



# Economic Development

## Draft Goals and Objectives



Fall 2023

This document includes the draft Goals and Objectives for the updated Economic Development chapter and provides additional context and background on this topic. The document is organized by the following sections:

- **Overview:** Brief introduction to this topic.
- **Draft Goals and Objectives:** The draft updated Goals and Objectives for this chapter. This is the section we're asking for community input on this fall.
- **Phase 2 Community Input Themes:** Major themes from community input heard on this topic during the first two rounds of Phase 2 engagement (January - July 2023).
- **Topic Report and Connections to the AC44 Framework:** Information on challenges, opportunities, recent trends, and data on this topic, as previously provided in the 'topic reports' at the beginning of Phase 2. Summary of how this topic is connected to the AC44 Framework for an Equitable and Resilient Community.

## Economic Development Overview

Economic development is an essential component of quality of life and well-being in Albemarle County. A thriving and sustainable economy offers residents job opportunities, competitive wages and career advancement. A strong economy also enhances the visibility of the community, attracting visitors and retaining current residents.

The County's Project ENABLE, a strategic plan adopted in 2019, provides guidance and direction for economic development and fulfilment of Comprehensive Plan goals and objectives. The Comprehensive Plan update will incorporate Project ENABLE strategies to achieve a diverse and vibrant economy by supporting existing businesses and new business ventures, with a focus on target industries. Additional priorities include provision of job opportunities, competitive wages, and workforce development.

The Comprehensive Plan update also presents an opportunity to enhance equity and climate action through economic development. Providing equitable access to jobs, pathways to small business success, 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. Utilizing energy efficient construction and renewable energy sources holds the potential to improve climate action among businesses. Sustainable agriculture practices also present opportunities to protect the environment and reduce energy consumption and emissions.

While not the principal purpose of economic development, there is significant overlap with other topics of the Comprehensive Plan such as housing, land use, transportation, and environmental stewardship. Housing is directly impacted by the economy, as sustainable local jobs offer career ladder employment opportunities for area residents. Desirable job opportunities within proximity to housing that is affordable to the local workforce also reduces commute times. Therefore, the goals and objectives of economic development offer opportunities to provide supplemental direction and support for the strategies of other plan topics.

## Draft Goals and Objectives

These draft Goals and Objectives were developed based on input from community members, County staff and partner agencies, the Planning Commission, and the Board of Supervisors, the AC44 Framework for an Equitable and Resilient Community, best practices, and the current Comp Plan. They will inform the Action Steps that will be developed in Phase 3.

**Goal 1: Albemarle County will lead the growth of targeted industries, existing primary businesses, and emerging opportunities, recognizing the different expectations for land uses and development in the Development Areas and Rural Area based on the Growth Management Policy.**

Objective 1.1: Ensure the availability of sufficient land with existing or planned infrastructure, including a diversity of sites across the Development Areas to accommodate future business and industrial growth, especially for the Target Industries.

Objective 1.2: Maintain or increase the amount of land designated as Office, Flex, Research and Development (R&D), and Light Industrial (LI) in the Development Areas.

Objective 1.3: Reduce barriers for the growth of targeted industries and existing primary businesses through regular updates to County ordinances, including the Zoning Ordinance. Barriers may include, but are not limited to, parking requirements, building height, massing and setbacks, and signage requirements.

Objective 1.4: Within the Development Areas and especially in Activity Centers and Employment Districts, encourage infill, redevelopment, and adaptive reuse of existing buildings to efficiently use existing infrastructure and Development Areas land for employment related uses.

**Goal 2: Albemarle County will attract additional financial resources into the community through responsible economic development activities that result in quality job creation and career employment opportunities, increased tax base, an enhanced natural environment and community character, and an improved quality of life.**

Objective 2.1: Utilize Project ENABLE to guide implementation of the County's economic development priorities.

Objective 2.2: Plan for complimentary future public and private land uses adjacent to Rivanna Station.

Objective 2.3: Cultivate and sustain local, state, federal, and regional partnerships in support of the County's economic development goals.

Objective 2.4: Encourage and promote sustainable business practices that support the County's Climate Action Plan and ongoing Climate Resilience Planning.

Objective 2.5: Continue to strengthen existing business retention and expansion services.

Objective 2.6: Support the local tourism industry that builds on and protects the county's local assets, including the natural environment and historic, scenic, and cultural resources.

**Goal 3: Albemarle County will collaborate with partners to support local start-ups, small businesses, and entrepreneurs.**

Objective 3.1: Promote and support an adequate supply of diverse spaces for businesses of all sizes to operate.

Objective 3.2: Provide clear guidance and pathways for starting a business in Albemarle County.

Objective 3.3: Utilize partnerships to advance the County's support for under-resourced entrepreneurs.

**Goal 4: Albemarle County will foster opportunity for upward economic mobility with pathways for all community members to thrive through local and regional partnerships.**

Objective 4.1: Partner and collaborate with local schools, colleges, universities, and/or other education and training providers to provide community members with opportunities for job training, career development, access to career ladder jobs, and job applications.

