Planning Commission Retreat

Overview of Planning History in Albemarle

- Comprehensive Plans, Planning initiatives
- Major Milestones
- Key Policies
PC Retreat – Planning History

Planning began in Albemarle County in the late 1960s

- Adoption of the Zoning Ordinance and Zoning Map (1969) and Zoning Map approved by referendum (public vote)
- Adoption of first Comprehensive (1971)
- Comprehensive Plan should precede Zoning Ordinance and Map approval (but not here-not then.)
1971 Comprehensive Plan


- The County’s Growth Management Policy in place today was first established in the 1971 Plan.

- One of the major planning focuses of the 1970s was water resource & water supply protection.
Albemarle County’s Growth Management Goals

- Promote the efficient utilization of County resources through a combination of Designated Development Areas and Rural Areas.

- Direct growth into Designated Development Areas.

- Protect Natural Scenic and Historic Resources.

- Discourage rural residential development other than dwellings related to a bona fide agricultural/forestal use.

- Strongly support and effectively implement the County’s growth management priorities in the planning and provision of transportation, and public facilities and utilities.
1971 Comprehensive Plan

Major implementation initiatives in the 1970s:

Water resource protection measures:

- Reservoir run-off control ordinance adopted (1977)
- Urban stormwater ordinance adopted (1979)
- First Capital Improvements Program adopted (1979)
The First Comprehensive Plan in 1971 was really a growth accommodation plan based on a projected population of 185,000 by 1995.
Development Area Comparison

- **1971 Land Use Plan:**
  - **20 designated Development Areas** (Urban Area, 5 Communities, 14 Villages).
  - A total of **37,000 acres** designated in Urban Area and Communities, *not* including area designated for 14 Villages.
  - **1971 Comp Plan capacities were established, in part, to address threats of annexation from the City.**

- **Current Land Use Plan:**
  - **5 designated Development Areas** (Urban Area, 3 Communities, 1 Village).
  - A total of **22,300 acres** designated in Urban Area, Communities and Village.
comprehensive plan
1977 - 1995

Albemarle County, Virginia

Board of Supervisors

Steering Committee

Citizen's Advisory Panel

Planning Commission

County Staff & Other Agencies

IDA Staff

Incorporated in 1745

[Text on the page includes lists of names and titles, and various sections likely detailing the components of the comprehensive plan for the county.]
1977 Comprehensive Plan Update

Issues in the 1970s that were the focus of Planning efforts:

- Continued rapid growth/subdivision activity in the County’s Rural Areas.
- Much of the subdivision activity in the South Fork Rivanna River Reservoir watershed (western Albemarle—ivy, Earlysville, Free Union)
- Rapid siltation of the South Fork Rivanna Reservoir.
- Note: Growth Area boundaries not yet based on water supply watersheds.
Rural Areas Land-use Patterns: Small Lots
1977 Comprehensive Plan Update

- This Plan began to place even greater emphasis on protection of the County’s Rural Areas, particularly the water supply watersheds due to rapid siltation of the South Fork Rivanna River Reservoir.

- The number and size of the Growth Areas (now Development Areas) were reduced to reflected projected growth needs and resource protection issues.

- The amount of Growth Areas designated within the water supply watersheds was reduced.
general land use plan

urban area land use plan
1980 Comprehensive Rezoning

To implement the recommendations of the 1977 Comp Plan to protect the Rural Area and resources:

- New zoning ordinance adopted with new urban zoning districts and a new Rural Areas District (Development Rights created)
- New Zoning Map
  - Down-zoning of many properties in the designated Rural Areas (particularly in water supply watershed areas) to be consistent with Comprehensive Plan.
  - Only properties with existing uses or approved developments maintained an urban zoning designation in the Rural Areas.
  - This did leave “old/stale zoning” on parcels.
1980 Comprehensive Rezoning

- Numerous lawsuits filed over the comprehensive rezoning.
- Courts upheld the new Zoning Ordinance and Zoning Map
1982 Comprehensive Plan Update

- Further adjusted the Growth Area boundaries to be consistent with the water supply watershed boundaries (except for Crozet, Ivy and part of Earlysville)
- Villages reduced to four (Earlysville, Stony Point, North Garden, and Ivy)
- Plan recommendations emphasize protection of the Rural Areas; relatively limited in recommendations supporting development of Growth Areas.
- Interstate Interchange policy first appears in the Comp Plan.
Interstate Interchange Policy

The purpose of the Interstate Interchange Policy:

- Identify those interchanges where some level of more intensive development would be appropriate.
- Established the type of land uses appropriate for the interchange area.
- Established transportation/road access and other design recommendations/guidelines.
Interstate Interchange Policy

- 1982 Plan stated:

“Land in the vicinity of interstate interchanges should be developed in a manner consistent with the area in which it is located. It is recommended that the following interchanges be developed in accordance with the standards forth....:

- Route 250 East (Shadwell)
- Route 20 South
- Route 631 (Fifth Street)
- Route 29 South

Other interchanges: Rt. 250 West (Yancey Mill); Rt. 637 (Ivy) and Rt. 616 (Black Cat Road) - are not recommended for development except as provided generally in the Plan.”
Within the designated interchanges, “permitted uses should be related to and supportive of the interstate highway function” and “two (2) categories of land use were recommended:”

- Regional uses which rely on a regional or larger scale make (sales, labor, service) and would depend on the interstate as a non-local mover of people and goods (regional shopping centers, major offices, business and employment centers; convention centers, light industrial, warehousing, and high density development.

- Highway service businesses which primarily rely on the interstate traveler as a market: hotels/motels, restaurants, service stations, truck stops, convenience stores, gift/craft/antiques shops.”
1982 Comprehensive Plan

Issues in the 1980s that were the focus of Planning efforts:

- Continued rapid growth/subdivision activity in the County’s Rural Areas.
- At times, 50 percent of total new residential development in the Rural Areas, with associated impacts to rural resources.
- The primary tool applied in the ’80s was the Comprehensive Rezoning and new Z.O. (Rural Areas District regulations).
Comprehensive Plan for Albemarle County, Virginia 1989 - 2010

Adopted July 12, 1989
1989 Comprehensive Plan

- Earlier Comp Plan policies, recommendations and implementation measures had focused efforts on restricting development in the Rural Area.
- The 1989 established more proactive recommendations and implementation strategies to encourage future growth in the Development Areas:
  - First recommendation to undertake development of neighborhood plans for each development area. (Neighborhood Plans for Crozet and Pantops adopted)
  - A Public Facilities Goal established: which focused provision of services to a higher level in the DA; proactively provide those facilities to the DA provide quality/ attractive communities in the DA
  - Recommended establishing level of service standards for community facilities (through a Community Facilities Plan adopted in 1991).
- Rural Preservation Development (RA clustering) recommendation recommended in Plan, conservation easement programs encouraged.
1989 Comprehensive Plan

- **Ivy Village** removed as a designated Development Area (located in water supply watershed, mostly built out).

- **Stony Point Village** removed as a designated Development Area (public water and sewer not feasible, and some evidence of water quantity and soil quality issues, so not conducive to supporting more intensive development).
Development Area
Expansions/CPAs

- Four applicant requests to amend the Comprehensive Plan (CPAs) were approved between 1989 Comp Plan adoption and 1996 Comp Plan adoption.
  - Rivanna Village
  - North Fork Research Park Expansion
  - Towers Land Trust (North Pointe area)
  - Piney Mountain (east of Route 29, NGIC area)

- Over 2,400 acres added to the Development Areas in the 1990’s (Rivanna Village 1,700 acres)
1989 Comprehensive Plan

Implementation initiatives:

- Adoption of Neighborhood Plans in Crozet and Pantops.
- City, County, University joint planning effort through Three Party Agreement (“Area B” Studies of Areas of mutual interest)
- Creation of the Rural Preservation Development option in the RA.
1996 Comprehensive Plan

- Further emphasized encouraging new growth to locate in Development Areas, identified infill development (of the DA’s) as an important goal/objective.

- Analysis of Land Use Plan land use inventory indicated a need for addition lands if development continued in the mostly low density suburban form.

- Commission evaluated expansion areas and amount of expansion—a divided Commission recommended a small expansion.
1996 Comprehensive Plan

- Board did not support expansion. Directed staff to undertake efforts to encourage more efficient and effective use of Development Areas through improved form, density and quality of development.

- The Board indicated that there should be no expansion of the Development Areas until more efficient use of the existing DAs could be realized.

