

Future Land Use Guide

Roanoke County Comprehensive Plan

Future Land Use is one component of the Roanoke County Comprehensive Plan. The Future Land Use Guide is a policy framework for future land use decisions within the County. Used in conjunction with the Future Land Use Map, this Guide serves as a reference for citizens on the most desirable locations for future land use activities throughout the County.

Future Land Use Designations should be used by Roanoke County citizens and property owners when evaluating alternative uses for their land and will be used by Roanoke County staff, the Planning Commission and the Board of Supervisors in the evaluation of requested land use amendments.

Future Land Use Designations

The following designations are used to identify areas around the county where certain activities occur or are anticipated. The types of land uses that are desirable within each designation are also described.

This section also includes **land use determinants** - factors that are used to evaluate requested changes to the Future Land Use Map. The careful examination of these factors will determine which land use designation is most appropriate for an area or parcel of land.

Conservation

A future land use area of particular environmental sensitivity due to topography, existence of unique land characteristics, conservation/open space/greenway easements, soil types or location with respect to other State or Federally preserved lands. Typical resources would include wetlands, ridgelines, mountainsides, scenic views from the Blue Ridge Parkway and Appalachian Trail, identified greenway corridors, productive agricultural lands, historical and cultural resources and threatened or endangered species habitats.

Land Use Types

Agricultural Production - The production of crops, plants, vines, trees, livestock, poultry and eggs and associated services such as soil and crop preparation, landscape and horticultural care.

Forest and Wood Products - Tree farms, forest nurseries and reforestation services.

Parks - Large regional park facilities that are designed and developed to preserve the environmentally sensitive nature of the land.

Public Lands - Includes land that is owned by a public entity but is not an official park. Examples would be Haven's Wildlife Management Area, Spring Hollow Reservoir, Carvin's Cove watershed, Appalachian Trail, Blue Ridge Parkway, Forest Service lands and publicly owned land on Green Ridge Mountain.

Conservation Easements - Includes private lands that are protected by a conservation easement (includes scenic, agricultural, greenway and open space easements) held either by a private land trust or a State agency.

Rural Residential - Very limited, low density single-family homes generally averaging a gross density of one unit per 10 acres. Cluster developments are encouraged.

Land Use Determinants

Existing Land Use Pattern - Locations where unique and important natural, agricultural, historical and cultural resources exist that deserve to have the highest level of protection.

Resource Protection - Locations where valuable and irreplaceable resources such as open space, public water supply impoundments, rivers, streams, lakes, productive agricultural land, woodlands, critical slopes, ridgelines, historical and archeological sites and unique natural areas exist.

Access - Locations that are accessible by existing improved or unimproved rural roads.

Rural Sector - Locations not served by urban services.

Rural Preserve

A future land use area of mostly undeveloped, outlying lands. These rural regions are generally stable and require a high degree of protection to preserve agricultural, forestal, recreational, and remote rural residential areas.

Land Use Types

Agricultural Production - The production of crops, plants, vines, trees, livestock, poultry and eggs.

Agricultural Services - Services that support agricultural production such as soil and crop preparation, veterinary services and landscape and horticultural care.

Forest and Wood Products - Tree farms, forest nurseries and reforestation services.

Parks and Outdoor Recreation Facilities - Large regional parks and other recreation facilities that are designed to preserve environmentally sensitive lands and protect them from more intense land uses.

Rural Residential - Single-family residential generally averaging a gross density of one unit per three acres. Cluster developments are encouraged.

Rural Institutional - Limited intensity uses such as religious assembly facilities and clubs serving the local rural population base.

Mining and Extraction Operations - Those uses that locate according to the availability of natural resources. There are strict limitations on these industries in the Rural Preserve designation due to potentially harmful effects on housing, farming and resource protection and conservation areas.

Land Use Determinants

Existing Land Use Pattern - Locations where agricultural, recreational, and forestal uses are predominant and are encouraged to expand.

Existing Zoning - Locations where agricultural zoning is in effect.

