

AT A REGULAR MEETING OF THE PLANNING COMMISSION OF THE CITY OF SALEM, VIRGINIA held in the Council Chambers of City Hall, 114 North Broad Street Salem, VA 24153

**AGENDA ITEM:**      **Resolution to Adopt Back to Salem's Future - Comprehensive Plan 2045**

Consider adopting resolution of recommendation regarding "Back to Salem's Future - Comprehensive Plan 2045" for the City of Salem. The plan addresses housing, redevelopment, open space, city government, transportation & infrastructure, land use, and other information used to outline the City's long-term vision and goals for development and growth.

**SUBMITTED BY:**      Max Dillon, Planner

**SUMMARY OF INFORMATION:**

Under the auspices of the City of Salem Planning Commission, the Planning and Zoning Division, in conjunction with Glenn Walters of TownStudio, initiated the process to conduct a re-write of the City's previous Comprehensive Plan in accordance with Virginia State Code Section 15.2-2223 in October of 2023. The previous iteration of the Comprehensive Plan was adopted in June of 2012, with subsequent amendments in the following years.

Understanding that Salem boasts an incredibly rich history in the Commonwealth, the mission of this revamped Comprehensive Plan was not to sidestep the City's celebrated attributes, but rather to preserve the elements of its history that have proven successful, while seamlessly integrating forward-thinking strategies that situate Salem in position to embrace a dynamic and promising future. With that in mind, the brand *Back to Salem's Future* was born, with a guiding vision of "Honoring Our Past, Innovating the Future." Ultimately, the overarching goal of this newly created Comprehensive Plan is to serve as the City's playbook for success, providing recommendations and action items that are regularly monitored, reviewed, and updated, and can correspondingly inform decision-making over the course of the next several years.

The latter stages of 2023 represented the proverbial kickoff of the Comprehensive Planning effort. Salem Planning and Zoning staff attended the City's annual Pumpkin Fest to advertise the upcoming planning effort, Virginia Tech graduate MURP students were integrated into the process as part of their curriculum, an online poll was distributed to garner the general sentiment of the community, and the first public meeting was held at the Civic Center to begin conversations about community ideas and themes to be addressed.

2024 was an exciting time for the review of the Comprehensive Plan, as it encompassed the bulk of the planning effort. The process involved key stakeholders from various sectors and disciplines to ensure that the plan reflects both the needs of the community and professional best practices. Throughout the year, advisory committee meetings were held to routinely provide feedback on ideas and initiatives, numerous community workshops were conducted

to solicit feedback on document material and develop new ideas, stakeholder engagement sessions were led to verify an equitable process, departmental reviews were organized to certify existing processes and evaluate new recommendations, and open houses were provided for iterative public input.

**Advisory Committee Meetings:** Regular advisory committee meetings were held throughout the year to provide ongoing counsel and feedback on key issues, ultimately ensuring that the plan both aligns with current best practices and meets long-term goals. The committee helped ensure that the planning process remained transparent and balanced the needs of the community and professional best practices.

**Community Workshops and Stakeholder Engagement:** A series of community workshops were held to directly engage residents, businesses, and local organizations. These workshops served as a platform for community members to share their perspectives, offer feedback, and ask questions. In addition, meetings with key stakeholders focused on obtaining insights from students, local businesses, and other relevant groups to ensure the comprehensive plan addresses a broad spectrum of concerns and priorities. Staff and TownStudio attended First Baptist Church and a Salem Red Sox game, engaged with students at Salem High School, and met with representatives of the Roanoke Valley Association of Realtors and the Roanoke Regional Home Builders Association. Input gathered from these sessions directly influenced the plan's direction and its final recommendations.

**Departmental Reviews:** Each relevant City Department involved in the comprehensive planning process conducted internal reviews to assess current practices, policies, and strategies, while brainstorming strategies to accomplish future initiatives and projects. These reviews allowed departments to evaluate their goals with the target of aligning operations with the overarching objectives of the comprehensive plan.

**Open Houses:** Open houses were held to present key findings, solicit public feedback, and discuss the draft elements of the comprehensive plan. These events were accessible to all members of the community and featured displays, presentations, and opportunities for attendees to engage with committee members, Commissioners, staff, and the consultant. The open houses served as a critical touchpoint to ensure that the plan reflects the values and aspirations of the community and that residents played a significant role in shaping Salem's future.

**Subcommittees:** City Council, Planning Commission, Advisory Committee members, and interested citizens were invited to participate in the formation of subcommittees that were created to focus on major topics of the comprehensive plan. Housing, Open Space and Greenways, Multi-Modal Transportation, and Business Corridors were the directed four topics of discussion based on input from stakeholders, community conversations, and planning principles. Multiple meetings were held with each group, and the corresponding themes and strategies were finalized.

The final version of the document is arranged into chapters with an introduction, themes and strategies, an Action Plan, future land uses, and a City Atlas. Derived from the countless meetings and conversations held with the public, stakeholders, and City staff, the central themes included are the following:

1. Connected Neighborhoods through Parks and Greenways
2. Safe, Multi-Modal Corridors that Support Mobility and Identity
3. Vibrant Redevelopment Districts for Growth and Innovation
4. Diverse Housing for All Stages of Life
5. A Resilient Economy for the Next Generation
6. Outstanding Community Services and Infrastructure
7. Regional Collaboration to Expand Opportunity

Rooted in both feedback from engaged participants and best planning practices, the document takes aim at high-level ambitions like elevating equitable access to greenways and neighborhood-scale parks, introducing complete streets concepts along identified corridors, encouraging mixed-use development patterns in targeted redevelopment districts, and expanding housing availability and affordability for all ages and lifestyles. Embedded in each of those objectives is a desire to emphasize Salem's strengths, while also capitalizing on opportunities to best position the City for future success.

A draft of the Comprehensive Plan was discussed during the August 13, 2025, work session of the Planning Commission, during which Commissioners provided feedback for slight adjustments to the document. Since that time, staff has worked diligently to incorporate those tweaks, primarily related to document clarity, which are now reflected in the current draft.

Once adopted, staff recommends that Planning Commission conduct annual review meetings with relevant "Teams" noted in the Action Plan to discuss progress, needs, and necessary adjustments to the plan so that the City can actively respond to the goals of the community.

### **REQUIREMENTS:**

The request meets the requirements of Section 15.2-2223 of the Code of Virginia related to the preparation and adoption of the Comprehensive Plan.

### **RECOMMENDATION:**

Staff recommends approval of this request.

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# CITY OF SALEM

## BACK TO SALEM'S FUTURE PLAN 2045



## Comprehensive Plan 2045

This plan could not have been written without the dedication and input of City Leadership, Staff, our Committees, and the community at large. The City of Salem Planning and Zoning Division would like to extend a special thank you to the following groups for their contributions of time, resources, and/or facilities:

- Salem Civic Center and staff
- Salem Parks and Recreation and staff
- Salem High School faculty, staff, and students
- Virginia Tech – Diane Zahm and MURP students
- Salem Red Sox
- First Baptist Church
- Calvary Baptist Church
- Chip and Jo's

The City of Salem boasts one of the richest histories in the Commonwealth, from our treasured downtown to our diverse neighborhoods. Through the formulation of this plan we envision a harmonious blend of cherished history and cutting-edge innovation, where the roots of our heritage remain firmly planted as we strive for continued progress and evolution. Our vision is to preserve the elements of our history that have proven successful, while seamlessly integrating forward-thinking strategies to embrace a dynamic and promising future.



# ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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DRAFT





# INTRO

**A summary of a Comprehensive Plan including its purpose and goals, Salem's vision for the future, key opportunities, summary recommendations, and an overview of the public engagement process used to develop the plan.**





# INTRODUCTION

## WHAT IS A COMPREHENSIVE PLAN?

**A Comprehensive Plan is a formal planning document adopted by resolution to provide aspirational and strategic continuity across time and to support successive public bodies with a shared community vision.**

The Plan establishes the framework to focus future public and private investments and describes the actions needed to realize an agreed-upon community vision. Because a Comprehensive Plan is developed through a citizen-driven process, it creates political and societal accountability for its success. In Virginia, comprehensive plans are required by state law for all counties, cities, and towns. The requirements are outlined in Section 15.2-2223 of the Code of Virginia, the key elements of which are as follows:

### General Requirements

- **Preparation:** Each local planning commission is responsible for preparing a Comprehensive Plan for the locality's physical development.
- **Scope:** The plan must address present and future needs and resources to guide and accomplish coordinated, adjusted, and harmonious development.

### Content Requirements

- **Land Use:** Designation of the general or approximate location, character, and extent of various land uses, such as residential, business, industrial, agricultural, and other categories.
- **Transportation:** Incorporation of a transportation plan showing the general location and extent of existing and proposed streets, roads, highways, parkways, railways, bridges, waterways, terminals, and other public transportation facilities.
- **Community Facilities:** Identification of public facilities, such as parks, schools,

libraries, public buildings, and other community services.

- **Housing:** Assessment of current housing conditions and future housing needs.
- **Natural Resources:** Planning for conserving, utilizing, and protecting natural resources and historical areas.
- **Public Utilities:** Plans for the development and improvement of utilities, such as water supply, wastewater treatment, stormwater management, and solid waste disposal.
- **Economic Development:** Consider the locality's economic development needs and potential strategies.
- **Environmental Protection:** Addressing measures to protect the environment, such as flood control and pollution prevention.

### **3. Planning Process**

- **Public Participation:** There must be opportunities for public involvement and input during the development of the plan.
- **Review and Adoption:** The planning commission must hold at least one public hearing before recommending the plan to the local governing body. The local governing body must also hold a public hearing before adopting the plan.
- **Periodic Review:** The Comprehensive Plan must be reviewed at least once every five years to determine if amendments are necessary. The goal would be to have it be reviewed more regularly to ensure its use and efficacy.

### **4. Implementation**

- **Zoning and Subdivision Ordinances:** The Comprehensive Plan serves as a guide for the development and implementation of zoning and subdivision ordinances.
- **Capital Improvement Program (CIP):** The plan should align with the locality's CIP, which outlines the funding and timing of public infrastructure projects.

### **5. Coordination**

- **Regional Planning:** Coordination with neighboring localities and regional planning agencies to address issues that cross jurisdictional boundaries.
- **State and Federal Requirements:** Compliance with relevant state and federal regulations and policies.

### **6. Documentation**

- **Maps and Diagrams:** Inclusion of maps, diagrams, charts, and other visual aids to illustrate the plan's proposals.
- **Textual Description:** Comprehensive narrative explaining the goals, objectives, and strategies of the plan.

### **7. Special Considerations**

- **Urban Development Areas (UDAs):** Localities are encouraged to designate UDAs to focus development in areas where it can be more efficiently served by public services.

- **Affordable Housing:** Addressing the need for affordable housing and strategies to meet this need.
- **Environmental and Historic Preservation:** Identification and protection of environmentally sensitive and historic areas.

## CRITICAL GOALS OF THE PLAN:

1. **Integrate existing plans and initiatives into a community-wide vision for the future.**
2. **Create a resource to inform policy decisions.**
3. **Set priorities and responsibilities.**
4. **Outline specific goals and strategies to achieve the vision.**
5. **Align Strategic Plans, Capital Improvement Plans (CIP), Budgets, and Department Action Plans.**
6. **Used by Staff and Leadership to initiate tasks and make decisions.**

## WHAT DOES IT INCLUDE?:

The Salem Comprehensive Plan includes goals, strategies, area plans, and implementation measures that reflect the community-driven process. The Plan is a

starting point – where the vision is articulated and implementation is identified. It lays the framework for future action but purposefully does not resolve all the goals, plans, and measures identified by the Community. The Plan itself identifies and describes the strategies that must be implemented by the community to realize the agreed-upon vision.

## HOW TO USE IT:

As the City's playbook for success, this document consists of written recommendations supported by maps, definitions, and action items to guide City leaders in making decisions that will impact Salem over the next 20 years. It should be used when departments are making plans for the year when budgets are being created and to influence the City's long-term focus and work.

This Comprehensive Plan is a guiding document, and is to be used in that capacity. It sets the vision and strategic recommendations for future collaborative work so the City can achieve its vision. In that regard, it is not a regulatory or binding set of recommendations.

# SALEM IN A SNAPSHOT

Throughout centuries of storied history, the City of Salem continues to be a place its residents are proud to call “home.”

Industrial roots permeate the modern business environment, and both small enterprises and corporate commercial ventures contribute to a healthy regional and global market.

Supreme City services, schools, and recreational facilities attract and serve residents and visitors alike.

A healthy blend of tradition and innovation defines the City’s ambitions, positioning Salem for continued prosperity.



## POPULATION

**Population = 25,477**

**Median Age = 40.3**

- State of Virginia = 39.3
- Roanoke County= 43.7
- Roanoke City = 39.1

**Recent Growth = .46%**  
(Last 10 years approximate)

- State of Virginia = 7.65%
- Roanoke County= 5.53%
- Roanoke City = 1.14%



## INCOME

**Median Household  
Income (2023)**  
= \$66,716

- State of Virginia = \$90,974
- Roanoke County = \$82,931
- Roanoke City = \$52,671

**Median Property Value**  
= \$265,000

State of Virginia = \$410,032  
Roanoke County = \$309,000  
Roanoke City = \$260,000

**Cost of Living Index\***  
= 86.1

State of Virginia = 103.6  
Roanoke County = 87.2  
Roanoke City = 86.5



## HOUSING

**Number of Households**  
= 10,100

**Homeownership Rate**  
= 63.5%

State of Virginia = 69.1%  
Roanoke County = 78.7%  
Roanoke City = 51.7%

**Rental Rate = 36.5%**

State of Virginia = 30.9%  
Roanoke County = 20.43%  
Roanoke City = 48.3%

\*The **Cost of Living Index** is a measure that compares the average expenses of goods and services (like housing, food, and transportation) between different locations. For this comparison, the National Cost of Living is 100.

# VISION AND PRINCIPLES

**The Salem Comprehensive Plan is the result of engaged citizens and stakeholders contributing to a shared and agreed-upon vision for their community.**

## SALEM'S VISION

**"Salem is a beautiful and proud City in the mountains. Our people are our greatest assets, and our "small-town" feel defines our character.**

**Our commitment to economic opportunities, nature and the outdoors, diverse neighborhoods, history, community services, sports, and best-in-class schools foster a pride of place and a unique quality of life that is shared by all our citizens.**

**As we encounter change, we will respond wisely, learning from our history and embracing the future with a fresh mindset and a commitment to excellence."**

## SALEM'S PRINCIPLES:

The following principles guide our actions and policies. They represent fundamental truths that we don't waver on as we initiate policies, codes, plans, designs, and construction projects.

### Culture and History

**We value our history while positioning ourselves for a prosperous future:** Our people and historic neighborhoods are defining elements of our sense of place. We acknowledge the need to protect the visual character of our City.

**Our Downtown is the heart of our community:** We will continue to nurture its vitality, safety, character, and ways to bring people together.

**We are linked physically and culturally with our mountains and rivers:** We enable sensitive ways to promote access and use of these important natural features and work regionally to promote and protect their health.

## Mobility

### **We value walkable and bikeable**

**connectivity:** Our streets, greenways, and trails form an interconnected, scaled, rational network that provides several convenient routes that are bikeable and walkable to destinations such as parks, open spaces, shops, work, and school.

### **Our neighborhoods are linked with our**

**community assets:** By expanding upon our sidewalks, bikeways, and trail networks, all of our citizens can easily access routes that connect us to our natural and cultural assets.

## Community Character

**We have high-quality – complete neighborhoods that are open to a diverse population.** Our neighborhoods retain their character as they add new and diverse residents in the future and open their arms to contextually appropriate infill development and redevelopment.

**We live and work on safe, human-scaled streets:** Our streets accommodate multiple forms of transportation and are designed appropriate to their context and to maximize mobility, safety, comfort, connectivity, and a place to shop, park, stroll, greet friends, and hold events.

**We place high value on our public realm:** Our sense of community, character, pride, and sense of place is defined by the design

quality of our public realm, which includes our streets, parks, public spaces, open spaces, and our natural resources.

### **We value our best-in-class parks and**

**recreation:** In addition to having high-quality active sports fields and sports tourism, our neighborhoods have a variety of neighborhood-scaled parks that support all age groups, abilities, and ways access to them on foot, bike, or other.

**We value reuse and infill development:** We encourage new development to be located where there is vacant land or land best positioned for redevelopment that is already serviced by infrastructure. Doing so will reduce areas that are not performing as well as others and offer a place for housing and business diversity.

### **We strive for more diversity and unique**

**ways of living:** We are mindful of housing affordability, changes in the marketplace, desires of younger folks, as well as the needs of our seniors, and we shape our neighborhoods in ways that accommodate all our citizens.

## Economic Opportunity

### **We balance growth with preserving our**

**sense of place and character:** We accept our slower rate of growth but recognize that we can't stand still. We focus on areas for growth that create the highest opportunities

for something that reflects newer markets and preferences, while protecting our historic neighborhoods.

**We have a clear economic strategy:** “One that’s rooted in sustainable growth with industry diversification and real estate development, achievable goals for talent and business attraction and retention, and establishing stronger regional and statewide partnerships to help our City thrive.” (from Economic Development’s Strategic Plan)

**We are fiscally responsible:** Our government services are fiscally responsible and maximize return on investment, and we support entrepreneurial ventures, education, and development that will strengthen our local economy.

**We promote equity for our citizens:** Our citizens have access to a diverse range of dignified, affordable, and market-rate housing choices to rent or purchase and easy access to community amenities, parks, open spaces, education, assistance, and services.

**We are regional partners:** We promote working in partnership within our region to maximize economic development, marketing, education, infrastructure service, environmental stewardship, transportation, health and safety, and connectivity.

## Environmental Stewardship

**Our built environment is in harmony with the natural environment:** We promote design and engineering practices that ensure the health of our rivers, streams, and creeks.

**We recognize that new developments and multimodal streets can be supportive of environmental stewardship:** We create plans and policies that promote walking and cycling, public transportation possibilities, providing shade with tree plantings, and promoting greener buildings.

## SALEM’S OPPORTUNITY

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### A CITY THAT MOVES FORWARD WHILE RESPECTING ITS PAST

**Salem is a proud city that recognizes the importance of its people and its sense of community.** The landscape of the Virginia Blue Ridge Mountains, the history, scale, and character of its neighborhoods, the growing vibrancy of its downtown, its best-in-class parks and recreation network, its high-quality school system, and its access to the Roanoke River provide it a character, sense of place and history that demands a careful approach to balance growth and preservation.



**This Comprehensive Plan looks out 20 years. The Plan describes specific principles, strategies, and actions that together enable Salem to act on its vision and values.** The plan considers that growth must be accomplished in ways that support the City's vision of strong neighborhoods, environmental harmony, and access and fairness for its citizens. These are to be accomplished by the application of well-tested urban planning principles that channel growth toward the land that is the most suitable for development based on economic, cultural, social, and environmental principles.

Salem is a small-town setting, and historically, it has not had the types of growth pressures that have caused it to lose its sense of place and character. Salem has grown slowly in the recent past and is only now feeling the potential impacts of accelerated development within its boundaries.

These new developments and current market preferences are reshaping select parts of the city, causing stress. **Salem can craft a vision of the future to shape new growth using a set of tools that establishes predictable and balanced outcomes.** Salem's future needs to be carefully planned so that the balance and harmony that make it special today are nurtured, updated, and best positioned for the next generation to benefit from.

With the creation of this Comprehensive Plan, Salem will continue to evolve based on its deep appreciation and connection with its

history, the natural environment, resilient planning principles applied city-wide, and equitable access to housing, parks, open spaces, and services. It acknowledges that growth for growth's sake is not Salem's vision. It recommends ways that balance preservation and protection while also accommodating expanding diversity, uniqueness, and housing affordability in logical locations that could use investment and an economic boost.

**The key to the future is to reposition underperforming parts of Salem with plans that encourage new and unique districts supportive of varied employment and housing opportunities.**

This includes continued efforts to make the large arterial roadways that bisect the City, such as East Main Street, West Main Street, and Apperson Drive, more livable with safer crossings, slower speeds, multipurpose paths, streetscape, access management, and gateway elements. It includes "place-based" planning to help guide the redevelopment of the East Bottom area, South of Downtown, Apperson Drive, and portions of East Main Street into diverse, highly integrated mixed-use districts that have livable streets, parks and open spaces, connectivity, and walkable destinations.

**The Plan promotes the development of "people places" such as parks, river access, natural areas, and urban places to gather, which will encourage walking and cycling**

**along with transit as options for mobility that impact residents more broadly than auto-centric policies and development can.**

Leveraging the Roanoke River Greenway with adjacent compatible land uses and higher levels of connectivity will take advantage of that important piece of public infrastructure.

**Focusing on vacant infill lots and their feasibility for attractive and affordable housing and mixed-use development will enable sensible population growth on land already serviced with infrastructure.**

The Plan acknowledges that Salem is highly woven into the Roanoke Valley and shares roadways and borders with the City of Roanoke and Roanoke County. Cooperation and collaboration will need to be maintained within the region so that cross-jurisdictional identities are allowed to be expressed within a common perspective about regional issues such as open space, roadways, waterways, housing, and stormwater management.

**Lastly, the Plan considers that the hallmarks of great and lasting places include protecting the natural assets that define it, promoting cultural and economic diversity, ensuring inclusion, and establishing the physical and social infrastructure and frameworks that enable people to share, prosper, gather, work, recreate, walk, bike, and connect freely with one another.**

## KEY QUESTIONS FOR THIS PLAN:

“How can we diversify our housing, population, and business offerings while retaining the sense of place and character that we cherish?”

“How can we prepare areas of the city for new and exciting redevelopments while supporting the businesses and residents that are already there?”

“What tools do we need to create to fit new development into existing patterns, ensure high quality, and ensure we maintain our aesthetics?”



The Salem Farmers Market draws residents and visitors Downtown for fresh foods and community connections and is one of the many events hosted by the City.

# SUMMARY OF RECOMMENDATIONS

## **1. Identify Areas to Capture Potential Growth**

– Define priority areas for new place-based development while strengthening and supporting existing neighborhoods.

## **2. Expand Mixed-Use Development**

– Expand and refine the definition of Mixed Use to foster walkable, vibrant communities.

## **3. Promote Revenue-Generating Development**

– Support business growth and job creation through strategic investments and policies.

## **4. Address Housing Needs**

– Explore strategies to improve housing affordability, diversity, and accessibility, with a focus on younger generations and seniors.

## **5. Create Walkable Neighborhoods**

– Develop and implement Complete Streets that prioritize pedestrian-and bike friendly neighborhoods

## **6. Provide Neighborhood Parks**

– Ensure access to equitably distributed parks within both existing and future neighborhoods.

## **7. Expand and Enhance the Roanoke River Greenway Experience**

– Extend

the Greenway into Salem's neighborhoods and commercial districts to enhance access and connectivity. Position Salem as a premier "trail-oriented City," leveraging outdoor recreation.

## **8. Continue to provide excellent Community Services**

– Provide the resources and and staffing needed to continue to offer these services into the future.

## **9. Strengthen Regional Collaboration**

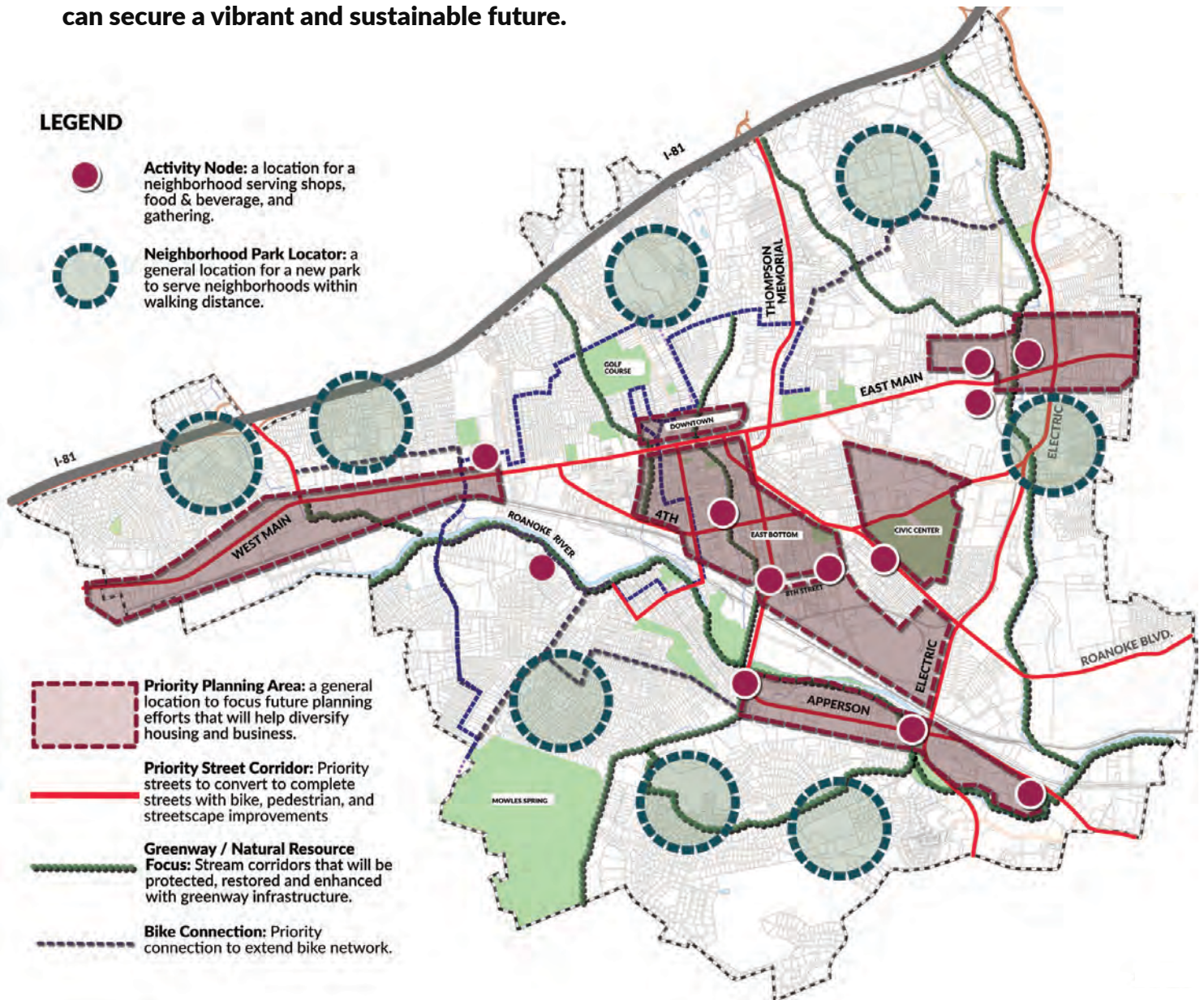
– Promote collaboration around economic growth, connectivity, open space preservation, and housing solutions across the region.

## **10. Align Actions with Budget Priorities**

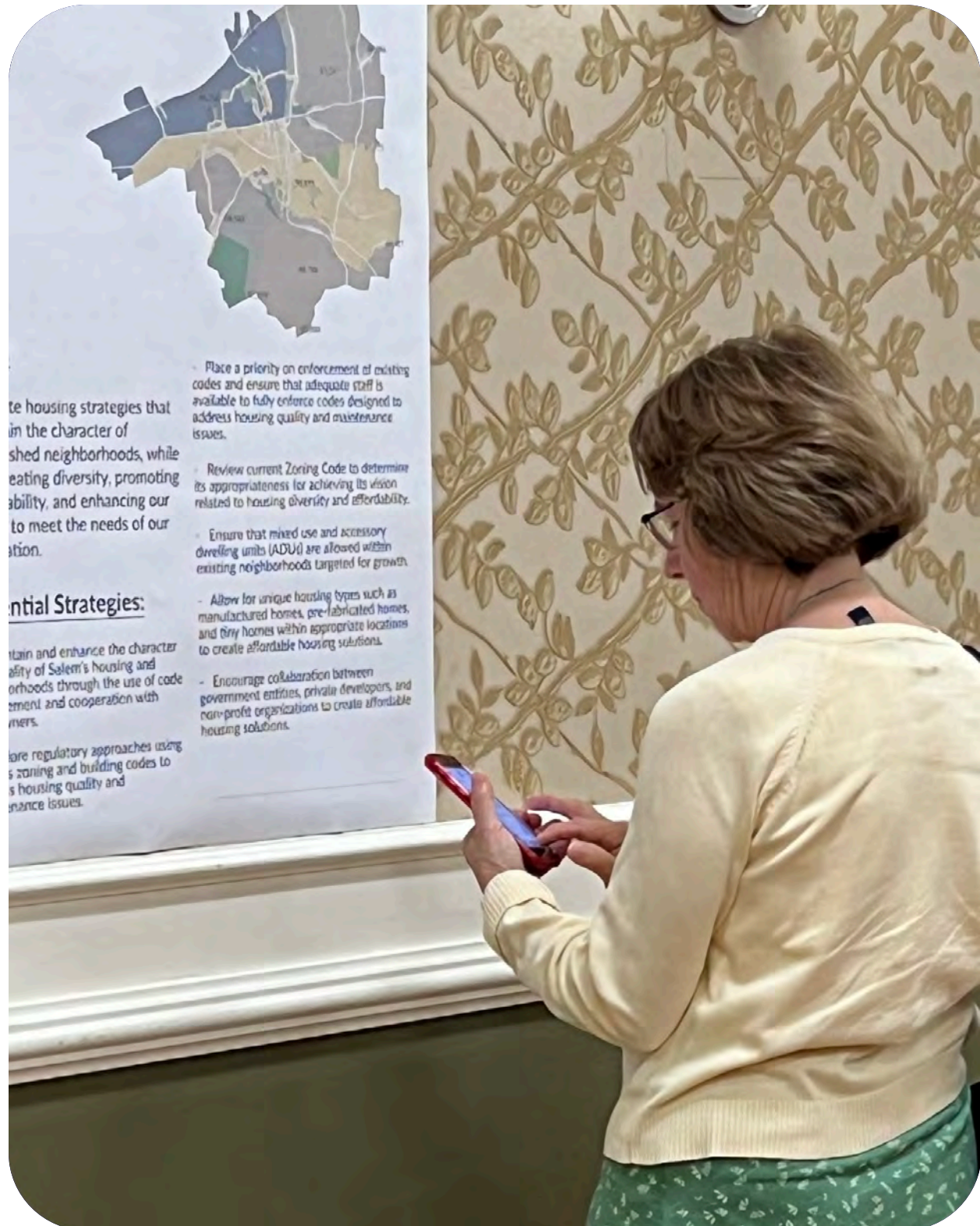
– Define and prioritize key initiatives within budget constraints and across departments.



Simple, time-tested urban planning principles—when implemented thoughtfully and with high-quality execution—can enhance Salem’s economy, strengthen neighborhood connections, and boost overall connectivity. By fostering walkability and embracing placemaking, Salem can secure a vibrant and sustainable future.







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in the character of  
shed neighborhoods, while  
eating diversity, promoting  
ability, and enhancing our  
to meet the needs of our  
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### ntial Strategies:

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lore regulatory approaches using  
s zoning and building codes to  
s housing quality and  
insurance issues.

- Place a priority on enforcement of existing codes and ensure that adequate staff is available to fully enforce codes designed to address housing quality and maintenance issues.

- Review current Zoning Code to determine its appropriateness for achieving its vision related to housing diversity and affordability.

- Ensure that mixed use and accessory dwelling units (ADUs) are allowed within existing neighborhoods targeted for growth.

- Allow for unique housing types such as manufactured homes, pre-fabricated homes, and tiny homes within appropriate locations to create affordable housing solutions.

- Encourage collaboration between government entities, private developers, and non-profit organizations to create affordable housing solutions.

# COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

**Community engagement was a priority within the process to create the plan. Over the course of the plan's development, there were multiple opportunities for the public to provide input, voice concerns, and comment on and shape in-progress plans.**

Efforts were made along the way to adjust the approaches in order to reach as many segments of the community as possible. Workshops were scheduled throughout the process of creating the plan so that input directly influenced the development of the plan. Several techniques were used to engage the community, including presentations, pop-ups, polling, table exercises, and one-on-one or group meetings.

## ADVERTISING ENGAGEMENT

The City used multiple methods to drive engagement, including direct mail, attending church services, press releases, flyers, attending community events such as The Pumpkin Fest and a Salem Red Sox baseball

game, managing a project web site, social media, print media, and signage.

## PLANNING COMMISSION, AND CITY COUNCIL

The consultants and planning staff met with the Planning Commission and City Council at key milestones to solicit feedback on the development of the draft plan. These meetings were both public meetings, and workshops.

## WEB AND MEDIA PRESENCE

The Comprehensive Plan was developed alongside a 24/7 web presence via the City website that allowed free and open access to key plan documents as well as a platform for the public to interface with and react to the plan's development. The plan was advertised and reported on in a variety of local media, including press releases, email, and the City's social media platforms.

## PUBLIC ONLINE POLLING

The plan was influenced by online public polling that mirrored the topics within the process of creating the plan. The polling began a dialogue about Salem's strengths as a community, evaluated citizen satisfaction

with existing City services and qualities, discussed options for growth, housing, open space, and parks, and offered a glimpse into public preferences for prioritizing future investment. Our initial polling attracted over 600 responses and provided the plan guidance on key issues.

## PUBLIC MEETINGS:

**Five in person public workshops were conducted with the community. These were focused on specific topics as follows:**

1. **Plan, Vision, and Themes**
2. **Transportation corridors**
3. **Parks, trails, and open space systems**
4. **Housing**
5. **Strategies and Vision for the East Bottom District**

The meetings offered the community the chance to share ideas and priorities through live polling and chat function. One meeting was held with the Students at Salem High School. A final public community meeting was held at the Salem Civic Center, where exhibit boards were set up to reveal the Themes and Strategies, a draft Future Land Use Map (FLUM), and the Focal Area Plan for East Bottom. All workshop exhibit materials were published online and translated into a user-friendly format for viewers to navigate and respond to survey questions or provide comments at their own pace.

## KEY TAKEAWAYS:

**Several important topics and concepts came to the forefront of our varied discussions while conducting the planning process:**

- **Salem residents overwhelmingly expressed pride and satisfaction in calling this City home.** As the community looks toward the future, there was a strong desire to protect and build upon the qualities that make Salem special—its small-town charm, strong sense of place, and connected neighborhoods.
- **Growth is welcomed, but with care and intentionality.** The community supports development that enhances Salem’s character, brings new life to the City, and broadens opportunity. By encouraging a mix of housing options—including affordable units, diverse densities, and homes that meet the needs of younger residents and aging seniors—Salem can attract a wider population while supporting its existing community.
- **Historic neighborhoods, beloved for their character and heritage, are deeply valued.** Preserving these areas remains a top priority, with future planning efforts aimed at reinforcing their unique identity.



