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## 4.0 COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT AND INPUT

The Steering Committee and consultant selected a variety of methods for involving citizens, staff, and elected officials in the update to the greenway plan. These methods included:

- Citizens:
  - Two input meetings, one February 16, 2006 and one on June 8, 2006
  - Continuous updates to the Regional Commission website, with on-line comment form and message board
  - Presentations to a variety of user and civic groups
  
- Staff:
  - Review of routes and priorities
  - Assessment of routes
  - Interviews with consultant
  - Steering Committee review of materials and development of plan
  - Greenway Commission assessment of roles and responsibilities
  
- Elected Officials:
  - Interviews with consultant
  - Presentation by consultant at Metropolitan Planning Organization and Regional Commission
  - Presentation by Greenway Commission at City Councils, Town Council, and Board of Supervisors meetings

Input from these various sources is summarized in this section.

### 4.1 Public Input Meetings

Two public meetings were held to receive input on routes and greenway-related issues.

#### 4.1.1 First Public Input Meeting

The initial public input meeting was held on February 16, 2006 from 7:00-9:00 p.m. at the Roanoke Civic Center Exhibition Hall. This meeting was well attended with more than 125 people providing input and discussion on a range of greenway issues including:

- Vision
- Route Priorities
- Problems
- Improvements Needed
- Community and Public Involvement

Stakeholders had the opportunity to identify routes on maps and provide comments by completing a public input form and/or



*A large crowd attended the first public input meeting.*

participating in facilitated break-out sessions. The public input form was also made available on the website to be completed by those who could not attend the meeting.

During the break-out sessions, facilitators guided the discussion of the questions from the public input form and recorded/displayed the groups' comments. Following the break-out sessions, each group provided a brief summary of the discussion to the larger audience. The compiled public input from the first public meeting is provided in Appendix C.



*Citizens provided feedback at break-out comment sessions at first public meeting.*

The Steering Committee and consultant distilled this input into key issues.

#### Public Input Meeting #1 - Key Issues

- **Prioritize routes** to better focus effort to get greenways on the ground – Priority #1: Roanoke River Greenway.
- Promote **connectivity** between greenways and other activity centers /destinations.
- Provide additional **greenway information** – signage, mapping, kiosks.
- Provide additional **amenities** along greenways – trash bins, restrooms, signs, benches.
- Increase **publicity and promotion** of greenways – races, special events, etc.
- Promote **sponsorship** by corporations and adoption by neighborhoods.
- Recognize greenways as an **economic generator**.
- Recognize that some **public lands** are managed for specific purposes, e.g. Carvins Cove and Spring Hollow for watershed protection, Havens Wildlife Management Area for hunting, the Blue Ridge Parkway as a recreational motor road, the Appalachian Trail as a foot path for hikers.

#### 4.1.2 Second Public Input Meeting

The second public input meeting was held on June 8, 2006 from 7:00-9:00 p.m. at Virginia Western Community College. Between the first and second public meetings, the Steering Committee reviewed and analyzed input from the first meeting, held staff meetings in each locality to discuss priorities, field checked some routes, and revised maps. Approximately 80 people attended the second meeting. Staff and the consultant presented the key issues from the February meeting and the prioritization of greenways developed by the Steering Committee.



*Citizens review maps at the second public meeting.*

The focus of this meeting was to present to the public some of the challenges faced by local governments and to get public input on methods of addressing these concerns. The critical issues to be addressed were:

- Priorities of Routes
- Acquisition Methods
- Funding
- Other Initiatives
- Organization

After the presentation, participants were given the opportunity to fill in a comment sheet and to express their opinions on alternatives under each issue, using a dot exercise. Comment sheets were also available.

#### Public Input Meeting #2 – Key Comments

- Finish the **Roanoke River Greenway** in the next five years.
- Create an **aggressive land acquisition** program to acquire the right-of-way, using all methods of acquisition.
- Use a **variety of funding** methods, including a bond, local government contributions, corporate donations, and private/public sponsorships.
- Increase **information** on existing greenways.
- Increase greenway **staffing** to facilitate greenway development.

The results of the dot exercise are shown in Appendix C. The issues from the public input meeting are discussed further below in Section 4.5.

