



# Albemarle County

## Legislation Text

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**File #:** 16-202, **Version:** 1

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**AGENDA DATE:** 3/2/2016

**TITLE:**

Rio/29 Small Area Plan

**SUBJECT/PROPOSAL/REQUEST:** Project Update

**ITEM TYPE:** Regular Information Item

**STAFF CONTACT(S):** Foley, Walker, Davis, Kamptner, Graham, Cilimberg

**PRESENTER (S):** Wayne Cilimberg

**LEGAL REVIEW:** Yes

**REVIEWED BY:** Thomas C. Foley

**BACKGROUND:** The Places29 Master Plan, originally adopted in February 2011, included the area around the Rio Rd./Rt. 29 Intersection as a Priority Area for public investment and land use decision-making, using a *Small Area Plan* in order to coordinate land uses with recommended road improvements. With the now ongoing construction of the Rio Rd./Rt. 29 interchange (completion expected by the end of calendar year 2016), the *Small Area Plan* became a critically important undertaking to insure that land use, transportation, infrastructure, and other recommendations both incorporate this imminent interchange and provide guidance for the development of the larger area which has been identified as a future focal point for new urban development and redevelopment. Recognizing this, the Board of Supervisors included undertaking this *Small Area Plan* in its FY 2015-17 Strategic Plan and included funding towards the *Small Area Plan* in its FY 2015-16 budget.

The Places29 Master Plan expected the *Small Area Plan* to feature: 1) updated current and projected traffic information; 2) a future land use map showing land uses at a more detailed level than in the current Places29 Master Plan; 3) a neighborhood street network that further details the improvements recommended in the current Places29 Master Plan, including streetscape elements; 4) preliminary design of the recommended transportation improvements; 5) identification of right-of-way for the transportation improvements, including new local streets; 6) measures to minimize the impacts of the recommended transportation improvements; 7) identification of opportunities for business development, expansion and relocation; and, 8) identification of strategies for fostering revitalization and redevelopment to a more compact, urban and mixed use form, including amendments to the County Code and projects for the Capital Improvements Program that would better enable implementing the recommendations of the *Small Area Plan*.

Understanding the urgency to undertake the *Small Area Plan* while bringing to bear all resources that would enable this to happen, in August, 2015 staff made application with the Virginia Office of Intermodal Planning and Investment for consultant assistance under an Urban Development Area Planning Grant. A grant was subsequently awarded and a contract agreement was executed in October 2015 for \$65,000 for consulting services to be provided, in accordance with the grant terms, by the team of the Renaissance Planning Group and Michael Baker International.

**STRATEGIC PLAN:** Goal 3: Development Areas: Attract quality employment, commercial, and high density residential uses into development areas by providing services and infrastructure that encourage redevelopment and private investment while protecting the quality of neighborhoods.

**DISCUSSION:** Staff began working with the consultant in late October to develop a scope of work for the *Small Area Plan* that would incorporate all of the project elements necessary to implement the recommendations of the *Small Area Plan*. The team identified a series of important tasks, including a market study, technical analysis of transportation conditions and detailed transportation, land use and implementation components. The team determined that these tasks would take the project beyond the limits of the grant budget. With a desire to get the project underway within the limited resources of the grant, the project team determined that a two phase approach would be preferable (see Attachment). Phase 1, utilizing the current grant, would develop a set of two to three land use alternatives for the study area that are based on a market assessment of future business potential and capture rates, would provide an analysis of the trip generation resulting from each land use alternative utilizing the existing regional travel demand model, and would culminate with a preferred land use alternative, all with regularly scheduled community review and input. Phase 2, with funding to be determined, would conduct transportation analysis on the preferred land use alternative and would develop a series of transportation improvements to best address safety, congestion and accessibility issues for the preferred plan. In addition, this phase will develop a final land use plan, urban design plan, transportation plan, and implementation action plan for the study area and a final report.

Phase 1 concludes at a necessary decision point regarding the preferred land use alternative, which lays the appropriate foundation for the Phase 2 work. This two phase approach does not change or add to the work that needs to be undertaken in the *Small Area Plan*, as all elements shown in the attachment would be necessary without the phasing. The two phase approach also would allow for better consideration of the land use and economic benefits of a preferred scenario for the study area in the first phase, allowing for community consensus on an overall future vision in this phase, with more detailed analysis of the impacts and design options for implementing the vision in the second phase.

Also of note, the Board recently concurred with a proposal to refocus its strategic plan and to concentrate the urbanization initiative on a yet to be defined geographic area in the Rio Rd./Rt. 29 area, with an action plan coming forward on that approach in April. As was mentioned during that discussion, meaningful community engagement and other shorter term work products of the *Small Area Plan* process would feed the more immediate action-focused efforts of the strategic plan initiative to insure the best coordination and leveraging of both processes as they move forward.

**BUDGET IMPACT:** If staff pursues the Rio/29 Small Area Plan in a two phase approach, Phase 1 would be largely accomplished with consultant assistance funded by the Urban Development Area Planning Grant. Staff resources, already anticipated in the FY 2015-16 budget and department work programs, would be primarily devoted to a significant public information and engagement effort and managing the process for ultimate decisions by the Board of Supervisors. Phase 2 may also be eligible for grant funding, but could be covered, if necessary, by the \$120,000 currently allocated for the *Small Area Plan* in the FY 2015-16 budget.

**RECOMMENDATION:**

This executive summary is provided for the Board's information, and staff welcomes any feedback or questions.

**ATTACHMENTS:**

A - Scoping Worksheet