

***Other Residential or Commercial
Boulevards***

- Peters Creek Road N.W.
- Hershberger Road N.E. and N.W.
- Colonial Avenue S.W.

Implementation of the gateway, entrance route and boulevard projects would require detailed traffic and urban design analysis. Landscaping efforts could be coordinated through the Parks and Recreation Department's landscaping program and would be aided by the development of the proposed City tree nursery.

Road Improvements

Road improvements to improve traffic flow should be a priority. In addition to the three projects approved by the City Council (Peters Creek Road extension, a new I-581 interchange, and Franklin Road widening), additional improvements to the road system should be made as funds become available. As shown in the Transportation Strategy map, projects may include improvements to Hershberger Road from Cove to Peters Creek Road and the eastern portions of Orange Avenue, 10th Street N.W., and Williamson Road, as well as completion of 13th Street N.E. and S.E. south of Orange Avenue. The impacts of the new I-581 interchange on plans for improvements to 10th Street N.W. and adjacent streets should also be examined. Improvements to Williamson Road might include selected cross street closings which would decrease traffic impacts on the surrounding neighborhood, provide additional areas for parking and/or landscaping, and improve traffic flow.

Transportation Planning

The City should also be involved with initiating a review process for the State-prepared Roanoke Valley Area Transportation Plan. Based on planning and development activities proposed in this Comprehensive Development Plan, projects included in the previous transportation plan, but not a current priority for the City should be reviewed and new proposals considered.

A parking and traffic management plan is needed for the downtown and major arteries, including better traffic circulation and improved signs to direct residents and tourists to downtown. As noted in the Commercial Development section of this plan, a reduced fee or free "Park and Shop" program for shoppers could be revived to encourage more people to come downtown. In addition, new parking facilities and programs may be needed. A recent parking study revealed that although downtown currently has a surplus of spaces, full occupancy of existing buildings would fully use these spaces. The potential development of the available vacant land in downtown Roanoke would require new parking sites. Plans for feasibility studies for additional parking including the cost of land and accessibility should be prepared for any new downtown development.

Other localized transportation problems should be identified in neighborhood plans. However, since transportation is a unifying element, a plan to coordinate minor street improvements and maintenance will also be needed. Problems with dangerous intersections, unpaved or poor quality roads and truck traffic conflicts should be addressed on both a neighborhood and city-wide basis. The current sidewalk improvement plan should eventually be expanded to include



Parks and Recreation



Above: New facilities at Thrasher Park provided through the ongoing park improvement program. Right: The city's parks are popular and heavily used by all ages.

EXISTING CONDITIONS

Roanoke's park system is the primary source of recreation and open space within the city. The existing park system includes two regional parks, six downtown parks and plazas, nine community parks, eight Roanoke River parks, twenty neighborhood parks, eleven school site parks, and nine community centers. City park facilities have 57 ball fields, 60 tennis courts, two Olympic-size outdoor swimming pools, and a 25,000 person capacity stadium. In addition, nine community centers provide an important opportunity for recreation, especially for the elderly.

Recent Actions and Current Plans

A master plan for the parks system, completed in 1980, has served as the basis for planning decisions for the last five years. Actions have included the development of a downtown urban park system, a strategy of improvements in neighborhood parks and the construction of a new major, centralized sports complex.

Despite Roanoke's abundant open space, the park system is not geographically balanced: for instance, a significant amount of the total park land is part of the steep slopes of Mill Mountain. The 1980 Plan recommended that this issue be addressed by increasing park land primarily in the northwest (70-125 acres) and northeast parts of the city (37-65 acres). The Parks and Recreation Strategy map indicates areas which lack park facilities.

Current plans for the park system are primarily the continued implementation of the 1980 Parks Master Plan. This includes completion of the Sports Complex at Victory Stadium and improvements to twenty-five other parks and facilities by the end of 1986. In addition, an ongoing maintenance program has been developed to achieve the desired level of quality for all parks.

