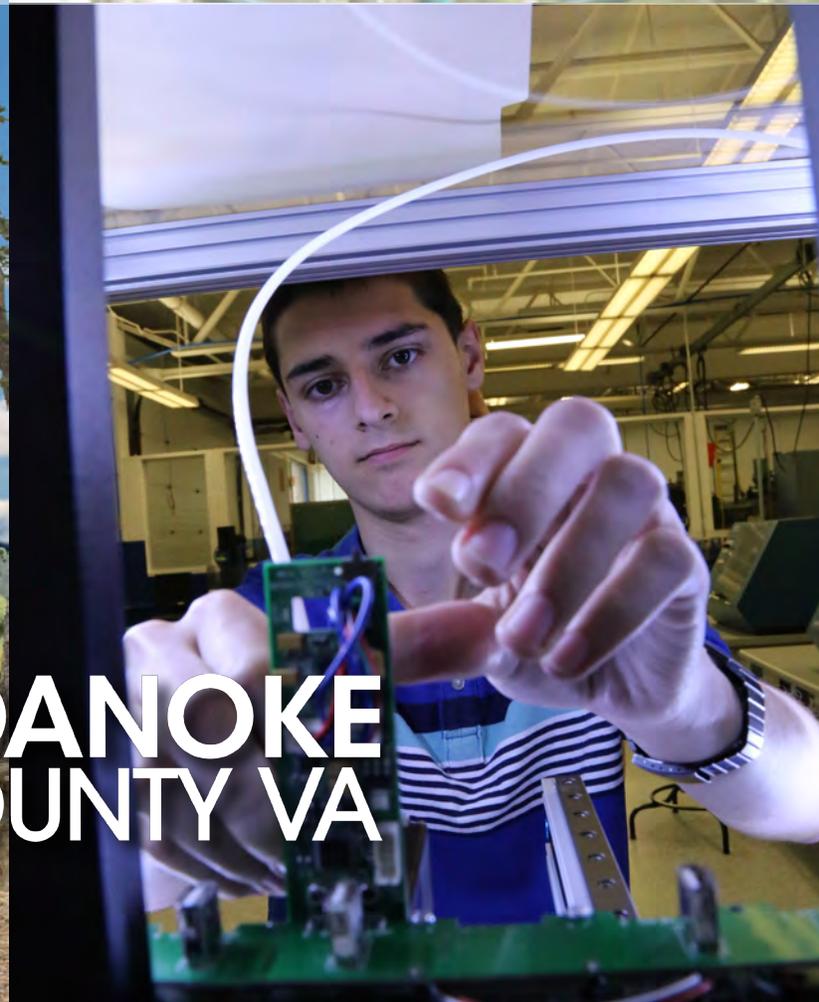




COMMUNITY STRATEGIC PLAN 2019 ANNUAL REPORT



**ROANOKE
COUNTY VA**

BOARD OF SUPERVISORS CHAIRMAN

Nearly four years ago, citizens and stakeholders from across Roanoke County and the greater valley joined together to develop our first Community Strategic Plan. Public input throughout the Community Strategic Plan process gave voice to what our citizens desired most - enhanced public safety, increased economic growth, and more connections within the County and with the world.

The Community Strategic Plan outlines all this while supporting our community's commitment to our natural beauty, human services, and educational opportunities.

The overarching themes in this plan also help inform your local government about the investments that matter most to its citizens. The plan's seven Strategic Initiatives have continued to guide the decisions of Roanoke County's elected officials and staff in our efforts to improve the quality of life in our community.

As we move into the next year of implementing our Community Strategic Plan, I encourage everyone to share your thoughts on how we can best continue to make Roanoke County a "community of choice" in which to live, work, and play. In Roanoke County, we are always exploring innovation.



*Phil C. North, Hollins Magisterial District
2019 Board of Supervisors Chair*

COUNTY ADMINISTRATOR

The Community Strategic Plan has become an important part of our efforts to provide best-in-class services every day, for everyone.

The plan helps Roanoke County's departments work together to achieve common goals that support the plan's Strategic Initiatives and allows us to combine the ideas, resources, and technology to create the services that our citizens desire.

The results are new programs that address ongoing citizen concerns in new and innovative ways, and Roanoke County has been recognized as a leader in creating new citizen services and opportunities. Several of these new programs have earned prominent awards from state and national organizations throughout the year.

As you read over the updates in this document, I hope that you consider the many partnerships and cooperative efforts being made to achieve the ideals our citizens put forth in the plan.

While the Community Strategic Plan is a living document developed in cooperation with our citizens, it also provides a framework for planning future budgets, which ensures our community remains a vibrant and beautiful place in which to live, raise a family, or start a new business for years to come.



*Dan O'Donnell,
Roanoke County Administrator*

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ABOUT THIS UPDATE...

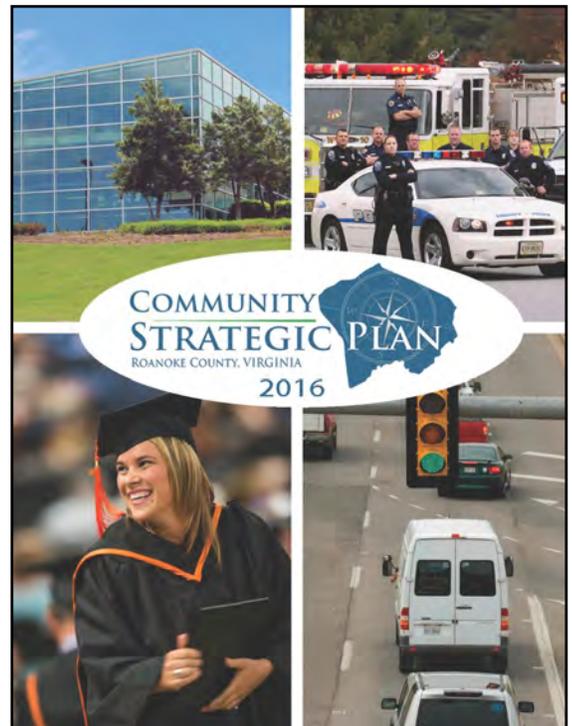
Roanoke County’s 2016 Community Strategic Plan was designed as a five-year plan to guide the pursuit of seven key Strategic Initiatives within the budget and resource limits available to the County. These seven initiatives reflect the vision statement adopted by the Board of Supervisors in January 2016, that “Roanoke County is a vibrant, innovative, and scenic community that values its citizens, heritage, and quality of life.”

