



Source: Albemarle County Community Development 2011

DEVELOPMENT AREAS

GOAL:

Albemarle's Development Areas will be vibrant active places with attractive neighborhoods, high quality, mixed-use areas, thriving business and industry, all supported by services, infrastructure, and multimodal transportation networks.

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VISION:

Albemarle County envisions a community with abundant natural, rural, historic, and scenic resources • healthy ecosystems • active and vibrant development areas • a physical environment that supports healthy lifestyles • a thriving economy • and exceptional educational opportunity for present and future generations.

Relationship to the Vision

The Development Areas are the counterpart to Albemarle County's Rural Area. Honoring a rural heritage means new development occurs where infrastructure can support it - in the Development Areas. Good urban design and a strong economy make the Development Areas attractive and vibrant. Infra-structure, such as schools, libraries, sidewalks, and streets promote economic activity and create the places for old and new residents to live in close proximity to work.

The Development Areas

Introduction

The Development Areas are the complement to the Rural Area. As the places for residential and business growth, they are to be attractive and vibrant communities where people live, work, and play. High quality design is expected to provide new development and redevelopment with an urban look and feel. Preserved streams and stream valleys as well as parks and trails provide respite and recreation.

Existing neighborhoods are also key features of the Development Areas. Investments in infrastructure, such as water, sewer, sidewalks, and drainage, help to strengthen these neighborhoods. Improved street networks, connections to employment centers, and excellent school facilities help support residential development as well as encourage businesses to expand. [Broadband services](#) enhance livability and business development.

Expectations for the Development Areas:

1. Master Plans for neighborhoods within the Development Areas;
2. High quality development through application of the Neighborhood Model principles;
3. Livability in existing neighborhoods;
4. Preventing premature expansion of the Development Areas;
5. Promoting density to help create new compact urban neighborhoods;
6. Compatible infill development;
7. Vibrant, active employment centers;
8. Collaboration with the City of Charlottesville, the University of Virginia, and the Town of Scottsville
9. Preserved natural systems;
10. Infrastructure that supports existing and new development; and
11. Opportunities for urban agriculture.

When fully realized, the Development Areas will be dynamic and inviting areas helping to preserve the scenic agricultural Rural Area.

Master Plans for the Different Development Areas

The County's Development Areas are distinctive places with separate identities. There are three types of Development Areas:

- The *urban neighborhoods* that surround the City of Charlottesville.
- Two satellite *communities* along Route 250 West and Route 29 North.
- The *Village of Rivanna*, which is mostly residential in nature but is intended to have a small mixed use village center.

Names of Neighborhoods	
Places29 North	Hollymead and Piney Mountain
Places 29 South	Neighborhoods 1&2
Pantops	Neighborhood 3
Southern Neighborhood	Neighborhoods 4&5
Western Neighborhood	Neighborhoods 6&7
Community of Crozet	Crozet
Village of Rivanna	Village of Rivanna

Figure 1 shows the locations of the Development Areas. Although organized and named differently than they have been in the past, their historic identification numbers (i.e., Neighborhoods 1 – 7. etc.) are retained for statistical purposes and to describe subareas. The Land Use Plan on Figure 2 shows expected land uses in the Development Areas. It reflects the Land Use Plans from each Master Plan on a single map. The [Land Use Categories and Guidelines](#) found in the Appendix describe the expectations for each land use category.

The Urban Neighborhoods: Places 29, Pantops, and the Southern and Western Neighborhoods

The *urban neighborhoods* surround Charlottesville and relate most closely to the City. They are sometimes referred to as the “urban area” because, in many ways, the boundary between the City and the County is not discernible. Downtown Charlottesville is the geographic core of the entire area. Major employers, including UVA, are located in the City and in the urban neighborhoods. The Master Plans for [Neighborhoods 1 and 2, as part of Places29](#), [Pantops](#), and the [Southern and Western Neighborhoods](#) are found in the Appendix.

The *urban neighborhoods* are expected to provide a full array of residential types and densities and look and feel like a city, all levels of retail, business, and industrial activities, along with regional employment centers. In addition, extensive urban and regional public facilities and services and infrastructure are to be provided. A mixture of housing types is expected and the urban areas are to be supported by transportation systems that include interconnected streets, pedestrian paths, bicycle circulation systems, and mass transit.

Communities: Crozet, Hollymead and Piney Mountain

Hollymead, Piney Mountain and Crozet are satellite *communities*. They are more distant from the City and the urban neighborhood and are expected to be able to operate independently. Like the urban neighborhoods, *communities* should have a mixture of housing types and be supported by transportation systems that include interconnected streets, pedestrian paths, bicycle circulation systems, and mass transit.

Villages: Village of Rivanna

Similar to the satellite communities, *villages* are located away from the urban neighborhoods; however, due to their large residential component, *villages* are not expected to operate independently. Residential density is expected to be lower than in the urban neighborhoods and communities. The range of uses, as well as provision of a variety of goods and services, is much less than what is expected in the urban neighborhoods or communities.

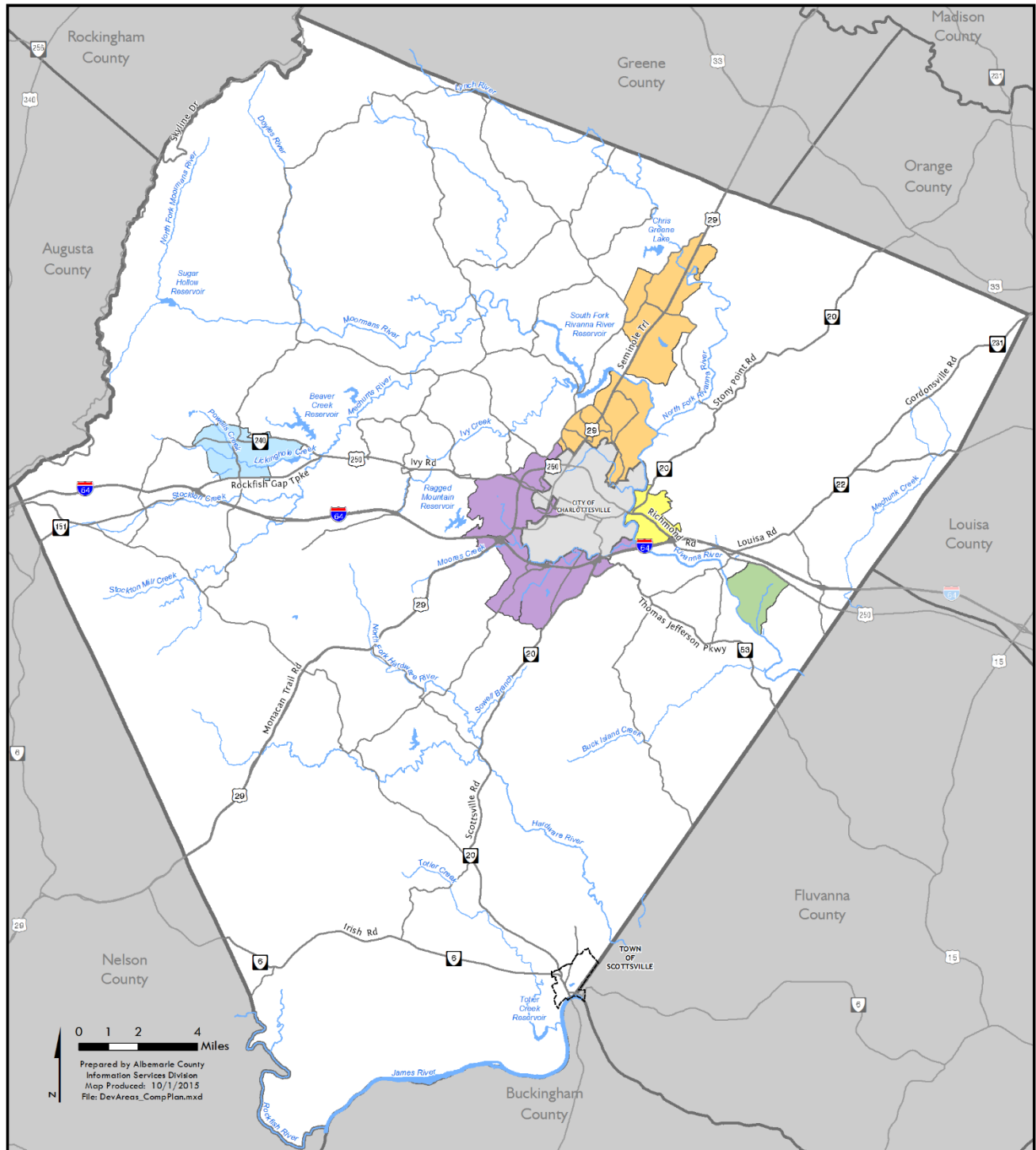


Figure 1: The Development Areas



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Employment centers are not anticipated and industrial uses are not recommended. At present, the only village is the Village of Rivanna. The [Village of Rivanna Master Plan](#) is found in the Appendix.

Villages are expected to have a variety of housing types, including single-family detached and attached units, townhouses, and garden apartments. *Villages* should have a center where neighborhood scale services are provided, such as convenience shopping, neighborhood retail and service uses, and medical and professional offices. Senior living may also be provided. In addition, restaurants and small lodging facilities, such as inns, are anticipated. Areas for development are shown in colors other than green on the Village Land Use Plan. Uses should be in accordance with the [Land Use Categories and Guidelines](#) found in the Appendix and the Master Plan. Overall residential density in *villages* should not exceed six (6) dwellings per acre; however, higher density in some areas can be provided if lower density is provided in other areas to average no more than six (6) units per acre.

When the Village of Rivanna was initially created in 1989 and adopted into the Comprehensive Plan, the Board of Supervisors acknowledged that the Land Use Plan and zoning for the Glenmore development did not meet all of the expectations for new *villages*. At that time, the Village of Rivanna only provided an area of single-family homes with a significant recreational component and not many of the other features expected in a *village*. In 2002, after adoption of the Neighborhood Model and an extended public process, the Board of Supervisors approved a Comprehensive Plan Amendment to create a mixed use area in the Village for a variety of housing types and supporting commercial and retail uses for the Development Area. These changes have brought the Village of Rivanna closer in line with the original expectations for *villages* in the Development Areas.

