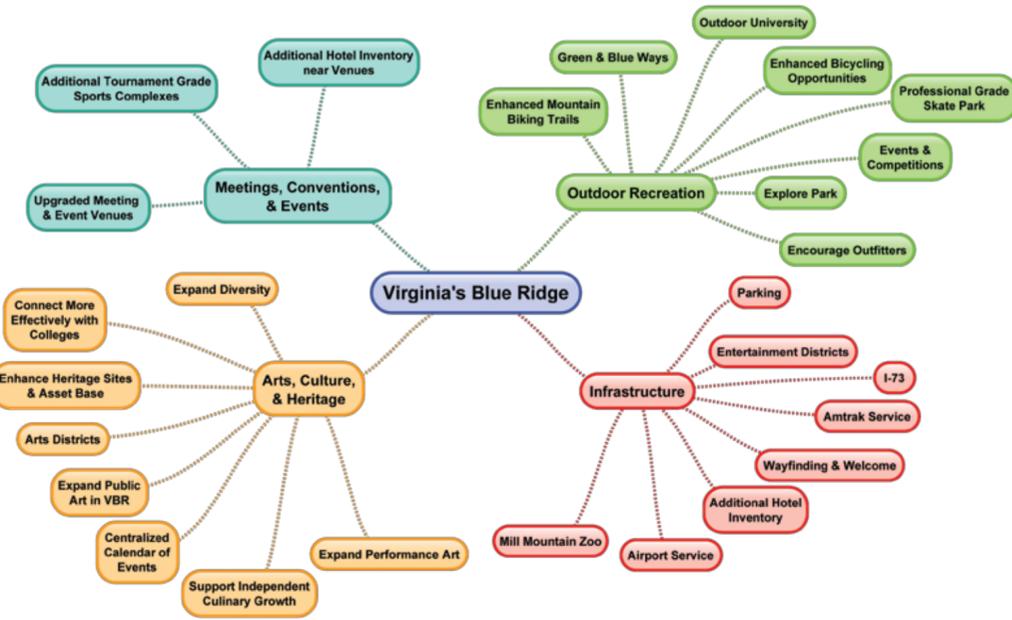


FUTURE VISIONING OUTCOMES GAINING THE MOST OUT OF THE POSSIBLE!

Regional tourism has become an important economic driver. Now everyone wants a piece of the pie. The travel and tourism industry as a whole has become very competitive. We need to focus on "gaining the most out of the possible."



DESTINATION VISION 2030 Building Destination Partnerships



The Roanoke Valley in Virginia's Blue Ridge boasts the largest metropolitan center in the Blue Ridge Mountain chain.

Roanoke Valley Convention & Visitors Bureau DESTINATION VISION 2030 Building Destination Partnerships

THE CONCEPT

A great place to live is typically a great place to visit! As one of the agencies that participated in *Living Roanoke Valley*, the *Roanoke Valley Convention & Visitors Bureau (RVCVB)* set out to work with our *Participating Localities (Cities of Roanoke and Salem and Counties of Botetourt, Franklin, and Roanoke)* to develop a vision plan for quality of life amenities and facilities that are attractive, not only to residents, but to visitors.

Working from a viewpoint that *Virginia's Blue Ridge* deserves a future by design, not by chance, the *RVCVB* has spent the past year gathering intelligence from a wide-range of sources. The Bureau has worked collaboratively with community leaders to identify "what's next" for the region. This overview aims to inform readers where we've been, where we are and where we are headed.

"If we build a place where people want to visit, we'll build a place where people want to live. And, if we build a place where people want to live, we will build a place where people want to work. And, if we build a place where people want to work, we will build a place where business has to be. And, if we build a place where business has to be, we'll be back to building a place where people have to visit. It all starts with a Visit." – *Maura Gast*



THE OUTCOMES

ARTS, CULTURE & HERITAGE

Just as important to the magnetism of the region is its stellar collection of *Arts & Culture* from attractions to performances. But, there are opportunities to expand the arts, celebrate the culture and better interpret our history.

INFRASTRUCTURE

So much potential exists in the region and with the right destination infrastructure the possibilities are endless.

MEETINGS, CONVENTIONS & EVENTS

Virginia's Blue Ridge has been a great resource for groups of all sizes. But, as the competition heats up, so does the need for upgraded facilities and experiences.

OUTDOOR RECREATION

Recently named one of the *10 Best Bike Friendly Cities by USA Today Travel*, *Virginia's Blue Ridge* boasts an amazing array of Outdoor Recreational opportunities, from the future of *Explore Park* to the *Blue* and *Green Ways* around the region.

Tourism is **BIG Business** for *Virginia's Blue Ridge* and **NOW** is the time to take action to improve upon our tourism products and services.



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THE PROCESS

DESTINATION ASSESSMENT

The *RVCVB* contracted with *Zeitgeist Consulting*, a nationally-known destination planning firm, to guide the region in the development of a **2030 Destination Vision Plan** for *Virginia's Blue Ridge (VBR)*. The first step in the process was hosting a team of outside destination development experts to experience *VBR* as first-time visitors to more fully understand strengths, challenges, synergistic connectivity and opportunities. An assessment plan was produced to review in preparation for the next steps in the visioning process.

REVIEW OF EXISTING PLANS

Zeitgeist also performed a review of existing *Comprehensive and Vision Plans* from throughout *Virginia's Blue Ridge* to identify development opportunities already under consideration that would advance the magnetism of the region for both visitors and residents.

COMMUNITY VISIONING SESSIONS

Based on the notion that successful destinations were built for residents first and visitors second, over 30 (includes political officials, Board and community leaders) listening and visioning sessions were held throughout *Virginia's Blue Ridge* to test out recommendations from *Zeitgeist* as well as identify concepts and opportunities that had yet to be considered. Over 250 individuals participated in these sessions during the 4th quarter of 2014 and the 1st quarter of 2015, culminating in the identification of four major areas of focus and over 25 primary opportunity areas for development.

