ALBEMARLE COUNTY PLANNING COMMISSION
COUNTY OFFICE BUILDING
401 MCINTIRE ROAD – ROOM 241
TUESDAY, JANUARY 30, 2018 – 6:00 P.M.
Joint Meeting with Board of Supervisors

The Albemarle County Planning Commission held a joint work session with the Board of Supervisors on Tuesday, January 30, 2018, at 6:00 p.m., at the County Office Building, Room 241, Second Floor, 401 McIntire Road, Charlottesville, Virginia.

Commissioners attending were Karen Firehock, Jennie More, Bruce Dotson, Daphne Spain, Julian Bivins, Pam Riley, Vice Chair; Tim Keller, Chair and Bill Palmer, UVA Representative.

Other officials present were Andrew Gast-Bray, Director of Planning and Community Development Department (CDD), Rachael Falkenstein, Senior Planner, Sharon Taylor, Clerk of Planning Commission and John Blair, Deputy County Attorney.

Agenda Item No. 1. Call to Order and Establish Quorum:

Mr. Tim Keller, Chair of Planning Commission, called the Planning Commission meeting to order at 6:01 p.m. and introduced Julian Bivins the new Planning Commissioner for the Jack Jouett District.

The Chair, Ms. Mallek, called the special meeting of the Albemarle County Board of Supervisors to order at 6:01 p.m., for the purpose of allowing a quorum of Board members to convene an open meeting, to receive and discuss a presentation, and consider endorsement of the Rio/29 Small Area Plan Phase 2 design framework.

PRESENT: Mr. Norman G. Dill, Mr. Ned Gallaway, Ms. Ann Mallek, Ms. Diantha H. McKeel, Ms. Liz A. Palmer and Mr. Rick Randolph.

ABSENT: None.

OFFICERS PRESENT: County Executive, Jeff Richardson, County Attorney, Greg Kamptner, Clerk, Claudette Borgersen, and Senior Deputy Clerk, Travis O. Morris.

Agenda Item No. 2. Presentation - Rio/29 Small Area Plan.

Rio/29 Small Area Plan. Staff and consultants will be presenting the final drafts for Phase 2 of the Rio29 Small Area Plan, which includes a connectivity plan, a sample quadrant plan, and images and renderings demonstrating form and feel. In addition to the designs, staff will share preliminary results from transportation and market analysis and a summary of implementation recommendations.

The Executive Summary forwarded to the Board states that the County's Comprehensive Plan lays out a vision for Development Areas that are "vibrant active places with attractive neighborhoods, high quality, mixed-use areas, thriving business and industry, all supported by services, infrastructure, and multimodal transportation networks." This vision was further validated during Phase 1 of the Small Area Plan by citizens, stakeholders and elected officials. The community expressed a desire for the Rio29 area to transform into a walkable, bikeable, mixed use area with ample green space and recreational opportunities, all accessible by transit.

To achieve this vision, the Phase 1 land use plan specified that development along Route 29 should be concentrated in centers of development that will begin to set the stage for future transit (this is often referred to as Transit Oriented Development, or TOD). The Phase 1 visioning for the Small Area Plan called for the establishment of three centers, or nodes, of development along Route 29 between

Branchland Blvd. and the Rivanna River, with a priority given to the node centered around the Rio Road and Route 29 intersection.

The Phase 1 vision stipulated that nodes should be developed strategically to encourage transit and to also be respectful of existing neighborhoods using a core/edge pattern of development. The most intense development is expected to be concentrated towards the center of the node, closest to transit. The height and intensity of development of the node should cascade down to the edges, where development of lower intensity and height would be found, especially in areas adjacent to existing residential neighborhoods.

At an August 15, 2017 joint meeting staff presented a conceptual circulation network and design sketches to the Board and Planning Commission. During that meeting members of the Board and Planning Commission expressed support for the draft concepts but wanted to see more detail associated with the designs. The Board and Commission also expressed a desire for the Rio29 area to be unique and emphasized the importance of placemaking.

The presentation on January 30 will include detailed design plans consisting of a connectivity plan, a sample quadrant plan, and images and renderings demonstrating form and feel. Staff will also give a brief overview of implementation recommendations. The design materials will be shared with the Board and Planning Commission during the presentation on January 30 and no attachments are provided with this Executive Summary.

The connectivity plan to be presented includes recommendations for a future circulation network and green infrastructure. The connectivity plan demonstrates a framework of interconnected pedestrian friendly roadways, trails and green amenities, supported by a centrally located transit station. The connectivity plan also demonstrates a phasing concept that can be supported by strategically timed public investments and allows for the phased redevelopment of privately owned strip retail centers.

Phase 2 also includes a sample quadrant plan, which illustrates a redevelopment scenario of an existing strip retail center that corresponds to the aforementioned connectivity plan demonstrating form standards. We will provide a phasing exhibit and associated analysis to illustrate how an existing shopping center could redevelop over time without displacing existing tenants. A feasibility analysis demonstrates the financial viability of the sample redevelopment within the local marketplace. We will pair the sample quadrant plan with renderings and images showing the experience and feel for the core and edges of the development scenario.

Lastly, we will provide an implementation overview to lay out the steps the County can take to help realize the vision and desired form laid out by the Small Area Plan. The implementation discussion will be a summary of staff and focus group recommendations to-date and will be for information purposes during the presentation on January 30. The Board will receive a more detailed presentation and will have an opportunity to provide staff with direction on the implementation recommendations during a February 14 workshop meeting.

Portions of consultant services for Phase 2 of the Small Area Plan were funded through a $65,000 Urban Development Area Planning Grant through the Office of Intermodal Planning and Investment. Additional funds for Phase 2 consultant work have been covered by the $120,000 FY17 budget allocation for the Small Area Plan.

After staff's presentation, questions and discussion, staff recommends the Board and Planning Commission endorse the Small Area Plan design framework and direct staff to advance the presented information to a Comprehensive Plan Amendment.

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Mr. Andrew Gast-Bray addressed the Board and Commission and stated that he would present on Phase 2 of the Rio/29 Small Area Plan, which he described as a design, plan, and implementation framework stage. He stated that Mr. Vlad Gavrilovic of EPR and Ms. Rachel Falkenstein of County staff

are present at the meeting, and he noted that Mr. Mike Callahan was going to be the principal presenter but had come down with the flu.

Mr. Gast-Bray reported that the purpose of this meeting is to obtain feedback and endorsement of the framework and designs for the progress made on understanding the hopes for Rio/29. He stated that they will be providing a connection from the Phase 1 work, which is a general vision for the area that the Board and Commission had determined was consistent with the Comprehensive Plan and had captured what the public wants to see in this area. Mr. Gast-Bray said the vision has certain performance characteristics such as transit-oriented development that will be discussed in detail, and he emphasized that what staff is presenting at this meeting is a visualization as to what might be. He stated that the questions to be answered are whether the designs reflect the vision established in Phase 1, because the Board and Commission had indicated in August that they wanted more detail and needed more information as to how it would perform specifically. Mr. Gast-Bray said that because this is affiliated with the Comprehensive Plan, the Commission is present.

