# **Peters Creek South**



NEIGHBORHOOD PLAN Adopted by City Council October 17, 2005

Roanoke Virginia



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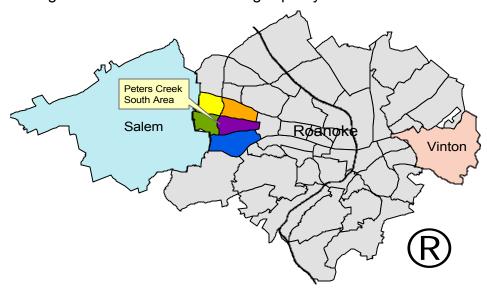
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## Introduction

Peters Creek South is a collection of five neighborhoods set within the overall fabric of neighborhoods that makes up our city: Edgewood-Morwanda-Summit Hills, Ridgewood, South Washington Heights, Wilmont, and Cherry Hill. The Ridgewood Park, Wilmont, and Cherry Hill neighborhoods developed during the 1950s and 1960s when farmland gave way to apartment complexes and single-family brick ranch houses. The City annexed these three neighborhoods from Roanoke County in 1949, using Peters Creek as its western boundary. The neighborhoods also currently contain some of the extensive grounds associated with the Veterans Administration Hospital, the Norfolk Southern Railway, Shenandoah Avenue and several commercial establishments.

While each neighborhood is unique with different issues and distinct areas, they are combined into one plan to facilitate completion of plans throughout the city. Peters Creek South is in the northwest quadrant of the city, bounded on the north by Melrose Avenue, on the south by Norfolk & Southern railroad tracks, on the east by the Shenandoah west and Hurt Park neighborhood, and on the west by the City of Salem. Main thoroughfares within the Peters Creek South neighborhood are Melrose Avenue, Peters Creek Road, Salem Turnpike, and Shenandoah Avenue. The suburban setting and four major arterials make for easy access to downtown, Valley View Mall, and other neighborhoods and services. The neighborhoods provide a variety of opportunities for living, from suburban-style development to more traditional historic areas. As with many city neighborhoods, continued revitalization and improvement are crucial to a bright future and a continued high quality of life.



# **Neighborhood Planning**

When adopted, this plan will become a component of *Vision 2001-2020*, Roanoke's Comprehensive Plan. *Vision 2001-2020* recommends that neighborhood organizations, civic groups, and businesses be involved in the development of neighborhood plans. The Roanoke Department of Planning Building and Development worked with neighborhood representatives, residents, property owners, and business owners to prepare this neighborhood plan. Through work sessions, the community's issues, opportunities, and areas of greatest need were discussed. This involvement formed the basis for the plan's recommendations and assured that community interests, as well as the overall concerns of the city, were addressed. A group of interested community representatives consistently attended work sessions. Their historical perspectives, thoughtful input, and direct comments were invaluable to the development of this plan. Discussion was organized around six key planning elements:

- · Community Design
- · Residential Development
- · Economic Development
- · Infrastructure
- Public Services
- Quality of Life

The Community Design element looks at physical design features and land use patterns. Residential Development addresses existing and new housing opportunities. Economic Development deals with commercial and industrial development in the neighborhood. The Infrastructure element evaluates transportation systems and utility systems such as water, sewer, environmental issues, and storm drainage. The Public Services element assesses Fire/EMS, police and other city services. Finally, the Quality of Life element addresses recreational opportunities, education, and community development. Each plan element contains information about current conditions and issues.

## Community Values

Planning staff conducted a detailed study of current neighborhood conditions, such as land use patterns and infrastructure. Residents were heavily involved throughout the development of the plan through planning workshops. Major issues identified through the process include:

- Incompatible infill housing and encroachment of commercial uses
- Lack of curb and gutter
- Traffic safety
- Code enforcement/property maintenance
- Police presence
- Street maintenance



Brick Ranch homes in the Edgewood-Morwanda-Summit Hills Neighborhood



Homes on 36th Street in the Wilmont Neighborhood

# **Strategic Initiatives**

While this plan contains many recommended policies and actions, there are five **Strategic Initiatives** on which implementation should be focused:

**Housing Development & Conservation:** Promote rehabilitation, maintenance, well-designed infill development, and increased resident ownership. Zoning patterns should protect and maintain established residential areas.

**Capacity Building:** Peters Creek South residents are willing participants in determining the future of their neighborhood. Neighborhood-based organizations will be crucial to initiating and sustaining revitalization efforts. The many groups and individuals working toward Peters Creek South's revitalization should collaborate to ensure open communication and awareness of development projects.

**Infrastructure:** Peters Creek South should have safe, well-designed streets and other infrastructure. Traffic management and street design must be evaluated and improved to ensure compatibility with the neighborhood setting.



Homes in the Wilmont Neighborhood





#### About this Plan and Roanoke Vision 2001-2020

In 1985, Roanoke Vision, the City's comprehensive plan, declared Roanoke a "City of Neighborhoods." A major recommendation of the plan was to develop neighborhood plans for each neighborhood. Vision 2001-2020 continues support for neighborhood-based planning for a livable and sustainable city. Roanoke's neighborhoods will be more than just places to live: they will be the nucleus for civic life. Their local village centers serve as vibrant and accessible places for business, community services, and activities, including higher density housing clusters. (Roanoke Vision 2001-2020).

The Peters Creek South Neighborhood Plan establishes a shared vision and desired future for the neighborhood. Area residents, government officials, and city staff collaborated to develop this plan as a framework for the future. Some of this plan's goals are short-term (within five years). Others will take longer to accomplish. Many groups and organizations, including the Edgewood-Morwanda-Summit Hills Neighborhood Organization, Ridgewood Park Neighborhood League, Wilmont Neighborhood Organization, various departments within city government, and individual residents and businesses must work together to achieve the goals and help shape the future of the neighborhood.



Homes in the Wilmont Neighborhood

#### Development History of the Peters Creek South Neighborhoods

The history of the Peters Creek South Neighborhoods began with the Salem to Lynchburg Turnpike and Melrose Avenue/US Route 460, two of the earliest roads that traversed the Roanoke Valley. These roads, followed existing Indian and buffalo trails, which always took the easiest grades. Both roads run in a east/west direction. Melrose Avenue began as the Carvins New Road, originally leading to Cloverdale in the mid - 1700s. The Salem to Lynchburg Turnpike, originally called Neely's Road, carried travelers from Salem to Big Lick, and eventually on to Lynchburg. The Peters Creek area was originally part of Augusta County.

The earliest land grant in this vicinity was the Roanoke Grant in 1739, which encouraged many German and Scots-Irish to immigrate from Pennsylvania and Maryland. For example, in 1748, Peter Kinder, whose name Peters Creek bears, purchased a 150-acre tract at the junction of the creek and the Roanoke River. In addition, in the same year, Methusalem Griffith purchased 400-acres on the upper part of Peters Creek.

Several later settlements also contributed to the early history of the neighborhoods. A German settlement known as New Antrim, on the Presbyterian Meeting House Tract, was established in 1769 alongside Peters Creek near the current intersection of Peters Creek Road Extension and the Salem Turnpike. Adjacent to this tract, in 1791, Dr. John Neely acquired the largest tract, 1,083 acres that featured the original Neely's Road. Daniel Frantz purchased some of this land, built a house, and transferred 640 acres to George Howbert in 1816.

The last remnant of the New Antrim community was the ca. 1800 Howbert House, a large, two-story log house with full-dovetailed notching over a stone cellar. Frantz most likely built the original section, while George and his wife Elizabeth added another log section ca. 1816, overlooking Peters Creek. Their farmstead featured a stone-lined springhouse, orchards, cornfields, and associated outbuildings. Over time, the property changed hands several times and was later damaged by fire and left vacant. Despite the best efforts of city and state officials, and the Edgewood-Morwanda-Summit Hills Neighborhood Association, the Howbert House was demolished in 1999. It was one of the oldest and rarest recorded buildings in Roanoke.

