



Historic, Scenic, & Cultural Resources

Draft Goals and Objectives



Fall 2023

This document includes the draft Goals and Objectives for the updated Historic Resources 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.

Historic, Scenic & Cultural Resources Overview

Albemarle County’s rich historic, scenic, and cultural resources contribute to the county’s identity as a unique and storied place. These resources also contribute significantly to the quality of life of Albemarle’s residents, and they form a strong base for the experience of visitors traveling throughout the county. Given this significance, these resources must be preserved and protected to maintain Albemarle’s distinctive character and the resulting benefits to the community.

Maintaining the county’s character first requires the systematic identification of the individual historic, cultural, and scenic resources that comprise that character. Celebrating the resources and sharing information about them communicates their value to residents and visitors, which engenders community pride and responsibility. Building on this strong foundation, a balanced program of incentives and protection measures can support active preservation.



**Cove Presbyterian Church,
Covesville VA**

This work also plays a critical role in enhancing equity in the community. A more inclusive history of the county can be established by recognizing and uplifting undertold

narratives that represent a broad and diverse range of community members and the places that represent those events and efforts. A more complete picture of the county’s development can be told by expanding the traditional definition of “significance” to acknowledge those places, and by increasing storytelling and access to those stories. By making sure we do not lose the places that tell our stories we can understand, celebrate and reconcile our past.

These resources also have an important role to play in meeting our climate action goals. Preserving and reusing historic properties conserves building materials and energy resources and helps retain the natural landscape. Protecting scenic resources safeguards forests, farmland, and waterways. Protecting vegetated buffers along designated scenic rivers and streams helps prevent flood damage, improve water quality, and capture CO2 emissions.

The important work associated with historic, cultural, and scenic resources overlaps with several other topics of the County’s Comprehensive Plan. For example, conserving and reusing historic places and structures strengthens the local economy by reviving commercial areas, multiplying the economic effects of investment, creating jobs, supporting businesses, and attracting visitors and events to our community. Some of the county’s nationally recognized historic districts are significant for their rural landscapes, and some of those landscapes are protected by conservation easements. Protection of entrance corridors and scenic roads is also a component of transportation planning. These areas of overlap allow the following goals and objectives to support related policy areas.

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 recognize, celebrate, and increase awareness of the broad range of historic, cultural, and scenic resources that contribute to Albemarle’s unique sense of place.

Objective 1.1: Proactively identify, map, and document the significant historic, cultural, scenic, and rural resources that contribute to Albemarle’s unique sense of place.

Objective 1.2: Share stories and information related to Albemarle’s unique resources while uplifting the narratives and resources of historically underrepresented groups, including through a local historic marker program, honorary awards, and nominations to the State and National Registers.

Objective 1.3: Proactively identify and protect against potential threats to the resources that contribute to Albemarle’s unique sense of place.



River View Farm Historic Marker

Goal 2: Albemarle County will protect its historic, cultural, scenic, rural, and natural resources while considering the future trajectory of development in the community.

Objective 2.1: Encourage greater preservation and protection of Albemarle’s historic, cultural, scenic, and natural resources by land and business owners through incentives, grant programs, and other funding streams.

Objective 2.2: Increase the preservation and adaptive reuse of historic and cultural resources throughout the County through County programs and updated regulations, promoting energy-efficient upgrades while documenting resources when they are demolished and salvaging building materials where feasible.

Objective 2.3: Cultivate and pursue strong partnerships to lend additional support to the preservation, protection, and management of Albemarle’s historic, scenic, natural, and cultural resources.

Goal 3: Albemarle County will have opportunities for all community members to access and enjoy local historic, scenic, and cultural resources.

Objective 3.1: Provide both online and in-person opportunities to access historic, scenic, cultural, and rural resources and increase awareness about the benefits of preserving these resources.

