

2. The Vision and Guiding Principles

The Vision Statement and Guiding Principles for the County's four Northern Development Areas are an essential part of the Places29 Master Plan. Both the vision and the principles were developed from a combination of community input and policies set forth in the County's Comprehensive Plan. Incorporating both public input and County policy anchors the Master Plan in established County policy and in the local community's desires for its future. The vision and principles are to be used in conjunction with the County's Comprehensive Plan. The County recognizes the impact of the vision and guiding principles on its neighbors, the City of Charlottesville and the University of Virginia, as well as on the region as a whole.

Vision Statement

Albemarle County's four Northern Development Areas will feature compact development consisting of residential and employment neighborhoods that are organized around centers. These neighborhoods and their centers will be pedestrian-oriented and mixed-use; they will offer a variety of housing choices, retail environments, office types, and employment opportunities. They will be connected by an attractive, efficient, and accessible multimodal transportation system. Integrated into this urban-style development, parks and open spaces will provide a sense of respite and contribute to an overall excellent quality of life.

Guiding Principles

Development

1. As stated in the Comprehensive Plan, the County has chosen to direct future development into the Development Areas in order to lessen development pressure on the Rural Areas. New development in the four Northern Development Areas is intended to follow the Neighborhood Model, so that those areas will include lively, mixed-use, pedestrian-friendly centers.
2. The four Northern Development Areas form a corridor centered on US 29 North. As development in the corridor and elsewhere increases, the additional traffic it generates must be addressed by this Master Plan.
3. By improving on the current configuration of neighborhoods, places of employment, and shopping areas, the community seeks to create a pattern of walkable places with a diverse range of uses. Transit, pedestrian, and bicycle connections and facilities should improve access and ensure safety.
4. The Master Plan recognizes the need for land and infrastructure to accommodate sustainable levels of business and industry.
5. The Northern Development Areas can expect a combination of new development, infill development, and redevelopment to take place subject to this Master Plan. It is essential for this development to follow the principles of the County's Neighborhood Model; to respect and work with the terrain.
6. Preserving the character of existing neighborhoods while improving the quality, diversity, and affordability of new housing is important. Housing, including workforce housing,

located close to employment centers, shopping areas, transportation, and recreation is important for the Northern Development Areas.

7. The community of the Northern Development Areas values creative, effective design, which respects the scale and character of existing development and adjacent planned open space.
8. It is important to provide infrastructure at or before the time it is needed to serve new development. Infrastructure may be funded by local government, the private sector, or a combination of funding sources.



Figure 2.1. A photosimulation illustrating several development guiding principles: a mixed-use, pedestrian-friendly Center with onstreet parking, pedestrian amenities, a public plaza, and buildings facing the street.

Transportation

9. An efficient, effective, and accessible transportation system will serve users across the entire spectrum, from local trips to regional ones, and it will be multimodal—including vehicular, transit, pedestrian, and bicycle access. In particular, improvements to the US 29 corridor should recognize and address the road's multiple purposes. The system will also address the movement of freight by truck, train, and air.
10. Future improvements to the transportation system are an opportunity to increase the connectivity of places and land uses currently separated by US 29 and other high-traffic roads, such as Hydraulic and Rio roads. The future transportation system can also enhance the connectivity between neighborhoods, mixed-use centers, recreational amenities, and community facilities throughout the area. In certain instances, connections for pedestrian and bicycle access may be made where road connections would be inappropriate or would disturb established neighborhoods. The road network that will best serve the Northern Development Areas includes US 29, roads that are parallel to US 29, and good east-west connecting roads.

11. Safety and aesthetics are important for new and existing streets.
12. Public transit is now available in some parts of the Northern Development Areas and is an important alternative form of transportation that should be planned for, expanded, and enhanced in the future. New development and transportation improvements should be transit-ready.



Figure 2.2. A photosimulation illustrating several transportation guiding principles: a transit-friendly neighborhood street with bicycle lanes, and parked cars separating traffic from the sidewalk.

Open Space and Community Facilities & Amenities

13. The community values the expansive views of the Blue Ridge Mountains and other vistas; they add to the quality of life. They should be preserved through careful delineation and protection of viewsheds.
14. The community of the Northern Development Areas values a well-connected network of accessible public open spaces, greenways, and trails. This network will be created by preserving the existing open spaces and adding new ones, and by making connections between open spaces in the Development Areas, the surrounding Rural Areas, and the City of Charlottesville.
15. The County's public facilities, such as libraries and schools, are both a source of pride and a resource. These facilities should be convenient and accessible to neighborhoods and employment centers.



Figure 2.3. A photograph of a public open space with pedestrian amenities.