Objective 4.2: Collaborate with departments across the County and with public and private partners in the community to reduce barriers to workforce participation, including by increasing access to affordable housing, multimodal transportation options, affordable childcare, and broadband.

## **Phase 2 Community Input Themes**

The following summary highlights the major themes from community engagement heard to date during AC44 Phase 2. These are organized by the chapter's Goals.

### **Supporting target industries, primary businesses and emerging opportunities**

- Support target industries, including tech and bio-tech, industrial and manufacturing, agriculture and tourism
- Provide financial support for primary businesses
- Commercial and business taxes are too high

### **Using Project ENABLE to guide economic development**

- Attract new jobs to the county
- Facilitate business location and development, including availability of land and infrastructure
- Reduce barriers for land development, permitting and construction and site design requirements
- Support infill and adaptive reuse of buildings, especially vacant commercial and office space

### **Supporting start-ups, small businesses, and entrepreneurs**

- Provide space for start-ups, entrepreneurs, incubators, and shared workspaces.
- Provide financial support for small businesses, including minority businesses
- Support artisans and craft-businesses, including provision of workspace

- Improved broadband and internet support for remote workers and home businesses
- Reduce restrictions for home businesses and home occupations

## **Supporting career growth and development**

- Enhanced jobs training, including vocational and technical training
- Supporting local community colleges/technical schools
- Encourage career education in public schools
- Greater support for public schools, address overcrowding, improved teacher salaries
- Support career advancement programs
- Promote and support livable wages
- Improved transit connections for workers
- Greater access for entry level and mid-level jobs

## **Planning Toolkits Feedback – Step 2:**

The following community input was shared during engagement on the planning toolkits

- Employment uses should be priority within activity centers
- Support redevelopment, including vacant and under-utilized properties
- Improve pedestrian access to employment areas
- Redevelop older commercial areas within Places29 Master Plan
- Increase employment uses in Crozet Centers
- Stonefield needs more mixed-use and commercial variety
- Increase commercial and retail uses to balance housing
- Support adaptive reuse within crossroads communities for small businesses, including country stores, small groceries and general stores
- Mixed support for non-residential uses at the Shadwell and Yancey Mills rural interstate interchanges
- Some support for agricultural processing, light industrial and warehousing businesses at interchanges

## Project Enable

The County's Economic Development Office (EDO) plays a vital role in supporting the local economy. The mission of the EDO is to attract additional financial resources into the community. The EDO utilizes [Project EnABLE](#), a strategic plan (adopted in 2019) that serves as a playbook to achieve the goals and objectives of the Comprehensive Plan.

### Project ENABLE Goals

**Goal 1: Strengthen Existing Business Retention and/or Expansion to Help Existing Businesses be Successful**

**Goal 2: Improve the Business Climate**

**Goal 3: Lead the County's Readiness to Accommodate Business**

**Goal 4: Seek Private Investment to Further the Public Good**

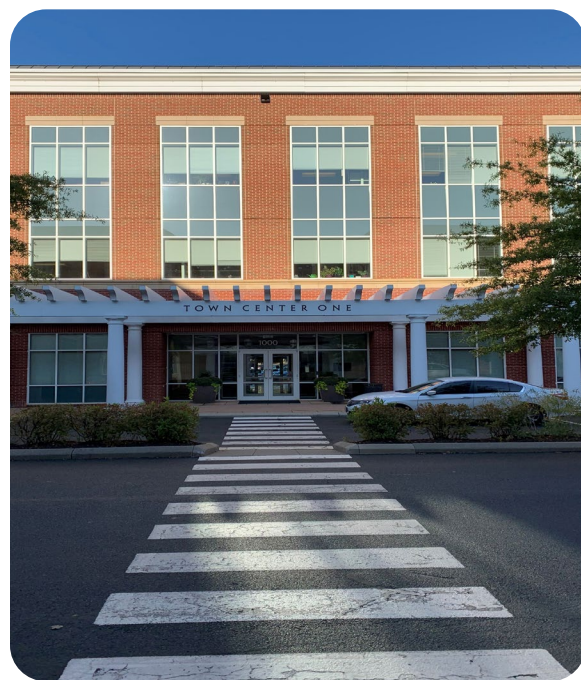
**Goal 5: Educate the Community and Enhance the Visibility of Economic Development**

**Goal 6: Lead External Efforts to Create Strategic Partnerships with Economic Development Institutions**

**Goal 7: Partner to Expand Efforts to Build the County's Tourism Sector**

## Creating a Healthy Economy

A healthy local economy contains a diversity of business types and can thrive when the flow of resources (mostly financial) coming into the community exceeds the flow of resources going out. A positive flow of resources is generated by supporting an appropriate balance of primary businesses to consumptive businesses. A primary business produces a good or service locally, and then primarily sells to customers outside of the Charlottesville metropolitan statistical area, which imports new financial resources into our community. In contrast, consumptive businesses primarily serve the local community and circulate financial resources between businesses and people. Eventually, however, the financial resources being circulated will ‘leak out’ of the community, which is why a well-balanced mix of primary and consumptive businesses results in a more vibrant and resilient economy.



