



New River Valley

Planning District Commission

FY 2013-2014 Annual Report

CHAIR'S MESSAGE



Most of the time when folks write this kind of column, it's looking back and often bragging on things accomplished. Briefly, I want to look forward, definitely brag a bit and anticipate great things still to come.

Maybe it's the boy in me, but I'm still in awe of trains. And I am so excited at the prospects of passenger rail service being extended to the New River Valley and beyond, westward to Bristol.

I'm proud of the role the New River Valley Planning District Commission has played thus far in this project and its progress. The PDC's role as a "convener" continues to evolve with so many projects and in so many directions and this passenger rail service "effort" is a prime example. The effort to bring the train back to our valley is a top priority. In regard to that aspect of this effort we are already rolling down the track.

We can already see around the bend and know locating the station site confronts us. Will it be Radford, or Christiansburg, or Blacksburg or maybe Pulaski? Who knows? Nobody yet!

Our PDC is poised to bring all the parties together and to work with all to assure the best site is chosen. "Harmony not Conflict" continues to be the trademark of the PDC and its staff as they convene the party!

This is a big regional project. Like all of these kinds of projects, this passenger rail service project will have many "when" and "how" questions to be answered and then resolved. Be assured the PDC is up to the challenge as is our New River Valley and all the players. I look forward to the day when that black shiny engine rolls down the track from Roanoke, pulls into our NRV station and the party really begins.

Michael S. Patton, Chair

FY2013-2014 COMMISSIONERS

Floyd County

Ms. Evelyn Janney
Mr. Fred Gerald

Giles County

Mr. Richard McCoy
Mr. Leon Law

Montgomery County

Ms. Annette Perkins
Mr. Ray Chambers

Pulaski County

Mr. Charles Bopp
Dr. Doug Warren

City of Radford

Mr. Tim Cox
Dr. Helen Harvey
Mr. Keith Marshall

Town of Blacksburg

Ms. Holly Lesko, Past Chair
Ms. Cecile Newcomb

Town of Christiansburg

Mr. Scott Weaver, Treasurer
Mr. Henry Showalter

Town of Floyd

Mr. Michael Patton, Chair

Town of Narrows

Mr. Tom Garrett

Town of Pearisburg

Ms. Susie Journell

Town of Pulaski

Mr. Larry Clevinger
Mr. Greg East

Town of Rich Creek

Mr. William Kantsios

Radford University

Mr. Joe Carpenter

Virginia Tech

Mr. Kevin Sullivan, Vice Chair
Mr. Jason Soileau



REGIONAL COOPERATION

New River Valley Livability Initiative

The three-year collaborative planning process for the Livability Initiative celebrated the release of final reports in February, 2014. All told, the process engaged over 3,000 residents of the region, hosted several hundred meetings to gain further insight on a future vision and published three reports documenting data, trends, projects and vision captured in a regional report, and sub-reports for housing and energy. The project was guided by a consortium comprised of local governments, non-profits and local serving agencies. In November the Livability Initiative hosted a regional meeting to brief leaders on the findings of the planning process and to secure feedback before the plan went into publication. Public input shaped the direction and content for the reports which was collected through a multitude of means including a planning board game created for the region called, BUILT NRV; an interactive web-based survey called NRV Tomorrow, as well as paper surveys, a community priorities survey, public meetings, topic-specific working groups, focus groups and a month-long public comment period on the final reports.

The final report is broken down into four themes shaped by the input gathered during the planning process; Enhancing the Living and Working Environment; Preserving Rural Heritage and Community Character; Making the Business Environment More Productive and Resilient; and Building Healthy Communities. Goals and strategies identified for each theme are supported by data and trends. The intention of the reports is to help inform decision making in communities across the region and serve as the foundation for collaborations that can champion efforts. The final reports can be found on the Commission's website and hardcopies are also available.



Going forward, the NRV Livability Initiative is being transitioned to the Community Foundation of the New River Valley. As a local philanthropy dedicated to raising local funds for local needs, the Foundation will be evaluating their grant programs to determine whether their funds are directed to the areas of highest need as identified by the Livability Initiative planning process. Further, the Commission will partner with the Foundation to monitor progress in areas of high need and measure data relevant to indicators established in the plans.

