

Comments Received for the Draft Hollins Center Plan

March 6, 2020 – May 5, 2020

Comments received via Survey Monkey

I'm very excited about Hollins being improved. I hope you will consider bringing the improvements/bike/pedestrian paths all the way down to wood Haven road. There are a lot of residential in this area that is part of Hollins but feels left out from the improvements. It would also be great to be able to access the new mixed area without using vehicle.

I hope Hollins will encourage a business plan that makes way for Kroger to expand. This store is the anchor to business and needs expansion, not more competition.

I'm glad to see ADA in this plan. Why not fix what is not working, before starting new projects? You spent millions of dollars on a walk way that is not used much, but you cannot improve public transportation and low income housing for people with disabilities. I really hope to see more options for disabled individuals in all of these plans. Everything has to be wide enough, and level for wheelchairs. No gravel anywhere!

The plan is of professional quality and I appreciate all of the work and research that must have gone into it. I am excited about the possibility of Hollins becoming a true town center, as I think it's what our area desperately needs. I am most interested in the development of greenways and the possibility of having walk-able shop locations and making the community here more of a destination.

I think it is ridiculous to put this center in this area. It is already getting too congested with traffic. You sight in the plan that there have been increased traffic and bike accidents in this area. Use common sense. You should go out further on the other side of Hollins College where there is more open land. You should focus on the greenways that everyone enjoys.

Professional, high quality work put into this plan. The Summary is informative but user friendly with vibrant, easy to read graphics. Excited for improvements in this portion of the County!

It's awesome! Love the graphic-rich "USA Today" version.

There should be more direct access to Carvins Cove and there should be a trail from Carvins Cove connecting it to Hollins College, Walrond Park, and Hollins Library. There seems to be a lot of apartments being built off of Airport Road, but it would be nice if some of that development was closer to the college in this center that would bring in shops, restaurants, grocery stores. Don't build any round-a-abouts on the main roads, like at VA Western!

The Hollins Community plan offers hope to this area that hasn't been given the attention and development it deserves with its surrounding Mountain View's, university, and proximity to 81. The new sidewalk was a great start by the county but I'd like to see tables with seating and lighting on the next sidewalks if built. I would like to see the new brick welcome sign have a place to advertise community events. The planters at the end of the new sidewalk need some TLC. The planters near Kroger and Dunkin Donuts need TLC too. It would be nice to see the county help attract something to the Aldi grocery store property and help develop the areas from Hollins College to CVS and near 81. Incentives for more local places like Lew's and Hollywood's would be lovely. Incentives to keep our landmark local restaurants like Lew's and Hollywood's open post COVID-19 would be great, too. This is the county's college town area, let's put in some effort to give it charm like Downtown Salem/Radford/Blacksburg. Some flowers and people on the sidewalks would be a nice start. This area should be the best 81 exit from Staunton to Christiansburg. Instead of a new library it would be nice to see a community center that includes a library.

The Hollins plan is a well rounded plan that people of all ages and backgrounds should comprehend well. The plan "summary" document is beautiful and is a nice outline for folks who didn't and will not follow this whole process. The graphics will help keep peoples attention while reading the document. I would like to see collaboration with Hollins University to make this entire area feel less industrial and more like a college corridor. School pride using all of the greens (green crosswalks in the virtual photos are nice), but more green stoplight posts, street lights, and light pole banners would be pretty and show support to Hollins/Northside. I'd also like to see more Hollins signs, specifically something that doesn't look like you are entering the county like the brick one. Something to make the area feel like home for residents and students, yet something that visitors and parents would want to take photos with. Northside Middle/High and Hollins University all have wonderful art departments, so it would be wonderful to see some art in this area, especially on the new asphalt sidewalk in front of the Envelope plant and near the university entrance. I feel like Botetourt, Salem, and Christiansburg have done a nice job getting people to stop at their 81 exits. It would be nice if Roanoke County could get some local and national chains to develop at the interstate exit to make this area more trendy (Tropical Smoothie, Chick-fil-A, Panera Bread, Chipotle would be popular with the university students). There seems to be room near the gas stations and McDonalds for plenty of growth. Building housing here would also be closer than Daleville for commuters to drive to downtown. This area is more traveled by out of towners than Valley View and is one of only 2(?) 81 exits in the

county. It would be great to expand the tax base here while helping keep the Camping store and hotels in business. Perhaps even a conference center/event venue now that the big one off Hershberger has closed. There's not many options that are easy to get to that aren't downtown. I see landscaping in the virtual photos. It would be nice to have better landscaping near Kroger and CVS. Both of these areas could be really pretty, considering the views provided by our surrounding mountains. Will there ever be easier/more direct roads to Carvins Cove from this "center"?

