



INTRODUCTION



INTRODUCTION

1.1 Overview

 The Roanoke County 200 Plan (200 Plan) is intended to serve as the framework for the County, its citizens, business owners, and the development community to guide growth and development for the next 15 years. The 200 Plan is an update to the existing 2005 Community Plan and its subsequent amendments. This chapter provides an overview of the benefits of developing a comprehensive plan for the County, summarizes the unique content of the plan and its relationship to other County planning documents, and gives an outline of the planning and approval process.

1.2 The Comprehensive Plan

What is a Comprehensive Plan?

 A comprehensive plan, also known as a comprehensive land use plan or master plan, is a long-range planning document that sets forth a vision for the future of a community and provides guidance on how to achieve that vision. It is a comprehensive plan in the sense that it addresses all aspects of community development, including land use, transportation, housing, economic development, parks and recreation, public facilities, infrastructure and environmental protection.

Comprehensive plans are typically developed by a planning commission or department, with input from the public and stakeholders. The planning process typically involves the following steps:

- 1. Data collection and analysis:** The planning team gathers and analyzes data on the community's existing conditions, including population demographics, economic trends, land use patterns, housing, environmental and cultural resources, community facilities, transportation, and infrastructure.
- 2. Public engagement:** The planning team engages the public to gather their input on the community's vision for the future and their priorities for development.

3. Vision and goals development: Based on the data collection and public engagement, a vision and goals for the community's future are developed.

4. Policy and strategy development: The planning team develops policies and strategies to achieve the community's vision and goals.

5. Plan adoption: The planning commission or department presents the draft comprehensive plan to the governing body for adoption. Once the plan is adopted, it becomes an official policy document for the community.

Comprehensive plans are typically updated every 5 to 10 years to ensure that they remain relevant to the community's changing needs and priorities.

Benefits of Comprehensive Plans

Comprehensive plans offer a number of benefits to communities, including:

- Guiding growth and development:** Comprehensive plans provide a framework for guiding growth and development in a way that is consistent with the community's vision and goals. This can help to avoid haphazard development and promote a more livable and sustainable community.
- Protecting community resources:** Comprehensive plans can help protect the community's natural and cultural resources, such as farmland, forests, wetlands, and historic sites.
- Promoting economic development:** Comprehensive plans can help to promote economic development by creating a favorable environment for businesses to invest and grow.
- Improving quality of life:** Comprehensive plans can help to improve quality of life for residents by promoting safe and accessible neighborhoods, affordable housing, and quality public facilities and services.

The Roanoke County 200 Plan

The Roanoke County 200 Plan (200 Plan) is a major update to the County's existing comprehensive plan, which was last updated in 2005. The 200 Plan name has been coined because the plan represents the community's vision for the future growth and development of the County by the year 2038, when the County will be celebrating its 200th anniversary.

The 200 Plan 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. 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 public. It also provides those in the land use and development process the opportunity to anticipate Board decisions and to actively work in concert with the Plan rather than in conflict with it.

The 200 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.

What's included in the 200 Plan?

The 200 Plan is intended to replace the County's 2005 Comprehensive Plan with a new plan reflecting the current social and economic conditions of the County and providing updated goals and objectives for guiding the growth anticipated over the next 15-20 years. Although it will serve as a replacement, the 200 Plan intentionally incorporates many of the plan elements of the 2005 Plan. This includes providing an updated discussion and engagement process specific to the County's

INTRODUCTION



eleven (11) Community Planning Areas to provide an overview of the values and concerns specific to each area, and incorporating by reference many of the existing component area plans and studies whose implementation over the next 15-20 years is still relevant. The County is making these area plans because each area has unique needs and priorities. The area plans will allow the County to tailor its policies and programs to the specific needs of each area.

