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SECTION 1. PREFACE

A. Plan Purpose

The preparation of a comprehensive plan is encouraged by North Carolina legislation. However, there are broader and more important reasons to engage in the planning process. Local government plans and planning affect people's lives. Basically, planning begins with understanding Roanoke Rapids and its people, and caring for both. Tough choices must be made about the natural, manmade, and financial resources in the city. The city's budget should be compared to the plan to ensure that public money will be spent in accordance with the city's goals and objectives.

The planning process also serves to educate ourselves about Roanoke Rapids citizens, about our attitudes towards others, and our willingness to share a sense of belonging to Roanoke Rapids. Planning should be promoted as a means of community decision-making through public participation. But planning also may involve conflict and friction because it may divide people into opposing groups. Some conflict in the planning process is good. It stimulates thinking and reminds us of the need to understand and tolerate, and even support, the opinions of others.

The City of Roanoke Rapids has undertaken the preparation of this comprehensive plan with the understanding that the plan should be:

- ▶ comprehensive in setting goals and objectives for all aspects of the city.
- ▶ part of a continuous planning process that is timely and responsive to the needs/desires of the city.
- ▶ the legal basis for land use regulations and a guide for city budgeting.

This process will provide a workable, creative, and dynamic plan to guide future long-term growth and development throughout the next twenty (20) years. It provides a foundation for Roanoke Rapids' ongoing planning program and serves as the city's primary policy guide for short- and long-range planning, zoning, and land use-related decision-making within the city.

B. The Planning Process

The adoption of this plan by Roanoke Rapids is not the end but rather the beginning of an ongoing process. This process includes four (4) essential elements:

1. *Study and Analysis.* Roanoke Rapids must study land use, population trends, the economic base of the city, and physiographic features.



2. *Plan or Policy Preparation.* The comprehensive plan must provide a basic statement of how the city will develop, in what direction, and at what pace.
3. *Basic Goals.* Roanoke Rapids must consider basic goals including: Do we want to grow? Do we want to be a center for high-tech industry? What balance do we want between growth and preservation of the natural environment?
4. *Implementation and Effectuation.* To implement the plan, the city must use such tools as land use regulations, capital improvements programs, and general guidelines for private development and public investment.

Specifically, this plan will:

- ▶ Review historical data.
- ▶ Discuss principal issues.
- ▶ Define problems associated with growth.
- ▶ Define main trends and produce forecasts.
- ▶ Define healthy eating and active living issues/community needs.
- ▶ Define public, private, or public-private programs which should be implemented or improved.
- ▶ Define goals, policies, and implementing actions.



Centennial Park *Image Source: City of Roanoke Rapids*

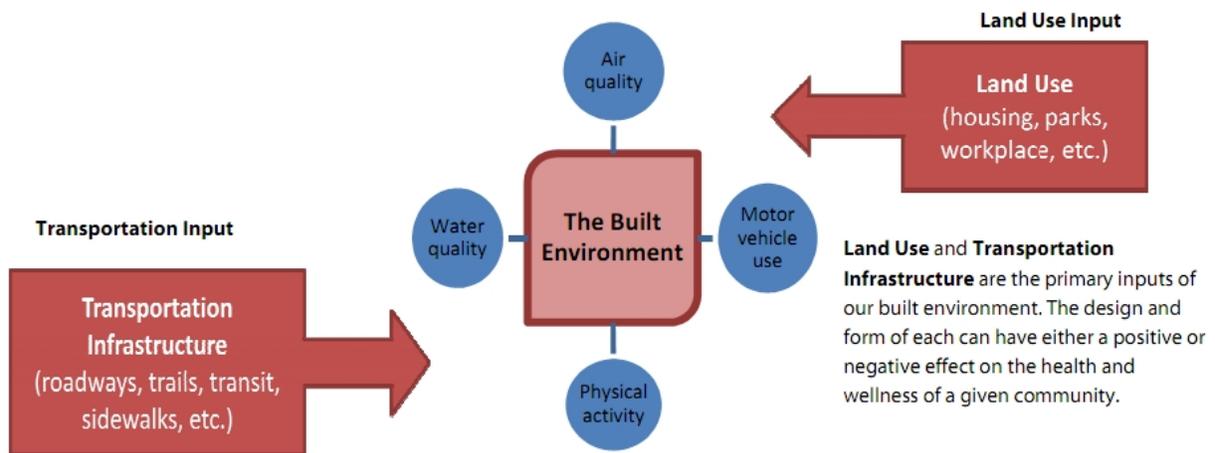


Roanoke Canal Museum *Image Source: City of Roanoke Rapids*



C. Health, Wellness, and the Built Environment

Public health and wellness is affected in many ways by the design of the built environment, which is defined as the environment as humans have shaped it - including roadways, buildings, parks, and neighborhoods. In Roanoke Rapids, as in other places across the country, the design of our roadways, residential developments, and settlement patterns all contribute to the relative health and wellness of citizens. For the purposes of this plan, wellness is defined in the physical dimension as the need for regular physical activity and physical development that encourages learning about diet and nutrition. The diagram below summarizes the impact of land use and transportation systems on our built environment. Land use and transportation planning lay the foundation for changes to our built environment, and in turn the effects to our air and water quality, level of motor vehicle use, and ease of access to open space amenities (physical activity opportunities).



