

## FRANKLIN ROAD AREA

### OBSERVATION:

The area between the City Market study area and nearby Elmwood Park (which has suburban office buildings developed in the 1970's and 1980's) does not feel like downtown Roanoke.

### DISCUSSION:

Buildings developed in this area, born out of the 1960's Federal Urban Renewal process and funded by UDAG grants, are now considered anti-urban object buildings and plazas. They are suburban structures in their style of architecture.

The buildings tend to turn their backs to the street, presenting blank walls to very wide suburban thoroughfare streets. The blank walls and the wide, impassable streets keep some pedestrians from walking to Elmwood Park; many don't feel comfortable walking south beyond the Norfolk Southern building.

Unlike the City Market, this area is just not an interesting place to be; it is not an inviting urban place.

### FINDINGS:

The Franklin Road corridor is another area adjacent to the designated project study area that needs further review. Solutions to problems caused by the 1960's urban redevelopment are not easy ones. Cities throughout the United States have similar problems. The sheer size and scale of large suburban structures dropped into a city grid prevent those structures from being good urban neighbors.

One solution provided in the study shows how edge development could be developed along the Norfolk Southern railroad headquarters building.

Although this is one of the nicer landscaped areas in the Roanoke, in order to make the city more urban and less suburban, transformations such as edge or liner development are important.



*Franklin Road, looking west*



*Blank facades along Franklin Road*



*Uninviting urban spaces along Franklin Road*



*Uninteresting walkway between Elmwood Park and Market Street*