Villages are to be linked to the urban neighborhoods and the City of Charlottesville by multimodal roads with adequate capacity to safely and efficiently move residents conveniently between the village and the urban core. This guideline reflects a concern for using but not overloading the County's main roads, which are identified as arterials and major collectors in the transportation network, and a concern that minor collector and local roads not become subjected to traffic loads which they cannot tolerate, or which alters their character over time. In addition, *villages* should be served by more than one major road to provide for better access to and from the other neighborhoods.

Although there is only one designated *village* at this time, other villages might be designated in the future. Future *villages* should be located where a village historically has been located or a settlement has existed and where public water and sewer can be made available. The proposed design should be a logical and harmonious outgrowth of what currently remains of that settlement. Within a proposed *village*, new development should emulate historic regional patterns of village density and design, such that the feel of a traditional village is created. The Neighborhood Model principles should be applied to new development in a *village*.

When new *villages* are designated or the boundaries of existing *villages* are expanded, the impact of the planned expansion on existing development should be scrutinized. Plans to establish a new *village* or expand an existing *village* should be sensitive to the existing character of the surrounding Rural Area and the needs and wishes of those persons already living and owning property in the area. The effect on existing transportation infrastructure should also be a major consideration when planning for new development.

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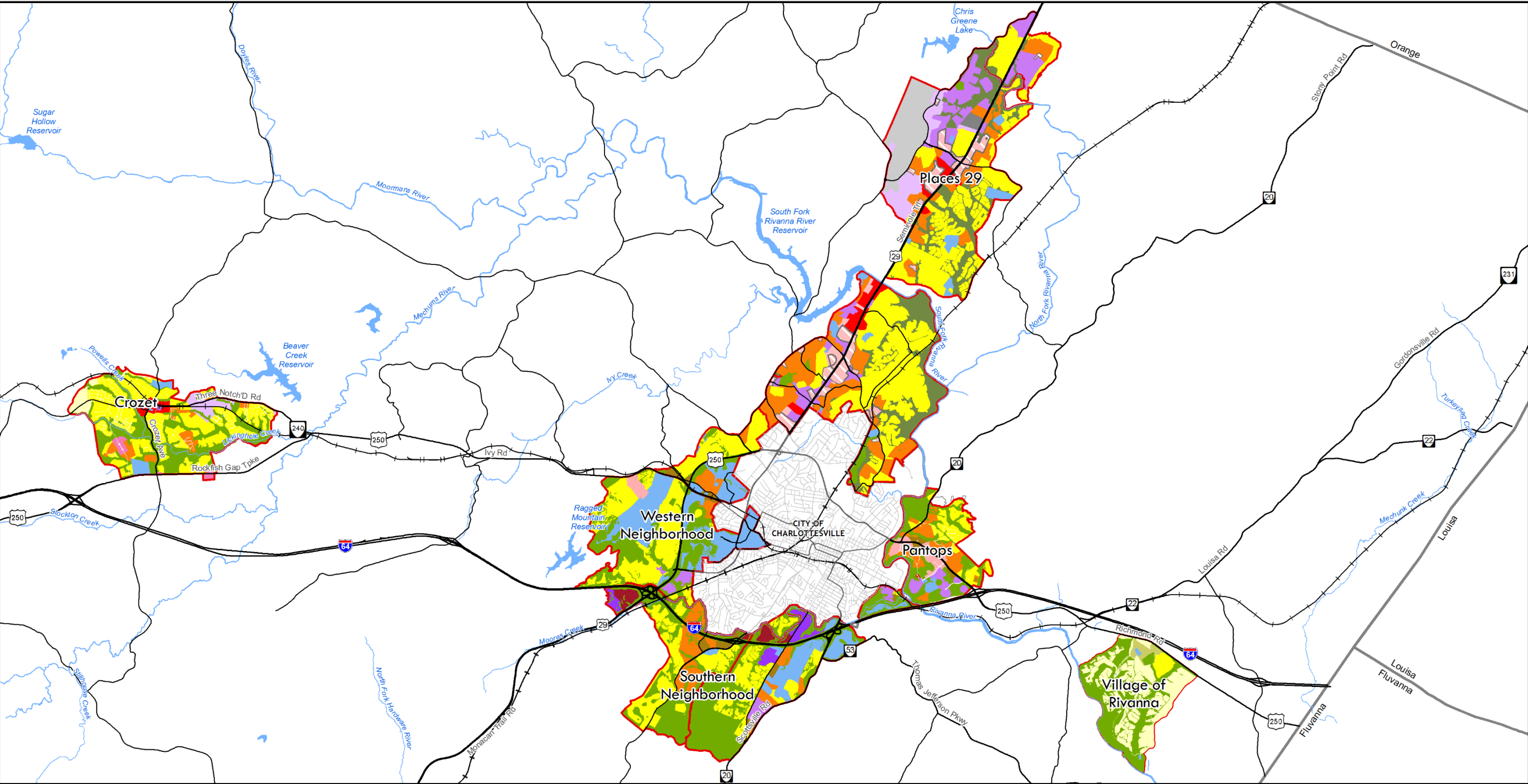
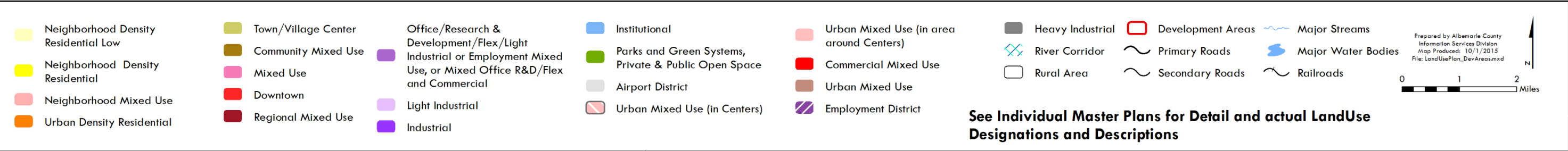


Figure 2: Generalized Land Use Plan for the Development Areas



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Urban Development Areas

In 2011, Albemarle County established Urban Development Areas (UDAs) in accordance with the requirements in Virginia Code § 15.2.2223.1. Urban Development Areas are places for compact, mixed-use urban development. They can accommodate 10 – 20 years of growth and were established to improve coordination between transportation and land use.

The County has two designated UDAs in the Development Areas. They are shown in the Places29 Master Plan and the Pantops Master Plan. The UDAs correspond with the priority areas shown in those Master Plans. As in all the Development Areas, the Neighborhood Model principles will be reflected in the UDAs. It is expected that state and local funding will be directed to UDAs where feasible. Although the County formally designated only two UDAs, all of the designated Development Areas meet the intent for UDAs. They are places for mixed-use, dense development that are anticipated to accommodate future residential and business growth.

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Objective 1: Use Master Plans to guide development and investment in each Development Area.

Starting in 2004 with the Crozet Master Plan, Master Plans have been developed for all of the Development Areas. These Master Plans are currently being used to help guide decisions related to infrastructure, development, and other public improvements.

Strategy 1a: Update Master Plans every five years to keep them current.

The Master Plans are updated approximately every five years. Community Advisory Committees appointed by the Board of Supervisors typically guide the update process. Advisory Committee meetings typically provide the venue for updates to the Plans. As with the development of the Master Plans, the County's Growth Management Policy will continue to play a strong role in helping create attractive and active Development Areas for future populations. Application of the Neighborhood Model principles in the Master Plans and identification of needed infrastructure to improve neighborhoods will help guide changes to achieve vibrant livable areas.

Strategy 1b: Continue to use Community Advisory Committees to help develop Master Plan updates, provide guidance on conformity of proposed projects with the Master Plan, assist in implementation of the Master Plan, and to act as a clearinghouse for information that is important to the Development Area.

The first Community Advisory Committee was appointed by the Board of Supervisors in 2003 as the Crozet Master Plan was nearing completion. All Development Areas which have Master Plans have Advisory Committees. Appointment of an Advisory Committee(s) will be needed for the Southern and Western Neighborhoods when this Plan is adopted.

Strategy 1c: To the extent possible, create uniformity in format and land use categories in Master Plans.

At present, there are five Master Plans; however, uniformity is not present among them. As each Master Plan was created, the maps and format of the Master Plans changed somewhat. This situation has created difficulty for users of all of the plans because of lack of consistency. Uniformity in land use categories across Master Plans is needed to better convey expectations to all potential users of the Plan.

With the advent of the Neighborhood Model and the first Crozet Master Plan in 2004, the County strove to bring the "transect concept" into master planning in each area. The transect is no longer used

Livability Project

Charlottesville and Albemarle County will support neighborhoods and places that allow residents to live, work, and play near their homes and where attention to the character of new development and redevelopment enhances quality of life.

To do this, the City and County will:

- Encourage development and redevelopment in areas of the City identified for increased density and greater intensity of use, and in County Development Areas where appropriate in order to preserve open space, rural areas, and agricultural areas;
- Promote land use patterns that encourage multi-modal transportation opportunities;
- Coordinate City and County Development Areas land use and infrastructure policies;
- Maintain the distinct character of the Rural Areas;
- As a means of decision coordination, continue to actively participate in the Planning and Coordination Council (PACC), which brings City, County and University leaders together to discuss issues of common concern and interest;
- Establish policies that provide for consideration of development effects on the neighboring locality and shared community resources; and
- Create a unified vision for land uses adjacent to the Rivanna River that supports the river corridor as a destination while ensuring the protection and improvement of the river's water quality.

by name, but the concept of changing intensities of use remains. The concept is illustrated later in this document and referred to as a “continuum in intensity of use.”

To the extent possible, the [Land Use Categories and Guidelines](#) table in the Appendix should be used for Master Plan updates. This table shows standard land use colors (yellow for low density residential, red for commercial, etc.), and the text describes expected future use of land. The color green shows the presence of sensitive environmental features, existing and proposed parks and greenways, and other areas that are not available for development. When land is assessed for future density or development, areas shown in green are not included in acreage available for development.

Text in the Master Plans should continue to be used to indicate any special treatment for areas that are not recommended for the full spectrum of uses or the full range of density in a particular land use category. For example, in the Southern and Western Neighborhoods, the Fontaine Research Park is shown with the color denoting Office/R&D/Flex/Light Industrial. Text in that Master Plan says that use of land in that area is “intended for office, research, and development. Flex and light industrial uses are not recommended.”

