

Policy Briefing Summary

City Council



Regarding:	Environmental Regulations and Policy Review Project
Staff Contact(s):	Victoria Kanellopoulos, City Planner
Presenter:	Victoria Kanellopoulos, City Planner
Date of Proposed Action:	November 17, 2025

Issue

The Environmental Regulations and Policy Review Project ("Project") will develop new policies, implementation recommendations, and regulatory revisions to align the City of Charlottesville, Virginia's ("City"), policies and regulations for natural resources with the City's Comprehensive Plan. City Neighborhood Development Services ("NDS") Staff has developed a draft Project scope and identified several recommended topic areas. City NDS Staff is asking for City Council input on the proposed Project phasing and recommended areas of study, organized by topic.

Background / Rule

The City's Comprehensive Plan ("CP") implementation priorities include both supporting housing choice and affordability and protecting the natural environment. Since the City's new Development Code ("DC") was adopted in 2023, there have been multiple challenges with implementing these CP priorities, especially for smaller infill sites, where it is difficult to accommodate both by-right dwelling units and required grey and green infrastructure (including stormwater management and trees).

In June 2025, this Project was identified as part of the NDS FY 26 Work Plan. As NDS leads updates to the DC and the City's CP, this Project is an opportunity to collaborate across City Departments on a variety of related City plans and programs, including Resilient Together, the Community Flood Preparedness Fund Grant, and the Urban Forest Management Plan.

Additional information is available on the Project and is included on the City's website, including an overview presentation of existing conditions and recommended areas of study (also provided as Attachment 2).

Analysis

This Project supports multiple Strategic Outcome Areas including Climate & Sustainability, Housing, and Economic Prosperity. This Project will also inform updates to the City's CP through the five (5)-year review.

While scoping this Project, City NDS Staff identified six (6) topic areas: stormwater management, floodplain management, tree canopy, stream buffers, critical slopes, and energy efficiency. City NDS Staff has also conducted an extensive assessment of existing conditions to identify key issues and opportunities. Recommended areas of study and a proposed grouping and phasing of topics have been identified based on input from City Staff, alignment with related plans and programs, and impact on the City's CP implementation. Many of these topic areas overlap and can be addressed simultaneously.

City NDS Staff asked for the Planning Commission's ("PC") feedback on this Project at its October 28, 2025, Work Session, and will provide a summary of the PC's feedback during this Work Session (see Attachment 3).

During the Work Session, City NDS Staff's presentation slides will be the same as Attachment 1. Attachment 2 is provided as additional background information.

Financial Impact

There is no immediate financial impact. Project work is being completed by City NDS Staff and may use allocated Capital Improvement Program ("CIP") funding for the Project. There may be requests for additional funding for consultants as the Project progresses. A request for \$1.5 million of CIP contingency funds to be used for Project consultants and a Mobility Policy Plan was made on October 6, 2025, with a Second Reading held on October 20, 2025.

Recommendation

City NDS Staff requests direction on the draft scope and Project topics from City Council, using the following questions to guide the Work Session discussion:

1. Do the "recommended areas of study" in Attachment 1 capture the key areas of needed study for the six (6) topics identified for this Project?; and
2. Are there additional topics or supporting information that should be included?

Recommended Motion (if Applicable)

Not applicable. For informational and discussion purposes only.

Attachments

1. Environmental Regulations and Policy Review Project Presentation, November 17, 2025
2. Environmental Regulations and Policy Review Project Existing Conditions and Recommended Areas of Study
3. Summary of Planning Commission Feedback, October 28, 2025 Work Session