Mr. Gast-Bray stated that they also wanted to clarify whether the designs are consistent with public feedback to date, which both bodies will need to determine. He said they will also want to establish that they are consistent with strategic plan goals for the project and other things going on within the County. He added that they will also want to evaluate whether they are ready to advance the framework and designs to a Comprehensive Plan Amendment phase. If endorsed, this presentation will lay the groundwork for a later discussion of implementation. Mr. Gast-Bray noted that questions in that scenario or context are how to realize the vision and what degree of participation will come from the County. He commented that there is a very capable Planning Commission that can also weigh in on other matters because they have a lot of experience in general, and that input will be welcomed.

Mr. Gast-Bray pointed out that there are challenges with the precepts, as the County does not own, nor is it pursuing ownership or development of the area on its own, so any design is unlikely to develop exactly as visualized. At best, he said, the County can encourage, entice, and inspire a private developer to achieve the design as presented and/or demonstrate the performance of the endorsed visualization such that any variation will achieve the same or better performance, even though it may look different. Mr. Gast-Bray stated that the County has been working with all four quadrants around the Rio/29 interchange, landowners and stakeholders, as well as the public. He said they are showing opportunities in one quadrant, the northeast portion that includes Albemarle Square, because it is easiest to explain how it might be able to evolve in the future. He noted that it is an open area with one owner that is easier to visualize what might happen, but this does not imply that it is a specific target or particular beneficiary of any County program, and that landowner has provided a lot of feedback.

Mr. Gast-Bray stated that they have had a lot of additional engagement, with many great comments from the Board and Commission, and stakeholder guidance through the steering committee and work group. He said there have been special areas in topic guidance – focus groups – which dealt with issues of connectivity, placemaking, finance and implementation, entrepreneurial infrastructure, etc. Mr. Gast-Bray mentioned that the Hydraulic area is undergoing a very similar process and that area is very important to the success of Rio/29. He said they have also had outside expert assistance in the form of Stantec, which helped with economic analysis for the area; Kimley-Horn, which has performed a transportation analysis; and Renaissance and EPR, who have been doing the designs and visualizations.

Mr. Gast-Bray stated that they have the capacity to field questions from the public should the Board and Commission choose, but the meeting was not advertised as such because it is mostly for their own opportunity. He said there had been a public engagement session the previous week and there are other possibilities, noting that they are in the middle of the process and not at the end by any means. Mr. Gast-Bray noted that there would be plenty of time for questions afterwards, but they could ask questions along the way as necessary. He introduced Ms. Falkenstein to continue the presentation.

Ms. Rachel Falkenstein addressed the Board and Commission and presented a slide that showed this as an “opportunity plan” – an opportunity for property owners to increase possibilities for development of their property and increase flexibility and use of the property. She said that staff also sees this as a benefit for the community, supporting the creation of great walkable places that people want to see in the

area; and as a benefit for the County because it offers economic development potential of the area and supports growth management policies.

Ms. Falkenstein reminded them that there is broad policy context, with Places 29 setting the vision for walkability, the Neighborhood Model, and the growth management policies of the County; and this plan is focused on one priority area within that development area. She noted that they are now in Phase 2, working on urban design plans, which are supported by some analysis of transportation and economics, and if the Boards agree, they can move this forward to a Comprehensive Plan Amendment and potential zoning and policy updates in the future. She stated that the visualizations shared with them in August included a draft connectivity plan that begins to lay the groundwork for an interconnected network of streets, parallel roadways to get traffic off 29 and into the quadrants, and to provide additional connectivity in the area. Ms. Falkenstein said they also shared a draft detail design that started to demonstrate the form of the area.

Ms. Falkenstein stated that they had a lot of feedback and discussion on these in August, and there was a lot of support for the big picture concepts, with people liking the idea of the connectivity, which they call the "loop concept," and there was support for transit and walkability. Ms. Falkenstein noted that the Board and Commission wanted to see more detail in terms of appearance and functionality, and they also guided staff to placemaking and green infrastructure as they felt they were important elements that could be an organizing feature of future development in the area. She said that staff also heard a lot from property owners and stakeholders about phasing and form, and people felt it was important for it to be taller than two to three stories in order to make mixed-use development work. Ms. Falkenstein said property owners wanted them to avoid showing streets through existing buildings where possible, so staff reworked the street network, and people also felt that phasing was important. She noted that there are big shopping centers in the area that have long-term leases, and people wanted the County to envision how this area could redevelop in phases without displacing those tenants.

Mr. Vlad Gavrilovic of the firm EPR addressed the Board and Commission and stated that he is privileged to have been part of the large design team that worked on this project and helped bring the draft vision to realization in the past year and a half. He stated that this is a vision that relies heavily on the private sector to be implemented, and staff would share the County and public-sector encouragement that could happen to help realize this vision. Mr. Gavrilovic emphasized that the purpose of this draft is to encourage, inspire, and create opportunities for the private sector to transform this area in the coming decades into something with a better quality of life than its current function. He stated that in terms of connectivity, started in Phase 1 about a year earlier, Rio and 29 are regional crossroads for the area and form the corner and uptown for this section of the County – but to transform, they lack parallel collectors, a road network that will support the traffic in this area, and lack transit, walkability, and the features of a more complete community. Mr. Gavrilovic said that their connectivity concept looks to line up Berkmar Drive with the signal at Fashion Square south, that looks to realign Hillsdale Drive when it is extended to this area; so that rather than going off into residential areas to the north and east, it starts to loop around, parallel 29, and come back in to create a loop system that serves the future redevelopment of the area.

Mr. Gavrilovic stated that they have done a lot of work on the connectivity plan in response to Board, Commission, and public input, and have maintained the kind of loop concept showing the Berkmar extension to the south, aligning with the traffic signal there and connecting to Hillsdale to form the southern part of that loop. He explained that they looped it around Fashion Square and Albemarle Square, but were not quite able to connect it to Woodbrook because of VDOT's spacing requirements to the existing Rio/29 intersection. Mr. Gavrilovic stated that it helps funnel future traffic around this node and back onto 29, and said they have done a lot of work with staff on respecting existing property lines and footprints. He said he would be showing how the area could be phased without affecting tenants, businesses, and buildings in the area. He added that they have also done a lot of work on green connectivity, showing how trails could permeate this area and offer green and civic spaces, and he would demonstrate a typology of what the streets and trails could be in the area.

