

**CITY OF CHARLOTTESVILLE**  
**DEPARTMENT OF NEIGHBORHOOD DEVELOPMENT SERVICES**  
**STAFF REPORT**



**JOINT CITY COUNCIL AND PLANNING COMMISSION PUBLIC HEARING**

**DATE OF HEARING: December 13, 2022**

RE: **Charlottesville Comprehensive Plan Amendment**  
Project Planners: James Freas, NDS Director  
Missy Creasy, NDS Deputy Director  
Carrie Rainey, Senior Planner, NDS

**Background**

The Charlottesville Comprehensive Plan is an important component of the City's overall policy framework, serving to express a vision and set goals for the future development of the City. On November 15, 2021, City Council unanimously approved an update to the Comprehensive Plan created through the Cville Plans Together process. The approved plan was informed by a wide range of community engagement opportunities, as well as the experience and expertise of the Cville Plans Together team including the consultants at Rhodeside & Harwell (RHI) and City staff. The Planning Commission reviewed a detailed report on the engagement strategies and outcomes at their October 12, 2021 meeting. The full report is available at: <https://www.charlottesville.gov/1077/Agendas-Minutes>

In 2021, the Commonwealth of Virginia adopted § 15.2-2223.5 directing localities to incorporate into its comprehensive plan strategies to promote manufactured housing as a source of affordable housing: *During an amendment of a locality's comprehensive plan after July 1, 2021, the locality shall incorporate into its comprehensive plan strategies to promote manufactured housing as a source of affordable housing. Such strategies may include (i) the preservation of existing manufactured housing communities, (ii) the creation of new manufactured home communities, and (iii) the creation of new manufactured home subdivisions.*

Both the City code (Section 34-1200) and Virginia code (§36-85.16) define a manufactured home (summarized) as a structure constructed for use as a dwelling, meeting the requirements of the Manufactured Housing Construction and Safety Standards Law and built on a permanent chassis, transportable in one or more sections, with or without a permanent foundation, and connected to the required utilities. Manufactured homes shall comply to the National Manufactured Home Construction and Safety Standards and subject to the Federal Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) regulations. Structures commonly referred to as "modular homes" are *industrialized buildings* per Virginia code §36-71.1 which are (summarized) a combination of one or more sections or modules subject to

state regulations, including utility connection and manufactured off-site and transported to the point of use to comprise a finished building. Like traditionally built homes, industrialized buildings may be classified as single- or two-family homes in compliance with the applicable International Residential Code and regulated by the Virginia Department of Housing and Community Development (DHCD). Manufactured homes as defined by §36-85.16 are explicitly not considered industrial buildings within this code section.

To align the City’s 2021 Comprehensive Plan with Virginia code § 15.2-2223.5, staff is proposing several additions to the approved comprehensive plan. The additions do not alter the goals and strategies created through the Cville Plans Together robust engagement process but expand the toolkit of sub-strategies established to achieve those community determined goals.

### **Proposed Changes to the Comprehensive Plan**

The following text shows proposed additions to the City’s 2021 Comprehensive Plan in Chapter 4: Land Use, Urban Form, and Historic & Cultural Preservation and Chapter 5: Housing. The proposed additions are shown in red. The entirety of each related goal and strategy is provided for context.

### **Chapter 4: Land Use, Urban Form, and Historic & Cultural Preservation**

**Goal 1: Zoning Ordinance: With the community, create a new zoning ordinance to reinforce and implement the vision for Charlottesville’s future as articulated in the Comprehensive Plan, Affordable Housing Plan, Small Area Plans, Vision Plans, and the Standards and Design Manual.**

**Strategy 1.3 Implement zoning changes needed to support the creation of more housing, including affordable housing opportunities, throughout the city.**

Sub-strategies:

- In coordination with multifamily zoning changes, identify zoning changes needed to support “soft density” (house-scaled multi-unit housing) in areas currently zoned single-family throughout the city, to lower the cost of entry for residents to live in these areas while preserving existing market-affordable housing, limiting displacement of existing residents, and mitigating continued rise in housing costs.
  - » Using the revised Future Land Use Map, identify areas suitable for rezoning to allow “soft density.” On the Future Land Use Map, “Soft density” corresponds to General Residential and Medium Intensity areas.
  - » Identify form and design requirements to support soft density (or “missing middle”) housing, including walkability, use of a scale and form similar to surrounding development, allowing for smaller building footprints, supporting affordability through design, and allowing for reduced parking on-site.
  - » Identify incentives (property tax rebates, public funding, design flexibility) or requirements to support the development of affordable housing as part of new soft

density development, particularly for those projects seeking additional units in the General Residential category.

