

3.1 DEVELOPMENT AREAS LAND USE

INTRODUCTION

Since 1971, Albemarle County's Growth Management Policy (GMP) has protected the Rural Area uses and environment, and focused growth, density, and urbanism in 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 more-dense 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 426 square miles of Albemarle County, 95% is defined as Rural Area and Development Areas comprise the remaining 5%.

Per the July 1, 2023 United States Census estimates, 115,676 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 90s, 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.



NEIGHBORHOOD MODEL PRINCIPLES (2015 COMP PLAN)

- Pedestrian Orientation
- Mixture of Uses
- Neighborhood Centers
- Mixture of Housing Types and Affordability
- Interconnected Streets and Transportation Networks
- Multi-modal Transportation Opportunities
- Parks, Recreational Amenities, and Open Space
- Buildings and Space of Human Scale
- Relegated Parking
- Redevelopment
- Respecting Terrain and Careful Grading and Re-grading of Terrain
- Clear Boundaries with the Rural Area

ESTABLISHING THE DEVELOPMENT AREAS

To accommodate projected growth, the Development Areas are specifically defined areas within the County promoting density and mixtures of uses supported by 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.

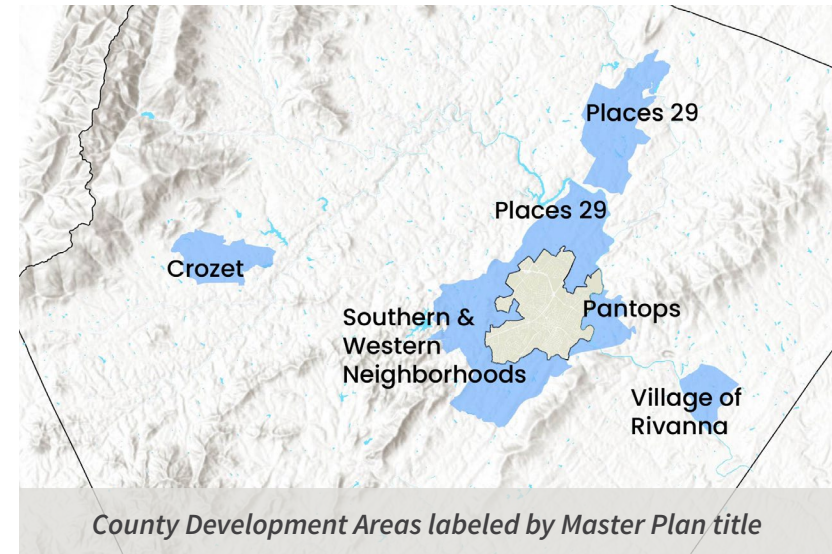
As our community grows, encouraging greater density within the existing Development Areas is expected result in a lighter environmental footprint per household and more housing affordability and choice, as compared with less compact and more sprawling developments.

To ensure the Development Areas are performing as anticipated and expected, a new concept of Development Area Utilization Review is introduced with AC44. Beginning in 2026 and routinely occurring on a two-year cycle, a series of measurements will be taken to assist the Board of Supervisors in assessing the successful deployment of the Growth Management Plan. The factors to be tracked and shared are as follows:

- A. Comparison of the estimated demand for residential and non-residential land uses with the estimated capacity.
- B. The intensity/density of development approvals through rezonings and special use permits compared with recommended density per future land use categories.
- C. The remaining percentage of the DAs estimated to have capacity for additional development or redevelopment.
- D. The ratio of dwelling units being built in the RA compared with the DAs.

- E. Cost and vacancy trends for residential and non-residential land uses.
- F. Compliance of the Development Areas build-out with the AC44 Comprehensive Plan.

Should the data indicate the Development Areas are not performing as expected, the Board of Supervisors can evaluate an array of options based on the findings.



Each Development Area also has its own Master 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).

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 state recognizes are appropriate for higher density development supported by public utilities and infrastructure and where redevelopment and infill is encouraged. Importantly, there are specific state funding programs with rules geared towards funding improvements within UDAs. VDOT SMART Scale funding program is an example. For the purposes of State Code and applicable transportation funding programs, all Development Areas identified above and including 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 and Employment Centers, work together to guide future development as well as future land use 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 on the Future Land Use Map (FLUM) and thus designates where we want to see housing, businesses, industry, and public parks distributed throughout the Development Areas.

