

Draft Comprehensive Plan (Att B)

Note: As draft text is proposed for review it will be inserted into the following sections of this document.

Part I: Community Vision and Needs

1. INTRODUCTION

- a. High level summary of why we have a comprehensive plan and how it will be used*
- b. Reasons for updating the Comprehensive plan*
- c. Plan Structure and how to navigate the Plan*

2. CONTEXT/HISTORY

- a. Conditions*
- b. Trends*
- c. Regional/Statewide Plans*

3. COMMUNITY VISION

a. County Vision

Albemarle County envisions a community with the following:

- Abundant Natural, Rural, Historic, and Scenic Resources
- Healthy Ecosystems
- Active and Vibrant Development Areas
- A Physical Environment that Supports Healthy Lifestyles
- A Thriving Economy
- Exceptional Educational Opportunities for present and future generations.

b. Public Engagement themes

4. GUIDING PRINCIPLES

a. Green and Resilient

We will value, protect and restore our natural, scenic and cultural resources. We will protect and enhance our natural environment to support healthy and thriving ecosystems and connected wildlife habitats. We will reduce carbon emissions, utilize green energy sources and energy efficient designs and provide access to healthy and affordable local foods.

b. Welcoming and Equitable

We will provide equitable access to a range of essential services and infrastructure. We will have affordable housing with a range of housing types. Our Development Areas will provide a mix of uses, walkable communities and access to parks and open space. We will provide ongoing engagement opportunities for community members to provide input on County projects that enhance wellbeing and quality of life.

c. Connected and Accessible

We will provide well-connected transportation networks that include a variety of safe transportation modes, including walking, biking and transit. Transit options will be reliable and accessible to all community members. We will collaborate with area partners to provide regional connectedness for residents, visitors and businesses.

d. *Thriving and Prosperous*

We will have a robust and healthy economy that provides access to jobs and career ladder opportunities. Our local workforce will have access to education and jobs training and associated workforce needs, including housing, transportation and essential services. We will ensure available land to support a range of industries and businesses in the Development Areas.

5. IDENTIFYING THE COMMUNITY'S NEEDS

a. *Development Areas Land Use*

b. *Rural Area Land Use*

c. *Transportation Network*

d. *Environmental Stewardship*

e. *Resilient Community*

f. *Housing*

g. *Thriving Economy*

h. *Parks, Recreation, and Open Space*

i. *Community Services and Infrastructure*

j. *Protection of Historic, Scenic, and Cultural Resources*

Part II: Growth Management Framework

1. INTRODUCTION

2. GROWTH MANAGEMENT FRAMEWORK

AC44 is grounded in the same overarching idea as the current Comprehensive Plan — that focusing growth within the Development Areas is the best way to preserve land for agriculture, forestry, and the natural environment in the Rural Area, and to foster a vibrant mix of uses and activities with services and amenities in the Development Areas, leveraging existing infrastructure and opportunities for redevelopment, discouraging sprawl, and providing services and infrastructure in a fiscally responsible manner.

The purpose of the Growth Management Policy is to provide efficient and cost-effective public service delivery and encourage compact, connected, and dense development patterns and uses within the Development Areas to protect the ecosystems and natural, scenic, historic, and cultural resources in the Rural Area. The expectations for infrastructure and service delivery are different for the Development Areas and Rural Area. For example, the Albemarle County Service Authority (ACSA) Jurisdictional Area for the provision of public water and sewer primarily follows the Development Area boundaries. The Growth Management Policy guides land use decisions, capital projects, and public service provision.

The County provides fire/rescue and police protection, roads, utilities, school bus service, transit, and other governmental functions most efficiently to smaller and more concentrated areas than to a large and dispersed rural population. Increased densities and intensities of uses in the Development Areas augment such efficiencies. Rural Area uses are generally widely dispersed housing and agricultural and forestry uses, and therefore result in public safety services provided at reduced service levels than those in the Development Areas.

Investing in the Development Areas is essential to creating thriving neighborhoods with a high quality of life to entice current and future community members to live in the Development Areas. It is also important to recognize that over 40 percent of County residents currently live in the Rural Area. Therefore, while the levels of service provision are different in the Rural Area, there are still essential services provided as needed, including fire/rescue, police, and health care.

