



ALBEMARLE COUNTY PLANNING

STAFF REPORT SUMMARY

Project Name: CPA202100002 AC44 Comprehensive Plan Update	Staff: Tori Kanellopoulos, Principal Planner Ben Holt, Senior Planner II Kevin McDermott, Acting Planning Director
Planning Commission Work Session: November 14, 2023	Board of Supervisors Work Session: Tentative date: January 17, 2024
Owner: Multiple	Applicant: N/A (County-initiated)
TMP: Multiple Acreage: ~464,640 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: Draft Goals and Objectives for the following two Comprehensive Plan chapters: Housing and Economic Development.
Discussion/Recommendation: Staff recommends that the Commission review the attached draft Goals and Objectives, community input summaries, and information provided in this staff report and consider the following questions for each chapter: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Are the draft Goals aligned with the AC44 Framework for an Equitable and Resilient Community?• What is missing from the draft Goals and Objectives?	

STAFF CONTACTS:

Tori Kanellopoulos, Principal Planner
Ben Holt, Senior Planner II
Kevin McDermott, Acting Planning Director

PLANNING COMMISSION:

November 14, 2023

BOARD OF SUPERVISORS:

Tentative date January 17, 2024

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 (Attachment 1)
 - 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, Factors for potential future Development Areas expansion, 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)
 - Metrics for tracking successful Plan implementation
- 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

At the beginning of Phase 2 (Step 1), staff shared a series of topic reports with data, trends, challenges, and opportunities for each Plan chapter that 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. Several County committees, including the Natural Heritage Committee, the Historic Preservation Committee, the Architectural Review Board, and the Solid Waste Alternatives Advisory Committee shared their input on their topic areas of expertise and suggestions for relevant Plan recommendations.

The second round of Phase 2 engagement (Step 2) focused on the Planning Toolkit Topics: Activity Centers, factors for potential future Development Areas expansion, Crossroads Communities, and Rural Interstate Interchanges. Community members shared their input through questionnaires, open houses, and chat kits. Summaries of Phase 2 Step 1 (Attachment 4) and Phase 2 Step 2 (Attachment 5) are also available on the AC44 website. Staff held work sessions with the Planning Commission (August 8, 2023) and the Board of Supervisors (September 6, 2023) and are continuing to refine the Planning toolkits based on community, Commission, and Board feedback.

The final round of Phase 2 engagement (Step 3) involves 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:

- October 10 work session: Environmental Stewardship, Parks and Recreation, and Historic, Scenic, and Cultural Resources
- November 14 work session: Housing and Economic Development
- December 19 work session: Rural Area Land Use and Transportation, Development Areas Land Use and Transportation, and Community Facilities

Community engagement in Step 3 includes online questionnaires, pop-ups, a virtual open house, ‘chat with a planner’ office hours, and upcoming additional meetings and events. During each Commission work session, staff will share community input heard to date on the draft Goals and Objectives. Staff anticipates keeping the online questionnaires open throughout the fall, to have ongoing opportunities for community input on the draft Goals and Objectives.

After community engagement and the Commission’s fall work sessions, staff will hold a work session with the Board of Supervisors on all Plan Goals and Objectives in early 2024, which will include sharing the Commission’s feedback. Staff will then revise Goals and Objectives based on community, Commission, and Board input, and will return to the Commission for a work session on Goals and Objectives for all Plan chapters.

PURPOSE OF THE WORK SESSION:

The draft Goals and Objectives for each Comprehensive Plan chapter are developed through collaboration by an interdisciplinary team of County staff, in coordination with partner agencies, by reviewing the current (2015) Comprehensive Plan, incorporating best planning practices, using the AC44 Framework, and by incorporating community, County committee, Planning Commission, and Board of Supervisors input.

The updated Comprehensive Plan will be organized by goals, objectives, and action steps. Each chapter will have multiple goals, and each goal will have associated objectives and action steps. A goal is a high-level and long-term direction to fulfill the AC44 Framework and Plan vision. An objective is a specific outcome or target that accomplishes a goal. An action step is a policy, infrastructure improvement, planning effort, or other activity or project to achieve and implement a Plan objective.