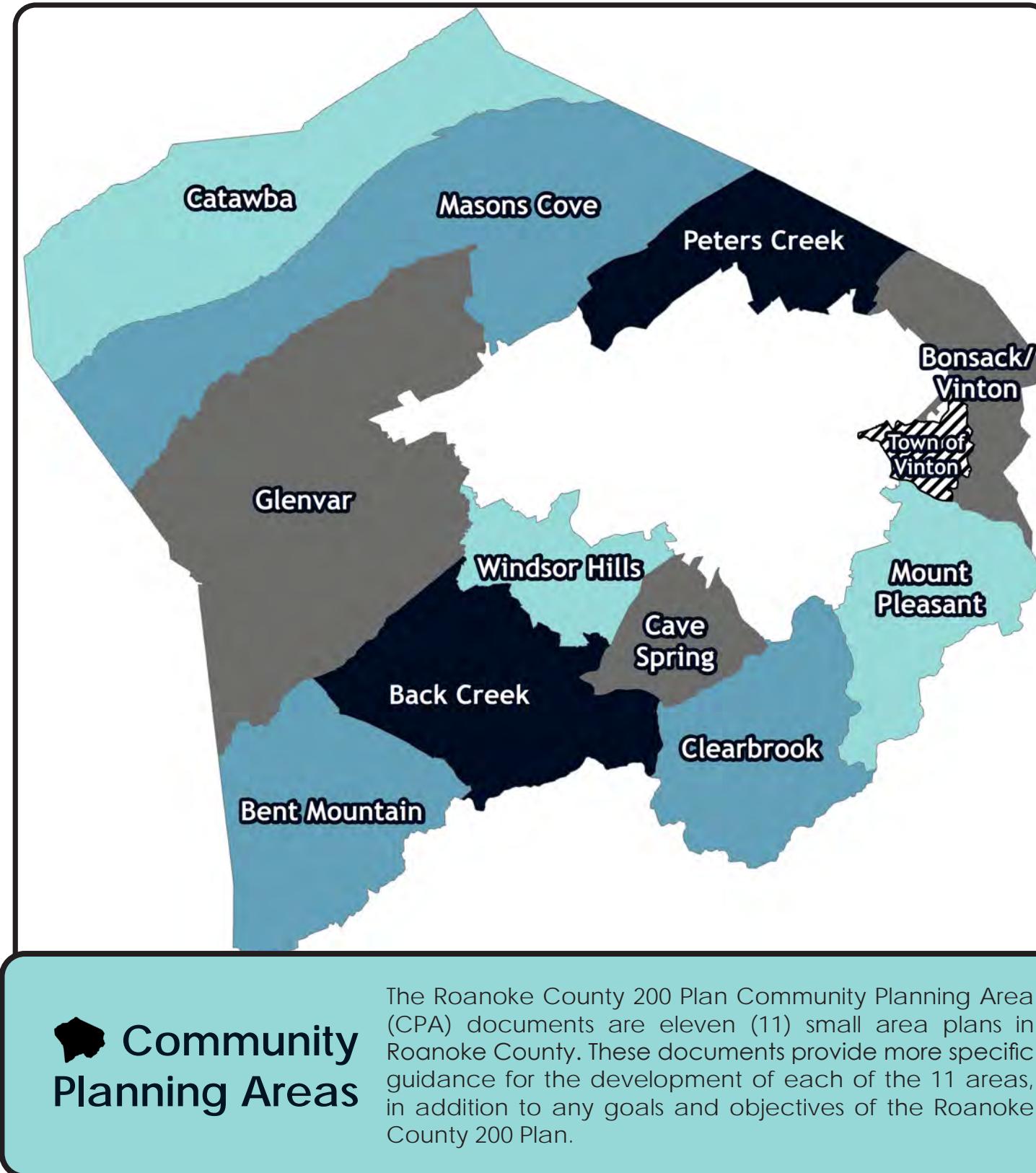
Community Planning Areas

To ensure the concerns and desires of all community members throughout the County's many geographic areas are addressed in the development of the 200 Plan, each of the County's (11) Community Planning Areas (CPAs) have been individually engaged throughout the development of the 200 Plan. While engagement has been based on the goals and objectives of the County-wide 200 Plan, engagement on the CPA level has allowed for the unique needs of each CPA community to be identified. While these summary documents are based on the goals and objectives of the 200 Plan, they provide more detail to better tailor County policies and programs and guide growth and development specific to each individual CPA.

