**Albemarle County Planning Commission**
**Draft Minutes December 19, 2023**

The Albemarle County Planning Commission held a work session on Tuesday, December 19, 2023, at 6:00 p.m.

Members attending were: Corey Clayborne, Chair; Fred Missel, Vice-Chair; Julian Bivins; Luis Carrazana; Karen Firehock; Nathan Moore; Lonnie Murray.

Members absent: None.

Other officials present were: David Benish; Tori Kanellopoulos; Ben Holt; Andy Herrick, County Attorney's Office; and Carolyn Shaffer, Clerk to the Planning Commission.

**Call to Order and Establish Quorum**

Mr. Clayborne called the meeting to order.

Ms. Shaffer called the roll.

Mr. Clayborne established a quorum.

**Other Matters Not Listed on the Agenda from the Public**

Holmes Brown stated that he resided at 1894 Stillhouse Creek in Batesville, Virginia. He said that over the past 67 years, he had observed Batesville evolve and change. He said that he submitted a document containing 11 pages of comments on rural crossroads communities to County staff several weeks ago. He said that before elaborating on specific points, he wanted to address a generic question regarding crossroads communities. He said that the question was what the advantages are of being designated a rural crossroads community. He said that at this point, it seemed that this designation merely met a County definition and offered no material benefits.

Mr. Brown said that County surveys had identified various services that residents would like to see available, and many of these could be provided in rural crossroads communities with proper incentives. He said that site-specific consultations would determine what was feasible and desired for individual crossroads communities. He asked if, to achieve these goals, the final comprehensive plan would adopt either a passive approach involving merely changing or eliminating regulations for crossroads so that enhancements to crossroads communities would be dependent on private funding or private initiatives, or would it undertake supportive projects or offer financial and policy assistance to promote crossroads communities' priorities.

Mr. Brown said that rural communities had faced various challenges, such as abandoned buildings and groundwater depletion due to development. He said that to address these issues, it would be beneficial to establish ownership of abandoned buildings more efficiently and create entities that can manage them. He said that additionally, conducting a survey on water levels and understanding the impact of development on groundwater resources could help mitigate the problem of wells going dry.

Rob McGinnis stated that he was representing the Piedmont Environmental Council. He said that PEC strongly supported the County's decision to prepare standalone chapters for rural areas and

development areas. He thanked them for making that important decision. He said that regarding crossroads communities, he recommended that the County pause the designation of new crossroads communities in the comprehensive plan update.

Mr. McGinnis said that PEC included a recommendation in the rural area chapter for the completion of a rural area plan. He said that during the process of completing a rural area plan, the County should engage rural communities regarding the potential designation of their communities as crossroads communities. He said that PEC strongly supported the County's proposal to undertake small area plans for rural communities with significant community engagement.

Mr. McGinnis said that the PEC generally supported the draft multimodal systems planning activity centers option for implementing the planning toolkit, however, the proposed Activity Center Destination P4 for the SEG property bordered by I-64 and U.S. 29 was problematic due to its isolation and lack of walkable connectivity, as well as marginal bikeable connectivity. He noted that given the likely growth of the biotechnology sector and the proximity of these parcels to the Manning Biotechnology Institute, it would be more suitable for them to be designated as an employment district with a proposed land use designation of office, research and development, flex, and light industrial.

Peggy Gilgas stated she was from the Jack Jewett District and owned a historic property in White Hall. She expressed her gratitude for the inclusion of a separate rural area chapter in AC44. She said that in the past 20 years, she had observed numerous changes in this area. She mentioned that open space, healthy functioning ecosystems, and clean water were becoming increasingly endangered in Albemarle County. She thanked them for considering Albemarle's future and preserving these important features that made Albemarle an attractive place to live and improved the quality of life daily.

Ms. Gilgas said that regarding the updating of future land use designations, she believed they should continue to maximize the potential of already designated growth areas. She expressed uncertainty about how the City's upzoning would impact these designated growth areas as well as the County. She said that in the meantime, she supported the formation of a development area task force to address the growing pains experienced by their growth areas. She emphasized that their designated growth areas must function well for residents and accommodate further population growth comfortably.

Ms. Gilgas said that regarding community crossroads, although she was unfamiliar with most of them, she did know White Hall. She said that in White Hall, they had two country stores with gas stations, a Ruritan building available for community events, a post office, a vineyard, and an inn. She noted that White Hall was close to Crozet, which offered expanded services. She said that, regarding Whitehall, she believed no additional commercialization was necessary. She expressed concern that commercializing crossroads in rural areas may have negative consequences.

Ms. Gilgas stated that she agreed that emergency shelters could be valuable in rural areas; however, she thought it would make sense to utilize existing facilities such as schools for this purpose. She said that believed utilizing existing buildings or enhancing old ones for this purpose would be more efficient than constructing new facilities regarding guidelines for new development. She said that since the implementation of the County's Climate Action Plan and Community Resilience Priorities, she wanted to see many highly effective climate strategies recategorized

from encouraged to expected. She said that they needed to reduce their impact and simultaneously restore and support natural solutions to mitigate climate change.

Ms. Gilgas said that instead of stating that site design could consider protection and restoration of the natural environment, she wanted to see site design should protect and restore the natural environment. She said that she wanted to see native plants and an ample number of native trees expected under their new design guidelines, not just encouraged. She said that with any new development, they needed to have highly efficient building standards and distributed energy capabilities across residential and commercial buildings, as well as over parking lots, so that they could reduce the need for large industrial solar installations on agricultural or forested land.

Ms. Putnam stated that she was from the Scottsville District, and she served as the Chair of the Albemarle County Natural Heritage Committee. She said that she resided in the southern part of Albemarle, with her property situated in the middle of the planned Woodridge Solar Project. She said that she had attended a meeting regarding another proposed project off of Secretary's Sand Road, and just last week she drove by the Rivanna Solar project near the intersection of Buck Line Road and Route 53 last week. She said that after witnessing this work in progress, she was convinced about the significant impact of utility-scale solar projects on the land, which resembled a moonscape. She said that she recommended the Commissioners visit it to see for themselves.

Ms. Putnam said that with the growing number of data centers coming to Virginia and their insatiable energy needs, it was more crucial than ever to properly plan and take action to protect rural areas. She said that the push to develop more utility-scale solar installations was just one example of the pressures being placed on rural areas. She said that wineries, glamping facilities, and parking lots for tow trucks all contributed to increased pressure on natural resources due to the creation of more impervious surfaces, traffic, depletion of groundwater, and removal of tree canopies. She said that this was why it was essential to create a rural area plan that took into account the protection of large forest blocks, wildlife corridors, and water resources.

Ms. Putnam said that a strong solar ordinance should be implemented, which prohibited grading and required the restoration of natural landscapes to support biodiversity. She expressed her gratitude to the Planning Commission for their support of a rural area plan. She said that the implementation of this plan was long overdue and could not happen soon enough given the development pressures from all directions. She said that she would like to comment on the draft community design guidelines. She said that she was very pleased to see the numerous significant design features that acknowledged the importance of ecosystem services provided by trees, buffers along streams, and greenways.

Ms. Putnam said that she was encouraged by the commitment to develop areas in the best possible manner rather than expanding them. She said that she had questions regarding why some elements were merely encouraged instead of being expected. She said that for example, they should expect the protection of tree canopies and the implementation of low-impact development best practices. She said that she would like to see the addition of language addressing light pollution with dark sky compliant lighting requirements that mandate the use of fully shielded or low-intensity, low-temperature lighting to minimize light trespass. She said that there should be an expectation that all new developments incorporate solar-ready building design. She said that both of these guidelines would assist them in achieving their climate energy goals.

Kristen Rabourdin stated that she was the current owner of Batesville Market, which had been in operation since 1880. She mentioned that the market had experienced numerous changes

throughout its history, and they were grateful for the County's interest in supporting crossroads communities, not only to preserve these communities but also to provide essential services that would contribute to their growth and vitality. She said that crossroads communities served as important hubs for community members, rather than mere passageways between points A and B.

Ms. Rabourdin said that by engaging their diverse population and offering unique services catering to both the young and aging demographics, they aimed to address the needs of individuals who may not have immediate access to more centrally located resources. She said that in addition to recognizing the importance of crossroads communities, they aimed to ensure traffic control and create safe spaces. She said that this was crucial as Batesville experienced an aging population, and they wanted these areas to be walkable and accessible for all individuals.

Ms. Rabourdin said that addressing safety and accessibility also involved addressing electricity and broadband issues. She said that the lack of reliable electricity and unreliable broadband significantly affected their youth, as demonstrated during the COVID-19 pandemic when many children faced a lack of access regardless of their financial situation. She said that creating a connected crossroads community was highly significant. She said that examining development and zoning regulations tailored to each community based on its specific needs was essential.

Ms. Rabourdin said that each community had unique land usage patterns and requirements, so it was crucial to consider these factors and engage the community members when determining zoning regulations for each crossroad community. She said that they appreciated the support of country stores, which served as important hubs for the community and sometimes the only place nearby where people could meet and gather. She said that to ensure their success, it would be beneficial to explore zoning regulations that were more favorable for country stores.

Mr. Clayborne asked the Clerk if there was anyone online who wished to speak.

Ms. Shaffer said that yes, the speaker was Neil Williamson.

Neil Williamson stated that he was the president of the Free Enterprise Forum, and he appreciated the diligence that the Planning Commission took in preparing the comprehensive plan. He said that the best protection for the rural areas was an adequate development area. He said that it was essential to consider a climate lens and an equity lens when examining development areas. He said that if development areas did not have sufficient space to grow, and rural areas were prevented from growing residentially, additional residents would be pushed into outlying counties.

Mr. Williamson asked how that aligned with their goals for addressing climate issues. He said that he appreciated the conversation about rural areas and crossroads communities. He said that he looked forward to discussing how they could strike a balance between meeting people's needs close to their homes and promoting community in those areas. He acknowledged that achieving this balance would not be easy, and he was eager to engage in further discussions.

## Consent Agenda

Mr. Missel motioned the Planning Commission adopt the consent agenda, which was seconded by Mr. Moore. The motion passed unanimously (7-0).

## Work Session

**a. CPA2021-02 AC44 Land Use and Transportation Recommendations for Implementing the Planning Toolkits**

Ben Holt, Senior Planner II, said that tonight, they would discuss options for implementing the planning toolkits. He said that these toolkits were presented earlier this year, and they had discussed their four main components, so now, they would receive additional information on how to implement those toolkits. Mr. Holt said that the agenda included providing a snapshot of their progress in the AC44 process. He said that they would cover community priorities and the Planning Commission and Board direction received so far for the five topics being presented today.

Mr. Holt said that these topics included the multimodal plan, activity centers approach, draft updated future land use designations, draft community design guidelines (previously referred to as neighborhood model principles), calculating density, and discussing gross versus net density application. He said that the last topic would address rural crossroads communities once more. He said that at the end of the presentation, they would outline the next steps in the process.