- **Housing emerged as a key issue.** While there is recognition of the need for expanded offerings—including smaller infill homes, Accessory Dwelling Units (ADUs), and the possibility of manufactured homes in new areas—there is also caution. Community members emphasized the importance of quality, thoughtful integration, and clear guidance on where such changes would be appropriate.
- **There was broad agreement on the need to reimagine Salem’s major transportation corridors.** These areas must evolve in response to shifting retail trends, growing traffic concerns, and the need for safer, multi-modal transportation options. Each corridor has its own character, and tailored strategies should reflect and elevate their individual roles within the broader City vision.
- **Recreation and green space access remain vital community values.** Many residents expressed a strong interest in expanding neighborhood-scale parks that are easily walkable from homes, as well as enhancing connectivity to the Roanoke Greenway. The Greenway, in particular, is seen as a standout asset with the potential to knit neighborhoods together and link residents to natural spaces and City amenities.

- **Concerns about property maintenance and the appearance of certain areas were also raised.** Addressing these issues will require a shared understanding of current regulations and a collaborative approach to policy enforcement and support.

**Together, these priorities shape a shared vision for Salem—one rooted in respect for the past, responsiveness to present needs, and readiness for a resilient, inclusive future.**

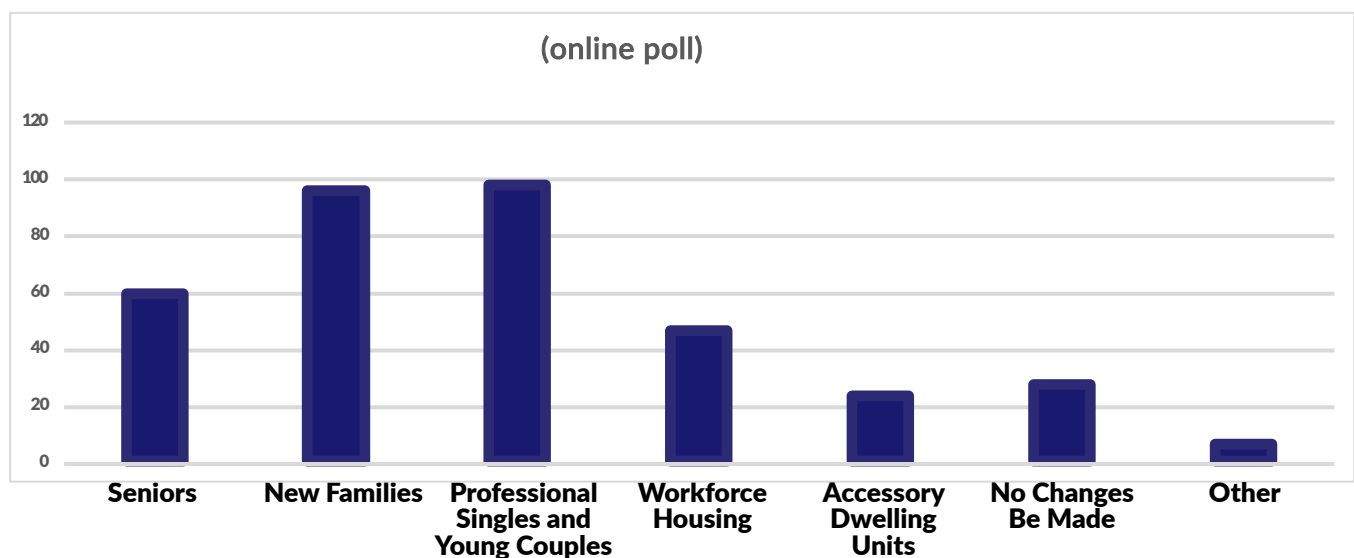
**Investments in planning should be scoped to create the tools needed to provide the protection and preservation outcomes expressed by residents, incentivize new housing that is more diverse and affordable, attract new businesses in walkable patterns, and create small area plans that define how new developments will encourage a revitalized City over time, in support of the Comprehensive Plan’s Vision.**

## CAPTURE FROM COMMUNITY

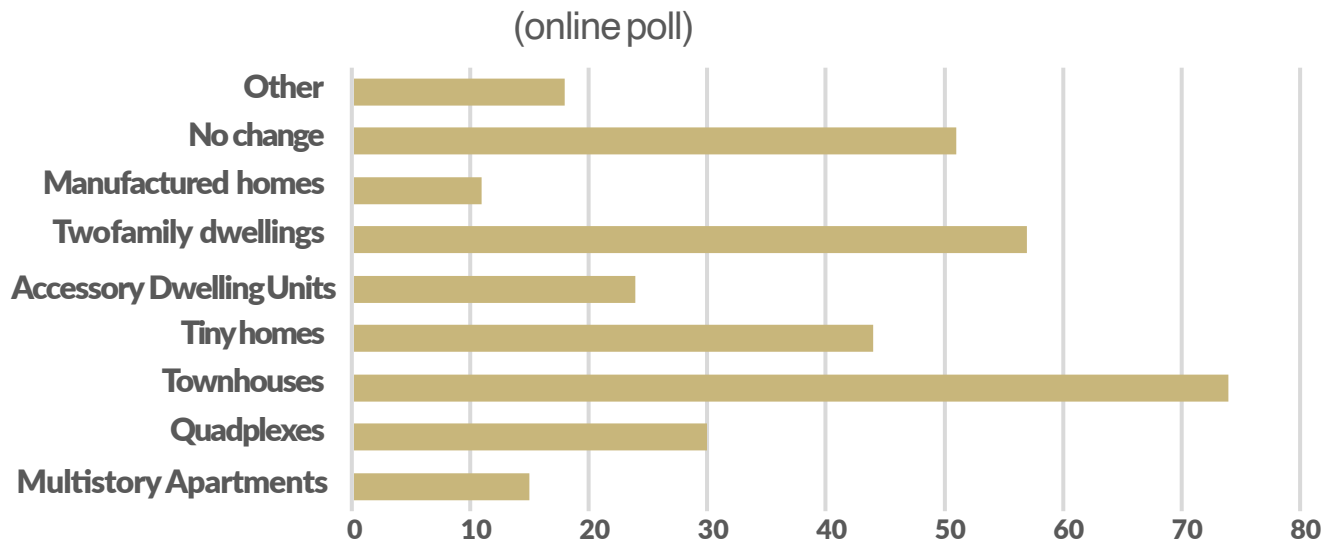
Various polling exercises conducted throughout the process focused on housing, growth, and development to get a feel for how Salem might best accommodate the production of housing that is affordable to more of its citizens.

The polling suggested that Salem is divided on growth and housing. Many residents didn't want the City to grow or grow slowly, while others were more accommodating of growth. Interestingly, the polling also showed that many residents would like more houses that were attractive to more market segments, would be appealing to a younger generation, and would be priced more modestly.

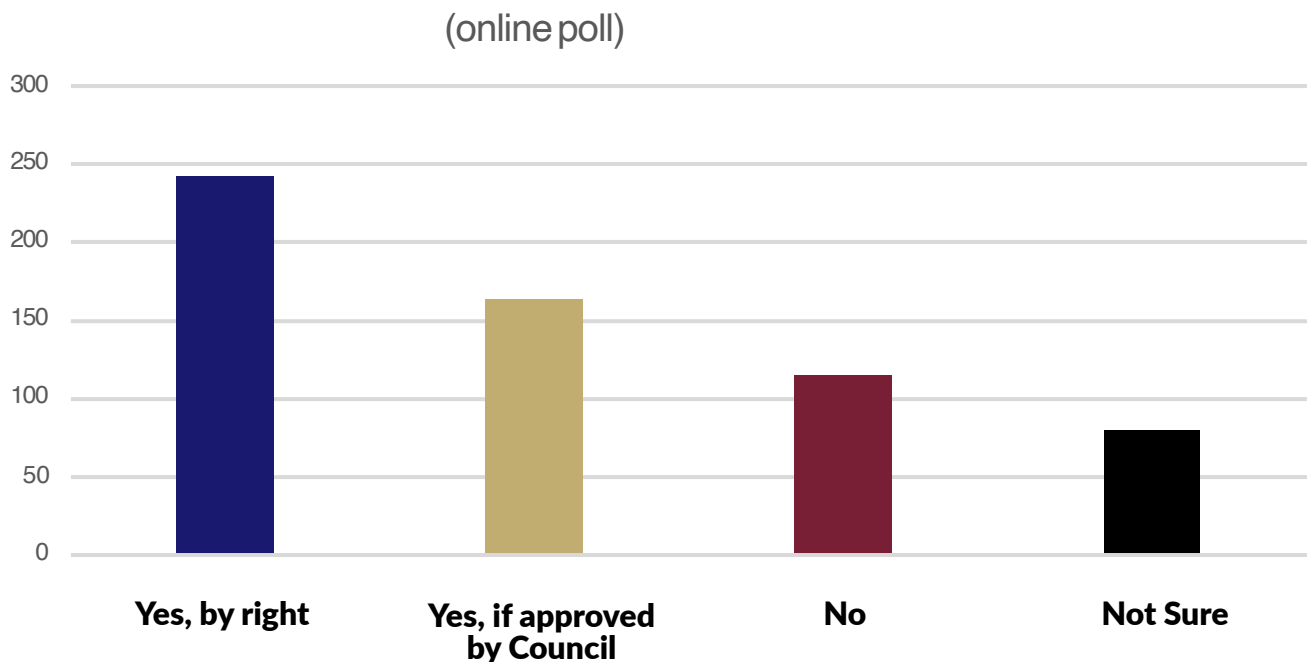
### BROADENING SALEM'S HOUSING OFFERINGS SHOULD FOCUS ON:



## TYPES OF HOUSING RESIDENTS WOULD LIKE TO BECOME MORE ACCESSIBLE / AVAILABLE

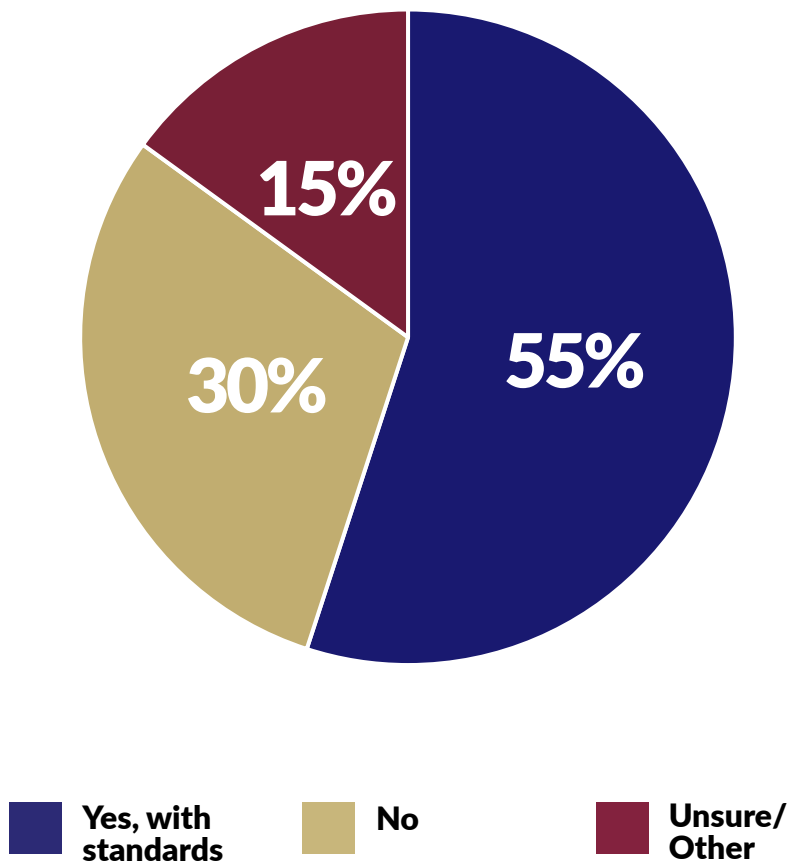


## SHOULD ACCESSORY DWELLING UNITS BE ALLOWED?



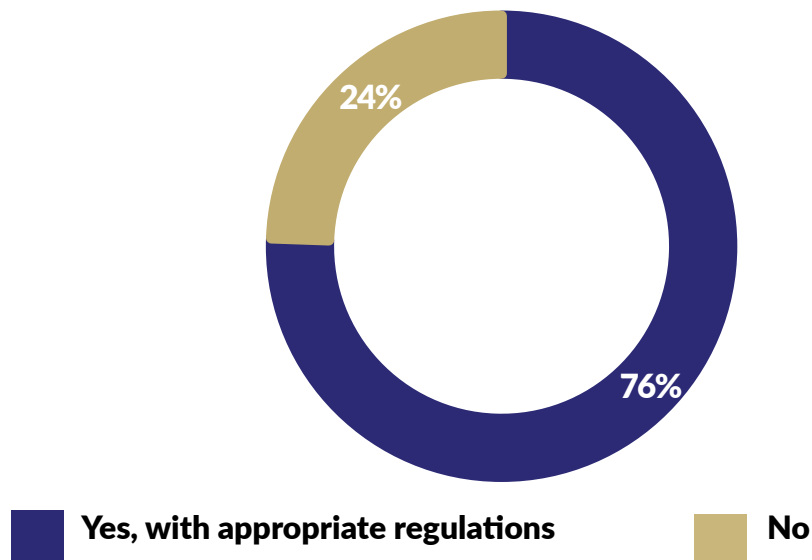
**CONSIDERING MANUFACTURED HOUSING AS A MEANS TO  
IMPROVING HOUSING AVAILABILITY AND AFFORDABILITY**

(Online Poll)



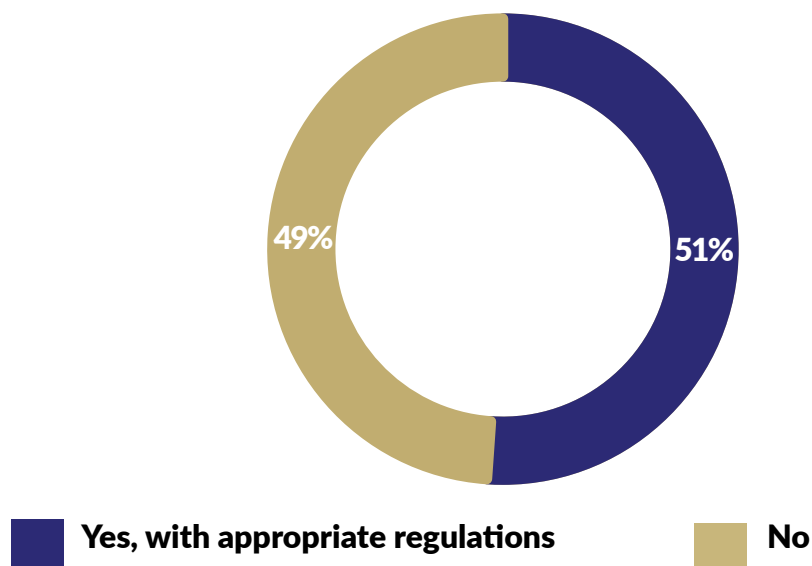
## SHOULD ADU'S BE CONSIDERED / ALLOWED?

(August 2024 Open House)



## SHOULD MANUFACTURED HOUSING BE EXPLORED OUTSIDE OF MANUFACTURED HOME PARKS?

(from August 2024 Open House)



# KEY DEFINITIONS

## Urban Planning Terms – Simple Definitions

### Accessory Dwelling Unit (ADU)

A small, separate living space on the same property as a main home. Examples include garage apartments or backyard cottages.

### Affordable Housing

Housing that costs no more than 30% of a household's income, making it accessible to low- or moderate-income people as defined by the department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD).

### Average Daily Trips (ADT)

Average Daily Trips (ADT) is the average number of vehicle trips generated to and from a location or roadway segment per day, typically calculated over a 24-hour period.

### Bikeability

How easy and safe it is to get around a place by bicycle.

### Bikeable

Describes a place where riding a bike is safe, convenient, and comfortable.

### Community Services

Public services that support daily life and well-being, such as schools, libraries, healthcare, parks, and emergency services.

### Complete Streets

Roads designed for safe use by everyone—people walking, biking, driving, or using public transit—regardless of age or ability.

### Connectivity

How well streets, paths, and transit routes link places, making travel more direct and convenient.

### Corridor Study

A planning review of a major road or transit route to improve safety, traffic flow, development, and access.

### Daylighting Streams

The process of uncovering buried or piped streams and restoring them to a more natural, open condition.

### Economic Development

Efforts to grow jobs, businesses, and investments in a community to improve its economy and quality of life.

### Floodplain

Land next to a river or stream that may flood during heavy rain or snowmelt.

### Floodway

The central part of a floodplain where water flows fastest and deepest during a flood—development is usually restricted here.

### Housing Affordability

A measure of whether people can afford to rent or buy homes based on their income and local housing costs.

### Housing Density

The number of homes in a specific area, such as per acre or square mile.

## **Mixed-Use**

A development or area that combines housing, businesses, and other uses in one place to encourage walking and reduce car use.

## **Place-Based Planning**

A planning approach that focuses on the unique needs and strengths of a specific location or community.

## **Regional Cooperation**

When neighboring cities, towns, or counties work together on shared challenges like transportation, housing, or environmental protection.

## **Sharrows**

(shared lane markings) are road symbols used to indicate that a travel lane is shared by both bicycles and motor vehicles. They remind drivers to expect cyclists and guide cyclists on proper lane positioning.

## **Small Area Planning**

Detailed planning for a specific part of a city or town, like a neighborhood or district, to guide growth and improvements.

## **Walkability**

How friendly a place is for walking, based on things like sidewalks, safety, and access to destinations.

## **Walkable**

Describes a place where walking is safe, convenient, and pleasant for people of all ages and abilities.

## **Zoning Terms:**

### **Form-Based Zoning**

A zoning approach that focuses on the physical form and appearance of buildings and public spaces, rather than their specific use.

### **Euclidean Zoning**

A traditional zoning method that separates land uses into specific geographic zones (e.g., residential, commercial, industrial) with strict rules about what can be built in each.

### **Hybrid Zoning**

A zoning system that combines elements of both form-based and Euclidean zoning to allow for more flexibility in land use and design.

# COMPLIANCE WITH STATE OF VIRGINIA

The State of Virginia's Code of Virginia 15.2-2223 requires that comprehensive plans be developed according to the following Article 3 and include certain elements as shown on the table on the left hand page:

## Article 3. The Comprehensive Plan.

### § 15.2-2223. Comprehensive plan to be prepared and adopted; scope and purpose.

A. 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.

In the preparation of a comprehensive plan, the commission shall make careful and comprehensive surveys and studies of the existing conditions and trends of growth, and of the probable future requirements of its territory and inhabitants. The Comprehensive Plan shall be made with the purpose of guiding and accomplishing a coordinated, adjusted and harmonious development of the territory which will, in accordance with present and probable future needs and resources, best promote the health, safety, morals, order, convenience, prosperity and general welfare of the inhabitants, including the elderly and persons with disabilities.

The Comprehensive Plan shall be general in nature, in that it shall designate the general or approximate location, character, and extent of each feature, including any road improvement and any transportation improvement, shown on the plan and shall indicate where existing lands or facilities are proposed to be extended, widened, removed, relocated, vacated, narrowed, abandoned, or changed in use as the case may be.

#### Notes:

- Transportation Plan formed regionally by the Long Range Transportation Plan created by RVARC in conjunction with local input and initiatives
- Historic areas designated by registration with State and National Historic Registries
- Water resources outlined in Resilience Plan and Municipal Water Service Plan
- Salem Capital Improvement Plan
- Resilience described within Salem's Resilience Plan



## COMPREHENSIVE PLAN COMPLIANCE SUMMARY

### A. PREPARATION OF A COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

- All Chapters

### B. TRANSPORTATION PLAN

- Roanoke Valley Transportation Plan
- Safe, Multi-modal Corridors To Enhance Our Image and Character Chapter
- Neighborhoods Connected to Parks, Open Spaces, and Greenways Sub Chapter

### C. LONG RANGE PLAN RECOMMENDATIONS

#### 1. Areas of Public and Private Development and Use

- Strategic Redevelopment to Promote New Housing, Diversity, and Businesses Sub Chapter
- Housing That Fits Our Needs and Supports Our Neighborhoods

#### 2. Designated System of Community Service Facilities

- City Data Chapter
- Best in Class Community Services and Infrastructure That Meet the Needs of our Citizens Sub Chapter

#### 3. Designation of Historic Areas and Areas for Urban Renewal

- Strategic Redevelopment to Promote New Housing, Diversity, and Businesses Sub Chapter
- An Economy and Workforce that will Carry Salem into the Future Sub Chapter

#### 4. Water Resource Areas

- City Data Chapter

- Best in Class Community Services and Infrastructure That Meet the Needs of our Citizens Sub Chapter

- Neighborhoods Connected to Parks, Open Spaces, and Greenways Sub Chapter

#### 5. Capital Improvement Plans

- Action Plan Chapter

#### 6. Recycling Centers

- City Data Chapter

#### 7. Military Bases (N/A)

#### 8. Corridors and Routes for Electric Transmission Lines of 150 kv or more (N/A)

#### 9. Areas for Affordable Housing

- Strategic Redevelopment to Promote New Housing, Diversity, and Businesses Sub Chapter
- Housing That Fits Our Needs and Supports Our Neighborhoods Sub Chapter

#### 10. Strategies to Provide Broadband Infrastructure N/A

- City Data Chapter

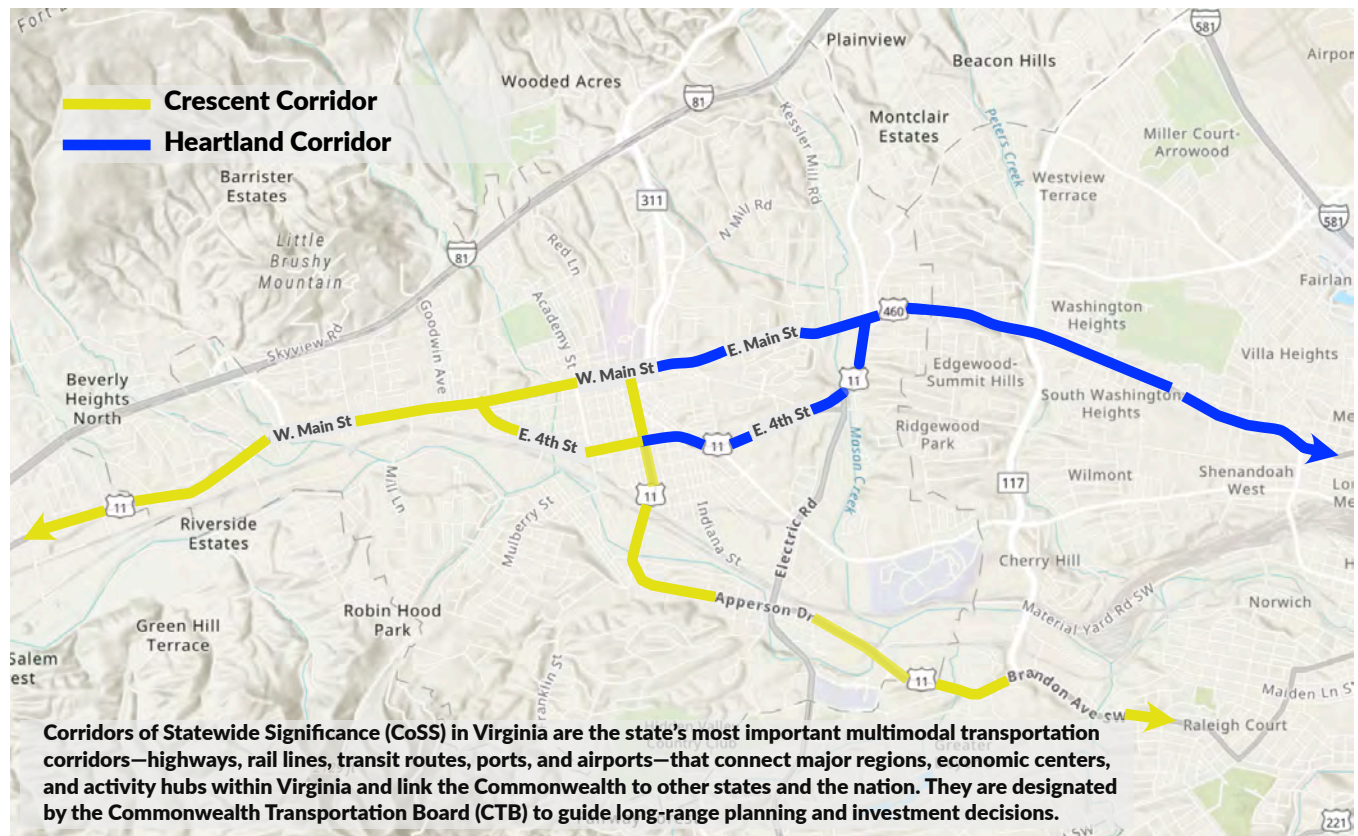
#### 11. Plan for Resilience

- Salem, Virginia Resilience Plan
- Strategic Redevelopment to Promote New Housing, Diversity, and Businesses Sub Chapter
- An Economy and Workforce that will Carry Salem into the Future Sub Chapter
- Regional Partnerships to Enhance Opportunities

## COORDINATION WITH VIRGINIA DOT/VTRANS

Transportation projects will be developed in coordination with VTrans. VTrans is Virginia's statewide transportation plan. It is prepared for the Commonwealth Transportation Board (CTB) by the Office of Intermodal Planning and Investment (OIPI). VTrans lays out the overarching vision and goals for transportation in the Commonwealth and plans to achieve those goals.

### VDOT Corridors of State Significance:



### Significant Projects: Six Year Improvement Projects (Salem)

UPC	Description	Route	District	Road System	Jurisdiction
119562	#SMART22 - ROANOKE RIVER GREENWAY EXTENSION	9999	Salem	Enhancement	Salem
125090	ROANOKE RIVER GREENWAY - APPERSON TO COOK CONNECTOR	9999	Salem	Enhancement	Salem
127468	ELIZABETH GREENWAY PHASE 2	9999	Salem	Enhancement	Salem
119474	#SMART22 - APPERSON DR (RTE 11)/ORCHARD INTERSECTION IMPROV	11	Salem	Primary	Salem
119475	#SMART22 - DOWNTOWN SALEM - COLLEGE AVENUE IMPROVEMENTS	11	Salem	Primary	Salem
110574	#SGR18LB - APPERSON DRIVE BRIDGE REPLACEMENT	11	Salem	Urban	Salem
110689	#SGR18LB - COLORADO ST BRIDGE REHABILITATION	11	Salem	Urban	Salem
119473	#SMART22 - DOWNTOWN STREETScape IMP WHITE OAK TO MARKET	11	Salem	Urban	Salem
111367	#SMART18 - MASON CREEK GREENWAY PH3 - 419 MULTIMODAL IMPRV	419	Salem	Urban	Salem
113142	DOWNTOWN SALEM - ROANOKE BOULEVARD	9999	Salem	Urban	Salem
113566	ELIZABETH GREENWAY	9999	Salem	Urban	Salem
121998	FRANKLIN STREET IMPROVEMENTS - SALEM	9999	Salem	Urban	Salem
122903	INTERSECTION SAFETY IMPROVEMENTS - CITY OF SALEM	9999	Salem	Urban	Salem
125070	CITY OF SALEM PEDESTRIAN CROSSINGS	9999	Salem	Urban	Salem

## SUPPLEMENTAL PLANS

Including but not limited to:

**Salem City Schools Comprehensive Plan (2016-2022):**

[https://www.boarddocs.com/vsba/slmsdva/Board.nsf/files/ABLRZS70760C/\\$file/2016-2022%20Division%20Comprehensive%20Plan.pdf](https://www.boarddocs.com/vsba/slmsdva/Board.nsf/files/ABLRZS70760C/$file/2016-2022%20Division%20Comprehensive%20Plan.pdf)

**Roanoke Valley Transportation Plan (RVTP):**

<https://rvarc.org/wp-content/uploads/2023/12/RVTP-approved-1-26-23.pdf>

**Salem, Virginia Resilience Plan (2023):**

<https://salemva.gov/DocumentCenter/View/6031/Salem-Resilience-Plan>

**Bikeway Plan for the Roanoke Valley Area Metropolitan Planning Organization (2012 Update)**

<https://rvarc.org/wp-content/uploads/2023/12/RVAMPO-BikewayPlan-2012Update.pdf>

**Greenway Plan**

<https://greenways.org/about-the-greenways/greenway-plan/>

**Salem Tourism Report – to be completed in 2025**

**City of Salem Solid Waste Management Plan**

**Roanoke Valley Allegheny Regional Hazard Mitigation Plan**

[https://rvarc.org/wp-content/uploads/2023/12/RVAR\\_Hazard\\_Mitigation\\_Plan\\_2019.pdf](https://rvarc.org/wp-content/uploads/2023/12/RVAR_Hazard_Mitigation_Plan_2019.pdf)

These documents, an assortment of both localized and regional missions, collectively guide Salem’s efforts in urban planning, economic development, downtown revitalization, and educational excellence, ensuring a coordinated approach to the City’s future growth and prosperity.

**Economic Development Strategic Plan (2023-2028):**

<https://salemva.gov/DocumentCenter/View/5364/Salem-Economic-Development-Strategic-Plan-2023-2028>

**Downtown Plan:**

<https://salemva.gov/DocumentCenter/View/2489>

**The Roanoke Valley-Alleghany Regional Commission (RVARC) Regional Housing Market Analysis**

<https://rvarc.org/wp-content/uploads/2023/12/Region-Housing2020FINAL.pdf>

<https://rvarc.org/wp-content/uploads/2023/12/Regional-Housing-Market-Analysis-Study-05122021.pdf>



DRAFT





# THEMES AND STRATEGIES

**Community Priorities Organized into Synergistic Themes and Strategies.**







**The Salem Library is a community hub at the City's center.**

# COMMUNITY PRIORITIES



## **1. Connected Neighborhoods through Parks and Greenways**

Every neighborhood will enjoy access to parks, open spaces, greenways, and trail networks.



## **2. Safe, Multi-Modal Corridors That Support Mobility and Identity**

Key transportation corridors will be transformed with safe, multi-modal infrastructure—inviting pedestrians and cyclists, calming traffic, and projecting a forward-looking city image through high-quality design.



## **3. Vibrant Redevelopment Districts for Growth and Innovation**

Embracing mixed-use redevelopment that supports a growing and diverse population, fuels economic innovation, and builds vibrant districts with distinct character.



## **4. Diverse Housing for All Stages of Life**

Neighborhoods will be supported by housing that fits the evolving needs of Salem residents.



## **5. A Resilient Economy for the Next Generation**

Focusing on diversifying industry, attracting and retaining talent, supporting local business, and leveraging strong partnerships to ensure long-term prosperity.



## **6. Outstanding Community Services and Infrastructure**

Remain committed to delivering best-in-class public services that meet the expectations of today's citizens and prepare us for tomorrow's needs.



## **7. Regional Collaboration to Expand Opportunity**

Actively building partnerships with regional and state entities, recognizing that collaboration is key to unlocking new opportunities, sharing resources, and amplifying our collective impact.





**The Roanoke Greenway creates a great opportunity for Salem to expand upon its greenway and trails networks to create a City linked to its natural areas, its parks, and to the Blue Ridge region. Exploring methods to increase neighborhood accessibility to parks, open space, and greenways will enhance environmental equity and quality of life for all residents.**



# CONNECTED NEIGHBORHOODS THROUGH PARKS AND GREENWAYS

## Goal:

**Commit planning efforts to explore and develop parks, open spaces, greenways, bikeways, and trails that link with neighborhoods across the City.**

## Context:

Salem's setting within the Blue Ridge Mountains, the Roanoke River, investments in the Roanoke River Greenway, and its natural landforms/waterways create an opportunity to maximize access to the outdoors. This corresponding city plan, over time, will elevate household connectivity to existing and future parks, open spaces, greenways, trails, and natural areas.

Salem has the foundation to maximize its natural setting and claim stake as a regional hub for all types of outdoor recreation and to attract people because of these assets.

