

★ ROANOKE *VISION*

**ZONING: A PROCESS FOR BALANCING
PRESERVATION AND CHANGE, 1986**



ZONING COMMISSION
District of Columbia

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Case 86-26
CASE NO. 86-26
Exhibit 528
EXHIBIT NO. 528A1

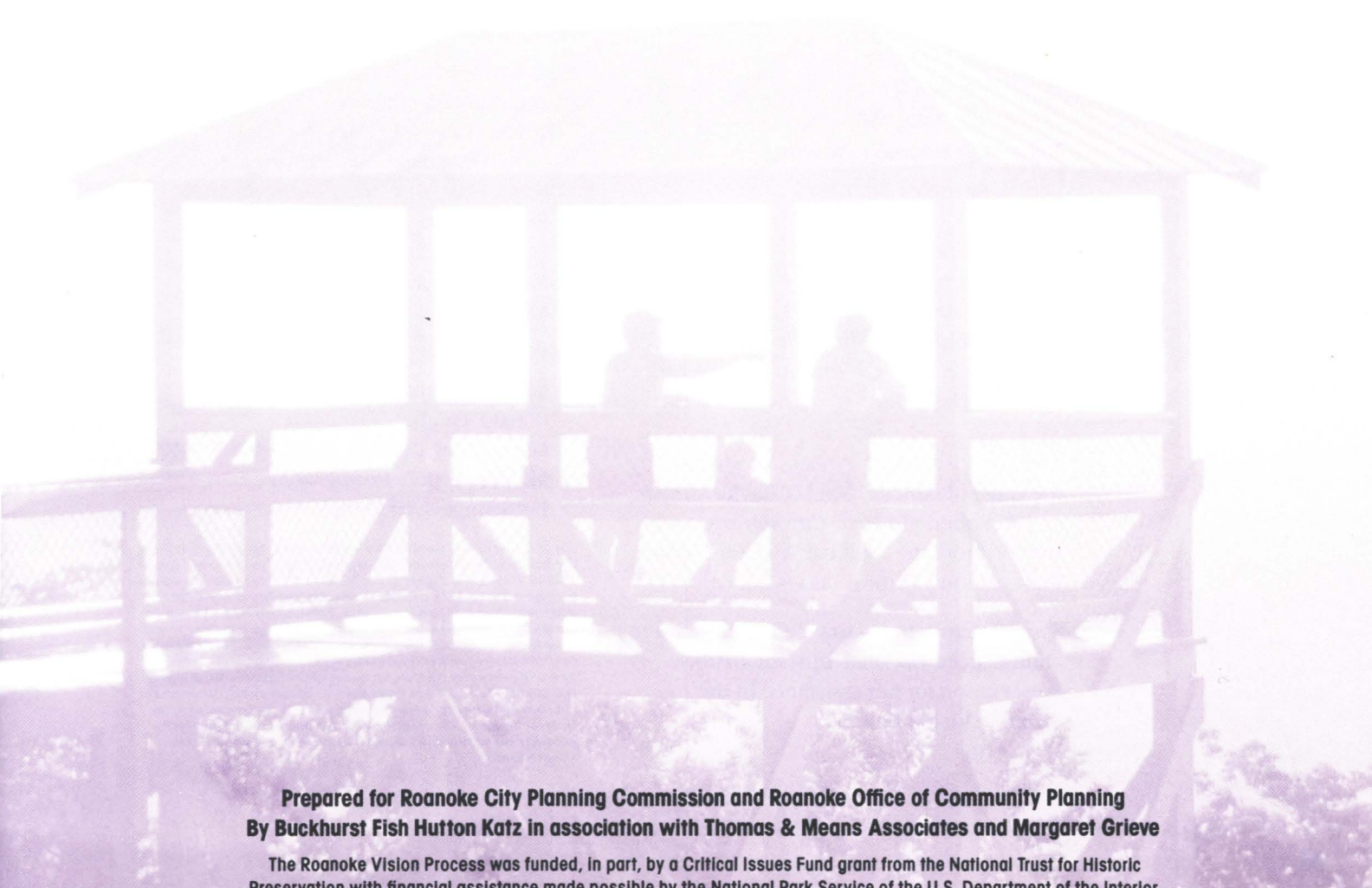
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**Prepared for Roanoke City Planning Commission and Roanoke Office of Community Planning
By Buckhurst Fish Hutton Katz in association with Thomas & Means Associates and Margaret Grieve**

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Credits

Zoning for Preservation: A Process for Balancing Preservation and Change in Roanoke, Virginia is a component of the Roanoke Vision Planning Process which included the development of a new Comprehensive Development Plan and a revised zoning ordinance. The Roanoke Vision Process was a project of the Roanoke City Planning Commission. The Planning Commission is staffed by the Office of Community Planning, City of Roanoke, which was responsible for directing the project.

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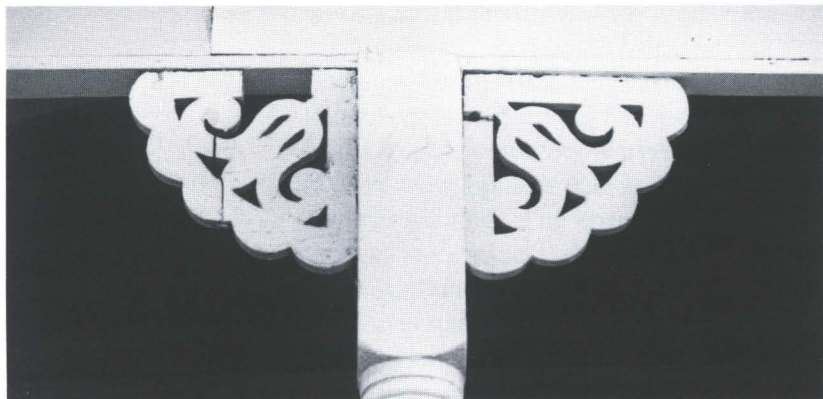
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Introduction



Cities and towns throughout the United States are faced with finding appropriate ways to preserve and enhance the historic fabric of their communities. In most localities this now means going beyond efforts to restore landmark properties or designate special historic districts. It means encouraging public and private investments in commercial districts and residential neighborhoods while balancing the often competing economic, aesthetic, preservation and development interests in the community. Increasingly, it also means revising local planning, building and land development regulations to promote preservation, design quality and neighborhood conservation.

