



2010 VACO Achievement Awards

Deadline: June 1, 2010

Application Form

All applications must include the following information. Separate applications must be submitted for each eligible program. Deadline: June 1, 2010.

Program Information

Locality County of Louisa

Program Title Community Development 2010

Program Category Organizational Development & Customer Service

Population Category 30,001 to 50,000

Contact Information

Name Amanda Reidelbach

Title Public Information Officer

Department County Administration

Complete Mailing Address Post Office Box 160
1 Woolfolk Avenue, Louisa, Virginia 23093

Telephone # 540-967-3400 Fax # 540-967-3411

E-mail areidelbach@louisa.org

Signature of county administrator or chief administrative officer

Name Dale G. Mullen

Title County Administrator

Signature* *Dale G. Mullen*

*Entries without this signature will not be accepted.

Recognizing the Best in County Government Programs!

Achievement Awards 2010



ATTN: 2010 Achievement Awards Program
 Virginia Association of Counties
 1207 East Main Street, Suite 300
 Richmond, Va. 23219-3627

address service requested

Call for Entries

COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT 2010

Community Development 2010 is a management plan created by the Department of Community Development for the principal purpose of improving customer service. It captures the spirit of open government and promotes the use of technology and resources to improve the effective and efficient delivery of service. The plan was implemented in late 2009 out of the need to address the growing challenges associated with new state regulations, rapid population growth, higher service expectations, and limited staff resources. *Community Development 2010* addresses these challenges by establishing a vision for the future and laying out a path to get there.

Six goals and 25 objectives are established within the Community Development plan. These goals and objectives diverge into a multitude of different service areas ranging from public outreach to file management. Some of the accomplishments so far include the creation of an online public access database of land use applications; commencement of a public outreach program including customer appreciation meetings, public education meetings, surveys, publications and informational brochures; enhancements to the Community Development website; the utilization of regular reporting and tracking procedures; establishment of new policies and a written policy manual; standardization of legal forms, employee training in customer service; and the digital integration of code enforcement inspections with building inspections.

Community Development 2010 is an innovative solution the systematic challenge of changing the status-quo. This management plan is being used to elevate the level of service offered to the public. *Community Development 2010* is unique to the needs of Louisa County, but could be a model for other local governments.

What is Community Development 2010?

Community Development 2010 is a plan for improving service through structured systematic change. The initiative was implemented in September 2009 and is an annual management plan for the Department of Community Development.

The Louisa County Department of Community Development is a highly visible department in Louisa County that works with a great number of citizens, businesses, organizations, design professionals, local official, and state agencies in executing the duties of several community services. In summary these services include planning, zoning, building permit and inspections, GIS, erosion and sediment control, biosolid monitoring, and code enforcement. As local regulation become more complex and time consuming, and the expectation of the community change, it is imperative that the most efficient systematic tools and approach are used in order to provide the best customer services possible.

Community Development 2010 is a project that captures both a vision for the future and a task for the present. The vision for the future is for the department to become a customer service role model for other jurisdictions by serving the unique interest and needs of Louisa County in the most helpful way possible. The task for the future is to initiate structured change that achieves the goals needed for the fulfillment of the vision.

Changes that are initiated as part of *Community Development 2010* are not focused on criticizing past practices. Indeed, many past practices have been effective. However, today's world offers new technologies, innovations and philosophies that can be used to reach a new level of performance.

Community Development 2010 Mission Statement

To guide public and private development efforts in an atmosphere of superior customer service while enforcing adopted regulations and advancing planning practices for the betterment of the community.

The following six goals were identified:

1. To create a weekly system of reporting activities within the department so useful information and notification are shared promptly with management and local leaders in a consistent format;
2. To consolidate files, communications logs and applications in a centralized database for improving the overall organization of files so information is more readily available for retrieval, monitoring, research, and analysis;
3. To improve the handling of customer inquiries in a way that transfers a more consistent perception of openness, fairness and professionalism;
4. To find ways to expedite and simplify the plan review processes in the mist of the growing complexity of local, state and federal regulations that govern land use and physical development;
5. To broaden the understanding of community development's role and value in the community;
6. To standardize processes and procedures through the implementation of written policies for improving the understanding of employee expectations.

The goals and objectives were developed for the purpose of improving customer service through the implementation of transparent policies, better use of technology, public outreach, and professionalism.

Community Development 2010 is customized to the needs of Louisa County, and more specifically, the Department of Community Development. The plan identifies specific areas within the department where measurable goals can be achieved during the year.

Community Development 2010 is an innovative solution used to implement systematic change within the Department of Community Development. The philosophy of the specific goals and objectives in the plan promote open government, public participation, and professionalism.

