



Main Street News

Winter 2017

www.wraba.org

WILLIAMSON ROAD IMPROVEMENT COMMITTEE REACHED CONSENSUS ON CONCEPT PLAN

The Williamson Road Improvement Committee, made up of Williamson Road Business owner, Neighborhood representatives and City of Roanoke personnel, met regularly from January to November 2017 and worked very hard to seek Committee consensus on a concept plan. We have had the opportunity to review several illustrations of possibilities that the City produced at our request with the main focus being curb, gutter, sidewalk with a grass divider strip between vehicular traffic and pedestrians, better lighting and drainage in the current right of way. In addition to these features, the latest plan

also includes two travel lanes, a center turn lane and bicycle lanes. Of course improved safety is a focus with these improvements. The illustrations the City brought to our November meeting have been reviewed and, given the main focuses of the committee work, a consensus was reached to send this set of illustrations on to the City for further consideration and cost estimation [keeping in mind that this project is not currently funded either in the City Capital Improvement Program (CIP) or in any VDOT program]. As the City

further considers the project concept drawing, additional opportunities for community input will be needed to gain broader WRABA and community consensus. Additionally, WRABA and the City are very willing to speak, one-on-one, to individual businesses regarding specific concerns they may have about the project. That can be viewed at <http://www.roanokeva.gov/2192/Williamson-Road-Improvements>

We are available to provide factual answers to your questions and provide a clearer understanding. Please feel free to contact us via email at wraba@wraba.org or by phone at 362-3293.

REACHING A BALANCED SOLUTION ON INTERNET SALES TAXES

By Congressman Bob Goodlatte

The advent of the internet has revolutionized the way Americans communicate, store information, and shop. But while internet commerce is booming, many traditional retail stores are feeling unfairly burdened because of the way state sales taxes are collected – a burden

internet shops don't always face.

It's important to note that these taxes are already on the books and are owed, so they are not new taxes. The question is whether there is a fairer way to collect them that does not place the burden completely on brick-and-mortar stores. Many

small businesses rightly argue that the current condition of internet sales tax obligations places them at a disadvantage. In fact, many business owners in Roanoke have told me about "show rooming."

The issue of internet sales tax is a complicated one, with serious implications for

2017-2018

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FROM THE DESK OF WRABA'S EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR



Wendy J. Jones,
WRABA Executive Director



*Williamson Road - Over 150
Businesses to serve you!*

As we come down the wire to marking an end to calendar year 2017 we at WRABA wish you and yours a very Merry Christmas, a Happy and Safe New Year and celebrate your holiday season with you.

2018 brings the new opportunities each new year provides. WRABA will continue work on the Williamson Road Improvement Project in search of the very best improvements for the

community as a whole. Economic Development, Public Safety, Strategic Planning, Membership and Relationship Development, Partnership with Governmental Agencies and Departments and businesses remain a focus for us.

We encourage you to join in, be involved and be a part of WRABA to achieve our common goals. Membership in WRABA is one way to make sure you get information you need

factually. WRABA meets the third Tuesday of every month (except December) for our monthly membership luncheon. We have time to network as well as a very informative speaker at each meeting. Dues, which cover your lunches and one Christmas Dinner, are \$165 per year from July 1st-June 30th. Joining WRABA mid-year (after January 1st is prorated-we also collect the following year's dues at that time). Join WRABA and stay educated and informed!

ROANOKE COUNTY UPDATE

Submitted by Rebecca James, AICP-Principal Planner, Roanoke County Community Development Department

Williamson Road

Over 150 Businesses

To Serve you!

Commercial Corridor Matching Grant Program

The Commercial Corridor Matching Grant Program encourages site and design improvements above and beyond the current building and zoning requirements. Only commercial properties are eligible for this program. Currently, the program is offered for economic redevelopment of highway entrance corridors in Roanoke County along Williamson Road/Hollins area and Route 11/460.

Potential improvements include façade renovations, improved landscaping in parking lots and at building entrances, updated exterior

lighting, freestanding monument shared signage and enhanced site improvements including benches, wooded fences and retaining walls.

The most recent project to utilize the Corridor Matching Grant funding was Creative Therapy Care (CTC), located at 8249 Williamson Road. CTC supports children and adults with special needs through the use of occupational, speech, music, creating expression and carpentry therapies, incorporating animals. They also provide

education for the public regarding the therapeutic benefits and advantages of working with animals, as well as raise funds to provide these therapies to individuals with special needs, regardless of their ability to pay.

