



The Virginia Chapter of the American Planning Association

ISSUE BRIEF

ENHANCEMENT OF THE VIRGINIA LAND CONSERVATION FUND

VAPA supports enhancement of the Virginia Land Conservation Fund. The VLCF provides jurisdictions an opportunity to leverage local, federal and private funding for the preservation of parcels that define and serve community improvement needs. VAPA supports enhanced funding to the VLCF and programmatic revisions that will strengthen support for local Purchase of Development Rights (PDR) and conservation easement programs.

Section 10.1-1020 of the Code of Virginia defines the purposes of the Fund, stating in subsection A. 2.:

“Providing grants to state agencies, including the Virginia Outdoors Foundation, and matching grants to other public bodies and holders for acquiring fee simple title to or other rights, interests or privileges in real property for the protection or preservation of ecological, cultural or historical resources, lands for recreational purposes, and lands for threatened or endangered species, fish and wildlife habitat, natural areas, agricultural and forestal lands and open space.”

Section 10.1-1020 C. 2. of the Code details the formula of the Fund:

“Seventy-five percent shall be divided equally among the following four uses: (i) natural area protection; (ii) open spaces and parks; (iii) farmlands and forest preservation; and (iv) historic area preservation.”

VAPA supports enhanced program flexibility that will encourage local efforts to establish and expand PDR programs. Currently the VLCF is interpreted to only consider grant requests for specific projects. Allowing VLCF grants to be used for seed funding to start or expand community-wide PDR programs will encourage the expansion of efforts that promote multiple public purposes. PDR programs recognize the value of private property rights while promoting the conservation of valuable farm and forest land.

MAKING GREAT COMMUNITIES HAPPEN:

VAPA will support state-level planning policies that make Virginia and its communities the best place to live, work and play. Sound planning offers a key to making Virginia the best place it can be for all Virginians. Every region requires planning that promotes good jobs in livable communities. Faster growing regions have the added need for planning that recognizes pressures that are unprecedented in Virginia’s history. Good planning actively involves the people of a community in the process; it combines their input on what is “valuable” for a good community with the technical facts brought by professionals and scientists. Sound planning includes an understanding of the differences



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between technical and value judgments and blends both appropriately to recommend a direction that moves a community toward the best place it can be for its citizens.

ADVOCATING FOR GREAT COMMUNITIES:

In our efforts to advocate for sound planning policies, regulations, and practice in Virginia, our diverse membership is available as a resource for information and expert testimony regarding planning practice in Virginia. Likewise, through our parent organization, APA, we can provide information regarding planning practice through the United States. VAPA is ready and willing to assist as needed.

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