## 4.2 Input from Elected Officials and Staff

### 4.2.1 Presentations to Regional Commission and Metropolitan Planning Organization

The consultant made presentations to the Roanoke Valley-Alleghany Regional Commission and the Roanoke Valley Area Metropolitan Planning Organization on April 27, 2006. At these meetings Regional Commissioners and MPO representatives were asked to review various possible funding mechanisms and indicate their level of support for each mechanism and to provide any additional comments.

### 4.2.2 Key Stakeholder Interviews

The consultant conducted qualitative telephone interviews with key stakeholders during the month of April 2006 to gain an understanding of perceptions and attitudes towards greenway development. The Steering Committee provided the consultant with a list of key stakeholders – elected officials, chief administrative officers, department heads, and other decision makers. From this list, the consultant conducted fifteen qualitative, anonymous, telephone interviews consisting of nine qualitative discussion questions pertaining to general greenway development and greenway specific funding. Most of those interviewed supported greenways and understood the connection to economic development. Most were willing to consider a

variety of funding options, but unwilling to use condemnation to obtain the land. A summary of the Key Stakeholder Interviews is provided in Appendix C.

#### 4.2.3 Work Sessions with Elected Officials

Between June and October of 2006 the Greenway Commission met with each locality's elected officials at either a work session or a Council/Board meeting. There was significant support for greenways, but also continued concern about right-of-way acquisition and questions about the process for deciding the location when the north and south sides of the river were in different jurisdictions.

#### 4.2.4 Input from Staff and Greenway Organizations

The Steering Committee and consultant used several methods to obtain additional input from the Greenway Commission, Pathfinders for Greenways, and local staff. These included homework assignments, a survey, discussion of organizational options at meetings, and assessment of who should be doing various tasks.

### 4.3 Corporate Input

After the first public input meeting in February of 2006, the Greenway Commission was approached by Ted Melnik, president of Novozymes Biologicals, Inc., for information about the greenway program. On April 4 Novozymes held a press conference to announce its support and commitment of \$50,000/year for the next five years to help complete the Roanoke River Greenway.

Mr. Melnik has made numerous presentations to solicit additional corporate and business support for the greenway program. An economic study completed by Dr. Sabine O'Hara for the Roanoke Business Council also emphasizes the importance of greenways and trails to attracting businesses to the region. Many corporate leaders have lived in other areas with more extensive greenway networks and recognize the importance of these facilities to their employees.



*Ted Melnik, president of Novozymes Biologicals, presents a \$50,000 check to the Greenway Commission to show corporate support for finishing Roanoke River Greenway.*

A frequent request from the business community has been to see a business or implementation plan for the Roanoke River Greenway. The Greenway Commission has now asked the Steering Committee to work on compiling the necessary information and developing an implementation plan for Roanoke River Greenway through all jurisdictions.

## 4.4 Input from Other Sources

### 4.4.1 Case Studies

The consultant prepared four case studies, comparing the Roanoke Valley Greenway program to the efforts in Charlotte, NC, Indianapolis, IN, Knoxville, TN, and on the Washington and Old Dominion Trail in northern Virginia. These studies revealed organizational differences, as well as different sources of funding. The case studies are included in Appendix D.

### 4.4.2 Local Park Plans

During the time that the Greenway Plan update was being developed, Roanoke County was engaged in a year-long process to write its first Parks Master Plan and the City of Roanoke began a process of updating its 2000 Parks Master Plan. At the public meetings for both of these processes, there was strong support for greenways.

Roanoke County's process included a statistically valid survey of County residents, asking about their needs and support for park facilities. This survey showed that more households (59%) felt a need for greenways than for any other park facility. Greenway development was the action most supported to improve parks and recreation facilities. The County Park Master Plan recommends increasing greenways and park trails.

In the City of Roanoke's master plan update, a statistically valid survey of residents also showed greenways and walking/biking trails as the park facility most needed, with 50.2% of respondents finding it very important. When asked what actions were needed to improve parks and recreation facilities, development of walking/biking trails was again the first choice of respondents.