**North Fork Town Center**

The Economic Development Office (EDO) supports the financial resources of the community by prioritizing and providing service directly to primary businesses. Building a strong local economy requires EDO support of a multitude of healthy primary businesses that offer residents career ladder job opportunities, competitive wages, career advancement and a supplementary pathway to thrive for all in the community. The new wealth brought into the county from primary businesses is essential to the health of the local consumptive businesses (e.g., movie theaters, coffee shops, restaurants, dentists).

In 2018, intellectual capital (a workforce’s expertise, knowledge, experience) in our community was identified as an important asset that could be leveraged for economic development. To do so, a strategy was developed in cooperation with the University of Virginia and the City of Charlottesville to tap into the abundance of intellectual capital and support entrepreneurship as a key strategy.

Entrepreneurship is an economic activity that involves designing, launching and running a new business in order to earn profit. Entrepreneurship taps into creativity and innovation to discover new ideas that can be turned into a business. The partnership between the county, University, and City is currently formulating a process for ideas to

be vetted and supported, ultimately leading to a pipeline of start-up business ventures. These start-up businesses will provide both present and future locally grown primary businesses that offer career-ladder jobs for residents.

As an economic development strategic plan, Project EnABLE's primary purpose is to Enable A Better Life Economically. Implementation of Project EnABLE includes strengthening target industries, which are key to the existing local economy. The priorities in this strategic plan purposely align with the existing Comprehensive Plan and the County's overall [Strategic Plan](#). Together, they create an economy driven by:

- **primary businesses; and**
- **consumptive businesses; and**
- **key economic sectors such Defense, Life Sciences, High Technology, and Tourism; and**
- **public-private partnerships; and**
- **strategic partnerships with the public sector; and**
- **tourism**

By strengthening primary businesses, indirect support is transferred to consumptive businesses and workforce initiatives, improving the business climate, utilizing public-private partnerships to attract investment, support for tourism, as well as creating strategic partnerships with institutions to leverage the immense local intellectual capital.

## Land Use Buildout Analysis

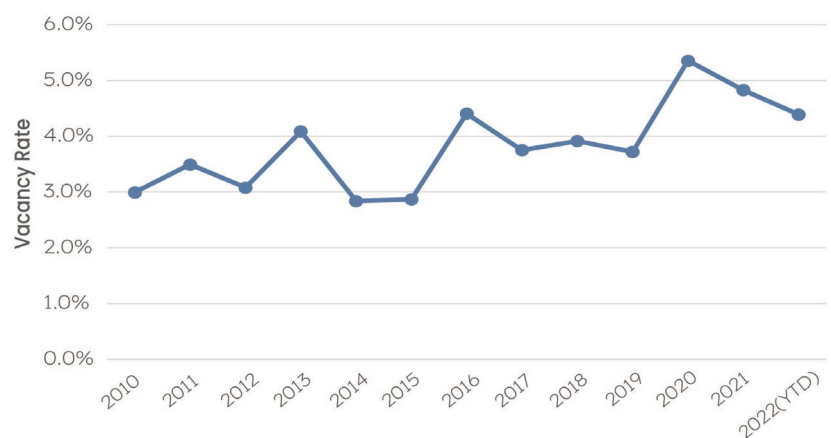
Land use is an important factor to consider regarding the support, growth and sustainability of economic development in Albemarle County. The allocation of adequate land for commercial, industrial and office use is essential in providing locations for existing and future businesses to expand and thrive. County land designated for commercial, retail, office, industrial and mixed-use development is predominately located within Albemarle County's Development Areas. The Development Areas, which are intended for more intensive development (and provision of supporting infrastructure), comprise approximately 5% of county land. The remaining 95% of county land is designated as the Rural Area and is intended for agriculture, forestry, and natural-resource conservation.

The [Albemarle County Land Use Buildout Analysis](#) published in 2022 captures past trends for development as well as projections for potential buildout capability in the future for different categories of land use in the county. Non-residential land uses within the buildout analysis are divided into categories of retail, office, industrial and hotel use.

Trends for county retail, office and industrial uses are captured over the previous 10-12 years. Retail development (as measured by total square footage completed each year) increased between 2010-2016, with an overall decline between 2017-2022. This local trend corresponds with a national decline in local retail business, as retail sales have increased through online shopping. The trend was amplified by COVID-19, as social distancing further reduced shopping visits to stores and retail outlets. Retail vacancy rates in the county fluctuated between 3% and 4.5% between 2010 and 2019 but spiked above 5% in 2020 during the emergence of COVID-19. The two following years have shown a gradual decline in retail vacancy with rates dropping closer to 4% in 2022.

