



ALBEMARLE COUNTY PLANNING
STAFF REPORT SUMMARY

Project Name: CPA202100002 AC44 Comprehensive Plan Update	Staff: Tori Kanellopoulos, Principal Planner Kevin McDermott, Acting Planning Director Ben Holt, Senior Planner II
Planning Commission Work Session: August 8, 2023	Board of Supervisors Work Session: September 6, 2023
Owner: Multiple	Applicant: N/A (County-initiated)
TMP: Multiple Acreage: ~272,640 acres (726 sq mi)	Comprehensive Plan Amendment: Update of the Albemarle County Comprehensive Plan
Magisterial Districts: Rivanna, Scottsville, White Hall, Jack Jouett, Samuel Miller, Rio	Future Land Use: Multiple
DA (Development Area) or RA (Rural Area): All Development Areas and the Rural Area	Topics for discussion: AC44 Planning Toolkit topics: Activity Centers, Draft Factors for Development Areas Expansion, Rural Crossroads Communities, Rural Interstate Interchanges
<p>Discussion/Recommendation: Staff recommends that the Commission review the attached background information, community input summary, and information provided in this staff report and provide direction to staff on the Planning Toolkit options, specifically which option should be pursued for each of the four topics:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Activity Centers in the Development Areas • Factors and Considerations for Future Development Areas Expansion • Rural Crossroads Communities • Rural Interstate Interchanges <p>Staff has included the Planning Commission Recommendations for each of the four Planning Toolkit topics. All updates to the original staff report are indicated by red text. The Planning Commission recommendations follow the original staff recommendation for each of the four topics. These recommendations include updated language and notable feedback from the Commission.</p>	

STAFF CONTACTS:

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PLANNING COMMISSION:

August 8, 2023

BOARD OF SUPERVISORS:

Tentative date September 6, 2023

PROJECT BACKGROUND:

Albemarle County's Comprehensive Plan Update (AC44) is currently in Phase 2. The Comprehensive Plan is being updated through a four-phased process:

- Phase 1: Plan for Growth
 - AC44 Framework for an Equitable and Resilient Community
 - Updated land use buildout analysis (2022)
 - Review of Growth Management Policy using growth management options
- Phase 2: Goals, Objectives, and Planning Toolkits
 - Updated Goals and Objectives for each Comp Plan chapter
 - Plan recommendations for each of the Toolkit topics (Activity Centers, Development Areas expansion considerations, Crossroads Communities, Rural Interstate Interchanges)
- Phase 3: Prioritize Action Steps
 - Updated Action Steps for each Comp Plan chapter
 - Prioritized Plan recommendations with 'Big Moves' (wide-reaching initiatives that cover multiple goals of the updated Plan that will set the County on track to reach its vision for 2044; Big Moves may include multiple Action Steps and are priorities for the next 5 years to implement the updated Plan)
- Phase 4: Finalize and Adopt Plan
 - Finalized Comprehensive Plan document
 - Public hearings with the Planning Commission and Board of Supervisors
 - Final adoption by the Board

During Phase 1 of AC44, staff facilitated a community visioning process to hear input on what Albemarle County should aspire to be in the year 2044 (the 20-year Comprehensive Plan horizon) as it centers equity and resilience in its policies, plans, and actions. Community members identified the following 'Big Ideas' to guide updated Plan recommendations that became the Framework for an Equitable and Resilient Community: Green and Resilient, Welcoming and Equitable, Connected and Accessible, and Thriving and Prosperous. This Framework will continue to be used in Phases 2 and 3 to guide updating Goals, Objectives, and Action Steps.

At the beginning of Phase 2, staff shared a series of topic reports with data, trends, challenges, and opportunities for each Plan chapter that will provide a foundation for updating Goals, Objectives, and Action Steps. Community members shared input on their priorities by topic through an online questionnaire, 'chat kits', and pop-ups. A summary of this input is available [here](#).

The most recent round of Phase 2 engagement focused on the Planning Toolkit Topics: Activity Centers, Development Areas expansion considerations, Crossroads Communities, and Rural Interstate Interchanges. These are topics that were first discussed during Phase 1 ('growth management options') that could be used to support coordinated land use and transportation planning, build on current Comprehensive Plan recommendations including the Growth Management Policy, and implement the Framework. These toolkit topics need significant community input and guidance from the Planning Commission and Board of Supervisors prior to drafting updated Goals, Objectives, and Action Steps for these topics. An overview of the Planning Toolkits was shared with the Commission at the [April 25, 2023](#),

meeting.

A summary of community input on these topics is provided in Attachment 5 and includes community input from five open houses (four in-person and one virtual), four online questionnaires, and several 'community chats'. The full results from the four online questionnaires on the toolkits are available on the AC44 website [here](#) along with responses from 'community chats' hosted by several Working Group members [here](#).

The final round of Phase 2 engagement will include sharing draft Goals and Objectives for each Plan chapter with a series of community engagement opportunities and Planning Commission work sessions scheduled for September through December. From that point, staff anticipates moving into Phase 3 where the Action Steps, metrics for tracking successful implementation of the Plan, and prioritized "Big Moves" for the next 5 years will be developed.

PURPOSE OF THE WORK SESSION:

The purpose of this work session is to receive Planning Commission feedback on the approach for each of four the Planning Toolkit Topics.

The four toolkit topics were introduced to the Planning Commission in the April 25, 2023 meeting. They were then shared with the community in a series of open house meetings and online questionnaires between May and July. Based on the community input received and the Planning Commission's review of these topics, the purpose of this work session is for the Commission to give specific recommendations to the Board and staff on how to carry forward each of these topics into the Goals, Objectives, and Action Steps in the updated Comprehensive Plan.

Staff has provided several options for how Comprehensive Plan recommendations could be updated for each of the four topics and is asking for the Commission's input on which options should be pursued. A Board of Supervisors work session is scheduled for September 6, 2023, for the Board to provide their direction on this content. Feedback from the Commission and direction from the Board will be used to draft updated Goals, Objectives, and Action Steps for each topic.

