

**VIRGINIA
CHAPTER OF THE
AMERICAN
PLANNING
ASSOCIATION**

2009 AWARD
WINNERS

SUMMARIES

Outstanding Planning Award Richmond Downtown Plan

City of Richmond

The Richmond Downtown Plan was adopted by the City Council in October 2008 after an 18-month planning effort built upon an extensive engagement of the public and a commitment to key planning principles or 'foundations'. The Dover Kohl & Partners Team assisted the City in this effort. These Seven Foundations set a clear tone and direction for the plan with a focus on: variety and choice, traditional city patterns, a green downtown, a river context, urban architecture, history and economic diversity. The community engagement included key stakeholder meetings, charrettes, and an Open Design Studio where residents and passersby were encouraged to stop in and offer input. The studio was open day and night from Sunday through Thursday and over 150 people visited the studio during that time. A Work-in-Progress presentation was made in a charrette format and set the stage for a refinement of the illustrative plan, further analysis, and subsequently the addition of the seventh foundation on maintaining a mix of incomes Downtown. In addition to this community participation, the Planning Commission and Council conducted advertised public hearings on the draft documents. In addition to the community involvement, another feature of the planning effort and resultant adopted plan was the development of implementation activities to sustain the planning energy with initiatives including regulatory changes, planning strategies, funding mechanisms, advocacy, and possible capital improvements. And priorities were established to focus the energy. The hands-on planning built trust in the process, supported sound planning principles and resulted in products of clear direction on complex issues to the City. The process and plan are good examples to follow for both small and large area public planning throughout the Commonwealth.

**Planning Innovation Award
Roanoke Residential Pattern Book**

City of Roanoke

While pattern books are not new, the innovative, highly illustrative and inclusive manner in which the “Roanoke Residential Pattern Book” is written is exceptional. The Roanoke Residential Pattern Book was formulated as an extensive public-private partnership with the Roanoke Planning Office and Hill Studio. The third leg of the stool was the public including builders, developers, homeowners and interested citizens. The plan input process included house tours in addition to extensive public meetings. The final product is a truly exceptional and innovative document that contains unique elements such as:

- Neighborhood (lot) patterns
- Green Building
- Landscaping and Fencing sections
- Permissive and friendly writing style
- Checklists and worksheets

These elements together with highly illustrative pictures and graphics make the Pattern Book highly usable and transferable to other jurisdictions.

**Student Planning Project Award
Hull Street Road Revitalization Plan**

Virginia Commonwealth University

Members of Dr. John Accordino’s Urban Commercial Revitalization class completed a highly complex and thorough plan for the Hull Street corridor this past fall. The Plan was comprehensive including excellent mapping, organization, and analysis. The students coupled the corridor’s existing challenges with a market study that considered future possibilities to provide specific future recommendations for the area. The Plan was quite comprehensive and considered the history of the area, the plans in place or pending, as well as a myriad of survey results to produce a realistic plan. The Plan uniquely addressed the questions: Why, Where, Who and When, to each objective. Overall, the students did a superior job in creating a realistic plan that included extensive analysis, solid writing and excellent mapping and graphics.

Private Sector Planning Award
Journey Through Hallowed Ground Corridor Management Plan

Lardner/Klein Landscape Architects

The Journey Through Hallowed Ground (JTHG) National Heritage Area is a unique area through Pennsylvania, Maryland and Virginia that needs to be protected, cherished and explored. This 179-mile corridor traverses 3 states and includes two World Heritages Sites, 13 National Park Units, 15 National Historic Landmarks, 60 National Register Rural Historic Districts and more than one million acres listed on the National Register of Historic Places. A Corridor Management Plan was developed to integrate participation and guide the JTHG Partnership for the corridor. An extensive collaborative process was conducted that involved every local government along the corridor, three state transportation, conservation and historic resources agencies, over 150 civic organizations, local businesses and private landowners. This large scale regional planning effort advocates a context sensitive approach to projects within the byway corridor to protect the valuable scenic, historic, archaeological, cultural, natural and recreational resources, all of which were inventoried and analyzed through months of research and miles of field work. The management plan established a framework to insure that the Plan will be implemented. Some additional case studies were conducted within the corridor. The team worked with various DOT's to coordinate the differing views about context sensitive solutions. In addition, best practices used throughout the corridor were highlighted to serve as examples for other to follow. This extensive effort of inventory and community participation is a good standard for multi-jurisdictional, large scale planning studies throughout the Commonwealth.

