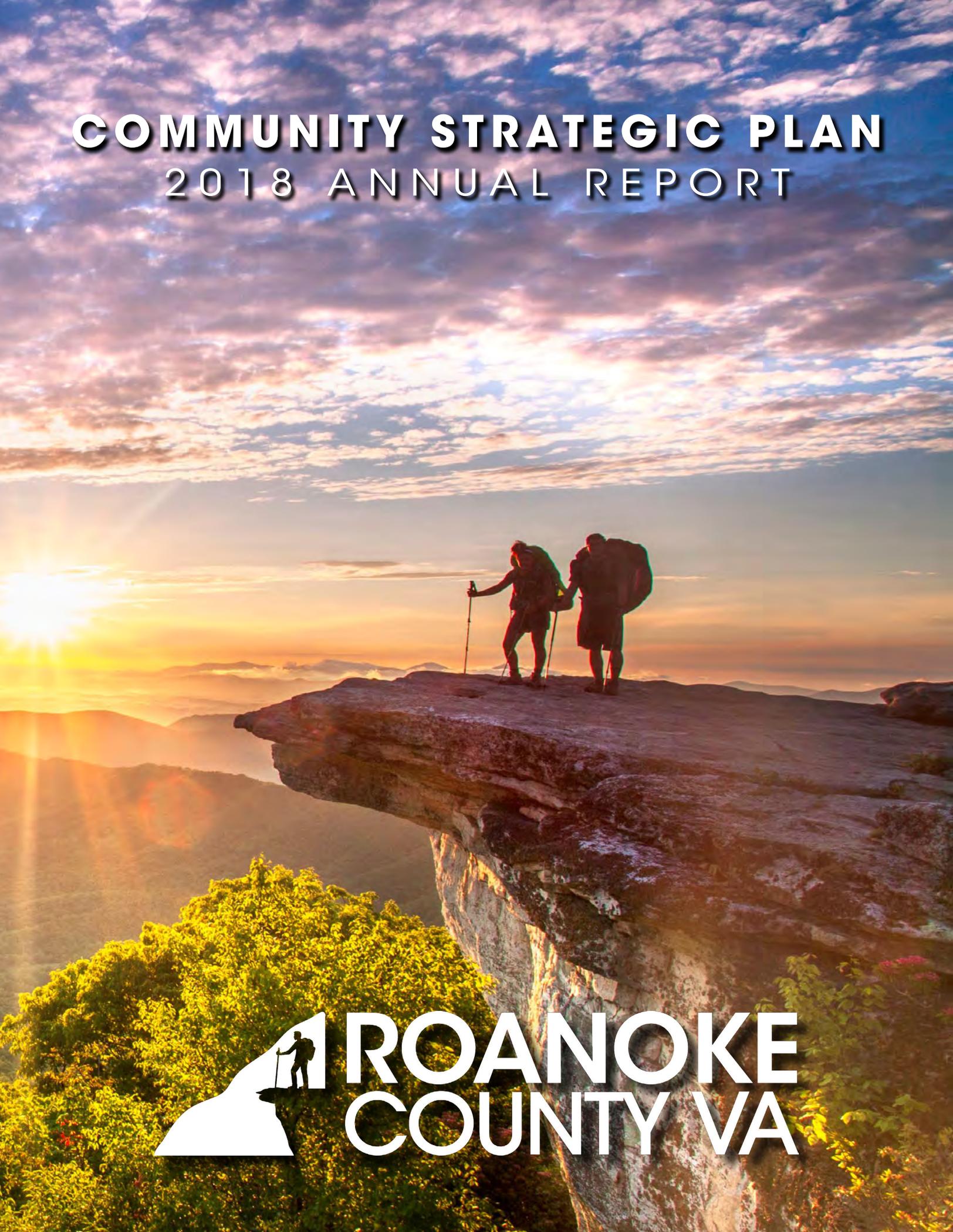


COMMUNITY STRATEGIC PLAN 2018 ANNUAL REPORT



**ROANOKE
COUNTY VA**

BOARD OF SUPERVISORS CHAIR

The overall goal of the Community Strategic plan is to improve the quality of life Roanoke County citizens enjoy today while laying the foundation for a more prosperous future.

The plan is the result of many conversations with our citizens about what is required to make Roanoke County a better place to live, work and visit.

The Community Strategic plan is more than a snapshot of citizen interests. It's a guide for achieving what people value most from Roanoke County - economic growth, enhanced public safety, stronger connections with each other and the world, preserving our shared natural beauty, and a focus on education for all ages.

More importantly, the plan informs Roanoke County's government and the Board of Supervisors on which investments matter most to its citizens. After reading this year's update, we invite you to share your thoughts on our progress so far, and how we can continue to make Roanoke County even better in the years to come.



*Martha B. Hooker,
2018 Board of Supervisors Chair*

COUNTY ADMINISTRATOR

Our Community Strategic Plan not only gives voice to our citizens, it also helps focus the efforts of County departments and staff.

The plan helps departments envision common goals, which often enables staff to combine resources to accomplish more in less time, in the most cost-effective ways.

One example of this is how County staff continues to find ways to work smarter, as shown through the award-winning use of technology that helps us deliver practical services to our citizens. From public safety to economic development and community concerns, Roanoke County continues to offer the latest tools to help serve its citizens and businesses.

The initiatives in the Community Strategic Plan also provide a framework for planning future budgets and help measure the County's achievements against citizens' expectations.

