

# NEWSBRIEF



American Planning Association  
Virginia Chapter

Making Great Communities Happen

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American Planning Association

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## ROANOKE URBAN EFFECT DESIGN COMPETITION

By Linda J. Woods, Urban Designer, Clark Nexsen

**Roanoke Urban Effect** is an International Design Competition that challenged design professionals in 2008 to look beyond the traditional urban planning model and present innovative ideas towards a more vibrant and sustainable urban environment. The competition focused on connecting three focus areas along the City of Roanoke's main thoroughfare, Jefferson Street, by addressing streetscape, vehicular and pedestrian circulation, and other methods of enhancing linkage. The focus areas included:



Roanoke City Market

**Focus Area #1 - Roanoke City Market**, houses one of the oldest Farmer's Markets in the country and would be described by many as the heart and core of the region.



The Crossing

**Focus Area #2 - The Crossing**, was once a busy industrial hub. It houses railroad shops and several old industrial warehouses around the still functioning railroads.

**Focus Area #3 - Reserve Avenue/Riverside**, was once home to Victory Stadium and is significant in the minds of locals. Located along the Roanoke River it now contains several sports fields and an armory.

In November, 2008, **Clark Nexsen**, a



Riverside

Virginia architecture, engineering, planning, landscape architecture and interior design firm, was awarded first place in the **Roanoke Urban Effect Design Competition** for their Urban Design entry.

Organizers of the competition, a collection of local young professionals, affiliated with the Blue Ridge American Institute of Architects' Young Architects Forum (YAF), are passionate about the City's future vitality and had the goal of inspiring the community to dialogue about opportunities for future growth and development. The competition received broad national and international interest. The entries were judged by a four-person jury

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## REINVIGORATING A "SENSE OF PLACE" IN CHARLOTTESVILLE

By Brandie Schaeffer, LEED AP, Director of Community Planning  
The Brick Industry Association

*"You can't rely on bringing people downtown; you have to put them there...." – Jane Jacobs, The Death and Life of Great American Cities, 1961.*

From the late 1950s through the 1970s, local cities and towns installed nearly 200 pedestrian malls throughout the country. Today, approximately 30 still exist, and many of them are re-opening portions to accommodate vehicular traffic. However, some noteworthy communities such as

Charlottesville, VA, are deliberately enhancing and expanding their pedestrian mall.

**The Origins of Pedestrian Malls:** Several decades ago, before the principles of "New Urbanism" became part of today's lexicon, many cities and communities saw pedestrian malls as a way to help preserve tax bases and revitalize aging downtown districts that were competing against self-contained, suburban malls. Pedestrian malls were installed all over the country from coast to coast – ranging from Santa Monica to Minneapolis and Miami to Buffalo. Addressing concerns also faced by many other

communities, Charlottesville engaged Lawrence Halprin & Associates to design the Downtown Pedestrian Mall, which opened to the public in 1976.

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## PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE - JERYL ROSE PHILLIPS, AICP

Greetings,

It was my honor to represent the Chapter at the APA National Leadership meetings and conference in Minneapolis in April. What a great city situated on the falls of the Mississippi River - one that has embraced its mill history with fine examples of adaptive reuse of grand buildings along the riverbank, that has found ways to reinvent its retail, entertainment, and office cores and destinations with fascinating architecture and public art, and that has retooled itself to meet modern transportation needs and preferences with an aggressive regional transit and bike/ped plan. I learned much during my stay.

I am extremely proud of the work of our Chapter and its leadership. In Minneapolis, it was apparent to me that Virginia planners have been noticed and are holding important positions within APA and the AICP Commission. The list includes: former Chapter member, Irayda Ruiz-Bode, AICP, presently serving on the APA Board of Directors at Large; Terry Harrington, AICP, AICP Commissioner Region II; Past President, Denise M. Harris, AICP, Secretary/Treasurer of the Chapter President's Council (CPC), who is also serving on the leadership Nominating Committee and on the Awards Committee; our Ethic and Cultural Diversity Committee, recognized by the CPC with an award for its programs; Terry Holzheimer, FAICP, outgoing Divisions Council Chair and Divisions Council Advisor to the APA Board; recently transplanted to the Mid-West Jason Beske, AICP, serving on the New Urbanism Division; and, I am presently serving as Vice-Chair of the CPC Leadership Development

Committee. The work of former Chapter Treasurer, Jana Lynott, AICP, of AARP's Public Policy Institute was also prominently featured in a session on Planning Complete Streets Policy for an Aging America. Over 60 Virginia planners were in attendance, and those interested in how fine British ales are brewed gathered at a pub one evening for a bit of social networking.