The goal of the CTC project was to help make the 8249 Williamson Road location more attractive to the general public. CTC is located in the Williamson Road/Hollins Village study area and is visible from Williamson Road. In addition, CTC is located

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Stick-in-the ground signs are prohibited in Roanoke County



ROANOKE CITY POLICE DEPARTMENT NEWS

Written by Scott Leamon Crime Prevention and Community Outreach Roanoke Police Department

THREE HOLIDAY GIFTS TO GIVE THIEVES AND THEY'LL LOVE YOU FOR IT!

I know that thieves who like to steal from your customers, and take things from your stores, are high on your holiday gift list! You want to show them how much they mean to you by picking out that great gift idea that'll make them smile ear-to-ear and maybe even shed a few tears of joy!

So below are three proven ideas that work! If you gift one, or all three, of these to your favorite pilferers... trust me... they'll be coming back to see you again and again!

1. When a customer runs into your store and leaves his/her car running, unlocked, with the keys in the ignition, don't say a word. We don't want to give thieves the impression that we know that an unlocked car, left alone and running, is a prime opportunity for a vehicle theft. Let's make sure and never encourage customers to simply turn their vehicles off, take their keys, and lock their doors. We want to make sure all car thieves have a target rich environment

along the Williamson Road corridor.

2. When those pesky cops show up after a holdup or a case of shoplifting, make sure nobody knows how to access your video surveillance system. Let's face it, no thief wants to be bothered by trying to avoid capture after his/her face is thrown out all over the news, so, if you're the only one who knows how to use your business's video surveillance system, and you're gone on a holiday vacation, please don't teach anybody else to use it. We want to make sure and give our friendly thieves and robbers as much of a head start on the police as possible.

When somebody calls claiming your business owes them money, and if you don't pay up right now they'll cut off your utilities or throw you in jail, then give them your credit card number no questions asked! Why try and haggle these thieves when they call and pretend to be from your "utility company" or the "IRS," just give them your business credit card numbers, send

them a money order, or buy one of those reloadable debit cards and give them the numbers on it. After all, the thieves earned this opportunity to "liberate" your hard earned money from your bank account. Right?

Okay. Hopefully you know I'm just joking on all this. Everything I said to do in the previous three paragraphs, you need to do the opposite! My main point is: Let's do everything we can to make sure crooks and thieves get nothing this holiday season except a big lump of coal in their stockings! Shoplifting and fraud are two of the biggest drivers of crime in Roanoke, and, with you're help, we can "Make Crooks and Thieves Poor Again!"

Trust me... if you eliminate opportunities for thieves to fleece you and your customers, they'll move on to somewhere else. And that's a present we all want to unwrap.



Door left wide open
Next to copier

"...if you eliminate opportunities for thieves to fleece you and your customers, they'll move on somewhere else. And that's a present we all want to unwrap."



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REACHING A BALANCED SOLUTION ON INTERNET SALES TAXES (CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1)



Many small businesses rightly argue that the current condition of internet sales tax obligations places them at a disadvantage. In fact, many business owners in Roanoke have told me about “show rooming.”



traditional retailers, shops with an online component, and state governments. However, most of the legislative solutions being debated do not strike the right balance between the principles of competition, simplicity, and neutrality, and don't go far enough to bring relief to small businesses.

The House Judiciary Committee has proposed draft legislation that centers on two core principles: simplicity and preventing regulation without representation.

One big problem with most proposals to address this issue is that they permit states to regulate businesses outside of their borders. If Congress were to endorse this cross-border reach, it would have implications far beyond the tax arena. The last thing Virginia businesses need is for California legislators to regulate how they produce their goods and services. To prevent this

problem, we must ensure that businesses collecting sales tax on internet sales answer only to their home state taxing authority.

Furthermore, it's imperative that any solution to this problem is simple. The Judiciary Committee's draft legislation makes compliance so simple for small businesses that there is no need for a specific small-business exemption. For example, this proposal instructs states to choose a single statewide rate that will apply to internet sales made to residents within their state. Sellers everywhere would then collect the sales tax at a customer's home state rate. However, sellers would still follow the taxability and remittance rules of their own home state. These simple measures ensure that small businesses and online retailers will not have to purchase, install, and integrate complicated tax software to comply.

My hope is that we can

reach a balanced solution that will protect small businesses, level the playing field with internet retailers, and ensure states are sovereign within their borders but not beyond. Ultimate resolution will require flexibility on all sides – states need to commit to do their part to address the administrative challenges associated with remote sales tax collection. Those concerned about this issue should also contact their representatives in the Virginia General Assembly to urge compromise.

