

Botetourt County Board of Supervisors – Strategic Priorities

Updated December 2016

Thriving Business Environment

Goal 1: *Create and implement a new economic development plan that emphasizes a more active role in marketing the County and attracting new businesses*

- *Coordinate with the Roanoke Regional Partnership as appropriate, including leveraging their resources and not being limited by their activities*
- *Use the results of the study completed in 2010-11 to inform the Plan*
- *Review and ensure that our economic development tools are effective, including the IDA and Agriculture Extension program*
- *Review/update guidelines for economic development incentives*

Progress:

A Director of Economic Development was hired in summer 2016 in order to guide the department through its next phase of development. Initial work has begun on this as the new staff has come on board.

Looking ahead, this is a comprehensive strategic priority that deserves more attention than through this update. Any economic development strategy needs to be thorough and involve the several areas of development- business/industrial, asset (tourism and recreational), workforce (available “workforce” housing and cultivating a pipeline of available and skilled workers needed by existing and target industries), small businesses (delivering connections to available resources), communications (emphasis on social media), and partnerships (with Roanoke Regional Partnership, Visit Virginia’s Blue Ridge, VEDP, VWCC, DLCC, and others). Moreover, the Department of Economic Development should identify a mission and values statement to guide its work in these various areas of economic development.

Goal 2: *Design and implement a strategy to create a pro-business climate/environment to include all relevant County departments*

- *Ensure customer service attitude*
- *Consider a review of County Codes and whether it would be helpful to acquire input from businesses on them (may involve other partners such as Chamber)*
- *Examine business engagement plan*
- *Revise processes as needed*

Progress:

This has taken place through informal training and coaching of staff, especially during the new tenure of the County Administrator. Prior, the “Starting a Business in Botetourt County” brochure served as an initial example of enhancing our customer service to the business community. The Department of Economic Development will continue to work with other departments and businesses on these priorities, especially through a comprehensive business communications strategy.

Goal 3: *Develop a retention plan and strategy for existing business***Progress:**

Initial development of a retention plan began in 2015. The Corporate Visitation Program was launched in early 2016 in order to familiarize government, school, and other officials with the County’s businesses. Additional activities include periodic and on-going communications and relationships with local business management, google alerts for existing businesses news, and continually evaluating talent pipelines for available workforce needs of existing businesses.

Goal 4: *Complete construction of a shell building in Greenfield and market it***Progress:**

A performance agreement of the shell building was signed in November 2015. Financing was procured through early and mid-2016. Construction has begun with substantial completion initially stated for end of CY 2016. Marketing activities include listing on Virginia Scan, preparing and distributing marketing sheets with photos and relevant data, and directing marketing sheets to existing and target industries. The building has already been submitted for project inquiries.

Goal 5: *Complete the Agriculture Study and evaluate its strategies for implementation***Progress:**

The Agriculture Study was completed in fall 2015. County Administration, Economic Development, the Cooperative Extension, and the Schools have begun discussions to determine the next steps in evaluating its strategies.

Goal 6: *Explore opportunities to develop a business park to serve small scale industry***Progress:**

No major discussions have occurred regarding proposed developments. Some initial planning for small lots at Greenfield has occurred, and implementation will be guided by development costs and demand. An initial step will be to assess additional available commercial properties for suitability for small scale

industry, including building specifications, utilities, and zoning requirements. Economic Development will assess future real estate opportunities for a possible commerce park.

Goal 7: *Explore the possibility of acquiring medical or pharmaceutical industries that will capitalize on the County's proximity to regional medical facilities and universities*

Progress:

The County continues to work with the Roanoke Regional Partnership and the Virginia Economic Development Partnership to identify target industries, including medical and pharmaceutical industries. Success will be largely determined by real estate availability and opportunities to meet site requirements.

Goal 8: *Work with the Western Regional Economic Development Facilities Authority to explore a large tract business development park*

Progress:

The County worked with the Authority in order to identify a large tract of land for business development. In late 2015 through mid-2016, the County performed its due diligence to determine the feasibility of joining with the Authority and other localities on the proposed development. The County decided that it would not join in the current venture, and the Authority announced its purchase of a large tract of land in September 2016. The County will continue to work with the Authority as other opportunities arise.