During the APA Leadership meetings, the exchange of ideas between other Chapter Presidents continues to energize my work with our Board of Directors. Other Chapters, and even the APA staff, are very interested in many things we are doing well, such as our Legislative & Policy Program; the fantastic job that our AICP Professional Development Officer, Glen Larson, AICP has done with regular communication with our AICP members, among other things; outreach to youth on Careers in Planning and our student planners; and, our work on ethnic and cultural diversity within our profession, just to name a few. Likewise, I walked away with much food for thought on things we can do to enhance our programs. Discussions on Chapter Conferences A-Z, ideas for how to celebrate National Community Planning Month in October, leadership succession planning, and engaging young and student planners were all very helpful. I look forward to sharing what I heard with our Board during our summer meeting, at which time we will also be

evaluating our progress on the 2008-2010 Work Plan goals, and appropriating the revenue received during our Spring Annual Conference.

APA's National Infrastructure Investment Task Force has been created to evaluate current conditions and challenges affecting the nation's vital infrastructure, develop a new vision for that infrastructure, and identify recommendations for changes in public policy and planning practice. The task force will be headed by APA Past-President David Siegel, AICP; APA Past-President Robert Hunter, FAICP; and current APA President Bruce Knight, FAICP. The task force steering committee includes the chairs of six sub-committees, focused on the topics of transportation, water, energy, technology and telecommunications, public facilities and green infrastructure. In addition, a series of Town Hall meetings across the country has been launched as part of APA's *Rebuilding America* campaign and, should the series wind its way to Virginia over the summer or fall, we will assist in facilitating that community conversation here.

I have been recently contacted by the Region II Representative for the APA Student Representative Council (SRC), a second year Master's student at UNC-Chapel Hill, inquiring how APA and the SRC can better work with students and chapters to promote their mission of providing leadership in the development of vital communities. I shared with her the various opportunities for student engagement that our Chapter currently offers, including among other things, a Student Representative position on

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## ROANOKE URBAN EFFECT DESIGN COMPETITION CHALLENGES (CONTINUED)

comprised of some of the country's top minds in architecture and urban planning.

### The Challenge

Activity along the Jefferson Street corridor, with the Carilion Hospital to the south, and the historical Roanoke City Market to the north, is separated by the vacant "industrial island" of the Crossings (Focus Area 2). This area, once a busy hub housing railroad shops and working factories, contains the still functioning railroad tracks with Interstate 581 crossing over.

This convergence of transport corridors creates a major barrier for connectivity between downtown and the Roanoke River, and impedes pedestrian movement and walkability along the Jefferson Street Corridor.

The dense urban form of downtown with a consistent building edge along the street, disappears from Elm Avenue heading south. From here on the streetscape is characterized by primarily surface parking, irregular buildings of varying architectural style and quality, and inconsistent setbacks.

Elm Avenue, with five lanes of traffic, is not only an edge to downtown in the minds of locals but a barrier that prevents Elmwood Park from becoming the central gathering place. Heading south, City blocks have been consolidated and built out preventing connectivity and interrupting pedestrian movement.

So assuming these physical challenges can be overcome, what are we reconnecting to? The Riverside area to the South is emerging as a major medical district and generating significant activity as a destination in itself. Downtown needs to support and

capitalize on this emerging market by offering the twenty four hour, 7 days a week atmosphere that is so attractive to professionals and therefore employees.

### Planning Context

To arrive at a solution for reconnecting the Jefferson Street Corridor, it was important for Clark Nexsen to understand the planning context – both historically and plans in progress.

Roanoke has a long history of city planning commencing with the 1907 plan by John Nolen, who went on to develop plans for San Diego, Charlotte and Asheville. The Renovating Roanoke plan, provided the framework for the present day neighborhoods. In 1928, he updated his original with a series of parks, open space and amenities with walkable connectivity.

The City has continued its tradition of planning ahead for growth and development. The current long-range plan called Vision 2001-2020 includes the downtown and market district plans. Urban Design Associates (UDA) developed Outlook Roanoke in 2001. Duany Plater-Zyberk & Co. (DPZ) developed the City Market District Plan in 2005.

There are common themes that connect today's plans with John Nolen's originals. Each plan promotes the principles of what we refer to today as New Urbanism, and emphasize connectivity, walkable neighborhoods and districts, a mix of land uses, and quality open space. All encourage the connection of the urban environment with the natural via a greenway system.

*"Park units should be part of a*

*system. ...The parkways prove to be not only beauty lines but important circulation arteries."* - John Nolen – 1928 Roanoke Comprehensive Plan

A major element of John Nolen's 1928 plan is the defining of neighborhoods, each with its own central park space. Even back in 1928 he had the foresight to understand that these neighborhood districts surrounding downtown would eventually need their own centers providing basic needs and recreation for the local community.

