

VIRGINIA

TOWN & CITY

The magazine of the Virginia Municipal League

VOL. 52 NO. 4
MAY 2017

Time to act

Meeting the challenges
of short-term rentals
in a digital economy



**SHORT-
TERM
RENTAL**

Inside:
Innovation Awards
call for entries





How Secure Is Your Data?

A stolen or lost laptop. A phishing e-mail that exposes your organization to a cyber attack. It's more common than you think. Is your entity taking the appropriate measures to protect data?

VML Insurance Programs' (VMLIP) members with Cyber Coverage are protected from liability arising out of lost computer equipment, network security breaches and human errors.

In addition to liability losses, VMLIP members also have access to training and program development through YourCISO, an information security portal that provides:

- A security health check
- Personalized consulting
- The latest cyber security news and data
- Sample cyber security policies and templates
- Cyber security training and awareness materials; and much more.

To learn more about what VMLIP has to offer, visit: www.vmlins.org.





On the cover

VML urges every locality to take time and at the very least review the regulatory schemes your locality currently has in place that could affect short-term rentals. Here's an overview of factors to consider. Written by Michelle Gowdy, this story starts on page 15.

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Features



Become a Stairway to Success community

In its second year, the Stairway to Success program seeks to increase local government's role in early childhood education, which in turn builds a qualified, well-educated workforce. The competition awards points to localities for specific actions that enhance the early childhood experience.

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Active healthy seniors create a better future

Older Americans are working longer, trying new things, and engaging in their communities. Municipal and county leaders can harness the ideas and vigor of the older adults in their communities to create age-friendly environments that will help their older citizens stay vital and remain healthy as they age.

By Susan DeFrancesco and Clara Richards

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2017 Innovation Awards - Call for entries

It's time to stand up and recognize those municipal projects that have made a real difference in the quality of life in your community. The Innovation Awards celebrate all you do to make your city, town or county a great place to call home. Don't

delay, deadline to enter is July 31.

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Bicycling means business

The bicycle is the fastest-growing means of transportation. People bike for many reasons – better health, recreation, transportation, to save money, to run errands. But the biggest reason that bicycling is booming in the United States is the growth in bicycle infrastructure.

By Edward T. McMahon

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Marion and Southwest Virginia roll out the red carpet

WE HAVE JUST COMPLETED another round of Regional Suppers and again they were a resounding success with over 200 local officials attending! Traveling around the state, meeting our members, and talking to you about your needs and accomplishments is truly one of the highlights of working at VML.

This year's southwest regional supper was held in Marion, and it had the highest attendance that we have ever seen at a regional supper. And, let me tell you, they really rolled out the red carpet! The supper was held at the Holston Hills Community Golf Course (www.holstonhillsgolf.com), a municipal facility operated by the Town of Marion. The location was beautiful, but the real treat was the food. Employees from the Town of Marion grilled steaks and made every kind of side and dessert you could ever want. The town employees did all of the work, including planning, cooking, serving, and cleaning up. It was an amazing meal served with the utmost in hospitality.

To top it all off, we also enjoyed music provided by Austin Tate and Valley Grass. This 18-year old young man has played at the Grand Ole Opry and won countless awards. Check out their Facebook page <https://www.facebook.com/valleygrass/> or their website at www.valleygrass.weebly.com for more information. To the Town of Marion and your wonderful employees who volunteered their time and efforts, thank you for making this a special event. You are

terrific cooks and amazing hosts!

The next day, we were given a tour of the new School of Health Sciences at Emory and Henry College in Marion (<http://www.ehc.edu/academics/programs/school-health-sciences/>). This facility features two undergraduate programs as well as graduate level programs, including Doctor of Physical Therapy, Master of Occupational Therapy, and Master of Physician Assistant Studies programs. After a \$13.3 million renovation of the former Smyth County Community Hospital, what remains is a state-of-the-art facility that features world class graduate programs. Dr. Lou Fincher is the Dean of the School of Health Sciences and she has overseen the development of this facility.

In addition, Dr. Fincher understands the importance of community involvement. She has worked hand in hand with the Town of Marion on issues of student housing, downtown development, and more. What an incredible asset for Emory and Henry College and the Town of Marion! Special thanks to Dr. Fincher for taking time out of her very busy schedule to show us around.

And, special thanks to Mayor David Helms, Community and Economic Development Executive Director Ken Heath, and Town Manager Bill Rush for being terrific hosts! It is always a pleasure to be in southwest Virginia and Marion. 



The Emory & Henry College School of Health Sciences in Marion is nestled in the mountains of Southwest Virginia.

Catlin to retire in Albemarle

Lee Catlin will retire as Assistant County Executive for Albemarle County effective Nov. 1.

During her 25-year career with the county, she led the communications, media relations and community engagement programs, managed efforts related to economic development and tourism, and directed special projects, which included the Route 29 Solutions Business Assistance Program and a successful bond referendum passed by county voters. She has served in her current position since 2014.

Purcellville town manager to retire



- Lohr -

Rob W. Lohr Jr. will step down as Town Manager in Purcellville on July 1. He has held the position since 1993. During that time, the population of the town in western Loudoun County has grown from approximately 1,600 to 9,000 residents.

During Lohr's tenure, the town constructed a wastewater treatment plant, built a new maintenance facility, purchased the Fireman's Field park complex, renovated a church as the new town hall building, made streetscape improvements and preserved historic assets. Purcellville maintains a AAA bond rating. Lohr was Town Manager for seven years in New Market prior to coming to Purcellville.

Strasburg names Pearson town manager

Strasburg Town Council promoted **Wyatt Pearson** from Planning and Zoning Administrator to Town Manager effective May 3. Pearson has worked for the town of approximately 6,600 residents in Shenandoah County since 2014.



- Pearson -

Pearson replaced Ryan Spitzer, who left to serve as Town

Manager in Pineville, N.C. Pearson holds a master's degree in urban and regional planning from Virginia Tech, and an undergraduate degree from Virginia Tech in environmental policy and planning.

Transit authority taps Charles City's Trogdon

Charles City County Administrator **Zack Trogdon** was appointed Executive Director of the Williamsburg Area Transit Authority (WATA) on March 2. Trogdon, a native of Lynchburg, will assume his new job in mid-June. He served as administrator in Charles City since 2012, and prior to that was town manager in Boiling Springs, N.C.



- Trogdon -

WATA provides a transportation system to citizens and visitors of James City County, the City of Williamsburg and the Bruton District of York County. It operates eight fixed-routes and three specialty routes.

Trogdon holds a master's degree in public administration from the College of Charleston. He is an ICMA-credentialed manager.

Williamsburg RHA appoints director



- Gates -

The Board of Commissioners of the Williamsburg Redevelopment and Housing Authority (WRHA) named **Melody W. Gates**, a North Carolina housing official, as executive director of the agency effective June 1.

Gates, who served most recently as the executive director of the Benson Housing Authority in Benson, N.C., relieves Peter Walentisch of the responsibilities for the WRHA. Walentisch, the Director of the city's Human Services Department, had been serving in both roles. He will continue as the Director of Human Services.

Gates also has held positions with the state of North Carolina Department of Administration and Johnson County, N.C.

Peck appointed town manager

Reese Peck has been appointed town manager in Bowling Green. Peck comes to Bowling Green with nearly 25 years of state and local government experience, most recently as County Administrator in Essex County. His prior experience also included positions at the Virginia Department of Conservation and Recreation and the Department of Housing and Community Development in the Commonwealth of Virginia. He also served on the James City County planning commission.



- Peck -

Mr. Peck holds a Bachelor Degree in Political Science from the State University of New York at Albany and a Master's Degree in Public Administration at the University of South Dakota.

Johnston appointed as DHCD chief deputy



- Johnston -

Erik Johnston has been appointed as Chief Deputy Director of the Department of Housing and Community Development. Prior to this job, he served as the Deputy Policy Director in the Office of the Governor since November of 2015. Prior to that, he served as Director of Government Affairs for the Virginia Association of Counties. He also spent eight years working on federal policy with housing and community development stakeholders through his work with the National Association of Counties. Erik received his Bachelor's degree in Political Science and International Affairs from the University of Mary Washington and his Master's degree in Public Administration from Virginia Tech.

