

# AC44 Comprehensive Plan

## Parks, Recreation and Open Space



Board of Supervisors  
March 5, 2025

# Work Session Agenda



- Summary of previous feedback (including PC work session)
- Community Input Themes
- Parks, Recreation, & Open Space Chapter Overview
- Upcoming Schedule
- Chapter focus topics for discussion



# Chapter Focus Topics



- Objective 3: **Accelerate the development of urban parks and greenways** within a 15-minute walk of residents in the Development Areas
- Objective 5: **Increase the environmental sustainability and resilience** of County parks + greenways
- Objective 6: Expand the greenways network to enhance outdoor recreation and **increase multimodal connections**



# PC & BOS: Previous Feedback



- Prioritize **new parks** (including small pocket parks) in **DAs**
- **Too much reliance on developers** to provide open space
- Consider **additional funding sources** for parks/greenways
- Improve **connectivity** of parks/greenways system
- Parks serve as important **community gathering** spaces
- Consider **maintenance and implementation** costs



# PC Feedback 2.25.25 Work Session



- Objectives should be measurable + achievable
- Support for expansion of parks/open space within DA
- Integrate area plans for parks/open space planning and trails connectivity
- Expand funding sources (e.g. land acquisition fund)
- Expand Rivanna trail system and river access (boat launches)
- Consider gathering spaces – arts/cultural events





# Community Input Themes



## Parks/trails connectivity

- More pocket/urban parks and greenway access to neighborhoods
- Improve walking/biking connectivity to parks/greenways

## Recreation & amenities

- Need more facilities/amenities for teens
- Expand amenities at parks (restrooms, benches, etc.)
- More athletic amenities + recreation programs
- More outdoor spaces for music & entertainment
- More shade in parks is needed

## Accessibility

- Improve universal access (wheelchairs, strollers, etc.)



# Community Input Themes



## Sustainable land management

- Protect tree canopy, stream buffers, wildlife habitat
- Invasive species management

## Water access & amenities

- Expand boat launches – esp. Rivanna River
- More public splash parks and pools



# Community Input: Open House 1/29/25



- Support for future Parks and Rec master plan (Action 1.3) and ongoing public engagement and updates (Action 1.2)
  - Including updating Parks and Rec Needs Assessment (Action 1.1)
- Support for acquiring and using County-owned land for parks and greenways
- Revisit specific recreational uses and amenities at existing and future parks





# Parks, Recreation & Open Space Goal



Connected & accessible network of parks and trails that will provide:

- Passive & active recreation opportunities
- Active modes of transportation
- Enhanced climate resilience
- Welcoming and inclusive amenities



# Parks & Rec. Objectives



1. **Plan for the parks and recreation needs** of current and future community members
2. **Increase County ownership and use of land** for parks, greenways, blueways, and recreation facilities, prioritizing the Development Areas
3. **Accelerate the development of urban parks, pocket parks, and greenways** in the Development Areas
4. **Increase access to County parks and trails** with an emphasis on inclusion, equity, and universal access
5. **Increase the environmental sustainability and resilience** of County parks and greenways
6. **Expand and improve the trail networks and blueways** in County parks and greenways and **increase multimodal connections**
7. **Increase the availability and accessibility of recreation** programs, classes, and facilities

# Summary of Changes from 2015 Plan



## Continued themes:

- Developing parks and greenways
- Protecting natural areas
- Expanding access to parks and greenways
- Enhanced multimodal connections



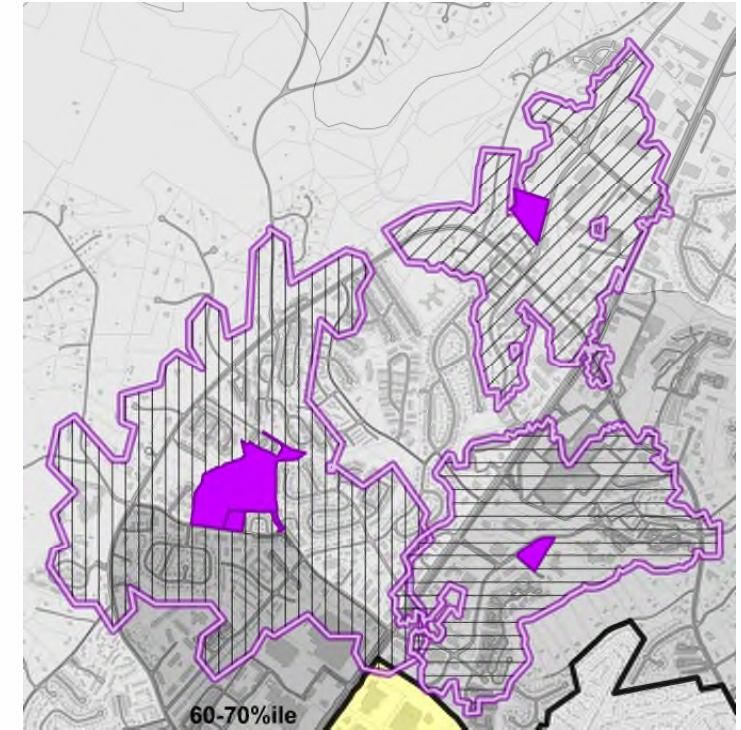


# Summary of Changes from 2015 Plan



## New emphasis:

- Increase County owned land for parks and greenways
- Expand parks and greenways in Development Areas, including pocket parks
- Increase walkable access (0.25-mile or 15-minutes) to parks and greenways (DA)
- Enhance focus on environmental resilience and sustainable land management practices



Example of 'walkshed' analysis

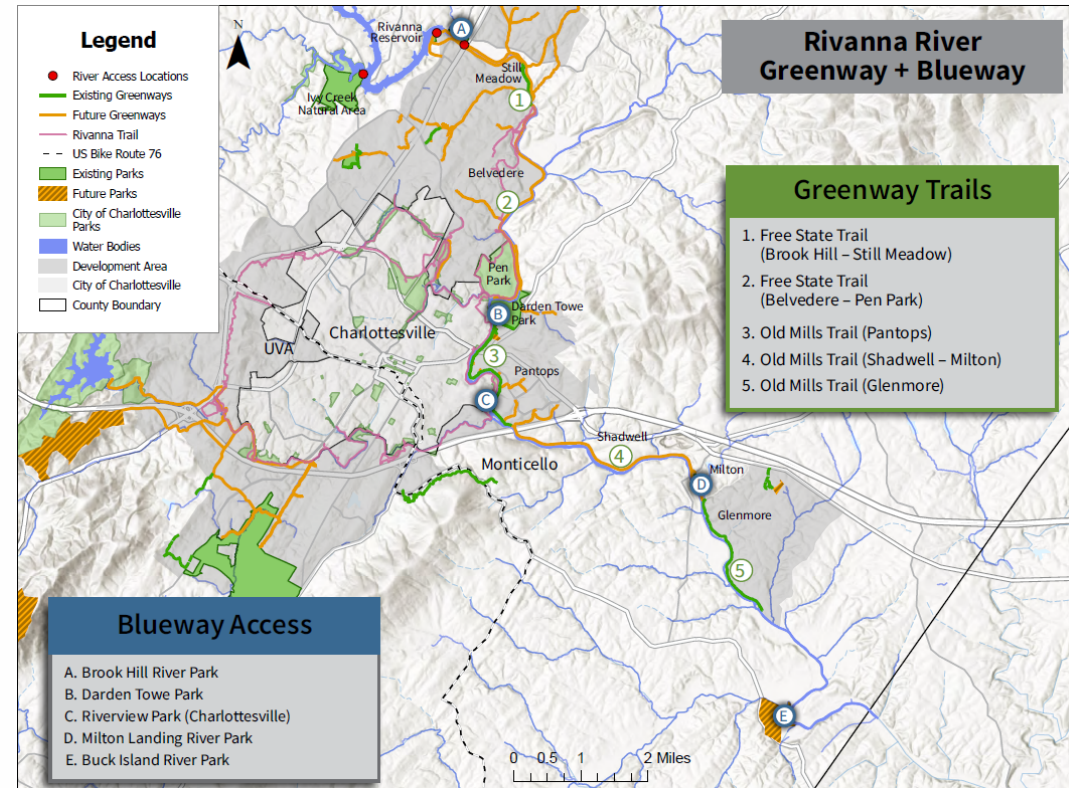


# Parks, Rec & Open Space Highlights



## Additional points of emphasis:

- Rivanna River Greenway + Blueway: Enhance, expand, and connect parks, trails, and river access amenities along the Rivanna River





# Parks, Rec & Open Space Highlights



## Additional points of emphasis:

- Urgent Need: New facilities and amenities are needed now – with additional (growing) demand resulting from increased visitation and use, anticipated population growth, and new trends and uses

### TOTAL VISITS TO COUNTY PARKS

YEAR	TOTAL* PARK VISITS	CHANGE FROM PREVIOUS YEAR
2019	1,450,765 Total* Park Visits	N/A
2020	1,682,180 Total* Park Visits	15.9% increase over previous year
2021	1,914,509 Total* Park Visits	13.8% increase over previous year
2022	1,895,243 Total* Park Visits	1.0% decrease over previous year
2023	2,061,931 Total* Park Visits	8.9% increase over previous year

611,166 more visits in 2023 than in 2019 (42% increase)

*\*Excludes Charlotte Y Humphris Park, Dorrier Park, Brook Hill River Park, Milton Landing, Crozet Greenway trails, and Glenmore section of Rivanna Greenway trail.*

### 3.3.2 FACILITY RANKINGS

Facility/Amenity	Priority
Walking, Hiking and Biking Trails	High
Youth Athletic Fields - Diamond and Multi-Purpose	
Open Space/Conservation Parks	
Small Neighborhood Parks	
Large Community Parks	
Aquatic Facilities	
Off-Leash Dog Parks	
River Access/Boat Launches	
Pavilions and Picnic Shelters	

Pre-existing high priority demand for more trails, athletic fields, and river access (2018)

*2018 Recreation And Needs Assessment*





# Related Chapters



- **Transportation** – portions of County's trail network that are maintained at a higher standard (paved shared-use paths) are part of the transportation network
- **Environmental Stewardship** – resource inventory and management planning: removing invasive species, trail siting, restoring stream banks, etc.
- **DA Land Use + Housing** – open space/pocket parks, multimodal connections to residential areas, proximity to amenities



# Related Chapters



- **Historic/Scenic/Cultural Resources** – protected resources with signage/info within parks/greenway areas
- **Thriving Economy** – recreation is a major tourist draw
- **Community Facilities** – County-owned parks + open space, public school playgrounds, fields, courts, trails, etc.
- **Resilient Community** – community centers as potential community resilience hubs



# Schedule



**CHAPTER REV.  
DA Land Use &  
Community Design  
Guidelines (contd.)  
BOS: April 2**

**THRIVING ECONOMY**  
PC : March 11  
BOS: April 16  
Virtual Lunch and  
Learn: February 27

**Comm Facilities +  
Infrastructure**  
PC : March 25  
BOS : April 16  
Lunch & Learn (3.27  
tentative)





# AC44 Engagement



[Engage.albemarle.org/ac44](https://engage.albemarle.org/ac44)

- Chapters will continue to be shared on the Phase 3 page
  - Ask questions
  - Share feedback on Actions
- Engagement events and PC/BOS work sessions will continue to be posted on the main page and Phase 3 page
- Sign up for emails/newsletters!

AC44 Phase Three is Coming to You!  
**Here's Our Rollout for Plan Chapters:**

NEW CHAPTERS RELEASED EVERY MONTH

**How We'll Invite You to Participate**

- e-Newsletters
- Engage Albemarle Website
- Social Media
- Albemarle County Website Calendar

**Ways You Can Participate**

- Read the Materials
- Use the "Ask a Planner" Tool
- Attend the Monthly Lunch & Learns
- Attend Work Sessions
- Comment on Plan Actions

**Materials We'll Prepare for You**

- Draft Chapters in PDF
- Easy to Read Chapter Summaries
- Chapter 101 Video Presentations
- Recordings of the Lunch and Learns

The Plan chapters are shown below. Green buttons are clickable, and grey buttons indicate that the content is coming soon.

- READ THE DRAFT CHAPTER **Development Areas Land Use**
- READ THE DRAFT CHAPTER **Rural Area Land Use**
- READ THE DRAFT CHAPTER **Transportation**
- READ THE DRAFT CHAPTER **Thriving Economy**



