Joint Work Session
Albemarle County &
City of Charlottesville Planning Commissions
September 24, 2013
Albemarle County Office Building
Minutes

City Commissioners Present
Ms. Genevieve Keller
Mr. Dan Rosensweig-Chairperson
Ms. Natasha Sienitsky
Mr. Kurt Keesecker

County Commissioners Present
Mr. Calvin Morris-Chairperson
Mr. Russell (Mac) Lafferty
Mr. Bruce Dotson
Mr. Don Franco
Mr. Thomas Loach
Mr. Richard Randolph
Mr. Ed Smith
Ms. Julia Monteith, AICP, Senior Land Use Planner for University of Virginia

Staff Present
Missy Creasy, Planning Manager
Lisa Robertson, Chief Deputy City Attorney
Wayne Cilimberg, Planning Director
Elaine Echols, Principal Planner
Greg Kamptner, County Attorney
David Blount, Acting Executive Director Thomas Jefferson Planning District Commission (TJPDC)
Will Cockrell, Project Manager at TJPDC
Wood Hudson, Senior Environmental Planner of TJPDC

Call to Order

Mr. Morris convened the Albemarle County Planning Commission meeting at 6:00 p.m.

Mr. Rosensweig convened the Charlottesville Planning Commission meeting at 6:00 p.m.

Work Session

The Planning Commissions held a work session to set general direction and obtain feedback on the following issues:

Livability Grant Product Review

- Performance Measurement system
- Codes and Ordinance Toolkit

Introduction

David Blount, Acting Executive Director at Thomas Jefferson Planning District Commission, said the two items to be presented this evening are the Performance Measurement System and Code and Ordinances Review and Toolkit. The Performance Measurement System is really a tool that contains an inventory of baseline conditions in the community that are good indicators for the region's livability. They think it will be helpful as a tool as they monitor

progress and are tracking trends toward implementing livability goals and achieving those goals in the community. The second piece is an overview of the Code and Ordinances Review and Toolkit. They think it will be very helpful for both the Commissions and staffs as they are moving forward towards implementing their Comprehensive Plans.

Overview of the Public Review Draft of the Livability Performance Measurement System Report
Wood Hudson, Senior Environmental Planner of TJPDC, presented a PowerPoint presentation to discuss The Performance Measurement System. He indicated that no action is required from the Planning Commissions. Public comments and feedback will be incorporated into the final version which will then be reviewed by PACC Tech before receiving final acceptance from PACC. Once accepted by PACC the report is intended to act as the starting point or baseline for measuring success or tracking future progress of the community for future revisions.

Mr. Hudson asked the Commissioners if the report adequately highlights the baseline conditions of the communities. He asked if the baseline indicators included in this report would be adequate for tracking progress if the data were to be updated in the future. Finally, he asked if there were items that should be tracked or monitored in the future.

Commissioners asked the following questions and made the following comments:

- The City needs a more fine-grained way at looking at density variations within the City;
- It would be helpful to make cross-references to similar recommendations where they exist in both the City and County recommendations (Code and Ordinance Report), and ensure that all recommendations have a comp plan linkage, even if it is a stretch link (Performance Measures Report).
- Please show how both performance indicators and code and ordinance suggestions can/might address more than one Comp Plan issue. For example, code change that increases density (or provides incentives to promote higher density) addresses housing availability, but also promotes economic development in having more residents closer to businesses, which in turn addresses public health issues by placing residents within walking distance of day-to-day services, etc.; and,
- It would be helpful for the PDC to provide a list of unavailable data that might prove to be helpful/beneficial in the future and therefore might be worth looking into how to obtain such data, for example, areas where there are sidewalk/bike lane network broken and/or incomplete? What is the residential usage of parks and community amenities?
- How often are the performance measurements updated? Staff answered that some items are being tracked already, but there are no expectations for the PDC to do an overall update at a future time.
- There are some data points where there is already an existing baseline, such as employment. Can it show trends? The answer was yes.
- It is an economic development tool. It will provide local information to those unfamiliar with the community.
- It would be difficult to track, but would be interesting to try to identify some peer communities to compare ourselves to such as communities that have universities and colleges or the same populations or growth rates. The system is useful to compare City/County development area/County rural area. It is a great start and they can build on it.
- It would be helpful to see a further breakdown if possible of housing affordability by other percentages of Area Median Income. This would be true at the very low end of income as well as in the range of 95 – 110%. What is housing availability for these populations?
- Can the tool be used in the (Albemarle County's) Annual Report in December? There may be ways to keep this up to date on an annual basis. Staff answered that there will be data points that will be updated regularly.
- Will keeping track of data be built into the regular program and work plan of (Charlottesville's) Neighborhood Development Services?
- The Commissions said they would be looking to staff for guidance on how keeping the information updated could be incorporated into localities' work plans.

