

NEWSBRIEF



American Planning Association
Virginia Chapter

Making Great Communities Happen

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Helping Healthy Norfolk Make Norfolk Healthy

By Newsbrief

Launched in 2011, the Healthy Norfolk initiative strives toward “excellent quality of life by promoting and supporting safe, healthy and active living in Norfolk”. Through community collaboration, Healthy Norfolk has supported health and well-being by focusing on policy, systems, and environmental change. Recognizing community health as an essential aspect of making great communities happen, APA Virginia has partnered with the Virginia Public Health Association to build on the successes and ongoing efforts of Healthy Norfolk.

This coalition seeks to address unhealthy diet and inactivity as determinants of chronic disease in the city of Norfolk, Virginia. Chronic diseases are a significant contributor to mortality and morbidity. In Virginia, heart disease, stroke, cancer, diabetes and arthritis, account for 54 percent of all deaths. 3.2 million Virginians (49%) have at least one of these chronic conditions or are obese; and one in five has more than one condition. In Virginia, as in many states, significant disparities in health and the ability to be healthy exist, both geographically and demographically. The number of years of potential life lost prior to age 75 (YPLL) is 77% less in the county having the best health outcomes, when compared with the county with the worst outcomes.¹

Norfolk, Virginia, a city of 243,056 residents, is one area in Virginia with significantly poor health outcomes: It is ranked 106th of 133 counties and localities. A large

number of residents in Norfolk are in economic need. Over 90,000 residents (41%) are living at less than 200% of the federal poverty limit [FPL], compared with 26% of all Virginia residents. Nearly 28% of children in Norfolk live in poverty, which is much higher than the 15% of all Virginia children. Over 20,000 children (61%) are eligible for a free/reduced lunch. Only 68% have at least a high school education, and 22% have severe housing problems, such as overcrowding, high housing costs, or a lack of kitchen or plumbing facilities.

Chronic diseases and their related behaviors and community factors are significant contributors to the poor health outcomes within Norfolk. Rates of diabetes (12.1%), high blood pressure (30%), cancer incidence (6.3/100,000) and cancer mortality (age adjusted rate - 201/100,000) are all greater in Norfolk than the overall rates in Virginia. Obesity is a significant contributor to the development of chronic disease and poor health outcomes; 35% of Norfolk adults report being obese, compared with 28% of all Virginians. Similarly, 70% eat



Figure 1. Health Opportunity Index

less than 5 servings of fruit and vegetables each day, 24% (or over 40,000 adults) eat less than one vegetable daily, and 25% report having no leisure time physical activity in the previous 30 days. Norfolk residents also have high rates of smoking, with 26% of adults reporting that they are current smokers, compared with 18% of all Virginians.

Social determinants of health and the community environment are significant contributors to health behaviors and over

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¹ County Health Rankings. Robert Wood Johnson Foundation and University of Wisconsin Population Health Institute. www.countyhealthrankings.org Accessed on 12/13/2014.



Photo by James May.



People Make Places, Not Governments

A new session of Congress is underway as is a new session of the Virginia General Assembly. There are some noteworthy contrasts. This Congress will remain in session until after we have elected a new President into early January 2017. Our General Assembly will adjourn on the last day of February 2015. While the somewhat romanticized Virginia tradition of the part-time legislator has faded over the past several decades, it remains mostly true that the women and men sent to Richmond each January have to have another way of earning their way the rest of the year. And because of this, our senators and delegates have a much better opportunity to remain connected to the folks and communities they represent than do the full-time legislators in Congress. For this reason, I believe that the Virginia way better serves the citizens of our Commonwealth.

However, communities are made by people, not by governments. While it is possible for government to attempt to prevent bad things from occurring, governmental action alone rarely makes good things occur. For the most part, the good things in communities are driven by people making individual, and occasionally collective, choices. And if residents are the fabric of communities, it is neighborhoods that are the basic building block of cities. It therefore follows that community plans and planning should reflect the needs, desires and aspirations of neighborhoods and residents—ALL neighborhoods and residents within the community. Too often the voices of certain neighborhoods are more clearly articulated than others and some residents gain more influence than others. While this is a political reality, it should not be a planning reality.

Proverbs 31:8-9 says, "Speak up for those who cannot speak for themselves, for the rights of all who are destitute. Speak up and judge fairly; defend the rights of the poor and needy." Our profes-

sion, as the guardians of the future, shoulders this responsibility to a greater extent than others. It is our job—our calling if you will—to be as inclusive as possible in our thinking and our plans. Thus, it becomes our responsibility to seek out otherwise under-represented neighborhoods and groups to discern how their interests and hopes can be represented in our work products. We already recognize that the traditional public hearing format—as often as not dominated by attorneys representing the already over-represented—is an ineffective way to truly gather public comment and thought. Thus new forms of public engagement have begun to emerge. Many of these capitalize on social media and the unprecedented digital connectivity that exists today. These potentially afford an option for those who are turned off by the public hearing approach to have a voice in decisions; however, not all are part of the new technology. The digital divide may leave out the aged, rural dwellers, recent immigrants and those for whom a smart phone with a data plan is beyond their means. These residents deserve to be heard and their goals deserve to be considered in the planning process as much as anyone else.

