

Why Develop a Master Plan for Explore Park?

• Community Asset

Master plan development will focus on ways to leverage a unique property to create a CLEAN, SAFE, FUN and BEAUTIFUL environment for citizens to play. The planning process will involve a large amount of public input, and include a long-term plan for development of the property. The final plan will meet community and regional outdoor recreation needs such as hiking, picnicking, boating and fishing, while ensuring a stable groundwork for more specialized park amenities and adventure tourism initiatives.

• Regional Tourist Attraction

Our region has become known for its beautiful natural scenery and abundant outdoor amenities, and recently established a new brand identity as “Virginia’s Blue Ridge.” Explore Park will provide a much needed attraction for area visitors while fitting into the broader marketing strategy of the Roanoke Valley Convention and Visitors Bureau.

• Unique Location

Explore Park is uniquely positioned to be at the center of outdoor recreation development in Western Virginia. The park is located at the intersection of the Blue Ridge Parkway, the beautiful Roanoke River Gorge, the headwaters of Smith Mountain Lake, and the expanding Roanoke River Greenway system. Its close proximity to the Roanoke metropolitan area provides a “metro-mountain” mix, attractive to visitors seeking both recreation and culture. The park is also well placed to draw visitors from as far as Washington DC, Richmond VA, and Charlotte NC, all of which are approximately 3.5 hours away.

• Economic Impact

Preliminary master plan discussions have identified a public-private partnership model of development, whereby Roanoke County may seek out business partners to help develop park amenities, operate recreation services, and sub-lease areas of the facility to expand our offerings at Explore Park. These partnerships and their peripheral services will have a positive economic impact.

• Overall Return on Investment

Exceptional parks are community shaping infrastructure that span generations and create quality places to live and visit. Explore Park’s long-term benefits include improved community health, higher quality of life and positive economic impact.



A Roanoke County Parks,
Recreation and Tourism Facility
Blue Ridge Parkway, Milepost 115