



Executive Summary

Community First: Harnessing Change and Building Connections is the 2003 update to the New River Valley's Vision 2020 strategic plan. Citizens of the region identified strengths and challenges facing the New River Valley and developed a plan to enhance their community through projects and programming over the next five years. The citizens of the New River Valley have put their ideas and plans for action into a community context that can be shared and moved forward.

Six vision areas were identified to guide this plan's development:

- Leadership
- Natural and Cultural Resources
- Education and Training
- Economic Development
- Human Resources
- Physical Infrastructure

Within these vision areas, needs and opportunities were determined and melded to create an inventory of potential programs and projects that could make *Community First* a reality.

Fully realizing *Community First* can be achieved by Harnessing Change and Building Connections within and outside the New River Valley. The region is poised to capture opportunities for growth and development. This document is a powerful tool for getting things done, but without sustained



commitment to the vision within, it loses value. The projects and programs need champions and investors.

The above graphic shows three supporting components of *Community First*. Organizing Community, Corporate Development, and Infrastructure serve to categorize the five-year projects within this plan.

There are risks and hurdles along this visionary path and there will undoubtedly be disappointments as we reach for these lofty visions. There are also clear opportunities for investment and each project and program has a lead agency or team of agencies prepared to guide it through implementation. Join *Community First* by investing in the vision and by being part of the successes strategically developed for the New River Valley.



Acknowledgements

The 2003 Vision 2020 Update has been made possible by the concentrated efforts of numerous New River Valley visionaries. Contributors include local government officials, members of nonprofit organizations, civic leaders, teachers and school administrators, business community members, and many others committed to a bright and community-guided future for the New River Valley.



Though no project is ever the success of one individual, the Vision 2020 process has had an important champion. Dr. Edwin Barnes, former President of New River Community College (NRCC), has never tired in his support and bald-faced marketing of Vision 2020 and its importance to the region. Dr. Barnes was a member of the initial Vision 2020 Steering Committee and assisted in the document and programming development. He saw in this effort something bigger than jurisdictional cooperation and

economic competitiveness – he saw community visioning. Dr. Barnes kept a copy of Vision 2020 at hand and frequently referred to it in his role as President of NRCC and as the biggest fan of the New River Valley. Thank you Dr. Barnes for your vision, for how you love this region, and mostly for how you bring us all to see our potential and possibilities.

The overall data gathering and community input program development was guided by the Vision 2020 Steering Committee. This work would not have happened without their tireless contributions. The Steering Committee members are: Andy Morikawa, Beth Obenshain, Tom Roberts, David Ridpath, Dave Rundgren, Shelia Smith, Jan Reynolds, and Holly Lesko. These individuals brought their personal commitment and love of the New River Valley, their organizations' resources, and their community connections and knowledge to this effort. Thank you seems inadequate for the work and dedication of this group.

Over 500 citizens from across the region responded to the call for input during the brainstorming and project development phases of this effort. The residents of the New River Valley are the creators of this vision and without their commitment to being fully engaged and accountable for this work, this document would be no more than added weight on the bookshelf. *Community First* contains the hopes and visions of the people of this proud region. The people of this regional community have proven time and again that we are capable and committed (and maybe a little lucky) to keep making progress in the New River Valley.

The dedication and hard work of all the citizens and groups that have made this plan a reality is sincere and energized. The cumulative efforts ensure that Vision 2020 is still a powerful roadmap for a prosperous 21st century in the New River Valley.



Chronology of Vision 2020

- **1989-1992**
 - Over 2,600 jobs lost in the New River Valley
- **1992-1993**
 - Armament Retooling and Manufacturing Support (ARMS) Initiative enacted by Congress
 - New River Valley Planning District Commission (NRVPDC) establishes NRV Economic Adjustment Strategy Steering Committee
 - NRVPDC successfully applies for US Department of Defense economic recovery funds totaling nearly \$200,000
- **1993-1995**
 - Targeted Industries and Economic Analyses completed
 - Community Meetings Held and Working Groups formed
 - Alliant Techsystems, Inc. purchases Hercules Aerospace Division and takes over operation of Radford Army Ammunition Plant
 - Vision 2020 Strategic Plan completed, distributed, and placed on website for electronic access
 - NRVPDC contracts with Alliant Techsystems, Inc. to develop strategic reuse plan for RFAAP
- **1995 – 2001**
 - NRVPDC advocates for and is given community representation on National ARMS Task Force
 - New River Valley Competitiveness Center is completed and expanded for start-up and developing businesses in the region
 - Giles Business Incubator and the Jacksonville Center develop support and space for targeted business start-ups in those localities
 - Jurisdictional Departments of Social Services collaborate to form Partners for Self Sufficiency in response to Welfare to Work legislation
 - The New River Valley is awarded over \$750,000 in direct grant funding for community development and training through the Managing Information with Rural America (MIRA) program at the Kellogg Foundation.
- **2002-2003**
 - State Budget Crisis deepens with drastic cuts in education and local government support
 - NRVPDC and Vision 2020 Steering Committee host Vision 2020 Celebration and Update Kick off – highlighting over \$500,000,000 in community investment since 1993
 - Demographic and economic trend data is analyzed and reviewed for update process
 - Community Brainstorming and Program/Project Development meetings are held
 - *Community First: Harnessing Change and Building Connections* strategic plan is developed, distributed, and posted on NRVPDC website as Vision 2020 Update



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Community First Harnessing Change and Building Connections

Ten years ago we began the process of a full regional accounting of whom we are and where we want to go: New River Valley Vision 2020.

We pictured a group of first graders in that first assessment – these same students finished their high school freshman year in June 2003. Even with advanced education in their future, these students most certainly will be seeking jobs before the year 2013. Will there be opportunities for them to continue to make this region their home?

As we stated then, we must reemphasize again, this plan is about what we must do now, not about what to do in the future. Though we can certainly point to changes in the region and in the world, we in the New River Valley are still the drivers of our future.

It can seem daunting to pursue visionary goals in these economic times. However, in 1993 when the Vision 2020 process began, we were facing sizeable layoffs and

closings in our manufacturing businesses. We had double-digit unemployment and the military downsizing was hitting us at home by way of significant layoffs at the Radford Army Ammunition Plant. Our 1995 Vision 2020 document recommended community investments of nearly \$85 million over the next five years to address needs in the region. Nearly **\$200 million** was invested in the New River Valley since 1995. This region, along with state, federal and private partners, made that happen.

Today we are facing serious federal and state budget crises that are impacting local governments and agencies as well. It is easy to place responsibility for this far from the New River Valley. Many discussions about how to improve *our* economy, *our* schools, *our* lives begins with “What *they* need to do is..” This plan

calls us back into full participation in community. We are “they”!



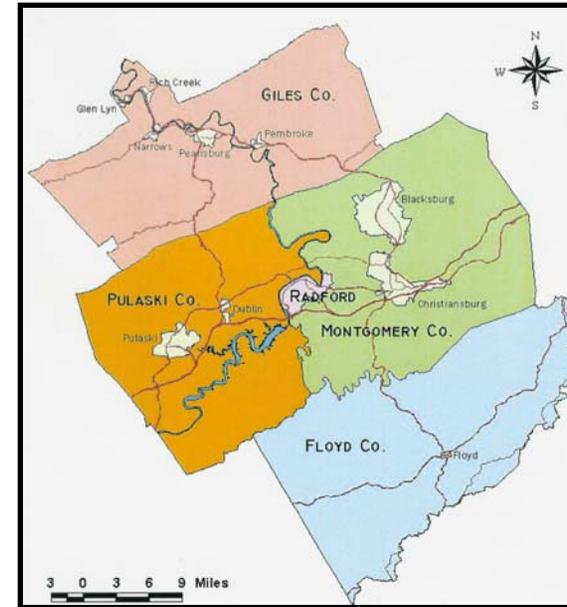


Who are we?

