



**STRATEGIC PLAN**  
**July 2014 – June 2017**

**November 2014**



**STRATEGIC PLAN**

**JULY 2014 - JUNE 2017**

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## Executive Summary

### ***Who we are:***

Leaders from local and state government, the private sector, academia, and Virginia Sustainable Building Network have come together to form this new organization to accelerate resiliency planning in Virginia communities

### ***Our mission:***

Our mission is to launch a **Community Resiliency Initiative** in Virginia that will provide communities with the ability to adapt and thrive despite changing environmental, social, and economic conditions.

Our goals are to inform diverse community representatives around the Commonwealth about natural, climate-related, and man-made challenges; to educate key groups about models for community resiliency planning; and to activate these communities by providing tools to engage in strategic plan development.

### ***Highlights of Our Action Plan:***

Key activities include:

1. **Create a website** with links to key resiliency topics, including energy, high performance buildings, food and water security, emergency preparedness, economic risk management, and public policy.
2. Hold a **Community Resiliency Initiative Launch** event in early 2015.
3. Organize the **Resilient Virginia Conference**, in the Fall 2015, which will:
  - inform community members, business leaders, and state and local officials about resiliency concepts,
  - provide outstanding examples of communities moving toward resiliency in Virginia, the nation, and internationally, and
  - carry out participatory workshops to bring together key stakeholders by regions to develop resilient community goals and strategies.
4. Following the conference, Resilient Virginia will work with state and national partners to offer sector-oriented **training, workshops, and presentations** on resiliency strategies.

### ***Partners:***

We are reaching out and engaging key groups around the state. Our partners include regional representatives from local governments and planning district commissions, community organizations, and local businesses. In addition, we are identifying partners from state government agencies, academic institutions, national organizations, major corporations and national organizations. We are also engaging partners from subject areas such as energy, disaster preparedness, food and water security, green building, healthcare, and communications, that represent core areas of resiliency.

### ***Background:***

Resilient Virginia's Board of Directors and staff together bring to the organization a 20 year history, working as the Virginia Sustainable Building Network (VSBN), of promoting Green Building and Sustainable Development. VSBN developed a wide variety of educational programs, including technical training for architects and builders, informational workshops for government, community leaders, and higher education managers, and insightful seminars on cutting edge ideas. We have worked with public and private partners to organize statewide sustainability conferences since 1999. These include the Virginia Sustainable Future Conference series, the 2008 COVES (Commonwealth of Virginia Energy and Sustainability) Conference, and the 2013 Virginia Commonwealth University Energy and Sustainability Conference.

Our capacity to bring together diverse audiences to engage in new concepts, enhance interaction, and promote learning has increased the sustainability of Virginia communities, businesses, and government for many years. We are continuing this legacy with a new organization – Resilient Virginia – that will be a critical source of tools for the development of community resiliency strategies.

### ***Resilient Virginia Board of Directors (2014)***

**Chairman - Jerry Walker**, CEM, LEED AP, Energy Manager, Henrico County

**Vice Chairman - Bryna Dunn**, AICP, Associate AIA, LEED AP BD+C, Vice President, Moseley Architects

**Secretary/Treasurer - Jordan Starbuck**, LEED Green Associate, Assistant Director of Sustainability, Virginia Commonwealth University

**Denise Thompson**, Manager, Environmental Protection Programs, City of Norfolk

**Pamela Vosburgh**, Business Development, 2rw Consultants Inc.

**Billy Weitzenfeld**, Executive Director, Association of Energy Conservation Professionals

**Managing Director - Annette Osso, LEED AP**

Contacts: Jerry Walker, [wal03@co.henrico.va.us](mailto:wal03@co.henrico.va.us), 804-507-4674

Annette Osso, [osso@resilientvirginia.org](mailto:osso@resilientvirginia.org), 703-486-2966



## **STRATEGIC PLAN July 2014 – June 2017**

### **Organizational Description**

#### **WHY RESILIENT VIRGINIA IS NEEDED**

In the United States, and globally, there are increasing numbers of risks to the normal functioning of communities. These challenges are more frequently taking the shape of climate-related and natural disasters, such as tornadoes, floods, hurricanes, wildfires, heat waves, and earthquakes. Human-induced stressors also abound, including acts of terrorism, infrastructure failures, economic crises, and social unrest.

The U. S. government and national organizations have recognized that dealing primarily with post-disaster or post-crisis provision of emergency services and rebuilding efforts is costly and inadequate. On the other hand, communities that pro-actively take steps to address basic resiliency preparedness will be most successful in maintaining community relationships that bolster their ability to function in the event of disruptive events and long-term environmental or economic challenges. .