Rural Residential And Institutional Areas - Locations where limited, very low density residential and institutional uses are allowed.

Resource Protection - Locations where valuable and irreplaceable resources such as open space, public water supply impoundments, rivers, streams, lakes, productive agricultural land, woodlands, critical slopes, ridgelines, historical and archeological sites and unique natural areas exist.

Access - Locations that are accessible by existing improved or unimproved rural roads and, to a lesser extent, rural arterial highways.

Rural Sector - Locations outside the urban service area.

Rural Village

A future land use area where limited development activity has historically occurred and where suburban or urban development patterns are discouraged. These rural community and farming areas are generally in between the intense suburban development patterns already established in the County and the designated Conservation and Rural Preserve areas.

Land Use Types

Rural Housing - Low-density single-family residential generally averaging one unit per acre. Cluster developments are encouraged.

Rural Community Centers - Nonresidential uses which serve rural residents such as outdoor recreation and park facilities, religious assembly facilities, schools, fire and rescue stations and clubs.

Agricultural Production and Services - Livestock, orchards and crop productions, landscape and horticultural services, veterinary services, farm labor and farm management services. Generally including all activities that support land based uses.

Forest and Wood Products - Includes the operation of timber tracts, tree farms, forest nurseries and the gathering of forest products. Excludes sawmills and large-scale timber cutting operations.

Small Scale Commercial - Limited commercial operations that serve the local, rural community. Included would be personal services and retail convenience stores.

Rural Parks and Outdoor Recreation - Parks and recreational facilities that are designed to preserve the environmentally sensitive character of the rural landscape.

Land Use Determinants

Existing Land Use Pattern - Locations where very low density residential, institutional and limited agricultural uses have developed.

Existing Zoning - Locations where rural residential and agricultural zoning have been established.

Rural Residential Expansion Areas - Locations where small scale, very low density rural residential housing is desirable.

Agricultural - Locations where existing agricultural uses and activities are present.

Access - Locations served by an existing improved rural road and, to a lesser extent, rural arterial highways.

Rural Sector - Locations outside the urban service area.

Village Center

A future land use area which serves as the commercial and institutional focal point of surrounding rural residential and farming establishments. Here, the highest level of rural land use activities may occur. By nature, the majority of commercial and institutional activities in Village Center areas are designed, scaled and marketed to best serve the product and service needs of the residents from the surrounding rural areas.

Land Use Types

Agricultural Production and Services - Services which support the surrounding agricultural community.

Parks and Outdoor Recreation - Small-scale facilities that serve the rural neighborhoods or are used for community purposes. These recreation facilities should be linked to the residential areas by greenways, bike trails and pedestrian paths.

Eco-tourism - Facilities that serve a niche market and are often outdoor, sports oriented. Designed in an environmentally sensitive way to protect the valuable natural resources of the rural areas.

Residential - Development at relatively high rural densities, generally not exceeding 6 units per acre and including single-family and two-family housing.

Rural Community Centers - Includes institutional uses such as schools, religious assembly facilities, clubs and meeting rooms that serve the needs of the surrounding rural village residents.

Convenience Retail - Establishments that provide retail goods and services to the surrounding rural village residents.

Rural Highway Retail - Small-scale, rural establishments that provide retail goods and services to the passing motorists. These uses should be clustered in a village design that complements the rural surroundings.

Land Use Determinants

Existing Land Use Pattern - Locations where very low density residential, institutional and limited agricultural uses have developed.

Existing Zoning - Locations where rural residential and agricultural zoning have been established.

Rural Residential Expansion Areas - Locations where small scale, very low density rural residential housing is desirable.

Agricultural - Locations where existing agricultural uses and activities are present.

Access - Locations served by an existing improved rural road and, to a lesser extent, rural arterial highways.

Rural Sector - Locations outside the urban service area.

Neighborhood Conservation

A future land use area where established single-family neighborhoods are delineated and the conservation of the existing development pattern is encouraged.