North Carolina Department of Transportation conducted a study on the financial benefits of 4 of its greenways. Findings from the project revealed that greenways in North Carolina provide substantial economic benefits, including:

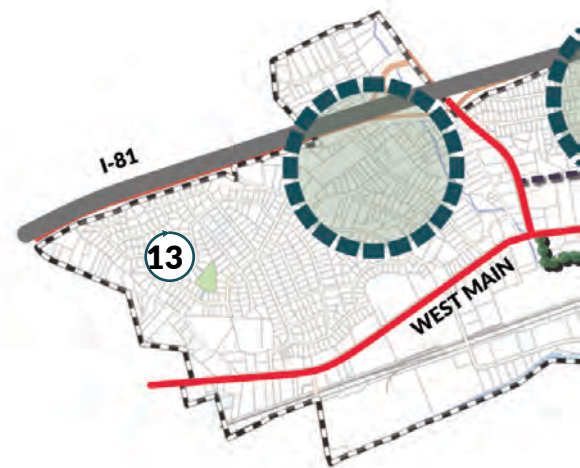
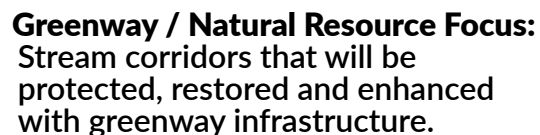
**Business and Employee Benefits:** \$19.4 million in total estimated revenue for local businesses along the four studied greenways

**Retail Sales Tax Benefits:** \$684,000 in total estimated sales tax revenue made from businesses along the greenways, which goes back to local governments

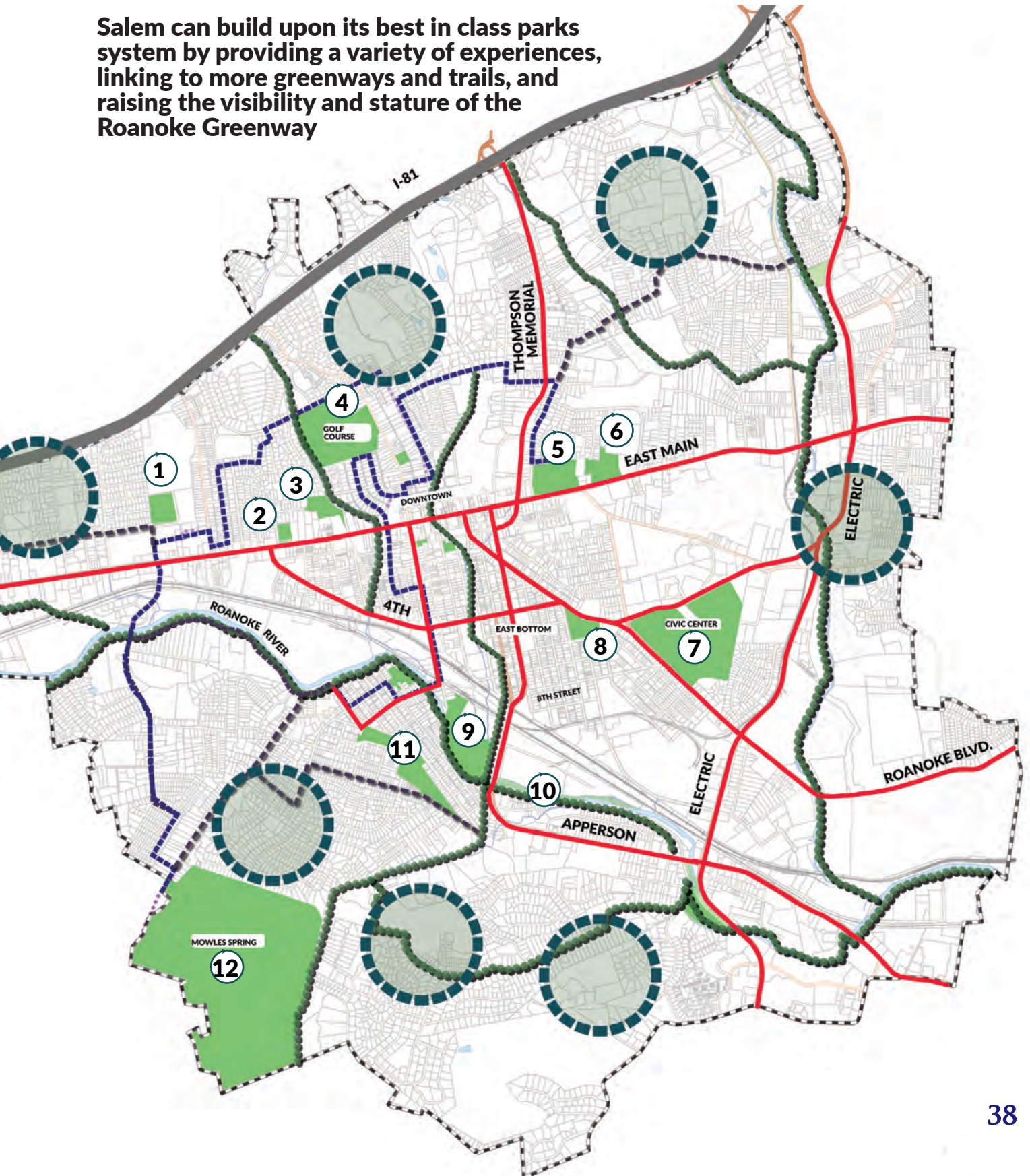
**Trail Construction Benefits:** \$48.7 million in total estimated business revenue from construction of the studied greenways

**Health, Congestion and Pollution Benefits:** \$25.7 million in total estimated savings due to more physical activity, less pollution and fewer traffic injuries from use of the four greenways

- 1: Middleton Gardens
- 2: Lake Spring Park
- 3: Shanks Street Park
- 4: Salem Golf Course
- 5: Longwood Park
- 6: Oakey Park
- 7: Memorial Park / Civic Center
- 8: Kiwanis Field
- 9: Carver Park
- 10: James Moyer Complex
- 11: Ted Webber Park
- 12: Mowles Spring Park
- 13: Beverly Heights Park



Salem can build upon its best in class parks system by providing a variety of experiences, linking to more greenways and trails, and raising the visibility and stature of the Roanoke Greenway





# Strategies & Actions:

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## **1. Create a long term, holistic strategy to develop or refurbish City parks, especially in areas that are currently lacking facilities to increase equity and improve the balance between active parks and less programmed parks:**

- Provide a variety of parks, including small pocket parks and playgrounds that are equitably located cross the City and easily within walking distances (1/4 mile) of homes. Prioritize South Salem locations.
- Explore initiatives to increase awareness of and accessibility to the regionally located skate park.
- Investigate opportunities to create localized, dedicated spaces where community members can safely engage in activities like skateboarding, rollerblading, and biking, providing a recreational outlet and fostering an active lifestyle.
- Develop accessible and affordable solutions to accommodate and capture the needs of younger folks (elementary/middle school-aged) through built-environment design and/or programming.
- Continue efforts to make a Downtown pocket park a reality.
- Explore possibilities for the location/installation of inclusive playgrounds to ensure that recreation spaces are available for folks of all abilities.
- Evaluate avenues to enhance the utilization of Longwood Park to maximize its value as a central community asset/amenity.
- Add active or passive green spaces along the Roanoke River Greenway, such as exercise equipment, play equipment, benches, bird blinds, art, etc.
- Encourage and/or incentivize the development of river activities to capitalize on the Roanoke River Greenway and other connecting creeks/streams.
- Evaluate the Salem Municipal Golf course to determine if other programs can coexist on this important piece of property to expand its use for the community, such as trails, disk golf, nature play, parcourse, etc. Consider the importance of a Conservation Easement to protect it.

## **2. Explore mechanisms to enhance the funding available to finance park, open space, and greenway creation, development, and maintenance including impact fees and grant programs.**

- 
- 3. Continue with regional approaches that leverage Roanoke County, Roanoke City, City of Salem, Botetourt, and Vinton, to provide a regional “Blue Ridge” holistic park and trails (biking and walking) network for tourism and recreation (and importantly economic development).**
    - Through a regional approach, promote and market the region’s parks and trails to attract more visitors, residents, business and revenue.
  - 4. Ensure that community and park system needs are supported and fulfilled by regularly monitoring and exploring:**
    - Best practices to capture the benefits of the City’s sports tourism economy.
    - An appropriate balance between organized sports complexes, passive parks, neighborhood parks, and small pocket parks.
    - Staffing requirements as park system expands.
    - Appropriate revenue generation to support continued funding of high-quality parks experiences.
    - Accessibility to open space and within programmed parks for all age groups and demographics to promote environmental equity.
  - 5. Pursue the completion of the Roanoke Greenway, the Mason Creek Greenway, and other opportunities such as Dry Branch that extend the greenways into the city’s neighborhoods and to Downtown.**
    - When planning greenways, consider including recreation equipment, benches, lighting, learning experiences, and other elements to elevate the experience.
    - Create a clear and attractive map for the Greenway(s) routing.
  - 6. Investigate opportunities related to uncovering previously damaged, piped and channeled streams/creeks. Where practical and feasible due to funding mechanisms, restore them into natural areas that include native plantings, trails, and sitting areas. Priority streams and creeks may include:**
    - Snyders / Williams Branch
    - Dry Branch

## Strategies & Actions:

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- Barnhardt Creek
- Gish Branch
- Williams Branch
- Horners Branch
- Paint Bank Branch
- Mill Race
- 12 O’Clock Knob Branch
- Bowman Hollow

**7. Create a plan to expand bikeways (bike lanes, bike ways, or sharrows) and sidewalks that create additional connections between existing and proposed parks, open spaces and greenways. Priority streets may include the following, with an understanding that built environment constraints will shape the design of possible improvements:**

- Union Street
- 12 O’Clock Knob
- Carrollton Avenue
- Red Lane
- Calhoun Street
- Colorado Street
- South College Avenue
- Florida Steet
- Indiana Street
- Electric Road
- East Main Street
- 8th Street or 7th Street
- Upland Drive
- Apperson Drive
- Kimball Avenue

**8. Create a compelling signage and wayfinding system design that elevates the visibility of bikeways, greenways, and trails that connect to the City’s greenway and park system.**

- 
- 9. Continue to publicize and leverage the McAfee's Knob Shuttle Program as a connection to larger trail systems through advertisement and signage.**
  - 10. Create a more user-friendly website or app to display the availability, operating hours, amenities, location, etc. of each park within Salem.**
    - Create clear communication about the school playgrounds that are accessible to the public.
  - 11. Integrate environmental design principles into the design of parks, open spaces, parking lots, and developments to expand the impacts and benefits of having “nature in the city”.**
    - Highlight/advertise existing City initiatives to celebrate and inform residents about ongoing sustainability projects.
    - Consider light paving and/or permeable paving in City-owned parking lots to reduce heat island impacts.
    - Continue to find places to provide additional native tree canopy (for example, the Civic Center).
    - Integrate best practice storm water management techniques.
    - Design and implement landscapes that do not require heavy maintenance and high-water usage.
    - Explore floodplain enhancement strategies that can either help reclaim property from existing floodplain boundaries and/or reduce flood insurance rates.
  - 12. Identify available grant funding opportunities that can facilitate recapturing lost public space within alleys, parking lots, and City-owned property and develop creative plans for their use.**

## What the Community Said:

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The top two most common desires expressed by the Comprehensive Plan Open House participants in August were:

1. Installation of traffic calming street designs/multi-modal improvements
2. Addition of neighborhood parks, playgrounds, and street trees throughout communities to make public spaces more accessible, attractive, and usable.

## Citizen Quotes:

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“We need more shade (trees) along the greenway, walking paths, sidewalks, and playgrounds.”

“More trees should be installed along West Main Street – we need to focus [planning efforts] on producing more [neighborhood scale] pocket parks.”

“Beautifying some of our neighborhood parks would be great..perhaps adding picnic tables or even shelters where neighbors could go to have birthday parties [or other events].”

“I would like to see a focus on connecting the greenway and providing safe walking and biking space to access schools, grocery stores, and public transit.”

“We love living in Salem, but we are not sports fans. Would like to see more focus on outdoor activities such as hiking and biking”



## Additional Resources For Review:

The Roanoke River Greenway in Salem is part of a larger multi-jurisdictional project to build a trail through the four localities within the Roanoke Valley. Currently, approximately four miles of the greenway have been completed within the city. Several other phases are in planning. Salem is also home to the Mason Creek Greenway and the Hanging Rock Battlefield Trail. The portion of the Roanoke River greenway around the Moyer Sports Complex has been designated the David Smith trail.

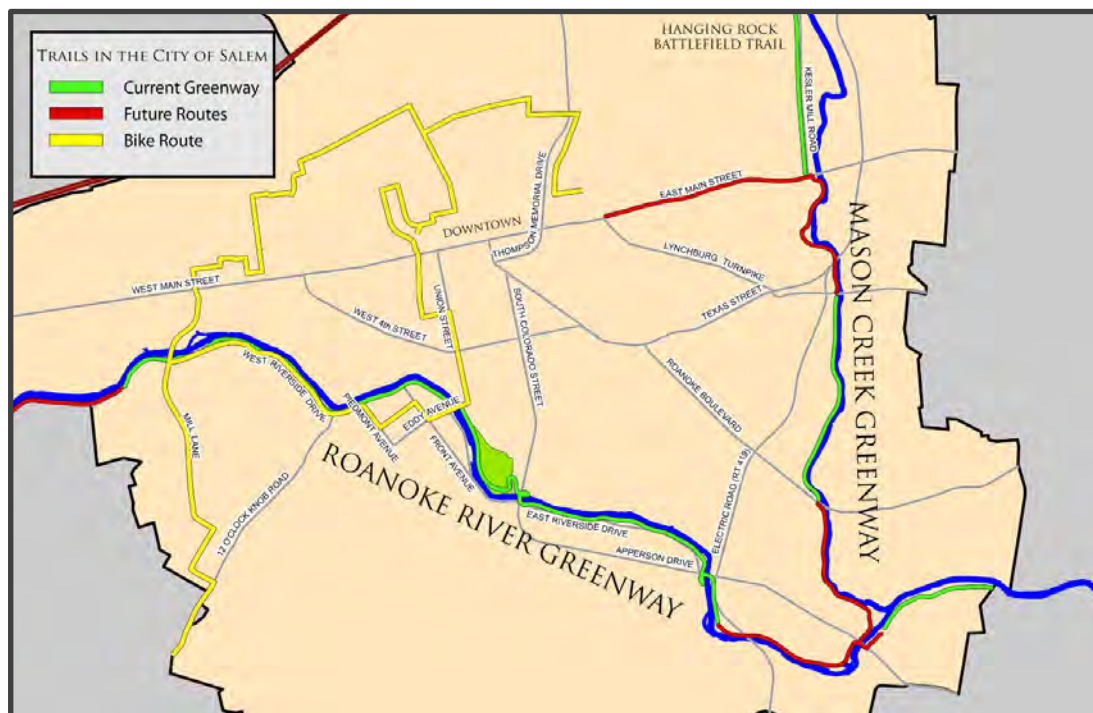
### Links to Relevant Plans and Studies:

<https://greenways.org>

<https://www.ncdot.gov/news/press-releases/Pages/2018/Greenways-Providing-Positive-Economic-Benefits-to-North-Carolina.aspx>

<https://salemva.gov/332/Salem-Bike-Route>

<https://salemva.gov/235/Parks-Recreation>







**Safe, multimodal streets are essential for creating inclusive, accessible communities by accommodating various forms of transportation, including walking, cycling, public transit, and driving. These streets promote safety for all users, reduce traffic congestion, and encourage healthier, more sustainable transportation choices, contributing to a higher quality of life.**



# SAFE, MULTI-MODAL CORRIDORS THAT SUPPORT MOBILITY AND IDENTITY

## Goal:

**Reconstruct important transportation corridors to include multi-modal elements, streetscapes, urban design standards, and enhanced pedestrian and bicycle safety.**

## Context:

Salem is primarily built on a grid of streets, which is arguably the most efficient and flexible design a City could have to support choices, flexible growth, and connectivity. However, larger streets than necessary exist to support regional traffic and to accommodate emergency routing related to I-81 congestion.

Maximizing pedestrian and auto safety on the major, more heavily trafficked streets will enable them to be less of a barrier between North and South Salem, and safe for pedestrians. Finally, considering land use could require a change in the design of corridors like West Main Street, East Main Street, Apperson Drive, and even 4<sup>th</sup> Street.

Complete Streets is a plan to transform how transportation, whether by foot, bike, car, or mass transit, can be accessed safely to the benefit of everyone in a community.

Complete Streets advocates for the addition of infrastructure assets, like unobstructed sidewalks, well-marked bike lanes, and roundabout intersections, in an equitable, thoughtful way to increase safety and accessibility.

Complete Streets not only reduce crashes and injuries but boost employment levels, property values, investment from the private sector, and net new businesses.



# Illustrative Diagram

## STREET TYPES

### STREET IMPROVEMENT TYPE A:

Residential Park Streets: Connect greenways and parks and improved to include painted bike lanes, completed sidewalks, painted on-street parking, and signage and wayfinding.

### STREET IMPROVEMENT TYPE B:

Greenway Connectors: Larger streets that directly connect to open spaces, and greenways that will be improved to include bike lanes, wide sidewalks, lighting, trees and landscaping, and signage and wayfinding.

### STREET IMPROVEMENT TYPE C:

Residential Mixed Use Streets: Smaller pedestrian friendly streets that have a variety of housing types fronting sidewalks, street trees, bike lanes, and on street parking.

### STREET IMPROVEMENT TYPE D:

Mixed Use Commercial Corridors: Corridors that will be transformed into complete streets with road diets, streetscape, painted bike lanes, painted parking, urban design guidelines, complete sidewalks, etc.

### STREET IMPROVEMENT TYPE E:

Gateway Streets: Streets that connect Salem to the region that will be augmented with gateway signage and landscape elements, painted bike lanes, streetscape, lighting, signage and wayfinding.

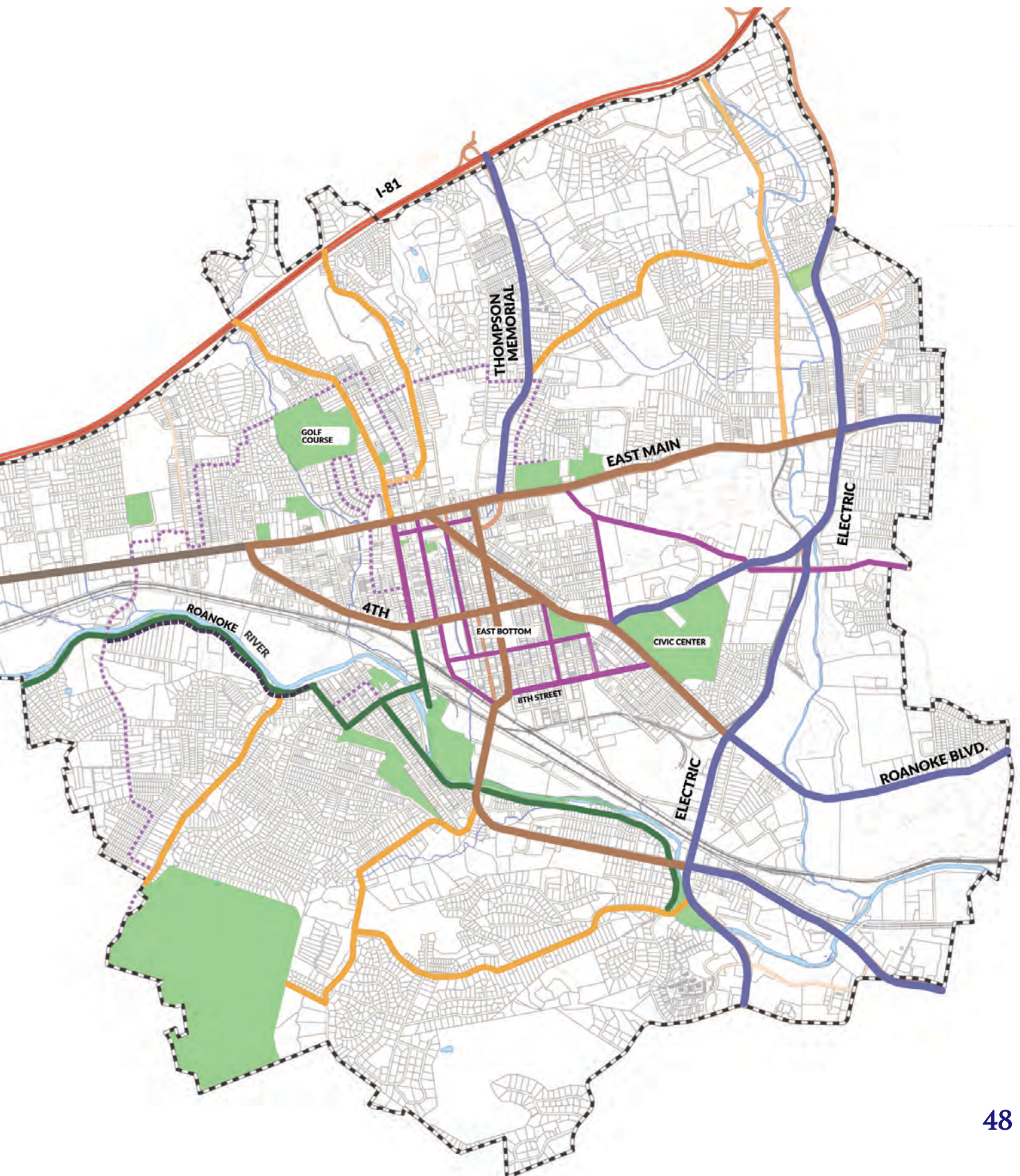
### STREET IMPROVEMENT TYPE F:

High Volume Corridor: Corridors that retain its capacity to handle a high traffic volume. Supports transit with bus shelters, includes signage and streetscape elements, overhead and pedestrian lighting, highly visible crosswalks, and over time, access management techniques, increased signalization, and new urban design patterns and standards for redevelopments.



**Key streets that connect neighborhoods to each other and the City's assets, and Salem to the region, can become more multi-modal and attractive with streetscape elements.**





# Strategies & Actions:

- 1. Work with the Roanoke Valley Alleghany Regional Commission (RVARC) to secure funding priority for needed projects within Salem on the Long-Range Transportation Plan.**
- 2. Coordinate priorities and design standards with RVARC and VDOT to discuss how Salem can work towards creating “Complete Streets” within the City.**
- 3. Create and coordinate the development of a Bike and Pedestrian Plan to expand those elements within the City to connect community assets with neighborhoods (See Theme associated with this for priority streets).**
  - Consider the requirement of sidewalks in new subdivisions where lot size/spacing criteria is met.
  - Work to identify projects designed to retrofit existing neighborhoods with functional sidewalk networks and match them with available and appropriate funding programs.
- 4. Continue to work with VDOT to fulfill the East Main Street project that extends existing streetscape, sidewalk, and bike lane enhancements eastward.**
- 5. In conjunction with the Engineering Division, create design plans and design standards and guidelines for “Type A”, and “Type B Streets” to better support bike and pedestrian friendliness and safety that may include:**
  - Reduced travel speeds (25 mph max).
  - Painted bike lanes dimensions to ASHTO standards, painted parking spaces, adequately dimensioned sidewalks (6 ft.), tree planting space and street trees.
  - Signage and wayfinding.
  - Additional traffic calming elements such as narrower travel lanes, on street parking, etc.
- 6. In conjunction with the Engineering Division, create design plans and guidelines for “Type C” and “Type D” streets that may include:**
  - Adequately dimensioned sidewalks.
  - Safe and highly visible crosswalks, and pedestrian flashing beacons where appropriate.
  - Access management techniques.
  - Urban design criteria.
  - Streetscape elements.
  - Signage and wayfinding.
  - Redevelopment guidance.

**7. In conjunction with the Engineering Division, create a corridor design plan for key “front door” corridors (Type E Streets) that may include:**

- Coordinated decorative signage, gateway elements, and landscape treatments.
- Bike lanes, sidewalks, and/or off-street multi-purpose trails.
- Street trees and planted median spaces where possible.
- Road diets where possible.
- Safe and highly visible crosswalks and pedestrian flashing beacons.

**8. Create a long-range plan to support pedestrian friendly redevelopment (over time) along West Main Street and 4th Street, to include:**

- Access management techniques.
- Explore alternative routes and connections along the northern side of West Main Street that may facilitate more efficient traffic (vehicular/alternative) flow.
- Multimodal accommodations.
- Safe and highly visible crosswalks and pedestrian flashing beacons where appropriate.
- Attractive furnishings.
- Adequately sized sidewalks.
- Grade separated bikeways (if possible).
- Urban design strategies that bring buildings closer to the sidewalk and street – especially where pedestrian friendly development is beneficial.

**9. Create a City-wide signage and wayfinding plan that articulates and brands greenway elements, street names, districts, locations for key City elements.**

- Create an identifiable, distinct connection between the Moyer Sports Complex and the Downtown area.
- Consider elements such as wayfinding signage and/or asphalt striping/markings.
- Consider Salem branding options at major intersections with Main Street (Wildwood, Thompson Memorial, Electric).

**10. Enhance the use of public transportation within the City to include:**

- Attractive, comfortable, and regularly spaced bus shelters along major corridors where Valley Metro bus stops currently exist.
- Consider the integration of an attractive “hop on hop off” shuttle or trolley to circulate around key connective streets that link with neighborhoods and city assets and destinations.
- Extend transit routes to underserved areas to ensure equitable access and mobility.



- Create artful and highly visible signage for the system.
- Conduct public outreach campaigns to educate residents about the benefits and availability of public transit.
- Engage the community in planning processes to ensure that transit services meet their needs.

**11. Work with Norfolk Southern Railway to design and construct safer crossings over railroad tracks to enhance connectivity.**

## What the Community Said:

“The City needs to rethink how West Main is designed so that it becomes a place where residents want to go. Could start by reducing it to 2 lanes plus bike lanes, reduce speed, add roundabouts, and develop along the road rather than having all businesses set back across a sea of asphalt.”

“The congestion in Salem when there is an accident on 81. I’m concerned about emergency vehicles being delayed trying to get through traffic!”

“Stop restricting traffic flow on Main Street in Salem with planters, additional curbing and sidewalk extensions into the street.”

“Please fix West Main Street, whether it be through reprogramming or updating the traffic lights or figuring out a way to avoid it being a major detour road for I-81.”

“Sidewalks and bike lanes would benefit transportation and encourage younger families to the community.”

“My priorities are more sidewalks in neighborhoods, especially to connect to downtown, green spaces, and the Greenway as well as more mixed-use development downtown.”

# Additional Resources For Review:



## Links to Relevant Plans and Studies:

<https://rvarc.org/wp-content/uploads/2023/12/RVTP-approved-1-26-23.pdf>

<https://nacto.org/publication/urban-street-design-guide/>

[https://nacto.org/docs/usdg/designing\\_walkable\\_urban\\_thoroughfares.pdf](https://nacto.org/docs/usdg/designing_walkable_urban_thoroughfares.pdf)

<https://valleymetro.com/docs/planning/E87748E5-B3F9-B4F8-FEB5-1DB4FFC5D5CD.pdf>

## WHAT IS A COMPLETE STREET?



[https://santafenm.gov/uploads/images/misc/Screenshot\\_2022-10-25\\_092943.png](https://santafenm.gov/uploads/images/misc/Screenshot_2022-10-25_092943.png)





**Effective corridor planning can foster vibrant commerce districts by enhancing connectivity, optimizing land use, and creating pedestrian-friendly environments that attract businesses, residents, and visitors alike. Creating and implementing strategies that harmoniously blend these elements will maximize the success and vibrancy of Salem's activity nodes.**

## VIBRANT REDEVELOPMENT DISTRICTS FOR GROWTH AND INNOVATION

### Goal:

**Accommodate population and business growth within active mixed-use districts that possess unique identities, diverse housing, complete streets, parks, and community support elements.**

### Context:

With forward-looking planning and the correct codes/policies, Salem can anticipate its future and encourage the evolution of specific areas of the city into mixed-use districts that are less about siloed uses, and more about flexibility, living/working close together, marketable housing densities, complete streets, and access to recreation.

These districts can celebrate unique characters and support a broad, diverse image that celebrates the past, while also capitalizing on the future.

Mixed-use development is an alternative to single-use zoning. It places multiple uses within a site, for example street-level retail with residential units above (vertical mixed use), or co-locates uses within neighborhoods that offer a combination of different uses within walking distance (horizontal mixed use). Mixed-use projects can support non-vehicular access to destinations, increase economic opportunity,



<https://i.pinimg.com/originals/24/7b/17/247b17fce177fb8c4aa7e46f40812b7d.jpg>



# Illustrative Diagram

## 1. West Main Commercial District:

A long term redevelopment district that takes advantage of long standing anchor businesses and promotes new viable commercial uses.

## 2. Downtown District

Continue promoting new businesses, residences, and public spaces to Downtown.

## 3. Snyder-Williams Branch District

Long term redevelopment into an urban neighborhood that organizes around the creek and supports downtown with denser housing stock.

## 4. East Bottom District:

Long term redevelopment into an urban neighborhood that builds off of Valleydale development and provides increased housing density and type.

## 5. Civic Center / Elizabeth Campus District

Create redevelopment plans for Civic Center site to include new Civic Center, mixed use, lodging, properly scaled parking.

## 6. Apperson District:

A plan for redevelopment that promotes a higher mix of uses, and creation of a complete street, that can take advantage of direct access to the Roanoke Greenway.

## 7. East Main Commercial District:

Long term redevelopment that includes rental residential, hotels(s) and storefront commercial uses.



**Activity Node:** a location for a neighborhood serving shops, food & beverage, and gathering.



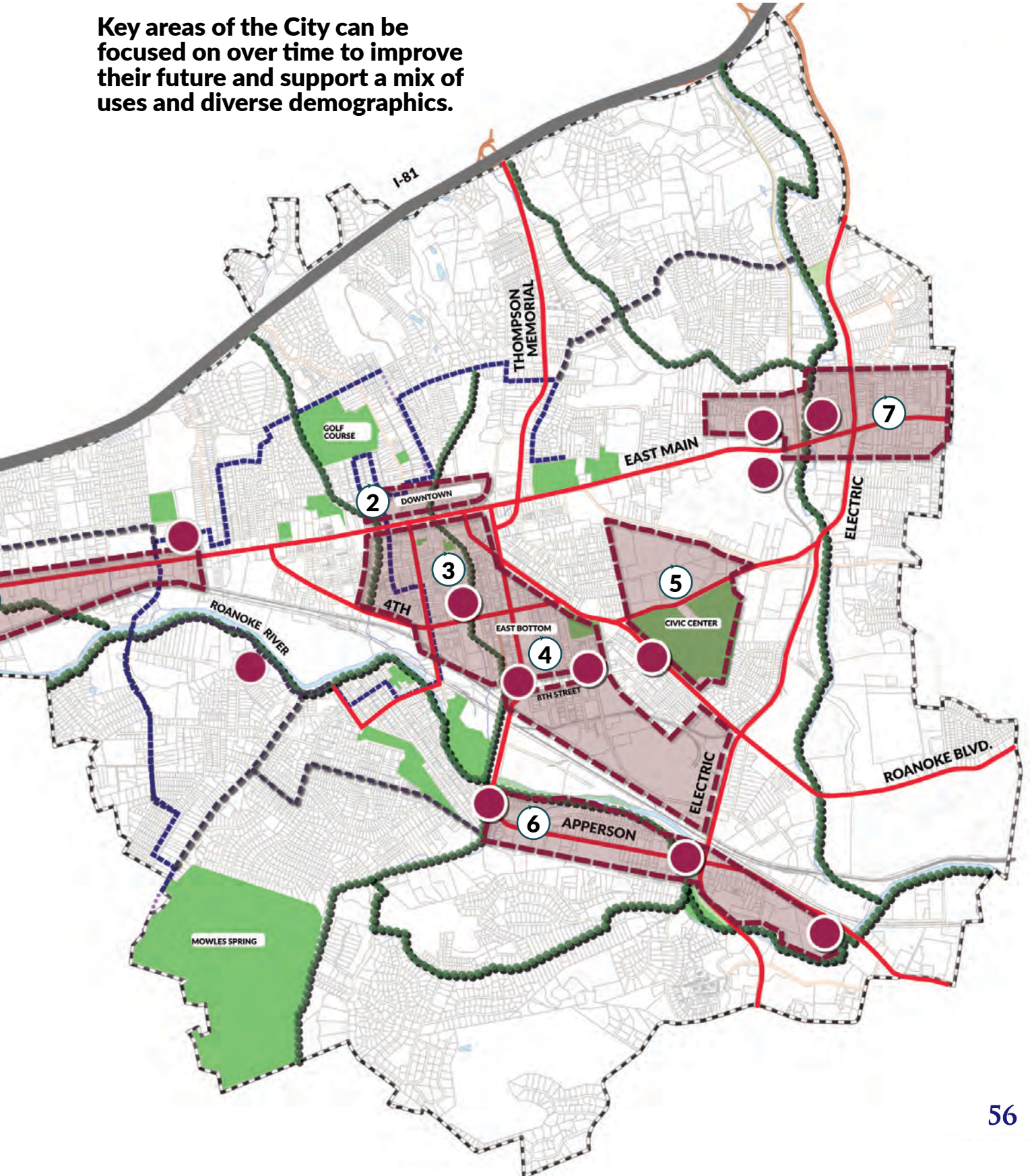
**Priority Planning Area:** a general location to focus future planning efforts that will help diversify housing and business.



**Key Streets:** Important streets that link the districts together and the City to the Region.



Key areas of the City can be focused on over time to improve their future and support a mix of uses and diverse demographics.



# Existing Incentive Overlays

## UDA OVERLAY

-  CITY CORE
-  MIXED-USE CORRIDOR
-  VILLAGE CORE

## TOURISM OVERLAY

-  DOWNTOWN
-  EAST MAIN STREET
-  KESLER MILL
-  TEXAS STREET

## OPPORTUNITY ZONE

-  OPPORTUNITY ZONE

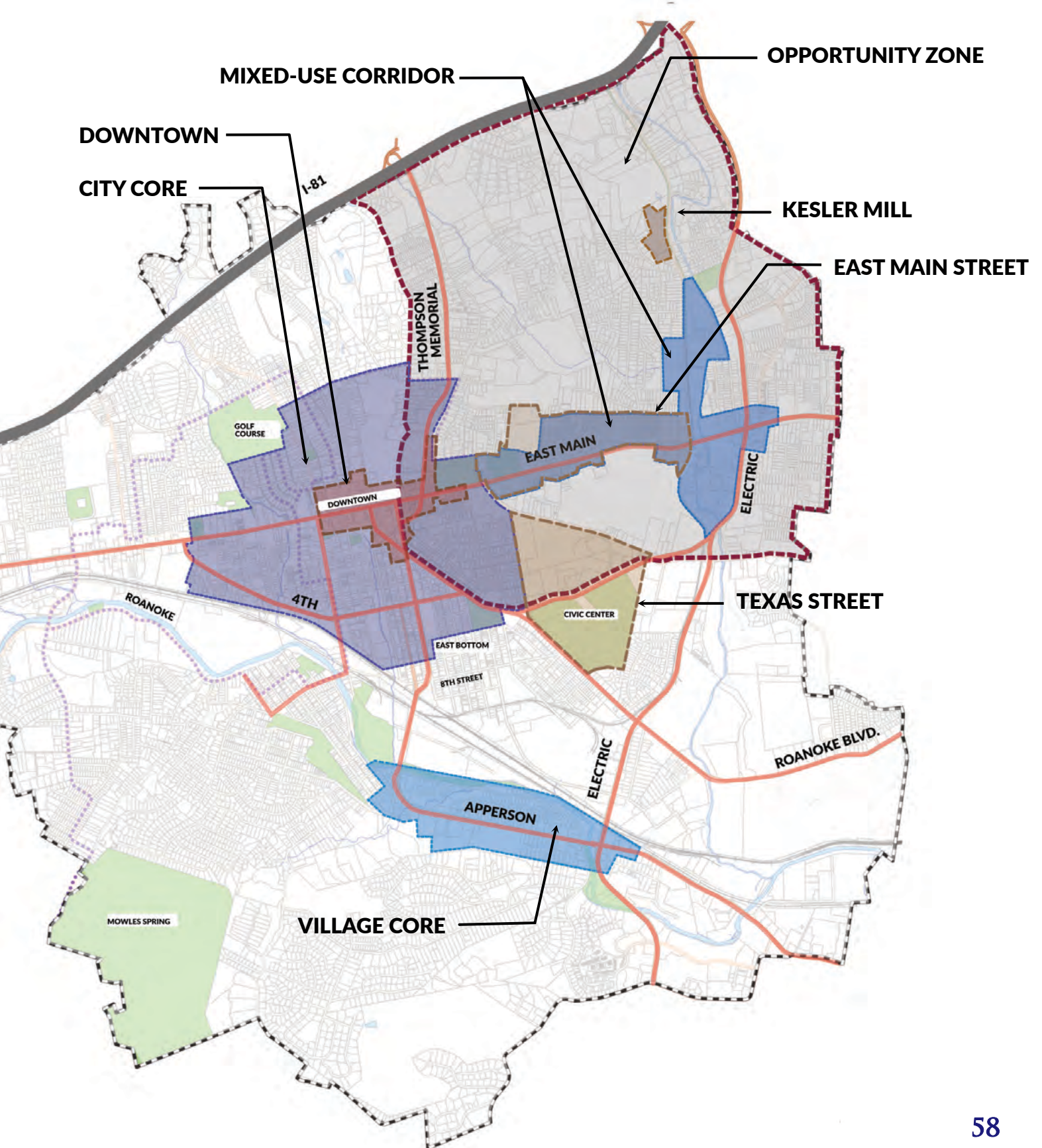


An Urban Development Area (UDA) is a designated area where a locality plans for more intense growth (reference: §15.2-2223.1 of the Code of Virginia)

A Tourism Zone in Virginia is a designated area where businesses can receive incentives and regulatory flexibility to promote tourism. The goal of tourism zones is to attract visitors, create jobs, and increase revenue for the area.