**Resilience can be defined as the capacity to maintain or regain functionality and vitality in the face of natural or man-made disturbances. For the long term, community resiliency provides the ability to adapt and thrive despite changing environmental, social, and economic conditions.**

Resilient Virginia will serve a critical function of bringing together national, state, and local resiliency expertise and resources, and act as a dissemination point from which these resources can be distributed state-wide. Resilient Virginia will utilize its expert staff and partner resources to reach out to normally disaggregated groups – such as the chambers of commerce, faith groups, local government and schools, higher education, civic and environmental groups, the healthcare sector, disadvantaged and minority populations, and major corporations - within a community, to engage them in mutually beneficial educational initiatives focused on resiliency strategy development.

By educating diverse elements of communities and building collaborative relationships, community structure will be strengthened. These communities can be more successful in continuing to function as centers of production and sources of essential services and resources despite the natural and man-made challenges they may encounter.

## **BACKGROUND**

Resilient Virginia's Board of Directors and staff together bring a 20 year history, working as the Virginia Sustainable Building Network (VSBN), of promoting Green Building and Sustainable Development. VSBN developed a statewide network of building and development-related businesses, as well as a network of local and regional governments, including K-12 school and higher education institutions, and community organization contacts.

VSBN developed and funded a wide variety of educational programs for diverse public and private audiences. These included technical training for architects and builders; informational workshops for government and K-12 school officials, community leaders, and higher education managers; and insightful seminars on cutting edge ideas. VSBN-sponsored events have included presentations ranging from "One Planet Living or How to Build Zero Energy/Zero Waste Communities" to "Corporate Sustainability: The Business Community's Role in Advancing Climate Protection." VSBN also brought to Virginia international presentations, such as "The Story Behind Samsø: The Danish Energy Self-Sufficient Island."

The staff and board members have worked with public and private partners to organize statewide sustainability conferences, beginning in 1999 with the first "Virginia Sustainable Future Conference". Organized by Virginia Sustainable Building Network (VSBN), the conference was supported by the Virginia Department of Environmental Quality (DEQ), as well as several other state agencies and private sponsors. Led by VSBN, this group of supporters developed several additional statewide sustainability conferences, culminating in the 2008 "Commonwealth of Virginia Energy and Sustainability Conference."

That event was organized around the theme of "Meeting the Climate Change Challenge." It featured Governor Tim Kaine, who highlighted the new State Energy Plan and Commission on Climate Change report, and brought together a host of national, state, and private speakers, participants, and sponsors. State agency involvement included the Virginia Department of Mines, Minerals and Energy, DEQ, the Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services, the Department of Conservation and Recreation, and the Department of Game and Inland Fisheries, as well as several state universities.

More recently VSBN organized, in conjunction with the Deputy Secretary of Natural Resources, the first "Governor's Energy Conference" in 2010, and worked with Virginia Commonwealth University, as well as public and private sponsors to organize the "2013 Energy and Sustainability Conference," which focused on business sustainability opportunities.

## **WHAT WE OFFER**

Resilient Virginia's staff and our partners' capacity to bring together diverse audiences to engage in new concepts, enhance interaction, and promote learning has increased the sustainability of Virginia communities, businesses, and government for many years. We are continuing this legacy with a new organization – Resilient Virginia – that will be a critical source of education and tools for resiliency planning.

The **Virginia Community Resiliency Initiative** will provide information on resiliency concepts and establish a framework to guide decision-makers at all governmental, community, and business levels to plan for the changing local and global environment, as well as to address economic uncertainties and man-made threats.

Resilient Virginia recognizes that Virginia, as part of the southeastern United States region, faces environmental and climate-related challenges that include:

- **Sea level rise**, which poses widespread and continuing threats to both natural and built environments, as well as to the regional economy;
- **Rising temperatures** and the associated increase in frequency, intensity, and duration of extreme heat events, which will affect public health, decrease productivity, increase mortality, and will affect natural and built environments, energy, agriculture, and forestry;
- **Decreased water availability**, exacerbated by population growth and land-use change, which will continue to increase competition for water and impact the region's economy and unique ecosystems;
- An increase in **extreme weather events**, such as the derecho which struck the state in 2012, hurricanes and severe thunderstorms, and even tornados, which result in flooding, property damage, and power outages.

In addition our communities deal with a variety of man-made stresses.