The purpose of this work session is to receive Planning Commission feedback on the draft Goals and Objectives for Housing and Economic Development, focused on the following two questions:

Q1 – Are the draft Goals aligned with the AC44 Framework for an Equitable and Resilient Community?

Q2 – What is missing from the draft Goals and Objectives?

The Commission’s feedback will be used to refine the draft Goals and Objectives and will be shared with staff topic experts for each chapter and with the Board of Supervisors at their work session.

Housing: Draft Goals and Objectives

Topic Overview

Housing that is affordable and accessible is a fundamental need for our community and a key component of quality of life and wellbeing. This includes housing choice, or access to a variety of housing types at a variety of price points. Housing choice enables community members to live near where they work, to

remain in their community as they age, and to be able to afford both the cost of housing and other household expenses without burdening household budgets. According to the 2019 Regional Housing Needs Assessment published by the Central Virginia Regional Housing Partnership, Albemarle County needs to add approximately 10,070 affordable units to our housing stock by 2040 to ensure all current and future residents can enjoy a good quality of life in our community.

The benefits of housing choice are important for both quality of life and addressing climate change. Ensuring that there are a variety of housing options at a variety of price points near centers of employment, daily needs, and community amenities provides places for community members to live with shorter travel distances and commute times and increases opportunities to walk, bike, or take transit. Additionally, smaller units are often more affordable, easier to maintain, and have lower energy costs. Multifamily buildings and mixed-use buildings can naturally insulate units with shared walls and can realize efficiencies in shared building systems and shared infrastructure, such as streets, parking, and utilities.

Housing is strongly tied to many other topics in the Comprehensive Plan, including land use, transportation, and economic development. Land use designations provide the foundation for recommended housing types and densities throughout the County's Development Areas. Land use recommendations for the form and scale of development and site design, when used to guide zoning ordinance updates, can impact the cost and feasibility of developing housing, such as minimum parking requirements and building setbacks. Transportation networks connect housing to services, amenities, and jobs. Continued coordination across these topics is key for housing choice and affordability.

Key Themes from Community Input

The following summary highlights the most prominent themes from community engagement heard to date during AC44 Phases 1 and 2. These community priorities help inform Plan recommendations.

- A variety of housing types are needed at a variety of price points, including tiny homes, smaller housing units (generally), accessory dwelling units, multifamily housing, and middle housing options.
- More housing options are needed that are walkable, bikeable, and/or have public transit options for accessing services, recreation, amenities, and jobs. Allow for higher densities around transit nodes.
- New homes should be energy-efficient, and there should be incentives for energy-efficient upgrades to existing homes.
- Concerns about being able to remain in the community due to the high costs of housing. This includes community members who cannot afford to buy a home in the County and community members who cannot afford to maintain or repair their existing home or keep up with rising assessments and property taxes.
- Restricting housing locally may result in people living further away and commuting into the County for work.
- Improve and strengthen affordable housing requirements, including with new development.
- Housing choice is also important for being able to age in place, including one-story homes, one-bedroom apartments, accessory dwelling units, smaller homes, and units with elevators. More assisted living and senior living communities are also needed.
- Aging in place goes beyond housing and includes transportation, healthcare, and daily needs.
- It seems like most of the housing that is being built now is not affordable for community members here.

Draft Goals and Objectives

The draft Goals and Objectives for Housing are provided in Attachment 2 (starting on page 4), along with a summary of community input and the topic report.

The updated Goals and Objectives for this chapter reflect community input and carry forward key themes from the 2015 Comprehensive Plan, including increasing the overall housing supply, increasing the supply of affordable and workforce housing, preserving and maintaining existing housing, fair housing, working to end and prevent homelessness, and aging in place. The updated recommendations include connections to the Activity Centers, multimodal transportation options for aging in place, and additional emphasis on energy-efficiency.

Economic Development: Draft Goals and Objectives

Topic Overview

Economic development is a critical factor in providing a high quality of life and prosperity for Albemarle County. A thriving and sustainable economy offers community members a range of employment opportunities, competitive wages and a path for career growth. A strong economy also enhances the visibility of the community, attracting visitors and sustaining current residents.