I recently listened to a special episode of the program called "The Public Philosopher" hosted by Michael Sandel of Harvard (and the opening keynote speaker at the 2011 APA National Planning Conference in Boston). The discussion questions whether democracy can continue to exist in an era of hyper-partisanship and uncivil discourse. For democracy to work requires an educated electorate to be interested, independent and involved believing that there are real choices and that each individual's vote matters. The participants expressed concern that many of those necessary precursors are disappearing. Moreover the increasing lack of respect for elected leaders and partisan stridency bordering on hysteria is turning off increasing numbers of eligible voters. While the discussions took place in London at the Palace of Westminster centered on the British Parliament, the concerns are equally applicable—and perhaps even more so—on this side of the pond. And in such an environment, it is especially important that we planners find ways to reach those who are staying away from the traditional political processes and include them in the plans we work to develop. Because, it truly IS people who make places, not governments.

“Speak up for those who cannot speak for themselves, for the rights of all who are destitute. Speak up and judge fairly; defend the rights of the poor and needy.”

— Proverbs 31:8-9

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pdo.apavirginia@gmail.com

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Mark Tyler Klein, AICP
membership.apavirginia@gmail.com

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jmh5yr@virginia.edu

Justin Grenzebach,
Virginia Commonwealth University
grenzebachjj@mymail.vcu.edu

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miguel.salinas@loudoun.gov

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Committee Chair
Wayne Cilimberg, AICP
wcilimb@albemarle.org

Young Planners Group

Abbey Ness, Co-Chair
Mario Wells, Co-Chair
apavirginiaypg@gmail.com

Editors

James May, MPA
Donald Whipple, AICP, ASLA
newsbrief.apavirginia@gmail.com

Graphic Designer

Anthony M. Nesossis
anthonyamark@nesossis.com

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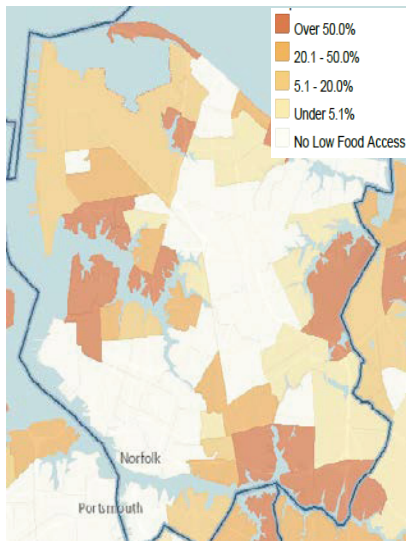


Figure 2. Low Food Access

all health outcomes. The Virginia Department of Health has computed a Health Opportunity Index (HOI) that identifies areas and populations that are most vulnerable to poor health outcomes based on social determinants. The HOI is derived from 10 indicators reflecting a diverse array of social determinants, including: 1) education, 2) environmental hazards, 3) affordability of transportation and housing, 4) household income diversity, 5) job participation, 6) population density, 7)

racial diversity, 8) population churning, 9) material deprivation, and 10) local commuting patterns. Areas with low health opportunity (i.e., they have few opportunities or resources that support the health of their residents) are associated with lower life expectancy. Norfolk City is one of the areas in Virginia with generally low opportunities for health (lightly shaded or yellow areas in Figure 1).

There are opportunities to improve conditions that contribute to better health outcomes. Currently, 15% of Norfolk residents live in areas that are considered food deserts. However, there are serious inequities in access to food, with some communities having no problems, while in other communities more than 50% of residents have difficulty accessing healthy food options (figure 2). Similarly, with a rate of 5.35 recreational facilities per 100,000 residents, Norfolk has a rate nearly half of the state average (10.35/100,000 residents). Access to parks and recreational facilities is not equally distributed; while more than 90% of residents in some areas live within ½ mile of a park, there are other areas in which no residents live in close proximity to a park (figure 3).

These data demonstrate that there are significant opportunities to improve health and reduce chronic disease in Norfolk through policy, systems, and environmental changes that impact access to healthy foods and promote greater physical activity. To

work toward equitable health outcomes in Norfolk, the coalition will pursue a “twin approach” that couples population-wide interventions with targeted approaches in communities bearing inequitable burdens of disease. The geographic area of focus is the entire city of Norfolk, with a targeted intervention in the neighborhoods surrounding the Norview Community Center.