The 11 CPAs found throughout the County are:

- Back Creek
- Bent Mountain
- Bonsack-Vinton
- Catawba
- Cave Spring
- Clearbrook
- Glenvar
- Masons Cove
- Mount Pleasant
- Peters Creek
- Windsor Hills

INTRODUCTION

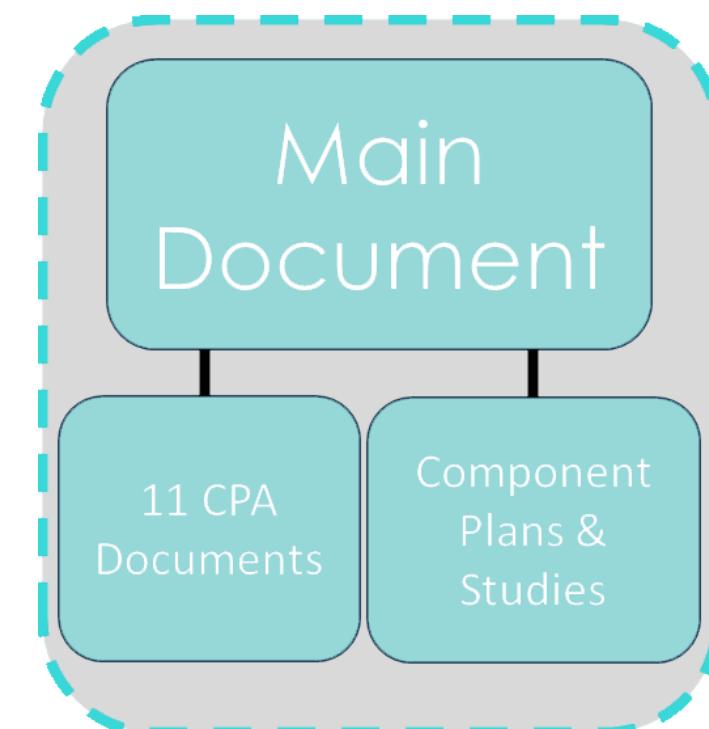


Component Plans and Studies

In addition to CPA documents, the 200 Plan incorporates smaller area plans and studies specific to various focus areas in the County. These small area plans and studies provide site specific design guidelines and implementation actions for individual areas such as neighborhoods or corridors. The following plans and studies are incorporated by reference into the 200 Plan for the purpose of fine-tuning decision-making and guiding public and private investments for specific locations in the County:

- 419 Town Center Plan (2019)
- Colonial Avenue Corridor Study (2000) – Design Guidelines for Development/Redevelopment (only)
- Glenvar Community Plan (2012)
- Hollins Center Plan (2020)
- Oak Grove Center Plan (2021)

Roanoke County 200 Plan



- Roanoke Valley Greenway Plan (2018) - except for the Perimeter Trail (#36) from Havens Wildlife Management Area to the Roanoke River including the greenway along Callahan Branch from the Center for Research and Technology to Valley Tech Park
- Route 220 Corridor Study (2007)
- U.S. Route 460 Land Use and Connectivity Study (2023)

What's not included in the 200 Plan?

Other component area plans and studies exist as part of the current comprehensive plan but will not be incorporated into the 200 Plan because they have either: 1) been implemented and are no longer applicable as guiding documents; 2) have had their goals and objectives incorporated directly into the 200 Plan; or 3) have had their content replaced by a more current planning document. The following plans and studies are intentionally excluded from the 200 Plan:

- Colonial Avenue Corridor Study (2000) – except for the Design Guidelines for Development/Redevelopment
- Community Facilities Map (2008)
- Hollins Area Plan (2008)
- Mount Pleasant Community Plan (2008)
- Route 221 Area Plan (2009)
- Vinton Area Corridors Plan (2010)
- The following previous studies and plans were incorporated into the 2005 and 1998 Community Plans:
 - Route 419 Frontage Development Plan (1987)
 - Roanoke River Corridor Study (1990)
 - Roanoke Valley Regional Stormwater Management Plan (1998)
 - Previous regional greenway plans (1995, 2007)

