Albemarle County Planning Commission
August 21, 2018

The Albemarle County Planning Commission held a public hearing on Tuesday, August 21, 2018, at 6:00 p.m., at the County Office Building, Lane Auditorium, Second Floor, 401 McIntire Road, Charlottesville, Virginia.

Commissioners attending were Tim Keller, Chair, Julian Bivins, Jennie More, Daphne Spain, Karen Firehock, Bruce Dotson and Pam Riley, Vice-Chair. Luis Carrazana, UVA representative, was absent.

Also present were Rachael Falkenstein, Principal Planner; Sharon Taylor, Clerk to Planning Commission; Andrew Gast-Bray, Assistant Director of Community Development and Director of Planning and Greg Kamptner, County Attorney.

Call to Order and Establish Quorum

Mr. Keller, Chair, called the regular meeting to order at 6:00 p.m. and established a quorum. The meeting moved to the next agenda item.

From the Public: Matters Not Listed for Public Hearing on the Agenda

Mr. Keller invited comment from the public on other matters not listed on the agenda. Hearing none, he said the meeting would move to the next item.

Work Session

Rio/29 Small Area Plan

Mr. Gast-Bray addressed the Commission and stated that Rachel Falkenstein had done most of the work and would be speaking after his introduction. He stated that this had been a long process and there were a lot of details that needed to be addressed, but the focus of most of this meeting would be on items 2 and 3, the revised design concepts, which hopefully integrated comments from the Commission and Board from late 2018. He said this was important because the implementation of this was ultimately a form-based code or something similar. He stated that when looking at designing a code, it was important to know what things to regulate and how they might regulate them.

Mr. Gast-Bray reported that when they last met, there was a desire for the area to be unique, which presented a slight challenge because they were talking about a zoning code, zoning ordinance -- which did not in itself lead to uniqueness but was a filter to present the worst types of development. He noted that it was important to understand where they can encourage and not get in the way of innovative, unique design that meets the goals for the county for a given area such as Rio/29.

Mr. Gast-Bray stated that they also talked about green infrastructure as an organizing feature, and given that this site existed already, it was a challenge -- but they are using the green infrastructure as an organizing feature for the new designs they are doing. He said that it was also an opportunity for the places that were more public, as that could be a unique feature.

Mr. Gast-Bray said that they were asked to provide a mix of housing types, and he hoped they would address that feature in this tonight, as well as more detail about form and feel because it was not

specific enough for them last time. He noted that they worked with property owners to try to provide the needed flexibility to get an area that would thrive in future land uses -- not those in the past.

Mr. Gast-Bray stated that the question for them to contemplate at this point was whether the revised designs reflected the feedback heard from the Commission and the public so far and whether they supported advancing the design concepts that would help lead this to an actual Comprehensive Plan Amendment, which would allow them to start regulating these features in the implementation of a Zoning Ordinance, as well as any additional feedback.

Mr. Gast-Bray stated that with that as a backdrop, they would try to talk about these design concepts and connectivity -- parks, trails, amenities such as green infrastructure, character and place types, a plan for those elements, and implementation. He said that there were specific components of connectivity, such as general street locations, street types, street sections, green infrastructure, general park and trail locations, park types and general guidance for such, trail types and standards for the trail.

Mr. Gast-Bray noted that they would also look at character and place types, including the types themselves -- which includes three specific ones for the transit-oriented design areas they are using as sort of the organizing principle for the Rio/29 node: core, flex, and edge. He stated that it was very important to the neighborhoods that they didn't do anything brutal or shocking next to them, so they cascade down from a village center down to something more homogenous with neighboring residential districts.

Mr. Gast-Bray said that the next considerations were building form guidance, site design guidance, then implementation -- how to verify designs and summary of the transformation possibilities that are either in a county-owned space or a public space that would involved partnering with other entities to create "in between" spaces.

Mr. Gast-Bray stated that he would review briefly where they had been and where they were going in terms of phases, with phase one being the node concept with transit at the center, greenspace, walkability, and the Rio/29 node as a top priority for redevelopment because it was a larger area. He said that phase two involved developing three design alternatives and came up with a preferred design concept, with connectivity, plan, form, and demonstration -- and they have moved forward from that. He stated that phase three was refined design concept with specifics and recommendations for guidance, connectivity, parks, trails, and development character.

Mr. Gast-Bray said that he would also provide an update on implementation projects and transportation and economic analysis and provide some information on the final small area plan document, so they got a feel for how this would be pulled together. He stated that the next step after phase three would be adoption of a Comprehensive Plan amendment, which would require Planning Commission and Board of Supervisor public hearings, with anticipated adoption being December 2018, when they would be able to write the code.

Ms. Falkenstein addressed the Commission and explained that this plan was being done as a strategic initiative of the Board of Supervisors, who chose this area because they felt it was a strategic location, situated between the Northern Development Area and Charlottesville Airport, as well as UVA and downtown Charlottesville, She said there had also been a high amount of infrastructure and investment in this area so it's poised to support future growth, and the Board felt that it provided an opportunity for transformation to a walkable area with amenity spaces and a mix of uses.

Ms. Falkenstein referenced a diagram with a boundary in blue representing a half-mile radius from the Rio/29 intersection, with areas of single-family residential removed from it. She said that this was a boundary area they were focusing on, and it was mostly commercial with some multi-family residential -- and the area is mostly paved today, with 61% paved and 122 acres of parking, but very limited spaces for bicyclists and pedestrians.

Ms. Falkenstein stated that they would be focusing at this meeting on the revised design plans, but she reminded them that with phase two, the design concepts were focused around a connectivity plan, and there was a demonstration of form that took a 15-acre site within the Rio/29 area and showed how the form could redevelop -- and it was meant to be a model and not to dictate where buildings should go and how things could look on a site within the area.

Ms. Falkenstein said that she would present three design concepts for which to get Commission feedback, and they have taken the connectivity concept and got a bit more refined with it. She stated that they had identified street typologies, so each street on the connectivity plan had been broken down to show what type of street it is, as represented in colors based on street function and capacity. She noted that each street type had a corresponding standard, as they would see on the next few slides.

Ms. Falkenstein emphasized that the street locations were conceptual, and some of the A and B streets were based on existing streets and would just be upgrades to those existing streets -- but where the streets don't exist, they're intended to convey a concept of connectivity. She said that when a property owner was ready to redevelop and wanted to come talk to the county, if the alignment changed from what was on the plan, that was acceptable if the connectivity was still maintained with the development. Ms. Falkenstein noted that the final alignment would be determined based on how the area developed.

Ms. Falkenstein reported that the only A street in the area was Rio Road, and this would be the only street that is four lanes, two lanes each way, separated by either turn lane or median -- and facilities for bicyclists and pedestrians as shown. She noted that they were trying to take the existing automobile street and add the extra layer of bicycle and pedestrian realm outside of it. She said that staff had broken it down to inside and outside of the core, which is explained in the character type concepts and shows wider sidewalks in the core areas -- whereas outside closer to the edges of the areas, they might not need as wide sidewalks.

Ms. Falkenstein stated that the B streets are Berkmar and Hillsdale Drive, and the street sections for inside and outside of the core are shown, with an additional section on the bottom for Berkmar because there is a multi-use path along there along the newly construction section -- and the county is looking for funding to extend it all the way down to Rio. She said that the C streets are the local roads intended to convey smaller amounts of traffic and connect areas and provide better connectivity in the area, with two-laned streets -- with those in the core possibly having parking and wider sidewalks but not necessarily needing bike lanes because bikes can share the roadways with a lower level of traffic.

