

ROANOKE COUNTY, VIRGINIA

2005 COMMUNITY PLAN



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.

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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.

7. Transportation

Introduction

Roanoke County has become a vital employment, retail, residential, and entertainment center for Southwest Virginia. Along with this growth and expansion, the County is experiencing the consequent transportation dilemmas that much of the nation is undergoing. In order to remedy the problems, one must closely examine travel characteristics, statistics, and trends to gain insight into the quandary. The population of the United States increased 33% from 1970 to 1998, while the workforce increased 66% over that same period. That means that about 55 million more people are commuting daily to work and the majority of those, some 88%, travel in an automobile. That means over 48 million more commuters by automobile on the road every day. The incredible magnitude of the problem becomes clear when one examines the data and realizes that the amount of vehicle miles traveled is almost doubling (increased 72% from 1980 to 1998) while the amount of road mileage/capacity is holding steady as new roads are not being funded and built (total U.S. roadway lane-miles increased by only 3.6% during the same time period) (All statistics from Bureau of Transportation Statistics).

Comprehensive and forward-looking solutions are necessary to address these problems and to meet the transportation needs of Roanoke County residents, visitors, and businesses. The Transportation element of the Community Plan provides a policy and program framework for these solutions. Transportation projects and plans developed and implemented within Roanoke County are guided by this framework. By achieving the goals set forth in this Plan, Roanoke County will provide accessible, attractive, economically viable and environmentally sound transportation options that meet the needs of residents, employers, employees, and visitors for safe, convenient, and efficient travel.

The Virginia Department of Transportation (VDOT) and the Commonwealth of Virginia owns, constructs, and maintains all of the public roads in the County. However, the County does have considerable input and say into what transportation projects are supported and funded within the County; and a close working relationship is and will be maintained with VDOT on County transportation issues. Roanoke County will also 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. Utilizing this Transportation element of the Community Plan and working in coordination with adjoining localities and the aforementioned entities will enable the County of Roanoke to achieve the goals laid out herein.

It should be noted that this element of the Community Plan is a policy document rather than a transportation proposal; no specific projects or changes in traffic planning are mandated.

Long Range Plan

Roanoke Study Area 2025 Recommendations & Priorities
Jurisdiction -- Roanoke County (Primary Routes)

Priority	Primary Route	Facility	From	To	Length (mi)	Exist. Lanes	VDOT Recommends	Roanoke Co. Recommends	Roanoke Co. Comments
1	11/460	Lee Hwy	Rte 612	WCL Salem	1.91	3L	R4L	R4L	Already being done; could be removed from list
2	221	Bent Mtn.	1.05 mi W 694	.35 mi S Rte 897	3.34	2L	R4L	R4L	4L prior to this section; properties have already been bought through S-turns, some plans have been done
3	11	Williamson	Roanoke CL	Rte 117	1.49	2L	U4L	U4L	Agree, don't want a bottleneck; high priority for County
4	115	Plantation	Roanoke CL	Rte 11	2.19	2L	U4L	U4L	R-O-W has been bought, wide R-O-W; a lot of development in area; widen this takes traffic off Peters Cr.
5	220	Franklin	S Rte 715	Roanoke CL	3.72	4L	R6L	U6L/R6L	Why not continue to Franklin Co. Line? U6L from Roan. City line to Yellow Mtn Rd, R6L from Yellow Mtn Rd to Franklin CL
6	116	Jae Valley	Rte 664	Roanoke CL	1.24	2L	R4L	R2 24'	Downgrade to R2 24'; goes under BR Parkway; keep on the list, very important for Smith Mtn Lake
7	460	Challenger	Roanoke CL	Botetourt CL	1.98	4L	R6L	U6L	Change to U6L; proposed commercial development in this area
8	419	Electric Rd.	Rte 220	Starkey	0.83	4L	U8L	U8L or U6L	For planning purposes keep it 8-lane? 8 lanes probably won't work, would hurt real estate, 8L not the answer; need to focus on 220 interchange; possibly 6L or 4L with frontage roads
9	419	Electric Rd.	Starkey	SCL Salem	4.58	4L	U6L	U6L	Agree, especially if upgrade section prior to this one
10	116	Jae Valley	Franklin CL	Rte 664	1.94	2L	R2 24'	R2 24'	Smith Mtn Lake big attraction; lots of curves and bad terrain; would be major \$ to increase lanes
11	221	Brambleton	Rte 689	Rte 419	0.99	4L	U6L	U4L	4L should accommodate traffic volumes; major impacts if widen; may be removed from list

Table T-3: Roanoke Study Area 2025 Recommendations & Priorities – Primary Routes

step towards providing smooth, safe, and economical road surfaces and achieving the best possible value for the available public funds.

