AC44
ALBEMARLE COUNTY 2044

PART 1: PLAN POLICY

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RESOLUTION ADOPTING THE PLAN

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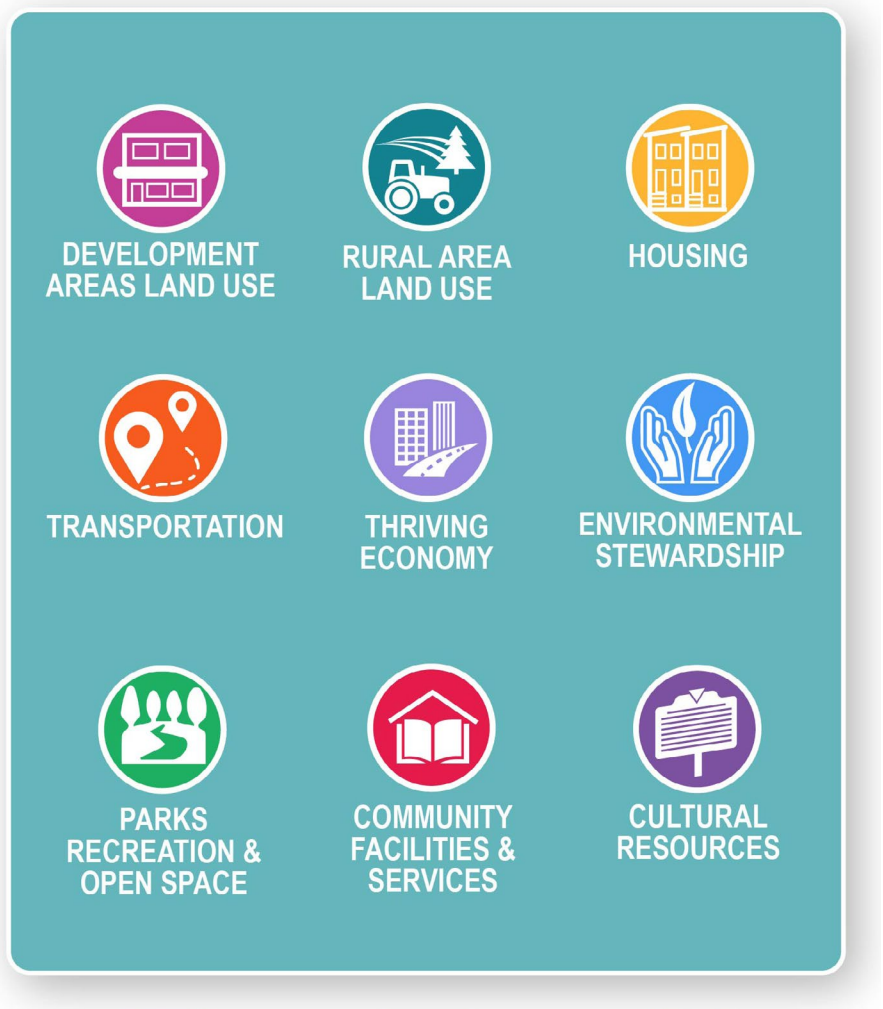
NAVIGATING THE PLAN

AC44 is a policy guide for County staff and officials and a resource for community members. The Plan articulates our community's vision for the future and the steps we need to take to implement that vision.

Part I establishes the legal context for the Comprehensive Plan, shows how the Plan relates to other local and regional planning efforts, summarizes the community input process, issues and themes heard, the Guiding Principles, and shares recent trends informing the Plan update.

Part II sets the stage for how growth and development happen differently in the Development Areas and Rural Area. It includes the history and content of the Growth Management Policy, defines the Development Areas and Rural Area boundaries, establishes criteria for changing that boundary, and provides examples of how each element of the Comprehensive Plan is applied. Part II provides the fundamental framework for AC44's recommendations in Part III.

Part III describes nine individual plan topics. These form the building blocks of our community that work together to implement the Guiding Principles and the Growth Management Policy. Each chapter has a narrative to provide policy details, a goal statement, objectives, and actions. The topics build on the Guiding Principles and community input themes heard; provide actionable responses to the challenges and opportunities in our community; and establish policy direction for Albemarle County. This section concludes with broad policies for future area planning efforts, comprehensive plan amendments, and key performance indicators that will be used to measure the successful implementation of AC44.



Part III contains nine chapter topics

Implementation of each Plan topic is essential to the overall well-being and quality of life, including affordable and accessible housing, transportation choices, a healthy natural environment, places to recreate and enjoy nature, and access to public services and facilities.

The final part of this comprehensive plan is the Appendix. It includes:

- A summary of the AC44 process and public engagement.
- Community Design Guidelines which apply to all development in the Development Areas.
- Links to county policy documents like County Area Plans (Crozet Master Plan, Pantops Master Plan, etc.) and Topic Area Plans (Climate Action Plan, Biodiversity Action Plan, and Housing Albemarle

Each of the items in the Appendix is considered to a part of the Comprehensive Plan. Any updates to these plans will require a Comprehensive Plan amendment. See the Implementation Chapter for more information.

In addition are Reference Documents which help to support and inform the Plan but are not part of the Comprehensive Plan. They provide information that pertains to the Plan and other policies, supporting information, and data that relates to the Plan. The Reference Documents are included as background and help to enlighten the recommendations of the Plan. The following are examples of reference documents with links that can be found in the Appendix:

- Rivanna River Corridor Plan – Draft Concept and Framework
- Regional Transit Vision Plan
- Regional Transit Governance Study
- Regional Natural Hazard Mitigation Plan



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OVERVIEW

Many attributes define Albemarle's unique character and continue to make it a desirable place to live, work, and play. Our nationally recognized historic landmarks, university, scenic beauty, natural environment, and local enterprises make the county one of the nation's most attractive and popular places to live and visit. We are a community with a strong tradition of protecting and enhancing Albemarle's admired qualities and features while planning for anticipated new community members and businesses.

AC44 establishes a long-range vision to guide the county's planning, development, and growth for the next 20 years. The purpose of this Comprehensive Plan is to set forth County government policy that helps to guide public and private activities as they relate to land use, investment, and resource allocation. It establishes the blueprint for future decisions regarding protection of the natural environment, land use and development, transportation systems, public facilities and utilities, thriving economy, housing, and public services.

The Growth Management Policy is the foundation of AC44 and serves as the basic framework for the entire Comprehensive Plan. It emphasizes the importance of focused growth within the Development Areas and creation of vibrant, mixed-use places while protecting the natural environment, historic and cultural resources, and character of the Rural Area. It also guides the provision of public services and facilities. For example, the Albemarle County Service Authority's Jurisdictional Area for public water and sewer primarily follows the Development Areas boundaries, promoting efficient use of infrastructure.

The Comprehensive Plan is the result of a dynamic planning process. While the Plan cannot completely satisfy the interests of every community member, active participation from individuals and groups is essential to create a Plan that addresses the health, safety, and welfare of the community in a fair and equitable manner.

Comprehensive Plan Implementation

The Comprehensive Plan is implemented by both the public and private sectors and through partnerships. Albemarle County staff use the Comprehensive Plan to guide public projects and investments (including the Capital Improvement Program), new or updated regulations (including the Zoning Ordinance), developing department work programs, and to evaluate rezoning and special use permit applications. The development and business communities use the Comprehensive Plan to guide development proposals, business location and expansion decisions. Partnerships leverage capacity and resources in our community, including through community-led programs.



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Maintaining a balance between the diverse individual and collective interests a growing, changing community can be challenging. With the guidance of our community vision and principles and the objectives and actions that implement them, the Comprehensive Plan can better prepare the County to meet these challenges.

Comprehensive planning does not end with this document. Several actions, such as ordinance amendments, partnerships, and investments are needed to implement AC44 and are listed in Part III "Implementation."

STATE CODE

State law (Virginia Code 15.2-2223) requires every county, city, and town to adopt a comprehensive plan for the physical development of its territory. The State Code defines the purpose of a Comprehensive Plan as guiding and achieving coordinated, compatible development and supporting infrastructure within a locality to meet the needs of current and future community members. It also requires that the Comprehensive Plan be reviewed at least once every five years by the planning commission to determine whether it is advisable to amend the plan.

In addition to the State Code required review every five years, the County also allows for property owners to request an amendment to the Comprehensive Plan. Applications to amend the Comprehensive Plan can be submitted twice a year. For more information about this process, see the Implementation Chapter in Part III.

COMPREHENSIVE PLAN PROCESS

PHASE 1

- Review the Growth Management Policy for accommodating growth over the next 20 years through the lens of equity and climate action.
- Develop the Guiding Principles using the common themes heard during community engagement.
- Confirm vision and Guiding Principles with the Planning Commission and Board of Supervisors.