During the 1850s and early 1860s, tracts of land transferred to new residents with names like Trout and Miller, while some tracts stayed with the descendants of Hubbert and Frantz. It appears that little development occurred during this time, except for a scattering of farmsteads along Salem Turnpike and Melrose Avenue.

Although there was little development during the mid-19th Century, three important cemeteries were established in what is now the South Washington Heights neighborhood. In 1890, when the Roanoke City Cemetery began to run out of land, business people purchased 52 acres



Home in the South Washington Heights Neighborhood on the Salem Turnpike midway between Salem and Roanoke to create Fairview Cemetery. Although the current cemetery entrance faces Melrose Avenue, people originally entered from the Salem Turnpike under two stone pillars and an iron arch that displayed "Fair View." St. Andrews Catholic Cemetery, just west of Fairview, was established the following year, in 1891. Located directly north of St. Andrews is the C.C. Williams Memorial Park, established for the African-

American community. Christopher C. Williams, a native of Hampton, Virginia, moved to Roanoke in 1911 and became a successful longtime executive and community activist. He opened the C.C. Williams Funeral Home at 126 Gilmer Avenue, N.W. in 1912, and the C.C. Williams Memorial Park was named for him.

During the 1920s, smaller farmsteads and single-family homes appeared along the Turnpike and Melrose Avenue, and the Washington Heights Elementary School was built in 1921 to serve the community. Subdivisions began to occur in the Morwanda-Edgewood-Summit Hills and the South Washington Heights neighborhoods situated between Melrose Avenue to the north and Salem Turnpike to the south. Summit Hills still contains a gathering of farmhouses, bungalows, and what may have been an old general store that is indicative of a small 1920s community. These two neighborhoods were annexed by Roanoke in 1976.



Fairview Cemetery in the South Washington Heights Neighborhood

Saint Andrews Cemetery in the South Washington Heights Neighborhood





Williams Memorial Cemetery in the South Washington Heights Neighborhood

# **Community Design**

Zoning and Land Use Patterns

Peters Creek South is an area with a mix of traditional and suburban neighborhoods. Zoning patterns are needed to reflect these diverse development styles. The predominant land use in the Peters Creek South area is single-family residential. Forty-four percent of the land area is dedicated to single-family residential and 62 percent of the area is zoned for single-family. Several apartment complexes are scattered throughout the neighborhoods of South Washington Heights and Cherry Hill. They are generally zoned RM-2, Residential Multifamily District. The predominant housing architectural style throughout the Peters Creek South neighborhoods is the small suburban brick ranch style, most common in the 1950s - 1980s.

Peters Creek South Zoning & Land Use				
	Zoning	Land Use		
Single Family Residential	62%	44%		
Mixed Density Residential	20%	6%		
Commercial	6%	10%		
Industrial	13%	4%		
Institutional (includes cemeteries)		29%		
Vacant		7%		
Total		100%		
Source: City of Roanoke, Department of	Planning Building and D	Pevelopment		

Most commercial uses are located along major thoroughfares. Six commercial areas provide basic retail and services within close distance of residents. Smaller commercial establishments are dispersed throughout the neighborhood. Commercial uses accounts for ten percent of the Peters Creek South property uses



Brick Ranch homes in the Ridgewood Neighborhood

#### **South Washington Heights**

This neighborhood consists of mainly small ranch homes with additional craft homes, apartments and bungalow homes. This area has a mixture of retail, industrial, residential, and commercial. Only a small number of streets were developed in a grid pattern. Most areas have no curb or sidewalks, and street trees are sparse in this area. Three cemeteries occupy nearly 30% of the land area of the neighborhood.

#### Cherry Hill

Cherry Hill is a traditional suburban neighborhood that was developed in the mid 1900s. The neighborhood contains mostly single-family homes. Older homes are clustered in northeast part of the neighborhood. Much of the remaining homes in the area were built between 1970 and 1980 as ranch style homes. Two multifamily developments are within the neighborhood.

Steep rolling terrain provides views of the valley and surrounding areas. In addition, the Norfolk & Southern railroad tracks run east to west along the southern edge of Cherry Hill. Commercial establishments are located along Shenandoah Avenue. This plan identifies a small commercial area along Westwood Avenue and Old Stevens Road as a potential village center.

Noted development in the Cherry Hill neighborhood is the Roanoke Electric Steel plant, zoned Heavy Manufacturing (HM), and built in 1949. Before Steel Drive was built, trucks had to go through a residential area to enter the plant; even today some workers of the plant use Westside Avenue to get to work.

Homes on Michigan Avenue, South Washington Heights



Brick Ranches in the Cherry Hill Neighborhood

#### Wilmont

Wilmont, a neighborhood with both traditional and suburban characteristics, developed between 1920 and 1960. It contains areas of single-family, detached homes on small lots, large multifamily apartment complexes, and commercial/industrial areas. Noted land uses in the Wilmont neighborhood include Fairview Elementary School, Greenvale Nursery School, Strauss Park, located on Westside Boulevard, and an industrial area on Shenandoah Avenue. The neighborhood has few street trees. Topography is rolling. The neighborhood has a modified grid pattern with large blocks and many dead-end streets.

#### **Edgewood- Morwanda-Summit Hills**

The Edgewood-Morwanda-Summit Hills neighborhood has mostly suburban development patterns, characterized by large blocks, large lot sizes, and multiple dead end streets.

Most of Edgewood-Morwanda-Summit Hills contains single-family detached dwellings on medium to large lots. Housing styles vary but are

typically modern brick ranches. There are no multifamily developments within the neighborhood. A strip of commercial uses is located along Melrose Avenue. Most of neighborhood's single-family homes were built in the 1950s through 1960.



Homes in the Wilmont Neighborhood



Homes in the Edgewood-Morwanda-Summit Hills Neighborhood

#### **Commercial and Industrial**

Most commercial land uses are located along Melrose Avenue. Most businesses along this corridor are automobile-oriented. With the exception of Melrose Avenue sidewalks are nearly non-existent, and parking is typically located in the front.

Most industrial uses are located along Shenandoah Avenue and Salem Turnpike. Parts of this industrially-zoned area are either undeveloped or under developed.

Peters Creek South Demographic Trends 1990-2000				
	1990	2000	% Change	
Donulation	7 166	7 002	-1.0%	
Population   Black	7,166 3,035	7,093 3,536	-1.0% +16%	
White	4,038	3,216	-20%	
Other Races &	93	189	+103%	
Multiracial				
Ages				
0-17	1,974	1,894	-4%	
18-34	1,951	1,580	-19%	
34-65	2,362	2,532	+7%	
65 and older	879	1,087	+24%	

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

Cherry Hill - Tract 9, Block Group 2

Edgewood-Morwanda-Summit Hills - Tract 22, Block Group 1

Ridgewood – Tract 22, Block Group 2

South Washington Heights -Tract 9, Block Group 4

Wilmont - Tract 9, Block Group 3

Note: Some percentages do not equal 100% due to rounding.

Roanoke Salem Plaza on Melrose Avenue on the border of South Washington Heights Neighborhood





Commercial business on Melrose Avenue on the border of South Washington Heights Neighborhood

#### **Population and Characteristics**

Peters Creek South had a population of 7,093 in 2000, about seven and one-half percent of the City's population. The Peters Creek South population decreased by one percent between 1990 and 2000. During the same period, Roanoke's population decreased by one and one-half percent. Despite a small population loss between 1990 and 2000, there was an increase in the number of housing units (1.5%).

Racial Composition: Peters Creek South saw dramatic shifts in its racial makeup between 1990 and 2000. The black population increased by 16 percent while the white population decreased by 20 percent. It is difficult, if not impossible, to determine the underlying cause of these patterns. On the surface, it appears to simulate a "white flight" pattern common in the 1950s and 60s, or it could be that the black population is simply replacing the white population and is not necessarily spurring an out-migration of whites. Demographic information suggests that people from majority black neighborhoods in the core areas of northwest have a tendency to move outward, but stay within the same sector of the city.