The Gateway Center

Goal 1: *Complete the Gateway Center Market Study, evaluate its findings, and determine what actions to take*

Progress:

The Gateway Center Market Study was completed and received by the Board in fall 2015. Since then, the document has guided high-level conversations regarding the area. As a result, administration drafted a series of suggested action steps:

1. Create a Gateway Center Development Steering Committee
2. Develop, adopt and implement planning and zoning measures to encourage and facilitate Gateway Center development as envisioned in the Exit 150 Markey Study and Conceptual Master Plan
 - Update the County's Comp Plan to reflect the conceptual master plan and various policy goals (economic development, transportation, land use, utilities and infrastructure, housing, etc.) reflecting the County's vision of Gateway Center.

- Review and amend County subdivision, zoning and other relevant ordinances to not only facilitate but encourage desired land uses and development standards throughout the Gateway Center area.
3. Provide skilled and experienced staffing.
 4. Establish a reliable and dedicated source of County funding for Gateway Center Development.
 5. Develop a Gateway Center development program budget.
 6. Define performance measures.
 7. Develop and report progress against an annual Gateway Center Development Plan.
 8. Reorganize the County's Industrial Development Authority.
 9. Develop and execute a targeted marketing plan.

County staff continue to evaluate each of these possible actions and look for opportunities to implement them. Some, including the reorganization of the IDA and updating the Comprehensive Plan, have already taken place.

Goal 2: *Review and adopt policies and strategies from the Gateway Center Market Study that are relevant to other County plans and initiatives (i.e. ED Plan, Comprehensive Plan, CIP, etc.)*

Progress:

In spring 2016, the Planning and Zoning Division was awarded a grant by the state to develop a comprehensive plan amendment for Urban Development Areas (UDAs). The Gateway Center and Daleville Town Center were identified as locations suitable for UDA designation. The amendment and accompanying study were adopted in November 2016. The comprehensive plan amendment refined the market study and provided a zoning tool to help guide development in the area.

The consultants for the amendment will also provide a high-level analysis of the zoning ordinance. This review will drive staff's recommendation to issue an RFQ/RFP to update the zoning ordinance. Components of an update could be as minor as tweaks, or could include an overlay district and overhaul of the commercial districts regulations, and could also result in an update of the zoning map.

Economic Development will continue to develop financing mechanisms to facilitate commercial development, identify available properties inventory, assess demographic and trade data that will largely determine the types of commercial development likely to occur, and to cultivate relationships with relevant property owners, developers, and target commercial businesses desired to locate at Exit 150.

Goal 3: *Following the Gateway Center Market Study, form a planning coalition of affected property owners to develop and/or begin implementation of the plan*

Progress:

County Administration and the Department of Economic Development continue to work with property owners in the Gateway Center area regarding possible partnerships and development goals. No formal coalition has been formed at this point.

Goal 4: *Develop a broad Master Plan (overlay) to develop the Cloverdale, Troutville, Daleville, Bonsack, and Blue Ridge area in relation to Exit 150 redevelopment*

Progress:

Planning and Zoning staff have begun finalizing the formal plans for the Gateway Center area. Following comprehensive plan and zoning updates to the Gateway Center area, staff will begin to examine the potential to obtain additional grant funding to connect the Gateway Center areas to Cloverdale, Troutville, Daleville, Bonsack and Blue Ridge via comprehensive plan and zoning ordinance updates. These efforts also include regional transportation and greenway planning efforts and coordination with VDOT.

Botetourt Cool

Goal 1: *Adopt an integrated regional greenway plan*

Progress:

The County joined the Roanoke Valley Greenway Commission in July 2016. The Commission is an integrated regional greenway plan developing. Planning for the Daleville Greenway and the eventual extension of the Tinker Creek Greenway from Roanoke is in progress.

Goal 2: *Create a bikeways plan for the County (note that the plan can include roads)*

Progress:

The Roanoke Valley-Alleghany Regional Commission (RVARC) adopted a regional Bikeway Plan in 2012. County staff continue to work with RVARC staff to update and refine the regional planning activities. Such work could be included in a future update of the comprehensive plan, but no action has been taken on this to date.

Goal 3: *Develop a timeline and action plan to establish a New Castle to Eagle Rock Craig's Creek Rails to Trails project*

Progress:

A formal timeline and action plan has not been developed at this point. County staff continue to explore possibilities to develop this trail. Also, the County has moved forward with signing a contract to purchase the Jeremy Thomas property in order to assist this project.

Goal 4: *Create a local national forest advisory council to influence federal forestry lands planning and projects that are consistent with the County's vision*

Progress:

No formal advisory council has been created. County staff continue to work with the National Park Service and the Forest Service to ensure local partnership with some of their projects.