Objective 2: Create a physical environment that supports healthy lifestyles through application of the Neighborhood Model Principles

The Neighborhood Model is a set of recommendations for creating livable urban neighborhoods and areas. Created by a diverse committee including residents, developers, development professionals, business professionals, and representatives of advocacy and neighborhood groups, it was adopted by the Board of Supervisors in 2001. The Neighborhood Model principles are those of “new urbanism,” and they represent the preferred model for development in the County’s Development Areas. Sidewalks with street trees, curb and gutter on interconnected streets, parks and amenity areas, human-scaled architecture, and working with terrain are expectations for all new developments.

The Neighborhood Model continues to be the preferred form of development and each proposed development should strive to address as many of the Neighborhood Model principles in Figure 3 as possible. The twelve principles illustrate the characteristics which the Development Areas are to reflect at buildout. ***However, it is recognized that as individual proposals are considered, all of the principles of the Neighborhood Model may not be equally applicable to any specific proposal. All proposals will need to be considered in a larger context, particularly as they relate to the mix of uses. It is recognized that there are multiple applications of the principles of the Neighborhood Model and balanced, rational and reasonable application of those principles is expected.***

Design guidance for achieving principles of the Neighborhood Model can be found in the Appendix. The methods illustrated in this Appendix reflect some but not all of the ways to meet principles of the Neighborhood Model. Additional creative approaches are expected as the principles are applied over time.

Figure 3: Neighborhood Model Principles

- 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

Pedestrian Orientation

Strategy 2a: Continue to require and provide sidewalks and pedestrian paths in the Development Areas.

Sidewalks and walking paths are key features of urban areas and important components of livable communities. A pedestrian orientation means that walking is a convenient, safe, and comfortable form of transportation. Childhood obesity and obesity in adults is linked, in part, to a sedentary lifestyle. Provision of sidewalks and walking paths can help create a choice for walking instead of sitting or driving. Sidewalks and paths also allow mobility to be a reality for the elderly, the young, and those with limited access to automobiles.

Sidewalks and walking paths should be provided throughout the Development Areas and maintained where they already exist. New developments should provide their part of the pedestrian system, preferably as sidewalks in the right-of-way beside the street. There may be circumstances in very low-trafficked areas where pedestrians can be expected to walk in alleys or in the street. This situation requires very slow moving traffic and short streets with sufficient visibility for drivers and the pedestrian. It is the exception rather than the rule.

Sidewalks should be provided on both sides of the street to avoid discontinuity in pedestrian access and unnecessary pedestrian street-crossing movements. For example, a child should not have to cross the street to get to a sidewalk. Sidewalks should be located parallel to streets rather than meandering around buildings and through a site. Additional paths may be needed throughout a development for additional safe and convenient access. Providing a sidewalk on only one side of the street should be limited to locations where right-of-way conditions are constrained. As a rule, sidewalks and paths should be provided by developers when properties are developed or redeveloped.

Figure 4:
Narrow Sidewalk on Slow-traffic Street
Separated by Tree Island



Source: Albemarle County Community Development 2013

Strategy 2b: Promote block development rather than long cul-de-sacs and provide guidance to developers on ways to create blocks and streetscape with Albemarle County's topography.

Blocks help to define a place and are also important features of urban places. Blocks provide a frame of reference for walkers because pedestrians often measure distance from one place to another by counting the number of blocks. In general, short blocks help create comfortable walks, and, as a rule, blocks should not exceed 600 feet in length.

Albemarle County's rolling and sometimes mountainous topography in the Development Areas represents challenges to creating a true grid-system. Guidance on creating blocks on such terrain can be found in the Neighborhood Model Design Guidance in the Appendix.

Strategy 2c: Continue to promote pedestrian safety through construction of crosswalks for sidewalks.

Crosswalks are essential for safety as pedestrians cross streets from one sidewalk to another. The design of crosswalks depends largely on the size and function of streets. Where traffic signals exist, pedestrian crossings may need to be included with signal timing for the intersection. Street crossings on very busy roadways may need to be elevated. Locations of crosswalks on public streets must be coordinated with the Virginia Department of Transportation.

The County has developed a capital needs list which includes locations for crosswalks to improve pedestrian safety. Funding and prioritization takes place through the Capital Improvements Program (CIP). This activity should be continued to improve pedestrian safety.

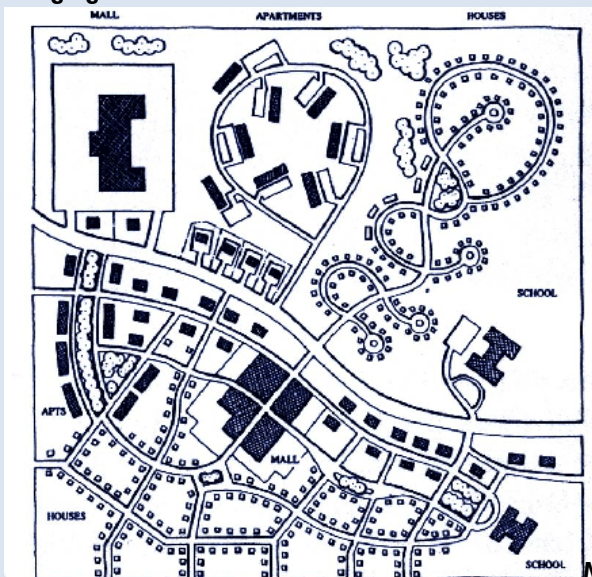
Strategy 2d: Conduct a study on ways in which street lights can enhance pedestrian safety in the Development Areas.

Street lights are common to urban areas; however, to date, Albemarle County's process of creating more urban areas has not included street lighting. Issues which are often debated are whether street lights impact the Dark Sky, keeping street lights from causing glare for nighttime drivers, and how to ensure consistent lighting through pedestrian corridors. With new mixed-use development and centers being created, pedestrian lighting should be studied and a plan with implementation strategies developed. In addition, the County should consider where and how street lighting can enhance pedestrian safety in existing neighborhoods and centers. Funding options for installation and operation should also be explored.

Mixture of Uses

Strategy 2e: Continue to approve mixed-use developments that are in keeping with the Neighborhood Model and Master Plans.

Figure 5:
Illustration of Conventional and Compact Development Segregated Uses



In the Development Areas, a mixture of uses is expected, rather than uses segregated into individual areas for residences, retail and office, and industry. Just as older villages and towns contain a mixture of uses, newer neighborhoods can develop the same friendly blend of useful services, shopping, or employment and close-in housing. Uses with complementary hours can share parking and increase the efficiency of land use. This pattern of mixed uses discourages extensive linear style development along major roads. Figure 5 shows the differences between conventional segregated uses and a more interconnected mixed-use area.

Mixed-use can occur within buildings, such as a buildings with retail uses on the first floor and housing on upper floors. A mixture of uses may be provided in different buildings with close proximity to one another. Making mixed-use areas a reality requires not only financial

Mixed Uses

Source: Duany Plater-Zyberk, and Company 2001

backing, but support from the County and the community. As more mixed use areas are developed, residents will be able to experience the benefits of living and working in close proximity.

Not every area or building is expected to contain a mixture of uses. Existing residential neighborhoods are expected to remain single use areas. Industrial-type uses with odors, noise, trucking, or outdoor activities that interrupt the peaceful enjoyment of a residential area should not be mixed with residential uses. Development Area Master Plans provide guidance on expected locations of mixed-use centers.

Figure 6: Illustration of Mixed Use Center at The Shops at Stonefield



Source: Edens 2013 - used with permission

Neighborhood Centers

Strategy 2f: Continue to promote centers as focal points for neighborhoods and places for civic engagement.

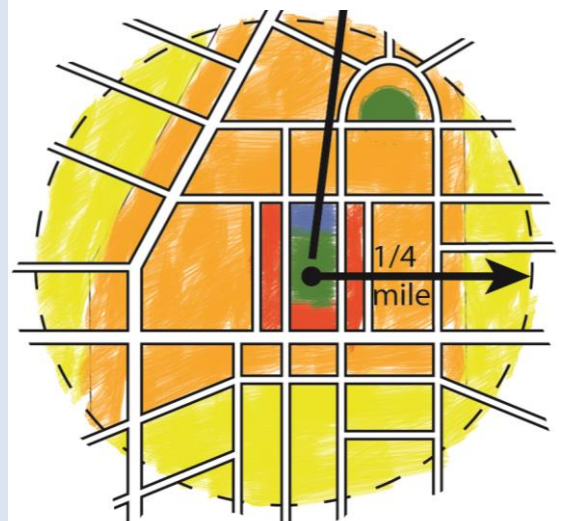
Neighborhood centers are focal points or places in a neighborhood or area where people congregate. A center may be a school or park, location of a major employer or a shopping area. Like the Charlottesville downtown mall, centers are destinations. They are very important in creating the identity of an area and can be the heart of a neighborhood. Identifying existing centers and places for new centers is a major component of developing a Master Plan. As seen in Figure 7, they are intended to be located within a comfortable walkable distance (approximately ¼ mile) from homes. This distance can be increased up to ½ mile if a center contains a transit stop.

When centers are employment hubs or areas of mixed use, they help provide a form that allows for a continuum of uses, from least intensive to most intensive. In Figure 7, the most intensive center would be found in Area 5.

Legend for Figure 7:

- Park or outdoor amenity
- Commercial or mixed use area
- Medium to high density residential area
- Low to medium density residential area

Figure 7: Illustration ¼ Mile Distance from Neighborhood Center



Source: Community Design and Architecture 2011

Figure 8: Illustration of Continuum in Intensity of Use



Development is least intensive in Area 1 and most intensive in Area 5. The height of buildings gradually increases from Area 3 to Area 5, which has the tallest buildings.

Source: Adapted by Albemarle County Community Development from Duany Plater-Zyberk and Company image 2012

New centers should be created in accordance with Master Plan recommendations. Existing centers should be recognized and, in some cases, enhanced. Public investment may be needed to create a center, such as a new public park in or near an existing neighborhood. New centers should be created in accordance with Master Plans. As destinations, centers should be visually discernible to help create and facilitate a sense of arrival.

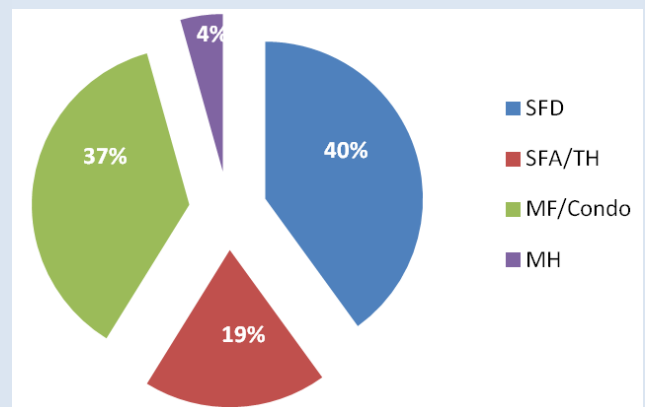
Mixture of Housing Types and Affordability

Strategy 2g: Through Master Plans and rezoning approvals, ensure that all Development Areas provide for a variety of housing types and levels of affordability.

