



Town-County Relations in Virginia: The Promise

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The relationship

- Towns remain part of the county
- Towns do not exist without the county

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Definitions

- “Incorporated”
- “Became a town as provided by law”
- “Defined boundaries”

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Benefits provided by towns

- Services for citizens in concentrated population centers
- Self governance
- County services
- Sense of community and place

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Benefits towns provide for citizens of unincorporated county

- Cultural, community, and economic concentration
- Overall benefits: police, water, and refuse services

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Problems with the relationship

- Double taxation
 - Paying twice for services
 - Paying for services not received
- Overlapping powers
 - County laws apply in the town
 - General Assembly can alter this rule
 - Power sometimes resides in both town and county
 - Non-county wide purpose: ordinance applies in unincorporated county
 - County-wide purpose: ordinance applies in town unless town council acts
 - Comity
- Taxation Issues
 - County property taxes apply in the town
 - County excise taxes usually preempted by town taxes

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VI. The Promise

- House Bill 3202 advances towns
- Authorizes “urban development areas”
- These areas are “appropriate for higher density development”
- Comprehensive plan elements embrace new urbanism, traditional neighborhood development, pedestrian friendly roads, mixed use neighborhoods, preservation of natural areas
- General Assembly embraced characteristics and physical attributes of towns
- General Assembly to study how to implement principles: HJR 178 (2008)
- Policies support and validate towns

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