Community Design Guidelines: The next tool, Community Design Guidelines, addresses the character (buildings pulled up to the street, relegated parking) and expectations of new development in the Development Areas (pleasant pedestrian experience, connecting



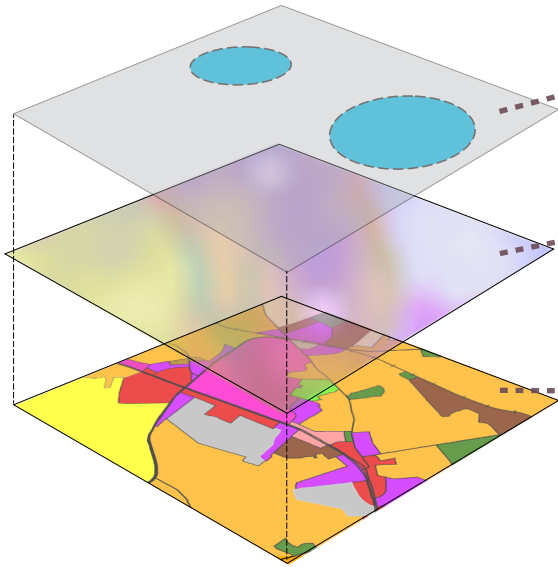
Multi-use paths create valuable connections between residential neighborhoods and nearby destinations

to a street network). These Community Design Guidelines are founded upon the Neighborhood Model Principles clarified to reflect best management practices and lessons learned since the adoption of the 2015 Comprehensive Plan.

Activity and Employment Centers: The last set of tools are the Activity and Employment Centers. These centers are locations where higher density and intensity of uses are expected and the goal is to create walkable mixed-use centers and major employment hubs. When the plans for future transportation systems are laid on top of the map of Activity and Employment Centers, 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: Act like a land use ‘overlay’ to encourage more mixed-use and higher intensity development than underlying land use designations(s) in identified centers.

COMMUNITY DESIGN GUIDELINES: General guidance for all new development and redevelopment in the Development Areas. Intended to encourage connected and mixed-use development throughout the Development Areas.

LAND USE DESIGNATIONS: Recommended future land uses and general form and scale of development. Applied to each property in the Development Areas.



ACTIVITY CENTERS: encourage mixed use destinations that are distributed throughout the Development Areas and use land efficiently, pairing a higher intensity of uses with supporting infrastructure and investments.

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

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

COMMUNITY DESIGN GUIDELINES: guide site design and the form of development throughout the Development Areas.

FUTURE LAND USE KEY

Residential Uses



Neighborhood Residential

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



Middle Residential

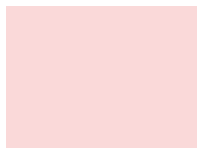
Primarily residential
6-12 units/acre (up to 18 units/acre with
affordable and MMH housing types)
Small-scale neighborhood retail/institutional



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
6-34 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



Recreation/Open Space

Parks/greenways
No residential
Parks, trails, natural areas, community centers



Rural Area

Rural land use - outside Development Areas
1 unit per 2 acre (min. lot size)
Agriculture, forestry, low-density residential

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 dwelling 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. Encouraged housing types: small and medium multiplexes, live-work units, bungalow courts, two over twos, single-family cottages, townhomes, single-family attached, accessory dwelling 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.