One city which is taking this kind of comprehensive approach to preservation issues is Roanoke, Virginia. Assisted by a grant from the National Trust for Historic Preservation's Critical Issues Fund, Roanoke revised its existing zoning ordinance in conjunction with a comprehensive planning process called Roanoke Vision. In Virginia, as in many states, the city's comprehensive plan provides the legal basis for its zoning regulations. In order to revise zoning provisions causing serious preservation problems, Roanoke began by developing a new comprehensive plan which clearly set forth

the community's values about its neighborhoods, history and appearance. The Critical Issues Fund grant then helped highlight the importance of creating new preservation-focused regulatory tools to promote neighborhood conservation and improved design quality on a citywide basis.

Appropriate regulatory tools are particularly critical to a broad range of medium-sized cities throughout America of which Roanoke is typical. The primary development focus of these cities is no longer on the suburban style subdivisions or commercial areas which characterized so much of their post-war growth. Instead, as in Roanoke, the focus is now on improving the quality of existing residential neighborhoods, revitalizing downtown and neighborhood commercial areas, expanding the local economic base, and maintaining current public facilities and services for populations which are now stable in size.

However, while the development focus and economic realities in these cities have changed, the regulatory tools which influence investment and set development and land use standards have remained relatively constant. In Roanoke's case, the city did enact a historic district overlay zone to protect its City Market and Warehouse districts as part of the city's recent downtown revitalization, but the overall zoning ordinance continued to be based on development trends of the 1950s and 1960s. It did not recognize the growing values placed on preserving the scale, style and character of the city's past. In fact, the existing ordinance actually encouraged the destruction of many of the city's older and low-income neighborhoods.

This report describes how Roanoke engaged itself in a year-long process of identifying the regulatory stumbling blocks impeding preservation, design quality and neighborhood conservation in the city and

how a new proposed zoning ordinance addresses those problems. Readers familiar with zoning and regulatory issues will note that no single element of Roanoke's proposed new ordinance is *the* solution to preservation issues, yet as a whole, the proposed ordinance represents a significant new approach. Regulatory impediments to preservation have been removed and positive revitalization strategies are encouraged on a citywide basis. While other cities may face different specific problems, Roanoke's approach provides a way for other localities to identify the specific impediments to preservation and design quality in their own ordinances.

The report also highlights the citizen-based public information and participation processes through which this comprehensive regulatory revision project took place and the subsequent official approvals process which is currently underway. Without

this city-wide consensus-building approach, the competing economic, political and community issues which surround all land use decision-making easily could have overwhelmed the goals of the zoning revision process. Finding ways to take the community's pulse through public town meetings, TV specials, public opinion surveys, workshops and more, and then finding ways to articulate those concerns in the policies of the new comprehensive plan, came well before any attempts to draft new zoning text. Through this process, the comprehensive plan set forth strong community values upon which the zoning text could be based. These values, directly related to land development concerns, included the importance of:

- preserving the cultural and architectural character of the city and improving the quality of its neighborhoods;

Roanoke is a city of 100,600 located in the Blue Ridge Mountains of western Virginia.



Without the city-wide consensus-building approach, the competing economic, political and community issues which surround all land use decision-making could easily have overwhelmed the goals of the zoning revision process.

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- encouraging appropriate economic development and growth, but not at the expense of sacrificing the city's friendly atmosphere, close neighborhood and family social patterns or convenient life style; and
- enhancing the city's physical appearance and conserving its unique environmental assets.

These strongly held community values go beyond a narrow definition of historic preservation, yet have a major impact on preservation and development issues. They set the framework for the new proposed zoning ordinance and are proving instrumental in achieving broad-based support during the approvals process.

This comprehensive analysis in Roanoke also identified several constraints within state law that limit a Virginia municipality's ability to enact certain preservation-focused regulatory measures. Examples of some of these constraints within Virginia enabling legislation for comprehensive planning and zoning are also included.

Through this report, Roanoke hopes to share its experiences in weaving its community's values into preservation-oriented action strategies and regulations. While some of the elements of the new plan and ordinance are innovative, the purpose was not merely to devise new techniques, but rather to revise and coordinate all aspects of the city's official land development policies and regulations to promote preservation, design quality and neighborhood conservation. Roanoke's innovation is its comprehensiveness and its commitment to building a public consensus *before* zoning changes. The success of this approach in Roanoke shows that other cities can also take the lead in developing a cooperative approach that makes preservation and neighborhood concerns important elements of the land use decision-making process.