The "other races and multiracial" category more than doubled (+103%), but still only represents about five percent of the population. At least some of this increase could be attributed to addition of the "multiracial" category in the 2000 census.

Age Distribution: The 35 to 64 year old population is by far the largest age category. Peters Creek South's 65 and older population grew by almost four percent, the largest increase among all age categories. Despite this dramatic increase, the percentage of persons in the 65+ category is comparable to the citywide distribution. Also notable is the relative lack of people in the 0-17 age category, which is eight percentage points below citywide.

Westside Apartment, South

Westside Apartment, South Washington Heights Neighborhood

Westwood Village Apartments in the South Washington Heights Neighborhood



Population and Housing 2000				
	Peters Creek South	Roanoke		
	Total			
Population	7,093	94,911		
Black	50%	27%		
White	45%	69%		
Other	5%	4%		
Other	5%	4 70		
Ages				
0-17	27%	19%		
18-34	22%	27%		
35-64	36%	38%		
65 and over	15%	16%		
Households	2,893	42,003		
Owners	55%	56%		
Renters	45%	44%		

#### Source: U.S. Census Bureau; 2000 Census

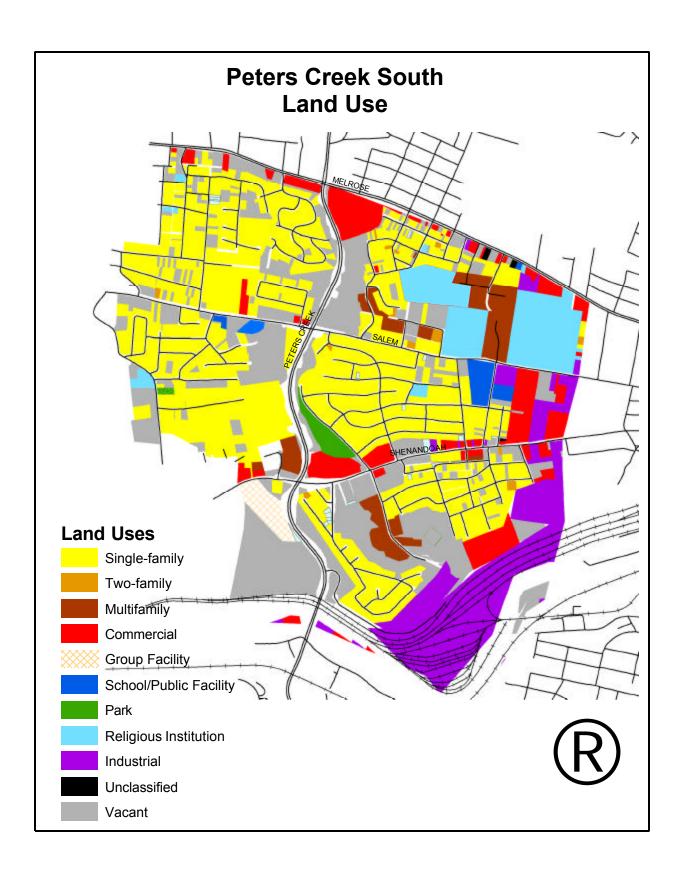
Cherry Hill - Tract 9, Block Group 2

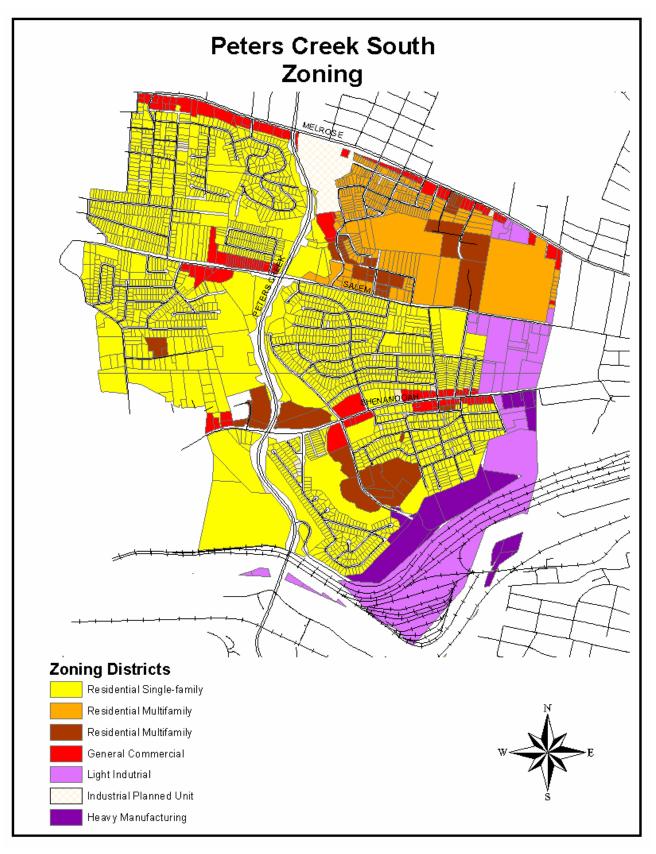
Edgewood-Morwanda-Summit Hills - Tract 22, Block Group 1

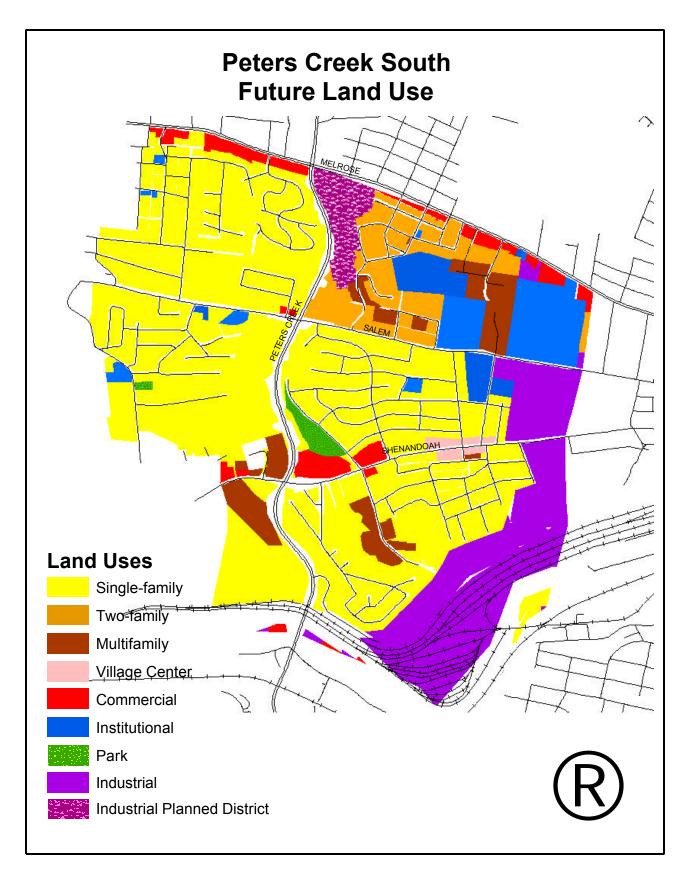
Ridgewood – Tract 22, Block Group 2

South Washington Heights - Tract 9, Block Group 4 Wilmont - Tract 9, Block Group 3

Note: Some percentages do not equal 100% due to rounding.







## Residential Development

The Peters Creek South area is stable in terms of the ratio of owners to renters. Many of the larger rental properties are well maintained and managed, but others are showing signs of age and neglect. While there are not many large older homes in the area that can be divided into apartments, many of the small affordable homes have become rental properties. An existing supply of affordable rental housing is present with four apartment complexes in South Washington Heights and two within the Cherry Hill neighborhood. Multifamily properties tend to be clustered in one part of each neighborhood separated from single-family residential areas. Both Cherry Hill and South Washington Heights have several multifamily complexes clustered in one area. A mixed environment of homeowners and renters should be encouraged, and so should proper maintenance of existing properties.