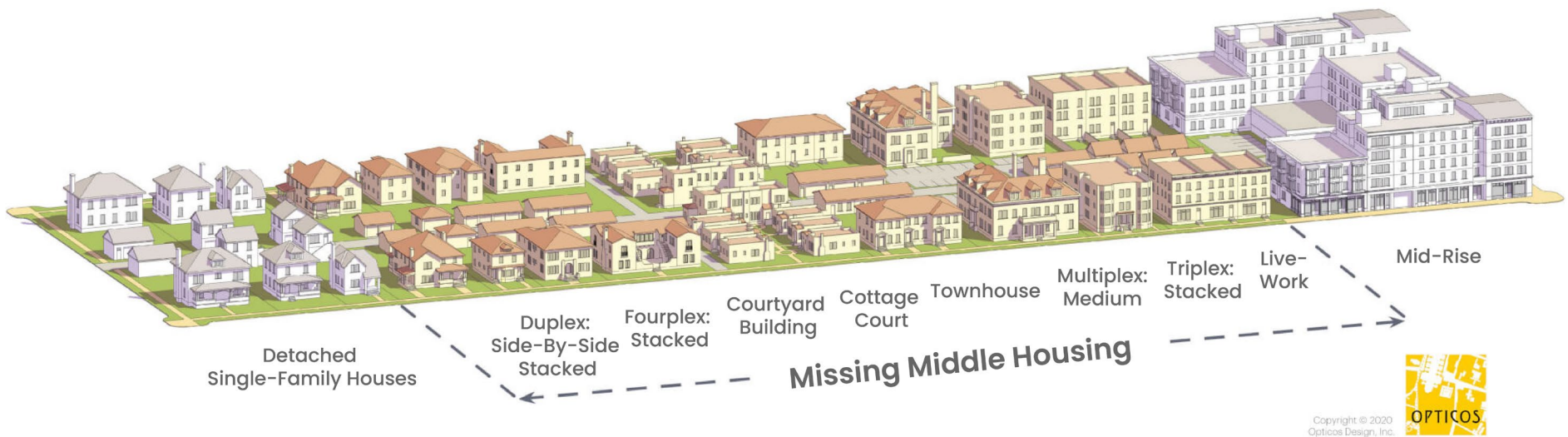
Smaller housing units on smaller lots are encouraged to increase affordability and housing choice and offer live-work units.

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 Dwelling Units (ADU):** A secondary dwelling that shares the building lot of a larger/primary house. ADU’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:

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 ADUs).

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 dwelling 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 1 to 4 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	Not applicable



Neighborhood Mixed Use

Description Mixed use development with neighborhood-serving retail and service uses for nearby residential areas. Residential development supported by small to medium scale commercial/retail uses.

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 dwelling 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 Not applicable



Community Mixed Use

Description	Mixed-use development that provides convenient access to goods and services for nearby community members.
Primary Land Uses	Residential, typically at a density of 6-34 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 dwelling 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 dwelling 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. 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





Recreation & Open Space

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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LAND USE CATEGORY CONSOLIDATION

In AC44 the overlap across the 24 previous land use categories are reduced and consolidated to 11 categories plus two legacy categories. Previously, 24 land use categories were created across the Future Land Use Map (FLUM). Often the differences between these categories were minor and typically provide similar recommendations.

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). Uses were consolidated, not abandoned. For additional details see the Future Land Use Summary Table in the Appendix.

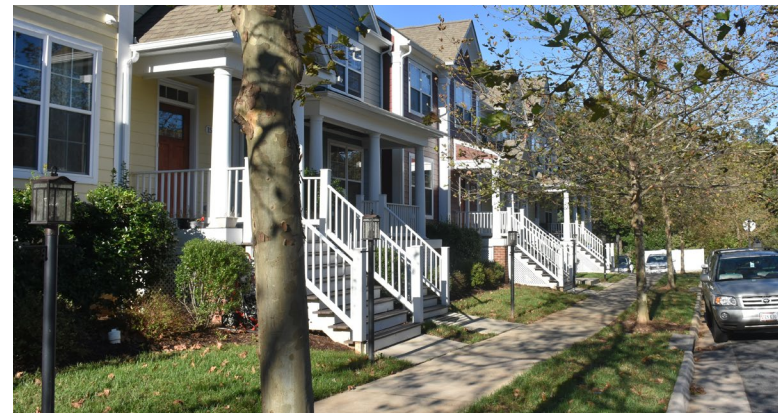
During small area planning processes, specific land use designations are applied to all parcels within the small area plan. Two special cases exist within the existing the Crozet and Village of Rivanna Development Areas, where previous small area plan efforts created unique, highly specific land use 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.