# Chapter Focus Topics

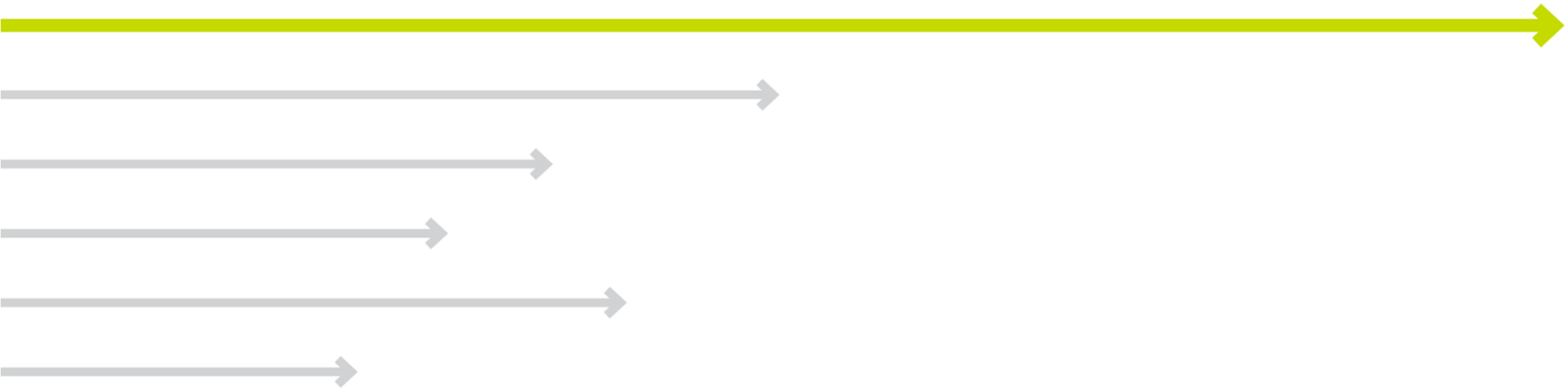


- Objective 3: **Accelerate the development of urban parks and greenways** within a 15-minute walk of residents in the Development Areas
- Objective 5: **Increase the environmental sustainability and resilience** of County parks + greenways
- Objective 6: Expand the greenways network to enhance outdoor recreation and **increase multimodal connections**
- Any other objectives/actions needing input?





# Back Pocket Slides





# Objectives + Actions



- **Objective 1:** Plan for the parks and recreation needs of current and future community members through a planning process that is equitable, inclusive, and responsive to existing and emerging needs.
- **Objective 2:** Increase County ownership and use of land for parks, greenways, blueways, and recreation facilities, prioritizing recreation opportunities in the Development Areas.
- **Objective 3:** Accelerate the development of urban parks, pocket parks, and greenways in the Development Areas to increase the percentage of community members within the Development Areas that are within a 15-minute walk from a public park and/or public greenway trail.
- **Objective 4:** Increase access to County parks and trails with an emphasis on inclusion, equity, and universal access.
- **Objective 5:** Increase the environmental resilience of County parks and greenways while restoring the health of the natural environment.
- **Objective 6:** Expand and improve the trail networks and blueways in County parks and greenways and increase multimodal connections to parks and greenway trails.
- **Objective 7:** Increase the availability and accessibility of recreation programs, classes, and facilities, including athletic fields.

<b>OBJECTIVE</b>	<i>Parks 1. Plan for the parks and recreation needs of current and future community members through a planning process that is equitable, inclusive, and responsive to existing and emerging needs.</i>
<b>ACTION</b>	
1.1	Regularly update the countywide Parks and Recreation Inventory and Needs Assessment.
1.2	Perform robust community engagement with multiple venues for community input during the planning for parks and recreation facilities.
1.3	Develop a county-wide Parks and Open Space Master Plan with an emphasis on increasing equitable access and responding to existing and emerging needs. Include an analysis to identify communities with lower access to recreation opportunities and open spaces.
1.4.	Lead parks and greenways planning with local and regional partners.
1.5.	Develop a funding resources plan for countywide development, expansion, and enhancement of parks, greenways, community centers, and other recreation amenities and destinations.
1.6	Identify and pursue alternative funding sources and partners for new facilities, amenities, and infrastructure, such as grants, tax revenues, or public bonds.
1.7	Provide public art in County parks through the creation and funding of an arts in public places program featuring local artists.
<b>OBJECTIVE</b>	<i>Parks 2. Increase County ownership and use of land for parks, greenways, blueways, and recreation facilities, prioritizing recreation opportunities in the Development Areas.</i>
<b>ACTION</b>	
2.1	Develop and implement a parks and greenways Land Acquisition Policy with an emphasis on providing equitable and safe access to parks and greenways.
2.2	Establish interim parkland management plans for undeveloped County parklands addressing environmental features, historic and cultural resources, public access, and environmental stewardship best practices.
2.3	Expand public private partnerships and increase resources that accelerate the implementation of County parks projects through joint efforts with the Albemarle County Parks Foundation.



