

# DEVELOPING NEWS

Highlighting changes and improvements in Fairfax County's planning and development review process

Summer  
2019

## ESI/LDS AWARDS HIGHLIGHT PLAN QUALITY, CONSISTENCY



**Best Site Plan: Reston Gateway by Urban LTD.**



**Overall Excellence in Infill Grading Plan Submission: Land Design Consultants**



**ePlans Excellence Award: Charles P. Johnson and Associates**



On June 21, 2019, Fairfax County recognized high-quality development plans submitted to the county at the ESI/LDS Plan Excellence Awards. This is the third year that the Engineers & Surveyors Institute and Fairfax County Land Development Services have given out these awards, which highlight site-related plans prepared with great care and attention to detail.

Supervisor Kathy Smith (Sully) spoke at the event. She thanked the recipients, noting the importance of close collaboration between local government and the private sector as development occurs within the county. Learn more about the awards at [FairfaxCounty.gov](http://FairfaxCounty.gov) (search "Plan Excellence Awards").

## THE BUSINESS CASE FOR HEALTHY DESIGN

By Anna Ricklin, Fairfax County Health in All Policy Manager

Real estate developers create places where people live, work, play and thrive. For the past several years, the way these places shape and impact the health of inhabitants and workers has emerged as a significant aspect of this work. Whether it's features like exposed stairways that encourage people to take steps instead of the elevator, or looking at ways to use the open space on a site to support play instead of parking, the market has begun to expect health-promoting attributes to ensure the success of new developments.

Yet, it is not only market demand that shapes how our communities get built. The broader culture of

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development, along with governmental policy, heavily influences what our communities look like and how they promote health. In 2018, Fairfax County hired me as its first Health in All Policy Manager. With a background in both health and urban planning, I am tasked with bringing a health lens to the programs and policies that shape our built environment – a huge task in county of this size. Working with the Department of Planning and Development, as well as Land Development Services, has given me insight into the many factors that go into planning for health in Fairfax.

Most importantly, users and occupants are not the only ones who benefit from healthy design – developers do, too. As shapers of the built environment, developers can benefit from understanding community health, and with that perspective, understand how it can offer new opportunities for client, community or market assessments. This means that projects that advance health may also have a market advantage, while benefiting occupants and surrounding communities by providing opportunities for active living, access to light and the outdoors, and places for people of all ages and abilities to feel comfortable.

As Fairfax County continues to develop, we have a significant opportunity to think and build differently, and more and more resources are available to help. Resources like the Urban Land Institute's [\*Building Healthy Places Toolkit: Strategies for Enhancing Health in the Built Environment\*](#), which outlines evidence-supported opportunities for enhancing health outcomes in real estate development, provide practical guidance for developers, owners, property managers, designers, investors and others involved in real estate decision making. A more recent resource, [\*The Business Case for Healthy Buildings\*](#), breaks down the potential ROI for building healthy places. The [\*American Institute of Architects\*](#) offers related guidance, while the Center for Active Design's [\*Active Design Guidelines\*](#) provides best practice recommendations and strategies to create places that contribute to healthier people and communities, and to enhance and preserve value.

At the end of the day, who doesn't want to live in a community that makes it easy to live a healthy, active life, that is safe for our children and supports mental wellbeing? As we consider innovations in building materials, design and placemaking, we would do well to consider health, too.

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### **County Staff is Available to Assist You**

**Planner of the Day:** 703-324-5387/5372, TTY 711

**Engineer of the Day:** 703-324-2268, TTY 711

**Permit Application Center:** 703-222-0801, TTY 711