

Small Area Plan Public Engagement Plan DRAFT

Project Description

The Places29 Master Plan, originally adopted in February 2011, included the area around the Rio Road/Route 29 Intersection as a Priority Area for public investment and land use decision-making and called for using a Small Area Plan to coordinate land uses with recommended road improvements. With the now ongoing construction of the Rio Road grade-separated intersection (completion expected by December 2016), the Small Area Plan became a critically important undertaking to ensure that land use, transportation, infrastructure, and other recommendations both incorporate the new grade-separated intersection and provide guidance for the development of the larger area, which has been identified as a future focal point for new urban development and redevelopment.

The Places29 Master Plan expected the Small Area Plan to feature:

- 1) Updated current and projected traffic information
- 2) A future land use map showing land uses at a more detailed level than in the current Places29 Master Plan
- 3) A neighborhood street network that further details the improvements recommended in the current Places29 Master Plan, including streetscape elements
- 4) Preliminary design of the recommended transportation improvements
- 5) Identification of right-of-way for the transportation improvements, including new local streets
- 6) Measures to minimize the impacts of the recommended transportation improvements
- 7) Identification of opportunities for business development, expansion and relocation
- 8) Identification of strategies for fostering revitalization and redevelopment to a more compact, urban and mixed use form, including amendments to the County Code and projects for the Capital Improvements Program

The Small Area Plan will be completed in two phases. Phase I will develop two to three land use alternatives for the study area that are based on a market assessment of future business potential and capture rates and will include a trip generation analysis for each land use alternative. Phase I runs from May 2016 to March 2017. Phase II will conduct a comprehensive transportation analysis for each of the land use alternatives and will use the preferred alternative to develop a series of transportation improvements to best address safety, congestion and accessibility issues. Timing and funding for Phase II will be determined in the Winter of 2016.

Phase I of the Small Area Plan is being supported by a direct on-call consultant, funded through the Virginia Office of Intermodal Planning and Investment's Urban Development Area Technical Assistance grant program. The consultant team consists of Renaissance Planning Group and Michael Baker International.

Work Product for this Project

The Small Area Plan will become an amendment to the Places29 Master Plan once approved and adopted by the Board of Supervisors. Prior to that, work products will be presented to the Board of Supervisors in the form of a final report, one for each phase.

The process will encourage early identification of short-term implementation strategies that can be enacted parallel to the planning process.

Phase I (May 2016 – January 2017; funded)

The report for this phase will include:

- Study area analysis of existing conditions
- Market assessment
- Land use alternatives
- Preliminary transportation analysis

Phase II (to be determined)

The report for this phase will include:

- Transportation analysis
- Transportation improvements plan
- Final land use plan
- Urban design plan
- Transportation plan
- Implementation action plan

Study Area

The Small Area Plan will focus on the 29 North Urban Development Area (the mixed use, commercial, and urban density portions of the County along Route 29 North, from Hydraulic Road to Woodbrook Drive), as defined in the Places29 Master Plan. A more refined study area boundary will be determined during the study area analysis and considering input from stakeholders.

Specific study topics include land use, transportation, demographics, and market conditions.

Project Methodology (Phase I)

Staff and the consultant will complete several preliminary analyses to capture existing conditions and identify opportunities to align land use and transportation based on demographics, growth patterns, environmental features, and market conditions. Sources for information will include the US Census, the Bureau of Economic Analysis, the Bureau of Labor Statistics, the Virginia Employment Commission, the National Center for Education Statistics, and others, as well as local data for land use, transportation, environmental and natural features, and the County's adopted zoning regulations.

The project is divided into four activity areas – market assessment, study area analysis, land use alternatives, and preliminary transportation analysis. As draft deliverables are prepared, the consultant will present the materials to the Community Advisory Committee for input and refinement, then will invite the community at-large to provide input before presenting to the Planning Commission and the Board of Supervisors. Focus groups will be used to solicit direct feedback on specific questions related to redevelopment.

Level of Public Participation

Public involvement – Staff will work directly with the public throughout the process to ensure that issues, aspirations, and concerns are consistently understood and considered. This includes elements of public information and outreach as well as two-way communication.

Staff will work with stakeholders to ensure that their concerns, aspirations, and issues are directly reflected in the alternatives developed, using the Places29 Community Advisory Committee meetings as

the venue to fulfill a major portion of the stakeholder role. Staff will report to the Board how public input influenced the development of alternatives.

Public Participation Goals

- Provide educational opportunities for Places29-area residents regarding general planning processes and the Small Area Plan process specifically
- Gather public feedback regarding community desires for the Small Area Plan land use alternatives
- Disseminate community input to the Planning Commission and the Board for their consideration
- Establish realistic expectations about the process and timeline for completion
- Keep the public informed about the Small Area Plan as it moves through the process
- Provide a transparent process for how public input is used in developing alternatives and strategies

Role of the Places29 Community Advisory Committee

The Board of Supervisors appointed the Places29 Community Advisory Committee (P29CAC) members to provide assistance, feedback and input related to the implementation of the Places29 Master Plan. The P29CAC will play a critical role in advising on and assisting with the Small Area Plan process, including providing input on materials presented at Community Meetings. The P29CAC will also invite citizens and other stakeholders who may be interested to attend regular P29CAC meetings where the Small Area Plan is an agenda item to participate in those discussions. County staff will work with the P29CAC to design elements of the public engagement process and to regularly discuss the effectiveness of community involvement.

The P29CAC is comprised of three sub-committees; Places29-North, Places29-Rio, and Places29-Hydraulic. The Places29-Rio and Places-29 Hydraulic sub-committees will serve as the core Small Area Plan Study Advisory Committee as they represent the urban development area that will form the basis of the initial study assessment. Accordingly, these two sub-committees, augmented by other interests as may be determined, will be the primary stakeholder group for the Small Area Plan engagement. Places29-North will be regularly briefed on the process.