*"The natural course of modern city development is leading to decentralization. The size of the city, its arrangement and topography, has built up neighborhoods of ... definite boundaries and of varying distances from downtown ... It is natural that at some central and accessible point there should develop a small local business group which will supply the neighborhood..."*

John Nolen – 1928 Roanoke Comprehensive Plan

### The Response

By understanding the evolution of downtown's urban fabric, the Clark Nexsen design team was able to identify an underlying framework based upon sound planning principles that could be tapped into and re-cultivated. The design solution had to be a response borne of Roanoke's unique challenges.

We established three criteria to revitalize and reconnect the Jefferson Street Corridor:

- Connectivity
- Activity
- Quality Open Space

To improve connectivity along the corridor the experience of travelling, both vehicular and pedestrian, must be enhanced to

*(Continued on page 4)*



## ROANOKE URBAN EFFECT DESIGN COMPETITION CHALLENGES (CONTINUED)

encourage visitors and residents to continue exploring from one end of downtown to the other.

Clark Nexsen proposed a series of walkable districts along Jefferson Street, reminiscent of the original 1928 Plan. These provide clarity and orientation at the human scale. At the heart of each district is a vibrant center providing a gathering place for

the local community, and an ideal location for transit nodes.

Pedestrian trails and greenways overcome vehicular barriers by offering an alternate route to Jefferson Street, and link these centers pulling activity from one district to another. Excess land along the I581 was transformed into a bike and pedestrian greenway that connects to the

Roanoke River greenway, providing a continuous link from north to south.

Each district is unique in land use, form, and aesthetics ensuring a distinct edge from surrounding development and a variety of experiences.

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## CHARLOTTESVILLE (CONTINUED)

The majority of the country's pedestrian malls, however, lacked the type of vision needed for long-term success. Many of the malls were simply re-paved, car-free streets that choked off automobile access. "When many cities installed them in the 1960s and 1970s, little thought was put into what would happen in the reclaimed space. Lacking a clear purpose, these malls were often devoid of public activity and became empty spaces, which, at their worst, were consumed by crime and loitering," Steve Davies, Senior Vice President of the Project for Public Spaces, a nonprofit design and planning group, said recently in the New York Times.<sup>1</sup>

Charlottesville, on the other hand, has had a startlingly different experience. The Downtown Pedestrian Mall is the second leading tourist attraction in Charlottesville – ahead of Monticello<sup>2</sup>. After the mall solidified its position as a vital part of the Charlottesville community in the 1990s, the City commissioned Wallace, Roberts and Todd to develop a Master Plan in 2001. The findings indicated that the basic concepts of the mall, including the bricked walkways, tree canopy and fountains, were still feasible. Rather than a complete overhaul,

the plan recommended upgrades that corrected safety and drainage concerns, replaced dying trees, updated key features, and remedied connectivity concerns<sup>3</sup>. As a result, MMM Design Group implemented a \$7.5 million renovation that was completed on time and under budget. The newly renovated Mall was unveiled in May, 2009.

### **The Ingredients for Charlottesville's Success:**

When one strolls through Charlottesville's Downtown Pedestrian Mall today, it is impossible not to notice a sense of vitality. The mall includes more than 120 shops and 30 restaurants located in the historic buildings on and around old Main Street Charlottesville. According to Jim Tolbert, AICP, Director of Neighborhood Development Services in Charlottesville, The Downtown Pedestrian Mall is the community's primary economic driver. Tolbert claims that, "most of the initial naysayers are the ones who are now claiming that the Downtown Pedestrian Mall is a great thing."

If a large number of communities are doing away with pedestrian malls, why is Charlottesville expanding and improving its

Downtown Pedestrian Mall? Tolbert gives several reasons. First, the Mall is home to unique destination venues, such as the Virginia Discovery Museum, the Paramount Theater, the Charlottesville Pavilion and a large number of local, "chain-free" stores and restaurants. Second, the Mall has significant "buy in" from the local business community, which is committed to the Mall's success. For example, the local government allots funds for maintenance, landscaping and police, and, in turn, the local businesses support special promotions on a continuous basis. Third, the Mall benefits from the populations at the University of Virginia, nearby offices and local government buildings which are closely connected to the Mall. Finally, the local citizens actively support the Mall and participate in its activities. The Planning Department and other groups involved local citizens by holding public hearings and disseminating information through several media outlets, including web sites like <http://www.mydowntownmall.com>. Put together, these elements enable all of the stakeholders to have a set of varied and vibrant experiences and attitudes that cannot be replicated with a conventional, enclosed mall.

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<sup>1</sup>"Pedestrian Malls: Back to the Future," By the Editors, "Room For Debate Blog," The New York Times, February 27, 2009.

<sup>2</sup>Dennis Holder, "Charlottesville's Downtown Mall is 32 years old and still thriving," [www.virginiabusiness.com](http://www.virginiabusiness.com), March 1, 2008.

