weekday morning on the downtown mall
The Comprehensive Plan’s purpose is to implement the City Council Vision while providing general guidelines for future development and neighborhood stability.
# Table of Contents & Appendix

**Note:** The following Appendix items are not included in the chapters, but you can follow the link to those documents by clicking the 🔄 symbol

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**Introduction**

- The 1998 Sustainability Accords 🔄
- Livability Project & Charlottesville and Albemarle County Joint Vision and Goal Language 🔄

**Community Values**

**Community Characteristics**

- Community Characteristics Tables and Figures Appendix 🔄
- Charlottesville City Schools Assessment and Accountability Report & Division Profile Report 🔄
- Thomas Jefferson Health District Mobilizing for Action through Planning and Partnerships Report 🔄
- Virginia Employment Commission – Charlottesville Community Profile 🔄
- Virginia Department on Social Services Local Department of Social Services Profile Report and Local Population Demographics Profile Report 🔄
The use of land in Charlottesville supports human activities and reflects community values. Our land use plan aims to promote harmonious development and support neighborhoods and places that allow residents to live, work, shop and play in proximity. Charlottesville’s land use patterns will create, preserve, and enhance neighborhood character, improve environmental quality, integrate a diversity of uses, encourage various modes of transportation, promote infill development, and increase commercial vitality and density in appropriate areas. These interdependent parts will converge to enhance the social, cultural, recreational and economic needs of our City.

The City of Charlottesville’s civic facilities and services are important to fostering a healthy and vibrant community. Residents benefit from access to excellent public services, recreational facilities and public buildings. Therefore, Charlottesville will have outstanding civic and recreational facilities, bicycle and walking trails and be served by a strong support system that includes one of the nation’s best emergency response systems. Effective and efficient water, wastewater and stormwater services will support the health and welfare of the City.

A strong economy is essential to the social, cultural and financial vitality of our city. Public and private initiatives help create employment opportunities and a vibrant and sustainable economy. The City of Charlottesville is committed to creating a strong, diversified economy and an environment that provides career ladder employment opportunities for residents. At its best, Charlottesville is a community with an effective workforce development system and a business-friendly environment that supports entrepreneurship; innovation; heritage tourism; commercial, mixed use, and infill development; and access to a growing array of diverse employment and career ladder opportunities for all City residents. The Downtown Mall, as the economic hub of the region, features a vibrant historic district with arts and entertainment, shopping, dining, cultural events and a dynamic City Market.
The City of Charlottesville will be a green city, with clean and healthy air and water, sustainable neighborhoods, ample open space and natural areas that balance increased development and density in residential and economic centers, and walkable, bikeable and transit-supportive land use patterns that encourage healthy lifestyles.

Environmental Quality and Diversity: The quality and diversity of the City of Charlottesville’s housing stock creates the basis for viable neighborhoods and a thriving community. In order to be a truly world class city, Charlottesville must provide sufficient housing options to ensure safe, appealing, environmentally sustainable and affordable housing for all population segments and income levels, including middle income. Consequently, City neighborhoods will feature a variety of housing types, housing sizes, and incomes all within convenient walking, biking or transit distances of enhanced community amenities that include mixed use, barrier free, higher density, pedestrian and transit-oriented housing at employment and cultural centers connected to facilities, parks, trails and services.

Transportation: The City of Charlottesville’s transportation network provides the fundamental framework for creating a safe, livable community while reinforcing more sustainable land use patterns. The system connects people to each other and to destinations, fosters economic activity and provides public space for human interaction. As a result, the transportation system should be designed for everyone, whether young or old, motorist or bicyclist, walker or wheelchair user, bus rider or shopkeeper. A multimodal transportation network is an effective, flexible framework for building community and creating places in our City.
Urban design and historic preservation contribute to the character and quality of neighborhoods, and to the aesthetic value of the entire community. As a result, the City of Charlottesville will be a well-designed community with neighborhoods, buildings, and public spaces, including the Downtown Mall, that are human scaled, sustainable, healthy, equitable and beautiful. Charlottesville will also seek to preserve its historic resources through education and collaboration to maintain the character of our neighborhoods’ core historic fabric, our major routes of tourism and our public spaces.

The Comprehensive Plan should coordinate public and private development with present and future policies that are reflected through zoning, capital improvement programs, code enforcement, and other means.

A secondary purpose of the Comprehensive Plan is to comply with state regulations that require local planning. Virginia Code requires community plans to be reviewed and updated once every five years as necessary. In 2001, the City of Charlottesville completed a revision of the Comprehensive Plan. The 2006 review produced minor revisions with increased attention to transportation and housing.

The 2012 review also was organized and conducted as an update with minor content revisions and substantial attention to reorganizing and reformatting the Comprehensive Plan document.

