

- Good land use planning and urban design guide the development of livable communities.
- The Places29 Master Plan supports a primary goal of the Comprehensive Plan - to focus growth in the Development Areas in order to preserve the character of the Rural Areas.
- The Places29 vision is an attractive, functional series of walkable neighborhoods and centers that accommodate future growth without sacrificing those characteristics people enjoy now.
- The Master Plan will fulfill the principles of the Neighborhood Model, with a variety of mixed-use developments in an environment that offers transportation, housing, and recreation choices; provides parks and open space; and respects the environment.

### Why Do We Plan?

*The goal of city and regional planning is to further the welfare of people and their communities by creating convenient, equitable, healthful, efficient, and attractive environments for present and future generations. Planning is city building.*

-American Planning Association

*Albemarle County has arrived at a critical moment in its history. The natural beauty of its landscape, combined with the area's depth of cultural resources, excellent schools, strong economy, and the charm of downtown Charlottesville, attracts increasing numbers of new residents and businesses each year. Increasing large-lot land development in the rural and urban areas of the County, however, threatens to diminish many of the same qualities that have made the County such an attractive place to live and work. The pace of development combined with a low-density suburban form of development has begun placing great strain on roads, schools, and utilities. The demand for housing threatens the scenic beauty and health of the County's urban and rural areas.*

-Introduction to The Neighborhood Model



*The vision for the Places29 area includes well-designed mixed-use developments that accommodate future growth without sacrificing the characteristics people enjoy now.*

### Save the date:

May 18th (Evening)

Introduction and Background Presentation

May 20th (9:00a.m.)

Small Group Session on Preferred Alternative

Public meetings will be held at Sutherland Middle School. Please visit [www.albemarle.org](http://www.albemarle.org) for more information.

### The Vision for the Places29 Area

*Albemarle County's Northern Development Areas will feature compact development organized into neighborhood and employment centers. These centers will be pedestrian-oriented and mixed-use; they will offer a variety of housing choices, high quality retail, office, and employment opportunities. They will be connected by an attractive, efficient, and accessible multi-modal 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.*

-Places29 Vision Statement

### Places29 Overview:

Places29 is an exciting community planning project that will help shape the future of northern Albemarle County communities. Places29 brings residents, business owners and others together to map out the best possible shared vision for this critical area. The project combines land use planning for four designated urban communities with the US 29 North Transportation Corridor Study.

Places29 Overview  
Transportation  
Transit & Transportation Operation Solutions  
Street Types  
**Land Use & Urban Design**  
Place Types  
Open Space & Natural Resources  
Economics  
Implementation

## Land Use Planning and Urban Design

Land use planning provides guidance for the physical development of land - for making desirable places to live that serve people's needs. Those needs include homes, businesses, employment, recreation, and many others. Planning also includes the connections-transportation, public facilities, and utilities. And planning coordinates all of this development with the natural environment that surrounds and enhances our communities.

Urban design connects and defines the details of the overall land use and transportation framework by guiding and defining the architectural and landscape characteristics of an area's streets, sites, and buildings. Urban designers work to create a consistent, functional, and harmonious community with a focus on creating a high-quality civic environment. The two photographs below show an example of good (top photo) and poor urban design (bottom). The top photo shows an attractive streetscape with a wide sidewalk buffered from traffic by a row of parked cars, shaded by a row of trees, and improved with seating. Parking near the businesses benefits customers and clients. The photo on the bottom shows how a sidewalk that doesn't provide pedestrians a buffer from the sun or traffic and buildings oriented away from the street discourage pedestrian activity.



*Good urban design (top) includes attractive streetscapes that encourage activity. Buildings with their back to the street discourage pedestrian activity and represent poor urban design (bottom).*

## Planning in Albemarle County

Albemarle County's Comprehensive Plan provides the overall direction and policy guidance for the physical development of the land. One of these policies is to focus future growth in the Development Areas so that the Rural Areas can remain rural. The Neighborhood Model was adopted as part of the Comprehensive Plan in May 2001 to guide land use planning and urban design in the Development Areas. The Model follows the "smart growth" principles used throughout the country.