PHASE 2

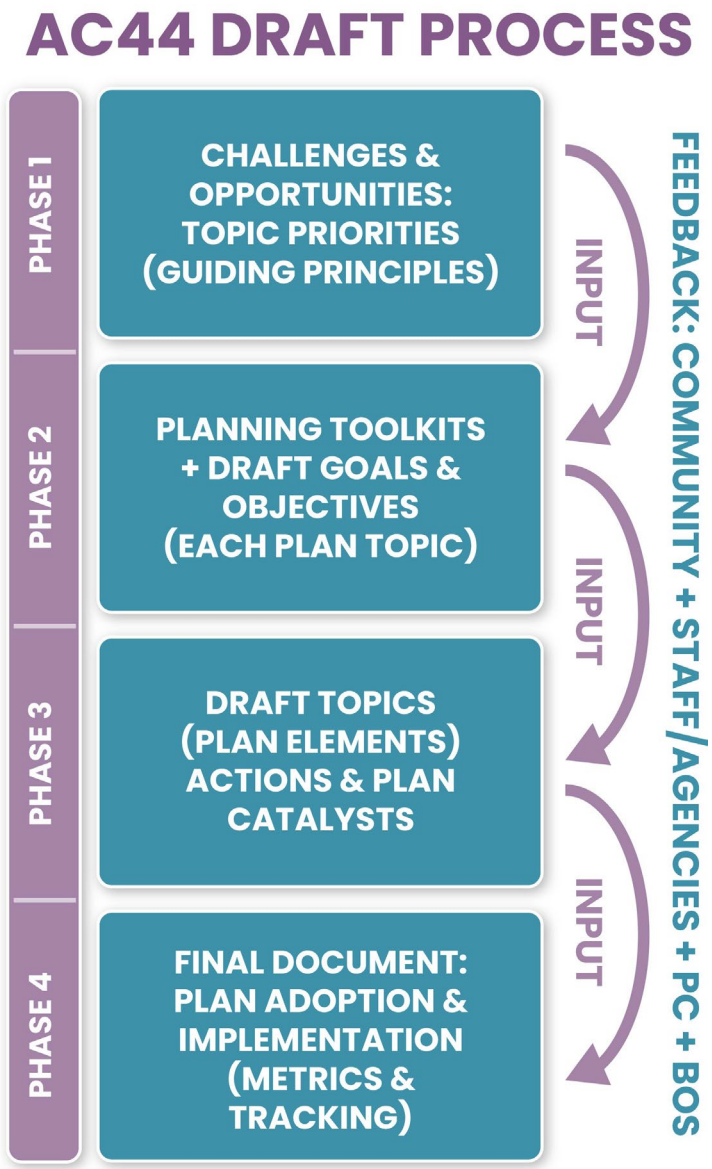
- Develop draft goals and objectives for each plan topic.
- Engage the community.
- Confirm the goals and objectives with the Planning Commission and Board of Supervisors.

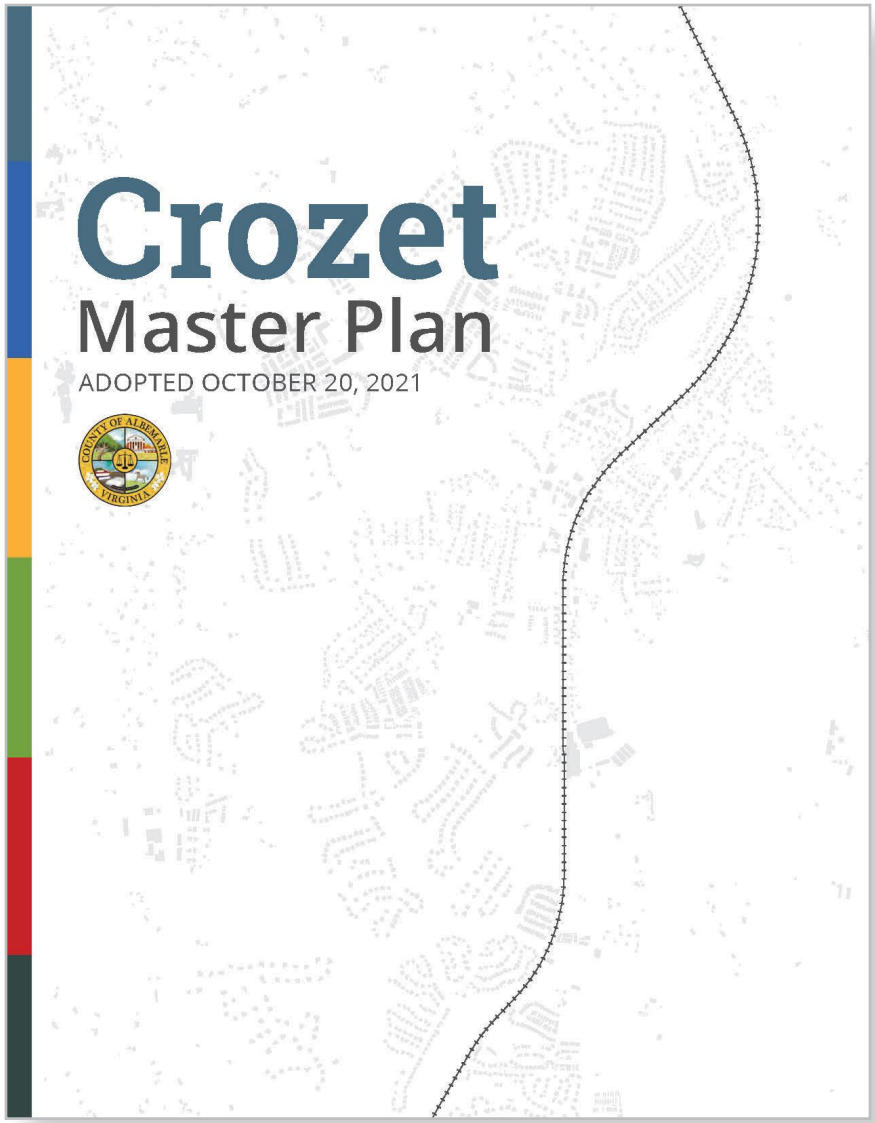
PHASE 3

- Draft the policies, actions, and strategies to support the implementation of the Comprehensive Plan.
- Engage the community.
- Confirm the policies and actions with the Planning Commission and Board of Supervisors.
- Draft the other components of the Comprehensive Plan such as Part I – Context and Vision, and the Appendix.

PHASE 4

- Finalize the document.
- Adoption of the Comprehensive Plan by the Board of Supervisors.





CONNECTION TO OTHER COUNTY PLANS

The Comprehensive Plan establishes a long-range vision and direction that guides planning, development, and growth for the next twenty years, as well as establishing a blueprint for the decisions regarding protection of the natural environment, land use development, and for transportation, utilities, public facilities/services, housing and economic development efforts.

Supporting Plans: Area Plans, Topic Area Plans and Corridor Studies

The "Comp" Plan is focused on a county-wide scale. Area Plans and Corridor Studies are supporting documents that are guided by, and augment, the Comp Plan's overall direction and have been developed to address more specific areas of the County in greater detail. The Area Plans provide specific analysis and guidance/recommendation of the respective areas, while continuing to use and apply the overall guidance derived from the Comprehensive Plan. Six (6) Area Plans exist covering sections of the County's designated Development Areas:

- **Pantops**
- **Southern and Western Neighborhoods**
- **Crozet**
- **Village of Rivanna**
- **Places29**
  - **Includes Rio 29 Small Area Plan**

There are four supporting Corridor Studies that provide specific guidance for two road corridors, one river corridor, and an employment district:

- *Avon Street Corridor*
- *Rio Road (east) Corridor*
- *Rivanna River Urban Corridor*
- *Broadway Blueprint Phase 2*

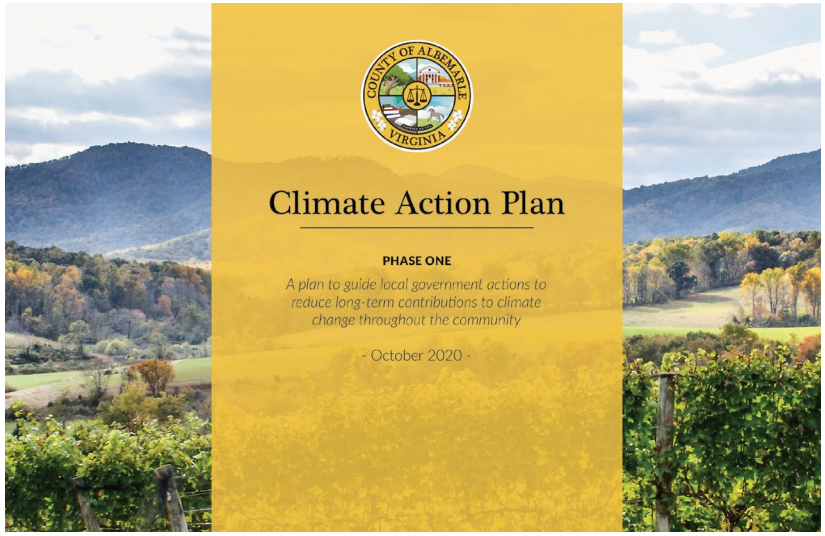
These plans and corridor studies can be found under separate cover and in the Appendix of this document.

