



## Roanoke County 200 Plan: 2021 Community Meeting Summary

### Bent Mountain

**Meeting: Bent Mountain Center - Thursday, November 4, 2021**

Attendee Count: 77

Staff present:

Planning	Long Range	Transportation	GSPRT
Philip Thompson Cecelia Monnin	Bailey Howard-DuBois Alex Jones Cecile Newcomb	Will Crawford Megan Cronise	Lindsay Webb

### Land Use

Meeting Exercise: Place post-it note comments on the map.

1. Where are current issues with land uses?
2. Where are there zoning enforcement issues?
3. What types of development are desired?
4. Where should new development go?
5. Where should redevelopment happen?

Meeting Exercise Comments:

- Need incentives for businesses (restaurants and retail).
- More residential development is needed to maintain property values.
- A clinic or doctor's office is desired where doctors from Roanoke Valley can hold appointments for our residents so that they do not have to drive to Roanoke every time they need medical care.
- Keep development on Route 221.
- Would like to see Welcome to Bent Mountain signs.
- Keep future development in the suburban areas of the county, this area should remain rural and agricultural.
- Preserve the area as it is now.
- No more development.
- Do not want any more development here. Our water needs to be protected because citizens rely on wells. The MVP pipeline has already compromised this area too much.
- MVP pipeline should be on the maps and it should be acknowledged that it completely limits land uses along its corridor.
- Consider adjusting the Bent Mountain CPA boundary on the northeast side to follow the Bent Mountain ridgeline.
- The Future Land Use Map should remain as it is now for Bent Mountain.
- The Rural Preserve designated areas on the Future Land Use Map should be changed to Conservation. This makes more sense because of the topography, the waterways and their riparian buffers, and other uses that are established. The waterbodies and wetlands need this higher degree of protection.



- Having both Conservation and Rural Preserve Future Land Use designations does not really make sense, why have both?

## Community Facilities

Meeting Exercise: Tell us about the facilities that you use.

*Leave a suggestion or comment about issues or needs for community facilities.*

### Meeting Exercise Comments:

- Full-time 24/7 staffing is needed at the Bent Mountain Fire and Rescue Station. Many citizens expressed that this was their top concern for the community.
- Several citizens expressed their willingness to volunteer at the Bent Mountain Fire and Rescue Station if longer hours are kept in operation.
- The Bent Mountain Fire and Rescue Station is critical due to the aging population and new families in the community.
- Roanoke County needs to better maintain and support the Bent Mountain Branch Library and extend operation hours.
- Roanoke County needs to better maintain and support the Bent Mountain Center.
- Need rural broadband / internet access in the entire Bent Mountain community.
- Internet and cell service is a major problem, especially for K-12 students and citizens working from home.
- The towers on Poor Mountain do not serve this community.
- Mill Creek and Bottom Creek need to be protected from future development. Could potentially create greenways or trails along both areas for walking options off of the roadways.
- Would like to keep the area quiet, with the current community facilities that they have, without losing anymore existing services. Citizens are still frustrated with the closure of Bent Mountain Elementary School.
- The area needs a recycling drop-off location in the Bent Mountain Center or Fire & Rescue Station area. If Bent Mountain cannot get a drop-off location, the Back Creek Elementary area would be ideal.
- More playground options for kids at the Bent Mountain Center and Bent Mountain Branch Library property.
- Expand and improve the existing walking trail at the Bent Mountain Center, including repairing the Eagle Scout boardwalk, since both are so heavily used.
- Tree debris and the entire area around the picnic shelter area needs cleaned up.
- Connect the walking trail to the picnic area at the Bent Mountain Center.
- Better general cleanup efforts are needed on the Bent Mountain Center property.
- County needs to insure support and maintenance of the Bent Mountain Post Office; assist with staffing issues.
- Continue trash pick-up service; do not eliminate any services.
- The County should have nature and wildlife education classes at the Bent Mountain Center, like the classes offered at Explore Park.



