



RIC Messenger

Boone, Clay, Kanawha, Putnam Counties

A publication of the B-C-K-P Regional Intergovernmental Council

Winter 2026



Chair Mitchell's Message

I hope 2026 is off to a good start for everyone and everyone is staying warm! I want to take this time to share some RIC updates with you!

General Updates

- **Certified Development Company (CDC)**

The application to formally request Certified Development Company status for Mountain State Small Business Finance was submitted to the Small Business Administration in December.

- **Hazard Mitigation Plans**

Boone, Clay, Kanawha, and Putnam counties hazard mitigation plans expire in October 2027. Hazard mitigation plans are lengthy and in-depth.

To prepare for this, RIC will be submitting a hazard mitigation plan grant program application for a match to fund 75% of the cost. Please look for an email from RIC explaining the process going forward to see if you would like to be included in the application.

Transportation Projects

- **Elk River Trail**

There is interest in expanding the Elk River Trail into Charleston from Clendenin. The RIC Transportation Team has been a part of these conversations to see if RIC can help move the project forward either through bringing interested parties together or through using suballocated funding.

- **Paving Projects**

RIC is working with DOH on suballocated paving projects for the City of Charleston and the City of St. Albans.

- **Metropolitan Transportation Plan (MTP)**

The Transportation Team is continuing to work on the MTP.

- **Comprehensive Plans**

The Transportation Team is working on comprehensive plans for the towns of Marmet, Glasgow and Clendenin.

- **Suballocated Funding**

Be watching for a call for projects from the RIC Transportation Team. This will include about 80% funding for comprehensive plans, transportation plans, and sidewalk or paving projects.

Community Development Projects

- **Boone Memorial Hospital Farmers Market Project**

The Substantial Completion Notice has been received for the Boone Memorial Hospital Farmers Market Project. The greenhouse installation will complete this project.

- **Boone County Broadband Project**

The project engineer has been selected to perform the project study requested by Appalachian Regional Commission and the Department of Economic Development for the Boone County Broadband Project.

- **CMI2 Project**

The CMI2 waterline extension is nearly complete.

- **Clay County Annex Project**

The Clay County Annex Project is complete and now in use.

- **Big Otter/Nebo/Walker Road Waterline Extension Project**

The Big Otter/Nebo/Walker Road Waterline Extension Project is progressing well and is on track to be completed in March 2026.

I look forward to meeting with everyone at our **March 12, 2026**, quarterly meeting as we work together to promote local communities, regional solutions, and statewide impacts.

Kris Mitchell
RIC Chair

Welcome New RIC Board Member

Leonard Price, Appalachian Power

Upcoming RIC Meetings

Thursday, March 12, 2026

Thursday, June 11, 2026

Thursday, September 10, 2026

Thursday, December 10, 2026

*All meetings will be held at Noon at the West Virginia Regional Technology Park.
A virtual option through Zoom will be offered as well.*

Sign-up to Join the RIC Email List

If you would like to receive information about upcoming events and opportunities, sign up to join our email list at <http://eepurl.com/dH-hyj>

RIC Staff

Tyler Ferrell, Executive Director

Brandy Whittington, Finance Manager

Joanna Keller, Executive Assistant

Bruce Mullins, Community Development Manager

SoJuana Ellis, Project Administrator

Terry Martin, Project Coordinator

Sebrena Williamson, Project Coordinator

Jasper Ball, Project Administrator

Jeffery Mace, Transportation Program Manager

Ali Haider, Senior Transportation Engineer

Jake Smith, Transportation Planner

Anannya Talukder, Regional Planner

History and Mission of the Regional Intergovernmental Council

The Appalachian Regional Commission (ARC) was formally established on March 9, 1965, when President Lyndon B. Johnson signed the Appalachian Regional Development Act (ARDA) into public law. The ARC is a federal-state partnership committed to strengthening Appalachia's economy and helping the Region's 13 states achieve economic parity with the rest of the Nation. The Boone-Clay-Kanawha-Putnam Regional Intergovernmental Council (RIC) is the ARC's Local Development District (LDD) for our four county Region.