The Norview Community Center opened in 2009 and provides a full spectrum of recreation and leisure activities to Norfolk residents. The city selected The Norview Community Center for this initiative because a large percentage of the population is age 17 and below, the community center is within 1 mile of a rich diversity in neighborhoods with a population of 3,889, and there is a belief from residents that barriers exist to accessing the facility, in terms of street and road design, a lack of pedestrian facilities, and perceptions of personal safety due to crime. There have been several bicycle and pedestrian accidents in this area. In addition, the surrounding population is 67% African American, compared to 43% of the city as a whole, and 13.6% Latino compared to 6.6% of the rest of city.

Some strategies will reach the entire population of Norfolk (complete streets and vending machine procurement policies), with Norview benefitting from the city wide strategies and focused community engagement using PhotoVoice to address barriers to accessing the Norview Community Center. Because policy, systems, and environmental changes take time to implement, the impact on the population may be delayed for strategies such as the adoption of a Complete Streets policy, which

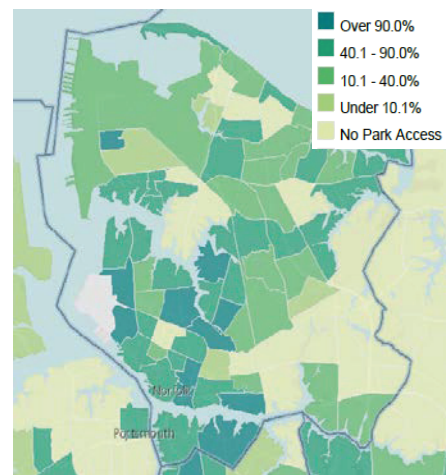


Figure 3. Population < 0.5 miles to park

changes the process by which streets and roads are designed to accommodate multi-modal users of all ages and abilities. However, even though it will take time, APA Virginia and the Virginia Public Health Association are committed to continuing the success of Healthy Norfolk and making great communities happen. ■

Valley Teacher Wins Grant for Trail

By Don Del Rosso

Turner Ashby High School teacher Cindy Ferek had no reason to believe that it would be anything other than a typical day on the job.

But that changed without notice on Monday, Dec. 8, when “15 guys in suits” walked into the school’s gymnasium. “Once I saw them coming in I thought ‘I hope this is what I think it is,’ re-

called Ferek, a health, physical education and driver’s education teacher at the school near Harrisonburg.

Ferek’s instincts proved correct. As it turned out, the contingent of Farmers Insurance, county school system and state education representatives visited her “class” to inform her that her proposal to construct a pair of multi-purpose trails on the Turner Ashby school campus would be funded through the insurance company’s nationwide Thank a Million Teachers program.

The company gave her a check for \$100,000 for the project. “They kept it a secret until then,” Ferek said in a telephone interview. “Very exciting.”

The company established five regional zones from which it selected 15 finalists – three per district. CONTINUED ON PAGE 5



Besides Ferek, finalists for the eastern zone included teachers from Baltimore and Lanham, Md.

The public, via on-line voting between Oct. 1 and Nov. 30, made the final selections. You had to be at least 18 years old and could cast one vote per day during the campaign, according to Ferek.

"I felt like a politician," said the Bridgewater College graduate, whose instructional duties also entail teaching adaptive physical education to special needs students. "I had to get out the word out. We needed to get everybody out to vote."

The planned trail system will provide multimodal access to the open space and athletic facilities on the approximately 70-acre campus (See map). "It's to make better use of the resources we had," said Ferek, adding that the facilities "are far away" from one another and the school.

It will accommodate pedestrians, cyclists, wheelchairs and golf carts, explained Ferek. No vehicles, other than golf carts, will be allowed on the nine-foot-wide trails, she said.

It also will be a key component of the school's driver's education program. Students on bicycles (acquired through various grants previously secured by Ferek) will learn the "rules of the road" through a variety of scenarios on the trails, said Ferek, who joined the Turner Ashby faculty in 1997. (Her winning entry is called "Two Wheels Squared," a reference to two bicycle wheels, "and when you square that number you have

the four wheels on a motor vehicle," Ferek said.)

"People say why do you use bikes?" to simulate highway experiences for students. To Ferek, who has taught driver's education for 17 years, the answer seems obvious. "Because I can't put them in cars. Most of my students don't even have a learner's permit."

The concept plan shows three trails totaling 1.14 miles in length. Trails 1 and 2, which will be funded with the Farmers Insurance grant, will be linked by a traffic circle. Trail 2 will be used to create vehicle passing exercises and other maneuvers. (Trail 3, which will link Trail 2 to an existing gravel drive that serves a baseball field, softball field and tennis courts, will be built subject to additional funding.)

Ferek stressed that trail use isn't limited to students and faculty. "Everyone can use" them. "The requirement is if (you're a cyclist) you have to a helmet."

Ferek hopes that the project will be put out for construction bids in January, with excavation beginning in March and work being completed in May. If things go as planned, the trails will open in time for the new school year, she said.

To hear her mother talk, Ferek, a licensed pilot, has always been a focused, dogged person. Over the years, Ferek has won a number of grants to buy 44 bikes to support the driver's education program, but nothing on the order of \$100,000.