In the United States, the automobile is often the dominant force driving urban design. The vast demand for private vehicular transportation regularly dictates the scale of our streets, the relationship between buildings, and the speed at which we experience our environment.

Land use decisions can also have an effect on the health and wellness of individuals. Studies have shown that urban areas with a range of land uses increase the walkability of an area and subsequently lessen vehicular miles of travel. Traditional zoning districts often restrict multiple uses making new development single use in nature and thus contributing to a lack of walkability and interconnectivity.



Human Scale - A built environment more tailored to the needs of pedestrians and cyclists versus the automobile. *Image Source: City of Roanoke Rapids*

The creation of the health and wellness related elements in the comprehensive plan use multiple academic and research based reports to establish an information base related to health and the built environment. Local health related data has been gleaned from public health officials, and the 2010 Halifax County Community Health Assessment.



SECTION 2. INTRODUCTION

A. Development of the Plan

This plan was prepared to replace the city's existing Comprehensive Development Plan which was adopted October 10, 1989. Preparation of the plan was funded with \$15,500 in City of Roanoke Rapids funds and \$7,500 in Community Transformation Grant (CTG) funds awarded by Region 7. The CTG funds were provided to support inclusion of a specific community health and wellness section in the plan which will address how the built environment affects community health.

To aid in the development of this plan and to further its goal to optimize citizen participation, the Roanoke Rapids City Council appointed a Comprehensive Plan Advisory Committee composed of the members listed below. This *ad hoc* committee was instrumental in overseeing the development of the plan and supervised presentation of the draft plan to the Planning Board and City Council.

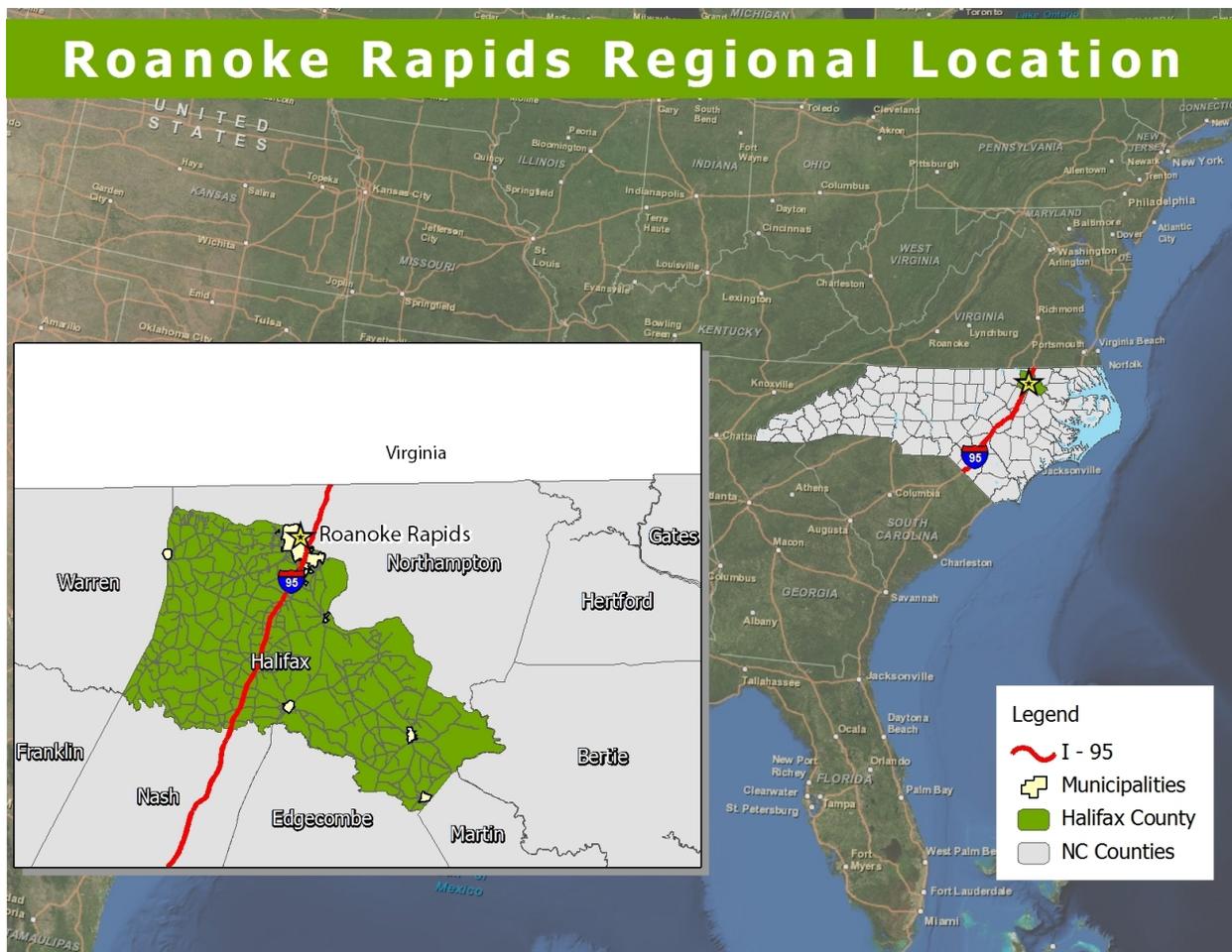
Name	Organization
Bruce Robistow	VP of Clinical and Support Services, Halifax Regional Medical Center
Nick Rightmyer/ Bill Dreitzler (alt.)	DM2 Engineering
Sherry Hux	Main Street Director, Roanoke Avenue Business Alliance (RABA)
Betty Harris	Wilkie Real Estate
Justin Blackmon	Utility Engineer, Roanoke Rapids Sanitary District
Cathy A. Scott	Executive Director, Halifax County Economic Development Commission
Doug Miller	Director of Maintenance and Transportation, Roanoke Rapids School District
Connie Hill	Roanoke Rapids Planning Board
Wayne Smith	Resident/Recreation Advisory Board
Christopher Cain	G.W. Hux & Company Insurance
Victoria Chetty	Visions, Inc./Beautification Committee
Gavin Coombs	Halifax County Community Transformation Grant Coordinator, NC Public Health Foundation
E.B. Odom	Dietician, Halifax County Health Department
Suetta Scorbrough	Roanoke Rapids City Council
Kelly Lasky	Planning and Development Director
Larry Chalker	Public Works Director



