AC44 Activity Center Planning

Key Questions to be Answered

1. What are the major factors driving development, now and in the future?
2. Where are the best public investment opportunities, now and in the future?
3. What features and amenities are needed to attract quality projects?
4. What are the major constraints on achieving Activity Center goals?
5. What are the timeframes for opportunities? Which ones are most immediate?
6. What policies and other tools are needed to help make Activity Centers a reality?
7. Where can County actions and leadership make the greatest impact?

Process Overview (specifics will vary by location)

1. Project Design: Laying the groundwork for excellence

Activity Center Plan location prioritization and selection; process scoping, including timelines, key activities, technical advisory group and community involvement approaches, metrics and review processes, including working with the County's Executive Office, Planning Commission and Board of Supervisors.

Outcomes: Selection of first ACP location; project scoping and timeline; background research findings

2. Analysis and Engagement: Assessing existing conditions, identifying opportunities and constraints

Data gathering; GIS mapping; ground-truthing; market analysis; coordination with multimodal transportation planning; identification of opportunities and constraints (e.g., affordable housing and economic development opportunities, redevelopment and infill opportunities, parks and green space opportunities); integration of findings from County leadership, the technical advisory group, the public and the development community

Outcomes: Existing conditions, opportunities, and constraints summary

3. Investments and Tools: Catalyzing sustainable long-term change and growth

Identification of catalyst projects; identification of public investments and partnership opportunities; integration of more feedback from County leadership, the technical advisory group, the public and the development community

Outcomes: Catalyst projects inventory; public investments strategy; list of implementation priorities and timelines

4. ACP Report and Implementation Strategy Development: Drafting concise, visually compelling materials that address current and future conditions and are ready for implementation

Implementation strategy development, including partners and timelines; ACP report development based on all project activities to date, in alignment with AC44's Big Moves and the County's Strategic Plan's goals; integration of final feedback from County leadership, the technical advisory group, the public and the development community.

Outcomes: Completed Activity Center Plan with implementation strategy that includes timelines, partners, and next steps

Timelines

Twelve to 18 months for each Activity Center Plan.

Core Focus Areas (based on AC44's Big Moves)

- ***Increased Density*** – Identifying targeted development, redevelopment, and infill areas, phasing strategies, infrastructure needs, and necessary resources.
- ***Well-integrated Multimodal Networks*** – Detailing 15-minute walksheds, connected sidewalks, bike lanes, vehicular lanes, public transit stops, and regional connections.
- ***A Mix of Uses*** – Fostering diverse residential, commercial, and public-sector uses to reduce travel distances while considering market conditions.
- ***More Accessible Affordable Housing*** – Expanding housing options with strategic investments and partnerships.
- ***Well-distributed Recreation, Parks, Trails, and Green Space*** – Planning pocket parks and linear green spaces throughout Activity Centers and Employment Centers.
- ***A Vibrant Public Realm and Streetscape Connectivity*** – Establishing human-scale urban design standards, including setbacks, block length, building frontages, and parking.
- ***A Well-defined Rural Area*** – Protecting natural resources and historic and cultural resources, enhancing services for rural residents and economic opportunities for Rural Area businesses.
- ***Environmental Protection and Climate Action*** – Addressing heat island effects, green infrastructure, and greenhouse gas emissions.
- ***Equity*** – Ensuring access to well-distributed infrastructure, housing, services, jobs, and amenities.

Outcomes

The Activity Center Plans will assist and inform:

- Strategic public and private investments and decision making in the County's Development Areas, in line with AC44 and the County's Strategic Plan.
- New opportunities and improved proximity and accessibility for jobs, economic development, multimodal transit, affordable housing, parks and green space, environmental protection, climate action, equity, and overall quality of life.
- Enhanced collaboration across County departments, external partners, and the community.
- Measurable progress toward AC44 and Strategic Plan goals, in line with AC44's Big Moves.

Engagement

Engagement with the community, area partners, the development community, the County's Executive Office, the Planning Commission, the Board of Supervisors, and County departments will be an important part of the Activity Center Planning process.

In coordination with CAPE, and working with a technical advisory group, CDD will develop fact sheets, presentations, and other content, and host open houses, with all materials and regular updates posted on the Engage Albemarle website. A consultant may assist with the process.

The County's Executive Office, the Planning Commission, and the Board of Supervisors will be engaged at major project milestones, including report reviews and work sessions focused on plan drafts.

Evaluation

As part of each Activity Center Plan, CDD will develop project summaries, reports, and presentations at key milestones and use a standardized set of project metrics to track progress toward AC44 and Strategic Plan goals, in line with AC44's Big Moves.