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CASE STUDY

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

Livable Roanoke Valley Partnership seeks to promote and incentivize infill development¹ as a key strategy of the Partnership's economic development program. These smaller and/or undeveloped parcels and older commercial strips across the region may serve to attract new smaller or more compact business uses, bringing new jobs and revenue to the Valley while also fostering sound land use and planning practices.² Understanding how another community in Virginia has assembled key stakeholders, generated momentum among the developer and business community for commercial re-development and implemented revitalization activities can provide the Roanoke Valley with a roadmap of potential next steps.

The objective of this study has been to identify policies and programs from locations in the Commonwealth of Virginia that provide instructive lessons for the development of an infill

incentive program that will support the Valley's needs. Initial research has indicated that relatively few Virginia communities have initiated robust incentive-based infill development programs. The following includes an extensive case study addressing urban infill development in Arlington, VA and a case brief on the suburban and rural development programs in Albemarle County, VA.

CASE STUDY: COLUMBIA PIKE INITIATIVE, ARLINGTON, VA

Columbia Pike Initiative (CPI) in Arlington County is one of the most comprehensive infill programs operating in Virginia. Although focused on urban infill for the redevelopment of an existing corridor, it is a relevant case study for Roanoke as it incorporates a number of incentives and strategies in an integrated program that, to lesser degrees, are being used individually by other communities in Virginia.

COMMUNITY PROFILE

Columbia Pike is a three and a half mile long corridor within Arlington, Virginia, characterized by an auto-oriented, commercial strip development interspersed with single family, garden and mid-rise residential housing complexes. Columbia Pike (Route 244) forms an east-west spine with housing and businesses extending approximately one-third of a mile to the north and south of the pike road. The corridor contains a broad mix of incomes. Located within a rapidly

¹ The US Green Building Council defines infill development as the channeling of revitalization, renovation and new construction into existing communities by developing underutilized or vacant land parcels. Infill development parcels are generally defined as land that shares the majority of a parcel boundary with previously developed sites containing existing infrastructure and/or buildings. Infill sites tend to be located close to community services such as a variety of businesses, public transit, and public infrastructure such as roads, water and sewer lines. US Green Building Council. LEED for Neighborhood Development Reference Guide, 2009.

² Benefits of infill development include increasing access to jobs and reducing commuting times and costs. Area employers can also benefit from enhanced proximity to the labor force. Renewing older communities can maintain and enhance real estate values. Also, re-investing in areas of existing development can make use of existing infrastructure, lowering costs of providing public services in newly developed areas such as transit, schools and public safety. Typical barriers to infill development include a lack of developer interest, cost of development, neighborhood resistance to higher density, regulatory barriers, administrative delays and inadequate public facilities. Georgia Department of Community Affairs, Infill Toolkit, undated.

growing region, the Columbia Pike is home to approximately 40,000 people, growing 16% from 1990 to 2000, with more than 7,000 new residents expected to join by 2040. Increasing pressure on land values from the area's growing population and revitalization efforts are likely to lead to dramatic changes in the mix of commercial and housing options at various family income levels.

PROGRAM DESCRIPTION

The Columbia Pike Revitalization Organization was founded in 1986 to promote commercial development in an area that had experienced stagnating economic growth, disinvestment and deterioration since the 1960's. After 12 years of consensus building among civic leaders, businesses and County leadership, the Columbia Pike Initiative (CPI) was established in 1998 to reverse the decline by re-establishing a main street community of mixed-use developments.

CPI has provided the area with a framework for sustainable growth by:

- forming a community revitalization organization,
- initiating a comprehensive community visioning and planning effort,
- achieving the vision through a form-based code (FBC)³,
- integrating growth with a streetcar transit vision; and,
- enhancing community through events and regular dialogues.

While the initiative's initial goals were focused on economic and social development, the updated *Columbia Pike Initiative – A Revitalization Plan*, released in 2002, enriched the early vision with mixed use development, a return to the main street and enhanced mobility. The *Columbia Pike Special Revitalization District Form Based Code (2003)* is a tool created to help realize this vision by including developer incentives, describing fast track approval by right or by use

³ *Form-based codes define physical form (rather than separation of uses) as the organizing principle for the code. The regulations address the relationship between building facades and the public realm, the form and mass of buildings in relation to one another, and the scale and types of streets and blocks. The regulations and standards are presented in the code with in both text and diagrams and are keyed to a regulating plan that designates the appropriate form and scale (and therefore, character) of development, rather than only distinctions in land-use types. Most significant, this approach to land use does not rely on the conventional zoning methods to control development intensity, such as floor area ratio, dwellings per acre, setbacks, parking ratios, and traffic levels of service. Form Based Code Institute Website, <http://www.formbasedcodes.org/what-are-form-based-codes> (October 2013).*

permit processes and encouraging flexibility for developers. Planning for multi-modal transit with a street car line was also initiated to enhance access and facilitate commercial activity.