B. Regional Location

Roanoke Rapids is strategically located on I-95 immediately south of the North Carolina/Virginia state line. The city’s location on I-95, the Nation’s major north-south east coast highway, is approximately mid-way between Florida and New York. As one of the busiest corridors in the country, I-95 has the potential to boost the local economy. The city is located on the fall line separating Coastal and Piedmont North Carolina. Located in the upper northeast Coastal plain, the city is situated in an agriculturally productive area. The city’s location places it adjacent to Roanoke Rapids Lake and Lake Gaston, major recreational areas. See Map 1 for regional location.

Major North Carolina attractions are readily accessible with most places on North Carolina’s coast being within 170 miles or less. Raleigh, the state’s capitol, is located 50 miles to the west. The city’s location provides excellent regional access and a direct connection to the Nation’s interstate system.



Map 1. Regional Location Map



C. History

Native Americans warned settlers to avoid the turbulent rapids of the Roanoke River. Instead, they encouraged English traders to use the Tuscarora Trail near Halifax and the Occoneechee Trading Path to the West. Today, we still do. One is called I-95 and the other, I-85.

It was not long into the 19th Century that Colonel Andrew Joyner recognized the value of dealing with the forbidden terrain. He specialized in "transportation links" and dug the first canal to connect the Raleigh-Gaston Railroad with the Weldon-Wilmington Railroad. The die was cast for the founding of Roanoke Rapids.

Roanoke Rapids was built on four pillars - Water Transportation, Railroad, Paper Products, and Textiles - each of these pillars was strong in its day; each has crumbled. The Roanoke Navigation Canal was completed in 1819. It routed boats carrying freight out of the river into a nine-mile canal bypassing the rapids. When transportation by the canal ceased, water in the canal was harnessed to generate power. As a result of this access to hydropower, industries sprang up along the river, including a textile mill and a paper mill. Roanoke Rapids was born.

Homes for the workers of the mills were built on Hamilton, Washington, and Jefferson Streets between First and Fourth Streets (Old Town). Soon homes were built on Jackson, Madison, and Monroe Streets between First and Fourth Streets (New Town). In 1987, these two villages, situated along the same central axis called the "Avenue" were incorporated and renamed Roanoke Rapids. Two of these 19th century mill homes, designed by the famed architect Stanford White, still stand. The textile industry has been the cornerstone of the community throughout its history. The textile company provided utilities, health care, and housing for employees and the residents of Roanoke Rapids. By the early to mid-1900s, three distinct mill villages were built. Mill employees were provided housing a little or no cost. Approximately 800 Mill Houses were eventually constructed. Many of these stand today.