RIC was established in 1970 as a voluntary association of local governments. In 1971, it was designated by then Governor Arch Moore as West Virginia Region III, one of eleven such councils in West Virginia. RIC is committed to promoting economic, environmental, educational, cultural and recreational growth in Boone, Clay, Kanawha and Putnam counties.

In 1975, RIC was designated as the Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) for the Charleston Urbanized Area. Later, this was expanded to include the entire Metropolitan Area (Kanawha and Putnam counties), to match the air quality non-attainment area. All urbanized areas in the U.S., as a condition of receiving federal highway, and transit funding, must have an official MPO. The responsibility of the MPO is to carry out a coordinated, cooperative and comprehensive planning process. This includes the development of various transportation plans and programs in cooperation with state and local officials, transit agencies, and local citizens.

RIC was designated as the Economic Development District (EDD) for the Economic Development Administration (EDA) on June 16, 1977. The EDA plays a critical role in facilitating regional economic development efforts in communities across the nation. EDDs serve as multi-jurisdictional entities that work to lead the locally based, regionally driven economic development planning process.

RIC's policy board is comprised primarily of representatives from 25 municipal and four county governments in the Region. The board acts as a forum for discussing mutual problems and dealing with issues that transcend political boundaries. The RIC staff works for all 29 units of government by assisting with multi-jurisdictional issues.

The general purpose of the Council is stated in its by-laws:

"The Council is organized and shall be operated as a cooperative organization of local governments for the promotion of public health, safety and welfare by providing improved public services and facilities, advancing the business prosperity and economic welfare and achieving a satisfactory level of living for the citizens of the area served by the Council."

RIC Officers for FY 2026

Kris Mitchell—Chair
Mayor David Fletcher—First Vice-Chair
Coston Davis—Second Vice-Chair
Mayor Dave Casebolt—Third Vice-Chair
Connie Kinder—Secretary
Scott Elliott—Treasurer

RIC MPO Call for Projects Coming February 4th, 2026

The RIC MPO Team will be initiating a Call for Projects for Fiscal Year 2027 funding. A form will be posted on the RIC website and sent out via mailing list when it opens.

What is the Call for Projects?

This Call for Projects allows for a broad range of potential projects to be submitted to RIC to be funded via one of our available funding sources.

Who can submit for a project?

Municipalities, Counties, the State, Non-Profits & other community organizations may submit projects. Construction projects require the submitter to be the final owner of the construction project.

What kind of projects may be funded?

This Call for Projects may include planning and/or construction projects. Construction projects have a limited amount of funds available. As a planning organization the MPO is particularly interested in furthering our planning level activities. The following are some of the types of projects that can be funded:

- Intersection or Corridor Safety or Congestion Mitigation Studies
 - * Safety Studies are encouraged, require data based verification of crash and injury history or risk profile.
 - * Congestion mitigation studies can examine locations that see sustained or peak congestion problems.
- Complete Street Studies
 - * Examine a street, block or network of streets to enhance usability for pedestrians, cyclists and transit, can be coupled with a land use review to plan for better land use complementary to the Complete Street recommendations.
- Cycling and Pedestrian Project Engineering
 - * Engineering design and studies for on-street or potentially trail based projects (trails need a transportation component, not pure recreational) to develop a project to be ready for construction.
- Sidewalks
 - * Engineering or Construction of sidewalk segments
- Safety Improvements
 - * Design and/or Construction of safety improvements in an intersection or roadway
- Planning Studies
 - * Corridor or regional studies to examine possible improvements to transportation and land use in a specific area.

What match must be provided for a project to advance?

