STAFF CONTACT: Stacy Pethia, Principal Planner – Housing

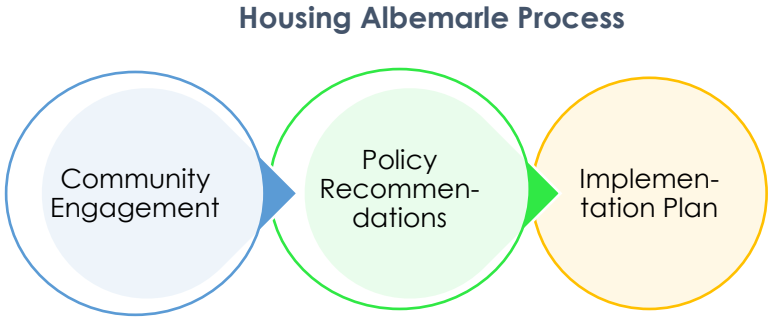
PLANNING COMMISSION: August 11, 2020 (Work Session)

PROJECT BACKGROUND AND PURPOSE OF THE WORK SESSION

Albemarle County is committed to creating sustainable communities and safe, decent housing opportunities for our residents. Since 2004, our Comprehensive Plan and Affordable Housing Policy have provided guidance on how we meet that need. However, new residential development in the County has not kept pace with growing housing demand, leaving many County residents struggling to find housing they can afford that meets their needs.
The *Comprehensive Regional Housing Study and Needs Analysis*[1] report released in 2019, identified more than 10,000 homeowners and renters who are paying more than the recommended 30 % of gross household income for housing and housing related costs. As the County continues to grow, that number is estimated to increase by 4,000 households by the year 2040. To ensure the County continues to provide sufficient and appropriate housing opportunities in our community, the County embarked on an effort to update our housing policy in October 2019. The new policy recommendations provide the tools necessary to meet the diverse housing needs of all County residents regardless of income, age, or other special needs.

A Way Forward

In April 2019, the Thomas Jefferson Planning District Commission published the *Comprehensive Regional Housing Study and Needs Assessment*[2] report. This study, which examined housing needs on both a county level and region-wide basis, identifies more than 10,000 Albemarle County households – both renters and homeowners (20 % and 42 % of total households, respectively) -- struggling with housing costs. Households with incomes less than 50 % of area median income experiencing the greatest housing cost burdens (67% of all very low- and extremely low-income households). The report further shows that the number of households paying more than the recommended 30 % of income for housing costs is anticipated to increase 34 % by the year 2040. To help meet current and future housing needs for county residents, staff is undertaking an update of the county's Housing Policy.



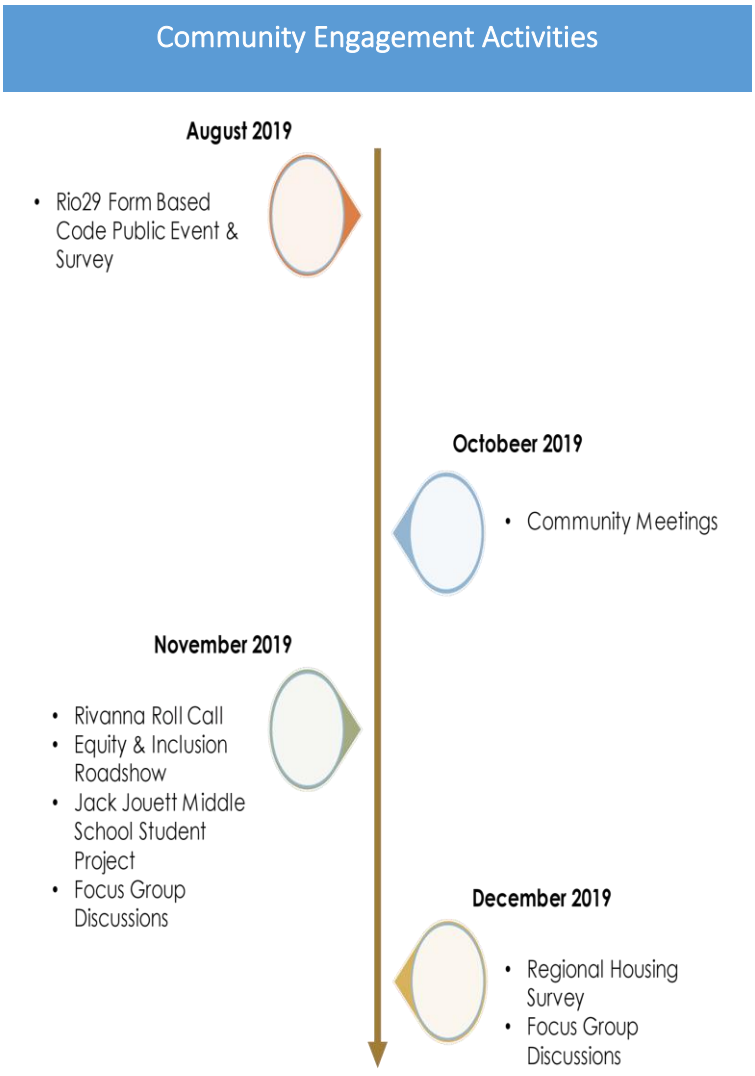
[1] Partners for Economic Success (2019). *Comprehensive Housing Analysis and Needs Assessment: Planning District 10.*
[2] Ibid.

