

**ROANOKE COUNTY, VIRGINIA**

**1998 COMMUNITY PLAN**

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## **Acknowledgments**

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Think globally, act locally.

--Rene Dubois

The concept of the public welfare is broad and inclusive. The values it represents are spiritual as well as physical, aesthetic as well as monetary. It is within the power of the legislature to determine that the community should be beautiful as well as healthy, spacious as well as clean, well-balanced as well as carefully patrolled.

--William O. Douglas

We shape our buildings, and afterwards our buildings shape us.

--Winston Churchill

Falling in love with a locality can be as powerful an emotion as falling in love with a person. In some form it lasts a lifetime.

--Daniel Doan, author

A community is not just the proper physical arrangement of buildings and roads..... A community is also a state of mind.

--Thomas Hylton, author

It is always best to start at the beginning and follow the yellow brick road.

--The Wizard of Oz

## **ROANOKE COUNTY COMMUNITY PLAN**

The Roanoke County Community Plan consists of three volumes:

Volume 1: Roanoke County Community Plan, effective date January 12, 1999

Volume 2: Roanoke County Community Plan - Citizen Participation, 1997

Volume 3: Roanoke County Demographic and Economic Profile, September 1996

In addition, the Roanoke County Community Plan is comprised of the following special studies and plans that have been previously reviewed and approved by the Planning Commission and adopted by the Board of Supervisors:

- A. The Route 419 Frontage Development Plan originally approved by the Board of Supervisors in February 1987, with the substitution of the new future land use map from the 1998 Community Plan.
- B. The Roanoke River Corridor Study adopted by the Board of Supervisors on December 18, 1990.
- C. The Conceptual Greenway Plan, Roanoke Valley, Virginia, adopted by the Board of Supervisors on April 22, 1997.
- D. The Roanoke Valley Regional Stormwater Management Plan adopted by the Board of Supervisors on March 24, 1998.

The Roanoke County Community Plan references the following supporting documents that provide additional information and data:

- 1. Roanoke County Public Library Five-Year Plan, 1996
- 2. Economic Development Strategy, May 1992
- 3. Economic Development Strategy, 2000 and Beyond
- 4. 1997 Comprehensive Facilities Study of the Roanoke County School System
- 5. Roanoke County Capital Facilities Plan
- 6. County of Roanoke Six Year Secondary System Construction Plan and Six Year Primary System Improvement Program

For additional information, please contact: Roanoke County Department of Community Development, P.O. Box 29800, Roanoke, Virginia 24018 or call: (540)772-2068. The Community Plan can also be accessed from the Roanoke County Home Page-[www.Co.Roanoke.VA.US](http://www.Co.Roanoke.VA.US).

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# CHAPTER 1

## INTRODUCTION

The Roanoke County Community Plan is a blueprint for the future growth and development of the County over the next 10-15 years. It provides direction and guidance, for both the public and private sectors, in making decisions about land development, public services and resource protection. This Plan allows decision makers to study the long-term consequences of current decisions and recognize that today's actions will impact the County for many years to come.

The Community Plan is a planning document and reflects the community's goals and visions of what the future might be. It allows the Board of Supervisors to present a snapshot of the County's long range goals, policies and strategies to the community. This includes those involved in private land development, neighborhood organizations and civic groups, neighboring jurisdictions, County departments, commissions and boards and the general public. It also provides those in the land development process the opportunity to anticipate Board decisions and to actively work in concert with the Plan rather than in conflict with it.

The Community Plan is a public document, developed with a great deal of public participation. It encourages individual participation in public affairs and particularly the long-range planning process of the County. It also ensures citizens that decisions based on the Plan are well-thought out and in the best interests of the County as a whole.

The Roanoke County Community Plan was developed in accordance with Chapter 15.2 of the *Code of Virginia*, Local Planning Legislation, Article 3, The Comprehensive Plan, which requires that:

*“The local (planning) commission shall prepare and recommend a comprehensive plan for the physical development of the territory within its jurisdiction.”*

*“At least once every five years the comprehensive plan shall be reviewed by the local (planning) commission to determine whether it is advisable to amend the plan.”*

The foundation of this Community Plan is the community's vision for the future documented in the *Vision Report, The Changing Century - Roanoke County 2010*. The research, debate, discussion, thought and commitment that went into the visioning process are articulated and reflected in this Plan. The following components of the Plan support the community's vision:

- Land use, community facilities and resource preservation issues - These general, community wide issues affect the entire community.
- Future Land Use Guide - This chapter includes land use designations and policies.

- Community Planning Areas - The future land use maps are included in this chapter along with critical neighborhood issues and resources.
- Community Plan Implementation - The final chapter includes work item priorities.

## THE COMMUNITY PLAN PROCESS

### History

Roanoke County has a long history of comprehensive planning. In 1939 the County established the Planning Commission. Within the next year the county's first Community Plan was adopted and in 1941 the first zoning ordinance was in place.

In 1974 Roanoke County adopted the second Community Plan and in 1983 a general revision to that plan was begun. Two years later the third Community Plan was adopted by the County. The community lead visioning process was begun in 1995 and at its conclusion, in the summer of 1996, an intensive community involvement process was begun to develop the 1998 Community Plan.

### Process

The community involvement process used in developing the Community Plan is, in many ways, as important to the credibility and value of the plan as the final document itself. The Plan must reflect the community's value and be open to all citizens of the County in order to be called a success. It cannot be a reflection of only a minority of viewpoints or special interest groups.

Over the past three years, Roanoke County has been involved in an extensive outreach program to involve its citizens in the development of a new Community Plan. The first component of this outreach program was the visioning process. In February 1995 the visioning process formally began with a community values survey. This scientifically-valid telephone survey questioned 500 county residents about public policy issues and assessed the relative importance of these issues. The visioning process continued throughout the spring and summer and eventually involved more than 800 citizens in the development of a vision of what Roanoke County could be like in the year 2010. This component of the citizen outreach program was concluded in June 1996 with the publishing of the *Vision Report, The Changing Century - Roanoke County 2010*.

The second component of the outreach program was to develop a neighborhood-based citizen participation element. This element was designed to identify issues at the neighborhood level and to relate the findings of the vision process to each neighborhood. To accomplish this task the Board of Supervisors appointed a Citizen Advisory Committee (CAC) consisting of 24 citizens - two from each of the twelve community planning areas. The CAC held their first meeting in August 1996. The charge to the CAC was to formulate a citizen participation process that would effectively involve a broad spectrum of county citizens in the comprehensive planning process. In addition, the goal was to develop a citizen involvement structure that would continue to be involved in county planning at all levels - from the development of neighborhood plans to

rezoning issues. The purpose was to integrate active, concerned citizens into the planning process thereby increasing the level of commitment to the long-range plan and ensuring future accountability to the plan.

The CAC met during the fall of 1996 and by December developed a citizen participation process. This process involved the creation of neighborhood councils in each of the county's 12 community planning areas. The CAC appointed local citizens and leaders of community-based organizations to serve on the councils. The CAC's objectives for the neighborhood council process were:

*To assure that the Community Plan reflects the desires of the majority of citizens for the future of Roanoke County and to expand the sphere of influence the Community Plan will have in guiding decisions in the future for our Roanoke County community.*

The neighborhood councils began meeting in January 1997. Over the next four months they worked to identify critical land use, resource preservation and public facility issues in their neighborhoods. These extensive lists of issues were later prioritized by council members. Secondly, the councils mapped cultural, historical and natural resources that added uniqueness, beauty and a sense of place to their communities. The final component of their work was to identify examples of design elements, located in their neighborhoods, such as building size and mass, building architecture, landscaping, parking design, signage, materials and colors that are visually appealing.

In May 1997 a community forum was held to exhibit the results of the neighborhood council process. This meeting was an open house with booths that displayed the work and maps produced by each council. Representatives of various special interest groups made presentations to the Planning Commission and the CAC.

The major components of the Community Plan reflect the results of the visioning process as well as the work of the CAC and neighborhood councils. The first component provides background, goals, objectives, issues and opportunities and implementation strategies in the areas of land use, community facilities and resource preservation. The second component is the Future Land Use Guide. Land use guidelines and policies that reflect the results of the visioning process are outlined. The third component is the Community Planning Area Analysis. This section takes an in-depth look at each of the 12 community planning areas around the County. Future land use maps are displayed in this section. The final chapter of the Plan includes implementation strategies.

## **PLAN UPDATES**

Every five years the Community Plan will be reviewed and updated as necessary to ensure that it is consistent with the overall community vision. This review process will provide the opportunity to analyze and address changes in the community and to update statistical data and implementation strategies. It will also provide the opportunity to measure progress and make adjustments, where necessary, toward the implementation strategies recommended in the 1998 plan.

## **PLAN AMENDMENTS**

The Roanoke County Community Plan is a general planning document that is subject to interpretation. It is intended to guide future land use development in the County but is not fixed in place. Therefore, proposed amendments to the Community Plan will be received and reviewed twice annually in the months of January and July. Amendments to the Roanoke County Community Plan may be initiated by any citizen, the Board of Supervisors, the Planning Commission, any county landowner or the Secretary to the Planning Commission.

Amendment applications must meet one or more of the following criteria:

- The subject property was misinterpreted or overlooked in the Community Plan.
- Significant changes have occurred in the condition of surrounding lands.
- The requested amendment will significantly enhance other goals of the Community Plan.

Amendment applications will be considered, based on the preceding qualifications. The Planning Commission will review the application, hold a public hearing and recommend to the Board of Supervisors whether to consider the amendment. The Planning Commission may, at their discretion, hold a community meeting or convene a meeting of the appropriate neighborhood council. If recommended by the Planning Commission, the Board of Supervisors will hold a public hearing and vote to accept, deny, or modify the amendment and forward its order to the Secretary to the Commission. The Board of Supervisors retains the right to initiate an amendment to the Community Plan at any time. Any amendment should be determined to be consistent with the remaining goals of the Community Plan and the overall community vision.

# CHAPTER 2

## VISION STATEMENTS

### INTRODUCTION

In 1995 the citizens of Roanoke County initiated a strategic planning process called visioning. The purpose of this process was to build a vision for the future of Roanoke County that is based on community consensus and reflects the community's values.

In March 1995 a thirteen-member citizen Steering Committee was formed to administer and guide the vision process. The Steering Committee formed ten focus groups to discuss and prepare recommendations on the following topics: Agriculture and Forestry, Economic Development, Public Education, Technology, Resource Preservation, Transportation, Growth Management and Planning, Government Relations, Recreation and Culture and Housing. These focus groups involved over 200 citizen volunteers.

The focus groups met throughout the summer of 1995 and in the fall presented their recommendations to the Steering Committee and Board of Supervisors. There were five key issues, or principles of action, that emerged from the focus group reports. These issues cut across the thinking that County citizens brought to the vision process and are as follows:

### COMMUNITY-WIDE THEMES

1. Regionalism - The County must take the lead in finding new and innovative ways to look beyond its political boundaries for solutions to the challenges of the next century.
2. Sustainability - Recognizing that our natural systems are vital to providing both economic needs and quality of life for all citizens, sustainable development has been incorporated into County planning -- meeting the needs of the present generation without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs.
3. Community Identity - Roanoke County citizens identify very closely with their neighborhoods and school districts. Efforts must be made to preserve the elements of community identity that provide gathering places for the exchange of information and support.
4. Scenic Beauty - The mountains that surround the County provide a sense of place and are a source of beauty, recreational activity and inspiration. Steps must be taken to develop sound conservation policies for our dwindling farm lands, mountainsides and ridges, rivers and streams, soil and air. These resources are considered by many to be our region's greatest asset.
5. Quality of Life - The citizens of Roanoke County recognize that there exists a fragile balance between economic growth and prosperity and the preservation of a way of life that is cherished by many. Proactive steps must be taken to manage growth in a positive way - to act

conservatively and with deliberation when making decisions that will affect our high quality of life and that of our children's children.

In addition to these five broad community-wide themes each focus group developed a vision statement that reflects their discussions about the future of Roanoke County.

## **VISION STATEMENTS**

The following vision statements represent the work of the focus groups and are reprinted here exactly as they were developed by each group.

### **Government Relations**

1. In 2010, Roanoke County is one of a group of regional independent counties and cities, that choose to practice - as an aggressive and proactive policy - broad based, regional collaboration and cooperation in: 1) meeting the current day-to-day needs of the citizens of Roanoke County, and 2) preparing for the challenges and opportunities of the future. In these cooperative efforts, Roanoke County government leads the way, thereby ensuring the prosperity and happiness of the citizens of Roanoke County.

### **Resource Preservation**

1. In 2010, Roanoke County has incorporated principles of sustainability into County ordinances. These principles will maximize energy efficiency and minimize waste and pollution. To assist with this effort, the County has adopted and enacted local interpretations of the recommendations of the "Blueprint for Sustainable Development of Virginia," while bolstering industry through a variety of incentives to adhere to these standards.
2. In 2010, Roanoke County continues to support the educational efforts of Explore Park and includes environmental education in the public school curriculum.
3. In 2010, Roanoke County has enacted ordinances and programs to preserve the integrity of the surrounding mountains and open space. These include mountainside, ridgeline and natural resource protection.
4. In 2010, Roanoke County has identified the area's diverse flora and faunal resources by means of a comprehensive survey and makes use of this information in designating sites to be protected as preserves, parks, greenways and other natural corridors connecting critical habitats.

5. In 2010, Roanoke County has established tax incentives to encourage landowners to dedicate their mountain land for scenic and conservation easements. This has been supplemented by purchases of land by a Natural and Scenic Resources Foundation - a local land trust.
6. In 2010, Roanoke County has participated in a regional effort to identify and protect viewsheds along the Blue Ridge Parkway and the Appalachian Trail.
7. In 2010, Roanoke County has established sound growth management policies that preserve the region's scenic assets and natural resources while allowing residential development that includes open spaces, parks, cluster development and rural villages.
8. In 2010, Roanoke County continues to recognize the economic and scenic value of its farm lands and has actively participated in promoting the economic viability of the rural lifestyle.
9. In 2010, Roanoke County citizens exhibit a strong public and private sector commitment to the preservation of Roanoke County's distinctive cultural heritage -- its historic buildings and landscapes, archaeological sites and folk traditions. Recognizing that the architectural and archaeological records of this valley lend character and identity to our area, historic preservation has become an important tool for economic development. Through efforts to identify heritage resources, through cultural heritage education in the public schools and through cooperative efforts with other groups, the County has, over the last 15 years, set the standard for a sound preservation ethic.
10. In 2010, Roanoke County has implemented the "Recommendations for Planning" produced as a result of the architectural survey of 1991-1992. The County has also initiated a similar archaeological survey.
11. In 2010, Roanoke County community libraries have established local archives which house video and audio tape oral histories, copies of family trees, diaries, and pertinent newspaper articles and books that document each community's unique history.
12. In 2010, Roanoke County has mountain festivals, jamborees, fiddler conventions, story telling festivals, and pow-wows that are used to preserve interest in and knowledge of local folk traditions.

### **Housing**

1. In 2010, Roanoke County has developed incentives and a sliding scale of fees to encourage affordable housing. Housing costs have been addressed by controlling utility connection fees, erosion control requirements and waste disposal options.
2. In 2010, Roanoke County has a diverse housing stock meeting the demands of current



and future residents. Dwellings are available in a range of prices, styles and designs to accommodate students, single persons, the elderly and families. Alternatives to single family ownership are being met by an adequate supply of apartments, duplexes, attached housing, senior services and nursing homes for rent.

3. In 2010, Roanoke County has managed a healthy economic growth while protecting and maintaining its natural resources. Through careful planning and orderly development, our natural resources have been protected to ensure the quality of life for future generations. Open spaces and greenways have been provided through the use of cluster development and innovative site design concepts.
4. In 2010, Roanoke County has taken a leadership role in valleywide cooperative efforts to hold the cost of public services to a relatively low level. Services have been extended, in a planned and orderly manner, to meet housing demands.

### **Transportation**

1. In 2010, Roanoke County roads are well maintained. New roads are initiated and planned in cooperation with VDOT and with a high level of citizen participation. Transportation planning is carried out in conjunction with the County Comprehensive Plan. New roads are designed to accommodate large vehicles and incorporate new technology wherever possible. The design and construction of new roads are accomplished in an environmentally sensitive manner, protecting natural resources and minimizing various forms of pollution.
2. In 2010, Roanoke County, Roanoke City and Salem City have encouraged the growth of public transit throughout the Roanoke Valley. An active and successful public relations campaign has resulted in increased ridership. Public transit is now a vital link in the Valley's multi-modal transportation network.
3. In 2010, Roanoke County has incorporated the efficient movement of freight into the overall transportation system design. The new Inland Port has given southwest Virginia's industries a promising global connection.
4. In 2010, Roanoke County has incorporated the use of bicycle trails, pedestrian walkways and greenways into the transportation network.
5. In 2010, Roanoke County has embarked on a multi-purpose light rail project. This project serves as a valuable transportation and recreational facility for residents and visitors alike.

**Growth Management and Planning**

1. In 2010, Roanoke County growth management provides for greenways and open space as an integral part of communities and individual lifestyles.
2. In 2010, Roanoke County has addressed the impacts of strategies to provide for sustainability within growth management.
3. In 2010, Roanoke County communities have small commercial nodes and business opportunities that serve local areas. This strategy has encouraged and enabled citizens to use alternative forms of transportation such as pedestrian corridors, bicycle paths and public transit.
4. In 2010, Roanoke County allows flexibility, within a consistent framework of sustainable development, to encourage community redevelopment, commercial development, infill development and industrial revitalization while preserving neighborhood stability and property values. This planning process is successful due to extensive community and private sector involvement.
5. In 2010, Roanoke County transportation planning is an integral part of growth management strategies. Following through with a trend begun in 1995, Roanoke County citizens have continued to be pro-active participants in the transportation planning process.
6. In 2010, Roanoke County growth management strategies and sustainability are guided and measured by a system of benchmarks established with citizen input. This results in a highly involved citizenry who are knowledgeable in planning principles, who proactively participate in the planning process, and who believe they can influence the process.

**Agriculture and Forestry**

1. In 2010, Roanoke County has taken action to identify and establish distinct rural areas worthy of preservation that will balance the rights of property owners while protecting the productive value of rural lands.
2. In 2010, Roanoke County has implemented policies to tax rural land on its specific value for agriculture and/or forestry production.
3. In 2010, Roanoke County has taken action to reinforce the "right to farm" and there exists a high level of mutual respect among farmers, non-farm owners and rural visitors of individual property rights, responsibilities and privacy.

4. In 2010, Roanoke County has established markets for small- scale farm and forestry products that support and sustain a viable rural land-based economy and robust farmers' markets in the Valley.
5. In 2010, Roanoke County continues to value, protect and preserve the scenic vistas, water resources and other important natural and cultural resources of the rural areas. There continues to be strong recognition that these resources are critical components of the quality of life of the region.
6. In 2010, Roanoke County has established and has been operating a level of public services, particularly fire and rescue, to the rural areas that is appropriate and consistent with the needs of an aging rural population.
7. In 2010, Roanoke County has established mechanisms so that rural residents are directly represented, consulted, advised and involved in their local government.

### **Economic Development and Tourism**

1. In 2010, Roanoke County has played a major role in developing the Roanoke Valley into a center of industrial and commercial technology by adequately funding the Industrial Development Authority, enabling them to acquire property and providing the infrastructure to encourage economic growth.
2. In 2010, Roanoke County and the surrounding areas have become a natural playground for visitors and residents. The local governments have provided the necessary infrastructure to permit full usage and enjoyment of our scenic resources - both private and public - such as a regional greenway system, pedestrian-friendly roads, campgrounds and recreational vehicle parking areas. Strong incentives have been put into place to encourage developers to include dedicated lands and connected greenways in all new development projects.
3. In 2010, Roanoke County has taken the lead to preserve our most valuable natural asset, the scenic environment and natural ridge lines of the mountains surrounding the Roanoke Valley.

### **Recreation and Culture**

1. In 2010, Roanoke County - through unique initiatives and as a result of reciprocal arrangements and partnership efforts with neighboring local governments and private entities- is nationally known as a preeminent East Coast recreational and cultural center and is the major recreational and cultural center on the Blue Ridge Parkway. Awareness of the County's unique and high-quality recreational and cultural programs is reflected in large audiences, a high level of individual participation and volunteer activity, broad-based financial support, a healthy citizenry and increased tourism.

### **Technology and Communications**

1. In 2010, Roanoke County provides its citizens opportunities to interface with each other, the capability to access local and global community services through the latest communications technologies and encourages - through both public and private means - the use of the latest technologies to enhance the quality of life in the Roanoke Valley.
2. In 2010, Roanoke County encourages technological improvements/innovations in manufacturing, power transmission, communications, commerce and transportation to reserve and enhance the natural resources of the Roanoke Valley. Roanoke County facilitates a managed technological environment that balances education, productivity, social skills, health and the ecosystem.
3. In 2010, Roanoke County affords its citizens opportunities - through technical schools, extension programs, and a four-year college of higher learning - to obtain the technological skills required to work and function in a rapidly changing world.

### **Public Education**

1. In 2010, Roanoke County provides access to world-class educational services to all citizens. The educational focus is to prepare learners for the work place and to develop in them characteristics of responsible, productive members of society for whom learning is a lifelong endeavor.



# CHAPTER 3

## LAND USE ISSUES

### 1. CITIZEN PARTICIPATION

#### **Introduction**

Roanoke County encourages citizen participation in all elements of the government. The challenge is to keep the level of citizen interest high and to make their active participation in the workings of their government as convenient and easy as possible.

The participation of an informed citizenry is a critical element in the success of this community plan and of other County initiatives. This plan reflects the hopes and desires of County citizens for the future and is dependent on their continued support, diligence and commitment.

#### **Goal**

**To achieve the highest possible level of citizen participation in all elements of Roanoke County government by keeping our citizens informed and educated on public policy issues and by maintaining an open, democratic, and easily accessible governmental system.**

#### **Issues and Opportunities**

- The Roanoke Valley government and public education television channel (RVTV) provides information on local government issues for Roanoke County, the City of Roanoke and the Town of Vinton in addition to broadcasting City Council and County Board of Supervisors meetings. It also provides a bulletin board of announcements concerning job opportunities, upcoming events, tax information, etc.
- RVTV is not available to the entire county population due to cable access constraints.
- For the most part, there are not major neighborhood concerns or county-wide problems that citizens feel a need to unite, organize or rally around.
- When seeking input on planning initiatives, such as revisions to the zoning ordinance, it is sometimes difficult to get a broad spectrum of comments from a variety of people, groups and organizations. For example, it seems that neighborhood-based and environmental-based groups are not as well organized or financed as other special-interest groups, that because of financial interests, are highly motivated to participate in such efforts.

- As shown every year in the citizen survey that the County conducts, the vast majority of County citizens are satisfied with the level of government services they are receiving.
- Civic leagues exist in all areas of the County and are effective in getting zoning violations remedied and organizing neighborhood crime watch efforts.
- Because of the general level of satisfaction with government services, the majority of County citizens tend to be reactive rather than proactive on public policy issues.
- The County has a Deputy Assistant to the County Administrator whose major job responsibility is to assist citizens in resolving problems they may be having with a County policy, requirement or regulation.
- The County holds all public hearings and community meetings in the evenings to allow the general public to participate in them.
- The County Administrator holds quarterly meetings with the civic league presidents.
- Community meetings are often held to obtain citizen input on rezoning petitions prior to the Planning Commission public hearing.
- The County has a web page that provides information on the county government and services and linkages to other regional, state and federal government sites.
- The Community Plan citizen participation process developed neighborhood councils consisting of citizens from each of the community planning areas.

## **Objectives**

- A. Ensure that all citizens have full and appropriate access to information concerning their government.
- B. Encourage all citizens, of all ages, to participate to the fullest extent possible in public meetings and hearings.
- C. Provide assistance to any neighborhood or community area that wants to establish a civic league.
- D. Promote the use of the most effective and efficient methods to communicate issues and policies to the citizens and to receive their input and suggestions.
- E. Treat all citizens with the utmost respect and courtesy. Listen and respond promptly to their comments and suggestions.

## Implementation Strategies

1. Enhance and expand the role of the neighborhood councils. Utilize these councils to gather neighborhood input on a variety of topics such as rezoning petitions, neighborhood plans and other local issues. (Obj. B, D, E)
2. Develop and fund a County Page quarter-page notice in the Roanoke Times. This could run once a month and would provide information on public policy issues, upcoming public hearings and community meetings, road projects, etc. (Obj. A, D)
3. Expand the coverage of RVTV. (Obj. A, B, D)
4. Develop a quarterly newsletter that covers Department of Community Development issues such as planning, zoning, progress toward goals of the community plan, stormwater, drainage, roads, etc. This should be posted on the Roanoke County Home Page and distributed to organizations, civic leagues, PTA's, neighborhood councils and a general public mailing list. (Obj. A, B, D)
5. Develop a network of contact people with all neighborhood and special interest groups so that they can be notified and involved in public policy issues. (Obj. A, B, C, D, E)
6. Encourage, as part of the application process, all rezoning petitioners to hold community meetings, unless exempted by the Zoning Administrator. (Obj. A, D)
7. Once a year, hold a meeting of the Board of Supervisors and Planning Commission in each magisterial district of the county - Hollins, Catawba, Windsor Hills, Cave Spring and Vinton. (Obj. A, B, D, E)
8. Roanoke County should provide its citizens the opportunity to interface with each other and the capability to access all community services through the latest communications technologies. (Obj. A, D)



## 2. DESIGN GUIDELINES

### Introduction

Establishing design guidelines to promote quality development and enhance the unique character of communities within the County is an important component of Roanoke County's Community Plan. These guidelines are intended to facilitate development creativity and provide incentives for development design principles that will result in the enhancement of the visual appearance of the built environment in the County. They relate to such items as: site development, relationship of proposed land uses to adjoining land uses and buildings to adjoining buildings, relationship of buildings to their site, site layout, parking lots, landscaping, building design, lighting, and signs.

The results of the Neighborhood Council process re-enforce the idea of guiding development design with the following themes voiced by all the communities within the County:

- New development should incorporate a high standard of design including the following design elements: appropriate architecture, landscaping, and signage.
- Encourage neighborhood involvement in the design process associated with any development proposal through citizen meetings with developers.
- New developments should be designed and planned as cohesive communities.
- Incompatible land uses should be buffered from adjoining land uses.
- New developments should be required to design around existing, healthy stands of trees and/or individual specimen trees where possible, to preserve trees that are outside of the building envelope and to replace trees when existing trees must be removed.

### Goal

**All new and redeveloped sites are designed to be in harmony with their surroundings, improve the general appearance of the site and strengthen community identity.**

### Issues and Opportunities

- Design guidelines may provide a level of comfort with a proposed development that otherwise would not exist.
- Design guidelines may help assure that development reflects the unique characteristics of the community.
- The citizens of Roanoke County appear to be very supportive of design guidelines.

## Objectives

- A. Develop and incorporate design guidelines for all future development in the County, excluding individual home sites and farm buildings.
- B. Involve citizens, businesses and community leaders in the creation of community specific design guidelines.

## Implementation Strategies

- 1. Continue to support and expand as necessary the Hollins Village/Williamson Road redevelopment initiative using public funds as a catalyst to stimulate private investment.
- 2. Identify and ensure that the gateways into the County are attractive and enhance the community's identity.
- 3. Encourage through community meetings, public participation in the development of design guidelines for land in Roanoke County.
- 4. Provide education and outreach to the public emphasizing the importance of developing design guidelines for the County.
- 5. Be firm about goals, but flexible about how to attain them.

## Land Use Designations

The Plan designates the following land use areas. Each designation has a set of design guidelines that pertain to development issues within that area.

**Conservation** - These areas are characterized by significant environmental and cultural features such as mountains, ridgetops, wildlife habitat, forests, rivers and lakes.

**Rural Preserve and Rural Village** - These areas are characterized by rural landscapes where protection of the rural character is desired.

**Village Center** - These rural village centers, where established crossroad communities are present, serve as focal points for the surrounding rural areas.

**Neighborhood Conservation** - These are established residential neighborhoods where conservation and continuation of the existing housing pattern are desired.

**Development** - These areas are characterized by new residential growth and a variety of housing types and densities.

**Transition** - These areas are corridors where current commercial strip development patterns exist or future development pressure is possible.

**Core** - These are commercial, retail areas where suburban centers of high intensity urban development are present or expected.

**Principal Industrial** - These are areas where high technology industries and research and development firms are present or may develop.

**Scenic Corridors** - These are areas encompassing a current or possible future designated scenic corridors.

## **Design Guidelines**

### **Conservation**

Certain areas within the County are designated as Conservation because of significant environmental and cultural features such as mountains, wildlife habitat, clean water resources or scenic beauty. The Conservation land use areas include part of the George Washington/Jefferson National Forest, the Appalachian Trail corridor, Havens State Wildlife Management Area, Carvin's Cove Reservoir, Spring Hollow Reservoir, Blue Ridge Parkway viewsheds, the higher elevations of Read Mountain and a County owned portion of Sugar Loaf Mountain. When the specific data is available, the viewsheds from the Appalachian Trail should be included in this designation. The primary goal of the following objectives and guidelines is to protect and preserve the inherent environmental and natural resources within the County.

### **Objectives**

- A. To recognize existing areas within the County that fit under the Conservation land use areas and establish guidelines to protect and preserve them.
- B. Identify, evaluate and work to assure the preservation of wildlife habitats and corridors, natural landmarks, historic and archaeological sites, significant agricultural lands and examples of natural heritage. Maintain a registry of qualified areas and link decisions concerning land and easement purchases and new developments with the conservation framework established.
- C. Encourage the establishment of additional Conservation land use areas through conservation easements, greenways and parks that in the end result, create a network of interconnected Conservation areas.

- D. Provide assistance and incentives for land owners to maintain natural areas. Work with landowners and other entities to promote sound conservation practices and where appropriate, establish cooperative management plans. Encourage private owners to investigate and utilize the preservation programs offered by other governmental entities and private foundations.

### **Guidelines**

1. Use Conservation land use areas to preserve: critical ecosystems; scenic vistas; fish and wildlife habitats; natural resources and landmarks; outdoor recreation areas; cultural, historic and archaeological areas; connections and trails; access to public waters and other useable open space lands; scenic waterways or highway corridors; important forest lands, range lands, or agricultural lands; aquifer recharge areas and surface water.
2. Resource extraction should be carried out in a manner that preserves open space along stream corridors, minimizes the impacts on the land and is compatible with adjacent land uses. Reclamation plans should be reviewed and processes monitored to ensure the area's continued significance.
3. Isolated wetlands, stream corridors, lakes, drainage areas and their associated riparian areas should be preserved, protected and used for a variety of open space purposes such as landscape features, irrigation, water quality protection, buffers, wildlife habitat and flood control.
4. Development of any kind should be planned, designed and constructed to avoid or minimize the degradation of natural and cultural resources.
5. Minimize habitat fragmentation from the combined effects of development, roads, trails and an overall increased human presence.
6. Place adequate buffers around sensitive sites.
7. Restrict development of structures, such as residential, commercial or industrial facilities, on slopes greater than 20%. Allow passive recreational uses, such as picnic shelters, greenways and trails in these areas.
8. Restrict development within 100 feet of a water course, excluding passive recreational uses, water related recreational uses or incidental utility uses.
9. Significant scenic views should be preserved and a detailed inventory developed.

### **Rural Preserve and Rural Village**

In those areas of Roanoke County designated as rural and/or agricultural where local officials and residents are looking for preservation options, certain design strategies can be followed. Through the use of these design strategies land will remain available for productive agricultural activities and open space, developers are not placed under any unreasonable constraints, and realtors gain a special marketing tool, in that rural views from the new homes will be guaranteed by the conservation easements.

### **Objectives**

- A. While allowing future development, employ design strategies that leave land available for productive agricultural activities and open space.
- B. Preserve rural views and vistas.

### **Guidelines**

- 1. Encourage cluster developments that set aside 50 to 70 percent of the parcel as open space, and preserve or incorporate existing site features into the overall design.
- 2. Require that rural subdivisions be buffered and set back from roadway view.
- 3. Decrease the number of new driveways fronting on public roads.
- 4. Decrease the obstruction of views by new developments by strategically locating buildings on the site. Locate buildings either in a wooded fringe at the edge of field or set back and buffer them from fields and public roads through the use of landscaping.
- 5. Buildings located on prominent mountain sides should use exterior colors and textures to aid in them blending into the landscape.
- 6. Discourage the siting of buildings on ridge lines.

### **Village Center**

There are numerous Village Centers throughout the rural and suburban areas of Roanoke County. These centers are established crossroad communities which have traditionally served as focal points for the surrounding area. They play a functional role in providing homes, limited neighborhood- oriented commercial services and businesses, and civic buildings such as churches, post offices, fire stations and schools. Many of the Village Centers in Roanoke County contain historic structures and/or sites, which should be preserved through local historic district zoning. These Village Centers each have a unique character and sense of place with which local residents easily identify.

## **Objectives**

- A. Collaborate with community members to develop design guidelines for Village Centers to protect and enhance the existing village character and historic qualities.
- B. Establish provisions which allow for limited mixed-use development in existing Village Centers, and permit the future development of additional Village Centers in appropriate locations throughout the County.

## **Guidelines**

- 1. Design and build new construction to blend in with the existing buildings in the village. New construction should be compatible with the existing village in respect to height, size, character, massing, roof shapes, material, and door/window proportions.
- 2. Locate and cluster institutional services at Village Centers to enhance community identity.
- 3. When existing buildings create a characteristically close relationship with the street, retain this pattern in order to preserve the community's character.
- 4. Reduce the visual impacts of parking areas upon community character through placement, landscaping and buffering requirements.
- 5. Screen open storage areas, exposed machinery, and outdoor areas used for storage from roads and surrounding land uses.
- 6. Preserve roadside trees due to their important role in defining the character of a community and encourage the planting of new roadside trees.
- 7. Design exterior lighting and signs as integral architectural elements of the building and site.
- 8. Control lighting in both height and intensity to maintain village character. Shield luminaries to prevent excessive lighting and glare beyond lot lines.
- 9. Encourage compatibility or shared use of signs for adjacent businesses. Maintain good scale and proportion in sign design and in visual relationships to buildings, surroundings and views.
- 10. Encourage the re-use of historic structures.
- 11. Create historic district overlay zoning for appropriate village centers.

### **Neighborhood Conservation**

Single-family neighborhoods are traditionally the most protected land uses. The strategic placement of non-residential land uses, such as parks, schools, libraries and churches (determined by neighborhood preference and need) can play a vital role in preserving and enhancing neighborhood character. Also, creative site planning practices can enhance the opportunity for attached housing to achieve compatibility with adjacent detached housing.

#### **Objective**

- A. Preserve and enhance the existing character of established neighborhoods through boundary protection and the addition of desired amenities.

#### **Guidelines**

1. Screen and buffer adjacent non-compatible land uses.
2. Incorporate greenways within neighborhoods as well as from neighborhoods to adjacent institutional services, other neighborhoods and commercial centers.
3. Encourage infill of vacant lots with similar density housing.
4. Any additions or changes to existing neighborhoods should be compatible with established (underlying) site patterns.
5. Allow well-designed low impact service oriented businesses to locate near neighborhoods.

### **Development**

These areas of new residential growth have the most opportunity for innovative land development practices. Cluster developments with a mix of housing types and densities, limited retail support, and efficient layout of streets can prevent sprawl and create self-contained neighborhoods with combined living and working areas. These areas also respond to the current needs and demands of smaller families and energy/resource conservation. The protection and inclusion of environmental processes and natural site amenities, such as drainage systems and vegetation, should be priorities for all new developments.

