

Roanoke County, Virginia

2017 Community Economic Development
Award Nomination

Category IV

For Efforts in all of the Following:

Business Retention and Expansion
Business Recruitment
Community Development
Community Involvement



Jill Loope
Director, Economic Development

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Introduction

Roanoke County is pleased to submit the following unique and innovative project for consideration for the Virginia Economic Developers Association (VEDA) 2017 Community Economic Development Award (CEDA).



The Roanoke County Department of Economic Development has launched a [Site Selector](#) web application that provides enhanced services for businesses, site selection consultants, and corporate real estate executives. Site Selector is a configuration of Geographic Information Systems (GIS) software and JavaScript, which allows users to readily access comprehensive property information in one convenient location.

This innovative [Site Selector](#) application is interactive, user-friendly and helps business owners and corporations search for and locate available buildings and sites while combining their property search with community and demographic information. Access to this information facilitates better business decisions and helps to ensure that investments in the County are sustainable and align with business objectives.

Awards and Recognition

The National Association of Counties (NACo) granted Site Selector a National Achievement Award in the category of Community/Economic Development. NACo also granted Site Selector a National Achievement Award in the category of Information Technology.

In addition, NACo will feature Site Selector in both their February 20, 2017 newsletter and online national County News report. Unfortunately, the CEDA application is due Prior to the running of the feature(s) but you can find the story at www.naco.org/news.

Efficient Government (www.efficientgov.com) recognizes Site Selector as an efficient, cost effective, and innovative tool and highly suggests that other government entities develop a real estate tool just like our Site Selector. In fact, they asked our department to present a Site Selector webinar in order to teach other governments about this efficient and effective economic development tool. Governments throughout the USA and Canada participated in the webinar. A recording of the webinar can be seen [HERE](#).

Innovativeness

The Site Selector application leverages new technology to provide users with a one-stop-shopping experience when researching properties. While the application functions much like popular websites such as Zillow, Loopnet, and others, Site Selector provides more advanced and comprehensive data on business properties. This data includes, but is not limited to: property reports, real estate details, tax maps, 3-D property imagery, zoning, demographic and income reports, business summary reports, site maps, geographical intelligence, neighborhood information, utilities, magisterial districts, zoning, transportation data, property prospectus, marketing materials, police activity, and more. The application is intuitive and easy to use.



Site Selector is an online, interactive tool. Because of this fact, it is strongly suggested that you watch the [webinar](#) and [demonstration video](#). Also, please click on the Internet links embedded in the text of this document to get a full understanding of the innovativeness, transferability, community commitment and leverage, measured objectives, and secondary benefits of [Site Selector](#).

Video overview address: <http://siteselector.roanokecountyva.gov/help.htm>

Webinar address: <http://efficientgov.com/blog/2016/10/25/webinar-gis-economic-development/>

Site Selector can be found on the Economic Development website under the “Sites and Buildings” menu at: www.yesroanoke.org

The new application can also be found in the “Maps & Apps Gallery” through the County’s GIS page at <http://gis.roanokecountyva.gov/>

Transferability

Site Selector has great potential to be used by other economic and community development agencies or practitioners, because the information used, and technology leveraged, is readily accessible.

Site Selector is a configuration of Geographic Information Systems (GIS) software and JavaScript. Both the software and code are easily sourced by any organization. While the technology is innovative, the ability to apply it is relatively simple through the use of web templates and web plug-ins.


The data that is used is readily available from Realtors®, real estate websites, and local governments.

In short, the idea to create the one-stop-shopping Site Selector is innovative, but the ability to duplicate this innovative resource is easy.

Community Commitment and Leverage

This project has helped to bring the real estate, business, and economic development communities together due to the fact that information has been needed from each to complete the project of creating Site Selector. This project and its ongoing usefulness have given us all an opportunity to work together on a resource that is mutually beneficial to the real estate, business, and economic development communities, as well as the community as a whole.