3. GROWTH MANAGEMENT POLICY UPDATES

The Growth Management Policy (Policy) has remained relatively consistent since 1971. From its start and still today, the policy directs development into the County's Development Areas, while the remainder of the County's land is dedicated to preservation of Rural Area uses – farms, forests, open space, and natural, historic, and scenic resources. While the overarching Growth Management Policy has remained consistent, the distribution and character of the County's Development Areas has changed substantially, starting with about 48,000 acres of land in the Development Areas in 1971 to about 23,800 acres today.

Some of the reduction of Development Areas' acreage is due to early overestimates of population growth in the 1970's (possibly due to concerns about annexation), a previously abundant supply of commercial and industrial land relative to past demand, and concerns about water quality in the South Fork Reservoir water supply watershed. Past decisions to not expand the Development Areas, even while the County's population continued to grow, can also be attributed to a changing approach towards more urban and mixed-use forms of development with the adoption of the Neighborhood Model in 2001.

With this Comprehensive Plan update (AC44), the text of the Growth Management Policy has been updated. The Development Area boundaries remain unchanged. In Phase 1 of AC44, staff asked the community about the current Growth Management Policy (per the 2015 Comprehensive Plan), including what aspects of the Policy should be prioritized with the AC44 Comprehensive Plan update. Staff also used the County's Equity and Climate Action Lens to review the 2015 Policy language. The text of the Growth Management Policy has been updated to reflect community input and incorporate equity and climate action, while keeping the core purpose of the Policy.

To summarize updates to the Policy text:

1. Clear language that Albemarle County is planning for both current and future community members, consistent with State Code requirements for Comprehensive Plans.
2. Specifically listing out the major areas the Policy guides: land use, capital projects, and public service provision.
3. Adding language for small-scale businesses and limited public services in the Rural Area to support existing communities.

4. Including language within the Policy about distinct boundaries between the Development Areas and Rural Area (was previously only included in other Plan chapters).

The Policy text alone does not capture the many ways that the Growth Management Policy is connected to how we live, work, and move through the County. The Policy also informs the goals, objectives, and actions throughout the Comprehensive Plan.

For example, based on community input to date, staff has heard the need for more clear recommendations in the Rural Area related to small-scale community-serving land uses. Community input has emphasized the importance of identifying options for health care (including mobile), food access/ community gardens, emergency preparedness/response, and places for community gathering. Identifying ways to more equitably allow and provide access to services is also a key aspect of this Plan update, consistent with the Board's priority to incorporate equity and climate action throughout the Plan.

4. DRAFT UPDATED GROWTH MANAGEMENT POLICY

"Albemarle County is a welcoming community that will grow equitably and sustainably, supporting the needs of current and future community members for housing, jobs, and a healthy environment.

The County will use designated Development Areas (the growth area) and the Rural Area to guide land use, capital projects, and public services provision. The Development Areas will have a variety of housing types, a mix of land uses, high-quality public infrastructure, and services to support the majority of residential and business growth in the county. The Rural Area will provide land for agriculture, forestry, and conservation of ecosystems, the natural environment, and historic and cultural resources, with small-scale businesses and limited public services and infrastructure supporting existing communities while generating limited additional residential development. The Development Areas and the Rural Area will have distinct boundaries, without low-density transition areas."

5. DEVELOPMENT AREAS UTILIZATION REVIEW

Based on the estimated Development Areas capacity in the most recent 2022 land use buildout analysis, there appears to be sufficient capacity to accommodate projected growth (both residential and business) in the next 10 to 20 years. However, the constraining factors identified in the analysis, when left unchecked, will limit the actual buildout of the Development Areas. The buildout analysis also identified very few locations close to being site ready for the County's economic development target industries.

As part of the AC44 Comprehensive Plan update, the Board of Supervisors indicated no changes to the Development Areas boundaries are needed at this time. While boundary changes may not be needed in the near future, there may come a point in time where the current Development Areas no longer have sufficient capacity to accommodate future housing and employment needs.