As the mills expanded, Roanoke Rapids experienced phenomenal growth. In 1900, the population was 1,009. By 1930, it was 3,404; by 1940, 8,545. In 1960, Roanoke Rapids' population was 13,230. The textile industry remained the largest employer in the area. The "Avenue" business district was the retail and commercial hub for Roanoke Rapids.



Main Street, Looking South Photo Courtesy of North Carolina Postcards Collection, UNC-CH



SECTION 3. COMMUNITY PROFILE

A. Introduction

This section provides a synopsis of the current population, housing, and economic conditions in Roanoke Rapids. Public Health and Wellness statistics have been summarized based on the 2010 Halifax County Community Health Assessment. Demographic data is sourced from both the 2000 and 2010 US Census, NC Office of State Budget & Management (NC OSBM), PCensus¹, and the NC Employment Security Commission.

B. Health & Wellness Issues

According to the 2010 Halifax County Community Health Assessment, there are ten (10) major health problems identified and chosen as priorities for Halifax County. They are as follows:

1. Obesity/Overweight
2. Diabetes
3. Cancer
4. Teen Pregnancy
5. Heart Disease (Heart Attacks/Stroke)
6. Sexually Transmitted Diseases
7. Mental Health
8. Aging Problems (Alzheimer's, arthritis, hearing or vision loss, etc.)
9. Substance Abuse (Alcohol/Drug Abuse/Smoking)
10. HIV/AIDS and STDs

These ten problems were from a survey completed by over 650 Halifax County residents. Of these ten issues, the design of the built environment plays a role in just four – obesity, diabetes, cancer, and heart disease. According to the Centers for Disease Control (CDC), chronic diseases - such as heart disease, stroke, diabetes, and cancer - are among the most common, costly, and preventable of all health problems in the United States.

Obesity is a leading cause of chronic disease in the United States and increases the risk for a variety of chronic diseases including heart disease, strokes, glucose intolerance, and some forms of cancer. It is not a direct cause of most diseases, but unfavorably alters the risk factor profile. For example, obesity may lead to increases in blood pressure and blood cholesterol, which in turn, can lead to cardiovascular disease and strokes.

¹PCensus is a software program that uses US Census Bureau data, in addition to other data sources, to identify demographic information across geographic boundaries.



Chronic disease differs from infectious disease (or communicable disease) in the way it occurs in individuals. Infectious diseases usually occur because of contact with an affected host, while chronic diseases may occur solely because of a sedentary lifestyle. Common infectious diseases of current and past years include Tuberculosis, Ebola, Malaria, Measles, and HIV/AIDs.

Infectious diseases were once the primary cause of death in the United States a century ago, but proper hygiene, environmental design, and immunization has led to the downfall of such disease in the United States. In Halifax County, the primary cause of death is heart disease. Five “Health Priorities” were drafted as a result of the Halifax County Community Health Assessment. The Healthy Halifax Partners, Healthy Carolinians partnership will draft action plans to address each priority. They are as follows:

Chronic Disease

- ▶ Overweight/Obesity
- ▶ Cancer
- ▶ Diabetes
- ▶ High Blood Pressure

Health Promotion

- ▶ Substance Abuse

Obesity Mechanisms. Obesity results from a positive caloric balance, meaning that the intake of calories is greater than caloric expenditure. Nutrition plays a direct role in determining caloric balance because it is the sole variable when accounting for caloric intake. Caloric output, however, is dependent on three specific variables. These include physical activity, resting metabolism, and the thermogenic effect of food.

Thermogenesis occurs when your body raises its core temperature. When your body increases its heat or energy output, your metabolism increases and your fat cells are used as the main source of energy. Of the three variables, physical activity is the most often altered in order to increase caloric expenditure.

In general, obesity tends to be a multi-faceted problem with no one solution to combating its occurrence. However, there are certain segments of the population that are more likely to be obese as it is more prevalent in the low socioeconomic status (SES) segments of society. Investigations have shown similar results in urban, suburban, and rural communities.

In addition, a childhood spent in poor social and economic conditions has been shown to lead to a less healthy adulthood. In both adolescent boys and girls, low SES and parental education levels were related to an unfavorable risk factor profile indicating a need for early intervention in low SES communities.



To identify areas of Halifax County that are considered low in socioeconomic status, GIS analysis was used. Census estimates for educational attainment, employment, and income levels were combined to locate these areas.

C. Population

Population Growth

From 1980 to 2010, Roanoke Rapids’ population increased from 14,702 to 15,754, an increase of 7.2%. Part of this increase was the result of twelve (12) annexations with occurred from 1985 to 2006. No further annexations have occurred. Thus, the population within the pre-1985 city boundaries has either largely remained static, or may have in fact slightly declined. The city’s extraterritorial jurisdiction population increased from approximately 1,270 in 1980 to 2,075 in 2010, an increase of 63.4%. This increase may be reflective of a trend in eastern North Carolina for out-migration from medium-sized communities. The Halifax County population decreased slightly from 1980 (55,076) to 2010 (54,691). By comparison, from 1980 to 2010, North Carolina’s population increased by 62.2%. Concurrently, the United States population increased by 36.3%.

