

COUNTY OF ALBEMARLE



DEPARTMENT OF COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT

Transportation Project Prioritization Report

Transportation Project List

The Albemarle County Transportation Project List (i.e. “Project List”) includes all major transportation projects recommended through any planning process in which Albemarle County has participated. These planning processes include the AC44 Comprehensive Plan, Area Master Plans, Small Area Plans, corridor studies, and other transportation plans including bicycle and pedestrian or greenway plans. These planning documents have been developed by the County or a consultant on behalf of the County or on behalf of a Development Project, by the Thomas Jefferson Planning District Commission, the Charlottesville-Albemarle Metropolitan Planning Organization (C-A MPO), or by state agencies such as the Virginia Department of Transportation (VDOT) or the Department of Rail and Public Transit (DRPT) among others.

The current Albemarle County Transportation Project List includes 169 transportation improvement projects, as shown in the project identification maps in Attachment B. Information about each project is provided in Attachment C.

Purpose of Project Prioritization

With 169 projects identified from a variety of sources, the purpose of prioritizing projects, generally, is to understand how each project aligns with and furthers the County’s goals and values. Projects that rank highly are most closely aligned with the goals and values and are of highest importance for moving forward.

Given limited resources for design and construction, project prioritization serves as a decision support tool for project selection. Ideally, prioritization aligns limited resources with projects of highest need and highest importance.

However, the ranking of projects according to the County’s values and priorities will not always align with funding opportunities. Transportation funding programs contain their own eligibility and selection criteria. The top-ranked projects may not be eligible or competitive for specific program funding. Nevertheless, prioritizing projects according to the County’s goals is valuable in understanding which projects are the County’s highest priorities independent of outside influences.

Previous Prioritization Efforts

Albemarle County staff have conducted transportation project prioritization efforts in the past, most recently in 2023. That effort established a scoring methodology with six factors – Land Use, Economic Development, Safety, Congestion, Equitable Accessibility, and Environmental –

that aligned County goals with the evaluation categories of SMART SCALE, the largest funding program for transportation projects in Virginia. Staff presented the results of the most recent prior effort to the Board of Supervisors in October 2023 during a work session. The Board of Supervisors did not approve the ranked list of projects at that time due to work on AC44.

2026 Project Prioritization

Over the past four months, County staff have been working to update the Project List and revisit the prioritization methodology.

Purpose

The purpose of this prioritization effort is to develop a prioritized list of transportation projects to inform project selection for project development and funding applications over the next three years.

County staff will begin development of the County's first Multimodal Transportation Plan (MMTP) – one of the work projects to implement the AC44 Comprehensive Plan – in FY2027. The prioritization effort being conducted now is intended to provide a list of ranked transportation priority projects while MMTP development is underway. This initial prioritization is a first step in the multimodal transportation planning process, which staff presented to the Board on April 15, 2026 as part of AC44 Implementation.

Updates

The prioritization effort consisted of updating the Project List to include new projects recommended in recently completed plans and studies and revisiting the prioritization methodology. County staff updated data sources and modified the scoring methods to increase transparency and address Supervisors' concerns and questions raised in 2023, without major changes to the basis of the methodology.

Quick Effort to Identify Benefits and Drawbacks

The goal of this prioritization effort is to produce a prioritized project list in a relatively quick timeframe using readily available data and resources, without a large-scale overhaul of the methodology. Staff have noted benefits and drawbacks to the existing process, as discussed later in this report. The MMTP development process will likely illuminate additional opportunities for changes to the prioritization methodology. County staff anticipate a more comprehensive remodeling of the prioritization methodology upon completion of the MMTP.

Project Scoring Methodology

County staff evaluated each individual project according to a scoring methodology similar to the 2023 effort, using readily available data and simple GIS and visual evaluation techniques. Projects can score up to 10 points in each of the six factors – Land Use, Economic Development, Safety, Congestion, Equitable Accessibility, and Environmental – for a theoretical maximum of 60 points. Table 1 below shows the evaluation questions for the six factors. The details of the scoring methodology, including the individual assignment of points and sources of data, are provided in Attachment D.