The toolkits are intended to build on key features of the current Growth Management Policy, including the expectation that future growth will occur primarily within the Development Areas. 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 natural resources in the Rural Area, foster a vibrant mix of uses and activities with services and amenities in the Development Areas, leverage existing infrastructure and opportunities for redevelopment, discourage sprawl, and provide services and infrastructure in a fiscally responsible manner.

The four toolkit topics (Centers, Development Areas expansion factors, Crossroads Communities, and Rural Interstate Interchanges) are all in the current (2015) Comprehensive Plan. For each topic, staff has provided an overview of why updates to the Comprehensive Plan are being considered, a summary of recommendations in the current Plan, key themes from community input, and options for how the Plan could be updated, along with staff's recommendation for consideration. For each topic, Option 1 is to continue the current recommendations, and subsequent options (Options 2-3) are ways that the Comprehensive Plan recommendations could be updated through AC44.

AC44 TOOLKIT TOPICS FOR THE COMMISSION:

Topic 1: Activity Centers in the Development Areas

Why are updates to the current Comprehensive Plan being considered?

To support the Growth Management Policy, as defined in the current Plan, the Development Areas are expected to support compact development form, infill, redevelopment, a variety of housing types, a mix of uses, multimodal transportation networks, access to trails and parks, and placemaking elements.

Within the Development Areas, designated Centers support the AC44 Framework by focusing higher intensities of development in mixed-use areas that are (or should be) accessible by multimodal transportation options. Centers also encourage mixed-use employment areas with a variety of housing types and encourage redevelopment and infill with green and resilient design. A variety of housing options located within a short distance to services, amenities, and activities offers support for housing choice and affordability along with more affordable and lower-emission transportation options, such as walking, biking, and transit.

The designated Centers per the current Comprehensive Plan support the Growth Management Policy and the AC44 Framework, though recommendations for Centers are not consistent across the Master Plans, and the significant number of current Centers (50) can make prioritization of future projects and redevelopment more challenging. To achieve an updated and consolidated set of Activity Centers, the updated Plan could use new and updated activity center place types (Neighborhood, Town, Destination) that would be consistently applied across the Development Areas. Potential Activity Centers were identified based on existing development patterns, known planned projects (the development pipeline), recommendations in Development Area Master Plans, and current and future activity levels measured in jobs and people per acre (Attachment 1).

Current (2015) Comprehensive Plan Recommendations

Relevant current Comprehensive Plan recommendations include:

- Development Areas Strategy 2f: *Continue to promote centers as focal points for neighborhoods and places for civic engagement.*
 - Supporting text: *A center may be a school or park, location of a major employer or a shopping area. Identifying existing centers and places for new centers is a major component of developing a Master Plan. They are intended to be located within a comfortable walkable distance (approximately ¼ mile) from homes.*
- Pantops Master Plan: *For those areas within centers and the Employment District, additional intensity of development is encouraged, with the appropriate form and scale.*
- Crozet Master Plan: *Centers are intended to be nodes of activity that feature a dense mixture of uses that foster a sense of community for residents, employees, and visitors to Crozet.*
- Development Areas Objective 5: *Promote density within the Development Areas to help create new compact urban places.*
- Development Areas Strategy 2o: *Promote redevelopment as a way to improve and take advantage of existing investment in the Development Areas.*

The current Comprehensive Plan identifies 50 centers across the Development Areas through each of the five Master Plans. Recommendations for the current 50 centers are not consistent across the Master Plans, as some have been updated more recently than others: the Places29 Master Plan uses the underlying land use designation to define the centers; the Southern and Western Master Plan uses a 'C' for general location with text recommendations; and Crozet and Pantops use walksheds with tables for form and scale guidance. Additionally, some currently identified centers are very small and not mixed-use, such as a trailhead or a single store.

Key Themes from Community Input

Key themes on this topic from community input in Phase 2 include:

- Overall, community input indicated support for the Activity Centers concept, especially for a mix of uses with options to live, work, and shop, housing that is affordable and connected to centers, opportunities for redevelopment, and safe options for walking and biking separated from vehicles/roads. Comments noted that if people are going to walk and bike, they need useful destinations to walk and bike to.
- Multiple comments indicated that employment uses should be a priority in Activity Centers and that regulations should be updated to make it easier for small businesses to open.
- Several comments expressed concern that a mix of uses would not be feasible, at least not in every draft Activity Center, especially with empty storefronts and a lack of foot traffic in some existing developments.
- Support for amenities, open space, parks, and events in Activity Centers.
- Support for more frequent and reliable transit/bus service, especially to connect neighborhoods and Activity Centers. Park and ride options could include rural area connections and provide access to key areas of the county and Charlottesville.
- Need for more assisted living and senior living communities in the county; these communities should be in walkable areas and have access to public transportation.
- Some comments noted an interest in better access to retail and services (especially by walking), such as grocery stores, services for daily needs, day care centers, neighborhood businesses, gyms, dry cleaners, restaurants, coffee shops, pharmacies, and gas stations.
- Some concern was expressed for certain locations with dense development on small lots. Balance higher densities with quality and character of the site and provide open areas/green spaces.

Options for Activity Centers

Option 1: Do not change any of the currently identified Centers in the Development Areas in the County's five Master Plans. As Master Plans are updated in the future, consider updating each of the Centers to the new Activity Center framework as outlined in AC44.

Overview of Option 1: If the current 50 centers remain, they could be reviewed and updated with each Development Areas Master Plan update. With this approach, it is expected that a similar format to the Crozet and Pantops Master Plans would be followed by using tables for form and scale guidance and with centers encouraging additional density and intensity of activity.

Staff's Recommendation: Option 2: Update all of the Center locations in the Development Areas using the mixed-use Activity Center place types (Neighborhood, Town, Destination) in this Comprehensive Plan update. This would give a consistent format and terminology for all Centers in the current Master Plans. Continue to use Districts to identify areas of activity that are primarily single use (e.g. parks, employment centers) and identify updated Districts.

Planning Commission Recommendation: Option 2, as presented by staff. The Commission supported the Activity Centers concept with application of the three center types. The Commission noted that the concept would support infill, redevelopment, walkability and a mix of uses. The Commission also was supportive of reducing the number of centers identified in the current Plan (50 centers), which they believed to be excessive. Community Advisory Committee input should be incorporated with center updates, as the associated master plans are updated. Places29 and the Southern and Western master plans were noted as areas where significant changes to center locations are proposed.