The New River Valley has a strong heritage and pride embedded in its roots. It is a dynamic area of industry and trade, partly because it is located within a day's drive to approximately three-quarters of the nation's major markets. The scenic vistas, historical and cultural attractions, and qualities inherent to the area are drawing tourists and businesses to this growing Valley. A critical component of success in this region is the pride and work ethic exhibited by the residents. These are the people that move the Valley toward accomplishing its goals and sustaining its growth.

Committed to educational excellence, the people in the New River Valley have developed an exceptional educational system. The region's commitment to excellence in education benefits everyone; students, parents, and employers. The area is home to Virginia's largest university, Virginia Tech (VT). VT is ranked one of the best engineering colleges in the nation. Radford University provides strong programs in business, geography, communications, and education. New River Community College, along with its excellent associate degree programs, is dedicated to training and retraining the region's labor force. In fact, our educational institutions are our largest employers in the region. These higher educational centerpieces also have strong ties with the local school divisions and local business and industry.

The New River Valley is committed to a progressive secondary education system for our young people. Alternative education opportunities, crucial to education success, are present and



supported in the region. Head Start programs throughout the area provide students equal opportunities to education at the pre-school level as well. Lifelong learning through technology and community use of public school facilities ensures educational opportunities to adults in the region.

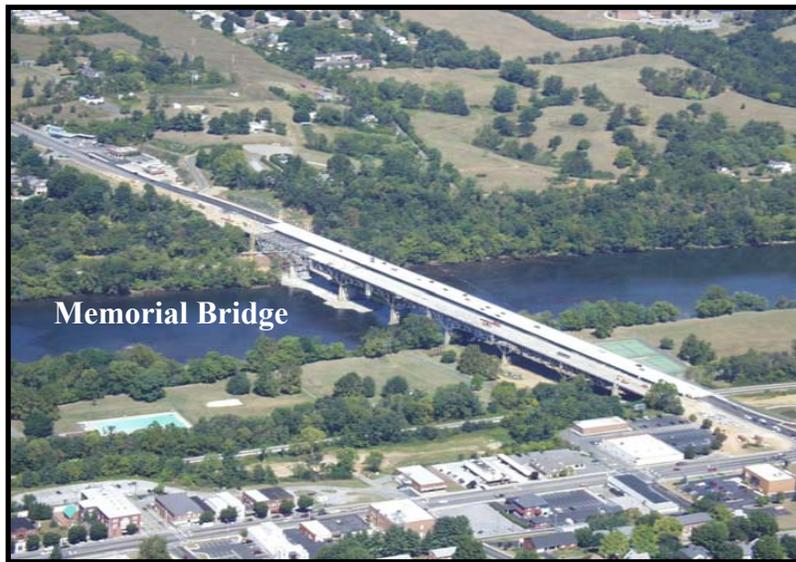
Another support system in the New River Valley exists for small and emerging businesses. The Virginia Tech Corporate Research Center provides the opportunity for innovative high-tech companies to bring ideas to market. The New River Valley Competitiveness Center is an industrial development incubator. The Jacksonville Center, a craft incubator in Floyd County and the Giles Business Incubator add substantial support to the entire entrepreneurial community. Additionally,



the region is home to the Radford University's Business Assistance Center that promotes and supports emerging businesses.

Local governments and community organizations have responded to the physical infrastructure needs in the region by investing in land development, water and sewer improvements, housing starts and renovations, and road development and improvements. Several industrial parks and buildings have been enhanced including traditional shell buildings and industrial park layouts as well as mixed use and alternative economic development sites.

Tourism is also an expanding economic force in the New River Valley. The region is situated parallel with the Blue Ridge



Mountains, which are to the south, and the Appalachian Mountains to the north while the nation's oldest river, the New River, stretches across this fertile land. In 1998 the river was designated an American Heritage River, further advancing its status and the area's recognition. Recreational opportunities abound in the area offering residents great places to spend a day relaxing or working.

Communities have taken advantage of downtown revitalization funding as well as transportation grants to build alternative transportation pathways through our region. Citizens have rallied around the preservation of historic and cultural sites and have developed collaborative and creative methods to protect and promote our natural resources. The New River Land Trust



is one such organization formed with the mission of conserving the New River Valley's scenic, natural, and cultural resources.

New River Trail State Park links the Town of Pulaski to the City of Galax along a 57 mile converted railroad corridor. Gatewood Reservoir Recreation Area owned by the Town of Pulaski provides facilities for recreation. Claytor Lake and State Park in Pulaski County is a recreation and camping facility. The Appalachian Trail and the Cascades Park are located in Giles County, and from Floyd the Blue Ridge Parkway is easily accessed. Scenic views, hiking, picnicking, camping, swimming, fishing, and other outdoor recreational activities are available throughout the New River Valley.

Numerous historical societies promote an appreciation of the region's heritage. There are many culturally significant sites in the area including the Smithfield Plantation, the Olde Newberne, Snowville, and Downtown Pearisburg and Pulaski Historical Districts. Also, the *Long Way Home* is a local historical drama recreating the Mary Draper Ingles story.

The people in the area are proud of the quality of life in the New River Valley. Here, surrounded by natural beauty, is a spirit of cooperation to get things done. The priorities are clear: develop and maintain a growing economy and provide jobs and personal enrichment opportunities for everyone. The vision of the New River Valley is to provide opportunities to grow and prosper in an atmosphere of cooperation while maintaining our environmental quality. We are making this vision a reality and thus creating a region worthy and enjoyable for living and visiting.

The local governments of the New River Valley are committed to providing services and support to the citizens of the region.



There are a host of regional organizations and governmental partnerships that provide opportunities for individuals, organizations, and businesses as well as technology enhancements and transportation opportunities. Recent programming in the area include: welfare to work efforts by our local departments of social services; shelter and transitional housing for battered women and children; workforce investment for those needing training or job search assistance; a locally-operated and controlled community foundation for



investing in our region; library enhancements across the region; and the creation of a program to fund and support emerging home and small businesses.

The New River Valley chambers have long promoted leadership training in the business sector. In recent years, leadership training has expanded to include youth and non-traditional leaders. This effort has brought a more diverse group of citizens to the table around issues that concern our local communities. The Chambers of Commerce have provided valuable skill-based business leader training. The EAGLES (Energized Grassroots Leaders Engaged Systematically) Program provides personal and community development opportunities to non-traditional leaders in the region. Montgomery County Public Schools has supported diversity training headed by student teams in the middle and high schools of the County to promote positive activities and ideas around diversity.

The Kellogg Foundation provided MIRA (Managing Information in Rural America) programming in the New River Valley. Ten community teams from across the region participated in community development training and team project development and implementation. Two hundred citizens participated in this program that brought over \$750,000 in technology, technical assistance, and direct grant funding to our communities.

The Radford Army Ammunition Plant (RFAAP) participates in the Armament Retooling and Manufacturing Support (ARMS) program that funds commercial development at this federal

facility through its operator Alliant Techsystems, Inc. This funding has brought some 350 new jobs to the facility and has created many opportunities for relationship development between the contracting and government officials at the facility and within the community.

Localities have invested in public facilities and private financial institutions have supported private enterprise throughout the region. The New River Valley International Airport includes a Foreign Trade Zone and US Customs operation connecting the New River Valley to the world. Many organizations have developed and participated in national quality assurance programs and local marketing. Business support organizations work tirelessly to create and sustain an environment of progressive and well-known excellence in our region.