Opportunity Zones are low-income census tracts [IRC Section 45D(e)] that were nominated by the governor of Virginia and certified by the U.S. Treasury where new investments may be eligible for preferential tax treatment if they meet certain qualifications to spur economic development.





# Strategies & Actions:

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## **1. Create a long-term Small Area Redevelopment Plan for the “West Main Street District” that re-positions it over time to maintain commercial success.**

- Consider that West Main Street will always need to accommodate high levels of traffic at key times of the day, and “road dieting is probably not an option”.
- Include provisions for public transportation to reduce traffic congestion.
- As redevelopment occurs, consider relocating power lines underground or behind new development to create space along the street corridor for streetscape elements and grade separated bike ways.
- As part of creating the plan, establish building and parking setbacks that allow for better dimensioned sidewalks, bikeways, and streetscape elements.
- As a way to reduce congestion, include the requirement to connect parking areas and travel lanes between developments so that circulation can occur off of West Main Street.
- Promote redevelopment that enhances pedestrian friendliness and a higher mixing of land uses over time.

## **2. Continue efforts to complete the recommendations of the Downtown Plan, which includes expanding housing opportunities.**

- Consider a new plan for the Farmers Market site, the library grounds, the EMT facility and the City parking lot adjacent to East Burwell Street to increase housing, lodging and more flexible public spaces.
- Enhance awareness of Downtown parking availability through physical signage and/or marketing of online resources (GIS application).
- Expand the potential of Downtown by conducting a retail market analysis.

## **3. Create a Small Area Redevelopment Plan for the “Snyder-Williams Branch District” that reclaims the creek as a central open space.**

- Establish incentives for the development of vacant lots into higher density housing.

- Restore the Snyder-Williams Branch Creek and make it a community open space amenity.
- Establish a retail node at 4th street to enable the district to have a walkable destination for food, beverage, small retail, and other services.
- Coordinate with the Multimodal Improvements theme and create complete streets on key streets.
- Explore grant funding opportunities for facade maintenance, block grants, redevelopment grants, etc. to assist existing and/or prospective property owners.
- Create limited design guidelines for how redevelopment should occur to enhance neighborhoods.
- Develop affordable housing initiatives to ensure a mix of housing options for all income levels in mixed-use districts.
- Rehabilitate and preserve existing housing stock to improve living conditions.

#### **4. Create a Small Area Future Redevelopment Plan for the “East Bottom District” to promote a diverse mixed use community that supports new and existing businesses and residents.**

- Include community gathering spaces such as a community center, parks and active recreation spaces, and places to eat and socialize.
- Explore grant funding opportunities for facade maintenance, block grants, redevelopment grants, etc. to assist existing property owners.
- Revisit codes and pursue reasonable code enforcement to help clean up the area.
- Promote diversity in housing types, business types, and demographics and that will attract younger families to the area.
- Pursue zoning or other that promotes an organic approach to growth - one that allows for a variety and flexibility of land uses, in general compatibility to each other.
- Create a unique signage and wayfinding design that expresses East Bottom's unique character and history.



## Strategies & Actions:

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### **5. Create a Small Area Future Redevelopment Plan for the Civic Center and Elizabeth Campus to use space more efficiently, promote more flexible use, expand lodging and retail opportunities, events, and public space.**

- Consider how the civic center site ties to East Bottom at 8<sup>th</sup> Street and consider the potential of a mixed use retail node.
- Expand the program and usage of the Elizabeth Campus and integrate into plan for Civic Center nodes.

### **6. Create a Small Area Future Redevelopment Plan for the “Apperson District” to integrate more mixing of uses to take advantage of the adjacency to the Roanoke River Greenway.**

- Use ½ mile nodal pattern to create a Transit Ready pattern for the future and plan for mixed use activity nodes at key intersections such as Electric Road, Keagy Road, and East Riverside Drive that offers a diversity of housing, retail, jobs, community services, etc.
- Explore the potential for road diets, medians, access management, transit stops, bikeways, etc. to make Apperson Drive more multi-modal, safe, and attractive
- Consider enhancing street connectivity, when parcels are deep enough and the redevelopment plan supports it, with additional streets that run parallel to Apperson Drive and form a street grid to provide alternative routes.
- Pursue zoning that promotes an organic approach to growth - one that allows for a variety and flexibility of land uses, in general compatibility to each other.

### **7. Create a Small Area Future Redevelopment Plan for the East Main District to include extensions of streetscape improvements, and a mix of uses that include lodging, higher density residential, commercial, and retail nodes adjacent to the Greenway.**

- Extend streetscape and multimodal designs to the City boundary.
- Promote an activity node at Kesler Mill Road where the greenway and East Main Street come together.

### **8. Elevate the business friendly attitude, and create incentives for developers to participate in district development and redevelopment.**

9. As districts are created consider themes that would make them unique and attractive, such as entertainment, or arts, or culture.
10. Facilitate the development of a designated environment (public or private) for younger folks (middle school aged) to gather and enjoy themselves.
11. Capitalize on Roanoke College's proximity to and investment in Downtown.
12. Evaluate existing Urban Development Areas and Opportunity Zones to maximize their applicability.
13. Investigate methods to attract and expedite industrial development in targeted zones.

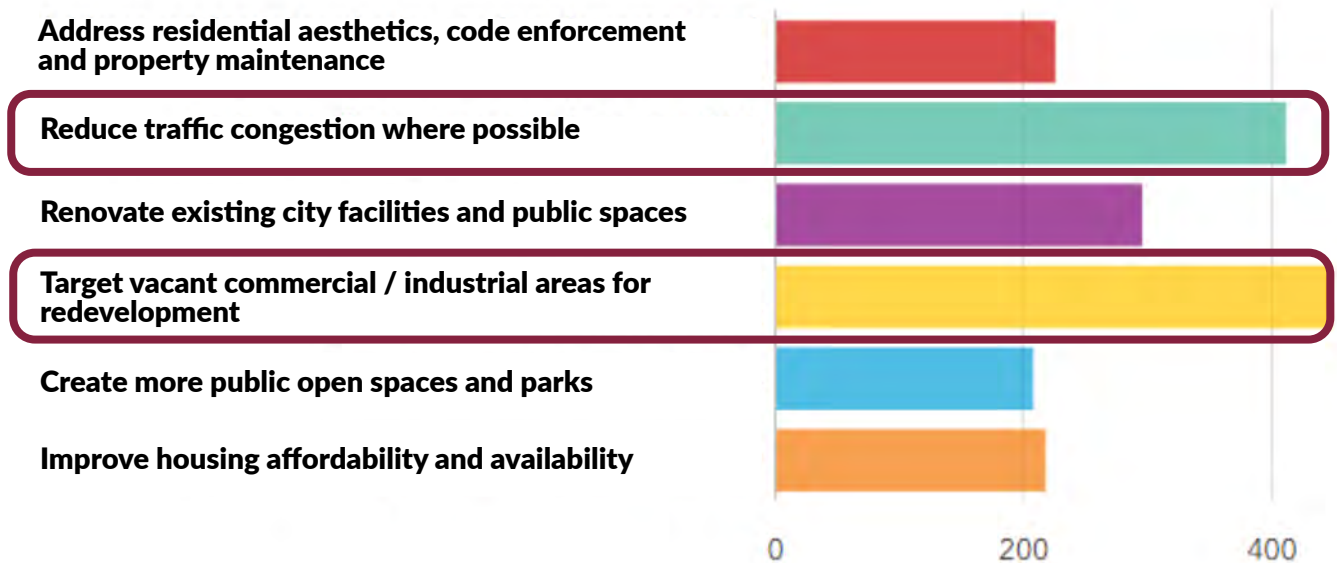


<https://storage.googleapis.com/stateless-mountainmedianews-co/sites/8/2022/10/Town-Council-Photo-1-scaled.jpg>

**The Valleydale Lofts project has created new housing opportunities within the City and has brought new focus to the East Bottom neighborhood.**

## What the Community Said:

### How would you prioritize improvement in Salem?



## Community Quotes:

“West Main Street makes the City look and feel like a strip mall...All those parking lots sit 75% empty for 80% of the year.”

“Too many vacant ‘brown spaces’ that need unique local businesses.”

“Prioritize walkability, [it] adds to the close-knit feel of being able to go for a walk and end up somewhere interesting.”

“Limit curb cuts along West Main Street.”

# Additional Resources for Your Review:

*The Urban Land Institute identified key characteristics that “make up a holistically healthy corridor and its surrounding area.” Check them out below!*



## Additional Resources:

<https://www.linkedin.com/advice/0/how-can-mixed-use-development-support-local-economic>

<https://www.digitalbluefoam.com/post/mixed-use-development-what-are-the-benefits>

<https://salemva.gov/212/Downtown-Plan>

Improved infrastructure	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>» Frequent, safe, and well-marked pedestrian crossings</li> <li>» Safe and well-marked bike lanes</li> <li>» Traffic speeds that accommodate pedestrians, bicyclists, and other users</li> <li>» Reduced traffic congestion</li> <li>» Utility lines and traffic signs and signals that are underground or that blend in</li> <li>» Sidewalks that link adjacent neighborhoods to the corridor and that are unobstructed, wide enough for a variety of users, and buffered from the street</li> <li>» Streetscapes that include amenities for visual interest and safety, including seating, trees for shade, and green buffers</li> <li>» Lighting that improves visibility and safety for pedestrians and bicyclists</li> <li>» Features that improve accessibility for all types of users, in compliance with Americans with Disabilities Act standards</li> </ul>
Design and land use patterns that support community needs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>» Vibrant retail environment</li> <li>» Housing options for all income levels</li> <li>» Buildings adjacent or proximate to sidewalks</li> <li>» Improved parking strategies and shared parking</li> <li>» High-quality parks and public spaces</li> <li>» Healthy food options</li> </ul>
Engaged and supported people who live, work, and travel along the corridor	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>» Engaged residents and local business owners</li> <li>» Organizations that facilitate long-term improvements and resident engagement</li> <li>» Regular programs in community gathering spaces</li> <li>» Accommodations for pets</li> <li>» Accommodations for vulnerable populations, including children, the elderly, and people with disabilities</li> <li>» A defined identity, drawing on the arts and culture of the community and supported by creative placemaking programming</li> <li>» Measures to address safety and perceptions of safety</li> </ul>
Linkages to other parts of the city	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>» Well-connected, multimodal street networks</li> <li>» Safe and easily identifiable connections, including sidewalks and trails</li> <li>» Transit, including enhanced bus service or rail</li> <li>» Bike infrastructure on or adjacent to the corridor</li> </ul>





**Housing affordability is crucial for a community's health and well-being, as it ensures that residents of varying income levels can live and work in the same area, promoting economic diversity and social cohesion. Affordable housing helps attract and retain a stable workforce, supports local businesses, and reduces financial stress on families, ultimately contributing to a more resilient and thriving community.**

# DIVERSE HOUSING FOR ALL STAGES OF LIFE

## Goal:

**Create the tools and policies that allow for and enhance housing diversity, promote affordability, enhance the character of our neighborhoods.**

## Context:

Salem's growth has been slow for decades. Many in the community like a steady population growth, while others wish for new housing that can replace aging/outdated homes, be attractive to broader market needs and wants, and provide a range of prices that accommodate a diverse citizenry. The key for Salem is to install the tools, support, and zoning necessary to enable market supported housing and lot types, and to encourage, through incentives and other methods, developers/builders to pursue a variety of attractive housing types that sustain a healthy community.

Affordable housing refers to housing that is reasonably priced in relation to the income of the occupants.

Typically, housing is considered affordable if a household spends no more than 30% of its gross income on housing costs, including rent or mortgage payments, utilities, and other related expenses.



mosaichomes.com



# Strategies & Actions:

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- 1. Maintain and enhance the character and quality of Salem's housing and neighborhoods using code enforcement and cooperation with landowners.**
  - Explore regulatory approaches using Salem's zoning and building codes to address housing quality and maintenance issues.
  - Place a priority on enforcement of existing codes and ensure that adequate staff is available to fully enforce codes designed to address housing quality and maintenance issues.
  - Initiate public educational programs on zoning standards and zoning violations and the need for compliance.
- 2. Review current Zoning Code to determine its appropriateness for achieving its vision related to pursuing housing diversity and affordability.**
  - Consider Form Based approaches within targeted districts which will help to create harmony with historic neighborhood development patterns.
  - Consider and study the potential that mixed use and auxiliary dwelling units (ADUs) are allowed within existing neighborhoods targeted for growth.
  - Consider and study the potential of Inclusionary Zoning, which requires developers to provide affordable housing within new developments, to encourage diversity and affordability across the City.
  - Consider and study the allowance of unique housing types such as manufactured homes, pre-fabricated homes, and tiny homes within neighborhoods and not only within designated and enclaved parks or projects.
  - Allow for architecturally compatible infill development that respects the scale, massing, and architectural character of Salem's neighborhoods.
- 3. Create metrics or measurable goals, potentially posted on City website, related to housing diversity and affordability to track progress over time, such as:**

- Housing affordability based on known HUD guidelines.
- Home ownership vs rental housing.
- Protection of property values within existing neighborhoods.
- Percentage of citizens that have access to housing that is affordable.
- Number of housing units constructed to meet demand.

#### **4. Consider innovative strategies to better assist with housing affordability, including:**

- **Public-Private Partnerships:** Encourage collaboration between government entities, private developers, and non-profit organizations to create affordable housing solutions.
- **Preservation of Existing Affordable Housing:** Invest in the maintenance and rehabilitation of existing affordable housing stock to prevent displacement and ensure long-term affordability.
- **Supportive Housing Services:** Provide services such as job training, financial literacy programs, and mental health support to help residents maintain stable housing and improve their economic situation.
- **Streamlining Development Processes:** Reduce bureaucratic hurdles and streamline the approval process for affordable housing projects to make it easier and faster to build new units.
- **Infill Dwelling Design and Development Assistance:** Create acceptable house plans for various home types that are pre-approved for immediate construction.
- Create a stable of builders qualified and ready to build affordable housing.

#### **5. Consider and implement strategies to retain historic character of priority existing neighborhoods to include:**

- Create a committee comprised of staff, organizational members, and citizens to consider and evaluate the following:
  - Engage the community through public forums and neighborhood surveys to



## Strategies & Actions:

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gather input on preservation priorities and ensure preservation strategies align with local values.

- Conduct a comprehensive survey of historic neighborhoods to identify contributing structures, key architectural features, and areas with the greatest historical significance.
  - Encourage the voluntary inclusion of historic neighborhoods and districts that meets defined criteria.
  - Provide educational outreach for homeowners and developers on the importance of preserving historical character, including best practices for renovations and energy efficiency improvements in historic homes.
  - Partner with preservation organizations (DHR, RVPF, and Salem Historical Society and Museum) to host events, workshops, or informational sessions on the benefits of preserving historic neighborhoods.
  - Assist with coordination for state and national historic preservation programs to leverage funding and technical support for preserving eligible neighborhoods.
- Offer education services about the formulation of grassroots initiatives that can encourage compatible new development that complements the scale, density, and architectural style of historic neighborhoods to prevent gentrification or inappropriate development.
  - Utilize existing Historic Structures code section to prevent deterioration by neglect and ensure that maintenance standards are met for historic properties.
  - Explore form-based code solutions in targeted areas that can complement the adaptive reuse of historic buildings for modern purposes while retaining key architectural features, such as converting old schools into residential or mixed-use spaces.
  - Develop a marketing plan to highlight the unique qualities of historic neighborhoods, potentially boosting tourism or fostering local pride and investment.

## A Missing Middle Housing Sampler



[https://www.cnu.org/sites/default/files/MMH-sampler\\_0.jpg](https://www.cnu.org/sites/default/files/MMH-sampler_0.jpg)

“Missing middle” housing refers to housing that provides diverse options along the spectrum of affordability, which includes structures like duplexes, triplexes, and townhomes. Middle housing is not eligible for tax credits or most other federal, state or local government subsidies. Typical middle housing types include multiunit structures such as townhomes, duplexes, triplexes and fourplexes. Other examples can include cluster homes and cottage courts.





## Additional Resources For Your Review:

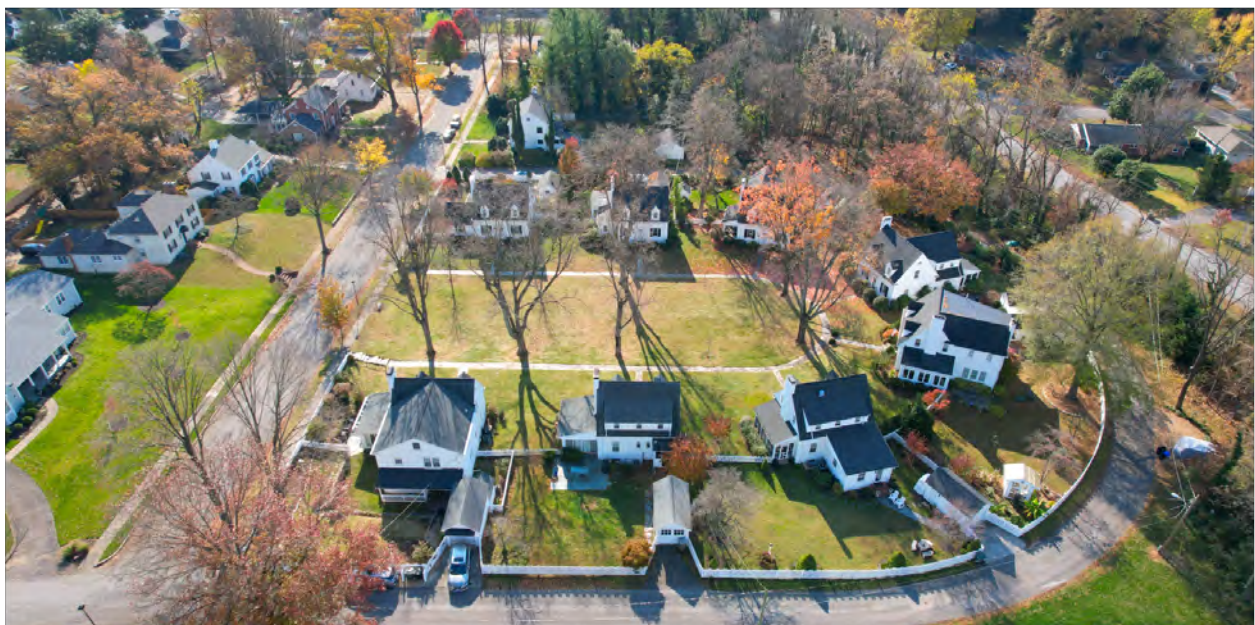


### Additional Resources:

<https://rvarc.org/wp-content/uploads/2023/12/Regional-Housing-Market-Analysis-Study-05122021.pdf>

<https://rvarc.org/wp-content/uploads/2023/12/Salem-City-Report-Housing-2020.pdf>

<https://www.nlc.org/article/2024/01/23/what-is-missing-middle-housing/#:~:text=Solutions%20for%20Cities%20to%20Boost%20Middle%20Housing%20Supply&text=Communities%20can%20overcome%20these%20barriers,higher%20density%20in%20small%20structures.>







**Roanoke College is a wonderful asset that brings vitality to the City with its youthful energy. It creates a “place attachment” for Salem from its students**

## A RESILIENT ECONOMY FOR THE NEXT GENERATION

### Goal:

**Set an economic development strategy that's rooted in sustainable growth with industry diversification and real estate development, achievable goals for talent and business attraction and retention and establishing stronger regional and statewide partnerships to help our City thrive.**

### Context:

Salem Economic Development is charged with the responsibility of assisting in the improvement of Salem's natural and built environments. This is achieved through the Department's involvement in most major public and private development projects during the City's development review processes, long-range planning, and economic development activities. As part of that, it has created a Strategic Plan for the next 5 years.

According to Director of Economic Development Tommy Miller: "The benchmark of success will be looking back and seeing an established foundation for a proficient economic development office having successful growth, expansion, and diversification of our economy and ready to embark on the next round of even more rigorous planning."

## Strategies & Actions:

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### **1. Refer to the Salem Department of Economic Development 2023-2028 Strategic Plan for specific strategies and actions, including:**

- Create an existing business outreach strategy.
- Create a new marketing brand and web presence for the office of economic development.
- Conduct outbound marketing efforts to attract new business investment.
- Identify and support available real estate assets for lease, sale, development, and/or redevelopment for Commercial and Industrial use.
- Engage with state, regional and local entrepreneurial development organizations to provide resources and programming to local entrepreneurs.
- Provide physical space in the City of Salem for local entrepreneurs to cultivate their businesses, exchange ideas, and provide access to resources.
- Strengthen partnerships and programming with local, regional, and state workforce partners to provide opportunities for employment and skills advancement.
- Identify opportunities to support talent attraction efforts to the Roanoke Region and the City of Salem.
- Become a partner and resource for local, regional, and state tourism organizations.
- Utilize Economic Development analysis and resources to evaluate future opportunities and marketing efforts related to tourism and hospitality.
- Become a partner and resource for the City of Salem's Department of Community Development.
- Advance the City of Salem's participation in the DHCD's Main Street Program and implement best practices.
- Provide regular opportunities to share best practices with EDA and City leadership related to accomplishing the goals of the strategic plan.

### **2. Update the Strategic Plan every 5 years to ensure economic development goals are being met and new opportunities and challenges are responded to promptly.**

### **3. Continue with efforts that best position Salem's workforce. for current and future opportunities.**

- Appoint a task force to survey adults in Salem regarding their educational needs.
- Assess the need for improved adult job training and develop a plan to meet those needs.
- Develop a program for comprehensive job training including workforce credentialing.
- Promote additional collaboration with Virginia Western Community College, ITT, National College and other providers to connect Adult Basic Education provided by the school system to programs for job training.
- Discuss with Roanoke College ways to take advantage of programs for the benefit of all Salem area residents.
- Eliminate the "digital divide" in the city by working to provide a computer in every Salem home.
- Assess the number of families with access to a computer in their home.
- Identify funding sources (state, federal, private) available to provide for computer access in every home.
- Remain connected to work force programs through the Virginia Employment Commission as well as other organizations that offer work force programs, (i.e. TAP, Goodwill, etc.).
- Continue to collaborate Regional Workforce Board to accomplish workforce goals.
- School Board participation in programs that prepare and educate the future workforce.

### **4. Consider the following new strategies and actions when preparing the next Economic Development Strategic Plan:**

- Focus new development opportunities into identified Districts to create vital mixed-use districts that offer diverse housing, job opportunities, and tax revenue generation.
- Continue to work with business owners within East Bottom as it transitions into the future.



## Strategies & Actions:

- Create a market assessment to determine how the commercial environment may change as part of creating Small Area Plans for West Main Street, 4th Street, and East Main Street, Apperson Drive to anticipate how the retail environment along that corridor may change over time and to position Salem and property owners to take advantage of those changes.
- Work with Community Development on Code Enforcement policies and enforcement.
- Engage various City departments to reduce barriers to entry into development and to improve business development.
- Consider the creation of measurable goals or metrics to maintain jobs to housing balance, housing affordability, and cost of living affordability.
- Study facilities related to events and sports tourism across the region to determine best use of the Civic Center site.
- Once complete, create a plan for the Civic Center site to maximize its usage and revenue.





**Downtown Salem is coming alive with new streetscapes and businesses. Downtown is a key economic driver and an essential component of the City's economic development.**





**Salem has historically committed itself to providing excellent community services and investing in its infrastructure.**

## OUTSTANDING COMMUNITY SERVICES AND INFRASTRUCTURE

### Goal:

**Provide the citizens of Salem with outstanding parks and recreation, electricity, water and sewer, police, fire, EMT, street maintenance, schools, engineering services, plan reviews, and building inspections.**

### Context:

Salem takes great pride in the way it serves its community. Its departments are motivated to provide “best in class” services and creatively use available resources to help enable a high quality of life for its citizens. As always, there are areas of improvement and a need to continue to refine its approaches. There is also a need to continue to capture revenues to fund these services. Recognizing that these services are important, and continuing to



creatively grow tax base is critical. Making land use decisions that support more efficient and economical servicing, and that are revenue positive (or at least neutral) needs to be factored in as a high priority within the plan. Future efforts can also build upon the work associated with naturalized storm water, stream restoration, tree canopy, alternative energy use, etc. as ways to pursue greater environmental stewardship.



# Strategies & Actions:

## Public Works

### Transportation:

1. Identify transportation needs and anticipate areas of development/redevelopment with the intent to pursue/install corresponding projects that will improve capacity, connectivity, and level of service for pedestrian, and vehicular traffic.
  - Priority projects may include (list subject to administrative review and adjustment in coordination with the Virginia Department of Transportation):
    - East Main Street Improvements
    - Roanoke Boulevard Sidewalk
    - Roanoke Boulevard Bridge over Mason Creek
    - Mill Lane/Riverside Intersection Improvement
    - Route 419 at Texas Street and Lynchburg Turnpike Intersection Improvements
    - Franklin Street Widening Phase II
    - Apperson Drive Corridor – 419 to Colorado Street
    - Apperson Drive/Electric Road Intersection Improvements
  - Where the physical constraints of the built environment allow, integrate components of Complete Streets into the design of City streets.
  - Explore the options available to upgrade pedestrian and alternative transportation access across the railroad tracks.
  - Develop and install an Access Management Plan to better guide the location, spacing, and design of entrances, street intersections, median openings, and traffic signals.
  - Develop a localized Greenway Plan that intimately displays and describes ongoing and planned projects.
  - As previously utilized railways become less utilized and even abandoned, pursue Rails to Trails projects that help reimagine public spaces that create desirable, safe methods of alternative transportation and outdoor experiences.
  - Investigate opportunities to maximize both the efficiency and infrastructure associated with public transportation, including the quest for additional bus shelter installation.

## **Stormwater Management:**

- Create a comprehensive list of stormwater management projects to be explored, prioritized, designed, pursued, and funded.
- Activate the Resiliency Plan by identifying projects designed to reduce flooding/stream channel erosion and obtain available grant funding.
- Enact a committee to evaluate the potential of a Stormwater Utility Fee which could catalyze projects such as stream bank stabilization, pond maintenance, storm drain maintenance, and dredging.
- Conduct a City-wide analysis of the storm system to develop a prioritized list of problem areas to address.
- Evaluate the potential for targeted flood studies to verify the accuracy of flood maps that guide development.
- Explore the processes and requirements associated with implementing a Community Rating System (CRS), a voluntary incentive program for floodplain management practices that exceed the minimum requirements of the National Flood Insurance Program (NFIP).

## **Streets and General Maintenance:**

- Explore opportunities to return manicured areas to their natural state in designated areas to promote native plants, animals, and other environmental benefits.
- Where feasible, explore opportunities for the installation of community gardens, tree canopy, and edible landscaping on City-owned land.
- Publicize efforts related to sustainability for citizen education and appreciation.
- Over time, evaluate the possibility of utilizing alternative energy vehicles and equipment.
- Exploring ways to integrate environmental design into the design and maintenance of streets and public spaces.

## **Electric:**

- Pursue and negotiate power supply options to provide adequate power at a price that allows the City to maintain reasonable retail rates to customers.
- Where physically and financially feasible, proactively relocate problematic overhead utility lines underground to reduce system vulnerability.

## Strategies & Actions:

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- Investigate the potential of relocating overhead utility lines behind properties on major corridors to reduce right-of-way usage and improve view-shed.
- Work with developers and contractors to provide appropriate service to any new residential or commercial development.
- Monitor reliability indices to locate and address any areas experiencing reliability issues.

### Water & Sewer:

- Explore the most efficient ways to accommodate residents without relying on the Western Virginia Water Authority for supplementary service, especially in the Northeast quadrant of the City.
- Pinpoint and install best practice techniques to reduce rain infiltration into the sewer system.
- Install sewer system upgrades.
- Replace underperforming water lines based on existing prioritization list to improve fire flows and reduce water line breaks.

## Citizen Services/Resources

### Planning and Zoning:

- Initiate the formulation of a new zoning, subdivision, and sign ordinance designed to accomplish the goals set forth in this plan, notably those related to housing diversity/affordability, and business attraction/retention.
- Develop criteria for the requirement of sidewalks in new subdivisions.
- Create an inventory/map of existing sidewalks, identify priority improvement areas (based on connectivity potential and fragmentation), and explore funding sources to facilitate corresponding projects.
- Promoting environmentally friendly development and landscapes to encourage sustainable development.

## **Police:**

- Maintain accreditation with the Commission on Accreditation for Law Enforcement Agencies (CALEA), known as “The Gold Standard in Public Safety.”
- Continue to provide quality community policing services by protecting the safety of residents’ life and property.
- Expand staffing in conjunction with population growth to preserve an appropriate level of service for citizenry.
- Remain a trusted community partner and approachable resource for all citizens.

## **Fire and Emergency Services:**

- Develop and implement a strategic plan designed to promote the protection of life and property, provision of pre-hospital care for the sick and injured, and mitigation of man-made and natural emergencies.
- As land use evolves over time, provide effective, timely, and efficient emergency response to all areas of the City in a fiscally responsible manner.

## **Library:**

- Provide an inclusive, accessible space for residents to interact with educational materials and technology resources.
- Develop and initiate library improvements in accordance with the ongoing Capital Improvement Project initiative.

## **Communications:**

- Explore ways to enhance effective and efficient information dissemination to residents.
- Facilitate a seamless connection between citizen inquiries and the appropriate resources.
- Ensure City website pages are up-to-date and user friendly.



## Strategies & Actions:

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### **Parks and Recreation**

- Elevate community health, social interaction, and civic pride by offering professionally managed recreation programs and special events.
- Maintain Salem's position as "Championship City" by promoting active sports tournaments and having the facilities to support them.

### **Tourism**

- Conduct a feasibility study to identify avenues to attract and situate additional hotel/meeting space within the City.
- Explore marketing opportunities to create identifiable business districts (for example, the West Main District).
- Remain at the forefront of engagement with Virginia's Blue Ridge marketing activities.
- Complete and install priorities described in the Tourism Strategic Plan.

### **Technology/GIS:**

- Establish an economic development hub that facilitates data downloads and provides applications relevant to development in the City of Salem.
- Manage and maintain Next Generation 911 data. This GIS-based software enhances response times for first responders.
- Enhance the tools available on the GIS Web Application to provide more advanced analytics for users of the platform.
- Engage with public and/or private programs that facilitate the extension of broadband infrastructure to underserved households across the City.



**The Academy Street Condominiums have been redeveloped from the original Salem High School, exemplifying the benefits of adaptive reuse of historic structures.**





**The Roanoke River provides the City and the Region with a special recreational, environmental, and economic development asset.**



# REGIONAL COLLABORATION TO EXPAND OPPORTUNITY

## Goal:

**Expand our opportunities for success by increased collaboration with regional and state partnerships that best position Salem for success.**

## Context:

Salem has mostly succeeded on its own, without the need for heavy regional partnership. While emphasizing independence has been an effective strategy in years past, embracing a regional approach and partnering with neighboring localities to capitalize on Salem's individual strengths will help maximize its prosperity in the future. Moving forward, the City should consider ways to expand its position within



<https://tbrnewsmedia.com/tag/greenway-trail/>

the Mid-Atlantic and Blue Ridge Mountain region by evaluating its assets and leveraging those advantages into efficient investment within the larger regional ecosystem. Cooperation and coordination with localities that possess alternate strengths can ultimately amplify the social, environmental, and economic benefits to all.



## Strategies & Actions:

1. Promote and participate in regional greenway and trail expansion projects as a highly marketable regional asset.
2. Participate in regional economic development activities to promote the region, while maintaining Salem's unique roles and advantages.
3. Be an active participant in expanding the connectivity and quality of transportation choices.
4. Collaborate on consistency with basic development standards to protect natural landscape, waterways, sense of place, character.
5. Consider approaches to housing affordability that help satisfy regional challenges and situate Salem in a position to leverage available land, market demands, and infrastructure capacity.



**Salem is a hub for sports and sports tourism, hosting many national and regional events - earning it the title of “Championship City”.**



**The Blue Ridge Mountains provide an amenity shared by tourists and residents alike, creating a draw for people to live and visit.**



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# FROM PLAN TO ACTION

**Prioritized Actions to meet the goals of the Plan, including responsibilities, time frame, and investment.**







# ACTION PLAN PLAYBOOK

## IMPLEMENTATION AND INVESTMENT

**Salem 2045 conveys a vision, goals, strategies and actions derived through a collaborative “community based” planning process to ensure Salem maintains and promotes its high quality of life, its unique landscape and access to nature, its history and culture, its aesthetics and expanded economic opportunities.**

To realize this vision, implementation should be viewed as a shared opportunity and commitment for the City’s departments, leadership, private sector interests, and citizens to hold each other accountable to act on the Comprehensive Plan and provide the capital investment, human capacity, collaboration and shared commitment that is needed for the City to manage its growth toward an even more viable and sustainable future.

Each of the strategies and actions included in this document has been determined to be important to accomplish if the City wants to achieve its aspirations and visions. In that sense, this Comprehensive Plan is a living document that needs to be worked with regularly. It describes actions to be taken by local government to implement policies that meet the requirements of Virginia State code regarding Comprehensive Planning.