Overview of Option 2: This approach would involve updating the Master Plans to include AC44 Activity Center place types and updated locations during the Comprehensive Plan update (Attachment 1). This

option would reduce the current number of centers from 50 to approximately 20 to 30. It is expected that additional supporting text would remain in the Master Plans (e.g. the call-out boxes in the Southern and Western Master Plan for each center) and could be updated with each applicable Master Plan update.

With this approach, multimodal street typologies would be developed for each center place type to encourage a safe and connected multimodal network through future development and redevelopment.

If this approach is pursued, there would be additional opportunities for community, Planning Commission, and Board input on both the Activity Center locations and place types during AC44. The locations and place types would continue to be revised based on feedback, and center locations would be more clearly defined.

Center types would have guidelines for form, scale, and intensity of uses. As with the Crozet and Pantops Master Plans, the updated Activity Centers would encourage additional intensity of development above the underlying land use designation(s), consistent with the center type’s recommended form and scale.

	Neighborhood Center	Town Center	Destination Center
Intent	Provide smaller-scale areas of activity that support surrounding neighborhoods. They may not necessarily have a more intense ‘core area’ (like Town and Destination Centers). They generally serve a smaller area than other center types.	Serve as a focal point for commercial and cultural activities and promote a mix of uses. The most intense activities tend to be concentrated within the core area (approximately a quarter-mile radius).	Create community focal points with high-density, compact, mixed-use development patterns. The most intense activities tend to be concentrated within the core area (approximately a quarter-mile radius).
Core Area	May not have a core area; walkshed typically 1/4 mile radius from center or about 10 minutes walking end to end	Core area typically in the 1/4 mile radius from center (about 10 minutes walking end to end). Walkshed for multimodal service area about 1/2 mile radius from center (about 20 minutes walking end to end)	Core area typically in the 1/4 mile radius from center (about 10 minutes walking end to end). Walkshed for multimodal service area about 1/2 mile radius from center (about 20 minutes walking end to end)
Building Type	Vertical mixed-uses are encouraged; buildings should be constructed to allow ground story commercial/retail along main street frontages	Vertical mixed-uses are encouraged; buildings should be constructed to allow ground story commercial/retail along main street frontages	Vertical mixed-uses are encouraged; buildings should be constructed to allow ground story commercial/retail along main street frontages
Use and Development	Mix of uses (non-residential and residential) expected; land uses should be generally consistent with underlying land use designations. Additional development intensity and infill encouraged with appropriate form and scale for Neighborhood Centers	Mix of uses (non-residential and residential) expected; active ground story uses encouraged especially in the core area; land uses should be generally consistent with underlying land use designations. Additional development intensity and infill encouraged with appropriate form and scale for Town Centers	Mix of uses (non-residential and residential) expected; active ground story uses throughout the Center are encouraged; land uses should be generally consistent with underlying land use designations. Additional development intensity and infill encouraged with appropriate form and scale for Destination Centers
Form & Site Design Guidance	2-4 stories; street trees and landscaping; bike/pedestrian connections to adjacent neighborhoods/Centers/Districts; transit stops encouraged; parking relegated to side/rear of buildings or on-street parking (encouraged)	2-4 stories, up to 6 stories within core; street trees and landscaping; wide sidewalks within core, bike/pedestrian connections to adjacent neighborhoods/Centers/Districts; enhanced transit stops encouraged; structured parking encouraged, parking relegated to side/rear of buildings or on-street parking (expected)	3-6 stories, up to 8 stories within core; street trees and landscaping; wide sidewalks within core; bike/pedestrian connections to adjacent neighborhoods/Centers/Districts; enhanced transit stops encouraged; structured parking strongly encouraged, parking relegated to side/rear of buildings or on-street parking (expected)
Public Civic & Open Space	Public civic and open spaces encouraged, such as small or medium-scale plazas and parks with active and passive recreational amenities	Public civic and open spaces encouraged, such as small or medium-scale plazas and parks with active and passive recreational amenities	Public civic and open spaces encouraged, such as medium or large-scale plazas and parks with active and passive recreational amenities
Examples of typical scale & building types			

With legislative review applications (rezonings and special use permits), proposed developments in Activity Centers would be reviewed for consistency with the underlying land use designation(s) and with the recommendations of the applicable activity center type (Neighborhood, Town, or Destination).

Additional specific recommendations for individual Activity Centers could be developed during future Master Plan updates and Small Area Plans, when more detailed study of specific areas can be

accomplished. For example, the Rio29 Small Area Plan provided very detailed land use recommendations within the Rio Road/Route 29 study area, which resulted in the adoption of the Rio29 Form Based Code.

For areas of activity that are primarily single use, such as parks, some employment centers, and institutional uses, a District designation could be used instead of an Activity Center. The Crozet and Pantops Master Plans use Employment, Recreational, and Education Districts to provide recommendations for building form and scale and multimodal transportation for areas of activity that do not have the same form and mix of uses as activity centers. For example, Biscuit Run Park could be designated a recreational district, instead of an activity center.

Staff Analysis: This approach (Option 2) would provide a consistent set of center and district place types applied across the Development Areas with the Comprehensive Plan update. This approach would also reduce the total number of Centers, which should provide more focused direction for future public and private investments and development, including investments in multimodal improvements. Community input indicates support for this approach through comments that encourage promoting redevelopment, using the Development Areas efficiently and prioritizing growth in the Development Areas over expanding the Development Areas, encouraging safe and accessible multimodal options with destinations to travel to, and encouraging a variety of housing types.

Topic 2: Factors for Future Development Areas Expansion

Why are updates to the current Comprehensive Plan being considered?

The current Comprehensive Plan and Growth Management Policy encourage a variety of land uses with a more urban form (consistent with the Neighborhood Model Principles) in the Development Areas in part to avoid expanding the Development Areas earlier than necessary. Since Albemarle County's first Comprehensive Plan in 1971, the Development Areas boundaries have been significantly reduced to better protect natural resources and encourage more connected, dense, and mixed-use development.

