

CITY OF CHARLOTTESVILLE, VIRGINIA
CITY COUNCIL AGENDA



Agenda Date:	June 20, 2023
Action Required:	Appropriating funding received from UVA for Emmet Street and Fontaine Avenue Streetscape Projects
Presenter:	Samuel Sanders, Jr., Deputy City Manager
Staff Contacts:	Samuel Sanders, Jr., Deputy City Manager Michael Rogers, Interim City Manager
Title:	Appropriating funding received from UVA donation to Emmet Street and Fontaine Avenue Streetscape Projects - \$5,000,000 (2nd reading)

Background

In March 2018, the University of Virginia confirmed by letter, a commitment to provide \$5 million in support toward a safer and more bike and pedestrian friendly community. This funding was to support projects in areas adjacent to the University Grounds, as improvements for the safety, security, and walkability. With projects like Brandon Avenue and Ivy Corridor contributing positively to this goal, the desire was for direct collaboration in furthering other projects.

City staff collaborated with their peers at UVA on the Emmet Streetscape and West Main Streetscape projects as they were submitted for consideration of funding through VDOT's Smartscale Program. Both projects were eventually awarded funding for implementation.

Discussion

With the advent of COVID and challenges to budget and schedules with the city's transportation portfolio, the West Main Streetscape became the center of much discussion about the ongoing merits of this project moving forward. After a protracted period of discussion, the project was ultimately canceled and staff is currently making the arrangements to repay the early expenditures of up to \$78,000 to VDOT. VDOT has also allowed for the redistribution of previously awarded funding to help with bringing the entire portfolio into budget. VDOT has actively participated in the discussions and approves of this funding being used to trigger funding reassignments within the city's portfolio, as it strives to reach a higher level of sustained performance and compliance.

Last year, city leadership engaged with UVA leadership in a discussion about the \$5 million commitment to support the West Main Streetscape Project being shifted to support the two other projects in close proximity to the University Grounds. The desire was to redirect those funds to the Emmet Street and Fontaine Avenue Streetscape Projects, ensuring both became viable again due to serious cost escalation that could have led to their cancelations.

Having previously offered the generous support of pedestrian and bike improvements, the

administration has agreed to the allocation of funds to support the current projects as described. The University would like to remind council and staff of the importance of the West Main Corridor and hope that a revisit of the streetscape plan will be possible in the future.

Alignment with City Council's Vision and Strategic Plan **Comprehensive Plan Guiding Principles**

- Equity & Opportunity – All people will be able to thrive in Charlottesville.
- Community Culture and Unity – Charlottesville's rich and diverse culture and form will be celebrated, and the entire community will feel welcomed, valued and respected.

Strategic Plan (2018-2020) Goal 3: A Beautiful and Sustainable Natural and Built Environment

- 3.1 Engage in robust and context sensitive urban planning and implementation
- 3.2 Provide reliable and high quality infrastructure
- 3.3 Provide a variety of transportation and mobility options

Community Engagement

All of the corridors that are addressed in this Agenda Memo have been the subject of much study, evaluation, and debate on the priority for pedestrian improvements to ensure safety, security, and walkability. They each occupy a high priority in the Streets That Work Plan and the Bike/Ped Master Plan for the city.

Budgetary Impact

The impact of this funding will be used to cover significant cost escalation that now provides two important and viable streetscape projects within the city and adjacent to University Grounds. The cancelation of the West Main Streetscape project will have a cost impact to the city of up to \$78,000 and will be brought to council for resolution at a later date.

Recommendation

The City Manager and staff recommend approval of this appropriation to ensure two important transportation projects can proceed with adding critical bike and pedestrian infrastructure to the city landscape.

Recommended motion: "I move the RESOLUTION appropriating \$5,000,000 received from the donation by UVA be used for the Emmet Street and Fontaine Avenue Streetscape Projects"

Alternatives

Council may elect not to approve the recommendations, which would forego the opportunity to ensure that these two important streetscape projects can move forward.

Attachments

1. Revised Resolution_UVA donation_Emmet-Fontaine Streetscape Projects_\$5,000,000