(Note: Interested citizens should consult the most recent “*County of Roanoke Six Year Secondary System Construction Plan and Revenue Sharing*” document for a current, prioritized list of road improvement projects in the County. The document is available for review at the County office and/or on the County website.)

C. Goal: To guide the use of Roanoke County transportation infrastructure system to control air pollution, traffic, and livability problems.

i. Objective: To reduce Roanoke County’s dependence on single-occupant vehicle use as a primary mode of travel.

a. Strategy: *Bicycle Facilities & Greenways* --

Bicycle facilities

There are numerous benefits associated with bicycling. Bicycling offers health and fitness benefits through increased exercise; environmental benefits through reduced vehicular emissions; and transportation benefits by providing an alternative transportation option to the automobile. Bicycles may also serve as an excellent, all-around short-distance transportation alternative to the single-occupant vehicle for trips to work, schools, shopping, recreational facilities, and other intra-neighborhood destinations. The many benefits of bicycle facilities and reasons to invest in such infrastructure have been adequately explained in detail in both the 1997 *Bikeway Plan for the Roanoke Valley* and the *Regional Bicycle Suitability Study - Phase I and II* (both documents can be accessed via the Roanoke Valley Allegheny Regional Commission (RVARC) website: <http://www.rvarc.org/bike/home.htm>, or by contacting either the RVARC, at telephone number (540) 343-4417, or the County Traffic Engineer, at telephone number (540) 772-2080, to obtain a hard copy of the documents). For that reason, this element of the Community Plan will not attempt to duplicate the valuable information contained in those documents; rather, explain how the County attempts to implement its bikeway plan.

The following disclaimer is presented in the 2003 *Regional Bicycle Suitability Study*:

Note: For bicycle accommodations to be considered as part of roadway improvements using Federal and State funding,

the roadway must be included in an approved bikeway plan. The *1997 Bikeway Plan for the Roanoke Valley Area* (RVAMPO, 1997) is the approved bikeway document for the MPO, thereby fulfilling this requirement. As such, the *1997 Bikeway Plan* should be referenced when specific roadways are cited for bicycle accommodations. *Phase I* of the *Regional Bicycle Suitability Study* is not intended to supercede or replace the *1997 Plan* in this capacity. Instead it should complement the efforts and goals of the *1997 Plan* and facilitate the provision of bicycle accommodation in the MPO.

Due to the Virginia Department of Transportation's requirements and importance of having an adequate and complete list, the County is striving to provide input; not only on amendments to the *1997 Plan*, but in the creation of a region-wide, connected network of bicycle facilities that will hopefully be an end product of the *Regional Bicycle Suitability Study*.

The *Regional Bicycle Suitability Study* will consist of *Phase I* and *Phase II*. Whereas *Phase I* of the *Study* introduces the applicable computer models, provides detailed analysis and summary of survey responses, gives an overview of local, regional, state, and national bicycle facility planning efforts, and lays the groundwork for the project, *Phase II* of the *Study* will consist primarily of the application of work products developed in *Phase I*. A prioritized list of routes, corridors, destinations, and activity centers to be connected via a significant regional bicycling network; maps of existing and proposed bicycle facilities, and other spatial data relevant to the study; and potentially a new, approved, and updated bike plan are end products of *Phase II*.

The primary goal of the *Study* is to provide planners, transportation engineers, citizens, and bicycle coordinators and enthusiasts the tools and data for use in developing facilities and other accommodations to enhance safe bicycle travel within the MPO area. Data and tools developed as part of the *Study* are useful in identifying current and future problems facing the bicycling public, facilitating the planning and design of a bicycle-friendly transportation system, and determining possible options regarding operational and design requirements for new facilities. End products will assist stakeholders in establishing consistency and connectivity along travel corridors, developing crucial linkages with the greenway system and public transit, and developing other components of a regional bicycling network.