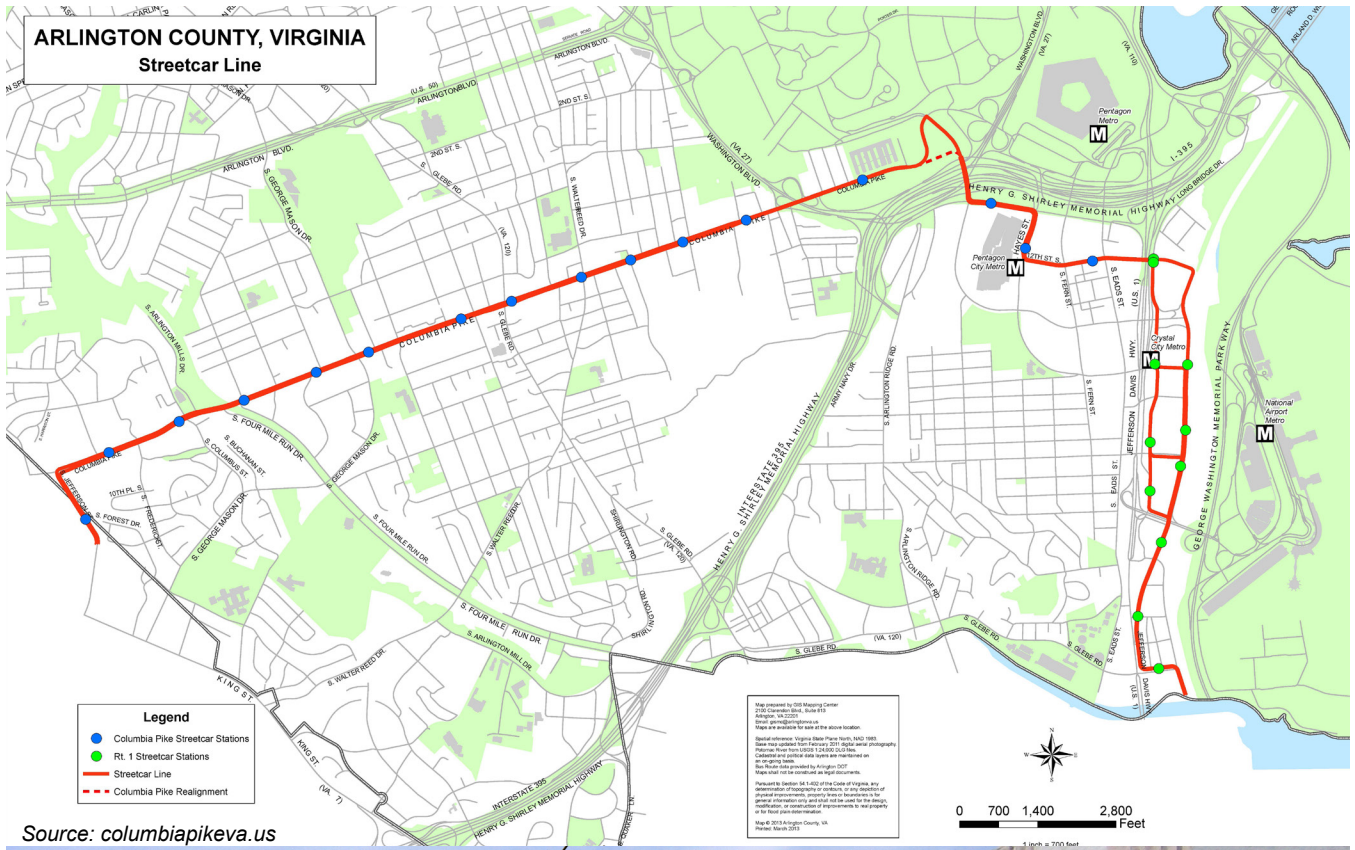
Since the release of the FBC for mixed use development began in 2003, developers have added nearly 200,000 square feet of commercial space containing nearly 1,200 residential units. Ten CPI-related projects have been built since 2003, with additional projects currently in the approval process. The effort is also yielding public infrastructure and streetscape benefits as the utilities are being relocated underground, transit improvements are underway and new and wider pedestrian-friendly sidewalks are being built.