All supplemental documents in the Plan will include subsequent versions of those documents following adoption of this Plan to allow up-to-date information to be referenced as needed. Any changes to the Chapters themselves would need to be reviewed through the public process.

Considerable effort has been directed at developing a Comprehensive Plan that both responds to current development trends and anticipates long-range requirements for developable land and related public improvements. To distinguish between immediate and long-range needs, two planning periods have been established: a short-range period, up to 2017, for which decisions reflect development trends that are underway or imminent and offer more immediate ways to protect and enhance neighborhoods; and a long-range period, which extends beyond 2017, for which policies are formulated to direct anticipated growth and aim to improve our neighborhoods. These two planning periods have been used in the analysis of community resources and in the formulation of proposals regarding the timing of future development.
Citizen participation is considered an important element in the Comprehensive Planning Process. In order to prepare a plan that is fully responsive to the needs of community residents, the Planning Commission carried out an extensive program of citizen review and participation. The objectives in encouraging public participation were to assist local residents in understanding the planning process, to allow residents to discuss the future of their community, to incorporate public input into the formation of policies for the future, and to transmit these comments to members of the Planning Commission and the City Council. The Planning Commission also emphasized open and free distribution of information and encouraged public involvement in the formulation of goals, policies, and implementation strategies. The following processes and outreach efforts demonstrate the City’s efforts to engage in effective public participation:

**2006 Neighborhood Design Day**

Materials from the 2006 Community Design Process were evaluated to determine which recommendations would be included in the 2013 Comprehensive Plan. These materials were included as Neighborhood Plans in the 2007 Comprehensive Plan as an appendix. Staff reviewed and categorized each statement resulting from that effort and found that the majority of these neighborhood statements are supported by the 2013 Comprehensive Plan.

The 2013 Comprehensive Plan includes the additional following items:
- the addition of references that highlight the importance and the promotion of mixed-use development opportunities in our community, and
- the addition of a goal to support planning efforts for the Rivanna River.

**Land Use Opinion Survey**

As a part of the update of the Land Use chapter of the Comprehensive Plan, staff gathered input from multiple sources, especially members of the public who do not often participate in the visioning and planning of the City. Staff particularly wanted to gain input on the idea of creating more neighborhood commercial nodes in the City, as well as identifying the kinds of improvements the public would like to see in residential neighborhoods.

The survey effort produced the following overarching Land Use Focus Groups

City staff attempted to engage various groups of people in a series of focus group conversations regarding various aspects of the City. Among the discussions, staff engaged residents on their City preferences, opportunities for improvement, and how their unique experiences in and around the City might benefit the planning process. Commonalities among the nine focus groups included the following several themes:
- A desired City focus on pedestrian and bicycle infrastructure improvements,
- Strong support for open space and parks, and
- A need for balanced economic development.

Themes:
- There is strong support for the existing character of the City of Charlottesville, and this character should be maintained.
- There is support for increased access to alternative modes of transportation, whether public transportation, or walking and bike routes.
- Many citizens voiced a need preserve and increase the amount of green and open space.

**Community Outreach Meeting**

In the fall of 2012, Neighborhood Development Services hosted a series of meetings to gain feedback on the Comprehensive Plan chapter goals and the draft Land Use map.

The meetings occurred on three evenings at Buford Middle School and at Venable and Clark Elementary Schools. All three meetings had the same content, which included the following:
- An overview of the planning
efforts and principles of the recent past.

- Citizen feedback on a condensed version of each of the Comprehensive Plan chapter visions and 4-6 overarching goal themes. Staff reviewed each of the chapters to create one-sentence goals that captured the spirit of the chapter goals. Participants used a real time selection tool and were asked to select 2-3 of the goals from each chapter as priorities for implementation and early action.
- A gallery of posters and maps explaining the draft land use map changes and feedback stations for public comment.

LAND USE FOCUS GROUPS

City staff attempted to engage various groups of people in a series of focus group conversations regarding various aspects of the City. Among the discussions, staff engaged residents on their City preferences, opportunities for improvement, and how their unique experiences in and around the City might benefit the planning process. Commonalities among the nine focus groups included the following several themes:

- A desired City focus on pedestrian and bicycle infrastructure improvements,
- Strong support for open space and parks, and
- A need for balanced economic development.
In 1998, the Thomas Jefferson Sustainability Council created the Thomas Jefferson Sustainability Accord, which is incorporated into this plan by reference, which speaks to the overriding theme of this document. In 2011, the Thomas Jefferson Planning District Commission (TJPDC) received a $999,000 grant to develop a Livability Implementation Plan for the Charlottesville-Albemarle Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) area. The process to develop this plan, referred to as the Livable Communities Planning Project, builds upon the region’s 1998 Sustainability Accord 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 Livable Communities project was launched in April 2011 in conjunction with the kick off to the Charlottesville and Albemarle County Comprehensive Plans and the MPO Long Range Transportation Plan update processes. In addition to the Livability Implementation Plan, the Livable Communities project was able to provide additional public input for the City’s comprehensive plan update.

