Albemarle County Planning Commission
Regular Meeting
Final Minutes October 13, 2026

The Albemarle County Planning Commission held a public meeting on Tuesday, October 13, 2026, at 6:00 p.m.

Members attending were: Luis Carrazana, Chair; Karen Firehock, Vice Chair; Corey Clayborne; Mary Katherine King; Nathan Moore; Lonnie Murray; and Catherine Brown.

Members absent:

Other officials present were: Michael Barnes, Director of Planning; Bart Svoboda, Director of Zoning; Kevin McDermott; Francis MacCall, Deputy Zoning Administrator; Lisa Green, Manager of Code Compliance; Tonya Swartzendruber; Bill Fritz; Jessica Dimmick; Jenny Tevendale, Deputy County Attorney; and Carolyn Shaffer.

Call to Order and Establish Quorum

Carolyn Shaffer called the roll.

Mr. Carrazana established a quorum.

Public Comment on Matters Pending Before the Commission, but Not Listed for a Public Hearing on This Agenda

There were none.

Consent Agenda

Mr. Clayborne motioned that the Planning Commission approve the consent agenda. Ms. Brown seconded the motion, which carried unanimously (7-0).

Items Requesting Deferral to a New Date

AFD-2026-00005 Glen Oaks AFD Review

AFD-2026-00006 South Garden AFD Review

Mr. Clayborne motioned that the Planning Commission defer AFD-2026-00005 Glen Oaks AFD Review and AFD-2026-00006 South Garden AFD Review to the October 27, 2026, Planning Commission meeting. Mr. Murray seconded the motion, which carried unanimously (7-0).

Public Hearing

TA-2026-00001 Fill Regulations

Bill Fritz, Development Process Manager, said that this item was a proposed ordinance, which was developed based on direction from the Board and input from the public, the Virginia Department of Forestry (VDOF), the Virginia Department of Transportation (VDOT), and others. He said that the current set of regulations was adopted in 2016, and in 2023, the Board had directed staff to work on revisions. He said the item would be presented to the Board on November

4. This proposal created a new use called a “short-duration activity” primarily intended to facilitate agricultural or forestal activities.

Mr. Fritz said that it allowed for material to be brought in to maintain fields, access, or stabilize rural land, with regulations to minimize impacts without compromising community safety. He said that activity was limited based on the type of road accessed, and the duration of the activity was also related to the quality or category of the road being accessed. He said that updates had been made to reflect both the Virginia State Code and the Administrative Code, and the special use permit (SUP) and special exception (SE) processes had been updated.

Mr. Fritz said that performance regulations were not changing; these included drainage requirements for positive drainage, slope stabilization, lateral support, and tree protection, as well as the requirement that work did not occur on critical slopes. He said that setbacks were also not changing, and the regulation maintained the 2,500 square foot limit that triggered the need to comply with the regulations. He said that although no exemptions had been identified in the erosion and sediment control and sediment management regulations, the ordinance retained a statement that fill was not exempt from the regulations, per the direction of the Board of Supervisors.

Mr. Fritz said that regulations for the bonding of stabilization were also retained. He said that the proposal included two attachments: one with annotations providing brief descriptions of new items, changes, or relocated sections, and a clean version. Changes included the definition of inert fill material, which included items such as asphalt, brick, and glass. He said that the list of exemptions had been clarified to reduce confusion, and the short-duration fill activity had been added. The duration and truck traffic were limited based on access roads, categorized as principal arterial, minor arterial, major collector, and all others. The duration was limited to six months on major roads, whereas it was currently limited to one year and was not based on roads.

Mr. Fritz said that both the duration and number of trips might be increased by SE, except on smaller roads, such as local or privately maintained roads, where the process was now an SUP. He said that acreage limits were being removed because the duration of activity was being limited, based on Board direction, noting the theory was that limiting the duration also limited the area. He said that some design standards for private access ways were no longer needed due to the limitation on duration, the difficulty of enforcement, and the addition of the SUP.

Mr. Fritz said that for local private roads, an SUP would be required, allowing for the evaluation of road quality and design. He said that the existing ordinance had an exception process for the approval of inert fill; however, after additional review of the state code, this should be done via an SUP, which had been erroneously listed as an SE previously. He said that the concept of truck round-trip limits had been added. He said that on a principal arterial, such as Route 29 or Route 250, there would be no limit. A minor arterial, such as Route 6, Route 20, Route 231, Route 250, or Route 240, would be limited to 25 round trips. A major collector, such as Rolling Road, Carters Mountain Road, or Dick Woods Road, would be limited to 15 round trips.

Mr. Fritz said that for all other roads, truck limits would only be determined by SUP, and the Board of Supervisors could set appropriate limits as a condition of that permit. He said that short-duration activity was limited to rural area districts and allowed for inert fill if used as a substitute for conventional aggregate, such as for road construction or stabilization of areas for forestry. He said that the property had to be 21 acres or greater or in land use. This activity was subject to all drainage, limited area placement, and lateral support design standards, but it was not subject to setbacks, limitations on tree cutting, or maximum area. He said that it was limited to 60 days,

which could be extended through an SE, and was restricted to Monday through Saturday, from 7:00 a.m. to 7:00 p.m., and truck traffic was limited based on the road.

Mr. Fritz said that the proposed language for inert materials was intended to more closely follow the types of materials allowed to be disposed of under the exemptions of the Virginia Administrative Code, provided that no open dump hazard or public nuisance was created. He said that while the Board had requested in a work session that asphalt be removed from the list of permitted materials, staff had not removed asphalt and had added other materials. He said that if any material was to be removed, the County should state both the reason for the exclusion and how allowing the material to be used as inert fill would create an open dump hazard or public nuisance.

Mr. Fritz said that inert materials were only allowed in rural areas for short-duration activity and only if used as aggregate. For other activities in rural areas, the use of inert materials would require an SUP, and during the review of an SUP, the Board could remove materials if there was a specific reason to do so in a particular case. He said that the Virginia Administrative Code defined a nuisance as an activity that unreasonably interferes with an individual's or the public's comfort, convenience, or enjoyment such that it interferes with the rights of others by causing damage, annoyance, or inconvenience.

Mr. Fritz said that a correction had been made to the list of variations or exceptions. He said that the ordinance previously stated that the Board could grant an exception if all relevant factors were met; however, it should state that an exception could be granted if any one of those factors was met. He said that the corrected language ensured that the Board was not required to meet all five criteria to grant an exception. He said the key issues included changes to the ordinance for clarity and to add the inert fill, which required discussion. He said that the duration of truck traffic had been limited based on access roads, and an SUP process had been added.

Mr. Carrazana asked for clarification regarding the change in duration, specifically the limitation changing from one year to six months.

Mr. Fritz said that the short duration was now 60 days and there were six months for everything else, which could be amended by SE unless the project was on a local road.

Ms. Brown said that she was concerned that asphalt could leach contaminants over time. She said that regardless of whether the location was rural or urban, those contaminants could move through water, and once they were in the soil, it was much harder to address. She said that it seemed appropriate to hold off on using asphalt until more studies could be conducted, as its use as a fill material was being questioned by Supervisors and across other regions of the United States.

Mr. Moore said that he was curious regarding the asphalt. He said that it appeared to be a Dillon Rule matter, and he asked if asphalt was listed in the state code.

Mr. Fritz said that the procedure was outlined in several locations within the Virginia Administrative Code. He said that one section mentioned "asphalt" and another mentioned "road pavement," which was interpreted to include asphalt and all associated materials. He said that, essentially, the code stated that those materials may be used if they did not create an open dump hazard or a public nuisance. He said that while the code provided a definition for public nuisance, it did not define "hazard" or "open dump," but it did list those items within the Virginia Administrative Code.

Mr. Moore asked if the County could state that using old pavement could be a hazard.

Mr. Fritz said that if the County wanted to exclude those materials, it would have to be able to state why or how they created an open dump hazard or public nuisance.

Mr. Moore asked how violations were identified, what had been learned from complaints and enforcement cases over the last six years, how enforcement worked, and whether this addressed any gaps regarding ensuring compliance.

Mr. Fritz said that staff members were available to provide further details, but he would attempt to address the question before staff provided specifics, as it did not pertain to a particular project. He said that County enforcement practices were conducted on a complaint basis and that upon receiving a complaint, staff would monitor the situation or take necessary actions.