Construction of office space in the county has greatly varied each year between 2010 and 2022. Office building completion records range from zero square feet some years to more than 100,000 square feet for other years. 2020 included a significant addition of nearly 140,000 square feet of office space, with the majority from an office building known as 'UVA at North Fork', formerly known as the 'UVA Research

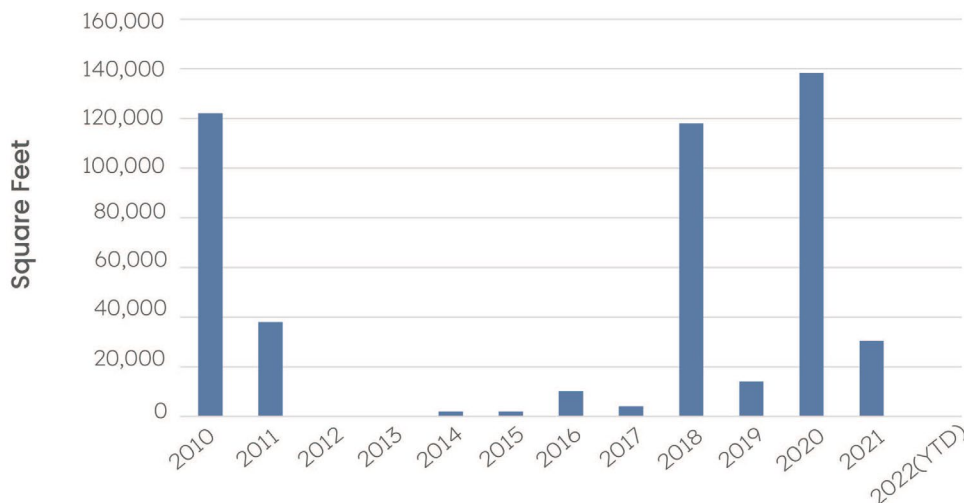
Park.' Like the retail sector, vacancy rates for offices significantly increased in 2020 due to impacts of COVID-19. During 2020, an increased number of employers expanded remote working options for their staff. According to an analysis by Pew Research Center (COVID-19 Pandemic Continues to Reshape Work in America, February 2022), remote work continues to influence office activity with approximately 59% of workers with jobs that can be done remotely electing to stay at home as of January 2022. Hybrid work options will likely continue to impact the quantity and type of office space that businesses need in the coming years. Office lease rates in Albemarle County increased from \$22.02 per square foot in 2010 to nearly \$25 per square foot at year-end 2021. Average annual increases were 1.1% for the county, but rent growth slowed in the last two years with an increase of only 0.3% per year.



**Albemarle County Retail Vacancy Rate Trends 2010-2022**

Industrial uses have seen a national increase trend in recent years, especially for warehouse and distribution centers. Impacts include the growth of online retail and measures by companies to improve last mile-distribution gaps in pursuit of faster order fulfillment. The land use analysis includes the industrial categories of manufacturing, warehouse, distribution, and storage, and research and development/flexible workspaces. Warehouse space (including mini-warehouse and storage facilities) is the leading type of industrial space in the county. Since 2010, construction data indicates an average of 41,000 square feet of industrial space completed per year. Warehouse, including mini-storage facilities, is the leading product type completed in recent years.

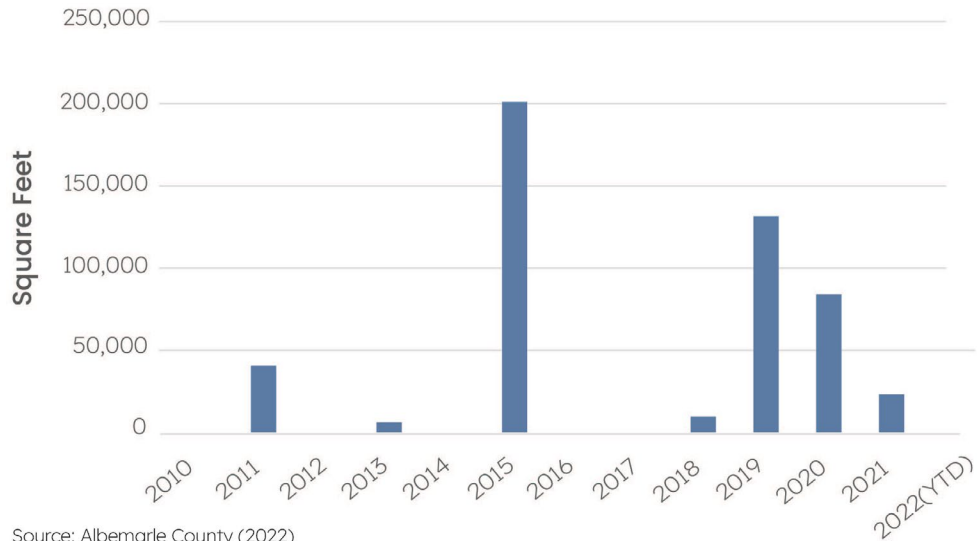
Industrial space vacancies have declined throughout the county in recent years. The most recent vacancy rate (2022) for industrial uses in the county was approximately 1.4%, following a general decline in vacancy since 2016 when vacancy rates peaked above 9%. As a point of comparison, current vacancy rates in other major Virginia markets are also well below historic averages, including 2.6% in Richmond, 4.5% in Roanoke, 1.3% in Harrisonburg, and 1.7% in Virginia Beach. Rental rates for industrial uses have shown a steady increase over the past decade with average leases increasing from \$8.94 per square foot to \$12 per square foot in 2021.