Goal 5: *Design and implement a series of individual hiking trails linking the Appalachian Trail and Blue Ridge Parkway to community centers and conveniently placed trailheads*

Progress:

No work has been done on this thus far. The County's membership in the Greenway Commission and partnerships with the National Park Service and Appalachian Trail Conservancy will assist in the development of these projects.

Goal 6: *Evaluate the feasibility of a visitor's center/welcome center*

Progress:

Formal work on this project has not occurred. County staff continue to discuss the idea as a possible future development and would work with Virginia's Blue Ridge during this process.

Goal 7: *Determine how to modify the logo of Botetourt County to better reflect the vision and Botetourt Cool and present recommendations to the Board, including costs*

Progress:

Initial focus groups and idea exchanges were held during summer 2016. The Economic Development staff is working to finalize a project timeline and to identify key ways to expand the County's brand. A cost projection will be completed as a part of the overall project.

Goal 8: *Evaluate and consider whether to build a large scale music and entertainment venue (also consider how this integrates with the Sports Complex, Greenway Master Plan, and Gateway Center Master Plan)*

Progress:

No formal planning has occurred at this point. County staff can integrate the planning of this project with other plans once those other plans are completed.

Goal 9: *Evaluate the expansion of the water trail concept to Craig's Creek (i.e. itineraries and access points)*

Progress:

The water trail has become a regional project and work is being done to assess opportunities for improvement and expansion. The current plans for expansion do not include Craig's Creek at this point, but the planning is ongoing.

Responsible Governance

Goal 1: *Develop a plan to find additional alternative revenue sources to lessen dependence on real estate taxes, to include the following possible strategies:*

- *Obtain approval from the General Assembly to raise the cap on the County's meals and lodging tax rates*
- *Develop a grant strategy in order to leverage alternative funding sources for projects across the County*
- *Identify potential projects on which the County can partner with other agencies*

Progress:

The transient occupancy tax was increased in FY2017. The meals tax is at the maximum allowable according to state law. County staff are working to identify other possible opportunities.

Grants continue to be utilized in Fire & EMS/ Dispatch, Economic Development (Tourism), Community Development (Comprehensive Plan) & EDA projects. The Budget Team continues to work with departments to help identify possible grant and other alternative revenue opportunities.

The County recently identified a possible regional economic development project that could be a source of partnership, but the County chose not to participate after due diligence. The County also has continued conversations with the National Park Service and the Appalachian Trail Conservancy to determine viable partnerships for development around Exit 150.

Goal 2: *Develop a state and federal legislative agenda in concert with the business community*

Progress:

County Administration has worked with the Board and members of the General Assembly on key issues, including the transient occupancy tax, land use issues, PILT, and scenic trails initiatives. No formal legislative agenda has been developed.

Goal 3: *Conduct a long term debt carrying capacity analysis and create a related long term facilities investment plan*

Progress:

The Finance Director and Budget Team have performed a basic debt analysis during each budget cycle. In fall 2016, a comprehensive financial forecast, focusing on debt carrying analysis through 2030, was developed. Using the updated debt analysis and debt per capita figures, the County will be looking at debt carrying opportunities with the Schools. County Administration and Finance will work with the Parks, Recreation, and Maintenance to update the facilities study. There are budgeted funds in FY2017 to begin addressing facilities issues.

Infrastructure and Facilities

Goal 1: *Develop a positive strategy to partner with other localities and/or to use public/private partnerships to address infrastructure needs (i.e. broadband)*

Progress:

Botetourt County has partnered with the Roanoke City, Salem City, and Roanoke County to form the Roanoke Valley Broadband Authority. With the help of the Authority, the localities have identified existing infrastructure and possibilities for expansion. Roanoke City and Salem City have begun expansion of broadband networks in their jurisdictions, and the counties continue evaluate future possibilities.

Botetourt also continues to partner with the other localities in the Transportation Planning Organization (MPO) regarding regional transportation needs. These relationships have been strengthened by the structures created by the Commonwealth Transportation Board's Smart Scale funding process.

Goal 2: *Complete the process of joining the Western Virginia Water Authority and bringing Carvin's Cove water to Daleville and Greenfield*

Progress:

The County joined the Water Authority in July 2015. A pump station was then constructed in Daleville, and water from Carvin's Cover currently flows to Daleville and Greenfield. We continue to work in partnership with the Water Authority to improve service and infrastructure in the County.