Challenges Facing the Region

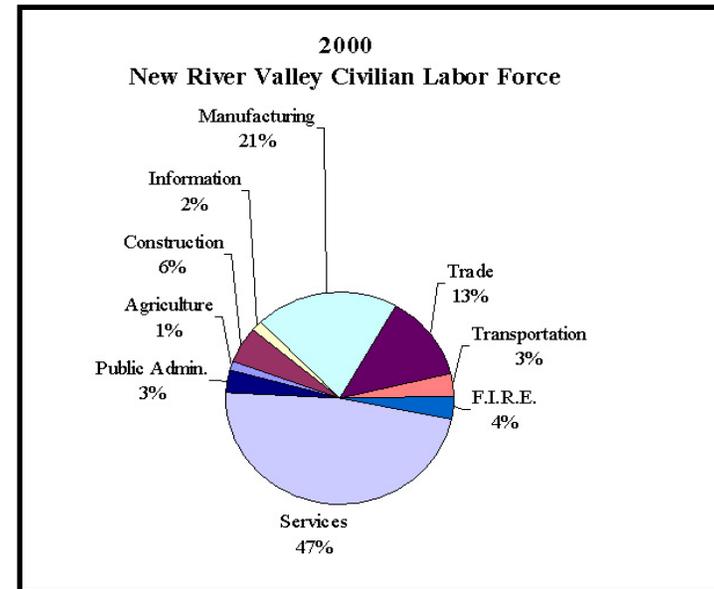
According to the US Census, the population of the New River Valley has been growing at about eight percent over the past decade. The following table shows the population change in each of the region’s jurisdictions. Floyd County is the only jurisdiction that grew faster than the State.

Jurisdiction	1990	2000	Percent Change
Virginia	6,189,197	7,078,515	14.4%
Floyd County	11,965	13,874	16.0%
Giles County	16,366	16,657	1.8%
Montgomery County	73,913	83,629	13.1%
Pulaski County	34,496	35,127	1.8%
Radford City	15,940	15,859	-0.5%
New River Valley	152,680	165,146	8.2%

This growth is above average for the region in comparison to previous years. The more rapid growth and in particular the growth in the over 50 year old population of the region impacts many aspects of planning, financing, and development for local communities. Providing services to this growing and aging population is a key challenge to local governments and organizations of the New River Valley.

With current state and federal governments facing deficits, the challenge of meeting basic service and development needs is daunting for our region. The impact on higher education alone (our largest regional employer) is staggering for the economic stability of the New River Valley. Strengthening relationships

within and outside the region and creating new ones are the tools at hand to survive and even grow in these difficult times.



The per capita income of the region has increased since 1990, however the New River Valley remains well below the State average. Earning power in the New River Valley is a real challenge to be faced in concert with issues of living wage in our communities. Our labor force changes show an economy that was 36 percent service jobs to one with 47 percent of our labor in the service category. Our industrial job base is shrinking as well. This region must address how we will respond to the changing global economy. We have the



resources and human capacity to rise to the challenges of a high technology economy. Our planning and strategic development must build the necessary infrastructure and support to prepare the New River Valley for this change.

At the same time, we can support our loyal industries and businesses that not only provide jobs and stability to this community, they are the basis upon which we will build our new economic future. Innovation is happening in our local businesses and we must be supportive and flexible with our current and emerging industries to meet the demands of a global economy. Educated, talented people who are essential to this economy must be supported, encouraged, and embraced as the economic assets they are to this region.



Per Capita Income

Place	1990	2000
New River Valley	10,884	17,284
Virginia	15,713	23,975

In 1990, the NRV's per capita income was 69% of the State.
 In 2000, the NRV's per capita income was 72% of the State.

Source: US Census

We must help businesses, organizations, employees and governments see the benefits and opportunities of putting *Community First* in today's economy. We are a regional community and in order to be competitive we must know and trust each other as well as believe in our collaborative abilities to move the New River Valley forward successfully.

We are up to the challenges and our strategic planning process has helped us develop tools and concrete action plans for moving this region successfully ahead, putting *Community First*. There were many elements of this process and the following section lays out the steps and community involvement opportunities that built this important and far-reaching plan for the citizens of the New River Valley.



Vision 2020 Update Process

The development of *Community First* was a community-driven process. Citizens from across the region were solicited for their input and ideas about how this region will continue to pursue cooperative goals and strategies for development.

In the summer of 2002, the NRVPCD called upon eight citizens from the region to serve on the Vision 2020 Update Steering Committee. The members of the committee met for several weeks reviewing the progress from the initial Vision 2020 process and determining how to develop an update to this important document. It didn't take long to recognize that the first order of business was to celebrate the successes of this initial strategic planning process.



On September 30, 2002, community leaders from across the New River Valley came together to celebrate some of this region's accomplishments from the past seven years. Scores of successful projects and programs completed within six vision areas were presented. Our initial Vision 2020 process was extremely useful and effective in helping citizens of the New River Valley target resources and energy to take steps toward achieving our vision. *Community First* provides new ideas and directions to continue the work of reaching our goals and vision for 2020.

The vision areas were modified to create a better representation of where projects and programs are needed in the future: ***Leadership, Natural and Cultural Resources, Education and Training, Economic Development, Human Resources, and Physical Infrastructure.***

Participants from the government, business, and non-profit sectors as well as scores of citizens from the general public participated in "Mapping our Region's Future" as part of the kick off for the next version of Vision 2020. Citizens participated in the events by brainstorming actions in six key vision areas around the question:

"In this vision area, what are the issues, challenges and opportunities facing the New River Valley today?"



Small groups worked to develop strategies within the six vision areas and developed lists of specific ideas and processes for each of the strategies. The entire group ranked the most crucial strategies by signing their names to those they found most important.

Five jurisdictional meetings provided additional details and new categories within the vision areas. Participants at the jurisdictional meetings provided comment, added details and categories and signed up for activities and projects that they would like to help bring to reality in the region.



Over 200 citizens from the region participated in this initial brainstorming phase of the Vision 2020 Update. They provided valuable insight into the goals and values this community holds as important. Following the generation of ideas of the challenges and opportunities in our community, it was necessary to develop strategies for moving forward to address the challenges and invest in our opportunities. Project Development Workshops were scheduled to get down to this work.

November 2002 through January 2003 brought community visionaries together to talk about project development within the *Community First* vision areas: Leadership, Natural and Cultural Resources, Education and Training, Economic Development, Human Resources, and Physical Infrastructure.



Using the brainstorming data collected from the community meetings and regional celebration, the groups developed projects and programs to address challenges and opportunities of the region. Participants created an impressive array of projects and programs to jumpstart the implementation of *Community First*.

In addition to the jurisdictional and regional meetings, organizations and groups provided input to the brainstorming and project development phase of *Community First*. The Regional Competitiveness Partnership (RCP), a committee of the NRVPC, provided valuable insight into the plan through their lenses of what makes the region economically competitive in the global marketplace.

Additionally, local governments provided input at the project development phase by providing lists of important projects each locality will be seeking support and funding for in the coming years.

In an effort to show how the many groups and individuals came together to create and mold this important regional plan, this graphic was developed to show the connections and interactions. In no group or organization is the development of *Community First* a primary activity. However, the cumulative efforts of all of these groups brought great energy and focus to this important work. All are leaders in this community and all have a strong influence and responsibility in the development and ultimate achievements of *Community First* now and into the future.





Vision Areas

The six vision areas were used as the framework to brainstorm and develop strategies for advancing the region's strategic planning process. These helped guide discussions around needs and opportunities facing this region. The following is a brief overview of these vision components and citizens' best ideas for how to rise to the intent and reach of these ideals.

Leadership

The New River Valley is an environment that promotes and sustains current and emerging leaders within our community.

This region has amazing human capacity. The desire within this vision area is to communicate that potential and instill commitment into our current and rising leaders of the New River Valley. The region must provide support systems for leadership development. This community must foster opportunities for the generation of new ideas while recognizing and embracing the risks that come with such ventures.

