



# Franklin Road/ Colonial Avenue

AREA PLAN

Adopted by City Council  
June 21, 2004

ROANOKE  
VIRGINIA



vision 2001  
2020

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**Planning Building & Development**

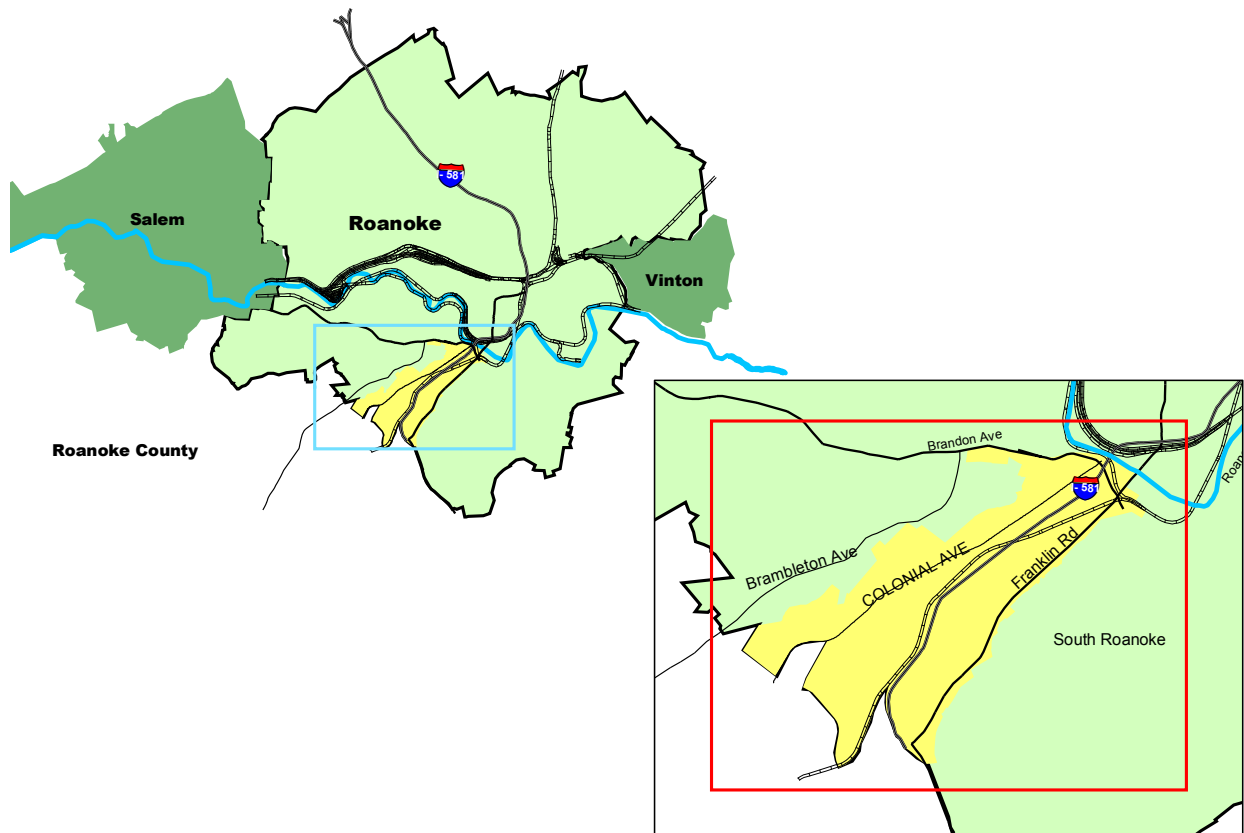


# Introduction

Franklin Road and Colonial Avenue are two of Roanoke's busiest streets. Both corridors are vital to the economic health of the City and the entire Roanoke Valley. In addition, Virginia Western Community College on Colonial Avenue is an important educational asset to the region.

Because of the relationship of these corridors and the development they support, it is logical that they be evaluated together. While these major arterial streets and the adjoining commercial development are the dominant features of the landscape, several established neighborhoods are also included in the plan. These include the subdivisions of Colonial Heights, Fralin Park, and Jefferson Hills off of Colonial Avenue; and a small neighborhood on Beechwood Drive, Gardens and Roberts Roads, the Southwood development and several apartment complexes off of Franklin Road.

Since this land was annexed, commercial development gradually emerged and has grown along Franklin Road and in Towers Shopping Center. More recently, new subdivisions have been developed with single-family homes. Most of the houses are tucked away from the busy commercial corridors, making this an area of economic activity and stable residential neighborhoods.



**Priority Initiatives**

The plan proposes four priority initiatives:

**Community Design**

- Define the edges of commercial centers, and commercial zoning and development on Colonial Avenue and Franklin Road to ensure that residential areas are preserved and development of existing commercial sites is maximized.

**Residential Development**

- Maintain current residential densities in the update of the zoning ordinance per the future land use map

**Economic Development**

- Focus small- to medium-sized commercial development in concentrated centers

**Infrastructure**

- Improve the flow of traffic in the vicinity of Virginia Western Community College (VWCC) and Towers Shopping Center, including Wonju Street, Brandon and Colonial Avenues and all exit/entrance ramps. This improvement is the highest priority of this plan.
- Limit curb, gutter and sidewalk improvements to arterial streets and new developments

View from Southwood



## People

The overall population of the area has remained steady in recent years. The number of households increased between 1990 and 2000, while there was a decrease in the average household size. This is a national demographic trend.

The area has become slightly more racially diverse in recent years, yet continues to be predominantly white. While white residents comprise 91% of the population, the number of black residents has increased 67% since the 1990 Census. The decrease in the number of "other race" residents from the 1990 Census is probably explained by the Census Bureau adding a new "two or more races" category to the 2000 Census.

The age distribution of the area's population has seen some noteworthy changes over the last decade. The only increases were in people 35 years of age and older. The number of children and teenagers decreased, as did the number of younger adults (ages 20 - 34). As Table 2 shows, the area has proportionally less children and teenagers and more senior citizens when compared to the age distribution citywide. This may indicate an aging population or an influx of senior citizens and middle-aged people who don't have children.

	<b>1990</b>	<b>2000</b>	<b>Percentage Change</b>
Total Population	2,816	2,860	2%
Households	1,444	1,556	8%
White	2,684	2,630	-2%
Black	69	135	96%
Other Races & Multiracial	63	95	51%
Two or more races	n/a	28	n/a
0-19 Years Old	454	418	-8%
20-34 Years Old	663	544	-18%
35-64 Years Old	927	1,106	19 %
65 Years and Over	772	792	3%

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 1990 and 2000 Census



Virginia Western Community College, located on Colonial Avenue, has over 8,000 students.

