



County of Albemarle

COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT DEPARTMENT

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MEMORANDUM

AGENDA DATE: 01/28/2025

TITLE: AC44 Parks, Recreation and Open Space

SUBJECT/PROPOSAL/REQUEST:

Request for Planning Commission feedback on the draft Parks, Recreation, and Open Space Chapter, with particular emphasis upon the draft actions.

ITEM TYPE: Work Session

STAFF CONTACTS: Richardson, Wall, Filardo, Barnes, McDermott, Swartzendruber, Kanellopoulos, Holt

PRESENTERS: Tonya Swartzendruber, Planning Manager and Tim Padalino, Chief of Parks Planning

LEGAL REVIEW: Not Required

REVIEWED BY: Jeffrey B. Richardson

BACKGROUND: Albemarle County is updating the Comprehensive Plan through the Albemarle County 2044 (AC44) project. The project is in Phase 3: drafting language for the four-part Comprehensive Plan document and developing Plan actions.

The draft language for the Part III – Parks, Recreation, and Open Space chapter in Attachment B is built upon community input and reflects the Planning Commission's and Board's feedback.

Albemarle County's parks and recreation facilities, greenways, and open space areas enhance the quality of life for community members by providing exercise, physically active transportation connections, social interaction, and connection to nature. These publicly accessible amenities, and associated land, also aid in the preservation of natural landscapes, historic resources, and habitat, while providing enhanced climate resilience. Managed parks and athletic facilities offer active recreation opportunities, such as playgrounds and organized sports programs. Preserved nature areas, greenways, and blueways (waterway trails) provide a means for passive recreation, such as walking, biking, paddling, fishing and enjoying nature.

The majority of Albemarle County's large parks and open spaces are located within the Rural Area, which contains 95% of the County land area. Given the allocation of dedicated land and recreation amenities within the Rural Area, AC44 places special emphasis upon expanding the parks, open space and recreation amenities within the Development Area, where most county

community members reside. This emphasis includes an expansion of shared use paths within and throughout the greenway network, including upgrading existing trails to shared use paths where appropriate and creating new shared use path connections. By expanding this urban network of parks, open space and paths, more residential neighborhoods will be located within walking or biking distance of these amenities.

AC44 also seeks to provide more inclusive access to community members of all backgrounds and ability levels to enjoy parks, greenway paths, recreational facilities, and recreational activities. Such measures include increasing universal access to greenways and parks, expanding facilities at parks and recreation centers, and offering more athletic and recreational programs.

County parks, open spaces, greenways and blueways trail networks provide a valuable contribution towards climate resilience. The preserved public land within these areas offers the benefits of natural resources, including trees and other vegetation that provide carbon sequestration, reduced heat impacts, and streamside buffering that reduces pollution, runoff and while mitigating flood impacts for county waterways. Greenway paths support multi-modal transportation options such as biking and walking, reducing the emissions associated with vehicle travel. Additionally, sustainable management practices offer opportunities to support native species of plants and animals and to employ green maintenance strategies, such as no-mow zones.

For reference, a summary of previous Planning Commission and Board of Supervisors feedback on Parks, Recreation, and Open Space is provided as Attachment D. Community input themes associated with the topic are summarized in Attachment C.

STRATEGIC PLAN: Quality of life – Encourage a vibrant community with economic and recreational opportunities that serve all community members.

DISCUSSION:

An updated AC44 outline is provided as Attachment A. As a reminder, the topics within the red box will be the focus of today's work session. This work session focuses on proposed comprehensive plan language within Attachment B, including the draft actions, with particular emphasis upon the actions associated with the following objectives:

1. Objective 2: increasing County-owned land for parks, greenways, and recreation facilities, prioritizing the Development Areas.
2. Objective 3: accelerating the development of urban parks and greenways within a 15-minute walk of residents in the Development Areas.
3. Objective 6: expanding the greenways network to increase multimodal connections.

The Board of Supervisors will hold a work session on February 19, 2025, to discuss the Parks, Recreation, and Open Space chapter.

BUDGET IMPACT: There is no budget impact associated with this agenda item.

RECOMMENDATION: Staff requests the Commission review and provide feedback on draft Parks, Recreation, and Open Space Actions.

ATTACHMENTS:

Attach A – [CPA2021-02 AC44 - AC44 Outline](#)

Attach B – [CPA2021-02 AC44 - Draft Parks, Recreation, and Open Space Chapter](#)

Attach C – [CPA2021-02 AC44 - Parks Community Input Themes](#)

Attach D – [CPA2021-02 AC44 - Summary of Planning Commission and Board Feedback](#)