Some of the project ideas that emerged within this category include:

- Leadership Education
- Youth Business and Civic Leadership Development
- Regional Leadership Forum
- Community Needs Workshop for Elected Officials
- Regional Leadership Certification
- Non-traditional Leadership Development

Natural and Cultural Resources

The New River Valley is an attractive and desirable place to live, work, and visit.

Our natural and cultural environments are important assets in this region. The vision for creating an inviting and well-protected environment is crucial for the future we imagine and strive to achieve. We lose identity when we do not support our natural and cultural environment. We are a proud and valuable community and these assets must be supported and promoted.

Some of the project ideas that emerged within this category include:

- Promote and Support Christiansburg Institute
- Regionally-linked Trail System
- Open Space Conservation
- Regionally-link Historic and Natural Attractions





Youth

Leadership

Education and Training

The New River Valley provides a cooperative educational system with quality personal, professional, and technical education for all citizens.

We must find ways to support our educational institutions and programs through these times of budget cuts and economic slowdown. Our educational system is not a perk; it is a necessity.

Two of the project ideas that emerged within this category include:

- Regional Educational Facilities for alternative and adult education
- Regional Educational Services – Magnet & Governor’s School; alternative; and advanced placement

Economic Development
The New River Valley has a diverse, stable business and industry community that provides high quality jobs, investment.

This region has much to offer in the area of business assistance and development. The opportunities for entrepreneurial development are growing and finding creative ways to entice our youth to stay and grow in this local economy is key to our economic success.

Some of the project ideas that emerged within this category include:

- FirstWorks
- Niche Development for Downtowns
- VT KnowledgeWorks
- RU Business Technology Park and Center



New River Valley Competitiveness Center



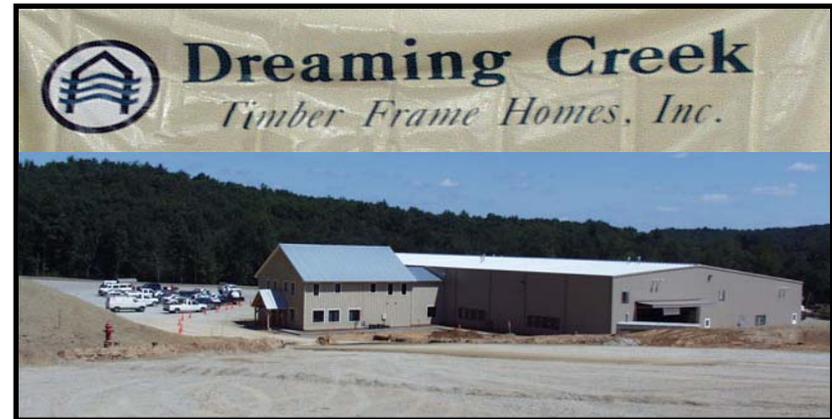
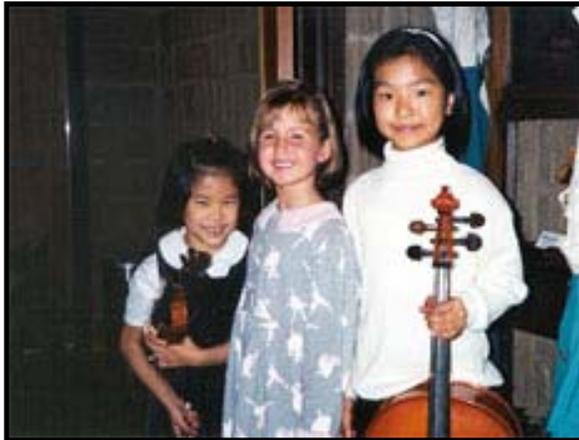
Human Resources

The New River Valley provides opportunities for families and individuals to achieve their potential.

The people are this region's most important resource. The New River Valley has the capacity and will to create community for all who live here. We are in this together and through mutual support and work we can move this vision forward.

Some of the project ideas that emerged within this category include:

- Youth Entrepreneurial Center
- Telecommunication Infrastructure Region-wide
- Evaluate Service Delivery Programs
- Strengthen Montgomery County Human Services Commission
- Quarterly Agency/Community Sessions



Physical Infrastructure

The New River Valley has complete and quality infrastructure to support the goals, needs, and aspirations of the regional community.

How we “build and protect” our physical spaces will significantly impact our ability to advance our visions of the future. We must be far-sighted in both our development and conservation of key areas of the region.

Some of the project ideas that emerged within this category include:

- Regional Land Use Planning
- Regional Water and Sewer Development
- Regional Water Supply and Protection
- Regional Public Transportation
- Regional Civic/Convention Center



Facing the Future with Vision

With the severe budget crisis facing the Commonwealth and the already distressed economy of our region, it is critical that citizens of the New River Valley plan and work together to build a viable and livable economy here at home. This economy certainly must be linked to the state, nation, and world. It begins, however, with a local commitment to understood and “doable” goals. *Community First* is an appropriate and timely vehicle for creating these goals, objectives, and the projects and the programs to make them real.

Clearly our educational institutions and skilled and motivated workforce provide an important and powerful basis upon which to enhance our future. Additionally, our regional commitment to collaboration supports the model of partnerships and teamwork that is crucial in this highly competitive and connected economy. We are more than the paid work that we do. This regional community recognizes that the businesses and entrepreneurs that are growing and expanding expect a vibrant and progressive community in which to live and work. The New River Valley has the assets and values to support this as well.

Our local manufacturing industry will always be an important piece of this region, however, it can no longer provide the number of jobs and spin-off companies it did so well in the past. We must build on our local talents and strengths; support

strong community; and promote individual initiative that is such an obvious asset to the New River Valley.

This work takes diverse and committed members of the regional community coming together – learning about and with each other, as we develop ideas, plans, and actual projects that will drive our vision forward. We can do this; we must do this.

The 2003 update of the New River Valley Vision 2020, *Community First* calls the citizens, organizations, businesses, and governments of our region to put ***Community First***. The projects and programs that came from the community brainstorming work clearly called for putting ***Community First***, ahead of reliance on outside markets and ahead of individual or organizational pursuits. We are in this together in the New River Valley and we need to find ways to build bridges across jurisdictional and programmatic lines.

Projects were categorized into three supporting components: Organizing Community, Corporate Development, and Infrastructure. In the following Projects and Programs section, effort was made to provide ballpark cost and timing estimates. These are clearly not absolute. Unforeseen circumstances, interest, and funding will influence of how these projects will actually move forward over time. That caveat aside, these projects and programs are drivers of this vision and efforts to bring them to reality is key to *Community First*.



Community First **Projects and Programs**

Organizing Community Corporate Development Infrastructure

The Projects and Programs section of the plan contains two pages of projects for each component area. To our best ability to foresee the future, these projects are arranged in “project initiation” order. Short descriptions of each project/program are listed to the left of the page with projected start time and dollars needed to the right.

If you have an interest in working on any of the projects listed on the following pages or would like to learn more about them, please contact the lead agency/agencies listed following each project description. You may contact the New River Valley Planning District Commission for contact information on any of the lead agencies listed.



Organizing Community Projects and Programs

Organizing Community has components for learning and community gathering opportunities, youth involvement, traditional and alternative leadership development and institutional change within it. Education in a very broad way was a driving factor of this theme. Opportunities for groups and individuals to learn from and with each other are crucial to appropriate and community-supported program and project development. Changing the look of organizations and structure of public information gathering and dissemination is also a component of the Organizing Community theme.

Regional Planners’ Forum: Create a structure for regional planning organizations and professionals to meet regularly to discuss and implement cooperative land use planning strategies and projects.