Unlike the Rural Area, a mixture of housing types is planned for the Development Areas. A full range of housing types creates choices for residents. As seen in Figure 9, the Development Areas currently have a variety of housing types. Master Plans show places where this principle can be met with new development. More information on housing is provided in Chapter 10.

Each Development Area is expected to provide for a range of housing types. Unless a mixture of housing types already exists in an area, new development proposals should offer a variety of housing types for different income levels.

Figure 9: Dwelling Units in Development Areas



Source: Albemarle County Community Development 2013

However, a mixture of housing types may not be necessary for infill development, depending on the context and location.

Strategy 2h: Encourage builders to make affordable housing units indistinguishable on the exterior from other units.

One of the stigmas associated with low-to-moderate income individuals is that their housing often looks more cheaply made than other housing. This does not have to be the case. It is possible that affordable housing not appear less expensive than other units in a neighborhood. In the townhouses shown in Figure 10, the top 2 levels are a townhouse and the lower level is a 1 story affordable rental unit. In Figure 11, the brick units in the middle of the row of townhouses are affordable units. Builders and developers should be encouraged to create affordable units that look like other houses in the neighborhood. When successful, such units can be as attractive as the houses shown in Figures 10 and 11.

Figure 10:
Townhouse with Accessory Dwelling
Inside, Wickham Pond, Crozet, VA



Source: Vito Cetta, AIA, 2013

Strategy 2i: Through rezoning and special use permit decisions, ensure that affordable housing units are dispersed throughout the Development Areas rather than built in enclaves.

Figure 11:
Affordable Units Located in Center of
Row of Townhouses in Silver Spring,
MD



Source: Dan Reed, justupthepike.com 2013- used with permission.

Affordable units should be dispersed throughout the Development Areas and in neighborhoods so that housing is available for all stages of life and for all income levels. Staff can provide guidance to developers on rezoning and special use permit requests to ensure that this dispersal takes place. The Housing Chapter provides specific guidance on different housing types and levels of affordability expected in the County.

Interconnected Streets and Transportation Networks

Strategy 2j: Continue to require that streets are interconnected in the Development Areas; ensure that exceptions occur rarely and not routinely.

Vehicular, pedestrian, and bicycle connections accrue numerous benefits in the Development Areas. They enable pedestrians to walk easily to many destinations. They allow for residents to more easily access shopping centers, jobs, and entertainment. Interconnections ensure that traffic has alternative routes. Car trips can be reduced in number and length. Interconnections make new neighborhoods accessible to existing residents and to mixed use and employment areas.

The County's subdivision regulations changed in 2005 to require that street connections are built to the property line of adjoining properties. Interconnections continue to be important in new developments to avoid creating an isolated environment that requires motorists to travel long, roundabout routes. Although street connections can be resisted by existing neighborhoods, connections provide alternate traffic routes for old and new neighborhoods and can also improve emergency response time.

Figure 12 shows an interconnection between the Forest Lakes North and the Forest Lakes South subdivision. Although opposed by all three neighborhoods in 1998, the Board of Supervisors viewed it as an important interconnection between neighborhoods, especially because of the location of the nearby school complex. The connection does not appear to have had a negative impact on residents. It has enabled school buses to travel from Forest Lakes North to the schools without travelling on Route 29 North. It has also allowed residents from Forest Lakes North and Forest Lakes South to use both clubhouses in the developments.

Interconnections can sometimes be hampered by physical features such streams and railroad tracks. For streams, a balance must be made between the frequency of stream crossings and the potential effects that such crossings have on stream banks, riparian habitat, and the stream itself. This balance is particularly important for the remaining large [greenfield](#) sites in the Development Areas. The master planning process should be used to determine which streams will ultimately be crossed for interconnections and which streams should be avoided. Additionally, few railroad crossings will be approved by the railroad companies in the future. As a result, desired railroad crossings should be identified in Master Plans. Since these crossings are often critical to the success of the County's transportation network, conversations with railroad company officials should begin sooner rather than later.

Constructing interconnections should be the rule rather than the exception. However, at times it may not be possible to make a connection in the short term. In these cases, right-of-way should be reserved for dedication in a manner consistent with planned transportation improvements, and non-roadway connections made, such as walking and bicycle paths.

Figure 12: Interconnection of Timberwood Parkway to Powell Creek Drive in Forest Lakes Development in Places 29 Area



Source: Pictometry from Albemarle County GIS 2013

Multi-Modal Transportation Opportunities

Strategy 2k: Provide for multi-modal transportation opportunities in new development and encourage the building of complete streets.

Multi-modal transportation means that drivers, walkers, bicyclists, and transit users all have the ability to travel. Complete streets provide sidewalks, bike lanes, and stops for public transit. Sidewalks make it possible for pedestrians to walk from place to place, as well as make transit stops accessible. As indicated earlier, sidewalks are expected on all new and improved streets in the Development Areas and existing sidewalks should be adequately maintained. Transit is a key feature of multimodalism and expansion of transit should be anticipated as new mixed-use developments are built outside of the current routes. More information on multimodalism and ways to provide for complete streets can be found in Chapter 10.

Parks, Recreational Amenities, and Open Space

Strategy 2l: Acquire, develop, and maintain public parkland shown on Master Plans. Continue to require recreational amenities in residential developments.

Parks, natural areas, recreational amenities, and other undeveloped open areas are essential to create a high quality of life in the Development Areas. A balance of natural areas and urban parks and plazas help provide variety and respite for residents. Important environmental features, such as floodplains, critical slopes, and forested areas shown on the Development Area Master Plans form green systems that should be protected.

Ideally, parks and recreational amenities are centralized features in the Development Areas that are accessible on foot or bicycle. These spaces provide for public and private outdoor recreational areas for active and passive recreation. Recreational facilities are required in multi-family developments and in some planned developments. These features are crucial to the quality of life of residents in the Development Areas, especially as the County continues to achieve goals for density.

In the future, there will be a greater need for public parks. In the past, school yards have provided most of the public park functions in the Development Areas; however, large school campuses can inhibit walkability. Having standalone parks in the Development Areas can help promote walkability.

As more residents move to the Development Areas, public parks will be needed as centers for neighborhoods and the community. Old Trail Park in Crozet and the future park in the Village of Rivanna are parks that will help meet parks needs of existing and future residents. [The Parks and Recreation; Greenways, Blueways, and Green Systems Chapter](#) of this Plan provides additional information on expectations for parks, recreational facilities, greenways, and blueways.

Buildings and Spaces of Human Scale

Strategy 2m: Continue to promote appropriate scale, massing, and enclosure with new development proposals.

Places that are inviting and comfortable for pedestrians have a human scale. They are places where buildings are designed with the pedestrian in mind. In walkable areas with appropriate scale, massing, and building enclosure, a pedestrian can feel comfortable when standing next to or walking along a

street lined with buildings. Pedestrians gauge the height of buildings by the number of stories. Stories are most easily distinguished by windows and other façade details. In mixed-use areas store fronts also help the pedestrian to assess their relationship to the nearby building and the street.

In Figure 13, the building's windows and porches help create proportionality for the pedestrian. A distinctive lack of comfort exists when walking beside large windowless, featureless buildings such as the buildings in Figure 14.

Figure 13: Human Scale Buildings



Figure 14: Lack of Human Scale



Source: Albemarle County Community Development 2013

Spatial enclosure is another important design element along streets. Buildings should not be so tall and streets so narrow that it creates a “canyon” effect. Similarly, buildings should not be so short and streets so wide that a person feels exposed. Front yards should be shallow to allow for good spatial enclosure. Massing and scale should be appropriate to the area in which buildings are proposed. Attention should be paid to architectural details. More information on how to create buildings and spaces of human scale may be found in the Neighborhood Model Design Guidance in the Appendix. Recommended guidelines for setbacks, sidewalks, and urban streets are also found in the Appendix.

The Neighborhood Model Zoning District is a mechanism used to create new urban developments. This district requires a Code of Development that addresses building scale, massing, and enclosure. Other districts do not have such a requirement; however, developers are often asked to provide such information. When developer and builders address this principle appropriately, high quality places are created. The County should continue to ask for commitments to scale, massing, and enclosure with rezoning and special use permits in the Development Areas. County staff should encourage applicants for site plans to consider these aspects for their buildings.

Relegated Parking

Strategy 2n: Continue to work with developers to design and build projects that relegate parking to the side or rear of sites, which results in the fronts of buildings facing the street.

Parking is relegated when it is located behind a building that faces a street or to the side of that building. When this happens, buildings are the dominant features along streets and parking lots are secondary features. A building should never turn its back to the street; the front entry to a building should face the street. Walkways should be provided from the sidewalks along the street to the front entry. Having on-street parking or parking to the side or rear of the building means that pedestrians do not have to cross major parking areas when walking from a sidewalk to a building.

The concept of “relegated parking,” is not unique to Albemarle County, although other places may not use the same words. Many communities require that parking lots are located to the side and rear of buildings, at least in some zoning districts. Relegated parking is best illustrated in downtown areas where on-street parking is provided parallel to the street and off-street parking is in separate lots, parking structures, or accessed from alleys.

Figure 17: Garages along Alley



Source: Albemarle County Community Development 2010

Sufficient area for maneuvering is needed when alleys are used. Other ways to relegate parking can be found in the Neighborhood Model Design Guidance section in the Appendix.

Figure 15: Non-Relegated Garages



Source: Albemarle County Community Development 2010

Figure 16: Relegated Garage



Source: Don Franco 2004

In residential developments, relegated parking means that garages are not the prominent feature seen from the street. Instead of creating “snout houses” such as those seen in Figure 15, garages should be recessed behind the line established by the front façade, as seen in Figure 16. In a compact development, a street can end up looking like a parking lot if all of the parking is in the front and there is little space between driveways.

Alleys are a form of relegated parking that provide for rear access to houses, townhouses, and businesses. In a residential setting with alleys, visitors should be able to park on the street in front of the house.