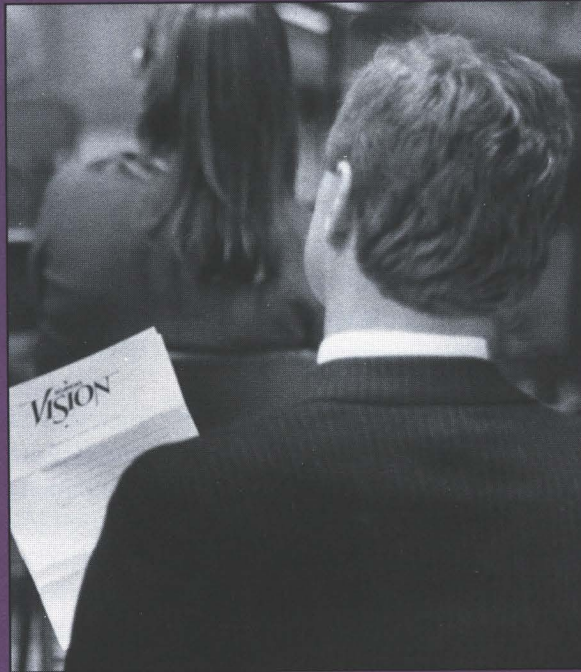


As this report goes to press, the Roanoke Vision Comprehensive Development Plan 1985-2005 has been officially adopted. The proposed text of the new zoning ordinance is being reviewed by staff, a citizen committee and a subcommittee of the Roanoke City Planning Commission during the summer of 1986. Public hearings before both the Planning Commission and the City Council will be held during the fall of 1986. Final action to enact the proposed new ordinance, including any modifications developed during the approvals process, is expected in late 1986. For more detailed information on Roanoke's experience, copies of the Roanoke Vision Comprehensive Development Plan 1985-2005 are available. Copies of the final zoning ordinance will be available after it is officially approved in late 1986.

Right: The Roanoke Star, a symbol on Mill Mountain for 40 years.



1 PLANNING ROANOKE



Comprehensive planning and zoning was a city-wide public process.



Roanoke: A City Balancing Preservation and Change

Right: A view of the Hotel Roanoke in the early railroad era.

Roanoke is a city of 100,600 people located in the Blue Ridge Mountains of western Virginia. Although the city itself has a stable population and little remaining undeveloped land, it is part of a growing metropolitan area of 225,000. Roanoke has a strong, diversified economic base as a regional industrial, professional service, finance, health care, commercial and transportation center for a market area of approximately 800,000. Its setting in the mountains provides the city with varied topography, striking vistas and easy access to environmental and recreational resources including the adjacent Blue Ridge Parkway.

Roanoke was founded in the 1880s as a railroad center and grew rapidly as a major transportation and industrial location for the region. From the late 1880s to the 1920s, the city experienced a series of development “booms.” The city’s downtown and much of the housing in the oldest neighborhoods were built by speculative land companies to meet the growing demands of workers drawn to jobs in Roanoke. The legacy of this period can still be seen today in well-defined clusters of a range of late 19th and early 20th century building types. Stately Victorian mansions, red-tin-roofed American foursquare homes with traditional front porches, rows of small “shot-gun” workers’ cottages and modest pre-war bungalows can be found throughout the city’s older neighborhoods. The legacy of these early development patterns is also evident in the downtown, where a vibrant farmers’ market is still flanked by small commercial buildings of the era. The relationship of workers’ housing near early industrial locations along the Roanoke River and rail lines is also still a feature of many of the city’s neighborhoods.

Evidence of Roanoke’s concern for bringing order to its rapid growth can be found in two early city plans. The first, com-



pleted in 1907, was commissioned by a group of citizens. This plan established the foundation of the city by coordinating the location of downtown buildings, establishing an orderly street system and proposing a network of parks. By 1928 the city had outgrown its plan and, as it had in 1907, again retained John Nolen of Cambridge, Massachusetts, a well-respected planner and landscape architect of the day, to develop a new comprehensive plan and the city’s first zoning ordinance. The resulting 1928 plan is an excellent guide to the city’s past because it documents the development patterns and regulations which govern the extent of the “old” Roanoke now worthy of preservation.

Roanoke’s prosperity continued to the immediate post-war period, but the loss of a major industry in the late 1950s, coupled with residential and commercial growth in suburban areas, began a period of decline for the city’s downtown and older neighborhood areas. When the city developed a new plan in 1964 to try to make sense of these changes, the prevailing wisdom was that many of the older neighborhoods were no longer suitable or attractive places to live. The plan recommended reuse of old neighborhood areas as centers for business, industry, offices and institutions. The powers of urban renewal were used to remove deteriorated housing and create sites for new de-

velopment. In 1966, the city's zoning code was changed to reflect this plan. However, this zoning allowed a mix of incompatible uses in many areas without provisions for planning for this transition or dealing with its impact. The result was often the destruction of the residential fabric and character of many neighborhoods, as well as the loss of many fine older structures. Much of the commercial development that did occur was of an unplanned, strip commercial nature.

By the late 1970s, Roanoke faced problems encountered by many cities its size throughout the U.S. Its downtown was deteriorating as retail and office uses became firmly established in suburban complexes. Roanoke also had serious housing problems with a weak market for city properties, many vacant units, substandard conditions, housing demolitions and general disinvestment in older neighborhoods. Yet despite these significant problems, new values and leadership began to emerge and Roanokers began to rediscover the rich diversity of the city's neighborhoods and the pleasures of downtown. As this process began, it became clear that the same market trends that had taken almost all development pressures to

the suburbs since the 1950s had, in fact, helped preserve large areas of the more graceful, older city. The traditional values that had kept some families rooted to their neighborhoods also provided the foundation for a burgeoning neighborhood revitalization movement.

The result has been that within the last 10 years, Roanoke has reversed patterns of disinvestment through major downtown and neighborhood revitalization efforts. Over \$110 million in private investment and over \$30 million in public improvements downtown have brought new office, specialty retail, restaurant and cultural/entertainment uses to the city center. Active neighborhood organizations, housing and related neighborhood development programs and private investment have made dramatic changes in city neighborhoods. Economic growth and job creation over the same period, fueled by significant industrial and commercial development, have made Roanoke a more competitive regional center within the southeastern U.S. This positive change has helped bolster the city's attitude about its own identity and potential. It is within this positive civic climate that the values for pre-



Over 40 diverse neighborhoods are home to Roanoke citizens.

Gradual disinvestment in many of Roanoke's older neighborhoods was accelerated by changes in the city's zoning code in the late 1960's.



serving the city's historic and neighborhood character developed.

