COMMUNITY
STRATEGIC PLAN
ROANOKE COUNTY, VIRGINIA

April 2016
Combined Focus Group Topics, Goals, and Objectives

Economic Development

Transportation

Quality of Life

Education

**Community Health and Well-Being**

Public Safety

NEXT EVENT:
Open House Community Meetings to comment
on the Draft *Community Strategic Plan*

Thursday, June 16 at Vinton War Memorial
3 p.m. to 5 p.m. and 7 p.m. to 9 p.m.

Monday, June 27 at South County Library
3 p.m. to 5 p.m. and 7 p.m. to 9 p.m.

The topics, goals, and objectives in this document represent the first steps in the development of Roanoke County's first *Community Strategic Plan*. I wish to express my appreciation to the 268 people who devoted the time and energy to share their desire for creating a better community for everyone. I would also like to thank Board of Supervisors Chairman Jason Peters, Vice Chairman Joe McNamara, Cave Spring Supervisor George Assaid, Catawba Supervisor Martha Hooker, Hollins Supervisor Al Bedrosian, and Roanoke County Schools Superintendent Dr. Gregory Killough for their efforts and support of this community-based Focus Group process.

- Dan O'Donnell, Assistant County Administrator
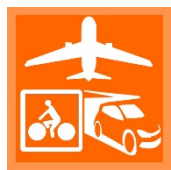
For additional information on the *Community Strategic Plan* including Focus Group results and the Telephone Survey results, please visit
www.roanokecountyva.gov/csp

Economic Development Focus Group

TOPIC 1: INFRASTRUCTURE

Goal 1. Invest in technological infrastructure and site improvements.

Objective 1: Ease government regulations for new site development, including coordination with DEQ for stormwater credit program.

Objective 2: Extend high speed internet (gigabit) and affordable broadband to business parks, commercial corridors and residential districts. Incorporate wireless service where appropriate.

Objective 3: Coordinate with the Western Virginia Regional Industrial Facilities Authority in increasing the number of prepared sites within Roanoke County.

Goal 2. Support improvements to the region's multi-modal transportation system.

Objective 1: Improve air service with more flights to new markets and make more affordable. In addition, research and engage Lynchburg concerning the construction of a new airport.

Objective 2: Improve Interstate exits, including lighting, along I-81. In addition, within Roanoke County improve the traffic lighting system, specifically the synchronization of lights.

Objective 3: Complete the Roanoke River Greenway from Explore Park to Green Hill Park and provide linages to Southwest County. In addition, improve safety, services and amenities along the existing Greenway trail

Goal 3. Encourage and plan for the development of attractive, mixed-use, walkable communities.

Objective 1: Create mixed-use zoning designation and amend the Roanoke County Zoning Ordinance to include sidewalks for redevelopment areas.

Objective 2: Establish uniform development standards for Commercial Matching Grant Program and expand program County wide.

Objective 3: Identify and prioritize properties for redevelopment, focusing on industrial and commercial zoned districts.

TOPIC 2: REGIONAL COOPERATION AND MARKETING

Goal 1. Enhance regional cooperation for economic development.

Objective 1: Improve and expand revenue sharing between localities on regional projects.

Objective 2: Evaluate effectiveness of County business incentive programs.

Objective 3: Establish regular meetings between economic development departments across the region to align marketing efforts.

Goal 2. Proactively market and advertise the region.

Objective 1: Proactively recruit targeted business and industrial sectors.

Objective 2: Explore what types of business should be recruited based on demographics of our region/market.

Objective 3: Adopt and continuously promote Virginia's Blue Ridge brand.

Goal 3. Promote and assist local business activity.

Objective 1: Conduct a survey of existing business to determine needs.

Objective 2: Create one-stop shop for business assistance on a regional level, including promotion of SBDC.

Objective 3: Modernize zoning codes to include mixed-use development.

TOPIC 3: WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT

Goal 1. Support lifelong learning (K through Gray) to train and enhance the workforce.

Objective 1: Equalize vocation and college tracks in high school.

Objective 2: Offer incentives for skill education and encourage community colleges and high school to participate.

Objective 3: Collaborate with local higher education institutions.

Goal 2. Target industries for workforce development.

