



# Roanoke Valley-Alleghany REGIONAL commission

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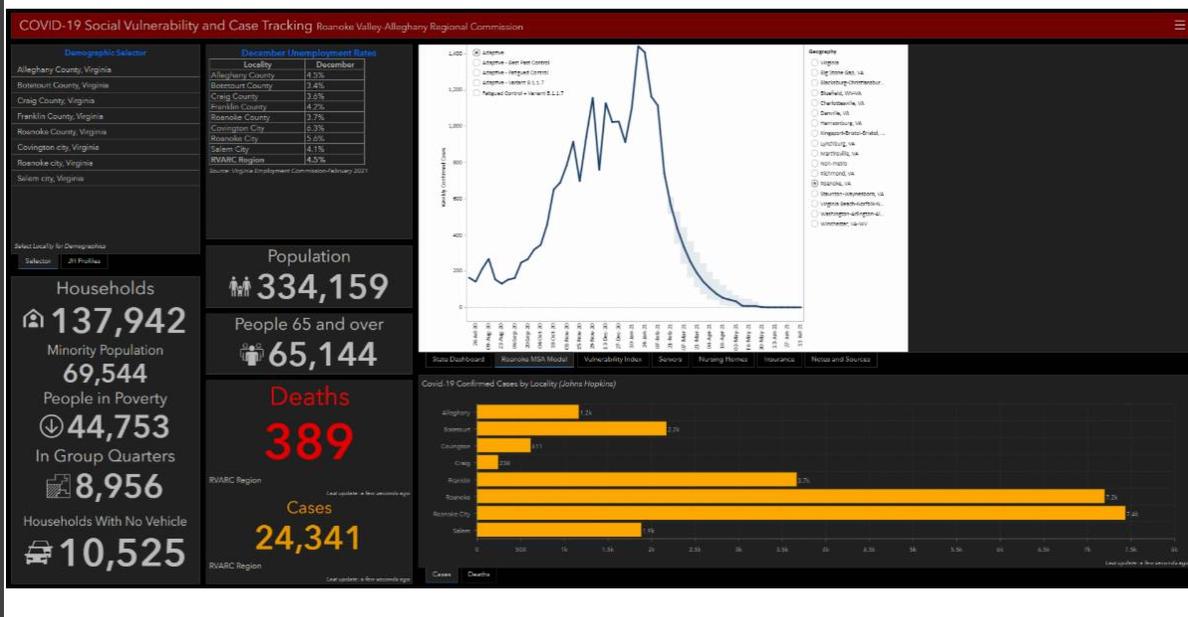
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## COVID-19 Dashboard

Roanoke Valley-Alleghany Regional Commission staff has prepared a COVID-19 dashboard to track regional cases and also includes demographics and mapping of vulnerable populations.

Included in the dashboard are unemployment claims, nursing home locations, and zip code COVID-19 data. COVID-19 cases and deaths are updated hourly from Johns Hopkins. To access the dashboard, click [HERE](#).



## Weldon Cooper Releases Annual Population Estimates

In January, the Weldon Cooper Center for Public Service at UVA released their annual population estimates for localities in Virginia. The RVARC has grown by 1.2% over the past decade; the same rate as the Commonwealth. Four localities saw population decline, while the highest growth occurred in Roanoke City and Roanoke County. Of the 11 Metropolitan Statistical Areas (MSAs) in the state, 9 grew at a faster rate than the Roanoke MSA. The growth in the region can be attributed to in-migration since more detailed data shows that deaths outnumbered births by 2,890 for the decade. In other words, over 7,000 people have moved to the RVARC region; almost half of those to Roanoke County. Population numbers are expected to be adjusted again when the 2020 Census numbers are released later this year.

Area	2020 Population Estimates		Change since 2010 Census	
	2010 Census	2020 Estimate*	Numeric Change	Percent Change
Alleghany County	16,250	14,933	-1,317	-8.10%
Botetourt County	33,148	33,684	536	1.60%
Craig County	5,190	5,123	-67	-1.30%
Franklin County	56,159	56,011	-148	-0.30%
Roanoke County	92,376	94,224	1,848	2.00%
Covington City	5,961	5,747	-214	-3.60%
Roanoke City	97,032	99,795	2,763	2.80%
Salem City	24,802	25,522	720	2.90%
RVARC Region	330,918	335,039	4,121	1.20%

Source: January 29, 2021-Weldon Cooper Center for Public Service Demographics Research Group