Source: Albemarle County (2022)

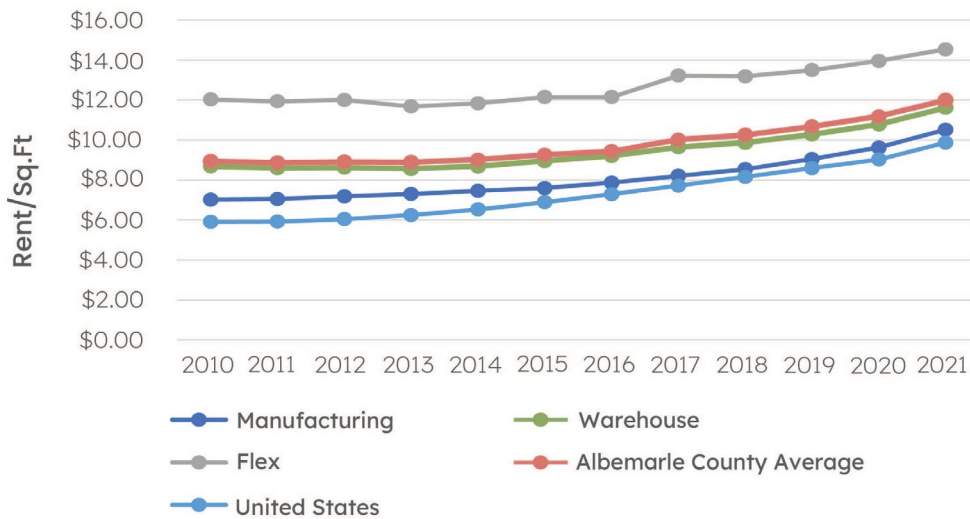
### Albemarle County Office Completion Trends 2010-2022

Hospitality has been significantly impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic. National forecasting suggests that recovery for the hospitality industry will likely extend into 2023 as the public regains confidence in traveling safely throughout the country. Forecasts also anticipate that professional business travel will likely remain lower than pre-pandemic levels considering the increased use of virtual meetings across the business sector.



### Albemarle County Industrial Completion Trends 2010-2022

Prior to 2020 COVID-19 impacts, hotel occupancy in the county typically ranged between 70% and 73%, which is considered a healthy rate in the travel and tourism industry. After dipping to 46% in 2020, occupancy rates have rebounded above 65% for the following two years.



### Albemarle County Industrial Rate Trends 2010-2022

Looking to the future, the land use analysis estimates a maximum theoretical buildout for each non-residential land use category (retail, office, industrial and hotel use) based on buildable land within the Development Areas. The assumptions used to identify buildable land are outlined on pages 4-11 in the full analysis. The maximum buildout estimate is compared to a demand forecast, projecting 20 years into the future. The 20-year demand includes a range of low-end and high-end projections. Retail, office and industrial uses calculate buildout based on square footage, whereas hotel use buildout is based on number of hotel rooms.

### Summary of Non-Residential Findings: Land Use Buildout Analysis, 2022

| Land Use Type        | 20-Year Demand Forecast |       | Maximum Buildout Estimate |
|----------------------|-------------------------|-------|---------------------------|
|                      | Low                     | High  |                           |
| Retail (sq. ft.)     | 1.0 M                   | 1.3 M | 1.9 M                     |
| Office (sq.ft.)      | 750,000                 | 1.0 M | 2.7 M                     |
| Industrial (sq. ft.) | 950,000                 | 1.1 M | 5.5 M                     |
| Hotel (rooms)        | 750                     | 900   | 2,554                     |

The summary findings for retail, office, industrial and hotel uses indicate that adequate land exists to accommodate each use in relation to the projected demand over the next 20 years. However, it is important to note that the demand forecasts do not take into consideration various development limitations, such as the availability of land, cost of development, and environmental constraints. Due to these limitations, the buildout analysis includes a chapter on constraining factors (see discussion beginning on page 50 in Chapter 6 of the [Buildout Analysis](#)). Considering these limitations, actual buildout is expected to be less than the maximum buildout estimate.

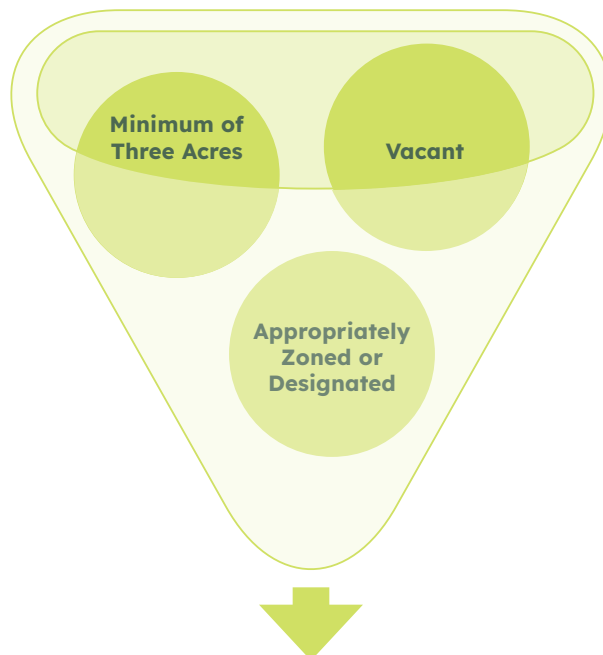
A secondary analysis was conducted to determine prime properties for non-residential development. Evaluation criteria included adequate size (defined as three or more acres), vacant land, and appropriate zoning. The evaluation indicated only 39 parcels within the Development Areas that are prime for non-residential development.