As the term indicates, Topic Area Plans provide a more focused analysis for specific topic areas and typically include policies, and implementation strategies/recommendations. The values and visions articulated in the Comp Plan help inform the topic area plans and studies. In turn, the policies and recommendations of those plans inform the Comprehensive Plan and are adopted into the Comprehensive Plan by reference in the Appendix. Topic plans include, but are not limited to:

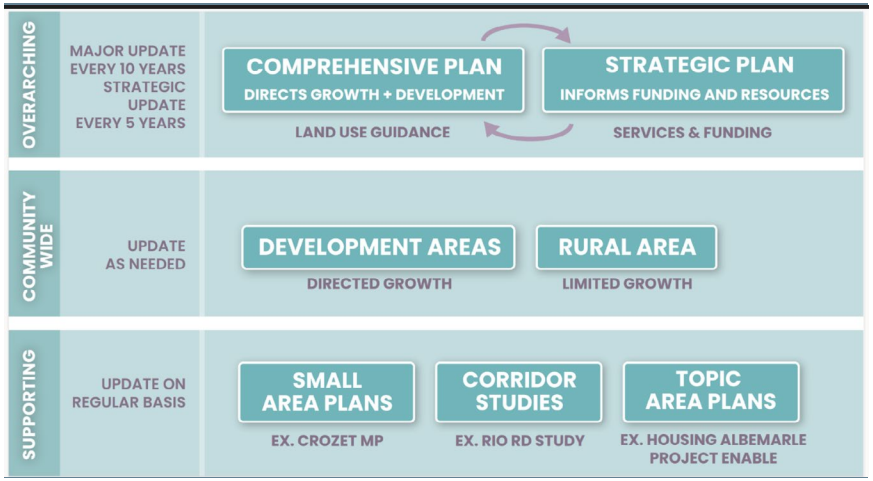
- *Housing Albemarle*
- *Climate Action Plan*
- *Economic Development Strategic Plan*



The Rio Road Corridor Plan was completed in 2022



The County's Climate Action Plan (2020) provides guidance to address climate change impacts



The County Strategic Plan directs resources and funding. Strategic Plan priorities are also aligned with Comprehensive Plan implementation.

IMAGE PLACEHOLDER

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COUNTY STRATEGIC PLAN

Strategic planning is used to set priorities and focus energy and resources to move organizations towards their vision. Albemarle County has used strategic planning for many years to inform policy development and financial decision-making and to achieve the community desires and values articulated in the County's Comprehensive Plan.

REGIONAL PLANNING

Albemarle County planning is influenced by the larger region within which the County is located. The County participates in several regional planning and service delivery organizations, including, but not limited to, the Thomas Jefferson Planning District (TJPDC), the Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO), the Central Virginia Partnership for Economic Development, and the Thomas Jefferson Regional Home Consortium, Land Use and Environmental Planning Committee (LUEPC), and the Charlottesville Albemarle Regional Transit Authority (CARTA). Working together, these organizations enable the exchange of information, coordinated planning for the future, avoiding duplication of services, and greater efficiency in the provision of infrastructure.

Thomas Jefferson Planning District Commission (TJPDC)

The TJPDC works with local government agencies to coordinate initiatives and develop effective solutions to meet the needs of the community. Services include planning, technical assistance, data and information gathering. This includes producing plans that cover the City of Charlottesville, the Counties of Albemarle, Fluvanna, Greene, Louisa, and Nelson. TJPDC is responsible for managing and coordinating several regional planning efforts and programs, including but not limited to the MPO/regional transportation planning, and regional hazard mitigation planning.

Charlottesville-Albemarle Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO)

A Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) is the policy board of an organization created and designated to carry out the metropolitan transportation planning process. MPOs are required to represent localities in all urbanized areas (UZAs) with populations over 50,000, as determined by the U.S. Census. The Charlottesville-Albemarle MPO is the forum for cooperative decision-making among Albemarle, Charlottesville, and State and Federal officials.

The MPO develops the Long-Range Transportation Plan (LRTP), which guides the development of an efficient transportation system for the region over the next 20 years and includes a specific list of projects to address mobility needs. It is required to be updated every 5 years with the last update occurring in 2024. The LRTP covers all of Charlottesville and the urbanizing portions of Albemarle County (Insert Map of MPO study area).

The Charlottesville-Albemarle Transportation Improvement Program (TIP)

The TIP is a document used to coordinate spending of federal transportation funds within the Charlottesville-Albemarle Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) region with significant state and local funds. The TIP is a prioritized listing/program of transportation projects that is developed and formally adopted by the MPO as part of the transportation planning process. Any project that will use federal funding (such as SMART SCALE or Revenue Sharing) or requires other federal funding must appear in the TIP .

Land Use and Environmental Planning Committee (LUEPC)

LUEPC, formerly known as The Planning & Coordination Council, was established in 1986 as part of a Three-Party agreement to promote cooperation in planning and community development among the City of Charlottesville, Albemarle County, and the University of Virginia. LUEPC consists of representatives from the County, City, University of Virginia, UVA Foundation, Rivanna Water and Sewer Authority

Figure 2: Geographic Area of Thomas Jefferson Planning District

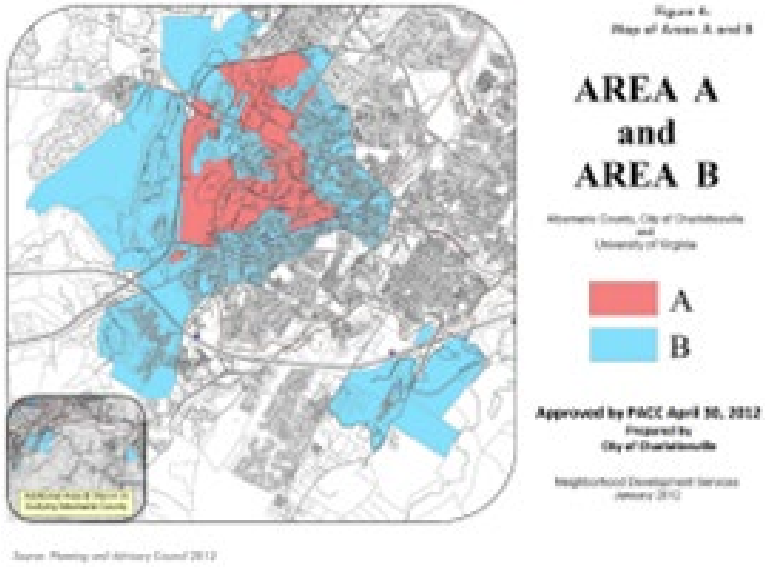


Source: TJPDC, 2013

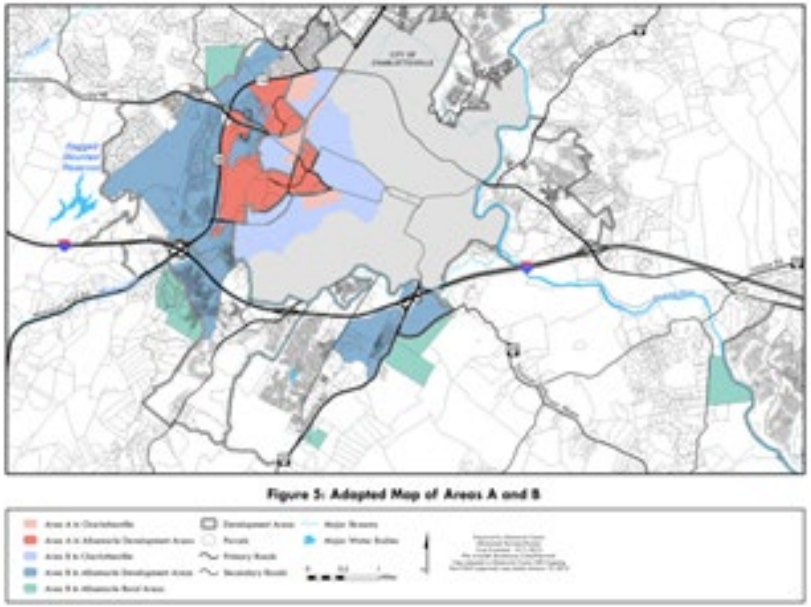
The Thomas Jefferson Planning District Commission (TJPDC) works with nearby counties to coordinate regional planning efforts

IMAGE PLACEHOLDER

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Map of Area A and B



Adopted Map of Area A and B

Three-Party Agreements

The Three-Party Agreement between the City of Charlottesville, Albemarle County, and the University of Virginia was established in 1986. The agreement outlines how the three entities will interact with each other on land use issues depending on which entity owns the land.

