

**CITY OF CHARLOTTESVILLE, VIRGINIA  
CITY COUNCIL AGENDA**



<b>Agenda Date:</b>	December 2, 2019
<b>Action Required:</b>	Resolution Adopting an updated Standards and Design Manual
<b>Presenter:</b>	Marty Silman, Public Works
<b>Staff Contacts:</b>	Marty Silman, Public Works; Lisa Robertson, City Attorney's Office
<b>Title:</b>	<b>Standards and Design Manual (SADM)</b>

**Background:**

The City's Standards and Design Manual (SADM) is an existing document that was adopted by City Council in 2008. The manual establishes design and construction standards for City projects and development projects throughout the City.

Since the adoption of the current SADM in 2008, there have not been any significant revisions, so the manual is out of date and does not meet the current needs of the City or the community. In December of 2016, City Council approved funding which allowed staff to proceed with the overhaul of the text of the current Standards and Design Manual. Through the procurement process and a Request for Proposal, Toole Design Group and RK&K collaborated to provide these services and were selected to assist the City in this effort. That contract was executed in August 2017. On October 15, 2018, a first draft of the manual was brought before Council. Staff was directed to conduct two more workshops to flush out outstanding concerns from stakeholder groups. Those workshops were conducted on June 13, 2019 and September 30, 2019.

The final manual, less the updated appendices, is available at [www.charlottesville.org/SADM](http://www.charlottesville.org/SADM).

**Discussion:**

One of the main goals of the SADM update was to incorporate the previously approved Streets That Work Plan, which defined street typologies and their associated characteristics. Other goals of the manual was to provide clear design expectations for development projects that impact the public right of way, clarify requirements for inspections, revise outdated construction details, provide a distinct reference to other governing agencies that influence the City's infrastructure, such as VDOT, AASHTO, etc. Additionally, several new chapters were created such as a dedicated chapter on Environmental Sustainability, General Materials and Methods of Construction, Maintenance of Existing Infrastructure and Design Control Districts. These additional chapters will serve to provide guidance in areas that were previously vague or inconsistently applied.

The approach by the SADM team was first to conduct a series of workshops with City staff from various City departments who rely on the current manual (NDS, Public Works, Utilities, CAT, Parks & Rec, Fire, Police and the Attorney's Office) to finalize an outline and establish the content that required revision. Following creation of a draft document, workshops were then held to give the public and stakeholders an opportunity to provide feedback and suggestions. A total of nine stakeholder groups were invited to participate in the process.

Much of the feedback that was received from the public and/or stakeholders was submitted via email sent to [feedbackSADM@charlottesville.org](mailto:feedbackSADM@charlottesville.org), which is intended to remain active throughout the life of the manual. Of particular importance, it should be noted that the revised Standards and Design Manual is intended to be a *living* document and grow with the needs of the City. By maintaining a dynamic manual, it affords staff the opportunity to make adjustments as new technologies come about and continues to provide a mechanism for the receipt and incorporation of feedback and new ideas.

Work still to be performed on the SADM is the creation of checklists, construction details and specifications. This effort was held until the text of the SADM was completed, as the text of the manual drives the need for many of the details and specifications. Throughout the process of drafting the text of the manual, staff and the consultants have been compiling a list of existing construction details to revise, new details to create, new specifications, or supplemental specifications to VDOT's standard specs.

### **Alignment with City Council's Vision and Strategic Plan:**

This effort supports City Council's Vision for A Green City and A Connected Community by maintaining a strong focus on environmental sustainability and stormwater management as well as a solid transportation network that offers effective multi-modal uses.

#### Strategic Plan Goal 3: Beautiful Environment

- Goal 3.1 – The SADM implements urban planning by formalizing requirements of the Streets That Work Plan.
- Goal 3.2 – A primary function of the SADM is to ensure that reliable and high quality infrastructure are provided and maintained.
- Goal 3.3 – The SADM carries forward a strong focus on bike and pedestrian infrastructure including specific sections on ADA requirements and formally adopts PROWAG.
- Goal 3.4 – Three out of thirteen chapters are focused directly on protecting the environment and natural resources.
- Goal 3.5 – There is a chapter dedicated to design control districts to provide guidance for those working in those areas

#### Strategic Plan Goal 5: Responsive Organization

- Goal 5.3 – Having a current and detailed manual will provide the ability for staff to provide clear and consistent customer service for all aspects of development and community projects.

### **Community Engagement:**

Staff has provided multiple opportunities for the public to provide input into the process. Prior to even selecting a consultant to assist in the effort, staff met with the Charlottesville Albemarle

Developer's Roundtable to discuss opportunities with the upcoming changes and how feedback was to be received. The PLACE Design Task Force was also invited to review the Request For Proposal to help shape the scope of the project. In addition to the CADRE group and PLACE Design Task Force, stakeholders that were invited to participate in the process included the Tree Commission, City Council, the Code Audit/Streets That Work Advisory Committee, ADA Advisory Committee, Board of Architectural Review, and the Bicycle and Pedestrian Advisory Committee. A total of four (4) in-person workshops were conducted to provide opportunities for the public and stakeholders to provide feedback in June of 2018.