Another measure called a “Tier Analysis” illustrates the availability of readily developable land. This measure ranges on a scale from Tier 1 to Tier 5. Tier 1 sites are the least ready for development (raw land) to Tier 5 (site is ready to construct). Albemarle County Economic Development staff reviewed each of the 39 parcels that met the tier criteria to estimate its level of site readiness. 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. None of the properties met the definition of a Tier 5 site. Staff estimated

that nine additional properties could also support development in the 12–18-month time-frame but may require some extension of infrastructure. Given the limited number of these properties and their concentrated location, it will be important for the county to identify and support a diverse selection of prime properties throughout the Development Areas to support non-residential development and future job creation.

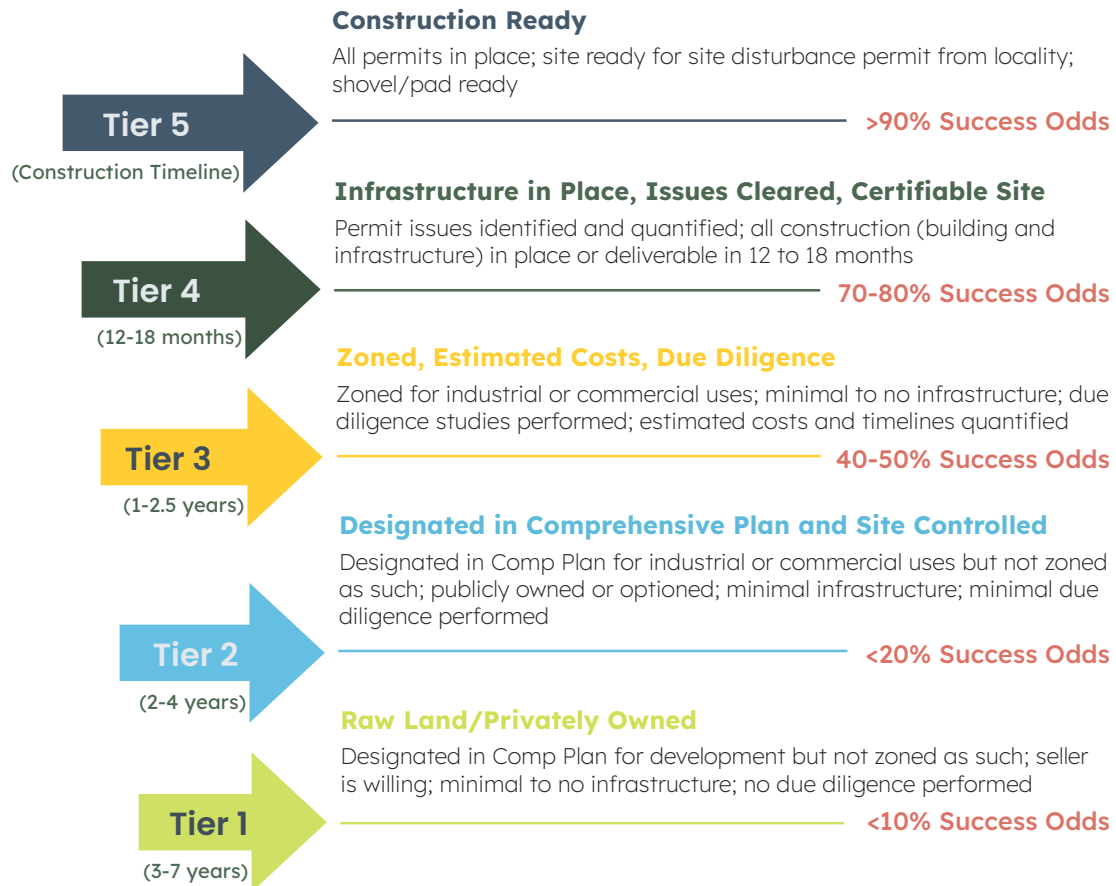


### 22,900 Total Development Area Parcels



**39 Development Area Tier  
Qualified Parcels**

## Tier System Analysis for Site Selection (as defined by VEDP)



## Demographics Trends & Projected Jobs Growth

Albemarle County's current population and anticipated population growth is an important aspect to consider when projecting job growth for the future. US Census data estimated a 2020 population of 112,395 residents for Albemarle County. By 2040, the county population is expected to be 138,485, an increase of approximately 26,000 additional residents (source: Weldon Cooper Center for Public Service). It is also important to note that presently more than 32% of county residents are under the age of 24. Recent data indicates most Albemarle County employees are between the age 25 and 64. The younger demographic of approximately 36,000 individuals under the age of 24 will be entering the workforce over the next twenty years. The expanding county population and the entry of younger residents into the workforce will require support of existing employers and growth of new businesses in the coming decades.