Planning Leadership Award (Professional Planner)

Peter Braham, AICP (Fairfax County, retired)

Peter worked as a planner for over 25 years and recently retired as a Principal Planner from the Fairfax County Department of Planning and Zoning (DPZ) after 23 years of service to the County. As a knowledgeable and well-established planner, Peter utilized his skills and background to mentor junior planners while also engaging and educating citizens, applicants and elected officials, thereby, increasing the awareness of planning principles and the process. In addition, Peter worked tirelessly to make certain that decision makers understood his ideas and goals, were incorporated into plans as appropriate, which ensured that such projects advanced the cause of planning. He is known as a planning resource throughout the region and is well respected by his peers, citizens, applicants, Planning Commissioners and members of the Board of Supervisors. He served the planning field through his work with the Engineers and Surveyors Institute (ESI), a recent presentation at the Virginia Chapter of the American Planning Association conference and importantly, by taking the time and making the effort to explain the principles and goals of planning to those within and outside the planning field.

Planning Leadership Award (State Elected Official)

Clifford L. (Clay) Athey, Jr.

Delegate Clifford L. (Clay) Athey came to the legislature in 2002 with local government experience, serving for four years on the Front Royal Town Council and two years as Mayor. In his law practice, he assists landowners with planning and zoning issues and the intersection of his public service with his private practice has made him keenly aware of the challenges facing comprehensive community planning and development in the Commonwealth, and most especially for small towns and rural communities. This combination of perspectives has given him an insight that has been exceptionally helpful in the legislature. His efforts on HB3202 have helped to bring about some of the most significant changes in land use law in a generation. For better or worse, Del. Athey can rightfully be viewed as the primary author of the Urban Development Area (UDA) concept, which strives to use a community's adopted Comprehensive Plan as a true guide for future development using the principles of smart growth and new urbanism. He now serves as the Co-Chair of the Joint Subcommittee Studying Land Use Tools in Virginia. As a legislator, Del. Athey often will propose ideas and ask questions, then sit back, listen and carefully consider the responses, then refine the ideas and questions and listen some more. He has been especially diligent in ensuring that planners and planning perspectives are included at the table where these discussions occur.

APA Virginia Awards

2009 Special Recognition Award

VML Go Green Virginia Initiative

The Virginia Chapter of the American Planning Association awarded “Special Recognition” to the Virginia Municipal League’s Go Green Virginia Initiative, a program that encourages local governments to reduce energy and promote sustainability.

The cornerstone of the initiative in 2008 was the Green Government Challenge, a friendly competition among VML member local governments to encourage the implementation of specific environmental policies and practical actions that reduce carbon emissions. Local governments earned “green points” by implementing or adopting up to 30 policies and actions divided into 11 categories ranging from energy efficiency and green buildings to land-use and innovation. Amassing at least 100 “green points” out of a possible 200 earned certification as a “Green Government.”

In its first year, the Green Government Challenge produced the following results:

- Sixty-eight member local governments took the time to register their interest in the Challenge on the Go Green Virginia Web site.
- Of those 68, 41 cities, towns, and counties chose to participate in the Challenge and submit their accomplishments for review.
- Of those 41 local governments, 26 achieved the minimum score of 100 “green points” that was necessary for certification as a “VML Green Government.”

In accepting the award at the annual conference, VML Executive Director Mike Amyx thanked the APAVA members for the recognition and announced that year two of the initiative includes new partnerships with Virginia Association of Counties and the Virginia School Board Association making the “Green Government Challenge” available to all local governments and school districts in the Commonwealth. For more information on how your local government can participate go to www.gogreenva.org.