Households have increased 1.5 percent between 1990 and 2000. The ratio of homeowners to renters remained virtually unchanged between 1990 an 2000. Homeownership for Peters Creek South is 55 percent, which is slightly lower than the homeownership rate for the city. Since portions of Peters Creek South have aging housing and aging population, future development should focus on diversity in housing supply and market. Residents consider the Peters Creek South area a good value for housing for the Roanoke Valley.



Home on Morwanda Avenue in the Edgewood Morwanda-Summit Hills Neighborhood

Because of its relatively newer housing stock, Peters Creek South has not experienced many of the conditions found in some older city neighborhoods. Maintenance and Code violation problems tend to be related to outdoor storage, junk cars, and poor property maintenance.

Three apartment complexes and two private apartment buildings are located within the South Washington Heights area. Caru Apartments is the largest complex and is located off 35th Street. It has 20 residential buildings, each three stories, containing 244 units. Westwood Village, which is contiguous to Caru Apartments, has 16 two-story buildings with 113 units. Panorama Heights is a three-story apartment building on Panorama Avenue with a total of 12 units. On Fairview Road is also a three-story apartment building with 12 units. Both of these single buildings are of brick and are within close proximity of each other. Salem View Apartments are five, three-story buildings located off Westside Boulevard containing 60 units. Westside Apartments are also located on Westside Boulevard next to Salem View. There are twelve, two-story buildings totaling 74 units.

Cherry Hill has two apartment complexes within its boundaries. Barberry Avenue Apartments are three, two-story buildings equaling 18 units, positioned contiguous to each other on Barberry Street. These apartments were built in 1973 and today show signs of wear. Westcreek Manor, built in 1971, is the largest apartment complex within the Cherry Hill area. It has consists of 25 three-story buildings, totaling 200 units and is set in line along Westside Boulevard. West Creek Manor apartments in part have been newly renovated in the last few years. However, one section of the apartments complex across the street appears to be vacant and in need of refurbishing.



Caru Apartments in the South Washington Heights Neighborhood



#### **Residential Development Opportunities**

All the neighborhoods in the Peters Creek South area have some land for potential development, but Ridgewood and Edgewood-Morwanda-Summit Hills have large-scale vacant land with potential for development. Some properties are large enough in terms of land area to support largescale subdivisions like the neighborhood experienced in the 1960s and 1970s. However, much of the property is located on steep grades, thus limiting development potential. The scarcity of developable land within the city and the availability of infrastructure make this land very attractive to developers. The amount of large vacant parcels in the area provides excellent opportunities for new market-rate housing. More market-rate, single-family residential development should be encouraged.

Since many of the vacant parcels in the Peters Creek South area have development challenges, planned unit developments should be



considered as a development

option. This will increase the options available for density, development standards such as setbacks, street widths, and housing types. Developers can include dedicated open space, a much needed amenity in the area, in return for increased density and enable development to avoid sensitive areas such as steep slopes. In addition, middle- and upper-income housing,

which is needed to help diversify low-to-moderate housing in the Peters Creek South area, should be the focus. Integrating limited multifamily housing in single-family development is preferred over a cluster development of large apartment complexes within established neighborhoods.

> Vision 2001-2020 recommends higher density residential around village centers as a neighborhood model.

Newer homes in the Ridgewood Neighborhood

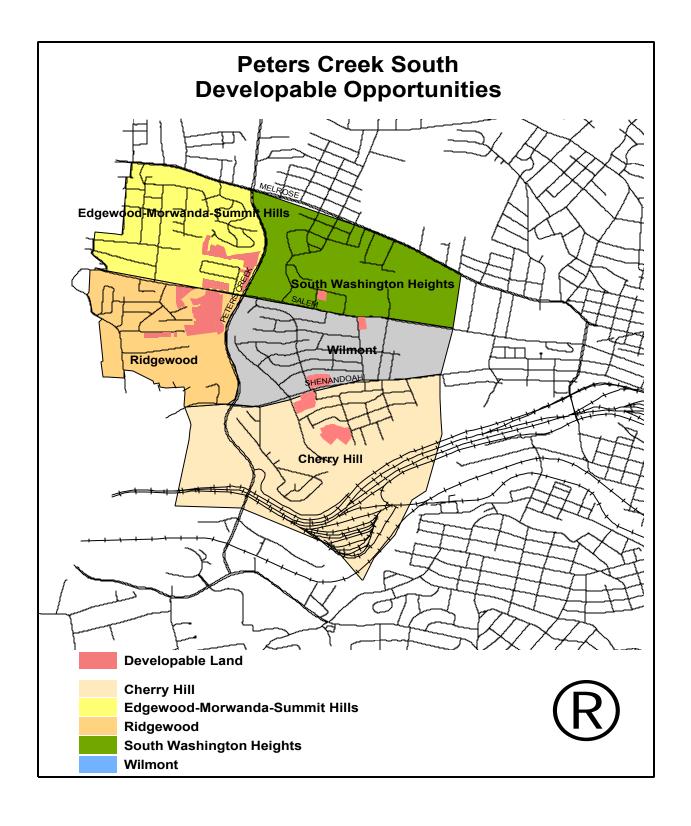
Vacant parcel in

the Wilmont

Neighborhood



New subdivisions should connect to the existing street network to maintain traffic circulation and incorporate new development into the community. The use of a cul-de-sac for street endings should be avoided.



## **Economic Development**

#### Neighborhood Business Trends

Though the major employment center of the Roanoke Valley should continue to be downtown, it is still important to provide quality job opportunities throughout the city. Residents indicated that easy access to shopping is one of the advantages to living in the area. Peters Creek South has a diverse mix of commercial and industrial uses. Many businesses are focused on Shenandoah Avenue, Melrose Avenue, and Salem Turnpike. Peters Creek South has few small commercial areas within walking distance. Most residents of Peters Creek South neighborhoods have to drive in order to reach commercial establishments.

# Economic Development Opportunities

Most commercial development takes place as strip development along major arterials. One goal of the comprehensive and neighborhood plans is to focus commercial development into centers. While it is difficult to completely reverse strip development patterns, zoning strategies can work to focus commercial development into identifiable centers. This plan identifies four such centers:

- Intersection of Melrose Avenue and Peters Creek Road
- Intersection of Peters Creek and Salem Turnpike
- Intersection of Peters Creek and Shenandoah Avenue
- Shenandoah between Peters Creek and Old Stevens Road

These centers could have a range of functions as commercial centers, from a compact village center to a larger local commercial center. Current scale and orientation of development in these centers will determine their future scale and character. Infrastructure improvements should be focused in these centers and coordinated with development to improve

appearance and pedestrian access.

Vacant commercial space in the Wilmont Neighborhood



Small commercial area on Salem Turnpike, Edgewood-Morwanda-Summit Hills Neighborhood







Commercial area on Shenandoah Avenue (proposed Village Center area) in the Wilmont Neighborhood

Zoning patterns should reinforce these centers. General commercial zoning should be limited along corridors. Expanded use of neighborhood commercial zoning should be used to encourage maximum development of sites with many small-scale buildings containing diverse commercial uses.

Vision 2001-2020 identifies the southeast corner of Melrose Avenue and Peters Creek as a future development opportunity area. Roanoke Salem Plaza was originally developed in 1957 as an outdoor plaza, it once contained several national chains as anchors. Today it is used for warehouse space and outlet retail. Currently, it is zoned IPUD (Industrial Planned Unit Development). This site should be considered for redevelopment according to the development model illustrated in Vision 2001-2020 with new buildings developed at the street frontage. In addition, pedestrian connection should be provided to existing residential areas.

#### Village Centers

Few of the centers mentioned above, as they exist, resemble identifiable village centers. These were formed around suburban neighborhoods and built for the use by car. Shenandoah Avenue between Westwood and Old Stevens Road is the closest setting to a village center within the Peters Creek South area. This area is located on the southern edge of the Wilmont neighborhood and the northern edge of the Cherry Hill neighborhood. It is close to Fairview School and within walking distance to the neighborhoods; it contains retail establishments, entertainment venues, restaurants, and office space. Future development should include vehicular and safe pedestrian-bicycle connections. Thoughtful site and building design should be encouraged for good relationships between commercial and residential development. Transitional landscaping should be used to reduce the visual impacts of larger parking lots.