Land Use Types

Single-Family Residential - Attached and detached housing at a reasonable density that is not significantly higher than the existing neighborhood. Infill lots or community re-development should be designed to be sensitive to the surrounding neighborhood but can be at reasonably higher density. New single-family residential developments should incorporate greenways and bike and pedestrian trails. Cluster developments are encouraged.

Neighborhood Institutional Centers - Uses that serve the neighborhood residents including parks, schools, religious assembly facilities, recreational and park facilities, community meeting areas and clubs. These facilities should be linked to the residential areas by greenways, bike trails and pedestrian paths.

Neighborhood Commercial - Low impact services to serve the local neighborhood that are consistent with the Community Plan design guidelines.

Land Use Determinants

Existing Land Use Pattern - Locations where limited density residential subdivisions have been platted and developed.

Existing Zoning - Locations where limited density residential zoning has been established.

Expansion Areas - Locations where the expansion of the existing development pattern is logical.

Infill Development - Locations where infill areas complement the surrounding development pattern.

Access - Locations served by a local street system.

Urban Sector - Locations served by urban services.

Development

A future land use area where most new neighborhood development will occur, including large-scale planned developments which mix residential with retail and office uses. Innovation in housing design and environmental sensitivity in site development is a key objective. Clustered developments are encouraged as is the use of greenways and bike and pedestrian trails.

Land Use Types

Conventional Residential - Single-family developments in conventional lots. Includes attached, detached and zero-lot line housing options. Greenways and bike and pedestrian trails are encouraged.

Cluster Residential - Single family developments with similar gross density of conventional subdivisions but individual lot sizes may be reduced to accommodate the clustering of housing while allocating common open space. Includes attached, detached and zero-lot line housing options. Greenways and bike and pedestrian trails are encouraged.

Multi-family - Developments of 6-12 units per acre. Clustering is encouraged as are greenways and bike and pedestrian trails.

Planned Residential Development - Mixed housing types at a gross density range of 4-8 units per acre. Includes conventional housing, cluster housing, zero lot-line housing, townhouses and garden apartments. Greenways and bike and pedestrian trails are encouraged.

Planned Community Development - Planned residential development mixed with office parks, neighborhood shopping centers and supporting retail development. The majority of the development is residential with a maximum limit set on the retail land. Greenways and bike and pedestrian trails are encouraged.

Community Activity Centers - Facilities which serve the neighboring residents including parks, schools, religious assembly facilities, parks and recreational facilities and community clubs and meeting areas. These activity centers should be linked to residential areas by greenways, bike and pedestrian trails.

Land Use Determinants

Public Facilities Capacity - Locations where public facilities are adequate to handle the increased population concentration. This includes schools, parks and recreation facilities and fire and rescue facilities.

Utility Availability - Locations where water and sewer services exist or are scheduled to serve the area.

Environmental Capacity - Locations where natural land features, including topography, provide optimum opportunity for urban residential development.

Access - Locations which have or can provide direct access to a major street.

Urban Sector - Locations served by urban services.

Transition

A future land use area that encourages the orderly development of highway frontage parcels. Transition areas generally serve as developed buffers between highways and nearby or adjacent lower intensity development. Intense retail and highway oriented commercial uses are discouraged in transition areas, which are more suitable for office, institutional and small-scale, coordinated retail uses.

Land Use Types

Office and Institutional - Planned office parks and independent facilities in park-like surroundings are encouraged. A high degree of architectural design and environmentally sensitive site design is encouraged.

Retail - Small-scale planned and clustered retail uses.

Multifamily Residential - Garden apartments at a density of 12 to 24 units per acre.

Single-Family Attached Residential - Planned townhouse communities of 6 or more units per acre.

Parks - Public and private recreational facilities. These facilities should be linked to residential areas by greenways, bike and pedestrian trails.

Land Use Determinants

Existing Land Use Pattern - Locations where limited commercial uses exist.

Existing Zoning - Locations where commercial zoning exists.

Access - Locations where properties have direct frontage and access to an arterial or major collector street.

Surrounding Land Use - Locations which serve as a logical buffer strip between conflicting land use patterns.

