



HOLLINS AREA PLAN



A COMPONENT OF THE
ROANOKE COUNTY
COMPREHENSIVE PLAN
NOVEMBER 11, 2008



Graphic 2.37 Bicycle Lane along Memorial Drive in Roanoke City

The Hollins Study Area is the location of one of the “Priority List Corridors” as defined by the bikeway plan, envisioned to run along Plantation Road from Interstate 81 through its intersection with Hollins Road at the Roanoke City limits. As a priority listing the Plantation Road alignment is an important foundation for the greater network, and thus will receive priority for construction funding as it becomes available. Additionally, several other routes are designated as “Vision List Corridors” around Walrond Park and are viewed as routes to fill in gaps in the overall network. See Map 33, Hollins Area Plan Greenways and Bikeways for the proposed bike routes in Appendix A.

Greenways

Greenways are best defined as paths and trails based on natural corridors, canals, abandoned railbeds and other public rights-of-way that serve as recreational amenities. Greenways also enhance and improve connectivity within communities.

Originally developed in 1995 and substantially updated in 2007, the *Roanoke Valley Conceptual Greenway Plan* serves as a guide for greenway development within Roanoke County and across several neighboring jurisdictions. The Roanoke Valley Greenway Commission oversees all planning and implementation of greenways within the Roanoke

Valley. In this plan 51 potential greenways are identified along various courses throughout the Valley. The implementation priorities are based on public input, the Greenway Steering Committee and localities within the Valley.

Of the potential greenways identified in the original plan, only the Tinker Creek Greenway directly crosses through the Hollins Study Area. Identified as a Priority #2 Greenway, the Tinker Creek Greenway is planned to run 11 miles alongside Tinker Creek from its confluence at the Roanoke River in Roanoke City to its headwaters at Carvins Cove in Botetourt County. The greenway will incorporate numerous historic sites along its route and will serve as a direct connection between the Roanoke River Greenway and the existing trail network at Carvins Cove.



Graphic 2.38 Pedestrian Walkway beneath Williamson Road

With a conceptual plan complete in 2000 through the Hollins Study Area, the greenway will parallel Carvins Creek and pass beneath Williamson Road utilizing an existing pathway. From that point, the greenway will wind through the western portions of the Hollins University property before crossing beneath Interstate 81 en route to Carvins Cove. Hollins University has included the greenway in its master plan and as of the 2007 Greenways Plan Update, this stretch of the greenway should be completed within five to ten years. See Map 33,

were fairly well split with 15 percent replying 11 to 20 years, 20 percent answering 5 to 10 years and 25 percent responding less than five years.

3.0.1 *Community Likes and Concerns*

The next two questions encouraged thoughtful responses using open-ended blank spaces. The full bar charts showing all categorized responses are located in the Survey Results in Appendix B (Document 5).

The top five responses to the question “What do you like most about your community?” included:

1. Convenience/Proximity (to destinations)
2. Appearance
3. Character
4. Quiet/Peaceful
5. Interstate 81 (close to Interstate, easy access)

The five most common answers to the question, “What concerns do you have with respect to your community?” were:

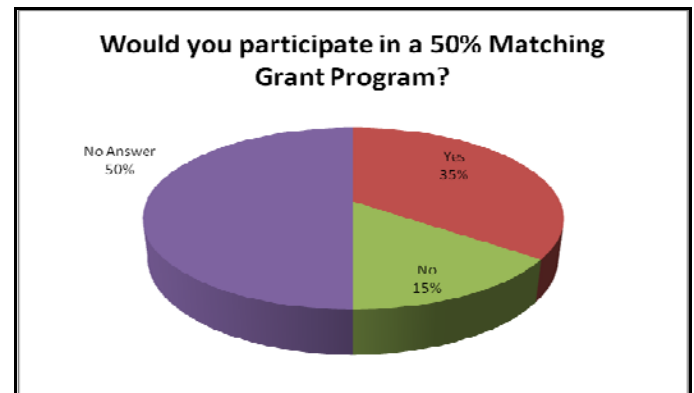
1. Traffic
2. Commercial/Industrial Development
3. Roads/Intersections/Other Transportation
4. Appearance
5. Pedestrian Accommodations

3.0.2 *Commercial Matching Grant Program*

In analyzing only the business-owner survey responses, the answers indicated that most owners are:

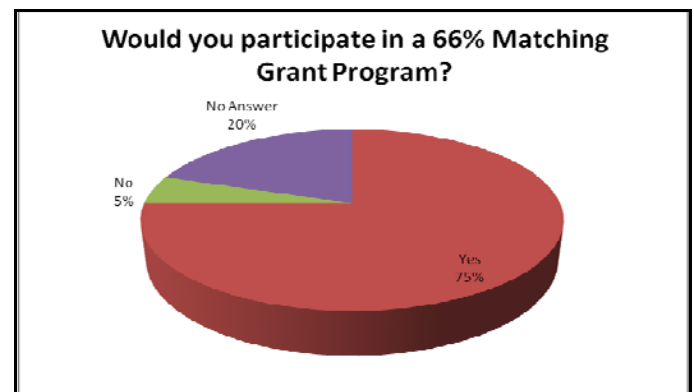
- Male (70 percent)
 - Female: 25 percent
 - No answer: 5 percent
- 50 years of age or older (80 percent)
 - 65 or older: 45 percent
 - 50 to 64: 35 percent
 - 35 to 49: 15 percent
 - No answer: 5 percent
- Hollins business owners only (85 percent)
 - Hollins business and homeowners: 15 percent
- Hollins business owners for 20 or more years (70 percent)
 - 11 to 20 years: 10 percent
 - 5 to 10 years: 5 percent
 - Less than 5 years: 15 percent

The Roanoke County Corridor Matching Grant Program was established in the early 1990s to provide a means for business owners to improve the appearance of their businesses and property. The program currently provides 50 percent County matching funds up to \$20,000 dollars for site or building façade improvements. When business owners were asked if they would participate in the 50 percent Matching Grant Program, half did not answer the question, 35 percent answered “yes” and 15 percent replied “no.”



Graphic 3.05 Community Survey 50 percent Matching Grant Results

Those answers changed significantly when the matching amount was hypothetically changed to 66 percent matching funds, leaving the business owner paying 33 percent. The number of “yes” responses more than doubled to 75 percent, the “no” responses dropped to five percent and only 20 percent did not answer the question.



Graphic 3.06 Community Survey 66 percent Matching Grant Results

Chapter 4:

PLAN RECOMMENDATIONS

4.0 Plan Goals

The three main goals of the Hollins Area Plan are as follows:

1. Improve upon the established commercial, industrial, residential and institutional foundations while balancing industrial and commercial pressures with the needs of the community;
2. Enhance the visual appearance of Williamson and Plantation Roads; and
3. Anticipate growth pressures and create standards for quality development.

These goals can be achieved by implementing the following plan recommendations including changing the Future Land Use Map, creating new zoning overlays for a historic district and an entrance corridor, conserving viewsheds, modifying the Commercial Corridor Matching Grant Program along with updating the Williamson Road Hollins Village Design Guidelines, planning for gateway and streetscape improvements and supporting transportation improvements such as van service and bicycle lanes.

4.1 Future Land Use Changes

The future land use designations in the Hollins Study Area were last modified during the 1998 Comprehensive Plan rewrite. Several changes have occurred since this time including new commercial developments and demolition and redevelopment of several commercial structures. With an ideal location just off of Interstate 81 and aging structures, the Hollins area is again poised for substantial new development and redevelopment. The Future Land Use Map should be updated to account for new development already constructed as well as for anticipated proposed redevelopment of key parcels. The following Future Land Use Map scenarios propose such changes.

4.1.0 Current Future Land Use Map / Scenario 1

As the Future Land Use Map exists today, half of the Hollins Study Area is designated Neighborhood Conservation, almost one-third is labeled Principal Industrial, 16 percent is identified as Core and four percent is classified as Transition.

| Table 4.01 Hollins Study Area Future Land Use Scenario 1 | | |
|--|---------|------------|
| Future Land Use | Acreage | Percentage |
| Neighborhood Conservation | 336.02 | 50% |
| Principal Industrial | 194.30 | 29% |
| Core | 110.02 | 16% |
| Transition | 28.08 | 4% |
| Total | 668.42 | 100% |

The first Future Land Use Scenario does not propose any changes to the existing future land use designations. See Map 36, Hollins Area Plan Future Land Use Scenario 1 in Appendix A for more information.