Mr. Holt said that the purpose of today's meeting was to gather feedback on implementing these planning toolkits and how they will be incorporated into relevant maps, guidelines, goals, objectives, and action steps for each plan topic. He said that the recommendations aimed to support community priorities and incorporate the feedback received from the Planning Commission and Board thus far. He said that they currently were in phase two of four for the comprehensive plan. He said that in phase one, they distilled the big ideas, established the direction for the plan, and determined the type of community desired. He said that they developed a framework and conducted a review of the growth management policy and a land use build-out analysis.

Mr. Holt said that for phase two, following the Commission's recent assistance in updating the goals and objectives for each plan chapter, they were now delving into the planning toolkits, which involved a coordinated approach to land use and transportation planning. He said that in phase three, commencing early next year, they would update the action steps and prioritize the plan recommendations, referred to as the big moves. He said that these represented the priority implementation measures that they would pursue within the first five years following the plan's adoption.

Mr. Holt said that phase four, scheduled for late 2024, would entail the final comprehensive plan adoption, which would include public hearings with the PC and the Board, allowing the public to share their input as well. He said that the comprehensive plan organization currently consisted of eight chapters, which were displayed on the left of the slide. He said that guidance included in the plan covered multimodal transportation, activity centers, and districts, future land use designations, the future land use plan, and community design guidelines.

Mr. Holt said that in building upon phase two for community priorities within development areas, as summarized in the staff report, key takeaways included increasing housing choice, walkability, public transit, and access to high-quality open or green space. He said that the aim was also to provide safe and comfortable multimodal transportation options, particularly at key destinations such as parks, schools, and employment opportunity areas. He said that greater density or intensity of uses would be prepared with quality open and recreational space while protecting the natural environment.

Mr. Holt said that redevelopment and infill within development areas would be encouraged, ensuring that infrastructure kept pace with growth, especially regarding transportation and schools. He said that community priorities for rural areas may involve small-scale uses such as healthcare facilities, country stores, community centers, and fire rescue stations in some crossroads communities. He said that in the process of engaging with individual communities prior to any land use or zoning changes, they aimed to establish community resilience hubs that offered affordable food access and could be utilized by seniors and youth with related programming.

Mr. Holt said that they intended to provide access to healthcare, emergency shelter, phone, and internet services during emergencies. He said that there was a need for public transit and access to employment areas, which would likely first be implemented by smaller on-demand transit options. He said that they aimed to protect and restore the natural environment, including conservation focus areas identified within the biodiversity action plan. He said that to build upon phase two, the Planning Commission and Board direction focused on updating center locations and place types throughout development areas.

Mr. Holt said that this update aimed to encourage walkable mixed-use development and support existing growth management policy. He said that they would continue to prioritize efficient use of development area land over potential development area expansion. He said that also, rural interstate interchanges will be addressed after the comprehensive plan update, which would involve separate small area plans that would not identify specific land uses.

Mr. Holt stated that the introduction of their first topic in the toolkit concerned multimodal planning and activity centers approaches. He said that the multimodal planning strategy was employed by localities throughout the state and was based on guiding documents from the Virginia Department of Rail and Public Transit (DRPT). He said that the guidelines had been reviewed by VDOT and could enhance coordination for future projects with VDOT. He said that the result of this methodology was a unified land use and transportation plan that demonstrated activity centers, multimodal corridors, and modal emphasis.

Mr. Holt said that a cohesive land use and transportation approach was crucial in offering alternative options to driving, which helped reduce emissions and traffic congestion. He said that this model supported less expensive transportation alternatives, such as walking, biking, and transit. He said that this type of planning provided more focused guidance for future transportation projects and infrastructure. He said that activity centers were locations that currently or would soon house a variety of businesses, services, and residences. He said that these areas served as community gathering points where individuals could shop, walk, stroll around, and visit destinations meeting their daily needs.

Mr. Holt said that development would incorporate a variety of housing types, a mix of uses, multimodal transportation networks, access to trails and parks, and various place-making elements. He said that to identify draft activity centers, they conducted an analysis to estimate the current and future number of people and jobs per acre using housing unit counts, job counts, the land use build-out analysis, and the County's development pipeline. He said that they then compared this analysis with the existing master plans' designated centers.

Mr. Holt said that there were currently 50 centers across the five master plans, many of which were not mixed-use or expected to be mixed-use in the future. He said that this called for an

update. He said that as a result, staff recommended consolidating and updating these centers through the AC44 process to facilitate more focused project and infrastructure planning, including multimodal transportation planning. He said that the attached chart detailed the three different activity center place types, which were neighborhood, town, and destination. He said that the draft center place types would function similarly to those in the Crozet and Pantops master plans, which were most recently updated compared to other master plans.

Mr. Holt said that these would serve as a land use overlay to provide additional guidance on building form, scale, uses, open spaces, and encourage higher intensity or density of development beyond the underlying land use designation. He said that this would be a means to achieve the desired density within development areas. He said that all center place types were expected to be mixed-use and walkable, although they may differ in form and scale. He said that for example, a neighborhood was recommended at two to four stories, a town center at two to six stories, and a destination at three to eight stories. He said that the scale of recommended public and civic open spaces also increased as they moved up the center place types hierarchy.

Mr. Holt said that this brought them to an example in comparing current centers with updated centers. He said that an example was reducing and consolidating the number of designated centers, such as in the Places 29 master plan, where there were currently 12 centers designated in the Places 29 area below the Rivanna River, including Stonefield and several centers along Hydraulic, Route 29, and Rio Road East. He said that with these new draft activity centers, they now presented three total centers within the Places 29 South Small Area Plan. He said that they had developed a more focused, consolidated approach that could help guide future development and redevelopment, as well as possible infrastructure improvements and public-private partnerships.

Mr. Holt said that the multimodal plan demonstrated a modal emphasis, and part of this multimodal process involved identifying the modal emphases for streets within the development areas. He said that they had identified where certain modes and related infrastructure should be prioritized, such as key parts of a bike network or a transit route. He said that to identify these priorities, they began by reviewing existing conditions and future recommended projects. He said that this included utilizing data on existing infrastructure like sidewalks, shared use paths, bike lanes, and reviewing the master plans alongside local and regional plans for recommended future projects.

Mr. Holt said that the modal emphasis maps prioritized optimal standards for the mode being emphasized, though all streets should accommodate all modes. He said that the modal emphasis mapping did not preclude additional transportation projects or infrastructure. He said that for instance, even if a street was not designated as a bike modal emphasis, it could still be a suitable candidate for a bike lane in the future. He said that the modal emphasis maps highlighted the primary or spine network for biking and transit. He said that achieving these multimodal networks would take place over several years or even decades with combined efforts from both public and private sectors.

Mr. Holt said that modal emphasis and activity center maps were provided for each development area. He said that they had draft versions for each master plan area, which they would continue to refine based on input. He said that the intention was to build a multimodal network that connected centers, parks, and schools. He said that all streets in the development areas had been identified as pedestrian emphasis, and walkability was expected throughout these areas. He said that the bicycle emphasis, shown in green, was identified based on major connections

required between and through centers, as well as other significant locations such as parks and schools.

Mr. Holt said that the transit emphasis, shown in red, was identified through existing transit routes and the unconstrained version in the regional transit vision plan, as well as the Charlottesville area. He said that the modal networks within the comprehensive plan would serve as a basis for targeting future investments in bicycle, pedestrian, and transit facilities. He said that in the future master plan updates for the County's development areas, the multimodal system elements can also be refined in greater detail. He said that regarding the center/modal emphasis maps, although staff would not spend a lot of time on each one during this presentation, they would be happy to revisit these slides once the feedback session begins. He said that the first map presented was Crozet, which featured four centers. He said that Pantops followed with three centers.

Mr. Holt noted that the Places 29 South area had been consolidated into three centers, with two very large ones situated along either side of Route 29. He said that unlike others, these centers did not form neat geometric circles; instead, they had been adapted in shape to accommodate the underlying land use conditions and future land use plans. He said that Places 29 North contained five centers, with the largest being adjacent to Route 29. He said that moving to the southern and western neighborhoods, their first map focused on the western area where there were two centers. He said that one was adjacent to 64 and one was in the southern area of the southwest model. He said there was also the Village of Rivanna, primarily residential with one designated center situated in the northern portion of Village of Rivanna.

Mr. Holt said that for the Community Advisory Committee (CAC) input acquired on these modal maps, they held meetings with all CACs except for Pantops, which had been rescheduled for January due to quorum. He said that they sought input regarding preferred travel methods within their CAC area, desired transportation modes, any major bike or transit emphases that might be missing, and additional destinations they would like to be able to walk or bike to. He said that a summary of the input was displayed in the slide.

Mr. Holt said that in summary, feedback indicated that all bike emphases should also cater to pedestrian needs, a desire for connections to schools for walking and biking, considering scooters and e-bikes as part of multimodal transportation, and establishing bike modal connections to nearby rural area destinations. He said that they would also like to identify park and ride facilities for transit modal emphasis, better connectivity between parks and trails. He said that significant barriers included high-speed roads such as Route 29 and I-64, which did not accommodate bike and pedestrian movement. He said that the bike infrastructure needed to be separated from vehicles for safety purposes.

Mr. Holt said that there were also some additional centers suggested for Places 29, including the north of the Rio 29 Small Area Plan below the river. He said that there was overall support for consolidating the number of total centers. He said that this led them to the feedback portion, and they wanted to hear from attendees any feedback on the location and types of activity centers. He said that they also sought input on whether any of the activity centers seemed out of place or missing. He said that also they must find if there were other important destinations that were not connected and if major bicycle or transit modal emphasis appeared to be missing.

Mr. Murray said that in examining bicycle and pedestrian transit, he would like to know if they had analyzed existing data regarding where people currently bike, walk, and run. He said that he

would like to see corresponding maps illustrating current biking, walking, and running locations in their presentation. He said that he appreciated the public comments addressing connections to rural areas. He said that when discussing a rural area plan, which he hoped they would, it was essential to consider rural multimodal travel as well.

Mr. Murray said that for instance, a popular through Crozet served as a national bike route and an important connector. He said that there was also the Three Notch'd Trail and other things talked about with community planning, as well as connections to Shenandoah National Park. He said that they should not only focus on growth areas but also consider their relationship with rural areas in the larger context.

Mr. Missel said that he had a question for clarity regarding the multimodal systems planning and activity centers. He said that activity centers were identified based on jobs and people per acre across development areas, and this resulted in a heat map. He asked whether they had reviewed this heat map.