<sup>3</sup>Excerpts from, "My Downtown Mall: History-Past and Present," [www.mydowntownmall.com](http://www.mydowntownmall.com)

## ROANOKE URBAN EFFECT DESIGN COMPETITION CHALLENGES (CONTINUED)

### + roanoke city market + the crossing + roanoke river

option 2: urban design



**Urban Design Entry - Proposed Vision Plan for Jefferson Street Corridor**

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## ROANOKE URBAN EFFECT DESIGN COMPETITION CHALLENGES (CONTINUED)

The treatment of Focus Area # 1 concentrated on reinforcing the pedestrian link between the historical markets and Elmwood Park, and reconnecting downtown to the south. Vacant parcels and underutilized sites were developed to create activity around the park and at street level. It was essential to reestablish Elmwood Park as the heart of downtown.



**Looking north-east across Elmwood Park**

To revitalize Focus Area #2 - The Crossings, buildings of significant character and history were retained to preserve the industrial history of the area and add character to this new urban district. Such buildings could provide cheap space for artists and startups. The urban form was then restructured with a main street and central piazza lined with new buildings of an industrial flavour. The district is energized by the greenway crossing through its center.



**Looking east into the Crossings**

This wasteland of surface parking between Focus Area #1 and #2 becomes another thriving district - The Village. The growing medical presence in the area creates the opportunity to build upon the existing Roanoke Community Hospital and combine this with education and residential to create a vibrant mixed use hub along Jefferson Street.



**The Village center**

Focus Area #3 - Riverside Park, injects the residential population that is needed to revitalize downtown and create a twenty four hour, seven day atmosphere. These would be ideally situated for professionals, close to the Medical district and with easy transit access to downtown.

The architectural style of these new districts is a contemporary interpretation of the existing urban patterns along the Jefferson Street Corridor, with variations as inspired by the surrounding historical neighborhoods of downtown Roanoke.

### The Design Team

The Clark Nexsen project team included:

- Director of Architecture: David Keith, AIA, LEED AP
- Senior Landscape Architect/Planner: David Taylor, CLA
- Urban Designer: Linda Woods
- Architect: Shriram Surendhranath
- Senior Architectural Illustrator: Peter Giraudeau
- Architectural Illustrator: Bayani Lacerna
- Architectural Intern: Gareth Ratti
- Architectural Intern: Patrick Ward
- Architectural Intern: Dalia Hafiz

Clark Nexsen is a premier architecture, engineering, planning, landscape architecture and interior design firm with over 88 years of experience. With offices in Norfolk, Alexandria, Washington DC, Richmond, and Roanoke, Virginia, and Charlotte and Raleigh, North Carolina, Clark Nexsen employs a staff of over 450 dedicated design professionals. For more information on Clark Nexsen, please contact **Mike Padden**, Principal, at 757 961 7871 or e-mail [mpadden@clarknexsen.com](mailto:mpadden@clarknexsen.com)

## REMINDER:

It's not too early to start thinking about next year's awards program! Now is the time to start planning a nomination for the APA VA Planning Awards. Awards will be presented at the next annual meeting covering the categories of planning, leadership, innovation, student projects, public awareness and journalism. More detail will be provided in the next issue of Newsbrief. So keep an eye out!

## CHARLOTTESVILLE (CONTINUED)

### Genuine Clay Pavers Critical in Creating "Living, Breathing Space"

According to UVA Landscape Architecture Professor Elizabeth Meyer, the original 4" X 12" bricks were one of the most important aspects of Halprin's original design. "He intentionally designed the Mall's surface so it doesn't look like a building wall," she says, "so it would differentiate itself from the historic buildings."<sup>4</sup>

Halprin himself stated that the brick pavers were a critical component to the atmosphere of the Mall. "I feel it's important to maintain the original brick size and pattern, as the ground level establishes the character for the Mall," he said. "If the bricks need to be replaced, I urge the City to replace them with similar ones."<sup>5</sup>

In fact, the brick pavers became a heated topic during the planning phase of the Mall's renovation. While almost 80% of the 30 year old clay pavers were in good condition, the mortar joints that held the brick together started to fail. To retain Halprin's original intent, control costs and maintain the aggressive timetable, Charlottesville replaced the original pavers with new clay pavers of a similar dimension. This time, though, MMM Design Group advocated that the pavers be laid in a sand setting bed – a method

of installation recommended by the Brick Industry Association for this type of pedestrian-oriented application.

The Downtown Pedestrian Mall is much more successful than most other pedestrian malls because it follows through on the principles of New Urbanism. The Mall is a pedestrian-friendly destination that is full of rich and diverse activity that appeals to a wide variety of constituencies. Its mix of one-of-a-kind stores, offices and superior cultural venues encourage people to circulate, wander and participate in the Mall's activities. Its design grid also promotes close connectivity both within the Mall and to surrounding areas at two levels – the 200' x 200' urban street grid as well as the 18' on center tree spacings.