Regional Convening

The Commission Board of Directors hosted a dinner meeting for all elected officials in the region at Radford University to honor the Commission's inaugural award recipients. Nearly 100 local government elected officials, along with planning commission chairs as well as state and federal elected representatives were in attendance.



Mr. Joseph "Joe" Sheffey, Chair of the Pulaski County Board of Supervisors, received the Champion of the Valley award, given to an elected official within or representing the region. As Chair of the Pulaski County board since 1996, Sheffey has led the Pulaski County in the growth and development of regional efforts. Mr. Sheffey's concern for others, patient demeanor, even-handed approach, professional manner, frank perspective, level-headedness and commitment to doing the right thing in all circumstances have contributed to the success of so many regional endeavors. Dr. Charles Steger, President of Virginia Tech, received the Citizen of the Year award for his 14 years of service as President diligently pursuing the course he laid out to establish the university among the nation's premier research institutions.

Regional Tourism

In May, the Commission convened the region's first tourism discussion among local government administrative officials and the destination marketing organization (DMO) staff. In FY14 for the first time the region has a staff person in all four counties and the city dedicated to tourism in whole or in part. Realizing the significance of staffing presence, the Commission worked with local government leaders to convene a meeting to discuss their respective markets, strategies and collaboration opportunities. The May meeting well attended by local government managers and tourism staff, with representation across all four counties, the city and several towns. All four counties and the city have tourism plans and the group expressed a desire to identify collaboration items within the existing plans which may serve as the foundation of a regional plan. The NRVPCDC will continue to host regional tourism discussions in the future as well as explore opportunities to develop a regional tourism plan.

New River Valley Mayors and Chairs

In FY14 the Commission established an important regional convening role by bringing together the chief elected officials (Mayors and Board of Supervisor Chairs) from all the local governments in the region. The group established a bi-annual meeting schedule for the fall and spring each year. The meeting provides an opportunity for peer learning and exchange among the mayors and chairs as well as their chief administrative officials who also attend the meeting. Both meetings in FY14 were well attended with representation across the region and lively discussion regarding issues of mutual interest.

New River Valley HOME Consortium

Since its inception in 2007, the HOME Consortium has leveraged approximately \$6.28 for every dollar of HOME funds and created almost 350 units of affordable housing in the New River Valley. In the past year, construction has begun or been completed on two single-family homes for households earning at or below 50% of the area median income in a partnership with Habitat for Humanity, eight apartments for persons 55 and older on Grissom Lane in Blacksburg in partnership with Community Housing Partners, 46 renovated rental units at the Laurel Woods complex in Pulaski in partnership with Community Housing Partners, and five rental units in downtown Radford in partnership with Taylor Hollow Construction.

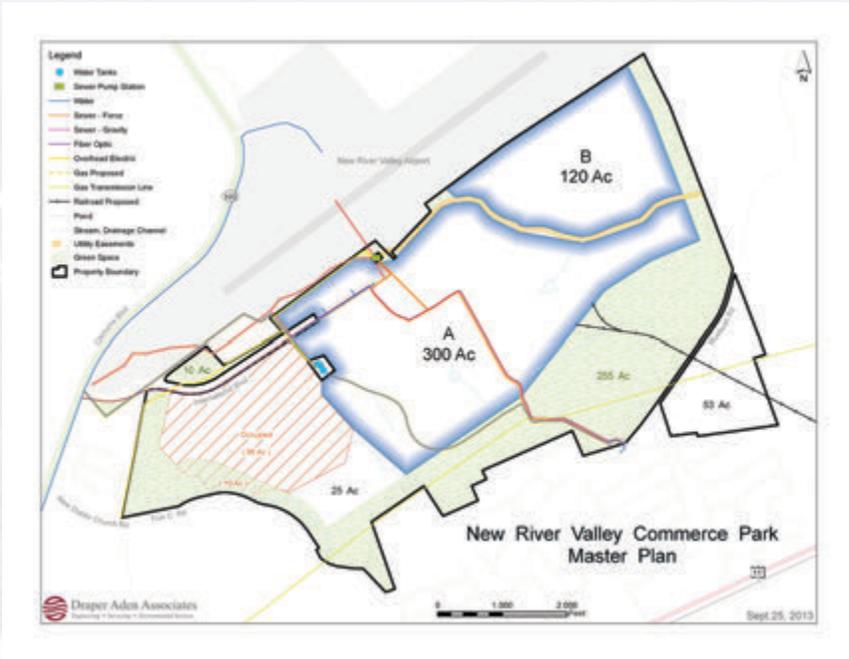
The HOME Consortium also played a vital role in a regional partnership to hire a 3-year VISTA volunteer to work on the creation of a strategic plan to better help people age at home and in their communities. This partnership also includes the NRV Planning District Commission, NRV Agency on Aging, VT Center for Gerontology, NRV Habitat for Humanity, VT Meyers School of Construction, and Department of Rehabilitative Services.



