



PRELIMINARY INFORMATION FORM (PIF) for INDIVIDUAL PROPERTIES

DHR No. (to be completed by DHR staff) 104-5994

Purpose of Evaluation

Please use the following space to explain briefly why you are seeking an evaluation of this property.

This evaluation was undertaken as part of a 2021-22 Cost Share project to document the Charlottesville Downtown Mall, an eight-block pedestrian street designed by Lawrence Halprin & Associates to help revitalize the city's downtown neighborhood in the mid-1970s. The Preliminary Information Form will increase awareness about the significance of the Downtown Mall and support the long-range historic preservation planning efforts of the City of Charlottesville. The PIF is intended to outline the potential National Register of Historic Places eligibility for a proposed Downtown Mall Historic District.

Are you interested in applying for State and/or Federal Rehabilitation Tax Credits? Yes No

Are you interested in receiving more information about DHR's easement program? Yes No

1. General Property Information

Property name: Charlottesville Downtown Mall

Property address: Main Street between Water Street and East 7th Street, plus the 100 block of 2nd Street SE, the 100 block of 3rd Street NE, and portions of the 100 blocks of 1st Street SE, 2nd Street NE, 5th Street SE, and 5th Street NE

City or Town: Charlottesville

Zip code: 22902

Name of the Independent City or County where the property is located: Charlottesville

Category of Property (choose only one of the following):

Building Site X Structure Object

2. Physical Aspects

Acreage: 3.85

Setting (choose only one of the following):

Urban X Suburban Town Village Hamlet Rural

Briefly describe the property's overall setting, including any notable landscape features:

The Charlottesville Downtown Mall (DHR ID#104-5994) is an eight-block, pedestrianized segment of Main Street in the heart of the city's downtown commercial district. Lying two blocks to the south of historic Court Square, the location of the Albemarle County Courthouse, the Downtown Mall stretches from Water Street on the west to East 7th Street on the east and extends into a few side streets. The Mall itself lies on generally level ground from Old Preston Avenue to East 7th Street. On the west, the landform slopes upward between Old Preston Avenue and Water Street. On the east, the natural downward slope beyond East 7th Street has been

transformed into an amphitheater for outdoor concerts. The ground also drops away toward Water Street south of the Mall. Designed by the landscape architecture firm Lawrence Halprin & Associates, the Downtown Mall is paved from building face to building face in brick laid in a herringbone pattern with contrasting stone accents. Fountains, planters, streetlights, public sculpture, and bosques of trees enliven the space. Downtown is characterized by banks, law offices, and other businesses, as well as churches and residences, while the Mall acts as a focus for entertainment, dining, and boutique shopping. It is especially active in warmer weather, when outdoor seating at restaurants is available and outdoor musical events take place at the amphitheater. The Mall is also the location of the Charlottesville City Hall and the Downtown Transit Center on the east and the Omni Hotel on the west.

3. Architectural Description

Architectural Style(s): Post Modern

If the property was designed by an architect, landscape architect, engineer, or other professional, please list here: Lawrence Halprin & Associates

If the builder is known, please list here: _____

Date of construction (can be approximate): 1976, 1980, 1985, 1994, 2006, 2009

Narrative Description:

In the space below, briefly describe the general characteristics of the entire property, such as its current use (and historic use if different), as well as the primary building or structure on the property (such as a house, store, mill, factory, depot, bridge, etc.). Include the architectural style, materials and method(s) of construction, physical appearance and condition (exterior and interior), and any additions, remodelings, or other alterations.

The Charlottesville Downtown Mall (DHR ID#104-5994) is a 66-foot-wide pedestrianized segment of Main Street that follows an east-west course from Water Street to East 7th Street. Vehicular traffic is allowed on two cross streets, West 2nd Street and East 4th Street. The Mall, designed originally by the landscape architecture firm Lawrence Halprin & Associates (LHA), fills the right of way from building face to building face and extends greater or lesser distances down several of the side streets. Built features include brick and granite paving, bosques of deciduous trees, fountains, street lighting, planters, seating, bollards, bike racks, signage, and public artworks. Commercial activity along the Mall has resulted in added impermanent elements such as sandwich board-type signs, small planters, and newspaper boxes, as well as tables, chairs, and post-and-chain or pipe-rail enclosures for outdoor dining areas.

Paving: The LHA design for the Mall used patterned elements repeated in the paving to establish the Mall's framework, creating interconnected outdoor rooms, influencing movement, and providing locations for rest and social interaction. In the area encompassing the two earliest Mall building campaigns in 1976 (from 1st Street to East 6th Street) and in 1980 (from 1st Street to Old Preston Avenue), paving consists of brick laid in a herringbone pattern as a ground, with contrasting granite paving used to highlight specific features. Most of the current brickwork dates to 2009, when the original 11 ¼ by 3 ¼ bricks set in gray mortar were replaced by 12 by 4-inch bricks set in sand for easier maintenance. With two exceptions, the contrasting masonry at intersections consists of a pointed cruciform element in black granite set in a cruciform frame of black granite with a light gray granite border. A light gray granite rectangle surrounds this frame. At each intersection, brick laid in a herringbone pattern fills the space between the pointed cruciform element and its cruciform frame and between the latter its rectangular frame. Similar light gray granite borders, of varying lengths and with brick infill, delineate the ground plane of the bosques of trees along the Mall. The granite features follow the original LHA design, but were installed in 2009, replacing the concrete installed originally as a cost-cutting measure. The two exceptions to this approach are the vehicular crossings at West 2nd Street and East 4th Street, where the original cruciform

elements were removed in 2009 in favor of a light gray granite rectangle around a plain brick field. These intersections are also crossed on the east and west by truncated cone-textured concrete pavers as a warning to sight-challenged pedestrians that they are approaching a vehicle crossing.

Original bricks set in light-colored mortar can be found in the runnels that help to drain water from the Mall and along the building faces (DHR ID#104-5994-0003). These drainage bands, one on each side of the Mall space, mark the historic interface between the sidewalk and roadbed of Main Street prior to the Mall projects. They run parallel to each other in an east-west direction alongside the gray granite rectangles that divide the Mall's space. Inlets with cast-iron grates, spaced within the drainage runnels and planned in the Mall's original design, direct surface runoff into the city's underground storm sewer system. Additional, perpendicular runnels at intersections also carry runoff to these inlets. Intersections of the runnels and the brickwork along the building faces include mitred corners specified in the Halprin drawings.

Trees, fountains, lighting, and street furniture: In addition to the two-dimensional patterned ground, LHA employed three-dimensional features to organize space and influence movement along the Mall. Extant features include four fountains constructed in the first two building campaigns, bosques of willow oak trees spaced at different intervals along the Mall's course, three sizes of movable planters, two types of lighting, bollards, and trash receptacles. These elements were located along, but on either side, of the Mall's center line, encouraging pedestrians to take a meandering course down Main Street. The original construction also included dozens of movable benches and two hexagonal kiosks where information could be posted. All the aforementioned elements were custom-designed by LHA. Chairs (DHR ID#104-5994-0005) remain available for pedestrians, but they are off-the-shelf models installed in 2009 and bolted into place. Both of the original kiosks have been removed.

Central Place, a small plaza at the northeast corner of East 2nd Street, stands halfway along the Mall. It consists of herringbone brick paving; the Mall's largest fountain, composed of three granite uprights in a depressed brick pool (DHR ID#104-5994-0001); and red maple trees along 2nd Street NE and on the south side of East Main Street. The only remaining LHA-designed trash receptacle (DHR ID#104-5994-0014) is also located at Central Place. The other three fountains of the LHA design (DHR ID#104-5994-0002) are located within tree bosques along Main Street. All three consist of a square, stepped, granite pool, with its floor below the level of the Mall paving and a granite base and top. Two of the fountain tops are round, one is square. The fountains were designed to tempt visitors to pause in their movement along the Mall, giving the opportunity for social interaction. The gathering space around the three Main Street fountains is currently restricted, however, by dining area enclosures serving restaurants facing the Mall.

The bosques of trees vary in length, containing either three, five, or seven specimens of willow oaks. Some of the trees are fifty or more years old. Whereas the Mall's brick paving initially surfaced the ground plane immediately around the trees, square metal grates (DHR ID#104-5994-0004) have served that purpose since 2009. The trees provide shade in the summertime and create distinct spaces, bordered by gray granite, within the Mall's length. Like other features of the LHA design, the bosques are located along the Mall's center line, but weighted to one side or the other to encourage lateral movement. Associated with the trees are what the LHA drawings called "tree lights" (DHR ID#104-5994-0011). They originally consisted of a single pole (a 3-inch, schedule 80 steel pipe) supporting a single, cylindrical fixture. At some point prior to 2005, the original fixtures of the tree lights were replaced with flared, cone-shaped shades. Intended by LHA as the locations for movable benches where pedestrians could rest, eat, or interact, many of the bosque areas are now given over to outdoor dining areas for nearby restaurants that have received permits from the city. All of the original LHA-designed benches have been removed. The current chairs, added in 2009 and similar to the originals, although smaller, are now bolted in place.

