

GROWTH MANAGEMENT POLICY

WHAT IS THE GROWTH MANAGEMENT POLICY?

AC44 is grounded in the same overarching idea as the current Comprehensive Plan — that focusing growth within the Development Areas is the best way to preserve land for agriculture, forestry, and the natural environment in the Rural Area, and to foster a vibrant mix of uses and activities with services and amenities in the Development Areas, leveraging existing infrastructure and opportunities for redevelopment, discouraging sprawl, and providing services and infrastructure in a fiscally responsible manner.

The purpose of the Growth Management Policy is to provide efficient and cost-effective public service delivery and encourage compact, connected, and dense development patterns and uses within the Development Areas to protect the ecosystems and natural, scenic, historic, and cultural resources in the Rural Area. The expectations for infrastructure and service delivery are different for the Development Areas and Rural Area. For example, the Albemarle County Service Authority (ACSA) Jurisdictional Area for the provision of public water and sewer primarily follows the Development Area boundaries. The Growth Management Policy guides land use decisions, capital projects, and public service provision.

The County can most efficiently provide fire/rescue and police protection, roads, utilities, school bus service, transit, and other governmental functions to smaller and more concentrated areas than to a large and dispersed rural population. Increased densities and intensities of uses in the Development Areas augment such efficiencies. Rural Area uses are generally widely dispersed housing and agricultural and forestry uses, and therefore result in public safety services provided at reduced service levels than those in the Development Areas.

Investing in the Development Areas is essential to creating thriving neighborhoods with a high quality of life to entice current and future community members to live in the Development Areas instead of the Rural Area. It is also important to recognize that over 40 percent of County residents currently live in the Rural Area. Therefore, while the levels of service provision are different in the Rural Area, there are still essential services provided as needed, including fire/rescue, police, and health care.



UPDATES TO THE GROWTH MANAGEMENT POLICY

The Growth Management Policy (Policy) has remained relatively consistent since 1971. From its start and still today, the policy directs development into the County's Development Areas, while the remainder of the county's land is dedicated to preservation of Rural Area uses – farms, forests, open space, and natural, historic, and scenic resources. While the overarching Growth Management Policy has remained consistent, the distribution and character of the County's Development Areas has changed substantially, starting with about 48,000 acres of land in the Development Areas in 1971 to about 23,800 acres today.

Some of the reduction of Development Areas' acreage is due to early overestimates of population growth in the 1970's (possibly due to concerns about annexation), a previously abundant supply of commercial and industrial land relative to past demand, and concerns about water quality in the South Fork Reservoir water supply watershed. Past decisions to not expand the Development Areas, even while the County's population continued to grow, can also be attributed to a changing approach towards more urban and mixed-use forms of development with the adoption of the Neighborhood Model in 2001.

With this Comprehensive Plan update (AC44), the text of the Growth Management Policy has been updated. The Development Area boundaries remain unchanged. In Phase 1 of AC44, staff asked the community about the current Growth Management Policy (per the 2015 Comprehensive Plan), including what aspects of the Policy should be prioritized with the AC44 Comprehensive Plan update. Staff also used the County's Equity and Climate Action Lens to review the 2015 Policy language. The text of the Growth Management Policy has been updated to reflect community input and incorporate equity and climate action, while keeping the core purpose of the Policy.

To summarize updates to the Policy text:

- Clear language that Albemarle County is planning for both current and future community members, consistent with State Code requirements for Comprehensive Plans.
- Specifically listing out the major areas the Policy guides: land use, capital projects, and public service provision.
- Adding language for small-scale businesses and limited public services in the Rural Area to support existing communities.
- Including language within the Policy about distinct boundaries between the Development Areas and Rural Area (was previously only included in other Plan chapters).

The Policy text alone does not capture the many ways that the Growth Management Policy is connected to how we live, work, and move through the county. The Policy also informs the goals, objectives, and actions throughout the Comprehensive Plan.

For example, based on community input to date, staff has heard the need for more clear recommendations in the Rural Area related to small-scale community-serving land uses. Community input has emphasized the importance of identifying options for health care (including mobile), food access/ community gardens, emergency preparedness/response, and places for community gathering. Identifying ways to more equitably allow and provide access to services is also a key aspect of this Plan update, consistent with the Board's priority to incorporate equity and climate action throughout the Plan.

GROWTH MANAGEMENT POLICY (AC44)

Albemarle County is a welcoming community that will grow equitably and sustainably, supporting the needs of current and future community members for housing, jobs, and a healthy environment. This Growth Management Policy is the basis for the Goals, Objectives, and Actions of this Comprehensive Plan and is the primary means to achieve the County's vision for the future.

The County will use designated Development Areas (the growth area) and the Rural Area designation to manage land use, capital projects, and public services. New development and public infrastructure investment will target Development Areas. Limited new development will occur in the Rural Area remainder of the County. The Development Areas will have a variety of housing types, a mix of land uses, high-quality public infrastructure, and services to support the majority of residential and business growth in the County. Density and connectivity, high quality sustainable design, and reinvestment, redevelopment, and infill will be emphasized. The Rural Area will provide land for agriculture, forestry, the protection of the public water supply, conservation of ecosystems, the natural environment, and historic and cultural resources, and climate resiliency. Small-scale businesses and limited public services and infrastructure supporting existing communities will be supported while minimizing additional residential development in the Rural Area. The Development Areas and the Rural Area will have distinct boundaries, without low-density transition areas.

RURAL AREA LAND USE

GOAL: *Albemarle County's Rural Area will have thriving farms and working forests, rural communities, protected water supplies, healthy ecosystems, and protected natural, historic, cultural, and scenic resources, with a land-use pattern based on large parcels that are suitably sized for agricultural and silvicultural production and for unfragmented habitats. Land use in historic rural communities will prioritize adaptive reuse, historic preservation, water supply protection, energy-efficiency, and businesses and services that support rural land uses and surrounding community members.*

Objective 1: Develop and implement policies for protecting rural land-use patterns in the Rural Area, especially for land conservation, agriculture, and forestry, while prioritizing large and unfragmented parcels.

Objective 2: Protect natural systems, water supplies, and historic and cultural resources through the implementation of natural area preservation, adaptive reuse, historic preservation, and education policies and practices.

Objective 3: Increase the use of land conservation programs to implement the objectives of the Rural Area and Environmental Stewardship chapters.

Objective 4: Support local agricultural and forestry production and value-added processing.

Objective 5: Increase the adaptive reuse of existing structures in rural communities for uses that provide essential services and daily needs for rural residents.

Objective 6: Encourage land uses that support large and unfragmented rural properties while mitigating their potential impacts.

Objective 7: Plan for and manage non-residential land uses and existing development in the Rural Area.



CONTEXT

Albemarle County's Rural Area encompasses a diverse landscape ranging from the low-lying valleys of the Rivanna and James Rivers to the steep ridges of the Blue Ridge Mountains. The Rural Area contains approximately 689 square miles or 95% of the county. Within the Rural Area, the County's Growth Management Policy prioritizes the preservation of agricultural, forest, historic, cultural, and scenic resources.

The County equally prioritizes conservation and restoration of the natural environment and ecosystems within the Rural Area. These natural resources provide tangible ecological benefits to the community members of Albemarle in the form of clean drinking water and air quality, dark skies, and biodiversity preservation. Additionally, the Rural Area plays a critical role as one of our best defenses against climate change. These daily benefits are shared by rural and urban residents alike.

Based on community input during the AC44 process, protecting waterways and dark skies continue to be community priorities. Nearly half of Rural Area land is within water supply watersheds for public drinking water supplies. The night sky is not only a source of beauty and wonder, but also is essential for migrating birds and benefits leaf retention on deciduous trees. Light pollution is the biggest threat to the dark sky and primarily comes from overly bright and misdirected lighting sources. The Historic Resources chapter provides recommendations on updating the County's lighting requirements to protect dark skies, noting that lighting in the Development Areas should prioritize safety.

In 1971, when the County's first Comprehensive Plan was adopted, approximately 60 percent of new residential development occurred in the Rural Area. Since then, that figure decreased to 16 percent. This dramatic change results primarily from the land conservation policies and subdivision regulations developed in the 1970's to meet the preservation, conservation, and restoration objectives

described above. While the rate of residential development within the Rural Area has significantly decreased over the past 50 years, it is essential to continually monitor the ratio of development in the Rural Area compared to the Development Areas and leverage land use and conservation tools in support of the Growth Management Policy. If the rate of residential development in the Rural Area starts to increase, especially in proportion to the Development Areas, then updates to these land use and conservation tools may be needed.

The Rural Area recommendations in this chapter are intended to balance the need for equitable access to services for the 43% of the County's population (as identified by the 2020 Census) living in the Rural Area, while also being consistent with the Growth Management Policy. The farms, homes, and businesses owned by this population require some private and public services and facilities. Some of these services may be provided by small, rural scale businesses, such as country stores. Others are essential services, public safety, and community facilities, such as fire stations, community centers, and schools. Consistent with the Growth Management Policy, the level of public investments and services will vary between the Rural Area and Development Areas. This chapter prioritizes conservation of land in the Rural Area and provides policy guidance for residential uses in the Rural Area as well as the relative appropriateness for a variety of non-residential land uses. The Community Facilities chapter provides additional guidance on public facilities and services in the Rural Area.



MAJOR FINDINGS AND TRENDS

Local agriculture has remained relatively stable in the Rural Area, while residential development has decreased since the 1990s/early 2000s. Natural, historic, cultural, and scenic resources continue to comprise significant portions of the Rural Area:

The Rural Area has diverse habitats and landscapes with essential resources for the health of humans, native species, and ecosystems:

- Approximately 46% of Rural Area land is within public water supply watersheds. These are areas where water drains into public water supplies, such as the Ragged Mountain Reservoir and the South Fork Rivanna Reservoir. These watersheds provide drinking water for the City of Charlottesville, the Town of Scottsville, and the Development Areas of Albemarle County.
- About 25% of Rural Area land is protected by conservation easements.
- Approximately 66% of the Rural Area is forest cover.
- 29 percent of the county's land area is within 12 registered historic districts, which are primarily in the Rural Area.
- The County's Biodiversity Action Plan identified large forest blocks, which are forests with 100 acres or more of interior forest. There are 179 large forest blocks in Albemarle County, totaling about 157,143 acres when including both forest interior and edge habitat, with the majority in the Rural Area.

While there are challenges for the local agriculture industry, farm loss in Albemarle County has been at a slower pace compared to Virginia overall:

- About 38% of Rural Area land in Albemarle County is in farmland. This percentage has remained relatively stable (between 35-40%) over the last 30 years.

- Over 65% of Rural Area land has important soil for agriculture and about 99% has important soil for forestry.
- There were \$43M in agricultural products produced in Albemarle County sold in 2022.
- Albemarle County ranks second in the state for fruit production.
- According to a study by the Virginia Office of Farmland Preservation, between 2001-2016, approximately 272,900 acres of farmland in Virginia was converted to low density residential development.
- Slightly more than half of U.S. farm households report losses from their farm businesses each year. Therefore, income losses for farms is not unique to Albemarle County. According to the USDA: "The proportion incurring farm losses is higher for households operating smaller farms, where most or all of their income is typically derived from off-farm activities."

Residential development in the Rural Area has remained relatively stable over the past 10 years:

- From 2014 through 2023, an average of 114 dwelling units were built each year, ranging from a low of 93 units (2023) to a high of 148 units (2018). That is a 43.8% decrease in the average number of units built each year compared to 1994-2013 (203 unit average).



RURAL AREA LAND USE APPROACH

The County's Rural Area and Growth Management policies establish the following land use approach for the Rural Area:

- 1. Conserve and restore the natural environment, with a focus on water quality, as well as historic, cultural, and scenic resources.*
- 2. Maintain large and unfragmented parcels to support a strong rural economy and the Environmental Stewardship chapter objectives.*
- 3. Discourage new residential development.*
- 4. Support and promote primarily agricultural or forestry uses or supporting land uses to agriculture (e.g. food processing) or forestry. Other appropriate non-residential land uses are described later in this chapter (Objectives 5 and 7). Uses should also be evaluated based on their location and potential impacts.*
- 5. Maintain distinct boundaries between the Development Areas and Rural Area without 'transitional' development to avoid sprawl.*

Consistent with this Comprehensive Plan, there will be future updates to the Zoning Ordinance for the Rural Area zoning district. Potential new permitted uses in the Rural Area Zoning District should be evaluated based on the following considerations:

- Maintain and enhance land for working farms and commercial forestry operations.
- Protect, restore, and maintain native ecosystems, aquatic ecosystems, and healthy water supplies.
- Maintain and enhance wildlife habitat connectivity.
- Preserve and enhance rural landscapes supporting historic resources.
- Support low-impact uses to encourage the economic viability of rural properties.
- Discourage residential growth and development and the related demand for increased public services.
- Require that uses are compatible in scale to the surrounding buildings, both in height and footprint.
- Promote uses that allow land to return to agricultural/forestry or conservation use.
- Operate without public water and sewer.
- Minimize demand for groundwater.
- Serve rural areas via existing rural roads.
- Encourage uses of distributed power sources to increase the reliability of power.
- Consider broadband availability.
- Consider adjustments to Development Areas boundaries to align existing uses and infrastructure.

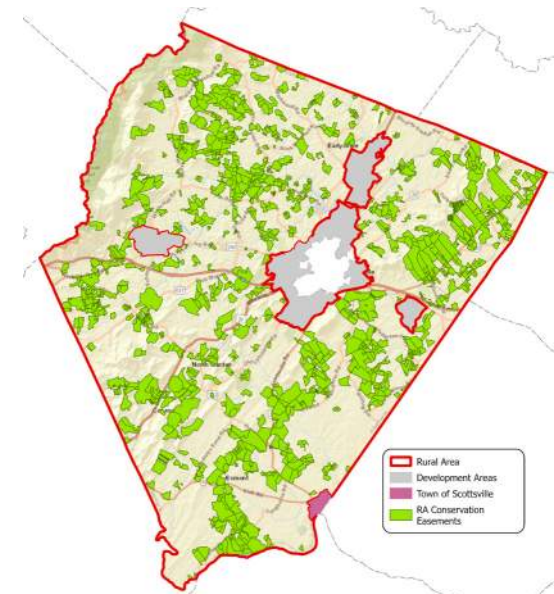
LAND CONSERVATION

Approximately two thirds of the Rural Area is covered in forests. Between 2008 and 2016, forests and other natural land cover in the county sequestered an average of nearly one million metric tons of carbon dioxide per year, with forests contributing the most.

