

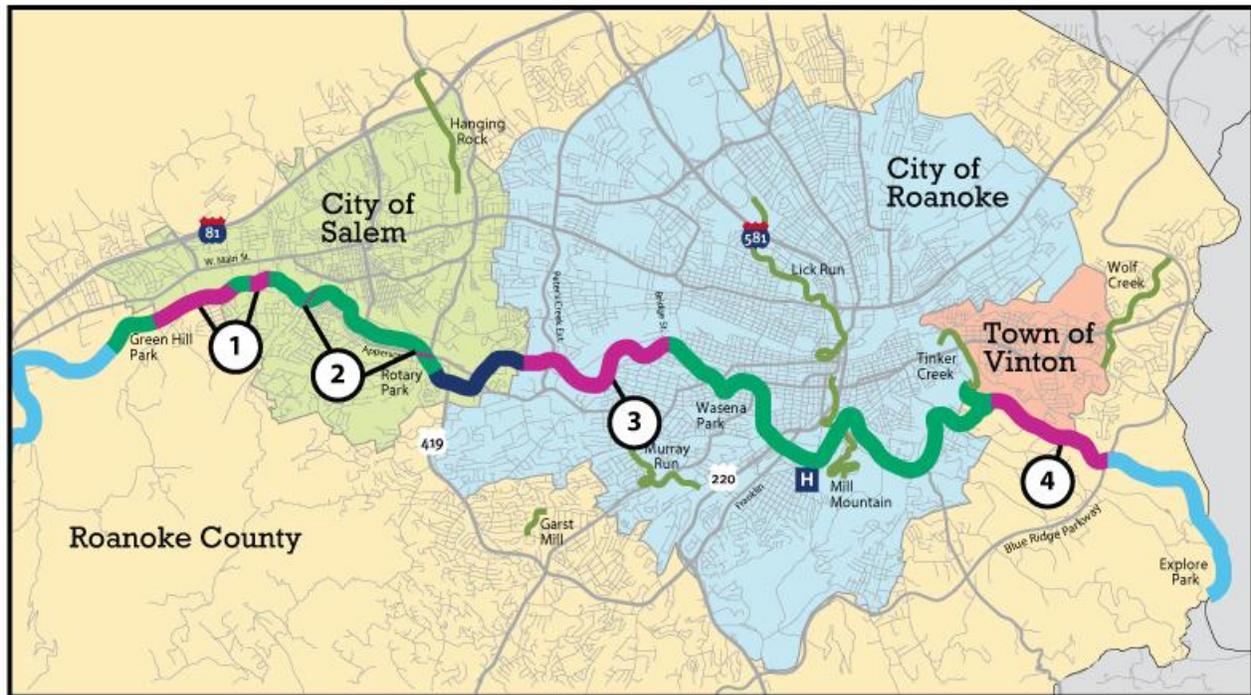
Finish Roanoke River Greenway from Green Hill Park to the Blue Ridge Parkway Regional Surface Transportation Program Application

1. Project Sponsors: City of Roanoke, City of Salem, Roanoke County, Town of Vinton
In cooperation with Roanoke Valley Greenway Commission

2. Proposed Implementing Agencies: City of Roanoke, City of Salem, Roanoke County

3. Project Description and Proposed Improvement Locations: (aerials attached)

This project requests \$12,775,000 for completion of Roanoke River Greenway (hereinafter referred to as RRG) from Green Hill Park to the Blue Ridge Parkway making a 21.2-mile bicycle/pedestrian trail across the Roanoke Valley. To date 12.2 miles of this greenway are completed and open, 1.7 miles funded, and 7.3 miles partially funded. The four sections which need additional funding, are: 1) Green Hill Park to Woodbridge and Mill Lane to Riverside Park, 2) Eddy Avenue and Apperson Drive bridges, 3) Roanoke/Salem line to Bridge Street, and 4) Water Pollution Control Plant (WPCP) to Blue Ridge Parkway.



| | |
|--|--|
| Additional Funding Needed | Completed |
| Funded For Construction | Future Planning |



4. Detailed Scope of Work, Relation to Other Phases, Status, and Other Funding Sources (details attached)

The following table summarizes the scope of work for this funding request. Each of these four sections has previous funding through Enhancement or Open Container grants. A detailed status chart for the whole greenway is attached, showing the status in each locality and the connectivity of the phases.