**Table 2. Population Age Distribution: Franklin/Colonial Area and Citywide**

Age	Wasena		City of Roanoke	
	Persons	Percentage	Persons	Percentage
0-19	418	14%	23,455	25%
20-34	544	19%	20,146	21%
35-64	1,106	39%	35,750	38%
65 and over	792	28%	15,560	16%
Total	1,633	100%	94,911	100%

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2000 Census

The area has a greater percentage of residents who've obtained higher education degrees than the City as a whole. The percentage of residents with a graduate or professional degree is over twice that of the City. While 13% of residents 25 years of age and older don't have a high school diploma, this is substantially lower than the citywide average of 24%.



**Table 3. Educational Attainment, 25 Years of Age and over**

Education Level	Total	Percentage	City of Roanoke Avg.
Less than High School			24%
High School	248	11%	30%
Some College	501	22%	21%
Associate's Degree	557	25%	6%
Bachelor's Degree	107	5%	12%
Graduate or Professional	475	21%	7%
Total	365	16%	100%
	2,253	100%	

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2000 Census

**Table 4. Household Income in 1999**

Income Bracket	Franklin/Colonial		City of Roanoke Avg.
	No. Households	Average	
\$0 - \$14,999	287	18%	22.7%
\$15,000 - \$24,999	284	18%	17.8%
\$25,000 - \$34,999	260	17%	16.1%
\$35,000 - \$49,999	226	14%	17.1%
\$50,000 - \$99,999	383	25%	21.3%
\$100,000 +	126	8%	5.0%
Total	1,566	100%	100%

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, Census 2000 Summary File 3

(Data based on Sample)

The distribution of income in the area is comparable to that of the City as a whole. In addition, the average household income in the area is \$31,406, slightly above the citywide average.

## Neighborhood Organization

There are no recognized neighborhood organizations in the area. Recently, a neighborhood organization formed in the Pasley Avenue area in the Fralin Park subdivision. The Grandin Court Civic League, the Greater Raleigh Court Civic League, the Wasena Neighborhood Forum, and Neighbors in South Roanoke represent surrounding neighborhoods.



Neighborhood workshop at James Madison School

# Community Design



House on Creston Avenue

This area is overwhelmingly suburban in character. The majority of development occurred after World War II. Suburban development is characterized by an orientation to the automobile, wide streets that enable higher speeds, subdivisions of large single-family houses with large front, back, and side yards, and shopping centers and strip commercial establishments with large parking lots in front.

The City annexed land from Roanoke County that was already developed or subdivided with single-family houses on large lots. The Colonial Heights, Fralin Park, and Jefferson Hills neighborhoods all had some development prior to annexation.

Virginia Western Community College was founded in 1966 and continues to grow. The campus spans over 69 acres on both sides of Colonial Avenue. A skywalk over Colonial links the north and south campuses. The north campus has six buildings, six parking lots, and two tennis courts. The south campus has nine buildings, six parking lots, and also includes the Community Arboretum - a public botanical garden on the corner of Colonial Avenue and Winding Way Road. Recently, the college received funding from the Friendship Group, Lewis-Gale Medical Center, and Richfield Retirement Community to expand programs and enrollment in health care fields. The college is currently constructing its College Services Building on the southern side of Colonial Avenue, which will receive and house various supplies and the offices of the campus police.



Colonial Avenue at Virginia Western

Much of the surrounding neighborhoods were already developed prior to the college's development, however a great deal of growth in the City and in Southwest Roanoke County has occurred since then. Whereas the campus was designed and built in a suburban layout, it has gradually become more urban with more buildings and greater volumes of traffic. Colonial Avenue separates the two campuses, but the streetscape is not well suited to pedestrian or bicycle traffic. Improvements to Colonial Avenue should address its impact on Virginia Western and better integrate the streetscape with the campus. Potential improvements to the streetscape of Colonial Avenue through Virginia Western include:

- A landscaped center median through portions of Colonial Avenue where there are no turns
- A stamped or raised crosswalk at the intersection of Colonial Avenue and McNeil Drive
- A roundabout on Colonial Avenue at Winding Way Road



View atop Strother Road

While a couple of Virginia Western's buildings are close to Colonial Avenue, others are set back with large parking lots in the front. Along most of Colonial Avenue, parking lots are the dominant feature of the campus. Future campus





House on Winding Way Road

development on Colonial Avenue should be oriented toward the street with parking to the rear or side. The College Services Building is being constructed in this fashion, and should diminish the visual impact of the parking lots to some degree. Given the growth of the college, a parking garage could add to the campus' appearance and increase the number of parking spaces.

Franklin Road is a four-lane arterial commercial corridor. Most buildings are set back from the street with parking lots in the front, accessed by wide curb cuts. There are a few exceptions on the southern side where some buildings are located at the sidewalk with no front yard. Vision 2001-2020 recommends that commercial corridors such as Franklin Road feature development with buildings on or close to the property line in front, with parking to the rear or side. This development pattern is especially appropriate for this corridor as rocky terrain tends to limit the depth of parking lots.

The terrain on both sides of Franklin Road is hilly. There are several residential developments off of the northern side of Franklin Road that are tucked away and perched above the commercial establishments on the street. These include newer single-family subdivisions and a few apartment complexes. Duke of Gloucester Street provides access to several single-family subdivisions that have been developed since the late 1990s, such as Southwood and Kingsbury Court. At the time of the planning process, development of additional single-family units was underway in this neighborhood. Many of the houses in these subdivisions were

built out to the lot line and are thus very close to one another. Most are one-story, brick veneer, and characterized by a protruding garage on the front that is integrated into the main mass of the structure.

Colonial Avenue is also very hilly west of Virginia Western Community College. This stretch of the street is winding with two lanes through predominantly single-family residential neighborhoods. This part of Colonial Avenue maintains a suburban character until the intersection with Ogden Road and the corporate limits where there are several apartment complexes. Houses tend to be on larger lots with substantial yard space and vegetation.



Kingsbury Lane



House on Forest Road

From Virginia Western east to Brandon Avenue, Colonial Avenue has four lanes and is consistently busy during, and between, peak hours. This stretch of the street lacks curb, gutter and sidewalk, and is unsafe for pedestrians. Its wide profile, especially at VWCC is notorious for speeding traffic, despite heavy pedestrian activity. East of VWCC, no area is allotted for pedestrian traffic. Many houses in the neighborhood off of the northern side of Colonial Avenue lie beneath the grade of the street. This neighborhood is dominated by one-story Ranch and Cottage style houses, but also has a few apartment buildings near Towers Shopping Center.



Intersection of Forest and Winding Way Roads

South of Virginia Western off of Colonial Avenue there are several subdivisions of single-family houses. Jefferson Hills is accessed via Winding Way Road adjacent to Virginia Western. The neighborhood's layout, with its winding streets (hence, Winding Way Road) and abundance of trees, gives it an almost rural character and isolates it from nearby busy areas. The undulating terrain and wooded landscape serve as natural buffers from I-581, Franklin Road and Colonial Avenue. Lots in Jefferson Hills are large—most are over half an acre—and the architecture reflects the styles of the subdivision's origin in the 1950s. The suburban one-story Ranch is the most common architectural style, and brick veneer is the dominant exterior finish.