Comments received via Email (Before the Public Hearing)

Ed Brennan, Resident

I have reviewed the draft Hollins Center Plan (Plan) and I have a few concerns that I did not see addressed in the Plan.

Williamson Road is already inadequate for the volume and commercial vehicle use of traffic as it is, and increasing the volume and use will only make the problem worse.

The speed limit on Williamson Road is poorly enforced by the Roanoke County Police Department (RCPD). Vehicles traveling from east to west from about St. Philip's Lutheran Church through the intersection with La Marre Drive continually speed through the 45 MPH section, do not decrease speed where the speed limit decreases to 35 MPH, and frequently drive through the red light at the intersection (traveling in both directions). I witness this on a daily basis. RCPD monitors speed from the vacant lot between J Moore & Company PC and Marson Road about 99 percent of the time, and from the Enon Baptist Church parking lot about 1 percent of the time. After I submitted a speed monitoring request online RCPD monitored speed from the median just east of Hollins Court Drive for three mornings. I witnessed multiple vehicles get stopped for speeding each of those three days in just the few minutes that I traveled through this area. Yet, I have not seen the RCPD monitor speed from that location since.

The traffic light at the intersection of Williamson Road and La Marre Drive is faulty. A vehicle can be waiting at the red light to exit Hollins University well before another vehicle gets to the same red light from La Marre Drive, yet the light will always turn green first for the vehicle coming from La Marre Drive. On numerous occasions, I have been waiting at the red light to exit Hollins University and the light will not change to green.

The Plan makes no allowance for adding a traffic light at Hollins Court Drive. A vehicle turning left (west) from Hollins Court Drive has to cross two lanes of traffic to enter one of the two west bound lanes. This is already unsafe due to the continuous speeding issue described above. Increasing the volume of traffic and not adding a traffic light at Hollins Court Drive will make traveling into and out of this residential street even more unsafe. I trust that my above concerns will be considered and addressed in the final Plan.

Valerie Brooke Stephens, Resident

I wish to please submit the following comments for the Planning Commission public hearing on May 5, 2020 concerning proposed incorporation of the Hollins Center Plan (Reimagine Hollins) into the Roanoke County Comprehensive Plan. Please kindly reply to this email and let me know if it has been received and will be referred to all the members of the Planning Commission for consideration of public comments for the public hearing this evening, May 5, 2020. Thank you.

I agree with most of the recommendations, and the proposals for implementation of those recommendations, of the Hollins Center Plan, and think that incorporation of the Hollins Center Plan into the Roanoke County Comprehensive Plan would be an improvement for the Roanoke County Comprehensive Plan. I would appreciate please just to ask some questions and make the comments below concerning the Hollins Center Plan for a few concerns and questions I have regarding the Hollins Center Plan.

Per information on the Hollins Center Plan - Draft 3-15 page concerning Community Engagement/Engagement Results, the following information is stated:

"Future Land Use Scenarios

Three future land use (FLU) scenarios were presented at the Draft Plan Reveal meetings. Two scenarios recommended changing property within the study area to a Mixed Use FLU designation. The online survey and public meetings results followed the same order (combined here):

- Full Mixed Use (56%)
- Partial Mixed Use (38%)
- No Change (6%)"

As noted above, the overwhelming choice (56%) of the participants at the Draft Plan Reveal meetings was for the Full Mixed Use future land use (FLU) designation scenario for property within the study area. However, the recommendations for the Hollins Center Plan to be incorporated into the Roanoke County Comprehensive Plan would instead implement only the Partial Mixed Use scenario (see maps on Hollins Center Plan - Draft 3-9 page for details) for property within the study area. I have this question: Why is it being recommended to amend the county's Comprehensive Plan Future Land Use Map to change only the southern portion of the study area to a Mixed Use designation when it is clear that the overwhelming majority of participants at the Draft Plan Reveal meetings preferred the Full Mixed Use designation for significantly much more of the property within the study area than just only for the southern portion? Please see maps on Hollins Center Plan - Draft 3-9 page for comparison and details.