The 1998 Sustainability Accord can be accessed here:

**LIVABLE COMMUNITIES PLANNING PROJECT**

In 2011, the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) awarded nearly $100 million in grants to 45 communities across the country. The grants were intended to support livability and build economic competitiveness by connecting housing with good jobs, quality schools, and transportation. The process to develop this plan, referred to as the Livable Communities Planning Project, builds upon the region’s 1998 Sustainability Accord 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 Partnership Group is made up of more than 60 representatives of community organizations. The organizations range from neighborhood associations, political parties, environmental interest groups, to housing advocacy organizations, and hobby guilds, and others groups.

The existing Planning Action Coordination Council (PACC), made up of representatives from the University of Virginia, the City of Charlottesville, and the County of Albemarle, is the designated governing body of the project.

The Livable Communities project launched in April 2011 in conjunction with the kickoff to the Charlottesville and Albemarle County Comprehensive Plans and the MPO Long Range Transportation Plan update processes. Project staff has assisted in coordinating public input into the three plan updates, as well as coordinating and collaborating with project partners toward the completion of the five deliverables that will comprise the Livability Implementation Plan.

These five deliverables are:

1. A Performance Measurement System to analyze where the region stands with respect to transportation, the environment, housing, economic development, and energy use.
2. One map reflecting future land use designations and transportation projects for the City of Charlottesville and the County of Albemarle.
3. A list of recommended Livability policies to inform the Charlottesville and Albemarle Comprehensive Plans, and the MPO Long Range Transportation Plan.
4. Recommendations for code and ordinance changes to help implement recommended Livability policies.
5. Recommendations for voluntary individual and community-wide actions that will support Livability within the community.

Products from the Livable Communities project will be available as completed at the project website: 1-community.org.

CHARLOTTESVILLE & ALBEMARLE JOINT GOALS

The City and County Planning Commissions began meeting together regularly in March of 2011 with the intent of working on community issues which reach across shared jurisdiction boundaries. The process began with a review of the future land use map along the community boundaries in association with the One Map Livable Communities project deliverable and progressed to a discussion of regional priorities based on current plans and community input. Once the areas where the commissions wanted to focus were determined, the public provided additional comment at community forums and the Commissioners created detailed language. The result of the joint process is attached to the introduction.

Furthermore, the Commissions highlighted two areas where they would like to begin their work, which include the following:

1. Creation of a plan that incorporates a unified vision for land uses adjacent to the Rivanna River that support the river corridor as a destination; and that develops a shared vision for parks, trails, and recreational opportunities associated with the river.

2. Creation of a plan that coordinates building the sidewalk network across City-County boundaries, and creates dedicated bike-pedestrian connections across physical barriers within the community.

It is anticipated that the commissions will work together in the coming years to move towards implementation of these objectives in a coordinated manner.

USE OF THE PLAN

This Plan may be used effectively in a variety of ways. First, and foremost, it should serve as a guide for the government and neighborhoods of Charlottesville in considering and making decisions about land use and urban development related matters.

Second, the Plan may serve as a source of information for private sector entities concerned with the location, timing, and intensity of new development.

Third, it is important that the Plan be used as a means of coordinating local government activities including capital improvements programming, community and economic development activities, zoning, housing initiatives, transportation improvements, open space utilization, and community facility plans aimed at improving our neighborhoods and quality of life.

Because this Plan presents an outline for the pattern, intensity, and timing of land uses, it should be used as the primary source of information for those persons engaged in urban policy-making and administration.

The end result toward which the Comprehensive Planning Process has been directed is to give guidance to short term and long term decisions that affect the quality of life in our neighborhoods and community. It includes recommendations for the location, timing, and intensity of development, and the establishment of standards for assessing the desirability of development proposals. This plan is meant to form a comprehensive basis for decision making for the next twenty years.
Additional reading for Introduction to the Comprehensive Plan:

- The 1998 Sustainability Accords
- Livability Project & Charlottesville and Albemarle County Joint Vision and Goal Language
The first Comprehensive Plan for the City of Charlottesville was adopted in 1979. This most recent version of the Comprehensive Plan was adopted by City Council on August 19, 2013. Previous plans and drafts may be accessed online through: CHARLOTTESVILLE.ORG

THE COMPREHENSIVE PLAN HAS BEEN DEVELOPED BY CHARLOTTESVILLE CITIZENS WITH THE HELP OF:

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Michael Osteen          David Neuman

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