FUNDING

The CPRO is a 501 (c3) non-profit organization that operates on an approximately \$280,000 annual budget. One-third of annual funds (approximately \$100,000) are provided by the County through a memorandum of understanding that specifies services CPRO will provide including promotion of public space events, encouraging walkability, coordinating community-wide meetings, hosting planning workshops, etc. A third of annual funds are provided as contributions from property owners and businesses with the other one-third of the budget generated from activities and events.

While the Pike is not an officially designated business improvement district (BID), the CPRO functions as the district's business partnership by organizing streetscape beautification; coordinating business advocacy efforts with the county such as sidewalk seating and lighting; addressing traffic concerns; and, hanging light pole banners during district events. Under the Code of Virginia, the establishment of a BID for Columbia Pike would require legislative action by the Arlington County Board of Supervisors. BIDs that are currently authorized by Arlington County (i.e. Rosslyn) levy a small percentage (approximately, 4.5%) of the property taxes within a specified district to finance the activity of the BID. A BID develops a work plan that includes some city functions (i.e. park maintenance, trash collection, etc.).⁴

⁴ *Summary from Interviews with, Takis Karantonis, Executive Director of the Columbia Pike Revitalization Organization (CPRO) and Matt Mattauszek, Lead Planner, Arlington County, (October 2013) and planning reports. See list of Resources at end of document.*



IMPLEMENTATION

The following elements of the CPRO approach were fundamental to the success of the CPI:⁵

1. **Consensus Building:** Extensive consensus-building among all key stakeholders via a foundational non-profit has established a strong foundation.

CPRO's consensus-building efforts from 1986 through today have provided the successful foundation for the initiative's vision and implementation. The Columbia Pike Initiative is seen as one common initiative driving forward a shared vision rather than a battle of "developers versus community". More than twenty-five years of partnership-building among the Pike's ten civic association boards, businesses, developers and County leadership have enabled the CPI to secure broad political, community and financial support as well as to ensure that incentives for revitalizing the area would compel property owner investments and engagement. CPRO has achieved this consensus through facilitating design charettes and work sessions with stakeholders from multiple sectors to define community needs, assess developer interest and secure county support. The CPRO has served as the key facilitator and primary organizational advocate engaged with each of the planning efforts and documents produced by the CPI since the initiative's inception.

CPRO's multi-stakeholder board also contributes to establishing broad support for CPI activities. The board is composed of relatively equal numbers of civic representatives and business representatives, including County staff representation. This balance of interests provides significant credibility when advocating for any policies. The board's regular meetings are also a venue for achieving consensus on issues among diverse stakeholders before engaging with County leadership.

2. **Policy of Attraction:** Place-making is an essential communications and outreach step for growing community pride and generating momentum.

The CPI has benefited from a focus on creating a corridor where people want to live. The vision-setting plans from 2002, 2005 and 2012 have focused on describing new plazas and civic squares along with a "park once; then walk" environment. Takis Karantonis, Executive Director of CPRO

⁵ *Ibid.*

noted: "early placemaking efforts should not just focus on the developer side, but must see the main street concept as extremely important to local residents. Once this match happens of developer and community, the place will begin to recover and once again, become a main street."⁶

The concept of returning the Pike to a "Main Street" experience provided stakeholders with a clear concept of what it could look like. The vision plan described a place with a mix of shop fronts, sidewalk cafes, and other commercial uses at street level, overlooked by canopy shade trees and upper story residences and offices. Once this main street vision was created and agreed upon, it enabled stakeholders to communicate their vision to potential businesses and developers outside the community. Pride in the community grew and those outside the Pike became more attracted and interested in making investments.

CPRO played a leading role in inviting developers to learn about the corridor and explore possible ways to grow with the community. CPRO continues to lead activities such as farmers markets, art festivals, restaurant week and bar crawls that foster cooperation among current businesses. The actions of businesses and civic associations, working together rather than in competition, has been a key driver of growing pride throughout the Pike community. As Karantonis notes, "the rising tide of community placemaking lifts all partners."

3. **Pro-business messaging and engagement:** The CPI welcomed and demonstrated the district's value on business involvement throughout planning and development.

The genesis of CPI is found in the leadership of small business owners and developers seeking to enhance economic development. The engagement of small businesses with County and civic stakeholders led to critical business-friendly actions while maintaining the key elements of the initiative. They included the flexibility to make concessions for the earliest development at site plan review, in the period when the FBC was still under development. In one case, a developer wanted to construct apartments on the first floor of a building that the community had envisioned as retail space. However, CPRO's interests in initiating development momentum prevailed and first floor apartments were permitted for this project during site plan review. In another example, a

⁶ *Interview, Takis Karantonis, Executive Director of Columbia Pike Revitalization Organization (CPRO), October 2013.*

developer was awarded density bonuses as an incentive to renovate a historic building that would be advantageous to the district. The flexibility to make strategic concessions in the early stage of the initiative enhanced development value and reduced investment risks in an area with untested market potential. Also, these actions sent a signal that the CPI is pro-business.