Area A – All properties now owned by UVA and its related foundation that are used for educational purposes.

Area B - Land that lies at the boundaries of the University in either the City or the County or has otherwise been designated as part of Area B, and on which the activities of any or all three of the parties might have a significant effect, as designated on the Map. Development in these areas continues to be guided by the current City and County Comprehensive Plans and the current University of Virginia Grounds Plan.

Area C – All land not included in Areas A and B.

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Town of Scottsville

Issues of regional interest and sustainability are not limited to the TJPDC, or the Three-Part Agreement. The Town of Scottsville, which is the only incorporated area in the County, is recognized as a designated Urban Development Area, equivalent to other Development Areas in the southeastern corner of the County. Scottsville includes approximately 961 acres and 536 residents within Albemarle, and 18 acres with 19 residents within Fluvanna.

Scottsville property owners, residents, and business owners pay real estate and property taxes to the County in which their property lies. Albemarle and Fluvanna Counties are responsible for providing Scottsville residents with the same level of services available to other county residents. Albemarle County delivers services such as schools, supplemental police protection to the Town's Police Department, fire and rescue services, social services, library access, parks and recreation, and utilities.

Unlike other designated Development Areas, however, Scottsville has its own governance. Land use and zoning are within the purview of the Town and not the County.

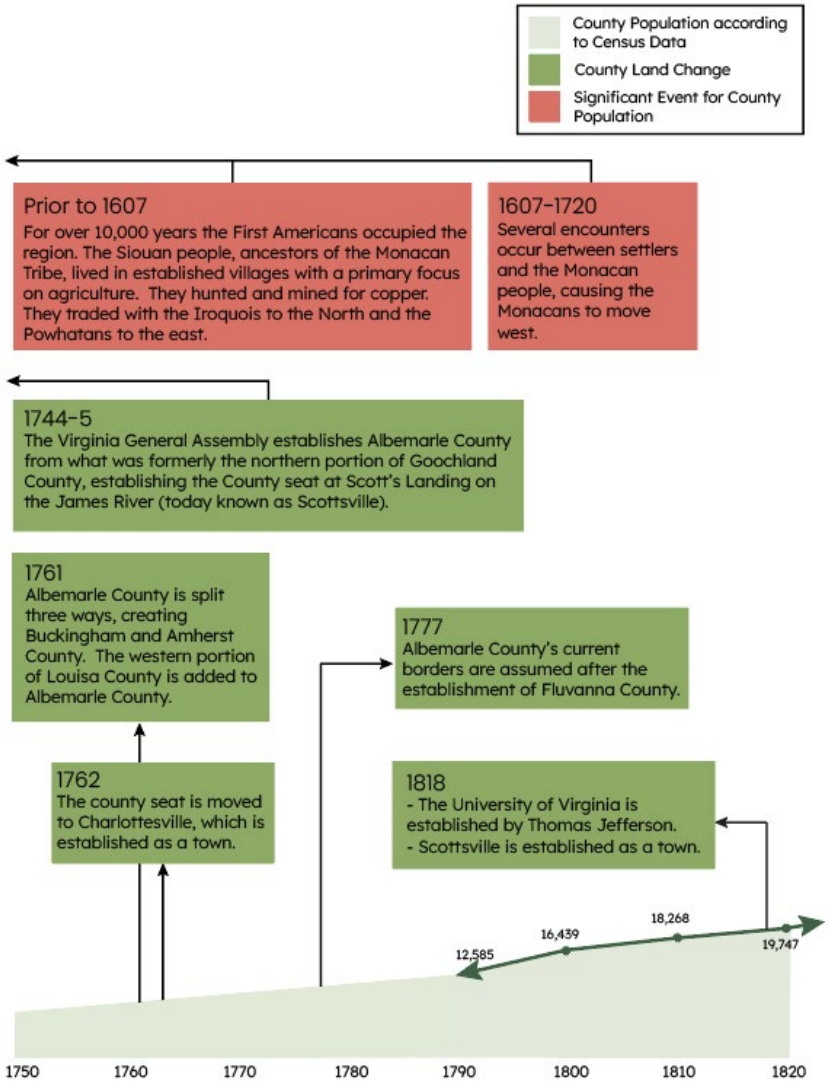
As an incorporated town, Scottsville plays a unique role in Albemarle County by offering amenities, shops, employment opportunities, and community services to both Town and County residents. Strategies for collaboration can be found in the Development Areas Chapter. A link to the Town of Scottsville's Comprehensive Plan is available in the Appendix.



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Albemarle County Timeline (1750-1820)

INTRODUCTION AND CONTEXT

A BRIEF HISTORY

Understanding Albemarle County's history provides important context to the current physical layout and form of development of our community. The following brief history is a summary of the structural and land use decisions, at the local and national level, that shaped our community. A more detailed version of the county's history, including its people and land use may be found within the Community Story section of the Part 4 Appendix.

While Albemarle County was officially established in 1744, its history extends back far beyond that year. By 1744, Native Americans had been living in the area for over 10,000 years. The Monacan Indian Nation is documented as having lived in Albemarle County for at least 1,000 years. As British colonists moved west across Virginia in the 1700s, they forced Native Americans from their lands. The Monacan Indian Nation, unwilling to enter into conflict with the colonists, relocated west with many members settling in present day Amherst County. Additional conflicts and discriminatory laws forced Monacans and other Native Americans to leave this area and even move out of Virginia. The Monacan Indian Nation was officially recognized by the Commonwealth of Virginia in 1989 and federally recognized in 2018.

Racial and ethnic disparities within the U.S. continued throughout the early and mid-1900's, a variety of public and private methods were used across the nation to exclude non-white residents from homeownership in specific neighborhoods and entire sections of localities. In Albemarle County, one of the most predominant exclusionary housing practices was the use of racial covenants to restrict where residents could live based on their race, ethnicity, or religion. A racial covenant is a binding legal obligation between buyer and seller that is written into the deed of a property to restrict who can live on a property based on race, ethnicity, or religion. While covenants restrict only individual properties, developers often wrote them into the deeds of entire neighborhoods

as houses were sold. The use of racial covenants became widespread throughout the country beginning in the 1920's, most often targeting Black Americans.

In 1948, the Supreme Court ruled that racial covenants cannot be enforced. While these racial covenants were no longer enforceable, they were still added to property deeds, and many remain today. It would be another 20 years until the Fair Housing Act was passed in 1968 prohibiting housing discrimination based on race. In the meantime, federal discriminatory lending practices continued. The federal government also provided localities with funding for 'slum clearance' and 'blight removal', which often meant the destruction of Black neighborhoods to make room for new projects such as highways. Annexation is a process for localities to expand their land area. In Virginia, cities are independent of counties. Cities are therefore able to acquire land from an adjacent County through annexation.