Mr. Holt said that they had shown it in the initial drafts. He said that it was a traditional heat map featuring a gradation of yellow, orange, and red, used to identify where the centers would be placed. He said that the current versions of the map aimed to show more underlying conditions, such as land use and transportation networks, so the heat maps would have been too busy. He said they could follow up and provide details on which work sessions these heat maps were shared.

Mr. Missel said that he was primarily concerned with the center maps. He asked if the development pipeline data was used to identify these areas, referred to as activity centers. He said that it stated that projects that had been approved or were currently under review were also employed. He said that his question was regarding the scope of future adaptability; essentially, if they could expand upon these activity centers in the future. He said that their current focus was on capturing a snapshot based on existing knowledge and projected near-term developments. He said that he was curious if there were any long-term strategies that could assist them in planning for additional activity centers.

Ms. Kanellopoulos said that the development pipeline would include projects that had been approved and were currently under review, which identified projects that were moving forward. She said that in addition to this, staff utilized land use build-out analysis and underlying land use designations to capture properties that were not yet part of the pipeline but may be considered for future development.

Mr. Carrazana said that the overarching priorities emphasized ensuring that infrastructure kept pace with growth. He said that it was mentioned in various sections of the report. He said that his question regarding moving forward was how they expected to achieve this goal. He asked about the tools and mechanisms being considered for implementation to ensure that infrastructure keeps pace with growth.

Mr. Holt said that he believed it began with emphasizing modalities. He said that they must ensure that the public understood their intentions regarding a transportation network and clearly communicate this information to the development community. He said that by collaborating, they could achieve the desired networks together. He said that transportation was the most significant infrastructure concern for people, followed by schools.

Ms. Kanellopoulos said that the multimodal plan activity centers indeed assisted in guiding new development applications submitted and outlining what was expected from them. She said that these centers could be employed to prioritize future transportation projects and determine their optimal locations. She said that they anticipated that having fewer overall centers would contribute to this prioritization process as well.

Mr. Carrazana said that he believed that all of this information was clear, but he did not see much regarding capital improvement plans and how funding was integrated into it. He said that their points were important. He said that by focusing on fewer centers and specific areas with limited resources, they must determine where to allocate them in order to maintain their effectiveness. He said that coordinating land use with transportation, as suggested, was crucial for achieving this goal. He emphasized keeping this concept at the forefront of their decision-making process as they proceed further. He said that this would enable them to develop actionable steps toward implementing these strategies effectively.

Mr. Missel said that he would like to elaborate on one point made by Mr. Holt, and he completely agreed. He said that Mr. Holt mentioned working with the development community to ensure they understand where these initiatives are heading. He added that it was not solely about the development community influencing this process, but also collaborating with capital improvement plans, RWSA, transit authorities, and other relevant entities was necessary to distribute the burden more evenly among all parties involved.

Mr. Clayborne said that in the discussion phase, it was essential to address the agenda items presented. He mentioned that there were three questions for consideration. He said that they could discuss each question, providing additional guidance to frame their thoughts. He said that historically, they had approached this topic in three elements: identifying one positive aspect, exploring areas for further investigation within these three questions, and addressing any missing aspects that required further attention. He said that as they proceeded, he asked them to consider these factors as they went around the table.

Mr. Moore said that regarding considering other location options or types of activity centers, he was looking at the Rio 29 area, specifically the south side which was largely contiguous with his district. He asked why there were destination designations for the Stonefield shopping area and on the other side of 29, but none on either side of the highway north of the Rio Small Area Plan, despite significant development between 29 and Berkmar on both sides. He said that this disconnection raised questions for him about the reasons behind these designations. He said that otherwise, things did seem connected in terms of bicycle and pedestrian modal networks, as well as the recommendations from the CACs.

Mr. Moore mentioned that attempting to cross 250, attempting to cross Rio, and attempting to cross 29 in any form or fashion was simply challenging. He said that this was a very difficult task. He said that even just trying to go across, where they now had crosswalks or bike lanes, they were not actually safe despite their presence. He said that individuals he knew intentionally crossed 29, not at a designated crossing point, because it was safer than crossing a turning lane where people may not be looking. He said that it was encouraging to see the blue lines indicating crossings over 250 and Rio; however, they must address how to achieve these improvements.

Mr. Murray said that examining the map, he saw that Eastern Avenue was still present despite receiving several comments questioning its feasibility. He said that there needed to be a thorough

reassessment of Eastern Avenue's role and feasibility. He said that in light of this situation, it may be necessary to make some adjustments if construction did not commence soon.

Ms. Firehock said that she did not have a specific location per se, but she would like to have some emphasis present about promoting bike commuting as an alternative to traditional road cycling. She emphasized the need for focusing on off-road bike commuting options rather than just bike lanes on roads. She said that an example was Lynchburg, where a trail network with shared bikes led to increased bike commuting due to better connectivity between parks and downtown areas. She said that they were very surprised, but the citizens said that they had never been asked whether they wanted to bike in order to commute to work, but lots of them did.

Ms. Firehock said that they had the parkway, but she suggested being more creative in exploring alternative opportunities for bike commuting. She said that her specific comment was related to the destination center for P4 in the Samuel Miller district. She said that this location, situated south of where 29 and 64 intersected and up a steep hill behind rock formations, had been used as a distribution center for beer and other things. She said that numerous discussions had taken place regarding how to connect this site, considering various options such as tunnels and bridges for pedestrians, cyclists, and others.

Ms. Firehock said that no single feasible solution had been proposed or considered by the most creative individuals thus far. She said that she did not envision it functioning as a destination center where people would live or adopt the walkable neighborhood model. She said that perhaps one could drive their car near it and walk around in the area, but they could not easily enter or exit it due to its design. She said that she did not believe it was appropriate to consider that location as an official destination center intended for various uses, such as residential and commercial purposes.

Ms. Firehock said that despite VDOT's efforts to improve traffic flow with turn lanes for trucks and a traffic light, the area remained challenging. She said that she commuted through it daily. She said that the current designation of this location as a multi-use center was not suitable, given its complex layout and proximity to existing developed commercial areas. She said that she appreciated the concept of consolidating centers and eliminating confusion in urban planning. She said that she was looking forward to the future development of more thoughtfully designed central locations.

Mr. Missel said that first, regarding the location and type of activity centers, he believed they were generally well-identified. He said that however, he recommended considering the edge conditions around the boundaries that they had drawn for each center. He said that there may be instances where these edges became more arbitrary as they approached them, and it was essential to think about whether these edges were hard and fast boundaries or more transitional in nature. He said that they should consider how to address potential oversights in the future regarding the activity centers. He asked if there was a logical way to add that in. He asked if there were other important destinations that were not connected.

Mr. Missel said that last Thursday, several of them heard concerns regarding connections across major roadways during the Fifth and Avon Street CAC meeting and also in the public comments. He said that addressing these connections was important and finding ways to improve them. He asked if they were going to cross Avon Street over the top of 64, and if there was enough width to plan for bike lanes or if there were creative ways to think through that. He said that regarding resonates explanation and addressing missing comments suggested by their chair, refining these

designations was great and much simpler. He said that they promoted density and infill, which was a good thing.

Mr. Missel said that he thought the categories on the left side of the types were all very logical. He said that he had a few minor concerns along there. He said that one that stood out to him was how they were dealing with residential under the draft district types. He said that thinking through an affordable housing lens, he suggested considering how those might be included in those and it may not be their right place for it, but just to think through that. He said that he thought it was important to consider the need for more explanation, as well as re-echoing the capital investment needs and looking at those in parallel with this.

Mr. Missel said that he also believed that utilizing existing partnerships, such as those with the City of Charlottesville, mountain biking groups, trails organizations, and others, could be beneficial. He said that they must determine if this provided clarity for the development community and how they were expected to use these if they belonged to that community. He asked whether it would result in additional investments and if there were ways to incentivize some of these objectives. He said that lastly, he wanted to mention that the maps might be a bit challenging to read.

Mr. Holt said that he believed that some of these issues might be related to scale. He said that when they presented this information to the CACs, they used a large 24-by-36 poster. He said that having such materials made it easier for people to understand the content. He said that he hoped that when they viewed the PDFs online in their packets, they were clear enough. He said that if not, staff could follow up and share some larger-sized documents with them.

Mr. Carrazana said that the density and infill opportunities presented in the discussion significantly contributed to their efforts and simplified the areas. He said that he commended staff for this approach. He said that he found the logic behind the development of these areas sound. He said that regarding the difficulty in reading the maps, he suggested maintaining consistency in the information provided. He said that some maps included street names while others did not, which might result from varying scales due to different areas.

Mr. Carrazana said that if there was continuity and additional features such as landmarks were incorporated, it would enhance readability. He said that concerning areas that might be missing or required improvement, he wanted to discuss a few points. Mr. Carrazana said that as Mr. Moore mentioned, he was uncertain about the logic of where the centers stopped and started in certain areas of the Route 29 corridor. He said that it seemed there was no identified area from Rio 29 to Sam's Club, despite significant activity and potential for infill development and densification. He said that he was curious as to why this was not included or if they could review it further.

Mr. Carrazana said that the Fontaine Research Park, which was mentioned by one of the speakers at the beginning, was not identified. He said that this area was currently being developed by the university and involved P3 partnerships and initiatives. He said that it fell within the southwest district or area. He said that considering that as a center, he would encourage them to examine this area thoroughly because there was so much happening there, not only in this specific region but also the surrounding areas would be affected. He said that he agreed with Ms. Firehock regarding not always having the major modes of transportation: bikes, vehicles, and transit, in the same location. He said that they had discussed other models that separated these modes. He said that sometimes it might be easier to create a completely different path, taking advantage of green spaces, to establish bike lanes and transit paths.

Mr. Bivins said that there were a few aspects that continued to puzzle him. He said that the work done by staff was honorable and in the right direction, but he must emphasize the importance of addressing what are were doing to retroactively incorporate sidewalks and bike paths into areas with high population density that are not new developments. He said that he had mentioned this privately to several people, but it was worth noting that most bicycle shops in the area were located outside their County, except for Dick's and one relocated shop near the Target area as well.

Mr. Bivins said that the majority of bike centers in the community catered to university students, as expected in a university setting. He said that individuals who did not work at the University of Virginia may face challenges in finding suitable facilities to change out of their sporty Lycra attire before going to work. He said that those who were employed by the university could attest to having access to showers within the men's room. He said that for non-university employees, commuting to service area jobs or regular office jobs via bicycle may not be an easily achievable option.

Mr. Bivins said that the cost of electric bikes was a significant concern as well, with prices starting at around $3,000. He said that his primary concerns revolved around improving public transportation and enhancing sidewalk infrastructure to ensure safety and prevent accidents on busy roads like 29. He said that they must find a way to either go over or under 29, which was an expensive and often challenging issue. He said that VDOT, during the Smart Scale process, typically preferred not to consider going over or under Route 29.