### 4.4.3 Blueways

In fall of 2005 the Greenway Commission was approached by a group of "blueway" advocates proposing that the Greenway Commission expand its role to include blueways. After a series of meetings, the group summarized its request in a letter stating that the goal of the blueways initiative was to "ensure the protection, preservation and appropriate economic and recreational use of the valley's waterways, particularly those waterways that interface with greenways and other open spaces." The Greenway Commission was asked to consider including in its work: education on stream and river issues, study of watershed land use with consideration of sedimentation and pollution loads, coordination of monitoring and stewardship, coordination of media relations, coordination of blueway clean-ups and water quality mitigation, partnering with community organizations, promotion of recreation and tourism, support of historic preservation along the river, and promotion of neighborhood utilization and adoption of blueways. The Greenway Commission decided to consider this request during the update to the 1995 Plan and to ask the consultant to assess the feasibility of including blueways in the Greenway Commission mission. This is discussed in Section 4.5.13.

## 4.5 Discussion of Issues

The Steering Committee and Greenway Commission have tried to address the issues raised by the public and by elected officials and staff. The discussion below provides some background to these issues and some of the rationale used in developing the implementation strategies presented in Section 6. Some of the issues are applicable in all four jurisdictions; others are not. The intent is to show how the greenway program, with all its partners, has evolved and how the partners might continue to work together to improve the greenway network. The issues to be addressed are:

Issue#	Issue	Source of Issue
1	Prioritization of routes	Public meetings, corporations
2	Connectivity between greenways	Public meetings
3	Greenway signage and information	Public meetings
4	Greenway amenities	Public meetings
5	Publicity and promotion	Public meetings, elected officials
6	Sponsorships	Public meetings, elected officials, corporations
7	Economic development	Public meetings, corporations
8	Trails on other public lands	Staff from other agencies
9	Land acquisition for greenways	Elected officials, staff
10	Funding	Elected officials, staff, corporations
11	Staffing for greenway projects; roles and responsibilities	Public meetings, staff
12	Timeliness of implementation	Public meetings, corporations
13	Blueways	Blueway group
14	Design, management and operations	Staff, public meetings

### 4.5.1 Prioritization of Routes

When the greenway program began, greenway advocates and staff agreed that it was important to get some trails on the ground and build grassroots support for the program. Each of the greenways built to date was initiated because of some factors which simplified implementation. In many cases the land was already in public ownership, and thus the most difficult of issues, right-of-way acquisition, was avoided.

While Roanoke River Greenway has always been considered the priority project, construction of the greenway had to be coordinated around other public works projects, specifically the sewer interceptor line replacement and the flood reduction project. While the greenway was not built with the sewer line replacement, acquisition of land for that project did simplify completing the greenway in the Cities of Salem and Roanoke. The Roanoke River Greenway is now a component of the flood reduction project in the City of Roanoke, and federal funds are paying 50% of the cost of trail installation. Thus, coordination with these projects has

helped, albeit slowly, to build resources for completion of Roanoke River Greenway, and the flood project is now moving in a timely fashion.

The priorities in the 1995 Plan were based on public input at the time (See Section 2.4.3). To the extent that these projects fall within the jurisdiction of the four local governments, progress has been made on implementation. The priorities identified then which have seen little progress are those which require action by another agency, such as Virginia Department of Transportation or the Blue Ridge Parkway. Some projects that were not priorities were implemented as a result of unique opportunities, such as coordination with other projects. An example would be a portion of Lick Run Greenway, which was coordinated with the interchange construction for Valley View Extension.

A key comment during the update has been that the greenway program needs to be more focused on fewer projects and that the projects need to connect to provide longer trail opportunities. The priorities in this Update are based on input from citizens, staff, elected officials, and corporations, assessments of feasibility, importance to the regional network, benefits, opportunities, and resources. The projects have been divided into four priorities. (See Chapter 5.) The rationale for these priorities is:

Priority #1 Route: This will be the most important project, Roanoke River Greenway. It will be the only #1 priority, in order to focus efforts on finishing it within five years. This greenway offers the longest route when finished, the most opportunity for economic development on adjacent lands, the greatest attraction for tourists, the most recreation and health benefit for residents, the most opportunity for special events such as marathons, the most opportunity for water based recreation such as canoeing and fishing, the most opportunity to enhance appreciation of environmental resources, and the most opportunity to be a regional asset. Roanoke River Greenway is the “backbone” of the greenway network.

Priority #2 Routes: These are important regional greenways, already underway, which could be finished in 5-10 years. They include five north-south routes connecting to Roanoke River Greenway and three destination sites with clusters of trails. These routes provide the major side corridors of the greenway network.

