RIC Messenger



Regional Intergovernmental Council
Boone · Clay · Kanawha · Putnam

RIC Quarterly Meetings will now be held at the Charleston Area Alliance
1116 Smith Street, Charleston, WV 25301

Upcoming Meeting: December 10, 2026

A MESSAGE FROM THE BOARD CHAIR

Kris Mitchell

Moving Our Region Forward Through Partnership and Progress

As we enter the fall season, RIC continues to build momentum through initiatives that strengthen our local economies, improve essential infrastructure, and create new opportunities for the communities we serve. I am pleased to share several important updates that reflect the dedication of our staff, the commitment of our partners, and our continued focus on regional growth and development.

Launching New Opportunities Through the Certified Development Company
One of the most exciting developments for RIC is the progress being made toward establishing our Certified Development Company [CDC]. The application recently received contingent approval from the U.S. Small Business Administration [SBA], and we are hopeful that the CDC will be operational within the next four to six weeks, pending further guidance from the SBA. A ribbon-cutting ceremony will be planned once the official operational date is confirmed.

We are also working to secure resources to support the CDC's successful launch. RIC is in the final stages of receiving a $95,000 USDA Rural Business Development Grant that would fund a staff position for one year. Additionally, discussions have taken place with the Benedum Foundation regarding funding for an additional staff position for two years.

These efforts represent an important investment in RIC's capacity to support business development and expand economic opportunities throughout our region.

Community Development Projects: Building Stronger Communities
RIC continues to make progress on several community development projects that address local priorities and strengthen essential infrastructure.

A Message from the Board Chair

CONTINUED

In Boone County, bids for the Alexis Lane Waterline Extension Project have been awarded, with costs coming in line with project estimates. The Boone County Public Service District (PSD) / Rock Creek Development Project has also advanced, with the EDA approving the bids and specifications.

Additional progress is being made on projects designed to improve infrastructure and expand access to essential services. The Boone County Rock Creek Broadband Project has received its broadband study and authorization to advertise. Meanwhile, the Town of Clay Tank and Pump Station Project has received authorization to bid, moving it forward in the project development process.

Each of these initiatives reflects RIC's commitment to working with local partners to address community needs and lay the groundwork for future growth.

Transportation Initiatives: Improving Mobility and Safety

Transportation remains an important component of regional development, connecting residents to jobs, services, and opportunities. RIC's Transportation Team continues to pursue initiatives that support improved mobility and safer roads.

The team has executed a grant through the Rural and Tribal Assistance Pilot Program to develop a rapid bus transit study in partnership with Kanawha Valley Regional Transportation (KRT). This study will help explore opportunities to improve public transportation and regional connectivity.

RIC has also applied for a Safe Streets and Roads for All grant to bring a road safety program to Boone and Clay counties. This effort reflects our ongoing commitment to roadway safety and to identifying opportunities to make travel safer for residents and visitors.

Looking Ahead

The progress taking place across RIC's programs demonstrates the value of collaboration and a shared commitment to our region's future. Whether supporting business development, advancing infrastructure projects, or exploring transportation improvements, RIC remains focused on creating opportunities and helping our communities thrive.

On behalf of the Board, I extend my sincere appreciation to our staff, community leaders, local governments, funding partners, and all those who contribute their time and expertise to these efforts. Their continued support and collaboration are essential to moving these projects forward.

As we look toward the months ahead, we remain optimistic about the opportunities before us and committed to building a stronger, more connected, and more prosperous region.

Sincerely,
Kris Mitchell

Mountain State Small Business Finance

Affordable Commercial Financing

SBA's 504 program helps small business owners purchase fixed assets with long-term, fixed rate financing. This means that small business owners can seek reliable, cost-effective financing when purchasing major assets like land, buildings, and equipment. The program is expected to be operational this fall.

Fixed Assets

The 504 program funds:

Equipment
Buildings
Land
Construction
Renovations

**The 504 Loan Program does not fund working capital or rolling stock.*

Eligibility

Independent, **for-profit enterprises** with **500 or fewer employees** or **under $7.5 million** in average annual receipts.

Be **based in West Virginia**, and be an **owner occupied business.**

Project cost range is typically between **$100,000 and $12,500,000.**

Down payment is typically **10% of all project costs.**

Email Tyler@wvregion3.org to learn more!

MOUNTAIN STATE
Small Business Finance

BROWNFIELDS

Help Identify Brownfield Sites in the Region

The Regional Intergovernmental Council is forming a Brownfields Community Advisory Team (BCAT) as part of our application for an EPA Brownfields Community-Wide Assessment Grant.

Brownfields are properties where redevelopment is held back by known or suspected contamination, such as historic homes, former schools, industrial sites, rail corridors, and abandoned commercial buildings. Environmental assessments are often the first step to getting these properties cleaned up and back into productive use for housing, businesses, recreation, or public facilities.

The BCAT will meet quarterly to review, and score nominated sites using a consistent scoring system that looks at health and safety risks, who benefits, reuse potential, ownership, and community support.

HOW TO GET INVOLVED

Nominate a site. Local governments, partner organizations, and residents can suggest properties for consideration.

Join the BCAT. We're inviting county commissions, municipalities, development authorities, health departments, and community organizations to take part in the quarterly meetings.

We'll present the site identification process at the December RIC board meeting.

To nominate a site or learn more, contact Jasper Ball, Project Administrator, at jasper@wvregion3.org or (304) 744-4258.

COMMUNITY SPOTLIGHT

Boone Memorial Health's "Market on Main" Farmer's Market









The "Market on Main" is a year-round farmers market in downtown Madison, WV, offering local produce, live music and educational events.