Mr. Bivins said that when examining their financial resources and what they could control, he aimed to improve mass transit in this area. He said that they did not own the mass transit organization, which was CAT. He said that he believed there was a regional transportation system coming soon. He said that he wanted to hear more about the regional transportation network and how their County could leverage mass transportation for their residents. He said that this included addressing sidewalks and retrofitting areas that lack them due to their initial development not anticipating such density.

Mr. Bivins said that in the proposed activity centers and core areas, he would love to believe that people in the County should be able to walk 20 minutes. He said that he thought this goal should be adjusted as he did not believe most people in urban areas consistently walked for 20 minutes unless they were students attending Albemarle High School and lived within a mile of the school. He said that 20 minutes was too ambitious. He said that the other point he wanted to make was that they were still in their form and site design guidance.

Mr. Bivins said that they continued to promote a single-family, low-height community, which contrasted with utilizing the density found in only 5% of the County. He said that in their form and site design guidance, they stated that neighborhood centers would have two to four stories, while town centers may range from two to four stories up to six. He said that he would prefer if they simply said two to six stories. He said that regarding destination centers, he would ask if the Rio Small Area Plan was considered a destination center.

Ms. Kanellopoulos said that that was done as a separate small area plan, and it would be guided by the land use recommendations and the form-based code that had been adopted. She said that the form-based code permitted up to seven stories in the core when utilizing bonus height.

Mr. Bivins said that he would suggest that since it was a form, they were excited about that they elevate it and declare it as the form. He said that if they were able to do it in the Rio 29 Small Area Plan, they should be able to set a maximum of seven or eight stories there. Mr. Bivins said that regarding the draft district types, he was struggling with the concept of an employment district since many members had expressed support for live-work environments. He said that in the employment district, there was no provision for residential living unless a special use permit was obtained. He said that if they were truly committed to this idea, they should explore ways to incorporate housing into that area.

Mr. Bivins said that he also wanted to see them include all public school land and institutions within the plan designated as institutional land use. He said that the big Roslyn farm area was once considered rural, with a significant farm owned by Mrs. Alton Jones covering over 200 acres. He said that now, it had since been divided into smaller five-acre lots. He said that considering this transformation, if they could rethink the placement of schools and place them in more suitable zones, it would be beneficial. He said that under the employment district, if live-work was possible, they should explore the option of allowing up to six stories as a maximum height for buildings.

Mr. Bivins said that this would align with their vision of combining living and working spaces. He said that he would like to address another matter by returning to the maps for a moment. He said that he was struck by the densely populated area, specifically 29 South, where there was a small amount of green space, which was the Charlotte Humphris Park, which was not a traditional park but rather an urban wooded area. He said that on the other side, there was little or no owned green space. He said that he had repeatedly expressed his desire for the County to purchase the green lot at Stonefield and preserve it as a natural area.

Mr. Bivins said that he would once again request that the County consider purchasing this green parcel of land. He said that this area could provide an accessible location for people to gather and enjoy the outdoors. He said that unlike other areas, this one did not have a permanently set aside green space. He said that by focusing on enhancing community spaces, they could improve the overall quality of life in the area. He said that by thinking about what they already had, they could utilize these ideas and existing places to benefit the community today. He said that they should challenge the Supervisors with identifying how to apply these theories into these particular districts identified here.

Mr. Bivins said that they received a significant amount of land designated as open space, so they should take the opportunity to buy a piece of land for a park and other purposes. He said that even in Pantops, it would be difficult for children to get to Darden Towe Park across the street. He said he was sick of tot lots, and finding space that could be multi-generational was also something that must be considered when discussing neighborhood centers.

Ms. Firehock said that she would briefly add to Mr. Bivins' point. She said that it was true that purchasing land and creating parks could be expensive. She said that however, property values around these green spaces would significantly increase, making the investment worthwhile. She said that parks provided space for events such as craft fairs and other local events which could attract more people. She said that they offered more than just a place to throw a frisbee with a dog. She reiterated that if they examined the real estate values of having parks in urban areas, if they were going to encourage people to live in the urban ring, they should not promote infill and only provide plazas, which are hot due to impervious surface and lack of vegetation.

Mr. Bivins said that he knew they had to have hard lines drawn around the development area but encouraged considering at some point having softer boundaries around certain districts instead of solely focusing on the development areas. He said that this would provide flexibility, especially if the County agreed to partner with a developer to create the desired housing in specific locations.

Mr. Clayborne said that he would encourage the group to consider topics at a macro level, such as climate change. He said that it was essential to take into account that each summer became hotter, which raised questions about who would be using these paths when the heat index reaches 115. He said that regarding the comment about walking for 20 minutes, he expressed curiosity about what public health data said for their area. He asked if this information helped them determine infrastructure and where to place some of these paths.

Mr. Clayborne said that he would also request that they continued to assess the feasibility of the lines drawn on the paper in terms of inviting people to use their spaces as intended. He said that for example, when looking at the Pantops map, he questioned the effectiveness of a pedestrian emphasis along Richmond Road due to his personal experiences walking it frequently. He said that it did not feel safe with cars zipping by at 50 miles per hour down that hill. He said that the feasibility behind some aspects required further consideration.

Mr. Clayborne said that Olympia Drive in the Pantops area was suitable for cycling due to its proximity to Marcos Pizza, a smoothie shop, as well as numerous neighborhoods nearby. He said that regarding borders, he noted that one colleague had expressed concerns earlier about Richmond Road crossing into Charlottesville. He said that the map showed an arrow at this point, and it would be helpful to include a narrative clarifying that coordination with the City had been established to ensure that people were not left stranded in unfamiliar locations.

Mr. Holt said that he would like to note that they aimed for a 20-minute session for each topic feedback. He asked the Commissioners to try to hold it within this general time frame. He said that moving on to drafting future land use designations across the five master plans, he would point out that many of these designations had similar but different names and recommendations, particularly regarding form and scale. He said that for instance, the neighborhood density residential was found in every master plan; however, some building footprint square footage recommendations varied.

Mr. Holt said that in most master plans, it was 5,000 square feet, whereas for southern and western neighborhoods, it was 3,000 square feet. He said that the current comprehensive plan recommended having a consistent set of land use designations across the master plans. He said that this approach would also be in alignment with the County's current housing policy, which recommended removing barriers to affordable and workforce housing through comprehensive plan updates, including reviewing all land use designations.

Mr. Holt said that having an updated and standardized set of land use designations made this type of review much more feasible, including for future conference and plan updates. He said that the current plan recommended that the text in the master plans could highlight any additional considerations for specific areas. He said that to update and consolidate these land use designations, the AC44 teams started with the existing land use designations in the Crozet and Pantops master plans, as these plans were updated most recently using best practices.

Mr. Holt said that they consolidated similar land use designations and land use designations that had the same name but slightly different recommendations. He said that many of the consolidated

land use designations were within the mixed-use designations, and after receiving community, Commission, and Board input on the draft land use designations in phase two, the draft land use designations would be applied to a future land use map during phase three using a one-to-one matching approach. He said that for example, properties designated as neighborhood density residential would remain as neighborhood residential.

Mr. Holt said that more significant changes to land use, such as those from residential to employment or industrial, would likely be implemented through future master plan updates. He said that some adjustments may be made during the AC44 process to reflect existing developments, such as redesignating a parcel for residential instead of industrial if there is an existing apartment building or to reflect the intended future use of County-owned properties. He said that a summary of these changes included a slight increase in the recommended maximum density for neighborhood residential low, increases to the low end of recommended densities for urban residential, and all land use designations now having a recommended density range, which some previously did not specify.

Mr. Holt said that additionally, there was an increase in the recommended maximum building height and square footage for some non-residential uses. He said that there was also more focus on form and scale guidance for mixed-use development instead of focusing solely on building footprints. He said that building footprint recommendations were included in primary residential designations, while block length is used to guide mixed-use developments and break up longer blocks, resulting in areas that are more walkable and created a better pedestrian experience.

Mr. Holt said that once again, similar to the presentation of maps, they would progress through these slides quickly, and if they would like to revisit them, please let him know during the feedback portion at the end of this section. He said that the current slide demonstrated residential designations, ranging from neighborhood low to neighborhood residential, then middle residential, and urban residential, which increased in density.

Mr. Holt said that the following slide showcased mixed-use designations, including neighborhood mixed use, community mixed use, commercial mixed use, downtown mixed use, and urban mixed use. He said that the next slide encompassed employment and industrial uses, as well as institutional public land and green systems. He said that that the questions to consider for this topic were if the Commission had any initial feedback regarding the draft land use designations, and if the Commission supported having the AC44 team develop an updated future land use plan for community input during phase three using these designations.

Mr. Moore said that he had a clarifying question regarding the current zoning map. He said that specifically, he wanted to understand if R1 and R2 designations corresponded with neighborhood residential zones. He asked for an explanation of how these classifications related.

Ms. Kanellopoulos said that they did not exactly correspond. She said that they had some similarities in terms of density from a standpoint, but she emphasized that there was not a straightforward method for matching up the zoning districts and land use designations.

Mr. Missel said that he had a general question regarding the missing middle residential primary uses. He said that the text discussed a density bonus for added affordable housing, and there were other examples throughout this. He asked how this would be administered. He asked if there was any formula or thoughts on how this might be administered.

Ms. Kanellopoulos said that they could incorporate this concept into the future materials as well. She said that currently, it was only mentioned in the Crozet master plan, specifically in the appendix section. She said that the plan outlined a few scenarios demonstrating how it would be administered. She said that it aimed to function as a density bonus by exceeding the provision of missing middle housing types, which could lead to achieving 18 units per acre instead of 12 units per acre. She said that it may apply affordable housing beyond the recommendations set forth in the housing policy.

Mr. Missel asked if an example would be if part of the administration would involve examining the carrying capacity of the land. He said that if the land was being overstressed or did not fit appropriately within the community, this would serve as a check or constraint against it.

Ms. Kanellopoulos said that for any rezoning, the evaluation of the impacts on public infrastructure and facilities would certainly be conducted.

Mr. Bivins said that he would suggest considering alternative terms for "neighborhood residential low" and "neighborhood residential." He said that these terms may lead to confusion and it was advisable to have distinct terminology for each. He noted that "low" might not work well since the differences across these categories were not significant. He said that when examining land use designations, he observed that their community remained predominantly low-density until reaching missing middle and urban residential, which only slightly increased density. He said that if there was no desire to increase beyond the 5% of county land designated for the development area, it would be beneficial to have clearer terminology for these categories.

Mr. Bivins said that if there was not going to be anything beyond the 5% solution, then there were two things to consider. He said that he thought they could be more efficient in their land use with an increase in density with the hope of preserving land around any project. He said that if they stayed true or continued to build low-rise structures that took up as much land as possible, he believed that is what would push people toward filling up a lot instead of providing them an easier way to add height in appropriate places. He said that builders could inform them about the maximum height for a wooden structure before it needed to be replaced with a steel building.