There are a variety of tools the County can use to affect capacity prior to changing the Development Areas boundaries in the future. Those tools include:

- Revising current future land use designations through Area Plan updates (e.g. changing a property from Neighborhood Residential to Office/Flex/LI/RD).
- Public infrastructure and amenities and public private partnerships hold the potential to catalyze and support development in Activity Centers.

- Updates to the Zoning Ordinance could support high quality, mixed use, and dense development and a variety of housing types.

Virginia State Code requires that Comprehensive Plans require planning for the needs of both current and future community members based on anticipated population growth. As part of long-range planning in the context of uncertain changing economic and environmental conditions, tracking the utilization of Development Areas through a set of factors on a routine basis is intended to provide data to the Board of Supervisors for consideration.

The following factors and trends should be used to monitor the utilization of Development Areas and can be used as a basis for making sound land use decisions.

A. A comparison of the estimated demand for residential and non-residential land uses with the estimated capacity.

Estimated demand begins with a market demand forecast which estimates the number of residential units and square footage of retail, office, and industrial square feet expected to be built in Albemarle County over the next 20 years. The forecast is based on projected population growth and the historic growth and development trends from the past 10 years. (Potential growth limitations like the availability of land, the cost of development, or environmental constraints are not considered).

The purpose of this forecast is to provide a high-level estimate of the need for housing and non-residential development to support the projected population growth over a 20-year horizon.

The estimated demand can be compared with the estimated capacity of the Development Areas for both future land use (per the Comprehensive Plan) and for existing zoning (by-right development).

B. The intensity/density of development approvals through rezonings and special use permits as compared with the recommended density per future land use categories.

It is important to understand how the estimated capacity of the Development Areas compares to actual buildout patterns and trends. This can provide a ‘reality check’ and help us understand if the County is achieving the densities and land uses recommended by the Comprehensive Plan.

For example, the 2022 land use buildout analysis found that between 2016-2021, the total number of dwelling units approved through rezonings and special use permits was approximately 58% of the maximum number of units recommended per future land use categories in the Comprehensive Plan.

C. The remaining percentage of the Development Areas estimated to have capacity for additional development or redevelopment.

Based on the 2022 land use buildout analysis, approximately 7% of land in the Development Areas (0.3% of total county land area) had capacity for new development or redevelopment. The remaining Development Area consists of currently developed land or is undevelopable, likely roadway, located in floodplain, contains steep slopes, or is otherwise constrained in some way. Over time the remaining sites will likely be properties that are more challenging to develop.

Initially, properties with the capacity for development are identified as those where the land value of a parcel is greater than the value of improvements/structures on the parcel. Then, additional

assumptions were used to further refine each type of land use. For example, a property with a \$100,000 land value and \$20,000 structure value would be included in this initial review.

The following assumptions were used for further refine properties with potential capacity for each type of land use.

RESIDENTIAL DEVELOPMENT:

Residential with Development Opportunity

- Land value > improvement value and parcel > or = 2 acres
- Vacant parcel

Residential without Development Opportunity

- Parcel is Completely in Conservation Easement
- Parcel is completely in Floodplain
- Improvement value > land value
- Parcel is part of a homeowner's association (HOA) open space
- County-owned and used for stormwater management, schools, road right-of-way (ROW), water/sewer utilities, public park, or other use that precludes residential development
- Owned by the University of Virginia

COMMERCIAL/RETAIL DEVELOPMENT

Commercial with Development Opportunity

- Land value > improvement value
- Parcel is designated commercial or mixed use in the Comp Plan and/or is zoned Highway Commercial (HC), Commercial Office (CO), Commercial (C1), Planned Development Shopping Center (PDSC), Planned Development Mixed Commercial (PDMC)

Commercial without Development Opportunity

- Improvement value > land value
- Big box stores (e.g. Walmart, Target, Lowe's, etc.)
- Auto stores/service/dealers
- Mini-warehouse or storage built after 2000

INDUSTRIAL DEVELOPMENT

Industrial with Development Opportunity

- Parcel is designated Office/Flex/R+D/LI in the Comp Plan or is zoned Light Industrial, Heavy Industrial, or Planned Industrial (PDIP)
- Parcel is > or = 2 acres