Further south on the northern side of Colonial Avenue are several other predominantly single-family subdivisions off of Robyn, Wright, and Hartland Roads, and Pasley Avenue. Lots are large in these subdivisions; few are less than 10,000 square feet.



Williamsburg Manor Apartments

## Zoning and Land Use



Towers Shopping Center on Colonial Avenue



Edge of Commercial development off of Franklin Road



The title of this plan indicates the most prominent land use patterns of this area. The area of study is largely characterized by the wide commercial corridor of Franklin Road, and the Colonial Avenue corridor that extends southwest from Towers Shopping Center. These two streets run nearly parallel to one another and provide access to all the development in the area.

The zoning and land use can be summarized into four general areas:

- Franklin Road Commercial Corridor - with the exception of the vacant land in the 32-3400 blocks, Franklin Road is a commercial corridor. There are some offices and a mix of commercial uses, including restaurants, gas stations, specialty retail, and car lots.
- Scattered residential off of Franklin Road - subdivisions off of Franklin Road accessed via Roberts Road and Duke of Gloucester Street have a number of new single-family housing units. The latter also features a subdivision with several multifamily units. Several apartment buildings are off of Townside Road.
- Towers Shopping Center and the commercial/residential mix in the vicinity - Towers is a major shopping destination in the City and has generated commercial development on the northeastern end of Colonial Avenue. A small neighborhood lies just to the southwest of the shopping center and there is a mix of residential and commercial along this section of Colonial Avenue.
- Virginia Western Community College and the Jefferson Hills neighborhood to the southwest - southwest of the commercial development on Colonial Avenue, the campuses of Virginia Western and James Madison Middle School represent a transition in the development pattern. Colonial Avenue is void of any commercial development southwest of the 2700 block, and beyond Virginia Western is Jefferson Hills and other single-family neighborhoods with homes on both sides of Colonial Avenue and abutting the railroad tracks.

There are some large undeveloped parcels in the area. Department of Real Estate Valuation data lists 163 properties as vacant, defined by a lack of a building. While some of these properties are parking lots or additional yard space to an adjoining property, there are several large swaths of untouched forest. Most of these large parcels pose challenges to development due to topography, natural barriers and limited access. Examples of such lots are:

- Between the railroad tracks and Franklin Road - several large parcels surround the new subdivisions currently being built upon. Several of these parcels are zoned RPUD and could be developed with a variety of housing units.

Montessori School on Colonial Avenue, Colonial Green site to the rear



Intersection of Pasley Avenue and Bannister Street

- South side of Colonial Avenue - two parcels totaling over 46 acres lie side by side on the southern side of Colonial Avenue just east of the corporate line. The floodway runs through one of these parcels, limiting its development potential. However, there is a substantial amount of land for residential development.
- North side of Colonial Avenue - a City-owned parcel of over 29 acres just east of the corporate line. At present, a proposal for a mixed residential development is being evaluated for this site.

At the time of the planning process, construction of new housing units was underway on a number of lots, most notably in the subdivisions off of Duke of Gloucester Street; Kingsbury Lane and King James Street.



Kingsbury Lane

The suburban development pattern of the area was encouraged by past zoning policies, which required a large number of parking spaces, small lot coverage ratios, and large setback distances from streets. This type of development resulted in unused parking spaces and buildings on lots with large amounts of unused land. In addition, zoning patterns encouraged strip development along Franklin Road. The development pattern of the area today still reflects this suburban orientation.

Over the years, development has crept farther from downtown and the core of the City. Once isolated neighborhoods are now close to commercial establishments with neon signs and street lights. While the vast majority of the houses in the area do not abut commercial development, commercial zoning districts need to be clearly delineated and their boundaries maintained to prevent further encroachment upon residential areas.

**Community Design Issues**

- Lack of integration between different uses and neighborhoods
- Encroachment of commercial uses into neighborhoods
- Limited green/open space in some areas
- Overabundance of underused pavement



House on Winding Way Road



# Residential Development

This area has a stable housing stock with some of the newest construction in the City. There are rarely any building code enforcement issues in the neighborhood and homeownership is high among single-family homes. Due to the prominence of commercial development, several neighborhoods are tucked away from Franklin Road and Colonial Avenue and are likely unknown to newer residents of the City.

Most of the homes in this area were built after World War II, with great spurts in the 1940s and 1950s. By the 1960s housing development had leveled off, while there has been a recent surge in building in the last few years. Since 2000, an average of over 16 single-family homes a year has been built. Large parcels of vacant, residentially zoned land and a strong market in the area will likely attract more development.



City Manager Darlene Burcham speaks at an open house for the Southwood development

**Table 5. Housing**

Year: (Total Units)	1990 (818)	2000 (808)	Percentage Change	Roanoke Pct. Change
Occupied Housing				
Units	1,444	1,556	8%	2%
Vacant Housing				
Units	127	70	-45%	-3%
Vacancy Rate	8%	4%	-4%	-1%
Owner Occupied	668	700	-1%	2%
Renter Occupied	776	856	3%	3%

Source: U.S. Census Bureau: 1990 Census, 2000 Census

Recent development has brought higher end single-family housing. Southwood is a mixed density planned community with private roads, perched atop a knoll between Franklin Road and Route 220. Southwood is in a district zoned RPUD, Residential Planned Unit Development. The purpose of the RPUD is to provide design flexibility to encourage orderly development of large sites that maximize the land more than other residential zoning categories. RPUD developments tend to be denser than most single-family subdivisions. At the time of the planning process, development of more homes was underway in Somercroft Court and Kingsbury Court, subdivisions within the RPUD adjacent to Southwood.



Finished houses in Southwood

**Table 6. Single-family Construction, 1900 - present**

Years	1900-45	1946-60	1961-99	2000-03
No. Units	26	226	154	65

Source: City of Roanoke, Real Estate Valuation



Residents look at proposed plans for Colonial Green

There are a few major vacant sites in the area that are zoned for residential use. Two vacant parcels off of the southern side of Colonial Avenue total over 46 acres. Murray Run and the floodway flow through the westernmost parcel. A portion of this parcel is in the floodplain, and a small portion of the eastern parcel is as well. The westernmost parcel was rezoned in 1983 to RM-2, Residential Multi-Family Medium Density, to allow for the development of 170 townhouses. Although that development never came to fruition, State law mandates that the proffered rezoning—conditions that a developer agrees to abide by when the property is rezoned—is valid until the owner requests, and City Council approves, that they be repealed or amended.