Bedford's Kolakowski takes Northampton post

Bedford Town Manager **Charles Kolakowski** resigned in late April to accept the position of County Administra-

tor in Northampton. He served Bedford as Town Manager for 11 years and was a key player in the town's transition from city to town status, a process that began in 2008 and culminated in 2013. Kola-kowski took over as chief administrator of the Eastern Shore county of approximately 12,200 residents in May.

A graduate of the College of William and Mary, he served previously as business administrator for the City of Bridgeton, N.J. Assistant Town Manager Bart Warner was appointed interim manager in Bedford.

Blake to head up Loudoun Department of Family Services



Loudoun County Administrator Tim Hemstreet announced in April the appointment of **Glenda Blake** as the new director of the Loudoun County Department of Family Services. Blake will begin her service in Loudoun County on May 4, 2017. She will replace Ellen Grunewald, who retired in 2016.

Blake comes to Loudoun from Ar-

lington County, Virginia where she most recently was the Aging & Disability Services Division Chief in the Department of Human Services. Prior to that appointment, Blake served as Assistant to the Director of Arlington's Department of Human Services. Blake earned a bachelor's degree in social work from Norfolk State University, a master's of science in social work from Columbia University and a master's in public administration from Virginia Tech.

Mason appointed as county administrator

Michael Mason was appointed county administrator at an April 19 meeting of the Accomack County Board of Supervisors. Macon had been serving as interim administrator since the end of January.

Mason is a long-time employee of the county who was first hired as deputy director of finance in 1996. He was appointed director of finance in 2008. He is a graduate of Old Dominion University, where he earned a degree in business administration, and is a certified public accountant.

Mover and Shakers

Do you know someone who's on the move? Send your announcements about new hires in local government, promotions, retirements, awards and honors to Sherall Dementi at sdementi@vml.org.

Fairfax executive to step down in September



Fairfax County Executive **Edward L. Long** has announced a retirement date of September 15. Long has served as county executive since April 2012. He began his career with the county as a budget analyst in August 1977. During his tenure, Long served as director of the Department of Management and Budget from 1989 to 1997. He was then appointed deputy county executive/chief financial officer, responsible for overseeing the county's financial and human resources functions. He came out of retirement in 2012 to take the position as county executive.

- Long -

News & notes

Charlottesville Gas wins annual Damage Prevention Award

THE VIRGINIA DIVISION of Utility and Railroad Safety of the State Corporation Commission recently announced Charlottesville Gas as this year's winner of the annual Damage Prevention Leadership Award. The award was presented to Charlottesville Utilities Director Lauren Hildebrand at the Damage Prevention Conference in Virginia Beach on April 18th.

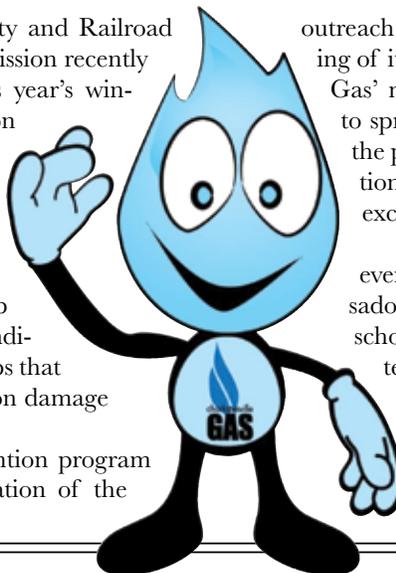
The Damage Prevention Leadership Award was established to recognize individuals, companies or stakeholder groups that have demonstrated a significant effect on damage prevention in Virginia

Charlottesville Gas' damage prevention program took off in 2014 with the implementation of the

outreach program "Dig with Care" and the outsourcing of its gas line location operation. Charlottesville Gas' mascot, Flicker the Flame, also contributed to spreading awareness about safe digging. Since the program's start, there has been a 75% reduction in gas line damage caused by third party excavators.

Flicker the Flame promotes gas safety at events around the city as a Gas Safety Ambassador. Flicker the Flame also visits elementary schools and summer camps throughout Charlottesville and Albemarle County as part of the Flicker @ Your Classroom program.

More information is available at <http://bit.ly/2qwy0Hh> and <http://bit.ly/2rqXm8G>.



Front Royal launches pedestrian safety campaign

HOPING TO RAISE PUBLIC AWARENESS about pedestrian safety, the town of Front Royal recently launched the Smart Towns Observe Pedestrian Safety program (STOPS).

The campaign is targeted at pedestrians, motorists and bicyclists and includes information about devices and practices designed to enhance pedestrian safety. These include important points for use of crosswalks, pedestrian warning signs, pedestrian signal indications and reflective materials for nighttime visibility.

The campaign focuses on three main areas: public education, infrastructure improvements and enforcement to provide a safe environment for all users of the road.

The town's goal is zero pedestrian fatalities.

According to the *Northern Virginia Daily*, two pedestrians died in the town this past January.

Additional information is available at <http://bit.ly/2pU7arj> and <http://bit.ly/2rfOupP>.



Hampton school system named Ford Next Generation Learning community

FORD NEXT GENERATION LEARNING Executive Director Cheryl Carrier presented Hampton City Schools with the Ford NGL designation at a gathering on April 20 at the Hampton Convention Center. Hampton is the first school system to receive the designation in Virginia, and is one of only 23 designated communities nationwide. Awards were also presented to community partners, including the City of Hampton, Peninsula Council for Workforce Development, the Virginia Peninsula Chamber of Commerce, and Thomas Nelson Community College.

The Ford NGL model mobilizes educators, employers, and community leaders to prepare a new generation of young people who will graduate from high school ready for *college, career, and life*, while prepared to compete successfully in the 21st century economy.

Using the Ford NGL model, *The Academies of Hampton* will prepare students for college and careers by providing opportunities to learn academics through the lens of a career. Academies also make learning more relevant and engaging as students get to work with professionals in the field who mentor them in their projects and develop problem-solving, critical-thinking, communication and teamwork skills through engaging in real-world problems. The overall goal of the academies is to equip students to make informed decisions about their future.

In order to be designated a Ford NGL community, Hampton developed a five-year master plan to increase the number of students learning in college and career academies and broaden its reach in Hampton and the peninsula through affiliations with senior business, education and civic leaders.

Ford NGL communities have demonstrated success through higher graduation rates, increased academic achievement, lower dropout rates and industry certifications earned in high school.



Hampton Mayor Donnie Tuck at the Ford NGL community announcement.

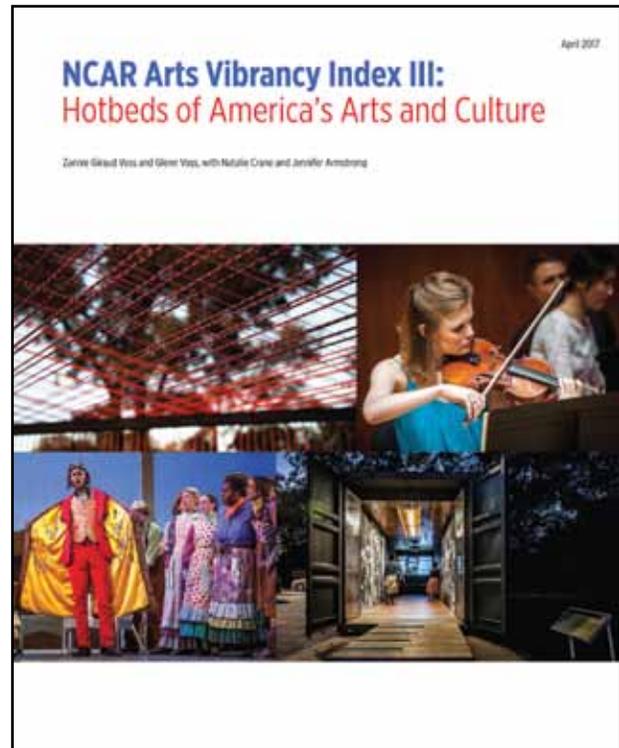
Washington-Arlington-Alexandria region tops list of most arts-vibrant communities

THE WASHINGTON-ARLINGTON-ALEXANDRIA, DC-VA-MD-WV Metropolitan Division ranked first among large metropolitan areas as the most arts-vibrant community in the US, according to a recent ranking by the Southern Methodist University's National Center for Arts Research. The Washington-Arlington-Alexandria division includes Arlington and Fairfax counties and the city of Alexandria in Virginia, the District of Columbia and Prince George's County in Maryland.

