



## May 2024 Update

### 2024 Planning Commissioner Training



In partnership with the region's local government planning staff, the Regional Commission facilitated an evening of training, discussion, and fellowship for local Planning Commissioners. Hosted at the Montgomery County Government Center, the group of nearly 70 had a chance to engage around several pertinent scenario topics such as conflict of interest, Freedom of Information Act, and land use considerations as well as hear a deep dive discussion on existing housing challenges and opportunities from a state and local perspective. This annual training is always a highlight of the year and a great way for Planning Commissioners and staff from around the region to come together and share in the collective work.

For more information, contact Jennifer Wilsie, [jwilsie@nrvc.org](mailto:jwilsie@nrvc.org).



The New River Valley Regional Commission with help from the National Park Service- Rivers, Trails and Conservation Assistance Program facilitation consultants, Solid Ground, convened 30 New River Water Trail stakeholders for an interactive workshop April 10th. Stakeholders were invited to participate in a discussion on the enhancement of the New River Water Trail and the partnership that oversees it. As part of the workshop, participants discussed potential structures and collaborations for a management organization. This was the first of several workshops to define the partnership's direction, structure, and commitments from partners to support a thriving New River Water Trail.



## ACEs Foundation

NRVRC Recovery Ecosystem staff Kinsey Weaver and Julie Fox partnered with Patricia Wheaton at InStill Mindfulness to provide ACEs

## Town of Narrows Zoning

The Town of Narrows is reviewing its Zoning Ordinance to address any potential issues such as inconsistency with the recently updated Comprehensive Plan and meeting development needs. The Town is also identifying issues encountered during regulation implementation and evaluating compliance with new state and federal requirements.

(Adverse Childhood Experiences) Foundations training at the Community Foundation of the NRV's monthly Third Thursday event on April 18. The training offered foundational learning to local nonprofits around the topics of ACEs and resilience.

For more information, please contact Julie Fox, [jfox@nrvc.org](mailto:jfox@nrvc.org).

For more information, please contact Aphi Fancon, [afancon@nrvc.org](mailto:afancon@nrvc.org).



## NRV Recovery Ecosystem

The NRV Recovery Ecosystem was highlighted at the Virginia Department of Health (VDH) Community Health Services (CHS) Leadership Biannual Meeting in Richmond Virginia. Dr. Noelle Bissell, Director of the New River Health District and Holly Lesko with the Regional Commission provided an overview of the program with other Health Directors and senior VDH staff. The level of collaboration and trust built across the New River Valley over the years was shared as the foundation of this program which is unique in the scope of the work and breadth of partnerships engaged in the opioid abatement effort in the region. Dr. Bissell noted, "The Regional Commission provided the structure and glue to our regional response to COVID and continues to do so for the NRV Recovery Ecosystem." and Dr. Karen Shelton, VDH Commissioner who also serves on the Virginia Opioid Abatement Authority (OAA) promoted this collaboration as an exemplar for other health districts to follow.



### Establishing the Ecosystem

#### Leveraging Assets & Resources

- Regional Cooperation Track Record
- \$1.2M in Direct Allocation Match
- 5-year comprehensive funding
- Service agency expertise & commitment



For more information about the NRV Recovery Ecosystem, contact Holly Lesko [hlesko@nrvc.org](mailto:hlesko@nrvc.org).



## Broadband Update

The Virginia Telecommunication Initiative (VATI) extends broadband service to currently unserved areas. The goal of VATI is to create strong, competitive communities through the installation of telecommunications infrastructure. The Regional Commission, in conjunction with several of local governments and multiple Internet Service Providers (ISPs), has been working diligently to get fiber to the premise broadband services installed throughout the New River Valley.

Montgomery County, which has two VATI grants that will benefit over 12,000 residents, has initiated work in the eastern portion of the county. The County received \$919,569 in VATI funds and was able to secure an additional \$488,068 in match funding to provide broadband internet service to 1,292 connections in the Allegheny Springs, Elliston, Lafayette, and Shawsville areas including 44 businesses and community anchors. Both GigaBeam and AEP have been diligently working in the area for several months and are on target to start making connections live in the very near future. It is anticipated that connections will become available as the project progresses throughout the targeted area in the spring of 2024.

For more information, please contact Chris Owens, [cowens@nrvc.org](mailto:cowens@nrvc.org).

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