At the corner of Peters Creek and Shenandoah is a small commercial cluster with a major grocery chain (Food Lion) as its anchor. A small commercial strip located across its parking lot, has a restaurant, cleaners, and movie rentals. *Vision 2001-2020* encourages a model that develops the street frontage for retail use and larger stores in the rear.

On Salem Turnpike at its intersection with Peters Creek Road, is a small commercial area that has a clothing shop, convenience store, and small car lot. All of the small commercial buildings need refurbishing, landscaping, and defining parking spaces would greatly improve the small commercial area.

## Industrial Development

The Peters Creek South area contains significant industrial development, located mainly in the Wilmont and Cherry Hill neighborhoods. Thirteen percent of the land area is zoned industrial. The industrial district on Shenandoah and Salem Turnpike has some small and large scale industrial uses. Commercial uses such as restaurants or convenience stores are scattered along the edges of the industrial areas. Some industrial buildings appear to be vacant.

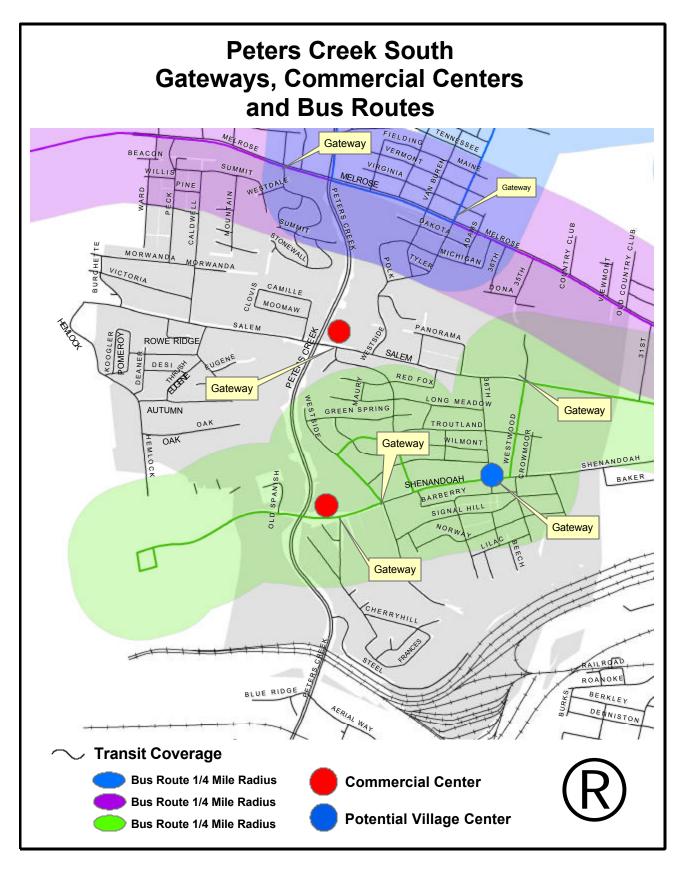
Roanoke Electric Steel is a large industrial operation located along the southeastern edge of the Cherry Hill. Both operations are adjacent to a residential area on Westside Boulevard. Before Steel Road was developed, employees and trucks used Westside Boulevard to get to the plant. Trucks now use Steel Road and Shenandoah Avenue for access. However, some employees continue to use Westside Boulevard to come to work.



Industrial site on Salem Turnpike, Wilmont Neighborhood

Industrial property on Salem Turnpike in the Wilmont Neighborhood





## **Infrastructure**

#### **Transportation**

The Peters Creek South area has a strong framework of arterial streets. Melrose Avenue, Shenandoah Avenue, and Salem Turnpike are east-west arterials that radiate from the central core of Roanoke. Peters Creek Road intersects all three and provides north-south access. Hemlock Road, Old Stevens Road, 36th Street, and Westside Boulevard are neighborhood collector streets that provide access to smaller local streets. Each neighborhood has a network of local streets providing access to individual properties. The design of local streets ranges from a modified grid to more suburban designs with sweeping curves and cul-de-sacs.

Peters Creek Road is the heaviest traveled street within the Peters Creek South area. The Peters Creek Road extension, completed in 1996, leads south and connects with Brandon Avenue to provide better access between northwest and southwest. The extension has also increased the amount of traffic that leads through Peters Creek South. The Annual Average Daily Traffic (AADT) for Peters Creek Road extension, from US 11 to AerialW ay Drive is 16,000 trips per day Virginia Department of Transportation Daily Traffic Volume Estimates, Including Vehicle Classification Estimates, Special Locality Report 128, City of Roanoke, 2003). Shenandoah Avenue AADT trips from west city line to 24th Street is 13,000; Melrose Avenue from Peters Creek Road to 24th Street is 12,000; and Salem Turnpike from the west city line to 36th Street is 7,300 trips.

Peters Creek Road, Cherry Hill Neighborhood



Salem Turnpike, between Wilmont and Cherry Hill Neighborhoods





Melrose Avenue, South Washington Heights Neighborhood boundary

## Transportation Plans

In 2003, the Roanoke Valley Area Metropolitan Planning Organization (RVAMPO) produced a draft of the Long-Range Transportation Plan 2025. Listed in its long-range plan are street improvements to Salem Turnpike/Shenandoah Avenue Corridor from 36th Street to 24th Street, including improvements of traffic lanes with bike lanes, with an estimated cost for this project of \$5.6 million. The Long Range Transportation Plan serves two primary purposes: 1) it provides a list of projects which could "graduate" to the more near term should unanticipated additional funding become available; and 2) it provides a sense of direction for citizens to ascertain how the regional transportation system would change if additional funding sources are available in the future. There are currently no transportation improvement projects in the area that are funded in the Virginia Department of Transportation (VDOT) Six-Year Plan.

Moomaw Heights drainage issues are identified with the city Engineering Department and currently have a storm drain project on hold until funding for construction is available.

Each neighborhood cited needs to improve safety and traffic conditions on arterial streets (Peters Creek, Shenandoah, and Salem Turnpike). However, the city should recognize the potential negative impacts that could be created by adding more lanes. Four-lane options should not be considered for Salem Turnpike or Shenandoah Avenue.

#### Alleys

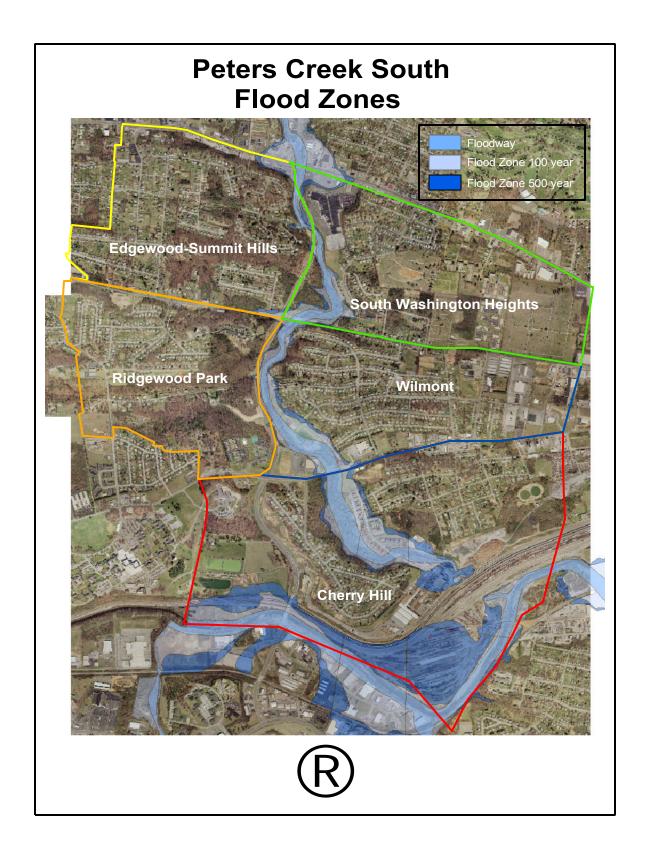
Alleys are not common in Peters Creek South. South Washington Heights has a few alleys, but most are unused and unimproved. The city should improve and maintain alleys that are needed for access or service. Unused unimproved alleys should be vacated and transferred to adjoining property owners.

