

2022 SESSION

INTRODUCED

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HOUSE BILL NO. 1276

Offered January 20, 2022

A *BILL to amend the Code of Virginia by adding a section numbered 15.2-2223.6, relating to comprehensive plan; healthy communities strategy.*

Patrons—Simonds, Glass and Maldonado

Referred to Committee on Counties, Cities and Towns

Be it enacted by the General Assembly of Virginia:

1. That the Code of Virginia is amended by adding a section numbered 15.2-2223.6 as follows:

§ 15.2-2223.6. Comprehensive plan; healthy communities strategy.

A. Beginning July 1, 2022, each city with a population greater than 20,000 and each county with a population greater than 100,000 may, during the next scheduled and all subsequent reviews of its comprehensive plan, as required in § 15.2-2230, consider adopting a healthy communities strategy that meets the requirements of this section.

B. The healthy communities strategy shall:

1. Identify each neighborhood that contains major sources of pollution or hazardous waste sites within the locality's jurisdiction, on the basis of data from the U.S. Census Bureau;

2. Identify objectives and policies to reduce the unique or compounded health risks in those neighborhoods identified in subdivision 1 by means that include the reduction of pollution exposure; the improvement of air and water quality; emergency management; resilience to increased flooding, excessive heat, and other impacts of a changing climate; and the promotion of public facilities, food access, safe and sanitary homes, and physical activity;

3. Identify objectives and policies to promote civic engagement in public decision-making processes by residents of those neighborhoods identified in subdivision 1;

4. Identify objectives and policies that prioritize improvements and programs in those census tracts identified in subdivision 1 that promote healthy communities, including affordable broadband Internet access, job training, access to healthy foods, aging in place, equitable access to public parks and greenways, increased tree canopy, public transit services, bicycle and pedestrian facilities, electric vehicle charging, and other clean transportation options; and

5. Identify objectives and policies that encourage linking public transit with community and health services and siting or co-locating health services in unconventional settings to ensure convenient access for all community members.

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