Ms. Falkenstein reported that the Commission has emphasized the importance of green infrastructure and amenities spaces for people, and it has been the number one comment heard from the public, so staff has tried to focus a concept on that and show how these areas could provide for these amenities in a future development. She said that they had a green network on a previous connectivity plan but had gotten more specific and identified specific park and trail types, with guidelines for each.

Ms. Falkenstein said that the first park type is the square, as parks can be a more urban type of park not seen in the county yet and were intended to focus as public outdoor spaces. She stated that the square is identified as the central outdoor amenities space for Rio/29, and it should provide space for gatherings -- informal or formal -- and event space. She said staff had shown it next to the library because they felt it should be adjacent to a civic space, but they intentionally left it flexible so the square could locate in another quadrant if the county decided to locate another civic facility in the area, and that decision would be made in the next few years, depending on what the Board decided to do with a school center or another civic space. She said that other features of the square include that it should be mostly paved but should have some landscaping in shaded areas and should include a central feature like an amphitheater or water feature and should be designed for people to gather.

Ms. Falkenstein reported that the next park type was the plaza or green, and this was similar to the square but not as focused on event space -- but was just space for casual gatherings -- and it should provide an amenity space for the adjacent development for people who work there to go out on a nice day. She said it could be relatively flat and could be paved or grass but would essentially just provide an outdoor space for the neighborhood. She noted that the two other areas identified for plazas or greens were within the southeast and northeast quadrants as shown.

Ms. Falkenstein said that another park type was a linear park, which staff was showing in the northwest quadrant and more of a greenway in the northeast quadrant. She presented a diagram of a park that was longer than it was wide, noting that it could provide an area of greenery and a more urban area that wouldn't normally have that type of an amenity. She stated that it could provide for passive and active recreation, would typically have a trail along its length -- along a natural feature such as a stream. She stated that there could be typical park amenities such as parks, benches, and small play areas.

Ms. Falkenstein stated that another park type identified was a floodable park, which was a parcel the county currently owned that was a one-acre storm water management facility, and staff looked at it and contemplated using it for a dual purpose -- storm water retention and treatment as well as a usable amenity space. She said this was an idea that came out of the facilities management crew who currently manage it, and they have done this in other parts of the country and globally, it might be underwater during rain but usable park space when dry. She added that it was currently one acre, but if adjacent developments wanted to take advantage of it and use it for storm water management, it could become a bigger park in the area.

Ms. Falkenstein reported that the last type of park was the natural area, which focused primarily on preservation of existing natural features, with two shown on the map -- one south of Woodbrook and the other adjacent to Agnor Hurt. She said that the area is intended to have footpaths in it and should be minimally developed and focused on preservation. She said that staff had also identified four different trail types, with Type A and the two Type Bs already in the county, based on existing design standards -- and staff added one more called "Urban Type A," which was a bit more intense of a multi-use path than the 10-foot paths seen. She noted that this would be something seen in a more urban environment where there would be a lot of bicyclists and pedestrians on the same path -- and they would want the wider path and some separation between the two, with pavement marking or paint to separate the users.

Ms. Falkenstein reported that the third concept was development character, which had possibly the most detail in it, and this was the form standards that might be used to guide a future zoning code or

form-based code in the area. She said they had broken down the study area into place types, with four place types but the urban core and core very similar in their form, with just a bit of nuance on the first four uses, and each one having corresponding standards.

Ms. Falkenstein said that the first-place type they would discuss was the urban core and the core, with main features of this being height, about 3-6 stories, largely based on feedback heard from the development community and property owners. She stated that they would bring the buildings close to the street, with small setbacks, and stepbacks for upper stories so there isn't a tunnel effect on streets. She said that structured parking would be appropriate in the core and encouraged, though should have liner buildings in front of it when it was along the street, as well as some façade articulation so there were not giant blank walls across streets.

Ms. Falkenstein stated that appropriate uses within the core would be a wide mix of uses, but they really wanted to see the dark red on the map, especially in the urban core, with active ground store uses to bring the street to life so there is foot traffic and people coming and going to these uses -- rather than a private use that would be a dead space on the street. She said that multi-family residential would be appropriate in the core, as well as commercial, retail, hotels, institutional, office, and flex uses.

Ms. Falkenstein said the second-place type is the flex, which is the area between the core and the edge and is the largest land area, and it is the most flexible of the use types identified -- and the height can be two to five stories, with a mid range of setbacks but with buildings encouraged to be close to the streets. She noted that they would want some minimal architectural requirements to prevent large blank walls, but it might not be as intense as in the core. She added that they would want to relegate the parking, but structured or street parking would be permitted if it was appropriately relegated. She noted that there was similar flexibility on uses and they still wanted to encourage an active first floor where possible, understanding that the market might not be there for every building to have that -- so any uses on the first floor would be appropriate.

Ms. Falkenstein reported that the last type was edge, which as shown on the map was the areas adjacent to existing single-family neighborhoods, so they would want to limit the footprint and height of those buildings -- so it would be smaller buildings of no more than three stories. She said that those could be set back further from the street, but they would want to make sure the buildings were oriented to the street, had pedestrian entrances, etc. She said that this was where single-family housing, townhouses, or single-family detached would be located.

She presented a video that illustrated how the three use types were tied together

Ms. Falkenstein reported that they had an August 9 community meeting and did an online survey for about a week, with similar public feedback provided as was heard in the first two phases. She said that people wanted more parks and trails, which she hoped staff had addressed, and there was a good amount of support for the concepts shown. She stated that the number one concern related to traffic and how transit would incorporate into those designs.

She presented three questions to the Commission: Does this reflect the feedback you've given so far? Do you support advancing this to a Comprehensive Plan Amendment? Any additional feedback?

Mr. Keller suggested having the Commission provide their input to staff first, then hear both portions, open the hearing to the public, then have the Commission do a wrap up.

Ms. Falkenstein said staff had one more piece, related to implementation projects.

Mr. Bivins stated that there had been good progress between winter and summer, expanding out on the basic ideas the Commission had provided. He said that he would like to talk about the transition pieces, as he was concerned that in looking at the character types of core, flex, and edge they did not by default create separation or create a center of activity within and a band that excludes on the perimeter. He said that in the flex edges on the northeast side of Route 29, there were existing communities -- and on the other side of 29, there were other types of developments that he hoped would be invited into that space as they looked at the core, as opposed to creating a new space that would separate them from that area.

Mr. Bivins stated that regarding the park and trail plan, he hoped that as they did some of the improvements about the library, it would be an interesting central space -- but it was not easily walkable, particularly since the population that exists was on the other side of Route 29. He said that there was a large group of people on the east side of 29, so giving them a place they could enjoy greenspace would be nice in the plan. He said that structures were being massed on the west side of Route 29, and he would like to consider having it on the east, such as the greenspace that's by the outdoor equipment space.

Ms. Falkenstein noted the location of space on the west side and a greenway trail leading to a natural area, but she said she understood Mr. Bivins' point.

Mr. Bivins emphasized that he was looking for a "pausing" greenspace where people could sit on a park bench or something, so it was not necessarily all about vehicles.

Ms. Spain stated that one of the pictures she didn't see on the flythrough or on the list of concerns from the public was the preservation of mountain views, which came up multiple times earlier, and she wondered how the 3-6 story buildings would obscure those views. She said that she noticed in the flythrough, there were no mountains in the background even though they were shown in the presentation.

She added that in one of the descriptions of the parks, there was reference to benches and such, which sounded like fixed seating -- but one of the recommendations from Jane Jacobs was that movable seating provided a feeling of control for people. She acknowledged that it might be a security risk, but that type of seating stayed put in New York's Bryant Park.