REGIONAL COOPERATION

Virginia's First & New River Valley Commerce Park

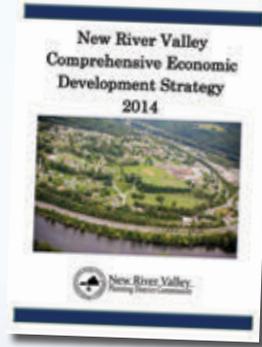
Virginia's First continues to focus on economic development opportunity in the NRV, with efforts for this year centered on the New River Valley Commerce Park. Staff have been assisting with the administrative and financial functions of the authority and its New River Valley Commerce Park Participation Committee. Design and development work is being done this fiscal year and next to better position the park in the market, particularly in response to a site certification process created by American Electric Power. Staff have assisted with site assessment activities and coordination of engineering design and studies.



ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT & HUMAN SERVICES

Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy Annual Update

The 2014 New River Valley Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy (CEDS) serves as the five-year update. Every five years Economic Development Districts are tasked with making a major update to the CEDS followed by four annual updates. The major changes in this year's document include a more robust data analysis, an infrastructure breakdown, and included major findings and goals developed through the New River Valley Livability Initiative. Projects were solicited from all four counties, the City of Radford, and the towns within the region. The CEDS Committee, made up of public and private sector representatives from the region, discussed small business and entrepreneurial development while establishing new ranking criteria for the projects that are included in the CEDS. An abbreviated consumer version is available and a copy of the five-year update can be found online: www.nrvpdc.org/cedsinformation.html.



Pulaski County Adult Day Services & Fall Prevention Clinic

Pulaski County has been moving forward on the implementation of its Community Development Block Grant to create an adult daycare facility within the County. The non-profit operating the facility kicked off its Capital Campaign in January of 2014, with the goal of raising an additional \$500,000. After bids for the renovation of Newbern Elementary came in over budget, the County has been working to either streamline the floor plan of the facility or explore other location options that would maximize grant funds while still providing the much needed service of adult day services and fall prevention to the citizens of Pulaski County.



Floyd Innovation Center

PDC staff is working with the project management team and providing grant administration for building the Floyd Innovation Center. Construction is nearing completion with the roof and siding installed in FY14. The center will host multiple tenants engaged in industries such as high-performance and biotechnology manufacturing. Grant funding by the Tobacco Commission, the ARC, and the US EDA bring the total investment in the project to \$2.3 million. These grants will fund design and construction of a 13,000-square-foot-plus building that will provide tenant spaces suitable for clean room production and energy-efficient features for sustainable operation in the Floyd Regional Commerce Center. The building will be owned and operated by the Floyd County EDA.



ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT & HUMAN SERVICES

Baskerville Neighborhood Rehabilitation Project

Over the last year, infrastructure work was completed in the Baskerville neighborhood. Although most of the neighborhood is located within the County, the Town of Dublin provides water and sewer services to the residents of the Baskerville community. Infrastructure work included updating of 875 linear feet of 8" waterline, 714 linear feet of 6" waterline, raising 21 manholes, and providing new sewer service to one Town of Dublin resident, benefitting approximately 92 people.

