

Community Story

QUALITY OF LIFE, WELLBEING, & EQUITY

As Albemarle County continues to evolve, it maintains strong rankings across various quality of life indicators, including life expectancy, median income, and access to knowledge. According to the 2021 Albemarle County Equity Profile, Albemarle County has a score of 7.42 on the American Human Development Index (AHDI). This index is created using these quality of life factors to assess an area's residents' well-being. Virginia's overall AHDI score is 5.8.

While Albemarle County overall has a high household median income, high access to education, and above-average life expectancy, there are significant differences in these quality of life factors across the County. The Equity Profile uses data at the census tract level to look at differences by location in the County. For example, AHDI scores in the County range from 9.5 in North Garden (census tract 112.02) to 5.2 in Oak Hill, Old Lynchburg Road (census tract 113.02).

The following series of maps provide a detailed view of quality-of-life indicators across Albemarle County. These measures of well-being vary considerably by location and even within the same Development Area. As we advance the implementation the Comprehensive Plan, this data will serve as a valuable tool in addressing disparities and ensuring equitable access to resources throughout the County.

Albemarle County AHDI (2023)

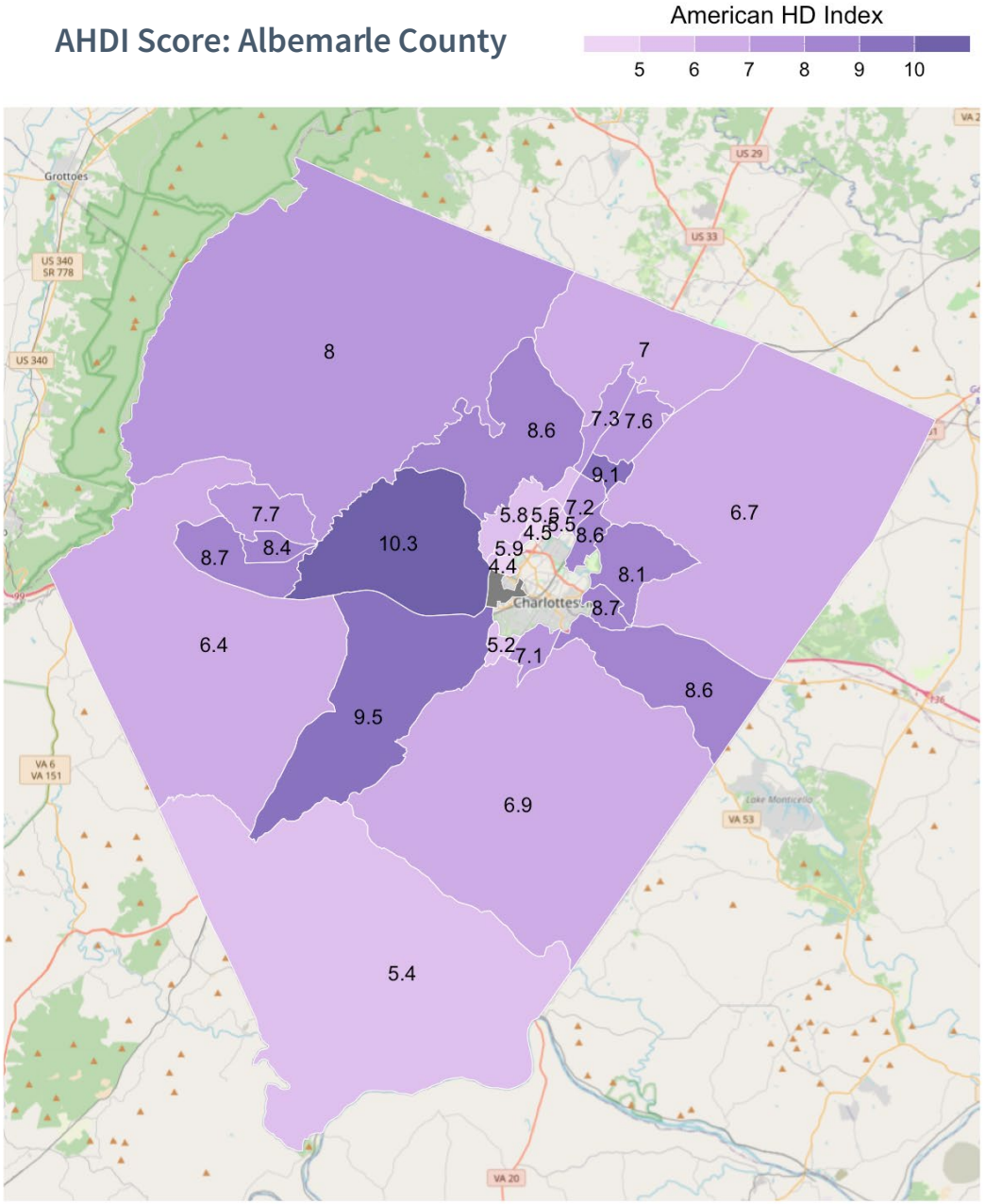
The first map is the 2023 American Human Development Index (AHDI) estimates for each census tract in Albemarle County. This index is a metric to assess well-being and equity across health, access to education, and living standards. It is intended to show where disparities in well-being exist and can be used to inform policy updates to enhance equity for all community members.





Quality of life is impacted by many factors including health and wellness, income and access to knowledge. Images: pedestrian bridge at Woolen Mills (upper) and Northside Library (lower).

AHDI Score: Albemarle County



10.3 Ivy
9.5 North Garden
9.1 Polo Grounds Road
8.7 Old Trail
8.7 Pantops
8.6 Dunlora-Stone Henge
8.6 Earlysville
8.4 Village of Rivanna
8.4 Western Ridge-Westhall
8.1 Darden-Key West
8 Free Union
7.7 Crozet-Beaver Creek
7.6 Hollymead
7.3 Berkmar Drive
7.2 Woodbrook-Carrsbrook
7.1 Avon Street Ext.-Mill Creek
7 Charlottesville-Albemarle Airport
6.9 Monticello, Carters Mountain
6.7 Stony Point-Keswick
6.4 Yancey Mills, Batesville
5.9 Barracks-Hessian Hills
5.8 Albemarle High School
5.5 Branchland
5.4 Commonwealth-Townwood-Berkmar
5.4 Southern Albemarle-Scottsville
5.2 Oak Hill, Southwood
4.5 Hydraulic
4.4 Old Ivy-Darden School (UVA)

