

GOVERNMENT RELATIONS

GOAL

Partner with federal, state, and local governments, businesses, institutions, and other area stakeholders to plan and develop as a unified region.

Sustainability Goal

Work in partnership to sustainably support the New River Valley region economically, environmentally, and socially.

Citizen Involvement

Meaningful citizen involvement is key to the Town's ethic of governance. There are a number of standing committees and working groups that advise staff and Town Council on government relations which are listed later in this chapter. Citizens are also encouraged to attend and share their priorities and concerns at Planning Commission and Town Council public hearings when government relations topics are being discussed.

OVERVIEW

What happens in Blacksburg affects neighboring jurisdictions, just as the actions of state agencies and neighboring jurisdictions, such as the Virginia Department of Transportation and Virginia Tech, affect what happens within the Town limits. There are many existing committees, topical initiatives, and ongoing programs that build strong working relationships among the local governments, economic development agencies, planning related organizations, and universities in our area.

The New River Valley, as illustrated in the map on the following page, is a natural geographic boundary for creating and promoting a regional identity. The Town partners with many different organizations and surrounding jurisdictions to promote the Town, Montgomery County, and the New River Valley. While lines on a map identify boundaries between individual jurisdictions, in reality, those boundaries are invisible for items such as transportation and the natural environment. Local governments and state agencies share in the design and construction of roads and regional transportation facilities, such as the Virginia Tech/Montgomery County Executive Airport, Blacksburg Transit, and the Smart Way Bus. The Town shares mutual aid agreements with many surrounding jurisdictions in the areas of public health and safety. Virginia Tech and other higher education facilities offer the region economic opportunities through their research, teaching, and service opportunities to students, staff, faculty, alumni, visitors, and the community. The Virginia Tech Corporate Research Center and Blacksburg's Industrial Park provide attractive international and national business addresses, while simultaneously retaining local business in the region.

New River Valley



- Major Roads
- New River
- Blacksburg
- Town Limits
- County/City Limits

Town of Blacksburg
Engineering & GIS
April 10, 2018
Map Not to Scale

PARTNERSHIPS AND COOPERATIVE EFFORTS

There are many committees with Town representation collectively at work in the New River Valley. The Town also closely coordinates with Virginia Tech on a wide range of topics. Regional coordination and collaboration are increasingly important in solving long-term regional issues. The New River Valley Livability Initiative is one example of a regional approach in assessing topics of interests to all living within the New River Valley. The Town also recognizes the importance of increasing partnerships with localities and organizations in the larger surrounding regions, such as the Roanoke Valley and in Southwest Virginia. The following list includes standing committees, topical initiatives, and ongoing programs and events where partnerships and cooperative efforts are vital to success.

Administration

- Blacksburg Town Council
- Blacksburg-Virginia Tech Liaison Committee
- Greater Montgomery Liaison Committee

Agriculture

- Agricultural & Forestal District Advisory Committee
- Friends of the Blacksburg Farmers Market

Economic Development

- Blacksburg Partnership
- Business Relations Committee
- Connect North Main
- Downtown Blacksburg, Inc.
- Downtown Revitalization Committee
- Go Virginia
- Montgomery-Blacksburg-Christiansburg Development Corporation
- Montgomery County Chamber of Commerce
- Montgomery County Department of Economic Development
- Montgomery County VA Regional Tourism Office
- Montgomery Regional Economic Development Commission
- New River Valley Development Corporation
- Onward NRV
- Roanoke Regional Small Business Development Center
- South Main Merchant Association
- University City Boulevard Merchant Association
- The Virginia Tech Corporate Research Center

History

- Cemetery Trustee Advisory Committee
- Historic or Design Review Board
- The Blacksburg Museum and Cultural Foundation

Housing and Neighborhood Services

- Housing and Community Development Advisory Board
- Off-Campus Housing Fair
- Rental Housing Inspection Program
- Student Orientation
- The Big Event
- Town-Gown Community Relations Committee

Planning

- Blacksburg Planning Commission
 - Zoning Ordinance Review Committee
 - Long Range Planning Committee
- Board of Building Code Appeals
- Board of Zoning Appeals
- Community Foundation of the New River Valley Livability Initiative Implementation
 - Aging In Place Leadership Team
- New River Valley Regional Commission
 - Livability Initiative
- Virginia Tech Campus Master Plan Update

