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## **Roanoke County Launches Economic Development Strategic Planning Effort**

*~ ELEVATE Roanoke County Plan will guide work in promoting a good business climate, growth in jobs and investment, economic health and recovery~*

Roanoke County has launched a yearlong effort to develop a strategic plan that will help guide the direction and focus of the County's economic development program over the next five years. Branded the **ELEVATE Roanoke County 2026 Plan**, the County will be assisted by the Virginia Tech Office of Economic Development which has worked with more than 200 clients at the national, state, and local level on such plans and other economic development projects. The effort is funded by a grant from Appalachian Power and leveraged resources from the Virginia Tech Office of Economic Development.

"Developing a strategic plan is essential to the work of economic development," said Jill Loope, Roanoke County Director of Economic Development. "Changing demographics, consumer preferences and the ability of many employees to work remotely presents challenges and opportunities for economic development. This strategic planning effort will guide the County and enable us to direct our actions and investments to yield future results."

"Communities such as Roanoke County work really hard to improve their economies and the wellbeing of all their citizens. But with limited resources and small staffs, it is difficult for them to both do that hard work day in and day out and at the same time gather the information and perspective needed to plan for the future," said Scott Tate, Associate Director of Virginia Tech's



Office of Economic Development. “Our office will help gather the data, survey business owners and community leaders, research best practices, and together with the County, craft a plan that will help guide the County’s economic development efforts.”

The planning process will be ongoing throughout 2021 and will include data gathering and analysis; community engagement; assessment of strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats; community presentations and opportunities for the public to provide input. The final report and public presentation of the strategic plan will be released in late fall. Helping steer the effort is a group of representatives from Roanoke County, businesses, and other economic development stakeholders in the region.

Information on the planning effort was presented to the Roanoke County Board of Supervisors at their regularly scheduled meeting and retreat in January.



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