Commute patterns measured in 2014 indicated 31,948 commuters traveling into the county for employment versus 26,811 commuters leaving the County jurisdiction for a net influx of 5,137 commuters. However, it is important to note that the primary destination for out commuters is the City of Charlottesville, with 12,919 commuters. The next highest commute destinations are Fairfax County (1,362), Henrico County (768), Richmond City (625), and Harrisonburg City (548). The leading jurisdictions that commuters are arriving from include Charlottesville City (5,966), Fluvanna County (3,185), Greene County (2,412) and Louisa County (1,567).

Employment data for the state and Albemarle County over the past ten years indicates declining unemployment rates between 2011 and 2019 with a sharp increase in 2020. The 2020 unemployment increase was part of a greater national and global trend due to impacts from the COVID-19 pandemic. However, 2021 indicated a decreasing unemployment trend as jobs began to adjust and recover from the effects of the global pandemic.

Virginia Employment Commission data shows that most county employers consist of four or fewer employees: 2,687 businesses, which is more than half of the 4,103 businesses in the county.

Occupational trends from the Virginia Employment Commission project a net increase of 17,708 total jobs (10.59%) across all county industries between 2014 and 2024. The ten-year trend for leading occupations predicts that healthcare related jobs will be the leading category in jobs growth followed by computer/mathematics, personal care/service, food preparation/serving, and community/social service occupations (in descending order). Declining occupations projected over the same ten-year period are led by switchboard operators/answering service employees, US Postal Service workers, non-USPS mail workers, electrical engineers, and social science workers.

| Employers by Size of Establishment |                  |                |
|------------------------------------|------------------|----------------|
|                                    | Albemarle County | Virginia       |
| 0 to 4 employees                   | 2,687            | 203,032        |
| 5 to 9 employees                   | 575              | 40,335         |
| 10 to 19 employees                 | 399              | 29,234         |
| 20 to 49 employees                 | 291              | 21,238         |
| 50 to 99 employees                 | 88               | 7,199          |
| 100 to 249 employees               | 45               | 3,622          |
| 250 to 499 employees               | 13               | 1,066          |
| 500 to 999 employees               | ***              | 357            |
| 1,000 and over employees           | ***              | 250            |
|                                    | <b>4,103</b>     | <b>306,333</b> |

## Employment by Industry

Quarterly data published by the US Bureau of Labor Statistics indicates that health care and social assistance is the leading employment category for Albemarle County, followed by professional/scientific/technical services, retail, manufacturing, management of companies/enterprises. Virginia Employment Commission (VEC) data lists the top ten employers of the county as:

1. **Commonwealth of Virginia**
2. **Sentara Healthcare**
3. **Department of Defense**
4. **County of Albemarle**
5. **State Farm Mutual Auto**
6. **Crutchfield Corporation**
7. **Walmart Associates Inc.**
8. **Northrop Grumman Corporation**
9. **Pharmaceutical Research Association**
10. **Wegmans Food Markets Inc.**

VEC employment data indicates that the leading employment industry categories are government (federal, state and local), healthcare/social assistance, retail, and professional/scientific/technical services. Projected industry employment from 2014 to 2024 predicts healthcare/social assistance to be the top growth industry, followed by professional/scientific and technical, construction, arts/entertainment/recreation, and finance/insurance.

Project EnABLE has identified industries that have strong growth potential and offer high-quality jobs (higher wages, opportunity for advancement). These target industries are based upon a regional industry study, originally conducted in 2012. Project EnABLE recommended target industries include:

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

The target industries list also contains complementary industries of health services and arts/design/sports & media.

Notable county entities for the defense and security industry include the Northrop Grumman Corporation and Rivanna Station. As a defense contractor, Northrop Grumman operates a 25,000 square foot facility in the county that conducts systems engineering and intelligence analysis work supporting the US military. Rivanna Station, operated by the US Government, includes the National Ground Intelligence Center (NGIC), a division of US Army intelligence and Security Command. Also operated within Rivanna Station are the Defense Intelligence Agency and the National Geospatial-Intelligence Agency.

| <b>Total County Impact</b> (in 2020 USD)     |                  |
|----------------------------------------------|------------------|
| <b>County Economic Impact</b>                | <b>\$567.2 M</b> |
| Percentage of Economy                        | 7%               |
| Total Jobs (Direct, Indirect, and Induced)   | 4,970            |
| Average Defense-related Income               | \$82,866         |
| Average County Income                        | \$63,019         |
| <b>Direct Defense Spending</b> (in 2018 USD) |                  |
| Defense Contracts                            | \$182.0 M        |
| Personnel Compensation                       | \$192.8 M        |
| Pensions & Transfers                         | \$29.0 M         |
| <b>Total Defense Spending</b>                | <b>\$403.9 M</b> |

#### Department of Defense Impacts: Albemarle County

## Rural Area Economy

Most Albemarle County businesses are located within the County's Development Areas. Despite the concentration of businesses in the Development Areas, the Rural Areas are also critical to the county's economy. Rural Areas comprise approximately 95% of the county land area and contain industries such as agriculture, forestry, tourism and agritourism. More than 16,000 county parcels qualify for Land Use taxation as properties with designated agriculture or forestry use.