Additionally, clay pavers play an integral role in the Mall's success. From the outset, clay pavers add a rich color and design palette that is critical in delineating the pedestrian-oriented spaces from gray, asphalt roadways. The modular sized units fulfill the intent of creating a human scale that enhances the Mall's environment in a visually interesting way. The durability and unsurpassed colorfastness of the clay pavers have also helped the Downtown Pedestrian Mall develop a character all its own – something that would

have been much harder to create with concrete paving systems, which cannot retain color without sealants. Finally, clay pavers embody the notion of sustainability. Made of natural materials, clay pavers never need sealing and can be re-used and recycled in a number of ways. Many of the Mall's pavers, for example, are being re-used and re-sold to local citizens. The beauty of clay pavers, as Tolbert points out, is that "not one ounce of the brick went to the landfill."



*Photo by Kelly Ewell, Brick Industry Association, June 2009*

### About the Brick Industry Association

The Brick Industry Association (BIA) is the national trade association representing distributors and manufacturers of clay brick and suppliers of related products and services.

<sup>4</sup>Dave McNair, "ONARCHITECTURE- Mauling the Mall? Don't change the bricks: Halprin," *The Hook*, June 5, 2008.

<sup>5</sup>Ibid.

## PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE (CONTINUED)

the Board of Directors, student recognition as part of our Awards Program, and scholarships for students to attend the Annual Conference. After sharing our Chapter Development Plan with her, I anticipate hearing more from her about ways we can improve this aspect of our Chapter programming.

Our Chapter, and in turn, the Northern Virginia Section leaders have also been asked to assist the APA Regional and Intergovernmental Planning Division in planning the next Mid-Atlantic Region

Conference in Frederick, MD on September 30-October 1. This conference will be examining the impact of the growth of the Baltimore-Washington Metropolitan Area on Maryland, Virginia and Pennsylvania. Also this fall, another regional effort to which all members are invited will take place with the Virginia and Maryland Chapters in Chincoteague on Virginia's beautiful Eastern Shore (ES) October 16-17.

In closing, we hope to announce very soon the date and location of the 2010

Chapter Conference so you can save the date early, during what promises to be another tight year insofar as travel and training budgets go. Your feedback on the 2009 Conference has been invaluable, and adjustments have already been made to our conference planning process as we strive to better meet your professional development and networking expectations. Enjoy summertime and its welcomed sunshine!

Jeryl

## SHOULD WE TOSS OUT OUR REGULATIONS FOR BETTER URBAN DESIGN?

by Dom Nozzi, AICP

*This issue's guest commentary comes from Dom Nozzi. Dom was a senior planner for the City of Gainesville FL for 20 years. He now lives in Richmond VA and has an independent urban design consulting practice. He can be reached at [dom@walkablestreets.com](mailto:dom@walkablestreets.com).*

The most wonderful, timeless neighborhoods and communities in the world were built without regulations or zoning codes. The regulations that *did* exist were less voluminous and less formalized.

By contrast, nearly every detail of new development is now regulated, and nearly all of these conventional zoning codes used by most communities today are costly, difficult to understand, time-consuming to use, unwieldy, gargantuan in size, and overly ad hoc.

The development regulations they contain offer no community vision of how development should be designed. Almost exclusively, the conventional code is a *negative* code—here are the designs that we don't want. Here are the things you should not do. The code says little about what we want, and says a great deal of what we don't want—the things that we fear. Developers, community planners and citizens are left with no predictability of what new development might look like, and no guidance as to what sort of development design is envisioned for various neighborhoods.

In the 20th Century the car emerged as the dominating form of travel, and at least in America, we engaged in a process of heavily subsidized car travel (and the car-oriented lifestyle). The subsidies have substantially distorted the market for what consumers value in terms of goods and services they desire. Unfortunately, car travel is a zero-sum game. Nearly always, when conditions are improved for cars, travel by other means becomes more difficult, unpleasant, and dangerous. In addition, the happier cars become, the more unhappy humans

become. A quality habitat for cars is an awful habitat for people.

In the walking cultures of the past, there would therefore be little need for individuals to be guided by laws/regulations/zoning. In a walking culture, individuals naturally build/design/choose walkable neighborhoods and lifestyles without being told to do so.

In my opinion, therefore, it is appropriate that in what is now—hopefully—a brief moment in time, we use the second-best approach. That is, the approach of using laws and regulations adopted by the community to guide individuals in making decisions for the common good.

New land development tools now being established by a growing number of communities throughout the nation are known as “form-based” codes (in contrast to conventional “use-based” codes).

The form-based code takes the position that design is more important than use. That it is more important to specify the height of the building, where it is located on the property, where the sidewalks belong, how the parking is provided and how the building walls, roof and windows are designed. It is less important—from the point of view of community quality of life to know what is happening *inside* the building (which is the primary focus of use-based codes).

