

# VIRGINIA

TOWN & CITY

The magazine of the Virginia Municipal League

VOL. 51 NO. 5 JUNE 2016



# Zika in Virginia?

State and local officials prepare  
to combat virus

**Inside:**  
Innovation Awards  
call for entries





*VMLIP Senior Account Executive Lisa Schenk, Western Virginia Water Authority Fleet, Risk & Safety Coordinator Neil Norris and HR Director George Scott*

## Congratulations to the Western Virginia Water Authority!

The authority was awarded the **Margaret A. Nichols Risk Management Leadership Award** at the 2016 VML Insurance Programs (VMLIP) Annual Meeting. This award is given to recognize and encourage innovation in risk management.

Congratulations to the 2016 **Risk Management Performance Award** winners:

- Town of Halifax
- Town of Ashland
- Prince William County Service Authority



## About the cover

Summer is here and so are mosquitoes. Localities have been given broad authority to fight the spread of the virus. (see page 15)

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## Features



### Working class proud

Hopewell is once again on the upswing. One of Virginia's oldest towns, it has always had an industrial-based economy. By preserving its working class heritage, Hopewell becomes hip again.

By Christina Luman-Bailey

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### From empty lot to pop-up park

Fairfax County is finding that temporary parks in high-growth areas build a sense of community quickly.

By Andrea Dorlester

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### Does this call for a public hearing?

Our experts give you a quick guide to when and how to hold a public hearing.

By Zachary Packard and Michael Connolly

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### Keeping up appearances

Lower-income neighborhoods in Norfolk are getting the boost they need to maintain their homes through a program that benefits everyone.

By Aarian Daniels and Mary Keough Page 22

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# Legacy and leadership in Winchester

**C**ONNECTING WITH LOCAL OFFICIALS is the part of my job that I love the most. When asked to provide a description of what VML does, I always say, “We serve those who serve.”


We are in the midst of our spring regional suppers where we travel throughout the state, hosting events designed to engage member communities and promote networking among local officials. While the windshield miles can make you weary, the enthusiasm and commitment of those that serve our cities and towns generates a spark that only increases the desire to assist in any way that we can.

The first trip this year was to Winchester and our supper was held at The George Washington, a Wyndham Grand Hotel. This charming hotel was originally opened in 1924 and operated throughout changing times in the travel and hospitality industry.

Locals described a building that had fallen into disrepair and sat vacant from 1993 – 2004. At that time, a \$30 million investment was made to renovate and reopen the hotel. In 2010, the hotel was placed on the National Register of Historic Places.

Perhaps their website says it best: “Located in downtown Winchester, Virginia, The George Washington, a Wyndham Grand Hotel, marries modern conveniences with comfortable elegance in a charming, historical setting.”

Soon after our arrival, Mayor Elizabeth Minor told me that she was planning to retire after 36 years in public service. She was selected to fill a council vacancy in 1980, served as vice-mayor for eight years, and then most recently, served as Mayor for the last 12 years. Thirty-six years is an incredible commitment!

In this world of job hopping and commitment-phobia, this type of longevity deserves to be honored. Mayor Minor, we thank you for your many years of service and wish you the very best! 

**The George Washington Hotel was opened in 1924. Decades later, it fell into disrepair and was vacant from 1993-2004. Following a \$30 million renovation, the hotel was reopened in 2010.**



### Rordam receives top honor from Transit Association

VML President **Ron Rordam**, Mayor of Blacksburg, received the Virginia Transit Association's award for outstanding contribution by an individual. He was recognized for his ongoing work with local, regional and national organizations to increase access to public transportation for all citizens. Rordam was vice president of the Virginia Transit Association in 2009 and 2010, president in 2011 and 2012, and currently serves on the executive committee. He has worked to increase state wide funding for transit, both bus and rail, and has helped raise awareness of the importance of transit to the Commonwealth of Virginia.



- Rordam -

### Blacksburg makes Formica permanent

**Randy Formica**, who has served as Blacksburg's interim director of engineering and GIS for the past seven months, has been selected for the permanent position of director. Formica has worked for the town of Blacksburg as town engineer for the past 22 years. Prior to his tenure with the town, he worked for the Radford Army Ammunition Plant as well as a private engineering consulting firm. Formica holds his professional engineer license in the state of Virginia.



- Formica -

### Chesapeake hires three key leaders

The city of Chesapeake has appointed United States Navy Captain **Robert Geis** to the position of deputy city manager, effective July 1. Geis assumes the position vacated by the retirement of Amar Dwarkanath in 2015. Captain Geis was previously chief of staff



- Geis -

to commander, Navy Region Mid-Atlantic, supporting 14 naval installations from Maine to North Carolina. Geis served with a number of Navy squadrons in support of Operations Desert Storm, Southern Watch, Enduring Freedom, and Iraqi Freedom. He was twice named "NFO of the Year," once in 1992 and again in 2000.

**Sandy Madison** was appointed Chesapeake city clerk in March. She began her career with the city in 2002 at the South Norfolk Health Department and then transferred to Chesapeake General District Court. In 2007, Madison became a deputy city clerk. She left Chesapeake for a deputy city clerk position in Virginia Beach from 2012 to 2015, and returned to Chesapeake earlier in 2016. Madison is also currently serving as president of the Virginia Municipal Clerks Association.



- Madison -

In May, the Chesapeake City Council appointed **Gregory Daniels** as real estate assessor. Daniels most recently served as city assessor for Lynchburg, a post he held since 2001. He is a past president of the Virginia Association of Assessing Officers, and past chairman of the International Geographic Information System (GIS) & Computer Assisted Mass Appraisal (CAMA) Conference.



- Daniels -

### Onancock hires town manager

**William Kerbin** has been named the new town manager of Onancock effective July 5. Kerbin was previously director of community development for the city of Oneonta, N.Y. He replaces G. Cabell Lawton, IV, who recently retired from the position of town manager.

### Pulaski appoints deputy town manager

**Nichole Hair** is the new deputy town manager for Pulaski. Hair previously served as the planning director and zoning administrator for the town of Christiansburg. As deputy town manager, she

will direct all planning and code enforcement functions, as well as assisting with budgeting, policy implementation, procurement and capital planning. Hair received her MPA from the University of South Dakota in 2015. She is certified in zoning administration, transportation management, local government management and paralegal studies.

### Chesterfield County names new administrator

**Joseph Casey** will be the next county administrator of Chesterfield County. He replaces Jay Stegmaier, who announced he will retire June 30 after a 37-year career in Chesterfield. Casey was most recently deputy county manager of Henrico County. Prior to that, he was deputy county administrator of Hanover County.



- Casey -

### Harrisonburg names city planner; director of parks & rec

**Thanh Dang** is the new city planner for Harrisonburg. She has worked with the public works department for the past 10 years, most recently as the transportation and environmental planning manager. Prior to joining public works, Dang graduated from James Madison University and volunteered with AmeriCorps. She was the recipient of James Madison University's 2012 Public Servant of the Year Award and of the 2014 Governor's Safety Award for bicycle and pedestrian safety.



- Dang -

**Luciana "Luanne" Santangelo** is Harrisonburg's new director of parks and recreation effective July 25. Santangelo served as the director of parks and recreation for the city of Palm Coast, Florida since 2010 and has nearly 24 years of experience in recreation administration. She will replace retiring



- Santangelo -

## People

Director Lee Foerster, who ends his tenure with the city on June 30.

### Wodicka to lead Bedford County

Bedford County has hired **Reid Wodicka** as its new county administrator effective August 1. Wodicka was previously town manager of the town of Woodstock. Prior to that he served as manager of the town of Elkton.

### Round Hill treasurer retires after three decades

Round Hill Treasurer **Betty Wolford** will retire June 30 after more than 30 years of service to the town. Wolford first worked for the town in 1978, recruited

by husband John Wolford, who was first elected mayor in 1977, to help provide coverage while the town treasurer was away on vacations. Gradually, Wolford's role extended to longer stints until, in 1981, she was hired as fulltime treasurer. She continued to work for the town after her husband retired as mayor. In 2000, Wolford left Round Hill to take up the treasurer's position in Middleburg. Four years later, however, she returned to Round Hill as treasurer, and served in the position to this day.