The County's Project ENABLE, a strategic plan adopted in 2019, provides direction and guidance for economic development and fulfillment of Comprehensive Plan recommendations. The Comprehensive Plan update will integrate and support Project ENABLE strategies to achieve a diverse and vibrant economy by supporting existing businesses and new business ventures, with special emphasis on target industries. Additional priorities include provision of career ladder job opportunities and workforce development.

The Comprehensive Plan update also presents an opportunity to promote equity for employees and climate action support through best practices for economic development. Providing inclusive access to jobs, small business prosperity, a range of career ladder employment opportunities, and access to employment and workforce training helps elevate the opportunities of community members to achieve financial stability. Increased climate action support may be achieved by utilizing energy efficient construction and renewable energy sources through best practices by local businesses and employment related development. Reduced energy consumption and carbon emissions may be achieved through sustainable agriculture practices, improving environmental protection throughout the county.

Overlapping spheres of influence through economic development include other topics of the Comprehensive Plan such as housing, land use, transportation, and environmental stewardship. For example, housing is significantly impacted by the economy through sustainable local jobs offering career ladder employment opportunities for area residents. Proximity between affordable housing and employment locations reduces commute times, lowering vehicle emissions and presenting expanded transit and multimodal travel opportunities. Updated goals and objectives will be aligned to improve desired outcomes between these and other related topics.

Key Themes from Community Input

The following summary highlights the most prominent themes from community engagement heard to date during AC44 Phases 1 and 2. These community priorities help inform Plan recommendations.

- Support for primary businesses and target industries, including tech, bio-tech, manufacturing, agriculture, and tourism.
- Reducing barriers for development and construction of employment related uses.

- Supporting infill and adaptive reuse of vacant and underutilized buildings for employment uses.
- Reducing commercial and business taxes.
- Support for small businesses including minority owned, artisans and craft industries.
- Enhanced career training, including vocational and technical training.
- Improved access to jobs and support for career advancement and livable wages.
- Improved transit and multimodal connections to employment areas.
- Support for employment uses within activity centers and commercial/retail opportunities located near housing.
- Promoting adaptive reuse for buildings within rural crossroads communities, including small stores and office uses.

Draft Goals and Objectives

The draft Goals and Objectives for Economic Development are provided in Attachment 3 (starting on page 3), along with a summary of community input and the topic report.

The updated Goals and Objectives for this chapter reflect community input and carry forward key themes from the 2015 Comprehensive Plan, including support of target industries, ensuring an adequate supply of land for employment-generating uses within the Development Areas, encouraging infill and adaptive reuse, utilizing partnerships for business support, supporting small businesses and start-ups, and workforce development and training. The updated recommendations include a stronger focus on promoting sustainable practices in support of climate action, multimodal transportation connections to employment locations, utilizing Project ENABLE (adopted 2019) to guide economic development, and encouraging job centers and employment-generating uses in designated Activity Centers and Employment Districts.

Next Steps

Throughout this fall (September through December), the AC44 team will continue to gather community input on draft Goals and Objectives and will hold corresponding Planning Commission work sessions. The next work session is scheduled for December 19 (Rural Area Land Use and Transportation, Development Areas Land Use and Transportation, and Community Facilities).

In early 2024, staff anticipates holding a work session with the Board of Supervisors on draft Goals and Objectives for all Plan chapters. Staff will share community input and Commission feedback and recommendations for each chapter. Staff will then hold a work session with the Commission on all draft Goals and Objectives. Once the AC44 team has received community, Commission, and Board input on all chapters, the team will revise the draft Goals and Objectives based on this feedback. 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.

Attachments:

Attach 1 – [CCP2023-02 AC44 Comp Plan Update AC44 Framework for an Equitable and Resilient Community](#)

Attach 2 – [CCP2023-02 AC44 Comp Plan Update Housing: Draft Goals and Objectives](#)

Attach 3 – [CCP2023-02 AC44 Comp Plan Update Economic Development: Draft Goals and Objectives](#)

Attach 4 – [CCP2023-02 AC44 Comp Plan Update Phase 2 Step 1 Engagement Summary](#)

Attach 5 – [CCP2023-02 AC44 Comp Plan Update Phase 2 Step 2 Engagement Summary](#)