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# Memorandum

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**To:** Chairs of Albemarle County and City of Charlottesville Planning Commissions  
**Through:** Albemarle County Community Development and Charlottesville Neighborhood Development  
**From:** Emily Irvine, Climate Program Manager, City of Charlottesville  
Gabe Dayley, Climate Action Program Manager, Albemarle County  
Jamie Powers, Climate Action Project Manager, Albemarle County  
Serena Gruia, Community Engagement Coordinator, Albemarle County  
**Date:** October 18, 2024  
**Subject:** Resilient Together Presentation to Joint Session of Planning Commissions

Mr. Missel and Mr. Mitchell,

In the upcoming joint session of the Planning Commissions on October 29, 2024, City and County environmental sustainability staff are pleased to share with you about the Resilient Together project, a collaboration led by the City, County, and UVA.

## Background

The impacts of climate change are already being felt in Virginia. Locally, we are experiencing longer, hotter heat waves, more destructive storms, wildfire smoke, and invasive pests. Scientific projections show these challenges will increase in the coming years and decades, with implications for our community's health and well-being.

## Resilient Together

Resilient Together is a collaborative process led by Albemarle County, the City of Charlottesville, and UVA, designed to ensure our community is strong, safe, and healthy in the face of a changing climate. The presentation at the joint session of the two Planning Commissions will cover the project context, work completed thus far, and next steps.

## Materials to Review in Advance

The following materials provide additional information about Resilient Together. We invite you to review these ahead of the session on October 29, 2024. If you have limited time, we recommend reviewing in the order provided.

1. "[Resilient Together Progress Report | October 2024](#)" (attachment)
2. Project website: <https://engage.albemarle.org/resilient-together>

3. "Preparing for Resilience – An Overview of Albemarle County Climate Change Impacts" (summary of technical report, relevant to city and county):  
<https://www.albemarle.org/home/showpublisheddocument/13841/637907312413800000>
4. Videos on local climate change impacts: <https://www.pecva.org/albemarle-climate-action/>
5. "Albemarle County Climate Vulnerability and Risk Assessment":  
<https://www.albemarle.org/home/showpublisheddocument/13774/637937484453800000>
6. "City of Charlottesville Climate Risk and Vulnerability Assessment":  
<https://www.charlottesville.gov/DocumentCenter/View/12729/Charlottesville-Risk-and-Vulnerability-Report-2023-FINAL-Pages>
7. "Resilient Fairfax: Climate Adaptation and Resilience Plan" (example of a finished plan):  
[https://www.fairfaxcounty.gov/environment-energy-coordination/sites/environment-energy-coordination/files/assets/documents/pdf/resilient%20fairfax%20final%20carp\\_ada\\_signed.pdf](https://www.fairfaxcounty.gov/environment-energy-coordination/sites/environment-energy-coordination/files/assets/documents/pdf/resilient%20fairfax%20final%20carp_ada_signed.pdf)

## Discussion and Feedback

One of the next steps in the project is the development of resilience strategies. Among the options under consideration are strategies focused on land use. During discussion, we will invite feedback from the Planning Commissions on two such example resilience strategies. We invite you to consider these potential strategies along with the following discussion prompts and questions:

**Use more compact development and other techniques to increase walkability and accessibility, which increases transportation options during climate hazards, decreases transportation cost burden and supports baseline public health.**

Pursuing this strategy appears deceptively simple but requires transforming complex systems. Charlottesville recently updated its zoning ordinance to reflect these priorities, and Albemarle County's AC44 Comprehensive Plan and subsequent zoning modernization process will likely reflect similar priorities for the county's urban area. Many people agree that our community should pursue these aims overall, but community members often express strong concerns and resistance when a project reflecting such priorities is proposed near where they live. How can our community overcome the challenges associated with achieving these aims in practice so that we can realize the beneficial outcomes?

**Protect areas that provide ecosystem services through improved public lands management and ownership strategies such as conservation easements and private open spaces.**

Many communities, including ours, wrestle with the tension between development and conservation. Often, communities have attempted to balance this tension by stating the intention to pursue economic growth and development while limiting environmental harm. The increasingly extreme weather events driven by climate change are forcing communities to reframe this balance into one of regenerating and expanding ecological health while also growing local economies. How might a resilience strategy for improved public land management and conservation easements help us do this? How can our community pursue this strategy in a way that enhances rural and urban interdependence and mutual benefit?