Mr. Gavrilovic reported that for the big connectors – Hillsdale and Berkmar – there would be urban rain gardens in the right of way that create buffers and enhance the wide sidewalks along the big connectors. He stated that for the smaller roads, the local street network, they would have plenty of

landscaping, street trees, and tree lawns or parkways that would treat the rainwater before it enters the storm drain system. Mr. Gavrilovic pointed out that this really enhances the quality of life, walkability, and character of the local streets. He stated that there would be greenspaces, city spaces that are not just urban plazas but are pocket parks, and addition of green vitality throughout the development – connecting it all with a series of multi-use trails, as well as inclusion of daylighted streams. Mr. Gavrilovic said there is a stream under the pavement north of Albemarle Square, and it could possibly be daylighted, turned into an amenity, and provide a green connection throughout the area.

Mr. Gavrilovic stated that the connectivity plan would be dependent on how the area redevelops and the pace and pattern of redevelopment, but the design team considered how it could redevelop in a series of logical phases. He pointed out the existing street network and noted the location of signals at Fashion Square south, Berkmar, between the malls on Rio Road and Woodbrook, and the existing trail network that currently goes behind Albemarle Square. He said that in the first phase, they could envision the realignment of Hillsdale as it comes to the area with a new crossover intersection at Rio Road, wrapping around while still allowing the existing buildings and street network to maintain in Albemarle Square but wrapping around that and Fashion Square, going out to Route 29. He noted that the extension of the existing trail into more of a regional trail network, possibly connecting with the Rivanna River as part of a regional trail. Mr. Gavrilovic stated that they would also start building a transit network with an express bus stop at the intersection of Rio and 29.

Ms. Mallek asked which level of street is what they are proposing as northern Hillsdale – the smaller connector one or the bigger 60-foot wide one. Mr. Gavrilovic replied that it is the bigger connector, and he does not know how many lanes it would be, but it would have the more urban rain garden character.

Mr. Gavrilovic stated that in the next phase, as the area starts to redevelop, they would build out the network of local streets, green streets, and trails. He presented an example of a daylighted stream being turned into a trail network that goes under Route 29 and starts to connect and build a trail network in each of the four quadrants, so people could someday cross through the area on a system of trails. He said that once the area builds out and begins to transform through future redevelopment, they would complete the local street network and system of blocks that are much smaller scale like downtown Charlottesville, rather than the super-blocks found in a typical suburban strip retail environment. He noted that this would also be the time when the bus rapid transit would be realized with a transit-oriented development supporting it, and a possible future roundabout at the intersection there.

Mr. Gavrilovic explained the way the roundabout would work would be that the structure and tunnel under Rio and the platform above would not be changed, but they would redirect traffic into the roundabout – which would take out signalization so that right-turning traffic could free flow on the ramps and left-turning traffic could go around the roundabout. He emphasized that this has potential for improving pedestrian safety because rather than crossing five or six lanes, you would be crossing two at a maximum. He noted that this would also allow for a bridge concept so that someday there could be a bridge above the area, with no traffic/pedestrian interactions. Mr. Gavrilovic pointed out an animation depicting what this might look like. He stated that there is also the potential for this to allow more traffic capacity in the area, and ultimately more intense development, taking the capacity of the intersection a long way into the future.

Mr. Gavrilovic stated that in terms of the detail plan, this is a template for the four quadrants that is intended to inspire how redevelopment could happen and gradually transition from suburban strip retail to mixed-use/walkable over time. He said they have done a lot of work on this since they last presented it to them, with an emphasis on making it greener with a trail network going around it and connecting to trails in the other quadrants. He stated that they have also established a central green plaza so when you step off the bus rapid transit system, you go down a sidewalk into a green park plaza, with a series of pocket parks that would take you down to the trail network that goes in the stream valley behind it, loops around another stream valley and encircles the development.

Mr. Gavrilovic said that he has also shown how this respects the existing buildings and allows for appropriate phasing, but most importantly, this is based on a study that Stantec did for the County for a

15-acre site such as this that shows a market feasible redevelopment with this mixture of uses that provides an appropriate rate of return. He noted that this shows a two to three-story low-rise retail fronting Rio and 29, with enclosed parking, and the inner core would be mixed office and retail with structured parking – with the edges feathering out to lower density and more compatible uses as residential, with a mixture of structured and surface parking. Mr. Gavrilovic demonstrated how this could be phased, referencing a slide showing the current Albemarle Square, and the design team believes that in the first phase the surface parking areas fronting Rio and 29 could be redeveloped into two to three-story buildings with retail on the bottom and offices above. He noted that they could build podium parking into the grade, so they would be replacing the parking as well as providing ample parking for these new uses, and it does not affect the shopping center. Mr. Gavrilovic said that in the next phase, you could take any internal bays of parking areas and provide pad-ready, shovel-ready sites for redevelopment of a mixture of office and retail uses, with structured parking that again provides parking for the new uses and replaces parking with viable shopping center uses and continued leases while redevelopment is occurring. He stated that as the area transforms, it becomes a 15-minute walkable community where people can live, work, shop, and recreate – all within an easy walking distance – and it would be permeated with green spaces, parks, and trails.

Mr. Gavrilovic stated that the design team did some computer simulation to demonstrate the possible look and feel of the area, noting that this is correlated to the market feasibility study done by Stantec so it reflects the scale, intensity, and mixture of uses called for in the market study. He referenced what would be visible as a person steps off of the bus rapid transit station, with a sloped sidewalk that opens into a plaza/urban park with the core of development facing the pedestrian – beginning at six stories but feathering down to lower heights to be more compatible with surrounding areas. Mr. Gavrilovic said that both sides would have retail on the ground floor and residential or office above, and there is an opportunity – particularly in the core area – for the County to make some investments either in civic spaces, open spaces, or in actual building and uses to catalyze the private investment and development in the area.

Ms. Falkenstein reported that they have had an opportunity to receive some early feedback on the designs, with an open house held the previous Thursday, and some themes emerged from the public comments. She noted that these were also out online for a few days and had some feedback received there. Ms. Falkenstein reported that they invited the stakeholder group, community advisory committee, and citizens to attend the open house. She said that what they heard was generally positive reaction, particularly to the proposed green features, as people liked the idea of more trails, parks, and daylighted streams. Ms. Falkenstein noted that there were concerns about possible crime and noise in the area, with a park right next to a busy street, as well as how it might impact the existing neighborhoods in the area.

Ms. Falkenstein stated that there were concerns about existing property owners related to showing future streets on private property, with some concerns as to how that might impact the financing or developability of their property in the future. She added that there were also concerns about affordability for both residential and small businesses who are currently located in this area, in terms of how this would impact prices. Ms. Falkenstein stated that recurring themes they heard from feedback relate to the design and how the increased density would impact the area, with concerns about protecting the views from existing neighborhoods. She said there has also been a theme of flexibility, as people want the County to maintain flexibility to allow the development to happen in any quadrant and to be prepared for that development to happen.