The City owns a 29-acre parcel of mostly vacant land on the northern side of Colonial Avenue at the corporate limits. At present the New Vista Montessori School is located on this parcel. This property is suited for mixed-density residential development as well as limited commercial elements. Currently, a proposal is being evaluated for the development of this site, called *Colonial Green*.

The Williamsburg Manor apartment complex off of Duke of Gloucester Street is just to the south of the RPUD. This complex is comprised primarily of duplexes, and is well landscaped and buffered from Route 220 by a wooded hillside. Across from Williamsburg Manor is Hounds Chase, a small apartment complex off of Kingsbury Lane.

Aside from these developments, the majority of the other apartment complexes in the area are concentrated off of Franklin Road on Parliament and Townside Roads, and Southway Drive behind Townside Festival Shopping Center. There are also apartments in the neighborhood just to the south of Towers Shopping Center, and one development on Colonial Avenue near Virginia Western.

Residents did not voice many concerns with the appearance or upkeep of the housing in their neighborhoods. Residents of Jefferson Hills did note that some of the newer construction has been of houses that are much closer to one another than in the rest of the neighborhood. Residents feel that some of the newer development is not in keeping with the suburban feel of the neighborhood, and that the future



Williamsburg Manor Apartments



New Construction on Winding Way Road

zoning ordinance should serve to maintain the large single-family lots that are common there. Overall, homeowners in the area expressed pride in their homes, and would like to maintain the character of their neighborhoods

With limited land resources, the City must encourage efficient development patterns that maximize the potential of the land. *Vision 2001-2020* discourages new suburban style development in favor of traditional urban development patterns. However, established neighborhoods can and should be maintained.

**Residential Development Issues**

- Encroachment of commercial uses into neighborhoods
- Increasing density in some areas



Construction at Southwood



# Economic Development



Towers Shopping Center



Commercial development on  
Colonial Avenue west of Towers



Montano's Restaurant in  
Townside Festival

Establishments along Franklin Road and in Towers Shopping Center comprise a large part of the City's commercial tax base. Southwest of Wonju Street, Franklin Road is a busy commercial corridor with a wide variety of commerce. *Vision 2001-2020* identifies the section of Franklin Road between the South Jefferson Redevelopment Area and Wonju Street for potential redevelopment with industrial, commercial, or mixed land use. This area is zoned LM, Light Manufacturing, on the western side of Franklin Road, and C-2, General Commercial, on the eastern side. The development pattern of Franklin Road has changed over the years and is now predominantly commercial, with very little industrial development. The upper half of the land on the western side of Franklin Road abuts the railroad tracks and is well suited for industrial use. However, the lower half of this land faces Franklin Road and has an adverse impact on the corridor's appearance. The South Jefferson Redevelopment Area should serve as a catalyst for improving this section of Franklin Road.

The area has few neighborhood or pedestrian-oriented commercial uses. However, there are a few concentrations of small- and medium-sized commercial uses along Franklin Road. These include Townside Festival and Piccadilly Square. Both of these small shopping centers feature restaurants and specialty retail stores. These areas need to be distinguished from larger commercial sites on Franklin Road, such as auto sales, auto repair shops, motels, and fast food restaurants.

Future development in such commercial centers should include residential components, e.g. live/work space with commercial on the first floor and apartments on upper floors. In addition, such centers should feature buildings that are closer to the street with parking to the rear or side, and improvements within the centers for pedestrian access.

Towers is one of the Roanoke Valley's largest strip commercial shopping centers. It features the neighborhood's largest grocery store and a number of specialty retail stores and restaurants. Several features have helped Towers stand out from other shopping centers and malls, and maintain its competitive edge. The internal street system provides good circulation and the angled parking spaces on the northern side allow for quick visits. The wide sidewalks outside and the stairway and escalator inside, allow for good pedestrian access within the center. A few establishments are located on the exterior of the site close to Colonial Avenue, filling in what was previously excess parking space.

**Economic Development Issues:**

- Underused commercial and industrial land
- Lack of differentiation between commercial uses



Piccadilly Square on Franklin Road is a good example of a small-to medium-sized commercial development off of a busy arterial street



# Infrastructure

## Transportation



This stretch of Colonial Avenue is very busy during peak hours



Intersection of Franklin Road and Brandon Avenue



Franklin Road

Franklin Road and Colonial Avenue are both major arterial streets. Franklin Road is a four-lane urban street that connects downtown and Roanoke County. It is also accessible from Interstate 581/Route 220. Colonial Avenue is a heavily traveled four-lane urban street from the campus of Virginia Western northeast to its intersection with Brandon Avenue. To the southwest of Virginia Western, it is a two-lane suburban street. Both of these streets are commercially oriented with the exception of Colonial Avenue southwest of Virginia Western.

Also included in this plan is the south side of Brandon Avenue from just east of Brambleton Avenue to Franklin Road. The confluence of these three major arterial streets and the existing development along them requires they be addressed collectively.

The Virginia Department of Transportation rates streets and intersections with Level of Service (LOS) ratings from A-F. An LOS rating of C is considered excellent for urban areas and an LOS of D is considered sufficient. LOS of E and LOS F denote streets with more traffic than they were designed to carry (See Table 7).

**Table 7. Street Level of Service (LOS) Projections, 1990 - 2025**

Street	Between	1990 ADT	2015 ADT	2025 ADT	2025 LOS
Brandon Ave	Main St to Colonial Ave	22,267	28,100	24,100	C
Brandon Ave	Colonial Ave to Franklin Rd	22,267	28,100	25,700	D
Broadway St	Franklin Rd to McClanahan St	8,713	10,800	9,700	C
Colonial Ave	Roanoke SCL to Wonju St	14,833	14,833	26,100	F
Colonial Ave**	Wonju St to Brandon Ave	21,258	21,258	18,300	C
Overland Rd***	Brambleton to Colonial Ave	7,132	7,132	12,000	D
Wonju St	Colonial Ave to Franklin Rd	n/a	n/a	19,000	C

\*\* This section of Colonial Avenue has a reduced projected volume due to traffic being diverted to the Wonju Street Extension on the 2025 network. This new facility was not on the 2015 network.

\*\*\* The reduction in projected volume on Overland Road may be attributed to the change of assignment method used for the 2025 model. The previous model was run without any built in capacity restraints, while a capacity restraint volume adjustment was used for the 2025 model assignment, which would restrict the amount of traffic being carried by this two-lane facility.