Additionally, two more homes are currently being rehabilitated, slated for completion in late summer of 2014. The Baskerville project, which will be complete in early 2015, was made possible through a \$1,000,000 Community Development Block Grant through the Department of Housing and Community Development.

New River Valley Development Corporation Revolving Loan Fund

This year, PDC staff continued to provide staff support for the NRV Development Corporation Revolving Loan Fund (RLF).

The Development Corporation extended one loan this year to Jon Beegle, owner of Bootleg BBQ in Floyd. Mr. Beegle had a previous loan to build a food trailer and purchase a smoker, and with the new loan, has purchased a commercial freezer.

Mr. Beegle continues to grow his business, setting up shop within the Town of Floyd and at festivals and events within the region. Currently, the Development Corporation is servicing loans to businesses located within the Town of Blacksburg, the Town of Floyd, Montgomery County, and Pulaski County.



Radford University Economic Impact Study

As Radford University (RU) continues to expand and the student population moves closer to 10,000 students, the university began working with PDC staff to complete an economic impact study. To perform the study, PDC staff met with RU representatives who provided the PDC with information regarding new construction activities, alumni distribution, faculty and staff compensation, and other items to project the economic impact on the region. The NRVPCD partnered with the Roanoke Valley Alleghany Regional Commission to utilize IMPLAN economic impact modeling software. This software allows users to input information such as salaries or capital expenditures, and projects direct and indirect impacts on the regional economy. Radford University provides a strong employment base while supporting many sectors of the regional economy. The final draft will be complete in early FY15.



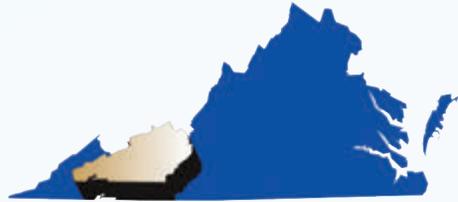
Photo Courtesy Of Radford University

New River Valley/Mount Rogers Workforce Investment Board

This past year the New River/
Mount Rogers Workforce
Investment Board (WIB)
contracted with the Virginia
Tech Office of Economic
Development (VT OED) to
complete the research portion
of the Skills Gap Analysis.

Representatives from VT OED
and Board Staff made 19 presentations around the region, including
one on the national stage at the National Association of Workforce
Boards Forum. More presentations are scheduled and the data is
available on the WIB's website.

The WIB also partnered to hold a job fair where over 60 employers
participated and over 400 job seekers were served. The WIB completed
the Valley's on the job training (OJT) Program; through this grant
initiative 12 participants were placed and 75% of participants completed
the program. The WIB served 632 adult/dislocated worker with a
placement rate of 89% and 275 youth with a placement rate of 88%.
For Further information on the WIB visit www.nrrmwib.org.



PLANNING/TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE

Town of Christiansburg Parks and Recreation Master Plan

The Commission provided technical assistance to the Town of Christiansburg to develop a master plan for their Parks and Recreation department. The process involved meeting with Town staff and their Parks and Recreation Advisory Commission, as well as obtaining input from the public through a survey and a public meeting. The public outreach survey collected responses from more than 600 people. As part of the process, Commission staff researched current trends in recreation activities while evaluating existing conditions. Alongside staff from the Parks and Recreation department, the Advisory Commission, the assistance of other town departments, and through public outreach, strategies for future parks and recreation facilities and programs were developed to meet future needs. The final Christiansburg Parks and Recreation Master Plan is available on the town website: www.christiansburg.org.



The Commission hosted the seventh such training session on May 28, 2014, which was attended by more than 30 local planning commissioners and staff. The session focused on “Housing for an Aging Population.” The program featured an overview of regional housing issues and trends provided by Jennifer Wilsie of the Commission staff, followed by a panel discussion on Lifespan Friendly Housing. The panelists and their topics included:

- Patti Drescher, Occupational Therapist/Assistive Technology Specialist, Virginia Department for Aging and Rehabilitative Services: Home Modifications that Facilitate Aging in Place
- Nancy Phillips, Realtor, Coldwell Banker Townside Realtors; President, Legacy Builders NRV, Inc.: New Construction Features Sought by Senior Home Buyers.
- Andrew Warren, Senior Planner/Zoning Administrator, Town of Blacksburg: Land Use/Zoning Ordinance Provisions in Relation to Aging in Place.