American Human Development Index Map, source: ACS, 2023

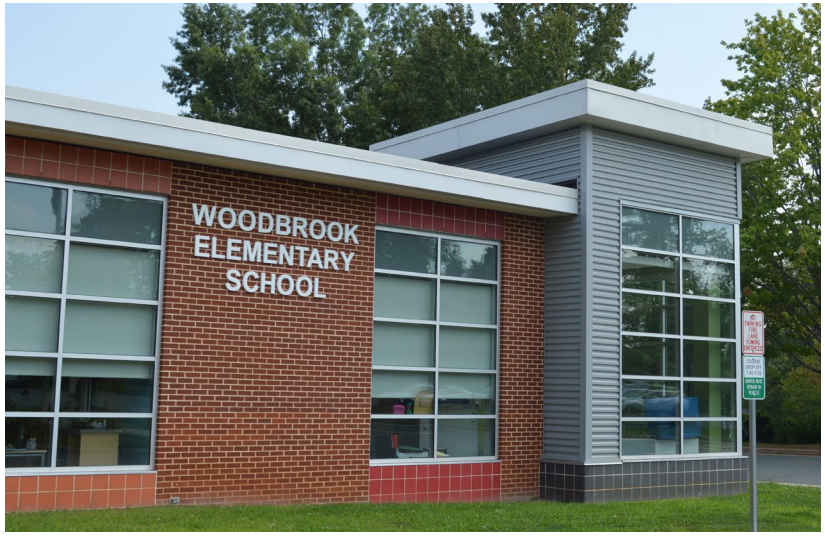
Albemarle County Median Household Income (2023)

While the county's overall median household income is relatively high, many cost of living factors in the area are also high, especially housing costs. Median household income ranges in the county from $41,000 to $183,000 by census tract. The county's overall median household income is $102,600. The corresponding map provides median household income data (by census tract) from the American Community Survey (ACS) US Census Bureau, 2023.

Albemarle County Educational Attainment (2023)

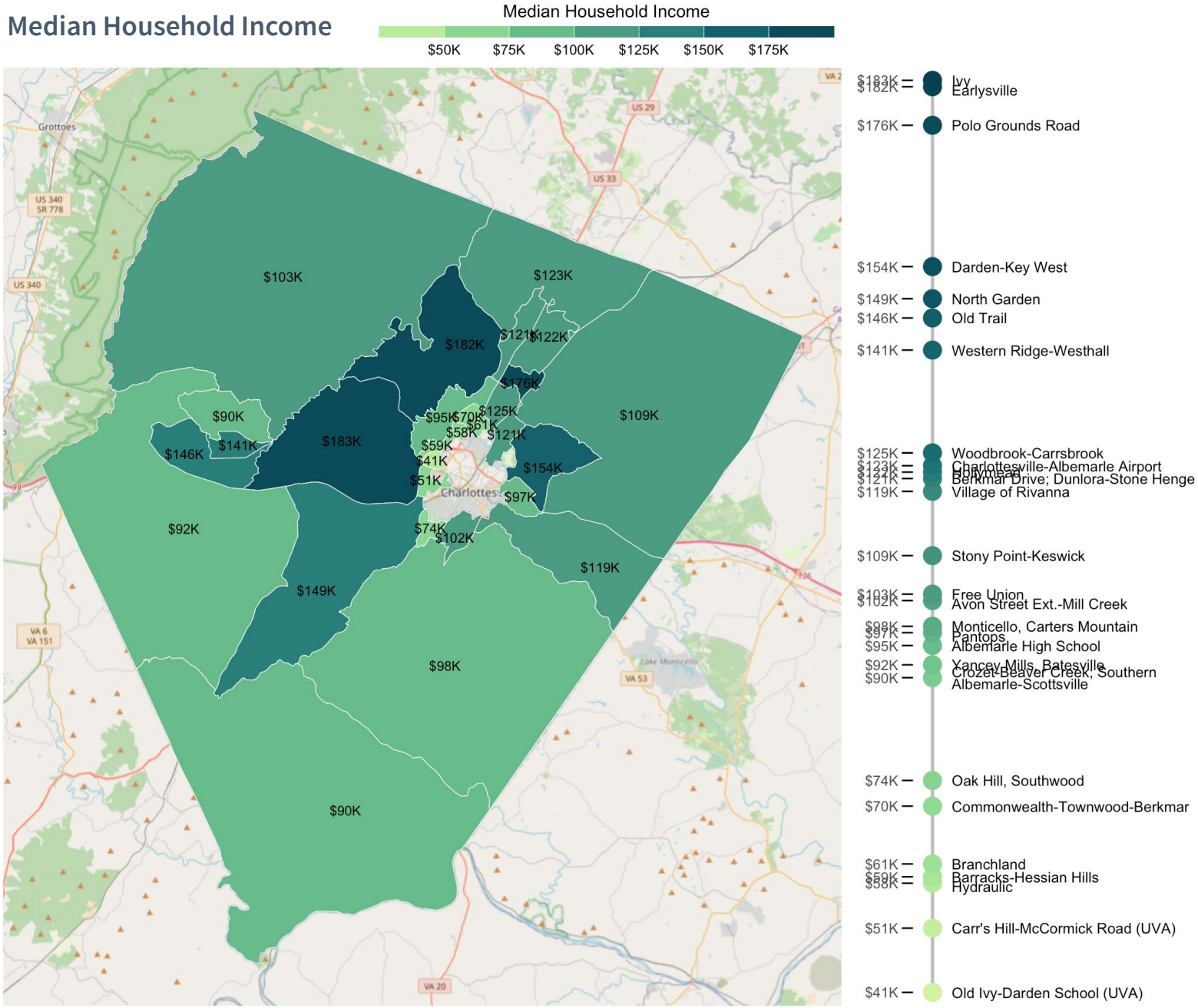
Educational attainment varies throughout the county by location. As noted in the Albemarle County Equity Profile, education is connected to income, which in turn affects the resources and basic needs that people are able to afford. Figures range from 37% to 86% of County community members that have a Bachelor's degree or higher (for those over 25 years old). Bachelor's degree attainment varies greatly by race and ethnicity, as 65% of white adults hold a bachelor's degree or higher compared to 31% of Black adults and 36% of Hispanic adults. Additionally, 1 out of 5 Hispanic residents in the County have less than a high school diploma—the highest percent of any racial/ethnic group present in this data





