

Preliminary Climate Action Platform Guidance Document in Support of a Climate-Ready Albemarle County

November 2022

Introduction

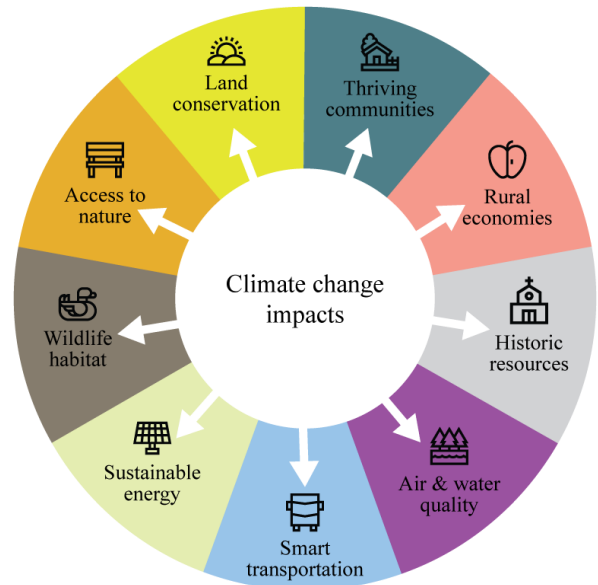
This document summarizes the priority areas where we believe The Piedmont Environmental Council (PEC) can most advance our mission *and* support Albemarle County's mitigation of and preparation for climate impacts. We believe it is time to take action to build a more resilient County.

The recommendations contained in this document directly address climate vulnerabilities and risks as identified through a thorough, scientific assessment of local impacts (Albemarle County, 2022). Our recommendations include ways to maximize the potential of designated Development Areas while preserving rural and natural lands, protecting lives and livelihoods, increasing energy efficiencies and adopting smart renewable policies, and incorporating climate-ready planning processes and nature-based solutions into Albemarle's local land use planning framework. In addition to building resilience, our recommendations also create new and expanded economic and leadership opportunities, and enhanced quality of life for all residents.

While we recognize that responding to climate change will require a thoughtful and holistic approach over an extended period, one immediate opportunity to implement meaningful climate adaptation planning is through the County's Comprehensive Plan five-year update. An overarching recommendation is that the County complete its proposed Climate Adaptation and Resilience Plan and consider the priorities we have detailed within this document, which addresses both mitigation and resiliency for a robust, proactive response.

In developing these priorities, our goal is to work with Albemarle County and many other partners to make sure the County and the people who call it home are prepared for the climate impacts we are currently experiencing and the ones we know are coming. It is important to note that we see this as a living document to revisit as more information and tools become available.

Our vision is a County that is sustainable, climate resilient, innovative, equitable, and one that leads by example on inland climate mitigation and adaptation planning.



Background

PEC focuses on protecting and restoring the lands and waters across the Virginia Piedmont while building stronger, more sustainable communities. Our organization envisions a future with intact natural and cultural landscapes, healthy waters, and working farms and forests nourish vibrant and equitable communities where residents across all walks of life participate in decisions about its future. Climate change challenges everything PEC does — conserving land, creating thriving communities, strengthening rural economies, celebrating historic resources, protecting air and water quality, building smart transportation networks, promoting sustainable energy choices, protecting and restoring wildlife habitat, and improving people’s access to nature

PEC supported the *2022 Climate Vulnerability and Risk Assessment*, a science- and data-based initiative to identify specific, expected climate change impacts in Albemarle County. The intent was to understand the specific climate effects that communities throughout the County should expect and prepare for in the coming decades, and identify immediate actions that can be undertaken starting now. Results of the assessment demonstrate the importance of making informed and proactive decisions now to create a more resilient County that maintains the characteristics its residents value most.

Two broad themes run through our climate platform priorities: one speaks to the social fabric of Albemarle County and the other to its natural and built landscape characteristics. The two are inextricably linked, and in weaving these themes together, we not only seek to achieve environmental justice, but also landscapes and communities that are able to flourish under changing climate conditions:

- 1) We must prioritize equity and justice to ensure climate resilience for all who call Albemarle County their home. We are committed to working with residents and community organizations to amplify the voices of those most affected and champion their needs.
- 2) Nature-based solutions, including green infrastructure, provide a myriad of ecosystem, social, and resiliency benefits and must be broadly included in land use planning at multiple scales.

