



Partnership for a **LIVABLE ROANOKE VALLEY PLAN**

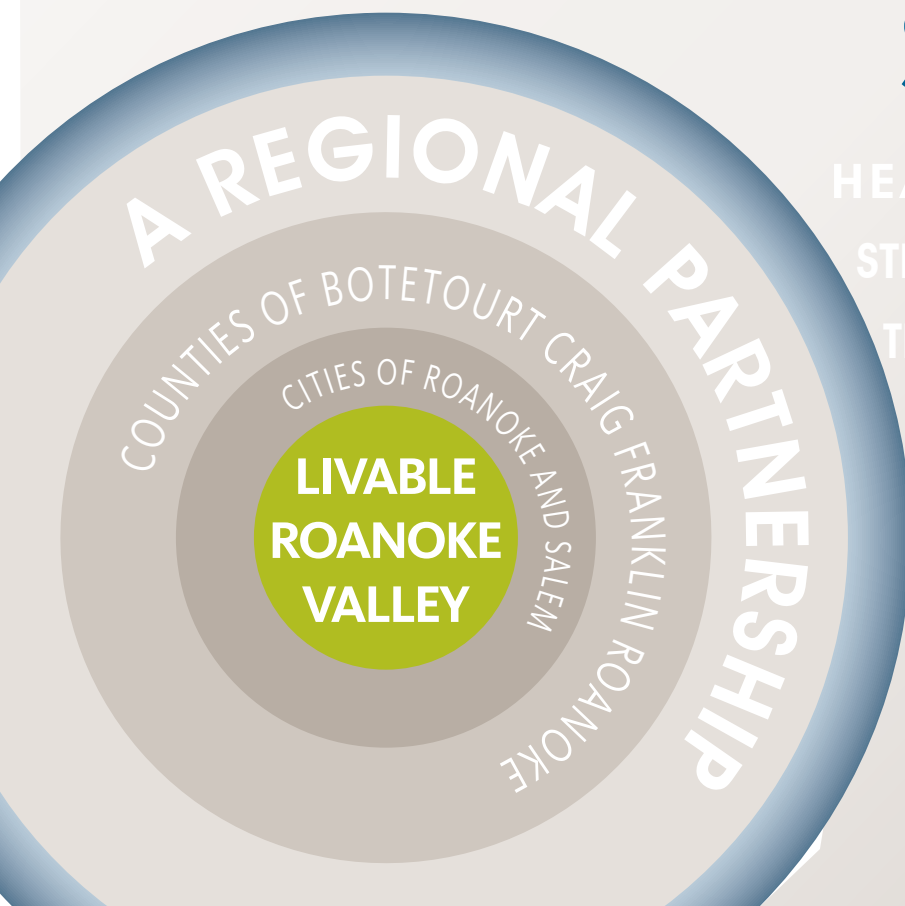
Promoting Economic Opportunity and Quality of Life in the Roanoke Valley



SUMMARY

Final February 2014

HEALTH CARE REGIONAL
STRENGTHS EDUCATION LIVABILITY
TRANSPORTATION INFRASTRUCTURE
COMMUNITY REGIONAL ARTS
FUTURE VALUES INDUSTRY DATA
OUTDOORS ACADEMICS WELLNESS
PRIORITIES COLLABORATION
RESOURCES ENVIRONMENT



4 OUR VISION FOR THE VALLEY

The success of any community-based plan is tied to its ability to inspire action towards the accomplishment of its goals. With that in mind, we developed a framework for the Livable Roanoke Valley process to help ensure that we captured the values and priorities of our communities and that they clearly inform the elements of the plan. The framework addresses:

- **Our Vision** – a well articulated statement that outlines what our citizens want our community to be in the future.
- **Our Values** – our understanding of the beliefs and priorities that are shared among our citizens.
- **Our Guiding Principles** – statements that reflect public values and inform future efforts.
- **Our Goals** – statements of what we intend to accomplish to meet the public's priorities and needs.

The development of a vision, principles and goals is just the beginning of a long-term process to maintain and improve the livability of the Roanoke Valley. In the following chapters we present the strategies and actions to achieve our vision and goals, as well as the means to track our progress.

OUR VISION FOR THE FUTURE

We are living the dream. Beautiful mountains. Clean rivers and streams. People who care. The Roanoke Valley is filled with promise. To make the most of these opportunities, we will work to provide quality education, access to healthcare, work and career opportunities, responsible stewardship of the environment, and greater regional cooperation. As we strive to fulfill our promises, we will be the destination for individuals, families and businesses who share our same dream.

LIVABILITY GUIDING PRINCIPLES

Based on the input from stakeholders, the Virginia Tech Survey, public workshops, and guidance from the Steering and Stakeholder Committees, the following livability guiding principles were crafted to capture our citizen's values and priorities. The livability principles are statements that are open to localized and regionally scaled approaches through collaborative problem solving.