A responsible government is responsive to the needs of its citizens, and the Community Strategic Plan is an important part of our efforts to provide best-in-class services for everyone, each day.



*Thomas C. Gates,
Roanoke County Administrator*

INTRODUCTION

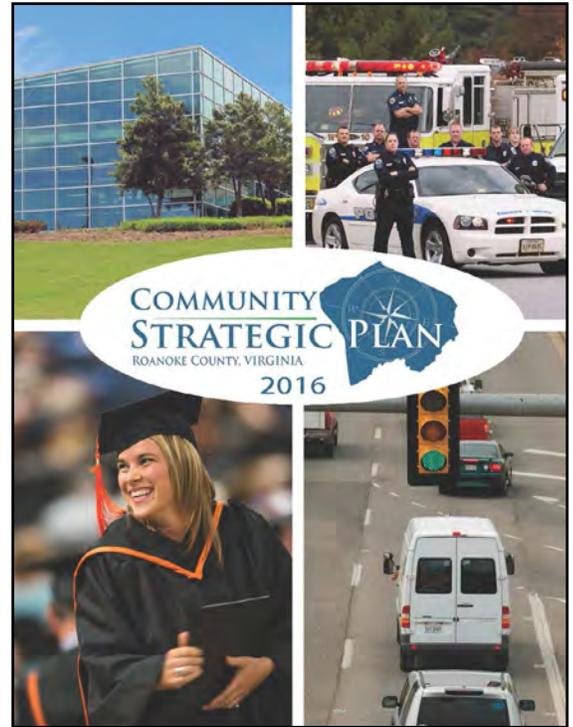
The goal of Roanoke County's 2016 Community Strategic Plan process was to establish a strategic direction for the County with input provided by our community. In January 2016, the Board of Supervisors framed the strategic planning discussion by creating the vision statement, "Roanoke County is a vibrant, innovative, and scenic community that values its citizens, heritage, and quality of life."

Development of Roanoke County's 2016 Community Strategic Plan involved responses from 604 telephone surveys and 276 citizens and stakeholders through 18 community meetings held over nine weeks.

As a result of this process, seven Strategic Initiatives were developed to help guide Roanoke County toward a future as envisioned by its citizens.

Roanoke County is committed to providing annual reports on progress toward achieving the Community Strategic Plan's vision. Our first update was released in fall 2017 in conjunction with the State of the County Address. This 2018 report highlights significant projects and accomplishments completed since the plan's fall 2017 update.

To view the Community Strategic Plan and the 2017 update, please visit www.roanokecountyva.gov/csp.



Roanoke County's 2016 Community Strategic Plan.

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Technology for Learning and Living

With the official lighting of the Roanoke Valley Broadband Authority fiber in 2017, Roanoke County continues to improve communications and data technology in both the businesses and government sectors. With a focus on economic development, regional businesses, libraries and non-profits can now connect to stable, enterprise-quality fiber internet and data services across the Roanoke Valley.

Technology also connects Roanoke County Public Schools' students to the larger world through distance learning opportunities outside the classroom. Roanoke County Public Schools is the **first K-12 school system in the nation** to offer students free access to Adobe Spark that enables the creation of online presentations and portfolios.



Above - Roanoke County Public Schools' commitment to excellence includes providing students the tools and opportunities necessary to succeed in a connected world.

More Connections to Our Region...

Roanoke County's support of regional transportation is also important. Recent efforts to bring Amtrak back to the area have been successful, and the Roanoke-Blacksburg Regional Airport has announced receipt of a Department of Transportation Small Community Air Service Development Grant for \$750,000 to attract new air service to the region. Airport officials are in discussions with carriers to add new service to Denver, Dallas/Ft. Worth, Detroit, Boston and Ft. Lauderdale. Passenger traffic is up over 4% the past twelve months at the Roanoke-Blacksburg Regional Airport, or almost 30,000 passengers.

Several infrastructure projects have been completed, including a new Walkway Canopy, Air Carrier Ramp Rehabilitation, new Jet Bridges for all gates, sealcoating the runways and taxiways, and improvements to the overflow parking lot.

Roanoke-Blacksburg Regional Airport also successfully launched the Art in the Airport project in an effort to add local art and color to the terminal.





New Looks and New Insights

As part of the need for **Regional Cooperation and Marketing identified in the Community Strategic Plan** Roanoke County launched its destination branding effort in 2017, featuring the McAfee Knob landmark. The new brand compliments efforts of our local government partners in Virginia's Blue Ridge to attract visitors by highlighting the outstanding outdoor amenities that can be found only in Roanoke County.

In 2017 and 2018, Roanoke County installed four new median gateway signs within prominent corridors visitors use to enter the County. An additional sign has been added to the Hollins Community as a part of the Plantation Road Project. Usage of the new mark has expanded through the majority of the County's service vehicle fleet, into County marketing materials and across many websites that serve residents and visitors alike.

A new **Open Data Portal** offers prospective businesses, residents and visitors a way to connect with Roanoke County through publicly available data. This new service allows greater and easier access to the County's authoritative information on mapping, tax parcel, zoning, public safety, economic development, and government services data. Users can access data by category or use the quick search function to browse data, allowing users to explore Roanoke County through a variety of publicly available data sets. Users can access the comprehensive data in many standard formats, on any device, at any time.

The new Open Data Portal received the **2018 Governor's Award** at the Commonwealth of Virginia Innovative Technology Symposium (COVITS), and a **2018 National Association of Counties (NACo) Achievement Award**.

