

FORM-BASED CODES PROVIDE NEW OPPORTUNITIES FOR DESIGNING COMMUNITIES

By Jeff Purdy and Valdis Lazdins,
LSL Planning, Inc.

New-urbanism has attracted a great deal of interest in re-creating traditional, walkable, mixed-use neighborhoods that have been lost in modern suburbs. As an outgrowth of this movement, form-based codes are the latest technique to support the development of such special places, and re-examine the underlying zoning principle of separating uses.

Form-based codes are a type of land use regulation that can help maintain, improve or transform our communities to make them more livable. They support traditional

development patterns and character and help foster more human-scale environments. Unlike conventional zoning, that focuses on separating land uses with little emphasis on design, form-based codes address how buildings relate to the streetscape and adjacent uses, and they allow a mix of land uses based upon their context. Therefore, compatibility is achieved through design and building orientation instead of by separation. And, while conventional zoning ordinances focus on permitted land uses and the development of individual lots, form-based codes focus on the context that individual buildings and elements of



the built environment create to shape the public realm. Form based codes rely on design concepts and patterns intended to preserve the best features of a community, thereby creating more exciting and vibrant environments and spaces.

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CONNECTIONS AND CHOICES: AFFORDABLE HOUSING, TRANSPORTATION, AND SPRAWL

By Trip Pollard, Southern
Environmental Law Center
Frances Stanley, Virginia Local
Initiatives Support Corporation

The Southern Environmental Law Center and Virginia Local Initiatives Support Corporation have produced a new report that examines the links between affordable housing, transportation, and sprawl in the Richmond region – links that are

critical to creating and maintaining healthy communities and that are of interest to planners statewide. The report, *Connections and Choices: Affordable Housing and Smarter Growth in the Greater Richmond Area*, provides a fresh look at the growth patterns, escalating traffic, and affordable housing shortage in the region, the adverse impacts of these trends, and potential steps to

address these problems.

Affordable Housing Crunch

The Richmond area faces a growing affordable housing crisis. The median value of owner-occupied housing rose from just under \$120,000 to over \$180,000 between 2000 and 2005, jumping over 50% in

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PLAN ON RESTON IN 2008 – A NEW TOWN FOR A NEW VISION

By Jason Lee Beske, AICP
VAPA Conference Chair

Washington, DC,
Philadelphia, Savannah?
They all have one thing in common...they are all wonderfully planned cities. But when you think of these archetypes of city planning does Reston belong in the

same hemisphere? The 2008 Conference of the Virginia Chapter of the American Planning Association will endeavor to answer this question.

Conceived as a planned community by Robert E. Simon in 1964, Reston has become commonly known

amongst planners as an exemplar of a post-war planned community, drawing upon principles of the New Town (or Garden City) concept. With an abundance of wooded green spaces and lakes, Reston is planned upon a series of seven residential

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PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE - DENISE M. HARRIS, AICP

Sometimes I come upon a place that will ignite my senses. With so many sterile, cookie cutter sites in the country, I always find myself a little surprised as I stop to take in the details of the scene surrounding me trying to discern what makes this place different? Why is it special? These places can be on an intimate or grand scale, urban or rural environment. Yet they all seem to have one thing in common – they have the power to make me feel complete, make me belong and invite me to participate. It raises the question: what makes a place rise above the norm to something one wants to appreciate and absorb fully through sight, sound, smell, touch, and taste? I believe it comes down to one word. **Design**

Like a great piece of art, proper design with attention to detail can lift the spirit. It makes one feel connected to the world at large. It encourages a person to be an active participant with a sense of stewardship. Seems to me that how we design our places (notice I do not use the word communities intentionally) is the key to creating healthy environments, economies, and even people. In this time when we are bombarded by studies proclaiming the devastation of our natural resources, the failing economy, and the threats to our physical and mental well-being, it is essential that professional planners take a hard look at the role we play with allied professions in the health of our communities.

In March 2008, the Virginia Chapter of the American Planning Association will hold its annual state conference in Reston around the theme of designing healthy communities. Topics will include presentations on how good design leads to healthy people, environments and economies. This issue of Newsbrief provides a brief preview of the conference, recognizing that decisions about land use, community design, and transportation planning have a direct effect on public health and the economic well-being of a community.

In this issue Jeff Purdy and Valdis Lazdins explain how the new zoning tool, Form Based Codes, can be used to create healthy communities. Form Based Codes, while not for everyone and every parcel of land, offer an opportunity to create a traditional, walkable, mixed-use neighborhood which is gaining popularity with American homebuyers. Also, Trip Pollard reports on a new report on the connections and choices between affordable housing, transportation and sprawl in the greater Richmond area. Pollard is with the Southern Environmental Law Center and was writing back in 2003 for the American Journal of Health Promotion on the connection between land use and public health (see Policy Prescriptions for Healthier Communities, 2003 by American Journal of Health Promotion, Inc.). In the synopsis of Pollard's article, the AJHP writes, "*Evidence of the health*

impacts of the built environment has increased rapidly. Studies have linked physical inactivity and motor vehicle pollution to a range of health problems and have shown that activity levels and air quality are influenced by community design, land use and transportation patterns."

