



American Planning Association  
**Virginia Chapter**

*Making Great Communities Happen*

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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## **Botetourt County Wins Holzheimer Economic Development Award**

The Virginia Chapter of the American Planning Association (APA Virginia) is pleased to announce that **Botetourt County** has been awarded the **2023 Holzheimer Economic Development Award**.

Botetourt County won this statewide recognition for its recently adopted [Gateway Crossing Overlay](#), which is a zoning tool intended to transform an underutilized and underperforming area of the County into a vibrant, mixed-use community that benefits residents, businesses, and visitors alike. The Gateway Crossing Overlay was born out of the [Gateway Crossing Area Plan](#), a small area plan adopted into the County's [Comprehensive Plan](#) in 2017. The Plan highlights and prioritizes connectivity, mixed-use structures, multi-family residences, and enhanced pedestrian and bicycle connections. The plan builds off existing amenities such as the Appalachian Trail and the location along three major roadways, Interstate 81, US Route 220, and US Route 11.

Julie Chop, MURP, CZA, Vice President of External Affairs for APA Virginia remarked that *"it's evident that the Botetourt County project team worked incredibly hard and generated real-world ideas and smart designs to implement Gateway Crossing's vision without losing sight of Botetourt's ideals and character that make it a special place in the Commonwealth."*

The Gateway Crossing Area Plan seized upon a once-in-a-generation VDOT redesign of the road network to envision an attractive entrance into the County that welcomes both visitors and residents. To implement this vision, County staff worked with consultants to develop a set of zoning tools that lessen burdensome development standards, incorporates walkability and bikeability, and connects the built and natural environments to one another.



The new zoning tool unlocks new opportunities for high quality urban design in the Gateway Crossing area while sustaining the existing regulations which protect Botetourt's rural areas. The County's planners and consultant team

While developing the overlay zoning tool, County staff forged relationships with stakeholders and the broader Botetourt community through multiple meetings and workshops, online engagement tools, and direct conversations with citizens, Planning Commissioners, and elected officials.

This project stood out to the Awards Committee for many reasons, including:

- The County's initiative to capitalize on a once-in-a-generation redesign of a major road interchange.
- The innovative approach to encouraging development in a pre-defined growth area.
- The County's use of online engagement tools and outreach methods to encourage input.

APA Virginia will present Botetourt County with the Holzheimer Economic Development Award during an award ceremony at 12:00pm on Tuesday, July 17th at the Hotel Roanoke and Conference Center (110 Shenandoah Ave NE | Roanoke, VA 24016).

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#### About the [American Planning Association, Virginia Chapter](#)

Our mission is to make great communities happen in Virginia by offering continuing professional development and other valuable services to planners that will enable them to excel in their practice. We are committed to raising awareness about the many benefits that planning offers as a foundation for effectively addressing the physical, economic, and social changes that take place in Virginia, and to providing effective leadership in planning advocacy reflective of a diverse geography and population.