Urban Development Area (UDA) Process in Virginia: History & Requirements

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VDOT Coordinating Transportation & Land Use Forum
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Today’s Conversation

• Brief history and purpose of UDAs
• UDAs in the VTrans Multimodal Transportation Plan (VMTP)
• UDA Grants and Grantee Highlight
What is a UDA?

A UDA is defined as (Section §15.2-2223.1):

- Areas designated by a locality that **may be sufficient to meet projected residential and commercial growth** in the locality for an ensuing period of at least 10 but not more than 20 years.

- Where an urban development area in a county includes planned or existing rail transit, the planning horizon may be for an ensuing period of at least 10 but not more than 40 years.

- Areas that may be appropriate for development at a **density** on the developable acreage of at least four single-family residences, six townhouses, or 12 apartments, condominium units or cooperative units per acres and an authorized floor area ratio of at least 0.4 per acre for commercial development, or any combination thereof.

- Urban development areas **shall** incorporate principles of **traditional neighborhood design** (TND).
Purpose of UDAs

Why strategically plan for UDAs?

• **The problem:** Dispersed development patterns increase the financial burden of maintaining and expanding the transportation system.

• **The purpose:** Improve the future efficiency of the transportation system.
  
  ➢ Compact development and traditional neighborhood design (TND) alleviate the transportation system impacts of low density/single use development

  ➢ By locating residences and businesses closer together and in areas with existing infrastructure, new development requires less new system capacity and less overall maintenance

  ➢ By mixing uses together, communities require shorter trips to access daily needs. More trips can be completed by walking and biking.
FROM THIS:

• Arterial “spines” carry all trips
• Typical 6-lane arterials needed
• Separated land uses = longer trips
• All trips by automobile
• “Bottlenecks” for emergency access
• Higher personal transportation costs
• More/wider roads = more public costs

TO THIS:

• Distributed road network
• “spine” arterials free of local traffic
• Mixed uses = shorter trips
• ‘Communities,’ not ‘Subdivisions’
• Better routes for emergency access
• Bike/Pedest. options for short trips
• More cost efficient

More Safety, Less $$, Better Quality of Life
UDAs in Virginia
Timeline

1987
Frederick County, VA, adopts a UDA

2007
Virginia General Assembly added Section 15.2-2223.1 to the Code of Virginia requiring high growth localities to designate UDAs in their comprehensive plans

2010
UDAs are more broadly defined, designation now voluntary

2012
• Legislation amended to establish density and design criteria for UDAs and to improve transportation and land use coordination
• VDOT administered UDA Local Government Assistance Program

2014
HB-2 – “promote urban development areas”
UDAs in Virginia
Timeline

2014
HB-2 and VTrans—“promote urban development areas”

2015
UDA Needs Assessments Completed
UDA Research and Outreach Begins

2016
Grant Program Reinvigorated
Grant Program Continues, UDAs continue to be added
UDAs in Virginia

Timeline

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- HB-2 and VTrans—“promote urban development areas”

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Evolution of UDAs

HB2 Project Prioritization

• HB2 – Provided for the development of a prioritization process for projects funded by the CTB:
  • Candidate projects and strategies shall be screened by the CTB to determine whether they are consistent with the assessment of capacity needs for all:
    • Corridors of statewide significance
    • Regional networks, and
    • Improvements to promote urban development areas (established pursuant to § 15.2-2223.1, undertaken in the Statewide Transportation Plan in accordance with § 33.1-23.03)
UDAs in Virginia
2015 Research Focus

Needed to Understand:

• The extent of planning and designated UDAs
• Extent of other areas with similar characteristics
• How this list had significantly grown and diversified since the original 2007 legislation.