For more information on the connection between planning and health, check out the APA's participation with the National Association of County and City Health Officials with funding from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention on a number of studies and symposiums designed to understand the issues and identify collaborative models to address the issues. (www.planning.org/research/healthycommunities.htm).

Remember that planning as a profession emerged out of 19th century public health initiatives, including tenement housing reforms and the design of suburban "greenbelt" towns. But in that uniquely American way of taking a good idea and using it as a panacea for all of our ills, we took off to the extreme, creating communities where walking is paramount to taking your life in your hands and children are picked up by the school bus two blocks from the school. It appears now is the time to go back to our planning roots.

Denise

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VAPA CHAPTER OFFICE

Robin Morrison, Administrator
2231 Oak Bay Lane
Richmond, Virginia 23233
Ph 804.754.4120
Fax 804.754.0801
vaplaning@comcast.net
www.vaplaning.org

Editor

Liz Via, AICP
evia@ci.manassas.va.us

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FORM-BASED CODES PROVIDE NEW OPPORTUNITIES FOR DESIGNING COMMUNITIES (CONTINUED)

Principles Associated With Form-Based Codes

The Form-Based Codes Institute defines form-based codes as “[a] method of regulating development to achieve a specific urban form. Form-based codes create a predictable public realm by controlling physical form primarily, and land uses secondarily.” This is achieved by going beyond conventional zoning and addressing the relationships of buildings to the streetscape, and the relationships between buildings to define a desired urban form.

- First and foremost, form-based codes are place-based. They are adapted to fit the unique characteristics of a community and require that new development fit within that context to reinforce a unique sense of place.
- Next, form-based codes allow the unique character of a community to be expressed by allowing a mix of uses. They can support the relationships established between various uses and building types both at a neighborhood and community-wide scale.
- Form-based codes are purposeful and not reactive. Conventional zoning tends to be restrictive and focuses on preventing development that could



be damaging to neighboring properties or the community (i.e. zoning tells you what you can't do). Form-based codes, on the other hand, document desired patterns and prescribe the form buildings, streets, and other elements must take to achieve the desired community vision.



- Conventional zoning regulations have limited ability to effect change, as they tend to prohibit development that is determined to be inappropriate, but they do not paint a clear picture of a desired future. Since form-based codes are more prescriptive and do a better job of describing the desired urban form they can help transform neighborhoods to encourage pedestrian activity, social interaction, and local investment.
- Form-based codes help knit urban forms and land uses together by describing the building types that are suited for specific land uses. They also relate uses and building types to streetscapes, thereby creating desired forms for neighborhoods and business districts.
- Form based codes support development that is characterized by compactness, intensity, mixed-uses, human

scale, and pedestrian friendly environments that result in livable neighborhoods, and healthy communities.

- And finally, form-based codes are graphic and they are designed to be easy to use and understand.

What Is Regulated?

An underlying premise of form-based codes is that the public realm (i.e. the streetscape) is shaped by buildings. They define and give character to spaces, and because of this building placement and orientation are paramount. In order to define the streetscape, form-based codes prescribe where buildings must be placed relative to specific dimensions from lot lines. These are called build-to-lines rather than setbacks, and they relate to the type of street on which a building may front.



Conventional zoning uses minimum setbacks to define where a building may be placed on a lot; however, its ultimate location within that envelope is unpredictable. Consequently, conventional zoning's focus is lot by individual lot and scant attention is paid to how buildings relate to streets, to each other, and to the public realm they shape. Form-based codes take a more holistic approach and consider how building forms and their locations

relate to the streetscape. In most traditional downtown environments buildings are located at the sidewalk with a resulting build-to-line of zero, and all parking is at the rear. Typically, in residential neighborhoods homes are placed a specific distance from the front lot line to create an ample and appropriately scaled front yard, or entrance courtyard.

Once streetscape character has been molded by building placement, the next step is to define building character and the elements necessary to ensure compatible relationships with the streetscape, and adjacent buildings. In a business district, for example, this would include the number of stories, the placement of doors and windows along a sidewalk, minimum floor to ceiling heights, window proportions, building expression lines and other architectural features. In residential neighborhoods requirements for front porches, alleys, or limitations on front-loaded garages may help define this character.



While land uses play a more secondary role in form-based codes they are nonetheless important. Similar to a conventional zoning ordinance land uses are still defined, but they are

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CONNECTIONS AND CHOICES: AFFORDABLE HOUSING, TRANSPORTATION, AND SPRAWL (CONTINUED)

only five years. Sales prices have climbed even higher. Incomes have not kept pace, and today many people – including an increasing percentage of the workforce and retirees on fixed incomes – cannot afford to buy or rent in many parts of the region. Despite the current national housing slowdown, area home prices have continued to increase.

A lack of affordable housing greatly limits choices for many individuals and families of where to live and work. It also can hurt economic competitiveness by making it difficult to attract and expand businesses and to attract and retain employees, and by concentrating poverty and accompanying social problems. Moreover, a lack of affordable housing can undermine communities by forcing essential employees such as teachers, police, and firefighters to live outside the area where they work.