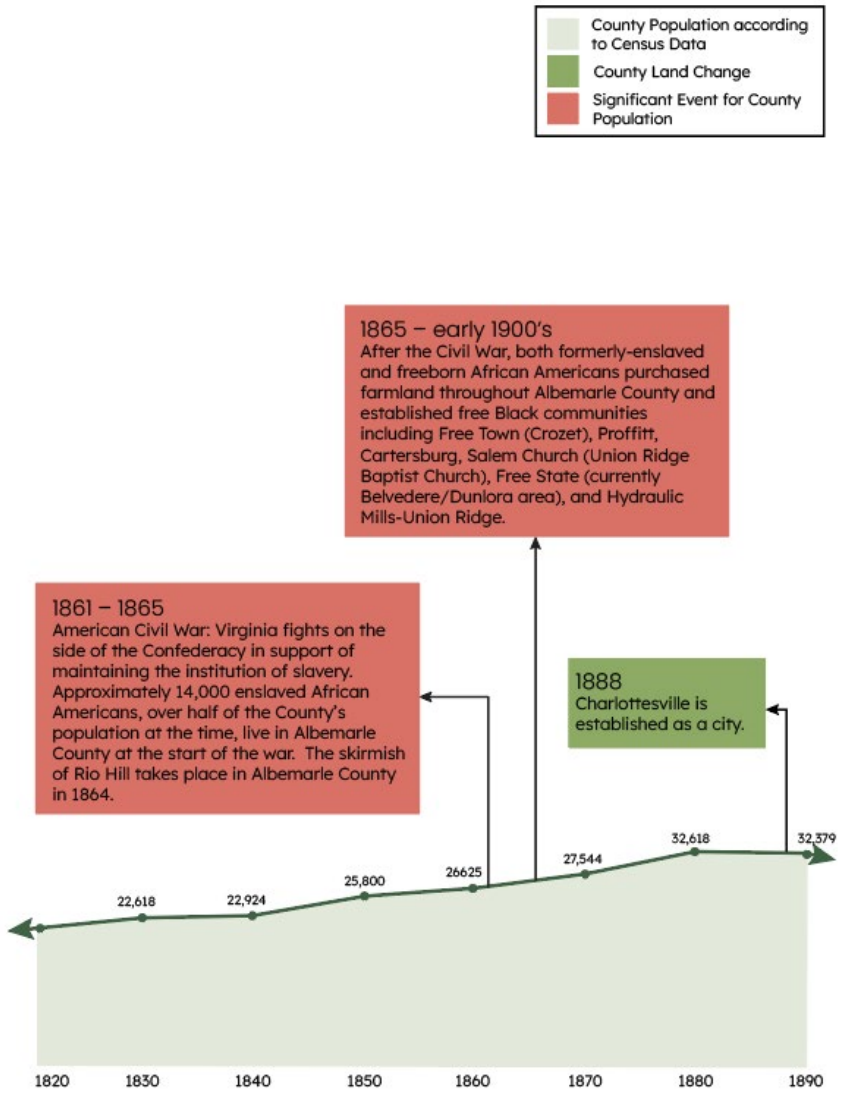
LOCAL PLANNING AND GROWTH HISTORY

Annexation is a process for localities to expand their land area. In Virginia, cities are independent of counties. Cities are therefore able to acquire land from an adjacent County through annexation.

Prior to 1900, the City of Charlottesville annexed land from Albemarle County about five times. These annexations were relatively small areas of land, totaling approximately 1.2 square miles. After 1900, Charlottesville annexed land from the County three times. These annexations were significantly larger areas of land and added over 7 square miles of land to Charlottesville, establishing the City's current boundaries. In 1972, the city attempted to annex about 12 square miles of County land, which ultimately failed.



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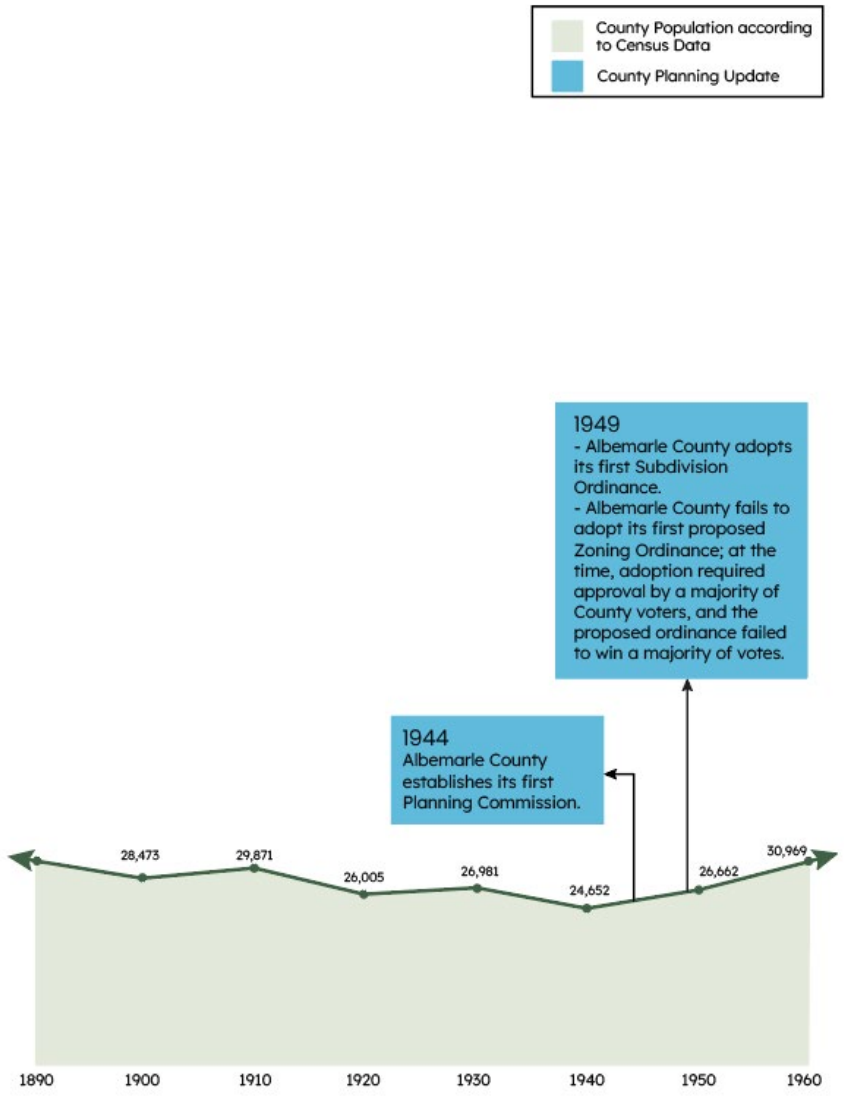
Albemarle County Timeline (1820-1890)

Tensions over annexation and the need to coordinate on public water supply planning led to the 1982 Annexation and Revenue Sharing Agreement between Charlottesville and Albemarle County, which remains in place today. Charlottesville gave up its authority to annex in exchange for the County to contribute a portion of its real property tax base to the City, which occurs annually as a part of the budget, according to the formula in the agreement.

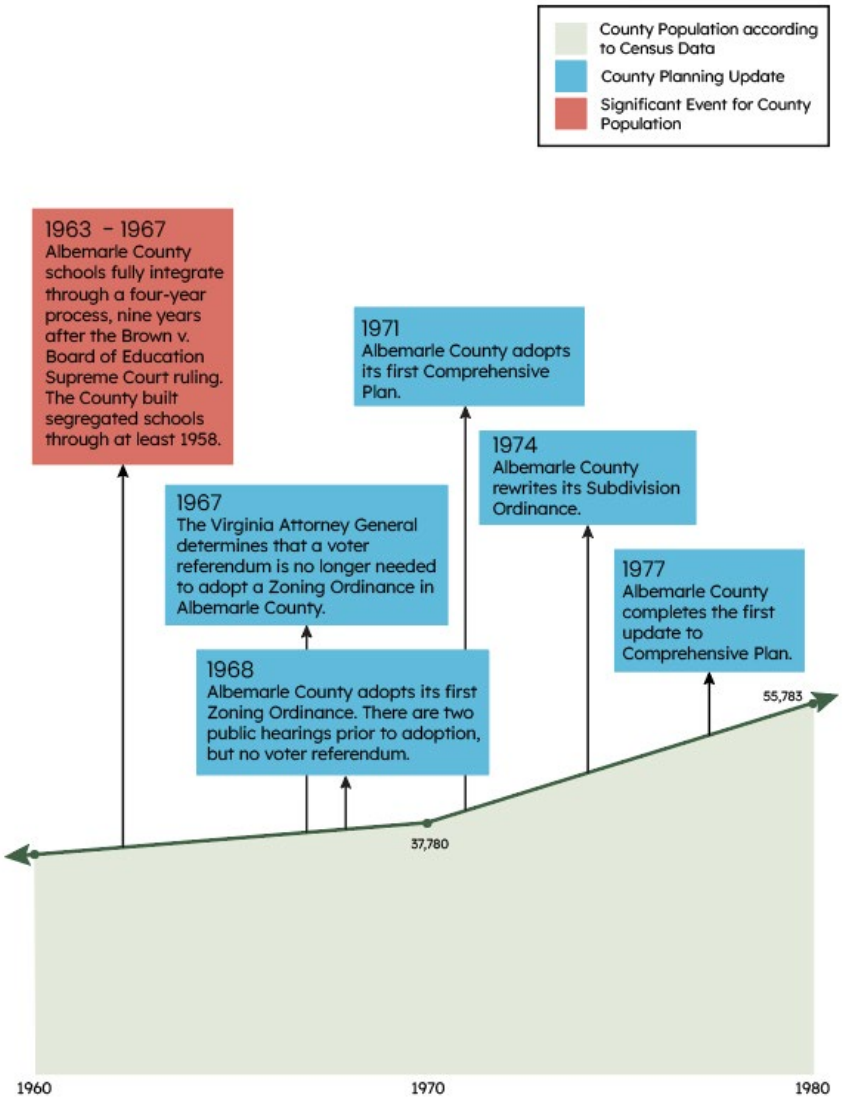
By 1962, the Albemarle County Board of Supervisors recognized that regulating where public water and sewer could be supplied could be used to incentivize development in certain areas and potentially protect against annexation . In 1964, the County established the Albemarle County Service Authority (ACSA). ACSA completed Beaver Creek Reservoir in 1965 and the sewer interceptor in 1988 to provide the existing community of Crozet with public water and sewer. In 1964, the County also adopted Service Authority Project Areas to establish where public water and/or public sewer service would be provided. These Project Areas were mapped and adopted as the ACSA Jurisdictional Area in 1982 . The ACSA Jurisdictional Area remains in place today and has been amended over the years. The boundaries primarily correspond with the Development Areas, however there are some areas with public water or public sewer (or both) that are located within the Rural Area.

