



# Roanoke Valley-Alleghany **REGIONAL** commission

Connect

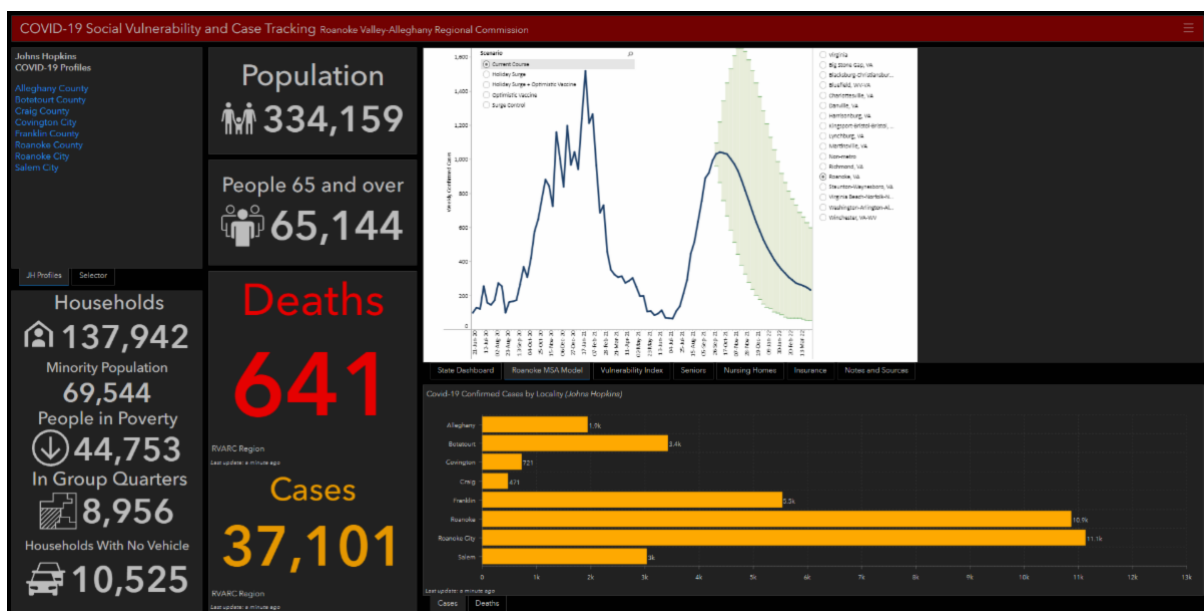
Collaborate

Cooperate

## 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](#).

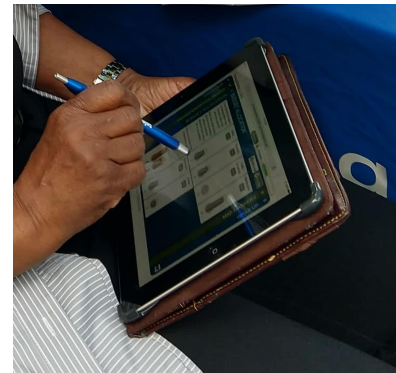


## Regional Commission Staff Member Rachel Ruhlen Presents at MetroQuest Conference

### Extending Our Reach: Increasing Participation and Diversity in Public Engagement

Over 130 planners heard about RVTPO public engagement successes in the transportation planning industry's first ever Conference on Virtual Public Engagement for Transportation Planning (a virtual conference) on September 28. Rachel Ruhlen, RVARC transportation planner, presented "Extending Our Reach: Increasing Participation and Diversity in Public Engagement". The presentation's key takeaways were:

1. Online surveys increase participation. A one-question survey with a comment box will elicit more comments than merely announcing a public comment period.
2. Facebook ads targeted to zip codes are very effective in ensuring responses come from all geographical parts of a region.
3. Maintaining an email list has been a very effective way of increasing the racial/ethnic diversity of respondents.
4. To reach younger voices, working with young people to craft messaging and methods that speak to our youth has increased their participation.
5. Recognizing and working to remove barriers that discourage participants in lower socio-economic classes is helping to increase economic equity and representation.
6. Inviting participants to share their needs enables us to be more responsive and inclusive.