Ms. Falkenstein stated that staff has done some initial analysis and feel that it is important for the designs to be realistic and achievable, so their evaluation considered transportation and the market for the area. She explained that they worked with Kimley-Horn to do transportation modeling for the area, and there is much more work to be done if the County moves forward with this design. She said the firm found that the proposed network's capacity for Rio and 29 could handle almost a doubling in increase of development of the area. Ms. Falkenstein stated that they have also done some initial intersection analysis, with the future Hillsdale/Rio intersection chosen to determine whether the proposed intersections could handle the future development. She said this modeling demonstrated that either a signal or a roundabout for this intersection could work. Ms. Falkenstein stated that there were benefits to

connectivity, creating multiple routes to destinations, improvements to bicyclists and pedestrians, and the ability to get to densities that would make transit feasible in the area.

Ms. Falkenstein reported that they worked with Stantec to look at the market in the area, and their analysis demonstrated that a healthy market return was achievable with a mixed-use development in the area with structured parking. She said they also considered what the market is doing in terms of absorption and whether it could even handle the additional development in this area, finding a healthy absorption rate for both multi-family and office use in the area. Ms. Falkenstein highlighted the CBDs, which represent the Central Business District of downtown Charlottesville, with a current vacancy rate of zero, indicating that there is a strong desire for businesses to locate in mixed-use walkable communities. She pointed out that perhaps Rio/29 could provide an alternative area for businesses that want these features.

Ms. Falkenstein stated that the purpose of her report on implementation is to provide an overview, and no decisions are expected at this point, although they have been thinking about it and there is a meeting with the Board in February to start the conversation and get more direction on implementation. She said this is not a comprehensive list, but is just a list of tools heard from stakeholders, experts, and citizens about where they should focus implementation efforts. Ms. Falkenstein stated that staff has delineated this into four separate categories, the first being transportation improvements. She said staff expects that some portions of the connectivity plan shown would require some level of public investment, specifically the core streets of Rio, Berkmar, and Hillsdale, as well as the transit piece. Ms. Falkenstein stated that the phases could be broken down further and this is highly dependent on how the area redevelops, so the County should be flexible as to how they phase these.

Ms. Falkenstein said the next category is placemaking measures, which are based on the strong desire heard from the public to have more trails and greenspace in the area, and to have more amenities. Ms. Falkenstein noted that she has broken this down into two goals – parks/trails and making the public realm more interesting; and fostering connections to place. She stated that there are some short-term and long-term recommendations for the Board to consider, including the North Town Trail Study, which has been in the Comprehensive Plan for many years, to connect the northern development area to the City of Charlottesville and would pass through the study area. She commented that this could be an early implementation step the Board could take to start to realize some of those important trail features that people wanted to see. Ms. Falkenstein stated that the Woodbrook Natural Area is a storm water facility that the County currently owns behind Albemarle Square and the Woodbrook neighborhood, and there is currently an informal trail network in the area – and she wonders if the Board would be interested in opening that up and providing more access to those trails for people to use. She said the next category is partnerships and incentives, and stakeholders and property owners felt it was important that the County be a partner in the redevelopment – either through a public/private partnership, locating a core tenant, strategic infrastructure investments, or financial incentives. Ms. Falkenstein added that staff anticipates that the Board would be exploring these options further if they move forward with their premarketing study.

Ms. Falkenstein said the last category is zoning and policy updates, and staff believes that most of these updates could be achieved in the short term for Rio/29, and the County should allow the desired form by-right through zoning. She stated a good tool for that could be form-based code, and simultaneous to that they could look at their review process and how they can encourage developers to want to develop their property through a fast-track review to get through the process faster.

Mr. Gast-Bray stated that to realize this vision, they have five component parts: the transit piece and orientation and how that impacts community form; the roadway network that connects all of these modes together including a bike/pedestrian network; and the green network. He said they would take them all individually just to get the targets in the framework as they move forward, and transit is key to this image and framework because this area grew up for a reason – and if no alternative to single-occupancy vehicles driving every place they go, the design would continue in the way it had been with roads and parking lots. Mr. Gast-Bray noted that transit-ready design has huge impacts because it encourages parking once so people do not get back in their cars to go to and from different buildings and could

instead access everything they need within a short parking distance. He said the idea of designing and orienting around transit is important to the quality of life in this area.

Mr. Gast-Bray said that community form is directly tied to the orientation and lifestyle, and a connected network allows people to get easy access to transit from building to building. He stated that the roadway network has to accommodate more than just cars alone but would also need to address cars, and when quality places are designed for people to park and drive their cars, it works better for all the modes, which is key to long-term success. He said there also must be a bike-ped network, and the networks must be complete in serving all modes in a connected way. Mr. Gast-Bray stated that they have a green infrastructure network in the plan, which adds uniqueness to the place and adds amenities that the growing community wants to see. He noted that improving trail connections, open space and park designs is necessary to inspire people to want to be there. Mr. Gast-Bray commented that the network also provides a way to look at potential community investments, including infrastructure and future school plans.

Mr. Gast-Bray asked the Board and Commission if the framework and designs reflect the vision established in Phase 1, which is consistent with where the Comprehensive Plan wants them to go and the public feedback to date with strategic plan goals as set by the Board and Commission for this project – consistent with other strategic plan goals they already have. He stated that the final question is whether they are ready to advance the framework and design through a Comprehensive Plan Amendment and process for enabling this to happen, rather than being an impediment to it. Mr. Gast-Bray said that on February 5, they will learn more about the context of form-based code with a workshop, with a morning session for the Board to ask questions of an outside expert, Peter Katz, who has been implementing award-winning form-based code plans throughout the country. He noted that there would be a public presentation later that evening, and on February 14, there would be some follow up to talk about implementation.

Ms. Mallek asked if there are questions of staff before entertaining what Mr. Gast-Bray has outlined. Ms. Spain asked if, pursuant to the Stantec report, the bottom-line message is that there needs to be structured parking that is publicly funded. Mr. Gast-Bray responded that the report was vague as to the specifics of the structured parking, but successful development must involve some sort of structured parking to allow the intensity of development to enable all of these factors. He said they typically need some sort of investment in the places where it has been successful, but there are lots of ways of implementing it and they do not want to pre-anticipate the details of how to implement it. Mr. Gast-Bray stated that the examples around the country that have been most successful have some significant degree of investment, cooperation, or partnership with community investment.

Ms. Spain asked what the process would be if the county decides to subsidize it and whether it would go into the CIP for a particular year or some other fund, and asked whether the Board would vote on that kind of partnership. Ms. Mallek said that they would.

Mr. Gast-Bray stated that the Board has not weighed in on that discussion yet, and that is a possible way of doing it – with staff envisioning pieces of the puzzle so that one entity does not have to assume the entire burden of structured parking. He said in other places, such as Keene, New Hampshire, there is a public investment of structured parking to spark downtown revitalization – and they are charging for parking. He added that there are numerous configurations as options, ranging from small to large public investments, and he anticipates that they would begin that discussion on February 14.