Source: VDOT and the Roanoke Valley-Alleghany Regional Commission

### Colonial Avenue and Wonju Street



23rd Street is used as much as a cut-through route as it is for access to Towers



Colonial Avenue



Recently repaved Colonial Avenue near Virginia Western

The area of greatest concern is the south side of Towers Mall along Colonial Avenue, its intersection with Wonju Street and the traffic using the exit and entrance ramps from Wonju onto Route 220. Traffic counts in this area are high for Colonial Avenue and Wonju Street, and traffic congestion is compounded by motorists on Colonial Avenue turning to and from 23rd Street and frequent stacking of cars on the ramps. Twenty-Third Street is used frequently as a cut-through route between Colonial and Brandon Avenues. Twenty-Third Street intersects Colonial Avenue less than 150 feet from the signalized intersection of Colonial and Wonju Street. Cars using 23rd Street further clog and slow down this intersection.

Residents of the Jefferson Hills neighborhood expressed concern with the traffic generated by Virginia Western, particularly on Colonial Avenue at the intersections of McNeil Drive and Winding Way Road. With Virginia Western's enrollment increasing, traffic will increase. The college's new building will have an entrance off of Colonial Avenue, which may pull some of the traffic from Winding Way and McNeil.

VDOT's recent draft Six Year Improvement Program includes a four-lane extension of Wonju Street from Brandon to Colonial Avenue, with full funding in 2005 and construction tentatively set for 2009. The Six Year Plan sets priorities and allocates funding for street improvements. Improvements that reach the construction phase then become part of the Transportation Improvement Program, which is done in two year increments. The Wonju project is currently in the preliminary engineering phase, as potential designs are being evaluated.

Colonial Avenue, from Wonju Street to Winding Way Road, is slated for urban three-lane improvements; sidewalk, curb and gutter, and bike lanes, in VDOT's Roanoke Valley Area Long Range Transportation Plan, 2005-2025. These improvements are recommended for construction after the extension of Wonju is complete, and are based in part on the pedestrian and bicycle accommodations recommended in the Roanoke Valley Conceptual Greenway Plan and the Roanoke Valley Area Bikeway Plan. Residents of the Colonial Avenue corridor reaffirmed the recommendation of the Long Range Transportation Plan not to widen Colonial between Winding Way and Ogden Roads as the previous long-range plan had recommended.

The long-range plan is conducted by the Roanoke Valley Area Metropolitan Planning Organization (RVAMPO) under the direction of the Roanoke Valley Alleghany Regional Commission with the cooperation of several government agencies. The plan serves as a guideline for VDOT and the City for future transportation improvements. The highest priority improvements from the long range plan are included in the six year plan.



Wonju Street

During the public workshops, residents stated the traffic congestion in this area to be their foremost concern. Residents also offered several suggestions and asked that interim measures be taken to alleviate the congestion around Colonial Avenue and Wonju Street. The City's Transportation Division researched several ideas and concluded that none were practical at present. Rather, staff feels that the entire street network from Towers to Virginia Western needs to be addressed collectively.

The Wonju extension should be assessed concurrently with improvements to Colonial Avenue and the exit ramps to and from Route 220. While no funding has been allocated to the Colonial Avenue improvements listed in the six year plan, the funding allocated to the Wonju extension offers an opportunity for a more comprehensive approach to improving the corridor. Staff will work with VDOT to determine both the optimal design of the Wonju extension and alternatives and/or additions to the extension that might address the flow of traffic in the general vicinity.

## Franklin Road



New development in both the City and Roanoke County portions of Routes 220 and 419 has increased traffic on Franklin Road in recent years. Franklin Road is a major arterial street that connects to Route 419, which serves as a beltway for much of the southwestern side of the Valley. Franklin Road is also one of the City's main gateway streets, connecting to downtown via the Old Southwest neighborhood.

The LOS projections for Franklin Road show increases from Wiley Drive to Avenham Avenue, while from Route 419 in the County to Townside Road, it is projected to remain about the same. Franklin Road is in good condition, and is not currently scheduled for resurfacing or any other maintenance improvements. However, it was designed with wide lanes to move large capacities of traffic at as fast a pace as possible and as a result, speeding traffic is frequent. A potential improvement to the street would be a center landscaped median, similar to the one currently being constructed on Williamson Road. Medians serve to slow traffic, define access points and can improve a street aesthetically.

An on-street greenway connection on Franklin Road is also proposed in the Roanoke Valley Conceptual Greenway Plan. While this potential greenway has not yet been designed, future improvements on Franklin Road will be designed with consideration to it. On the more urban segments, bike lanes and sidewalks may constitute the greenway.

In addition to Colonial Avenue, bicycle lanes are proposed for all of Brandon Avenue from the City corporate limits to Franklin Road.



**Public Transportation**

Valley Metro provides two routes that directly service the area. Routes 51/52 and 55/56 both circulate between Campbell Court bus terminal and Tanglewood Mall. Both of these routes run along Franklin Road and Colonial Avenue.

**Curb, Gutter, and Sidewalk**

Franklin Road is equipped with curb and gutter. On the eastern side of the street there is a creek that is piped underneath the sidewalk from the 3100 block north. Storm drainage is a problem on this side of Franklin Road during heavy rains, as the culvert system cannot contain all of the runoff. Most of Franklin Road has sidewalks, however there is a segment that is undeveloped on both sides and does not have any sidewalk.

West of Virginia Western, Colonial Avenue and most of the streets off of it lack curb, gutter, and sidewalk. Some residents in Jefferson Hills noted that storm water runoff is a problem, particularly on Winding Way Road where many houses are below the grade of the street. While some expressed their desire to see curb and gutter improvements on Winding Way, most residents stated they did not, and would rather see some alternatives to curb and gutter. Since many homes in this area are below the grade of the street, installing curb will not necessarily impede runoff. The pavement is impervious, and curbs are not substantial enough to block a large amount of water. Some lots in the neighborhood have drainage ditches; however, the grade of many lots is too steep for them.

Recently in Jefferson Hills, curb and gutter improvements were installed on Dogwood Lane, Forest and Heritage Roads. There is some standard curb, but most of the improvements are rolling curb; a concrete bevel slightly below the grade of the street curved in the middle to channel water.

The design guidelines of *Vision 2001-2020* call for suburban neighborhoods to be developed in the future with urban features, which include curb, gutter and sidewalk improvements. However, given the existing suburban development and rolling topography in this area, curb, gutter and sidewalk improvements may actually exacerbate drainage problems and would be very costly in these low density areas.

Future curb, gutter and sidewalk improvements in the area should be based upon the following guidelines:

1. Arterial streets - all arterial streets should be equipped with curb, gutter and sidewalk
2. Infill development on existing streets - no curb, gutter or sidewalk should be installed in existing single-family developments
3. New subdivisions - all new developments will have curb, gutter and sidewalk



Above, new curb on Park Lane, below, asphalt shoulder on Winding Way Road



**Infrastructure Issues**

- Congested traffic, especially at Wonju Street, on Colonial Avenue between Brandon Avenue and Virginia Western, including exit ramps to and from Route 220
- Increased traffic from Virginia Western Community College
- Storm water drainage



Colonial Avenue at Virginia Western Community College

# Public Services

## Police

Review of recent data indicates that crime is not an overriding concern. Of the City's 14 police districts, the two (3 and 9) that comprise the area received the third and fourth least calls for service during the last fiscal year. Animal offenses, disorderly conduct, and larceny comprise the most frequent calls for service to the police department.