Development of the Community Strategic Plan involved public input from hundreds of telephone surveys, multiple stakeholder interviews, and a series of community-based focus groups held over nine weeks.

Annual Community Strategic Plan Updates provide Roanoke County’s citizens information about the many projects, programs, and activities that support the Strategic Initiatives of this community-based plan.

This 2019 Community Strategic Plan Update follows previous updates from 2018 and 2017, marking more than three years since the original plan’s adoption by the Board of Supervisors in August 2016. The updates inside this document highlight significant achievements since the publication of the previous Community Strategic Plan Update in 2018.

To view the original 2016 Community Strategic Plan and the annual reports, please visit www.roanokecountyva.gov/csp.



Above: Roanoke County’s 2016 Community Strategic Plan was adopted by the Board of Supervisors in August 2016.



Interstate 81 Improvements Set to Begin in 2020

Interstate 81 is Roanoke County's most vital connection to the world, and as the community grows many improvements are needed to help Interstate 81 keep pace with the needs of residents, visitors, and the businesses that depend on this corridor.

In April 2019, legislation was signed to create the Interstate 81 Corridor Improvement Program and Fund, which is projected to raise \$800 million over six years for improvements to Interstate 81 throughout the region. The Interstate 81 Committee is providing advice and recommendations to the Commonwealth Transportation Board regarding the program and fund.

One key improvement to Interstate 81 is scheduled to begin in late 2020, with the creation of Auxiliary Lanes in both directions between exits 141 (Route 419/ Electric Road) and 143. While these segments are just over two miles each in length, the Auxiliary Lanes will help ease congestion on this heavily traveled stretch of Interstate 81 in Roanoke County.

Developing Connections with the Fralin Biomedical Research Institute

Established through the Virginia Tech Carilion (VTC) partnership that began in 2007, the **VTC School of Medicine and the Fralin Biomedical Research Institute** play key roles in the region's emerging innovation economy.

Fralin Biomedical Research Institute scientists are starting companies that take discoveries from the lab into the market, which helps drive economic growth through the commercialization of diagnostic, therapeutic and other medical products. In just nine years, researchers and graduate students working at the institute have spun out five separate biomedical companies.

Roanoke County officials are working with Fralin Biomedical Institute and VTC officials to help strengthen the technology ecosystem, and develop the local amenities that will both attract and retain knowledge workers for the region.



Above: The first improvements to Interstate 81 are scheduled to begin in late 2020 with the addition of Auxiliary Lanes between exits 141 and 143.

MtnNet Connects Bent Mountain Community to the Internet with Wireless Broadband Project

January 2019 saw the launch of **MtnNet, a new internet service provider in the Bent Mountain community**. With a goal of providing more than 100 homes internet speeds of up to 25mbps, MtnNet delivers high-speed wireless service previously unavailable to Bent Mountain's residents.

MtnNet's network is built off of connectivity to the **Roanoke Valley Broadband Authority's** world-class, carrier-grade and open access network. This data connection provides new enhanced services and access options to rural areas of the County.

The project is expected to be a catalyst for innovation and entrepreneurship in the Bent Mountain community. For more information, see www.mtnnet.net.

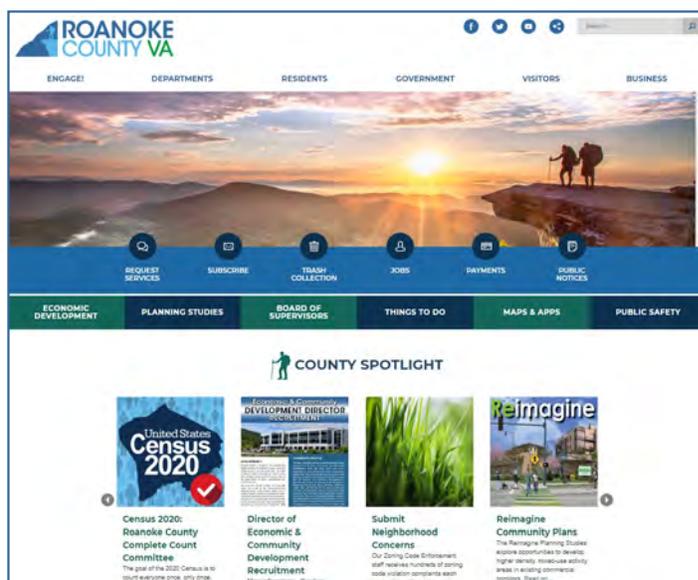


Roanoke County's New Website Focuses on Services

On June 27, 2019, Roanoke County unveiled its new website to the world. Along with a modern and responsive design that highlights County services, the new design also reflects the community's natural beauty and outdoor amenities.

This project also allowed Roanoke County Public Library to reformat its website to better highlight community classes and technology education programs while offering easy access to the library's online catalog and free databases. Roanoke County's Economic Development Department also launched a new website in June that focuses on recruitment, business services, and other programs vital to economic growth.

As right: Visit [Roanoke County's new website](#) to sign up for notifications, report concerns, make payments, and find information about the County.



Carilion Clinic's IRONMAN 70.3 and VBR's "Be A #Trailsetter" Campaign Connect Visitors to the Region, Strengthening Tourism Efforts



Tourism initiatives play an ever-increasing role in the region's economy, and Roanoke County is proud to be a part of next year's **Carilion Clinic IRONMAN 70.3** race across the Roanoke Valley. Announced by **Visit Virginia's Blue Ridge (VBR)** on July 30, 2019, the IRONMAN 70.3 set for June 7, 2020 promises to bring more than 2,500 athletes to the valley next year.

The announcement comes after a **2018 International Mountain Bicycling Association (IMBA) Silver Level Ride Center** designation for the region. This designation helped influence VBR's marketing efforts to define the region as a destination for outdoor tourism with its **"BE A #TRAILSETTER"** campaign. For more information, visit www.visitroanokeva.com.