A management plan such as *Community Development 2010*, can be used to help elevate the level of service offered to the public. *Community Development 2010* may be unique to the needs of Louisa County, but is believed to be a model other local governments may learn from.

What is the problem, challenge, or situation faced by the locality?

The plan was drafted and initiated out of the need to address a number of growing challenges associated with new state regulations, rapid population growth, higher service expectations, and limited staff resources.

How the program was carried out, including financing and staffing, and the program's results?

Staff drafted the plan for *Community Development 2010* with input from County Administration, the Board of Supervisors and the Planning Commission. No financial

cost was associated with the preparation of the plan other than time and the paper to print it. The plan was prepared over a period of about two months by the Director of Community Development which included open meetings with the Planning Commission and the Board of Supervisors.

Some of the accomplishments so far include the creation of an online public access database of land use applications; commencement of a public outreach program including customer appreciation meetings, public education meetings, surveys, publications and informational brochures; enhancements to the Community Development website; the utilization of regular reporting and tracking procedures; establishment of new policies and a written policy manual; standardization of legal forms, employee training in customer service; and the digital integration of code enforcement inspections with building inspections.

How is this initiative cost effective for the County?

Community Development 2010 was developed without any additional cost to the County. The plan will improve both the short-term and long-term efficiency and effectiveness for the department.

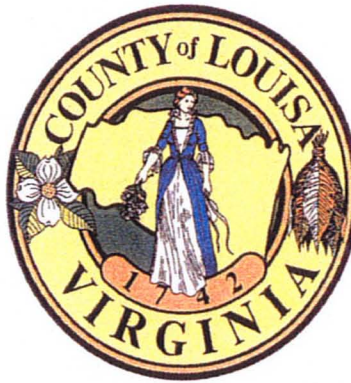
What results have come from the implementation of Community Development 2010?

As is common in local government, and particularly for agencies such as Community Development, the day-to-day activities can overwhelm staff's time, making it difficult to find the time to look at things from a comprehensive perspective. *Community Development 2010* helps staff stay focused on the big picture.

As each of the objectives of the plan are achieved, step-by-step the department moves forward. The plan also reminds staff of the importance of continued growth, not

only for them individually, but also for the larger team of Community Development. The plan encourages a new level of open government and sets a higher standard for customer service.

LOUISA COUNTY, VA



Community Development 2010

A Plan for Improving Service through Structured Systematic Change



DEPARTMENT OF COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT

8/24/2009; Revised 9/10/2009

INTRODUCTION:

The Louisa County Department of Community Development is a highly visible department in Louisa County that works with a great number of citizens, businesses, organizations, design professionals, local officials, and state agencies in executing the duties of several community services. In summary, these services include planning, zoning, building permits and inspections, GIS, erosion and sediment (E & S) control, Biosolid monitoring, and code enforcement. As local regulations become more complex and time consuming, and the expectations of the community change, it is imperative that the most efficient systematic tools and approaches are used in order to provide the best customer service possible.

Community Development 2010 is a project that captures both a vision for the future and a task for the present. The vision for the future is for the department to become a customer service role-model for other jurisdictions by serving the unique interests and needs of Louisa County in the most helpful way possible. The task for the present is to initiate structured change that achieves the goals needed for fulfillment of the vision.

Changes that are initiated as part of Community Development 2010 are not focused on criticizing past practices. Indeed, many past practices have been effective. However, today's world offers new technologies, innovations, and philosophies that can be used to reach a new level of performance.

This document serves as a starting point in identifying the structured changes needed and setting a plan for implementing those changes. The document is organized into three categories. First, a 2010 Mission Statement is established for the department which reflects the intended vision for the future. The second category details general goals that need to be achieved to achieve the mission of the department. Third, specific objectives and an implementation plan are established. Implementation efforts will be made while maintaining current work duties and other special projects not identified or addressed in this plan for systematic changes.

I. **2010 MISSION STATEMENT:** *To guide public and private development efforts in an atmosphere of superior customer service while enforcing adopted regulations and advancing planning practices for the betterment of the community.*

II. **GOALS:**

GOAL #1: *To create a weekly system of reporting activities within the department so useful information and notifications are shared promptly with management and local leaders in a consistent format.*

GOAL #2: *To consolidate files, communication logs, and applications in a centralized database for improving in the overall organization of files so information is more readily available for retrieval, monitoring, research, and analysis.*

GOAL #3: *To improve in the handling of customer inquiries in a way that transfers a more consistent perception of openness, fairness and professionalism.*

GOAL #4: *To find ways to expedite and simplify the plan review process in the mist of the growing complexity of local, state and federal regulations that govern land use and physical development.*

GOAL #5: *To broaden the understanding of community development's role and value in the community.*