Sprawl and Limited Housing Choices

In recent decades, development has sprawled into previously rural areas, farther from central services, schools, shopping, and jobs. Almost 59,000 acres were developed in the area in just five years—outpacing Northern Virginia and Hampton Roads. At this rate, more land will be developed in the Richmond region in the next 20 years than in the previous 400. Localities increasingly recognize the high costs of extending services to scattered development. Moreover, as businesses move farther out, it becomes difficult for many people to reach a job, and commuting costs increase for those with a job.

Most housing is still being designed for individual families, offering limited choices to fit the needs of younger workers, single parents, senior citizens, and others in an increasingly diverse population. Few energy-efficient choices are available, and rising electricity and fuel bills are a particularly serious problem for low-income households.

Growing Transportation Costs

As homes and businesses spread apart and people travel farther looking for affordable housing, we often have little choice but to drive everywhere—and to drive longer distances—to go to work, to shop, to take children to school, or to engage in other activities. The Richmond region has the highest driving rate of any Virginia metro area. People in the region drive over 27 million miles daily resulting in less time for families and community activities, more congestion, more energy consumption, and more air and water pollution. The average household spends more on transportation than on anything other than housing, and families moving farther out for affordable homes often spend more on transportation than they save on housing.

By the same token, the region's lack of transportation choices can be especially burdensome to individuals without a car or no longer able to drive, who all too often find it difficult to get or retain jobs (particularly in suburban locations not served by transit), or to accomplish tasks many of us take for granted.

Opportunities for Change

The housing, sprawl, and transportation challenges facing the region are the result of many factors, including governmental investments and regulations. Public spending on transportation that over-emphasizes road projects and slight other modes of travel, for instance, can subsidize sprawl and offer few alternatives to driving. Zoning provisions such as minimum lot size and setback requirements can prohibit traditional neighborhoods and increase housing costs.

There are ample opportunities to change course:

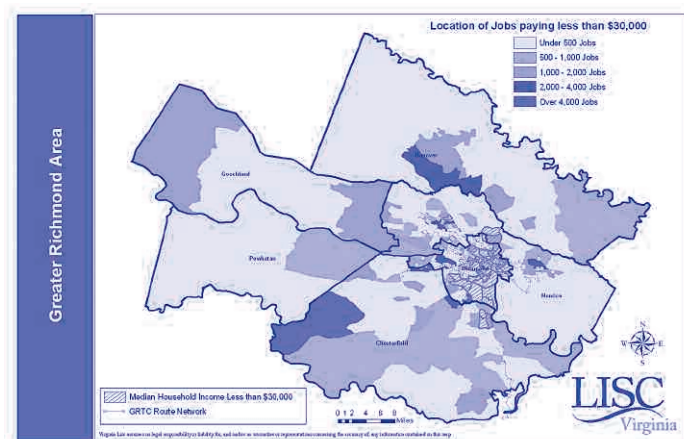
- Reduce regulatory barriers to traditional neighborhoods and towns that mix residential and commercial uses and accommodate a range of housing styles, sizes, and prices.
- Promote infill development, revitalize existing communities, and redevelop declining commercial areas.
- Reorient spending and policies at the state, regional, and local level to provide alternatives to driving.
- Offer incentives for greener buildings to make new and existing structures healthier, cleaner, more

energy efficient.

- Require—or at least offer incentives to—developers to include meaningful levels of affordable housing in projects, and provide additional funding for affordable housing.
- Guide growth to designated areas and protect rural and natural areas.
- Promote multi-jurisdictional cooperation and mechanisms, such as a regional housing coalition and regional housing trust fund.

These are just some approaches that would foster more sustainable long-term growth while offering greater housing and transportation choices, better integrating places where people live, work, and shop, protecting open spaces, strengthening communities, and safeguarding environmental and human health.

The report is available on the web at www.SouthernEnvironment.org and at www.virginialisc.org, or by calling (434) 977-4090 or (804)358-7602.



PLAN ON RESTON IN 2008 - A NEW TOWN FOR A NEW VISION (CONTINUED)



villages that provide residents easy access to schools, retail and recreation facilities. In addition to the physically and socially convenient villages, two town centers act as the lungs of Reston – breathing life and vibrancy into the community.

Lake Anne Village Center established America's first

Planned Unit Community zone dedicated to social openness, citizen participation, and the dignity of the individual. At a time of urban renewal and a sprint of developers to the countryside, Lake Anne established a precedent in mixed-use planning that would provide a foundation for generations of thoughtful planners.

Reston Town Center, the site of this year's conference, has become ubiquitously known as America's premier example of a downtown in the suburbs. As opposed to the modernism of Lake Anne, Reston Town Center has developed in a more traditional urban design, complementing Simon's vision for the community. The Town Center is characterized by a main street, walkable blocks, mixed uses, and a vibrant

public realm with plazas and open air streets.

It is in this setting that the 2008 VAPA conference will provide a dynamic and unmatched experience for Virginia's planners and allied professions. Among the distinguished guests, Reston founder and National Planning Pioneer Robert E. Simon (RESton) will share his experiences regarding the development of Reston and provide a walking tour of Lake Ann Village Center.