Small business and retail shop owners in Roanoke are in need of relief. I will continue to work closely with all stakeholders to resolve this issue that has been pending for far too long.

Congressman Bob Goodlatte represents the Sixth Congressional District in the U.S. House of Representatives and is the chair of the House Judiciary Committee.

Congressman Goodlatte submitted this article at our request after a discussion with our Executive Director. WRABA has fielded several comments and complaints on this topic and on “show rooming”. We hope this article has provided you with information and that the discussion will continue for a solution.



Williamson Road



Williamson Road Area Business Association

December 2017						
S	M	T	W	T	F	S
					1	2
3	4	5	6	7	8	9
10	11	12	13	14	15	16
17	18	19	20	21	22	23
24 / 31	25	26	27	28	29	30

January 2018						
S	M	T	W	T	F	S
	1	2	3	4	5	6
7	8	9	10	11	12	13
14	15	16	17	18	19	20
21	22	23	24	25	26	27
28	29	30	31			

February 2018						
S	M	T	W	T	F	S
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4	5	6	7	8	9	10
11	12	13	14	15	16	17
18	19	20	21	22	23	24
25	26	27	28			

March 2018						
S	M	T	W	T	F	S
				1	2	3
4	5	6	7	8	9	10
11	12	13	14	15	16	17
18	19	20	21	22	23	24
25	26	27	28	29	30	31

Dates To Remember:

December:

- 7th: WRABA Annual Christmas Dinner
- 25th: Christmas Day
- 31st: New Year's Eve

January:

- 1st: New Year's Day
- 12th: Lee/Jackson Day
- 15th: Martin Luther King Jr Day
- 16th: WRABA Monthly luncheon and Board Meeting
- 18th: Adopt-A-Street Clean Up Day

February:

- 2nd: Ground Hog Day
- 14th: Valentines Day
- 19th: President's Day
- 20st: WRABA Monthly luncheon and Board Meeting

March:

- 11th: Spring Ahead! Change clocks and smoke alarm Batteries!
- 17th: St. Patrick's Day
- 20th: WRABA Monthly luncheon and Board Meeting

WRABA Monthly Meetings

WRABA meetings are held the third Tuesday of each month (except December) at noon. A hot buffet lunch is served and there is always a speaker on an interesting topic. Meeting reminders are emailed to dues paying members prior to each meeting, and an RSVP is required as we must provide a headcount to the hotel. Become a dues paying member and join the meetings for networking and knowledge!

Speakers for the next few months are listed below. If there is a topic on which you would like a presentation, please feel free to contact me at (540) 362-3293 or via email at Wraba@wraba.org!

December 5th: Annual Christmas Dinner

January 16th: Chief David Hoback, Roanoke City Police Department Update

February 20th: County of Roanoke Planners-Hollins Plan (tentative)

March 20th: Bob Cowell, Roanoke City Manager



REQUIRED WITHDRAWALS FROM RETIREMENT PLANS: WHAT SHOULD YOU KNOW?



Submitted by Mike Pendleton, CFP, AAMS of the Hollins Branch of Edward Jones

You may spend decades contributing to your IRA and 401(k). But, eventually, you'll need to use this money. Before that day arrives, you'll want to be familiar with the rules governing withdrawals – and you'll want to know just how much you should take out.

To begin with, withdrawals from traditional employer-sponsored retirement plans like these fall under the Internal Revenue Service's "required minimum distributions" (RMD) guidelines. (You aren't required to take these distributions from a Roth IRA.) Here are some of the key RMD points to keep in mind:

- *You need to take distributions by age 70-1/2 .* You generally should begin taking RMDs in the year in which you turn 70-1/2. If you don't take your first RMD during that year, you must take it no later than April 1 of the following year. If you do put it off until April 1, you must take *two* distributions in one year. If you don't take your RMDs on time, you may have to pay the IRS a 50 percent penalty tax on the taxable portion of your uncollected

distribution — so make sure you know your dates.

- *You can take more than the minimum.* You can withdraw more than the RMD, but, as the word "required" suggests, you can't withdraw less.
- *You may be able to delay RMDs in an employer's retirement plan if you're still working.* If your employer's retirement plan permits it, you may not have to take RMDs if you are still working and you are 70-1/2 or older. However, this exception won't apply if you own 5 percent or more of your company.