Mr. Randolph commented that there is a cultural expectation in the Charlottesville/Albemarle area for paid parking, so any configuration – either through the Economic Development Authority, referendum funding, etc. – could include paid parking. He stated that he is concerned with the Stantec report that it is commercial-space intensive, and there was no discussion of multi-family units in this area. Mr. Randolph said that unless people actually live in the area, they will only visit and recreate here, which means more auto traffic. He stated that he also feels that what is missing from the Stantec report are ways to increase the viability in this location for nonprofit organizations, which he feels would be a very important component of potentially working and operating in this area. Mr. Randolph said that they should also look

at the synergy of a governmental center with adjacent properties and its impact on the rents that would be demanded in the area. He also complimented staff and Mr. Gavrilovic for the presentation.

Ms. Falkenstein stated that Stantec had done research on the demand for multi-family residential, using the term tertiary markets, and said that data was difficult to find in the tertiary market, but looked at past trends to find that the absorption rate for the area was about 400 units per year. She said this was not highlighted in the memo she said because they focused the cost-benefit analysis they did for the Board in December and included discussion of that in this analysis.

Ms. Firehock commented that the plan illustrations include some large blocks with big chunky structures, which are reminiscent to her of those at Fontaine Research Park, and she does not understand how buildings over time would gradually transition into residential. Mr. Gast-Bray responded that there would be many different options with phasing, and staff wanted to make sure they had opportunities that may become available. He said the real development would allow that to more organically happen, which would likely mean smaller chunks. He added that certain things they do right now are in the way of the kind of development desired, so they are trying to address those things and have a path to achieve them.

Mr. Gavrilovic stated that where this differs from Fontaine Research Park is that the park has primarily surface parking in "super blocks," with the blocks proposed for the small area being 300 x 300 – and downtown Charlottesville being 200 x 300, which are small, walkable blocks. He said that rather than look at how big the building is, the experience for the user is what is seen from the street. Mr. Gavrilovic noted that there is also much greener infrastructure built into the Rio/29 area than there is in downtown Charlottesville.

Mr. Dill asked about the validity and depth of community feedback with this, as people latch onto concepts such as green space because they miss having it in other places and want more of it. He stated that in terms of the retail space, the type of retail needs to be stipulated, and green space would be an amenity that attracts people to the area. Mr. Gast-Bray said that it is tempting to view the future through the lens of today, and he would advise that they need to think about the changing nature of retail – with Albemarle Square having been a successful retail model not that long ago. He stated that he is reluctant to stipulate whether this would be high-end retail such as Stonefield, and if this evolves over time they would not necessarily know what the target of the future would be. Mr. Gast-Bray emphasized that it is incumbent on them to ensure there is enough flexibility to accommodate whatever future that is. He stated he is hopeful that the future model would be much more diverse because with a single price point area, it does not really cater to the complete neighborhood they hope to have in this area – and whatever it is, he anticipates it would be much more diverse than they have today. He said they need to be flexible to accommodate all potential markets because they are trying to give stakeholders an opportunity to create this place in the future.

Ms. More commented that it seems the February 14 meeting on realizing the vision would be the first of many meetings to talk about public-private partnerships, County investment, and how to incentivize – and perhaps they would be thinking of some new creative ways to accomplish this. She said a commitment to some level of that is essential, and she asked how staff sees that linking with a Comprehensive Plan Amendment.

Mr. Gast-Bray responded that staff views it as an essential discussion, and part of the reason they invited Mr. Katz to speak was because he has a lot of experience with success in the past. He stated that each place is a bit different, and finding the right mix is key, so he imagines that it will take a number of meetings for the process going forward. Mr. Gast-Bray noted that the plan would need to consider everything from pad-ready sites to smaller businesses, and he does not want to over anticipate what is coming. He emphasized that staff feels confident with Stantec and the consultants on board that they could adapt to the needs and desires of the County, and it would not be a quick discussion.

Ms. More asked if the discussion would take place prior to a CPA. Mr. Gast-Bray responded that it should start prior to it.

Ms. More stated that there would be some indication of some level of interest or commitment on the Board's behalf since it is so key to moving forward. Mr. Gast-Bray agreed.

Ms. Palmer noted that some members of the Board and Commission have not yet been through the Comprehensive Plan process, and it would help her to have some examples as to what the CPAs might look like – as it seems somewhat nebulous at this point. She asked for staff to point out which sections would need to be changed, and asked if it is the case that the small area plan itself could be part of the Comprehensive Plan.

Ms. Falkenstein explained that the small area plan would be part of Places 29, which is part of the Comprehensive Plan, so it is sort of another level. She stated that the form-based code is the zoning, so that could be a CPA implementation recommendation, but the code itself would be in the zoning ordinance. She stated that the small area plan CPA would be a new small plan embedded into the Places 29 Master Plan, but they would not be going through all of the goals and objectives previously adopted.

Mr. Gast-Bray added that staff is hoping their question for this meeting would revolve around whether the implementation visualization is consistent with the goals and strategies staff has already designed. He stated that the Comprehensive Plan is vaguer, and the question is whether they are still on board as the plan becomes more specific.

Ms. Palmer said that one of the questions would be how specific they want to get in the Comprehensive Plan because that is always a bit of an argument when they are going through revisions.

Ms. Mallek noted that the public had provided some feedback regarding their concerns about the plan showing streets in the middle of their properties, and those same concerns arose in 2004-2010 when the County was working on Places 29. She stated that this is a hurdle, and she asked staff how they plan to meet with stakeholders and build those bridges.

Mr. Gast-Bray responded that there are several issues in Ms. Mallek's comments, including the nature of planning for a given connection, and one of the reasons they chose larger road lines was because they did not know exactly where it was going to go. He stated that they need to be more explicit with an example of that, and in the particular examples showed they had to show that what was demonstrated was not completely erratic, so they measured rights of way, etc. Mr. Gast-Bray said they also had to see if it was possible within VDOT road standards and options, which meant they needed to talk with a landowner. He stated that there was a question as to whether the County and/or VDOT would be willing to take something on, but they had to start with some sort of connection here and have enough specificity to show that it would be possible. Mr. Gast-Bray emphasized that this is really just the starting point for the dialogue.

Mr. Gavrilovic added that this differs from Places 29 because it is a bit more specific and shows potential for individual properties, and if Fashion Square or Albemarle Square were to redevelop with these kinds of densities, without a plan like this they would be faced with managing that traffic onsite, including showing connections to Rio and 29. He stated that the intersections would quite possibly fail with these kinds of densities, so a plan like this offers the opportunity to distribute some of the traffic because there are connections between parcels and across the quadrants, with a finer level of detail.

Ms. Spain stated that the report says there should be a differentiation among those, and she asked whether one class generated higher tax returns than another class, with A being the highest. She also asked if the goal was to get a mix of A, B, and C properties so there are some old buildings and some new buildings in the redevelopment areas.