Priority #3 Routes: These greenways are priorities within specific localities. These are important at the local level for enhancement of neighborhood values, economic development and public health. The goal is to finish these in 5-10 years. Most have already had some work done, such as planning or acquiring right-of-way. Some are neighborhood priorities.

Priority #4 Routes: These are other greenway projects to be addressed as opportunity and resources arise. Included in this group are several routes that

have strong citizen support but no resources in terms of land or funding. Also included are clusters of trails on other public lands that help provide connectivity for the greenway network.

#### 4.5.2 Connectivity among Greenways

Because of the initial approach of building greenways where public land or right-of-way was already available, many of the greenways are short and do not have good connections to other greenways, trails or destinations. An interconnected, regional, greenway trail network provides a range of benefits – transportation, economic, environmental, and health – that, collectively and individually, improve the overall quality of life for residents of the Roanoke Valley. The need to promote greater connectivity among greenways and other activity centers/destinations was identified as a key issue at the public input meetings.

Increasing connectivity between the greenway and trail networks and the transportation and recreation infrastructure can be accomplished through the development of a variety of accommodations. These could be temporary measures until a greenway is completed or they may be the long-term plan. These accommodations could include:

- Sidewalks
- Paved shoulders
- Bike lanes
- Wide travel lanes
- Shared streets and roadways
- Roadways with “Share the Road” signs
- Path adjacent to roadway
- Trails or other routes
- Neighborhood streets
- Alleys
- Signage and pavement markings
- Spot improvements

Connectivity between greenways could be improved by on-road way finding and signage. Street maintenance and signage are locality functions within the Cities of Roanoke and Salem and the Town of Vinton; in Roanoke County the Virginia Department of Transportation (VDOT) is responsible for road maintenance. Under VDOT’s new policy for integrating bicycle and pedestrian accommodations, the local district has initiated efforts to pave shoulders, erect signs, and stripe lanes in ways that improve bicycle safety and use.

This issue will need to be addressed not only through construction of greenways but also through better identification of user needs, greater coordination between departments in each locality, better signage, and improvements to road and sidewalk infrastructure. The Regional Commission’s new Mobility Map is a first step, as it helps show the connectivity among greenway trails, bike lanes, and bus routes.

#### 4.5.3 Greenway Signage and Information

A key issue noted during the Update process was the need for additional information on existing greenways. Examples of ways to improve information include signage and route markers, information kiosks, web site information, and brochures at visitor centers.

### 4.5.3.1 Signage and Route Markers

The public input process cited the need for additional signage and route markers along greenways to assist users. Confusion for users is often due to insufficient number of signs, but may also be due to a combination of factors such as insufficient size/height or placement of the signs or route markers.



Greenway signage across the Roanoke Valley varies considerably between different greenways as well as along individual routes. Signs are particularly important at greenway termini, when a greenway crosses roads or parking lots, or when a route changes from off-road to on-road. The photos above show the efforts to provide signage, pavement markings, and route markers along the Mill Mountain Greenway in the City of Roanoke. This greenway is at times off-road and at other times on sidewalks and streets. Although signage is adequate in some places, citizen comments have indicated that pavement markings and way finding posts are not always visible from a distance. A balance needs to be maintained with sensitivity to providing for user needs while limiting vertical signage that might detract from natural scenery and attractive landscapes.



In addition to signage to assist in way finding, public input indicated the need for additional mileage markers, interpretive signs (cultural, historical), and environmental education. The need for increased consistency in greenway signage was also noted. A concern for the localities is cost control. Several departments have the ability to make metal-backed street signs themselves. Wooden or routed signs are usually more expensive. Within each locality signage design criteria need to be compatible with locality requirements, while meeting the user needs and recognizing the regional greenway network.



### 4.5.3.2 Information Kiosk

Kiosks are available downtown near the market, at Mill Mountain Star, at the Discovery Center, at Wolf Creek Greenway in Goode and Stonebridge Parks, at Stewarts Knob on the Blue Ridge Parkway, and at Fishburn Park. Ideally these should display mapping, contact information,



interpretive information, and greenway descriptions. The kiosks could also promote greenway connections and educate the public on benefits of a greenway network.

