



SUBMISSION FORM

All submission forms must include the following information. Separate submission forms must be turned in for each eligible program. **Deadline: Friday, April 3, 2026.** Please include this submission form as the first page of your electronic entry. Contact [Gage Harter](#) with any questions.

PROGRAM INFORMATION

County: Roanoke County

Program Title: Roanoke County 200 Plan

Program Category: Community Development, Economic Development, & Land Use

CONTACT INFORMATION

Name: Isaac Henry

Title: Principal Planner

Department: Planning

Telephone: 540-772-2140 Website: www.roanokecountyva.gov/pz

Email: ihenry@roanokecountyva.gov

SIGNATURE OF COUNTY ADMINISTRATOR OR DEPUTY/ASSISTANT COUNTY ADMINISTRATOR

Name: Richard L. Caywood, P.E.

Title: County Administrator

Signature: 

2026 VACo Achievement Award Submission
Community Development, Economic Development, & Land Use
Roanoke County Planning Department
Roanoke County 200 Plan

Executive Summary

The Roanoke County 200 Plan, adopted in September 2024, guides growth through 2038, the County’s bicentennial. It is the first major comprehensive plan update since 2005 and establishes a long-term vision for transportation, community facilities, natural and cultural resources, land use, and housing. It helps leaders anticipate impacts, attract investment, and maximize opportunities, services and quality of life.

In addition to countywide recommendations, the plan includes separate documents for each of the County’s 11 Community Planning Areas (CPAs), offering detailed, localized guidance. Four additional “small area” plans are also components of the Comprehensive Plan, creating a three-tiered framework—Countywide, CPA, and Small Area—that effectively addresses diverse community needs and supports health, safety and welfare.

Developed in-house by the Roanoke County Planning Department with significant public input, the plan demonstrates how localities can reduce costs while improving comprehensive planning quality.

Introduction

The Roanoke County 200 Plan, adopted in September 2024, is the County’s new comprehensive plan guiding growth through 2038, its bicentennial. It is the first major update since 2005 and sets a long-term vision for transportation, community facilities, natural and cultural resources, and land use and housing.

Beyond countywide recommendations, the plan includes separate documents for each of the County’s 11 Community Planning Areas, providing localized analysis and tailored guidance. Developed in-house with substantial public input, it helps leaders anticipate long-term impacts, attract investment, and enhance opportunities, services and quality of life.

Problem, Challenge, or Situation Faced by the Locality

Before adoption of the Roanoke County 200 Plan, the prior comprehensive plan—the 2005 Roanoke County Community Plan, with language dating to 1998—had become outdated amid changing population trends, economic conditions, and development pressures. Its recommendations were vague, which may

have been appropriate then, but after the 2009 Great Recession the County became more reliant on federal funding, which favors projects explicitly identified in adopted plans. The Roanoke County 200 Plan includes numerous specific project recommendations, improving funding competitiveness.

The 2005 plan was also not designed for public consumption, consisting almost entirely of text with few graphics, whereas the Roanoke County 200 Plan uses photographs and clear visuals to communicate with residents. It further brings the County into compliance with Code of Virginia Sec. 15.2-2223(E) requiring consideration of broadband infrastructure—absent from the earlier plan due to limited high-speed internet at the time. Finally, under Sec. 15.2-2230, comprehensive plans must be reviewed at least every five years; only minor revisions were made between 2005 and 2020, leaving a major update necessary to maintain relevance and effectiveness.

How the Program Fulfilled the Awards Criteria

Innovation

The Roanoke County 200 Plan includes a countywide document and separate plans for 11 Community Planning Areas (CPAs), providing detailed, localized goals tailored to each community. This level of granularity — especially for an in-house effort — is uncommon. Across the 12 documents are 196 maps and 143 charts designed for clarity and accessibility, allowing readers to understand much of the County by skimming visuals alone. These graphics, created for communication rather than complexity, have been praised by social media experts and planning academics.

The Comprehensive Plan also incorporates four adopted “small area” plans: the 419 Town Center Plan (2019), Hollins Center Plan (2020), Oak Grove Center Plan (2021), and Route 460 Land Use and Connectivity Study (2023). In 2025, Roanoke County began a fifth small area planning effort, the Glenvar Center Plan, which is anticipated to be completed in 2026. These focus on smaller geographies with strong commercial potential and transportation needs, offering land use and mobility recommendations to enhance economic activity, livability and walkability. They also served as pilot projects shaping the Roanoke County 200 Plan’s process, structure, and visual approach. Two of the small area plans were consultant-assisted and two were produced entirely in-house.