Development of a regional bicycling network will require coordination and cooperation among all stakeholders in the study area. As a geographic region composed of several jurisdictions, Roanoke Valley governments should coordinate bicycle facility improvements to ensure that travel corridors are consistent in and between jurisdictions in the study area.

As part of the *Regional Bicycle Suitability Study*, a planning committee, composed of interested stakeholders, was established to assist in various aspects of the study. Representation from a varied cross-section of stakeholders was sought in selecting members. The planning committee was composed of Regional Commission staff, local planning and traffic engineering staff (including Roanoke County staff), Greenway representatives, VDOT representatives, bicycling advocates, and citizens. The committee is assisting in the development of a regionally significant bicycling network by guiding the application of work products in *Phase II* of the *Regional Bicycle Suitability Study*, facilitating continued regional cooperation in bicycle facility planning, and data collection.

The new *Study* will make it easier for the MPO and the localities to develop a new bikeway plan to replace the *1997 Bikeway Plan*, but will not, in itself, be a replacement for the 1997 plan. Until a new plan is developed and adopted by the MPO, the 1997 plan will be the official plan that the County adheres to and thus, it is important to keep the 1997 plan up-to-date. Tools from the *Regional Bicycle Suitability Study* could be used to develop a new bicycle plan for the region in the next few years.

Rather than waiting for the completion of a replacement or update to the *1997 Plan*, the County will strive to utilize the computer models introduced and implemented in the *Regional Bicycle Suitability Study* to get a jump on the planning efforts. Before the design phase of scheduled road projects begins, County staff will attempt to measure the existing bicycle compatibility level and generate proposed options regarding an applicable bicycle facility; all the while consulting the *1997 Bikeway Plan*.

Study findings and work products will be available to localities in the region, and can be easily incorporated in the development of regional and local plans. Once the *Regional Bicycle Suitability Study* is complete and the localities have agreed upon a bicycle-friendly transportation infrastructure that has been developed on a regional basis (not only to meet existing demands, but also to encourage and facilitate bicycling as a viable means of

transportation in the Roanoke Valley), County staff recommends that the County Board of Supervisors adopt the new plan and that it is utilized as the County's approved plan.

In addition, the Virginia Department of Transportation released a memorandum in early 2003 stating their bicycle and pedestrian policies and procedures. In the memo, the Secretary of Transportation stated, among other things: that non-motorized transportation should receive the same consideration as motorized transportation in the planning, design, construction, and operation of Virginia's transportation network; and bicycle and pedestrian accommodations should be included in the design of all new highway facilities and all major highway reconstruction efforts, unless special circumstances exist that prevent their inclusion or a local governing body has formally requested that bicycle or pedestrian accommodations not be included. The Secretary declared that the new policies should be in place by end of the 2003 calendar year. That policy became effective on March 18, 2004 and applies to projects that have not yet reached the scoping phase. The "*Policy for Integrating Bicycle and Pedestrian Accommodations*" can be reviewed on VDOT's website. The County will keep abreast of the developments pertinent to VDOT's bicycle and pedestrian policies and procedures.

Ultimately, the County's objectives pertaining to bicycle facilities can be summed up in the following points:

- To complete a network of bikeways that serves bicyclists' needs, especially for travel to employment centers, commercial districts, transit stations, institutions, and recreational destinations;
- To provide bikeway facilities that are appropriate to the street classifications, traffic volumes, and speed of traffic;
- To develop and implement education and encouragement plans aimed at youth, adult cyclists, and motorists; and to increase public awareness of the benefits of bicycling and of available resources and facilities;
- To encourage bicycle parking and related facilities as part of all new construction or major renovation, including office, retail, industrial, and housing developments;
- To encourage the construction of showers and changing facilities in all new or renovated commercial development;
- To encourage bicycle parking facilities at all park and ride lots, commercial developments, and selected parking lots (such as bicycle parking facilities at public spaces such as County buildings, museums, libraries and civic centers).

A regionally significant bikeway network in the MPO will include the Roanoke Valley Greenway system. The greenway system is an integral component of the recreational and transportation infrastructure in the area, providing open and recreational space for Roanoke Valley residents. Some bicyclists, such as novice users, will not be comfortable with on-road facilities. The Greenway Plan presents an added opportunity to meet this need by providing facilities with little conflict from automobiles and by providing linkages and connectivity. The Roanoke Valley's greenway system is explained in the following section of this element of the Community Plan.