### Sidewalks,

There are few sidewalks in the Peters Creek South area. Most Curbs, Gutters residential streets lack sidewalks because they were developed after WWII, when land developers discontinued the once-customary practice of installing sidewalks in neighborhoods as they developed. In planning workshops, residents expressed that new sidewalks are a high priority in improving the Peters Creek South area. However, the expectation of having new sidewalks constructed on all neighborhood streets is unrealistic. As with most suburban areas of Roanoke, cost would prohibit construction of new sidewalks throughout the area. Priorities for new sidewalk construction should therefore be limited to arterial and collector streets, where higher traffic volumes create the need for safe pedestrian access. Likewise, new curb and gutter construction should be limited to arterial and collector streets until a continuous system is complete.

> Curbs are more common than sidewalks within the area. However, in Edgewood-Morwanda-Summit Hills and South Washington Heights, curbs are nearly non-existent. Residents in these neighborhoods indicate they have been requesting curb and gutter for many years. deterioration is evident where curb and gutter are absent. The absence of sidewalks and curbs may cause a series of problems, including poor drainage, parking in front yards, poor pedestrian circulation, and lack of definition between public and private space.

> New sidewalks, curb, and gutters are needed throughout parts of the city as a whole, so it is unlikely that funding will be available to meet all the needs in Peters Creek South. Whenever new streets are built, sidewalks and curbs should be provided to prevent the need to construct them later. Based on recent changes to city policy, new subdivisions will be required to include sidewalks and curbs to provide for pedestrian access and prevent the City from having to bear the costs in the future.



#### **Storm Drainage**

Peter Creek flows north to south through the area. Numerous properties, especially those at Peters Creek Road and Melrose Avenue, experienced flood damage in 1985 and 1989. In response, the City of Roanoke undertook major flood control projects along the creek. Two large detention basins were built upstream in Roanoke County and the creek has been dredged to remove silt and debris that could cause increased flooding. These projects reduced the number of properties in the flood plain by nearly 20%. In addition, numerous properties have either been acquired or have been flood-proofed.

The inability to address all of the storm drainage problems in the area is part of a larger issue. The city currently has over \$57 million in needed storm drainage projects. Approximately \$700,000 per year on average has been spent in the last 15 years on storm drain improvements. There is currently no scheduled recurring funding or bond funding for storm drains. A long-term funding strategy should be developed to address the city's storm drainage needs. The funding shortfall creates the need to set priorities. Meanwhile, the Engineering Department ranks each project according to criteria such as safety, damage caused, frequency of the problem, number of people affected, and cost.



Westside Boulevard (next to Peters Creek) Cherry Hill Neighborhood

#### Transit Service

Public transportation is accessible, but could be improved. Less than half of the area is within a quarter mile of transportation route. Public transit stays mainly on arterial streets. No route serves the Salem Turnpike west of 36th Street. As a result, areas bordering the Salem Turnpike are underserved and must travel more than a half-mile to get to a transit route. Currently, there are no covered bus stops in the area. Residents in the Peters Creek South neighborhoods voiced the need for covered stops for protection from inclement weather. Most of the bus stops in the neighborhood do not have benches; elderly residents who ride the bus sometimes have problems standing for long periods waiting for the bus. Valley Metro should partner with private property residents and assess the feasibility of adding bus stop shelters.

#### Gateways

Vision 2001-2020 views gateways as important elements in defining different areas of the city and enhancing the neighborhood's image. Peters Creek South does not have a welcome sign that denotes its boundaries, only Ridgewood has a neighborhood sign located at the corner of Salem Turnpike and Westdale. Priority areas for neighborhood gateways are identified as:

- Melrose Avenue at Pilot Street and Westside Boulevard
- Salem Turnpike at Westside Avenue and Old Stevens Road
- Shenandoah at Cherry Hill, 36<sup>th</sup> Street and Westside Boulevard

Each of these gateways should be enhanced by the addition of landscaping and gateway signs. Residents expressed interest in beautification of gateway areas to improve impressions when entering the neighborhoods. Neighborhood organizations should take the lead and coordinate with the city and each other for gateway enhancements.

Westside Boulevard and Salem Turnpike entrance to the Cherry Hill Neighborhood



#### Utilities

The Peters Creek South neighborhood is fully served with public water and sewer. Phone, electric, and cable lines are located above ground. Natural gas is available within the neighborhoods. Street lighting is good throughout most of Peters Creek South neighborhoods. However, residents report that areas in Edgewood-Morwanda-Summit Hills have inadequate lighting due to tree over growth. Streetlights are generally located at intersections but additional lights at mid-block locations could improve deficient areas.

#### Bicycle Pedestrian Connections

Peters Creek South lacks a network of sidewalks and bike routes. Most children, other than ones living in the Wilmont neighborhood, cannot walk or bike to school because there are no safe routes. The Regional Bicycle Suitability Study (page 56) delineates that Shenandoah Avenue from 30<sup>th</sup> Street to Salem city line grades the BCI (Bicycle Compatibility Index and the BLOS (Bicycle Level of Service) each with a D (meaning moderately low). The focus for enhancing pedestrian and bike access should be placed on arterial, where traffic volumes and speeds are higher.

Vision 2001-2020 indicates a future greenway-pedestrian/bicycle pathway along Melrose Avenue from Peters Creek Road to Salem city limits, in addition to a greenway-pedestrian/bicycle pathway along Salem Turnpike from 24<sup>th</sup> Street to Peters Creek Road. Moreover, Vision 2001-2020 also delineates bikeways along Melrose Avenue, Salem Turnpike and Peters Creek Road for the Peters Creek South area. These routes for greenway-pedestrian/bicycle should be devleoped for safer connections.

Within the Wilmont neighborhood, Old Stevens Road and 36<sup>th</sup> Street are heavily traveled by both pedestrians and cars. Both streets are used as routes to reach either Salem Turnpike or Shenandoah Avenue. Residents have complained that cars speed through these streets while kids play and walk the street. Speed safety measures (i.e., bike lane, sidewalks, yield signs, or signals) should be implemented concerning this issue.

## **Public Services**

#### Fire and EMS

Station 4 located on Peters Creek Road, Station 13 on Appleton Avenue, Station 9 on 24th Street and Melrose Avenue, and Station 5 on 12th Street and Loudon Avenue provide fire and emergency medical response to the Peters Creek South area neighborhoods. Ambulance service is primarily from Station 4 and 9. Current response times average four minutes (Roanoke City Fire/EMS statistics). The Fire/EMS Master Plan proposes relocating Stations 9 and 13 from their current locations to a more central site, and replacing them with one large station and a multiservice facility serving the same coverage area. The location of the new station is currently being evaluated. The majority of Peters Creek South is served by Fire Station 13 on Peters Creek Road. This is a fairly new station with a double company, which means it has an engine and a ladder truck. The median strip in front of Station 13 was recently reconfigured to provide easier access, subsequently reducing response time by 20 seconds.



Fire Station 4 on Peters Creek Road

#### Code Enforcement

Code enforcement is a major issue for residents in the Peters Creek South area. Inoperative cars, outdoor storage lots, and weeds are recurring violations. Eyesores negatively affect surrounding property values and quality of life in the neighborhood. Effective code enforcement is essential for future revitalization efforts, and it must be aggressively pursued in the South Washington Heights, Wilmont, and Edgewood-Morwanda-Summit Hills neighborhoods. Residents chose code enforcement as a topic of special concern. They noted that violations seem to be in concentrated areas of the neighborhoods. These areas could be targeted by proactive inspections and assisted by residents reporting violations.