Mr. Holt said that he believed the standard was four stories.

Mr. Bivins said that if they maintained four-story buildings in a 5% solution, they would simply have what they currently had. He said that they needed to figure this out and be bold enough to say that if it was the 5% solution, they should explore ways to increase density so that they could provide more green space around some of these communities. He said that in terms of building types and forms, he would like to know where modular homes, not manufactured homes, come into play.

Mr. Bivins said that he wanted to explore the possibility of constructing a modular home in Texas and subsequently having it transported to his location in Albemarle County. He said that he did not think that was easily achievable today. He said that if they were to consider how to drive down the cost of building, they must be flexible regarding construction methods while ensuring safety measures were maintained.

Mr. Carrazana said that going back to the topic of density, he believed that there were opportunities for densification and that some other steps would be taken or conversations held to address the point about how to use land and how to densify it. He said that there was a lot of

progress being made toward increased density and infill. He said that he would discuss the incentives for affordable housing. He said that his only concern was that if they densified without maintaining the incentive, they might end up with too much density without the necessary support.

Mr. Carrazana said that they may provide the incentives, but they were not fully realized. He said that this might relate to Mr. Missel's question regarding how this program was administered and how they could maximize these incentives to prevent the loss of affordable housing that was not being realized, causing it to no longer be considered as affordable housing. He said that this factor should be considered when evaluating these incentives.

Mr. Missel said that in the primary use column, urban residential discussed a density range of 12 to 34 units per acre, religious assembly, and other uses. He said that however, it did not mention anything about missing middle residential or affordable housing accommodations. He said that it was worth considering whether such an addition would be appropriate in this category. He said that the secondary use category for urban residential appeared quite limited.

Mr. Missel said that staff may want to review it and explore potential alternative secondary uses. He said that at one point that they were cumulative, as if they were simply building on each other; however, they were also repeated in other columns, so he did not think that was the case. He said that he examined the bottom section under prioritized design principles, and there was no mention of transportation. He said that if a development opportunity being considered fell under those principles, transportation should be part of residential iterations for neighborhood mixed use and community mixed use.

Mr. Missel said that regarding mixed use, under primary uses, neighborhood mixed use had overlaps with residential up to a density of 18 units, while community mixed use stated 634 units. He said that there seemed to be overlap there and it was confusing. He said that when considering mixed-use developments, industrial institutional parks, and open space, he assumed that economic development would play a significant role. He said that explore this further, he suggested having a conversation with economic development professionals to identify potential ways to enhance or strengthen these aspects.

Mr. Missel said that regarding the mixed-use component, especially in urban and downtown settings, he thought it would be beneficial to incorporate contextual sensitivity and awareness into height recommendations. He said that this would ensure that buildings were not just placed without considering their surroundings but rather fit harmoniously within their respective environments. He said that lastly, he wanted to mention the possibility of incorporating ARB design guidelines and entrance corridors as part of this discussion.

Ms. Firehock said that considering incentives, initiatives such as providing parking variances near public transportation locations, could help discourage the use of surface lots and promote more sustainable development options. She said that she was somewhat perplexed by the distinctions between various mixed-use concepts, including neighborhood mixed-use, community mixed-use, commercial mixed-use, downtown mixed-use, and urban mixed-use. She said that upon examining each category, she found that sometimes there was a subtle difference, while other times they appeared indistinguishable.

Ms. Firehock said that if she were a developer considering these options, she would be even more confused than she currently was. She said that she would suggest finding if it was possible to consolidate mixed-use into just three categories. She said that she firmly believed that mixed-

use development was beneficial but found it challenging to determine the optimal placement and rationale for each component in various areas of the County. She said that consequently, she could not make a definitive decision regarding their locations. She asked if they could kindly consider addressing this matter so she could simplify their task. She said that they aimed to avoid incorporating an excessive number of diverse mixed-use types.

Ms. Firehock said that in the urban ring of Albemarle County, she would like to do what they did in the Pearl District in Oregon. She said that one could reside in an apartment building where one could take the elevator down to the first floor, and upon the elevator door opening, step directly into a grocery store. She said that these buildings offered affordable housing options, including large-scale, cost-effective high rises. She said that affordability was seamlessly integrated with market rate properties in this area, which boasted exceptional public transportation. She said that there was no excessive parking demand, as people did not require personal vehicles. She said she would like to see more of these features implemented. She said she would refrain from commenting on the affordability aspect.

Ms. Firehock said that she must credit Mr. Bivins for introducing the concept of modular housing. She said that in older thinking, people might perceive modular housing as similar to the unsightly double-wide trailers, which were poorly constructed and energy inefficient. She said that modern modular housing designs offered flexibility, allowing for units to be adapted as families grew or changed. She said that this adaptability was akin to playing with Legos. She said that she was uncertain about the feasibility of tiny house communities due to various logistical challenges. She said that they had talked about it romantically over the past few years and were excited about the possibility, but she did not see where it would go. She said that she would like to see those types of communities; it would be beneficial for more people to consider smaller living spaces given the increasing costs associated with heating and maintaining larger homes.

Mr. Murray said that in terms of stories, he would suggest increasing the height to accommodate more urban areas. He mentioned that one comment stated that if they truly utilized their growth area, they needed to have more urban settings. He said that he was unsure about where was downtown. He said that he recommended focusing on higher buildings. He said that he believed that minimizing the neighborhood residential low category would be beneficial for their growth area. He said that in terms of secondary uses, no area should disallow mixed-use development. He said that at a neighborhood scale, commercial uses such as cafes could serve the local community in any area.

Mr. Moore said that he mostly agreed with everything previously stated, especially regarding the cost of living and housing. He said that as they considered options, one approach was density. He said that they had a limited number of strategies available for addressing these issues. He said that the County may either expand the development area, which is a contentious topic for some people, or significantly upzone large swaths of neighborhood residential areas, including low-density ones. He said that he did not understand why they needed to be separate categories; instead, it would create more missing middle potential.

Mr. Moore said that most of the residential areas east of 29 were in the low-density residential category. He said that they were not going to be able to achieve much in terms of infill or redevelopment if that situation remained unchanged. They said that the third option, if they did neither of those things, was that every home would increase in value by at least half a million dollars. He said that every home would see an increase of half a million dollars or more as the

base rate. He said that through actions or inactions, one of those three options or possibly two of them must be considered, and changes must take place.

Mr. Murray said that these were urban land use designations. He said that when they reached the rural areas chapter, he hoped they would also consider land use designations for rural areas because he believed this was important. He said that he had mentioned the need for an agricultural support industry category, which he saw as distinct from light industrial. He said that additional categories were required as well; thus, he hoped that these land use designations would not be limited to those for the growth area but extended beyond it.

Mr. Clayborne said that Mr. Murray had made a great point, and he had a similar comment. He said that he had considered wineries and their potential impact, as they had just won some accolades in tourism. He said that they should ensure they were in the mindset of thinking about the land use when they reached the rural areas.

Mr. Holt said that they were moving on to draft community design guidelines. He said that these guidelines were based on the neighborhood model principle in the existing comprehensive plan. He said that the recommendations were detailed within 36 pages of the comprehensive plan plus the appendix. He said that the goal was to consolidate and update this guidance. He stated that the guidelines would still be utilized for rezoning and special use permit reviews, supporting redevelopment and infill while using development area land efficiently.

Mr. Holt said that it encouraged development in the development area to be higher density, walkable, mixed-use, and include multimodal transportation options as well as open space and parks. He said that the neighborhood model principles had been consolidated into four guideline categories, which were detailed on the following slide. He said that they also had an example of how it was currently reviewed within the staff report. He said that the current12 principles tended to make these reviews more lengthy with a lot of overlap between the principles.

Mr. Holt said that the four categories of the guidelines now included expected elements and encouraged elements. He said that these distinctions had been drawn between the two, with expected elements provided through new development or redevelopment. He said that possible exceptions were noted, such as development that only had one type of use but contributed to a mix of uses in adjacent areas. He said that their best practices supported previous feedback from the Commission and served as a reference for developers.

Mr. Holt said that the categories included land use, transportation with a multimodal emphasis, site design, which had suggestions for form and built environments, and guidance for parks and recreation amenities and open space, which they would like to see better dispersed throughout development areas, particularly within and adjacent to activity centers. He said that this brought him to the next point of feedback, which was a field notes exercise they created. He said that this activity aimed to provide participants with an opportunity to think like a planner and visit and explore locations in the County to offer feedback on what made it a great place and to spend some time considering how it could be improved in the future.

Mr. Holt said that staff received nine total submissions for an evaluation of various centers within the development area, which included Stonefield, Hollymead Center, Fifth Street Station, Southside, Riverside Village, Pantops, Hillsdale South, and Rivanna Village. He said that these submissions generally involved two or more participants working together to make these observations. He said that in addition to the development areas, they had two submissions for

crossroads communities and one for the Rivanna River Greenway. He said that it was a group of high school students led by Serena Gruia from CAPE who provided some feedback.

Mr. Holt said that they heard requests for more mixed-use developments, integrating housing and commercial activity, improved and safer pedestrian facilities, and better connectivity. He said that another significant piece of feedback involved enhancing bike facilities, particularly focusing on improved parking and bike racks within destination areas, shopping centers, and other similar locations. He said that some notes suggested that the parking should be moved to the perimeter of activity centers instead of located in the middle. He said that it was mentioned that in certain areas, this arrangement disrupted the flow of neighborhood design or center design.

Mr. Holt said that the community also desired more transit stops with pedestrian connections, increased green spaces, gathering areas, public art, outdoor seating, larger shade trees, traffic calming measures such as speed bumps and tables, better crosswalks, and a desire to showcase historic and cultural resources. He asked if the Commission had any initial feedback regarding these community design guidelines and whether the draft guidelines supported the priorities identified for development areas, which included mixed-use developments, housing choice, multimodal transportation, and open space or parks.

Mr. Moore said that his initial feedback would be positive. He said that the expected elements in site design and land use appeared to align with other aspects of the discussion. He mentioned that one point others might also highlight was the hard boundary distinction between development areas and rural areas. He said that suggestions had been made to potentially expand the development area in a more graduated manner. He said that he would not want to reduce density potential within existing development areas, but it could be peculiar at times when driving along and transitioning from a four-story apartment building to fields.

Ms. Firehock said that Mr. Murray had mentioned her main point, which was to have complete green streets. She said that since they had been focusing on retrofitting, the approach allowed them to incorporate stormwater management by creating underground cells with the planting of a large shade trees and retrofit a stormwater storage facility that watered the tree, reduced flooding, and cleaned stormwater. She said that notable examples of this practice existed. She said that grants were currently available through the Infrastructure Act, enabling numerous cities to retrofit their streets in a similar manner. She said that they should pay close attention to these initiatives. She said that she would like to see local photographs instead of relying solely on examples from other locations for inspiration.