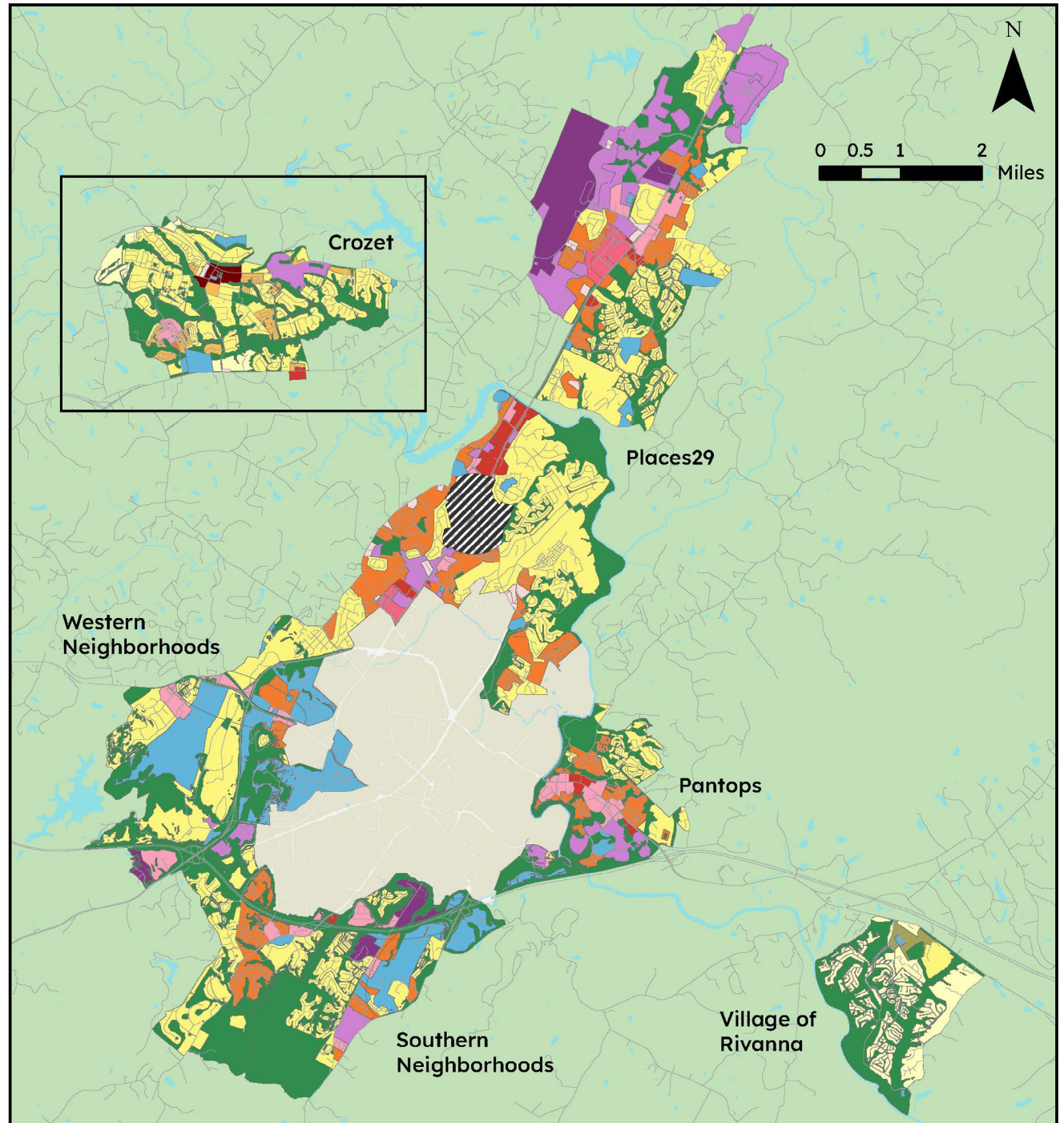
FUTURE LAND USE MAP

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
- Recreation and Open Space
- Rural Area

Refer to the applicable plan for the following land uses:

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



FUTURE LAND USE INTERPRETATION POLICY

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

1. Calculate density based on the total acreage of the property, using gross density, consistent with the Zoning Ordinance. 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.
2. Multiple land use designations on a single parcel are discouraged. However, if a property is partly designated Recreation and Open Space 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.
3. To encourage development of affordable housing, higher density is encouraged within the range for the land use designation, and results in a higher number of affordable units to be developed as a percentage of overall units in the proposed project.
4. Regarding development of infill parcels or the redevelopment of underutilized parcels, densities above the recommended range may be considered.
5. Clustered development and protection and restoration of sensitive environmental features is encouraged.