Internationally-renowned author Richard Louv, [Last Child in the Woods: Saving Our Children from Nature-Deficit Disorder](#) (2006 Algonquin Books of Chapel Hill) brings an awakening message of hope for the long-term health of our communities. Louv (invited) will share a profound message

addressing the preservation of environmental values and the creation of a vibrant built environment – elements displayed in Reston's ongoing prosperity.

In addition to the vibrancy of Reston and a once in a lifetime chance to see Robert E. Simon and Richard Louv speak in tandem, plan on attending the 2008 conference for an environmental debate (scheduled) and dozens of riveting and provocative educational sessions and mobile workshops that will enlighten and renew your passion for planning (while coincidentally satisfying your AICP CM requirement)!

For additional information regarding the conference visit www.vaplanning.org or email jbeske@leesburgva.gov

WHAT'S NEW - VIRGINIA PLANNERS ON THE MOVE!

JOE POWERS, AICP has retired as Planning Director for Montgomery County. In December, **STEVE SANDY, AICP, CZA** assumed those duties after serving as Interim Director of Planning and Development in Franklin County. Steve is very familiar with Montgomery County having previously served as Zoning Administrator.

Throw out your phone list for Henrico County – there are changes afoot! First, **HARVEY HINSON**, Deputy County Manager for Community Development announced his retirement after 46 years with the county, followed by the announcement that **FRED OVERMANN**, Director of the Community Development Department

will also retire this year. In addition, **SUSAN BLACKBURN**, Assistant Director of the Community Development Department has resigned to accept the King William County Zoning Administrator's position.

Botetourt planning and zoning administrator **CHUCK SUPAN** was named the Roanoke Regional Home Builders 2007 Public Employee of Year. The award was presented at a meeting in of the home builders last September. Congratulations Chuck!

The Vienna, VA firm of **LEWIS SCULLY GIONET** has earned a Merit Award from the Pennsylvania/Delaware chapter of the ASLA for the

firm's design of the Peninsula on the Indian River Bay, a luxury waterfront resort/residential community in Millsboro, DE. The project was developed on a 788-acre site consisting of fields, surrounded by woods and wetlands. Design of the community optimized use of the former agricultural land and minimized impact on the site's 225 acres of wetlands – ultimately disturbing only 1.6 acres. www.lsginc.com

The Town of Herndon has appointed **ELIZABETH "LISA" GILLERAN, AICP** as Director of Community Development following the resignation of long-time director **HENRY BIBBER** in June 2007. Lisa previously served as the Town's Zoning

Administrator/Senior Planner.

While he may have retired from professional planning, **SATYENDRA HUJA** has not retired from public service. Satyendra has moved to the other side of the dais with his election in Charlottesville to the City Council. Congratulations Satyendra! Planners Rule!

FRANK M. DUKE, a planner from North Carolina, has been appointed by the City of Norfolk to the post of Director of Planning and Community Director. Duke was previously the director of planning for both the city of Durham and Durham County, NC.

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FORM-BASED CODES PROVIDE NEW OPPORTUNITIES FOR DESIGNING COMMUNITIES (CONTINUED)

de-emphasized. In form-based codes a blend of compatible uses are accommodated within districts, or along specific street corridors that are defined by a distinct and consistent character. Form-based codes embrace neighborhood variety by applying specific standards for different types of buildings, and because use and building type are intertwined these standards ensure that building forms respond to the streetscape, and adjacent land uses.

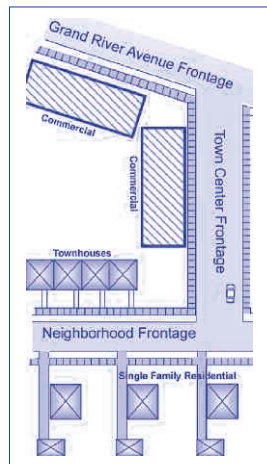
Unlike most conventional zoning ordinances form-based codes also regulate land uses vertically. In downtowns or neighborhood commercial areas they may allow retail uses on the first floor, and residences or offices on upper floors. In a downtown “Main Street” setting they may mandate retail on the ground floor to create the synergy necessary for a strong shopping environment.

Form-based codes regulate not just a building and site, but they also control elements of the public realm, such as design requirements for streets, sidewalks, on-street parking, street trees, and public parks and plazas. Because form-based codes transcend the usual requirements that deal with “use and bulk” other agencies and professionals, besides planners, are much more involved in their implementation. Consequently, they require much more cooperation and coordination. In Virginia, most streets fall under state jurisdiction and without early intervention, education, and cooperation a community’s ability to prescribe a certain streetscape design may be limited. Other considerations for multi-disciplinary involvement include storm water management, and utilities.

How Form-Based Codes Are Structured

A form-based code is based on a regulating plan, which is analogous and functions similarly to a zoning map. But, a

regulating plan differs because it provides greater specificity to the design of streets and their classification, city block dimensions, and the location of buildings and parking. Because regulating plans are more design based, they may also locate parks, squares and plazas. For shopping districts, a regulatory plan may indicate where retail frontage and use is mandated.



