



Annual Report

2025-2026



Chair's Message

Fiscal Year 2025–2026 was another productive year for the Regional Commission, marked by continued progress, new opportunities, and strong partnerships across the New River Valley. The Commission advanced important projects and programs while also taking on new initiatives that respond to the evolving needs of our region.

Collaboration with local leaders and regional partners is essential to our continued growth and the well-being of the communities we serve. Throughout the year, the Regional Commission worked closely with local governments and higher education institutions to address shared challenges and pursue opportunities that benefit the entire Valley. We are especially proud to have 100% membership among the region's local governments and higher education institutions, providing complete representation across the New River Valley and strengthening our ability to work collectively toward regional priorities.

Our work this year spanned a broad range of areas, including broadband, economic development, community health, housing, transportation, community development, and natural resources. Perhaps most importantly, we continued to provide technical assistance to our members throughout the Valley, helping local leaders address immediate needs while planning for long-term success.

As Board Chair, I would like to thank our board members for the time, energy, and enthusiasm they bring to serving the Commission. Ours is a unique board that brings together elected officials, citizen representatives, and higher education leaders. Through their collective knowledge and regional perspective, they help us better understand the opportunities and challenges facing the New River Valley and advocate for positive impact across the region.

Looking ahead, we are excited to relocate to our new building in Christiansburg at the end of this year. This new home represents another step forward for the Commission as we continue to grow our capacity and strengthen our service to the region.

The Regional Commission is well positioned for the future. We will continue to be a trusted partner to our members, working collaboratively to promote economic and community development, strengthen regional connections, and create opportunities throughout the New River Valley. Most importantly, we will continue working to make this region an even better place for everyone who calls it home.

Hil Johnson

Chair

Fiscal Year 2025-2026



FY2025-2026 Commissioners

Floyd County

Mr. Michael Maslaney
Ms. Linda DeVito Kuchenbuch

Giles County

Mr. Richard McCoy
Mr. Leon Law, Treasurer

Montgomery County

Mr. Anthony Graftsky
Mr. Brian Wheeler

Pulaski County

Mr. Jeffery Reeves
Ms. Lara Ramsey

City of Radford

Mr. David Horton
Mr. Jeff Martin

Town of Blacksburg

Ms. Susan Anderson, Vice-Chair
Mr. Michael Harvey

Town of Christiansburg

Ms. Tonya Hockett
Mr. Hil Johnson, Chair

Town of Dublin

Mr. Wayne Seagle

Town of Floyd

Mr. Will Griffin

Town of Narrows

Mr. Tom Spangler

Town of Pearisburg

Ms. Amanda Davis

Town of Pembroke

Mr. CB Andrews

Town of Pulaski

Mr. Larry Clevinger
Mr. Brooks Dawson

Town of Rich Creek

Mr. Mikhail Mann

Radford University

Dr. Angela Joyner

Virginia Tech

Mr. Richard Gibson
Ms. Liza Morris

New River Community College

Dr. Robert Brandon

Regional Cooperation



NRVRC Annual Awards

The Regional Commission board of directors celebrated their annual award recipients at the annual dinner held in October 2025 at The Highlander Hotel in Radford, VA. The award winners for 2025 included Champion of the Valley, Judge Lee Harrell, 27th Judicial Circuit of Virginia; Citizen of the Valley, Ms. Angie Covey, New River Community College; and Friend of the Valley, Dr. Tamarah Holmes, Virginia Department of Housing and Community Development.



NRV Recovery Ecosystem Program

The Regional Commission provides oversight and coordination of the New River Valley Recovery Ecosystem (NRVRE), a five-year cooperative funding effort. Now in its third year of implementation, the NRVRE is transforming early momentum into lasting stability, strengthening partnerships, expanding impact, and building the foundation for long-term regional impact. The Virginia Opioid Abatement Authority (OAA) awarded this initial funding to the region through a competitive process for FY24–28 projects. With Montgomery County serving as fiscal agent, the Recovery Ecosystem coordinates programming in prevention, treatment, education, and harm reduction to create structural changes that address the impacts of addiction and support well-being across the region. The Regional Commission provides staff support to the technical teams; assists with fiscal and performance tracking; delivers educational outreach and communication strategies; collaborates with higher education institutions and regional school districts on prevention opportunities; offers facilitation and programmatic guidance to regional leadership; seeks funding for pilot efforts; and troubleshoots issues to ensure this work delivers the greatest benefit in addressing opioid impacts on the New River Valley.



500+

people attended Day of
Hope at Huckleberry Park

3,082

youth participants in
substance use
prevention education



172

people trained in
Trauma and Resiliency



Year Three program highlights include:

Education & Programmatic Training

- 172 people trained in Trauma and Resiliency Basics, including 47 high school and college-aged students
 - 12 people trained as trainers in Trauma and Resiliency Basics and adverse childhood experiences in partnership with NRV Resiliency Network
 - 1,777 students received Just Say Know substance use prevention education in area elementary, middle, and high schools
 - 777 high school students received training on the Dangers of Fentanyl
 - 570 high school and middle school students participated in Addicted 2 Life, a 3D substance use prevention presentation
 - Brought Community Resiliency Model (CRM) training for staff and faculty to two school districts
 - Two community partner agencies attended The Champions for Youth Summit and the Joint Meeting on Youth Prevention, Treatment, and Recovery
- Four collaborations with Virginia Tech, Radford University, and Pulaski County High School focusing on resilience, stigma, and substance use prevention
 - Developed anti-stigma educational materials based on 16 local stories of substance use, resilience, and recovery to be distributed to community stakeholders and elected officials
 - Provided legal aid education to individuals at the Radford and Giles peer centers through Southwest Virginia Legal Aid

5,408

test kits distributed
for fentanyl, xylazine,
nitazene, and
medetomidine



280

 reported overdoses reversed

777

high school students
trained on the
Dangers of Fentanyl

306

naloxone doses
distributed to
community
members via
Appalachian
Save a Life Day

Outreach, Treatment, & Facilities

- Continued operation of three peer centers in Floyd, Giles, and Pulaski counties to support recovery and access to services
- Distributed 1,746 naloxone kits as part of comprehensive harm reduction services
- Served 480 participants through Rise Above's harm reduction program
- Reversed 280 overdoses
- Distributed 5,408 test kits for fentanyl, xylazine, nitazene, or medetomidine
- Launched the STAR program for support and treatment for adolescent recovery
- Connected over 200 individuals to medications for opioid use disorder (MOUD) through harm reduction programming
- 22 partner agencies participated in the Day of Hope event at Huckleberry Park in Christiansburg with more than 500 attendees
- Grew the New River Valley Lived Experience Network to 77 active Peers and added quarterly professional development events
- Provided Community Health Center wrap-around services for 183 patients receiving MOUD
- 400 ONEboxes for emergency opioid overdose reversal made available for businesses, organizations, and public spaces at no cost



1,746

doses of naloxone distributed as
part of a comprehensive harm
reduction program

4

Lived Experience
Network professional
development events

24

recovery court
graduates



77

people
engaged in
NRV Lived
Experience
Network

95,201

Individuals reached through
anti-stigma communication
via blogs, social media posts
and presentations

4

collaborations with Virginia
Tech students focusing on
**resilience, stigma, and
substance use prevention**

480

participants served via Rise Above's
comprehensive harm reduction program



200+

individuals connected to
MOUD throughout harm
reduction programs

Transportation & Housing

- 17,204 on-demand rides facilitated via four service providers
- 31,324 transportation calls received
- Supported expanded ride access through DRPT application and matching funds via Community Transit Go program
- Increased access to the Rapid Rehousing program for individuals via New River Community Action
- Over \$200,000 of OAA-provided "wrap-around funds" used across the NRV to assist individuals with expenses such as housing, utilities, SUD treatment, childcare, and work expenses



Justice Involved

- 24 Recovery Court graduates this year
- 31,000+ drug tests administered
- Support of the State Opioid Response program through New River Health District to link citizens returning from incarceration to services prior to release and expand housing resources for individuals enrolled in Rise Above
- Average of 87 individuals participating in Recovery Court in the region
- Expansion of Recovery Court clinical services and pro-social activities for participants, graduates, and families

Fiscal & Performance Tracking

- Review of all invoicing and performance tracking for funded partners
- Execution of quarterly performance tracking for project elements
- Support to local governments and funded partners to meet fiscal agent and grantor's requirements
- Regular support to troubleshoot funding and programmatic concerns
- Point of contact for OAA to address concerns and request guidance for project elements
- Successful submission and award of renewal funding for year four with the Virginia Opioid Abatement Authority Communications
- Reached 95,000+ individuals through an expanded anti-stigma campaign through blogs, social posts, and presentations
- Regular meetings and monthly newsletter communication with stakeholders about projects, events, and opportunities
- Hosted locality-specific training for local partners about Virginia OAA funding, performance tracking, and reporting requirements

2,338

visits to Rise Above
harm reduction services



400

ONEboxes for overdose
reversal purchased for
distribution to public
spaces and businesses
throughout the NRV

19

regional employers participated
in a workshop designed to
encourage skill-based hiring
and creating recovery-friendly
workspaces



17,204

on-demand
rides facilitated

NRV Passenger Rail

The New River Valley Passenger Rail Station Authority (NRVPRSA), the entity responsible for owning and operating the station, in conjunction with the Virginia Passenger Rail Authority (VPRA), the entity leading the project for the Commonwealth, has continued to work diligently on the passenger rail station in Christiansburg.