Building on these efforts, the Roanoke County 200 Plan establishes a consistent, legible aesthetic across all planning documents, improving usability and public understanding while fostering transparency and trust. Together, the countywide plan, CPA plans, and small area plans create a three-tiered framework—Countywide, CPA, and Small Area—balancing big-picture goals with localized needs and targeted investment opportunities. With adoption of the Roanoke County 200 Plan in 2024 and inclusion of the small area plans, Roanoke County set a new standard for both detail and clarity in comprehensive planning in Virginia.

Partnership or Collaboration

The Roanoke County 200 Plan planning process lasted just over four years, from August 2020 to September 2024, and was overseen by three separate Principal Planners whose communication over the four years ensured smooth leadership transitions. Three rounds of outreach (Fall 2021, Spring 2022, Winter 2023) included 25 community meetings with 934 attendees and two surveys generating 717 responses. Twenty-six stakeholder groups—elected officials, County departments, neighboring jurisdictions, state agencies, regional bodies, nonprofits, and subject matter experts—were also engaged.

Use of Community Planning Areas and incorporation of small area plans expanded participation. Outreach for the 419 Town Center, Hollins Center, Oak Grove Center, and Route 460 plans added 23 meetings with about 1,700 attendees, 10 surveys with roughly 2,000 responses, and consultation with 24 stakeholder groups. In total, Comprehensive Plan outreach included 48 meetings with about 2,600 participants, 12 surveys with more than 2,700 responses, and engagement with 50 stakeholder groups—an unusually high level of public input that strengthened the final plans.

Model for Other Localities

The Roanoke County 200 Plan sets a new standard for in-house comprehensive planning in Virginia. Producing a comprehensive plan internally is uncommon, and Roanoke County went further by creating detailed plans for each subarea using only staff labor. No consultants or subcontractors were involved; every map, chart, figure, and document was produced by County planners. This not only required significant staff effort but also saved hundreds of thousands of dollars in consultant fees.

The in-house approach also improved the quality of the final comprehensive plan. The plan was created by staff who work daily on local planning issues, rather than consultants simultaneously learning basic facts about the jurisdiction while drafting a regulatory document. As a result, the Roanoke County 200 Plan offers a model for other Virginia localities to reduce costs while improving outcomes through internal expertise.

How the Program Was Carried Out

Development of the Roanoke County 200 Plan spanned just over four years, from August 2020 to September 2024. The first year focused on data collection and research, followed by three phases of public outreach between late 2021 and early 2023. From mid-2023 to adoption, the plan was assembled and finalized. Adopted September 24, 2024, it is the first major update since 2005 and serves as a 15-year guide through the County's 2038 bicentennial. Chapter 9 outlines a community vision with 36 objectives across key policy areas, while Chapter 10 provides specific recommendations for natural and cultural resources, community facilities, transportation, land use, and housing.

To address diverse needs, the plan includes separate documents for each of 11 Community Planning Areas, offering localized analysis and project recommendations. Together, the countywide and CPA documents total 479 pages (excluding appendices) and balance detail with accessibility. The entire plan was produced in-house by the Roanoke County Planning Department, requiring costs for staff, software, outreach, venues, and printing—expenses that would also apply to consultant-led efforts, which typically add \$100,000 to \$1 million in fees.

Overall, the Roanoke County 200 Plan provides a roadmap for the next 15 years, guiding development, supporting transportation funding, and helping maximize benefits while minimizing impacts. By doing so, it aims to protect health, safety, and welfare and position Roanoke County for its highest quality of life by 2038.

Program Results

With its adoption by the Board of Supervisors in September 2024, the Roanoke County 200 Plan entered its implementation phase, which is intended to continue through the County's bicentennial anniversary in 2038. Since the adoption of the Roanoke County 200 Plan eighteen months ago, Roanoke County has seen the following direct, quantifiable impacts:

- On December 10, 2024, the new YMCA at Tanglewood Mall opened. This 47,000-square-foot facility represented a \$2 million investment and has created over 100 new jobs.
- On February 25, 2025, the Roanoke County Board of Supervisors adopted a Safe Streets and Roads for All Comprehensive Safety Action Plan, with recommendations for safety improvements to prevent deaths and serious injuries for all roadway users, including pedestrians, bicyclists, motorists, commercial vehicle operators, transit riders and micromobility users.
- In February 2025, the Glenvar Center Plan was announced, which represents the first activity center planning effort recommended by the Roanoke County 200 Plan to be undertaken. As of March 2026, the Glenvar Center Plan is nearing completion.
- In early 2025, Roanoke County initiated a new social media outreach strategy utilizing staff across all departments to make creative, fun, engaging short videos to improve community engagement. This new strategy has led to a 90% increase in engagement with Roanoke County's online content over a one-year span.
- In March 2025, the Virginia Department of Transportation initiated a Project Pipeline Study at Roanoke County's request, to study potential bicycle, pedestrian and roadway improvements for Route 419 between Starkey Road and Springwood Park Drive. Recommendations from this study, which is anticipated to be completed in Summer 2026, will likely be developed into SMART SCALE Round 7 applications.
- In April 2025, Roanoke County hired RKG Associates to carry out a Housing Market Analysis Study to identify housing needs in the County and inform program, policy, and development recommendations for meeting those needs. The Study is anticipated to be completed in 2026.

- In April 2025, construction began on a new-to-market Publix supermarket in Cave Spring. The store, which is anticipated to open in 2026 or 2027, will be over 50,000 square feet and will employ approximately 130 people.
- In July 2025, the Roanoke region hosted the USA Cycling Endurance Mountain Bike National Championships, including events in Roanoke County. This event will return in July 2026.
- In August 2025, Roanoke County completed the purchase of 1,100-acre Explore Park, which is directly connected to the Blue Ridge Parkway via the Roanoke River Parkway, from the Virginia Recreational Facilities Authority. Explore Park attracts over 300,000 visitors annually.
- In September 2025, Roanoke County began the process of identifying outdated proffer conditions on properties for potential removal, to promote redevelopment and expedite the development process. As of March 2026, approximately 300 parcels without outdated proffer conditions have been identified, with 75 parcels identified as priorities for proffer removal. Four property owners have been contacted to initiate the proffer removal process. This process is ongoing and will continue as long as there are parcels with outdated proffer conditions whose owners are interested in having these conditions removed.
- In October 2025, Roanoke County began investigating potential traffic calming solutions for Huntridge Road. Two new sets of permanent speed boards will be installed on Huntridge Road in 2026.
- On November 6, 2025, Roanoke County held a ribbon cutting to mark the opening of the West Roanoke River Greenway Phase 1, a new 0.6-mile section of the Roanoke River Greenway that straddles the Roanoke County-Salem line just east of Green Hill Park.
- On November 18, 2025, the Board of Supervisors adopted the West Roanoke River Greenway Feasibility Study, which identifies potentially viable routes for the Roanoke River Greenway in western Roanoke County between Green Hill Park and Montgomery County.

- In late 2025, construction was completed on the East Roanoke River Greenway between the Blue Ridge Parkway and Explore Park. A ribbon cutting will be held in May 2026 to mark the opening of this new 3.4-mile section of the Roanoke River Greenway.
- In 2025, Roanoke County saw a total of over \$40 million in new business investment.
- Roanoke County is currently seeking Surface Transportation Block Grant/Carbon Reduction Program funding to design its two remaining unconstructed segments of the Roanoke River Greenway between Green Hill Park and Explore Park.
- Construction on the new 123,000-square-foot Roanoke County Career & Technology Center is nearing completion and it is anticipated that the Center will open in early 2027.
- The Roanoke region is currently outpacing many larger metro areas, including Northern Virginia, in rates of employment growth and in-migration.
- The Roanoke County 200 Plan was awarded a 2025 NACo Achievement Award in the Planning category.

Roanoke County also aggressively publicized the planning effort from its kickoff in 2020 until adoption in September 2024, and was able to leverage the planning effort and draft recommendations of the 200 Plan to bring about the following successes prior to adoption:

- Roanoke County saw over \$110 million in new business investment across 2023 and 2024.
- Between 2020 and 2024, Roanoke County was awarded over \$80 million in state and federal funding for transportation projects.
- Between 2021 and 2024, Roanoke County received over \$6.5 million in state and private funding to expand broadband availability in rural areas, bringing high-speed internet access to over 1,400 previously unserved addresses.
- According to the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, approximately half of Virginia's net manufacturing growth between 2019 and 2023 occurred in the Roanoke region.