Ms. Spain said that her only other concern was that the significant transit issues were addressed in the longer-range plans, and the Rio/Route 29 commuter bus stop was in the short term, and that was key to everything. She stated that the timing of these depended on the funding and a variety of other things, but she would emphasize the transit infrastructure as much as possible, even put at a higher priority than some of the other projects.

Ms. Riley stated that she would like to see more green in general -- greenways and parks -- and there was very little county-owned land there in terms of what's already owned to have an impact on this. She asked Ms. Falkenstein to talk a bit more about pedestrian crossings, as there was an identified tunnel under Route 29 and she wondered what the other pedestrian crossings along streets were and whether they were crosswalks, a bridge, street level, etc.

Ms. Falkenstein pointed out one that was contemplated as a tunnel because there was currently a stream that went under Route 29 there and the topography made the most sense for a tunnel. She stated that this was contemplated as a pedestrian overpass because the topography made sense with the east side of 29 being a bit higher, so it could probably be at grade there -- and then with stairs or a ramp on the other side. She noted that this crossing needed to be an enhanced pedestrian crossing because of Rio being a heavy traffic load, and VDOT was planning a short-term crosswalk, but depending on how the area redeveloped, they could relook at the crossing to be something more. She said that the topography would actually make sense for a tunnel there for a pedestrian crossing, but it would depend on how this section of Rio evolved, and the signal was planned to stay for the near future -- and that would provide an opportunity for an at-grade crossing there.

Ms. Falkenstein referenced an intersection contemplated as a roundabout, so that would be a safe pedestrian crossing area, with both sort of at-graded crossings. She said that there was the existing Rio crossing of Route 29, and they were looking at how they could enhance that for pedestrians and cyclists in the near and long term.

Ms. Riley said that as a person who has a little bit of information, no real experience with form-based code, and knowing that that's a very new approach in the county, it would be useful at least conceptually for them to understand what level of detailed regulation they were looking at for some contextual understanding on how much detail they would be regulating in terms of form-based code.

Ms. Falkenstein responded that they would have future conversations about that, and what they were trying to do now was set up the framework and vision they could turn into form-based code, but it would depend on how comfortable they were, the Board was, and the community was in terms of how far they went with the level of regulation.

Ms. Firehock commented that she liked structured parking, but it may be difficult to get done because it is so incredibly expensive, and she was wondering if there were ways the county could incentivize people to build structured parking with things like tax incentives. She stated that the parks overall were too urban, although plaza spaces had their place and value -- but there seemed to be too much plaza in this, and they remain empty in hot weather.

Ms. Firehock said that she would also prefer a linked system of green plazas, linked by green streets -- perhaps with more trees along a certain way so people feel like they are going from green node to green node. She stated that she was thinking of more of a savannah feel, green squares that provide a bit of respite, as they are much more pleasant to be in. She added that she does work in that area and knows that people would appreciate that, and the real estate values would be higher around any park space constructed -- even more so than a plaza.

Ms. Firehock stated that she wondered how they could inspire more interesting architecture than the usual brick and column feel, and her feeling was to encourage something different to happen there, so it is creating a sense of place. She said that she had been to many office park-type places in the country, many of which have no character, and she has spent a lot of time working at the Ezri Headquarters in Redlands, California. Ms. Firehock stated that basically they have a lot of glass and natural spaces and have packed a lot of office space in, but it feels like an oasis.

Ms. Firehock emphasized that that there was currently no hip, interesting urban space in Albemarle County at this point -- and she would like to explore how they could do something different here and not try to compete with downtown Charlottesville. She said that she did not really like places that tried to make a faux “old town” and would like to go in another direction.

Ms. Firehock commented that the new Hillsdale Drive Extended was curvy and intimate and worked very well, with her only regret being that they had to shoehorn the street in after the different businesses were there -- and she enjoyed it but there was nothing to do along there such as coffee shops. She said that she liked the street and hoped they could combine it with actual vibrant things that were going on.

Ms. Firehock stated that she felt the scale of this was too large, and her overall feel was that there was no “there” there. She said she did not feel that Rio Road and Route 29 were a place and the Planning Commission had discussed last time that perhaps there were more small nodes that could become centers within these four corners divided by the highway. She said she appreciated the pedestrian tunnel and the attempts to connect people, but it was big and spread out and it seemed they were trying too hard to make something different when they were kind of shoehorned by a major highway and major almost highway intersecting it.

Ms. Firehock said that the question to the Commission was whether they were far enough along that this could be ready to be adopted in the Comprehensive Plan, and her feeling was no -- and she couldn’t vote for it in its current form. She said that they tried to make some green connectivity across, but it was still not green enough for her and it did not inspire her, and she was not sure she would buy into this project if she were a developer.

Ms. Firehock apologized if she came across too negative, as she appreciated staff’s time and their incorporation of the Commission’s previous feedback.

Ms. More stated that the challenge here was that there were quadrants they were trying to work with, but they wanted to create the connections between them, so it was all a meaningful space and didn’t feel like chopped up spaces. She said that in creating parks and trails, there needed to be an attempt to make smaller spaces that could be used, such as a business park space people can spend time in, and they needed to be in each of the quadrants and the urban core, as well as along the edges.

Ms. More said that when they talked about a plaza or a square, there was a huge benefit in creating a larger, meaningful space -- and sometimes when they talked about plazas and squares, sometimes there was an antiquated idea of it being dry, hardscaped, boring, plain and hot. She emphasized that there were plazas that were not like that, and she encouraged staff to look at Missoula, Montana, where it was on the outside of a core of their downtown. She said that they had a beautiful river behind the park but had done an amazing job where there was grass open area where you could have picnic blankets, as well as hard space with an amphitheater and built-in seating, with a stage and a smaller version of the Charlottesville Pavilion.

Ms. More commented that there was a decent amount of hardscape to accommodate events they had weekly, out to lunch and local businesses, where people walked or took public transportation. She said that they held events there three times a week, such as larger concerts, brew fests, and other events -- and it was very well done because it was green all around it and was softer around the edges but softer in the center where there was built-in amphitheater-type space. She emphasized that it was a place that

invited people in and was a placemaking space for the community, and it would be a huge benefit for the county to create a space like that, even though little, smaller spaces were still important.

Ms. More said that one concentrated space would be valuable in establishing a connection between all of this, and the trick is where did it go and how to make sure everyone who lived nearby could get to it. She stated that Mr. Bivins was pointing out right now that a lot of people lived on the other side of where one of the larger parks was, but staff was suggesting that there would be residences on that side too when the project was in full buildout. She said that a floodable park sounds a bit crazy to her, and perhaps she needed to learn more as she envisioned small children trying to play in runoff from the streets and pavement around that, and possibly parking lots if it would collect in the space. Ms. More said she really liked the primitive, natural trails, and the location of the green.

Ms. More stated that she was concerned about what they were showing for B Street, noting that they have on-street parking. She said that on Hillsdale and Berkmar, she was having trouble figuring out how fast people would be moving in terms of the size and scale and how much traffic would be on these roads, and that there was a bike lane and parallel parking -- which was often dangerous to bikers. Ms. More said that she understood needing to have some on-street parking, but she really liked the urban type A where there was a paved and separated multi-use path. She stated that she did not know if that was appropriate for these connections or if it would happen on the smaller roads, but she felt it was safer for the biker to have a separation, rather than having a biker riding where there were cars on the road.