Goal 3: *Complete a County-wide internet access plan in conjunction with private sector communications providers*

Progress:

County Administration and Technology Services continues to work with private internet providers in the County to ensure that citizen and business needs are addressed. A cross-disciplinary staff team is currently being formed to systematically identify and proactively pursue partnerships with the Roanoke Valley Broadband Authority, private service providers, businesses, and residents to expand and improve broadband internet services across the county.

Goal 4: *Submit and advocate with VDOT for the following road projects to be included in the 2040 Transportation Plan: 4 lanes for Route 11 through Cloverdale, including railroad bridge; an alternate bypass for I-81 around Buchanan; the Fincastle Bypass; and Route 220 4 lane expansion from Eagle Rock to I-64*

Advocate for the expansion of I-81 capacity with VDOT and the Federal Highway Administration (FHA)

Progress:

In 2015, VDOT and the Commonwealth Transportation Board (CTB) created the Smart Scale (formerly HB2) application process for receiving funding for transportation projects. At this same time, the state was developing the 2040 Transportation plan.

Route 11 in Cloverdale has been identified as a need. We anticipate applying for a project there in the 2018 round of Smart Scale. I-81 around Buchanan has a need, and was unsuccessful in the 2015 Smart Scale process. We reapplied in 2016 and await the outcome. No discussion has been had at this time regarding a bypass around Buchanan. The Fincastle Bypass was applied for in 2016, and we await the outcome. Route 220 improvements were applied for in 2015. While not funded through Smart Scale, VDOT has found money to move the project along as an expanded 2-lane road. The feasibility of a 4-lane road will be evaluated in the future.

We have advocated for the expansion of I-81 capacity with VDOT, the CTB, and the General Assembly. We have not advocated at the federal level yet.

Goal 5: *Develop an existing facilities inventory and plan for facilities maintenance and replacement, including energy efficiency considerations*

Progress:

The inventory of existing facilities was conducted in late 2015 through early 2016. Staff have been refining the inventory in recent months and have begun prioritizing the greatest needs. The key focus of the prioritization has been the life expectancy and estimated cost for HVAC and roof replacements. New roofs have been installed on the Purchasing/Registrar building and the Health Department building. Parking lot sealing, exterior painting, and carpeting in the Circuit Courthouse were all completed in

summer and fall of 2016. Staff is also actively investigating participation in the Department of Mines, Minerals and Energy (DMME) performance contracting program recently authorized for the county school division as a means of cost-effectively improving utility efficiency in county facilities.

Responsive Government

Goal 1: *Redesign and re-launch the County webpage, adding more online services and information access, also considering options for:*

- *Taking informal polls on public opinion*
- *Doing citizen/customer surveys on line*
- *Working with the diversity of the County; recognizing that one size doesn't fit all*

Progress:

In summer 2016, the County hired a consultant to rebuild the back end of the website and migrate the content management system to WordPress in anticipation of a future overhaul. The new backend supports more web features that are being rolled out as needs arise. Initial planning is underway for the redesign of the website, depending on funding. Such planning will include citizen and community input from across the County.

Goal 2: *Establish a County/Town relations committee to open up and establish a viable dialogue with the towns*

Progress:

The County Administrator has established periodic meetings with the Towns' leadership. Other senior staff are invited, depending on the issues to be discussed.

Goal 3: *Engage the Sheriff's Office, State Police, and Fire/EMS Department to develop a proactive long term County safety and security plan consistent with Botetourt's vision*

- *Ensure that these agencies are part of planning for the Board's priorities in the initial phases of each (i.e. Gateway Center, Botetourt Cool initiatives, etc.)*

Progress:

- The agencies are actively engaged through planning processes, and the Department of Community Development has reached out to ensure further collaboration.
- No formal collaboration is currently in place, but the agencies work together routinely
- Improved the Insurance Service Office's (ISO) Rating from a 9 to a 5 (lower the number the better the rating).

- Increased service level of EMS by adding an additional 24 hour ALS unit to the system.
- Purchased a new Fire Engine that will replace an older out of date unit.
- Sheriff's Office purchased equipment for large animal rescue.

Goal 4: *Initiate a "Future of our Libraries" evaluation project (i.e. determining the desired future of libraries, modernization that may be required; consideration of potential for use as community centers; role in adult education and lifelong learning, etc.)*

Progress:

- Funds were budgeted for this project in the FY2017 CIP.
- The project has yet to be fully organized or produce any significant results. It has been discussed among senior library staff and with the Botetourt County Library Board of Trustees. The plan calls for creating a steering committee to direct the project, gathering information and researching current trends, considering the role of the library in adult education and lifelong learning, determining how facilities can be modernized, and finally, producing a report of findings and recommendations.
- The Library Board has endorsed the idea of hiring a consulting firm to help organize the process, conduct the needed research, facilitate focus groups, and make recommendations. Resources to aid in this work are being identified, including academic and external library professionals.