Airport Improvements Promise More Connections and Services for the Region

The **Roanoke-Blacksburg Regional Airport** made several announcements this year that will mean more travel options for both residents and businesses. Along with ongoing negotiations to increase the number of flights, the airport announced an upcoming Airport Master Plan, the acquisition of new land, and the construction of a new large hangar facility to support local business. Roanoke-Blacksburg Regional Airport Executive Director Tim Bradshaw reports that the airport has an annual economic impact of \$250,000,000 for the region, and offers access to nearly 500 destination cities worldwide. Roanoke County continues to support the progress being made to strengthen Roanoke-Blacksburg Regional Airport as a travel connection for residents and local businesses.



STRATEGIC INITIATIVE POSITION ROANOKE COUNTY FOR ECONOMIC GROWTH

Carilion Children’s Announces New Facility at Tanglewood Mall

On September 26, **Carilion Clinic** President and CEO Nancy Howell Agee, Roanoke County Chairman Phil North and John Abernathy, President of Blackwater Resources, the owner of Tanglewood Mall, along with other Carilion officials came together to announce the development of a new **Carilion Children’s** facility that will occupy the former JCPenney and Miller-Motte spaces at the mall.

Carilion Clinic has leased 150,000 square feet of space at Tanglewood Mall, which will become home to a variety of Carilion Children’s outpatient practices.

“After years of adding more and more specialized pediatric services for our community, we’re excited to have a new home for those services,” said Nancy Howell Agee, President and CEO of Carilion Clinic. “More than a dozen pediatric and adolescent specialties are represented at Carilion now. This development will help us make access easier for our patients and their families.”



Above: Chairman North and Carilion officials join Carilion pediatric patients for the “groundbreaking” of a new Carilion Children’s facility in the former JCPenney and Miller-Motte spaces at Tanglewood Mall. Photo by Elaine Bays-Murphy / RVTV.

Chairman North noted that Carilion’s development at Tanglewood Mall will serve as a catalyst for additional future developments in the 419 corridor by bringing renewed energy to the area. The project is expected to invest more than \$30 million in the 419 Town Center, with completion scheduled in 18-24 months.

VFP, Inc. Opens New Headquarters in Roanoke County



Above: VFP, Inc.’s new headquarters in the former Cox Communications building. Photo courtesy Elaine Bays-Murphy / RVTV-3.

VFP, Inc. completed its purchase and move into the former **Cox Communications** building on Fallowater Lane earlier this year. The nearly 50,000 square foot facility now hosts VFP, Inc.’s corporate headquarters in the Roanoke Valley.

VFP, Inc. makes custom-engineered building solutions to protect critical equipment for utility companies, municipalities, government, and military applications.

A leasing agreement between VFP and Cox will allow the cable company to retain a strong presence in the County at this location. The project supports the redevelopment goals outlined in the **Reimagine 419 Plan** to revitalize this important commercial corridor.



POSITION ROANOKE COUNTY FOR ECONOMIC GROWTH

Metis Opens Redeveloped Former Allstate Building

This past June, **Metis Holdings** held a **grand opening ceremony** with Metis Plaza's new corporate tenants to celebrate the completion of the redevelopment of the former Allstate building. The 165,000 square-foot building on Electric Road is also the new home for **Lucas & Kite**, **Vistar Children's Eye Care Center**, and **Fit Studio**. The redeveloped property is expected to employ 600 people at full occupancy.

The completion of the redevelopment project coincides with Roanoke County's **Reimagine Oak Grove Center Plan** which aims to reshape the area into a modern hub for businesses and the community. Metis Holdings has invested more than \$6 million to redevelop the facility into a dynamic, multi-tenant facility in the Oak Grove area.



Above: Roanoke County Chairman Phil North and Supervisor David Radford join Chris Carey, President of Metis Holdings, earlier this year to celebrate the opening of Metis Plaza.

The Board of Supervisors Adopts 419 Town Center Plan

On July 23, the Board adopted the 419 Town Center Plan as part of the County's Comprehensive Plan document. The plan is a blueprint for the area's future growth, development, and redevelopment over the next 20 years.



Above: The 419 Town Center Plan as adopted by the Board of Supervisors in July 2019 as part of the Roanoke County's Comprehensive Plan.

The plan includes reports on existing conditions in the area, a retail market analysis, and reports about infrastructure and residential opportunities that will help guide the redevelopment this vital economic corridor in South County.

The 419 Town Center planning process launched September 15, 2016, when more than 150 participants came together to provide insights into what they hoped to see for the future of the 419 study area.

Stakeholder interviews with property owners, area businesses, and government leaders were conducted which led to community-based workshops to help envision the future of the 419 corridor.

The final plan, along with presentations, summary reports and additional information can be found on the [419 Town Center web page](#).



STRATEGIC INITIATIVE POSITION ROANOKE COUNTY FOR ECONOMIC GROWTH



Introducing Hilton’s TRU

Leaders from Roanoke County and partners **Jasmine & Hannah, LLC** came together to celebrate the grand opening of the new hotel **TRU by Hilton** in November 2018. This is the first TRU by Hilton hotel in the Roanoke market and adds 82 rooms to the Hollins area. The \$8 million investment also created 30 new jobs and provides a new lodging option for Roanoke County’s visitors.

At left: The new TRU by Hilton added 30 new jobs and 82 rooms that support Roanoke County’s visitor and tourism economy.

The Billy Byrd Opens in Vinton

The Billy Byrd is Vinton’s latest redevelopment project, with the renovation of the former William Byrd High School into 82 new apartments for the community.

The \$12 million project by Waukeshaw Development Inc. began in 2017 and officially opened on October 10, 2019. By preserving many historic assets of the school, Waukeshaw has created a unique, market-rate apartment complex and new housing options within the Town of Vinton.



Above: Roanoke County and Town of Vinton officials join Waukeshaw Development, Inc. at The Billy Byrd ribbon cutting ceremony.

Richfield’s Expansion Will Provide New Options for Seniors

Richfield Living held a groundbreaking celebration this year to pave the way for an additional 140 new independent living residences with skilled nursing facilities. Richfield’s construction plans include a new town center featuring an atrium, chapel, dining room, and salon services that will create a new communal, multi-purpose space for residents. Richfield’s project was enabled by a \$93 million bond inducement through the Economic Development Authority to support the project and high-quality health care services for the community.

