



2025 Long-Range Strategic Plan

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

ROANE COUNTY EXECUTIVE

Mr. Wade Creswell

ROANE COUNTY COMMISSION LONG-RANGE PLANNING COMMITTEE

Mr. Shannon Hester
Mr. David Brackett
Mr. Lance Duff
Mr. Ben Gann
Mr. Brad Goss
Ms. Nancy Hamilton
Mr. Mike Hooks
Mr. Chris Lehman

ROANE COUNTY PLANNERS

Mr. Glen Cofer
Ms. Brooke Mayes
Mr. Jake Anderson, GIS Department



Prepared by:

Community Development Partners, LLC



FOREWORD

I am proud to have participated in the process to produce Roane County's first comprehensive, long-term, strategic plan. I am also proud to have walked through this two-year long journey with several county commissioners, department directors, staff members, city leaders, and community members. Any plan that didn't involve input from as many perspectives as possible would have been inadequate and would have missed the mark.

But this process hasn't been easy. There are so many factors that make it difficult to come to a consensus on choosing a direction for our county in so many areas of focus. Nothing worth doing ever comes easy.

This plan establishes a direction for Roane County to pursue in areas where we have the most challenges. Some areas provide us with more direction than others; therefore, we are further along in pursuing our direction in some areas than we are in others. However, this process of planning never stops.

This is how we implement the plan instead of it becoming just another document that sits on a shelf. It is alive and ever-changing. The goal in establishing this plan is as much about prioritizing the planning process as it is about the plan itself.

This plan and the process to produce it moved the county's collective vision to a much longer-term perspective. That, in and of itself, is a major victory for our county. We must treat planning as the priority rather than relying on the plan itself, which will be challenged and will need to be adjusted as circumstances and conditions change.

So, as you read or use this plan, please understand that the process of long-term planning never stops. But now we have a direction to pursue, so let's get going!

Thank you for reading this plan, and please help Roane County keep our vision far down the road toward a much brighter future.

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read "John C. ...".

Roane County Executive

Table of Contents

Executive Summary	01
--------------------------	-----------

Introduction	05
---------------------	-----------

- Overview
- Vision and Goals
- County History
- Geography and Natural Features
- Public Engagement
- Past Plans

Demographics	13
---------------------	-----------

- Population and Trends
- Demographic Composition

Economy & Tourism	22
------------------------------	-----------

- 2022 Economic Overview
- Economic Impact of Tourism

Infrastructure	29
-----------------------	-----------

- Transportation
- Water and Wastewater
- Broadband

Facilities & Services 38

Emergency Services
Fire Services
Parks and Recreation
School District and Facilities

Housing, Land Use, & Zoning 47

Roane County 2024 Housing Market
Housing Characteristics
Housing Development Patterns
Roane County Zoning
Roane County Target Development and Growth Area

Strategic Implementation & Recommendations 58

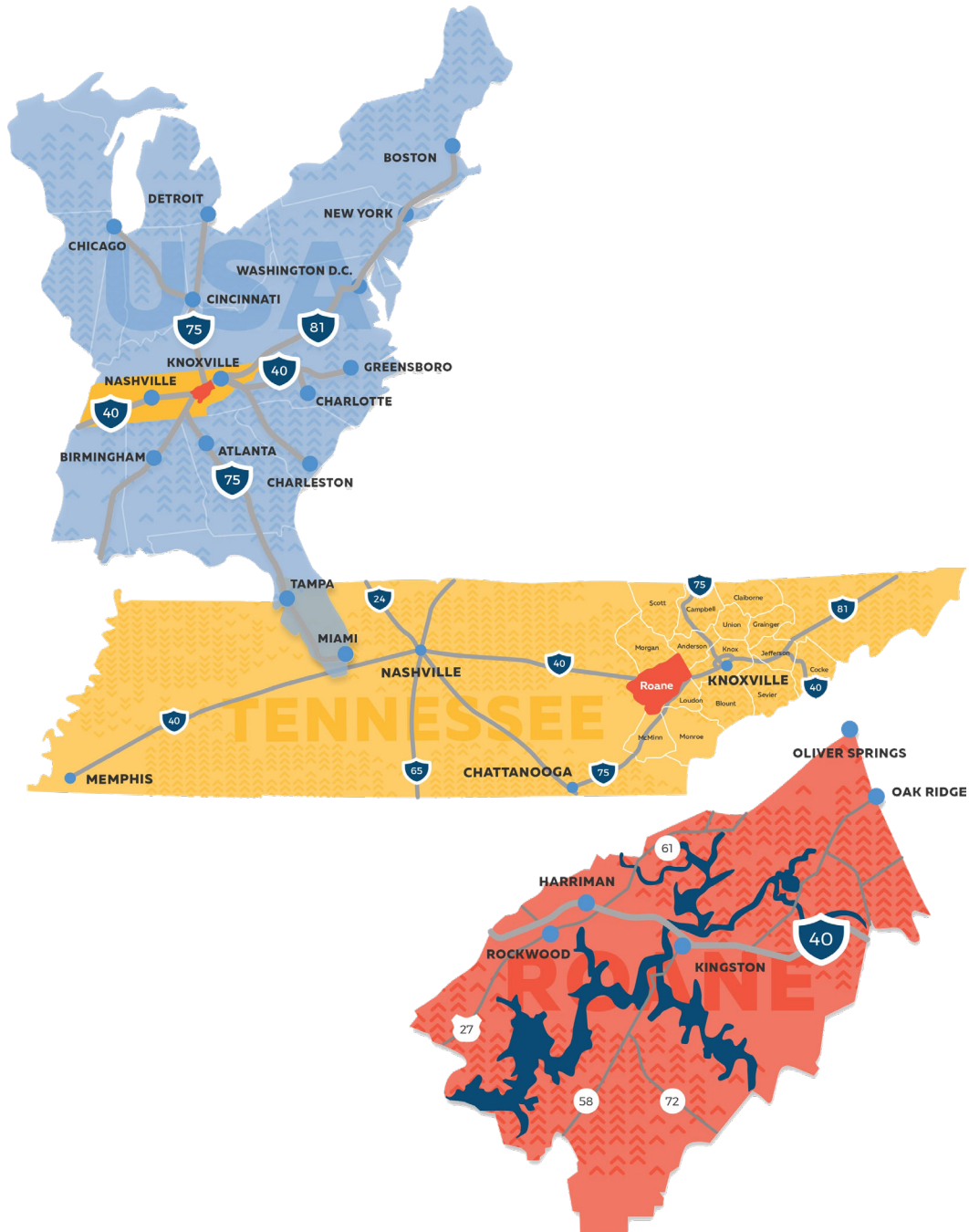
Short Range Recommendations (0 – 2 years)
Medium Range Recommendations (3 – 6 years)
Long-Range Recommendations (7 – 10+ Years)

Appendices 72

1. Guiding Growth and Development
2. Updating Zoning and Land Development Standards
3. Zoning Resolution Amendments and Updates
4. Planning Commission Visioning Workshop Survey
5. Public Online Survey

Executive Summary

The *2025 Roane County Long-Range Strategic Plan* is a comprehensive roadmap that outlines the county's development objectives for the next five to ten years. The plan seeks to balance economic growth with the preservation of natural resources, guiding sustainable development, infrastructure investment, and addressing community needs. Developed by the Roane County Commission Long-Range Planning Committee, the plan reflects input from public engagement and the county government. It is designed as a living document, adaptable to future conditions while focusing on long-term goals.



VISIONS AND GOALS

The strategic plan is built around the following key goals established in 2024, which guide future actions and implementations:



Define a vision and standards that reflect the values of the county.



Address current problems and anticipate future issues in the county.



Align with other local and regional plans, such as capital improvement plans; parks and recreation plans; or transportation plans as an ongoing effort toward a shared vision.



Manage population and development growth.



Guide land use, zoning, and ordinances.



Create a living and ongoing document.



Set priorities and responsibilities for where the county should devote its time, attention, and investment.



Develop a system for implementing and measuring progress, including periodic updates to the document.



Provide staff and leadership guidance for actions and implementations that meet the needs and aspirations of its citizens.

Key Focus Areas

1

ECONOMY & TOURISM

Roane County's economy is primarily supported by energy, manufacturing, and healthcare. In 2023, tourism generated \$74 million, with attractions like Watts Bar Lake drawing visitors. Efforts to expand broadband, support small businesses, and attract new industries are critical to diversifying the local economy.

2

INFRASTRUCTURE

Transportation, water, wastewater, and broadband infrastructure are vital for supporting growth. Roane County's strategic location along major highways enhances connectivity. However, there are still challenges with rural broadband coverage and aging water systems. The county is encouraged to make investments in infrastructure, especially in areas designated for future growth.

3

FACILITIES & SERVICES

The county aims to maintain and sustain essential services, including emergency services, fire protection, parks, and school facilities. The aging school facilities are a priority for change and ensuring sustainable growth while maintaining service quality is a central focus.

4

HOUSING & ZONING

Due to rising home prices and an increasing retiree population in the county, the plan focuses on addressing the availability and affordability of housing, as well as the need for updated zoning regulations. Strategies include promoting more housing in growth areas while preserving rural landscapes and agricultural lands.

PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT

Community input played a significant role in shaping the strategic plan. An online public survey, conducted from October 2023 to May 2024, gathered 578 responses, highlighting issues such as broadband access, school facility conditions, infrastructure maintenance, and substance abuse.

STRATEGIC IMPLEMENTATION

Short-term Recommendations (0-2 years)

Address immediate infrastructure needs, update zoning resolutions, monitor programs, and address critical program changes for emergency and public services.

Medium-term Recommendations (3-6 years)

Expand water and wastewater systems, develop new industrial parks, expand broadband, and create programs for local businesses.

Long-term Recommendations (7-10 years)

Expand and update infrastructure, including transportation and energy; address poverty; and continue to update and adapt the plan to evolving community needs.

CONCLUSION

The *2025 Roane County Long-Range Strategic Plan* provides a structured approach to managing the county's growth while preserving its unique heritage and natural resources. Through careful planning and continuous community engagement, the plan positions Roane County for sustainable development and long-term prosperity.

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

The Roane County Long-Range Strategic Master Plan is a comprehensive guide for the county's development over the next several decades. It aims to balance the preservation of the county's unique heritage and natural resources with the need for sustainable economic and housing development, as well as infrastructure tracking and updating. The plan is the result of extensive conversations, discussions, and careful consideration of the county's future challenges and opportunities. Developed by the Roane County Planning Commission, this strategic plan is designed to align with the aspirations of the community and to provide a feasible roadmap for the county's future.

The Roane County Long-Range Strategic Master Plan is a living document, intended to guide the county's development while remaining flexible enough to adapt to changing circumstances. Through careful planning, ongoing community engagement, and dedicated implementation, Roane County is well-positioned to achieve its vision of becoming a vibrant, sustainable, and prosperous community.

OVERVIEW

Roane County, located in East Tennessee, is at a crossroads of growth and preservation. This plan outlines the county's long-term vision and strategic goals across various sectors, including infrastructure, economy, land use, housing, and public services. The focus is on fostering a vibrant community where economic vitality, housing access, environmental stewardship, and quality of life are balanced. The plan encompasses an assessment of current conditions, an analysis of trends, and a set of recommendations to guide decision-making for county officials, stakeholders, and residents.



VISIONS & GOALS

In April 2024, the Roane County Planning Commission conducted a discussion and vote to establish the goals and vision for the Roane County Long-Range Strategic Plan. The goals and vision were determined through a majority vote and discussion, with the intention of guiding the plan in developing future action plans and implementations.

Define a vision and standards that reflect the values of the county.

Address current problems and anticipate future issues in the county.

Align with other local and regional plans, such as capital improvement plans; parks and recreation plans; or transportation plans as an ongoing effort toward a shared vision.

Manage population and development growth.

Guide land use, zoning, and ordinances.

Create a living and ongoing document.

Set priorities and responsibilities for where the County should devote its time, attention, and investment.

Develop a system for implementing and measuring progress, including periodic updates to the document.

Provide staff and leadership guidance for actions and implementations that meet the needs and aspirations of its citizens.

VISIONS FOR THE ROANE COUNTY LONG-RANGE STRATEGIC PLAN

1

LIVABLE BUILT ENVIRONMENT

Ensure that all elements of the built environment, including land use, transportation, housing, energy, and infrastructure, work together to provide sustainable, green places for living, working, and recreation, with a high quality of life.

Encourage design standards appropriate to the community context.

Provide accessible public facilities and spaces.

Conserve and reuse historic resources.

2

HARMONY WITH NATURE

Ensure that the contributions of natural resources to human well-being are explicitly recognized and valued, and that maintaining their health is a primary objective.

Restore, connect, and protect natural habitats and sensitive lands.

Encourage development that respects natural topography.

Comply with state and local air quality standards.

Provide for solid waste reduction.

Protect and manage streams, watersheds, and floodplains.

3

RESILIENT ECONOMY

Ensure that the community is prepared to deal with both positive and negative changes in its economic health and to initiate sustainable urban development and redevelopment strategies that foster green business growth and build reliance on local assets.

Provide the physical capacity for economic growth.

Plan for a balanced land-use mix for fiscal sustainability.

Encourage community-based economic development and revitalization.

Provide and maintain infrastructure capacity in line with growth or decline demands.

4

INTERWOVEN EQUITY

Ensure fairness and equity in providing for the housing, services, health, safety, and livelihood needs of all citizens and groups.

Provide a range of housing types.

Plan for a jobs/housing balance.

Plan for the physical, environmental, and economic improvement of at-risk, distressed, and disadvantaged neighborhoods.

Plan for improved health and safety for at-risk populations.

Provide accessible, quality public services, facilities, and health care to minority and low-income populations.

Upgrade infrastructure and facilities in older and substandard areas.

Plan for workforce diversity and development.

5

HEALTHY COMMUNITY

Ensure fairness and equity in providing for the housing, services, health, safety, and livelihood needs of all citizens and groups.

Provide a range of housing types.

Plan for a jobs/housing balance.

Plan for the physical, environmental, and economic improvement of at-risk, distressed, and disadvantaged neighborhoods.

Plan for improved health and safety for at-risk populations.

6

RESPONSIBLE REGIONALISM

Ensure that all local proposals account for, connect with, and support the plans of adjacent jurisdictions and the surrounding region.

Coordinate local and regional housing plan goals.

Promote regional cooperation and sharing of resources.

Enhance connections between local activity centers and regional destinations.

Encourage consistency between local capital improvement programs and regional infrastructure priorities.

COUNTY HISTORY

Roane County, Tennessee, was established in 1801 and named after Archibald Roane, the second governor of Tennessee. The county's early history is closely tied to its strategic location along the Tennessee River, which played a vital role in its development. The river allowed for transportation and trade, especially during the 19th century, when agriculture and commerce flourished. Early settlements such as Kingston, one of Tennessee's oldest cities, briefly served as the state capital in 1807.

During the Civil War, Roane County was divided in its loyalties, with both Union and Confederate sympathies present. After the war, the construction of railroads in the late 19th century, such as the Tennessee Central Railroad, further boosted the county's economic growth, attracting industries like coal mining and manufacturing.

In the mid-20th century, the creation of Watts Bar Dam by the Tennessee Valley Authority (TVA) in 1942 brought hydroelectric power, flood control, and economic development to the region, transforming Roane County into a hub for recreation and energy production. Today, the county balances its rich history with modern developments in energy, industry, and tourism.



Old Roane County Courthouse



Gov. Archibald Roane

Sources:

Roane County Heritage Commission,
Tennessee Encyclopedia:
Roane County History,
Tennessee Valley Authority (TVA)
History

GEOGRAPHY & NATURAL FEATURES

Roane County, Tennessee, is located in the eastern part of the state and is characterized by diverse geography and rich natural features. The county is bordered by the Tennessee River, with Watts Bar Lake serving as a major waterway and recreational area. The terrain varies from rolling hills and fertile valleys to forested ridges, typical of the Appalachian Ridge-and-Valley region. The Clinch and Emory Rivers also run through the county, contributing to its lush landscape and providing important ecological and recreational resources.

Roane County's proximity to the Cumberland Plateau and the Great Smoky Mountains further enhances its scenic beauty. The region is home to numerous parks, wildlife management areas, and natural preserves, offering ample opportunities for hiking, boating, fishing, and wildlife observation. These natural features not only define the county's landscape but also play a vital role in its economy and recreational tourism.

Watts Bar Lake



PAST PLANS

Roane County has not previously developed a comprehensive long-range plan to address all aspects of government management. The Roane County Long-Range Strategic Plan seeks to inclusively encompass as many aspects as possible to facilitate long-term planning for the county's future. Several organizations have collaboratively or independently developed plans adjacently or in coordination with Roane County. This section duly acknowledges these plans to encourage, advance, or refine this plan's recommendations that align with or build upon these existing plans.

2020 Roane County 10 Year Parks and Recreation Master Plan

Roane-County-Master-Plan-10-Year.pdf
(roanecountyttn.gov)

2020 Roane County Trail Master Plan

Roane County Trails Master Plan_11x17-book_June 2020_DRAFT-06-05 PO_more compressed.pdf (roanecountyttn.gov)

2021 East Tennessee South Rural Regional Transportation Plan - TDOT

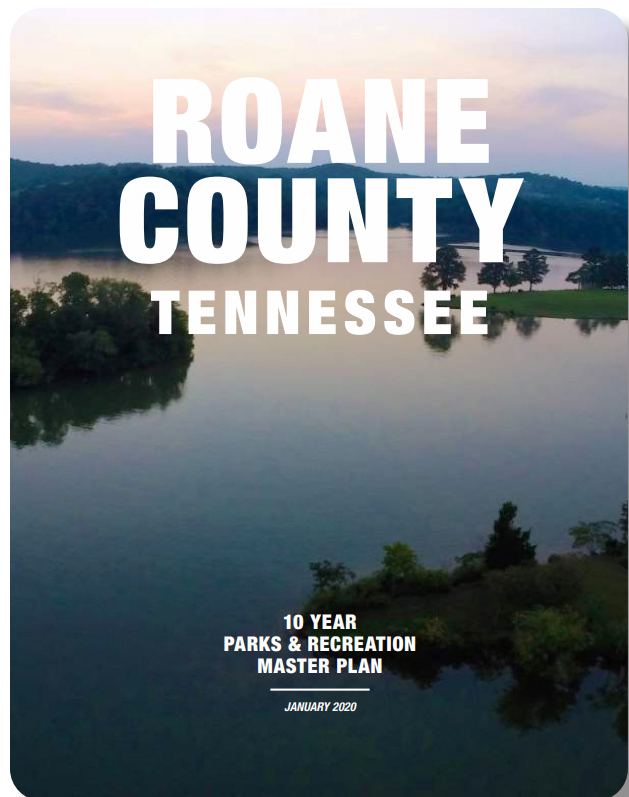
East Tennessee South Rural Planning Organization. The Rural Regional Transportation Plans stem from recommendations contained within TDOT's 25-Year Long-Range Transportation Policy Plan.
Rural Regional Transportation Plans (tn.gov)

Roane County Anti-Drug Coalition (RCADC) - 2024 plan in development

The Roane County Anti-Drug Coalition (RCADC) (roaneantidrug.org)

Roane County Basic Emergency Operations Plan (BEOP)

Office of Emergency Services - Roane County Government (roanecountyttn.gov)



PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT

Public engagement has been a fundamental aspect of the planning process for Roane County's Long-Range Strategic Master Plan. The input gathered reflects the diverse perspectives and priorities of Roane County's residents, ensuring that the plan is deeply rooted in the community's values.

An online public survey was conducted in the community from October 2023 to May 2024, and it received 578 responses. Major notable issues highlighted in the community included broadband internet access, the condition of school facilities, infrastructure maintenance, drug addiction, and substance abuse. A public workshop took place on April 30th at the Kingston Community Center, where similar concerns were discussed. The detailed online public survey results can be found in Appendix 5 of this document.



CHAPTER TWO

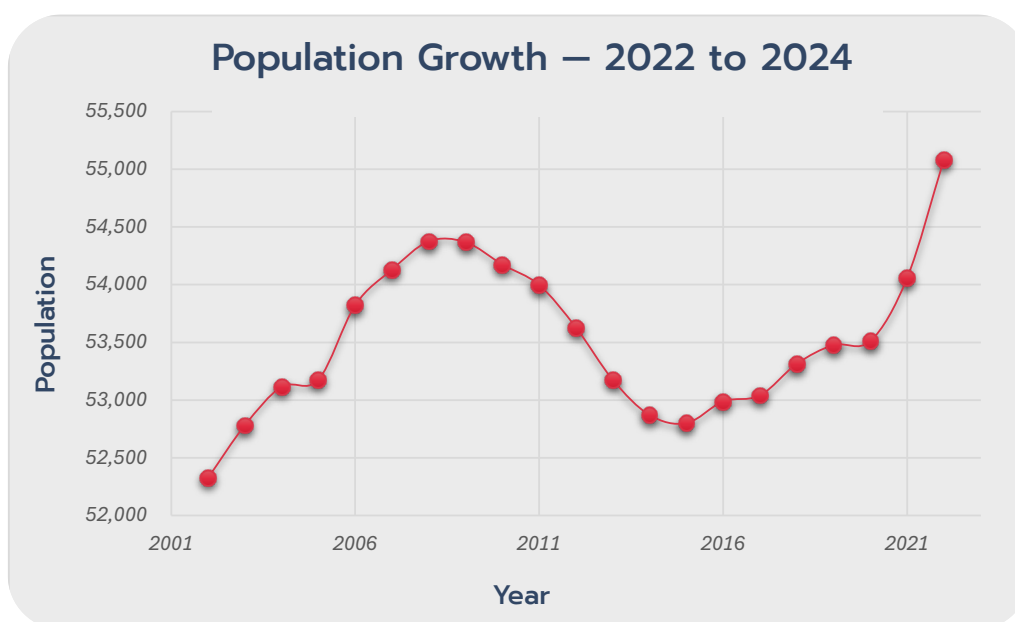
DEMOGRAPHICS

Roane County has a diverse demographic profile that consists of both rural and small-town populations. This reflects broader demographic trends in rural Tennessee. Understanding the county's demographic composition is crucial for planning future infrastructure, housing, and services. This chapter will delve into Roane County's population structure; age distribution; race and ethnicity; education levels; income; and other demographic factors, using data from the U.S. Census Bureau for 2022.¹ The Roane County Long-Range Strategic Master Plan is a living document, intended

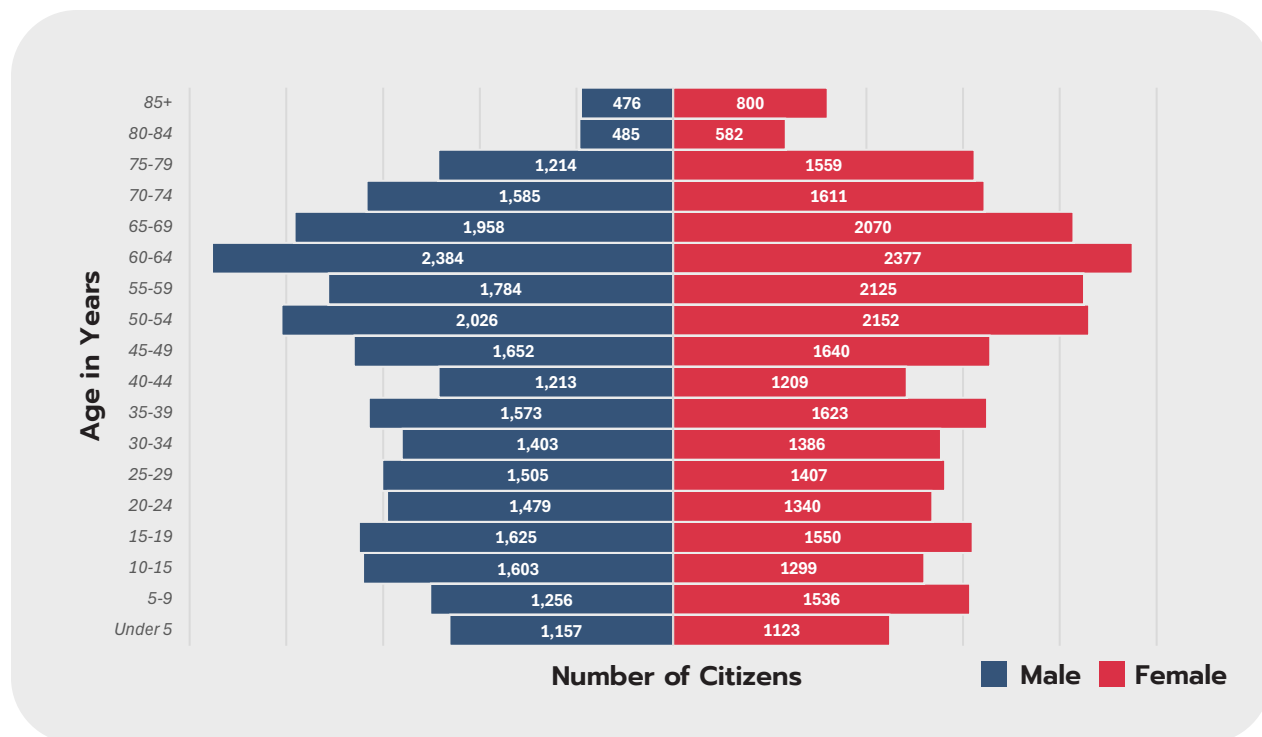
to guide the county's development while remaining flexible enough to adapt to changing circumstances. Through careful planning, ongoing community engagement, and dedicated implementation, Roane County is well-positioned to achieve its vision of becoming a vibrant, sustainable, and prosperous community.

According to the most recent data, Roane County is home to approximately 56,000 residents. The county has seen rapid population growth in recent years, surpassing the population loss experienced in the mid-2010s. After the 2020 pandemic, there was a notable increase in population, and the growth rate continues to rise steadily. This growth is attributed to a net migration to the area, with new residents moving into the county from other parts of Tennessee and other states. Many new residents are choosing to live in the rural areas of Roane County.