In part, this de-emphasis on uses inside the building recognizes that non-residential uses often have a brief lifespan, whereas buildings and streets tend to be around for a much longer time. Thus, a growing number of designers and planners believe that the design of “bricks and mortar” is becoming more important to the long term quality of a community than the way uses are laid out geographically (“smart growth” advocates are quick to point out that “use segregation” is also working against community efforts to reduce excessive car

dependency and loss of a sense of community—among other problems).

Form-based coding acknowledges that while use segregation was quite important 100 years ago (when many uses tended to be much more noisy, ugly, dangerous and smelly), segregation of uses is declining in importance today because most businesses do not cause the same degree of problems for neighbors which were caused 100 years ago with the “dark, satanic mills” of our industrial past. That uses formerly needing strict segregation can increasingly be compatible neighbors.

Form-based coding has the potential to effectively correct the one-size-doesn't-fit-all problem. It allows a community to shrink the size of its land development code because describing a positive vision of what is expected requires a smaller code of ordinances than one that hopelessly seeks to anticipate all the possible negative things that might be done, and regulate against them.

Form-based codes make it more feasible for a community to establish a coherent vision. Instead of using confusing legalese and bureaucratic jargon, form-based codes use a large number of illustrations to clearly demonstrate (even to non-planners, non-engineers, non-attorneys and non-developers) what the community or neighborhood expects and desires from the new development. Predictability and local vision are therefore greatly enhanced.

Nathan Norris recently had this to say about form-based coding: “Economic arguments tend to trump most other arguments in our public discourse these days. Thus, the number one reason for [form-based] codes is economics. Predictability breeds investment. Unpredictability discourages investment. Form-based and

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## REGULATIONS FOR BETTER URBAN DESIGN? (CONTINUED)

transect-based codes breed greater predictability than use-based codes as it relates to what actually gets built. Thus, more developers will invest (and prosper) if provided a competent form-based and transect-based code."

Again, it is my hope that in the future, we will no longer need such heavy-handed, often ineffective guidance of individuals. That we can return to that happy time in which individuals were spontaneously acting in a

neighborhood-enhancing way. (In other words, naturally striving for place-making.) That we can throw away our 700-page zoning codes and rely on the cultural wisdom we had in our past—a wisdom informed by an environment in which the car is an option and not a requirement.

But in the interim, it would appear that the use of form-based land development codes (instead of conventional use-based codes) is a strong step in the right direction.

**Deadline for the next  
Newsbrief submissions is  
September 1, 2009.**

## APA VIRGINIA – PLANNER NEWS AND MOVES

Arlington County Planning Director **Robert Brosnan** reports that you can now trace Arlington's smart growth journey with a 52-minute documentary, "Arlington's Smart Growth Journey." The documentary, produced by Arlington County Government, traces the history of Metro and Smart Growth in Arlington. Producers Peter Hill and Mary Curtius conducted more than 24 hours of interviews with key elected officials, staffers, citizen activists and independent experts. The result is a compelling tale of how Arlington leveraged Metro to transform itself from an aging inner suburb to a nationally recognized model for smart growth. The documentary can be viewed on the Arlington county website at: [www.arlingtonva.us](http://www.arlingtonva.us), keyword: "smart growth." DVDs also can be purchased for \$5 by contacting Arlington county librarian Steven Carr at (703) 228-3708.

**Robert D. Fink, AICP** is Westmoreland County's new director of planning and community development. Robert is locating from Washington State where he was the planning manager for 8 years for Mason County. He does however hold degrees from both the University of Virginia and Virginia Tech so of course the first question we have to ask is, "Which team do you route for on game day?"

**Sandy Manter** joins the growing list of planners moving up in local government with her appointment in April as Onancock town manager. Sandy has been filling the position as the interim town manager. She has served as the Director of Planning for Accomack County for 10 years. An informal listserve survey found almost 30 planners turned administrators in the Commonwealth of Virginia.

And, joining the ranks of planners/politicians – our own **Dan Painter, AICP** has been appointed to the Town of Madison's Town Council to fill the remaining 3 years of a

4-year term. Dan joins such notables as **Mike Chandler** (Blacksburg- retired) and **Satyendra Huja** (Charlottesville).

**Jana Lynott, AICP**, is currently a Strategic Policy Advisor on Transportation/Livable Communities for the AARP, Public Policy Institute and she authored a new report that addresses the need to create Complete Streets that are safe and convenient for travel by automobile, foot, bicycle and transit regardless of age or ability. The study encourages roadway planners and engineers to approach road design through the lens of Complete Streets and employ design strategies that support older drivers and pedestrians. Findings from original research conducted for this study show that:

- Two-thirds of planners and engineers report that they have not yet begun considering the needs of older road users in their multi-modal planning.
- More than 80 states and localities have adopted Complete Streets policies, but less than one-third of these explicitly address the needs of older road users.
- Forty percent of adults age 50 and older report inadequate sidewalks in their neighborhoods. More sobering, nearly 50 percent report they cannot cross main roads close to their home safely.