At the same time as the water and sewer Project Areas were being established, the State Water Control Board mandated that the City and County coordinate on their watershed planning efforts, including merging utilities. These efforts resulted in the establishment of the Rivanna Water and Sewer Authority (RWSA) in 1972. A subsequent State mandate required a single regional wastewater treatment facility to serve the Charlottesville-Albemarle urban area, which was established at Moore's Creek. Interceptor lines would carry waste from Crozet and the outlying communities to the regional facility. These facilities made it unlikely to use small 'package' sewer treatment facilities to service the outlying villages that were designated in the 1971 Comprehensive Plan, as smaller and separated public sewer systems would no longer be achievable.

The County adopted its first Zoning Ordinance in 1969 and its first Comprehensive Plan in 1971. The first Comprehensive Plan established the County's first Growth Management Policy, directing growth into the Urban Area (similar to Neighborhoods 1-7), five Communities, and 14 Villages. Encouraging development in the designated Development Areas was intended to reduce sprawl, protect natural resources, and provide public services and utilities more efficiently. The 1971 Comp Plan also directed new public utilities, including public water and sewer, to these Development Areas. At the time, most of the new residential development was built in the Rural Area. Subsequent Comprehensive Plan updates occurred in 1977, 1982, 1989, 1996, and 2015. Each update



Albemarle County Timeline (1890-1960)



Albemarle County Timeline (1960-1980)

upheld the Growth Management Policy, with a much greater emphasis on using the Development Areas effectively and encouraging more walkable, mixed-use, and dense communities as time went on. Of note in 1980, there was a major comprehensive rezoning of the County, which downzoned areas located within water supply watersheds previously zoned for urban development to rural area zoning. This action was taken to protect the quality of drinking water supplies and reduced the acreage of the Development Areas. Other zoning ordinance and map changes during the same time frame were made to bring zoning regulations into conformance with other recommendations of the Comprehensive Plan at that time.



	Residential (approx 1-2 units/acre)	Residential (approx 2-6 units/acre)	Residential (approx 6-34 units/acre)	Industrial	Mixed Use/Commercial/ Office	Open Space and Parks (in the Development Areas)
1971 Comp Plan	31.12%	20.85%	3.21%	4.38%	2.09%	30.14%
1977 Comp Plan	23.19%	32.99%	4.90%	4.70%	1.98%	31.87%
1982 Comp Plan	10.46%	42.84%	16.07%	3.04%	7.64%	11.89%
1989 Comp Plan	15.85%	40.22%	12.22%	9.52%	6.19%	12.47%
1996 Comp Plan	0%	54.97%	9.24%	10.07%	23.01%	1.54%
2015 Comp Plan	7.89%	30.04%	9.68%	7.19%	14.95%	30.25%

This table shows the approximate percentages of land area dedicated to the general land use catagories in each Comprehensive Plan within the Development Areas. These estimates were calculated using GIS after digitizing the 1971-1996 Comp Plan land use maps. It should be noted that these are estimates and that not all percentages add up to 100%, as there are some gaps (unmarked designations) within the Development Areas in the 1971-1996 maps.)

Land Use and Climate Change

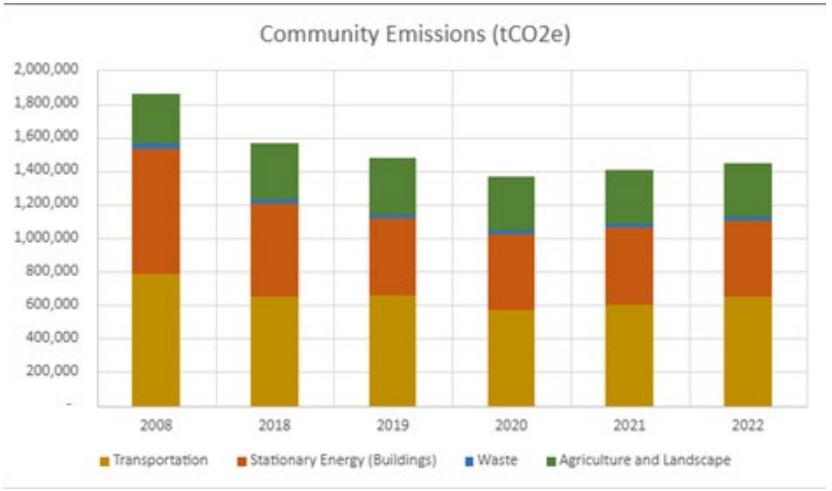
Land use decisions across the planet have contributed to climate change in numerous ways, and Albemarle County is no exception. Communities across the globe have contributed to the climate crisis for centuries, with limited knowledge of those contributions and impacts until recent decades. However, the current data and research on climate impacts requires recognition of how previous practices have contributed to the problem so that our community can be part of the solution going forward.

Converting forested land to cropland, pasture, and other land uses has increased Earth's surface reflectance by 0.2 watts per square meter. These changes occurred throughout the globe over previous centuries, including notable changes within the US, dating back to 1750. Vegetation also contributes water vapor to the atmosphere through evapotranspiration, and removal of that vegetation leads to warming and to decreased carbon sequestration. Greenhouse gas emissions, including carbon dioxide, methane, and nitrous oxide, have been the primary driver of the climate crisis since the Industrial Revolution. How humans allocate and develop land has a significant influence on those emissions. Development patterns within the U.S., particularly throughout the 20th Century, were highly dependent upon automobiles. Land uses became more dispersed, with places of employment and commerce located further and further away from new residential areas. The increased sprawl further reinforced the need for personal vehicles to provide essential connections to everyday needs. This trend has also led to under-investment in transit systems and infrastructure for walking and cycling. Continued subsidies for fossil fuel infrastructure alongside under-investment in renewable energy sources has strengthened the reliance on fossil fuels to heat and power buildings. A global food supply chain that relies upon the use of chemical fertilizers, pesticides, and inefficient livestock practices have shaped the landscape of our food, textiles, and fuel since the Second World War. Particularly in the U.S., an ingrained consumer culture generates excessive waste that continues to overburden landfills with materials emitting greenhouse gases. These are all part of our community's contributions, and we have an opportunity to be part of the solution moving forward.

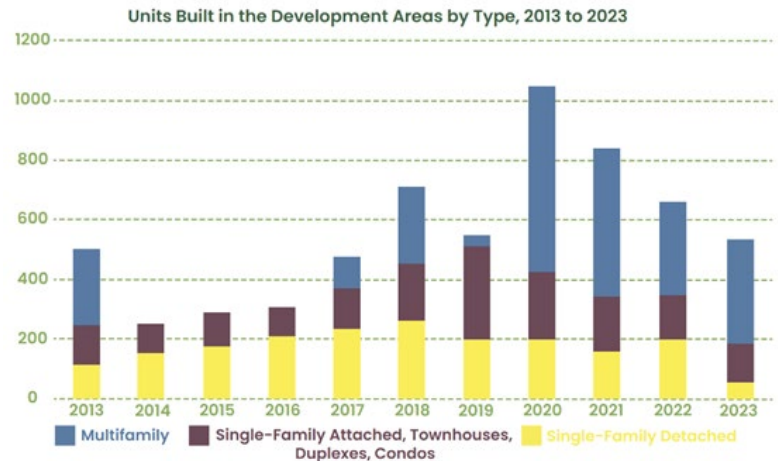
RECENT TRENDS

While the Virginia State code requires the Comprehensive Plan to be reviewed every five years, it is also important to periodically revisit and update the plan to ensure it is responsive to changing community needs and its vision for the future. Important trends and changes used to inform this Comprehensive Plan update include residential and business growth, new and updated local policies, plans, and priorities, and new state code provisions. Many of these trends are included in Part III chapters and are organized by topic. Some overarching trends that informed this Comprehensive Plan update include:

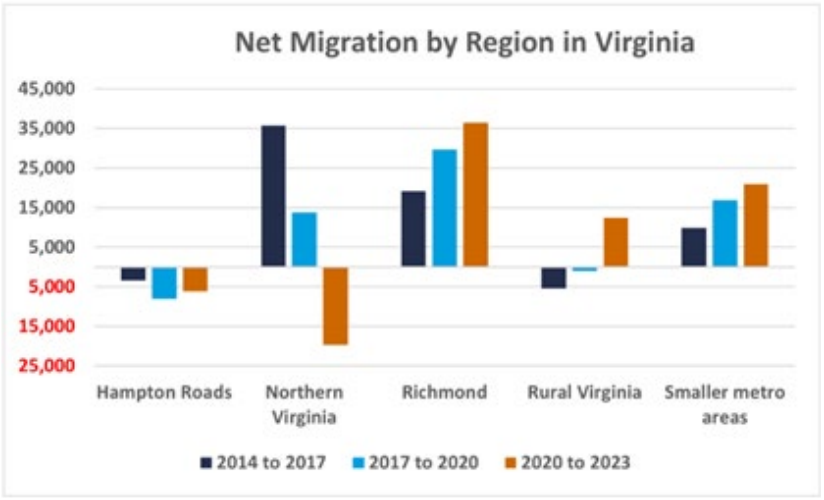
- In the next 20 years, Albemarle County is expected to have continued growth with an estimated 31,000 new residents living in the County by 2044. [See appendix for 2025 Buildout Analysis]
- Based on U.S. Census data, the County's population increased approximately 13.6 percent from 2010 to 2020. Along with this growth, there has been an increasing demand for urban services and infrastructure, including parks, broadband, school capacity, and transportation improvements.
- According to the County's Greenhouse Gas Emissions Inventories, our emissions have been on a generally downward trend since our baseline year of 2008. However, after a decrease related to the Covid pandemic in 2020, emissions began to rise.
- While the median household income and housing values continue to rise in the county, growth and change have not been experienced uniformly across all community members. As shown in the Albemarle County Equity Profile, co-authored by Albemarle County's Office of Equity and Inclusion and the UVA Equity Center, over 29% of Albemarle County households were ALICE – or Asset Limited, Income Constrained, Employed households, and an additional 8% of county households were living in poverty (according to the latest 2023 data).



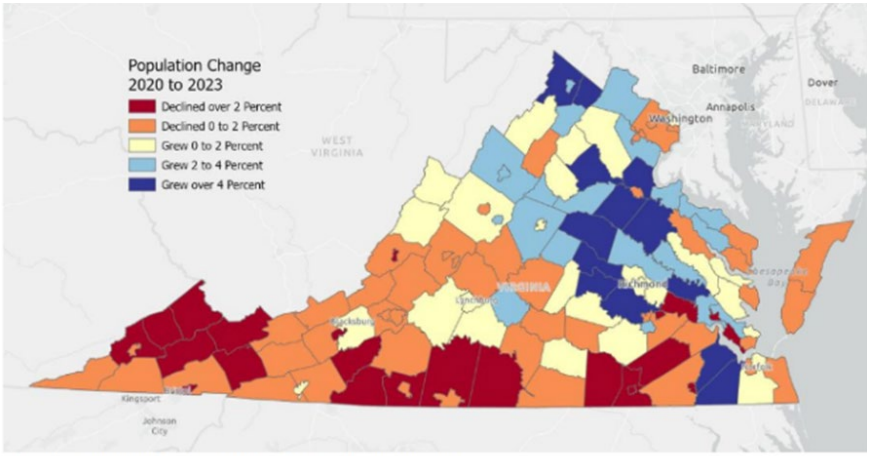
Following the baseline year of 2008, emissions inventories have been completed each year from 2018-2022. The biggest source of our community emissions come from transportation, followed by energy use in buildings.



Between 2013 and 2023, approximately 39 percent of the total housing units built in the Development Areas have been multifamily units, followed by single-family detached (31 percent) and single-family attached/townhouses (28 percent). The remaining 2 percent were duplexes, mobile homes, and accessory apartments.



According to a Weldon Cooper Center study, Virginia residents are moving from larger metro areas to rural counties and small metros.



– Source: Weldon Cooper Center Population Estimates

Albemarle County was one of about half of the counties in Virginia that experienced population growth between 2020 and 2023.

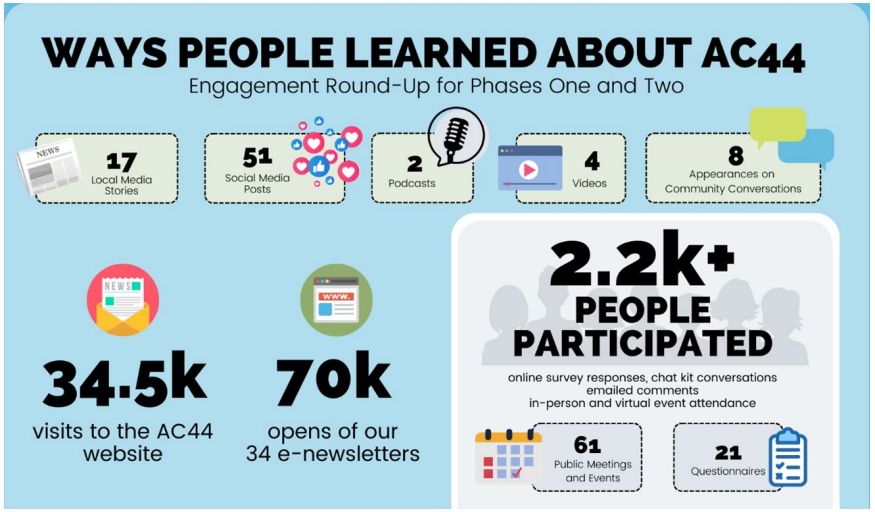
- Between 2012 and 2022, the percentage of residents in Albemarle County over the age of 65 increased from approximately 15.5% of all County residents to 20.7%.
- During the same period (2012-2022), the average county household size decreased from 2.45 people per household to 2.38 people per household.
- Continued U.S. population growth is expected, but at a slower rate than previous years. The South and West regions are expected to gain population, while the Northeast and Midwest are predicted to shrink after 2030. By 2030, approximately one in five people in the U.S. will be over the age of 65. (Weldon Cooper Center)
- According to the County's Climate Vulnerability and Risk Assessment, over the last 30 years Albemarle County has seen an increase in the number of days over 95 and 100 degrees Fahrenheit, the number of days when rainfall will bring more than 1" or 2" of water, and a decrease in the number of days with below freezing temperatures.
- The rise in remote work, e-commerce, available broadband, and desire for outdoor recreation has continued the trend of people moving within the U.S. from larger metros to rural counties and smaller metros (fewer than 250,000 residents). In 2023, rural counties and small metros 'became the top destination for people moving within the country for the first time in decades.' (Weldon Cooper Center)
- Mirroring national trends, many people moving within Virginia are moving from larger metro areas (especially Northern Virginia) to rural counties and small metros. (Weldon Cooper Center)

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

Albemarle County's community engagement approach for the AC44 Comprehensive Plan update utilized a process grounded in transparency, inclusivity, and phased participation. The County structured engagement over multiple years and plan phases, combining in-person events, online questionnaires, virtual sessions, and targeted outreach to gather diverse community input. Each phase of the process was designed to build upon the previous one, starting with foundational policy review, progressing through exploration of land use and transportation options, and culminating in detailed feedback on draft goals, objectives, and actions. An Engagement Process Summary in the Appendix section provides a detailed account of the AC44 engagement history and methods.

The engagement process was designed to elevate voices from across the County and ensure that key themes such as equity and resilience were reflected in the plan. Tools such as "chat kits," interactive open houses, and targeted meetings with boards and community groups helped inform the Plan's development while encouraging ongoing public dialogue. Public input was incorporated in an ongoing process to shape plan content, from the initial Growth Management Policy evaluation to the refinement of planning toolkits and future land use recommendations.

Overall, Albemarle County's engagement process for the AC44 Plan exemplifies a responsive, adaptive, and community-centered approach to long-range planning, fostering a shared vision for a more equitable and resilient future.



Throughout the AC44 process the County engaged the public and sought feedback in various ways. The AC44 website was used extensively for sharing information and receiving public input.

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT THEMES

Housing that is affordable and accesible

Community input emphasized that everyone in the community should have access to housing they can afford and maintain, and that is safe and healthy.

Protected and restored natural environment

Protecting and restoring the natural environment continues to be a top priority for our community, including for the benefit of native plants and animals, recreation and access to nature, water quality, scenic beauty, and community enjoyment.

Vibrant mixed-use centers in the Development Areas

Community input identified the vision for the Development Areas, including neighborhoods with a variety of housing types that are walkable to businesses, services, jobs, and parks, protected and restored natural areas, vibrant and connected Activity Centers, and efficient use of land and infrastructure.

Multimodal transportation choices

Community input emphasized the importance of safe, affordable, and comfortable transportation options for walking, biking, transit, and driving.

Rural Area with small-scale rural communities and protected natural environment, historic, cultural, and scenic resources

Community input identified the key elements of the Rural Area, including small-scale rural communities that support surrounding community members, protected and restored natural areas, celebrated historic and cultural resources, and working farms.



Public ameneties such as trails and shared use paths are important to our community members

Access to parks and trails

Community input underscored the importance of having parks, trails, community centers, and natural areas throughout the county. Parks are a critical aspect of quality of life and well-being.