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 (Roanoke County, Roanoke City, City of Salem, and Town of Vinton) appointed representatives to a Greenways Steering Committee, supported by the Fifth Planning District Commission. A consulting firm was hired to develop a *Conceptual Greenway Plan for the Roanoke Valley* with input from elected officials, civic leaders, and the general public. This Plan was adopted by each of the four jurisdictions in 1997.

The Roanoke Valley Greenway Commission, appointed by the four Valley governments, replaced the Steering Committee in

1997. It is an advisory body with the responsibility to 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.

In August 1997, the first one-half mile of greenway in Roanoke was completed through Garst Mill Park along Mud Lick Creek. This was the first section of greenway in Roanoke County and is being very heavily used. Extensions of this greenway are planned to connect to the Hidden Valley High School and to Murray Run Greenway in the City of Roanoke.

The Hanging Rock Battlefield Trail which travels through portions of Salem and Roanoke County opened in 1999. This Trail is included on the brochure *Shenandoah Valley Civil War Trails* and attracts tourists as well as local residents. The extension of this greenway will follow Masons Creek to the Roanoke River.

In 2001 the Wolf Creek Greenway opened in Roanoke County, extending a section built in the Town of Vinton in 1999. This trail connects the new bicycle lanes built on Hardy Road to Goode and Stonebridge Parks in Roanoke County. The extension of this greenway will connect with the Blue Ridge Parkway to the northeast and with the Roanoke River to the south. A master plan for Tinker Creek Greenway was completed in 2000 in cooperation with Roanoke City, and plans for Glade Creek Greenway are being developed with the Town of Vinton.

The backbone of the Roanoke Valley greenway system will be the Roanoke River Greenway which will run for over 20 miles through Roanoke County, Salem, Roanoke City, and Vinton. Master plans for the Roanoke River Greenway have been completed, and two sections of the greenway have been built - one in Salem and one in Roanoke City. The first section to be built in Roanoke County will be in Green Hill Park.

In 1998, Roanoke County completed a prioritization of greenways within its jurisdiction. The priorities for off-road routes were: Wolf Creek, Roanoke River, Tinker/Carvins Creek, Glade Creek, and Mud Lick Creek Greenways. The priorities developed by staff in 2001 for on-road facilities needing major improvements were: Mountain View Road, Plantation Road, Hardy Road, Loch Haven Drive, and Colonial Avenue. While a significant amount of progress has been made on greenways over the last 7-8 years, there are substantial steps still to be taken.

b. **Strategy: *Traffic Management Strategies*** -- For the most part, the effectiveness of existing roads should be maximized rather than using new road construction as a crutch. It has been proven in the past that we cannot build our way out of congestion; we must begin to be creative about the utilization of the existing infrastructure. Some potential strategies Roanoke County staff can implement include:

- Encouraging motorists to carpool or rideshare;
- Promote employer-supported vanpool programs;
- Persuade the use of park-and-ride facilities;
- Endorse shuttle transit service from fringe parking areas to urban centers or major destinations;
- Encourage enhanced motorists information services and systems (such as presenting the congestion crises on television, radio, or the internet; motorists would be advised to car pool or alter their driving patterns);
- Advocate public transit, working with Valley Metro (Greater Roanoke Transit Company) and RADAR (Roanoke Area Dial-A-Ride);
- **Support non-motorized travel, such as bicycle/pedestrian facilities** (addressed in other sections of this Plan);
- Teaming up with Roanoke Valley-Allegheny Regional Commission (RVARC) and their regional ridesharing program called “Ride Solutions”. This program is a grant-funded program that provides free carpool and vanpool matching services for citizens of the Roanoke Valley and surrounding areas within southwestern VA. The program also provides directions to area park-and-ride lots, and information about alternative modes of transportation, such as public transit service, walking, and bicycling. Information on Ride Solutions can be obtained from the website www.ridesolutions.org or by calling them at (540) 342-9393.

c. **Strategy: *Education on Transportation Systems & Livability Issues*** -- Americans perceive their car as a provider of the freedom that we have come to cherish so greatly. An aspect of that freedom is enjoying the privacy, convenience, and safety of automobiles. Our love of cars has grown out of necessity. That is to say, as residential developments are built without proximity to employment centers or shopping facilities, residents have no choice but to use personal automobiles. Transportation infrastructure has been designed and built for the personal transport vehicle, rather than designed on a human scale.