Much of the credit for this important new direction can be attributed to an unusual level of cooperation among local government, neighborhood organizations, preservation groups, the business community and the non-profit/voluntary sector. Each major initiative in the city since 1978 has been accompanied by an active public information and participation component. Citizens were drawn into planning for improvements to downtown, parks, and neighborhoods at the earliest stages through public forums, interactive workshops, and a wide range of communication media. Their concerns and opinions become an integral part of planning and design solutions.

The success of these previous cooperative efforts set the stage for the kind of comprehensive policy and regulatory analysis needed if the city's revitalization was to continue. As the private sector, neighborhood organizations and local government agencies gained experience in revitalization efforts on some fronts, outdated zoning regulations and inadequate development controls were undermining the successes in

other areas. The next major task was to create a system of coordinated land use policies and regulations which would remove the obvious impediments to promoting preservation-sensitive neighborhood conservation and quality infill development. Such policies and regulations could also help ensure that the local government's current administrative commitment to neighborhood issues would continue and not be as vulnerable to possible political or personnel changes.

Right: Shops and restaurants in the newly revitalized City Market Building have brought new life to the downtown district.





The historic structures and neighborhood areas threatened by inappropriate zoning and inadequate development controls, though concentrated in the older, central areas of Roanoke, can be found throughout the city. Recent efforts to document and preserve historic structures and districts include the designation of three Virginia and National Register Historic Districts including:

Warehouse District—A collection of 5 warehouses built between 1889 and 1902 along the rail lines and adjacent to downtown.

City Market District—A six block area of downtown containing a diverse group of about 60 small commercial buildings. Key features of the district include a newly restored Georgian Revival style City Market building — the site of a daily farmers' produce market — and Center-in-the-Square, an arts/museum/theater complex housed in renovated industrial space.

Southwest Historic District—Three neighborhood areas which together contain approximately 1600 structures and comprise Virginia's second largest historic district. Most are residences built between 1890 and 1930. The tree-lined streets of this district reflect a variety of architectural styles and include what were once some of the city's most stately homes as well as areas of more modest residences.

In addition, twelve commercial, residential and industrial properties are listed on the Virginia and National Register of Historic Places. Recent surveys identified approximately 20 additional properties eligible for nomination and another 40 or more properties judged to be of local significance. Beyond the neighborhoods

No clear set of policies had ever been developed to define the community's interest in preservation, design quality, commercial development, or neighborhood conservation.

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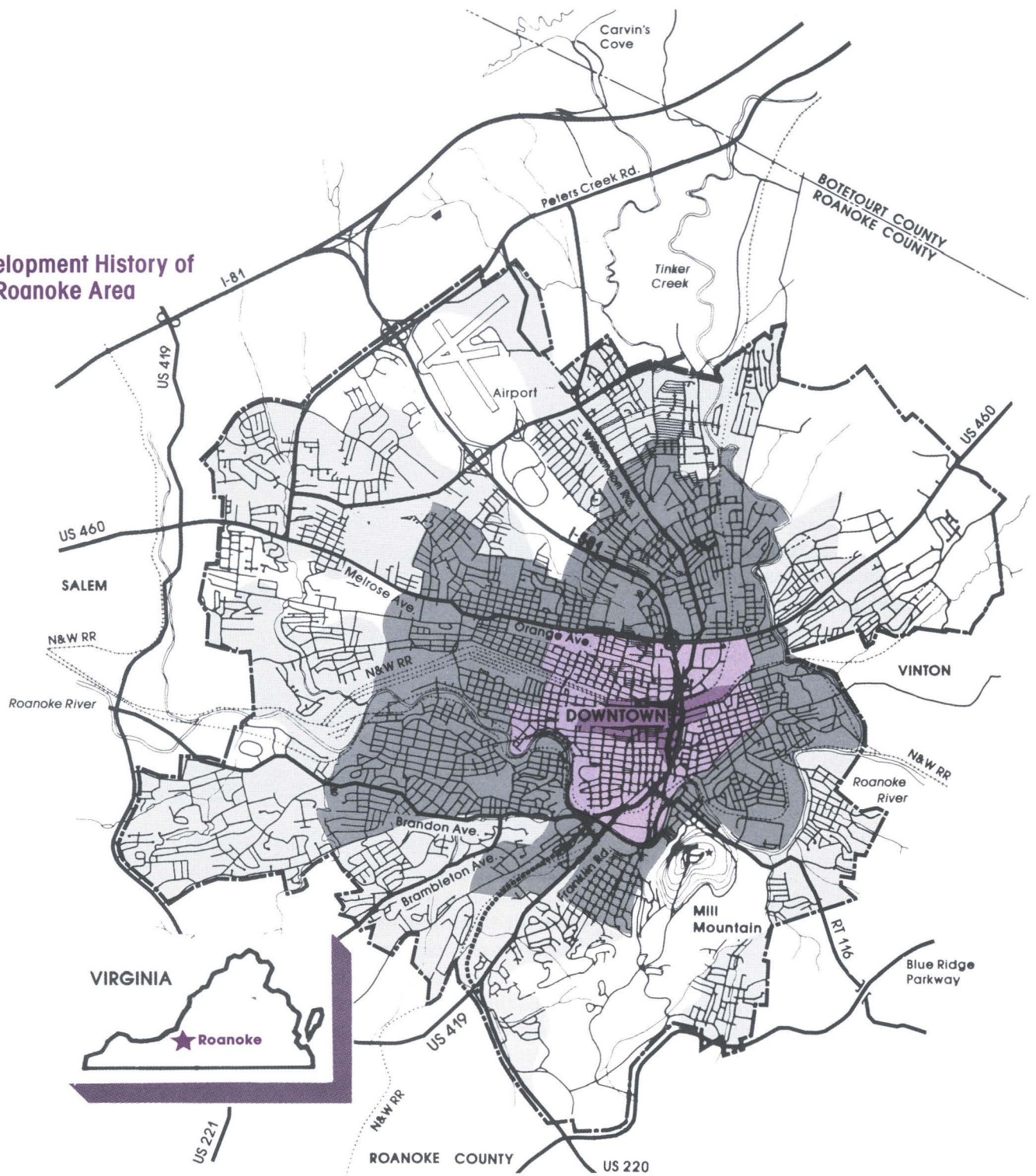


Well-maintained homes in the Southwest Historic District.