Districts that are delineated on the regulating plan allow specific land uses and corresponding building types. Building types may include a broad range, such as single family dwellings, townhouses, apartments, live-work units, and commercial and mixed use buildings. Depending on the district and the proposed building type, specific requirements dictate where the building must be placed. These are graphically depicted as building lines, building heights, and parking lot locations. While these are comparable to a schedule of area and bulk requirements in a conventional zoning ordinance, they rely more on graphic depictions, and tend to be more prescriptive (e.g., building lines identify exactly where a building must be placed, instead of stating minimum setbacks). Building heights are often defined as both minimums and maximums in a form-based code to ensure that a building is tall enough to define the streetscape, but not too tall to overwhelm.



and special consideration by a planning commission or board of zoning appeals. Essentially, form-based codes should be structured to make it easy to do the right thing, and harder to deviate from the code and regulating plan.

While form-based codes are very detailed with little room for discretion there must be room to accommodate unique circumstances, or

unique development forms. Typically, a form-based code should permit three levels of deviation:

- Administrative approvals for minor departures. The process and authority for administrative departures must be clearly defined in the code, such as allowing the planning director to substitute a hedge for a parking lot screening wall.
- Major departures, such as a building façade that does not meet building form requirements should necessitate planning commission review based on specific standards that relate to regulatory intent.
- A third level of review should accommodate departures such as a deviation from a build-to line, or exceeding height limits. These kinds of changes warrant a variance from a board of zoning appeals based on standards of review.

Developing a Form-Based Code

Before embarking to significantly change how a community regulates development it must first have a broad-based commitment to create better

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Building elements, such as materials, door and window locations, building expression lines, and front porches are related to the type of building being proposed. Most form-based codes do not regulate architecture – if a building has the proper form, then its architectural or vernacular style is less important. However, in the case of an historic district it may be appropriate to include more detailed architectural requirements.

Because building form and streetscape are interrelated, form-based codes also include requirements for streetscape design, such as on-street parking, sidewalk dimensions, and street trees.

How Approvals Are Processed

The unpredictability and greater discretion typically associated with conventional zoning ordinances make their development review processes much more complex and time-consuming. Form-based codes, on the other hand, have very detailed and predictable requirements with little, if any, room for discretion. Consequently, a development application that meets all the requirements of a form-based code can, and should be approved administratively. However, deviations from those rules must trigger a more rigorous process

FORM-BASED CODES PROVIDE NEW OPPORTUNITIES FOR DESIGNING COMMUNITIES (CONTINUED)

places. This goal must go beyond just a desire for change - the desires of the community and its vision should be clearly articulated through a master plan, urban design framework, or downtown plan so that there is a clear mandate, and a foundation to move forward.

Early in any process to develop a form-based code the type of code that is desired and its geographic coverage must be articulated. A form-based code can be integrated into a community-wide ordinance, or perhaps much more tightly applied to a specific corridor, neighborhood, or business district.

Next, there needs to be an inventory and analysis of existing conditions to document the existing community "forms". This inventory can be fairly labor intensive and involve detailed analysis of such things as lot widths, setbacks, and building heights. With a good understanding of the existing "forms" the public should be engaged in a process to help gain consensus on which community qualities should be maintained, and which new ones need to be achieved. This is often done through a design charrette, or workshop.

From the inventory, analysis, and public process, detailed standards are developed that address features, such as streets, blocks, building placement, land use, and building form for the various building types in the community. These standards are then developed into an ordinance and applied to a regulating plan.

Applying a Form-Based Code

Form-based codes can be used to preserve the character of an area, such as an historic downtown, or neighborhood; to improve a neighborhood that still has many of the characteristics the community desires; or as mechanisms of change to transform an area, such as a suburban commercial corridor, or district.

Form-based codes can be applied to a variety of geographic areas, from community-wide to a specific subarea, such as a downtown. To-date, the most common applications of form-based codes have been to subareas. They have primarily been used in downtowns and historic districts to preserve and enhance the traditional development character of those areas, and also to preserve the character of specific neighborhoods to insure new infill development will be compatible with existing homes. And, they are being used as effective tools to transform outdated regional malls, and strip commercial corridors into new town centers.

When used as a tool to redevelop subareas form-based codes can be applied as a new zoning district, or as an overlay zone with certain triggering mechanisms. These triggers can be structured so that an existing use is subject to the requirements of the underlying district until such time an expansion, or change in use occurs. Once a change is proposed the requirements of the overlay form-based code would engage. Another overlay option would be to encourage the use of a form-based code to help regenerate a district by offering incentives, such as additional height, or intensity of use.

While form-based codes have been most often applied to subareas, more communities are looking to adopt them on a community-wide basis. However, pure form-based approaches may not be the best applications for all situations - there still need to be zoning districts to address industrial uses, such as truck terminals, assembly plants, and hazardous uses. For this reason, a community-wide application will most likely be a hybrid, with some areas regulated as form-based zoning districts, and others by more conventional means.

A form-based code can be an

effective regulatory tool for many communities, especially those with traditional development patterns, such as historic downtowns and neighborhoods. In these cases, form-based codes are an appropriate tool to apply community-wide; however, others should carefully consider their use and utilize this new technique strategically for certain neighborhoods, or districts.



Most importantly, before starting a process to reconsider its regulatory arsenal, a community must be committed to create a better vision for itself and go through the process of gaining the public's consensus on what that desired form should be. As such, form-based codes can be powerful tools used to help revitalize our urban areas, and create new, more compact suburban communities that reflect the principles of smart growth.