Additionally, feedback was received via an email address dedicated solely to the content of the SADM ([feedbackSADM@charlottesville.org](mailto:feedbackSADM@charlottesville.org)). On occasion, clarity was requested from those that provided feedback in order to properly inform changes to the draft manual. This email address is also intended remain active for the life of the manual and should be monitored periodically.

To date, nearly 800 comments of substantive nature were received, many of which contributed to positive changes to the final document. It should be noted that not all feedback was incorporated because it was either too general to result in an informed change, it violated a larger code requirement (state or federal), or was more geared towards a code, policy or operational change.

All comments received to date have been inserted into a spreadsheet on the City's Engineering website where the manual is located. Responses to each of the comments is also included in the spreadsheet.

### **Budgetary Impact:**

This has no impact on the General Fund. Funds used were previously allocated from year-end carryover funding of previous fiscal years.

### **Recommendation:**

Staff recommends voting to approve the attached Resolution.

The Resolution has been drafted by the City Attorney's Office, and it contains provisions allowing certain projects for which a proposed final site plan is currently under review to complete the review process under the old SADM provisions. The Resolution also clarifies that, going forward, modifications can be made by the City Engineer, with the concurrence of the City Manager and the City Attorney's Office. It is advisable for the SADM to become a document that is adaptable, and we do not want to go for another decade without being able to be responsive to requests for consideration of new ideas or approaches; we want to be able to maintain the document as a "living document" over time. The City Attorney's Office concurs with this, and has advised that this approach is correct, because City Code Sec. 2-154 vests the City Manager with general supervision and control of all streets, utility systems and public works.

### **Alternatives:**

An alternate option is to not adopt the updated manual and continue to rely on the current (outdated) manual. The current manual is often unclear in the design expectation, does not

obviously document specific references for outside agency standards and is not conducive to implementing the goals of the Streets That Work Plan.

**Attachments:**

The final Standards and Design Manual is located at [www.charlottesville.org/SADM](http://www.charlottesville.org/SADM).

Attached hereto is a resolution to adopt the final manual for immediate implementation.

**RESOLUTION**  
**APPROVING AN UPDATED STANDARDS AND DESIGN MANUAL**

**WHEREAS**, this City Council has provided for a set of design and construction specifications for public improvements and infrastructure, referred to within the City's Subdivision Ordinance at City Code §29-140(6) and §29-141, and in various provisions of Chapter 10 (Water Protection), Chapter 28 (Streets and Sidewalks) and Chapter 34 (Zoning Ordinance) as the City's "Standards and Design Manual" (SADM); and

**WHEREAS**, in 2017 the City commenced a process to review and update the contents of the SADM, which was originally approved by City Council in 2008 and had not received a comprehensive update since that time; and

**WHEREAS**, the text of the proposed updated SADM has been developed by the City Engineer in consultation with the departments and public officials referenced in City Code §29-61, and was made available for public review and comment, and many public comments have been incorporated into the SADM presented to this Council for approval;

**NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED** by the Council of the City of Charlottesville that the proposed updated Standards and Design Manual (2019), together with existing Appendices A through H, are hereby approved by City Council as the City's official "Standards and Design Manual", effective December 2, 2019 (collectively, the SADM approved by this resolution). In the event of any conflicts between the updated SADM text approved by this resolution and the contents of any existing Appendices, the updated text of the SADM shall be the controlling provision; and

**BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED THAT**, consistent with the provisions of City Code §2-154, the City Engineer, with the approval of the City Manager and the concurrence of the City Attorney's Office, may amend and update the SADM, or any appendices thereto. Any proposed amendment to the SADM or its appendices shall contain a specific revision date, and shall be posted on the City's website for public information for at least ten (10) business days prior to being approved by the City Engineer and City Manager.

**BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED THAT** the City Engineer shall have the authority to administer and interpret the provisions of the SADM, including, without limitation, the authority to issue technical bulletins or written interpretations of the contents of the SADM. This administrative authority shall be carried out subject to oversight by the City Manager or his or her designee, and subject further to the requirement that the Engineer's findings and conclusions shall be official only with the concurrence of the City Attorney's Office. Upon issuance of a technical bulletin or written interpretation containing the concurrence of the City Attorney's office, the content of that document shall have the same weight of authority as the text within the SADM; and

**BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED THAT**, notwithstanding the effective Date of December 2, 2019, the following may proceed using the SADM provisions in effect prior to December 2, 2019:

1. Development depicted within a final site plan approved prior to December 2, 2019;
2. Charlottesville Redevelopment and Housing Authority (CRHA), South First Street Project (Phase 2);
3. Piedmont Housing Alliance, Friendship Court Redevelopment (Phase 1); and
4. Any common plan of development or sale, or an individual phase within such common plan, for which (i) a proposed final site plan was officially submitted on or after November 1, 2019 and (ii) that officially submitted plan satisfies all requirements necessary to be deemed final, per Va. Code §15.2-2261(A), on or before March 31, 2020.