

MEMORANDUM

To: Charlotte Planning Commission
Copy: Project Steering Committee
From: Darren Schibler, Senior Planner
Date: March 7, 2024
Re: Charlotte Villages Master Plan Update

Overview

The Planning Commission has requested monthly updates on the status of the East and West Village Master Plan project. The table below summarizes the project status within the overall scope of work and timeline:

Task / Subtask	Current Timeline	Status
1A: Kickoff	9/29/2023	Complete
1B: Steering Committee	3 rd Weds., 8:30am	Ongoing
2A: Base Mapping & Data Collection	Oct – Dec 2023	Complete
2B: Website	Oct – Dec 2023 & beyond	Complete, updates ongoing
2Ci: PPP Development	Oct – Dec 2023	Complete, updates ongoing
2Cii: Initial Outreach	Dec 2023 – Feb 2024	Complete
2Ciii: Design Charette and Survey	March 16, 2024	Announced / Open
2Civ: Draft Presentation	April / May 2024	To be informed by Task 2Cii-iii
2D: Design & Graphics	Dec 2023 – May 2024	To be informed by Tasks 2A, 2C
3: Bylaw Updates	Apr 2024 – Dec 2024	To be informed by Task 2
4: Bylaw Outreach	Jan 2025 – Mar 2025	To be informed by Task 3

Recent Progress

- Initial Outreach Results
 - 101 people responded to the initial Community Questions survey, which generally captured the town’s demographic profile (but skewed a bit to older folks).
 - Project staff are still analyzing results, but responses generally reflect the themes of stakeholder interviews conducted in January:
 - Though there is caution about the scale and intensity of development in the Villages general support for increased activity and vitality focused around community spaces, local services, and dining opportunities.
 - Residents are generally interested in opportunities to drive less, whether by having their needs met within Charlotte (as opposed to traveling to other communities) and being able to walk or bike to and within the Villages.

- Most respondents support additional housing within the Villages (particularly the West Village) provided it fits the existing scale and character.
 - There is understanding of development challenges (protected resources and water / septic capacity), but interest in exploring creative solutions.
 - Most importantly, there is a strong desire for community connectedness, a willingness to have difficult conversations, and a call for municipal leadership (particularly by the Selectboard) to implement the community's vision for the future.
- Visual Preference Survey released (https://bit.ly/Villages_visual_preference_survey)
 - This in-depth survey presents a range of images within several design themes and asks respondents to rate how well they like or don't like what is shown (and why). Themes include:
 - Community Spaces
 - Housing Types
 - Commercial Uses
 - Parking / Park & Rides
 - Walking and Biking
 - Wayfinding
 - Representative Communities
 - As of 3/6, the Visual Preference Survey already had 102 responses.
- Design Workshop(s) Planned
 - An in-person design workshop is scheduled for Saturday, March 16th from 9am-12pm at the Congregational Church. Food and childcare will be provided.
 - A virtual design workshop is tentatively planned for Thursday, March 28th from 6pm-8pm to provide an option for people who cannot attend the in-person workshop.
 - Both workshops will guide participants in three hands-on exercises to establish a shared vision for each Village, exploring the geographic boundaries, transportation connections to / within / between the Villages, and the scale and form of buildings.
 - Focus groups with Village residents
 - Most community input thus far has come from residents who live outside the Villages. The Steering Committee is organizing a focus group specifically for people who live in or near each Village to make sure their perspectives are included in the community's vision. These will be scheduled for April to allow attendees to respond to initial concept plans based on feedback gathered to date.

Next Steps

- Conduct design workshops
- Analyze Visual Preference Survey results after it closes on 3/24
- Conduct focus groups with residents of each Village in April
- Begin developing the concept plans and graphics based on the above
- The next Steering Committee meeting is March 20th at 8:30am