#### **Objectives**

- A. Encourage the development of planned residential communities and cluster developments that protect and incorporate environmental features and resources within the developed area.

- B. Within the development areas, plan for an interconnected framework of greenways, parks and activity/retail centers.

### **Guidelines**

1. Take an inventory of all environmental features and resources present on site in order to create a site development plan that is able to preserve and benefit from the existing natural features.
2. Use those existing site features to create a common framework within a mix of housing types and densities.
3. Retail support should be located in central locations, easily accessible by car, bike or foot.
4. Lay out streets in an efficient manner, but avoid creating main thoroughfares that can attract heavy amounts of traffic.
5. Neighborhoods should be easily identifiable; create gateways at major entrance points.
6. Create common recreational open space for all neighborhood residents.
7. Protect, and enhance when possible, scenic views to and from the site.

### **Transition**

Certain roadways within the County have become or have the potential of becoming primary corridors where current strip development pressures exist. Within these corridors access and aesthetics should be controlled in order to avoid unappealing forms of commercial strip development and the resultant traffic congestion.

### **Objective**

- A. Establish development and design guidelines for future development along designated key road corridors and gateways into the County.

### **Guidelines**

1. Support and expand the public-private partnerships in the redevelopment of older commercial corridors in the County.
2. Establish provisions which discourage strip development along corridors and promote planned development nodes located at major road junctions.



3. Redevelopment of existing strip developments should stress the importance of reducing the number of entrances, coordinating signage and parking and increasing vegetative buffers.
4. Encourage the interconnection of parking lots and the reduction of driveways along primary, arterial and collector roads.
5. Coordinate vehicular and pedestrian movement among adjacent sites.
6. Preserve, enhance, and/or incorporate into the design natural site resources such as topography, vegetation, views to and from the site and drainage ways.
7. Plan the site to provide a desirable transition with the streetscape. Provide space for adequate planting, safe pedestrian movement, and screened parking areas. Provide an inviting atmosphere for the pedestrian through grades of walks, parking spaces, terraces, and other paved areas.
8. Buffer along rear property lines where development backs up to less intensive residential uses.
9. Design exterior lighting and signs as integral architectural elements of the building and site. Encourage compatibility or shared use of signs for adjacent businesses. Maintain good scale and proportion in sign design and in visual relationships to buildings, surroundings and views.
10. Ensure unity of landscape design by repetition of appropriate plants that are indigenous to the area through coordination with adjacent properties.
11. Buffer adjacent incompatible land uses by landscaping, earth berms, walls and fences or combinations of these elements. Use landscaping to enhance architectural features and viewsheds and provide shade.
12. Provide incentives to utility companies to place newly installed utility services and service revisions necessitated by exterior alterations underground where possible.

### **Core**

Core areas by nature have the potential of becoming congested and visually cluttered districts. Therefore, it is essential that in these areas property owners establish common planning goals in new developments and redeveloping areas to ensure safe, accessible, and visually pleasing Core areas.

## **Objectives**

- A. For each respective Core area, establish common characteristics that will ensure ease of travel and visual coherence.
- B. Encourage the redevelopment of congested Core areas.
- C. Encourage the development of high density residential that is integrated with commercial development.
- D. Create pedestrian-oriented Core areas to ease traffic congestion.
- E. Concentrate intensive commercial uses into one area rather than in long linear corridors.
- F. Develop strategies to accommodate large box retail uses.

## **Guidelines**

- 1. Common links between adjacent sites and land uses should be made whenever possible to ensure connectiveness in these areas of high intensity urban uses.
- 2. Site-to-site movement for vehicles, pedestrians and bicycles should be easy and safe.
- 3. Encourage the interconnection of parking lots and the reduction of driveways along primary, arterial and collector roads.
- 4. Building size, shape, height, and materials should complement adjacent buildings.
- 1. Natural site amenities, especially slopes, trees and drainage, should be conserved to the maximum practical extent.
- 6. Create common areas as buffers along the edges of Core areas that adjoin less intensive land uses.
- 7. Designate and establish landmarks - public buildings, monuments, squares and mini-parks - to strengthen the identity of community Core areas.
- 8. Design exterior lighting and signs as integral architectural elements of the building, site and Core area. Encourage compatibility or shared use of signs for adjacent businesses. Maintain good scale and proportion in sign design and in visual relationships to buildings, surroundings and views.
- 9. Encourage the siting of communication antennae and dishes on existing or new structures rather than on stand-alone towers.

10. Research and develop design and site development strategies to accommodate large box retail uses and allow them to have a positive relationship to the surrounding community.

### **Principal Industrial**

Through innovative planning practices, many industrial areas can become beneficial to adjacent areas, providing jobs for nearby residents and customers for commercial areas.

### **Objectives**

- A. Create industrial districts that use environmental design practices in their development and become assets to surrounding neighborhoods.
- B. Encourage cluster developments within industrial districts, combining industries, support retail and open space.

### **Guidelines**

1. Inventory existing site natural features and resources as a first step in development.
2. Protect and utilize natural features and resources wherever deemed helpful in combating the negative aspects that industrial developments create, such as noise, air emissions, waste discharge, and increased runoff.
3. Where industrial development is adjacent to residential areas, apply exceptional design measures to achieve compatibility.
4. Provide direct access to sufficient capacity public streets.
5. Avoid slopes in excess of 15% for building sites.
6. Take advantage of slopes to break up large parking areas.
7. Plan for trees in parking lots to provide shade (at least one per 20 spaces).
8. Consider the use of pervious pavement for large parking areas.
9. Provide buffering for adjacent land uses in the form of a vegetative screen, open space or a communal greenway.
10. Allow opportunities for industrial site employees' to use alternative modes of travel, such as biking or walking.

11. Encourage the siting of communication antennae and dishes on existing or new structures rather than on stand-alone towers.

### **Scenic Corridors**

Throughout the County there are important corridors where access, aesthetics and future development should be managed in order to preserve scenic rural views and vistas.

### **Objectives**

- A. Preserve identified critical scenic views along the Blue Ridge Parkway, Appalachian Trail, Roanoke River and other scenic corridors. Vistas and overlooks should be protected from the encroachment of development and signage.
- B. Preserve the scenic integrity of important road corridors and historic sites throughout the County.
- C. Designate scenic routes throughout the County where development and design standards can be applied to protect important natural views and vistas.
- D. Create overlay protection zones for these scenic corridors.

### **Guidelines**

1. Produce viewshed maps, as seen when traveling the corridor, to delineate the boundaries of the corridor protection area.
2. Limit the number of access points to adjoining properties by combining driveways.
3. Create a minimum 25 foot natural landscape buffer along the corridor.
4. Limit construction to relatively flat areas (less than 15%) on properties adjoining the road.
5. Consolidate small lots into large parcels to encourage unified development and site planning.
6. Within the scenic corridor, limit structure height to a maximum of 25 feet.
7. Identify major public view points in which prospective developers must develop in accordance with adopted design standards.
8. Discourage the placement of broadcast towers along scenic roads or in scenic viewsheds.

### 3. NEIGHBORHOODS

#### Introduction

Our basic instincts and human nature seek a sense of community, a sense of place where we live, work and play. In Roanoke County, neighborhoods are the backbone of the community. Residents of the County identify very closely to their own neighborhoods and especially to their elementary school districts. This is exemplified by the high attendance at elementary school Parent Teacher Association meetings and youth sports events, festivals and social events that are held at the neighborhood level.

The results of the 1995 visioning citizen survey showed that residents associate more closely with their own subdivisions and neighborhoods than with the County as a whole. This makes it very important to preserve community meeting places such as neighborhood schools, fire and rescue buildings, community centers and community stores. These meeting places serve the same function as neighborhood taverns in more urban locales. It also becomes more critical to preserve those natural, historical and cultural features of a neighborhood that lend uniqueness and that feeling of being home - a sense of place - to the area.

Many neighborhoods in Roanoke County are reaching middle-age - they were built in the late 50's, 60's and early 70's. These communities provide an abundant source of good, affordable housing to citizens throughout this region. It is important to preserve the stability of these areas by finding creative ways to maintain property appearances and housing integrity, thereby maintaining property values in these communities.

Some older Roanoke County neighborhoods will continue to feel pressure for redevelopment as large tracts of commercial property become harder and harder to find. It is important to encourage community redevelopment and infill development along appropriate road systems and in appropriate commercial service areas.

If we as a community are successful in managing growth - encouraging and directing growth toward those areas of the County that can support it - preserving viewsheds and open space and retaining an agricultural base, we need to recognize that there will be more and more pressure for infill development and the redevelopment of existing sites in the more urban areas of the County. This will require some changes in densities and uses in what used to be stable neighborhoods and must be done with appropriate design guidelines, citizen input and the involvement of commercial interests.

#### Goal

**Continue to recognize the importance of Roanoke County neighborhoods and work to preserve the institutions and natural, cultural and historical features that help to define these communities.**

## Issues and Opportunities

- Many Roanoke County neighborhoods have active civic leagues and community watch programs. In addition, as a part of the Community Plan process, neighborhood councils were formed in each of the twelve community planning areas around the County.
- Roanoke County elementary school Parent Teacher Associations often have participation at the one-hundred percent level.
- There is a long-term tradition and commitment to neighborhood schools in Roanoke County.
- Many Roanoke County neighborhoods were built almost 40 years ago. These areas are, to some extent, beginning to show their age and require more and more maintenance and upkeep.
- The older neighborhoods in the County provide a good source of affordable housing.
- Some of the older Roanoke County neighborhoods, that are located in close proximity to commercial centers and primary road access, are subject to redevelopment pressures from commercial interests.
- Most Roanoke County neighborhoods are very dependent on the automobile with very limited pedestrian trails and sidewalks.
- County neighborhoods tend to be very stable.
- There are only a few neighborhoods in the County that have a mix of residential densities or commercial uses.
- The strong economic base of the County has meant that property values are steadily increasing.
- Youth sports events - such as little league, soccer and softball - are great opportunities for neighborhood friends and acquaintances to meet and greet.
- The Roanoke Valley provides a beautiful and relatively clean place to live.
- There are a good variety of housing options and price ranges in the County.
- Some types of housing and housing communities, such as cluster developments and mixed-use developments, are not widely available in the County.

- The County has a high quality of life that manifests itself in low crime, little traffic congestion, abundant natural resources and good schools.
- There are some areas of the County where substandard housing exists.
- There are not “housing maintenance or upkeep” provisions in the County zoning ordinance, County Code or Building Code. It is sometimes difficult to correct problems of this nature.

## **Objectives**

- A. Protect the uniqueness and special characteristics of each Roanoke County neighborhood.
- B. Protect the scenic beauty of Roanoke County while allowing for appropriate economic development.
- C. Require land development patterns that preserve open space.
- D. Ensure that all Roanoke County citizens have access to safe and affordable housing.
- E. Protect the property values of all citizens.
- F. Promote the use of a “liveable traffic” design model - one that values neighborhood appearance, saleability and pedestrian friendly aspects of transportation equally with ease of traffic movements.
- G. Provide all County residents easy access to community parks, ballfields and greenways.
- H. Encourage alternative modes of transportation around neighborhoods such as walking and bicycling.

## **Implementation Strategies**

1. Continue to support the concept of neighborhood schools, recognizing the important function they play in community identity. (Obj. A)
2. Continue to foster the neighborhood councils by expanding their role and developing neighborhood specific plans. (Obj. A)
3. Research the efforts of other communities and implement programs to assist in the maintenance and upkeep of our older neighborhoods. (Obj. E)

4. Develop planning strategies to guide commercial development, community redevelopment and infill development while preserving neighborhood stability and property values. (Obj. A, E)
5. Revise the County zoning ordinance and subdivision ordinance to encourage, where appropriate, sidewalks and greenways throughout new residential developments and connecting neighborhoods and commercial and institutional areas. (Obj. F, G, H)
6. As we work to preserve the more rural areas of Roanoke County, revise the zoning ordinance to allow slightly higher infill development in existing neighborhoods. (Obj. A, B, C, E)
7. Continue to seek community input on all rezoning requests. (Obj. A, E)
8. Encourage community meetings for all rezoning requests. (Obj. A, E)
9. Make the necessary revisions to the zoning ordinance and subdivision ordinance to allow by right, cluster developments and mixed use developments, where appropriate. (Obj. A, B, C, E)
10. Identify substandard housing and seek solutions to alleviate these conditions. (Obj. D)
11. Research the need for housing maintenance regulations to mitigate problems with unkempt property. Develop, if necessary, appropriate regulations. (Obj. D, E)



## 4. QUALITY OF LIFE

### Introduction

To the residents that call Roanoke County home, this is a community with a distinctive character and an abundance of natural beauty. There exists a very intrinsic relationship between the natural resources that exist here - the mountains and ridgetops, forests and streams and breathtaking scenic views - and people's perception of quality of life here in the County.

In a citizen survey, conducted in early 1995, the majority of County residents said there is a high quality of life in Roanoke County and they are very interested in protecting that. For many people this quality of life manifests itself in the natural beauty and scenic resources of this area. Others appreciate the relatively low cost of living, the lack of formidable transportation and commuting problems and the high quality of public education. For whatever reasons, and there is a myriad of them ranging from low crime, good schools and scenic beauty to low cost of housing and cultural opportunities, the citizens of Roanoke County are very interested in protecting their quality of life.

During the visioning process many citizens expressed concern that those things that make Roanoke County "special" could vanish all too quickly without the proper long-range planning. Without well managed growth and development, we could trade in a sense of place and authenticity for a feeling of sameness and homogenization. Steadily and perceptibly, we could lose the distinctive qualities that trigger people's desires to live here, work here and visit here.

There are real and legitimate needs for jobs, tax revenues, a diversified local economy and housing opportunities. Yet there is also the recognition that we need to find more effective strategies that will enable our community to grow in ways that enhance and protect rather than degrade and threaten the quality of life that lends us distinction and character.

### Goal

**To achieve and maintain the highest possible quality of life for the citizens of Roanoke County.**

### Issues and Opportunities

The scenic beauty of Roanoke County is a major contributing factor to the high quality of life here.

- Other factors influencing the high quality of life include the low crime rate, relatively low cost of housing, ease of commuting and high quality public and private school systems.

- The citizens of Roanoke County place high value on the importance of their quality of life and are very protective of it.
- Many newer residents of the County have lived in other places where the quality of life may not have been as high or they experienced the degradation of that quality of life.
- The economic base of the county needs to continue to grow to support an increased demand for and cost of services such as public education.
- The existing rules and regulations for land development do not allow enough flexibility and creativity nor do they require site resource conservation.
- Neighborhood street design standards require excessive cut, fill and tree removal.
- Roanoke County has implemented a tree protection ordinance for public properties but does not have a tree protection ordinance for private lands.
- The existing zoning ordinance and subdivision ordinance do not have the mechanisms to protect mountainsides and ridgelines from inappropriate development.
- The School Board Blue Ribbon Committee has made extensive recommendations concerning physical facilities, which, if adequately funded, will help ensure the continuation of high-quality public schools in the County.
- Roanoke County has maintained, to the extent possible, the concept of neighborhood schools.
- The citizens of Roanoke County believe that the people here are basically friendly.
- Roanoke County is considered a good place to retire due to factors such as cost of living.
- Parks and greenways are seen as important quality of life issues.
- Automobile travel, including commuting to and from work during peak hours of the work day, is relatively easy.
- Parent/teacher associations enjoy a high level of participation at the elementary school level, sometimes approaching one-hundred percent.

## **Objectives**

- A. Preserve the scenic beauty of the County while balancing the need for economic growth.

- B. Promote the location of clean, high-technology research and development firms in the Roanoke Valley.
- C. Maintain the concept of neighborhood schools.
- D. Provide access to community parks and greenways to all citizens.
- E. Provide cultural and recreational opportunities to citizens of all ages.
- F. Promote the use of good traffic planning concepts.
- G. Preserve, where appropriate, existing trees and encourage the planting of tree species that are native to the Blue Ridge region.
- H. Encourage innovation and creativity in land development.

### **Implementation Strategies**

- 1. Develop and adopt more stringent regulations and incentives to protect natural resources in the County - including mountainsides, ridgetops, streams, rivers, viewsheds, open space, wetlands, forests, soils and wildlife. (Obj. A, E, G, H)
- 2. Ensure that future growth and development is consistent with the adopted Community Plan and enhances the quality of life of Roanoke County citizens. (Obj. A, B, C, D, E, F, G, H)
- 3. Modify and enhance design guidelines, incorporating incentives where feasible, to be applied to all future residential, commercial and industrial developments. (Obj. A, H)
- 4. Continue funding and support of the greenway system and develop a dedicated source of funding to support the system. (Obj. D)
- 5. Fully implement the recommendations of the School Board Blue Ribbon Committee for school construction and maintenance needs. (Obj. C)
- 6. Revise the neighborhood street design standards to give liveability, pedestrian/bicycle and retail friendly aspects equal footing with ease of traffic movements. (Obj. F)
- 7. Adopt a tree protection ordinance that applies to private properties. (Obj. A, G)
- 8. Ensure that future commercial and industrial parks receiving financial or tax incentives from the County are built as park-like environments and include strict design guidelines, greenways and open space. (Obj. B, D, H)

9. Revise the subdivision ordinance to encourage the dedication of greenway easements at the time a subdivision is platted. (Obj. D)
10. Continue to support and participate in the regional land trust - a publicly-supported charitable organization providing a voluntary means to promote the preservation of natural and cultural resources - and other statewide and national land trusts. (Obj. A, E, H)
11. Continue to provide a variety of housing options in a broad range of prices. (Obj. H)
12. Through zoning ordinance revisions, allow for increased housing density, while requiring the dedication of open space. (Obj. A, D, E, H)
13. Encourage the development and re-development of lands served by public utilities while discouraging through zoning ordinance revisions the development of lands without these services. (Obj. A, H)
14. Continue to preserve the nature and stability of existing single-family neighborhoods but allow infill development, appropriately designed, at slightly higher densities. (Obj. H)
15. Continue to work cooperatively with, and provide financial support to, cultural and recreational organizations which provide invaluable opportunities to County residents. (Obj. E)
16. Expand the Roanoke County park system so that neighborhood parks are accessible to all citizens. (Obj. D, E)
17. Expand and enhance the County-wide road beautification efforts. (Obj. A, G)

## 5. REGIONALISM

### Introduction

Roanoke County is one of several local government units that make up the Roanoke Valley. The high quality of life that Roanoke County citizens have come to expect and deserve can continue and grow only if we practice, in a proactive manner, broad-based collaboration and cooperation with neighboring jurisdictions. Roanoke County should take the lead in these endeavors.

As we move into the next century, we need to begin to think of this geographic area as a cohesive unit rather than as many, often competing, parts. Many of the challenges of the twenty first century will know no geographic boundary line and will present all Valley citizens and local officials with opportunities to seek efficient and effective solutions. Critical issues such as economic development, natural resource preservation, transportation, cultural opportunities and housing require a regional perspective and regional solutions. We must find new and innovative ways to work together for the good of all.

### Goal

**To work in cooperation with all local jurisdictions to provide the highest quality services, in the most efficient and effective manner, to Roanoke County citizens.**

### Issues and Opportunities

- The formation of the New Century Council presents the opportunity to look outside our own county limits and develop a strong economic base that is competitive in the global marketplace.
- A coordinated regional approach is needed to attract high-quality targeted industries.
- The scenic beauty of this region is largely attributed to the mountains. Many of the significant mountain ridges and ranges extend beyond the boundaries of the County.
- The Roanoke Valley has the unique opportunity to develop a world-class bikeway and greenway system that is interjurisdictional and interconnected.
- The road infrastructure between the City of Roanoke and Roanoke County is very interconnected due to the “doughnut” configuration of the two localities.
- The County has many intergovernmental projects with the Town of Vinton, the Cities of Roanoke and Salem, Botetourt County and other neighboring jurisdictions such as fire and rescue facilities, libraries, sewer treatment plant and the airport.

## **Objectives**

- A. Preserve the scenic beauty and natural resources of Roanoke County and the greater Roanoke Valley.
- B. Attract high-technology research and development firms to the Roanoke Valley.
- C. Promote a cooperative working relationship with neighboring jurisdictions.
- D. Promote communication and coordination with neighboring jurisdictions on planning issues.
- E. Promote Roanoke County and the greater Roanoke Valley as a tourist destination.
- F. Continue to participate in joint projects with neighboring jurisdictions to provide services to County citizens - such as communication facilities, libraries, fire and rescue facilities and water and sewer lines - in the most efficient manner.

## **Implementation Strategies**

- 1. Fully support and participate in the New Century Council. (Obj. A, B, C, D, E, F)
- 2. Continue to support and participate in the Roanoke Valley Greenway Commission. (Obj. A, C, D, E)
- 3. Implement regional cellular tower policies to protect the region's viewsheds and mountaintops. (Obj. A, D)
- 4. Continue to support and participate in the Roanoke Valley Economic Development Partnership and the Industrial Development Authority. (Obj. B)
- 5. Continue to support and participate in the Roanoke Valley Convention and Visitors Bureau. (Obj. E)
- 6. Continue to notify adjoining localities when rezoning petitions impact property at the mutual boundaries. (Obj. D)
- 7. Continue to meet jointly with the governing bodies of adjoining jurisdictions. (Obj. C, D, F)
- 8. Encourage the Planning Commission to meet jointly, on an annual rotating basis, with planning commissions from adjoining jurisdictions as is currently done with City of Roanoke and the Town of Vinton. (Obj. C, D, F)

9. Continue to work cooperatively with the Fifth Planning District Commission on regional planning projects. (Obj. C, D, F)
10. Continue to support and participate in regional, statewide and national land trusts. (Obj. A, C, D, E)
11. Seek opportunities to work with other jurisdictions to attract high-quality, clean, research and development firms to this region. Share in the costs of infrastructure and share the generated revenue. (Obj. B)
12. Expand the Roanoke County park system so that neighborhood parks are accessible to all citizens. (Obj. A, E)
13. Expand and enhance the County-wide road beautification efforts. (Obj. A)

## 6. ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT PLAN

### Introduction

Economic development is a dynamic public program in Roanoke County. This activity is defined as, “ the process of creating wealth through the mobilization of human, financial, capital, physical, and natural resources to generate marketable goods and services.” The economic development process is of critical importance to the continued high quality of life in Roanoke County and the continued ability of the County to provide a high level of public services to citizens.

Roanoke County established an economic development program in 1985 and implemented an economic development strategy to establish the initial goals and objectives for implementation. Subsequently, the Board of Supervisors re-adopted an economic development strategy in 1987 and 1989.

The Economic Development Strategy adopted in May 1992 was intended to complement the 1985 Comprehensive Plan. The Strategy presented six economic opportunity areas into which economic activity would be promoted. The emphasis was to identify potential commercial and industrial sites that could be developed and marketed by the County as “product” for economic development opportunities. A series of public actions, including proposed capital improvements, rezonings and coordination with VDOT primary and secondary road planning were recommended to implement the Economic Development Strategy.

A tourism strategy was presented which proposed the development of Virginia’s Explore Park, the promotion of special events and privately owned tourism destinations, the development of tourism infrastructure (hotels, restaurants, etc.), the promotion of the County’s historic resources and closer coordination with the Roanoke Valley Convention and Visitors Bureau to market the region.

The Economic Development Strategy, 2000 and Beyond sets forth details of implementation activities and impact measures for the four program areas of existing industry development, business attraction, tourism and community development. The goals and objectives of the Strategy are generally described below.

### Goal

**To create a healthy, viable, diverse economy in Roanoke County:**

- 1. By maintaining a healthy prosperous economic base of existing businesses;**



2. **By carrying out a coordinated program to target and attract compatible business and industry to locate in Roanoke County to increase the commercial and industrial tax base and related employment opportunities;**
3. **By increasing the number of visitors to Roanoke County and;**
4. **By recognizing that the community is an economic development “product”.**

### **Issues and Opportunities**

- Competition among land uses for developable land: There is a limited amount of developable land in Roanoke County. Residential uses and tax-exempt activities are the major land uses competing with economic development for developable land. Potential commercial and industrial sites need to be identified, rezoned and “land banked” for future development.
- Identify economic opportunity areas: The 1992 Economic Development Strategy delineated the I-81 corridor, North County/Hollins Road, the Route 460 East Corridor, West County, Explore Park and the Southwest County/419 Corridor as economic opportunity areas. Since 1992, significant economic development activities have occurred in these areas. The following have implemented the Economic Development Strategy:

**I-81 Corridor** - proposed I-81 widening and I-73 location study, North Loop of the Spring Hollow Transmission Line, Hanging Rock Battlefield Trail project, development of Interstate Commerce Park and new hotel construction;

**North County/Hollins Road** - Winn Dixie, Hanover Domestications, planned Hollins Road improvements and widening, expansion of ITT Night Vision, Williamson Road Master Plan, commercial development on Peters Creek Road, expansion of Optical Cable Corporation and GaAstek at Valley Pointe;

**Route 460 East Corridor** - Valley Gateway Business Park and industrial shell building, commercial development (Acme Business Machines, Famous Anthony’s, Bank of Botetourt), industrial development in Jack Smith Park and Carson Road sewer extension;

**West County** - Development of Valley TechPark and location of R.R. Donnelley and Rusco, expansion of Kroger Mid-Atlantic Distribution Facility, acquisition of 456 acres and planning /design of Roanoke County Center for Research and Technology and proposed improvements to Route 11/460;

**Explore Park** - Completion of Roanoke River Parkway into Virginia's Explore Park, expansion of facilities at Explore including opening of the Brugh Tavern restaurant, plans for Blue Ridge Parkway Orientation and Interpretation Center, planning of adjacent land for Parkway compatible uses at McDonald Farm and Virginia Mountain Country; and,

**Southwest County/419 corridor** - New investment/construction at Tanglewood Mall, location of Lowe's Home Center in Pinkard Court, location of Harris Teeter store, expansion of business in Southwest Industrial Park.

Maps of the Economic Opportunity Areas are included in this section. These maps include existing commercial and industrial areas and potential economic opportunity sites for future use. Economic Opportunity Areas are intended to provide for future economic development, conform to future land use designations and be an overlay on the land use maps of the Community Plan.

- **Product development for sites and buildings:** Roanoke County needs an inventory of commercial and industrial sites in order to compete in economic development. The identification of potential sites is the initial step in the process of converting an undeveloped property into a "ready to go" commercial or industrial site. The Industrial Development Authority of Roanoke County implemented a rezoning study of potential commercial and industrial sites in 1995-96 and rezoned 117 acres for such uses. The Department of Economic Development is involved in the Capital Improvement Plan process by recommending projects for funding and working with the Utility Department to identify water and sewer extension projects that will extend public utilities to potential sites. The staff has worked with the Department of Community Development and the Virginia Department of Transportation to identify secondary roads and primary highways needing improvements that serve economic development areas. Roanoke County has initiated the location of publicly owned industrial parks such as Valley TechPark (177 acres) and the Roanoke County Center for Research and Technology (456 acres) and has participated as a partner in the development of Valley Pointe (52 acres in Phase I), Valley Gateway (108 acres), and Jack Smith Industrial Park (68 acres). Roanoke County participated with The Greater Roanoke Valley Development Foundation to construct a 75,000 foot expandable shell building in Valley Gateway. The County's role is to provide marketable, "ready to go" commercial and industrial sites and buildings so that we can respond favorably and promptly to inquiries about expansions and relocations.
- **Targeting business and industry:** The Roanoke Valley Economic Development Partnership markets the Roanoke Valley as a business location and serves as a point of contact for companies seeking to relocate to or expand within the Valley. The Partnership has targeted automotive and transportation related, wireless communications, printing and large office and corporate headquarters. Roanoke County concurs in this list and adds large commercial projects and technology based companies that pay salaries and wages above \$10.00 per hour.

- Using quality measures to evaluate economic development opportunities: The series of community workshops held in the planning areas of the County confirmed that the quality of an economic development is important to the citizens. The appearance and the impacts on the local community are important factors to consider in proposing new projects in areas adjacent to residential areas. Roanoke County pursued a design “charette” with the citizens residing adjacent to both the McDonald Farm and the Roanoke County Center for Research and Technology. This process has resulted in a Master Plan that the County and Town recently qualified by hiring a marketing firm to review the economic feasibility of the various land uses proposed in the Master Plan. Retention of natural vegetation, site and building design criteria, open space preservation and the adoption of protective and restrictive covenants are some of the quality measures adopted in the Master Plan process which will not be compromised as development occurs.
- Recognizing that tourism is one of the fastest growing economic sectors: Tourism is one of the fastest growing sectors in the economy. Roanoke County partners with the Roanoke Valley Convention and Visitors Bureau to market the area to the leisure traveler, group tours and conventions/conferences. The County has six interchanges on Interstate 81 and three exits from the Blue Ridge Parkway. The County’s role is to help create tourism “product”, such as Virginia’s Explore Park and the Hanging Rock Battlefield Trail, that will draw travelers from these roads into the Roanoke Valley. The Economic Development staff must also encourage the development of tourism infrastructure in the private sector so that hotels, restaurants and travel related services are available for visitors. A partnership is proposed to locate and construct an orientation/interpretation center serving the Blue Ridge Parkway visitor is being studied to benefit Virginia’s Explore Park and the Roanoke Valley.
- Assisting economic development through its public private partnerships: Roanoke County has adopted a public-private partnership policy to assist businesses with expansion and relocation opportunities. Funds are annually appropriated to an economic development fund and administered for projects in accordance with the policy. The County will consider financing eligible public improvements and employee training costs as a partnership if there is a “payback” or return on investment from new taxes/fees generated by a commercial or industrial project. Typical partnerships involve extensions of water and sewer service and related utility connection fees. All projects are subject to the execution of a performance agreement between the County and a prospect to insure that a proposed development meets its investment goals. Partnerships are audited by the County staff to determine if the taxes and fees are being generated by a partnership project.
- Maintaining existing business to expand the local tax base: Roanoke County carries out an annual existing industry visitation program to contact companies located within the County. These visits provide a confidential update of a company’s products, markets, operations and growth potential. The goal is to retain investment and employment within Roanoke County. Existing businesses are eligible for public-private partnership

assistance. The Economic Development staff also coordinates with other County offices and State and Federal agencies to address issues raised by existing businesses.

- Redevelopment in the County is encouraged through a broad based community development approach that includes citizens, business and the County as partners: Redevelopment in Roanoke County is best approached with the involvement of public and private parties. The Lowe's Home Center project in Pinkard Court and the Williamson Road Corridor Plan are examples of two successful redevelopment efforts. In both instances a Master Plan was developed, citizens and the business community became involved and public monies were used to leverage private funds for property improvement and development. County staff served as a partner in these projects and as a facilitator assisting all parties to accomplish their goals.
- Assisting business startups and small business: The Economic Development staff has many contacts in both the public and private sectors. The Commonwealth of Virginia, the Service Corps of Retired Executives (SCORE), the New Century Venture Center, regional agencies (such as TAP), local colleges and universities and the regional Small Business Development Center (SBDC) are available to assist citizens seeking to start a business. County staff referrals to these resources will contribute to the growth of new businesses in Roanoke County.

## **Objectives**

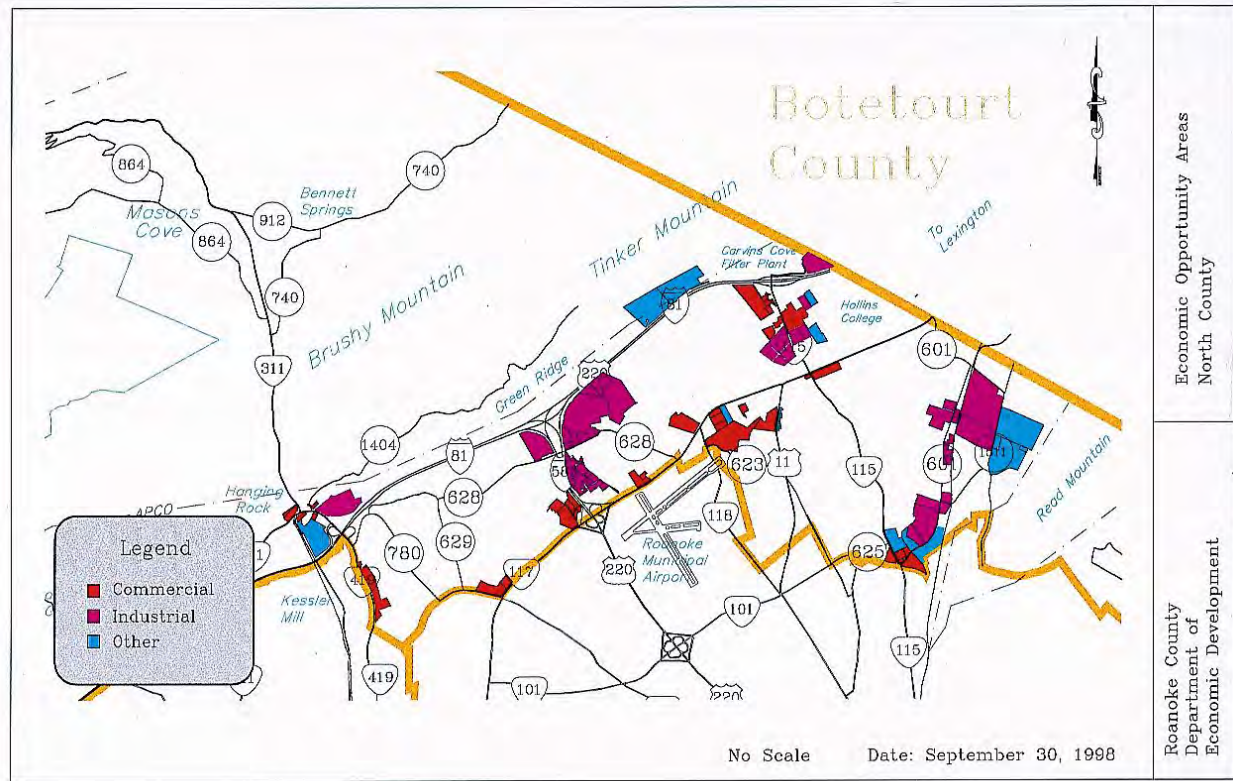
- A. Strengthen existing industry retention efforts and assist companies to expand within Roanoke County.
- B. Attract new industry to the County that will enhance the industry base.
- C. Identify potential commercial and industrial sites and pursue opportunities to add these properties to the "product" inventory of the County.
- D. Identify opportunities to increase tourism "product" such as special events, destinations and private businesses.
- E. Increase public awareness of business activities and their role in the economic base of Roanoke County.
- F. Identify areas for community development projects that will allow the citizens, businesses and County to jointly improve a geographic area.
- G. Identify potential public-private partnerships that will enhance economic development in Roanoke County.