2009 VIRGINIA PLANNING SCHOOLS OUTSTANDING STUDENTS

VIRGINIA COMMONWEALTH UNIVERSITY URBAN AND REGIONAL PLANNING

Graduate Outstanding Student - Craig F. Carver

Our faculty believes Craig F. Carver is the most worthy recipient of the VAPA Outstanding Student Award among our MURP students. He is on track to graduate this May with an outstanding 3.8 GPA and will long be remembered by the faculty as one of the brightest, yet also most congenial students we have had the pleasure to teach. Furthermore, Craig has been superb in teamwork situations, practicing the gentle, yet persuasive leadership that marks all good planners. But it is his work outside the classroom that really sets him apart. After one semester, MURP students elected him president of the Urban and Regional Planning Student Association. Under his leadership, the group developed new initiatives to serve the community and to strengthen relationships with planning practitioners, as well as to help recruit prospective planning students. Craig is also active organizing and participating in volunteer work with the Habitat for Humanity in its home-building projects. In the view of the VCU faculty, Craig is not only an outstanding student, but has all the makings of an outstanding planner, and we are very proud of him.

Undergraduate Outstanding Student - Aaron Shoemaker

Aaron is a thoughtful, engaged, and talented student with a current cumulative GPA of 3.882, which is higher than any of his peers in the program. Aaron makes regular, insightful contributions in class and his writing and analytical skills are well above average. He also has gotten enthusiastically involved in community engagement and service activities. In sum, we feel that Aaron shows great promise for future academic and practical work in planning.

UNIVERSITY OF VIRGINIA URBAN AND ENVIRONMENTAL PLANNING

Graduate Outstanding Student – Glenn Kenneth Heimgartner

For outstanding academic performance (3.92 GPA), consistent professional quality in his work, and vigor in making the sustainability connection between the built and natural environment.

Undergraduate Outstanding Student – Melissa Ann Reese

For outstanding academic achievement as an undergraduate planning student (GPA 3.84), professional quality work in applied courses, and outstanding service toward all undergraduate planning students through the Student Planner's Association. She is a leader by example and intellectual clarity. She has been a helpful teaching assistant in undergraduate courses. She has also championed the planning efforts of those in the "informal" communities both here and abroad.

**VIRGINIA TECH UNIVERSITY'S NATIONAL CAPITAL REGION
URBAN AND REGIONAL PLANNING**

Graduate Outstanding Student – Nicole Sitko

Nicole Sitko was selected to represent our program because she has simply been the most talented student since arriving at UAP-Alexandria in the fall 2007. She is graduating this spring with a 4.0 GPA in a MURP degree. Nicole was a GA in Metropolitan Institute at Virginia Tech in her first and worked tirelessly on a series of key projects for the center. For example, she analyzed data and helped MI project development demand to 2040. This past year, Nicole took a GA position with Jonah Fogel at Virginia Cooperative Extension in Richmond, thereby bringing sponsored research money to Virginia Tech while still a grad student. Nicole is also a good citizen of the program and actively participates in all our events. Finally, she has a great sprit of public service, which is so critical in planning, and will join the Peace Corp after graduation.

**VIRGINIA TECH UNIVERSITY
URBAN AFFAIRS AND PLANNING**

Graduate Outstanding Student – Scott Gentry

Scott Gentry came to Virginia Tech with a civil engineering degree and has become a planner. He continues his interest in water planning research and will receive the graduate certificate in watershed management along with his MURP degree. As President of the Graduate Urban Affairs and Planning Association, he is a leader in his Virginia Tech Blacksburg MURP class of 2009.

Undergraduate Outstanding Student – Ryan Little

Ryan Little is an outstanding graduating Virginia Tech senior in Public and Urban Affairs with a GPA of 3.7. He has taken his academic work very seriously and has shown great promise as a professional planner.