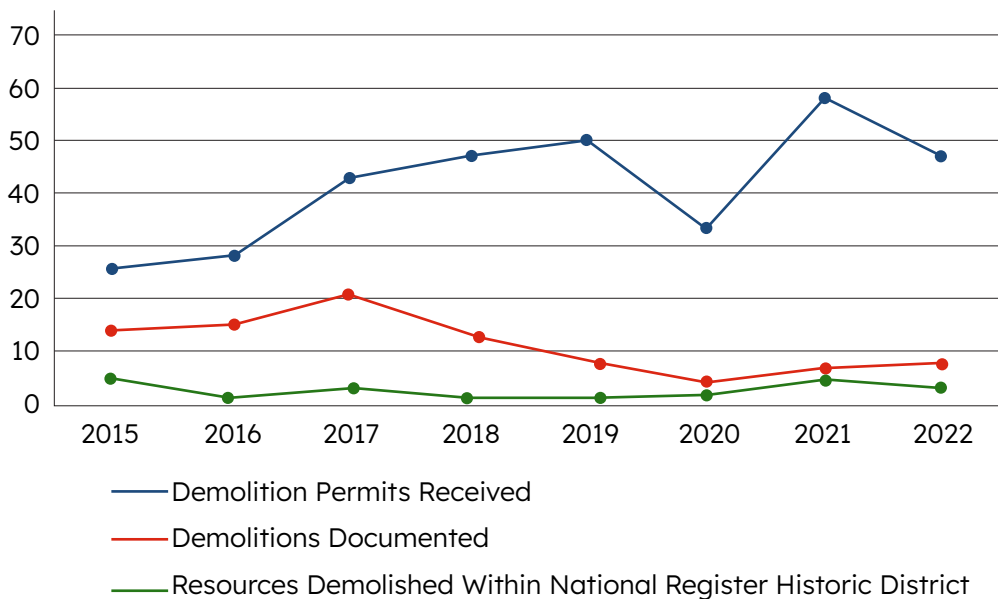
Objective 3.2: Protect, enhance, and recognize the importance of local viewsheds and landscapes that contribute to the County’s identity, especially around historic and cultural sites and landscapes, mountain resources, and waterways.

Objective 3.3: Reduce light pollution to protect and enhance the dark sky while balancing the need for a safe built environment.

Goal 4: Albemarle County will have attractive and scenic entrance corridors and other important county roadways that support the county’s natural environment and unique sense of place.

Objective 4.1: Elevate the quality of design along designated Entrance Corridor streets and encourage the use of renewable energy sources and sustainable building materials.

Objective 4.2: Increase the number of designated scenic roads in Albemarle County.



County Demolition Tracking: 2015-2022

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.

Recognizing and Celebrating Historic, Cultural, and Scenic Resources

- Collaborate with indigenous groups for tribal acknowledgment and commemoration.
- Recognize Black and African American and historic Freetown communities in the Rural Area. Consider using the UVA Finding Freetowns project and ways to better share Freetown histories and engage with community members.
- Identify cultural opportunities and resources unique to the area.
- Continue to add historic markers to share information about the County's history.
 - Comment to recognize Spring Hill Baptist Church as historic landmark and repurpose to be a community center with access to local government and health services.
- Share more inclusive histories with historic preservation efforts and equitable recognition of historic resources
- Use tourism to support historic preservation, including through educational events.

Protecting Historic, Cultural, and Scenic Resources

- When asked the question 'How would you prioritize the following ways to protect our historic and cultural resources?', the top three answers (in order of priority) were:
 - Provide additional incentives to property owners to preserve historic and cultural resources.
 - Provide more information about local historic and cultural resources in walkable areas such as parks and along trails.
 - Adopt regulations to protect historic and cultural resources.
- Improve historic preservation and adaptive reuse in villages and crossroad communities in the Rural Area, using an appropriate small and rural scale.

- Some comments suggested that if an existing building is not salvageable and must be torn down, the new building should have to have the same footprint as the previous building.
- Historic buildings in the Rural Area can be adaptively reused as community gathering places.
- Support for historic general stores and artisan trails.
- Some comments noted a preference to prioritize incentives over requirements for historic preservation.
- County should do more to prevent ‘demolition by neglect’ of historic structures.
- Increase protections for cemeteries.
- Even though historic post offices may not be as necessary as other land uses in the Rural Area, appreciate that they are being preserved.

Accessing and Enjoying Historic, Cultural, and Scenic Resources

- Update the County’s lighting ordinance to better protect dark skies and to decrease light pollution.
- Protect scenic streams and scenic views, especially mountain views.

Attractive and Scenic Entrance Corridors and Other Important Roadways

- Protect road corridors and associated viewsheds, including mountain views.