Objective 1: Determine needed skill sets of business region wants and attract and connect VWCC to provide classes.

Objective 2: Create common platform to gather workforce needs data.

Objective 3: Identify unemployed and connect to education and jobs.

Goal 3. Focus on regional solutions and regional partners for workforce development.

Objective 1: Promote apprenticeships for high school credit.

Objective 2: Involve local high schools in regional partnerships, including career and technical education (CTE), Magnet Programs (Governor's School) for CTE.

Objective 3: Construct a clearinghouse to connect businesses with skilled workers and students – high school and college level.
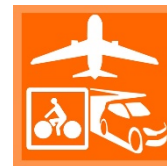
Transportation Focus Group

TOPIC 1: INFRASTRUCTURE IMPROVEMENTS

Goal 1. Improve maintenance and construction of roads

Objective 1: Lobby for equitable funding and explore other mechanisms for funding

Objective 2: Encourage road interconnectivity

Objective 3: Revisit Eastern Circumferential road

Goal 2. Sustainable, walkable and accessible community

Objective 1: Expand bus service into Roanoke County

Objective 2: Provide streetscape improvements with sidewalks, trees, pedestrian lights (solar-powered), native vegetation

Objective 3: Improve accessibility to bus stops and routes

Goal 3. Coordinate and improve regulations

Objective 1: Ensure ADA compliance at all levels for new construction

Objective 2: Facilitate better traffic flow at traffic signals (e.g. Austrian Traffic Light system, time and computerize traffic signals to speed limit and announce/publicize)

Objective 3: Incorporate all modes of transportation in new and existing developments

TOPIC 2: MULTIMODAL CONNECTIVITY, BALANCE AND ACCESSIBILITY

Goal 1. Extend public transit in County

Objective 1: Develop a strategic funding plan to implement the Transit Vision Plan

Objective 2: Adopt or endorse the Transit Vision Plan

Objective 3: Choose priorities from the Transit Vision Plan

Goal 2. Create opportunities for all users (multigenerational) to access business/activity centers, neighborhoods, and healthcare

Objective 1: Adopt and endorse the Pedestrian Vision Plan

Objective 2: Restore funding to previous levels for CORTRAN with extended hours
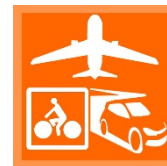
Objective 3: Construct pedestrian facilities on 419 – install sidewalks and crosswalks in the Tanglewood and Oak Grove areas

Goal 3. Encourage/promote mixed-use town centers with multi-modal access

Objective 1: Decentralize transit routes and transfer hubs

Objective 2: Review and update development ordinances

Objective 3: Identify town center locations

Transportation Focus Group (continued)

TOPIC 3: CONNECT ROANOKE (TO THE WORLD)

Goal 1. Develop/Improve relationship with other jurisdictions (e.g. Smart Road, medical school)

Objective 1: Participate in regional committees and planning

Objective 2: Publicize projects we collaborate on and invite jurisdictions to do more of the same (ex. Expand the Alert System, Increase Community Developments readership by 20%)

Objective 3: Set up a citizen advisory committee for transit

Goal 2. Create a seamless, intermodal system with motorized and people-powered transportation

Objective 1: Develop hubs (park and ride, etc.) at strategic locations

Objective 2: Connect bicycles and trails to the Blue Ridge Parkway

Objective 3: Provide bus service (Valley Metro) to airport and passenger rail

Goal 3. Improve air service

Objective 1: Roanoke County should encourage its citizens to fly in and out of the Roanoke airport with "Fly Home" or "Fly Roanoke" slogans

Objective 2: Offer package deals for transportation options

Objective 3: Build and open Explore Park

Quality of Life Focus Group

TOPIC 1: FUNDAMENTAL SERVICES FOR A LIFELONG COMMUNITY

Goal 1. Be at the forefront of communication technology

Objective 1: Accessibility to residential high-speed internet for all citizens.

Objective 2: Expand and improve cell service after performing a cell coverage   analysis.

Objective 3: Implement and expand broadband.

Goal 2. Promote regionalism

Objective 1: Expand public transportation infrastructure to include sidewalks, greenways, electric charging stations, bus service and bike lanes to improve connectivity and access throughout region.

Objective 2: Establish which services need to be regionalized.