Site Selector has given the Economic Development Department the opportunity for ongoing communication with the real estate and business communities through Site Selector presentations, phone conversations, and email updates, as well as face-to-face visits. Site selector also provides a strong and useful tool when having detailed conversations about various sites and properties with prospects, existing industry, and community stakeholders.



Roanoke County Economic Development
INVITES ALL ROANOKE AREA REALTORS®
TO A DEMONSTRATION OF THE NEW
SITE SELECTOR APPLICATION

Site Selector is an online interactive, user friendly tool that helps Realtors® promote and/or search for buildings and sites, while combining their property search with key community and demographic information.


This is an opportunity for Realtors® to learn how Site Selector and other new enhancements to the [County GIS website](#) provide one-stop-shopping for Realtors® looking for data on:

- Property reports
- Tax maps
- Demographic and income reports
- Summary reports
- Site maps
- Neighborhood reports
- Utilities
- Zoning
- Transportation
- 3-D property views
- Schools
- County services

This is an opportunity for Realtors® to:

- Learn how to keep listings up to date with the Economic Development Office
- Commercial Realtors® to schedule a meeting with economic development staff

All commercial and residential Realtors® are welcome.
Date: Thursday, January 14, 2016
Time: 9:00 am to 10:00 am
Location: South County Library Auditorium , 6303 Merriman Rd, Roanoke, VA 24018
Please Register by email to jbrenchick@roanokecountyva.gov or call (540) 772-2070



yesroanoke.com

Perhaps most importantly, Site Selector is a tool that is easily accessible to anyone with an internet connection. This means that not only community stakeholders can use this tool, but anyone in the community, or world, has equal access to this resource.

Site Selector has far reaching effects/affects for business attraction, expansion, and retention. It is often said that communities can be under consideration by a prospective business, or existing business, looking to expand at any point in time and that a community can be ruled out before ever being contacted. Site Selector puts the right information in their hands, so they can make an informed decision based off of data and not a decision based off of a lack of data.

The County just completed a [strategic planning process](#) in which Site Selector played a vital role. This planning process involved all Roanoke County departments, as well as close to 400 citizens and stakeholders from Roanoke County and surrounding communities.

Measured Objectives

Completing the Site Selector project has made it possible to gather an unprecedented amount of data and provide it in a one-stop-shopping format, which is something that was not possible before. The completion of the Site Selector project is, in and of itself, a measurable objective.

Also, Site Selector is yet one more tool in our marketing tool box. We are able to share internet links to specific properties via the web, Facebook, Twitter, and email, which then gives us the opportunity to obtain accurate measures of those interested in properties through the use of various analytic tools that include, but are not limited to the incorporation of: PIWIK Analytics, Google Analytics, GroupWise tracking, and Constant Contact newsletter analytics.

Lastly, Site Selector has proven to be an effective resource when working with businesses small and large. For example, the Economic Development Department is working with a start-up chiropractic business. We have been able to work with the chiropractor via Site Selector in order to help him find the ideal property for his practice. Via Site Selector he can see site plans, business and demographic reports, and other data vital to his decision in purchasing a property to start his practice. Conversely, Site Selector has proven to be an efficient and effective tool when working some of Virginia's biggest business attraction projects that involve multimillion-dollar capital investment and a large number of high paying career opportunities.

Secondary Benefits

As mentioned earlier, Roanoke County underwent a community [strategic planning](#) process.

As part of the planning process, community development issues were identified and plans to address them formulated. Site Selector proved to be a valuable and convenient tool for participants in the strategic planning process to use as they identify projects aimed at creating, improving and retaining quality jobs, additional capital investment in the community, increasing the business tax base, and improving the overall quality of life in Roanoke County.

In addition, due to the fact that data and documentation on business properties are now available online, and in an easy to access format, this will lead to reduced costs in printing and staff time on the part of other Roanoke County departments, citizens, and business owners. In other words, citizens do not need to visit the community development office to request information that County staff then has to research and print. Now, anyone can simply access data via Site Selector.