More Economic Development News from Roanoke County

AEP Transmission Operation Center - The Economic Development Department sold 53 acres in the Center for Research and Technology to AEP for a new 75,000 sf. high secure, mission-critical facility. This \$60 million investment is expected to be completed in 2021.

Wood Haven Technology Park - Development at the Wood Haven Technology Park continued this year with water and sewer extensions to the park along with plans for a four-lane entrance road and a landscaped median.



Award-Winning Community Planning Helps Guide Future Development



Above: Planning staff from both the City of Roanoke and Roanoke County, along with Roanoke County Public Schools, accepting a 2019 VACo Achievement Award for engaging local students and educators as part of its Oak Grove Center Plan. For the latest news about the Reimagine planning studies, visit www.roanokecountyva.gov/reimagine.

Community meetings for the **Hollins Center Plan** and the **Oak Grove Center Plan** concluded in May 2019. Engagement participation for both plans has been outstanding, with 880 citizens participating in Hollins and 1,325 engaging in the Oak Grove community.

Next steps include working with both the Roanoke County Planning Commission and Board of Supervisors on the Hollins Center Plan. The City of Roanoke Planning Commission and the Roanoke City Council will join the Roanoke County Planning Commission and Board of Supervisors to review the Oak Grove Center Plan.

Roanoke County's Planning Services staff earned a 2019 Achievement Award from the Virginia Association of Counties (VACo) for the Public Schools Planning Workshop portion of the Oak Grove Center Plan.

In November 2017, a team of planners from Roanoke County and the City of Roanoke met with the Roanoke County Student Advisory Council to involve them in the planning process, solicit their input for the Oak Grove

Center Plan, and get their ideas about involving younger generations in community planning.

Students participated in several interactive planning exercises. Feedback from the Student Advisory Council informed four subsequent workshops that were held at the elementary, middle and high schools nearest to Oak Grove.

Educators participated in envisioning future development, transportation and public amenities in several small group mapping exercises. Afterward, teachers created ways to use the content for project-based learning assignments and involved students in the Oak Grove planning process.

The Public Schools Planning Workshop program successfully met the goal of soliciting a large amount of public input from residents under age fifty while simultaneously exposing students to the planning profession. For more information, see the [Reimagine plans web page](#).



STRATEGIC INITIATIVE PROMOTE NEIGHBORHOOD CONNECTIONS

New Transportation Projects for Roanoke County

Transportation improvements often take years of planning and involve millions of dollars in local, state and federal funding. Roanoke County, in cooperation with the Virginia Department of Transportation, has completed several projects recently, and below are a few of the many projects with approved funding that citizens will be seeing over the next several years.

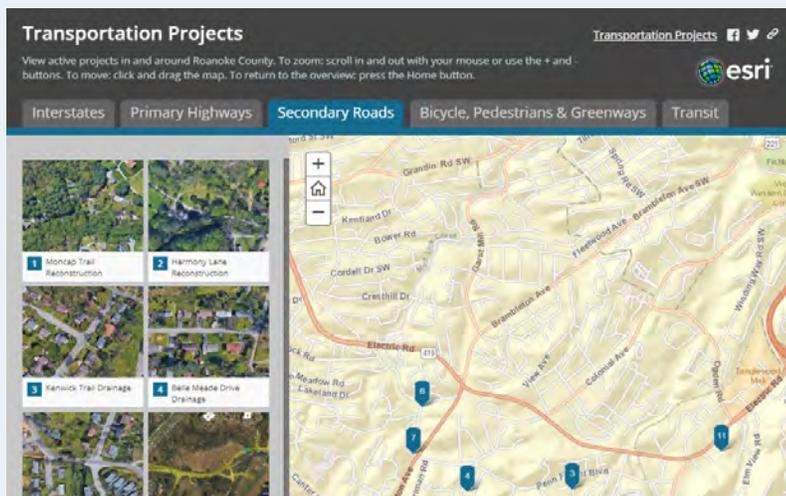
Improvements to Electric Road at Tanglewood Mall are slated to begin in 2020 and will feature an additional southbound lane along with bicycle and pedestrian accommodations. This project will add one southbound, outside lane from Ogden Road to Route 220, which will become southbound ramp to Route 220. It will also reduce pavement widths and add bicycle lanes outside of the travel lanes. Sidewalks will be added on the Tanglewood Mall side from Ogden Road to the Route 220 underpass, and on the opposite side of the street from Ogden Road to South Peak Boulevard. Pedestrian crosswalks and signals will be added at Ogden Road, Elm View Road, and South Peak Boulevard. This \$6.5 million project is funded by state and federal transportation sources.

A **Route 311/Route 419 Roundabout project** has been funded and approved for construction beginning in Fiscal Year 2021. The roundabout will help ease congestion and improve safety at this intersection during peak traffic hours.

The **Fallowater Lane Extension** has been identified as a major connector to increase access to the 419 Town Center Planning Area. This \$4.3 million project will provide access from Route 419 to The Ridges, with the majority of the funding coming from state sources. Construction is expected to begin in late 2020.

Visit the Transportation Story Map to See Transportation Project Updates

Roanoke County offers citizens a comprehensive view of projects across the County through its [Transportation Story Map](#). 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 moving toward construction include:



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

- Plantation Road Bicycle, Pedestrian and Streetscape Improvement Project, Phase 2, from Walrond Drive to Gander Way,
- West Main Street Pedestrian Improvements from the City of Salem to Technology Drive,
- Plantation Road/Lila Drive Intersection Safety Improvements,
- West Roanoke River Greenway to Roanoke County's Green Hill Park,
- East Roanoke River Greenway from the Water Treatment Plant to the Blue Ridge Parkway.



Diverging Diamond Interchange Near Tanglewood Announced

One of the most exciting transportation developments in 2019 was the funding of a **Diverging Diamond Interchange** at the intersection of Route 220 and Electric Road near Tanglewood Mall.

The Diverging Diamond Interchange (DDI) project to reconstruct the Route 419 (Electric Road) and Route 220 Interchange was funded by the Commonwealth Transportation Board and the Roanoke Valley Transportation Planning Organization in June 2019. The DDI and associated traffic signal modifications will improve traffic flow and help reduce congestion on both roads. Pedestrian and bicycle accommodations will also be included to connect to planned and existing facilities in Roanoke County and the City of Roanoke. The \$17.5 million needed to complete this project will come from federal and state funds. Construction is anticipated to begin in 2024.