While an expansion of the Development Areas may not be needed in the near future, as part of long-range planning in the context of uncertain changing economic and environmental conditions, the possibility that the current Development Areas may at some point no longer have sufficient capacity to accommodate future housing and employment needs is clearly considered in the current Comprehensive Plan and is being considered with this Comprehensive Plan update.

Identifying considerations and factors (Attachment 2) for the location and timing of potential future expansion supports the concepts in the AC44 Framework by identifying natural resources and sensitive areas to protect, establishing expectations for future mixed-use communities, employment centers, a variety of housing types, green and resilient design, connecting networks for multimodal transportation, parks/trails, and wildlife corridors/habitats, and ensuring coordination of the timing of public facilities and services.

In addition, identifying considerations for potential future Development Area expansion supports the goals of the County's Economic Development Strategic Plan to have a diversity of sites for employment-generating uses. Based on the 2022 land use buildout analysis and the Economic Development Tier Analysis, only 39 parcels could be identified in the Development Areas that were at least 3 acres, currently vacant, and already zoned or designated for commercial, light industrial, flex, office, or industrial uses. Only one property in the Development Areas met the description of a Tier 4 site where infrastructure is in place, site challenges have been addressed, and a project could be brought to market in 12 to 18 months. Additionally, there is market pressure for residential uses that can conflict with employment land uses.

Four recent all-residential developments (either approved or currently under review) in the Places29 area totaling 30.57 acres were on properties with land designations of Office/Flex/R+D/LI.

Current (2015) Comprehensive Plan Recommendations

Relevant current Comprehensive Plan recommendations include:

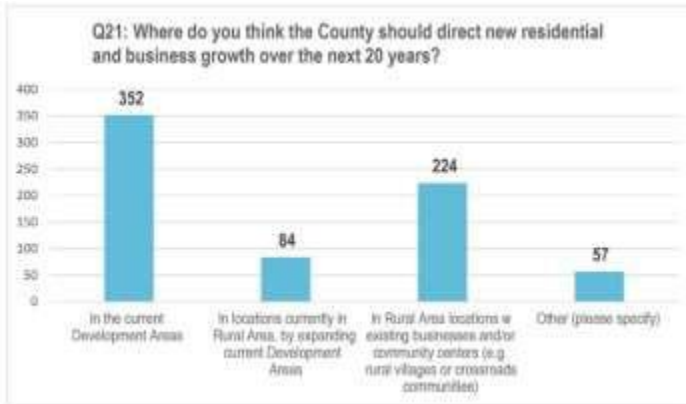
- Development Areas Objective 4: *Use Development Area land efficiently to prevent premature expansion of the Development Areas.*
 - Supporting text: *Although there is no policy that the boundaries should remain unchanged, the County has acknowledged that premature expansion of the Development Areas will frustrate the goals of the County's Growth Management Policy, the Rural Areas Plan, and the Neighborhood Model in achieving compact urban places.*
- Development Areas Strategy 4a: *Continue to monitor building activity in both the Development Areas and the Rural Area to gain information on the rate of residential and non-residential development in the County.*
 - Supporting text: *Monitoring growth will help planners know when and how to advise future decision-makers on the timing for changes to the Comprehensive Plan.*
- Development Areas Strategy 4b: *Update the capacity analysis every two years to ensure adequate residential land exists to meet new housing needs.*
 - Supporting text: *Until it is established that the Development Areas cannot accommodate expected future residential and nonresidential growth, the boundaries should remain intact, with the exception of minor adjustments that result in no substantial gain in acreage. In order to know when or if the boundaries should be expanded, it is important to monitor building activity and regularly update the capacity analysis.*
- Development Areas Strategy 7a: *Continue to ensure that sufficient developable land is available for future commercial and industrial development needs.*

The current Comprehensive Plan has recommendations for the timing of potential Development Areas expansion (i.e. “when”); however, it does not include recommendations for how to determine where future expansion should occur. During the 2015 Plan update, only minor changes to the boundaries were made.

Key Themes from Community Input

Key themes on this topic from community input in Phase 2 include:

- For comments on draft factors for how and where the Development Areas could be expanded in the future, the top priorities included avoiding environmentally sensitive areas and protecting natural resources, preserving the Rural Area, protecting water resources and water supplies, protecting tree cover and requiring tree replacement with new development, and assessing transportation impacts.
- Several comments supported building more road networks with future development to have options other than the main higher-volume roadways (e.g. Route 29).
- Multiple comments said Development Areas expansion should not be considered at this time.
- Several comments suggested Route 20 South and Scottsville as possible future growth areas.
- For comments on draft factors for when the Development Areas could be expanded, the top priorities included having infrastructure in place/planned before additional growth (especially related to transportation and schools), encouraging density and a mix of uses in the Development Areas before expanding the Development Areas, and considering the already high cost of housing and the significant need for housing that is affordable.
- Overall, community input indicated support for using the Development Areas efficiently and only expanding when new development/redevelopment options in the Development Areas become extremely limited.
- Responses to Questionnaire 1 in Phase 2 on where the County should direct new residential and business growth over the next 20 years:



Options for Factors for Future Development Areas Expansion

Option 1: Keep the recommendations in the 2015 Comprehensive Plan, without developing any new factors or criteria for potential Development Area expansion.

Overview of Option 1: With this option, the current recommendations on the potential timing of Development Areas expansion would continue to be used, with updates to the land use buildout analysis every two years and continued monitoring and analysis of development trends (e.g. the ratio of how many units are being built in the Development Areas compared with the Rural Area).

Option 2: Develop a set of factors for consideration in potential future Development Areas Expansion to include both timing and location factors, without identifying potential timeframes or locations for future expansion at this time.

Overview of Option 2: In addition to the current Plan recommendations, factors for identifying potential locations for future Development Areas expansion and other factors for the potential timing of an expansion would be included in the updated Plan. These draft factors are outlined in Attachment 2 and are the same draft factors that were shared for community input through the open houses and questionnaires.

Draft factors for the ‘where and how’ include infrastructure needs and impacts, public utility availability and capacity, protection of natural resources and environmental features, protection of water supply watersheds, access to amenities and services, and expectations for future development patterns.