### Manassas EMS officer receives top honor

**Valerie Kusterbeck**, a firefighter/medic for the city of Manassas, has been honored with the award for Outstanding



- Kusterbeck -

Pre-hospital Provider by the Northern Virginia Emergency Medical Services Council. Kusterbeck has been with the Manassas Fire & Rescue Department for more than seven years. She is a mentor and field training officer for the department. Northern Virginia EMS awards recipients and honorees from Virginia's 10 other regional EMS councils will be considered for the Governor's EMS awards, which will be announced in November.

## News & notes

### 2016 Building Safety Month

MAY IS BUILDING SAFETY MONTH, not just in Virginia but across the United States. As a way of promoting building safety, building official departments across the Commonwealth held events during May that focused on educating the public about how building codes protect people and structures from disasters such as fires, weather-related events and structural collapse.

In some parts of the state, localities joined together in promoting regional events. Galax, Grayson County and Carroll County partnered with the Virginia Building and Code Officials Association and the International Code Council to host a Building Safety Month event. The localities in Hampton Roads also held a combined event. Prince William County was one of the localities that held an inaugural building safety month event this year.

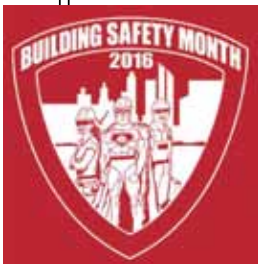
At the national level, President Barack Obama proclaimed May 2016 as National Building Safety Month, encouraging citizens, government agencies, businesses,



The Alexandria permit center team wears the shirts to prove that building code officials are our modern-day super heroes. (see shirt logo at left).

non-profits and other interested groups to join in activities that raise awareness about building safety.

Governor Terry McAuliffe's proclamation declaring May to be Building Safety month called on Virginians to consider home and community improvement projects that promote safety and sustainability and acknowledge the essential services provided by Virginia's building safety community.



### Norfolk named 2016 All-America city award winner

Norfolk is one of 10 cities nationwide to receive the National Civic League's 2016 All-America City Awards (AAC). The honor is given each year to towns, cities, counties, tribes, neighborhoods

and metropolitan regions for outstanding civic accomplishments. This year, the All-America Awards program highlighted community efforts to ensure that all children are healthy and successful in school and life. The AAC finalist communities addressed topics such as: school attendance, racial equity, health and well-being (of children, parents and

community), neighborhood safety, poverty, nutrition, affordable housing, and healthy natural environments.

To win, each community had to complete an application demonstrating their efforts and make a presentation to a jury of civic experts focusing on three outstanding examples of collaborative community problem solving.

## Williamsburg's Stryker Center awarded LEED certification

Williamsburg's new Stryker Center, home to city council chambers and other city administrative offices, has been awarded LEED Silver Certification. LEED® (Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design) is a globally recognized symbol of excellence in green building.

Williamsburg City Council approved the building design to include LEED®



certification standards to ensure that the Stryker Center achieved electricity cost savings, lower carbon emissions, and a

healthier footprint for the Williamsburg community.

The Stryker Center's special building features include an underground stormwater storage tank; optimized energy performance of the heating, ventilation, and air conditioning system; and a reduction in the heat island effect with a highly reflective membrane roof. Indoor environmental quality is improved by use of low-emitting materials, controllable lighting, and a controllable thermal comfort system.

## The New Way To Manage Fund Balances



VML/VACo's **Virginia Investment Pool** enables local governments to enjoy higher yields without putting fund balances out of reach in emergencies.

Developed by Virginia Treasurers and Investment Officers, VIP is a short-term investment pool, professionally managed and governed by participants.

For information on yields or to learn how to participate, visit our website at [valocalfinance.org](http://valocalfinance.org) or phone 804-648-0635.

VIP is rated "AAf/S1" by Standard & Poor's.



## Newport News named 2016 sustainability partner

The Department of Environmental Quality (DEQ) has named Newport News a Virginia Environmental Excellence Program Sustainability Partner (VEEP SP) for 2016. The annual approval recognizes the environmental achievements the city has made to date, as well as sustainability goals set for the future.

## Winchester Fire and Rescue honored by Heart Association

Winchester Fire and Rescue (WFRD) has received the American Heart Association's Mission: Lifeline® EMS Silver Award for quality improvement measures in 2015 for the treatment of patients who experience severe heart attacks. In 2015, WFRD received the Bronze award for treatments made in 2014.

In 2015, the department responded to 39 cardiac arrests and were able to save 18 (46%) of those patients. The national average for "return of spontaneous circulation" is only 21%.

# Wonder why they call it “Wonder City”?

## Hopewell rebuilds itself once again

**H**OPEWELL is “on an economic roll after a history of boom and bust,” reported the Petersburg *Progress-Index* just last month. The current “economic roll” is inspired by a cultural renaissance and a renewed emphasis on Hopewell’s heritage and natural assets.

Evidence of this latest boom includes the ever-improving and revitalizing downtown, the thriving industrial presence and its recent expansions, the imminent “Riverwalk” which will enhance enviro-tourism, educational opportunities for schools, and recreational opportunities for residents.

Other signs are the growing numbers of cultural, community-driven events like the “Wonder City” Craft Beer Festival, outdoor concerts at the Hopewell Marina, indoor concerts at the Beacon Theatre, “Light up the Night” holiday festivities, and the Hopewell Farmer’s Market.

Hopewell’s come back is in full swing.

**DuPont was largely responsible for constructing homes to house workers. Many of these homes were Aladdin kit homes. Today Hopewell’s industry-built neighborhoods have been identified among the most intact, historic, working-class neighborhoods in the nation.**

But the positive momentum of revitalization that the Wonder City is now experiencing required patience and persistence. Ten to 15 years ago, many were dubious about Hopewell’s future. People were pulling in different directions; some were seeking a “something better than we are” template to follow, believing that a “clean slate” was the path forward, while others, especially some local businesses and residents, felt dismissed, over-taxed, and excluded from the revitalization process.

Then there were those who were just plain apathetic, commenting that nothing would ever happen and emphasizing past failed attempts to revitalize. Public investment without community buy-in was not working. The apparent emphasis on creating a new and different “Anytown, USA” ignored the unique character of Hopewell and the heritage that the Wonder City is celebrating this year.

## Hopewell’s heritage is its storied past

To understand Hopewell, one must understand its storied past. Hopewell/City Point is the longest currently inhabited



**At the beginning of World War I, DuPont built villages for employees of its gun cotton factory in Hopewell. The villages included paved streets, schools, churches and shops.**

city in Virginia (Jamestown is no longer inhabited). A natural port at the confluence of the James and Appomattox rivers, City Point, now a neighborhood of Hopewell, served as the Union Army’s supply depot during the Civil War. In fact, at that time, City Point was the second busiest port in the world.

Around the time of WWI, Hopewell proper became a chartered city after the area experienced an incredible population surge due to workers flocking to work at the DuPont Gun Cotton factory. The city grew within a two-year period from a few thousand to approximately 40,000 inhabitants.

It was akin to a Wild West boomtown with workers and their families sleeping in tents or hastily constructed shelters. Many were Greek, Italian, and Eastern European immigrants whose proud descendants remain today.

DuPont was largely responsible for constructing homes to house workers, creating “A Village,” “B Village,” and others as well. Many of these homes were Aladdin kit homes, built with quality materials and the majority of these homes still stand today.

But the Gun Cotton factory was created to supply the war effort and, within a week of the signing of the Treaty of Versailles, DuPont announced the closure of the factory. More than 20,000 workers were released and, by 1918, Hopewell’s population shrank from 40,000 to 1,369.

Hopewell appeared to be in trouble up to the mid-1920s when a Belgian Rayon company, Tubize, took over the old DuPont plant and generated silk products. More quality kit homes were constructed. Other manufacturers followed, including the Stamsocott cellulose company and the Mayhew Corporation.

It was during this time Hopewell earned the name, the



APPOMATTOX REGIONAL LIBRARY SYSTEM



A float at the 1954 Labor Day Parade shows how central the fabric manufacturer Celanese was to the economy and culture of Hopewell.

Hopewellians held solid, good paying jobs, and enjoyed the natural beauty of the James and Appomattox Rivers. Hopewell’s connection to its industries and rivers has always been, and remains today, a key ingredient of the city.