## Fire/EMS

Fire Station Numbers 7 and 8 are close to the area. Number 7 is located at 1742 Memorial Avenue, S.W., and Number 8 is the closest at 2328 Crystal Springs Avenue, S.W.

Station Number 7 houses an engine and a ladder. Station Number 8 houses an engine. The Fire/EMS Strategic Business Plan recommends future improvements to both stations to continue their operation in their current locations for the foreseeable future.

**Public Service Issues:**

- Lack of neighborhood organizations to communicate with the Police
- Improvements to fire stations



Cycle Systems off of Wonju Street processes all of the City's recycling



# Quality of Life

Commercial development has brought a lot of services to the area, yet at the same time has brought more traffic and has diminished the quality of some of the residential areas. The main single-family residential areas that adjoin commercial development are west of Towers on Colonial Avenue, and Beechwood Drive and Roberts Road off of Franklin Road. The concentration of apartments off of Townside Road also abuts commercial development on Franklin Road, however, such multifamily development is better suited close to a commercial corridor than single-family subdivisions.

In several areas the natural environment seems far removed from the strip commercial development of Franklin Road and Route 220. The Jefferson Hills and Fralin Park neighborhoods are both situated on undulating terrain and surrounded by healthy forest with a mature tree canopy. The neighborhoods off of Duke of Gloucester Street are also perched atop plateaus that offer clear mountain views in each direction.

Overall, the concern of residents in the area and their appreciation of their neighborhoods and surroundings indicate that it is a desirable place to live. Defining the boundaries of commercial zoning to prevent encroachment into neighborhoods, increasing the ability to walk to neighborhood destinations, and improving traffic conditions are essential to maintaining the high quality of life in the area.



View of Virginia Western campus from the community arboretum

## Parks and Recreation

There are several parks adjacent to the area. These include Fishburn, Rivers Edge, and Wasena/Smith. In addition, open space and recreational facilities are available at James Madison Middle School. Fishburn Park on Brambleton Avenue has two tennis courts, hiking trails and a lot of green space. Rivers Edge Park lies just to the north along Franklin Road and Reserve Avenue. This park is used heavily and features tennis courts, soccer and football fields, a softball diamond, playground and a comfort station (a restroom and water fountain). In addition, the Department of Parks and Recreation's main office is on Reserve Avenue and houses the Rocwood climbing gymnasium.

Wasena and Smith Parks are off of Wiley Drive a short distance from Rivers Edge. Wasena Park includes amenities for recreational activities (softball, basketball, tennis, etc.), playgrounds, picnic tables, a comfort station (a restroom and water fountain) and a scenic drive. In addition, the park offers biking, jogging, walking, and fishing opportunities. The general public and various organizations frequently use it as a venue for cookouts and parties, while the Department of Parks and Recreation hosts league softball games and other sporting events there. Located adjacent to Wasena Park, Smith Park is a 10-acre community park. The facility includes a picnic shelter with restrooms, a large playground structure, and a small memorial garden.



Gazebo in the arboretum

**Greenways**

Greenways are corridors of protected open space managed for conservation, recreation and non-motorized transportation. Greenway trails vary in their makeup; some are paved, while others are cleared paths in the environment. As vegetated linear parks, greenways provide tree cover, wildlife habitat, and riparian buffers to protect streams. 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 rollerblading.

The Roanoke Valley Conceptual Greenway Plan features three routes in the area: Route 419/Electric Road, US 220, and Murray Run. The Murray Run Greenway is an off-road bicycle/pedestrian route that follows along the Murray Run creek until it intersects with the Roanoke River Greenway. Portions of the Murray Run Greenway have been completed around Fishburn, Shrine Hill, and Woodland Parks, and the Patrick Henry High School campus.

The Route 419/Electric Road Greenway is proposed as an on-road bicycle/pedestrian facility that would run along Franklin Road from Electric Road to the Roanoke River. The US 220 Greenway would also be an off-road bicycle/pedestrian route that intersects with the Roanoke River.

**Schools and Libraries**

Fishburn Park Magnet Elementary School and James Madison Middle School are both on the same campus at Colonial Avenue and Overland Road. The north campus of Virginia Western Community College is adjacent to both of these schools, with the south campus on the opposite side of Colonial Avenue.

Fishburn Park is an environmental education magnet school. The school has achieved full accreditation in the state's Standards of Learning (SOL) since 2000. James Madison Middle School is the first fully SOL-accredited middle school in the City of Roanoke, and has been fully accredited for four consecutive years.

Virginia Western is a two-year institution of higher education with seven academic divisions operating under the statewide system of community colleges. The service region of the college includes Roanoke, Salem, Roanoke County, Craig County, southern Botetourt County, and northern Franklin County. Classes are also offered at off-campus locations in the area, including the Higher Education Center in downtown Roanoke. The college was established in 1966 and has grown from an initial enrollment of 1,352 students to 8,124 in the fall of 2003.

The Downtown and Raleigh Court libraries are the branches nearest to the area. The Raleigh Court Library Branch features several monthly programs such as Preschool Storytime for ages 3-5, which includes activities like stories, crafts, and fingerplays, and the Tuesday Night Book Club, which discusses books on a variety of topics. The library also has the Friends of the Raleigh Court Branch



Virginia Western Community College Campus

Library, a citizen group that plans fundraisers and provides support for library events.

**Quality of Life Issues:**

- Maintaining both a high quality of life for residents and a concentration of commercial services
- Improved access to recreational facilities