The first steps include prioritizing the most critical items and creating work plans, identifying responsibilities, identifying partnerships, determining the time frame for completion, and establishing funding. It is also helpful to consider actions in terms of when they will be initiated. Typically short-term activities initiate from just after adoption to up to three years, mid-term activities begin three to 10 years after the plan’s adoption, and long-term activities that extend beyond ten years and may overlap into the next Comprehensive Plan Update.

Finally, the Comprehensive Plan should be a reference tool referred to often and regularly updated as necessary, and should be the impetus for the ongoing decisions and focus of the City’s internal interactions and engagements with its citizens.



# FUNDING PRIORITY INVESTMENTS

**Salem, Virginia, like other local governments, generates revenue through a combination of taxes, fees, and other financial mechanisms.**

## 1. Property Taxes

**Real Estate Taxes:** One of the largest sources of revenue, where homeowners and businesses pay taxes based on the assessed value of their property.

**Personal Property Taxes:** Levied on personal property like vehicles, trailers, and other assets. The rate is set by the city and is applied to the assessed value of these items.

## 2. Sales and Use Taxes

The city receives a portion of the sales tax collected on retail sales. In Virginia, the statewide sales tax is 5.3%, with a portion distributed to local governments, including Salem.

## 3. Business and Occupation Taxes

**Business License Taxes:** Local businesses pay a fee or tax based on their type of operation and revenue generated.

**Meals Taxes:** Salem applies a meals tax on restaurant food and beverages, which is a significant revenue source, especially in cities with a tourism or dining industry.

## 4. Utility Taxes

Salem collects taxes from utilities, including electricity, natural gas, telephone, and cable services, either as a percentage of the service bill or a flat fee.

## 5. Lodging (Hotel) Taxes

A tax is levied on hotel and motel stays within Salem. This tax can be significant in areas with a tourism or business travel industry.

## 6. State and Federal Aid

Salem receives funds from both the Commonwealth of Virginia and the federal government. These funds often come in the form of grants or revenue sharing for public services like education, transportation, and public safety.

## 7. Licenses, Permits, and Fees

The City charges fees for various services, permits (e.g., building permits), and licenses. These are required for certain types of commercial and residential activities.

## 8. Fines and Penalties

Revenue is also generated through fines, such as parking tickets, traffic violations, and penalties for non-compliance with local laws.

## 9. Enterprise Funds

Some City services, like electric, water and sanitary sewer, operate as enterprise funds. Residents and businesses pay fees for using



these services, which are then used to maintain and upgrade the systems.

### **10. Investment Income**

Salem may invest idle funds in various financial instruments, and the interest earned from these investments can provide a source of revenue.

### **11. Special Assessments**

For specific projects, such as infrastructure improvements in certain areas, the City may levy special assessments on property owners who benefit directly from these improvements.

## **OPTIONS / ACTIONS TO ACCOMMODATE GROWTH & DELIVERY OF SERVICES:**

1. Consider the use of development agreements, tax increment financing, and similar instruments to finance necessary infrastructure improvements that accommodate acceptable growth while limiting the financial impact on the City.
2. Seek innovative and creative funding sources (federal and state) to support investment in needed infrastructure.

3. Collaboratively work with property owners and interested developers within key growth areas to develop plans for public/private partnerships for investing in infrastructure to facilitate development.

4. Annually review, revise, and adopt a capital improvement plan as part of the City's budget to ensure that both municipal infrastructure and major departmental equipment needs are identified, planned for, and funded each fiscal year.

5. Utilize regular, recurring sources of funding to finance anticipated infrastructure maintenance and capital investment needs.

6. Prepare regular assessments of municipal infrastructure to utilize in adjusting the capital improvement plan.

7. Seek partnerships with community groups, educational institutions, governmental agencies and commercial ventures to leverage the planned investments by outside groups to support the City's infrastructure needs, such as recreational facilities.

8. Provide funding support at a level that is requisite with the departments' needs for continuing to provide high quality and efficient services to the City.

9. Actively participate in regional planning and financing initiatives to ensure that regionally-funded projects reflect the needs of Salem.

## CONNECTED NEIGHBORHOODS THROUGH PARKS AND GREENWAYS

### ACTION

Create a long term, holistic strategy to develop or refurbish City parks, especially in areas that are currently lacking facilities, to increase equity and improve the balance between active parks and less programmed parks.

### COST REQUIRED

\$\$\$

### TIMING

LONG TERM

### TEAMS

PARKS AND  
RECREATION  
DEPARTMENT

### ACTION

Pursue the completion of the Roanoke Greenway, the Mason Creek Greenway, and other opportunities such as Dry Branch that extend the greenways into the City's neighborhoods and to Downtown.

### COST REQUIRED

\$\$\$

### TIMING

NEAR -MID  
TERM

### TEAMS

COMMUNITY  
DEVELOPMENT  
- ENGINEERING

### ACTION

Explore mechanisms to enhance the funding available to finance park, open space, and greenway creation, development, and maintenance including impact fees and grant programs.

### COST REQUIRED

\$  
(FOR THE PLAN)

### TIMING

NEAR TERM

### TEAMS

PARKS AND  
RECREATION  
DEPARTMENT

\$ = Lower cost items such as coordination or simple plans/ \$\$ = Medium to Higher Cost such as conducting more extensive design, planning or studies / \$\$\$ = Highest Cost such as for design, engineering and construction elements.

## SAFE, MULTI-MODAL CORRIDORS THAT SUPPORT MOBILITY AND IDENTITY

### ACTION

Create a City-wide signage and wayfinding plan that articulates and brands greenway connective elements, street names, districts, directions, locations for key City elements.

### COST REQUIRED

\$\$

### TIMING

MID TERM

### TEAMS

COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT - ENGINEERING / PLANNING AND ZONING & COMMUNICATIONS

### ACTION

Work with the Roanoke Valley Alleghany Regional Commission (RVARC) to secure funding priority for needed projects within Salem on the Long-Range Transportation Plan

### COST REQUIRED

\$

### TIMING

NEAR TERM

### TEAMS

COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT - ENGINEERING / PLANNING AND ZONING

### ACTION

Continue to work with VDOT to fulfill the East Main Street project that extends existing streetscape, sidewalk, and bike lane enhancements eastward.

### COST REQUIRED

\$

### TIMING

NEAR TERM

### TEAMS

COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT - ENGINEERING / PLANNING AND ZONING



# VIBRANT REDEVELOPMENT DISTRICTS FOR GROWTH AND INNOVATION

## ACTION

Investigate methods to attract and expedite industrial development in targeted zones.

## COST REQUIRED

\$

## TIMING

NEAR -  
LONGTERM

## TEAMS

ECONOMIC  
DEVELOPMENT

## ACTION

Enhance the awareness of parking availability in the Downtown District through physical improvements (signage, colored markings, etc.) and by promoting other educational platforms (website, GIS application,

## COST REQUIRED

\$\$

## TIMING

NEAR TERM

## TEAMS

COMMUNITY  
DEVELOPMENT,  
COMMUNICATIONS  
& STREETS

## ACTION

Capitalize on Roanoke College's proximity to and investment in Downtown.

## COST REQUIRED

\$\$\$

## TIMING

MID TERM

## TEAMS

ECONOMIC  
DEVELOPMENT,  
COMMUNITY  
DEVELOPMENT  
- PLANNING  
AND ZONING

## DIVERSE HOUSING FOR ALL STAGES OF LIFE

### ACTION

Review current Zoning Code to determine its appropriateness for achieving its vision related to pursuing housing diversity and affordability.

### COST REQUIRED

\$-\$\$

### TIMING

MIDTERM

### TEAMS

COMMUNITY  
DEVELOPMENT -  
PLANING AND  
ZONING

### ACTION

Maintain and enhance the character and quality of Salem's housing and neighborhoods using code enforcement and cooperation with landowners.

### COST REQUIRED

\$-\$\$

### TIMING

NEAR TERM

### TEAMS

COMMUNITY  
DEVELOPMENT -  
PLANING AND  
ZONING

### ACTION

Consider innovative strategies to better assist with housing affordability.

### COST REQUIRED

\$\$

### TIMING

NEAR TERM

### TEAMS

COMMUNITY  
DEVELOPMENT -  
PLANING AND  
ZONING

## OUTSTANDING COMMUNITY SERVICES AND INFRASTRUCTURE

### ACTION

Identify transportation needs and anticipate areas of development/ redevelopment with the intent to pursue/ install corresponding projects that will improve capacity, connectivity, and level of service for pedestrian, active, and vehicular traffic.

### COST REQUIRED

\$\$

### TIMING

LONG TERM

### TEAMS

COMMUNITY  
DEVELOPMENT  
- ENGINEERING

### ACTION

Develop and install an Access Management Plan to better guide the location, spacing, and design of entrances, street intersections, median openings, and traffic signals.

### COST REQUIRED

\$\$

### TIMING

MID TERM

### TEAMS

COMMUNITY  
DEVELOPMENT  
- ENGINEERING

### ACTION

As previously utilized railways become less utilized and even abandoned, pursue Rails to Trails projects that help reimagine public spaces that create desirable, safe methods of alternative transportation and outdoor experiences.

### COST REQUIRED

\$\$

### TIMING

LONG TERM

### TEAMS

COMMUNITY  
DEVELOPMENT -  
PLANING AND  
ZONING



# OUTSTANDING COMMUNITY SERVICES AND INFRASTRUCTURE

## ACTION

Create a comprehensive list of stormwater management projects to be explored, prioritized, designed, pursued, and funded.

## COST REQUIRED

\$

## TIMING

NEAR TERM

## TEAMS

COMMUNITY  
DEVELOPMENT  
- ENGINEERING

## ACTION

Conduct a city-wide analysis of the storm system to develop a prioritized list of problem areas to address.

## COST REQUIRED

\$\$

## TIMING

MID TERM

## TEAMS

COMMUNITY  
DEVELOPMENT  
- ENGINEERING

## ACTION

Initiate the formulation of a new zoning, subdivision, and sign ordinance designed to accomplish the goals set forth in this plan, notably those related to housing diversity/affordability, and business attraction/retention.

## COST REQUIRED

\$\$\$

## TIMING

NEAR TERM

## TEAMS

COMMUNITY  
DEVELOPMENT -  
ENGINEERING /  
PLANING AND ZONING

## OUTSTANDING COMMUNITY SERVICES AND INFRASTRUCTURE

### ACTION

Where physically and financially feasible, proactively relocate problematic overhead utility lines underground to reduce system vulnerability.

### COST REQUIRED

\$\$\$

### TIMING

LONG TERM

### TEAMS

ELECTRIC DEPARTMENT

### ACTION

Conduct a feasibility study to identify avenues to attract and situate additional hotel/meeting space within the City.

### COST REQUIRED

\$

### TIMING

NEAR TERM

### TEAMS

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT, TOURISM, PLANNING AND ZONING

### ACTION

Enhance the tools available on the GIS Web Application to provide more advanced analytics for users of the platform.

### COST REQUIRED

\$

### TIMING

NEAR TERM

### TEAMS

COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT - GIS

# REGIONAL COLLABORATION TO EXPAND OPPORTUNITY

## ACTION

Promote and participate in regional greenway and trail expansion projects as a highly marketable regional asset.

## COST REQUIRED

\$\$

## TIMING

NEAR TERM

## TEAMS

ECONOMIC  
DEVELOPMENT

## ACTION

Participate in regional economic development activities to promote the region, while maintaining Salem's unique roles and advantages.

## COST REQUIRED

\$

## TIMING

NEAR TERM

## TEAMS

ECONOMIC  
DEVELOPMENT

## ACTION

Be an active participant in expanding the connectivity and quality of transportation choices.

## COST REQUIRED

\$

## TIMING

NEAR TERM

## TEAMS

COMMUNITY  
DEVELOPMENT  
- ENGINEERING



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# FUTURE LAND USES

**Salem's Future Land Use Plan as well as concepts for how East Bottom can be planned and redeveloped.**







# FUTURE LAND USE PLAN

## GOAL

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**Create a Future Land Use Plan to serve as a strategic guide for managing Salem’s growth and land use patterns over the next 20 years to accomplish Salem’s Vision and Goals for housing, economic development, demographic diversity, affordability, and environmental stewardship.**

## PURPOSE

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A Future Land Use Plan is a key component of a Comprehensive Plan and provides a framework for zoning, infrastructure planning, and decision-making. Its purpose is to:

### **Guide Development:**

It outlines where and how different types of development (residential, commercial, industrial, recreational, etc.) should occur to meet the community’s needs and vision.

- District nodes
- Redevelopment focus areas / corridors

### **Promote Sustainable Growth:**

The plan ensures that growth is balanced with environmental conservation, infrastructure capacity, historic resources, community resources, and fostering sustainability.

### **Facilitate Zoning Decisions:**

It informs zoning ordinances and decisions, ensuring that land use regulations align with long-term goals.

- Mixed use residential
- Mixed use commercial
- Mixed use industrial

## **Protect Natural Resources and Open Spaces:**

The plan identifies areas that should be preserved for environmental, recreational, or aesthetic purposes.

## **Coordinate Infrastructure and Services:**

By predicting future growth patterns, the plan helps the city prepare for roads, schools, utilities, and other essential services.

## **Support Economic Development:**

It designates areas for commercial and industrial use, creating opportunities for job growth and economic activity.

## **Preserve Community Character:**

The plan reflects community values and priorities, helping to maintain the desired aesthetic, historical, or cultural characteristics.

## **Provide a Legal Framework for Decision-Making:**

It serves as a foundation for defending land-use decisions against legal challenges by demonstrating a consistent and planned approach. In essence, a Future Land Use Plan is a roadmap to help a community grow wisely while preserving its unique identity and ensuring a high quality of life for residents.

## **FUTURE GENERALIZED LAND USE MAP**

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The Future Generalized Land Use Map serves as a general guide for the future development of the Salem community. Both public and private sector decision makers may use this map. Local planning commissions and elected officials can use this future land use map as one source of information when planning public facilities or evaluating land use requests. The map also may serve as a general guide for private investment, indicating the location and type of future desired development.

This map presents a generalized overview of desired land use locations within the city. The map is not intended to be parcel specific. As a generalized map, a mixture of land uses may be found in any designation. The specific location of future land uses will be determined by the zoning ordinance, and when required, the Planning Commission and City Council will review specific land use requests. Such review will consider the compatibility and benefits of the use and land use impacts of a specific use on the surrounding neighborhood and larger community.

## **EIGHT FUTURE LAND USE DESIGNATIONS DEFINE THIS MAP. THEY ARE:**

**Commercial Areas** - Commercial areas generally designate the location of existing and desired future retail, service, and office

areas. Included are downtown, highway commercial, and neighborhood commercial areas.

**Industrial Areas** - Industrial areas are the location of a significant portion of Salem's industrial and employment base, and are used for a variety of manufacturing, processing, and storage activities.

**Economic Development Areas** - These areas have been designated as possible suitable locations for productive economic uses, and may include commercial, industrial and/or residential uses. Future development in these areas will be compatible with surrounding properties with respect to land use, density, access, and site design features.

**Downtown Areas** - These areas have been designated for possible suitable locations for downtown uses and character. The areas would provide commercial and mixed-use commercial/residential development.

**Mixed-Use Transition Areas** - These areas refer to places within the City that are intended to evolve, through future planning and zoning designations, into places that integrate multiple uses within a single building, property, or district. These areas typically combine residential, commercial, cultural, institutional, or industrial uses into walkable village-like patterns. Through thoughtful programming and design, mixed-use these areas aim to promote convenience, walkability, and efficiency by allowing diverse activities—such as living, working,

shopping, and recreation—to coexist within a self-supportive village. They also support economic development and enhance demographic diversity.

**Institutional Areas** - This category includes major publicly-owned property, and other major properties owned by tax exempt and charitable entities.

**Residential Areas** - Residential development is the predominant land use within this category. New residential development primarily will be located within these areas. The density and type of new residential development in these areas will be determined by zoning, and the adequacy of public facilities, access, and compatibility with surrounding land uses.

**Public Parks and Recreation Areas** - This category shows the location of existing and proposed public parks and recreation areas. It is inclusive of City-owned park land, proposed park land, and more active recreational facilities such as the Moyer and Salem Civic Center recreational complexes. Also included within this category are existing and proposed greenway corridors within the City of Salem.



# FUTURE LAND USE PLAN MAP

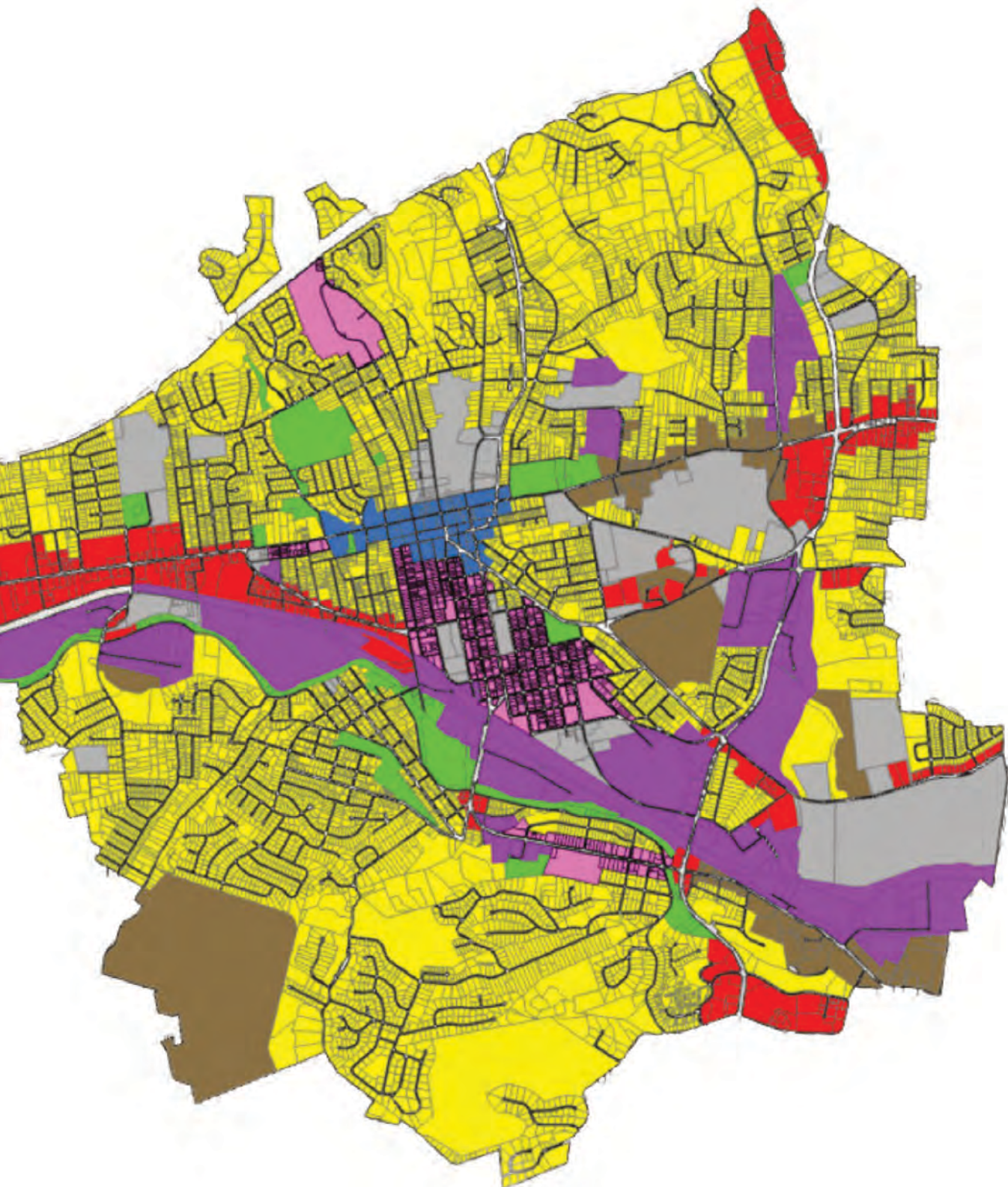
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The Future Land Use Map anticipates the redevelopment of key areas, such as East Bottom, into Mixed Use, which will be accomplished with future zoning changes.

## LEGEND

	COMMERCIAL
	DOWNTOWN
	ECONOMIC-DEVELOPMENT-AREA
	INDUSTRIAL
	INSTITUTIONAL
	PUBLIC-PARKS-AND-RECREATION
	RESIDENTIAL
	MIXED-USE-TRANSITION









**The East Bottom neighborhood is experiencing change. With deliberate planning, the neighborhood can evolve into a place of unique character, diversity, and mix of uses.**



# EAST BOTTOM CONCEPT

## GOAL

**Create a community supported small area plan for the East Bottom of Salem that will allow new and existing land uses to coexist harmoniously, support economic development, contribute to tax base, provide a safe and friendly place to live, and promote the special history and qualities of the area.**

## VISION

East Bottom is a special place within Salem that expresses its uniqueness through diverse businesses and residents, committed to neighborliness, cooperation, and pride in a shared history, sense of community, and culture.

East Bottom is a safe place to raise a family with pedestrian-friendly, bikable streets and easily accessible parks for gathering and recreation. The Neighborhood's diverse housing stock provides residents with

options for living in the community whether they be first time home buyers/renters, starting a family, or beginning their retirement. East Bottom is held together by its neighborliness and a strong commitment to cooperation and shared responsibility.

## PROCESS

A charrette-based workshop was conducted over three days with the residents, land owners, and business owners of East Bottom. During the workshop, discussions were facilitated on topics like areas of concern, areas of improvement, utility services, code enforcement, vision, land use, street safety, and character. A vision statement, diagrammatic mapping, and strategies were created and shared back with the community for their input and acceptance. Following the workshop, plans and strategies were refined for inclusion in the Comprehensive Plan.

## WHAT THE COMMUNITY SAID:

1. Issues with traffic safety, sight distance, traffic speeds, etc., along several streets, especially 8th Street, Florida, Tennessee, and Indiana Streets.
2. Property maintenance is a concern, and the city needs to enforce codes appropriately maintain its properties and streets to a higher standard.
3. Cars that are permanently parked along streets that are part of business operations.
4. Need for beautification such as landscaping and building upgrades.
5. Incomplete sidewalks and nonexistent sidewalks on many streets.
6. Businesses need to be protected so that they remain part of the district.
7. Loss of neighborliness, history, and character with new folks coming in. Need for young families and kids again.
8. Since it is low-lying land, the area is prone to flooding.

## STRATEGIES AND ACTIONS

**1. Design streets into “complete streets” that include sidewalks, street trees, safe crosswalks, regulatory signage, on-street parking, bulb-outs, bike lanes, and other methods to calm traffic and enhance multiple modes of travel.**

- Work within the existing right of way and curb-to-curb dimensions as much as possible to reduce costs and impacts on property owners.
- Consider expanding rights of way, in cooperation with property owners, on key streets that serve mixed-use buildings and retail uses.

**2. Create a bike and pedestrian connectivity plan to ensure safe routes to school, to district and city assets, to work, and parks from residences in the district.**

- Target key north-south streets where the residential uses have driveway access and may not require on-street parking on both sides.
- Make sure that bike lanes and parking are painted clearly and defined by signage.

**3. Promote and incentivize community gathering spaces such as community centers, parks, places to eat and socialize.**

- Consider 8th Street as a vital corridor to house gathering spaces, retail, entertainment, and restaurants.
- Consider Indiana as a secondary corridor for mixed uses.

**4. Explore grant funding opportunities for façade maintenance, block grants, redevelopment grants, etc., to support existing property owners who need assistance.**

**5. Revisit codes and pursue reasonable code enforcement to help clean up the area.**

- Consider that the industrial areas have different maintenance factors than the residential areas and may require special consideration on how to apply codes.

**6. Promote and incentivize diversity in housing and business types.**

- Promote housing and amenities that will attract younger families to the area.
- Promote vertical mixing of housing with retail at the ground level.
- Incentivize the development of housing that meets affordability guidelines of less than 30% of total household income devoted to housing costs.
- Allow for accessory dwelling units, duplexes, triplexes, and townhomes within residential redevelopments.
- Continue to assist property owners with targeted recruitment of businesses.

**7. Pursue zoning that fosters a natural and adaptable approach to land use and growth, ensuring a diverse yet compatible mix of land uses.**

**8. Consider adopting form-based codes, or hybrid form-based codes within the district to better integrate a mix of compatible uses along the same street.**

- Consider the creation of simple design guidelines to define architectural image and character that would promote the district.
- Reduce setback requirements and allow buildings to be built closer to the street and lots to be developed more densely.
- Minimize off-street parking requirements and utilize on-street parking.
- Promote mixed-use vs single-use zoning in areas other than the industrial areas.

**9. Create a unique signage and wayfinding design for East Bottom that includes gateway signage, decorative street regulatory signage, and location signage.**

- Conduct a community-based design process.
- Utilize local artists and designers that are sensitive to the districts importance to the community.
- Integrate environmental design techniques into developing new infrastructure to include naturalizing stormwater management, tree planting that includes species variety, reducing large expanses of asphalt, native landscaping, and downward directed “full cut-off” street lights.



## APPLICABILITY OF ZONING

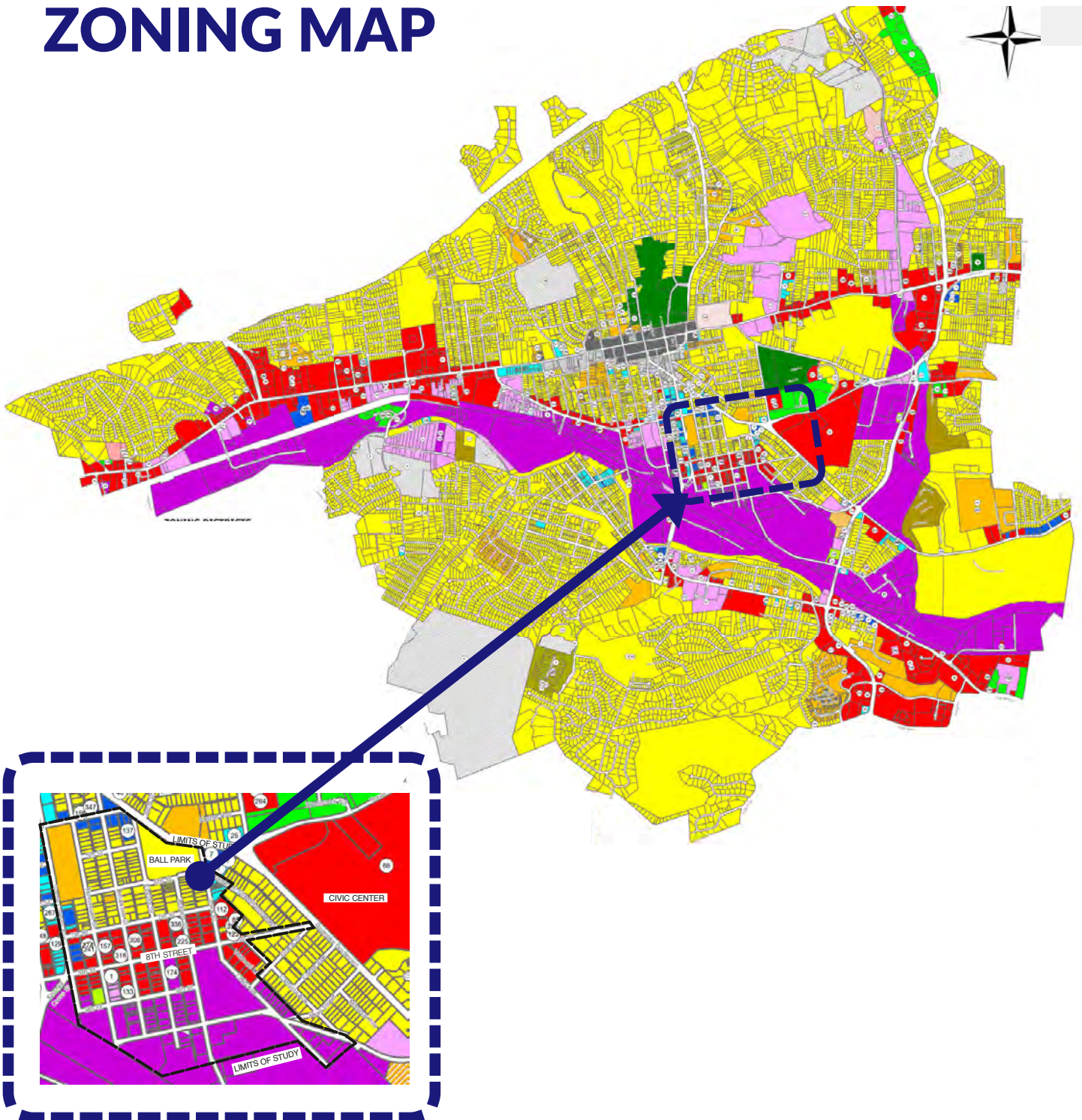
**Although the current city zoning for the study area includes a variety of uses, allowing one to live, dine, work, recreate, and conduct limited shopping, it does not allow for the vertical mixing of uses that promotes an active street environment, more efficient use of land, and the increasing land values and new business associated with higher density.**

- RSF zoning does not allow for a mix of uses, such as retail or office. It also has significant setback requirements of 25 feet for front and rear yards and requires a special exception permit to allow any residential use beyond a single house on the lot. The zone also does not allow for accessory dwelling units to be built on the lot. This could potentially limit the ability of developers to build to a higher residential density, and limits mixed-use – both of which would benefit the Salem economy and enable potential lower home rents and prices.
- CBD zoning is more mixed-use friendly and would provide building relationships with the street that are advantageous.
- HBD zoning within the district may be out of scale with the intent of the vision in some instances. It wouldn't allow vertical mixing of uses, however, which provides efficient use of land and promote walkability.
- Industrial zoning works for the land zoned for it. Issues with industrial uses have more to do with code enforcement.
- Parking requirements by use are generally reasonable. However, it is not clear how parking requirements are offset by the on-street parking that exists within the district. Reducing parking requirements to adjust for on-street parking would reduce asphalt and allow more efficient use of property for development.

## ZONING DISTRICTS

AG - Agriculture District	PUD - Planned Unit District
BCD - Business Commerce District	RB - Residential Business District
CBD - Community Business District	RMF - Residential Multi-Family District
CUD - College/University District	RMF/RB - Residential Multi-Family/Residential Business District
DBD - Downtown Business District	RSF - Residential Single Family District
HBD - Highway Business District	RSF/HBD - Residential Single Family/Highway Business District
HBD/HM - Highway Business/Heavy Manufacturing District	RSF/HM - Residential Single Family/Heavy Manufacturing
HBD/LM - Highway Business/Light Manufacturing District	RSF/RB - Residential Single Family/Residential Business District
HM - Heavy Manufacturing District	RSF/RMF - Residential Single Family/Residential Multi-Family District
LM - Light Manufacturing District	RSF/TBD - Residential Single Family/Transitional Business District
LM/HM - Light Manufacturing/Heavy Manufacturing District	TBD - Transitional Business District
MHP - Manufactured Home Park District	

# ZONING MAP



## EXISTING CONDITIONS

**East Bottom sits between 4<sup>th</sup> Street, Roanoke Boulevard, the Norfolk Southern Rail lines, and South College Avenue. 8<sup>th</sup> Street bisects the district and intersects with Roanoke Boulevard at the Civic Center and College Avenue. The land is generally low, sloping from North to South to the Roanoke River. Large portions of the land is within the 100-year flood plain.**

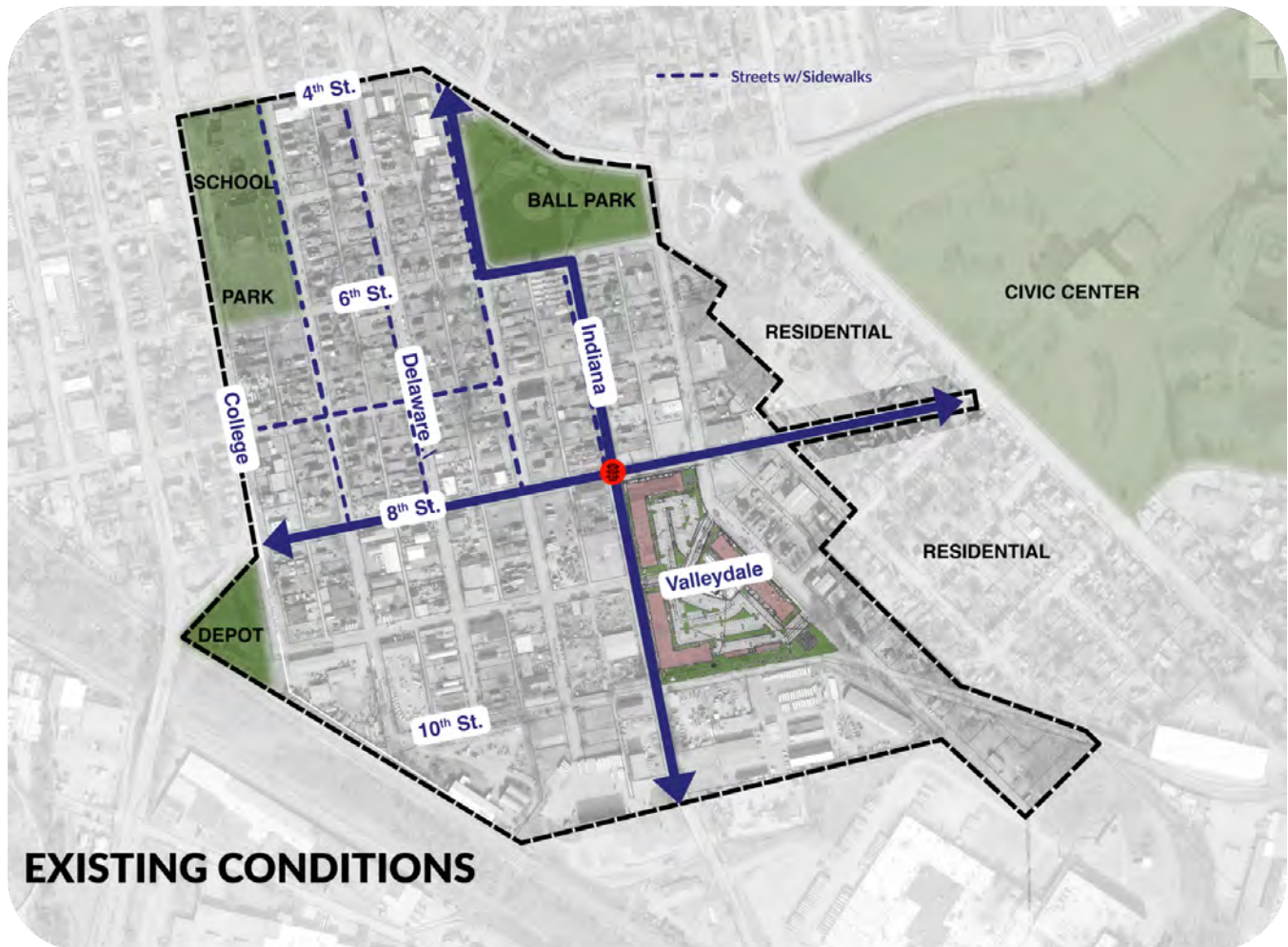
The northern portion of the district is primarily single-family residential. The southern portion is mostly industrial. There are areas of business commercial along 8<sup>th</sup> St. and 7<sup>th</sup> St. Kiwanis Park, located in the northeast corner of the district houses a baseball diamond with grandstands.