Population growth occurred in most eastern North Carolina communities from 1980 to 2010, with some area’s experiencing over 70% growth. Table 1 provides a summary of the population change.

Table 1. Population Growth

	Total Population				Percent Change			
	1980	1990	2000	2010	'80-'90	'90-'00	'00-'10	'80-'10
Roanoke Rapids Corporate Limits	14,702	15,722	16,957	15,754	6.9%	7.9%	-7.1%	7.2%
Roanoke Rapids ETJ	1,270	1,702	2,063	2,075	34.0%	21.2%	0.6%	63.4%
Halifax County	55,076	55,516	57,370	54,691	0.8%	3.3%	-4.7%	-0.7%
Edgecombe County	55,988	56,692	55,606	56,552	1.3%	-1.9%	1.7%	1.0%
Nash County	67,153	76,677	87,385	95,840	14.2%	14.0%	9.7%	42.7%
North Carolina	5,880,095	6,632,448	8,046,813	9,535,483	12.8%	21.3%	18.5%	62.2%
United States	226,545,805	248,709,873	281,421,906	308,745,538	9.8%	13.2%	9.7%	36.3%

Source: US Census Bureau and PCensus.

Gender and Racial Composition

Roanoke Rapids’ gender composition has shown little change over the past decade with 45.9% of the population being male in 2010 and 54.1% female. The 2010 state population was 48.7% male and 51.3% female. Thus, there was little difference between the state and city gender composition.



The 2010 Census indicated that Roanoke Rapids’ population was 63.6% white and 31.2% black. The city’s racial composition is in contrast to Halifax County’s population which was 40.0% white and 53.2% black. Edgecombe County was also predominantly black. In northeastern North Carolina, an increasing number of counties have predominantly black populations. By comparison, in 2010 68.5% of North Carolina’s population was white and 21.5% was black.

Table 2. Population by Race, 2010

Race	Roanoke Rapids		Halifax Co.		Nash Co.		Edgecombe Co.		North Carolina	
	Number	%	Number	%	Number	%	Number	%	Number	%
White	10,016	63.6%	21,890	40.0%	53,531	55.9%	21,923	38.8%	6,528,950	68.5%
Black	4,912	31.2%	29,109	53.2%	35,650	37.2%	32,435	57.4%	2,048,628	21.5%
Other Race	623	4.0%	3,033	5.5%	5,100	5.3%	1,623	2.9%	751,706	7.9%
Two or More Races	203	1.3%	659	1.2%	1,559	1.6%	571	1.0%	206,199	2.2%
Total	15,754	100.0%	54,691	100.0%	95,840	100.0%	56,552	100.0%	9,535,483	100.0%

Source: US Census Bureau.

Population by Age

Approximately 47.5% of Roanoke Rapids’ population is 40 years old or older. This trend is lower than that for Halifax County which was 52.2% and comparable to the state at 46.2%. In all cases, approximately ½ of the population is approaching retirement age. For Roanoke Rapids, the primary child bearing age group, 25 to 39, is at 17.5% which is below the state’s 25 to 39 age group percentage of 20.0%. The age of the Roanoke Rapids and Halifax County populations are expected to continue to increase. From 2000 to 2010, the city’s median age increased from 36.8 to 37.9, an increase of 3.0%. However, the state’s median age increased from 35.3 to 37.4, an increase of 5.9%. This increase in median age in Roanoke Rapids can be attributed to both the “aging in place” trend – whereby older adults are less likely to move from their residences – and also a net migration of the younger segment of the population.

Table 3. Population by Age. 2010

Age Groups	Roanoke Rapids		Halifax Co.		Nash Co.		Edgecombe Co.		North Carolina	
	Number	%								
0 to 24	5,510	35.0%	17,196	31.4%	30,826	32.2%	18,802	33.2%	3,220,253	33.8%
25 to 39	2,760	17.5%	8,986	16.4%	17,240	18.0%	9,732	17.2%	1,906,436	20.0%
40 to 64	5,154	32.7%	19,673	36.0%	34,381	35.9%	19,914	35.2%	3,174,715	33.3%
Over 65	2,330	14.8%	8,836	16.2%	13,393	14.0%	8,104	14.3%	1,234,079	12.9%
Total	15,754	100.0%	54,691	100.0%	95,840	100.0%	56,552	100.0%	9,535,483	100.0%
Median Age	36.8 (2000) 37.9 (2010)		37.2 (2000) 41.7 (2010)		36.5 (2000) 39.9 (2010)		36.2 (2000) 39.6 (2010)		35.3 (2000) 37.4 (2010)	

Source: US Census Bureau.