Progress continues on both major components of the New River Valley Passenger Rail Initiative: (1) the Virginia Passenger Rail Authority's (VPRA) station site construction and (2) the New River Valley Passenger Rail Station Authority's (NRVPRSA) passenger rail station building project.



VPRA, in conjunction with Norfolk Southern, continues construction of the station site to include the passenger platform, parking areas, access roads, utilities, and associated rail infrastructure. Construction is also progressing on the Radford layover facility, which will provide overnight train storage, servicing, inspection, and cleaning to support reliable daily Amtrak operations. These projects remain on schedule for the planned initiation of passenger rail service in 2027.

Simultaneously, the NRVPRSA continues to make significant progress under its Appalachian Regional Commission (ARC) Planning Grant for the rehabilitation of the historic Cambria Depot. Wendel, in partnership with Foresight Design Services, is providing architectural and engineering services for development of the Preliminary Architectural Report/Preliminary Engineering Report (PAR/PER), environmental review, final station design, construction bid documents, and an operational pro forma. The PAR/PER has been completed, and the environmental review is approximately 45% complete. The station design is approximately 60% complete and is currently awaiting review by Amtrak before advancing to the next phase. These planning activities will position the Authority to pursue construction funding for the depot rehabilitation and complete the station building in coordination with the ongoing site improvements.

New River Watershed Roundtable

The New River Watershed Roundtable continues to serve as a convenor of water quality interests across the region. At quarterly meetings, partners gather to learn about regional watershed projects, discuss water quality, and elevate ideas for collaboration. This year, the Roundtable served an important role in facilitating dialogue across the region, focusing on cleanup and resilience measures. The quarterly meetings have included an array of guest speakers from state and local organizations specializing in disaster response, water supply, drought conditions, as well as other topics of interest for the New River Watershed. The ReNew the New in the fall of 2026 will be an opportunity to get several hundred volunteers on the river to assist with continued debris removal from regular flows as well as remnants from Tropical Storm Helene in 2024.



Virginia Disaster Assistance Fund

In direct response to the impact of Tropical Storm Helene and the February 2025 Winter Storms, the Commonwealth of Virginia established a \$50M financial relief program to support homeowners, businesses, and communities facing major disaster-related damage and total losses to properties. The program, administered by the Virginia Department of Housing and Community Development (DHCD), is delivered through local governments and Planning District Commissions. The Regional Commission has been instrumental in facilitating this recovery effort, managing the intake and submission of applications and helping applicants navigate state requirements, documentation, and the review process.

Amount Awarded
\$625,221.38

Total Applicants
31

Damage Across the Region
\$2,664,918.44

To date, \$625,221.38 in relief funding has been awarded to eligible property owners across Giles, Montgomery, and Pulaski counties, areas most severely impacted by these disaster events in our region. These awards help recipients address critical property repairs, restore access, resolve safety concerns, and move forward with long-term recovery. As the program continues, the Commission remains dedicated to supporting eligible property owners through the process and serving the region's long-term recovery needs.

Planning Commissioners Training 2026



In partnership with the region's local government planning staff, the 2026 Planning Commissioners Training was an evening of education, fun, and fellowship. Hosted at the Montgomery County Government Center, Planning Commissioners played a competitive game of Planners Jeopardy ("PLAN-eopary!") and heard a presentation about data centers from Botetourt County. This annual training is a great way for Planning Commissioners and staff from around the region to network with their peers and expand their knowledge, with a twist of fun.

The Commission also had the opportunity to give a presentation on this annual event at the 2025 American Planners Association of Virginia summer conference, attended by planners from across the Commonwealth.

New River Valley Home Consortium

The New River Valley HOME Consortium was created in 2007 and utilizes an annual funding allocation from HUD to construct or rehabilitate affordable housing for low-to-moderate income households in the New River Valley.

- Completed construction on the Claremont Apartments in the Town of Pulaski, with developer Landmark Development. The project consists of both new construction and adaptive reuse of the old Claremont School and totals 50 units of affordable rental housing
- Celebrated the groundbreaking on the Stroubles Ridge homeownership project, constructed by Community Housing Partners. The first phase of the project will create 20 new homes utilizing modular construction

- Continued construction on the Legacy On Main Apartments, a 56-unit rental development in the Town of Blacksburg and owned by Community Housing Partners. The project is slated for completion by fall 2026
- Continued predevelopment efforts (environmental review, conceptual design, site acquisition) with New River Community Action on eight (8) new permanent supportive housing units using \$2.1M in (local and state) HOME American Rescue Plan Act funding
- Began project planning with Giles County to explore potential sites for a scatter-site infill homeownership project





Planning/ Technical Assistance

Town of Rich Creek ARPA

The Town of Rich Creek utilized American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) State and Local Fiscal Recovery Funds to construct a new fire department facility. These funds were allocated to help local governments mitigate the economic and public health consequences of COVID-19, with the Regional Commission providing grant administration support.



Christiansburg Comprehensive Plan Update



The Town of Christiansburg is in the final stages of updating its Comprehensive Plan, a long-range planning document that guides development decisions, establishes priorities for future programs and town initiatives, and informs public investment decisions. Throughout the project, the town engaged residents, businesses, stakeholders, and partner organizations through community events, an online engagement platform, focus groups, departmental interviews, and a community survey. Community engagement efforts resulted in more than 2,000 visits to the project website and over 1,000 survey responses. The town also recently held two public open houses to present the draft goals, objectives, and policies, to provide an opportunity for public review, and to receive final input before adoption. The updated Comprehensive Plan is scheduled to be considered for adoption this fall.

Giles County Comprehensive Plan

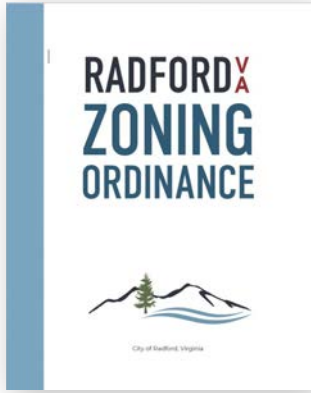


The Regional Commission is providing technical support for the updated Giles County Comprehensive Plan by providing data analysis and mapping to highlight key trends, challenges, and opportunities. These findings will shape the plan's goals, objectives, and

policies in the areas of land use, economic development, recreation, transportation, and more. The updated plan is expected to be complete by the end of 2026.

Radford Zoning Ordinance Rewrite

The City of Radford continued making significant progress on its Zoning Ordinance Rewrite, which is intended to modernize development regulations, improve usability, reduce



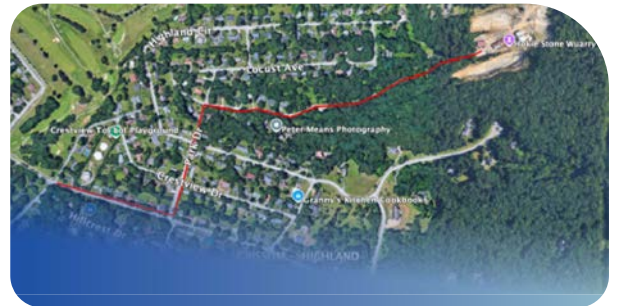
unnecessary barriers, and ensure consistency with current state and federal requirements. As part of the ordinance rewrite process, the City Council recently held a work session to review the draft ordinance and discuss the revisions developed collaboratively by the Planning Commission, city staff, and the Regional Commission. Key updates include reorganizing the ordinance for easier navigation, modernizing zoning districts and use tables, revising sign regulations, parking and landscaping standards, and updating telecommunications and other development regulations. Staff is continuing to refine the draft based on City Council and departmental feedback before releasing the ordinance for public review and an open house.

Citizen's Industrial Park Broadband Expansion Project

Citizen's Telephone Cooperative (Citizen's) received a \$540,000 Appalachian Regional Commission (ARC) grant to provide access to a regional open-access fiber network to three (3) separate locations, including an industrial park located in Dublin, the Virginia Tech Rock Quarry in Blacksburg, and an industrial park in Independence. In addition to the grant funds, Citizen's is contributing \$360,000 for a total project cost of \$900,000. The goal of this project is to create growth opportunities for economic advancement for existing businesses. It will also help retain existing businesses, allow businesses to expand, and attract businesses to bring new jobs and capital investment into the region.

Project activities include the construction of 26,400 LF (or five miles) of middle mile broadband network with approximately two miles of fiber installation at the industrial park located in Dublin, approximately 1.2 miles of fiber installation at the Virginia Tech Rock Quarry, and approximately 1.8 miles of fiber installation at the industrial park in Independence.

To date, the environmental review and all the pre-contract activity requirements have been completed, and Citizen's is getting under contract with ARC. With these preliminary activities complete, the project is positioned to begin implementation, extending high-speed broadband infrastructure to support businesses and future economic development within the three industrial parks and their associated counties. Project completion is expected by spring of 2027.



Pulaski County VATI

Construction began on the Pulaski County broadband project in April 2026. This hard-won step in delivering broadband availability to Pulaski residents means installation of nearly 300 miles of fiber is underway throughout the county. High-speed internet access will be available to over 7,000 households and businesses by the end of 2026 in unserved and underserved areas of the county.