At many of the intersections, original features such as planters, bollards, and streetlights have been clustered, along with trash and recycling cans dating from 2009 and three-sided, kiosk signage (DHR ID#104-5994-0013).

Early in the Mall's history, the planters (DHR ID#104-5994-0010), in the shape of a flattened sphere, were located in various places – within the tree bosques, near seating and streetlights, and elsewhere. As outdoor dining for restaurants began to occupy some of the Mall's formerly public space, many of the planters were relocated to the intersections. Other current groupings include a row of seven planters on the north side of West Main Street near Water Street. The bollards (DHR ID#104-5994-0008), which feature a hemispherical cap with a three-tiered, or ringed, base that rests on a fluted column, mark the corners of the cruciform granite frame of the intersections. "Pedestrian lights" (DHR ID#104-5994-0011), as they're called in the LHA drawings, are located in the corners of the rectangular granite frame of the intersections and elsewhere along the Mall. Sometimes called "spider lights," they consist of a single pole shaft supporting four curved arms, each with a single fixture. During a renovation of the Mall in 2009, the pole shafts of the pedestrian lights were replaced with shafts of a similar design, and the lights were raised by 2 feet to allow fire truck access along the Mall.

An early addition to the Downtown Mall was a set of six sculptures by Charlottesville artist James Hagan, installed in 1981 (DHR ID#104-5994-0007). The life-sized figures were fabricated from 3/4-inch thick steel and painted black. They were placed without bases in various locations on the Mall. Each depicts either a single figure or a group of figures in silhouette. One figure, for example, depicts a standing woman holding shopping bags, while another portrays a mother and child walking.

Later extensions of the Mall and side streets: LHA's early planning for the Downtown Mall encompassed the area of Main Street between Water Street on the west and East 7th Street on the east, plus short extensions into some of the side streets. Plazas with fountains, seating, and vegetation were planned on both the east and west ends. As noted above, the two earliest building campaigns in 1976 and 1980 completed the Mall from Old Preston Avenue on the west to East 6th Street on the east. Pedestrianizing Main Street beyond these two segments and into the side streets was not undertaken immediately, but has been implemented in phases over the nearly fifty-year history of the Mall. The two terminal plazas were never built as LHA intended. Later construction departed in many ways from the original design and diverged more substantially as time passed. The area between Water Street and Preston Avenue, west of the 1980 expansion, was originally landscaped in association with the construction of a Radisson Hotel in 1985 (now the Omni Hotel). It did not follow Lawrence Halprin & Associates' plans for the area. The design, however, did include brick paving in a herringbone pattern, concrete cruciform paving elements, and willow oak trees. Changes were made when the Center of Developing Entrepreneurs (C.O.D.E) was built opposite the Omni in 2021. This stretch of the Mall now includes sand-set brick in a herringbone pattern, concrete cruciform elements, a row of LHA planters near Water Street, LHA-style "spider" light fixtures, mature willow oak trees on the north side of Main Street, and two raised planting beds with concrete walls, containing rows of young willow oaks.

The 600 block of East Main Street was pedestrianized in 1994, then rebuilt and altered in 2006 to accommodate changes at that end of the Mall, including an enlarged concert pavilion and the new the Downtown Transit Center. This area also includes elements common to the Lawrence Halprin & Associates design. The bricks are laid in a herringbone pattern, although they are 8 by 4 inches, rather than the 12 by 4-inch bricks used to repave the original Mall building campaigns. Two rectangular areas with granite borders set the stage for outdoor rooms similar to those in the LHA design, and willow oak trees shade the westernmost space. This space is bisected by the Community Chalkboard (DHR ID#104-5994-0006), originally undertaken by the Thomas Jefferson Center for the Protection of Free Expression and known as the Free Speech Wall. Completed in 2006, the Chalkboard is a permanent public art installation designed by landscape architect Peter O'Shea in collaboration with architect Robert Winstead. It is comprised of two principal elements – a sixty-foot-long and seven-foot-tall wall, which serves as a double-sided chalkboard, and a podium. Willow oaks are placed on either side of the wall, rather than off center as in the LHA-designed part of the Mall. None of the streetlights in this area follow the original Mall designs.

Some of the most recent development on the Downtown Mall has occurred on streets that formerly crossed Main Street. The multidisciplinary design team Wallace, Roberts, & Todd developed a master plan for the

Downtown Mall in 2005 that recommended the location and extent of side street development. That work has been undertaken generally according to those recommendations. South of Main Street, 1st and East 5th streets have been partially pedestrianized, while traffic has been barred from East 2nd Street between Main Street and Water Street. On the north, East 2nd and East 5th streets have been partially pedestrianized, while traffic has been barred on East 3rd Street between Main Street and Market Street. With one exception, 8 by 4-inch brick in a herringbone pattern has been used as paving. The exception is 3rd Street SE, where concrete pavers, also 8 by 4 inches, in a herringbone pattern are used. Trees (maple and ginkgo) in these side streets also vary from their Main Street counterparts, as do light fixtures. The side streets, the rights of way of which are half as wide as Main Street, include non-LHA lighting (DHR ID#104-5994-0012) but no planters, seating, or other street furniture. Simple cylindrical bollards (DHR ID#104-5994-0009) are employed to mark the boundary between vehicular traffic on the side streets and the pedestrian Mall. The WRT plan included permanent, bent-pipe bike racks in its plans for development, and many such racks have been installed.

4. Property's History and Significance

In the space below, briefly describe the history of the property, such as significant events, persons, and/or families associated with the property. Please list all sources of information used to research the history of the property. (It is not necessary to attach lengthy articles or family genealogies to this form.)

If the property is important for its architecture, engineering, landscape architecture, or other aspects of design, please include a brief explanation of this aspect.

The Evolution of Downtown Charlottesville

The General Assembly of the colony of Virginia established a new Albemarle County seat on December 23, 1762. It was to be named "Charlottesville" after Queen Charlotte Sophia of Mecklenberg-Strelitz, wife of King George III of Great Britain. A thousand acres were purchased for the town, with fifty set aside to be laid off into streets and lots south of the courthouse, located on the site's high ground. (Moore 1976:29-30). The five original east-west streets, including Main Street, measured 66 feet across with the six north-south streets half that width. The courthouse became Charlottesville's first center of population and commerce, with dense construction on the streets that faced the two-acre courthouse square. Increased building activity came to what is now Main Street and the Downtown Mall beginning in the early nineteenth century. The street was a segment of Three-Notched Road, a vital transportation corridor between the state capital in Richmond and western Virginia. Construction on Main Street differed from the region's tradition of detached buildings. "The pervasive presence of party walls . . . distinguished Charlottesville from its surroundings," according to architectural historian Daniel Bluestone. (*More than a Mall* 2010:1) This pattern of urban construction and the relationship between the buildings and Main Street continues to the present day and helps to reinforce downtown's sense of place.

Unlike the previous county seat, at Scott's Landing (now Scottsville) on the James River, Charlottesville did not have a direct water connection to Richmond. It therefore developed slowly until the arrival of the railroad in 1850. By 1855, Charlottesville's downtown boasted a Greek Revival town hall, four churches, two banks, and four newspapers. Citizens voted to macadamize Main Street in 1859. Rapid growth began in the last two decades of the nineteenth century. In 1888, the General Assembly of the Commonwealth of Virginia incorporated Charlottesville as a city, separating its government from that of Albemarle County. A year earlier, the state legislature had chartered a street railway between downtown and the University of Virginia a mile to the west. Horses or mules initially pulled cars on tracks running along Main Street, but by 1894 the system had been electrified. (Moore 1976:165, 188, 276-277) The street cars allowed for denser development outside of downtown, and the city's population grew, from 1,676 in 1880 to 10,688 by 1920. Population stood at 15,245 ten years later. The red-brick, Victorian architecture from this period can still be found throughout downtown Charlottesville. (Charlottesville and Albemarle County Courthouse Historic District NR Nomination 1982:8:3-6)

Throughout this period, downtown Charlottesville drew residents to conduct business, purchase everyday necessities, attend church, and seek entertainment at movie and performance theaters. Beginning with the Great

Depression of the 1930s, however, downtown Charlottesville began a slow decline. After World War II, that decline accelerated, driven in part by a tremendous increase in the use of automobiles. This was a fate that downtowns across the country shared. Able to live farther from their places of employment thanks to the automobile and improved roads, people began to seek suburban residences and an escape from congestion and pollution in American cities. The growth of suburbs spawned the development of shopping centers with abundant free parking located along highways. Barracks Road Shopping Center opened in 1959 within easy reach of downtown Charlottesville, the University of Virginia, and suburban development, heralding the movement of many residents and businesses away from Main Street. Additional suburban development, as well as the completion of Interstate 64 south of the city, which enabled those passing through the area by automobile to bypass downtown completely, continued this draining away of traffic and potential customers through the 1970s. (Herman 2010: 79-80)