Public Safety and Emergency Planning

- Adopt A Cop
- Drug Task Force
- Drunk Driving Enforcement
- Emergency Locator System
- Judicial Affairs
- Law Enforcement Training
- Major Event Security
- Montgomery County/Blacksburg Local Emergency Planning Committee
- Mutual Aid Agreements for Fire, Police, and Rescue Services
- New River Valley Alcohol Safety Awareness Program
- New River Valley Emergency Communications Regional Authority
- New River Valley Hazard Mitigation Planning
- Safety Seat Check Points/Educational Program
- Underage Alcohol Enforcement

Social Issues

- Council on Human Relations
- Women's Center at Virginia Tech
- New River Valley Agency on Aging

Arts, Recreation, & Events

- Art at the Market
- Blacksburg Partnership Collaborative for the Arts

- Friends of the Huckleberry Trail
- Holiday Parades
- Recreation Advisory Board
- Steppin' Out Street Festival
- Summer Solstice Fest
- Virginia Tech Arts Initiative
- Virginia Tech Summer Arts Festival

Technology

- Montgomery County Public Schools Technology Steering Committee
- NRV Network Wireless Authority
- VT Knowledge Works

Transportation

- Blacksburg Transit
- Greenway/Bikeway/Sidewalk Corridor Advisory Committee
- New River Valley Metropolitan Planning Organization
- New River Valley Rail 2020
- Roam NRV Bike Share
- Roanoke-Blacksburg Regional Airport
- Towing Advisory Board
- Traffic Committee
- Virginia Tech Montgomery Executive Airport

Utilities and Environment

- Blacksburg-VPI Sanitation Authority
- Climate Action & Community Sustainability Working Group
- Energy Alliance of Southwest Initiative
- Mayor's Task Force on Climate Protection & Sustainability
- Montgomery Regional Solid Waste Authority
- NRV Regional Water Authority
- Stormwater Stakeholder Advisory Group
- Virginia Tech Salt Storage Joint Facility Agreement

GOVERNMENT RELATIONS

Objectives and Policies

- GR1. Improve existing relationships and establish new relationships between governing bodies of the New River Valley and the Roanoke Valley to improve understanding and support regional development.
- GR2. Work with the Community Foundation of the New River Valley to successfully implement the NRV Livability Initiative.
- GR3. Continue coordination with the Town of Christiansburg and Montgomery County at the comprehensive planning level.
- GR4. Identify opportunities for short, medium, and long-term joint infrastructure, recreational, or environmental protection projects between partnering agencies and governments that achieve efficient uses of resources and cost savings.
- GR5. Support regional efforts by local government jurisdictions and non-profit organizations providing for the needs of the aging population.
- GR6. Work with other entities in the region to explore expansion of Blacksburg Transit and other transportation mode options to increase mobility between localities in the region and reduce single-occupancy vehicle commuting.
- GR7. Work with Montgomery County to encourage developments outside of Town limits that are of a scale and design to complement developments within the Town, minimize impacts on traffic congestion, and provide open space and greenway connections, while protecting viewsheds and ridgelines.
- GR8. Develop initiatives with Montgomery County to protect and promote historic districts located in the Town and County. Provide financial incentives for investing and renovating historic properties.
- GR9. Continue to coordinate with Virginia Tech on Town/Gown relations, transportation, implementation of the University Master Plan and the Town's Comprehensive Plan, Virginia Tech Foundation projects, and protection of commercially zoned properties Downtown.
- GR10. Ensure that meals, lodging, and other taxes are applied equally within the Town so that businesses are not placed at a disadvantage because they are taxed at different rates depending on their location.
- GR11. Support local governments and other regional organizations to implement economic strategies and incentives to promote the Town of Blacksburg and the New River Valley.

- GR12. Continue to participate in the Regional Airport Authority with Virginia Tech, Montgomery County, and the Town of Christiansburg to support airport operations and marketing the airport to help grow the region's economy.
- GR13. Promote a unified regional development pattern and address the regional impacts of development by considering the following Town concerns when commenting on development proposals in adjacent jurisdictions. *Please refer to the Blacksburg Administrative Manual for additional detail.*
1. Density and intensity of land use and transition of land uses with adjacent jurisdictions
 2. Implementation of Urban Development Areas
 3. Historic preservation
 4. Viewsheds
 5. Town gateways
 6. Transportation, including road construction, traffic volume and safety, transit, trails, sidewalks and bikeways
 7. Water
 8. Wastewater
 9. Stormwater and Watershed impacts
 10. Technology, including Telecommunications Towers
 11. Broadband Development
 12. Economic Impacts