Richmond and the greater Richmond metropolitan statistical area took the 20th ranking.

The rankings are based on three factors: supply, demand, and government support. Supply is assessed by the total number of arts providers in the community, including the number of arts and culture organizations and employees, independent artists, and entertainment firms. Demand is gauged by the total nonprofit arts dollars in the community, including program revenue, contributed revenue, total expenses, and total compensation. The level of government support is based on state and federal arts dollars and grants.

A copy of the report is posted on NCAR's website at <http://bit.ly/2q82gKH>.



Spring Arts project features rain pictures

TO HELP CELEBRATE the Spring Arts Season, volunteers from the Williamsburg Book Festival are giving people a reason to play in the rain. The project is called Rain Lit (literature) and it involves applying short prose or poems to sidewalks using a stencil and temporary spray, with City approval, of course. The result is prose that is only visible when it rains or the sidewalk gets wet. This is accomplished by having the text show as a dry spot on otherwise soggy concrete.

The art project features prose gathered by the Festival through an open request issued in February. The exposition includes 10 separate works at different locations. The literary quotes should be visible for several months, fading with wear and weather.

The project is sponsored by the City of Williamsburg, James City County, the Triangle Arts & Culture League and the Williamsburg Book Festival.

City to use Facebook Live for meetings

IN APRIL, THE CITY OF WILLIAMSBURG began to use Facebook Live to broadcast its monthly City Council and Planning Commission meetings to the public. Regular monthly Facebook Live broadcasts began with the City Council meeting on April 13.

The City of Williamsburg has been broadcasting City Council and Planning Commission meetings via the City's website and on its government access television station for many years. Citizens and other interested individuals can visit the City website, click on a link and watch meetings on demand from wherever they may be. The introduction of Facebook's live video feeds, known as Facebook Live, is

a game changer in terms of engaging people where they are. Facebook launched its live broadcast feature in 2016 and it allows a user to see live streaming video posted by their friends or followed sites in their own Facebook timeline. Now, instead of going to a website and clicking a link, the user just goes to their Facebook page and the video is live right on that page. Live video feeds are getting attention. They are watched three times longer than the standard video post.

The City will continue to use website for live and on demand video as well as the government access TV channel.

High school students build tiny house

STUDENTS IN THE DESIGN and Engineering Class at Western Albemarle High School spent their school year building a tiny house, which will be sold upon its completion in May. According to the school's website, students learn how to communicate, work together and solve problems in order to design and build the house. Each student has had shop experience of 2 years or more, learning the basic technical skills needed to complete this task.

A news clip by CBS Channel 19 noted that a tiny house is by definition not more than about 400-square feet. The clip says that the house will be sold when completed, with the proceeds going to pay for building another house next year.

More information is available on Western Albemarle High School's website at <http://wahstinyhouse.weebly.com/>. View the Channel 19 news clip at <http://bit.ly/2qsbUT>.



Learn and Earn: Complimentary online course provides education and CPE

WHETHER YOUR COMMUNITY issues municipal bonds once a year or once every 10 years, it pays to be an informed issuer. A free online course developed specifically for local government professionals provides engaging lessons to highlight best practices and potential pitfalls of the bond issuance process.



Created with input from senior government finance professionals, the course allows participants to assume the role of an official responsible for issuing municipal bonds. Pick a financing team, practice financing projects using real-world scenarios and earn continuing professional education credit at no cost.

Most local government professionals can benefit from strengthening their understanding of the municipal securities market. The Municipal Securities Rulemaking Board (MSRB) created this resource to address a need for continuing education in the municipal market.

The course, *Being an Informed Municipal Bond Issuer*, is a useful learning tool for elected officials as well as any government professional involved in a bond transaction. Among the topics covered in the course are the roles and responsibilities of key members of the financing team and the disclosure obligations of an issuer.

"This course provides a unique and engaging way to help issuers understand the basics of the bond market," said Kenton Tsoodle, Assistant Finance Director for Oklahoma City and a member of the debt committee of the Government Finance Officers Association. "It is a great educational tool and an exciting development for the municipal government community."

Being an Informed Municipal Bond Issuer is part of the MSRB's MuniEdPro, a suite of interactive, online courses designed specifically for municipal market participants. Register for MuniEdProSM to take the free, 45-minute course. For any organization that wants to provide the course to a broad audience, it can be

integrated into in-house learning management systems.

In addition to the new course for local government professionals, the MSRB offers an extensive library of free, educational resources for municipal bond issuers available in the MSRB's online Education Center and on-demand webinar portal. State and local public finance professionals can get tips for using the MSRB's Electronic Municipal Market Access (EMMA®) website to monitor their outstanding debt, and learn how to comply with their ongoing responsibility to disclose financial information to investors throughout the life of their bonds, among other educational material about the municipal market.

As the self-regulatory organization for the municipal securities market, the MSRB makes educational resources available in support of its mission to promote a fair and efficient market. The MSRB's free, objective educational materials help ensure all market participants understand applicable regulations and current market practices. For more information on the MSRB's resources for municipal bond issuers, visit MSRB.org. 

About the author: *Lynnette Kelly is the Executive Director of the Municipal Securities Rulemaking Board.*



STAIRWAY TO SUCCESS

SUPPORTING EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION



STAIRWAY TO SUCCESS is a friendly competition among VML member localities. The program seeks to increase local government's role in early childhood education, which in turn, builds a qualified, well-educated workforce. The competition awards points to localities for specific actions that enhance the early childhood experience. Participants will be recognized during an awards program at VML's Annual Conference October 3 in Williamsburg.

See entry details on the following pages.



Steps to participate

- Step 1** Go to the Stairway to Success web page at www.vml.org to review the details and rules.
- Step 2** Adopt a resolution on the importance of early childhood education.
- Step 3** Download the digital application form and begin tracking your points.
- Step 4** E-mail your completed application form to VML at mgowdy@vml.org by August 18, 2017

Who's eligible?

Eligible participants include cities, towns and counties, but partnerships with other local government and regional agencies and with the private sector are encouraged.



What's the application deadline?

Completed applications must be e-mailed to mgowdy@vml.org no later than August 18, 2017. The form is available at www.vml.org.

Awards Categories

- | | |
|-------------------------|--|
| BRONZE
READY | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Adoption of a resolution on the importance of early childhood education• 1 or more activities totaling a minimum of 20 points |
| SILVER
SET | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Adoption of a resolution on the importance of early childhood education• 3 or more activities totaling a minimum of 30 points |
| GOLD
GO! | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Adoption of a resolution on the importance of early childhood education• 5 or more activities totaling a minimum of 50 points |

Checklist of Activities

Complete details on the checklist of activities that will earn points toward the award are available on the application form at www.vml.org. Creative activities are encouraged. The common denominator is early childhood education. City, county and town officials are encouraged to develop their own approaches to supporting early childhood education.

The activities below can get you started and/or help you gauge the number of points that comparable activities would merit.

Also, **you can claim points for activities you are already doing**, such as participation in Read Across America, or support for storytelling programs at the local library, but VML encourages you to enter into new programs as well.



Five Points

Five point activities are designed specifically to encourage participation in the program and to take very little staff time to develop. Examples of activities that will earn five points include establishing a station for collection of donated art supplies, displaying preschoolers' art projects in public buildings or other activities of similar scope. Remember, too, you can receive credit for activities you are already doing.



Ten Points

Hold an art competition for preschoolers, recognize local preschool educators or provide financial support for the Virginia Preschool Initiative Program or Head Start, or undertake similar activities and you will earn 10 points.

Fifteen Points

Develop some creative programs on your own such as a nature program targeted at preschoolers, literacy initiatives and programs aimed at the parents of young children (such as CPR or effective parenting), and you will earn 15 points.



What happens if we win?

