



Albemarle County

Legislation Text

File #: 21-221, **Version:** 1

AGENDA DATE: 3/17/2021

TITLE:

Comprehensive Plan Update - Draft Scope of Work

SUBJECT/PROPOSAL/REQUEST: Staff will provide an updated draft scope of work and budget estimate for the upcoming Comprehensive Plan update based on previous Board feedback.

ITEM TYPE: Regular Information Item

STAFF CONTACT(S): Richardson, Walker, Filardo, McCulley, Rapp, Falkenstein

PRESENTER (S): Rachel Falkenstein, Planning Manager

LEGAL REVIEW: Not Required

REVIEWED BY: Jeffrey B. Richardson

BACKGROUND: At a March 4, 2020 Board of Supervisors Work Session, staff presented the 2020-2023 Community Development (CDD) Work Program, which proposed a Comprehensive Plan (Comp Plan) update and subsequent Zoning Ordinance update, with work beginning on the Comp Plan update in the fourth quarter of 2020. The Board shared their support for prioritizing the Comp Plan and Zoning Ordinance updates as part of the overall CDD work program.

At a February 3, 2021 Board Work Session, staff presented a draft conceptual scope of work and budget estimate for the Comp Plan update. The scope estimated a three-year planning process broken into five phases of work. The scope also included a high-level engagement approach, which included setting up a Project Advisory Group that will act as the lead community member advisory body on aspects of the project scope and content. The budget estimate included funding to provide stipends to the Project Advisory Group members.

STRATEGIC PLAN: Mission: to enhance the well-being and quality of life of all community members through the provision of the highest level of public service consistent with the prudent use of public funds.

DISCUSSION: During the Board Work Session on February 3, 2021, the Board provided feedback on the draft conceptual scope and budget estimate. Three themes emerged from the Board's discussion: requests for more information about the Project Advisory Group funding, questions related to how the Board will be engaged throughout the project, and a desire to speed up the project timeline. Staff has prepared additional information to address each of these themes.

At the February meeting, staff shared a proposal to provide funding to support the Project Advisory Group for their work throughout the 3-year project timeline. Board members expressed concerns with this approach, especially considering the number of other volunteer committees that currently exist across the County. Staff proposes that rather than offering flat stipends to each Advisory Group member, that this funding be set aside to reduce barriers to participation. Group members will be asked to communicate if there are barriers to their

participation and what those are (language access, childcare, transportation, etc.). These funds would then be available to support their participation as needed. Similar approaches have been used in communities across the country and demonstrate that this is instrumental aspect of conducting equitable engagement processes.

Board members also asked staff to clarify how the Board will be engaged and shared a desire to be involved throughout the process rather solely at the project's conclusion (Phase 5). The revised project scope (Attachment A - page 3) shows a more detailed outline of proposed Board engagement. Staff proposes conducting Board work sessions at the beginning and end of each project phase to provide feedback on draft content and to inform the project scope for the subsequent phase of work. The project team would supplement the work sessions with consent agenda informational updates.

Lastly, the Board stressed the urgency of this work and shared a desire to shorten the project timeline. Given the level of engagement, breadth of topics covered in the County's Comp Plan, and planning best practices as shown in localities across the United States, staff believes that three years is a realistic timeline. We recommend two tactics to help keep this project on schedule: 1) Develop a clear project engagement plan that specifically outlines how stakeholders will be engaged and identifies a decision- making process, and 2) Clearly articulate the appropriate level of detail for the Comp Plan document at the beginning of the process. This will allow the project team to develop a document that is usable and appropriately-sized in both content and length. Finally, this approach will enable staff to intentionally focus community engagement materials on relevant and timely content throughout the process.

Staff plans to engage the Board on the project engagement plan and the content framework at a work session later this year, prior to beginning the Phase 2 "Big Questions and Community Goals".

BUDGET IMPACT: The total estimated budget for the Comp Plan update project is \$470,550. A breakdown of budget estimate by phase is provided on page 1 of Attachment A.

RECOMMENDATION:

Staff recommends the Board provide direction and feedback on the attached scope of work. If the Board supports the proposed scope of work and associated budget estimate, staff recommends the Board direct staff to continue with work on Phase 1 "Pre-Planning" and preparing for Phase 2 "Big Questions and Community Goals".

ATTACHMENTS: A - 2021 Comprehensive Plan Update - Conceptual Project Scope