Protect the beauty and ecology of the Roanoke Valley.

Description The principle reflects the pride, appreciation and identification the locals have for the surrounding natural environment, encompassing both the scenic value and the ecological values that have been expressed. The use of *beauty* is intended to make a stronger statement of the quality of the natural environment beyond *scenic*. *Protect* supports the strong survey finding that residents value clean water and air. The principle expresses a strong commitment to ensure that policies and activities undertaken by Roanoke Valley leaders will have the necessary measures to protect the valuable resources of the surrounding natural environment.

Provide a healthy and equitable quality of life for all of our citizens.

Description The principle is phrased at a high-level to encompass a broad array of community quality, health, and equity issues. It supports the survey findings for *promoting equitable, affordable housing, accessible transportation choices, strengthening educational options and providing preventative health care and lower health care costs*. Economic diversity is included at our community table. The principle is an affirmative statement that all are welcome and included at our community table and that we are committed to promoting equitable and accessible services to enhance the quality of life in the Roanoke Valley.

Celebrate the diversity of our region and its contribution to our culture.

Description The principle places emphasis on *celebrate* to reflect community pride in local arts and culture and to welcome an expression of diversity. It supports the survey findings that there is desire for *bringing people together for a sense of community*. The principle is a value statement about respect and admiration for the multitude of cultures and an expression that those cultures are an asset to the Roanoke Valley.

Embrace both our traditions and new innovations to create economic vitality.

Description The principle supports the survey findings for *economic development, job creation and keeping local jobs*. *Embrace* is used to suggest that there is room for many at the economic development table. *Traditions* is used to reflect the regional and local identity and pride and to convey reassurance to our citizens that they matter as we work as a region to attract and inspire entrepreneurs for new economic development. The principle inspires economic development that is progressive and future thinking while also very mindful of the context and sense of place of the Roanoke Valley. Future actions will aim to retain our existing resources as we work to attract new resources.

Anticipate and adapt to change with responsible leadership.

Description The principle begins with *anticipate* to signal forward thinking, intentionality, and responsibility to distinguish from being reactive to change. This statement seeks to acknowledge the dynamic political, environmental and culture changes that the communities are likely to face without addressing polarizing specifics. It supports the survey findings that there is a need for *bringing people together for a sense of community*. The principle is a statement in support of leadership that is accountable, transparent, and forward looking - and is committed to measuring the progress and adapting to the challenges facing the Roanoke Valley.

Build on the assets of our local communities to strengthen our regional collaboration.

Description The principle honors and recognizes the communities as an *asset* and highlights that regionalism does not necessarily mean centralized solutions. It supports survey findings about *bringing people together for a sense of community*. It also can address the survey request for *efficient and reliable fire and police services* that is regionalized for efficiency while servicing local communities.

Invest in regional infrastructure improvements that meet the communities' needs of the 21st century.

Description The principle supports findings that indicate a *desire to provide more transportation choices*. *Invest* reflects a *commitment to maintaining and expanding infrastructural needs*. *Communities* is included to address the threat of centralized infrastructural solutions that ignore or are disruptive.

tive at the local level. *Needs of the 21st Century* is intended to allow essential flexibility to adapt to future infrastructural needs that will make the region attractive to different types of businesses of the future. It also supports survey findings that encourage energy efficiency and local energy sources infrastructure. The principle is a statement of commitment to the leadership required to provide infrastructure to service needs and desires of the communities and responsibly plan for the future.

Promote excellence in education, job training, and a culture of lifelong learning.

Description The principle supports the findings that show strong support for education and training, specifically a *high graduation rate and job training programs*. *Lifelong learning* represents the understanding that education is important at all times of our lives, but particularly as we adjust to the changing needs of employers and the broader economy. The principle is a statement that reinforces the foundational aspect of education to a good quality of life and a thriving economy. It affirms that a culture of lifelong learning empowers citizens to anticipate and adapt to change.

GOALS TO ACHIEVE OUR VISION

The following livability goals were developed by the stakeholders to directly reflect the public's priorities and the involvement of key representatives from government, the private sector, and nonprofit organizations. The goals are forward looking and seek to leverage our region's key strengths and opportunities, while addressing our largest threats. They establish the framework for strategies and actions to achieve our vision for the future.

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

Create jobs, increase incomes and grow businesses to improve the quality of life for all residents of the Roanoke Region.

WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT

Provide access to job training and educational advancement by fostering a culture of lifelong learning for people of all ages and abilities.

HEALTHY ROANOKE VALLEY

Mobilize community resources to improve access to care, coordination of services, and promote a culture of wellness.

NATURAL ASSETS

Work collaboratively to preserve and enhance the historic, cultural, and natural assets of the region.

The strategies and actions that will be necessary to achieve our vision and our goals are outlined in the following chapter.

Source: Barton Malow Company



The Center for Science and Health Professions on the campus of Virginia Western Community College in Roanoke, Virginia.