For each of the five Climate Ready Action Areas, we recommend a series of actionable recommendations to help achieve meaningful progress. We have indicated which of these recommendations are specific to Albemarle County and the 2024 Comprehensive Plan update, and those that can be addressed through PEC and our partners.

To create a resilient, sustainable, and just Albemarle in the face of climate changes, PEC has identified the following five Climate Ready Action Areas:

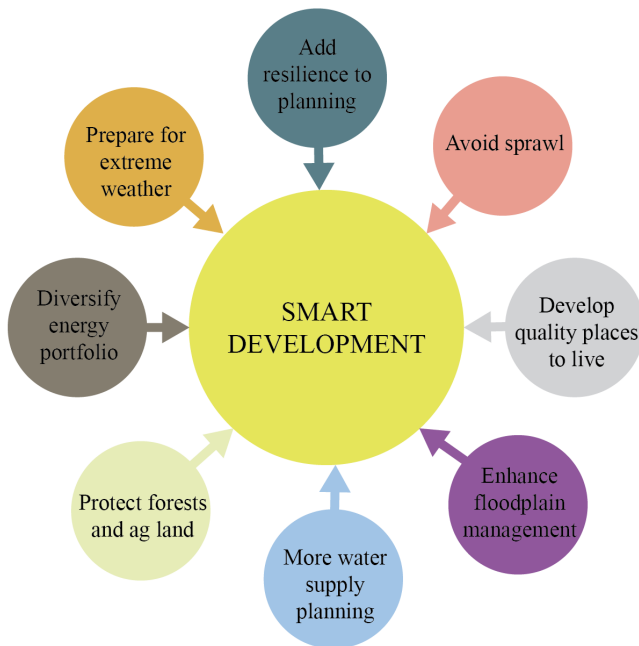
1. Champion livable communities in designated Development Areas;
2. Conserve and enhance Rural Areas and natural systems in the County to address the impacts of climate change;
3. Prepare for extreme weather events by developing response plans to protect lives and livelihoods;

4. Support the diversification of the County’s energy portfolio by increasing efficiencies and adopting renewables; and
5. Adopt climate-ready planning processes and nature-based solutions.



1- Champion livable communities in designated Development Areas

The most impactful way to create climate resilience throughout the County is to focus growth in compact, walkable, highly livable communities. As mentioned in the *2015 Albemarle County Comprehensive Plan*, by creating quality living areas, we can avoid sprawl, improve access to services, and protect the natural systems, agricultural resources, and other uses in Rural Areas. ([Master Planning, Albemarle County website](#)). Our recommendations support these goals, while also being proactive in preparing for expected climate change impacts. It is imperative to weigh in now as the Albemarle County Comprehensive Plan ([AC44](#)), in development, will shape the County’s next 20 years — through 2044.



In line with the County’s objectives to prevent rapid suburban sprawl by using land efficiently and to reduce transportation-related emissions — the County’s most significant source of greenhouse gasses — PEC has consistently championed the development of attractive, innovative, affordable, and resilient mixed-use communities, and will continue to do so.

In the Development Areas, we envision compact, well-connected communities, where residents’ homes, workplaces, and other needs are all within a short walk or ride from the schools, jobs, shopping, parks and green spaces, and other resources residents need to thrive. Planning for and designing these focused communities provides opportunities for collaboration and innovation across sectors and areas of expertise, creating opportunities for planners, designers,

artists, scientists, and many others to get involved.

Investments in these focused communities will also benefit all people across the County, even if they do not live in the Development Areas. By providing attractive places to live in designated Development Areas, rural communities can keep their historic and scenic character intact and preserve land for open space, natural systems, outdoor recreation, and agriculture and forestry, on which all County residents depend.

Benefits:

- Compact development allows for the efficient allocation of resources toward amenities, infrastructure, and designed landscapes that makes for a more enjoyable, creatively expressive, and high-quality place to live.
- Compact, well-developed communities reduce energy, transportation, and healthcare costs.
- Reducing travel time and stress, provides residents with more time to focus on the things they care about most.
- Making high density areas more attractive places to live takes pressure off rural land to accommodate sprawl and protects the natural resources, watersheds, and distinct places and communities that define the County.