Jeff Purdy and Valdis Lazdins are both with LSL Planning, Inc., a community planning firm with offices in Michigan and Indiana. LSL is currently developing a form-based code for Leesburg, VA. All photo's courtesy of LSL Planning, Inc. (2007).

WHAT'S NEW – VIRGINIA PLANNERS ON THE MOVE! (CONTINUED)

New Kent County has a couple of staff changes of note...**MATTHEW EBINGER**, a recent VCU MURP grad has joined the staff as a Planner I and because planners rule (see election of Huja to City Council) and can do all things – Planning Manager **RODNEY HATHAWAY** has taken on tourism promotion as an additional responsibility.

BART WARNER, Assistant City Manager/Planner Director for the City of Bedford and his wife, Tara welcomed their third son, Jacob Wesley Warner on November 3rd. Big brothers Sam and Noah are excited but no word yet on whether or not they are willing to share their toys.

Virginia planner extraordinaire, **KAT IMHOFF** and her husband, the equally extraordinaire **JOHN MOORE, AICP** are heading off to Helena, Montana along with their black labs and horses. Kat has accepted the position of State Director for The Nature Conservancy in

Montana. Currently Kat is the vice-president of the Thomas Jefferson Foundation, Inc. which owns and operates the home of Thomas Jefferson, Monticello – a World Heritage site. She previously served as the executive director for the Preservation Alliance of Virginia, and vice president for conservation and development for the Piedmont Environmental Council. Last year, the Council presented her with its Conservation Leadership Award. Kat is probably best known to some of us for her work on the Commission on Population Growth and Development and the Council on Virginia's Future. John is currently a Land Conservation Officer for the Piedmont Environmental Council in Orange, VA and has worked both for public sector agencies and private sector firms in Charlottesville, Warrenton and Reston. They will both be missed but Virginia's lose is Montana's gain!

Manassas planner

DEBORAH BRUCKMAN, AICP is also moving westward, if not quite so west. Deborah has left her position with the City of Manassas to take a position as Director of Community Development for the City of Winchester, KY. She just happens to be a UK grad and sports fan but we never held that against her here in Manassas!

KIM VANN reports that VAPA partner, the Virginia Crime Prevention Association (VCPA) was awarded the "Crime Prevention State Association of the Year" award in October from the National Crime Prevention Coalition (NCPC). The award recognizes individuals and organizations for their extraordinary accomplishments to prevent crime and create safer and more caring communities. VCPA has conducted over 110 training courses and presentations that have reached nearly 3,700 individuals.

The Town of Blacksburg has had lots of changes this year.

As reported by the Roanoke Times in August, Planning Chief **BRANDOL HARVEY** retired to Ohio (what is it with the moving west thing??) and Zoning Administrator **STEVE HUNDLEY** has taken a job with Spotsylvania after eight years in Blacksburg. **ADELE SCHIRMER** has been appointed to oversee a new engineering and capital projects departments.

Editors Note: Member announcements should be emailed to the Newsbrief Editor at newsbriefeditor@vaplaning.org as soon as they happen for inclusion in the next available issue. We like news and reserve the right to have a little fun in this section! We promise to be staid and proper everywhere else! PS – We normally check AICP status on the APA's website but it wouldn't let us in this week so an apology to anyone whose AICP was left off their name!

REPORT FROM THE ETHNIC AND CULTURAL DIVERSITY COMMITTEE (ECDC)

Committee Co-Chair, Joseph Curtis, AICP

The Ethnic and Cultural Diversity Committee have been on hiatus since the VAPA Conference in Wintergreen, but plans to start 2008 with an ambitious schedule. At the Wintergreen conference, ECDC Co-Chair Joseph Curtis made a presentation on lessons learned from the Committee's Education Initiative. The Initiative, which concluded its first

year in June, was created to introduce youth to planning as a career choice. During the session, Joseph received several comments on how to improve and expand the initiative for 2008. As such, the 2008 Project Initiative will include the Hampton Roads, Central, and Shenandoah regions of the Commonwealth. Volunteers in these areas are needed—please contact the ECDC for more information at curtisj@pbworld.com

The ECDC is proposing a multi-session track at the upcoming VAPA Conference entitled "the New Face of Planning" focusing on women in planning among other current topics. In addition, the ECDC will host another Diversity Summit during the Conference. The first Summit at the 2006 VAPA Conference in Portsmouth was a big success and the ECDC is looking forward to hosting a second Summit in Reston!

And as always, the ECDC will start its Planners Network Diversity Breakfasts again soon. Make sure you are on the VAPA list serve to receive information about the next Breakfast in the Hampton Roads, Central, Shenandoah, and Northern Virginia regions.