GOAL #6: *To standardize processes and procedures through the implementation of written policies for improving the understanding of employee expectations.*

III. **IMPLEMENTATION PLAN**

GOAL #1: *To create a weekly system of reporting activities within the department so useful information and notifications are shared promptly with management and local leaders in a consistent format.*

➤ **Goal #1 Objectives:**

Objective 1a – WEEKLY CER REPORT. *The Senior Administrative Assistant and Building Official will forward weekly code enforcement activity to the Director of*

Community Development at approximately 12:00 noon of the last day of each week. The Director of Community Development will then review and provide a weekly activity report (CER Report) to the County Administration Office (County Administrator and Office Manager) and the County Attorney's Office (County Attorney and Paralegal) for code enforcement activities. County Administration will then forward reports to the Board of Supervisors. The CER Report will run in Beta until CY2010 as the content of the report is evaluated to determine what information is most useful. Cases that pose an immediate concern shall be reported to the Director of Community Development and Building Official immediately. Reports are to be automated with Blueprince technology to minimize preparation time spent on preparing reports.

Objective 1b – EXPANDED WEEKLY REPORTING. The process used in the CER report will be progressively expanded to cover additional activity within Community Development during the Beta stage of reporting. Areas desirable for weekly reporting may be modified as needed, however, beginning CY2010, or sooner, weekly reporting is anticipated to cover the following areas:

New Code Enforcement Cases	Weekly Inspections
Weekly Permits Issued	New Land Use Applications
Weekly Information Inquiries	Weekly E & S Activity
Weekly Biosolids Monitoring	New BZA Applications

Objective 1c – MONTHLY REPORTS. Current monthly data and narrative reports are to be continued and will include department activities not included in weekly reports. Monthly reports are to be modified, as possible, to account for automation so re-creation of data can be avoided, and to provide consistency with weekly reports.

GOAL #2: To consolidate files, communication logs, and applications in a centralized database for improving in the overall organization of files so information is more readily available for retrieval, monitoring, research, and analysis.

➤ **Goal #2 Objectives:**

Objective 2a – CENTRALIZATION OF ALL HARD COPY FILES. All hard copy files not presently centralized, such as code enforcement cases, will be located at designated storage locations in the department rather than filed separately in the offices of individual employees. However, a sign-out sheet will be used so other staff members can easily locate a file. Files may be kept with individual employees while they are

actively working on them. The Senior Administrative Assistant will maintain a filing cabinet guide to designate the location of file types within the department.

Objective 2b – AUTOMATION OF ALL FILES. All files will be logged-in and updated on Blueprince by the Administration division of the department and a corresponding hard copy file will be created. Blueprince shall be updated as activity occurs by the employee involved in the activity. This shall include logging-in conversations held on the case or application and providing status updates. Important documents will be added to the online file as appropriate. Technology difficulties will be addressed with the assistance of Blueprince technicians and the County's IT department. Files shall integrate GIS data as possible. Code Enforcement inspections will be added to the inspection grid currently used for building inspections.

Objective 2c – DIGITAL SCANNER: To reduce file storage; to prolong the life of documents; to expand GIS capabilities and assistance to the public; and to assist with the automation and retrieval of files the purchase of a digital scanner is recommended for next fiscal year. This equipment is presently on the Louisa County Capital Improvement Plan.

GOAL #3: To improve in the handling of customer inquiries in a way that transfers a more consistent perception of openness, fairness and professionalism.

➤ **Goal #3 Objectives:**

Objective 3a: PHONE CALLS. Initiate a customer service training program specific to the handling and interaction of the public on the phone. Create a written policy of performance standards for employees to recognize, such as the time period a call is placed on hold before interaction and the process and language that should be used in directing calls to the appropriate individuals or taking messages for returning calls. While keeping the daily online calendar, establish and in-out board to better inform administrative professionals when employees are out of the office.

Objective 3b: OFFICE VISITS. Establish a policy of designating an individual for each day of the week that is accountable as the customer service representative of the day. The employee will be the lead person for walk-in customers and general phone inquiries during that day.