Winners in all categories will be notified by September 8. All winners will be honored during the awards presentation at the VML Annual Conference on October 3 in Williamsburg.

Localities promote Building Safety Month



Catherine Milaris of Planning and Zoning (left) and Genet Teferi of Code Administration and of course, Mrs. and Mr. SweetFrog.

LOCALITIES ACROSS VIRGINIA celebrate Building Safety Month through a variety of activities ranging from the adoption of proclamations to exhibits and training sessions. Sometimes Building Safety Month even hits television airwaves!

CBS 6, the local CBS affiliate in Richmond, featured the work of the building inspector during its May 18 broadcast of “Nikki-Dee Can You Be Me?” Nikki-Dee Ray is a meteorologist who learns about jobs ranging from beekeeping to cutting hair to bartending in a weekly community feature. Ray visited Chesterfield County to learn about groundwork plumbing inspections.

Emporia, Greensville County and the Red Cross teamed up to install home smoke detectors. The agencies will continue their efforts in October 2017, in honor of Fire Safety Month.

Galax, Hillsville, Carroll County, Grayson County and Lowe’s held its second annual joint event on May 12. Delegate Israel O’Quinn presented a resolution from the Virginia House of Delegates in support of Building Safety Month. A workshop on residential deck construction was held throughout the day, as well as a demonstration by Grayson County representatives on the use of an unmanned aerial system (drone) in the inspection and mapping processes. The Galax Fire Department demonstrated its smoke trailer and made appointments for the installation of smoke detectors through its Deanna Project. The Deanna Project was started in 2009 after a 4-year old died in a fire in a mobile home in Galax.

Kevin Heath with The Lane Group and architect Doug Williams also made a presentation on good design practices using strong building codes. These practices promote economic growth within a community. Certificates of achievement also were given to five high school students who had participated in the High School Technical Training Program, which teaches students about building codes. And Lowe’s held a nail-driving contest!

The city of Alexandria’s 5th annual event kicking off Building Safety Month included lunch, exhibits and a training session on the swimming pool code, all held on May 5. The



Mike Ayres, of the Galax Fire Department and Ada Loree Patton.

kick-off event included remarks by Mayor Allison Silberberg, City Manager Mark Jinks, and International Code Council Senior Vice-President of Government Relations Sara Yerkes; as well as vendors from the local building community and representatives from multiple City departments. Further, the city provided free training for building safety personnel on deck design and wall bracing for wind design prior to the May 5th event. City staff also answers questions on building safety, design, permitting and construction, and other code-related topics at a different location each Saturday in May.

Fairfax County set up a month-long series of activities including presentations on accessibility, preparing for natural disasters, and green buildings and sustainability. In addition, tours of the plan review and inspections offices at the county administration complex will be held in late May.

Prince William County's celebration included a ceremonial signing of the Building Safety Month Proclamation by the county's Board of Supervisors, as well as exhibits on current building construction technology used to construct safe and secure residential and commercial structures. The purpose of the campaign is to bring awareness to the importance of code

enforcement officials and the impact they have on creating safe and sustainable structures. Jim Mertz, vice president of Retail Development for the Peterson Companies, told the group that Prince William County makes things easy for developers and keeps residents safe all at the same time. Jeff Kaczmarek, the executive director of the County's Department of Economic Development, said the approach development services takes helps make his job of attracting businesses to the county easier.

The Department of Housing and Community Development sponsors an essay contest with an award of \$1,500 for high school juniors and graduating seniors. The theme of the essay is to show how code officials promote safety and economic growth in their community. The recipient will be announced June 1.

Founded by the International Code Council, Building Safety Month is celebrated by jurisdictions worldwide during the month of May as part of a public awareness campaign to help individuals, families and businesses understand what it takes to create and keep safe and sustainable structures. The campaign reinforces the need for adoption of modern, model building codes, a strong and efficient system of code enforcement and a well-trained, professional workforce to maintain the system. 

Building safety celebrated at VBCOA conference

THIS YEAR VBCOA was honored to have Governor Terry McAuliffe's proclamation proclaiming May to be Building Safety Month presented at the opening session of VBCOA's 2017 Mid-Year Conference. Elizabeth Rafferty, representing the Secretary of Commerce and Trade, presented the proclamation to VBCOA President David Beahm. Also in attendance for the event were Bill Shelton, director of the Department of Community Development and representatives from the Virginia Plumbing and Mechanical Inspectors Association, State Fire Marshal's Office, International Association of Electrical Inspectors, Women in Code Enforcement and Development, and Home Builders Association of Virginia. The meeting was held May 1 in Charlottesville.

During the opening session, Beahm and Shelton presented Mike Toalson with plaques honoring his dedication to the construction industry and code development. Toalson retires later this year after serving as director of the Homebuilders Association of Virginia for twenty years.

VBCOA's mid-year conference also included the presentation of the VBCOA Region of the Year Award to Region I chair Brian Hildebrand, building official in Washington County. Region I's members include the cities of Bristol, Galax and Norton; the counties of Bland, Buchanan, Carroll, Dickinson, Grayson, Lee, Russell, Scott, Smyth, Tazewell, Washington, Wise and Wythe; and the towns of Abingdon, Big Stone Gap, Bluefield, Chilhowie, Clintwood, Hillsville and Wytheville.

Region VI Chair Richard Farthing, deputy chief facilities officer with the Virginia Community College System, accepted the plaque for VBCOA Merit Region of the Year. Region VI's members include the cities of Co-



(l-r) Elizabeth Rafferty, representing Secretary of Commerce and Trade Todd Haymore; Dustin McLehane, VPMIA President; Brian McGraw, State Fire Marshal; Paula Johnson, VAESA; and David Beahm, VBCOA President.

lonial Heights, Emporia, Hopewell, Petersburg and Richmond; the counties of Amelia, Brunswick, Charles City, Charlotte, Chesterfield, Dinwiddie, Greensville, Halifax, Henrico, Lunenburg, Mecklenburg, Nottoway, Powhatan, Prince Edward, Prince George, Surry and Sussex; and the towns of Farmville and South Hill.

Educational sessions were held on leadership development, concrete anchor installations, flexible gas lines, and cross laminated timbers. Some participants attended a tour of the Rotunda at the University of Virginia.

VBCOA is a professional association of code administrators and inspectors. The association's next meeting is its annual school and conference on October 15-17 in Virginia Beach. VBCOA is an affiliate organization of VML. VML's Director of Research Mary Jo Fields is VBCOA's outgoing executive director; Government Relations Associate Sandra Harrington assumes that role on June 1.

The time to act



t is now

Meeting the challenges of short-term rentals in a digital economy

By Michelle Gowdy

SHORT-TERM RENTALS (“STR”) have been the subject of discussion and negotiation by legislators for the last two sessions of the General Assembly, as well as by a subcommittee of the Virginia Housing Commission over the 2016 summer. With great relief, legislation to affirm that local governments have the authority to address issues regarding short-term rentals was passed by the General Assembly and signed into law by Governor Terry McAuliffe in March of this year. SB1578, introduced by Senator Tommy Norment, has an effective date of July 1, 2017. VML was pleased with the passage of this legislation, as the league has consistently stated that local governments have the authority to regulate this use of property and the ability to collect local taxes.



SHORT-TERM RENTAL

What is a short-term rental?

The new legislation first defines “short-term rental” as “the provision of a room or space that is suitable or intended for occupancy for dwelling, sleeping, or lodging purposes, for a



period of fewer than 30 consecutive days, in exchange for a charge for the occupancy.” (new VA Code Section §15.2-983) Regulation under this definition does not include persons who are licensed by other entities such as the Real Estate Board, Real Estate Time-Share Act, hotels, motels, and bed and breakfast establishments. This regulation also does not supersede contracts, recorded declarations or covenants or any governance document under the Condominium Act, the Common Interest Community, the Virginia Real Estate Cooperative Act or the Property Owners’ Association Act. If a vacation rental is handled through a real estate agent or a homeowners’ association restricts this use, then any pertinent documents apply.