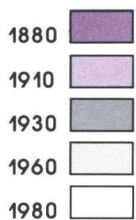
within the Southwest Historic District, many other residential areas contribute to the historic character of the city. As the following map indicates, the city contains more than 40 distinct neighborhoods. Most are well-defined by topography or other natural and man-made features and are strong communities with active neighborhood organizations. Preserving the physical character, housing stock and market strength of these areas also helps maintain important social and family networks.

Current land use regulations, including the existing zoning ordinance, zoning district classifications and demolition procedures, have had negative impacts on these neighborhood conservation efforts. Examples of zoning and land use conflicts

Development History of the Roanoke Area



Developed areas by:



1976 City Boundary



0 8000 ft.

abound. Although a strong historic overlay district limiting demolition and providing design controls has protected the two downtown historic districts since 1979, neighborhood areas have remained largely unprotected.

When the zoning ordinance of 1966 was enacted, new office, commercial or industrial uses were proposed for many of the city's older, intact neighborhoods. The ordinance also significantly increased the residential densities allowed in these older, architecturally rich neighborhoods and made the prevailing small lot sizes nonconforming by raising the minimum lot size. This meant that a majority of the existing lots in older areas were judged to be too small and could not be developed or redeveloped without applying for a variance to the zoning ordinance. In addition, the ordinance contained a transition zone provision which allowed encroachment of inappropriately scaled multi-family and commercial uses in established residential areas. Another problem was the broad range of uses allowed within some districts without any provisions for making potentially conflicting uses compatible through site design or other development criteria. For example, an auto body repair shop, warehouse or other light industrial, commercial or office use could be the immediate next door neighbor to a row of well-kept single family homes. No landscaping, setback or other design standards would apply to the non-residential uses in the neighborhood.

These zoning regulations contributed to patterns of neighborhood change and disinvestment. In some older neighborhoods, residential structures were replaced by office, commercial or multi-family housing in conflict with the scale and architectural character of the area. Other neighborhoods suffered from inadequate separation of residences from new industrial uses. Serious deterioration, abandonment and eventual demolition of some of the city's oldest homes occurred.

Other regulatory problems for neighborhood conservation included:

- a lack of flexible provisions for developing new "infill" housing on vacant lots;
- a lack of innovative preservation techniques, such as allowing additional or specialty uses including "bed and breakfast" accommodations, art studios and professional occupations in historic structures to make their restoration and reuse more economically feasible;
- a lack of appropriate design guidelines and site development controls to encourage quality rehabilitation and compatible new construction worthy of preservation in the future;
- a lack of effective procedures to discourage demolition of significant structures.

In addition, several general problems within the ordinance, including a lack of clear definitions, extensive cross-referenc-