As with all Comprehensive Plan amendments, the Planning Commission will provide the overall guidance and decision-making on the Small Area Plan approval process, and the Board of Supervisors will have the ultimate authority for approval.

The Small Area Plan Advisory Committee, as constituted by the two P29CAC sub-committees, will provide a sounding board at each Community Meeting and will provide guidance for the process, as outlined below:

- Provide general advice and input to staff and the consultant team on the project and on how to encourage public input and engagement
- Review information compiled before each Community Meeting and provide a sounding board for key study area stakeholders
- Review information compiled and advise staff and consultant team on best ways of summarizing input for Planning Commission and Board work sessions.

Other Stakeholders

- North Charlottesville Business Council

- Chamber of Commerce
- Area large landowners/property managers
- Area businesses, including small property owners and lessees
- Area homeowner associations
- Special interest organizations, including the Northside branch of JMRL

Public Participation Tools

- Project website on Albemarle.org
- Press Release
- A-mail – Places29 Master Plan list
- YouTube videos
- Focus group
- Community Meetings (2)
- Places29 CAC meetings
- Survey instrument

Other Roles & Responsibilities

- Staff – Work with the community to ensure the effectiveness of the public engagement process, provide review and recommendations to the Planning Commission and the Board of Supervisors in accordance with established County policies and plans, keep the community informed regarding the progress of the Small Area Plan, communicate how public input has shaped decisions regarding the study, present final recommendations to the Planning Commission and the Board of Supervisors.
- Consultant team – Prepare materials for the P29CAC, the focus group, the Planning Commission, and the Board of Supervisors, and participate in key meetings in order to convey findings and to consider and be responsive to feedback.
- Technical Committee – Provide general coordination and guidance on the technical aspects of the Small Area Plan research process. Provide assistance in data collection, identify data collection needs, and ensure continuity between this project and other County and regional studies and initiatives. The Technical Committee will be comprised of staff from various Albemarle County departments and divisions, the Virginia Department of Transportation, the Metropolitan Planning Organization, the Albemarle County Service Authority, and the Jefferson Madison Regional Library.
- Focus groups – Focus groups will be invited to provide input on discrete topics as identified. A targeted focus group will include representatives of the North Charlottesville Business Council, the Chamber of Commerce, large landowners/property managers and area businesses with a particular emphasis on early identification of potential business development initiatives and incentive strategies.
- Community At-large– Two (2) community meetings will be held during the course of Phase I, the first at the conclusion of the study area analysis and the second for the presentation of the Land Use Alternatives. Additional community meetings will be scheduled as determined to be necessary, particularly as part of Phase 2. Special invitations to these meetings will be sent to the “Other Stakeholders” identified above.
- Planning Commission – Planning Commissioner liaisons to the P29CAC will listen and provide information as prescribed in the Rules of Procedure for the CACs during Phase I. Phase II of the Small Area Plan will culminate in an amendment to the Comprehensive Plan. The Planning

Commission directs updates to the Comprehensive Plan and will be expected to manage this update in their legally prescribed role. The Planning Commission will conduct its required public process, including work sessions and a public hearing, on the draft Small Area Plan, resulting in a recommendation to the Board of Supervisors. The Planning Commission will be briefed by the consultant team and staff in June, August, and December 2016.

- Board of Supervisors – The Board of Supervisors has the final decision-making authority for approving all amendments to the Comprehensive Plan, of which the Small Area Plan will be a part. The Board of Supervisors will conduct its required public process, including work sessions and a public hearing, on the draft Small Area Plan, with the opportunity to adopt the Small Area Plan as an amendment to the Place29 Master Plan. The Board of Supervisors will be briefed by the consultant team and staff in June, August, and December 2016.

Feedback Loop

The public participation plan will ensure dissemination of public input to decision-makers and back to the public at-large to demonstrate how comments and concerns have been recorded, understood, and accurately communicated. It will also show the public how their input has been translated and how it influenced the outcome of the project. Staff will make available the following resources as part of the public participation feedback loop:

- A Small Area Plan website will be created and will house up-to-date information on all meetings and other events.
- All comments generated at public meetings will be recorded and available to review on the project website.
- Drafts of project deliverables will be communicated to the community prior to being presented to the Planning Commission and the Board of Supervisors. All public meetings will be posted to the website and open to the public for their attendance.
- The Places29 Amail list will be used to keep interested citizens up-to-date.
- Press releases and other materials will be sent out as appropriate to keep the community informed about the process.
- Survey instruments will be used in meetings and will be available afterwards online to allow for feedback to be recorded, and summaries of the feedback received will be posted on the project site.
- YouTube will be used to share information about the project for people who are unable to attend meetings in person; one video will explain what the Small Area Plan is and another will share information about the land use alternatives developed as part of this process.

Evaluation

Staff will use evaluation as an ongoing tool to assess and improve the public engagement plan as the project moves forward, including the following strategies:

- Informal feedback
- Surveys
- End of project evaluation

		May	June	July	August	September	October	November	December	January	February	March
Consultant Tasks	Project Initiation/ Reconnaissance											
	Market Assessment											
	Study Area Analysis											
	Land Use Alternatives											
	Transportation Analysis (prelim)											
	Draft Final Document/ Presentations											
	Final Report											
Briefing	Places29 Community Advisory sub- Committees											
	BOS/PC Briefing											
Engagement	Webpage Update											
	Press Release											
	Email											
	Community Meeting											
	Focus Group											
	YouTube											
	Survey											
	Northside Library											
	Public Hearing											