Planning Toolkits

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

- Support for redevelopment, including adaptive reuse of historic structures; consider mixed-use repurposing
- Preserve the rural area and associated historic resources
- Consider adaptive reuse of historic structures for community hubs
- Preserve rural/historic character of Rural Area communities
- Protect landmarks
- Expanded historical recognition and historic markers
- Preserve scenic resources adjacent to interstate interchanges from development

Historic and Cultural Resources Topic Report

The significance of many of Albemarle County’s cultural and historic resources has been recognized by listing these resources in the state and national registers. 94 individual properties are listed in the Virginia Landmarks Register (VLR) and the National Register of Historic Places (NRHP). Among them are Thomas Jefferson’s Monticello and the Rotunda and Lawn at the University of Virginia, two of the county’s four National Historic Landmarks and the county’s two World Heritage sites. Though the county contains some well-known landmarks, its important cultural resources are not limited to prominent sites with high-style architecture. 29% of the county’s land area is contained within one of 12 registered historic districts that also include a wide range of more modest dwellings and structures, without which the complete story of Albemarle’s development cannot be understood.

The main goal identified in the Albemarle County Historic Preservation Plan (adopted in 2000 and carried forward as a component of the 2015 Comprehensive Plan) is the protection of the county’s natural, scenic, historic, and cultural resources. Primary objectives of the Plan are to identify and recognize these resources and to pursue protection measures and incentives that would result in preservation of the county’s character. The listing of Albemarle’s resources in the state and national registers is one way to recognize the significance of these properties, and the identification and recognition of resources has slowly increased over the years.



Historic Barn, Ivy Creek

Recognized Historic Resources: There are currently 106 verified county resources listed on the VDHR web site: 12 historic districts (including Scottsville) and 94 individual resources:

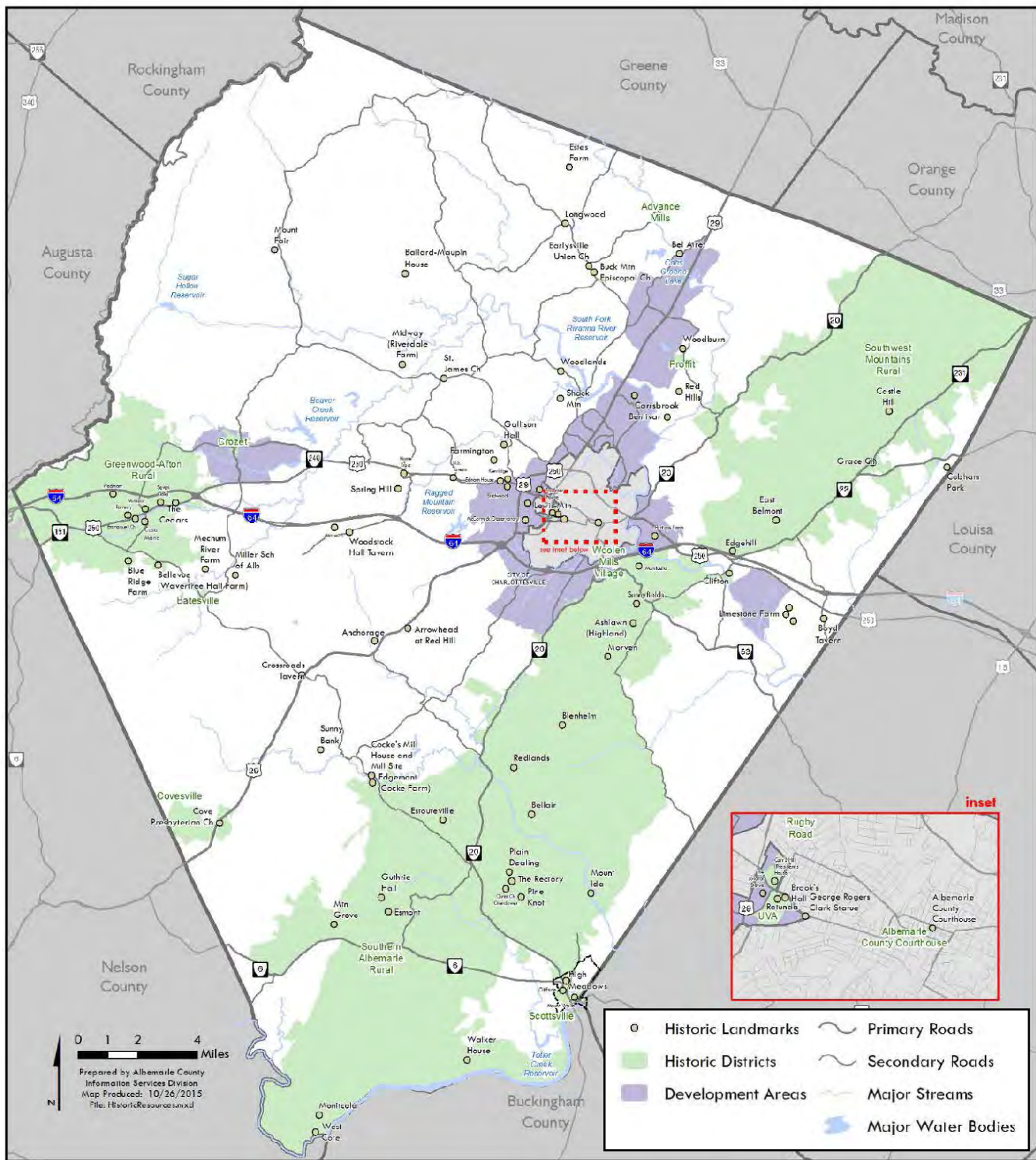
- **71 resources were listed by 2000, including 8 districts (including Scottsville)**
- **The 2015 Comprehensive Plan identifies 81 individual resources in the VLR, 80 in the NRHP, and 12 districts on 29% of county land area**

