

## Home Office Design

Creating a professional backdrop for video conferencing.

BY MARILYN CAMPBELL  
THE CONNECTION

In the age of coronavirus, working from home and connecting with colleagues using video conferencing platforms like Zoom has become the new normal. From staff meetings to happy hours, virtual connectedness is keeping offices linked in a world of social distancing. For some, however, this means scrambling to give their home office a sense of professionalism moments before a meeting. Now that mad dash can become a thing of the past.

Create a dedicated work zone away from other distractions, suggests Keira St. Claire of Anthony Wilder Design/Build. "You will feel more at ease if your space is set up to work for you," she said. "It will also in turn make you feel more calm and prepared to be productive."

Organization is the first step in creating that space. "Start by cleaning up clutter," said St. Claire. "But before you start purging, set goals. What would you like to accomplish?"

A part of this thought process should include envisioning the look and feel of the space. "What type of spaces make you feel the most calm?" asks St. Claire. "A zen-inspired minimalistic retreat? A library-like space to display your favorite collectibles, art work and precious things? A lush, soft room? Each of these goals will require different items in different quantities."

In fact, incorporating decorative objects from other parts of one's home can add an air of professionalism to a workspace. "Nothing puts the 'home' into home office better than antiques," said Annie Elliott, Annie Elliott Design. "An antique desk or table topped with beautifully framed drawings and photographs adds such character to a space."

"When your home office is a desk out in the open, it's critical that you tuck your work out of sight at the end of the day," continued Elliott. "Every desk should have drawers not only for pens and pencils, but also for your papers, notebooks, and ideally your laptop."

An aesthetically appealing workspace can offer a sense of serenity that can be enjoyed even when not on a video conference. "Working at home with the kids and pets can be overwhelming right now," said Pamela Harvey of Pamela Harvey Interiors. "Create an inviting work area by adding good task lighting and fresh flowers."

In fact, lighting is key when creating office-worthy backdrops for a video conference. "Lighting is everything," says St. Claire. "Natural light is the best, especially northern light. 'Open up and let the light shine in. If natural light is scarce, decide on the right artificial lighting. Is cozy warm lighting or brighter whiter lighting better for your daily work? Dimmers are great as they help to control the amount of light you may need throughout the day as the natural light changes.'"

Desk lamp lighting shouldn't be overlooked, added Tracy Morris, of Tracy Morris Design. "Leave behind the harsh fluorescents of a traditional office and add



Create a clean and uncluttered home office environment, says interior designer Tracy Morris.

PHOTO BY GREG POWERS



Every desk should have drawers, not only for pens and pencils, but also for your papers, notebooks and ideally your laptop, advises interior designer Annie Elliott.

PHOTOS BY JENN VERRIER



Create an inviting work area by adding good task lighting and fresh flowers, advises Pamela Harvey.

in warm light from a lamp," he said. "This will also better illuminate your desk than overhead light and help prevent eye strain."

"Just because you're doing real work doesn't mean your desk can't be attractive," said Elliott.

### BULLETIN BOARD

Submit civic/community announcements at [ConnectionNews-papers.com/Calendar](http://ConnectionNews-papers.com/Calendar). Photos and artwork welcome. Deadline is Thursday at noon, at least two weeks before event.

#### CHANGES TO THE COURTS

The Fairfax County courts are making new changes to their schedules and procedures in response to the coronavirus, including further postponing dockets. While the Fairfax County Courthouse remains open to the public, the Circuit Court, General District Court and Juvenile and Domestic Relations District Court have changed their bond and arraignment schedule until further notice:

General District Court: Bonds and Arraignments — 8:30 a.m. and 9:30 a.m.

Circuit Court: Bonds and Arraignments — 10:30 a.m. and 11:30 a.m.

Juvenile and Domestic Relations District Court: Bonds and Arraignments — 2:30 p.m.

The Circuit Court introduced a temporary process to waive oral argument for motions in an effort to encourage social distancing. To be eligible, the waiver must meet certain conditions, including that all parties agree and evidence is not required. The Circuit Court continues to postpone non-essential, non-emergency proceedings through Monday, April 27.

The General District Courts have now postponed most dockets through Thursday, April 30, except for bonds, arraignments, emergency motions, protective orders and attorney court.

Regular court hearings for incarcerated individuals are expected to begin Monday, April 13, as technology permits.

For people who aren't in jail, any civil, criminal and traffic court cases that were previously scheduled for this month will be continued. Look up the specific status of your case using the Online Case Information System.

#### DULLES TOLL ROAD CHANGES

The Dulles Toll Road will suspend manual cash-exchange toll collecting until further notice beginning Monday, April 6 due to COVID-19; toll booths will be unattended. Only electronic and exact change coin payments will be accepted. Motorists without E-ZPass, other electronic forms of payment or exact change will receive bills through the mail. All lanes and toll booths on the Dulles Toll Road are equipped with electronic tolling features. Any lane can be used with a valid E-ZPass account or other form of electronic tolling. Customers can visit E-ZPass Virginia at <https://www.ezpassva.com/> for information on how to obtain an E-ZPass, or the GoToll mobile phone app at <https://www.gotoll.com/>. Customers are encouraged to visit <https://www.tollroadsinvirginia.com/ViolationToll/PayViolation> for information on paying toll violations.

#### FIRE STATIONS CLOSED TO THE PUBLIC

In order to protect the health of firefighters and medics, Fairfax County Fire and Rescue is closing all fire stations to the public, effective March 27. These closures are in coordination with Fairfax County government's decision to close county government buildings to the public. Notices will be posted to the front door of each station directing visitors to call the station for any inquiries. Exceptions will be made for any emergency that would require members of the public to enter the station for treatment.

#### DMVS ARE CLOSED

Until at least April 23, all 75 DMV customer service centers are closed and all DMV 2 Go and DMV Connect services postponed in response to the continued spread of the coronavirus (COVID-19). DMV weigh stations have also suspended operations for the same duration.

Driver's licenses and identification cards set to expire between March 15 and May 15 are extended 60 days from the original date of expiration. This includes credentials for individuals aged 75 and older who are typically required to make an in-person visit to renew.

Vehicle registrations that expire in March and April are extended for 60 days.

<cal1>Park Authority Closes All Parks

<cal2>Effective Tuesday, March 24, all Fairfax County Park Authority parks and amenities will be closed to the public until further notice. This change is in response to Virginia Gov. Ralph Northam's order to close public access to recreational facilities.

Park Authority closures include parking lots, athletic fields, sport courts, restrooms, nature centers, visitor centers, golf courses, historic sites, picnic areas, playgrounds, amusements, boat launches, skate parks, off-leash dog areas, outdoor fitness equipment and any areas for open recreation. While all parks and amenities are closed, trails will remain open for individual use, but not group use.

#### METRO REDUCES SERVICE HOURS

As part of its ongoing efforts to limit frontline transit workers' exposure to the public during the ongoing COVID-19 emergency, Metro's Pandemic Task Force will further reduce rail and bus hours, starting Monday, April 6, 2020. Metrorail will close at 9 p.m. every day: Mon.-Fri.: Open 5 a.m.; Close 9 p.m.; Sat.-Sun.: Open 8 a.m.; Close 9 p.m. Metrobus service also will end earlier each day, with the last trips departing at or before 11 p.m. Buses that enter service at or before 11 p.m. will continue to the end of the route before going out of service.

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