Mr. Murray said that he questioned the use of the phrase “inert,” noting that concrete was not inert because it was calcium carbonate. He said that it added alkalinity to substances, and water leaching through it or anything that came into contact with crushed concrete will change the pH, much like crushed coral or crushed lime. He said that while this may not be a problem, the claim that concrete was physically, chemically, and biologically stable and non-reactive was inaccurate because it was calcium carbonate.

Mr. Fritz said that while the language is outdated, the old and new language matched the Virginia Administrative Code. He said that this did not prevent the County from saying that concrete was a public nuisance or hazard.

Mr. Murray said that circumstances could arise where, depending upon the resources present, adding alkalinity to an area could either hurt or help; therefore, it was not technically neutral or as inert. He said that in the past, there were issues with people dumping AstroTurf in the rural area for fill. He asked if this was prohibited now.

Mr. Fritz said that it was not in the list of permitted materials.

Mr. Murray said that he seconded the point regarding asphalt and noted that evidence suggested heavy metals and other substances can leach out as it degrades, which could create a long-term hazard.

Mr. Clayborne asked Mr. Fritz if there was any scientific data available regarding the use of asphalt in fill material.

Mr. Fritz said that when the original ordinance for fill was adopted, the County Engineer at the time had offered that asphalt was inert and did not create a problem. He said the County Engineer had cited that the streets in rural areas were asphalt and that asphalt was already being placed in rural streets. He said that in his memo, he had stated that it might actually reduce runoff and infiltration into the soil because it would not be running off and would have opportunities for biodegradation. He said that there were no independent studies or analyses, short of what was in the Virginia Administrative Code, stating whether it was safe or not safe.

Mr. Clayborne asked if the American Council of Engineering Companies (ACEC) or the American Society of Civil Engineers (ASCE) had been contacted for their input.

Mr. Fritz said they did not.

Mr. Clayborne suggested that staff consider requesting input from professional societies.

Ms. Firehock said that regarding rural roads, when pavement was treated to maintain stability without reconstructing the road, and Sealant was used to bind the material together. She said that these chemical binders could be toxic. She said that while asphalt was generally considered inert, it was not always inert when other binders were used to attach it. She said that inertness should be considered in terms of potential harm. She said that while glass was an inert material by definition, if glass, old bricks, or other materials were used to create a temporary driveway and were compacted, there was a possibility that the glass could escape the setting and wash away during an extreme storm.

Ms. Firehock said that this was distinct from manufacturing new pavement with crushed glass or rubber, which were successful techniques used to provide more give and prevent cracking. She said that she was concerned that in the case of temporary, compacted material used for site access, crushed glass, and potentially porcelain, could escape the environment due to the temporary nature of the surface and the occurrence of storms and washouts.

Ms. King said that she would like to discuss the day-to-day application of the processes being facilitated. She said that there were regulations in both the Rural and development areas, and that this particular type of fill was often used in place of gravel. She said that, regarding the benefit of S.L. Williamson bringing asphalt onto a site to use as fill, the advantage was that the material was not sent to a landfill or transported to Richmond or Tidewater to a recycling facility.

Ms. King said that instead of purchasing gravel from Martin Marietta at Red Hill, which involved digging up earth and transporting it, this practice functioned as a recycling method. She said that rather than tearing up ground in Albemarle County, material that had been excavated was transported as close as possible to be used as fill underneath a hard surface. She said that once the material was placed in the ground beneath a paved road, it would be less likely to become saturated.

Mr. Fritz said that was the term the engineer had used.

Ms. King said she would love to see an asphalt recycling plant in the County, and she would prefer allowing the use of asphalt as inert fill material.

Ms. Firehock asked whether the material would be located underneath a paved surface.

Mr. Fritz said that inert material must be covered and cannot be left uncovered. He said that all fill must be covered with two feet of clean earth fill, unless the engineer determined it was best to leave it uncovered to prevent specific erosion or if the material was being used for roads.

Ms. Firehock asked if anything had to cover the clean fill.

Mr. Fritz said it had to be stabilized, so usually vegetation was added.

Ms. Firehock asked if it could be driven over.

Mr. Fritz said that asphalt could be used as a permitted type of inert fill by placing it in the ground, covering it with two feet of clean earth fill, and stabilizing the area with plantings.

Ms. King said that the material was not always for road construction fill.

Mr. Fritz said that if broken asphalt, bricks, or other materials were used in lieu of conventional aggregate for a road, they would not be covered with fill, as it would not make sense; instead, the

materials could be exposed because they are being used as conventional aggregate. He said that this would be limited to a short duration of 60 days, during which inert materials may be used if they are covered with two feet of material or used as a road.

Mr. Fritz said that for other fill activities, an SUP was required in rural areas. He said that in rural areas, the time limit was not relevant because the activity was controlled by the SUP. The Board of Supervisors was able to determine what materials were being brought in, what they were being used for, and where they were being placed.

Ms. Brown said that the idea of reusing materials was supported in principle; however, the process for vetting such materials remained unclear. She said that some materials, such as asphalt, might contain fewer chemicals, coatings, toxins, or contaminants that could have been absorbed through years of use from vehicles or leaks. She said that because the current discussion encompassed all asphalt and potentially other materials, it was difficult to determine the impact. She said that a process for vetting these materials before they were reused would assist in making an informed decision.

Mr. Fritz said that while it would be ideal for zoning inspectors to have the opportunity to test each load, doing so on a per-load basis would be virtually impossible, technically difficult, and complicated.

Ms. King asked if there was a scope in which the regulation would not need to be met, such as the neighborhood model development (NMD) fill under garage slabs in Albemarle County that builders used, which was not currently being regulated.

Mr. Fritz said that no change was proposed there because activities associated with a building permit, an approved site plan, or an approved subdivision with road construction were not covered by the regulation. He said that those activities were covered under the site plan, the erosion control plan, and the requirements of the building permit for foundations, compaction, and similar matters.

Ms. King said that she understood the point, but she would like to hear an example of how a new development's fill would be regulated differently under the site plan.

Mr. Fritz said that an approved site plan did not trigger the ordinance if material was being brought in to level the site, as such activities were covered under the Virginia Administrative Code. He said that as long as the material was not on the prohibited list, which included radioactive or toxic substances, it was covered under that code. He said that if the activity was not associated with that code, it fell under the Fill Ordinance.

Mr. Fritz said that if a property owner in a development area or a farmer wants to terrace their property, that was not covered by a building permit and fell under the Fill Ordinance. He said that building a pond, cleaning out a pond, or attempting to improve soil quality by bringing in material from offsite would be considered a fill activity. He said that moving material from one part of a farm to another was not considered fill and is specifically exempted by a provision in the state code.

Ms. King said that if a person is terracing a garden in a backyard, the County would not know what was going on.

Mr. Fritz said that regular gardening was exempt, but the Fill Ordinance would apply if a large property were being terraformed or if a subdivision were being developed involving activities not covered by a building permit or road construction.

Mr. Murray asked if there had been consideration regarding the dredging of a reservoir that was filling with sediment, specifically concerning the scale of dredging for lakes and how the placement of the dredged sediment would be handled.

Mr. Fritz said that dredging would clean earth fill, and it was permitted, but if located on a road, the duration would be limited to six months. He said that if located on a small road, an SUP would be required and the project would need to undergo the review process for any individual property. He said that on a larger road, an SE could be requested to increase the duration or the number of truck trips per day, whereas for a smaller road, those details would be part of the SUP. He said that a process exists to evaluate whether a particular property is suitable for the volume of material proposed to be located on it.

Mr. Murray said he was concerned regarding demolition and other activities in the development area, specifically regarding people bringing concrete and other materials to the rural area. He said he was concerned about reversibility; while a farm can be converted to a wildlife habitat or allowed to revert to a natural state, he noted that bringing in fill such as glass, concrete, or bricks may result in permanent, semi-industrial changes. He asked that the Commission take into consideration that those actions may make permanent changes to the rural area that cannot be undone.

