



**COUNTY OF ALBEMARLE**  
**Department of Community Development**  
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**MEMORANDUM**

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TO: Tom Foley, County Executive  
Ella Jordan, Clerk of the Board of Supervisors

FROM: V. Wayne Cilimberg, Director of Planning *WC*

DATE: August 26, 2015

RE: Planning Commission Comprehensive Plan Priority Objectives and Strategies

The Albemarle County Planning Commission, at its meeting on August 18, 2015, unanimously approved the attached strategies as its priorities in the newly adopted Comprehensive Plan. The Commission's rationale for each is included in the attached.

Should you have any questions regarding this action, please do not hesitate to contact me.

## **Attachment 1: Comp Plan PC Priority Strategies 8-18-15**

**Rural Area Strategy 2e:** Strengthen the Acquisition of Conservation Easements (ACE) Program by providing a stable dedicated funding source and staff resources for administering the program.

- *Owners typically study their options, sometimes for years, but once they feel the final push they may face a choice of selling for development or keeping the farm and participating in an ACE easement. They need to be assured that the ACE program will consistently be there when they are ready to decide.*
- *ACE leverages significant matching federal and state funds (\$2.2 million since 2000). Without county dollars, the match requirement of these grants cannot be met.*
- *ACE fills a major gap by targeting working family farms and landowners whose income is not high enough that they can gain tax benefits from donating an easement. Without ACE, fragmenting of large parcels and sale for development may be the best option for many average or lower income owners.*
- *ACE is based on a Board of Supervisor established point system that targets rural properties with the greatest public benefit (e.g., threat of conversion to development, historic value, or frontage on a water supply watershed that provides water to both growth area residents and industry requiring clean water).*
- *ACE needs continued staffing to administer the technical acquisition aspects of the program but also, along with PRFA, to do ongoing education and stewardship to assure that the public values justifying the initial acquisition are maintained long term.*

**Housing Strategy 6e:** Gather information on the location of affordable and proffered units in the County. Develop mechanisms to promote long term affordability and protect public investments.

- *Improving our data base is a doable and a necessary first step and foundation for the dozen plus potential affordable housing strategies enumerated in the Comp Plan adopted in June 2015.*
- *The County's Housing Committee is defunct and no longer meets, the Planning Commission - advised by Housing Office, Community Development and GIS staffs - could fill this gap.*
- *Quoting the Comprehensive Plan "40% of the households in the County need affordable housing but only 20% of the housing is affordable". The need is clearly there.*
- *As one leading scholar has put it, "the conscience of growth management is affordable housing". While the County pursues its goals of rural area conservation and growth area development, understanding affordable housing issues to a greater degree is an important corollary and foundation.*

**Economic Development Strategy 4a:** Provide a strategic assessment of properties available for existing business expansion, start-up industries, and desirable locations for target industries. Continue to assess the quality of the areas designated for business and industry to ensure that there is land for business and industrial growth that has suitable size, topography, location, and availability of infrastructure.

- *It is imperative that the 2015 Comprehensive Plan is not vitiated with a series of CPAs and rezoning before the legitimacy of the new Comprehensive Plan is acknowledged and accepted by the Albemarle county community.*

- *To prevent the occurrence of spot zoning and developer-dictated re-zonings the county needs to conduct a thorough assessment of existing properties to determine the quantity, quality (steep-slopes, Army Corps issues, critical habitat, etc.) and proximity of these sites to major state and federal roads.*
  - *Property owners with parcels of suitable size, topography, location and infrastructure whose property is classified as LI or commercial should be contacted by the county to determine the ongoing status of their property and the property's readiness and their eagerness for development.*
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