For a time after WWII, Hopewell thrived with a vibrant downtown. Independent retailers, shops, and other small businesses served the needs of those who lived within the city. It was self-sufficient; everything from groceries to hardware stores, auto shops and bakeries served the community.

Yet, like many cities across the United States during the 1960s and 1970s, people began to move out toward a more suburban lifestyle. The downtown declined. Shopping malls and chains sprang up and reasons for coming downtown were fewer and fewer.

Then, in 1975, Hopewell made national news. The Allied Chemical Company had contracted with Life Sciences in Hopewell to produce Kepone. In short, it ultimately led to over 200,000 pounds of Kepone being released into the James River and, subsequently, a shutdown of fishing in the James River all the way to the Chesapeake Bay.

Yet the Wonder City endured. The population in 1970 is still very close to the population today. There’s just something about Hopewell that offers a sense of community. Many people in Hopewell today are rooted in its past and care deeply about the city, the future, and they just don’t give up.

This brings us to the present: a city deeply connected with industry, celebrating working class families and long ties to the past, a close community with a distinct character, and a place with a true downtown area including walkable streets.

It is a city with public access to the confluence of two major rivers where all residents can enjoy fishing, swimming and boating, a city with beautiful historic structures deserving of preservation. In short, it’s a real city with unique attributes to build upon and certainly not an “Anytown USA.” Here’s how we wrote the next chapter in Hopewell’s Wonder City story.

### Lesson 1: Build on what we have

Hopewell’s current positive momentum is the result of a city embracing its identity and making the most of it. Rather than pushing away its “blue-collar roots” and attempting to start from scratch, the Wonder City is maximizing its natural



Workers wait in the serving line at a Labor Day picnic.

Wonder City. People wondered how a city so devastated by the departure of DuPont could bounce back so quickly.

Once again, a setback occurred. The Great Depression began in 1929 and five years later, Tubize departed. It took World War II to help pull Hopewell out of its decline.

Industry has always been in the DNA of Hopewell. DuPont, Tubize and others contributed not only to affordable, quality housing, but also to growing the quality of life. The local industries recognized the value of Hopewell’s natural beauty and nurtured these assets. DuPont sponsored the Village Beautiful movement in 1916 and residents beautified their homes and neighborhoods.

Subsequently, Tubize created Hopewell’s historic “City Park” where citizens could gather, meet their beau, possibly, and listen to music at the bandstand or take a rowboat out on the river.

### More than a century of trials and triumphs

1914	WWI begins. DuPont begins construction of gun cotton factory in Hopewell	1916-1918	DuPont builds worker housing villages; population swells to 40,000	1920	Population of Hopewell drops below 1,400	1929	Great Depression
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1860

1861-65	Hopewell (then named City Point) is second busiest port in the world; serves as Union Army supply depot	1916	Hopewell becomes a chartered city	1918	Treaty of Versailles ends WWI; DuPont closes gun cotton factory	1920s	Belgian fabric manufacturer Tubize opens factory; Tubize buys DuPont housing and promotes improvements to workers’ homes
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## Hopewell

assets. The natural beauty of its expansive and mostly undeveloped waterfront is a draw to tourists from all corners of the earth and a great benefit to residents of the region.

Hopewellians know their heritage is linked to industry. They don't hide it; they celebrate it. Our industries are part of our community and a significant economic contributor to making all of our citizen's lives better, through the jobs they provide as well as the tax base.

Recently, Governor McAuliffe joined in congratulating Ashland Chemical on its expansion and commitment. Green Plains has invested and taken over the production of the Ethanol plant and contributed significantly to the tax base, relieving citizens of higher real estate taxes. Honeywell and WestRock remain stalwarts of the economy and participate consistently.

**Hopewellians held solid, good paying jobs, and enjoyed the natural beauty of the James and Appomattox Rivers. The city's connection to its industries and rivers remains today a key ingredient of the city. Hopewell is building on what we have, not what we would pretend to be.**

It's not only manufacturing, though. Hopewell has a great relationship with John Randolph Hospital, part of the HCA. Entrepreneurs are returning to Hopewell as well.

Thanks to the Main Street Approach, Hopewell has focused on building a "real" downtown. The city has rebuffed the "tear it down and rebuild," tactic. Instead, we encourage revitalized buildings and homes with interesting aesthetic appeal, walkable streets, independently-owned shops, gyms, art studios, restaurants and more.

In fact, Hopewell's industry-built neighborhoods have been identified as among the most intact historic working class neighborhoods in the nation – something that simply cannot be replicated. The belief in revitalization is absolutely essential, as it is what makes a city or town unique.

Significant historic rehabilitations in the past ten years include the Butterworth Lofts, the Hopewell Lofts (formerly Mallonee High School), and the Beacon Theatre. Several major façade improvements have occurred and continue to occur downtown.



**The Hopewell Marina got a facelift in 2014. Plans for a river walk connecting the marina to the historic City Park are underway.**

Neighborhoods dating from the DuPont era will be recognized with signage as part of Hopewell's 100th anniversary. The Hopewell Marina has been rejuvenated and a river walk from the marina to historic City Park is in the works.

The destruction of older buildings and residences dating from the DuPont era is slowing. We desire it to stop. These structures are historic and deserve preservation. One is reminded of Austin, Texas where smaller, cottage-like homes were renovated. Hopewell has that same attribute to build upon and we will.

In sum and substance, all cities and towns have to recognize their history and heritage to stimulate revitalization. Hopewell has natural eco-friendly beauty, historic structures, a real downtown, industries with a heritage, and a village-like community of residences. Hopewell is building on what we have, not what we would pretend to be.

The City of Hopewell will celebrate its 100th anniversary with a six-month long series of events.



**July 2** – Commodores in Concert; Fireworks over Appomattox River

**September 11** – Ride for Warriors

**September 17** – 100 years of Classic Cars (car show)

**September 24** – Paddle Battle on the Appomattox River

Check out more 100th anniversary events at [www.hopewellva.gov](http://www.hopewellva.gov).

**1934** Tubize shuts down major portion of factory

**1960s & 70s** Suburban migration; Hopewell downtown declines

**2011** Hopewell becomes a designated Main Street USA community

**11941-45** WWII. Economy rebounds as local industries boost production related to war effort

**2006** Downtown revitalization gathers momentum

**2016** Hopewell celebrates 100th anniversary as an incorporated city

**2016**



Hopewell Farmer's Market.



Hopewell rings in the holidays with its annual Light Up the Night celebration.

## Lesson 2: Government, communities and private investment must harmonize

Government leadership is critical. It's important to realize, though, that we are "servant leaders." We serve our constituency which includes citizens of all walks, as well as businesses and industries.


We serve to promote good stewardship of our ecological environment which our children and grandchildren will inherit, not to alienate our community and its links to the past. To serve means to listen to all constituencies and, if we don't have collaboration and buy-in from most people involved, we get nowhere.

## Lesson 3: Get outside help

Hopewell isn't alone. Urban flight and the mentality of suburban recreation gripped our state and others across the nation. Now, people are realizing the benefits of community life in towns and cities. Hopewell leaders learned by participating in the Virginia Municipal League and "The Main Street Program." We listened to experience from other communities with similar issues to craft our longer-term vision and encourage local participation and revitalization.

## The Wonder City celebrates its 100th birthday

It's fitting that Hopewell's resurgence coincides with its 100th year of being a city. Through all its ups and downs, Hopewell perseveres. Hopewell personifies the resiliency of a blue-collar heritage. Whether the kids graduated college and

went into white-collar jobs, their parents or grandparents came from Hopewell's working class heritage. The people of Hopewell celebrate the past and look to the promise of the future. This is the spirit of Hopewell that earned it the name Wonder City. 