Taxation, ABC regulations and registration

Commissioners of the Revenue are very engaged in the short-term rental issue as well because transient occupancy taxes must be collected. It is imperative that the Commissioners know where this activity is taking place so that the tax and income can be properly accounted for. While the legislation does not mention the transient occupancy tax, the registry provides a mechanism for accountability and local collection.

During many of the negotiations on the issue, regulation under the Virginia Department of Alcoholic Beverage Control (“ABC”) was discussed. For example, what if the STR Host offers the lodger a glass of wine? What if the lodger takes a beer? The bed and breakfast industry rightfully pointed out that as operators they have to obtain an ABC license before they can offer lodgers alcoholic beverages. Senator Norment responded to that by including in the legislation provisions that require STR Hosts to comply with the ABC rules that apply to bed and breakfast establishments.

Under SB1578, local ordinances may be adopted to outline an annual registration process. Under the statutory scheme,

the annual registration may include the complete name of the operator and address of each property in the locality offered by the operator. It may also include a reasonable fee for registration. Penalties for failing to register may be included, but cannot exceed \$500 per violation. The penalties may also include prohibiting the operator from listing their STR until the fine is paid. If there are repeated violations, an ordinance may address a prohibition on listing a property and registering.

The legislation affirms a locality’s ability to use local land use and zoning authority in regulating STR’s. Through the local zoning authority, a locality may require other items that it deems necessary for the health, safety and welfare of the locality.

Legislative history

The STR Industry proposed a bill in 2016 and repeatedly attempted to introduce a substitute bill during the 2017 legislative session that promoted its interests. While the proposals were different, the main points affecting local government were the same. With regard to the collection of the local transient occupancy tax, the bills proposed to have this local tax collected anonymously at the state level. This would prohibit any local Commissioner of the Revenue or Finance Director from being able to audit the tax. That type of collection is very uncommon. The approach is a concern to localities and is a precedent that should not be created. Anonymous reporting would have also made accounting for the income tax difficult. While ministerial registration would have been allowed if a locality created an ordinance, there would be no way to compare the registration to the anonymously collected tax!

These proposals also would have gutted local zoning authority. The original bill in 2016 flat-out preempted local zoning authority and allowed this use. This use would have been allowed without any zoning control at the local level. VML is strongly opposed to giving up zoning control at the local level. The proposed substitute refined this a little and defined residential dwelling unit in a way that did not include apartments, condos and other multi-family units. However, the substitute allowed operators of STRs to not register unless they were engaged in the use more than 21 days per year. One of the other items that was problematic is that the substitute bill exempted short-term rental registration from the Freedom of Information Act, meaning neighbors would not be able to find out from their own local government whether the property next door to them was a short-term rental.

Senator Norment came through this year with his bill which did just what VML had been saying; he affirmed a locality’s ability to conduct its business. His bill also addressed the ABC laws and stated that short term rentals should be licensed just as bed and breakfast establishments are.

Why local governments need to take immediate action on STRs

VML is asking every locality to take time and at the very least review the regulatory schemes your locality currently has in place that could affect STRs. The STR industry will continue to pressure the General Assembly to impose a statewide approach for STRs. As an example, even after the General

Assembly adopted SB1578 and legislators had left Richmond at the conclusion of the 2017 session, the STR lobbyists pressed Governor McAuliffe to introduce a budget amendment that provided for anonymous reporting of transient occupancy taxes.

VML is asking every locality to take time and at the very least review the regulatory schemes your locality currently has in place that could affect STRs.

VML has been very lucky to have worked on this legislation with both the Virginia Restaurant, Lodging and Travel Association and Hilton Worldwide. They were instrumental in helping affirm local authority.

All of the parties who worked on this legislation agree that it is vital that all localities consider adopting ordinances pertaining to STRs and how they fit with current and future zoning

Now to the fun part - How to create STR regulation and enforce

At the end of this article are web links to ordinances adopted by some local governments in Virginia that are already in place. There are also web addresses to forms that some Commissioners of the Revenue have that assist in reporting income/taxes.

Addressing STRs check list

- Review Current Lodging Ordinances**
- Review Transient Occupancy Tax Ordinances**
 - Meet with Commissioner of the Revenue**
 - **Collection/Remittance**
 - **Penalties**
 - **State Tax ID**
- Review Current Zoning Classifications for Similar Uses**
- Ask for Public Input and Recommendations**
 - Stakeholders include:**
 - **Hospitality Industry**
 - **Hosts of STRs**
 - **Neighbors of STRs**
 - **General Public**

Issues VML suggests that an ordinance should address include:

- Registration
- Zoning
- Collection and Remittance of Local Taxes

Registration

In talking with various legislators throughout this process, it was clear that they wanted to make STR registration as easy as possible. A “one-stop” shop for registration for STR Hosts is envisioned to include a visit to one permit center or to the Commissioner where the registrant could obtain a business license (if required) and a Virginia Sales Tax Identification Number (“State Tax Id.”), and could complete their short-term rental licensure with zoning approval (if needed) and any other required documentation.



Virginia Beach and Arlington are just two localities that offered an amnesty period for registration and waived the registration fee for a short period of time. This was done in an effort to obtain maximum participation in the registration process.

Several localities restrict STRs to owner-occupied dwellings and require that proof of ownership be provided as well.

Other items to consider include:

- Proof of insurance to cover owner, guest, and third-parties
- Safety items (signs for exits, carbon monoxide and smoke alarms)
- Trash collection and disposal
- Inspections by the locality to verify compliance
- Posted placards with contact information of the owner

Whether the locality requires a business license or not, it is important to work with the Commissioner of the Revenue so that any registration captures all the information needed to collect local taxes, including transient occupancy taxes, as well as to report income and sales revenues from STR Hosts to the state.

Zoning

Even if your locality does not allow for STRs, it is imperative to conduct an examination of the local zoning rules and consider whether or not STRs should be allowed. These reviews will show the STR industry that Virginia localities have seized the opportunity to make appropriate zoning and land use decisions based upon their unique local services circumstances.

There is an opportunity here to further define STRs:

- Should it be restricted to owner-occupied/primary residence?
- Should the use be limited to a certain number of days per year?

Short-term rental

- Should the responsible party be required to provide contact information?
- Is there a maximum number of overnight lodgers?
- Parking considerations
- Cleanliness (Chicago's ordinance requires new soap and clean towels)
- How should signage or display of a permit be handled?
- Noise control

Other zoning issues to be aware of is that nothing in this legislation restricts a special use permit or conditional use permit. A lot of discussion that occurred while working on this legislation revolved around treating STRs as home occupations, as they seemed to fit in this category.

These are just some of the things to consider when evaluating your local zoning laws and how STRs could play a part.

As a side note, there was also a bill this year to amend the definition of agritourism (SB1491) to allow the rental of a single-family residence on a farm for a period of not less than one week. While this bill died, it is likely to be the subject of future legislation.

Collection and remittance of local taxes

From the inception of the proposed legislation, at least one of the STR Internet companies has asked for anonymous reporting of transient occupancy taxes to local authorities. Anonymous reporting is extremely problematic for many reasons: Zip codes cross jurisdictional boundaries, there is no ability to audit and ensure the taxes being remitted are accounted for; income tax reporting could not be verified - just to name a few of the issues. Many states have reached agreements with Airbnb specifically to collect and remit local taxes to the state level, but those agreements are secret. VML does not support an anonymous agreement to collect local taxes.

It is imperative that local taxes be regulated at the local level; however, most of these STR Hosts will need to obtain a

state tax id. A locality can assist a business owner in obtaining the state tax id. VML urges you to work with the State and your Commissioner of the Revenue to provide this service, again keeping in mind the "one-stop shop" that legislators want localities to offer.

To assist STR Hosts, many localities – including Charlottesville, Staunton, and Blacksburg – have forms that hosts can use to report collection and remittance of transient occupancy taxes. Some localities have a form for bed and breakfast establishments that can be easily tailored to STRs.

Deadlines should be clearly stated and penalties enforced so that compliance can be achieved. There are various software systems available that "cull" the various STR hosting platform websites for listings in your area. Virginia Beach is experimenting with this software.

It is imperative that local taxes be regulated at the local level

Summary

STR Platforms are billed as part of the new disruptive economy and are exciting, but certainly are not a new concept. For centuries people have rented carriage houses, rooms and even traded homes without needing an Internet platform. The Internet has made these rentals easier to do, and much more widespread and public, which in turn highlights the tax, parking, noise and other headaches that can develop.

