

## **The Livability Project** **April 5, 2013**

In 2011, the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) awarded a \$999,000 grant to the Thomas Jefferson Planning District Commission (TJPDC) to develop a Livability Implementation Plan for the Charlottesville-Albemarle MPO area. The process to develop this plan, referred to as the Livable Communities Planning Project (Livability Project), builds upon the region's 1998 Sustainability Accords and other area planning documents to integrate cross-cutting strategies for land use, transportation, housing, economic vitality, air and water quality, and energy use. The Livability Project was launched in April 2011 in conjunction with the kick off to the Charlottesville & Albemarle County Comprehensive Plan and Long Range Transportation Plan updates. Since the kick off, project staff have assisted in coordinating public input into the three plan updates.

The process to develop the Livability Project has been a continuation of decades of cooperative planning efforts formally set in place in 1986 through the Three Party Agreement. This Agreement between the City of Charlottesville, Albemarle County, and the University of Virginia (UVA) created the Planning Action Coordination Council (PACC) to oversee planning and development coordination in areas of adjoining or overlapping jurisdiction.

Areas "A," "B," and "C" were shown on a map to delineate the areas of adjoining or overlapping jurisdiction. Area "A" are University-owned properties, Area "B" contains privately-owned properties that span the City-County boundary, and for which mutual interest exists. Area "C" is everything that is not part of Area "A" or "B." In years past, properties in Area B had specific plans to guide future development. These specific plans are updated and are expected to be part of the City and County's Comprehensive Plans. In addition to Area B work, Charlottesville, Albemarle and University of Virginia have worked with TJPDC on regional transportation planning under the auspices of the Charlottesville-Albemarle Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO). The partners also work closely on planning related to diverse issues of mutual concern.

The grant expectations are for completion of five primary products:

1. Common Map

This product is a single map depicting in a consistent fashion the Future Land Use Plans of Charlottesville and Albemarle County, the UVA Grounds Plan and fiscally constrained transportation projects in the CA MPO Long Range Transportation Plan. This product is intended to assist all participants including Planning Commissions and the public in visualizing the future plans for the area.

2. Performance Measurement System

This product is intended to depict the most important measurements of the status of the Charlottesville-Albemarle area through quantitative data. The measurements being selected are those that portray the priorities for the area as expressed in the Comprehensive Plans of the two localities. Data that is incorporated into the Performance Measurement System has been chosen due to its ready availability and regular schedule for updates allowing the performance measurements to be easily updated and tracked in the future.

3. Code and Ordinance Review

The Code and Ordinance Review is intended to create a list of topics in the Charlottesville and Albemarle Zoning Ordinance and Subdivision Ordinance that should be reviewed based on policy changes adopted in the updated Comprehensive Plans. It is intended to be used by Planning Commissioners and staff over the next several years to make sure that the policy changes in the Comprehensive Plans get incorporated into the Zoning and Subdivision ordinances which are the legal implementing documents.

4. Sustainability Initiatives

The Sustainability Initiatives report will identify key sustainability issues facing the area and suggest approaches by which public and private community leaders can work cooperatively to address those issues.

5. Comprehensive Plan Recommendations

The purpose of this product is to support the required updates of the Comprehensive Plans of the City of Charlottesville and Albemarle County.

Specific activities expected in development of the plan included the following:

1. Development of a Local Plans Database

This product was created by the TJPDC staff to provide a tool to efficiently search a compilation of over 12,000 goals, objectives, strategies and action items based on key issues and topics identified in 82 local planning documents from the project study area. Use of the Local Plans Database allows members of the public to quickly access goals, objectives, strategies and recommendations related to any topic or combination of topics. It also can be used by staff members to quickly identify everything that has been adopted by the localities on any topic.

2. Expanded Public Input

An expanded public input process was provided for both the City and County Comprehensive Plan updates through the following activities:

- a. Community Outreach Series - In the fall and winter of 2011/12 a Community Outreach series was conducted. These workshops touched on a wide variety of issues, including environment, land use, transportation, housing, economic drivers, community facilities and

services, and historic resources. Attendees were asked to provide feedback on existing goals and actions being taken to implement the goals.

- b. Questionnaires – Public input was also sought to support the Comprehensive Plan updates through a number of questionnaires. These questionnaires were distributed online or at events and broadened the number of people that provided input on the issues. Questionnaires sought input on the Performance Measurement System, Housing and Economic Drivers, Transportation, Historic and Scenic Resources and on Community Priorities. Received input was analyzed by project staff and reported to the public, Planning Commissioners and locality staff for consideration in the Comprehensive Plans.
- c. OneCommunity Conversations – The OneCommunity Conversations were a series of workshops held in October 2012. These workshops shared findings from the Community Priorities Questionnaire and solicited feedback on shared planning goals for Charlottesville and Albemarle County. Four workshops were held at different locations, but all included the same content and format. The workshops utilized a focus group approach structured around facilitated small groups whose comments were written down by recorders.