The Rural Area is also the primary source of the public water drinking supply supporting the Development Areas and the City of Charlottesville. The watersheds of the reservoirs and river-water intakes that supply public water to our community cover about 319 square miles of the Rural Area.

Given the extent of important resources in the Rural Area, land conservation has become an essential tool for achieving the County's land use priorities. Ten organizations, including the County and the County-appointed Albemarle Conservation Easement Authority (ACEA), hold voluntary permanent conservation easements that limit development and protect resources on rural land. A total of approximately 112,000 acres (about 25% of the Rural Area) has been protected by easements. Of that total, over 30,000 acres are easements held by the County and/or the ACEA. These conservation easements benefit all community members by helping to maintain a clean water supply and biodiversity. Land conservation also has fiscal benefits for the community, as land in open space uses requires less in public expenditures than the same land converted to residential uses.

The County's land conservation programs are necessary to support the Growth Management Policy, preserve large tracts of land, make land conservation possible for lower-income rural landowners whose land is at most risk of sale for development, and to protect important areas identified in the Biodiversity Action Plan.



Map of existing conservation easements in Albemarle County (January 2024)



County Forest Cover. Source: National Land Cover Database (2016)

RURAL AREA LAND USE PLAN

In previous Comprehensive Plans, land uses in the Rural Area have been treated as a single land use category and shown as a single land use type for all 689 square miles on Future Land Use Maps. A recommended action is to develop and adopt a Rural Area land use plan (see Action 1.1). Rather than a ‘one size fits all’ approach, a Rural Area Land Use Plan would recognize that the Rural Area is a mosaic of different land uses and natural areas, including biodiversity-rich areas, rural communities, scenic views, heritage properties, and historic districts. This approach for the Rural Area Land Use Plan would include conservation and restoration of natural, historic, cultural, and scenic resources and appropriate small and rural-scale land uses. Additional recommendations for protecting and restoring the natural environment are found in the Environmental Stewardship chapter.

RECOMMENDED SUPPORTING RURAL LAND USES

There are rural scale land uses and public facilities that are appropriate in the Rural Area to support agriculture, forestry, and existing rural communities. Industrial uses should augment local agriculture and forestry and be at appropriate locations in the Rural Area to mitigate potential impacts. Marketing local foods and agricultural products depends on the availability of local distribution facilities such as warehouses for locally grown produce and meat. These facilities need to be located on public roads that can support truck traffic. These collection and distribution facilities can help connect farms to consumers and provide more opportunities for agricultural uses to thrive in the Rural Area. Large commercial distribution centers such as department store warehouses are not appropriate in the Rural Area.

For rural communities, supporting land uses include essential public safety services and daily needs for rural residents that can utilize existing buildings, such as health care (including small-scale doctors/dentist offices and mobile clinics), fire/rescue and police services, job training programs, community gathering spaces, country stores/small-scale markets, local artisans/crafters, daycare, post offices, emergency shelters, and access to affordable and healthy food.

Community input supported the concept of community resilience hubs and emphasized the importance of identifying options for providing or supporting essential services such as food access, community gardens, internet/phone service/broadband, emergency preparedness and response, and places for community gathering. Existing historic structures can provide opportunities for adaptive reuse and often have a building scale and footprint consistent with the surrounding rural character.



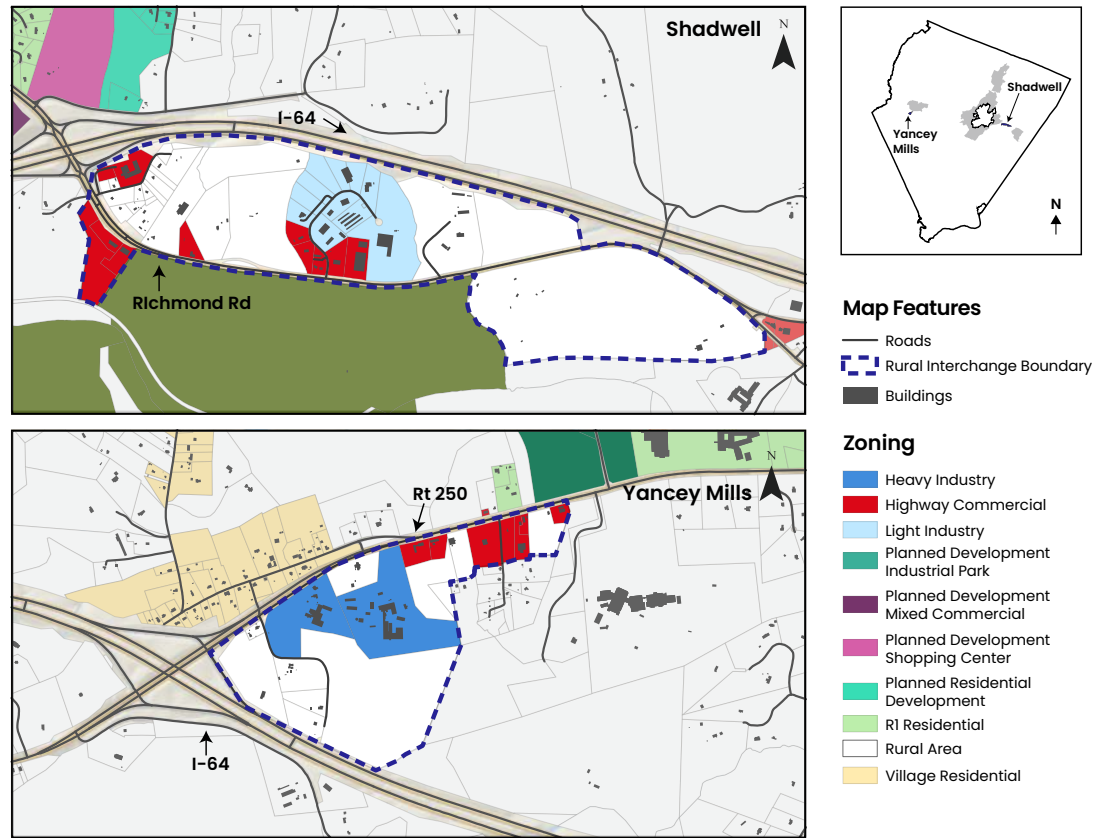
Community garden at Yancey Community Center

RURAL INTERSTATE INTERCHANGES

There are four rural interstate (I-64) interchanges in the county's Rural Area: Yancey Mills (Exit 107), Ivy (Exit 114), Black Cat Road (Exit 129), and the southern part of the Shadwell interchange by Exit 124. There is existing development and underlying by-right commercial and industrial zoning at the Shadwell and Yancey Mills interchanges, with the potential for additional by-right industrial/commercial/office uses.

Development at some of these rural interstate interchanges could provide spaces for local food systems and food processing/distribution, or for uses that may not be suitable for walkable and compact development in mixed-use Development Areas. Further, job opportunities consistent with the County's target industries for economic development could efficiently use land with existing infrastructure and development in these locations.

Based on evaluation of the four rural interstate interchanges, this Plan recommends further study of the Shadwell (Exit 124), and Yancey Mills (Exit 107) interchanges to determine what land uses may be feasible and desired. Small Area Plans are recommended for the Shadwell and Yancey Mills interchanges, prioritizing Shadwell to identify general land uses, transportation impacts, protection of environmental features, and infrastructure needs and feasibility. It is possible that no changes in recommended land uses would be identified, and that only land uses consistent with the Rural Area designation (mainly agriculture/forestry and supporting uses) would continue to be recommended.



Rural Interstate Interchanges at Shadwell (Exit 124), and Yancey Mills (Exit 107)

IMPLEMENTATION

OBJECTIVE	<i>RALU 1. Develop and implement policies for protecting rural land-use patterns in the Rural Area, especially for land conservation, agriculture, and forestry, while prioritizing large and unfragmented parcels.</i>
ACTION	
1.1	<p>Develop and adopt a Rural Area land-use plan to provide recommendations for the range of land uses and land conservation needs in the Rural Area, including agriculture, forestry, and rural communities. The Rural Area land-use plan will be adopted as part of the Comprehensive Plan and:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Recognize multiple geographic areas within the Rural Area with specific conservation needs, rather than a “one size fits all” approach. • Provide recommendations for protecting the Rural Area to maintain and enhance land for working farms and commercial forestry operations; native ecosystems; wildlife habitat connectivity, aquatic ecosystems and healthy water supplies; and rural landscape contexts for historic resources. • Include a map of rural focus areas and proposed land-use and conservation priorities for each. • Include a geographic analysis of conservation needs in the Rural Area and identify an approach for designating and protecting focus areas across the Rural Area.
1.2	Develop location standards for renewable-energy land uses in the Rural Area, such as utility-scale solar, that make those projects possible and implement the Climate Action Plan while protecting forests and other important landscapes.
1.3	Establish routine annual meetings with the University of Virginia to review plans for the Rural Area properties held by both the University and the University of Virginia Foundation (Area B) for compliance with the Comprehensive Plan.
OBJECTIVE	<i>RALU 2. Protect natural systems, water supplies, and historic resources through the implementation of natural area preservation, adaptive reuse, historic preservation, and education policies and practices.</i>
ACTION	
2.1	Lower the total acreage that can be used for development rights lots subdivisions (currently 31 acres) to significantly reduce the acreage used for residential lots.
2.2	Update ordinance requirements for permitted residential development to encourage maintenance and restoration of native forest vegetation and vegetated stream buffers per the Stream Health Initiative.
2.3	Evaluate Special Use Permits based on considerations including the presence of rare habitats and species, as identified in the Biodiversity Action Plan or as designated endangered species by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service.

2.4	Petition the Commonwealth for revised enabling legislation to permit adoption of updated requirements for clustered subdivisions (“rural preservation developments”) in the Rural Area. If successful, revise the rural preservation development design standards in the Zoning Ordinance to reduce the total area of these subdivisions used for residential lots, and to increase protection of important soils and natural systems.
OBJECTIVE	RALU 3. <i>Increase the use of land conservation programs to implement the objectives of the Rural Area and Environmental Stewardship chapters.</i>
ACTION	
3.1	Revise the ACE ordinance to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Clarify scoring requirements for candidate properties including definitions and scoring criteria that include scoring for forest blocks and other priority areas identified in the Biodiversity Action Plan. The process should include completion of the scoring-system update process reviewed by the ACE Committee in 2021. • Reactivate the ACE (Acquisition of Conservation Easements) program to make land conservation possible for lower-income landowners. • Source predictable funding for easement purchases.
3.2	Conduct outreach to landowners in high-priority conservation areas as identified in the Biodiversity Action Plan to encourage and support voluntary land conservation through donated and purchased conservation easements.
3.3	Align monitoring and enforcement staffing for management of County- and ACEA-held conservation easements to be sufficient to review all easements per the required rotation cycle.
3.4	Provide landowner outreach, support, and public education to increase awareness and understanding of the County’s land-conservation programs.
3.5	Provide subject matter expertise and data regarding County land held in easements to other organizations operating conservation easement programs in the county.
OBJECTIVE	RALU 4. <i>Support local agricultural and forestry production and value-added processing.</i>
ACTION	
4.1	Use land-conservation tools to reduce the conversion of rural land with soils that are important for agriculture and forestry to other uses such as residential, commercial, and large-scale utility uses.
4.2	Update zoning regulations to allow rural light industrial and commercial uses that support local processing and retail sales for local agriculture and forestry on properties with agricultural and silvicultural uses.
4.3	Increase opportunities for by-right farm worker housing in support of agricultural and forestal production.
4.4	Update the Zoning Ordinance to permit warehouse and distribution facilities for locally-produced goods in the Rural Area.

4.5	Revise the regulations for “special events” so they are only possible on registered historic properties or heritage properties with property ingress and egress onto VDOT-managed public roads.
OBJECTIVE	<i>RALU 5. Increase the adaptive reuse of existing structures in rural communities for uses that provide essential services and daily needs for rural residents.</i>
ACTION	
5.1	<p>After conducting community engagement through the Zoning Modernization project, allow updated uses in existing non-residential structures in rural communities, prioritizing adaptive reuse of historic structures and small-scale commercial uses that provide essential services and daily needs. If adaptive reuse is not feasible, new/rebuilt buildings should be restricted to a similar footprint and scale as the replaced building.</p> <p>Examples of land uses include: health care (including small-scale doctors/ dentist offices and mobile clinics), fire/rescue and police services, job training programs, community gathering spaces, country stores/ small-scale markets, local artisans/crafters, daycare, post offices, emergency shelters, and access to affordable and healthy food.</p> <p>Small-scale uses should be similar in building height and footprint as existing non-residential buildings in the Rural Area, such as existing country stores and offices. Buildings should generally be 1-2 stories and have a building footprint of 5,000 sq ft or smaller.</p> <p>Use the criteria for updating the Zoning Ordinance on Page 5 to guide which uses are appropriate to allow. Uses should either have performance standards or be allowed by the special use permit process to address and mitigate impacts.</p>
OBJECTIVE	<i>RALU 6. Encourage land uses that support large and unfragmented rural properties while mitigating their potential impacts.</i>
ACTION	
6.1	Review and update noise regulations to limit the impacts of amplified sound from permitted events.
6.2	Add small-scale, low-impact outdoor recreation uses (not to include indoor lodging) to the list of uses permitted in the Rural Area zoning district, especially where these uses can co-exist with rather than replace existing agricultural and silvicultural uses.



There are several possible land uses present in the Rural Area requiring additional consideration for appropriateness and impact mitigation, including:

- *Rural interstate interchanges*
- *Adaptive use of historic or landmark properties*
- *Special events in the Rural Area*
- *Essential services and supporting uses for surrounding community members in rural communities*
- *Community resilience hubs*
- *Economic vitality for heritage properties*



Existing commercial use building, North Garden

OBJECTIVE	RALU 7. Plan for and manage non-residential land uses and existing development in the Rural Area.
ACTION	
7.1	Utilize existing buildings and community facilities as community resilience hubs. See the Resilient Community chapter for actions related to resilience hubs.
7.2	Develop community plans that support the recommendations in this chapter and enhance the quality of life of rural communities. Community plans should include recommended land uses, transportation improvements, private well and septic feasibility for any potential new land uses, historic or cultural resources to protect or adaptively reuse, and natural areas to protect and restore. Potential land use changes should prioritize small-scale uses that serve the surrounding community, such as country stores, offices, daycare, medical services/offices, community resilience hubs, and public institutional uses (e.g. community center, school, fire/rescue station, or post office). Community planning may be done as part of the Rural Area Land Use Plan (Action 1.1).
7.3	Review and update existing commercial and industrial zoning for properties within the Rural Area. The process should prioritize land use and zoning opportunities to support agricultural, silvicultural, and related/supporting industries in these locations.
7.4	Develop Small Area Plans for the Rural Area portions of the following rural interstate interchanges: Exit 124/Shadwell and Exit 107/Yancey Mills. Prioritize the Shadwell plan and complete it prior to the Yancey Mills plan. The small area plan process includes identifying the following: recommended land uses, transportation networks, sensitive environmental areas to protect, natural, historic, cultural, and scenic resources to preserve, heritage properties, and public water and sewer feasibility. The process should prioritize land use and zoning opportunities to support agricultural, silvicultural, and related/supporting industries at these locations. Planning for the rural interstate interchanges may be done as part of the Rural Area Land Use Plan (Action 1.1).