Planning for a Revitalized Downtown

Changes in the city government in the twentieth century helped prepare Charlottesville to address the economic decline. Although the city had a planning commission by 1934, made up of business leaders from the community, it did not hire its first professional planning engineer until 1951. In the middle of the decade, Charlottesville commissioned the professional planning firm Harold Bartholomew & Associates (HBA) to create a master plan to address multiple concerns with the city, including increasing automobile traffic and declining economic activity. Bartholomew had worked on one of the first comprehensive city master plans in the United States, for Newark, New Jersey, in 1913, and formed his own planning firm in 1919. The company pioneered the strategy of single-use zoning – separating residential, commercial, and industrial uses into distinct areas. It also built city plans with automobile travel in mind and advocated the clearance of deteriorated parts of cities in order to achieve zoning goals. This practice became known as urban renewal and has been much discredited in recent years. By 1956, however, HBA was one of the largest planning firms in the country, and Bartholomew himself had been appointed chairman of the National Capital Planning Commission in Washington, D.C., by President Dwight Eisenhower. (Herman 2010:82-83)

HBA was involved in Charlottesville planning for more than a decade, and the city implemented several of its recommendations, including some designed to accommodate the increase in automobile traffic that resulted in the demolition of neighborhoods viewed as “blighted.” With regard to downtown, the most important of these implemented recommendations included broadening connector streets such as Ridge Street, McIntire Road, and Preston Avenue. Urban renewal made the construction of McIntire Road possible; the city razed the predominantly African American neighborhood of Vinegar Hill, at the west end of what is now the Downtown Mall, displacing dozens of families. Another urban renewal project, along Garrett Street south of Main Street, displaced more African American families. Taking place in the early 1960s at the same time as the state campaign known as “Massive Resistance” to desegregation in public schools, the planning and implementation of urban renewal at Vinegar Hill and Garrett Street increased racial tensions in Charlottesville. (Herman 2010: 84-85; Foley 2010:112; Tarter 2020: 385-386)

HBA’s plans for downtown included making it pedestrian friendly, while not banning cars completely, accompanied by the widening of South Street (a block south of Water Street) to 80 feet, with parking garages the size of two city blocks. Main Street would have been narrowed and mega-blocks would have been created by closing parts of city streets. In addition, Bartholomew & Associates planned a three-acre commercial building in the razed area of Vinegar Hill. By the end of the 1960s, however, resistance to these plans had grown and reached the city government. Charlottesville expanded its official planning efforts to include a Planning Department in 1968, and the city planner by that time, Thomas Conger, criticized a 1970 HBA master plan revision, taking issue with its widening of city streets, limitations on pedestrian and bicycle accommodation, and proposed additional demolition. By 1971, Charlottesville also had a new city manager in Cole Hendrix and an all-Democratic and progressive city council, led by Mayor Francis Fife. The city’s governing body included the first African American and the first female councilors, Charles Barbour and Jill Rinehart, respectively. Barbour would later become Charlottesville’s first Black mayor.

Seeking a change from the HBA approach but attracted to a pedestrian-friendly downtown, city officials sought guidance on the possibilities of a pedestrian mall. Joe Bosserman, dean of the architecture school at the University of Virginia, recommended contacting Lawrence Halprin & Associates (LHA). The city planning department sent a potential plan to the firm in 1972. It resembled a design Halprin had implemented for the Nicollet Mall in Minneapolis, Minnesota, a city facing problems similar to those in Charlottesville. After continuing contact with the Halprin and his firm and discussion of the Nicollet Mall with Minneapolis officials, Charlottesville hired Lawrence Halprin & Associates in 1972 to complete a plan for the central business district (CBD), rather than a comprehensive city plan. (Herman 2010:89-92)

Lawrence Halprin & Associates

Lawrence Halprin (1916-2009) grew up in Brooklyn, New York, and, after graduating from high school in 1933, spent several years on a kibbutz in Israel. He studied plant sciences and played varsity baseball at Cornell, graduating in 1939, and then pursued graduate study at the University of Wisconsin at Madison, from which he received a master's degree in horticulture in 1941. It was while at Wisconsin, where he met and married dance student Anna Schuman, that Halprin visited Taliesin, Frank Lloyd Wright's home and studio about thirty miles west of Madison. The visit inspired Halprin to take up the study of architecture with a focus on landscape design. He then enrolled in the Graduate School Design at Harvard in 1942, where he studied with landscape theorist Christopher Tunnard, architects Walter Gropius and Marcel Breuer, and educator László Moholy-Nagy. The last three were all associated with the Bauhaus, the influential Modernist design school in Germany. Before graduating, however, Halprin joined the U.S. Navy and served two years in the Pacific during World War II. He began his career as a landscape architect after the war in San Francisco, with Thomas Dolliver Church, collaborating with Church and architect George Rockrise on the influential Dewey Donnell Garden in Sonoma, California. He worked for Church for four years before starting his own firm in 1949. During the 1950s, his firm designed the kind of projects that were available to landscape architects in the post-war years – residential gardens, campus master plans, suburban shopping centers, and housing projects (with Bay Area architects). (Meyer 2009:124-125; Walker and Simo 2002:148-150)

By the 1960s, however, Halprin's firm had begun concentrating on urban areas, executing designs for pedestrian-oriented landscapes at Ghirardelli Square (1962-1968) and Embarcadero Plaza (1962-1972) in San Francisco, Nicollet Mall in Minneapolis (1962-1967), several projects in Portland, Oregon (beginning in 1965), and Freeway Plaza in Seattle, Washington (1970-1974). Pedestrianizing parts of downtowns to lure shoppers and businesses away from the suburbs had been tried with some success elsewhere, but Halprin's ideas varied from the norm by emphasizing mixed use development instead of the strict separation of uses that had characterized the Harland Bartholomew form of city planning, as a means to give downtowns twenty-four hour usage. Such continuous use was seen as a way to strengthen economic activity, increase safety, and maintain the physical environment. An additional Halprin emphasis focused on movement through space, "choreographed" or "scored" like dance. To accomplish this purpose, Halprin assembled and located landscape features (fountains, lighting, seating, plantings, etc.) to create rhythmic movement through space while also providing choice and allowing for improvisation. In these projects, Halprin and his firm "asserted the landscape architect's role in regenerating the American city" and "made vital social and pedestrian spaces out of formerly marginal sites," according to University of Virginia Landscape Architecture Professor Elizabeth K. Meyer. "In so doing, they reimagined a public realm for American cities that had been cleared by federal urban renewal programs and abandoned for new suburban developments." (Meyer 2009:125-126)

In addition to Church and his Harvard mentors, a wide range of individuals and fields of study influenced Halprin's designs, from musician John Cage, to psychologists Carl Jung and Paul Baum, to anthropologist Joseph L. Henderson. The importance of these people for Halprin lay in his recognition of the significance of the creative process to landscape design and urban planning. (Walker and Simo 2002: 154-155) Especially important was the work of Halprin's wife Anna, who became "one of the pioneers of (post-)modern dance and performance art in the USA, re-envisioning the spatialities of performance, and taking dance and performance

out of the theatre and into a range of public spaces,” according to Peter Merriman. (Merriman 2010: 432) In the 1950s and 1960s, Anna conducted interactive dance events, in which situations and loose actions were proposed, but the ultimate performance was left open for the participants to complete. Her work on dance in public spaces in the 1950s and the relationship between dance and the environment influenced her husband’s conception of “scoring” or “choreographing” movement through the landscapes he designed, while giving visitors flexibility in determining direction and pace. (Merriman 2010: 433-435; Hirsh 2011:127)

By the time Halprin’s firm received the Charlottesville commission, he had become a nationally known expert on the redesign of urban spaces. He had been awarded the Medal for Allied Professions by the American Institute of Architects in 1964 and became a fellow of the American Society of Landscape Architects in 1969. He had served on the White House Council on Natural Beauty and the Advisory Council on Historic Preservation. (Meyer 2010:126-127) He received a grant from the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development for a study of six urban renewal projects in New York City that resulted in the book *New York, New York* in March 1968. (Hirsch 2014:177) He was considered, as Peter Walker and Melanie Simo later called him, “a towering figure.” (Walker and Simo 2002:145) Alison Hirsch has written that the creative process employed by Halprin and his firm “represents an overlooked antecedent to today’s approach to landscape in urban design, which emphasizes infrastructural networks, ecological processes, multidisciplinary collaboration, as well as public participation.” (Hirsch 2011:127)

