



CHAPTER
THREE

PLAN ELEMENTS:
THE BUILDING
BLOCKS OF
THE PLAN



vision 2001
2020

As described in the Executive Summary, this plan defines a vision for the future of the City. The vision is a future state based on the goals developed by citizens who participated in the public workshops and on the Vision Advisory Committee.

A vision for 2020. In the year 2020, Roanoke is a growing, dynamic, and sustainable city that is focused on the future with a strong, diverse economy and a balanced and growing population that values and enjoys a high quality of life in a safe and attractive environment. Working together, the City and region boast a steady growth in jobs and residents, higher school scores, improved government services, and a broader range of recreational and entertainment activities. Through regional cooperation, the mountain views and ridgetops are protected and are easily accessed by a network of greenways that link downtown, neighborhoods, and regional parks and parkways.

Roanoke's sustainability is measured not only by the health of its economy but also by its quality of life. Economic prosperity can be continued and enhanced by supporting our cultural and entertainment amenities, education, and other services. Protecting our natural environment, supporting a wide range of cultural and entertainment amenities, maintaining a first-class educational system, and providing ongoing educational opportunities will attract new residents and businesses.

— Taken from Executive Summary page 7

To achieve this vision, the plan recommends specific policies and actions that will guide public and private decision-making and investment. The plan also recommends several strategic initiatives to proactively encourage development opportunities.

Vision 2001-2020 plan elements consist of four sections: background, policy approach, policies, and actions. The background information provides a thumbnail sketch of the current situation. The policy approach describes the intent of the plan and identifies initiatives. The plan's policies establish the guidelines for decision-making. The plan actions are implementation steps that must be taken to achieve the long-term vision and goals of the plan.

STRATEGIC INITIATIVES



Strategic Initiatives are the key concepts of the plan. In developing the plan's elements, several key ideas emerged as strategies for immediate action. The overall theme of the initiatives is that new approaches are needed to ensure that Roanoke will be a beautiful, vibrant, and livable place that will attract new businesses and residents to an economically and environmentally healthy community. Several initiatives look at opportunities for housing development such as housing clusters and the reuse of underutilized industrial and commercial sites. One initiative recommends investment in promoting the City and the region, and another identifies the importance of developing a regional approach to protecting and enhancing the critical amenities that set Roanoke apart from other regions. A theme that runs throughout the plan is that for Roanoke to be truly successful in the new century, it must look for new opportunities to do business, see old places in a new way, and recognize and celebrate Roanoke's urban uniqueness.

The policies and actions in these sections of the plan apply citywide. Detailed neighborhood and area plans are adopted as components of the City's Vision 2001-2020 plan. These plans include more detailed strategies to implement the plan policies and actions.

Citywide Long-Range Development Plan

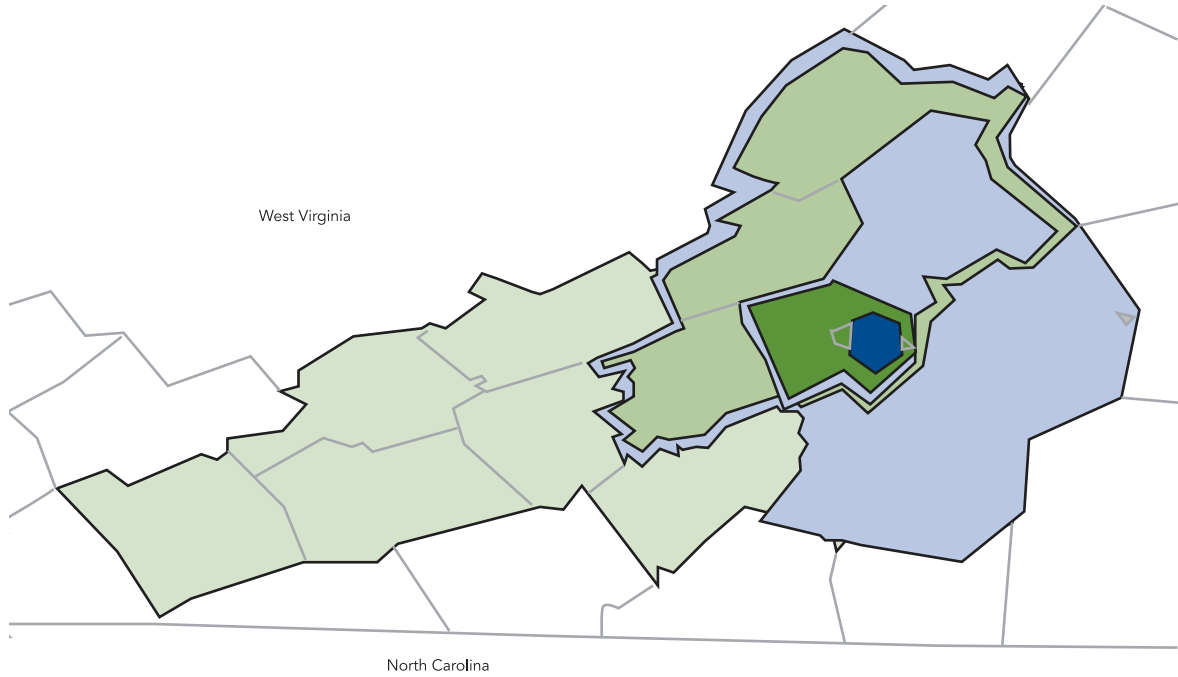
The City of Roanoke is one of several local government units in the Roanoke region. Maintaining and enhancing the high quality of life that is important to citizens in the City and the region requires the collaboration and cooperation of all of the jurisdictions. Many of the challenges that the City of Roanoke identifies are also challenges for the region. Critical issues such as economic development, natural resource protection, transportation, tourism, entertainment and cultural venues, and housing all require a regional perspective and regional solutions. Vision 2001-2020 includes not only policies and actions that will be implemented within the City's jurisdictional boundaries but also recommendations for regional approaches and actions that require intergovernmental cooperation.