Orientation - Locations which are physically oriented toward the major street.

Urban Sector - Locations served by urban services.

Core

A future land use area where high intensity urban development is encouraged. Land uses within core areas may parallel the central business districts of Roanoke, Salem and Vinton. Core areas may also be appropriate for larger-scale highway-oriented retail uses and regionally-based shopping facilities. Due to limited availability, areas designated as Core are not appropriate for tax-exempt facilities.

Land Use Types

General Retail Shops and Personal Services - Planned shopping centers and clustered retail uses are encouraged. These centers should incorporate greenways, bike and pedestrian trails into their designs and link them to surrounding neighborhoods.

Office and Institutional Uses - Planned developments are encouraged.

Limited Industrial Uses - Planned uses in areas designated as economic opportunity areas.

Land Use Determinants

Existing Land Use Pattern - Locations where commercial uses have been developed or will likely be developed.

Existing Zoning - Locations where commercial zoning exists.

Access - Locations served by an arterial street system.

Population Center - Locations within close proximity to the projected population concentrations.

Urban Sector - Locations served by urban services.

Principal Industrial

A future land use area where a variety of industry types are encouraged to locate. Principal Industrial areas are existing and planned regional employment centers and are distributed throughout the county, convenient to major residential areas and suitable highway access. Due to limited availability, areas designated as Principal Industrial are not appropriate for tax-exempt facilities.

Land Use Types

Agricultural - Industries which involve the manufacturing, storage, marketing and wholesaling of agricultural products. These industries may also be located outside of the Principal Industrial areas, within the rural designations, where agricultural skills may be found.

Small Industries and Custom Manufacturing - These industries typically serve a local market and may involve the on-site production of goods by hand manufacturing.

Mining and Extraction - These facilities locate according to the availability of natural resources.

Industrial - Conventional freestanding industrial uses, warehouses, wholesalers, storage yards.

Industrial Parks - Large tracts of land that are subdivided, developed and designed according to a unified plan. These parks are employment centers and may include mixed land uses including supporting retail services. These types of industries are encouraged to develop in Principal Industrial areas. Planned industrial parks should incorporate greenways, bike and pedestrian paths into their designs and link these features to surrounding neighborhoods where appropriate.

Land Use Determinants

Existing Land Use Pattern - Locations where industry has historically developed.

Existing Zoning - Locations zoned industrial.

Economic Opportunity Areas - Locations identified by Roanoke County as an economic opportunity area.

Employment Centers - Locations where labor-intensive industries exist.

Topography - Locations that can be developed in an environmentally sensitive manner and that are outside of the designated floodplain.

Resource Protection - Locations that can be developed in such a way as not to threaten valuable natural resources.

Water And Sewer Service And Supply - Locations where water and sewer service exist or can be provided in the near future.

Access - Locations served by an adequate public street system that does not direct traffic through existing residential neighborhoods.

Transportation Centers - Locations within close proximity to rail, airport and major street systems.

Urban Sector - Locations served by, or in close proximity to urban services.

Suburban Village

A future land use area that represents the focus of surrounding, generally lower intensity commercial, institutional and residential growth for a broad mixture of surrounding development. New neighborhood development occurs in close proximity to institutional, office and retail uses. Cluster developments and greenways are encouraged in conjunction with formerly rural land uses focusing on environmental and building and site design innovation.

Land Use Types

Agricultural Production and Services - Services supporting the remaining agricultural community such as farm management, horticultural and veterinary services.

Parks and Outdoor Recreation/Ecotourism - Public and private recreation from small-scale community based facilities to regional attractions with greenway linkages as appropriate. Also encouraged are ecotourism businesses that supply a niche market, usually outdoor oriented.

Residential - Suburban densities (up to six units per acre) of single and two-family housing, attached, detached, zero-lot line, cluster, low density multi-family, townhouses and garden apartments.

Community Activity Centers - Public and private facilities serving surrounding residents including schools, religious assembly centers, community clubs and meetings areas with linkages to residential areas by greenways, bike and pedestrian paths wherever possible.