The Open Data Portal is part of a **suite of GIS-enabled applications** that helps citizens, new residents, potential businesses, and regional developers connect with Roanoke County's data and services at any time, with convenient access from smartphones, tablets, and desktop computers.



Pictured above - Roanoke County's award-winning Open Data Portal allows businesses and visitors to connect with Roanoke County on a deeper level through publicly available data. See more at <http://data.roanokecountyva.gov>.



Wood Haven Project Opens Up New Opportunities

The Wood Haven Technology Park achieved a milestone in 2018 with the rezoning of 109 acres along Wood Haven Road to a planned technology development district which will accommodate high quality, high investment projects.

A GO Virginia grant is helping to extend utilities to the property which will soon achieve Tier 4 readiness status in the Virginia Business Ready Sites Program. Next steps for the project include creating an entrance and some site preparation to kick start marketing of the property.

An Opportunity Zone designation was received to attract new development and additional grants have been awarded by the Department of Housing and Community Development, the Virginia Economic Development Partnership and Appalachian Power in support of this important project.

The Wood Haven Technology Park soon will be the largest, prepared site in the urban area, and is a joint development of Roanoke County, the City of Roanoke, and City of Salem through the [Western Virginia Regional Industrial Facility Authority](#).

More Economic Development Across the County

The **former Allstate building** is soon to be fully leased with Metis Holdings' move into the facility this year. Metis, a local leader in insurance and risk management services converted this iconic building into a multi-tenant facility that includes Lucas & Kite Law firm, Vistar corporate offices and Pediatric Eye Care Center, a new state of the art fitness center named Fit Studio, and an on-site cafe. The \$6 million redevelopment project brings a projected employment of up to 600 people at full occupancy to the Oak Grove area.

Several local businesses have also announced expansions in the past year. **Blue Ridge Beverage** announced a 40,000 sq. ft. expansion with a \$2.5 million investment, and **Cardinal Glass** announced an \$8 million expansion and the creation of 60 new jobs.

A \$1.5 million **Magnets USA** expansion was supported by re-training assistance from the Virginia Economic Development Partnership and **Ardagh Packaging** invested \$4.2 million in continued growth in the County. **Harris Corporation** also added 50 new jobs this year and secured workforce training assistance from the state of Virginia.

In the residential business sector, the **Retreat Apartments** were completed with a grand opening held in October 2017. Other new openings to watch for include the **TRU by Hilton** and the **Macado's Vinton Restaurant**, both planned for the fall of 2018. The grand opening for the **William Byrd High School redevelopment project** is slated for early 2019.



Community Planning Makes New Strides

Two new “Reimagine” community-based planning studies were launched in 2018 to help revitalize two important Roanoke County corridors. These plans follow the successful “Reimagine 419” study, and promise to help guide development of these areas for years to come.

The **Oak Grove Center Plan** is being conducted in cooperation with Roanoke City, and nearly 170 students, teachers, and community members gave feedback on potential plans at this spring’s community meetings.

Hollins Center community meetings involved nearly 160 members of the public, dozens of stakeholder interviews and hundreds of survey responses for the planning study.



For the latest developments in Roanoke County’s Reimagine planning studies, see our website at www.roanokecountyva.gov/reimagine.

These community-based plans explore opportunities to redevelop commercial and residential properties, create new community spaces, and how best to implement multi-modal transportation improvements, new design standards and infrastructure improvements.

Focus on Workforce Development Yields Results

Roanoke County’s Economic Development Department has expanded its involvement with local and regional workforce development organizations, including Virginia Western Community College, Total Action for Progress (TAP), Roanoke County Public Schools, the Roanoke-Blacksburg Technology Council, the Virginia Department of Business Assistance, the Small Business Development Council, Hollins University and Roanoke College.

A **Workforce and Registered Apprenticeship Summit** introduced the state’s Virginia Registered Apprenticeship Program to area businesses, where attendees learned about numerous state and local workforce assistance programs to help educate and recruit qualified employees.

Talent Attraction & Retention is also important to the region’s future success. A \$65,300 Go Virginia grant was secured in 2018 by the Roanoke Regional Partnership to develop and implement a talent attraction plan for the region. Roanoke County is part of a coalition that will create strategies and tactics to improve the recruitment pipeline between regional colleges and universities and local businesses.

Roanoke County’s departments of Economic Development and Library supported **The Advancement Foundation’s Gauntlet Business Competition** (pictured below) through educational workshops, resources, and judging for Virginia’s largest regional business program and competition. The Gauntlet is a 10-week program designed to help entrepreneurs launch and develop their business concepts.