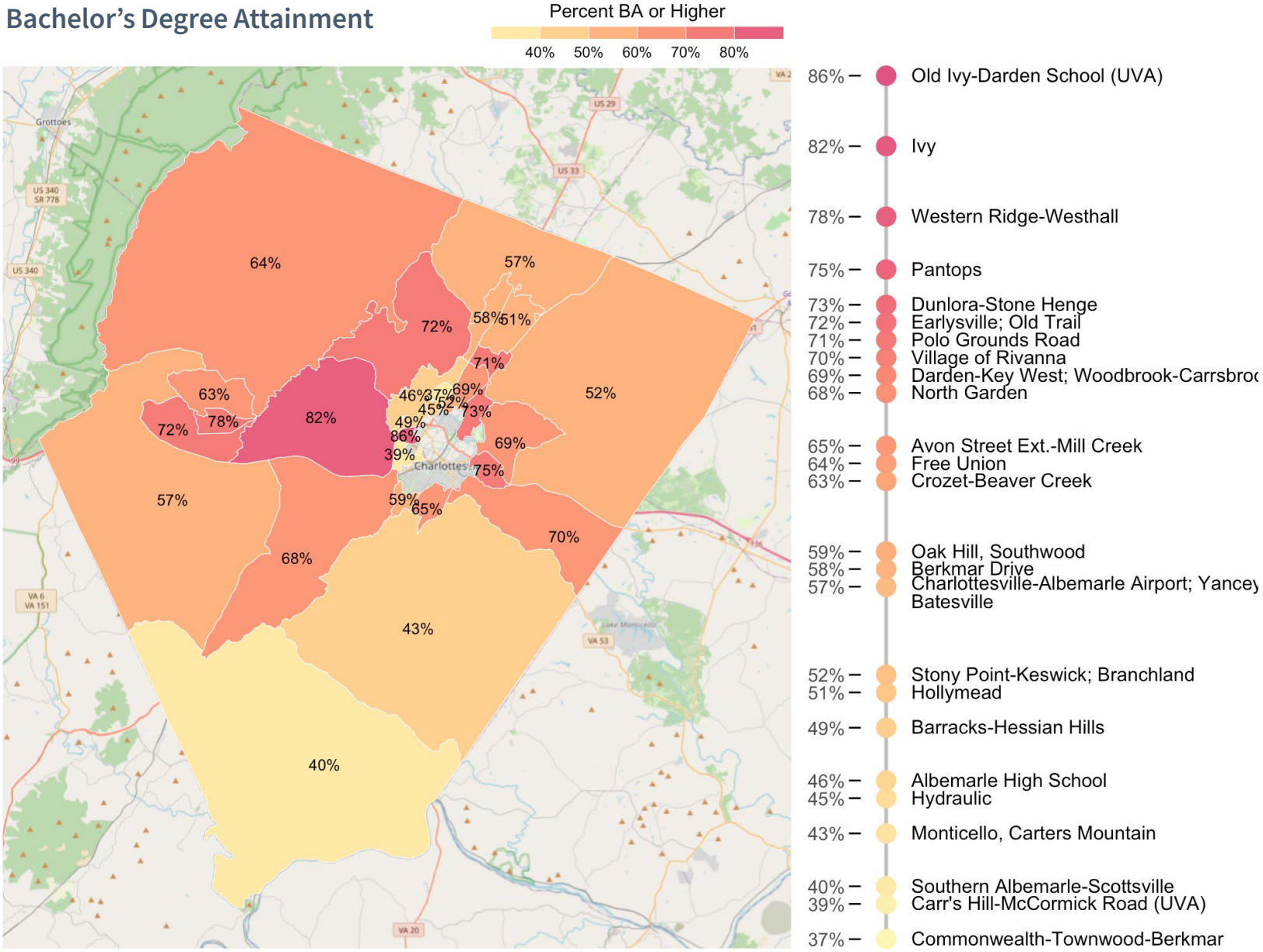
Household income and educational attainment rate varies across different areas of the county and by race and ethnicity.