- **As of December 2022, there are:**
 - **No new historic districts since 2015**
 - **13 new individual resources since 2015**

Historical markers are another tool for recognizing the county’s historic resources and educating the public about those resources. By 2000, when the Historic Preservation Plan was adopted, there were 13 markers installed in the county; another 18 were installed by 2015 when the Comp Plan was adopted. Beginning in late 2019, the Albemarle County Historic Preservation Committee (HPC) began working with the County’s Office of Equity and Inclusion (OEI) to tell a more inclusive history of Albemarle County through the installation of new historical markers representing women and people of color. By the end of 2022, that collaboration resulted in five new markers approved by the Virginia Department of Historic Resources (VDHR). Another nine markers were installed by other sponsors between 2016 and early 2022, bringing the total number of historical markers in the county in late 2022 to 45.

Three of the markers resulting from the collaboration of OEI and the HPC are considered “local” markers by VDHR; the subjects are of local - rather than state, regional or national - significance. Given the success of these markers, the number of potential local topics of significance, and anticipated public interest, the HPC recommended that a county local historical marker program be established. Such a program would require funding and staffing, neither of which are currently available. The HPC notes that reinstating the former Historic Preservation Planner position, which was eliminated in 2008, could cover the public outreach, research and coordination efforts required for a local marker program.

Markers and listing in the registers are means of identification and recognition, and listing is also an honor for the property owners, but these methods offer no protection for the resources they identify. The county has no regulations in place to protect these resources and important historic resources continue to be demolished. These include historic manor houses that are sometimes memorialized in the names of the residential subdivisions that take their place. The HPC notes that these subdivisions could be planned around the historic resources, adaptively reusing the historic houses within the new development, but adaptive reuse is not being pursued in many of these cases. Generally, the number of historic district resources demolished in recent years has not substantially increased or decreased.



Individual properties and historic districts in Albemarle County listed in the Virginia Landmarks Register and National Register of Historic Places. Districts indicated by green shading; landmarks, by labeled points. Source: County data, VA Landmarks Register and National Register of Historic Places

Scenic Resources

The 2015 Comprehensive Plan identifies Albemarle’s scenic resources as: state and national designated scenic roads (Virginia Byways, State Scenic Highways, National Scenic Byways), county designated Entrance Corridors, state and county designated scenic streams and rivers, important scenic views, and the dark sky. The plan notes the contribution of each of these resources to quality of life and the county’s tourism economy, and it recommends the pursuit of additional scenic designations to support tourism and to maintain the visual integrity of the resources. Some progress has been made in this regard since 2015:



Albemarle County contains many rural and scenic roadways

- **The John Warner Parkway was designated an Entrance Corridor in 2018.**
- **The Middle James River was found to qualify for Virginia Scenic River designation in 2020.**
- **Rt. 810 from Rt. 240 in Crozet to the Greene County line was designated a Scenic Byway in 2021.**

At the time of this report, two areas of work are being pursued relative to the county’s Entrance Corridors (EC). First, the Architectural Review Board (ARB) is working with staff to prepare addenda to the EC Design Guidelines that identify the individual characters of the various corridors. This work is a step towards the corridor-specific guidelines recommended in the 2015 Comp Plan. It will inform future updates to the Guidelines and will help clarify the desired character of development along the corridors. Second, the arterial status of several of the county’s streets has recently been confirmed by VDOT. This confirmation is the springboard for consideration of alternate forms of protection for non-arterial corridors, like scenic highway and historic district designation, as previously directed by the Board of Supervisors. This is timely because the EC Guidelines work is showing that landscape and scenic qualities may be more important in some corridors, while architecture is primary in others. These aesthetic, scenic, and historic qualities are all also significant factors in the county’s land conservation programs, which will be reviewed as part of the Comp Plan update. Given the overlapping goals, considering the broad range of tools available for protecting the county’s varied but related resources could result in more efficient programs and more effective protection.