Ms. Falkenstein responded that staff did not anticipate that there would be on-street parking everywhere, but there might be certain spots where it was appropriate.

Ms. More stated that she understood the challenge of creating a meaningful space when there were roads needing to be overcome, and she believed there was a way to do that. She said she liked the tunnels underneath as long as it felt safe, and she believed that one larger plaza could help define that space and encourage people to cross out of the quadrants and not feel they were in just a section.

Mr. Dotson stated that his comments were more strategic than detailed, and he did not have comments on the connectivity plan. He said that with the character types plan, he saw use as being largely absent -- although they talked in the video some about use. He said that when they moved to the next stage, it was important to talk more about retail, office, residential, and what mix in the different type of areas. He added that the idea was that someone would look at a development proposal and say it fit what they said for that type of area or it did not, so there was a real art in trying to specify something without being overly precise.

Mr. Dotson stated that also related to character types, it looked as though Rio Road was becoming a main street, with the greatest intensity of use being along that main street. He said he felt like there may be a conflict between VDOT's interest in moving traffic and the character of a main street -- and to function, it needed traffic calming, possibly on-street parking, crossings for some of the intermediate streets, etc., so he wasn't sure how this would function as a main street although it had that intensity.

Mr. Dotson stated that with parks and trails, he asked who the Woodbrook trail was for. He said that if there was no connection to the apartments and uses south of that and it was just connected to Woodbrook, there would be a cheering section -- and neighbors interested in being involved in the

design of it. He stated that if it was just for the apartments, there also might be people excited about it, but it was very difficult, as history showed, that connected the two.

Mr. Keller commented that it was wonderful to see this concept evolving and he shared his colleagues concerns on pieces of it, but staff had done a wonderful job in taking a set of interests and ideas and stakeholders and try to give a simple concept and solution. He said that it had come a long way since the early introduction of this, and it was a pleasure to serve with Commissioners who offered such thoughtful comments.

Mr. Keller stated that it was important to think about the northeast quadrant in these times when they are thinking about affordable housing for the region and the county, and in thinking about the low-wealth community, there were opportunities here to make a real statement -- but he did not feel they were seeing it in this plan. He said that it was a tweaking of priorities, and he encouraged staff to go back and think about that.

Mr. Keller stated that as a designer, height was not what precluded views, it was sight lines and distance -- so form-based codes should provide an opportunity to think about the orientation of street alignments so there can be views and vistas down those streets. He commented that what was important but often lost in the community, region and world as a whole was the over-engineering of sites to take the existing underlying geomorphology away, and much of this area has lost that and has been flattened for parking lots. He added that this was what had been some of the challenge in thinking about the park system and connectivity because of what had been eradicated, so thinking about preexisting topography and hydrology would be worth at least a moment's contemplation in how that might affect it.

Mr. Keller stated that if they reflected on downtown Charlottesville, there were powers that were brought to bear many decades ago that allowed Gleason's to grow across the street, so you couldn't see down 1st Street but the building was low enough you could see the Southwest Mountains over it. He noted that this building pattern was continued, and a new higher rise building was allowed behind the old building, and that allowed the views to be cut off. He stated that the criticism that use-oriented people have to form-based code is the other set of benefits that allow performance standards that could think about these kinds of issues, and he was looking forward to hearing thoughts on that and how they might be incorporated as this developed.

Mr. Dotson commented that he was a member of the working group, so anything that sounds like a criticism is a self-criticism and not a critique of staff.

Ms. Falkenstein stated that she would discuss some modeling staff had been doing to verify the designs and talk about what they can afford to do for implementation, and Mr. Gast-Bray would touch on this briefly.

Mr. Gast-Bray stated that they did not have the refined numbers yet, but initial modeling runs indicated that the buildout of this area would result in a positive fiscal benefit such that annual revenues from the kind of things they might enable would exceed expenditures and allow them to pay for the infrastructure to do this -- but there was some chicken and egg in the process. He said that the first sanity runs had been positive, which was encouraging, and it was worth pursuing this line of thought.

Mr. Gast-Bray said the annual revenue increase would largely be driven by growth in property taxes through redevelopment opportunities along the Rio Road corridor, so it didn't take huge areas to redevelop in order to do this if efforts were concentrated in very sensible areas and the priority was put on the greatest potential for return. He said that based on model testing, future land use iterations that intensify development in these strategic areas and focuses more intently on mixed-use land patterns, that would result in a stronger net revenue increase. He added that each step they took could produce a positive benefit.

Mr. Gast-Bray stated that it was still a long way from being ready to know exactly what you do when, and they were trying to get the models to help define the greatest ROI and what transformative projects would be doing that and leverage the necessary increase in transportation to enable this. He added that this area was built on cars and parking lots, so if they didn't change the development pattern to something that allowed a different approach, they were back to cars and parking lots. He noted that they didn't emphasize the transit this time because they emphasized it last time.

Mr. Gast-Bray asked if also was reasonable to think that whatever they did would generate a level of service A and B, but that was not likely -- because even if they widened a road, it would quickly fill up. He stated that staff felt they could exist with the kind of load they have now and just increase how many people without dramatically changing the current level of service, and on top of that would be the transit, bike, and pedestrian trips. He commented that they could more than double the number of trips they have now, but without impeding the car traffic that was so important and that everyone was so afraid of.

Mr. Gast-Bray said that they were trying to do in refining future land use patterns, but this was zoning, and the county did not own the land -- and they concentrated on the areas they did control to act as the spine and the catalyst. He acknowledged that as they modeled and honed this, they would have to refine designs of all of this, but in the meantime, they were just trying to define key spines and locus for to encourage and gain partnerships that will develop the land in the patterns they were defining.

Mr. Gast-Bray stated that they would also have to define the guidelines through the form-based code as to how to design the development, so they can preserve the vistas and performance. He said that when they talked about greenspace, they were looking at trying to come up with mechanisms for each development to contribute to greenspace -- but there needed to be enough flexibility for them to do the unique designs and have enough control, and it needed to be defined in terms of performance. He said that this was why they were working hard on the modeling to say what kinds of things were key features to entice people to bring the numbers, and he hoped to have those by the time the Board of Supervisors met.

Ms. Falkenstein said that she would focus on transformative projects, recognizing that the implementation would be kind of a tool kit -- and these capital projects were one of the tools that could be utilized to catalyze development here and encourage redevelopment. She added that there would also be incentives, and the county was looking at public-private partnerships and the zoning and form-based code. She stated that the presentation focused on the transformative projects, and she anticipated that there would be future conversations about the other tools she mentioned.

Ms. Falkenstein presented a map with the three other concepts removed and the public projects shown, focusing on how they could be phased to catalyze and support development as it started to build out. She said that staff had identified the list of projects and had taken their best guess at what they thought

the timing and order could be for them, and this could be refined a bit further based on the modeling that was being done, as well as where they saw redevelopment occurring. She said they had talked to several property owners who acted like they might be interested in redeveloping, so that was considered as they organized the projects -- but the properties could change hands and have a new developer come in, which could affect the timing of the projects.

Ms. Falkenstein said that staff had developed a list of projects and she had a description of each, which she would she would go through fairly quickly. She stated that the first projects listed were the library plaza, Berkmar Drive and Rio Road path improvements -- which represented the convergence of the multi-use paths on the Rio/29 area from Berkmar north and from Rio Road from the east. She said that these were considered short-term priorities to provide better bicycle and pedestrian connectivity through the area for routes that were already starting to converge. She said that library plaza could be a central amenity feature, and Northside Library was the most popular branch of JMRL -- even more so than downtown Charlottesville. She stated that Northside drew hundreds of people to events, and there was a latent demand evident for people wanting civic space and a place to congregate, so library plaza could be an important catalyst for that, which is why it was listed early on.