INTRODUCTION

Relationships Between Different Plans

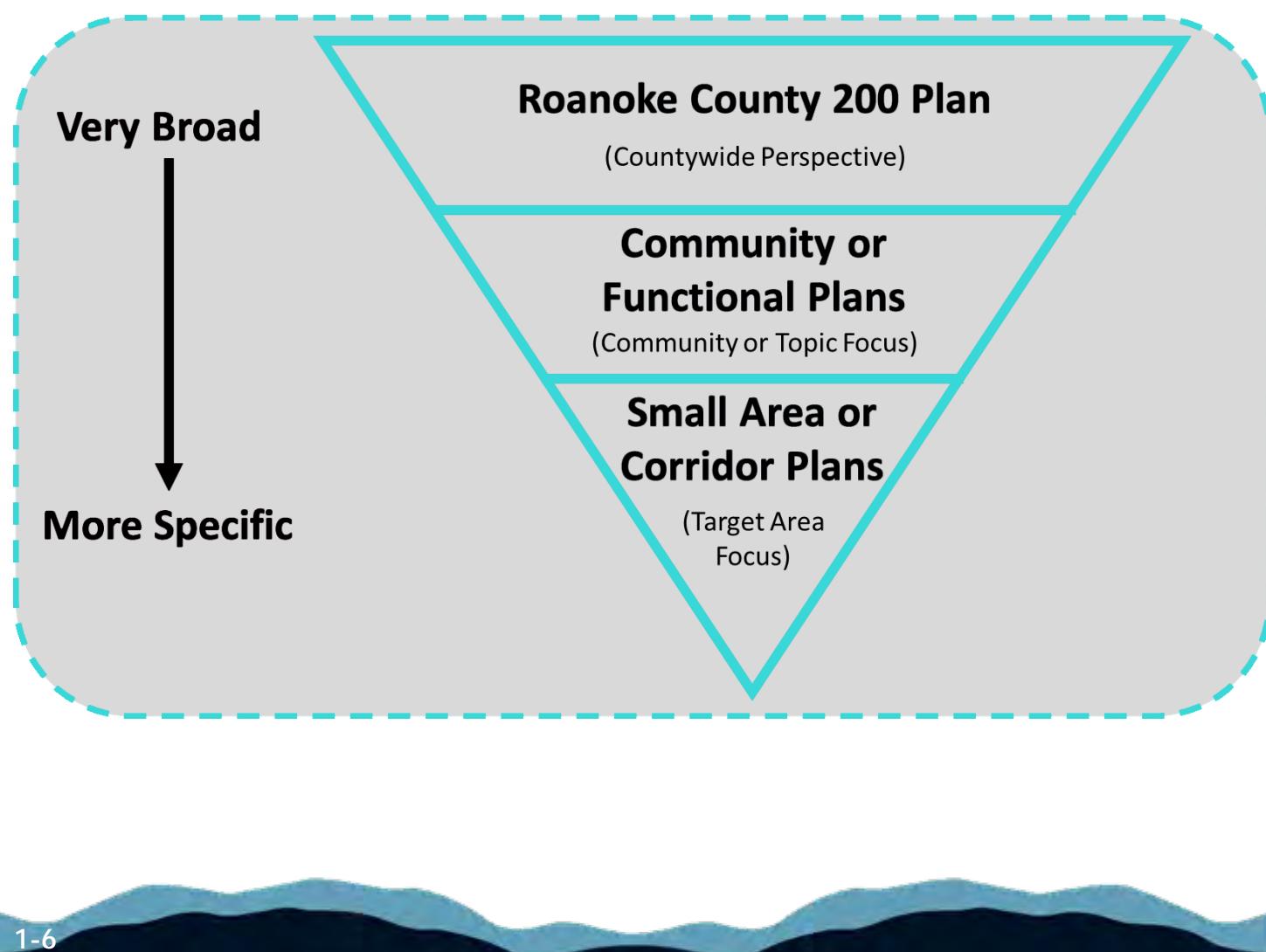
The 200 Plan as a whole serves as a guiding document for informing decision making at a broad scale for the next 15-20 years. It summarizes a shared County-wide vision for growth and development patterns for the next 15-20 years. The overarching 200 Plan vision is intended to be general in nature and does not provide the level of detail required to inform decision making at all scales.