It is vital that localities demonstrate how capable they are in managing STRs and all emerging technology. I am hopeful that this article provides you some tools to use and consider as you address STRs. 

About the author: *Michelle Gowdy is VML's General Counsel.*

Locality websites of Virginia ordinances

Town of Blacksburg's Homestay Regulations/Forms:
<http://bit.ly/2qkNwra>

City of Charlottesville's Short-term Rental and Tax Reporting Statement: <http://bit.ly/2rjQKd8>

County of Botetourt's Short-term Rental Ordinances:
<http://bit.ly/2rjuT5u>

County of Arlington's Short-term Residential Rentals:
<http://bit.ly/2qKad9I>

City of Virginia Beach's Commissioners Office Information: <http://bit.ly/2pPSetw>

City of Roanoke's Short-term Rental Ordinances:
<http://bit.ly/2qoUVUW>

City of Williamsburg's Short-term Rental Policy:
<http://bit.ly/2qkZS2D>



A large, stylized graphic of an award trophy, possibly a torch or a similar ceremonial object, rendered in a semi-transparent, geometric style. It is centered on the page and overlaps the text. The background is a gradient of warm colors, from light yellow at the top to deep red at the bottom.

2017

VIRGINIA MUNICIPAL LEAGUE

INNOVATION AWARDS

Recognizing Excellence
in Virginia Local Government

CALL FOR ENTRIES

2017 VML Innovation Awards

THE 2017 VML INNOVATION AWARDS celebrate your hometown successes and all that you do to make your city, town or county a great place to live.

The Innovation Awards recognize outstanding achievements in local governments across Virginia. Formerly known as the VML Achievement Awards, the program is 40 years old and is recognized as Virginia's highest honor in local government management.

Don't miss this opportunity to spotlight programs that have made a big difference to your residents – to celebrate innovative solutions that address emerging needs.

The awards are presented at a banquet at VML's Annual Conference in early October.

Criteria

Projects and programs are judged on how well they demonstrate the following:

Innovative problem solving

Improved quality of life

Excellence in management

Making the most of local resources

Increased citizen participation

Commitment to higher levels of service

Long-term value to the community

Adaptability to other communities

Award-winning projects typically demonstrate innovative ways of delivering services, address a community need, or significantly improving an existing service.

Categories

Award categories are based on the field of work with local governments of all size populations competing within these categories. Our panel of judges have years of experience in local governments of all sizes and will judge the scope and impact of the project in relationship and proportion to the community's size, thereby putting localities of all sizes on a **level playing field**.

We recognize that many projects relate to more than one category. When deciding what category best fits your project, consider what the primary goal of the project is and what aspect of it demonstrates the greatest innovation.

Localities may submit in as many categories as they like. The categories are:

Community Health

includes building healthy community environments through active lifestyle programs, nutrition education and improving access to healthier food choices.

Infrastructure

includes public works, transportation, public utilities, stormwater, customer service enhancements, environmental preservation, sustainability, resiliency planning, structures and facilities, libraries and other projects.

Economic Development

includes business development, historic preservation, tourism, workforce development, housing, community events, strategic planning and visioning, public-private partnerships, consumer and financial literacy, public art, museums and similar projects.

Public Safety

includes police, fire, rescue services, emergency planning and coordinated response, building code enforcement, jails, health and mental health related to public safety.

Working with Youth

includes civics education, pre-k-12 education, summer programs, parks and recreation, library and literacy programs.

Communications

includes promotional campaigns, branding campaigns, crisis plans, events, customer service programs; media can include online, video, print, social and other formats.

President's Award for Innovation

One winning project from the category winners will be selected for the top prize – the President's Award – and will receive this top honor in addition to the award in their category. The President's Award can come from any of the categories.

Deadline

All entries must be received via e-mail by 5 p.m., Monday, July 31, 2017.

Rules for entering

- New this year, **all entries must be submitted electronically via email.** Localities must download the entry form at www.vml.org/education/innovation-awards and fill in all of the requested information directly on the form. The completed form must then be e-mailed to mtimbreza@vml.org.
- The competition is open to all VML local government members.
- Entries must cover new projects or programs completed between Jan. 1, 2016 and May 1, 2017, or – for existing projects – entries must cover major enhancements that occurred between Jan. 1, 2016 and May 1, 2017.
- Each entry form must be fully completed and must be signed by the local government's chief administrative or elected official.
- A local government can submit entries in all of the six categories. The President's Award is not a separate category.
- Supporting materials totaling no more than 10 pages, including photos, brochures, charts, or other information, can be included in a separate document. This document must also be e-mailed. If you wish to submit one video as part of your supporting materials, contact mtimbreza@vml.org and we will send you the link to a secure FTP site where you can upload your video. Maximum length of video is five minutes.

Questions?

For more information about completing your entry or other details, contact VML's Manuel Timbreza at mtimbreza@vml.org or call 804-649-8471.

The judging

Entries are screened by VML staff and judged by a panel of three judges chosen for their expertise in local and state government. They generally represent a variety of communities – from small towns to large cities and state agencies.

The winners

Awards will be presented at the VML annual conference in Williamsburg, October 9-11. All winning entries will also be featured in articles in the VML magazine *Virginia Town & City*.

Don't miss this premiere opportunity to spotlight innovative programs that make your town, city or county a great place for people to call home!



Active healthy seniors create a better future

Local role in promoting a better lifestyle for older Americans

MAY IS “OLDER AMERICANS MONTH” and an appropriate time to highlight the importance of building healthy communities that include healthy eating and active living opportunities for older adults. According to the National Council on Aging, “more than ever before, older Americans are working longer, trying new things, and engaging in their communities. They’re taking charge, striving for wellness, focusing on independence, and advocating for themselves and others.”

communities to work together to create age-friendly environments that will help their older citizens stay vital and remain healthy as they age.

Active living

As people age, they stop driving or limit their driving. Therefore, the walkability of a community becomes especially important to older adults. If they can walk to places in their neighborhood - such as a public transportation stop, a grocery store, a senior center, and a park - they may be more likely to stay engaged in community life and “age in place.” Also, walkable neighborhoods can encourage older adults to walk for exercise.

By adopting and implementing “complete streets” policies and practices, local government leaders can create walkable neighborhoods. Complete streets are designed and operated to provide safe and convenient travel for all roadway users, including pedestrians, bicyclists, users of public transportation, motorists, children, older adults, and people with disabilities. Some of the strategies that create complete streets for older adults include retiming signals to account for slower walking speeds and providing median refuges or sidewalk bulb-outs to shorten crossing distances. Also, sidewalk design features such as curb ramps, seating (such as benches and other street furniture), good lighting, and planter strips that provide a buffer to traffic, as well as other features that take account of the mobility, visual, and hearing capacity of all community members, can improve walkability.

Older adults are overrepresented among pedestrian deaths so designing complete streets that slow down cars and create the kind of pedestrian-friendly infrastructure described above can also reduce the risk of pedestrian injury. Sidewalks that are well-maintained and that do not present fall hazards are also important to keep older adults safe. Further, older adults’ security concerns can be addressed by design

“All sectors must be engaged in planning for the opportunities of a growing population of older adults to ensure we are not only adding years to life, but life to years.”

Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. National Prevention, Health Promotion, and Public Health Council. Healthy Aging in Action: 2016 Advancing the National Prevention Strategy.