Mr. Carrazana opened the public hearing

Tim Kindrick, President of the Albemarle County Farm Bureau, said he was from the White Hall District and operated a cow cap operation on a farm that his family had operated since 1739. He said that in 2012, Delegate Hugo introduced an amendment to prevent contractors and commercial operators from abusing the Right to Farm Act by turning protected farmland into unmanaged landfills and open dumps under the guise of agricultural activity, which the Farm Bureau fully supported.

Mr. Kindrick said that neither Delegate Hugo nor the General Assembly intended for that exception to interfere with bona fide agricultural activities. He said that that ordinance limited ordinary farming activities. He said that clean earth and inert waste fill were essential to replacing topsoil, leveling fields, maintaining soil fertility, and erosion control and restoration. He said that the ordinance already allowed the Board to grant an SE when fill would further the agricultural use of the property; however, that exception should be made automatic instead of discretionary to ensure the ordinance does not encroach on the Right to Farm Act.

Mr. Kindrick said that the agricultural exemption should be broadened, as it only discussed lime and fertilizer applications, ultimately implying that any other legitimate farm activities are excluded. He provided examples of legitimate farm activities, including building up around a livestock facility to improve drainage, leveling a field, and repairing flood damage. He said that the phrase “generated on the farm,” as it appeared in the exception, was ambiguous because many farmers operated several parcels or wanted to share fill material with neighboring farms.

Mr. Kindrick said that any bona fide agricultural activity be automatically exempt to cover fill used in connection with an agricultural entity rather than fill generated on the farm. He said that if the Planning Commission concluded an SUP would remain a requirement, he requested that the current 90-day discretionary timeline be made mandatory. He said that if no action was taken on

an SUP under those ordinances within that time frame, the SUP should be automatically granted. He asked the Commission to adopt the amendments discussed and as stated in greater detail in the written comments.

Neil Williamson, President of the Free Enterprise Forum, said that the 188-page report released last week from Matrix Consulting Group was a review of the Community Development Department assessment. He said that one of the 85 recommendations in the report was to reduce the number of SUPs that went before the Board; however, there was discussion regarding adding another one.

Mr. Williamson said that it was often a knee-jerk reaction of planning commissions and boards of supervisors across the state to decide to review every instance. He said that the staff report, which was well presented, indicated that performance standards already exist. He said that there was now discussion regarding road standards that would set the number of vehicles per day into the code. He said that he was concerned that an SUP would create another avenue for people to be upset about agriculture in rural areas. He questioned what Albemarle wanted in its rural areas. He said that currently, more than 95% of the landmass was dedicated to rural areas.

Mr. Williamson said that this type of inert material was exceedingly helpful to farming. He said that if science determined that asphalt was detrimental, the Virginia Administrative Code would change, and the County would have to change its code as well once the science caught up. He said that an ordinance could be developed to address specific concerns without a special use permit. He said that utilizing an administrative review would allow farmers the flexibility and time to complete tasks.

Sue Green, White Hall District, said that while the revised ordinance included important clarifications and safeguards, the fact that those safeguards could be completely voided by an SE or SUP renders the ordinance essentially meaningless. She said that this had been experienced in her neighborhood. She questioned what motivated the Board of Supervisors to grant such exceptions or special use permits for up to six years at a time, especially when there had been significant opposition from community members.

Ms. Green said that the impact of those permits was significant, and it became very difficult to hear much of anything inside her house at times due to the constant truck traffic. She said that when walking, trucks pass in front of pedestrians, causing dogs to react and creating hazards for bikers and children. She said that in some instances, several trucks passed each other and the traffic could be almost constant, occurring over 150 times a day for a period of six years. She said the trucks were just outside the neighborhood and quite large, with many being five or six axles that barely fit on the road.

Ms. Green said that inside the neighborhood, on smaller roads with no lines, no sidewalks, and no places to escape, the impact was greater. She said that last year, one of the trucks left the neighborhood and immediately went off the road, hit a school bus stop sign, swerved across the road, swerved back, took out some mailboxes, and ran into a tree. She said that this occurred while children were waiting for school buses or walking to school, as well as while residents were trying to walk and bike within the neighborhood.

Gary Green, White Hall District and the Earlysville Forest subdivision, said he had provided a photo which showed road damage caused by dump trucks that continuously traveled down Earlysville Forest Drive. He said that repairs to that road had likely cost at least half a million dollars due to that particular ordinance exception. He said that time-stamped data from trucks showed that the traffic was constant. He said that while he appreciated concerns regarding what

was being dumped, equal concern should be given to the assault on the Earlysville subdivision. He said that the road was intended only for residential access, yet an SE had allowed thousands of trucks passing through the community during one summer.

Kathy Erskine said she appreciated the changes regarding short-duration activity and limited activity on particular types of roads. She said she was concerned, as it appeared none of those regulations applied to listed exempt activities. She said that Section J stated the Board of Supervisors could approve an exception from any requirement other than those listed by SUP in the summary table in Section E. She said it remained unclear if an SUP must still follow the short duration, the number of days, or the hours, which could imply that an SUP might bypass those regulations.

Ms. Erskine said that she requested that unlimited dump truck traffic not be allowed in a subdivision with no sidewalks, with elementary school bus stops, children playing, and pedestrians, where excessive noise, including recent jackknifing incidents, and noxious exhaust fumes create constant safety issues. She said that even if a direct access road is identified as unable to handle dump truck traffic, exemptions and the possibility of an SUP could evade those regulations. She requested information regarding what could be done for communities like those.

Mr. Carrazana closed the public hearing.

Ms. Firehock asked if agricultural activities were excluded from this ordinance.

Mr. Fritz said that agricultural activities on the farm were exempt if the material was generated on the farm. He explained that, for example, if material was removed from a pond on one portion of a farm to be used on another portion of that same farm, that material was not subject to the regulation. He said that the term “farm” was defined the same way the state did, meaning one or more parcels of land, whether such parcels were abutting or not, operated under the same management and whose primary use was agriculture.

Mr. Fritz said that if surplus material from a farm in one part of the County was moved to another part of the County, it was permitted if it qualifies as the same farm. He clarified that the provision applied to the “farm” rather than the “parcel.” He said that moving material from one farm to a different farm was not permitted, but moving material between different parts of the same farm was covered under the provision of the state code. He said that if material was not generated on the farm, it was not considered an agricultural activity.

Ms. Firehock said that her second question related to the comments just made. She asked if the ordinance limited truck traffic, except on major arterial roads such as Route 29.

Mr. Fritz said that was correct. He said that when the Board of Supervisors considered an SE or an SUP, there could be no limit. He said that a cap only applied when an SE or an SUP must be requested from the Board.

Ms. King said she was unsure how many other commissioners were aware of the issue at Earlysville Forest prior to the incident, but she was aware that it affected home values in that neighborhood. She said her understanding was that the situation resulted from an SUP that allowed that particular use, though such an occurrence could happen again.

Mr. Fritz said that an SE existed and any ordinance adopted by the Board of Supervisors would not affect previously approved applications. He said that other applications would also be covered

and would not be impacted; while a nonconformity would exist, those entities could continue to operate as long as they operate within the parameters for which they were originally approved.

Ms. Brown said that an SE like that could still happen regardless.

Mr. Fritz said that the Board of Supervisors had broad authority when performing a discretionary action. He said that while the particulars of the SE were unknown, it likely had a time limit. He said that if that time limit was reached and an applicant returned to request an SUP for the same purpose, the Board may approve it, deny it, or impose new conditions.

Michael Barnes, Director of Planning, said that it was not to say that limits would not be placed. He said that SUPs were reviewed frequently and that limits were placed on various matters. He said that this discussion concerned a threshold that would be by right, whereas matters beyond that threshold would require an SUP and could be subject to conditions. He said that the purpose of these trips was to create a ceiling or a breaking point between what was by right and what was not by right.

Mr. Clayborne said that this was a follow-up to the information shared regarding the ability to move material from one farm to another parcel on the same farm. He asked for clarification on why material could not be moved from his farm to Mr. Carrazana's farm.

Mr. Barnes said that regarding the by-right condition, if one owned two separate parcels of the same farm, fill could be brought from one to the other. He said that one could bring fill to another farm, just not by right.

Mr. Fritz said that it would be covered under the fill regulation. He said that the origin and use of the material did not matter, except for inert material used as aggregate. He said that, whether the material came from a construction site or another farm, it could be brought there as a short-duration fill activity or as a regular fill activity.