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 legislative review process. In order 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 & EMPLOYMENT 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 support higher intensity centers thereby making them attractive places to live. The comprehensive plan guides future planning for infrastructure, amenities, and services, and the location of and requirements for centers.

A key tenet in the Neighborhood Modal was to situate centers within a five-minute walk of the majority of 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 to 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 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 30 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 Centers. Subsequent pages provide detailed attributes of these four center types. However, the basic concept for the hierarchy of centers is:

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 also 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 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 larger, 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 CENTERS

Employment Centers are clusters of Office, Flex/Light Industrial, Research and Development, and Light Industrial uses. These centers play a critical role 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 Centers may contain residential uses or a built form not completely aligned with Community Design Guidelines. Specific policy guidance for the utilization of Employment Centers is found in the Thriving Economy Topic Chapter.

The Activity and Employment Centers Map shows the location and identifies a name for each Activity and Employment Center. 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. 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 to guide the implementation of this chapter more specifically.



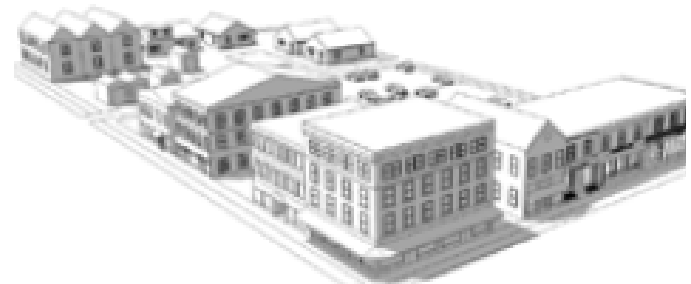
Local Center

Description	Smaller-scale areas of activity that support walkability to neighborhood-scale goods and services for surrounding residential areas.
Walkshed & Center	Walkshed is the same as the center area and is typically 1/4 mile radius from the center, or about 10 minutes walking end to end.
Land Uses	Mix of uses (residential and non-residential) expected. Land uses should generally be consistent with underlying land use designations. Additional development intensity and infill encouraged with appropriate form and scale for Neighborhood Centers.
Building Height Recommended	At least 2 and up to 4 stories.
Ground Floor	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.
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 and/or wall. On-street parking encouraged.
Public Civic & Open Space:	Publicly-accessible spaces encouraged, such as small or medium-scale plazas and parks with active or passive recreational amenities.



Community Center

Description	A focal point for commercial and cultural activities that are accessible by a variety of transportation options for surrounding neighborhoods and areas.
Walkshed & Center	Walkshed typically 1/2 mile radius from the center. The center area is generally a 1/4 mile radius from the middle of the Activity Center; however, the center may also be oriented toward a major multimodal corridor (e.g. Route 29 or Route 250).
Land Uses	Mix of uses (residential and non-residential) expected. Land uses should generally be consistent with underlying land use designations. Vertical mixed-use buildings are encouraged. Additional development intensity and infill encouraged with appropriate form and scale for Town Centers.
Building Height Recommended	At least 2 stories and up to 6 stories. Taller buildings may be considered depending on the surrounding context. The effects of heights, lighting, structured parking, and service and loading areas on neighboring properties also should be considered and mitigated, particularly when buildings are located adjacent to smaller-scale residences.
Ground Floor	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.
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, including to provide space for outdoor seating.
Parking	Parking relegated to the side or rear of buildings or on-street parking encouraged.
Public Civic & Open Space:	Interconnected publicly-accessible spaces encouraged, such as medium-scale plazas and parks with active recreational amenities. 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.





Employment Center

Intent	An area with employment-generating uses supporting basic industries and economic development goals; secondary residential, commercial, and retail uses that support employees and community members.
Walkshed & Center	Concentrated areas with Office/R&D/Flex/Light Industrial land use designations and School property boundaries or the area including a cluster of community facilities and any adjacent/related public facilities.
Building Type	All Light Industrial activities should be located inside of buildings. Vertical mixed-use buildings encouraged for infill and redevelopment. Horizontal mixed-use buildings permitted if no residential units are proposed.
Use	Use should be consistent with underlying land use. Uses supportive of the County's Economic Development goals are strongly encouraged.
Form & Site Design Guidance	2-4 stories (up to 6 by additional consideration). Massing, height, and setbacks should be consistent with any localized recommendations (such as viewshed protection or screening from adjacent areas, etc.). Relegated and structured parking encouraged.