## Implementation Strategies

1. Carry out the four economic development program areas described in the Economic Development Strategy 2000 and Beyond of Existing Industry Development, Business Attraction, Tourism and Community Development. (Obj. A, B, C, D, E, F, G)
2. Implement all three development phases of the Roanoke County Center for Research and Technology. (Obj. B, C, G)
3. Locate and construct the Blue Ridge Parkway Orientation/Interpretation Center. (Obj. D)
4. Identify sites and opportunities for future business park development. (Obj. C, F)
5. Review the I-73 Corridor for economic opportunities. (Obj. C, F)
6. Redevelop the Hanging Rock area and West Main Street (Route 460) corridor. (Obj. A, D, F, G)
7. Continue the land banking program to identify, reserve and rezone Economic Opportunity Areas for future needs. (Obj. C)
8. Develop of regional publicly owned business park. (Obj. A, B, C, E, G)

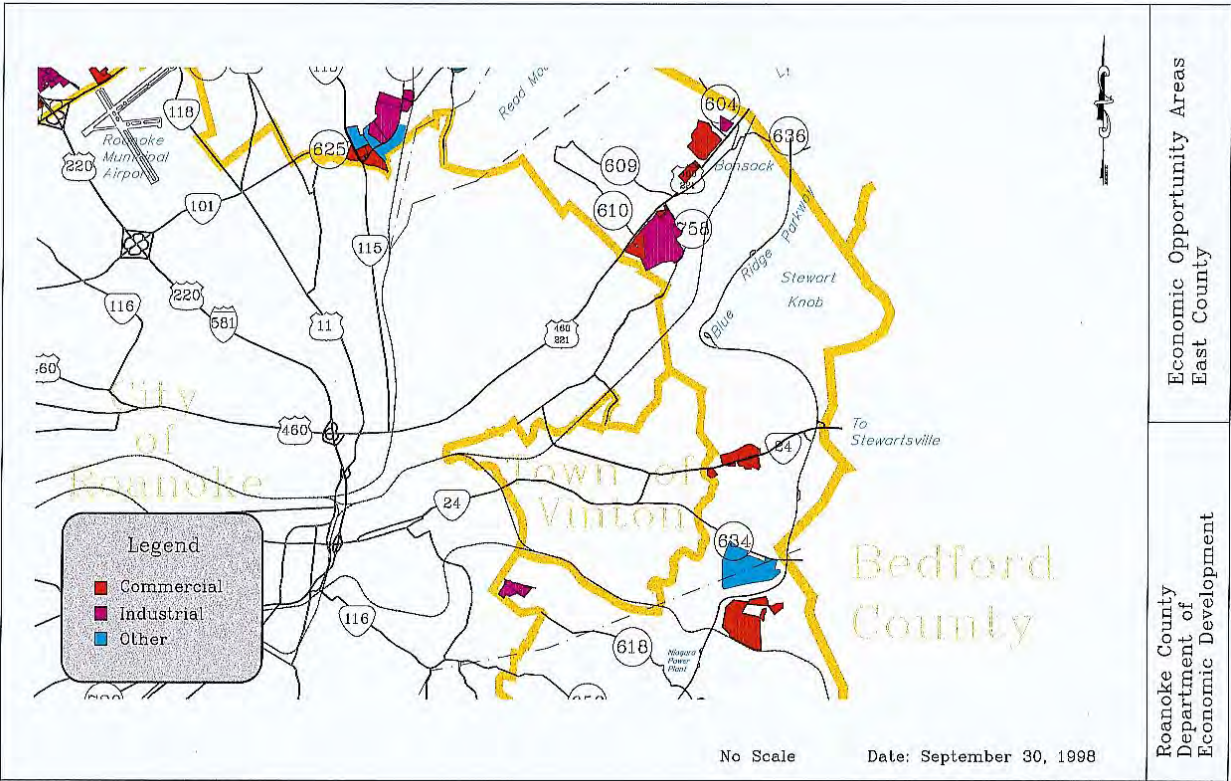
The following Economic Opportunity Area maps include existing commercial and industrial areas and potential economic opportunity sites for future use. The blue areas identified on these maps as “Other” are areas that have not been specifically identified at this time as future commercial or industrial areas. They are areas where, based upon their location, access or topography, some potential for future economic opportunity exists.

Economic Opportunity Area Map - North County



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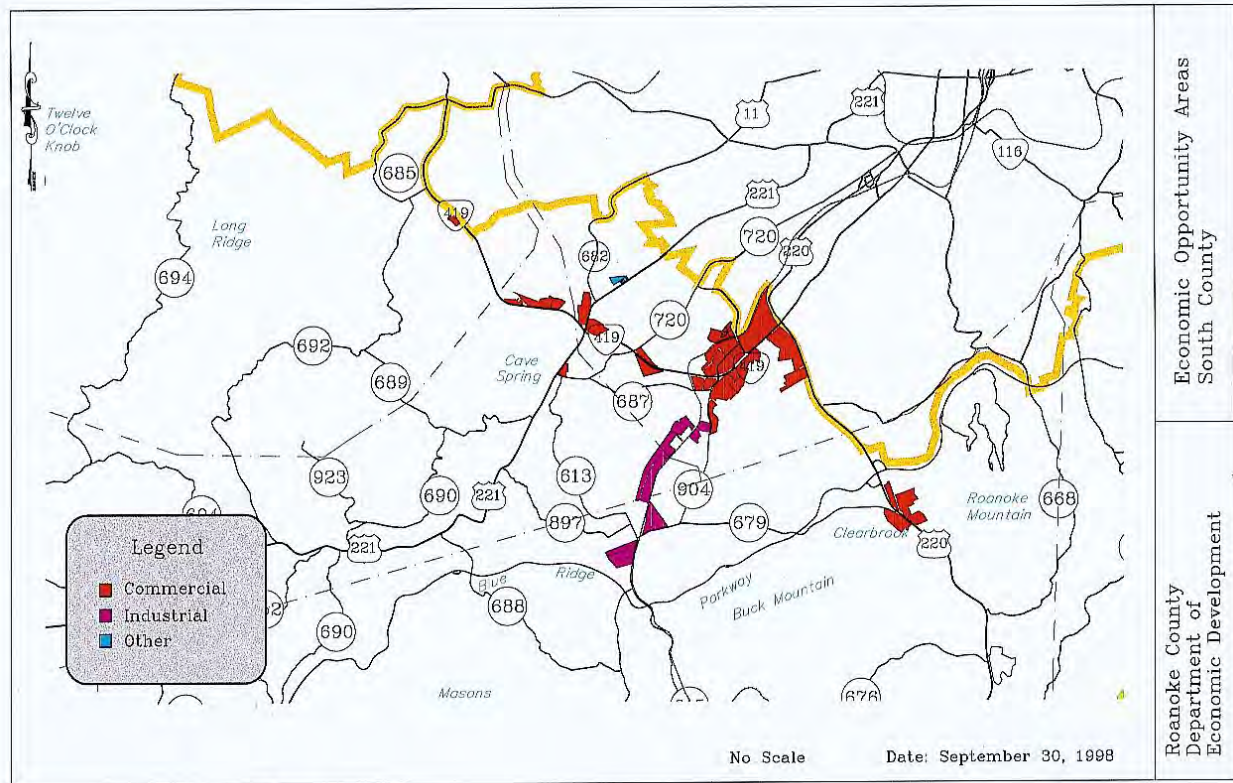
Economic Opportunity Area Map - East County





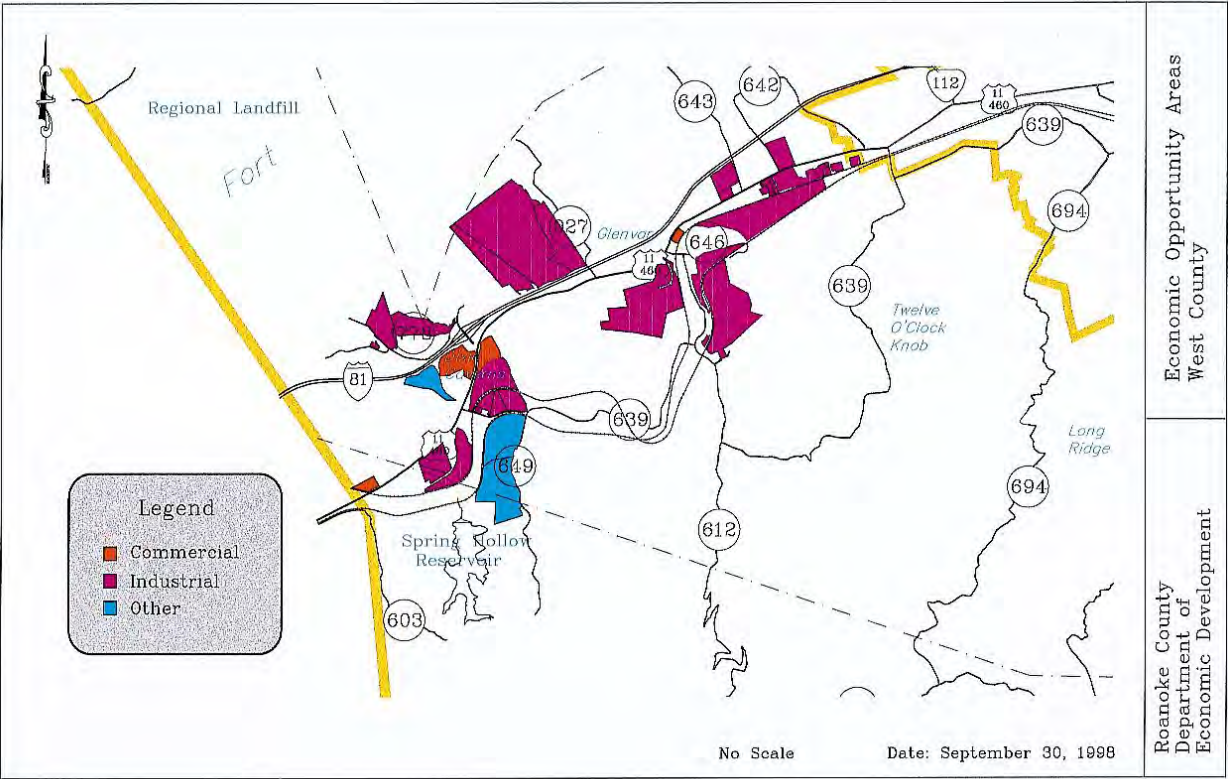
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Economic Opportunity Area Map - South County



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Economic Opportunity Area Map - West County



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# CHAPTER 4

## COMMUNITY FACILITIES

### 1. PARKS AND RECREATION

#### **Introduction**

The Roanoke County Parks and Recreation Department offers a vast variety of programs and services. The department oversees large-scale special events, an after school program, development of a residential camp, a ropes course, new park developments and a teen center. The department is motivated to offer the best possible programs and services to the citizens of Roanoke County and the surrounding areas.

The future direction of park facility development includes some exciting projects for Roanoke County. In addition to developing and updating master plans for parks, the Parks and Recreation Department is actively seeking sites and funding to acquire new park land. During school renovation and new school construction, the Parks and Recreation Department and the School Board work to develop joint-use facilities and community centers. The department actively supports the efforts of the Roanoke Valley Greenway Commission. A recent successful fundraising campaign has provided money for significant investment at Camp Roanoke and a master plan for park development around Spring Hollow Reservoir has been completed.

#### **Goal**

**To protect, conserve and manage designated Roanoke County public parks, assigned public lands and associated environmental, cultural and historic resources consistent with the needs, attitudes and interests of County residents and within available resources.**

#### **Issues and Opportunities**

- There is growing interest in a Valley-wide greenway system. With the creation of the Roanoke Valley Greenway Commission, opportunities exist to create and expand trail systems throughout the County and across jurisdictional lines. Greenways can serve as a link between destinations such as schools, parks, libraries, and commercial and employment centers. Greenways also can preserve important natural areas, protect water quality, and promote healthy lifestyles and physical fitness. There needs to be continued support for the planning and development of greenways on a County and Valley-wide basis.

- Roanoke County Parks and Recreation and the Roanoke County School Board have a long history and tradition of the joint use and development of park and athletic facilities. Joint use is a cost-effective way to optimize the use of publicly owned land. As the School system proceeds with the implementation of the Blue Ribbon Committee's School Facilities Plan, efforts should be made to incorporate design strategies that promote and accommodate non-school community programs. Where practical, gyms should be full sized, with convenient and safe access. Outdoor recreation areas should be developed that support both the schools and secondarily, the community recreation mission.
- The requirements associated with the passing of Americans With Disabilities Act has increased both the demand and the expectations for recreation services for our physically and mentally challenged citizens.
- Opportunities exist to partner with private businesses, non-profit community service organizations, and other local governments to develop facilities, programs, and events which will improve the quality of life of all Valley residents. Through increased tourism, these partnerships could also have a positive impact on the business community.
- The development community can provide additional park and recreation facilities. These facilities may include dedication of park land or payment in lieu of dedication, construction of park facilities, dedication and construction of greenways and other forms of public-private partnerships.

### **Objectives**

- A. Continue to develop the County's district parks as a major source of recreational facilities and activities.
- B. Develop a greenway system, and funding mechanism, that provides access to Roanoke County's cultural, historic, and recreational resources for the benefit of all Roanoke Valley citizens.
- C. Encourage the provision of open space and park facilities with new development.
- D. Acquire additional land for new parks, or expansion of existing parks, where facility deficits exist.
- E. Seek alternative funding methods for existing and future recreation facilities and programs.
- F. Provide additional park and recreation facilities during the renovation and/or construction of schools.

- G. Expand the number, size, and type of park facilities in Roanoke County.
- H. Provide alternative modes of transportation to access recreation facilities.
- I. Provide adequate waterfront access to the Roanoke River.
- J. Develop strategies to preserve the Roanoke River as a recreational resource.
- K. Continue to encourage public input and opinion in planning for parks and recreation.
- L. Attract major athletic events and festivals to park facilities.

### **Implementation Strategies**

- 1. Continue to use the master planning process to obtain citizen input for park facility's development. (Obj. A, G, K)
- 2. Use the Capital Improvements Program (CIP) to acquire land and provide improvements to the County's park and recreation facilities. (Obj. D, F, G)
- 3. Obtain State and Federal funds for park and recreational facility development whenever possible. (Obj. B, E)
- 4. Revise subdivision and zoning ordinances to require specific amounts of park land to be dedicated or payment in lieu of dedication by developers to the County based upon the population to be served as well as the size of the development. (Obj. C)
- 5. Coordinate with the Roanoke County School Board on the location, phasing, and design of school and park sites to enhance the potential for development of community recreation facilities. (Obj. F, G)
- 6. Develop an integrated park and greenway system linking major resource areas, parks and schools. (Obj. B, F, H)
- 7. Capitalize on the region's tourism through publication of recreational site locations and activities, public waterfront access locations and community programs and events. (Obj. I, J, L)
- 8. Develop intergovernmental agreements for the provision of recreational programs and facilities. (Obj. B, J, L)
- 9. Continue to develop park facilities at Camp Roanoke and Spring Hollow Reservoir. (Obj. E, G)



10. Expand Valley Metro and Cortran service to ensure access to County recreation centers and district parks. (Obj. H)
11. Evaluate the development of a County-owned and operated water park. (Obj. D, G)
12. Implement the Southwest District Park Master Plan. (Obj. A, G, K)
13. Develop a soccer complex in north Roanoke County. (Obj. A, G, K)
14. Encourage neighboring jurisdictions to adopt the Roanoke River Corridor Conservation Overlay District. (Obj. I, J)

## 2. LIBRARIES

### Introduction

In 1996, the Roanoke County Library Board of Trustees revised and approved the *Roanoke County Public Library Five-Year Plan*. The plan provides goals, objectives and strategies for the following components of the library system: resources; operation, organization, and procedures; staff development; collection development; program service and development; technology, capital items and facilities; and interdepartmental and interlibrary cooperation.

The *Roanoke County Public Library Five-Year Plan* has a simple and effective structure of goals, objectives, and implementation strategies. The plan is divided into seven components. Each component of the plan has one general goal, with several underlying objectives. Each objective has strategies to meet the objectives. Each strategy is given a target year for completion. The goals of each component are listed below as objectives. A sample of the objectives of each component goal are listed below as implementation strategies. For complete text of the plan, the reader should refer to the *Roanoke County Public Library Five-Year Plan, April 24, 1996*.

### Goal

**The Roanoke County Public Library System is a community information and life-long learning center which provides citizens with the resources to help them develop their intellectual, economic, cultural and educational potential.**

### Issues and Opportunities

- As a world-wide, information-based economy continues to develop, accompanied by vast structural changes in the work force, continual job-related learning, training, and development will become increasingly important to citizens. Career and vocational information, specific skills instruction and access to distant education programs will be vital.
- Demand will grow for electronic, online, audio and video formats and for multimedia information delivery. Libraries will need to have all of these items in their collections and must have the facilities and equipment for their housing and use.
- Extended hours and special reference and research services will be needed as customers want maximum convenience to fit their hectic, demanding lives.
- The way information is gathered, stored, accessed, and disseminated will be subject to continuing technological change as well as changes driven by human behavioral factors and needs. Validation, arrangement and packaging of information may change radically.

- Automation of routine tasks will help maintain services. Customer self-charging systems, debit cards, security systems, after-hours voice mail and e-mail drops and automated calling systems are all possibilities.
- Contracted cataloging and preliminary processing of up to 70% of all selected titles may eventually be possible, freeing technical services personnel for public services work. Document delivery may be another possible outsourcing option.
- As research strategies and the available search tools become more sophisticated and varied, staff will need to receive constant training to provide effective service. Library work will demand increased knowledge and skills, and, on the average, reference transactions will become more complicated and time-consuming.
- The average age of Roanoke County citizens is increasing. Older library consumers tend to need and demand a higher level of service, including more or improved services in areas such as health and medical information, investment research and non-book formats.
- While children will decrease as a percentage of the County's population their absolute number will remain relatively stable. Continued service improvements will be required for children and students. In an information-economy, the library's role as a doorway to learning and reading for pre-schoolers will be more crucial than ever.
- Assisting students to be competitive with students from around the world will be important. The library can help the information "have nots" of all ages - but especially children - to gain access to technology and information.
- In trying to serve the needs of the oldest and youngest age groups the library will need to improve outreach activities. Beyond these two age groups, the community will also benefit from increased outreach to businesses and educational agencies.
- The library needs to develop more extensive working partnerships with other agencies and private sector organizations.
- The library needs place for active, noisy toddlers as well as quiet space for dedicated researchers. Additional space is needed for community meetings and programs, space supporting the arts and local cultural efforts and instructional space for distant learners.
- The development of the Internet will continue to increase demand on library services.

## **Objectives**

- A. Increase quality of managerial control of resources and seek to improve resource level.
- B. Improve the efficiency and effectiveness of operations and procedures.

- C. Provide opportunities for staff skill development and improvement.
- D. Develop strong, responsive collections, which address well defined, prioritized needs through the systematic use of collection management and developmental techniques and tools.
- E. Expand the customer base for current programs; identify emergent programming needs and develop appropriate support and action plans.

### **Implementation Strategies**

- 1. Maintain and improve current reporting methodologies. (Obj. A)
- 2. Adjust and refine formal resource allocation procedures. (Obj. A)
- 3. Develop a staffing plan to project staffing need based on workload indicators and service plan, and define needed new positions. (Obj. A)
- 4. Establish and support budget goals for collections. (Obj. A)
- 5. Diversify team activities through greater use of working teams to address specific, emergent issues. (Obj. B)
- 6. Complete restructuring process. (Obj. B)
- 7. Adopt a vision statement to complement the mission statement. (Obj. B)
- 8. Revise five-year plan. (Obj. B)
- 9. Promote team concept and support county training. (Obj. C)
- 10. Improve and expand in-house training. (Obj. C)
- 11. Support attendance for professional programs, conferences, and workshops. (Obj. C)
- 12. Retain annual special collection development goal plan. (Obj. D)
- 13. Begin to build systemized collection development plan. (Obj. D)
- 14. Maintain expanded staff participation in collection development. (Obj. D)
- 15. Conduct needs' assessments and fill rate studies. (Obj. D)

16. Provide strong support for juvenile services programs. (Obj. E)
17. Develop plan for adult programming. (Obj. E)
18. Identify and protect core fundamental services from fee encroachment, but consider fee-based enrichment programs. (Obj. E)
19. Strengthen local history collection and services. (Obj. E)
20. Expand electronic services. (Obj. E)

### 3. SCHOOLS

#### **Introduction**

In April 1996, the Roanoke County School Board began a comprehensive study of their 28 educational facilities. The School Board hired a local consulting firm to coordinate the project. The consulting firm set up local school committees for each of the 28 facilities. The committees consisted of individuals, such as school faculty and staff, PTA members, and parents, who were the most familiar with the physical needs of the schools. The local school committees made lists of major capital investment needs, as well as operation and maintenance needs.

The Roanoke County Board of Supervisors and School Board jointly developed a citizen committee to evaluate and prioritize the results of the facility study. The 22-member group was named the Blue Ribbon Committee. The Blue Ribbon Committee visited each of the school facilities to review the list of needs developed by the local school committees. Following their review and evaluation, the Blue Ribbon Committee identified \$100 million in school capital improvement needs. Three phases of construction were recommended over a 10-year period. The total cost of the recommended improvements, adjusted for inflation, is approximately \$121 million.

On March 17, 1997, the Blue Ribbon Committee presented the school facility's plan to a joint meeting of the Roanoke County Board of Supervisors and the Roanoke County School Board. On March 27, 1997, the School Board accepted and endorsed in concept the report of the Blue Ribbon Committee. On April 22, 1997, the Board of Supervisors passed a resolution endorsing in concept the recommendations presented by the Blue Ribbon Committee.

#### **Goal**

**Support and implement the School Facilities Plan submitted by the Blue Ribbon Committee and adopted by the School Board.**

#### **Issues and Opportunities**

The following issues and opportunities were provided by the School Board in 1997. Some of the issues were carried over from the 1985 Comprehensive Plan, Community Facilities Plan.

- The Roanoke County School Board's six-year plan presents goals and strategies intended to enhance the teaching/learning process and to give direction to improvement efforts. The Roanoke County School Board has developed and continues to support a wide range of academic and extracurricular programs. The curriculum and design of each of these Programs are reviewed on a regular schedule to ensure that classroom instruction and other school activities reflect the best practices and recent research.

- Enrollment is predicted to increase by approximately 3.5% by 2000. The largest increase is anticipated in the West County District (6.1%), followed by Vinton (5.5%), South County (2.9%), and North County (1.3%).
- Roanoke County schools serve as multiple-use facilities. Adult education and continuing education programs use various school facilities. In addition, the School Administration building is used for seminars and workshops. The school system cooperates with the Roanoke County Department of Parks and Recreation in making available gymnasiums and athletic fields for recreation use after school hours. Citizens in many sections of the County sponsor community education programs and/or community meetings in respective elementary schools. County schools are used frequently for community activities and for polling stations. School libraries can also serve as public resources.
- Acquiring school sites over the next 10 years will provide a significant challenge to the County School system, due to an ever tightening real estate market and lack of sites suitable for school facilities.
- The County and the school system cooperate in the areas of central purchasing of paper products, office supplies, food items, office machine maintenance, insurance, data processing services and gasoline facilities.

### Objectives

The following objectives for school facilities are excerpts from Section 3A, 3B, and 3C, Statement of Equality Issues in *The 1997 Comprehensive Facilities Study of the Roanoke County School System*. In the Statement of Equality Issues, the Blue Ribbon Committee established guidelines for school population size, school space requirements, safety requirements, and regulatory requirements. The guidelines were developed for elementary, middle/junior high, and high schools.

#### Statement of Equality Issues, Elementary Schools

##### Size

Newly constructed elementary schools' student population should be no larger than 600 to 660. However, most of the existing elementary structures were not originally designed for those numbers and their size should not be increased to handle more than a maximum population of 500.

##### Requirements

Dedicated areas should be established at each school for the resource subjects of art, physical education, music, reading specialist, learning disability specialist, computer lab and other special areas such as guidance and library.

##### Safety

## Chapter 4: Community Facilities

- All doors unlocked during the school hours should be monitored either through a visual means or opening from an office which is constantly manned or by means of electronic equipment.
- All doors should be designed to be operable by all students.
- There should be a 2-way communication intercom in every instructional area for use by the teacher.
- Each school should have a monitored sick child room or clinic.
- Each school should have adequate lighting, indoors and out, to support school functions.
- Dusk-to-dawn lighting should be used at the exterior of each school.
- Each building's electrical system, interior signage, fire alarms, fire doors, emergency exits, etc, should be maintained at current code, not "grandfathered" into acceptance at the expense of safety.
- Procedures for safe arrival and departure of students, whether by bus, auto or on foot, should be implemented and reviewed periodically.
- Adequate space for bus loading and unloading should be provided on school property.
- Adequate parking space should be provided.
- Restroom facilities with adequate ventilation and capacity should be provided.

### Regulatory

- "Push and go" doors for handicapped accessibility.
- Access to handicapped bathroom facilities.
- Compliance with ADA through ramps, elevators, etc.
- Compliance with all current local, state and federal codes is required.



Statement of Equality Issues, Middle / Junior High Schools

Size

The optimum size for a middle school is approximately 800 to 850 students, with a core facilities capacity of approximately 1,000.

Requirements

- Requirements under the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) must be met.
- Classroom space properly designed and appropriately equipped to meet special education needs must be provided.
- Properly equipped science labs with adequate dedicated space for storage and separate preparation rooms are essential.
- Music and art are not frills. These disciplines are an important part of our culture. Adequate dedicated space must be provided for instruction and storage for these subjects.
- Core areas such as the gymnasium, cafeteria, auditorium, media center/library, and computer labs must be large enough to accommodate the students and faculty in reasonable comfort.
- Sufficient space must be dedicated to essential administrative functions such as administrative offices, guidance offices and conference rooms and storage areas.
- A properly equipped faculty lounge, of a size adequate to accommodate the faculty, is essential. Faculty work areas must be provided so that teachers have a space dedicated to the planning and preparation that are an essential part of proper instruction.
- Storage space is, at best, inadequate and often nonexistent. Storage areas for instructional equipment and materials must be provided.
- Adequate student lockers must be provided. Students should not be required to share lockers. A resolution of the overcrowding problem may alleviate this situation.
- Persistent problems with air conditioning, humidity and heating must be solved.

Safety

- A sick student room with a sink must be provided.
- The administrative offices must be located and configured to provide visual control of all unlocked entrances so as to allow for the observation of strangers entering the building.

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- An intercom system must be established to provide two-way communication between the administrative offices and each classroom. Under current conditions, the only way many teachers have to summon help in an emergency is to send a student to the office.
- Bus and automobile loading and unloading areas must be located and configured to provide safe pick-up and delivery of students.
- Exterior and parking lot lighting must be adequate to provide security.
- Adequate paved parking must be provided.

### Statement of Equality Issues, High Schools

#### Size

The optimum size for a high school is approximately 1,000 to 1,100 students with a core facility for 1,400 students. No high school should exceed 1,400 students. To manage enrollment, the committee recommends an annual review of attendance lines and a willingness to redraw them when necessary. At overcrowded schools, special attention should be given to reducing the number of non-resident students.

#### Requirements

- Requirements under the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) must be met.
- Provide classroom space properly designed and appropriately equipped for all students and programs, including those with special education needs.
- Science labs must be properly equipped with adequate dedicated space for storage and separate preparation rooms.
- Adequate dedicated spaces for music and art are essential including the necessary storage.
- Core areas should include gymnasium, auxiliary gymnasium, cafeteria, auditorium, media center/library and computer labs. These areas must be large enough to accommodate students and faculty in reasonable comfort.
- Until cafeteria space problems can be resolved, short term solutions should be attempted. These include consideration of a 4th lunch period and establishing a lunch program at Arnold R. Burton.
- Outside play fields should be adequate to support the physical education and team sport functions.

- Dedicated space essential for administrative functions (administrative offices, guidance offices, conference rooms and storage areas) must be provided.
- Faculty should be provided with a lounge of adequate size and work areas with a dedicated space for planning and preparation.
- Students need adequate lockers which do not require sharing.

### Safety

- Administrative offices must be located and configured to provide visual control of all unlocked entrances allowing for observation of unauthorized visitors.
- An intercom system should be provided for two-way communication between administrative offices and each classroom.
- Bus and automobile loading and unloading areas must be located and configured to provide safe pick-up and delivery of students/.
- Adequate paved parking must be provided including exterior security lighting.

### **Implementation Strategies**

Strategies to accomplish the objectives take the form of specific proposed facility improvements in the construction phasing schedule. The phasing schedule which is listed below is found in Section 5, Prioritization of Selected Options in *The 1997 Comprehensive Facilities Study of the Roanoke County School System*. For specific project details, the reader should refer to Section 4, Recommendations in *The 1997 Comprehensive Facilities Study of the Roanoke County School System*.

#### Phase I      1997-2002

New Pyramid V High School and Sports Complex  
Glenvar Middle School Separation/High School  
    Auxiliary Gymnasium and Band Room  
Proposed Bonsack Elementary School  
Burlington Elementary School  
Clearbrook Elementary School

Phase II        2001-2006

Cave Spring Middle School  
Roanoke County Career Center  
Arnold R. Burton Technology Center  
Oak Grove Elementary School  
Mount Pleasant Elementary School  
Mountain View Elementary School  
Northside High School  
Glenvar High School  
Cave Spring High School

Phase III        2004-2009

Land Acquisition for New South County  
Elementary School  
Glenvar Elementary School  
Mason's Cove Elementary School  
Bent Mountain Elementary School  
Penn Forest Elementary School  
Glen Cove Elementary School  
Herman L. Horn Elementary School  
W.E. Cundiff Elementary School  
Green Valley Elementary School  
Northside Middle School  
William Byrd Middle School  
Fort Lewis Elementary School  
Cave Spring Elementary School  
William Byrd High School  
Hidden Valley Middle School  
Back Creek Elementary School

## **4. PUBLIC SAFETY**

### **Introduction**

Public safety includes the services provided by the County Sheriff's Office and the Fire and Rescue and Police Departments. This element of the Community Plan recognizes that the level of service provided by these departments is a significant factor in the quality of life enjoyed by the County's residents. The strong growth that Roanoke County is experiencing is paralleled by demand for additional services from these departments. Roanoke County must strike a balance between land use decisions and the sustainability of providing appropriate levels of public service.

The primary mechanism for ensuring a well-balanced and adequate public safety system is through the Capital Improvement Program (CIP). The County's Capital Improvement Program guides the development of facilities over a five year period. It shows the arrangement of projects in a sequential order based upon a schedule of priorities and assigns an estimated cost as well as an anticipated method of funding of each project. The Capital Improvement Program provides the financial foundation necessary to implement plans.

The following Goal, Issues and Opportunities and Objectives apply to all three areas of public safety: Sheriff's Office, Fire and Rescue Department and the Police Department. Following the Objectives are specific Implementation Strategies for each of the three public safety areas.

### **Goal**

**To provide the highest level of public safety services in the most cost-effective manner.**

### **Issues and Opportunities**

- The County strives to provide the efficient delivery of public safety services with minimal response times.
- There are opportunities for increased community involvement and educational programs in the public safety areas.
- There are opportunities for enhanced intergovernmental cooperation in the provision of public safety services.

## **Objectives**

- A. To provide for the safety of all of Roanoke County's citizens, businesses and visitors.
- B. To protect the rights and property of all citizens within the boundaries of Roanoke County.
- C. To cooperate and coordinate with neighboring jurisdictions to provide the most effective and cost-efficient services to County residents.
- D. To inform and educate County citizens about all aspects of public safety.

## **Police Department**

### **Introduction**

Roanoke County Police Department (RCPD) is committed to ensuring that citizens continue to trust the department to provide reliable and effective law enforcement service. The services provided by the RCPD meet or exceed the Commonwealth of Virginia Department of Criminal Justice Services Commission Standards and the stringent standards required for national accreditation. Existing department programs which were enhanced through the accreditation process include: criminal investigations, traffic enforcement, domestic violence, crime prevention, criminal apprehension and community-involved policing. Citizen safety and well-being are of paramount importance to the department.

### **Implementation Strategies**

- 1. Provide the necessary resources to the Roanoke County Police Department to meet the existing and projected needs of County residents. (Obj. A, B, C, D)
- 2. Reduce patrol response times by reevaluating existing patrol districts and maximizing staffing resources. Any modifications to patrol districts should utilize existing community centers and the topographic features of the County. (Obj. A, B, C)
- 3. Continue to expand drug awareness programs by working with the Roanoke County School Board to assist in funding increases in D.A.R.E., the D.A.R.E. Camp and middle school D.A.R.E programs. Utilize the School Resource Officer program to impact drug use in the schools. (Obj. D)

4. Increase community participation in crime control by actively involving the citizens and businesses of Roanoke County in a variety of crime prevention programs. Such programs include: Neighborhood Watch, Business Watch, Citizens Police Academy and other similar programs. (Obj. D)
5. Maintain National Accreditation (CALEA) Status. National Accreditation serves as a management tool to standardize and professionalize the Roanoke County Police Department. (Obj. A, B)

## **Fire and Rescue Department**

### **Introduction**

The Roanoke County Fire and Rescue Department (RCFRD) is committed to providing the most effective and efficient level of fire prevention, suppression and emergency medical services to the residents, business and visitors of Roanoke County. The department is committed to maintaining and enhancing its services while it maximizes the use of taxes and other resources.

### **Implementation Strategies**

1. Examine the existing facilities, equipment and personnel to determine where the demand for services has increased faster than the provision of services. Develop a comprehensive plan to address the deficits in existing services, to minimize response times and project where future improvements will be needed. (Obj. A, B, C)
2. Encourage and provide opportunities for public participation and training in fire prevention and safety as well as first aid and CPR. (Obj. D)
3. Recognize the challenges associated with using a volunteer system. Staff resources are extremely limited during the day when many volunteers are at their day jobs. During the neighborhood planning process the need for new volunteers was identified as a challenge confronting many of the rural fire and rescue stations. Response times for fire and rescue services are constantly monitored and evaluated. (Obj. A, B, D)
4. Take advantage of new technologies to update and improve the County's dispatch and communication systems and establish a regional emergency communications center. (Obj. A, B, C)

## **Sheriff's Office**

### **Introduction**

The primary duties of the Roanoke County Sheriff's Office are to provide a secure and safe environment in the courtrooms for all members of the judiciary and the public. Additionally, the Sheriff's Office is responsible for providing a safe and secure environment for all inmates housed in the Roanoke County-Salem Jail and to serve all civil process orders in a timely manner.

### **Implementation Strategies**

1. Construct a regional juvenile detention center. This facility will eliminate overtime and be a more cost effective and efficient method for the detention of juveniles. (Obj. A, B, C)
2. Continue to learn about and pursue technological innovations in justice administration. The devices and monitoring systems can free up jail space for more serious offenders as well as eliminate the costs of constructing additional space. (Obj. A, B)
3. Explore opportunities for the use of private contracts to provide full detention services and the more basic tasks associated with the administration of courts and detention centers. Exploring these opportunities should be part of an annual review so as to offer the most cost effective system as possible. (Obj. A, B)



## 5. PUBLIC UTILITIES

### Introduction

The public utilities available in Roanoke County include water distribution, sanitary sewer collection, solid waste management, electrical service, telephone service, natural gas distribution and cable television. Public water and sewer and solid waste collection are services that are provided by the County. The transfer of solid waste to the regional landfill and the management of that landfill is the responsibility of the Roanoke Valley Resource Authority.

This section of the Community Plan discusses two public utility services - water and sewer - which, individually and combined, greatly influence growth in Roanoke County. The provision of these services to a previously unserved area will encourage growth and development in that community. As we learned over the last 10 years, the lack of water and sewer services to an area does not necessarily mean that community will not experience growth. Past history has shown that growth may still occur but it will likely be at less suburban densities and as development pressures increase the communities may experience water and sewer failures.

As a community Roanoke County must recognize the influence that public water and sewer services and internal policies concerning fees, fee rebates and cost sharing have on growth management. The policies of the Utility Department must be consistent with other County policies concerning issues of land use, economic development, schools and the provision of public services such as police, fire and rescue.

The Roanoke County Utility Department is charged with providing water and sewer service to the citizens of Roanoke County. This department operates as an enterprise fund and receives no direct general fund tax dollars. The department is funded solely by the water and sewer fees it collects from citizens of Roanoke County.

The Utility Department is responsible for providing and maintaining a safe drinking water supply. The predominant source of this water is the Spring Hollow Reservoir which, when full, holds 3.2 billion gallons of water. The reservoir can meet Roanoke County's water needs past the year 2040.