Please also note the following information: "Residentially-zoned properties make up 23% of the study area." See info and details on Hollins Center Plan - Draft 2-11 page.

Please also see the Map 2-9 for Existing Conditions/Land Use and Housing, on Hollins Center Plan - Draft 2-7 page.

Please also see Map 2-12 for Existing Conditions/Land Use and Housing, on Hollins Center Plan - Draft 2-10 page.

Please note the following information on Hollins Center Plan - Draft 2-12 page that: "Non-conforming land use refers to uses that were allowed under previous zoning regulations but are no longer allowed by the current zoning regulations. ... There are numerous residential uses occurring on parcels zoned for I-1 Low Intensity Industrial and C-2 High Intensity Commercial (see Figure 2-15)."

There are at least 14 parcels for single family homes that were allowed for residential land use under previous zoning regulations but apparently must have been changed at some point in the past to either C-2 High Intensity Commercial or I-1 Low Intensity Industrial zoning designations. I have these questions: Would it not be more fair to the property owners of these single family homes to restore the R-1 Residential zoning for their properties? Also, what provisions are there for protection and conservation of residentially zoned properties and neighborhoods in the study area of the Hollins Center Plan and nearby?

Please note that, per Hollins Center Plan - Draft 2-8 page, for Existing Land Use, that: "Residential uses include 15.7% as single-family homes, and 2.2% as multi-family duplex and triplex." As mentioned above, there are also currently at least 14 single family home parcels, being used for residential uses, that are located on properties that were previously zoned residential in the past but which were changed at some point to commercial or industrial zoning designations (whether these changes were done with or without any input from the single family home owners is not clear). Also, per Hollins Center Plan - Draft 2-9 page, regarding surrounding neighborhoods of the study area, "The commercial corridors of the Hollins Center study area are adjacent to residential neighborhoods and Hollins University. The Hollins Center study area is surrounded primarily by single-family neighborhoods..." Please see Map 2-11 on Hollins Center Draft 2-9 page. I have these questions: What provisions and protections will there be for residential home owners in the study area for the Hollins Center Plan and also for the surrounding residential areas of the study area? What will be done to conserve and protect residential neighborhoods in, near, and surrounding the study area of the Hollins Center Plan?

I attended and participated in the community engagement meetings and activities regarding "Reimagine Hollins" that were offered to the public, and I thank the Planning Commission and Roanoke County staff and employees who made those meetings and activities possible and available to the public. It was apparent to me from attending the various meetings for public input for the drafting of the Hollins Center Plan, that the overwhelming majority of those persons attending those meetings and activities strongly favored:

1. Increased pedestrian accommodations for safely walking in the study area, such as sidewalks, and greenways, and for pedestrian accommodations so that persons in

existing residential neighborhoods in or near the study area could safely walk or bicycle to retail and commercial areas in the study area and to businesses and work places in the study area.

2. Increased public transportation options for the study area, such as buses and public transit, which would help support economic growth in the study area and provide ways to link businesses and work places with the public and with their employees. The Hollins area is the largest employment center in Roanoke County, but lacks public transportation and transit availability, which is crucial for economic growth. See the Hollins Center Plan - Draft 2-29 page which states: "There is currently no fixed-route transit service in the Hollins area." If Roanoke County wants to attract people to live and work in the Hollins area, and to attract new businesses to locate in the Hollins area, then public transportation and transit options are extremely important.

3. Preserve and protect the irreplaceable natural resources in and near the study area, such as Tinker Creek, the mountains, Carvins Cove, the Appalachian Trail, etc. These resources are vital for attracting tourism and businesses that benefit and depend on tourism, and in attracting businesses that promote clean and green technologies, and in attracting the businesses of the future with good paying jobs. We have an obligation to future generations in Roanoke County to preserve and protect these priceless natural resources that are the heritage of all Roanoke County residents and which are so important for the quality of life for everyone in Roanoke County. Preserving these natural resources and preserving scenic views of the surrounding and nearby mountains will make Roanoke County an area that will attract newcomers to come live here and new businesses to locate here.

4. Improve parks and playgrounds in the study area and link parks when possible by greenways, walking paths, trails, etc. Pave the existing walking path/trail at Hollins Park to make it accessible to disabled walkers.