Lead Agency: New River Valley Planning District Commission (NRVPDC)

Support and Promote Christiansburg Institute (CI): Develop support and promotion plan for CI. Create partnering relationships with local governments and agencies to fully develop and market this important community resource.

Lead Agency: CI

Research and Publicize Non-Profits’ Contributions to Communities: Provide accurate and documented information about non-profit organizational contributions to New River Valley communities. Develop mechanism for gathering this data and updating on regular basis. Seek publication sources throughout the region for information dissemination.

Lead Agencies: Community Foundation of the New River Valley (CFNRV), NRVPDC, Radford University Business Technology Center (RU-BTC), Virginia Tech (VT), Partners for Self Sufficiency – regional Social Service Depts. (PSS)

Community-wide Viewshed Identification: Identify and rank viewsheds in the region.

Lead Agencies: New River Land Trust, Regional Planners’ Forum

<u>Initial Investment</u>		
Regional Land Use Planning	\$15,000	2003
Support Christiansburg Institute	\$100,000	2004
Research/Publicize Non-Profit Contributions	\$50,000	
Community Viewshed ID	\$20,000	



- Community Awareness Workshops for Elected Officials and Corporate Leaders:**
 Establish short course for elected officials and corporate leaders highlighting community development issues and opportunities.
Lead Agency: NAACP, PSS, Local Governments and Industrial Dev. Authorities
- Youth Leadership Recognition Program:** Create award/program that recognizes and rewards youth leadership efforts in the civic and business sectors of the region.
Lead Agency: Technology Magnet School Board – Superintendent Task Force
- Education for Leadership:** Coordinate leadership resources in the region and adapt model for impactful leadership training in the New River Valley. Include follow-up assessment of community engagement following training.
Lead Agencies: Local Leadership groups, RU-BTC, VT, Chambers
- Youth Leadership Training – civic and business:** Provide hands-on training and mentoring opportunities through business and civic organizational partners in the program.
Lead Agency: Technology Magnet School Board – Superintendent Task Force
- Regional Coordination within/between Government Agencies:** Develop mechanisms for greater communication and coordination between government and regional agencies of the New River Valley.
Lead Agencies: Local Governments, NRVPCD
- Strengthen Montgomery County Human Services Commission (MCHSC):** Create opportunities for regional and local human service agencies to gather and exchange information and resources.
Lead Agency: MCHSC, PSS, United Way
- Quarterly Agency/Community Sessions:** Create structure for human service agencies and concerned/impacted citizens to gather regularly to discuss human service delivery issues and strategize opportunities for improvement.
Lead Agency: PSS

<u>Initial Investment</u>		
Community Awareness Workshops	\$20,000	2004
Youth Leadership Recognition Program	\$10,000	2005
Education for Leadership	\$100,000	2006
Youth Leadership Training	\$50,000	
Regional Coordination within and between Gov. Agencies	\$10,000	
Strengthen MCHSC	\$45,000	
Quarterly Agency/Community Sessions	\$25,000	2007



Corporate Development Projects and Programs

Corporate Development focus is capacity for team building within the private, public, and nonprofit sectors. This leg of our community reclaims the group or organization meaning in the term corporate. The projects identified here include organizational development opportunities and support systems for governments, agencies, organizations, businesses, and community groups within the New River Valley.

Local Philanthropy (time, talent and resources): Create educational and promotional materials to engage New River Valley citizens about local investment. Create sense of local ownership and responsibility about our community development.
Lead Agency: CFNRV, Corporate Research Center

Youth Participation on Established Councils, Committees and Boards: Create formal opportunities for youth to participate in meaningful ways on community boards and commissions.
Lead Agency: Local Community Boards and Commissions, NRVPDC Education Committee

Regional Water and Sewer Planning: Using Planner’s Forum, create strategies for regional cooperation in water and sewer planning and development.
Lead Agency: Regional Planners’ Forum, NRVPDC, Local Public Service Authorities, VT

VT KnowledgeWorks: Create and administer program for effective technology transfer within the university.
Lead Agency: VT Foundation

Regional Educational Services – regional trade school, regional alternative school, regional AP program, support Governor’s and Magnet schools: Maximize educational resources through regional coordination of specialty education opportunities. Support current regional educational institutions.
Lead Agency: NRVPDC Education Committee, Technology Magnet School Board

<u>Initial Investment</u>		2003
Local Philanthropy	\$30,000	
Youth Participation on Established Councils, Committees and Boards	\$5,000	
Regional Water and Sewer Planning	\$200,000	
VT KnowledgeWorks Phase I and II	\$9 M	
Regional Educational Services	\$10,000	2004



Improve Land Use Planning: Using Planner’s Forum, create strategies for improved and collaborative land using planning across the region.

Lead Agency: NRVPC, Regional Planners’ Forum

Strengthen Non-profit Corporate Governance: Develop and support organizational development model that fits needs and vision of non-profit sector in the region.

Lead Agency: CFNRV, RU-BTC

Regional Leadership Organization: Create formal regional leadership forum to provide opportunities for business, non-profit, civic and public organizations.

Lead Agency: RU Leadership Group, Chamber Coalition

EAGLES Leadership Programming Across Sectors: Expand non-traditional leadership training and targeting to all sectors of the community to promote concept of personal development as the path to community development.

Lead Agency(ies): CFNRV and NRVPC

Evaluate and Implement Comprehensive Service Delivery Programs: Using higher education partners, evaluate innovations in human service delivery programs and create pilot programming for the region.

Lead Agency: PSS, Center for Innovative Leadership

FirstWorks: Mentoring/supporting new technology graduates through process of developing new businesses in the region.

Lead Agency: New River Valley Development Corporation (NRVDC)

Open Space Conservation: Identify and invest in protection of important natural resource areas in the region.

Lead Agency: New River Land Trust, DCR

Niche Development for Downtowns: Define downtown niches for cooperative marketing of unique development characteristics of NRV downtowns.

Lead Agency: Local Downtown Development Groups, Regional Planners’ Forum

<u>Initial Investment</u>		
Improve Land Use Planning	\$125,000	2004
Strengthen Non-profit Governance	\$50,000	2005
Regional Leadership Organization	\$100,000	
EAGLES Leadership Program	\$200,000	2006
Evaluate Service Delivery	\$200,000	
FirstWorks	\$500,000	
Open Space Conservation	\$5 M	2007
Niche Marketing for Downtowns	\$125,000	



Infrastructure Projects and Programs

Infrastructure has a focus on making our cultural and natural ideas/resources work for us. It houses projects that are the “traditional” version of infrastructure including utilities, transportation, and structural infrastructure needs. Additionally, the theme is home to ideas and projects about conservation and collaborative planning. Our infrastructure is what we build and what we protect – the balance of these is critical to meeting the overall land use needs and goals for us all.

Regional Sewer Expansion: Strategic sewer infrastructure development and funding.

Lead Agency: Peppers Ferry PSA, Blacksburg/VPI PSA

Business Technology Center – RU: Develop and market technology center at RU.

Lead Agency: RU Real Estate Foundation

North Dublin Water and Sewer: Expand water and sewer to North Dublin and Commerce Park development area.

Lead Agency: Virginia’s First Regional Industrial Facilities Authority (VFRIFA)

Regional Trail Network: Develop regional task force to map and prioritize trail improvements necessary to fully link the New River Valley trail systems.

Lead Agency: Pathways (Radford), Friends of the Huckleberry, DCR

Telecommunication Infrastructure/Expand Blacksburg Electronic Village (BEV)-like Programs in NRV: Develop regional telecommunication organization to assess telecommunication needs and opportunities in the New River Valley. Seek funding and support for expanding appropriate services throughout the region.