The Andrew Lewis Middle School sits in the Northwest corner of the area, and includes a shared city park space. A rail depot sits in the southeast corner of the area, currently being used as Total Action for Progress. A few restaurants exist within the study area.

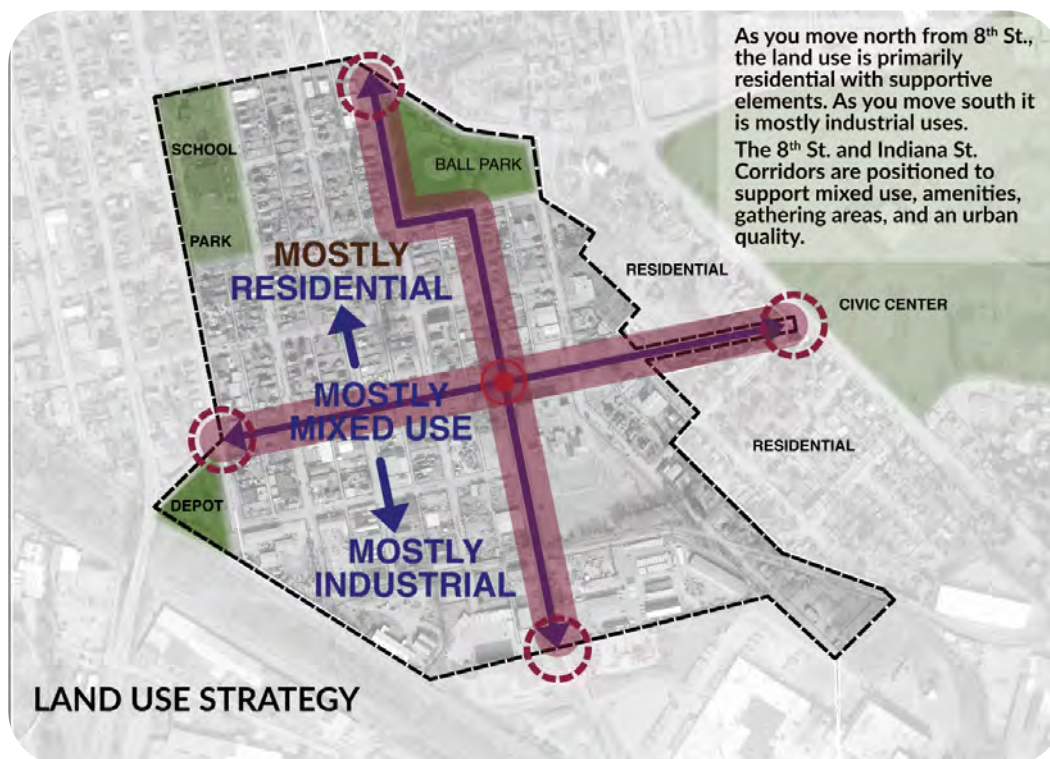
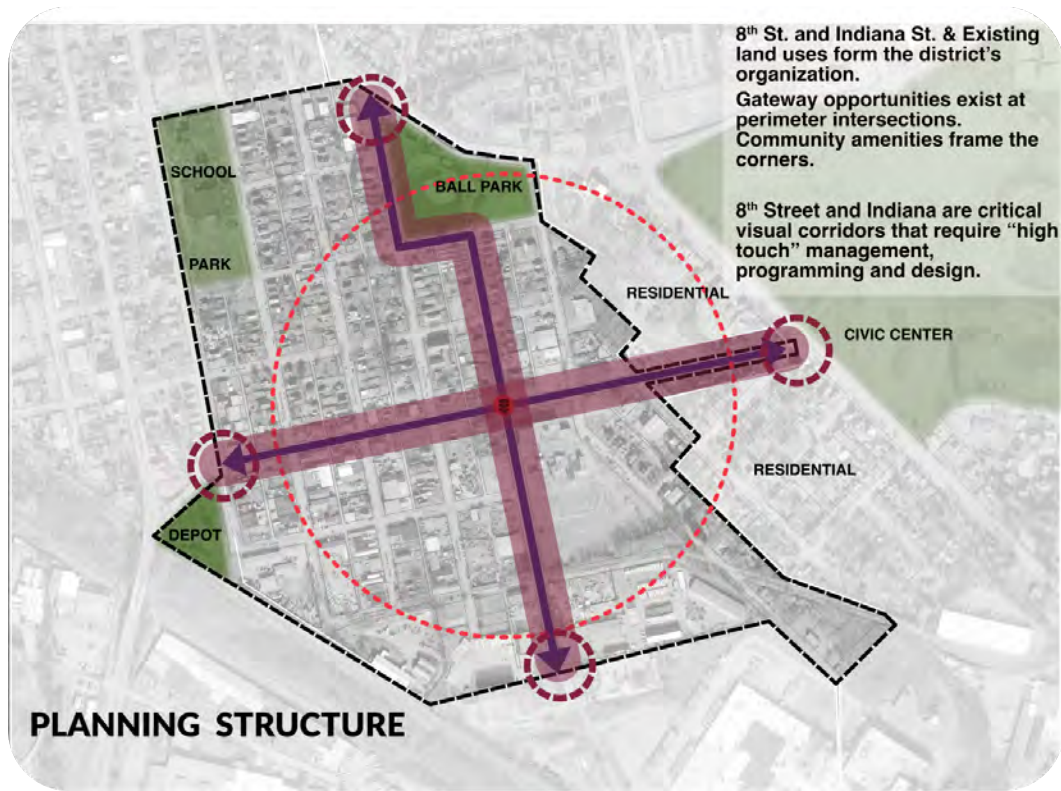
- The streets generally have a paved width of 40 feet and a Right of Way of 60 feet.
- Sidewalks exist on some of the streets, including portions of 6<sup>th</sup>, 7<sup>th</sup>, and 8<sup>th</sup>, and on portions of Florida, and Indiana.
- Space for on-street parking is provided on district streets. Many of the residences are also served by driveways, which leaves room within the paved area of the street for other uses, such as bike lanes.
- A traffic light exists at Indiana and 8<sup>th</sup> Streets.
- No streetscapes or street trees exist.
- Southwest corner is within floodplain and is prone to flooding.



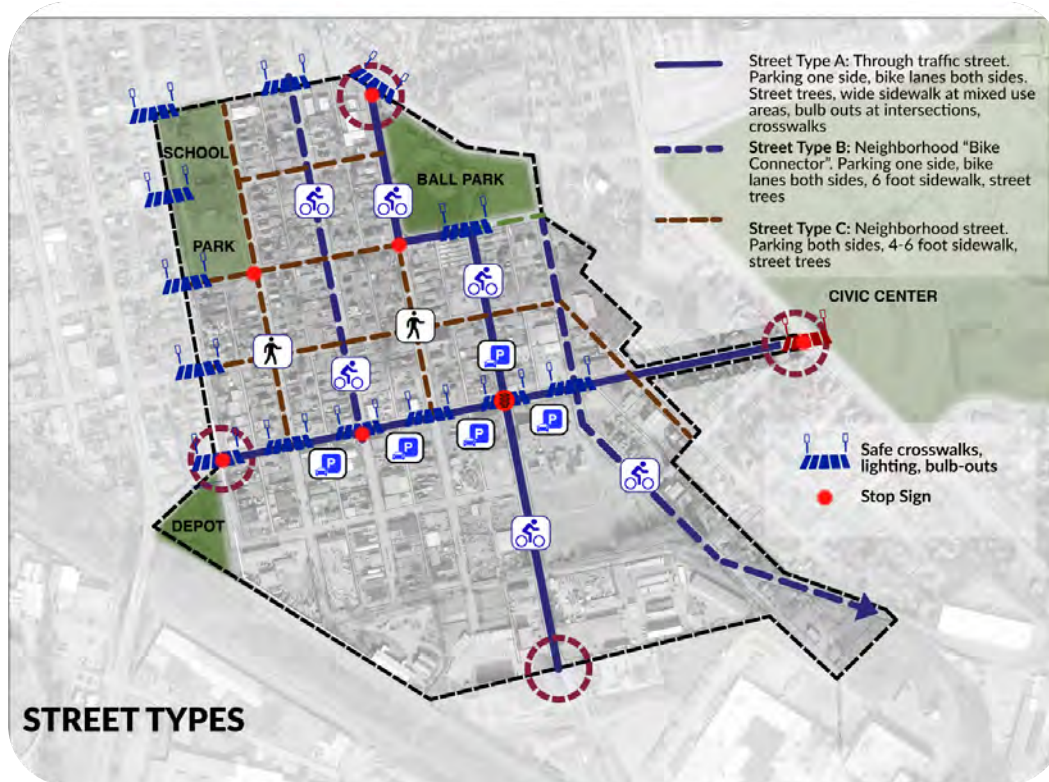




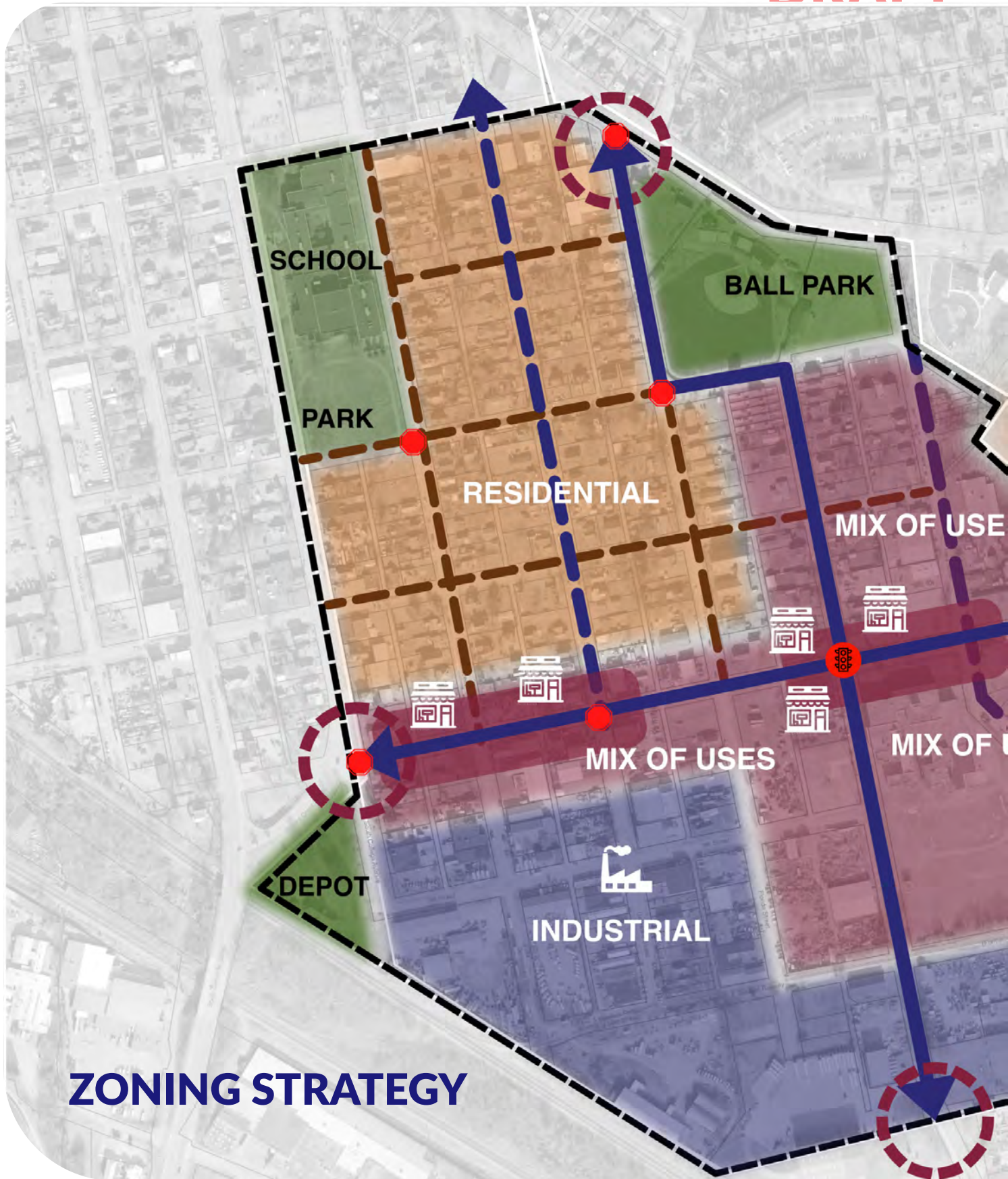
**8<sup>th</sup> Street and Indiana Street form a cross axis through the district forming a set of key streets. Valleydale sits on this axis, as does the Civic Center.**







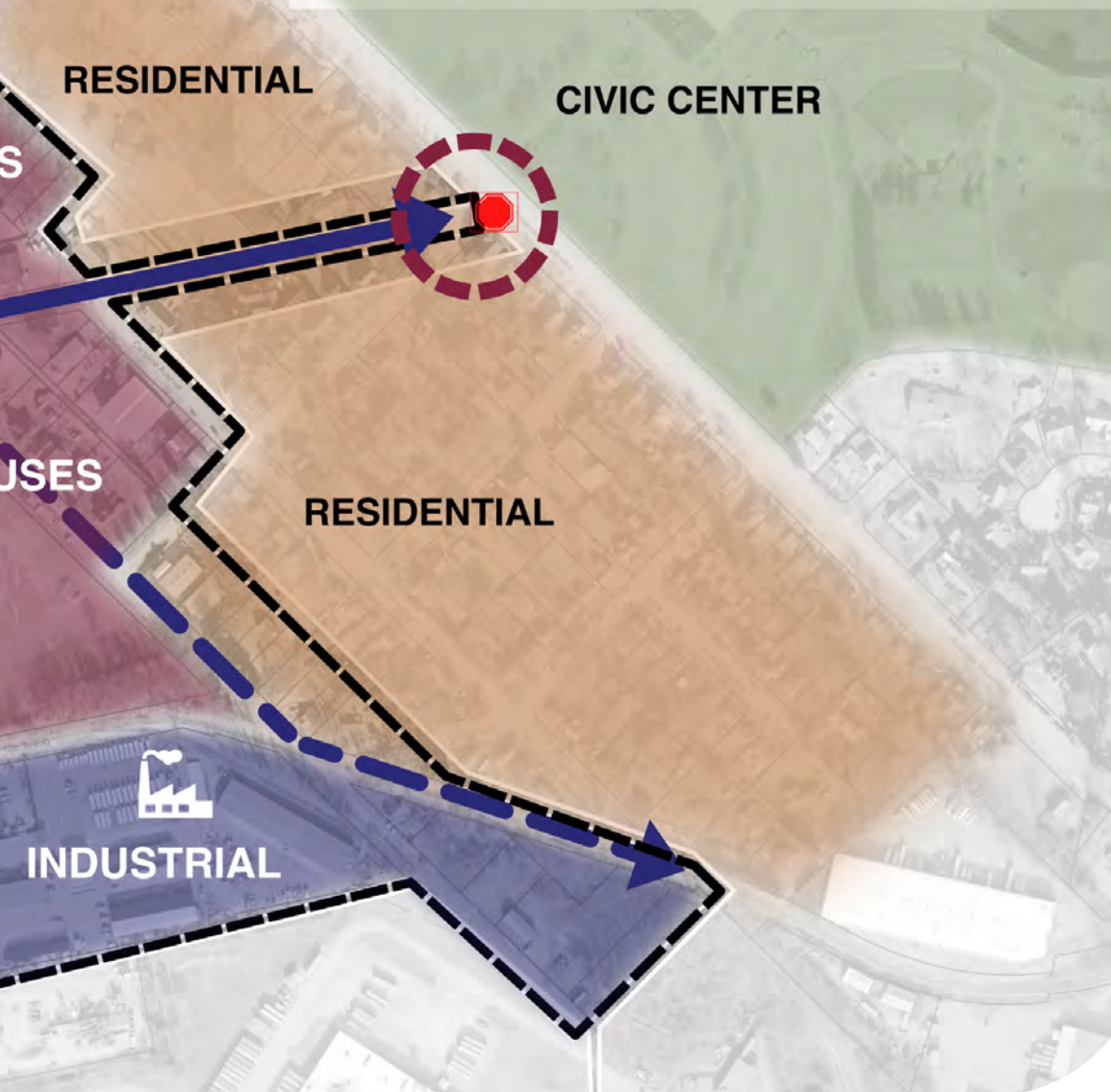




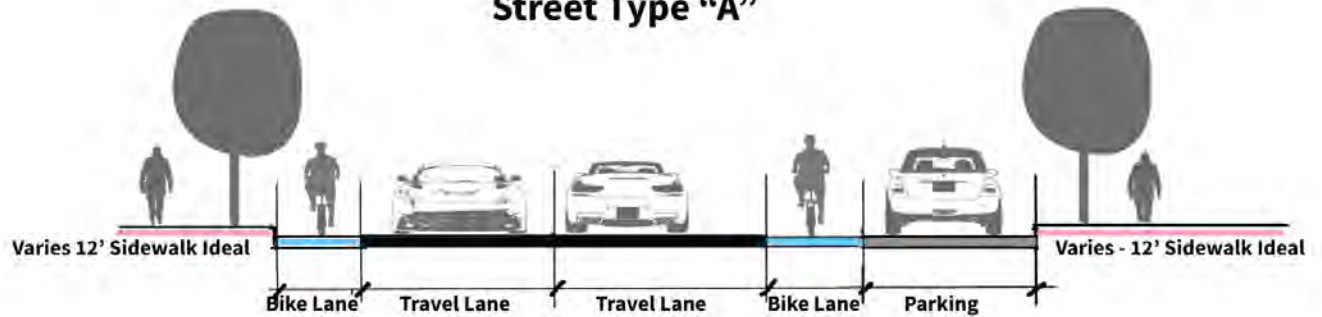
**ZONING STRATEGY**



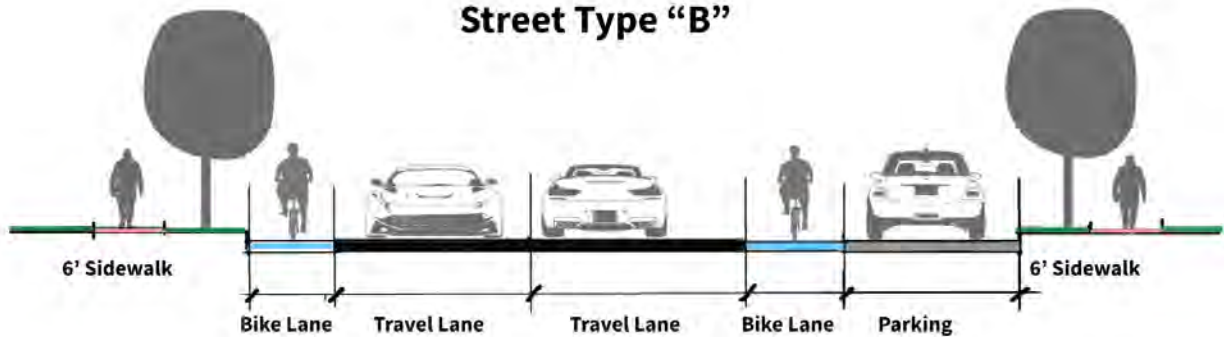
The heart of the district is the core that centers around the existing traffic signal, and adjacent to Valleydale, creating a highly walkable environment with a variety of uses plugged onto existing, improved, urbanized streets.



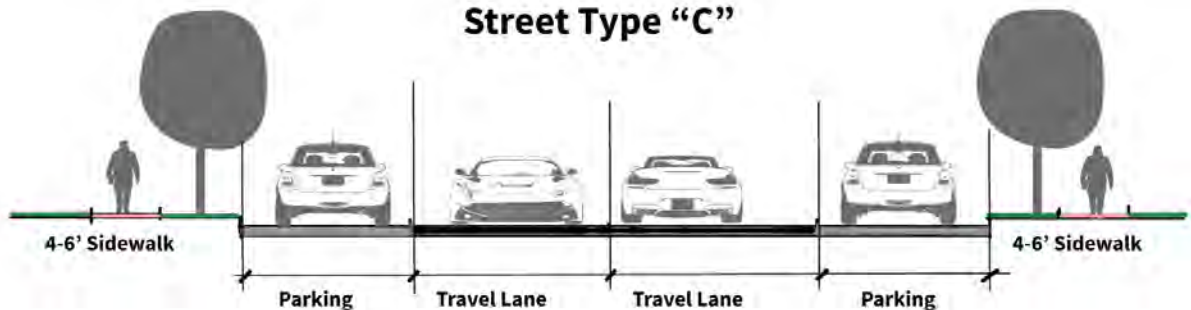
**Street Type "A"**



**Street Type "B"**



**Street Type "C"**



## CONCEPT STREET SECTIONS



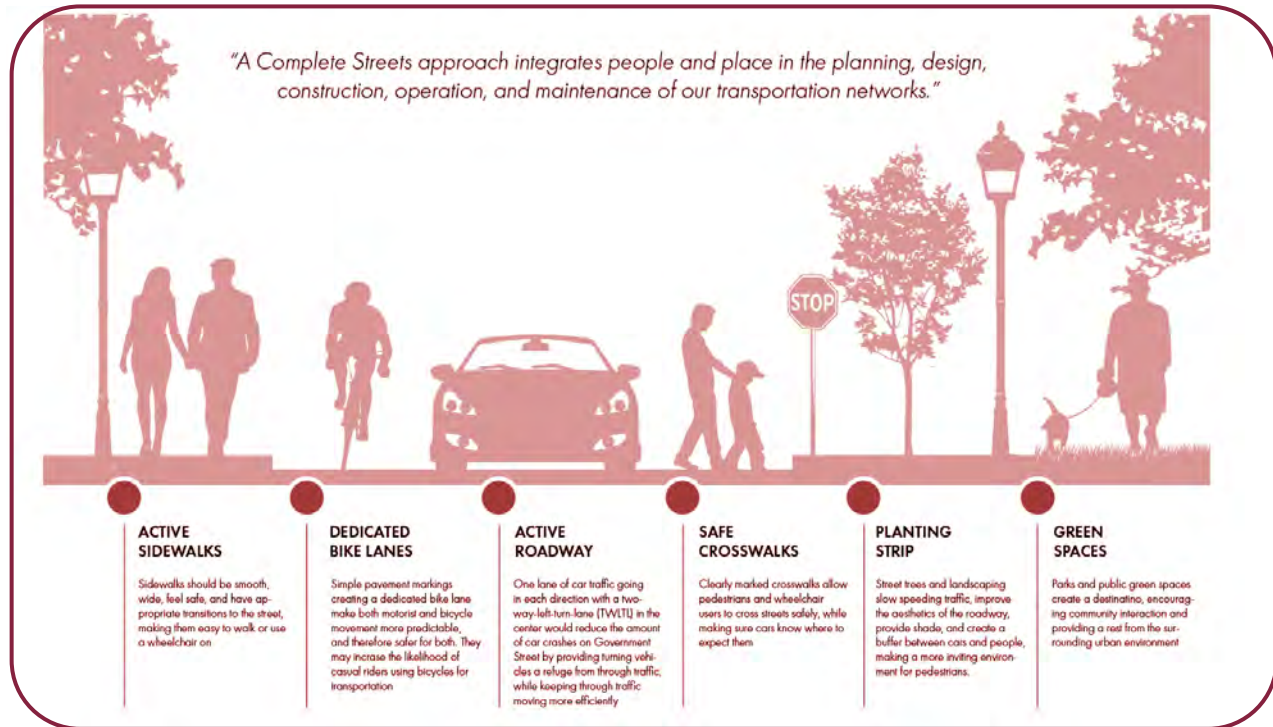
## DEVELOPMENT PRINCIPLES

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**East Bottom will be redeveloped and maintained to a higher quality, while retaining its organic nature. Standards that will be incorporated into specific zoning codes and guidelines include:**

- Development that reflects local culture, history, and community values, creating a unique identity and fostering pride among residents.
- Engaging the community stakeholders in the planning process to ensure developments meet the needs of current and future residents.
- Promoting local history, culture, and architectural styles to create a unique identity.
- A blend of residential, commercial, recreational, and cultural uses to reduce travel distances, enhance convenience, and stimulate economic diversity.
- Support the economy with small business opportunities and by supporting existing businesses within the district.
- Prioritize people over cars, with a focus on human-scaled architecture, landscaping, and streetscapes to improve social interaction, walkability, and community identity.
- Housing options to accommodate people of different income levels, ages, and family structures, fostering inclusivity and affordability in the community.
- Streamlining the planning process to provide clarity for developers, reduce costs, and encourage projects aligned with smart growth goals.
- Complete streets that include crosswalks, parking, sidewalks, street trees, lighting, and bike facilities where space allows.
- Streetscapes, signage, lighting, and architecture that creates a visually appealing and comfortable atmosphere, where buildings are oriented to the street and designed to a scale suitable for people.
- Retaining narrow travel lanes within the street grid, versus expanding streets that would encourage faster travel speeds.
- Buildings designed in harmony with the pedestrian environment that included compact buildings and developments, reduced setbacks and buildings that front the street and public realm.
- Preserving existing trees, and planting of new trees to expand the tree canopy along the street, within parking areas, and on the lot area of the development.

# STREET / URBAN DESIGN CONCEPTS



Bentley Rysedorph

**Integrate design concepts for complete streets into redeveloped corridors.**

**Orient new buildings to the street and include a +/- 16 foot urbanized sidewalk to promote pedestrian friendliness.**



<https://www.utiledesign.com/wp-content/uploads/2023/03/2022-04-06-Frontage-Definition-01-1400x803.jpg>



Ennis-Flint\_TrafficScapes\_TrafficPatterns02.jpg

**Consider street paving in the center turn lanes on key streets to distinguish their purpose, create an attractive streets, and slow cars down.**

**Utilize curb extensions and “bulb-outs” within mixed use areas to create safer and shorter street crossings.**



<https://breakfastonbikes.blogspot.com/2017/03/downtown-board-to-discuss-corner-bulb-outs-curb-extensions-dab.html>



<https://www.cityofsanrafael.org/crosswalk-improvements/>

**Utilize flashing pedestrian beacons at busy street crossings.**



DRAFT

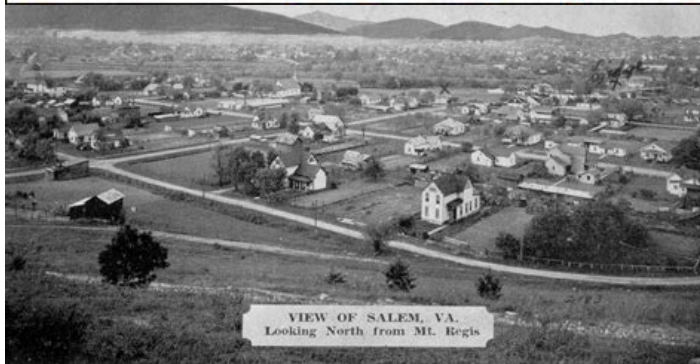
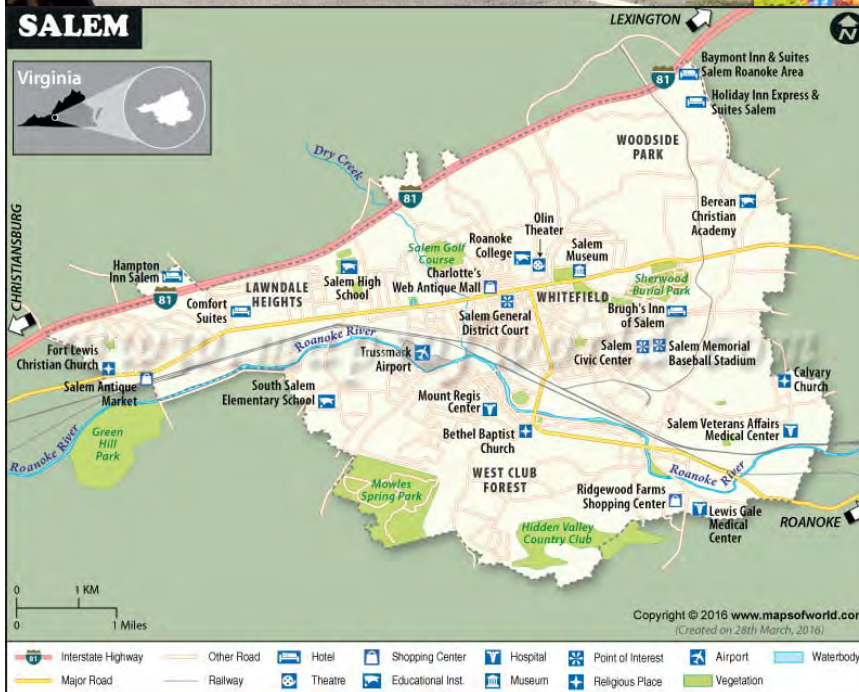




# CITY ATLAS

**The data and mapping included within this chapter is a summary of various existing conditions that, along with community and stakeholder input, provide a background and impetus for the Comprehensive Plan's recommendations.**







# HISTORY & CULTURE

**Downtown Salem’s history dates back to the early 1800s when fewer than 25 families lived along the Great Road, a vital route connecting Pennsylvania to southern states like Tennessee and Georgia.**

James Simpson, a local land speculator, recognized the area’s potential and developed a small town called Salem. Businesses like blacksmiths, stables, and general stores flourished along Main Street, supporting the growing community. The railroad eventually fulfilled the dream of connecting Salem to broader markets.

Salem became the county seat when Roanoke County was formed in 1838, and a red-brick courthouse opened in 1841, serving as a hub for social and business gatherings. The courthouse that replaced it in 1910 now serves as Roanoke College’s Francis T. West Hall. Roanoke College itself was founded in 1847, originally established as Virginia Collegiate Institute before relocating to Salem. The college grew rapidly, attracting students from beyond the region and contributing to Salem’s development as an educational and cultural center.

Further population growth led to the construction of the Carver School for Black students and Salem High School on Broad Street for white students. The school’s destruction led to the prompt construction of Andrew Lewis High School, which was for white students until desegregation in 1966. The former high school on Broad Street is now City Hall. Carver is now an elementary school, and Andrew Lewis is now Salem’s middle school. Today’s Salem High School opened in 1977.

As the City evolved, interstate highways eclipsed railroad in the 1960s—the first stretch of I-81 opened in 1964. Passenger rail service was discontinued and the passenger station closed. By the 1980s, three exits tied Salem to I-81, which roughly followed the historic corridor of the Great Road and its Wilderness Road extension westward.

**As it has in the past, Salem continues to support its community with a variety of quality of life programs:**

## **1. Community Events:**

Year-round local events, festivals, and sports activities including: Olde Salem Days, Pumpkin Fest, the Lewis Gale

Salem Half Marathon, national and regional sporting events, The Salem Fair, and several concerts at the Salem Civic Center.

## **2. Scenic Landscapes:**

Nestled in the Roanoke Valley, Salem offers picturesque views of the Blue Ridge Mountains and abundant natural beauty that includes the Roanoke River. Parks and green spaces are well-maintained, providing residents with numerous outdoor recreational opportunities.

## **3. Educational and Recreational Facilities:**

- Salem's school system is highly regarded, contributing to a family-friendly environment. Educational facilities are well-respected and play a crucial role in community life.
- Salem is known for its dedication to sports, with high-quality facilities like Moyer Sports Complex, for both youth and adult leagues. The Salem Civic Center is a hub for entertainment and sporting events.

## **4. Safety and Services:**

- The City is well-served by its police, fire, and rescue services, which are known for their responsiveness and community involvement. This contributes to a strong sense of security among residents.
- Salem proudly boasts the nation's second oldest all-volunteer rescue squad.

## **Salem, Virginia, boasts historic districts, historic areas, and neighborhoods that reflect its rich architectural and cultural heritage:**

### **1. North Broad Street Historic District**

Designated as Salem's first residential historic district in 2018, the North Broad Street Historic District showcases the City's economic prosperity from the 1880s to around 1950. This area features substantial homes in various architectural styles, including the notable Evans House. Many side streets bear the names of influential residents from that era. Its proximity to Main Street and Downtown Salem meant early access to infrastructure improvements like paved streets and electricity.

### **2. Downtown Salem Historic District**

The Downtown Salem Historic District encompasses approximately 34 contributing buildings and one site in the City's commercial core. The district includes mixed-use commercial buildings, churches, residences, a courthouse, a post office, a library, a park, and a Farmer's Market. Architectural styles such as Greek Revival, Italianate, and Queen Anne are represented. Noteworthy structures include the Stevens House ("Old Post House"), Kizer-Webber Building, Duval-Oakey House, and the former Salem High School.

## **Salem also boasts a variety of historic buildings and sites including:**

### **1. Salem Presbyterian Church**

- **Location:** 41 E. Main Street, Salem, VA
- **Built:** 1851
- **Architectural Style:** Greek Revival
- **Significance:** This church is one of the oldest in Salem and has played a significant role in the community's religious life.

### **2. Salem Museum and Historical Society**

- **Location:** 801 E. Main Street, Salem, VA
- **Built:** 1845 (Williamson Road Building)
- **Significance:** Housed in the historic Williams-Brown House, this museum showcases the history of Salem and the surrounding areas.

### **3. Old Roanoke County Courthouse**

- **Location:** 301 E. Main Street, Salem, VA
- **Built:** 1910
- **Architectural Style:** Beaux-Arts
- **Significance:** This courthouse served as the Roanoke County Courthouse until 1985 and is now used for various Roanoke College events.