***Recommendations for Climate Ready Action Area 1:
Champion livable communities in designated Development Areas*****Comprehensive Plan Recommendations****Top priorities**

- Incentivize the use of green infrastructure and other related actions that reduce urban heat islands, retain vegetation, support clean energy, and help manage stormwater. These include pocket parks, green roofs, reflective materials for roofs and pavements, and rooftop and parking lot solar panels.
- Encourage the County to continue developing connectivity within and between neighborhoods and ensure that sidewalks, bike paths, bus stops, and other transportation infrastructure are accessible to all ages and abilities, receive weather refuge throughout the day, and facilitate safe pedestrian access to schools and other services. A focus on community connectivity would also allow the County to pursue new, infill, and revitalization scenarios.
- Advocate for a robust regional transit system that provides attractive alternatives to personal automobiles, featuring low- or no-emission vehicles wherever possible, while investing in trails, paths, sidewalks, and bike lanes to support non-vehicular transportation.

Additional priorities

- Ensure that a variety of housing types that are accessible and affordable to all income levels and abilities are included in new mixed-use developments, mixed-use redevelopment of outdated commercial properties, and revitalization of existing communities.
- Encourage the County to work closely with the City of Charlottesville, the University of Virginia, the Planning District, and surrounding localities regarding collaborative planning and climate action. The work of the County-City-UVA Land Use and

Environmental Planning Committee is critical. The Committee's process and materials need to be publicly accessible for transparency and accountability.

- Encourage the County to enhance site development ordinances, defining the minimum tree canopy coverage, focusing on retaining and minimizing disturbance to existing tree cover for all new development projects, and requiring the utilization of native plants that can adapt to changing climate conditions. Special use exemptions must not be provided if they are not consistent with these ordinances.
- Further refine the Neighborhood Model within Development Areas so residents will have nearby access to such essential services as food and health care.
- Encourage the County to work with nonprofit and governmental partners to apply for federal and state programs offering climate action funding and other forms of support — particularly those related to neighborhood equity and access.
- Support the development of an Urban Forest Management Program [see Fairfax County's program: <https://www.fairfaxcounty.gov/publicworks/trees/about>] to protect and enhance the County's urban forests and natural systems.
- Support the renaturing of the urban Development Areas with native species to increase biodiversity wherever possible, including in parks, along walkways and trails, in public spaces, on rooftops, and even in abandoned or blighted properties.
- Completion of the County's proposed Climate Adaptation and Resilience Plan.

PEC Activities

Top priorities

- Review the County's five-year Capital Improvements Program and review the County's proposed budget annually to make sure both set the course to encourage growth in the designated Development Areas.
- Using the goals and objectives in the completed 2024 Comprehensive Plan, create our own report card on livability and local quality of life in Albemarle County. It will contain metrics for green space, tree cover, bike lanes, clean energy usage and the like as an annual assessment of progress towards climate action and improving quality of life for Albemarle residents.
- Collaborate with existing programs, such as Piedmont Master Gardeners and Master Naturalists to identify funding sources for a program aimed at homeowners and Home Owner Associations (HOAs) to encourage a shift from manicured, resource-intensive lawns in favor of more resilient and attractive microhabitats that encourage plant and animal diversity. This program will also provide guidance and education regarding invasive plant species, how to manage them, and native plant alternatives.

Additional priorities

- Advocate for improved connectivity and park access; work with state and local agencies to create projects that receive funding.

- Support community-driven initiatives that create opportunities for marginalized communities to participate in planning processes, with an emphasis on activities that build trust and encourage communication between residents and decision makers and that amplify marginalized voices to ensure their concerns and needs are factored into future plans.
- Host a series of workshops with the development community, decisionmakers, and community groups to identify challenges and opportunities related to density and growth in the designated Development Areas.

2 - Conserve and enhance Rural Areas and natural systems in the County to address the impacts of climate change



Albemarle County takes pride in its natural resources and magnificent cultural landscapes. The County is home to historically and culturally significant properties, forests, wildlife corridors, waterways, orchards, vineyards, and food production operations that are both economically and ecologically important to Albemarle’s communities and to the region. These special places and important resources are prized by County residents and visitors alike. They help define the local way of living, offset some of the most harmful climate effects, and are at the same time vulnerable to the expected impacts of climate change in this area. It would be costly and difficult, if not impossible, to restore these places and resources if we lose them.