Industrial without Development Opportunity

- Improvement Value is Greater or Equal to 40% of the Total Valuation
 - AND/OR Improvement Value is Greater or Equal to \$1.5M

D. The ratio of dwelling units being built in the Rural Area compared with the Development Areas.

In 1971, when the first Growth Management Policy was adopted, approximately 60 percent of new houses constructed were in the Rural Area. But that percentage has changed drastically over the decades, in large part due to the effectiveness of the policy. From the early 2000s through the start of the Great Recession, the County saw single-family construction occurring in a roughly 50-50 balance between the Development Areas and the Rural Area. Since 2009 the majority of new single-family construction has occurred within the Development Areas. It is important to continue to monitor these trends and to leverage land use and conservation tools in support of the Growth Management Policy.

E. Cost and vacancy trends for residential and non-residential land uses.

Not realizing the full buildout of the Development Areas and limiting the supply of available housing can drive up costs locally and push new residential growth into surrounding localities, potentially increasing commute times and placing the greatest burden on lower-income households. This factor should also consider the available affordable housing against the goals identified in Housing Albemarle.

Additionally, increasing demand for non-residential space could lead to costs rising and influence businesses to look for space in other localities if there are not sufficient readily available land and sites for these types of uses.

This factor needs to be balanced with using Development Areas land efficiently and not changing boundaries earlier than necessary when there are still reasonable and feasible redevelopment and infill opportunities still available. Leveraging site readiness opportunities will be key for industrial/employment land uses. Industrial land uses are the most likely to be directly impacted by land cost, with developers seeking larger tracts and lower values. High land costs could influence new industrial uses to seek space in more affordable counties.

F. How well development in the Development Areas is meeting the objectives of the Comprehensive Plan.

This includes assessing the extent to which the current Development Areas are meeting the Comprehensive Plan objectives for the Development Areas and the Plan's four Guiding Principles. Along with the previous five factors, these might include: walkability and bikeability scores tracked over time, miles of sidewalks, greenways and shared use paths built, and an inventory of public amenities added and preserved like parks and open space.

These metrics should be reported to the Board of Supervisors for their review and consideration every two years or as requested, beginning in FY26. Many of these are included as part of the land use capacity analysis,

most recently completed in 2022, which will be reanalyzed every two years after this Comprehensive Plan is adopted.

When the Board determines changes to the Development Area boundaries should be considered, an in-depth analysis of these and other factors will help determine where changes may occur.

6. GROWTH MANAGEMENT POLICY APPROACH IN THE RURAL AREA AND DEVELOPMENT AREAS

Part III - Implementation

- 1. RURAL AREA - LAND USE**
- 2. DEVELOPMENT AREAS - LAND USE**
(See Att C - the Draft Land Use and Activity Center Preview)
- 3. TRANSPORTATION NETWORK**
- 4. ENVIRONMENTAL STEWARDSHIP**
- 5. RESILIENT COMMUNITY**
- 6. HISTORIC, CULTURAL, AND SCENIC RESOURCES**
- 7. HOUSING**
- 8. THRIVING ECONOMY**
- 9. PARKS, RECREATION, AND OPEN SPACE**
- 10. COMMUNITY INFRASTRUCTURE AND SERVICES**

Each chapter will contain the following sections

- a. Narrative*
- b. Objectives*
- c. Actions*

Part IV: Appendix

- 1. AC44 PROCESS AND ENGAGEMENT SUMMARY**
- 2. METRICS TO MEASURE PLAN IMPLEMENTATION**
- 3. PROCESS TO FOR FUTURE AREA PLAN UPDATES**
- 4. LINKS TO RELATED LOCAL, STATE, AND REGIONAL PLANS AND STUDIES – EXAMPLES:**
- 5. AREA PLANS**
- 6. HOUSING ALBEMARLE**
- 7. PROJECT ENABLE**
- 8. BIODIVERSITY ACTION PLAN**
- 9. REGIONAL HAZARD MITIGATION PLAN**