Needed to Produce:

• A single, current, consistent summary of UDAs and UDA-like areas
• A summary of their current planning status, diverse socioeconomic and transportation characteristics, and anticipated future conditions of these areas
• List of locations and attributes before asking about needs
Finding UDAs & Designated Growth Areas

- Recipients from 2010/2011 UDA Local Government Assistance Program
- Comprehensive plans for high-growth localities responding to DHCD’s 2011 survey
- Top quartile localities in terms of Weldon Cooper Center population projections
- DRPT Statewide Transit and TDM Plan emerging localities
- Cities and towns with populations over 130,000
- Interview PDCs
UDAs in Virginia
2015 Research Process

• 271 total UDA or UDA-like areas
  • 77 of these areas were currently designated UDAs
  • 21 were areas that were designated as UDAs and had since been reclassified by localities since 2012
• 173 UDA-like areas in comprehensive plans
• Jurisdictions: 15% towns, 21% cities, 64% counties
• Size: Average 3 sq.mi., range from 0.02 sq.mi. to 55 sq.mi.
• Existing density: More than half are less than 500 persons/sq.mi.
• Location: 60% in rural/exurban/suburban localities
Initial Research Findings

- Designated Urban Development Areas
- Locally Designated Growth Areas (UDA-like)
- UDAs Repealed Since 2011
- Counties & Cities
- MPOs & PDCs
UDAs in Virginia

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VMTP Needs Assessment

Three Scales:

- CoSS
- UDAs
- Regional Networks

CAPACITY & OPERATIONS NEEDS
UDA Needs Assessment Guiding Principles

Focus on promoting growth consistent with intent of UDA legislation by assessing:

• Context sensitive multimodal transportation solutions
• Last-mile access to jobs and non-work attractions
• Bicycle and pedestrian circulation
• Safety
• Connections to local multimodal networks and regional transportation options
• LOCALLY Driven
VMTP Needs Assessment

UDA Guiding Principles

CoSS  RNs  UDAs

STATEWIDE FOCUS  LOCAL FOCUS
UDA NEEDS
Update on VTrans Multimodal Transportation Plan 2025 Needs Assessment

UDA Profile – HIGHLIGHTS

Zion Crossroads is located at the junction of U.S. 250 and U.S. 15 in Fluvanna County – serving as a gateway to Fluvanna County from I-64.

Location Characteristics

**PDC** - Thomas Jefferson
**UDA Size** - 3.2 sq mi
**Year Designated** - 2009

**Comprehensive Plan Detail** - Development within Urban Development Areas should be based on the principles and features of Traditional Neighborhood Design (TND) in order to achieve transportation and other benefits over typical suburban development. These TND features support the overall land use goals for the Zion Crossroads UDA and Community Planning Area, by encouraging a village-scaled center at Zion Crossroads as a piece for economic development.

Current Place Type - Rural or Village Center

Mixed Use Intensity - Low
Activity Density (jobs + people / acre) = 1 - 19.7
Typical Net Floor Area Ratio = 0.02 - 0.33

Planned Place Type – Medium Town Center

Mixed Use Intensity - Moderate
Activity Density (jobs + people / acre) = 13 - 35
Typical Net Floor Area Ratio = 0.23 - 0.55

Socio-Economic Characteristics

**UDA Characteristic**
- **Total Population (Density)** - 916 (104 per sq mi)
- **Total Primary Jobs** - 198

Jobs by Industry

- **Administration & Support**
- **Construction**
- **Accommodation and Food Services**

Total Jobs by Earnings

- **<$15,000 per year**
- **$15,000 to $30,000**
- **> $30,000 per year**

- **21%**
- **56%**
- **22%**

Working Age Population Within a 45 Minute Drive - 16,560

**Jurisdiction Characteristics**

**Population Growth** (Source: Virginia Census Data)

- **2010** - 25,491 residents
- **2030** - 31,839 residents

Future Transportation Needs

**Internal UDA Needs**
- **High**
  - Roadway Capacity
  - Safety Features
  - Intersection Improvements
  - Intersection Design
  - Signage
  - Traffic Calming
  - Environment Improvements

**External UDA Needs**
- **High**
  - Complete Streets
  - Intersection Improvements
  - Bicycle Infrastructure

- **Moderate**
  - Bicycle Infrastructure
  - Pedestrian Infrastructure
  - Signage
  - Traffic Calming

Existing Internal Needs Gap (% shortfall)

The chart below shows an estimate of the gap between transportation infrastructure in place today and what is needed to support a fully developed UDA.