The Charlottesville Downtown Mall, 1973-1980

A year after it was commissioned, Halprin’s team led a three-day workshop in Charlottesville in which selected community members engaged in a series of exercises designed to foster an appreciation of downtown, elicit ideas for its revitalization, and create a consensus on development that would garner local support. LHA associate Jim Burns led the March 1973 workshop, with Halprin, who had visited Charlottesville on several occasions prior to the workshop, becoming involved on the last day when the group formed its recommendations. Public participation had become a significant part of the Halprin firm’s approach to urban design and was adapted from the “temporal-situational guidelines” of Anna’s performance events. Known as “Take Part” workshops, the Halprin participatory process involved a series of what the landscape architect called “scores,” in which participants were encouraged to view the urban areas to be redesigned with fresh eyes. In Charlottesville, participants, drawn from the city’s government and business leaders, but also including a hospital technician, a housewife, a retiree, and students, were given a walking score and a driving score, with stops along the way assigned and questions or activities specified. The participants followed their scores, called “awareness activities,” individually, then shared their responses to the environment when they reconvened after the exercise. While the walking scores kept the participants in the area that would be redesigned, the driving score took them farther afield, to the University of Virginia, Barracks Road Shopping Center, residential neighborhoods, and elsewhere. On the third day, the group worked together to plan the redesign. Hirsch has written that the goal of the workshops was not to generate innovative solutions to urban situations. Rather, they were designed to involve the community in a transparent process that would enable the implementation of a plan generated together. In Charlottesville, that goal seems to have been achieved, with Halprin saying that the ideas generated by the process represented “a remarkable consensus” among the participants. (Hirsch 2011: 133-138)

Based on these ideas, Lawrence Halprin & Associates developed a master plan for Charlottesville’s commercial district. In addition to the downtown area, the plan also included Vinegar Hill and Garrett Street, the two predominantly African American neighborhoods that had been razed as urban renewal projects in the 1960s. Although the master plan aimed to link those areas to Main Street, only the Downtown Mall was constructed according to the master plan intentions. Dean Abbott acted as LHA’s Mall project designer and Norm Kondy as urban designer, with Halprin exercising oversight and final approval of the design. Kondy noted that the Charlottesville Take Park workshop constituted “the first time he (Halprin) was able fully to implement his innovative notions of a choreographed community design process into a built detailed design and an adopted master plan,” in the words of Sarita Herman. (Herman 2010: 91-93).

LHA's plans for the Downtown Mall advocated respect for the existing building fabric, especially its scale, window and door openings, and materials. Abbott and Halprin adapted a characteristic Charlottesville building material – red brick – for use as the Mall's paving, laid in a herringbone pattern and set off initially by a contrasting concrete cruciform details at intersections and borders defining the Mall's outdoor spaces. These details were later rebuilt in gray granite as LHA had originally intended. Street furniture included custom-designed movable benches, three sizes of planters, two types of streetlights, fluted bollards, and trash cans. With the exception of the wood-slat benches (3 ½ feet wide), these were all made of durable cast iron or steel and treated with a painted black finish. Plantings consisted of willow oak trees in bosques along the Main Street right of way and red maple trees at Central Place, a plaza near the center of the Mall. LHA located the plantings to influence movement through downtown. The bosques varied in size (three, five, or seven trees placed on the diagonal), and the spaces between them also varied, creating a series of interconnected, outdoor rooms. The locations of the bosques on the center line of the Mall but weighted to one side or the other encouraged lateral movement toward open space. The plan interspersed three small fountains among the bosques and a larger one in Central Place, to provide occasions for visitors to pause in their journeys and gather with others. The movable seating offered flexible locations for lengthier withdrawal from the flow of movement by individuals or groups. (Noe 2009: 6-11)

In 1978, Charlottesville authorized the extension of the pedestrian mall two blocks to the west, from 1st Street to Old Preston Avenue. The work began in 1979 and was completed in 1980. (City Council Resolution: May 15, 1978; Richmond Times-Dispatch, February 2, 1979, January 7, 1981) The landscape architecture firm CHNMB implemented the work, following the original Halprin design. CHNMB was composed of five former principals of Lawrence Halprin & Associates, who purchased the business from Halprin in 1976. Its name derived from the last names of its principals, who included Don Carter, William Hull, Satoru Nishita, and Byron McCulley. Carter and Satoru, who had worked for Thomas Church with Halprin, joined Lawrence Halprin & Associates upon its formation in 1949. Carter, Nishita, and McCulley worked on several of Halprin's urban landscapes, including Ghirardelli Square, Nicollet Mall, and the Portland, Oregon, projects. (TCLF: Pioneers)

Mall Expansion

The Downtown Mall did not immediately become successful. Indoor shopping malls began to compete with the earlier strip malls, continuing to draw people away from downtown. Fashion Square Mall, in Albemarle County north of Charlottesville, opened in 1980. Department stores, such as Miller & Rhoads, left downtown for Fashion Square. Typical Main Street businesses – hardware stores, dry cleaners, doctors and dentists, grocery stores – continued to move to be closer to where their customers lived. The type of businesses on the Downtown Mall therefore changed, adjusting to the possibilities the Mall presented. By the 1990s, the commercial focus of downtown had evolved from everyday products and services to entertainment, dining, and specialty shops. The small scale of the buildings downtown made it feasible for small businesses to invest in their rehabilitation and re-use as restaurants or boutiques. The second and third floors of these buildings began to be rehabilitated as apartments. The success of the city's Fridays After Five outdoor musical events, held in warmer weather at what was first known as the Charlottesville Pavilion at the eastern end of the Mall, led to the restoration of two movie palaces, the Paramount Theater and the Jefferson Theater, as a performance venues. (Jost 2008:63-64) The city adjusted, too, returning Water Street to two-way traffic in 1994 and providing two vehicular crossings and additional parking to better accommodate visitors arriving by automobile. (McNair 2018:6-7)

The city also continued to make improvements and adjust its approach, but did not abandon the concept of a pedestrian mall, as so many other jurisdictions did when their pedestrianized downtowns failed to reverse economic losses. When development of the Vinegar Hill urban renewal area failed to attract the multi-use environment that LHA had envisioned (including hotel accommodations), the city provided financing for the construction of a large luxury hotel and parking deck on the site, which opened in 1985. Also not immediately successful, the hotel, initially managed as a Radisson Hotel, was later sold and run as an Omni Hotel. (*More than a Mall* 2010:44) West Main Street in the area of the hotel was pedestrianized at the time, although not in the

manner the Halprin team had planned, which included water features, outdoor seating, and shade trees. The 1985 work and the extension of the Mall to the east in 1994 to accommodate the outdoor amphitheater did respect the original paving, use of willow oaks, and street furniture. The two vehicular crossings on Main Street, at West 2nd Street (1996) and East 4th Street (2006), ultimately resulted in removal of LHA-designed features from those intersections, including the cruciform paving element at their centers, and the addition of crossing signage, textured paving, and other changes. Over time, vehicular traffic has damaged the paving, especially the contrasting granite elements, and the added safety features disrupt and obscure the original design. In 2005, a new pavilion and amphitheater opened at the eastern terminus of the Mall, and, the following year, the paving in the 600 block of East Main Street was rebuilt to accommodate the pavilion and the Downtown Transit Center, which opened in early 2007. The work included a new plaza in front of the Charlottesville City Hall.

A large cluster of physical changes to the Downtown Mall took place in 2009. Following a 2005 master plan by Wallace, Roberts & Todd (WRT), a multidisciplinary design firm with offices in Philadelphia and San Francisco, and a later master plan prepared by MMM Design Group from Norfolk building on WRT's proposals, a number of alterations took place that shape the Mall's current appearance. After some debate, the city voted to alter the most basic element of the Downtown Mall, its brick paving, replacing LHA's 11 ¼ by 3 ¼-inch bricks set in gray-tinted mortar, with sand-set, 12 by 4-inch bricks in the same herringbone pattern. While the size of the new bricks was intended to emulate the size and pattern of the original brickwork, in practice the new pavers could not replicate the precise geometry of the LHA design, resulting in more areas where bricks needed to be cut in irregular sizes to fit. Two shades of gray granite replaced the concrete paving details of the earlier construction, following the unfulfilled original LHA plans. The brick runnels that drained rain water from the Mall and the band of soldier course bricks at the building faces were not replaced and remained set in what was by then a light-colored mortar. Grates were installed in square openings around the trees, whereas the LHA design brought the brick paving right up to the tree trunks. New trash and recycling cans and new chairs replaced the LHA versions of those items and new signage was added. The 2009 work also included repair of the fountains and the addition of bike racks, and the city followed WRT/MMM recommendations for extending the Mall into selected side streets. Prior to the WRT plan, the four-lamp pedestrian lights received new lamp shades, and cone-shaped shades replaced the simple cylindrical lights on the poles within the bosques. The pedestrian lights were refurbished in 2009. (Wallace, Roberts, & Todd 2005: 16-30; Werner 2022)