The inclusion of small business, landowner and real estate community peers on the board of CPRO and/or deeply engaged in the CPI planning efforts has helped to attract additional business interests and investment to the area. CPRO serves as a liaison to developers by working with them to achieve a more predictable outcome by ensuring that their development proposals will comply with the community's vision prior to initiating the formal review process.⁷

4. Comprehensive and predictable development framework: The Columbia Pike Form Based Code (FBC) is a tool to incentivize development by providing a predictable process.

The County Manager's proposed zoning ordinance amendment to create the Columbia Pike Special Revitalization District was adopted by the County Board in 2003 and includes the following elements of the FBC: metes and bounds, Regulating Plan, Building Envelope, Architectural Standards and Streetscape Standards. The clearly defined set of design requirements and a transparent design review process based on already-designated locations and properties has helped incentivize development (see attached map "Potential/Required Sites for Use Permit Review."⁸

The inclusion of the development community in the process resulted in highly practical standards that were fundamental to its success. For instance, when an early draft of the code specified eight story building heights to concentrate density in one location, a developer noted that the proposed building type would require a significantly different construction method, potentially more complicated codes and higher construction costs that might deter a developer. This type of input enabled the working group to balance community and developer needs, ensuring developers would still be incentivized to work with the code.

For developers, the code provides a predictable and credible vision including an alternative to site plan review, locations, design form and materials for every block of the Pike. Predictability is also included in the approval process, which is based on meeting the transparent and prescriptive standards already established and agreed upon by all key stakeholders. There are two approval options; by-right (Option 1) or by use permit approval (Option 2) within the Columbia Pike Special Revitalization District.⁹ Properties within the Columbia Pike Special Revitalization District, which have not been redeveloped using the FBC, are governed by all use limitations in the underlying zoning classification

As long as a developer follows the prescriptive technical requirements, the code limits the possibility that a local council or planning commission can alter the process. The code enables developers to generate pro forma documents that are already informed by the knowledge of uses and building types that will be in adjacent locations. Buildings 40,000 sq ft and smaller qualify for by right, administrative review only to determine that they meet the standards of the code. Thus, the predictability enables developers, and their investors, greater control over managing time and costs.

5. Continuous refinement: The refinement of the Form Based Code is a continually improving process for balancing developer, community and county interests.

The process to create the FBC was funded by the county and facilitated by a consultant who partnered with CPRO and local stakeholders. The stakeholders were engaged throughout the workshops and charrettes, negotiating on the establishment of major mixed use and commercial nodes and design forms for buildings along the Pike. Once the code was adopted by the county, the FBC Advisory Working Group was established, composed of community members and County staff who regularly keep neighborhoods informed of the FBC process. This working group and developers continue to refine the code to ensure it meets all needs, processing ten code amendments over the past ten years¹⁰ This working group is also helping to develop the multi-family residential code.

⁷ *Ibid.*

⁸ Arlington County. *Potential/Required Sites for Use Permit Review*. June 21, 2013.

⁹ Arlington County, *Adoption of Proposed Zoning Ordinance Amendments*. February 25, 2003. Revised Report. http://www.arlingtonva.us/departments/CPHD/forums/columbia/current/pdf/formbase_022503.pdf

¹⁰ Arlington County, *Adoption of the Columbia Pike Neighborhoods Area Plan*. July 2012

For the county, implementing the code is an experiment because this approach is new to this area and has rarely been used for applying to urban contexts with a variety of existing conditions. However, the negotiated code provides the county with a better sense of how to plan for growth that is likely to occur, where it will take place and what kind of infrastructure services will be needed and provided through the redevelopment. A second phase of the FBC, to be released in December 2013, will guide development of multi-family residential areas located between the major mixed use nodes along the Pike. Engagement of multiple stakeholders in the development of this code has helped to meet community needs and retain and attract businesses.

6. Density Bonuses: A housing bonus density has been created to incentivize developer participation.

Enhancing density in targeted areas of the Pike was seen as a key strategy for facilitating mixed-use activities, investing in pedestrian experience/streetscape enhancements and enabling cost effective mass transit. Integrated with the FBC, developers can receive a density bonus if they provide 20% of the net new units as committed affordable housing; or, 25% of the net new units could be provided through renovating existing units and making them committed affordable housing.¹¹ These units need to remain affordable to households earning up to 60% of area median income for 30 years.