Median Household Income



Albemarle County Median Household Income, source: ACS, 2023

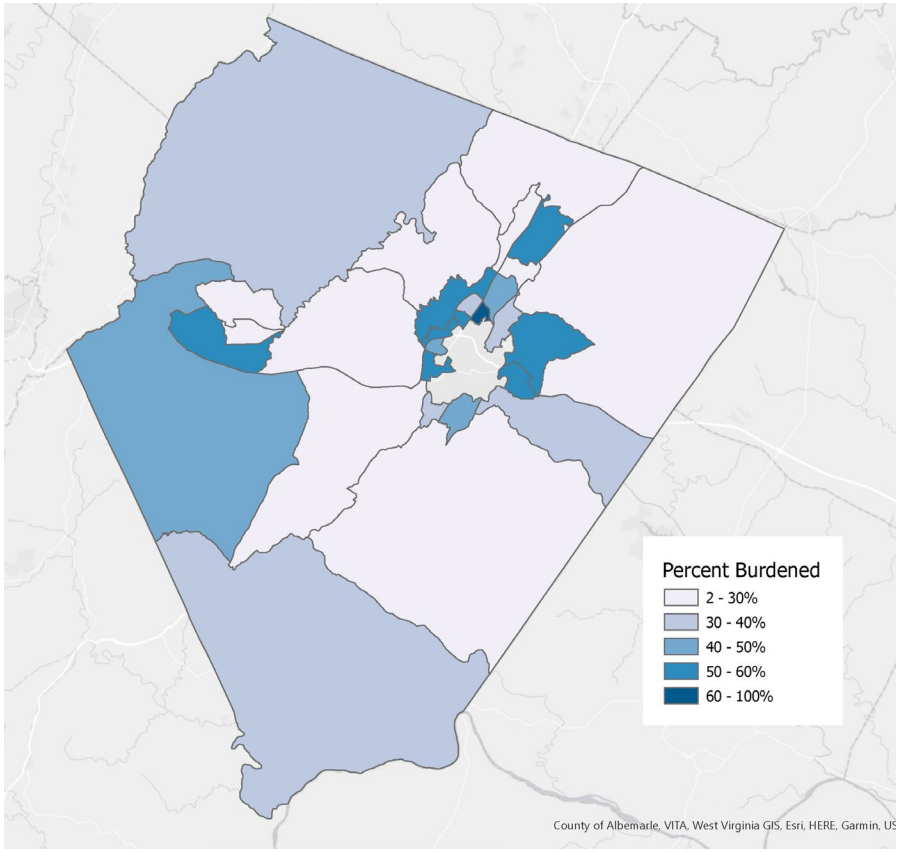
Bachelor's Degree Attainment



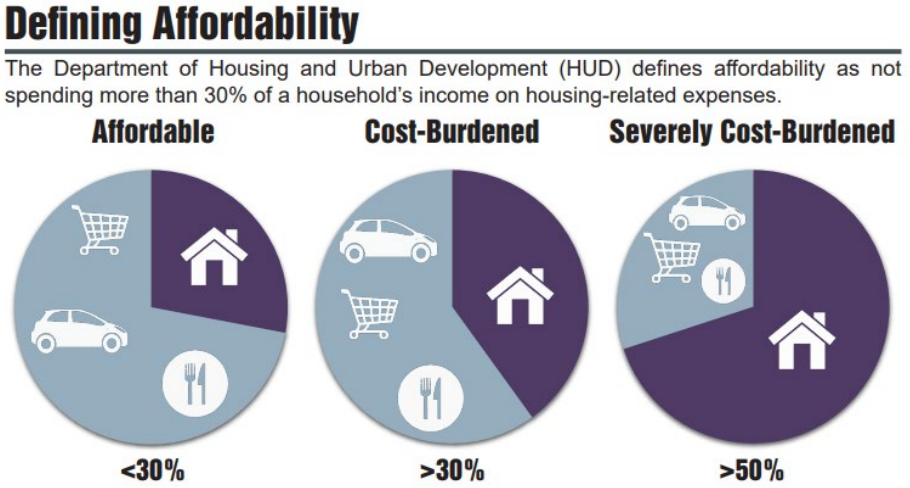
Education Level: Bachelor's Degree attainment (age 25 and older), source: ACS, 2023

Albemarle Cost-Burdened Renter Households (2022)

Approximately 5,648 households, or 13% of all county households, are severely cost-burdened. About 86.6% of county households with incomes less than $35,000 are cost-burdened, compared with about 36.5% of households with household incomes of $50,000-$75,000 and 7.6% of households making over $75,000. This means that cost burden is not evenly distributed among income levels and disproportionately impacts lower income residents.



Albemarle County Cost-Burdened Households, percent by census tract, source: ACS, 2022



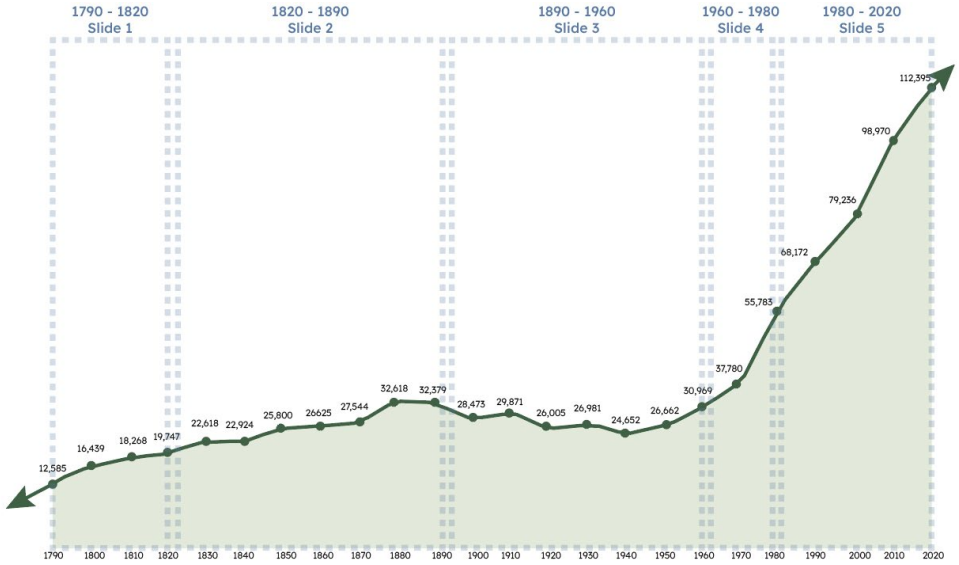


The Southwood neighborhood is an affordable housing cooperative effort between Albemarle County and Habitat for Humanity