The Neighborhood Model anticipates a pedestrian oriented community. Sidewalks along a street create the opportunity for an entryway from that street and encourage people to walk rather than drive for short distances. Developers and builders in Albemarle County are beginning to build parking lots to the side or behind buildings. However, it is a new concept for some builders to have an entrance from a street. There is a tendency to create a single entrance from the parking lot behind the building which results in the back of buildings facing the street. Figure 18 shows the back of a shopping center facing a major thoroughfare in a nearby community. Staff should work with developers and builders to find a solution that can provide relegated parking and an entrance from the building facing the street. In addition to providing a pedestrian orientation, a building front is a more attractive feature than a building back or a massive parking lot in front of a building. Figure 19 shows a development along Route 250 East that has addressed this Neighborhood Model principle well.

At this time, most shopping areas in Albemarle County are accessible only by car; however, in the future it is anticipated they will be accessible by sidewalk. Buildings should be designed so that if the building front cannot be used for an entryway in the present, it can easily be retrofitted in the future. This issue is discussed in more detail in conjunction with Entrance Corridor recommendations, as well as in the Design Guidance for the Neighborhood Model.

Figure 18: Shopping Center with Back to the Street and no Sidewalk



Source: Albemarle County Community Development 2008

Figure 19: Luxor Center with Face to Street and Sidewalk



Source: Albemarle County Community Development 2013

Redevelopment

Strategy 2a: Promote redevelopment as a way to improve and take advantage of existing investment in the Development Areas.

Redevelopment is a principle that promotes the re-use of buildings or areas to improve the functionality and appearance of underutilized sites. It also offers the ability to gain utility out of sites currently served by infrastructure and avoid the need to expand into the Rural Area. Redevelopment opportunities exist to transform older suburban-style sites, such as poorly performing strip shopping centers, into vibrant mixed use areas. Parking garages can be built over areas where parking lots currently exist. Adding stories for residential units as well as reconfiguring parking lots can take advantage of places that have easy access to good transportation networks.

Single family and townhouse neighborhoods can also redevelop over time. Gentrification near city centers occurs in urban areas when new homeowners purchase older homes to remodel or rehabilitate, resulting in increased property values and improved neighborhoods. Builders can also profit by rehabilitating older homes with close proximity to jobs and amenities. In Albemarle County, redevelopment of residential areas has occurred mostly with removal of mobile homes; however, the

County may see older neighborhoods near Charlottesville gentrify in the future. Reinvestment in these places will ensure long term viability of existing neighborhoods.

Redevelopment can bring about a positive change to an area; however, care should be taken in designing new buildings and structures. Creating a more urban area with greater densities can affect existing neighborhoods as well as historic buildings and sites. Care is needed so that redevelopment complements rather than detracts from nearby neighborhoods or historic properties. Massing, scale, building style, materials, and other architectural elements should tie together new and old buildings. Guidelines for redevelopment may be needed to help ensure compatibility. Strategy 6b addresses this issue, as well. The [Economic Development Chapter](#) provides recommendations on ways the County could promote redevelopment of areas to transform them into attractive and accessible centers for employment.

Respecting Terrain and Careful Grading and Re-grading of Terrain

Strategy 2p: Encourage developers to design buildings that fit into the terrain rather than flattening the land for trademark buildings.

Albemarle County's mountains, streams, and valleys provide spectacular views and makes the Rural Area a place of beauty and tranquility. In the Development Areas, a similar topography provides character but also presents significant challenges for development. The strategies listed in this section address the desire to retain certain features of landscape as it is developed. This principle also notes the need for attention to final finished grades when grading is essential.

Albemarle County's hilly terrain can be advantageous to builders and developers. More interesting and potentially functional buildings can be designed when some of the features of the existing landscape are retained. In addition, grading costs can be lowered when sites are not "flattened" for large single-story buildings. These features give Albemarle its own character and separate it from the myriad of communities with franchise buildings and large parking lots lining primary streets. Developers should carefully consider the costs of designing buildings that work with the terrain and compare the design costs to grading costs. If the difference is minimal, a better result may be achieved through an individualized building design.

Strategy 2q: Require that re-graded slopes result in smooth rather than abrupt or steep grades that are difficult to vegetate and maintain.

Within the Development Areas, grading is often necessary and, when grading does occur, it is important that finished grades be smooth rather than abrupt. Where grading is necessary, site grading should result in slopes that are attractive, functional, and easy to maintain, and promote interconnectivity of parcels. In all instances, developers and builders should work to preserve areas of environmental sensitivity shown on the Master Plans. The County recently changed its critical slopes regulations and included standards for re-grading "managed" slopes. (Managed slopes are slopes of 25% or greater that are not designated for preservation.) These grading standards should be expanded to cover all grading in the Development Areas, not just grading on slopes in excess of 25%. More guidance on how to achieve better graded slopes may be found in the Neighborhood Model Design Guidance.

Clear Boundaries with the Rural Area

Strategy 2r: Promote use of Development Area land up to the boundary with the Rural Area. Do not require transitional areas between the Rural Area and Development Areas.

Part of Albemarle's beauty and attractiveness for residents and visitors is their ability to clearly see and appreciate the features of both the Rural Area and Development Areas. Discerning the boundary between the designated Rural Area and the Development Areas is important because it affects where and how new development should take place.

Physical Boundary

Physical boundaries such as mountain tops, rivers, streams, and roads help to visually define the interface of the Development Area with the Rural Area. As described in the Growth Management Policy, the physical boundaries between the Rural Area and the western part of the Development Areas were established at the tops of the hills that define the public water supply watershed. The Community of Crozet and a very small area in Piney Mountain are the only places in the public water supply watershed where development is recommended. For the eastern Development Areas, boundaries have been formed by physical or geographic features such as the Southwest Mountains to the east, Interstate 64, the Rivanna River and other streams, rivers, roads, and mountaintops. Each Master Plan provides detail on the boundaries for that Development Area.

Visual Boundary

Visual clues are also helpful in identifying the Development Areas - Rural Area interface. Land use on both sides of the boundary should be so distinct that residents and visitors know they are in the Development Areas or the Rural Area. These visual differences help to define expectations and appreciation for the different areas. Figure 20 clearly shows that the left side of Rio Road is in the Rural Area and the right side is in the Development Areas.

In most circumstances, development in the Development Areas should extend to the Rural Area boundary in order to use the full potential of the Development Areas and not have to expand into the Rural Area. Transitions of large-lot subdivisions at the boundary are discouraged, as they are neither rural nor urban. They are too small for agricultural uses and muddy the edge. In addition, the full capacity of the Development Areas cannot be achieved. Ways to help create more discrete boundaries are described in the Neighborhood Model Design Guidance portion of the Appendix.

Figure 20:
Rural Area on Left and Development Area on Right of Rio Road in Places 29 Area



Source: Pictometry from Albemarle County GIS 2013

Objective 3: Promote Livability in Existing Residential Neighborhoods

Although most new neighborhoods in the Development Areas reflect the desired compact urban look, function, and feel expected as a result of the Neighborhood Model, many of the older neighborhoods lack

these key features. Aging infrastructure, lack of sidewalks, and, in some cases, lack of maintenance are some of the challenges faced by existing neighborhoods who may also be dealing with changing demographics. This Objective speaks to the importance of the vitality of all neighborhoods in the Development Areas to create attractive livable Development Areas.

Strategy 3a: Work with neighborhood groups and/or Community Advisory Committees to identify specific areas in neighborhoods with needs, the nature of those needs, and ways to help the neighborhoods become safer and more attractive.

Albemarle County strives to involve residents and property owners in decisions to maintain and improve the County's quality of life. Because older neighborhoods are some of the neighborhoods most vulnerable to change, it is essential that residents be invited into a process that helps determine the future of their neighborhood. Advisory Committees have successfully been able to bring together older and newer neighborhoods to achieve common goals and can be an excellent venue for finding solutions to problems. Development of small area plans may be an outcome of such a process. Advisory Committee meetings can also be used to prioritize needs for public infrastructure improvements that will be funded in the Capital Improvements Program. Additional outreach will be necessary in older residential neighborhoods to prevent decline that results in increased police calls, social service needs and zoning violations. Gaining a better understanding of the needs of residents will help the County to provide services and improvements that help resolve existing neighborhood problems and prevent future issues.

Strategy 3b: Invest in public services and improvements for sidewalks, drainage, public parks and other features that improve older neighborhoods.

Most of the County's older neighborhoods were built before the County began requiring sidewalks, street trees, and amenity areas. Some have inadequate drainage infrastructure. Interconnections to employment and shopping areas were not always constructed. Implementation projects identified in the Master Plans for the Development Areas and the County's Capital Improvements Program need funding in order to provide the improvements for older neighborhoods. Prioritizing these improvements in consultation with the Community Advisory Committees and neighborhoods will help improve the infrastructure that supports neighborhoods.

Strategy 3c: Identify property maintenance concerns and establish expectations. Initiate County programs to address maintenance issues and ensure that resources will enable the programs to be effective.

Some of the County's neighborhoods have properties that are experiencing wear and tear and not being well-maintained. This can leave an impression that residents and property owners do not care. It can depress property values and invite criminal activities. Attention is needed now to avoid blight and the negative effects of continuing deterioration. This strategy is intended to engage the community in addressing property maintenance issues and share "ownership" with the County in establishing expectations and undertaking initiatives. While adoption of a property maintenance code similar to that of the City of Charlottesville, with enforcement by the County, could be an option, it is not assumed. Instead, the focus here is on a community-based approach utilizing civic groups, volunteers and property owners to address maintenance issues for the larger benefit of neighborhood quality, property values and safety.

Strategy 3d: Identify and build pedestrian, bikeway, roadway, and transit connections that facilitate movement between neighborhoods and services, especially near wide, busy roads, such as Route 29 and Route 250.

Residents in many of the County's existing neighborhoods, especially in the Pantops and Places29 areas lack the ability to easily access employment, shopping, and services because of major barriers such as Route 29 North and Route 250 East. Other streets such as Rio Road and Hydraulic Road connect with Route 29 North but also carry heavy traffic. Lack of crosswalks or safe ways to cross heavily trafficked streets, along with missing sidewalks, bikeways, transit, and road interconnections hamper efforts to achieve the expectations of the Neighborhood Model. Master Plans identify many places where improvements are needed. Identification of additional improvements through the Master Plan updates, as well as funding in the CIP, will ensure that residents will truly be able to live, work, and play in close proximity.

