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Workplan: Housing Policy Update

I. Statement of need:

The *Comprehensive Regional Housing Study and Needs Analysis* report, released in April 2019, identifies more than 10,000 housing cost burdened households (defined as those households spending more than 30 percent of their household income for housing costs) living in Albemarle County today, with an estimated 15,000 County residents set to experience housing cost burdens by the year 2040. Low- and moderate-income households – those with income less than or equal to 80 percent of area median income – are most effected by our region’s high housing costs with nearly half (46.3 percent) of the County’s low- and moderate-income households experiencing housing cost burdens.

To ensure we can meet our community’s current and future housing needs, staff will take steps to update the County’s Affordable Housing Policy. This update will entail a three-step process to include a community engagement process, a comprehensive update of the current housing policy document, and creation of a housing policy implementation plan.

II. Project scope:

To ensure we can meet our community’s current and future housing needs, staff will take steps to update the County’s Housing Policy. This update will entail a three-step process to include community engagement, a comprehensive update of the current housing policy document, and creation of a housing policy implementation plan. Details of each step are outlined below.

A. Community engagement

To help ensure the new housing policy represents the housing needs and aspirations of all members of our community, staff will employ several different engagement tools. Two advisory committees will be created to help guide the policy update. These committees will assist in reviewing information collected during the engage period, help with the formulation of policy recommendations, and make sure the final policy reflects community input. Staff will engage with County residents through a variety of mechanisms including: community-wide meetings, focus-groups with nonprofit housing providers and the families they serve, online via a dedicated project web page, and a housing survey. A description of each engagement activity follows:

1. Advisory Committees

Staff will work with both internal and external advisory committees.

a) *The Technical Advisory Committee*

The Technical Advisory Committee, to be comprised of representatives from relevant Albemarle County Departments, will meet on a quarterly basis. This group will work with the Housing Planner to: 1) ensure the updated housing policy and

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newly created housing strategy conform with and support the County's Comprehensive Plan and Strategic Plan goals; 2) review community recommendations for the housing policy/strategy and help address any inconsistencies between those recommendations and current County plans and/or State enabling legislations; and 3) assist with a review of available tools (including enabling legislation). Membership of this group will include representatives from the following departments:

- Community Development;
- Department of Social Services and/or Housing Choice Voucher program;
- Economic Development;
- Office of Equity and Inclusion;
- County Schools;
- County Police Department; AND
- Charlottesville Area Transit or JAUNT.

b) Stakeholder Advisory Committee (meets bimonthly)

The Stakeholder Advisory Committee will meet on (at minimum) a bimonthly (every other month) basis. The primary responsibility of this committee will be to make sure the updated housing policy represents the housing needs and aspirations of the County's current residents, as well as supporting the housing needs of future residents. Membership of the committee have 11 members representing the following stakeholder groups:

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| • Board of Supervisors (1); | • Developer/construction community (1); |
| • Planning Commission (1); | • Real estate sector (1); |
| • IMPACT (1); | • Legal sector (1); |
| • University of Virginia (1); | • Low- or moderate-income homeowner (1); AND |
| • Department of Social Services (1); | • Low-income renter (1). |
| • Expert in finance or economics (1); | |

2. Focus groups

An effective Housing Policy will address the needs and concerns of a range of actors – from housing developers to housing consumers – involved in the housing arena. To better understand the needs of each sector, a series of focus groups will be held with the following sectors; a sample of discussion topics for each sector are included:

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a) *For-Profit Residential Developers* – what are the barriers to affordable housing production? How can the County support and/or incentivize affordable housing development?

b) *Nonprofit/social service providers* – what housing challenges do their clients face? How do these challenges impact the families and individuals their organizations serve? What are the organizational challenges to housing services provision?

a) *Business community* – how is a lack of affordable housing impacting business growth and/or development? Is a lack of housing options effecting employee recruitment or retention?

b) *Schools/School Board* – what are the housing challenges faced by students, staff and teachers? How are these challenges impacting students and their families? Is a lack of housing negatively impacting school operations or recruitment/retention of staff and teachers?

c) *Health sector* – what is the relationship between health and housing? How can the health sector become more involved with the affordable housing sector? What housing challenges are staff facing? What impact does housing have on the health and welfare of their patients?

d) *Community Advisory Committees (CAC)* – what are the greatest housing-related needs in their communities? Are any specific groups (e.g. seniors or renter households) experiencing greater challenges related to housing? What steps can the county take to address housing needs?