¹ Census: https://data.census.gov/profile/Roane_County,_Tennessee?q=050XX00US47145 (2022)
Census Reporter: <https://censusreporter.org/profiles/05000US47145-roane-county-tn/> (2022)



POPULATION BY AGE AND SEX 2022 Census

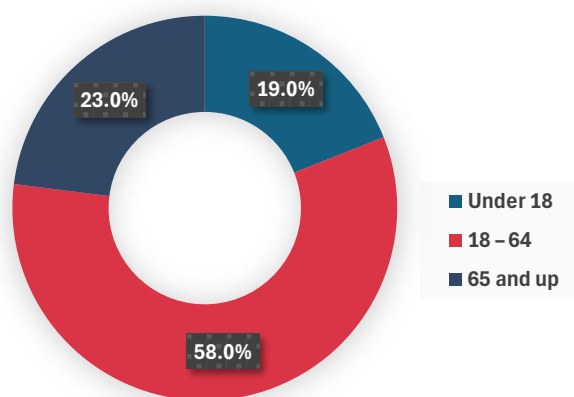


AGE DISTRIBUTION

The population in Roane County is getting older, which is a common trend in many rural areas of Tennessee. As of 2022, the median age in the county was 47.4 years, higher than both the state and national averages. Around 23% of residents are 65 years old or older, indicating that the county is a popular retirement destination due to its affordable living costs and natural beauty.

On the other hand, the younger population (under 18) makes up about 19% of the total population, and unfortunately, is decreasing over time. Individuals aged 18–64 make up roughly 58% of the population and comprise the majority. This aging trend is expected to continue, posing challenges for healthcare services, housing, education, and workforce development.

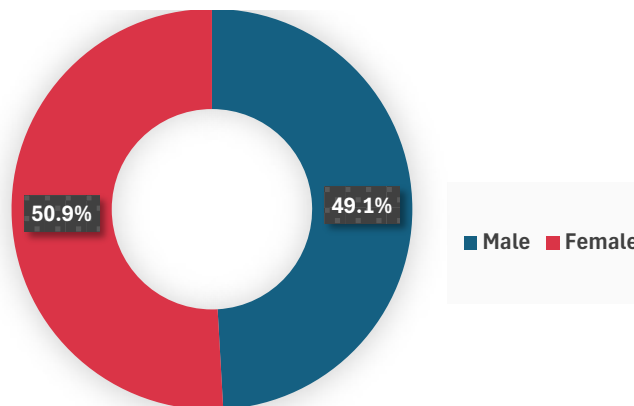
POPULATION PERCENTAGE BY AGE 2022 CENSUS



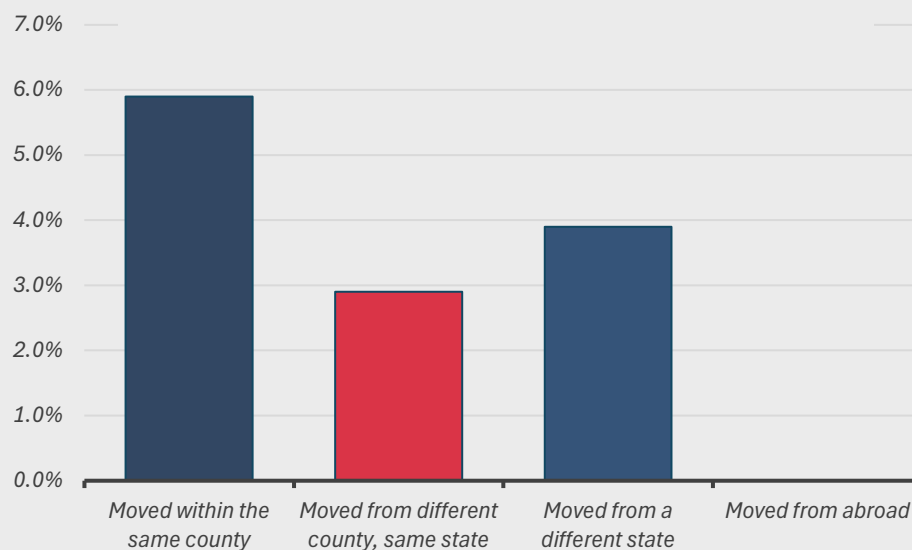
GENDER DISTRIBUTION

The gender distribution in Roane County is nearly equal, with 50.9% being female and 49.1% male. This is comparable to that of the nation as a whole: The US population distribution by gender is estimated to be approximately 49.59% male and 50.41% female.

POPULATION PERCENTAGE BY GENDER 2022 Census



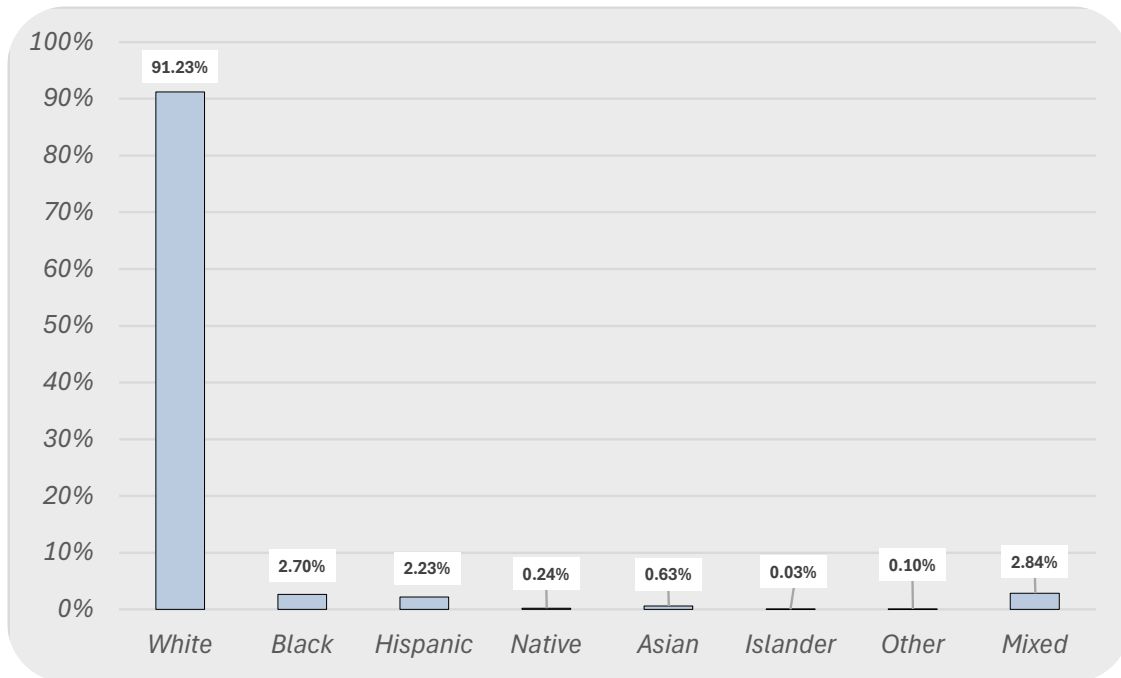
Residential Mobility in the Last Year 2022 Census



RACE & ETHNICITY

As of 2022, the population of Roane County is mostly non-Hispanic white, accounting for approximately 91% of residents. The county has a relatively small minority population, with African Americans comprising around 3% of the population and Hispanic or Latino individuals making up about 2%.

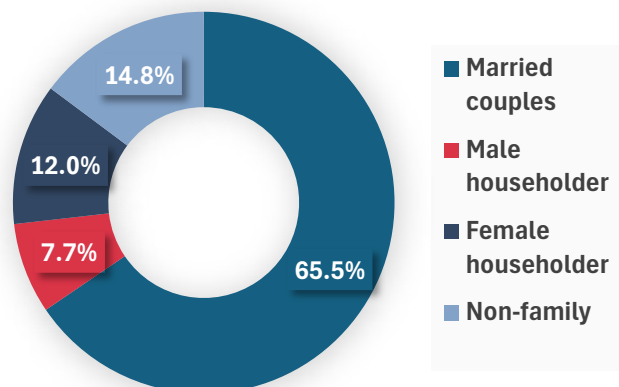
RACE & ETHNICITY BY PERCENTAGE 2022 Census



HOUSEHOLD COMPOSITION

In 2022, Roane County had around 22,000 households, with an average of 2.4 persons per household. There is a growing number of single-person households, especially among older adults, reflecting the county's aging population. While married couples make up the majority of households, there is also a significant number of non-family households, including individuals living alone or with non-relatives.

POPULATION BY HOUSEHOLD TYPE 2022 Census

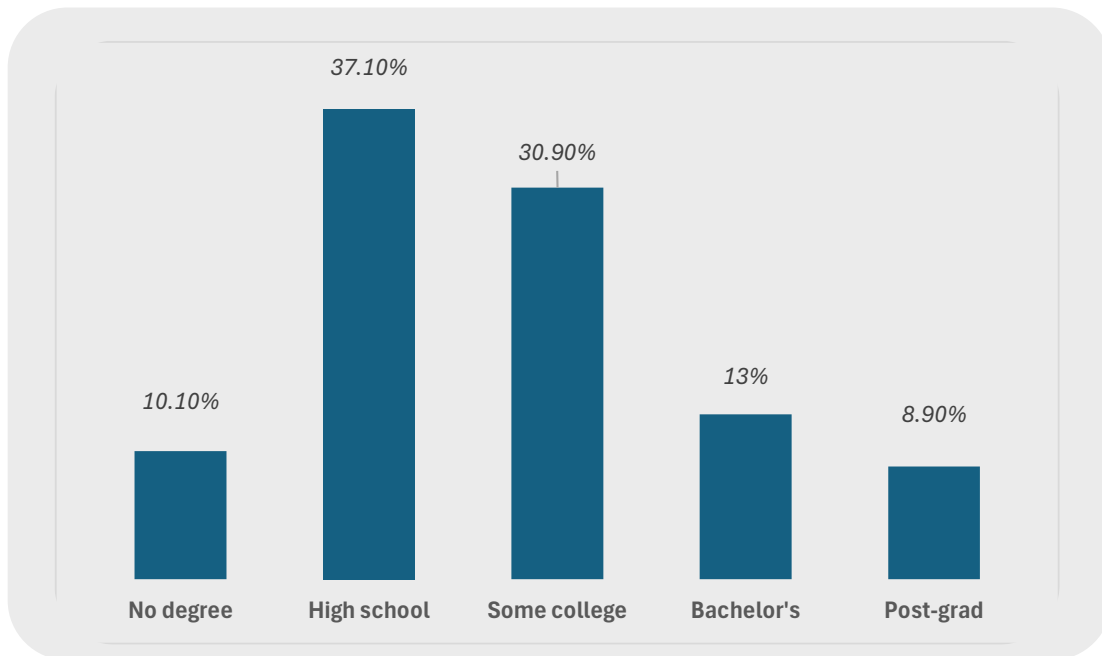


EDUCATION LEVELS

As of 2022, about 90% of residents over the age of 25 have earned a high school diploma or some higher education, and approximately 22% have a bachelor's degree or higher. Access to higher education is supported by nearby institutions such as Roane State Community College, which is an important resource for traditional students and adults seeking workforce development or continuing education in the county.

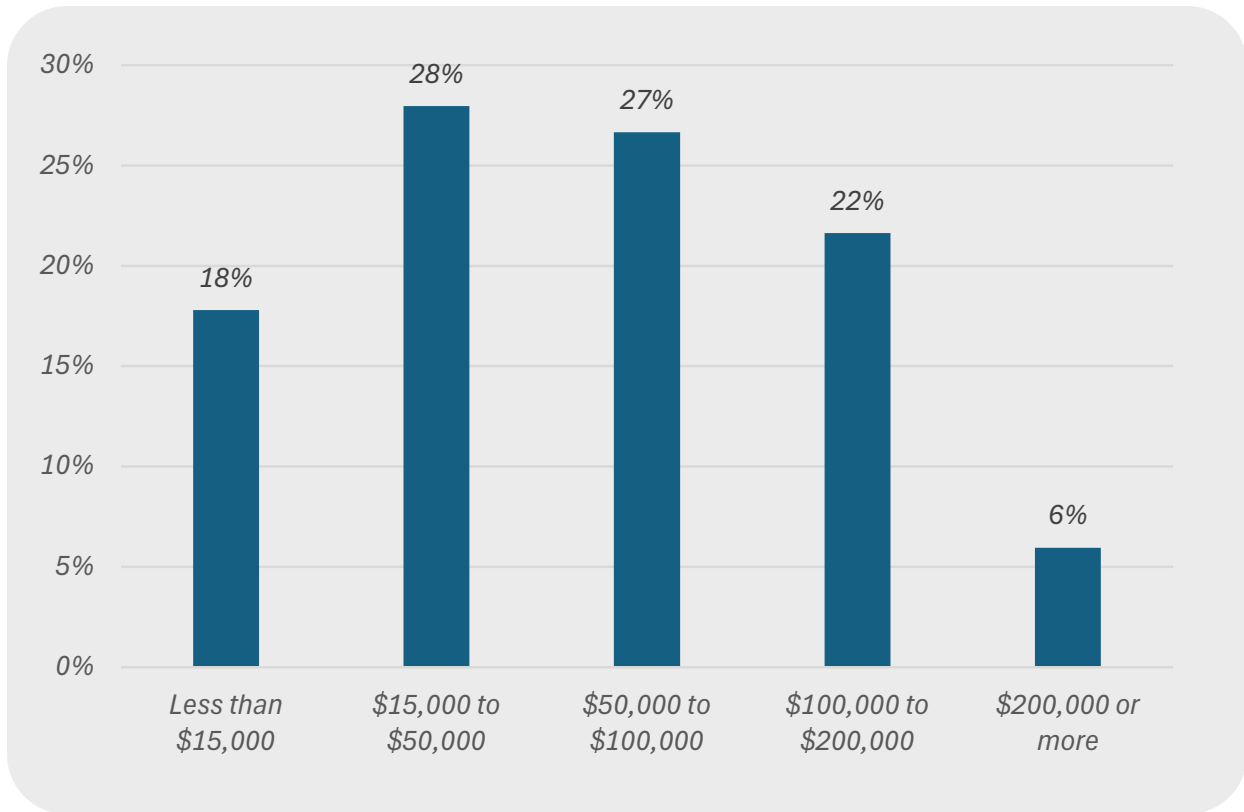


POPULATION BY HIGHEST EDUCATION LEVEL 2022 Census



INCOME & BENEFITS

(in 2022 inflation-adjusted dollars) 2022 Census

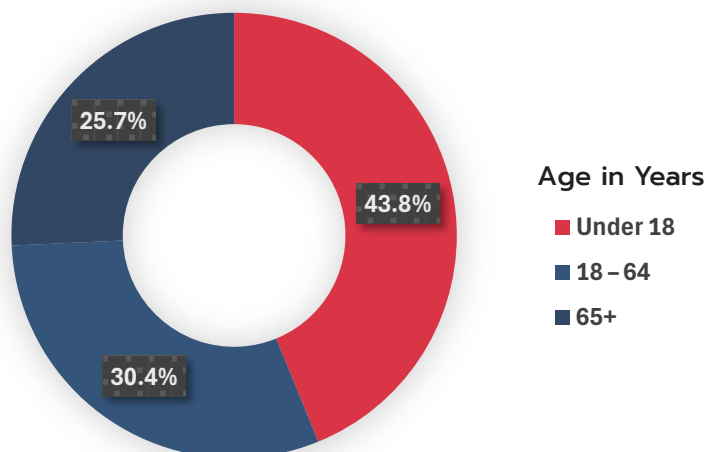


POVERTY

The poverty rate in Roane County is approximately 12% as of 2022, which is lower than the state average of 14%. However, poverty is especially significant among children below 18, with a rate of 16.7%. This highlights the need for specific social services and possible family support initiatives targeted towards this demographic.

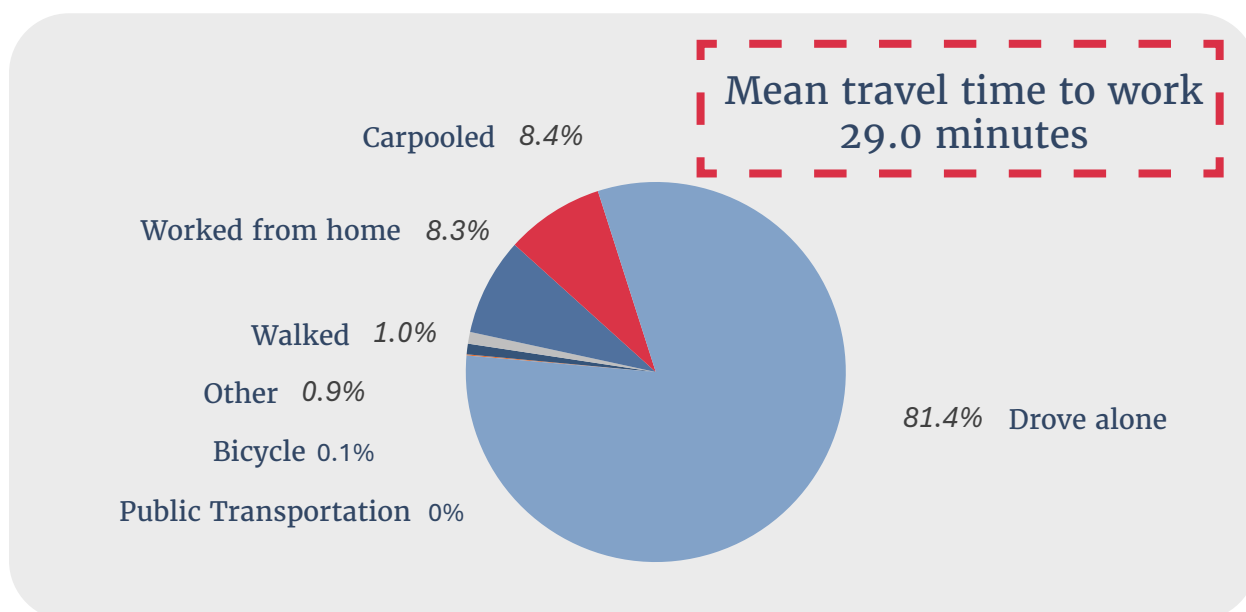
POVERTY PERCENTAGE BY AGE

2022 Census



Class of Worker	Population	
Private wage & salary workers	16,925	71.5%
Government workers	5,039	21.3%
Self employed in their own, non-corporate business workers	1,668	7.0%
Unpaid, family workers	36	0.2%

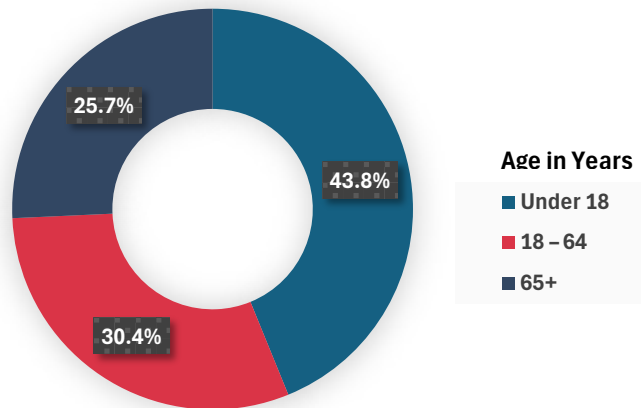
COMMUTING HABITS 2022 Census



POVERTY

The poverty rate in Roane County is approximately 12% as of 2022, which is lower than the state average of 14%. However, poverty is especially significant among children below 18, with a rate of 16.7%. This highlights the need for specific social services and possible family support initiatives targeted towards this demographic.

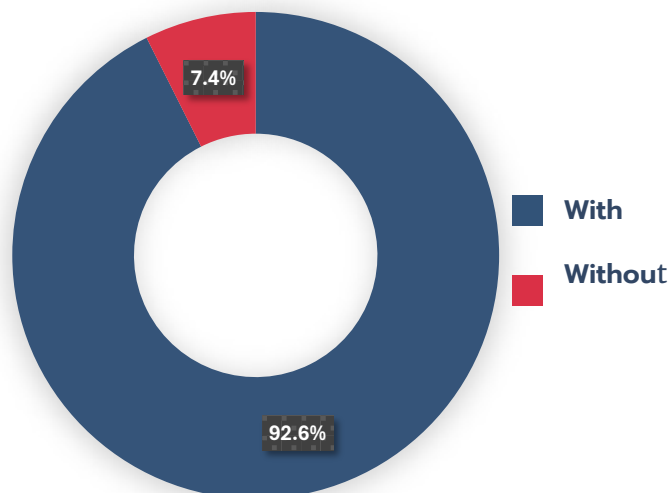
Poverty Percentage by Age
2022 Census



HEALTH & HEALTHCARE ACCESS

Roane County has an aging population that makes up the majority of the residents. The county has one major hospital, Roane Medical Center, which has 54 private beds. In 2022, approximately 7% of adults in the county reported not having health insurance. Access to healthcare is a significant concern, particularly in rural areas. Therefore, there is a need to consider investing in healthcare facilities and clinics within the county.

HEALTH INSURANCE COVERAGE BY PERCENTAGE
2022 Census



CONCLUSION

The demographic profile of Roane County presents both opportunities and challenges associated with rural living. The aging population, regional growth, and average income and education levels necessitate careful planning and specific interventions. It is important to address issues such as rapid population growth and childhood poverty while making use of the county's community resources. This will be crucial for fostering sustainable development and enhancing the quality of life for all residents in Roane County.

CHAPTER THREE

ECONOMY & TOURISM

In 2022, Roane County had a diverse economy anchored by key industries such as energy, manufacturing, healthcare, and education. The Tennessee Valley Authority (TVA) and Oak Ridge National Laboratory (ORNL) are major employers that provide stable, high-paying jobs in energy production and research. Manufacturing also played a significant role, with companies involved in automotive parts, industrial equipment, and other goods contributing to local employment.

Healthcare and education were significant sectors as well, with Roane State Community College and local healthcare facilities offering both employment and essential services. However, there were ongoing concerns about attracting and retaining younger workers, as the younger population is decreasing over time. Efforts to boost economic development and expand broadband access were key priorities for growth and diversification.



