



County of Albemarle

COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT DEPARTMENT

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MEMORANDUM

AGENDA DATE: 11/19/2024

TITLE: AC44 Rural Area Land Use Policies

SUBJECT/PROPOSAL/REQUEST:

Request for Planning Commission feedback on draft Rural Area land use policies within the draft Rural Area chapter (Pages 2-6) and associated Objectives and Actions, primarily Action 1.1 and Objectives 5 and 7. Specifically, staff is asking for feedback on:

- Whether the chapter provides sufficient recommendations and context for updating the County's Zoning Ordinance related to Rural Area land uses;
- Whether the recommended non-residential land uses that are not the primary Rural Area land uses (agriculture, forestry, and land conservation) are the appropriate secondary land uses to include; and
- If anything is missing from the proposed content for the Rural Area land use plan (Action 1.1).

ITEM TYPE: Work Session

STAFF CONTACTS: Richardson, Wall, Filardo, Barnes, McDermott, Swartzendruber, Kanellopoulos, Holt

PRESENTERS: Michael Barnes, Planning Director

LEGAL REVIEW: Not Required

REVIEWED BY: Jeffrey B. Richardson

BACKGROUND: Albemarle County is updating the Comprehensive Plan through the Albemarle County 2044 (AC44) project. The project is in Phase 3: drafting language for the four-part Comprehensive Plan document and developing Plan actions.

The draft language for the Part III – Rural Area Land Use (RA LU) chapter in Attachment B is built upon community input and reflects the Planning Commission's and Board's feedback. For reference, the following is a summary of previous Planning Commission and Board of Supervisors feedback on Rural Area land use policies:

Rural Area Land Use Plan and Rural Communities

- Multiple PC and Board work sessions: The Commission and Board have noted the need for a Rural Area land use plan that has multiple land use categories for the Rural Area,

given that there are a variety of existing and encouraged land uses and land conservation efforts.

- August 8, 2023, and March 12, 2024, PC work sessions: There was consensus from the Commission that there should be further study of individual rural communities (called 'crossroads communities in the 2015 Comp Plan) prior to any land use designations or zoning district changes, and that the special use permit process is important for identifying and mitigating potential impacts of non-residential land uses in the Rural Area. The Commission had concerns about several land uses mentioned through community input and possible impacts to groundwater, waterways, and transportation.
- September 6, 2023, and March 20, 2024, Board work sessions: The Board agreed with the Commission that individual communities should be studied and that the special use permit process should continue to be used. The Board supported allowing small-scale doctors and professional offices by special use permit in rural communities. The Board was concerned about the feasibility of businesses in the Rural Area, especially in less-traveled locations.

Rural Interstate Interchanges

- August 8, 2023, PC work session: There was consensus from the Commission to have an Action for future Small Area Plans for the Shadwell (Exit 124) and Yancey Mills (Exit 107) rural I-64 interstate interchanges, prioritizing Shadwell. The Commission did not want to specify which land uses should be recommended, as land uses should be identified during the Small Area Plan process and could include no change from current uses or potentially uses that support agriculture and food processing.
- September 6, 2023, Board work session: The Board agreed with the Commission that there should be Small Area Plans for Shadwell and Yancey Mills, prioritizing Shadwell. The Board noted there are a variety of other Small Area Plans that also need to be completed.

Community Resilience Hubs (recommendations will be included in the Resilient Community chapter)

- August 8, 2023, and March 12, 2024, PC work sessions: The Commission was supportive of the community resilience hub concept, noting that services and programs should be supportive of current community members and not encourage additional residential development.
- September 6, 2023, and March 20, 2024, Board work sessions: There was strong support from the Board for the community resilience hubs in the Rural Area, especially to provide spaces for emergency shelters and recovery from natural hazards.

It should be noted that Rural Area policies from the 2015 Comp Plan, including land conservation, protecting the natural environment, and reducing land fragmentation, continue to remain priorities in AC44. The topics for this work session and previous work sessions have often focused on land use policies where there is less consensus and therefore more input is needed from the community, Commission, and the Board.

The overarching AC44 Rural Area land use approach and guidance for updating the Rural Area Zoning District are found on Page 3 of Attachment B. The Rural Area land use approach continues the Rural Area recommendations from the 2015 Comprehensive Plan, including protecting the natural environment, land conservation, and large unfragmented parcels. The AC44 guidance for updating the RA Zoning District is an update to the 'Criteria for Review of New Uses' section of the 2015 Comprehensive Plan (Page 7.5, PDF page 191). New or updated secondary uses in the Rural Area should support primary uses (agriculture/forestry/conservation) and/or support surrounding existing communities and should not generate significant demands for service or infrastructure.

STRATEGIC PLAN: Quality of life – Encourage a vibrant community with economic and recreational opportunities that serve all community members.

DISCUSSION:

An updated AC44 outline is provided as Attachment A. As a reminder, the topics within the red box will be the focus of today's work session. This work session focuses on proposed comprehensive plan language within Attachment B, specifically:

- Whether the chapter provides sufficient recommendations and context for updating the County's Zoning Ordinance related to Rural Area land uses;
- Whether the recommended non-residential land uses that are not the primary Rural Area land uses (agriculture, forestry, and land conservation) are the appropriate secondary land uses to include; and
- If anything is missing from the proposed content for the Rural Area land use plan (Action 1.1).

Please note that staff will ask the PC for feedback on the goal statement, objectives, and actions for the Rural Area Land Use topic chapter at their December 10 PC meeting. The Board of Supervisors will hold a work session on January 8, 2025 to discuss both the policies and the goal statement, objectives, and actions for the Rural Area Land Use topic chapter.

BUDGET IMPACT: There is no budget impact associated with this agenda item.

RECOMMENDATION: Staff requests the Commission review and provide feedback on draft Rural Area land use policies.

ATTACHMENTS:

- A – [AC44 Outline](#)
- B – [Draft Rural Area Land Use Chapter](#)
- C – [Community Input Themes](#)