Regarding the ‘when’ of potential expansion, the primary factor as directed by the 2015 Plan would be the availability of land with development/redevelopment potential, per the land use buildout analysis. However, other factors could also be considered, such as the cost of housing and the vacancy rates and leasing costs of non-residential land.

If this approach is pursued, there would be additional opportunities for community, Planning Commission, and Board input on the draft factors during AC44. With this option, the draft factors would be further refined with more detailed descriptions and potential metrics.

Factors for evaluating locations would be applied if an expansion was found to be needed in the future. Prior to any future expansion, there would be significant coordination with service providers (such as RWSA, ACSA, Schools, Fire/Rescue, Police, VDOT). Additionally, a Small Area Plan or similar planning effort would be needed prior to any expansion, which would provide additional opportunity for community input and would develop recommendations for land uses, transportation networks, and parks in any areas added to the Development Areas.

Staff’s Recommendation: Option 3: Conduct an analysis that applies the additional factors from Option 2 to develop mapping of potential locations for future Development Areas expansion and develop possible timeframes for future expansion with this Comprehensive Plan update.

Planning Commission Recommendation: Option 3 with modifications to staff's proposal. The Commission supported developing a set of location, process, and timing factors for consideration in potential future Development Areas Expansion. Expansion factors should also include an analysis of whether the Development Areas are achieving a mix of uses, higher density, walkability, redevelopment, and quality open spaces prior to expansion. Conduct an analysis on the feasibility of potential areas for future Development Areas expansion by first using factors related to location to develop a generalized map of broad potential locations for future Development Areas expansion and second, by using the factors related to timing and infrastructure feasibility to develop possible timeframes for future expansion with this Comprehensive Plan update. General area expansion maps were suggested rather than detailed, parcel level mapping that may encourage developers purchasing expansion area property, thereby increasing land costs.

Overview of Option 3: Under this option, potential locations would be identified with the Plan update for potential future Development Areas expansion, in part to plan for future infrastructure needs. Since public service providers plan for infrastructure needs and improvements decades into the future, knowing where future development may occur is important for their planning and funding efforts.

This option would not require expanding the Development Areas now but would involve mapping and identifying possible future locations and broad timing considerations. Identifying these locations could be helpful for future infrastructure planning needs, so that agencies such as ACSA and RWSA are aware of where future growth is more likely to occur (even if it is 5-10 years or more in the future). The level of detail in mapping could be very general in location or could show specific parcels, depending on the level of detail needed for long term infrastructure planning.

Identifying areas for potential expansion could also include the proposed land use priorities for those areas, based on needs identified in the land use buildout analysis and through the Comprehensive Plan update. For example, areas could be identified as needed for primarily employment uses, residential uses, a mix of uses, or public uses. Areas that are primarily non-residential or residential would still be expected to follow the Neighborhood Model Principles and to contribute to the mixed-use character of the overall area.

If this option is pursued, staff would further refine draft factors (as with Option 2) and would also use the factors to evaluate areas adjacent to the current Development Areas and develop a list of potential locations for future expansion. These potential locations would be shared for community, Commission, and Board input during AC44. Primary land use needs for each identified potential location would be included.

Staff Analysis: Based on the estimated Development Areas capacity in the 2022 land use buildout analysis, there appears to be sufficient capacity to accommodate projected growth and demand in the next 10 to 20 years. However, the constraining factors, 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 target industries. Additionally, not realizing full buildout of the Development Areas and limiting the supply of available housing can drive up costs and drive new residential growth into surrounding localities. This trend can have the highest burden on lower income community members who work in the county but cannot afford housing locally.

Identifying potential locations for future expansion and a potential timeframe would allow for coordination with service providers. This would give service providers information for possible future capital needs and infrastructure projects. Even if an expansion is not found to be needed in the next 5 to 10 (or more) years, service providers would be aware of where expansion would be most likely to occur next.

This option (3) could help address potential 'changes' to land use capacity that occur when developments are not consistent with their land use designation(s). For example, some properties designated Office/Flex/LI/RD are developed with only residential uses, which indicates some capacity for non-residential uses has been 'lost'. Additional capacity could be identified both through Master Plan updates

(e.g. by changing a property from Neighborhood Density Residential to Office/Flex/RD/LI) and through potential future expansion locations.

With any option that is pursued for this topic, staff emphasizes that efficient use of the current Development Areas should continue to be prioritized over expansion, while recognizing that at some point it is likely that the Development Areas will need to be expanded to accommodate future housing and business needs.

Topic 3: Rural Crossroads Communities

Why are updates to the current Comprehensive Plan being considered?

Crossroads communities are places in the Rural Area that have a historic small commercial center, typically at a literal crossroads, that may or may not still have active commercial uses or other community gathering places. As defined in the current Plan, they are intended to “provide support services and opportunities to engage in community life” for Rural Area community members and adaptively reuse existing buildings.

Without a clear definition of crossroads communities or a clear rationale for the selection of the number and distribution of the seven identified communities, questions remain about why some communities with documented local histories and existing businesses, gathering places, and historic structures were selected, while others were left off the list. There are many additional communities in the Rural Area that are active and that have gathering places with rural and historic character in addition to the seven currently identified crossroads communities. Community input in this phase has reinforced the need to address these questions.

Existing community facilities in the Rural Area, such as schools, community centers, and fire stations, can provide space that may be used to support Rural Area residents. There also is the potential for ‘community hubs’ in the Rural Area to provide additional services such as healthcare, food access/community gardens, emergency preparedness/response, and places for community gathering at existing community facilities or future adaptively reused buildings. These concepts were also echoed by the community input in this Phase.

Crossroads communities could support the AC44 Framework by more equitably distributing services and amenities in the Rural Area, providing opportunities for redevelopment and use of existing infrastructure, reducing the distance needed to travel for some services and activities (thereby reducing greenhouse gas emissions), providing spaces for small businesses, and providing opportunities for improved walkability, bikeability, and traffic calming (Attachment 3).

Current (2015) Comprehensive Plan Recommendations

Relevant current Comprehensive Plan recommendations include:

- Features expected in the Rural Area: *Crossroads communities that provide support services and opportunities to engage in community life.*
- Rural Area Chapter text: *This Chapter recommends consideration of a few new land uses in the Rural Area, including supportive uses for agriculture, tourism, and crossroads communities. The County recognizes that a delicate balance exists between*

providing more opportunities for supporting rural uses and allowing so many of them that the Rural Area features are lost.