Objective 3: Regional summits to identify and explore shared service options.

Goal 3. Improve lifelong educational opportunities

Objective 1: Establish and encourage partnership with businesses to encourage vocational education at all levels and workforce readiness.

Objective 2: Close workforce skills gap.

Objective 3: Expand multi-generational education opportunities.

TOPIC 2: RECREATION & ENTERTAINMENT

Goal 1. Be progressive in developing emerging recreational activities

Objective 1: Develop Explore Park.

Objective 2: Complete Roanoke River Greenway in next 5 years.

Objective 3: Build an in-river whitewater park.

Goal 2. Improve and activate access to outdoors/infrastructure

Objective 1: Canoe/kayak access.

Objective 2: Restrooms along the Greenway.

Objective 3: Build an entertainment venue and encourage performers/vendors (beer, wine, music) food trucks; open mic night.

Goal 3. Expand cultural/arts entertainment opportunities

Objective 1: Develop an art center with studio space.

Objective 2: Promote and encourage regional cooperation for events.

Objective 3: Develop botanical gardens.

TOPIC 3: NATURAL RESOURCES MANAGEMENT, PROTECTION & CONSERVATION

Goal 1. Develop and improve accessibility to natural resources

Objective 1: Continue to expand greenways and trails.

Objective 2: Directional signs/marketing.

Objective 3: Improve safety on greenways.

Goal 2. Develop wiser waste management

Objective 1: Ban plastic bags or create "disincentives" for use of plastic bags.

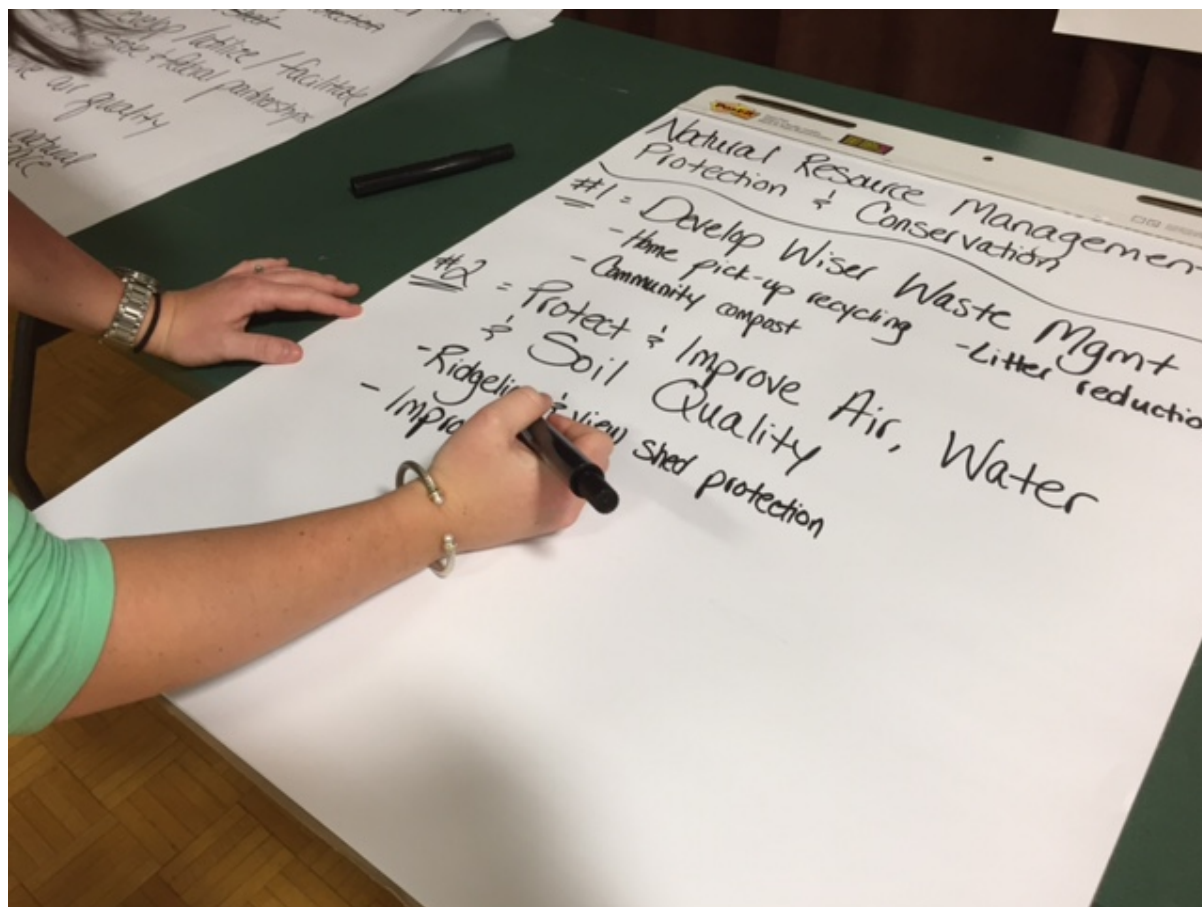Objective 2: Develop recycling program.

