



Albemarle County

Legislation Text

File #: 21-429, **Version:** 1

AGENDA DATE: 9/1/2021

TITLE:

Rivanna River Corridor Plan Update and Time Frame for Consideration of Draft Plan

SUBJECT/PROPOSAL/REQUEST: Update on the Rivanna River Corridor Plan, a joint City/County Plan being developed by the Thomas Jefferson Planning District Commission.

ITEM TYPE: Consent Information Item

STAFF CONTACT(S): David Benish

PRESENTER (S): N/A

LEGAL REVIEW: Not Required

REVIEWED BY: Jeffrey B. Richardson

BACKGROUND: The Thomas Jefferson Planning District Commission is in the final stages of the second phase of a joint Charlottesville and Albemarle Rivanna River Corridor planning process. Phase I involved an inventory of existing conditions and was completed in 2018. Phase II involves the development of a joint area plan to guide the future development and environmental preservation of the urban portion of the Rivanna River.

STRATEGIC PLAN: Natural Resources Stewardship - Thoughtfully protect and manage Albemarle County's ecosystems and natural resources in both the rural and development areas to safeguard the quality of life of current and future generations.

DISCUSSION: Phase II began in July 2019, with the first tasks being a review and update of the mapping materials largely completed in Phase I. An initial round of public engagement was held at the Flow River Fest in September 2019 and this public input was used to inform the initial drafts of the Vision Statement, Guiding Principles, and Recommendations.

The COVID-19 pandemic disrupted the timing for the development of the Plan, including the original plans for public engagement in the spring of 2020, but TJPDC staff worked with the locality staff on the technical committee to develop alternative outreach opportunities to engage the public. Signs were developed and placed along the Rivanna River Corridor in late summer/early fall to direct the public to a project website and allow the public to submit questions and comments, and to find information related to draft materials and scheduled meetings. TJPDC staff also completed a benchmarking process by reviewing other river corridor plans produced by other localities, including plans from Greenville, SC and Richmond, VA.

TJPDC staff met with the project Steering Committee in September of 2020, and then held two public webinars in October of 2020 to get input on the draft Vision Statement and Guiding Principles, and to receive any other input or thoughts from members of the public. Steering committee feedback indicated that environmental protection of the river was the highest priority in considering the preferred future for the urban river corridor,

and this same sentiment was confirmed during the public webinars. The other opportunities for future use/development of the urban river corridor were considered to be of equal importance and the goal of the plan was to strike the right balance in supporting recreational use; development/redevelopment; multi-purpose trails and bridges; public health, safety, and welfare measures; and historic and cultural considerations. TJPDC staff then coordinated a series of stakeholder group discussions to develop the recommendations sections. The stakeholder groups consisted of members of the technical committee, as well as others that had expertise in specific content areas.

TJPDC staff completed an initial draft of the plan in December of 2020, which went through a series of reviews by Albemarle County and Charlottesville City staff. A revised draft of the plan was provided to the project Steering Committee in April 2021, and a Steering Committee meeting was held on April 26th to receive feedback from the Steering Committee on the revised Vision Statement and Guiding Principles, review the recommendations, and provide additional feedback on the draft plan content.

TJPDC staff has incorporated the feedback of the project Steering Committee into a near final draft of the plan, which is now available for review on the TJPDC Website, at <https://tjpd.org/our-work/area-plans/urban-rivanna-river-corridor-plan/>. Staff is still in the process of finalizing the formatting of the plan document and the layout for the recommendations section, as well as developing a final section indicating next and future steps and project priorities.

TJPDC staff will be seeking feedback from the City and County Planning Commissions and Board of Supervisors' and City Council. The City Planning Commission was provided an initial presentation on August 10, and staff has received their initial comments on the Plan. Once the draft Plan has been revised and finalized, including the future next steps and project priorities section, it will be scheduled for final review by the City Planning Commission. The date for that final review is to be determined. Once the City Planning Commission has completed its review, the plan will be scheduled for review by the County Planning Commission. Once the Commissions' reviews are complete, the Plan will be scheduled for consideration by the City Council and Board of Supervisors.

BUDGET IMPACT: There is no anticipated budget impact.

RECOMMENDATION:

For information only. No action required at this time.

ATTACHMENTS:

None