While several of the kiosks have been built by volunteers, localities have standards for signage and publications that volunteers may not be able to address. Maps and educational information for kiosks are items which require professional development and approval by the localities.



#### 4.5.3.3 Web Sites and Brochures

The Greenway Commission's web site is [www.greenways.org](http://www.greenways.org). Maintenance of the site and posting of timely information has been sporadic. Each locality and the Regional Commission also post greenway information on their web sites.

In 1998 the Greenway Commission developed a greenway brochure with maps and information on benefits, volunteering, and greenway history. (This was revised and reprinted in 2003.) In 2002 the Pathfinders developed a less expensive brochure for users with sketched maps and drawings. This is currently being updated. Brochures for individual greenways have occasionally been developed prior to ribbon cuttings, but there is no family of brochures for the greenways.

The Greenway Commission recognizes that the Internet is currently the most important source of information for many people. Pathfinders for Greenways have obtained a donation to pay for redesigning the web site. After this is done, maintenance of the site by either staff or volunteers will be an on-going need.

#### 4.5.4 Greenway Amenities

The public has requested greenway amenities such as toilet facilities, trash receptacles, bike racks, water fountains, benches, and lighting. In the past the localities and Greenway Commission have focused on getting the trail built and have added amenities later as funds or donations became available.

Amenities requiring infrastructure are more difficult to add than benches and trees. Flush toilets and water fountains which can be open year round require frost proof lines, which are often not available. Lighting requires conduit and operational funds. In the past the localities have opted not to provide lights because parks are closed at night. Ultimately, all amenities require maintenance, whether it is bi-weekly trash removal or biennial painting. Localities are challenged to provide amenities and pay operational costs of maintaining them.



At this time the addition of amenities to greenways can be a piece meal process. Localities may be approached with donations, grants, Eagle Scout projects, requests, and suggestions. The localities and Greenway Commission need to work together to develop a process for utilizing donations, providing consistent facilities, utilizing energy and water free designs, and maintaining amenities.



#### 4.5.5 Publicity and Promotion

Citizens and elected officials recognize that the Roanoke Valley greenway program needs more publicity and promotion. Common complaints are that many people don't know about the greenways, it is hard to find information, it is hard to locate the greenways, and it is difficult to know when you are on a greenway. Improvement to signage, information, and the web site (See 4.5.3) will address part of this issue. Another component is that greenways could be used more frequently for special events such as races and walks and for fundraisers for monies to speed up greenway construction.

#### 4.5.6 Sponsorships

Citizens and corporations suggested sponsorships as a method by which they could be involved and provide funding for greenways. A neighborhood or civic group initially sponsored several greenways. Hanging Rock Battlefield Trail was initially a project of the Hanging Rock Battlefield and Railway Preservation Foundation. The Greater Raleigh Court Civic League has sponsored Murray Run Greenway.

Sponsorships by corporations could be a method for providing capital funds for construction as well as annual maintenance monies. Other communities, such as Laguna, CA, recognize sponsors who provide funding for greenway maintenance with small signs along the trails. Corporations are also often willing to provide manpower of employees for special projects like clean-ups or plantings. Companies adjacent to greenways are particularly good candidates to be sponsors, as greenway users would recognize their contribution and proximity to the trail.

Development of a regional "adopt-a-greenway" program has been difficult because of the localities' different approaches to liability, volunteerism, and risk management. The City of Roanoke has developed a Greenway Sponsorship program, which is utilized for adopting greenway sections. A similar system could be adapted to fit each jurisdiction's needs. The benefits include not only the manpower for minor maintenance like trash pick-up but also the ownership and watch functions that daily users can provide.

#### 4.5.7 Economic Development

Citizens and corporations have recognized the importance of greenways for economic development. In 2003-04 the Greenway Commission assisted with a state sponsored study of the economic impact of the Virginia Creeper, Washington & Old Dominion, and New River trails. This study confirmed that these trails are important economic generators for surrounding communities. The economic study by Dr. O'Hara (see 4.3) recognized trails as an important quality of life attraction for employees. Several corporate executives have been promoting greenways as important to their ability to attract employees and as a factor in their location in

the Roanoke Valley. Real estate agents and developers have already recognized the value of greenways and trails, and use this asset in advertising. The Roanoke River Greenway in particular has potential to contribute to the economic vitality of the Riverside Centre and other industrial complexes. Other communities also see small business impacts once greenways of substantial length are built.