With the success of the Mall's entertainment venues, shops, and restaurants, beginning in the 1990s, outdoor dining has also increased in popularity. While only one café with outdoor seating existed in 1976, twenty percent of the Mall's open space was given over to outdoor dining and vendors by 2008. Permits for outdoor café spaces averaged less than two a year between 1981 and 1992, but jumped to eight per year from 1993 to 1999. (City Council Appropriations/Resolutions: 1981-1999). The city has organized permitted seating areas mainly in the center of the Mall, often within the bosques of trees, near restaurants. Post-and-chain and pipe fencing around the restaurant seating negates the original public purpose of these spaces, which were intended to accommodate the flow of people along the Mall and provide opportunities for respite and socializing. The fencing also isolates and obscures original features of the LHA design, such as the fountains and the contrasting paving. (Noe 2009: 26-33)

Recommendation

The Charlottesville Downtown Mall is a well-designed, well-used public space in the heart of the city's historic commercial center. It was constructed in stages over the course of more than thirty years, approximating the expanse originally envisioned by Lawrence Halprin & Associates, and it has been adapted to changing commercial interests and advances in design, construction techniques, and materials used in outdoor public spaces. Over the course of its nearly five decades of existence, but especially within the last fifteen years, a large amount of its original material has been replaced. The integrity of its materials and workmanship has therefore been degraded. After much debate, the most prominent material (brick) was replaced (with the exception of bands along the building faces and in the drainage runnels) with brick pavers very close to the size of the original pavers to maintain LHA's paving pattern. The change in material, along with the absence of the original mortar

joints, has led to a loss of the visibility of its original patterning, as well as awkward juxtapositions with the remaining original brick paving. Another replacement material (granite instead of concrete for contrasting paving) fulfills the initial design, which was altered in the implementation to cut costs. Certain character-defining elements of the original design (planters, bollards, fountains, willow oak bosques) remain, while others (streetlights, metal and wood chairs) have been altered or changed out but retain some of the character of the original, LHA-designed features. The permanent location of the chairs, bolted into place, contrasts with the ability to move the LHA benches short distances in order to create spontaneous gathering spaces. The spatial organization that the LHA design devised to influence movement along the Mall also remains, although the current use of public space for private dining areas hinders its original effect and adds to the sense of clutter on the Mall. The dining areas and the permanent locations of the chairs also detract from the Mall's intended function as a public gathering space for purposes other than private dining. It should be noted that both these alterations to the original design intent are reversible. The Downtown Mall continues, however, to fulfill much of its original purpose in its original location – offering an attractive public space to bring residents and visitors to the downtown area, providing housing for twenty-four hour use, and spurring the local economy. Integrity of location, design, setting, feeling, and association therefore remain moderate to strong.

The Downtown Mall represents an important step in Charlottesville's planning process, one that sought citizen participation and expert guidance. The development and implementation of the Mall became a turning point in the commercial fortunes of downtown, while revitalizing its public use, helping to maintain the significant role that this section of Main Street has played in the city's history for more than two hundred years. The Downtown Mall has also become a great success. Two hundred pedestrian malls were created from the 1960s until the 1980s, but only about thirty lasted until the 1990s, many in college towns like Charlottesville. (Pojani 2010: 173) The Downtown Mall is therefore significant under National Register Criterion A at the state and local level in the area of community planning and development as a successful planning intervention incorporating significant city support and appropriate infrastructure and landscape strategies. The Downtown Mall is also significant under Criterion C at the state and local level in the area of landscape architecture as an important work of urban landscape design by Lawrence Halprin, one of the most influential landscape architects of the late twentieth century, and his firm, Lawrence Halprin & Associates. The Charlottesville Downtown Mall is an excellent example of Halprin's approach to public space design as choreography of movement, providing for continuous flow of people, while also offering areas for reflection, respite, and social interaction. The Mall illustrates Halprin's method of eliciting value and usage ideas from the community to develop his firm's designs while generating consensus to support the effort, as well as his utilization of a simple palette of materials and features based in part on local precedents to create a series of interconnected spaces that act as a stage for public life. The Charlottesville Downtown Mall is Halprin's only extant work in Virginia. The period of significance for the Mall has been determined to encompass 1976 and 1980, the dates of the completion of the first two building campaigns, which followed the original Lawrence Halprin & Associates design.

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5. Property Ownership (Check as many categories as apply):

Private: _____ Public\Local X Public\State _____ Public\Federal _____

Current Legal Owner(s) of the Property (If the property has more than one owner, please list each below or on an additional sheet.)

name/title: Jeffrey B. Werner, AICP. Preservation and Design Planner (City of Charlottesville)
organization: City of Charlottesville Neighborhood Development Services
street & number: 605 East Main Street
city or town: Charlottesville state: VA zip code: 22902
e-mail: wernerjb@charlottesville.gov telephone: (434) 970-3130

Legal Owner's Signature:  Date: April 6, 2022

•• Signature required for processing all applications. ••

In the event of corporate ownership you must provide the name and title of the appropriate contact person.