ADVANTAGE VALLEY

Advantage Valley Celebrates Waterway Industrial Park Ribbon Cutting

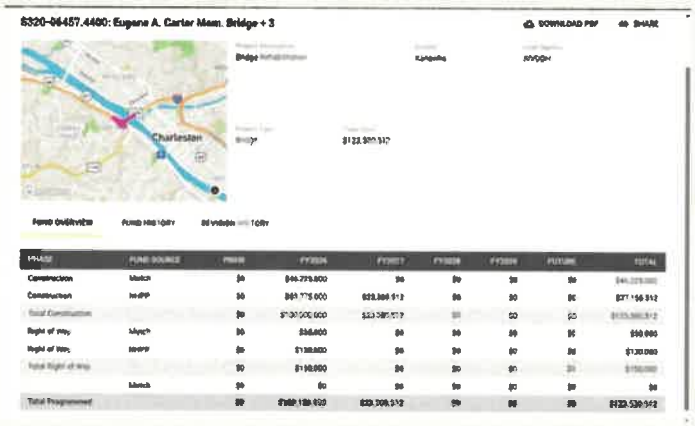


Advantage Valley invested more than $6.5 million in funding from the U.S. Economic Development Administration and the West Virginia Economic Development Authority to revitalize the property and prepare it to accommodate high-quality manufacturing tenants.



TIP PROCESS

EcoInteractive on the MPO's TIP Process



The electronic TIP process, powered by EcoInteractive by Sovra.

This may not be known but the TIP process is an arduous task with extensive pieces and takes typically more than one week to complete. The MPO has over the period of a year adopted an electronic TIP process to better track and maintain our TIP documentation. The provider of this software is EcoInteractive by Sovra, they assist with the implementation process each quarter for the TIP and help to make the task as routine as possible. Us, along with four other MPOs, have already implemented the same TIP software as it is becoming a primary resource in this state. In general, the TIP is complicated by the nature of information that has to be filtered and readied for each quarterly cycle. In the standard process the MPO area receives a 'snapshot' of projects sent by the WVDOH and other documentation, with the new projects added for the cycle. These are compared with the previous cycles projects and updated accordingly with new projects added to the TIP. Then the projects that are added and updated get accepted at the policy board meeting. Completing the cycle for the quarter.

The EcoInteractive process makes this substantially more streamlined. With those same snapshots the projects can be searched on the website database. Making it easier to find projects regardless of how old the project may be. Which previously would take hours to locate any given project through the dozens of TIP amendments/adjustments periods.

The TIP changes and funding are all centralized onto singular pages and the maps of said projects are presented alongside in this format. The simple changes make for a greatly more accessible process that better suits the users and viewers of the TIP. This new software helps to greatly organize and simplify the previous issues that plague the process, namely the timing constraints and disarray of projects scattered across the different quarters.

Overall, the TIP process is a highly technical process that requires a great deal of care and attention to function properly and effectively. And the EcoInteractive software plays a pivotal role in the new TIP process by consolidating and shortening a typically extensive process. This is why adopting of this software has greatly improved the TIP cycles and is widely adopted in the state of West Virginia and many other MPOs across the country. It is exciting to see where this software will take us on the process and the future of the MPO efforts.

REGIONAL UPDATES

Transportation Team Updates

The Regional Intergovernmental Council (RIC) has been busy advancing several transportation planning initiatives across the region, strengthening partnerships, and preparing for new projects.

RIC recently established four-year Master Service Agreements with five on-call consultants: Burgess & Niple, GAI Consultants, Kimley-Horn, Michael Baker International, and RK&K. These agreements will allow RIC to efficiently advance transportation planning projects throughout the region.

Several studies have recently kicked off, including the Charleston Bike Plan Update, West Washington Street Corridor Study, Transit Funding Study, and Hurricane Main Street Design Study. Work also continues on the Regional Active Transportation Plan Update, which will help identify and prioritize improvements for walking, cycling, and other active transportation options.

RIC has also begun working with the Build America Bureau to advance the region's Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) and Transit-Oriented Development (TOD) studies. Meanwhile, staff continue coordinating with the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) to finalize grant agreements for the 2025 Safe Streets and Roads for All (SS4A) grant and the Cedar Grove VITAL RAISE grant. Consultant teams have been shortlisted for the VITAL project, with interviews expected soon.

Looking ahead, RIC recently submitted a PROTECT grant application to develop a Regional Resilience Improvement Plan, focusing on identifying transportation vulnerabilities and improving the region's ability to withstand severe weather and other climate-related risks.

Finally, RIC staff attended the National Association of Metropolitan Planning Organizations (AMPO) Conference in Sacramento, California, exchanging with peers from across the country. The conference highlighted the expanding role of MPOs in their communities, from emerging technologies and housing coordination to infrastructure implementation and construction support.

Together, these efforts reflect RIC's continued commitment to improving mobility, safety, resilience, and quality of life throughout the region.

LEATHERWOOD WATER PROJECT

A New Chapter for Leatherwood

Water project officially underway



Groundbreaking on the Leatherwood Water Project

A long-awaited milestone has been reached for the Leatherwood community as groundbreaking officially begins on the Leatherwood Water Project. This transformative initiative will install more than six miles of water line, bringing reliable access to clean, running water to 84 families.

Backed by $7.9 million in funding from local, state, and federal partners, the project represents a significant investment in the community's future. For some Leatherwood residents, the wait for running water has stretched nearly 70 years. Now, after decades of anticipation, that long-awaited dream is finally becoming a reality.

6+ miles	84	$7.9M
of water line	families served	in funding