- Development Area Initiatives Steering Committee subsequently created after adoption of 1996 Plan
1996 Comprehensive Plan

- Initiatives called for in 1996 Plan:
  - Create an Acquisition of Conservation Easement Program
  - Dark Sky protection (lighting ordinance)
  - Greenway Plan for a system of greenways/blueways in the Co.
  - DISC process/what became the Neighborhood Model Principles

- All of the above implemented and/or underdevelopment

- Modifications to the Plan:
  - North Garden Village removed as a designated Development Area (public water and sewer not feasible)
  - Earlysville Village removed as a designated Development Area (mostly built out, and located in Chris Green Lake back-up water supply watershed)
  - Interstate Interchange policy…
1996 Comprehensive Plan - Interstate Interchange Policy

- In the 1996 Plan, the policy was modified to apply only the west side of (Urban Area side) of the Shadwell interchange and the north side of the Route 631 (Fifth Street) interchange.

Reasons for the change in the Policy:

- Concern with the character of Shadwell interchange/Route 250 as an entrance corridor (adjacent historic sites) if developed under interchange policy land uses. Traffic impacts from more intensive development near the interchange was also a concern.

- Potential impact from the potential uses on existing residential areas near the south side of the Fifth Street interchange.
THE NEIGHBORHOOD MODEL:
BUILDING BLOCK FOR THE DEVELOPMENT AREAS

Amendment to 1996 Comprehensive Plan

ADOPTED by Albemarle County
Board of Supervisors
May 16, 2001
“DISC” and Neighborhood Model Highlights

- 23 member Board appt’d committee
- Represented by citizens, developers, Chamber of Commerce, advocacy groups
- “Form” as important as density
- “If the DA aren’t attractive and functional areas, people won’t want to live there.”
- Unified recommendation
Neighborhood Model Recommendations

The Neighborhood Model: Building Blocks for the Development Areas was adopted, May 2001

Recommendations:

- Change from “suburban” to “urban” form
- Require urban form: curb & gutter, sidewalks, street trees, parks and open space
- Reduce setbacks and buffers
- Make mixed-use easier
- Find ways for affordable housing to be part of a mix of housing types
Premature expansion of the DA will frustrate goals of the Neighborhood Model.

Expansion of growth area boundaries should not be considered until after master plans are completed.

Future expansion of DA should be done in coordination with and contingent on other efforts, not as a substitute for achieving these objectives.

Hard DA/RA boundaries help to push density inside the DA; all efforts needed to attain LUP density.

Infrastructure to support development should be constructed simultaneously with the development to ensure that increased density will not diminish the quality of services currently being provided.

Adjustments may be considered if no substantial gain to DA results and NM is advanced.
Principles of the Neighborhood Model

1. Pedestrian Orientation
2. **Neighborhood Friendly Streets and Paths**
3. **Interconnected Streets and Transportation Networks**
4. Parks and Open Space
5. Neighborhood Centers
6. **Buildings and Spaces of Human Scale**
7. Relegated Parking
8. Mix of Uses
9. **Mix of Housing Types and Affordability**
10. Redevelopment rather than Abandonment
11. **Site Planning that Respects Terrain**
12. Clear Edges
The Neighborhood Model:

- Accommodates walkers, bikers and public transportation
- Open space integral to overall design
- Buildings and spaces are human scaled
- Incorporates varying densities
- Contains a mix of uses
- Streets are interconnected
- Large parking lots are out of site
- Emphasizes the re-use of sites
- Adapts to terrain
- Maintains a clear edge between Development Areas and Rural Areas
- Focuses greatest density in neighborhood centers
Design Matters more than Density

Photo courtesy of Daggett and Grigg Architects.
Principles of the Neighborhood Model
Pedestrian Orientation

What Pedestrians Need:

• Convenience and Safety
• Destinations
• Comfort
Neighborhood Friendly Streets and Paths
Neighborhood Friendly Streets and Paths
Interconnected Streets and Transportation Networks
Neighborhood Parks and Open Space
Neighborhood Centers
Buildings and Spaces of Human Scale
Buildings and Spaces of Human Scale
Relegated Parking - Commercial

Conventional Development
Parking in front of buildings

Neighborhood Model
Most parking behind buildings*

*parallel parking on-street is encouraged
Relegated Parking - Residential

**Conventional Development**
Parking in front of houses

**Neighborhood Model**
Parking behind buildings*

*parallel parking on-street is encouraged*
Mixture of Uses

**Conventional Development**
Retail separate from residential

**Neighborhood Model**
Retail is integral with residential
Mixture of Uses
Mix of Housing Types and Affordability
Mix of Housing Types and Affordability
Redevelopment
(rather than Abandonment)
Site Planning that Respects Terrain

*Or regrading terrain for more gentle slopes
Site Planning that Respects Terrain

- Use building foundations as retaining walls
- Site building into existing grade
- Tuck-under parking absorbs grade
Clear Boundaries with the Rural Areas