Mr. Missel said that at the bottom of page 7, it stated that the revised community design guidelines would be implemented through the same process as the current neighborhood model principles. He asked if the current neighborhood model principles were being replaced with the new principles.

Ms. Kanellopoulos said that yes, these would replace them.

Mr. Missel said that in his experience, what was occurring there was that they were transforming good design into a codified form. He said that having gone through numerous rezoning processes in the past, including neighborhood model district rezoning, he had come to understand that the level of detail required should be somewhat softened at the comprehensive plan level. He said that while it was essential to identify issues and encourage certain items, they must exercise caution regarding the amount of detail included.

Mr. Missel said that over time, he observed that the flexibility inherent in this process allowed requirements to adapt during rezoning. He said that sometimes this paralleled the market. He said that when the market was down, there was flexibility because some of these would cost money, and as the market tightened up or became more lucrative, they could ask for more. He said that they should consider how they could monitor and manage the level of detail as part of this process. He said that regarding structured parking, it could be allowed and accommodated; however, it was 10 times the price compared to surface parking. He said that from a development standpoint, one must be full-tilt and dense before affording structured parking.

Mr. Murray said that incentives such as tax incremental financing, but it was not suitable for all structures.

Mr. Missel said that if they could close the gap, then yes.

Ms. Firehock said that if land was scarcer, then one would be more incentivized to implement structured parking instead of expanding the growth area where there was ample space for surface parking.

Mr. Missel said that at that point the land value conversation that emerged. He said that the same comment applied regarding public art. He said that he admired public art, but they were delving into more detail where they did not need to.

Mr. Carrazana said that for initial thoughts or feedback at a high level, transportation made sense as a category. He said that site design included walkability, pedestrians, streets, trees, and landscape. He said that building form and scale, adaptive reuse, and historic preservation of structures were aspects he began to question. He asked if these should be in the same category or should they be in land use.

Mr. Carrazana said that land use was also part of this discussion, considering the massing of buildings and historic preservation. He said that things that were missing included such elements as lighting levels, which went hand-in-hand with safety. He said that when guidelines became too prescriptive, they often failed to achieve their intended purpose, so it was important to be aware of that.

Mr. Bivins said that regarding land use, specifically the variety of housing types mentioned, which tended to be more affordable compared with large lot single-family detached units, he was uncertain about the reasons for requiring large lots in certain areas. He said that there were numerous gated communities in their County that did not have large lots. He said that these communities could be quite expensive despite being on smaller lots, such as quarter acre lots or those found in Crozet. He said he was unsure about the value of large lots in terms of affordability. He said that he would like to engage in further discussions regarding its relevance.

Mr. Bivins said that his colleague from White Hall and he may have differing perspectives on this issue of hard boundaries, but he would add his voice to the hard boundaries. He said that he had previously expressed the hope that this could serve as a model for retrofitting their community. He said that when discussing CPIs, he did not want to focus solely on future implementation. He said that there were numerous locations in the County that would benefit from such improvements right now. He said that many areas lacked sidewalks on both sides of the street, which was an

issue that should be addressed. He said that he preferred to have people able to walk on both sides of the street in their existing community and not just in future designs.

Mr. Bivins said that he recently came across an idea related to incentives for this purpose. He said that the use value tax deferral program was designed for agriculture, horticulture, forestry, and open space. He said that he suggested implementing a similar program for renovations and community recrafting efforts. He said that while he did not advocate for tax deferral or abatement for home ownership,. if they could allocate funds from the use value tax deferral pool to important aspects in the comprehensive plan, it made sense to use the same tool.

Mr. Herrick said to Mr. Bivins that for better or for worse, the current land use taxation system consisted of only four categories, and only those four were enabled.

Mr. Bivins asked if that was due to the people down in Richmond.

Mr. Herrick said that they were unable to use additional activities for taxation.

Mr. Bivins said that where the equity piece comes into play, which he would discuss with their Supervisors. He said that he would have a conversation with a specific Supervisor regarding legislative initiatives. He said that when considering changes in a community, he questioned why they were focusing solely on a portion of the community. The last time he checked, USDA data indicated that the county only produced 1% of the state's agriculture production, as compared to the rest of the Commonwealth. He said that 1% accounted for the value of agricultural production there. He said that they provided tax incentives for individuals who contributed just 1% of the total value. He said that his point was if they were attempting to find economical ways to make the 5% of county land as development area solution work, they had to think of ways in which they could make it work.

Ms. Firehock said that there were other tools such as expedited review that could incentivize retrofitting of these structures.

Mr. Bivins said that he agreed, but he argued that specific sectors received preferential tax treatment. He said that he inquired about why they did not discuss the matter of tax preferences when there were genuine concerns regarding housing.

Mr. Murray said that as he stated before, tax incremental financing served a similar purpose to what was being asked. He explained that it essentially stated that infrastructure investments would defer taxes until the property value increased as a result of these improvements. He said that this made development more affordable. He said that they should implement a policy upfront that included design standards for community redevelopment and offer tax deferral for properties in need of revitalization. He noted that currently, there were empty parking lots that would remain unchanged.

Mr. Bivins said that regarding lighting, they should discuss dark sky initiatives in a meaningful manner. He said that secondly, during the site design discussion on steep slopes, he suggested considering utilizing new technology to determine what constitutes a truly steep slope. He said that over time, they had debated whether such slopes were manufactured or had become a permanent feature due to changing perceptions. He said that it was essential to recognize that the current state of these slopes was not inherent but rather a result of human intervention and evolving perspectives.

Mr. Clayborne said that he supported the simplification of the project and noted that climate and equity served as their two guiding principles. He observed connections to climate but not as many regarding equity. He said that these guidelines should be reinforced. He suggested referring to the American Institute of Architects' Framework for Design Excellence, which covered various aspects such as equitable communities and water conservation. He said that this resource may provide helpful signals in relation to these guidelines. He said that they needed to emphasize climate and equity within this framework. He said that if these guidelines or roadmap served as their foundation, now was not the time to be silent or lenient regarding this issue. He said that they would take a brief recess before discussing the next two topics.

**Recess**

The Planning Commission recessed at 8:00 and reconvened at 8:15.

**Work Session (continued)**

Tori Kanellopoulos, Principal Planner, stated that she would be walking the Commissioners through topic four, which was calculating density. She said that when reviewing applications for rezoning or special use permits that incorporated residential components, they were assessed in part based on the recommended density according to the relevant master plan. She said that density was calculated as the number of residential dwelling units per acre. She said that one unit referred to one single-family detached home, one single-family attached home, one modular home, or one apartment unit.

Ms. Kanellopoulos said that the recommended density range was provided based on the future land use designation. She said that for example, neighborhood residential had a recommended density of three to six units per acre. She said that special use permits and rezonings were also evaluated considering other recommendations in the master plan and comprehensive plan, such as transportation, parks and trails, and anticipated impacts on public facilities and services.

Ms. Kanellopoulos said that there were two primary methods for calculating density: gross and net density. She said that gross density involved using the entire acreage of a site, which was how it was calculated in the zoning ordinance, and the net density balanced certain areas, typically environmental features or sensitive locations, which was what the current comprehensive plan recommended utilizing for special use permits and rezoning. She said that density calculations were one factor affecting the types of housing and total number of units built in new developments.

Ms. Kanellopoulos explained that using net density calculations for any property with environmental features would result in a lower recommended number of units compared to using gross density. She said that there was no similar calculation for non-residential uses. She said that for by-right development, gross density was used in the zoning ordinance. She said that regardless of how density was calculated, ordinance requirements applied for protecting environmental features such as avoiding construction in flood plains. She said that there were also requirements for providing open and recreational space, unnecessary infrastructure like roads, water, sewer, and stormwater management, and all these requirements consumed space on a site.

Ms. Kanellopoulos said that even with gross density, a variety of infrastructure and open space still needed to fit within the site alongside residential units. She said that alongside other

strategies, such as encouraging redevelopment and infill and identifying activity centers, using gross density to calculate recommended density for rezoning and special use permits could be an option for prioritizing development in existing development areas. She said that this approach would also provide consistency between the zoning ordinance and comprehensive plan, as it could make some missing middle housing types more feasible, such as bungalow courts, multiplexes, accessory dwelling units, two over twos, and tiny homes. She said that these types of units tended to be higher density than single-family detached or attached units and were typically smaller.

Ms. Kanellopoulos said that using gross density would increase the recommended density for some properties in the development area. She said that this would apply to any property with steep slopes, stream buffers, or floodplains. She said that recommendations for properties without these environmental features would remain unchanged. She noted that land use designation ranges, their recommendations, and the maximum recommended density were not always feasible due to topography and other physical constraints, as well as the space needed to accommodate infrastructure and open and recreational space.

Ms. Kanellopoulos said that clustering development to avoid sensitive environmental features was always encouraged, regardless of the recommended number of units. She provided an example of a hypothetical 15-acre property with five acres in the floodplain. She said that if the property was already zoned R6 residential, and the owner wanted to develop it by right, they would use a gross density calculation of 15 acres multiplied by 6 units, resulting in a total of 90 units.

Ms. Kanellopoulos said that however, if the property was instead zoned R1 and designated neighborhood residential in the applicable master plan, which recommended three to six units per acre, the owner would need to rezone the property to allow for more units, in this case, the recommended density would net out the five acres in the floodplain, resulting in a recommended density of 10 acres multiplied by 6 units, totaling 60 units. She said that the question for the Commission to consider was whether to recommend gross density or net density for rezonings and special use permits. She said that these recommendations would be sent to the Board of Supervisors for their input and final direction.

Mr. Bivins stated that he would recommend the gross amount. He said that he believed that the individuals who had appeared before them possessed the necessary skills and talent. He said that given the various environmental concerns that would likely be identified and understood by these individuals, he said it was best to allow them the freedom to be innovative.

Mr. Carrazana said that he also would recommend gross density. He said that there were several aspects discussed which had implications here. He said that they talked about height as well, which he considered an important factor because individuals may not be able to achieve the desired 90 units due to height limitations. He said that many of these elements were interconnected. He said that Mr. Bivins also mentioned critical slopes as another factor to consider. He said that not all critical slopes were equal or had the same impact; some might limit the buildable area, while others may affect the watershed or entry corridor. He said that this change was closely related to the concept of critical slopes.

Mr. Missel said that he agreed with the comments made thus far.

Ms. Firehock said that she supported the recommendation of the gross density regarding infill development in urban areas as well. She said that she used to be only in the net camp, however,

after attending numerous attempts to implement infill in their urban area, which consisted of a lot of suboptimal land and leftover land that people did not build on for a reason, it became evident that they needed to be more creative to achieve their goals. She said that she agrees with Mr. Carrazana's point about the need to consider height restrictions because even with creative design and removing non-critical slopes from their classification, they must find ways to allow increased density. She reiterated that she was supportive of utilizing gross density.

