GOVERNMENT RELATIONS
*A Regional Look*

GOAL
Partner with federal, state, and local governments, commerce, institutions of higher education, 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
Citizens can participate on the following related Town Council appointed committees: Blacksburg-Virginia Tech Liaison Committee, Council on Human Relations, Montgomery County/Blacksburg Local Emergency Planning Committee, Montgomery Regional Economic Development Commission, New River Valley Agency on Aging, New River Valley Alcohol Safety Awareness Program, New River Valley Development Corporation, New River Valley Livability Initiative, New River Valley Planning District Commission, and Town-County Liaison Committee. Town residents, as Montgomery County residents, can also serve on Montgomery County appointed committees and boards.

OVERVIEW
What happens in Blacksburg affects neighboring jurisdictions, just as the actions of neighboring jurisdictions and state agencies, such as the Virginia Department of Transportation and Virginia Tech, affect what happens within the Town limits. There are many available tools to help 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 of Blacksburg 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.
FORMAL AND INFORMAL COOPERATIVE EFFORTS AMONG THE TOWN OF BLACKSBURG, LOCAL GOVERNMENTS & VIRGINIA TECH

There are many Town committees and regional committees with Town representation working collectively in the New River Valley. The Town also closely coordinates with Virginia Tech. Participation locally and regionally are two important ways in which the Town participates in the decision-making processes that affect the future of the Town. Going forward, regional coordination and cooperation will be increasingly important in solving long-term regional issues. The New River Valley Livability Initiative is one such good example of a regional approach in assessing topics of interests to all living within the New River Valley. Efforts to increase partnerships with localities and organizations in the larger surrounding regions, such as the Roanoke Valley and in Southwest Virginia, should be goals to achieve in the future.

Administration
- Blacksburg Town Council
- Blacksburg-Virginia Tech Liaison Committee
- Town-County Liaison Committee

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

Economic Development
- Blacksburg Partnership
- Downtown Blacksburg, Inc.
- Downtown Revitalization Committee
- Montgomery-Blacksburg-Christiansburg Development Corporation
- Montgomery Regional Economic Development Commission
- New River Valley Development Corporation

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

Housing and Neighborhood Services
- Blacksburg Housing and Community Development Advisory Board
- Rental Housing Inspection Program
- Student Orientation
- The Big Event
- Town-Gown Community Relations Committee

Planning
- Blacksburg Planning Commission, and subcommittees:
  - Environmental Quality and Land Use Committee
Long Range Planning Committee

- Board of Building Code Appeals
- Board of Zoning Appeals
- New River Valley Planning District Commission
  - Livability Initiative
- Virginia Tech Campus Master Plan

Public Safety and Emergency Planning

- 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 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

Recreation & Events

- Art at the Market
- Holiday Parades
- Huckleberry Trail
- Recreation Advisory Board
- Steppin’ Out Street Festival
- Summer Solstice Fest
- Virginia Tech Arts Initiative
- Virginia Tech Summer Arts Festival

Technology

- Blacksburg Electronic Village Board
- Montgomery County Public Schools Technology Steering Committee
- NRV Network Wireless Authority
- VT Knowledge Works
Transportation
• Blacksburg Transit
• Greenway/Bikeway/Sidewalk Corridor Committee
• Metropolitan Planning Organization Board
• Safe Routes to School
• Towing Advisory Board
• Traffic Committee
• Virginia Tech/Montgomery Regional Airport Authority

Utilities/Environment
• Blacksburg-Christiansburg-VPI Water Authority
• Blacksburg-VPI Sanitation Authority
• Energy Alliance of Southwest Initiative
• Mayor’s Task Force on Climate Protection & Sustainability
• Montgomery Regional Solid Waste 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 Montgomery County on the successful redevelopment of the Old Blacksburg Middle School property.

GR3. Work with the New River Valley Planning District Commission to successfully complete and implement the NRV Livability Initiative.

GR4. Continue coordination with the Town of Christiansburg and Montgomery County at the comprehensive planning level.

GR5. 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.

GR6. Support regional efforts by local government jurisdictions and non-profit organizations to support the needs of the increasing senior citizen population.

GR7. Work with other entities in the region to explore expansion of Blacksburg Transit and alternative transportation to increase mobility between localities in the region and reduce individual commuting by automobile.
GR8. 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.

GR9. 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.

GR10. 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.

GR11. 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.

GR12. Support local governments and other regional organizations to implement economic strategies and incentives to promote the Town of Blacksburg and the New River Valley.

GR13. Continue participating in discussions regarding Montgomery County joining the Water Authority.

GR14. 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.

GR15. 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. Information Technology, including Telecommunications Towers
11. Broadband Development
12. Economic Impacts