Mr. Clayborne said that the regulations were driving the special use permit.

Mr. Fritz said that the Board of Supervisors could permit fill activity without regulating it, but the Board's difficulty was in determining the source of the material and its intended purpose. He said that if the material was being used for agriculture, the Board was concerned with how that use was verified. He said that a short-duration activity had been created to allow for this. He said that for agricultural purposes, there was a six-month period that could be exercised by right with certain limited restrictions.

Mr. Fritz said that if those limits were exceeded, an applicant might appear before the Board of Supervisors to demonstrate that the activity was truly for agriculture by providing the history of the property and the specific intended use, ensuring a subdivision or other type of development was not being conducted under the guise of agriculture. The Board was grappling with determining the appropriate duration, vehicle limits, and use limits while attempting to balance those factors, and that the current framework had been developed based on the direction received from the Board.

Mr. Murray said that a reasonable exception should be considered to exempt any approved federal or state conservation project, such as a project through the National Resources Conservation Service (NRCS). He said that he hoped no barriers would be placed in front of a project approved with federal or state conservation dollars.

Ms. Brown asked if there was a way to streamline the process for the farmers, as mentioned by the Farm Bureau, to reduce the time frame for seeking those approvals.

Mr. Fritz said that the code section referenced in the letter was for special use permits that go before the Board of Zoning Appeals rather than the Board of Supervisors. He said that the time frames were longer for projects that do not go to the Board of Zoning Appeals, noting that projects heard by the Board of Zoning Appeals were heard within 90 days, whereas special use permits heard by the Board of Supervisors came to the Planning Commission within 90 days and to the Board of Supervisors within a year, as required by state code.

Mr. Fritz said that SEs must also be heard within 90 days. He said that if the Board of Supervisors provided direction and resources to accelerate the review process, it could do so. He said that, for example, due to state code provisions, wireless applications must be processed within 150 days, and the ordinance required they be processed within 150 days. He said that if the Board directed the staff to process them quicker, the staff would do so.

Mr. Clayborne said that he would support that line of thinking, though it seemed counterintuitive. He said that it was difficult to determine what information was missing. He said that in rural areas, farming seemed to be the appropriate sector for that implementation. He said that if the execution of that regulation could be streamlined, it would be incredibly beneficial. He said that while certain flagged items might require extra scrutiny, the bulk of the process could potentially be handled administratively to make things easier for farmers.

Mr. Fritz said that if the criteria for qualifying for an SE were established, the process would simply state that the use was permitted rather than requiring the special exception process. He said that efforts had been made to identify ways to minimize the number of items requiring an SUP or an SE. He said that it was difficult to account for all variables, such as the type of minor collector, the actual traffic volume on that collector, the characteristics of the road in the vicinity, the source of materials, and the routing. He said that a location 100 feet from a minor collector off of an arterial requires a different evaluation. He said that it was not possible to identify every single variable to make the process administrative, as doing so would require an exhaustive level of verification that staff could not provide.

Mr. Moore said that the proposed regulation of fill represented a moderate approach. He said that certain activities would be permitted by right with a relatively small number of vehicle trips, whereas the example provided by commenters would not be permitted by right due to the excessive number of trips. He said that other activities would trigger an SUP, allowing the Board to approve or deny the specific number of trips and the volume of material from various sources, which describes the current view. He said that this relatively limited scale of by-right applications appears more effective than allowing any amount of fill, though it was not as restrictive as it could be, representing a middle ground.

Mr. Carrazana asked if anyone was ready to make a motion.

Ms. Brown asked if a motion could be made that included a modified recommendation for the Board of Supervisors to modify the time frames.

Mr. Fritz said that a recommended motion was available to recommend approval, or approval with changes. He said that discussions had occurred regarding inert fill and the speed at which an SUP or SE might be processed before being forwarded to the Board of Supervisors.

Ms. King asked whether those changes made it more difficult for staff to review and approve items, and whether the process was clearer, simpler, and easier, or if it was more cumbersome.

Mr. Fritz said that if it was recommended that asphalt was not a permitted material, asphalt would be written out as a type of permitted material. He said that if a faster review process was recommended, the Board of Supervisors would be advised that this had an impact on staff resources and might impact the speed at which other applications were processed.

Mr. Barnes said that the question concerned whether the outlined process would be simpler or more complex for staff than the previous process.

Mr. Fritz said that the proposed process was slightly more complex depending on the type of road, but generally, it was not substantially more complex. He said that it included an administrative process for zoning clearance, which presented some minor burdens that were not excessive.

Ms. Firehock asked if it made the short-term project easier, where the goal was to stabilize something to get in and out of a site while performing work.

Mr. Fritz said that it certainly made the activity easier for the applicant.

Ms. Firehock said that the focus should be on the big picture and whether it was easier overall to complete the necessary tasks.

Mr. Fritz said that the intent of the Board was to design the language to make certain short-duration agricultural activities easier and speedier. He said that the clarification of certain terms was also intended to provide efficiencies for everyone by preventing debates over the meaning of terms or what is or is not allowed. He said that, overall, these changes should be helpful.

Mr. Carrazana said he appreciated the work performed and noted that the process had involved extensive conversations with attorneys and inter-agencies. He said he believed a good balance had been struck. He said he had some uncertainty regarding the asphalt, noting that asphalt is the primary material used for road construction, and he was unsure if crumbling it to use as sub-base material was more or less harmful. He said he had concern regarding the definition of inert, noting that substances leach out of asphalt, and he questioned whether those substances were harmful.

Ms. King made a motion to recommend approval of TA-2026-00001 Fill Regulations as presented. Mr. Murray seconded the motion.

Mr. Murray said that he proposed an amendment to provide an exception for approved federal and state conservation projects.

Commissioner Firehock asked if that was for projects currently underway and if the fill material would facilitate the construction of those projects.

Mr. Barnes said that it would apply to new projects.

Ms. Firehock said that the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) database was problematic because many BMPs dropped off after five years and that, consequently, while they were listed as project sites, tracking them in Virginia had been difficult.

Mr. Barnes said that he would have to defer to the County Attorney, but the ordinance would only apply to new projects moving forward.

Ms. King motioned that the Planning Commission recommend approval of TA-2026-00001 Fill Regulations for the reasons stated in the staff report and with the exception for new state and federal conservation projects. Ms. Murray seconded the motion, which carried unanimously (7-0).

Presentation

Albemarle County Multimodal Transportation Plan

Michael Barnes, Director of Planning, said that he would provide a couple of points for context. He said that the transportation plan was a well-laid-out process that incorporated consensus from AC44 and many of the concerns heard from the Board, Commission, and others. He said that no plan perfectly balanced all the variables, needs, or desires voiced within the community, and that this plan would undoubtedly fall short because there was much ground to cover on the topic, and time was limited.

Mr. Barnes said that staff had discussed the steps in the plan extensively over the past several months to hone a process that would deliver a product geared toward the implementation of a transportation network. He said that this plan built upon numerous previous studies and was being delivered relatively quickly; the public input from those plans allowed the process to build upon existing work rather than starting from the beginning.

Mr. Barnes said that this plan accomplished two major objectives. He said it set out a clear path for mapping out transportation networks of sidewalks, bike paths, transit, auto, and freight, and it set out a clear path for coming to consensus on strategies and policies that would govern how those networks were built. He said that these policies would support growth policies that accommodated roughly 31,000 people over the next 20 years, mostly in the development area and many within activity centers.

Mr. Barnes said that while these transportation networks by travel mode would map out where infrastructure was needed, it was important to recognize limited resources, time, money, and staff. He said that for that reason, the latter steps in the plan would formulate strategies and policies to direct future transportation investments in ways that maximized the functions of the network and delivered the greatest return on investment.

Jessica Dimmick, Principal Transportation Planner, said that she would present the Multimodal Transportation Plan on behalf of the Transportation Planning team. She said that this was an introductory work session for an effort that was just beginning. She said that the Multimodal Transportation Plan was being developed because the AC44 Comprehensive Plan required it, specifically as Action 1.1 in the Transportation Chapter. She said that AC44 contained nine topic chapters with 378 actions and seven Big Moves that encompassed, guided, and prioritized those actions.