ADAPTING HISTORIC VENUES TO NEW AND MODERN USES

A Report from the Tidewater Section Joseph Curtis, AICP

In November, the Tidewater Section of the VAPA held one of its biggest events ever. The topics discussed at the event included “adapting historic venues to new and modern uses” and “how the City of Norfolk was emerging as a 24-hour city”. In terms of adapting historic venues, no venue was better suited than the Granby Theater, a Norfolk landmark for decades. The Granby Theater originally opened around 1915 as a vaudeville theater and later functioned as a movie theater before closing in 1985, and remaining empty for almost two decades until purchased by the Wright Company. Owner Bobby Wright told the attendees how financing was sought to purchase and restore the old theater and how it was modified to accommodate more modern uses. As Bobby explained, the seats were removed to accommodate three bars, and a ground-level floor that

could also be used as a dance floor. The result is a new interpretation that pays homage to the glory days of the grand theater. Chandeliers and gold-leaf paintings were painstakingly replicated or restored to their original grandeur. Wright, who also owns several properties in downtown Norfolk, went on to describe his passion for downtown living. “In fact,” he said, “we made sure our business cards read ‘a downtown real estate company’ “ to reflect this passion.

Wright was followed by the gregarious Rick Henn who has been working with City of Norfolk for over 20 years. As Senior Project Manager in the Development Department, Rick gets paid “to the sell the City.” Because he loves Norfolk, nothing could be better than selling the City he loves. And Tidewater planners were sold. All eyes were glued to Rick’s presentation on new buildings planned and under construction. Projects of note include the

Wachovia Center, a \$150 million, 22-story office tower and apartment/retail complex to be built next to the successful MacArthur Center Mall; the Granby Tower, a high-rise condominium with ground-floor retail; and a new Residence Inn by Marriott, among others. In addition, Rick discussed some of the interactions between developers and planners, using the Norfolk Conference Center and Hilton hotel project as an example. The new Conference Center required

the demolition of three historic buildings, which was met with some controversy that is still being resolved. However, Rick is confident that there will be a positive outcome.

Special thanks to PB Americas for their sponsorship of the Tidewater event and to Dave Kello and Bobby Wright for hosting the section at the Granby Theater.



Guests Bobby Wright (left) and Rick Henn (right) with Joseph Curtis (center) at the Tidewater event.

AICP Update

Glenn Larson, AICP
Virginia Chapter Professional
Development Officer

Certification Maintenance – Develop
Your Credit Strategy

It’s here! By December 31, 2009, AICP members must earn a total of 32 credits under the new Certification Maintenance (CM) program. While I don’t have room here to go into the details of CM (more on that at www.planning.org/cm), I do have some suggestions about developing a strategy to compile needed credits. If you are an AICP member, you need to start now on your CM credit strategy. Take some time to think about how and when you can accumulate the credits

you’ll need. Because so many CM credit opportunities are tied to scheduled events, even procrastinating a few months could jeopardize your ability to compile 32 credits needed by December 2009. If you go the AICP’s Certification Maintenance program web site, you’ll see the following tips on how to earn CM credits:

- Attend your state APA chapter conference
- Ask your favorite providers to register their courses
- Tap into APA’s educational resources
- Enroll in online courses
- Sign up for podcasts and webcasts
- Seek out university courses

All good suggestions, but perhaps lacking in detail. Here are some

additional things to consider:

1. If you can, attend at least one of the two national APA conferences set between now and December 2009. I estimate that, with significant commitment to attending as many qualifying conference sessions as possible, you can qualify for at least 25 credits by attending a national APA conference, if not more. I know the national conference is expensive and many planning departments/offices don’t have that kind of travel budget, so it may not be a viable option for some. Given the two-year timeframe, it may be a good idea to talk to your boss about the

(Continued on page 10)

AICP UPDATE (CONTINUED)

- possibility of including national or state conference attendance in next year's budget. The earlier the better.
2. Can't go to a national planning conference? Consider attending the annual VAPA planning conference. VAPA is working to provide at least 16 CM credit opportunities at the March 2008 conference in Reston. If you are fortunate enough to go both to the 2008 and 2009 VAPA annual conferences and attend all sessions qualifying for CM credits, you will be well on your way to obtaining the credits you will need by December 2009.
 3. Look for other CM credit options provided by VAPA. We are working on offering APA audio/web training sessions at a number of Virginia locations in 2008. In addition, VAPA plans to set up a "lending library" of CD ROM training packages for AICP members. While still a preliminary estimate, I'm hoping that VAPA can offer up to ten CM credits in 2008 through these two initiatives.

Stay tuned.

4. Keep an eye out for other CM credit announcements made in Newsbrief, at the VAPA website (www.vaplanning.org) and through VAPA's e-mail announcements.
5. If you find a training session from a non APA/VAPA provider that you think could qualify for Certification Maintenance program credits (see the qualifying criteria at www.planning.org/cm/activities.htm) contact me before registering for the session and I will ask AICP to contact the provider. I'll need to know the name of the session, the date it is taking place and the provider's e-mail address.

Yes, all of these CM credit options involve a significant commitment of time and/or money, which is all the more reason to develop your CM credit strategy. Once you've done so, meet with your supervisor and discuss the commitment necessary for you to maintain your AICP certification.

Hopefully, with advance planning and the commitment of your employer, you'll have a much better chance of obtaining all the credits you'll need while minimizing your time and financial obligations.

AICP Exam Update

More than 40 aspiring AICP exam takers attended the September AICP exam orientation sessions in Fairfax and Richmond. Special thanks to Chuck Johnston and Charles Hutchinson, new AICP members, who attended the sessions and provided their experiences in taking the exam.