Crime prevention remains a priority of residents. Most residents in Peters Creek South value the safe environment their neighborhood provides. In February of 2000, City Council passed an ordinance advocated by neighborhood watch groups that would allow city abatement of public nuisances. This ordinance was seen as an important tool for enhancing crime-fighting efforts.

Many residents feel that noise (loud car audio systems) is a particular problem in their neighborhood. The problem with enforcement of noise pollution is it is difficult to catch the violators. In addition, residents in South Washington Heights, Wilmont, and Cherry Hill neighborhoods indicate that litter is an issue throughout the neighborhood. Residents can address this problem by sponsoring regular neighborhood cleanups. Neighborhoods throughout Roanoke regularly sponsor litter cleanups on Clean Valley Day, but participation is usually low from residents in the Peters Creek South neighborhoods. Greater participation of Clean Valley Day via residents becoming involved with their neighborhood organizations would help reduce litter problems in the area.

#### Human Services

Vision 2001-2020 recommends educational systems and human services be linked to skill—based training programs and to state-of-the-art health care to enhance and support a healthy and productive life. Peters Creek South generally has adequate access to these services because of its location in the city. Nevertheless, some services need to be provided on a neighborhood level. Vision 2001-2020 recommends a community based system that will bring human and health services to the neighborhood.

The City of Roanoke offers over 30 social service programs for people with problems stemming from lack of nourishment to lack of proper physical care. The city also offers program and grants to aid for home purchase, business building, home renovation, and repair. Many residents expressed concerns that they were not aware of such programs. Residents express that there is an apparent lack of communication concerning information on public support programs.

Automated solid waste collection is provided on street. Residents that attended planning workshops had few concerns about solid waste collection. Recycling collection services are provided throughout the area. Participation in the recycling program should be increased to encourage overall awareness of the neighborhood's environment.

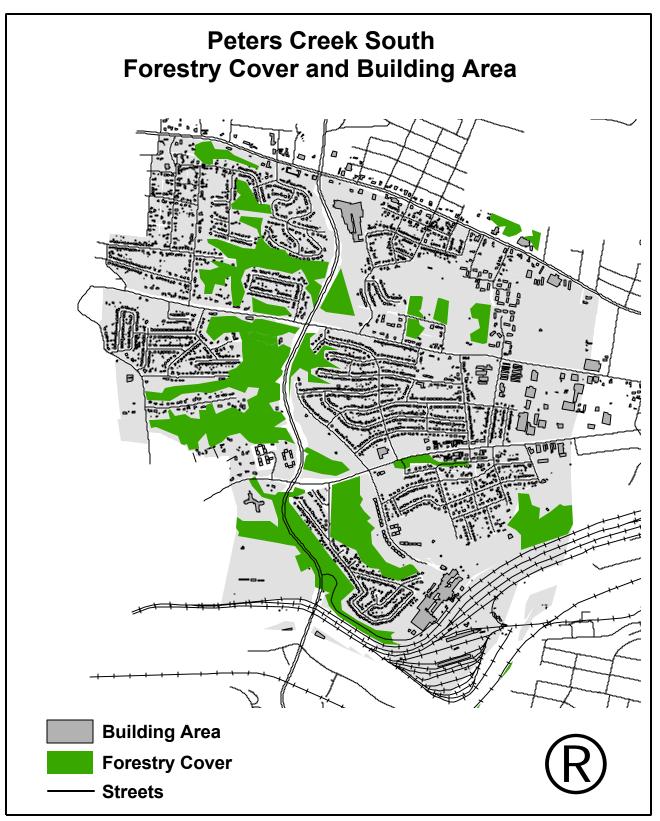
#### Crime Prevention

Public safety is of great concern and is crucial to improving any neighborhood's future. Residents from the Peters Creek South area expressed a perceived increase in criminal activity. Residents feel they need more police presence in the neighborhoods, by either bicycle or patrol car.

In 2004, the Roanoke City Police department restructured patrol to a geographic zone policing method. Funding for major infrastructure projects is generally provided through the City's Capital Improvement Program. Funding can come from a variety of sources, including CDBG, transportation funding, state, and federal funds, and general revenue. The Capital Improvement Program is developed by identifying needed projects and matching them with potential funding sources. Each project is reviewed and ranked in terms of priority.

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

The department has divided Roanoke into four zones, Northwest, Northeast, Southwest, and Southeast. Each zone has a Community Resource Officer that oversees current happenings within their assigned zone. The restructuring has brought positive reports on policing and positive reports from citizens. Crime reports in the last three years show a decrease in reports taken and a decrease in most catagories of crime.



# **Quality of Life**

There are two parks (Strauss Park and Ridgewood Park) within the Peters Creek South area. In August of 2004, the city opened Ridgewood Park, located on Hemlock Street. The 1999 Parks and Recreation Master Plan identified the need for park development in this neighborhood, and funding was made for the first phase of the Parks and Recreation Capital Improvement Projects. Amenities for the park include:

- Play structures
- Walking trail
- Picnic shelter
- Handicap accessible
- Future plans for this park includes a boardwalk and interpretive signage.

Ridgewood Park in the Ridgewood Neighborhood





Strauss Park in the Wilmont Neighborhood





Strauss Park is located on Westside Boulevard in the Wilmont Neighborhood. Built in the 1970s within a floodplain, this 11.4-acre park serves the area neighborhood with amenities for picnics, basketball court, tennis courts, and fields for play. There are no future plans for this park except regular maintenance.

Residents expressed concerns that there was not a recreation center within the Peters Creek South area and that the closest recreation center was Norwich Recreation Center on Buford Avenue, S.W. The Comprehensive Parks and Recreation Master Plan that was adopted by City Council in September of 2000 delineates a balance of citizens' desires for large-scale recreation facilities with the benefits of smaller scale neighborhood parks and open space. At this time, there are no current plans for recreation centers for this area.

In addition to Peters Creek South area parks, a segment from *Vision 2001-2020* proposes extension of the greenway and bikeways along Melrose Avenue, Peters Creek, and along Salem Turnpike.

Ridgewood Park in the Ridgewood Neighborhood



#### Schools

Fairview Elementary School and Greenvale (Nursery) School are located within the boundaries of Peters Creek South area. Youth within the areas attend William Fleming High School, William Ruffner Middle School, and Westside Elementary School for the Performing Arts and/or Fairview Elementary School. William Ruffner Middle School and Westside Elementary are both magnet schools, which provide a unique learning opportunity to attract students from around the city. Youth in the Ridgewood, Wilmont, and Cherry Hill neighborhoods attend Fairview, Addison Magnet School, and Patrick Henry High School. Youth in South Washington Heights attend Westside Elementary, Addison Magnet School, and William Fleming High. Edgewood-Morwanda-Summit Hills' youth attend Fairview Elementary, Addison Magnet, and William Fleming High.

Fairview Elementary School in the Wilmont Neighborhood





Greenvale School in the Wilmont Neighborhood



### Recommendations

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

The Future Land Use Plan is the most important recommendation of this plan. It specifies how future development should take place. Zoning is the principal tool that is used to implement the Future Land Use Plan, so the plan recommends changes to zoning so that future development will be consistent with the Future Land Use Plan.



# **Community Design**

#### **Policies**

- Roanoke will encourage mixed-use neighborhoods with opportunities for housing, employment, and services for all ages, races, and incomes.
- Neighborhoods should be well-connected to one another and to other parts of the city. Streets should be designed with special attention to mobility and safety for pedestrians and bicycles.
- Zoning patterns will be used to focus commercial development into identified centers rather than in strip patterns along arterial streets.
   Zoning patterns will support the neighborhood pattern as noted in Vision 2001-2020, with identifiable centers with surrounding residential densities decreasing with distance from the center.
- Encourage collaboration of community groups to initiate beautification projects with a priority on improving gateways.
- Support streetscape and beautification projects, particularly at gateways where they can help to reinforce neighborhood identity.