GOAL #4: *To find ways to expedite and simplify the plan review process in the mist of the growing complexity of local, state and federal regulations that govern land use and physical development.*

➤ **Goal 4 Objectives:**

Objective 4a: EXPEDITED REVIEW PROCESS. *Research the potential for establishing an expedited review process for time sensitive projects that present a significant public benefit.*

Objective 4b: OTHER AGENCY REVIEW. *Evaluate the performance of other agency review processes and determine where improvements can be made. Determine if the department should continue to serve as the coordinator of the plan review process for state government entities such as VDOT, DCR, and VHD. As part of this, evaluate the value and coordination changes needed should a change be made to have applicants submit plans directly to review agencies outside of the County for review.*

Objective 4c: APPLICATIONS & CHECKLISTS. *Evaluate and amend applications and checklists to simplify and streamline information needed from applicants.*

Objective 4d: PROACTIVE INTERACTION WITH APPLICANTS. *Set performance standards for monitoring applications. Proactive interaction is often needed to identify problems and reach solutions to problems that arise. Furthermore, the County should help with State agency problems were possible to avoid unnecessary project delay.*

Objective 4e: REVIEW COMMENTS. *Provide clear review comments that are verbally discussed with the plan preparer.*

Objective 4f: PRE-APPLICATION MEETINGS. *Meet applicants to discuss applications where possible before application submission. Change approach so the first choice of a meeting place is on-site.*

Objective 4g: NEIGHBORHOOD AND DCR MEETINGS. *Consider reducing the time period between Neighborhood Meetings and DCR meetings.*

Objective 4h: CODE AMENDMENTS. *Continue to work with the Planning Commission to recommend amendments to zoning and subdivision ordinance to modernize the development standards and processes used.*

Objective 4i: MINUTES FOR PC WORKSESSIONS. Determine if taking minutes at work sessions is needed, and if not, eliminate it from the work schedule so time can be spent on other activities.

Objective 4j: REVIEW BONDING POLICY, FEES, EMPLOYEE WORKLOAD. Evaluate if changes in the bonding procedures, fee structure, employee workload, and proffers is warranted. Consideration of economic changes due to the downturn in the economy should be a factor for consideration in this process.

Objective 4k: DEPARTMENT WEBSITE. The department website should be reviewed for accuracy and user friendliness. For example, it was recently identified that some of the district regulations were not updated when amended a couple years ago.

GOAL #5: To broaden the understanding of community development's role and value in the community.

➤ **Goal 5 Objectives:**

Objective 5a: CUSTOMER SERVICE SURVEYS. The department participated in the customer service committee's beta citizen survey test. In the results of the Customer Service Committee's surveys, Community Development was tied with the animal shelter for the most comments received. Of the comments made, all comments were overwhelmingly positive of service received. While this information is positive for current service levels, more information is needed to determine steps that can be taken to do even better. A more detailed survey would guide the department better in specific areas that can be improved. The survey should target both citizens, developers and design professionals. The anticipated date to run this survey will be in November, with data collection continuing until the end of this CY. In CY2010, the surveys will be evaluated and presented for analysis.

Objective 5b: COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT OPEN HOUSE MEETINGS. During the months of November 2009, December 2009 and January 2010 Community Development will hold a series of workshops to introduce and educate the public on the roles of community development. The workshops will be focused on both education and solicitation of input for ideas for progressive changes.

Objective 5d: EMPLOYEE RECOGNITION. An employee of the month blog will be added to the Community development website with a picture of the employee and

summary of what the employee does. The blog is intended to be educational, not an award program for employees.

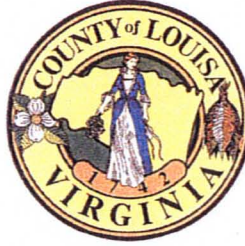
Objective 5e: REPORTS TO BOARD. The department will continue to submit reports to the Board of important topics of interest and need.

Objective 5f: ARTICLES. The department will continue to submit articles and facts for the County Messenger for educating the public.

GOAL #6: To standardize processes and procedures through the implementation of written policies for improving the understanding of employee expectations.

➤ **Goal 6 Objectives:**

Objective 6a: POLICY MANUAL. A written policy manual has been created in the past year to establish rules that apply outside of the scope of the code and County policies. The setback compliance policy and bonding policy were the first of such written policies. Additional written policies shall be written to address code enforcement procedures and customer service guidelines.



Developer's Roundtable Meeting

Discussion Topic: New DCR Stormwater Regulations & Fees

<p>When:</p> <p>Friday, May 29, 2009 11:30—12:30 (followed by lunch)</p> <p>Where:</p> <p>Public Meeting Room (Board Room) 1 Woolfolk Avenue Louisa, Virginia 23093</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">Agenda:</p>
	<p>11:30 <u>New DCR Stormwater Regulations & Fees</u></p> <p style="text-align: center;"><i>Introduction:</i></p> <p>Jeremy Camp, Louisa County Director of Community Development</p> <p style="text-align: center;"><i>Guest Speakers:</i></p> <p>Alyson Sappington, Thomas Jefferson Soil and Water Conservation District</p> <p>Scott Crafton, Virginia Department of Conservation & Recreation</p> <p>12:00 <u>Questions & Answers / Discussion</u></p> <p>12:30 <u>Lunch</u></p>

Please RSVP to Susie Needham via e-mail at sneedham@louisa.org or by phone 967-3430, no later than Tuesday, May 26, 2009 if you plan to attend.