DEVELOPMENT AREAS LAND USE



GOAL: Albemarle County's Development Areas will be thriving, walkable, and mixed-use, with a variety of housing types that are connected by multimodal transportation options to goods, services, employment opportunities, and parks and natural areas. Neighborhoods will be green and resilient with tree coverage, protected natural features, and energy-efficient designs. Land use planning in the Development Areas will consider the housing and business needs of current and future community members and will encourage efficient use of land through redevelopment, infill, and adaptive reuse.

Objective 1: Increase the use of infill, higher density development, adaptive reuse, and redevelopment in the Development Areas.

Objective 2: Increase the number of jobs and housing units in designated Activity Centers and Employment Districts.

Objective 3: Invest in existing neighborhoods in the Development Areas with increased connectivity and equitable access to Activity Centers, parks, open space, and community facilities and services, and infrastructure improvements that prioritize under-served communities.

Objective 4: Increase access to nature, green infrastructure, and tree coverage in the Development Areas.



CONTEXT

Since 1971, Albemarle County’s Growth Management Policy (GMP) has protected the Rural Area uses and environment, and focused growth, density, and urbanism into the Development Areas. This GMP concentrates residential development and County investments in public facilities and services such as water and sewer infrastructure, public safety, and multi-modal transportation in the Development Areas to maximize the reach of those investments to our denser populations. Paired with an array of conservation efforts in the Rural Area, the GMP balances the needs of an increasing county population with the community’s support of agriculture, silviculture, stream health, and forestry in the Rural Area. Of the 726 square miles of Albemarle County, 95% is currently designated as Rural Area and Development Areas comprise the remaining 5%.

Per the July 1, 2023, United States Census estimates, 115,676 community members live in the county with approximately 64,682 people or 57.54% of the county’s population living within the Development Areas and the Town of Scottsville – a total area of 37 square miles. By 2044, the Weldon Cooper Center of the University of Virginia projects Albemarle will gain approximately 31,000 more people. The approach of the AC44 Comprehensive Plan (AC44) is to accommodate the majority of these new community members in the Development Areas through the policies and actions described within this Plan.

In the 1990s, a community-wide planning effort led by a steering committee resulted in the adoption of the Neighborhood Model Principles intended to create a vibrant urban environment.

The Neighborhood Model Principles served as the foundation for changes within the Development Areas. However, AC44 introduces an updated Future Land Use Map and the new concepts of Community Design Guidelines and Activity Centers, which are explained later in this document. These new tools will be critical to creating the dense, urban environment envisioned for the Development Areas.



PRIORITIES FOR THE DEVELOPMENT AREAS

- Efficient use of limited Development Areas land including through infill, higher density development, adaptive reuse, and redevelopment.
- A variety of housing options (unit types, sizes, owner/rental, etc) throughout the Development Areas.
- Redeveloping Activity Centers to create walkable mixed-use nodes.
- Spaces for current and future employers and businesses, especially in Centers and Employment Districts.
- Supporting amenities, recreation, transportation, and services.
- Balancing density with protecting and restoring the natural environment.

MAJOR FINDINGS AND TRENDS

Our community is projected to grow by 31,000 community members by 2044. The purpose of this chapter is to plan for and accommodate this growth and to ensure high quality neighborhoods and dense, walkable Activity Centers.

Limited developable land is available:

- Based on the assumptions used in the 2022 buildout analysis, the remaining buildable acres comprise only about 6.9% of the Development Areas land mass.
- Sufficient land is available to accommodate 20 years of estimated growth and demand in the existing Development Areas when considering future land uses. However, achieving ‘full buildout’ is dependent on development at the high end of recommended density/ intensity of uses.
- Additionally, constraining factors will limit buildout, such as the cost of land, physical site constraints, and site location and infrastructure access.
- Charlottesville’s population of 46,553 lives within 10.27 square miles - a density of 4,533. Albemarle’s Development Areas’ population is 64,682 in an area of 37 square mile – a density of 1,748. At a density less than 40% of the city, it suggests that infill and redevelopment opportunities exist within the Development Areas to increase density.

Recent new developments have provided housing choice and a walkable/mixed use product, but there is room for improvement:

- Recent rezonings have been approved at approximately 58% of the maximum recommended density per the Comp Plan.
- Between 2012 and 2022, approximately 39% of the total housing units built in the Development Areas have been multifamily units, followed by single-family detached (32%) and single-family attached/townhouses (28%).

Reusing existing parking lots and decreasing parking requirements increases land available for housing and other uses:

- A staff analysis of Albemarle County’s designated Activity Centers found approximately 20.2% of land in those Centers is currently dedicated to surface parking.
- Looking at Activity Centers identified as having development or redevelopment potential (and that do not already have an approved/building out development), the amount of land in surface parking was about 24.8%.
- A 2023 study by Rutgers University found that lowering mandated parking requirements resulted in lower initial construction costs and ongoing operating costs for residential developments, allowing reduced rents as compared to more typical ‘over-parked’ residential developments.

A denser form of development while protecting the natural environment supports climate action, community resilience, and the Growth Management Policy:

- As our community grows, encouraging greater density within the existing Development Areas will likely lead to a lighter environmental footprint per household and more housing affordability and choice, as compared with less compact and more sprawling developments.
- Tree coverage varies significantly between neighborhoods and census tracts, ranging from around 12% to over 60%. Additional tree coverage is needed to reduce the urban heat island effect, provide shade (including along walking routes), and remove CO2 emissions.

ESTABLISHING THE DEVELOPMENT AREAS

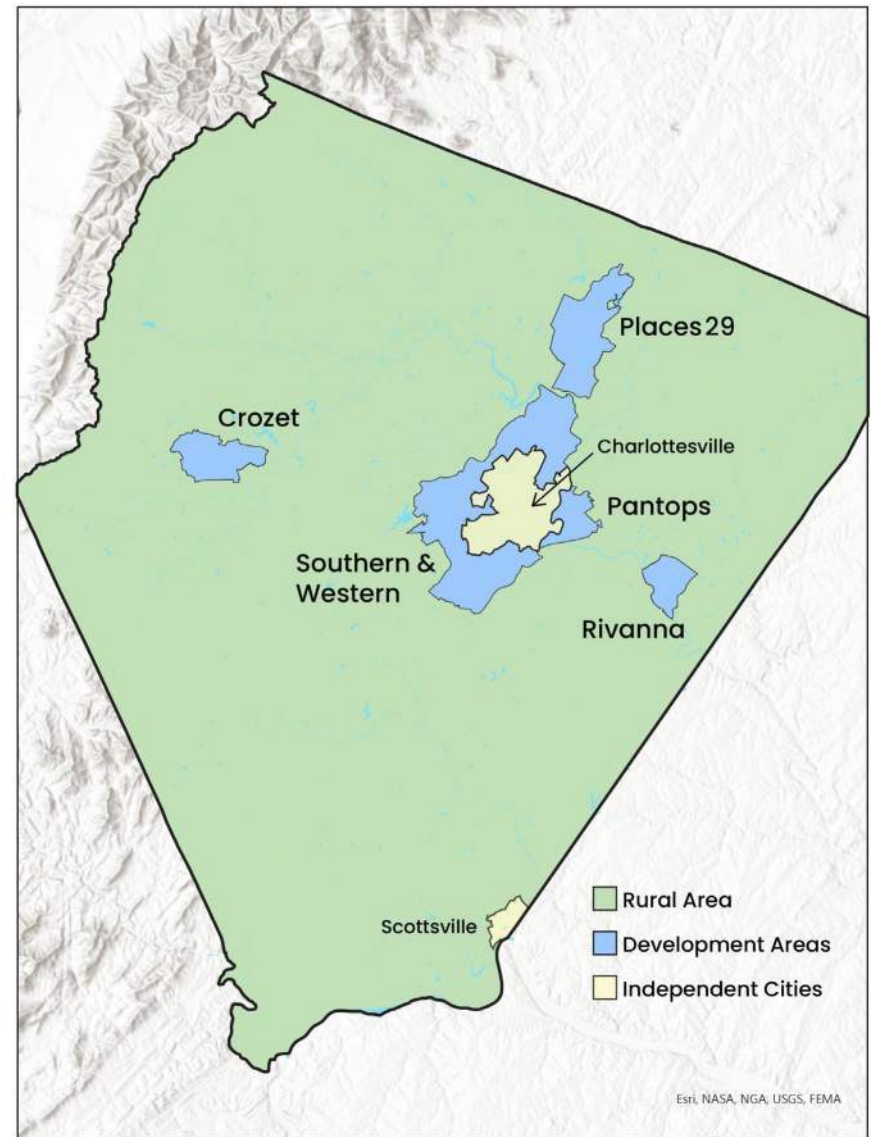
To accommodate projected growth, the Development Areas are defined areas within the county promoting density and mixtures of uses supported by public water and sewer infrastructure, multimodal transportation networks, public parks, and public safety services. Boundaries between Development Areas and the Rural Area utilize the availability of public water and sewer infrastructure to define areas within the Development Areas. Using Development Areas land effectively and ensuring the Development Areas are vibrant and welcoming places to live are critical for protecting the Rural Area and implementing the growth management policy.

CHANGES TO BOUNDARIES

Refer to Part II of the Comp Plan (Growth Management Framework) for guidance on tracking Development Areas utilization and on potential future changes to boundaries.

Each Development Area has its own Area Plan with recommendations for land use, transportation, parks/recreation, and natural areas.

General development guidelines for all Development Areas are contained in the Community Design Guidelines (formerly Neighborhood Model Principles).



County Development Areas labeled by Area Plan title

URBAN DEVELOPMENT AREAS

Per Virginia State Code (§ 15.2-2223.1), any locality may amend its Comprehensive Plan to incorporate one or more Urban Development Areas (UDAs). Like the County's "Development Areas," UDAs are areas that the State recognizes as appropriate for higher density development supported by public utilities and infrastructure and where redevelopment and infill is encouraged. There are state funding programs that fund improvements within UDAs, such as VDOT's SMART Scale program. For the purposes of State Code, all Development Areas and the Town of Scottsville are considered UDAs in Albemarle County.

PUTTING THE LAND USE TOOLS TOGETHER

The following four land use tools: Land Use Categories, the Future Land Use Map, Community Design Guidelines, and Activity Centers and Employment Districts, work together to guide future development and transportation planning within the Development Areas. The next several sections of AC44 provide an in-depth explanation of these tools' purpose and how they are applied; however, a brief overview helps to understand how they work together.

Land Use Categories: The first tool, Land Use Categories, describes the type of new residential and non-residential uses the county expects as well as density and intensity of these uses. The second tool places these land use categories onto a Future Land Use Map (FLUM). The map designates where we want to see housing, businesses, industry, and public parks distributed throughout the Development Areas.

Community Design Guidelines: The Community Design Guidelines establish urban design goals for subdivision and street layouts, building placements, parks and open spaces, and many other design elements. These guidelines seek to create a high-quality, walkable urban environment that will attract people into the Development Areas. These Guidelines are founded upon the Neighborhood Model



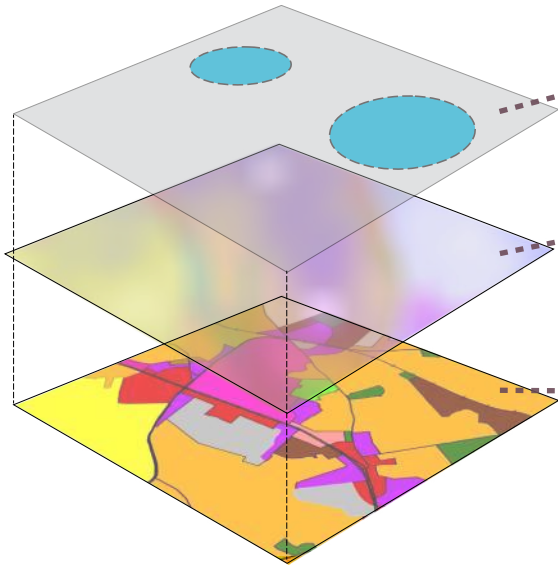
Multi-use paths create valuable connections between residential neighborhoods and nearby destinations

Principles and clarified to reflect best management practices and lessons learned since the adoption of the 2015 Comprehensive Plan.

Activity Centers and Employment Districts: The last set of tools are Activity Centers and Employment Districts. These centers are locations where higher density and intensity of uses are expected to create walkable, mixed-use nodes or major employment hubs. When the plans for future transportation systems are laid on top of the map of Activity Centers and Employment Districts, the intent is to connect the centers with a variety of transportation options so community members can easily move within and between centers.

Together, these tools work to build a community with more destinations, housing types, and amenities. The following graphic illustrates how these land use tools work together to provide guidance for new development and redevelopment.

ACTIVITY CENTERS & LAND USE GUIDANCE



ACTIVITY CENTERS: Acting like a land use ‘overlay,’ Activity Centers encourage projects to develop at the higher end of the densities and intensities ranges established by the underlying Land Use Designations(s).

COMMUNITY DESIGN GUIDELINES: Provide guidance for the general urban form for all new development and redevelopment in the Development Areas. Their intent is to create an urban area that maintains its economic value and provides an attractive, livable environment for our community members and visitors.

LAND USE DESIGNATIONS: Establish recommended densities and intensities as well as the general form and scale of development for every parcel in the county.

ACTIVITY CENTERS: These encourage high-density, mixed-use destinations that are distributed throughout the Development Areas. As highly walkable nodes, they will accommodate much of the County’s future population growth and serve as a focal point for future transportation investments and other capital improvement projects.

FUTURE LAND USE DESIGNATIONS + MAP: These guide the location, mix of uses, and housing types in the Development Areas. Each designation has recommended future land uses and building form/scale.

EMPLOYMENT DISTRICTS: Identify land for Office/ Flex/ Light Industrial/Research and Development and encourage employment-generating uses consistent with the County’s economic development initiatives.



FUTURE LAND USE CATEGORIES & DESIGNATIONS

LAND USE CATEGORIES

To provide the direction for orderly growth, all past County comprehensive plans have used a series of land use categories paired with a Future Land Use Map (FLUM) to guide future uses on all properties within the Development Areas. The FLUM establishes the future vision for development patterns and land uses within the County's Development Areas over the next 20 years by applying the land use categories across the Development Areas.


Generally, land use categories create a range of standards that vary and gradually increase as land uses within each category become more dense or more intense, especially when a mixture of non-residential uses are desired. Within AC44, each land use category has a description articulating a vision for the land use and standards establishing desired primary uses, secondary uses, density ranges, and pertinent built form details, such as building height and requirements for ground floor non-residential uses. The purpose of these descriptions and standards is to provide clarity to the community on possible uses and modifications to properties, and to help guide the review of new development and redevelopment projects. When these land use categories are designated on the FLUM, they indicate how individual properties may develop in the future specifically to accomplish the goals of the Comprehensive Plan.


The AC44 Plan establishes twelve (12) "standard" land use categories. These twelve land use categories are listed and briefly described on the following page and detailed descriptions and standards are found on subsequent pages. **These future land use categories are recommendations, not regulations, and are intended to provide general guidance.**




FUTURE LAND USE KEY

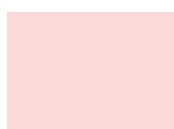
Residential Uses


 **Neighborhood Residential**
Primarily residential
3-6 units/acre
Small-scale neighborhood retail/institutional


 **Middle Residential**
Primarily residential
6-12 units/acre (up to 18 units/acre with affordable and MMH housing types)
Small-scale neighborhood retail/institutional

 **Urban Residential**
Primarily residential
12-34 units/acre
Neighborhood retail/institutional


Mixed Uses


 **Neighborhood Mixed Use**
Mixed-use
Up to 18 units/acre
Neighborhood retail/institutional/office


 **Community Mixed Use**
Mixed-use
12-34 units/acre
Commercial/retail, office, hotel, institutional

 **Corridor Mixed Use**
Mixed-use, transit-oriented development
18-60 units/acre
Commercial/retail, office, hotel, institutional


Commercial & Employment Uses


 **General Commercial**
Primarily auto-oriented retail
6-34 units/acre (secondary)
Commercial/retail, auto, office, hotel, wholesale, institutional


 **Office/Flex/Light Industrial/R+D**
Primarily employment generating uses
6-34 units/acre (secondary)
Offices, R+D, flex, LI, secondary retail/commercial

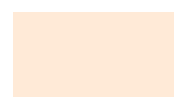
 **Industrial**
Primarily manufacturing/processing/distribution
No residential
Manufacturing, warehousing, distribution, processing

Other

 **Institutional**
Primarily government/public uses
Residential may be considered (primarily affordable)
Institutional/public uses with secondary offices

 **Public Land**
Publicly accessible parks/greenways systems
Parks, trails, natural areas, community centers

 **Green Systems**
Privately owned open space
Natural areas, environmental features, private rec.

 **Rural Area**
Rural land use – outside Development Areas
Refer to the Rural Area Chapter

Neighborhood Residential

Description Primarily residential with some neighborhood-scale commercial, retail, and institutional uses.

Primary Land Uses Residential, typically at a density of 3-6 units/acre. Encouraged housing types: townhomes, single-family attached, single-family detached, accessory units.

Secondary Land Uses Neighborhood-scale non-residential uses such as schools and child care, commercial, retail, religious assembly, and institutional uses.

Building Form Buildings are generally 1 to 3 stories. Building square footprints for non-residential uses are typically less than 20,000 square feet. Non-residential uses are encouraged to be located within smaller-scale buildings or as part of mixed-use buildings with small shop-fronts along streets.

Ground Floor Use Not applicable



Middle Residential

Description Primarily residential with some neighborhood-scale commercial, retail, and institutional uses. Intended to encourage a variety of housing types to promote housing choice and affordability.

Primary Land Uses Residential, typically at a density of 6-12 units/acre (up to 18 units/acre for additional missing middle and/or affordable housing - see the following page). Encouraged housing types: small and medium multiplexes, live-work units, bungalow courts, two over twos, single-family cottages, townhomes, single-family attached, accessory units.

Secondary Land Uses Single-family detached housing units.
Neighborhood-scale non-residential uses such as schools and child care, commercial, retail, religious assembly, and institutional uses.

Building Form Buildings are generally 1 to 3 stories. Building square footprints for non-residential uses are typically less than 20,000 square feet. Non-residential uses are encouraged to be located within smaller-scale buildings or as part of mixed-use buildings with small shop-fronts along streets.

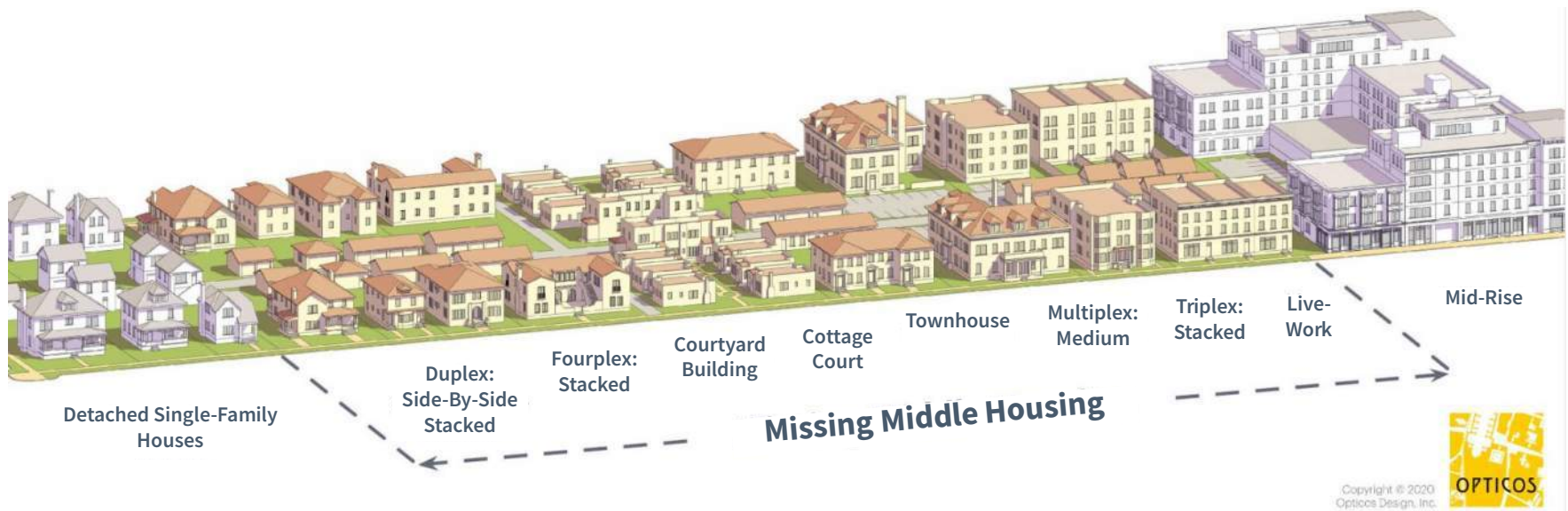
Smaller housing units on smaller lots are encouraged to increase affordability and housing choice and offer live-work units.

Ground Floor Use Not applicable



'MISSING' MIDDLE HOUSING

Like many communities throughout the country, Albemarle County has an increasing need for greater housing variety and affordability. The market currently delivers a housing supply that consists largely of detached single-family units or multi-family apartment units. 'Missing Middle Housing' refers to the lack of housing options in the middle of the spectrum (in terms of form, scale, and affordability) that lie somewhere in-between single-family detached units and multifamily apartment units at either end of the spectrum. 'Middle' housing may include options such as townhomes, duplexes, cottages or courtyard housing. Increasing the supply of 'middle' housing types offers the potential to create more walkable communities and improve housing affordability.



'Missing Middle' housing illustration. Source: Opticos Design, Inc.

Middle Residential - Additional Guidance

HOUSING CHOICE:

The following guidance is intended to encourage additional housing choice and affordability for the Middle Residential land use designations. Using the following guidance increases the recommended density range to up to 18 units/acre.

Additional housing units provided that are over a higher end of the standard recommended ranges for Middle Residential (6-12 units/acre) should be considered to accommodate additional designated affordable units (beyond the Housing Policy) or to allow for 'missing middle' housing types, such as:

- **Medium Multiplexes:** A multiple-family structure containing approximately 7-12 units, which may be arranged side by side and/or stacked. Units typically share an entrance along the street. Typical unit size 800 to 1,500 sq ft.
- **Small Multiplexes:** A multiple-family structure containing approximately 2-6 dwelling units, which may be arranged side by side and/or stacked, such as a duplex, triplex, or quadruplex. Typical unit size 800 to 1,200 sq ft.
- **Single-family Cottages:** A smaller single-family detached unit (may also be arranged in a bungalow or cottage court layout around a shared amenity space) that is typically 800 to 1,500 sq ft per unit.
- **Live-Work Units:** A dwelling unit that is 'paired' with a small-scale non-residential use, typically a dwelling unit that is above or behind a fire-separated ground floor space. The residential and non-residential uses typically have separate street entrances. Typical unit size 1,000 to 3,000 sq ft.
- **Accessory units (AU):** A secondary dwelling that shares the building lot of a larger/primary house. AU's can be internal/attached or external/detached and are typically 800 to 1,200 sq ft.
- **Tiny House:** A dwelling unit that is typically less than 400 sq ft (state building code).

Example scenario for Middle Residential that would meet the above guidelines:

- Project Acreage: 5 acres
- Density provided with rezoning: 18 units/acre
- Total dwelling units: 90 units
- Housing types: 60 units that are townhouses/single-family detached units and 30 units that meet the missing middle housing types (including small multiplexes, a cottage court, and AU's).
- Affordable units: 18 out of the 90 total (20% of the total).

Urban Residential

Description	Primarily residential supported by commercial, retail, office, and institutional uses.
Primary Land Uses	Residential, typically at a density of 12-34 units/acre. Encouraged housing types: multifamily, multiplexes, live-work units, bungalow courts, two over twos, single-family cottages, townhomes, single-family attached, accessory units. Non-residential uses such as schools and child care, institutional, and religious assembly.
Secondary Land Uses	Single-family detached housing units. Non-residential uses such as commercial, retail, and office.
Building Form	Buildings are generally 2 to 5 stories. Building square footprints for non-residential uses are typically less than 25,000 square feet. Non-residential uses are encouraged to be located within smaller-scale buildings or as part of mixed-use buildings with small shop-fronts along streets.
Ground Floor Use	Allowed but not required.



Neighborhood Mixed Use

Description Mixed use development with neighborhood-oriented retail and smaller employers, providing a transition between primarily residential areas and higher intensity mixed-use areas.

Primary Land Uses Residential, typically at a density of up to 18 units/acre. Encouraged housing types: multifamily, multiplexes, live-work units, bungalow courts, two over twos, townhomes, single-family attached, accessory units.

Non-residential uses such as commercial/retail, offices, schools and child care, institutional, and religious assembly.

Secondary Land Uses Non-residential uses such as auto-commercial sales and services and Office/R&D/Flex/Light Industrial.

Building Form Buildings are generally 1 to 3 stories. Building square footprints for non-residential uses are typically less than 25,000 square feet. Non-residential uses are encouraged to have shop-fronts along streets.

Flex and light industrial activities that could impact nearby and adjacent residential uses should be located inside of buildings.

Ground Floor Use Allowed but not required.



Community Mixed Use

Description Mid-rise, mixed-use development provides convenient access to goods and services.

Primary Land Uses Residential, typically at a density of 12-34 units/acre. Encouraged housing types: multifamily, multiplexes, live-work units, two over twos.
Non-residential uses such as commercial, retail, offices, hotels, conference facilities, schools and child care, institutional, and religious assembly.

Secondary Land Uses Single-family attached, townhomes, accessory units.
Non-residential uses such as existing auto-commercial sales and services and Office/R&D/Flex/Light Industrial.

Building Form Buildings are generally 2 to 5 stories. Block-scale development encouraged for walkability/pedestrian-orientation and a mix of uses, with block lengths typically 300 to 500 feet.
Non-residential uses are encouraged to be located within multi-story mixed-use buildings with shop-fronts along streets.
Flex and light industrial activities that could impact nearby and adjacent residential uses should be located inside of buildings.
Stepbacks and facade breaks can be used to support pedestrian-oriented development and are encouraged if any areas have been identified for viewshed protection.

Ground Floor Use Active ground story uses are encouraged. Buildings that start out as single-use are encouraged to be constructed to allow for future conversion to active ground story uses.





Corridor Mixed Use

Description	Mixed-use development along major corridors, envisioned for pedestrian and transit-oriented development with goods, services, and jobs that are conveniently accessible for nearby community members.
Primary Land Uses	<p>Residential, typically at a density of 18-60 units/acre. Encouraged housing types: multifamily, larger-scale multiplexes, live-work units, two over twos. Higher density encouraged for infill sites paired with quality public open/green space.</p> <p>Non-residential uses such as commercial, retail, offices, hotels, conference facilities, schools and child care, institutional, and religious assembly.</p>
Secondary Land Uses	<p>Single-family attached, townhomes, accessory units.</p> <p>Non-residential uses such as existing auto-commercial sales and services and Office/R&D/Flex/Light Industrial.</p>
Building Form	<p>Buildings are generally 2 to 6 stories. Urban form, block-scale development encouraged for walkability/pedestrian-orientation and a mix of uses, with block lengths typically 200 to 400 feet.</p> <p>Non-residential uses are encouraged to be located within multi-story mixed-use buildings with shop-fronts along streets.</p> <p>Flex and light industrial activities that could impact nearby and adjacent residential uses should be located inside of buildings.</p> <p>Stepbacks and facade breaks can be used to support pedestrian-oriented development and are encouraged if any areas have been identified for viewshed protection.</p>
Ground Floor Use	Active ground story uses are encouraged. Buildings that start out as single-use are encouraged to be constructed to allow for future conversion to active ground story uses.