The Regional Commission, partnering with Pulaski County and All Points Broadband (APB), received a \$29,122,000 VATI grant from DHCD. The County and APB together are providing an additional \$26,103,057 in matching funds.



VATI 2024 Giles County

Giles County received a \$4,199,596 Virginia Telecommunications Initiative (VATI) grant to provide broadband services to an underserved/unserved area in Giles County. There is an additional \$1,343,604 provided by the county and Pembroke Telephone Cooperative (PemTel). The primary purpose of this project is to construct 103 miles of the fiber needed to connect 611 resident and business locations in the White Gate, Staffordsville, Poplar Hill, Sugar Run, Wilburn Valley, and Walker Creek communities of Giles County to have access to reliable, high-speed (100/20 Mbps) fiber to the premises broadband.

Construction of the project continues to progress on schedule, with approximately 84 miles of fiber infrastructure completed, representing about 80% of the overall network. To date, 342 households and businesses are now being served, and project partners anticipate completing construction in fall 2026.

Town of Dublin Brownfields Multipurpose Grant



The Regional Commission continued assisting the Town of Dublin with implementation of its \$1M U.S. Environmental Protection Agency Brownfields Multipurpose Grant. The project focuses on the Dublin Industrial Park Target Area, where environmental assessment and cleanup work can help prepare underused properties for future redevelopment and investment.

The grant covers more than 200 acres across five priority areas within the Dublin Industrial Park and supports community involvement, property inventory, environmental site assessments, cleanup planning, and future

remediation. During the year, the town selected CHA Consulting as the project's qualified environmental professional. The Commission supported the procurement process, grant administration, required reporting, project coordination, and preparation for upcoming community input and environmental assessment work.

The next phase will include community input to share information about the grant, hear from residents and property owners, and better understand local priorities and concerns. Additional public engagement will occur as environmental findings and potential cleanup alternatives are developed.

This work will help the town better understand environmental conditions, identify cleanup needs and costs, and determine the steps required to return properties to productive use. The project is intended to reduce uncertainty for future development and support reinvestment, business activity, and job creation within the industrial park.

Town of Floyd Donnkenny Redevelopment Planning Project

The Regional Commission is assisting the Town of Floyd with its \$100,000 Community Development Block Grant planning project for the former Donnkenny property at 326 West Oxford Street. The project helps the Town evaluate how the vacant former industrial site could support future housing, community space, and other compatible uses.

During the year, the Town selected CJMW Architecture to complete the Preliminary Engineering Report and Preliminary Architectural Report. The Commission is supporting grant administration, project management, consultant coordination, market and feasibility work, and discussions with local leaders, property owners, and potential development partners.

Current concepts being explored include retaining a portion of the existing building for community-serving or commercial use, with housing considered across the remainder of the property. No final redevelopment plan has been selected. The next phase will include additional developer coordination, community input, and review of redevelopment alternatives.

The completed planning work will give the town a clearer understanding of project feasibility, development costs, infrastructure needs, and the steps required to move the property toward future investment.



\$100,000

CDBG planning grant

Former industrial property

Being planned for cleanup and redevelopment

Two redevelopment concepts

Being developed for community input

Housing and community use

Among the options being explored

Floyd County Scatter-site Housing Rehabilitation Project Phase II

Floyd County was recently awarded a second round of funding totaling \$1.24M from the Virginia Department of Housing and Community Development to rehabilitate eight (8) homes throughout the county. Households must have demonstrated housing need and earn less than 80% of the area median income. Over the past year, the project has accomplished the following milestones:

- Approved rehab applications for five of the eight projected households
- Began construction on the first housing rehab project, which will be done in conjunction with students from the Floyd County High School Building Trades program
- Partnered with Community Housing Partner's Weatherization Program to leverage additional funding to eligible households
- Hosted a group housing counseling class for rehab households in partnership with SERCAP



The Montgomery/Bland Counties Broadband Initiative

The Montgomery/Bland Counties Broadband Initiative's objective is to bring broadband internet connectivity to unserved and underserved households throughout Montgomery County and Bland County.

The Regional Commission, partnering with Montgomery County, Bland County, and GigaBeam Networks, received a \$39,233,355 VATI grant from the Department of Housing and Community Development. Montgomery County and GigaBeam together are providing \$38,247,340 in matching funds. Additionally, the Regional Commission, in conjunction with Montgomery County and GigaBeam, was able to secure two Virginia Make-Ready Initiative (VMRI) grants totaling \$1,365,489 to cover make-ready costs (utility pole replacements and mid-span pole installations).

The goal of this project is to install approximately 619 miles of fiber to provide broadband access to 11,587 households and 507 businesses throughout the remaining unserved and underserved areas of Montgomery County and Bland County.

Currently, GigaBeam has deployed more than 793 miles of fiber and installed more than 90 OLT cabinets in various locations throughout both Montgomery County and Bland County. GigaBeam is continuing to build out the network and is now serving 3,541 households, 223 businesses, and 56 community anchor institutions. This project is ongoing and is anticipated to be completed in the fall of 2026.

Calfee Training School Adaptive Reuse Project

The Town of Pulaski, in partnership with the Calfee Community and Cultural Center, received funding from the Appalachian Regional Commission (\$700,000) and the National Park Service (\$500,000) to continue the next phase of renovation work on the former Calfee School building.

- Construction began in fall of 2025, with completion slated for fall of 2026
- Construction includes the expansion of the existing warming kitchen into a certified commercial kitchen and exterior improvements such as a new roof, windows, and doors, and a restoration of the brick façade
- The completed kitchen will become the "Lena Huckstep Community Kitchen," where local food entrepreneurs can build successful businesses, local food producers can connect more directly with local markets, and community residents can access affordable, nutritious meals



Floyd County Industrial Access Grant Administration

The Regional Commission supported Floyd County's road extension in the Floyd County Commerce Center to support new pad sites with transportation access and utility extensions. Grant funding (\$5,185,023 in all) was provided by the Tobacco Commission, USEDPA, and ARC. The project is expected to be complete by the fall of 2026.



Regional Digital Opportunity Plan

With the region close to building out universal coverage for broadband, the time has come to think about how to make the most of that availability. Through the Digital Opportunity planning process, Floyd, Giles, Pulaski and Montgomery counties, and the City of Radford identified ways to increase broadband access and adoption in the New River Valley. Residents and businesses provided ideas through stakeholder meetings and online engagement channels focused on what they need and how they need better access to broadband and its opportunities.

Key findings and priorities are identified in the final plan, which can be found at engagenrv.org/nrv-digital-opportunities. The most significant needs to leverage available broadband are affordability, universal adoption, and digital literacy and training.

Nine themes emerged from the stakeholder process:

- Affordability
- Education
- Devices (for Access)
- Training & Upskilling
- Safety & Security Online
- Digital Literacy
- Healthcare Access
- Partnering
- Sustainability

1.1 KEY FINDINGS

- 1. Affordability:** Solve the affordability challenge such that every user who wants access at home can reasonably purchase it and every user has access to affordable devices, including large-screen devices. This will require sustainable technological solutions, cost support for subscriptions, and partnerships to expand low-cost or free access where cost burdens are not solved.
- 2. Universal Adoption:** Enable universal and optimal use of broadband when universal coverage is achieved. The goal focuses on expanding the use of broadband in workforce development, entrepreneurship, education, receiving essential services, telehealth, and accessing resources to improve quality of life. The strategies identified have crossover implementation – serving multiple populations in the objective and the strategies, though delivery may be most appropriate with a population-specific focus.
- 3. Digital Literacy and Training:** Equip the region's citizens with the skills and knowledge to be savvy and security-conscious users.

1.2 TOP PRIORITIES

Recognizing intersections in the priorities developed in the Digital Opportunity Plan's objectives and strategies can encourage consideration of multiple factors during implementation. However, the interconnection among them supports the broader goals in broadband adoption.



Nine themes
emerged from
the stakeholder
process:

- Affordability
- Education
- Devices (for Access)
- Training & Upskilling
- Digital Literacy
- Healthcare Access
- Partnering
- Sustainability
- Safety & Security Online

Economic Development & Human Services



Regional Economic Strategy Annual Update

With funding from the U.S. Economic Development Administration, the Regional Commission continued its year-round economic development work program as the region's designated Economic Development District. This work includes maintaining the Regional Economic Strategy, administering the New River Valley Revolving Loan Fund, reviewing regional economic and workforce data, coordinating with local and regional partners, and helping advance new projects and funding opportunities.

The Regional Economic Strategy serves as the primary document guiding economic development efforts across the New River Valley. During the year, Regional Commission staff worked with the Regional Economic Strategy Committee to review current economic, demographic, workforce, and labor-market information and discuss needs and opportunities identified by regional partners.

The strategy is organized around five regional goals:

Business Development and Entrepreneurship

Supporting existing businesses, entrepreneurs, and access to capital

Workforce Preparation and Support

Connecting economic development with workforce, education, and talent needs

Land, Infrastructure, and Site Readiness

Preparing sites, infrastructure, utilities, and redevelopment opportunities for future investment

Natural and Cultural Resources

Using the region's natural, cultural, recreation, and tourism assets to support the economy

Business-Friendly Governance and Partnerships

Strengthening coordination among local governments, economic development organizations, businesses, and regional partners

The Commission also hosted a regional lending roundtable that brought together lenders, economic development staff, and small-business support organizations. Participants discussed conventional lending, local and regional financing programs, common challenges businesses face when seeking financing, and ways partners can better connect businesses with available resources.