D. Housing

Dwelling Unit Inventory

From 2000 to 2010, the Roanoke Rapids housing inventory decreased from 7,595 to 7,157, a decrease of 5.7%.² Some of this decline is the result of code enforcement, community development demolitions, and flood damage demolitions. Simultaneously, Halifax County’s inventory increased slightly from 25,309 to 25,829. The state’s housing inventory expanded by 20.0%. This data reflects the overall stagnation of housing growth in the Northeastern North Carolina region.³

Table 4. Housing Characteristics, 2000 and 2010

	Roanoke Rapids		Halifax Co.		Nash Co.		Edgecombe Co.		North Carolina	
	Number	%	Number	%	Number	%	Number	%	Number	%
2000 Census										
Owner-occupied	4,104	54.0%	14,821	58.6%	22,792	61.5%	13,063	54.4%	2,172,355	61.6%
Renter-occupied	2,805	36.9%	7,301	28.8%	10,852	29.3%	7,329	30.5%	959,658	27.2%
Vacant	686	9.0%	3,187	12.6%	3,407	9.2%	3,610	15.0%	391,931	11.1%
Total	7,595	100.0%	25,309	100.0%	37,051	100.0%	24,002	100.0%	3,523,944	100.0%
2010 ACS										
Owner-occupied	3,435	48.5%	13,827	53.5%	24,067	57.6%	13,580	54.6%	2,468,489	58.4%
Renter-occupied	3,002	42.4%	7,763	30.1%	13,695	32.8%	8,021	32.2%	1,157,690	27.4%
Vacant	648	9.1%	4,239	16.4%	4,004	9.6%	3,293	13.2%	603,373	14.3%
Total	7,085	100.0%	25,829	100.0%	41,766	100.0%	24,894	100.0%	4,229,552	100.0%

Source: 2000 US Census; 2006-2010 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates.⁴

From 2000 to 2010, the city’s number of vacant dwelling units significantly increased from 686 to 958, an increase of 39.7%. North Carolina’s vacant housing inventory increased by 53.9%.

²NOTE: It is believed that the Census data indicating the decline in housing inventory is an error.

³North Carolina’s Northeast Commission is the regional economic development organization for the sixteen counties of North Carolina’s Northeast Region.

⁴The American Community Survey (ACS) is a nationwide survey, conducted by the US Census Bureau, that collects and produces information on demographic, social, economic, and housing characteristics about the nation’s population every year.



Dwelling Unit Age

In 2010, approximately 57% of the Roanoke Rapids housing inventory was 30 years old or older. For comparison, 43.7% of North Carolina’s inventory was over 30 years old. This disparity with the state is largely repeated throughout northeastern North Carolina. The city’s housing inventory is not being replaced or increased as it ages.

Table 5. Dwelling Unit Age, 2010

Year Built	Roanoke Rapids		Halifax Co.		Nash Co.		Edgecombe Co.		North Carolina	
	Number	%	Number	%	Number	%	Number	%	Number	%
2005 or later	196	2.7%	806	3.1%	2,065	4.9%	644	2.6%	242,715	5.7%
2000-2004	169	2.4%	1,231	4.8%	4,762	11.4%	2,506	10.1%	513,028	12.1%
1990-1999	612	8.6%	4,340	16.8%	8,577	20.5%	4,143	16.6%	896,428	21.2%
1980-1989	1,013	14.2%	4,680	18.1%	7,215	17.3%	2,815	11.3%	725,467	17.2%
1970-1979	1,153	16.1%	3,797	14.7%	7,197	17.2%	5,293	21.3%	648,184	15.3%
1960-1969	912	12.7%	3,124	12.1%	4,046	9.7%	2,784	11.2%	428,956	10.1%
1950-1959	1,408	19.7%	3,025	11.7%	3,322	8.0%	2,419	9.7%	338,842	8.0%
1940-1949	808	11.3%	1,952	7.6%	1,683	4.0%	1,107	4.4%	177,508	4.2%
1939 or earlier	886	12.4%	2,874	11.1%	2,899	6.9%	3,183	12.8%	258,424	6.1%
Total	7,157	100.0%	25,829	100.0%	41,766	100.0%	24,894	100.0%	4,229,552	100.0%

Source: 2006-2010 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates.

Housing Condition and Cost

Roanoke Rapids’ median housing value in 2010 was \$106,600. This amount was above Halifax and Edgecombe counties but below that of the state and Nash County.