Lee Pearson, said she had questioned whether her daughter could compete effectively for one of the Farmers Insurance grants.

"Cindy, there's no way you're going to win the award," said Pearson, who proof-read the grant application before Ferek submitted it. "She surprised us. She's a very determined, dedicated young lady."

The five grant winners also received an all-expenses paid trip to Pasadena, Calif., to ride on the Farmers Insurance float in the Rose Bowl parade and attend the Rose Bowl football game on Jan. 1.

"It's a pretty nice Christmas present," Ferek said. In anticipation of the trip, she laughed, adding: "This little country bumpkin is going to have quite an experience." ■

Learn more about *Two Wheels Squared*, by visiting: www.cindyferek.weebly.com



Cindy Ferek, Teacher at Turner Ashby High School in Rockingham County, VA was awarded a \$100,000 grant from Farmers' Insurance Thank a Million Teachers program to construct a multi-use trail around the school campus. (Photo and image provided by Cindy Ferek)

Land Use Equivalencies

By Tracey Shiflett, MPA, AICP

In the years since wide spread use of zoning, land use regulations have expanded beyond a tool designed to address nuisances to one that impacts a vast array of daily activities. Many communities have adopted zoning codes where land uses are



Tracey Shiflett

narrowly categorized and segregated. In many cases these zoning codes have become voluminous tomes full of lists, often with only minor distinctions between uses. This over classification phenomenon often happens driven largely by perceived rather than actual differences in land uses. Additionally, decision makers fall victim to political pressures and demands made by individuals or groups that support or oppose to a particular use when making land

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use decisions. I believe a better way to make land use decisions is to look at uses more broadly and group them by equivalencies.

Land uses are considered equivalent when the essential elements of the uses are the same. This is true even if the form or appearances of the uses are different. One of the most important laws enacted to address the equivalency issue is the Religious Land Use and Institutionalized Persons Act of 2000; commonly known as “RLUIPA”. According to the United States Department of Justice, This law was enacted in part because government land use regulations and decisions were treating religious gatherings differently than other forms of assembly. In its fact finding report on the issue, the U. S. Congress found that zoning laws “sometimes exclude religious assemblies in places where they permit fraternal organizations, theaters, meeting halls, and other places where large groups of people assemble for secular purposes.

In other situations, Congress found that zoning codes or landmarking [sic] laws may permit religious assemblies only after highly discretionary proceedings before zoning boards or landmarking [sic] commissions, which can and often do use that authority in discriminatory ways.”

RLUIPA highlights one type of land use, but the idea that uses can and should be looked at more broadly is something is an important concept for land use planners to embrace. The challenge for planners is determine the key elements and the make land use decisions based on these similarities rather on a narrow classification system based on perceived differences. A practical way to find these elements us through the use of scenarios.

Scenarios can be a useful technique in determining the essential elements of a use as well as a good way to present information to stakeholders and policy makers to assist them in making good land use decisions. As many of you will remember a few years ago, the Virginia Department of Social Services began requiring day care providers to show proof of compliance with local zoning regulations in order to receive or renew their licenses. This set off a flurry of activity across the state as communities worked to revise their zoning regulations in light of this change. It is also likely that the General Assembly will be looking at child care regulations in the upcoming session. Therefore, I have chosen this issue as simple example on how to use a scenario to identify the key elements of a particular use.

Scenario 1. Person X has just moved to a single family home on a quiet residential street with a cul-de-sac. There are 10 children aged 1-10. In order to support themselves, X receives funding from outside sources (government, charities etc.). She uses some of the funding to hire assistants to help with the children, cooking and cleaning.

Scenario 2. Person Y has just moved to a single family home on a quiet residential street with a cul-de-sac. There are 10 children aged 1-10. Y has a job and hires a baby sitter, a cook and a cleaner to help take care of the children.

Scenario 3. Person Z has just moved to a single family home on a quiet residential street with a cul-de-sac. Z runs a daycare for 10 children aged 1-10. Z receives money from the children’s parents and hires assistants to care for the children, cook and clean.

Are the uses different? I would suggest to you that they are not. In each case, money is exchanged, children are cared for and staff is hired. From an equivalency perspective, they are the same. However, in many communities, scenario’s 1 and 2 would be permitted, but scenario 3; if permitted at all, it would require special permission, because it would be considered to be a business use operating in a residential district.

In addition to scenarios there are many other ways to evaluate uses to identify the essential elements of land uses. Using the following techniques will help you and policy makers identify uses that are essentially the same and treat them as such.

1. Look at the issue from the 30,000 foot level rather than down in the weeds. It’s easy to get so wrapped up in minutia that you miss the big picture.
2. Determine the essential elements of uses. Find out what makes a use unique as well as determine what it has in common with other uses.
3. Use scientific research and standards. There is an enormous amount of information available to policy makers to assist them in making good decisions and build public confidence in the process and the law. Hire experts in the field if you need to.
4. If you can’t find useful research, use the “Duck Test”. If it looks like a duck, swims like a duck, and quacks like a duck, then it probably is a duck.