Developer's Roundtable Meeting
Discussion Topic: New DCR Stormwater Regulations & Fees

Address: 1 Woolfolk Avenue
P.O. Box 160
Louisa, VA 23093

Phone: 540-967-3430
Fax: 540-967-3483
E-mail: jcamp@louisa.org
sneedham@louisa.org





BUILDER'S ROUNDTABLE DISCUSSION:
DISCUSSION OF POTENTIAL CHANGES TO FEE SCHEDULE
AND PROFFER POLICY

WHERE:

- Louisa County Office Building
Extension Meeting Room
(3rd Floor)
1 Woolfolk Avenue
Louisa, VA 23093

WHEN:

- ◆ April 29, 2010 at 1:30 p.m.

Hello

The Louisa County Department of Community Development is interested in hearing from you regarding potential changes to the Community Development Fee Schedule and Proffer Policy. Staff has drafted recommended changes that IF adopted will impact both building permit and zoning fees. The drafted changes include fee increases, fee decreases and changes in how fees are calculated. A change to the maximum proffer amount for rezoning applications is also being considered. All interested citizens, design professionals, builders and developers are encouraged to attend.

Please call the Louisa County Community Development office for more information & to RSVP—(540) 967-3430

**BUILDER'S ROUNDTABLE DISCUSSION:
DISCUSSION OF POTENTIAL CHANGES TO FEE**

Address: 1 Woolfolk Avenue
P.O. Box 160
Louisa, VA 23093

Phone: 540-967-3430
Fax: 540-967-3486
E-mail: jcamp@louisa.org
sneedham@louisa.org
psnyder@louisa.org





HELP THE COUNTY BY TAKING PART IN THE DRAFTING PROCESS OF THE LOUISA COUNTY TRANSPORTATION PLAN!

WHERE

- Jouett School, 315 Jouett School Road (Rte. 648 just off Rte. 33)
- Thomas Jefferson (TJ) School, 1782 Jefferson Highway (Rte. 33 east of Louisa)
- Trevilians School, 2035 S. Spotswood Trail (Rte. 33 west of Louisa)

WHEN

Meeting #1: Vision

(please attend one)

- ◆ Jouett School: Thursday, February 18, 2010
- ◆ TJ School: Wednesday, March 3, 2010
- ◆ Trevilians School: Tuesday, March 16, 2010

Meeting #2: Strategies

(please attend one)

- ◆ Jouett School: Tuesday, February 23, 2010
- ◆ TJ School: Monday, March 8, 2010
- ◆ Trevilians School: Tuesday, March 23, 2010

ALL MEETINGS WILL START AT 7:00PM
AND END BY 8:15PM

Hello:

The Louisa County Planning Commission is in the process of drafting a transportation plan. This plan will guide transportation investments in the County for years to come. The transportation plan will address the number of growing challenges related to the County's road infrastructure. In addition, it will address public transit, bike paths, sidewalks, and more. Help us make this plan successful by participating in the process!

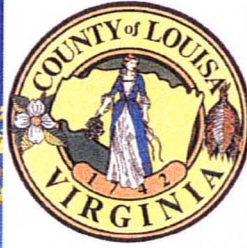
You are welcome and strongly encouraged to attend two open door meetings regarding the preparation of the Louisa County Transportation Plan. At the first meeting, a vision of Louisa County's transportation future will be developed. This will be followed by a meeting that will focus on the strategies the County can use to implement the vision.

**HELP THE COUNTY BY TAKING PART IN THE
DRAFTING PROCESS OF THE LOUISA COUNTY
TRANSPORTATION PLAN!**

Address: 1 Woolfolk Avenue
P.O. Box 160
Louisa, VA 23093

Phone: 540-967-3430
Fax: 540-967-3486
E-mail: jcamp@louisa.org
dholtzman@louisa.org
sneedham@louisa.org





CUSTOMER SERVICE MEETINGS

TELL US YOUR IDEAS OF HOW WE CAN BETTER SERVE YOU

WHERE

- L.C. Office Building
Upper Level,
Extension Office Meeting Room
1 Woolfolk Avenue
Louisa, Virginia 23093

WHEN

- ◆ Tuesday, April 14th, 12:30 - 1:30 PM
- ◆ Tuesday, April 21st, 12:30 - 1:30 PM
- ◆ Tuesday, April 28th, 12:30 - 1:30 PM

COMPLIMENTARY REFRESHMENTS, INCLUDING PIZZA, WILL BE AVAILABLE AT EACH OF THE MEETINGS!