Contact person: _____
Daytime Telephone: _____

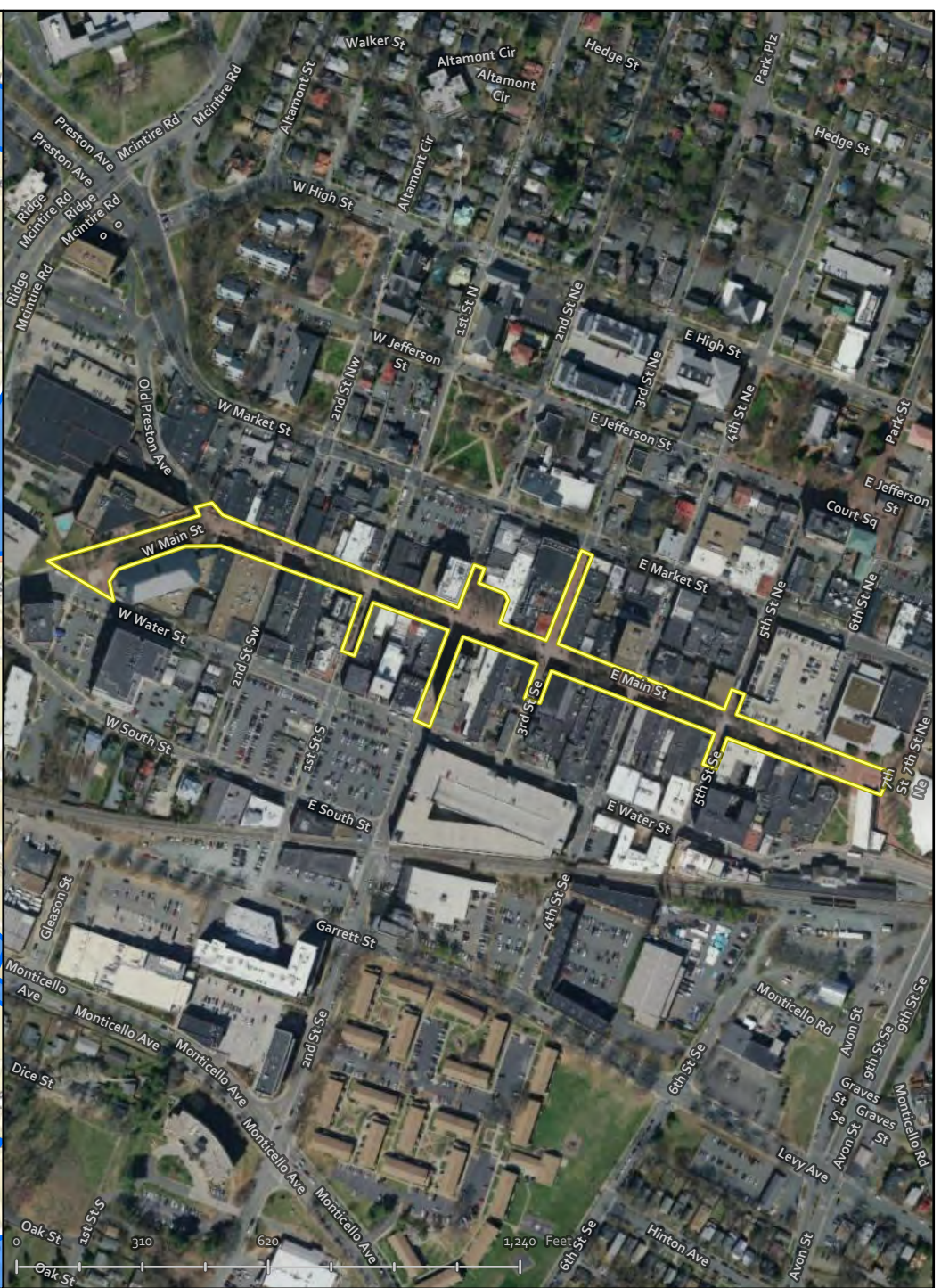
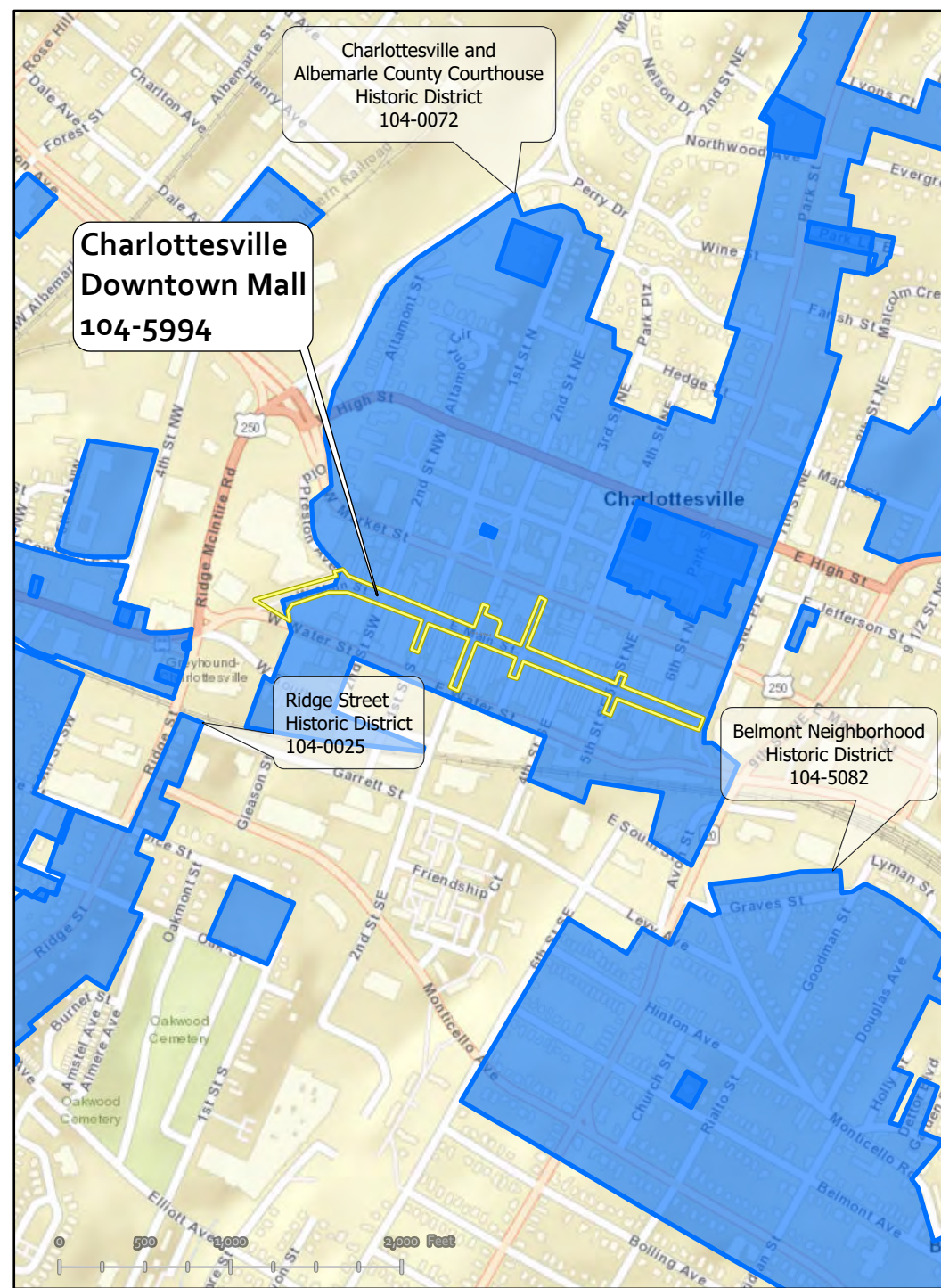
Applicant Information (Individual completing form if other than legal owner of property)

name/title: Timothy C. Kerr and Daria A. Gasparini
organization: Robinson & Associates, Inc.
street & number: 4005 Wisconsin Avenue NW, P.O. Box 9454
city or town: Washington state: DC zip code: 20016
e-mail: tkerr@robinson-inc.com telephone: 202-234-2333

6. Notification

In some circumstances, it may be necessary for DHR to confer with or notify local officials of proposed listings of properties within their jurisdiction. In the following space, please provide the contact information for the local County Administrator, City Manager, and/or Town Manager

name/title: City Manager
locality: City of Charlottesville
street & number: 605 East Main Street
city or town: Charlottesville state: VA zip code: 22902
telephone: 434-970-3890

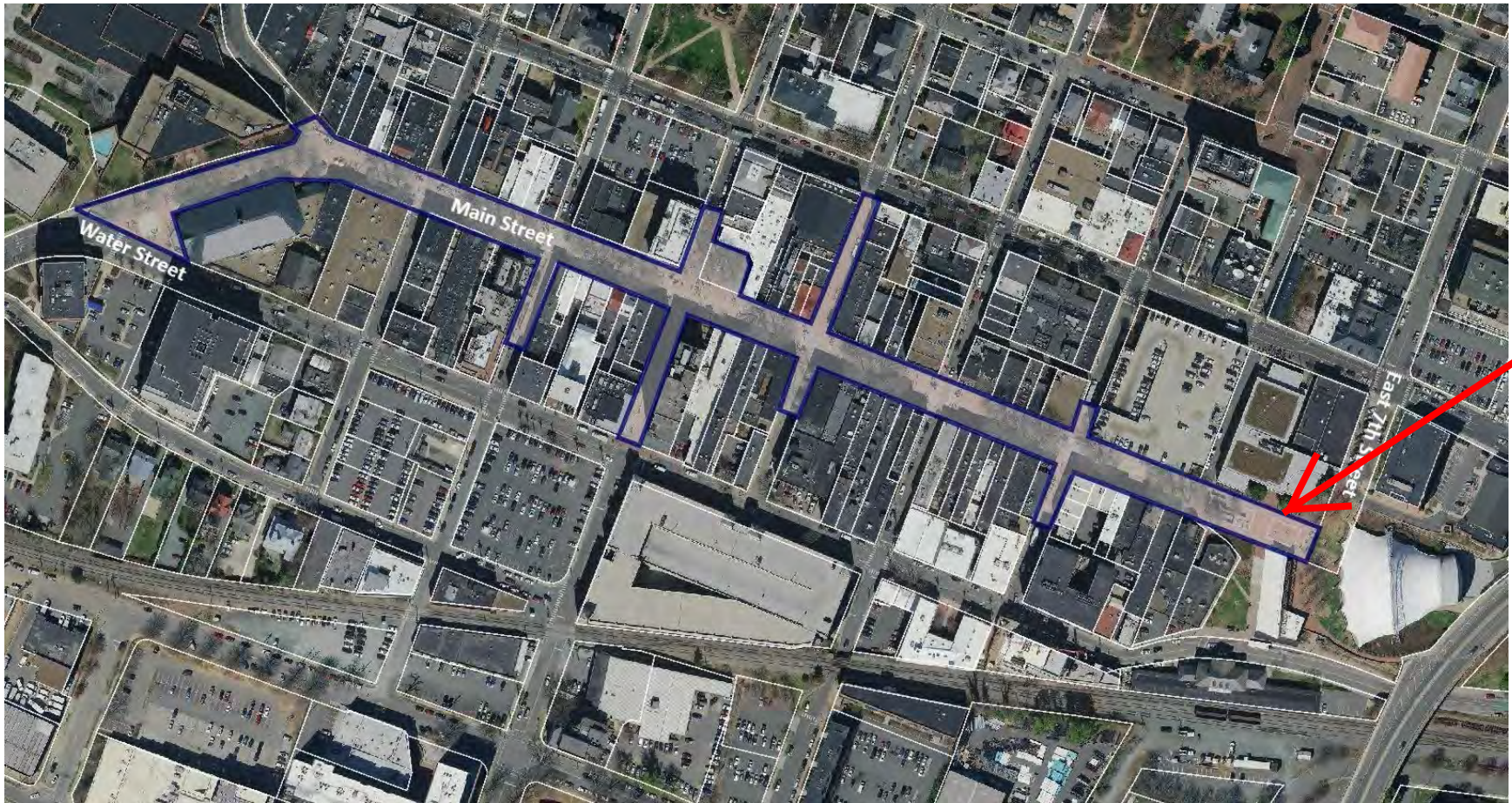


Charlottesville Downtown Mall
 City of Charlottesville, Charlottesville East Quad
 DHR ID: 104-5994