A height bonus is available in some designated neighborhoods of the Pike if a developer exceeds affordable housing provision goals within the specific neighborhood, meets goals in other locations of the Columbia Pike and/or accommodates additional density as a receiving site through a transfer of development rights (TDR). The TDR is a mechanism which enables the property owner of a 'sending site' that can accommodate density proposes to rehabilitate units and converts them to committed affordable housing. The 'receiving' site receives the value of transferred density as a way to help subsidize creation of affordable housing.

Other density bonuses and incentives include:¹²

- A TDR mechanism to gain density bonuses in other locations by preserving existing affordable housing units and meeting specified provisions for affordable housing units in historic areas.

¹¹ Arlington County Board, July 2012, report 48

¹² Arlington County. *Financial Implementation Tools Final Draft Recommendations*. October 2013

- Renovation of housing located in the designated historic housing conservation areas.
- Reduced parking ratio for affordable units that comply with the FBC
- Partial property tax exemptions for the increase in assessed value of improvements from rehabilitation or redevelopment of affordable housing units.
- The Affordable Housing Preservation Loan Program (AHPL) to help existing owners maintain affordable rents and pay for moderate renovations by offering below market interest rate loans
- Affordable Housing Investment Fund's revolving loan program supporting subsidization of new affordable housing. (This Fund receives County Board and Developer contributions in addition to Federal grant support.)
- Additionally, a green building standard FBC for new construction or renovation is under consideration for use as a density bonus incentive. In addition to meeting goals of Arlington's Community Energy Plan, achieving green building standards such as Leadership for Energy and Environmental Design (LEED) could also help lower residents' utility costs.

7. Partnerships: Establishing a strong relationship between Arlington County and CPRO has provided mutual benefits.

The recognition of a mutually beneficial relationship between these two entities has been a driver of the CPI's overall success. For the county, the CPRO provides community-based outreach and serves as the "eyes and ears to the street." The CPRO serves as a coordinated, credible and informed point of contact on Pike matters from civic and business sectors. The CPRO's ability to reach out for testing ideas or generating interest through multiple networks is unparalleled. Its history of engagement since the 1980s, its board of community leaders, and its community-based meeting space adds further value.

For the CPRO, partnership with the county provides direct access to regulatory and administrative processes which can influence public space and public infrastructure operations such as transit systems, park spaces and land use controls.

Identifying a key county board member early in the process provided political support at a crucial moment for allocating vision and form-based code study funds. The county board's budget allocations provide key financial and in-kind staff support from county agencies to the CPI. For the businesses and civic associations of the Pike, this partnership provides a responsive system for addressing barriers and realizing visions.

8. Mobility: Transit alternatives can be a redevelopment catalyst.

Affordable and efficient alternatives to single occupancy vehicle travel have been explored as a key component of realizing a revitalized Columbia Pike with an enhanced quality of life and affordability. Transit ridership has been growing quickly in this area, with ridership increasing 45 percent since 2004 and projected is expected to continue with the corridor's revitalization.¹³ Extending along five miles of the Pike and integrating with other transit modes, a streetcar is envisioned to promote economic development by increasing property premiums (4-10%) for properties immediately adjacent to the streetcar and increasing the pace of corridor revitalization.¹⁴

The streetcar feasibility studies have been funded by the Arlington County Board. In 2012, Arlington County submitted an application to the U.S. Federal Transit Administration's (FTA) Small Starts program which provides grants for up to approximately \$200 million for capital costs associated with bus corridor improvements, fixed guideway systems and extensions.¹⁵ While the application was not accepted due to anticipated costs exceeding grant limits, the County is exploring funding options through another FTA mechanism called Moving Ahead for Progress in the 21st Century as well as through the State of Virginia. The County also worked with staff of the Washington Metropolitan Area Transit Authority and the Virginia Department of Transportation to assess alternatives.

In the ten years since the Columbia Pike Initiative was launched in earnest, development achievements includes:

- Completion of 10 mixed use commercial and residential projects located at major nodes, totaling nearly 200,000 sq ft of commercial space and 1,200 new residential units.