**About the author:** *Christina Luman-Bailey is the Vice-Mayor of the city of Hopewell.*

**Hopewell's Beacon Theatre was originally opened in 1928 under the name The Broadway Theatre, offering silent movies and Vaudeville shows. The theatre was abandoned in 1981 and remained dark until 1999 when a group of citizens began restoring it. The restoration was completed by the City of Hopewell in 2015. Its concert lineup includes nationally renowned country and bluegrass performers.**



# Let the people speak

## A quick guide to when and how to hold a public hearing

“THE AFFAIRS OF GOVERNMENT are not intended to be conducted in an atmosphere of secrecy since at all times the public is to be the beneficiary of any action taken at any level of government.”<sup>1</sup>

These words inscribed in the Virginia code echo the revolutionary ideas and democratic principles of the American spirit. It evokes a strong feeling that the government is for the people and by the people; therefore, citizens should have a right to be informed of their government’s affairs. The local public hearing requirement contained within a number of Virginia statutes is a manifestation of this idea. A public hearing not only keeps the public informed but also provides a forum for concerned persons to express their opinions regarding certain issues.

Public hearings are not only helpful for citizens. They are extremely beneficial to local governments and their officials because hearings provide important insight into public acceptance, or lack thereof, for proposed actions.

### Why are public hearings held?

The essence of a public hearing is to determine whether the proposal before the governing body meets statutory requirements and whether it is in the best interests of the community, i.e. public interest. In some instances, the legislature authorizes a public hearing to take the place of a citizen referendum. At other times, the hearing may simply be an opportunity for greater citizen input on a matter.

Additionally, the governing body can hold public hearings even if they are not required by statute. Importantly, when deciding on whether or not to hold a public hearing, officials must always consult the local city or town charter or the rules of procedure/bylaws of the governing body as these may contain additional requirements.

### Examples of mandated public hearings

Local governing bodies should understand what a public hearing entails and when this requirement is triggered. Several examples of required public hearings are covered here.

#### Comprehensive plans – The key land use guides for the locality

The General Assembly’s choice to mandate public hearings during preparation and approval of a comprehensive plan illustrates that it wants the public to be aware of the process and be able to voice their concerns as the locality’s land use plan



evolves. Under the Virginia Code, a local planning commission must hold a public hearing to discuss a proposed comprehensive plan.<sup>2</sup> Following a hearing, the commission recommends the plan, or part thereof, to the governing body.<sup>3</sup> Once the governing body of a city, county or town receives the recommendation, it also holds a hearing to allow more public input.<sup>4</sup> These rigorous hearing requirements ensure the public is kept apprised at every step of the process.

#### Zoning – Regulating land development and use

Some of the most complex public hearing requirements accompany the development of zoning regulations and approval of change in use or regulations of, or specific exceptions for, individual properties. As a general rule, every adoption of, or change in a zoning ordinance, requires a public hearing. The planning commission must hold a hearing on the proposed changes,<sup>5</sup> and the governing body must conduct a hearing prior to approval and adoption of any proposed zoning ordinance or amendment.<sup>6</sup>

The Virginia Code contains specific notice requirements for the hearing. It is imperative for a zoning notice to contain the correct zoning classification. For instance, if a proposed rezoning allows for more use or density, the notice must clearly describe the up-zoning that may occur. If the governing body desires to zone land “to a more intensive use classification than was contained in the public notice,” the process will start over and a new public hearing will need to be held.<sup>7</sup>

Further, amendments and variations of zoning conditions proffered by a property owner in conjunction with a previously approved rezoning (i.e. “proffers”) require a public hearing and notice.<sup>8</sup> However, the governing body can waive this hearing requirement as long as certain conditions are met.<sup>9</sup>

In the case of special exceptions, variance requests or appeals of the zoning administrator and other administrative determinations, the appointed Board of Zoning Appeals must hold a hearing to allow public input prior to taking action.<sup>10</sup>

## Subdivision ordinances – Orderly subdivision of land and its development

Enactment or amendment of subdivision ordinances requires a public hearing before the local planning commission, as well as before the city or town council, or board of supervisors.<sup>11</sup>

### Annexation

Annexation occurs when a local government desires to incorporate land outside its boundaries into its city or town boundaries. A proposed agreement between a town and a county to define the town's future annexation rights requires the State Commission on Local Government to hold a public hearing so that “interested parties may appear and offer evidence or comments.”<sup>12</sup>

### Eminent domain

Unlike annexation, which involves the taking of property to add to the local government's jurisdiction, eminent domain or use of condemnation powers involves the taking of private property for a public use. This “taking” of private property also requires a public hearing. In this case, the local government must hold a public hearing prior to passing any eminent domain ordinance or resolution.<sup>13</sup>

### Budgets and tax rates

One of the most routine legislative actions that require public hearings are budgets. The board of supervisors or council must hold a hearing prior to adoption of its annual budget.<sup>14</sup> The local governing body must hold a public hearing at least seven days prior to approval of the budget.<sup>15</sup> Certain amendments to the budget during the year, which exceed total expenditures in the adopted budget, trigger additional public hearings.<sup>16</sup>

When the assessment of real property would result in an increase of 1% or more in the total real property tax levied, a locality must hold a public hearing to avoid reducing the tax rate. Localities can hold this hearing close to, but not at the same time, as the annual budget hearing.<sup>17</sup>

Again, this list is not intended to be a definitive guide to public hearings, but a sampling of public hearing requirements. Virginia's diverse public hearing requirements illustrate that hearings are integral to protecting citizens' rights and ensuring that those affected have a forum to voice their concerns.

## Required and best practices for public hearings

### Notice – The keystone of public hearings

In order to fulfill statutory public hearing requirements, it is essential that local governments follow proper notice procedures by informing citizens of the pending hearing and the issues that will be discussed. For example, in general, land use public hearings require notice in two forms: (1) specific written notice to those landowners and others whose rights may be affected by the proposed action, and (2) an advertisement giving the public notice (publication requirement).<sup>18</sup> The specific written notice requirements for publication and notification are located in each specific statute. An issue that often arises, in litigation chal-

lenging a land use action by a governing body is whether or not the local government advertised an effective notice.

Most land use statutes follow the publication requirements of § 15.2-2204(A). This section requires the local planning commission and the governing body to provide notice that specifies the time and place of the public hearing, so that persons affected by the proposed plan, ordinance, or amendment may present their views.<sup>19</sup> Notice must be published once per week over a two-week period in a newspaper with general circulation in the locality, and the public hearing must be held between five and 21 days after the publication of the second advertisement. The statute also allows for the local planning commission and the governing body to hold a joint hearing, in which case only the governing body needs to provide notice.

Notice publication is effective if it contains: (1) a descriptive summary of the proposed amendments; (2) notice of the local governing body's intention to adopt the proposed amendments; (3) a statement as to the location of where the proposed amendments may be examined by the public; (4) and in some cases, the requirement to notify localities within a certain distance of the subject land.

The Virginia Supreme Court has made it very clear that these procedural requirements are critical and has struck down land use decisions that the Court concluded were not properly noticed. The case law illustrates that the biggest issue in providing effective notice is whether the advertisement contained “a descriptive summary” to adequately inform the public of the issues to be discussed at the hearing.<sup>20</sup>

### Conduct of the hearing – where the rubber meets the road

When most people think about the proceedings of a public hearing, they imagine a regimented structure with time constraints and question and response procedures. Officials may think that they need to respond to speakers' questions, or that they need to alternate between pro and con speakers. In reality, localities have great discretion in designing the hearing format. The Virginia Code simply states “persons affected may appear and present their views.” This expansive language allows localities to conduct hearings in the manner they see fit, as long as the persons affected are given an opportunity to speak.

**Although localities may be statutorily obligated to hold a public hearing for certain issues, they are given great latitude in crafting the hearing procedures.**

Although there may be no specific requirements regarding how to conduct a meeting, we have several suggestions that



## Public hearings

can make the hearing run as efficiently and productively as possible. Also, the appearance of fairness in the conduct of the public hearing can make it go more smoothly and avoid litigation. While these aspects are important in all proceedings, they are critical in the conduct of large public hearings where many people come to speak on a contentious matter.

**Time limit for speakers:** One important issue involves the time period that the public will be allowed to address the governing body. While it may seem obvious, placing time limits on the hearing's duration and speaker's time is crucial. Also, consider asking or requiring individuals who represent an organized group to consolidate time (and have non-speaking members stand or raise their hands) if they are the spokesperson, and many speakers are anticipated.<sup>21</sup>

Clear, enforced time periods can prevent regular hearings from turning into marathons or claims of favoritism, painful for both those in the audience and the governing body.

