WEST MAIN																	BACKBONE
3 SIA																	ARTS / MIXER
4 NORTH DISTRICT																	INNOVATION / MAKER
5 HYDRAULIC / HILLSDALE																	EDGE CITY
6 CATEC																	REC+ED DESTINATION
7 FREE BRIDGE																	RIVER PASSAGE
8 RT 20 / QUARRY ROAD																	JEFFERSON THRESHOLD
9 5 TH STREET / HARRIS ROAD																	INTERSTATE COMMERCE
10 FONTAINE / JPA																	HOSPITAL THRESHOLD
11 IVY ROAD / ALDERMAN																	UNIVERSITY THRESHOLD
12 BARRACKS / EMMET																	MARKET GATEWAY
13 PRESTON/GRADY																	TOO MANY CARS
14 ROSE HILL / AMHERST																	WALKABLE CENTER
15 LOCUST/HIGH																	REINVENTION
16 WOOLEN MILLS/E.MARKET STREET																	GATEWAY TO RIVANNA
17 DOWNTOWN BELMONT																	MORE THAN EVENING?
18 CHERRY/ROOSEVELT BROWN																	HOSPITAL DOORSTEP
19 THE CORNER																	STUDENT ENTERTAINMENT
20 (MCINTIRE PLAZA)																	START-UP ANCHOR
21 (IX)																	EXPERIMENTAL REPURPOSE

Places that will require both infill and infrastructure changes should be given attention with the highest priority. By infrastructure changes, I mean that the 'bones' of the area need to be altered or improved....street alignments, right of way changes, additional connectivity, or significant streetscape improvements. The areas requiring both infill and infrastructure (noted with dark green lines) can then be considered by their relative 'attributes for change' and prioritized. All other areas are monitored or engaged with ongoing help from residents.



Connections

But Charlottesville isn't just a series of stand alone places. These places are all connected by a network of streets, transit, and in some cases trails. The connections also have important qualities that enhance our daily experiences. So, the challenge is to build a relationship model that recognizes the interdependence of both the places and the connections...





Settlement

Road Segment

Road Segment

Settlement

Every Settlement must be built at least two segments distant from the next. All segments are built on border edges between valuable resource areas

Without trying to explain the entire set of game rules, suffice to say using the 'building blocks' of Catan (the roads and the settlements/cities) as an analogy could be oversimplifying Charlottesville. But, if one considers in the past we may have been guilty of an overemphasis on corridor planning only to be recently moved by the merits of placemaking, it seems reasonable to assume we could benefit from a conceptual working image of our City where both the corridors and places rely on each other and work together to take advantage of resources to increase opportunities + experiences.

City of Charlottesville
Places + Connections

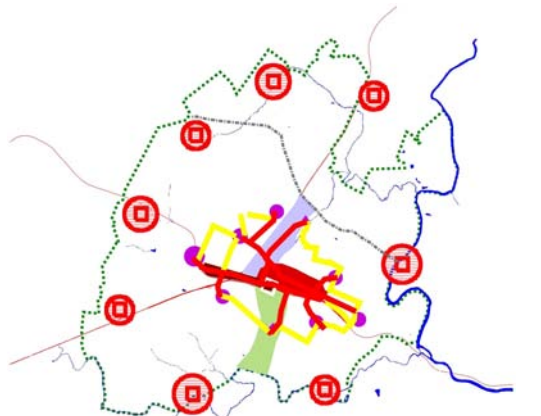
luckily, somebody has already done it...
1.20.15

'Yes, we *Catan*..'

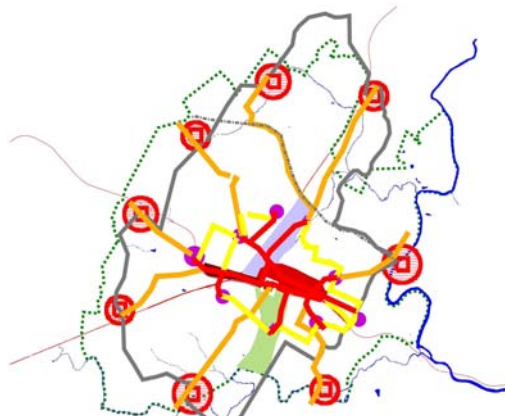
(so, that's a pretty bad pun...but hopefully you know the game and this analogy will make sense.)