¹³ Pike Transit. *Columbia Pike Transit Initiative Return on Investment Study*. July 2012

¹⁴ *Ibid.*

¹⁵ U.S. Federal Transit Administration, *fta.dot.gov*, downloaded October 2013

- Construction of a 40,000 sq ft community center and mixed-use facility with 121 affordable housing units in one of the major activity nodes designated along the pike. Compliant with the FBC's town center goals, the Center was funded through \$33 million from bonds and \$3 million from County fiscal year 2009 and 2010 funds.
- Complete street projects are underway include creating safer pedestrian crossing locations and bike lane connections. The County's Vehicle Decal Fee program is helping to fund these programs, funded by residents' purchase of decals demonstration vehicle registration compliance.
- Pilot of Super Stop high capacity bus route facilities is demonstrating high levels of participation. These stops are designed for efficient and comfortable mass transit usage, serve multiple transit modes with 24 planned for the entire length of the bike. \$835,000 for the prototype was provided by the County and the Washington Metro Area Transit Authority.
- Transfer of utility systems from the streetscape edges to underground culverts beneath the center of the road. Sidewalk improvements, new lighting, street trees and bus shelters will follow as phase 2. The \$7.4 million project is funded through a combination of federal secondary, state revenue-sharing and county-matching funds.
- Bike boulevard designs are complete for secondary roads adjacent to the Pike

ASSESSMENT

The CPI demonstrates the opportunity to realize goals of incentivized development and public benefits through an integrated approach to infill development. While the initiative has a 30 year planning and implementation horizon (through 2040), review of the accomplishments of the initiative since its founding reveals a number of key teachings, including:

1. Consensus-building for redevelopment among key stakeholders takes time. The CPI required approximately 15 years to clarify a vision, negotiate interests and develop a credible plan for the area. The

transformation to the Pike is now visible took 30 years of effort.

2. The Initiative had a clearly defined boundary and area of focus. Identification with the area helped to bring together partners and generate momentum. With a significantly larger land area to address in Roanoke Valley, this approach suggest it will be important to identify of key zones or nodes to target for initial efforts in infill and redevelopment programs.
3. The County's partnership with the non-profit CPRO has played a key role in ensuring that plans are responsive to community needs and effective for incentivizing private sector investment. Establishment of the non-profit organization led by civic, business, residential and county staff has provided a community-wide entity for driving change with an operating life that can withstand political leadership changes. By creating a partnership entity, the pike development became the focus and highest priority of this entity.
4. The CPRO has employed the FBC as a strategic instrument for infill and redevelopment, integrating planning vision, development standards, development incentives, and the review and approval into a clear and comprehensive framework.
5. The CPRO can provide a level of flexibility and accessibility to developers that might be challenging for county staff to achieve on their own. The CPRO is often aware of interested developers well before the county learns of the developer's interest.¹⁶
6. Engaging community, business and civic stakeholders throughout the development of the FBC has provided all stakeholders with predictability about the growth plan.
7. More value can be created when developers, the public sector and the community come together to negotiate outcomes through comprehensive planning processes.
8. "Placemaking" can serve as the tide that lifts all boats. The ability for CPRO to convene businesses and community to work together through restaurant weeks, street fairs, community days, etc. help to create identify and sense of place that has benefited all.

¹⁶ Interview with Matt Mattauszek, Arlington County, October 2013.

CASE BRIEF: ALBEMARLE COUNTY, VIRGINIA

Rural and suburban infill sites are those located outside urban development areas but within commercial areas which tend to be zoned for commercial or industrial uses. They have been previously developed and/or are proximate to infrastructure necessary for commercial and industrial uses.¹⁷ The Roanoke Valley has small (less than 100 acres), existing industrial, warehouse, or office sites that may be well suited for use by industries or businesses while also supporting the value of protecting rural and scenic land.