- Rural Area Objective 5: *Recognize and support crossroads communities, which serve as rural-scale community meeting places and provide opportunities for residents to take part in community life.*
 - Supporting text: *A study entitled “Survey of Historic Crossroads Communities,” completed in 2003, identified seven crossroads areas that have historically provided services for nearby residents. These crossroads communities are: Advance Mills, Batesville, Covesville, Free Union, Proffit, Greenwood, and White Hall. Other crossroads communities may also be appropriate to consider for a future designation.*
- Rural Area Strategy 5a: *Identify the geographic limits of a crossroads community by meeting with Rural Area residents.*
- Rural Area Strategy 5b: *Consider amending the Zoning Ordinance to allow for small-scale, supportive uses in designated crossroads communities. Examples of such uses are country stores, offices, day care facilities, doctor/dentist offices, and public institutional uses, such as post offices.*
 - Supporting text: *Reusing existing buildings, especially historic buildings, is preferable to building new structures. Such existing buildings would need to be renovated and reused at a scale that is appropriate for the area and that does not require additional infrastructure. Expansions of infrastructure, such as roads, water, or sewer, should not be provided to these crossroads centers. Consideration should be given to allowing some of these uses by-right in existing buildings with performance standards such as square footage and architectural features that are reflective of historic and rural area uses to be established in the Zoning Ordinance. Residents of crossroads communities need to be involved in determining appropriate uses for those communities. It should be noted that this goal emphasizes providing greater support for existing Rural Area residents rather than encouraging or supporting new residential development in the Rural Area.*

The seven currently identified crossroads communities were selected from a 2003 survey of historic crossroads communities, which were previously surveyed in the 1995 report Historic Architectural Survey of Albemarle County Villages (Attachment.3) The 1995 report surveyed 12 historic communities and recommended another 17 as historically significant, to be further reviewed. The current Plan focuses on crossroads communities in the Rural Area as areas of activity, primarily by adaptively reusing existing buildings. The current Plan recommends strategies to update the Zoning Ordinance to allow recommended uses (by-right in existing buildings) and to identify the boundaries of crossroads communities, but these have yet to be completed.

Key Themes from Community Input

Key themes on this topic from community input in Phase 2 include:

- For comments on the types of small-scale businesses or services community members would like to see in crossroads communities, the most frequently mentioned uses (in order of number of comments) were medical services and healthcare, country stores, small grocery stores, community centers, post offices, fire rescue/EMS stations and services, parks, restaurants, general retail (e.g. bank, hardware store, basic needs), and childcare options.
- There were several comments to have ‘working groups’ for each crossroads community to learn what community members there want through direct engagement, as needs may differ by community.

- Community members would generally prefer to have input on the types of uses they would like to see in their specific crossroads community prior to any changes to underlying zoning districts/by-right uses.
- For comments on natural, historic, and cultural resources that should be protected in the Rural Area, top priorities were waterways/water resources, habitats (including mountains/old growth forests/wildlife corridors), and historic buildings and landmarks.
- Several comments expressed the need for public transportation options to employment areas (e.g. Charlottesville) and to access healthcare, especially for Southern Albemarle.
- For comments on recommended additional crossroads communities, the most frequently mentioned communities were Esmont, Scottsville, North Garden, Earlysville, and Keene.
- Community input generally indicated support for community hubs, with the need for community centers with classes/events/programming, affordable food access, senior or youth centers and related programming, and emergency shelter with phone/internet access. Preference to use existing buildings (e.g. schools, community centers, fire stations) compared with new buildings.

Options for Rural Crossroads Communities

Option 1: Keep the current Plan recommendations for crossroads communities with no changes.

Overview of Option 1: With this option, no additional crossroads communities would be identified in this Plan update. However, potential future County efforts (outside of the Comprehensive Plan update) could implement some or all of the Zoning Ordinance updates recommended in the current Plan and delineate crossroads communities boundaries more precisely.

Staff's Recommendation: Option 2: Clearly define the criteria for identifying crossroads communities and identify additional crossroads communities beyond the current seven using these criteria. This option would also incorporate recommendations for 'community hubs'. Prior to any changes to recommended land uses or existing zoning districts in a crossroads community, engage with community members in that community to determine what uses are appropriate and desired.

Planning Commission Recommendation: Option 2 with updates to staff's recommendation. The Commission supported the strategy to create a clear definition for crossroads communities and applying the definition to identify an updated list of crossroads communities in the Comprehensive Plan. The Commission also supported the continued practice of adaptive reuse for existing structures for uses such as community resilience hubs, small offices and country stores. Resilience hubs would be evaluated and developed with coordination from County Fire/Rescue and the Virginia Department of Health. The Commission also recommends utilizing public engagement with community members prior to updating uses and potential zoning updates within each crossroads community. Additionally, use impacts should be evaluated as part of the land use/small area plan study. Noted concerns included impacts to groundwater and transportation. Special permit reviews may be necessary to address impacts associated with certain uses.

Overview of Option 2: With this option, a clear definition for crossroads communities would be applied through the Comprehensive Plan update, which would include designating additional crossroads communities. Recommended land uses in crossroads communities would continue to be small-scale supportive uses for nearby residents. There would not be any changes to land use designations or zoning districts in crossroads communities with the Plan update, though changes could be considered through future community engagement, as the appropriate and desired land uses will likely vary with each community. Some comments from community members indicated support of land uses beyond the current Plan recommendations including small grocery stores, general retail (e.g. hardware, auto, household goods, banking), restaurants, and small-scale residential units (e.g. live-work units and small multifamily units).

Crossroads communities would also be identified as possible locations for 'community hubs', or places for

services such as community gardens, food distribution, healthcare, workforce development, emergency preparedness and response, and community events. The Yancey Community Center is an example of an existing building that was adaptively reused and has become a community hub, with a community garden, community events, and access to food and mobile medical services. These community hubs can also support emergency preparedness and response, including serving as warming/cooling locations and places to distribute bottled water and other resources. These recommendations would be implemented by coordinating with Fire/Rescue, Parks and Recreation, the Virginia Department of Health, and other service providers to determine where and how to provide needed community services. If public community facilities were utilized as public uses, updates to the Zoning Ordinance would likely not be required for implementation.