Above: A conceptual drawing of the planned Diverging Diamond Interchange planned for Route 220/Electric Road near Tanglewood Mall.

Plantation Road Project Phase I Completed, Phase II Underway

Roanoke County businesses on Plantation Road joined County staff on October 31, 2018, for a ribbon cutting ceremony to celebrate the completion of Phase I of the Plantation Road Bicycle, Pedestrian and Streetscape Improvement Project. The completed shared-use path for pedestrians and bicyclists extends along Plantation Road from Williamson Road to Walrond Drive and includes street trees, a “Welcome to Hollins” gateway sign, and drainage improvements along the road. The next part of the project is currently in the design phase and will include road, drainage, and pedestrian improvements on Plantation Road from Walrond Drive to Gander Way. Construction on Phase II is anticipated to begin in Fiscal Year 2021.



Above and right: A Wizard of Oz-themed ribbon cutting was held on October 31, 2018, for Phase 1 of the Plantation Road Bicycle, Pedestrian and Streetscape Improvement Project.





STRATEGIC INITIATIVE ENSURE CITIZEN SAFETY

Roanoke County Receives StormReady Designation



Above: Fire & Rescue Staff, Chairman North, Phil Hysell from the National Weather Service, and Virginia Department of Emergency Management's Mike Guzo on hand for the presentation of Roanoke County's StormReady designation to the Board of Supervisors.

This summer Roanoke County received the prestigious **National Weather Service StormReady Designation**. StormReady is a nationwide voluntary program that helps communities take a proactive approach to severe weather preparation and response, while increasing public awareness of impending weather conditions. Roanoke County Fire & Rescue Staff worked with the National Weather Service, State Emergency Management and the media to help the County become a StormReady community.

Vinton Fire/EMS Merges with Roanoke County Fire & Rescue

As part of a renegotiated agreement with the Town of Vinton, the Town's Fire and Emergency Medical Services staff merged with Roanoke County Fire & Rescue on July 1, 2019. Career staff from Vinton were officially sworn in at a ceremony after the merger. This consolidation of services between the Town and County promises to enhance public safety coverage for both the Town and parts of East Roanoke County.

Improvements to several Public Safety Stations include renovations to accommodate 24-hour career and volunteer personnel at several key locations. These improvements help strengthen Roanoke County's Fire & Rescue response across the community.

In 2019, the department also **created two additional shifts** to improve service delivery at no extra impact to the Fire & Rescue department's annual budget.



Above: Vinton Fire/EMS officers at the Swearing-In Ceremony this summer.

Training Citizens

Fire & Rescue staff continued to coordinate the combined **Citizens Public Safety Academy** that includes demonstrations and lectures from Police, Fire & Rescue officers and Sheriff's deputies. Twenty citizens began this year's program that runs from February through November.





Police Chiefs Inducted Into Evidence Based Policing Hall of Fame



Above: Police Chief Howard Hall and Assistant Chief Jimmy Chapman at the induction ceremony for the Evidence Based Policing Hall of Fame.

In June 2019, Chief Howard Hall and Assistant Chief Jimmy Chapman were inducted into the **Evidence Based Policing Hall of Fame** at the George Mason University's Center for Evidence Based Crime Policy. The Hall of Fame recognizes law enforcement practitioners who have implemented high-quality research programs in their agency and who are also champions of institutionalizing evidence based practices. Chief Hall and Assistant Chief Chapman joined a group of approximately 40 other law enforcement officials honored with this award over the past 10 years.

Ongoing Community Safety Planning

Roanoke County Police's Crime Prevention Coordinator held a **Faith-Based Safety Summit** to provide information on possible threats and help organizations develop their own safety plans. Numerous faith-based organizations from across the valley attended this event.

During the past year, continuing training was provided to both Police and **Roanoke County Public Schools** staff on emergency procedures and safety plans. Several technology projects were completed or planned to help school staff and Police monitor activity in the schools. This is in addition to a new **Police focus on gun safety** and violence prevention in Roanoke County's Public Schools.

Using Technology to Enhance Public Safety Throughout The Region

Roanoke County and its PSAP (Public Safety Answering Point, 911) partners, the City of Roanoke and the City of Salem, have deployed shared databases to integrate the agencies' separate 911 CAD systems. This project helps officers on all sides to provide mutual aid and decrease response times throughout Roanoke County and to the other localities. This project is a critical part of preparing for future NextGen-911 services that will use location data from multiple types of communication sources to assist public safety responders in the field.

The Roanoke Valley Radio System gained another partner this year as the **City of Salem** joined other public safety agencies across the region to offer seamless emergency communications throughout the Roanoke Valley and its neighboring communities.

Roanoke County's **Communications and Information Technology Department** is also working with **Roanoke County Public Schools** on the first steps to bring schools into the Roanoke Valley Radio System as well. This multi-year plan to phase the County Schools into the system will ensure that first responders have uninterrupted radio coverage in all Roanoke County Public Schools.

The Police Department has also worked with the Communications and Information Technology Department and the **Court System** to implement an **electronic summons system**. This system will allow officers to issue summonses and warnings via an in-car computer, which will be transmitted to the Courts electronically. This project will reduce the time to transport and process documents and will also streamline data entry into the Court System. The first units are expected to be deployed in patrol cars later this year.

In response to the increasing number of thefts from vehicles this year, the **Police Department's Crime Analyst** has created a process to identify "micro-hot spots" for these incidents. Additional police resources are assigned to these areas while residents are notified to be on the alert through the County's **RoCo Alert System** and social media channels.



Department of Social Services Focuses on Human Needs and Development



Roanoke Valley STARS is a hybrid specialized foster parent program shared by Roanoke County Social Services and the City of Roanoke Social Services. This unique collaboration is meeting the needs of traumatized youth and helping them remain in their community as they strive towards permanency. In Fiscal Year 2019, the Roanoke Valley STARS program grew to serve 14 youth. These youth would otherwise have been placed in costly and restrictive treatment foster care or residential placements.