#### 4.5.8 Trails on Other Public Lands

Within the Valley there are federal, state and local lands which are managed for specific purposes and include trail networks. Many citizens voiced their need to be connected to these trail systems. Agency personnel expressed concern for recognition of their specific management direction.



The Steering Committee recognized the following federal, state, and local trail networks as important destinations for greenway users. In response to public input and with consideration of agency concerns, these trails are included in this plan as existing networks which are destinations within the greenway network. These are described in more detail in Section 5.

Federal:

- Appalachian National Scenic Trail, managed for foot travel only
- Blue Ridge Parkway, Chestnut Ridge Trail, managed for pedestrian and horse use, may be proposed for multiple use
- Blue Ridge Parkway Horse Trail, managed for pedestrian and horse use
- Jefferson and George Washington National Forest trails, managed for multiple use

State:

- Department of Game and Inland Fisheries Birding and Wildlife Trail, a mapped network of existing local and state park sites where birding and wildlife observation are available
- Havens Wildlife Management Area trails and roads, managed for hunting and wildlife observation
- Virginia's Explore Park trails, hiking and mountain biking
- Poor Mountain Preserve, a Natural Heritage preserve, hiking trails

Local:

- Carvins Cove Natural Reserve trails, multiple use
- Green Hill Park trails, multiple use
- Mill Mountain Park trails, multiple use but hiking only on Star Trail
- Spring Hollow Reservoir trails, not yet developed, proposed for multiple use

Within locality parks there are other trails providing on-site recreation opportunities. These are not included in the Greenway Plan unless they provide connections to destinations beyond the park.

#### 4.5.9 Land Acquisition for Greenways

Elected officials recognize land acquisition as the most sensitive issue for greenway development. The four localities own and operate the greenways. Because of the linear nature of greenways, many properties may be crossed. Some greenway easements have been donated and others proffered as part of rezonings. The City of Roanoke has acquired numerous properties for Lick Run, Mill Mountain, and Roanoke River Greenways. Roanoke River properties were bought in conjunction with the flood reduction project, where City Council has authorized condemnation if needed. Elected officials from other jurisdictions have expressed reluctance to consider using condemnation but are amenable to donation or purchase. The City of Salem acquired many properties along the river when installing the sewer line and is proceeding with acquisition of easements needed for Roanoke River Greenway.

#### 4.5.10 Funding

Construction costs for greenways have increased dramatically in the last five years and are expected to continue to do so. Costs vary depending on the trail surface and the terrain. Volunteers can build natural surface trails at minimal cost. Class B trails with cinder surface cost \$40,000-\$100,000/ mile. Paved greenways in urban areas have ranged from \$150,000-\$800,000/mile. Bridges increase those costs. The Roanoke River Greenway alone is projected to cost \$30 million.

Funding for the greenway program has come from a variety of sources. (See Section 2.4.6.) The Roanoke Valley has received at least one Transportation Enhancement grant every year since 1995; this funding requires a 20% match. At least one locality has received a Virginia Recreational Trails grant every year also; these also require match. The Greenway Commission has assisted the localities with submission of these applications.

In 2000 the Greenway Commission requested that the localities provide capital funding every year to get the Roanoke River Greenway completed. The City of Roanoke responded by putting \$200,000 per year in its capital funds for greenways every year starting in 2001, and it has set up a multi-year action plan for its greenway effort through 2010.

In 1999 the Greenway Commission received a challenge grant of \$100,000 from a private foundation for Roanoke River Greenway in Salem. With the help of Salem staff the Greenway Commission raised the matching funds, but that effort took a year. The Greenway Commission is not currently staffed or set up for fundraising activities and campaigns.

During LandDesign's review of funding issues, it concluded that the program is overly dependent on Transportation Enhancement Funds. The consultant's recommendation was that private giving increase to 25% of costs and locality contributions to 50%. The consultant recommended obtaining funding from all four sources (federal, state, local, private) every year.