Fishburn Elementary School

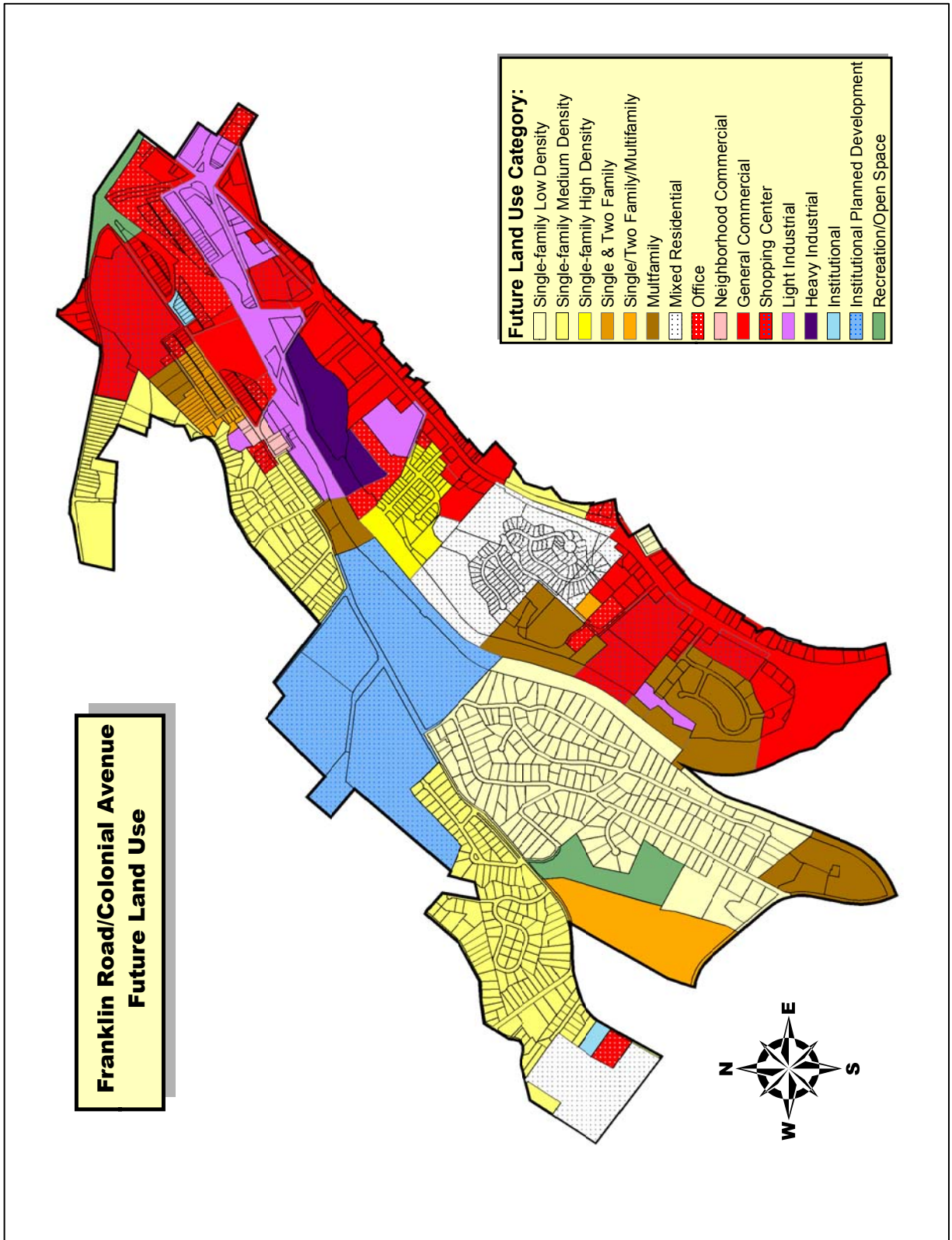
# Recommendations

## Recommended Policies and Actions

Recommendations are organized by the Plan Elements (community design, residential development, etc.). Recommendations take the form of “policies” or “actions.” Policies are principles or ways of doing things that guide future decisions. Generally, policies are ongoing. Actions are projects or tasks that can be completed and have a definite end.

## Future Land Use

The *Future Land Use* map on the following page is the most important recommendation of this plan. It specifies how future development should take place. Zoning is the principal tool that is used to implement the future land use plan.



**Community Design Policies**

- **Neighborhood Character:** Established neighborhoods should retain their current character and development patterns.
- **Design:** Future commercial development should adhere to the design principles of Vision 2001-2020 for commercial corridors:
  - o Concentrations of higher-density, mixed use development and live/work space at key intersections.
  - o Minimal curb cuts, shared parking, increased lot coverage, signs co-located, no excessive lighting, and orientation of buildings close to the street.
- **Zoning:** Commercial and residential zoning districts should be clearly delineated with the intensity of uses minimized in some areas.
- **Parking:** Paved parking spaces should be minimized.
- **Colonial Avenue Area:** Maintain the established development pattern of the older neighborhoods such as Fralin Park and Jefferson Hills.
- **Franklin Road Area:** Require new developments to incorporate urban amenities (e.g. sidewalks and curbs), and mixed-use (commercial and residential) where possible.

**Community Design Actions**

- **Franklin Road Commercial:** Update the zoning ordinance to require the design guidelines of Vision 2001-2020; buildings should be closer to the street with parking to the side or rear.
- **Zoning:** Establish commercial boundaries in the update of the zoning ordinance.
- **Parking:** Limit the number of parking spaces for new developments in the update of the zoning ordinance.

## Residential Development Policies

- **Neighborhood Character:** Older neighborhoods should retain their current residential character.
- **Zoning:** Zoning should reinforce the existing character of neighborhoods.
- **New development:** New development should be well-planned and use limited land resources wisely.

## Residential Development Actions

- **Zoning:** Maintain the density of existing neighborhoods in the update of the zoning ordinance.
- **Vacant Parcels:** Identify and promote appropriate new development on vacant parcels.

**Economic Development Policies**

- **Commercial Corridors:** Commercial areas should accommodate competitive businesses that have aesthetic and functional compatibility with adjoining residential areas.
- **Commercial Centers:** Small- to medium- sized concentrations of commercial establishments should be developed differently than larger strip commercial developments.
- **Industrial Districts:** Industrial uses should have sufficient land to operate and have a minimal impact on adjoining properties.

**Economic Development Actions**

- **Towers Shopping Center:** Maintain commercial zoning that will allow Towers to continue to be a competitive and growing shopping center.
- **Franklin Road:** Maintain commercial zoning that will retain existing businesses and attract new establishments.
- **Commercial Centers:** Identify or create nodes along Franklin Road for commercial centers; concentrations of small- to medium- sized commercial establishments.
- **Maximize Commercial Districts:** Avoid further expansion of commercial districts to encourage quality development and more efficient use of land in existing districts.
- **Industrial Districts:** Evaluate underused industrially zoned land and demarcate or rezone to maximize its potential.



## Infrastructure Policies

- **Streetscapes:** Streetscapes should be well maintained, attractive and functional for pedestrian, bicycle and motor traffic.
- **Connectivity:** The connectivity of streets and the grid street system should be promoted and maintained.
- **Street width:** Streets should be kept at the minimum width necessary to accommodate vehicular traffic and on-street parking.
- **Curb, gutter and sidewalk Improvements:** New developments and arterial and collector streets should have urban amenities such as sidewalks and curb and gutter and appropriate species of trees should also be planted along streetscapes.
- **Stormwater Drainage:** Stormwater runoff should be mitigated as much as possible through improvements that are consistent with the character of the neighborhood.