Lifelong Learning Excellence

Goal 1: *With the School Board, jointly evaluate the 2014 School Efficiency Study and develop strategies that identify and address future school system requirements*

Progress:

County Administration and other senior staff have worked informally with school officials to develop long-term plans to address those issues. Also, as a result of the study, the schools undertook a facilities study that will be analyzed in late 2016. That study will help guide the best current and future uses of the school facilities and assist with debt planning.

Goal 2: *Continue regular meetings between County and School administrations to build a better working relationship so that further efficiencies can be identified across the County*

Progress:

The Board of Supervisors and the School Board began holding quarterly joint meetings in 2015 in order to facilitate discussions between the two bodies. County Administration and senior school officials

continue to meet on a regular basis to ensure effective collaboration, especially in regard to budget priorities.

Goal 3: *As part of our economic development strategy, enhance and formalize County partnerships that ensure a workforce development strategy that lays the foundation for future employer needs, including leveraging our community colleges*

Progress:

Informal collaboration began in 2015 with the former Economic Development Manager and continues with the Department of Economic Development staff. Formal collaboration began in earnest with the creation of the Botetourt Corporate Visitation Program in spring 2016. Such collaboration helps to ensure effective relationships with the Botetourt County Schools System, Workforce Development Board, community colleges, VEC, VEDP, and other workforce partners. Staff will continue to place an emphasis on workforce population being employable through soft skills training (via the Virginia Career Readiness Certificate), exposure to available employment opportunities, and connecting needs skills sets with market wages for the jobs most needed in the county and region.

Strategic Land Use

Goal 1: *Create and adopt a wind ordinance*

Progress:

- Utility-scale wind ordinance adopted June 2015
- Research on draft residential wind energy has been conducted, proposed amendment structure has been crafted. Staff recommends a potential working group with at least one community meeting. The process could take 6-9 months.

Goal 2: *In conjunction with Towns, create overlay districts that provide for consistent and desirable land use planning and protect resources, culture, and architectural integrity*

Progress:

- Staff has met with Fincastle Town Manager to discuss the potential for coordinating Comprehensive Plan Amendments and county zoning updates that would reflect the above goal.
- Staff recommends pursuit of grant funding to establish UDA's in and around town boundaries, if available.
- Anticipates reaching out to other towns as the needs arise

Goal 3: *Complete the 5-year update to the County's Comprehensive Plan that embraces the new vision*

Progress:

- A public hearing is scheduled for November to update Chapter 2, Trends, relevant maps, incorporate the Gateway Crossing Area Plan, and designate the Daleville Town Center area and the Gateway Crossing Area as Urban Development Areas, which includes updates to the Future Land Use Map.
- In the next 3 months, staff will be working with the Department of Economic Development on Phase I of the housing study and is preparing to develop a grant proposal for Phase II.
- Staff anticipates quarterly updates to the Comp Plan, focusing on each topic, such as housing, environmental, cultural and historic resources, transportation, etc. Each would be incorporate citizen input and culminate in a public hearing.

Goal 4: *Initiate an annual review of the Zoning Ordinance*

- *Ensure zoning that makes favorable environments for agriculture and open space*

Progress:

- The following updates to the ordinance have been adopted:
 - June 2015: Utility-scale wind
 - December 2015: amended site plan review process and Board of Zoning Appeals procedures and processes.
 - January 2016: amended subdivision review process
 - May 2016: updated zoning map boundary determinations review process, process for tabling public hearings, timelines for rezoning, SEP, comp plan and text amendments; incorporated RAM into relevant sections; amended enforcement procedures and introduced civil penalties; amended use districts, definitions and supplemental regulations to better incorporate short-term rentals; increased maximum density for multi-family by SEP from 10-16 acres.
- The following updates are proposed:
 - December 2016: incorporating mixed-use residential on 2nd story or higher above commercial/office uses in B-1, B-2, PUD, TND
 - Staff suggests hiring a consultant to assist with the development of an overlay zone for the Gateway Center
 - Commercial and residential zoning districts will need to be updated to conform to new vision for Gateway Center
 - Staff recommends a review of agricultural zoning to update types of uses and may consider new or updated districts to expand upon AR/RR A-1 and FC
 - The sign ordinance should be updated to eliminate any content-based regulation