AM2 Advanced Manufacturing and Materials Tech Hub

The Regional Commission is helping lead the AM2 Advanced Manufacturing and Materials Tech Hub, a four-region initiative connecting manufacturers with technology, workforce, research, and business-support resources. The partnership includes the New River Valley, Roanoke Valley-Alleghany, Lynchburg, and Southern Virginia regions.

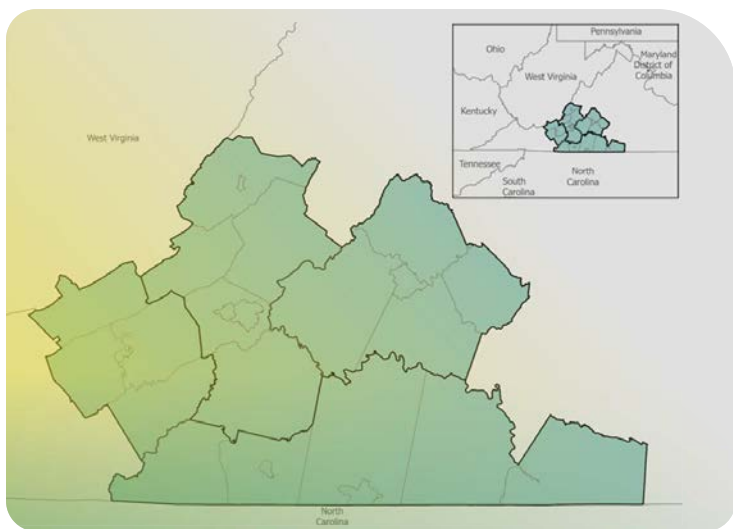


**Additive Manufacturing
& Advanced Materials
TECH HUB**

During the year, AM2 moved from regional planning into implementation. GO Virginia awarded \$4.2M for the initiative, supported by over \$2M in non-state matching resources. The Commission is leading coordination of the AM2 Consortium, including partner engagement, governance, communications, and connections with manufacturers and economic development organizations across the four-region footprint.

Implementation is organized around four connected programs: the AM2 Consortium, AM2 Studios, AM2 Fellows, and the AM2 Career Network. These programs will help manufacturers explore and adopt new technologies, connect businesses with specialized facilities and expertise, develop industry leaders, and build stronger education and workforce pathways.

The regional planning process included six All-Hands meetings, informational webinars, and a regional conference that brought together manufacturers, educators, workforce organizations, economic development partners, and research institutions. This work created the partnerships and implementation plan needed to begin the next phase of AM2 in May of 2026.



\$4.23M

GO Virginia implementation award

\$2.12M

Non-state resources leveraged

Four regions

New River Valley, Roanoke Valley-Alleghany, Lynchburg, and Southern Virginia

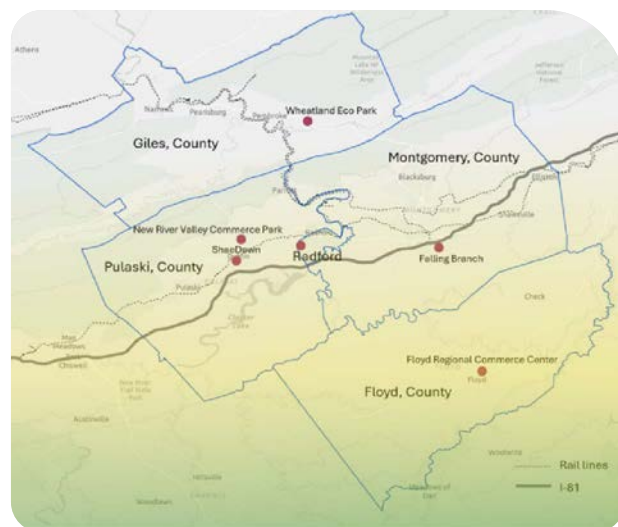
Four connected programs

Consortium, Studios, Fellows, and Career Network

New River Valley Site Advancement Strategy

With funding from GO Virginia Region 2, the Regional Commission is working with Onward New River Valley, local economic development offices, and Hurt & Proffitt to evaluate six priority employment sites. The project includes one site in each of the New River Valley's five jurisdictions—Floyd, Giles, Montgomery, and Pulaski counties and the City of Radford—along with the New River Valley Commerce Park, a regional industrial site owned and managed by Virginia's First Regional Industrial Facility Authority.

The project reviews each site's infrastructure, utility capacity, environmental and physical constraints,



development readiness, and alignment with the region's target industries. This work is helping identify potential improvements, additional studies, and investments needed to make each property more competitive for future business development.

The project is developing an advancement roadmap for each of the six sites, along with a regional Site Selection Investment Report. These resources will provide localities with clear next steps for advancing their sites, pursuing future funding, and responding to business and site-selection opportunities.

Six priority employment sites

Evaluated across the New River Valley, including five locality sites and one regional site

Six site advancement roadmaps

Identifying needs and next steps for each property

One regional investment report

Supporting future site development and funding decisions



New River Valley Housing Fund (PDC Housing Development Grant)

The Regional Commission is nearing completion of a \$2M grant from Virginia Housing for the development of at least 20 affordable housing units in the region. The Regional Commission used that funding to create the New River Valley Housing Fund (NRVHF). This past year, the project has:

- Completed construction on the Claremont Apartments (Town of Pulaski) with developer Landmark Development. The project consists of both new construction and adaptive reuse of old Claremont Elementary School, creating 50 units of affordable rental housing (NRVHF provided \$850,000)
- Nearing completion on the Legacy on Main Apartments (Town of Blacksburg) with 56 new affordable rental units. The project is currently accepting applications for income eligible households (NRVHF provided \$950,000)



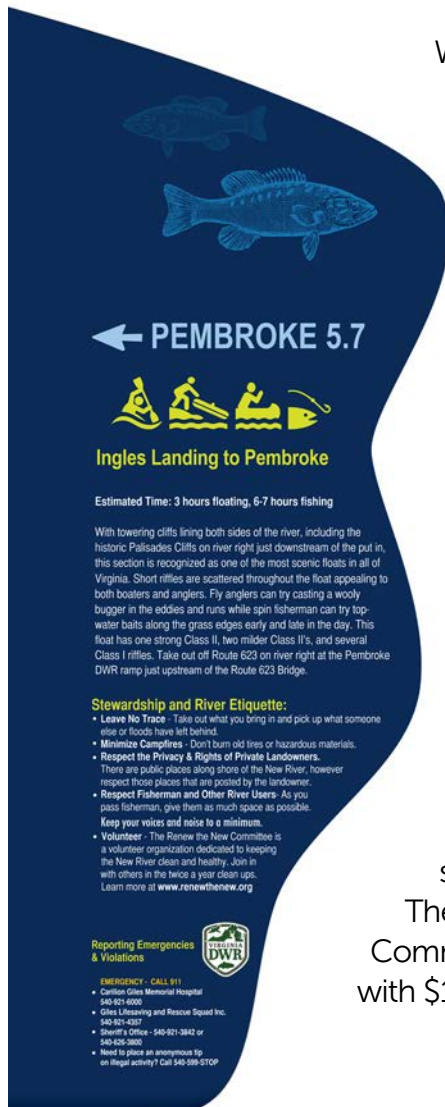
- Received \$305,000 for FY26 in local investment from local governments and the Community Foundation of the NRV
- Invited by Virginia Funders Network to participate in a video spotlight for regional housing efforts underway in the New River Valley
- Presented on the work of the NRV Housing Fund as a guest speaker at a regional housing summit in the Central Shenandoah region

New River Valley Revolving Loan Fund

The New River Valley Revolving Loan Fund provides gap financing to support the startup and expansion of eligible small businesses across the region. Loans generally range from \$10,000 to \$25,000 and may finance up to 90% of eligible project costs. Funds may be used for equipment and machinery, working capital, property acquisition, construction, rehabilitation, and site or leasehold improvements.

Previously issued loans were repaid during the year, returning capital to the fund for future lending. More than \$100,000 in dedicated loan capital is currently available to support eligible small businesses across the New River Valley. Commission staff continues to respond to inquiries, explain program requirements, and connect prospective borrowers with financing and business-support resources.

New River Water Trail Expansion Efforts



Work towards expanding the water trail continued in FY26 and included advancing the design phase of new boat access facilities, successful grant funding for wayfinding signage on the river, and collaborating with partners to expand the water trail into West Virginia, southwest Virginia, and North Carolina. The Regional Commission continues to support NRWT initiatives through grant writing, administering grant funding, collecting and maintaining a GIS database, preparing plans and studies, and facilitating the New River Watershed Roundtable.