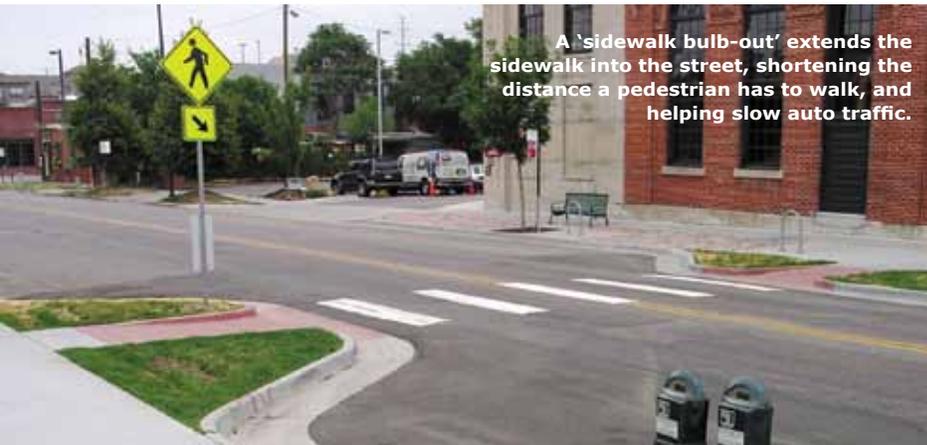


14.2% of Virginia’s population (about 1.2 million) is 65 years and over. Some projections forecast that there will be over one million more older adults in Virginia by the year 2025.

Sources: American Community Survey and Project 2025.

Active lifestyles and healthy eating can promote older adult health by lowering the risk of being overweight and obesity. In Virginia, 29.3% of the population 65 years and older is obese. Weighing too much leads to costly and debilitating health conditions such as heart disease, high blood pressure, diabetes, some cancers, osteoarthritis, breathing problems, body pain, and difficulty with physical functioning. Keeping physically active in later life can also help reduce the risk of falls, improve balance and stamina, and delay cognitive decline. The World Health Organization notes that “... older people who live in an unsafe environment or areas with multiple physical barriers are least likely to get out and therefore more prone to isolation, depression, reduced fitness and increased mobility problems.”

The physical environment in which older adults live has been shown to affect their levels of physical activity as well as their ability to access healthy food. Municipal and county leaders can harness the ideas and vigor of the older adults in their



features. For example, crime prevention through environmental design (CPTED) incorporates street design elements that deter criminal behavior.

Parks can also be an important community resource for older adults and can serve as a place to be physically active, connect to nature, and make social connections. The distance to a neighborhood park can sometimes deter use by older adults, as can concerns about safety and security. Design features that promote safety, deter crime, and improve the walkability of roads and sidewalks that lead to the park can help promote use of parks by older adults.

The concept of a “complete parks system” can help ensure that the needs of older adults are considered when parks are designed or improvements are made. According to the Complete Parks Playbook, “it is necessary to take into account numerous factors, including how people travel to parks; equitable access to parks; how parks are designed; what types of activities and amenities are planned for parks; how and by whom parks are used; what types of plants and trees are planted in parks; how parks are maintained; and how parks are funded.”

Healthy eating

Access to affordable, healthy foods is also important for older adult health. Distance to the nearest supermarket or other healthy food retail outlets matters – longer distances are associated with a decrease in the daily consumption of fruits and vegetables by older adults. Municipal leaders can use land use planning, zoning regulations, economic development, tax credits, and other incentives to encourage healthy food retail, especially in communities where healthy food options are lacking. Also, municipal leaders’ efforts to increase the walkability of communities, as described above, can provide older adults with safe access to retailers who do sell healthy food.

Older adults often have limited incomes, and low-income status has been identified as another barrier to healthy food access. Farmers’ markets/farm stands, food carts, and community gardens can increase convenient access to affordable, healthy food for older adults. Facilitating the use of municipally-owned and privately-owned property for community gardens by providing zoning and open space protections and a water source can promote the establishment of community gardens. Defining farmers’ markets as an approved land use, allowing and identifying sites for farmers’ markets and food carts on municipal-owned property; providing easier, less expensive permitting processes; and encouraging developers to dedicate

space for farmers’ markets are all ways local leaders can encourage the establishment and strategic location of farmers’ markets and food carts.

Many low-income older adults rely on the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) to purchase their food. Enabling or requiring vendors at farmers’ markets and farm stands to accept Electronic Benefits Transfer (EBT) can increase access to healthy food for older adults who, by means of EBT, can use their SNAP benefits.

Municipalities and counties that run senior centers can also increase access to nutritious food through their “purchasing power.” Contracts with vendors who supply food to senior centers, for example, can require that the food served at the center meet federal nutrition standards.

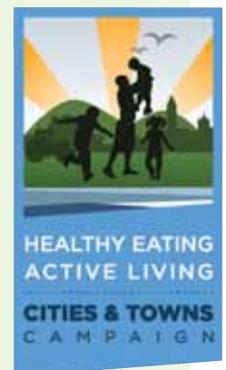
Conclusion

Municipal leaders can adopt and implement an array of policies and practices to create community environments that promote and support the health and well-being of their older constituents. By integrating the needs of older adults into local decision-making and planning – for example, decisions and planning involving transportation, street and sidewalk design, park development, and land use and zoning – localities can create age-friendly communities. But age-friendly communities that provide safe, walkable neighborhoods and convenient access to healthy food and places to be physically active promote not only the health of older adults – they benefit citizens of all ages! 

About the Authors: *Susan DeFrancesco, HEAL Cities and Towns Campaign Manager, Institute for Public Health Innovation and Clara Richards, Master of Public Health Student, Department of Behavioral and Community Health, University of Maryland School of Public Health.*

For more information

THE HEAL CITIES AND TOWNS CAMPAIGN of the Mid-Atlantic offers free technical assistance to municipal leaders to help them create healthy, prosperous communities. The Campaign, funded by Kaiser Permanente, is a project of the Institute for Public Health Innovation. The Virginia Municipal League has been a strategic partner in the development and promotion of the Campaign. To date, 27 cities, towns and counties in Virginia have joined the Campaign. For more information about coming a HEAL city or town and for resources regarding older adults and healthy eating and active living, visit the HEAL Cities and Towns website at www.healcitiesmidatlantic.org or contact Susan DeFrancesco, HEAL Cities & Towns Campaign Manager at 240-252-2016.





Bicycling means business

Bike lanes and other infrastructure draw more cyclists and spur rising property values.

By Edward T. McMahon

This article originally appeared in Urban Land, the magazine of the Urban Land Institute.

WHAT IS THE FASTEST-GROWING means of transportation in the United States? The bicycle, according to the U.S. Census Bureau. People bike for many reasons – better health, recreation, transportation, to save money, to run errands. But the biggest reason that bicycling is booming in the United States is the growth in bicycle infrastructure.

In 1992, there were only 50 federally funded bicycle infrastructure projects; last year, there were about 2,500. The Rails to-Trails Conservancy says there now are more than 1,900 rails-to-trails projects totaling almost 31,000 miles (50,000 km) of safe, off-road bike trails. Bicycle infrastructure also includes many additional miles of grade-separated bike trails, protected bike lanes, and a growing system of bike boulevards (low-traffic streets optimized for cycling).

Bicycling is part of a larger shift toward “shared-use mobility,” which emphasizes the availability of multiple, shared ways of moving around a city rather than vehicle ownership. Ride sharing, car sharing, bike sharing, Uber, Lyft, and autonomous vehicles are all part of this larger evolution. Today, for example, there are almost 120 urban bike-share systems in the United States and over 750 worldwide.

Just as investments in roads and highways led to automobile-oriented development and public transportation investments led to transit-oriented development, investments in bicycle infrastructure are now leading to trail-oriented development. This trend is likely to grow because bicycle infrastructure is relatively inexpensive and it provides high levels of return on investment. For instance, Portland, Oregon – the U.S. city with the highest percentage of bicycle commuters – has developed a 300-mile (483 km) network of bike trails, lanes, and boulevards

for about \$60 million—about the same cost as one mile (1.6 km) of urban freeway.

San Francisco reports that one mile of protected bikeway in the heart of the city cost \$445,000. This seems expensive until one considers that reconstruction of a one-mile segment

Economic effects of biking in Virginia

Bicycle tourism in the Central Shenandoah Valley region is estimated to have generated \$8.6 million in sales activity in 2015. The total economic impact of bicycle tourism, including multiplier effects, is estimated to have been \$13.6 million that supported 184 jobs in the region in 2015.

Source: *The Economic Impact of Bicycling in the Central Shenandoah Valley.*

From 2012 to 2015, Richmond 2015 generated an estimated \$161.5 million (direct, indirect, and induced) in economic impact in the Richmond metropolitan statistical area.