3. A Joint Planning Commission Process

One of the most important activities in the Sustainable Communities Planning Project was the Joint Planning Commission process. Over the course of a year and a half, the Charlottesville and Albemarle Planning Commissions met together nine times in joint session. These sessions allowed Planning Commissioners to discuss issues of overlapping concern, share existing approaches and identify key issues that needed to be addressed by both localities. Through the course of this process, the two Planning Commissions identified eight areas of joint interest for discussion and recommendations; Economic Development, Entrance Corridors, Environment, Housing, Land Use, Transportation, Parks and Recreation, and Historic Preservation. The Planning Commissions ultimately agreed on an overall direction in these areas that are important for both the localities.

At the January 2013 Joint Planning Commission meeting the two commissions identified two priorities for implementation:

1) Planning for a unified vision of the Rivanna River Corridor by the two localities that supports the river corridor as a destination and develops a shared vision for parks, trails and recreational opportunities associated with the river;

2) Planning for a coordinated sidewalk network across City-County boundaries and dedicated bike-pedestrian connections across physical barriers within the community.

These priorities are identified in each locality's Comprehensive Plan Draft as of April 5, 2013.

The final version of the Vision and Goal Statements, as approved by the two planning commissions at their meeting on January 15, 2013, is below. The Vision and Goal Statements will be incorporated into the updated Comprehensive Plans by the two local governments using approaches that are appropriate within the structure of the updated Comprehensive Plan documents. As a result, the presentation of the Vision and Goal Statements is somewhat different in the two plans and may be modified by City Council and Board of Supervisors. One of the most important outcomes of the HUD Sustainable Communities Planning project for the Charlottesville-Albemarle area has been the input from the entire community, opportunities to learn about how each locality addresses areas of common interest and collaborative efforts by the two Planning Commissions to jointly identify and prioritize vision and goals for the entire community.

### **Charlottesville & Albemarle County Joint Vision and Goal Language**

**Final February 19, 2013**

#### **Economic Development**

*Charlottesville and Albemarle County recognize the necessity of vibrant regional economic relationships and will work together toward a strong, diversified economy creating stability and opportunities for advancement in our communities.*

To do this, the City and County will:

- Continue to coordinate staff efforts to support regional economic development, including collaboration with the University of Virginia.
- Improve opportunities for employment centers that are connected to community amenities, housing, and services in the City and in the County's Development Areas.
- Coordinate with education partners – elementary, middle, high schools, as well as PVCC and CATEC – to provide training for locally based jobs.
- Support a range of businesses in identified target industry areas (bioscience & medical, business & financial, information technology & defense, and agribusiness).
- Encourage land use practices and policies that promote vibrancy in the local economy through cultural industries including heritage tourism, entertainment, agritourism, local food, and art, and entertainment.
- Improve opportunities for entrance and re-entry into, and advancement within the workforce by encouraging a diversity of training and placement programs designed to help all citizens, regardless of education or income, secure and retain jobs in our community.
- Identify opportunities for small businesses and entrepreneurship and develop policies that encourage innovation.

## **Entrance Corridors**

*Charlottesville and Albemarle County will work together to more consistently enhance the visual quality and multi-modal experiences along the corridors.*

To do this, the City and County will:

- Enhance communication among the University of Virginia and, City and County Boards and Commissions related to proposed changes within Entrance Corridors and other shared boundaries.
- Create distinctive destinations and places through multiple means such as landscaping and urban area walkability
- Establish a consistent approach to signage.
- Coordinate continuity of corridor guidelines between the City and County.
- Enhance and improve the scenic and historic character of each corridor, while connecting historic resources – such as Monticello, Ashlawn-Highland, the University of Virginia, and Court Square – within the community.

## **Environment**

*Charlottesville and Albemarle County will continue to promote a community of green neighborhoods, healthy waterways, clean air, and sustainable natural resources.*

To do this for each aspect of the environment, the City and County will:

- **Air Quality**
  - Encourage multi-modal transportation and focus development and redevelopment in urban areas that are supported by multi-modal transportation facilities that will help to reduce emissions of air pollutants and greenhouse gases.
  - Encourage industries to be clean and environmentally responsible.
- **Water Quality**
  - Protect drinking water supplies, and associated watershed protection areas.
  - Improve water quality of all of our waterways.
  - Recognize the connection between land use practices and water quality in decision making.
  - Coordinate actions intended to address and meet all appropriate water quality standards.
- **Stormwater**
  - Improve stormwater infrastructure and reduce stormwater runoff.
  - Encourage low-impact development techniques and practices through land development regulations, education, and incentives.
- **Agriculture**

- Improve the viability of local agriculture through concentrating development in the city areas identified for greater intensity of use and higher densities and county development areas while strengthening measures that protect agriculture in the rural areas.
- Recognize the shared interests between the City and County in promoting a strong local food economy.
- **Vegetation and Biodiversity**
  - Recognize the benefits of biological diversity and encourage the retention and use of native plants.
  - Encourage establishment, maintenance, and replenishment of urban tree canopy in the developed areas, as a means of promoting urban green space, as well as supporting stormwater runoff reduction efforts
- **Energy Efficiency and Conservation**
  - Continue to develop resource and energy conservation strategies and practices applicable to both public and private facilities.
- **Disposal Practices**
  - Promote re-use and recycling.
  - Encourage programs to eliminate roadside litter.