Ms. Dimmick said that County staff were working on five work projects to implement AC44, and staff presented an overview of these projects to the Board of Supervisors in April. She said that primary and secondary connections showed how the work projects pushed the Big Moves forward in multiple ways. She said that the development of the Multimodal Transportation Plan would move the goals, objectives, and actions within AC44 forward alongside several other parallel initiatives.

Ms. Dimmick said that a Multimodal Transportation Plan identified and prioritizes infrastructure projects, programs, and strategies to create a safe, connected transportation system. She said that it was forward-thinking, encompassed all travel modes, and reflected the diversity of land use contexts and travel needs throughout the County. She said that the multimodal plan would provide a clear, geographically specific vision for a system that worked for all modes and aligned with land use, economic vitality, environmental, and other goals.

Ms. Dimmick said that it would take the transportation goals and objectives established in AC44 to a higher level of clarity through system mapping, analysis, and priorities for implementation. She said that this process was not starting from scratch, as there were many existing plans and studies. She said that the purpose of the multimodal plan was to take the recommendations and findings from prior efforts and weave them together with data-based analysis and focused public input into one cohesive countywide transportation plan that reflected the County's goals and priorities.

Ms. Dimmick said that this included aligning with the transportation planning efforts of neighboring jurisdictions and addressing the diversity of transportation needs of County residents, businesses, visitors, and other stakeholders. She said that the outcomes of this process would include a clearly defined transportation vision, maps of future transportation networks for each travel mode, a prioritized list of transportation projects, policy, program, and strategy recommendations, and an implementation plan with a funding strategy.

Ms. Dimmick said that since the presentation to the Board in April, the team had focused on process design, goal setting, gathering data, reviewing prior plans and public input, and refining the approach and messaging. She said that a focus on limited resources had emerged as a guiding principle throughout the development of the multimodal plan. She said that while it was easy to envision an aspirational network for every mode, resources to build that network are limited, meaning the process would involve tough choices regarding what to build first.

Ms. Dimmick said that this would include a discussion on how to strategically focus and phase projects to deliver functional portions of the plan networks that provide the most usefulness in connecting people to necessary destinations. She said that as the multimodal plan moved forward, there were five keywords repeated in AC44 that described what the County's transportation system needed to be. She said the multimodal plan was an opportunity to define and bring clarity to exactly what these terms meant for Albemarle.

Ms. Dimmick said that to be truly multimodal, these five goal themes must be true for all modes. She said that "connected" referred to whether a connected network of facilities existed. She said that for auto and freight modes, the answer was generally yes, except for a few needed new road connections, but for bicycle, pedestrian, and transit modes, the network of facilities was fragmented with gaps in facilities and services. She said that "accessible" asked whether the network provided access to necessary destinations. She said that a connected network may go from point A to point B, but if a necessary point C was not served, the network was not fully useful.

Ms. Dimmick said that "safe" asked whether the transportation system allowed travel without the risk of bodily harm. She said that "efficient" was defined as whether the transportation network moved people and goods with minimal waste. She said that, while efficiency was often used in the narrow context of minimizing vehicular delay, this perspective could be broadened to include all resources and a more holistic view of people-moving capacity or trips completed, incorporating goals such as sustainability and reliability.

Ms. Dimmick said that “equitable” asked whether one group of people experienced disproportionate levels of service or access compared to another; while travel by personal automobile typically provided the highest level of access in terms of destinations, travel time, and reliability, not every resident, employee, or visitor has access to a personal automobile. She said that the process was organized into six steps across three distinct phases. She said that the first phase was multimodal system planning, which involved establishing the desired networks for each travel mode and the metrics by which progress would be evaluated.

Ms. Dimmick said that the current step was step one: process design and goal setting. She said that the next step would be to identify deficiencies through a needs analysis of gaps and needed connections, after which the team would produce route network maps for each travel mode. She said that in step 2C, an initial feasibility assessment would be conducted to ensure the proposed networks are feasible, followed by step 2D, refining the route networks to create a complete system for all travel modes.

Ms. Dimmick said that phase two will involve developing recommendations for infrastructure projects, strategies, programs, and initiatives, prioritizing them, and creating a funding plan to match priorities with funding and construction opportunities. She said that this work is expected to continue through the end of fiscal year 2029. She said that after plan development was completed, phase three would involve implementation and monitoring, where metrics would be evaluated to assess progress. She said that key activities and anticipated deliverables for each step were provided in the meeting packet as Attachment 1.

Ms. Dimmick said that regarding community engagement, the multimodal plan would build on the input received through prior planning efforts. She said that the public and stakeholders had provided significant input, which served as the foundation for this work. She said that the team was currently designing the community and stakeholder engagement process. She said that internal discussions were occurring regarding how to engage with different stakeholder groups, and that the key would be to identify strategic, targeted engagement activities at critical points in the plan development process.

Ms. Dimmick said that this plan was not starting from scratch, as work had been focused on reviewing prior plans and studies. She said that there were 68 planning initiatives, and efforts were underway to determine how to meaningfully incorporate the recommendations and findings from all of these prior efforts. She said that although the volume of information was significant, there was a commitment to honoring the work that had already been done and using it as a starting point.

Ms. Dimmick said that the Board and the Commission had expressed a desire to move toward implementation rather than planning for the sake of planning; therefore, these plans and studies are being reviewed to avoid reinventing the wheel as much as possible. She said that given that the process was at the beginning, there were several questions for consideration and feedback for staff. She said that these questions included whether the five Multimodal Transportation Plan goal themes adequately captured the transportation goals and objectives from AC44, what County staff needed to know as this process began, what data sources or other studies should be utilized, and what questions the Commission had regarding the process.

Ms. Brown said that given the long timeline for those processes and the fact that implementation and funding sources often take years to reach, it might be helpful to identify potential funding sources along the way. She said that identifying “low-hanging fruit” or shovel-ready projects could be beneficial in case funding opportunities, especially smaller ones, arise quickly.

Ms. Brown said that, for example, during the approval of the bipartisan infrastructure plan, many large projects were pushed through rapidly because they were ready, even if they were not ideal. She said that maintaining a list of projects that could be funded quickly and examining potential funding sources to package activities or tasks might help accelerate implementation.

Mr. Moore asked how this planning would be coordinated with the activity center plans and zoning modernization.

Mr. Barnes said that elements of that already existed in AC44, such as the idea of having activity center plans and creating walkable nodes. He said that one of those strategies could be maximized, and the intent of the plan was to reduce the number of centers to provide a place to focus on walkability. He said that when discussing limited resources, walkability aspects or the majority of investments might be geared toward activity centers or schools, and that the same logic might apply to other areas.

Mr. Barnes said that transit was necessary to move people between those activity centers and to serve a larger area, and the bike plan might be an important project to build if it connects to activity centers. He said that coordinating land use and transportation to build something that supports the goal created in the NMD in 2000, while underpinning that with supporting transportation, was a significant goal. He said that funding will always be a factor.

Mr. Barnes said that there had typically been a heavy reliance on VDOT, and it would likely continue, especially for larger projects. He said that there may be opportunities to build smaller projects to help fill in the network, which was something that may be addressed eventually. He said that regarding funding, the approach was looking slightly broader than in the past, though there had been a heavy reliance on VDOT's funding sources.

Mr. Moore said that it was relevant to how much there would be a dependence not just on SmartScale, but on all available VDOT programs. He said that while connections between activity centers were an obvious priority, consideration should also be given to current versus projected needs and focusing on transportation investments that encourage more housing production. He said that it had been mentioned in every meeting that there would be 20,000 more people in the next 14 or 15 years who must be accommodated locally rather than in outlying counties.

Mr. Moore said that it was important to determine how to create transportation connections that encourage housing production. He said that there was common criticism from residents regarding building too much without the roads to support it, although Berkmar Extension was an exception where the construction of a road had enabled significant development alongside it. He said that consideration must be given to how this was framed moving forward, specifically regarding building for future growth versus connecting what is already known to be developing.

Mr. Barnes said that one of the primary ways to balance environmental desires with growth management policy was to build denser. He said that activity centers offered an opportunity to achieve this, as many coincided with grayfields and other areas suitable for infill. He added that the parallel effort of working with activity center plans involved discussions with colleagues in the private sector regarding the obstacles they faced.