Objective 4: Use Development Area land efficiently to prevent premature expansion of the Development Areas

Albemarle County's Development Area boundaries have generally been the same for the last sixteen years. Although there is no policy that the boundaries should remain unchanged, the County has acknowledged that premature expansion of the Development Areas will frustrate the goals of the County's Growth Management Policy, the Rural Areas Plan, and the Neighborhood Model in achieving compact urban places. The ability of the Development Areas to accommodate projected growth depends on the density and quality of new development. To help guide decisions concerning whether to expand the Development Areas boundaries at this time, the County conducted a capacity analysis to see if sufficient land area would be available in the Development Areas to support future growth. The full capacity analysis is found in the [Reference Documents](#). The main points are found below.

The County used the population projections prepared by the Weldon Cooper Center for Public Service as seen in Figure 21 to predict the number of new units likely needed by years 2020 and 2030, as seen in Figure 22.

Figure 21: Projected Population for Albemarle County and Charlottesville

	2013	2020	2030
Albemarle County	101,575	115,642	134,196
Charlottesville, VA	45,073	45,636	47,252
City/County Combined	146,648	161,648	181,448

Source: Weldon Cooper Center for Public Service/Virginia Employment Commission, 2013

Using this information, staff projected the number of new units likely needed by years 2020 and 2030.

Figure 22: Potential New Dwelling Units Needed by 2020 and 2030

Albemarle County	2020	2030
Projected Population	115,642	134,196
Current Population	101,575	101,575
Population Growth	14,067	32,621
Residential Units Needed	6,423	14,895

Source of projection and current population: Weldon Cooper Center for Public Service 2013

Source of persons/unit and vacancy rate: U.S. Census Bureau 2010

To see whether sufficient land was available for up to 15,000 new units, the County identified vacant and buildable land in the Development Areas. The number of dwellings possible on land designated and zoned for residential development was calculated and the expected need was compared to the number of units possible on vacant buildable land as seen in Figure 23.

Figure 23: Total Capacity for Additional Dwelling Units in Development Areas

	Possible Dwelling Units on Buildable Land		Approved Unbuilt Units	Total Capacity for Additional Dwelling Units	
	Low	High		Low	High
Comprehensive Plan	6,009	21,214	7,861	13,870	29,075
Zoning	5,544	12,013	7,861	13,405	19,874

Source: Albemarle County Community Development 2013

The analysis showed that the County's Development Areas have vacant land available for 13,870 to 29,075 based on the Land Use Plan and 13,405 and 19,874 new units based on zoned land. The County needs up to 15,000 new units by 2030, which can be accommodated if development occurs at a higher density than the low end of the density range.

Strategy 4a: Continue to monitor building activity in both the Development Areas and the Rural Area to gain information on the rate of residential and non-residential development in the County.

Building activity reports provide valuable information on the rate of development in the County. Very active homebuilding or commercial development can indicate a need to reexamine the capacity of the Development Area to accommodate future growth. Monitoring growth will help planners know when and how to advise future decision-makers on the timing for changes to the Comprehensive Plan.

Strategy 4b: Update the capacity analysis every two years to ensure adequate residential land exists to meet new housing needs.

As identified in the beginning of this section, sufficient land exists for residential growth and commercially zoned but unbuilt land can accommodate future commercial needs through 2030. Until it is established that the Development Areas cannot accommodate expected future residential and non-residential growth, the boundaries should remain intact, with the exception of minor adjustments that result in no substantial gain in acreage. In order to know when or if the boundaries should be expanded, it is important to monitor building activity and regularly update the capacity analysis.

Objective 5: Promote density within the Development Areas to help create new compact urban places.

The Development Areas are the complement to the County's Rural Area. They are to be attractive and inviting places for people to live, work, and play. To create these places where parks, playgrounds, shopping, transit, and employment are all within a walking or bicycling distance of residents, density is needed.

Albemarle County's Growth Management Policy relies on development within the density ranges recommended for the Development Areas. Although parts of Albemarle County's Development Areas were developed at less than two units per acre, low-density development prevents opportunities for transit and

increases maintenance costs for roads and utilities. For these reasons, Albemarle County expects new development in a different pattern so that residents can have more opportunities to walk, bicycle, or take transit to work and entertainment. To avoid expansion of the Development Areas and to help create livable walkable places, density of new development is expected at a minimum of three units per acre in places designated as Neighborhood Density and a minimum of six units per acre where land is designated as Urban Density.

Strategy 5a: Provide ongoing education to the public on the relationship of density in the Development Areas and efforts to prevent sprawl.

For over 40 years, the County's growth management policy has directed development to the Development Areas. The last 25 years have been spent in encouraging density in those places. Adopted in 2001, the Neighborhood Model was intended to ensure creation of high quality neighborhoods in conjunction with density. Despite a long history of working to make Albemarle County a wonderful place to live, work, and play, new residents to the County are often unaware of the County's Growth Management Policy. They do not know that it contributes strongly to Albemarle County's high quality of life.

Many residents who move to the County expect that nothing will change after they arrive. However, in a vibrant area, change will occur and it is natural for residents to fear the effects of change. For this reason, education is important to help new residents understand the County's expectations for rural preservation balanced with high quality urban development. As residents become more knowledgeable of the County's policies and see advantages of innovative design, they can more easily understand the reason for higher density and compact development. Conveying the benefits of density, such as neighborhood schools and parks is also important. Understanding that the Development Areas can be great places to live can help residents embrace density in the Development Areas.

Strategy 5b: On greenfield sites, encourage developers to build at the higher end of the density range, provided that development will be in keeping with design recommendations in the Neighborhood Model.

While there is no formal definition, greenfields are typically thought of as multi-acre sites, not closely surrounded by existing development. Greenfields can range in size from several acres to several hundred acres; however, context is the determining factor for greenfields. Although there are not as many greenfield sites in the Development Areas as there once were, staff has a unique opportunity to help achieve Development Areas goals when working with developers. Staff can be an advocate for the Comprehensive Plan and the Master Plans. It can advise applicants on the aspirations of the Comprehensive Plan and help applicants use the Neighborhood Model to design developments that provide both density and good design. Neighborhood meetings can be used to help promote Comprehensive Plan goals. As applicants see the Plan supported by the Planning Commission and Board of Supervisors, applicants begin to depend on it as the guiding document to help achieve higher densities in conjunction with the Neighborhood Model.

Strategy 5c: Encourage developers to build within the density range recommended in the Master Plans on infill sites.

As with greenfields, the term infill has no formal definition. Typically an infill site is a vacant parcel surrounded or mostly surrounded by existing development. Expectations for infill are different than for greenfield sites. Within neighborhoods the development pattern has been set. Goals for density must

be tempered with the need for compatibility with the neighborhood. If density were to be proposed at the high end of the range within a low density neighborhood, the change could be so dramatic that it would severely alter the character of the neighborhood. A medium density development next to a high density development may be more appropriate than high density to help create a variety of housing types within a neighborhood. Density for infill sites is determined largely on context and it should not be assumed that the high end of the range is more appropriate than the low end of the range.

Strategy 5d: Review the cash proffer policy to assess its effects on density.

Proffers are voluntary offers to help mitigate the impacts of new development on a locality. To help provide guidance to developers on ways to appropriately mitigate impacts, the County adopted a cash proffer policy in 2007. Included in the Appendix, the policy states that an owner of property rezoned for residential uses should provide cash proffers equivalent to the proportional value of the public facilities deemed necessary to serve the proposed development on the property. Over the last several years, some developers have opted to develop land “by-right” at a much lower density permitted by the existing zoning than at the recommended density shown on the Master Plans. While some anecdotal information suggests that the proffer system may be affecting decisions related to density, the true effect is not known. A study is being conducted to see whether the proffer policy is affecting decisions related to density. The results of this study may lead to proffer policy changes in the future.

Strategy 5e: Study the nature and extent to which transient lodging is currently taking place and consider whether policy or regulatory changes should occur to accommodate this use. If such changes are determined to not be needed or appropriate, develop and implement a plan to bring errant operators of transient lodging into conformity with the County's regulations in a timely fashion.

As indicated in the [Rural Area Chapter](#), rental vacation and tourist homes are operated throughout the County and some are in the Development Areas. The Zoning Ordinance allows tourist lodging in the Development Areas which means that a homeowner may have up to 5 guestrooms inside a home provided that the owner or a residential manager lives in the home. Internet research shows that some of these facilities are operating without permits.

The City of Charlottesville studied this issue in 2014 to determine the extent to which transient lodging was occurring in City neighborhoods and its impacts to neighborhoods and on availability of affordable housing. The City is currently looking at these issues as well as potential revenue impacts for the City.

The County should undertake a similar study of both the Rural Area and Development Areas to decide if B&B and tourist lodging regulations should be changed in the County. The County might benefit from using the same research techniques to develop data for analysis. The County could also benefit by reviewing the issue in a broader community context than just at a County-level. In the Rural Area it is important to understand the extent to which new guest cottages or residences are being built for transient lodging or whether such facilities are helping to preserve historic buildings and sites. For the Development Area, the County will want to understand the impacts to neighborhoods when guest houses are operating with non-resident managers.

Objective 6: Promote infill and redevelopment that is compatible with surrounding neighborhoods and uses.

Redevelopment and infill are expectations because only 11% of the Development Areas land area is vacant and unconstrained by environmental features, and thus available for new development. (See Reference Documents.) Vacant parcel sizes range from less than an acre to several hundred acres, with many more small parcels than medium size and large parcels remaining for new development. Redevelopment and infill are considered positive aspects for development because generally they can provide for a greater efficiency in transportation, utility, and service provision. [Strategy 2o](#) also speaks to advantages of redevelopment. The key to successful redevelopment and infill is compatibility with surrounding neighborhoods and uses while achieving goals for density at least at the low end of the density range.

It should be noted that with infill and redevelopment, all [Neighborhood Model Principles](#) may not be applicable, depending on the context of the site. For example, development of a small vacant site within a neighborhood where no new streets are proposed would likely not warrant the provision of curb, gutter, sidewalks, and street trees along the frontage of the site. Shallow building setbacks would not make sense if the rest of the homes have deep setbacks. As indicated in the Neighborhood Model section, as individual proposals are considered, all of the principles of the Neighborhood Model may not be equally applicable to any specific proposal and balanced, rational and reasonable application of those principles is expected.

