

Policy Briefing Summary

City Council



Regarding:	Public hearing and resolution to authorize execution of Right-of-Way Agreement and Utility Easement at Darden Towe Park
Staff Contact(s):	Riaan Anthony, Director of Parks & Recreation
Presenter:	Riaan Anthony, Director of Parks & Recreation
Date of Proposed Action:	April 20, 2026

Issue

Background / Rule

City Council approval is requested to authorize the City Manager to execute a Right-of-Way Agreement granting a utility easement to Virginia Electric and Power Company (dba Dominion Energy Virginia) across property jointly owned by the City of Charlottesville and the County of Albemarle at Darden Towe Park. The easement is necessary to extend electrical service near the Lewis and Clark Building to a new prefab ADA-compliant restroom facility adjacent to the picnic shelter and to provide upgraded electrical service to the existing pavilion facilities at the park. Without approval of this easement, the electrical installation required for the restroom and pavilion cannot proceed, delaying completion of a project that is part of Albemarle County's ADA Capital Improvement Project (CIP). This action is consistent with the existing joint ownership and operational framework between the City and Albemarle County as outlined in the 2007 Darden Towe Park Agreement.

Analysis

Darden Towe Park is jointly owned and operated by the City of Charlottesville and Albemarle County, with both jurisdictions sharing responsibility for capital improvements and park operations. Albemarle County's current Capital Improvement Project (CIP) includes installation of an ADA-compliant restroom facility to enhance accessibility and service to park users.

During installation, unforeseen electrical supply limitations were identified. To resolve this issue, a new electrical service line must be installed from the existing transformer near the Lewis and Clark Building to the restroom and pavilion. The proposed ROW agreement grants Dominion Energy a non-exclusive easement to construct, operate, and maintain underground electrical conduits and associated infrastructure across the park property.

The scope of the electrical installation includes:

- Installation of underground conduit and wiring
- Installation of a new 200-amp electrical panel mounted to the restroom
- Lighting, ventilation, and GFCI-protected outlets
- Power service to the adjacent picnic shelter pavilion
- ADA and local code compliance

The project improves public safety, extends seasonal usability of facilities, and ensures the park's infrastructure is modern, reliable, and prepared for future upgrades such as security cameras or automated fixtures.

Environmental impacts will be minimal, with trenching limited to existing paths and directional boring used to avoid roadway disruption. Energy-efficient LED lighting and ventilation systems will be installed.

Financial Impact

The total project cost for electrical installation is \$14,474.35, broken down as follows:

- Dominion Energy installation: \$697.55
- AAP Construction (road boring): \$3,200.00
- 200-amp electrical panel and infrastructure: \$10,576.80

Albemarle County's fiscal year 2025 expenses for this project were \$22,333, with the city's share at 30.75 percent or \$6,867.40. These costs were incorporated within the approved CIP budget for the ADA restroom project at Darden Towe Park. No additional General Fund appropriation is required.

Recommendation

Staff recommends that City Council approve the execution of the utility easement agreement with Dominion Energy Virginia. Approval will allow the City and Albemarle County to proceed with final construction and ensure the ADA restroom and pavilion facilities are fully operational, safe, and accessible to the public.

Recommended Motion (if Applicable)

I move that City Council authorize the City Manager (or designee) to execute the Right-of-Way Easement Agreement with Dominion Energy Virginia for the installation of electrical infrastructure at Darden Towe Park to support the ADA restroom and picnic shelter pavilion project.

Attachments

1. agr_abemarle_county_and_city_of_charlottesville_combined_0071
2. Darden Towe Park ROW_
3. 2026-04-20 RESOLUTION -Authorizing Execution Of A Right-Of-Way Agreement And Utility Easement