



# Partnership for a **LIVABLE ROANOKE VALLEY PLAN**

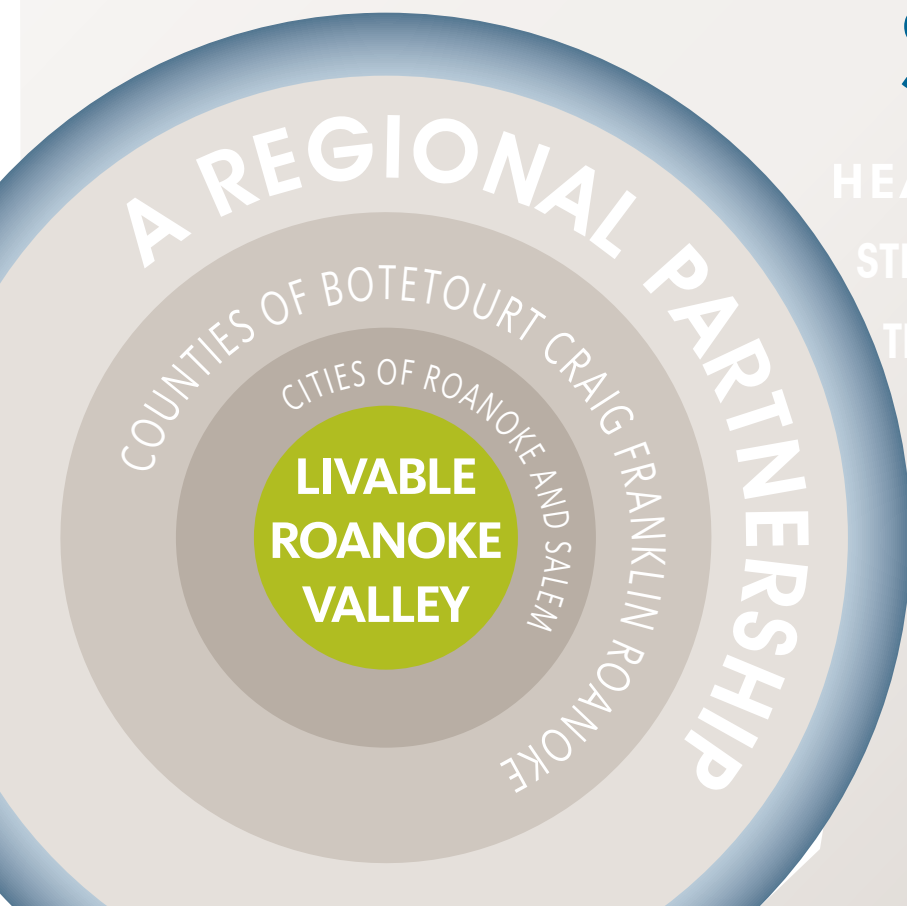
Promoting Economic Opportunity and Quality of Life in the Roanoke Valley



## SUMMARY

*Final February 2014*

HEALTH CARE REGIONAL  
STRENGTHS EDUCATION LIVABILITY  
TRANSPORTATION INFRASTRUCTURE  
COMMUNITY REGIONAL ARTS  
FUTURE VALUES INDUSTRY DATA  
OUTDOORS ACADEMICS WELLNESS  
PRIORITIES COLLABORATION  
RESOURCES ENVIRONMENT



Cover image source: Kurt Konrad Photography  
Back cover image source: Roanoke Valley Convention and Visitors Bureau



My time as Chair of the Partnership for a Livable Roanoke Valley has been eye opening. We have learned detailed information about our region's strengths and weaknesses. We have studied service organizations, businesses, and local, commonwealth, and federal programs to really understand what's available in the Roanoke Region. We have asked "what does the future hold for the Roanoke Valley of Virginia" and "how can we ensure a strong quality of life in our communities?"

The Partnership for a Livable Roanoke Valley is an initiative of seven local governments and more than 60 organizations in the Roanoke Valley. The initiative seeks to promote economic opportunity and a greater quality of life for all Roanoke Valley residents through the development of the area's first regional plan for livability. Starting in 2011, Livable Roanoke Valley has taken a straight-forward approach to understanding and addressing key issues affecting the region. We started by engaging partners, organizations, and over 1,300 citizens to gain a strong understanding of our region's values, vision, and priorities. Next, we developed a picture of potential futures for the region based on a detailed understanding of key trends at the local, commonwealth, and national level. Finally, we identified 11 strategic initiatives to achieve goals in the areas of economic development, workforce development, health, and natural assets.

I'd like to thank everyone who has participated and dedicated their time and expertise to this partnership. Countless hours have been spent to craft a plan that promises economic vitality balanced with a high quality of living. We have made every effort to be inclusive, to set real world measures and to present to you a plan that is representative of what our residents and businesses want and need.

In closing, I want to ask you to do one thing. If you take away nothing else from our efforts, I want you to be proud that you live in Virginia's Blue Ridge and tell people the things you already know:

- How we care for each other.
- Tell them that our schools are good and our educators are dedicated to our children.
- Surprise them with news that your local governments are working together more efficiently than ever.
- Remind those who have moved away that you can kayak or hike or play softball after work.
- Brag that our rush hour is really about 15 minutes, and
- Smile when you tell people that a "long line" for TSA at our airport maybe has a dozen people.

Be ambassadors for our area. We need every single person to spread the word about our efforts, and thanks to Livable Roanoke Valley, I can say quite scientifically that our best resources are our people. **And we have a lot to be proud of.**

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Lisa D. Garst".

The Honorable Lisa D. Garst  
Chair, Partnership for a Livable Roanoke Valley  
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See page 33 and 34 for a full list of the working group members.

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With Support Provided By **AECOM** with Logan Simpson

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View from Dragons Tooth trail near Catawba, Virginia.

# 1

## WHY WE CAME TOGETHER

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Situated between the Blue Ridge and Allegheny Mountains, the Roanoke Valley has natural beauty and outdoor amenities that have always made it an attractive place to live, work, and visit. Our valley has a lower unemployment rate than the national average. We have growing health care employment and stability in our traditional industries that capitalize on our position as a transportation hub. Students in our schools are doing well and we're now seeing positive signs that our urban and rural schools are closing the achievement gap.

While there are many things that the Roanoke Valley can proudly proclaim, there are also challenges and threats to our continued progress. Our employment rates and population growth, while stable, are far from vigorous and trail other parts of Virginia. Our economy is dominated by employers that are dependent upon the commonwealth and federal government, which is disconcerting in an era of decreasing government funding. We are an aging region that is losing some of its most promising young people to more populated regions. We suffer challenges with obesity, teenage-pregnancy, smoking, and drug use. There is an increased demand for safety net health care services and a shift in the use of the Emergency Department for primary care by the uninsured and low income. The Roanoke Valley is also experiencing growing poverty, especially within its urban and more rural areas.

To address these challenges and better plan for the future, in 2011 the Roanoke Valley-Alleghany Regional Commission (Regional Commission) and the Council of Community Services (CCS) created the Partnership for a Livable Roanoke Valley (Livable Roanoke Valley) to address these challenges and plan for a better future. With a goal to promote economic opportunity and a greater quality of life for all residents, we have developed the Valley's first integrated regional plan. To

that end, we sought to answer important questions such as: What does the future hold for the Roanoke Valley? How can we ensure a strong quality of life in our communities? Can we improve access to opportunity for all of our residents?

This executive summary summarizes a two-year long undertaking to engage our stakeholders and community in a process to articulate a vision, principles and goals, and to develop a strategic action plan to realize our vision for a "Livable Roanoke Valley." The full-length Livable Roanoke Valley Plan can be found at [livableroanoke.org](http://livableroanoke.org)

## OUR PARTNERS

Seeking broad community representation, we actively recruited over 60 organizations to take part in the Livable Roanoke Valley process. The core of our partnership is the local governments of the Roanoke Valley region, working with the support of nonprofits, businesses, and commonwealth government, who staffed the following groups (see Figure 1):

- The **Steering Committee**, composed of elected officials and regional non-profit organizations and businesses leaders, guided the process, including the development, review, and adoption of the plan and provided guidance and oversight of the Stakeholder Committees and Working Groups.
- The **Stakeholder Committee** was responsible for directing the public involvement process, with emphasis on outreach to traditionally under represented populations, and reviewing and analyzing the results of each phase of plan development. The

Committee included two representatives from each working group and one member from an organization/ population that is traditionally under represented in the planning process.

- **Working Groups** formed to specifically address the issues of housing, transportation, workforce and economic development, land use, energy and environment, and health and education, were composed of representatives from organizations working to address these issues.

A Project Team led by The Regional Commission, with support from the Council of Community Services, AECOM, Logan Simpson, T.J. Willard and Associates, and Kathy Baske Young provided assistance to the committees and management of both the technical planning process and the consultant team.

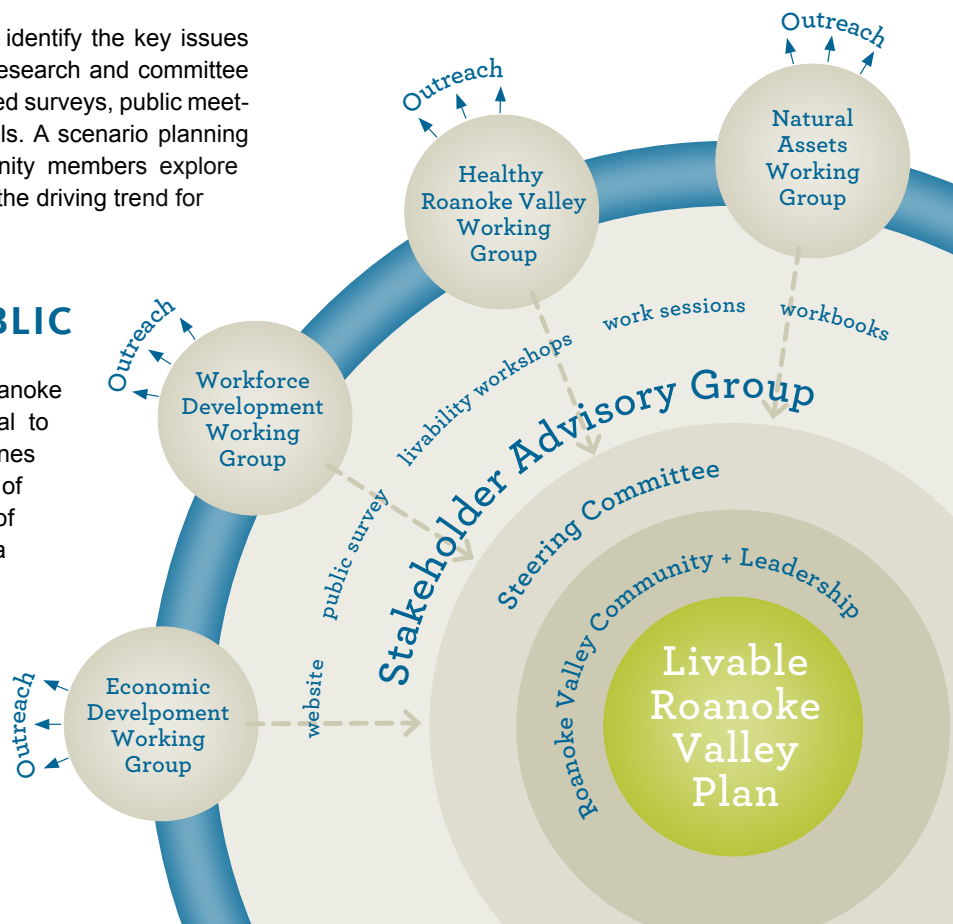
We used an integrated approach to identify the key issues affecting the region, balancing our research and committee work with outreach efforts that included surveys, public meetings, and the use of web-based tools. A scenario planning exercise was used to help community members explore potential futures as they considered the driving trend for the region.

## ENGAGING THE PUBLIC

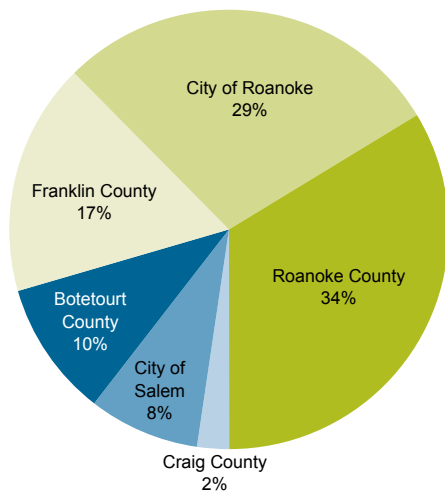
Engaging the public in the Livable Roanoke Valley planning process was central to shaping a future vision that combines economic opportunity and quality of life for generations. Each phase of the planning process contained a public outreach segment designed to seek opinions regarding the future and share progress regarding the current status of the livability plan, thus ensuring a truly community-driven process. Our outreach efforts were guided by the following objectives:

- Ensure the public has an opportunity to shape the plan and future vision for the region.

- Foster collaboration among the cities, counties, and towns in the Roanoke Valley.
- Utilize multiple outreach mediums to capture the largest range of participants and perspectives, including those who have been previously under represented.
- Utilize scenario planning as a means to gain a deeper understanding of the risks facing the valley and the key opportunities and forces that will shape the valley.
- Generate strategic decisions with resiliency.
- Set the foundation for continued dialogue, collaborative learning and planning across the valley.



**FIGURE 1** Partners and their relationship to the engagement process for the Livable Roanoke Valley Plan



**FIGURE 2** Virginia Tech Telephone Survey - Respondent Localities

Through our efforts we actively engaged over 1,500 citizens in the development of the Livable Roanoke Valley Plan. Utilizing phone surveys, public workshops, websites, and social media, we sought to engage the greatest possible range of participants and perspectives.

### Statistically Valid Telephone Survey

The Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University (Virginia Tech) Center for Survey Research surveyed 1,030 citizens in the Roanoke Valley in late summer 2012 regarding their opinions on 13 areas of livability, such as transportation, health care, land usage, and fire and police services. A random-digit dialing method of listed and unlisted land and cellular telephone numbers was employed, achieving demographics that closely match the region’s population to insure that the survey results were representative of our community (see Figure 2), and designed to ensure participation from people of all ages, races, and socio-economic levels. The full survey findings are available at [livableroanoke.org](http://livableroanoke.org).

### Public Workshops

Public workshops were held in 2012 and 2013 to provide an opportunity for citizens to meaningfully contribute to the work of Livable Roanoke Valley.

- In October 2012, a workshop entitled a “Framework for the Future” was repeated in seven localities over three days to ensure broad access and opportunity to participate so citizens could express their vision and priorities for the future of the Roanoke Valley. Participants viewed, commented, and added suggestions to the Virginia Tech survey findings and had the opportunity to contribute to priorities and goals. Over 150 citizens throughout the region participated in the workshops.
- In October 2013, the “Livable Strategies” Workshop was held in Roanoke City to present the goals and strategies that had been developed by the committees and to provide an opportunity for the public to comment and vote in support of particular strategies using “Roanoke Bucks.” Over 75 citizens participated in the workshop and provided their priorities and comments. This input has been incorporated into the Livable Roanoke Valley Plan.



“Framework for the Future” Workshop, October 2012



“Livable Strategies” Workshop, October 2013



## Websites and Social Media

We utilized two websites to promote public engagement in the process.

- A Livable Roanoke Valley website (livableroanoke.org) was developed and launched by The Regional Commission to publicize information about the planning process, including advance advertisement of all meetings for the Steering Committee, Stakeholder Committee, Focus Area Subcommittees, public workshops, and posting of agendas, meeting minutes, survey data, workbook exercises.
- A second website (ideas.livableroanoke.org) was developed by MindMixer to solicit public input via survey questions and to facilitate discussion among community members about the Livable Roanoke Valley strategies. Acting in a “blog-like” fashion, the site allowed citizens to interact with each other as they commented on the priorities outlined in the Virginia Tech survey findings and other activities of the Livable Roanoke Valley planning project.
- Facebook was used to encourage public discussion and promote attendance at public workshops.

We engaged with the public throughout the planning process to inform the outcome of each phase. The Livable Roanoke Valley Plan is truly a reflection of those who live, work and play in the Roanoke Valley.

## Engagement of Traditionally Marginalized Populations

We made targeted efforts to engage populations that are traditionally marginalized from the public planning process. We held multiple public workshops in all of our partnering



Sample survey from [ideas.livableroanoke.org](https://ideas.livableroanoke.org)

jurisdictions, including rural counties and small towns. In our urban area, every public workshop was held in a location that was accessible by walking, biking, and public transportation. Announcements of all public workshops were sent by the Council of Community Services to non-profit organizations that represent marginalized populations.

## OUR PROCESS

The Livable Roanoke Valley process and the outcomes of our research, workshops, committee work, and public meeting is described in the following chapters:

**Chapter 1 Why We Came Together** describes reasons why the Partnership for a Livable Roanoke Valley was formed, and how we worked together and engaged the public.

**Chapter 2 Where We've Been** includes a brief history of the region, a review of the region's existing strengths and weaknesses, and a summary of more than 40 local and regional plans or initiatives that were inventoried to better understand what has been proposed and what has been accomplished.

**Chapter 3 Where We're Going** identifies the trends, opportunities, and threats for the Roanoke Valley in the areas of housing, transportation, land use, energy and environment, economic and workforce development, and health and education. We explored scenarios of different futures for the Roanoke Valley based on an understanding of key trends in the region and nation.

**Chapter 4 Our Vision for the Valley** captures the values that were expressed in the public workshops and the Virginia Tech telephone survey, defines the vision of the future, and states the principles that will guide our activities.

**Chapter 5 How We'll Get There** outlines the strategies and actions that will be necessary to achieve our vision and goals to increase jobs and the quality of life of our communities, and identifies key organizations that will lead in transforming strategy into action.

**Chapter 6 What We'll Accomplish** identifies our priorities as we move forward to implement the plan and the framework we will establish to track the success of the strategies and progress towards meeting our common goals.

**Chapter 7 A Call to Action** asks our community to join us in realizing our plan for a Livable Roanoke Valley.

# 2 WHERE WE'VE BEEN

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As we came together as a region to articulate a vision for our future, we realized it was important to understand the following:

- **Our Region's History** Our region's history and how we have come to be a collection of communities.
- **Strengths and Weaknesses** It has also been important that we take an objective view of the strengths and the weaknesses of both our attributes and our activities to provide a clear and sound context upon which to envision our future.
- **Regional Plans** Finally, we strived to respect the work that has been done before us and to incorporate the lessons learned from the previous plans that have been developed for our region.

## OUR REGION'S HISTORY

The Native Americans who first settled the fertile lands of what was to become the Roanoke Valley created an agriculture-based society along the Roanoke River. European settlers would follow, venturing into the valley as early as the 17th century. Early communities were established as farmers and tradesman populated the region, beginning with Botetourt County, followed by Franklin County and the Town of Salem (now a City). Roanoke County and Craig County were carved out of portions of Botetourt and Montgomery Counties, and Salem and New Castle became the respective county seats.

The growth and character of the region were shaped by the arrival and expansion of the railroad through the second half of the 19th century. The City of Roanoke was located and grew with the arrival of the Virginia and Tennessee Railroad, the Norfolk and Western Railroad, the Shenandoah Valley Railroad, and ultimately the Norfolk and Western Railway (N&W). Initially a hub for the transport of agricultural products, by the 1880s the N&W railroad began to expand into the coalfields of western Virginia and southern West Virginia and by the end of the century, coal transported through the Roanoke Valley to Norfolk was the primary commodity. The region continued to prosper into the 20th Century as the railroad expanded to employ thousands of workers.

From 1900 to 1940 the region changed dramatically due to changing modes of transportation and the move from farming to manufacturing. Factories that employed thousands of workers were built along the rail lines in the City of Roanoke, Towns of Salem and Vinton, and Roanoke County. Roanoke Municipal Airport was established in 1929 and the construction of the Blue Ridge Parkway began in 1936. The construction of the Virginia section of Interstate 81, from 1964 to 1987, connected the Roanoke Valley to cities and markets across the mid-Atlantic region.

Regional health care systems were introduced in the early 1900s with the opening of the nonprofit Roanoke Hospital (now Carilion Clinic) and the Lewis-Gale Hospital in the City of Roanoke and the Catawba Sanatorium in Roanoke County. President Franklin Roosevelt dedicated the Veterans Administration Hospital in Salem in 1934.



Norfolk and Western Railway advertisement showing the industrial development opportunities in its service area.

The region continued to prosper through the late 19th century with the founding of Virginia Tech in 1872 as an agricultural and mechanical land-grant college. Eventually, more than 25 colleges and universities would be founded within a 60-mile radius of the City of Roanoke, enhancing the cultural and economic status of the region as a research and higher education center.

Agricultural employment continued a slow decline through the 20th century as workers transitioned to manufacturing and to homes in the growing suburbs of Roanoke County. Manufacturing employment grew steadily with the location of large industries, such as General Electric (1955), Allstate Insurance Company (1956), ITT Components Division (1959), and the expansion of Advance Auto Parts (1932).

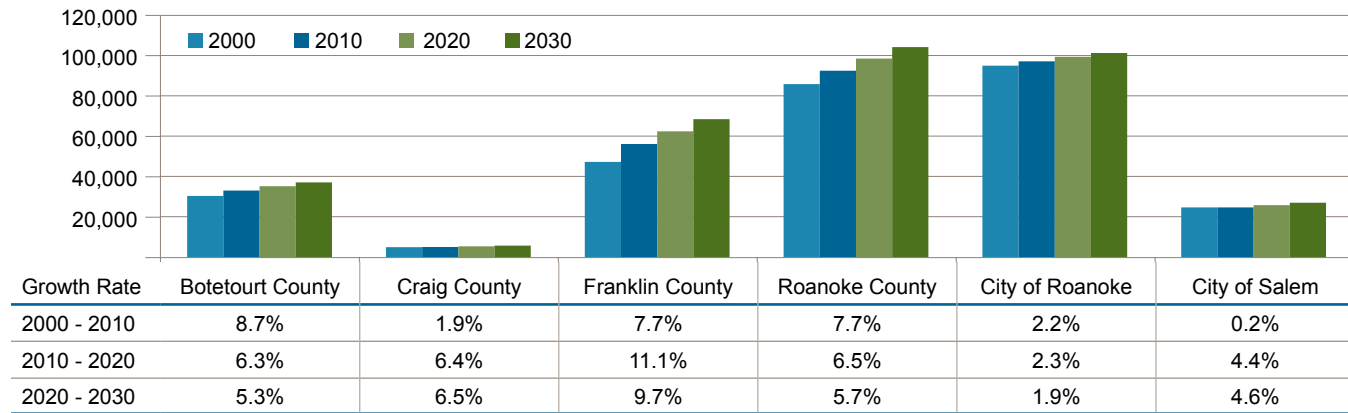
Regional economic progress was disrupted through the 1980s by the merger of N&W Railway with Southern Railway to form Norfolk Southern Corporation and the subsequent relocation of many of its departments and headquarters,

causing the loss of thousands of jobs. The region was further ravaged by the Flood of 1985, which killed ten and caused over \$300 million in damages.

However, during this period the City of Roanoke developed a plan entitled Design79 that inspired the revitalization of its Market District, including the renovation of the City Market Building, formation of Center in the Square, and public improvements to the Historic City Market. Area leaders developed plans for Explore Park, envisioning a historic theme park in Roanoke County as they began to plan for an enhanced tourism economy. Explore Park slowly developed in the 1990s with the construction of a major access road and bridge, as well as the re-location of historic structures to the site. In 1995, the historic Hotel Roanoke was renovated and expanded into a state of the art hotel and conference center.

The 21st century was welcomed by the Roanoke Valley as an opportunity to reinvent itself. There was a new focus on tourism, health care industries, and advanced manufacturing.

**FIGURE 3** Historic and Projected Population



Source: US Census 2000, 2010. Weldon Cooper Demographic Research Group: Population Projections 2020 and 2030

In 2000 the Carilion Biomedical Institute was constructed, in partnership with Virginia Tech and the University of Virginia, as a biomedical science, engineering, and technology research and development organization. This would be the first of several significant partnerships between Carilion and Virginia universities. In 2007, Virginia Tech, the Carilion Clinic, and the Governor of Virginia joined to announce the creation of a public-private partnership in the form of a new medical school and research institute, the Virginia Tech Carilion School of Medicine and Research Institute. Other developments over the past decade include the founding of the Roanoke Higher Education Center (2000), which offers over 200 programs of study through the Center’s 12 partnering universities and colleges; the planning and construction of over 12 miles of the Roanoke River Greenway and over 12 miles of connecting greenways; and the pending arrival of both an intermodal freight rail facility and passenger rail service to the region.

## WHO WE ARE NOW

The Roanoke Metropolitan Statistical Area (MSA) includes over 300,000 people and is the largest metropolitan area in western Virginia. The Roanoke Valley had a moderate increase (7%) in population from 2000-2010, a slower pace compared to the commonwealth, and is projected to have a slight and slow increase to the year 2030. Franklin County has experienced the fastest growth (18.8%) and the amenities driving growth of Smith Mountain Lake are attracting retirees and those nearing retirement. The population in Roanoke City and Salem City are projected to grow more slowly (see Figure 3).

Population growth has been uneven across age groups. Younger cohorts have tended to emigrate due to education, employment, or lifestyle reasons. At the same time, the region attracts retirees and aging-in-place baby boomers because of our natural amenities, lower than average cost of living, and the presence of quality medical services. Our median

age in the MSA is 42 and, with the exception of the City of Roanoke, the median age in each locality is well above those of the commonwealth (37.5) and the United States (37.2).

## STRENGTHS

**Economic** The Roanoke Valley offers access to unique natural beauty and outdoor amenities and it is recognized as an attractive place to live, work, and visit. The region is strategically located in the mid-Atlantic, equidistant from major commerce centers in New York City and Atlanta. It is well-served by interstates and is the hub of extensive rail service provided by Norfolk Southern and CSX. The region is the medical center for Southwest Virginia, with four major hospitals, several smaller hospitals, and thirteen private and public clinics.

**Workforce** The Roanoke Valley’s workforce is broad-ranging, talented, well-trained and large. The region attracts workers within a 60-mile radius for a supply of more than 350,000 people. The talent pool is diverse, offering skills in advanced manufacturing, life sciences, engineers and experienced managers, and is continuously refreshed with highly-skilled graduates of our region’s colleges, universities, and training programs.

**Nonprofits** The 650 nonprofit organizations headquartered in the Roanoke Valley employ 2,563 staff and 1,759 part-time workers, and benefit from the contributions of over 32,000 volunteers. Our nonprofit organizations are working together to resolve community problems, in areas such as homelessness, health, and the environment, and have formed coalitions to act more strategically and use resources more effectively.

**Higher Education** There are 25 colleges and universities within a 60-mile radius of Roanoke. Virginia Tech, an internationally known research university located within 45 minutes

of City of Roanoke, is nationally ranked in research spending and patents received per research dollar. The region also boasts the centrally located Virginia Western Community College that has an enrollment of over 12,000 students.

**Natural Assets** The beauty of our region's mountains are the most cited attribute by citizens and visitors alike. We are blessed with beautiful streams, rivers, local parks, national forests, the Blue Ridge Parkway, the Appalachian Trail, and world class recreational waters in Smith Mountain Lake. We have plentiful and high quality drinking water, with streams and rivers. We also have a strong environmental ethic and awareness of energy issues.

## WEAKNESSES

**Economic** Our rolling topography poses challenges in the assembly of large tracks of land for commercial and industrial development. Our employment rates and population growth are stable but significantly trail other parts of the commonwealth. There are pockets of urban and rural poverty with limited access to services that affect the Roanoke Valley as a whole and contribute to the prevalence of other problems, such as concentrated unemployment and obesity.

**Workforce** Our workforce is negatively impacted by our school dropout rates and areas of urban and rural poverty that frequently lack reliable transportation and access to educational opportunities and jobs. However, recent improvements in educational attainment should help to address this issue in the long-term.

**Health Care** Carilion Roanoke Memorial Hospital's Emergency Services, one of the largest and busiest emergency departments (ED) in Virginia, serves as the region's Level I trauma center and Pediatric Emergency Room. In 2011, the ED had 71,247 patient visits with an estimated rate of 15-20% being an "inappropriate utilization" of services, particularly for the uninsured and Medicaid recipients, who use the ED for minor services that do not require emergency evaluation or treatment.

**Natural Assets** The Roanoke Valley has been affected by degrading air quality due to pollutants from the Ohio Valley. While there has been gradual improvement, we are limited in our ability to eliminate these pollutants. Our region also has more than 127 impaired river and stream segments that contain pollutant levels exceeding water quality standards. Our natural assets are threatened by continued dependence

on greenhouse gas-emitting fossil fuels and a slow transition towards renewable sources.

**Regional Cooperation** Historically, there has been little incentive for local governments to work together to resolve common problems. Recent progress on regional initiatives promise to turn this challenge into a strength for the region. The formation of the Western Virginia Water Authority to manage water resources and wastewater services is an example of a cross-jurisdictional initiative and more recently, the Roanoke Valley Broadband Authority and the Western Virginia Industrial Facilities Authority have been formed.

## OUR REGIONAL PLANS

Livable Roanoke Valley recognizes the significant regional planning that has been undertaken in past decades and is building on the planning foundation it provides. Stakeholders and committee members reviewed 40 plans and reports, ranging from the comprehensive to strategic, to better understand how previous efforts have addressed issues key to livability, such as transportation choice, affordable housing, and healthy communities. The review included 1) the specific plan structure (such as goals, strategies, implementation, and indicators), 2) the extent the plans are aligned with each other, 3) whether they are actively being implemented, 4) gaps in planning, and 5) consistency with initial draft livability principles adapted from the Federal Partnership for Sustainable Communities.

Review of the Roanoke Valley local government comprehensive plans found that plans:

- Acknowledge the need for more transportation options but provide few specific implementation strategies.
- Fail to substantively address affordable housing issues, with the exception of the City of Roanoke.
- Address economic development although not in relation to other Focus Area issues.
- Recognize the need to focus new development in existing developed areas but lack consistent planning strategies.
- Have begun to coordinate the objectives of various programs to achieve broader goals or strategies.
- Placed importance on supporting existing communities and neighborhoods.
- Address educational issues to some level.
- Lack focus on community health and the affect of local government services on health.

# 3 WHERE WE'RE GOING

The Livable Roanoke Valley process provided us a unique opportunity to explore where we are likely going as a region and the internal and external influences and impacts that may shape our future. To that end, we conducted workshops with our stakeholders to explore:

- **Trends** in social, economic, and political areas that have a likelihood of having a significant impact on the future vitality and livability of the region
- **Opportunities and threats** that may shape our future
- **Scenarios** for the future that could be the result of these trends, opportunities, and threats

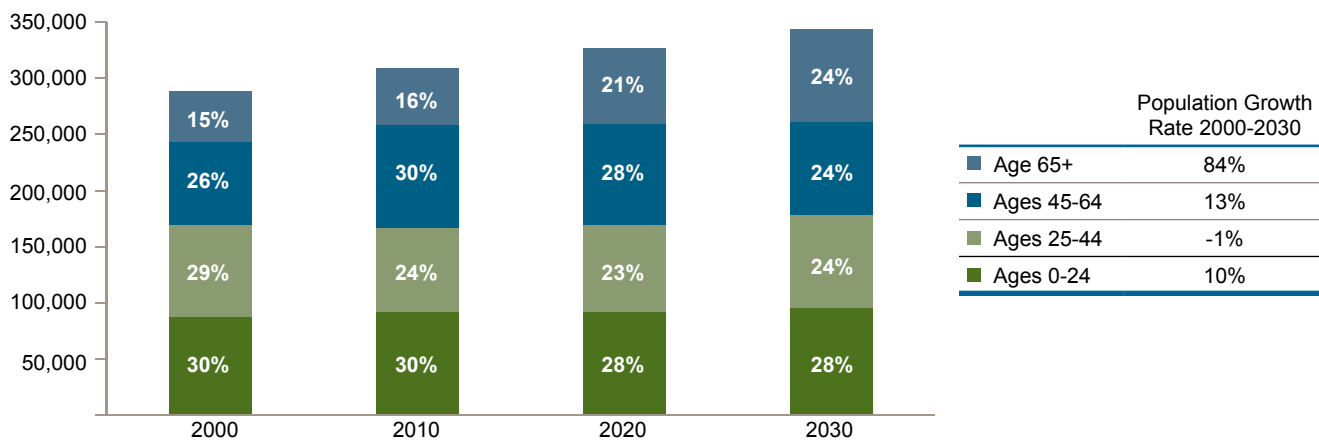
## TRENDS

A trend analysis documented key trends affecting the future of the region. Over a series of work sessions with our stakeholders in June 2012, we identified the following top “driving trends” in the region, which have been used to inform the development of the Livable Roanoke Valley Plan:

 **Increasing aging population and changing demographics**

Our region is faced with a decline in overall population growth rate, from a modest 7.1% in the past decade to 5% over the next two decades, driven primarily by the migration of adults aged 25 to 44 to pursue education, employment or lifestyles elsewhere. At the same time, there is an increasing number of retirees and aging-in-place baby boomers attracted to our

**FIGURE 4** Roanoke Metropolitan Statistical Area Historic and Projected Population by Age Groups



Source: US Census 2000, 2010. Weldon Cooper Demographic Research Group: Population Projections 2020 and 2030

natural amenities, lower than average cost of living and the presence of quality medical services.

### Decreasing commonwealth and federal funding

An outcome of the 2008 national recession was decreasing tax revenue that impacted federal and commonwealth program funding. This is particularly significant for the Commonwealth of Virginia, as 30% of the economy relies on federal funds. Nearly half of our region's employment sectors, including local, commonwealth, and federal government, healthcare and social assistance, and educational services are directly supported by government funds.

### Increasing need for regional infrastructure investment

Both reduced tax revenues and increased capital expenditure for maintenance of existing infrastructure are restricting local government investment in new infrastructure. Joint investments to share costs in cross-jurisdictional infrastructure (roads, water, wastewater, stormwater, natural gas, greenways, and broadband) or share benefits (industrial facilities, intermodal freight facilities, waste management, and airports) have emerged as alternative funding mechanisms of local governments. Localities in Roanoke Valley are forming regional authorities to fund broadband infrastructure and industrial facilities.

### Continued challenges for employment

Over the past decade, the Roanoke Valley has had a net loss of 3,581 jobs primarily in the information technology, manufacturing, mining, and real estate sectors. Growth has occurred in health care, agriculture, administrative support and education sectors. Employment offering a livable wage in the region will remain a challenge due to a lack of manufacturing and other high paying jobs and/or a lack of required skills to perform the higher paying jobs available in the health-related industry.

### Increasing need for technically skilled workforce

Skilled health care, education, and manufacturing workers will need to be replaced as significant percentages of workers from these industries retire within the next ten to fifteen years. In particular, the retirement of 24% of the manufacturing

workforce over the next 10 years will further compound the challenge to fill skilled labor positions in complex automation and other advanced manufacturing systems.

### Increasingly rapid changes in technology

The accelerating rate of technological progress, the computation speed of information systems, and smart technology will continue to have significant impacts across all sectors. Remote access to health care and education, integrated industries, new competitors and the further disruption of industries will lead to new business models. Governments will increasingly become involved in technology, investing in a broad range of applications — from home-grown innovation incubators, local manufacturing sites that create jobs, and broadband systems to serve new industry.

### Increasing need for health care

An aging population is a primary driver of the increasing need for health care. The Roanoke Valley has a median age of 42 and 16% of the population is 65 years of age or older, above the average found in the commonwealth or the country. Obesity is also a factor affecting the need for health care in the region. Data from the Centers for Disease Control show that 28% of residents 20 years of age and older are obese in the Roanoke MSA.

### Increasing need for healthcare workforce

There are too few medical providers in the Roanoke MSA. Craig County and Franklin County are designated Medically Underserved Areas (MUA) as are portions of Northern Botetourt County. In the City of Roanoke, eight census tracts are designated MUA's. Health Professional Shortage Areas (HPSA) are present in the portions of the Roanoke MSA for Primary Care, Dental, and Mental Health providers.

### Increasing need for educated workforce

Sixty-five percent of all American employment now requires specific skills and it is projected that 75% of the workforce will need to be retrained merely to retain current jobs. The Bureau of Labor Statistics forecasts that 71% of job growth in 2016 will require post-secondary credentials. This need will be compounded as forty-six million college-educated

baby boomers continue to retire over the next twenty years. Yet today's employers estimate that 39% of their current workforce and 26% of their new hires have basic skills deficiencies. Although almost 86% of the Roanoke Valley's population have a high school diploma or greater, the number of residents who continue their education is far less than the commonwealth percentage, indicating the need for additional training after high school.



### Increasing energy costs

The price of oil has fluctuated throughout the 20th century, with occasional spikes of high or low cost. Over the last decade the price has been more volatile and has gradually risen since an historic low in 2009. Many industry experts believe that increasing prices will continue in the long-term due to declining oil supplies and the increasing cost of extraction and refinement. The inflation-adjusted price for electricity is also projected to continue to rise into the future.



### Increasing importance of energy efficiency

Reduction in energy use through energy efficiency efforts is growing as energy efficiency measures have become more commonplace in building codes, industry, and government. The Roanoke Valley is seen as a leader in energy efficiency and sustainability efforts within the Commonwealth of Virginia.



### Increasing affordability of renewable energy systems

Renewable energy sources will become increasingly viable as the costs of utility-scale renewable energy projects continue to decline. Bloomberg New Energy Finance has projected global annual investment in renewable energy will increase from 250% to 450% by 2030, leading to an energy mix of 69-74% renewable new power capacity worldwide.



### Increasing value of the natural environment and scenic beauty

Residents of the Roanoke Valley have become increasingly aware of the value of the area's natural and scenic beauty and have looked more strongly at the potential of a tourism economy as the area has lost jobs in the transportation and manufacturing sectors. The focus on outdoor-based tourism means that the natural assets of the region must be protected, enhanced, and better understood.

## OPPORTUNITIES

**Economics** Strengthening our ties to the higher education community will allow us to retain in-demand talents such as biomedical research, life sciences, and healthcare in the region, as well as to support entrepreneurship. Branding our region as "Virginia's Blue Ridge" will enhance our efforts to promote tourism, sports tournaments, and conferences. The proposed intermodal freight facility in Elliston will connect industries from the Midwest to international markets along the Heartland Corridor, which passes through the Roanoke Valley. Passenger rail services will be re-established soon connecting Roanoke to the Amtrak network and improving travel options for professionals and tourists.

**Workforce** There are 25 colleges and universities within a 60-mile radius of the City of Roanoke, with more than 100,000 students, providing tremendous opportunity to draw new talent and innovation into our communities. The Commonwealth is expanding workforce training and promoting regional collaboration in the area of career and technical education programs.

**Higher Education** Our numerous institutions of higher education provide great opportunity to pursue education. They are also a unique community asset because they work across jurisdictions to address the academic, career, and technical needs in the region. The Higher Education Center in Roanoke represents a model of providing innovative and customized education options that will benefit our citizens and employers.

**Natural Assets** Our region can create new opportunities through the preservation of high-priority scenic and rural land. We have promising resources to support solar, small wind, geothermal, and biofuel renewable energy systems. There is growing support to pursue mitigation banks as a means to offset the impacts of land development.

## THREATS

**Economic** There is a strong perception that a "resistance to change" and a lack of business and political leadership to address tough issues has prevented the region from taking forward-thinking actions and investments to promote a vibrant future. Population shifts have created a decline of commonwealth-wide legislative influence from Southwest Virginia and the Roanoke Valley. The migration of young people from the region and our growing percentage of senior citizens also challenge economic vibrancy.



**Workforce** Over 20% of healthcare, manufacturing, and education workforce in the region will retire by 2020. At the same time, the percentage of working age adults is projected to decline. Our region will be faced with replacing more than 4,000 employees in the manufacturing sector.

**Healthcare** The high median age of the region’s population and the rapid growth of the 65 and older age group are driving the projected increase in the demand for health care. At the same time, a small but growing population in Franklin County and the City of Roanoke cannot access health care due to the costs

**Natural Assets** Sprawling land development and loss of agricultural land may be one the of largest threats to the region’s natural environment, particularly in high-priority scenic areas and adjacent to the region’s streams and rivers. Increasing pollution from worsening traffic congestion, especially along Interstate 81, also threaten the assets of the region.

of what the Roanoke Valley might face (see Figure 5). The scenarios were based on the information collected during our exploration of “why we came together,” “where we’ve been,” and “where we are going” and the greater understanding of the issues that were achieved as we worked with the stakeholders and the public.

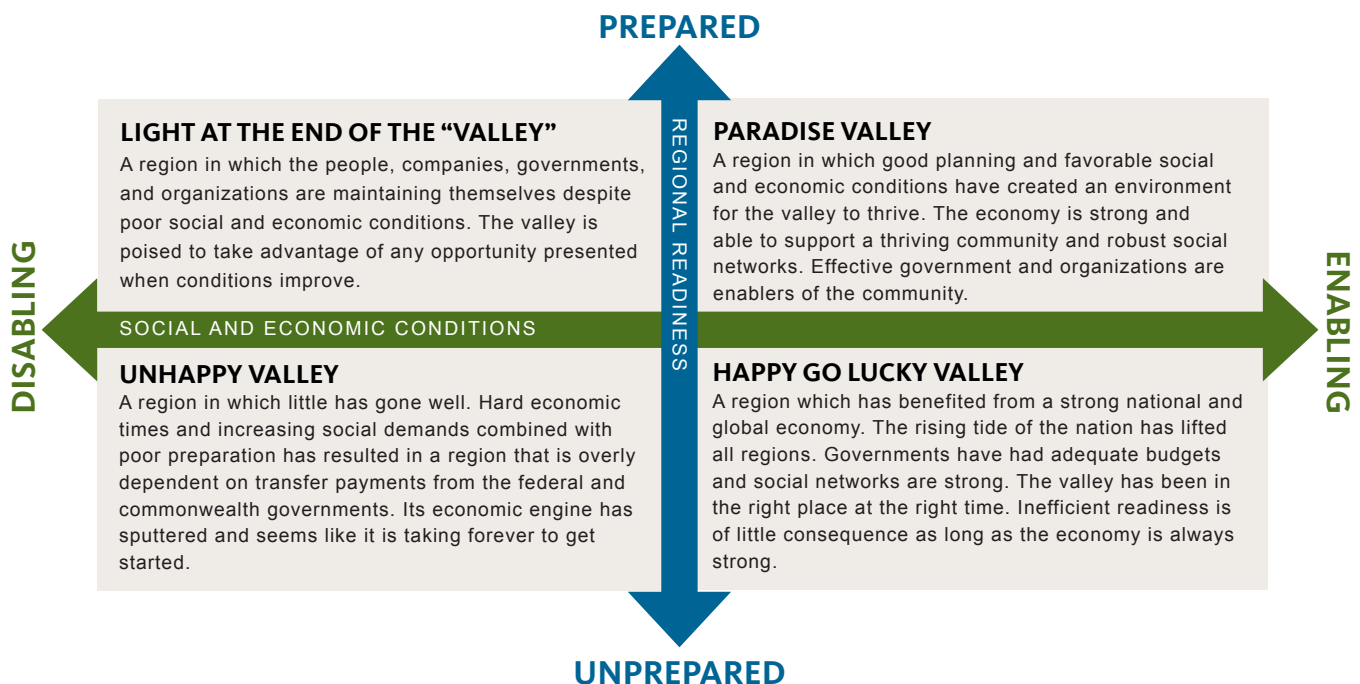
In developing the scenarios, the following key drivers to shape the future of the Roanoke Valley were identified:

- **Social and Economic Conditions** are a combination of external factors such as demographics, state and federal funding, changes in technology, energy costs, and renewable energy systems. Our region cannot control many of these issues; therefore it must be prepared for both enabling and disabling social and economic conditions.
- **Regional Readiness** relates to the ability of our region to take advantage of enabling social and economic conditions or be prepared for disabling conditions.

## SCENARIOS OF OUR FUTURE

Livable Roanoke Valley utilized the process of scenario planning as a means to gain a deeper understanding of the risks facing the region and to identify key opportunities and forces that will shape the valley. During a Scenario Development Workshop over 30 participants created four “future scenarios”

Figure 5 describes four future scenarios the region might experience. The Livable Roanoke Valley Steering Committee believes that our region is currently somewhere between “Light at the End of the Valley” and “Happy Go Lucky Valley.” The Scenarios were used as tools to help our stakeholders consider how best plan to thrive in any future that might occur.



**FIGURE 5** Quadrants Describing Four Scenarios of the Future

# 4 OUR VISION FOR THE VALLEY

The success of any community-based plan is tied to its ability to inspire action towards the accomplishment of its goals. With that in mind, we developed a framework for the Livable Roanoke Valley process to help ensure that we captured the values and priorities of our communities and that they clearly inform the elements of the plan. The framework addresses:

- **Our Vision** – a well articulated statement that outlines what our citizens want our community to be in the future.
- **Our Values** – our understanding of the beliefs and priorities that are shared among our citizens.
- **Our Guiding Principles** – statements that reflect public values and inform future efforts.
- **Our Goals** – statements of what we intend to accomplish to meet the public's priorities and needs.

The development of a vision, principles and goals is just the beginning of a long-term process to maintain and improve the livability of the Roanoke Valley. In the following chapters we present the strategies and actions to achieve our vision and goals, as well as the means to track our progress.

## OUR VISION FOR THE FUTURE

We are living the dream. Beautiful mountains. Clean rivers and streams. People who care. The Roanoke Valley is filled with promise. To make the most of these opportunities, we will work to provide quality education, access to healthcare, work and career opportunities, responsible stewardship of the environment, and greater regional cooperation. As we strive to fulfill our promises, we will be the destination for individuals, families and businesses who share our same dream.

## OUR VALUES

The Virginia Tech survey was highly informative in establishing our community values and priorities. The full results of the survey can be found at <http://livableroanoke.org>. The survey found that:

- Nine out of 10 surveyed (92%) said economic development, job creation and keeping jobs in the area was a top priority
- 85% said clean air and water was a top priority
- 77% said that preventive health care and lowering health care costs was a priority
- 76% said that educational options and academic performance was a priority
- 75% said that fire + police services was a priority
- 68% said that energy efficiency + local energy sources was a priority
- 51% said that affordable + accessible housing was a priority
- 47% said that transportation options + efficiency was a priority
- 39% said that developing a sense of community was a priority
- 25% said that land development in existing communities was a priority
- 23% said that local arts + culture was a priority

The survey findings (see summary in Figure 6), reinforced through the public meetings and in web-based dialogue, are at the core of the Livable Roanoke Valley Plan's four focus areas:

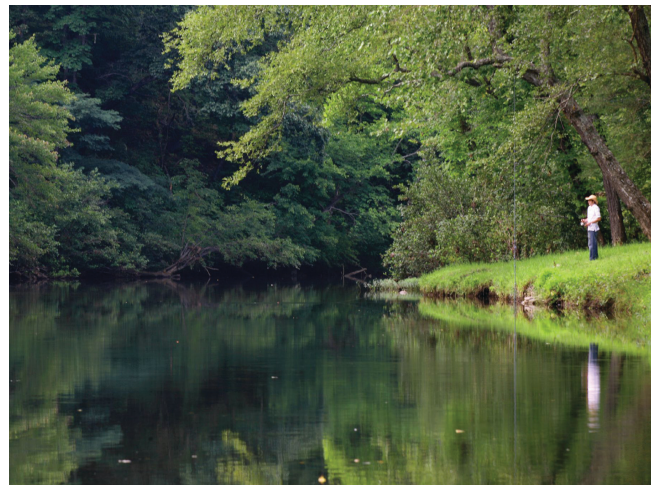
- **ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT**
- **WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT**
- **HEALTHY ROANOKE VALLEY**
- **NATURAL ASSETS**

The respondents were also asked to answer two open-ended questions regarding what they like best about living in the region and our greatest challenges. They said that the mountains and scenery were what they like best and overwhelmingly stated that jobs and the economy were the greatest challenges.



Source: The Regional Commission

Olde Salem Days arts and crafts festival in Salem, VA



Source: Flickr User ShowPaul

Craig Creek in Botetourt County

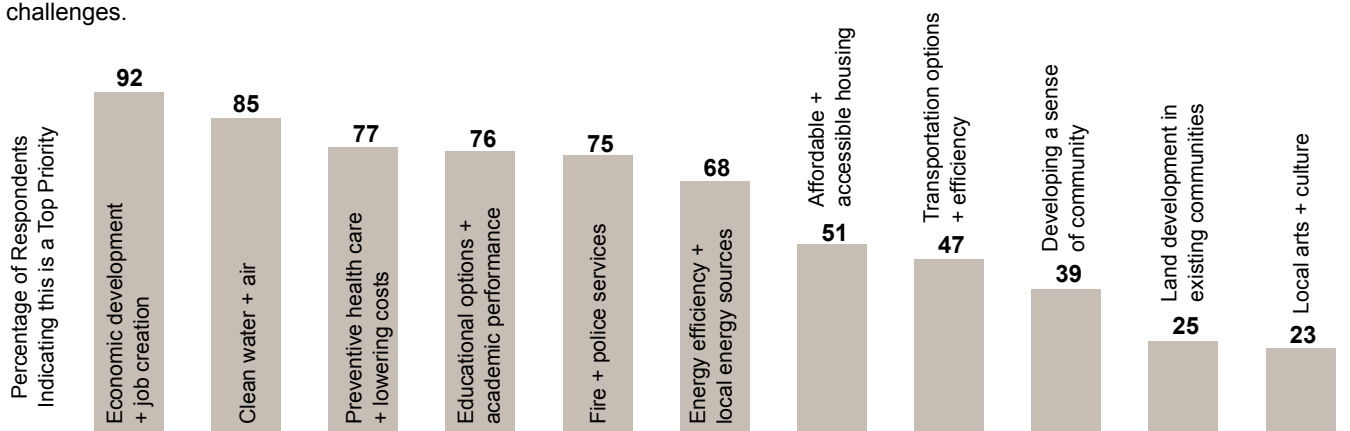


FIGURE 6 Virginia Tech Telephone Survey (2012) - Percent of Respondents Identifying These Priority Areas as a Top Priority

## LIVABILITY GUIDING PRINCIPLES

Based on the input from stakeholders, the Virginia Tech Survey, public workshops, and guidance from the Steering and Stakeholder Committees, the following livability guiding principles were crafted to capture our citizen's values and priorities. The livability principles are statements that are open to localized and regionally scaled approaches through collaborative problem solving.

### Protect the beauty and ecology of the Roanoke Valley.

**Description** The principle reflects the pride, appreciation and identification the locals have for the surrounding natural environment, encompassing both the scenic value and the ecological values that have been expressed. The use of *beauty* is intended to make a stronger statement of the quality of the natural environment beyond *scenic*. *Protect* supports the strong survey finding that residents value clean water and air. The principle expresses a strong commitment to ensure that policies and activities undertaken by Roanoke Valley leaders will have the necessary measures to protect the valuable resources of the surrounding natural environment.

### Provide a healthy and equitable quality of life for all of our citizens.

**Description** The principle is phrased at a high-level to encompass a broad array of community quality, health, and equity issues. It supports the survey findings for *promoting equitable, affordable housing, accessible transportation choices, strengthening educational options and providing preventative health care and lower health care costs*. Economic diversity is included at our community table. The principle is an affirmative statement that all are welcome and included at our community table and that we are committed to promoting equitable and accessible services to enhance the quality of life in the Roanoke Valley.

### Celebrate the diversity of our region and its contribution to our culture.

**Description** The principle places emphasis on *celebrate* to reflect community pride in local arts and culture and to welcome an expression of diversity. It supports the survey findings that there is desire for *bringing people together for a sense of community*. The principle is a value statement about respect and admiration for the multitude of cultures and an expression that those cultures are an asset to the Roanoke Valley.

### Embrace both our traditions and new innovations to create economic vitality.

**Description** The principle supports the survey findings for *economic development, job creation and keeping local jobs*. *Embrace* is used to suggest that there is room for many at the economic development table. *Traditions* is used to reflect the regional and local identity and pride and to convey reassurance to our citizens that they matter as we work as a region to attract and inspire entrepreneurs for new economic development. The principle inspires economic development that is progressive and future thinking while also very mindful of the context and sense of place of the Roanoke Valley. Future actions will aim to retain our existing resources as we work to attract new resources.

### Anticipate and adapt to change with responsible leadership.

**Description** The principle begins with *anticipate* to signal forward thinking, intentionality, and responsibility to distinguish from being reactive to change. This statement seeks to acknowledge the dynamic political, environmental and culture changes that the communities are likely to face without addressing polarizing specifics. It supports the survey findings that there is a need for *bringing people together for a sense of community*. The principle is a statement in support of leadership that is accountable, transparent, and forward looking - and is committed to measuring the progress and adapting to the challenges facing the Roanoke Valley.

### Build on the assets of our local communities to strengthen our regional collaboration.

**Description** The principle honors and recognizes the communities as an *asset* and highlights that regionalism does not necessarily mean centralized solutions. It supports survey findings about *bringing people together for a sense of community*. It also can address the survey request for *efficient and reliable fire and police services* that is regionalized for efficiency while servicing local communities.

### Invest in regional infrastructure improvements that meet the communities' needs of the 21st century.

**Description** The principle supports findings that indicate a desire to *provide more transportation choices*. *Invest* reflects a commitment to maintaining and expanding infrastructural needs. *Communities* is included to address the threat of centralized infrastructural solutions that ignore or are disrupt-

tive at the local level. *Needs of the 21st Century* is intended to allow essential flexibility to adapt to future infrastructural needs that will make the region attractive to different types of businesses of the future. It also supports survey findings that encourage energy efficiency and local energy sources infrastructure. The principle is a statement of commitment to the leadership required to provide infrastructure to service needs and desires of the communities and responsibly plan for the future.

### Promote excellence in education, job training, and a culture of lifelong learning.

**Description** The principle supports the findings that show strong support for education and training, specifically a *high graduation rate* and *job training programs*. *Lifelong learning* represents the understanding that education is important at all times of our lives, but particularly as we adjust to the changing needs of employers and the broader economy. The principle is a statement that reinforces the foundational aspect of education to a good quality of life and a thriving economy. It affirms that a culture of lifelong learning empowers citizens to anticipate and adapt to change.

## GOALS TO ACHIEVE OUR VISION

The following livability goals were developed by the stakeholders to directly reflect the public's priorities and the involvement of key representatives from government, the private sector, and nonprofit organizations. The goals are forward looking and seek to leverage our region's key strengths and opportunities, while addressing our largest threats. They establish the framework for strategies and actions to achieve our vision for the future.

### ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

Create jobs, increase incomes and grow businesses to improve the quality of life for all residents of the Roanoke Region.

### WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT

Provide access to job training and educational advancement by fostering a culture of lifelong learning for people of all ages and abilities.

### HEALTHY ROANOKE VALLEY

Mobilize community resources to improve access to care, coordination of services, and promote a culture of wellness.

### NATURAL ASSETS

Work collaboratively to preserve and enhance the historic, cultural, and natural assets of the region.

The strategies and actions that will be necessary to achieve our vision and our goals are outlined in the following chapter.

Source: Barton Malow Company



The Center for Science and Health Professions on the campus of Virginia Western Community College in Roanoke, Virginia.

# 5 HOW WE'LL GET THERE

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Our vision and goals provided the framework for our stakeholders to develop the following strategies and actions to realize our ambitions. They reflect our values, the deeper understanding of the region we have acquired through our analysis of “where we are,” and our consideration of the local and national trends in “where we’re going” that are likely to shape our future.

- **Our strategies** are an aligned group of intentional choices for how we will achieve our goals.
- **Our actions** are the well-defined means by which we will “get there.” They are well-integrated and provide co-benefits across the four core goals.

The implementation of the Livable Roanoke Valley Plan will take a long-term commitment from a variety of organizations from the public, private, and nonprofit sectors. We have identified the agencies that have agreed to lead and champion each action and the potential partners they will enlist for the implementation of each action. The lead agencies have agreed to be accountable to the region for the accomplishment of the assigned action.

## ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

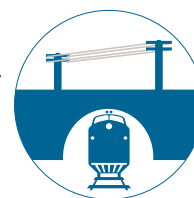
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**GOAL** Create jobs, increase incomes and grow businesses to improve the quality of life for all residents of the Roanoke Region.

### STRATEGY A

#### Invest in regional infrastructure

We will make strategic public/private investments in regional infrastructure that provide competitive advantages for businesses and institutions. Regional infrastructure investment decisions will be made to obtain the greatest public benefit. See the Economic Development Case Study (page 19) to learn how other Virginia communities are incentivizing development that improves quality of life.



#### Action A.1 Provide large, market-ready industrial sites and buildings.

Increase the Roanoke Valley’s competitive advantage in industrial and manufacturing recruitment by creating larger (>100 acre), market-ready sites and buildings. In demand are modern manufacturing facilities (30’ ceilings, 100,000-300,000 sq. ft., under 10 years old) and office/business sites that are easily accessible, have adequate parking, are within a campus environment, and are close to amenities. The local governments have agreed to form the Western Virginia

## CASE STUDY: ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

*This is a synopsis of the economic development case study prepared for the Partnership for a Livable Roanoke Valley. The full case study can be found at <http://livableroanoke.org>.*

### Columbia Pike Initiative, Arlington, Virginia

The Columbia Pike Initiative (CPI) was created in 1998 to incentivize redevelopment and improve the quality of life along a three and a half mile long corridor of declining commercial strip development. Since the release of the CPI Form Based Code (FBC) for mixed use development in 2003, developers have added nearly 200,000 square feet of commercial space containing nearly 1,200 residential units. The initiative has also yielded public infrastructure and streetscape benefits as utilities are being relocated underground, transit improvements are underway and new and wider pedestrian-friendly sidewalks are being built. Key actions to incentivize development include:

- Creation of a comprehensive and predictable development framework called the Form Based Code (FBC) that clearly defines design requirements and a transparent design review process based on already-designated locations and properties. Developed in partnership with community, business and government partners, the FBC enables developers to generate pro forma documents that are already informed by the knowledge of uses and building types that will be in adjacent locations. Investments in streetscape and pedestrian mobility are generated through compliance with the FBC.
- Establishment of housing density bonuses for development projects promotes investments in affordable housing by providing new units, renovating existing units, converting housing to affordable units or rehabilitating historic housing. A height bonus is also available in some designated neighborhoods if a developer exceeds affordable housing provision goals.
- Promotion of improved, affordable mobility for workforce, businesses and residents has been explored as a key component of a revitalized Columbia Pike with an enhanced quality of life. County leadership has helped secure funds from the County Vehicle Decal fee, federal grants and state revenue-sharing matching to support transit improvement studies and streetscape enhancements.

### Albemarle County, Virginia

Albemarle County has faced the challenges of balancing economic development and the maintenance of its rural beauty, healthy environment, and quality of life. In 2010 the County Board adopted a three-year economic vitality action plan that identified ways to promote the growth of target businesses within designated growth zones and reduce complexity of approval processes through the following incentives:



- The county created an Office of Economic Development (with annual budget of approximately \$160,000 for director and staff) that will take a more active role in identifying potential sites for target businesses seeking to locate or expand in the county. The economic development team has also created a web-based map of available, commercial and industrial-zoned properties, including basic property information such as utilities, topography and tax map boundary.
- A "fast track review" process has been approved by the County Board which enables businesses from targeted industries seeking land use designation changes or special use permits to qualify for high priority, fast track review processes. The county is continuing to adjust its approval process to promote efficiency.
- The Albemarle Business First Visitation Program connects prospective business visitors with information and needed resources. Once a business initiates project development, a Community Development manager from the county is assigned as a single point-of-contact liaison to ensure that the project moves efficiently through site plan review and permitting.

The 2013 draft County Comprehensive Plan notes the county will consider proactively rezoning property to align with desired business uses.

Industrial Facilities Authority to identify and create 100-plus acre industrial parks to attract larger business.

- **Lead Agency** Western Virginia Regional Industrial Facilities Authority
- **Potential Partners** Roanoke Regional Partnership, Local Governments, Western Virginia Water Authority, Roanoke Gas Company, Appalachian Power Company

#### **Action A.2 Redevelop small industrial sites.**

Support the redevelopment of smaller (<100 acres), existing industrial, warehouse, or office sites within the region. Our focus will be on meeting the needs of smaller businesses and industry that are more likely to utilize these sites. This not only leverages a currently abundant resource, but also supports the value of protecting rural and scenic land.

- **Lead Agency** Western Virginia Regional Industrial Facilities Authority
- **Potential Partners** Roanoke Regional Partnership, Local Governments, The Regional Commission, Western Virginia Water Authority, Roanoke Gas Company, Appalachian Power Company, Roanoke Valley Broadband Authority

#### **Action A.3 Provide high-speed broadband.**

Recognize broadband as critical infrastructure and provide access to high-speed broadband for schools, industrial parks, large employers and other economic centers. A Regional Broadband Authority, to include Botetourt and Roanoke County, as well as the Cities of Roanoke and Salem, has been formed to address this issue.

- **Lead Agency** Roanoke Valley Broadband Authority
- **Potential Partners** The Regional Commission, Botetourt County, Roanoke County, City of Roanoke, City of Salem, The Center for Innovative Technology, Western Virginia Water Authority

#### **Action A.4 Improve the mobility for freight, travelers, and the workforce.**

Improve transportation mobility by reducing interstate highway congestion, expanding public transportation and the greenway network, providing intermodal freight rail facilities, intermodal passenger facilities, and making air service more reliable and affordable.

- **Lead Agency** Roanoke Valley Area Metropolitan Planning Organization
- **Potential Partners** The Regional Commission, The Greater Roanoke Transit Company, Roanoke Area Dial-a-Ride, Local Governments, Roanoke Blacksburg Regional Airport, Roanoke Regional Partnership, Virginia Department of Transportation, Virginia Department of Rail and Public Transportation

## **STRATEGY B**

### **Innovate through higher education**

We will create an environment and culture in the Roanoke Valley that promotes innovation and supports entrepreneurs. We will actively pursue partnerships with local universities and colleges to create new business opportunities and a strong workforce in the region.



#### **Action B.1 Host a regional internship fair.**

The area's colleges and universities should regularly co-host a regional internship fair to educate students regarding employment opportunities and the quality of life of the region.

- **Lead Agency** Career Premiere
- **Potential Partners** Roanoke College, Ferrum College, Hollins University, Virginia Western Community College, Jefferson College of Health Sciences, Radford University, Virginia Tech, Chambers of Commerce

#### **Action B.2 Bring alumni back to the region.**

Develop a marketing strategy to encourage alumni of our region's colleges and universities to return to the area to visit, live, or start a business. This should be a coordinated effort between career services, alumni offices, and the business community.

- **Lead Agency** Roanoke Blacksburg Technology Council
- **Potential Partners** Virginia Tech, Roanoke College, Ferrum College, Hollins University, Virginia Western Community College, Jefferson College of Health Sciences, Radford University, Roanoke Valley Convention and Visitors Bureau

#### **Action B.3 Create an online academic clearinghouse.**

Create an online clearinghouse for service requests, for research projects, for communication, and for the creation of programs and alliances that may not already exist.

- **Lead Agency** Roanoke Higher Education Center
- **Potential Partners** Roanoke College, Ferrum College, Hollins University, Virginia Western Community College, Jefferson College of Health Sciences, Radford University, Virginia Tech



## STRATEGY C

### Cultivate and market outdoor and cultural amenities

We will make the Roanoke Valley the most desirable place in Virginia to live, work, and play. We will actively market our outdoor brand and invest in and maintain our quality of life assets, as they can be a catalyst for broader economic development. Our unique outdoor and cultural assets will attract a talent stream for existing industries and will encourage entrepreneurs to relocate their businesses here or create new businesses.



#### Action C.1 Enhance sports tournaments infrastructure.

Protect and enhance our region's position as a sports tournament destination by maintaining and expanding our inventory of premier athletic facilities.

- **Lead Agency** Roanoke Valley Convention and Visitors Bureau
- **Potential Partners** Local Governments, Virginia Amateur Sports, Roanoke Regional Partnership, Virginia High School League

#### Action C.2 Package and sell current outdoor amenities.

Package our current outdoor adventures in order to help visitors plan and purchase their experience and provide improved signage and wayfinding to all outdoor amenities. Support the development and maintenance of greenway, blueway, trail, and park resources, the critical infrastructure of our outdoor marketing. Consider an app and/or an Outdoors "Concierge Service" that would work with people to custom design their experience. This app would also include concerts, night life and other urban activities.

- **Lead Agency** Roanoke Valley Convention and Visitors Bureau
- **Potential Partners** Roanoke Regional Partnership, Local Governments, Chambers of Commerce, Virginia Tourism Corporation, Roanoke Valley Greenway Commission

#### Action C.3 Create outdoor ambassadors.

Create outdoor ambassadors of our citizens through an internal marketing campaign to encourage familiarity, knowledge, and excitement about our offerings. Our citizen's familiarity, knowledge and stewardship of our offerings will go a

long way towards creating the hospitality and positive vibe that attracts the businesses and professionals who will want to make the Roanoke Valley their home.

- **Lead Agency** Roanoke Regional Partnership
- **Potential Partners** Roanoke Valley Convention and Visitors Bureau, Virginia Amateur Sports, Local Governments' Departments of Parks and Recreation, Virginia's Blue Ridge Hospitality Association

#### Action C.4 Create a premier outdoor adventure destination.

Create a premier outdoor adventure destination that features our water sports, bicycle, and trail offerings.

- **Lead Agency** Roanoke County (Explore Park)
- **Potential Partners** Roanoke Regional Partnership, Roanoke Valley Convention and Visitors Bureau, The Regional Commission, Local Governments, Roanoke Valley Greenway Commission

#### Action C.5 Provide more unique accommodations.

Work with private and public interests to increase the supply of campgrounds, cabins, and unique accommodations in the region to meet the demand for quality campgrounds, cabin rentals, and other unique lodging options, particularly as we continue to attract outdoor enthusiasts to our area.

- **Lead Agency** Roanoke Valley Convention and Visitors Bureau
- **Potential Partners** Bed and Breakfast Association of Virginia, Virginia Hospitality and Travel Association, Virginia Campground Association, Virginia Tourism Corporation

#### Action C.6 Advance arts and culture.

Advance arts and culture as a significant contributor to the growth of the region and an essential element to economic development and quality of life.

- **Lead Agency** Roanoke Valley Convention and Visitors Bureau
- **Potential Partners** Roanoke Arts Commission, Hollins University, Taubman Museum of Art, Roanoke Symphony Orchestra, The Crooked Road, Salem Fine Arts Commission, Local Governments

## WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT

**GOAL** Provide access to job training and educational advancement by fostering a culture of lifelong learning for people of all ages and abilities.

### STRATEGY D

#### Align workforce and economic development investments

We will work to align workforce investments with the needs of existing and emerging industries in the Roanoke Valley. We will coordinate workforce and economic development programs and investments in order to maximize employment opportunities in the region. See the Workforce Development Case Study (page 23) to learn about Washington State's successes and lessons learned from integrating workforce and economic development.



#### Action D.1 Form a regional workforce and economic development network.

Form a Regional Workforce and Economic Development Network to increase interaction with a focus on education, training, data collection and sharing.

- **Lead Agency** The Regional Commission
- **Potential Partners** Roanoke Regional Partnership, Western Virginia Workforce Investment Board, Virginia Western Community College, Chambers of Commerce, United Way of the Roanoke Valley, Roanoke Higher Education Center, Virginia Employment Commission

#### Action D.2 Develop and maintain a data exchange.

Maintain a robust data exchange environment to provide citizens with access to information on existing and future jobs in the region.

- **Lead Agency** Workforce/Economic Development Network
- **Potential Partners** Western Virginia Workforce Investment Board, The Regional Commission, Roanoke Regional Partnership, Council of Community Services, Virginia Employment Commission

#### Action D.3 Create industry sector partnerships.

Create industry sector partnerships among employers, educational institutions, training and workforce providers, and economic development organizations to develop expertise in the area of industry focus, coordinate resources, and implement responses.

- **Lead Agency** Workforce/Economic Development Network
- **Potential Partners** The Regional Commission, Roanoke Regional Partnership, Western Virginia Workforce Investment Board, Virginia Western Community College, Chambers of Commerce, United Way of the Roanoke Valley, Roanoke Higher Education Center, Private Sector, Virginia Employment Commission

#### Action D.4 Create relevant career pathways.

Create workforce development career pathways to meet the evolving needs of industry.

- **Lead Agency** Workforce/Economic Development Network
- **Potential Partners** Roanoke Higher Education Center, Roanoke College, Ferrum College, Hollins University, Virginia Western Community College, Radford University, Virginia Employment Commission

#### Action D.5 Track outcomes of network and partnerships.

Develop and track desired outcomes and results of network and industry sector partnerships.

- **Lead Agency** Workforce/Economic Development Network
- **Potential Partners** Western Virginia Workforce Investment Board, The Regional Commission, Roanoke Regional Partnership, Council of Community Services, Virginia Employment Commission

## CASE STUDY: WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT

*This is a synopsis of the workforce development case study prepared for the Partnership for a Livable Roanoke Valley. The full case study can be found at <http://livableroanoke.org>.*

### Washington State Industry Skills Panels

The Washington State Industry Skills Panels were established by the Washington State Workforce Training and Education Coordinating Board. Through the Panels, the Board, created in 1993, has convened business, labor and educational institutions at one common table to advise the governor and the legislature regarding prioritization of investments in workforce development.

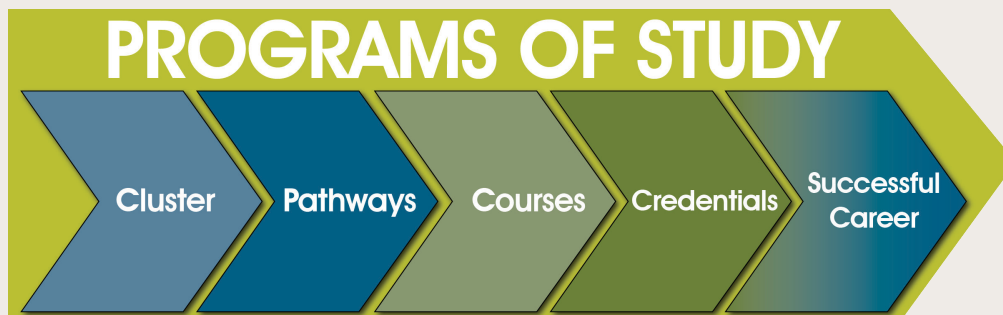
Panels in each region of the state have been established with a focus on key industries, including health care, construction, information technology, manufacturing, marine and industrial safety training, game software development, energy and electronics. Each panel includes approximately 15-20 participants from businesses within the same industry cluster and region as well as community colleges, implementing activities that create integrated solutions to close industry skill gaps.

The panels have enhanced access to job training and educational advancement through integrated programs with local industry and schools. Panel activities have included:

- Identifying and developing skill standards
- Creating certificate programs
- Advising community college center of excellence
- Strengthening career pathways through education and licensure
- Leveraging funds

Although the model presented in this case study was initiated at the state level, it provides examples of how regional Industry Skills Panels composed of industry and workforce development providers are working together to produce a more qualified workforce. The Washington Industry Skills Panels provide numerous outcomes and lessons-learned that may be relevant to the Roanoke Valley's efforts, including:

- Including representatives from industry, labor and education in the process can promote comprehensive solutions.
- Engagement with employers is a key to understanding workforce needs.
- Financially sustainable initiatives have the flexibility to respond to local need through formation of unique education and industry partnerships.
- Efficient decision-making requires engagement with key decision-makers.
- Both a longer-term view and shorter-term flexibility is required to fill employment gaps.
- Focus on specific industries enables greater understanding of barriers and opportunities.
- Numerous workforce development needs may be met through better use of existing education and training institutions.
- Community colleges have resources and leadership skills of value to the panels.
- In-kind support is a valuable contribution to workforce development.
- Monitoring and evaluating progress and outcomes can be challenging.
- Listing of products and services provided can raise awareness of a panel's value.



## STRATEGY E

### Prepare students for careers in high-demand fields

We will explore the development of a regional career and technical education (CTE) program, including science, technology, engineering, mathematics, and health (STEM-H) Programs. We will offer courses not currently provided in local schools, pool resources to allow divisions to hire more instructors, and purchase state-of-the-art training equipment.



#### Action E.1 Form a regional task force.

Form a regional CTE task force to explore the feasibility of developing a regional career and technical education program.

- **Lead Agency** The Regional Commission
- **Potential Partners** Local Governments, Virginia Western Community College, Roanoke Regional Partnership, Workforce/Economic Development Network, Chambers of Commerce

#### Action E.2 Develop feasibility analysis of regional program.

Conduct a feasibility analysis of developing a regional career and technical education program for high school students. Also consider the possibility of providing adult workforce training at the same location.

- **Lead Agency** The Regional Commission
- **Potential Partners** Local Governments, Virginia Western Community College, Roanoke Regional Partnership, Workforce/Economic Development Network, Chambers of Commerce

#### Action E.3 Engage industry and employers.

Engage local industries regarding their needs and support for a CTE program.

- **Lead Agency** Workforce/Economic Development Network
- **Potential Partners** Roanoke Regional Partnership, Workforce/Economic Development Network, Virginia Western Community College, Chambers of Commerce, United Way of the Roanoke Valley, Roanoke Higher Education Center

#### Action E.4 Create career and technical ambassadors.

Create ambassadors of educators, career counselors, and workforce programs to encourage students to consider educational programs focused on career readiness.

- **Lead Agency** Junior Achievement
- **Potential Partners** Local Businesses, Virginia Western Community College, Blue Ridge Independent Living Center, Goodwill Industries

## HEALTHY ROANOKE VALLEY

### GOAL Mobilize community resources to improve access to care, coordination of services, and promote a culture of wellness.

Healthy Roanoke Valley (HRV), an initiative of the United Way of Roanoke Valley, is a partnership of over 50 health and human service providers, academic and business leaders, and community activists dedicated to improving the health of residents living in the Roanoke Valley. HRV origins come from the Roanoke Community Health Needs Assessment performed in 2012 and led by Carilion Clinic.



**HEALTHY**  
roanoke valley  
MAKE CHANGE HAPPEN

The *Healthy Roanoke Valley Strategic Framework* was created to implement cost-effective and financially viable programs that demonstrate and measure positive health outcomes using the model of collective impact. There are over 100 volunteers who are addressing these strategies by dedicating their time and talents through the HRV Steering Committee or Action Teams.

The framework addresses the five priority areas identified in the needs assessment that can improve health:

- Access to medical/primary care services; dental services; mental health and substance abuse services
- Coordination of care
- Wellness

## CASE STUDY: HEALTHY ROANOKE VALLEY

*This is a synopsis of the Healthy Roanoke Valley development case study prepared for the Partnership for a Livable Roanoke Valley. The full case study can be found at <http://livableroanoke.org>.*

### Jefferson County Public Health, Jefferson County, Colorado

Jefferson County Public Health Department (JCPH), in Colorado, is focusing on the longer-term impacts of strategies, implementation plans, and partnerships that will enable them to more effectively manage health. The Community Health Improvement Plan includes guidance on how government and organizations can work together to affect some of the county's toughest health issues. Because obesity and active living are issues that require inter-disciplinary strategies, JCPH is independently exceeding the state mandate to address policy, environmental, and system changes to improve the long-term health in the county.

The JCPH initiative is a major community undertaking that is still in the early stages of implementation; the program will need to develop further before a rigorous assessment can be conducted. At this time, JCPH cited challenges with data availability and constrained resources to collect neighborhood level data to determine health trends and built environment opportunities and challenges. Determining earlier on the types of data that the plan might ultimately require would have economized and strengthened their initial assessment of health issues. JCPH recommends investing in data sharing between communities, especially when the study area encompasses multiple jurisdictions.

### Philadelphia Department of Public Health, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania

The Get Healthy Philly program is a collaborative initiative organized by Philadelphia's Department of Public Health (PDPH) that addresses the effects of land use, transportation, and the access to health care and fresh food on public health. With minimal challenges and setbacks, Get Healthy Philly has successfully fulfilled the program's basic objectives to promote active living and healthy eating. There were some difficulties related to transparency, coordination between partners, and collection of data to identify health indicators.

The Get Healthy Philly program is particularly notable for the collaboration and shared funding resources that occurred between partnering agencies and organizations that do not typically engage in public health. Political leadership helped champion Get Healthy Philly's objectives, as did the strategic engagement of key decision makers. Cultivating constructive relationships allowed the program to more directly influence standards for schools, for-profit businesses, and work places.

Access to complete, consistent, and reliable data complicated initial analysis and subsequent evaluation efforts to secure continued funding. City agencies had different methodologies for data collection that had to be addressed at the start of the program and it took almost two years for PDPH to develop a consistent scoring system for food access. However, savings in time and resources should be achieved as PDPH is now aware of the forms of data most effective in the evaluations for health indicators.



Source: Flickr user benrey

*With 32% of adults and 20% of children considered obese, Philadelphia's obesity rates are higher than the 2010 national average.*

## STRATEGY F

### Coordinate healthcare resources

We will develop a centralized coordination of care system that connects residents to medical resources available in the community and helps these residents enter and navigate through the system.



#### Action F.1 Define and develop coordination of care best practices.

Define and develop centralized coordination of care best practices that are found within Virginia and throughout the nation.

- **Lead Agency** Healthy Roanoke Valley
- **Potential Partners** HRV Coordination of Care Team, Project Access of Roanoke Valley, Council of Community Services

#### Action F.2 Enlist local partners.

Enlist local organizations and resources to create a sustainable system.

- **Lead Agency** Healthy Roanoke Valley
- **Potential Partners** HRV Coordination of Care Team

#### Action F.3 Form a coordination of care forum.

Create a coordination of care forum to guide the development and implementation of the system.

- **Lead Agency** Healthy Roanoke Valley
- **Potential Partners** HRV Coordination of Care Team

## STRATEGY G

### Improve access to healthcare services

Identify and work with partners to attract, recruit, and train healthcare providers (primary care, behavioral health, and oral health) to achieve increased capacity in delivering care and other health-related services to the uninsured, Medicaid-eligible, and other vulnerable populations in the Roanoke Valley.



#### Action G.1 Identify provider capacity needs.

Identify the primary care, behavioral health, and oral health provider capacity needs of the safety net which serves the uninsured, Medicaid-eligible, and other vulnerable popu-

lations. Advocate for an increase in the number of these providers as needed.

- **Lead Agency** Healthy Roanoke Valley
- **Potential Partners** HRV Medical Team, HRV Mental Health Team, HRV Oral Health Team

#### Action G.2 Advocate for a health information exchange.

Investigate, promote, and work with partners to initiate a community Health Information Exchange that will serve all citizens of the Roanoke Valley.

- **Lead Agency** Healthy Roanoke Valley
- **Potential Partners** Carilion Clinic, LewisGale Medical Center, Salem VA Medical Center, HRV Medical Team, HRV Mental Health Team, HRV Oral Health Team

#### Action G.3 Create a community dental clinic.

Strengthen and expand the existing oral health network through the support and development of a community dental clinic which will provide services to the uninsured, Medicaid-eligible and other vulnerable populations.

- **Lead Agency** Healthy Roanoke Valley
- **Potential Partners** New Horizons Healthcare, HRV Oral Health Team

## STRATEGY H

### Broaden wellness support services

We will support existing and new programs at schools, community- and faith-based sites, and at the workplace that improve access to healthy foods; offer physical activity and health promotion opportunities; and align with strategies to decrease risky behaviors (alcohol, tobacco, and other drug use in youth and young adults). See the Healthy Communities Case Study (page 25) to understand how Jefferson County, Colorado and Philadelphia are comprehensively promoting healthy living.



#### Action H.1 Address obesity.

Identify and develop a program that decreases the risk of chronic diseases in overweight and obese patients in a primary care setting through access to farmers' markets and other resources in the community that encourage increased consumption of fresh fruits and vegetables and physical activity opportunities.

- **Lead Agency** Healthy Roanoke Valley
- **Potential Partners** LEAP, HRV Wellness Team

### Action H.2 Reduce risky behaviors in youth.

Support a community-wide initiative that promotes frequent family dining as a prevention strategy to reduce alcohol, tobacco and other drug use in youth.

- **Lead Agency** Healthy Roanoke Valley
- **Potential Partners** Prevention Council of Roanoke County, Roanoke Area Youth Substance Abuse Coalition, HRV Wellness Team

### Action H.3 Identify wellness funding and other resources.

Identify collaborative funding and other shared resources for organizations in the forum to help support high-priority wellness programs or other priorities.

- **Lead Agency** Healthy Roanoke Valley
- **Potential Partners** American Heart Association, American Diabetes Association, American Cancer Society, Virginia Foundation for Healthy Youth

### Action H.4 Promote active living.

Promote active living by providing non-motorized access to schools, work places and facilities. Promote policies that encourage physical activity.

- **Lead Agency** RideSolutions
- **Potential Partners** YMCA, Local Governments, Roanoke Valley Greenway Commission, Pathfinders for Greenways, Roanoke Valley Area Metropolitan Planning Organization, Virginia Department of Transportation, Healthy Roanoke Valley, Fleet Feet

## NATURAL ASSETS

**GOAL** Work collaboratively to preserve the historic, cultural, and natural assets of the region.

### STRATEGY I

#### Preserve scenic and rural land

We will safeguard our most valued sensitive streams, rivers, areas, and scenic views. We will support redevelopment of infill, brownfield, and greyfield sites to take advantage of existing infrastructure and proximity to existing services. Viewshed protection will occur through volunteer mechanisms, such as land conservation and tree canopy improvements.



### Action I.1 Protect ridgetops, viewsheds, and critical rural lands.

Protect high priority ridgetops and viewsheds, such as ones visible from the Blue Ridge Parkway, the Appalachian Trail greenways, and critical rural lands that are vital to the local agricultural economy and the character of our rural communities. Important viewsheds should be mapped and prioritized.

- **Lead Agency** Blue Ridge Land Conservancy
- **Potential Partners** Local Governments, Friends of the Blue Ridge Parkway, Roanoke Appalachian Trail Club, National Parks Conservation Association, The Regional Commission, Roanoke Valley Greenway Commission

### Action I.2 Encourage infill and redevelopment.

Incentivize infill and redevelopment of existing industrial and commercial sites, brownfields, and greyfield areas, to protect our scenic beauty while also expanding economic opportunity. (See economic development strategies.)

- **Lead Agency** Local Economic Development Offices
- **Potential Partners** Local Governments, Roanoke Regional Partnership, The Regional Commission, Western Virginia Water Authority, Roanoke Gas Company, Appalachian Power Company, Roanoke Valley Broadband Authority, Roanoke Redevelopment and Housing Authority

## STRATEGY J

### Encourage energy efficiency and renewable energy

We will support the adoption of energy efficient building code standards, the removal of permitting barriers, and the development of incentives programs that promote the installation of renewable energy systems. We will advocate increasing the percentage of renewably-sourced energy serving the region.



### Action J.1 Provide energy efficiency & renewable energy incentives.

Provide energy efficiency and renewable energy incentives for commercial and residential application. Virginia Code Section 58.1-3221.2, the Energy Efficient Buildings Tax Exemption, provides a lower property tax rate if owners renovate or construct a building that exceeds the USBC standards by 30%, or meet, the standard of several other recognized energy efficiency certification programs. We will encourage

installation of renewable energy sources by citizens, businesses, local governments, and utilities.

- **Lead Agency** Save-a-Ton
- **Potential Partners** Local Governments, Association of Energy Conservation Professionals, United States Green Building Council of Southwest Virginia, Roanoke Valley Cool Cities Coalition, The Regional Commission

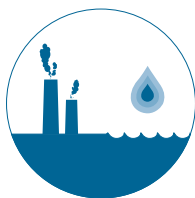
### Action J.2 Encourage utilities to use renewable energy.

Support a renewable energy portfolio standard for energy utilities serving the region. Promising renewable systems for our region includes: solar, small wind, geothermal, and biofuels.

- **Lead Agency** Roanoke Valley Cool Cities Coalition
- **Potential Partners** Association of Energy Conservation Professionals, United States Green Building Council of Southwest Virginia, Renewable Energy and Electric Vehicle Association, Appalachian Power Company

## STRATEGY K Improve air and water quality

We will explore developing a regional stormwater banking program that allows property owners an option of exercising stormwater credits or paying a fee to meet stormwater management requirements. We will improve air quality by expanding mobility options and increasing access to bicycling, walking, public transportation, ridesharing, vanpooling, and carpooling. We will protect forested lands and land along critical waterways. See the Natural Assets Case Study (page 29) to understand how Upstate South Carolina and Washington D.C. are using market-based programs to address stormwater quality and quantity.



### Action K.1 Develop a stormwater banking system.

Initiate the development of a regional stormwater banking system to help property owners meet forthcoming stringent federal stormwater management regulations in areas challenged by dense urban settings by paying a banking fee in lieu of on-site treatment.

- **Lead Agency** The Regional Commission
- **Potential Partners** Local Governments, Clean Valley Council, Roanoke Valley Trout Unlimited, Upper

Roanoke River Roundtable, Western Virginia Water Authority

### Action K.2 Increase alternative transportation options and regional connectivity.

Increase the number of on and off-street bike trails, greenways, miles of sidewalks, bus routes and stops, and programs for ridesharing, vanpooling, and carpooling.

- **Lead Agency** RideSolutions
- **Potential Partners** Local Governments, Roanoke Valley Greenway Commission, Greater Roanoke Transit Company, Roanoke Area Dial-a-Ride, The Regional Commission, Pathfinders for Greenways

### Action K.3 Restore and maintain stream buffers.

We will protect forested lands and land along critical waterways in order to maintain and enhance air quality and reduce polluted runoff flowing into our rivers and streams. We will also work to secure greenway and trail right-of-way in select areas.

- **Lead Agency** Blue Ridge Land Conservancy
- **Potential Partners** Local Governments, Friends of the Blue Ridge Parkway, Roanoke Appalachian Trail Club, National Parks Conservation Association, The Regional Commission, Roanoke Valley Greenway Commission



## CASE STUDIES: NATURAL ASSETS

*This is a synopsis of the Healthy Roanoke Valley development case study prepared for the Partnership for a Livable Roanoke Valley. The full case study can be found at <http://livableroanoke.org>.*

The Partnership for a Livable Roanoke Valley identified a strategy to improve water quality by reducing stormwater runoff. The strategy calls for developing a regional stormwater banking program that allows property owners to reduce on-site water treatment improvements in exchange for payment into a stormwater banking program.

While both the Upstate Forever Stormwater Banking Program and the DC Stormwater Management Regulation both seek to improve waterways in their respective regions, the programs are significantly different. The programs are similar in that they both look to the market to drive a robust outcome. The Upstate Forever program seeks to improve stormwater quality through a voluntary, incentive-based density bonus program. The DC program was developed in response to an EPA mandate requiring the District to develop a mandatory stormwater retention requirement for all significant construction projects.

### Upstate Forever Stormwater Banking Program, South Carolina

Upstate Forever launched the EPA-funded Stormwater Banking Program to develop a non-regulatory, market-based solution to improve water quality in the Reedy River watershed. The program focused on two pilot areas: single family residential zones in Greenville County and commercial zones in the City of Greenville. The residential program grants residential developers density bonuses for enhancing stormwater quality through best management practices (BMPs) and other metrics or payment of an in-lieu fee. The commercial program allows the development of surface parking spaces beyond the parking standard if BMPs are installed or an in-lieu fee is paid.

### Stormwater Management Regulation, Washington, District of Columbia

In response to a new Municipal Separate Storm Sewer System permit requiring stormwater retention from the 1.2" storm, the District of Columbia significantly revised its Stormwater Regulation to include an on-site retention requirement for all new construction and significant renovation disturbing over 5,000 square feet of land. Once fully implemented in July 2015, the regulation will require qualifying sites to be responsible for 100% of the stormwater from the 1.2" storm. Sites will be required to retain at least 50% of stormwater on-site and the balance can be met through payment of an in-lieu fee, Stormwater Retention Credits (SRCs), or a combination of both. The Stormwater Retention Credit market is a first-of-a-kind market that allows land owners to register properties for SRCs and then sell the SRCs to landowners that are unable to retain 100% of stormwater on-site.



Source: Flickr user Jason Reedy

*In 1999, the Reedy River, which flows through the City of Greenville, experienced a significant algal bloom, which generated strong community interest in improving water quality in the watershed.*

# 6 GETTING IT DONE

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The development of a vision, goals, and strategies is just the beginning of a long-term process to maintain and improve the livability of the Roanoke Valley. The success of this community-based plan will be tied to our ability to inspire action to accomplish the vision and goals we have described. To that end, we have begun to prioritize our activities and to identify the means to track our progress and ensure that we are moving towards our vision and goals. We believe that this framework is critical to building the public's trust and garnering the buy-in of key partnering organizations, which will be critical to the successful implementation of the Livable Roanoke Valley Plan.

## OUR PRIORITIES

The vision and plan for Livable Roanoke Valley is ambitious and expansive, with goals that will take years and the help of many partners to complete. In order for our region to make progress towards these goals we must be organized and start with a prioritized list of actions. Our citizens and stakeholders have helped us develop this list by expressing their priorities for those goals and strategies that should be undertaken in the earliest phases of our work.

During a public meeting held in October of 2013, citizen prioritized the 12 strategies that have been developed to achieve the plan goals through a voting exercise. Our Stakeholder Committee then gave further review and prioritization of the strategies based upon more detailed criteria, asking:

- **Is it in accord with Livability Guiding Principles?** Will this initiative reinforce our livability guiding principles and lead to a more livable Roanoke Valley?
- **Is it Realistic?** Will this initiative produce tangible and measurable results within 5 to 15 years?
- **Is it Championed?** Does the initiative have a local "champion" who will lead and oversee the implementation effort?
- **Is it Aligned?** Is the initiative well-connected to existing regional or sub-regional strategies and programs?
- **Is it Significant?** Will the initiative have a significant livability impact by improving local economic prosperity and net job growth?
- **Is it Opportunity Driven?** Is the initiative linked to available opportunities in the form of existing or new public policies or outside funding?

The citizen and committee review and ranking of strategies have been synthesized into the following prioritization list that we will use to direct our actions and allocate our resources most effectively (see Table 1).

**TABLE 1** Strategy Prioritization

<b>Economic Development</b>
1. Invest in regional infrastructure
2. Cultivate and market outdoor and cultural amenities
3. Innovate through higher education
<b>Workforce Development</b>
1. Prepare students for careers in high-demand fields
2. Align workforce and economic development investments
<b>Healthy Roanoke Valley</b>
1. Improve access to healthcare services
2. Coordinate healthcare resources
3. Broaden wellness support services
<b>Natural Assets</b>
1. Preserve scenic and rural land
2. Improve air quality and water quality
3. Encourage energy efficiency and renewable energy

## OVERCOMING BARRIERS

If achieving our vision for a Livable Roanoke Valley were easy, our work would already be complete. However, there are significant barriers that are important to consider during the implementation process. In particular, there is a lack of access to services and resources that some of our citizens regularly face that would limit their ability to participate in achieving the vision and goals that we have articulated for the region.

We have mapped and analyzed the access that our citizens have to opportunities and resources in our region as an element of our funding partnership with the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development. The mapping exercise, which can be found at <http://livableroanoke.org>, reveals patterns of limited access to jobs, education, and training; and resources like health care, recreation, and public transportation that will affect our region across our four goal areas. We recognize that we must begin to address these barriers if we are to realize a Livable Roanoke Valley.

## TRACKING OUR PROGRESS

The Partnership for a Livable Roanoke Valley has made a commitment to support and monitor the implementation of the strategies. The partnership will meet quarterly to review the progress of the lead agencies in completing their actions. The plan will be reviewed annually and a report prepared to provide a status update on actions completed and implemented. The convening of the Livable Roanoke Valley Steering Committee and production of the annual report will be the responsibility of the Regional Commission.

One role of the Steering Committee will be to develop measurable indicators that help the region evaluate if we are making progress towards achieving the goals. Preliminary, high-level indicators that were identified during the planning process that may be considered include:

### Economic Development

- Unemployment rate
- Per capita or median family income
- Cost of living

### Workforce Development

- Aggregated high school graduation rate
- Percent of high school or post-secondary graduates with industry certifications or licenses
- Number of positions open or available in particular industries

### Healthy Roanoke Valley

- Percent of underserved persons who have access to and appropriate utilization of comprehensive care through a centralized coordination of care system.
- Percent of persons living with a primary care provider.
- Percent of the population that is obese.

### Natural Assets

- Percent reduction in key pollutants in our impaired rivers and streams.
- Percent reduction in the annual average air quality index.
- Number of miles of greenways and trails.

# 7

## A CALL TO ACTION

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Over the course of two years, we have been pleased and honored to work with the citizens of the Roanoke Valley and the stakeholder and steering committees that came together to develop the Livable Roanoke Valley Plan. We are excited about what we have created and enthused by the community support. But there is more work to do and we need more citizens of the region to help us realize the vision and goals we have established for our future.

We will continue to seek the endorsement of the community and the local governments and partners across the region. We hope that the community will review our plan and continue to provide us valuable comments and ideas. We call our community to work together to protect our regional assets and to realize a truly more livable future for all our citizens.



Source: Flickr user SchumWeb

*The Roanoke Star on Mill Mountain*

## WORKING GROUPS

### ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT WORKING GROUP

**Lisa Allison-Jones** Jefferson College of Health Sciences  
**Dr. Nathaniel Bishop** Jefferson College of Health Sciences  
**Kim Blair** Ferrum College  
**Doug Blount** Roanoke County Parks and Recreation  
**Wayne Bowers** City of Roanoke Economic Development  
**Steve Buschor** City of Roanoke Parks and Recreation  
**Paul Chapman** Franklin County Parks and Recreation  
**Brook Dixon** Hollins University  
**Beth Doughty** Roanoke Regional Partnership  
**Sam English** Attention Point  
**Pete Eshelman** Roanoke Regional Partnership  
**Wayne Flippen** Roanoke Small Business Development Center  
**Lisa Garst** City of Salem Council  
**Nancy Gray** Hollins University  
**Landon Howard** Roanoke Valley Convention and Visitors Bureau  
**Daniel Knight** The Orvis Company  
**Derrick Maggard** Roanoke Blacksburg Technology Council  
**Dana Martin** Commonwealth Transportation Board  
**Michael Maxey** Roanoke College  
**Tom McKeon** Roanoke Higher Education Center  
**Dan Motley** Norfolk Southern  
**Michael Pace** Roanoke College  
**Melinda Payne** City of Salem Planning and Development  
**Pete Peters** Botetourt County Parks and Recreation  
**John Provo** Virginia Tech Office of Economic Development  
**Todd Putney** Medical Facilities of America  
**Bobby Sandel** Virginia Western Community College  
**Shane Sawyer** Roanoke Valley-Alleghany Regional Commission  
**John Shaner** City of Salem Parks and Recreation  
**John Smolak** Appalachian Power Company  
**Samantha Steidle** Roanoke Business Lounge  
**Bobby Thompson** Ferrum College  
**Joyce Waugh** Roanoke Regional Chamber of Commerce

### WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT WORKING GROUP

**Shelby Assad** Salem Veteran's Administration Medical Center  
**Ron Bradbury** National College  
**Kay Dunkley** Virginia Tech Roanoke Center  
**Debbie Lovelace** Carilion Clinic  
**Kris Meyers** Smart Beginnings of Greater Roanoke  
**Bruce Phipps** Goodwill Industries of the Valleys  
**Jim Poythress** Virginia Western Community College  
**Frank Rogan** United Way of the Roanoke Valley  
**Mary Wells-Garland** Salem Veteran's Administration Medical Center  
**Whitney Wimmer** Salem Veteran's Administration Medical Center

### NATURAL ASSETS WORKING GROUP

**Jeffrey Busby** Botetourt County  
**Diana Christopoulos** Roanoke Valley Cool Cities Coalition  
**Lisa Cooper** Franklin County  
**Megan Cronise** Roanoke County  
**Richard Flora** Craig County  
**Frederick Gusler** City of Roanoke  
**John Hull** Roanoke Regional Partnership  
**Eileen Lepro** New Horizons Healthcare  
**Annette Lewis** Total Action for Progress  
**Michael McEvoy** Western VA Water Authority  
**Karen Michalski-Karney** Blue Ridge Independent Living Center  
**Carl Palmer** Valley Metro  
**Melinda Payne** City of Salem  
**David Perry** Blue Ridge Land Conservancy  
**Jim Poythress** Virginia Western Community College  
**Dave Prosser** Freedom First Credit Union  
**Frank Rogan** United Way of the Roanoke Valley  
**Doloris Vest** Western VA Workforce Investment Board  
**Tori Williams** Roanoke Regional Chamber of Commerce

### Focus Group Participants

**Katherin Anderson Elam** Junior Achievement of Southwest Virginia  
**Greg Anderson** Virginia Department of Environmental Quality  
**Curtis Andrews** RADAR  
**Neal Barber** Roanoke Regional Housing Network  
**Liz Belcher** Roanoke Valley Greenway Commission  
**Hope Cupit** Southeast Rural Community Assistance Project  
**John D'orazio** Roanoke Gas Company  
**Marc Davis** Blue Ridge Independent Living Center  
**Cristina Finch** Roanoke Valley-Alleghany Regional Commission  
**Bob Flynn** Roanoke Regional Home Builders Association  
**David Foster** RAIL Solutions  
**Christy Gabbard** Catawba Sustainability Center  
**Tracy Garland** Community Housing Partners  
**Michael Gray** Virginia Department of Transportation  
**Robin Haldiman** Child Health Investment Partnership  
**David Harrison** Regional Bicycle Advisory Committee  
**Jeremy Holmes** RIDE Solutions  
**Doug Jackson** Virginia Department of Housing & Community Development  
**Carla James** Roanoke Higher Education Center  
**Pete Johnson** Grandin Gardins  
**Joe Jones** Appalachian Power Company  
**Gregg Lewis** Community Alliance for Energy Efficiency  
**Mark McCaskill** Roanoke Valley-Alleghany Regional Commission  
**Reid McClure** Blue Ridge Bicycle Club  
**Hunter Moore** Virginia Western Community College  
**Amy Moorefield** Hollins University - Wilson Museum  
**Rhonda Morgan** Arts Council of the Blue Ridge  
**Rod Nuñez** Freedom First Credit Union  
**Jenna Owen** The Orvis Company  
**Nicole Pendleton** Freedom First Credit Union

**Courtney Penn** Roanoke College - Admissions  
**Suzanne Renegar** Roanoke-Alleghany Health Districts  
**Leon Robertson** RADAR  
**Kenneth Rodgers** Southeast Rural Community Assistance Project  
**Jim Shaver** Goodwill Industries of the Valleys  
**Owen Shultz** Total Action Against Poverty  
**Helen Smythers** Roanoke Valley Urban Forestry Council  
**Steve Sunderman** Terrazia  
**Carol Tuning** Advisory Council of Homelessness  
**Karla Turman** Town of Vinton  
**Teresa Volk** Southeast Rural Community Assistance Project  
**Marie Webb** Carilion Clinic  
**Susan Williams** Local Office on Aging  
**John Williamson** Roanoke Gas Company  
**Lee Wonson** Roanoke-Alleghany Health Districts  
**Desi Wynter** Roanoke Redevelopment & Housing Authority  
**Tamim Younos** The Cabell Brand Center

### HEALTHY ROANOKE VALLEY WORKING GROUP

#### Project Team

**Pat Young** Program Manager  
**Becky Kinser Davis** Administrative Assistant

#### Steering Committee

**Gail Burruss** Blue Ridge Behavioral Healthcare  
**William Caldwell** LewisGale Regional Health System  
**Jane Conlin** City of Roanoke Department of Human Services  
**Kate Ellmann** Project Access  
**Tim Fortuna** Carilion Clinic  
**Stephanie Harper** Roanoke Alleghany Health District  
**Shirley Holland** Carilion Clinic  
**Miguel LaPuz** Salem VA Medical Center  
**William Lee** Loudon Avenue Christian Church  
**Eileen Lepro** New Horizons Healthcare

## WORKING GROUPS (continued)

**Dan Merenda** Council of Community Services  
**Karen McNally** Presbyterian Community Center  
**Frank Rogan** United Way of Roanoke Valley  
**Abby Verdillo** United Way of Roanoke Valley  
**Sarah Wall** Virginia Tech Translational Obesity Research

### Coordination of Care Action Team

**Brenda Allen** Roanoke Valley Healthcare Connection  
**Clara Anne Spencer** Carilion Clinic  
**Ken Argot** The Salvation Army  
**Estelle Avner** Bradley Free Clinic  
**Jonathan Carrington** Kissito Pace  
**Melissa (Missy) Conley** MajestaCare  
**Mindy Conley** Family Service of Roanoke Valley  
**Kevin Earl** Carilion Clinic  
**Kate Ellmann** Project Access  
**Lori Firebaugh** LewisGale Medical Center  
**Sue Frankel** TAP Head Start  
**Robin Haldiman** CHIP of Roanoke Valley  
**Crystal Hall** Roanoke Redevelopment & Housing Authority  
**Aaron Harris-Boush** Carilion Clinic  
**April Jones** Kissito Pace  
**Sally L. Walker** Planned Parenthood Health Systems  
**Todd Martin** Anthem Blue Cross Blue Shield  
**Karen McNally** Presbyterian Community Center  
**Anne Millehan** Sanofi  
**Kathy Murhphy-Stephenson** Carilion Clinic  
**Sue Nutter** Adult Care Center of Roanoke Valley  
**Sandra P. Davis** Anchor of Hope Community Center  
**Kim Robertson** New Horizons Healthcare  
**Carla Santos** Bradley Free Clinic  
**Pam Shepherd** Council of Community Services- 211  
**Allison Szuba** Adult Care Center of Roanoke Valley  
**Abby Verdillo** United Way of Roanoke Valley

**Leisa Wade** Carilion Clinic Patient Access  
**Susan Williams** LOA Area Agency on Aging  
**Brendle Wolfe** Project Access  
**Lee Wonson** Roanoke/Alleghany Health Districts  
**Tim Woodrum** Salem VA Medical Center

### Medical Action Team

**Victor Bell, MD** New Horizons Healthcare  
**Kevin Earl** Carilion Clinic  
**Thomas Eldridge, MD** Salem VA Medical Center  
**Timothy Fortuna** Carilion Clinic  
**Shirley Holland** Carilion Clinic  
**Robert Marmerstein** LewisGale Medical Center  
**Todd Martin** Anthem Blue Cross Blue Shield  
**Karen Michalski-Karney** Blue Ridge Independent Living Center  
**David Nova** Planned Parenthood Health Systems  
**Randy Rhea, MD** Carilion Clinic  
**Kim Robertson** New Horizons Healthcare  
**Kim Roe** Carilion Clinic  
**Abby Verdillo** United Way of Roanoke Valley  
**Leisa Wade** Carilion Clinic Patient Access  
**Gregory Walter** Walter Chiropractic  
**Mark Watts, MD** Project Access/Carilion Clinic

### Mental Health/Substance Use Action Team

**Abby Verdillo** United Way of Roanoke Valley  
**Alan Ronk** Foundation of Roanoke Valley  
**Brittany Sandidge** Prevention Council of Roanoke Co  
**Chani Jain** Intern- VT MPH  
**Cheri Hartman, Ph. D.** Carilion Clinic/ PATH Coalition Director  
**David Mortellaro** Associates In Brief Therapy  
**Diane Kelly** Mental Health America of Roanoke Valley  
**Gail Burruss** Blue Ridge Behavioral Healthcare  
**Jane Conlin** City of Roanoke - Department of Human Services  
**Mark Derbyshire** Carilion Clinic

**Nancy Hans** Prevention Council of Roanoke Co  
**Paula Mitchell** LewisGale Medical Center  
**Rita Cone** Salem VA Medical Center  
**Sharon Jarrett Thacker** Family Service of Roanoke Valley  
**Tamara Baldwin** New Horizons Healthcare

### Oral Health Action Team

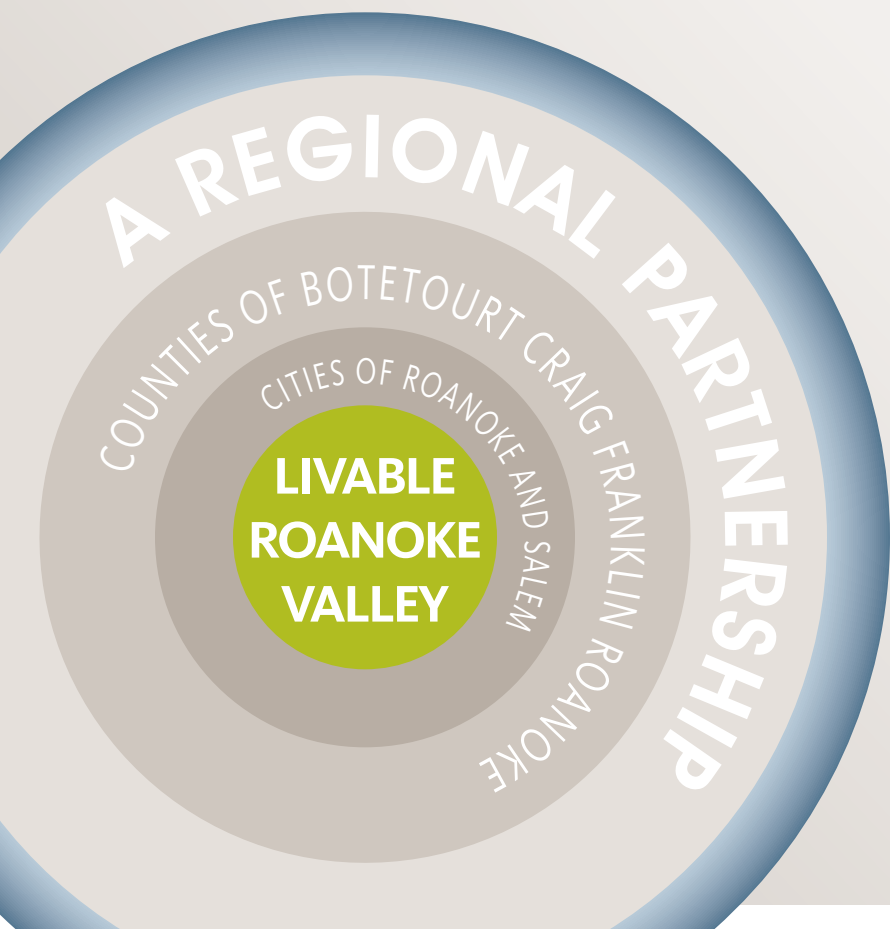
**Abby Verdillo** United Way of Roanoke Valley  
**Alison Jorgensen** Council of Community Services  
**Calvin Curry** Boys & Girls Clubs of Southwest Virginia  
**David Black, DDS** Blue Ridge Dental Group  
**Eileen Lepro** New Horizons Healthcare  
**Estelle Avner** Bradley Free Clinic  
**Gary Helton** Blue Ridge Dental Group  
**Helen Ferguson** Rescue Mission Ministries  
**Kate Ellmann** Project Access  
**Kim Robertson** New Horizons Healthcare  
**Leah Russell** Carilion Clinic  
**Marty Sullivan** VWCC- School of Dental Hygiene  
**Robert Humphreys** Total Action for Progress  
**Robin Haldiman** CHIP of Roanoke Valley

### Wellness Action Team

**Anna Beebe Sachs** Food for Thought/RCPS  
**Ally Bowersock** Jefferson College of Health Sciences  
**John Bryant** Roanoke Natural Foods Co-op  
**Tom Cain** Impact + Amplify  
**Carroll Carter** Pastor- St. Paul United Methodist Church  
**Deb Chappell** Virginia Cooperative Extension  
**Brent Cochran** LEAP  
**Melissa Conley** MajestaCare  
**Sandra P. Davis** Anchor of Hope Community Center  
**Laurie Gibbons** Boys & Girls Clubs of Southwest Virginia  
**Jake Gilmer** Roanoke Valley- Alleghany Regional Commission  
**Kathy Graham**  
**Sullivan** RAYSAC

**Frederick Gusler** City of Roanoke  
**Nancy Hans** Prevention Council of Roanoke County  
**Virginia Hardin** Community Volunteer  
**Aaron Harris-Boush** Carilion Clinic  
**Cheri Hartman, Ph. D.** Carilion Clinic/ PATH Coalition Director  
**Amy Hatheway** Total Action for Progress  
**Roger A. Hofford, M.D., CPE** Carilion Clinic VTC Family Medicine  
**Karen Hogan Pillis** Family Service of Roanoke Valley  
**Elizabeth Holbrook** Roanoke College  
**Jeremy Holmes** Ride Solutions  
**Pamela Irvine** Feeding America Southwest Virginia  
**Cal Johnson** Community volunteer  
**Miguel LaPuz** Salem VA Medical Center  
**Robin Lewis** Fleet Feet Sports  
**Margaret Macher** New York Life  
**Lynn McDowell** Blue Ridge Behavioral Healthcare  
**Maureen McNamara** LEAP  
**Brooks Michael** Carilion Clinic  
**Anne Millehan** Sanofi  
**Caroline Mueller** Roanoke College  
**Edie Naughton** Carilion Clinic  
**Barbara (Boo) Pack** Cailion Clinic  
**Kerstin Plunkett** Food for Thought/VWCC  
**Mark Powell** Roanoke Community Garden Assoc.  
**Heather Quintana** Happy Healthy Cooks  
**Tricia Reynolds** YMCA of Roanoke Valley  
**Frank Rogan** United Way of Roanoke Valley  
**Brittany Sandidge** Prevention Council of Roanoke Co  
**Kim Shrader** Community Volunteer  
**Abby Verdillo** United Way of Roanoke Valley  
**Sarah Wall** Virginia Tech  
**Ann Weaver** Lead Safe Roanoke  
**Marie Webb** Carilion Clinic  
**Mike Wray** Norfolk Southern  
**Desi Wynter** RRHA

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