In general, RIC's funding sources will cover 80% of the cost of the project. All projects must certify that the applicant can cover the 20% match requirement. Some projects may proceed with a lower match, if selected and eligible for lower match amounts; however, at time of submission, all applications should assume 20% match required.

Cash matches are strongly preferred, in-kind matches may be accepted, but applicants should reach out to discuss before submitting with in-kind.

What are the funding sources available?

In this round of Call for Projects, RIC MPO staff will align projects to funding sources based on eligibility and to maximize opportunity. We have 4 potential funding sources:

- Planning Funds – These are the MPO's standard funds for our normal operations and projects. Funds unallocated after the development of our 2027 Work Plan may be used for transportation and land use planning projects.

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- Surface Transportation Block Grant (STBG) – STBG funds are flexible funds that can be used for most surface transportation planning or construction projects. FY27 funding in Kanawha County is very limited in this group. For projects in Putnam County, particularly Hurricane to Teays Valley, significantly more funding is available.
- Carbon Reduction Program (CRP) – CRP funds are for projects that are designed to reduce carbon emissions. These projects can plan or construct projects that increase pedestrian, cycling, or transit infrastructure and other projects such as alternative fuel systems.
- Safe Streets and Roads for All (SS4A) – Pending final award – Certain data driven safety planning projects may use our SS4A award funding for development. Locations identified in RIC's or a local agency's Comprehensive Safety Action Plan, the State Vulnerable Road User report, or identified locally with data provided supporting the need to address a safety concern, may be funded.

RIC staff will determine what funds a project submission is eligible for, and which funds will be used if a project is selected.

Who to contact if we have questions?

Jeffery Mace, Transportation Program Manager – jmace@wvregion3.org

How will applications be submitted?

Submissions will be via a form on the RIC website with supporting documents emailed as indicated in the form.

How will projects be approved?

Projects will be evaluated first to ensure that they meet the criteria to be eligible for funding and that they further the MPO's regional goals. If project submissions exceed available funding projects will be reviewed by MPO staff for approval.

We hope this Call for Projects gets our community partners thinking about various projects that they want to see developed to enhance our regional communities. Feel free to reach out if you want to discuss potential projects.



Anannya Talukder joins RIC as a Regional Planner



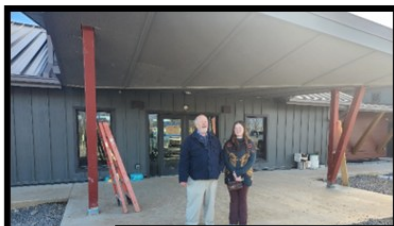
Anannya Talukder, MCRP is a planner and architect dedicated to strengthening data-informed, place-based planning across Appalachian communities. She brings expertise in GIS, spatial analysis, and land-use strategy, supported by a Master of City and Regional Planning and a GIS Certificate from the University of Memphis. Her academic work integrates demographic and economic studies with population projections and research aimed at supporting long-term, sustainability-focused regional and community planning.

Before joining the Regional Intergovernmental Council (RIC), Anannya served as a Housing and Community Development Graduate Fellow with the Binghamton Development Corporation. In this role, she supported neighborhood planning initiatives through EPA Brownfields Assessment research, recycling route planning, census-based evaluations, and GIS-driven mapping. Her work provided planning teams and community partners with data-supported insights on land use, environmental

conditions, and community needs, informing revitalization strategies and program development. Earlier in her career, Anannya worked as an architect and project manager in Bangladesh—designing public facilities, ensuring regulatory compliance, and coordinating with government agencies and multidisciplinary teams. These combined experiences equipped her with a practical, multiscalar understanding of community needs, development constraints, and land-use decision-making.

At RIC, Anannya will serve as a Regional Planner supporting regional planning, long-range land-use strategy, zoning and ordinance analysis, infrastructure assessments, and community engagement. Her work will help align local priorities with broader regional objectives and assist municipalities in planning for growth, resilience, and improved quality of life. Drawing on her multifaceted background, she will bring a precise, multidisciplinary perspective to regional planning efforts across West Virginia.