| Roanoke River Greenway - Scope of Work for Funding Request (Shown from West to East) | | | | | | |
|---|---|------------------|-----------------|------------------|--|--|
| Map # | Section | UPC | Length in Miles | Other Funding | Status | Scope of Work |
| 1 | Green Hill Park to Woodbridge; Mill Lane to Riverside Park | 97171 | 1.9 | OC | Alternatives analysis and technical report completed. | Acquisition of ROW, final engineering, construction of 1.9 miles of trail with 4 river bridges |
| 2 | Eddy Avenue and Apperson Drive Bridges | 56409 | | TE | Preliminary design/ cost estimates completed to address safety issues at each bridge, where trail utilizes narrow sidewalks. Eliminates one at grade crossing. | Construction of 200' bike/ped bridge and widened sidewalk/ trail facility on 150' bridge. |
| 3 | Roanoke/Salem Line to Bridge St. | 72180; 102769 | 2.6 | TE, TA, RS, P | Preliminary alignment completed. RFP for Final Engineering advertised. | Construction of 2.6 miles of trail with 3 river bridges. |
| 4 | WPCP to Blue Ridge Parkway | 91191 | 2.8 | TE | Survey, geotech, aerial topo, preliminary alignments completed. | Acquisition of ROW from 14 owners, final engineering, construction of 2.8 miles of trail. |
| Total | | | 7.3 | | | 7.3 miles of trail, 9 bridges |
| OC=Open Container, TE=Transportation Enhancement; TA=Transportation Alternatives; RS=Revenue Sharing; P=Private | | | | | | |

5. – 9. **Not Applicable.** This project is a bicycle/pedestrian shared use path.

10. **Project Cost by Phase and Funding Request by Year** – A detailed budget for each section is attached.

| Roanoke River Greenway - Cost by Phase | | | | | | | |
|--|---|-------------------------|------------|--------------|--------------|-------------------|----------------|
| Map # | Section | Preliminary Engineering | RightOfWay | Construction | Total Cost | Funding Available | Funding Needed |
| 1 | Green Hill Park to Woodbridge, Mill Lane to Riverside Park | \$ 507,500 | \$ 370,000 | \$5,612,250 | \$ 6,489,750 | \$ 3,499,000 | \$ 2,990,750 |
| 2 | Eddy Ave. & Apperson Dr. Bridges | | \$ - | \$1,314,100 | \$ 1,314,100 | \$ 251,500 | \$ 1,062,600 |
| 3 | Roanoke/Salem line to Bridge St. | \$ 645,000 | \$ 150,000 | \$5,900,300 | \$ 6,695,300 | \$ 3,831,500 | \$ 2,863,800 |
| 4 | WPCP to Blue Ridge Parkway | \$ 584,900 | \$ 527,800 | \$5,461,400 | \$ 6,574,100 | \$ 716,250 | \$ 5,857,850 |
| Totals | | | | | \$21,073,250 | \$ 8,298,250 | \$12,775,000 |

| Roanoke River Greenway - Funding Request by Fiscal Year | | | | | | | |
|---|---|----------------------|--------|--------------------|--------------------|--------------------|--------------------|
| # | Section | Total Needed | Phase | FY 14 | FY 15 | FY 16 | FY 17 |
| 1 | Green Hill Park to Woodbridge, Mill Lane to Riverside Park | \$ 2,990,750 | CN | \$ 218,600 | \$ 2,772,150 | | |
| 2 | Eddy Ave. & Apperson Dr. Bridges | \$ 1,062,600 | CN | \$ 1,062,600 | | | |
| 3 | Roanoke City Line to Bridge St. | \$ 2,863,800 | CN | \$ 2,863,800 | | | |
| 4 | WPCP to Blue Ridge Parkway | \$ 5,857,850 | ROW,CN | \$ 1,085,650 | | \$ 3,164,400 | \$ 1,607,780 |
| Totals | | \$ 12,775,000 | | \$5,230,650 | \$2,772,150 | \$3,164,400 | \$1,607,780 |

11. RSTP Project Rating Factors

A. Regional Project Consideration

This project is being submitted jointly by the City of Roanoke, City of Salem, Roanoke County and the Town of Vinton, with endorsement by the Roanoke Valley Greenway Commission. The project is located in three of the four jurisdictions and is connected to Vinton by an existing bridge. The project serves citizens from all jurisdictions and has become a focal point for visitors and tourists. The greenway is popular across the Valley,

and its completion would be hailed as a huge accomplishment representative of exemplary cooperation among the four localities, Greenway Commission, and many, many partners.