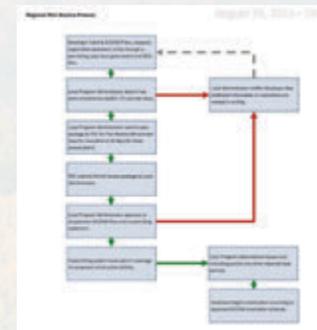
Regional Planning Forum

The Commission supports communication and training between local government planning departments by coordinating a Regional Planning Forum for local planning staff. The Forum meets three to four times a year at a rotating host community to discuss planning issues of common interest in the region. The Planning Forum provides at least one training session annually which is open to all local government Planning Commission members in the region.



New River Valley Stormwater Program

The Commission assisted participating localities with the development of local stormwater programs, prepared draft ordinances and funding plans, presented to local leadership groups, developed a strategy for multi-jurisdictional partnerships, and completed available training. In addition, the Commission facilitated stakeholder group discussions between local partners, State Agency representatives, engineers, and attorneys. Local partners included Montgomery County, Pulaski County, Floyd County, Patrick County, the Town of Pulaski, the Town of Pearisburg, and the Town of Glen Lyn. The Virginia Stormwater Act became effective on July 1, 2014.



Sunset Cemetery Master Plan – Town of Christiansburg

The Commission provided technical assistance to the Cemetery Advisory Committee appointed by Christiansburg Town Council to prepare a master plan for Sunset Cemetery. Currently, less than 30% of the cemetery property is undeveloped. The Town had a strategy for traditional in-ground burials; however, additional scenarios were evaluated for each of the six planning areas. The scenarios are intended to assist the Advisory Committee with future recommendations to Town Council for site development. In addition to scenario development, the Commission facilitated committee meetings, reviewed existing conditions, explored potential strategies, developed a conceptual plan, and identified potential costs.



GIS Partnership – New River Health District

The Commission recently established a partnership with the New River Health District (NRHD). The Commission and NRHD recognize the capabilities of utilizing Geospatial Information Systems (GIS) to convey technical information visually, catalog historical data, and analyze information. By sharing financial resources and technical expertise, the Commission and NRHD can provide GIS services on a broader platform. The Commission will geocode NRHD information and make it accessible through online applications and hard copy maps.

Other Technical Assistance

- Town of Narrows Planning Commission and staff in developing draft updates of the Town's Zoning and Subdivision Ordinances. (adopted by Council, February 2014)
- Town of Pearisburg Planning Commission and staff in developing a draft update of the Town's Comprehensive Plan. (adopted by Council, May 2014)
- City of Radford Planning Commission and staff in developing a draft update of the City's Comprehensive Plan. (ongoing)

TRANSPORTATION

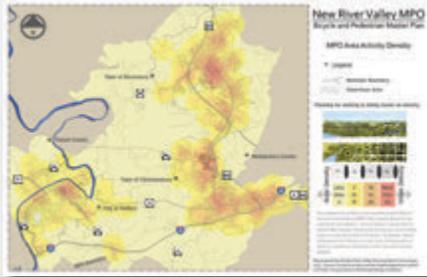
RIDE Solutions

The RIDE Solutions program continues to support and recruit Workplace Partners in the NRV. This goal is being met by directly contacting businesses, participating in business expos and other events to build visibility, and by developing partnerships with other organizations in the region. Community outreach through the NRV Job Fair and Expo and partnering with local organizations for Bike Month activities such as the fifth annual Blacksburg Fix Fest and a Clean Commute Hospitality Station are also building recognition of the RIDE Solutions brand and interest in sustainable transportation such as carpooling and cycling.