5. Get out in the field and observe how various land uses actually function.
6. Understand the laws governing the use. Review and understand the relevant statutes and case law. Some uses are mandated by law to be treated the same as others, even if there are some differences. For instance in Virginia group homes are required to be treated as single family residences in many cases.
7. Don’t substitute public opinion for facts. Just because a use is unpopular doesn’t mean that it’s not equivalent to other uses.
8. Don’t wholesale “borrow” (a.k.a. steal) regulations from other communities. Doing research and getting insight from your peers is fine, but remember, just because a law was passed, doesn’t mean it is correct or legal.
9. Your local government attorney is a great resource to help you with developing regulations; however, don’t let them do all writing and editing. Their role should be limited to determining legality and conformance with constitutional rights, not in developing policy. (*Note: I am not advocating that non-lawyers practice law nor should this or anything I write be considered legal advice.*)

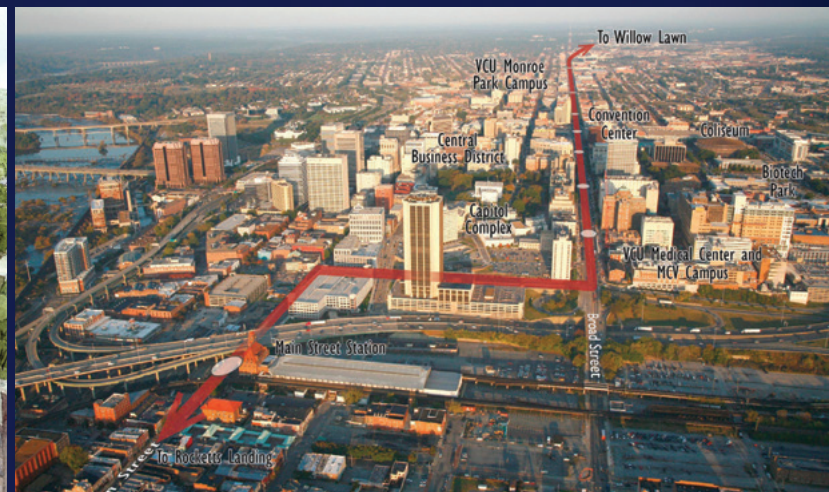
Mr. Shiflett is the CEO of Practical Management, Local Government, Business & Non-Profit Consulting. ■

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The Board Report

By Claire Jones, Secretary



The APA Virginia Board of Directors held its quarterly meeting on December 19, 2014, at the offices of the Richmond Regional Planning District

Commission. The room and the agenda were full as the Board began setting the tone for the coming year.

- Glenn Larson brought greetings and an update from the AICP Commission. The enhancement of the value of the AICP credential is at the heart the Commission's mission. Over the next year, the Commission will lead an initiative, in collaboration with members of all the disciplines and perspectives, that will assess and articulate planning's core competencies. Agreeing upon common AICP core competencies can form the foundation for new appreciation for the value of the AICP credential, and more effectively link existing initiatives like degree accreditation and professional development training together. Chapter members will be asked to provide its input on those competencies based on their own experiences as planners.
- The Board agreed to partner with the Virginia Public Health Association to apply for a Healthy Communities Grant focusing on the city of Norfolk. Strengthening partnerships with allied organizations through joint efforts like this one helps to raise awareness of the role of good planning in Virginia and will help to achieve our goal of making great communities happen here.
- Following our successful annual conference last July, this year's gathering in Norfolk promises to be a dynamic professional development and networking event. Plan to navigate the waters of planning with this year's theme: Resilient Communities. The call for sessions will be out in February, so now's the

time to start planning your proposals. For more details, visit the conference website at: <https://www.planning.org/chapters/virginia/conference>.

- The Mentor Match program will return to the conference this year. This program is an excellent way for experienced planners to share their knowledge with young or new planners who want to bolster their professional and personal growth. Other career building opportunities are being pursued by the Young Planners Group and will enhance the value of the conference for new and aspiring members of APA Virginia. Look for more details as the conference gets closer or contact our Membership Director, Tyler Klein, for more information.
- Our 2015 Legislative Agenda is set and bill tracking is once again available. Visit our Legislative and Policy Program page at <https://www.planning.org/chapters/virginia/policy> to follow the 2015 General Assembly session.
- The Chapter continues to make more information available through its social networking feeds. Please find us on Facebook and follow us on Twitter.

If you're interested to see what other matters the Board is discussing, please visit the APA Virginia website or contact one of the Board members. If you have any questions, contact Claire Jones at secretary.apavirginia@gmail.com. ■

2015 Legislative Agenda

By Emily Gibson, V.P. Legislative Affairs

With the call to order of the 2015 Session of the Virginia General Assembly, the Virginia Chapter of the American Planning Association renews its commitment to advocating legislation that helps make great communities happen. APA Virginia supports legislative and administrative actions which are outcome based and incorporate review of return on investment in order to ensure efficient expenditures of resources and opposes legislation that focuses only on the short-

term economic benefit of actions without considering potential long-term economic and other impacts on residents and businesses in the Commonwealth as a whole. The Chapter has identified six specific issues for focus as legislators convene to do the people's business.