The Planning Commission directed staff to begin work on updating the Housing Policy at their July 23, 2019 meeting. The Housing Policy update was a three-phased process. It began with a series of community engagement activities to collect feedback on housing-related issues and aspirations, as well as on potential tools the County may use to meet current and future housing needs in Albemarle County. The information collected through these activities directly informed the second and third phases of the policy update process – creation of a comprehensive housing policy, as well as an implementation strategy. An overview of this process is outlined below.

Community Outreach

Between August and December 2019, approximately 400 county residents engaged with the new policy development process. Staff conducted three community meetings in October 2019 with the goals of sharing information about affordable housing in Albemarle County, listening to residents' concerns about housing in the county, and identifying solutions to support affordable housing in our neighborhoods.

In addition to the community meetings, staff worked with local nonprofit service providers to organize focus group sessions with nonprofit staff, and the individuals and households they serve. Staff completed a total of seven focus group sessions between November 1, and December 17, 2019. These discussions focused on a set of general topics:



- What, if any, housing related issues are you or someone you know struggling with?
- How does a lack of affordable housing affect you, your neighborhood, our county?
- What types of housing do we need in Albemarle County?
- What can Albemarle County do to address affordable housing needs?

Meeting and focus group participants represented a diverse cross-section of persons who live and/or work in Albemarle County, including residents from both the Development and Rural areas, seniors, renters and homeowners,

developers and real estate professionals, local employers and nonprofit service providers.

Other engagement and data collection activities undertaken by staff include:

- Rio29 Form Based Code Public Event & Survey – August 2019
- Rivanna Roll Call – November 2019
- Office of Equity and Inclusion Roadshow Stop – November 2019
- Regional Housing Survey (*conducted by the Thomas Jefferson Planning District Commission*)
- Jack Jouett Middle School, Eighth Grade Student Project – November 2019 to January 2020

Community outreach activities were supplemented by staff discussions with various county departments including: the Economic Development Office, Facilities and Environmental Services, the Office of Equity and Inclusion, the Office of Housing, and the Department of Social Services.

Stakeholder Committee

To develop the new policy recommendations, staff worked with a nine-member a Stakeholder Committee comprised of individuals representing the following interests:

- county residents aged 65 years and older;
- IMPACT[3];
- people experiencing homelessness;
- for-profit developers of multi-family rental housing;
- the Regional Housing Partnership[4];
- homeowners;
- local employers;
- low-income households; and
- the City of Charlottesville.

The recommendations developed by this committee include a range of tools and policy objectives to advance affordable housing and encourage the creation of inclusive, sustainable communities throughout Albemarle County.

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[3] IMPACT, or the Interfaith Movement Promoting Action by Congregations Together, is a grassroots initiative comprised of 27 diverse faith congregations in the Charlottesville-Albemarle area who wish to live out and work in response to the common call for justice found in each of our traditions.

[4] Members of the Regional Housing Partnership include the following: City of Charlottesville, Albemarle County, Fluvanna County, Greene County, Louisa County, Nelson County, non-profit housing providers, homeless services provider, a local builder, a local developer, a design professional, resident of an urban area, residents of a rural area, University of Virginia, Thomas Jefferson Planning District Commission, rural non-profit organization, Workforce Investment Board, Regional Transit Partnership, and the Thomas Jefferson Health District.

The Draft Policy

The draft policy contains 12 policy objectives and associated strategies. The objectives address the full range of anticipated housing needs through the year 2020 including market-rate, affordable and workforce housing. Recommended strategies support the creation and preservation of affordable rental and homeownership units, accessible housing for seniors and persons with disabilities, and persons experiencing homelessness. Tools to enhance equitable development are presented, as well as recommendations for promoting community sustainability. The implementation schedule provides a six-year plan for implementation of the policy recommendations and identifies six recommended priority actions.

STAFF RECOMMENDATIONS:

Staff recommends the Planning Commission review and discuss the attached draft policy document. Staff welcomes suggestions from the Planning Commission and will incorporate Planning Commission feedback into the draft policy prior to a work session with the Board of Supervisors in October. Once staff receives, and incorporates, feedback from the Board of Supervisors, the draft policy will be made available for public review and comment. Staff anticipates returning to the Planning Commission the end of 2020 or the beginning of 2021 with final policy recommendations.

Attachment:

1. Draft Housing Policy & Implementation Plan