New River Valley MPO Bicycle & Pedestrian Master Plan

The New River Valley Metropolitan Planning Organization (NRVMPO) partnered with the Commission to develop a Bicycle and Pedestrian Master Plan. The purpose of the plan was to develop a long-range multimodal transportation system strategy. The planning process was led by a sub-committee of the NRVMPO. Representatives participated from localities within the 2013 expanded planning area, existing transit providers, universities, and community stakeholders. To complete the plan, the NRVMPO sub-committee utilized the Virginia Department of Rail and Public Transportation's (DRPT) Multimodal System Design Guidelines to create a multimodal system plan. To complement the plan, an interactive Multimodal Planning Tool and supporting project website were created. For additional information: <http://www.nrvpdc.org/nrvmpo>



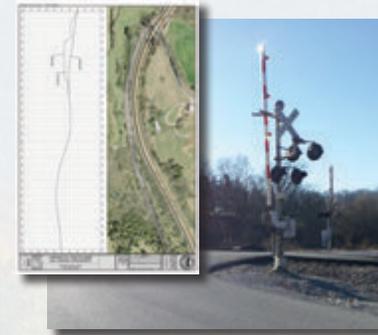
Appalachian Trail Community –Town of Pearisburg

The Town of Pearisburg was recently designated as an Appalachian Trail Community. The designation is designed to act as a catalyst for enhancing economic development, engaging citizens as trail visitors and stewards, aiding municipalities and regional areas with conservation planning, and helping community members see the trail as a resource and asset. The Commission worked with the Town to develop a hiker's guide tri-fold brochure and kiosk map.



Highway-Rail Grade Crossing Safety Improvement Project – Town of Christiansburg

The Commission worked with the Town of Christiansburg's engineering and planning staff, Norfolk Southern Railroad, and the Virginia Department of Transportation to prepare a grant proposal to improve an existing rail crossing along Chrisman Mill Road. The project was selected for an award of \$437,800. The proposed improvement will re-align the existing roadway approach angle, improve the pavement width, and install a new gate.



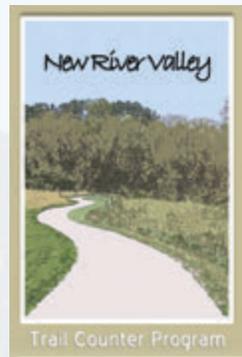
Giles and Montgomery County's Safe Routes to School Projects

The New River Valley Planning District Commission worked with Giles County, Montgomery County, the Town of Pearisburg and the Town of Christiansburg to develop School Travel Plans and Infrastructure Grants. NRVPCD staff worked closely with local administrators, school

principals, planning departments, teachers, police departments, EMS representatives, parents, and local communities to identify routes to school that could improve student's physical activity and health. Two of the four projects were selected for an award, totaling \$500,000 in new infrastructure funding, approximately 25% of the Virginia's total available funding. The Commission continues to support the two selected projects by providing contract administration services.

New River Valley Trail Counter Program

Beginning July 1, 2014, the Commission will be seeking requests from localities to identify trail count locations. The purpose of the New River Valley Trail Counter Program is to measure trail usage along a specific segment, at a trail head, or near businesses, identify patterns (e.g. weekday vs. weekend); evaluate the effects of weather, terrain, and other physical features; delineation between user types (cyclist, pedestrian, horseback, etc.); and identify potential investment strategies. Some of the specific deliverables expected from the program include measuring potential economic impacts, enabling communities to perform maintenance during non-peak seasons, and providing new information that can be used in the local decision making process.



Multi-Region Bikeway/Walkway Social

Since 2010, the Multi-Region Bikeway/Walkway Social continues to provide a unique opportunity to learn about recent planning efforts and successful bicycle and pedestrian projects. The event is provided through a partnership with the New River Valley Planning District Commission and Roanoke Valley Allegheny Regional Commission. In 2013, the event was held in Bisset Park in Radford. The event proved to be a successful networking opportunity for organizations, planners, engineers, agency partners, and others interested in bicycle and pedestrian improvements.