Distribution of water from the Spring Hollow Reservoir is via two transmission lines. The south loop will serve the major areas of Woodbridge, Hidden Valley, Castle Rock, Penn Forest, Bridlewood, Canterbury Park and Hunting Hills. The north loop begins at Route 11/460 near Cherokee Hills and proceeds to Route 311 near Hanging Rock. Future phases of the north loop will include a section along Loch Haven Road to the Plantation Road area and a parallel line from Dixie Caverns to the Fort Lewis area. Major areas to be served by the north loop line include Broadview, Cherokee Hills, Valley TechPark, Roanoke County Center for Research and Technology, Glenvar East, Wooded Acres and the AEP Service Center.

Roanoke County continues to have limited dependence on ground water wells. Currently, approximately 22 wells supply drinking water. More than forty wells have been taken off-line since the construction of the Spring Hollow Reservoir. In addition, the County purchases approximately 2.25 million gallons of water per day from the City of Roanoke and 0.2 million gallons per day from the City of Salem.

The Utility Department is responsible for maintaining the conveyance system, including pump stations, for the County's wastewater system. Roanoke County participates in the regional wastewater treatment plant that is owned and operated by the City of Roanoke.

Roanoke County, Botetourt County, the Town of Vinton and the Cities of Salem and Roanoke are participating in an upgrade of the regional wastewater plant and the Roanoke River and Tinker Creek interceptors.

The Utility Department has completed a Capital Improvement Plan through the year 2000. This Plan includes the most critical needs in the areas of water and sewer service that can reasonably be funded and constructed within the 1995-2000 time frame. The Department develops a new Capital Improvement Plan every five years.

Section 15.2-2232 of the Code of Virginia states that any new utility facilities must be shown on the master land use plan or in the absence of such, must be approved by the Commission as being substantially in accord with the adopted community plan. The Planning Commission should therefore, take a proactive role in the review of those portions of the Capital Improvement Plan that directly affect land use policies of the County. To be effective, the Commission should review the Capital Improvement Plan prior to its review by the Board of Supervisors.

## 6. STORMWATER MANAGEMENT

### Introduction

In 1997, the *Roanoke Valley Regional Stormwater Management Plan* (the Plan) was coordinated by the 5th Planning District Commission (PDC). It was funded by the City of Roanoke, City of Salem, Town of Vinton, and County of Roanoke, and a stormwater mitigation grant from the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA). By resolution on March 10, 1998, the Roanoke County Board of Supervisors accepted the analysis, design and flood reduction recommendations contained within the Plan. The resolution also amended the Roanoke County Comprehensive Plan to include these components of the Plan. The resolution stated that the Plan shall be used as a general guide for implementing the Plan's recommended improvements as future funding sources are identified and funding is allocated for specific projects.

An important component of the Stormwater Management Plan is a series of maps showing the location of future regional stormwater basins. These maps are available to staff and will be reviewed as future rezoning petitions are evaluated.

The following are excerpts from the Executive Summary of the Plan. The Plan components include: enhancement of the 1993 FEMA Flood Insurance Study, development of master plans for the individual watersheds, development of specific multi-jurisdictional projects and policies, development of implementation practices, and preparation of watershed plans. The study area consisted of sixteen priority watersheds that are tributaries of the Roanoke River. The watersheds drain a combined area of 248 square miles. Existing land use and future land use projections were determined. Flood hazard mitigation measures were determined for each study watershed.

For specific goals, objectives and strategies for regional stormwater management, the reader should refer to: *Roanoke Valley Regional Stormwater Management Plan, October 1997* by Dewberry and Davis.

## 7. TRANSPORTATION

### Introduction

The predominant transportation mode in Roanoke County is the automobile. The County maintains a close working relationship with the Virginia Department of Transportation (VDOT) on all road and vehicular traffic related issues. The State of Virginia owns, constructs and maintains all roads in the County and is responsible for the maintenance of all rights-of-ways.

More emphasis should be placed on other modes of transportation in the County including bicycles, pedestrian walks and public transit. As the County's population continues to age, public transit will become even more relevant to maintaining a high quality of life. All segments of the County population will be better served by the evolving mix of transportation alternatives.

Roanoke County should give consideration to issues of sustainable development when making transportation decisions by using resources efficiently and preserving resources, where possible, for future generations.

Transportation planning should work in conjunction with sound growth management and planning policies. Growth should be encouraged where adequate roads and other transportation systems exist. In areas where future growth is desired, road and public transportation systems should be planned and developed. Where growth is to be controlled, new roads should not be built, but existing roads should be maintained. The County should encourage cluster development, where appropriate. This trend will reduce the miles of new roads, preserve open space and protect natural resources.

Citizen input should be expanded and more emphasis should be placed on encouraging citizen comments during the early stages of transportation planning. County citizens need to become more proactive and more informed about transportation planning issues and alternatives. One way they can achieve this is by utilizing the regional Metropolitan Planning Organizations' public involvement process and participating in a variety of citizen advisory committees.

Roanoke County will continue to participate in the Roanoke Valley Area Metropolitan Planning Organization to continue comprehensive transportation planning and to promote and provide additional opportunities for effective citizen input in concert with neighboring jurisdictions.

### Goal

**Roanoke County's Transportation Plan should provide safe, efficient and convenient modes of transportation. Improvements to transportation systems should be sensitive to the County's environmental, social, land use and economic strategies and should be conducted with maximum citizen input and participation.**

## Issues and Opportunities

- Interstates 81 and 581 provide access through the County for movement of goods and motor vehicles with connections to the Atlantic coast. Major improvements to I-81 are planned in the near future and include inside and outside lane widening and overpass improvements. Roanoke County's segment of I-81 is expected to receive high priority status. The I-81 improvements are designed to address two major concerns: safety concerns and the growth of truck traffic. The road was originally designed to carry only 15 percent of all truck traffic within the State. The highway now carries more than 40 percent of the truck traffic in the State.
- Proposed Interstate 73 is planned to go through Roanoke County linking Detroit, Michigan to Myrtle Beach, South Carolina. In 1994, VDOT completed a feasibility study of 12 corridors and the Commonwealth Transportation Board selected one within which the new interstate would be developed. The primary corridor is approximately 7 miles wide and follows the current location of I-581/U.S. 220. VDOT has started environmental and preliminary engineering studies on alternative routes within this corridor. VDOT will conduct a location study to look at this section of the corridor more closely and identify several possible locations or alternatives for building the new interstate. The Commonwealth Transportation Board will select a single location based on the results of the location study. Although no construction funds have been set aside for I-73, the Commonwealth Transportation Board has allotted money for plan development. An actual construction schedule is unknown at this time.
- Intelligent Transportation System (ITS) is the use of high technology to solve transportation problems. VDOT will be developing further applications of ITS that will enhance the quality of life and promote State-wide economic development. One example of this applied technology is the Smart Road currently being constructed in Blacksburg, Virginia. The road is “smart” because it will be embedded with optical fibers that relay information to computers that monitor factors such as road conditions and traffic counts. Roanoke County is in a unique position to capitalize on the Smart Travel movement due to its close proximity to Blacksburg and multiple economic development possibilities.
- Increased development along the County’s major transportation routes (Interstates 81 & 581; U.S. Routes 220, 221, 460 and 11; and State Routes 24, 115, 116, 117 and 419) needs to be properly managed in order to maintain safe and efficient operation. Design guidelines for future commercial and industrial development need to be required along these routes. Successful corridor planning will necessitate developing a collaborative relationship with both VDOT and the private sector.
- The County participates in the State’s revenue sharing program. This program essentially matches dollar for dollar Secondary road improvements within the County. The past few years have seen the Federal funding for roadways placing more financial responsibility at the State level to fund new road construction projects and improvements. As a result,

road construction funds must be carefully expanded and road needs carefully identified and programmed. There are currently a large number of needed primary road improvements identified by the County and VDOT. These improvements are the result of current and past development policies which have lead to increased traffic volumes, conflicting turning movements and intersections.

- Numerous studies have identified the need and demand for mass transit services particularly in areas of the County in close proximity to the borders of Roanoke City. As the population of the region ages, and more retirees move into the County, this demand will increase.
- The transportation system of the County is predominately vehicle based. There is little infrastructure to support alternative modes of transportation such as bicycling (bike lanes) and walking (sidewalks/improved shoulders).
- The need for improvements to Roanoke Regional Airport spawned an Airport Master Plan Update in 1997 to estimate and accommodate future aviation demand, maintain flexibility for development opportunities and market changes and to recognize physical constraints. Major long-range anticipated improvements (horizon year 2015) include pavement upgrades to airfield runways, relocation and widening of taxiways, installation of new runway navigational/landing aids, construction of a new air traffic control tower and changes to the passenger terminal and parking lots.
- More emphasis should be placed on coordination among the County, adjoining localities, VDOT and the 5th Planning District staffs on matters related to the planning, programming improvements and transportation management techniques. The Metropolitan Planning Organization offers opportunities in this area which have been underutilized thus far.
- Roanoke County should study the use of private road systems and appropriate private road standards.

### Objectives

- A. Continue to maintain and update Secondary and Primary road improvement plans based on consistent policies and criteria. These criteria should provide means for establishing priorities and should be developed for urban and rural roads.
- B. Identify needed road improvements in the update of the County, Regional and State Thoroughfare Plans.
- C. Utilize both private and public funding to provide for transportation improvements within Roanoke County.

- D. Coordinate with VDOT and prepare corridor plans for all major arterial highways that include: traffic patterns, land use and public facilities; address parking connectivity and design standards for buildings and landscaping; reflect provisions for multi-modal uses such as walking and biking; provide street lighting with appropriate scale; and limit the access points to ensure safety and facilitate traffic flow, where appropriate. Utilize existing corridor plans where appropriate.
- E. Through use of the Metropolitan Planning Organization's Transportation Improvement Plan, Thoroughfare Plan and Long-Range Transportation Plan, work with VDOT and plan road improvements in anticipation of planned development and expected traffic generation.
- F. In collaboration with VDOT, identify new collector and arterial roads that are needed in the general road plan and develop a means to reserve rights-of-way for these roads.
- G. Provide appropriate standards for road design in association with each type and intensity of development. Use road classification systems and methods for determining which types of road improvements are to be provided.
- H. Provide collector and arterial roads in the County which can move large volumes of traffic from inside and outside the County while minimizing impact on residential neighborhoods.
- I. Minimize traffic congestion in a cost-effective manner by providing for the interconnection of neighborhoods and commercial areas with collector or arterial roads.
- J. Work toward a more balanced transportation system - one that is multi-modal.
- K. Plan regionally for transportation linkages and the provision of transportation services in the Roanoke Valley.
- L. Support the improvement of transportation services in the Roanoke Valley with particular sensitivity to safety, quality of life, scenic beauty and resource protection.
- M. Routinely evaluate traffic accident data in order to identify problem areas.
- N. Coordinate transportation planning with economic development policies.
- O. Support and provide safe and efficient air and rail transportation services for the County's residents and businesses.
- P. Ensure that Roanoke County citizens are informed, at the earliest stages of planning, when new roads or road improvements are initiated.

## Implementation Strategies

1. Provide road construction and other facility improvements which meet VDOT standards for inclusion in the State highway system. (Obj. B, G)
2. Plan roadway development to support and enhance the Community Plan. (Obj. E, K, L)
3. Continue to support industrial access requests. (Obj. N)
4. Include the general public and all appropriate agencies in transportation planning and transportation safety issues. (Obj. A, B, K, L, P)
5. Support improvement to the airport and airport access as a central factor in economic development. (Obj. N, O)
6. Ensure that provisions for pedestrian and bicycle travel are made in new developments in the suburban areas. (Obj. C, J).
7. Pursue advance acquisition of land for future highway rights-of-way and public transportation facilities in order to minimize project costs and impacts on established neighborhoods. (Obj. B, E, F, P)
8. Minimize the adverse impacts of existing and planned transportation facilities and services on environmental and cultural resources and neighborhood stability. (Obj. A, B, H, L, P)
9. Pursue increased State and Federal support for all types of transportation improvements. Examine modifications to the funding formulas that will bring more funds into the western portion of the Salem Transportation District. (Obj. A, B, C)
10. Monitor and correct safety problems associated with existing transportation facilities and services. (Obj. I, L, M)
11. Evaluate the transportation plan's ability to address future travel needs - such as multi-modal traffic patterns and mass transit use patterns - as part of the periodic review process. (Obj. A, B, E)
12. Actively promote and participate in the transportation planning process conducted at the Federal, State, regional, and sub-regional levels through the Metropolitan Planning Organization. (Obj. B, F, K, L)
13. Locate and operate aviation and related facilities in such a way as to minimize detrimental environmental and community impacts. (Obj. O, P)
14. Evaluate land uses around existing aviation facilities during the development review



process, to ensure compatibility in terms of height, noise, and the functional classification of the aviation facility. (Obj. O, P)

15. Implement, and secure funding for, the County-wide Greenways Plan. (Obj. C, D, I, J, L)
16. Prepare plans for critical interchanges and corridors. Adopt these plans as part of the Community Plan. (Obj. A, B, D, K )
17. Ensure that the street network is planned, designed and operated in recognition of the Roadway Functional Classification System found in the *Roanoke County Facilities Analysis*. (Obj. D, E, G)
18. Provide a street network level of service as high as practical, recognizing the social, environmental, and financial constraints associated with the diverse areas of the County. (Obj. B, C, D, I, L)
19. Develop and implement a responsible financial plan that identifies existing and new funding mechanisms, including private funding initiatives, to achieve the County's transportation system objectives. (Obj. B, C, K )
20. Provide screening and buffering of transportation vehicle storage, material storage, and maintenance yards operated by VDOT. (Obj. B, C, K, L)
21. Develop a circulation system that encourages the separation of through traffic from local traffic. (Obj. H, I)
22. Require that collector road systems in all new developments be interconnected. (Obj. H, I)
23. Provide sidewalks, where appropriate, and/or trails which link residential concentrations with transit stations, mixed-use centers, shopping districts, recreational facilities, and major public facilities and provide for pedestrian circulation within mixed use centers. (Obj. D, I, J, K, L)
24. Require new development to contribute to the costs associated with the resulting increased demand for transportation facilities. This can be accomplished by using dedication, conditional zoning, condemnation, road improvement plans or other methods to insure that needed roads as identified in the plan are provided and constructed. (Obj. C, F)
25. Adopt strategies to reduce motor vehicle emissions in order to help the region attain and maintain the National Ambient Air Quality Standards. (Obj. J, K, L, O)

## Chapter 4: Community Facilities

26. Encourage and facilitate private sector initiatives to finance and provide additions to the transportation system and to provide supplementary public transportation services. (Obj. C)
27. Incorporate medians and separate turning lanes in the design of roadways having four or more travel lanes. (Obj. D, L)
28. Upgrade existing roadways, including collectors, to correct unsafe conditions. (Obj. D, L, M)
29. Maximize the efficiency of existing roads through low-cost strategies to increase capacity, such as channelization, turning lanes, signalization, and signage. (Obj. D, G, I, L)
30. Enhance the efficiency of the existing street network by reducing and consolidating private entrances, median crossovers, and similar disruptions to traffic flow. (Obj. D, E, G)
31. Study the transit needs of the more urban areas of the County. (Obj. K, O)
32. Support the provision of transit service to the Roanoke Regional Airport, not only for passengers, but in support of the airport's role as a major employment center. (Obj. I, J, K, O)
33. Give priority to the programming of transit services that assist in accomplishing the County's land use goals and objectives. (Obj. I, J, K)
34. Encourage the use and development of the Roanoke Regional Airport and seek international status. (Obj. O)
35. Encourage the Airport Commission to procure aviation and related facility easements where appropriate. (Obj. O)
36. Review and expand the park-and-ride facilities within the County and the region. (Obj. B, C, D, F)
37. Support establishment of high-speed passenger rail service between the Roanoke Valley Region and Washington, D.C. and Richmond. (Obj. K, L, O )
38. Support the development of an inter-modal hub (air, highway, and rail) and a distribution terminal in the Roanoke Valley Region. (Obj. K, L, O )
39. Study the use, where appropriate, of private roads and private road standards. (Obj. G, L)

## **FUNCTIONAL ROAD CLASSIFICATION - DESIGN REQUIREMENTS**

### **PRIMARY ROADS**

#### **Principal Arterials (examples include U.S. 11, U.S. 220, U.S. 221, U.S. 460, VA 24, VA 115)**

- Limited access roads; direct access to individual adjacent properties is prohibited.
- Pedestrian access should be prohibited from individual adjacent properties. However, separate pedestrian/bicycle crossing facilities may be appropriate at specific locations.
- Engineering and design standards for these types of roadways shall conform to VDOT standards.

#### **Rural Principal Arterials (examples include U.S. 220, U.S. 221)**

- Since the primary function of rural principal arterials is the movement of traffic, access for individual properties must be a secondary consideration.
- Access from adjacent property should be obtained via various management techniques such as service roads, shared access points, internal roads and/or frontage roads. In addition, a limitation on the number, spacing, and location of access points should be utilized.
- Minimum street intersection interval is 1000 feet.
- Minimum street cross-over interval is 1,300 feet.
- Entrances shall be at least 500 feet from a cross-over and shall be either directly aligned with the cross-over or as far away from the cross-over as possible.
- Travel lanes shall be a minimum of 12 feet in width. Arterials which are constructed to rural design standards shall have improved shoulders with either aggregate or paved surface.
- No on-street parking will be permitted.
- Pedestrian access should be prohibited on rural principal arterials.
- Typically, rural principal arterials have 160 feet of right-of-way.
- Turn lanes, traffic channelization, restricted turning movements, signs, and signals should be utilized to minimize turning movement conflicts.

**Rural Minor Arterials (example is VA 116)**

- Discourage direct access by individual property owners. Encourage the use of access management techniques such as service roads, shared access points, internal roads and frontage roads. In addition, a limitation on the number, spacing, and location of access points should be utilized.
- Minimum street intersection interval is 800 feet.
- Minimum street cross-over interval is 1,000 feet.
- Entrances should be at least 500 feet from a cross-over and should be either directly aligned with a cross-over or as far away as possible.
- Minor arterials range from 80 to 160 feet of right-of-way.

**SECONDARY ROADS**

**Urban Collector (example is VA 720, Colonial Avenue)**

- The standard cross-section for urban collectors includes sidewalk, curb and gutter.
- Travel lanes have a minimum 10-foot width with 12-foot width being desirable.
- Sidewalks or other similar facilities shall be installed to facilitate pedestrian access to commercial, retail, or civic uses which shall be required to accommodate walk/jog/bike trails.
- On-street parking should be prohibited.
- Individual lot access should be carefully reviewed for impacts on the overall functioning on the roadway.
- Urban collectors typically have between 60 and 110 feet of right-of-way.

**Urban Local (example is VA 1821, Greenway Drive)**

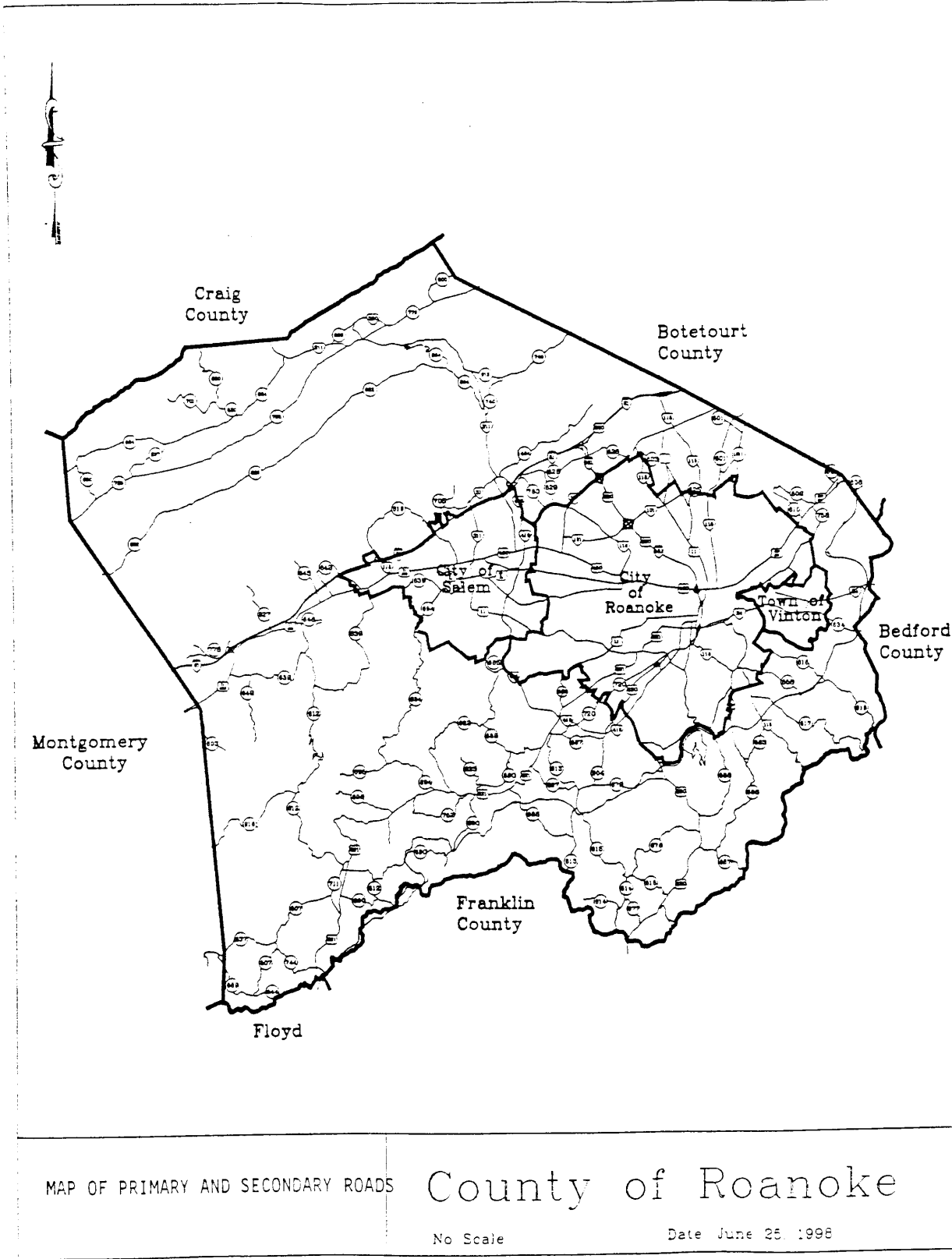
- On-street parking may be permitted.
- Urban local streets typically have between 50 and 60 feet of right-of-way.

**Rural Major Collector (example is VA 679, Buck Mountain Road)**

- Minimum 12-foot travel lane recommended.
- Entrance controls should be utilized where there are high traffic generating roads. Such controls may include: turn lanes, signals, signs, combined access points, and service or internal roads.
- On-street parking is prohibited.
- Access points should be limited to 900-foot intervals where possible.
- Residential lot access from individual properties should be minimized.
- Rural major collectors have a 60-foot right-of-way width unless otherwise specified.

**Rural Minor Collectors (example is VA 622, Bradshaw Road)**

- Roads to be spaced at intervals, consistent with population density, to collect traffic from local roads and bring developed areas within reasonable distance to a collector road.
- Direct access should be limited wherever it is possible, except in Village areas. Joint access points and other access modifications should be utilized to keep direct access points to a minimum.
- Access points should be limited to 600-foot intervals where possible.
- Rural minor collectors typically have a 50-foot right-of-way width.
- New lots in subdivisions should be served by internal streets.



## **BIKEWAYS**

### **Introduction**

This portion of the Transportation Plan focuses on developing a network of on- and off-road interconnected bicycling facilities that provide an alternative to the automobile. It borrows heavily from the Metropolitan Planning Organization's Bikeway Plan.

A bikeway is any road or path which in some manner is specifically designated as open to bicycle travel, whether such facilities are designated exclusively for bicycles or to be shared with other transportation modes. Bicycles are most commonly used for recreation, but also for commuting and personal errands. Where suitable terrain exists and there are no conflicts in uses, many proposed greenways will be able to accommodate bicycles. For example, the recently completed greenway at Garst Mill Park permits bicyclists in addition to its many pedestrians and provides safe off-road facilities with no conflict from automobiles.

### **Goal**

**To encourage the development of a logical bicycling network by examining Roanoke County's overall road connectivity, promoting driver and bicycle safety programs and insuring that the Bikeway Plan is financially feasible.**

### **Issues and Opportunities**

- Bikeways are a significant factor in the quality of life in Roanoke County.
- Bicycle and pedestrian modes of transportation provide excellent alternatives to motorized vehicles.
- If identified early in the road improvement planning process, funding can be set aside for bikeway construction in Roanoke County.
- At the State level, bicycle facility design standards have been established providing bikeway development guidelines from initial planning stages to final construction details.
- Bicycling is healthy, economical and energy efficient.
- Bicycling encourages better use of the existing transportation network by minimally impacting physical surroundings as well as government budgets.

## **Objectives**

- A. Include bicycling in all stages of transportation and land use planning.
- B. Identify existing and future bike routes (on- and off-street) in urban, suburban and rural areas and ensure that they are not eliminated as development occurs.
- C. Identify bicycle route corridors before they are developed and preserve rights-of-way for bike facility's improvements.

## **Implementation Strategies**

- 1. Encourage developers to construct bicycle routes and parking facilities within their projects. (Obj. A, B, C)
- 2. Establish a local bicycle fund consisting of annual allocations for bike facility construction and maintenance. (Obj. A, B, C)
- 3. Create an advisory committee to monitor progress on facility improvements such as pavement striping, signage and roadway improvements. (Obj. A)
- 4. Appoint one individual to coordinate County bicycle planning facility efforts. (Obj. A)
- 5. Examine traffic calming techniques (reduced speed limits, narrowed streets and other safety features) in order to provide safer and more pleasant conditions for motorists, bicyclists and pedestrians. (Obj. A)
- 6. Encourage bicycle parking facilities as part of new building or major renovations on residential, commercial or industrial developments. (Obj. A)
- 7. Install bicycle parking facilities at public buildings. (Obj. A)
- 8. Encourage widened curb lanes, provide bike lanes or paved shoulders on all major roadways. (Obj. A, B, C)
- 9. Identify physical barriers to bicycling and walking (such as rivers, bridges, railroad tracks and highway crossings) and implement solutions to overcome them. (Obj. A, B)
- 10. Develop bicycle and pedestrian friendly intersections that facilitate safe through movement. (Obj. A, B)
- 11. Construct all new or upgraded bridges to full road width and provide bicycle lanes or separated facilities for cyclists and pedestrians. (Obj. A, B)



12. Where feasible, build separated bicycle facilities adjacent to all new roads that prohibit bicycling unless alternate bike-compatible roads exist nearby. (Obj. A, B)
13. Roanoke County should officially adopt the Bikeway Plan to qualify for potential State or Federal funding for bicycle accommodations. (Obj. A)
14. The following bicycle facility classifications shall apply to those proposed improvements selected for funding:

Group A - Bike Trail or Path: a completely separated right-of- way designated exclusively for bicycles and pedestrians with minimized vehicle cross flows;

Group B - Bike Lane: on-road bikeway designated by striping signing, adequate pavement width and markings for the preferential or exclusive use of bicyclists;

Group C - Widened Outside Lane or Paved Shoulder: a roadway with a widened outside or paved shoulder that is constructed with an additional 2 to 3 feet of pavement width to accommodate bicycles;

Group D - Re-stripe for Shared Roadway: roadway designated for potential use by bicycles that is re-striped to increase the outside lane width and decrease the inside lane width minimizing potential conflicts with passing motorists;

Group E - No Improvement Necessary: roadway currently adequate for bicycle use.

(Obj. A, B)

The following table identifies roadways recommended for bicycle accommodation.

Roanoke County: Recommended Roadways for Bicycle Accommodation

Route/Street Name	From	To	Type of Improvement	Description
Alternate Route 220	Route 460	Botetourt County Boundary	B	Four lane road, Urban Principal Arterial, due to high traffic volumes and truck traffic needs widening to accommodate an on road bicycle lane
Barley Road	Route 11/460 (W. Main St.)	Route 612 (Poor Mountain Road)	E	Two-lane road, Urban Collector, no improvement necessary to accommodate bicycle traffic.
Barrens Road	Belle Haven Road	Nover Ave.	C	Two-lane road, Urban Local, needs widening to accommodate bicycle traffic
Barrens Road	Nover Ave.	Rt. 117 (Peters Creek Rd.)	E	Two-lane road, Urban Local, no improvement necessary to accommodate bicycle traffic
Belle Haven Road	Barrens Road	Loch Haven Dr.	C	Two-lane road, Urban Local, needs widening to accommodate bicycle traffic
Bike Trail	Loman Dr.	Goff Road	A	Construct bicycle trail through Walrood Park
Blue Ridge Parkway	Botetourt County Boundary	MPO Boundary	E	Two lane road, Unclassified, no improvements necessary to accommodate bicycles
Colonial Avenue	Route 419 (Electric Road)	Route 221	C	Two-lane road, Urban Minor Arterial, needs widening to accommodate bicycle traffic
Edgebrook Road	Red Ln.	Mountain Heights Dr.	E	Two-lane road, Urban Local, no improvements necessary to accommodate bicycles
Green Ridge Road	City of Salem Boundary	Cove Road	C	Two-lane road, Urban Local, needs widening to accommodate bicycle traffic
Lahan Road	Barrens Road	Loman Dr.	C	Two-lane road, Urban Local, needs widening to accommodate bicycle traffic
Loch Haven Drive	Route 419 (N Electric Road)	Barrens Road	C	Two-lane road, Urban Local, needs widening to accommodate bicycle traffic
Loman Drive	Lahan Road	Walrood Park	C	Two-lane road that lead to a dead end at Walrood Park, Urban Local, needs widening to accommodate bicycle traffic
Mountain Heights Drive	Route 311(Thompson Memorial Dr.)	Edgebrook Road	E	Two-lane road, Urban Local, no improvements necessary to accommodate bicycles
Ranchcrest Drive	Rt. 221	Rt. 613 (Merriman Road)	C	Two-lane road, Urban Local, needs widening to accommodate bicycle traffic
Roanoke Mountain Spur	Blue Ridge Parkway	Blue Ridge Parkway	E	Two-lane road with low traffic volumes and speed, Unclassified, Blue Ridge Parkway property, no improvements necessary to accommodate bicycle traffic
Route 101 (Hersheberger Road)	City of Roanoke Boundary	Rt. 115 (Plantation Road)	C	Four-lane road, Urban Principal Arterial, needs widening to accommodate bicycle traffic
Route 11	Williamson Road	Botetourt County Boundary	B	Four-lane road, Urban Principal Arterial, because of high volume and speeds a bike lane is needed
Route 11 (Williamson Road)	City of Roanoke Boundary	Rt. 117 (Peters Creek Road)	B	Three-lane road with wide center turn lane, Urban Principal Arterial, because of high volume and speeds a bike lane is needed
Route 112 (Wildwood Road)	City of Salem Boundary	Rt. 619 (Wildwood Road)	C	Four-lane road, Urban Collector, needs widening to accommodate bicycle traffic

Route/Street Name	From	To	Type of Improvement	Description
Route 115 (Plantation Road)	Rt. 601 (Hollins Road)	Dexter Road	C	Two-lane road, Urban Minor Arterial, needs widening to accommodate bicycle traffic
Route 115 (Plantation Road)	Dexter Road	Rt. 11	D	Five-lane road with center turn lane, Urban Minor Arterial, adjust striping to create wider outside lane to accommodate bicycle traffic
Route 115 (Plantation Road)	Rt. 11	Walton Dr.	D	Five-lane road with center turn lane, Urban Minor Arterial, adjust striping to create wider outside lane to accommodate bicycle traffic
Route 116 (Mount Pleasant Boulevard, JAE Valley Road)	MPO Boundary	City of Roanoke Boundary	D	Two-lane road, high volume, high speeds, Urban Minor Arterial / Rural Major Collector, adjust striping to create wider outside lane to accommodate bicycle traffic
Route 117 (Peters Creek Road)	City of Roanoke Boundary	Rt. 11 (Williamson Road)	C	Four-lane road, C&G along sections, wide shoulders, Urban Principal Arterial, because of high volume and speeds a wider outside lane is needed to accommodate bicycle traffic
Route 118 (Airport Road)	City of Roanoke Boundary	Peters Creek Road	C	Two-lane road, Urban Collector, needs widening to accommodate bicycle traffic
Route 221 (Brambleton Avenue)	Rt. 419 (Electric Road)	City of Roanoke Boundary	D	Five-lane road, center turn lane, C&G, Urban Minor Arterial, adjust striping to create wider outside lane to accommodate bicycle traffic
Route 221 (Bent Mountain Road)	MPO Boundary	Rt. 897 (Crystal Creek Road)	B	Two-lane road, Urban Principal Arterial, needs bike lane to accommodate bicycle traffic
Route 221 (Bent Mountain Road)	Rt. 897 (Crystal Creek Road)	Rt. 419 (Electric Road)	B	Four-lane road, Urban Principal Arterial, needs bike lane to accommodate bicycle traffic
Route 24 (Stewartsville Road)	Town of Vinton Boundary	MPO Boundary	C	Four-lane road, Urban Minor Arterial, needs widening to accommodate bicycle traffic
Route 311 (Thompson Memorial Drive)	City of Salem Boundary	MPO Boundary	C	Four-lane road, Urban Collector, needs widening to accommodate bicycle traffic
Route 419 (Electric Road)	Rt. 695 (Keagy Rd.)	Rt. 904 (Starkey Road)	C	Four-lane road, Urban Principal Arterial, needs widening to accommodate bicycle traffic
Route 419 (Electric Road)	City of Roanoke Boundary (Route 270)	Rt. 904 (Starkey Road)	C	Four-lane road, Urban Principal Arterial, needs widening to accommodate bicycle traffic
Route 460 (Challenger Avenue)	City of Roanoke Boundary	Boletourt County Boundary	C	Four-lane road, Urban Principal Arterial, needs widening to accommodate bicycle traffic
Route 460/11	MPO Boundary	City of Salem Boundary	C	Three-lane road, center turn lane, Urban Collector / Rural Major Collector, needs widening to accommodate bicycle traffic
Route 601 (Hollins Road)	Rt. 115 (Plantation Road)	Rt. 601 (Shadwell Dr.)	C	Two-lane road, Urban Collector, needs widening to accommodate bicycle traffic
Route 601 (Shadwell Drive)	Rt. 601 (Hollins Road)	Boletourt County Boundary	C	Two-lane road, Urban Collector, needs widening to accommodate bicycle traffic