Source: *Chmura Economics & Analytics: The Economic Impact of Richmond 2015 in Richmond MSA and Virginia*

As of December, 2016, the Virginia Capital Trail, which runs from Jamestown to Richmond, had exceeded its first year ridership, with 550,000 riders from all over the US.

Source: *Mobility Lab, “Virginia’s new Capital Trail spurs biking investments along its route.”*



One approach to counting bikers

BIKE WALK RVA COLLECTS DATA twice a year (May and September) on the number of people biking and walking in the Richmond area. Volunteers are assigned to 30 locations across the city to manually count the number of people biking and walking. Visit www.sportsbackers.org/program/bike-walk-rva/bikeped-counts.

of Doyle Drive cost \$571 million and a new one-mile refurbishment of the Bay Bridge cost \$2.07 billion. Dare County, North Carolina, which includes the Outer Banks, reports that a one-time expenditure of \$6.7 million to build a bike trail parallel to the beach resulted in a nine-to-one annual return on investment.

Bicycling is good for health and the environment, but it is very good for business, too. Numerous studies show that bike trails increase the value of nearby properties. A study of Indianapolis's Cultural Trail, for example, found that property values within one block of the trail rose 148 percent between 2008 and 2014 – far more than in the city as a whole. Studies of the Minuteman Bikeway in Massachusetts and the Katy Trail in Dallas found that homes near the trails sold faster and for more money than homes farther away. In 2002, the National Association of Realtors reported that walking trails and bike paths were the top neighborhood amenity sought by homebuyers.

Bicycling can also have a positive impact on retail sales. The New York City Department of Transportation, for instance, found that installing a mile-long protected bike lane on Ninth Avenue in Manhattan resulted in an estimated 49 percent increase in retail sales for merchants along the route.

Another business advantage is that bicycles take up much less space than cars. Ten to 12 bicycles can be parked in the same space as one car. This is significant when one considers that surface parking spaces cost \$3,000 to \$4,000 per space; structured parking costs \$15,000 to \$20,000 per space; and underground parking can cost up to \$50,000 per space.

The transportation landscape is changing. Bicycle infrastructure is catalyzing real estate investment,

and cities that give commuters more transportation options will be more competitive. What's not to like? 

About the author: *Edward T. McMahon is a senior resident fellow and Urban Land Institute Charles Fraser Chair for Sustainable Development and Environmental Policy. The new ULI report Active Transportation and Real Estate: The Next Frontier presents ten case studies of bicycle friendly development projects.*

Did you know?

Virginia has the most miles of the U.S. Bicycle Route System. U.S. Bicycle Route 76 runs west to east; U.S. Bicycle Route 1 runs north to south and U.S. Bicycle Route 176 goes through Richmond and Henrico County along shared roadways and the Capitol Trail. Together, these make up over 850 miles of the U.S. Bicycle Route System.

Source: *Virginia is For Lovers.*

Biking in Virginia

Virginia has some great biking trails. Here's just a sample. See more at <https://blog.virginia.org/2015/11/bicycle>.

High Bridge Trail, 31-mile trail from Burkeville to Pamplin City

Virginia Capital Trail, 52-mile trail from Richmond to Williamsburg

New River Trail, 57-mile trail from Pulaski to Galax

Virginia Creeper Trail, 34.3-mile trail from Abingdon to Whitetop

Heart of Appalachia, 128-mile trail from Burkes Garden to Coeburn

Washington & Old Dominion Trail, 45-mile trail from Arlington to Purcellville



Want to see more jobs?

Go to www.vml.org for details on these listings and for the most comprehensive listings of local governments jobs throughout Virginia. Jobs in every discipline are added weekly. VML members can also post job openings at the site free of charge.

Planning and Zoning Administrator, Strasburg

Under the direction of the Town Manager, this position is responsible for the professional and technical work necessary to effectively administer, modify, and enforce the Town's Unified Development Ordinance, as well as administration of all permitting activities and programs enabled by the Ordinance. Additional responsibilities may include investigating zoning complaints; enforcing the property maintenance code; participating in development application reviews; staffing the Board of Zoning Appeals, Architectural Review Board, and Planning Commission; and performing grant writing activities as time allows. Any combination of education and experience equivalent to a Bachelor's Degree in Planning, Geography, Public Administration or related field and two years' of work experience in zoning administration, building code enforcement, or planning is required. An interest in Historic Preservation would be useful as well. Applicants should fill out a Town of Strasburg application form, at <http://www.strasburgva.com/Facility-Info/Employment-Volunteer-Opportunities.aspx> or at the Town Office. Complete applications can be mailed to 174 East King Street Strasburg, VA 22657 ATTN: Amy Keller, or sent via email to akeller@strasburgva.com. Salary: \$50,481 - \$58,000. Full Benefits. Open until filled.

Planner II, Roanoke County

Performs professional work preparing and amending programs, policies, and ordinances used to guide current and future development within the County. May prepare reports to be acted upon by the Planning Commission and/or the Board of Supervisors. Bachelor's degree from an accredited college or university with major coursework in urban and regional planning or a related field. Preferred: Master's Degree from an accredited college or university in urban planning or a related field. Exper. Req: One or more years experience in comprehensive planning, reviewing development proposals, developing codes and ordinances, and policy analysis. Visit <https://www.governmentjobs.com/careers/roanokeva> for more information and to apply. Salary: \$43,563.00 - \$56,327.00. Full Benefits. Job Deadline: July 2, 2017.

Assistant County Attorney, Louisa

The Louisa County Attorney's Office is seeking one or two full-time entry-level Assistant County Attorney(s) to perform professional work under the direction of the County Attorney. For complete details for the position of Assistant County Attorney, please visit www.louisacounty.com. To be considered, a completed Louisa County Employment Application is required. Entry salary range: \$65,000 - 75,880. Open until filled; however, application review will begin on June 1, 2017. EOE

Zoning Analyst, Leesburg

Required: HS/GED supplemented by any combination of college courses or work experience in the area of planning/zoning, plan review, engineering, or permit processing; excellent communication and customer service skills. Preferred: Bachelor's degree in Planning and Zoning or related field or completion of a two-year college course in the area of planning, such as urban planning, public administration or related field; One year experience in local government, or building/construction or planning field; Certified Zoning Official and/or Certified Zoning Administrator; bilingual in English/Spanish. Visit www.leesburgva.gov/jobs for more information and to apply online. Resumes may be submitted as supplemental only. Salary: \$54,244 - \$91,048 DOQ. Open until filled. EOE/ADA.

Program Services Assistant, James City County

The Williamsburg Regional Library seeks an individual to perform responsible work assisting the public and staff in using the library's facilities and equipment; assisting with set-up, operation, minor repair, and preventive maintenance of library audiovisual materials and equipment. Provide technical support services for public and staff programs. Use a computer scheduling system to assist the public and staff in making reservations for theatre and meeting room use; explain theatre and meeting room policies and procedures to users. Req.: Any combination of education and experience equivalent to a high school diploma; some experience in personal computers, including word processing and database management preferred; audiovisual and theatrical equipment experience preferred. To apply visit <https://jobs.jamescitycountyva.gov/applications/externalapplicants/login/default.aspx>. Salary: \$14,269 / year + Part-Time County Benefits (20 hours / week). Open until filled.

Permit Technician, James City County

James City County Building Safety and Permits seeks an individual to perform responsible work processing, issuing, and tracking applications, registrations, requests, and payments. Provide first point of customer service at the front counter and on the telephone; provide administrative support to Building Safety and Permits Division staff members. Process permit applications, contractor registration, inspection requests, and payments; issue permits and certificates of occupancy; track permits and inspections; and, oversee and track daily collection of fees and pre-paid contractor accounts. Req.: Any combination of education and experience equivalent to a high school diploma; business school diploma or certificate and experience as permit technician preferred. Must possess or be able to obtain within 18 months of hire, certification as a permit technician from the International Code Counsel. Must possess or be able to obtain within 30 days of hire, a valid Virginia driver's lice To apply visit <https://jobs.jamescitycountyva.gov/applications/externalapplicants/login/default.aspx>. Salary: \$12.76 / hour; Part-Time Temporary Position. Open until filled.

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