- 104-5994
- Listed Resources

Created By: D. Bascone/4/21/2022
 Sources: VDHR 2020, ESRI 2020, VDOT 2020, VGIN 2020
 Records of the Virginia Department of Historic Resources (DHR) have been gathered over many years and the representation depicted is based on the field observation data and may not reflect current ground conditions. The map is for general illustration purposes and is not intended for engineering, legal or other site-specific uses. The map may contain errors and is provided "as-is". Contact DHR for the most recent information as data is updated continually





PIF LOCATION MAP*

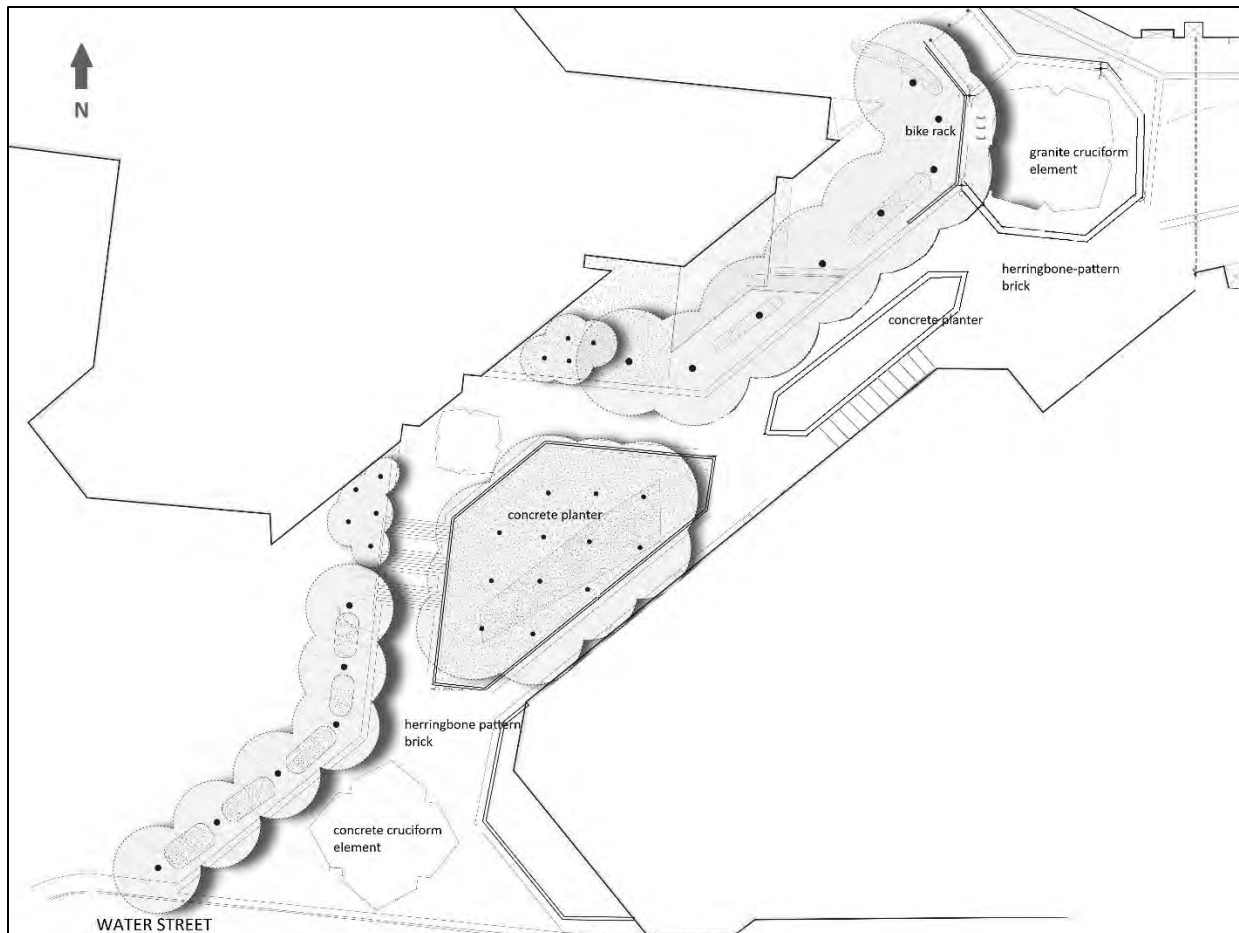
DHR ID: 104-5994

Downtown Mall, Main Street between Water Street and East 7th Street

Charlottesville, Albemarle County

February 2022

*Not to scale



PIF SKETCH MAP* (Map 1 of 4, Water Street through west portion of 200 block of West Main Street)

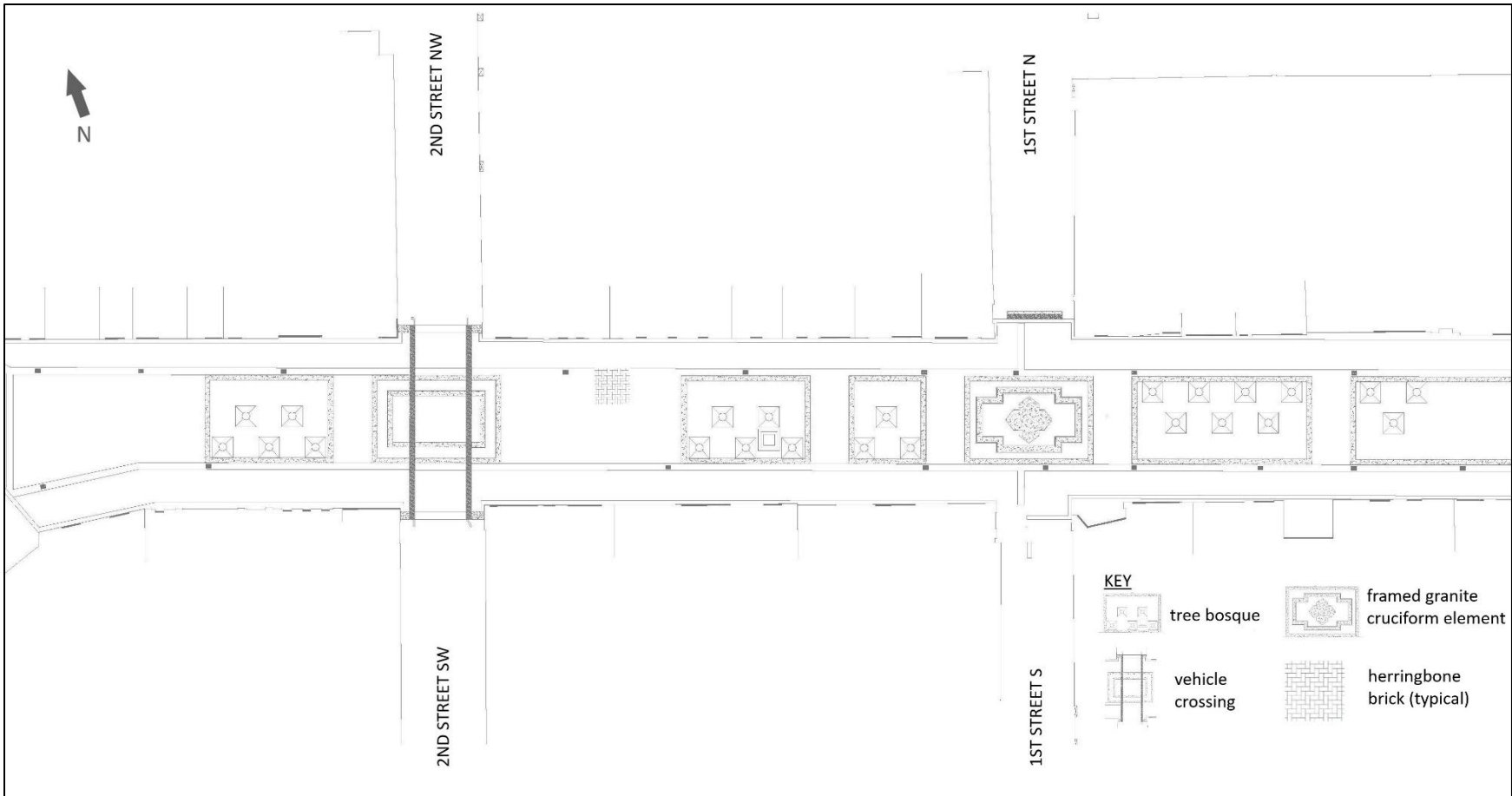
DHR ID: 104-5994

Downtown Mall, Main Street between Water Street and East 7th Street

Charlottesville, Albemarle County

February 2022

*Not to scale



PIF SKETCH MAP* (Map 2 of 4, East portion of 200 block of West Main Street through 100 block of East Main Street)