Route/Street Name	From	To	Type of Improvement	Description
Route 605 (Old Mountain Road)	City of Roanoke Boundary	Rt. 605 (Shadwell Dr.)	C	Two-lane road, Urban Collector, needs widening to accommodate bicycle traffic
Route 605 (Sanderson Drive)	Rt. 605 (Shadwell Dr.)	Botetourt County Boundary	E	Two-lane road, Urban Collector, no improvement necessary to accommodate bicycle traffic
Route 605 (Shadwell Drive)	Rt. 605 (Old Mountain Road)	Rt. 605 (Sanderson Dr.)	C	Two-lane road, Urban Collector, no improvement necessary to accommodate bicycle traffic
Route 612 (Poor Mountain Road)	MPO Boundary	Barley Dr.	C	Two-lane road, low volumes and speeds, narrow bridge over creek, Urban Collector, needs widening to accommodate bicycle traffic
Route 613 (Merriman Road)	Ranchcrest Dr.	Meadowlark Rd.	C	Two-lane road, Rural Major Collector, needs widening to accommodate bicycle traffic
Route 613 (Merriman Road)	Meadowlark Rd.	Rt. 688 (Cotton Hill Rd.)	B	Two-lane road, Urban Collector, needs widening to accommodate bicycle lane in the future
Route 613 (Merriman Road)	Rt. 904 (Starkey Rd.)	Rt. 688 (Cotton Hill Rd.)	B	Two-lane road, Urban Collector, needs widening to accommodate bicycle lane in the future
Route 616 (Carlos Road)	Rt. 601 (Hollins Road)	Rt. 605 (Old Mountain Road)	C	Two-lane road, Urban Local, needs widening to accommodate bicycle traffic
Route 618 (Riverside Road)	Rt. 658 (Rutrough Road)	Blue Ridge Parkway	C	Two-lane road, Urban Local, needs widening to accommodate bicycle traffic
Route 619 (Wildwood Road)	Rt. 112 (Wildwood Road)	Rt. 635 (Goodwin Ave.)	C	Two-lane road, Urban Local, needs widening to accommodate bicycle traffic
Route 621 (Green Ridge Road)	Rt. 628 (Wood Haven Road)	Rt. 780 (Cove Road)	C	Two-lane road, Urban Collector, needs widening to accommodate bicycle traffic
Route 628 (Wood Haven Road)	Rt. 623 (Green Ridge Road)	Rt. 117 (Peters Creek Road)	C	Two-lane road, Urban Collector, needs widening to accommodate bicycle traffic
Route 629 (Green Ridge Road)	Cove Road	Rt. 623 (Green Ridge Road)	C	Two-lane road, Urban Collector, needs widening to accommodate bicycle traffic
Route 634 (Hardy Road)	Town of Vinton Boundary	Blue Ridge Parkway	C	Two-lane road, Urban Collector, needs widening to accommodate bicycle traffic
Route 635 (Goodwin Avenue)	City of Salem Boundary	Rt. 619 (Wildwood Road)	C	Two-lane road, Urban Collector, needs widening to accommodate bicycle traffic
Route 639 (West River Road)	MPO Boundary	MPO Boundary	C	Two-lane road, Urban Collector, needs widening to accommodate bicycle traffic
Route 639 (West River Road)	MPO Boundary	MPO Boundary	E	Two-lane road, Urban Collector, no improvement necessary to accommodate bicycle traffic
Route 639 (West Riverside Drive)	Rt. 760 (Dinguids Ln)	City of Salem Boundary	C	Two-lane road, Urban Collector, needs widening to accommodate bicycle traffic
Route 651 (Mountain View Road)	Town of Vinton Boundary	MPO Boundary	C	Two-lane road, Urban Local, needs widening to accommodate bicycle traffic

Route/Street Name	From	To	Type of Improvement	Description
Route 654 (Feather Road)	Rt. 614 (Hardy Road)	Rt. 24 (Stewartsville Road)	C	Two-lane road, Urban Collector, needs widening to accommodate bicycle traffic
Route 658 (Rutrough Road)	City of Roanoke Boundary	Rt. 618 (Rutrough Road)	C	Two-lane road, Urban Collector / Rural Major Collector, needs widening to accommodate bicycle traffic
Route 679 (Thick Mountain Road)	Rt. 904 (Starkey Road)	Rt. 220	C	Two-lane road, Urban Collector / Rural Major Collector, needs widening to accommodate bicycle traffic
Route 685 (Keagy Road)	Rt. 419 (Electric Road)	City of Roanoke Boundary	C	Two-lane road, Urban Collector, needs widening to accommodate bicycle traffic
Route 687 (Penn Forest Boulevard)	Colonial Ave.	Rt. 800 (Chaparral Dr.)	C	Two-lane road, Urban Collector, needs widening to accommodate bicycle traffic
Route 687 (Penn Forest Boulevard)	Rt. 800 (Chaparral Dr.)	Rt. 904 (Starkey Road)	E	Two-lane road, Urban Collector, no improvement necessary to accommodate bicycle traffic
Route 688 (Cotton Hill Road)	Rt. 613 (Merriman Road)	Rt. 221	B	Two-lane road, Urban Local, because this is a narrow winding road and potentially hazardous, a bike lane is needed
Route 689 (Roselawn Road)	Route 692 (Sugar Loaf Mt. Rd.)	Rt. 221	C	Two-lane road, Rural Major Collector, needs widening to accommodate bicycle traffic
Route 692 (Sugar Loaf Mountain)	685 (Keagy Rd.)	689 (Roselawn Rd.)	C	Two-lane road, Urban Collector, needs widening to accommodate bicycle traffic
Route 694 (Twelve O'clock Knob Road)	MPO Boundary	Rt. 221	E	Two-lane road, Rural Major Collector, no improvement necessary to accommodate bicycle traffic
Route 694 (Twelve O'clock Knob Road)	MPO Boundary	City of Salem Boundary	E	Two-lane road, Urban Collector, no improvement necessary to accommodate bicycle traffic
Route 705 (Red Lane)	City of Salem Boundary	Edgemoor Road	C	Two-lane road, Urban Local, needs widening to accommodate bicycle traffic
Route 760 (Dunguids Lane)	Rt. 619 (W. Riverside Dr.)	City of Salem Boundary	C	Two-lane road, Urban Local, needs widening to accommodate bicycle traffic
Route 780 (Cove Road)	Rt. 623 (Green Ridge Road)	Rt. 419 (Electric Road)	C	Two-lane road, Urban Collector, needs widening to accommodate bicycle traffic
Route 780 (Cove Road)	Green Ridge Road	Rt. 623 (Green Ridge Road)	C	Two-lane road, Urban Minor Arterial, needs widening to accommodate bicycle traffic
Route 800 (Chaparral Drive)	Purple Finch Road	Route 419	C	Two-lane road, Urban Local, needs widening to accommodate bicycle traffic
Route 800 (Chaparral Drive)	Rt. 613 (Merriman Road)	Purple Finch Road	E	Two-lane road, Urban Local, no improvement necessary to accommodate bicycle traffic
Route 807 (Crystal Creek Road)	Crystal Creek	Rt. 613 (Merriman Road)	C	Two-lane road, Urban Local, needs widening to accommodate bicycle traffic
Route 807 (Crystal Creek Road)	Rt. 221 (Bent Mountain Road)	Crystal Creek	E	Two-lane road, Urban Local, no improvement necessary to accommodate bicycle traffic
Route 904 (Starkey Road)	Rt. 613 (Merriman Road)	Bennois Road	C	Two-lane road, Urban Collector, needs widening to accommodate bicycle traffic

Route/Street Name	From	To	Type of Improvement	Description
Route 904 (Snakey Road)	Dennis Road	Rt. 419 (Electric Road)	D	Five-lane road, center turn lane, Urban Collector, adjust striping to create wider outside lane to accommodate bicycle traffic
Timberview Road	Rt. 419 (Electric Road)	MPO Boundary	E	Two-lane road, Urban Local, no improvement necessary to accommodate bicycle traffic
Valley Pointe Pkwy.	Concourse Dr.	Rt. 628 (Wood Haven Road)	C	Two-lane road, Urban Local, needs widening to accommodate bicycle traffic
Valley Pointe Pkwy.	Rt. 117 (Peters Creek Road)	Concourse Dr.	D	Four-lane road, Urban Local, adjust striping to create wider outside lane to accommodate bicycle traffic
Walton Drive	Lonan Dr.	Rt. 115 (Plantation Road)	C	Two-lane road, leads to park, Urban Local, needs widening to accommodate bicycle traffic
Yellow Mt. Road	MPO Boundary	City of Roanoke Boundary	C	Two-lane road, Urban Collector / Rural Major Collector, needs widening to accommodate bicycle traffic



# **CHAPTER 5**

## **RESOURCE PRESERVATION**

### **INTRODUCTION**

The citizens of Roanoke County have a strong desire to preserve the quality of the county's natural, scenic and historic resources. The county's natural features - including mountains, forests, productive soil, streams, fresh air and wildlife - serve to distinguish the greater Roanoke Valley as a uniquely attractive urban center.

Roanoke County citizens recognize that the beauty of the existing natural environment attracts not only businesses and residents to our community but also tourists and sports enthusiasts. County citizens believe that it is essential to maintain the high quality of Roanoke County's environment while accommodating the pressures for future growth and development.

### **OPEN SPACE**

During the past twenty-five years, Roanoke County has experienced steady growth. From a population of 53,800 in 1970 that reflects the results of several annexations, the population grew 54 percent to 83,100 in 1995. Future population projections indicate that by the year 2010 the County population will be approximately 87,400.

This growth in population and the accompanying shift in demographics - such as an aging population - are changing the traditional rural landscape of the County. New residents require more housing, schools, shopping centers, office buildings, roads, water and sewer facilities and parks and recreational services. The rural landscape is gradually becoming urbanized as a result of this growth. What was once an orchard is now a residential subdivision or a shopping center. What was once a hardwood forest is now an office building or condominium.

Between 1982 and 1992 the number of farms in Roanoke County decreased 11 percent from 306 to 272. Acreage of farmland decreased 25.5 percent from 33,475 to 24,924 during that same time frame. The loss of orchard land was even more dramatic, decreasing over 44 percent from 459 acres in 1982 to 256 acres in 1992.

With this loss of rural and agricultural lands there is a loss of undeveloped land commonly referred to as open space. Although Roanoke County has a high-quality public park system, there are severe shortages of park land particularly in certain areas. In addition, the majority of park land in the County is devoted to active recreational uses such as ballfields.

Open space provides many functions necessary for a healthy and prosperous community. It protects our drinking water by providing ample undeveloped land for the recharge of underground aquifers. It offers safe habitat for rare and endangered species of plants and wildlife. Forested lands improve air quality by removing carbon dioxide and other pollutants



from the air and by releasing oxygen into the air. They also help prevent soil erosion by stabilizing the soil with the roots from trees and other vegetation. Buffers of trees beside streams can improve water quality by slowing stormwater runoff, allowing pollutants to filter out before being deposited into the water courses.

Open space, especially with the mountainous terrain in Roanoke County, provides residents a sense of relief or spatial definition. When you see the mountains off in the distance you have a perspective on where the urban/suburban space ends and the rural space begins. Open space can also link residential communities via greenways and provide buffers between adjacent land uses. It provides recreational, educational, and cultural opportunities for residents, of all ages.

An ad-hoc advisory committee with representatives from the planning departments of the Roanoke Valley's four local governments and the Fifth Planning District Commission has been working on a regional open space plan. To date, the study includes an inventory of open space resources. The next step is to obtain citizen input on priority resources and to examine the alternatives for preserving, protecting and managing open space resources.

In preparing the inventory of resources for the open space plan, different types of land or resources have been identified and mapped. Five categories of open space have been analyzed: public open space, semi-public open space, private open space, agricultural/forestral parcels and lands under a conservation easement. Lands with unique natural resource characteristics have also been mapped. These include greenway corridors, lands in the 100-year floodplain, mountain elevations at a specified elevation, threatened and endangered species areas and scenic views from the Blue Ridge Parkway. Scenic views from the Appalachian Trail - a National Scenic Trail - may be included as this information becomes available.

### **GREENWAYS**

A greenway is a corridor of protected open space managed for conservation, recreation and nonmotorized transportation. Greenways often follow natural geographic features such as ridge lines, stream valleys and rivers, but may also be built along canals, utility corridors or abandoned rail lines. Most greenways include a trail or bike path, but others may be designed strictly for environmental or scenic protection.

Greenways, as vegetated linear parks, provide tree cover, wildlife habitat, and riparian buffers to protect streams. The environmental benefits include reduced storm water runoff, flood reduction, water quality protection, and preservation of biological diversity. The trails within the greenways provide access between neighborhoods and destination points, opportunity to travel without an automobile, outdoor education classrooms, and close-to-home paths for walking, jogging, bicycling and roller blading. Tree cover and use of bicycles instead of cars provide for better air quality, fewer hard-surfaced parking lots and reduced energy costs. Although greenways are a collateral component of a county-wide park system they do not replace the need for additional park land.

In the spring of 1995, the four local governments appointed representatives to a Greenways Steering Committee, which was provided staff support by the Fifth Planning District Commission. A consulting firm was hired to develop a Conceptual Greenway Plan for the Roanoke Valley involving elected officials, civic leaders and the general public.

The Greenway Commission, appointed by the four Valley governments, is an advisory body. Its responsibilities include: facilitate cooperation and coordination among jurisdictions in greenway planning and development; recommend funding sources for greenway construction; develop uniform standards for design and construction; and, pursue public/private partnerships for greenway development.

The backbone of the Roanoke Valley greenway system is the Roanoke River which runs for over 20 miles through Roanoke County, Salem, Roanoke City and Vinton. In 1998 the Roanoke River Greenway Implementation Plan will be completed, focusing on that portion of the river in Salem and west Roanoke County.

In August 1997, the first one-half mile of greenway, through Garst Mill Park, was completed and opened. This was the first completed section of greenway in Roanoke County and is being very heavily used.

Construction will begin in 1998 on the Hanging Rock Battlefield Trail which travels through portions of Salem and Roanoke County. Also in 1998, construction is scheduled to begin on the Wolf Creek Greenway in the Town of Vinton. This trail will connect to the new bicycle lanes to be built on Hardy Road and the existing trail system in Goode and Stonebridge Parks in Roanoke County.

While a significant amount of progress has been made on greenways over the last 2 or 3 years there are substantial steps still to be taken.

## **ROANOKE RIVER**

### **History and Location**

The Roanoke River springs from the Jefferson National Forest in Virginia's western mountain highlands, and flows east through Montgomery, Roanoke, Bedford and Franklin Counties, the Cities of Salem and Roanoke and the Town of Vinton, to Smith Mountain Lake and beyond to the Atlantic Ocean. The heart of the Roanoke River corridor is an ageless, fertile valley, a scenic mountain bowl carved between the parallel ridges of the Allegheny and Blue Ridge Mountains. The river cuts perpendicular across two major, north-south routes in the region: I-81 and the Blue Ridge Parkway.

The mainstem of the Roanoke River is formed by the confluence of the North and South Forks. The North Fork drains a portion of the Ridge and Valley physiographic province, while the South Fork drains the western face of the Blue Ridge. The two forks converge at Lafayette, a short distance west of the Roanoke County line. The mainstem continues on through a narrow, steep-

walled valley near Glenvar. It then traverses the main valley, picking up many short and steep tributaries as it passes through the cities of Salem and Roanoke. The river follows the western slope of the Blue Ridge to Mill Mountain, where it turns east and enters the Roanoke Gap, a gorge that it cut as the ridge was rising. Once through the Blue Ridge, the river enters the rolling Piedmont province, where it has been impounded to form Smith Mountain Lake.

The mountainous nature of the river headwaters tends to increase the severity of storms and the speed of runoff, making the river subject to flash floods. The sill formed by the Blue Ridge creates a natural settling basin above the gorge, in downtown Roanoke. The natural constriction of the river is exacerbated by manmade structures such as bridges and rail embankments, as well as by floodplain development along the river's course through the main Roanoke Valley. One result is frequent and extensive flood damage.

On the other hand, the mountainous terrain contributes to the river's scenic and recreational value, and also has positive effects on the river as an aquatic habitat. The cool, well-oxygenated water harbors an unusually wide variety of aquatic life, including trout and the Roanoke logperch, which is listed by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service as an endangered species. Riparian vegetation and woodlands help to keep water temperatures down and provide a habitat corridor that allows wildlife to move through the urbanized Roanoke Valley.

The river has also provided a corridor for human movement, which has been an important factor in both the prehistory and history of the Roanoke Valley. Native peoples moved up and down the Great Valley, but also settled at the rich meadows above the mouth of the Roanoke Gorge. Pioneer settlers used this water gap as a route from the Virginia tidewater to the Great Valley and beyond. The railroads followed in the 19th Century, giving Roanoke its main industry for many years. As a result, the river corridor is as rich in prehistoric and historic resources as it is in environmental resources.

### **Roanoke River Corridor Study**

The Roanoke metropolitan area, the largest in Virginia west of the "urban crescent" from Washington through Richmond to Tidewater, is also the only major concentration of people and industry in the State to lie so close to the headwaters of a major river. It is the only population center of consequence to be found in the mountainous region west of the Blue Ridge. This location results in a set of environmental, aesthetic, and land use factors unique to the area.

The importance of the river and the urgent need for information on it led to the Roanoke River Corridor Study in 1990. This study included the length of the Roanoke River from its headwater tributaries in Montgomery and Roanoke Counties to the Hardy Ford Bridge, at the upper reaches of Smith Mountain Lake. Participants included the jurisdictions of Bedford, Franklin, Montgomery and Roanoke Counties, the Town of Vinton, and the Cities of Roanoke and Salem. Also included were the Central Virginia, Fifth, New River Valley and West Piedmont planning district commissions.

The study's goals were to produce a report documenting existing conditions in the Roanoke River corridor and to recommend ways in which identified problems, opportunities, and protection needs could be addressed. The final report contains detailed recommendations for policy implementation by the local governments.

One important element of the final report is a model Roanoke River Conservation Overlay Zone ordinance. This model ordinance provides a "shell" for each participating jurisdiction to use in developing an ordinance that is specific to the needs, challenges, opportunities and constraints of their jurisdiction. To date, only Roanoke County has adopted this ordinance and incorporated appropriate language into the comprehensive plan.

### **SOILS**

In 1989 a soil survey was conducted in Roanoke County that contains information that can be used in land-planning programs in the County. The soil survey contains predictions of soil behavior for selected land uses such as agriculture, woodland management, recreation and development. The survey also highlights limitations and hazards inherent in the soil, improvements needed to overcome the limitations, and the impact of selected land uses on the environment.

Great differences in soil properties can occur within short distances. Some soils are seasonally wet or subject to flooding. Some are shallow to bedrock. Some are too unstable to be used as a foundation for buildings or roads. Wet soils are poorly suited to use as septic tank absorption fields. A high water table makes a soil poorly suited to basements or underground installations.

In doing this survey, soil scientists observed the steepness, length, and shape of slopes; the general pattern of drainage; the kinds of crops and native plants growing on the soils; and the kinds of bedrock. The soils in the survey area occur in an orderly pattern that is related to the geology, landforms, relief, climate and natural vegetation of the area. Each kind of soil is associated with a particular kind of landscape or with a segment of the landscape. By observing the soils in the survey area and relating their position to specific segments of the landscape, a soil scientist develops a model of how the soils were formed. During mapping, this model enables the soil scientist to predict with a considerable degree of accuracy the kind of soil at a specific location on the landscape.

Predictions about soil behavior are based not only on soil properties but also on such variables as climate and biological activity. Soil conditions are predictable over long periods of time, but they are not predictable from year to year.

After soil scientists located and identified the significant natural bodies of soil in the survey area, they drew the boundaries of these bodies on aerial photographs and identified each as a specific map unit.

More specific information on the soils of Roanoke County can be obtained from the Soil Survey of Roanoke County and the Cities of Roanoke and Salem, Virginia published by the National Cooperative Soil Survey and issued in July 1997.

## **HISTORIC RESOURCES**

### **Overview**

Settlement began in Roanoke County in the mid-18th century, with the first immigration into the Great Valley of Virginia. The earliest settlers were Scots-Irish who came south along the Great Wagon Road, through the Shenandoah Valley and into the Roanoke River Valley. The earliest settlements naturally occurred in the northern areas, including Catawba and the Botetourt Springs/Hollins area. Germans began to settle in Roanoke County in increasing numbers, particularly in the last two decades of the 18th century.

By 1838, Roanoke County was established, with the growing town of Salem as its county seat. Roanoke County had its roots as an agrarian economy, dominated by wheat and later tobacco cultivation and their related industries, milling and tobacco processing. In 1852, the Virginia and Tennessee Railroad completed tracks through Salem and, two years later, to Bristol improving access to eastern markets. By the 1880's, Roanoke had become a major transportation hub for several railroads, particularly when Norfolk and Western Railroad established Roanoke as the major office of its Virginia operations. Between 1880 and 1900, the County and the Cities of Roanoke and Salem experienced rapid growth and urbanization. In the twentieth century, the agricultural base has declined with the increased urban growth of Roanoke and Salem, particularly since 1950. Today, the Roanoke area is the regional center for industry and commerce in southwest Virginia.

### **Historical Architecture Reconnaissance Survey**

Roanoke County residents have long been interested in the history of their community. In the 1980's, two new histories were written about the County and its architecture. In 1982, W.L. Whitwell, Professor of Art at Hollins College and Lee W. Winborne, a resident of Roanoke, prepared one of the first architectural studies of Roanoke County. Titled The Architectural Heritage of the Roanoke Valley, this book surveys the architecture of the County and the Cities of Roanoke and Salem, ranging from agricultural buildings to city storefronts. With the County's 150 year celebration of its founding, the Roanoke County Sesquicentennial Committee commissioned Deedie Kagey to write a history of Roanoke County, from its first settlement to the future. This volume, entitled When Past is Prologue: A History of Roanoke County, published in 1988, provided a valuable and complete history of the County.

Roanoke County's historic preservation efforts were boosted by the establishment of two important organizations in Roanoke: the Roanoke Regional Preservation Office and the Roanoke Valley Preservation Foundation. In 1990, in conjunction with these two organizations, Roanoke County undertook an architectural survey of its historic properties. The information gathered in this survey allows the objective evaluation of the significance of the County properties and provides preservation priorities to update the comprehensive plan.

The Roanoke County survey recorded a total of 410 structures. Of these, 379 historic sites were surveyed at the reconnaissance level and 31 at the intensive level. The most common building type documented in the survey area is the single-family dwelling. Roanoke County's domestic architecture is predominantly rural and vernacular, reflecting its traditional agrarian culture character. The County survey did not identify any resources dating to the 18th century. Even in the earlier settled area of the Catawba Valley, no 18th century structures have yet been found.

Eleven homes were identified as potential recommendations to the National Register. In addition, the areas of Janee Drive, Hollins College, Bonsack and Wabun were identified as potential historic districts.

One of the important objectives of this survey was to promote civic pride in our community and to promote heritage education. One of the first steps in educating the public about the historic resources in Roanoke County is to let them know that they exist. It is important to inform the owners of such properties that their buildings are historic and therefore a valuable part of the County's history. It is also important to inform the general public of the existence of these historic structures and areas. These objectives could be achieved through the distribution of the survey forms to the property owners and the development of a historic tour brochure. The creation of a permanent Roanoke County Historic Resources Commission to deal with preservation issues would further help to protect the historic resources in the County.

## **MOUNTAINS AND RIDGETOPS**

### **Introduction**

The mountainsides and ridgetops that surround Roanoke County have always served as a source of great beauty, community pride and cultural heritage to those who call this area home. The mountains that form the bowl around the Valley below make this area unique - very few places can claim the scenic beauty of this region.

The mountains are not only beautiful to look at. They provide a valuable tool in the economic development tool box whether it be courting a new industrial prospect, being selected as the site of a major sports event or drawing in outdoor enthusiasts and tourists from around the world. The Roanoke Valley is able to offer something unique and different from anywhere else in the United States and that can be attributed to the scenic beauty of the region - the mountains, the forests, the Blue Ridge Parkway and the Appalachian Trail. How many communities can boast that they have both a National Park and a National Scenic Trail within their boundaries?

As our county prospers and grows and developable land is consumed it becomes increasingly important to implement strategies to preserve and protect these mountains and ridgetops. Careful and prudent planning must be conducted.

### **Mountain and Ridgetop Development Policies**

For the most part, our suburban-oriented subdivision and zoning regulations assume that projects are built on relatively flat terrain. When these regulations are applied to projects built on

mountainsides and ridgetops they result in denuded hillsides, erosion, siltation of streams,

flooding and the loss of scenic quality. Mountains and ridgetop development policies can help alleviate these unpleasant results and serve the following purposes: 1) Minimize soil instability, erosion and downstream siltation; 2) Minimize flooding; 3) Promote safety of the design and construction of development; 4) Protect rare and critical environments, such as aquifers and recharge areas, wildlife, fragile soils and geologic structures; 5) Provide for safe vehicular access; and, 6) Preserve the scenic character of mountainsides.

There are various options for mountains and ridgetop development policies ranging from identifying and preserving steep slopes that should not be developed to adapting the density of development to the terrain so that as slope increases, allowed density decreases. In addition, various design guidelines should be evaluated to minimize land disturbance, encourage retention of existing vegetation and appropriate architecture that blends with the natural surroundings. Another option is to provide legal and financial mechanisms for the acquisition of open space and conservation easements in these areas.

## **AGRICULTURAL RESOURCES**

The characteristics of the rural areas of Roanoke County have changed significantly over the last three decades, a trend that can be seen across the State. Farming has decreased from about 47,000 acres to less than 20,000 acres since 1969. The number of farms existing in the County in 1997 had dropped to half of what it was in 1969. Another noteworthy trend is that increasingly smaller part-time farms dominate agriculture in Roanoke County. Only two dairy farms and a few orchards remain. The bulk of farming is truck (vegetable) farming, cattle and hay. In almost all cases these operations are supplemented by at least one and often two outside incomes. The major farm and land owners are aging and retiring, placing them on fixed incomes in a climate of rising real estate taxes. Frequently there is no expectation that the next generation will continue farming.

The climate for forestry is similar. Forest resources are diminishing and land ownership is becoming more fragmented. This has discouraged some logging and forestry related industries and services from operating in the County.

The process by which agricultural land becomes suburban land tends to be incremental and characterized by subtle changes. The actual breaking of ground is only the conclusion of this conversion process. The principal factors that drive this farmland conversion process include: 1) the local economic viability of agriculture; 2) the loss of the critical mass of agricultural land within an area necessary to support agricultural services and markets; 3) public investment decisions for road improvements and sewer and water system construction; 4) the strength of local growth pressures and the resulting difference in land values for agricultural use and for development; and, 5) the circumstances, lifestyle preferences, and life cycles of farm families.

Suburban residents in Roanoke County are increasingly drawn to the attractions of pastoral landscapes and rural lifestyles. At first, they built “farmettes” on parcels of 5 to 20 acres serviced by private wells and septic systems. Eventually, denser development followed and the community now closely replicates the suburbs from which the newcomers fled. Continuing subdivision development will tend to drive land prices higher, making it more difficult and expensive to maintain enough land to support viable agricultural operations. Conflict is and will continue to be created between the farmers and the new residents over the smells, noise, use of fertilizers and other attributes of agriculture.

Given the nature and realities of these trends, should the County take proactive steps to preserve and protect the remaining agricultural and forestry resources? Despite these trends, there is a strong desire on the part of rural residents to maintain the rural environment, the rural life style and the rural quality of life that they have enjoyed and to preserve these things so that future generations can also enjoy them. In a broader sense, the existence of rural areas, working farms, pastoral views and open space enhance the quality of life of all residents of the Roanoke Valley. Farming is an important and critical link to our agrarian heritage and culture and provides educational opportunities for adults and children alike.

If agricultural resources have value to the community, then planning strategies and preservation techniques must be pursued that will allow farming to survive and remain financially feasible under changing economic and market trends. The challenge entering the next century will lie in community and citizen-based efforts to develop balanced, equitable and widely supported approaches to preserve the rural and agricultural areas of the County.

## **THE BLUE RIDGE PARKWAY**

### **Introduction**

Although the concept of parkways had been around since the mid-19th century, the Blue Ridge Parkway was one of the first rural parkways to be conceived. Its original purpose was simply to link two national parks - the Shenandoah in Virginia to the north and the Great Smokey Mountains in Tennessee and North Carolina to the south - a distance of over 469 miles. The new roadway was seen by many as an economic stimulus to the struggling southern Appalachia region and economy. The Parkway was initiated as a means of alleviating unemployment and promoting tourism. The construction of the Parkway also served as a reclamation project since much of the land along the Parkway's route was in poor condition from excess timbering operations and poor farming practices.

Construction of the Blue Ridge Parkway began in 1935 and the final section of the Parkway, at Grandfather Mountain, was not completed until 1987. For most of its length it follows the Blue Ridge of the southern Appalachian Mountains in Virginia and North Carolina. Elevation along the Parkway ranges from 649 feet above sea level to 6,053 feet above sea level.



### **Design of the Parkway**

Although the general layout of the Parkway route had been established - a fairly direct linkage along the Blue Ridge Mountains connecting the Shenandoah National Park to the Great Smokey Mountain National Park - the design and construction route still had to be decided. In 1934 the designers of the Blue Ridge Parkway assembled in Roanoke, Virginia and established several principles to help define the themes and provide the context for the Parkway's design.

Throughout the 52 year life of the design and construction of the Parkway, these original unifying design themes have been closely followed: 1) The Parkway would pass through a wide right-of-way averaging about 100 acres per mile. This would allow for the restoration and preservation of the roadside landscape; 2) All structures, such as bridges, tunnels, park buildings, signs and site details would be characterized by a rustic simplicity so that the Parkway would harmonize with the natural and cultural environments; 3) All design elements would relate to each other in a way that provides the "complete road"; and, 4) At intervals, the linear parkway right-of-way would bulge, creating recreational parks and scenic protection.

### **The Blue Ridge Parkway in Roanoke County**

The Blue Ridge Parkway travels for 469 miles through two states, 29 counties, three national forests and an Indian reservation. The Parkway descends from the Peaks of Otter and for nearly 27 miles travels through Roanoke County. Roanoke has the distinction of being the most urban, metropolitan stop along this motor route.

As a long, linear national park the Blue Ridge Parkway shares its boundaries with a large number of adjoining properties. The Parkway has been described as a narrow ribbon laid upon the land. As such, many of the beautiful views, pastoral scenes and vernacular landscapes observed while driving the Parkway are private lands and not protected by national park status or scenic easement. As Roanoke County continues to grow and develop, the challenge is to protect the scenic qualities of the Blue Ridge Parkway while respecting private landowners' rights to use their land. This balance can be achieved through the use of careful design guidelines and incentives to encourage sensitive site planning.

### **Blue Ridge Parkway Overlay District**

A proposed Blue Ridge Parkway Overlay District may be one means to protect the important viewshed aspects of this resource. The National Park Service in conjunction with County staff has mapped and prioritized the significant viewsheds from the Parkway. These viewsheds are identified on the future land use maps in Chapter 7. This information could form the basis of a Blue Ridge Parkway Overlay District. Such a district would maintain the development regulations of the underlying zoning district while providing additional design guidelines and development flexibility to protect these viewsheds. This overlay district could include density bonuses to encourage cluster development outside of the viewshed areas, more stringent limitations on height of structures and more flexibility in landscaping requirements.

## **THE APPALACHIAN NATIONAL SCENIC TRAIL**

### **Introduction**

The Appalachian Trail (A.T.) is a 2,160 mile long public footpath traversing the spine of the Appalachian Mountains from central Maine to northern Georgia. First conceived in the early 1920s by Benton MacKaye, the A.T. was completed in 1937 largely due to the efforts of local volunteer organizations. The trail links 75 public parks and forests including 26 federally designated wilderness areas.

The A.T. is the most ecologically diverse unit of the National Park system. With inventories complete on 85% of the corridor, there have been 1472 recorded occurrences of sensitive, rare, threatened or endangered species at 402 separate sites.

Utilized by three to four million hikers annually, the trail offers everything from an afternoon's stroll to a six month through hike. The A.T. is within a days drive of two thirds of the population of the United States.

Perhaps as remarkable as the physical public resource is the system that built and maintains the trail for future generations. Locally based volunteer organizations perform the lions share of the work needed to build and maintain the footpath, overnight shelters, parking areas, bridges, and the environmental and cultural resources that are integral to the Appalachian Trail experience. Their partnership with state and federal agencies and local governments is perhaps the longest lasting, strongest and most complex public/private partnership in the nation. It has served as a model for similar arrangements across the country.

### **The Appalachian Trail in Roanoke County**

Some of the most spectacular sections of the entire Appalachian Trail and two of its most well used destination points are found along the 17.8 miles of the trail found in Roanoke County. The trail enters the county just north and west of the famed McAfee's Knob. This dramatic outcrop of Silurian sandstone provides a 270 degree view from the pastoral Catawba Valley to the City of Roanoke. It is arguably the most photographed point on the Appalachian Trail. The trail follows Catawba Mountain, crosses the Catawba Valley rural historic district, crosses Sandstone Ridge, and ascends Cove Mountain to the popular Dragon's Tooth outcrops. Following the crest of Cove Mountain above Millers Cove, the trail leaves the county but continues to view areas within the county. The trail re-enters the county at the crest of Brush Mountain and follows along the county line, passing the Audie Murphy monument, then dropping into the Sinking Creek Valley. The trail sections from Rt. 311 to McAfee's Knob and the day-use trail to Dragon's Tooth are among the most heavily used and best loved sections of the A.T. in the entire region.

The entire trail section through the county is well known for remote rugged ridgetops that overlook some of the most beautiful and unspoiled pastoral landscapes on the A.T. The Andy Layne/North Mountain trail system runs from Scorched Earth Gap on Catawba Mountain to Lost Spectacles Gap on Cove Mountain to complete a popular 28.7 mile loop trail with the A.T., almost entirely within the county.

Two trail shelters are located within the county on Catawba Mountain. Trailhead parking lots are located on Rt.311 at the crest of Catawba Mountain, at the foot of North Mountain and on the crest of Brush Mountain west of the Audie Murphy Monument.

### **The Appalachian Trail Overlay District**

All of the actual footpath of the A.T. and most of the foreground viewshed within the county is in federal ownership. The trail and associated lands are primarily managed by the Roanoke Appalachian Trail Club, a non-profit volunteer organization founded in 1932, and the Appalachian Trail Conference, a trail-wide private umbrella organization with local offices in Newport, Virginia. Trail lands east of the Virginia Route 624 crossing are under the jurisdiction of the National Park Service's Appalachian Trail Park Office and lands west of that crossing are a part of the Jefferson National Forest.

A proposed Appalachian Trail Overlay District is one means of protecting the important viewsheds associated with the trail experience in the county. The County staff, in conjunction with the Appalachian Trail Conference and Roanoke Appalachian Trail Club, and with the assistance of the U.S. Forest Service and National Park Service, are in the process of mapping the significant viewsheds from the trail. This information could form the basis of an Appalachian Trail Overlay District. Such a district would maintain the development regulations of the underlying zoning district while providing additional design guidelines and development flexibility to protect these viewsheds. This overlay district could include density bonuses to encourage cluster development outside of the viewshed areas, more stringent limitations on height of structures and more flexibility in landscaping requirements.

### **Goal**

**To preserve and manage the natural, historic and scenic resources of Roanoke County in a way that meets the needs of the present generation without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs.**

### **Issues and Opportunities**

- Roanoke County citizens place a high value on the surrounding mountain landscape, agricultural and forested lands, streams, rivers, open spaces and parks.
- Although rapidly urbanizing, the County still has large rural areas where little development has occurred and limited environmental degradation has taken place.
- The County is a member of the regional Greenway Commission. While actively involved in planning and constructing an integrated greenway system, the County has not prepared a detailed feasibility study for all of the primary off-road greenways proposed in the County.

- The County participates in the regional land trust through membership on the Board of Trustees and financial support. The land trust is a regional publicly-supported charitable organization providing voluntary means to promote the preservation of natural and cultural resources.
- The County participates in the regional open space planning project initiated by the Fifth Planning District.
- The County has adopted the Roanoke River Overlay District as part of the zoning ordinance. This provides a moderate level of environmental protection to this significant water resource.
- The County zoning ordinance is not an effective mechanism for protection of the natural landscape and environment. It does not prevent or even discourage development on mountainsides and ridgetops and has no tools in place for the protection of streams, wetlands and other natural features.
- Given the large land base of the County and the amount of construction activity occurring, the County requires additional monitoring and enforcement resources directed towards the control and prevention of soil erosion.
- Over the last decade, Roanoke County has seen moderate to strong residential development pressures. As more and more of the relatively flat and close-in land has been developed the economic feasibility of building on the mountainsides and ridgetops had grown.
- The County allows filling and construction in floodplain areas. Although this conforms to Federal Government minimum standards, it constrains stormwater drainage and may create a flooding hazard downstream.
- The zoning ordinance does not require nor effectively encourage open space or greenways in new subdivisions.
- VDOT road standards provide for the efficient and safe movement of traffic but do not allow or encourage innovation or creativity in subdivision design.
- The County subdivision ordinance needs to be updated and modified to reflect the policies and guidelines of this Community Plan.
- The County has developed a regional stormwater management plan but this plan does not emphasize the use of open space or greenways as a cost effective, non-engineering tool.
- The County does not restrict or monitor development in wetlands. The County depends on the Army Corps of Engineers for this but there is no “alert” mechanism in place. The system relies on the diligence of citizens to protect wetlands.