Mr. Barnes said that a recurring question was how to reduce the number of parking spaces if density increased, and that part of the solution involved increasing transportation infrastructure, such as transit or bike lanes, to assist with that transition. He said that limited resources would continue to be a factor in determining how to strategically invest money to support denser forms

of development, which might involve building up a portion of the network within the development area.

Mr. Moore said that his final point involved the public engagement phase and the associated process. He said that a particular effort should be made to hear from individuals who were not typically heard from, such as wage earners, renters, and those whose schedules make transit difficult, as well as to learn about their experiences. He said that rather than asking if people preferred Scenario A or Scenario B, the process should incorporate experience-based expertise from those who may not self-select to fill out a web survey or attend a meeting.

Mr. Barnes said that one of the things being examined was previous studies where data was broken down into two large groups. He said that part of the data was thematic, consisting of things the communities expressed over time regarding what they wanted to see from the transportation network, and that a good representation is achieved with many studies. He said that efforts were always made to include people who did not participate in public forums, and AC44 spent a lot of time attempting to do exactly that.

Mr. Barnes said that the other aspect was geographic and noted that many of these studies include surveys regarding specific spots where citizens are having problems. He said that between those two aspects, the current work and AC44 could build upon the comments received from the community over the past 10 to 15 years, which formed a very good basis for future actions.

Ms. Dimmick said that one thing she had learned through years of public engagement, especially when reaching individuals who are typically unheard from, was that time is a significant limitation. She said that to facilitate input, it was helpful to provide a very clear and simple request. She said that throughout this process, they aimed to be very clear about what is being requested, ensuring the ask was direct and targeted at a strategic point rather than being nebulous.

Mr. Murray said that when he was a Senior at Western Albemarle, he had been assigned to the Albemarle Planning Department to experience local government. He said that at that time, he had asked what was being done to provide safe places for children to ride bikes, as he had spent much of his time riding through the rural area of Ivy, which was then a development area. He said that a staff member had presented a map showing a network of bike lanes and trails traversing the County, which had left him feeling positive and optimistic about local government.

Mr. Murray said that since then, very little of that multimodal network had been built, and he thought it would be fascinating if that map could be located. He said that while the Board of Supervisors managed budgets and annual allocations, goals and metrics should be made as measurable as possible. He said that if a quarter-mile of greenway had been built every year since that map was created, significant progress would have been made toward achieving that goal.

Mr. Murray said that many places used for biking, running, or walking had become unsafe, and some were gravel roads that had since been paved, while others had seen traffic volumes increase to unsafe levels. He said that in addition to existing goal themes, a “do no harm” theme should be added. He said that it was necessary to recognize highly used areas for walkers, runners, and cyclists and to strive to ensure those places did not deteriorate. He said that while much of the focus in development areas was on where to build new infrastructure, the value of preserving existing walkable places must also be recognized.

Mr. Murray said that the recent expansion of the Old Mills Trail was a very expensive project to complete approximately one mile. He said that if roads like Dick Woods Road or Ridge Road are considered, the economic value they provide should be evaluated. He said that if the County had to replace that many miles of greenway, the cost would be significant. He said that resources are often perceived as having no value because they were not paid for by the County. He said that there must be a better job of documenting the economic value those places provided.

Mr. Murray said that to acknowledge these needs, the County could engage with community organizations; for example, staff could provide input on multimodal transportation, greenways, and trails at the upcoming Crozet Trails race. He said that engaging with forums such as the Charlottesville Track Club would allow for direct communication with organizations that have a long history of supporting walking, running, and cycling in the community. He said that regarding rural areas, the focus should be on preserving existing assets rather than building new infrastructure. He said that rural destination such as country stores, crossroads communities, churches, and community centers were important places that people must walk to, and in areas like Batesville, those locations served as lifelines for residents.

Mr. Murray said that there should be a recognition of the sphere around those places where the ability for people to walk must be preserved, alongside support for community-initiated improvements. He said the recent improvement to the Dick Woods parking lot for cyclists and runners, which was completed through a partnership between the Charlottesville Track Club and Miller School without County involvement, was a successful example. He said that the County should strive to be a more proactive supporter of projects like that.

Mr. Barnes said that he offered an apology to Mr. Murray, on behalf of the planning profession, for crushing his hopes as a young man. He said that many great points were made and one of the questions that must be addressed in this plan was the question of limited resources.

Mr. Murray said that he had spent approximately three hours compiling a list of frequently used gravel roads in Albemarle County. He said that he had made posts to various organizations to ask local running and cycling groups if the list was accurate and if those were the resources they used.

Ms. King said that she was uncertain regarding whether the term “resources” referred to the same concept mentioned by Mr. Barnes, but the discussion had prompted further reflection on the application. She said that she anticipated that the implementation would focus on development areas rather than rural areas, as the elements previously mentioned were located in rural areas. She stated that while bike trails in rural areas were beneficial, the focus of the proposal appeared to be on how to connect people in actual development areas where connectivity was required.

Mr. Murray said that the ability to go outside for a run was healthcare. He said that he had a history of heart disease and diabetes, and if he was not able to run on roads, he would be taking medication for diabetes or heart conditions, or worse, he would be transported to an emergency room. He said that he believed that it should be recognized that this is a form of transportation that needs to be accounted for. He said that the concept of “do no harm” applied to development areas.

Mr. Murray said that various projects had been presented that would disrupt areas where people currently walk and run, and he suggested that knowing where those places are allowed for the identification of gaps. He said that if there were two highly used networks of cyclists, runners, and walkers with a large void in the middle, that indicated what needed to be built. He said that without an awareness of where people were already using those paths, the gaps could not be identified.

Mr. Murray said that this was not an argument for building new trails in rural areas, but rather an argument against disrupting existing ones. He said that, for example, when special use permits came before the Commission, traffic counts were provided, but there was never a mention of whether there were pedestrian users in the same area. He said that if car traffic counts were being reviewed, a list of places highly used by cyclists, runners, and other pedestrians should be included when considering special use permits and other matters that could affect those populations.

Ms. King said that she understood that, as part of the plan, the focus was not on identifying improvements in those areas, but rather on accounting for the data.

Mr. Murray said that his point was to ensure the Commission was not operating without sufficient information. He said that if small improvements had been made to road projects since the 1970s, Route 76 would likely be more usable and significantly less dangerous.

Mr. Clayborne said that emphasizing the use of limited resources may not strengthen the presentation, as it could be interpreted as suggesting that while many things will be shown, expectations should remain low. He said that as the subject-matter experts, the team should put forth priorities and recommendations with the necessary context, but without overemphasizing limited resources, as that did not add value to the presentation.

Mr. Clayborne said that since 2029 was a long timeline, it might be beneficial to find moments to celebrate progress and identify successes to highlight. He said that broadening the perspective of the definition of “efficient” to include minimal waste was acceptable, but that the ability to reach destinations in a reasonable time must be included. He said that time was a highly valuable attribute and that making the case that County investment can save residents time, such as allowing them to get to work faster, might elevate the initiative as a priority.

Mr. Clayborne said that regarding the approximately 68 past plans, it would be beneficial to highlight key accomplishments from those previous plans to demonstrate progress and avoid the impression that this is simply plan 69 without any historical success. He said that regarding the County’s population, it was important to know how that was expected to change throughout the duration of AC44 and how that might impact priorities. For example, if the population was aging, the focus may shift away from bicycle commuting. He asked that staff weigh in on whether they have begun looking at key demographics and how those changes will be woven into the plan.

Mr. Barnes said that the Planning Department was cognizant of the fact that America was growing older due.

Mr. Clayborne asked whether the current considerations influenced whether biking or bus systems are prioritized. He said bus transit was a key ingredient for multimodal transportation, especially given the unique geography with regards to the City. He asked if there were conversations occurring between the County, the City, and the University to coordinate ridership to ensure a sustainable bus system. He expressed concern that putting forth an unfeasible plan would be a waste of energy and inquired whether this was something that could be addressed now or if it was a matter for a later date.

Ms. Dimmick said that staff was aware that the City was in the process of developing its own active mobility plan. She said that conversations had been held with City staff leading that effort to discuss how the two processes could be coordinated and aligned to the extent feasible, even if timing did not always align.