4.1.1 Future Land Use Scenario 2

The second Future Land Use Scenario incorporates basic changes needed to update the future land use designations according to the established uses on the ground as well as the underlying zoning. See Map 37, Hollins Study Area Future Land Use Scenario 2 in Appendix A for more information.

The proposed future land use modifications include:

- Changing the main Hollins University parcel (zoned C-1 Office) and other small parcels near the Botetourt County line (zoned R-2 Medium Density Residential) owned by Hollins University from Neighborhood Conservation to University, a new proposed future land use designation:

A future land use area that would guide a mix of educational, institutional, limited commercial, recreational, and open space uses related to a college or university campus. University areas are applied to lands owned by Hollins University and

As the ridgelines traverse towards the southwest en route to Montgomery County, many of them are visible in some form from throughout the Study Area. Of the identified peaks, Fort Lewis Church Mountain is the most prominent landmark. Visible from all locations except the Interstate 81 interchange, the majority of its peak is part of the Havens Wildlife Management Area, owned by the Commonwealth of Virginia. With this designation its development is extremely limited which is appropriate as its rugged terrain is not conducive to any significant type of development.

Additional ridges such as Coyner Mountain to the east in Botetourt County are prominently viewed from throughout the Study Area. Again, these sensitive areas can only be protected through cooperative efforts with Botetourt County. To address these areas in addition to those present in Roanoke County, a collaborative and comprehensive plan for viewshed preservation needs to be developed for the entire Roanoke Valley to preserve these views for future generations.

4.5 Gateway and Streetscape Improvements

Gateway and streetscape improvements typically achieve the most positive visual impact and change in a community for the amount of funds spent. Several design aspects can be included and considered for streetscape plans, including:

- Sidewalks
- Crosswalks with Pedestrian Signals
- Improved Road and Pedestrian Lighting
- Underground Utilities
- Bicycle Lanes
- Street Trees
- Landscaped Medians
- Community Signs
- Light Post Banners
- Street Furniture (benches, trash receptacles, etc.)

4.5.0 Pedestrian Facilities and Amenities

Sidewalks

While sidewalks have been constructed along short portions of Williamson Road, sidewalks are needed along the entire length and on both sides of Williamson Road and Peters Creek Road within the Hollins Study Area. Sidewalks are also needed along the western side of Plantation Road. The most immediate need is for sidewalks along the Williamson Road and Peters Creek Road frontage between Hollins University (Campus Drive) and Deer Branch Road. Additionally, these sidewalks could be expanded to create a greater pedestrian network to connect with Walrond Park and the Hollins University segment of the Tinker Creek Greenway. Sidewalks ranked fifth in priority along Williamson and Peters Creek Roads and fourth along Plantation Road in the Hollins Area Plan Community Survey. Over 80 percent of Hollins students and faculty, staff and administration employees surveyed agreed that better sidewalks are needed along Williamson Road.



Graphic 4.09 Dirt Path along Williamson Road

Crosswalks with Pedestrian Signals

Due to the volume of pedestrians from Hollins Manor and Hollins University walking along Williamson Road, the intersection of Williamson and Plantation Roads has the greatest need for a signalized pedestrian crossing. The second priority for a signalized crossing is the intersection of Williamson and Peters Creek Roads. With large residential areas in the immediate vicinity and a significant population of college students, having these amenities are critical in the ability of the residents to have a viable, safe means of traversing the corridor on foot. The Hollins Community Survey results showed that crosswalks with pedestrian signals ranked sixth in priority for Williamson and Peters Creek Roads as well as for Plantation Road. Additionally, over 80 percent of Hollins students and over 90 percent of Hollins faculty, staff and administration employees surveyed responded that better crosswalks are needed along Williamson Road.

Pedestrian Lighting

Pedestrian lighting should be included alongside sidewalks for safety reasons. Nicely designed light poles can also be used to display banners and hang planter baskets. The Hollins University surveys indicated that over 80 percent of students and over 70 percent of faculty, staff and administration employees who walk along Williamson Road contend that better pedestrian lighting is needed.

Utilities

Utility poles are typically located within the right-of-way and can be positioned in direct conflict with proposed sidewalks and landscaping. In the Hollins Area Plan Community Survey, the top streetscaping priority for citizens was undergrounding utilities along Williamson and Peters Creek Roads. Similarly, undergrounding utilities was the second highest requested streetscape priority along Plantation Road.