**Median Household
Income**

\$66,460



**Poverty
Rate**

12.2%



**Unemployment
Rate**

2.7%



**Population
16+ yrs**

45,191 = 100%



**In
Labor Force**

24,946 = 55%

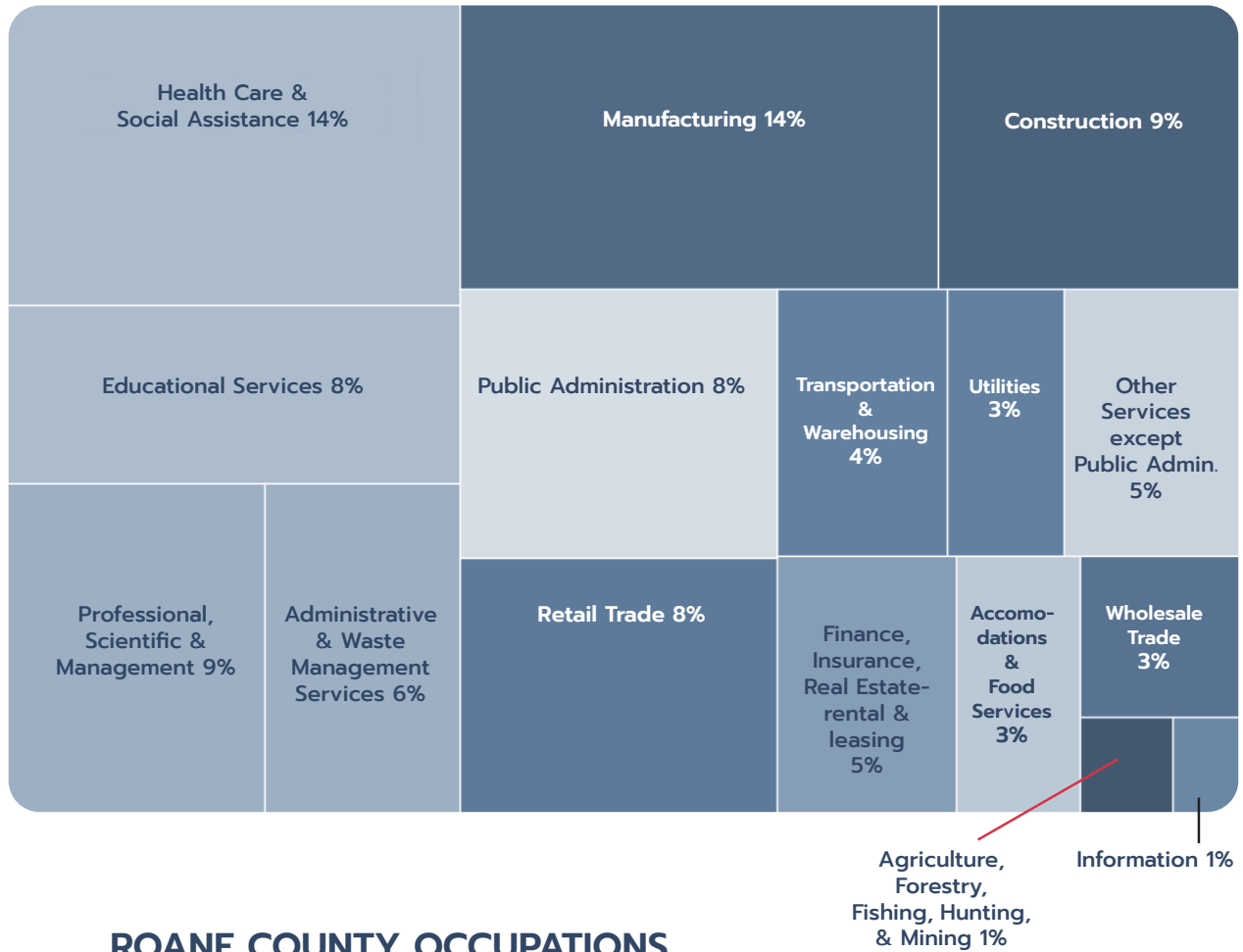


**Not in
Labor Force**

20,245 = 45%

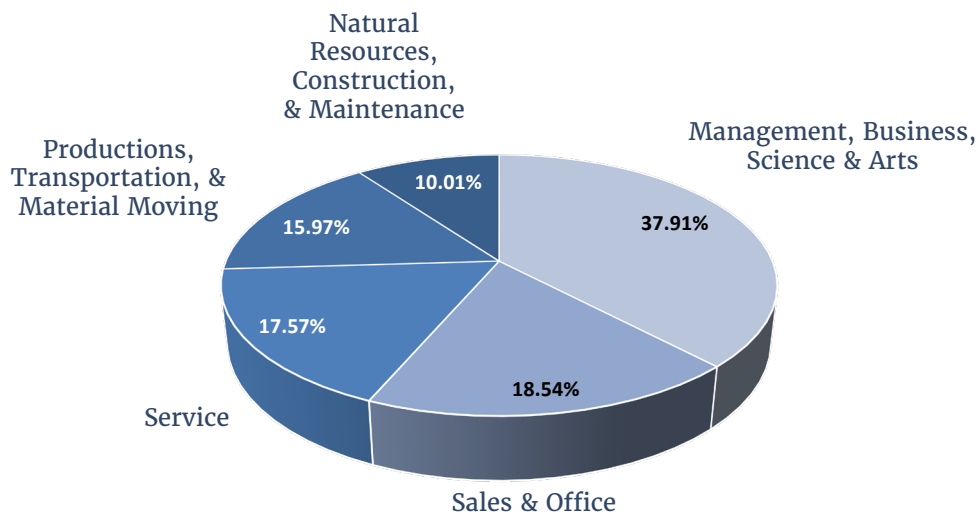
ROANE COUNTY INDUSTRY

What industries & jobs are in the county?
Census 2022



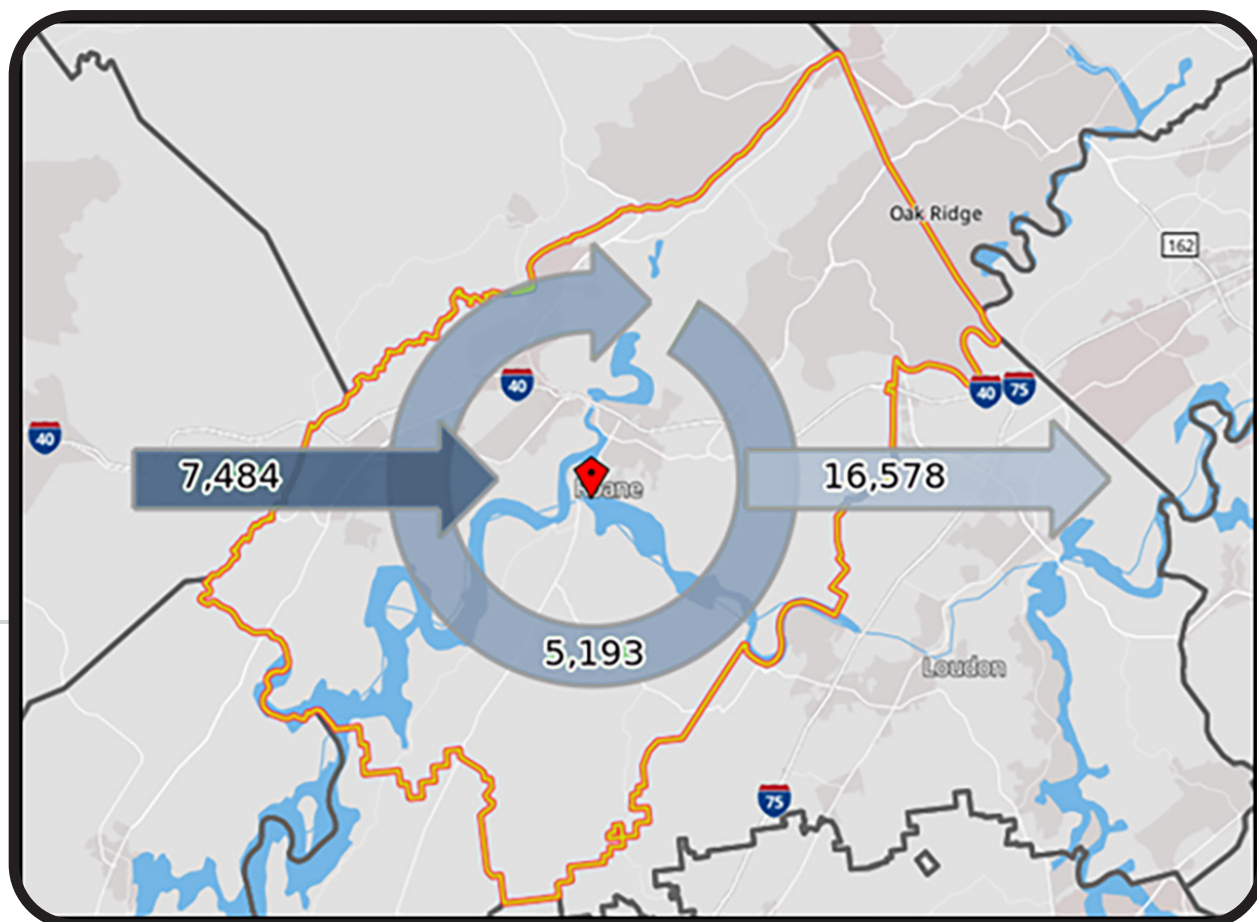
ROANE COUNTY OCCUPATIONS

What jobs do residents have in the county?
Census 2022



INFLOW & OUTFLOW OF JOB COUNTS

On the Map Census 2021



INFLOW & OUTFLOW JOB COUNTS

(All Jobs) Census 2021

Citizens	Count	Share
Employed in the selection area	12,677	100.0%
Employed and living in the selection area	7,484	59.0%
Employed in the selection area but living outside	5,193	41.0%
Living in the selection area	21,771	100.0%
Living and employed in the selection area	16,578	76.1%
Living in the selection area but employed outside	5,193	23.9%

Roane Tourism Attractions Map

<http://roaneattractions.com>



ECONOMIC IMPACT OF TOURISM

Tourism plays a significant role in Roane County's culture. This is largely driven by its natural attractions, such as Watts Bar Lake, the Tennessee River, and various parks and outdoor recreational opportunities. The county's location between Knoxville and Chattanooga makes it an attractive destination for activities like boating, fishing, camping, and hiking, which draw visitors year-round.

In 2022, tourism generated significant revenue for local businesses, estimated at \$70 million in economic impact through lodging, dining, retail, and recreational services. In particular, Watts Bar Lake is a major attraction for tourists seeking waterfront activities and events, contributing to the growth of local hospitality and service industries. Festivals, historical sites, and outdoor events further enhance Roane County's appeal, making tourism a common aspect of residential life in the area.

(Sources: TN Department of Tourist Development,
Roane Co/ Economic Development reports)

2022 & 2023 COMPARISON ROANE COUNTY TOURISM IMPACT

<http://tennesseevacation.com>

Tourism Impact Category	2022	2023	Percent Change
Spending	\$70,807,000	\$74,559,300	5.0%
Lodging	\$18,363,600	\$19,507,500	5.9%
Food & Beverages	\$20,114,000	\$21,279,600	5.5%
Retail	\$5,796,700	\$6,158,800	5.9%
Recreation	\$6,669,200	\$7,284,700	8.4%
Transportation	\$19,863,500	\$20,328,700	2.3%
Labor Income	\$14,993,900	\$16,061,700	6.6%
Employment	602	628	4.1%
State Taxes	\$4,064,800	\$4,325,200	6.0%
Local Taxes	\$2,133,000	\$3,356,000	36.4%
Tax Savings per Household	\$331	\$350	5.4%

DAILY TOURISM IMPACT

on an average day
visitor spending generated

\$193,992 in daily expenditures

\$41,079 in daily labor income

\$11,136 in daily state tax collections

\$8,584 in daily local tax collections

30
County Rank

2022 visitor
spending
ranking compared
to all 95 counties.

DIRECT VISITOR ECONOMIC IMPACT

\$70,806,000 — Spending

602 — Employment

\$14,993,900 — Labor Income

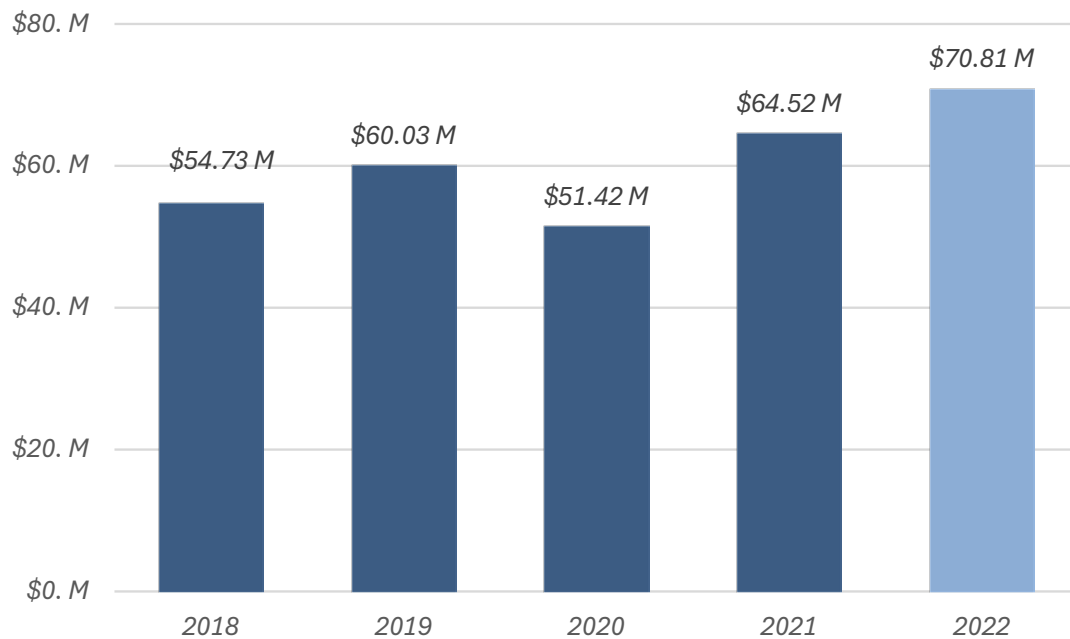
\$4,064,800 — State Taxes

\$3,133,000 — Local Taxes

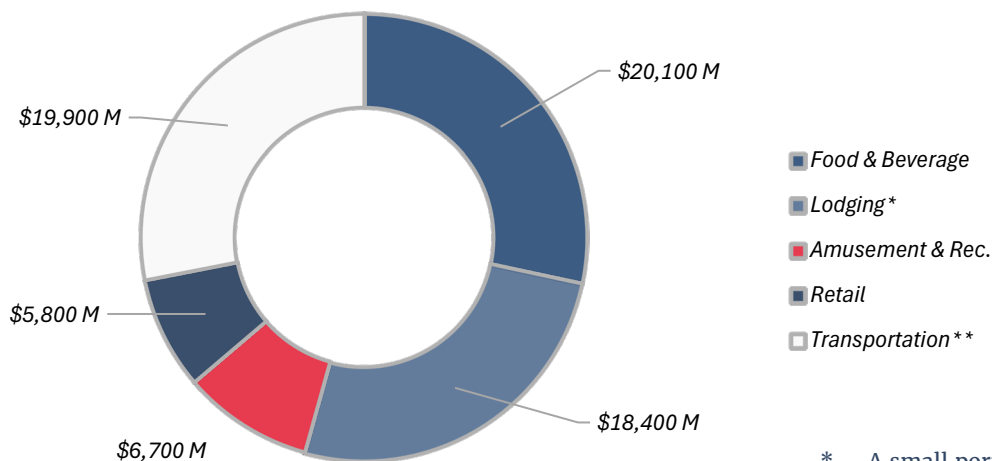


DIRECT VISITOR SPENDING OVER TIME

YOY Change 9.75%



DIRECT VISITOR SPENDING BY INDUSTRY



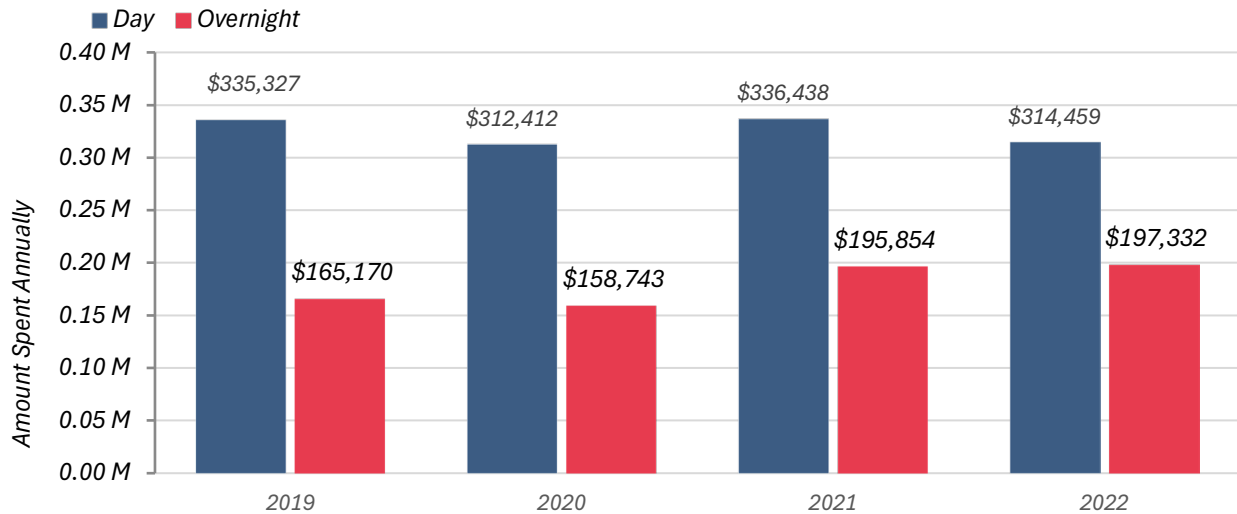
This economic impact report attributes 9.7% of retail and non-retail sales in Roane County to travel and tourism.

* A small portion of Lodging comes from second home spending.

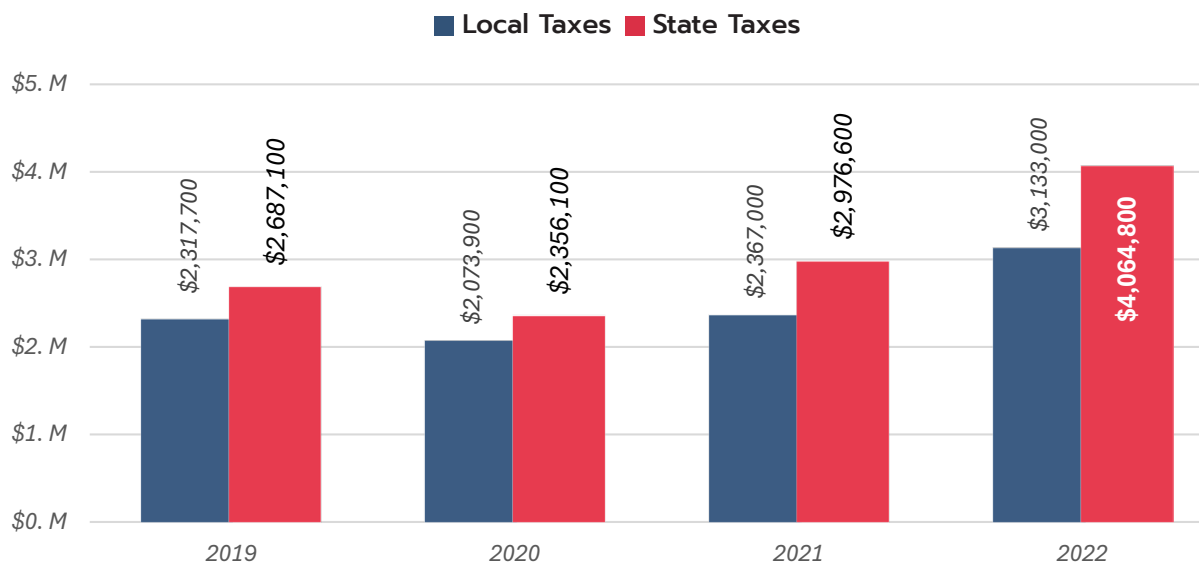
** Transportation includes both ground and air transportation.

ESTIMATED NUMBER OF COUNTY VISITORS

\$138 average visitor spending



STATE & LOCAL TAX COLLECTIONS FROM VISITOR SPENDING



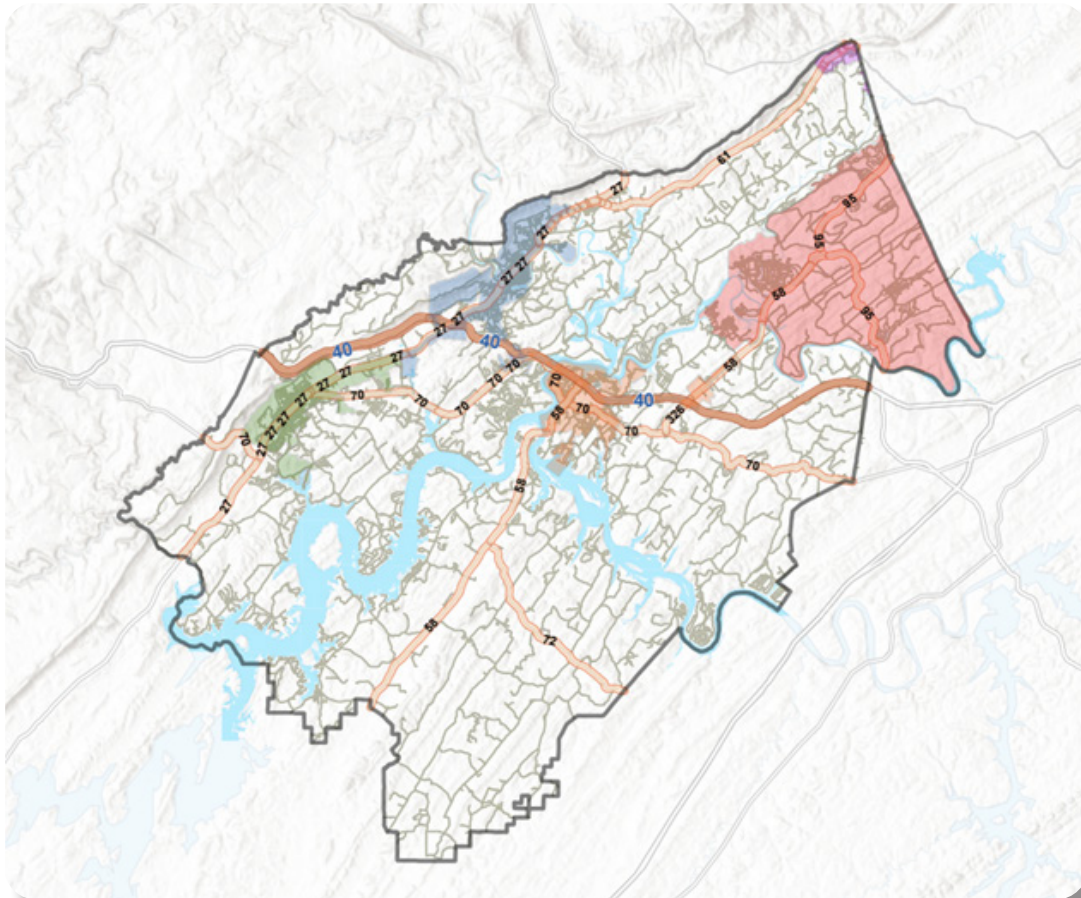
CHAPTER FOUR

INFRASTRUCTURE

TRANSPORTATION

Roane County, located in East Tennessee, is at a crossroads of growth and preservation. This plan outlines the county's long-term vision and strategic goals across various sectors, including infrastructure, economy, land use, housing, and public services. The focus is on fostering a vibrant community where economic vitality, housing access, environmental stewardship, and quality of life are balanced. The plan encompasses an assessment of current conditions, an analysis of trends, and a set of recommendations to guide decision-making for county officials, stakeholders, and residents.

Roane County Roads

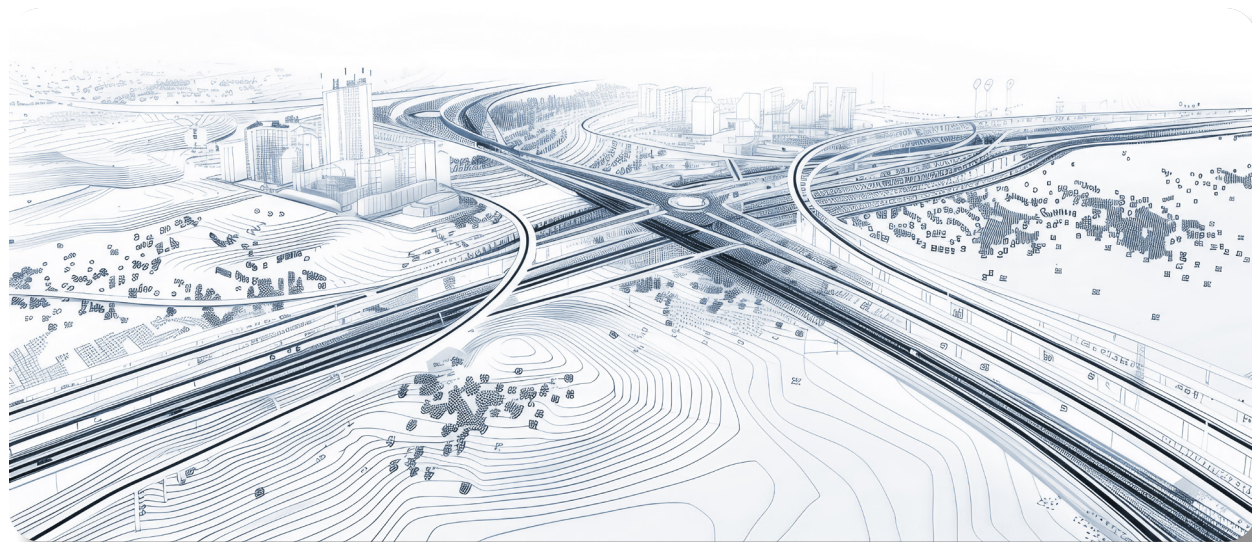


ROAD NETWORKS & HIGHWAYS

Roane County is served by an extensive network of highways and local roads that connect its towns and cities and provide access to surrounding regions. Interstate 40 (I-40) is the primary transportation artery, running east-west through the county, linking Roane County to Knoxville to the east and Nashville to the west. This interstate is vital for commerce, tourism, and daily commuting.

U.S. Highway 27 also serves as a major north-south corridor, providing access to neighboring counties and connecting key areas such as Harriman, Rockwood, and Oliver Springs. Additionally, State Routes 70, 58, 61, and 95 play significant roles in local and regional transportation, offering routes for rural and urban travel within the county.

Roane County's road network supports a mix of residential, commercial, and industrial traffic. However, there are ongoing challenges related to road maintenance and congestion, particularly in high-traffic areas near key commercial centers, and along the I-40 corridor and State Route 70. As the population grows, strategic investments in roadway improvements, capacity expansion, and maintenance will be essential.



BICYCLE & PEDESTRIAN INFRASTRUCTURE

Roane County's transportation infrastructure for bicyclists and pedestrians is limited but growing, particularly in parks and recreational areas. There is a trend for more dedicated bike infrastructure and pedestrian paths, especially near schools, parks, and urban centers. Future county development plans should include investments in multi-modal transportation infrastructure that regionally connects from city to city along the major routes.



RAIL & FREIGHT TRANSPORTATION

Roane County has a significant industrial base, and rail transportation is vital for freight movement. Norfolk Southern Railway serves the area, providing important rail connections for the transportation of goods, especially for the manufacturing and energy sectors. The availability of rail infrastructure supports economic growth by facilitating the movement of raw materials and finished products to and from the region.

AIR TRANSPORTATION

While Roane County does not have a major airport, residents have access to regional air travel through McGhee Tyson Airport, located approximately 45 miles away in Knoxville. McGhee Tyson provides commercial flights to national destinations, supporting business travel, tourism, and connectivity to broader markets.

For smaller private aircraft, Rockwood Municipal Airport offers general aviation services, including a 5,000-foot runway. This facility caters primarily to local business and private travel, and while it does not handle commercial flights, it serves as a valuable resource for corporate and recreational aviation.

CHALLENGES & FUTURE TRANSPORTATION NEEDS

Roane County is facing various transportation challenges as it plans for the future. Improving the major corridors and arteries of the county should be the top priority for road improvements. Addressing traffic congestion, especially near I-40 and State Route 70, will require collaboration with the Federal Highway Administration and the Tennessee Department of Transportation. The lack of alternative transportation options is affecting the mobility of older residents who cannot drive or do not have their own vehicles, highlighting the need for improved services, especially for vulnerable populations. Maintenance will be essential.