Kinship Fostering can also help families heal. This past year, eight kinship families were approved as foster parents for youth family members. This allowed 10 children to live in homes with adult relatives they have known and are comfortable with. Older teens often have a very hard time matching with a traditional or private agency foster home, and in the past year, six teens were placed in kinship foster homes who would otherwise have been placed in group homes or in other arrangements.

Through its **Virginia Initiative for Education and Work (VIEW) program**, Roanoke County's Department of Social Services partnered with Craig, Franklin and Botetourt counties, the City of Roanoke, Total Action for Progress, and Goodwill to receive a \$272,343 TANF (Temporary Assistance to Needy Families) grant to offer VIEW clients physical, medical and substance abuse assessments, and job readiness training to help clients achieve self-sufficiency.

Serving Community Needs

During the holiday season, Roanoke County Social Services partners with community groups to provide programs like **Santa to a Senior**, **Community Christmas Store**, and **GE Holiday Food Baskets**. These programs and other donations allow the department to provide many needy families and seniors with a holiday meal and a seasonal gift. Additionally, Social Services works with the **Junior League of the Roanoke Valley** to secure sponsors for foster children to ensure each child has gifts to open on Christmas morning. Many of the generous donors are County employees, who strongly support this effort every year.

Roanoke County's Department of Social Services also partners with the **United Way**, **Head Start** and the **local school systems** to provide a mixed-delivery pre-school program to better prepare these children with the experience and skills they need to succeed when they enter public school.

Virginia's Medicaid Expansion initiative began in January, and the new eligibility rules have changed the face of the Medicaid program in the community. More parents and single adults between the ages of 19 and 64 are now able to gain health insurance under the new rules. Benefits staff received hundreds of applications in the first few months and provided timely processing and enrollment for 1,823 new recipients to date, with new applications being submitted every day.



Teaching Life Skills to Create Empowered and Productive Youth

Roanoke County's Department of Social Services is required to provide independent living services to foster youth ages 14 and older. **The Independent Living Program** offers dynamic and interactive classes that encourage and empower foster youth, while giving them the tools necessary to succeed as adults.

Over the past year the Independent Living Program has continued to grow, and several agencies and group homes have asked to send additional youth to these classes. Programs are focused around local community resources, educational and vocational programs in the area, finance education, self-care and health education, and other topics.

Local business owners and educational programs have also reached out with educational and job opportunities for program participants, including Wisler Plumbing, Virginia Western Community College, FastTrack Educational Programs, Friendship Health & Rehab CNA, Paul Mitchell Cosmetology School, Securitas Security Company, Western Virginia Regional Jail, along with recruiters from the Army, Navy, and Marines.

Another highlight of the program is a version of the "Game of Life," where teens can experience what it's really like to live independently, manage bills, develop a budget, and deal with unexpected expenses.

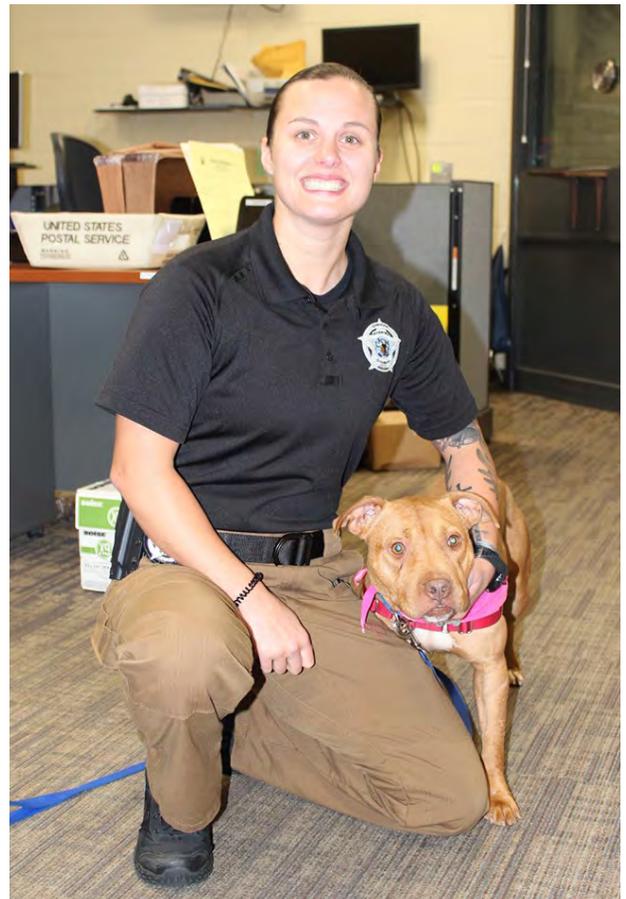
Sheriff's Office Community Outreach Supports Education and Community Service

Educational programs are a priority for the Sheriff's Office, both through its partnership with **Roanoke College's Inside-Out program** that allows inmates to take specific classes with college students and through its participation with the **Growth Through Opportunity (GTO)** program that lets young adults with autism perform tasks alongside deputies. At the School Board's request, the Sheriff's Office has also established a temporary **School Resource Deputy** position at Cave Spring High School.

In 2019, The Sheriff's Office partnered with the **Regional Center for Animal Care and Protection (RCACP)** to allow several inmates to help train dogs for future adoption. Inmates also provided cleaning and maintenance services at the RCACP shelter facility.

In addition, the Sheriff's Office employees strongly support the **Special Olympics** and annually volunteer for community fundraising events such as the Poker Run and Torch Run. The Sheriff's Office has also completed lighting and flooring renovations to the jail space, and will soon begin to upgrade the jail control room and camera systems.

At right: The Sheriff's Office provides service to the Regional Center for Animal Care and Protection through its inmate work program and by supporting the RCACP's Adventure Dogs program that takes shelter dogs out for day trips into the community.





STRATEGIC INITIATIVE PROMOTE LIFELONG LEARNING

Roanoke County Public Libraries Receive Virginia Association of Counties Achievement Award for “Igniting Wonder Through Technology”



Above: Roanoke County Public Libraries staff received a 2019 Virginia Association of Counties (VACo) Best Large County Achievement Award for its efforts in advancing digital citizenship through Artificial Intelligence (AI) programs, programming and robotics classes, and partnerships with other local organizations to advance technology education in the community.