### **4. Andrew Lewis School**

- **Location:** 616 S. College Avenue, Salem, VA
- **Built:** 1939
- **Architectural Style:** Colonial Revival
- **Significance:** Named after the Revolutionary War hero Andrew Lewis, this building now serves as a middle school.

### **5. Salem High School (Old)**

- **Location:** 114 N. Broad Street, Salem, VA
- **Built:** 1912
- **Significance:** The original high school building before the current Salem High School was constructed.

### **6. East Hill Cemetery**

- **Location:** Main Street and Lynchburg Turnpike.
- **Built:** 1869
- **Significance:** Civil War burials, and includes the grave of Andrew Lewis.

### **7. East Hill North Cemetery**

- **Beside the Salem Museum**
- **Built:** 1868
- **Significance:** Purchased to establish an African American burial ground.

### **8. GW Carver School**

- **Location:** #6 Fourth Street
- **Built:** 1948
- **Significance:** From 1940-1966 served African American students from grade 1-12.

### **9. Elizabeth College**

- **Location:** bounded by Lynchburg Turnpike and Idaho Street, Salem, VA
- **Built:** 1915 (Rebuilt after fire in 1921)
- **Significance:** Originally a Lutheran women's college, the building now serves as part of Roanoke College.





# DEMOGRAPHIC TRENDS

**Since 2000, Salem has experienced only modest population growth of approximately 3%, according to U.S. census reports.**

## Population Trends

According to City Data, which pulls information from United States Census Report, Salem's population grew by approximately 3.1% between 2000 and 2022, reaching 25,523 residents in 2022. In 2023 the population was recorded at 25,477, and in 2024, the estimated population reached 25,665, indicating a 1.03% increase since the 2020 census.

The City saw its most significant annual population increase between 2004 and 2005, with an addition of 306 people (a 1.25% year-on-year increase). Conversely, according to Neilsburg Research, the largest annual decrease occurred between 2009 and 2010, with a decline of 659 people (a 2.58% year-on-year decrease).

Overall, Salem's population growth has been relatively slow compared to other similarly sized cities in Virginia and the United States. The City's demographic challenges, particularly its aging population and available land, play a crucial role in shaping its population trends.

## Household Data

As of the latest available census data, Salem, Virginia, exhibits the following household demographics:

### Number of Households

Total households: 11,096.

Average household size: 2.51 persons.

### Median Household Income

The median household income in Salem has shown variation over recent years:

- 2023: \$66,716.
- 2022: \$68,402.
- 2021: \$66,472.
- 2020: \$63,411.
- 2019: \$57,165

(2023 ACS data).

### Poverty Rate

As of the most recent data, the poverty rate in Salem, Virginia, stands at approximately 10.9%. This figure is lower than both the national average of 12.4% and the rate in the Roanoke, VA Metro Area, which is 12.2%. This indicates that Salem has a relatively lower percentage of individuals living below the poverty line compared to these broader regions.

### Social Vulnerability

The Social Vulnerability Index provided by the CDC assembles composite data into 15 variables defined by the U.S. Census. The index was developed to assist in disaster planning, and when utilized, it can positively impact a community's resiliency.

**Socioeconomic Status:** Includes poverty levels, unemployment rates, income, and education levels.

**Household Composition & Disability:** Considers age (e.g., children and elderly), disability status, and single-parent households.

**Minority Status & Language:** Looks at racial and ethnic minority populations and English proficiency.

**Housing Type & Transportation:** Analyzes crowded housing, group quarters, vehicle access, and housing costs.

**Salem's Overall SVI Score: 0.3248**

Possible scores range from 0 (lowest vulnerability) to 1 (highest vulnerability).

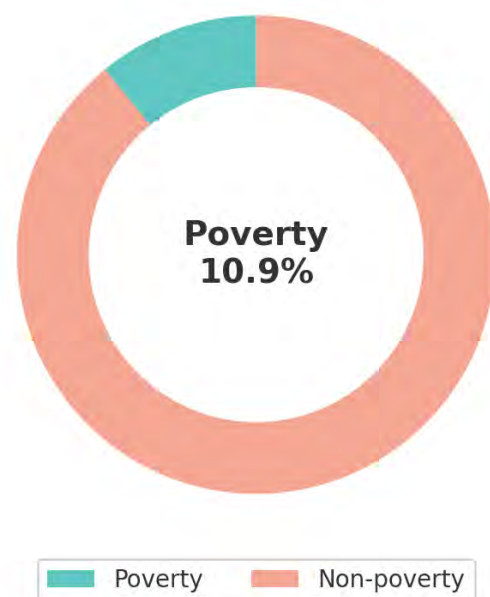
A score of 0.3248 indicates a low to medium level of vulnerability.

Sources include: [vpap.org](http://vpap.org), and [datavirginia.gov](http://datavirginia.gov)

### Poverty in Salem, Virginia, as of 2023.

Approximately 10.9% of the population lives below the poverty line, while 89.1% lives above it.

#### Total Population (All Ages)





## Age Demographics

Salem's age demographics suggest a moderately aging population. Key indicators include:

- **Median Age:** The median age in Salem is approximately 40.3 years, slightly higher than Virginia's median age of 38.8 years
- **Age Distribution:** Approximately 19.32% of Salem's population is aged 65 and over, which is higher than the national average of 16.8%.
- **Between 2000 and 2020, Salem, Virginia's median age increased from 39 to 40.3 years, indicating a slight aging trend over the two decades.**

These figures indicate that a significant portion of Salem's population comprises seniors, with nearly 20% of residents being 65 or older. By contrast, the average within Roanoke City is 18%, the USA is 17% and urban areas are typically 15%. These statistics indicate that Salem has higher proportion of older residents compared to state and national averages, suggesting a slightly aging population, while a balanced age distribution in the range of 15% is often considered beneficial for a City's economic and social vitality. This aging trend includes counting the student population of Roanoke College, which contributes approximately 1,800 student aged people, which skews the data toward a younger population estimate than is actual.

Sources: datausa.org, odphp.health.gov

## SALEM POPULATION PYRAMID



Source: U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey (ACS) 2017-2021 5-Year Estimates

As of December 2024, Salem's unemployment rate stood at 2.5%, a decrease from 2.9% in December 2023.

## Employment

Salem has generally maintained a favorable employment record compared to the state average. Like the rest of the state and nation, however, Salem's employment has been affected by recessions and the Covid 19 pandemic. Notably, during the COVID-19 pandemic, Salem experienced a significant spike in unemployment, reaching 10.6% in April 2020. Prior to the pandemic, in October 1999, the City recorded its lowest unemployment rate at 1.2%.

The average unemployment rate in Salem, Virginia, for the year 2024 was approximately 2.96%. This figure is based on monthly data sourced from the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics via the Federal Reserve Bank of St. Louis. Over the same year, Virginia's (statewide) was 2.9% and the United States (national) was 4.0%. This rate indicates a strong local labor market, as it is below both the national average and Salem's long-term average unemployment rate of 3.78%.

## Affordability / Cost of Living

According to C2ER (the Council for Community and Economic Research), the cost of living in Salem is estimated to

be 92.8% of the national average making it an average US City in terms of affordability.

**The median household income in Salem is \$66,716, which is 17% less than that of the state. The median income for an individual is \$35,584, which is 17% less than that of the state.**

Sources: [fred.stlouisfed.org](https://fred.stlouisfed.org), [tradingeconomics.com](https://tradingeconomics.com)

While the City's cost of living is lower than the national average, affordable housing is becoming a concern. A regional housing market analysis highlighted that lower-wage hourly positions exacerbate the need for affordable housing, indicating that many residents struggle to find housing within their financial means.

## How much do I need to live in Salem, Virginia

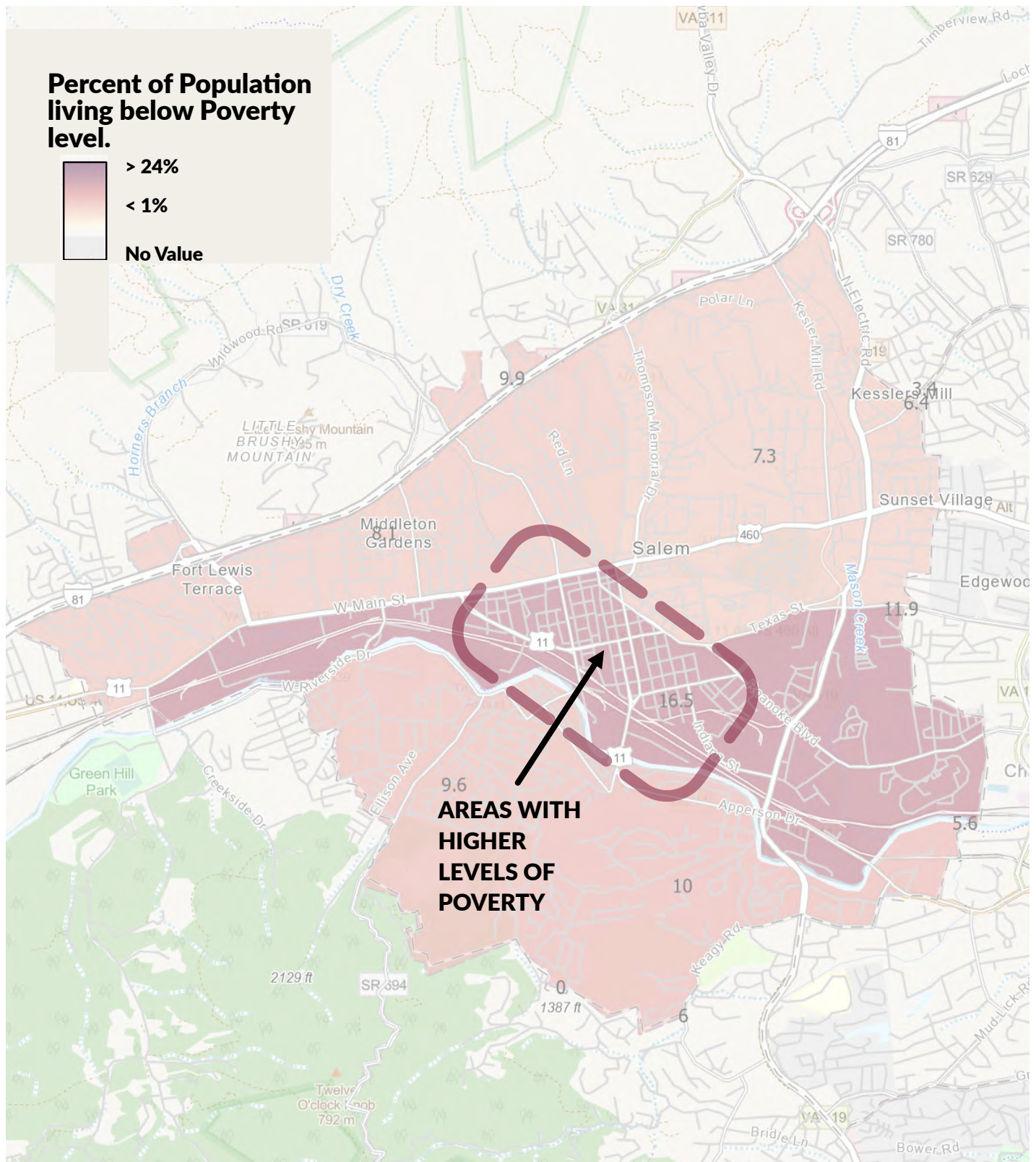
(according to Best Places - [bestplaces.net](https://bestplaces.net), which calculates cost of living and affordability for cities)

### **\$4,170 / month**

For a family, 22.8% less expensive than the national average - a total of \$50,040 for the year for a family.

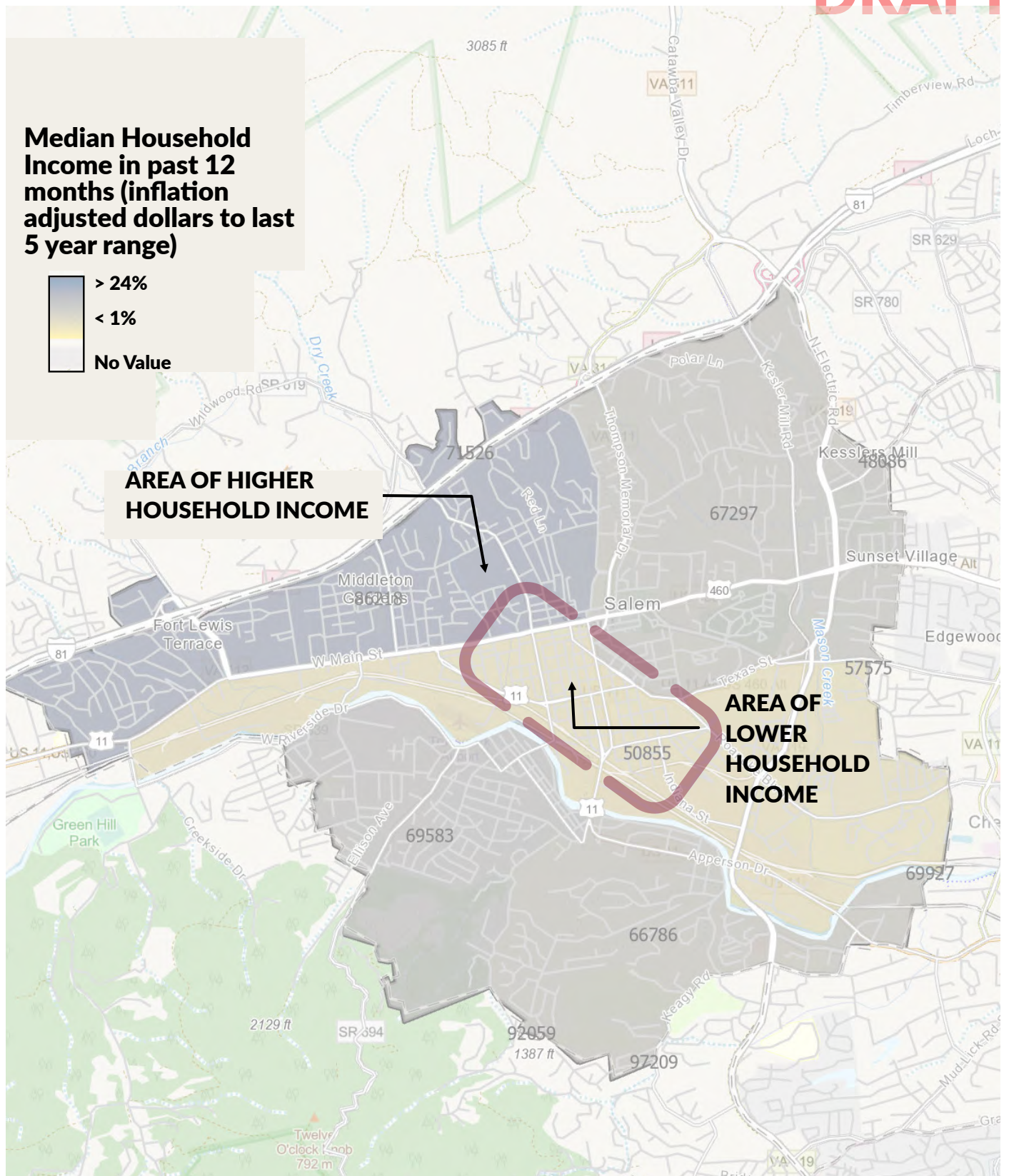
### **\$2,967 / month**

For a single person, 37.8% less expensive than the national average - a total of \$35,600 for the year for a single person.



**AREA OF CITY WITH HIGHER LEVELS OF POVERTY.** As shown on other maps, this area of Salem has fewer owner occupied housing units than the rest of the City, which limits the ability to generate wealth and create upward economic movement.





## MAP OF CITY SHOWING AREAS OF HIGHER AND LOWER HOUSEHOLD INCOMES

Areas of lower household incomes could indicate areas that need assistance

# HOUSING & AFFORDABILITY

**While Salem remains relatively affordable, it is not immune to the broader housing affordability challenges seen across Virginia and the U.S. Rising construction costs, limited land availability and land cost, permitting hurdles, and a shortage of subsidized housing options make it increasingly difficult to provide affordable homes for middle- and lower-income groups. Salem's home prices and rents are beginning to outpace wages and wage growth, while aging housing, the slow process of new development, and an older population staying in place further impact the housing market.**

## Homeownership and Rental Market

- **Homeownership:** Approximately 63% of homes in Salem are owner-occupied.
- **Rental Market:** Renters make up about 37% of the population. The rental market includes a range of options from single-family homes to apartments. Rental vacancy rates are relatively low at around 5.4%.

## Rental Prices

Rental prices in Salem range widely based on the size and type of the unit:

- Studio: ~\$1086 - \$1,659
- One-bedroom: ~ \$1,058 - \$1,133
- Two-bedroom: ~ \$1,237 - \$1,368
- Three-bedroom: ~\$1,434 - \$1,798

## Median Home Price in Salem, VA:

As of March 2025, the median “sold” home price in Salem, Virginia, was \$306,550, reflecting a 5.2% increase from the previous year. Additionally, the average home value in Salem was reported at \$292,525, up 5.0% year-over-year.

## Income Needed to Afford a Median-Priced Home in Salem:

A common affordability metric suggests that housing expenses should not exceed 30% of a household's gross monthly income.

Assuming a 20% down payment and a 30-year fixed mortgage at an interest rate of 6.8%, the estimated annual household income required to afford a \$292,500 home is approximately \$65,379, which is slightly lower than the median income level of the City at \$66,700. **However, availability of a down payment, and costs for mortgages, for other items like cars, furnishings, groceries, etc have also been getting more expensive, which adds to the challenges for buying a home.**

# ECONOMIC RESOURCES

**Salem, Virginia, has a diverse economy with various income and job sectors. Key sectors include:**

1. **Healthcare and Social Assistance:** This sector is a major employer in Salem, with facilities like the **LewisGale Medical Center** and the **VA Medical Center** providing numerous jobs.
2. **Education:** Salem is home to several educational institutions, including **Roanoke College** and **Salem City Schools**, which contributes significantly to employment in the area.
3. **Manufacturing:** There are several manufacturing companies, such as **Yokohama Tire** and **Integer**, in and around Salem, offering jobs in production, engineering, and related fields.
4. **Retail:** Retail businesses are prominent and include Walmart, Lowes, and Kroger, providing a range of job opportunities from sales to management positions. There are also many small businesses that add diversity.
5. **Public Administration:** Local government and public services also play a crucial role in the job market in Salem.
6. **Accommodation and Food Services:** This sector includes jobs in hotels, restaurants, and other food service establishments.
7. **Professional and Technical Services:** This sector includes various professional jobs, such as legal, accounting, engineering, and consulting services with companies such as **CMIT Solutions**.

## Economic Development

Economic development in Salem, Virginia is managed through dedicated departments and authorities that collaborate to promote business growth, attract new industries, and enhance the overall economic landscape of the region.

- **Department of Economic Development:** Salem's Economic Development office is situated in City Hall at 114 N Broad Street. This department focuses on supporting local businesses, attracting new enterprises, and fostering a



conducive environment for economic growth.

- **Economic Development Authority (EDA):**  
Established in 2017, the EDA comprises seven members who work closely with the Department of Economic Development. The authority is empowered to acquire, lease, and manage properties to promote industrial and commercial development within the City. Meetings are held monthly at City Hall.

**Salem is a member of the Roanoke Valley-Alleghany Regional Commission, which fosters regional cooperation and provides support in areas like transportation planning, environmental planning, and economic development.**

## MAJOR EMPLOYERS

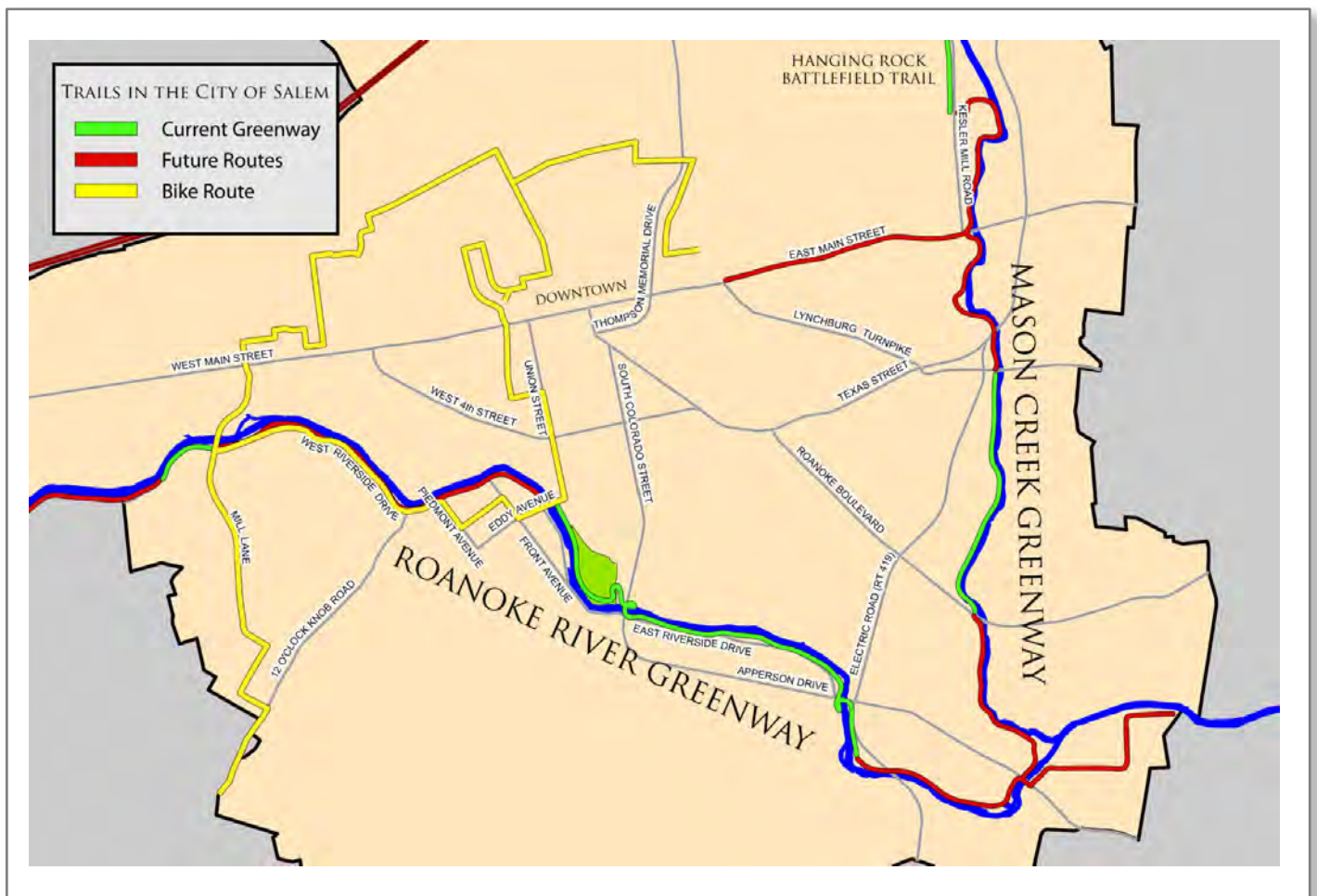
**VA Medical Center: 2,000 - 2,499**  
**Lewis-Gale Hospital: 1,000 - 1,499**  
**Yokohama Industries: 500 - 999**  
**Lewis-Gale Physicians: 500 - 999**  
**City of Salem Schools: 500 - 999**

## POTENTIAL CHALLENGES:

Like many communities, Salem faces several economic challenges that impact its growth and stability. Here are some key issues:

1. Dependence on Healthcare and Manufacturing
2. Aging population and talent leaving for other locations
3. Retail and small business struggles
4. Revenue and budget constraints
5. Competition from Roanoke and nearby areas
6. Limited housing diversity
7. Growing housing affordability issues
8. Workforce development and workforce fit with new industries
9. Limited community desire to accommodate growth of housing and population
10. Limited land upon which to accommodate growth

Sources included articles from [cardinalnews.com](http://cardinalnews.com), [pubs.ext.vt.edu](http://pubs.ext.vt.edu)



## SALEM TRAILS AND GREENWAYS

The Roanoke River Greenway and the Mason Creek Greenway are major investments and assets for Salem to capitalize on.

# TRANSPORTATION

**Salem's long-range transportation plan is part of a broader regional effort coordinated by the Roanoke Valley Alleghany Regional Commission (RVARC).**

**The RVARC handles transportation planning for the region, including Salem, and develops various plans and studies to address transportation needs.**

The statewide transportation plan, VTrans, also influences Salem's planning. VTrans outlines Virginia's long-term transportation vision, focusing on improving safety, accessibility, and mobility while supporting economic growth.

## Connectivity

Salem is organized on an urban grid system of streets, which provides high levels of connectivity for cars, bikes, and walkers. A bike network plan has been discussed to create bike lanes and shared streets to link community assets. Sidewalks exist on many streets but do not represent a complete system.

Several major roadways pass through Salem, creating issues for pedestrian crossings, cycle safety, and traffic congestion. Additionally, Salem's major roadways carry burdens when I-81 is closed or limited. Salem generally experiences moderate traffic congestion, especially during peak hours. Key areas of congestion typically include:

1. **Main Thoroughfares:** West Main Street, East Main Street, and Electric Road (Route 419) often see higher traffic volumes.
2. **Interstate Access:** The intersections near I-81, particularly exits 137 and 140, can be congested during rush hours.
3. **Commercial Areas:** Areas around the Salem Civic Center, Roanoke College, and large retail centers may experience congestion, particularly during events or weekends.

## WALK SCORE

Walk Scores are provided by [walkscore.com](https://www.walkscore.com). These scores summarize the walkability and public transit options. Salem's walk score varies across the City, with downtown being very walkable at a score of 83, but an overall average of 27, which means it is a car dependent city.



## **MAJOR STREETS**

### **East Main Street**

East Main Street connects Salem with Roanoke City. It is an important gateway into the City. As such it must accommodate not only automotive traffic, but the safe and efficient use by transit, cyclists, and pedestrians, along the entire corridor within the City.

A long stretch of the roadway as it leaves downtown, from Thompson Memorial Drive to Brand Avenue, has been improved with streetscape elements, bus stops, decorative lighting, bike lanes, and sidewalks.

Development along the corridor includes Longwood Park, Oakey Field Complex, automobile dealerships, and smaller commercial users. Topography confines the corridor, making expansive changes to land use difficult. A wide continuous center turn lane does provide an opportunity for select interventions aimed at improving the character and safety of the roadway, such as median pockets for landscape and pedestrian refuge.

From Brand Avenue to Parkdale Drive, East Main Street narrows in cross section to two wide lanes that service smaller commercial users of various types. No sidewalks, bike lanes, or streetscape elements exist on this

**\*Average Daily Trips (ADT) is the average number of vehicle trips generated to and from a location or roadway segment per day, typically calculated over a 24-hour period.**

portion of the roadway. A few potential redevelopment sites are located along the roadway, including one adjacent to the Sherwood Memorial Park.

From Parkdale Drive to Electric Road, the roadway widens back to included a continuous center turn lane, servicing large commercial users such as automobile dealerships. Streetscape elements such as bike/ped infrastructure and gateway landscape plantings, are absent.

From Electric Road to East City limits, two travel lanes each direction at 12 feet each, with a continuous intermittent turn median. A non-contiguous sidewalk exists along the edge of the roadway on both sides. Walkers are not buffered from moving cars. Crosswalks occur at several major intersections but not all of them.

**Current Average Daily Trips (ADT)\*: The highest ADT is between Kessler Mill Road and Electric Road at 13,000 ADT.**

### **West Main Street**

West Main Street, west of Downtown serves as the gateway into Salem from the west. The street section consists of two 2 lanes of travel in each direction and a continuous center turn lane with similar dimensions.

West Main Street functions as a relief route for drivers during congestion events on I-81. It is most traveled during early morning and late afternoon.

The width of the corridor ROW in places makes it difficult to consider continuous and adequate bike and pedestrian infrastructure. Sidewalks do exist, but are narrow and located directly along the roadway. Additionally, utility poles run alongside the road, making it difficult to widen sidewalks. Crosswalks are infrequent, which makes crossing the road safely a challenge.

West Main Street has limited near term redevelopment potential along most of its corridor. Larger commercial sites as well as pad retail and food sites dominate development between 4<sup>th</sup> Street and Diuguids Lane. Further to the west to the City Boundary the corridor becomes more rural in character.

**Current ADT: The highest ADT is between Wildwood Road and 4<sup>th</sup> Street at 23,000 ADT.**

**See Revisioning West Main Street: Creating a Multimodal Corridor in Salem, Virginia, April 2024, School of Public and International Affairs, Virginia Tech.**

### **Apperson Drive / Lee Highway / Colorado Street (Apperson Corridor)**

The Apperson Corridor stretches from East City Limits to Colorado Street. It is a wide roadway with a continuous center turn lane that serves as a gateway into the City from the southeast, traveling through commercial and residential areas.

The Corridor currently does not include pedestrian and bicycle infrastructure, however the current ADT suggests all or portions of it could be redesigned to add on street parking, planted center medians, and/or bike/ped infrastructure.

This roadway can play a larger role within the City, as a gateway. The provision of cycle infrastructure to leverage the nearby Roanoke Greenway would serve to link River Road and Downtown.

**Current ADT: Varies along its length from 13,000 to 20,000**

### **Wildwood Road:**

Wildwood Road is a short segment of road that connects I-81 and northern parts of the city, to West Main Street, west of Downtown. The existing ROW has no sidewalks, cycle infrastructure, and limited landscape elements. The Section includes 2 lanes of travel each way, with center turn pockets at intersections and a central median servicing pad retail sites and lodging. Wildwood Road should serve as another Gateway into Salem, but currently lacks any of the defining elements that would establish it as such. Current ADT counts suggest it is oversized for the capacity it handles. Wildwood Road is an excellent candidate for redesign to include narrower travel lanes, cycle and ped infrastructure, and streetscape improvements.

**Current ADT: 19,000 ADT**

### **Thompson Memorial Drive**

Similar to Wildwood Road, Thompson Memorial Drive connects Salem to I-81 east of Downtown. It has two travel lanes each direction, with a planted median and turn pockets at intersections and major curb cuts. The ROW does include sidewalks placed separate from the curb, but still close to the travel lanes. Thompson Memorial Drive provides access to residential areas as well as Roanoke College along a tree canopied corridor. Similar to Wildwood, the section is oversized based on Average Daily Trips. A redesign to take advantage of the existing tree canopy would reinforce and establish a green gateway into Salem. The redesign would include additional landscape, gateway signage, and a reduction in travel lanes and/or lane widths

**Current ADT: 12,000 ADT**

### **4<sup>th</sup> Street**

4<sup>th</sup> Street connects Roanoke Boulevard to West Main Street and serves truck traffic that would otherwise use Main Street from Thompson Memorial Drive to Lake Spring Park. The section consists of two lanes in each direction with a concrete median down in the center. Sidewalks are present on each side that are separated from the back of curb. Portions support street trees. There is no bicycle infrastructure.

4<sup>th</sup> Street services commercial developments of various types and several sites exist along

it that over time could be developed to support the shopping needs of nearby neighborhoods. A well designed streetscape plan and future zoning changes would help to transform 4<sup>th</sup> Street into an urban corridor, encouraging neighborhood based business, and pedestrian access.

**Current ADT: 17,000 ADT (varies)**

### **Main Street Downtown**

Main Street Downtown has been upgraded with streetscape, enhanced crosswalks, plantings, and parking. It provides an urbanizing and pedestrian friendly zone within the retail area of downtown.

**Current ADT: 13,000 ADT**

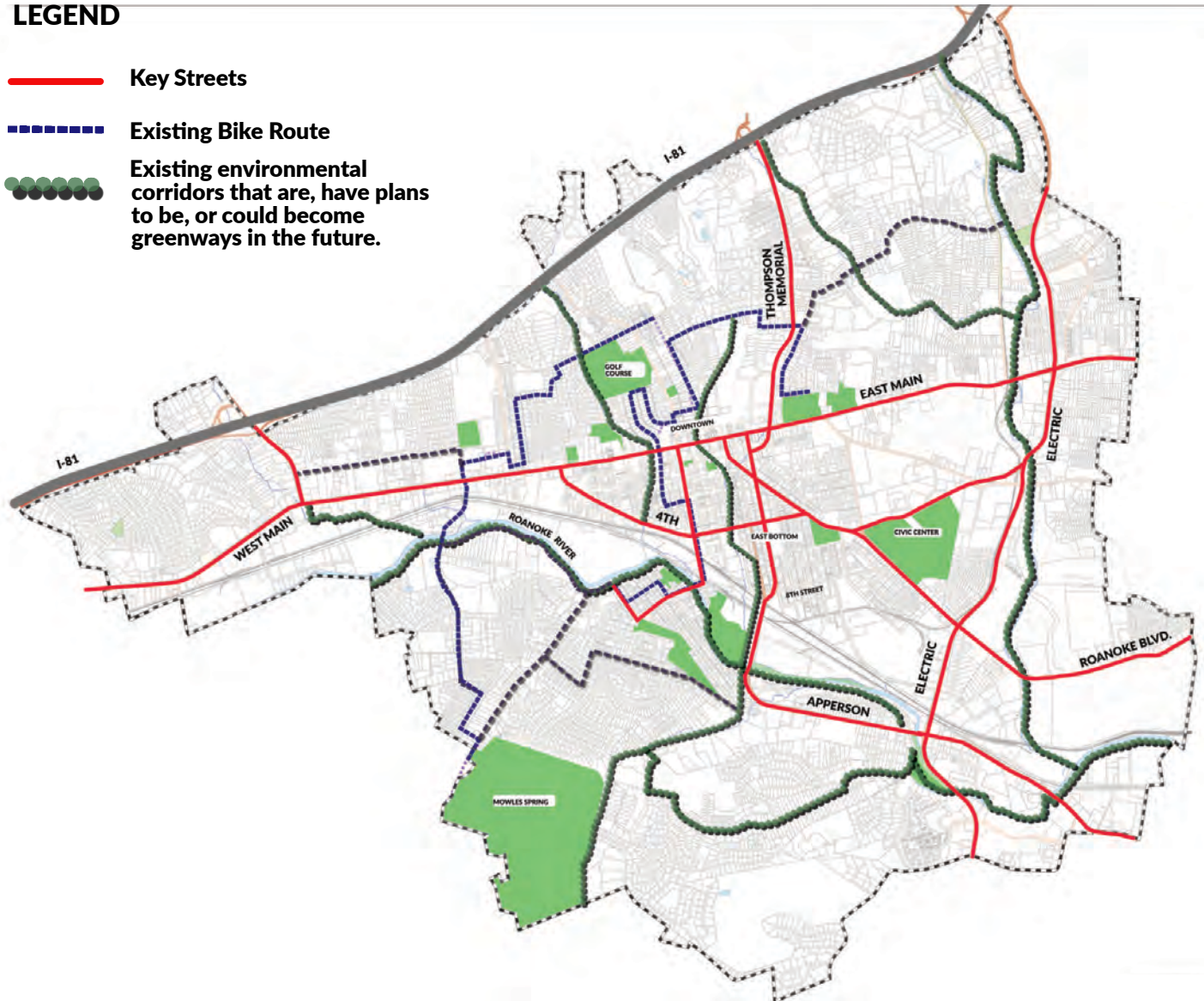
### **Public Transportation**

**The primary public transportation option in Salem is the Valley Metro bus service.** Valley Metro operates several bus routes within Salem, Virginia, primarily serving major streets such as Main Street, Apperson Drive, and Electric Road (Route 419).