General Commercial

Description	Development that is primarily car-oriented destinations for retail and services. Infill and mixed-use development encouraged where feasible. While uses and sites are generally car-oriented, streets are designed to accommodate safe and comfortable travel by all modes of travel. Transit connections are encouraged where possible.
Primary Land Uses	Non-residential uses such as commercial, retail, auto-commercial sales and services, wholesale businesses, offices, hotels, conference facilities, schools and child care, and religious assembly.
Secondary Land Uses	Residential, typically at a density of 6-34 units/acre. Encouraged housing types: multifamily, live-work units. The design of multi-family housing should be integrated with surrounding form. Office to housing conversions are encouraged. Non-residential uses such as Office/R&D/Flex/Light Industrial and institutional.
Building Form	Buildings are generally 1 to 4 stories. Multi-story buildings encouraged for residential use. Block-scale development encouraged for walkability/pedestrian-orientation, with block lengths typically 300 to 600 feet. Flex and light industrial activities that could impact nearby and adjacent residential uses should be located inside of buildings.
Ground Floor Use	Buildings that start out as single-use are encouraged to be constructed to allow for future conversion to active ground story uses.



Office/Flex/Research & Development/Light Industrial

Description	Vibrant employment centers and mixed-use areas with employment-generating uses and basic industries that are supported by secondary commercial/retail and residential uses.
Primary Land Uses	<p>Non-residential uses such as offices, research and development, flex spaces/uses, and light industrial.</p> <p>*Note: Heavy industrial and heavy manufacturing uses are not permitted under this land use designation.</p>
Secondary Land Uses	<p>Residential, typically at a density of 6-34 units/acre. Encouraged housing types: multifamily, live-work units.</p> <p>Non-residential uses such as commercial, retail, and institutional.</p> <p>Light manufacturing, warehousing, and distribution activities are acceptable uses provided they are combined with office, research and development, or flex space.</p>
Building Form	<p>Buildings are generally 1 to 5 stories. Block-scale development encouraged for walkability/pedestrian-orientation, with block lengths typically 300 to 500 feet.</p> <p>Light industrial uses must demonstrate that noise, light, and other impacts to surrounding properties will be minimized. Flex and light industrial activities that could impact nearby and adjacent residential uses should be located inside of buildings.</p> <p>Stepbacks and facade breaks can be used to support pedestrian-oriented development and are encouraged if any areas have been identified for viewshed protection.</p>
Ground Floor Use	Active ground story uses are encouraged. Buildings that start out as single-use are encouraged to be constructed to allow for future conversion to active ground story uses.



Industrial

Description	Employment areas that typically include uses such as manufacturing, processing, fabrication, assembly, packaging, storage, and distribution, that may not be compatible with mixed-use or residential development.
Primary Land Uses	<p>Industrial/employment uses such as manufacturing, storage, distribution, warehousing, processing, assembly, fabrication, and recycling.</p> <p>Non-residential uses related to industrial/employment uses such as related commercial activities, offices, and research and development.</p>
Secondary Land Uses	Non-residential uses such as larger auto-commercial service uses, wholesale, flex uses/spaces, light industrial, and institutional.
Building Form	<p>Buildings are generally 1 to 4 stories. Long, continuous buildings may be found within the Industrial designation.</p> <p>While blocks are typically longer, a safe internal pedestrian network is expected to navigate parking areas and internal streets.</p> <p>Industrial uses should be buffered from any nearby residential uses and the public realm (e.g. nearby public streets, open/recreational space).</p> <p>All modes of transportation should be supported, with a priority for larger/delivery vehicles.</p> <p>The layout of buildings, parking areas, and open spaces should recognize the unique needs of industrial users. Open space areas are typically designed to be used by employees. Relegated parking provided as feasible.</p>
Ground Floor Use	Not applicable



Institutional

Description	Development consisting primarily of government buildings, schools, public safety facilities, public utilities, and major healthcare facilities, or unprogrammed government property.
Primary Land Uses	Institutional uses such as schools, colleges, universities and ancillary facilities, fire stations, hospitals, libraries, public facilities, and major utilities, with associated non-residential uses such as research and development.
Secondary Land Uses	Offices supporting primary uses and nursing homes, assisted living facilities, and convalescent homes. Residential may be considered when compatible with surrounding areas and to provide affordable housing consistent with the County's Housing Policy.
Building Form	Buildings are generally 1 to 5 stories. Building form/type is dependent on use, with mixed-use buildings/areas encouraged where appropriate. Stepbacks and facade breaks can be used to support pedestrian-oriented development and are encouraged if any areas have been identified for viewshed protection.
Ground Floor Use	Not applicable



Public Land

Description	Publicly-owned or publicly-accessible parks, greenway systems, recreational areas, and natural areas for active, passive, or social recreational use and restoration and protection of the natural environment.
Primary Land Uses	Parks, greenways, recreational areas, and natural areas that are publicly-owned or publicly-accessible.
Secondary Land Uses	Not applicable
Building Form	<p>Buildings/structures should be associated with public recreational uses, such as community centers, picnic shelters, and public restrooms.</p> <p>Building design and placement guidance should be vetted through a park master plan, small area plan, or similar process.</p> <p>Multi-use trails offering pedestrian connections are encouraged wherever possible.</p> <p>Natural areas and environmental features, including but not limited to preserved steep slopes, stream buffers, floodplain, and important sites/ forest blocks in the Biodiversity Action Plan should be protected and restored.</p>

Ground Floor Use	Not applicable
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Green Systems

Description	Areas providing ecosystem and cultural services (including recreation), critical environmental areas, and areas held in common ownership in existing developments.
Primary Land Uses	Sensitive environmental features including stream buffers, floodplains, and steep slopes. Privately-owned open space with passive and/or active recreation amenities, parks, playgrounds, outdoor sitting areas, plazas, etc. Natural areas that are not publicly owned/accessible.
Secondary Land Uses	Not applicable
Building Form	<p>Few buildings/structures expected. Buildings/structures should be associated with recreational uses.</p> <p>Multi-use trails offering pedestrian connections are encouraged wherever possible.</p> <p>Natural areas and environmental features, including but not limited to preserved steep slopes, stream buffers, floodplain, and important sites/forest blocks in the Biodiversity Action Plan should be protected and restored.</p>
Ground Floor Use	Not applicable



LAND USE CATEGORY CONSOLIDATION

As part of previous comprehensive and area planning efforts, 24 land use categories were created across the Future Land Use Map (FLUM). Often the differences between these categories are minor and typically provide similar recommendations. As part of AC44 the overlap across the 24 land use categories has been reduced and consolidated to 12 categories plus 3 legacy categories.

The updated set of land use categories were applied across the Development Areas in a 1:1 matching approach. All previous land use categories that were carried forward (e.g. Urban Residential) remained the same. Other land use categories that were not carried forward were matched to the closest corresponding category (e.g. Regional Mixed Use became Community Mixed Use). This updated set of land use categories provides clear guidance for development applications and for future Area Plan updates.

During small area planning processes, specific land use designations are applied to all parcels within the small area plan. Three special cases exist within the existing the Crozet and Village of Rivanna Development Areas, where previous small area plan efforts created unique, highly specific land use designations within their relevant small area plan. The first case is the (LOW) Neighborhood Density land use category found in both the Crozet and Rivanna Village small area plans. The second and third designations are specialized categories of “Downtown Crozet” and “Village Center” found in Crozet and Rivanna respectively. These are unique and specialized land use districts will remain in the AC44 Future Land Use Map. However, these designations will not be more broadly applied or applied with future area plan updates.

FUTURE LAND USE MAP (FLUM)

The future land use categories and map work together to reflect our community’s vision, needs, and priorities while anticipating projected growth and demand for housing and businesses. Implementation of these future uses may take years to realize and depends on partnerships and collaboration between Albemarle County, the development community members, and partner agencies.

The FLUM is the tool used by the public and private sectors to achieve the objectives in this Plan. Other tools might include the zoning ordinance, public facility improvements such as water or sewer infrastructure expansions, and economic development programs.

When a property owner submits a request to change the zoning of their property or proposes a use only allowed by special use permit, the request is reviewed for alignment with the overall comprehensive plan, including the FLUM. The comprehensive plan provides guidance for the Board of Supervisors, the Planning Commission, and Albemarle County staff when making decisions on applications for changes to land use.



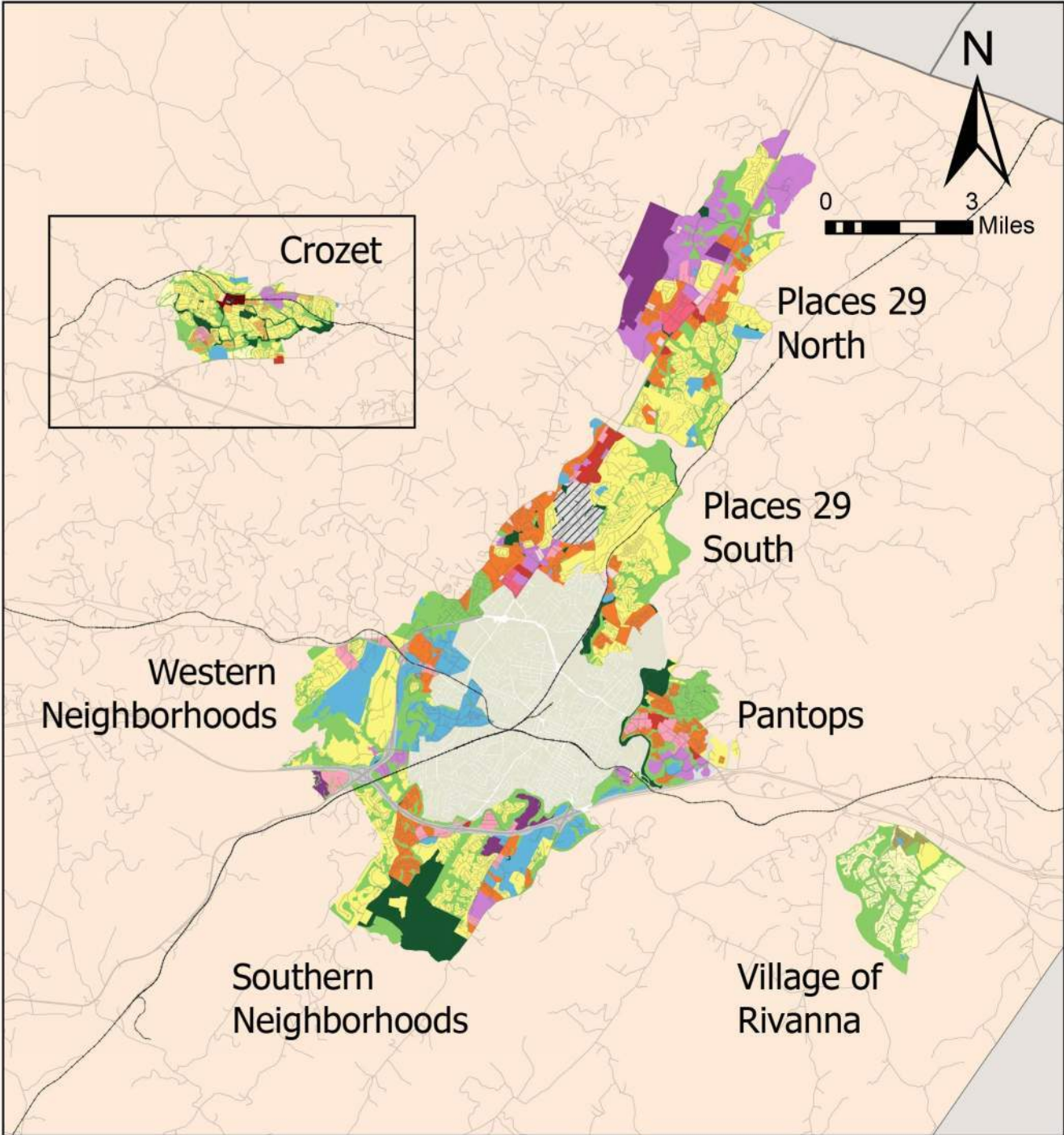
FUTURE LAND USE MAP

AC44 Future Land Use Categories

- Neighborhood Residential
- Middle Residential
- Urban Residential
- Neighborhood Mixed Use
- Community Mixed Use
- Corridor Mixed Use
- General Commercial
- Office/R & D/Flex/
Light Industrial
- Industrial
- Institutional
- Public Lands
- Green Systems
- Rural Area

Refer to the applicable plan for the following land uses:

- Crozet Downtown: Refer to Crozet Area Plan
- Neighborhood Density Residential - Low: Refer to Crozet & Village of Rivanna Area Plans
- Town/Village Center: Refer to Village of Rivanna Area Plan
- Rio29 : Refer to Rio 29 Small Area Plan



FUTURE LAND USE INTERPRETATION POLICY

When evaluating a new development proposal, consider the following guidance for interpreting Land Use Categories and the Future Land Use Map:

1. **Calculate recommended density based on the total acreage of the property, using gross density.** Environmental features and other site constraints must be protected as required, but the area used by these features and constraints does not reduce the overall density calculations.
 - 1a. If a property is partly designated Public Land or Green Systems and any other land use designation, the other land use designation (e.g., residential or mixed-use) is applied to the full acreage of the property for the purpose of calculating recommended density.
2. **Densities above the recommended range should be considered, especially with the following factors:**
 - 2a. Affordable units provided above the County's Housing Policy.
 - 2b. Infill and redevelopment, especially where surface parking is being replaced and existing infrastructure is used. New development should be connected to surrounding development and be appropriately scaled, especially directly adjacent to existing development.
3. **Clustered development and protection and restoration of sensitive environmental features** is encouraged. Taller buildings can provide additional density while reducing the area of land impacted by development.



COMMUNITY DESIGN GUIDELINES

EVOLVING TO COMMUNITY DESIGN GUIDELINES

Previous county comprehensive plans used the 12 Neighborhood Model Principles to analyze and determine the appropriateness of new rezonings and special use permit development proposals during the legislative review process. To provide clear and more concise guidance, AC44 includes Community Design Guidelines that replace the Neighborhood Model Principles. The guidelines are intended to implement the Growth Management Policy by encouraging development throughout the Development Areas that is mixed-use, walkable, and dense with multimodal transportation options and access to quality parks and open space, making the Development Area a more attractive area in which to live, work, and play. The Guidelines are intended to provide flexibility based on the characteristics of each proposed development and the surrounding context.



The twelve Neighborhood Model Principles from the 2015 Comprehensive Plan have been consolidated into **four Community Design Guideline categories of Land Use, Transportation, Site Design, and Parks, Recreational Amenities, and Open Space**. The consolidation is intended to streamline and organize the content, making the guidelines easier to read, evaluate and apply. Together, these guidelines provide direction for new development and infill to achieve Comprehensive Plan goals, use Development Areas land efficiently, and utilize best practices for the built environment within the Development Areas.