To fully implement the currently recommended uses in crossroads communities, the County's Zoning Ordinance would likely need to be updated to allow these uses by-right in designated crossroads communities. The current Plan recommends considering "allowing some of these uses by-right in existing buildings with performance standards such as square footage and architectural features".

As the current Plan recommends, the precise boundaries of the crossroads communities (or at least where commercial/office uses should be allowed) would need to be determined. The current Plan recommends that boundaries be based on evidence of the historic extent of small commercial centers and by meeting with nearby community members of each crossroads community to gather input on where small-scale commercial and office uses may be appropriate prior to zoning ordinance changes. This would likely be done as a separate engagement and planning effort outside of (and after) the Comprehensive Plan update.

If this option is pursued, there would be additional opportunities for community, Commission, and Board input on crossroads communities' locations, recommended land uses, and community hubs during AC44.

Staff Analysis: The small-scale uses recommended in the current Plan are generally consistent with community input on the types of uses community members would like to see in crossroads communities. Specific recommended land uses could be determined outside of the Comprehensive Plan update through engagement with individual communities.

Identifying additional crossroads communities is also important for recognizing their historic significance and current uses and identifying spaces for community gathering. Community input indicated support for recognizing additional Rural Area communities and for possible crossroads communities designation, with additional input from community members prior to any by-right zoning ordinance changes.

Community input indicates support for the 'community hubs' concept, especially for accessing healthcare, workforce development and learning opportunities, community gathering, and emergency response/preparedness. These hubs could support a more equitable distribution of services by making more efficient use of existing community facilities, such as schools, fire stations, and community centers. Additionally, the hubs would support climate action, reducing the need to drive to the Development Areas for these services.

Community input indicates support for small-scale uses in some Rural Area locations where there are existing buildings and uses, along with a desire for further input by community members in each community to develop more detailed recommendations specific to their community. Future planning efforts (outside of the Comp Plan) could include following the current Plan recommendations to meet with residents of each crossroads community to determine exact boundaries along with any potential zoning ordinance updates to allow by-right uses.

Topic 4: Rural Interstate Interchanges

Why are updates to the current Comprehensive Plan being considered?

The current Comprehensive Plan identifies four rural interstate interchanges: Yancey Mills/Exit 107,

Ivy/Exit 114, Black Cat Road/Exit 129, and the southern part of the Shadwell interchange by Exit 124 (Attachment 4). These are I-64 interstate interchanges that are located in the Rural Area. The current Plan recommends uses related to agriculture/forestry for these rural interchange areas. Land use recommendations for interstate interchanges in the Development Areas are included in the applicable Master Plan.

Some businesses, including certain light industrial uses, warehousing/distribution, and agribusinesses or food processing/distribution, require access to an interstate. Additionally, some of these businesses may not be suitable for the walkable and compact development that is expected within the Development Areas. These include some of the businesses identified by the current Comprehensive Plan and by Project ENABLE (the County's economic development strategic plan) as 'target industries' for economic development. Allowing non-residential development at some rural interstate interchanges could provide spaces for new or expanding businesses in a way that makes efficient use of land and infrastructure by concentrating these uses adjacent to the interstate.

The target industries support the cultivation of existing businesses and consider employment of current residents as the most important outcome. The target industries were selected based on available workforce, alignment with community preferences, and growth potential as well as strong multiplier effects that create jobs across a broad spectrum of skill sets. It should be noted that agribusinesses and food processing is a target industry identified by the current Comprehensive Plan for rural interstate interchanges.

The recommended target industries are:

- Bioscience and Medical Devices
- Business & Financial Services
- Information Technology and Defense & Security
- Agribusiness and Food Processing

Complimentary targets are:

- Health Services
- Arts, Design and Sports & Media

There is existing non-residential development and underlying non-Rural Area district zoning with the potential for additional by-right industrial/commercial/office uses at the Shadwell and Yancey interchanges. A small area near the Black Cat Road interchange has underlying non-RA zoning (currently undeveloped). The Rural Area portion of the Shadwell interchange includes existing light industrial/warehousing, research and development, auto service, retail, and hotel land uses. There is additional potential for by-right development with some properties zoned Light Industry and Highway Commercial. The Yancey Mills interchange includes Yancey Lumber, a VDOT storage facility, several gas stations, churches, and small businesses. There is additional potential for by-right development with some properties zoned Heavy Industry and Highway Commercial.

Development at some rural interstate interchanges could support the concepts developed in the AC44 Framework by providing space for local food systems and food processing/distribution, providing space for uses that may not be suitable for walkable and compact development in mixed-use Development Areas, providing job opportunities consistent with the target industries, and efficiently using land and infrastructure where there is existing development and infrastructure.

Current (2015) Comprehensive Plan Recommendations

Relevant current Comprehensive Plan recommendations include:

- Rural Area Chapter text: *Development adjacent to and dependent upon rural interstate interchanges is not served by public water and sewer nor is it intended to be served by*

public utilities. Interstate interchanges in the Rural Area should not be used as tourist destinations or tourist “stops” along Interstate 64.

- Rural Area Strategy 6c: *Permit uses at rural interstate interchanges that support agriculture and forestry.*
 - *Supporting text: Uses allowed by right in the Rural Area are appropriate at interchanges. Some uses allowed by special use permit may also be appropriate at interchanges because they provide a unique opportunity for agricultural goods to be transported to markets outside of the County. Size, scale, visibility, and function should all be considered for new uses allowed by special use permit. Traffic generated by such uses should be typical of agricultural uses and not large frequent trucking activities on rural roads.*
- Rural Area Strategy 6d: *Study the infrastructure challenges at the Shadwell interchange to determine the potential level and concentration of operations which are appropriate.*
 - *Supporting text: To date, the Shadwell interchange is the only one that has been identified as able to support a greater intensity of use and higher concentrations of supporting uses related to agriculture and forestry. Unlike the other rural interchanges, one side of the Shadwell interchange is in the Development Areas, and the Rural Area (south) side has other active uses, such as a motel, an industrial park, and businesses, that are in very close proximity to the interchange. The Shadwell interchange is closer to the Richmond market for shipping than most of the other interchanges.*

The current Comprehensive Plan recommends that development adjacent to or in rural interstate interchanges not be served by public water or sewer and not be used as tourist destinations. Any development at interstate interchanges that are located within the Development Areas would be reviewed based on consistency with the Comp Plan and the applicable Master Plan.