RRG is the priority facility for non-motorized transportation in the valley and the #1 priority in the regional Greenway Plan. Its route parallel to the river provides an east-west corridor through the heart of the urbanized area, thus giving bicycles and pedestrians a route to access every jurisdiction. When completed, it will connect to seven industrial and business complexes, fourteen parks, two sport complexes, two skateboard parks, Riverside Center, neighborhoods across the valley, and the Blue Ridge Parkway. Its location within two blocks of bus routes in 17 locations, its intersection with three other greenways and trails, and its connection to 15 other bicycle routes provides for regional, multi-modal transportation. RRG is heavily used, with counters in Roanoke showing 20,000+ per month, ADT 600+. It has become important to regional economic development, attraction of businesses and employees, and special events, as well as neighborhood revitalization.

B. Support Economic Vitality of the Metropolitan Area

The Roanoke Valley is seeing the economic impact of the greenway network. Completion of RRG will lead to increases in tourism and associated revenues, but the greenway has already contributed to growth of small businesses, real estate redevelopment, residential investment, attraction of employees, environmental protection, a healthier workforce, and neighborhood revitalization.

- *Small Businesses:* Underdog Bikes, River Greenway Bicycle Rental, HITS Frozen treats, and East Coasters.
- *Commercial Investment:* RiverHouse (\$15M), Wasena TapRoom, River Rock Indoor Climbing Gym. Coming soon: Riverside Station between Jefferson Street and the river with its own greenway connections.
- *Residential Real Estate:* A study by Roanoke staff showed property values within 2000 feet of the trail increased 32% more than average. Owners with For Sale signs are now installing them facing the greenway.
- *Business & Employee Attraction:* The Medical School, Meridium and Novozymes tout the greenway's importance in attracting employees and students and in decisions to locate to the Valley.
- *Tourism:* When 21 miles of trail are complete, with a connection to the Parkway, RRG will become a destination for those within a 2-3 hour drive. Studies have shown substantial expenditures by non-local trail users; in FY2010 \$238,300, 2%, of total tax revenue in Galax, VA was attributable to New River Trail use.
- *Special Events:* The greenway has become so popular as a venue for races that the City of Roanoke is now charging for use. Events like the Blue Ridge Marathon, with an economic impact of \$1.06M over three years, attract many visitors to the valley, as well as providing substantial support for non-profits.
- *Health and Fitness:* Wellness of the work force is an important consideration for businesses, a critical factor in reducing expenses and increasing productivity. Greenways promote exercise and health. A university study of Roanoke showed that residents are 40% more likely to exercise if there is a greenway nearby.
- *Neighborhood Revitalization:* The Greenway has helped spur a renaissance in Wasena and Mountain View neighborhoods and supports the Grandin Village area.

C. Increase the Safety and Security of the Transportation System

The greenway network was conceived by citizens in 1995 as a way to provide safe opportunities for bicycling and walking without interaction with cars. The Roanoke Valley street/road network is constrained by tight development, railroad lines, the river, narrow road shoulders, hills, and drivers unaccustomed to non-motorized users. RRG is an off-road, safe connection for those who prefer or need to travel without an automobile. Section #2 of this project, the two bridges in Salem, specifically addresses a safety issue where the trail utilizes a narrow sidewalk. At Eddy Avenue, the work will also eliminate an at-grade crossing.

D. Increase the Accessibility and Mobility Options

RRG is the longest outdoor, handicapped-accessible, facility in the Valley, available to people of all ages and from all walks of life, of all levels of ability or disability, and free to residents and visitors. It is a unique resource providing a transportation corridor for bicycles and pedestrians, fitness facility, recreation opportunity, and connection to nature. It connects all four jurisdictions and provides access to multiple sidewalks, bike routes, and business and recreation facilities in those communities.