Localities should be especially mindful of hearings with large attendance as they may prompt additional parameters. A sizable turnout to a hearing may activate certain rules in the board or council's rules of procedure which limit the amount of

time per speaker, or order of speakers. The number of people who trigger such a rule may be as few as 10 or as many as 100. It is essential that the governing body reacquaint itself with these rules in planning for such a public hearing. Making the hearing rules widely available in advance can streamline the hearing and again promote the perception of fairness.

Anticipation of high turnout should be used to the locality's advantage. The board or council can move the location of the meeting to accommodate more attendees. If all attendees cannot fit inside the meeting chambers, then the board or council should plan to have alternative space available, with live video if possible, but audio at a minimum. Or the governing body needs to plan on how to accommodate a crowd at its chambers without creating unnecessary confusion and frustration, and violation of room/building occupancy limits.

Speakers can be taken on an advance sign up or first-come, first-speak basis. Speakers should be called in groups so they can efficiently line up and wait for their opportunity to speak. Attendees should be asked to refrain from clapping or making comments as others speak.


Sharon Pandak of the Virginia-based law firm Greehan, Taves, Pandak & Stoner has worked on large public hearings involving contentious re-zonings for a Disney theme park, Walmart stores and other projects, as well as proposed downzonings and down-plannings. She advises local government staff and governing bodies on guidelines for the public hearings. "Preparing the notice of the hearing should be a joint

effort between the administration and legal counsel," says Pandak. "Early and thorough planning for the public hearing can ensure that the hearing is both conducted fairly and efficiently, and speakers perceive that their input is valued."

## Make it count

Public hearings by city and town councils and boards of supervisors provide an expression venue for concerned individuals on an array of local policy matters. The hearings allow local officials on the governing body to tap into public opinion surrounding certain issues. While the hearing requirement is statutory, governing bodies can also call for a public hearing whenever they feel one is appropriate.

Localities must be cognizant of the notice requirements because failure to comply will render any subsequent action moot, and (with or without litigation) the hearing will have to be held again in order to proceed properly. Although localities may be statutorily obligated to hold a public hearing for certain issues, they are given great latitude in crafting the hearing procedures.

Public hearings are an important aspect of our democracy. As such, it is critical these hearings are conducted in as fair, open and effective manner as possible. 

**About the authors:** Zachary C. Packard is an associate with the law firm of Greehan, Taves, Pandak & Stoner, PLLC. Michael Connolly, Esq. is affiliated with the firm. The authors acknowledge reference to prior presentations by Sharon Pandak, Esq. at the VML Annual Conference and VML Mayor's Institute.

- 1 Va. Code § 2.2-3700, introduction to the Virginia Freedom of Information Act.
- 2 Va. Code § 15.2-2225(i).
- 3 Va. Code § 15.2-2225(ii).
- 4 Va. Code § 15.2-2226.
- 5 Va. Code § 15.2-2285(A).
- 6 Va. Code § 15.2-2285(C).
- 7 *Id*
- 8 Va. Code § 15.2-2302(B)
- 9 *See* Va. Code § 15.2-2302(B)
- 10 *See* Va. Code § 15.2-2310.
- 11 *See* Va. Code § 15.2-2251; § 15.2-2253.
- 12 Va. Code § 15.2-3232(A).
- 13 Va. Code § 15.2-1903; § 15.2-1905(C).
- 14 Va. Code § 15.2-539.
- 15 *See* Va. Code § 15.2-2506.
- 16 Va. Code § 15.2-2507.
- 17 Va. Code § 58.1-3321.
- 18 *See* Va. Code § 15.2-2204.
- 19 *See* Va. Code § 15.2-2204(A).
- 20 *See Gas Mart v. Bd. of Supervisors of Loudoun County*, 269 Va. 334, 611 S.E.2d 340 (2005); *Glazebrook v. Board of Supervisors*, 266 Va. 550, 587 S.E.2d 589 (2003). Although one might conclude particularly from the detailed notice in *Glazebrook* that the Court found a procedural error; thus requiring new hearings by the boards of supervisors, in lieu of reviewing the very contentious issues of whether the adopted downzonings of properties were arbitrary and capricious.
- 21 The rules for such consolidation of time should be made clear in advance of the hearing.



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# Zi in Vir

Virginia localities play key role



# Zika in Virginia? in prevention

By Marissa Levine and Joe Hilbert

**T**HE VIRGINIA DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH (VDH) is well underway with its Zika response planning, in cooperation with many partners including the Virginia Municipal League. Reduction of transmission of the Zika virus is highly dependent on limiting person-mosquito contact and the control of mosquitoes. Virginia's localities have an important role to play in mosquito control, and every jurisdiction can make a difference.

Mosquito control does not have to be that complicated. The particular type of mosquito that could transmit the Zika virus in Virginia is the Asian Tiger mosquito (*Aedes albopictus*), which breeds only in container habitats that are usually found in yards around people's homes. These mosquitoes do not fly far (about 150 yards) and do not breed in puddles, swamps or ditches.

As a result, effective control of this mosquito requires Virginians to use insect repellent, and to dump, cover, discard or treat containers of water – even the smallest amounts of water – in their yards.

Because people are the only known Zika virus reservoirs for mosquitoes, a concentration of people and Asian Tiger mosquitoes, as well as the presence of the virus, is needed to facilitate the “local transmission” of the disease between people and mosquitoes. Consequently, all jurisdictions should focus primarily on their most populated areas.

## Establish mosquito control districts

All localities in Virginia are authorized to create one or more mosquito control districts (§32.1-187 et seq.) Mosquito control districts are provided with a broad authority to control and eliminate mosquitos. Specifically, mosquito control districts are:

- empowered to employ all necessary personnel and to perform all acts necessary to control and eliminate mosquitoes in the district, but such actions shall be subject to private property rights in the areas in which the work of the commission is performed. (§32.1-292)
- vested with the power of eminent domain to the extent necessary.... (§32.1-293)
- authorized to receive funding from a special tax levied on all real and personal property located within the boundaries of the district. (§ 32.1-194)

Currently, only about 10 percent of Virginia's jurisdictions have established mosquito control programs, and these programs operate in some of Virginia's most heavily populated jurisdictions. They include Alexandria, Fairfax, Prince William, Henrico, Gloucester, York, Newport News, Poquoson, Hampton, Norfolk, Portsmouth, Suffolk, Chesapeake, and Virginia Beach.

A number of other heavily populated Virginia jurisdictions, and most of Virginia's smaller or less populated jurisdictions, have no mosquito control capability but may have neighborhoods that have the potential to become Zika transmission zones. Such jurisdictions should start to educate themselves

## Zika prevention

and others. The key to controlling the mosquitoes that could transmit Zika is ultimately in the hands of a locality's residents, particularly homeowners, and the public.


Localities may also wish to review their legal authority to abate or remove "nuisances" (§15.2-1115 of the Code of Virginia) and to "prevent the spread of contagious diseases" (§15.2-1200), and consider how that authority could be appropriately used as part of its overall mosquito control effort.

Virginia's statewide planning effort includes an integrated framework with a focus on developing a statewide capability for broad-based mosquito control. Planning to date indicates a gap resulting from the limited number of localities with mosquito control capability. Filling that gap will likely require additional funding and time.

## Action steps for local communities

Effective mosquito control and prevention requires:

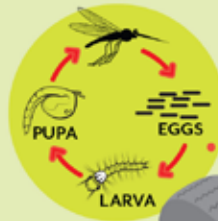
1. Thorough inspection of residential and commercial properties to find and eliminate, dump, or treat the containers of water that these mosquito species lay their eggs in. Effective treatment of a neighborhood often requires a property-to-property effort.
2. Spraying of aerosol fogs into the foliage of shrubs, hedges, ivy and other vegetation or structures where these mosquitoes sit.
3. Spraying of residual insecticide barriers on the foliage of shrubs, hedges, ivy, other low vegetation or walls on properties where these mosquitoes are abundant.
4. Maintaining screens on all home/building windows and doors to prevent the entry of these mosquitoes into the home.

Virginia's Zika Action Plan contains recommendations for four mosquito control response levels: preparedness, routine mosquito season activities, confirmed local transmission and widespread local transmission. VDH recommends that localities review the mosquito control components of the Virginia State Zika Response Plan at [www.vdh.virginia.gov](http://www.vdh.virginia.gov). VDH also has a Zika web page, [www.zikava.org](http://www.zikava.org), that includes numerous additional resources. 