Objective 3: Investigate community best management practices.

Goal 3. Protect and improve air, water and soil quality

Objective 1: Increase tree canopy.

Objective 2: Stormwater implementation and increase education County-wide.

Objective 3: Encourage renewable energy sources/reduce carbon footprint.

Education Focus Group

TOPIC 1: PATHS TO SUCCESS

Goal 1. Educate public, schools, parents and students on skill gaps and job information (i.e. job needs, salaries, etc.) in Roanoke Valley

Objective 1: Enlist software specialists to create an online job clearinghouse, i.e., information regarding job skills, income, training/education necessities. (ex. www.dreamitdoitvirginia.com)

Objective 2: Produce career fairs and programs individualized for elementary, middle school, high school, and continuing education adults.

Objective 3: Utilize social/local media to showcase success stories, job opportunities, collaboration between business, etc.

Goal 2. Rebranding image of community colleges and technical education

Objective 1: Publish images and information of today's community colleges and technical education in more cultural relevant media to change the perspective of technical careers.

Objective 2: Bring more focus to technical institutions and colleges within the Roanoke Valley (ex. certifications and apprenticeships).

Objective 3: Create new mottos/marketing focus that is not an extension of high school, but a bridge to one's future.

Goal 3. Create and promote diverse methods of technical / career / humanities and arts training and academics

Objective 1: Create and expand internships/job shadowing/cooperative education including profit and not-for-profit companies.

Objective 2: Enhance STEAM-H programming in K-12 to include summer/after school opportunities.

Objective 3: Create and expand Burton for additional CTE/Humanities and Arts (K-12) opportunities, offer on-site training programs with local businesses, and coordinate association programs with local colleges.

TOPIC 2: COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT AND PARTNERSHIPS

Goal 1. Promote / introduce students and adults to challenges of community activities and service learning opportunities (Experiential Education – service learning, volunteering, job shadowing, and internships)

Objective 1: Survey, research and identify existing and new job and volunteer opportunities to foster collaboration between schools, business, and communities.

Objective 2: Enhance and promote existing EE programs that might be underutilized.

Objective 3: Develop and promote new programs in an effort to focus on career fields in high need and community involvement.

Goal 2. Create public / private / education partnerships

Objective 1: Continuously survey the business community to identify necessary skills needed (soft and hard, people and technical) for entry into the job force.

Objective 2: Collaborate with School Administration and Counselors to promote and identify pathways to fill job needs and enrichment.

Objective 3: Collaborate with School Administration to develop a curriculum and to hire specialized instructors based on employers' needs.

Goal 3. Adequate funding

Objective 1: Research grant opportunities for technical, humanities and arts education to include summer, after school, and other enrichment opportunities (grant writer).

Objective 2: Coordinate schools with employers with specific job skills needs, and have them provide necessary equipment and/or staff, as well as adequate funding (CCAP).

Objective 3: Host a regional/state/national Skills-USA competition which brings revenue and visibility to our community.

TOPIC 3: CONTINUUM OF HIGH QUALITY EDUCATION

Goal 1. Promote education opportunities in the Roanoke Valley

Objective 1: Expand CCAP program for Roanoke County students and promote success of community college system.

Objective 2: Increase resources to support exceptional students and adults (gifted and people with disabilities and low income).