For more information about AICP, the exam and Certification Maintenance, see <http://www.vaplanning.org/m/aicp.cfm>. If you have questions about AICP, or want to be added to VAPA's semi-monthly exam update e-mail list, please contact me at 804/748-1970 or Larsong@chesterfield.gov.

VAPA BOARD - CALL FOR NOMINATIONS!

Now is the time to step up! Please consider a position on the VAPA Board. It is a unique and satisfying experience that will gain you much more than you give. Check out VAPA's website at <http://www.vaplanning.org/about.cfm> for information on the board and their duties. With the recent change in the by-laws, there are now 9 positions available. These include:

- President
- Vice President For Chapter Affairs
- Vice President for External Affairs
- Vice President for Legislative and Policy Affairs
- Vice President for Sections
- Secretary
- Treasurer
- AICP Professional Development Officer
- Membership Director

Ballots will go out in February 2008, the new Board will be announced at the VAPA conference in March 2008 and the term will run July 2008 through July 2010. **Please submit an expression of interest to vaplanning@comcast.net before January 7, 2008. Thanks so much for your consideration of this excellent opportunity!**

MONUMENT AVENUE DESIGNATED ONE OF 10 GREAT STREETS IN AMERICA BY THE AMERICAN ASSOCIATION OF PLANNING (APA)

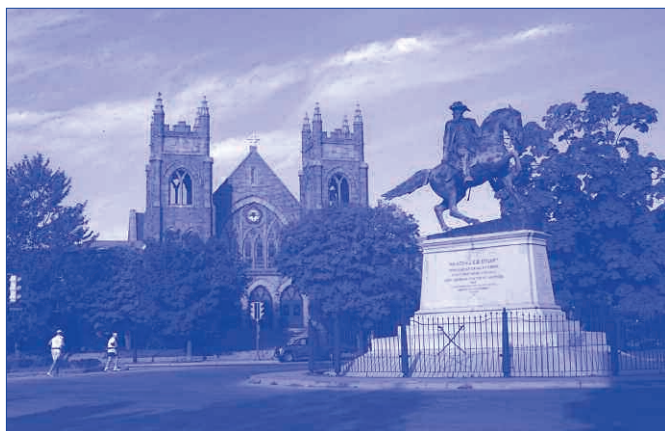
The APA announced that **Monument Avenue** in Richmond has been designated as one of 10 Great Streets for 2007 through APA's *Great Places in America* program. APA Great Places exemplify exceptional character and highlight the role planners

and planning play in creating communities of lasting value. APA selected **Monument Avenue** as one of 10 Great Streets in America for its historic architecture, urban form, and quality residential and religious architecture, diversity of land uses, public

art, and integration of multiple types of transportation. "We're excited to select **Monument Avenue** as one of this year's Great Streets," said APA Executive Director Paul Farmer, FAICP.

"**Monument Avenue** is one of the finest examples of a

public right-of-way that recognizes the past but lives in the present. Richmond is to be commended for protecting the legacy **Monument Avenue** brings to the city."



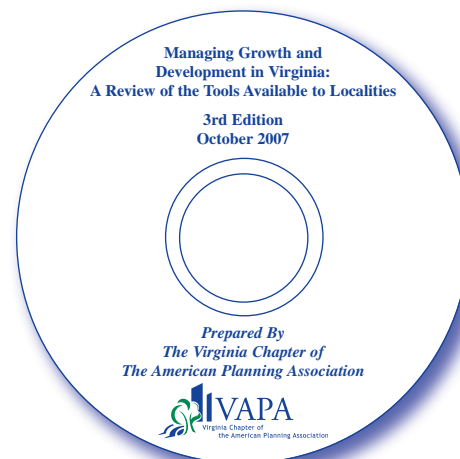
Monument Avenue, Richmond, VA - Photo courtesy of Richmond Department of Community Development 2007

MANAGING GROWTH AND DEVELOPMENT IN VIRGINIA: A REVIEW OF THE TOOLS AVAILABLE TO LOCALITIES AVAILABLE NOW

VAPA is pleased to announce the release of the 3rd Edition of **Managing Growth and Development in Virginia: a Review of the Tools Available to Localities** or what has been commonly referred to as "The Tool Kit." Written and edited by Virginia planners, whose contributions and time to this effort are greatly appreciated, The Tool Kit is a summary of the enabling authority derived from the Code of Virginia (as amended) related to land use planning in Virginia. The publication format defines

each tool and provides the associated Code of Virginia citation for reference. Examples of how the tool is being used by localities in Virginia, and discussions on limitations of use and recommendations for enhancement through the legislative process are also provided. This publication has proved in the past to be a valuable resource for our members and for anyone seeking to understand the current state of our enabling authorities; and, it is a must read for planners new to practicing in Virginia. The

Tool Kit is available as a PDF on the VAPA website at www.vaplanning.org and will be distributed on CD-ROM to key legislative committees and leaders in the General Assembly for the upcoming legislative session.





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VAPLANNING.ORG*

Save The Date!



VAPA's 2008 Annual Planning Conference
Hyatt Regency Reston
March 26 - 28, 2008