Resilient and healthy community

Community input highlighted the importance of ensuring our community is resilient to impacts and shocks to our environment and economy, including due to the effects of climate change. A resilient community is better prepared for and able to recover from natural hazards, storms, and economic downturns.

County Mission and Vision

The Comprehensive Plan is strongly tied to Albemarle County's Strategic Plan through our established Mission and Vision. Implementation of the Comprehensive Plan is essential for well-being and quality of life, including affordable and accessible housing, transportation choices, a healthy natural environment, places to recreate and enjoy nature, and access to public services and facilities. The Growth Management Policy supports the prudent use of public funds through more efficient and cost-effective service delivery.

The County's Vision identifies many of the building blocks needed to achieve well-being and quality of life.

Albemarle County Mission

To enhance the well-being and quality of life for all community members through the provision of the highest level of public service consistent with the prudent use of public funds.

Albemarle County Vision

Albemarle County envisions a community with the following, for present and future generations.

- Abundant natural, rural, historic, and scenic resources
- Healthy ecosystems
- Active and vibrant development areas
- A physical environment that supports healthy lifestyles
- A thriving economy
- Exceptional educational opportunities

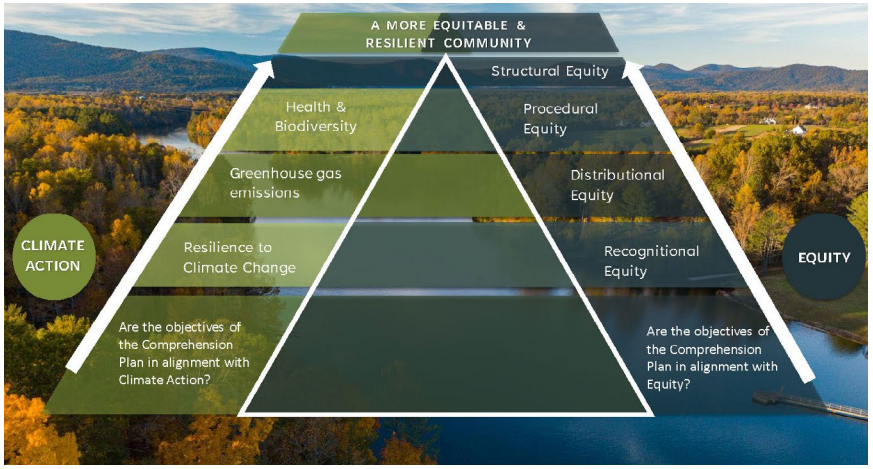
The County's Mission and Values envisions these foundational aspects for all community members. Additionally, several elements of our vision are well-aligned with climate action. We cannot have healthy ecosystems or abundant natural resources without actively working to stabilize our climate. Dense, vibrant, and multi-modal development areas are essential for achieving our climate goals. Achieving a modal shift away from personal vehicles to being a place where community members can walk and bike to school, work, and commercial centers will increase healthy lifestyles while reducing our greenhouse gas emissions. Although there is an inherent tension between continuous economic growth, the planet, and a community with finite resources, we can certainly focus our economy on sectors that are more aligned with our environmental needs.

Equity and Climate Action Lens

As stated above, the County's mission is to enhance community well-being through high-quality public service and responsible financial stewardship. Through numerous resolutions, comments to staff, and other actions, the Albemarle County Board of Supervisors has consistently emphasized the paramount importance of centering equity and climate action in our organization and service to the community. The Equity and Climate Action (ECA) Lens is a method of revealing information that can create opportunities for the benefit of our community.

Merely stating that we need to prioritize equity and climate action in our service to the community does not guarantee successful outcomes. Achieving these outcomes requires effectively integrating an understanding of equity and climate impacts across the organization and county planning. By consistently incorporating the perspectives of equity and climate action in our work now, we will be setting ourselves up for a resilient, equitable, and thriving community in the coming decades. This would not only align with our Strategic Vision/Plan for the County, but in addition, integrating equity and climate action into this comprehensive plan is well-aligned with our County's Values.

- Integrity: Honest and fair treatment often means relying on data to ensure all community members benefit as we achieve our goals. Various local and statewide studies help us to understand where we have work to do and help to facilitate necessary conversations.
- Innovation: As our community continues to grow and evolve, our challenges require new solutions. We must actively pursue creative approaches to social disparities, environmental impacts, and community involvement to reach our goals.



Equity and Climate action are vital for community well-being

- Stewardship: Our value of stewardship is inherently future-focused. We must ensure that our natural, physical, social, and financial systems are improved for all community members, present and future.
- Learning: Education must be an integral process for our growth as a community, both inside and outside of the classroom. Solving the problems of climate change and social disparities will require continuous and collective learning to address the needs of our community and the ones who serve it.
- Community: We are committed to enhancing the well-being for all community members through equitable & inclusive services and strategic planning of a "Resilient, Equitable & Engaged Community."

Equity

Community Wellbeing is integral to our work as public servants. As we strive to build, maintain and sustain a thriving community for all, careful considerations for the community we serve should inform our planning and development. In the Albemarle County Equity Profile (2021), "figures indicate that the County is becoming increasingly racially/ethnically diverse. Albemarle County is also home to a substantial number of foreign-born residents and older residents (over age 60). Such diversity requires that the County consider opportunities to deliver culturally sensitive public services to these respective groups." To build a thriving community for all, a continual process of action, reflection, and analysis of fair outcomes must be prioritized. This requires a commitment to learning and understanding quantified and qualitative metrics pertaining to existing disparities in quality of life, health, education, economic opportunity, access to resources and services, as well as the historical and present causes and conditions of such disparities. Furthermore, as we strategize and implement present and future plans, meaningful involvement and community engagement should demographically reflect the community we serve, including members of historically underrepresented groups. More information on community demographics and quality of life measures may be found in the Community Story section of the Appendix.

Climate Action

Climate action includes reducing our community's greenhouse gas emissions – climate change mitigation – and preparing for the impacts of the climate crisis that are baked into our future – climate change adaptation. Recommendations related to climate action cross all the Comprehensive Plan chapters and include recommendations incorporated throughout the Growth Management Policy. These connections are visible in the County's Climate Action Plan's vision, which is to:

- benefit the health of all residents.
- protect the local natural environment.
- stimulate the creation of green jobs to support a thriving local economy.
- promote education on climate action for youth and adults; and
- contribute to a more equitable community, with the benefits of climate action programs easily accessible and affordable for every resident regardless of socio-economic status.



Caption Text

Local climate action delivers multiple benefits, including economic growth, community health, and environmental protection while reducing greenhouse gas emissions. Preserving forests and planting trees enhances wildlife habitat, sequesters carbon, improves watershed health, and mitigates flood risk. Preserving and restoring biodiversity in turn makes Albemarle County a more enjoyable place to live, work, and visit. Increasing the health of the local natural environment also helps to preserve the character of rural and wild places in the county for generations to come.



Caption Text



Caption Text

Climate change impacts community members unequally, with extreme heat (days over 90 degrees) disproportionately affecting outdoor workers and those with inefficient HVAC systems or inadequate home insulation. Equitable climate action planning ensures benefits for everyone in the community, prevents worsening existing disparities, and addresses existing inequities. Meaningful engagement with underserved communities in program development enhances service quality for everyone.

Because humans have done little to address the causes of climate change over several decades, we will be unable to avoid the effects of the crisis in the coming years. Therefore, we must adapt to those climate-driven hazards, such as increased drought, increased rainfall, and increased heat. To address that adaptation need, the County is the process of developing a climate resilience plan through the Resilient Together project, a collaboration with Charlottesville and the University of Virginia. Resilience means adapting systems to mitigate the impacts of climate change and improving our response when disasters strike, strengthening emergency response, and fostering community networks when a disaster cannot be avoided. Resilience also involves anticipating and thriving amid climate challenges while safeguarding quality of life, reliable infrastructure, economic vitality, and resource conservation for present and future generation alike. Like climate action, resilience is integrated throughout the Comprehensive Plan.

GUIDING PRINCIPLES

The four Guiding Principles for the Comprehensive Plan began as a set of four 'Big Ideas' that were heard through extensive community input. The Big Ideas provided a guide for where we want to go and what we want to work towards as a community, with an aspirational view of Albemarle County in the year 2044

The Guiding Principles that were developed also reflect the Board's priorities for incorporating equity and climate action throughout the Plan. The Guiding Principles present a snapshot of a community that has centered equity and resilience in its policies, plans, and actions. It will be a community that is resilient to challenges (including climate change) and where all people can thrive.

The Guiding Principles build a foundation for the Plan's objectives and actions. They identify areas where there was significant common ground and consistent themes heard through community engagement. Additionally, they provide a vision for where we want to end up, and the Plan's Objectives, Actions, and policies work to move our community toward that vision. The principles are outlined below with just a few example characteristics. For additional information see "Framework for an Equitable and Resilient Community" located in the Appendix.



The Guiding Principle Examples