Roanoke's Regions

Roanoke's regions can be defined in many ways and are viewed as great opportunities for residents, businesses, and visitors. The map on page 34 shows the general location of the communities that comprise Roanoke's regions.

- The Roanoke Valley is typically defined as including the City of Roanoke, Roanoke County, the Town of Vinton, and the City of Salem.
- The Roanoke Metropolitan Statistical Area (MSA) is a much larger region that presently includes the City of Roanoke, Roanoke County, Salem, Vinton, and Botetourt County. This area is defined based upon census information.
- The Greater Roanoke Region is even more extensive and includes the MSA, the Counties of Craig, Franklin, Montgomery, and Bedford as well as the Cities or Towns of Blacksburg, Christiansburg, Bedford, and Lynchburg. Essentially, this region includes those jurisdictions surrounding the Roanoke Valley and those areas served by Roanoke's employment and commercial centers.
- The Roanoke Valley-Alleghany Regional Planning District includes the Cities of Roanoke, Salem, Clifton Forge, and Covington; Town of Vinton; and the Counties of Roanoke, Botetourt, Craig, and Alleghany. This district is the official planning district established by the state.
- The New Century Region includes the Cities of Roanoke, Salem, Clifton Forge, Covington and Radford; Towns of Vinton, Blacksburg, and Christiansburg; and the Counties of Roanoke, Franklin, Floyd, Montgomery, Pulaski, Giles, Craig, Botetourt, and Alleghany. This region was established several years ago to increase the region's strength and visibility in western Virginia.





Roanoke's Regions

- City of Roanoke
- Roanoke Metropolitan Statistical Area
- Roanoke Valley
- Greater Roanoke Region
- New Century Region

3.1 HOUSING AND NEIGHBORHOODS

BACKGROUND

Demographic Changes and Challenges

Roanoke’s population has fluctuated over time from a peak of more than 100,000 residents in the 1980s to 94,911 residents in 2000. During this same time period, the population of the Roanoke Metropolitan Statistical Area has grown by seven percent, while the City’s share of total population has declined by five percent. This data leads to two conclusions: 1) Roanoke is losing residents to its neighbors through out-migration; and 2) new residents are moving to the region but are choosing not to live in the City. Roanoke’s median household income fell one percent from 1996 to 1997, while the median household income in Salem, Roanoke County, and Botetourt County rose more than six percent over the same period. The median household income in Roanoke County is nearly twice as high (\$47,838) as the City’s median household income of \$27,492.

Neighborhood Development Patterns

Many of Roanoke’s neighborhoods are diverse urban areas with compact development patterns and a mix of residential, retail, and office uses, along with parks, religious institutions, schools, and other public facilities. Traditional neighborhoods formed on the edges of the downtown area, with small neighborhood commercial nodes offering a mix of neighborhood-