For this reason, the 200 Plan is intended to be used in conjunction with other planning documents that provide more site-specific guidance for certain focus areas throughout the County. The 200 Plan

should be used as the primary guiding document when considering decisions that have community-wide impacts, while the smaller scale component plans and studies of the 200 Plan are meant to enhance decision making by providing specific design guidelines and recommendations at a finer scale.

These additional planning documents are incorporated by reference into the 200 Plan with the intent that they are used to better inform decision-making when considering future land use and development applications as well as the development of future ordinances and policies.

Relationships Between Different Plans



Legal Authority

All jurisdictions within Virginia are required to develop a comprehensive plan in accordance with the Code of Virginia section §15.2-2223, which states that:

"The local planning commission shall prepare and recommend a comprehensive plan for the physical development of the territory within its jurisdiction and every governing body shall adopt a comprehensive plan for the territory under its jurisdiction".

The Roanoke County 200 Plan serves as the state mandated comprehensive plan and will act as a framework for the County and its developers, business owners, and residents to help shape future growth and development in a manner that is consistent with the community's shared vision.

Plan Amendments

In accordance with the Code of Virginia, the comprehensive plan is required to be reviewed at least once every five years to determine whether it is necessary to amend the plan. Although the 200 Plan will serve as a 15-year plan for the County, reviewing the Plan and amending it as necessary is important to ensure it continues to be relevant to the community's needs.

Amendments to the 200 plan will provide the opportunity to analyze and address changes in the community and to update statistical data

INTRODUCTION

and implementation strategies. It will also provide the opportunity to measure progress and make adjustments, where necessary, toward the implementation strategies recommended in the 200 Plan.

Amendments to the 200 Plan may occur through the following ways:

- Request by an applicant to amend the comprehensive plan, typically the future land use map, in concert with a land use application (rezoning);
- Annual review by staff of the comprehensive plan to identify any needed adjustments or inconsistencies;
- Amendments initiated by the Planning Commission or Board of Supervisors; and
- Incorporation of local or regional planning studies as components of the comprehensive plan.

The Planning Commission will review any amendment to the 200 Plan, then hold a public hearing and recommend to the Board of Supervisors whether to consider the amendment. If recommended by the Planning Commission, the Board of Supervisors will hold a public hearing and vote to accept, deny, or modify the amendment.



INTRODUCTION

Comprehensive Plan Review

Section 15.2-2232 of the Code of Virginia states:

... unless a feature is already shown on the adopted master plan or part thereof or is deemed so under subsection D, no street or connection to an existing street, park or other public area, public building or public structure, public utility facility or public service corporation facility other than a railroad facility or an underground natural gas or underground electric distribution facility of a public utility as defined in subdivision (b) of § 56-265.1 within its certificated service territory, whether publicly or privately owned, shall be constructed, established or authorized, unless and until the general location or approximate location, character, and extent thereof has been submitted to and approved by the commission as being substantially in accord with the adopted comprehensive plan or part thereof."

The expansion of a public utility or public facility not identified in the 200 Plan would need to be reviewed by the Planning Commission as being in conformance with the 200 Plan.

1.3 Relationship to Other Documents

 The Roanoke County Comprehensive Plan, Zoning Ordinance, the Roanoke County Community Strategic Plan, and the Capital Improvement Program are all related to each other in that they all play a role in shaping the future of Roanoke County.

Comprehensive Plan

The comprehensive plan is a long-range planning document that sets forth a vision for the future of Roanoke County and provides guidance on how to achieve that vision. It is a comprehensive plan in the sense that it addresses all aspects of community development, including land use, transportation, housing, economic development, parks and recreation, public facilities, and environmental protection.

Zoning Ordinance

The Zoning Ordinance is the primary tool for implementing the comprehensive plan. It regulates the use of land and the type of development that is allowed in different areas of the community. The Zoning Ordinance is based on the comprehensive plan and helps to ensure that new development is consistent with the community's vision and goals.

Community Strategic Plan

The Community Strategic Plan is a shorter-term planning document that identifies the County's top priorities for the next five years. The Community Strategic Plan is based on the comprehensive plan and provides a more specific roadmap for how the County will achieve its vision and goals.