New River Valley Boat Access Facility Improvements

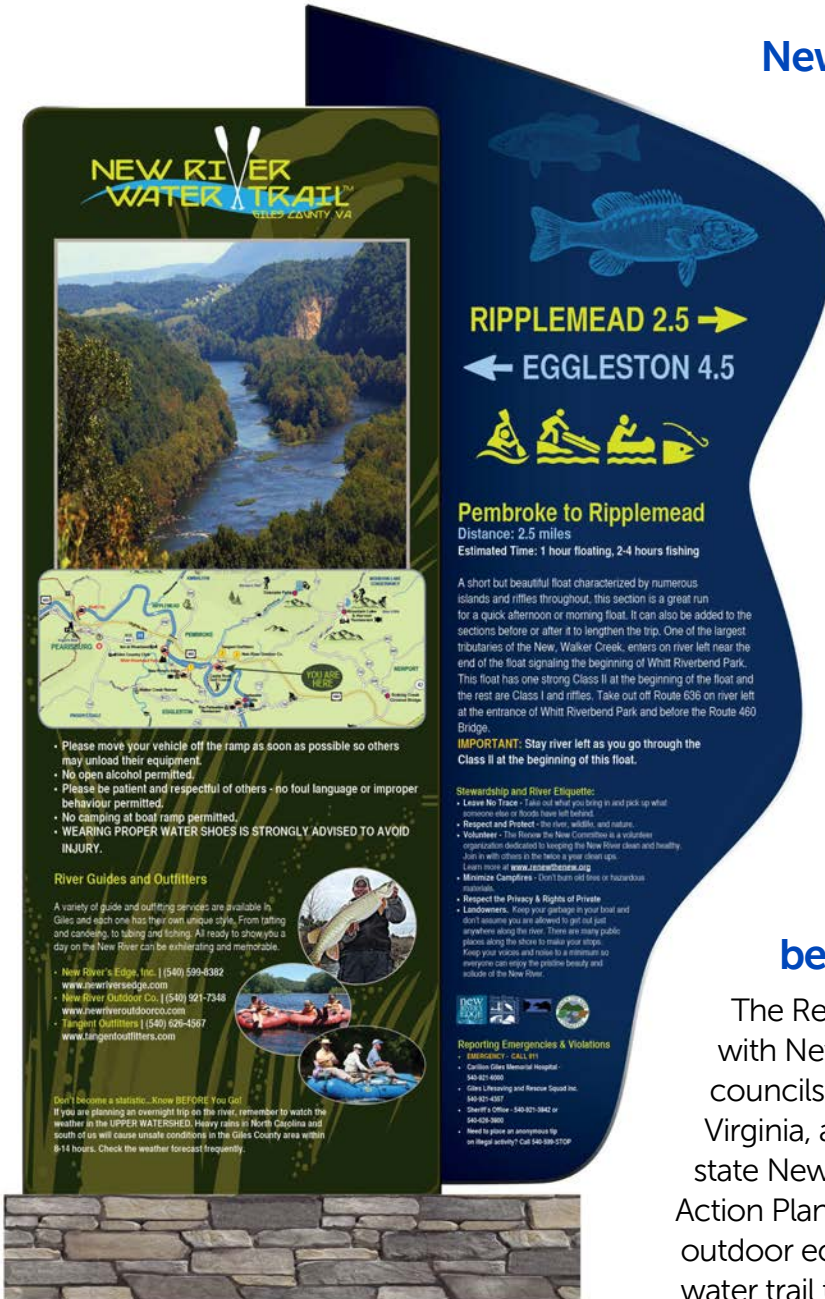
The Regional Commission is partnering with the Appalachian Regional Commission, Giles, Montgomery, and Pulaski Counties, and the City of Radford to add four new river access points along the water trail. The design of the Montgomery County facility reached the final stages of permitting and should be ready to advertise for construction later this fall. Pulaski and Giles County facilities should follow shortly thereafter, as design wraps up in the next few months. The improvements are funded by \$1.5M Appalachian Regional Commission POWER Initiative funds and matched by NRV partners with \$1.9M, for a total project of \$3.4M.

New River Water Trail Signage

The Regional Commission is partnering with the Virginia Department of Conservation and Recreation to provide kiosks at new boat access facilities and new wayfinding signage along the water trail. Once complete, each public boat access located along the 61 miles of New River Water Trail will have a kiosk sign, featuring a map, recommended float sections, and safety and stewardship information. Mile markers and additional wayfinding signage are also being explored and could be installed at up to 20 new locations. The project was awarded \$63,600 through DCR's Recreational Trails Program in June 2025.

Expanding the NRWT beyond the New River Valley

The Regional Commission is collaborating with New River Conservancy and regional councils of government in North Carolina, Virginia, and West Virginia to develop a multi-state New River Action Plan. The New River Action Plan aims to significantly advance regional outdoor economies by creating a multi-state water trail that stretches over 200 miles.



NEW RIVER WATER TRAIL
GILES COUNTY, VA

RIPPLEMEAD 2.5 →
← **EGGLESTON 4.5**

Pembroke to Ripplemead
Distance: 2.5 miles
Estimated Time: 1 hour floating, 2-4 hours fishing

A short but beautiful float characterized by numerous islands and riffles throughout, this section is a great run for a quick afternoon or morning float. It can also be added to the sections before or after it to lengthen the trip. One of the largest tributaries of the New, Walker Creek, enters on river left near the end of the float signaling the beginning of Whitt River Bend Park. This float has one strong Class II at the beginning of the float and the rest are Class I and riffles. Take out off Route 636 on river left at the entrance of Whitt River Bend Park, and before the Route 460 Bridge.

IMPORTANT: Stay river left as you go through the Class II at the beginning of this float.

Stewardship and River Etiquette:

- **Leave No Trace** - Take out what you bring in and pick up what someone else or floods have left behind.
- **Respect and Protect** - The river, wildlife, and others.
- **Volunteer** - The New River Commission is a volunteer organization dedicated to keeping the New River clean and healthy. Join in with others in the future to your clean up. Learn more at www.newrivercommission.org.
- **Minimize Campfires** - Don't burn old tires or hazardous materials.
- **Respect the Privacy & Rights of Private Landowners** - Keep your garbage in your boat and don't assume you are allowed to get out and anywhere along the river. There are many public places along the shore to make your stop. Keep your motor and noise to a minimum so everyone can enjoy the pristine beauty and solitude of the New River.

Reporting Emergencies & Violations

- **EMERGENCY - CALL 911**
- **Carroll County Memorial Hospital**
360-55-4600
- **Giles Licensing and Rescue Squad Inc.**
360-621-4367
- **County Office** - 360-621-3842 or 360-629-3600
- **Need to place an anonymous tip on illegal activity?** Call 360-366-2728

River Guides and Outfitters

A variety of guide and outfitting services are available in Giles and each one has their own unique style. From tubing and canoeing, to tubing and fishing. All ready to show you a day on the New River can be exhilarating and memorable.

- **New River's Edge, Inc.** | (540) 599-6382
www.newriversedge.com
- **New River Outdoor Co.** | (540) 921-7348
www.newriveroutdoorco.com
- **Tangent Outfitters** | (540) 626-4367
www.tangentoutfitters.com

Don't become a statistic...Know BEFORE You Go!
If you are planning an overnight trip on the river, remember to watch the weather in the UPPER WATERSHED. Heavy rains in North Carolina and south of us will cause unsafe conditions in the Giles County area within 6-14 hours. Check the weather forecast frequently.

Mount Rogers Workforce Development Area



2025-2026 Program Outcomes

EMPLOYMENT IMPACT



369

CREATING PATHWAYS. CHANGING LIVES STRENGTHENING OUR REGION.

Through innovative grant programs and comprehensive workforce services, we are helping people build skills, earn credentials, and achieve meaningful employment.

OUR DISCRETIONARY GRANT PROGRAMS

These programs create opportunities, build skills, and connect individuals to meaningful employment

Every number represents a person gaining employment and the opportunity for a better future. These programs and services are building a stronger workforce, supporting employers, and creating thriving communities across our region.



ARC READY

Strengthens our organization through systems, staff development, and data tools to better serve our region.



25 Entered Employment



PATHWAY HOME

Provides in-prison and reentry workforce training for justice involved individuals to reduce recidivism and build second chances.



38 Entered Employment



YOUTHBUILD

Empowers young adults (16-24) through education, construction training, leadership development, and supportive services.



36 Entered Employment



REBOOT RECOVERY

Supports individuals in recovery with workforce training, peer support, and mentoring to create stable, sustainable careers.



51 Entered Employment



TRADES GAP

Prepares individuals for high-demand skilled trades through hands-on training and industry recognized credentials.



31 Entered Employment



WORC

Workforce Opportunities for Rural Communities

Expands pathways to careers through training, work experience, and employer partnerships across rural communities.



40 Entered Employment

WIOA (Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act) Services



VIRGINIA WORKS

Connecting job seekers and employers to build a stronger workforce.



148

Entered Employment through WIOA funded services provided across our region.



Career Coaching



Job Search Assistance



Training Opportunities



Employer Connections

OUR IMPACT



\$19.38

median wage of employed participants.

When individuals become employed, taxpayer dollars are freed up to support other critical needs in our community.



A STRONG RETURN ON INVESTMENT

A majority of our participants face significant barriers to employment and rely on public assistance. When individuals gain employment, communities benefit through increased economic activity, stronger families, and a reduced reliance on public resources.

\$22,000+

Average annual cost to incarcerate one person

Pathway Home prepares individuals for successful reentry and employment.

\$6,000+

Average Annual Value of Public Benefits

When individuals become employed, taxpayer dollars are freed up to support other critical community needs.