Objective 3: A - Partner with business/industry to invest in high-tech facilities, equipment, and staff in schools and higher education (VWCC). B – Support and work with RHEC to align programs to job needs. C – Partner with higher education for workforce retraining.

Goal 2. Attract and retain high quality teachers, faculty and researchers

Objective 1: Allocate funds to meet market demands by competing against other districts, but also other career options.

Objective 2: Partner with higher education (VWCC, RHEC, Hollins, Roanoke, VT, and Jefferson), business, and school system to develop learning opportunities and experiences for area faculty, and keep people connected to the valley.

Objective 3: Allocate funding to reduce class size.

Goal 3. Emphasize career counseling (K-Adult)

Objective 1: Identify current and future job market needs in Roanoke region.

Objective 2: Use RVTV and other media to educate the community about needs and opportunities.

Objective 3: Partner with school system, higher education, and business to facilitate job shadowing, mentorships, and internships.

Community Health and Well-Being Focus Group

TOPIC 1: VULNERABLE POPULATIONS

Goal 1. Identify needs of each vulnerable population and prioritize current levels of services and gaps.

Objective 1: Data needs to be collected – how many in the area to be serviced; explore options for collecting data

Objective 2: Determine what vulnerable populations we will be working with

Objective 3: Determine the best way to prioritize – largest part of the population or greatest need?

Goal 2. Collaborate with public and private partners to maximize funds and resources.

Objective 1: Reach out to private businesses for resources

Objective 2: Determine which partners could co-benefit with the County

Objective 3: County to help citizens tap into resources that are already available

Goal 3. Provide assistance to help identified populations be as self-sufficient and independent as possible.

Objective 1: Identify resources to address safety concerns within the vulnerable populations

Objective 2: Experts to go out into the community to explain resources

Objective 3: Volunteer network to fit in where needed

TOPIC 2: PUBLIC AWARENESS

Goal 1. Improve public awareness of key resources by increasing outreach, increasing availability of information, and identifying barriers to public awareness.

Objective 1: Explore ways to utilize social media/online for information regarding existing resources; add links to existing websites

Objective 2: County partnership with existing non-profits that serve vulnerable populations to disseminate information regarding resources, including 211

Objective 3: Explore ways to tailor existing resource information to specific vulnerable populations

Goal 2. Increase community involvement and partnerships, to include peer to peer opportunities.

Objective 1: Utilize neighborhood recreation centers and libraries as a central point for distributing information regarding resources and volunteer opportunities; develop and run programming regarding community health and well-being out of these locations

Objective 2: Use neighborhood elementary schools/PTA groups to hold groups/meetings to discuss community health issues

Objective 3: County partnerships with local businesses to support employee volunteerism

TOPIC 3: HEALTHY CITIZENS

Goal 1. Identify and implement motivational and educational opportunities to engage citizens to be healthier.

Objective 1: Provide community gardens to include schools and nutritional education – juvenile education on healthy eating

Objective 2: Provide motivational partners

Goal 2. Enhance availability of and access to recreational opportunities and activities.

Objective 1: Finish the Greenway

Objective 2: Create more social and recreational opportunities and programming for adults, including Senior citizens

Objective 3: Develop and improve County recreational facilities with a focus on equitable facilities across different geographic areas and schools

Goal 3. Improve transitional support for all stages of life as it relates to overall health and well-being.

Objective 1: Provide workforce training for vulnerable populations

Objective 2: Conduct a survey to identify any gaps; use the information to implement changes

Objective 3: Transportation support; include support for Cortran (Medicaid/Medicare eligible)

Public Safety Focus Group

TOPIC 1: ADEQUATE STAFFING TO MEET PUBLIC SAFETY NEEDS

Goal 1. A long range staffing plan to enhance current staffing model (includes culture, recruitment and retention, succession planning, and concerns of community)

Objective 1: Increase personal property/real estate tax 2 cents plus, for public safety.

Objective 2: Study successful recruitment and retention for professional/ volunteer public safety positions.

Objective 3: Long range staffing plans and feasibility study.

Goal 2. Educate public why more staffing is important

Objective 1: Educate why taxes would be raised and explain where it would be going.

Objective 2: Build a statistical model to share with the public.