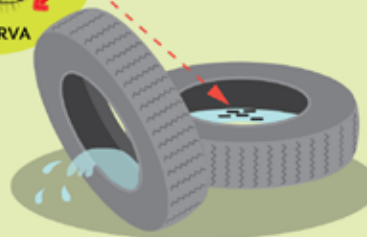
**About the authors:** Dr. Marissa J. Levine is the Virginia Health Commissioner. Joe Hilbert is Director of Governmental and Regulatory Affairs for the Virginia Department of Health.

# Stop the breeding of MOSQUITOES

Mosquitoes breed by laying eggs in and near standing water.



As little as one teaspoon or bottle cap of water standing for more than one week is enough for mosquitoes to breed and multiply.



At your house or business: Put away items that are outside and not being used because they could hold standing water.

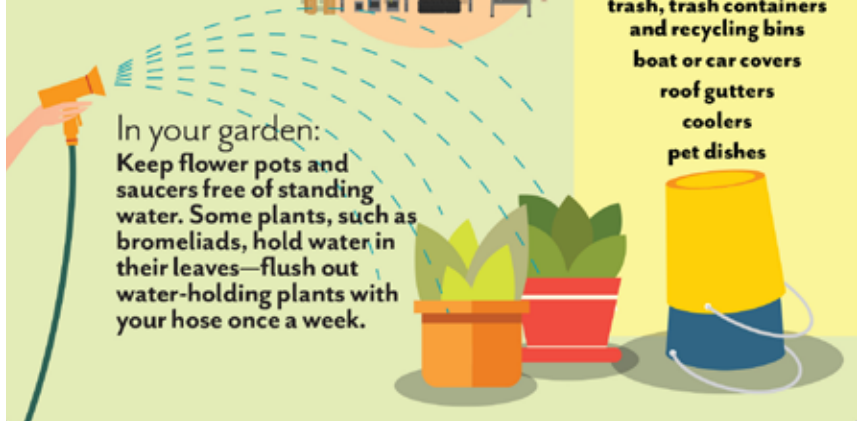


Around all buildings:

At least once a week, empty, turn over or cover anything that could hold water:

tires  
buckets  
toys  
pools & pool covers  
birdbaths  
trash, trash containers and recycling bins  
boat or car covers  
roof gutters  
coolers  
pet dishes

In your garden: Keep flower pots and saucers free of standing water. Some plants, such as bromeliads, hold water in their leaves—flush out water-holding plants with your hose once a week.



## What are the symptoms of Zika virus infections?

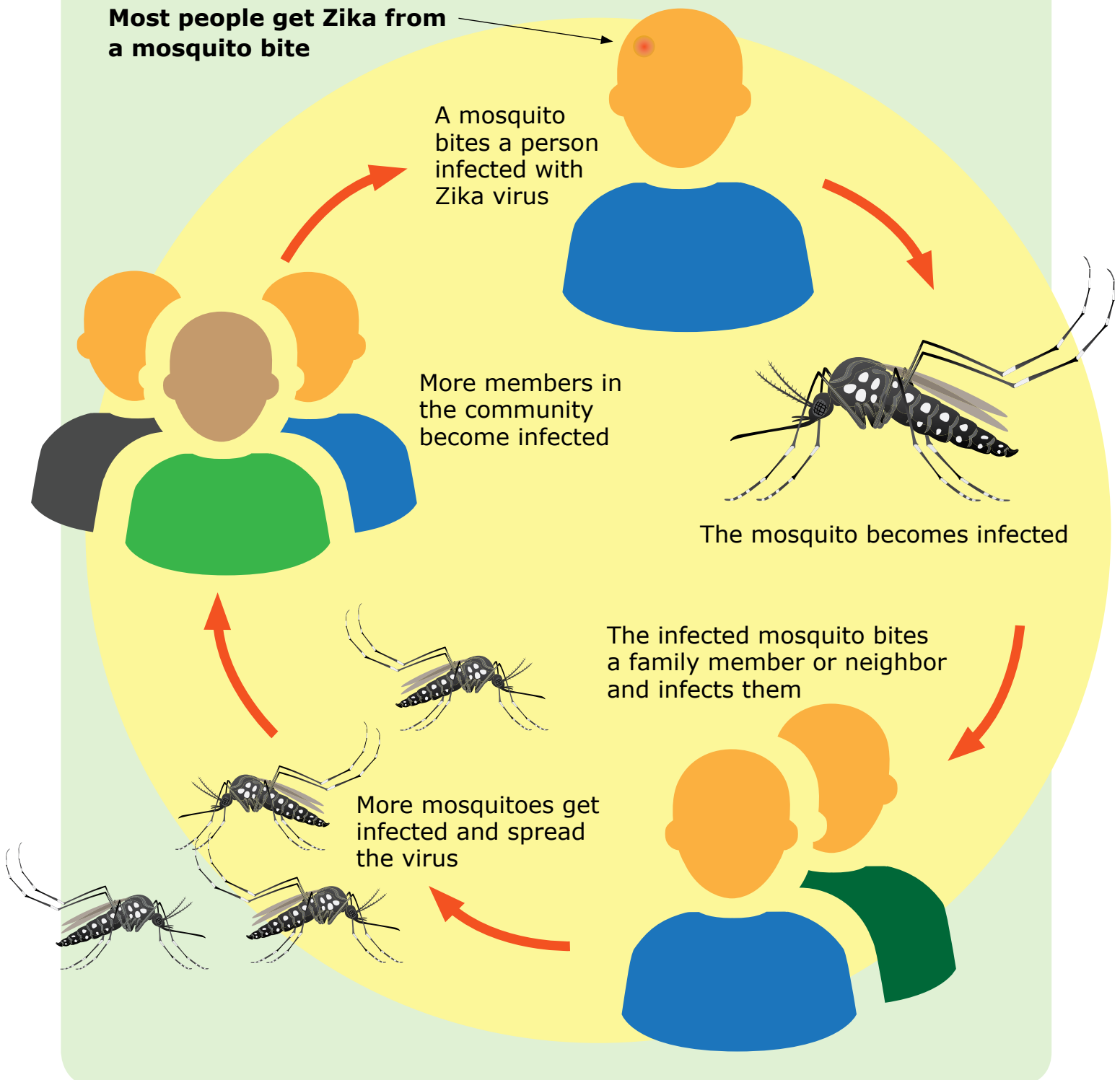
ABOUT 80% OF PEOPLE who are infected do not become sick. For the 20% who do become sick, the most common symptoms include fever, rash, joint pain, and conjunctivitis (red eyes). The illness is usually mild and the symptoms typically last several days to a week.

CDC scientists have announced that there is now enough evidence to conclude that Zika virus infection during pregnancy is a cause of microcephaly and other severe fetal brain defects and has been linked to problems in infants, including eye defects, hearing loss, and impaired growth.

# How Zika spreads

During the first week of infection, Zika virus can be found in a person's blood and can pass from an infected person to a mosquito through mosquito bites. An infected mosquito can then spread the virus to other people. To help prevent others from getting sick, strictly follow steps to prevent mosquito bites during illness.

**Most people get Zika from a mosquito bite**



# Lean forward

## Roanoke finds a better way to get the job done

**W**HEN YOU HEAR the word “Lean” used at Roanoke’s City Hall, it’s not referring to an exercise program, losing weight, or getting fit. Instead, it represents a new approach that is helping city workers “cut the fat” by focusing on customer experiences in their daily work.

In 2012, Roanoke City Manager Chris Morrill first became aware of Lean as a method private companies use to find efficiencies.

**The successful implementation of Lean practices improves quality, eliminates waste, minimizes cost, reduces time, enhances services to customers, and improves employee morale.**

The Lean’s process improvement method delivers the most value to the customer in the most efficient way. It essentially focuses on identifying and eliminating waste in the work that is done. Above all, Lean is a mindset, a way of thinking and acting for an entire organization. The successful implementation of Lean practices improves quality, eliminates waste, minimizes cost, reduces time, enhances services to customers, and improves employee morale.

Morrill was so impressed with what he learned that he decided to explore whether Lean could work for local government just as effectively.