Roanoke County Public Libraries fully embraced **Artificial Intelligence (AI)** when it became the nation’s first public library to recruit Pepper®, the humanoid robot. Staff sought to make AI education accessible and to close gaps in the field, including gender. Successful partnerships with **RobotLAB, Girls Who Code, Code Club Roanoke**, and local groups such as **Roanoke Robotics, Makers Club** and **Noke Codes**, enabled the Library to offer popular technology programming for all ages.

Library programs have included **Coding with Pepper and Cozmo, Micro-Bits** programming, and coding sessions with a smaller robot named **Vector** at all six locations. In one year, **15,000 people have interacted with Vector**, and the Library offered a total of 270 AI and coding programs, drawing 3,900 children and teens into the libraries.

Staff has shared information with other libraries across the U.S. and Canada, including appearances at national and state library conferences. The library’s efforts have been profiled as part of an article in Forbes magazine, “[Libraries Look to Serve As Leaders In Equitable AI Education.](#)”

The Library’s efforts were also recognized with the 2019 Top Innovator Award from the **Urban Libraries Council**. The Library’s “Meeting You at Your Wonder” award submission in the category of Workforce and Economic Development was cited as a “groundbreaking initiative that is sure to transform their community and inspire libraries across North America.” Visit www.urbanlibraries.org/innovations for more information.



Above: Pepper®, the humanoid robot, has been an integral part in developing technology classes and public education programs for all ages.



Library Offers Technology Classes for Adults and Businesses

The attention Pepper® brought to Roanoke County Public Libraries created opportunities for new programs and partnerships, including one with **The Advancement Foundation (TAF)**, a local business incubator that hosts The Gauntlet business competition.

Recognizing the need to prepare, recruit and retain talent in the region, RCPL leaned into the challenge by focusing on programs to help prepare today's workers to meet the workforce needs of tomorrow.

In one year, the Library offered **59 adult tech programs**, drawing 425 people and the Library purchased public access to **Lynda.com** online learning and added classes in **Photoshop**, stop-action video, **Python**, **Scratch**, **Arduino**, **C++**, **Choreographe** and **Linux** to the Library's portfolio of learning resources.

Library staff also worked with **Economic Development** and TAF to identify training needs in the community and to add more sophisticated workforce development workshops, including topics like **Lead Generation 101** and **Digital Media Relations**.

Roanoke County Public Schools Are Opportunity Ready

Roanoke County Public Schools is working to prepare students to be ready to take advantage of any of the many opportunities available after high school. With **Opportunity Ready**, the district is helping students develop key success skills of citizenship, creativity, collaboration, communication and critical thinking.

Being Opportunity Ready is about helping students get to learning that is engaging and purposeful. Successful students move beyond mere memorization to the application of knowledge through the use of strategies that engage students in authentic problem solving such as inquiry-based learning, project-based learning, and design challenges.

Deeper learning doesn't happen in a vacuum and students thrive within a carefully cultivated climate and culture conducive to learning and with educators and support staff prepared to collaboratively meet the needs of each student.

School Apprenticeship Program Participation Expands in 2019

On April 30, 2019, nineteen high school students across the County committed to local partner businesses as part of the **Roanoke County Public Schools Student Registered Apprenticeship (SRA) program**. These new students are in addition to the nine students from the previous year that are continuing with the program for a second year. This program is in collaboration between Roanoke County Public Schools and Roanoke County's Economic Development Department.



Above: 2019 Student Registered Apprentices at Signing Day. Photo courtesy Chuck Lionberger / Roanoke County Public Schools.

2020 VISION
C-ing Clearly



Above: Roanoke County Public Schools' 2020 Vision has the goal of ensuring student success through an Opportunity Ready education.

These ideals are embedded in the district's **C-Change Framework** which articulates the comprehensive mission of Roanoke County Public Schools.

To highlight the importance of deeper learning within the C-Change Framework, the school system is embarking on **2020 Vision**, to ensure that every student, in every classroom, in every school is being prepared to be Opportunity Ready.

For more information about Roanoke County Public Schools' Opportunity Ready initiative, please visit the [C-Change Framework web page](#).



Hinchee Park Adds 250+ Acres of Public Outdoor Access



Above: Roanoke County officials joined Hinchee Family members, Roanoke Valley Greenways, the Pathfinders for Greenways and others at the September 28 opening ceremony for the new Hinchee Park.

Roanoke County officially opened the new 235-acre **Hinchee Park** on Saturday, September 28. The park is a woodland preserve consisting of a two-mile trail connecting the Hanging Rock Battlefield Trail with Carvins Cove Natural Reserve. The new park provides pedestrian, mountain biking and equestrian access to over 60 miles of trails within Carvins Cove. Hinchee Park was made possible by a generous land donation from **Nancy Hinchee Pace**, as well as significant fundraising efforts by private donors coordinated through the **Roanoke Valley Greenways** and **Pathfinders for Greenways**. Additional support came through grant funding by the **Beirne Carter Foundation**, the **Virginia Outdoors Foundation**, and the **Virginia Land Conservation Fund**.

Jae Valley Park Receives 2018 Governor’s Environmental Award

The Jae Valley Park project received a **2018 Governor’s Environmental Excellence Award**. The Governor’s Environmental Excellence Awards recognize successful and innovative efforts that improve Virginia’s environment. Several parts of Jae Valley Park’s development helped earn the award, including focusing on grass parking, repairs to the entrance culvert, and using the natural geography of the park to promote hiking, and picnicking.





Explore Park Succeeds as a Center for Outdoor Recreation

In June, Roanoke County opened **Treetop Quest** at Explore Park. This new aerial adventure course hosts four different levels with a mobile challenge course and cargo net play area. Participants as young as age 4 can enjoy the outdoors in this unique and exciting new venue.

Explore Park's private partners are also seeing strong results as traffic at the park increases. In 2019, **Don's Cab-Inns** was awarded two state honors at the Virginia Recreation and Park Society (VRPS) annual conference, for **Best New Facility Award** and a **Distinguished Private Sector Service Award** for its contributions to Explore Park. Overnight lodging continues to be popular, with most available tents, yurts, and cabins fully rented.