Hello:

The Department of Community Development is requesting your assistance. Starting in April, the department will be holding a series of open door meetings to speak with our customers about ideas of how we can improve service to you.

Customer Service is our top priority, and we are looking for ideas from you about what we can do better. Whether you are a builder, developer, business person, community leader or a citizen, we want to hear from you.

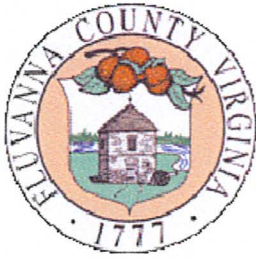
Please call the Louisa County Community Development office at (540) 967-3430 with questions.

TELL US YOUR IDEAS OF HOW WE CAN DO A BETTER JOB IN SERVING YOU!

Address: 1 Woolfolk Avenue
P.O. Box 160
Louisa, VA 23093

Phone: 540-967-3430
Fax: 540-967-3486
E-mail: jcamp@louisa.org
dholtzman@louisa.org
sneedham@louisa.org





**YOU ARE INVITED TO ATTEND
A TRAINING / REVIEW SESSION SPONSORED BY FLUVANNA & LOUISA COUNTIES**

Discussion Topic: VDOT Secondary Street Acceptance Requirements (SSAR)

The purpose of this meeting is to assist the local development community in Fluvanna and Louisa counties to have a better understanding of the new VDOT regulations.

<p>When:</p> <p>Thursday</p> <p>November 5, 2009</p> <p>1:30 p.m.— 4:30 p.m.</p> <p>Where:</p> <p>Spring Creek Sports Club Banquet Room 181 Clubhouse Way Gordonsville, Virginia 22942</p> <p>(Located just north of I-64 at Zion Crossroads—see enclosed map)</p> <p>1-540-832-0094</p>	Agenda:	
	1:30 – 3:00	<u>Secondary Street Acceptance Requirements</u>
		<p><i>Introduction:</i></p> <p>Jeremy Camp Louisa County Director of Community Development</p> <p>Darren Coffey Fluvanna County Director of Planning</p> <p><i>Guest Speakers:</i></p> <p>Joel DeNunzio VDOT, Charlottesville Residency Staff Engineer</p> <p>Mark Wood VDOT, Louisa Residency Staff Engineer</p> <p>Chuck Proctor VDOT, District Planner</p> <p>Brent Sprinkel VDOT, District Preliminary Engineering Manager</p>
	3:00—3:30	<u>Questions & Answers / Discussion</u>
	3:30—4:30	<u>Other VDOT Regulations & Changes</u>

Please RSVP to Susie Needham via e-mail at sneedham@louisa.org or by phone 540-967-3430, no later than Tuesday, November 3, 2009 if you plan to attend.

WE STRONGLY ENCOURAGE YOU TO PARTICIPATE IN THIS MEETING

Address: LOUISA COUNTY
1 Woolfolk Avenue
P.O. Box 160
Louisa, VA 23093

Phone: 540-967-3430
Fax: 540-967-3486
E-mail: jcamp@louisa.org
sneedham@louisa.org

Address: FLUVANNA COUNTY
132 Main Street
Palmyra, Virginia 22963

Phone: 434-591-1910
Fax: 434-591-1911
E-mail: dcoffey@co.fluvanna.va.us
bphillips@co.fluvanna.va.us



ATTENTION CONTRACTORS:

Louisa County Community Development is hosting a presentation on truss specs and design. Purcell Lumber and Apex Truss are sponsoring this presentation with a Q&A session following the presentation. The meeting will be held at the County Administration Building in the Public Meeting Room, December 3, 2009 at 4:45 pm.

Some items to be addressed include:

- **Temporary vs. Permanent Bracing**
- **Design Criteria, wind, snow loads, etc.**
- **Engineered drawings**

**Sponsored by J.S. Purcell Lumber, Corp. and Apex Truss
540-967-0026**



Community Development

Written Policy #01-09; Setback Compliance Policy

Purpose:

To ensure compliance with the Louisa County regulations governing setbacks and minimum yard areas in zoning districts.

Discussion:

In recent years there have been several occurrences of noncompliance with buildings and structures related to deficient setbacks and minimum yard areas. Too often when these violations are detected by County Staff, the building or structure has already been substantially completed. This results in a situation which requires a significant amount of County resources to resolve, as well as expense to the property owner.

The current permitting process relies heavily on the property owner to ensure compliance with setbacks. Minimum setback and yard distances are documented on all building permits as notice to property owners. In addition, plats are requested at the time of permitting and the applicant is required to show where the structure will be located on the property. At the time of application, Staff ensures that the structure is proposed in a location that complies with setback and yard area regulations. However, the review process has limited engagement with the applicant to stress the importance of setbacks, and no process currently exists, other than observance by County Staff, beyond the initial review at the time of application.