STRATEGIC INITIATIVE PROMOTE NEIGHBORHOOD CONNECTIONS

New Transportation Projects for Roanoke County

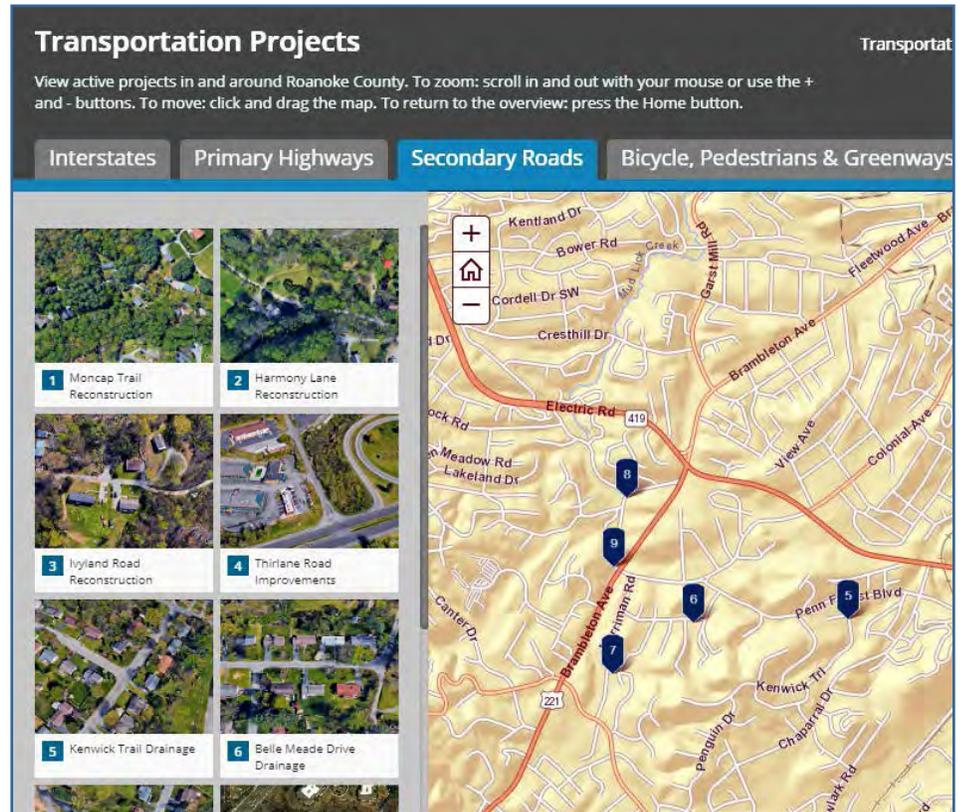
Transportation improvements often involve millions of dollars in planning and construction and may take years to complete. Roanoke County has completed several projects recently, and there are many projects with approved funding that citizens will be seeing over the next several years.

Improvements to Electric Road at Tanglewood Mall will add additional southbound lanes along with bicycle and pedestrian accommodations. Improvements will extend from the County line at Route 220 to Ogden Road, with construction beginning in 2021.

A new Route 311/Route 419 Roundabout project has been funded and approved for construction in fiscal year 2021. The roundabout will ease congestion and improve safety at this intersection during the morning and evening peak traffic hours.

Another high profile project will be the **Fallowater Lane Extension**. This funded project will provide access from Route 419 to The Ridges, and has been identified as a major connector to increase access to the 419 Town Center Planning Area.

The **Lila Drive Turnaround** off Plantation Road is now complete and provides public access to Harris Corporation and Wells Fargo. Additional construction projects on Plantation Road are scheduled for 2021 and 2024.



Visit the Transportation Story Map for Project Updates

Roanoke County offers citizens a comprehensive view of projects across the County through its Transportation Story Map (shown above). The map is a one-stop visual guide to current and future projects across the County. Separate tabs on the website allow viewers to see projects for the Interstate, Primary Highways, Secondary Roads, and other initiatives. Some projects to watch include...

- Auxiliary Lane Improvements to I-81 between Exits 141 and 143,
- I-581 Exit 2 (Peters Creek) Interchange Study,
- Route 116 over Back Creek,
- Route 419/U.S. 220 Diverging Diamond Interchange,
- Plantation Road Bicycle, Pedestrian and Streetscape Improvements,
- Starkey Road/Buck Mountain Road Roundabout,
- Dry Hollow Road Safety Improvements,
- Route 221 Bridge Replacement Over Martins Creek,
- Williamson Road/Peters Creek Road Pedestrian Improvements,
- McAfee Knob/Appalachian Trail at Route 311 Pedestrian Improvements.

View the Transportation Story Map at www.roanokecountyva.gov/tsm.



Greenways, Trails and More Connections Underway

As the regional vision of “Roanoke Outside” continues to blossom, the importance of having a bikeable and walkable community has grown as well.

Roanoke County has received funding to extend the **Roanoke River Greenway through Explore Park to Rutrough Point**. This 1.8 mile greenway through Explore Park will be a shared use path for bicyclists and pedestrians. Additional segments will connect to the Roanoke River Greenway to help provide a seamless greenway system across the valley.

Community partnerships with the Hinchee family, Pathfinders for Greenways, Virginia Outdoors Fund and Virginia Department of Conservation and Recreation will develop additional access to Carvins Cove in Roanoke County. Through this partnership, Roanoke County will acquire approximately 250 acres of land to create a park and linear trail system to connect Hanging Rock Battlefield Trail to Carvins Cove for hiking, mountain biking and equestrian use.



Pictured above - Pathfinders for Greenways, Inc. is a 501(c)(3) grass roots citizen organization that provides more than 5,000 hours of service each year to build trails and has purchased over \$100,000 worth of trail building equipment.

Redevelopment projects make new connections between communities ...

While the Roland E. Cook Lofts opened in Spring 2017, renovations are currently underway at the **former William Byrd High School** with an expected opening in 2019. These projects provide new apartments that feature convenient and walkable access to downtown Vinton’s businesses, the new Vinton Library, and the **upcoming new Macado’s Restaurant** at the former Vinton Library location.

Ride Solutions Bikeshare (Zagster) announced its new station in Vinton with a ribbon cutting April 23, 2018. The bikeshare station at the Vinton Farmers’ Market station provides short-term bike rentals for travel around town or connecting to any of the other 16 stations in the valley-wide network – from downtown Roanoke to other greenway access points across the valley.