Ms. Falkenstein mentioned that Mr. Dotson had brought up Woodbrook, and staff felt they needed to focus on the design as an early phase of this and engaging with the community because they knew there were concerns with some of the adjacent residents about potential for crime and for homeless people to hang out in the park -- so they needed to be intentional with the design as a first phase, even if it was not intended to be a highly constructed space. She emphasized that they needed to think about safety and think about the trail as they designed the space and thought about monitoring and maintenance of it.

Ms. Falkenstein stated that the commuter bus stop on the Rio/29 intersection was something that Ms. Spain had mentioned, and staff had it as an early phase because they felt they should start to provide that it could be incorporated as one of the stops on the commuter route running along Route 29.

Ms. Falkenstein stated that a lot of other countries were doing floodable parks quite a bit, although it was not as common here, and it would function as being underwater when it was raining and dry when it was not. She stated that they would have to figure out maintenance, but other places had figured it out. She added that they were not intending to design the park space now, and that would be a future planning effort. She said that the goal was to use the green infrastructure elements as usable space.

Ms. Falkenstein reported that they struggled with the Berkmar realignment and felt it was very important to try to provide better connectivity from Berkmar Drive, so they were looking at how they could connect it to this light -- but there was a shopping center there. She said they would not tear down a shopping center and build a road through it, so it was something they would just have to design if the property redeveloped. She said that if it did not redevelop, the alignment would stay as it is now, but if the property owner expressed an interest in redeveloping, staff would have to work with him to see if they could get an alignment to work somewhere along the property.

Ms. Falkenstein mentioned that the circulator bus was a midterm transit intervention that staff felt might be appropriate as the area started to redevelop more, similar to the downtown trolley, so that residents of the multi-family areas could get to the plazas and amenities in other quadrants. She stated that the capstone project was the transit station, and staff hoped that someday there would be bus

transit running up and down Route 29 at a frequent pace, and they could provide a transit station here because it was a logical place for transit routes going up and down Rio Road and Route 29.

Ms. Falkenstein stated that staff did not know the specific timing of the order of the plaza in the Fashion Square quadrant, but they anticipated that it should happen concurrently with the development of the property and could happen soon or 30 years out -- and it was very difficult to predict. She added that they knew of no short-term plans to redevelop, so they put it in a longer-term project.

Ms. Falkenstein asked commissioners if there were questions.

Mr. Dotson stated that when they talked about transformative projects, they needed to be clear that they were public projects. He said they talked about short, mid, and long-term projects and put years beside them, and it struck him as overly precise to put the years, as the term descriptions were enough because 10 years was read as such even if it said "10 plus" and he felt it was unlikely that those things would happen in a decade.

Mr. Dotson said that the thought that came to mind with the library plaza was fostered by the presentation for Dan Rosensweig of Habitat for Humanity in relation to Southwood, where they felt a garden would be a good thing to do -- but people didn't want it and expressed interest in having a soccer field. He emphasized that he was a bit squeamish about jumping to conclusions that people want what staff had in mind for the greenspace behind the library, and it would be good to test the item and contemplate it a bit more.

Mr. Dotson stated that he agreed with Ms. Spain's point about the Rio/29 commuter bus stop, as he felt it should be an immediate addition.

Ms. More asked about the multi-use path running along Route 29 and if the library plaza was the first thing on the list, why the connection was the cost of the bridge. She said she wondered if they were not making the connection because they did not have the multi-use path, or if the connection was then to allow the pedestrian use of what was currently the mall -- and they may want people to start crossing.

Ms. Falkenstein responded that there was a slight nuance to the timing, and she referenced a picture that showed Rio Road streetscape improvements as an early phase, looking at providing walkability along Rio Road and through the intersection, if possible. She said that was something staff was still modeling and working with VDOT on, and there had been a lot of iterations of this back and forth with VDOT and modelers to see if they could get something to work overtop the existing overpass. She noted that this was existing infrastructure and was the cheapest ways to get pedestrians and bicyclists across, so that was an early phase of the streetscape improvements.

Ms. Falkenstein mentioned that if they could not come to an agreement with VDOT, staff would recommend that the pedestrian bridge crossing move up in priority, as it was going to be very important to get people across Route 29 on bikes and on foot. Ms. Falkenstein said they would probably look at the timing of that if they couldn't work that out with the modeling and with VDOT, and they should know within the next few months as staff has had several sit-down meetings with VDOT, which has instructed that a bike lane could work on Rio and they would be open to discussing it.

Ms. More said that it was important even if they made the small steps, to start encouraging the bike and pedestrian access. She mentioned that in Crozet, as the Barnes site began to develop, they were trying

to get people to accept that they could not drive up and park right in front of the store anymore, and they would instead park and walk around. Ms. More stated that she liked the library plaza and would like to see more about styles and designs, and possibly because this was a long-range plan and the county didn't own the land, they could look to what was happening in Crozet with the plaza and potential for a P3. She said that if it was successful, they could model it here, so it would not all fall on developers to create the space.

Mr. Bivins asked if he had a sense of how the timing of the Supervisors' decision about relocating some aspect of their function into the court quadrant, because it would seem to him that if a decision could be made whether it was near Fashion Square or elsewhere, that would start the ball rolling. He said that he would ask if there was a way to give some institutional energy to the project as opposed to waiting for an owner who was not enthusiastic about changing the way the organization does business, and he understood that there was some confusion around the Fashion Square parcels and ownership. He emphasized that if they could have the county make a decision about whether they would enter that area, it would bring energy to a possible kickoff and success of this kind of effort -- because otherwise he was concerned about it.

Mr. Gast-Bray responded that he did not want to comment on a study that was underway, and he was not involved in the finalizing of, because part of a related study he had been peripheral to was the discussion with all four quadrants trying to see what opportunities existed. He emphasized that no one wanted to foist anything on anyone and wanted to find willing partners, as well as determining the right scale for things, and one of the early discussions was how to best leverage resources and the actions the county took. He stated that the Board of Supervisors was very cognizant of that, but he did not have any answers about it.

Ms. Firehock stated that she had a comment regarding how the neighborhoods connected and didn't connect, noting that they were different densities and were suburban-style developments, and it seemed that they discussed the fact they were bound to car culture because of the way it had developed -- yet it seemed that people would still have to get in their cars if they lived in the subdivisions to the north and east. Ms. Firehock said that neighborhoods were always worried about traffic, and there were no topo lines on what they were looking at tonight, so it would be beneficial if there was some way for them to connect with a path. She mentioned the good greenway system in Lynchburg, and when they built a new section of trail, all the people started walking and biking to work.

Ms. Firehock said that every time she went to Stonefield, she wished there was residential or office on top of the commercial -- and it irked her that the entire development was one story, even though there was residential behind it. She stated that with the Pearl District in Portland, there were condos built on top of the Whole Foods, so you could ride the elevator down, get your fish and produce, and ride back up. She said that this really made for a vibrant community, and her question was what they could do with form-based code that would incentivize someone to build something that wasn't a one-story mall with the housing behind it, which they were somehow calling mixed use.

Mr. Gast-Bray responded that he did not have a sweeping answer, but the involvement had been very encouraging -- and he lauded local development coming forward in this process, as well as the Board and Commission for giving staff the ability to do this as a pilot. He stated that staff had been able to reach out to the development community, which had met the concept with a lot of enthusiasm, and there were some other synergies with opportunity zones.