Table 1: Project Scoring Evaluation Questions

| Factor | Evaluation Questions |
|-----------------------------------|--|
| 1) Land Use | a) Is the project located in the Development Area? b) Does the project serve an Activity Center and how close is it to that Activity Center? c) Is the project located near community resources like schools, libraries, parks, and community centers? d) Are residential developments proposed or under construction near the project, and what is the size of those developments? e) Does the project enhance multimodal transportation facilities that connect to community resources? |
| 2) Safety | a) Does the project address a location where serious crashes are occurring? b) Is the location of the project on the VDOT Top 100 Potential for Safety Improvement list? c) Are there pedestrian/bike crashes happening at the project site? d) Is the project identified in the Move Safety Blue Ridge Safety Action Plan? e) Is the project on the High Injury Network identified in the Move Safely Blue Ridge Safety Action Plan? f) Is the project on a VDOT Pedestrian and Bicycle Safety Action Plan Corridor? |
| 3) Congestion | a) Is the project located on a high-volume corridor/intersection? b) Has a Traffic Impact Analysis or other study determined operational issues at the project location such as failing Level of Service? c) If the project will enhance transit, bike, or pedestrian facilities, will it provide opportunities to divert trips from single occupancy vehicles to alternative means? |
| 4) Economic Development | a) Is the project located in an employment center designated in AC44? b) Are non-residential developments proposed or under construction near the project, and what is the size of those developments? c) Will the project improve travel times or efficiency for freight vehicles traveling to and through the county primarily by access to a Corridor of Statewide Significance? d) Is the project located near an area where there are a significant number of jobs, and will it improve access to that area? |
| 5) Equitable Accessibility | a) Is the project located in an area identified as underserved? b) Does the project improve access to employment areas for underserved populations? c) Will the project improve transit access or pedestrian/bike infrastructure? |
| 6) Environmental | a) Does the project avoid floodplains and critical/preserved slopes? b) Does the project reduce emissions by preventing unnecessary idling at intersections or improve the effectiveness of the transportation network? c) Does the project avoid sensitive environmental areas including known Threatened and Endangered Species Habitat or other resources identified in the Biodiversity Action Plan? d) Does the project avoid impacts to identified historic properties, Historic Districts, or historic sites? e) Does the project reduce vehicle miles traveled by providing multimodal transportation options? |

Project Stages

The 169 projects in the Project List are at different stages of project development. Some projects are simply ideas identified in a master plan but have not undergone technical engineering evaluation or conceptual design. Other projects have been examined for technical feasibility and have preliminary concept designs and planning-level cost estimates. Still others are somewhere in the middle.

Updates to the prioritization effort include categorizing each project into a Project Stage from one to four, representing various levels of readiness and project development.

1. Generally, projects in Stage 1 require additional study for feasibility and concept definition before they can be considered candidates for funding applications.
2. Stage 2 projects have enough definition and feasibility to be considered a viable project and need preliminary engineering to produce cost estimates for funding applications.
3. Stage 3 projects have been designed to the level needed for funding applications and need funding to be identified.
4. Stage 4 projects are fully funded and are removed from the Project List.

All projects in Stages 1-3 have been scored and ranked. Attachment C (Albemarle County Transportation Project List by Project ID, with project descriptions and detailed scoring results) provides the individual scores for each factor and the overall project scores. Projects can be found in the map series in Attachment B, and looked up in Attachment C by Project ID.

The initial results described below focus on projects in Stages 2 and 3, as these projects are closest to the level of readiness needed for funding applications. Attachment F lists the project priorities by ranking, categorized by the project categories described below and by project stage. Attachment E provides maps of the projects in Stage 2 or 3 with the ranking by category and stage.

Initial Results

Tables 2 and 3 below show the results of the scoring and ranking for the top projects in Stage 2 or 3 with scores above 30 points. These tables are a subset of the project rankings in Attachment F.

The projects are presented in two categories:

- (1) Vehicular Safety and Congestion projects will significantly improve vehicular safety and/or congestion. Many of these projects include improvements for bicyclists and pedestrians.
- (2) Bike/Pedestrian Mobility and Safety projects will provide new or improved facilities for bicyclists and pedestrians, generally without major improvements to facilities for motorized vehicle travel.

Table 2 shows the top-ranked projects in the Vehicular Safety and Congestion category. Table 3 shows the top-ranked projects in the Bike/Pedestrian Mobility and Safety category.

While the tables below present the projects discretely categorized into one category or the other, it is important to recognize there is overlap, and most projects fall somewhere in between. Many Vehicular Safety and Congestion projects will improve facilities for bicyclists and pedestrians in the project scope. Conversely, many Bike/Pedestrian Mobility and Safety projects will encourage

more people to travel by walking or bicycling, which improves system capacity for movement across modes.

The ranked project lists in Tables 2 and 3 should not be interpreted as a definitive list, whereby the County seeks funding for only the top ranked projects. As explained in the Methodology Benefits and Drawbacks section, the scoring methodology does not account for other factors such as cost and project effectiveness that may influence project selection. Additionally, funding opportunities may arise in which projects that are ranked lower on the list, even those that are not top ranked, are most eligible and competitive, and these projects may be funded before projects that rank higher. The intent of this project prioritization is to inform, not dictate, project selection.