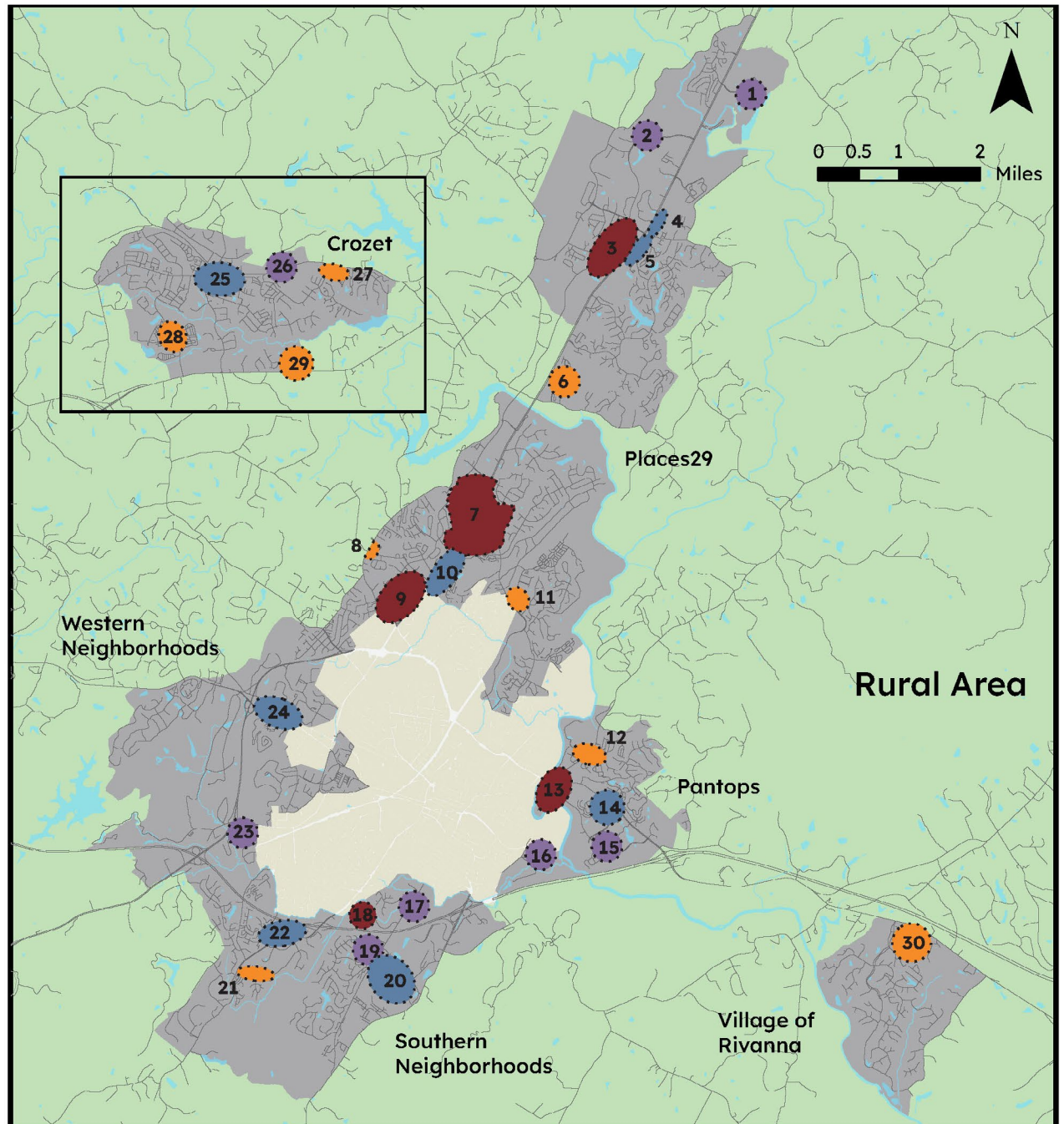
Regional Center

Description	A vibrant and urban area with goods, services, and entertainment activities that are accessible by a variety of transportation options for surrounding neighborhoods and that may serve as a regional destination.
Walkshed & Center	Walkshed typically 1/2 mile radius from the center. The center area is generally a 1/4 mile radius from the middle of the Activity Center.
Land Uses	Mix of uses (residential and non-residential) expected. Land uses should generally be consistent with underlying land use designations. Vertical mixed-use buildings are encouraged. Additional development intensity and infill encouraged with appropriate form and scale for Destination Centers.
Building Height Recommended	At least 3 stories and up to 8 stories. Taller buildings may be considered depending on the surrounding context. The effects of heights, lighting, structured parking, and service and loading areas on neighboring properties also should be considered and mitigated, particularly when buildings are located adjacent to smaller-scale residences.
Ground Floor	Active ground story uses required within core. Buildings that start out as single-use are encouraged to be constructed to allow for future conversion to active groundstory uses.
Multimodal Transportation	Bike and pedestrian connections to adjacent neighborhoods, Activity Centers, and Employment Districts. More frequent 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 should be relegated to the side or rear of buildings or be provided as on-street parking. Structured parking encouraged.
Public Civic & Open Space:	Interconnected publicly-accessible spaces encouraged, such as large-scale plazas and parks with active recreational amenities. 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.



ACTIVITY & EMPLOYMENT CENTERS

	Regional Centers:
	3. Hollymead Town Center
	7. Rio29
	9. Stonefield/Comdial
	13. Riverbend Shopping Center
	18. 5th Street Station
	Employment Centers:
	1. Rivanna Station
	2. North Fork Research Park/Airport
	15. Martha Jefferson Hospital
	16. Broadway
	17. Avon Street Extended
	19. Mill Creek Industrial
	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 Rd
	24. Ivy Road
	25. Downtown Crozet



SPECIFIC RECOMMENDATIONS FOR ACTIVITY & EMPLOYMENT CENTERS:

As new development and redevelopment occurs within Activity and Employment Centers, the following recommendations are intended to guide the review and implementation of these projects:

- The centers function as an overlay that encourages a higher intensity of uses than the underlying land use designation(s).
- Development proposals within centers will be reviewed based on the recommended land uses, building height, ground floor, transportation, parking, and open space recommendations for the applicable center place type.
- 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.
- 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.