The report suggests revisions to five intersection treatments in the *Federal Highway Design Handbook for Older Drivers and Pedestrians* to better balance the needs of both older drivers and pedestrians. If you would like hard copies of the report, "**Planning Complete Streets for an Aging America**" please contact (202) 434-3890. If you have any questions about the report, please contact Jana Lynott at (202) 434-3893 or [jlynott@aarp.org](mailto:jlynott@aarp.org).

## ETHNIC AND CULTURAL DIVERSITY COMMITTEE UPDATE

**By Joseph Curtis, AICP, Chair, ECDC Committee**

It has been a busy spring, starting with an ECDC speaker event with Parsons Brinckerhoff Vice President Rick Cunningham. The signature Planners Network Diversity Breakfast, which took place on March 19 at the Parsons Brinckerhoff offices in Norfolk, focused on Cunningham's accomplishments as an architect, marketer, vice-president, and champion for diversity issues during his tenure at several large infrastructure consulting firms. In addition to getting his company involved with Advancing Minorities in Engineering (AMIE), he has reached out to several historically black colleges and universities. Most recently, he has engaged his company to enter an information-sharing project with Hampton University. This partnership will allow HU students to be exposed to the engineering and planning professions.

Mr. Cunningham was just the beginning, since February, the ECDC has been assisting members of APA New Jersey who have expressed interest in creating a diversity group within their chapter. The ECDC, along with APA Virginia President Jeryl Phillips and APA Virginia Vice-President Denise Harris sent APA New Jersey a letter of reference and

offered to go to New Jersey to testify to the benefits of having a diversity committee. It is our great pleasure to let you know that the APA New Jersey Executive Committee approved the new venture, and the Planning Ethnic and Cultural Diversity Committee is now a reality! Congratulations, APA New Jersey—we look forward to working with you on a future project or session!

Moving back to Virginia, the ECDC would like to extend our gratitude to those who attended our session at the APA Virginia Conference in Williamsburg. "Overcoming Diversity Conflicts in Community Planning" was a two-part session using a real-life example involving community outreach with an ethnically diverse community in Loudoun County. We received a number of positive comments about this session and we really appreciate it. We strive to provide compelling and engaging sessions for our members, so thanks for letting us know we're on the right track! Thanks go to APA President Jeryl Phillips and ECDC Co-Chair Leon Hughes for facilitating the session. And special thanks to Miguel Salinas of Loudoun County and ECDC member for leading the session!

You'd think with all these events, we would get an award for our efforts. As a matter of fact, that's exactly what happened at the National

Planning Conference in Minneapolis. At the APA Meeting (the smaller meeting that takes place after the big Awards Luncheon) APA Virginia received the CCC Award for Outstanding Contribution to Members on behalf of the ECDC. President Phillips, ECDC Co-Chair Leon Hughes and I (ECDC Co-Chair Joseph Curtis) accepted the award and I have the personal responsibility of guarding the award until we come up with an appropriate place to display it. Until then, it is a great centerpiece of my entertainment system in the family room!

But we are not resting on our laurels just yet. We are working on future ECDC events in central, north, and southeast Virginia. Of note is the future ECDC diversity event on the impact of Lesbian- and Gay-owned businesses in Hampton Roads. We're already working on speakers and we expect to have this event in July or August. This could be one of our biggest turnouts ever.

And if you have an idea for a Diversity Breakfast or want to get involved, contact Joseph Curtis and Leon Hughes at [ecdc@apavirginia.org](mailto:ecdc@apavirginia.org). The e-mail will reach both of us. Thank you for your support!

## HAMPTON ROADS SECTION UPDATE

**By Joseph Curtis, Co-Chair Hampton Roads Section**

Greetings and welcome to the Hampton Roads section update. Once again, our Sector Directors have been busy on multiple projects. I've been busy gearing up for the ECO3 Symposium in Chincoteague this fall; Amy Jordan has been busy with a project of her own. Amy's 8 lb. 9 oz. "project," also known as Andrew Michael Jordan, was born this past May. I think my hands full lately, but not as full as Amy's!

At our last Section Meeting in February, we focused on planning issues on the Eastern Shore. Jim

McGowan and Sandra Benson, the Planning Directors of Accomack County and Northampton County (respectively) presented their issues to an audience of planners at the Parsons Brinckerhoff offices in Norfolk. The intimate gathering gave an up-close and personal look into the triumphs and the challenges of the strip of land connected to mainland Virginia by the Chesapeake Bay Bridge-Tunnel. Jim's presentation focused on a number of projects, including development at Wallops Research Park. This park is next to the Wallops Island NASA facility where a number of rockets have been launched into outer space. Sandra discussed the delicate

balancing act meeting the needs for development, agriculture, the environment, and the citizens of Northampton County. Sandra also discussed recent trends: from the emerging Hispanic population to increasing eco-tourism and aquaculture production. The meeting concluded with an invitation to come to the Eastern Shore. This Section Meeting, like all of our meetings, qualified for Certification Maintenance credit. And if that makes you wish you went, the intimate arrangement enabled us to order dinner for everyone.