STRATEGY

Parks and Recreation Objectives

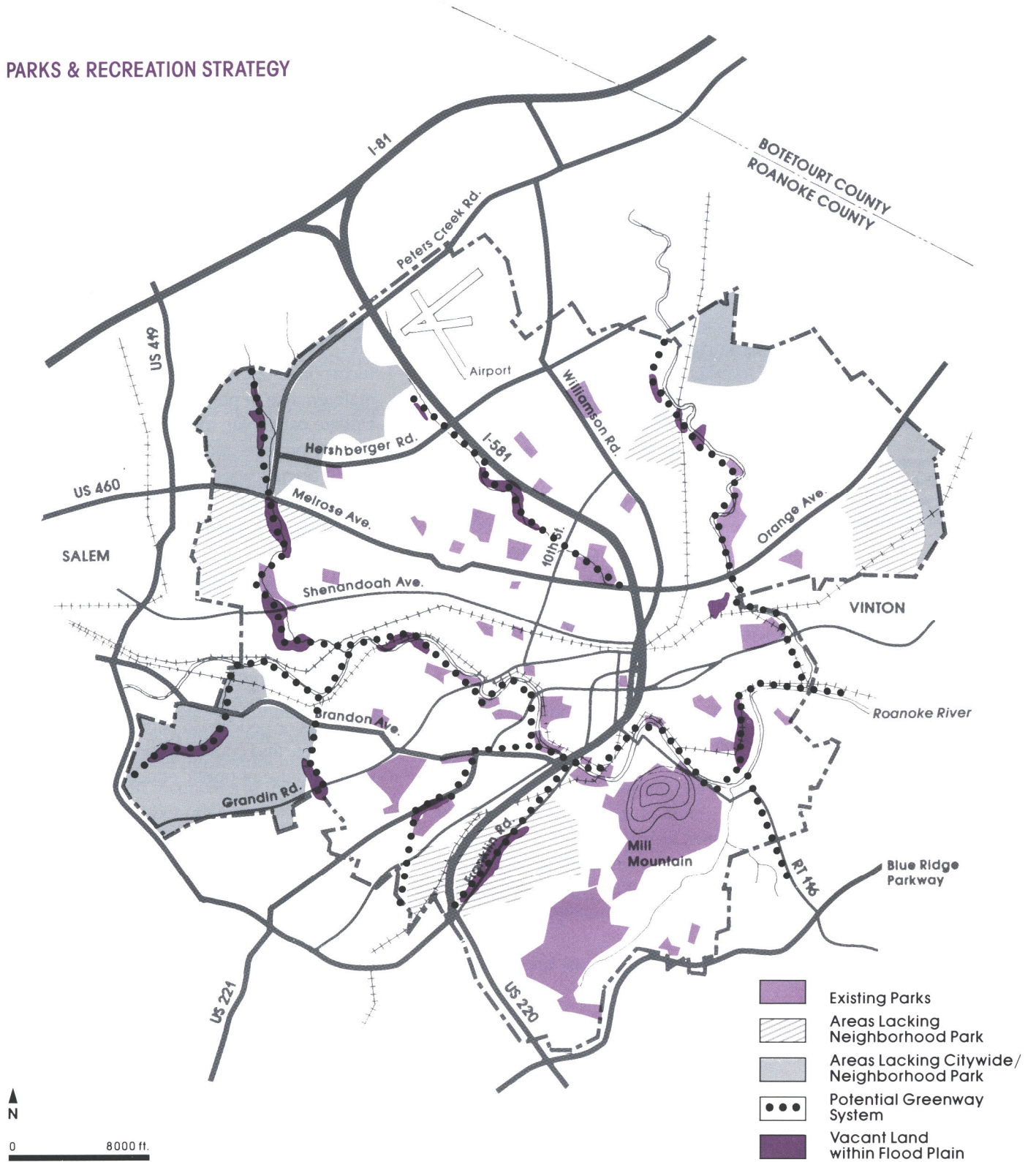
- Encourage development and upgrading of parks serving all neighborhoods.
- Encourage the development of a greenway system along the Roanoke River and major streams, linked to existing parks.



New Recreation Needs

Roanoke's 1980 Parks Plan clearly identified specific problems with existing individual facilities. Although these recommendations

PARKS & RECREATION STRATEGY



continue to be valid, an updated parks plan is necessary to define any new needs and to more closely identify potential park sites in the outlying sections of the city.

Neighborhood action plans should help identify local recreation opportunities and needs as a supplement to the city-wide parks plan update. These plans should address maintenance needs as well as facility and program development. Actions on both neighborhood and city-wide levels are required to expand youth recreation opportunities.

Recreation/open space needs should be considered in plans for any new residential development. For large residential developments, zoning regulations should include provisions for developers to provide adequate open space in connection with their developments. Residential developments in areas identified as needing park facilities should be reviewed with special care. Preservation of sufficient land for

future park facilities in these locations should be considered.

Undeveloped areas in the flood plains along all rivers or major streams should be preserved as open space to help protect the natural beauty, to mitigate flood damage, and to develop a linear bike and pedestrian trail system. When possible, these natural areas should be linked to existing parks.