Table 6. Housing Cost and Condition, 2010

	Roanoke Rapids		Halifax Co.		Nash Co.		Edgecombe Co.		North Carolina	
	Number	%	Number	%	Number	%	Number	%	Number	%
Median Housing Value	\$106,600		\$85,800		\$116,300		\$82,600		\$149,100	
Mortgage Greater than 30% of Income	665	32.2%	3,140	41.4%	4,590	30.6%	3,374	38.4%	535,120	32.2%
Rent Greater than 30% of Income	1,213	47.2%	3,719	56.3%	5,619	45.3%	3,678	55.5%	506,691	48.9%
Lacking Complete Plumbing Facilities	13	0.2%	337	1.6%	253	0.7%	89	0.4%	16,548	0.5%
Lacking Complete Kitchen Facilities	13	0.2%	281	1.3%	257	0.7%	140	0.6%	22,500	0.6%

Source: 2006-2010 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates.



At best, establishing the affordability of housing is an estimating process. Most measures of housing affordability consider 30% of gross income an allowable/affordable expenditure for housing. For homeowners, the cost includes mortgage payments, taxes, insurance, and utilities. For renters, housing cost includes rent and utilities.

Approximately 32% of homeowners in Roanoke Rapids have a mortgage to which 30% or more of their income is allocated to housing costs. This number was identical to the state. According to the 2000 Census, only 20.3% of homeowners in the city allocated that level of income to their mortgage - representing a 58.6% increase in homeowners burdened by a large mortgage payment over the last decade.

The number of renters paying a significant portion of household income for living purposes also grew from 2000 to 2010. In 2000, just over 31% of renters used more than 30% of their income to pay rent. By 2010, the percentage of renters burdened by their living costs increased to 47%, a 49.4% increase in the amount of individuals facing difficulties paying rent. Across the state, this trend held true as burdened mortgage owners and renters increased from 20.7% to 33.4%, respectively, in 2000 to 32.2% of mortgage owners and close to half (48.9%) of all renters in 2010.

E. Economy

Employment by Industry

Based on the NC Employment Security Commission, there were 1,084 establishments providing employment in 2010 to an average of 16,050 employees at an average weekly wage of \$635.00 (see Table 8). The largest single employment sector was Educational Services, and Health Care and Social Assistance with an average employment of 4,624 employees, or 28.8% of the workforce. Public Administration provided 1,650 jobs, 10.3% of the total. Thus, the public sector provided approximately 39.1% of the county's jobs. The largest single private sector category, retail trade, provided 2,338 jobs, or 14.6% of the total. The heavy dependence on the public sector for jobs is common in the Northeastern North Carolina region but indicates the need to further diversify the city/county employment base and expand private sector opportunities.

Table 8. Halifax County Employment and Wage by Industry

Industry	Establishments	Average Employment	Percent of Workforce	Average Weekly Wage
Agriculture, forestry, fishing and hunting, and mining	62	447	2.8%	\$529.00
Construction	77	376	2.3%	\$705.00
Manufacturing	32	1,858	11.6%	\$910.00
Wholesale trade	37	485	3.0%	\$867.00
Retail trade	236	2,338	14.6%	\$416.00
Transportation and warehousing, and utilities	46	805	5.0%	\$974.00



Industry	Establishments	Average Employment	Percent of Workforce	Average Weekly Wage
Information	12	103	0.6%	\$629.00
Finance and insurance, and real estate and rental and leasing	96	434	2.7%	\$628.00
Professional, scientific, and management, and administrative and waste management services	107	635	4.0%	\$526.00
Educational services, and health care and social assistance	152	4,624	28.8%	\$644.00
Arts, entertainment, and recreation, and accommodation and food services	113	1,885	11.7%	\$283.00
Other services (except public administration)	83	410	2.6%	\$484.00
Public administration	31	1,650	10.3%	\$661.00
Total	1,084	16,050	100.0%	\$635.08

Source: NC Employment Security Commission.

Table 7 identifies the 2013 Top 15 employers in Halifax County. The largest single employer is the Halifax Regional Medical Center. The largest single employment category for the major employers is the public sector with 56.9% of the total.



Halifax Regional Medical Center Image Source: <http://www.halifaxmedicalcenter.org/>

Table 7. Halifax County Top Employers

Company	# of Employees	Industry
Halifax Regional Medical Center	872	Health Care and Social Assistance
Halifax County Schools	700	Educational Services
County of Halifax	546	Public Administration
Kapstone Paper & Packaging	500	Manufacturing
Roanoke Rapids Graded Schools	389	Educational Services
Safelite Glass Corporation	311	Other Services
AAA Carolina's	282	Professional & Technical Services
Halifax Community College	250	Education & Health Services
New Dixie Oil Corporation	239	Transportation and Warehousing
Reser's Fine Foods	236	Manufacturing
Weldon City Schools	199	Educational Services
Don Pancho Authentic Mexican Foods	186	Manufacturing
PCB Piezotronics	170	Transportation and Warehousing
Patch Rubber Co, Inc.	158	Manufacturing
Halifax Linen Service, Inc.	155	Other Services

Source: Halifax County Economic Development Commission.