STRATEGIC INITIATIVE ENSURE CITIZEN SAFETY

Improving Emergency Response with Technology

Roanoke County has modernized its approach to data sharing within and between public safety entities through its **Mobile Incident Command Application**. The new application allows Police and Fire & Rescue personnel to coordinate during emergency incidents, enabling personnel in the field to track, illustrate, and interact with near real-time data from other users in the field or command personnel. The Mobile Incident Command Application has earned both the **2018 Virginia Association of Counties (VACo) Achievement Award** and the **2018 National Association of Counties (NACo) Achievement Award** for using innovative technology to coordinate emergency responses.

Enhancements to **Fire & Rescue's Trail Rescue Program** (pictured below) include a new **Drone Program** to improve safety for our citizens, visitors and responding personnel during rescues in remote areas, which was funded by a state grant. Additionally, Roanoke County purchased a **specialized utility task vehicle (UTV)** to help rescue injured citizens and visitors who receive injuries while hiking or exploring Roanoke County's scenic areas.



Also, a **new Radio System Upgrade** improves secure communications across County public safety agencies and between our regional public safety partners, allowing first responders to collaborate quickly and efficiently.

Public Safety Staffing Improvements

Our Fire & Rescue Department implemented a **Dynamic Staffing Deployment Model** that increases staffing at the Cave Spring and Fort Lewis stations, providing 48 more hours of coverage each week for these parts of our community. An additional Deputy Fire Marshal position has been assigned to assist with fire prevention, fire code enforcement, and fire investigation, all vital functions to help keep our community safe.



Enhancements to County Facilities

A **new commercial generator at Green Ridge Recreation Center** allows the County to use the facility as an emergency shelter. Prior to this installation, the County had no other shelters equipped to house a mass number of citizens affected by a weather or emergency event. To offset the County's costs, Fire & Rescue obtained two grants used toward the project.

The **Masons Cove Fire & Rescue Station** has also been renovated to support on-duty shift personnel and volunteer staff in the North County community. Other facility upgrades include security enhancements to the **Roanoke County Courthouse Complex** and **Roanoke County Public Library branches** to help ensure the safety of patrons and staff alike in these public spaces.



Partnerships Help Create A Safer Community

Fire & Rescue partnerships with neighborhood communities strengthen their ability to prevent wild fires through our Fire-Wise Program. This program assists civic leagues and neighborhood associations to help reduce “fuel” for wild fires around their homes.

A Cooperative Agreement with the U.S. Forest Service has been used to deploy Fire & Rescue personnel throughout the United States in 2018, with all costs covered by the U.S. Forest Service. Experience gained from these assignments pay dividends back home, as firefighters return with valuable knowledge that increases our ability to mitigate wild fires in Roanoke County.

Other partnerships are also working to make our community safer. Roanoke County Police Department along with our regional law enforcement partners, local businesses, higher education institutions, and health care facilities have created a **Regional Threat Assessment Community Partnership**. This unique consortium provides guidance and advice to businesses and large organizations to help identify and report potential threats before an incident occurs.

In 2018, **Roanoke County Public Schools** continued working to enhance the safety of its students in coordination with Roanoke County Police and Roanoke County Sheriff’s Office. Many facilities have seen recent improvements designed to limit access. In 2018 the number of School Resource Officers (SRO’s) was increased to twelve with the addition of two Sheriff’s Deputies to serve in elementary schools to supplement the ten Police Officers who serve in High Schools and Middle Schools.

Public Safety Academy Partnership Launches in 2018

In early 2018, the Citizens Police Academy changed to the Roanoke County Public Safety Academy. The goal of the Public Safety Academy is to educate citizens on how the Roanoke County Police Department, Roanoke County Sheriff’s Office and Roanoke County Fire & Rescue Department carry out their missions while working together as a team.

The Public Safety Academy provides a comprehensive view of the internal workings of each agency and how each department’s responsibilities and functions interrelate. Citizens learn about everything related to public safety in Roanoke County, from police patrol and SWAT, to court security and civil process from Sheriff’s deputies, to fire investigations and EMT operations from Fire & Rescue personnel.



Pictured - Public Safety Academy participants enjoy classroom presentations along with hands-on learning experiences with law enforcement, Fire & Rescue, and EMT personnel.



Focus On Fostering

Roanoke County’s Department of Social Services (DSS) has expanded its efforts to increase foster care awareness in the community using social media and other outlets. Since April 2018, DSS has had almost 23,000 views on our 14 posts, averaging out to 1,638 views per post. Our community outreach specialist has held 14 Community Conversations meetings in this past year, resulting in 106 new inquiries about foster parenting opportunities. This focus has saved more than \$911,000 in treatment foster care expenditures between 2016 and 2018.



Pictured above - an ongoing public awareness campaign about the importance of fostering has led to increased turnout at foster parent meetings and increased interest in foster programs across the board.

While child safety is a priority, Roanoke County DSS **Child Protective Services** workers also attended safety training with Roanoke County Police to learn about worker safety in the field. This training helps ensure staff is aware of their surroundings and provides guidance on how to react to potentially dangerous situations they may encounter.

Roanoke County DSS remains a leader in the state in the number of child adoptions finalized and staff are preparing for the Annual Adoption Celebration to be held November 17, 2018.