Codes and Ordinance Toolkit

Will Cockrell, Program Manager for Planning, Environment and the Transportation Program at the Thomas Jefferson Planning District Commission (TJPDC), presented a PowerPoint presentation to provide an overview of the Code and Ordinances Review and Toolkit. He emphasized this is a tool and not a policy document. He indicated that PDC staff used the content in the Comprehensive Plans to help identify ordinance changes needed. He said they plan to have a finalized draft in a couple of weeks.

Mr. Cockrell said that no action is required from the Planning Commissions since this is purely a reference document. He is asking for feedback from the Planning Commissions. Public comments and feedback will be incorporated into the final version of the report that will be reviewed by PACC Tech before receiving final acceptance from PACC. Once accepted by PACC, the report is intended to act as the baseline for future revisions to the plans.

Mr. Cockrell asked the following questions:

- Will this resource be useful to the Commissions as well as staff?
- Is there any additional information that would be useful in this tool?
- Should staff update this tool for future revisions of Community Plans?

Commissioners asked the following questions and made the following comments:

- What is the reasoning behind identifying certain issues as "regional" and other issues that are shared by the City and County? Staff responded that the next draft will be clear in that regard. It would be helpful to highlight the areas of similarities.
- Some of the "purposes" seem to be a little editorial. Please keep descriptions as value neutral as possible because eventually they will inform the actions of future Commissions, staff, Council and the Supervisors. This is especially important because every word in the Comp Plan has gone through appropriate channels and has been vetted and adopted. If they deviate from it they are in trouble. The City Counselors were changing words until the last minute before adoption of the Comp Plan. Therefore, that language is very important to them. Staff responded that these will be cleaned up in the next draft.
- Be sure to loop elected officials into this process so that the Codes and Ordinance recommendations do not just become a document that staff has access to.
- On page 35 the key colors need to be corrected to be consistent. In every other instance Charlottesville is yellow and the Albemarle is brown.

Mr. Morris invited public comment.

Travis Pietila, from the Southern Environmental Law Center, thanked the Livability staff for their hard work in putting these documents together and also the updated account tonight. Mr. Pietila noted a number of improvements in the performance measurement system report from previous versions. The report now provides separate data for Albemarle's development and rural areas on many subjects. This is an important distinction for some indicators, such as impervious surface cover where the size of the rural area alone would obscure data for Albemarle's urban areas if the two were combined.

- SELC also appreciates the housing section's new indicator combining housing and transportation costs as percentage of household income. As noted in the report, transportation costs are an essential component of housing affordability and are often overlooked when residents seek lower housing costs in rural areas far removed from jobs and services. The transportation section includes a related indicator of monthly household transportation costs. They recommend having each of these indicators reference the other as they paint a clear and more striking picture when read together.
- Finally, while this initial report is based on current available data they hope staff and the Commissions will use this report as an opportunity to identify areas where key data is missing that may accurately represent the community's livability and to seek out this data where possible. For example, the report currently shows that 100 percent of Charlottesville residents live within a quarter of a mile of a sidewalk or trail. Yet the City clearly isn't perfectly walkable. Indicators such as overall sidewalk coverage and continuity as well as similar indicators for the bicycle network are missing.

Neil Williamson, with The Free Enterprise Forum, commended staff for working with both Planning Commissions in two laborious Comp Plan updates. He thinks they literally took a charge and moved it forward. He has been a critic of that charge and continues to be a critic of that charge.

- Mr. Williamson said that only today he learned that this workbook of ordinances was being created, but it will be outdated the minute it is created. He said he believed that both the Albemarle County Planning Commission and the Charlottesville Planning Commission are exceedingly well served by legal counsels. He did not believe that those legal counsels will take this template approach to putting together ordinance changes. He understands that staff may find it helpful and it may save some time especially for things that come forward in the next 3 to 5 years. However, things change and he did not think this tool was incredibly helpful. That being said, he hoped he was wrong.
- With regard to the first document he continues to have questions about some of the metrics that are being suggested, but the biggest question was why they didn't consider using some of the grant money to create an automated dashboard that would update from the data collected. When the grant was funded, he suggested it was a planner employment act. In order to keep this information up to date it will require someone full time. He did not think that was something that either Commission or elected body has contemplated for the future.
- Mr. Williamson said he thinks that the One Community Report is a good report and has information that is helpful. However, he thinks it is just going to end up on the shelf. He thinks that even though the two Commissions got to know each other a whole lot better, the community did not seem to be as well served as the time spent.

There being no further public comment, Mr. Morris closed the public comment and bring it back to the Commissioners for further discussion.

There being no further discussion, Mr. Morris adjourned the County work session at 6:48 p.m. and Mr. Rosensweig adjourned the Charlottesville work session at 6:49 p.m.

Adjournment

With no further items, the Albemarle County Planning Commission adjourned to the Tuesday, October 1, 2013 meeting at 6:00 p.m. at the County Office Building, Second Floor, Auditorium, 401 McIntire Road, Charlottesville, Virginia.

V. Wayne Cilimberg, Secretary

(Submitted for approval by Sharon C. Taylor, Clerk to Planning Commission & Planning Boards)