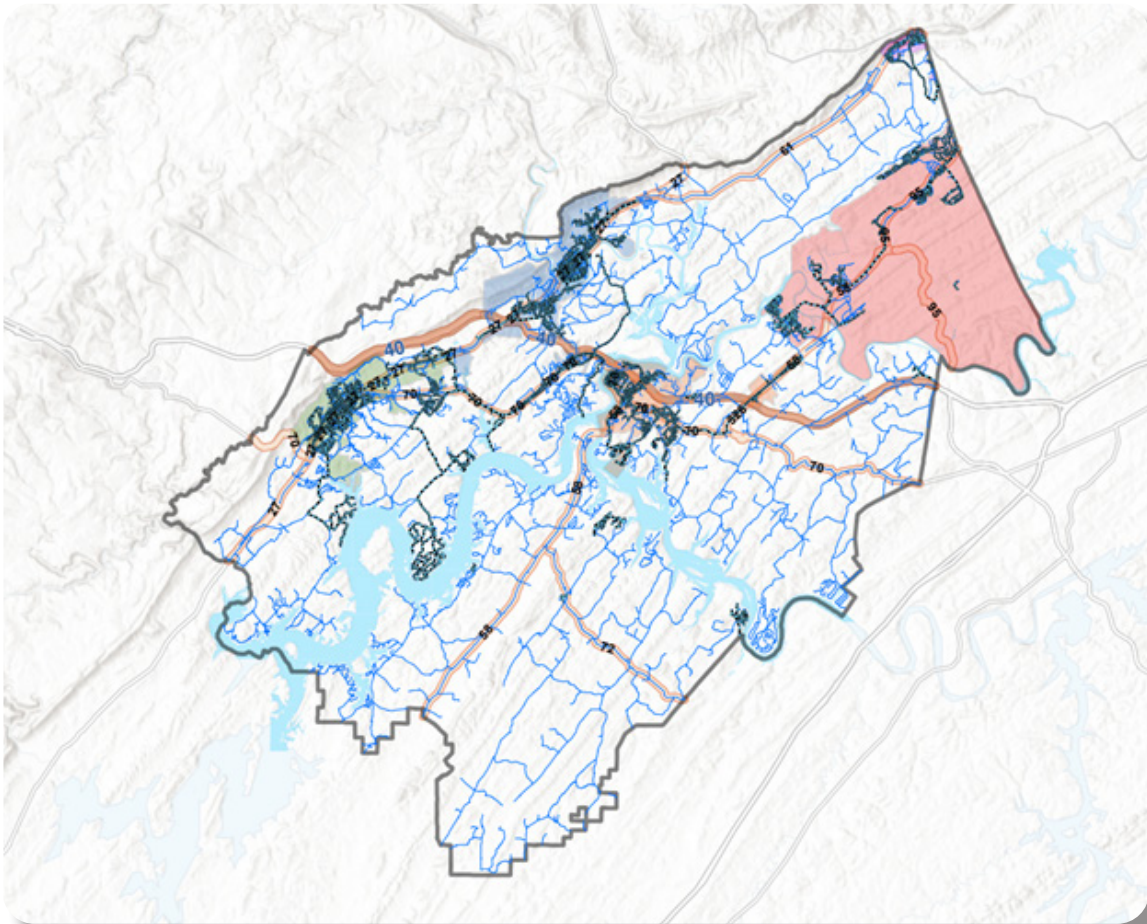
CONCLUSION

Roane County's transportation system plays a vital role in connecting communities, supporting economic activity, and enhancing quality of life. Addressing current and future needs in road maintenance, congestion management, and alternative transportation will ensure that Roane County remains well-positioned for growth and development.

WATER & WASTEWATER

Sufficient and dependable water and wastewater services are fundamental for fostering growth and upholding public health. The strategic plan examines potential investments in the expansion and maintenance of these systems, with a specific emphasis on areas earmarked for future development.

Roane County Water & Sewer

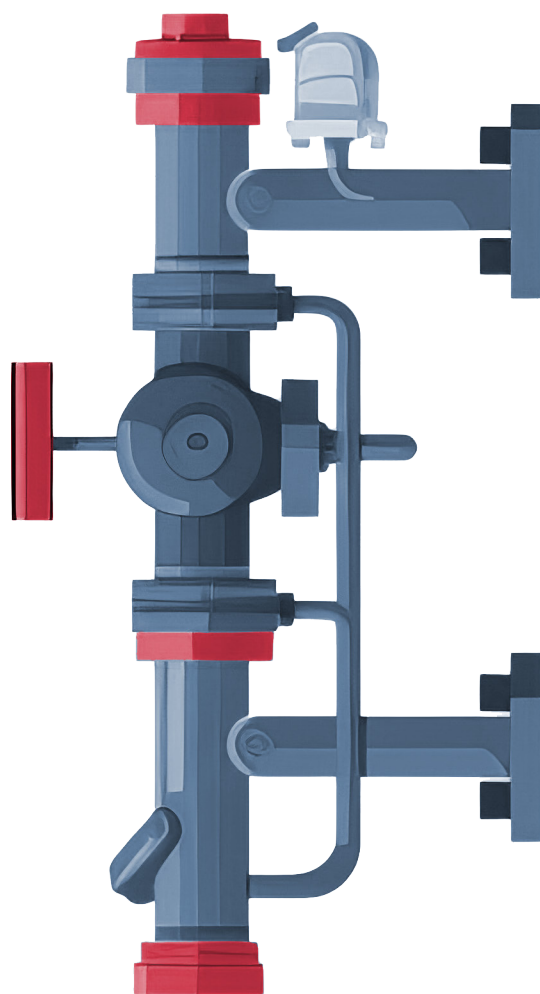


WATER SUPPLY SYSTEM

Roane County's water supply is managed by several local utility districts, including the City of Kingston Water Department, Harriman Utility Board, and Rockwood Water, Wastewater, and Gas Utility. These systems draw water primarily from surface water sources, including the Tennessee River and Watts Bar Lake, which provide abundant freshwater resources for drinking, irrigation, and industrial use.

The county's water infrastructure includes a network of treatment plants, storage tanks, and distribution lines that supply clean drinking water to households and businesses. Watts Bar Utility District serves a large portion of the county, ensuring access to potable water for rural and suburban areas. The water treatment plants are equipped to meet state and federal water quality standards, ensuring that residents have access to safe and reliable water.

As Roane County experiences growth, it is important to prioritize capacity expansion and the maintenance of aging infrastructure. In certain rural areas, the committee is interested in the discouragement of extending water services past where the infrastructure already exists. The committee acknowledges that every foot of water utility comes with substantial costs for the county, both in terms of construction and maintenance. Expanding water services is likely to promote new development in rural areas. The committee's goal is to strike a balance between preserving agriculture and the rural character of the county and discouraging the expansion of water services that are not financially viable. Thoughtful planning will be essential to ensure that the water supply system can effectively accommodate both population growth and industrial demand, particularly in areas with existing infrastructure that can be upgraded.



WASTEWATER TREATMENT SYSTEM

Roane County's wastewater is handled by multiple utility providers, including the Harriman Utility Board, the City of Kingston Wastewater System, and the Rockwood Water, Wastewater, and Gas Utility. These systems are responsible for collecting, treating, and safely discharging wastewater from homes, businesses, and industrial facilities.

The county's wastewater treatment facilities utilize a combination of mechanical and biological processes to treat sewage. This ensures that the effluent meets environmental regulations before being released into local water bodies, such as the Tennessee River. These systems play a crucial role in safeguarding public health and maintaining water quality in Roane County's rivers, lakes, and streams. Septic systems are also used in more rural areas of Roane County, where centralized wastewater services are not available. While septic systems provide an alternative solution for wastewater management, improper maintenance or failure of these systems can lead to groundwater contamination.

REGULATORY COMPLIANCE & ENVIRONMENTAL CONCERNS

Water and wastewater systems in Roane County are subject to regulations under the Tennessee Department of Environment and Conservation (TDEC) and the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA). Compliance with these regulations ensures the safety and quality of drinking water and protects local waterways from contamination due to improper wastewater disposal.

One of the key environmental concerns in Roane County is the protection of its natural water resources, particularly Watts Bar Lake and the Tennessee River, which are critical for both water supply and recreational use. As development increases, so does the potential for pollution from stormwater runoff, wastewater overflows, and industrial activities. Roane County's utilities must continue to invest in modern technologies and infrastructure to minimize environmental impacts and ensure the sustainability of water resources.

CONCLUSION

Roane County's water and wastewater systems are foundational to its infrastructure, supporting residential, industrial, and environmental needs. Ongoing investments in system upgrades, capacity expansion, and environmental protection are essential to ensure that the county can continue to provide reliable and safe services for its growing population. As the county looks to the future, sustainable water management will be key to maintaining a high quality of life for residents and preserving the natural beauty of the region.

BROADBAND

Broadband internet access is an essential component of modern infrastructure, supporting economic development, education, healthcare, and overall quality of life. In Roane County, broadband services are critical for both residents and businesses, enabling connectivity in a rapidly digitizing world. This section examines the current state of broadband services in Roane County, identifies gaps in coverage, and outlines future priorities for expanding high-speed internet access across the county.

Roane County's broadband services are provided by a mix of local and regional internet service providers. The availability of broadband varies across the county, with more urbanized areas such as Kingston, Harriman, and Rockwood enjoying relatively reliable access to high-speed internet. In these areas, residents and businesses typically have access to broadband at 100 Mbps downloads or higher.

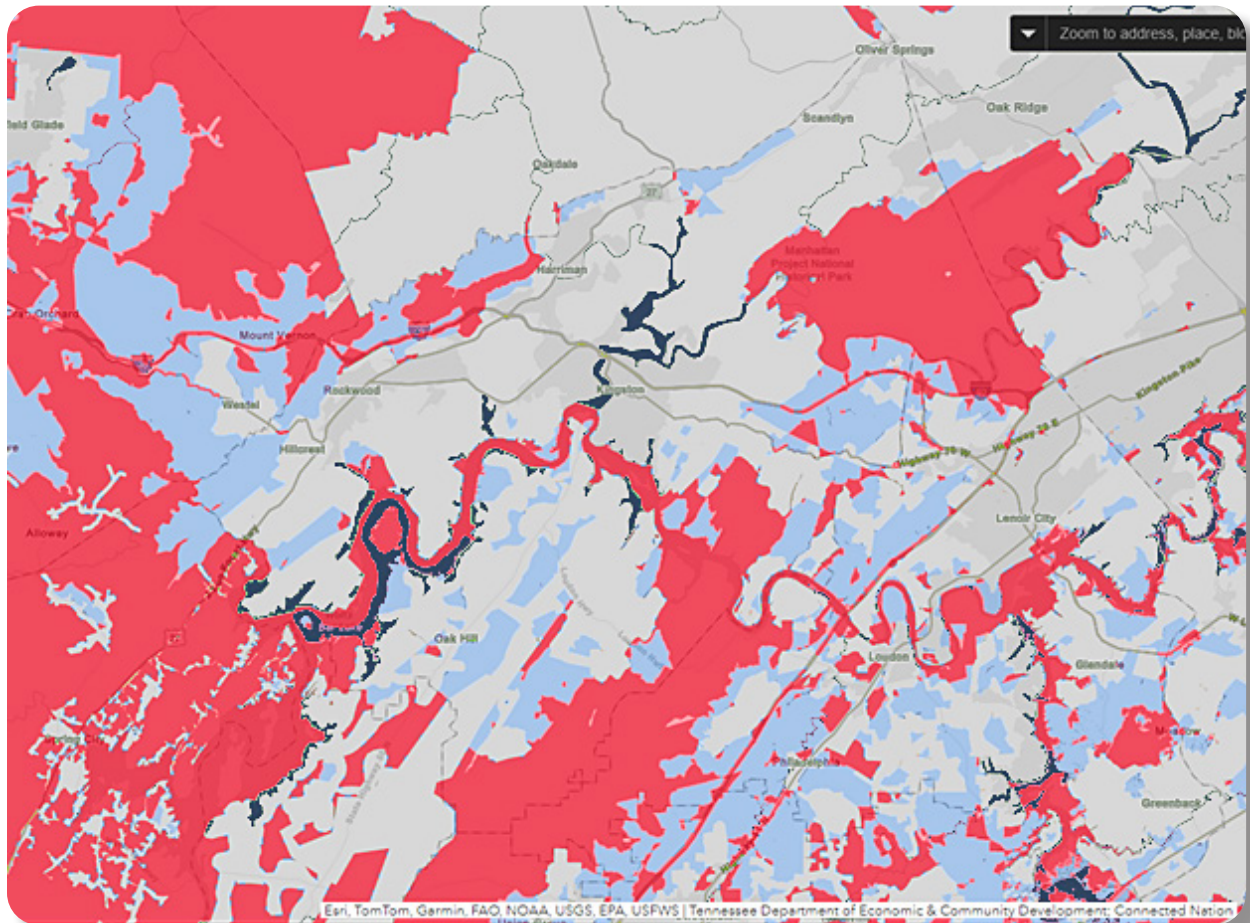
However, coverage in rural parts of the county remains inconsistent. Many rural areas rely on slower broadband access or satellite internet options, which are often less reliable and offer lower speeds than urban areas. The digital divide between urban and rural areas presents significant challenges, particularly as more services, such as telehealth, remote work, and online education, become essential in everyday life.






Affordability is another issue for some households, particularly in lower-income areas. Even where broadband is available, the cost of high-speed internet plans can be prohibitive, limiting access for certain segments of the population. Ensuring affordable access to broadband services will be important as Roane County looks to bridge the digital divide.

The main issue with Roane County's broadband infrastructure is the limited coverage in rural areas. The hilly and forested terrain, along with the lower population density, makes it less financially feasible for internet service providers to invest in high-speed infrastructure in these regions. Consequently, many rural residents do not have access to fast and affordable internet, which can hinder economic opportunities, access to education, and overall quality of life.

Roane County Broadband Access Tennessee Broadband Accessibility Map



-  **Served at 100 Mbps download/20 Mbps upload**
Served at 100M / 20M
-  **Unserved at 100 Mbps download/20 Mbps upload**
Unserved at 100M / 20M
-  **Unserved Area at 25M / 3M (Census 2020)**
Unserved (Lacking 25M / 3M)

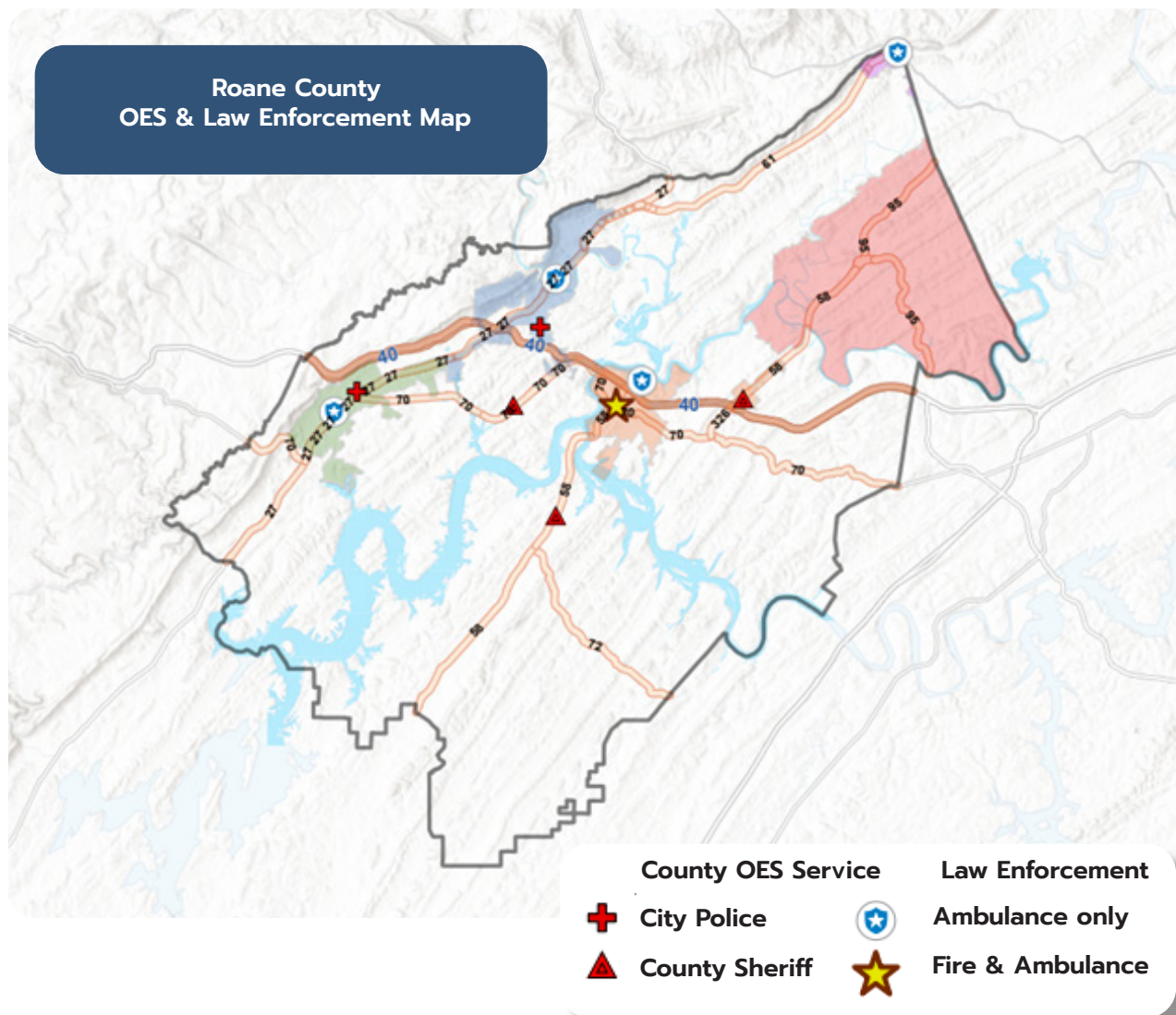
Source: <https://gis.connectednation.org/portal/apps/webappviewer/index.html?id=415548aa14c4471ea6dfbd9f051cd232> – Data last updated on November 15, 2022

CHAPTER FIVE

FACILITIES & SERVICES

EMERGENCY SERVICES

Ensuring that emergency services keep pace with growth is a priority for Roane County. Emergency services in Roane County are critical for maintaining public safety and responding to emergencies, including medical incidents, natural disasters, and other crises. The county's emergency services are provided by a combination of county, municipal, and volunteer agencies, ensuring coverage across the entire county.





EMERGENCY

MEDICAL SERVICES (EMS)

Roane County Emergency Medical Services (EMS) provides advanced life support and ambulance services to residents. The EMS team is trained to respond to a wide range of medical emergencies, and their coverage includes both urban and rural areas. Strategic placement of EMS stations throughout the county is designed to ensure timely responses to emergencies.

LAW ENFORCEMENT

Law enforcement in Roane County is primarily provided by the Roane County Sheriff's Office, which is responsible for patrolling unincorporated areas, managing the county jail, and responding to emergencies. In addition, the cities of Kingston, Harriman, and Rockwood have their own police departments that handle law enforcement within their respective jurisdictions.

911 COMMUNICATIONS

Roane County's 911 communications center serves as the hub for emergency response coordination, dispatching police, fire, and EMS services. The center operates 24/7, ensuring that residents can access emergency assistance at all times. Continuous investment in technology and training is essential to maintain efficient and effective emergency communications.

DISTASTER RESPONSE & PREPAREDNESS

Roane County's 911 communications center serves as the hub for emergency response coordination, dispatching police, fire, and EMS services. The center operates 24/7, ensuring that residents can access emergency assistance at all times. Continuous investment in technology and training is essential to maintain efficient and effective emergency communications.

FIRE SERVICES

Fire protection in Roane County is provided by a combination of municipal fire departments and volunteer fire departments. These agencies are responsible for responding to fires, hazardous material incidents, and other emergencies that require fire suppression and rescue services.

The recommendations outline the need for coordination improvements in fire services, including managing volunteer fire departments, acquisition of new equipment, and enhancement of fire prevention programs. These initiatives are aimed at ensuring that all areas of the county are adequately protected as growth occurs.

MUNICIPAL FIRE DEPARTMENTS

The cities of Kingston, Harriman, and Rockwood each operate their own fire departments. These departments are staffed by professional firefighters who provide fire protection and emergency response services within and around the city limits. In addition to fire suppression, municipal fire departments also engage in fire prevention, public education, and building inspections.

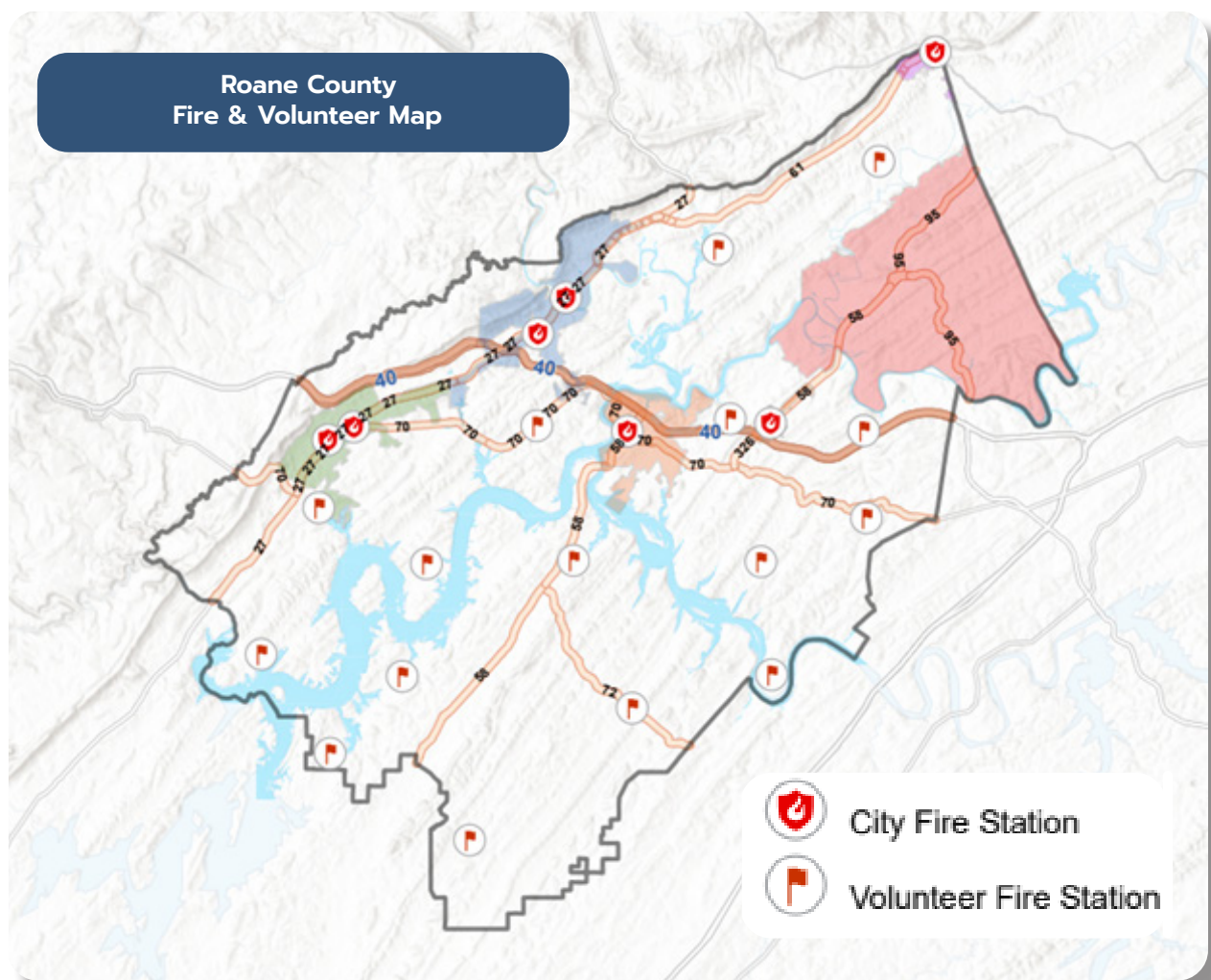
VOLUNTEER FIRE DEPARTMENTS

Roane County's rural areas are served by several volunteer fire departments. These departments play a crucial role in providing fire protection to areas that are not covered by municipal fire departments. Volunteer firefighters are trained to respond to a wide range of emergencies, and their dedication is essential to the safety of the county's rural communities.



CHALLENGES & FUTURE NEEDS

Challenges facing fire services in Roane County include the recruitment and retention of volunteer firefighters; the need for updated equipment and facilities; and the geographic challenges of providing coverage to rural areas. Addressing these challenges will require ongoing investment in training, infrastructure, government coordination, and community engagement.



PARKS & RECREATION

Roane County's parks and recreation facilities contribute significantly to the quality of life for residents and visitors. The county is home to a variety of parks, recreational facilities, and natural areas that provide opportunities for outdoor activities, sports, and community events.

COUNTY PARKS

Roane County operates several parks that offer a range of amenities, including playgrounds, sports fields, walking trails, and picnic areas. Key parks include Roane County Park near Kingston, which is a popular destination for families and outdoor enthusiasts, and Fort Southwest Point Park, which offers historical significance as well as recreational opportunities.

RECREATION PROGRAMS

In addition to physical parks, Roane County offers a variety of recreational programs for residents of all ages. These programs include youth sports leagues, fitness classes, and community events. The county's recreation department works closely with schools and community organizations to provide a broad range of activities that promote health and wellness.