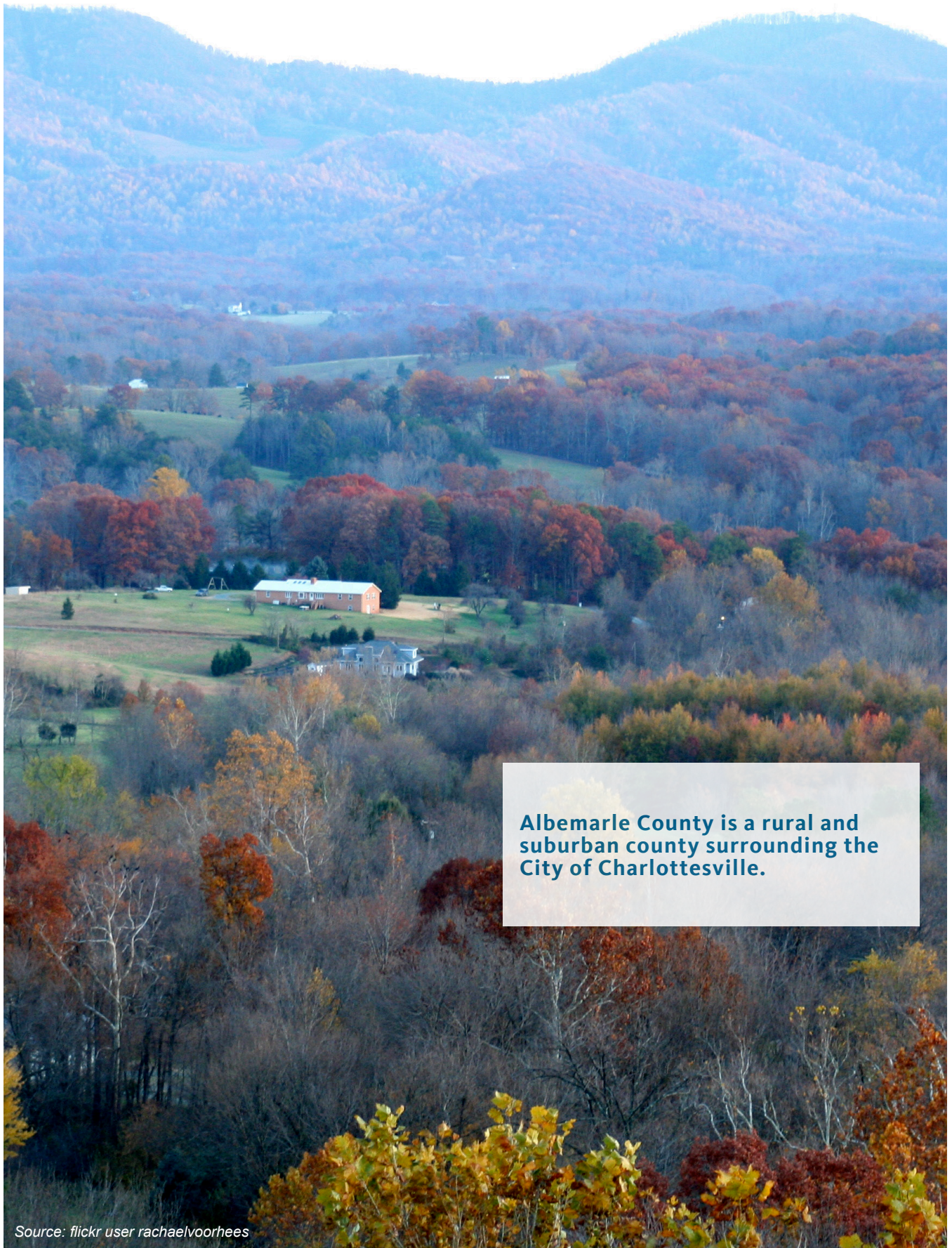
Albemarle County, a suburban and rural county that surrounds the City of Charlottesville, has a similar development context to the counties surrounding the City of Roanoke. Like the Roanoke Valley, Albemarle has been faced with the challenges of balancing economic development and the maintenance of its rural beauty, healthy environment, and quality of life.

COMMUNITY PROFILE

In more recent years the County Board of Supervisors has taken actions to attract development. The Board adopted a three-year economic vitality action plan in August 2010 that sought to identify ways the County could increase its pro-business image and streamline development regulations. The economic vitality plan has played a critical role in helping the community determine economic goals and priorities for focused use of limited resources. The plan identified ways to promote the growth of target businesses, such as expansion of the wine industry and boutique food producers and amendments to ordinances that can reduce complexity of approval processes.¹⁸ The County Board of Supervisor's active leadership in the development of the plan (produced internally by County staff) has ensured a high profile, community-wide engagement process that convened participants from university, workforce development, community college, tourism, farming and small manufacturing sectors. Outcomes include shortening the development approval process and expanding the number of uses allowed in land zoned for industrial uses.

¹⁷ Rutgers Center for Urban Policy Research. April 2007. *Infill Development Standards and Policy Guide*

¹⁸ Albemarle County, *Economic Vitality Plan*. Adopted August 4, 2010.



Albemarle County is a rural and suburban county surrounding the City of Charlottesville.

Source: flickr user rachaelvoorhees

One of the key institutional outcomes of the economic vitality plan, has been the creation of an Office of Economic Development (with annual budget of approximately \$160,000 for director and staff) that would take a more active role in identifying potential sites for target businesses seeking to locate or expand in the county. The objectives are to be more competitive with a selection of available sites and to promote job creation.¹⁹

PROGRAM DESCRIPTION

The following is a summary of the County's strategies and actions to incentivize rural and suburban infill development, including:

Providing location and development assistance for new businesses in target industries

Albemarle County staff, as part of economic development assistance, provides information to business and financial service entities on locations where zoning or buildings exist that can support new business and financial services opportunities.