First, the Chapter opposes any effort to establish state-mandated caps on development fees and proffers. However, the Chapter supports legislation that would permit impact fees based on local formulae with reasonable administrative requirements. The Chapter would not oppose requirements that impact fees be based on actual and anticipated costs, provided that the rational basis for each actual and anticipated cost is established by ordinance within each locality.

Second, the Chapter supports actions that encourage the development and promotion of building standards that provide for usability by all people, irrespective of ability. Universal Design practices and Visitability design principles promote community stability and allow residents to "age-in-place".

Third, APA Virginia recognizes the evolving nature of agriculture in the Commonwealth. The Chapter is committed to working with varied organizations to support practices foster economic growth and development of Virginia's agricultural heritage.

Fourth, the Chapter supports extending the requirement to consider the lifecycle costs of public investments to all state agencies and institutions.

Fifth, the Chapter applauds the tremendous strides made in the 2014 General Assembly to provide additional and reliable funding for transportation projects. Moving ahead, the Chapter feels that implementation of the funding plan for transportation costs now in effect should be supported, without change, to address the current and future transportation needs throughout the Commonwealth. Additionally, the Chapter supports transportation policy options and funding for mobility, connectivity, and accessibility to facilitate the easy movement of people and goods throughout the Commonwealth by coordinating transportation and land use.

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Finally, the Chapter believes that planning, zoning, subdivision, resource protection, neighborhood preservation, and local redevelopment are local issues that are best considered locally. The Chapter opposes any legislation that reduces local planning authority or threatens local ability to adequately provide for the health, well-being, and prosperity of all Virginians.

Planning provides opportunities for Virginians to look into the future and work towards a long-term vision. Planners are reliable and trusted sources of information committed to the communities they serve. The Virginia Chapter of the American Planning Association looks forward to working with the General Assembly to promote and protect our communities and our members.

For more information on APA Virginia's policy and legislative agenda, go to www.planning.org/chapters/virginia/policy. To see the status of legislation, visit the bill tracking site at eldonjamesassociates.com/vapa. ■

APA Virginia: Annual Summary on Chapter Membership & 2015 Preview!

By Tyler Klein, AICP, Membership Director

The American Planning Association Virginia Chapter (APA VA) membership continues to see an increase in planners, with 2014 seeing the second highest membership since 2008 (Calendar Year 2013 is first)! At time of writing, there are approximately 1,570 members across Virginia. Membership includes: full members, emerging professionals, students, university faculty, retired, and Chapter-only members. Student membership (full-time and free-student membership) from accredited planning programs (UVA, VCU, VT) in the Commonwealth continues to rise, along with faculty/university staff membership. There are currently 230 student and faculty members as of December 2014. Over 75 new mem-

ber welcome letters have been sent out since July 1, 2014, the majority of which were new student and emerging professional members. Ongoing work by the Young Planners Group chairs, University representatives on the board, efforts by the Planning Directors section outreach to universities as well as the formation of the Student Representative Committee all continue to contribute to this growth. These trends forecast a bright future planning in the Commonwealth!

2015 looks to be another banner year for Chapter membership and new member growth! The APA VA Governing Board in September 2014 transitioned to electronic new member welcome letters that in addition to making Chapter outreach more "green" also provides additional and interactive resources for new members to connect with the Chapter and other members. In addition, the 2015 APA VA Conference in Norfolk, VA will continue the enormous success of the mentor match program that provides opportunities for networking and professional development among student, emerging profession and seasoned veterans! Be on the lookout in early 2015 for information regarding the mentor match program and other great membership resources for all members!

For more information on Chapter membership, please contact the M. Tyler Klein, AICP, Membership Director at membership.apavirginia@gmail.com. ■

Planning Accreditation Board

By Newsbrief

At the fall 2014 Board meeting in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, the Planning Accreditation Board (PAB) granted accreditation to Virginia Commonwealth University (VCU) for the Master of Urban & Regional Planning degree and to Virginia Polytechnic Institute & State University (Virginia Tech) for the Master of Urban & Regional Planning degree. Sponsored by the American Planning Association (APA), the American Institute of Certi-



fied Planners (AICP), and the Association of Collegiate Schools of Planning (ACSP), the PAB accredits universities with bachelor's and master's degrees programs in North America. Accreditation is based on seven core standards, including: mission and strategic plan, student quality and diversity, faculty size and professional development, curriculum and instruction, program autonomy and leadership, program assessment outcomes, and progress towards strategic goals. VCU was first accredited by the PAB in 1977; Virginia Tech was first accredited in 1961 and is the oldest accredited program in the Commonwealth. Go Hokies! Go Rams!