- As part of the international community, we face the possibility of **man-made threats**, such as acts of terrorism, as well as health emergencies and pandemics.
- **Globalization of businesses**, national recession, and shifting state economics result in **societal stresses** that can manifest themselves as increased neighborhood violence, homelessness, and local food insecurity.
- **Infrastructure failures**, including water main breaks, loss of power, and bridge failures, due to delayed maintenance or weather events, affect business operations, transportation, schools, and communities.

The program concept for Resilient Virginia is based on federal and private resources including:

- the Homeland Security Advisory Council's Community Resilience Task Force Recommendations,
- National Academy of Sciences Resilient America Roundtable ([www.nationalacademies.org/PGA/ResilientAmerica](http://www.nationalacademies.org/PGA/ResilientAmerica)),
- national organizations such as Resilient Communities for America ([www.resilientamerica.org](http://www.resilientamerica.org)) that engages local governments,
- private initiatives such as the Resilient Design Institute ([www.resilientdesign.org](http://www.resilientdesign.org)) that address resiliency in buildings and communities, and
- community and state initiatives being undertaken in other locations throughout the United States.

There is basic agreement by these sources about the need for:

1. building a national campaign to strengthen and sustain national resilience;
2. working with key stakeholder groups to develop and share models for resilience;
3. building the knowledge and talent base for resilience;
4. building public awareness and motivating individual and community engagement;
5. facilitating community-based resilience assessment by developing a community-based, all-hazards methodology and toolkit, and
6. enabling community-based resilient infrastructure initiatives.

**Resilient Virginia will integrate the resources and tools already developed by these public and private programs to formulate a Virginia-based toolkit that can be used by communities to maintain a good quality of life for all, and that can enable them to be better prepared for uncertainties while adapting to changing short and long-term conditions**

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## **Mission Statement**

Our mission is to launch a **Community Resiliency Initiative** in Virginia. Our goals are to inform diverse community representatives around the Commonwealth about natural, climate-related, and man-made challenges; to educate key groups about the models for community resiliency planning; and to activate Virginia communities by providing tools to engage in resiliency plan development.

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## **Vision Statement**

Virginia communities, including households, businesses, governments, and institutions, will gain the ability to better adapt to environmental, social, and economic challenges while remaining healthy, vibrant, and safe places to live, work, and raise future generations.

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## **Value Statements**

***The organization supports the concept that healthy, economically sound communities are the building blocks for a strong, resilient statewide economy.***

***The organization supports the idea that an informed and aware public is the best foundation through which to build societal resilience.***

***The organization recognizes that the environment provides the natural capital that is the critical foundation for our communities' successful functioning.***

***The organization believes that innovation, diversity, and redundancy allow for greater adaptive capability and risk minimization.***

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## **Action Plan**

### **Goal 1: INFORM**

Resilient Virginia will create a website and social media plan which will direct viewer to **informational links for priority resiliency topic areas**, including energy options, high performance buildings, food and water security, emergency preparedness, business-related risk management, and public policy.

Resilient Virginia will also work to gather information on community and regional priorities related to current risks and vulnerabilities and perceived future challenges through conducting a **survey directed to local governments and community organizations around the state**. We will utilize the survey to determine what programs, actions, or funding would be helpful in addressing these challenges.

Out of this information-gathering activity, we will develop a set of **“Virginia community resiliency principles and practices”** to help guide future program direction.

### **Goal 2: EDUCATE**

We will develop educational events, working with the Planning Committee, that include the following:

1. A **Community Resiliency Initiative Launch** event in early 2015.
2. The **Resilient Virginia Conference**, in the Fall 2015, will be designed to:
  - inform community members, business leaders, and state and local officials about resiliency concepts,
  - provide outstanding examples of communities moving toward resiliency in Virginia, the nation, and internationally, and
  - carry out participatory workshops to bring together key stakeholders by regions to develop resilient community goals and strategies.

### **Goal 3: ACTIVATE**

Following the conference, Resilient Virginia will work with state and national partners to offer sector-oriented and regionally appropriate **training, workshops, and presentations** on resiliency strategies, with the goal of activating local public and private community members to move forward on resiliency plans.

We will work with partners’ organizations to develop a **comprehensive “resiliency checklist”** that will delineate actions that can be taken from the individual household, community, business, and regional perspectives. Resilient Virginia and its partners will host an **annual recognition event** to highlight outstanding examples of resiliency initiatives at the community, business, and government levels.

## **Evaluating Success of the Action Plan**

The Strategic Plan details actions to be taken over a three year period from July 2014 through June 2017. During this time, Resilient Virginia will undertake a range of educational activities. Our overarching goal is to bring the Community Resiliency Initiative to each of the 23 Planning District Commissions in the state and to at least one community in each PDC.