Mr. Murray said that he would support net density; however, he believed there were certain areas that should not be developed. He said that regions along the Rivanna floodplain and other sensitive areas should have retained their natural state as green spaces. He said that these areas were developed due to existing development rights and zoning restrictions. He said that ideally, a transfer of development rights policy would have been implemented to preserve environmentally sensitive sites with critical slopes, streams, and features.

Mr. Murray said that under this policy, the difference between gross and net development rights could be transferred to another site that is less environmentally sensitive. He said that by implementing such a policy, they could address both the issue of insufficient green space in their growth area and the concerns raised by community members. He said that this would enable them to have more green space because instead of just offering to develop large areas and then proffering back small corners, they could have the entire sensitive area as a green space rather than just a corner of that.

Mr. Murray said that he believed this was an important matter they should seriously consider addressing. He said that while he had less concern regarding gross density, he thought it was crucial to encourage or require more vertical development to better utilize the footprint of buildings on the site. He said that gross density and the number of units was less concerning to him compared to the size of the buildings themselves. He said that they must address this issue when dealing with environmentally sensitive sites by limiting the footprint. He said that he was unsure how they could achieve this, but he considered it a critical factor in moving from net density to gross density.

Mr. Missel said that what he was understanding was that if they chose gross and there would be an environmentally sensitive area on the site, that would still be controlled and not developed. He said that they would have more density rights and could go up in density with gross. He said that with net, they were prevented from having those areas. He said that his concern with going with net was that in within the development area, if they focused on net and backed down on opportunities to create density, affordable transit options might not be pursued as there were certain areas that were less dense due to the choice of net density versus gross. He said that he would not preclude those benefits that gross density provided in the development area while still protecting green space and sensitive areas.

Mr. Murray said that it would only protect 100 feet around the streams, so it was limited in what it was protecting.

Mr. Missel asked if that would be the same case for net density.

Mr. Murray said yes. He said that if they did that, they could be very generous with bonus density. He said that they could still achieve the overall number of development but would be more generous with how they gave out bonuses.

Mr. Carrazana said that he had the same understanding, however, he expressed a concern regarding the footprint and its capacity for construction. He asked if someone could please explain the distinction between net and gross footprints in terms of their actual differences and the buildable area.

Ms. Kanellopoulos said that there was not a distinction currently. She said that when looking at the site, they would still have to avoid the floodplain and slopes. She said that there were no specific recommendations regarding this issue. She said that building footprint sizes varied depending on some future land use designations. She said that in certain residential areas, these designations included commercial uses; however, she clarified that this was not applicable to all designations.

Mr. Carrazana said that increasing height was crucial for them to achieve their desired density. He said that if they limited the height, they would still not reach that goal. He said that the footprint should remain unchanged in this scenario. He asked if Mr. Murray was saying that it did impact it, and he would like to clarify that.

Mr. Murray said that he believed not that it limited the footprint, but that they should do more to constrain that footprint if they knew that a parcel had environmentally sensitive features. He said that through designating that area or other methods, they should find ways to limit the footprint in the surrounding region. He said that for instance, around Meadow Creek, the Rivanna River, and Moores Creek, there were areas that they knew were already impaired. He said that even if they protected a 100-foot buffer, protecting these environmental features would not prevent water quality from continuing to degrade over time.

Mr. Carrazana said that that could be done outside of the current conversation, regardless of what they did with net or gross.

Mr. Murray said that if they did not address that issue and continued to move from one problem to another, they were essentially creating a situation where the areas around their streams and rivers were constantly being eroded away. He said that they were aware that this could be observed throughout their growth area and the lack of green space they were experiencing.

Mr. Moore said that he would recommend gross density. He said that it was consistent with the other types, and removing certain land from calculations made more sense to be used with gross density.

Mr. Clayborne said that he also supported gross density.

Mr. Missel said that as a landowner, the yield was greater, the value of his land was greater, and that potentially, they could have had more money to contribute toward open space, stream preservation, and other similar initiatives, rather than solely viewing it as a profit source, which could also happen.

Mr. Moore said that he would like to further discuss Mr. Murray's proposal regarding transfer of development rights in a future conversation.

Mr. Bivins said that discussions regarding transferring rights in the past had caused discomfort due to speculation about potential development increases in certain areas. He said that some sophisticated individuals in Albemarle County purchased land with the intention of transferring

rights, particularly those that offered tax benefits. He said that this practice was already prevalent, although not specifically identified. He said that addressing stream buffers and water improvements would be more manageable than trading rights. He said that he could not trade rights for affordable housing, which was his preference, then he said he did not wish to engage in such trades at all.

Mr. Clayborne said that he believed that the Commission had addressed the question regarding net or gross density, so he would ask that they move to topic five, a discussion involving crossroads communities and community resilience hubs.

Ms. Kanellopoulos said that she would be presenting the fifth and final topic for the evening. She said that before moving forward, she wanted to mention that in January, they would be sharing draft goals and objectives for the remaining plan chapters that have not been shared yet. She said that this included rural area land use and transportation. She also said that they would be seeking feedback from the community, Commission, and Board on various other rural area topics besides the one under discussion this evening, such as land conservation, rural road paving, recreational use of roads, a strong agricultural and silvicultural rural area economy, and recommendations for already developed areas in the rural region.

Ms. Kanellopoulos said that as a reminder of the priorities they had heard for the rural area based on community input to date, the priorities included some small-scale uses suitable in certain crossroads communities. She said that community resilience hubs should offer affordable food access, senior and youth centers, access to healthcare, and emergency shelters when provided. She said that public transit was required to access employment areas in the healthcare sector, and ideally, there would be more healthcare options within the rural area as well.

Ms. Kanellopoulos said that the definition of crossroads communities had a community resilience focus and was intended to support these priorities with a more equitable distribution of and access to resources. She said that this definition was also consistent with the growth management policy. She noted that they planned to hold several rural area events in early 2024 to present the updated definition and gather additional input on this and other rural area topics.

Ms. Kanellopoulos said that they had received a few field note submissions from individuals who visited locations in the rural area. She stated that while there were not many submissions, they were consistent with other feedback they have received through email and questionnaires. She said that many comments focused on transportation issues, such as traffic volumes and speeding on rural roads, as well as a desire for more walking and biking facilities, particularly in commercial areas and crossroads areas. She stated that there were several comments related to parks and trails. She said that these included requests for more parking at trailheads, improved wayfinding and signage, and better maintenance of the existing trails.

Ms. Kanellopoulos said that they had the following draft definition of crossroads communities for the Commission's consideration. She said that the primary focus was on achieving a more equitable distribution of access to services in rural areas, thereby increasing community resilience and well-being. She said that one approach to enhancing resilience and well-being would be through the establishment of community resilience hubs, along with associated programs, events, and emergency shelters. She said that AC44 was collaborating with the Health Department, Fire Rescue, Parks and Recreation, and the Resilient Together team to incorporate recommendations for community resilience hubs into the comprehensive plan and the Resilient Together project.

Ms. Kanellopoulos said that this initiative was a joint effort between the City, UVA, and the County aimed at developing climate adaptation and resilience plans for each locality. She said that based on the current draft, crossroads communities may include Esmont, Batesville, Stony Point, White Hall, Ivy, Earlysville, and North Garden. She said that once the definition had been refined, staff would compile a complete list of communities for input. She said that staff recommended that individual crossroads communities be engaged through a small area plan or similar planning process prior to any future land use or zoning changes. She said that constraining factors, such as transportation and well and septic feasibility, would vary by location.

Ms. Kanellopoulos said that if community resilience hubs were incorporated into public facilities or existing businesses and community centers already operating in the rural area, they could likely be done by right. She said that the small area plan process was intended to focus on other types of land use changes, such as allowing businesses or offices if desired. She said that as part of the Resilient Together project, the project team collaborated with the Emerging Leaders in Architecture cohort to develop a toolkit of recommendations for community resilience hubs in Albemarle County.

Ms. Kanellopoulos said that pictured was one slide from the cohort's presentation, which showed ideal features that could be provided with resilience hubs. She said that these were buildings that provided physical spaces for accessing resources and services and preparing and responding to emergencies. She said that they could be public facilities such as libraries, community centers, and schools, or could be businesses and non-profit organizations, and they should be places where community members already go and feel comfortable visiting.

Ms. Kanellopoulos said that as the diagram in the bottom right corner of the slide demonstrated, these were spaces that should serve both everyday community needs and options to respond to and recover from unexpected events. She mentioned that many of the more detailed recommendations from the cohort also overlapped with the community priorities heard throughout the AC44 process. She said that these included community gathering spaces, community gardens and food distribution, warming and cooling centers, charging stations, Wi-Fi, and additional classes and workshops.

Ms. Kanellopoulos said that the cohort also considered the possibility of developing toolkits to share with the private sector for upgrading privately owned buildings to increase their resilience and identified potential public-private partnerships and utilizing grant funding opportunities. She asked the Commission to consider two questions. She said that they would appreciate feedback on the draft definition and would like to know if the Commission found the community resilience hub concept could support more equitable service provision and access in the rural area.

Mr. Clayborne asked if there were any questions for staff. Seeing none, he asked if there was any discussion on the topic.

Mr. Moore said that the definition of crossroads communities appeared to be logical. He said that these were places that were historically villages or small towns due to their strategic locations at intersections. He said that people gathered there for commerce, socializing, and other activities. He said it was commendable that they could acknowledge this historical significance and promote community building and development rather than zoning out such opportunities. He said that the concept of resilience hubs was intriguing as well, which could encompass various establishments like gas stations, schools, or senior centers. He said that although he did not live in a rural area, the idea seemed beneficial overall.

Mr. Murray said that he agreed with one of the comments received that in many ways, this would be more suitable to discuss in conjunction with the rural areas chapter. He said that since they were having it now, he would proceed. He emphasized that obtaining community support was crucial. He asked staff if it was correct that when small area plans were completed for each community, they would restrict the possible uses in those areas.

Ms. Kanellopoulos said that was correct.

Mr. Murray said that considering this, he was in favor of the proposal. He said that as it currently stood, he was satisfied with its content. He said that he did not approve of automotive centers or other activities with negative environmental impacts. He said that there was a comment suggesting better well monitoring and groundwater testing was an important measure that should be implemented; however, he would leave that for future consideration.

Ms. Firehock said that she was not against the concept at all. She was glad to see that some of them had been included in this list; they had too many last time, and some fell off because it did not make sense. She said that she still thought it did not make sense to have Batesville on this list. She said that she assumed that everyone had been to Batesville. She said that they had an excellent sandwich shop, and she loved the store, but she did not see how they were going to fit anything else in there. She said that the discussion was about providing services and facilities. She said that there was physically no room in Batesville to accommodate any of these items.

Ms. Firehock said that if they were going to have services, they must have physical space. She said that even if it was a person at a desk with a stethoscope, they literally could not fit that in Batesville. She said that she was all for recognizing and celebrating their historic crossroads communities. She said that she believed there was no reason why they could not engage in more conversations with Batesville regarding traffic, pedestrian, and bicycling issues, as well as other matters that Batesville residents were already concerned about and had been discussing for some time. She said that this did not preclude such discussions. She said that physically, there was nothing else to fit there.

Ms. Firehock said that just up the road, they had the development called Crossroads, which already featured UVA medical offices with doctors, a fire station, post office, bank, pizza joint, gas station, general store, sandwich shop, and various other establishments, including acupuncture and framing services. She said that these amenities were already present without requiring designation. She said that Esmont made a lot of sense because the County had already taken that direction with the repurposing of Esmont schools and the community center. She said that social services had been placed there, as well as classes. She said that all the necessary facilities were already present. She said that she would acknowledge that it was not perfect; additional improvements could be made.

Ms. Firehock said that the park had been revitalized, featuring walking trails and various activities in Esmont. She said that this made a lot of sense. She said that Batesville did not fit into this discussion because there was no available space for further development. She said that even if the store could expand, they lacked the necessary septic and water infrastructure to do so. She said that Batesville represented a separate conversation regarding community preservation and safety measures, but it should not be part of this category.

Mr. Missel said that he had a question regarding the information on page 10. He said that based on the draft definition; crossroads communities could include certain elements. He said that his question was whether this represented a reactive response to existing conditions in those areas or if there was a proactive position that might be different from what currently existed. He said that he wanted to understand if alternative ideas for an ideal community had been considered and whether they could potentially differ from the current situation.

Ms. Kanellopoulos said that she believed the primary focus was on responding to what already existed and recognized that certain communities may have reached their capacity for new buildings due to existing infrastructure. She said that by acknowledging these established communities, a small area plan could potentially identify additional uses in some areas. She said that it did not imply feasibility in all cases. She said that this approach assisted in identifying potential locations for resilience hubs.

Mr. Missel said that his second question addressed Ms. Firehock's concern, which he understood. He said that he lived in Batesville, and all of these communities presented unique challenges. He said that because they differed significantly, they did not all have to resemble each other. He noted that there could be variability within the classification of rural crossroad communities. He said that the label may be helpful for a community to identify itself, but it was essential to consider the limitations within its specific context. He said that another point he would make was that the definition referred to crossroads and communities as development areas not designated for economic development or residential holding capacity. He said that this raised the question of whether these areas should truly be considered communities.

Ms. Kanellopoulos said that she believed the primary objective was to serve community members who already resided nearby. She said that recognizing that it did not serve the same purpose as the development area, it was not intended to significantly increase residential capacity.

Mr. Missel said that he understood but was wondering if rural crossroads were centers. He said that they may be centers rather than an actual community. He said that lastly, he had to mention traffic. He said that if they brought these uses to a crossroads, it will likely increase the traffic generation. He said that there should be a review of the carrying capacity of those roads and the safety of adjoining parcels when recommending the development of such a center.

Mr. Carrazana said that with the exception of Batesville, he agreed with Ms. Firehock. He asked what had prevented these crossroad centers from being resilient hubs thus far. He asked if the new title would automatically provide them with the opportunity to be resilient hubs now.

Ms. Kanellopoulos said that an essential aspect she should have mentioned was identifying locations further from development areas. She said that this recognizes that these communities are generally situated farther out from those zones, necessitating longer drives to reach the development areas. She said that considering this factor for community resilience hubs could help identify them; however, they would not want to preclude them from being placed in other suitable locations based on collaboration with health departments, fire rescue teams, based on input from community members.

Mr. Carrazana said that there was nothing stopping them from pursuing all of those options.

Ms. Kanellopoulos said that was correct.

Mr. Carrazana said that many of them were already doing that to some degree.

Ms. Kanellopoulos said yes. She said that the Yancey Community Center was one of the locations where emerging leaders had focused their attention. She said that this center had already been functioning as a resilience hub in various ways. She noted that there were potential opportunities for future investments as well.

Mr. Carrazana said that defining these concepts and assigning them specific designations would not automatically enable a transformation that was not currently occurring in many cases. He noted that as one delved into smaller area plans and rural plans, it could become more apparent that they can be better defined based on their unique characteristics. He said that they may take on various roles such as communities or centers. He said that to him, this distinction appeared somewhat arbitrary.

Mr. Bivins asked how they would define the access to essential public services and basic service needs for rural populations. He said that he would want more definition of that as they explored this. He said that the one thing that the rural residents of the County knew, particularly if they lived far from the development area, that things happened there that were not identified officially. He said that for instance, when his lawn mower broke down, he took it to his neighbor who fixed small engines, which according to this proposal, should not happen. He said that the whole idea of being able to identify activities that were regulated in land use and type in the development area but happened in the rural area, he was fearful that it became prescriptive and limited things because it was under a level of scrutiny that would prevent the natural flow of life in the country from happening.

Mr. Bivins said that regarding Batesville, there would be resistance from the community if more intensive uses were proposed for the area. He said that when thinking of crossroad centers, there were places near the borders of the County that required essential services. He said that the question they must answer was how they would determine which of the current residents received essential services and not wait for a developer to come in. He said that they should spend time in the communities to find what they needed now, but also about what this place would be after they were gone.

Mr. Bivins said that part of what they were doing was contemplating what this place would be when they were gone. He said that this whole idea of crossroads communities needed to evolve with their community. He said that he agreed that for the Scottsville District, it should be centers, and they should be actively engaged in talking to people there about what it needed to be a center. He said that they should confer with the high school students from Monticello High School and Western Albemarle about what they wanted those places to be like.

Mr. Clayborne said that he agreed with the importance of defining public service and addressing basic needs. He said that a community member tonight had mentioned reliability and utilities for community members. He asked if the statement should say rural crossroads communities offer reliable access to essential public services and utilities.

Mr. Bivins said that he would suggest that when discussing these places, they typically had 600-level roads or 700-level roads. He said that in emergencies, such as when trees fell and blocked the road, if there was not an individual in the area with a chainsaw or tractor to clear the obstacle, it did not matter where they placed the resilience center. He said that many people would still remain cut off. He said that when considering this, he would like to briefly discuss how their

community had changed over the past 30 years. He said that they now had more individuals who did not understand the importance of removing trees from roads for everyone's benefit. He said that by creating more community-centered responses, it would go a long way toward creating crossroads communities.

Ms. Firehock said that their community of Howardsville had participated in the community emergency response training program. She said that they all completed the training and received certification, preparing them to respond effectively. She said that in case of an incident near the train tracks, such as a derailment, they would face significant challenges since professional assistance had a 50-minute response time from any location. She said that she wanted to emphasize that her intention was not to imply that small rural communities should not engage in planning efforts. She said that on the contrary, she was strongly supportive of rural area planning.

Ms. Firehock said that it was essential to recognize that all rural areas had unique requirements and capabilities, and while she did not think Batesville should be a resilience center because there was no space there, she still believed they should collaborate with Batesville and other small communities interested in this work. She said that she wanted to clarify the purpose of their discussion. She said that some of the topics they were addressing that night might belong in another category or an additional category, specifically emergency response.

Ms. Firehock noted that there was much they needed to improve regarding their ability to respond to storms, debris clearing, and debris hazard management site selection. She said that this was her professional expertise, and she said that there was still a long way to go. She said that they should not attempt to include everything in this category and instead remember that there was an entire separate level of emergency planning and access to services that may require a different conversation than the one happening that night.

Mr. Murray said that a comment had been made about what a community got out of being a crossroads community. He said that it needed to be something more than having additional uses occur there. He said that it was essential to address traffic calming. He asked if they could leverage this with VDOT and other stakeholders to improve safety in these communities. He said that it was crucial to acknowledge existing uses and consider ways to maintain their viability. He said that regarding Batesville, people were trying to keep that store as a viable use. He said that if they had made certain things by-right in that area, it may have made that easier to do.

Ms. Firehock said that there was another discussion regarding country stores, but she did not believe they needed to function as resiliency hubs either. She agreed that yes, they should address this topic during the rural area chapters.

Mr. Missel thanked staff for their life-changing work they did for the County and community. He said that the intentionality and collaboration with community members was apparent in their work, so he wanted to thank them.

Ms. Kanellopoulos said that for the next steps of AC44, they would share draft goals and objectives for the following three chapters, which were development areas land use and transportation, rural area land use and transportation, and community facilities. She said that they would distribute the final round of questionnaires early next year and continue to hold work sessions with the Commission and the Board on draft goals and objectives from January through March. She said that they would continue the rural area discussion and share the draft action

steps for plan implementation in phase three, which they expected to commence in the spring of next year.

**Public Hearings**

There were none.

**Committee Reports**

Mr. Missel said that he would like to mention a brief point: The 5th and Avon Community Advisory Committee met last Thursday. He said that during the meeting, there was an excellent presentation by Ms. Kanellopoulos, which was quite similar to what they discussed tonight. He said that the presentation led to some valuable feedback that was incorporated into the summary of community input presented to them this evening.

**Review of Board of Supervisors Meeting: December 13, 2023**

Mr. Barnes said that there were no land use items heard during the December 13, 2023, meeting of the Board of Supervisors, so there was nothing to review.

**AC44 Update**

Mr. Barnes said that the recent update given by Ms. Kanellopoulos encompassed most of what was to be expected in the upcoming events.

**New Business**

Mr. Bivins thanked Mr. Clayborne for his service as chair this year. He acknowledged that the chair had made significant contributions to their progress. He said that under the chair's guidance and leadership, they had accomplished a considerable amount of work that might have been challenging without the chair's support. He said that during the chair's absence, the vice-chair effectively stepped in to ensure their continued progress. He said that as a result, they had been well served by the chair's leadership this year, and he was grateful for the chair's efforts.

Mr. Clayborne said that he appreciated those kind words and that due to observing the chairs before him during two seasons of the COVID pandemic and Ms. Firehock’s tenure, as well as others who were no longer present. He said that they helped guide and coach him in his role. He said that he wanted to thank all of them for their support and encouragement throughout the year. He said that he would be prepared to pass on this responsibility by January, when a new chairperson would be appointed.

**Old Business**

There was none.

**Items for Follow-Up**

There were none.

**Adjournment**

At 9:35 p.m. the Planning Commission adjourned to Tuesday, January 9, 2024, Albemarle County Planning Commission meeting, 6:00 p.m. in Lane Auditorium.

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Kevin McDermott, Deputy Director of Planning

(Recorded by Carolyn S. Shaffer, Clerk to Planning Commission & Planning Boards; transcribed by Golden Transcription Services)

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