[Strategy 6a:](#) Encourage developers to meet with neighborhoods to find ways to minimize any negative impacts of infill and redevelopment. Use neighborhood meetings to help find solutions to potential compatibility issues.

With infill and redevelopment, citizen engagement is extremely important. Recent changes to the Zoning Map amendment process have added a neighborhood meeting to the list of activities to occur prior to a Planning Commission public hearing on new development. The neighborhood meeting can be used for County staff to explain the rezoning process and expectations for density in the Development Areas. The main purpose, however, is for a developer to present his/her proposed project and gain feedback from people most affected by the change. Additional meetings with neighbors can be used to find solutions to potential compatibility issues. Finding equitable solutions can help make infill and redevelopment activities more successful. Innovative design solutions may also resolve concerns. Neighborhood meetings can also be used in by-right development to help provide opportunities for residents and developers to identify potential problems and find positive solutions in advance of development.

[Strategy 6b:](#) Use design and architectural techniques to help infill and redevelopment blend into existing neighborhoods, and, if needed, create guidelines for residents and developers.

With infill and redevelopment, it is important for new buildings to blend into their surroundings. Use of similar setbacks, massing, scale, and use of architectural features, such as roof pitch and building styles, can help new buildings join into existing neighborhoods. Exact replication of these elements is not necessary, but new development should draw from existing development to help provide cohesive design. If the County finds that the [Neighborhood Model Design Guidance Appendix](#) is not sufficient, it may want to develop more detailed guidelines for residents and developers. Such guidelines should be illustrated and cover typical situations one might encounter in Albemarle County.

Strategy 6c: Continue to require screening, buffering, and, physical separation, where necessary, to promote compatibility of residential and non-residential uses.

The Zoning Ordinance requires screening between commercial or industrial districts and residential districts. Screening is also required between objectionable uses, such as parking lots, and single-family residential uses. Screening with trees and fences and buffering with landscaping can help to mitigate potential impacts between residential and nonresidential uses. Screening and buffering between low density and higher density residential uses can help provide privacy for both developments; however, deep buffers are not encouraged. Instead, site design that orients parking lots away from single-family backyards can be used to help avoid conflicts.

Current provisions of the Zoning Ordinance addressing the screening of objectionable features and dissimilar uses provide for additional protection. These features should be retained. Providing distance between potentially incompatible uses is also recommended, but only in cases where noise, vibrations, odors, and other activities generally associated with industrial uses would negatively impact residents. Deep buffers between uses that can be made compatible is not necessary and reduces the amount of Development Area land needed to accommodate growth.

Objective 7: Create thriving, active employment and commercial areas.

Albemarle County envisions its Development Areas as vibrant and active areas supported by transportation networks, utilities, services, and facilities that enable business and industry to grow. The [Economic Development Chapter](#) of this Plan provides additional information and strategies for growing the County's economy. This Objective speaks to two important land use aspects needed for thriving commerce and industry -- ensuring that sufficient land is available for future non-residential uses and helping to protect that land for future business and employment needs.

Supply of Approved Square Footage

As part of the capacity analysis for this Plan, the County looked at its inventory of buildable land for non-residential uses. That review, found in the [Reference Documents](#), showed that approximately 10% of the County's vacant and buildable land in the Development Areas is designated for commercial development and almost 16% is designated for industrial development. From a zoning standpoint, about 13% of the vacant and buildable land is zoned for commercial development, but only about 5% is zoned for industrial development.

Much of the zoning for commercial development took place between 2000 and 2008 when the County approved the building of approximately 6.7 million square feet of mostly retail/service, office, and institutional uses in the Development Areas. Of this square footage, approximately 5.3 million is unbuilt. Several studies over the last seven years have indicated that the County has enough commercial square footage to last beyond the next 15 years. There is even more capacity if opportunities for redevelopment of land with existing buildings are factored in. The larger issue lies with land needed for employment uses.

Target Industries

As described in the [Economic Development Chapter](#), the County has targeted the following industries and services for future growth:

- Bioscience and Medical Devices,

- Business and Financial Services,
- Information Technology and Defense and Security, and
- Agribusiness and Food Processing.

Complementary targets are:

- Health Services, and
- Arts, Design and Sports & Media

According to the Region's [Target Industry Study](#), target industries are those employment groups that have high relative wages, support or strengthen existing industries/employers, match the area's educational achievements to jobs, make use of Albemarle's unique attributes, including technology assets, provide positive projected employment growth, and have earnings greater than the local or State average. Complementary targets add to the quality of life to support a vibrant, sustainable urban community. Because of the types of service offered, they typically provide employment opportunities for a lower skilled workforce.

Of the industries listed above, many can locate in commercially designated space; however, agri-tourism typically would be found in the Rural Area. Industrially zoned land is required to accommodate some of the future bioscience and medical device uses as well as some of the information technology and agribusiness uses. Land area needs for these kinds of facilities ranges from 3 – 25 acres, depending on the type of operation. Figure 25 provides a table showing facility and acreage needs of target industries.

Strategy 7a: Continue to ensure that sufficient developable land is available for future commercial and industrial development needs.

As part of the background work for this Comprehensive Plan update, an [analysis](#) of land area available for commercial and employment uses was completed. It showed that sufficient land area has been designated and zoned to meet future commercial needs. For employment or industrial uses, it showed that overall acreage exists for future needs, but much of the available land is in small parcels and lacks the needed roads and utilities to be marketable to new and expanding target industries. Figure 24 shows the number of properties with developable acreage for future employment needs. Almost half of those properties are less than 5 acres in size.

Figure 24:
Parcel Sizes of Vacant Industrially Zoned and/or Designated Land

Developable Acres on Parcels	Number of Properties
1 – 2.99 acres (could be combined for larger parcel)	29
3 – 4.99	4
5 – 9.99	16
10 – 49.99	10
50+ (UVA Research Park -- 234 acres)	1

Source: Albemarle County Community Development 2013

Figure 25: Target Industry Needs and Locations

Target	Local Examples	Zoning, Land & Building Needs	Location Needs
Bioscience and Medical Devices	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Uses at University of Virginia Research Park • Uses at Fontaine Research Park • Micro Aire • Lewis & Clark Pharmaceuticals 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Industrial zoning or commercial zoning by SP • 3-5 acres • Minimum 50,000 square feet • Minimum of 1 story • Minimum ceiling height 10 feet • Additional building needs: high quality lighting, sound insulation, area free from vibration, and dock doors. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Close proximity to distributors (UPS, FedEx, airport, primary roads)
Business & Financial Services	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • State Farm Mutual Insurance Company • StellarOne Corporation/First Union Bank at Peter Jefferson Place • MusicToday/LiveNation 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Commercial or Industrial zoning • 3 -25 acres • 10,000-50,000 square feet • Additional information: larger operations can work with a mix of uses, data centers have special fiber optic, electrical, and water needs. Business service may also need area for small scale, high-end manufacturing. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Can locate anywhere; however, data center requirements limit sites to Places 29 area
Information Technology & Defense & Security	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • National Ground Intelligence – Defense Intelligence Agency at Rivanna Station • Northrop Grumman 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Commercial or Industrial Zoning • 3- 25 acres • Minimum of 10,000 square feet • Additional information: some operations can work with a mix of uses. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Anywhere broadband access is available • Some uses require an isolated site
Agribusiness, food processing, and Related Technology	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Gabrielle Rausse winery • Relay Foods local food delivery • Caromont Farm and Creamery • Lumi juice manufacturer • StarrHill brewery 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Rural Area, commercial or industrial zoning, dependent on the use • Uses requiring commercial or industrial zoning - 3 – 25 acres • 3,000 – 5,000 square feet, except for large food processors • Minimum ceiling height of 20' • Dock doors • Additional information: some operations can work with a mix of uses, some uses require warehouse buildings. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Proximity for distribution to Richmond, I-81, DC markets

Source: Albemarle County Office of Community and Business Partnerships 2012

The total developable acreage of industrially zoned and/or designated properties is 600 acres; however, 230 acres are part of the UVA Research Park. The UVA Research Park is well suited to a number of industries, but businesses locating in the Research Park, must have an academic relationship with UVA to locate in the Park. In addition, the UVA Foundation, which owns the UVA Research Park, allows only long term leases (and not sale) of land in the Park. These challenges mean that not all targets will find the Research Park properties suitable to their needs. In addition to small size and lack of infrastructure, not all of the parcels are zoned for employment uses, which can be a disincentive for businesses looking to expand in the County or to locate to the County.

More information on steps needed to ensure that sufficient land is available for future employment needs is provided in Objective 4 in the [Economic Development Chapter](#). The new Economic Development Program, recently approved by the County Board, will help direct efforts to ensure sufficient land is available for the County's future industry and employment needs.

Strategy 7b: Identify tools needed to help create and maintain vibrant employment centers.

Albemarle County is increasing its involvement in promoting and retaining high quality jobs for its citizens. As part of this effort, the County will need to explore ways in which it can assist expanding or new businesses and employers. Two possibilities are overlay districts and service districts. A zoning overlay may be useful to provide flexibility for redevelopment in targeted areas. A service district may be able to provide revenue to pay for infrastructure improvements. Strategy 4c in the [Economic Development Chapter](#) links to this strategy. Additional tools will be explored through the County's Economic Development program.

Objective 8: Preserve natural systems which are shown for preservation on Master Plan Land Use Plans.

Natural systems, such as stream corridors, wetlands, woodlands, and swaths of steep slopes are important in both the Rural Area and the Development Areas. In the Development Areas, they are designated as Parks and Green Systems maps within Master Plans. Preservation of these features helps to promote species diversity and provide visual and physical breaks in areas of intense development. Slope and stream protection helps prevent erosion which in turn helps water quality. Some stream valleys are designated as greenways where walking paths are planned.

Each Master Plan describes and shows Parks and Green Systems for its respective neighborhoods. These are the same areas that are shown in the color green on the Land Use Plans for the Development Areas. No density allowances are provided for this land use category and they are not intended for development, except as identified in the Master Plans.

Strategy 8a: Continue to provide detailed information on elevation, steep slopes, streams, stream buffers, floodplain, and wooded areas through the County's Geographic Information System (GIS) on-line database and share this information with property owners and developers.

The County's GIS database contains information on important environmental features in the County. Having this information available on-line helps property owners and developers easily identify areas for preservation. Continuation of this practice can also help with commitments for preservation during rezoning and special use permit applications. Staff should encourage land developers in by-right developments to preserve these areas voluntarily.