Capital Improvement Program (CIP)

The Capital Improvement Program (CIP) is a long-range plan for public projects, such as parks, fire and rescue stations, libraries, and other infrastructure. The CIP is based on the comprehensive plan and the Community Strategic Plan and helps to ensure that the County has the infrastructure it needs to support its growth and development goals.

How the Four Documents are Related

The four (4) documents are all related to each other in that they all work together to shape the future of Roanoke County. The comprehensive plan is the foundation for all of the other documents. It provides the overall vision and goals for the County. The Zoning Ordinance, Community Strategic Plan, and CIP all implement the comprehensive plan in different ways.

The Zoning Ordinance ensures that new development is consistent with the comprehensive plan's vision and goals. The Community Strategic Plan identifies the county's top priorities for the next five years and provides a more specific roadmap for how the county will achieve its vision and goals. The CIP helps to ensure that the County has the facilities and infrastructure it needs to support its growth and development goals.



INTRODUCTION

Overall, the four documents are all important tools for shaping the future of Roanoke County. By working together, they can create a more livable, sustainable, and prosperous community for all.

1.4 Planning Process



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 comprehensive plan. This outreach has been categorized into four phases. The first phase was to gather data, the second was to gather public input about community issues, the third was to gather public input on the draft of the 200 Plan, and the final phase was to present the drafts at public hearings for approval and implementation.

Phase 1: Gather Data

The process of gathering data to write a comprehensive land use plan can be time-consuming and complex, but it is essential to ensure that the plan is based on sound information. Some of the data that was collected includes information about the population, the economy, the environment, and the facilities and infrastructure in Roanoke County. It comes from a variety of sources, including census data, economic reports, and various studies. The kinds of data needed to write a comprehensive plan vary depending on the specific goals and objectives of the plan. However, types of data that were collected for the Roanoke County 200 Plan include:

- **Demographics:** Data on the population, such as age, race, ethnicity, income, and education level.
- **Economics:** Data on the economy, such as employment, income, and business activity.
- **Environment/Cultural:** Data on the environment, such as air quality, water quality, land resources, and cultural resources.

- **Public Facilities:** Data on community facilities, such as schools, libraries, public safety facilities, and parks.
- **Infrastructure:** Data on infrastructure, such as water and sewer lines, gas lines, and other infrastructure.
- **Transportation:** Data on transportation, such as roads, traffic pattern, transit, and bike and pedestrian facilities.
- **Housing:** Data on housing, such as the number of housing units, the age of housing units, and the cost of housing.
- **Land Use:** Data on land use, such as existing land use, zoning, and future land use.

Stakeholders

When developing a comprehensive plan, it is important to get input from a variety of stakeholders. Stakeholders are individuals or groups who have an interest in the outcome of the planning process. They may be directly affected by the plan, or they may have a financial or other stake in the outcome.

Some of the key stakeholders that were interviewed to provide input for the 200 Plan include:

- Roanoke County Planning Commission and Board of Supervisors
- Roanoke County Economic Development Authority and Department
- Roanoke County Parks, Recreation and Tourism
- Roanoke County Libraries
- Roanoke County Public Schools
- Roanoke County Public Safety
- Roanoke County Communication & Information Technology
- Town of Vinton, City of Roanoke, and City of Salem

INTRODUCTION

- Botetourt County, Franklin County, and Montgomery County
- Community Accessibility & Inclusion Organizations
- Regional Housing Experts
- Roanoke Valley Broadband Authority
- Virginia Department of Transportation
- Valley Metro

Gathering data and interviewing a variety of stakeholders has contributed to the County developing a comprehensive plan that is based on sound information and is intended to meet the needs of the community.

Phase 2: Initial Public Input

In the Fall of 2021, a series of twelve (12) community meetings were held in Roanoke County to gather input from residents on the future of the County. The meetings were held in September, October, and November 2021, and they were attended by 500 residents.