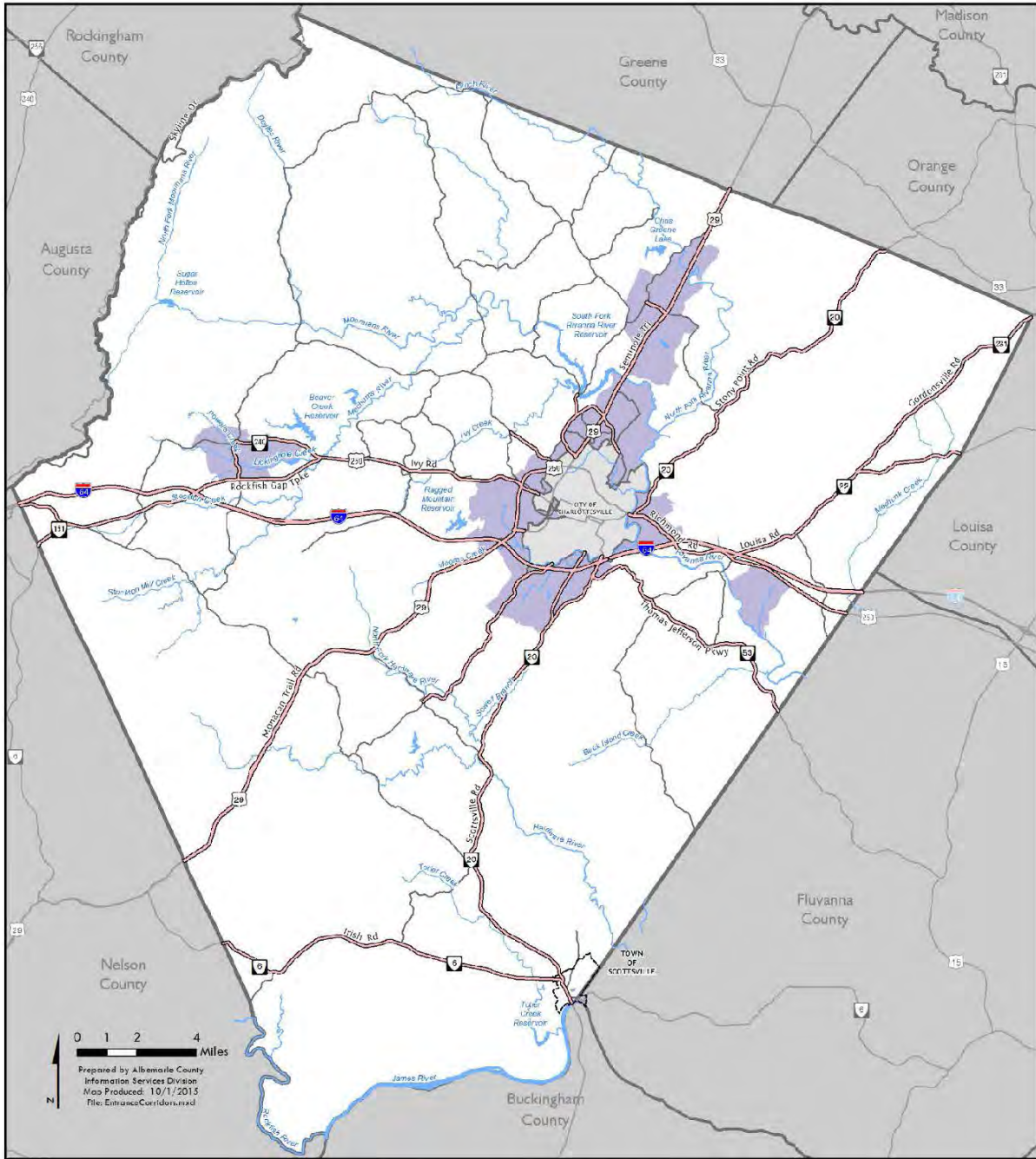


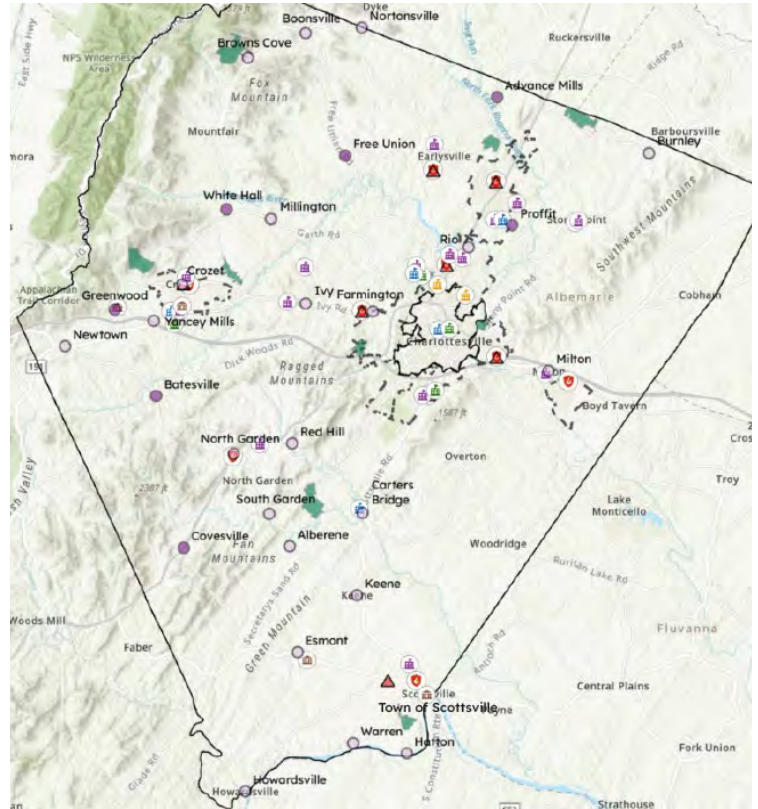
Figure 2: Entrance Corridors



Albemarle County Entrance Corridors: 2015 Comprehensive Plan

Crossroads Communities

According to the 2015 Comp Plan, designated crossroads communities in the Rural Area are intended to “provide support services and opportunities to engage in community life” for Rural Area community members. There are currently seven crossroads communities designated in the Comp Plan. They were selected from a 2003 survey of historic crossroads communities, which were previously surveyed in the 1995 report Historic Architectural Survey of Albemarle County Villages. The 1995 report surveyed 12 historic communities and recommended another 17 as historically significant and to be further reviewed. Without a clear definition of crossroads communities or a clear rationale for the selection of the number and distribution of the seven identified communities, questions remain about why some communities with documented local histories and existing businesses, gathering places, and historic structures were selected, while others were left off the list.



Albemarle Co. Crossroads Communities:
dark purple = designated, light purple = undesignated, historically significant

This map shows surveyed communities that were found to be historically significant, though only the seven in dark purple were officially designated in the 2015 Comp Plan as crossroads communities. The map also shows existing community facilities in the Rural Area including schools, fire/rescue stations, and parks. This type of mapping could help identify additional crossroads communities and community gathering places or ‘hubs’.

Phase 1 Engagement – Recap

Community input shared during Phase 1 reflected the following challenges and opportunities for Historic Resources:

- Comments indicated the desire to **mitigate the impacts of light and noise pollution** and to **protect dark skies**.
- Feedback expressed the need to **identify and protect historic and cultural resources**. Historic and cultural resources were noted as an important aspect of the county’s identity and legacy.
- Comments suggested that the county should promote **historic tourism** and increase education about local historic resources.

AC44 Framework

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:

- The County’s legacy of **valuing** its natural, **historic, and cultural resources** should support a thriving rural economy with sustainable farming and heritage based and ecologically based tourism.
- **Green and resilient designs** should also be incorporated in the Rural Area through energy efficient building practices, **retrofits of existing building stock**, and conservation site design.
- The County should **value, enhance, and preserve its vital local assets**, capitalizing on its **historic resources**, natural resources, activities, local businesses, and arts and cultural resources to leverage a variety of tourism opportunities.

Data Sources and References

Virginia Department of Historic Resources. Historical Highway Markers – Albemarle County. [DHR Virginia Historic Markers](#)

Virginia Department of Historic Resources. Albemarle County – [VLR Online & National Register Listings](#).

DHR Historic Registers: Albemarle County Willauer, Archer, ‘Crossroads Communities: Creating an Inclusive Definition’, August 26, 2020

Virginia Landmarks Register: National Register of Historic Places, 2022
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Willauer, Archer, ‘Crossroads Communities: Creating an Inclusive Definition’, August 26, 2020.