Blue Mountain Adventures launched river tubing at Explore Park this summer, a new and exciting recreational activity praised by the community. Demand for this type of service reflects the need to add more active outdoor recreation programs in Roanoke County.

Explore Park has also partnered with the **National Park Service** to offer free environmental programs, nature walks, and fireside discussions at Explore Park on Fridays, Saturdays and Sundays. These family-focused programs have proven to be a popular park attraction for all ages.

In 2019, the Board of Supervisors approved an agreement with **Twin Creeks Brewing Company** to reopen the historic Brugh Tavern as the **Twin Creeks Brew Pub**. The Brugh will soon feature food, craft brews, and a Virginia Wine and Cider Bar. Seating will be available inside as well as outside, and a new venue on the lawn will be a great space to enjoy music and entertainment along with food and beverages.

These and other recent developments have been made possible through the completion of water, sewer and utility extensions into Explore Park to support the infrastructure needed for the success of these public-private partnership amenities at Explore Park.



Above: *Treetop Quest at Explore Park has proven to be an exciting attraction.*



Above: *Award-winning Don's Cab-Inns at Explore Park can provide a comfortable weekend getaway.*



Above: *The Brugh Tavern reopens soon with the help of Twin Creeks Brewing Company.*



Stormwater Projects Protect and Preserve the Community

A large part of keeping the community healthy, clean, and beautiful depends on the quality of Roanoke County's **Stormwater Management Program**. Drainage and stormwater improvements help prevent damage from flooding, reclaim environmentally significant waterways, and help preserve natural beauty and resources. While many communities struggle to fund necessary stormwater projects, Roanoke County's Drainage Division has accomplished major improvements as part of the County's existing annual budget.

This year the County made drainage improvements on **Belle Meade Drive** by installing a new drop inlet and larger pipes to help prevent flooding in the area, a investment of approximately \$186,000 in the neighborhood.

On **Kenwick Trail**, \$197,000 of improvements were made by installing new curbing, drop inlets, and storm drain pipes along the street.

The **Stream Restoration of Glade Creek in Vinyard Park** continued with Phase II this year and included the stabilization of approximately 2,000 linear feet of stream in Vinyard Park. This improvement helps protect nearby ball fields and infrastructure from erosion while converting the stream into a park asset. Funding for this phase of the project was approximately \$650,000.

Stream Repair of Mud Lick Creek at Garst Mill Park included approximately \$60,000 to stabilize 100 linear feet of severely eroded streambank with overlapping stone walls.

Stormwater runoff, like many roads, often doesn't end within a single jurisdiction. Last year the Drainage Division, in partnership with the **City of Salem**, made significant improvements to **Franklin Street** where the road crosses localities. The City of Salem paid to construct a drop inlet and storm drain pipe, crossing Franklin Street into the County. The County funded approximately \$40,000 to extend the storm drain pipe to a nearby stream.



Above: Stormwater improvements made to Belle Meade Drive.



Above: Stream Restoration of Glade Creek, Phase II.



Above: Overlapping (or inbricated) stone walls were added to repair streambank erosion at Garst Mill Park.



Maintaining and Improving Outdoor Spaces

Explore Park held two river clean-ups last year with more than 170 volunteers and staff removing over five tons of garbage from the along the park's waterways.

Explore Park also partnered with the **Pathfinders for Greenways** to repair over 10 miles of equestrian trails from Explore Park to Mill Mountain. This project is another example of partnering to increase the outdoor experience for a variety of recreation users across the Roanoke Valley.



Above: River cleanup at Explore Park removed 10,000 pounds of trash from along the park's waterways.

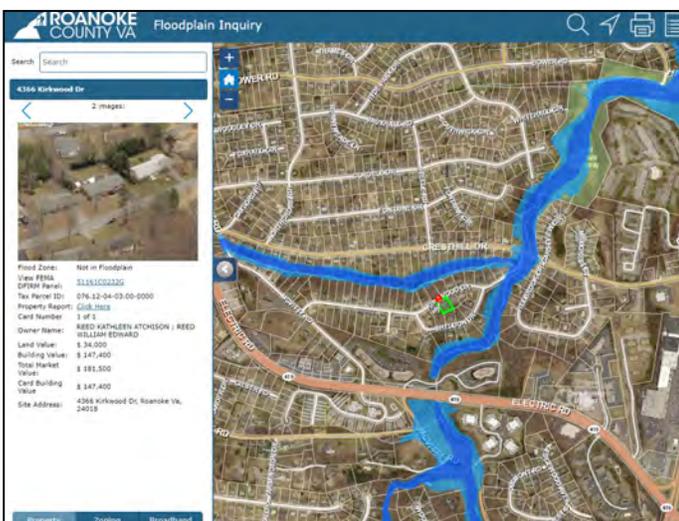


Bringing Books to Parks

Parks, Recreation and Tourism also partnered with **Roanoke County Public Libraries, Eagle Scouts, North Cross School, Community School** and **Northside High School** to build three new **Little Free Libraries** at Walrond Park, Green Hill Park and Garst Mill Park. Community-minded improvements like these help keep outdoor spaces relevant and appreciated by a wider variety of citizens.

At left: Board of Supervisors Chairman Phil North helped dedicate a new Little Library at Walrond Park earlier this year.

GIS Staff Launches Floodplain Inquiry App



In response to localized flash flooding last year, the **Communications and Information Technology GIS staff** quickly deployed a new **Floodplain Inquiry App** to help residents to easily find a vast amount of data about floodways, flood plains, tax parcels, building and land values, flood certificates and flood zone status.

This mobile-ready app helps residents and County staff identify flood risks and work to help mitigate potential damage to homes, businesses and public infrastructure across the County.

The Floodview Inquiry App is the latest in a series of award-winning applications developed by the County's GIS staff. For more information, visit gisweb.roanoke-countyva.gov/floodview/.



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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

Front Cover Photos: Pepper® courtesy Roanoke County Public Library; Treetop Quest at Explore Park courtesy Roanoke County Parks, Recreation and Tourism; Mechatronics photo courtesy Chuck Lionberger / Roanoke County Public Schools; Mountain Biker courtesy Eddy Alexander.

Back Cover Photo: Masons Cove Community courtesy of Roanoke County Fire & Rescue.



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