Adult Services Outreach Makes A Difference

The Department of Social Services Adult Services Team remains active in the community and this past year participated in Local Office on Aging (LOA) programs to support elderly in our community. Staff were active in providing services for the LOA “Santa for a Senior,” “Soup for Seniors,” and “Let’s Do Lunch” programs in 2018.



Roanoke County DSS was a contributor and a participant in the **Annual Blue Ridge Continuum of Care Symposium: Creating Safe Spaces**, which examined culturally competent housing and care for vulnerable and underserved populations. The conference offered an array of guest speakers and learning opportunities designed to improve service delivery for hard-to-serve populations.

The Department of Social Services also co-sponsored two sessions of **Bridges Out of Poverty** with Roanoke County Parks, Recreation and Tourism and Roanoke County Public Library. This training offered a comprehensive approach to understanding the dynamics that cause and maintain poverty from the individual to the systemic level. This program provides concrete tools and strategies for a community to prevent, reduce, and alleviate poverty.

Staff from Social Services also participated in the **Third Annual Language Access Conference** held at the Salem Civic Center. This conference addressed how front line workers can meet the needs of clients with limited proficiency in English. Attendees included behavioral health providers, front desk clerks, case workers, law enforcement officers and first responders.



A Regional Approach to CSA

The **Children’s Services Act (CSA)** program in Roanoke County hosted two regional meetings to address the needs of children in our community who receive special education services. The regional initiatives continue to address the quality of services provided to these children and the costs of those services. The Children’s Services Act is a 1993 Virginia Law that provides for services for high-risk youth and their families. Such services are intended to be child centered, family focused, high quality, and cost effective. State funds, combined with local community funds, are managed by local interagency teams who plan and oversee services to youth. Our local office serves Roanoke County and the City of Salem.

Preparing for Medicaid Expansion

The Department of Social Services has **added four new benefit program specialists** with state funds in preparation for an upcoming Medicaid expansion. Newly covered groups will receive more comprehensive medical services than in the past, and our expanded Benefits staff will help DSS provide services and guidance to those coming into the Medicaid system for the first time.

For more information about services and benefits administered by Roanoke County’s Department of Social Services, visit <https://www.roanokecountyva.gov/dss>.

Sheriff’s Office Community Outreach

Roanoke County Sheriff’s Office continues its commitment to the community by offering several outreach programs. The Sheriff’s Office and deputies continue to partner with the **GTO (Growth Through Opportunity)** to provide career and life skills training for adults with special needs. The program helps young adults with unique challenges gain valuable social experience and job skills by volunteering with various first responder agencies in the valley.

Special Olympics has received support from the Sheriff’s Office for years, through various fundraisers and special events like the **Annual Law Enforcement Torch Run** (shown below). The Sheriff’s Office also dedicates time each year for the **Tug for Tots** fundraiser for **CHIP (Child Health Investment Partnership)** that serves the greater Roanoke Valley.





STRATEGIC INITIATIVE
PROMOTE LIFELONG LEARNING

Library Brings Technology Education to the Public

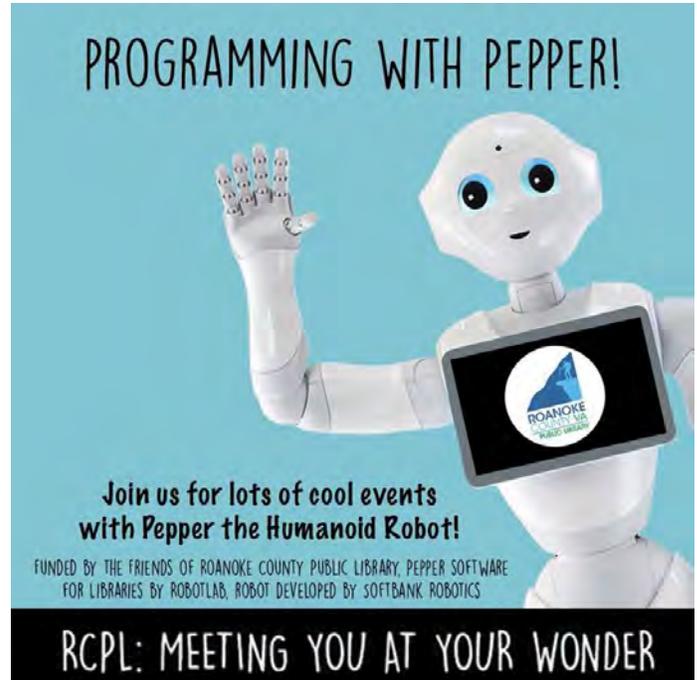
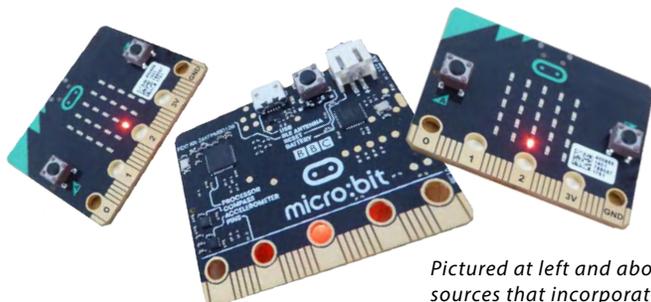
The Roanoke County Public Library System continues to elevate technology education in our community, with an increased number of technology related materials and programs available to the public.