- The Office of Business and Community Partnerships provides information on sites and mixed use locations where companies such as information technology, arts, design, sports, and media might be able to successfully locate and operate in the County.²⁰
- The Albemarle Business First Visitation Program connects prospective business visitors with information and needed resources that can help promote a business-friendly climate.
- The County's GIS data and staff is a resource available for helping new businesses locate or expand within the region.
- The County's economic development facilitator is available to help schedule project development reviews, advocate with County government and guide applicants through permit and approval processes.²¹

¹⁹ "Albemarle moves forward with economic development," *Charlottesville Tomorrow*, November 07, 2013

²⁰ *Albemarle Comprehensive Plan Draft for October 9, 2013*

²¹ *Albemarle County Office of Economic Development*. <http://www.albemarle.org/navpages.asp?info=business6>. November 25, 2013

Operating a commercial sites and building locator website

The County Office of Community and Business Partnerships has created a web-based display of available, commercial and industrial-zoned properties. The easy-to-access site (<http://www.albemarle.org/navpages.asp?info=business11>) lists available properties on an interactive map, for illustrating existing infrastructure and facilities within the area. The site also includes basic property information such as utilities, topography and tax map boundary.

Offering "fast track" application review

The County Board of Supervisors recently created a "fast track review" process by which businesses from targeted industries seeking land use designation changes or special use permits can qualify for high priority review processes.²² It is intended for targeted industries seeking locations and uses which align with the county's comprehensive plan. Key criteria which a qualifying business must meet include:²³

- Projects that provide a minimum (amount to be determined) number of jobs with higher wages than the prevailing County average;
- Projects that bring in a minimum (amount to be determined) capital investment;
- Projects that are anticipated to result in a minimum (amount to be determined) positive fiscal impact to the County; and
- Projects that generate over 50% of their revenue from outside the region.

According to Susan Stimart at the newly formed Office of Economic Development, the fast track process has been most useful for companies seeking to expand their operations within the county, as it has reduced the time needed to obtain special use permits. It has not been effective in incentivizing targeted businesses to develop new sites in the county, as laws requiring public notice and disclosure of new development actions limit the ability of the County to provide the expedited timelines. The county is continuing to adjust its approval process and is creating a modified review process

²² "Supervisors approve fast-track process for targeted industries," *Charlottesville Tomorrow*. June 6, 2012.

²³ *County of Albemarle, DRAFT Fast Track Review Process*. March 7, 2012.

for enabling targeted manufacturers to take site plans straight to review by the Board of Supervisors, rather than undergoing the site plan review process.²⁴

Providing “Single Point of Contact”

The County assigns a Community Development manager as a single point of contact liaison to guide and coordinate review. This manager helps ensure that the project moves efficiently through site plan review and permitting.²⁵

Advocating for business development in County Comprehensive Plan”

According to the County’s draft comprehensive plan released in 2013, additional actions that the County is committed to include:

- **Identify available property and infrastructure analysis of small parcels** A study needs to be conducted of land area available for industrial and office/R&D/flex/light industrial uses to develop a list of available properties and to ensure that these are adequate as business locations. Consideration should be given to investing in infrastructure to serve industrially zoned vacant parcels.
- **Understand the potential and needs of rural agribusiness** The County’s agribusiness growth in wineries, cattle and dairy farming suggests this is an area of continued growth. As a service for those landowners interested in land leasing opportunities, understanding what role agribusiness plays in the County’s economy is needed in order to determine how this economic sector may be best supported, encouraged, and promoted. While technical and business support programs exist, the lack of understanding about what businesses show potential for rural areas is likely inhibiting the rural landowners from realizing the full economic potential of rural economic infill opportunities.
- **Consider rezoning property to align with desired business uses** The County is considering proactively rezoning property to allow for an easier location process for new businesses and industries, creating a more desirable climate for business recruitment.

²⁴ Interview with Susan Stimart, Albermarle County. December 4, 2013.

²⁵ Albermarle County, Small Business Toolkit. Dec 2012.

RESOURCES

Columbia Pike Sources

Columbia Pike Revitalization Organization, <http://www.columbia-pike.org/>. Executive Director Takis Karantonis (703.892.2776)

Arlington County, Lead CPI Planner Matt Mattauszek (703.228.0493)

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Form Based Code Institute www.formbasedcodes.org