PEC encourages Albemarle County to supplement its existing growth management policy and to achieve a climate-ready County by building resilience into the landscape through nature-based solutions and smart development in rural lands already authorized for development.

Throughout the Comprehensive Planning process, PEC advocates for the incorporation of nature-based solutions that can provide multiple ecosystem and community benefits.

Ex.: identifying, protecting, and enhancing existing tree canopy cover that offers cooling shade, sequesters carbon, reinforces soil layers and encourages soil health, supports essential ecological systems and biodiversity, and is crucial to effective water management – whether during drought or inundation.

Benefits

- Focusing smart growth into existing Development Areas (as stated in Action Area 1 above) protects the natural resources and rural character of Albemarle County and the tourism dollars that these qualities attract.
- The ecosystem services provided by natural areas and systems in the Rural Areas and the Development Areas are often far less expensive and more resilient than engineered solutions.
- Minimizing land clearing and impervious surface coverage protects the communities’ ground and surface water resources.
- By protecting agriculture and the natural systems, we can create a more local food economy that can withstand external challenges related to food supply.
- People are happier and live measurably better lives when they are surrounded by thriving natural ecosystems.

Recommendations for Climate Ready Action Area 2: Conserve and enhance Rural Areas and natural systems in the County to address the impacts of climate change

Comprehensive Plan Recommendations

Top priorities

- Maintain and expand staff for the County’s natural resources and land conservation programs, and establish a stable and consistent funding source for the Acquisition of Conservation Easements (ACE) program.
 - Strengthen the land conservation programs to better protect water quality, biodiversity, and natural land cover and to prioritize ecological cores and connectivity opportunities identified in the Biodiversity Action Plan.
 - Encourage the County to revise existing land development ordinances regarding tree protection for development projects in designated Rural Areas and to better conserve resources, increase retention and protection of existing healthy trees, woodlands, and forested areas.
 - Establish the Riparian Buffer Overlay District and related proposals in the County’s Stream Health Initiative, to better protect stream health and associated critical natural systems.
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Additional priorities

- Ensure landscape connectivity of natural systems corridors in the Rural Areas with green spaces and parks in the Development Areas.
- Elevate the importance of protecting and conserving irreplaceable prime agricultural soils and soils of statewide significance as a major factor in future land use decisions and land development impact assessments within the Rural Areas.
- Undertake a sustained community outreach campaign to promote the information and tools provided on the County’s Environmental Stewardship Hub and to staff and fund the proposed New Landowner Education Project in the County’s Stream Health Initiative.
- Implement the Land Conservation for Water Quality (LCWQ) program and the Riparian Conservation Assistance Program (RCAP) that are proposed in the County’s Stream Health Initiative. The two programs play complementary roles in protecting riparian buffers and water quality. The purpose of the LCWQ program is to achieve direct, strategic, and perpetual protection of vulnerable streams and high-quality buffers, by augmenting the County’s existing land conservation programs to 1) enable acquisition of new riparian buffer easements, and 2) strengthen water quality protection provisions of new and existing whole property easements. The purpose of

the RCAP program is to establish a mechanism for prioritizing and funding permanent conservation of the highest-value riparian areas in the County.

PEC Activities

Top priorities

- Advocate for the completion of the County’s proposed Climate Adaptation and Resilience Plan.
 - Advocate for updating the County’s Biodiversity Action Plan based on new spatial data that could better incorporate resiliency into the modeling.
 - Undertake a sustained campaign advocating for substantial funding increases for the Acquisition of Conservation Easement (ACE) program, which supports lower-income landowners participating in conservation.
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Additional priorities

- Invest in expanding PEC’s internal understanding of the latest science and data on carbon sequestration and how that information can be used to develop stronger policies around local resiliency.
- Work with Virginia Department of Forestry and other partners to support the development of tools to assist landowners with planning longer-term for forest health and resilience.
- Support the identification of ecosystems at the interface of urban/rural and wild spaces and develop specific plans and secure funding to protect and restore them as appropriate.