- More Roanoke County Police patrol is needed in the entire area, specifically along Poor Mountain Road and the Bent Mountain Road incline/curves. Excessive speeding, illegal hunting, illegal littering, etc. are all growing problems within the community.
- Roanoke County Police response times need to be improved. It can take a long time for a police officer show up after a call.
- The Bent Mountain Center and Bent Mountain Branch Library should be a source for environmental education for Roanoke County Public Schools field trips, including opportunities to teach about solar, wind, natural, geothermal energy, etc.
- More Roanoke County Parks, Recreation & Tourism classes are needed at the Bent Mountain Center, including dance, yoga, exercise, arts, etc.
- A dog park would be great at Bent Mountain Center. Citizens would volunteer to help keep the park cleaned if Roanoke County Parks, Recreation, and Tourism would install the park.
- The walking trails and park areas should be safe for new families.
- Add dirt trails.
- The school should be used as a resource center for environmental education. It should be a place for school field trips, STEM classes and camps.
- Maintain walking trails near Bent Mountain Center. Extend trails possibly into wetlands.

## Transportation

Meeting Exercise: What are the transportation needs in this area?

*Leave a comment about: Road safety issues, Pedestrian, bicycle and/or transit needs.*

Meeting Exercise Comments:

### Route 221

- People drive too fast on Route 221. Lower the speed limit and provide police to enforce it, from the top of the mountain near Airport Drive, through Bent Mountain community proper, to Tinsley Lane.
- Citizens are working with VDOT to get solar-powered lighted signs to help during fog. It is often very foggy and difficult to drive.
- Need police enforcement on the curves going up the mountain, people drive too fast and boulders fall into the shoulder.
- Route 221 at Ivy Ridge Road speeding at blind curve makes it hard to turn right or left onto Route 221.
- Could a flashing light be installed on Route 221 near Ivy Ridge Road?
- There is heavy traffic down Route 221 due to the closure of the Blue Ridge Parkway.
- Need speed reduction and signage warning of curves and fog on Route 221.
- Dim lights at VDOT station Area Headquarters on Route 221.
- Make Route 221 four lanes.



- Need two lanes coming down the mountain on Route 221 at the three lane section.
- Add flashing yellow lights going down mountain on Route 221 near Look Out Lane.
- More guardrails going down the mountain on Route 221.
- Better fog lighting reflectors going down Route 221.
- Reduce speed limit near post office on Route 221.
- Boulders along Route 221 in the curves coming up the three lane section are a hazard to drivers, cyclists and motorcycles.
- Would like more reflectors on Route 221 to help with driving in fog.

#### Bicycle/Pedestrian Accommodations

- Concern over safety of cyclists using Route 221. The road is narrow with sharp curves.
- There should be a safe route for cyclists to ride from the Blue Ridge Parkway into Bent Mountain central area so that they do not have to ride on Route 221.
- Loop for bikes: Bottom Creek Road to Bottom Creek Lane to Patterson Drive to Bottom Creek Road.
- Bicycle accommodations are needed on 7-mile circle (Patterson Drive, Bottom Creek Road and Bottom Creek Lane).
- Provide better access to the Blue Ridge Parkway for cyclists.
- Bike route – Blue Ridge Parkway to Slings Gap Road to Route 221 across from the Bistro and Mercantile would provide supplies for cyclists.
- Bicycle accommodations are needed to link natural areas.
- Would like to see bicycle access from the Blue Ridge Parkway into Bent Mountain so that cyclists do not have to ride on Route 221. That way cyclists who are touring on the parkway can safely come into Bent Mountain to experience the community, get supplies, eat, etc.
- Better connections for hikers and bikers to Blue Ridge Parkway.

#### Bottom Creek Road

- Middle of Bottom Creek Road between Patterson Drive and Rocky Road has potholes next to fixed patches.
- Slow traffic on Route 221 and on Bottom Creek Road.
- Consider a centerline on Bottom Creek Road.
- There is more traffic, speeding on Bottom Creek Road since the pandemic.

#### Other Roads/Miscellaneous

- Need better police enforcement in Bent Mountain area for speeding.
- Repair and reopen the Blue Ridge Parkway.
- Consider a school bus warning sign near the Post Office near Howard Thompson's house (9996 Bent Mountain Road).
- Better speed limit enforcement is needed on rural roads.
- May be better for Ivy Ridge Road to remain unpaved as Ivy Ridge gets little sun and freezes often.
- Roadside mowing on secondary roads needs to happen more often.