<b>OBJECTIVE</b>	<i>Parks 3. Accelerate the development of urban parks, pocket parks, and greenways in the Development Areas to increase the percentage of community members within the Development Areas that are within a 15-minute walk from a public park and/or public greenway trail.</i>
<b>ACTION</b>	
3.1	Evaluate and update requirements for new development, zoning, and change in land use projects to contribute and connect to the countywide parks and recreation system.
3.2	Provide additional and equitably distributed public parks and trails in the Development Areas, prioritizing areas that improve safe and convenient walking or biking access to parks/open space and higher density residential areas.
<b>OBJECTIVE</b>	<i>Parks 4. Increase access to County parks and trails with an emphasis on inclusion, equity, and universal access.</i>
<b>ACTION</b>	
4.1	Complete an assessment of universal accessibility at County parks, greenways, blueways, and community centers. Incorporate the Equity and Climate lens in the evaluation process.
4.2	Implement universal access enhancements and facilities to improve and expand accessibility, including providing ADA-accessible trail segments and ADA-compliant recreational amenities near trailheads at all County parks and greenway trailheads where feasible.
4.3	Expand vehicular access and parking options, including electric vehicle charging infrastructure, at parks, greenways, and blueways trailheads and access locations.
4.4	Collaborate with Albemarle County Schools, Facilities, and Environmental Services to enhance the role of current and future public schools in the parks and recreation system, including public access, planning and design of new schools, and connecting public schools to public parks.
4.5	Increase public transportation access to County parks as outlined in the County’s transportation chapter of AC44.
4.6	Provide additional recreation facilities and services to reach underserved visitors including teens, seniors, and people with special needs.
4.7	Provide public accessible restrooms at all County parks.

OBJECTIVE	<i>Parks 5. Increase the environmental resilience of County parks and greenways while restoring the health of the natural environment.</i>
ACTION	
5.1	Increase the use of environmentally sustainable practices through the planning, development, and management of County parks and greenways, such as using native canopy trees, managing invasive species, conserving and restoring native plant communities, and creating opportunities for nature-focused recreational experiences.
5.2	Conduct natural resource inventories and resource management plans for County parks, greenways, blueways, and undeveloped parklands. Update inventories and plans on a regular established schedule.
5.3	Implement best practice lake management strategies to reduce harmful algae blooms and improve water quality in county lakes.
5.4	Provide interpretive signage in County parks with information on the natural environment and historic and cultural resources.
5.5	Sustain and increase partnership projects and programs with organizations that primarily focus on environmental conservation, sustainability, and resilience.
5.6	Coordinate volunteer teams and crews to support parks and greenways including through removal of invasive species and sustainable land management.

<b>OBJECTIVE</b>	<i>Parks 6. Expand and improve the trail networks and blueways in County parks and greenways and increase multimodal connections to parks and greenway trails.</i>
<b>ACTION</b>	
6.1	Construct and maintain sustainable new trails for hiking, mountain biking, and horseback riding, providing a variety of trail options for different trail users.
6.2	Update open space requirements for development to prioritize the usability and accessibility of open and recreational space and to require connections to the existing or planned public open space network of trails and parks.
6.3	Accelerate the development of the planned Rivanna River Greenway + Blueway improvements, including greenways and blueways along the Rivanna River and other key destinations for water-oriented recreation.
6.4	Improve and expand river access facilities and amenities in coordination with partner agencies such as the Virginia Department of Wildlife Resources, the Virginia Department of Conservation & Recreation, and the Rivanna Conservation Alliance.
6.5	Support the use of the Three Notched Trail study funded by a RAISE grant to accelerate the development of the paved Three Notched Trail.
6.6	Continue to sustain volunteer trail maintenance partnerships and service activities to support the efforts of County staff and provide opportunities for community engagement and participation.



<b>OBJECTIVE</b>	<i>Parks 7. Increase the availability and accessibility of recreation programs, classes, and facilities, including athletic fields.</i>
<b>ACTION</b>	
7.1	Expand schedule options for recreation classes, programs, and other activities
7.2	Evaluate field surface and outdoor lighting options that support both environmental stewardship and community use for new and upgraded athletic fields.
7.3	Develop partnerships to provide special events, cultural programs, and educational opportunities in County parks and community centers.





# Summary of Board Input: Environmental Stewardship

## 1/22 Work Session:

- Support for **Low Impact Development (LID) stormwater management** – preference for incentivizing/encouraging (vs requiring)
- Consider adopting **Chesapeake Bay Preservation Act**
- Use **County-owned** land and property to demonstrate best practices
- Consider re-establishing **groundwater monitoring** in the RA
- Evaluate **biosolids** monitoring and reporting practices used by other Virginia localities and consider adding an action
- Continually update **data**, including for stream classifications/locations





# Summary of Board Input: Rural Area Land Use Updates

## 2/19 Work Session:

- Support for **criteria for potential future RA/DAs boundary changes** – builds on criteria shared in Ph2 with addition of considerations for areas to change from DAs -> RA
- Add Plan recommendation for future **transfer of development rights** program
- Allow **small-scale businesses** (e.g. country stores, daycare, small offices) by special use permit with review criteria
  - **Restaurants** need different review criteria – they're a higher impact use
- Future Board work session for DA Land Use and Community Design Guidelines