![Existing Internal Needs Gap Chart]

Highest Rated Overall Needs within UDA

- **Safety for all users**
- **Access to transportation beyond the UDA**
Ongoing UDA Needs Assessment

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Current Place Type:
- Rural or Village Center

Planned Place Type:
- Medium Town Center

Socio-Economic Characteristics
- UDA Characteristic: (source: VTrans, 2010)
  - Total Population (Density): 916 (104 persons per sq mi)
  - Total Primary Jobs: 198

Jobs by Industry:
- Administration & Support: 33%
- Construction: 22%
- Accommodation and Food Service: 16%

Total Jobs by Earnings:
- $15,000 to $33,995 per year: 56%
- $34,000 to $55,995 per year: 22%
- $56,000 or more per year: 22%

Jobs Within a 45 Minute Drive: 9,920
Working Age Population Within a 45 Minute Drive: 18,750

Jurisdiction Characteristics:
- Population Growth: (source: VTrans, 2010)
  - 2010: 25,891 residents
  - 2030: 31,889 residents

Needs Assessment Report – Statewide Data + 84 UDA Profiles Summaries
UDAs in Virginia
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Evolution of UDAs
2015 and 2016 Grant Program

Goal: Promote economic development and quality of life, and promote the coordination between transportation and land use planning.

Grant Program - Assistance available for localities interested in:

- Conducting planning to identify and designate newly identified UDAs,
- Updating plans for areas already designated as UDAs,
- Updating similarly designated growth area plans to meet the legislated characteristics of UDAs,
- Revising as appropriate applicable land use ordinances (including appropriate zoning classifications and subdivision ordinances) to incorporate the principles of traditional neighborhood design (see §15.2-2223.1 of the Code of Virginia),
- Assisting with public participation processes, and other related tasks.
2015 UDA Grant Projects

City of Salem
City of Norfolk
Town of Christiansburg
Town of Amherst Town of Vinton
City of Hampton
City of Hopewell
Town of Herndon
Town of Strasburg
Albemarle County
2016 UDA Grant Projects

Franklin County
Town of Warrenton
Botetourt
Salem #2
Salem UDA

Challenges and Opportunities facing Salem:

• Gateway/economic corridors in transition
• Public enthusiasm for strengthening downtown
• Current and future infrastructure needs
Project Schedule

Task 1: Project Initiation and Scoping
April-June 2015

Task 2: Analysis of UDA site Models
July-August 2015

Task 3: UDA Designation and Implementation
September-October 2015
Public Input

- Extensive Key Stakeholder Sessions
- Multiple Planning Commission meetings
- Public Open House

Enthusiastic Support for UDA Vision

GOALS

- Strengthen Downtown
- Promote Infill Development
- Establish Multimodal Gateways
- Alleviate Traffic
Multimodal Analysis

- Multimodal analysis based on DRPT System Design Guidelines
- Motorized + Non-motorized Networks
- Walkability Analysis
City Core UDA

- Strengthen Downtown Core
- Centralize Parking (potential garage)
- Redevelop surface parking lots
- Infill Residential
City Core UDA

Garage + Infill Concept

Infill Development Prototype

Precedents
Mixed-Use Corridor UDA

- Gateway to Downtown
- Aging auto-oriented commercial corridor
- Ongoing VDOT multimodal road improvement project
- Develop a future mix of uses throughout the corridor to tie to downtown

Urban Design Framework
Mixed-Use Corridor UDA

East Main Street Prototype

Precedents
Village Core UDA

- Gateway to Downtown
- Village Center for south Salem
- Manage the transition of Apperson Drive from residential to commercial
- Develop multimodal connections to the Village Center and Downtown

Urban Design Framework
Village Core UDA

Village Center Prototype

Apperson Drive Prototype

Precedents
UDA Designation

• The City of Salem unanimously adopted the three Urban Development Area designations into their comprehensive plan on September 28, 2015
Evolution of UDAs

Transportation’s Role in Promoting UDAs?

UDAs

Transportation

More efficient utilization and resource allocation

Promote development and support travel needs

Local Comprehensive Planning Grant Program

VMTP Needs Assessment HB-2
Thank You for Your Time 
&
Apply for a UDA Grant Today!

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