Anyone that has played Settlers of Catan knows the strategic use of roads is key to having a productive series of 'settlements' and 'cities.' ...deciding when, where, and how to apply resources is the essence of this strategy game.

3.1



...Build a strong interior web around Heart...



...connect Points to Heart and each other...



...tie into larger systems beyond...



...provide fabric of walking, bike, transit, and car...

Connected dots

Another simple analogy, but once we decide 'where' our places are located we can then go about connecting them through a series of ongoing efforts over long periods of time. Some connections will simply serve to move people about, while others will provide their own experiential environment, commercial activity, or series of gathering spaces to compliment places.

CONNECTIONS

	NETWORK IMPROVEMENTS NEEDED	RELEVANCE	POSITIVES	PRIORITY STAGE
	INFL			
	INFRASTRUCTURE			
	Bike / Ped Experience			
	Economic Opportunity			
	Tree Canopy / Natural Systems			
	Utility Lines			
	Three or More Intersection Improvements Present (Traffic Signal / Road Vehicle Volume and Neighborhood Context Do Not Correspond "Framework" Street			
	Missing Link			
	Direct Path (No Turning Lanes or Intersects)			
	Connects to One or More Prioritized Place			
	Three or More Places Connected or Adjacent			
	Favorable Topography for Improved Lanes			
	Favorable Right of Way for Potential Changes			
	Potential County or University Cooperation			
	Ongoing / Coordinated Incremental Department Operations			
	Provide Guide / Standards to Direct Developer Contributions			
	Grants, CDBG or Other Focused Short Duration Efforts			
	Dedicated Long-Term Streetscape Improvements			
DESTINATION PATHS	COMPLETE STREETS D1 WEST MAIN/WATER STREET D2 MARKET STREET / PRESTON D3 ROSE HILL DRIVE D4 ROOSEVELT BROWN D5 HARRIS / 4 TH NW D6 2 ND STREET SE D7 EAST HIGH STREET TO LOCUST D8 MONTICELLO ROAD			
ENTRANCE PATHS	PRIMARILY BIKE WITH TRANSIT / CAR MIX E1 HILLSDALE /HYDRAULIC /250/MCINTIRE E2 MEADOWBROOK PARKWAY E3 RIVER ROAD/E. HIGH STREET/250 E4 MONTICELLO AVENUE / AVON E5 9 TH STREET E6 JPA / FORTAINE AVE E7 NY ROAD / UNIVERSITY AVENUE E8 BARRACKS ROAD / PRESTON			
NEIGHBORHOOD CIRCUIT	EMPHASIS ON BIKE / PED N1 MADISON AVE (LINK) / PRESTON N2 (LINK) / ALLIED STREET N3 MCINTIRE / NELSON / N.WD/PARK/FARISH... N4 10 TH / E JEFFERSON N5 WATER ST EXTENDED / (LINK TO RYANNA) N6 MEADE / CARLTON AVE N7 MERIDIAN / BLENHEIM N8 ELLIOT / CHERRY N9 ROOSEVELT BROWN / 10 TH STREET N10 CHERRY / (LINK THROUGH HOSPITAL) N11 RUGBY / GRADY			
THRESHOLD CIRCUIT	PRIMARILY TRANSIT / CAR T1 HILLSDALE DRIVE / RIO T2 RIO / 250 T3 MEADE / CARLTON / MONTICELLO AVE T4 ELLIOT / AVON / FUTURE WEGMANS T5 HARRIS / JPA T6 MAURY / ALDERMAN T7 NY / EMMET T8 EMMET / HYDRAULIC			

With a more robust development of a 'Connections' matrix, one could then begin to identify those connections that most directly impact the quality of the prioritized places (as identified by the previous 'Places' matrix.) Finding this synergy between place and connection would help direct small area planning efforts in terms of both priority and area of study.

This page intentionally left blank, because any conclusions would have to be identified as a group after a more robust discussion...