Mr. Clayborne asked if there were conversations at a larger scale regarding pooling ridership.

Mr. Barnes said that a major effort with Charlottesville Albemarle Regional Transit Authority (CARTA) was underway to determine how Charlottesville, Albemarle, and to a certain extent University of Virginia (UVA) could work together to deliver transit more effectively. He said that the state had passed enabling legislation for that transportation authority over 10 years ago, and the process had come to fruition over the past couple of years. He said that members of the Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) boards may have heard discussions regarding this, as the goal was to move forward by finding other funding sources to promote a regional transit authority.

Mr. Barnes said that this regional component was the missing piece in the discussions regarding other modes and working with the City. He said that it was necessary to figure out how to work with the City to meet their goals of reducing traffic and congestion within the City, as well as addressing the need to pass through the City. He said that the intention was not to suggest that work was not being done on the automobile aspect, but rather to broaden the conversation. He said that there were major choke points within the community, especially during peak hours, where congestion was significant, and auto-oriented solutions alone were unlikely to succeed.

Mr. Barnes said that it was very difficult to widen roads or build new ones these days, though intersection improvements could be made to create efficiencies. He said that many VDOT projects aimed to eke more efficiency out of the existing network. He said that time was a function of capacity, not just an individual's capacity in a car to get across town, especially during peak hours when everyone is using the same mode. He said that another goal was to determine if a percentage of the population could use transit, biking, or pedestrian paths to reduce peak-hour demand and increase the efficiency of the automobile road system.

Mr. Barnes said that because transit was on the same roads as automobiles, these elements were related. He said that the aspiration of the plan was to examine how these modes worked individually and then determine where to allocate funding to make them work as effectively as possible.

Mr. Clayborne said that regarding the transit piece, the focus was less on sitting in traffic and more on the bus transit system. He said that if a wait for the bus reached 35 minutes, the service became unusable. He said that the comments were primarily directed toward the goals of efficiency and equity regarding the bus system.

Ms. Firehock said that during her eight years on the Charlottesville Planning Commission, she had found success by creating a "wish list" of desired linkages, such as connecting specific neighborhoods to trails. She said that while the County did not own those connections, drawing them on paper allowed developers to incorporate them into their projects. She said that although proffers had decreased in frequency, maintaining a visible wish list assisted nonprofit organizations working on "bike to work" projects by demonstrating local government support for such initiatives.

Ms. Firehock said that regarding the plan's themes, she suggested that the term "green" should be included. She said that while Albemarle County already incorporated significant environmental elements, the concept of "complete green streets" should be emphasized. She said that this approach expanded upon "complete streets" which focused on multimodal accessibility and livability through benches and streetlights, by adding street trees, bioswales, and other features to filter stormwater and provide shade. She said that a separate project would utilize the state's

new one-meter land cover data and sidewalk data to analyze shade levels and heat on sidewalks within the development area.

Ms. Firehock said that the lack of street trees between pedestrians and vehicles created hot, uncomfortable walking environments, particularly on roads like Route 29 where narrow grass buffers provided little protection from high-speed traffic. Regarding stakeholder engagement, it was essential to reach low-income individuals who might lack vehicles, computers, or access to community surveys. She said that data could be obtained by engaging directly with those who must walk along roads like Route 29 because no other options existed.

Ms. Firehock said that she recommended that the plan consider trail networks that existed off the road, as bike lanes were not appropriate for all streets due to safety concerns. She said that a wish list approach had proven successful for smaller amenities, such as bike lockers, which developers often viewed as “low-hanging fruit.” She said that while the County currently received proffers for items like bus stop locations, the scope of those requests should be broadened. She said that the County should identify connections and prioritize walkability by considering shade, safety, and setbacks.

Ms. Firehock said that they should explore creative solutions, such as those seen in Lynchburg, where a trail through a wooded area unexpectedly created a commuter route connecting northern neighborhoods to downtown. She said that this might include utilizing easements on private property to create green pathways or finding creative ways to establish connections outside of VDOT rights-of-way. She said that while it was important to highlight past successes, the plan should also explain why this current transportation planning effort would be different.

Mr. Barnes said that the idea behind phase one was to establish a robust network that served not only as a basis for the public sector to select projects but also as a framework for private sector developers, non-governmental organizations (NGO), or local advocacy groups to build parts of the network. He said that the scope was not restricted to roads; while much activity occurs on roads, they are not always the best locations for biking and walking, so there was an opportunity to evaluate the network to reach that goal. He said that regarding complete streets and the heat island effect, it was important to remain pragmatic when considering the transportation network to be built.

Mr. Barnes said that having worked in the community for 20 years, it was evident that many optimistic plans had been proposed, but resources must be specifically directed toward providing opportunities for walking and biking. He said that the process should be participatory and reflective of what the community wants, rather than being planned solely by a single entity. He said that while much planning had been completed, the current effort aimed to establish a time frame to deliver the network and subsequently address how to build and fund it.

Mr. Barnes said that a good plan was vital, and there was currently no planning document that showed where bike paths should be located in the community. He said that while many bike paths and individual developments have been built, they did not always connect well, and articulating those connections was the purpose of the second step. He said that other efforts would address environmental issues and the sense of place on a street, which was critically important.

Mr. Barnes said that there were significant hurdles with the state agency that manages the roads, but to the extent that the two could be blended, both would be pursued. He said that this transportation plan was intended to pair with the activity center plan, which should ideally create walkable, inviting cores. He said that it was necessary to stay focused on the fact that limited resources circumscribed the available choices, and that rather than viewing this negatively, it was

a recognition of the current reality. He said that the goal was to build the best community possible with the resources available, acknowledging that limited resources constrained the community only as much as was allowed.

Ms. Firehock said that it was obvious that priorities had to be established because resources were limited. She said that it was important not to create an unrealistic plan that would become obsolete in 10 years. She said that several members of the dais came from the NGO world or had extensive consulting experience. She said that she had been involved in projects to secure bridges for communities, build new trails, install new sidewalks, create new street crossings, and establish safe routes to schools, much of which involved private funding. She said that the County could not do everything. She said that the current federal administration was not providing the same level of resources as others, which was why the County had to play the long game and be prepared with shovel-ready projects for the future.

Mr. Barnes said that there was general agreement on the basic aims, and a comprehensive network game plan was expected by the end of September 2027.

Mr. Carrazana said that he agreed with Mr. Clayborne's point regarding limited resources. He said that when providing the vision for multimodal transportation, limited resources should not limit the vision. He said that if the vision was not presented, it would never be accomplished. He said that once the vision was established, priorities could be set based on available resources to determine what was completed first while still working toward that long-term vision.

Mr. Carrazana said that the current discussion concerns the vision and the plan being developed. He said that he agreed with Mr. Clayborne that focusing on limited resources does not help the case, which should instead focus on a plan to connect the community through multimodal options, including cars, buses, walking, and bikes. He said that the focus must remain on that goal, acknowledging that while prioritization will occur, partnerships would also need to be sought.

Ms. King said that the term "pragmatic" aligned with her understanding of the limited resources vision and was a priority. She said that being pragmatic involved focusing on current needs rather than "pie in the sky" goals, and that while many things would be wonderful 20 years from now, the current plan would take three to five years to complete. She asked how a critical need identified in step two would be incorporated into the SmartScale applications in Q2 of 2027.

Ms. Dimmick said that while the plan development was proposed to take three years, work was also proceeding on the regular cycle of grant applications. She said there was already a list of 169 projects from prior plans. She said that one reason the multimodal plan had not commenced was that the Board directed a prioritization effort of the existing list of projects.

Ms. Dimmick said that this effort was being used to identify opportunities for seeking grant funds through SmartScale, revenue sharing, transportation alternatives, and other funding sources as a concurrent process. She said that once step four was reached, the prioritization effort would be revisited to refine it using the information learned through the plan development process.

Ms. King said that Phase 3, which followed the implementation, monitoring, evaluation, and refinement of Phase 2, should provide an opportunity to extend the wish list. She said that regarding limited resources, the focus should not only be on funding for road construction but also on staff resources. She said that staff resources should be prioritized for items that can be accomplished actionably within the next decade.