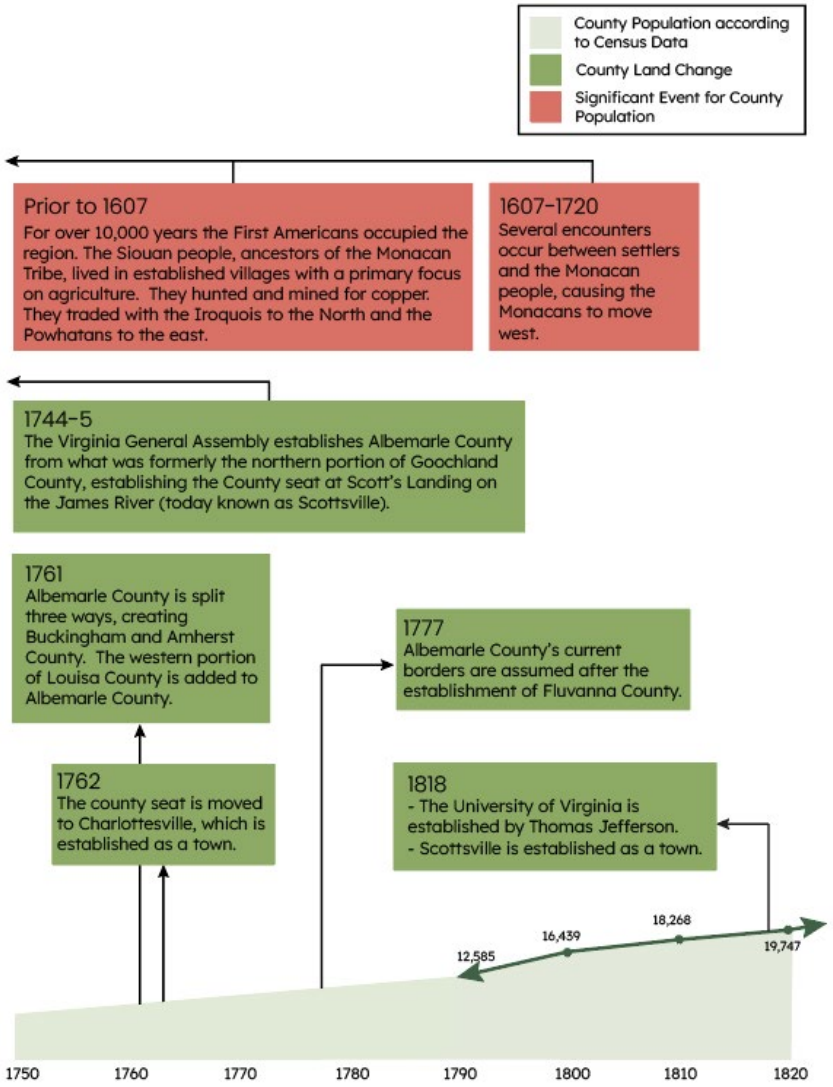
SECTION 2: HISTORY OF ALBEMARLE COUNTY

Understanding Albemarle County's history provides essential context to the current physical form and development patterns. The following summary outlines key local policies and decisions that shaped our community.

In Albemarle County, population growth is not a new trend. The accompanying timeline graphic illustrates population growth over time, while the historical overview highlights major events. We acknowledge that this is an incomplete history, and all the important county events cannot be summarized in a short report; and further, much of our history is still not documented, especially of marginalized populations.



Albemarle County population over time, 1790-2020



Albemarle County early timeline. The Monacan people lived in the Virginia Piedmont prior to English settlement in the 1600s

Monacan Nation History

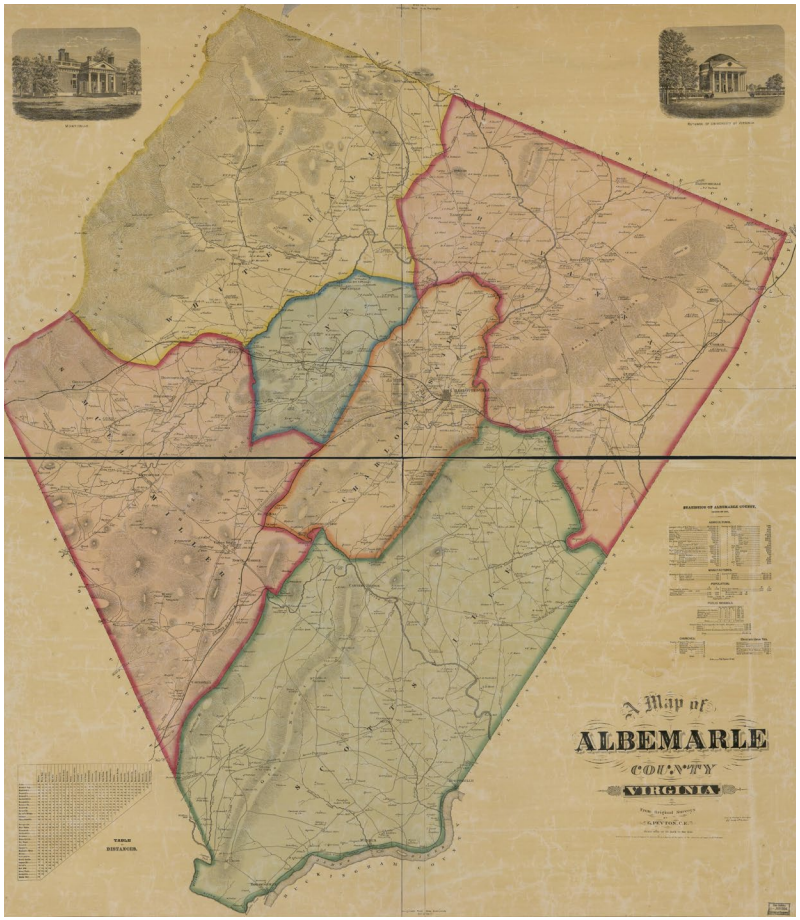
While Albemarle County was officially established in 1744, its history reaches back over 10,000 years. The Siouan people, ancestors of the Monacan tribe, lived in established agricultural villages for at least 1,000 years. They hunted and mined for copper and traded with the Iroquois to the north and the Powhatans to the east. The original tribe territory covered more than half of Virginia, including the Piedmont Region and part of the Blue Ridge Mountains.

As British colonists expanded west across Virginia in the 1700s, the Monacan were displace from their ancestral lands. Choosing to avoid conflict, many relocated west, eventually settling in present-day Amherst County. Subsequent discriminatory laws, including the 1924 Racial Integrity Act that required that birth certificates identify all Virginians as either “white” or “colored”, essentially erased the Native American identity from state official records and complicating recognition efforts.

Despite these challenges, the Monacan Indian Nation gained state recognition in 1989 and federally recognition in 2018. Today they are one of seven federally recognized tribes in Virginia and the only such Virginia tribe located west of Richmond.



Capt. John Smith’s map of Virginia in 1608 indicated Native American villages, including the Monacan people in the VA Piedmont. Map source: National Parks Service



Albemarle County Historic Map, 1875. Source: Library of Congress

Changing County Boundaries

In 1744, the Virginia Assembly established Albemarle County from what was formerly the northern part of Goochland County, with the County seat at Scott's Landing on the James River (now Scottsville). In 1761, Albemarle County was divided to form Buckingham and Amherst Counties, while gaining the western portion of Louisa County. The County seat was moved from Scottsville to the newly established town of Charlottesville in 1762. Albemarle County's current boundaries were finalized in 1777 after the establishment of Fluvanna County. In 1818 there were two significant events – Thomas Jefferson founded the University of Virginia, and Scottsville was formerly established as a town.

The plantation economy of the antebellum Virginia Piedmont relied heavily on waterways to power mills and transport goods for export in the Tidewater region. The Rivanna River served as a vital link to the James River from the northern half of Albemarle County. Large land holdings and mill villages bordering the river were defining qualities of the landscape.

Civil War

During the American Civil War from 1861-65, Virginia fought on the side of the Confederacy in support of maintaining the institution of slavery. Approximately 14,000 enslaved people, over half of Albemarle County's population at the time, lived in the county at the start of the war. There were relatively few battles fought within the county during the Civil War, though there was a skirmish at Rio Hill in 1864.