VDOT's Transportation and Land Use Forum

The Commission was invited to speak at the Virginia Department of Transportation's forum in April 2014. The Commission presented examples of how the Rural Transportation Work Program is utilized to support local transportation plans. Topics included: 1) how the 2035 Rural Long-Range Transportation Plan was used in Floyd County's Comprehensive Plan update; 2) how VDOT's Access Management Regulations were used to evaluate a segment of US Route 11/460 in Montgomery County; and 3) how the Commission is utilizing technology and visualization tools to support local conversations. Over 220 participants from localities, Metropolitan Planning Organizations, Planning District Commissions, the private sector, and VDOT attended. The forum took place at the John Tyler Community College's Chester campus.

2014 Innovation Award

The New River Valley Planning District Commission received a 2014 Innovation Award from the National Association of Development Organizations for the Multimodal Transportation System Planning Tool. As a product of the New River Valley MPO's Bicycle & Pedestrian Master Plan, the online tool is geared towards helping localities to identify mode choice gaps within the existing transportation system, evaluate potential solutions based on the density of jobs and housing, and prioritize bicycle and pedestrian improvements.

The NRVPCD utilized ArcGIS Online to create a story map. The final product identifies an interconnected transportation system for automobiles, bicycles, pedestrians, and transit. By utilizing the tool, users gain the ability to visualize the value of different corridors and their ability to move travelers within and between key activity centers.

FINANCE AND PERSONNEL



NRV Planning District Commission Staff

Left to Right:

(back row)

Kevin Byrd, AICP, Executive Director
Patrick Burton, AICP, Senior Planner
Janet McNew, Director of Finance and Personnel
Christy Straight, Regional Planner II
Julie Phillips, Office Manager
Jennifer Wilsie, Regional Planner II
Jonnell Sanciangco, Data Systems Manager

(front row)

Brad Mecham, Regional Planner
Jeremy Tuck, GIS Intern
Ken Hall, Part-time Regional Planner
Elijah Sharp, Director of Planning and Programming

Director's Message

Technical assistance, community engagement, innovation and collaboration were all keys to success in FY14 supporting the members and partners of the Commission. This annual report is filled with excellent examples of each of those while serving the region. The Commission takes pride in delivering all four of those keys to success in every project in the annual work program. Innovative community engagement and collaboration were hallmarks of the recently completed NRV Livability Initiative. So much so the project was selected for two innovation awards from the National Association of Development Organizations (NADO) and received the 2014 Outstanding Public Engagement Award from the Virginia Chapter of the American Planning Association. Further, the New River Valley Metropolitan Planning Organization Bicycle and Pedestrian Master Plan prepared by the Commission received an innovation award from NADO for creating a decision making tool that local governments can use for bike and pedestrian improvements. Receiving these accolades would not be possible without staff that thrives on new ideas and finding creative solutions, as well as partners who assist in plan development, and a Commission Board of Directors and member localities that support collaborative and innovative approaches. By starting planning processes with a collaborative approach at the onset, communities set themselves up to go much further than they can on their own. It is becoming a regular occurrence to hear about a project or program taking shape that started from a public input meeting or working group conversation that served to elevate a need in a community. Programs such as Aging in Place in the New River Valley, that took shape following the release of demographic data from the NRV Livability Interim Report, are collaborating across communities, agencies and programs to provide the best environment for the region's aging population all because multiple stakeholders were involved early and often in the project. Looking forward to FY15, the Commission is eager to support communities reaching their vision by providing technical assistance with collaborative approaches that yields innovative solutions and enables all communities to thrive.

Kevin R. Byrd, AICP, Executive Director

Finance Report

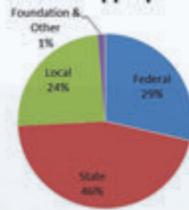
Year Ended June 30, 2014

Revenues

Grants and Appropriations

Federal	428,508
State	683,269
Local	366,363
Foundation/Other	20,457
Total	1,498,598

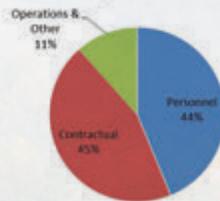
Grants and Appropriations



Expenditures

Personnel	622,678
Contractual	635,867
Operations & Other	164,395
Total	1,422,940

Expenditures



Funds Carried Forward 75,658





New River Valley

Planning District Commission

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