Mr. Gast-Bray emphasized that there was a big gap between interest and getting it on the ground, but when given the opportunity and working constructively with the development community, the county had been rewarded with people being interested in providing those amenities because it helped move them forward in a very quick manner. He said that time was costly to development, and the pilot trial allowed them to see what worked for the development -- which has helped developers overcome trepidation. Mr. Gast-Bray stated that at the end of the day, they usually pull things up from being the worst of the worst, but the best was usually driven by other forces and trends. He said that they have tried to be careful about stating too many things boldly in public.

Mr. Keller commented that Stonefield was originally designed to have residential above, but the economy tanked, and it never materialized. He stated that the other issue is there were members of the development community present and it would be important to have a meeting with the Economic Development Authority soon. He said that his understanding from the form-based code session he attended and speaking with colleagues from the development community was that there was a question as to where to get the funds for doing it, and at the moment the funding was not for mixed use or even residential -- it was for the rental market, which was why those units were being built. He stated that the interest in Charlottesville was whether they would see more self-funded projects, which was what staff and the economic development director were seeking for interesting partnerships. He said that owned residential projects in Charlottesville had presale of units before they began the development, so it was an interesting market and situation that led much of what they were seeing today.

Mr. Pete Caramanis addressed the Commission and stated that he was representing the owners of the Albemarle Square Shopping Center. He said that in looking at the transformative projects map, what was important to the owners was the E3 segment that went through Albemarle Square, and that looked like it was a dark grey circle, but the E project overall was listed in the short-term area. He asked them to clarify what the E phases meant, as it seemed that the white E was the traffic circle, the E2 was the portion of the road going south from the traffic circle, and E3 was the portion going north of it -- but others were not interpreting that way.

Mr. Gast-Bray responded that when displaying the big map and running out of space, it was difficult to display exactly where it was occurring, so the more focused depiction they were seeing was the more accurate representation. He said that as with the disclaimer, the road connections were expressions of desire, but they were flexible in terms of what happened and when, and there was no current plan for any of the Es to be in the section that was of direct interest to Albemarle Square, unless Albemarle Square was interested in moving it forward -- and it was not in the short-term timeframe.

Mr. Caramanis thanked him and said the owners would feel more comfortable knowing that was the case. He said that the way that this process had been presented had a current impact on Albemarle Square owners, and the plan had been shown publicly as having a road going through the middle of Albemarle Square. He said they had had some conversations about the location of the road, but it wasn't something the owners had ever agreed to -- so what the public was seeing was not something the property owner ever said was okay.

Mr. Caramanis stated that the plan was also being put forth in the public as saying that it was the result of community feedback, implying that it had the support of the people, and he was curious as to where that feedback had come from. He said that the feedback from the property owners should be prioritized, and none of this plan would happen without buy in from landowners. He stated that everyone wanted the same thing but presenting plans that had not been signed off by the owner and

creating uncertainty as to what was going to happen and when, as well as the variables such as the courts moving, created a harmful uncertainty to the shopping centers in the present.

Mr. Caramanis said that prior to the grade-separated interchange, the Albemarle Square Shopping Center owners spoke up with concerns, and they ended up losing tenancy. He said that for the past year, they had also spoken up about the Rio/29 plans because the uncertainty was continuing to have a negative impact, with Fresh Market just leaving the center. He added that causing situations that led to more challenges and difficulty for the property owners was not the way to get the properties redeveloped. He stated that the more successful these people could be, the more they could put into their properties and try to create even bigger success.

Mr. Caramanis emphasized his recommendation that more attention be given to conversations directly with property owners to try to come up with something they had bought into prior to it being publicly promoted. He stated that he understood this was a theoretical process and from a planning perspective it made sure to come up with a concept first -- and he appreciated staff's comments that these were conception locations and they did not own the property, etc. He said that the issue was that most of the public that was engaging int his was reading a newspaper article and seeing the map and not getting all that information, so this was causing uncertainty in the public eye and hardship among the tenants of the property.

Mr. Justin Shimp addressed the Commission as an interested citizen and engineer/developer, commenting that it was attractive to have a more urban zone in the county. He stated that Mr. Caramanis had mentioned the E street and concerns from owners, but it also caused concern for him as he was thinking about it -- particularly the housing on the other side of the greenway, as the conceptual plan would encourage retail to keep its back to all that housing. He suggested that they flip it and take the road and put it behind the center along the greenway path.

Mr. Shimp said that the residential on one side was consistent with Hillsdale south, and the redevelopment that would occur would face those people and there would be some encouragement for them to come across. He stated that the property owners had authorized him to come talk to the county about some of these logistics, and while his suggestion was not as easy a path as was shown on the plan, but it had a better long term for both the community and neighbors around that and the shopping center itself.

Mr. Shimp suggested that in looking at the mixed-use, higher density districts, he wondered what would happen if they changed it to have a maximum parking level and no minimum parking level, and it was an issue in the development of halfway form-based code districts. He explained that they set a building envelope and density and must have a lot of parking -- but if a developer wanted to take a chance on having less parking, the county should just let him do it. He emphasized that if they wanted to encourage people to take transit and not rely on roads, they should just not provide parking. He added that the density limit had also been a hindrance on housing, had created affordability problems -- and he wondered if people were sharing units where they didn't have to.

Mr. Shimp stated that on the road networks, Rio Road was a main street -- but the width to him was scary, and there was an opportunity to narrow that section and take the sidewalks in rather than out. He added that to his knowledge, Riverside village was the only vertical mixed-use project in the area, which resulted because the county stepped out of its norm in terms of Comprehensive Plan density and went

up. He stated that the developer took the incentive and built on it, so it was a matter of taking what was in zoning and identifying opportunities.

Mr. Neil Williamson of the Free Enterprise Forum addressed the Commission and thanked staff for the good job they did in distributing the information on this, but he concurred with Mr. Caramanis regarding property owner engagement. Mr. Williamson stated that he was fascinated with the Hydraulic planning in that they placed the two major property owners on the panel, which made a big difference as to how the process was received. He said that he also heard that the mention of BRT was misplaced in this document and was only in one or two places -- and he had brought a document that would show BRT was not going to work anytime in the near future. He said that they could call it a transit stop, but they needed to get people on board before they marched ahead.

Mr. Williamson stated that he still had concerns about lines running through existing properties, and he was hopeful that the caveat staff provided would be good. He said that remembering they were at a Comprehensive Plan level of a small area plan, he was not sure if there had been a planning philosophy change, and when the land use plan was originally put forth through LERC, DISC and other processes, the discussion was a hard edge -- but now they were talking about tapering. He pointed out that this was a different planning philosophy, and if there had been a shift, he probably agreed with it but had not heard a discussion about it. He added that since the time of LERC and DISC, there had been discussion of concurrent infrastructure funding, which Crozet had seen and was still seeing, and it was beyond the Commission's role. He emphasized that in looking back at plans, he did not see them ever coming out of the ground -- and he wondered if the county was over-promising and under-delivering.

Mr. Sean Tubbs of the Piedmont Environmental Council stated that the PEC saluted the work that had gone into the small area plan to date and supported any efforts to make the section of the county's growth area more attractive for redevelopment, that would set the tone for 21st Century Albemarle. He said that as judged by the empty storefronts, they needed to move past 20th Century thinking as they look to the future.

Mr. Tubbs commented that it was a tremendous challenge to create a new place, and he had lived in this area about 10 years earlier and saw so much potential -- so it was interesting to see professional planners seeing what he envisioned then. He said that at an early Places 29 meeting more than 10 years ago, his predecessor in this position, Jeff Werner, called upon the county to think about the eventual grid network that would set the tone for future development.