Commercial - Convenience retail establishments supplying limited goods and services to village residents. Planned small-scale or cluster retail such as local target area shopping centers with specialty businesses and personal services. Also found are small highway retail establishments providing goods and services to passing motorists. Such facilities should be designed to complement the suburban surroundings.

Land Use Determinants

Existing Land Use Pattern - Locations where low- to middle-density residential, institutional and commercial uses are established, connected to existing, sometimes transitional rural residential, agricultural and open space uses.

Rural/Suburban Sector - Locations on the fringe of the urban service area.

Access - Locations served by an arterial highway and a well-defined secondary street.

Environmental Capacity - Locations where physical land characteristics, especially topography, have and continue to provide the opportunity for suburban development.

Utility Availability - Locations where public water and sewer are in close proximity to the urban service area and expansion of these services is likely.

Economic Opportunity

A future land use area that would guide a mix of commercial, tourist-related and limited industrial uses related specifically to destination resort facilities. Economic Opportunity areas are applied to lands owned or leased by the Virginia Recreational Facilities Authority or Virginia Living Histories, Inc., and adjacent lands that could potentially be expansion areas for the facilities. The designation discourages uses that may conflict with or detract from the resort activities.

Land Use Types

Family Destination Resort - Various agricultural, civic, office, commercial, and limited industrial uses as defined in the Explore Park zoning district, and associated with the operation of resort facilities. A high degree of architectural design and creative site design is encouraged.

Existing Land Use and Zoning - For lands designated Economic Opportunity that are outside the resort property, uses permitted in the existing zoning districts are encouraged until such time that rezoning to Explore Park zoning district is sought. Rezoning to other zoning districts should be carefully examined for compatibility with the resort activities.

Land Use Determinants

Existing Land Use Pattern - Locations where Explore Park development has occurred or is planned.

Existing Zoning - Locations where Explore Park zoning exists.

Expansion Areas - Locations where the Explore Park zoning could potentially expand.

Access - Locations served by the Blue Ridge Parkway/Roanoke River Parkway for visitor access, and Rutrough Road and surrounding connecting public streets for public safety and delivery service access.

Topography - Locations that can be developed in an environmentally sensitive manner and that are outside of the designated floodplain.

Urban Services - Locations where public water and sanitary sewer exist or are planned.

University

A future land use area that would guide a mix of educational, institutional, limited commercial, recreational, and open space uses related to a college or university campus. University areas are applied to lands owned by Hollins University and integral/contiguous to the central campus. Other lands owned by the University may be included in other future land use designations that are more appropriate to their existing or future land uses. Proposed land uses adjacent or in close proximity to the University designated areas should be encouraged to compliment the Hollins University architectural and land design themes, and university activities.

Land Use Types

University Campus - Various agricultural, open space, recreational, civic, office, and limited commercial uses associated with the operation of a college or university. A high degree of architectural design and creative site design is encouraged. Historic structures should be preserved and used as a design theme for future development.

Special Events And Recreation - Various school-sponsored and community-based sports and recreational opportunities.

Land Use Determinants

Existing Land Use Pattern - Locations where Hollins University development has occurred or is planned.

Existing Zoning - Locations where existing zoning permits educational facilities.

Surrounding Land Use - Locations where surrounding land uses are complimentary to, and compatible with a university campus.

Historic Areas - The central core of Hollins University contains 6 buildings on the National Register of Historic Places, and several other structures that could be designated on the Historic Register.

Access - Locations served by an arterial street system.

Topography - Locations that can be developed in an environmentally sensitive manner and that are outside of the designated floodplain.

Urban Services - Locations where public water and sanitary sewer exist or are planned.

Special Events - Locations that have adequate physical facilities for various school and community special events.

Glenvar Village

A future land use area intended to serve as focal point for the Glenvar Community. This stretch of West Main Street is home to community identifiers such as the new Glenvar Library, Richfield Retirement Community, Fire and Rescue Station, Fort Lewis Elementary, entrance to Glenvar Schools Complex, Pleasant Grove and Fort Lewis Baptist Church. Because of the importance to the community, a high degree of architectural and creative site design is encouraged to enhance the rural and historic character of the area as well as pedestrian and vehicular connectivity between properties.