Post-Civil War

After the Civil War, formerly enslaved and freeborn African Americans purchased land throughout Albemarle County and established free Black communities, including Free Town (Crozet), Proffit, Cartersburg, Salem Church (Union Ridge Baptist Church), Free State (currently Belvedere/Dunlora), and Union Ridge/Hydraulic Mills. These communities are rich in history and cultural significance, with landmarks such as River View Farm at Ivy Creek Natural Area and Union Mission Baptist Church in Crozet. Local leaders played a vital role in creating schools, churches, and community centers that established critical services and served as gathering places for their communities.

While this historically African American community spanned much of Three Notch'D Road, the area near Union Mission Baptist Church, organized in 1913, was one of its centers. Edgar Wesley, one of the church's founders and trustees, and his wife Maggie lived nearby and operated a small store. The store was a space where meetings of fraternal societies such as the Odd Fellows were held, and the Wesley family provided classroom space inside their home. This classroom space was used until the Crozet Elementary School for African Americans opened next to the church in 1916 — at a time when Black students were excluded from white schools. The Union Mission area was home to educators, business owners, and civic leaders who shaped community life.

Despite the U.S. Supreme Court's 1954 Brown v. Board of Education ruling, Albemarle County continued building segregated schools for African American students through at least 1958, including Virginia L. Murray Elementary. Albemarle County Schools did not begin school integration until 1963 and took another four years to fully integrate.



Union Mission Baptist Church, Crozet area



River View Farm at Ivy Creek was established in the late 1800s



Albemarle County Comprehensive Plan covers, 1971-2015

Local Planning and Growth History

Charlottesville was formally established as a city in 1888, leading to ongoing changes in the city-county boundaries and tensions over annexation — a process for localities to expand their land area. Since cities in Virginia are independent of counties, cities can acquire land from an adjacent county through annexation.

Before 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.

Albemarle County formed its first Planning Commission in 1944 and adopted its first subdivision ordinance in 1949. However, that same year, it failed to adopt its first proposed Zoning Ordinance due to lack of support by County voters, as adoption required a majority vote.

By 1962, the Albemarle County Board of Supervisors recognized that regulating where public water and sewer could be supplied could guide development and potentially reduce the threat of annexation. In 1964, the County established the Albemarle County Service Authority (ACSA) and began acquiring existing private water and sewer facilities in some existing County neighborhoods. The County also leveraged federal funding to study areas for public water supply. ACSA completed the Beaver Creek Reservoir in 1965 and the sewer interceptor in 1988 to provide the existing community of Crozet with public water and sewer.

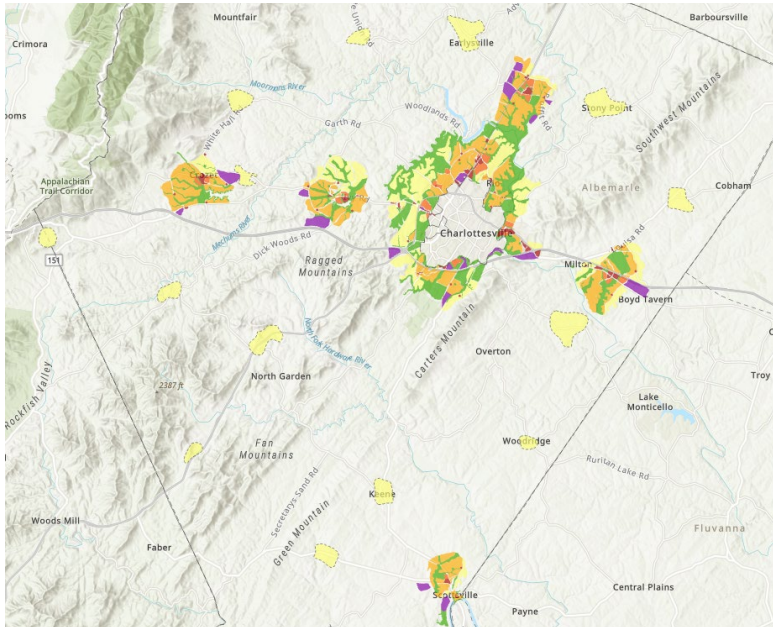
In 1964, the County designated Service Authority Project Areas to define where public water and/or public sewer service would be extended. These areas became the ACSA Jurisdictional Area in 1982, a boundary still in use today. While it generally aligns with the County's Development Areas, some parts of the Rural Area also receive public water and/or sewer service.

In 1967, the Virginia Assembly determined that a voter referendum was no longer required to adopt a Zoning Ordinance in the county. One year later in

1968, Albemarle County adopted its first Zoning Ordinance. There were two public hearings before adoption.

The County adopted its **first Comprehensive Plan in 1971**, three years after adopting its first Zoning Ordinance. This Plan established the County's first Growth Management Policy, directing growth into the Urban Area (similar to today's Neighborhoods 1-7), five Communities, and 14 Villages. The Plan estimated that future growth needed to accommodate a population of 185,000 people by the year 2000. The 1971 Comprehensive Plan aimed to concentrate growth in designated Development Areas to reduce sprawl, protect natural resources, and deliver public services more efficiently. It directed the extension of public utilities, including water and sewer, to these areas, with a strong emphasis on conserving open space and natural resources.

In 1972, the City attempted to annex about 12 square miles of county land, which ultimately failed. At the same time as the water and sewer Project