- » Increase the allowed intensity of housing, with required affordability at a base or bonus level, in all neighborhoods that are currently zoned for primarily single-family uses.
  - » Implement strategies that minimize displacement from low-income or other at-risk neighborhoods while supporting wealth-building opportunities related in these communities. Clarify how various “soft density” zones can connect to subsidy funds targeted at supporting existing homeowners and renters to prevent displacement, as well as funds for increased homeownership, particularly in neighborhoods with high numbers of low income households.
  - » Increase the number of lots on which ADUs can feasibly be built by adopting proposed changes to allow ADUs in University zoning districts, increasing the maximum height, and eliminating off-street parking requirements for ADUs.
  - » Weigh potential benefits and impacts of allowing development of soft density housing in historic neighborhoods, including consideration of ways to retain historic character, form, integrity, and naturally occurring affordable housing.
- In coordination with “soft density” zoning changes, identify changes needed to zoning and development processes to increase the production of medium- and higher- intensity multifamily housing at a variety of scales.
    - » Using the revised Future Land Use Map, identify areas suitable for rezoning to allow multifamily development in additional neighborhoods, particularly those that are or will be served by transit or are located within walking proximity to community facilities including schools and parks , and those that currently lack multifamily options.
    - » Prioritize strategies that protect existing affordable housing and create new affordable housing supply, and that reverse entrenched patterns of racial and economic segregation while protecting high-risk communities from displacement.
    - » Clarify how multifamily zones can connect to subsidy funds targeted at supporting existing homeowners and renters to prevent displacement.
  - Incorporate transition zones and restructure restrictions on height, density, setbacks, and parking to ensure that development activities compatible with the Future Land Use Map, site context, and goals of the Comprehensive Plan are feasible by-right without a special use permit, including for multifamily and mixed-use developments.
  - Identify changes needed to zoning and development processes to reduce barriers to the use of manufactured homes in appropriate locations to provide additional affordable housing options.
  - Consider locations on a site-by-site basis where they may allow for additional height beyond that described for each land use category, for high intensity and mixed use areas – e.g., if a site has a lower grade than the primary street, or has a particular reason to support higher-intensity development (e.g., existing student-housing dominated areas).

**Goal 2: Future Land Use Vision: Guide implementation of the Future Land Use vision contained in this Comprehensive Plan, including support for existing neighborhoods and preventing displacement.**

Strategy 2.1 Through City-led efforts and private development, expand community access to housing, as well as amenities and services that improve quality of life.

Sub-strategies:

- Through City-led projects, private and institutional development projects, and partnerships, address citywide and regional priorities. These include housing affordability and increased housing options; community equity and displacement protection for at-risk communities, including lower income households; tree canopy, environmental sustainability, and climate change mitigation and resilience; transit-oriented development; improved walkability and bikeability; enhanced access to parks, recreation, social interaction opportunities, schools, and other amenities and services; improved and equitable food access; and support for existing and new business opportunities, including for small and neighborhood-focused businesses.
- Support the use of manufactured housing and manufactured housing components to provide additional affordable housing.
- Support mixed use nodes and corridors that enhance access to amenities and services at a context-sensitive scale, with adequate transitions in height and massing to residential areas.
- Identify areas in the community that currently lack access to amenities and services via transit, walking, or biking, and find ways to support either providing these amenities and services in closer proximity or enhancing multimodal connections.
- Consider the potential of development on City owned property, particularly where it can support the addition of affordable housing units.
- Look to expand the network of vibrant public parks and other spaces, at both large and small scales, particularly in areas that are identified on the Future Land Use Map for higher intensity uses and/or areas currently lacking these amenities.
- Encourage the incorporation of meaningful and equitable public gathering spaces into urban design plans, particularly along corridors and at development nodes, including Downtown.
- Identify assets, priorities, and targets for long term permanent land access and infrastructure for both food production and food access points including existing city parks and city-owned land.
- Pair development along the River and stream corridors with park space and environmental protection features. Balance the competing priorities for properties adjacent to the River and other stream corridors to allow for an appropriate number of different types of uses without impacting the environmental quality of the waterways and riparian buffers, or devaluing the most important natural attributes that attract people to the area.
- In the event that development is planned for properties not currently designated on the Future Land Use Map (e.g., UVA properties, parcels adjacent to the railroad), this development should respond to the surrounding land uses shown on the Future Land Use Map as well as those included in any relevant existing Small Area Plans or similar adopted plans.
- Where possible, encourage increasing intensity of uses and addition of affordable housing through the reuse or reconfiguration of existing buildings or sites, including historic structures, large parking areas, and underutilized commercial or industrial areas. When considering which areas may be “underutilized,” consider land not developed to its full potential in ways that