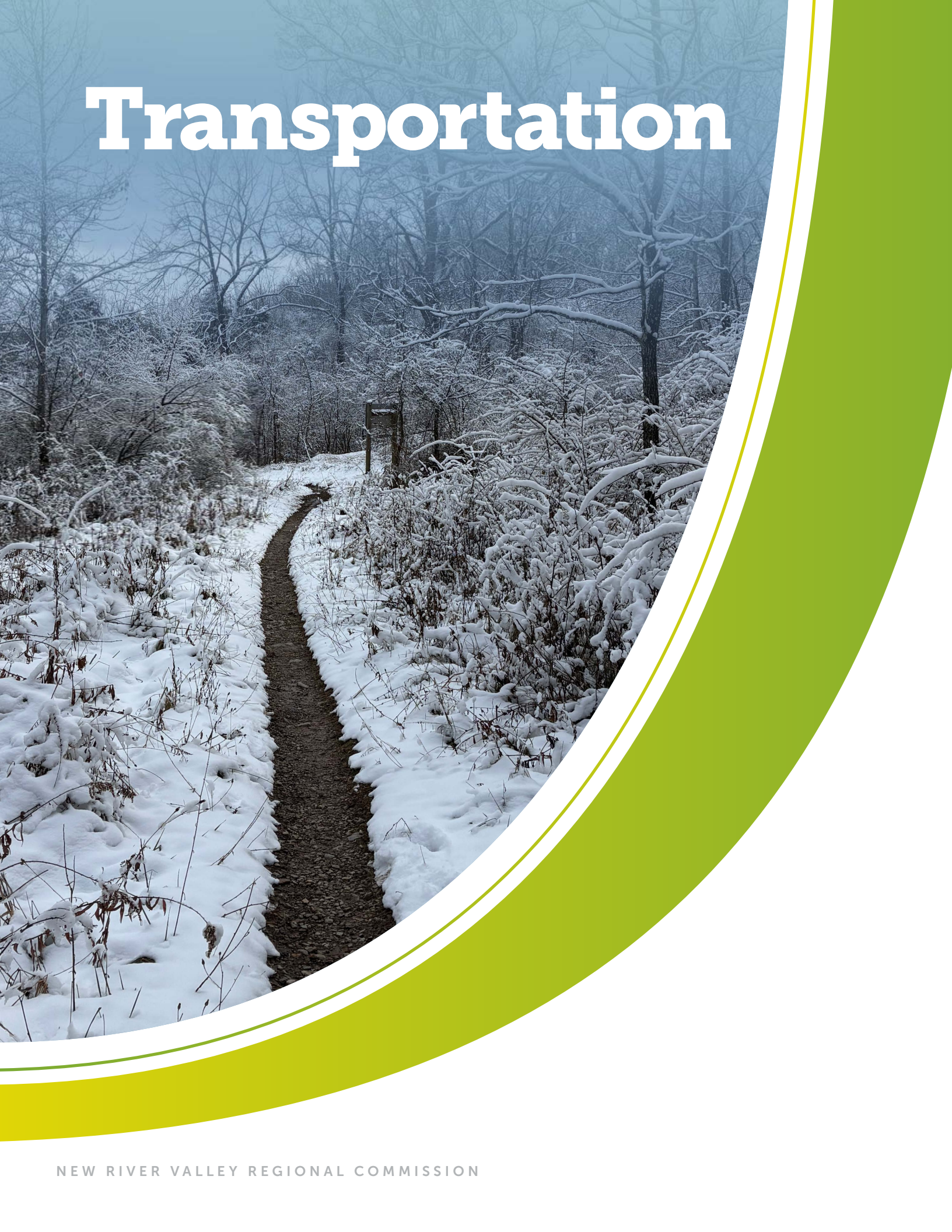
\$28,000+

Estimated Annual Return to Society per Participant

Increased earnings, and reduced public costs, creates a more stable community.

The New River/Mount Rogers Workforce Development Board is an Equal Opportunity Employer/Program. Auxiliary Aids and Services are available upon request to individuals with disabilities. View our Funding Statements: <https://vcwnewrivermtrogers.com/about-us/fundingstatements>

Transportation



RIDE Solutions

RIDE Solutions continues to connect with commuters through community outreach and employer events. Staff promoted Bike to Work Week in May and attended various community events throughout the year. The program continues to experience growth in commuter use of carpool matches, trip planning, and trip logging for rewards. Participation in supporting partner efforts include:

- Farmers' Markets around the valley
- Virginia Tech's Sustainable Transportation Fair
- NRV Job Fair

The RIDE Solutions app continues to be the primary online resource for individuals looking for carpool matches and transportation choices.

- Current NRV app user stats: over 1,600 commuters in the NRV — 66% of those commuting within the NRV; and 168 employers represented
- Nearly 2,000 carpool matches were requested, and 41% found matches
- This fiscal year, RIDE Solutions' NRV members reduced 120,678 vehicle miles and 7,089 trips
- Active users accumulated a savings of \$86,136



NRVMPO Long-Range Transportation Plan

Virginia's New River Valley Metropolitan Planning Organization is responsible for transportation planning within the urbanized areas of the region. The planning area includes the Towns of Blacksburg and Christiansburg, the City of Radford, and parts of Montgomery and Pulaski counties that are just beyond town/city limits.

The composition of transportation mode choices diversifies to align with transitions of housing types and densities. For example, in and around Virginia Tech and Radford University, 75% of homes are renter occupied and the higher-density areas are supported by fixed-route transit systems, sidewalks, and bicycle amenities that connect population and activity centers. The area also includes what Esri, a mapping tool, refers to as rustic outposts, as the planning areas extend beyond town/city limits. Households and lot sizes become larger, and more than 75% is owner-occupied. In these planning areas, it is common for households to own three vehicles or more.

The Regional Commission was pleased to support the MPO with its 2050 Long-Range Transportation Plan (LRTP) update. Work included ground-truthing land use, population, and employment data; conducting community engagement activities and working with local partners to develop a constrained list of transportation needs through 2050. Over the next 25-year planning horizon, maintaining a multi-modal transportation system will become increasingly challenging. The LRTP identified more than \$2B of unmet transportation needs throughout the region. Less than 60% of transportation needs can be funded based on historical funding levels.

The Regional Commission looks forward to continuing collaborative efforts with the Virginia DOT, local government and institutions of higher education, transit operators, airport managers, and other local partners to support long-range transportation planning initiatives.