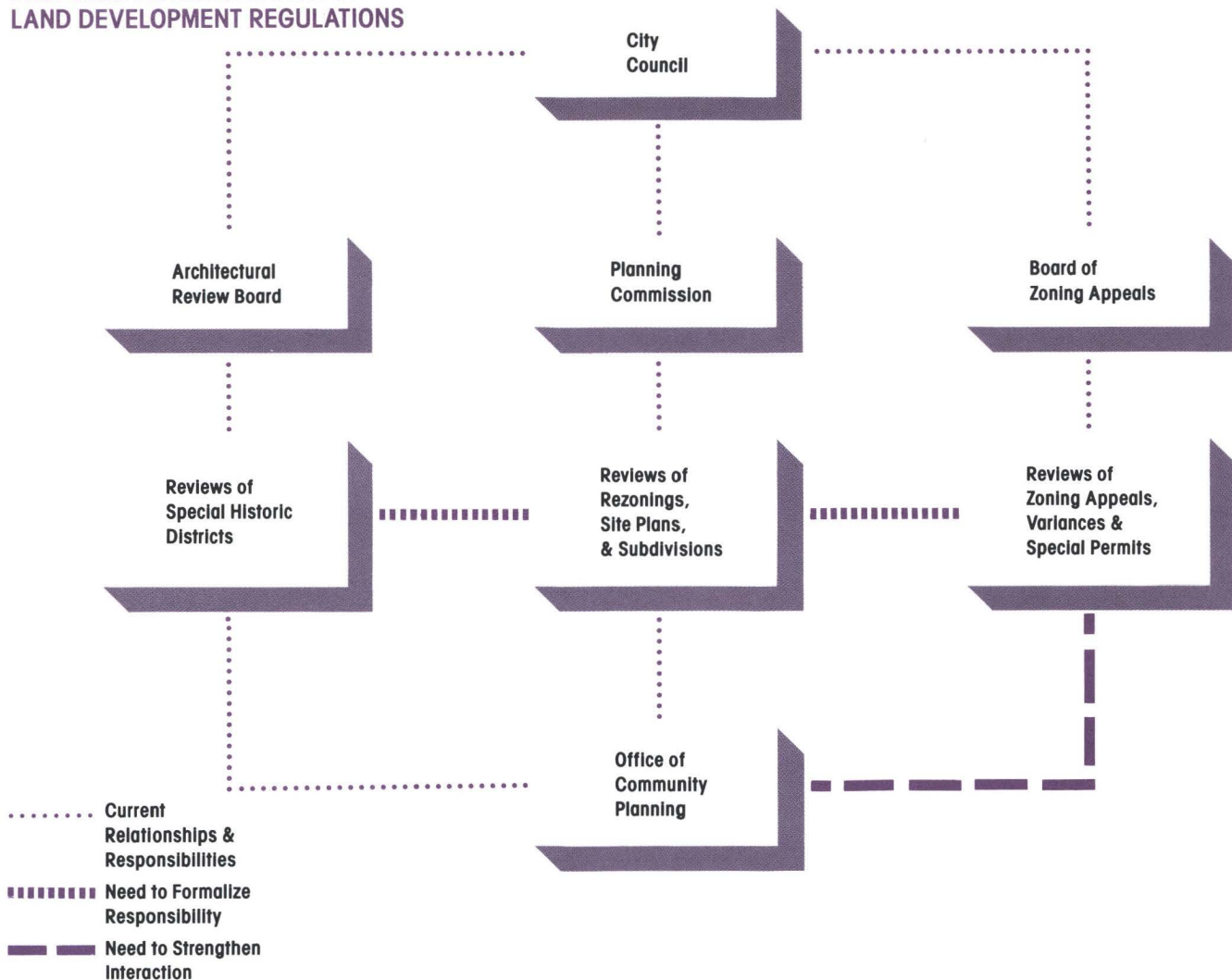


ing and a lack of easy-to-use summaries or schedules of zoning requirements also contributed to neighborhood conservation concerns. Homeowners, builders and neighborhood organizations had to struggle to understand the complexities of the ordinance, particularly as it related to the districts and classifications.

Another key concern was the administration of the ordinance itself. Under the existing system the functions of the three regulatory boards with land use decision-making authority were not equally staffed or coordinated. These three bodies — the Plan-

Incompatible commercial and residential uses contributed to serious problems in Roanoke's oldest neighborhoods adjacent to downtown.

PROPOSED ADMINISTRATION OF LAND DEVELOPMENT REGULATIONS



ning Commission, Architectural Review Board and Board of Zoning Appeals — have a major impact on how the zoning and related land use regulations are implemented. Under the existing system, only the Planning Commission and Architectural Review Board receive planning staff assistance. The Board of Zoning Appeals (BZA) does not have planning staff support, although many of its deliberations would also benefit from such staff input. For instance, the BZA has authority to permit special exceptions (the allowance of a use not ordinarily permitted in a zone) and to grant variances (reasonable deviation from zoning provisions for a specific property which would otherwise cause hardship). Frequently, findings required for these actions include planning as well as economic considerations.

The review and approval of development plans, including major development

plans, are currently the responsibility of the zoning administrator. This process excludes the major planning decision-making body, the Planning Commission, from deliberations on development activities. The lack of a formal orientation or training program for board members or commissioners to help them understand how their decisions worked together to affect development in the city also contributed to communication and coordination problems among the three regulatory groups. Moreover, no clear set of policies had ever been developed to define the community's interest in preservation, design quality, commercial development, or neighborhood conservation. Without this commonly-defined and accepted charge, the needed coordination among these bodies was difficult to achieve.

Roanoke Vision Process



The Roanoke Vision Process was designed to develop a system of coordinated land use policies and regulations which reflected basic community values, including the importance of preserving and improving the city's older neighborhoods, revitalizing its downtown, encouraging appropriate economic development and enhancing the city's physical and environmental image. This process involved three parallel work efforts:

Public Participation—This element of the process included workshops, media and public surveys designed to inform, involve and solicit the ideas and concerns of Roanoke Valley citizens.

Comprehensive Planning—The development of a new comprehensive plan provided an opportunity to define new policies and detailed public/private action strategies to carry out preservation, neighborhood conservation and other community goals. The resulting *Roanoke Vision Comprehensive Development Plan 1985-2005* is a guide to the positive planning and development actions needed to ensure the city's continued revitalization and growth. This technical planning element was prepared by a planning team of consultants and city staff with participation by community representatives.

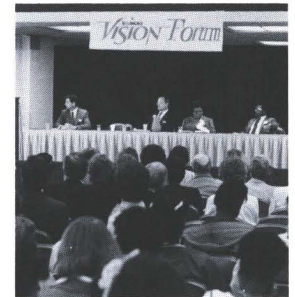
Zoning—The regulatory element of the process was designed to improve land use regulations based on the goals of the Comprehensive Plan. These new regulations will help implement the plan within the kind of active revitalization and development climate that the plan's action strategies encourage. As a preservation tool, zoning and other regulatory measures are controls on the land use and development process and must be paired with positive

public and private investment and action strategies. To achieve this kind of coordinated approach, the planning team and a citizens' review committee conducted a complete review of existing zoning/land use conflicts and drafted a new preservation-focused zoning ordinance.

PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

The public participation process was based on the premise that when planning begins with good communication—a lively exchange of information and ideas—it will result in effective actions with broad support. Over the last decade, Roanoke has proven that when citizens are given a real chance to help solve neighborhood, downtown or other civic problems, planning and zoning are no longer dry, technical matters. Instead, they are ways to reach common solutions to everyday problems. Active and creative communication can make planning come alive. Communication elements of the Roanoke Vision Process include the following elements:

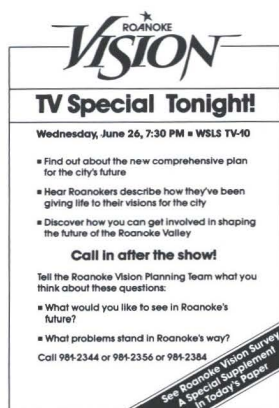
Roanoke Vision Comprehensive Plan Advisory Committee and Ordinance Review Committee—A City Council-appointed Comprehensive Plan Advisory Committee and a citizen-based Ordinance Review Committee played key roles in developing the Comprehensive Development Plan and zoning and related land use regulations. Representatives from the City's development-related boards and commissions and neighborhood organizations served on both committees. Because of its technical focus, the Ordinance Review Committee also contained representatives from the business, construction and engineering sectors of the community. These committees met monthly to review work in progress and also participated in the other elements of the participation process.