Table 2: Top-Ranked Vehicular Safety and Congestion Projects (Stage 2+3, Score >30 points)*

| Rank | ID | Project Name | Score |
|------|-------|---|-------|
| 1 | N5001 | 5th Street Interchange | 48.0 |
| 2 | N5004 | 5th Street and Stagecoach Road Intersection RCUT + Sidewalk and Shared Use Path | 45.0 |
| 3 | CZ019 | Route 250 Roundabout at Old Trail Drive | 38.0 |
| 3 | HM005 | US 29 at Airport Rd Intersection Improvements | 38.0 |
| 5 | N1001 | Hydraulic Rd/Lambs Rd/Whitewood Rd Intersection Improvements, improved SUP along Hydraulic, and Continuous Green T at Georgetown Road | 36.5 |
| 5 | N2018 | Rio Road East/Old Brook/Hillsdale Intersection | 36.5 |
| 7 | N3004 | Riverbend Drive Improvements | 33.5 |
| 7 | N4001 | Avon Street and Mill Creek Drive Intersection Improvements | 33.5 |
| 9 | N6005 | US 250 (Ivy Road) at Canterbury Road/ Old Garth Road Roundabout | 32.0 |
| 10 | N3016 | Rolkin Road at Abbey Road Roundabout | 31.0 |
| 11 | N1002 | Albemarle High School - New Loop Road | 30.5 |

*Most of the Vehicular Safety and Congestion Projects include improvements for bicycle and pedestrian facilities.

Table 3: Top-Ranked Bike/Pedestrian Mobility and Safety Projects (Stage 2+3, Score >30 points)

| Rank | ID | Project Name | Score |
|------|-------|---|-------|
| 1 | N4011 | Rivanna River Bicycle and Pedestrian Crossing | 41.0 |
| 2 | N5008 | Moore's Creek Greenway Trail Segment 2 - Old Lynchburg Rd to 5th St Station Parkway | 40.5 |
| 3 | N1003 | Berkmar Drive Shared Use Path from Rio Road to Woodbrook Drive | 40.0 |
| 4 | N2002 | Northtown Trail Segment 04 - Rio Road East | 39.0 |
| 5 | N5002 | Old Lynchburg Road Shared Use Path - Ambrose Commons Drive to 5th Street/Old Lynchburg Road | 38.0 |
| 6 | N3003 | Route 20 Infrastructure Improvements (south) between US 250 and Elk Drive | 37.5 |
| 6 | N4003 | Avon Street Shared Use Path - 5th St Station Parkway to Avon Ct | 37.5 |
| 8 | CZ028 | US 250 Shared Use Path - Old Trail Drive to Crozet Ave | 36.0 |
| 8 | N4005 | Avon Street Shared Use Path- Mill Creek to Peregory Lane | 36.0 |
| 10 | N4010 | Route 20 Shared Use Path from City line to PVCC entrance | 32.0 |
| 10 | N6001 | Old Ivy Road Bicycle & Pedestrian Improvements | 32.0 |

Methodology Benefits and Drawbacks

The prioritization effort identified several benefits and drawbacks to the methodology.

Benefits:

- Project rankings generally reflect the overall level of need and importance.

- Methodology produces a wide range of results, with the highest project score of 49 points, and the lowest project score of 0 points.
- Methodology produces variability within each of the six scoring factors.
- Project Stages group projects according to next steps

Drawbacks:

- Evaluation methodology scores projects highly in locations with high issues, but does not evaluate how well a project would address the issues.
- Evaluation methodology does not incorporate project feasibility, constructability, or cost into the project scoring.
- Top-ranked projects may not be compatible with funding program eligibility or selection criteria.
- Methodology does not incorporate the priority of a project as assigned in a plan. (Short-term “catalyst” projects do not receive more points than a long-term future project.)

Next Steps

- Board of Supervisors to approve the ranked priority project list (Attachment F)
- County staff to identify projects eligible for various funding opportunities over the next 2-3 years.
- County staff to begin development of the MMTP

Attachments

Attachment B: Map Series of All Projects

Attachment C: Albemarle County Transportation Project List by Project ID, with project information and detailed scoring results

Attachment D: Scoring Methodology

Attachment E: Map Series of Priority Project Rankings

Attachment F: Draft 2026 Albemarle County Priority Transportation Project List, ranked by project category and stage of readiness