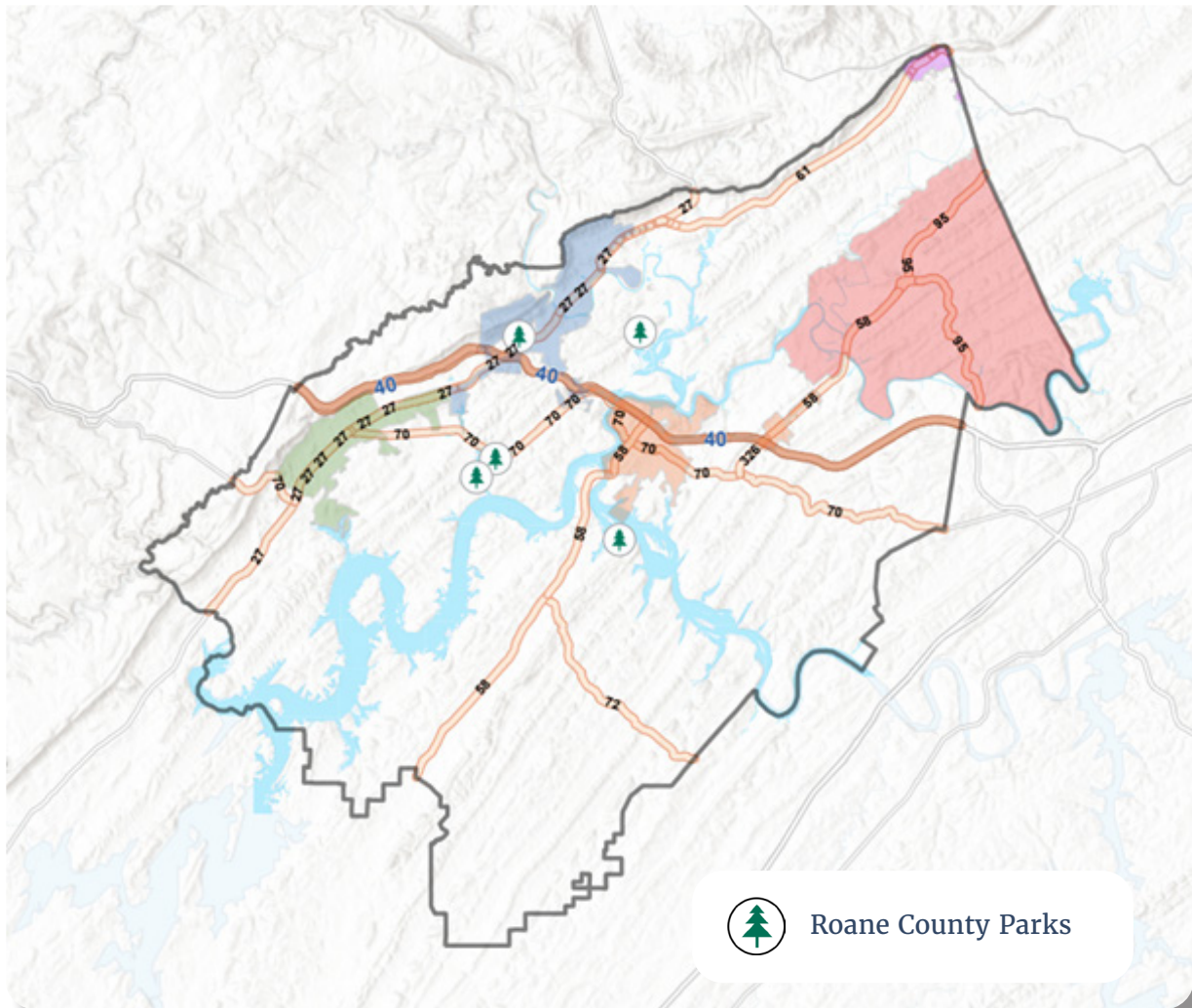
STATE & FEDERAL PARKS

The county is also home to state and federal parks, including the vast Watts Bar Lake, which provides opportunities for boating, fishing, and camping. The Tennessee Valley Authority (TVA) manages significant portions of land around the lake, ensuring that these areas are preserved for public use and enjoyment. Additionally, the Fort Southwest Point Park in Kingston is currently transitioning into a state park showing its historical importance.

CHALLENGES & OPPORTUNITIES

Challenges facing fire services in Roane County include the recruitment and retention of volunteer firefighters; the need for updated equipment and facilities; and the geographic challenges of providing coverage to rural areas. Addressing these challenges will require ongoing investment in training, infrastructure, government coordination, and community engagement.





SCHOOL DISTRICTS & FACILITIES

The Roane County School District is a key institution in the county, providing education to thousands of students from kindergarten through high school. The district's facilities and services are vital for supporting educational outcomes, community development, and workforce preparation.

SCHOOL FACILITIES

The Roane County School District operates multiple schools, including elementary, middle, and high schools. Each school is equipped with classrooms, libraries, sports facilities, and specialized spaces such as science labs and art rooms. However, many of the school buildings are increasing in age; therefore, ensuring that these facilities are well-maintained and equipped to meet modern educational standards is a priority for the district.

RECREATION PROGRAMS

The number of students attending Roane County schools fluctuates with changes in the population. Currently, most school facilities are below capacity, and demographic data indicates a decrease in the population of children under eighteen. It is important for the district to plan for sustainable management and ensure that schools have enough staff and resources to meet current and future capacities. This is a critical aspect of the school district's long-term strategic planning.

ENROLLMENT & CAPACITY

The number of students attending Roane County schools fluctuates with changes in the population. Currently, most school facilities are below capacity, and demographic data indicates a decrease in the population of children under eighteen. It is important for the district to plan for sustainable management and ensure that schools have enough staff and resources to meet current and future capacities. This is a critical aspect of the school district's long-term strategic planning.

EDUCATIONAL PROGRAMS

In addition to the standard K-12 education curricula, the Roane County School District offers a variety of specialized programs, including advanced placement (AP) courses; career and technical education (CTE); and extracurricular activities. These programs are designed to provide students with a well-rounded education and prepare them for post-secondary education and careers.

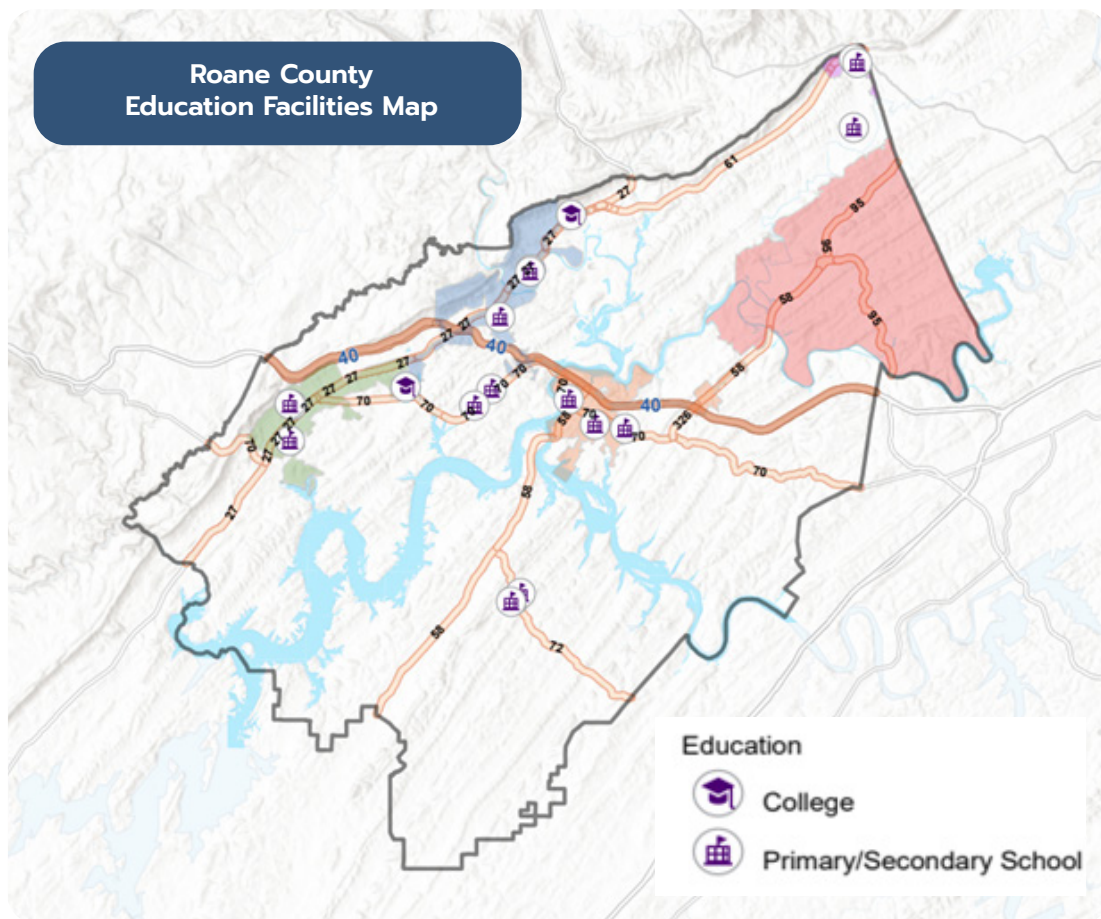


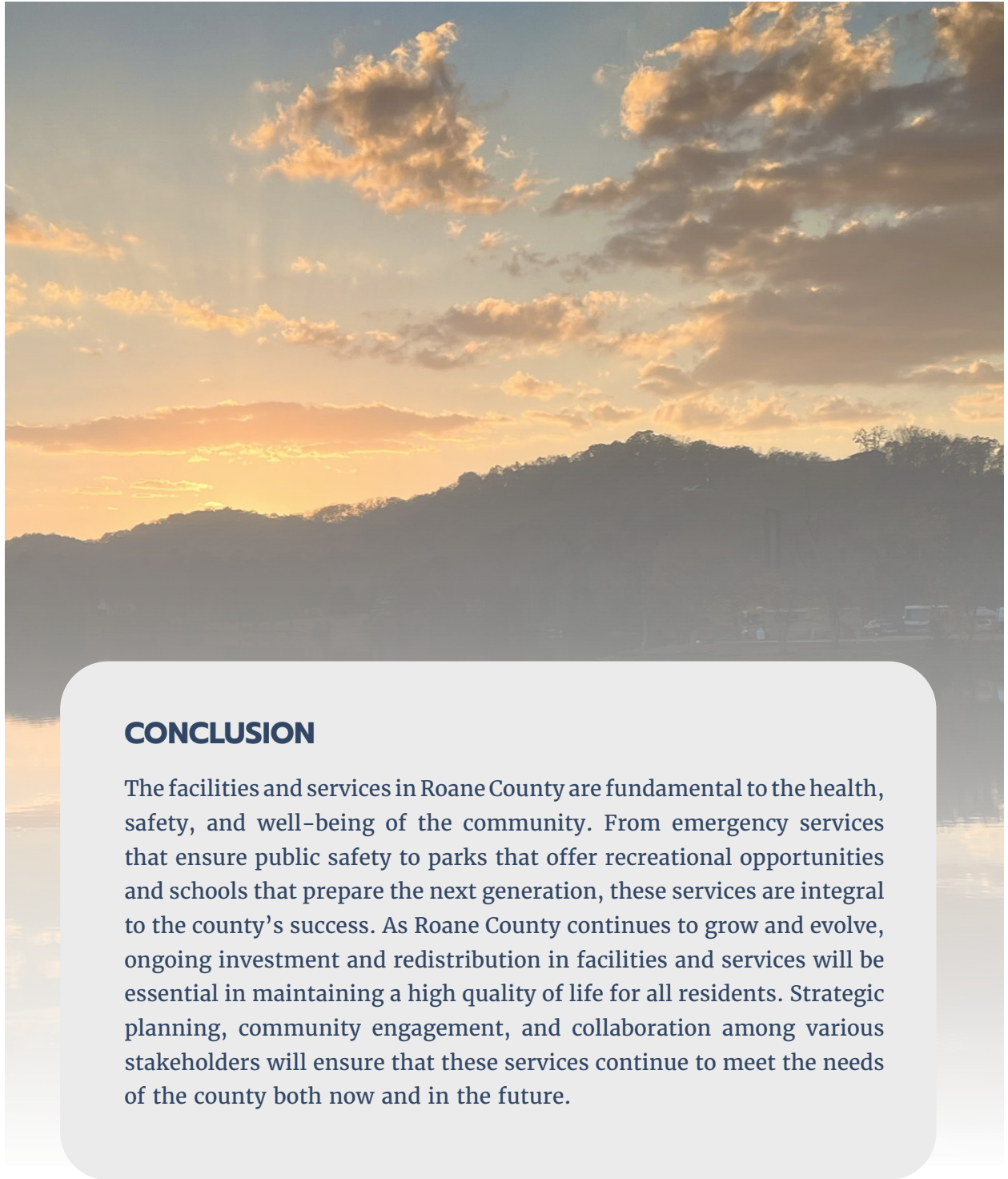
COMMUNITY & SCHOOL PARTNERSHIPS

Strong partnerships between schools and the community are essential for the success of the district. Engaging parents, local businesses, and community organizations in the educational process helps create a supportive environment for students. Collaborative efforts, such as mentorship programs and community service initiatives, enhance the educational experience and strengthen ties between schools and the broader community.

CHALLENGES & FUTURE NEEDS

The school district is currently dealing with several challenges. These include aging facilities, a stagnant child population, schools operating below capacity, the need for updated technology, and the recruitment and retention of qualified teachers. Overcoming these challenges will necessitate long-term investment in future planning.





CONCLUSION

The facilities and services in Roane County are fundamental to the health, safety, and well-being of the community. From emergency services that ensure public safety to parks that offer recreational opportunities and schools that prepare the next generation, these services are integral to the county's success. As Roane County continues to grow and evolve, ongoing investment and redistribution in facilities and services will be essential in maintaining a high quality of life for all residents. Strategic planning, community engagement, and collaboration among various stakeholders will ensure that these services continue to meet the needs of the county both now and in the future.

CHAPTER SIX

HOUSING, LAND USE, & ZONING

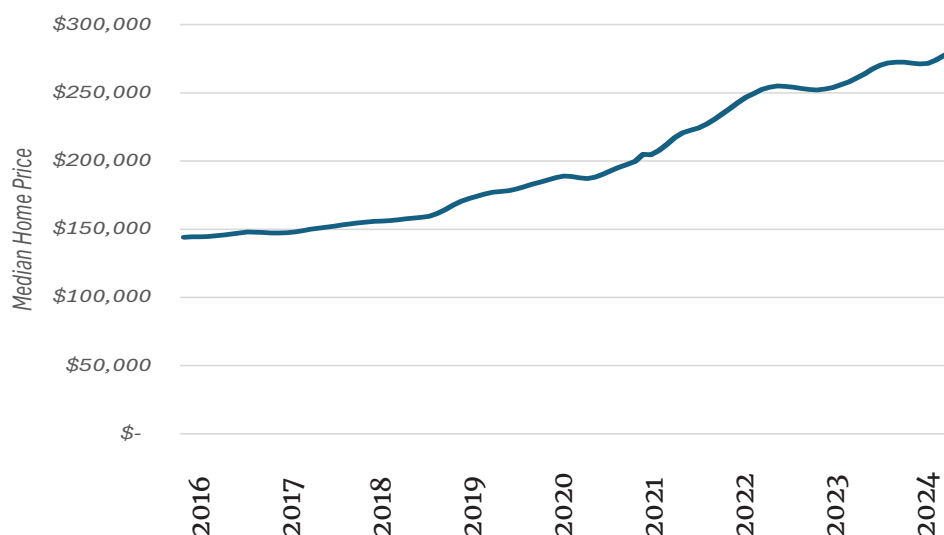
Roane County's land use and zoning significantly impact housing, development, and the overall rural experience. The county must carefully manage population growth while preserving its natural beauty and rural character, requiring thoughtful planning to ensure sustainable development. This chapter provides an analysis of housing trends, land use patterns, and zoning regulations in Roane County, focusing on current challenges, opportunities, and future strategic discussions. Healthcare and education were significant sectors as well, with Roane State Community College and local healthcare facilities offering both employment and essential services. However, there were ongoing concerns about attracting and retaining younger workers, as the younger population is decreasing over time. Efforts to boost economic development and expand broadband access were key priorities for growth and diversification.

ROANE COUNTY 2024

HOUSING MARKET

The median home value in Roane County was about \$259,300 in the summer of 2024, which is higher than the region has ever seen. It has been rising steadily in recent years due to the COVID-19 pandemic and increased demand for limited housing stock.

Median Home Price 2016 – 2024
Zillow



HOME PRICE DIFFERENCE

# of Bedrooms	APR 2023	APR 2024	% Change
1 Bedroom	\$150.0K	128.5K	-14.3%
2 Bedrooms	\$160.0K	\$200.0K	+25.0%
3 Bedrooms	\$240.7K	\$259.3K	+7.7%
4 Bedrooms	\$300.0K	\$344.5K	+14.8%
5 Bedrooms	\$360.0K	\$545.0K	+51.4%



RENTAL PRICE DIFFERENCES & LISTINGS

# of Bedrooms	Census 2020	Census 2022	Zillow & Apt.com May 2024 ¹
Studio	\$225	\$292	\$—
1 Bedroom	\$542	\$539	\$970
2 Bedrooms	\$675	\$738	+\$1,485
3 Bedrooms	\$776	\$888	\$2,135
4 Bedrooms	\$1,175	\$1,285	\$4,000
Total Average	\$666	\$753	\$2,148
5 Bedrooms	\$360.0K	\$545.0K	+51.4%

¹ Zillow and Apt.com are average posted listings price on their websites.



HOUSING CHARACTERISTICS

The cost of homes in Roane County has increased significantly over the past four years, but they are still more affordable compared to nearby counties. In June 2024, the median sales price of a home in Roane County was \$287,000, while in neighboring Loudon County, it was \$476,000. This lower cost of housing in Roane County is attracting retirees to the area.

However, the county has a limited supply of various housing types, such as townhouses, condos, duplexes, triplexes, quadplexes, cottage courts, small apartments, medium apartments, and large apartments. Most non-single-family housing options are available for rent, which limits the choices for purchasing different housing types. This situation may affect older couples or individuals looking to downsize their homes, as well as new families in search of affordable starter homes. The second most common type of area housing is a mobile home.

COMPLETE ROANE COUNTY HOUSING TYPE AND STOCK 2020

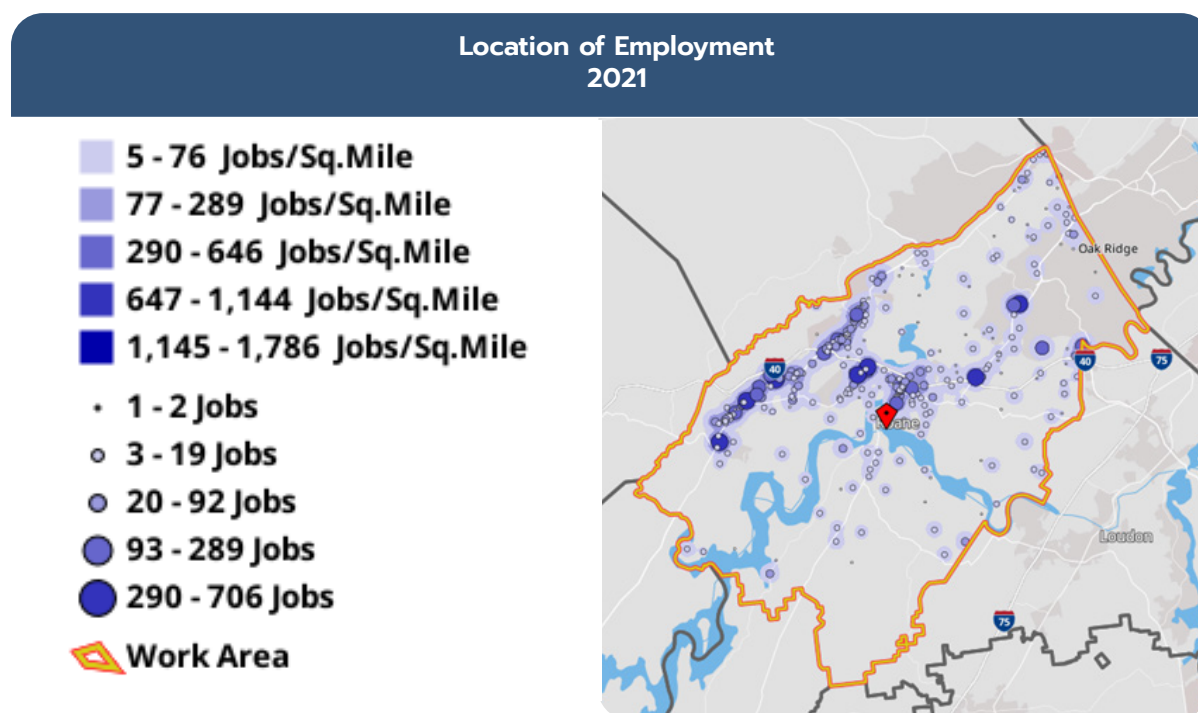
Housing Type	Owner	Renter	All Housing	Percentage
1 Unit Detached (single family)	13,731	2,327	16,058	74%
1 Unit Attached	317	147	464	2%
2 Units	28	501	529	2%
3 or 4 Units	14	522	536	2%
5 to 9 Units	17	415	432	2%
10 to 19 Units	8	413	421	2%
20 to 49 Units	10	104	114	1%
50 or more	0	306	306	1%
Mobile Home	2,163	513	2,676	12%
Boat, RV, Van, etc.	49	11	60	<1%
Total	16,337	5,259	21,596	100%

Approximately twelve percent of the population lives in some type of mobile home. The drawbacks of this housing option include the potential for depreciation in value, the absence of permanent foundations to withstand severe disasters, and the likelihood that the homeowner does not own the land beneath the home. Therefore, it is crucial for the county and all municipalities within the county to prioritize the provision of diverse housing options for people to own. As the population grows, there is a need for a variety of housing types to accommodate different people, such as affordable housing for the county’s workforce, senior housing, and more rental properties.

HOUSING DEVELOPMENT PATTERNS

This section examines housing developments throughout the county to identify trends and patterns. It is crucial to understand where growth is happening to ensure that infrastructure and services are available in the right places to support all residents. However, it’s clear that there are limited funds and resources to provide all services across the entire county. These services include fire protection; water and wastewater utilities; jobs; education; policing; broadband’ and emergency services.

The Roane County Commission Long-Range Planning Committee is committed to reaching a consensus on prioritizing areas for serving and promoting growth. The committee will assess the county’s requirements and standards to promote sustainable growth in areas that can provide all the necessary resources for the best quality of life for their residents.



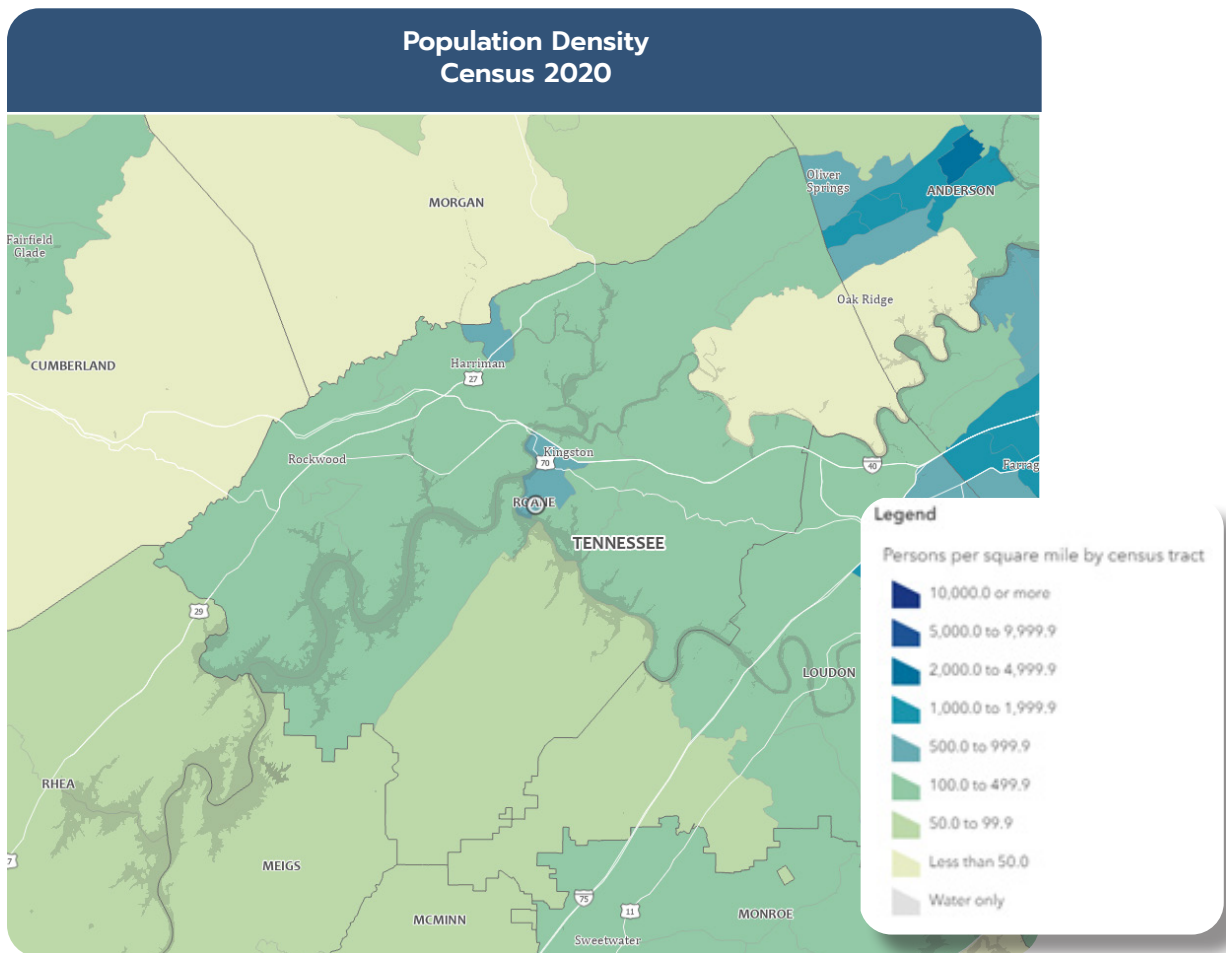
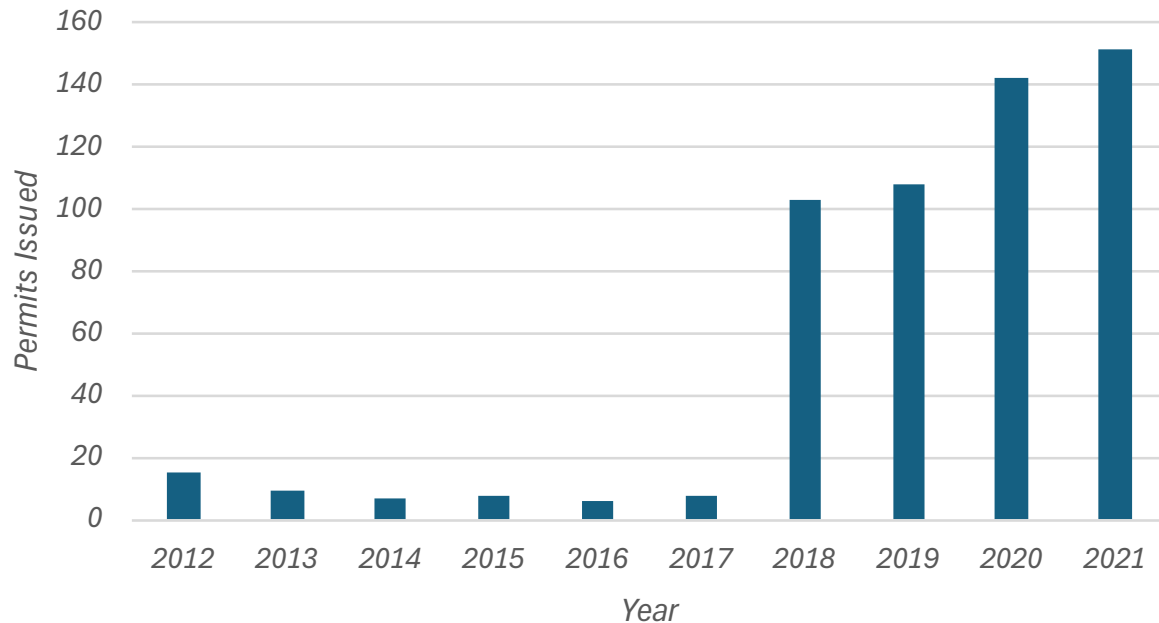


Figure 6.1
Residential Building Permits Issued



NOTE:

No multi-family building permits were issued during these years.

