

Summary of Planning Commission Feedback on the Environmental Review Project October 28, 2025 Work Session

The following is a summary of Planning Commission feedback from their October 28, 2025 work session. Where staff provided additional information or context during the work session, a 'staff response' is included below the relevant item. Feedback is summarized by major themes. The full work session is recorded and available [here](#).

Additional topics to address with the Environmental Review Project

- Address drought mitigation planning.
 - Staff response: The City participates in Rivanna Water and Sewer Authority (RWSA) planning processes, which includes drought mitigation efforts. Staff can incorporate this information into the background materials and will continue to coordinate with RWSA. The City also submits a drought management plan to the Virginia Department of Environmental Quality (DEQ), which was done most recently in 2025.
- Address wildfire risks. There have been several recent wildfires in Albemarle County and other nearby localities.
- Incorporate infrastructure and community resilience to natural disasters and their effects, such as significant power outages.

Regional coordination and additional partners

- Regional coordination will be important for this project. Consider venues such as the Land Use and Environmental Planning Committee (LUEPC), which includes the City, Albemarle County, and the University of Virginia. Also consider regional data such as watersheds, tree coverage, and population growth.
 - Staff response: Regional coordination will be an important part of this project and also overlaps with the ongoing regional Resilient Together project.
- Coordinate with Fire/Rescue on street standards including street trees.
- Continue to coordinate with regional partners such as RWSA and the Thomas Jefferson Planning District Commission (TJPDC).
- Several Commissioners provided additional community members and organizations as recommended contacts, which staff has received and noted.

Community engagement

- The background materials for the work session are useful for the Planning Commission, but future materials for community members should be more accessible and use more graphics.

- Graphics could include a more equal weighting of project topics, instead of showing them as a numbered list. This could include showing risk, complexity, timelines, and other considerations.
- Consider engagement with schools and students.
- Consider technical assistance and templates for smaller builders, nonprofits, and land trusts.
- Many of these topics will be of significant community interest and will require balancing different viewpoints and priorities.
 - Staff response: There will be multiple opportunities for meaningful community participation during the Environmental Review Project. There are also existing initiatives where staff can engage and share information with community members, such as Resilient Together and the 5-Year Comprehensive Plan review. Staff will communicate how project topics are essential for a sustainable and resilient community.

Project phasing

- Align the project topics with the ongoing plans and studies mentioned in the presentation (e.g. Community Flood Preparedness Fund grant and Urban Forest Management Plan). It would be best to wait for data and results from these projects to make informed decisions rather than getting ahead of the ongoing initiatives.
- Consider pairing the critical slopes and stream buffer topics, since there is significant overlap.
- Since this is a two-year process with some longer-term components, consider what 'quick wins' may be feasible.

Comments on proposed project topics

- Evaluate opportunities in the public right of way (PROW), especially for stormwater management and tree canopy. Consider locations for bump-outs and bioswales. Seattle cited as an example. Need to address both new infrastructure and maintenance of existing infrastructure. Coordinate on upcoming citywide Mobility Plan.
 - Staff response: There are spatial constraints and high project costs associated with stormwater management infrastructure in the PROW. The City does not allow private stormwater management facilities within the PROW. The City evaluates all existing Best Management Practice (BMP) stormwater facilities, with City-owned facilities evaluated annually and privately-owned facilities evaluated on a rotating basis every 5 years. Over a multiyear upcoming study, the City is looking to identify all existing BMP's and evaluate what maintenance is needed to bring any deficient BMP's up to standard.

- Evaluate if the City could incentivize directing the purchase of offsite stormwater nutrient credits for water quality to upstream waterways to better benefit the city's waterways. Also evaluate incentives for more onsite water quality treatment.
 - Staff response: Staff will continue to explore options to encourage more onsite water quality treatment.
- Could Utilities share more information on stormwater management capacity so that developers are aware of potential constraints?
 - Staff response: Utilities is working with a consultant on a stormwater infrastructure capacity study, with the ability to input different assumptions into the model (e.g. different rainfall events). This will likely inform updates to utilities standards.
- For floodplain management, evaluate the existing development potential of properties within the floodplain.
- Noting it will be important to have updated data and findings on tree canopy from the Urban Forest Management Plan to inform recommendations.
- Evaluate where critical slopes may already be protected and regulated by erosion and sediment control and stormwater management requirements.