#### 4.5.11 Staffing Roles and Responsibility

When the greenway program began, the four localities' representatives to the steering committee were planning staff. With formation of the Greenway Commission, parks and planning staff became ex-officio members of the Greenway Commission. In the early years some projects were coordinated by locality staff, and, for others, the Greenway Commission, Greenway Coordinator, and Pathfinders were important players. Many times the roles were dictated by the source of funding for the project, with paved trails with larger budgets requiring involvement of a variety of staff while natural surfaced trails involved more volunteers. As greenways were built, it became clear that staff from a variety of departments needed to be involved and that ultimately the parks departments were responsible for maintenance and management. Today the City of Roanoke and Roanoke County each have park planners responsible for greenway planning within the parks departments to lead local project planning and construction management.

Over the years the Greenway Coordinator has assumed different roles in projects, depending on the needs of the localities. Because the roles and responsibilities have evolved, there have been times when responsibilities were unclear. As part of this update the Greenway Commission and Regional Commission included an organizational analysis, which has been completed by the consultant, LandDesign. LandDesign has provided an outsider's perspective and has evaluated roles and responsibilities for the different partners. The recommendations of that analysis will need to be addressed further by the Greenway Commission and localities and may be further defined through revisions to the Intergovernmental Agreement.

#### 4.5.12 Timeliness of Implementation

Corporations and citizens have voiced concern about progress on greenways, particularly Roanoke River Greenway. The public wants to see Roanoke River Greenway completed within five years. To focus the valley's efforts and address this issue the Steering Committee developed priorities. (See Section 4.5.1.) In addition, the purpose of the organizational analysis was to improve efficiency. Efficient implementation requires a well defined project timeline, aggressive land acquisition, and continuous funding. Clear responsibilities and good coordination are needed to accomplish this.

#### 4.5.13 Blueways

The blueway group which approached the Greenway Commission in 2005 was actually looking for coordination of multiple activities along major streams and the river. While the term blueway could be interpreted to mean any stream or water body, it is generally used interchangeably with "water trail". (See *Virginia Outdoors Plan*, <http://www.dcr.state.va.us>.) Thus blueways are rivers and streams with sufficient depth and access to provide opportunity for water trails for canoeing and kayaking. Common blueway amenities and features include canoe and kayak access points, parking, route information on kiosks or maps, markers, toilet facilities, and outfitters for rentals and shuttles. The designated blueways closest to the Roanoke Valley are the New River Blueway, the James River Water Trail, and the Pigg River and Blackwater River Blueways in Franklin County.

While the Greenway Commission and Steering Committee recognize the concerns of this group, they felt that the only opportunity in the valley for a blueway as a water trail is on

Roanoke River. Other activities on smaller streams such as monitoring, land use studies, and clean-ups are the purview of other organizations and agencies. Should the four localities choose to enlarge the scope of the Greenway Commission, it would require substantial changes in organizational structure and staffing.

Currently, the Roanoke River has many of the amenities associated with blueways. Local governments maintain several public access points along the river, and a commercial outdoors store is adjacent to the river on Apperson Drive. Amenities at public access points vary, but generally include parking areas, launching points for canoes, kayaks, and light boats, and trash receptacles. Many of these access points are located at public parks with additional land-based amenities (picnic tables and shelters, playgrounds, restrooms, and water fountains) or are in close proximity to commercial establishments. Numerous bridges crossing the Roanoke River provide emergency access for water related search and rescue situations. Moreover, once completed, the Roanoke River Greenway would provide access along the entire length of a Roanoke River Blueway.



*Canoe access sign in Wasena Park.*

Stream flows and water levels in Roanoke River are sufficient for blueway activities for about half the year. Typically in the summer flows may drop to levels that are not conducive to paddling (e.g., sections may not be floatable or vessels may scrape bottom.) The river level can increase significantly following periods of moderate to heavy precipitation. Real-time stream flow data for the Roanoke River Basin is available at: [http://waterdata.usgs.gov/va/nwis/current/?type=flow&group\\_key=basin\\_cd](http://waterdata.usgs.gov/va/nwis/current/?type=flow&group_key=basin_cd).

While the Roanoke River flows unimpeded through much of the valley, obstacles do exist; which may require portage. Underwater utility lines may be crossed during high water but not low; low water bridges may be passed in low water but not high. Obstacles that always require portage are the ledge in Wasena Park, the two low water bridges in Smith Park, and Niagara Dam. The Niagara Dam portage is on the left side of the river and, at one-quarter mile long, is the most physically demanding.