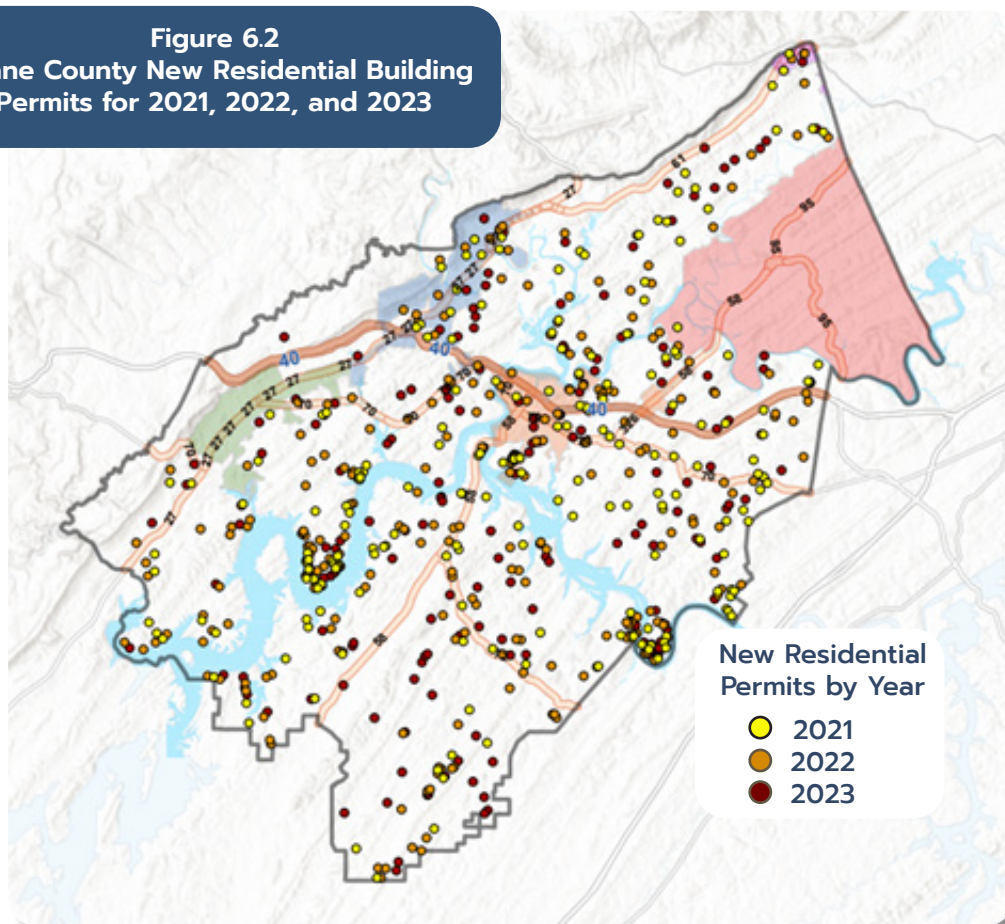
In *Figure 6.1*, it is evident that the number of residential building permits issued in Roane County saw a significant increase in 2018 and continued to rise through 2021, the last year for which data was available. The majority of permits were issued for single family dwellings. Given the growing population, the construction of residential units will need to continue to meet these housing needs.

To address the diverse population, a greater variety of housing types is necessary. It is essential to encourage developers to build missing middle housing such as duplexes, townhomes, and small-scale apartments. This type of housing is suitable for young, single individuals; middle-aged, empty nesters; and senior citizens. If necessary, local ordinances should be adjusted to allow for the construction of this housing type.

The locations where residential building permits were issued for the years 2021, 2022, and 2023 are depicted in Figure 6.2. While generally scattered throughout the county, there are clusters of new residential construction in municipalities and residential developments near the lake. It is important to single out these locations for two crucial reasons: (1) to ensure that utilities and other infrastructure are available to adequately serve the development. (upgrades to any or all of these may be necessary to accommodate the demand,) and (2) to note the location of new developments to ensure that they are not occurring in a location that would better serve another purpose (e.g., agriculture or open space). While it may be impossible to alter development that is already underway, it may prompt the county to identify areas suited for certain uses and take steps to reserve the property for that use.

As Roane County continues to grow, the housing needs will change. This plan aims to provide a variety of housing options to accommodate the diverse population, including affordable housing, senior housing, and new residential developments. It also considers the effects of development on infrastructure, services, and the environment, thereby promoting urban planning principles that minimize sprawl and preserve open space and agriculture.

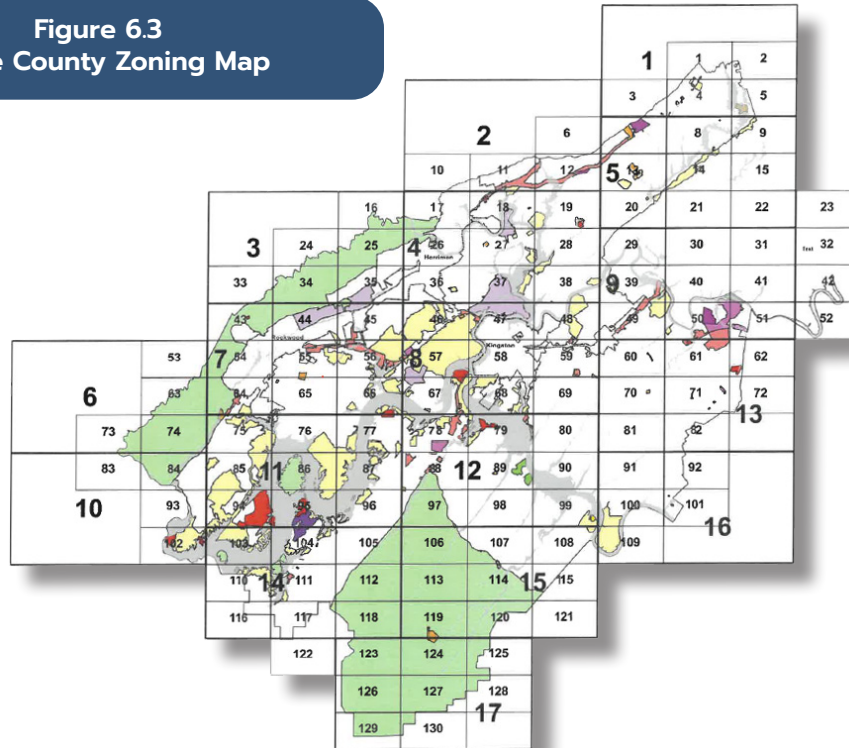
Figure 6.2
Roane County New Residential Building
Permits for 2021, 2022, and 2023



NOTE:

Permits for Rockwood are not shown or included.

Figure 6.3
Roane County Zoning Map



ROANE COUNTY ZONING

The Roane County Zoning Resolution, developed over thirty years ago, has effectively provided standards to guide development for the health and safety of the community. However, these standards have become a hindrance to the creation of certain housing types, have lacked protections for land uses that the community now holds dear, and have allowed unintended consequences that allowed development unsustainable for the county. Therefore, the Roane County Commission Long-Range Planning Committee and the county planners are determined to update the zoning standards to better align with the community's needs and to guide sustainable growth that will provide essential services for all their residents. For further information, please refer to the Recommendations chapter and Appendix of this document.

A-1	Agricultural Density
A-2	Development Agricultural District
R-1	Low-Density Single Family Residential District
R-2	Single and Two Family Residential District
R-3	Multiple Family Residential District
MHP	Mobile Home Park District
C-1	General Commercial District
C-2	Highway Commercial District
RB	Rural Business District
OI	Office / Institutional District
I-1	Light Industrial District
I-2	Medium Industrial District
I-3	Heavy Industrial District
PU-1	Planned Unit Development District
F-1	Flood Hazard District
SU	Special Use Permit
	Corporate Limits
	.02% Chance Flood (500 Year Flood)
	FIRM Zone A/AE (100 Year Flood)

ROANE COUNTY

TARGET DEVELOPMENT & GROWTH AREA

Roane County's zoning ordinance can serve as an effective tool for directing the county's development to make use of existing services and facilities. The Roane County Commission Long-Range Planning Committee has identified the northern area of the river as the main location for future growth (refer to *Figure 6.3*). Services and facilities are focused on the Target Development and Growth Area, which helps cut down or eliminate the expenses associated with providing essential and emergency services for new development.

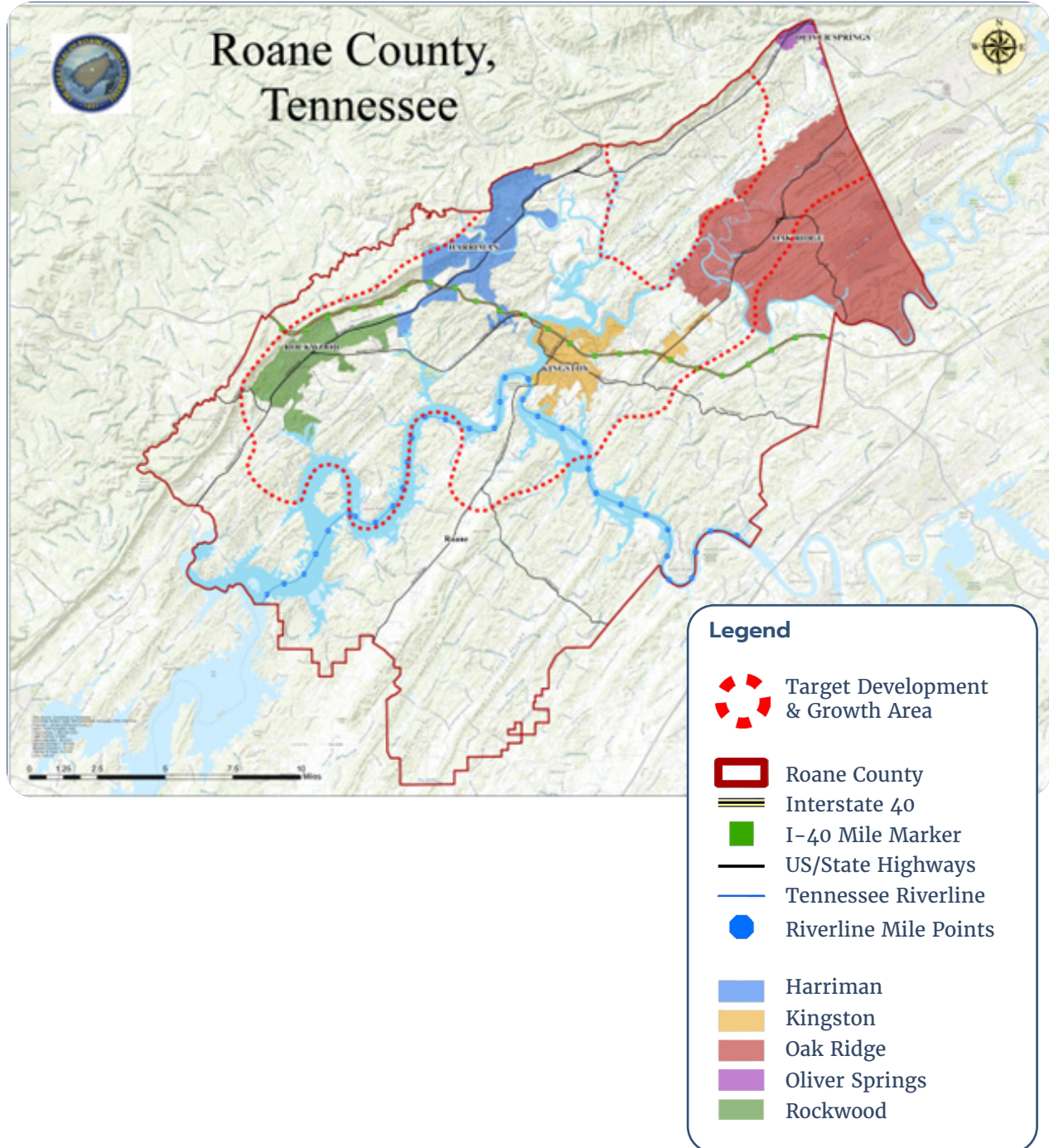
The Target Development and Growth Area is well-equipped with water and sewer systems, fire protection, emergency services, and a well-maintained road network that provides excellent access to properties in the area, and this area has numerous properties that are suitable for development or redevelopment. Properties with existing infrastructure, especially those with access to water and sewer service, should be prioritized for development. Properties suitable for development but lacking water, sewer, or other necessary infrastructure should be prioritized for the provision of the needed infrastructure.

Within the Target Development and Growth Area, there are intersections (nodes) of development, including municipalities in the county and commercial development at interstate interchanges. These nodes, along with the connecting corridors, still provide opportunities for development and redevelopment. The presence of infrastructure to support development makes these nodes and corridors a key factor in designating the area north of the river as the growth area.

The zoning of this area to allow for higher density residential and suitable commercial development will help the county manage its anticipated growth while safeguarding the agricultural lands on the county's edge and areas to the south of the river. This approach will uphold the county's longstanding development pattern and preserve its character. The members of the Roane County Commission Long-Range Planning Committee emphasized the importance of preserving the agricultural and open space lands, as they are a defining feature of the county.

To provide better guidance for development and redevelopment in the Target Development and Growth Area and to protect the county's agricultural lands, it is recommended that the county's zoning resolution be updated. Please refer to the Recommendations chapter and the Appendix for details. It is important to review the development standards for commercial uses to ensure that they align with the county's vision. Additionally, residential development standards should allow for housing options that would accommodate those who work or retire in Roane County to live in the county. The agricultural district should be updated to safeguard agricultural lands and open space from being prime targets for residential development and to permit agricultural uses that would generate income.

Figure 6.3
Roane County
Target Development & Growth Area Map



CHAPTER SEVEN

STRATEGIC IMPLEMENTATION & RECOMMENDATIONS

The successful implementation of the Roane County Long-Range Strategic Master Plan will require coordinated efforts across all sectors of the county government, private sector, and community organizations. The plan outlines specific actions, timelines, and responsible entities for each of the strategic initiatives. Regular monitoring, public reporting, and updates to the plan will be essential to ensure that it remains relevant and effective as the county evolves.

The list below outlines recommended actions aimed at addressing issues and achieving the vision identified by the citizens of Roane County and the long-range planning committee. Recommendations are categorized as short-range (to be implemented in the next two years), medium-range (to be undertaken in three to six years), and long-range (to be accomplished in seven to ten or more years). The responsible organizations or entities in charge of implementing the recommended actions are also provided.

Short-range recommendations include tasks that have funding in place, are easy to initiate, and/or require few resources to complete. Medium and long-range recommendations necessitate budgeted funds, are more complex, and/or build on earlier recommended tasks. Long-range recommendations are the result, continuation, or expansion of previous actions toward the long-term goals that the county aims to achieve. The completion of the recommended tasks will help achieve the vision for Roane County and will contribute to building a stronger community.

COUNTY COMMISSION PLAN ADOPTION MEETING



SHORT RANGE RECOMMENDATIONS (0 – 2 YEARS)

TRANSPORTATION

Federal and State Highways

Identify the primary highways that can or will serve new development and accommodate current traffic, considering capacity, safety, and traffic flow.

Entity Roane Co. Highway Department, TDOT, FHWA, Roane County Road Committee, Roane County Codes Office

County Highways

Maintenance issues need to be addressed, so to manage the backlog, continue to work with TDOT to accomplish specialty tasks (road maintenance, landscape trimming, mowing, etc.).

Entity Roane Co. Highway Department, TDOT

WATER

Initiate cooperation and relationships with water utility companies. Interconnection of water systems should be done wherever possible.

Continue to require new development along existing water line routes to connect to the system, particularly within the target development and growth area..

Entity Roane County Permitting Department, All water utility companies

WASTEWATER

Closely evaluate all requests for extension of collection lines to serve new development to ensure that all costs, including maintenance of lines and other necessary facilities, can be covered by the revenue generated.

Roane County Commission should continue requesting annual financial status reports from all utility companies.

Entity Roane County Permitting Department, Roane County Commission, and all utility companies

BROADBAND

Identify the reasons for the lack of broadband services in certain areas of the county and take action to improve service in poor service areas.

Apply for and/or influence grant applications to expand broadband coverage in unserved or underserved areas of the county for internet service providers.

Entity Roane County Executive's Office, internet service providers

ECONOMY

Local Businesses

Continue to advertise the programs and resources for individuals planning to establish a new local business.

Widely advertise the Roane Alliance resources for programs starting an LLC, sole proprietorship, or other business modes.

- Identify the advantages and disadvantages of each.
- Address costs and tax implications of each business mode.
- Provide tax assistance to new businesses.

Entity Roane Alliance, Chamber of Commerce

Industrial Parks

Begin the process of identifying locations for new industrial parks.

Entity Roane Alliance, Roane County Commission, Roane County Executive's Office

Roane Alliance

Continue monitoring economic performance using benchmarking in the annual reports from Roane Alliance

- Number of job types created
- Average wages offered in new jobsProvide tax assistance to new businesses.
- Additional taxes brought or impacted from created jobs or capital investments (one year later impact)

Entity Roane Alliance

Addressing Poverty

Measuring and tracking programs for poverty in Roane County.

- To tackle poverty, Roane County will need to track poverty levels by demographics in an annual report to identify areas with the highest concentration of poverty. Using this information, the Roane County Commission can create programs to assist families and individuals in need. Address costs and tax implications of each business mode.
- Demographic information should encompass a range of ages, genders, and locations. Indicators of poverty may include monitoring financial support for school programs, the availability of grants or scholarships, and the percentage of public school students eligible for free lunch. Other areas to consider are the usage of food banks, career-changing programs to transition into new industries, ETHRA services, and drug programs. It's important to assess whether these programs need to be expanded.

Entity Roane County Executive's Office, Roane County School District, adjacent organizations that can provide information

Sustainability & Environment

Encourage and promote sustainability and environmental actions of local businesses by providing small awards or honorable mentions to recognize and reward businesses with programs or activities that promote environmental consciousness. For example: a business recycling program or a business fully powered by renewable energy.

Entity Roane County Executive's Office, internet service providers

Clean Energy

Encourage clean energy industries to locate in the county.

Entity Roane Alliance, Chamber of Commerce

HOUSING & DEVELOPMENT

Review the zoning resolution to identify minor amendments to increase residential density in areas targeted for growth, while adjusting zoning in areas the County Commission wants to protect from uncontrolled growth.

Implement gentle density to allow small-scale, multifamily development, such as duplexes, townhomes, and apartments up to eight units, to introduce increased density over time in current low-density areas. Begin by allowing accessory dwelling units and gradually increase permitted density types, up to eight units, and smaller lot sizes.

Consider the requirement of a conservation subdivision, which clusters new development to preserve open space, instead of wide, equally divided lots.

Ensure the proper preservation of farmland and open space and consider increasing lot sizes in agricultural districts.

Entity Roane County Planning
Department, Roane County
Commission

IMPLEMENT AMENDMENTS

Start the process of gradually updating the zoning resolution comprehensively over time.

Entity Roane County Planning
Department

PARKS & RECREATION

Execute recommendations in the Roane County 2020 Parks and Recreation Master Plan and the Roane County 2020 Trail Master Plan.

Entity Roane County Parks and
Recreation Department, Roane
County Executive's Office

EMERGENCY SERVICES

Support the Roane County Basic Emergency Operations Plan.

Entity Roane County Commission,
Roane County Office of
Emergency Services

FIRE SERVICES

Further discussions will inform the decision on improving fire services in the county.

- Consider consolidating all volunteer fire departments into the county fire department and staffing all five existing volunteer fire departments with county employees. Address costs and tax implications of each business mode. OR
- Consider implementing a supplementary fire tax on affected properties to support volunteer fire services. Funds would be managed by the Office of Emergency Services, and all revenue would be allocated to the county's volunteer fire departments.
- OR
- Consider offering a subscription-based fire service for county residents. Also, consider entering into an agreement to provide services for homeowner associations (HOAs).

Entity County Fire Department, Roane County Commission, Roane County Office of Emergency Services, Roane County Executive's Office, HOA Subdivisions

DRUGS & REHABILITATION

Execute and support the Roane County Opioid Council and their new plan. Opioid Settlement Funds will fund the implementation of the plan with guidelines from the Tennessee Opioid Abatement Council.

Entity Roane County Opioid Council, Roane County Commission, Roane County Office of Emergency Services, Roane County Sheriff's Office

SCHOOLS & SCHOOL DISTRICT (executing Fall 2024)

A task force will be formed to evaluate the issues concerning the Roane County School District, including its facilities, capacity, and future management, in the context of a 30-year school capital improvement plan. The task force, known as the Roane County School Liaison Committee, will consist of five commissioners and five school board members. This committee will make recommendations to the school board and the County Commission on how to proceed. (Throughout this process, public input will be sought and taken into consideration.)

Entity Roane County Board of Education, Roane County Commission, Roane County School Liaison Committee, Roane County Executive's Office

MEDIUM RANGE RECOMMENDATIONS (3 – 6 YEARS)

TRANSPORTATION

Federal and State Highways

Work with the East Tennessee South Rural Planning Organization (ETSRPO) to identify federal and state highway projects that need improvement and include them in the Transportation Improvement Plan (TIP).

Entity Roane County Highway Department, TDOT, FHWA, ETSRPO

County Highways

Have a pavement survey/road condition study conducted by a qualified engineer.

Prioritize identified projects.

- Develop cost estimates for all identified projects.
- Identify funding source for all identified projects.

Entity Roane County Highway Department, Roane County Planning Commission

Alternative Transportation

Expand safe options for bicyclists and pedestrians.

Entity Roane County Highway Department

WATER

New water lines should be of adequate size and provide sufficient pressure for both domestic use and fire protection.

Entity Roane County Permitting Department, all water utility companies,

WASTEWATER

Given the age of some collection lines, inflow and infiltration are problems. Find funding sources and grants to replace old lines and eliminate stormwater and sewer flow problems.

Entity All water utility companies

BROADBAND

Provide free internet access at all county facilities, including libraries, parks, and volunteer fire department buildings.

Research potential sources of financial assistance for expanding high-speed internet services throughout the county, such as the Tennessee Broadband Accessibility Grant Program. Determine if these programs could help the county expand its services.

Entity Internet Service Providers,
Roane County Executive's Office

ECONOMY

Local Businesses

Provide information and a program for sharing affordable workspace in central locations, such as coworking space or business incubators.

Coordinate with Roane State Community College on the provision of programs for new and existing small businesses.

Entity Roane Alliance, Chamber of Commerce, Roane State Community College

Industrial Parks

Begin the process of installing new infrastructure for the development of new industrial parks in the designated areas.

Entity Roane Alliance, Roane County Commission, Roane County Executive

Sustainability & Environment

Encourage green business practices and programs.

Work with Roane County Solid Waste to provide recycling opportunities for local businesses and apply for state or federal grants to assist with costs.

Entity Roane County Waste Management Department

Renewable Energy

Apply for grants provided by the state of Tennessee or the federal government for renewable or electric energy transition. Grants include placing new electric vehicle charging stations at interstate interchanges.

Entity Roane Co. Highway Department, Roane County Executive's Office

ECONOMY *(continued)*

Tourism

Measure and monitor visitors. Roane County Tourism continues to track and analyze visitor and tourist data. This data could be used to identify areas for expansion or future development.