*(Continued on page 11)*

## HAMPTON ROADS SECTION UPDATE (CONTINUED)

Amy and I realize that we have been scheduling many of our Section Meetings on the days other important events are taking place. With that in mind, we are going to

try to hold future events on Wednesdays instead of Thursdays. We are in the midst of putting together our next meeting and we will post the date on the APA Virginia

website...or you can subscribe to the APA Virginia listserv and you'll be the first to know!

## LEGISLATIVE UPDATE

Compiled from Press Reports

VP-Legislation and Policy, **George Homewood, AICP**, and legislative consultants, Eldon James & Associates, have recently compiled an excellent and very comprehensive summary of key bills for planners to know as a result of the 2009 General Assembly Session. This has been posted to the Chapter website and members are encouraged to review it for mandatory deadlines with regard to amendments that may need to be made to local codes and ordinances.

Forthcoming in the fall will be the Chapter's annual update to the publication, *Managing Growth and Development in Virginia: Tools Available to Localities*. The Legislative Committee of APA Virginia continues to monitor the work and draft legislation of the Athey-Vogel Subcommittee on paying for growth, and will also be gathering over the summer to review and update the Chapter's legislative agenda, and set priorities for advocacy in the fall, in preparation for next year's Session.

As a result of the position the Chapter took last year on SB 768 re: Impact Fees in lieu of Cash Proffers, which encouraged more dialogue in the form of a study committee, the Chapter was encouraged to learn of the formation of the Joint Subcommittee Studying Development and Land Use Tools, SJR 70/HJR (Athey-Vogel Subcommittee) at the end of last year's Session. The committee has been meeting since last summer, and the Chapter has been well represented by VP-Legislation and Policy, George Homewood, AICP, and legislative consultants, Eldon James

& Associates. At this point, the committee has drafted two bills, 1483-D and 1484-D. The first addresses changes to the existing laws pertaining to inclusion of urban development areas in comprehensive plans. The second addresses changes to existing conditional zoning and impact fee laws, again the elimination of the cash proffer system in exchange for broader, more comprehensive impact fee authority, including caps on fees. APA Virginia President Jeryl Phillips, AICP offered a statement to the committee on June 18, informing the committee members of the Chapter's interest in this legislation but without benefit of a consensus position to offer at this time. Phillips offered assistance to the committee via facilitation of expert testimony by planners who have consulted to other states in the formation of their impact fee laws, emphasizing education as the Chapter's primary approach. The committee will continue to meet during the

summer, and will likely conclude its work in the fall. **APA Virginia Chapter members are encouraged to contact George Homewood, AICP ([legislation@apavirginia.org](mailto:legislation@apavirginia.org)) if they wish to offer comments.**

In preparation for the 2010 Session of the General Assembly, the Chapter Legislative Committee will get together toward the end of the summer to review the existing Chapter position statements (see the Chapter website) and determine if modifications are needed and if additional positions need to be drafted. The Legislative Committee has also been working on drafting a response to the draft stormwater management regulations and hopes to have a document approved by the Board before early August 2009. Any Chapter members interested in serving on the Legislative Committee are encouraged to contact George Homewood at the e-mail address above.







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## **ECO<sup>3</sup> EASTERN SHORE SYMPOSIUM**

### **OCTOBER 16 AND 17, 2009**

#### **Mark your calendars now for the ECO3 Symposium in Chincoteague!**

A year ago, the Hampton Roads Section Directors realized that it was not reaching out the Eastern Shore as it should. The Section originally thought of having a Section Meeting on the Shore, but then we thought, a location like this deserves more than just a Section Meeting and it needs to be for more than just Hampton Roads! And before we knew it, we had the ECO3 Symposium. This 1.5 day mini-conference will focus on Planning, Development, and Tourism. The focus will be on Eastern Shore Virginia but you don't have to live on the Shore (or in Virginia for that matter) to benefit from this Symposium. There will be sessions led by the Virginia Department of Environmental Quality, Accomack County Economic and Community Development, Assateague National Wildlife Refuge, Eastern Shore Tourism Commission, and the Chincoteague Bicycle Master Plan.

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*A special thanks to Jim McGowan of Accomack County, Sandra Benson of Northampton County, Jared Anderson of the Town of Chincoteague, Tim Bourcier of DBF and APA Maryland, Radhika Paruchuri of DBF in Salisbury, MD, and Katheleen Freeman of Caroline County, Maryland for their continued assistance on the Host Committee.*