Mr. Gast-Bray responded that he does not want to get down to that level of detail, but he thought that Ms. Spain's assessment process is probably correct, and he came to a similar conclusion that the highest ticket items would generate the most tax. He said this is not like the planning of the past where there is a singular use, such as retail, and all the different classes are needed to reinforce one another and add the value. Mr. Gast-Bray noted that if there is a retail component, it would need to be supported

by the residential in close proximity to sustain that in the future model. He stated that the plan did not delve into what has to be in which particular place.

Ms. Spain asked whether the existing buildings would stay if there were new buildings in the middle or on the pad sites in Albemarle Square, for example. Mr. Gast-Bray replied that they would have the ability to stay, at least in the early phases, but all buildings have a life to them and some of those have age. He stated that the goal would be working with those building owners in a strategic manner, and he said they received good feedback from Albemarle Square and Fashion Square as to how that might proceed, but the design team has to infer some aspects and provide them with more specific examples.

Mr. Randolph commented that a project like this provides outdated or suffering retail operations with an opportunity to downsize, which is what some retailers are doing nationally because they have too much square footage. He said they may want to keep the existing building at first, but by Phase 2 or 3 they would look at the transformation process and say this is a great opportunity to downsize and move from 40,000 square feet to 15,000 square feet because it would provide efficiency. Mr. Randolph stated that it is difficult to predict what each business would do, but the effects would likely be transformative and there would probably not be a lot of continually operating retail businesses in the same location.

Mr. Dotson stated that it seems to him that in terms of reaching their objectives, the plan presented and the work leading up to it does a pretty good job of addressing the desired outcome and is consistent with the principles the County has been working on for a number of years. He said that most of the questions will be related to how to get there, and timing could take 40 years or so – with Stantec's scenario describing 7 to 10-year buildouts. Mr. Dotson emphasized that the focus of future discussions would likely relate to implementation, but the objective seems acceptable to him. He said they have seen a sample of one of the four quadrants, but he assumes they are changing the plan for all four quadrants and the whole area, and perhaps there has been a misperception about it being one quadrant. Mr. Dotson stated that the economic analysis pertains to 15 acres, which is just that one quadrant, and he asked what the analysis might say about the possibility of four times that activity and whether there is a market for that.

Mr. Gast-Bray responded that he could not address all details of that question given its complexity, but at this point they are discussing and ensuring that the "there" is correct. He said the "getting" is challenging, and there is a diminishing rate of return on their visualization. Mr. Gast-Bray stated that the early parts of the process are easier, but there are many factors that affect the outcome. He pointed out that the design team and staff have been communicating with all four quadrants and had good input once they understood what was possible. Mr. Gast-Bray commented that Stantec is going to come before the Board to continue on and explore some of those details more carefully, but the 15-acre model tried to come up with a representation of what the growth in the area might be. He said that is for the entire 15 acres, and Phase 1 is a subset of that. Mr. Gast-Bray stated that he did not know for sure what the particulars were, but the area had positive growth compared to other localities in the state and around the nation, but not enough growth that it would be comparable to something like Arlington's work along Columbia Pike. He mentioned that what they do here will impact other places like Pantops and Crozet, so they need to be cognizant of not putting all the efforts into one area over this timeframe, as everyone wants a quality place.

Ms. Riley stated that regarding a form-based code, the Stantec report put a very high emphasis on the need for zoning flexibility, and she is curious as to how a form-based code would be adopted or whether it is just being recommended in a Comprehensive Plan. She said they are talking about one small area plan, but she would be interested to know the implications for the entire County.

Ms. Gast-Bray said that a form-based code is often viewed as being "done," but when the concept was presented to the City of Charlottesville, they showed 10 different levels of a form-based code – ranging from the lowest, with buildings fronting the street and parking behind, down to the details such as how much fenestration was around a window. He emphasized that this was particularly well-suited to historic places that were trying to preserve a distinctive character, and there is a bit of flexibility in Albemarle County because there is not a need in this specific area to preserve a lot of historic elements in great detail. Mr. Gast-Bray commented that a form-based code is a tool, but there is no guarantee that

just that tool would be sufficient. He said that Peter Katz would address how the tool would be effective, knowing that it is not enough in and of itself.

Mr. Gallaway asked if that could be achieved with what the County has in place now. Mr. Gast-Bray responded that currently as it is, Albemarle Square could not get residential, for example.

Mr. Gallaway asked if a form-based code would allow them to do that without having to go through a significant amount of process. Mr. Gast-Bray responded that it is a possibility, depending on how the County sets it up, but there are also some things they could do now with their commercial buildings – although the market has not driven that, and they have not chosen to do them. He stated that part of the dialogue is identifying the obstacles that prevents the kind of buildings desired.

Mr. Gallaway said that when they talk about the potential of people's property, the question is when they begin a more intensive dialogue with those property owners to see what potential they have identified as a form-based code could help them achieve, beyond the theoretical level seen thus far. He commented that when stakeholders are interested in getting something done, they pursue the County, and this does not seem like a "silver bullet" to help owners accomplish their business objectives. Mr. Gallaway stated that he wants to understand how what he can do as a policymaker to help them achieve their vision.

Mr. Gast-Bray responded that they do not yet have an agreement on "there," in terms of whether this visualization meets the criteria within the framework discussed, whether it achieves the kind of performance wanted, and whether it is consistent with the Comprehensive Plan. He said staff feels that it does, having worked with the stakeholders, but they need to validate that first – and assuming it is endorsed, they could proceed. Mr. Gast-Bray emphasized that staff has been in discussions with both Albemarle Square and Fashion Square, which have provided constructive feedback, but they have not been 100% behind what staff presented. He stated that those businesses have their needs and the County has its own needs, and the dialogue would be a continuing process. He also noted that the plan would be 30 or 40 years and would evolve over time, so no one thing would make it all work; they must work on a series of things that have to work for everybody. Mr. Gast-Bray mentioned that there are examples around the country where a city or county invests a great deal in something and it does not succeed. He stated that they have also seen examples of private investment where the corresponding localities did not invest, and that also shows a failure. Mr. Gast-Bray stated that this is a partnership, and the Board and Commission have indicated they are looking for the partnership potential, but the discussion of roles is the next step and would begin with their February 14 meeting. He emphasized that this is a very complex discussion and he does not have an answer but could show how it might be done, and Mr. Katz could also provide examples of what has been done.