further the city's goals for equity, sustainability, and enhancing Charlottesville's quality of life and sense of place.

Strategy 2.3 Evaluate existing and potential new programs for protecting communities at risk of displacement, as well as protecting existing affordable housing, historic buildings, community-based urban agriculture sites, and other resources.

Sub-strategies:

- Where possible, prioritize the preservation of existing structures while encouraging a greater intensity of use. Encourage infill development and reuse of or additions to structures, rather than demolition of existing buildings, to address gaps in established or planned development patterns. This may include strategies that can help preserve existing structures, including the use of Accessory Dwelling Units (ADUs), building additions, transitioning larger single-family houses to apartments, etc.
- If demolition is necessary, incentivize or require development of affordable housing, particularly in historically low income and/or majority-Black neighborhoods, which have historically been targets for redevelopment and displacement.
- Continue financial support for owner-occupied rehabilitation of housing, property tax rebates, and other existing programs. (See related Strategy in the Housing Chapter.)
- Consider use of ordinances, financial support, incentives, and other strategies to encourage the preservation of existing housing stock and expansion of housing options, especially deeply affordable housing options **such as manufactured housing**.
- Evaluate the effectiveness of the Historic Conservation District as an alternative, more flexible type of local historic district, to promote conservation of structures and district character while also allowing increased intensity of uses when new districts are being considered. Examine possibility for conserving individual properties as well as neighborhood areas.
- Consider programs to encourage conversion of large single-family houses into multiple units, while conserving their form and key historic features, including both locally- or nationally-designated historic properties as well as non-designated properties.
- Utilize strategies specific to preventing displacement within Sensitive Areas and look for ways to support targeted programs for communities, families, and individuals at risk of displacement throughout the City.

**Chapter 5: Housing**

**Goal 1: Establish and sustain a funding commitment to address affordable housing needs, tied to requirements to address community goals.**

Strategy 1.2 Prioritize City funding for those with the greatest need and attach funding awards to requirements for community representation in processes, duration of affordability, and leverage of non-public funds.

Sub-strategies:

- Focus funding on meeting funding allocation goals outlined in the Affordable Housing Plan, including 50% of funding to serve households with incomes up to 30% of Area Median Income (AMI), 30% of funding for households earning up to 60% AMI, and 20% of funding for households earning up to 80% AMI.
- Projects that receive public funding should be administered and governed by organizations that directly represent the beneficiaries of housing assistance. Funding awards should also incentivize permanent affordability of both renter- and owner-occupied housing. Public dollars should incentivize maximum leverage of federal, state, and private funding.
- Encourage the use of City affordable housing funds to support purchase of manufactured home parks to preserve or redevelop as affordable housing while retaining residents.
- Encourage the use of affordable housing funds to support relocation assistance to residents.

**Goal 2: Diverse Housing Throughout the City: Support a wide range of rental and homeownership housing choices that are integrated and balanced across the city, and that meet multiple City goals including community sustainability, walkability, bikeability, ADA accessibility, public transit use, increased support for families with children and low-income households, access to food, access to local jobs, thriving local businesses, and decreased vehicle use.**

Strategy 2.1 Encourage mixed-use and mixed-income neighborhoods and housing developments throughout the city and support zoning changes to allow them by-right.