## RVTPO Endorses Two Applications for TA Funding



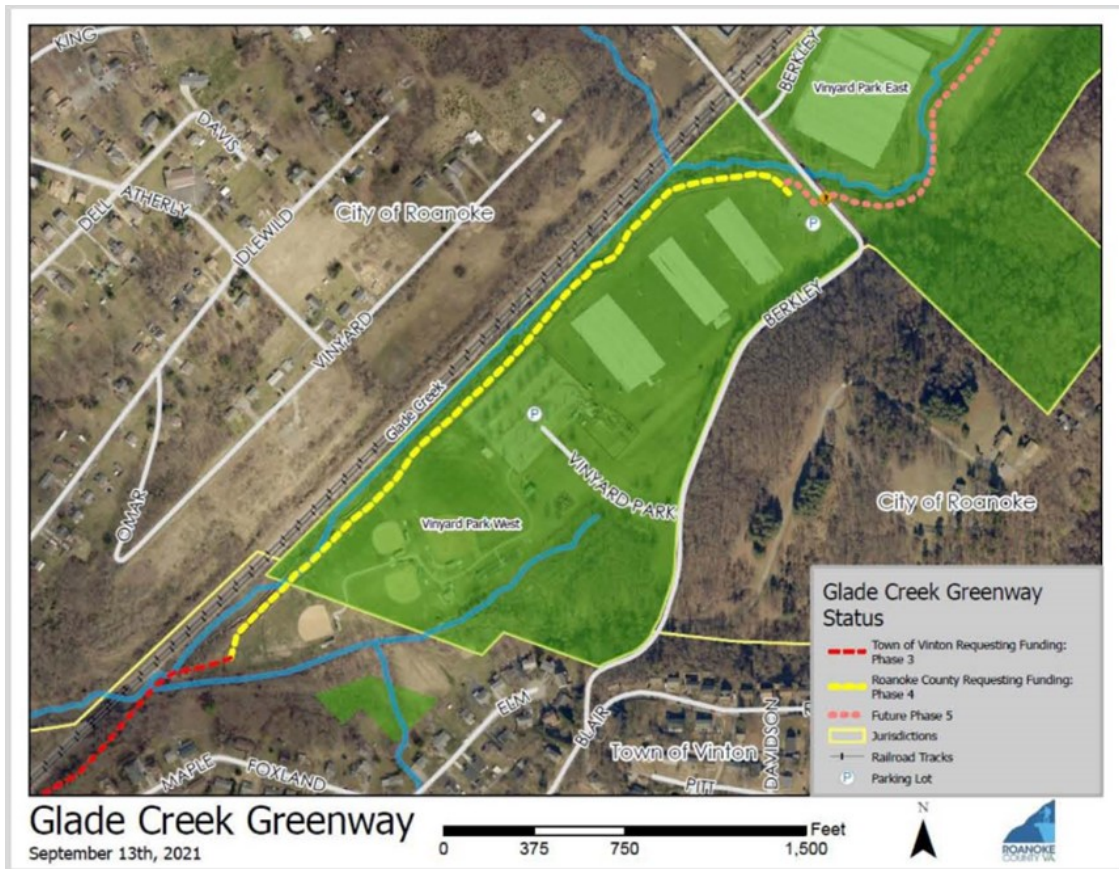
On September 23, the RVTPO Policy Board endorsed two applications applying for Transportation Alternatives funding. The two applications from the RVTPO region are: 1) Williamson Road Pedestrian Improvements, from the City of Roanoke; and 2) Glade Creek Greenway – Vinyard Park West, from Roanoke County. The first project application seeks to provide sidewalk and ADA curb ramps along the west side of Williamson Road between Hawthorne Road and Woodbury Street. The second project application seeks to construct a 10-foot wide asphalt bike/ped trail through Roanoke County's Vinyard Park West. The application deadline is October 1.

For more information, contact Bryan Hill at [bhill@rvarc.org](mailto:bhill@rvarc.org).



## Williamson Rd Pedestrian Improvements Project Scope

- Include sidewalk where none currently exist on Williamson Rd as shown in blue.
- Provide ADA curb ramps at Hawthorne, Woodbury, and driveway access points.
- Project includes curb and gutter and will reset a stormwater inlet reducing ponding and improve stormwater channelization on Williamson Rd.
- Anticipated project cost is \$575,000
- Project funding via the Transportation Alternatives program.
- Construction completion projected for 2027.



## Andrea Garland Selected as next Director of RIDE Solutions

After a months-long search that saw applicants from across the country, the Roanoke Valley-Alleghany Regional Commission has selected Roanoke resident Andrea Garland to head its multi-regional commuter assistance program, [RIDE Solutions](#).

“Andrea’s deep background in transportation and mobility planning, coupled with her long history of advocacy for multi-modal transportation options both within the Roanoke community and elsewhere, make her a natural fit for this leadership position,” says Regional Commission Executive Director Jeremy Holmes. “We’re thrilled to bring her on board at this important and challenging time for transit, biking, walking, and other non-driving transportation modes.”



RIDE Solutions began as an air quality improvement program focused on carpooling in 2006 and quickly expanded to encompass programs and promotions supporting public transportation, bicycle commuting, pedestrian safety, and more. In response to the COVID-19 pandemic, RIDE Solutions began developing telework programs, and is in the beginning stages of launching southwest Virginia’s first public vanpool program.

Says Garland, “My goal is to help the communities across Southwest Virginia to discover their transportation options and help facilitate all the ways they can make them a part of their daily life getting around the region.”

Ms. Garland’s first day with the Commission will be October 4th, 2021.

## **RVTPO Policy Board Approves Roanoke Valley Transportation Plan Amendment**



The Roanoke Valley Transportation Planning Organization (RVTPO) Policy Board approved an amendment to the Roanoke Valley Transportation Plan on Thursday, September 23. More information can be found on the website: [rvarc.org/transportation/mpo-urban-transportation/long-range-plan/](https://rvarc.org/transportation/mpo-urban-transportation/long-range-plan/).

## **Homeowners Encouraged to Think at the Sink during SepticSmart Week!**

SepticSmart Week was celebrated from September 20-24. This annual event focuses on educating homeowners and communities on the proper care and maintenance of their septic systems. Unmaintained septic systems can cause sewage backups into homes, leach nutrients



and bacteria into groundwater, and require more expensive repairs.

It is recommended septic owners pump these systems every 3-5 years to keep a system functioning properly and to extend its lifespan. Check out more tips about septic system functions and maintenance at <https://www.epa.gov/septic>.

## 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
- Roanoke Valley Transportation Plan
- 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
- Botetourt County Community Mobility Design Challenge
- Regional Study on Transportation Project Prioritization for Economic Development and Growth in the Roanoke Valley

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

[Visit our website](#)

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