Lead Agency: BEV

ID Key Land for Conservation: Assess open lands in the region and identify those most critical for conservation using effective and supported evaluation mechanisms.

Lead Agency: New River Land Trust, Regional Planners’ Forum

<u>Initial Investment</u>		2003
Regional Sewer Expansion	\$60 M	
Business Technology Center	\$4 M	2004
Dublin Water and Sewer	\$12M	
Connect Trails Regionally	\$200,000	2005
Telecommunication Infrastructure	\$300,000	
ID Land for Conservation	\$50,000	



Regional Educational Facilities/Regional Training Center -youth and adult:

Coordinate with educational organizations to support adult training and non-traditional youth education through regional cooperation.

Lead Agency: NRVPDC Education Committee, Superintendent of Schools

Regional Water Supply: Promote regional water system planning and collaborative development activities.

Lead Agency: Regional Water Resource Authorities

Business Technology Park – RU: Develop and market technology park at RU.

Lead Agency: RU Real Estate Foundation

Water Resource Protection: Assess and develop plan for protection of regional water sources and watersheds

Lead Agency: DEQ, Regional Planners’ Forum, DCR

Regional Public Transportation: Support development and implementation of regional public transportation program.

Lead Agency: Transportation Advisory Committee

Regional Historic Sites Marketing: Identify regional historic sites and collaborative map and market them.

Lead Agency: Regional Planners’ Forum, New River Historic Society

Youth Entrepreneurial Center: Create entrepreneurial training and practice center for area youth.

Lead Agency: NRVDC, Technology Magnet School

Regional Civic/Convention Center: Create event/conference center to provide space for large attractions and events.

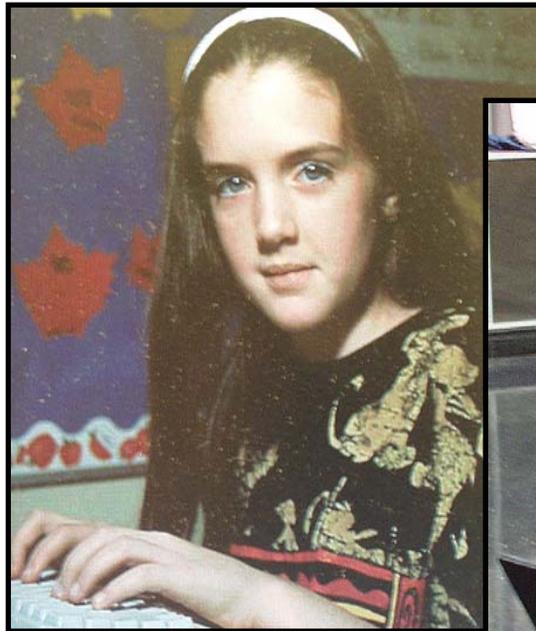
Lead Agency: VFRIFA

<u>Initial Investment</u>		
Regional Educational Facilities	\$10 M	2006
Regional Water Supply	\$20 M	
Business Technology Park	\$75 M	
Water Resource Protection	\$500,000	2007
Regional Public Transportation	\$5 M	
Historic Site Map/Marketing	\$50,000	
Youth Entrepreneurial Center	\$400,000	2008
Region Civic/Convention Center	\$50 M	



Conclusions

Once again the New River Valley has responded to the call for strategic thinking and action planning. *Community First* is a strategic and challenging update to our Vision 2020 process. The visions, objectives, projects and programs that form the basis of this strategy are built upon the strengths of the New River Valley: its people, its resources and its core values. *Community First* is a basis for long-term investment and commitment to an overall mission for the region that is challenging, sustainable, and driven by the local citizens that forged it.



A young third grader shared her excitement and interest in using the internet to learn and communicate with international pen pals back in 1994. Becky Simpkins was a symbol of how new technologies were changing the way we could imagine how to learn and connect. This imagining has become reality. In 2003, Becky has just completed her freshman year at Virginia Tech. She uses computer and internet technology on a daily basis for both learning and personal communication. She is still on the

cutting edge of technology and we delight in highlighting her progress and vision in *Community First*. Becky and her classmates and friends are central to this vision. The ability of this region to acknowledge contributions and meet new challenges with and through the young people of our communities will clearly benchmark the success of this visioning effort.

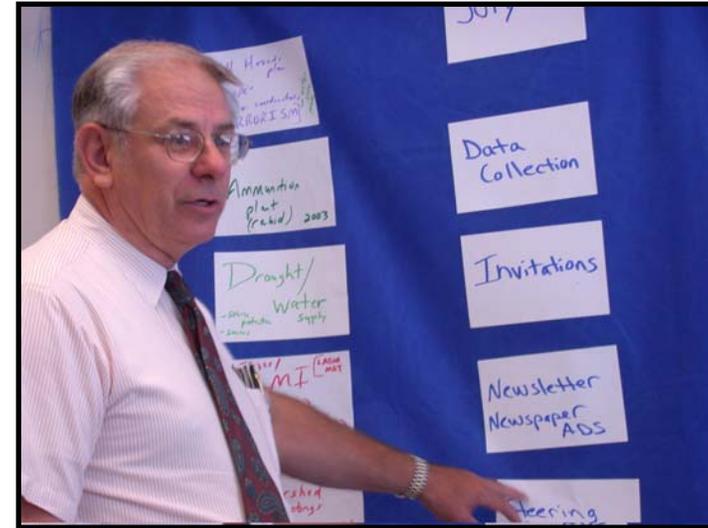


Harnessing Change and Building Connections are the subtext of *Community First*. How the New River Valley visionaries address these key elements will also determine the success of our regional vision. Change is inevitable. This document is a culmination of our community's best thinking and planning and investing for how we can truly harness change and guide the New River Valley through the 21st century to our best advantage. We are

prepared for the future and *Community First* is a valuable community-developed guide to ensure and build our future strategically and collaboratively.



Partnership is an important element of harnessing change. We are a community with very real and powerful connections. In any gathering within this region you would be hard pressed to find an individual who does not wear more than one organizational hat. We are also a community of individuals: raising families, running businesses, hiking the trails, driving, riding the buses, seeking resources, and sharing stories. Yet, we are more than that. We are connected by the geography, by school districts, by shared experiences, and a love of this community.



The citizens of the New River Valley have identified strengths and challenges facing this region. There are many opportunities for building on our strengths and addressing challenges within this document. Working together as a region and addressing opportunities for group and jurisdictional collaboration are the keys to really putting *Community First*. This region has done it before and the bar is raised higher to do it again *better*. This plan is the beginning of the effort. It is a powerful tool for getting things done, but without continued sustained commitment to the ideas within this document, it is a wasted effort. Not one single citizen of this region can ignore this work; just as not one single citizen can make it all work. These projects and programs need multiple champions and investors. Be an engaged and committed citizen of the region. The New River Valley is a wonderful community poised on amazing opportunities for growth and development: join the visionaries in implementing *Community First*!



Leadership

Natural and Cultural Resources

Education and Training

Economic Development

Human Resources

Physical Infrastructure

Appendix:

Community First Visions, Goals, and Objectives



Community First **Visions, Goals, and Objectives**

LEADERSHIP

The New River Valley is an environment that promotes and sustains current and emerging leaders within our community.

Goal: To train, inspire, support and deploy qualified leadership for all sectors and programs in the region.

Objective: Support the education and development of grassroots leaders.

Objective: Create a formal leadership organization.

Objective: Establish a certified leadership development program.

Objective: EAGLES programming across sectors.

Objective: Develop regional leadership organization and certification programs.

Goal: To establish youth involvement in the regional community.

Objective: Establish youth leadership training.

Objective: Seek youth participation in programs and provide recognition.

Objective: Create youth-specific seats on local councils, boards, and committees.

Objective: Create Youth Entrepreneurial Center for business and civic development and practice.