#### 4.5.14 Design, Management, and Operations

This issue encompasses a range of concerns raised by the public and staff about the way greenways are designed, managed and maintained. Examples are concerns about dogs, crime and security, emergency management, bicycle police patrols, dumping of trash, bicycle interaction with other users, maintenance, and budget. Design issues have been addressed over the years by using national standards, such as Crime Prevention through Environmental Design (CPTED) to improve security in public areas and American Association of State Highway and Transportation Officials guidelines to consider design safety. While these guidelines have been considered in greenway design, staff may not know how well they are working. Users may, through experiences, recognize problem areas where accidents could happen prior to staff knowing. Thus, a loop of feedback from users and from staff who manage and maintain the greenways to those designing the greenways could provide for continual improvement.

Other management issues may be ones that Park staff addresses frequently for other facilities. Many times design is influenced by available budget, and an acceptable solution may be built rather than the best solution. Staff charged with management of greenways need increases in budget to cover maintenance of new facilities as they are built. Interaction among departments is important, so that emergency management and police know where the greenways are and how to access them. Coordination among jurisdictions, within localities, and between citizens, volunteers, and staff is an on-going task which may require more attention.

#### 4.6 Goals

Since development of the 1995 Plan, public support for a regional greenway system has continued to grow. This is exhibited by the continued construction of trails and greenways over the last decade and responses from citizen surveys that show greenway development as a top priority issue for area residents. As greenway development has evolved over the past decade, so has recognition that the goals and objectives of the 1995 Plan must be modified to reflect implementation efforts to date and evolving needs and perceptions of the citizens and governments in the region.

There is concern that the original 1995 Plan may have been too ambitious and that there has not been a focused effort to complete long sections of trail and connections between greenways. It is the goal of this Update to develop a more focused approach to implementation of the greenway system over the next ten years. The Update continues the previous 1995 Plan's goals to achieve a well connected transportation network that will satisfy recreational, health and fitness needs of the region's residents and to provide open spaces and buffers that will maintain and enhance the natural resources of the Valley. However, the Update also focuses efforts so that a base system of connected trails can be constructed in the near term (next five years). In this way a functional greenway system will be in place soon, while still allowing full completion of the system over time.

This Update includes six goals to address the vision and issues raised through community involvement. These goals are essential to allow for construction of the base greenway system over the next five to ten years and provide for full construction over the longer term. The goals

are shown below, with the issues they address. Implementation strategies for these goals are in Section 6.

**Goals and Associated Issues**

Goals	Issues to be addressed
<p><b>1. Greenway Construction</b> Complete a connected greenway network of trails to provide the multiple benefits of a greenway system, with focus on finishing Roanoke River Greenway.</p>	<p>Prioritization of routes (4.5.1) Connectivity between greenways (4.5.2) Greenway signage and information (4.5.3) Greenway amenities (4.5.4) Trails on other public lands (4.5.8) Blueways (4.5.13)</p>
<p><b>2. Funding</b> Increase greenway funding to meet the goals for trail construction and completion of the greenway network.</p>	<p>Funding (4.5.10) Timeliness of implementation (4.5.12)</p>
<p><b>3. Land Acquisition</b> Develop a land acquisition program that provides rights-of-way needed for greenway construction.</p>	<p>Land acquisition for greenways (4.5.9) Timeliness of implementation (4.5.12)</p>
<p><b>4. Community Outreach and Education</b> Develop a community outreach and education program that provides information on greenway opportunities and benefits.</p>	<p>Greenway signage and information (4.5.3) Publicity and promotion (4.5.5) Economic development (4.5.7) Sponsorships (4.5.6)</p>
<p><b>5. Organizational Structure</b> Refine the organizational structure to effectively and efficiently implement the Update to the Conceptual Greenway Plan and manage the growing greenway system.</p>	<p>Staffing, roles and responsibilities (4.5.11)</p>
<p><b>6. Greenway Management</b> Manage the greenway network to meet user needs, provide a range of experiences in a secure environment, and protect the natural resources.</p>	<p>Design, management, and operations (4.5.14) Greenway signage and information (4.5.3) Sponsorships (4.5.6) Staffing, roles and responsibilities (4.5.11)</p>

4.0 Community Involvement and Input