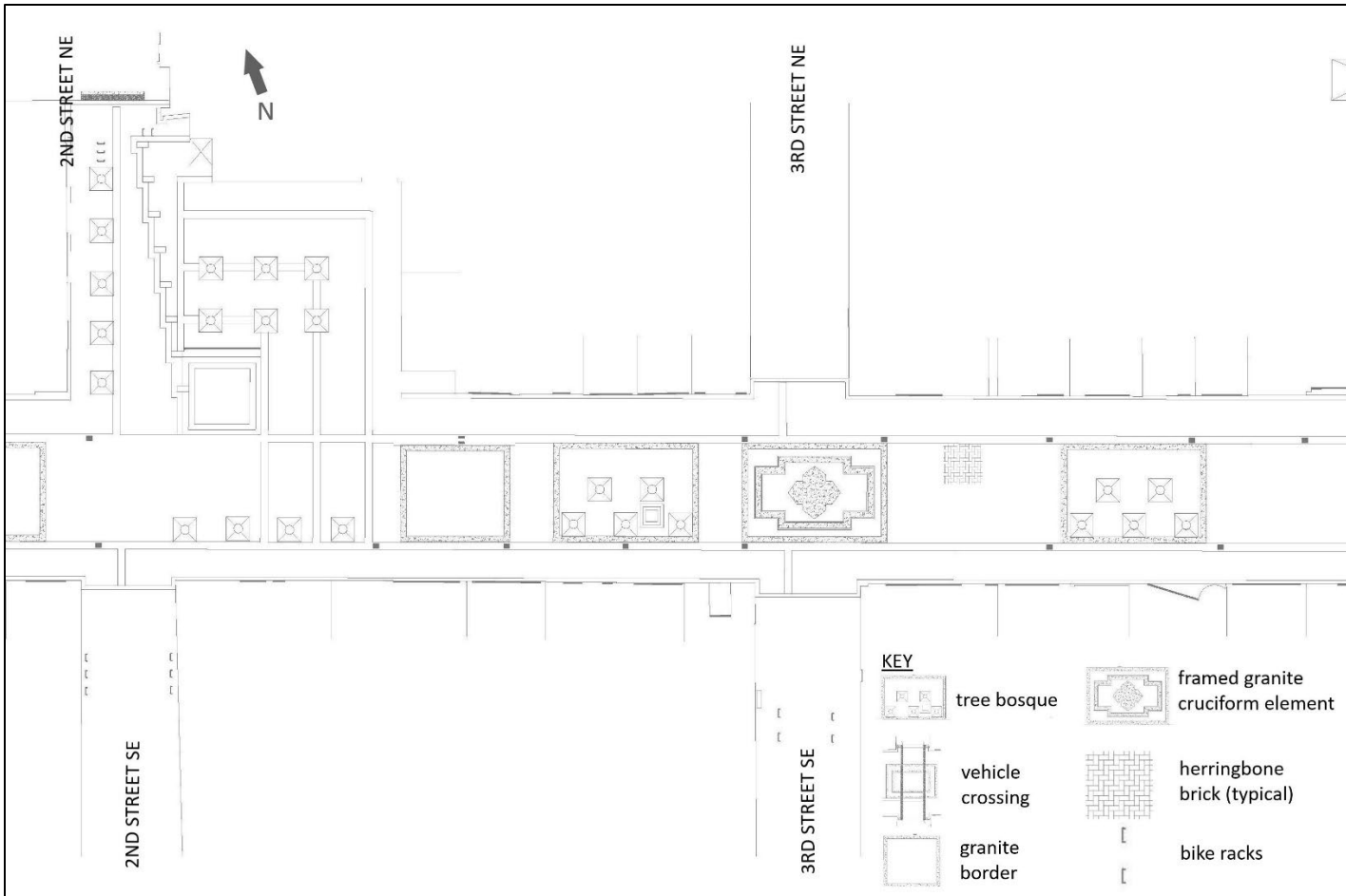
DHR ID: 104-5994

Downtown Mall, Main Street between Water Street and East 7th Street

Charlottesville, Albemarle County

February 2022

*Not to scale



PIF SKETCH MAP* (Map 3 of 4, 200 and 300 blocks of East Main Street)

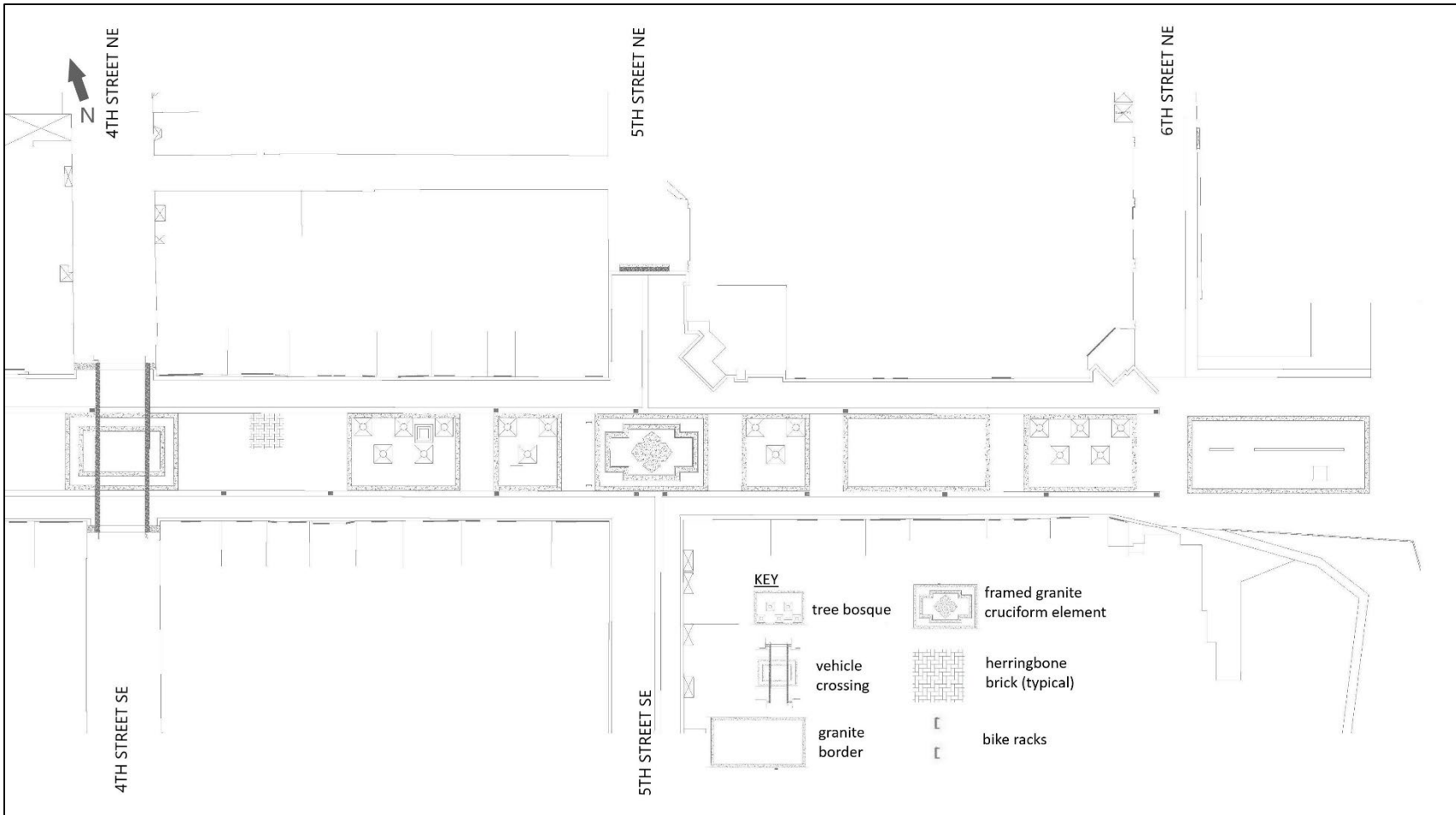
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Downtown Mall, Main Street between Water Street and East 7th Street

Charlottesville, Albemarle County

February 2022

*Not to scale



PIF SKETCH MAP* (Map 4 of 4, 400 block through 600 block of East Main Street)

DHR ID: 104-5994

Downtown Mall, Main Street between Water Street and East 7th Street

Charlottesville, Albemarle County

February 2022

*Not to scale













VPM
PBS

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THE
STREET







GWEN DICKA & RUTH

DICKA
MAREK

TOWNS
WATZ

SINCE WHEN DID I BE MORE
IMPORTANT THAN YOU?















DOWNTOWN MALL



Legend:
P Parking
R Public Restrooms
S Public Safety
A Area Safety Zone
CS Public Safety - Changing Station