e) *Under-represented communities* – Staff will work with local nonprofit organizations to organize discussion sessions with individuals and families they serve. Such efforts will ensure the County's low-income community members are provided a safe space in which to talk openly and honestly about their housing challenges. Some of the organizations staff hopes to partner with include:

- Albemarle Housing Improvement Program (AHIP);
- Esmont Seniors;
- Habitat for Humanity;
- International Neighbors/International Rescue Committee;
- Jefferson Area Board of Aging (JABA);
- Piedmont Housing Alliance (PHA);
- Thomas Jefferson Area Coalition for the Homeless (TJACH);
- Representatives from the disability community; AND
- Representatives from the LGBTQ community.

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3. Community meetings

A total of four public meetings will be held. Three of these meetings will be hosted prior to drafting the new housing policy. They will be oriented around learning, listening and solution finding. Information collected from these community discussions will feed into the draft policy. The fourth session, to be held after the draft policy is completed, will be to collect feedback on the proposed housing policy updates. A proposed format for these meetings can be found below:

Session 1: Learning

The first community meeting will set the stage for the housing-related discussions to be undertaken during the second and third community meetings. Led by county staff and the Thomas Jefferson Planning District Commission's Housing Program Coordinator, residents attending the meeting will learn: what is meant when we talk about affordable housing and why it is important, the results from the Regional Housing Needs Assessment report, and the local barriers to affordable housing development. After the presentation, staff will open the meeting to questions and comments from residents in attendance.

Session 2: Listening

This session will be organized as small group discussions around the following questions:

- 1) Do housing options in the county meet your needs and/or those of your community?
- 2) Do you think it is difficult to find decent, affordable housing the in county?
- 3) What types of housing do we need in the county?
- 4) Are there any other housing related issues you would like to discuss (e.g., discrimination, poor quality, lack of financing, etc.)?

Session 3: Solutions

The third community meeting will again be organized as small group discussions. These discussions will focus on one topic: What do you think the county can do to make housing more affordable or to increase affordable housing options in our communities?

Session 4: Public Comments

County staff will present the draft housing policy to county residents and solicit their comments on the draft.

4. Webpage and Resident Questionnaire

Recognizing the limitations of the above outlined activities to engage a broad spectrum of county residents, staff will create a webpage dedicated to the housing

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policy updating process. The webpage will include informational materials, such as housing-related fact sheets, that summarize different aspects of affordable housing (e.g., what it is, how it relates to improvements in health and education attainments, and the linkage between affordable housing and economic development). Materials and discussion topics from each of the community meetings will be provided, along with ways for residents to provide feedback on those materials and topics. Additionally, the webpage will provide regular updates on the policy updating process. Staff will also work with the Thomas Jefferson Planning District Commission to provide a link for county residents to complete a regional housing questionnaire. Comments collected through that questionnaire will help inform development of a regional housing strategy, as well as the update to the county's housing policy and strategy development.

B. Housing Policy Update

Four broad steps are involved in drafting the new housing policy: reviewing the current housing policy and housing chapter of the Comprehensive Plan; reviewing State enabling legislation related to affordable housing development and/or provision and analyzing those legislative tools for potential impact; collecting and analyzing community input collected through the engagement process; and developing a County vision and overall goals for affordable housing.

C. Creating the Housing Strategy

The Housing Strategy, which will be developed in tandem with the updated Housing Policy, will outline the implementation plan for meeting the broad Housing Policy goals. The strategy will identify specific housing goals including numerical targets for affordable housing development and preservation, housing priorities (e.g. housing for seniors or specific income groups), as well as the tools and programs needed to meet those targets. The strategy will also develop a series of housing metrics, to include equity measures, designed to track the County's progress in meeting housing goals. Mechanisms to collect associated data, as well measure progress towards the County's housing goals, will also be developed.

D. Timeline – 16 months (July 2019 – September 2020)

Staff anticipates the entire policy update process to be completed by September 2020. A schedule of activities is summarized below, as well as in the attached Gantt chart.

- July – August 2019: develop materials, create web page, schedule advisory committee meetings
- September– October 2019: community meetings, focus groups; questionnaire (with TJPDC)
- December 2019 – March 2020: draft policy and strategy
- April 2020: Joint work session with Board of Supervisors & Planning Commission

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- May -- June 2020: Public comment period
- June – July 2020: finalize policy/strategy

August – September 2020: present strategy to Planning Commission and Board of Supervisors for approval.