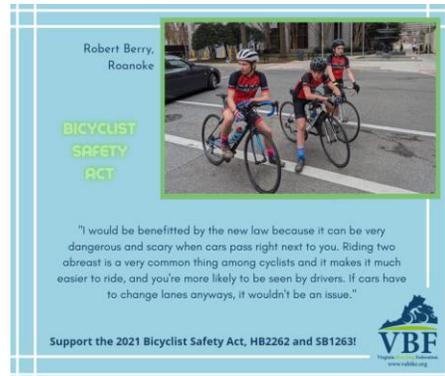
<https://demographics.coopercenter.org>

\*The July 1st, 2020 Population Estimates will be updated in the second half of 2021 to include the currently delayed April 1st, 2020 Decennial Census Count data.

## Bicycle Safety Act Passes Virginia General Assembly

The Virginia General Assembly passed the Bicyclist Safety Act, which requires motorists to change lanes when passing bicyclists and allows bicyclists to ride two abreast.

A third provision that requires bicyclists to yield at stop signs was substituted with a directive to the Virginia State Police to work with the Virginia Bicycle Federation to study the issue. Similar laws in Delaware and other states make bicycling safer and treated more equitably.



In January, RIDE Solutions hosted [“Resolve to Making Biking Better”](#), a panel discussion with the Virginia Bicycle Federation, the New River Valley Cycling Coalition, and Downshift Bikes & Brews to discuss the proposal. Many local bicycle advocates wrote letters supporting the bill and contacted their elected officials, leading to its passage in the General Assembly.

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## The National Fish and Wildlife Foundation Releases Proposal for Small Watershed Grants Program



The National Fish and Wildlife Foundation recently released Request For Proposals for the Small Watershed Grants (SWG) program. The SWG program has two distinct funding opportunities. Implementation grants are awarded to projects that result in on-the-ground actions, and Planning and Technical Assistance grants aim at funding projects that will enhance local capacity to implement future on-the-ground actions. The deadline to apply for the funding is April 22<sup>nd</sup>, 2021. Find more information [here](#).

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## Transportation Needs Related to Economic Development and Growth



**Roanoke Valley Transportation**  
**PLANNING ORGANIZATION**  
A Program of the  
**REGIONAL commission**

In 2018, the Roanoke Valley Transportation Planning Organization (RVTPO) adopted the Regional Study on Transportation Project Prioritization for Economic Development and Growth (TED Study). That effort was successful in that many of the goals and projects in that plan have already been addressed. As part of updating the TED Study as it relates to the development of 2045 Roanoke Valley Long-Range Transportation Plan, the RVTPO

staff is gathering input from economic development and business stakeholders to prioritize current and anticipated transportation needs that when addressed will better support existing businesses and grow the region's economy.

Staff met with the Economic Development Stakeholders group (a mix of local ED staff and business reps) on October 1st and December 3rd. An online survey was completed in November and results were reviewed by the group at its December meeting. Staff also met with individual stakeholders in one-on-one meetings allowing them to provide additional input about transportation needs and began a discussion of how the needs should be categorized.

Staff also gave a brief update to the RVARC Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy (CEDS) Committee at its December meeting and plan on keeping them in the loop since many of the projects in the CEDS document are transportation related.

The Economic Development Stakeholders group will meet one more time in February to make sure that no major transportation needs were missed and that all needs were identified and understood prior to updating the RVTPD and Transportation Technical Committee (TTC). Group members will be asked to select their top 10 needs from the list by next Tuesday (March 2). This will be helpful to inform the TTC of the importance of the economic development related items.

Once the group has reviewed the needs we will forward them to the TTC for their March 11th meeting. The TTC will then begin their review of the economic development related needs along with the needs that have been identified for the Roanoke Valley Long Range Transportation Plan. We anticipate that the TTC will identify 5-10 projects to address the priority economic development related needs by April.

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## Ongoing Projects

The Roanoke Valley-Alleghany Regional Commission is always working with localities on projects that benefit the region. Some of these projects are listed below.

- Alleghany Highlands Economic Impact of the Arts
- Alleghany Highlands Gap Analysis
- Rural Long-Range Transportation Plan
- City of Covington Downtown Revitalization Planning Grant Assistance
- City of Roanoke Neighborhood Walk Project
- City of Roanoke Pedestrian Safety Campaign
- Promotion and access improvements for the Roanoke River Blueway

For more information on ongoing projects contact [Tim Pohlad-Thomas](#) or visit [RVARC.org](#).

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[Visit our website](#)

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