AC44
ALBEMARLE COUNTY 2044

Community Input Themes: Thriving Economy



This document includes an overview of community engagement opportunities and major themes heard through community input related to Thriving Economy. These themes, along with direction from the Planning Commission and Board of Supervisors, technical research and best practices, and input from staff and partner agencies, inform the development of Comprehensive Plan recommendations.

PHASE 1 ENGAGEMENT OVERVIEW

We asked for community input on:

- The successes and challenges of the current Growth Management Policy (per the 2015 Comp Plan) and what should be prioritized with a Policy update
- Options for updating the Growth Management Policy to address 1) projected demand and population growth; 2) equitable access to services/resources; 3) implementing the Climate Action Plan and build community resilience
- The draft Guiding Principles and whether they guide us toward a more equitable and resilient community

AC44 Guiding Principles



Engagement opportunities included:

- 3 online questionnaires
- 4 round tables
- 5 pop-ups
- 4 open houses

Phase 1 Engagement Totals:

- **Attendance at in-person and virtual events: 254**
- **Online questionnaire responses: 637**
- **Website visits: 6,964**







PHASE 2 ENGAGEMENT OVERVIEW

We asked for community input on:

- Challenges, priorities, and opportunities for each Comp Plan topic
- What we want our community to be like in 2044, with questions including:
    - How do you want to get around the County in 2044 (e.g. walk, bike, drive, take transit)?
    - What business or job opportunities do you need to ensure you are financially stable and secure in 2044?
    - How might your housing needs change between now and 2044?
    - What types of businesses, amenities, recreational opportunities and housing do you wish you had closer to where you live?
    - How do you think your life will be different in the next 20 years as a result of climate change, and what should local government due to address future climate change impacts?
- Planning toolkits for coordinated land use and transportation planning, with the specific topics of Activity Centers, Development Areas boundaries, Rural Communities, Community Resilience Hubs, and Rural Interstate Interchanges
- Draft Goals and Objectives for each Comp Plan topic

Phase 2 Engagement Totals:

- **Attendance at in-person and virtual events: 443**
- **Online questionnaire responses: 861**
- **Community chat kits and field notes: 52**
- **Website visits: 16,186**

Engagement opportunities included:

- 3 rounds of online questionnaires
- 10 pop-ups
- 6 open houses
- 2 workshops
- 6 Community Advisory Committee (CAC) meetings
- Community chat kits
- Stakeholder meetings with organizations and groups such as the Jefferson Area Board for the Aging (JABA), the County's Economic Development Authority (EDA), Charlottesville Area Developers Roundtable (CADRe), and County Committees including the Natural Heritage Committee, the Architectural Review Board, the Historic Preservation Committee, and the Solid Waste Alternatives Advisory Committee





COMMUNITY INPUT THEMES

The following summary highlights the major themes from community engagement heard to date related to Thriving Economy:

Encourage and support businesses that create career ladder job opportunities

- Examples shared included biotech, manufacturing, agriculture, and tourism
- Attract new jobs to the county
- Concern that some commercial/business taxes are too high

Support small businesses and entrepreneurs

- Encourage spaces designed for start-ups, entrepreneurs, incubators, and shared workspaces
- Interest in seeing more spaces for artisans and craft businesses
- Improve broadband and internet for remote workers and home businesses
- Reduce restrictions for low impact home businesses and home occupations

Plan for land and infrastructure needs

- Facilitate business location and development, including availability of land and infrastructure
- Support infill and adaptive reuse of buildings, especially vacant commercial and office space
- Streamline the development process (for both businesses and housing)
- Economic development should be supported through overlapping initiatives, such as increasing parks and transportation options. Creation of the Three Notched Trail was specifically identified as a recreational project that would support the local economy

Support workforce development

- Collaborate to provide jobs training including vocational and job entry training, especially for trades and technical jobs that do not require four-year degrees. Should include training on new technologies and computer programs and prepare the workforce for local companies
- Encourage career education in public schools
- The County should collaborate with community organizations on additional services and resources that employees need, such as childcare, transportation, and affordable housing
- Partnerships should be created or strengthened with local schools/colleges/universities for workforce development opportunities