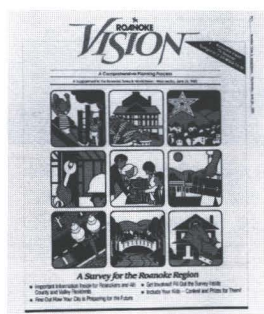
Keynote address at Roanoke Vision Forum by newspaper publisher Walter Rugaber.



Citizens identified key community values and planning issues.



Vision TV Ad



Vision Newspaper Survey

Roanoke Vision TV Special— This prime time television special, produced by the planning team and broadcast by the local NBC affiliate, highlighted the history of planning in Roanoke and the problems and opportunities the city faced in balancing preservation, revitalization and development trends. A special call-in segment after the broadcast allowed viewers to register their concerns with the planning team.

Roanoke Vision Survey— The Roanoke Vision Survey, published as a newspaper supplement, reached over 165,000 Roanoke Valley households on the same day the above TV special was aired. These two coordinated public information events provided a way to announce the beginning of what was to be a year-long citizen involvement process and helped capture people's attention about planning and zoning — two issues usually seen as dry and technical until they affect citizens in their own backyards.

In addition to providing background information on Roanoke's rich planning legacy and current issues facing the city, the Roanoke Vision Survey provided citizens with an opportunity to register their opinions on a range of planning and development activities. The results of this survey were used directly in the planning process.

Young people were also invited to respond through a "Dreams for Roanoke" contest. Through drawings and stories, children 14 and under shared their ideas, dreams and hopes for Roanoke's future. Revitalized neighborhoods, new parks and more were illustrated by contestants. Winners in several age categories were awarded savings bonds by local banks and gift certificates by local merchants.

Roanoke Vision Forum— This public town meeting brought together over 200 key civic, business, neighborhood and government leaders for a day to discuss critical ingredients in Roanoke's quality of life and the policy and regulatory issues the city faced in its continued revitalization and growth. The Forum was planned and staged as a major event — a chance for those concerned with every aspect of life in Roanoke to take time to consider the city's future. Be-

cause of the interest in Roanoke Vision, the Forum received excellent press and media coverage.

Planning Workshops— Through a series of three planning workshops, a representative group of citizens developed a comprehensive set of community values to be reflected in the Plan and revised zoning ordinance, provided information on specific neighborhood and city-wide issues, and reviewed preliminary Comprehensive Development Plan concepts.

Community and Civic Meetings— The Roanoke Vision Planning Team met with key public boards and commissions, professional organizations and civic and neighborhood groups to solicit their ideas and to explain the issues being addressed in the Comprehensive Development Plan and related land use regulations.

The ideas, hopes and concerns people brought to the public participation events in the planning process helped shape a common vision of the kind of community Roanokers would like their city to be. The results of the Roanoke Vision Survey, Forum and Planning Workshops as well as civic and neighborhood meetings directed the development of the Plan and revised zoning ordinance. Specifically, the planning team investigated the issues, conditions and potential planning, development or regulatory actions identified by citizens. Preservation and neighborhood revitalization issues were central concerns. Two companion reports, *Building the Roanoke Vision: A Summary of Citizen Response at the Roanoke Vision Forum* and *Public Opinion Survey: A Summary of Citizen Response to the Roanoke Vision Survey 1985*, provide more complete discussion of these issues.

COMPREHENSIVE PLANNING

The planning team conducted professional evaluations and developed planning recommendations in parallel with the public participation aspects of the planning process.

Analysis of Existing Conditions— In conjunction with City administrators and staff, the planning team examined

The timeline shows the progression of two major planning efforts from 1985 to 1986. The months are listed at the top: M (March), J (June), J (July), A (August), S (September), O (October), N (November), D (December) for 1985, and J (January), F (February), M (March), A (April), M (May) for 1986.

Comprehensive Plan:

- Analysis & Public Information:** Occurs from March 1985 to September 1985.
- Development & Participation:** Occurs from October 1985 to February 1986.
- Review & Approval:** Occurs from March 1986 to May 1986.

Zoning:

- Research & Analysis:** Occurs from March 1985 to April 1985.
- Develop Draft:** Occurs from May 1985 to July 1985.
- Produce Zoning Recommendations:** Occurs from August 1985 to November 1985.
- Approval:** Occurs from December 1985 to January 1986.

Analysis of Components and Preparation of Final Comprehensive Development Plan— The planning team analyzed and prepared recommendations for major components of Roanoke’s land use and infrastructure, testing each in terms of its relationship to the other, and synthesizing them into a final composite plan and set of policy recommendations. A major component of the plan is a three part neighborhood action strategy designed to 1) *maintain* stable areas, 2) *improve* transitional or problem areas, and 3) *change* seriously deteriorated conditions.

Analysis of Existing Zoning Ordinance and Map— The planning team, supplemented by zoning and land use law experts and a citizen review committee, developed a systematic analysis of problems within the existing zoning text and zoning map. Problems identified within the text included general citywide concerns, but highlighted those issues impeding preservation, design quality and neighborhood conservation. Land use analysis and mapping helped identify key areas of use and density conflicts negatively affecting older, established neighborhoods.

The ideas, hopes and concerns people brought to the public participation events in the planning process helped shape a common vision of the kind of community Roanokers would like their city to be.

Identification of Alternate Zoning Provisions

— In a series of monthly workshops with the citizen-based Ordinance Review Committee, proposed changes for each section of the ordinance were developed. For example, all residential issues were analyzed first. New zoning district classifications, lot sizes, allowed uses, preservation techniques and more were identified and debated for residential zoning categories. The Planning Team then prepared a preliminary draft text and a summary schedule to reflect the direction set by the workshop process. This method, which brought new ideas and built consensus into the process, was used for each component of the ordinance including commercial, industrial, site/development plan guidelines, and subdivision regulations, as well as overall regulatory administrative procedures.