The current Plan recommends land uses at rural interstate interchanges that are allowed by-right in the Rural Area. Land uses that are allowed by special use permit in the Rural Area could be considered, depending on size, scale, visibility, function, and transportation impacts. Recommendations in the current Plan for further study of the Shadwell interchange have not yet been implemented.

Key Themes from Community Input

Key themes on this topic from community input in Phase 2 include:

- When asked ‘should changes be made to the current recommended land uses at some rural interstate interchanges’ through the online questionnaire and open houses, there were approximately 31 responses for ‘yes’ and 26 for ‘no’.
- Comments on minimal or no change included concern with additional traffic and pollution from increased cars and trucks, the potential to add pressure for more growth, impacts to scenic and historic resources, and potential impacts to groundwater supplies.
- Some comments supporting changing recommended land uses at rural interstate interchanges indicated support for target industries and employment-generating industries, gas stations/convenience stores, light industrial uses, general commercial/retail, and hotels.
- A significant number of comments indicated that the Shadwell interchange should be rezoned to allow for commercial and industrial uses and that Shadwell should be the priority rural interstate interchange for development.
- For comments in support of changes at rural interchanges, community feedback identified the Yancey Mills interchange as the second priority option for commercial and industrial development.

- Some comments indicated support of commercial/industrial development at all four rural interstate interchanges; however, support for development at the Ivy and Black Cat Road interchanges was significantly lower than the other two interchanges.

Options for Rural Interstate Interchanges

Option 1: Keep the current Comprehensive Plan recommendations for rural interstate interchanges with no changes.

Overview of Option 1: With this option, no changes to the recommendations for the rural interstate interchanges would be made with the Plan update. If the current recommendations were kept unchanged, a future implementation recommendation could be for a Small Area Plan (or similar planning effort) for the Shadwell interchange, based on the land uses recommended in the 2015 Comprehensive Plan.

Staff's Recommendation: Option 2: Add recommendations for commercial and/or office/flex/research & development/light industrial land uses at the Shadwell and Yancey Mills rural interstate interchanges.

Planning Commission Recommendation: Option 2 with changes to staff's recommendations. The Commission recommended that Small Area Plans be applied to the Shadwell and Yancey Mills interchanges with the Shadwell interchange prioritized. The Small Area Plans would evaluate impacts such as transportation impacts and needed improvements, protection of natural, historic and scenic resources, public water and sewer feasibility and other infrastructure needs. The Commission proposed that specific uses (such as commercial, office, research and light industrial) be removed from the recommendation. Instead, the recommended uses would be identified through the Small Area Plans application.

Overview of Option 2: With this option, separate planning efforts such as Small Area Plans (outside of the Comprehensive Plan update) would be recommended for the Shadwell and Yancey Mills interchanges to provide detailed guidance for land uses and infrastructure needs for future development. Small Area Plans would apply land use designations to the rural interstate interchanges and study the feasibility of public utilities. No changes to land use designations at these interstate interchanges would be made during AC44.

The feasibility of public utilities would also provide more detailed guidance on what specific land uses may be appropriate and feasible, especially if challenges are found with providing public water and/or sewer. Recommendations would also be developed for protection of natural resources and to address potential impacts to surrounding areas. Recommended land uses would likely be focused on the County's target industries.

The Ivy and Black Cat Road interchanges would not be recommended to be considered at this time, as there is no existing non-residential development at those locations and significantly less underlying by-right commercial and industrial zoning compared with Shadwell and Yancey Mills.

If this option (2) is pursued, staff would develop Comprehensive Plan recommendations through AC44 for the general land uses, transportation needs, protection of natural resources, and infrastructure needs that should be included with future Small Area Plans for Shadwell and Yancey Mills. These Comprehensive Plan recommendations would be shared for community, Commission, and Board input during AC44.

Staff Analysis: There is existing development and underlying by-right commercial and industrial zoning at these two interchanges. The 2022 land use buildout analysis found very few locations in the Development Areas close to being 'site ready' for new or expanding businesses in target industries. These rural interstate interchanges have the potential to provide space and land for existing and expanding businesses (including those that may need to relocate from other places in the county).

Small Area Plans for these interchanges would provide more detailed study on appropriate land uses and infrastructure needs and support land needs for the County's target industries, including for existing businesses. Staff recommends that the Shadwell interchange be prioritized over the Yancey Mills interchange for a Small Area Plan. This more detailed analysis would identify natural and historic

resources to protect and sensitive areas that should be avoided with development.

Community input varied on this topic, with some support for making changes to recommended land uses at certain rural interstate interchanges. At the open houses and through the online questionnaire, approximately 31 responses indicated support for changing land uses, while approximately 26 responses preferred no change. For comments supporting changing land uses, target industries and employment-generating industries were the top priorities. Future Small Area Plans would provide additional opportunities for community input to further refine recommendations for these interchanges prior to any land use changes.

Next Steps

Based on the direction from the Planning Commission (at this work session) and the Board (September 6 work session), staff will proceed with drafting Goals and Objectives for each of these toolkit topics. There will be further opportunities for community, Commission, and Board input as Goals and Objectives are drafted and shared through the remainder of Phase 2. Those Goals and Objectives will then inform the Action Steps to be developed in Phase 3 for Plan implementation.

Attachments:

[Attach. 1 CPA2021-02 Draft Activity Centers Locations and Place Types](#)

[Attach. 2 CPA2021-02 Draft Factors for Future Development Areas Expansion](#)

[Attach. 3 CPA2021-02 Additional Background on Crossroads Communities](#)

[Attach. 4 CPA2021-02 Rural Interstate Interchanges Locations](#)

[Attach. 5 CPA2021-02 Summary of Community Input from Phase 2 Community Engagement \(April – July 2023\)](#)