Implementation of these guidelines will balance between community benefits and the cost or feasibility of new development, including housing construction and design costs, which are passed from developers to homeowners or renters. Community benefits may be achieved through the form and layout of quality development, such as recreational and open space, safe spaces to walk, and street trees for shade. Site design may also add to the cost and feasibility of new development, including aspects such as parking or building setbacks (the space between buildings and distance from the street).

Many site design requirements are important for safety and wellbeing. Additionally, there are opportunities through AC44 to support and recommend updates consistent with best practices and which can be integrated into the County's Zoning Modernization efforts. An example of best practices is illustrated by a recent study by Rutgers University, which found that lowering mandated parking requirements resulted in lower initial construction costs and ongoing operating costs for residential developments, allowing reduced rents as compared to more typical 'over-parked' residential developments.

ACTIVITY CENTERS

Since the adoption of the Neighborhood Model Principles, the concept of “centers” played a fundamental role in guiding future land use in Albemarle County comprehensive plans. The purpose of a center is to concentrate the provision of goods and services within an area proximate to nearby residents. This contemplates a community where people can walk, bike, or take transit between a wide array of housing choices and the daily destinations where they shop, work, or recreate. To implement this approach, infrastructure, amenities, and services components are required to support higher intensity centers to make them attractive places to live and, importantly, for the private sector to invest. Since the public sector plays a large role in guiding and providing the capital for these infrastructure, amenity, and service components, identification of the location of and requirements for centers is a valuable tool to prioritizing where the County should apply its resources, including implementing a multimodal transportation system.

HIERARCHY OF CENTERS

A key tenet in the Neighborhood Model was to situate centers within a five-minute walk of most Development Areas’ residents. Since the average person can walk a ¼ mile within five minutes, this principle planned for over 50 centers to be spread throughout the Development Area. This strategy for centers has been difficult to achieve for two reasons. First, the commercial market requirements to support over 50 economically viable centers with an adequate amount commercial square footage are difficult to achieve when the existing density within the Development Area is relatively low. A second important component to successfully creating centers is the necessary public investment in transportation, parks, and other urban services. With over 50 centers, the County’s capacity to provide investments required to support these critical centers is diluted.

To overcome these issues, the AC44 plan proposes only 22 Activity Centers and creates a hierarchal three-tier system for centers to guide the relative residential density and commercial intensity within these centers. Centers towards the top of this hierarchy are expected to accommodate a significant proportion of the County’s future residential and economic development. Correspondingly, since the centers at the top of this hierarchy contain more density and intensity, public investments and service provisions are prioritized for these locations.

AC44 incorporates three types of mixed-use centers: Local, Community, and Regional Activity Centers plus Employment Districts. Subsequent pages provide detailed attributes of these four center types. However, the basic concept for the hierarchy of centers is as follows:

LOCAL CENTERS

The Local Centers have the least intense commercial uses and are relatively small. These Local Centers are geared towards providing limited commercial offerings to lower density neighborhoods within a ¼ mile radius.



COMMUNITY CENTERS

Community Centers are mixed-use centers, but their target density and commercial intensity ranges fall in between Local and Regional Centers. Their intent is still to provide services to primarily residential neighborhoods, but at a higher level of service and to a larger area than local centers can support because the community center typically draws people from a wider area. The Food Lion shopping center on Avon Extended is an example of a Community Center that serves a quadrant of the Development Area.

REGIONAL CENTERS

On the other end of the scale is Regional Centers. These have the most intense commercial uses and extensive residential densities with a large, mixed-use core and surrounding urban neighborhoods with fairly dense, multi-family buildings. Due to their increased density, intensity and size, the relatively few Regional Centers will be focal points for public investments seeking to improve transportation mobility, affordable housing, access to quality open spaces and parks, and public safety services.

EMPLOYMENT DISTRICTS

Employment Districts are clusters of Office, Flex/Light Industrial, Research and Development, and Light Industrial uses. These Districts play a critical role in the County's economic development initiatives. Their central goal is to expand employment opportunities for area residents with high-paying jobs. It should be noted Employment Districts may contain residential uses or a built form not completely aligned with Community Design Guidelines. Specific policy guidance for the utilization of Employment Districts is found in the Thriving Economy Topic Chapter.

The map on the following page shows the location and identifies a name for each Activity Center and Employment District. It is important to note that each center was identified and classified based upon the 2022 land use buildout analysis, observed projects within the development pipeline, current and future job count

estimates, areas identified in small area plans, and professional judgment. Additionally, AC44 uses oval areas to represent the general locations of each center or district. The boundaries of these ovals should be considered as general representations of an individual center's extent. As future small area plans occur, the intent is to further define the boundaries of the centers or districts to guide the implementation of this chapter more specifically.

RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN CENTERS AND TRANSPORTATION

The identification of Activity Centers and Employment Districts is a critical component to the planning and implementation of an effective multimodal transportation plan because land use and transportation are interdependent. AC44's Transportation Chapter explains this interdependency more in depth, but it is important to recognize that developing dense, mixed use, urban, and walkable Activity Centers as well as concentrations of jobs within Employment Districts is key to building a multimodal transportation system that is efficient and provides increased mobility.

Multimodal Systems Plan & Urban Street Standards

Within AC44, the Development Areas Land Use and Transportation chapters recommend developing and adopting a multimodal systems plan. Detailed in the Transportation Chapter, a multimodal systems plan will allow the County to prioritize investment and coordinate with VDOT to utilize urban street standards in Activity Centers. Using street standards more urban in nature is critical to improving walking, biking, transit, and placemaking in the Activity Centers.

ACTIVITY CENTERS & EMPLOYMENT DISTRICTS

Regional Centers

- 3. Hollymead Town Center
- 7. Rio29
- 9. Hydraulic/29
- 13. Lower Pantops
- 18. 5th Street

Employment Districts

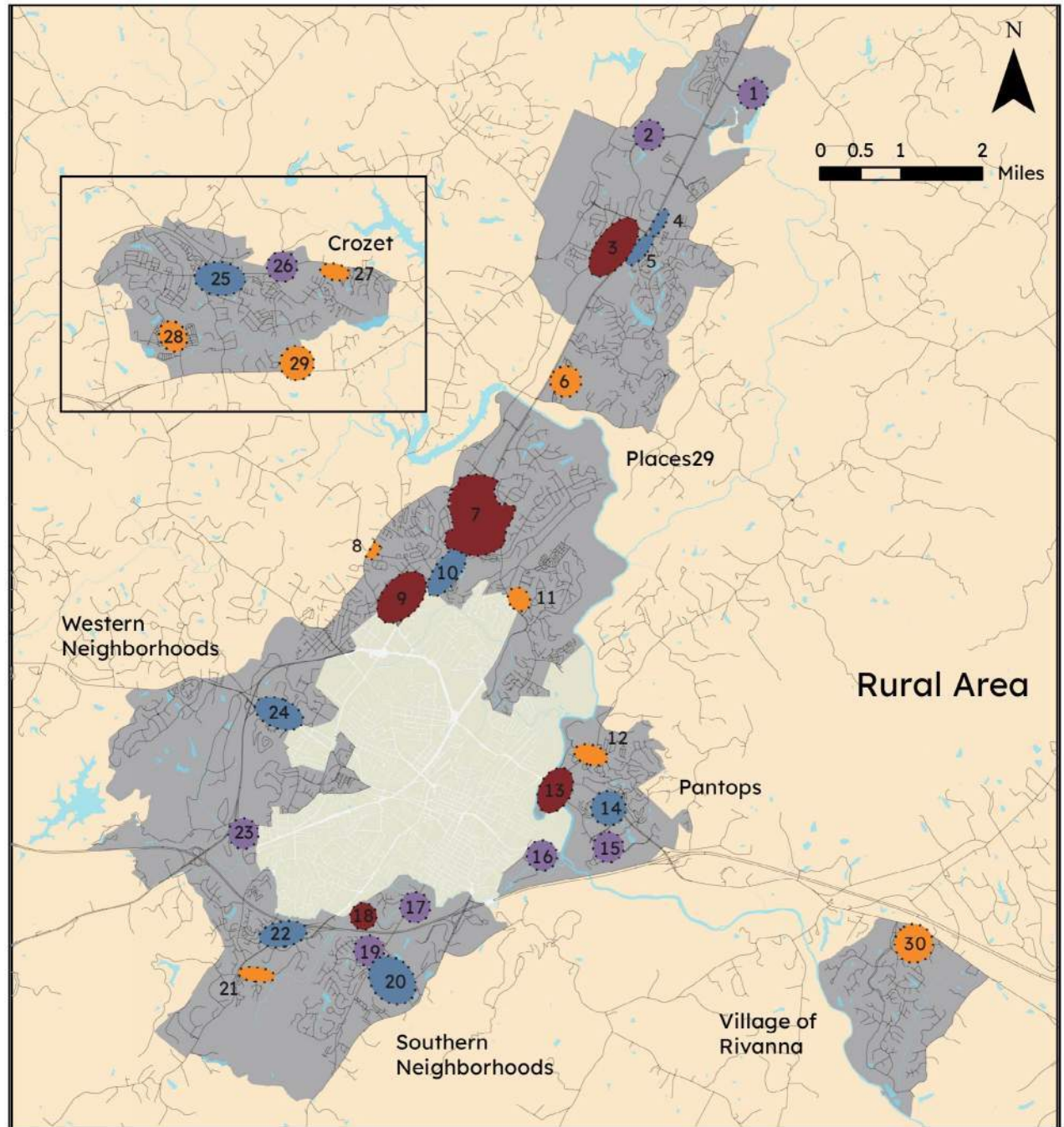
- 1. Rivanna Station
- 2. North Fork Research Park/Airport
- 15. Peter Jefferson Place
- 16. Broadway
- 17. Avon Street Extended
- 19. Mill Creek Industrial Park
- 23. Fontaine Research Park
- 26. Rt 240/Starr Hill/Music Today

Community Centers

- 4. North Pointe
- 5. Timberwood Shopping Center
- 10. Hillsdale Drive
- 14. Rivanna Ridge
- 20. Mill Creek Drive
- 22. 5th St/Old Lynchburg Road
- 24. Ivy Road/Old Ivy Road
- 25. Downtown Crozet

Local Centers

- 6. Brookhill
- 8. Whitewood/Hydraulic
- 11. Rio Road E/Gasoline Alley
- 12. Route 20/Riverside Village
- 21. Southwood
- 27. Wickham Pond
- 28. Old Trail
- 29. Clover Lawn
- 30. Rivanna Village



Local Center

The Local Centers have the least intense commercial uses and are relatively small. They are typically geared toward providing limited commercial offerings to neighborhoods within a ¼ mile radius.

Building Height

At least 2 and up to 4 stories.

Multimodal Transportation

Bike and pedestrian connections to adjacent neighborhoods, Activity Centers, and Employment Districts. Transit stops are encouraged along transit routes.

Parking

Parking relegated to the side or rear of buildings, or utilize screening. On-street parking encouraged.

Public Civic and Open Space

Interconnected publicly-accessible spaces with active or passive recreational amenities. Examples include:

- Appropriately scaled plazas and seating areas (e.g. 5-10+ tables or benches) with large shade trees
- Pocket parks (typically 0.25-0.5 acres) with hardscape, landscaping, and a combination of passive recreational amenities (such as benches, picnic tables, and pavilion or shade shelters) and smaller active recreational amenities (such as exercise stations or playground equipment)
- Pollinator gardens
- Natural areas with public trails and educational signage
- Off-leash pet area with fencing, shade, water, and benches



Source: DRPT Multimodal Systems Design Guidelines

Community Center

Community Centers are focal points for commercial and cultural activities that are accessible by a variety of transportation options. They may be oriented toward a major multimodal corridor as defined in the Multimodal Systems Design Guidelines (e.g. Route 29 or Route 250).

Building Height

At least 2 and up to 6 stories.

Multimodal Transportation

Bike and pedestrian connections to adjacent neighborhoods, Activity Centers, and Employment Districts. Enhanced transit stops are encouraged along transit routes. Wider sidewalks/pedestrian connections are encouraged in commercial and mixed-use areas, including to provide space for outdoor seating.

Parking

Parking relegated to the side or rear of buildings or on-street parking encouraged.

Public Civic and Open Space

Publicly-accessible spaces with active or passive recreational amenities. Examples include:

- Appropriately scaled plazas and seating areas (e.g. 10-15+ tables or benches) with large shade trees
- Parks (typically 0.5-1.5 acres) with hardscape, landscaping, and active recreational amenities such as exercise stations, playgrounds, interactive water features, and natural playscapes
- Amphitheaters, spaces for farmers/craft markets, and other event spaces
- Community gardens
- Natural areas with public trails and educational signage
- Open/maintained/unprogrammed lawn areas
- Off-leash pet area with fencing, shade, water, and benches



Source: DRPT Multimodal Systems Design Guidelines

Regional Center

Regional Centers are vibrant and urban areas with goods, services, and entertainment activities accessible by a variety of transportation options. They may serve as a regional destination.

Building Height

At least 3 and up to 8 stories.

Multimodal Transportation

Bike and pedestrian connections to adjacent neighborhoods, Activity Centers, and Employment Districts. Enhanced transit stops are encouraged along transit routes. Wider sidewalks/pedestrian connections are encouraged in commercial and mixed-use areas, including to provide space for outdoor seating.

Parking

Parking relegated to the side or rear of buildings or on-street parking. Structured parking encouraged.

Public Civic and Open Space

Publicly-accessible spaces with active or passive recreational amenities. Examples include:

- Appropriately scaled plazas and seating areas (e.g. 15-20+ tables or benches) with large shade trees and walking paths
- Parks (typically 1.5-2.5+ acres) with hardscape, landscaping, and active recreational amenities such as exercise stations, playgrounds, interactive water features, and natural playscapes
- Amphitheatres, spaces for farmers/craft markets, and other event spaces
- Multi-purpose athletic fields/courts
- Skate-parks
- Community gardens
- Natural areas with public trails and educational signage
- Open/maintained/unprogrammed lawn areas
- Off-leash pet area with fencing, shade, water, and benches



Source: DRPT Multimodal Systems Design Guidelines

Employment Districts

Employment Districts are clusters of Office, Flex, Light Industrial, Research and Development, and Industrial uses that play a critical role in the County’s economic development initiatives. Their central goal is to expand high-paying career ladder employment opportunities for area residents. The purpose of identifying Employment Districts is to designate areas that should retain Office/Flex/Light Industrial/Research + Development and Industrial land uses and identify major employment hubs for multimodal transportation connections with the future multimodal systems plan. There are limited locations in the Development Areas where these Office/Flex/LI/R&D designations occur, especially in clusters. Opportunities to support areas that are emerging as an employment district or could redevelop into an employment district should be carefully considered.