To determine your RMD, you'll need to use either the Uniform Lifetime Table, which is based on your life expectancy, or the Joint Life Table, if you have a spouse who is the sole beneficiary and who is more than 10 years younger. Your tax advisor can help you make this selection.

So, now that you know the basic rules of RMDs, you'll need to consider their impact on your retirement income. As mentioned above, you can certainly take out more than the RMD, but should you? If you need the extra money, then you'll have to take it. However, when determining *how much* you should take

beyond your RMDs, you'll need to weigh some other factors.

For one thing, if you can delay taking Social Security, you'll get bigger checks, so you might be able to lower the amounts you take from your 401(k) and IRA.

Another factor to consider is the size and composition of your investment portfolio held outside your retirement accounts. If you have a sizable amount of investments, with some of them providing regular income, you may be able to afford to take out only your RMDs, or perhaps just slightly more. On the other hand, if your 401(k) and IRA make up the vast majority of your investment holdings, you might need to rely on them much more heavily.

In any case, though, you will need to establish an appropriate withdrawal rate for all your investments to ensure you won't outlive your money. A financial professional can help you calculate this rate.

Do whatever it takes to maximize your benefits from your IRA and 401(k). They're valuable assets – so use them wisely.

"...but, as the word "required" suggests, you can't withdraw less..."





HANDLE WITH CARE:
MUTUAL FUNDS AND TAXES

Submitted by Tim Murphy, CPA, Partner, Kennett & Kennett

Many people overlook taxes when planning their mutual fund investments. But you've got to handle these valuable assets with care. Here are some tips to consider.

Avoid Year-end Investments

Typically, mutual funds distribute accumulated dividends and capital gains toward the end of the year. But don't fall for the common misconception that investing in a fund just before a distribution dates is like getting "free money".

Ture, you'll receive a year's worth of income right after you invest. But the value of your shares will immediately drop by the same amount, so you won't be any better off. Plus, you'll be liable for taxes on the distribution as if you had owned your shares all year.

You can get a general idea

of when a particular fund anticipates making a distribution by checking its website periodically. Also make a note of the "record date" - investors who own fund shares on that date will anticipate in the distribution.

Invest in Tax-efficient Funds

Actively managed funds tend to be less tax efficient. They buy and sell securities more frequently, generating a greater amount of capital gain, much of it short-term gain taxable at ordinary income rates rather than the lower, long-term capital gains rates.

Consider investing in tax-efficient funds instead. For example, index funds generally have lower turnover rates. And "passively managed" funds (sometimes described as "tax managed funds) are designed to minimize taxable distributions.

Another option is exchange-traded funds (ETFs). Unlike mutual funds, which generally redeem shares by selling securities, EFTs are often able to redeem securities "in-kind" - that is, to swap them for other securities =. This limits an EFTs recognition of capital gains, making it more tax efficient.

This isn't to say that tax-inefficient funds don't have a place in your portfolio. In come cases, actively managed funds may offer benefits, such as above-market returns, that outweigh their tax costs.

Watch out for Reinvested Distribution

Many investors elect to have their distributions automatically reinvested in their funds. Be aware that those distributions are taxable regardless of whether they've reinvested or paid out in cash.



"...mutual funds distribute accumulated dividends and capital gains toward the end of the year."



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Commercial Corridor Matching Grant Program (cont. from pg 2)

along a corridor entrance to Roanoke County. Their vision is to attract various types of therapists licensed in their respective fields to provide clients the opportunity for "one stop shopping". The commercial Corridor Matching Grant funds of

\$13,000 was approved in May of 2016. The scope of the work included a new concrete sidewalk with fencing and ADA improvements, new painting for the front and side elevations, new awnings which included revised

attached signage and new exterior light fixtures. For more information regarding the Commercial Corridor Matching Grant Program including the application, per see go to www.roanokecountyva.gov/index.aspx?nid=1105



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 WEBSITE!
 WWW.WRABA.ORG**

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 Roanoke, VA
 Permit 78

Membership Application

Name _____

Business _____

Mailing Address _____

Street Address _____

Phone _____ FAX _____

Email Address _____

Website Address _____



Yearly membership is \$165 per member. The membership year runs from July-June. If you have any questions please call Wendy Jones at (540)362-3293.

Attention All
 Readers!!!!

Have a suggestion for an article you would like to see in The Main Street News? Call Wendy Jones today (540)362-3293 or send an email to wraba@wraba.org.



Please join us every third Tuesday (except December) for our luncheon and meeting. This is a great opportunity to network and enjoy some really great food! Meetings are held at noon. Please watch your e-mail for meeting location details!