Buffered Boundary: refers to the condition along the edge of a Development Area. A buffered boundary typically consists of a heavily vegetated or landscaped area along the edge of the Development Area to screen development.

By-right: By-right uses are explicitly allowed by law in the Zoning Ordinance. County staff review applications or proposals for by-right uses to ensure they meet regulations. If the application or proposal meets the requirements of the County’s Zoning Ordinance and other relevant codes, the application must be approved.

Center: A focal point of activity serving the surrounding area. Centers can vary in size and scale and can range from neighborhood to regional serving activities and uses. Centers typically contain a mix of different land uses, have a higher intensity of uses than surrounding neighborhoods, and are served by transit.

Comprehensive Plan: Albemarle County’s Comprehensive Plan establishes a 20-year vision for the future growth of the County. It is a document that contains overarching policies, recommendations, and incorporates each of the Master Plans and Small Area Plans as they are adopted by the Board of Supervisors. The Comprehensive Plan does not carry the force of law, but can inform County Ordinances, budgets, and other policy decisions.

Density (dwellings units/acre): When using in planning, refers to the concentration of people, buildings, or streets in an area. Density is typically expressed in terms of dwelling units per acre. A higher number of units per acre has a greater density than a smaller number.

Development Area: Areas designated within the County’s Comprehensive Plan for residential and business growth. They are to be attractive and vibrant communities where people live, work, and play. High quality design is expected to provide new development and redeveloped land with an urban look and feel.

Development Area Boundary: The Boundary set within the Comprehensive Plan distinguishing between Rural Area and Development Area.

District: An area dedicated primarily to a specific function or use such as recreation, education, or employment uses. Districts can vary in size based on their use and service area. Districts are distinct from centers in that they are typically not mixed use and should be served by transit, where possible.

Dwelling Unit: A single unit providing complete, independent living facilities for one or more people. Type of dwelling units include: Single-Family Detached (units that do not share any walls with other units, or standalone houses), Single-Family Attached (units that do share walls, such as a townhouse or duplex), and Multi-family (multiple dwelling units within one building or complex, usually in the form of apartments or condos).

Form: When used in planning, “form” includes the physical characteristics that make up built areas, including the size, shape, and configuration of buildings.

Land Use Designation: Land Use Designations, or “land uses” set a long-range vision for a specific property and illustrate the expectations for future use and development patterns for land within the County. Land Use Designations typically include descriptions and recommendations for future uses on a property (such as office, residential, commercial, mixed-use) and some guidance on building form such as height, massing, and density. Land Use Designations are found in the Comprehensive Plan and do not carry the force of law, but can inform decisions on future policy changes such as zoning map or zoning text amendments.

Master Plan: A policy document providing a long range vision for land use and development, transportation, and parks and green systems for one of the County’s Development Areas. Master Plans typically contain narrative text, maps, a vision statement, recommendations, and implementation steps to guide future development and investment within the Master Plan area.

Rural Area: The Rural Area provides places for agriculture, forestry, protection and preservation of natural resources, habitat, and tourism. The County’s Comprehensive Plan designates 95% of the County’s land area as Rural Area to be protected for these uses. Intense residential and commercial development is not recommended for the Rural Areas.

Unbuffered Boundary: refers to the condition along the edge of a Development Area. An unbuffered boundary creates an obvious distinction or “hard edge” between a Development Area and a Rural Area. This treatment may be appropriate for highly traveled roadways or where a Development Area might be expanded in the future.

Walkshed: the land area within a defined walking range of a specified location.

Zoning: Most cities and counties have rules about what you can build and where. Called Zoning. What a property owner can build depends on where – or what “Zoning District” – their property is located within. Albemarle County uses zoning to group land into different areas – or zones – to protect the health, safety and wellbeing of its community members. Zoning caries the force of law and establishes regulations for each property in the County. Examples of zoning districts in Albemarle County include R-1 Residential, Rural Areas, Commercial Office, and Light Industrial.