Unemployment

Table __ provides employment data for Halifax County and the state from 2003 to May 2013. Throughout those years, Halifax County has had unemployment consistently higher than that of the state. The county's 2010 to 2013 unemployment rate decline has lagged behind the state's recovery.

Table 11. Unemployment in North Carolina & Halifax County, 2003 to 2013

Year	Halifax County	North Carolina
2003	8.6	6.5
2004	7.7	5.5
2005	7.2	5.3
2006	6.5	4.8
2007	6.5	4.8
2008	9.2	6.3
2009	13.3	10.4
2010	13.9	10.8
2011	13.7	10.2
2012	13.2	9.5
2013 (through May)	13.2	9.2

Source: US Department of Labor, Bureau of Labor Statistics.

Income

The city's 2010 median household income was \$35,902. This figure was well below Nash County and the state. However, the city's median household income is above most northeastern North Carolina jurisdictions. Halifax County's poverty rate is above that of the state but is in line with other northeastern North Carolina counties. The Northeast North Carolina region is one of the country's most poverty stricken areas.

Table 9. Median Household Income, 2000 and 2010

	Roanoke Rapids	Halifax Co.	Nash Co.	Edgecombe Co.	North Carolina
2000 Median Household Income	\$28,745	\$26,459	\$37,147	\$30,983	\$39,184
2010 Median Household Income	\$35,902	\$30,439	\$44,499	\$32,665	\$45,570
2010 Persons Below Poverty Level (%)	--	23.8%	14.1%	22.3%	15.5%

Source: 2000 US Census; 2006-2010 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates.



Vehicle Availability and Travel Time to Work

Over 12% of the city’s residents in occupied housing do not have a vehicle available. In North Carolina as a whole, 7% of residents do not have access to a vehicle. The city’s residents have only a 17.7 minute median travel time to work. This travel time is significantly below the state and surrounding counties. The travel time suggests local employment opportunities or employment located along the I-95 corridor which speeds access.

Table 10. Vehicle Availability and Travel Time to Work

	Roanoke Rapids		Halifax Co.		Nash Co.		Edgecombe Co.		North Carolina	
	Number	%	Number	%	Number	%	Number	%	Number	%
Occupied Housing Units	6,199	100.0%	21,590	100.0%	37,762	100.0%	21,601	100.0%	3,626,179	100.0%
No Vehicles Available	778	12.6%	2,660	12.3%	2,996	7.9%	2,872	13.3%	234,435	6.5%
1 or More Vehicles	5,421	87.5%	18,930	87.7%	34,766	92.1%	18,729	86.7%	3,391,744	93.5%
Median Travel Time to Work	17.7 minutes		21.6 minutes		21.0 minutes		20.2 minutes		23.4 minutes	

Source: 2006-2010 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates.

Tourism

Because of the city’s appealing visitor assets - Roanoke Canal Museum and Trail, Roanoke Rapids Lake, the Roanoke Rapids Historic District, Roanoke Rapids Theatre, and cultural amenities - a major tourism industry is developing. Growing tourism and entertainment in Roanoke Rapids can have a positive influence on the revitalization of Roanoke Avenue and its businesses.



“Avenue at Night” Image Source: City of Roanoke Rapids

Main Street Program

The Main Street Program strategically aligns the needs of Roanoke Rapids with the city’s Central Business District. Revitalization of the uptown/downtown historic district is a key to the viability of the entire community. The City recognizes the importance of stimulating new business opportunities and investment, bringing greater prosperity and an improved quality of life to the entire community. Rejuvenating the historic district is a long-term process and Roanoke Rapids' leaders are acutely aware that a collaborative effort is needed, combining the skills and advantages of both public and private sectors. The Main Street Program can help Roanoke Rapids develop allies, advocates, and leadership that is needed to make Roanoke Avenue a priority for the community and a major economic asset for Roanoke Rapids and Halifax County.



F. Community Profile Summary

- ▶ The Number **1 & 2 Health Priorities** in Halifax County are **Obesity** and **Diabetes**.
- ▶ The Roanoke Rapids **population** has **declined** from 16,957 in 2000 to 15,754 in 2010, a 7.1% decrease.
- ▶ Roanoke Rapids' **median age increased** from 36.8 in 2000 to 37.9 in 2010.
- ▶ The total number of **housing units** in Roanoke Rapids declined by 6% from 2000 to 2010.
- ▶ In 2010, approximately 57% of the city's **housing** was **30 years old or older**.
- ▶ Roanoke Rapids' **median housing values** are **lower** than those of Nash/Edgecombe counties and North Carolina.
- ▶ In 2010, the **public sector** accounted for 39.1% of Halifax County's jobs.
- ▶ In 2010, the city's **median household income** was **lower** than that of the state by almost \$10,000.
- ▶ **Tourism** is increasing its significance as a **contributor** to the city's **economy**.
- ▶ **Central Business District** revitalization is **essential** to Roanoke Rapids' long-term economic viability.