

Rio/29 Small Area Plan Community Meeting Summary

September 15, 2016

The County and its consulting team on September 15, 2016 held a community meeting open to all members of the community with an interest in learning about and providing feedback for the Rio/29 Small Area Plan. This summary describes the main points that participants made in regards to uses and forms to new development or redevelopment they would like to see in the area.

What uses would you like to see in this area?

- **More open space and civic spaces:** spaces for community gatherings; more green space and trees; natural open space that is accessible and usable; a civic space or park such as the IX Park (in Charlottesville) for music, festivals and outdoor events; access to the Rivanna River; a park near the library; relaxation spaces.
- **A mixture of uses:** more places to live, eat, work that are well integrated; redevelopment of existing shopping centers such as Albemarle Square and Fashion Square into a mixture of uses with housing. The redevelopment could be similar to other “lifestyle centers” across the country that bring together housing, shops, and offices on one master planned site.
- **More housing:** a broader mix of housing types; housing not segregated by age or other ways.
- **More office space**
- **Transportation alternatives:** public transportation, walking, and biking.
- **Civic uses:** a civic use at the area’s core or as a central feature for the area
- **Less parking:** there should be less parking at the existing intensity of development, and future parking should be addressed in a more efficient and safe manner, since most people will still have to drive here and park for the foreseeable future.
- **More community oriented uses**
- **Entertainment uses:** Ice skating, restaurants, entertainment, outdoor amphitheater.
- **A transit hub**

What do you want future development to look like?

- **More natural features:** the area should reflect the natural beauty of the County rather than be all pavement; add more trees and greenery; there should be more green areas attractive to millennials and baby boomers.
- **Buffer along Route 29:** a treeline buffer along Route 29; screen development from Route 29.
- **Transition to single family neighborhoods:** sensitivity to the transition between development and neighborhood; area should blend well to adjacent single family neighborhoods; preserve single family housing and provide setback and stepback from single family.
- **Height restrictions:** buildings shouldn’t be too tall, especially near residential neighborhoods that are on the periphery; between 3-4 stories height is appropriate, more height is needed to provide density, but don’t block views; views of mountains should be embraced; development should work with hilly terrain.
- **Pedestrian/Bicycle access:** provide pedestrian crossing across Route 29; provide bike/ped connectivity between key points and centers such as the new library; make these areas accessible to all modes.
- **Connectivity:** Provide connections within and around the four corners of the intersection.

- **Pedestrian safety:** focus should be safety for pedestrians, now and in future; wide streets safe for pedestrians; pedestrians should have feeling of comfort, cars aren't going too fast.
- **Parking on periphery or in garages:** Make parking accessible to retail and residential, but also make area walkable; provide structured parking on outside of village or retail areas and provide walkability internally; start with redevelopment of shopping centers (Albemarle Square) and make these "village" type blocks that people can drive to and park and walk around without having to get into cars.
- **Energy efficient/sustainable:** Create areas using energy efficient materials, use geothermal heating.
- **Dark skies:** Low lighting and direct light towards the ground to preserve nighttime views of the sky.
- **Examples of other developments with features people like:**
 - Crocker Park in West Lake Ohio: a mixed use area with central street you can drive down, but it is a hassle to drive through. It is easier, more enjoyable to park and walk. Area has live music, outdoor festivals, etc.
 - Shirlington in Arlington County
 - Short Pump
 - Reston Town Center – example of having parking in garages or on periphery
 - Stonefield does well with greenspace/trees and having a mix of uses, but it could be better on safety for pedestrians and access; streets in Stonefield are too narrow.

What do you not want to see in this area in the future?

- Tall buildings
- Strip malls and big box stores
- Extensive surface parking lots
- Overly dense residential areas
- Auto-oriented development
- Auto dealerships
- Increased congestion, noise and light pollution
- Decreased safety
- Destruction of natural areas and assets
- Large subdivisions
- Inappropriate scale of development for the area