Objective: Establish youth leadership recognition program.

Goal: To enhance and support entrepreneurial activity in the region.

Objective: Establish First Works model for entrepreneurial development through teams engaged in supported start-up businesses.

Objective: Create and administer VT KnowledgeWorks program for effective technology transfer with Virginia Tech.

Objective: Support business incubator system in the region.



Goal: To enhance public understanding of organizations and their functions.

Objective: Community awareness workshops for corporate leaders and elected officials.

Objective: Establish a mechanism to foster regional coordination among government agencies and organizations.

Objective: Research and publicize non-profit and public contributions to community development efforts.

Objective: Quarterly human service community meetings to discuss service delivery and system constraints and promote community input and collaborative problem solving.

Goal: To promote and support organizational development and engagement in regional cooperation and collaboration.

Objective: Strengthen Non-profit corporate governance.

Objective: Promote local philanthropy to enhance community investment and commitment to local development.

Objective: Support regional coordination within and between government agencies.

Objective: Support and promote Christiansburg Institute.

EDUCATION AND TRAINING

The New River Valley provides a cooperative educational system with quality personal, professional, and technical education for all citizens of the region.

Goal: To create educational programs that transcend school district lines to maximize available resources and eliminate inequity.

Objective: Use multi-media technologies in the classroom to share instructional delivery and access to information throughout the region.

Objective: Allocate resources equitably to ensure that students from all economic and basic skill groups in school are prepared, encouraged, and ready to learn.

Objective: Encourage State recognition of the need for a funding formula fostering regional cooperation among public schools in technology training and education.



Goal: To improve the Industry/Education interface at all levels.

Objective: Provide students with more "real world" learning opportunities in order to prepare them to compete in a global economy.

Objective: Provide nurturing environment to all children that stresses "employability skills" including work ethic.

Objective: Expand mentoring and "shadow" programs.

Objective: Establish partnerships between industry/business and schools to promote the importance of skill development and inform educators of the skills needed (e.g., Work Keys).

Goal: To increase literacy rates among the region's children and adults (90% with High School Diploma or equivalent).

Objective: Expand programs to teach basic literacy skills.

Objective: Offer more on-site literacy training opportunities to local businesses and industries.

Goal: To create life-long learning opportunities for New River Valley residents.

Objective: Expand educational curriculum, operating hours, use of technology, and location of programming to offer non-traditional students educational opportunities to meet the needs of all of the region's residents.

Objective: Provide affordable, diverse, and accessible continuing education opportunities.

Goal: To train and re-train workers for higher skills and productivity in the 21st Century economy.

Objective: Train managers and workers to meet the current and future challenges of a competitive marketplace.

Objective: Expand existing corporate training and professional development programs.

Objective: Encourage the "one stop career shop" to program services based on economic opportunities of the region and geared to providing skills and assistance necessary to compete in the global marketplace.

Objective: Implement a program to prepare secondary school students for technical careers that will support the recruitment of high technology industries to the New River Valley.



Goal: To enhance and link the region's labor skills and technology to improve wage levels.

Objective: Link local industries with technology and research capabilities of Virginia Tech, Radford University, and New River Community College.

Objective: Expand the Virginia Tech Corporate Research Center's programs to include a strong technology transfer component.

Objective: Encourage alternative education in vocational programs, marketable skills, including business skills.

Objective: Market the region's specialty skill base to prospective industries.

HUMAN RESOURCES

The New River Valley provides opportunities for families and individuals to achieve their potential.

Goal: To foster inter-agency cooperation in the delivery of human services.

Objective: Devise an easily available system for the delivery of human services.

Objective: Strengthen client awareness of available services through better use of media, technology, and volunteer care networks, and the grouping of social service agency representatives and informational material within the one stop center.

Goal: To provide affordable and accessible human services to all New River Valley citizens.

Objective: Make high quality services available in the New River Valley.

Objective: Target the needs of "high risk" persons of the region in order to allow greater participation of these persons in the workforce and community.

Objective: Encourage and improve volunteer involvement in the delivery of human services.



Goal: To create an affordable, accessible public transportation system for all citizens.

Objective: Coordinate and maximize the use of existing public and private transportation resources.

Objective: Target and coordinate the expansion of currently available “on demand” transportation services to fill the needs of elderly, disabled, and disadvantaged citizens.

Objective: Plan and coordinate the expansion of the existing public transportation network to incorporate the entire New River Valley.

Objective: Support volunteer-based transportation alternatives (e.g., Access to Rides).

Goal: To expand the region's child and adult day care network.

Objective: Develop an integrated network of private and public child and adult day care providers to assist families twenty-four hours a day.

Goal: To ensure the safety of the region's citizens.

Objective: Improve the region's preparedness and ability to respond to natural crisis and man-made emergencies.

Objective: Reduce police, fire, and Emergency Medical Service response times throughout the New River Valley.

Goal: To provide youth programs and support:

Objective: Provide access to family basics training.

Objective: Create a system of after school programs (e.g., boys and girls clubs).

Objective: Support the provision of youth shelter(s).



NATURAL AND CULTURAL ENVIRONMENT

The New River Valley is an attractive and desirable place to live, work, and visit.

Goal: To develop eco-tourism opportunities in the New River Valley.

Objective: Design and market a series of travel packages for different recreational consumers.

Objective: Institute measures to protect critical areas from inappropriate development.

Objective: Inventory cultural sites and artisan shops throughout the region, and establish loop trails off the Blue Ridge Parkway.

Objective: Develop nature-based recreational opportunities, including a network of trails for hiking and biking.

Goal: To manage the impacts of future development in order to preserve the character and quality of the regional environment.

Objective: Improve land use planning and practices to preserve the region's rural character and ensure that critical or high risk areas are protected from inappropriate development.

Objective: Educate the public on the issues of land use planning and controls.

Objective: Encourage the development of recreational amenities in conjunction with all development throughout the region.

Objective: Collaborate with the New River Valley Land Trust and other groups to educate landowners regarding voluntary conservation easements.

Objective: Investigate program funding to assist in the cost of acquiring conservation easements.

Objective: Support existing agriculture operations and assist in developing alternative agriculture opportunities.

Goal: To encourage regional recycling as a way to reduce demand for new or expanded solid waste facilities.

Objective: Continue public awareness of benefits and needs for recycling.

Objective: Develop convenient means to recycle throughout the New River Valley.



Goal: To increase the awareness of educational and cultural programs in the region.

Objective: Promote the enhancement of educational and cultural amenities, to include cultural libraries.

Objective: Coordinate and cooperatively market local events regionally.

Goal: To develop activities and attractions that would enhance the tourism potential of the New River Valley.

Objective: Identify, develop, and package the region's inventory of historical, cultural, natural features, and events and promote to outside markets.

Objective: Examine opportunities to attract travelers from the Blue Ridge Parkway.

Objective: Create and support a regional tourism agency/organization to promote the New River Valley as a whole in partnership with each locality and other regional promotion organizations.

Objective: Develop a “blueway” along the New River, regionally.

Objective: Seek inter-regional partnerships with other Virginia communities, West Virginia, North Carolina, Tennessee and Kentucky to enhance the region's chances of becoming a tourism destination.

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

The New River Valley has a diverse, stable business and industrial community that provides high quality jobs, utilizes local ideas and technologies, and leverages private investment.

Goal: To increase the number of jobs created through entrepreneurial start-ups and expansions in the New River Valley.

Objective: Organize creative financing programs and improve entrepreneurs' access to capital.

Objective: Strengthen the New River Valley’s capacity to assist in the creation and expansion of businesses that are competitive locally, nationally, and globally.

Objective: Support the business incubators, and their services to new businesses including the development of corporate structures.