## Infrastructure Actions

- **Wonju Extension:** Examine all design possibilities to improve Colonial Avenue and Wonju Street, including VDOT's proposed extension of Wonju Street to Brandon Avenue in the draft Six Year Plan. This improvement is the highest priority of this plan.
- **Colonial Avenue:** Improve Colonial Avenue between Towers Shopping Center and Virginia Western Community College as prescribed in the Long Range Transportation Plan. This improvement will be undertaken after, or in conjunction with, the Wonju extension.
- **Franklin Road:** Evaluate a center median in sections of Franklin Road to control access, improve functioning and create a more attractive street.
- **Traffic Signals:** Evaluate traffic signal at McNeil Drive and Colonial Avenue, and consider the possibility of signals at Winding Way Road and Colonial Avenue, and Twenty-Third Street and Brandon Avenue.
- **Curb, gutter and sidewalk Improvements:** Determine the need for improvements based on the following:
  - o Arterial streets - all arterial streets should be equipped with curb, gutter and sidewalk.
  - o Infill development on existing streets - no curb, gutter or sidewalk should be installed in existing single-family developments.
  - o New subdivisions - all new developments will have curb, gutter and sidewalk.
- **Stormwater Management:** Alleviate stormwater runoff as much as possible through alternatives to curb and gutter.

## Public Services Policies

- **Police:** Police officers should keep neighborhood residents informed of any crime issues in the area.
- **Fire/EMS:** Stations should be outfitted to provide the most efficient service possible.

## Public Services Actions

- Establish neighborhood contact persons with Neighborhood Services and the Police Department to open communication between the City and the neighborhoods regarding crime prevention.
- Improve Fire/EMS Station Numbers 7 and 8 per the recommendations of the Fire/EMS Strategic Business Plan.

**Quality of Life Policies**

- **Commercial/Industrial Development:** Commercial and industrial development should be economically viable without threatening the environment and high quality of life of the area.
- **Recreation:** Neighborhood and area parks should provide adequate recreational facilities for residents.
- **Greenways:** The greenway routes of the Roanoke Valley Conceptual Greenway Plan should be developed to enhance the quality of life in the area.

**Quality of Life Actions**

- **Zoning:** Establish commercial boundaries in the update of the zoning ordinance.
- **Recreation:** Maintain and enhance access to recreation resources.
- **Greenways:** Continue development of greenway routes in the area.

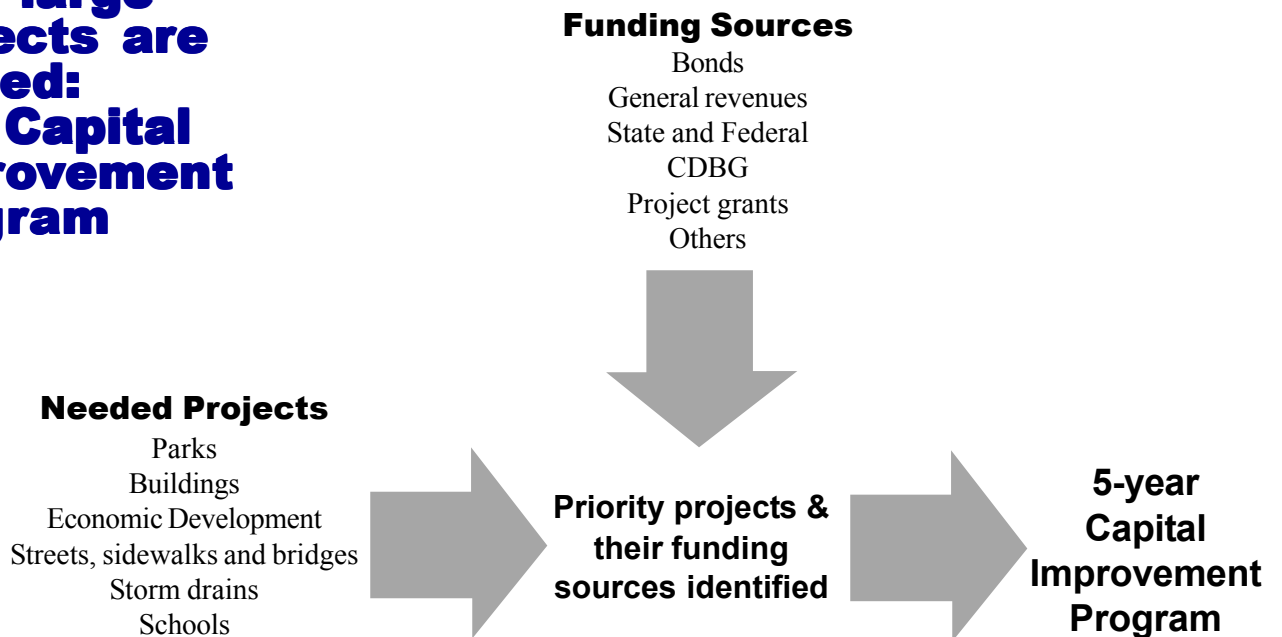
# Implementation

## Funding

Funding for major infrastructure projects is generally provided through the City's Capital Improvement Program. Funding can come from a variety of sources, including CDBG, transportation funding, state and federal funds, and general revenue. The Capital Improvement Program is developed by identifying needed projects and matching them with potential funding sources. Each project is reviewed and ranked in terms of priority.

The chart on the following page identifies major projects, their time frame, the lead agency or department, and potential sources of funding. The cost of most projects such as streetscape improvements cannot be determined until more detailed planning is completed.

## How large projects are funded: The Capital Improvement Program



Below is a general guide to the time needed to carry out the actions of this plan. It is intended to assist with scheduling priority projects, but does not provide a specific timeframe for each item.

Action	Year						Lead Agency	Potential funding sources
	1	2	3	4	5	Ongoing		
Zoning Changes		*					PBD	PBD Operating Budget
Wonju St Extension*						*	VDOT	VDOT
Install curb, gutter, sidewalk and bike lanes on Colonial Avenue**					*		VDOT	VDOT, Tea-21, Bond, PW capital account
Install curb, gutter, and sidewalk on arterial streets						*	PW	Tea-21, Bond, PW capital account
Evaluate Potential Improvements on Colonial Avenue			*				PW	PW capital account
Evaluate Potential Improvements on Franklin Road						*	PW	PW capital account
Establish neighborhood contact persons with Neighborhood Services & Police Department	*						HNS, PD	n/a
Improve Fire/EMS Station Numbers 7 and 8						*	Fire/EMS	GS Operating Budget
Complete Murray Run Greenway		*					P&R	Tea-21, P&R Operating Budget

\*Included in VDOT 6 year plan and fully funded, still subject to public review of design proposals

\*\*Included in VDOT 6 year plan, but not funded

**Abbreviations:**

- PD = Police Department
- PBD = Roanoke Planning Building and Development
- P&R= Roanoke Parks and Recreation
- PW = Roanoke Public Works
- TEA-21 = Transportation Enhancement Act (Federal transportation funding)
- VDOT = Virginia Department of Transportation

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