CMI2's Adaptive Experimentation Facility, Clay County



Regional Intergovernmental Council Membership

Boone County Commission	Brett Kuhn, Commissioner
Clay County Commission	Duane Legg, Commissioner
Kanawha County Commission	Natalie Tennant, Commissioner
Putnam County Commission	Andy Skidmore, Commissioner
Town of Bancroft	Jami Echols, Mayor
Town of Belle	David Fletcher, Mayor
Town of Buffalo	Conrad Cain, Mayor
Town of Cedar Grove	Melissa Young, Mayor
City of Charleston	Amy Shuler Goodwin, Mayor
City of Chesapeake	Melissa Hill, Mayor
Town of Clay	Marlene Lewis, Mayor
Town of Clendenin	Kay Summers, Mayor
Town of Danville	Mark McClure, Mayor
City of Dunbar	Scott E. Elliott, Mayor
Town of East Bank	Charles A. Blair, Mayor
Town of Eleanor	Cam Clendenin, Mayor
Town of Glasgow	Donald Fannin, Mayor
Town of Handley	Essie Ford, Jr., Mayor
City of Hurricane	Scott Edwards, Mayor
City of Madison	Victor Farmer, Council Member
City of Marmet	Frances Armentrout, Mayor
City of Nitro	Dave Casebolt, Mayor
Town of Poca	William Jones, Mayor
Town of Pratt	Ramon A. Williams, Mayor
City of St. Albans	Scott James, Mayor
City of South Charleston	Frank Mullens, Mayor
Town of Sylvester	Harvey Ferrell, Mayor
Town of Whitesville	Fred V. Harless, Jr., Mayor
City of Winfield	Randy Barrett, Mayor
Minority Group Representative	Vacant
Minority Group Representative	Coston Davis, Jr.
Boone County Citizen Representative	Kris Mitchell
Clay County Citizen Representative	Barry McCune
Kanawha County Citizen Representative	Audrey Kirksey
Putnam County Citizen Representative	Mark A. Stolle, Jr.
City of Charleston Citizen Representative	Andy Backus
Private Sector Representative (Education)	Kristi J. Sarrett, BridgeValley CTC
Private Sector Representative (Faith Based)	Charles Mays
Private Sector Representative	Kenneth Kinder, E.L. Robinson Engineering
Private Sector Representative	Connie Kinder, Clay County Schools
Private Sector Representative	Clark McCoy, WV Regional Technology Park
Private Sector Representative (Chamber of Commerce)	Andrew Dunlap, Charleston Area Alliance
Private Sector Representative (Labor)	Eric Sharp, Labor Employees Coop. Trust
Private Sector Representative (Education)	Ericke S. Cage, J.D., LL.M, WV State Univ.
Private Sector Representative (KVRTA)	Curt Zickafoose, KVRTA
Private Sector Representative (WVDOH)	Brian Carr, WVDOH
Private Sector Representative	Joy Underwood, Coal River Inn
Private Sector Representative	Megan Lomax, Putnam Co. Dev. Authority
Private Sector Representative	Leonard Price, Appalachian Power

*Regional Intergovernmental Council
315 D Street
South Charleston, WV 25303*



Upcoming RIC Meeting

Thursday, March 12th - 12:00 Noon

***Regional Intergovernmental Council
315 D Street, South Charleston, WV 25303
Phone: (304) 744-4258; Fax: (304) 744-2534
Website: www.wvregion3.org · Email: mail@wvregion3.org***

***Chair: Kris Mitchell
Executive Director: Tyler Ferrell***

Newsletter prepared by Joanna Keller, Executive Assistant

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Development Administration, the U. S. Department of Transportation and the
Appalachian Regional Commission.***

Local Communities / Regional Solutions / Statewide Impacts