Roanoke County Public Library is the first library in the United States to recruit **Pepper the Humanoid Robot**. Pepper will be integrated into technology education programs for children and adults. Pepper will tell stories, lead songs and movement, and offer memory strengthening activities for adults. Pepper brings happiness to children of all ages and the response at library programs has been positive. The library is partnering with a San Francisco-based robotics company, RobotLAB, to develop Pepper. Funding for Pepper was graciously provided by Roanoke County Friends of the Library.

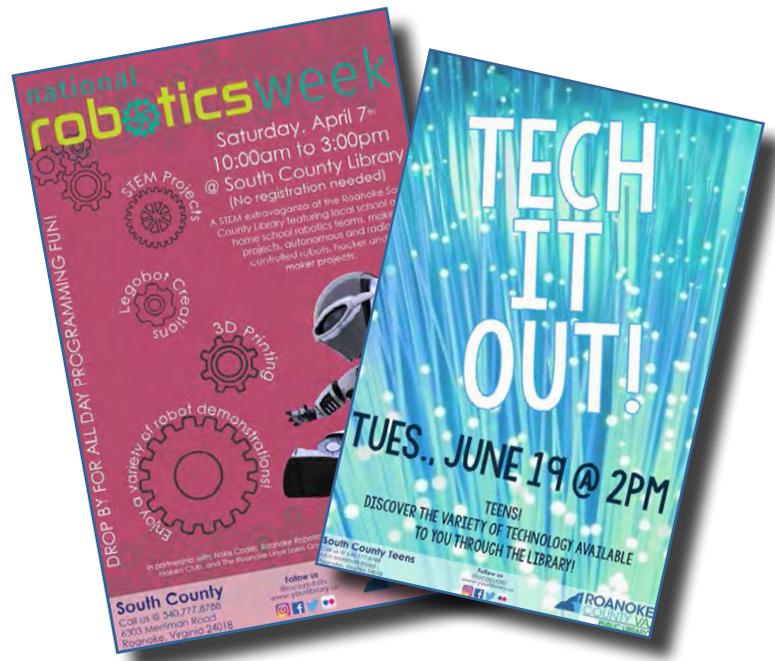
The library **offers learning opportunities for all ages**, including 3D Design and Printing, Arduino Programming, Intro to Python Programming, Raspberry Pi Programming, Android for Beginners, Intro to Photoshop, Computer Basics, and even classes devoted to helping patrons get the most out of their iPhones or other devices.

Recent developments include circulating Launchpads (pre-loaded tablets with stories and literacy games for kids), maker kits, and coding packs, along with offering AI (artificial intelligence) and robotics programs.

To further help patrons explore new technology at home, the library will be offering **Micro:Bits** as circulating items in its collection. These easily programmed computer controllers allow all ages to experiment with robotics, home electronics, music and more!



Pictured above - Pepper the Humanoid Robot is hosting programs at South County Library. See the latest scheduled public programs at <https://www.roanokecountyva.gov/library>.



Pictured at left and above - Micro:Bits computer controllers are just part of the new programs and resources that incorporate technology education for all ages through Roanoke County's Public Library.



New Career Opportunities for Roanoke County Students



Pictured above - Roanoke County Public Schools hosted its first-ever Apprenticeship Signing Ceremony on May 24, 2018 at the Roanoke County Public Schools Central Office to celebrate students who have committed to apprenticeships at local businesses.

This year, **Roanoke County Public Schools has expanded the medical curriculum** at the Burton Center for Arts & Technology with a new course designed to introduce students to careers in the nursing industry.

This program, in partnership with Carilion Clinic and with the assistance of the Claude Moore Foundation, will prepare students for the opportunity to take the National Nurse Assistant Assessment Program (NNAAP) exam to begin a potential career in the nursing field.

A **Career and Technical Education (CTE) Committee** was created in partnership with Roanoke County's Department of Economic Development to connect students with businesses and give students real-life work experience in their future potential careers.

The CTE Committee helped organize the **Apprentice Signing Day Ceremony** for students starting apprenticeships after graduation, the ongoing Roanoke Business Leaders Tour program to connect students with potential employers, and Career Fairs at Cave Spring and Glenvar high schools.

Roanoke County Public Schools has also launched the area's first **Student Registered Apprenticeship Program** to provide employment opportunities for students in technical education-related industries while in high school.

Following a pilot program in 2017 with the Western Virginia Water Authority, the apprenticeship program has expanded to **25 Roanoke County students signed on to hold apprentice positions** at the Western Virginia Water Authority, Southern Trust, Graham White, G&H Contracting, Canatel Steel, and Balzer & Associates. These programs bridge the gap between classroom learning and real-world experience while helping local businesses grow, develop and retain new employees.

Award-Winning Schools

Roanoke County Public Schools earned several awards in 2018, including the **VA Board of Education Distinguished Achievement Award** and the **Business and Industry Partner Award** from the Virginia Department of Education and the Virginia Community College System.

Three schools in the system were included in the **Best High Schools in Virginia List** from U.S. News & World Report which highlights top-performing public schools on a state and national level, including Cave Spring High School, Hidden Valley High School, and Glenvar High School.



Explore Park Becomes A Destination

The Explore Park Adventure Plan set forth the vision of establishing the park as a premier destination for adventure and outdoor activity. The plan’s focus includes hiking and biking trails, river access, overnight camping and educational programs based on the park’s unique environmental and cultural history - all while preserving the park’s natural beauty.



Pictured above - Partnerships with Don’s Cab-Inns and Blue Mountain Adventures are a key part of making Explore Park into an outdoor destination by offering lodging options for park visitors.