There does not appear to be any single cause for past setback and minimum yard area violations. Indeed, the current process is usually effective in ensuring compliance. However, it is recognized that more can be done to ensure compliance in the future.

A relatively recent incident of a house being built significantly inside of the front setback is an example of what can go wrong. In this instance, the applicant proposed the house in a compliant location. However, the applicant then built the house in a different location, possibly due to an error in measuring from the ROW. Staff discovered the violation, but not until mid construction of the house.

Numerous challenges exist for Staff under the current process in ensuring compliance of setbacks. Some of these challenges may include the lack of a plat of the property; difficulty in knowing where property lines are, or where the VDOT ROW begins; limited training of inspectors in zoning regulations; lack of professional qualifications to measure setbacks; disregard of regulations by some builders; and miscommunication between contractors and the owner, as well as between contractors and inspectors at a job site.

Recommended Policy:

The following additional steps in the permitting process are recommended to be administered by Community Development Staff in the future to ensure setback compliance:

- 1) Applications will be required to include a plat of the property. In cases where no plat exists, a survey of the property shall be required to provide an accurate plat of the property. An exception may be granted for nonresidential accessory structures at the discretion of the Zoning Administrator.
- 2) Applications shall include a site plan sketch of the proposed building(s) and/or structure(s) with dimensional lines showing the proposed distance to front, side, and rear property lines. Distances from other structures on the same parcel shall also be shown. The sketch shall account for decks, stoops, steps, ramps, or similar structures. When buildings are modified, a new site plan sketch shall be required.
- 3) In addition to the minimum required setbacks, building permit applications shall document the proposed setbacks.
- 4) When a building or structure is shown on the site plan sketch within 20 feet of the minimum setback a setback survey shall be required for foundations. In addition, a minimum of a setback certification report shall be required for such structures prior to the issuance of a final approval of the building permit. Surveys and setback certifications shall be prepared by a licensed Virginia surveyor. The applicant may also choose to require additional measures to be taken, such as a survey for footings. The cost of surveys and setback certifications shall be paid for by the permit applicant.
- 5) A copy of the site plan sketch shall be attached to all building plans.
- 6) Inspectors will be trained in zoning practices to understand site plan sketches.
- 7) When a survey is required for a foundation (See #4), a hold will be placed on the inspection process after foundation inspection until zoning approval is granted. Zoning review will verify that the foundation is constructed in compliance with setbacks.
- 8) The permitting process shall require that a final inspection accompany zoning approval when a setback certification report is required. Zoning review will verify that the structure is constructed in compliance with setbacks.

<u>APPROVAL</u>	
Comments: _____	
Director: _____	Date: _____

Community Development

Written Policy #02-09; Bonding Policy (bonding rates & administrative contingency)

Purpose:

To ensure that securities held for development projects in Louisa County include adequate funds to cover administrative (including legal) expenses necessary when the County is required to complete delinquent development projects.

Discussion of Issue:

When securities are required for development projects the Department of Community Development accepts the following types of security: bonds and letter of credits from a Virginia institution or a cash escrow.

The current security policies of the Department of Community Development include the following bonding rates:

- ❖ Road Construction: \$100 per linear foot of road + a 25%* administrative contingency. * Note: Recent legislation has reduced the amount of administrative contingency that can be received for roads to 10%.
- ❖ Erosion & Sediment Control: The amount determined by the Virginia Department of Conservation & Recreation (DCR), Soil and Water Conservation Division, + a 25% administrative contingency.

Current development policies allow the gross bond amount, including the administrative contingency, to be reduced when requested by developers to reflect the status of completion of the specific development project. After reduction of the administrative contingency, the County can be left with inadequate funds to cover administrative (and legal) expenses associated with pulling a security and completing a development project. Expenses include staff time in managing the project, VDOT fees and securities required for state road acceptance, and legal expenses that may be necessary.

Research has been done on construction costs for roads under current market conditions. Staff contacted VDOT and three local engineering firms to obtain information on what the appropriate bonding rate should be. Based on the information received, the cost to construct roads varied, but ranged from a low of \$100 per linear foot to a high of \$150 per linear foot.

Recommended Policy:

- 1) Change the security policy so the administrative contingency is not reduced at the time of bond reduction for development projects; except that, the Zoning Administrator, in consultation with the County Attorney, may use discretion in allowing alternative administrative contingency amounts when the total security amount is exceptionally low or exceptionally high.

- 2) Due to the mandatory reduction in the administrative contingency for road projects, and in consideration that Louisa County's rate is already set at the lowest threshold, it is recommended to increase the bonding rate to \$125 per linear foot of roadway.