- Refer to the applicable Area Plan for additional relevant 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 for specific areas.
- Development proposals will be evaluated for the development standards outlined in the Community Design Guidelines.

ACTIVE GROUND FLOOR USE

An active ground floor use is one that attracts pedestrian activity, provides access directly from the sidewalk or public open space, relegates parking to the side or rear of the building, and screens other non-active uses if present. The design of the ground floor use should be constructed to accommodate, at a minimum, Business Occupancy and/or Mercantile Occupancy groups defined by the currently adopted Commercial Building Code.

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).

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.

VERTICAL MIXED-USE BUILDINGS

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.

GOAL STATEMENT:

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.

OBJECTIVES + ACTIONS

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 in Activity Centers.
1.2.	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.
1.3.	Coordinate with VDOT for approval of urban street standards that are consistent with the DRPT Multimodal Design Guidelines.
1.4.	Update the County’s lighting requirements to reduce light spillover, glare, and excessive brightness, while still providing a safe environment for pedestrians and bicyclists, especially in mixed-use areas like Activity and Employment Centers.
1.5.	Use equitable and sustainable community and building design guidance to inform updates to standards and requirements, such as the AIA’s Framework for Design Excellence.
1.6.	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.
1.7.	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.

1.8.	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]
1.9.	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 and Employment Centers.</i>
ACTION	
2.1.	Reduce or eliminate vehicle parking requirements in designated Activity Centers. Parking maximums should be considered within Regional Centers.
2.2.	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.
2.3.	Identify and fund Capital Improvement Program (CIP) projects that would support Activity Center development, such as a multimodal transportation facilities, public parks and plazas, and other public infrastructure.
2.4.	In Employment Centers, 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.
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 and 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 tree coverage in the Development Areas, prioritizing neighborhoods with tree coverage below the County's Development Areas average tree coverage and neighborhoods with significant impervious surface.</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.
4.5.	Coordinate with VDOT to minimize the impact of street trees on VDOT infrastructure through the use of appropriate tree species.