3 - Prepare for extreme weather events by developing response plans to protect lives and livelihoods



Science-based models tell us that climate change will lead to more extreme weather events that are likely to be increasingly severe and less predictable. Extreme heat, bitter cold, larger and more frequent storms, and out-of-season weather events are all expected outcomes of climate change. PEC encourages Albemarle County to be proactive and intentional in its planning to ensure lives and livelihoods are prepared to withstand extreme weather. Such planning would include dedicated funding to building resilient infrastructure, supporting updates to existing infrastructure, and having plans in place to help residents, farmers, and business owners recover quickly and fully.

Albemarle County is expected to experience heavy rainfall and other precipitation events, alternating with extended periods of drought. In combination, these conditions increase vulnerability to flooding and variabilities in water supplies, both of which carry costs to

infrastructure, transportation routes, livelihoods, and human lives. PEC encourages the County to rethink its current floodplain management policies and move people and structures out of harm's way, while taking advantage of federal and state resources to support those actions, as well as activities that reestablish functional floodplains.

To date, much of the focus for resilience planning in the United States has been in urban and/or coastal areas. Therefore, Albemarle County has the opportunity to become a leader in rural inland resilience planning, especially as it relates to more effective floodplain management. By protecting wetlands, forests, and open space within the floodplain, the County can ensure floodplains retain such important ecosystem functions as carbon sequestration and water retention while protecting people and the built environment, reducing the economic and health burdens associated with destructive weather events.

Many tools and resources exist to support local decision making. There are existing models, federal programs, and other resources to draw upon when developing enhanced floodplain management policies. For example, the Federal Emergency Management Agency's (FEMA) [Community Rating System \(CRS\)](#) is a voluntary incentive program that recognizes and encourages community floodplain management practices that exceed the minimum requirements of the National Flood Insurance Program (NFIP). Communities that implement higher regulatory standards and other activities that result in enhanced floodplain management programs and fewer flood losses, will receive "credits" for these activities and community policyholders will pay discounted flood insurance premiums. More information is available from the [CRS Fact Sheet](#).

Another source of significant resources is through the statewide [Community Flood Preparedness Fund](#) administered through Virginia Department of Conservation and Recreation (DCR). This program currently provides ~\$40 million per year. State Code dictates that 45% of Virginia's revenues from participation in the Regional Greenhouse Gas Initiative (RGGI) go toward the Community Flood Preparedness Fund, with another 50% to go toward low-income energy efficiency programs. Roanoke, Christiansburg, and other inland counties have successfully pursued funding from this program to develop and implement resilience plans. While this program continues, Albemarle has the opportunity to pursue substantial funding support for flood preparedness projects.

Benefits

- Preparing for the expected climate impacts will directly prevent the loss of lives, property, and livelihoods throughout the County.
- Residents will experience fewer disruptions to essential systems and services if the County prepares for the climate changes we know are coming.
- By adopting resilient practices, the County and its residents can more readily recover from extreme events.
- These recommendations include protecting and restoring ecological systems to remain healthy and functional, providing benefits in other areas of resilience planning.

Recommendations for Climate Ready Action Area 3: Prepare for extreme weather events by developing response plans to protect lives and livelihoods

Comprehensive Plan Recommendations

Top priorities

- The Albemarle County Climate Vulnerability and Risk Assessment included maps of the built environment, identifying critical facilities (e.g., fire stations, nursing homes, schools, etc.), historic resources, housing types, transportation, and utilities across the County. While the spatial data inventory and a broad look at the range of vulnerabilities across the built environment exists, the County should undertake a more detailed vulnerability assessment of the built environment to prioritize and support site-specific response plans for areas and lives at risk. Additionally, the County should identify and pursue funding sources that allow for proactive property buybacks and restoration of the associated sites.
 - Encourage the County to collect and make available floodplain data to ensure models can more accurately project future changes, and to use findings to inform decision-making processes.
 - Encourage the County to develop clear emergency response plans for a range of extreme weather events and to conduct regular education and outreach to ensure residents know how to access emergency preparedness information and how to activate if and when the time comes. This could involve hiring Heat and/or Resilience Officers who can act as liaisons and work with emergency services to prepare and activate resources during weather related events.
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Additional priorities

- Encourage the County to participate in FEMA's Community Rating System to enhance floodplain management and become eligible for lower flood insurance premiums
- Encourage the County to create and implement incentives for landowners to plant, retain, and protect wooded buffers along streams, rivers, and other waterways above and beyond the current buffer requirements. Encourage the County to create incentives/outreach programs specifically for agricultural landowners to restore wetlands in low-producing, routinely wet areas. (See wetlandswork.org for existing location and desired use specific funding opportunities.)
- Encourage the County to evaluate the current stormwater systems and invest in system upgrades and maintenance to retain/slow/intercept storm water before entering streams and rivers.