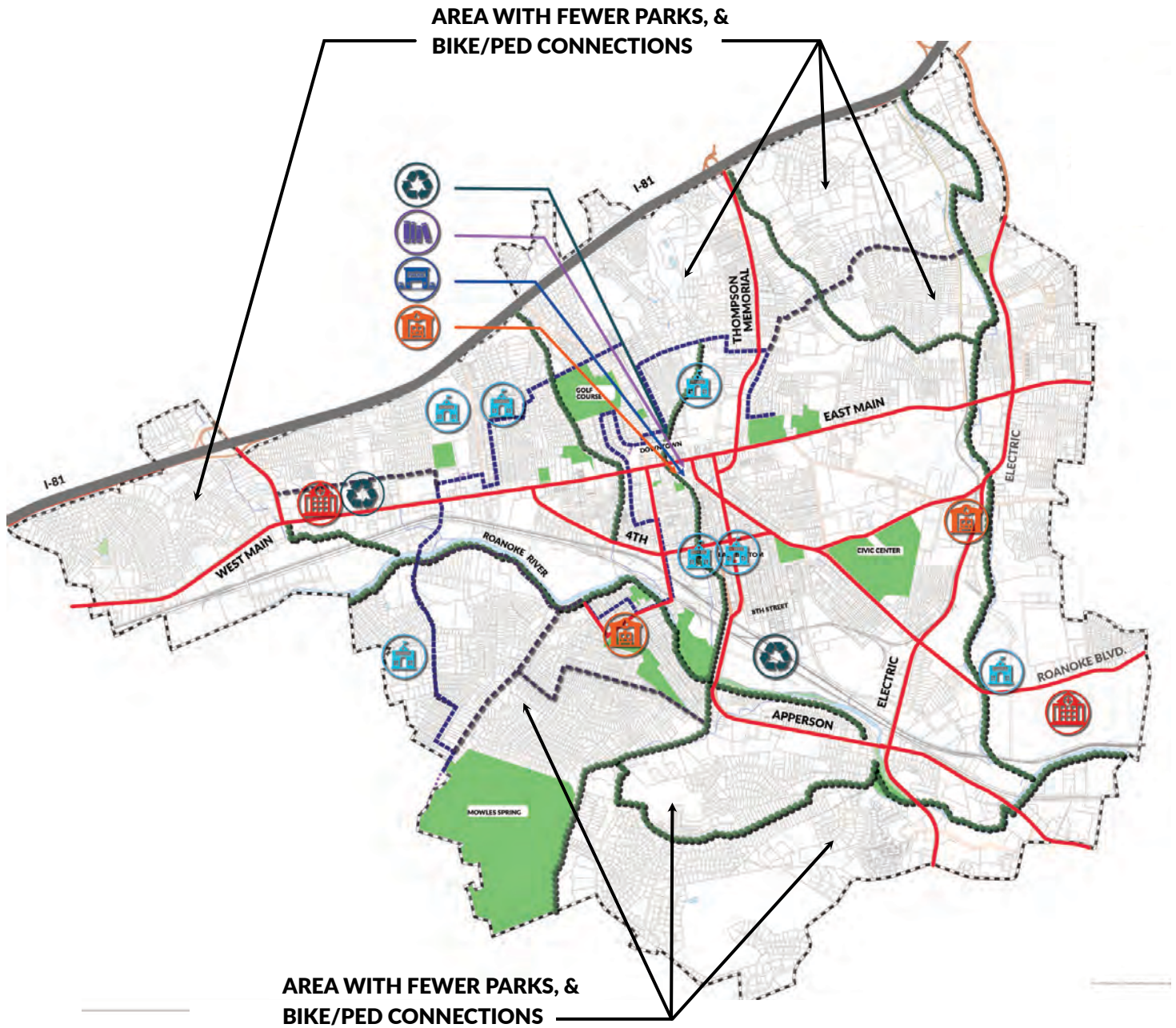
## LEGEND

- Key Streets
- - - - - Existing Bike Route
- Existing environmental corridors that are, have plans to be, or could become greenways in the future.



## KEY STREETS, TRAILS AND GREENWAYS

These corridors provide broad connectivity across Salem and can be improved and added to over time to support multi-modal connectivity.



## SALEM COMMUNITY SERVICES

As the diagram indicates, Salem is well served with community services. There is a need for parks, however, in portions of the city that neighborhood residents can walk to easily, especially in the north east portion and southwest portion of Salem.

# COMMUNITY SERVICES

## Public Utilities

### Storm Water Management

The City of Salem (City) operates a Stormwater Management Program in compliance with the Virginia General Permit for Discharges of Stormwater from Small Municipal Separate Storm Sewer Systems (MS4 General Permit).

The City of Salem (City) Program Plan when implemented constitutes compliance with the standard of reducing pollutants to the maximum extent practicable (MEP) of the VAR04 General Virginia Pollutant Discharge Elimination System (VPDES) Permit for Discharges of Stormwater from Small Municipal Minimum Control Measures.

The General Permit requires the Program Plan to include Best Management Practices (BMP) to address the requirements of six minimum control measures (MCMs) described in Part I.E of the General Permit. The MCMs are summarized as:

- MCM 1: Public Education and Outreach on Stormwater Impacts
- MCM 2: Public Involvement and Participation

- MCM 3: Illicit Discharge Detection and Elimination
- MCM 4: Construction Site Stormwater Runoff Control
- MCM 5: Post-construction Stormwater Management
- MCM 6: Pollution Prevention/Good Housekeeping for Operations

By integrating these elements, Salem, Virginia, aims to effectively manage stormwater, reduce flooding, protect water quality, and enhance the resilience of its infrastructure.

### Water / Sewer

The City of Salem Water and Sewer Department's mission is to provide a high level of customer satisfaction by providing reliable, high-quality water and sewer service in an efficient, cost-effective, and environmentally sensitive manner.

The City of Salem owns and operates a 10 Million Gallon per Day water treatment plant and approximately 175 miles of water distribution pipe, providing service to approximately 9,500 customers. The City's



main source of water is the Roanoke River. However, it also draws from multiple groundwater sources. This water is treated and distributed to several water storage tanks in and around the City. The commitment to Salem of the Water Department is to provide a continual source of high-quality drinking water to local residents, businesses and industries.

The City of Salem owns and operates approximately 200 miles of sewer pipe, providing service to approximately 9,400 customers. In partnership with the Western Virginia Water Authority (WVWA), the City's wastewater is sent to the Roanoke Regional Water Pollution Control Plant (RRWPCP). The WVWA operates the RRWPCP. For more information concerning how wastewater is treated, please visit Western Virginia Water Authority (WVWA).

Like many municipalities nationwide, the City is currently under a Department of Environmental Quality (DEQ) Consent Order and is in the process of working to repair or replace much of its aging wastewater system.

## **Transportation**

The City's Engineering staff works closely with VDOT and RVARC to identify transportation needs and anticipates areas of development with the intent to ensure that there is adequate capacity, connectivity, and

level of service for pedestrian, bicycle and vehicular traffic.

## **Streets and General Maintenance**

The City of Salem Street and General Maintenance Department provides services to improve the quality of life for citizens and the community. It is responsible for professionally maintaining and improving landscaped areas, various municipal facilities, schools along with their grounds, the City's motor vehicle fleet, refuse collection, public streets, sidewalks, storm drains, street signs, and pavement markings.

## **Electric**

The City of Salem owns and operates its own electricity distribution system. The Electric Department was established in 1892. It purchases energy wholesale from American Electric Power (AEP). Salem also receives a small portion of its energy from an allocation of federal hydropower from the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers Philpott Hydro Project through the Southeastern Power Administration. Blue Ridge Power Agency assists the City with securing and administering its wholesale power supply arrangements. Approximately 13,300 electric customers are served by the City.

The Electric Department presently operates and maintains 11 substations and one transmission switching station. The transmission system consists of a network of approximately 20 miles of lines that tie the

substations together and to the four tie points with the AEP system. The distribution system originates at the 11 substations and consists of about 160 miles of overhead and 30 miles of underground distribution. The department also furnishes streetlights and dusk-to-dawn lights and maintains traffic signals at 37 intersections in the City.

The Electric Department is an active member of the Municipal Electric Power Association of Virginia, Blue Ridge Power Agency, and the American Public Power Association. Through these agencies, the Electric Department has been actively participating in both Federal and State deregulation efforts.

## **Planning and Zoning**

The Planning and Zoning Division is responsible for all planning efforts within the City of Salem, such as the Downtown Plan and the Comprehensive Plan. The division is also responsible for ensuring public input and participation in the planning process. The division also manages the activities of the Planning Commission and handles applications for rezoning, Special Exception Permits (SEP), and other matters requiring the review of the Commission. It is also responsible for the approval and issuance of zoning permits, sign permits, and the enforcement of zoning related matters.

## **Citizen Services / Resources**

### **Police**

The Salem Police Department provides law enforcement services to the city of Salem, Virginia. They are responsible for maintaining public safety, enforcing laws, and providing various community programs. The department typically includes several divisions such as patrol, investigations, and special operations. They often engage in community policing efforts to build strong relationships with residents.

**Salem Staffing: 2.63 officers per 1,000 population.**

### **Fire & EMS**

The Salem Fire-EMS Department provides fire suppression, emergency medical services, rescue operations, and fire prevention education. The department is equipped to handle various emergencies and disasters, ensuring the safety and well-being of Salem's residents and visitors. Both departments play a critical role in the community, offering various programs and services beyond their emergency response duties, including community education, safety training, and public outreach.

**Salem Staffing: 2.95 full time, .98 Part time, 3.93 total per 1,000 population.**

### **Network Connectivity**

The average Salem home can get up to 4,988 Mbps on their fiber internet plan. The fastest fiber download speed in the City is 5,000

Mbps, which 69.13% of residents can get. Some homes and apartments do not have access to these speeds. On the slower end, for example, less than 1% of homes can only purchase plans up to 940 Mbps. The City of Salem WIFI network is publically available in central parts of the City.

Fiber internet speeds tend to be faster in the northeast parts of Salem, and slower in the northwest areas of the City.

- Fiber is the fastest internet type for 69.24% of Salem homes.
- Cable is fastest for 28.82% of the City.
- DSL is fastest for less than 1%.
- Fixed wireless is fastest for less than 1%.
- Satellite internet may be the only option for 1.75% of Salem homes.

**Several broadband providers offer a range of internet services:**

1. **Xfinity:** Another major cable provider, Xfinity offers speeds up to 1200 Mbps and is available to around 82% of Salem residents. They also provide an Affordable Connectivity Program for eligible customers .
2. **Lumos Networks:** Specializes in DSL internet, though their coverage in Salem is limited, reaching about 16% of homes. They are expanding their network, so availability might increase in the future .
3. **HughesNet:** Offers satellite internet services, covering nearly 99% of Salem.

This is a good option for those in rural areas where other forms of internet might not be available .

4. **T-Mobile Home Internet:** Provides home internet with speeds up to 245 Mbps, available to about 79% of Salem residents. They have promotional offers, including a prepaid Mastercard for new customers .
5. **Glo Fiber:** Glo Fiber, operated by Shentel, offers high-speed fiber-optic internet services in Salem, providing symmetrical speeds up to 2 Gbps. Their offerings include internet, TV, and phone services for both residential and business customers.
6. **B2X Online:** B2X Online is a locally owned provider based in Salem, specializing in fixed wireless broadband services. They serve residential and business customers in Southwest and Central Virginia, particularly in areas where wired connections are limited.

## Education

Salem, Virginia, has its own independent school system known as the Salem City School Division. Its mission is to create an atmosphere where children become competent learners, creative thinkers, and responsible, involved citizens.

The Salem City School Division is governed by a School Board, which is responsible for policy-making and ensuring the smooth operation of the schools. Specifically, the Salem City School Board:



- Provides the necessary trained and dedicated leadership, qualified personnel, equipment and materials to assure an appropriate education for every student;
- Treats all members of the school community equitably with the highest degree of respect;
- Demonstrates good stewardship of resources through fair and efficient allocation.

The Division's central office oversees the implementation of policies and supports the schools in delivering quality education.

### **Parks and Recreation**

The Department of Parks and Recreation provides the citizens of Salem with year-round programs and activities, which are geared for all ages. Programs are operated with a full-time staff of 22 and a number of part-time staff such as field maintenance workers, instructors, game officials, summer special event workers, summer interns, sports clinic leaders, and volunteer coaches. The mission is to make a positive difference in the lives of citizens through professionally managed recreation programs, tournaments, and special events that foster economic impact, promote healthy lifestyles, social interaction, and civic pride among participants.

#### **Virginia's Championship City**

Salem has a proud history of showcasing carious NCAA collegiate events. Through May 2025, the City has hosted 108 National Championships.

### **Senior Center**

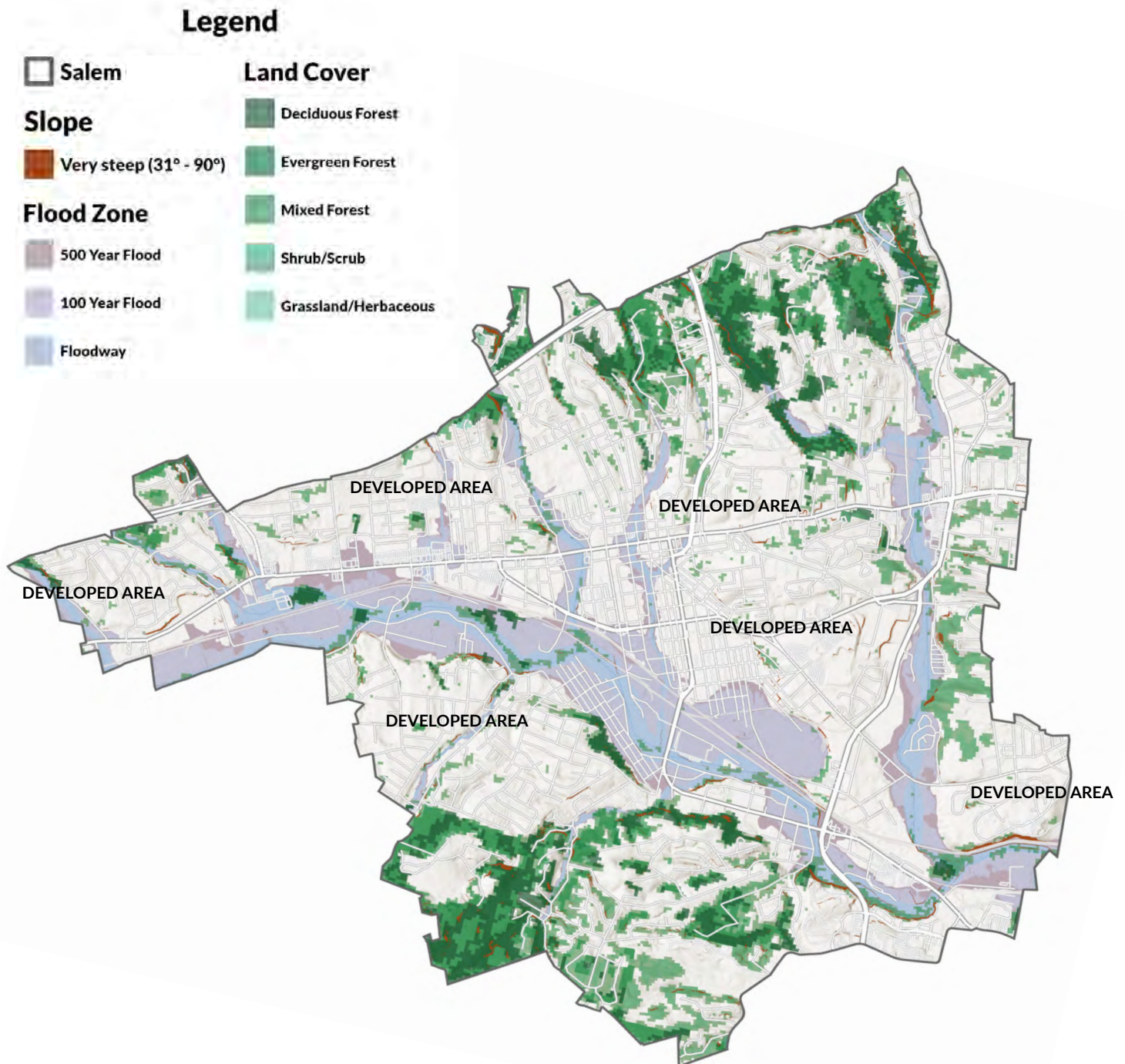
The Salem Senior Center program began in 1972 under the Salem Department of Parks and Recreation, led by Jerry Gwaltney, with Gertrude Harris overseeing senior programming. Initially based at 620 Florida Street, the program received federal and City of Salem funding. By 1976, the City fully supported it. In 1974, the Center moved into its current home at 110 Union Street, with an addition built in 1979. Since then, the Center has remained a welcoming space for all seniors.

### **Library**

Within the 16,000-square-foot building thousands of items are available for circulation, including books, audiobooks, DVDs, and more. There are 12 public computers available for free use. Technology also includes the free use of a scanner; documents can be scanned to a USB, sent as an email, or printed (per-page fee). The library acts as a hub for downtown activity, with free wireless available throughout the building and grounds.

### **Recycling Center**

Salem Citizens have three recycling drop-off centers in the City. One is located in east Salem at 1271 Indiana Street just across from the Street and General Maintenance Department near the Dog Park. The second one is in the west end of the Walmart parking lot on West Main Street. The remaining collection site is centrally located at 114 N Broad Street, in the parking lot behind City Hall near Roanoke College.



### VEGETATIVE COVER & FLOOD PLAINS

As the diagram indicates, there is very little natural areas left within Salem. Protection and promotion of tree cover, protection of flood plains, and protection / regeneration of stream corridors would enable higher levels of biodiversity.

# NATURAL RESOURCES

**Salem is mostly developed, with some remaining vacant and unbuildable land. The City's rolling terrain has many creeks and streams, which feed into the Roanoke River. Together, this system of watercourses and accompanying riverine flood plains define a contiguous natural open space network that supports bio-diverse vegetation and habitat.**

## Creeks, Streams, and Rivers

The Roanoke River cuts through the City and represents an important natural resource for habitat and recreation. It is a significant river stretching from the eastern edge of the Blue Ridge Mountains in Montgomery County VA, southeast across to the Albemarle Sound in the Coastal Plain of North Carolina. Within the City of Salem, the City of Roanoke, Roanoke County, and the Town of Vinton, the Roanoke Greenway, currently under construction, will provide access to the River, increasing recreational opportunities for the four communities and showcasing the region's natural setting.

Connecting to the Roanoke River are several streams and creeks and their vegetated buffers. These drain upland areas and feed water into the river. This secondary natural system offers opportunities to connect and integrate the Roanoke Greenway directly into the City.

According to The Roanoke River Blueway Committee, a coalition of local governments and agencies dedicated to the stewardship and promotion of the Blueway, "the Roanoke River is home to a range of fauna, including the Roanoke logperch (*Percina rex*), a federally and state-endangered species native to the Roanoke River. The largest populations inhabit the upper Roanoke River from the City of Roanoke into the lower reaches of its main tributaries. The Upper Roanoke River watershed is also home to numerous species of birds and waterfowl, wildlife, and game fish.

Many contributing streams have been buried or altered by urban development. Restoring and daylighting these waterways should be considered to support natural water management.



## **Flood Plain and Flood Way**

Supporting the river, stream, and creek system are riverine floodplains. These areas have generally been open for development. With development into the floodplain and an increase in major storm events, low-lying land is subject to increased flooding potential from upland properties.

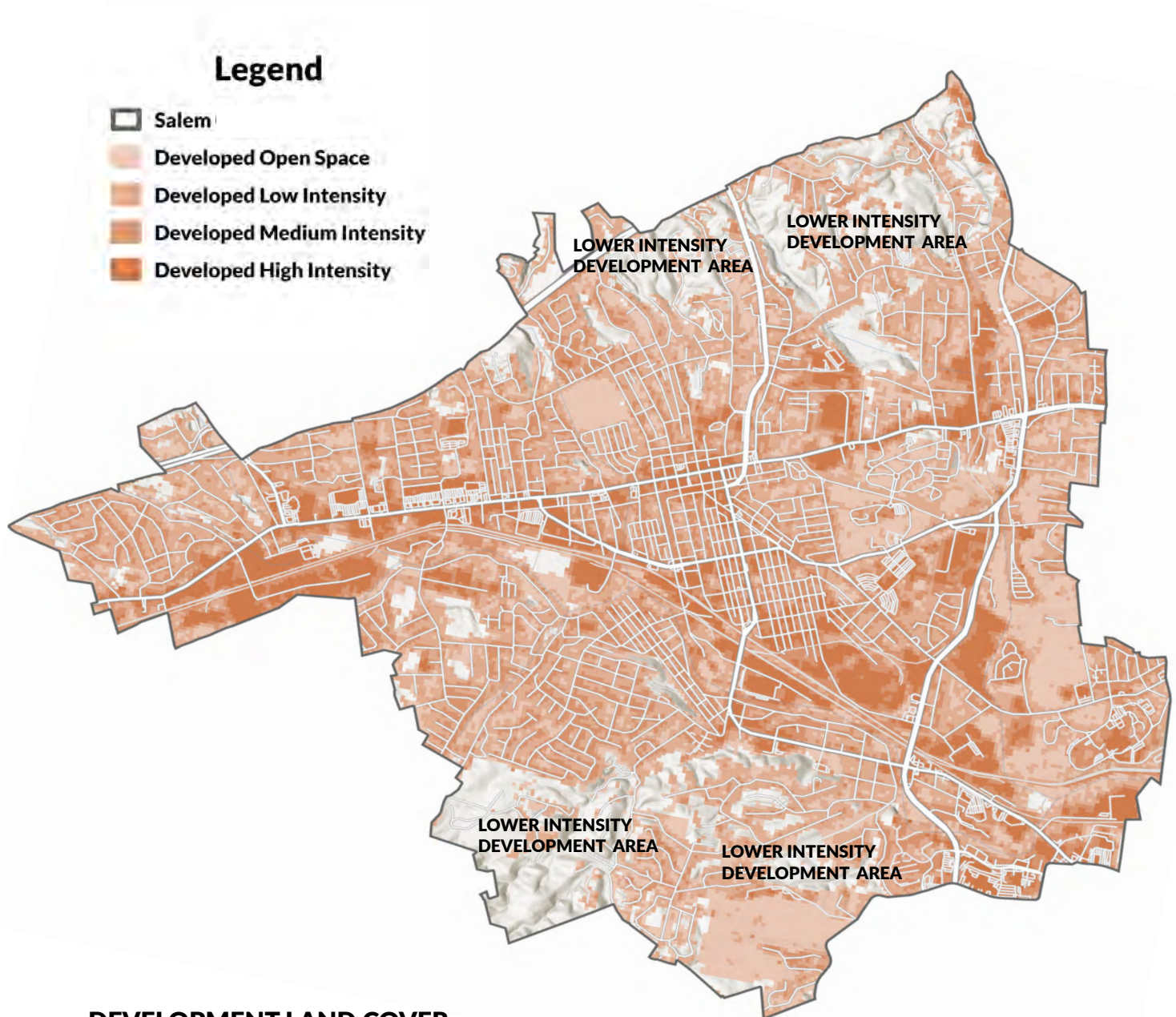
that connects across the City. However, these systems have been impacted by non-native or invasive species, which impacts the health of the native vegetation and the biodiversity of the system.

## **Duck Pond at Lake Spring Park**

Lake Spring Park, located at 700 West Main Street in Salem, Virginia, is a cherished urban green space offering a blend of natural beauty and historical significance. Originally the Lake Spring Hotel in the 1800s, the park's history is deeply intertwined with the City's growth and development, playing a significant role in Salem's recreational and cultural landscape. Spanning over three acres, the park features two tranquil ponds inhabited by ducks and geese, making it a popular spot for families and photographers alike. Children under 12 can enjoy fishing in the ponds, except during the Ernest "Pig" Robertson Fishing Rodeo held in May.

## **Vegetative Cover**

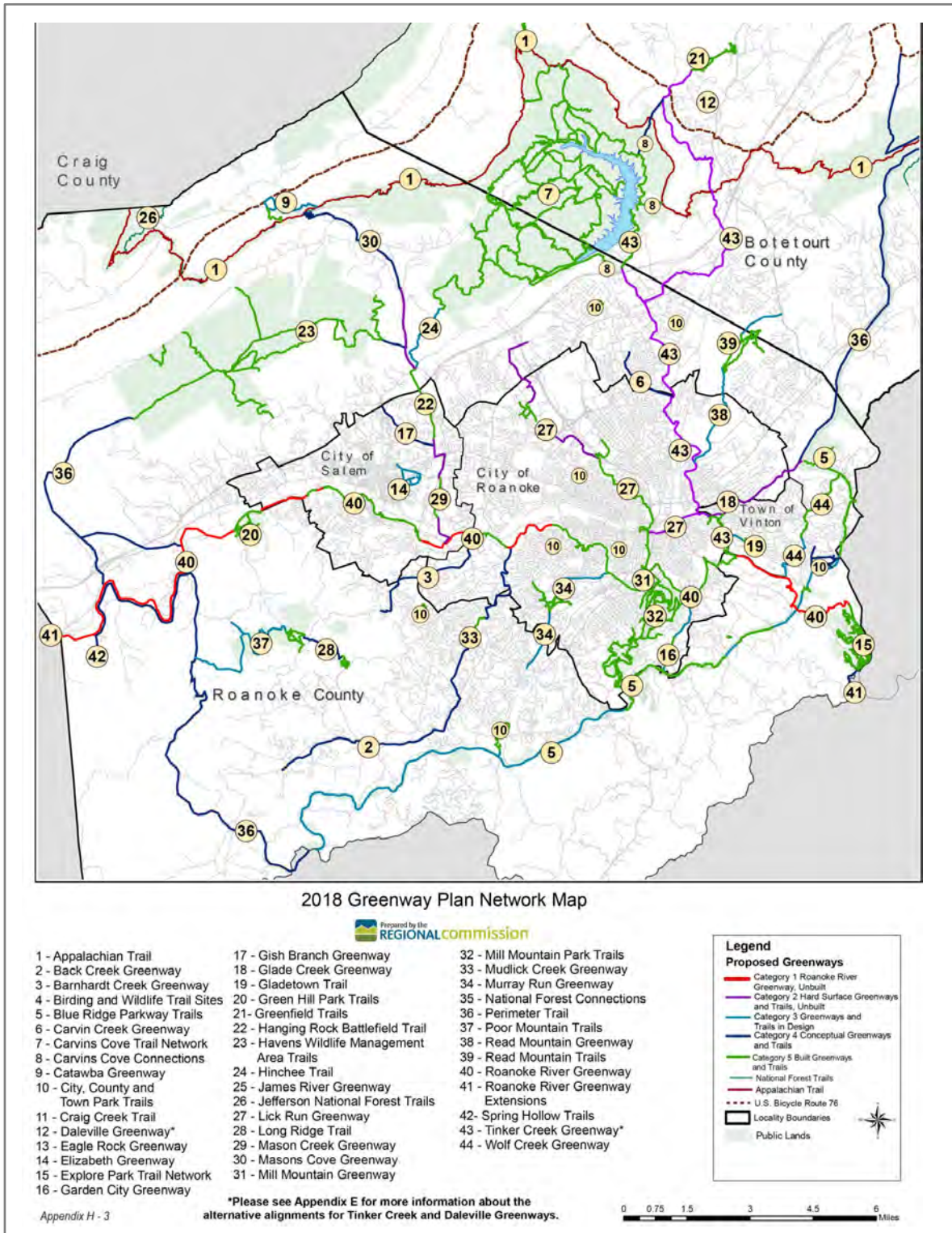
Most of Salem is developed into residential, commercial, industrial, and institutional uses. Site landscaping over time has created a tree canopy in many areas. Native vegetation within the buffers of rivers, streams, and creeks also provides a natural habitat system



## DEVELOPMENT LAND COVER

As the diagram indicates, there is very little undeveloped land in Salem that can accommodate growth. Infill and redevelopment of previously developed areas is required.





## REGIONAL GREENWAY TRAIL NETWORKS

Working regionally to maximize greenway connectivity will create economic, social, and health benefits. Salem can become a hub of trails within the region and brand itself as a “trail town”.



# REGIONAL RESOURCES

**The Roanoke Valley influences Salem by providing resources, in addition to the wonderful resources found within Salem, that citizens can use and benefit from. It also offers the opportunity to create synergies that can lift economies and quality of life, such as shared events, regional trail assets, economic development coordination, and coordinated branding. Significantly, the region has trail and park resources that can be highly capitalized on to attract tourism.**

## Natural Resources

**Blue Ridge Parkway:** Known as “America’s Favorite Drive,” this scenic route provides access to breathtaking mountain vistas, hiking trails, and abundant wildlife. It’s a hub for outdoor activities like hiking, birdwatching, and picnicking.

**Mill Mountain:** This natural landmark is home to the iconic Roanoke Star and Mill Mountain Park, with trails, picnic areas, and the Mill Mountain Zoo. The mountain offers views of the City and the surrounding valley.

**Appalachian Trail:** Part of this famous hiking trail passes through the Roanoke Valley,

attracting hikers and nature lovers. It offers routes ranging from easy day hikes to more challenging treks.

**Carvins Cove Natural Reserve:** This is the second-largest municipal park in the United States, with over 12,000 acres of forest and a large reservoir. It’s a prime location for mountain biking, kayaking, and fishing.

**Smith Mountain Lake:** Although slightly outside Roanoke Valley, this large lake is a popular spot for boating, fishing, and water sports, with miles of shoreline and recreational facilities.

**Roanoke River Greenway:** A series of green spaces and trails along the Roanoke River, ideal for biking, jogging, and enjoying the outdoors close to the City.

## Regional Trails

### 1. Appalachian Trail (AT)

The Appalachian Trail runs through the Roanoke Valley, offering world-class hiking opportunities. Popular segments include the trails leading to McAfee Knob, Tinker Cliffs, and Dragon’s Tooth, known collectively as the “Triple Crown” of Virginia hiking. These trails are challenging but reward hikers with panoramic mountain views.

## 2. Mill Mountain Park Trails

**Mill Mountain Star Trail:** A 3.5-mile round-trip trail that climbs from the Roanoke River up to the iconic Roanoke Star. It offers City views and connects to other Mill Mountain trails.

**Ridgeline Trail:** A 1.5-mile trail on Mill Mountain that connects to the Star Trail and other trails in the park, providing a network for varied hikes.

**Watchtower Trail:** A shorter but scenic trail with excellent views of the Roanoke Valley, good for a less intense hike on Mill Mountain.

## 3. Carvins Cove Natural Reserve

With over 40 miles of trails, Carvins Cove is a top destination for mountain biking, as well as hiking and trail running. Trails range from beginner-friendly paths to challenging single tracks. **Popular trails include the Bennett Springs Loop, Brushy Mountain, and Buck and Pole.**

**Enchanted Forest Trail:** A favorite for mountain bikers, this trail winds through the forest and is known for its gentle curves and scenic beauty.

## 4. Explore Park Trails

Located along the Blue Ridge Parkway, Explore Park offers several trails for hiking and mountain biking. The trails are well-marked and vary from easy to moderately difficult.

**Journey's End Trail:** A picturesque trail offering views of the Roanoke River, popular for families and easy hikes.

**Riverside Loop:** A beginner-friendly loop along the river, suitable for hiking and biking, with picnic spots nearby.

## 5. Read Mountain Preserve

**Buzzards Rock Trail:** This 3.5-mile trail leads to a stunning overlook on Buzzards Rock, with panoramic views of the valley. It's a moderate-to-difficult hike due to its elevation gain, making it popular with more experienced hikers.

## 6. Chestnut Ridge Trail

Located near the Blue Ridge Parkway and Roanoke's Mill Mountain, this 5.4-mile loop trail is primarily used for hiking and trail running. It's known for its wooded scenery and is a favorite for those seeking a peaceful experience close to the City.

## 7. Catawba Greenway

Near Catawba, this trail links with portions of the Appalachian Trail, serving as a scenic route for accessing the AT or exploring local views. It's a good starting point for hikers heading to McAfee Knob or Dragon's Tooth.

**These trails are maintained by a mix of local government agencies and volunteer organizations, including the Roanoke Valley Greenway Commission and the Pathfinders for Greenways.**

## Cultural Resources

**Taubman Museum of Art:** This museum features modern and traditional art, with a focus on American art and artists from the Appalachian region. Its unique architecture is also a highlight in downtown Roanoke.

**Virginia Museum of Transportation:** Reflecting the valley's railroad heritage, this museum has an impressive collection of locomotives, rail cars, and exhibits on Virginia's transportation history.

**Center in the Square:** A cultural center that houses multiple attractions, including the Science Museum of Western Virginia, the Harrison Museum of African American Culture, and a living coral reef aquarium.

**History Museum of Western Virginia:** Located within the Center in the Square, this museum explores the history of the region with exhibits on indigenous cultures, early settlers, and industrial development.

**Mill Mountain Theatre:** A well-regarded regional theater offering a variety of performances, from plays to musicals, and serving as a cultural focal point for the community.

**Jefferson Center:** This is a venue for music, performing arts, and community events. It hosts concerts, plays, and lectures, supporting the arts in Roanoke.

**Festivals:** Roanoke Valley celebrates a variety of cultural events, including the Virginia Blue Ridge Wine Festival, Festival in the Park, and the Blue Ridge Folklife Festival, celebrating music, food, and local traditions.