Ms. King said that while she acknowledged that long-term goals of 20 years were beneficial if included in the plan, she cautioned that excessive time spent searching for every detail may prevent the completion of planning and actual construction; therefore, she supported the theme of limited resources. She said that there was a connection between the comments made by Mr. Moore and Mr. Clayborne regarding regional transportation and housing. She said that she observed that, aside from Crozet, the County had focused development within a specific sphere and disallowed subdivisions outside of it.

Ms. King said that this approach forced residents to live in Greene, Fluvanna, Nelson, and Louisa counties, and subsequently required them to drive to downtown Charlottesville or Albemarle County. She said that consequently, a priority should be placed on a regional bus system. She said that implementing park and ride locations at Rio 29, Greenbrier, Fluvanna, and Nelson County would allow people to park and commute via bus, which would eliminate traffic congestion more effectively than other proposed measures.

Ms. King said that while bicycle infrastructure was beneficial, it did not address the issue of forcing residents to live in other counties and drive into the area, which increases carbon emissions. She said that she concluded that a heavy emphasis should be placed on regional transit and that the plan should focus on the development area.

Mr. Clayborne said that he agreed with the focus on practicality and getting things done. He said that, echoing Mr. Carrazana, he hoped that the vision put forth could be pursued while simultaneously reaching for essential needs. He said that courage was a muscle that must be exercised and urged the County to do so.

Mr. Barnes said that the message should convey more strongly that this step established a vision and a larger plan that set the template for municipal projects, provided context for decisions, and helped coordinate the efforts of the private sector.

Mr. Carrazana said that the two points made were not mutually exclusive, as a vision was required to prioritize the steps to bring that vision to fruition. He said that the Beltline in Atlanta was an example, noting that an architecture student at Georgia Tech had designed the Beltline and presented the design to the city. He said that despite many naysayers claiming the project would never be completed due to private property issues, the project had grown from a single, strategically located mile to now connecting most of the city. He said that the vision was achieved by someone presenting and fighting for it, and a similar approach could be taken here because the nodes existed.

Mr. Carrazana said these examples happen on smaller scales as well. He said that because not everyone would ride bicycles, Ms. King's point regarding how to attract commuters was important. He said that various terms had been used today, such as connectivity, awareness, prioritization, and partnerships. He said that partnerships were not necessarily limited to material goods like funding but could also involve sharing ideas. He said that, for example, UVA utilized commuter lots to bring people from outside the campus into the grounds every day. He said that there may be a way for UVA to partner by bringing commuters in from Greene County, Nelson County, or from across the mountain.

Mr. Carrazana said that since three years was a long time, the group should identify quick wins that could be celebrated; for instance, a partnership could be identified where one entity provides a bus and another provides a lot. He said that some of those needs were obvious, such as the requirements for Route 29. He said that with more development and industry coming to Greene County, this would be a natural progression.

Mr. Murray said that one effective measure implemented by Roanoke was the establishment of permanent advisory committees composed of individuals who regularly bike, walk, and run. He said that Roanoke established these committees under economic development because the outdoor recreation economy was critical to their economic development, noting specifically that Wells Fargo was attracted to Roanoke because of that economy. He said that many employers moving into Albemarle County were similarly drawn to the area because of those resources.

Mr. Murray said that establishing a committee could provide the momentum needed to maintain focus through staff changes, ensure the implementation of the plan, and incorporate ideas from nonprofits and other stakeholders. He said that while the rural area should not be the primary focus of the plan, it should not be ignored entirely, as it has been overlooked for a long time. He remarked that if residents must drive to the City to find safe places to run or bike, the purpose of the plan was defeated. He said that it was important to preserve existing resources, as requiring daily drives to the ACAC would negatively impact traffic.

Ms. King said that the plan should address how it supports housing and infill. She said that economic development was not mentioned as frequently in the presentation and suggested that a key goal of the plan should be to facilitate economic development.

Ms. Carrazana said that the Beltline served as a driver for economic development rather than just connecting people and activities. He said that many businesses had opened along the Beltline and that adaptive reuse had brought life to blighted neighborhoods. He said that it was much more than a multimodal plan and that there were many examples of this success.

Committee Reports

Mr. Murray said that the MPO Technical Committee had met and discussed how other MPOs in the state differed from this one. He said that some MPOs crossed state boundaries, such as those in North Carolina. He said that the mix of partners varied, and some MPOs involved multiple universities, while others included a local airport. He said that it was worth considering whether more could be done to engage the Charlottesville Airport. He said that examining how other MPOs operated in the state was an interesting exercise from which lessons could be learned.

Mr. Moore said that the Rio 29 Community Advisory Committee (CAC) had met, though there were no development proposals to discuss. He said that the meeting had focused primarily on a presentation from ACPD regarding crime statistics for the County and the Rio District. He said that countywide fraud was a significant issue, particularly for individuals aged 65 and older, who were twice as likely to be victims of fraud as they were to be victims of crime in general.

Mr. Moore said that there had been a spike in DUIs so far this year for unclear reasons, and that thefts from vehicles were ahead of the expected pace for that year, particularly in the spring. He said that the NeighborLink program allowed a household member to register a personal home security camera, such as a Ring, so that if a crime occurred in the area, the police could request to view the footage. He said that the hiring process for the new Police Chief was beginning and that the recruiter contract started that week.

Ms. Brown said that she had attended the National Heritage Committee meeting the previous week. She said that the Virginia Grassland Bird Initiative had provided a presentation stating that the 16-County Shenandoah area had experienced a steeper decline in Virginia grassland birds than any other area. She said that the initiative focused on programs for 10 to 20-acre plots in rural areas and had implemented impressive programming, including successful projects at public sites such as Walton Middle School. She said that the initiative had requested an update on the

progress of the biophilic region application through the planning stage and noted that the memorandum of understanding (MOU) was currently under review.

Mr. Barnes said he did not have any updates.

Ms. Brown said that the timing for bush hogging and harvesting was a significant factor. She said that educational materials were being developed using local research because established time frames for the Midwest or Ohio often do not apply in this region. She said that those time frames could be off by four to six weeks, which was critical for those habitats. She said that the production and sharing of those materials would be helpful, and incentive programs existed for landowners to change land use designations or activities regarding haying.

Review of Board of Supervisor Meeting: October 7, 2026

Mr. Barnes said that there were three items of interest from the October 7 Board of Supervisors meeting agenda. He said that the first was a public hearing on Camp Watermarks, located off Hatton Ferry Road near the James River, which the Board had approved unanimously. He said that another item, which had not come before the Commission, was a public hearing regarding the Schenks Branch sewer line located in front of the building along McIntire Road.

Mr. Barnes said that approximately 10 years ago, a sewer line and the greenway trail had been installed from the recycling center toward the bypass. He said that this project would extend from the recycling center across the County's property to eventually attach to a sewer line at the Preston intersection. He said that the request was to grant an easement for the replacement of that sewer line and the extension of a shared-use path as part of the project.

Ms. Firehock asked if that was an expansion of the pipe or just a repair.

Mr. Barnes said that the 21-inch clay pipe was very old and needed to be replaced, noting that this would be a major undertaking due to its depth. He said that Emily Kilroy, Director of Economic Development, provided a first-year update on the department's work with the strategic plan and its ongoing efforts. He said that AstraZeneca had been a major component of that work, which was directly in line with the strategic plan.

Mr. Barnes said that Community Development provided a presentation on confined animal feeding operations (CAFO). He said that due to community concern regarding CAFOs, a report had been provided to offer a clear understanding of the definitions in that realm, the state's enabling legislation, and how other localities regulated them. He said that many local regulations around CAFOs primarily involved setbacks from property lines. He said that there had been a request for more information to be presented to the Board in several months, at which point the matter would proceed.

New Business

There was none.

Old Business

There was none.

Items for follow-up

There was none.

Adjournment

At 8:45 p.m., the Commission adjourned to October 27, 2026, Albemarle County Planning Commission meeting, 6:00 p.m.



Michael Barnes, Director of Planning

(Recorded by Carolyn S. Shaffer, Clerk to Planning Commission & Planning Boards; transcribed by Golden Transcription Services)

Approved by Planning Commission
Date: 10/27/2026
Initials: CSS