- Encourage the County to update building codes for structure resilience and energy efficiency, to include wind speed resistance, roof inspections and integrity, flood resilience, and minimum insulation standards.
- Encourage the County to adopt ordinances that require landlords to maintain liveable temperatures for tenants and act quickly to correct temperatures that are outside of that range. Encourage the County to adopt ordinances that prohibit the shut-off of utilities during peak seasons and/or during extreme weather events.

PEC Activities

Top priorities

- Monitor and report on the County’s completion of the bullets above (e.g., report card).
- Advocate for the completion of the County’s proposed Climate Adaptation and Resilience Plan.
- Engage with the County’s water supply plan that will take place throughout 2023. When the water supply plan is reexamined in 2023, ensure that modeling assumptions for future drought events take into consideration climate change.

Additional priorities

- Advocate for programs that fund local flood preparedness actions, including the RGGI.
- Participate in regional water planning activities.

4 - Support the diversification of the County’s energy portfolio by increasing efficiencies and adopting renewables



Greenhouse gasses and other energy production by-products directly influence the severity of climate change effects. Additionally, climate changes will put greater pressure on local energy grids, leading to power outages threatening human health and economic activities. PEC encourages Albemarle County to adopt policies that reduce reliance on polluting fossil fuels, while diversifying and strengthening the local energy supply. This can only be done sustainably by ensuring the preservation of prime agricultural lands for agricultural activities and protection of natural systems like forests, streams, and wetlands in the process.

PEC believes renewable energy will make up a large percentage of energy generation projects in the U.S. and Virginia for the foreseeable future and is of the utmost importance to the future of our environment.

To that end, we support small-scale renewable energy solutions that are appropriate for the communities in which they are placed and that provide benefits beyond energy production. Examples include rooftop solar and wind, storage solutions for excess energy, solar canopies above parking lots and other developed areas, connecting distributed generation through parking lots and service stations to support EV charging, the adoption of higher efficiency standards for a range of buildings and structures, and the adoption of energy efficient appliances like heat pumps over more energy-intensive ones such as HVAC units.

PEC encourages local leaders to pursue all possible funding sources for these projects. Federal and state programs, philanthropic funders, public-private partnerships, and green lending funds are all possible sources of seed or matching funds. New programs, resources, and funding opportunities available through the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act, Inflation Reduction Act, Federal Emergency Management Agency, and many others should be leveraged in support of local resilience.

PEC also recognizes that utility-scale solar will also be an important part of achieving Virginia's clean energy transition. Our concern, to date, lies with Virginia's approach to utility-scale siting, in which 58% of projects occur on forested lands, and nearly 25% occur on cropland (Berryhill, 2021). This trend exists despite the availability of brownfields, abandoned mining land, and existing transportation and transmission corridors. To improve Virginia's approach to utility-scale solar siting, PEC worked with a broad coalition of partners in support of HB 206 during the 2022 General Assembly session. The legislation passed with strong bipartisan support, and provides a path toward reasonable mitigation standards for utility-scale solar projects that significantly impact sensitive natural resources. At the local level, we hope to serve as a resource to local communities and jurisdictions, helping determine whether a proposed project is appropriate with regard to size, scale, and impact to sensitive natural, cultural, or historic resources.

Benefits:

- The reduction of greenhouse gas emissions benefits everyone.
- Energy conservation measures and distributed renewable energy have the potential to reduce energy costs for Albemarle County government, businesses, and residents.
- Electrical production closer to load promotes a more reliable and resilient grid.