- Natural stream channels are allowed to be diverted or covered by development. Although unavoidable in a few specific instances, it does permanently alter the natural environment and aesthetic amenity of that water course.
- The County does not have a mechanism in place to control or manage the removal and destruction of trees on private properties.
- The County participates in the land use valuation program. This program allows land owners to reduce real estate taxes on land that is set aside in agricultural, forestry or horticultural uses.
- The County has not implemented the “Recommendations for Planning” produced as a result of the historic architectural survey of 1991-92.
- The scenic viewsheds of the Blue Ridge Parkway and Appalachian Trail are under a continuous threat from development, including broadcast towers.
- Active farm and orchard land in Roanoke County are diminishing rapidly.

## **Objectives**

- A. Require land use management policies that preserve the natural, scenic and historic environment while accommodating future growth and development.
- B. Protect the Blue Ridge Parkway, Appalachian Trail and other scenic corridors through Roanoke County.
- C. Protect critical mountainsides and ridgetops.
- D. Protect soils, aquatic life and water quality by reducing runoff and soil erosion.
- E. Reduce flooding and flood damage by protecting floodplains and wetlands.
- F. Encourage land use patterns that conserve and protect open space thereby providing wildlife habitat and recreational opportunities.
- G. Promote the use of a liveable traffic design model that values neighborhood appearance and pedestrian friendly aspects of a neighborhood street as much as the ease of traffic movements.
- H. Encourage innovation and creativity in site design and, where appropriate, greenways, parks and open space in new subdivisions.
- I. Provide incentives for the protection of forested areas on private lands.

- J. Increase participation in the land use valuation program.
- K. Increase awareness of our historic, cultural and heritage resources.
- L. Encourage design that respects the natural environment and reflects the local environment.
- M. Encourage the implementation of the Conceptual Greenway Plan.

### **Implementation Strategies**

1. Conduct extensive public education, with assistance from the Urban Forestry Council, Valley Beautiful and local, regional and statewide land trusts, on tree preservation and protection. Coordinate this effort with VDOT, AEP, Roanoke Gas, other utilities and the Roanoke Regional Home Builders Association. (Obj. C, D, I)
2. Adopt a tree ordinance to protect, preserve and/or replace trees on private property during land development. (Obj. C, D, I)
3. Develop a county-wide “conservation and development” resource map utilizing the GIS system. Include such features as wetlands, floodplains, steep slopes, historic sites, viewsheds, habitats of endangered or threatened species and significant woodlands. (Obj. B, C, D, E)
4. Adopt a Natural Resources Overlay District to include resources such as mountainsides and ridgelines, properties within the critical viewsheds of the Blue Ridge Parkway and the Appalachian Trail, and lands that include wetlands and floodplains. Within this overlay district “conservation site design” will be mandatory allowing full density with clustering and open space requirements. (Obj. A, B, C, E, F, H, L)
5. Incorporate “conservation site design” as a by right option in all agricultural and residential zoning districts. This design technique provides a straightforward way to ensure that new subdivisions are designed around the central organizing principle of conservation. It requires the developer to identify conservation and development areas on the site and locate houses, streets and lots in a way that protects these resource features while allowing clustering and full-density. (Obj. A, C, E, F, H, L)
6. Identify mountainsides and ridgetops that should be protected and develop preservation strategies for these resources. (Obj. C)
7. Adopt policies for the siting of broadcast towers. (Obj. A, B, C, L)
8. Incorporate the design and development of the greenway system into the regional stormwater management plan. (Obj. E, H, M)

9. Allocate a percentage of any future stormwater management utility fees to the development of greenways. (Obj. E, H, M)
10. Revise parking lot standards to reflect actual usage, not anticipated “worse case” usage. Encourage shared parking where feasible. (Obj. D)
11. Develop educational brochures that outline voluntary means to preserve and protect open space, forest and agricultural lands, mountainsides and ridgetops and historic resources. (Obj. B, C, D, E, J, K)
12. Adopt stormwater management techniques, such as grassy swales, that are both effective on-site control measures and aesthetically pleasing. (Obj. D, L)
13. Ensure the long-term protection of the Spring Hollow Reservoir and adjacent public lands. Study the effectiveness of various conservation strategies such as conservation easements, zoning ordinance overlay districts or other mechanisms. (Obj. A, C, D, F)
14. Revise the subdivision ordinance to reflect the policies and guidelines of this Community Plan. Encourage the donation of greenway easements when property that is included on the Roanoke County Conceptual Greenway Plan is subdivided. (Obj. F, H, M)
15. Distribute the historic resources survey forms to property owners and assist in the creation of a permanent Roanoke County Historic Resources Commission. (Obj. K)
16. Develop subdivision street standards that value salable communities, retail and pedestrian-friendly streets, and a distinctive product equally with ease of traffic movement. Consider private road systems and standards. (Obj. G, L)
17. Identify important gateways and develop gateway overlay districts to preserve scenic entrances to and views of our community. (Obj. A, B, K)
18. Work with representatives of the billboard industry to optimize the location of billboards in Roanoke County. (Obj. A, K, L)
19. Utilize the Virginia Department of Game and Inland Fisheries fish and wildlife resources and habitat’s information system. (Obj. D, F)
20. Prioritize the open space resources in Roanoke County and develop a long-term strategy to preserve, protect and manage these critical resources. (Obj. A, B, C, D, E, F, I K, M)

21. Prepare a detailed feasibility study, as described in the Conceptual Plan, for the primary off-road greenways proposed in the County. (Obj. M)
22. Study, identify and recommend dedicated sources of funding for the County greenway system. (Obj. M)
23. Encourage the use of best management practices in the watersheds of Spring Hollow and Carvin's Cove Reservoirs. (Obj. D, E)
24. Enhance existing regulations and enforcement procedures to reduce soil runoff and erosion and provide for the protection of soils, aquatic life and water quality. (Obj. D, E)





# CHAPTER 6

## FUTURE LAND USE GUIDE

### INTRODUCTION

The Future Land Use Guide is an important component of this Community Plan. The Guide is a policy framework for future land use decisions within the County. Used in conjunction with the future land use maps found in Chapter 7 of the Plan, the Guide serves as a reference for all citizens on the most desirable location for future land use activities throughout the county. The Future Land Use Guide also implements, to the extent possible, the design guidelines discussed in Chapter 3.

The Guide should be used by Roanoke County citizens and property owners who are evaluating alternative uses for their land and will be used by Roanoke County staff, Planning Commission and Board of Supervisors in the evaluation of requested land use amendments.

### LAND USE DESIGNATIONS

The following designations are used to identify areas around the county where similar land use activities occur. The type of land uses which are desirable within each designation are also described.

In addition, this section includes land use determinants. These determinants or factors are used to evaluate requested changes to the future land use maps. The careful examination of these factors will determine which land use designation a piece of land should be in.

**Conservation:** A future land use area of particular environmental sensitivity due to topography, existence of unique land characteristics, conservation/open space/greenway easements, soil types or location with respect to other State or Federally preserved lands. Typical resources would include wetlands, ridgelines, mountainsides, scenic views from the Blue Ridge Parkway and Appalachian Trail, identified greenway corridors, productive agricultural lands, historical and cultural resources and threatened or endangered species habitats.

**Land Use Types:**     Agricultural Production - The production of crops, plants, vines, trees, livestock, poultry and eggs and associated services such as soil and crop preparation, landscape and horticultural care.

Forest and Wood Products - Tree farms, forest nurseries and reforestation services.

Parks - Large regional park facilities that are designed and developed to preserve the environmentally sensitive nature of the land.

Public Lands - Includes land that is owned by a public entity but is not an official park. Examples would be Haven's Wildlife Management Area, Spring Hollow Reservoir, Carvin's Cove watershed, Appalachian Trail, Blue Ridge Parkway, Forest Service lands and publicly owned land on Green Ridge Mountain.

Conservation Easements - Includes private lands that are protected by a conservation easement (includes scenic, agricultural, greenway and open space easements) held either by a private land trust or a State agency.

Rural Residential - Very limited, low density single-family homes generally averaging a gross density of one unit per 10 acres. Cluster developments are encouraged.

**Land Use Determinants:**     EXISTING LAND USE PATTERN - Locations where unique and important natural, agricultural, historical and cultural resources exist that deserve to have the highest level of protection.

RESOURCE PROTECTION - Locations where valuable and irreplaceable resources such as open space, public water supply impoundments, rivers, streams, lakes, productive agricultural land, woodlands, critical slopes, ridgelines, historical and archeological sites and unique natural areas exist.

ACCESS - Locations that are accessible by existing improved or unimproved rural roads.

RURAL SECTOR - Locations not served by urban services.

**Rural Preserve:** A future land use area of mostly undeveloped, outlying lands. These rural regions are generally stable and require a high degree of protection to preserve agricultural, forestal, recreational, and remote rural residential areas.

**Land Use Types:**     Agricultural Production - The production of crops, plants, vines, trees, livestock, poultry and eggs.

Agricultural Services - Services that support agricultural production such as soil and crop preparation, veterinary services and landscape and horticultural care.

Forest and Wood Products - Tree farms, forest nurseries and reforestation services.

Parks and Outdoor Recreation Facilities - Large regional parks and other recreation facilities that are designed to preserve environmentally sensitive lands and protect them from more intense land uses.

Rural Residential - Single-family residential generally averaging a gross density of one unit per three acres. Cluster developments are encouraged.

Rural Institutional - Limited intensity uses such as religious assembly facilities and clubs serving the local rural population base.

Mining and Extraction Operations - Those uses that locate according to the availability of natural resources. There are strict limitations on these industries in the Rural Preserve designation due to potentially harmful effects on housing, farming and resource protection and conservation areas.

**Land Use Determinants:** EXISTING LAND USE PATTERN - Locations where agricultural, recreational, and forestal uses are predominant and are encouraged to expand.

EXISTING ZONING - Locations where agricultural zoning is in effect.

RURAL RESIDENTIAL AND INSTITUTIONAL AREAS - Locations where limited, very low density residential and institutional uses are allowed.

RESOURCE PROTECTION - Locations where valuable and irreplaceable resources such as open space, public water supply impoundments, rivers, streams, lakes, productive agricultural land, woodlands, critical slopes, ridgelines, historical and archeological sites and unique natural areas exist.

ACCESS - Locations that are accessible by existing improved or unimproved rural roads and, to a lesser extent, rural arterial highways.

RURAL SECTOR - Locations outside the urban service area.

**Rural Village:** A future land use area where limited development activity has historically occurred and where suburban or urban development patterns are discouraged. These rural community and farming areas are generally in between the intense suburban development patterns already established in the County and the designated Conservation and Rural Preserve areas.

**Land Use Types:**     Rural Housing - Low-density single-family residential generally averaging one unit per acre. Cluster developments are encouraged.

Rural Community Centers - Nonresidential uses which serve rural residents such as outdoor recreation and park facilities, religious assembly facilities, schools, fire and rescue stations and clubs.

Agricultural Production and Services - Livestock, orchards and crop productions, landscape and horticultural services, veterinary services, farm labor and farm management services. Generally including all activities that support land based uses.

Forest and Wood Products - Includes the operation of timber tracts, tree farms, forest nurseries and the gathering of forest products. Excludes sawmills and large-scale timber cutting operations.

Small Scale Commercial - Limited commercial operations that serve the local, rural community. Included would be personal services and retail convenience stores.

Rural Parks and Outdoor Recreation - Parks and recreational facilities that are designed to preserve the environmentally sensitive character of the rural landscape.

**Land Use Determinants:**     EXISTING LAND USE PATTERN - Locations where very low density residential, institutional and limited agricultural uses have developed.

EXISTING ZONING - Locations where rural residential and agricultural zoning have been established.

RURAL RESIDENTIAL EXPANSION AREAS - Locations where small scale, very low density rural residential housing is desirable.

AGRICULTURAL - Locations where existing agricultural uses and activities are present.

ACCESS - Locations served by an existing improved rural road and, to a lesser extent, rural arterial highways.

RURAL SECTOR - Locations outside the urban service area.

**Village Center:** A future land use area which serves as the commercial and institutional focal point of surrounding rural residential and farming establishments. Here, the highest level of rural

land use activities may occur. By nature, the majority of commercial and institutional activities in Village Center areas are designed, scaled and marketed to best serve the product and service needs of the residents from the surrounding rural areas.

**Land Use Types:**     Agricultural Production and Services - Services which support the surrounding agricultural community.

Parks and Outdoor Recreation - Small-scale facilities that serve the rural neighborhoods or are used for community purposes. These recreation facilities should be linked to the residential areas by greenways, bike trails and pedestrian paths.

Eco-tourism - Facilities that serve a niche market and are often outdoor, sports oriented. Designed in an environmentally sensitive way to protect the valuable natural resources of the rural areas.

Residential - Development at relatively high rural densities, generally not exceeding 6 units per acre and including single-family and two-family housing.

Rural Community Centers - Includes institutional uses such as schools, religious assembly facilities, clubs and meeting rooms that serve the needs of the surrounding rural village residents.

Convenience Retail - Establishments that provide retail goods and services to the surrounding rural village residents.

Rural Highway Retail - Small-scale, rural establishments that provide retail goods and services to the passing motorists. These uses should be clustered in a village design that complements the rural surroundings.

**Land Use Determinants:**     EXISTING LAND USE PATTERN - Locations where commercial, institutional and low- to middle-density residential uses have developed and that are generally surrounded by rural residential settlements.

EXISTING ZONING - Locations where commercial zoning has been established.

ACCESS - Locations that are usually situated at a crossroad and are served by a rural arterial.

RURAL SECTOR - Locations outside the urban service area.

**Neighborhood Conservation:** A future land use area where established single-family neighborhoods are delineated and the conservation of the existing development pattern is encouraged.

**Land Use Types:** Single-Family Residential - Attached and detached housing at a reasonable density that is not significantly higher than the existing neighborhood. Infill lots or community re-development should be designed to be sensitive to the surrounding neighborhood but can be at reasonably higher density. New single-family residential developments should incorporate greenways and bike and pedestrian trails. Cluster developments are encouraged.

Neighborhood Institutional Centers - Uses that serve the neighborhood residents including parks, schools, religious assembly facilities, recreational and park facilities, community meeting areas and clubs. These facilities should be linked to the residential areas by greenways, bike trails and pedestrian paths.

Neighborhood Commercial - Low impact services to serve the local neighborhood that are consistent with the Community Plan design guidelines.

**Land Use Determinants:** EXISTING LAND USE PATTERN - Locations where limited density residential subdivisions have been platted and developed.

EXISTING ZONING - Locations where limited density residential zoning has been established.

EXPANSION AREAS - Locations where the expansion of the existing development pattern is logical.

INFILL DEVELOPMENT - Locations where infill areas complement the surrounding development pattern.

ACCESS - Locations served by a local street system.

URBAN SECTOR - Locations served by urban services.

**Development:** A future land use area where most new neighborhood development will occur, including large-scale planned developments which mix residential with retail and office uses. Innovation in housing design and environmental sensitivity in site development is a key objective. Clustered developments are encouraged as is the use of greenways and bike and pedestrian trails.

- Land Use Types:**     Conventional Residential - Single-family developments in conventional lots. Includes attached, detached and zero-lot line housing options. Greenways and bike and pedestrian trails are encouraged.
- Cluster Residential - Single family developments with similar gross density of conventional subdivisions but individual lot sizes may be reduced to accommodate the clustering of housing while allocating common open space. Includes attached, detached and zero-lot line housing options. Greenways and bike and pedestrian trails are encouraged.
- Multi-family - Developments of 6-12 units per acre. Clustering is encouraged as are greenways and bike and pedestrian trails.
- Planned Residential Development - Mixed housing types at a gross density range of 4-8 units per acre. Includes conventional housing, cluster housing, zero lot-line housing, townhouses and garden apartments. Greenways and bike and pedestrian trails are encouraged.
- Planned Community Development - Planned residential development mixed with office parks, neighborhood shopping centers and supporting retail development. The majority of the development is residential with a maximum limit set on the retail land. Greenways and bike and pedestrian trails are encouraged.
- Community Activity Centers - Facilities which serve the neighboring residents including parks, schools, religious assembly facilities, parks and recreational facilities and community clubs and meeting areas. These activity centers should be linked to residential areas by greenways, bike and pedestrian trails.

- Land Use Determinants:**     PUBLIC FACILITIES CAPACITY - Locations where public facilities are adequate to handle the increased population concentration. This includes schools, parks and recreation facilities and fire and rescue facilities.
- UTILITY AVAILABILITY - Locations where water and sewer services exist or are scheduled to serve the area.
- ENVIRONMENTAL CAPACITY - Locations where natural land features, including topography, provide optimum opportunity for urban residential development.
- ACCESS - Locations which have or can provide direct access to a major street.



Chapter 6: Future Land Use Guide

URBAN SECTOR - Locations served by urban services.

**Transition:** A future land use area that encourages the orderly development of highway frontage parcels. Transition areas generally serve as developed buffers between highways and nearby or adjacent lower intensity development. Intense retail and highway oriented commercial uses are discouraged in transition areas, which are more suitable for office, institutional and small-scale, coordinated retail uses.

**Land Use Types:**     Office and Institutional - Planned office parks and independent facilities in park-like surroundings are encouraged. A high degree of architectural design and environmentally sensitive site design is encouraged.

Retail - Small-scale planned and clustered retail uses.

Multifamily Residential - Garden apartments at a density of 12 to 24 units per acre.

Single-Family Attached Residential - Planned townhouse communities of 6 or more units per acre.

Parks - Public and private recreational facilities. These facilities should be linked to residential areas by greenways, bike and pedestrian trails.

**Land Use Determinants:**     EXISTING LAND USE PATTERN - Locations where limited commercial uses exist.

  EXISTING ZONING - Locations where commercial zoning exists.

  ACCESS - Locations where properties have direct frontage and access to an arterial or major collector street.

  SURROUNDING LAND USE - Locations which serve as a logical buffer strip between conflicting land use patterns.

  ORIENTATION - Locations which are physically oriented toward the major street.

  URBAN SECTOR - Locations served by urban services.

**Core:** A future land use area where high intensity urban development is encouraged. Land uses within core areas may parallel the central business districts of Roanoke, Salem and Vinton. Core areas may also be appropriate for larger-scale highway-oriented retail uses and regionally-based shopping facilities. Due to limited availability, areas designated as Core are not appropriate for tax-exempt facilities

**Land Use Types:**     General Retail Shops and Personal Services - Planned shopping centers and clustered retail uses are encouraged. These centers should incorporate greenways, bike and pedestrian trails into their designs and link them to surrounding neighborhoods.

Office and Institutional Uses - Planned developments are encouraged.

Limited Industrial Uses - Planned uses in areas designated as economic opportunity areas.

**Land Use Determinants:**     EXISTING LAND USE PATTERN - Locations where commercial uses have been developed or will likely be developed.

   EXISTING ZONING - Locations where commercial zoning exists.

   ACCESS - Locations served by an arterial street system.

   POPULATION CENTER - Locations within close proximity to the projected population concentrations.

   URBAN SECTOR - Locations served by urban services.

**Principal Industrial:** A future land use area where a variety of industry types are encouraged to locate. Principal Industrial areas are existing and planned regional employment centers and are distributed throughout the county, convenient to major residential areas and suitable highway access. Due to limited availability, areas designated as Principal Industrial are not appropriate for tax-exempt facilities.

**Land Use Types:**     Agricultural - Industries which involve the manufacturing, storage, marketing and wholesaling of agricultural products. These industries may also be located outside of the Principal Industrial areas, within the rural designations, where agricultural skills may be found.

Small Industries and Custom Manufacturing - These industries typically serve a local market and may involve the on-site production of goods by hand manufacturing.

Mining and Extraction - These facilities locate according to the availability of natural resources.

Industrial - Conventional freestanding industrial uses, warehouses, wholesalers, storage yards.

Industrial Parks - Large tracts of land that are subdivided, developed and designed according to a unified plan. These parks are employment centers and may include mixed land uses including supporting retail services. These types of industries are encouraged to develop in Principal Industrial areas. Planned industrial parks should incorporate greenways, bike and pedestrian paths into their designs and link these features to surrounding neighborhoods where appropriate.

**Land Use Determinants:** EXISTING LAND USE PATTERN - Locations where industry has historically developed.

EXISTING ZONING - Locations zoned industrial.

ECONOMIC OPPORTUNITY AREAS - Locations identified by Roanoke County as an economic opportunity area.

EMPLOYMENT CENTERS - Locations where labor-intensive industries exist.

TOPOGRAPHY - Locations that can be developed in an environmentally sensitive manner and that are outside of the designated floodplain.

RESOURCE PROTECTION - Locations that can be developed in such a way as not to threaten valuable natural resources.

WATER AND SEWER SERVICE AND SUPPLY - Locations where water and sewer service exist or can be provided in the near future.

ACCESS - Locations served by an adequate public street system that does not direct traffic through existing residential neighborhoods.

TRANSPORTATION CENTERS - Locations within close proximity to rail, airport and major street systems.

URBAN SECTOR - Locations served by, or in close proximity to urban services.

## **LAND USE POLICIES**

The following land use policies apply to all land use designations.

### **GENERAL**

1. Act proactively to manage growth. Encourage and direct growth toward those areas of the County that can support it with the appropriate and necessary infrastructure, facilities and services and discourage development where the infrastructure and transportation system cannot support it.
2. Encourage sustainable economic growth that enhances the quality of life and fosters economic health.
3. Encourage land use development patterns that reflect community values and desires. Discourage land consumptive development patterns.
4. Allow flexibility in site design to encourage the preservation of unique natural resources and open space.
5. Recognize the uniqueness of our community. Work actively to protect those features and characteristics that distinguish Roanoke County from every other community.
6. Use high quality architectural features and character in addition to creative landscape design to develop sites that are sensitive to the environment and respect the unique land features of the site.

### **RESOURCE PRESERVATION**

1. Prevent or discourage land development that will destroy the County's valuable natural resources including ridgelines, mountains, floodplains, wetlands, scenic vistas and water quality. Develop incentives that will make this policy more palatable.
2. Encourage the preservation of agricultural lands. These farms have economic, educational, open-space and cultural value.
3. Encourage the preservation of historic and cultural resources in the County. Recognize the importance these features and sites have in the quality of life and collective history of County citizens.
4. Use creative and flexible site design techniques to protect natural resources while allowing reasonable densities.

## **DESIGN**

1. Implement, through the rezoning process, design guidelines for all new developments to encourage architectural and site design features that enhance the surrounding community and work in cooperation with the topography and land features. Provide incentives where appropriate to facilitate this process.
2. Encourage planned residential, commercial and industrial centers that utilize coordinated access points, parking and signage and common design themes.

## **NEIGHBORHOODS**

1. Recognize that because of the suburban nature of Roanoke County, most citizens identify more closely with their own neighborhoods than with the County as a whole.
2. Assist neighborhoods in promoting their own identities and forming neighborhood civic leagues.
3. Preserve the stability of residential neighborhoods by discouraging the intrusion of incompatible uses.
4. Recognize that in order to discourage sprawl and protect rural lands and natural resources, some reasonable increase in housing density may be necessary as infill development and re-development occurs.
5. Encourage the maintenance and enhancement of older neighborhoods, recognizing that these homes provide a viable source of affordable housing to the community.
6. Design traffic circulation patterns so that traffic is routed around rather than through residential neighborhoods whenever feasible. This policy is not meant to encourage cul-de-sacs but rather to examine the use of more narrow neighborhood streets, grid patterns, etc. to protect County neighborhoods from cut-through traffic.

## **COMMUNITY FACILITIES**

1. Continue to support the concept of neighborhood schools and recognize their importance as a focal point of existing, stable neighborhoods.
2. Encourage the use of school facilities for multiple purposes including community meeting places, recreational facilities and open space.

3. Recognize the impact that large residential developments have on community facilities, including schools, parks and police and fire services. Consider the use of impact fees and proffers to offset some of these costs.
4. Promote regional cooperation in the provision of all community services including public safety, libraries, schools, parks and utilities.

## **TRANSPORTATION**

1. Ensure that County citizens and staff have the opportunity to participate in transportation planning at the initial stages of plan development.
2. Require that transportation plans consider the viability and economic feasibility of alternative modes of transportation including greenways, bike paths, sidewalks and walking trails.

## **OPEN SPACE**

1. Prioritize the open space resources of the County and develop implementation strategies for preserving and protecting these valuable resources.
2. Encourage the preservation of agricultural lands. These farms have economic, educational, open space and cultural value.
3. Encourage private property owners of large tracts of open space lands to preserve these properties using tax incentives.
4. Participate and support the Western Virginia Land Trust in its endeavors to preserve the natural resources of Roanoke County.

## **GREENWAYS**

1. Greenways and greenway easements should be incorporated into new residential subdivisions and office and industrial parks.
2. New road construction and widening of existing roads should include serious consideration of greenways and bikeways and their associated benefits and costs.
3. Provide for the construction and maintenance of greenways by incorporating them into the Department of Parks and Recreation's park system with adequate funding.

## **ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT**

1. Create an effective business environment which fosters the growth and prosperity of existing business and industry.
2. Seek new business development and investment in Roanoke County in areas planned and designated as economic opportunity areas.
3. Develop and implement plans and programs to attract tourists to Roanoke County.
4. Recognize that the scenic beauty of the Roanoke County area is an essential ingredient in the tourist experience. Support efforts to preserve and protect these valuable natural resource features.
5. Create an effective mechanism so that the County can work together with citizens and civic associations to develop or preserve their community in its economic and social dimensions.
6. Encourage the diversification of the County economy.
7. Provide adequate land for commercial and industrial growth while minimizing the impacts on residential neighborhoods and natural resources.
8. Recognize that developable land is in low supply and encourage the re-use, re-development and occupancy of existing, vacant commercial space rather than developing additional land.
9. Recognize that County citizens desire and support economic growth, even in close proximity to their neighborhoods, when the developments are carefully designed, the buildings have aesthetically pleasing and site appropriate architecture, and creative site design elements that are sensitive to surrounding neighborhoods, are utilized.
10. Encourage the development of greenways, bike trails and pedestrian paths in all new commercial and industrial park developments.

# CHAPTER 7

## PLANNING AREA ANALYSIS

### INTRODUCTION

This section of the Community Plan presents the future land use maps for each community planning area in Roanoke County. In addition, this section summarizes the results of the neighborhood council meetings including the consistent themes that occurred in each of the neighborhood council meetings and the community values that were expressed at each of the meetings. These themes and values are reflected throughout this document and were used, to the extent possible, to develop the future land use maps for each neighborhood planning area. The detailed description and results of this process are available in the *Citizen Participation* volume of the *Roanoke County Community Plan*.

Upon adoption of the *Roanoke County Community Plan*, it is anticipated that the County will initiate the development of neighborhood specific community plans. The results of the visioning and community planning processes will be used by County staff and citizens to provide guidance in the development of these plans.

### COUNTY-WIDE NEIGHBORHOOD THEMES AND CONCERNS

This section provides a summary of those issues which were **consistently identified** by the neighborhood councils across the entire County. Many ideas and suggestions were brought up by the neighborhood council members. Only those issues that were consistently identified by the councils are described below. Individuals interested in greater detail should refer to the summaries for each community found in the *Citizen Participation Volume* of the *Roanoke County Community Plan*.

**These issues, as they are written here, are taken virtually “word for word” from the neighborhood council meetings.**

### LAND USE

#### *Design Themes*

- New development should incorporate a high standard of design including the following design elements: appropriate architecture, landscaping and tasteful signs.
- The use of planned communities needs to be encouraged for all new developments in the County. Such planned developments should have design standards in relation to tree preservation, trails, parks, and traffic circulation.



- Incompatible land uses should be appropriately buffered from adjoining land uses. Buffering should include the use of existing vegetation, topography, and landscaped areas designed to appear as part of the natural landscape.
- The preservation of trees is an important aspect in the approval of new developments.
- There should be community participation in the designs for large, new developments within the community.

### ***Enforcement Themes***

- Zoning laws pertaining to junk cars, garbage and refuse are enforced on a complaint basis. As a result, there is a perception that zoning laws are not strictly enforced or that these laws are not strong enough. To conduct systematic inspections of property for zoning compliance will require additional staff resources.
- The County should explore the use of civil processes to provide stiffer penalties for littering and illegal dumping.
- It will require diligent work to clean up properties that are perceived to be eyesores. Such efforts will require an increase in fiscal resources for these types of problem areas.

### ***Public Involvement/Communication Themes***

- The development community has too much influence and there is the perception that many of the land use decisions have been made prior to public hearings.
- Input from citizens should be solicited in all rezoning decisions. Such involvement would include community meetings and public participation in site design and/or layout.

### ***Plan Policy Themes***

- Plan and implement infrastructure improvements to be completed in conjunction with or prior to new developments being placed in the community.
- Provide incentives for the redevelopment of existing commercial and industrial structures. Such incentives need to be linked to good paying, high-tech jobs.
- Allow for flexibility in the zoning ordinance so that small scale commercial services and restaurants can be located in community/village centers.

- Develop a balance across the County between industrial and commercial development and residential development so that each community has a fair share.
- Develop corridor plans for the major roads leading into the County, work with adjoining localities so as to have consistent, compatible land uses.
- Ensure a balance in providing incentives to small, as well as large, businesses.
- Water and sewer service is a major tool to manage growth.
- Develop flexibility in zoning laws so that existing facilities may expand.
- The preservation of historic structures and/or the designation of historic districts should be encouraged where applicable.

## **PUBLIC FACILITIES**

### ***Regional Cooperation Themes***

- Maintain and improve the intergovernmental cooperation among the localities within the Valley. Such cooperation includes fire/rescue services, police services and library services. Expansion of these cooperative efforts should include water/sewer services, stormwater management, transit, parks/recreation and development procedures.

### ***Transportation Themes***

- Examine and cooperate for the provision of limited mass transit service to those areas of the County that can support it. In recent studies these areas are the more urban regions of the County lying close to Roanoke City's corporate limits.
- Include the planning of bike lanes in the development of transportation improvement plans and other planning documents of Roanoke County.
- Plan for and provide pedestrian access in the more developed portions of the County.
- Work with VDOT to expand the resources available to improve the width and maintenance of roads in Roanoke County. Such efforts should include better maintenance of road culverts, shoulders, curbs and gutters.
- The installation of turning lanes and traffic control devices at critical intersections will also improve traffic flow as well as safety for roads in the County.
- Center lines and edge lines are needed on many secondary roads.

- Expand major County roads to improve the capacity as well as the safety for existing and anticipated traffic volume.

### ***Educational Themes***

- The physical space and instruction in the County's schools needs to be expanded and improved.
- The impact of every new development upon the school system needs to be evaluated. The developers need to be financially responsible for the improvements required as a result of their development.
- The technical training program needs to be expanded for those students not wishing to enter college. A highly qualified, technically skilled, work force will be an asset in attracting new industry to the County.
- Library services need to be expanded in the rural areas of the County. Such expansion should include new branch facilities as well as upgrading the existing branches in the Mount Pleasant and Bent Mountain areas.

### ***Utility Service Themes***

- Meet the needs of current residents by providing water and sewer service prior to servicing new development.
- Implementation of the stormwater management practices will aid in the reduction of stream flooding.

### ***Recreational Themes***

- Expand and provide better maintenance of park facilities.
- Include the addition of gymnasiums and other lighted, recreational facilities when school improvements are planned.

### ***Public Safety Themes***

- Develop and implement a schedule for the improvement of fire and rescue buildings/facilities.
- The use of dry hydrants in rural areas provides a valuable asset in fire suppression.

- The presence and visibility of police patrols in neighborhoods provide the residents with an additional level of security. Increasing police patrols will improve the residents' sense of security.
- Additional resources need to be used to expand emergency services and to reduce response times.

## **RESOURCES**

### ***Greenway Themes***

- All localities in the Valley should coordinate to provide for the protection of environmental resources, such as Virginia's Explore Park, Roanoke River, Blue Ridge Parkway, Appalachian Trail and greenways.
- Greenways are important for recreation, tourism and economic development efforts.
- Greenways also help in the management of stormwater and flood waters.
- Adoption and implementation of the Valley Greenway Plan for the County will lead to increased recreation opportunities as well as improved stormwater management.

### ***Ridgeline Protection Themes***

- Utility and communications structures should not be placed on the ridgelines.
- The scenic beauty of this area contributes to its quality of life and preserves property values. Limits on the extent of mountainside and ridgeline development will help preserve the scenic beauty of the County.
- Mature trees need to be preserved through the County's development regulations.
- The use of best management practices (BMPs) in all logging operations need to be required in the County's ordinances. Such provisions include a pre-harvest and post harvest plan, a re-forestation plan, road specifications, and protection of environmentally sensitive areas.

### ***Water Quality Themes***

- The use of BMPs needs to be increased to preserve and enhance the water quality of the County's streams and creeks.

- Strengthening and enforcement of the erosion and sediment control measures will protect and enhance water resources in the County.

***Quality of Life Themes***

- Provide incentives and/or requirements for the preservation of the historic structures in the County. Preserve the architectural character of historic areas and structures.
- Commercial, industrial, and residential development need to be balanced with the preservation of agricultural practices and rural lifestyles in Roanoke County.

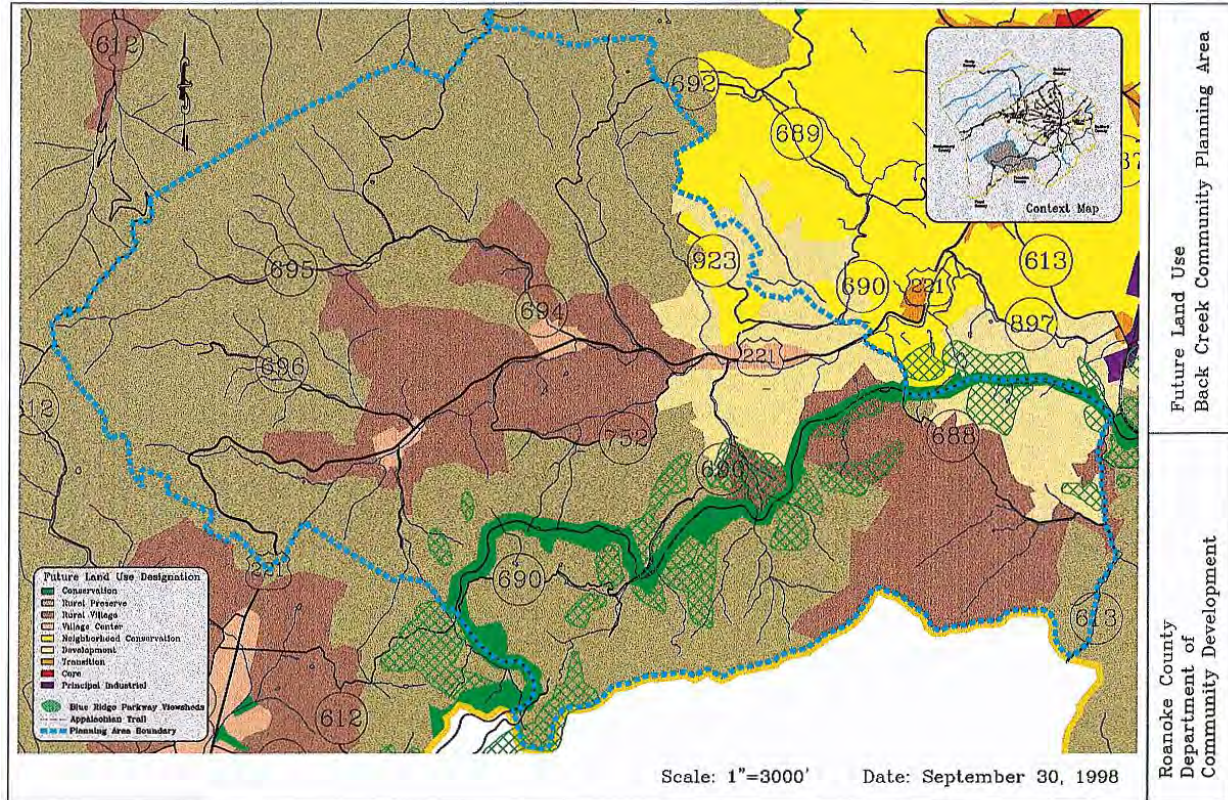
## **FUTURE LAND USE MAPS AND COMMUNITY VALUES, KEY RESOURCES AND GENERAL POLICIES**

Following is information gathered at each neighborhood council meeting on general community values, key community resources and general policies regarding natural resource, land use and public facility issues. As in the previous section, these comments are taken virtually word for word from the council meetings.