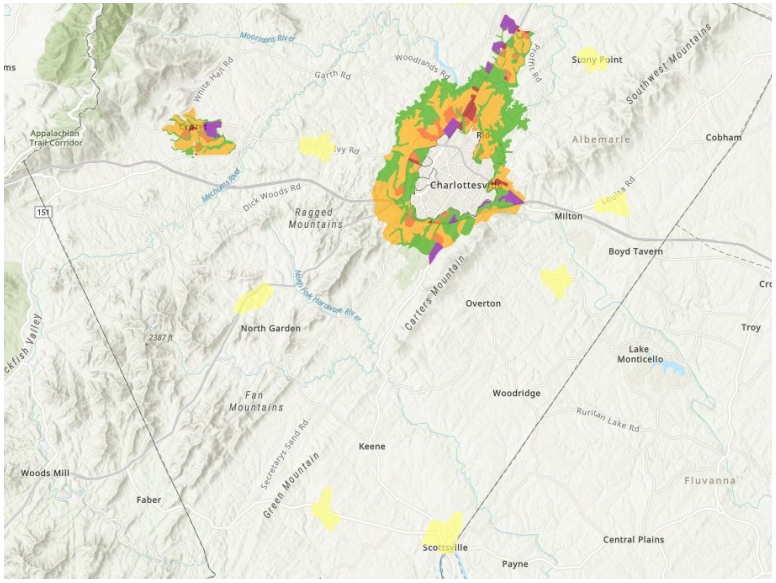


Land Use Map, 1971 Comprehensive Plan

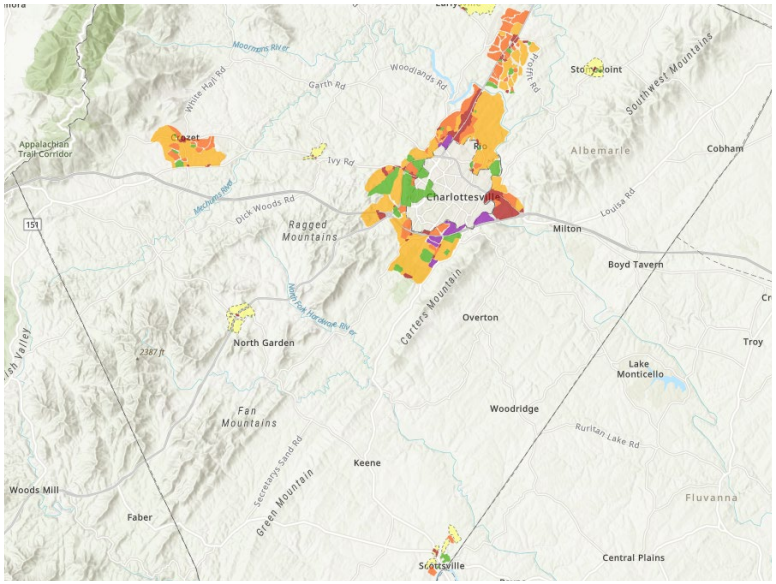
Comprehensive plan land use over time, 1971-2015



	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%



Land Use Map, 1977 Comprehensive Plan



Land Use Map, 1977 Comprehensive Plan

Areas were being established, the State Water Control Board mandated that the City and County coordinate on their watershed planning efforts, including merging of utilities. This resulted in the Rivanna Water and Sewer Authority (RWSA) being established 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. In 1974, the County rewrote its Subdivision Ordinance.

The **1977 Comp Plan** update reduced the Development Areas, mainly due to revised population projections for the next 20 years (86,800 people by 1995) and increased housing demand in the Rural Area —where about 60% of new residential development had occurred. Another main priority for the Development Area boundaries was to protect water supply watersheds—areas where water drains into the public water supply. The plan emphasized natural areas, conservation, and agricultural uses, with less priority given to economic and residential development. These natural and agricultural areas were to be protected for their economic benefits, but also for their 'physically attractive rural landscape'. The Plan placed an emphasis on protecting rural viewsheds and landscapes that were visible by people driving through the Rural Area.

In **1980**, Albemarle County adopted a major update to the Zoning Ordinance and **down-zoned much of the Rural Area** to Rural Area (RA)zoning, with some exceptions for legacy/existing development. A major focus of the Zoning Ordinance update and rezoning to RA was to protect the water supply watershed.

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.

The **1982 Comprehensive Plan** was the first update after the County adopted its 1980 Zoning Ordinance and down-zoned (reduced the number of housing units and commercial/industrial uses allowed) most of the County's Rural Area. The development trends leading up to the 1982 Plan showed continued

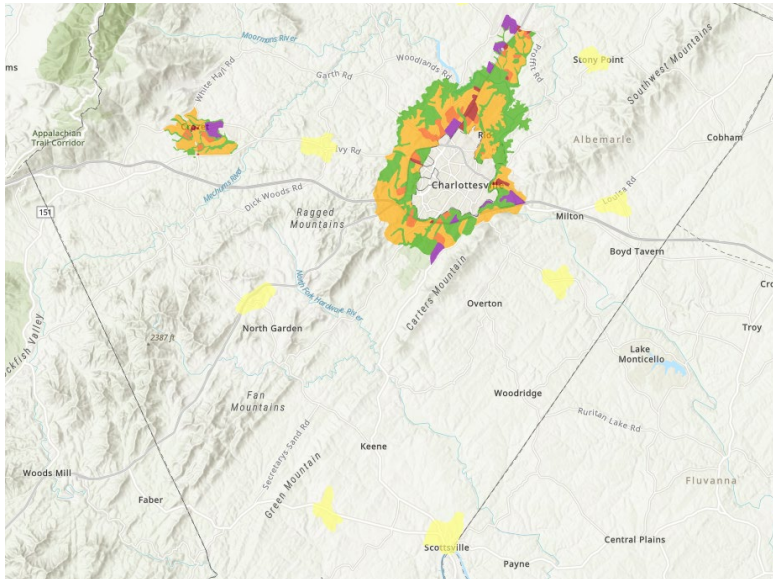
residential development in the Rural Area, with more than half of new residential units built in the Rural Area in the preceding years. The 1982 update removed over half of the designated Villages from the Development Areas, mainly those in water supply watersheds (with the exceptions of Ivy and Earlysville).

The **1989 Comp Plan's** shifted focus toward actively encouraging growth in the Development Areas, versus preventing development in the Rural Area. The development trends between the 1982 and 1989 Comprehensive Plan updates remained relatively unchanged, with just over half of all new units being built in the Rural Area. The 1989 Plan had more proactive recommendations for the Development Areas, including planning for and providing public water and sewer, transportation improvements, stormwater management, and neighborhood plans for Crozet and Pantops. The update also removed Ivy and Stony Point Villages from the Development Areas.