Objective 3: More coordinated effort to involve public (community outreach, public safety academy, advertising, social media)

Goal 3. Increase staffing to provide an officer in every county school

Objective 1: Feasibility study to discover the needs at all school levels.

Objective 2: Increase funding for SRO training; make more widespread.

Objective 3: Volunteer or part-time program for SRO's i.e.: retired police

TOPIC 2: COMMUNITY FOCUSED APPROACH TO PUBLIC SAFETY

Goal 1. Promote volunteerism in public safety

Objective 1: Use mass media

Objective 2: Promote benefits

Objective 3: Recruitment drives

Goal 2. Character building in all elementary schools with all public safety groups

Objective 1: Cooperation between public safety agencies to publicize already existing programs.

Objective 2: Partnership with schools

Objective 3: Work with existing or create new partnerships.

Goal 3. Accreditation –Obtain/Maintain for Public Safety Agencies

Objective 1: Data studies

Objective 2: Maintain training, funding, certifications

Objective 3: Future planning

TOPIC 3: ENSURE SUFFICIENT INFRASTRUCTURE CAPABILITIES FOR FIRST RESPONDERS

Goal 1. Fleet and Equipment Replacement and Maintenance

Objective 1: Review standard equipment for all public safety vehicles (ex. MDT, 4x4)

Objective 2: Feasibility study for Body Worn Camera program.

Objective 3: Evaluate ventilation needs at fire stations.

Goal 2. Adequate facilities for public safety personnel

Objective 1: Improve maintenance schedule for all buildings

Objective 2: Design/Consider future needs for public safety buildings

Objective 3: Feasibility study to develop a public safety multi-purpose substation

Goal 3. Sufficient water supply anywhere in the county

Objective 1: Identify sources for dry hydrants (rural areas) using database, CAD, GIS
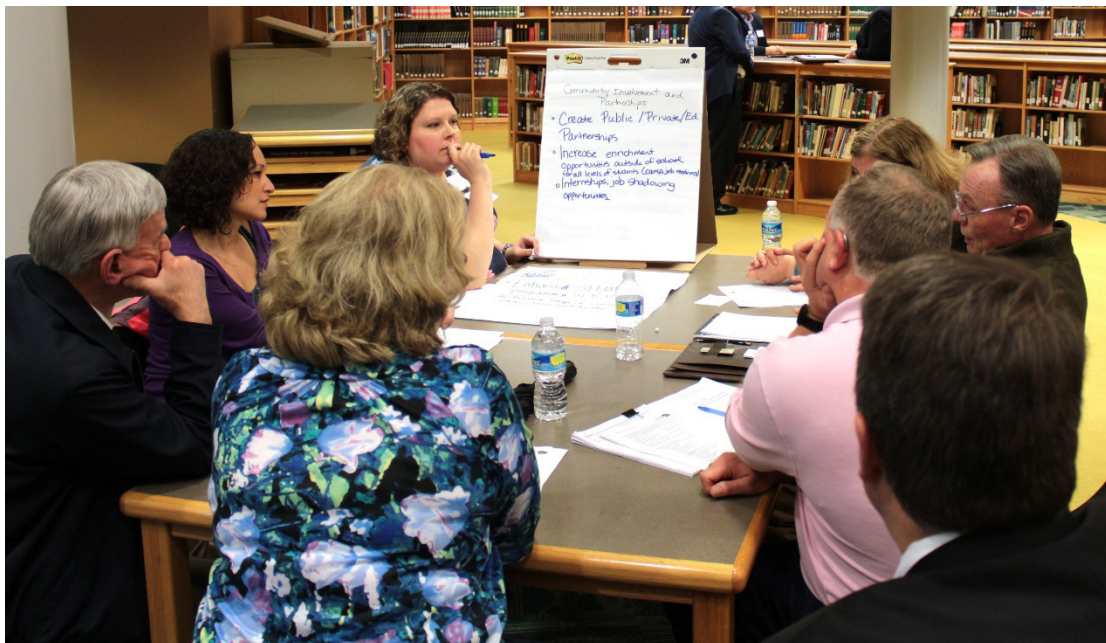
Objective 2: Obtain funding – Identify sources: Water Authority, Forest Service

Objective 3: Conduct feasibility study to identify areas for water expansion needs

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