5. Rebuild the Hollins Public Library, which has an aging building that no longer can meet the demands and needs of our citizens and the public, and which is out of date and not energy efficient. There were many days last year that the humidity level in the library indicated that the air conditioning and cooling systems were not working properly, and which not only made the library uncomfortable for patrons and staff, but also risked damaging the materials in the library, such as the books, computers, audiovisual equipment, videos and DVDs, etc., as heat and humidity are not conducive for preserving such items. The usage of the Hollins Public Library is among the highest of all the Roanoke County libraries, and the staff does a great job, but the building is increasingly woefully inadequate to meet the needs of a modern library which the usage of the library requires.

6. Improve the landscaping and visual attractiveness of Williamson Road and Plantation Road to help attract more visitors to the businesses there and also to attract more new businesses. Promote a village center type of development and aesthetic that is pedestrian friendly and walkable and is accessible to walkers and bicyclists.

7. Form partnerships with Hollins University that can benefit the Hollins area and Roanoke County as a whole. This is a potential that is not being utilized.

Steve Grammer, Advocate for people with disabilities

Everything has to be ADA accessible. What opportunities will this bring, for people with disabilities? Before beginning new projects, you need to fix what is broken first.

Liz Belcher, Roanoke Valley Greenway Coordinator

I am in agreement with a lot of the recommendations of the Hollins Center Plan and think that implementation of many of its recommendations will definitely be a great improvement for the Roanoke County Comprehensive Plan. Thank you to the Planning Commission staff and Roanoke County employees for all their hard work, dedication, and service for developing the Hollins Center Plan. I also greatly appreciate the meetings, activities, surveys and opportunities for input that were made available to the public during the development of the Hollins Center Plan and thank everyone who assisted with those and made that possible. Thank you for your consideration of these comments.

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on the Hollins Center Plan. I attended some, but not all, of the meetings and have discussed the plan with several people. The graphics and layout for the plan are very nicely done, public involvement was extensive, and comments were well incorporated into the plan.

1. I support the inclusion of bicycle/pedestrian/greenway facilities in the plan.
2. I support the concept of improving the Hollins area to be more of a gateway to Roanoke County.
3. I support most of the implementation recommendations, particularly:
 - a. completion of Tinker Creek Greenway, and
 - b. completion of the US. 11 transportation corridor study from Hollins to Cloverdale and beyond (p.5-8).

I believe the plan could be further improved now or at some future date.

4. Completion of the plan and the focus on the "Hollins Center" appear to be driven by economic development opportunities and concerns. In my mind, the plan could benefit from additional economic analysis. The water and sewer maps are good, but it would be nice to have some additional information, such as are the utilities adequate and are all properties within service range. We have a map of agricultural/vacant lands, but no map of underutilized or empty buildings. We have extensive transportation information, but very little employment data and no list of work force job skills that existing businesses have difficulty filling. We have significant citizen input wanting more restaurants, but no analysis of how many restaurants are

in the center and the greater Hollins area. Additional economic and real estate information might reveal opportunities or constraints.

5. The study area is narrowly focused to the Hollins Center, but clearly the public thought of this as an "area" plan, not a plan for a commercial or village center. Thus, it is important in the introduction to frame this plan within the context of other plans. Is the older Hollins Area Plan for a larger geographic area? Are there other neighborhood plans that take into consideration the surrounding residential, university, and park properties? Much of the information, existing conditions, input, and recommendations in this plan are beyond the study area boundaries. In what plan should this outside information be included?
6. The last paragraph on page 2-17 is a good explanation for how Hollins got to be the way it is. It seems like this paragraph would be well included in the introduction – this is how we developed from a rural area to an auto-centric area, which we would like to see become more liveable and sustainable in the future.

I encourage you to continue to protect what is good about Hollins – the views, the location, the history, the neighborhoods – so that it can continue to be important to the future of Roanoke County.

Comment received via Call (During the Public Hearing)

Mary Terry, Property Owner

I own property next to Hollins University. Hollins University had been interested in buying our property. I've attended some meetings over the years. I want the Planning Commission to vote for the plan because everything is changing so fast that if they don't vote for their plan they'll be left out.

Comment received via Email (During the Public Hearing)

Martie and David Byrd, Caroline Byrd, Residents

Thanks for the hard work. We are 20+ year residents and have enjoyed seeing the growth.

Questions: With expansion of 81, will sound buffers be added for neighborhoods which border 81 in this area?

We live in Buckland Forest. How will businesses be incentivized to come to this area?