NORFOLK 2015
Making Resilient Communities: July 19 - 22

Save the Date

It's only 6 Months Away
Norfolk Virginia, July 19-22

In 2015, the City of Norfolk will host APA Virginia's Annual Conference. We are developing an exciting conference program with a diverse range of speakers and topics. In the coming weeks, the Chapter will send out a request for session abstracts, for those wishing to serve as speakers. APA Virginia will also offer an earlier registration period, allowing attendees to secure their spots earlier than ever before.

Keep an eye out for future notices about the conference registration and session abstracts. We hope you will be able to join us at Norfolk 2015. ■

YPG NoVA Kicks Off!

By Trent Berger

The YPG NoVA Regional Committee held their first "kick-off" meeting on Thursday October 30, 2014 at the American Tap Room in Reston, VA. The event was well attended by 11 young planners from throughout the Northern Virginia region. The purpose of the meeting was to initiate engagement with young planners (age & mind) from the Northern Virginia region and create a network for future activities and outreach. The meeting focused on networking and

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socializing through which local organizers for the YPG NoVA Committee gathered invaluable feedback on the desires from the young planners for such a group to grow and expand professional development opportunities for young planners. Feedback from the participant's included a desire to engage at least bi-monthly for a networking/social event and on a quarterly basis

provide a broader event that would have a theme (lecture, volunteering, hike/clean-up) or focus on a particular planning topic (transportation, land-use, community development, natural resources, community engagement/outreach). The group also discussed opportunities to identify additional committee members, outreach strategies and future meeting locations to be capture

young planners in Northern Virginia.

The YPG NoVA Regional Committee is currently planning a second kick-off event for early-2015 to engage additional participation and hopes begin planning for a larger professional development event in the first quarter of 2015. For information regarding future events please contact Trent Berger (trentberger@gmail.com). ■

Montgomery County Names New Planning Director

By Montgomery County, Virginia (Photo provided by Emily Gibson)

“I am very excited to have Emily join the County's leadership team. Her experience with current planning practices is outstanding, and her leadership role with other planning professionals across Virginia will provide our planning department with a depth of expertise,” Meadows said. “Emily's focus is on exemplary citizen service, and I am confident she will work with our staff, our elected officials, and our citizens to help us chart a progressive and positive course for the County's future.”

Gibson has served as the Planner for Gloucester County since 2006. In her current capacity as Senior Comprehensive Planner, she supervises the Planning Division of the Planning & Zoning Department. During her tenure in Gloucester, she has served as a Planner I, Planner II and Planner III, and has been in her current position since 2013.

Gibson lives in Mathews County, and was appointed by its



Board of Supervisors to serve on the county's Planning Commission, a position she has held since 2008. She is a Certified Planning Commissioner, and is very active with the American Planning Association, where she serves as the Vice President of Legislative and Policy Affairs for the Virginia Chapter of APA. She has made presentations to a number of Virginia Association of Counties (VACo) committees, and has been a presenter at VACo's annual New County Supervisors' training. She has also appeared before General Assembly committees to discuss planning issues and regulations, and has served as Region 9 Director for PlanVirginia since 2011.

Gibson has Bachelor of Science in Environmental Policy and Planning, with a minor in Environmental and Natural Resource Economics from Virginia Tech. Her husband's family is from the New River Valley and they look forward to the move here with their son. Gibson's first day in her new position is Jan. 20. ■

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For more info, visit the APA-Virginia Sections website: www.apavirginia.org/member-resources/sections **First**, use the map on the website to locate your section. **Next**, contact your section director to receive notices about activities planned in your area. Section activities are a great way to meet other planners and earn CM credits.



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The Norfolk TIDE Light Rail System ... by the numbers

By Jeff Raliski, AICP

1	First light rail system constructed in the Commonwealth of Virginia began revenue operations on August 29, 2011
1.75	Dollars for a one way fare ticket
4	Park and Ride lots with 800 free daily spaces available
7.4	Miles in length from end to end connecting the Eastern Virginia Medical Center complex on the west through Downtown Norfolk to Newtown Road on the east and including sections of dedicated right-of-way, elevated bridges, ballasted track, and embedded rail street running operations
9	Siemens S70 bi-directional, low-floor light rail transit vehicles with available seating for 68 and a total capacity of 180 people
10	Minute headway service frequency in each direction during peak periods
11	ADA accessible stations with level boarding, shelters, lighting, customer information displays, public art and automated ticket vending machines
19	Feeder bus routes serving six station locations connecting the light rail system to the larger Hampton Roads Transit network and the surrounding cities
26	Minutes travel time from end to end
55	Miles per hour top operating speed for the system
318	Million dollars construction cost to complete
750	Volt Direct Current overhead catenary system powering the system
4,900	Average weekday riders, far above the opening day estimate of 2,900 people a day
1,200,000,000	Dollars in new investment and development along the light rail corridor since the announcement of the project

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Loudoun Supervisors Honor Retiring Planning & Zoning Director Julie Pastor

By Robin Geiger, Public Affairs and Communications Officer with Loudoun County, Virginia

The Loudoun County Board of Supervisors has presented a resolution of commendation to Julie Pastor, Director of the Loudoun County Department of Planning and Zoning, who is retiring effective January 1, 2015.