## **Staffing and Partners**

### **Staff**

For the first year of operations, Resilient Virginia will be managed by a volunteer Managing Director, Annette Osso, LEED AP, who served as the President of VSBN for 18 years. Annette Osso brings 30+ years of experience in environmental, sustainability, green building, and energy program development and management to Resilient Virginia.

The Board of Directors, chaired by Jerry Walker, LEED AP, CEM, Energy Manager for Henrico County, will also provide volunteer contributions to program and organizational development. In addition to Jerry Walker, additional Board Members are:

- Bryna Dunn, AICP, Associate AIA, LEED AP BD+C, Vice President, Moseley Architects (Vice-Chairman)
- Jordan Starbuck, LEED Green Associate, Assistant Director of Sustainability, Virginia Commonwealth University (Secretary/Treasurer)
- Denise Thompson, Manager, Environmental Protection Programs, City of Norfolk
- Pamela Vosburgh, Business Development, 2rw Consultants Inc.
- Billy Weitzenfeld, Executive Director, Association of Energy Conservation Professionals.

Together these Board members bring extensive expertise in local government energy and sustainability planning and implementation, university sustainability programs, private sector expertise in high performance building design and energy systems, and community sustainability education and outreach.

### **Partners**

Our partners include regional representatives from local governments and planning district commissions, community organizations, and local businesses. In addition, we are identifying partners from state government agencies, academic institutions, national organizations, major corporations and national organizations. We are also engaging partners from subject areas such as energy, disaster preparedness, food and water security, green building, healthcare, and communications, which represent core areas of resiliency.

The organization's first major undertaking will be the **Resilient Virginia Conference**, to be held in the Fall of 2015. We are assembling an outstanding group of public and private leaders at the state and national level to work on this initiative.

#### Conference Planning Committee Members (as of 12/2014)

Jerry Walker	County of Henrico
Annette Osso	VSBN/Resilient Virginia
Pamela Vosburgh	2rw Consultants Inc.

Joe Lerch	Virginia Municipal League
Harry Gregori	Gregori Consulting & Virginia Sustainable Future Forum
Daniel Slone	McGuire Woods & Resilient Design Institute
Mary Margaret Whipple	State Senator, Retired
Karl Bren	Retired (VSBN Founder)
Peggy Elkind	Sustainability Consultant
Jordan Starbuck	VCU Sustainability Office
Bryna Dunn	Moseley Architects
Carrie Webster	JRGBC & Moseley Architects
Nell Boyle	City of Roanoke
Tracy Garland	Natural Awakenings
Billy Weitzenfeld	Association of Energy Conservation Professionals
Charlotte Moore	Roanoke County Board of Supervisors
Tony Smith	Secure Futures
Angela Conroy	Cabell Brand & Secure Futures
Jeremy Holmes	Roanoke Valley -Alleghany Regional Commission
Denise Thompson	City of Norfolk
Lori Herrick	City of Virginia Beach
Ben McFarlane	Hampton Roads Planning District Commission
Tim Cole	Virginia Beach Public Schools
Michelle Covi	Old Dominion University
Jonathan Miles	James Madison University

We will assemble additional partners representing coastal areas, rural regions and urban centers of the state, and will include such groups as planning district commissions, universities, architects and urban planners, energy companies, emergency preparedness agencies, the agricultural extension service, transportation and water management specialists, economic development partnerships, and major corporations, as well as local businesses and community organizations, such as faith-based and environmental groups.

### **Organizational Support**

Resilient Virginia has received initial start-up support from Marion Construction Inc., which is supporting the Managing Director' staff time for one year. In addition, initial supporting sponsors and memberships are being gathered from past Virginia Sustainable Building Network supporters. We are also working to secure new supporters in the private sector that represent the broader resiliency areas. These include health care organizations, communications businesses, insurance and risk management companies, and disaster recovery businesses.

The Fall 2015 conference will be funded by sponsors and attendee registration. We anticipate a budget between \$175,000 and \$225,000 for that event. Resilient Virginia will seek federal funds, private business and foundation funding for discrete aspects of the program plan, such as the resiliency survey, the resiliency assessment checklist development, and educational workshops and presentations.

**For information on how to support or become involved with Resilient Virginia, contact Annette Osso, Managing Director, [osso@resilientvirginia.org](mailto:osso@resilientvirginia.org), 703-486-2966. *Strategic Plan Date: November 2014***