Other Amenities

Other types of street furniture such as refuse bins, benches and bicycle racks should be considered as part of the streetscape project as well.

4.5.1 Landscaping

Street Trees

Street trees provide shade, relief from heat, environmental and aesthetic benefits. The streetscape plans should provide street trees either between the curb and sidewalk or behind the sidewalk. The Hollins Area Plan Community Survey ranked street trees as the first priority along Plantation Road and the third priority along Williamson and Peters Creek Roads.

Landscaped Medians and Community Signs

Landscaped medians also provide a significant aesthetic benefit for any corridor. The Community Survey ranked landscaped medians fourth and third in priority ranking for Williamson/Peters Creek Roads and Plantation Road. Community identification signs are also important features at locations marking community entrances. These can be placed in landscaped medians. Community signs ranked second for Williamson and Peters Creek Roads and fifth for Plantation Road in the Community Survey.

4.5.2 Road Cross-Sections

As a part of the conceptual streetscape plans, road cross-sections will be designed to show typical road sections for certain locations with the Hollins Study Area.

4.6 Hollins University Segment of the Tinker Creek Greenway

4.6.0 Greenway Construction

The Hollins University portion of the Tinker Creek Greenway is shown in the 2007 Greenways Plan Update. While a rough alignment of the greenway has been identified between Williamson Road and Carvins Cove Reservoir, more definite

Document 13 - Schedule of Implementation Strategies

| Implementation Strategy | Responsible Party(ies) | Timetable | | |
|--|------------------------|-----------|----------|---------|
| | | Tier 1 | Tier 2 | Tier 3 |
| | | 0-5 yrs | 6-10 yrs | 10+ yrs |
| Commercial Matching Grant Program | | | | |
| Revise the Program's criteria | RC | ■ | | |
| Expand the boundaries of the Program | RC | ■ | | |
| Entrance Corridor | | | | |
| Develop and adopt an Entrance Corridor Overlay District | RC | ■ | | |
| Greenways | | | | |
| Construct the shared Hollins University / Roanoke County parking lot for Hollywood's Restaurant and the Greenway | HU, RC | ■ | | |
| Construct Hollins University Segment of Tinker Creek Greenway, Phase I (Williamson Road to I-81) | HU, RC | ■ | | |
| Construct Hollins University Segment of Tinker Creek Greenway, Phase II (I-81 to Carvins Cove) | HU, RC | | ■ | |
| Historic Resources | | | | |
| Include additional buildings on Hollins University on the National Register of Historic Places and the Virginia Landmarks Register | HU, RC, DHR | ■ | ■ | |
| Develop and adopt a Hollins University Historic Overlay District | HU, RC | ■ | | |
| Maintenance Programs | | | | |
| Ensure the maintenance of landscaping and other streetscape improvements throughout the study area | B, HU, PO, RC, VDOT | ■ | ■ | ■ |
| Pedestrian Amenities | | | | |
| Improve the pedestrian crosswalks at Plantation Road and Williamson Road | RC, VDOT | ■ | | |
| Improve the pedestrian crosswalks at Williamson Road and Peters Creek Road | RC, VDOT | ■ | | |
| Improve the pedestrian crosswalks at Williamson Road and Campus Drive | HU, RC, VDOT | ■ | ■ | |
| Streetscape Improvements | | | | |
| Construct and install streetscape improvements (sidewalks, lighting, landscaping, signage, street furniture, etc.) throughout the study area | B, HU, PO, RC, VDOT | ■ | ■ | ■ |
| Transportation Improvements | | | | |
| Incorporate bicycle lanes along Williamson Road and Plantation Road where feasible | RC, VDOT | | ■ | ■ |
| Expand transit opportunities to the study area when and where feasible | RC, HU | ■ | ■ | ■ |
| Viewshed Conservation | | | | |
| Identify critical viewsheds from and within the study area | RC | ■ | | |
| Encourage conservation easements on private lands and acquire scenic easements through grant funding to protect critical viewsheds | RC, PO, HU | ■ | ■ | ■ |

Document 13 - Schedule of Implementation Strategies

Abbreviations:

B – Businesses

DHR – VA Dept of Historic Resources

HU – Hollins University

PO – Property Owners

RC – Roanoke County

VDOT – VA Dept of Transportation