

North Fork

Charlottesville, Virginia



Type: Town Center
Designed: April 1998
Status: Plan revised by others,
Under construction
Size: 525 acres
Program: 3 million sf of mixed-use,
predominately office
space
Client: UVA Foundation



The University of Virginia Foundation selected a team led by the Washington, DC office of Duany Plater-Zyberk & Company which included Mitchell/Matthews, Architects; Alan Scouten, Architect; and Gregg Bleam, Landscape Architect, all of Charlottesville, following a national search and invited design competition to design a town center for the University of Virginia Research Village at North Fork. The 525-acre site is located north of Charlottesville, along the banks of the North Fork of the Rivanna River near Charlottesville's airport. When complete, the entire project will provide up to 3 million square feet of space, including space for research and development and hotel/conference center, and will support civic, commercial, and residential uses.



The proposed design represents a re-thinking of how research parks are used and planned. In response to the Foundation's stated desire to "emulate Jefferson", the team chose as a model Jefferson's Academic Village where the standard components of college were rearranged into a village with the expressed intention of creating an environment more conducive to learning. Similarly, the team proposed to arrange typical components of a research or office park as a village. Unlike most research parks that often lack a sense of place, include only buildings of similar size and use, and close after regular business hours, the University of Virginia's Research village will be designed around a traditional town center with a plaza, boulevards, cafes, greens, hotels, conference facilities and various amenities for the enjoyment of all the park's users. The research village will create a technologically advanced interactive community, where businesses, researchers, faculty, families and members of the community at large come together to work and socialize.



The team also proposed the addition of a residential component to the project. Although not permitted by the current zoning, the Foundation is considering this possibility for its programmatic and economic beliefs.