To fulfill this vision, Explore Park launched public private partnerships in 2018 with Blue Mountain Adventures camping services and Don’s Cab-Inns to develop lodging options at the park. Explore Park has also partnered with Reba Farm Inn at Niagara Ranch to provide equestrian services and outdoor activities for park visitors.

Roanoke County Parks, Recreation and Tourism continues to offer a wide range of outdoor activities at the park, from paddleboarding and nature classes to special events. Explore Park has seen more than 102,000 visits from July 2017 to June 2018, an increase of 32% over the previous year. For the latest programs, see www.explorepark.org.



The **Mayflower Disc Golf Course** held its opening at Explore Park on May 11, 2018. The course provides recreation access for citizens along with hosting regional and national disc golf tournaments. On opening weekend, the course hosted approximately 90 players at its first tournament, and is ranked in the top 5 disc golf courses in the Commonwealth of Virginia.

Silver Level Ride Center Designation Adds Regional Prestige



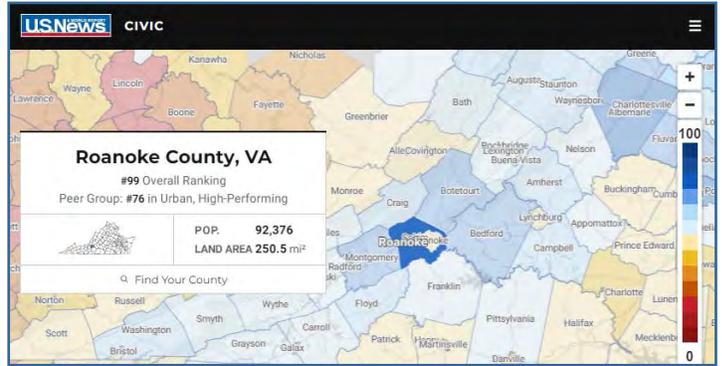
Virginia’s Blue Ridge (VBR) has been named a **Silver Level Ride Center** by the International Mountain Bicycling Association. This designation identifies Roanoke County and surrounding jurisdictions as a mountain bike destination for enthusiasts. VBR is the only Silver Level Ride Center on the east coast.

KEEP ROANOKE COUNTY HEALTHY, CLEAN AND BEAUTIFUL



National Recognition of A Healthy Community

U.S. News and World Report published its Healthiest Communities Rankings in March 2018, with **Roanoke County placing number 99 out of 3,000 communities** ranked. These rankings were compiled based on an assortment of factors, including housing affordability, food availability, and crime rates. The project scores counties on approximately 80 indicators across 10 categories that drive healthy outcomes.



For more information, visit <https://www.usnews.com/news/healthiest-communities/virginia/roanoke-county>.

Collaboration to Support the Outdoors

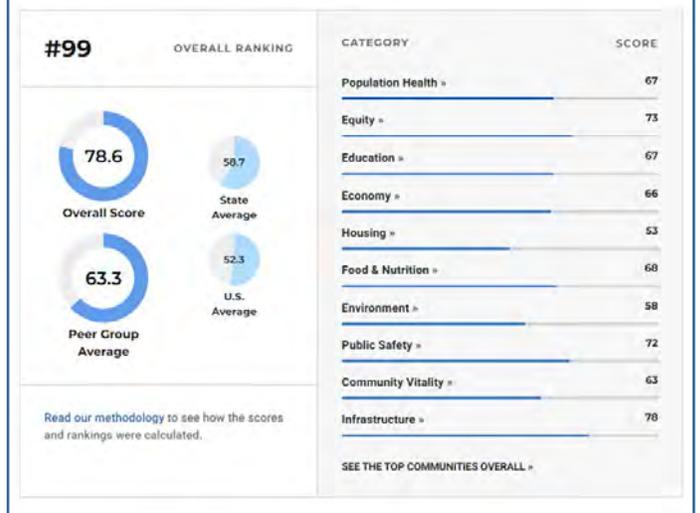
Another measure of a community’s health is the quality of its outdoor spaces. **Roanoke County Parks, Recreation and Tourism’s Park Partners Program** has grown to 52 groups that partner with the department to help beautify our parks.

In fiscal year 2018, 1,763 volunteers dedicated more than 7,000 hours working on various projects to help maintain our park properties, double the volunteers and hours over the previous year.



Pictured above - volunteer organizations invested thousands of work hours to help keep Roanoke County’s parks healthy, safe and beautiful. Learn more about Park Partners at <https://www.roanokecountyparks.com/383/Park-Partners-Program>.

OVERVIEW OF ROANOKE COUNTY



Back Creek Blueway Access Opens at Jae Valley Park

Roanoke County opened **Jae Valley Park** to the public on April 20, 2018. This park was a joint partnership with Roanoke City to provide more recreation opportunities and access to the Roanoke Valley Blueway on Back Creek. Located just off Jae Valley Road, the park features convenient and easy access to Back Creek and open areas for passive recreation. Kayak and canoe enthusiasts can use the blueway entry at Jae Valley Park to connect to Explore Park, just five miles away.



ROANOKE
COUNTY VA

www.roanokecountyva.gov

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VISION STATEMENT

“Roanoke County is a vibrant, innovative,
and scenic community that values its citizens,
heritage, and quality of life.”

- Roanoke County Board of Supervisors
January 2016



**ROANOKE
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**COMMUNITY STRATEGIC PLAN
2018 ANNUAL REPORT**