- Adjust zoning patterns to create or reinforce the model of multiple centers, with residential densities decreasing with distance from each center.
- Reduce the intensity of strip commercial zoning in areas lying outside of identified centers.

## Residential Development

#### **Policies**

- Roanoke will support development of new neighborhoods, or expansion of existing neighborhood, in areas identified as future Residential Development Opportunities. Zoning options such as planned unit development (PUD) should be considered to provide flexibility with respect to street design, lot sizes, setbacks, and density. PUDs can be used to maintain project feasibility while encouraging creation of usable open spaces and avoid development in environmentally sensitive areas such as steep slopes and riparian buffer areas.
- Areas immediately surrounding commercial centers should be considered for higher density housing. Higher density housing should be developed in a traditional neighborhood pattern (i.e., buildings fronting on streets) rather than in isolated complexes.
- Newly-created streets should tie into the existing street system and avoid creation of cul-de-sacs. Loop streets should be considered as an alternative to cul-de-sacs. New neighborhoods should include urban amenities such as curb/gutter, sidewalks, and street trees.
- New housing should focus in the mid-and upper-level markets to encourage balance in the range of housing. Further concentration of subsidized housing should be discouraged.
- Encourage better stewardship of multifamily and vacant properties by working with residents, neighborhood organizations, and Department of Housing and Neighborhood Services to increase vigilance and reporting of violations.

- Evaluate the development potential of properties identified as Residential Development Opportunities.
- Provide information sessions to residents to increase awareness of zoning codes and land use development.

## **Economic Development**

#### **Policies**

- Roanoke will encourage good relationships between commercial and residential development through thoughtful site and building design, landscaping, and transitional uses. New retail establishments should have a strong orientation to their primary street frontages. Roanoke will promote a diverse mixture of uses in commercial centers that are compatible with neighborhood character and scale.
- The overall availability of vacant and underused commercial property should be considered before permitted expansion of commercial zoning districts.
- Support redevelopment of the Roanoke-Salem Plaza site.

- Implement zoning patterns and regulations, which focus commercial development into centers and encourage buildings to be oriented to the street frontage and have good relationships with adjacent land uses.
- Work with owners of Roanoke-Salem Plaza to develop a plan for redevelopment of the property, especially along the perimeter of the site
- Consider placing public service facilities in village centers.
- Market the area village centers with emphasis on commercial uses with minimal noise and lighting impacts.

### **Infrastructure**

#### **Policies**

- Street system should provide high connectivity between neighborhoods and other parts of the city. The street system should support mobility by multiple modes of transportation. Streets should be designed (or redesigned) with special attention to mobility and safety for pedestrians and bicycles.
- Newly-created streets should tie into the existing street system and avoid creation of cul-de-sacs. Loop streets should be considered as an alternative to cul-de-sacs. New streets should include urban amenities such as curb/gutter, sidewalks, and street trees.
- Priority of construction of curb/gutter and sidewalks will be placed on arterial and collector streets.
- Streetlights should provide adequate illumination while avoiding glare and light pollution.

- Assess arterial streets for needed improvements and rank according to need.
- Identify priority areas for street lighting needs.
- Assess potential locations for bus stop shelters.
- Improve sight distance from streets along Salem Turnpike, Shenandoah Avenue, and Westside Boulevard.
- Develop a streetscape safety improvement strategy for Old Stevens Road and 36<sup>th</sup> Street.
- Develop bike accommodations bike lanes along east-west arterials (Melrose Avenue, Salem Turnpike, and Shenandoah Avenue).

### **Public Service**

#### **Policies**

- Roanoke will maintain high levels of Fire/EMS service to the area.
- Support collaboration between neighborhood groups, the Department of Housing and Neighborhood Services, and Roanoke Neighborhood Advocates.
- Solid Waste Management will work to increase resident participation in household recycling programs.
- The Police Department will emphasize crime prevention through its geographic policing strategy, community-oriented policing, and Crime Prevention Though Environmental Design (C.P.T.E.D). Improve communication between residents and police to target places and times where increased patrol would be most effective.
- Housing and Neighborhood Services will work with neighborhood organizations to identify and respond to nuisance code violations such as junk cars, weeds, and outdoor storage.

- Continue community-policing programs in partnership with community groups to ensure clear objective, information flow, enforcement, and community outreach. Coordinate National Night Out events and ongoing crime preventions efforts.
- Work with neighborhood groups to distribute information about code enforcement issues and to encourage participation in household recycling.
- Support neighborhood-based volunteer litter clean-up events.

# **Quality of Life**

#### **Policies**

- Improve neighborhood identity through beautification and gateway projects.
- Support ongoing active neighborhood organizations and community groups.
- Support creation of a network of high-quality parks and recreational facilities.
- Increase recreational utilization and opportunities in the area.
- Seek opportunities to connect the area's network of commercial centers and parks with greenways and/or on-street connections.

- Assess feasibility of establishing new small-scale neighborhood parks in underserved areas. Work with neighborhood organizations to identify specific locations that could be obtained and developed as "neighborhood parks" with a focus on sites that are not feasible to build because of flooding or other encumbrances.
- Assess additional amenities for existing parks (as requested by residents):
  - Recreation center for Peters Creek South area
  - New trail around Strauss Park
  - Water fountain at Strauss Park
  - Senior activities
- Coordinate periodic neighborhood cleanups by neighborhood organizations.

# **Funding**

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

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

How large projects are funded:
The Capital Improvement



## **Implementation**

Actions	Participants	Timeframe
Community Design		
Gateway Beautification	NG / HNS / PW	5 years
Vacant lot development	NG / HNS	5-10 years
Comprehensive Rezoning	PBD	1 year
Residential Development		
Implement home ownership programs	NG / HNS /PBD	Ongoing
Evaluate for potential development of	NG / HNS / PBD	2 year
opportunity properties		
Economic Development		
Develop Village Center between the	ED / PBD	1 – 4 years
intersections of Westwood Avenue and		
Old Stevens on Shenandoah Avenue.	DDD / ED	Ommaina
Revitalize older shopping centers and commercial buildings to improve	PBD / ED	Ongoing
relationship with existing land uses		
Infrastructure		
Repair and complete sidewalk and curb	PW	5-10 years
system		
Address partnership with Valley Metro	PO / HNS / VM	2-3 years
and private property owners for bus		
stop shelters.	DD / EO / NO / DO	0.5
Develop proposed greenways - pedestrian/bicycle paths as proposed in	PR / EG / NG / PO	2-5 years
the Vision 2001-2020 Plan		
Improve arterial streets with gateways	NG / EG / PW / HNS	Ongoing
and streetscape beautification projects.		angemg
Address safety issues on Old Stevens	PW / EN / TD	1-3 years
Road and 36 <sup>th</sup> Street.		
Identify priority areas for street lighting	NG / HNS / AEP	
needs Public Services		
	DD/ NO / OF	4.0
Enact program for neighborhood crime prevention and code en forcement	PD/ NG / CE	1-2 years
violations.		
Continue education and advocacy of	PW / NG / HNS	Ongoing
household recycling	1 11 110 1111	
Quality of Life		
Identify and develop small-scale	PR / NG	2 - 5 years
neighborhood parks		
Develop greenway and bike trails	PR / NG/ HNS/ PD	2 - 5 years

HNS: Housing Neighborhood Services ~ PBD: Planning Building and Development ~ CE: Code Enforcement ~ NG: Neighborhood Groups ~ PD: Police Department ~ PR: Parks and Recreation Department ~ ED: Economic Development ~ PW: Public Works ~ EN: Engineering Department ~ ST: Streets and Traffic ~VM: Valley Metro ~PO: Private Owners

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Brian J. Wishneff

Planning Commission
Chairman Richard A. Rife
Vice Chairman Henry Scholz
Gilbert E. Butler, Jr.
D. Kent Chrisman
Robert B. Manetta
Paula Prince
Fredrick M. Williams

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