In order to foster a more urban, compact form of development, the Neighborhood Model promotes increased density set within a high-quality urban environment of built and open spaces. The objective is to create more livable neighborhoods - ones that are appealing, functional, and offer a high quality of life. The Neighborhood Model is flexible; it permits a range of densities and supports many different types of housing, retail, commercial, and employment uses, preferably in a mixed-use development. This development may be new, or it may be infill development occurring in an area where some development already exists. There will also be opportunities for redevelopment as areas, particularly commercial ones, are renovated or replaced.

**Mixed-Use.** One of the most effective ways to create a livable community is to place residential areas and employment, commercial, service, and recreational land uses as well as open space in close proximity. This creates those choices - where to live, where to work, where to shop, and where to play in the park. It also means that trips from one activity to another are shorter - and may be done on foot, on a bicycle, in a car, or by transit. Livable communities are vibrant places where there is activity on the streets all day and much of the all night. Communities with this level of activity have more to offer by way of shopping, restaurants, entertainment, and many other activities because there are more people around to support all these activities. Busy communities are also safer because there are more people about more of the time - more "eyes on the street" to deter antisocial behavior.

**Density.** Higher density residential development is needed in order to create and enjoy the benefits provided by more compact places such as walkable neighborhoods and centers, better transit service, and fewer automobile trips. More compact settlement patterns also allow for the opportunity to protect larger, contiguous tracts of natural areas and agricultural land from development. By promoting higher residential density within an amenity-rich, mixed-use urban context, Albemarle County moves that much closer toward achieving its "dual goal of preserving its rural areas and creating livable communities in its designated Development Areas." (The Neighborhood Model)

Residential density is expressed in terms of the number of homes - or "dwelling units" - per acre. People are often surprised by the number of dwelling units that can "fit" in an acre and be an attractive, comfortable place to live, as well as an enhancement to the surrounding community. As seen in the four images to the right, homes can range from single-family detached units to townhomes to apartments and condominiums.



*4 to 7 units per acre  
Kentlands, Gaithersburg, Maryland.*



*11 to 15 units per acre  
Kentlands, Gaithersburg, Maryland*



*22 to 24 units per acre  
Metro Square, Sacramento, California*



*40 to 44 units per acre  
Park Place, Mountain View, California*

## How Do We Plan for Livable Communities?

The Comprehensive Plan is the basis for all land use planning in the County. The Places29 Master Plan will provide a more detailed land use framework for the four Northern Development Areas, and this land use framework will guide development for the next 20 years. In the future, the County may conduct additional planning efforts for some subareas within the Places29 area that would take the guidance provided by the Places29 framework to a higher level of detail.

Land use planning begins with what's in the Places29 area now, existing neighborhoods, the current transportation network, all the shopping centers, and public facilities. It continues with an assessment of what will be needed over the next 20 years. This assessment looks at population, economics, environmental constraints, and many other matters. The land use planning is also being coordinated closely with the US 29 North Corridor Transportation Study (See the Transportation Information Sheet).

Planners ask questions of the community to determine what needs to be in the plan. For example, planners want to know what people like about their neighborhoods - what they don't want changed - so those characteristics can be preserved in the plan. At the same time, with the certain growth that is coming into the area, the transportation network and transit services will need to be changed, parks and other public facilities will need to be added, and care will need to be taken to ensure that new development respects the environment.

With feedback from the people who live and work in the Places29 area, County, TJPDC, and VDOT staff - working with a team of consultants - will prepare the draft master plan. The plan will then be reviewed and refined with the public. The refined plan will be further reviewed, changed, and ultimately adopted by the Board of Supervisors (See the Implementation Information Sheet).

## For More Information:

### [Albemarle County](http://www.albemarle.org)

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**Places29 is a joint project of Albemarle County, the Thomas Jefferson Planning District Commission (TJPDC) and the Virginia Department of Transportation (VDOT), with the assistance of an experienced consulting team.**