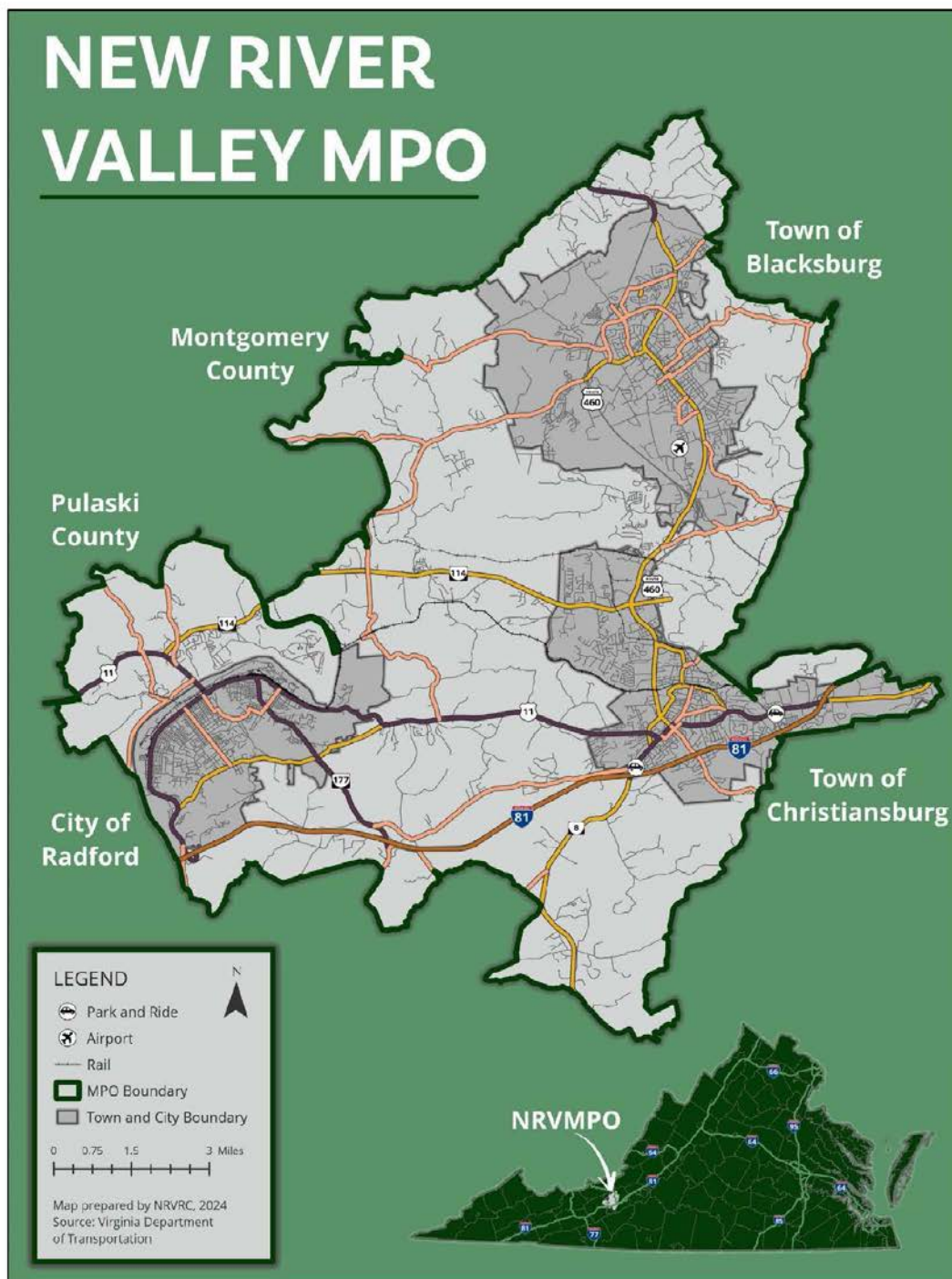




NEW RIVER VALLEY MPO 2050 | LRTP

Approved: November 6, 2025

NEW RIVER VALLEY MPO



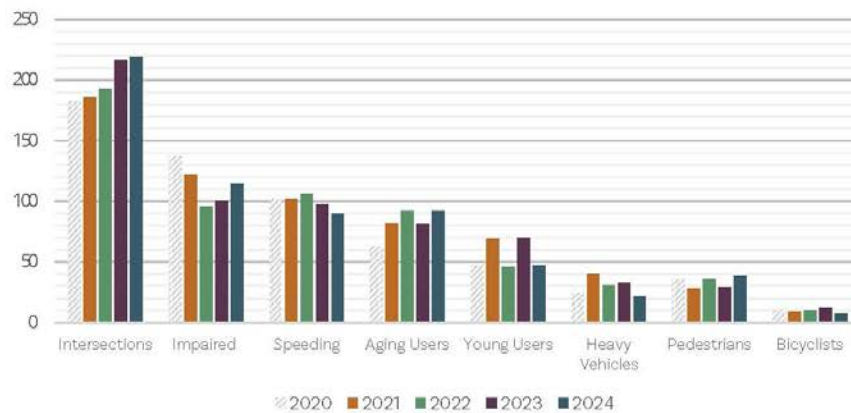
NRVMP
2050 | **LRTP**

Excerpts from the 2050 Long-Range Transportation Plan (LRTP)

Safety & Accessibility

The Virginia Department of Transportation and the Department of Motor Vehicles are responsible for maintaining records of crashes, fatalities, and injuries that occur statewide. The MPO is responsible for reviewing and establishing annual performance targets to meet federal requirements. The New River Valley supports the statewide vision of reducing fatalities and serious injuries by 50 percent by 2045. Virginia's Strategic Highway Safety Plan (SHSP) has six key principles: 1) death and serious injury is unacceptable, 2) humans make mistakes, 3) humans are vulnerable, 4) redundancy is critical, 5) Safety is proactive, and 6) responsibility is shared. Within the urbanized areas of VDOT's Salem District, deaths and serious injuries are trending down amongst roadway user groups and driving behaviors. However, intersections and pedestrian safety are emphasis areas that require attention.

People Killed or Seriously Injured⁵
VDOT Salem District - Urban Area



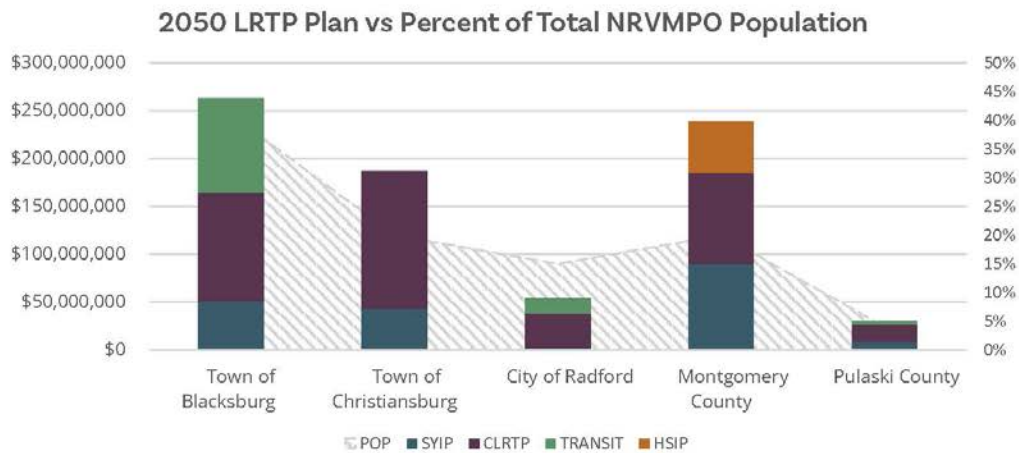
Accessibility is a primary focus area at the local and regional levels within the planning area. There are several standing committees that focus on bicycle, pedestrian, bike share, transit, and TDM initiatives. The MPO is supporting updates for bus stop safety and accessibility studies and the employment mobility guide in FY26-27. In addition, Urban Development Areas have been identified and established as required by the Code of Virginia throughout the MPO planning area. Each program and study is intended to improve the multimodal transportation system, increasing mode choice and improving safety for all users.

⁵ Virginia Department of Transportation, Strategic Highway Safety Plan, SHSP Dashboard. Retrieved from: <https://www.vdot.virginia.gov/about/safety-plan/>

More than \$1 Billion will be invested in the New River Valley's urbanized planning area over the next twenty-five years. Sixty percent of which is programmed for Interstate 81 improvements to enhance safety, reduce congestion, and unlock the region for further economic growth. I-81 is a key north-south freight corridor that sees 21 million truck trips each year, moves \$300 billion in goods, and accounts for 43% of statewide truck volume.

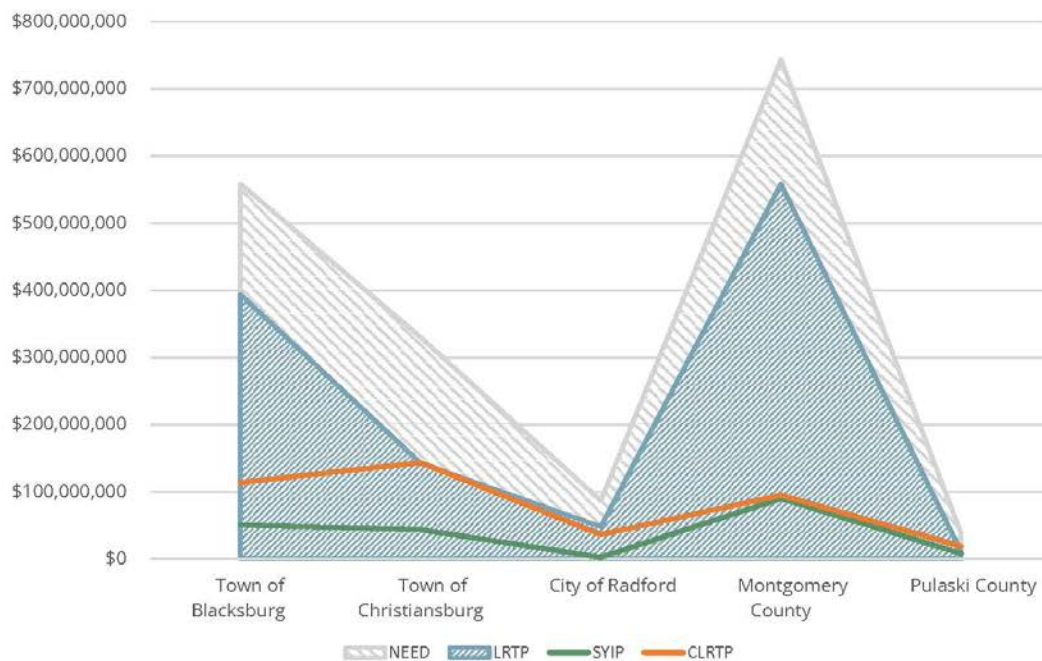
\$115 Million+ is aimed at improving existing public transit systems, by updating technology/equipment and improving bus stop locations. An additional \$300 Million is anticipated to support improvements to local roadways, intersection design and signalization, access management, bridges, and pedestrian networks.