Businesses consistent with the County’s economic development initiatives and uses consistent with underlying Office/R&D/Flex/Light Industrial or Industrial land uses should be encouraged in the Employment Districts. Additionally, emerging industries and businesses such as green technology, clean energy generation/storage, and incubator and maker spaces should also be considered. This list should not be interpreted as comprehensive or to exclude related sectors that support existing businesses.

Secondary uses include residential, commercial, and retail uses supporting employment uses. When incorporated, residential uses are encouraged to provide live/work opportunities, especially for workers employed by businesses in a District. The presence of residential uses should not preclude future light industrial uses in a District. Residential uses are encouraged to locate on upper floors of mixed-use buildings.

Additional guidance may be found in individual Area Plans and studies for specific Employment Districts, for example Starr Hill/Music Today in the Crozet Area Plan or the Broadway Blueprint Economic Development Revitalization Study (Phases 1 and 2).



CENTERS INTERPRETATION POLICY

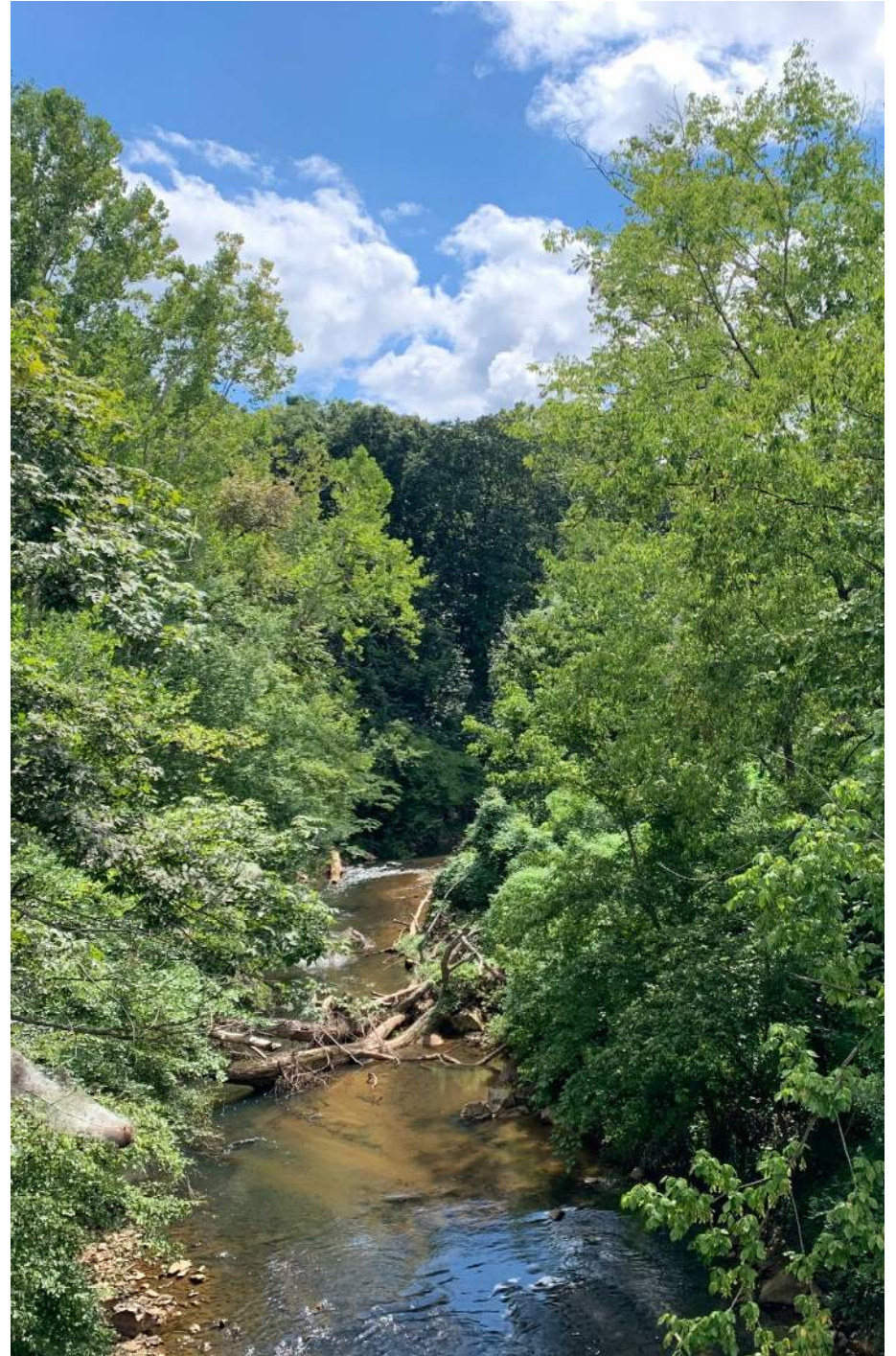
Use the following guidance for evaluating development proposals in Activity Centers along with the Center Place Types:

1. The Centers function as an overlay that encourages a **higher intensity of uses than the underlying land use designation(s)**. Land uses should generally be consistent with underlying land use designations. Additional development intensity and infill is encouraged with appropriate form and scale for each Place Type.
2. Activity Center recommendations are intended to be flexible. The same type and intensity of development will not be possible for every center location, even among the same center types. Review of applications in centers should **consider the surrounding context and contribute to an overall mix of uses across a broader area**.
3. **Refer to the applicable Area Plan for additional guidance.** The Activity Centers within this section of the Comprehensive Plan outline general expectations, while more detailed recommendations may be included in the Area Plans.
4. **Center Boundaries:** The general locations of each Center are shown on the Center map on Page 30. These boundaries are approximate and adjustments should be considered including with future Area Plan updates and with requests with development applications that are outside of and adjacent to center boundaries.
5. **Building Height:** Taller buildings above the high end of the recommended range may be appropriate. Impacts including lighting, structured parking, and service and loading areas on neighboring properties should be considered and mitigated, particularly when buildings are located adjacent to smaller-scale residences.
6. **Ground Floor/Active Ground Story Uses:** Examples of Active Ground Story uses include and are not limited to: retail, restaurants, services (e.g. gym/fitness studio, hair salon, pharmacy, library, etc.), educational/institutional uses (e.g. museum, a place to take classes/attend programs, etc.), and some studios/flex spaces (e.g. arts/crafts, maker-spaces). **Active ground story uses are encouraged throughout Centers but will not be feasible and successful in all locations.** Considerations for where to locate active ground story uses and where to construct buildings to allow future conversion to active ground story uses include:
 - **Locating active uses along major corridors and roads with a higher volume of pedestrian and/or vehicular traffic.** Concentrating active ground story uses in busier areas increases their likelihood of success.
 - **Locating active uses within buildings that have foot traffic that is ‘built in’,** such as an apartment or office building.
7. **Vertical Mixed-Use Buildings:** Have multiple land uses within the same structure (e.g. some combination of residential, commercial, office, institutional, and/or light industrial/flex/R+D). **Vertical mixed-use buildings are expected in Regional Centers, at least in the highest intensity areas or ‘core areas’ and encouraged in other Centers.** Active ground story uses may be included in a vertical mixed-use building and are defined above.
8. **Public Civic and Open Space:** As the intensity of land uses increases, a higher concentration of amenities and urban open space/recreation areas is expected to support the anticipated higher number of users. Amenities and open/recreation spaces may be small in scale/acreage but should be sufficient to support surrounding community members and visitors. **These spaces should be linked to other public open spaces and ideally be located along the public right of way frontage for easy access and visibility.**

PROTECTING AND INCREASING ACCESS TO NATURE

Directing growth to the Development Areas to protect natural resources in the Rural Area also needs to be balanced with both protecting the natural environment in the Development Areas and ensuring community members can connect with and explore nature. Waterways, floodplains, and steep slopes are protected by Zoning Ordinance requirements. This chapter recommends updates to the Zoning Ordinance and collaboration with community partners to also protect other important environmental features, reduce stormwater runoff and the heat island effect with improved tree coverage, and increase access to our natural community assets in the Development Areas.

The Rivanna River is a beautiful natural feature and major recreational resource in our community. The 2022 Urban Rivanna River Corridor Plan completed by the Thomas Jefferson Planning District Commission (TJPD) studied the portion of the Rivanna River in the Development Areas (Pantops) along the City/County border. The River Corridor Plan is found in the Appendix section (Part IV) and recommends protecting and restoring stream banks, removing invasive species, improving water quality, adding trail connections to nearby neighborhoods, conducting an inventory of historic and cultural resources, orienting and connecting development to the river, and developing a robust wayfinding system. Other ongoing and future projects can continue to activate the Rivanna River, including the Free Bridge Lane promenade, allowing small commercial uses along greenways to serve pedestrians and cyclists and extending the Old Mills Trail to Milton. A bicycle and pedestrian crossing of the Rivanna River near the existing vehicular-focused Free Bridge would also provide a safe and comfortable multimodal connection between the Pantops development area and the City of Charlottesville, creating additional opportunities for residents and visitors to access recreational, retail, and employment opportunities.



Increasing tree coverage in the Development Areas was a consistent community priority heard throughout the AC44 process. Based on data from the Tree Equity Score, which evaluates tree canopy coverage in comparison to community vulnerabilities (e.g. heat burden and unemployment and poverty rates), there are disparities in tree coverage in the Development Areas. This chapter includes several actions for equitably increasing tree coverage, focused on ensuring native tree species can thrive, filling in gaps in existing neighborhoods, and ensuring trees do not conflict with infrastructure. It also recommends a tiered system for tree coverage requirements for new development, with less tree coverage required the higher the intensity of the development, as higher intensity land uses typically involve more land disturbance and impervious surface area. Denser and taller development also provide more opportunity for ‘building up instead of out’, or building taller and denser to preserve more overall open space compared to larger lot development.

Along with implementing the Parks chapter, the Environmental Stewardship chapter, the Rivanna River Corridor Plan, and increasing tree coverage in the Development Areas, there are other opportunities to increase access to nature and improve air and water quality. This includes exploring the possibility of joining the international Biophilic Cities network, which encourages collaboration with other localities, contributions to the network’s resource library, and tracking local biophilic indicators over time to measure progress. It also involves connecting and building on our ‘green network’ ranging from parks to pollinator gardens to green roofs. These natural features and ‘nature-based solutions’ filter stormwater runoff, provide habitats for native species, provide shade, and create beautiful spaces for residents and visitors to spend time in nature.



IMPLEMENTATION

OBJECTIVE	DALU 1: <i>Increase the use of infill, higher density development, adaptive reuse, and redevelopment in the Development Areas.</i>
ACTION	
1.1	Update the Zoning Ordinance to support infill, adaptive reuse, and redevelopment especially in Activity Centers.
1.2.	Update the Zoning Ordinance to allow residential uses in commercial zoning districts by-right in some locations, especially in Activity Centers.
1.3.	Develop public realm standards for Activity Centers and other identified mixed-use corridors to include elements such as shade trees, bike parking, street furniture, pedestrian-level lighting, and other elements that are consistent with the Community Design Guidelines.
1.4.	Coordinate with VDOT for approval of urban street standards that are consistent with the DRPT Multimodal Design Guidelines.
1.5.	Update the County’s lighting requirements to reduce light spillover, glare, and excessive brightness, prioritizing a safe environment for pedestrians and bicyclists, especially in mixed-use areas like Activity Centers.
1.6.	Use equitable and sustainable community and building design guidance to inform updates to standards and requirements, such as the American Institute of Architects’ Framework for Design Excellence and Whole Building Design Guide’s Green Building Standards and Certification Systems.
1.7.	Establish incentives and identify opportunities for public-private partnerships to support redevelopment of underutilized areas in the Development Areas where infrastructure is already in place, such as for structured parking or connecting to public water and sewer.
1.8.	Update the land use buildout analysis as set under the “Development Area Utilization Review” section in Part II. If estimated supply does not seem to sufficiently exceed estimated demand, consider how other recommendations in this Plan could be leveraged to increase the capacity within the existing Development Areas.
1.9.	Monitor the proportion of development occurring within the Development Areas compared with the Rural Area. If the proportion of residential development begins to increase in the Rural Area, develop options for further encouraging and directing growth to the Development Areas and discourage subdivisions in the Rural Area. [2024 baseline: 17% new dwelling units in the RA]
1.10.	Continue participation in LUEPC and the Three-Party Agreement, including by coordinating with the University of Virginia on recommended land uses for Areas A and B in the Development Areas.

OBJECTIVE	DALU 2: <i>Increase the number of jobs and housing units in designated Activity Centers and Employment Districts.</i>
ACTION	
2.1.	Reduce or eliminate vehicle parking requirements, especially for non-residential land uses and in designated Activity Centers. Investigate parking maximums and shared parking requirements, especially in Regional Centers.
2.2.	Establish a policy that encourages developers to support multimodal transportation infrastructure and program investment in exchange for a reduction in the minimum number of parking spaces needed for a development.
2.3.	Update the County’s residential bonus density requirements to remove the minimum lot size and street frontage requirements to allow for additional open/natural/recreational space to be retained and for amenity-oriented lots.
2.4.	Identify and fund Capital Improvement Program (CIP) projects that would support Activity Center development, such as multimodal transportation facilities, public parks and plazas, and other public infrastructure.
2.5.	In Employment Districts, use tools, partnerships, and funding sources such as Capital Funding Grants and CDBG Community Improvement Grants to support employment-generating land uses, especially those that are consistent with the County’s Target Industries.
2.6	Update the Zoning Ordinance to allow data centers in the Development Areas in locations zoned for industrial uses. Use performance standards to address and mitigate potential impacts.
OBJECTIVE	DALU 3: <i>Invest in existing neighborhoods in the Development Areas with increased connectivity and equitable access to Activity Centers, parks, open space, and community facilities and services, and infrastructure improvements that prioritize under-served communities.</i>
ACTION	
3.1.	Allow small-scale commercial uses along major off-road connections and greenways used by pedestrians and bicyclists. Small-scale commercial uses could include kiosks, food/drink stands, mobile libraries, and food trucks.
3.2.	Use a Multimodal Systems Planning approach to coordinate land use and transportation planning in the Development Areas, including connecting Activity Centers, Employment Districts, dense residential development, schools, parks, and other key destinations.
3.3.	Coordinate with the Town of Scottsville on shared areas of interest, including opportunities for transportation improvements, parks and trails, and other public infrastructure projects, as well as opportunities for enhanced social/human services and affordable housing projects.
3.4.	Integrate new public facility location choices with transit route, walking and biking infrastructure development and broadband/digital access capacity.
3.5.	Collaborate with a representative range of community members to identify equitable and accessible locations and services for new public facilities.
3.6.	Incorporate publicly accessible trails and greenspaces and opportunities for contact with native ecosystems in the design of community facilities and public gathering spaces.