Mr. Randolph stated that Ms. Mallek and Mr. Gallaway seem to be asking about the public engagement prior to the CPA, and when it would come to the Commission and the Board, because when the CPA is developed in whatever configuration, there needs to be public engagement so that people in the affected area have a very clear concept. He said that people need to know the possibilities and have a dialogue with the County about it. Mr. Randolph stated that if a CPA is developed with commercial stakeholders in the area, he could envision a high public turnout at the Planning Commission with constituents who are concerned about what might happen. He said this is a new concept, and terms like "form-based code" are now familiar to the Board and Commission – but 99% of the population does not know what that means or implies. Mr. Randolph emphasized that they need to think carefully about a public engagement strategy, although he would hate to see more delay in the process. He stated that they do not want to invite a stormy reception when the topic finally goes public at a Board or Commission meeting.

Ms. Mallek commented that even though it is more burdensome, this calls for more of a face-to-face approach rather than big meetings, because it would not be likely for a landowner to express individual concerns in a room full of 150 people. She stated that they need to be sitting at the table with the engineering drawings, that their engineers have had a chance to look at and respond to, and they need to be able to get their people to ask relevant questions. Ms. Mallek added that when there are questions, people can often imagine something a lot worse than the truth, and they need the opportunity

to have that discussion in the proper time frame so they feel they are part of the process. She stated that this is also happening with storm water, and once things are written in stone, people's concerns are not going to be heard. Ms. Mallek said it may be a useful example and may be completely off base, but the downtown Crozet district is a small example of what they called form-based code in 2010, which was reduced setbacks that brought buildings to the street, with a minimum of three stories. She commented that this was pretty small requirements, and people could run with the by right from that point on. Ms. Mallek said the prior owner of the J.B. Barnes property did not put his property into the downtown Crozet district because he was worried that it would impact his ability to continue as a lumber yard and affect the 60 employees that had worked with him for decades. She noted that the economy ultimately eradicated the business and the jobs, but if the property had been included in the district, there would have been no rezoning required and it would have moved forward. Ms. Mallek said that with the form-based code already in place, the impact area could just require a building permit and site plan, rather than constant special use permits and rezonings, and this would likely shorten the process by at least a year.

Mr. Keller thanked staff and the consultants for their work to get them "there," and they have gone from having no vision for 29 North to having something that is fleshed out. He stated that they know the challenges from the state legislature in terms of proffers, and they know that in terms of parking and placemaking and green infrastructure, the form-based code would help them define the circulation systems as well as the individual placemaking pieces. Mr. Keller commented that this is a really important improvement, and his understanding is that some of the adjacencies within individual properties could be handled with that. He stated that there are also other pieces to this, with significant infrastructure and associated costs, and he would be interested in hearing staff's thoughts on how those would be addressed.

Ms. Mallek commented that there should be a service district discussion in the future.

Mr. Gast-Bray stated that they are jumping ahead on the February 14 meeting content, and stated that these are the complexities being faced, without question: how to invest, what kinds of investments, the strategy for investment, etc. He said that one specific form-based code question to resolve is whether it would be required or an optional district, whether it has form-based code elements, like downtown Crozet, but keeping the core zoning the same, and how it would be integrated with existing developments if the form-based code were optional. Mr. Gast-Bray stated that these are strategies that have to be addressed, and it is a choice, not necessarily a guarantee, so this is a "strategy system." He noted that Ms. Falkenstein had pointed out to him that Stantec had offered pre-marketing meetings that might address some of that, but he does not want to delude them into thinking there is a magic silver bullet. Mr. Gast-Bray emphasized that this is a dialogue and P3s are very complex entities that have been studied with a mixed income for many years, but they are getting increasingly better. He commented that they had talked about a community development authority as a potential mechanism to maintain dialogue in the area, but the Board and Commission had not yet agreed to that. Mr. Gast-Bray said the team would propose a series of recommendations of where they feel this would work best, but it would ultimately be the Board and Commission's call as to how this unfolds. He pointed out that the County has two different communities do the same thing, with different outcomes because they are complex systems. Mr. Gast-Bray said the alternative would be to do nothing.

Mr. Gavrilovic said that the questions relate to how this is implemented, rather than the fundamental vision, which he feels is a good sign. He stated that it is important not to confuse the implementation with the vision, and the Comprehensive Plan does not have the force of law that zoning does, and the adopting of the vision in a Comprehensive Plan is a key step and a key measure of the policy intent going forward. Mr. Gavrilovic said they need to have public input for every implementation step that would have the force of law, but that should not diminish the importance of adopting a policy intent in the Comprehensive Plan.

Ms. Palmer stated that she said "yes" to all four questions.

Ms. Mallek said that from the meetings she has attended, number 1 seems to be the next step and the details are things she had asked for. She asked if there was any feedback on number 2. Ms. Mallek pointed out that the node concept had been in the County's strategic planning framework for the

last four or five years, with importance placed on the nodes along 29 as far back as Places 29. She stated that number 4 is more challenging, and she is not sure how ready she is for it, so the meeting on February 14 will help with that.

Mr. Gallaway agreed.

Ms. Palmer stated that her primary question relates to what this means to the Comprehensive Plan, but Ms. Falkenstein had explained it adequately and she is okay with it at this point.

Mr. Gast-Bray said that they could have decided not to move forward to the next step, which would have meant they do not meet on February 14.

Ms. Mallek stated there is great interest in ensuring they nail down the questions heard at this point, and they would do their homework at the tutorial and go from there.

Ms. Spain asked if they could forward the Stantec report to the community advisory councils and leave it up to them as to whether they want to distribute it to the group. She asked if these are all public documents. Ms. Falkenstein confirmed that they are.

Mr. Gast-Bray stated that the chief manager of Stantec has extended an integrated view to the County, so he wants to be sure they are permitted to do that.

Ms. Mallek said that she would defer to the County's legal experts, and they confirmed that it was permitted.

Mr. Gallaway commented that the last few meetings and the VDOT transportation report at the MPO meeting talked about Hillsdale Drive being an extended throughway, and how transportation is considered in coming up and connecting to Rio impacts the small area plan tremendously. He stated that he always gets concerned when two different things are going along two different planning lines, and if Hillsdale Drive's extension continues all the way up 29, it will impact the vision being endorsed here – especially if it moves faster than the small area plan. Mr. Gallaway said they will need to evaluate whether anything they are doing with form-based code has negative impacts on that plan, and asked how those two project timelines have input from both places so that someone focused on a small area plan would be surprised by a new road.

Mr. Gast-Bray responded that it has been studied and is part of a traffic impact analysis that has been done for the area, and VDOT is very aware of it. He stated that in terms of timeframes, the work on Hillsdale will happen first. Mr. Gast-Bray noted that Phase 1 and its three smaller sub-phases was intended to reinforce existing connections, and the bus goes down this kind of trajectory, so it would basically be enhancing that existing network in the early phase – long before it becomes a throughway.

Mr. Gallaway said that the plan references traffic lights and intersections and roundabouts, etc., that would impact the development if all four quadrants started to develop out, and transportation projects cannot just be erased and redone. He asked if conversations about the traffic plans are happening at the planning level.