### Poor Mountain Road

- Poor Mountain Road has wash out areas and potholes that need maintenance.
- Repair Poor Mountain Road near Route 221.

## Protection and Preservation

Meeting Exercise: Leave a comment about natural and cultural resources on the map.  
*Tell us what this map is missing? What's valuable to you and why? What is impacted or needs improvement?*

### Meeting Exercise Comments:

- The wetlands are not being maintained the way they should be. Whose responsibility is this?
- All surface waters are at risk from the Mountain Valley Pipeline stream crossings – there is an additional risk to the Roanoke River.
- There is community interest in better protection of Mill Creek; there is some property owner interest in establishing a conservation easement on private property.
- Need to identify wetlands and floodplain that is not currently mapped on GIS – it is significant.
- The County must protect waters (including Tier III stream) and test wells before and after the Mountain Valley Pipeline is operational.
- Consider testing of well water before the Mountain Valley Pipeline is operational and afterwards.
- Protect waterways and wetlands on Bent Mountain.
- Support a new historic properties survey to update the 1992 potentially eligible properties for the National Register.
- Need to show the historic road network identified as part of the historic districts.
- The County needs to map and include all (rural) historic districts recognized by the Virginia Department of Historic Resources.
- Bent Mountain maps should include the Mountain Valley Pipeline route.
- The County needs to keep public record/mapping of conservation easements (they are not publically available now).
- Staff should work with Preserve Bent Mountain as a stakeholder in the 200 Plan.
- Stream labels are not accurate on Bent Mountain (specifically tributaries).
- The County should help get the Blue Ridge Parkway fixed more quickly.

## Staff Observations

### Land Use

- Residents of Bent Mountain love it the way it is. Some did not want new development at all, while others are amenable to limited development and new uses. There is interest in growing locally owned and operated activities in the community proper, like outdoor recreation and agricultural products and



services, as well as a brewery and restaurant. They would like the Community Center/former school to be used for more educational activities and family recreation/park/trail facilities. Residents and landowners are hopeful that the future land use map, as it is now, provides new opportunities for commerce and community activities in the Rural Village and Village Center areas, while protecting the mountains, forests and waterways.

#### Community Facilities

- Residents were very concerned about keeping their existing community facilities open and operating at longer hours. They do not want to see their Fire and Rescue Station, Community Center, or Library closed like their former elementary school. Residents would like to see more funding, support, and operating hours at all three of these facilities. They believe the County should better utilize the Bent Mountain Center with RCPS field trips and PRT programming.
- Citizens would like to see the area remain quiet, but feel like they are not getting the same services as other County citizens. The community really would like to see more police presence, maintenance crews and recycling options. The community wants more transparency, funding and support from the County in terms of internet and cell phone access, especially with students and parents working from home.

#### Transportation

- This community is very tight knit and are very concerned with the safety of the community and roadways within the community. Most of the conversation was around the safety of Route 221 and the many accidents that have occurred in this area due to speeds on Route 221. The majority of people I spoke to were pushing for decreased speed limits and increased signage warning of fog and sharp curves.
- I received several questions about the closure of the Blue Ridge Parkway and when it was anticipated to reopen. I did not have any information to share as the National Park Service has not communicated with us about the slope failure. I also talked with several people about the fantastic current bicycle routes and the lack of accommodations. Cyclists want to access the existing Bottom Creek loop and the Blue Ridge Parkway but do not want to contend with the speeds and drivers on Route 221. There were also many comments about Route 221 on the curves and on top of the mountain, how traffic drives too fast and how crashes are severe. There is a great sense of community in Bent Mountain as everyone seems to know each other. I spoke with many people about CORTAN and only three were previously aware of the program. Four CORTAN surveys were completed at the meeting.

#### Protection and Preservation

- Most attendees were deeply concerned about the arrival of the Mountain Valley Pipeline and the impact it would have on their wells and streams. Several people commented or agreed that it would be helpful for the County or another agency to test their wells before the pipeline is operational in order to help make



a case if water quality declines. Others commented that they appreciated the County's assistance in the past when residents attempted to oppose the pipeline but want to know that there will be continued support after its construction.

Miscellaneous

- The attendees were very excited that we came directly to their community and gave them the chance to comment on the plan.

*Summary Approved: PGT*