<u>APPROVAL</u>	
Comments: _____	
Director: _____	Date: _____

Community Development

Written Policy #03-09; Rural Additions Policy

Purpose:

To improve the process by which residents request and receive improvements to roads using VDOT's Rural Additions program; and

To improve the efficiency of the Rural Addition program in Louisa County so more state funds can be used toward needed transportation projects.

Discussion:

Many Louisa residents would like to raise the quality level of the roads they live on to enable them to become part of the state's secondary road system. It can take a long time to progress from the initial request for improvements to the point when the funding is available and construction scheduled. Given this, it makes sense for the County to have a consistent *process* for inclusion in the Rural Additions program and *criteria* for prioritizing projects once they are on the list. The existing program in Louisa has several flaws that have caused trouble for residents applying for Rural Additions status, as well as for the County.

The problems in the current *process* stem from a lack of information. Residents apply to the Board of Supervisors to have their roads included on the Priority List and the Road Reviews Committee considers their projects. But in many cases neither the Board nor the Committee has the information necessary to decide if the road should proceed through the process. For example, the Board may learn after a project is on the Priority List that there is language in the subdivision deed forbidding use of state funds. In other cases the Board may add a project to the List and find out later that the neighbors are not ready to proceed with the work. Common complications include that residents are divided on whether to pursue the road improvements, or residents are unable to pay to relocate utilities when required.

The problem with *criteria* is that there currently are none. The County has no means of prioritizing road projects, except in the order they are received. Sometimes residents are well-organized and their road project is ready to move forward, but it is stuck in line behind a project that is not moving at all.

Rural Additions Policy:

The following are key elements intended to clarify the process for inclusion in the Rural Additions program and criteria for the Priority List:

- 1) **Applications Should Go Through Community Development Staff.** Staff are in a good position to gather all the relevant information when residents first apply to have their road included in the program. Applicants will set up a pre-application meeting with Staff much as they would if submitting a site plan for a development project. At this stage Staff will work with the applicant to identify problems that could slow down a project later, or cause it to be taken off the list altogether.
- 2) **Resident Buy-in Is Necessary.** Neighborhoods that apply to have a road considered for the program must gather signatures on a Petition Form from properties that will be impacted. For a Petition to be sufficient, it should include 100% of all impacted owners on at least one side of the road, and no less than 75% of all impacted owners on all sides of the road. This will show that enough residents support the project and are willing to cede necessary right-of-way and move utilities if needed.
- 3) **Criteria Based on Readiness:** A set of criteria will help Staff determine where a road should be placed on the Priority List. A road will be a stronger candidate if a) a more complete right-of-way is pledged; b) it is in poor condition; c) a relatively large number of dwelling units are served by the road; d) the timeline for completion is relatively short; e) there are few conflicts with utilities; f) the neighborhood has special needs, such as a large number of elderly residents.

Proposed Steps in the Process:

1. Citizen submits written request to Community Development Department or to their Board of Supervisor Representative. For the former, Staff will contact the Board of Supervisor member for the corresponding voting district to inform him/her of the request. For the latter, the Board of Supervisor member should forward the request to staff for initial research. Staff will review the request and determines if the road qualifies for Rural Additions program. Also at this stage, a primary contact person is established for the project so contact can be maintained throughout the process between the County and the citizens.
2. Neighborhood representative provides completed Petition Form to Staff. The petition form should be in a format approved by the County. Furthermore, Staff should prepare a map for the citizens with a list of all applicable property owners along the road.
3. VDOT, Staff, neighborhood representative and utility company meet to assess whether utilities must be relocated.
4. Neighborhood decides if there is a desire and ability to pay for utility relocation.
5. Staff drafts report to the Board that recommends that the road be added to the List.
6. Utility easements are adjusted and neighborhood representative submits Right-of-Way Forms to Staff. These are signed by each resident and notarized so that the Board can dedicate right-of-way to VDOT. When the road is ready for work to

commence, it will be flagged as a potential project for funding, and will be evaluated relative to its priority and readiness with other road projects.

7. When funding is approved by the Board of Supervisors, a request will be sent to VDOT for rural addition funding approval. Construction will then commence.

Status of Existing Projects (Once New Process is Adopted)

It would be unfair to a neighborhood whose project has been on the Priority List for a long time if the new process and criteria caused them to fall to the bottom of the List. Therefore, projects on the List today will not be prioritized based on the criteria listed above. However, they will be expected to have support from 75 percent of dwelling units and to complete right-of-way forms. If they do not, even if their project is number one on the List, another project can pass it if it has sufficient neighborhood support.

<u>APPROVAL</u>	
Comments: _____	
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