Mr. Gast-Bray responded that they definitely are and in fact has driven a lot of what was presented, addressing the needs that have come from the studies. He noted that having two lights – one at the inter-mall drive and at Hillsdale Extended – would not be supported by VDOT because of those studies, which is why staff is looking at alternatives to that.

Mr. Gallaway said he would encourage the stakeholders in and around those quadrants to be privy to those conversations as well. Mr. Gast-Bray confirmed that they are involved with those.

Ms. Mallek stated that the neighbors in the northern sweep once you cross Rio would come forward to the County when they see this map, wondering where the road is going to go, as those

constituents have done since 2000 when other plans were presented. She emphasized that it is the uncertainty that makes people anxious.

The Chair opened the floor to comments from the public.

Mr. Gast-Bray mentioned that Mr. Jim Plotkin from Albemarle Square is in attendance, and stated that Mr. Plotkin has been a great partner in the process. He added that there are a number of other partners in the audience who have been integral stakeholders in the dialogue.

Mr. Jim Plotkin addressed the Board and Commission on behalf of Albemarle Square. Mr. Plotkin stated that he wants to mention a few things to them, including the communication and timing of the outreach to the stakeholders. He said it is not a perfect process, and at the tail end they are a bit marginalized in the way the plan is evolving at the end, prior to this meeting and the open house. Mr. Plotkin stated that they were caught by surprise when the plans showed a section of Hillsdale Drive that cut north and across Rio Road, then west across Arden Place and Putt-Putt, then continued west and down and across Albemarle Square's entrance drive to the corner of the Fresh Market, then up and in front of the storefront, out to the Gardens, then took a left turn toward Route 29. He said they were aware of some other adjustments in the planning, but not that one. Mr. Plotkin stated that stakeholders wanted to be part of the ongoing discussions to bring about the transitions for the small area plan, but wanted to shape those plans before they came to the Board and Commission, and before they go public and are ultimately adopted. He emphasized that stakeholders felt there was insufficient opportunity to engage their own engineers and consultants to be able to make meaningful contributions and comments to the plan that was developed while they were not at the table.

Mr. Plotkin stated that the plan before them is one the stakeholders have not been in a position to endorse, the principle component of which was the transportation piece – which they had asked be addressed first in transmittable detail, but that had never really happened. He commented that they were behind the eight ball with that, and now the Board and Commission are ready to adopt a plan that the stakeholders cannot endorse. Ms. Plotkin noted the comments made previously regarding the damage done by the uncertainty that the discussion of the roadway changes especially will have, as they are perceived in the minds of businesses, and any landlord would have the same problem as they go to negotiate new lease agreements and attract new tenants. He emphasized that this puts a cloud over their ability to attract new tenants and does damage to their ability to maintain the operation while the grand plan is being developed by the County. Mr. Plotkin stated that this is why they asked that it not come before the public, which it did, and the stakeholders understand and respect that the County has a timeline. He commented that the damage is potentially being done as they speak. Mr. Plotkin stated that they heard about the importance of the traffic signal, and without it their ability to implement elements of the small area plan – particularly the vertical, mixed-use components – becomes almost moot. He said that there had been comments suggesting they need more involvement from the developer and stakeholder community to make the plans rooted more in reality than they currently might be, with the reason being developer issues such as financing, designing and engineering – and if a developer were to appear before the County with a set of plans, they would know exactly what they thought would work and are taking the risk. Mr. Plotkin stated that they are entitled to know what the requirements are going to be and what the County will allow before they take that risk. He said this makes those plans very grandiose, but lacking somewhat in the rootedness of real experience. He emphasized that the stakeholders, landowners, and developer community will really guide them as to what they are willing to take the risk of doing to turn it into a successful venture.

Mr. Plotkin stated that intuitively, he would have asked to leave off of the plan the piece of Hillsdale Extended that crosses Albemarle Square and runs north to the Gardens and out to Route 29 – because other objectives of the plan could be realized only with the roundabout and picking up new development at Arden Place and Putt-Putt and other new development in this quadrant to get access to Rio Road without pushing it further than that. He said at some point in the future, if Albemarle Square were to transition to be consistent with the small area plan, there would be plenty of time to introduce a road at that point, when the developers taking the risk and doing the things the County is suggesting would have input as to what road networks would truly support that property. He commented that VDOT chose not to add a lane to Rio Road to resolve or relieve the heavier traffic coming from John Warner

Parkway and Hillsdale, which they anticipated when they built the tunnel. Mr. Plotkin said the question is why they did not widen Rio to carry the additional traffic in a more conventional way without inflicting more damage to a property that is still trying to recover from the implementation of the tunnel and the loss of a crossover, which was critical to the ability of the center to thrive and grow. He applauded the work that had been done to date and thanked the Board and Commission for allowing him to speak, adding that he is looking forward to an improved level of communication and sharing of information so the stakeholders can be a meaningful player in helping to shape the implementation of the vision.

Ms. Mallek stated that this was the end of the beginning – not the beginning of the end – and the County has just begun with decisions, so she does not want anyone to think they have adopted something that is finished. She added that this is an ongoing work in progress.

Ms. Sue Albrecht addressed the Board and Commission and stated that she owns several properties in the north quadrant of Route 29. She stated that she has tried over the years, through the Places 29 effort, to come up with a comprehensive solution to one of her sites – but it had been rejected. Ms. Albrecht said that she has a site plan approved and ready to break ground – Albrecht Place – behind 29th Place. She said the property is 3.5 acres and her plan is a by-right plan with a simple flex building, but it could be a much more comprehensive building like she had planned in 2006, which did not survive the process. Ms. Albrecht expressed concern that she is ready to go forward with a simple plan and wonders what the County wants to do and whether they will look at it with her before she breaks ground. She said the meeting she had attended the previous Thursday showed two of her buildings completely wiped out, with a Berkmar road change, and she is very concerned about those brush strokes on the plan – and what happened to about $2.5 million of her buildings that are leased out for 20 and 25 years. Ms. Albrecht stated that she is concerned about what the County will do to help her deal with the Berkmar alignment change, adding that she also has four properties in the place between the Hydraulic and Rio nodes and is wondering what will happen with those buildings. She noted that one of those is on the corner of Greenbrier and Commonwealth that could be a very attractive mixed-use project, so she has a lot of sites that need to be discussed with the decision makers in this room and looks forward to more stakeholder involvement.

Ms. Palmer stated that she had also wondered about Ms. Albrecht's point regarding lease times, as many of them were at least 10 years, if not substantially longer.

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Adjournment:

With no further business, the Planning Commission meeting adjourned at 7:51 p.m. to the Monday, February 5, 2018 Workshop on form-based code at 10:00 a.m. in Room 241, Second Floor, County Office Building, 401 McIntire Road, Charlottesville, Virginia.

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Andrew Gast-Bray, Secretary

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

Approved by Planning Commission
Date: 10-16-2018
Initials: sct