The Future Land Use maps for each community planning area are also presented in this section.

## Chapter 7: Planning Area Analysis

BACK CREEK - FUTURE LAND USE MAP





back of map

## **BACKCREEK COMMUNITY PLANNING AREA**

### **Community Values**

- The rural, pastoral views of the Back Creek area, with the Poage Farm being the focus of these views.
- The rural character associated with this area is an important quality to protect and preserve.
- All new developments need to respect these values and enhance them through the use of landscaping, building design and signage.

### **Key Resources**

- The views of Mount Chestnut, Masons Knob, Bent Mountain and the other ridgelines as seen from U.S. Route 221.
- The red bud trees lining the roadways and creeks in the Back Creek community.
- The historic buildings and sites in the Back Creek community, such as Harris House, Poage Farm, Jakes Garage, etc.
- The views from the “Horseshoe Curve” along U.S. Route 221 and the Blue Ridge Parkway.
- The land to the rear of the Back Creek Elementary School is an important resource and should be reserved for educational purposes.

### **General Policies**

#### **Natural Resources**

- Prevent development on sensitive environmental and natural hazard areas which would endanger the environment or the development.
- Recognize, respect, and work with private property owners in order to preserve the rural lifestyle and protect the rights of property owners.
- Continue and expand the land use assessment program to promote the preservation of agricultural and forestal uses of land.
- Creation of greenways in the community will provide a method to preserve open space as

well as offering safe walking and biking facilities.

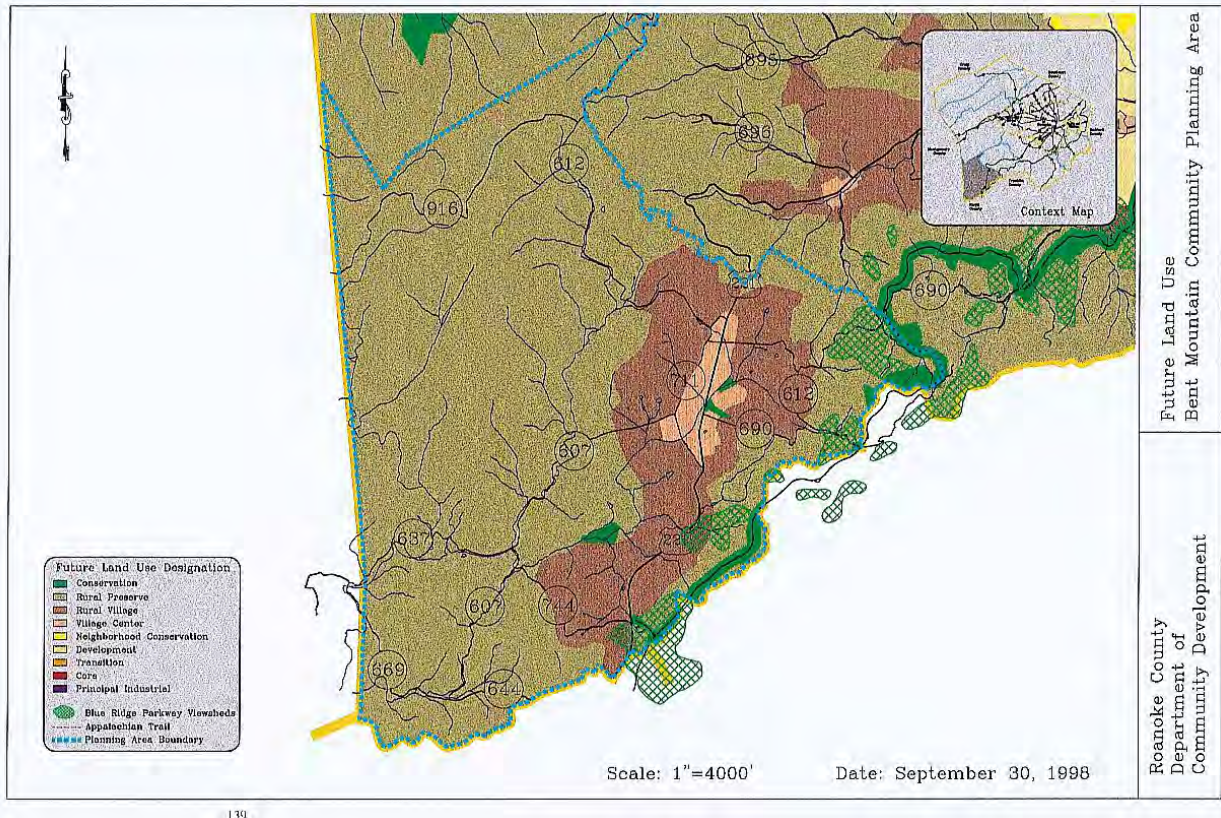
### **Land Use**

- Require both residential and commercial developers to use design principles that mitigate the impacts of the new development on adjacent uses. These design principles should enhance and protect the rural lifestyle of the community.
- Permit the development of small-scale commercial uses constructed in a planned commercial center for the community.
- Prevent the use of strip linear commercial development along the U.S. 221 corridor in the Back Creek community. This type of development has large un-screened parking areas, many access points to the main road, numerous detached buildings of varying architecture, and high light poles adding light pollution to the evening sky.
- Work cooperatively with VDOT to limit the requirements for small scale cottage businesses to operate in relation to transportation improvements required for access to the public road.
- Encourage and continue to permit the use of accessory apartments in conjunction with agricultural operations as supplemental income sources for agricultural operations.
- Maintain the low density of single-family homes in the Back Creek community.

### **Public Facilities**

- Support and encourage the upgrading of U.S. Route 221 to create a safe roadway for the community.
- Extensions of utility service should be conducted at the same time as the improvements to U.S. Route 221. However, such extensions should be made only after a careful evaluation of all the impacts which would be caused by the extensions. Additionally, community participation is a vital key to this evaluation process.
- Provide for street lights at key intersections in the community, such as in front of the elementary school.
- Promote increased support for the rescue squad and fire department in relation to providing full-time staff resources during the day.
- Continue the use and support of citizen watch groups working in cooperation with the County's Police Department.

### **BENT MOUNTAIN- FUTURE LAND USE MAP**



back of map

## **BENT MOUNTAIN COMMUNITY PLANNING AREA**

### **Community Values**

- The residents of the Bent Mountain community expressed a strong desire to manage growth instead of preventing it. Managing growth means decisions will be made in relationship to the carrying capacity of the land as reflected in the Community Plan.
- The community is proud of its many historic homes, farms, open spaces, and churches. Preserving this way of life is of vital importance to people of this community.
- The sense of community is an asset for the residents of Bent Mountain. In order to preserve and enhance this feeling, the residents desire to be actively involved in development decisions affecting their community.
- The community wants all new development proposals to have the proper design guidelines so as to protect the lifestyle and natural setting on the mountain while also promoting and enhancing a sustainable village center for the residents of Bent Mountain.

### **Key Resources**

- The plateau area and meadow on the top of the mountain serve as the gateway to the community.
- Numerous historic buildings and sites are located on the mountain.
- The views and overlooks from the Blue Ridge Parkway and other scenic vistas along roads in the community.
- The entrance to the Blue Ridge Parkway at the Floyd County line provides a second gateway into the community.

### **General Policies**

#### **Natural Resources**

- Promote the prevention of groundwater pollution and the remediation of any existing groundwater pollution in the community.

- Develop guidelines and base future decisions in such a way as to create a sustainable community for our children and grandchildren while preserving our resources and rural lifestyles.
- Ensure that land will be reserved and/or acquired for future parks and trails for the community.

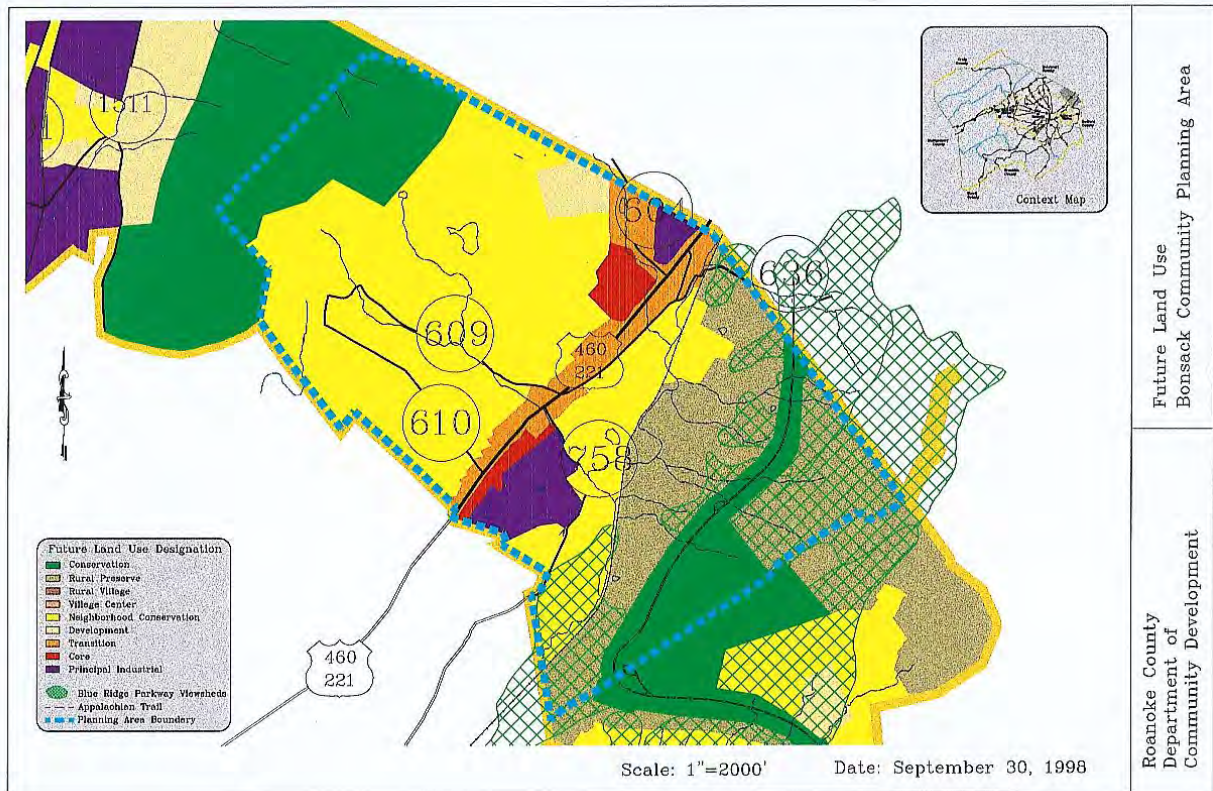
### **Land Use**

- Ensure that the residents of Bent Mountain are empowered to shape their own community. In so doing they need a commitment from the County to promote an open and clear line of communication in relation to development decisions which affect their community.
- Guide future development into an efficient and serviceable form which is protective of the community's predominantly rural character.
- Provide the means for the residents of Bent Mountain to clean up sites in the community which are perceived as eyesores.
- Ensure that the design and scale of all future development shall be in harmony with the rural character of Bent Mountain. Buildings of different architectural design should be made compatible through the use of screens, landscaping, buffers, site breaks, and materials.

### **Public Facilities**

- Retention and expansion of the Bent Mountain Elementary School are encouraged to provide an anchor to the community. This will also serve to maintain the sense of community that exists on the mountain.
- To further enhance the sense of community, expansion of the community center and library is recommended by the residents of Bent Mountain.
- To preserve and acquire land for future parks and trails are a major desire of the community.

BONSACK - FUTURE LAND USE MAP





back of map

## **BONSACK COMMUNITY PLANNING AREA**

### **Community Values**

- Preservation of the views of the mountains and ridgelines from this community is a value deeply held by the residents.
- The numerous historic buildings and sites provide a tie to the historic and cultural roots of the community. The preservation and enhancement of these aspects are vital to the residents of this community.
- The U.S. Route 460 corridor needs to have a unified development plan in conjunction with Roanoke City, Roanoke County and Botetourt County.
- Prevent the typical strip commercial/industrial development along U.S. Route 460. Instead require that commercial/industrial developments be developed in a planned or campus-like setting providing nodes of development along the corridor.

### **Key Resources**

- The protection of viewsheds from the Blue Ridge Parkway, Summit Ridge, Stewart's Knob, Lowe's Farm, Seibel's Farm, Bonsack Park, and Samuel's Gate are assets for the community.
- The preservation of the Cox Trout Farm and Glade Creek is vital for the community.
- The enhancement and preservation of the historic character of the "Village of Bonsack" are a critical resource for the community.

### **General Policies**

#### **Natural Resources**

- Require that all new developments are sensitive to the preservation, protection and enhancement of the viewsheds from the Bonsack community. In so doing, require higher standards of design which will minimize the visual impact of development and promote innovative methods of site planning.
- Acquire land for the establishment of a greenway providing critical linkages to shopping, schools, parks, libraries and homes for the residents of the community.

- Work cooperatively with adjoining jurisdictions, private landowners, and State and Federal agencies to preserve and protect significant natural, historic, and cultural features in the Bonsack community.

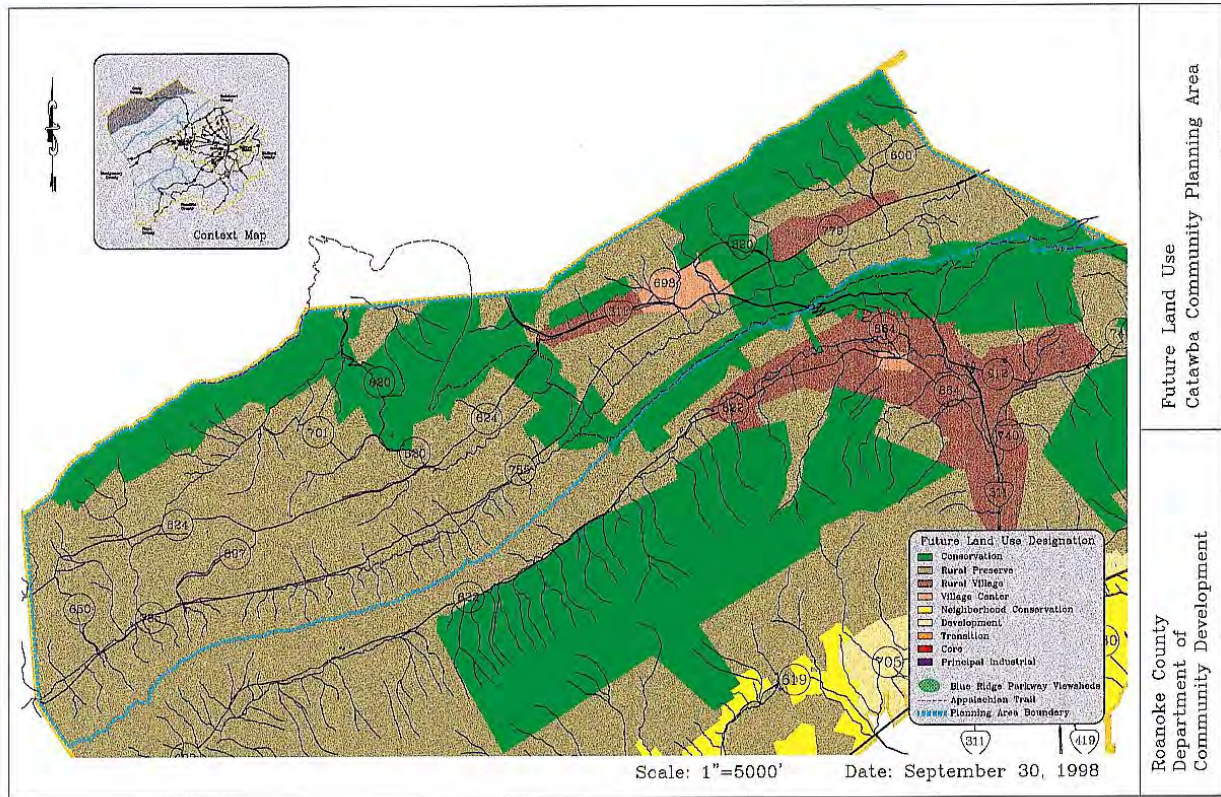
## **Land Use**

- Promote the use of planned commercial developments and/or nodes of commercial development along the U.S. Route 460 corridor. These developments would offer extensive landscaping, appropriate and tastefully designed signs and provide buildings which have a unified architectural design.
- The appropriate balance between residential, commercial, industrial, and agricultural land uses is a key to Bonsack becoming a sustainable community.
- Explore the opportunities to create a Historic District in the “Village of Bonsack,” which would promote preservation as well as economic development through heritage tourism.

## **Public Facilities**

- Construction of the Bonsack Elementary School is strongly encouraged as an anchor to the community.
- Assure that emergency ingress and egress is provided for in all new developments. Support the provision of additional resources for these services as required with additional development in the community.
- Maintain and enhance the facilities available at the Bonsack Park while monitoring locations for additional park sites within the community.
- Explore the potential of developing alternative transportation routes to relieve the traffic congestion and improve the safety of U.S. Route 460, such as an eastern circumferential highway.

CATAWBA - FUTURE LAND USE MAP



back of map

## **CATAWBA VALLEY COMMUNITY PLANNING AREA**

### **Community Values**

- The view from the top of the mountain along Virginia Route 311 is most important. The preservation of that view is a critical value to the community.
- All existing and future businesses in the community should strive for appropriate landscaping, building design and signage to maintain the rural character of the valley.
- Any new development that may come to the valley should strive to protect and enhance the rural character of the community.

### **Key Resources**

- The Appalachian Trail is a key resource for the community.
- Dragon's Tooth, McAfee's Knob and the ridges along Fort Lewis mountain are key resources to the Catawba valley.
- The historic properties and sites in the community, along with the headwaters of the Roanoke River and Catawba Creek, are important resources to the community. These resources need to be preserved and enhanced.
- The country inns and bed and breakfasts located in the valley are key resources for the community.

### **General Policies**

#### **Natural Resources**

- Preserve sensitive wildlife habitats (flora and fauna) and natural hazard areas which would endanger the environment or the development itself.
- Maintain and improve the groundwater quality of the valley.
- Protect agricultural land and other rural areas of the valley for their economic and open space value.

- Work cooperatively with private landowners, Western Virginia Land Trust and other interested parties to preserve the natural features of the valley such as ridge lines, scenic vistas, and open space.
- Continue the use and expand the land use assessment program to promote the preservation of agricultural and forestal uses of land.

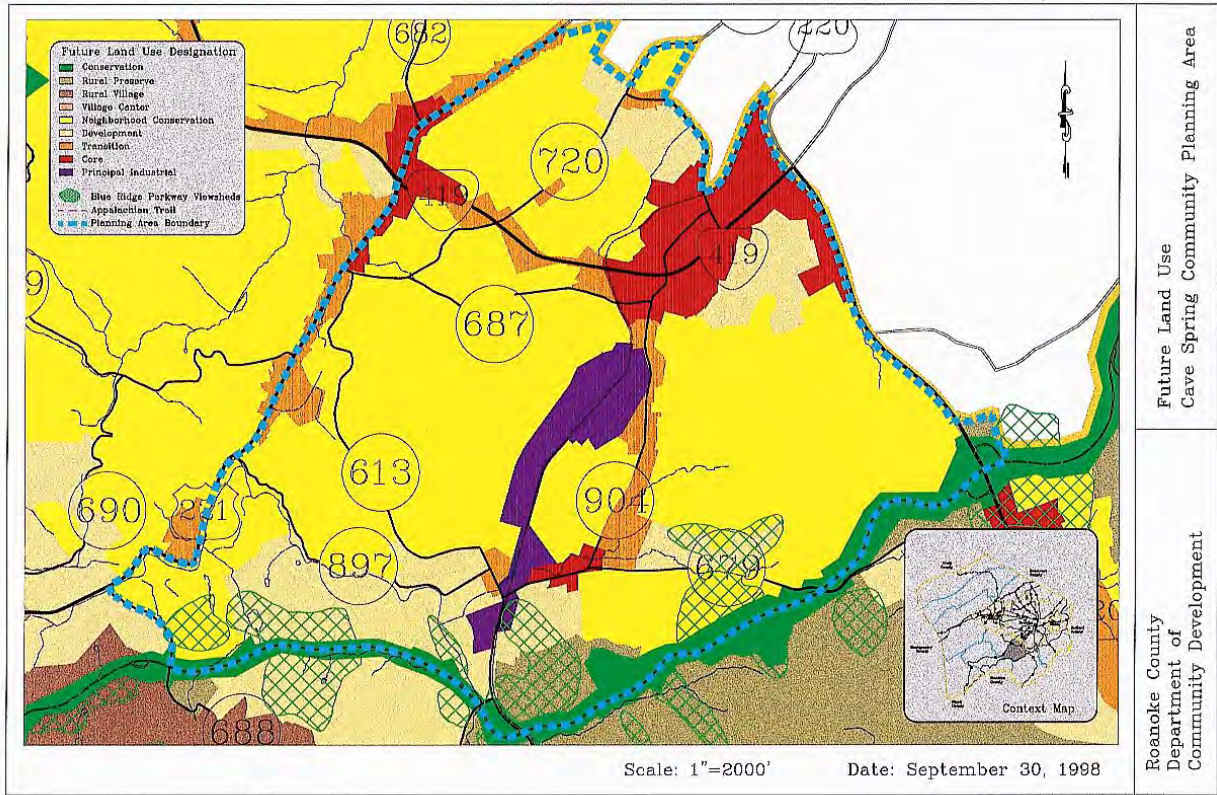
### **Land Use**

- Preservation of the rural character of the valley is the major objective for the residents in the community.
- Work cooperatively with Virginia Tech, the State and other agencies to preserve and protect the open space associated with the Virginia Tech Farm.
- Use of a community design process for any future uses of the VA Tech Farm is imperative to the residents of the community.
- Improve and expand communication between the county government and the citizens of the valley.
- Maintain the low density of single-family housing in the valley.
- Continue to permit accessory apartments in conjunction with agricultural operations as income streams for farming operations.
- Encourage and support the creation and growth of small, custom-manufacturing operations/cottage industries in the valley.

### **Public Facilities**

- Improve fire protection services to the residents of the valley through various methods, such as installing more dry hydrants in the community.
- Support the maintenance and improve the safety of the existing road network.
- Increase the parking capacity of the commuter parking lot to reduce the traffic flow on VA Route 311.
- Protect the valley from major transportation improvements, such as new interstates or freeways.

CAVE SPRING - FUTURE LAND USE MAP





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## **CAVE SPRING COMMUNITY PLANNING**

### **Community Values**

- Preservation of the Blue Ridge Parkway and the associated scenic vistas from the Parkway is important for the community.
- Development and maintenance of park facilities are of vital concern to the Cave Spring community.
- Commercial and industrial developments that are developed in campus-like settings with compatible architecture, open space, retention of natural vegetation and extensive landscaping of parking lots are of vital importance to this community.
- Achieve a balance in preserving natural, cultural, and historic resources and allow for quality residential, commercial, and industrial development.
- We have a right to the quality of life that this community offers, but we also have a responsibility to contribute to that quality of life.
- The attraction of corporations that provide white collar employment opportunities is fundamental to the residents of Cave Spring.

### **Key Resources**

- To maintain and enhance the commercial core in and around the Tanglewood Mall area. Preservation of this core area is vital to the community becoming a sustainable area and preserving the overall property values of the community.
- The ridgelines that encircle the community and are located along the Blue Ridge Parkway provide a sense of place for the residents of the community.

### **General Policies**

#### **Natural Resources**

- Promote the development of uses which are compatible with the environmental constraints present on the site. Use the natural environmental constraints as an element of design when building facilities for commercial and industrial purposes.

- Work cooperatively with private property owners and State and Federal agencies to protect, preserve, and enhance the vistas and ridgelines of the community.
- Preserve and protect the mountain ridges surrounding the Cave Spring community. The scenic beauty of the area has attracted many of the businesses to the community. If these vistas are not protected then these businesses may move to other places.

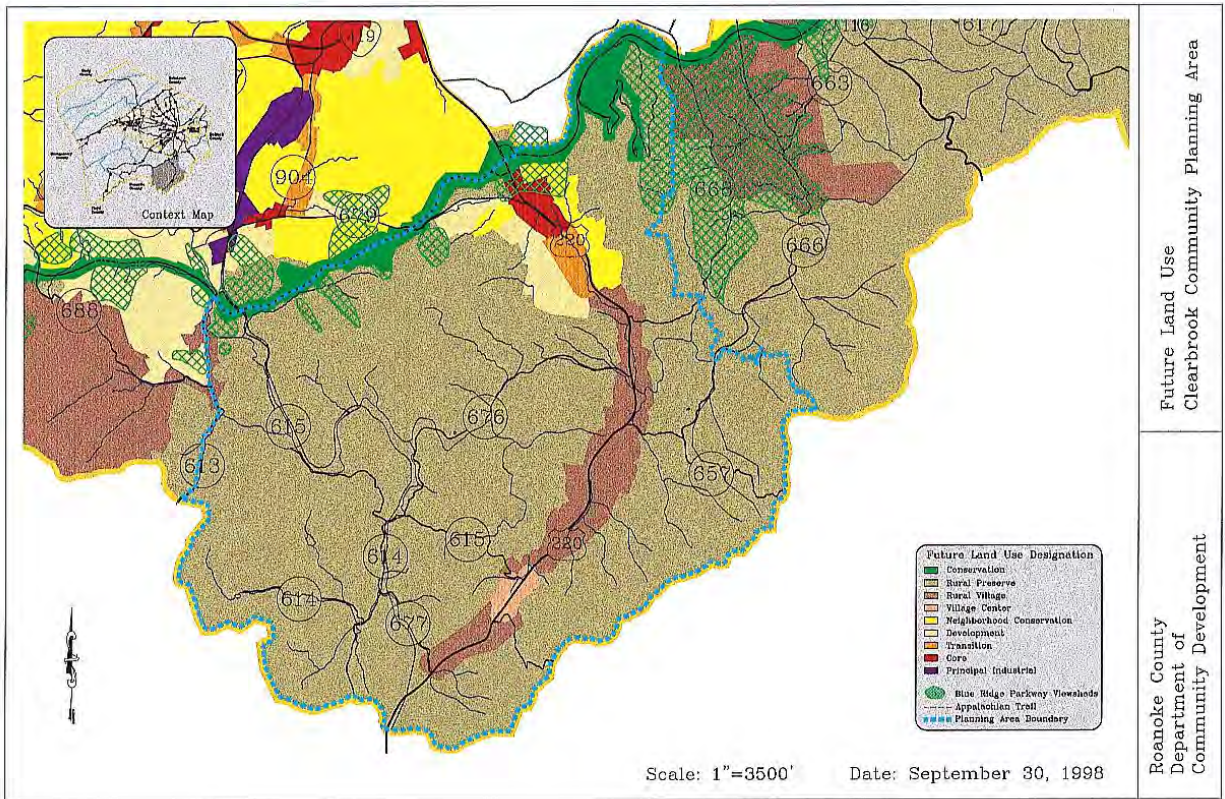
### **Land Use**

- Require that all future developments be planned unit developments (PUD). Increased density and/or intensity of development may be justified based upon site design considerations.
- Implement a tree preservation/planting program for the VA Route 419 corridor as well as for new developments.
- Develop and implement design guidelines in the County's development ordinances that require extensive landscaping, compatible architectural designs, small tasteful signage, and buffers between incompatible land uses.
- Generate and set in motion a program that will provide assistance to people in regards to the maintenance of older housing the community.

### **Public Facilities**

- Acquire new as well as develop/maintain existing park facilities in the Cave Spring community.
- Ensure that adequate public facilities are in place or planned to be constructed in conjunction with future development proposals, such as schools, parks and transportation facilities.
- Improve school facilities and curriculum to provide for high quality facilities and educational programs for our children.

CLEARBROOK - FUTURE LAND USE MAP



back of map

## **CLEARBROOK COMMUNITY PLANNING AREA**

### **Community Values**

- This is a close-knit community which is centered around the elementary school that many generations of the community have attended.
- There is a definite rural character associated with living in the Clearbrook community while it is only minutes away from the services and activities of the urbanized areas of the County and Roanoke City.
- The rural landscape and views of the ridges and valleys are important to the residents of the community.

### **Key Resources**

- The scenic quality of Back Creek is a major asset to the community.
- Historic structures and sites located throughout the area provide a link to the historic and cultural traditions of the community.
- The Blue Ridge Parkway and the views associated with it are irreplaceable resources for the community.
- Clearbrook Elementary School is a vital resource and link to the community's past traditions.

### **General Policies**

#### **Natural Resources**

- Preservation of the rural character and agricultural practices needs to be maintained into the future.
- Development should be centered around the "Village of Clearbrook" area within the community.
- Prevent development from disturbing the sensitive environmental and natural features of the community, such as ridgelines and Back Creek.

## **Land Use**

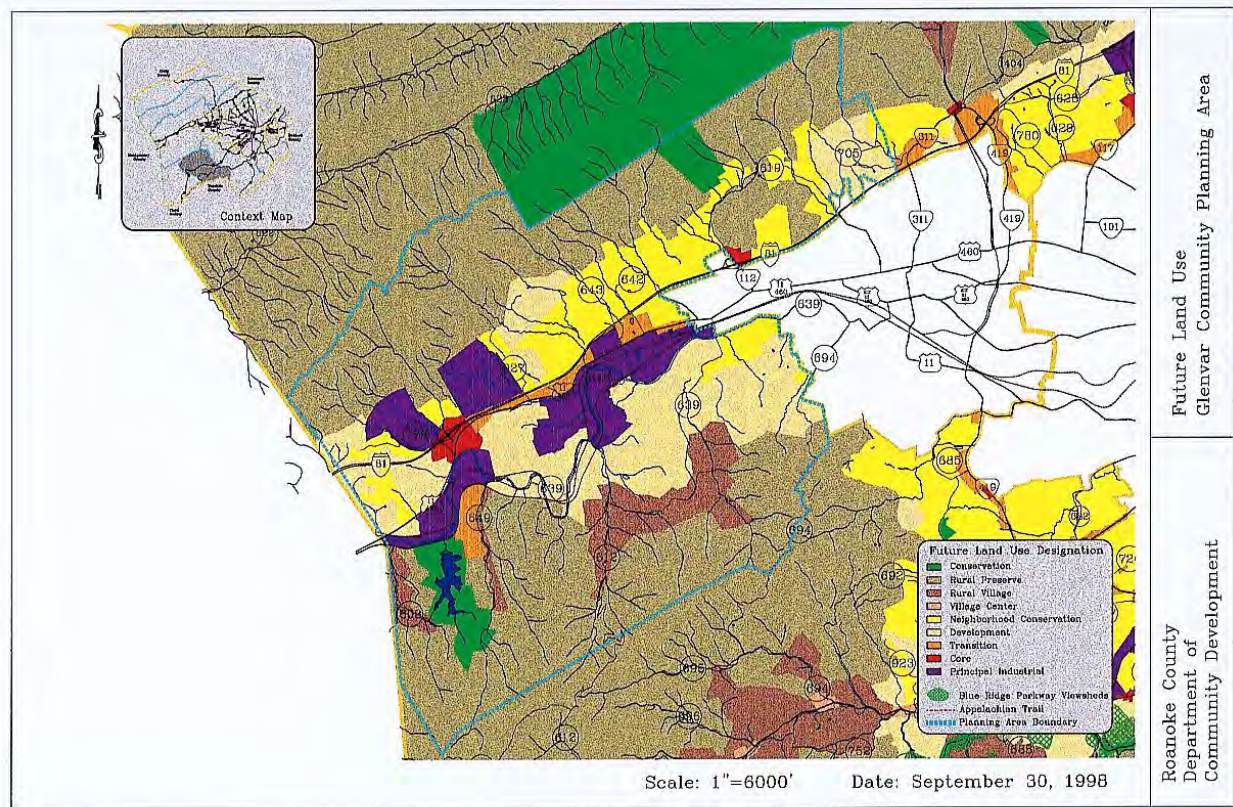
- Discourage traditional strip commercial/industrial development patterns, which have multiple access points, large parking areas, and numerous architecturally unrelated buildings.
- Development of businesses in and around the “Village of Clearbrook” should be promoted where landscaping, building design, signs, and parking lots can be designed to be aesthetically appealing and compatible with rural character.
- Assisted-living facilities, which have proper site design with ample open and/or green space around the facility, would be a good industry for this community.
- Ensure the quality of future development by providing reasonable guidelines which allow for a variety of housing types and limited, small-scale, commercial businesses to serve the needs of the citizens of the community.

## **Public Facilities**

- Improve the safety of U.S. Route 220 by straightening curves and installing crossing/turning lanes and traffic signals at major intersections.
- Upgrade the substandard secondary roads in the community to provide sufficient road widths.
- Expand utility service for the existing residents due to the large number of contaminated wells in the community. However, expansion of utility services creates development pressures on rural undeveloped land.
- Create compatible economic development opportunities for the “Village of Clearbrook” by expansion of utility services.
- Mitigate the flooding associated with Back Creek and other streams, helping to preserve or improve the water quality of these surface waters through the use of stormwater management techniques.
- Work cooperatively with private land owners to dedicate park land in advance in locations where neighborhood parks are needed, offer incentives related to future development potential for their remaining lands.
- Expand and further develop Clearbrook Elementary School Park located in the “Village of Clearbrook.”



GLENVAR - FUTURE LAND USE MAP





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## **GLENVAR COMMUNITY PLANNING AREA**

### **Community Values**

- The community respects its numerous historic sites and links to its culture as represented by these sites.
- The views of Poor Mountain and Fort Lewis Mountain from U.S. Route 460/11 are cherished by the community.
- The preservation of neighborhoods and respect for the rights of private property owners are important to this community.
- The community values an open and clear line of communication with the county officials in relation to future plans developed by the County.
- The Glenvar community desires to have more investment by the County to provide for needed infrastructure and redevelopment of the U.S. Route 460/11 corridor.

### **Key Resources**

- Green Hill Park and Equestrian Center/Trail are critical resources for the community.
- The Roanoke River, its tributaries, and wayside are important resources for this community.
- Other public facilities such as the schools, library, Spring Hollow Reservoir, and emergency services were viewed as resources for the community.
- The views of the ridges along Poor Mountain are valued by the residents in Glenvar.
- The commercial corridor of U.S. Route 460/11 is a resource to the community.