***Recommendations for Climate Ready Action Area 4:
Support the diversification of the County's energy portfolio by
increasing efficiencies and adopting renewables***

Comprehensive Plan Recommendations

Top priorities

- Adopt ordinances that require alternative energy sources and energy efficiency standards for all County government and new buildings. Establish an incentive program for rooftop, parking lot, and brownfield solar energy adoption combined

with a map of the existing built environment that identifies opportunities for the adoption of green rooftops, rooftop solar or wind, solar canopies, and other small scale energy sources.

- Develop utility-scale solar project siting principles and guidelines. To preserve the County’s Rural Areas character and natural resources, these projects should be sited in existing brownfields or redevelopment areas.
- Identify through a transparent process how much energy residents and businesses will actually need in coming years to provide a measurable target that will help the community understand the costs and benefits of shifting to sustainable energy sources.

Additional priorities

- Increase programmatic support for advancing development of infrastructure that supports increased adoption of electric vehicles (personal and commercial), including ample charging stations.
- Advocate for public and private programs to enable residents to participate in a Virtual Power Plant program where they sell excess solar energy back to the grid.

PEC Activities

Top priorities

- Monitor, assess, and report on the County’s progress toward renewable projects — particularly those in brownfield redevelopment areas.
- Promote small-scale, on-site solar to meet load demands on farms and rural residences.
- Continue our lead role in the annual Solarize Piedmont program, in partnership with the Charlottesville-based Local Energy Alliance Program.

Additional priorities

- Promote the exploration and adoption of geothermal energy in the Rural Areas to offset energy demand related to heating and cooling.
- Serve on the Department of Environmental Quality’s regulatory advisory panel and associated workgroups related to utility-scale solar to help ensure impacts to Albemarle farm and forest land are minimized when possible and mitigated appropriately.
- Support actionable best practices for local energy generation projects, including Utility Scale Solar.
- Advocate for comprehensive, consolidated regional transit both as a concept and as part of individual site plan review.

5 - Adopt climate-ready planning processes and nature-based solutions



Climate Action cannot be a sidecar — it should factor to some degree in every decision. PEC encourages the County to formally incorporate the perspectives of climate and sustainability staff, community stakeholders, and experts into decision-making processes related to land use, community development and transportation. PEC also encourages the adoption and promotion of County-supported incentives that promote the use of natural infrastructure as ways to prepare for and endure climate change and increased development. Nature-based solutions — from cover crops to urban tree canopies — is a broad category that has applications across all our priorities. Existing policies and other possible solutions are wide-ranging, and examples are provided throughout our platform.

Benefits:

- The County will be more resilient by broadly incorporating climate ready thinking and solutions into decision-making.
- Nature-based solutions provide resiliency, societal benefits, and ecosystem functions.

Recommendations for Climate Ready Action Area 5: Adopt climate ready planning processes and nature-based solutions

Comprehensive Plan Recommendations

Top priorities

- Advocate for the incorporation of climate-focused assessment review and consideration within the project review processes for all development plans, special use permits, and rezonings addressing both beneficial and non-beneficial impacts.
- Increase investment in community outreach and engagement programs to help residents, farmers, and business owners understand climate threats, local programs, state and federal funding sources, and other resources to support individual actions.

Additional priorities

- Incorporate the strategies included in *Protecting Green Infrastructure in Albemarle County, VA* (2017). Also, the report states that the plan is a living dynamic document and should be refined and updated periodically, we encourage the County to update the plan and associated strategies.
- Climate impacts should be factored into all new transportation projects.

Summary

The impacts of global climate change are already here and will intensify. At PEC we believe that we all have a responsibility to the present and to the future — that has been our approach for the last 50 years. Looking forward, we believe that we must consider climate impacts when addressing land use changes in Albemarle County and take deliberate measures to preserve and protect our natural resources and build sustainable, equitable communities. Further, we believe in a robust public process that enables participation from all as this is our shared future.

PEC's vision for the future of Albemarle County and all its residents is bold, inclusive, and innovative. The Albemarle County Board of Supervisors has an incredible opportunity to lead the way in rural climate resilience planning through its Comprehensive Plan in 2024. We encourage the Board to pursue bold and innovative approaches, like those outlined in this plan, to make evidence-based decisions and create an Albemarle that is a resilient, equitable, and desirable place for people to live, work, and play.

References

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