- The number of available lodging rooms/units.
- The countywide hotel/lodging vacancy.
- What the visitors are visiting.

Entity Roane Tourism, Roane Alliance

HOUSING & DEVELOPMENT

Continue the comprehensive update of the county's zoning resolution. Please refer to Appendices 1 and 2 for guidance on managing growth and the role of development standards in achieving the county's vision.

Entity Roane County Planning
Department, Roane County
Commission

LONG-RANGE RECOMMENDATIONS (7 – 10 YEARS)

TRANSPORTATION

Federal and State Highways

Continue to monitor the condition of federal and state highways in the county.

- Work with the ETSRPO to identify long-range transportation projects.
- Identify funding sources for the projects.

Promote the construction of a bridge across the Tennessee River (Clinch River) connecting Rockwood with south of the river area.

Entity Roane County Highway Department, Roane County Planning Commission, All Municipalities, ETHRA, and adjacent services (church services)

County State Highways

Continue to undertake repairs and upgrades identified in the pavement survey.

Develop capital improvement plans for ongoing maintenance and improvements.

Entity Roane County Highway Department, Roane County Planning Commission, All Municipalities, ETHRA, and adjacent services (church services)

Alternative Transportation

Prepare bicycle and pedestrian plans for the county.

Entity Roane County Highway Department, Roane County Planning Commission, All Municipalities, ETHRA, and adjacent services (church services)

Public Transportation

As the population ages, the demand for public transit services will increase.

Coordinate with ETHRA or similar services to expand routes and access.

Entity Roane County Highway Department, Roane County Planning Commission, All Municipalities, ETHRA, and adjacent services (church services)

WATER

Pursue grant funding for major system upgrades, new treatment plant construction, and to correct problems such as aging water distribution lines.

Encourage potential customers along existing water lines to connect to the system.

Consider creating a countywide water district with all water utilities joining. A new water district would be the county's sole provider of treated water.

Entity Roane County Permitting Department, all water utility companies, Roane County Commission, Roane County Executive

WASTEWATER

Older treatment plants will need significant upgrades soon, or new plants will need to be constructed to replace the old treatment plants. Grants should be pursued to help fund these improvements.

Entity All water utility companies, Roane County Executive, Roane County Commission

BROADBAND

Ensure the availability of high-speed internet service throughout the county.

- Identify areas with low levels of services.
- Research methods to improve internet service in areas identified as having low levels of service.
- Undertake actions to improve internet service in underserved areas.

Entity Internet Service Providers, Roane County Executive's Office

ECONOMY

Local Businesses

Partner with local banks to support capital investment and provide credit access for small businesses.

Entity Roane Alliance, Chamber of Commerce

Renewable Energy

Encourage industries in the nuclear energy market to locate in Roane County.

Entity Roane Alliance, Chamber of Commerce

Addressing Poverty

Continue creating or supporting programs to address poverty in Roane County.

Use the annual poverty reports to create specific programs to help families and individuals toward a better life.

Entity Roane County School District,
Roane County Commission,
Roane County Executive’s Office

HOUSING & DEVELOPMENT

Adopt updated zoning resolutions.

Conduct an annual evaluation of zoning resolution to ensure standards align with the county’s vision.

Modify zoning administration as needed to implement processes identified in the updated zoning resolution.

The Roane County Planning Commission and Planning Department reviews if housing needs are met at 10-year intervals.

Entity Roane County Planning
Department, Roane County
Commission



Appendices

APPENDIX

1

GUIDING GROWTH & DEVELOPMENT

PLAN FOR GROWTH

Identify where the county's population lives currently

- Assign a high priority for the extension of public infrastructure to densely populated areas not currently served.

Identify where new development, particularly residential development, is occurring

- Areas with concentrations of building activity should be investigated to determine if infrastructure, particularly water and sewer, can be extended to serve the development.

Identify areas where development is not desirable

- Prime farmland, open space, and environmentally sensitive areas.
- Place low priority on providing infrastructure to these areas.

Find vacant and abandoned properties to reinvest in and develop.

Identify areas that the county wants to be developed.

- After identifying the future growth areas, plans should be made for the extension of infrastructure to the identified areas.
- This enables the county to guide growth and development to those areas where services and amenities are located, thus reducing the cost to provide these to the new development.
- Please refer to the *Roane County Target Development and Growth Area Map* for guidance.

INFRASTRUCTURE TO SERVE DEVELOPMENT

Assess availability of infrastructure in identified growth areas.

Place higher priority on areas with sufficient infrastructure for growth and avoid developing in areas with inadequate infrastructure, or make plans for necessary expansion.

- Water and wastewater
 - Coordinate with all utility agencies
 - Identify improvements and extensions in long-range planning
 - Include improvements and extensions in capital improvement plans and budgets
- Roads and highways
 - County Roads – coordinate with Roane County Highway Department
 - State and Federal Highways – coordinate with TDOT division engineer and Regional Planning Organization
- Internet
 - Take advantage of programs such as the Last Mile Grant program to fund expansions
 - Work with internet providers to upgrade service

PROPOSED DEVELOPMENT PATTERN

Nodes and corridor development

- Development should be encouraged at main road intersections and along existing corridors with active development.
- Recognize and enhance current and ongoing development patterns.
- Optimizes use of land that has existing infrastructure.

Identify areas to be preserved

- Prime farmland, open space, and environmentally sensitive areas are to be preserved. This can be achieved by addressing zoning and implementing new development requirements.

Identify existing and future nodes (intersections)

- Where **is** development occurring?
- Where **should** development occur?

Identify corridors that connect nodes (intersections) and develop multi-modal connections – including bicycle, walking, and transit.

Create standards for development along corridors. This includes standards for access, signs, and landscaping on the road to ensure safety, aesthetics, and connectivity.

Create standards for development of nodes (intersections.)

- Honor community character and aesthetics.
- Standards for site and building design, landscaping, and signs.

Transect, development patterns of increasing density, can guide development radiating from nodes.

- Intensity of development decreases relative to distance from node.
- Higher density closer to services, employment, and retail.

PROPOSED DEVELOPMENT PATTERN *(continued)*

Create vibrant, well-connected commercial and live-and-work buildings (those with commercial space on the ground floor and living units above or within the property) that attract people and businesses.

Design commercial and live-and-work buildings that reflect the character of the community, prioritize safety, and provide amenities.

Direct investment and development along transportation corridors to stimulate economic growth, attracting businesses, industries, and job opportunities.

DESIGN WITH NATURE

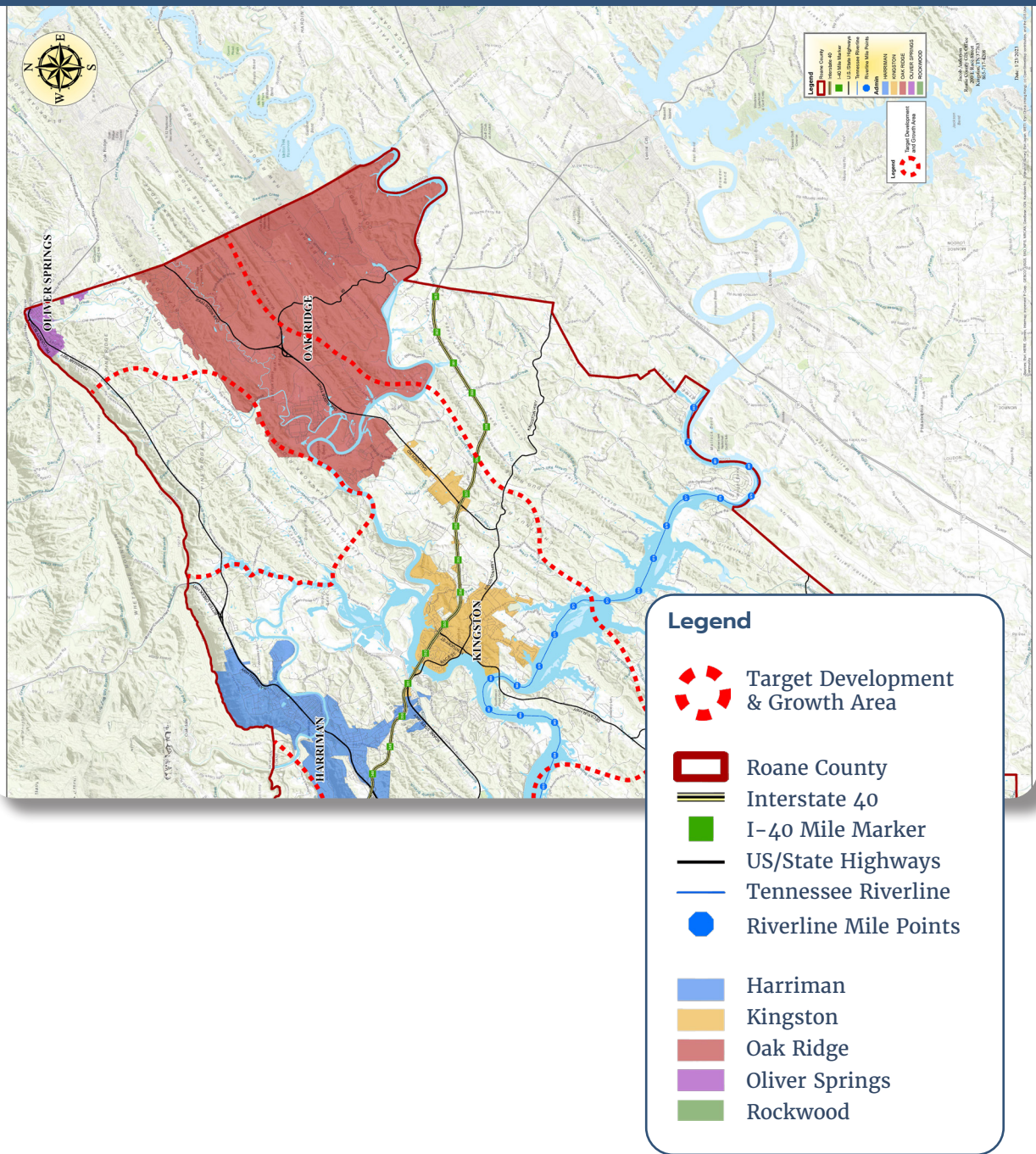
Emphasizes the importance of understanding natural systems and ecological processes when designing human environments.

Analyze the landscape's physical and biological characteristics.

Overlay maps and data to identify areas suitable for various land uses, considering factors like floodplains, erosion risk, and biodiversity.

Emphasize the integration of ecological principles into urban and regional design.

ROANE COUNTY TARGET DEVELOPMENT AND GROWTH AREA MAP



APPENDIX 2

UPDATING ZONING AND LAND DEVELOPMENT STANDARDS

UPDATING ZONING
What is the goal? Are we aiming to increase density and provide more housing? What kind of housing are we aiming for?
We need to create standards that will help us achieve the goals we've identified.
Presently, our existing standards are not providing the necessary guidance or supporting the development patterns that align with the county's goals.
<p>The Roane County Planning Department is currently in the process of updating the standards for each zoning district to better align with these goals.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">➤ Example: Agricultural District (current standard)<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Minimum lot size – 1 acre — maybe aim for 15-acre minimum?• Range of non-agriculture uses current permitted• Agri-business uses not listed as permitted use• Does this zoning achieve its purpose? The intent of the regulations in this District is to discourage the subdivision of land better suited for agricultural use instead of urban development.
Development standards should align with the intent and purpose of the district.



Zoning brings thunder, lightning, and the four riders of the apocalypse. No one wants anyone to tell them what to do with their property, but everyone wants someone to tell their neighbor what to do with their property.

— Gerald Green



ZONING RESOLUTION UPDATE

Adopting a comprehensive rewrite for new zoning resolution.

Amend both the zoning resolution and zoning map, with new/revised districts appropriately located..

Cost is a significant consideration, and funds would have to be budgeted for the update.

Staff time and resources would be required for managing the update, community meetings, zoning mapping.

APPENDIX 3

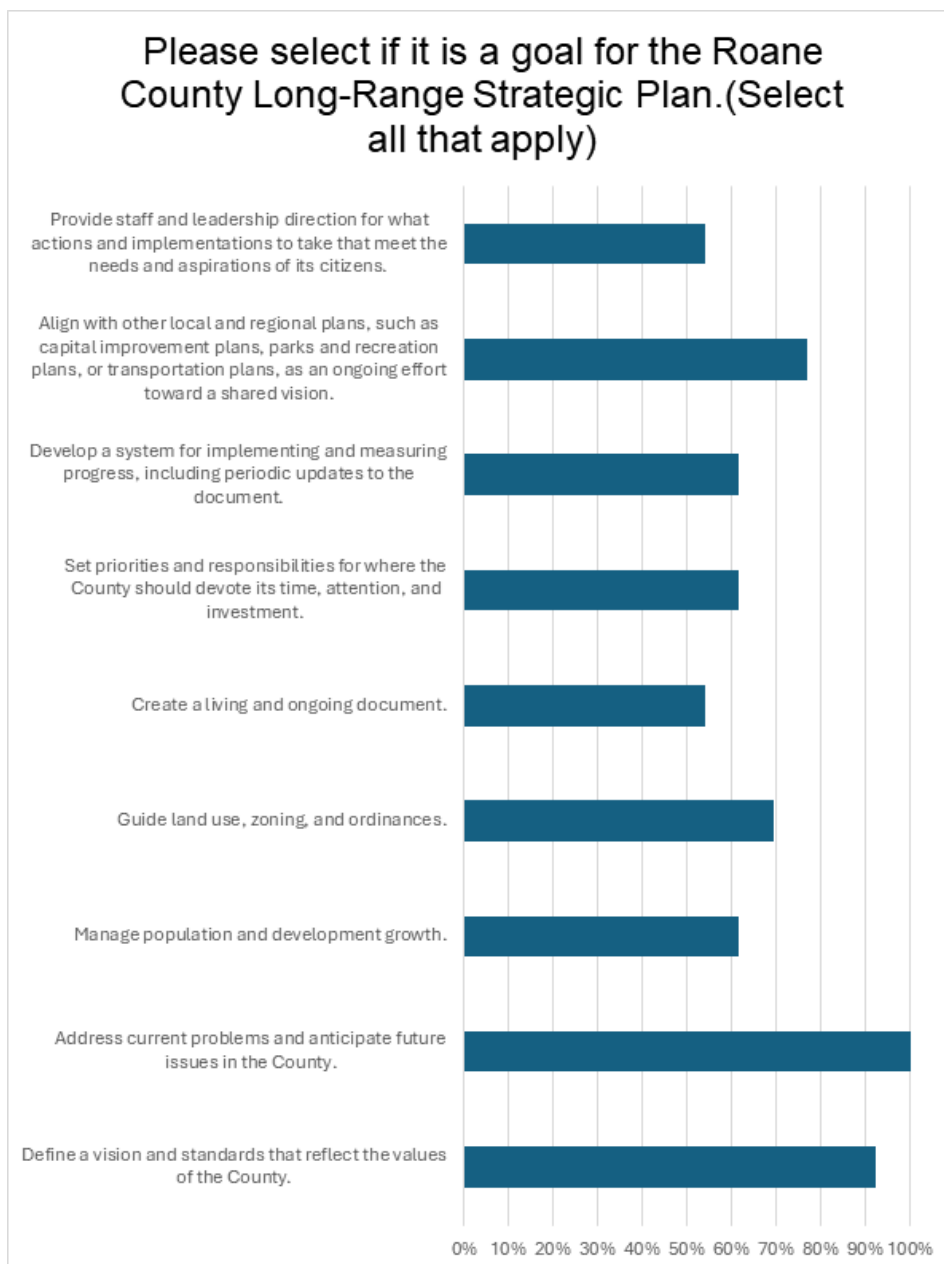
ZONING RESOLUTION AMENDMENTS & UPDATES

<p>Coordinate and collaborate with all municipalities to update their zoning.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">➤ Reduce minimum setbacks and lot sizes.➤ Increase the areas where multifamily units are allowed.➤ Allow for more housing types such as townhomes, cottage courts, condos, and small multifamily units (up to 8 units per building.)➤ Coordinate targeted and overall growth!
<p>Encourage sustainable new development with guided, gentle density.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">➤ Increase R2 and R3 districts across the county.➤ Review R2 and R3 guidelines to reduce frontage, width, setbacks, and lot sizes.➤ Allow accessory dwelling units in R1, R2, and R3 districts.➤ Decrease or eliminate the minimum number of parking spaces required for residential and commercial development and establish a maximum limit for commercial development.
<p>R-3 Recommendations</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">➤ Single-Family (<i>smaller lot size</i>)➤ Triplex➤ Quadplex➤ Cottage Courts➤ Low-rise Apartments

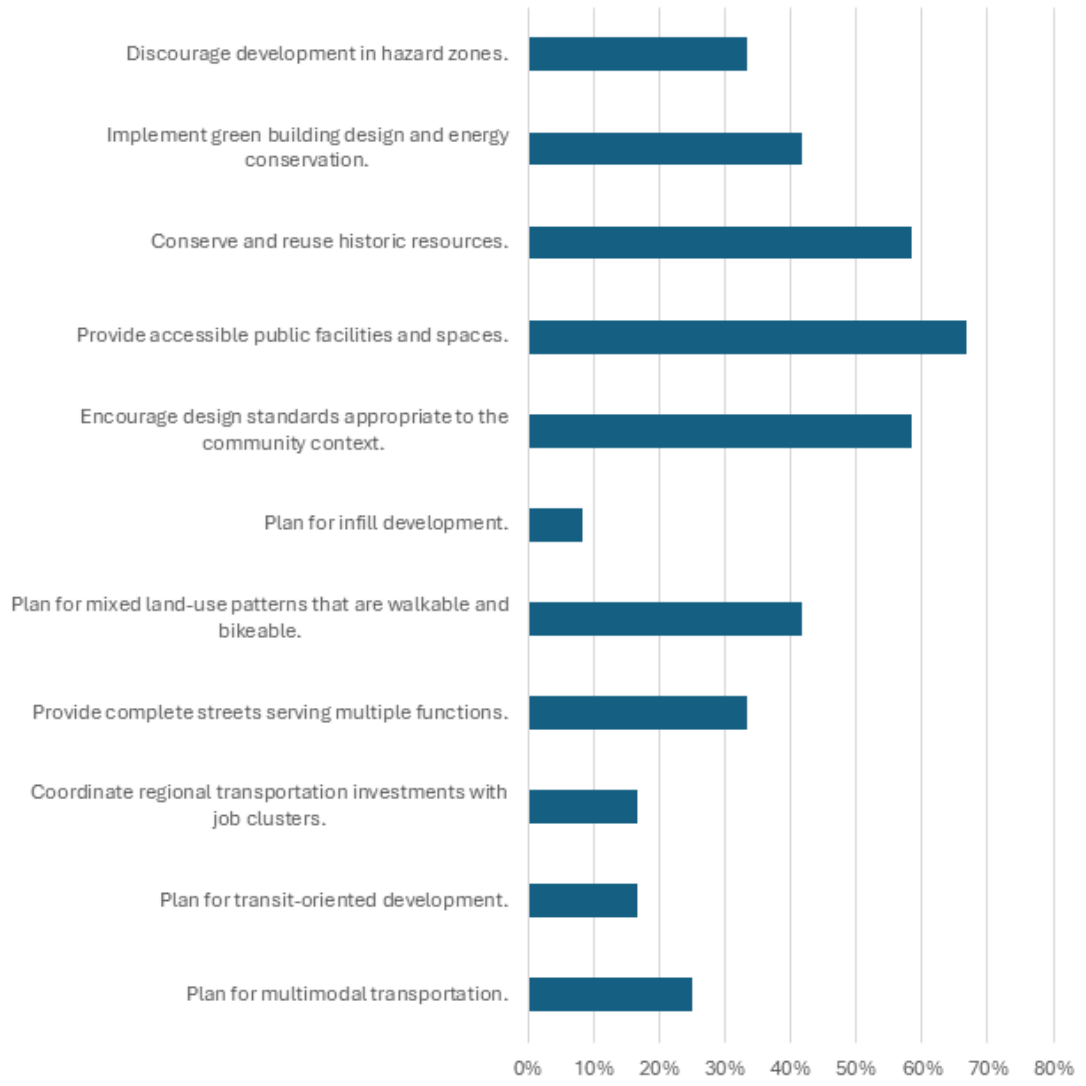
Allow small neighborhood commercial business centers or corners at main intersections and corridors, including within neighborhoods.
<p>Parking Minimums</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Calculate required parking spaces minimum per bedroom. ➤ Additional parking can be on-street parking or a small adjacent parking lot.
<p>Collaboration with municipalities</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Maintain a strong line of communication with all of them. ➤ Compare zoning codes ➤ Update all maps. ➤ Improve permitting process.
Allow residential units in all commercial districts.
Allow for live-and-work buildings in commercial corridors and nodes.
Allow residential units in all commercial districts. Allow for live-and-work buildings in commercial corridors and nodes.

Appendix 4

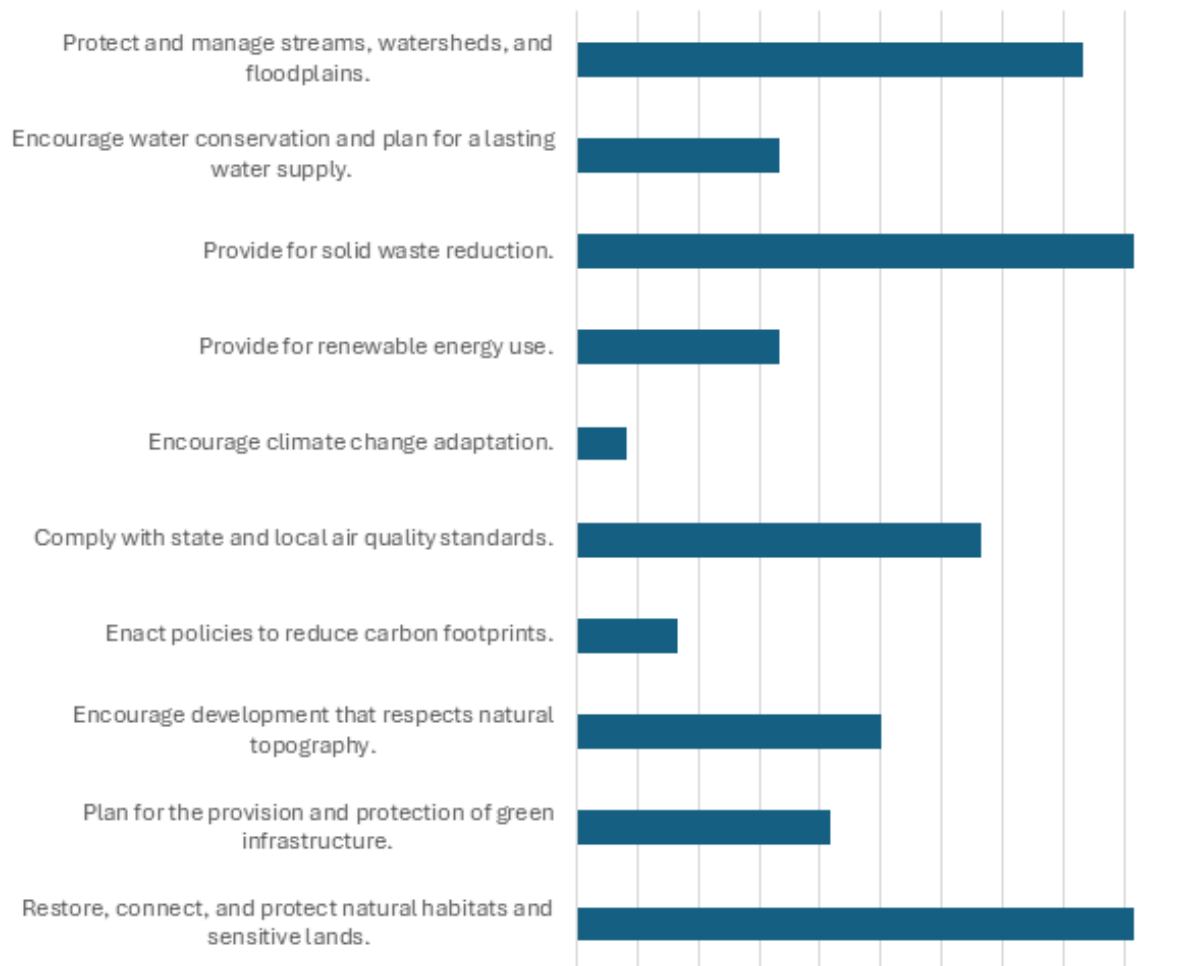
The April 25, 2024 Planning Commission Visioning Workshop Survey Data Results — Planning Committee



1. Livable Built Environment Ensure that all elements of the built environment, including land use, transportation, housing, energy, and infrastructure, work together to provide sustainable, green places for living, working, and recreation, with a high qua