SUMMARY: PLANNING AND DEVELOPMENT ACTIONS

1. Incorporate open space development and maintenance in neighborhood plans.
2. Update parks plan to evaluate and identify priority projects and provide links between open spaces.
3. Provide increased youth recreation programs with special emphasis in high need areas.
4. Enact zoning and subdivision regulations to provide adequate open space in connection with new residential development.
5. Develop a greenway system along rivers and streams with a connected system of bikeways or pedestrian paths.
6. Encourage and coordinate joint development and use of public education/recreation facilities.



EXISTING CONDITIONS

Regional Access

Roanoke's transportation system has an important impact on the city's regional markets and tourism as well as the businesses and industries it serves. The major routes serving the city, I-81, U.S. 220 and U.S. 460, have enhanced the city's regional position by providing easy access to other population centers. Roanoke's location adjacent to the Blue Ridge Parkway provides an important link for regional and national tourists.

Roanoke's airport is also a key element in the region's transportation system. Expansion of airport facilities is critical in maintaining Roanoke's competitive market position. A traveler can fly from Roanoke to 39 cities and return in the same day. In 1985, Piedmont Airlines increased its service from 16 to 21 flights a day; the five airlines serving Roanoke total over 50 daily flights. An Airport Master Plan is currently being completed to coordinate airport development. A new or expanded air terminal is a major element under consideration; together with the recent runway construction, these improvements should provide needed incentives to increase the quality and number of flights into Roanoke.

Local Access

Roanoke's local road network forms a radiating pattern of streets that serve all sections of the city. Most of Roanoke can be reached from downtown within 15 minutes. Although there are no major transportation problems, some local problem areas do exist. Through traffic on arterial roads sometimes disrupts neighborhood access. Poor traffic flow and cruising are added problems for strip developments such as Williamson Road. Truck traffic near industrial areas affects traffic flow, creates noise and accelerates the



deterioration of street surfaces. About one-third of Roanoke's neighborhoods lack sidewalks. For pedestrians, the City has developed a school safety sidewalk plan focusing improvements around public school facilities and is currently implementing improvements as funds are available.

The Roanoke Valley Area Transportation Plan 1975-1995, prepared by the State of Virginia has provided the guideline for road planning. For the road systems in Roanoke, City Council has designated three major projects for construction over the next five years. Other projects may also be added. Current priority projects include:

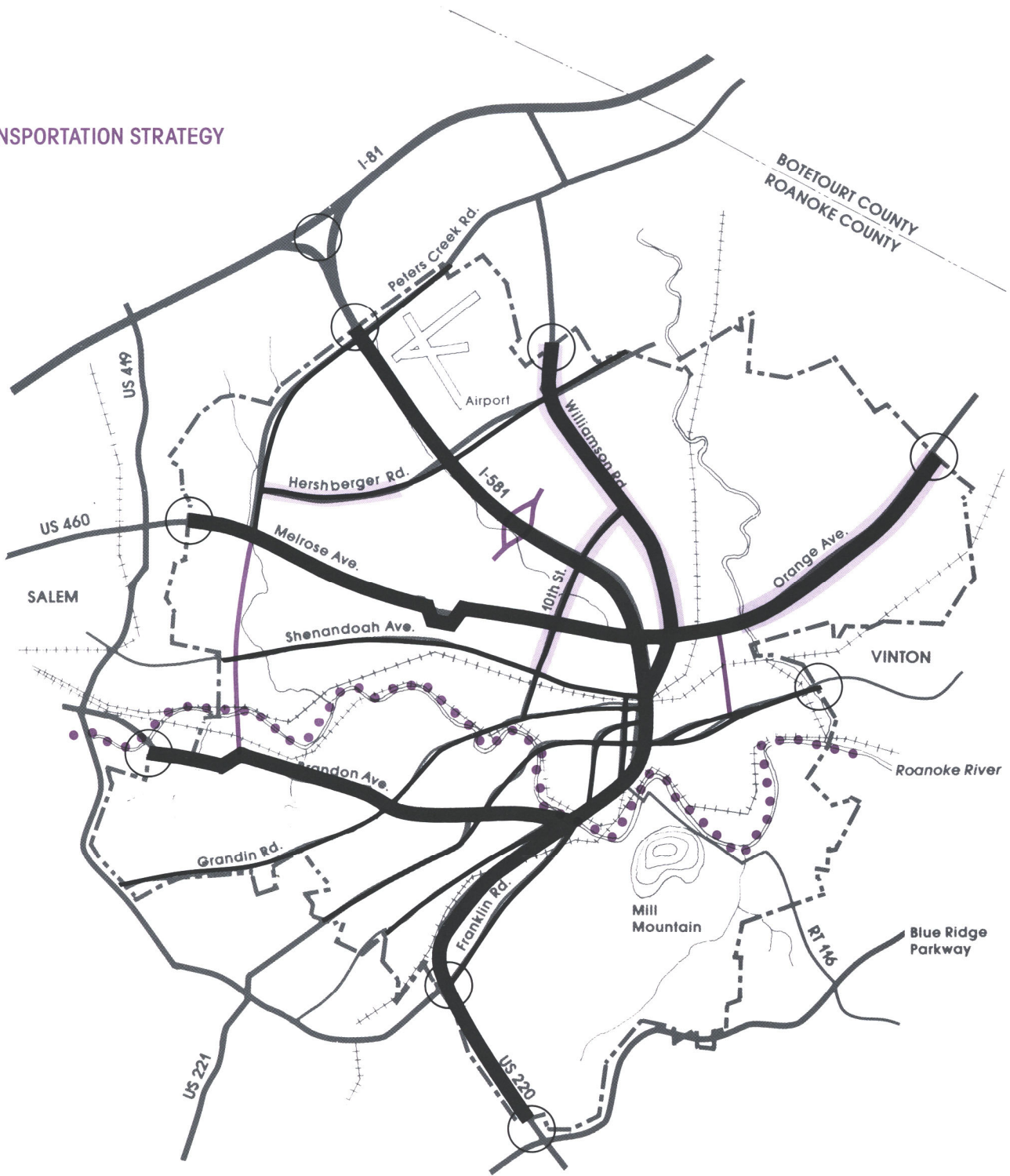
- Peters Creek Road extension from Lee Highway to Melrose Avenue.
- A new interchange on I-581, north of 10th Street (exact location has not been determined).
- Franklin Road widening from Third Street to Elm Avenue.