Goal: To encourage "would be" entrepreneurs through education and enhanced opportunities.

Objective: Provide alternate educational opportunities and support to encourage self-employment.

Objective: Encourage and acknowledge entrepreneurial efforts in established local industries and businesses.

Objective: Encourage home-based, community-based business zoning.

Objective: Explore the establishment of a youth entrepreneurial center.

Goal: Expand the use of technology as a basis for entrepreneurial ventures.

Objective: Encourage the use of locally developed technology in manufacturing and other industry.

Objective: Support the development of E-commerce and business-to-business ventures.

Objective: Encourage the formation of programs to develop technology-based businesses.

Goal: To expand the region's economic base without compromising the high quality of life.

Objective: Recruit environmentally responsible companies.

Objective: Utilize appropriate land use controls and utility availability to direct business to appropriate locations.

Objective: Develop and promote micro-business opportunities for recycled products to enhance local utilization of recycled materials.

Goal: To improve the region's ability to market itself and respond to the needs of new industrial, research, and technological prospects.

Objective: Market the region's existing industrial, technology, and research space.

Objective: Pursue a multi-regional marketing campaign involving the New River Valley Economic Development Alliance, and similar organizations throughout Western Virginia.



Goal: To strengthen the economic position of downtown commercial districts.

Objective: Enhance the diversity of the region's shopping opportunities.

Objective: Improve the competitiveness of downtown business districts.

Objective: Seek diversification and mixed use redevelopment of commercial districts.

Goal: To improve the customer service quality of local businesses.

Objective: Provide service instruction to employees.

Objective: Improve the region's ability to provide basic travel information to visitors.

Goal: To improve the region's tourism development potential and ability to market itself as a tourism destination.

Objective: Promote a regional identity to serve the marketing of the regions attractions.

Objective: Increase the region's tourism readiness and marketing capacity.

Objective: Attract support services.

Objective: Develop a unified signage program for the region.

Goal: To attract new industries that will complement the region's economy, strengthen inter-industry linkages, and utilize the region's labor force.

Objective: Pursue a targeted industry approach to industry recruitment.

Objective: Recruit outside firms seeking a trained and skilled labor force, low utility costs, high quality industrial space, and convenient highway access.

Objective: Recruit outside firms that currently have significant vendor relationships with New River Valley companies.

Objective: Utilize Virginia's First to provide creative public incentives to encourage private investment.

Objective: Foster partnerships among localities with common needs (including non-adjacent counties.)



Goal: To enhance the financial resources of local governments through tax restructuring.

Objective: Encourage the State to share income taxes and revenue growth with localities.

Objective: Encourage the State to allow more flexible local revenue strategies.

Goal: To bring a voice to the policy table on behalf of the region.

Objective: Seek representation on State Commissions and Committees.

Objective: Provide input to State from regional economic development organizations and planning districts.

Goal: To improve the ability of local firms to strengthen industry relationships, access product and/or consumer markets, and become globally competitive.

Objective: Promote and coordinate existing quality initiatives (e.g., ISO 9000 industry certification programs).

Objective: Develop a "Corporate Team" program to encourage local businesses to work together to pursue joint markets and/or federal contracts.

Objective: E-business support and development.

Objective: Market New River Valley products to other state, national, and international markets.

Goal: To develop and strengthen the role of international trade and commerce in the economy of the New River Valley.

Objective: Coordinate with existing international trade promotion, training and networking efforts/initiatives.

Objective: Market the advantages and promote the use of the Foreign Trade Zone and Customs Office at the New River Valley International Airport.

Objective: Use Foreign Trade Zone status as a tool in recruiting new industries and diversifying the New River Valley's economy.



Goal: To improve the region's ability to support and respond to the needs of local industries.

Objective: Create a more supportive and open relationship between industry, government, and educational institutions.

Objective: Utilize the Community College or the “one stop” centers to assist businesses seeking trained employees or training of employees requiring enhanced skills.

Objective: Provide intermediary between industry and social services.

Goal: To improve the corporate profitability of existing firms in order to encourage capital investment and job creation.

Objective: Create new financing opportunities for business/industry expansion.

Objective: Assist the commercialization of innovative technology and non-technology-based enterprises.

Objective: Develop more value-added processes for products developed locally.

Objective: Encourage recruitment of local college graduates.

Goal: To develop opportunities with international firms.

Objective: Identify potential international partners for local firms.

Objective: Evaluate the opportunities to locate a multi-modal transportation facility in the region.

Goal: To capitalize on the region's unique human resources.

Objective: To utilize specialty training (e.g., engineers, telecommunication, and technology).

Objective: To utilize specialty skills (e.g., artists and artisans).

Objective: To utilize basic skills in newer industries (e.g., hand dexterity).



PHYSICAL INFRASTRUCTURE

The New River Valley has complete and quality infrastructure to support the goals, needs, and aspirations of the regional community.

Goal: To improve the capacity, condition, and efficiency of inter- and intra-regional transportation systems.

Objective: Seek commitment of government and private interests to improve the capacity, efficiency, and condition of the regional transportation network.

Objective: Increase the capacity and utilization of existing air service facilities in the New River Valley.

Objective: Support passenger rail service for the New River Valley.

Objective: Increase interstate connections.

Objective: Seek opportunities to implement multi-modal services.

Objective: Seek to expand public transportation services and private transportation providers.

Goal: To enhance regional solutions to solid waste disposal and recycling.

Objective: Reduce the amount of waste added to the waste stream.

Objective: Seek inter-and intra-regional cooperation regarding the disposal of solid waste.

Objective: Pursue markets for recycled and reused products and materials.

Goal: To assure that the region has an ample supply of affordable housing to meet the needs of people in all income ranges.

Objective: Adopt creative development approaches to encourage the creation of affordable housing.

Objective: Determine appropriate and cost-effective means for providing shelter for all residents.

Objective: Seek to establish phased retirement centers.

Goal: To increase the commercialization of intellectual properties.

Objective: Support the implementation of programs and facilities which support companies in their development and utilization of intellectual properties (e.g., VT KnowledgeWorks and Radford University Business Technology Park).



Goal: To ensure adequate, reliable, and safe delivery of all utilities in the New River Valley.

Objective: Interconnect water and sewer systems regionally where possible to improve reliability and safety.

Objective: Examine the potential of the New River as an alternative source of water for communities using springs and wells.

Objective: Encourage AEP to build redundancy in electrical service to eliminate blackout/brownouts.

Objective: Deploy a network of fiber optics throughout the region.

Goal: To plan for the systematic construction, replacement, and repair of public infrastructure to meet future needs and ensure fiscal responsibility.

Objective: Encourage the development and updating of Capital Improvement Plans (CIP).

Objective: Seek creative and alternative funding sources for eligible capital improvement projects.

Objective: Seek creative and cooperative regional financing strategies for major infrastructure needs.

Goal: To improve the region's telecommunication network to attract new firms, assist existing firms, and educate citizens.

Objective: Establish a regional telecommunication committee to evaluate needs and recommend strategies.

Objective: Pursue plans to expand the "Electronic Village" concept, including public access to computers.

Objective: Promote the expansion and use of the "Electronic Classroom" at Virginia Tech, Radford University, New River Community College and primary and secondary schools.

Objective: Pursue direct electronic links to marketing information and market sources for advancing the region.

Objective: Establish a regional communications program for marketing and other outreach programs.

Goal: To increase the region's supply of ready and available industrial and other economic development properties.

Objective: Identify, evaluate, and negotiate the acquisition and/or reserved use of industrial and business property in the region.

Objective: Develop regional properties tailored to the needs of targeted industries.

Objective: Utilize Virginia's First Regional Industrial Facilities Authority to cooperatively develop properties.

Objective: Develop public/private partnerships to meet space needs of targeted economic projects.