Review of Proposed Zoning Text and Maps—

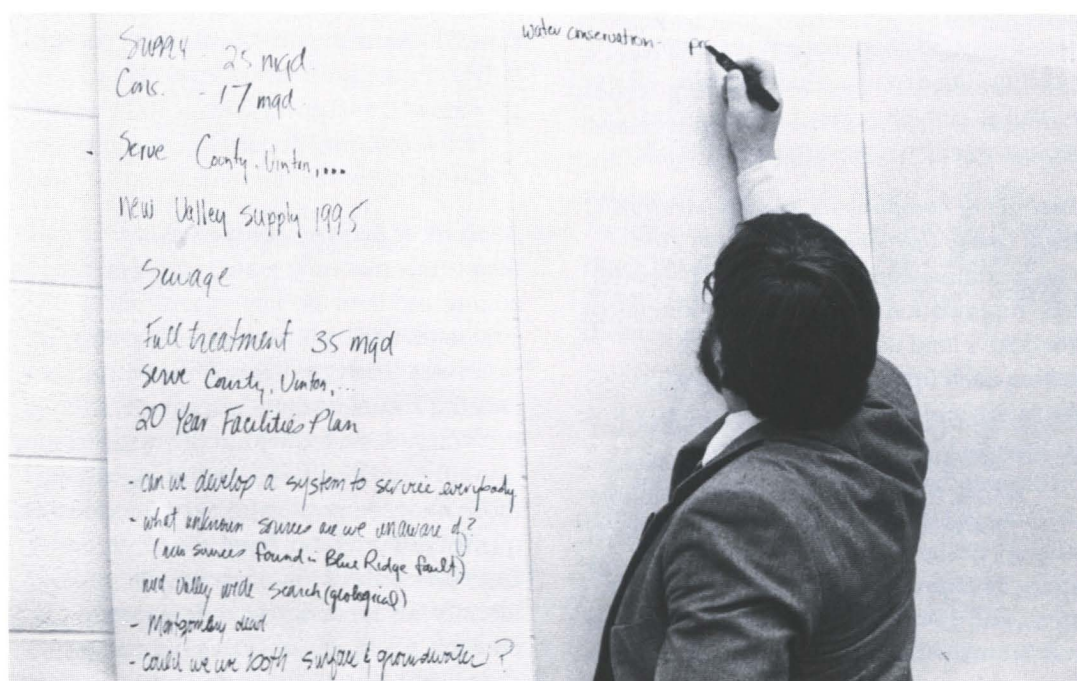
Once overall agreement was reached on each element of the zoning ordinance, detailed drafting of the proposed text of the

new ordinance began. Legal and city staff review preceded a new round of citizen review. During the summer of 1986 the Ordinance Review Committee will review the proposed text and send it on to the Planning Commission's subcommittee responsible for ordinance preparation. Because key members of this committee were involved in the citizen-based committee's ordinance review process, this step is expected to be one of final review and refinement.

Public Hearings, Approvals and Adoption Process—

The final step in the review process is consideration of the proposed zoning ordinance and map by the full Planning Commission at public hearings. This public hearing process is expected to take place during the fall of 1986. The Planning Commission will then recommend an approved ordinance to the City Council for adoption. Citizens will also have the opportunity to participate in public hearings before the City Council acts on the proposed ordinance in late 1986. However, because of the extensive community involvement in the development of the ordinance and the broad support for the Comprehensive Plan upon which it is based, extensive revisions are not expected during the final approvals process.

The citizen-based Ordinance Review Committee participated in all stages of zoning analysis and review.





PRESERVATION AND NEIGHBORHOOD CONSERVATION ELEMENTS

New zoning provisions which address historic preservation and neighborhood conservation issues are built into the structure of the ordinance at all levels. The basic statements of purpose and intent, the requirements of individual districts, special overlay zones and various administrative procedures, preservation, design quality and neighborhood conservation are all explicit concerns and underlying values. None of the changes alone are remarkable, yet taken together they represent a new approach to removing the regulatory impediments to preservation and revitalization in one city. The details of Roanoke's case are very specific to the unique set of conditions within the city's older neighborhoods created by an outdated and outmoded zoning code and map. However, the discussion of Roanoke's solutions should help other localities discover and examine the trouble spots in their own ordinances. In addition, several good ideas which would increase the effectiveness of the zoning ordinance to meet preservation goals could not be applied in Roanoke because of constraints or lack of clarity in Virginia state enabling legislation. These ideas will be discussed briefly in a following section for the benefit of localities in states with broader state provisions and to inform Virginia communities concerned with state policy and legislation.

For each of the proposed zoning revisions discussed below, a summary of how the revised text will help resolve preservation or neighborhood issues has been included. Where applicable, direct language from the proposed text has been included in the example. Please note that the following examples are based on the proposed zoning text. Further refinements may be made during the final approvals process.

STATEMENT OF PURPOSE

The proposed zoning ordinance is introduced with a new preservation-oriented statement of purpose. A general statement is followed by two specific provisions.

SEC. 36-1 PURPOSE.

Zoning regulations and districts are set forth in this Chapter for the general purposes of implementing the Comprehensive Plan of the City of Roanoke; of promoting the health, safety, comfort, prosperity and general welfare of the public; and of achieving the following specific purposes: . . .

f. to protect and enhance the scale, character and stability of existing neighborhoods, and to protect against destruction of or encroachment upon areas which contribute to the character of the city;

g. to facilitate the creation of a convenient, harmonious and attractive community, and to protect the natural beauty and special natural features of the city and the surrounding region; . . .

The revised zoning ordinance is designed to maintain the character and scale of the city's older neighborhoods.