### **General Policies**

#### **Natural Resources**

- Prevent development from destroying the views of the mountains in the Glenvar community and discourage development from occurring on environmentally sensitive and natural hazard areas within the community.

- Develop plans and policies to address the mitigation/control of flooding along the base of Fort Lewis Mountain and the Roanoke River.
- Develop and implement policies that prevent the construction and/or mitigate the impact of communication and transmission towers along the ridges in the Glenvar community.

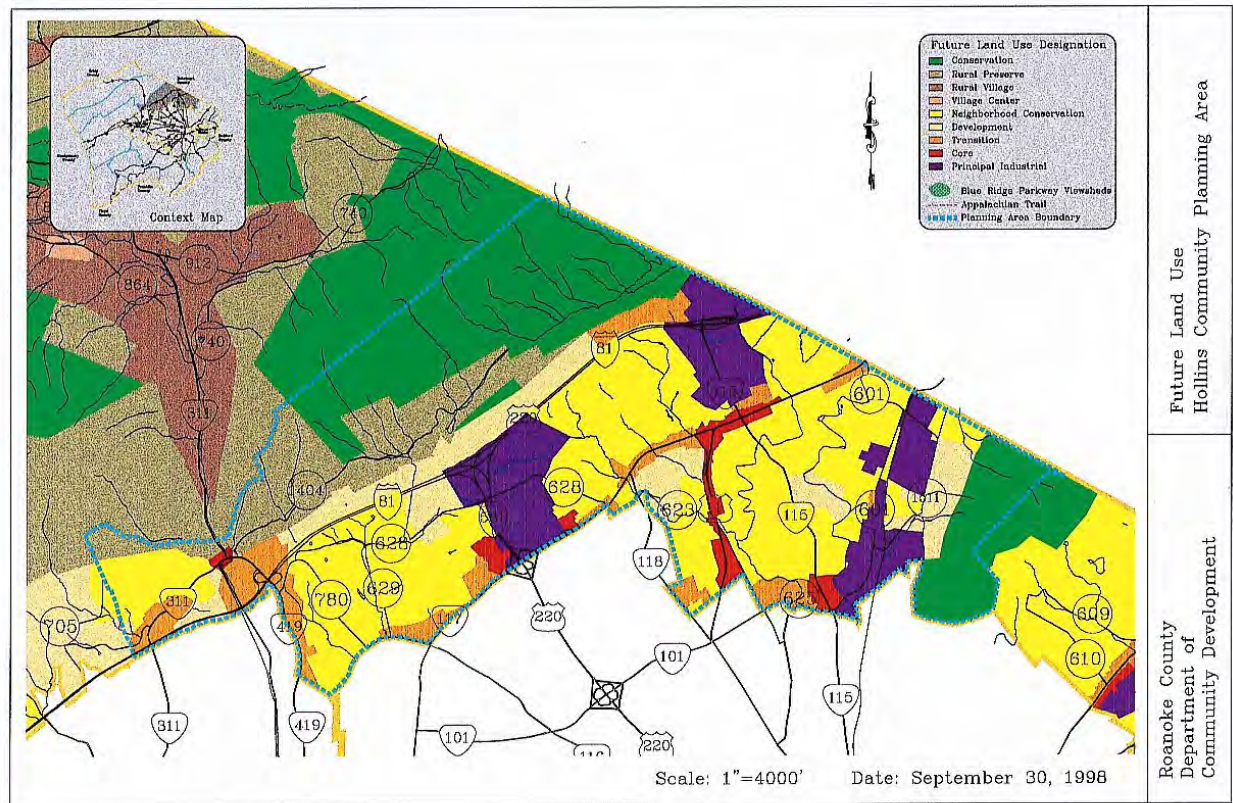
### **Land Use**

- Develop an open and clear method of communication with the residents of the community in relation to future land use decisions which involve and respect the desires of the citizens.
- Generate plans and policies which balance design requirements and community standards with the rights of private property owners.
- Develop a community plan which balances the needs of future industrial and commercial development with residential development and open space preservation.
- Increase requirements for developments to have planned settings with landscaping and design standards that will improve the looks of the community.

### **Public Facilities**

- Increase the capacity of U.S. Route 460/11 throughout the Glenvar community as a first priority before any additional development initiatives are proposed.
- Develop programs that allow elderly citizens to have access to County utility services at a lower cost than other users of these services.
- Continue to improve and expand the cooperation with the City of Salem in the provision of public services to the residents of Glenvar.

HOLLINS - FUTURE LAND USE MAP



back of map

## **HOLLINS COMMUNITY PLANNING AREA**

### **Community Values**

- The well balanced mix of business and residential development in the Hollins community plays an important role in the residents' high quality of life.
- There are many historic sites in the community that play a key role of providing the links to the past agricultural traditions of the community.
- Views of Tinker and Read Mountains are important to the residents of the community.
- Redevelopment of the Williamson Road area is improving the image of this section of the community. This project needs to be continued and appropriately expanded.

### **Key Resources**

- The numerous historic homes with ties to the past farming traditions of the community.
- The views of Read and Tinker Mountains.
- The educational resources located in the community, including the public schools, the library, and Hollins University.
- The well-developed parks and recreation areas are important resources to the Hollins community, such as Waldron Park, Brookside Park, and Carvins Cove.

### **General Policies**

#### **Natural Resources**

- Respect the viewsheds of Read and Tinker Mountains from the Hollins community by requiring future communication and transmission towers to be unobtrusive and aesthetically pleasing.
- Manage timber harvesting on ridgelines through the use of the guidelines published in the *Virginia Loggers Guide*. Selective harvesting should be used to preserve the viewshed and conserve soil resources on mountain sides.
- Prevent high density development on sensitive viewsheds and environmental areas which would endanger the viewshed or environment.

- Use the natural topographic features in the design of developments and promote the use of earth-tones buildings built on the sides of mountains.

## **Land Use**

- Develop and implement economic development strategies which attract businesses and industries that provide a variety of employment opportunities and offer competitive compensation to their employees.
- Require higher development standards for all types of development in relation to landscaping, signage, building design, and parking lots. All new development should use the natural topography as a design element of their site.
- Preservation of existing vegetation and trees should be incorporated into the County's development regulations.
- Expand the redevelopment initiatives associated with the Hollins Village Project into other areas in this community and the County.
- Preserve, promote, and enhance the mixture of residential and business development in the community. Encourage the development of commercial nodes which provide landscaping, buffers, and screens between incompatible land uses.
- Develop policies to promote and encourage small business which will result in developing a more sustainable community.

## **Public Facilities**

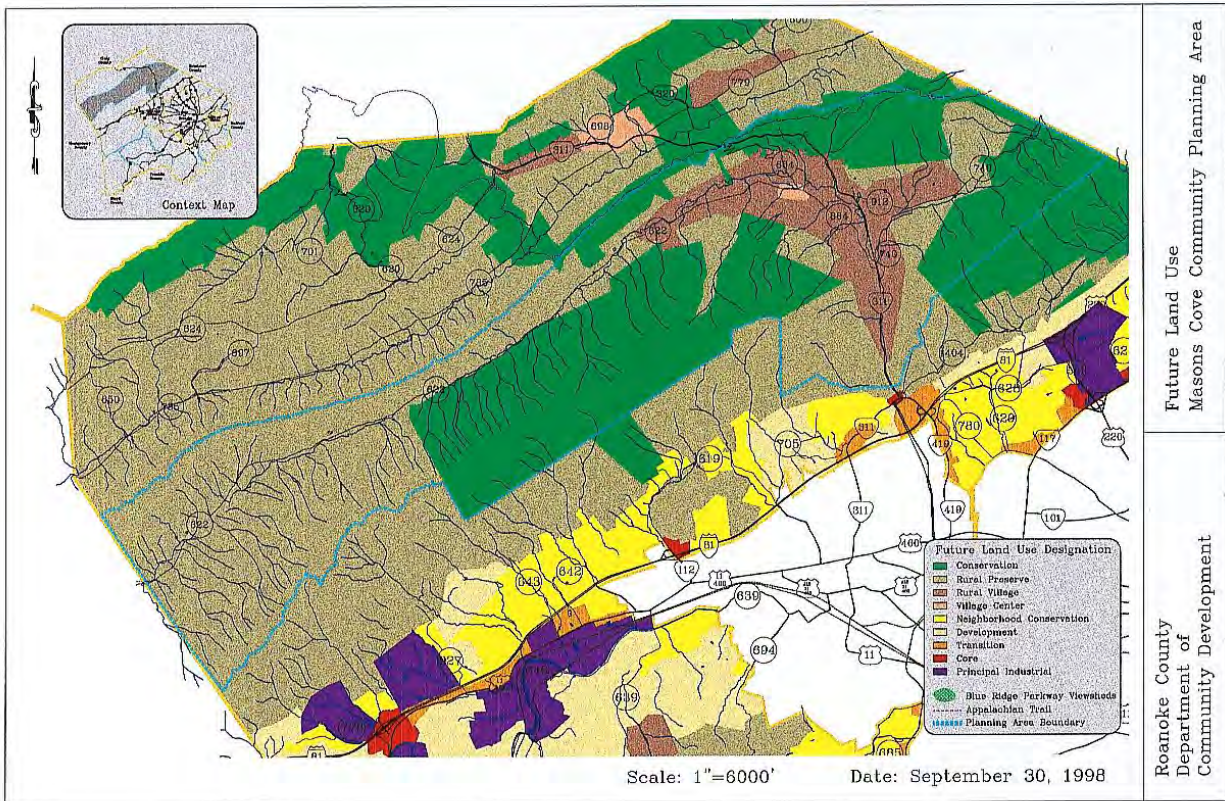
- Provide a transportation network that will prevent congestion and promote the conservation of resources via alternative modes of transportation for the residents of the community. Such alternatives would include the implementation and construction of greenways that link homes, schools, libraries, and shopping areas.
- Enhance and maintain the existing park facilities within the community and install more park facilities on existing school sites.
- Preserve the integrity of existing residential neighborhoods by acquiring additional land to provide space for future public facilities such as schools and parks, which will provide the foundations for the community.

- Develop policies and plans to address the management of stormwater and prevent flooding.
- Increase the visibility of police patrols through the use of community policing procedures and devote more resources on the concentration of crime prevention and/or personal protection services.





MASON'S COVE - FUTURE LAND USE MAP



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## **MASONS COVE COMMUNITY PLANNING AREA**

### **Community Values**

- The residents of the community view Havens Wildlife area as a very important asset.
- The views of the ridgelines along Catawba Mountain, Fort Lewis Mountain, Brushy Mountain and McAfee's Knob are important to the community.
- The scale of public buildings in relation the community provides a sense of place.
- The gap between Brushy Mountain and Catawba Mountain forms a gateway into the community, enhancing the sense of place felt by many residents.

### **Key Resources**

- The rural character of this area is an important quality to preserve and enhance.
- The many natural resources located within this community, such as Masons Creek, Havens Wildlife area, Appalachian Trail, Whispering Pines Park, etc.
- The views of the ridgelines as one drives along the old country roads in the community.
- The school and fire house are valuable resources to this community.

### **General Policies**

#### **Natural Resources**

- Prevent development along scenic ridgelines that would destroy significant vistas and endanger the environment of the community.
- Expand the land use assessment program to be used in the protection of scenic vistas and mountainsides.
- Prohibit the use of ridgelines as locations for communication and transmission towers.
- Improve water quality by developing and implementing strategies to manage stormwater and prevent flooding.

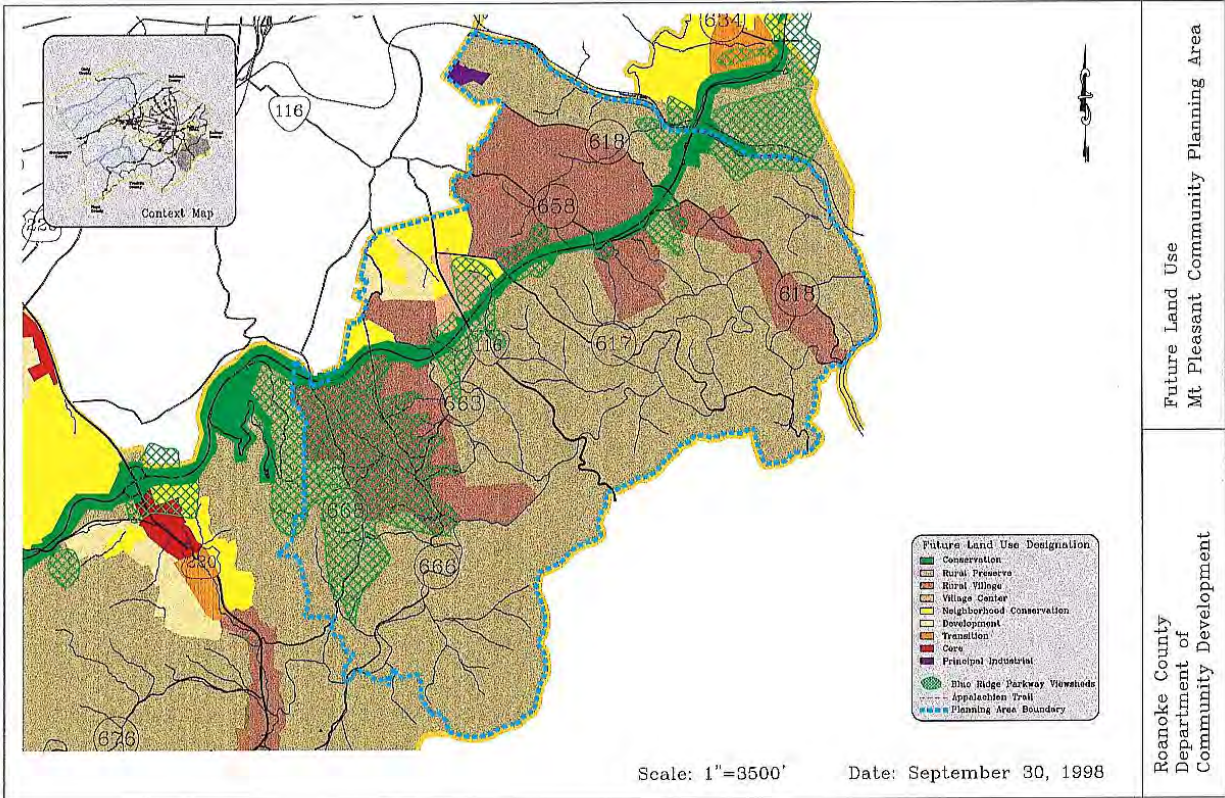
## **Land Use**

- Develop a program to provide assistance to improve the store facades, signs, parking, and landscaping of the businesses in the Hanging Rock area.
- Implement ordinance changes which would specify the preservation of existing vegetation and trees, along with higher development standards for all types of development, such as signage, landscaping, building architecture, and buffers. These standards should enhance and protect the rural lifestyle of the community.
- Permit the development of small-scale commercial uses constructed in a planned commercial center for the community.
- Promote the use of assessory apartments to provide income to landowners so as to protect the rural character of the community.
- Maintain the low density of single-family homes in the Masons Cove community.
- Continue to support and fund the delinquent property program used to clean up sites where debris has been dumped.

## **Public Facilities**

- Work with VDOT to improve the transportation network of the community and to provide alternative routes for commuter traffic and emergency vehicles.
- Cooperate with VDOT and Federal agencies to increase the capacity of commuter and Appalachian Trail parking lots located in the community.
- Support and fund improvements for school and park facilities such as soccer fields, gyms and adequate instructional space.
- Work with the community, VDOT, and other interested parties to provide for alternative modes of transportation in the community such as bike lanes and walking trails.
- Support needed improvements to existing emergency services in the community.
- Continue the use and support of citizen watch groups working in cooperation with the County's Police Department.
- Utility extensions into the neighborhood should be made only after a careful evaluation of all the impacts which could be caused by the extension. Part of this evaluation should include some type of public involvement from the residents of the community.

MT. PLEASANT - FUTURE LAND USE MAP



back of map

## **MOUNT PLEASANT COMMUNITY PLANNING AREA**

### **Community Values**

- The numerous historic sites and buildings in the community. These areas provide critical links to the traditions of the locale and are important resources to the residents of the community.
- The setting of the Village of Mount Pleasant provides a focal point for the entire community.
- The views of Windy Gap Mountain, Roanoke Mountain and Muarry's Knob are important scenic vistas for the community.
- The rural lifestyle that exists in the Mount Pleasant area. This is reinforced by the number of active farms in the community.
- Appreciation for quality development which respects the existing land uses and protects the natural environment through mitigation measures such as buffering, screening, preserving natural vegetation, and building design.

### **Key Resources**

- The course of Back Creek as it winds along the County boundary is an important feature for the community and needs to be protected.
- The mouth of Back Creek where it enters the Roanoke River has a pristine appearance. It is referred to by the residents as "The Point."
- The old Brook Hill School building is an important asset for the community.
- The Blue Ridge Parkway provides a linear park across the community.
- The public buildings and facilities in the Village of Mount Pleasant such as the school, library, fire/rescue building and the park.
- Small-scale commercial services offered in the Village are valuable to the residents of the community.
- Explore Park provides a large natural preserve for the northern section of the community.



## **General Policies**

### **Natural Resources**

- Develop plans and strategies to coordinate the Roanoke River Parkway, Explore Park, Blue Ridge Parkway, and the County's Greenway Plan, such that important vistas and sites are preserved as well as linking these sites to neighborhoods, schools, libraries, and shopping areas.
- Prevent development from occurring in environmentally sensitive areas and provide protection of these areas as part of the design of proposed developments.
- Recognize, respect, and work with private property owners in order to preserve the rural lifestyle, open spaces and agricultural uses of land.

### **Land Use**

- Ensure that as development occurs in the community there are adequate public facilities existing or planned prior to approving the development request.
- Evaluate all the impacts of future utility extensions into the community. Public involvement by the residents of the community should be part of this evaluation.
- Require that all developments use design principles that support and respect the rural lifestyle that exists in the community.
- Prevent the traditional strip development patterns which have multiple access points, large parking lots, bright lighting, and many architecturally unrelated buildings on the site.
- Promote the development of additional commercial businesses and services within the Village and develop an overlay design district for the Village area to enhance the sense of community or place.
- Preserve the integrity of existing residential areas and prevent the insertion of incompatible uses into these neighborhoods.

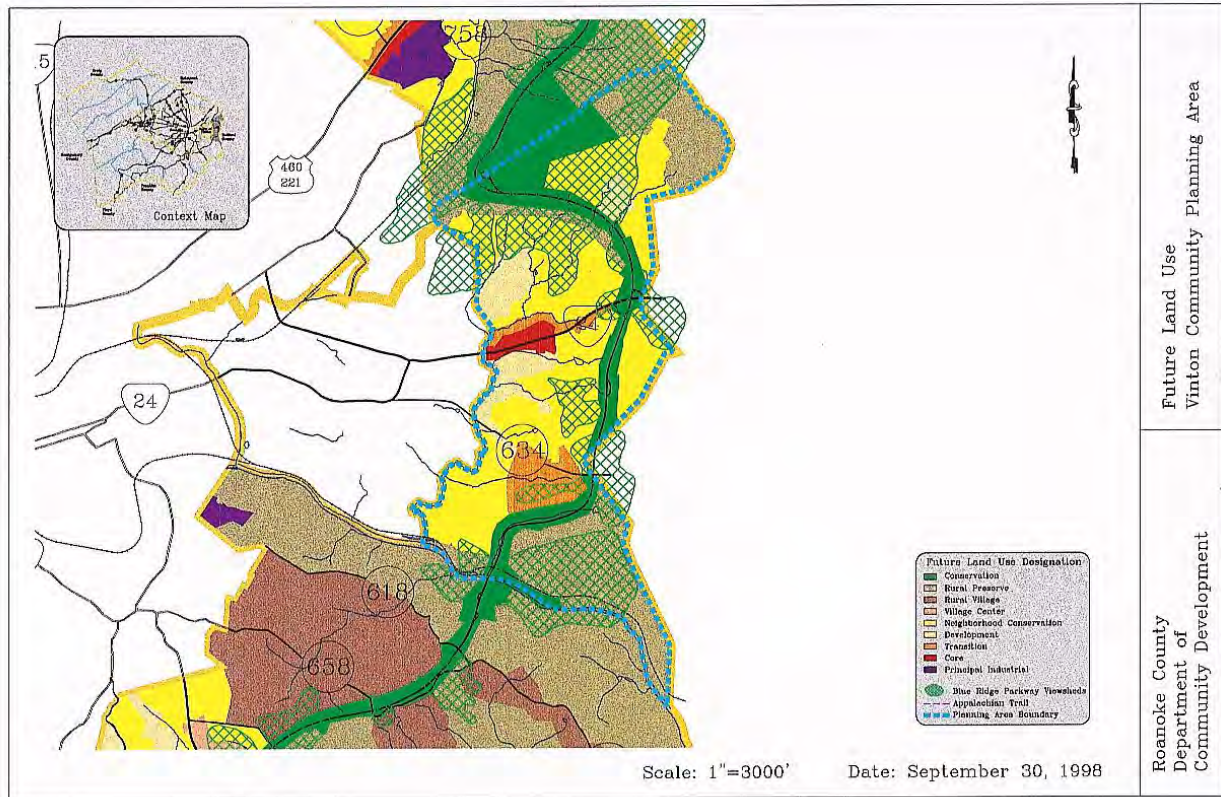
### **Public Facilities**

- Locate all new public buildings and facilities within the Village to promote the sense of place and to provide a focal point for the entire community.

- Provide for additional space in the school while maintaining the architectural integrity of the existing building.
- Support and fund the renovation/construction of a new emergency services building in the Village of Mount Pleasant.
- Explore the possibility of expanding the existing park to include the parcel of land across the street from the existing facility and the creation of a new park at “The Point.”
- Fully develop and maintain the community park.
- Work closely with VDOT to program road improvements for commuters and local traffic on the existing road network in the community.
- Develop a specific greenways/trails plan for this community as an alternative mode of transportation for local residents.
- Provide a fully functioning library for the community.
- Support the installation of dry hydrants throughout the community for increased fire protection.

## Chapter 7: Planning Area Analysis

VINTON - FUTURE LAND USE MAP



back of map

## **VINTON COMMUNITY PLANNING AREA**

### **Community Values**

- The sense of community or small town atmosphere is vital to the quality of life expressed by the residents of Vinton.
- Respect for the small business person is important to the community. Regulations on development standards must strike a balance between small businesses' ability to pay for these requirements as opposed to the costs for these requirements. Moderate landscaping and other site improvements are not prohibitive.
- The type of development that is placed on the McDonald Farm will have a major effect on how the community develops in the future.
- To achieve a balance between private property rights and development requirements. Land use is the key to making this a sustainable community in the future.

### **Key Resources**

- The small-town atmosphere is a resource for this community.
- The War Memorial provides a focal point for the community. It is used for many private parties and other types of social events.
- The McDonald Farm is a resource for the community.

### **General Policies**

#### **Natural Resources**

- Prevent development on environmentally sensitive and natural hazard areas in the community.
- Implement the greenways program to provide open space/green space through the community as well as wildlife corridors.

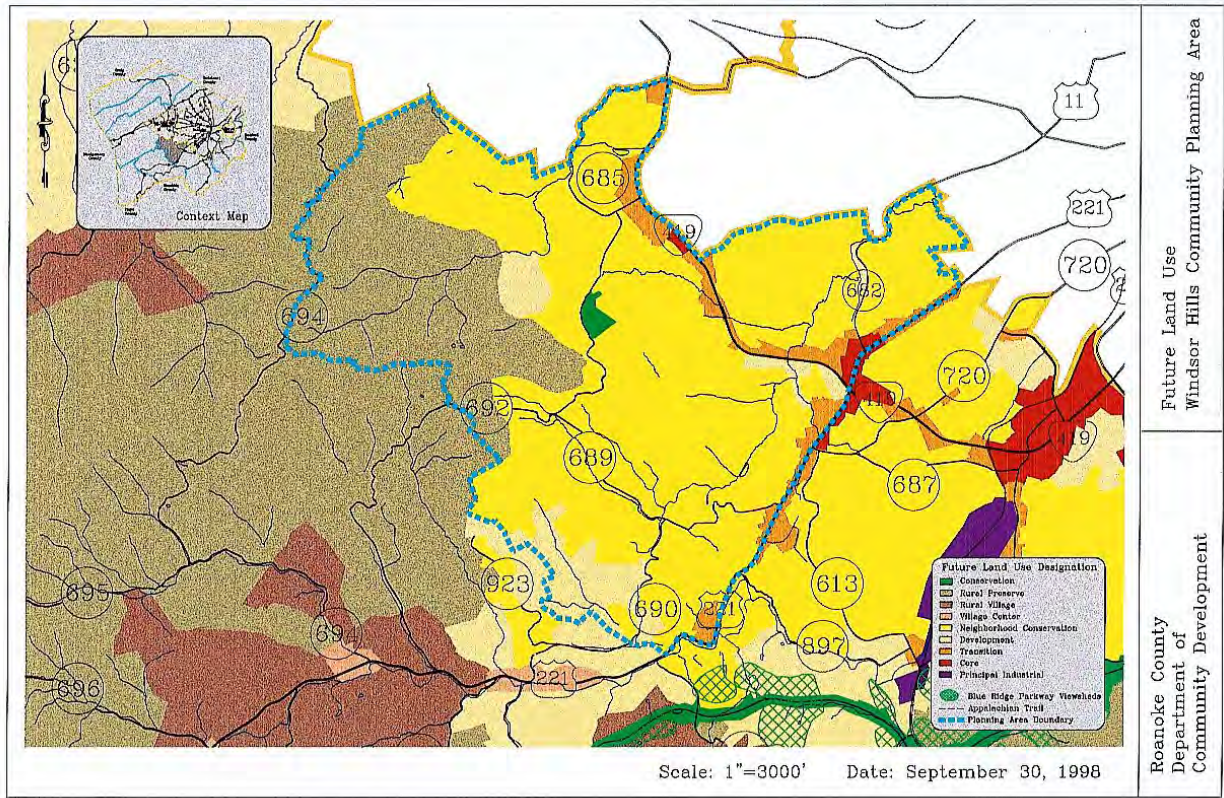
## **Land Use**

- Develop a program that will provide assistance to small businesses to help them renovate their store fronts and provide some landscaping on the site.
- Require that new developments contribute to the small town feeling in relation to the use of design principles that preserve the sense of place and contribute to the community's cohesiveness.
- Encourage the use of campus-like designs for new commercial and industrial developments which contribute to the natural environment by providing heavy landscaped areas and trails to adjoining uses such as neighborhoods and shopping areas.
- Development of the McDonald Farm should be oriented as a point of destination and provide tax revenue, employment, and an example for all new development in the community in relation to design standards.

## **Public Facilities**

- Work with VDOT and the Parkway to address the need to improve major transportation corridors that cross the Blue Ridge Parkway. Develop a procedure to achieve the goals of all organizations and the residents of the community in relation to these transportation improvements.
- Examine methods to require developers to contribute to the costs of transportation improvements required due to their activities in the community.
- Provide and support resources for the upgrading of educational facilities in the community.
- Cooperation of County, Town, and Federal officials is needed to develop stormwater management techniques that prevent flooding and improve water quality.
- Continue the maintenance and development of park facilities in the community.

WINDSOR HILLS - FUTURE LAND USE MAP





back of map

## **WINDSOR HILLS COMMUNITY PLANNING AREA**

### **Community Values**

- The views of the ridgelines along the Blue Ridge Parkway are a quality valued by this community.
- The views of Mount Chestnut, 12 O’Clock Knob and Poor Mountain are appreciated by the residents of Windsor Hills.
- The rural setting and landscape in the areas of Back Creek, Poage Farm, and Jamison’s Orchard.
- The landscaping and site design associated with Winterberry Point and the Colonnade Office Park on VA Route 419.

### **Key Resources**

- The following natural features are considered to be resources for the community: Sugar Loaf Mountain, Mount Chestnut, Poor Mountain, 12 O’Clock Knob and the natural setting along Back Creek.
- The park and recreation facilities located within the community.
- The small farms and orchards that continue to operate in the community.
- The village like setting along McVitty Road.
- The various large tracts of land that remain undeveloped, such as the Via property, Roberson property, Poage farm, and Jamison’s Orchard.

### **General Policies**

#### **Natural Resources**

- Prevent continued development on mountain ridges and provide protection and preservation of these scenic resources for the community.
- Use environmental preservation as an economic development strategy to develop eco-tourism attractions and activities.

- Preservation of sensitive environmental areas and prevention of degradation of these areas by surrounding development.
- Implementation of the planned Greenway system throughout the community.
- Preservation of the existing natural vegetation, farms, and orchards for their economic and open space value.
- Work cooperatively with private landowners, Western Virginia Land Trust, and other interested parties to preserve the natural features of the valley such as ridge lines, scenic vistas, and open space.
- Prevent the use of clear-cutting as a technique of harvesting forest resources. Promote the use of selective cutting and reforestation of areas after harvesting.

### **Land Use**

- Prevent the use of strip linear commercial development. This type of development has large un-screened parking areas, many access points to the main road, numerous detached buildings of varying architecture, and high light poles adding light pollution to the evening sky.
- Promote the use of planned commercial developments and/or nodes of commercial development in the community. These developments would offer extensive landscaping, appropriate and tastefully designed signs, and provide buildings which have a unified architectural design.
- To develop the appropriate balance between residential, commercial, industrial, and agricultural land uses is a key to Windsor Hills becoming a sustainable community.
- Explore the opportunities to create a Historic District in the village-like area along McVitty Road, which would promote preservation as well as economic development through heritage tourism.
- Develop and implement design guidelines in the County's development ordinances that require extensive landscaping, compatible architectural designs, small tasteful signs and buffers between incompatible land uses.
- Prior to approving new residential development, ensure that the needed public facilities are available or planned to be in place to coincide with the new development.
- Require all future developments to be planned unit developments (PUD).

- Develop and implement a plan for the renovation and beautification of the Brambleton Avenue area similar to the program underway in Hollins.
- Implement a tree preservation/planting program for the VA Route 419 corridor as well as for new developments.
- Clear and efficient methods of communication need to be developed between the County leadership and the local community.

### **Public Facilities**

- Continue to support and fund the school facilities improvement plan adopted by the School Board in 1997.
- Provide equitable distribution of school resources across the county.
- Maintain the Library Headquarters in its current location and provide additional space and resources as needed in response to continued growth of the community.
- Acquire, fully develop and maintain the park facilities within the community.
- Support and fund after-school and elderly recreation programs for the community.
- Work cooperatively with VDOT to provide the needed transportation improvements for the community, such as reduced speed lights for schools, wider shoulders along roads, and reduced speed limits for residential areas.
- Develop and implement methods that manage stormwater runoff, prevent stream flooding, and improve water quality.



## WORK ITEM PRIORITIES

**PC=Planning Commission**  
**BOS=Board of Supervisors**  
**GC=Greenway Commission**  
**PATH=Pathfinders**  
**VOF=Virginia Outdoors Foundation**  
**NC=Neighborhood Councils**  
**CAO=County Attorney**

## Secondary Resources

## 1. INCREASE CITIZEN PARTICIPATION IN THE PLANNING PROCESS:

- 189

## 2. ENHANCE PARK AND GREENWAY OPPORTUNITIES:

- |   |                       |                 |
|---|-----------------------|-----------------|
| A. Prioritize greenway projects and develop funding strategies. (Chap. 3, Chap. 5)                                      | DCD, DPR, GC, PC, BOS | NC, PATH, RRHBA |
| B. Increase recreational use of the Roanoke River by implementing construction of the Roanoke River greenway. (Chap. 4) | DCD, DPR, GC, PC, BOS | PATH, NC        |
| C. Review and update Roanoke County Park's Master Plan. (Chap. 4)   | DCD, DPR, PC, BOS     | NC              |

## 3. VISUAL IMPRESSIONS OF THE COMMUNITY:

- |   |                   |          |
|---|-------------------|----------|
| A. Enhance median and gateway beautification projects. (Chap. 5)                                  | DCD, DPR, PC, BOS | NC, VDOT |
| a. Have in place a working maintenance program including watering and plant material replacement. |                   |          |

## 4. INCREASE ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT AND TOURISM OPPORTUNITIES:

- |  |                   |                       |
|--|-------------------|-----------------------|
| A. Implement Phase I development of Roanoke County Center for Research and Technology. (Chap. 3) | DED, BOS          |                       |
| B. Construct Blue Ridge Parkway Orientation/ Interpretation Center. (Chap. 3)                    | DED, BOS          | National Park Service |
| C. Develop strategies to accommodate large-scale retail development. (Chap. 3)                   | DCD, DED, PC, BOS | NC                    |

## 5. IMPLEMENT RESOURCE PRESERVATION STRATEGIES:

- |   |                         |                 |
|---|-------------------------|-----------------|
| A. Encourage other localities to adopt the Roanoke River Conservation Overlay District. (Chap. 4)                                       | DCD                     | 5th PDC         |
| B. Study conservation strategies to ensure the long-term protection of the Spring Hollow Reservoir and adjacent public lands. (Chap. 5) | PC, BOS, DPR, UTIL, DCD | Land Trust, VOF |

## Chapter 8: Community Plan Implementation

C. Distribute to property owners, the historic resources surveys from the Historical Architecture Reconnaissance Survey. (Chap. 5)	DCD	Dept. of Historic Resources
D. Develop a County-wide conservation and development map. (Chap. 5)	DCD, PC, BOS	NC, RRHBA
E. Prioritize open space resources and develop strategies for protection and preservation. (Chap. 5)	DCD, PC, BOS	5th PDC

### **PROGRAMS:**

**January 2002 to December 2008**

#### **1. INCREASE ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT OPPORTUNITIES:**

A. Implement Phase II of Roanoke County Center for Research and Technology. (Chap. 3)	DED, BOS
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#### **2. VISUAL IMPRESSIONS OF THE COMMUNITY:**

A. Increase the number of median and gateway beautification projects. (Chap. 3)	DCD, DPR, PC, BOS	NC, VDOT
B. Work with the billboard industry to optimize the location of billboards. (Chap. 5)	DCD, CAO	

### **POLICIES:**

**January 1999 to December 2001**

#### **1. REVISE ZONING ORDINANCE:**

	DCD, PC, BOS	NC, RRHBA
A. Adopt Cluster Development Ordinance. (Chap. 5, Chap. 3)		
B. Adopt Natural Resources Overlay District. (Chap. 5)		



- C. Adopt Interstate Interchange Overlay District.  
(Chap. 4)

**2. REVISE SUBDIVISION ORDINANCE:**

- |  |              |           |
|--|--------------|-----------|
| A. Ensure compliance with adopted<br>Community Plan. (Chap. 5) | DCD, PC, BOS | NC, RRHBA |
|--|--------------|-----------|

<b>3. DEVELOP A TREE PROTECTION AND REPLACEMENT ORDINANCE.</b> (Chap. 5)	DCD, PC, BOS	NC, RRHBA
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**4. REVISE SUBDIVISION STREET  
STANDARDS.**

- |  |              |                        |
|--|--------------|------------------------|
| A. Consideration of private road standards.<br><br>(Chap. 5) | DCD, PC, BOS | NC, RRHBA,<br><br>VDOT |
|--|--------------|------------------------|

**POLICIES:**

**January 2002 to December 2008**

<b>1. REVISE ZONING ORDINANCE:</b>	DCD, PC, BOS, CAONC, RRHBA
------------------------------------	----------------------------

- A. Allow density bonuses for in-fill  
development including  
consideration of transfer of  
development rights. (Chap. 3)
- B. Adopt a Gateway Overlay District.  
(Chap. 5)