The Board's resolution points out that Pastor has served as Planning Director in Loudoun County since 1992, during a period of extraordinary growth and change in one of the fastest growing counties in the United States. During her service, the county's



population has grown from 86,000 to more than 330,000. Some of her major accomplishments include two "firsts" for Loudoun: development of the county's first County-wide Transportation Plan and the county's first Heritage Resources Preservation Plan.

Loudoun County Board of Supervisors Chairman Scott K. York, left, and County Administrator Tim Herstreet, right, present Planning and Zoning Director Julie Pastor, center, with a Resolution of Commendation adopted by the Board. (Photo by Lorie Flading)

Other highlights include:

- Implementation of the 1991 'Choices and Changes' General Plan, including adoption of the 1993 Zoning Ordinance with neo-traditional design concepts, mixed use patterns and rural village and cluster land use programs.
- Adoption of the 2001 Revised General Plan which updated land use policies, growth strategies and introduced the green infrastructure as a basis for community design. Two years later, the entire county was re-mapped to implement the plan setting the stage for a revitalized rural economy.
- Introduction of the concepts of high-density mixed-use nodes and a phased approach to development that successfully allowed for the approval of Transit-Oriented-Developments almost 20 years in advance of Metrorail to Loudoun becoming a reality.

Pastor received one of the highest honors of her profession earlier this year when she was elected to the College of Fellows of the American Institute of Certified Planners (AICP) in recognition of her significant contributions to the planning community and the profession.

Prior to coming to Loudoun County, Pastor served in both the public and private sectors. She has a Bachelor of Arts from Tufts University and a Master of Urban and Regional Planning from The George Washington University. ■



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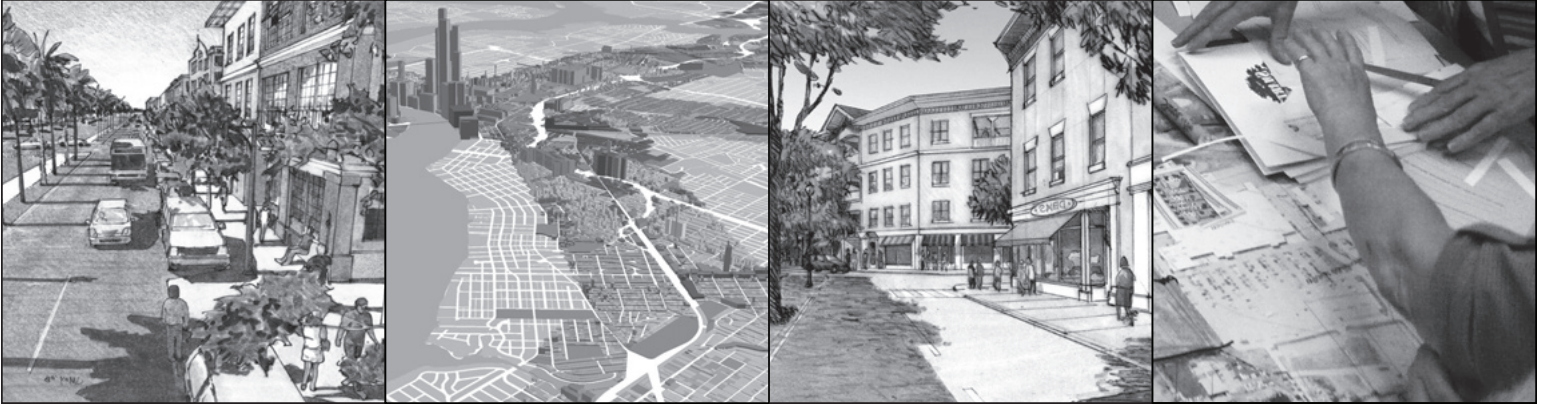


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Photo by James.



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c/o Eldon James & Associates, Inc.
24 East Cary Street, Suite 100
Richmond, VA 23219

PHONE 540-907-2008
E-MAIL eldon@eldonjamesassociates.com
WEB planning.org/chapters/virginia

NEWSBRIEF

Editorial Team

Andy Boenau, *AICP, Vice President of External Affairs*
Andy.Boenau@timmons.com

James May, *MPA*
newsbrief.apavirginia@gmail.com

Donald A. Whipple, *AICP, ASLA*
newsbrief.apavirginia@gmail.com

Anthony M. Nesossis, *Graphic Designer*
anthonymark@nesossis.com

The opinions expressed herein are those of the authors and do not necessarily reflect the views of APA Virginia or its Board of Directors.

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See page 8 to find out how you can get involved with your local section!