E. Protect and Enhance the Environment, Promote Energy Conservation and Improve Quality of Life

Construction of RRG has led to a variety of benefits, many of them environmental. Restoration of the river corridor has included clean-up of hazardous waste sites, removal of a trailer park, collection of trash, replacement of sewer lines, and removal of obstructions to fish travel. Conservation of the riparian buffer is now the norm. The greenway and adjacent lands are managed as a park, with riparian tree planting, interpretive signs, sculptures, canoe launches, and fitness stations. With thousands of greenway users along the river each week, there are many eyes now watching and hands helping to protect this natural resource. The greenway is a “green infrastructure” facility that protects the river environment and thus cools the air, protects water quality, provides wildlife habitat, and reduces fuel consumption by those using it, thus saving transportation costs.

RRG is free to users. It is popular for running, walking, bicycling, strollers, skating, wheelchairs, events, access for boating, fishing, and bird watching. In Roanoke, greenways ranked as the second most important arts/cultural asset. In City and County park plans, greenways ranked as the most important recreation facility. RRG has also become a “melting pot” where many languages can be heard and nationalities seen.

National statistics show that we now have an “obesity epidemic” and that children suffer from “nature deficit disorder”. We need resources and facilities that provide every citizen with a chance to enjoy healthful outdoor activities. We need safe routes for non-motorized transportation for commuting and other pursuits of daily life. We need places where people can congregate, socialize, and enjoy the outdoors. We need community resources for events that benefit charitable causes, such as races and festivals. Completing the RRG will address all of these needs and encourage active living, enabling people to walk and bike close to home for every day destinations and expanding these benefits to a broader range of our citizenry.

F. Enhance the Integration and Connectivity of the Transportation System, Across and Between Modes

As RRG gets longer, it becomes more important as a transportation facility, connecting business and employment centers in the corridor to residential and recreational resources. Many citizens are now riding bicycles to work; commuting by bicycle between Salem and Roanoke will be even more feasible when RRG is completed. Others use the greenway for activities like shopping. With gas increasingly expensive, RRG provides an alternative, non-motorized option that is free with positive side effects from the exercise. The expansion of the on-road bicycling network, the inclusion of bicycle racks on buses, and the continuity RRG can provide when completed all enhance the connectivity of the transportation system across non-motorized and transit modes.

G. Promote Efficient System Management and Operation

In the Roanoke Valley, greenways are owned and operated by the four localities. In the City of Roanoke and Roanoke County, greenways are maintained by the Parks Departments, in the City of Salem by the Streets Department, and in Vinton by Public Works. The efficiency of this is that the jurisdiction closest to the facility has responsibility and equipment on hand to address operation issues. The rapid clean-up after the January 25, 2013 flood shows the localities' commitment to maintenance and the facility's importance to citizens.

H. Emphasize the Preservation of Existing Transportation System

This project expands the transportation system. Connection of existing sections to each other improves the efficiencies of management and maintenance, encourages use and volunteering along the whole greenway, and thus encourages preservation of the existing system by making it part of a bigger system.

I. Cost/Benefit Consideration

Two cost/benefit analyses for portions of RRG have been completed. In 2009 the Army Corps of Engineers estimated benefits of adding 4.5 miles of trail from the Roanoke/Salem line to Wasena Park. Based on visitation of 243,200, the annual recreation benefit would be \$1.64 million (2001 dollars). The other analysis was an IMPLAN model prepared by the Regional Commission in 2009 for a TIGER application. It estimated that, conservatively, the annual economic impact of the Greenway from non-local users would be \$2.08 million and that, for every dollar invested, there would be a \$2.02 return.

J. Inclusion in Other Plans

RRG is included in the 2007 *Virginia Outdoors Plan* (p. 349-50, 353), the comprehensive/community plans of Roanoke, Salem, Roanoke County and Vinton, 2007 *Update to the Roanoke Valley Conceptual Greenway Plan*, *Bikeway Plan for the Roanoke Valley Area MPO - 2012 Update*, FY 2012-2015 TIP, 1998 *Roanoke River Preliminary Greenway Plan* (Roanoke County & Salem), 2000 *Roanoke River Greenway Master Plan* (City of Roanoke), 2002 *East Roanoke River Greenway Master Plan*, and multiple neighborhood plans in Roanoke. All of these plans have had public input components.