Community-Level Summary CL RTP FUNDING PLAN	SYIP FY26-FY30	CL RTP FY31-FY50	TRANSIT 2025 TSPs	HSIP SAFETY
Town of Blacksburg	\$50,753,619	\$114,026,638	\$98,475,833	
Town of Christiansburg	\$43,557,000	\$143,774,410		
City of Radford	\$2,556,000	\$36,428,772	\$15,188,908	
Montgomery County	\$89,997,000	\$95,247,775		\$53,528,820
Pulaski County	\$8,310,000	\$19,012,730	\$2,608,467	



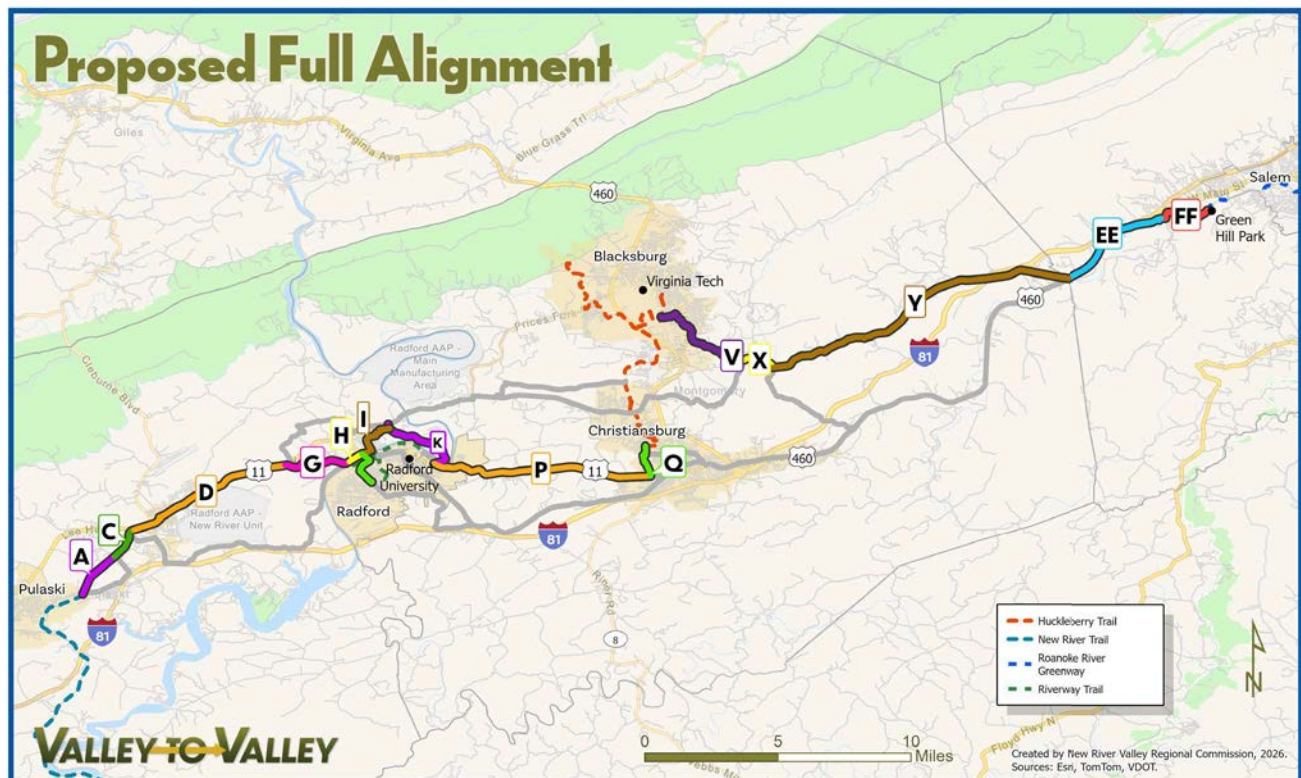
Community-Level Summary VISION PLAN	SYIP FY26-FY30	CL RTP FY31-FY50	L RTP FY50+	UNMET NEED FY50+
Town of Blacksburg	\$50,753,619	\$114,026,638	\$394,066,000	70.5%
Town of Christiansburg	\$43,557,000	\$143,774,410	\$142,893,819	43.3%
City of Radford	\$2,556,000	\$36,428,772	\$48,000,000	55.2%
Montgomery County	\$89,997,000	\$95,247,775	\$558,501,923	75.1%
Pulaski County	\$8,310,000	\$19,012,730	\$11,029,146	28.8%

2050 SYIP + CL RTP Funding vs. Known Needs



Valley to Valley

The Regional Commission continued advancing the vision for the Valley to Valley Trail, a proposed regional multi-use trail connecting the New River Valley and the Roanoke Valley through existing trail systems, including the New River Trail State Park, Radford Riverway Trail, Huckleberry Trail, and the Roanoke River Greenway. Building on the 2024 feasibility study, the Commission led a comprehensive public engagement effort to gather stakeholder and community input on potential trail alignments. Between July 2025 and April 2026, the project included development of a public outreach campaign, an interactive online survey, stakeholder review, and in-person engagement events across Pulaski County, Radford, and Montgomery County.



The engagement process generated 784 public responses through online and in-person participation, providing valuable feedback on preferred trail routes and community priorities. Survey results identified clear public preferences for alignments connecting existing public infrastructure, while emphasizing the importance of safety and access to recreational destinations. The findings, along with a cost feasibility analysis, will guide future planning and implementation efforts in the region.



Finance & Personnel



Volunteer Contributions

The Regional Commission is committed to utilizing our time, talents, and passion by volunteering to serve communities outside of our regular program of work.

The following is a list of organizations our team volunteered time with this past fiscal year:

- Blacksburg Farmer's Market
- Blacksburg High School Marching Band
- Downtown Christiansburg, Inc.
- Gaye Y. Whitaker Memorial Fund
- Live, Work, Eat, Grow
- Montgomery Museum of Art & History
- New River Community Action
- Renew the New
- School-Based Health Alliance of Virginia
- Tails of Recovery
- YMCA International Women
- Red Cross



Director's Message

Regional accomplishments often require partnerships, patience, diligence, technical expertise, and a willingness to see something greater on the horizon. Each of the Regional Commission's core program areas demonstrates these attributes as we work collectively to deliver projects that create lasting impacts for the communities we serve.

In FY26, the Regional Commission made significant progress across the region. We helped add affordable housing units to the market, advanced readiness for the reintroduction of passenger rail service, and secured investments to implement AM2, a key economic development strategy focused on additive manufacturing and advanced materials. We administered funding to connect over 20,000 locations to fiber broadband, assisted property owners in accessing more than \$500,000 in state funding for impacts from Tropical Storm Helene, supported increased access and education for individuals in substance use recovery, and neared completion of renovations for the organization's new office in Christiansburg.

Behind each of these accomplishments are Regional Commission team members who serve with purpose and pride, helping the New River Valley recognize and take advantage of opportunities. None of this work would be possible without the support of our member local governments, higher education institutions, board members, and partners. Our members help identify needs, engage with projects every day, and provide the partnerships and support for successful implementation.

When a resident opens the door to a new housing unit, the train whistle signals the return of passenger rail, a new job is announced, healthcare is accessed online, repairs are completed on a structure damaged by flooding, or people gather around a new regional meeting table, it is worth taking a moment to reflect on all of the people who helped make that accomplishment possible.



Regional success takes all of us working in the same direction. That is what we strive to do every day at the Regional Commission. We are grateful for the continued collaboration of our members, partners, and communities, and we look forward to seeing what we can accomplish together in FY27 as we continue working to advance the New River Valley.

Kevin Byrd, AICP
Executive Director

Finance Report

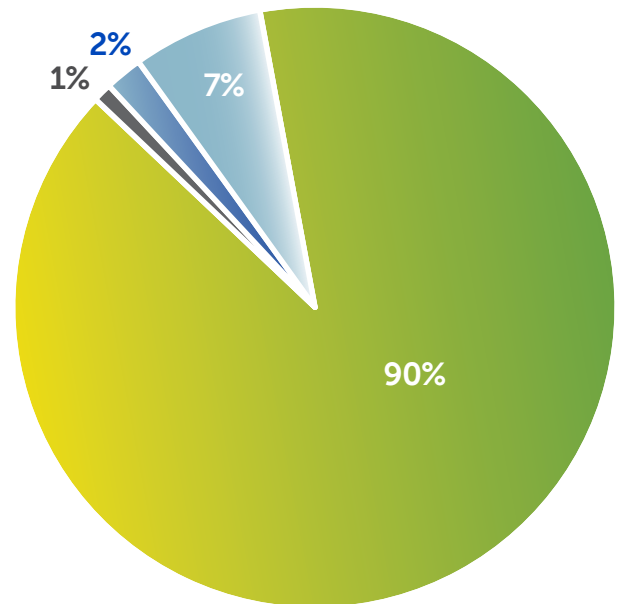
Year Ended June 30, 2026

Revenues

Grants and Appropriations

Federal	2,751,972
State.....	34,594,223
Local.....	801,620
Other	175,701

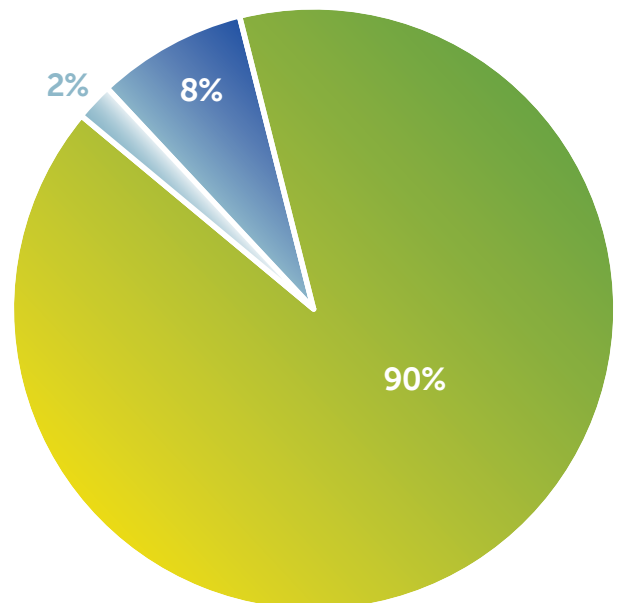
Total..... \$38,323,515



Expenditures

Personnel.....	3,112,681
Contractual	34,752,851
Operations & Other.....	748,445

Total..... \$38,613,977





6580 Valley Center Dr.
Suite 124
Radford, VA 24141

nrvrc.org