These meetings were a valuable opportunity for residents to share their thoughts and ideas about the future of the County. The meetings were successful in gathering a wide range of input from residents regarding the future of various planning elements. Some of the topics that were brought up by residents included:

- **Economic development:** Residents were interested in discussing how the County can attract new businesses and create jobs.
- **Housing:** Residents were interested in discussing the availability of affordable housing and the need for more housing options.
- **Transportation:** Residents were interested in discussing the need for better public transportation and improvements to roads as well as bicycle and pedestrian accommodations.

- **Environment:** Residents were interested in discussing the need to protect the County's natural and cultural resources.
- **Quality of life:** Residents were interested in discussing the need to improve the County's parks and recreation facilities, its schools, and other public infrastructure.

In addition to the meetings, a survey was conducted online and by mail. It was open for two weeks and received over 289 responses.

After all the input from Phase 2 and the data from Phase 1 was assembled and analyzed, specific and actionable recommendations were drafted to prepare for Phase 3.

Phase 3: Feedback on Draft Recommendations

In the Spring of 2022, a series of seven (7) community meetings were held in Roanoke County to gather input from residents on the future of the County. The meetings were held in March and April 2022, and they were attended by approximately 147 residents. In addition to the meetings, a survey was conducted online and by mail. It was open for two weeks and received 428 responses.

The draft recommendations for the Roanoke County 200 Plan were generally supported by the residents who attended the Spring 2022 Community Meetings. The majority of survey respondents supported the draft recommendations for the Roanoke County 200 Plan.

Responding to the feedback received, staff made edits to the recommendations and began drafting the 200 Plan documents.

Phase 4: Plan Reveal Meetings and Public Hearings

Six (6) planning meetings were held around Roanoke County in Winter 2023 for citizens to review the Draft Roanoke County 200 Plan Countywide Summary Document and Draft 11 Community Planning Area Documents based on

the feedback received throughout the community engagement process. The meetings were held in February and March 2023 and they were attended by approximately 300 residents. In addition to these meetings, two (2) Planning Commission public hearings were held in March and April to receive feedback from residents. A survey was also distributed to allow residents to comment on the draft documents of the 200 Plan. There were eight (8) public hearing comments and 40 responses to the survey.

The draft documents of the Roanoke County 200 Plan were generally supported by the residents who attended the Winter 2023 Community Meetings. Many of the survey respondents supported the drafts as well.

Adoption

After the plan reveal meetings and public hearings in early 2023, drafts of the 200 Plan Summary Document and the 11 Community Planning Area Documents were posted on the County website for public review. Between Fall 2023 and Summer 2024, the final drafts of the main document of the 200 Plan and the 11 CPA documents were finalized in anticipation of a final Planning Commission public hearing.

On August 6, 2024, a final Planning Commission public hearing was held on the final draft of the 200 Plan, which included consideration of the main document and the 11 Community Planning Area Documents. No citizens spoke during the public hearing and the Planning Commission voted (5-0) to recommend approval of the Roanoke County 200 Plan to the Board of Supervisors.

On September 24, 2024, the Board of Supervisors held a public hearing on the adoption of the 200 Plan. No citizens spoke during the public hearing and the Board of Supervisors voted (5-0) to approve through resolution the adoption of the Roanoke County 200 Plan as the County's Comprehensive Plan.

INTRODUCTION

1.5 Document Overview



This document is organized by the themes of the planning process. First, existing conditions are examined through data and community input. Then, the future of the County is discussed through visioning, goals, recommendations, and implementation to change the conditions of the County over the course of the next fifteen (15) years.

Chapters 2 through 7 analyze the existing conditions of the County by topic. Chapter 8 is an analysis of the community input process and feedback from residents. These chapters are listed below:

- Chapter 2: Background
- Chapter 3: Demographics
- Chapter 4: Natural & Cultural Resources
- Chapter 5: Community Facilities
- Chapter 6: Transportation
- Chapter 7: Land Use & Housing
- Chapter 8: Community Engagement

Chapters 9 and 10 attempt to describe the future of Roanoke County. Chapter 9 focuses on visioning and goals. Chapter 10 lists recommendations and implementation strategies to reach that vision by the County's 200th anniversary in 2038. These chapters are listed below:

- Chapter 9: Vision and Goals
- Chapter 10: Recommendations

Additional information is included in the Appendices of the plan.