Strategy 8b: Review new State and federal water resource protection requirements for consistency with County stream buffer regulations in the Development Area. If necessary, update County stream buffer regulations for intermittent streams and modify Master Plans accordingly.

Stream buffer requirements for perennial streams are different in the Development Areas than in the Rural Area. The difference is a result of the County's higher expectations for resource protection in the Rural Area than the Development Area. Recent changes to State regulations have created higher expectations for Development Areas streams. If these higher expectations extend to intermittent streams, then the County will need to update its regulations and Development Area Master Plans to indicate larger areas for preservation.

Strategy 8c: Review zoning standards for calculating density, and, if necessary, amend the Zoning Ordinance to better align density allowances with the Comprehensive Plan.

Density is calculated differently in the Comprehensive Plan than in the Zoning Ordinance and the different methodologies for calculating density have created some confusion on the part of the public. The Comprehensive Plan is a document that provides guidance, while the Zoning Ordinance contains legal requirements for land development.

With the Comprehensive Plan, when a property owner asks about the potential number of dwelling units that a parcel might yield, density is calculated by measuring the area with the land use designation other than Parks and Green Systems. For example, if a 10-acre property shows 8 acres for Neighborhood Density (3 - 6 units per acre) and 2 acres for Parks and Green Systems, available density would be calculated on 8 acres and range from 24 to 48 units.

Calculating available density for future development is different in the Zoning Ordinance. Density available for a parcel of land is calculated on the entire acreage of a property. Using the same example of 10 acres on a parcel zoned R4 (4 units per acre), density would be calculated on the entire 10 acres, even though 2 acres are in the floodplain, on required stream buffers, or in preserved slopes. A property owner could potentially build up to 40 units on the 8 acres outside of the floodplain, stream buffers, and preserved slopes but not on those environmentally sensitive areas.

The zoning regulations were put in place to promote greater utility of land in the Development Areas while preserving areas that the County wishes to protect. At the time the density calculations were developed for the Zoning Ordinance, Development Area Plans did specifically show areas to be preserved. Zoning maps and Development Area Land Use Plans were fully aligned. This is no longer the case. Consideration should be given to bringing the methodologies for calculating density closer into alignment between the Comprehensive Plan and the Zoning Ordinance.

In addition, changes are needed to the Zoning Ordinance where density calculations are described for the Neighborhood Model Zoning District. Descriptions for calculating density in this section of the Ordinance are not consistent with the Comprehensive Plan.

Objective 9: Match infrastructure availability and capacity with new development, especially in Priority Areas.

In order for the Development Areas to be the places where new and existing residents want to live, impacts from new development should not adversely affect existing residents and property owners. One way to mitigate impacts is to ensure that adequate infrastructure is in place before or concurrent with development. If roads are overburdened or schools overcrowded, the Development Areas become places where people do not want to live.

Strategy 9a: Continue to establish Priority Areas in all Master Plans.

Each Master Plan for the Development Areas identifies “priority areas” to help guide decision-making. Priority Areas are places where infrastructure is planned and needed to help support existing and proposed development. For example, an L-shaped area on the Pantops Master Plan at the intersection of Route 250 East and Route 20 North is a Priority Area. Within this area, transportation improvements are needed and river-related activities are to occur. The Priority Area in Crozet is the Downtown. It is expected that public improvements will be focused in these areas to help achieve Master Plan goals.

Strategy 9b: Make decisions to approve new development with an understanding of where public investments are being focused. Give priority to approving rezonings and special use permits that are consistent with priority areas established in the Development Area Master Plans.

The County has experienced steady and consistent growth over the past 50 years. Public investment and infrastructure improvements have not kept pace with this growth. This is particularly true with road improvements, but also includes other types of community facilities and services, such as incomplete sidewalk systems, lack of crosswalks, limited playing fields, and emergency service personnel. Proffers approved through rezonings sometimes include commitments to improve infrastructure needed for the new development. Sometimes, commitments are for cash to make public improvements. However, the private sector cannot be expected to mitigate impacts for existing deficiencies; new development can only be held responsible for deficiencies it creates.

The County’s Capital Improvement Program is used to guide decisions on County expenditures to improve infrastructure. Priority Areas are used to help provide guidance on where expenditures should be made as well as where new development should be approved. While decisions regarding private development proposals and investment should not be based solely on these priority areas, decisions on development proposals should be made with an understanding of where public investments are being focused. Land use decisions should be consistent with Priority Areas established in the Development Area Master Plans. The County may decide not to approve new rezoning or special use permit requests outside of the designated Priority Areas as planned facilities are not in place to support the proposed project and the existing neighborhoods. If approved, however, as part of the land development process, developers will need to provide more significant levels of improvements to ensure adequate infrastructure and services are available to the area.

Strategy 9c: Do not approve proposed rezonings and special use permits outside of Priority Areas when planned facilities are not in place to support the project and existing neighborhoods, unless the proposed project will provide significant improvements to ensure adequate infrastructure and services are available to the area.

According to the Code of Virginia§ 15.2-2283, localities are to consider impacts of a change in zoning on provision of police and fire protection, disaster evacuation, civil defense, transportation, water, sewerage, flood protection, schools, parks, forests, playgrounds, recreational facilities, airports and other public requirements. Zoning regulations and changes should prevent obstruction of light and air, danger and congestion in travel and transportation, or loss of life, health, or property from fire, flood, impounding structure failure, panic or other dangers. The County needs to keep these items in mind when approving rezonings.

Over time, some rezonings have been approved in Development Areas in advance of public improvements in certain areas. A cumulative effect of these rezonings has brought about the need for improvements sooner rather than later. By recognizing where commitments have already been made for infrastructure improvements and giving priority to approval of projects in those areas, the County can

help prevent negative impacts on residents who would otherwise need to wait for many years for improvements to catch up with the need.

Objective 10: Continue to work with the City of Charlottesville, the University of Virginia, and the Town of Scottsville on issues of joint interest to the community.

The [Background Chapter](#) of this Plan describes regional planning activities and the Planning and Coordination Council's joint efforts to promote cooperation in planning and community development among the City, County and UVA. The Livability Project, which the City, County, and UVA completed in 2013, built on many of those efforts. Collaborative and cooperative planning has the real potential to enhance the quality of life for the entire community as well as create efficiencies and cost savings for the localities. The strategies listed below are intended to build on the excellent joint planning efforts of the past.

Strategy 10a: Continue participation in the Planning and Coordination Council and the [Three-Party Agreement](#).

Albemarle County, the City of Charlottesville, and UVA established an agreement in 1986 to conduct collaborative planning in areas near the UVA campus which could affect the entities. The group has effectively created joint expectations for properties in Area B, which is mapped and described in the [Background Chapter](#). These activities are expected to continue.

Strategy 10b: Building on the successful collaboration between the City and the County on the [Livability Project](#), continue to work together on areas of joint interest to achieve mutual goals of the City and the County.

The Livability Project, facilitated by the Thomas Jefferson Planning District Commission, the City and County revealed similarities in the goals and objectives of each locality. The biggest differences were discovered in the programs of each locality. For example, both localities promote provision of affordable housing. The City has a Housing Authority which provides subsidized housing for low income residents. The County's affordable housing policy directs provision of 15% of new housing units in new residential development approved by rezoning or special use permit.

City and County Planning Commissions recommended several activities take place for the mutual benefit of both localities and the community. These strategies are provided throughout both the City and County Comprehensive Plans. Areas for cooperation and collaboration include land use planning, economic development, parks and greenways, transportation, historic preservation, rural preservation, environmental preservation, and housing. It is especially important to collaborate in areas of the County where jurisdictional borders are shared. The top priorities from the [Livability Project](#) are joint planning for the Rivanna River Corridor and overcoming physical barriers to walkability. All projects can be found in the [Background Chapter](#).

Strategy 10c: Continue collaboration between the County and the Town of Scottsville on projects of mutual interest.

The Town of Scottsville is an incorporated area within the County. As described in the [Background Chapter](#), the Town has its own Land Use Plan and administers its own Zoning Ordinance. Scottsville and the County actively collaborate on issues of land use and zoning, where activities are proposed near the border of the Town limits. The County parks and recreation staff coordinate with the Town on greenway and recreational projects that extend from the County through the Town, especially along the James

River. Economic development staff coordinates with the Town when prospective employers' needs may be met in Scottsville. County emergency service personnel work with the Town's police department. The relationship between the Town and County is very positive for both localities. Good communication is key and this excellent relationship is expected to continue.

Objective 11: Consider allowing for urban agriculture practices to increase access to healthy, local, and affordable foods and encourage the productive use of vacant land.

Local food production, with emphasis on food and products that are grown organically, locally, and sustainably is important to Albemarle County. It is addressed primarily in the [Rural Area Chapter](#) of the Comprehensive Plan. Urban agriculture encompasses a wide variety of activities such as community gardens, henhouses for laying hens in a backyard, and beekeeping. It is currently not allowed in most places in the Development Areas.

Strategy 11a: Study ways to allow chickens, goats, bees, and other forms of agriculture in the Development Areas without harming the safety, welfare, and enjoyment the property of adjoining owners.

In recent years, some residents of the Development Areas have requested permission for community gardens and to raise chickens, pigs, or goats on their property for agricultural production. These animals are not intended as pets. There are proponents and opponents of allowing farm animals in the Development Areas. The City of Charlottesville allows chickens and goats to be raised by-right with restrictions

The County should consider amending the Zoning Ordinance to support many forms of urban agriculture. It will be important to designate appropriate locations for urban agriculture. For example, keeping of farm animals within an apartment complex may not be suitable, but it might be acceptable on a single-family lot. Consideration will be needed to determine whether the County should align its regulations with the City's. If not, then minimum standards will be needed for poultry, livestock, and bees, along with enforcement of those standards. In addition, the study should address animal waste disposal, setbacks, permits, enforcement, and education. At present, urban agriculture opportunities should not be extended to the keeping of animals such as pigs and cattle as they pose significant concerns for the safety, welfare, and protection of neighborhoods and residents.

Strategy 11b: Amend the Zoning Ordinance to allow gardening as a standalone use in zoning districts in the Development Areas.

By and large, community gardens pose no concerns for the Development Areas; however, at present, the Zoning Ordinance does not permit gardening as a primary use of a property in non-Rural Area or Village Residential zoning districts. The Zoning Ordinance does allow gardening as an accessory use if a residential use exists on a property. To provide greater opportunities for community gardening in the Development Areas, the Zoning Ordinance should be changed.