OBJECTIVE	<i>DALU4: Increase access to nature, green infrastructure, and tree coverage in the Development Areas.</i>
ACTION	
4.1.	Update the street tree requirements in the Zoning Ordinance to provide appropriate spacing, soil volume, and buffers, and to require native species and increase biodiversity to ensure street trees can thrive and are more resilient to pests and disease.
4.2.	Develop and apply tiered standards for tree coverage that are tiered based on residential density and intensity of non-residential uses.
4.3.	Create grading and tree preservation requirements and/or incentives for new development and update the tree replacement requirements.
4.4.	Collaborate with local partners, community organizations, and property owners to preserve and protect clusters or ‘groves’ of healthy and native canopy trees and to plant native street trees along corridors with few or significant gaps in street trees. Use data such as existing tree canopy and Tree Equity Score to prioritize tree planting locations.
4.5.	Coordinate with VDOT to minimize the impact of street trees on VDOT infrastructure through the use of appropriate tree species.
4.6.	Evaluate the requirements to join the Biophilic Cities Network and pursue the application to become a member locality. Engage with the City of Charlottesville, the Town of Scottsville and the TJPDC for a regional approach to improving access to nature and integrating nature with urban design.
4.7	Explore creating incentives or requirements in zoning and development processes for green infrastructure, including for stormwater management (cross reference Environmental Stewardship Chapter Action 2.2) and for transportation infrastructure (cross reference Transportation Chapter Action 9.1). Prioritize areas with significant impervious surface and higher heat vulnerability from the heat island effect.

3.C COMMUNITY DESIGN GUIDELINES

LAND USE

INTENT

Throughout the Development Areas, provide a mix of land uses, a variety of housing types, and maintain a hard edge between the Development Areas and Rural Area.

CONSIDERATIONS

1. Direct the majority of Albemarle’s new residential (housing) and nonresidential (office, retail, commercial, industrial) growth will occur in the Development Areas.
2. Create a mixture of residential and non-residential uses to advance the goals of convenient access to work, to services, and to entertainment. Single use proposed projects will be evaluated on the adjacent types of uses and whether the use contributes to an overall mix of uses in the area.
3. Evaluate projects proposing one housing type only based on the nearby and adjacent housing unit types and whether the type contributes to an overall mix of housing types in the area. Build a full range of housing choices and housing types throughout Development Areas.
4. Review dedicated affordable housing units based on the **County’s Housing Policy (‘Housing Albemarle’)** and the recommendations in the Housing element of AC44.
5. Maintain hard boundaries between the Development Areas and Rural Area, with mixed-use, dense, and compact development encouraged up to that boundary. Development in the Development Areas will be consistent with the applicable future land use designations and Activity Center place types and will not be reduced or be ‘transitional’/suburban at the Development Areas edges.
6. Maximize the overall density within new developments, while conserving critical environmental resources, such as steep slopes, stream buffers, and wildlife corridors.
7. Recognize not all circumstances or properties are the same, and thus some of these Guidelines may not be suitable for all future developments.
8. Emphasize the re-use of existing Development Areas sites, especially outdated uses with large parking lots or existing uses with a relatively low residential density/ commercial intensity relative to the Future Land Use Map.



Photo credit:

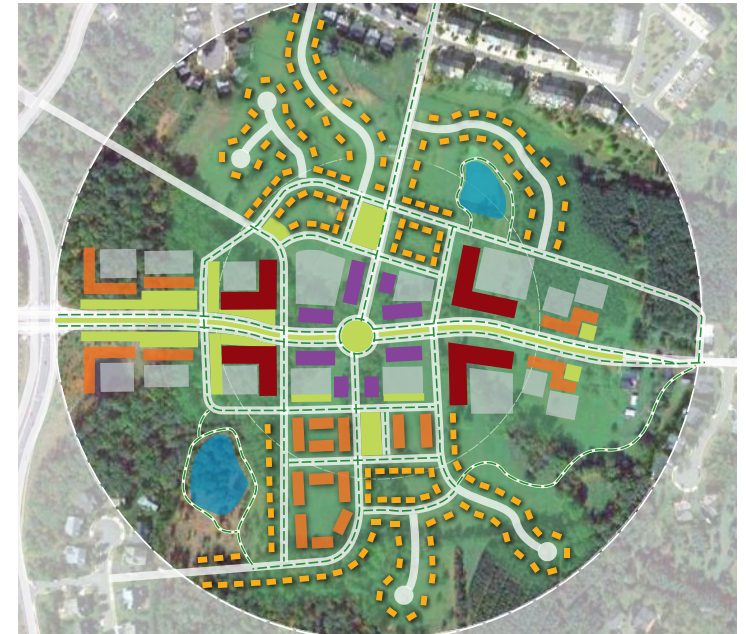


Photo credit:

TRANSPORTATION

INTENT

Deliver safe, comfortable, accessible multimodal transportation options through a connected transportation network.

CONSIDERATIONS

1. Develop a safe and comfortable pedestrian network including sidewalks on both sides of streets, crosswalks as needed for safe access, share use paths and trails, and connections to nearby or on-site recreation, commercial areas, schools, and other destinations.
2. Include access management strategies when planning improvements to through corridors and arterials and within Activity Centers.
3. Separate pedestrian infrastructure and protect pedestrians from vehicles. Create an urban environment with spatial enclosure along County streets to encourage walkability.
4. Separate bicycle infrastructure from vehicles on higher speed and higher volume roadways.
5. Provide safe and secure bicycle parking in commercial and employment areas and for housing units without garages. See guidance found in the **Association of Pedestrian and Bicycle Professionals' Essentials of Bike Parking guide**.
6. Provide safe and convenient multimodal transportation connections and infrastructure for all levels of users based on recommendations in the Transportation Plan Modal Emphasis maps and applicable small area plans.
7. Design streets to encourage traffic calming and slower driving speeds as outlined in the **National Association of City Transportation Officials (NACTO) Urban Street Design Guidelines**.
8. Connect streets within and between developments so pedestrians can easily bike or walk to many destinations, traffic has alternative routes, and car trips are reduced in number and length.
9. Connect new neighborhoods to existing neighborhoods, Activity Centers, and parks and open space. If road connections are found to be infeasible, provide bike and pedestrian connections.
10. Discourage cul-de-sacs and encourage connections throughout the site. Where cul-de-sacs are necessary, include pedestrian and bicycle connections to nearby streets.
11. Along existing and future transit routes provide transit stops with high-quality and ADA-compliant pedestrian infrastructure and shelters in coordination with transit providers.
12. Link transportation solutions in the Development Areas to land use policies and new development to expand opportunities to walk, bike, or take public transit.
13. Provide safe and secure bicycle parking/storage for multifamily residential, as well as for mixed-uses along the bicycle modal emphasis network and in all Activity Centers and Employment Districts.



Photo credit: City of Austin Transportation website



Photo credit: City of Portland Protected Bicycle Lane Design Guide

CDG #10 - Separate pedestrian infrastructure and protect pedestrians from vehicles. Create an urban environment with spatial enclosure along County streets to encourage walkability.

CDG #14 - Design streets to encourage traffic calming and slower driving speeds as outlined in the National Association of City Transportation Officials (NACTO) Urban Street Design Guidelines.



Photo credit: NACTO Urban Street Design Guidelines

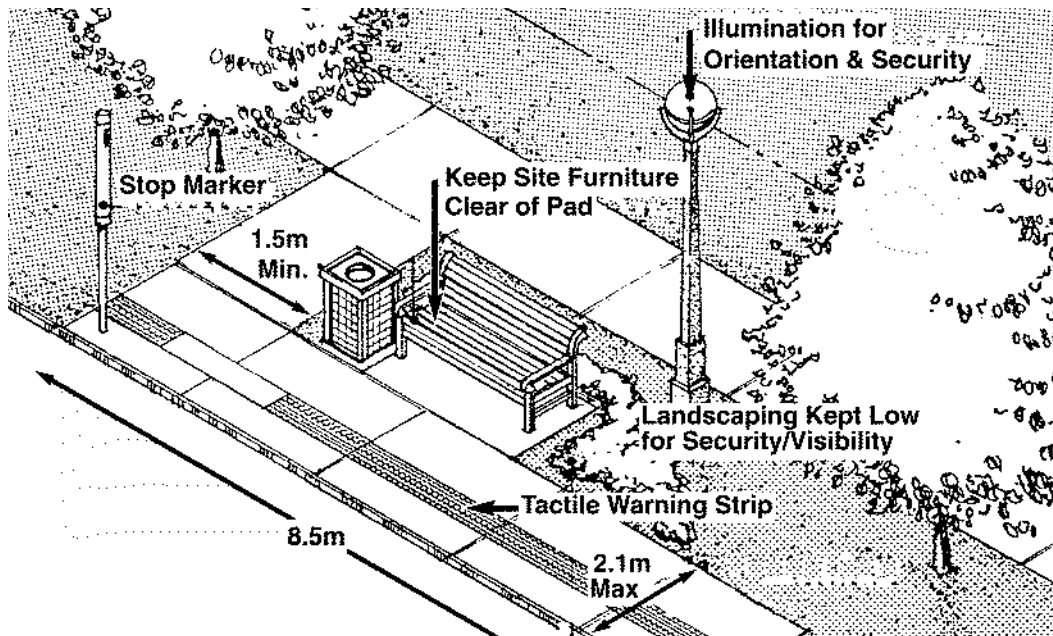


Photo credit: Design Guidelines for Accessible Bus Stops

CDG #18 - Along transit routes and in coordination with transit providers, provide transit stops with high-quality and ADA-compliant pedestrian infrastructure and shelters.

SITE DESIGN

INTENT

Provide spaces that are human scaled and enjoyable to utilize. Balance development with the protection and restoration of the natural environment. Design elements supporting the recommendations of the Environmental Stewardship chapter.

CONSIDERATIONS

1. Plant street trees from the approved plant list at regular intervals within landscape buffers between the sidewalk and the road on all streets, with sufficient lateral and vertical space for trees to survive and thrive.
2. Relegate parking to the side or rear of buildings. Recess garages behind the line established by the front façade.
3. Primary building entrances will face the street (or amenity for amenity-oriented lots).
4. Screen parking lots/parking areas with landscaping and trees from residential, commercial, office, and mixed-use development.
5. Respect natural terrain especially slopes greater than 25% and slopes along waterways when developing.
6. Smooth out re-graded slopes as abrupt or steep grades are difficult to vegetate and maintain.
7. Preserve and enhance on-site historic, scenic and cultural resources, including through adaptive reuse as feasible and appropriate.
8. Provide lighting within the street right-of-way for transit stops and sidewalks/pedestrian paths/pedestrian crossings in mixed-use and commercial areas.
9. Focus increasingly dense and intense opportunities for a diverse range of housing options, jobs, goods, and services generating continuous activity in the Activity Centers.



Photo credit: Albemarle County Rio 29 Small Area Plan



Photo credit: City of Boston Complete Streets Design Guidelines

PARKS, RECREATION, AND OPEN SPACE

INTENT

Provide equitable and expanding access to public parks, trails, natural areas, and open space. Design elements that support the recommendations in the Parks, Recreation, and Open Space chapter and the County's Climate Action Plan are strongly encouraged.

CONSIDERATIONS

1. Connect neighborhoods via trails to parks, natural areas, Activity Centers, and other key destinations like schools and shopping areas.
2. Balance providing recreational opportunities with conservation and/or restoration of habitat cores, wildlife corridors, and other significant natural areas and environmental features identified in the **Biodiversity Action Plan**.
3. Foster a well-developed open space system including public access to parks, trails, and open spaces so residents and workers can walk and bike to a public park, experience preserved natural areas and enjoy public gathering places.
4. Protect natural, historic, cultural, and environmental resources.



REFERENCE: BEST PRACTICES

The following best practices are intended to serve as a reference for the development community and have been organized by the four Design Guideline categories. These best practices may also be implemented as requirements or development bonuses through future Zoning Ordinance updates.

LAND USE

1. Strongly encourage missing middle housing types throughout the Development Areas, including but not limited to small and medium multiplexes (including duplexes/triplexes/quadruplexes), single-family cottages/bungalows, live-work units, accessory dwelling units, and tiny houses.

TRANSPORTATION

1. Enhance transit stops with elements such as benches, shelters, and bicycle parking.
2. Implement EV charging infrastructure, especially for multifamily, commercial, office, and mixed-use developments.
3. Construct green streets as a means to enhance the street and manage stormwater.
4. Discourage the vacation/abandonment of public rights-of-way and the construction of privately-owned roadways.
5. Support the expansion of micromobility devices especially in the Activity Centers.
6. Provide and require amenities that enhance the bicycling experience, such as parking, street trees and other shade structures, etc.

SITE DESIGN

1. Redevelop and re-use existing infrastructure where feasible.
2. Encourage shared parking and parking reductions.
3. Dedicate parking for carpooling and EV charging.

4. Incorporate public art and wayfinding into building and site design, especially in mixed-use and commercial areas.
5. Provide shade and weather protection for pedestrians; transparent windows along the first floor of buildings especially along major corridors; benches and trash cans; outdoor patio spaces; public restrooms in mixed-use and commercial areas.
6. Utilize low-impact development (LID) best practices for stormwater management, such as bioswales, permeable pavement, rain gardens/bioretenention swells, green roofs, and tree preservation.
7. Implement pavement options to reduce runoff and/or the heat island effect, such as permeable pavement and reflect/cooling pavements.
8. Implement renewable energy sourcing on site such as rooftop and parking lot solar.
9. Utilize renewable energy storage, e.g. batteries to store solar energy.

PARKS, RECREATIONAL AMENITIES, AND OPEN SPACE

Plant trees and plants from the approved plant list to reduce water dependency, increase survivability, and support wildlife.

1. Implement creative on-site recreational amenities, including but not limited to natural playscapes, outdoor fitness equipment, obstacle course / “ninja” play equipment, solar-powered outlets / stations, and climbing walls or other climbing equipment.
2. Utilize areas in steep slopes, floodplain, and stream buffers as common or public open space, instead of having these environmental features on individual lots.
3. Design clusters or “groves” of native canopy trees to maximize the cumulative environmental benefits. Existing forested land cover should be conserved and/or restored where possible and appropriate.