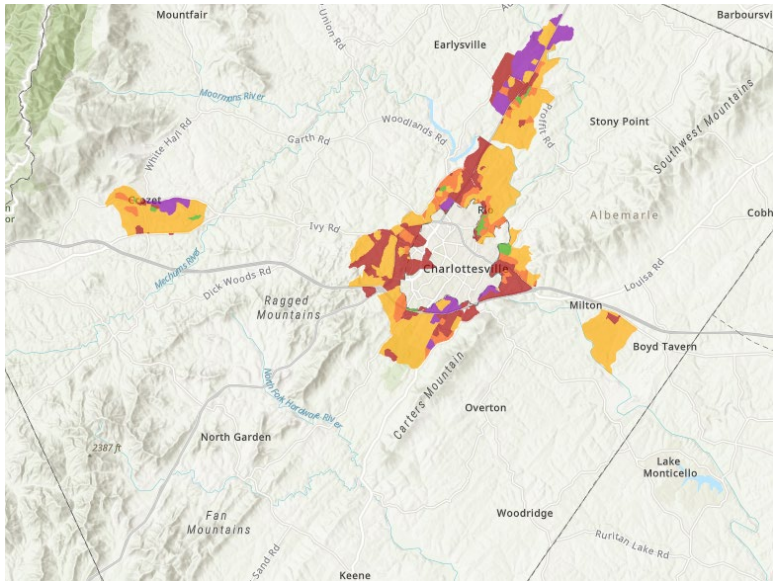
Between the 1989 and 1996 Comprehensive Plans, the County made several significant changes to the Development Areas. Four applicant requests to amend the Comprehensive Plan (CPA's) were approved, adding about 3.75 square miles of land to the Development Areas. This included Village of Rivanna, North Fork Research Park expansion, the North Pointe area, and the eastern portion of Piney Mountain.

The **1996 update** removed North Garden and Earlysville as designated Villages, leaving only the Village of Rivanna. The Board of Supervisors did not want to expand the Development Areas and directed that the existing Development Areas should be used more efficiently to accommodate growth. To support this, the Comp Plan stated that "the form of development must change and must be more urban and less suburban", and that the Development Areas would need to "gradually allow for an overall increase in density in the Development Areas".

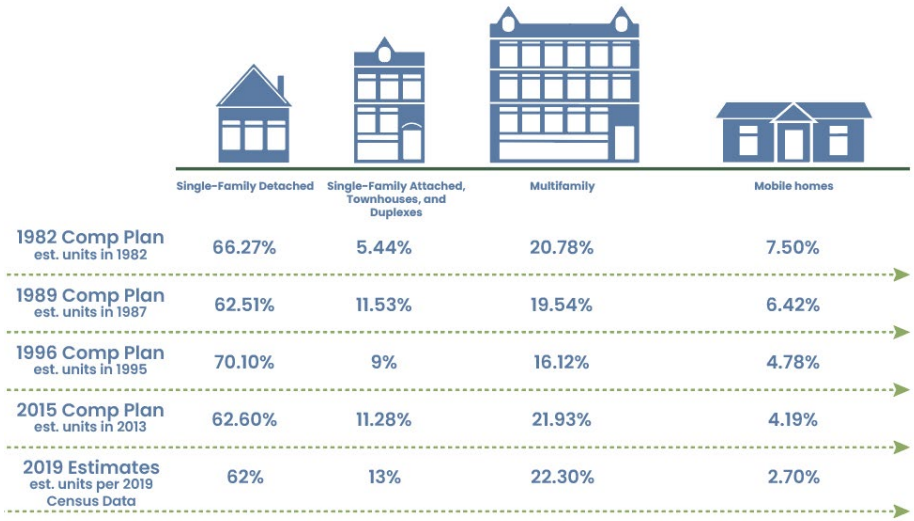
The **Neighborhood Model Principles**, adopted as a Comp Plan Amendment in 2001, were intended to implement this form and density of development. The recommendations promoted walkability, a variety of housing types,



Land Use Map, 1982 Comprehensive Plan

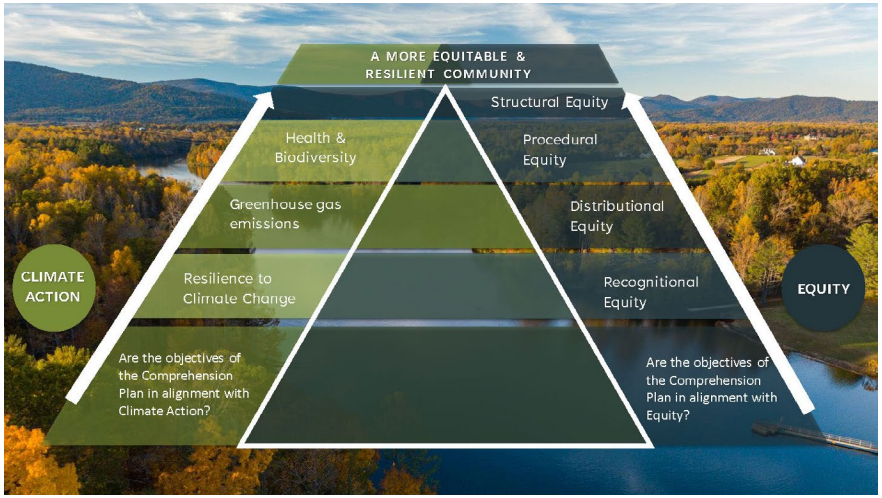


Land Use Map, 1996 Comprehensive Plan



	Single-Family Detached	Single-Family Attached, Townhouses, and Duplexes	Multifamily	Mobile homes
1982 Comp Plan est. units in 1982	66.27%	5.44%	20.78%	7.50%
1989 Comp Plan est. units in 1987	62.51%	11.53%	19.54%	6.42%
1996 Comp Plan est. units in 1995	70.10%	9%	16.12%	4.78%
2015 Comp Plan est. units in 2013	62.60%	11.28%	21.93%	4.19%
2019 Estimates est. units per 2019 Census Data	62%	13%	22.30%	2.70%

Housing unit types by Comp Plan year, 1982-2019



AC44 incorporates County priorities of climate action and equity

mixed-use developments, parks, and connected transportation systems.

The 1996 Plan also recommended Master Plans for each Development Area. Crozet's Master Plan was adopted in 2004, followed by Pantops (2008), Village of Rivanna (2010), Places29 (2011), Pantops update (2019), and updates to Crozet (2010 and 2021). The County also adopted a Southern and Western Master Plan with the Comp Plan update in 2015 and the Rio29 Small Area Plan in 2018.

The **2015 Comp Plan** update did not significantly change the Development Area boundaries. However, the update designated the area of Biscuit Run in Neighborhoods 4 and 5 as Parks and Green Systems. This area had previously received a rezoning approval for up to 3,100 dwelling units and 150,000 square feet of commercial uses across 828 acres.

The 2015 update incorporated the Neighborhood Model Principles into the Comprehensive Plan and described expectations for the form and density of new development that should occur in the Development Areas. It was also the first update to specifically mention climate change and the need for climate action, resiliency, and mitigation strategies. These priorities led to the adoption of the County's Climate Action Plan in 2020.