

Eligibility Requirements to Designate Urban Development Areas/Designated Growth Areas

What is an Urban Development Area/Designated Growth Area?

Designated Urban Development Areas (UDAs) and other locally designated growth areas (DGAs) represent the localized multimodal travel market component of VTrans2040. UDAs/DGAs generally include:

- Areas that may be appropriate for development at a density on the developable acreage of at least four single-family residences and an authorized floor area ratio of at least 0.4 per acres for commercial development.
- Areas designated by a locality that may be sufficient to meet projected residential and commercial growth in the locality for at least 10 years.
- Areas shall be mapped in the comprehensive plan and shall incorporate principles of traditional neighborhood development (TND). TND components include: walkable neighborhood centers, interconnected streets and blocks, diversity of land uses, easy access to jobs, by a variety of travel options (auto, bus, walk, bike, etc...).

UDA/DGA Eligibility and SMART SCALE

All projects submitted for SMART SCALE must pass through an initial screening process conducted by the Office of Intermodal Planning and Investment (OIPI). If a project does not address an identified need in VTrans2040, it cannot move forward in the SMART SCALE process.

VTrans2040 assesses Virginia's transportation needs on Corridors of Statewide Significance, Regional Networks, Urban Development Areas, and Statewide Safety Needs within the VTrans Multimodal Transportation Plan (VMTP) Needs Assessment. UDAs include areas where jurisdictions intend to concentrate future population and employment growth and develop consistent with the UDA section within the Code of Virginia (§15.2-2223.1). Any locally designated growth area that has a comprehensive plan reference to the UDA section is qualified for SMART SCALE screening.

Designate a UDA/DGA: Key Steps

If a locality finds one or more locally designated growth areas to be consistent with the Code and would like to establish those areas as UDA code adherent, the local jurisdiction governing body, for the jurisdiction in which those locally designated growth areas are located, must take the following two steps:

- **Include a Comprehensive Plan Update or Board/Council Resolution:** Take one of the following actions (**A** or **B**):
 - A.** Update the comprehensive plan to identify the locally designated growth areas (with specific, identified boundaries) that are consistent with the intent of the code. The Plan must specifically state that those locally designated growth areas are consistent with the intent of Virginia Code: § 15.2-2223.1, but is not required to use the term "Urban Development Areas."
 - B.** The governing body of the local jurisdiction may pass a resolution identifying which locally designated growth areas in the most recent, approved comprehensive plan (with specific, identified boundaries) are consistent with the intent of Virginia Code: § 15.2-2223.1
- **Communicate to the Office of Intermodal Planning and Investment (OIPI):**
 - Following either of the above actions (A or B), the jurisdiction must communicate to OIPI that this action has taken place. OIPI requests that the following materials be made available to OIPI:
 - The governing body resolution or updated plan, and
 - A map of the boundaries, or if available, an ArcGIS shapefile of the boundaries, or a clear, written description of the boundaries.

- OIPI will review your UDA documents and follow up with a survey (used to create a “UDA Profile”). Key next steps include developing a UDA profile and online mapping, both of which will be published to the OIPI VTrans2040 website.

More information is available:

http://www.vtrans.org/vtrans_multimodal_transportation_plan_2025_needs_assessment.asp

Including summaries of the VMTP Needs Assessment for UDAs and DGAs, the list of currently designated locations (this list is changing as localities designate over summer and fall 2016), profiles for each UDA/DGA or groups of UDAs/DGAs within each jurisdiction that has a resolution or existing comprehensive plan reference in place, and an on-line, interactive map to view current designated UDA/DGA boundaries throughout Virginia.

Please contact with questions or materials:

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Key components of UDAs/DGAs per §15.2-2223.1

Jurisdictions intending to designate a UDA or DGA must be compliant with Virginia Code: § 15.2-2223.1. The table below outlines key components of the code, including voluntary (“may”) sections of the code, and required (“shall”) sections.

UDA/DGA Requirements per §15.2-2223.1		
Code	Requirement	Jurisdiction Action
B.1	Urban development areas are 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 acre, and an authorized floor area ratio of at least 0.4 per acre for commercial development, any proportional combination thereof, or any other combination or arrangement that is adopted by a locality in meeting the intent of this section.	Determine the desired development density within the UDA or DGA
B.2	The urban development areas designated by a locality 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, which may include phasing of development within the urban development areas. Where an urban development area in a county with the urban county executive form of government 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.	Document the jurisdiction’s growth projections based on official estimates of either the Weldon Cooper Center for Public Service of the University of Virginia, the Virginia Employment Commission, the United States Census, or other projections.
B.3 & B.4	Determine the UDA/DGA Boundary: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The boundaries and size of each urban development area shall be reexamined and, if necessary, revised every five years in conjunction with the review of the comprehensive plan and in accordance with the most recent available population growth estimates and projections. The boundaries of each urban development area shall be identified in the locality’s comprehensive plan and shall be shown on future land use maps contained in such comprehensive plan. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Work with locality staff to determine the boundary of the UDAs or DGAs. UDAs or DGAs to be referenced as consistent with the code, and must be detailed in the local resolution, along with a description or map of area boundaries.
B.5	Traditional Neighborhood Design (TND) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Urban development areas, if designated, shall incorporate principles of TND, which may include but need not be limited to (i) pedestrian-friendly road design, (ii) interconnection of new local streets with existing local streets and roads, (iii) connectivity of road and pedestrian networks, (iv) preservation of natural areas, (v) mixed-use neighborhoods, including mixed housing types, with affordable housing to meet the projected family income distributions of future residential growth, (vi) reduction of front and side yard building setbacks, and (vii) reduction of subdivision street widths and turning radii at subdivision street intersections. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Document in the comprehensive plan or adopting resolution consistency with the example TND features noted in the code: