



**MINUTES**

The January meeting of the Roanoke Valley Alleghany Regional Commission was held on Thursday, January 27, 2022 at 3:00 p.m. at the Roanoke Valley-Alleghany Regional Commission office, 313 Luck Avenue, SW, Roanoke, VA.

**VOTING MEMBERS ATTENDING**

Steve Clinton	Botetourt County
Billy Martin, Sr.	Botetourt County
Lorie Smith	Franklin County
Dean Martin	Roanoke County
Phil North, <i>Chair</i>	Roanoke County
David Radford	Roanoke County
Lee Osborne	Roanoke County
Krystal Onaitis	City of Covington
Allan Tucker	City of Covington
Joseph Cobb	City of Roanoke
Dawn Erdman	City of Roanoke
Peter Volosin	City of Roanoke
Robert Jeffrey	City of Roanoke
Stephanie Moon Reynolds	City of Roanoke
John Saunders	City of Salem
Jim W. Wallace III	City of Salem
Denise King	City of Salem
Mayor Bradley Grose	Town of Vinton
Richard "Pete" Peters	Town of Vinton
Robert Wood	Town of Rocky Mount
Mark Newbill	Town of Rocky Mount
Chuck Unroe	Town of Clifton Forge

**VOTING MEMBERS ABSENT**

Shannon Cox	Alleghany County
Pete Huber	Alleghany County
James Griffith	Alleghany County
Erin Henderson	Botetourt County
Gary Larrowe	Botetourt County
Dan Collins	Craig County
Jesse Spence	Craig County
Ronald Mitchell	Franklin County
Mike Carter	Franklin County
Roy Enslow	Franklin County
Chris Whitlow	Franklin County
Kevin Hutchins	Roanoke County

**Member Governments:** Counties of Alleghany, Botetourt, Craig, Franklin, and Roanoke, Cities of Covington, Roanoke and Salem, Towns of Clifton Forge, Rocky Mount and Vinton



technical and grant-writing support for new COVID-related recovery programs, such as those that may arise from the recently passed infrastructure bill. These amendments should be posted next week, and their progress is being monitored by the VAPDC. The Commission may be following up with the Board with more information and requests for support as the budget moves through the General Assembly.

- Chair North reported that Mayor Pamela Marshall of Clifton Forge recently stepped down from her seat on town council. Chair North noted that the nominating committee, chaired by Mr. Billy Martin, has been tasked to recommend a candidate to be voted on at the February Commission meeting. Chair North thanked Mr. Joe Cobb of the City of Roanoke for agreeing to serve on the Nominating Committee, taking the spot vacated by Mr. Bill Bestpitch.
- Chair North noted asked that any member locality who is interested in presenting for the next month's regional highlight is encouraged to volunteer at today's meeting or to contact him after the meeting so they can be included in the February agenda. Chair North reminded members that the regional highlight is an opportunity for each member locality to introduce their community to their neighbors on the Commission and show off what makes them unique.
- Chair North reminded that the Work Program Committee will convene immediately after today's Commission meeting for a brief discussion to kick off the FY23 work program process.

#### **4. EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR'S REPORT**

- Jeremy Holmes commented that there is a new addition to the meeting room- the new Meeting Owl, located in the middle of the room. The owl will serve as microphone, speaker and video broadcasting for people attending remotely.

#### **5. SOUTHEAST CRESCENT REGIONAL COMMISSION UPDATE**

Chair North introduced Ms. Ava Gabrielle-Wise, who participated remotely in today's meeting to discuss the status of the Southeast Crescent Regional Commission, which will serve those parts of our Regional Commission not currently covered by the Appalachian Regional Commission.

In 2019, Ava Gabrielle-Wise organized the Southeast Crescent Regional Commission Coalition to convene the offices of the southern governors, congressional members, state, local and community leaders around the southeast to develop a strategy to activate the Southeast Crescent Regional Commission. Over the last two years, the network has held several sessions intended to advance the discussion of building resilience in the southeast. With the activation of the Commission in late 2021 following the appointment of its first federal co-chair, the Coalition has turned its attention to equipping the region with the information that it will need to engage the resources of

not only the Southeast Crescent Regional Commission but other federal agencies in the effort to build resilience in local communities.

Ms. Gabrielle-Wise's effort to see a regional economic development commission established in the southeast has spanned two decades. She has worked closely with policy makers, academia, and practitioners in their shared belief that the southeast could benefit from a federal commission. Ms. Gabrielle-Wise presented a short PowerPoint presentation (included in the Minutes).

**6. LOCALITY HIGHLIGHTS**

Teressa Hammond, Executive Director of the Allegheny Highlands Chamber of Commerce and Tourism, presented a PowerPoint presentation about Allegheny Highlands (the presentation is included in the Minutes).

Mr. Chuck Unroe thanked Ms. Hammond for the wonderful presentation.

Chair North asked if any member locality would like to sign up for the next locality highlights at the February Commission meeting. Ms. Laurie Smith commented that Franklin County would like to do their presentation in June or July. Mr. Jim Wallace remarked that City of Salem would like to do a presentation in May.

**7. COMMUTER ASSISTANCE PROGRAM OPERATING ASSISTANCE GRANT APPLICATION**

**A. Action Requested: Approval of Resolution, Authorizing the Application for State Commuter Assistance Program Operating and Mobility Program Grant**

Andrea Garland reported that DRPT traditionally has been the main source of funding for the TDM Community Assistance Program. The resolution authorizing the application for State Commuter Assistance Program and Project Assistance Grant was distributed with the agenda packet. The proposed budget is \$305,455 with a local match of \$61,000.

**MOTION:** by Lee Osborne to approve the Resolution, authorizing the application for State Commuter Assistance Program Operating and Mobility Program Grant, as presented. The motion was seconded by Dawn Erdman.

**Regional Commission Action:** Motion carried unanimously.

**8. BETTER BUS STOPS FOR NEIGHBORHOODS – CITY OF ROANOKE HUD GRANT APPLICATION**

**A. Review Application**

Andrea Garland reported that Better Bus Shelter for Neighborhoods is a program by RIDE Solutions with the goal to facilitate the process to acquire and install bus shelters in neighborhoods served by the region's transit service- Valley Metro. The

Roanoke Valley-Alleghany Regional Commission is requesting funding for this project via the city of Roanoke 2022 HUD – CDBG Program to install three bus shelters in low-to-moderate-income neighborhoods in Northwest Roanoke. The proposed budget is \$47,762.

**B. Action Requested: Approval of Certification Application**

**MOTION:** by Lee Osborne to approve the Certification Application, as presented. The motion was seconded by Billy Martin.

**Regional Commission Action:** Motion carried unanimously.

**9. CONSIDERATION OF FY24 RVARC SMART SCALE CANDIDATE PROJECT REQUESTS**

Bryan Hill noted that in early fall 2021, staff initiated the process for submitting and selecting RVARC candidate project applications for the FY24 round of SMART SCALE. The process entailed each locality or modal stakeholder requesting the RVARC to apply on its behalf for a SMART SCALE project to complete and submit the *Candidate Project Request Form for RVARC SMART SCALE Applications*.

Staff received eleven request forms (listed on pages 43 and 44 of the agenda in order that they were received) from localities located in the Roanoke Urbanized Area. The RVARC has a maximum of four applications it can submit in August 2022 but may initiate five pre-applications in March. It is anticipated that more information is known in February. A final recommendation will be presented to the RVARC at its February meeting so project pre-applications may be submitted in March.

**10. CONSIDERATION OF RESOLUTION IN SUPPORT OF HB105**

Chair North commented that everyone should have received a copy of the Resolution of Support for HB105 to provide funding for planning for renovations and expansions to Catawba Hospital. The approved resolution will be forwarded to Delegate’s Rasoul office.

**MOTION:** by Peter Volosin to approve the Resolution in support of HB 105. The motion was seconded by David Radford.

**Regional Commission Action:** Motion carried unanimously.

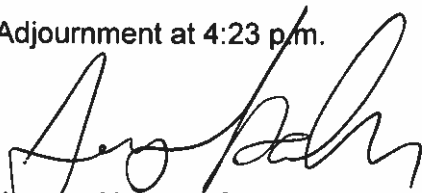
**11. OTHER BUSINESS**

No other business was discussed.

**12. COMMENTS FROM COMMISSION MEMBERS AND/OR THE PUBLIC**

Mr. Billy Martin reminded that the Work Program Committee will meet right after the adjournment of the Commission’s meeting.

Adjournment at 4:23 p.m.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Jeremy Holmes', written in a cursive style.

Jeremy Holmes, Secretary  
Secretary to the Regional Commission

# SOUTHEAST CRESCENT REGIONAL COMMISSION COALITION

Roanoke Valley-Alleghany Regional Commission

January 27, 2022



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## BACKGROUND

Ronald C. Wimberly North Carolina State University  
Libby V. Morris & Doug Bachtel University of Georgia  
Make the case for a federal commission at Tuskegee University, Dec 1990

US Representative Earl Hilliard (D-AL)  
Introduces H.R. 3901, first legislative attempt at a commission, 1994

UGA - Tuskegee Southeast Crescent Study

*"If the economic gaps with the ARC were eliminated in the service sector alone, the Southeast region would:*

- Enjoy additional income of \$15 billion.
- Boast 500,000 additional jobs.
- Return \$3.2 billion to government coffers—

Created in the 2008 Farm Bill



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### REGIONAL DECISIONS

These principles emanated from the community-based meetings and the general meetings with business, government, and community stakeholders held throughout the Southeast Region states."



- It should focus on ending poverty and building wealth.
- It should build on existing successful effort of states, local governments, and community based organizations.



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### REGIONAL DECISIONS

- It should have specific state-by-state objectives.
- It should secure input and program direction from local communities.
- It should engage in an ongoing process of comprehensive community strategic planning, taking into account both rural and urban issues and their interdependence.
- It should allocate resources to affect priority areas through organizations that interface directly with those who suffer from persistent poverty.



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# COMMISSION OVERVIEW

A federally funded, economic development intermediary in partnership with seven southern states that is intended to make strategic investments to stimulate growth in economically resistant areas of the southeast region of the United States.



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## OVERVIEW

Section 15731 of the 2008 Farm Bill defined the region of the Southeast Regional Crescent Commission to include all the counties of:

- Virginia
- North Carolina
- South Carolina
- Georgia
- Alabama
- Mississippi
- Florida



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## GOVERNANCE

Section 15301 mandates:

- The first federal co-chairperson, Dr. Jennifer Clyburn Reed was appointed on Dec 9, 2021
- A state co-chairperson who is a governor of one of the participating states, the governors of the participating states or their designees.
- An executive director

Decisions of the Commission are to be made by votes of the federal co-chair and a majority of the state members (Section 15302)



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## FUNCTION (SECTION 15303)

The functions of the Commission are:

- 1- to assess the needs and assets of the region;
- 2- to develop economic and infrastructure development strategies as a basis for priorities and approving grants;
- 3- establish development priorities including 5-year outcome targets;



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**FUNCTION (SECTION 15303)**

The functions of the Commission are:

- 5- encourage private investments in the region's development projects;
- 6- assist states in preparing economic and infrastructure development plans;
- 7- formulate and recommend plans for interstate cooperation and appropriate international cooperation; and



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**PROGRAM (SECTION 15501)**

Grants to the states, local governments, Indian tribes, and public and nonprofit organizations for projects to develop:

- (1) transportation infrastructure;
- (2) basic public infrastructure;
- (3) telecommunications infrastructure;
- (4) job skills training, employment education, technology, and business development.



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**PROGRAM (SECTION 15501)**

- (5) assistance for severely distressed areas needing resources for health care and public services;
- (6) to promote conservation, tourism, and open space;
- (7) to promote renewable and alternative energy sources; and
- (8) other purposes of the Bill.



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**AUTHORIZATION & APPROPRIATION**

- Initially authorized for \$30 million
- \$250,000 appropriated in 2010
- \$250,000 authorized each year until 2020
- \$1 million appropriated FY 2021
- \$5 million appropriated in FY 2022



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### **PROCESS TO FORM THE COMMISSION**

- (1) The presidential appointment and Senate confirmation of a federal co-chair, and potentially an alternate federal co-chair;
- (2) The convening of the commission, including the federal co-chair and the member state governors;
- (3) Organizational development of the commission, which includes the development of bylaws, hiring of a professional staff, and the identification of program priorities; and
- (4) The establishment of an economic development grant-making program, pending additional appropriations.

Congressional Research Service 12.17.2021






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The slide features the Allegheny Highlands of Virginia logo on the left. To its right is a photograph of a sunset over a mountain range, with a person standing on a rocky outcrop in the foreground. Below the logo and photograph is a bulleted list of participating entities, and at the bottom are four circular logos representing the City of Covington, Allegheny County, the Town of Clifton Forge, and the Town of Iron Gate.

- Allegheny County
- City of Covington
- Towns of Clifton Forge & Iron Gate

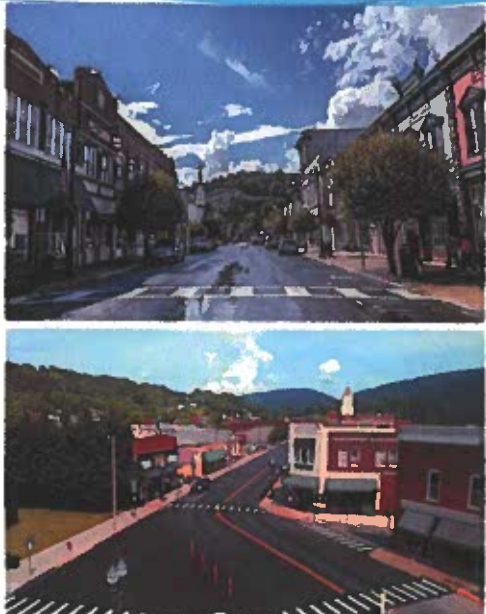
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- Located in the beautiful Allegheny Mountains
- Approximately an hour north of Roanoke; three hours west of Richmond
- Easily accessible via I-64 and Route 220
- More than 50% National Forest

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- Our major employers include paper manufacturer, WestRock, one of the largest exporters in Virginia and chemical company, Ingevity, who manufactures most of the activated carbon used in the auto industry
- We have two walkable downtowns with several revitalization projects in the works




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- We have an abundance of outdoor recreational opportunities; many historic attractions and a strong arts presence
- 45 Miles of the Jackson River and approximately 10 miles of the Cowpasture River flow through the region; these two rivers merge to form the James River just south of Iron Gate; along with Lake Moomaw and Douthat Lake they form the Alleghany Highlands Blueway



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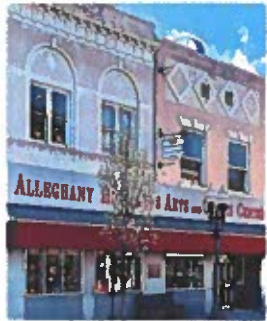



- Douthat State Park hosts over 250,000 visitors each year, offers wonderful hiking trails and is a mountain bikers paradise
- The Jackson River Scenic Trail is a rails to trails initiative that was recently awarded a grant from the EDA to complete the remaining 2 miles of trail, connecting the City of Covington to Bath County; this beautiful trail meanders along the Jackson River for approximately 16 miles






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- The C & O Railway Heritage Center as well as the Covington Depots highlight the railroad history of the region
- The Arts are alive and strong with the recently renovated 500 seat Historic Masonic Theatre, the Allegheny Highlands Arts Council, the AH Arts & Crafts Center and the Clifton Forge School of the Arts





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- Iconic attractions like Falling Spring Falls and Humpback Bridge also draw visitors to the region

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# Strengths



- Increased Economic Development Focus
  - Joint economic development of a pad-ready site
  - Re-branding of AHEDC
  - Re-adaptive use of publicly held buildings for attractions and housing
    - Rivermont School Housing Development – workforce, senior and family, total 47 units
    - Project Sparkle – former Leggett Department store under Option Agreement
- Full Gig with fast, reliable broadband connectivity
- Downtown Revitalization Efforts Underway in both downtowns
- DSLCC, soon to be renamed Mountain Gateway Community College – diverse course offerings and positioned to respond to workforce development needs
- Full facility YMCA
- Allegheny Foundation – supporting community and economic development efforts

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# Strengths continued



- Strong medical coverage – HCA, Carilion, Bath Community Hospital & Greenbrier Physicians Group
- Construction Project underway by Fralin – apartments next to the YMCA
- Critical Transportation Improvements in Covington
  - Rayon Bridge Over the Jackson River – Full Replacement and Realignment
  - Completed a Road Safety Audit of US Route 220 (Allegheny Ave.) for Safety and Multi-modal enhancements
    - Pedestrian improvements
    - Buffered and/or dedicated bike lane
    - Various traffic calming measures

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## Challenges

- Lack of diversified housing stock, overabundance of older single family homes
- Limited developable flat land
- Limited access to public transportation
- Empty former school buildings
- Absentee landlords in the two downtowns
- Lack of lodging options



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## Opportunities

- Exploring additional joint economic development projects
- School system consolidation of Covington and Allegheny to expand opportunities
- Continued improvements to existing Sports Tourism Infrastructure to benefit region
  - Feasibility study under way for Jackson River Sports Complex and Casey Field for upgrades
- Expanding Railroad Heritage Tourism



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## Opportunities continued

- Continued development of strong arts presence: maker spaces, artists' studios, public art, murals
- Continued partnerships with the community college to mesh with employer needs
- Revitalization of unused buildings for highest and best use
- Clifton Forge Underground—unique tunnel system under town streets, used for filming of "Dopesick."



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### Annual Events for 2022:


- Agony in the Alleghenies Gran Fondo cycling event – May
- Jackson River Scenic Trail Marathon, Half Marathon, 10K & 5K – June
- Lake Moomaw One Mile Open Water Swim - August
- Street Scene - August
- AdvXFest Overlanding Event; Jackson River Sports Complex – September
- Various concerts and events at the Historic Masonic Theatre and Amphitheatre
- Workshops and events at the Clifton Forge School of the Arts
- Various events and exhibits at the AH Arts & Crafts Center
- River Rock Summer Concert Series
- Kriskindlmarkt (CFSOTA) - November



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**Work Remotely.  
Live UNIQUELY.**




Remote working means more time checking flow charts... on the river

Work Remotely Live UNIQUELY Allegheny Highlands

**Goal:** Reach professionals who can work or locate their business anywhere they choose, individuals looking to buy a second home, retire or open a satellite business location

**Targeted Career Fields:** IT, Finance, Accounting, Independent Consultants and Customer Service

**Target Market:** NoVA, PA, OH, MD, DC



Remote working means more time for zooming... on the trails

Work Remotely Live UNIQUELY Allegheny Highlands

**The Allegheny Highlands is a great place to live, work, play and do business!**

Live Uniquely: <https://youtu.be/z6iohLQd4zI>

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