Public Transportation:

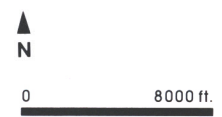
Local bus service is provided by the Greater Roanoke Transit Company Inc. (Valley Metro), which is solely owned by the City of Roanoke. Current routing is based upon existing demand.

Above: Excellent road systems serve the city. I-581 is the regional highway link from Roanoke to I-81 and U.S. 220.

TRANSPORTATION STRATEGY



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|---|-------------|---|------------------------------------|
|  | Gateways |  | Potential New Roads |
|  | Entanceways |  | Potential Road Improvements |
|  | Boulevards |  | River Parkway (schematic location) |



Improvements to public transportation include the Campbell Court Transportation Center, currently under construction, and plans for a new administrative and operation center for Valley Metro. This center will be housed in the rehabilitated City Stables in southeast Roanoke, a historic property of local significance.

STRATEGY

Transportation Objectives

- Encourage maintenance and upgrading of the transportation network to facilitate movement into and within Roanoke.
- Encourage the development of landscaped boulevards designed to enhance the city's image and to minimize traffic impacts on adjacent neighborhoods.

Airport Improvements

The Comprehensive Plan strongly supports future airport improvements. Quality air service is a critical factor in business location decisions. Quality air terminal facilities are gateways to the city and are important for Roanoke's image and economic growth.

Scenic Parkway

A scenic parkway along the Roanoke River is currently proposed as a 25 mile link between Dixie Caverns at I-81 through Roanoke to Smith Mountain Lake. If implemented in conjunction with flood control improvements, this project represents a unique opportunity to preserve the environmental quality of the river and provide needed, yet scenic, access for local and regional travelers. The parkway should be supported as an important transportation asset to area recreation and tourist centers.

City Image: Landscaped Boulevards

To enhance the city's image and visual quality, all major access roads into the city and entrance routes into downtown should



Above: Roanoke Regional Airport served over 616,000 passengers in 1985, a 16% increase over service in 1984.

be upgraded as gateways with signs, landscaping and lighting as appropriate. These routes shape tourists' first impressions of Roanoke as well as city residents' and Roanoke Valley commuters' daily image of the city. They should be attractive entrances offering clear identity and directional signs. Other major residential and commercial streets also can enhance Roanoke's visual quality and should be upgraded as residential or commercial boulevards with appropriate landscaping. These proposed access roads, downtown entrance routes and boulevards are shown on the Transportation Strategy map and include:

Gateways: Major City Access Roads

- I-81 and I-581
- U.S. 220 and Roy Webber Expressway
- U.S. 460 — Orange Avenue and Melrose Avenue
- Lee Highway/Brandon Avenue
- U.S. 11 — Williamson Road

Residential or Commercial Boulevards:

Downtown Entrance Routes

- Shenandoah Avenue N.W.
- Grandin Road S.W./Memorial Avenue S.W.
- 10th Street N.W. and S.W./Campbell Avenue S.W.
- South Jefferson Street
- Franklin Road S.W.
- Brambleton Avenue S.W./Main Street/Elm Avenue S.W.
- Route 24 — Jamison and Bullitt Avenues S.E.