To introduce the concept, Lean instructors from Virginia Tech’s (VT) Industrial and Systems Engineering (ISE) program provided department directors an overview of the process. Then directors were asked to identify employees to participate in the training and become Roanoke’s first Lean Team.

Initially, 16 employees were selected to receive training in the VT Lean Process Management Program. This team also worked with seniors from Virginia Tech’s ISE program to conduct Senior Capstone Design Projects.

“With increasing service demands and customer expectations, local governments cannot provide services the same old way,” said Morrill. “Leaders must be smart and innovative, establishing strategies and goals that bring about a continuous improvement environment. As a result, many local, state, and federal government leaders are turning to the concepts of Lean process improvement to pursue operational excellence. I’m proud to say Roanoke was one of the first local governments in our area to use this program.”

Now, a few years into its Lean journey, the city of Roanoke is reaping significant benefits.

### Lean success stories

#### Streamlining the intake process for the Department of Social Services

This project used Lean tools to identify areas for improvement in the current benefit application process and develop solutions. For example, one recommendation was to move toward online applications.

Using the Save Time, Apply Online Green Belt project, the number of SNAP applications submitted online went from 57 percent to 94 percent; and the number of TANF applications submitted online went from 44 percent to 93 percent.

Another recommendation was prioritized intakes. This was also accomplished through the Save Time, Apply Online project, which allowed staff to reduce the walk-in intake process to 29 minutes, a 22 percent reduction.

#### Creating a paperless permitting application for building inspections

Department of planning staff developed an online





**Lt. Stephen Keatts and Sgt. Michelle Vandergrift of the Roanoke City Police Department, graduates of “lean management” training, listen to residents’ concerns while patrolling the Rescue Mission area.**

application which has reduced the time required to process elevator re-certifications and could be used as a template in the future for the rest of the city’s trade permits.

### **Cards payable processing for the Department of Finance and the Purchasing Division**

Cards Payable enables staff to pay vendors directly through the Advantage system using a virtual credit card. This provides the vendor with payment faster. Terms are not an issue because the city pays statements monthly. It is also a revenue source because it increases the rebate the city receives from its purchasing card holder.

### **Intelligence-led policing for the Roanoke Police Department**

This project was done in three steps. In Step 1, staff implemented department-wide intelligence-led policing methods through expansion of the crime analysis and the establishment of guidelines for its use in geographic policing; Step 2 was the reorganization and restructuring of the department to support the intelligence-led policing effort; and Step 3 was the implementation of intelligence-led policing through the training of


all department members. This approach has been an important component in the city’s achievement of a 48-year low in part-one crimes.

Since its implementation, eight city employees have gone on to earn their “green belt” certification in Lean Six Sigma, indicating a higher level of skill and expertise in using Lean principles and tools.

Building on this success, the city partnered with Virginia Tech in March to hold a conference “Implementing Lean: Operational Excellence for Local Government.” The event introduced best practices for implementing Lean and shared the successes of continuous improvement projects from local government, state-wide consortiums, and universities.

Kay Dunkley, Director of the Virginia Tech Roanoke Center praised the city’s successes, saying, “I applaud Chris Morrill and his commitment to continuing and professional education opportunities for city employees.”

VT and the city are now developing a Lean Academy to offer employees from all jurisdictions, levels, and functions of government the knowledge and skills to create more efficient and effective government through a culture of continuous improvement. The

curriculum will feature four courses designed to meet the needs of organizations just beginning to explore Lean to those organizations who are more advanced in their Lean organizational transformation. 

**About the author:** *Melinda Mayo is the Communications and Media Officer for the City of Roanoke.*

## **Interested in learning to be Lean?**

Contact Roanoke’s Management and Budget Department:

Director, Amelia Merchant, (540) 853-6805, [amelia.merchant@roanokeva.gov](mailto:amelia.merchant@roanokeva.gov); or

Budget Administrator R.B. Lawhorn, (540) 853-1643, [rb.lawhorn@roanokeva.gov](mailto:rb.lawhorn@roanokeva.gov).

# Paint paradise over a parking lot

## Pop-up pocket parks in Fairfax County are public spaces made simple

**N**O LONGER DO CITY PLANNERS have to raise millions and wait years to develop a park-like community space.

An empty parking lot or a vacant parcel of land can quickly become an urban oasis. With some pavement paint, umbrella seating, and potted trees, you can have a welcoming retreat where workers can enjoy lunch and friends can meet for concerts and shows.

Pop-up pocket parks are a low-investment way to create a sense of place in a new area and allow cities a chance to test drive the space before making a bigger commitment.

The planned urbanization of Fairfax County's mixed use growth areas requires that the existing suburban park system be supplemented by parks that are more suitable for the unique urban context. The county's Urban Parks Framework includes pocket parks, common greens, civic plazas, larger recreation-focused parks, and linear parks.

Pocket parks are small-scale (usually less than one acre), open spaces incorporated into developments and designed as

a single defined space for people to enjoy. The county's policy is to locate pocket parks in areas of high-volume pedestrian activity, with easy access and high visibility to the street.

Some of Fairfax County's first pocket parks are planned for the Tysons Urban Center, which is undergoing large-scale mixed-use redevelopment, primarily focused around Metro transit stations along the new Silver Line.

Since 2010, approximately 45 new pocket parks have been proffered by developers through rezoning approvals in Tysons. Since these projects are in various phases of development, no permanent pocket parks have yet been built or opened to the public.

Interim and pop-up parks, however, have an important role to play in filling the gap in park and recreation needs until the ultimate build out of Tysons is realized.

The Tysons Park System Concept Plan recommends the use of interim and pop-up parks to create a sense of place, spur economic development, and make use of under-utilized land until such time as more permanent parks and facilities can be built and supported by redevelopment.



**The Greensboro pop-up park was also the site of the "Imagine Art Here: Tysons Tiles" project of the Arts Council of Fairfax County. The project included visually compelling ground murals. Photo courtesy of Fairfax County Office of Community Revitalization.**

According to the Concept Plan, “Pop-up parks can take advantage of unused surface parking lots and other vacant areas of land that do not require significant grading or construction. Temporary barriers, fences and planters can be used to define a space. Pavement paint, loose tables and chairs, lounges, shade structures and umbrellas, other outdoor furnishings, temporary lighting, and public art can help to transform an asphalt parking lot into a vibrant park space at relatively low cost.”

Fairfax County’s first pop-up pocket park opened up in Tysons in the fall of 2014. At the corner of Solutions Drive and Greensboro Drive, just one block from the new Greensboro Metro Station, the park was dubbed the “Greensboro Green.” This interim park space, which is privately owned and main-


gaged with 1,000 participants to investigate the role of art in the community, opinions on culture, and fun facts about the participants.

**Interim and pop-up parks have an important role to play in filling the gap in park and recreation needs until the ultimate build-out of Tysons is realized. The plan recommends the use of interim and pop-up parks to create a sense of place, spur economic development, and make use of underutilized land until such time as more permanent parks can be built.**

The project culminated with physical installations of visually compelling ground murals at several locations in Tysons last summer, including one at the Greensboro Green. The project was a good example of the incorporation of public art and the use of temporary art to enliven a space.

But the Greensboro Green will have fulfilled its purpose and be gone in just a year or two. In January of 2016, the Fairfax County Board of Supervisors approved a rezoning application for the property on which the Greensboro Green sits. The planned mixed-use project will consist of about four million square feet of new development. Ground breaking for the initial phases of the project will occur within the next 12-24 months, bringing an end to the Greensboro Green.

The new development, however, will include seven new park spaces, including several pocket parks and a one-acre central gathering space with hardscape and landscaped areas, pop jet fountains for water play, a variety of seating options, play elements, and a performance stage.

The developer’s intention in providing the Greensboro Green temporary park is to get people to think about the location as a place to gather and enjoy the outdoors. 

**About the author:** *Andrea Dorlester is a Senior Park Planner and Development Review Supervisor for Fairfax County Park Authority.*



**The term pocket park (or “vest-pocket park”) was first coined to describe Paley Park, a 4,200-square-foot space located along East 53rd Street in Midtown Manhattan. It is perhaps the most well-known pocket park in America. Photo by Andrea Dorlester.**

tained, is the result of repurposing excess surface parking near a popular food truck gathering area.

