VIRGINIA IS FOR LOVERS

Virginia Mountains



2024 Annual Economic Impact

STATE OF THE REGION

The Blue Ridge and Allegheny Mountains frame eight counties and the cities of Roanoke, Salem and Covington. Scenic parkways, trails, lakes, historic towns, cultural sites and landmark resorts support outdoor escapes, heritage trips and relaxed mountain getaways.

$1.2B	8.94K	$355.7M	$31.4M	$55.8M
Total Direct Spending	Total Employment Jobs	Total Labor Income	Total State Taxes	Total Local Taxes

STRENGTHS

RECREATION & NATURAL ENVIRONMENT

The Blue Ridge Parkway, Appalachian Trail, Carvins Cove and Smith Mountain Lake give the region a nationally recognized base for hiking, biking, paddling and scenic travel.

HOTELS & HOSPITALITY

The Omni Homestead and Hotel Roanoke attract overnight visitors, conferences and higher-spending guests, giving the region two landmark hospitality anchors.

ARTS & CULTURE

The D-Day Memorial, Taubman Museum and Harvester complement Appalachian music and historic downtowns, creating reasons to visit beyond outdoor recreation.

WEAKNESSES

Lodging is limited outside Roanoke and Bath County, making overnight stays and larger events harder to capture. Rural assets receive less visibility, while gaps in trail access, river connections and visitor services limit longer trips.

OPPORTUNITIES

RECREATION & NATURAL ENVIRONMENT

Connect trailheads, river access and nearby towns with better wayfinding and visitor services. Link the Parkway, lake and greenways into trips that encourage longer stays.

HOTELS & HOSPITALITY

Address lodging gaps outside Roanoke and Bath County with downtown boutique hotels, cabins and glamping near outdoor gateways. Explore a destination resort.

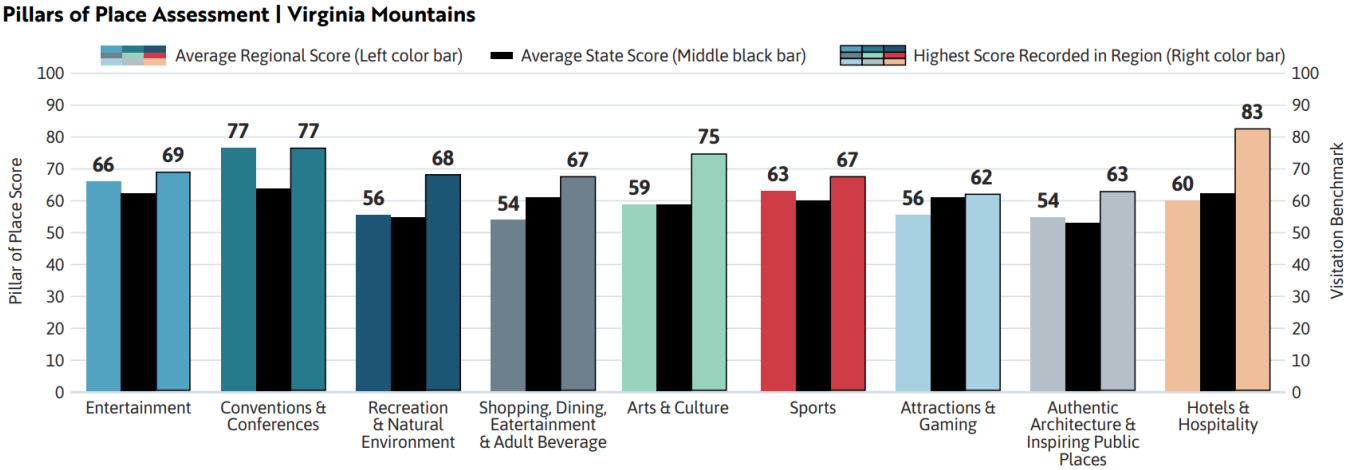
ATTRACTIONS & GAMING

Add family adventure parks and interactive discovery attractions rooted in the mountains. These would broaden the visitor mix and build more year-round demand.

THREATS

Asheville, the Smokies and Greenbrier Valley have stronger brands or larger attractions and resorts. Without better lodging and connected experiences, the region risks losing multi-day visitors to these destinations.

PILLARS OF PLACE – REGIONAL ASSET PERFORMANCE



The region has strong individual assets across multiple pillars, including landmark resorts, outdoor recreation and cultural attractions. Average scores vary, highlighting opportunities to strengthen the broader visitor experience.

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AUDIENCE PROFILES

J AUTUMN YEARS

Mature, long-settled couples
Value familiar, quiet routines, scenic drives, heritage and relaxed outdoor trips

C BOOMING WITH CONFIDENCE

Established couples and families
Value comfort, quality and shared experiences
Enjoy outdoor, cultural and family-oriented trips

Q GOLDEN YEAR GUARDIANS

Financially cautious and traditional retirees
Value community and familiarity
Prefer peaceful, comfortable experiences

COMPETITORS

Laurel Highlands, Pennsylvania • Asheville and Blue Ridge Mountains, North Carolina • Smoky Mountains, Tennessee • Eastern Kentucky • Greenbrier Valley, West Virginia

WHAT MAKES THE REGION UNIQUE

Authentic Appalachian culture, nationally known outdoor recreation and landmark resorts offer a less-commercialized mountain experience with arts, heritage and small-town character.

REGIONAL PRIORITIES

RECREATION & NATURAL ENVIRONMENT | SPORTS

The Blue Ridge Parkway, Appalachian Trail, Carvins Cove and Smith Mountain Lake already draw outdoor travelers. Better links to towns, river access and lodging can extend stays. Salem's tournament base offers a platform for more sports events and nearby accommodations.

HOTELS & HOSPITALITY | CONVENTIONS & CONFERENCES

The Omni Homestead and Hotel Roanoke are major anchors, but rural lodging remains the region's biggest gap. Add boutique hotels, cabins and glamping; explore a destination resort and more full-service meeting space in Roanoke to capture overnight demand.

ATTRACTIONS & GAMING | ENTERTAINMENT

The Harvester and Elmwood Park support events, but the region lacks a broad mix of family attractions and midsized venues. Develop interactive adventure or discovery attractions and expand music and festival spaces in Roanoke, Salem and Clifton Forge.

ARTS & CULTURE | SHOPPING, DINING & PUBLIC PLACES

Connect the D-Day Memorial, Taubman Museum of Art and Appalachian heritage with festivals, food and craft beverages. Strengthen walkable downtowns in Bedford, Roanoke and Clifton Forge to encourage longer visits.

TACTICAL RECOMMENDATIONS

RECREATION & NATURAL ENVIRONMENT

- Connect trail networks, towns and gateways
- Improve river access, signs and wayfinding
- Study signature adventure and recreation hubs

HOTELS & HOSPITALITY

- Recruit boutique and mid-scale hotels
- Add cabins, eco-lodges and glamping
- Explore resort and meeting-space growth

ATTRACTIONS & GAMING | ENTERTAINMENT

- Develop family adventure and discovery sites
- Build Appalachian-themed experiences
- Expand midsized music and event venues