Sub-strategies:

- Ensure that the forthcoming zoning rewrite supports a wide range of housing typologies **to include manufactured housing where appropriate**, including both rental and homeownership opportunities at a variety of scales, including for families, aging in place, and multigenerational living.
- Through Small Area Plans and zoning amendments, work with the community to determine appropriate levels of density/intensity in neighborhoods and nodes and along corridors identified on the Future Land Use Map.

### **Standard of Review**

All amendments to the Comprehensive Plan shall be recommended, approved and adopted, respectively, in accordance with the requirements set forth within Title 15.2, Chapter 22, Article 3 of the Code of Virginia as amended.

### **Consistency with the Comprehensive Plan**

The proposed amendments comply with the City's 2021 Comprehensive Plan in the following areas:

## **Guiding Principles**

**Equity & Opportunity:** All people will be able to thrive in Charlottesville

The City will support development and initiatives that take into consideration the full range of needs of Charlottesville’s diverse community, including residents, visitors, people who work in Charlottesville, business owners, and property owners.

All Charlottesville residents, regardless of race, ethnicity, age, income, neighborhood, religious affiliation, gender expression, sexual orientation, country of origin, immigration status, and other personal characteristics, will have equitable and expanded access to safe and affordable housing options, desirable jobs and wealth building opportunities, healthy and local foods, robust parks and natural resources, high-quality education and training, and other infrastructure and services that support a high quality of life.

**Community Culture & Unity:** Charlottesville’s rich and diverse culture, history, and form will be celebrated, and the entire community will feel welcomed, valued, and respected

The City will protect, celebrate, and enhance the people and places that have added to the uniqueness and cultural diversity of the community.

## **Chapter 4: Land Use, Urban Form, and Historic & Cultural Preservation**

**Goal 1:** Zoning Ordinance: With the community, create a new zoning ordinance to reinforce and implement the vision for Charlottesville’s future as articulated in the Comprehensive Plan, Affordable Housing Plan, Small Area Plans, Vision Plans, and the Standards and Design Manual.

- **Strategy 1.3** Implement zoning changes needed to support the creation of more housing, including affordable housing opportunities, throughout the city.

**Goal 2:** Future Land Use Vision: Guide implementation of the Future Land Use vision contained in this Comprehensive Plan, including support for existing neighborhoods and preventing displacement.

- **Strategy 2.1** Through City-led efforts and private development, expand community access to housing, as well as amenities and services that improve quality of life.
- **Strategy 2.3** Evaluate existing and potential new programs for protecting communities at risk of displacement, as well as protecting existing affordable housing, historic buildings, community-based urban agriculture sites, and other resources.

## **Chapter 5: Housing**

**Goal 1:** Establish and sustain a funding commitment to address affordable housing needs, tied to requirements to address community goals.

- **Strategy 1.2** Prioritize City funding for those with the greatest need and attach funding awards to requirements for community representation in processes, duration of affordability, and leverage of non-public funds.

**Goal 2:** Diverse Housing Throughout the City: Support a wide range of rental and homeownership housing choices that are integrated and balanced across the city, and that meet multiple City goals including community sustainability, walkability, bikeability, ADA accessibility, public transit use, increased support for families with children and low-income households, access to food, access to local jobs, thriving local businesses, and decreased vehicle use.

- Strategy 2.1 Encourage mixed-use and mixed-income neighborhoods and housing developments throughout the city and support zoning changes to allow them by-right.

### **Chapter 11: Implementation**

Priority Area: Support the development of more housing throughout the city, with a focus on creation of more housing that is affordable to more people, especially those with the greatest need

Priority Area: Make sure all people have access to job opportunities, shelter, healthy food, and other resources they need to thrive and have a high quality of life.

### **Public Input**

As noted in the Background section of this report, the City's 2021 Comprehensive Plan was developed through a robust community engagement process through Cville Plans Together. The proposed additions are additional sub-strategies that further support the goals and strategies for each relevant chapter, which were established through the Cville Plans Together process.