Land Use Types

A mix of uses on a parcel and/or along the West Main Street Corridor is encouraged in the Glenvar Village designation. Land use types proposed for the Glenvar Village designation include:

Community Activity Centers - Public and private facilities serving surrounding residents including parks, schools, community clubs and meeting areas connected to residential areas by sidewalks, bikeways and/or greenways.

Commercial – Planned small-scale or clustered commercial such as local target area shopping centers with specialty businesses, personal services and sit-down or family-style restaurants. Such facilities should be designed to complement the character of the community.

General Retail Shops and Personal Services – Planned shopping centers and clustered retail uses are encouraged. These centers should incorporate greenways, bike and pedestrian accommodations into their designs to link to surrounding development.

Office and Institutional - Planned office parks and independent facilities in park-like surroundings are encouraged. Such developments should be designed to enhance the rural and historic character of the area.

Limited Industrial - Low intensity industrial uses are encouraged to locate south of Route 11/460; such development should be clustered and should not have an adverse impact on air or water quality, the natural environment or scenic viewsheds.

Mixed Use – Developments that combine retail, service and other commercial uses with office and/or residential use in the same building or on the same site;

Parks and Outdoor Recreation/Ecotourism – Public and private recreation from small-scale community based facilities to regional attractions with greenway linkages and bike and pedestrian accommodations. Also encouraged are eco- and sustainable tourism businesses; and

Residential - Townhouse, low density multi-family, single-family attached and two-family dwellings. Clustering and connectivity are encouraged.

Land Use Determinants

Existing Land Use Pattern - Locations where commercial or industrial uses have been developed or will likely be developed

Existing Zoning - Locations where commercial or industrial zoning exists.

Access - Locations served by arterial street system.

Utility Availability - Locations where water and sewer service exist.

Mixed Use

The Mixed Use designation recognizes the existing mixture of uses and zoning districts and provides for a mix of uses to preserved and developed. This future land use designation allows for more choice and/or opportunity in how the land can be [re]developed. A high degree of architectural and creative site design is encouraged to enhance the rural and historic character of the area as well as pedestrian and vehicular connectivity between properties.

Land Use Types

Community Activity Centers - Public and private facilities serving surrounding residents including parks, schools, community clubs and meeting areas connected to residential areas by sidewalks, bikeways and/or greenways;

Commercial - Planned small-scale or clustered commercial including specialty businesses, personal services and sit-down or family-style restaurants. Also included are small, highway-oriented retail establishments providing goods and services to passing motorists. Such facilities should be designed to complement the character of the community;

General Retail Shops and Personal Services - Planned shopping centers and clustered retail uses are encouraged. These centers should incorporate greenways, bike and pedestrian accommodations into their designs to link to surrounding development;

Limited Industrial - Low intensity industrial uses are encouraged. Such development should be clustered and should not have an adverse impact on air or water quality, the natural environment or scenic viewsheds;

Mixed Use – Developments that combine retail, service or other commercial uses with office and/or residential use in the same building or on the same site;

Office and Institutional - Planned office parks and independent facilities in park-like surroundings are encouraged. Such developments should be designed to enhance the rural and historic character of the area;

Parks and Outdoor Recreation/Ecotourism – Public and private recreation from small-scale community based facilities to regional attractions with greenway linkages and bike and pedestrian accommodations. Also encouraged are eco- and sustainable tourism businesses;

Residential - Townhouse, low density multi-family, single-family attached and two-family dwellings. Clustering and connectivity are encouraged.

Land Use Determinants

Existing Land Use Pattern - Locations where commercial or industrial uses have been developed or will likely be developed.

Existing Zoning - Locations where commercial or industrial zoning exists.

Access - Locations served by arterial street system.

Utility Availability - Locations where water and sewer service exist or can be provided.