The space includes painted asphalt, potted plants, moveable seating, picnic tables and shade umbrellas. It is a popular destination for employees and local residents who enjoy being outside, especially at lunchtime and on evenings in the summer when musical performances are scheduled.

The Greensboro pop-up park was also the site of the “Imagine Art Here: Tysons Tiles” project of the Arts Council of Fairfax County. This project by artist Julia Vogl en-



**Fairfax County’s first pop-up pocket park, Greensboro Green, is a popular destination for lunch breaks and for summer evening concerts. Photo by Andrea Dorlester.**

# Keeping Up Appearances

Norfolk empowers homeowners to maintain neighborhoods with pride

**N**ORFOLK'S DEPARTMENT of Neighborhood Development focuses on initiatives that support neighborhood investment, growth and a sense of place. Launched in 2015, Renovate Norfolk allows Neighborhood Development to work with lower-income residents, empowering them to make improvements to their property that might not be possible without the funding assistance.

"We don't have clients or customers," says James Rogers, Head of Neighborhood Development. "Customers are people who rely on services and have no accountability. It's about partnerships, meaning you have equal standing at the table."

Renovate Norfolk is a grant program to assist income-eligible homeowners with residential restoration, rehab and repair. Through the program, qualified residents can receive up to \$25,000 to make improvements and an additional \$10,000 towards lead abatement.

The Department of Neighborhood Quality has partnered with HOMES, a non-profit organization specializing in home rehabilitation, to implement the construction phase of this program and all contractors are required to guarantee a one-year warranty on parts and labor.



## Eligible improvements

- kitchen and bathroom renovations
- porch repairs
- roof and window repair or replacement
- HVAC or plumbing upgrades
- exterior façade repair or replacement
- various structural repairs

**"When a house falls into disrepair, it identifies financial or life-changing occurrences that have affected the homeowner. Renovate Norfolk gives code enforcement inspection staff an option to assist and not just enforce."**

**- Sherry Johnson, Division Head of Neighborhood Quality.**

To qualify for Renovate Norfolk funding, applicants must be current on property taxes, mortgages and utility payments. The residence must be owner-occupied and the applicant cannot own more than two properties. The gross household income can't exceed the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development's income limits. The maximum income ranges from \$39,500 for a family of one to \$74,450 for a family of eight.

Grant funding must first be used to correct code violations and health and safety problems before general property improvements. "Housing is rarely only about the structure. When a house falls into disrepair, it identifies financial or life-changing occurrences that have affected the homeowner," says Sherry Johnson, Division Head of Neighborhood Quality.





“Renovate Norfolk gives code enforcement inspection staff an option to assist and not just enforce. It empowers us to become partners as we strive to have Norfolk neighborhoods of choice.”

Renovate Norfolk benefits the most economically challenged and income-restricted residents. With a strategic and place-based approach to assist neighborhoods, the city’s short-term strategy is to address homes in need of repair and rehabilitation while the long-term plan is to address neighborhoods comprehensively through property repair and improvements to vacant and blighted properties.

“In addition to assisting a single homeowner in one home, we hope to see instances where four or five houses are rehabilitated along two or three blocks,” says Assistant Director of Neighborhood Development Kimberly Pierce. “The purpose is two-fold: to see highly visible changes and to spur interest in surrounding neighbors to make improvements to their homes.”

In an effort to meet the needs of residents at higher income levels, the Norfolk Redevelopment and Housing Authority offers the Aesthetic Improvement Grant and the Significant Structure Grant. Both programs offer matching funds, up to \$10,000, and are available to residents at any income level.


To strengthen the investment in neighborhoods, the city has also partnered with non-profits and faith-based organizations to provide additional assistance to homeowners.

**“It allows us to compassionately provide help to residents wanting to improve their block’s appearance and marketability to the benefit of the whole neighborhood and city.”**

**- Jim Herbst, Senior Neighborhood Development Specialist**

Renovate Norfolk embodies the Neighbors Building Neighborhood philosophy that focuses on strengthening neighborhoods and encouraging residents to invest in their homes and create neighborhoods of choice.

“Renovate Norfolk is a terrific tool in our toolbox,” according to Senior Neighborhood Development Specialist Jim Herbst. “It allows us to compassionately provide help to residents wanting to improve their block’s appearance and marketability to the benefit of the whole neighborhood and city.”

Renovate Norfolk is marketed as an investment to the community. Staff attend civic leagues and taskforce meetings as well as hosting monthly informational sessions and other networking opportunities to promote this initiative. Twenty households have completed pre-inspections. Neighborhood Development expects to begin rehabilitation and repair in the first five homes this month. 

**About the authors:** *Aarian Daniels is Public Service Coordinator in Norfolk’s Department of Neighborhood Development. Mary Keough is Program Supervisor in the city’s Marketing Communications Office.*



2016

VIRGINIA MUNICIPAL LEAGUE

# INNOVATION AWARDS

Recognizing Excellence  
in Virginia Local Government

# CALL FOR ENTRIES

## 2016 VML Innovation Awards

(formerly the VML Achievement Awards)

THE 2016 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 nearly 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

New this year, categories are based on the field of work as opposed to population. All populations compete within these categories. Our panel of judges have years of experience in municipalities 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:

#### **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 other 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, 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., Friday, July 29, 2016.**

### Rules for entering

New this year, all entries must be submitted electronically. Localities must download the entry form at [www.vml.org/education/innovation-awards](http://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 [nchafin@vml.org](mailto:nchafin@vml.org).

The competition is open to all VML local government members.

Entries must cover new projects or programs completed between Jan. 1, 2015 and May 1, 2016, or – for existing projects – entries must cover major enhancements that occurred between Jan. 1, 2015 and May 1, 2016.

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 five categories. The President's Award is not a separate category.

A maximum of three supporting documents 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. Videos can be uploaded to a file transfer site. Full instructions are provided at [www.vml.org/education/innovation-awards](http://www.vml.org/education/innovation-awards).

### Questions?

For more information about completing your entry or other details, contact VML's Nancy Chafin at 804-523-8527 or [nchafin@vml.org](mailto:nchafin@vml.org).

### 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 Virginia Beach, 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!





# INSTITUTE FOR LOCAL OFFICIALS

KEY TRAINING FOR NEW & VETERAN OFFICIALS ALIKE

**July 22-23, 2016**

**Hilton Richmond Downtown**

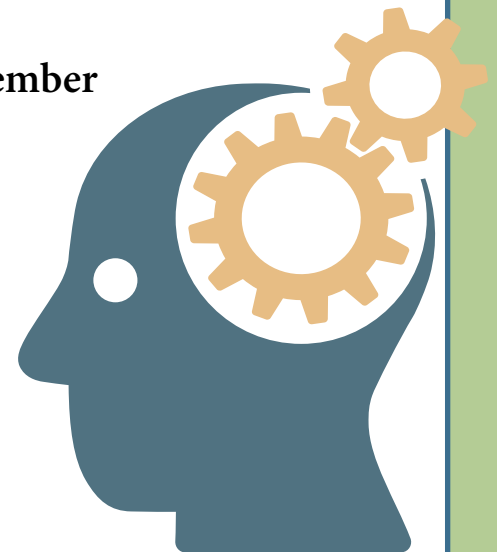
**501 East Broad Street, Richmond, VA 23219**

This event replaces what was previously known as the Newly Elected Officials Conference and is open to newly elected officials and veterans alike.

**To view the preliminary agenda and to register, go to [www.vml.org](http://www.vml.org).**

## TOPICS

- **Fundamentals of serving as a council member**
- **Making the most of meetings**
- **Budgeting**
- **Freedom of Information Act**
- **Conflicts of Interest Act**
- **Interacting with constituents**
- **Basic Law Making / Dillon's Rule**
- **Public officials' liability**



Attendees will earn 10 of the 40 hours required to achieve Level One (Local Government Basics) certification in the Virginia Leadership Academy.

Cost: \$175 for Members and \$75 for Guests

Hotel accommodations are available at the group rate of \$121/night.

For questions or more information, please contact Anita Yearwood, CMP, CGMP at (804)523-8534 or [ayearwood@vml.org](mailto:ayearwood@vml.org).

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