



# CITY OF CHARLOTTESVILLE

*To be a place where everyone thrives*

Department of Neighborhood Development Services

## **Memorandum**

**To:** City Council

**From:** James Freas, Director, Neighborhood Development Services

**Date:** March 18, 2024

**Re:** NDS Work Plan: Small Area Plans & Regulation Amendments

**CC:** Sam Sanders, City Manager  
Planning Commission

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With the adoption of the Charlottesville Development Code, the City has now completed the original Cville Plans Together program covering an affordable housing plan and comprehensive plan with new zoning to implement them both. As we worked through this process, a number of additional projects were identified that would need their own dedicated time. These projects are identified below with some notes around approach and timeframe. However, not all of these projects can be pursued simultaneously, so staff is seeking feedback from Council on your priorities and adjustments to the presented schedule.

Project	Estimated Start	Timeframe
10 <sup>th</sup> & Page / Rose Hill / Preston Corridor Small Area Plan	June 2024	18 to 24 months
Environmental Regulation Review & Update	May 2024	12 to 16 months
Short Term Rental Requirements	Sept 2024	6 to 8 months
Starr Hill Plan Implementation	Nov 2024	6 to 8 months
On-Street Parking Policy	April 2024	6 to 8 months
Pre-Approved Building Program	April 2024*	On-going*
Entrance Corridor Design Guidelines	2025	12 to 16 months
Noise Ordinance Review & Update	2025	6 to 8 months

## **Project Details**

### 10<sup>th</sup> & Page / Rose Hill / Preston Corridor Small Area Plan

We are developing a community-engaged planning process, building on the experiences gained in the Cherry Ave, Star Hill, and Comprehensive Plan processes. What that means is that we will collaborate with the community to develop the planning process and to create a plan that is responsive to the issues identified. Implementation will be considered from the very beginning with a focus on what can be accomplished in a five-year period. Next steps include initial conversations in the community and bringing a resolution to Council to expend planning funds from the CIP.

### Environmental Regulation Review & Update

During the process of drafting the Charlottesville Development Code, there were numerous requests for changes to the City's environmental regulations. These included ideas such as significant changes to, or elimination of, the Critical Slopes rules, expansion of the stream buffer program, changes to the stormwater management rules, and implementation of rules related to reducing the risk of climate change and climate resiliency. Ultimately, the time, resources, and study necessary to pursue these objectives was beyond the scope of that project and requires its own focused project. The objective of this project would be to align the City's environmental regulations with the Comprehensive Plan. Important to this project will be the idea of seeking the best possible environmental outcomes for the City while recognizing that the costs imposed by these regulations directly impacts the viability and cost of development, challenging the City's housing objectives.

### Short Term Rental Requirements

There are two primary objectives of this review of the short-term rental requirements of the zoning ordinance – 1) find ways to mitigate or address the negative impacts of short-term rentals, and 2) to reduce the administrative burden of monitoring and enforcing these requirements.

### Starr Hill Plan Implementation

The Starr Hill Plan was adopted by Council in 2021 as a “vision plan”. The primary identified deficiency in the plan was an implementation plan. Staff will convene stakeholders and City agencies to develop an implementation chapter for this plan.

### On-Street Parking Policy

This project will propose a new on-street parking policy/program consistent with the new zoning ordinance and recognizing that no minimum requirements for on-site parking are included in the new zoning ordinance. The focus will be on managing on-street parking as a shared resource.

### Pre-Approved Building Program

As more and more communities across the country adopt new zoning that promotes missing middle housing types, as we have done in the Charlottesville zoning ordinance, there is a growing recognition of the challenges these small projects face. Pre-approved building plans

have emerged as a solution that significantly reduces the review process, with its attendant costs and uncertainties. Staff is also exploring a solution for stormwater management for small-scale infill projects that can expedite review while ensuring compliance. On the building side, the likely first application of this idea would be with accessory cottages. This program will be implemented incrementally, building type by building type, sometimes supported by city funding, other times through work with partners. Experience within other communities is that once a program is in place, the individual building plans get reviewed periodically and removed or replaced.

#### Entrance Corridor Design Guidelines

The Entrance Corridors are among the areas most likely to see redevelopment under the new Development Code. These guidelines are out of date and need to be updated relative to the new Comprehensive Plan and Zoning.

#### Noise Ordinance Review & Update

Based on complaints regularly received from residents, it is increasingly clear that the noise ordinance is not meeting community expectations. As drafted, it has a number of ambiguities that make enforcement difficult. In an increasingly mixed-use urban environment, it is imperative that the noise ordinance is clear and effective.

#### **Other Elements of the NDS Work Plan**

The projects listed above do not represent the entirety of the work of the department. The day-to-day work of enforcing the zoning, property maintenance, and building codes continues as well as the review of development applications. This work represents the majority of staff time and attention. In addition, there are a number of specific ongoing projects and programs to be recognized.

Transportation Planning Program – Council will be receiving a detailed presentation on this program at the April 15, 2024 meeting. This program has a significant role in coordinating the City's transportation capital improvement program, including sidewalks, bicycle infrastructure, scooters, and street safety and function generally. The NDS Transportation Division works closely with CAT, Charlottesville Schools, the Bike / Ped Advisory Board, DPW, VDOT, the MPO, Albemarle County, and others to advance a safe and efficient multi-modal transportation system for the City and implementing the Comprehensive Plan and City Council's Strategic Plan. A few of the larger projects underway with our partners include the Move Safely Blue Ridge plan being led by the TJPDC and funded by a Federal Safe Streets and Roads for All planning grant, CAT's Transit Strategic Plan, and a 5<sup>th</sup> Street design study led by and funded by VDOT.

Zoning Ordinance Education & Improvement – The new zoning ordinance represents a significant change in how the City approaches zoning that will support new development while also promoting urban design outcomes that enhance livability and a pedestrian first urban environment. Implementing this new zoning ordinance will be a continual learning process, both in terms of learning from experience and making tweaks to the rules and also in the sense of educating staff, designers, and the public on the use of the new code. Staff looks forward to

reporting back to Council on our experience in the future. Staff will also begin a program of annual code clean-ups in the Nov/Dec timeframe that will bring forward tweaks and corrections for Council consideration and adoption.

Comprehensive Plan Implementation – Adopted in November 2021, the Comprehensive Plan drives NDS’s work plan. During 2024 the City will reach the halfway point in the period of time between the adoption of the plan and the state required 5-year review – an appropriate time for a check-in on implementation progress. Staff will provide that update, along with discussion around indicators that can track the City’s success towards the objectives of the plan.