Agriculture accounts for over 80 billion dollars annually in the State's economy. More than 900 farms operate within Albemarle County, the majority ranging between 10 and 180 acres. The leading livestock production is beef cattle with more than 300 farms. Hay and corn are the leading crops grown. In addition to agriculture, forestry provides significant economic value in the county, with recent data indicating a timber harvest value between 1.5 and 5.4 million dollars in a single year.

Also of economic significance to Albemarle County's Rural Area are the tourism and agritourism industries. Each year, visitors are drawn to the county by tourist attractions in the Rural Area such as Shenandoah National Park and Skyline Drive in the northwest portion of the county. Wineries, distilleries and breweries are also a significant tourism draw in the Rural Area. Wineries generate revenues through the production and sale of wines, on-site wine tastings and event hosting, such as parties and weddings.

## Phase 1 Engagement Recap

- The county should **support job creation** (especially career ladder jobs) and business growth, including entrepreneurship and start-ups. Several comments expressed support for reducing barriers to business expansion and development.
- **Appropriately located development** is needed for economic growth, which could include 'clusters' of businesses, amenities, and incubator spaces. Commercial development should be concentrated within the Development Areas. Feedback also suggested that businesses within the Rural Areas should be properly scaled, such as small businesses and home businesses.
- **Adequate land should be available** for existing business expansion and new businesses **with supporting infrastructure**.
- There was mixed support for and concern with using land adjacent to **interstate interchanges** for business development.
- Economic development should be supported through **overlapping initiatives**, such as parks and recreation expansion. Creation of the Three Notched Trail in the western portion of the county was specifically identified as a recreational project that would support the local economy.
- **Economic inequities** should be identified and addressed. Expanding economic opportunities should be supported for individuals of varying socioeconomic status and demographics.
- **Supportive services** (e.g., childcare, job training, public transit) should be provided along with affordable housing for people employed in the county
- **Partnerships should be created or strengthened** with local schools/colleges/universities for workforce development opportunities
- **Regenerative agriculture** should be practiced in the Rural Area, which supports climate action and local food systems.

## Framework and Economic Development



The [Framework for an Equitable and Resilient Community](#) was developed during Phase 1 of AC44. The Framework presents a snapshot of what the county aspires to be in the year 2044, which is a community that has centered equity and resilience in its policies, plans, and actions. The Framework was developed based on input from community members, the AC44 working group, the Planning Commission and the Board of Supervisors, and by incorporating equity and climate action considerations, reviewing goals in the current Comprehensive Plan, and researching best practices. Moving forward, the Framework will be used to guide updating Plan recommendations, including Plan Goals, Objectives, and Strategies.

Relevant guidance from the Framework for an Equitable and Resilient Community for this chapter includes: .

- Ample job opportunities and clear pathways for community members to thrive
- Ensuring available land and infrastructure to support new industries, while supporting and expanding existing businesses and local entrepreneurs
- Workforce access to robust educational and job training with career ladder opportunities for all, and a supportive system that includes affordable housing, flexible transportation options, and accessible community services
- Available makerspaces and incubators for local artists, entrepreneurs, and small businesses
- Economic development integrated into broader community planning, incorporating data to track economic opportunity and plan for industry and workforce development needs as growth occurs
- Preserve and enhance vital local assets, including historic resources, natural resources, activities, local businesses, and arts and cultural resources to leverage a variety of tourism opportunities
- Partner with schools, colleges, and universities to support a 21st century workforce

## Data Sources and References

Albemarle County Assessors Office: Parcel Data, 2022

[Albemarle County Land Use Buildout Analysis](#), 2022

The Economic Impact of Virginia's Agriculture and Forest Industry: Weldon Cooper Center for Public Service, 2017. [Ag-Forestry.Virginia.gov](http://Ag-Forestry.Virginia.gov)

US Census Bureau, OnTheMap Application & LEHD Origin-Destination Employment Statistics, 2014. [OnTheMap \(census.gov\)](http://OnTheMap(census.gov))

US Department of Agriculture (USDA): 2017 Census of Agriculture, County Data [NASS.USDA.gov](http://NASS.USDA.gov)

Virginia Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services (VDACS): Virginia Agriculture Facts and Figures, 2019-2020. [VDACS.Virginia.gov](http://VDACS.Virginia.gov)

Virginia Employment Commission (VEC), Economic Information and Analytics, Long-term Industry and Occupation Projections, 2014-2024

Virginia Employment Commission (VEC): Virginia Community Profile, Albemarle County 2022. [VirginiaLMI.com](http://VirginiaLMI.com)

Virginia Military Factbook, Secretary of Veterans and Defense Affairs, 2020  
Virginia Fact Book ([vada.virginia.gov](http://vada.virginia.gov))

Weldon Cooper Center for Public Service, 2021