## **Historic Preservation**

*Charlottesville and Albemarle County will enhance the historic character of the region by fostering community awareness of our historic and cultural resources and promoting the preservation of designated structures and areas.*

To do this, the City and County will:

- Prepare and maintain coordinated information detailing requirements, responsibilities and support programs for eligible, significant and designated resources.
- Collaborate on tourism outreach related to historic resources.
- Prepare, maintain, and make publically available a single map of formally designated City and County historic resources to be made available as a layer on both city and county data systems.
- Encourage designation of historic buildings, sites, districts, structures and objects through state and federal programs.
- Encourage local historic designations where appropriate in cooperation with neighborhoods.
- Collaborate with the University of Virginia, Ashlawn-Highland, and Monticello and other community organizations on historic preservation matters.

## Housing

*Charlottesville and Albemarle County will each have a range of housing types that support various incomes, ages, and levels of mobility. These housing types should be connected to community amenities, parks, trails and services in the City and in the County's Development Areas.*

To do this, the City and County will:

- Develop joint City-County housing goals, both for market-priced and affordable units.
- Explore the idea of a Regional Housing Authority.
- Encourage mixed income communities.
- Facilitate collaboration and coordination among various housing staff, committees, builders and organizations to ensure an appropriate range of housing choices for all community members.
- Develop policies to encourage housing opportunities suitable for healthy aging and for people with disabilities, located in close proximity to community services and amenities, recreational resources and connected to multi-modal transportation corridors.
- Promote housing located near employment centers in the City and County Development Areas and optimal multi-modal transportation links between those areas and major employment centers.
- Increase the range of housing type choices, focusing especially on the creation of additional workforce (60%-120% AMI), affordable housing (25%-60% AMI), and deeply affordable (0%-25% AMI) units in the City and the County.

## Land Use

*Charlottesville and Albemarle County will support neighborhoods and places that allow residents to live, work, and play near their homes and where attention to the character of new development and redevelopment enhances quality of life.*

To do this, the City and County will:

- Encourage development and redevelopment in areas of the City identified for increased density and greater intensity of use, and in County Development Areas where appropriate in order to preserve open space, rural areas, and agricultural areas.
- Promote land use patterns that encourage multi-modal transportation opportunities.
- Coordinate City and County Development Areas land use and infrastructure policies.
- Maintain the distinct character of the Rural Areas.
- As a means of decision coordination, continue to actively participate in the Planning and Coordination Council (PACC), which brings City, County and University leaders together to discuss issues of common concern and interest.

- Establish policies that provide for consideration of development effects on the neighboring locality and shared community resources.
- Create a unified vision for land uses adjacent to the Rivanna River that supports the river corridor as a destination while ensuring the protection and improvement of the river's water quality.

## **Parks and Recreation**

*Charlottesville and Albemarle County will provide a system of high quality public parks, recreation facilities and programming to meet the needs of all residents of the community.*

To do this, the City and County will:

- **Share community visions.**
  - Explore shared use facilities as a first option when contemplating new or replacement recreation facilities within either jurisdiction.
  - Explore the possibility of a Regional Park Authority to manage shared resources including, but not limited to Ivy Creek Natural Area and Darden Towe Park.
  - Develop and implement a shared vision for parks, trails and recreation opportunities associated with the Rivanna River.
  - Work with the Virginia Department of Conservation and Recreation (DCR) to develop a shared vision for recreation opportunities associated with Biscuit Run State Park.
- **Encourage healthy choices among all of our residents.**
  - Create multi-modal connections to and between parks and recreation areas and employment centers.
- **Coordinate shared parks and recreation resources.**
  - Utilize existing Needs Assessment documents to initiate a dialogue on meeting recreation needs.
  - Evaluate existing user fees associated with all parks, facilities and programs to explore reciprocity programs.
  - Coordinate with UVA to identify both active and passive recreation opportunities that may be shared with the larger community.
  - Create a common city/county park, recreation and programming "amenity matrix", and an associated map of amenity locations.
  - Create a regional plan to address need for additional recreational fields.

## **Transportation**

*Charlottesville and Albemarle County will promote regional multi-modal and accessible transportation options.*

To do this, the City and County will:

- Coordinate transportation planning between Charlottesville, Albemarle County, and the University of Virginia through the Metropolitan Planning Organization by;
  - Storing transportation data in the same format.
  - Coordinating collection of transportation data to facilitate sharing information among Charlottesville, Albemarle County, the University of Virginia, and the Metropolitan Planning Organization.
- Increase and expand transit network efficiency and use.
- Coordinate building the sidewalk network across City-County boundaries and addressing barriers to pedestrian connectivity.
- Provide community education regarding transportation options.
- Collaborate to strengthen intrastate and interstate rail and air transportation opportunities.
- Coordinate to provide and enhance multi-modal connections between employment centers and areas of high residential density.
- Create dedicated bike-pedestrian connections across physical barriers within community.
  - Rivanna River
  - Route 250 – East and West
  - Interstate 64
  - Railroad network
  - City and VDOT system connection
  - Route 29