He stated that at the time, there was resistance to doing anything to change the status quo on 20, and in principle, the Places 29 master plan called for a vision that they have begun to see implemented. He noted that there had been a parallel road network formed, with the grade-separated interchange at Rio Road offering possibilities they were now seeing. He said that PEC was hopeful that over the life of this plan, should it turn into zoning, it would also become reality as they needed new urban places to accommodate the population growth coming.

Mr. Tubbs said that the small area plan appeared to be another bold vision that sets out the county's expectations for what they would like to see, and he was glad to see them forward -- but there were a lot of unknowns that PEC was concerned about. He said that much of the work was speculative and would rely on property owners making a big investment. He stated that they were also skeptical about the form that some of the P3s would take, especially if there was a lack transparency in what would come forth.

Mr. Tubbs emphasized that Albemarle County's success in this area would depend on how Albemarle Square and Fashion Square Mall were redeveloped, as well as the empty store fronts such as Toys-R-Us. He said that the PEC hoped that county and business leaders could work together on a shared vision as partners. He added that he was glad that Ms. Firehock raised the cautionary tale of Stonefield, as it was once called a second downtown mall but hadn't developed in that way because the economy faltered. He said that he was hopeful that any lessons from that could be applied to the small area plan projects as they worked toward the new form-based codes, and PEC urged as much flexibility as possible. He added that they would like this to be transit oriented from day one, but a lot of that would depend on what happened with the regional transit partnership, and that meeting would be held on August 22.

Mr. Tubbs said that the PEC also echoed incentivization of affordable housing units, as they were needed in the county as well as the city. He mentioned that there was concern as to the ultimate fate of the County Office Building and courts, and this decision was well beyond the purview of this body -- but at some point, the public would like to know the status of those projects because there was a lot of uncertainty about what was going to happen, and that fostered a lack of buy in from owners and the public.

There being no further speakers, Mr. Keller brought the item back before the Commission.

Mr. Dotson commented that he had a question as to what the spirit of this plan is, and he started trying different ideas to see how they fit. He recalled that a year or so ago when work began on this, it was described as a "vision plan," then it was said to be a "40-year plan," and then he thought it was an "opportunity plan," then a "giant step plan," then a "readiness plan," and ultimately he settled on an "invitation plan." He explained that they were trying to look to the future to identify some opportunities and get some people to take some bold steps for the county to demonstrate that it was ready to be a partner -- and this plan was essentially issuing an invitation. He said that if there was some way the spirit could reflected in this, he felt it would be useful.

Mr. Dotson remarked that going back a year ago, there were several different concepts and what they've ended up with is a single node plan -- but at one point they also had sort of alternative main streets, with Berkmar and Hillsdale functioning as main streets. He said they also had a squares concept in which each quadrant had own center. He said that all of those concepts had positive attributes, but they agreed they should select one to analyze in greater detail and test it out as a scenario to measure its plausibility.

Mr. Dotson stated that he felt they had done a good job with those but suggested that they not give up those other alternatives because they didn't know what will happen. He said that Fashion Square could come in, and under the current scheme it was called a flex area -- which had the lowest intensity. He asked what might transpire if they came in with a new plan that was a new town uptown but was in a different area than what was shown on the small area plan and met all or most of the important principles they had identified.

Mr. Dotson emphasized that the county wanted to be flexible enough to proceed with alternative approaches, and one of the four quadrants was a federal/state opportunity area -- and perhaps that could generate something. He said that he wanted to maintain a certain amount of flexibility, and a friend of his described the need for "flexible exactness," which was what they needed to strive for with this plan. He stated that he was a bit nervous about the heavy reliance on visuals and felt they needed

more on the principles that any proposal would need to address and remain flexible to leave the door open for different ways. He said that there could be exactness in the sense of clear principles wherein they could rate a proposal. He noted that his concern was they had focused on the details, but it was equally important to focus on the spirit in which this was being put forward.

Ms. Spain commented that they had also talked about multiple nodes at the Polo Grounds/Route 20 intersection where Brookhill was going in, and there would be greenspace where the Monacan boat landing would be put in -- or at Airport Road, where there was already a lot of development. She said that if they identified multiple areas, then wherever the development started within that, if there was a way to follow up and encourage development, they had not given up on those spaces just because they were overconcentrating on the Rio/29 intersection.

Ms. More agreed, stating that she had a question regarding what engagement from stakeholders and property owners looked like at this stage.

Ms. Falkenstein responded that they had a work group composed of several property owners, developers in the area, a Board and a Planning Commission member, and had also held a lot of one-on-one conversations for property owners and developers who just weren't able to commit to being on the work group because it met somewhat frequently.

Mr. Gast-Bray commented that there were a number of methods of interaction over time, with different opportunities for different people, as not everyone could participate in the same way. He said that certainly an aggressive reaching out to stakeholders had been undertaken in a lot of ways, but not everyone was ready and not everyone had the opportunities to do things at the moment -- and they were trying to set up a structure for when the opportunity arose.

Mr. Gast-Bray said that they were doing draft coding in parallel to see if it was possible in the context of current zoning, and they had looked at optional zoning, so they could stay doing what they were -- or if they chose to redevelop, they would have that option as well. He said that the optional overlay zoning was being seriously considered as a part of that. He added that a lot of the visioning work was to demonstrate whether they could do this, whether it would work, and what it might look like -- but none of it would be what it would look like. He emphasized that they were devising a code, which was just really trying to enable, lift the quality, and define the metrics.

Mr. Gast-Bray said that it was exact but was very flexible, so the flexibility had been a real challenge because if they didn't show something, people didn't know what was being proposed -- but showing it resulted in pushback. He said that he liked the idea of the invitational because that was really what it was, as well as an opportunity plan. Mr. Gast-Bray stated that they were defining the performance metrics for what it should be and were being less prescriptive on exactly what it had to be.

Ms. More commented that staff had done an amazing job, and this was a huge undertaking, and it was important as has been said that not every property owner was in the same place -- and she liked the idea of an invitational plan. She emphasized that it was important to keep good relationships with property owners so there wasn't something that prevented an opportunity in the future because of a lack of communication or perceived lack. She said that this was the part that made her the most nervous, and she was sensitive to the comment about what the public had seen and how much they understood it -- especially if they were getting their information only from news articles. She added that

they needed to be sensitive to this as an invitation and vision, so that people didn't latch onto a particular image or idea.

Ms. More stated that they needed to be clear about why they picked this particular place, because originally there were nodes, and as others have said, the county's intention and how they play out would have a major role as the rationale for why this spot was picked. She said that it was important as the county moved forward to make those decisions and commitments, to provide momentum for this if it is to be successful.

Ms. Firehock said that she appreciated and agreed with the previous comments, and she said that her earlier comments on Stonefield were trying to underscore that form-based code would give the flexibility to do the creative things they would like to see. She reiterated that she would like the county to spend considerable time on how they could incentivize this, as they were asking people to take a risk and do something different -- which could be challenging when seeking investors.

Ms. Firehock said that nothing they had suggested thus far hadn't been done around the country or possibly the state, but that didn't mean they weren't going to keep seeing the exact same pattern of development -- unless they did something more radical in terms of incentives. She emphasized that they were providing permission and vision, but she wanted to ensure they were also providing incentives to reward the early adopters, because once they did it there would be proof of concept that would attract additional buy in.

Ms. Riley commented that she was in general accord with what had been said and reemphasized what Ms. Firehock had said and several audience speakers in terms of if they wanted to incentivize transit-oriented development and more density that goes along with that, as well as affordable housing, those were the principles that needed to be spelled out more clearly. She stated that they needed to be able to speak to some of the strategies they would use for incentivizing that.

Ms. Spain said that she agreed with her colleagues about the impact of the county courts project, they could not let these plans come to a halt waiting for that decision -- as it had already been a long time in the works and could be much longer in the works. She said that her understanding was that there needed to be a referendum now on whether the courts could be moved, and it would be ideal if there was a decision made soon so they could figure out where the anchors might be -- but she felt it would have to be a parallel process.

Mr. Bivins stated that staff had demonstrated that they heard the feedback and incorporated it into this current iteration, adding that he supported the design going towards the end of the Comprehensive Plan. He said that he did not want them to lose faith, because what staff had showed was the evolution or movement of Route 29, and they were asking the community to think about what that area would be in the future, and he did not want it to go back to a "horse lane." He emphasized that this was not a time where they could all be comfortable and get to a mutual "yes," and he thanked the owners and hoped they would continue to engage in this process.

Mr. Keller thanked his colleague and thanked Daniel Burnham, "Make no small plans." He said that the purpose of this was to encourage a vision beyond the haphazard development patterns along Route 29 North, and this process was about that. He stated that a lot of important points had been made by his colleagues and the public, and he wished staff luck in synthesizing them -- but the underlying feeling was that it was important to develop a plan. He said that the ultimate buildout could be quite different, but

the community had been challenged to think beyond the standard de-facto manner in which it had been developed to this point. He complimented staff on the good job they had done in daylighting this for everyone.

Mr. Dotson commented that the final element here was luck, and he shared a quote about luck: "I believe luck is preparation meeting opportunity," noting that it had been said by Oprah Winfrey.

Ms. Falkenstein asked what they would like to see before moving to the public hearing stage, to get to the point they were comfortable with the concepts they might recommend for a Comprehensive Plan Amendment.

Ms. More suggested having some more clarifying information about commitment to affordable housing, as staff said they had three things that were part of the spirit of this, but they were not really expounded on.

Ms. Falkenstein said that every person had several points and staff would do their best to address those and asked if another work session before a public hearing the appropriate avenue was.

Ms. Firehock suggested a different format, as the dais format did not allow them to interact with a map -- so perhaps an actual work session would be the right approach.

Mr. Keller stated that he was comfortable with it going to public hearing.

Mr. Dotson said that he would like to see words and would leave it to staff to respond to Commissioners' comments, and if they wanted to test the next iteration, they should bring it forward.

Ms. Falkenstein stated that they had been drafting a document, but it did not lend itself to a presentation format, which was why it was heavy on the pictures, so that could be a next step. She said that she had heard different suggestions from the Commission.

Mr. Dotson stated that he would like to see the words as part of the public hearing, so he was ready to go forward.

Ms. More said that she initially wasn't ready but questioned how much time they could spend going over things repeatedly, as they could spend forever going over a map and suggested lines. She said she would like more time but would support going forward.

Ms. Firehock stated that she felt it needed a lot more work to connect the neighborhoods, and she would not re-articulate everything said tonight -- and she did not feel they had fleshed out enough of what they were after to support this going into the Comprehensive Plan. She reiterated that she was not comfortable with this in its current state.

Ms. Riley commented that she was ready for it to go forward to public hearing.

Ms. Spain agreed.

Mr. Bivins also agreed, adding that listening to the audio or reading the transcript might help inform staff as to what they prepare to bring forward to public hearing. He said that perhaps they should have

more than five days to process this, and hopefully the schedule could be adjusted to provide that opportunity.

Mr. Keller said they often had a work session first, so staff could bring it forward for those kinds of tweaks. He added that what the Commissioners had said had been complimentary, from asking for more specifics and each of the concerns -- development, environmental, social issues, etc. -- had been addressed. He stated that just because they were not stated multiple points did not mean they weren't in agreement on the points being made.

Ms. Spain said she thought she understood them to say they would proceed with a public hearing.

Mr. Keller responded that they had referenced a ZTA, and he asked if that would be a public hearing.

Ms. Falkenstein clarified that she was just talking about the Comprehensive Plan Amendment, and the zoning amendment would come after that.

Mr. Keller noted that this meant they would get two more rounds of this process.

Mr. Gast-Bray said they would probably have more than that and would have another shot at the CPA as proposed here.

The Commission reached consensus that they were ready for staff to bring it back for public hearing.

Committee Reports

Mr. Keller invited committee reports.

Commissioner Spain reported:

- The Places29 CAC had met and discussed the Rio/29 Small Area Plan and Rio Mills CCP approval. She said that there were handouts in large and small form and not too many members of the community present, but there was a quorum of CAC members, so they discussed that. She said that Jeff Baker and David Benish from county staff were present and were able to address some of the questions that came up. She stated that the Rio Mills Park had been found to be in compliance with the Comprehensive Plan.

Commissioner Firehock reported:

- She had attended the 5th and Avon CAC met and heard a presentation by the City about plans for the 5th Street roundabout in front of the County Office Building, with a number of other improvements slated to help traffic so it flowed more evenly and cleanly in and out of the City. She said that there had been a presentation on the Southwood Development, at which they talked about the public engagement process, and citizens at the meeting reflected on points in the newspaper article talking about it -- with concerns as to how people could afford it, the phasing, what would be developed on Old Lynchburg Road. She said there were some questions raised but not really any answers given because it was a presentation, and she had a chance to express some concerns.
- There was a proposal for Regents School off of Reservoir Road, to develop the private school at the intersection with Route 29 in the northwest corner. She noted that there would be a community meeting the following week, and letters had already gone out.

Commissioner More reported:

- The Crozet CAC had not met for two months, which was rare, but there was a lot coming in the future.

Old Business

Mr. Keller invited old business. Hearing none, the meeting moved to the next item.

New Business

Mr. Keller invited new business.

Ms. Spain said that she kept hearing about activity at the UVA Research Park and wondered if they could get someone from UVA to update the Commission and whether they intended to confer with them at all.

Mr. Gast-Bray responded that the University had been more forthcoming and participatory than ever, and they were trying to work more in synch with the county -- but they were a large institution that hadn't always had to think about others. He noted that there was some past inertia they were working to overcome, but it was a huge entity so even though the planning and architects' group might come forward, the administration may not have jumped in.

Mr. Kamptner reported that the EDA had held its meeting at the Research Park just before this Commission meeting, and a UVA Foundation representative had provided an overview of their master plan developed for the research park.

Ms. Spain said that she would like to see that.

Mr. Keller stated that he wanted to be sure that Bill Palmer's replacement was in the email chain, and perhaps this was why they missed the last two meetings.

Mr. Keller announced:

- The next meeting would be on Tuesday, September 4, 2018 in the Auditorium at 6:00 p.m.
- There would be no meeting on Tuesday, August 28, 2018 and Tuesday, September 11, 2018.
- The meeting on September 18, 2018 may be moved.

Items for Follow-Up

Mr. Keller invited items for follow-up. Hearing none, the meeting moved to the next item.

Adjournment

Adjourn to September 4, 2018 Albemarle County Planning Commission meeting, 6:00 p.m., Auditorium, Second Floor, County Office Building, 401 McIntire Road, Charlottesville, Virginia.

The Planning Commission meeting adjourned its meeting at 8:30 p.m.

Andrew Gast-Bray, Secretary

(Recorded and transcribed by Sharon C. Taylor, Clerk to Planning Commission & Planning Boards)

Approved by Planning Commission
Date: 3-5-2019
Initials: SLB