



Albemarle County

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AGENDA DATE: 1/30/2018

TITLE:

Rio/29 Small Area Plan

SUBJECT/PROPOSAL/REQUEST: Presentation Phase 2 final products for Board and Planning Commission feedback and endorsement

ITEM TYPE: Regular Action Item

STAFF CONTACT(S): Walker, Graham, Gast-Bray, Falkenstein

PRESENTER (S): Mike Callahan, Renaissance Planning; Vlad Gavrilovic, EPR; Rachel Falkenstein, CDD; Andrew Gast-Bray, CDD

LEGAL REVIEW: Not Required

REVIEWED BY: Choose an item.

BACKGROUND: The County's Comprehensive Plan lays out a vision for Development Areas that are "vibrant active places with attractive neighborhoods, high quality, mixed-use areas, thriving business and industry, all supported by services, infrastructure, and multimodal transportation networks." This vision was further validated during Phase 1 of the Small Area Plan by citizens, stakeholders and elected officials. The community expressed a desire for the Rio29 area to transform into a walkable, bikeable, mixed use area with ample green space and recreational opportunities, all accessible by transit.

To achieve this vision, the Phase 1 land use plan specified that development along Route 29 should be concentrated in centers of development that will begin to set the stage for future transit (this is often referred to as Transit Oriented Development, or TOD). The Phase 1 visioning for the Small Area Plan called for the establishment of three centers, or nodes, of development along Route 29 between Branchland Blvd. and the Rivanna River, with a priority given to the node centered around the Rio Road and Route 29 intersection.

The Phase 1 vision stipulated that nodes should be developed strategically to encourage transit and to also be

respectful of existing neighborhoods using a core/edge pattern of development. The most intense development is expected to be concentrated towards the center of the node, closest to transit. The height and intensity of development of the node should cascade down to the edges, where development of lower intensity and height would be found, especially in areas adjacent to existing residential neighborhoods.

At an August 15, 2017 joint meeting staff presented a conceptual circulation network and design sketches to the Board and Planning Commission. During that meeting members of the Board and Planning Commission expressed support for the draft concepts but wanted to see more detail associated with the designs. The Board and Commission also expressed a desire for the Rio29 area to be unique and emphasized the importance of placemaking.

STRATEGIC PLAN: Thriving Development Areas: Attract quality employment, commercial, and high density residential uses into development areas by providing services and infrastructure that encourage redevelopment and private investment while protecting the quality of neighborhoods.

DISCUSSION: The presentation on January 30 will include detailed design plans consisting of a connectivity plan, a sample quadrant plan, and images and renderings demonstrating form and feel. Staff will also give a brief overview of implementation recommendations. The design materials will be shared with the Board and Planning Commission during the presentation on January 30 and no attachments are provided with this Executive Summary.

The connectivity plan to be presented includes recommendations for a future circulation network and green infrastructure. The connectivity plan demonstrates a framework of interconnected pedestrian friendly roadways, trails and green amenities, supported by a centrally located transit station. The connectivity plan also demonstrates a phasing concept that can be supported by strategically timed public investments and allows for the phased redevelopment of privately owned strip retail centers.

Phase 2 also includes a sample quadrant plan, which illustrates a redevelopment scenario of an existing strip retail center that corresponds to the aforementioned connectivity plan demonstrating form standards. We will provide a phasing exhibit and associated analysis to illustrate how an existing shopping center could redevelop over time without displacing existing tenants. A feasibility analysis demonstrates the financial viability of the sample redevelopment within the local marketplace. We will pair the sample quadrant plan with renderings and images showing the experience and feel for the core and edges of the development scenario.

Lastly, we will provide an implementation overview to lay out the steps the County can take to help realize the vision and desired form laid out by the Small Area Plan. The implementation discussion will be a summary of staff and focus group recommendations to-date and will be for information purposes during the presentation on January 30. The Board will receive a more detailed presentation and will have an opportunity to provide staff with direction on the implementation recommendations during a February 14 workshop meeting.

BUDGET IMPACT: Portions of consultant services for Phase 2 of the *Small Area Plan* were funded through a \$65,000 Urban Development Area Planning Grant through the Office of Intermodal Planning and Investment. Additional funds for Phase 2 consultant work have been covered by the \$120,000 FY17 budget allocation for the *Small Area Plan*.

RECOMMENDATION:

After staff's presentation, questions and discussion, staff recommends the Board and Planning Commission endorse the Small Area Plan design framework and direct staff to advance the presented information to a Comprehensive Plan Amendment.

ATTACHMENTS: None