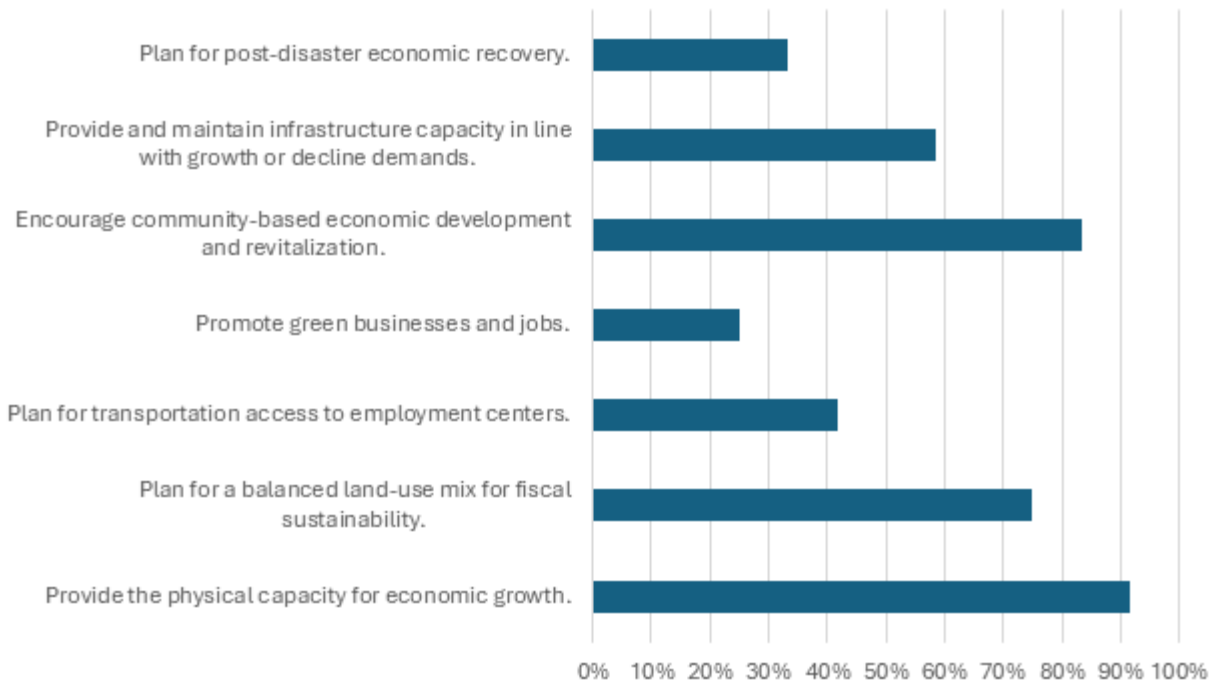


2. Harmony with Nature Ensure that the contributions of natural resources to human well-being are explicitly recognized and valued and that maintaining their health is a primary objective.(Check all that should apply to the Roane County Plan)

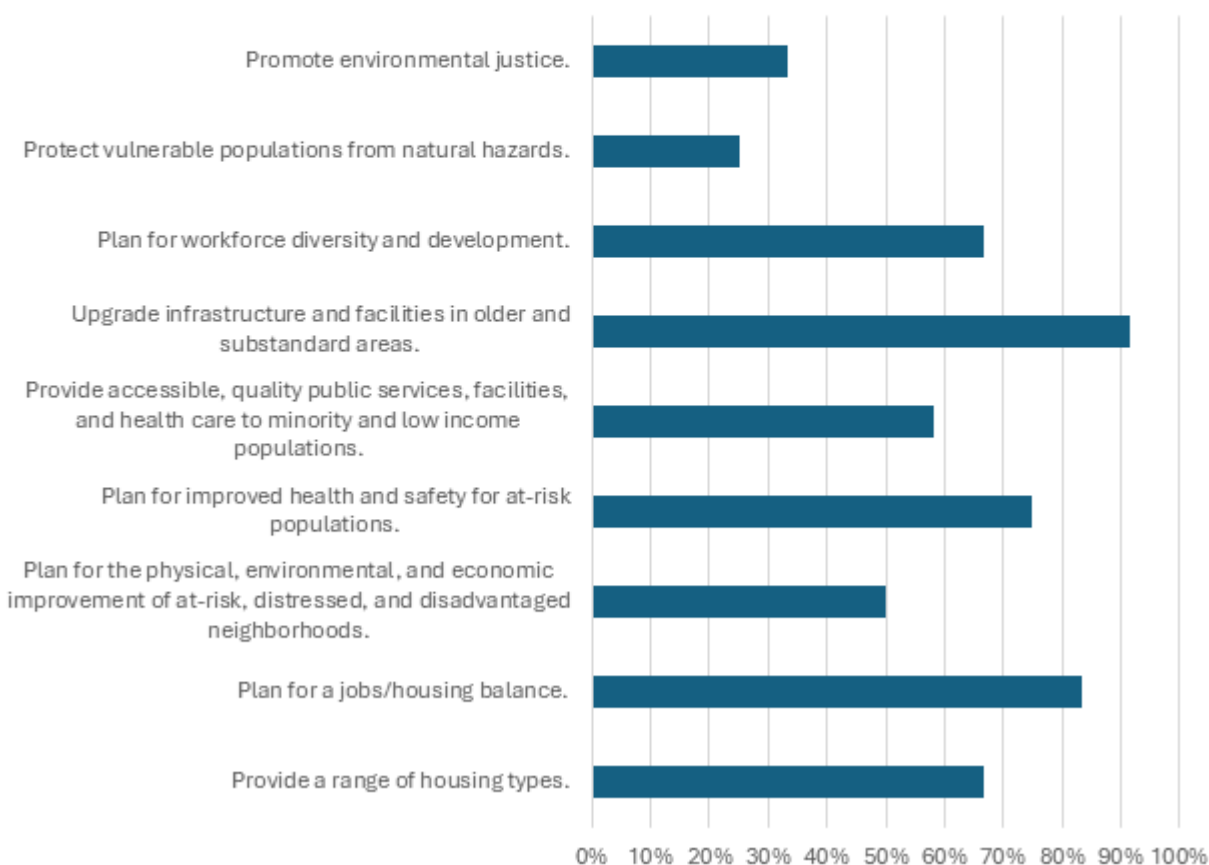


3. Resilient Economy

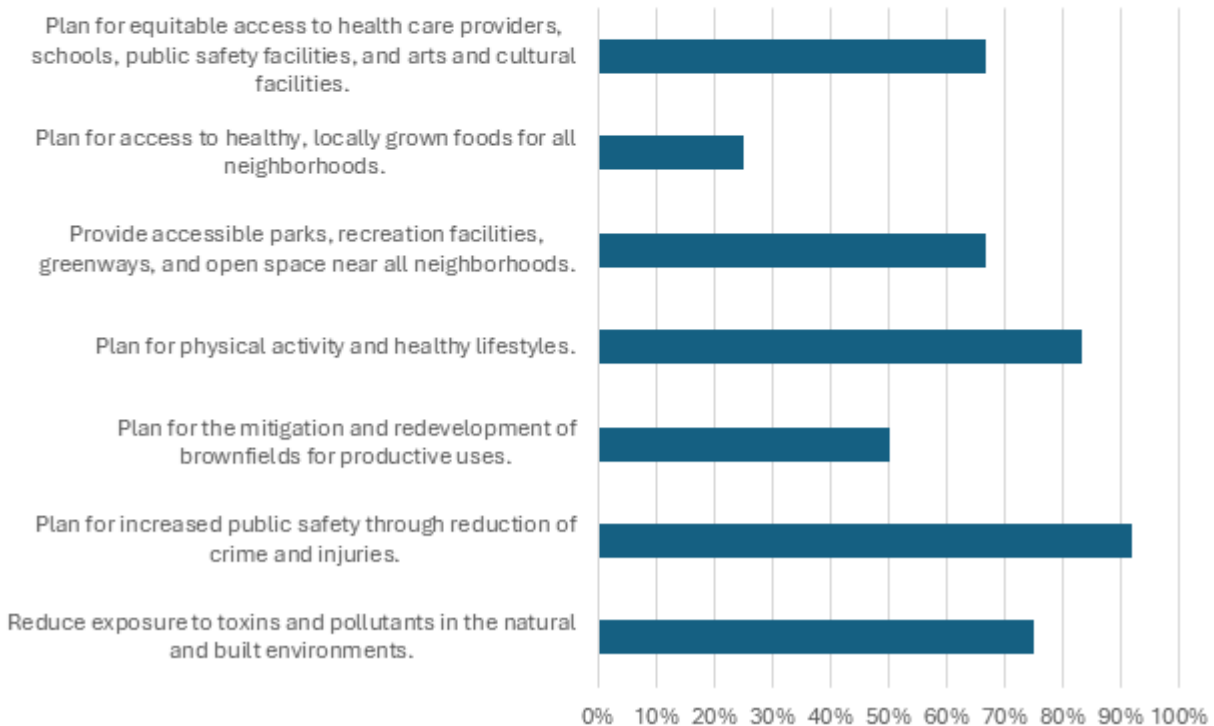
Ensure that the community is prepared to deal with both positive and negative changes in its economic health and to initiate sustainable urban development and redevelopment strategies that foster green business growth and build resilience



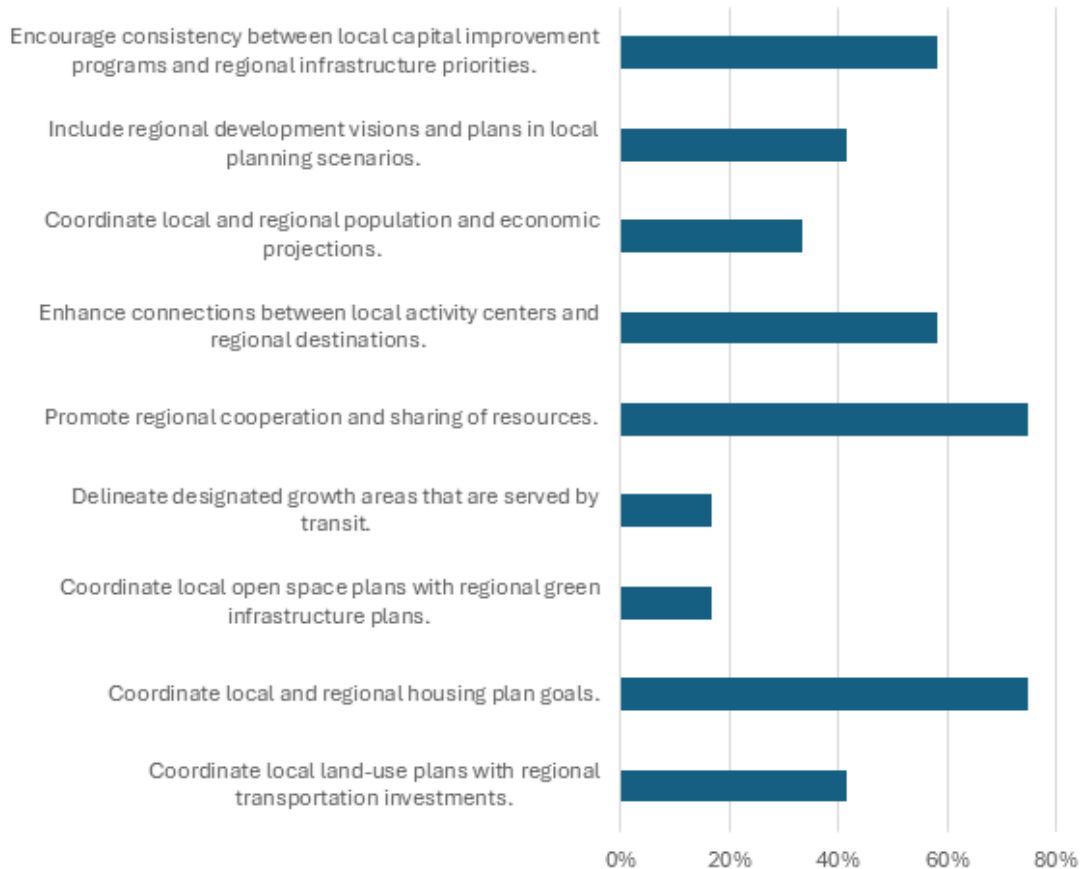
4. Interwoven Equity Ensure fairness and equity in providing for the housing, services, health, safety, and livelihood needs of all citizens and groups.(Check all that should apply to the Roane County Plan)



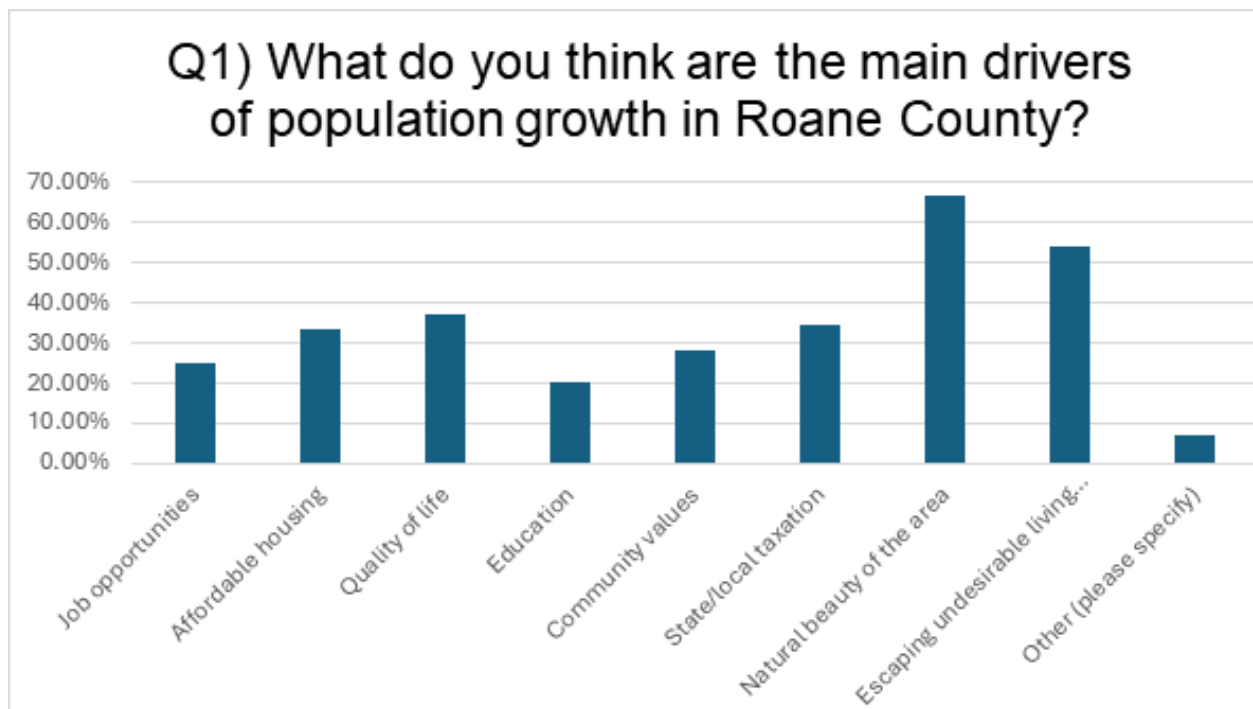
5. Healthy Community Ensure that public health needs are recognized and addressed through provisions for healthy foods, physical activity, access to recreation, health care, environmental justice, and safe neighborhoods.(Check all that should apply to the



6. Responsible Regionalism Ensure that all local proposals account for, connect with, and support the plans of adjacent jurisdictions and the surrounding region. (Check all that should apply to the Roane County Plan)

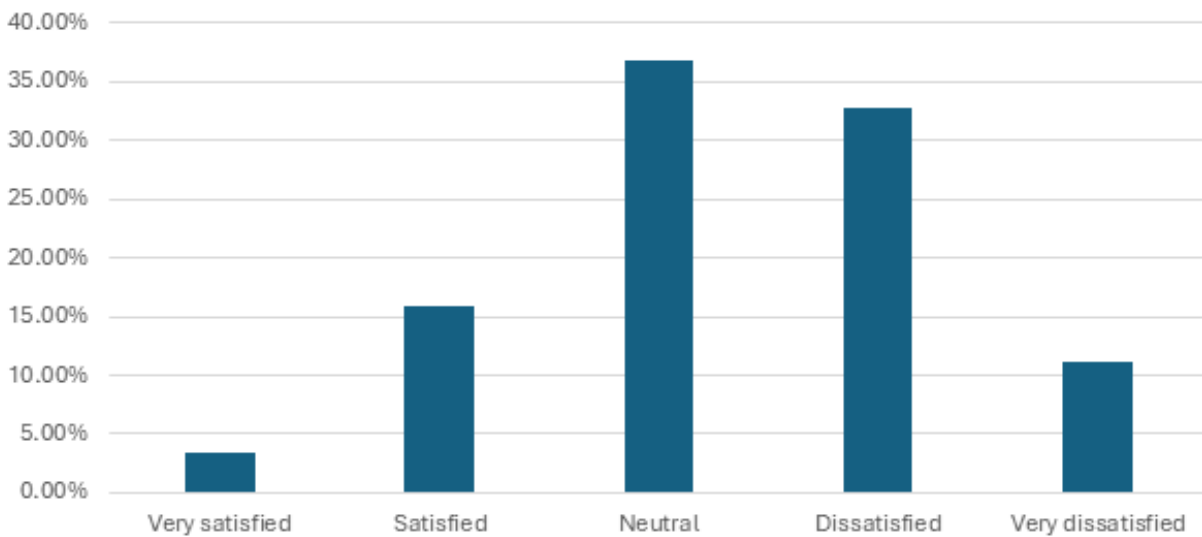


PUBLIC ONLINE SURVEY¹ 10/2023 TO 5/2024

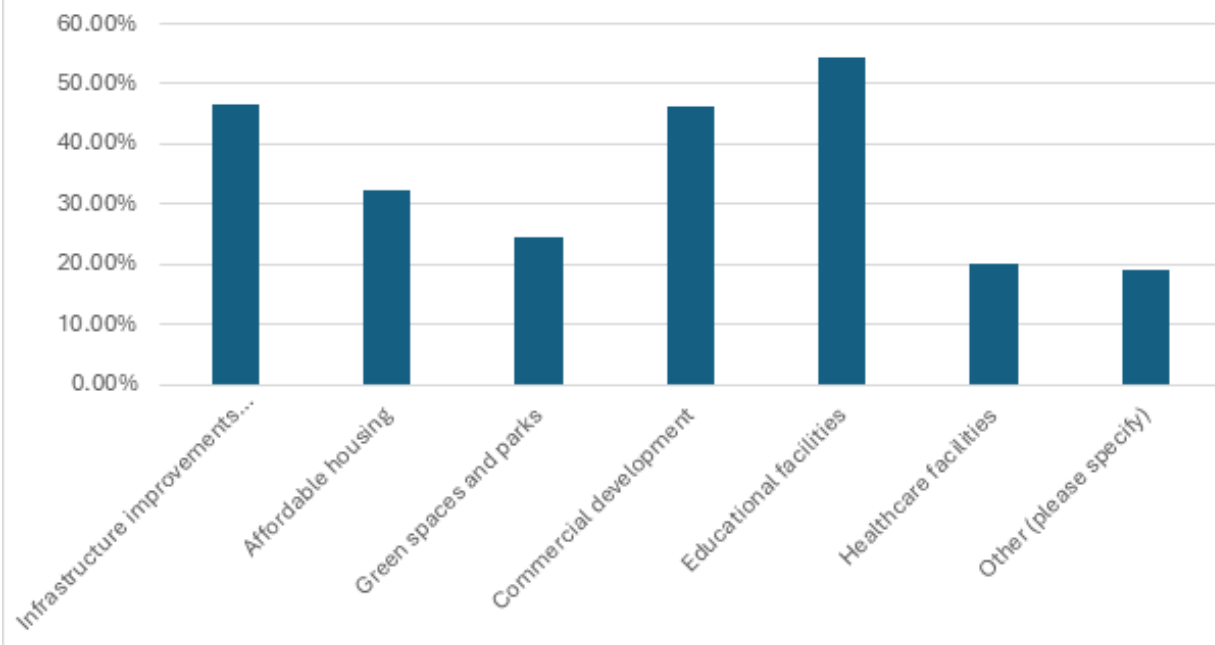


1 Survey Monkey data results — 578 reponses to 29 questions

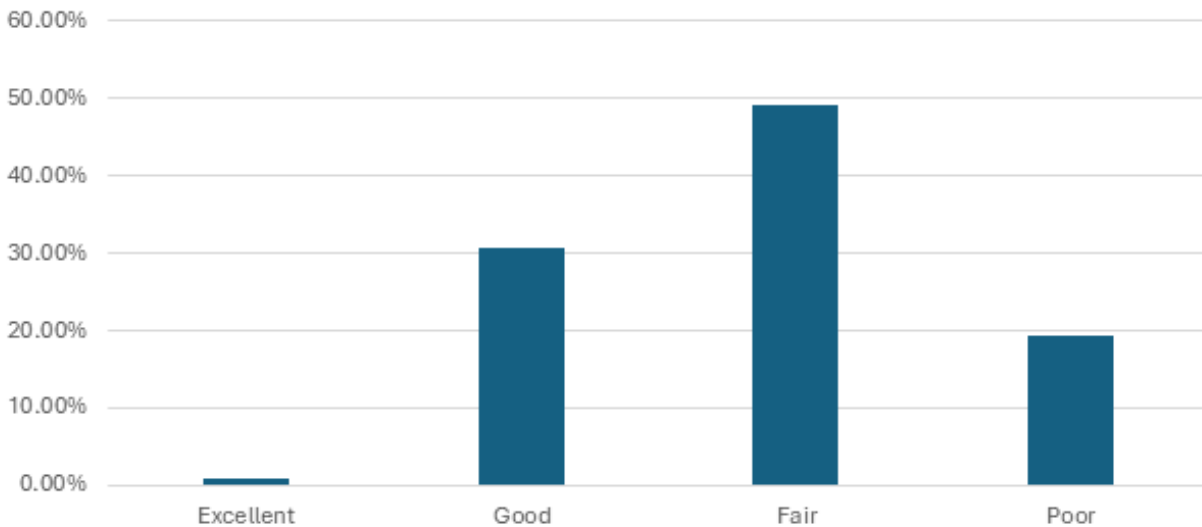
Q2) Are you satisfied with the pace of development in Roane County?



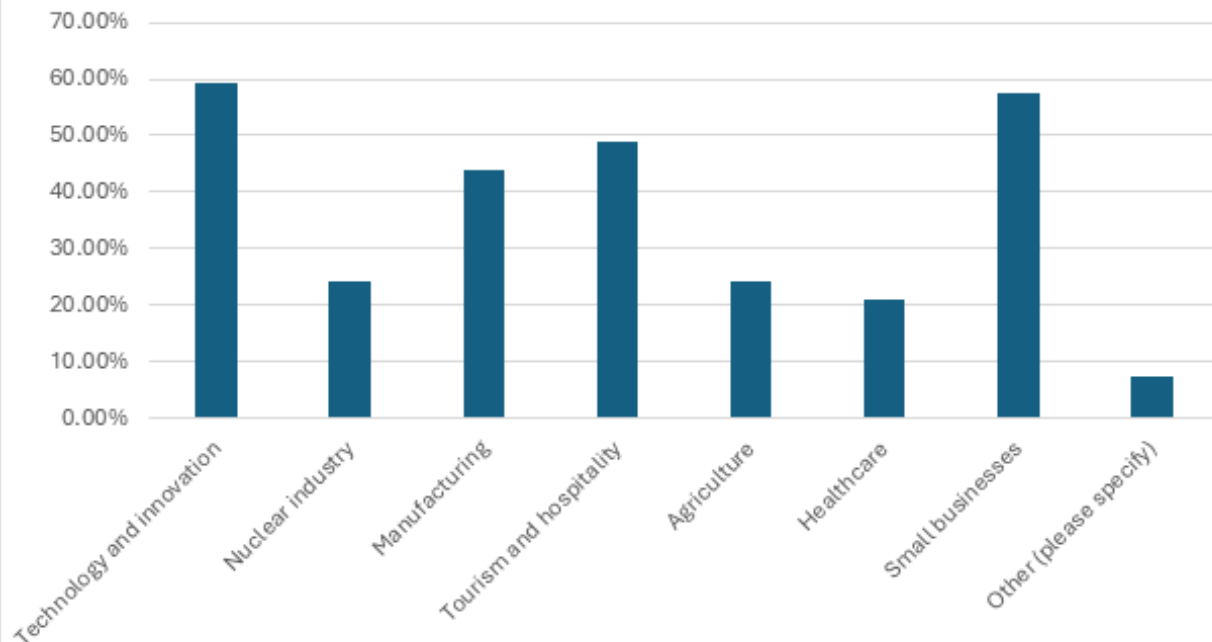
Q3) What types of development projects do you believe should be prioritized in Roane County? (Select up to three)



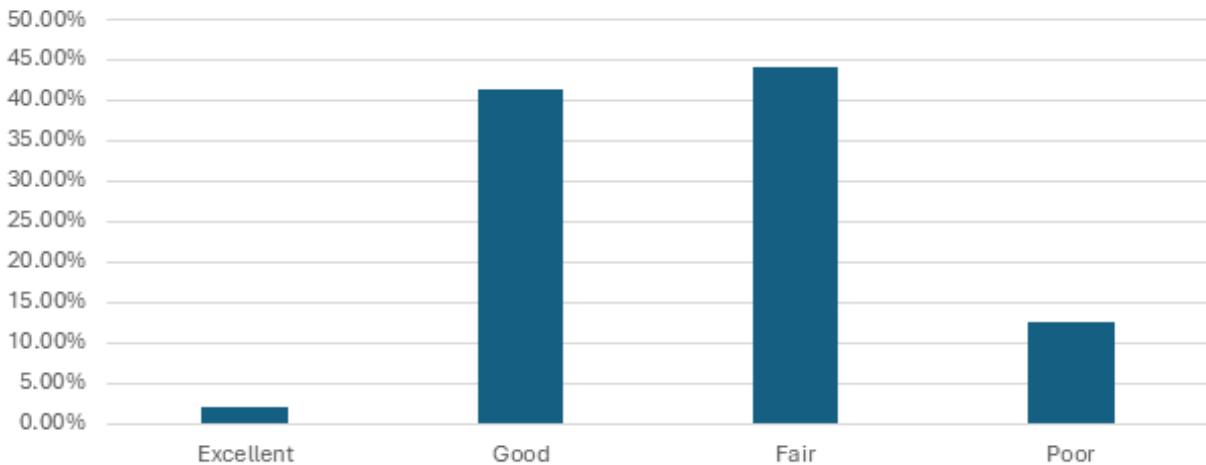
Q4) How would you rate the overall economic condition of Roane County?



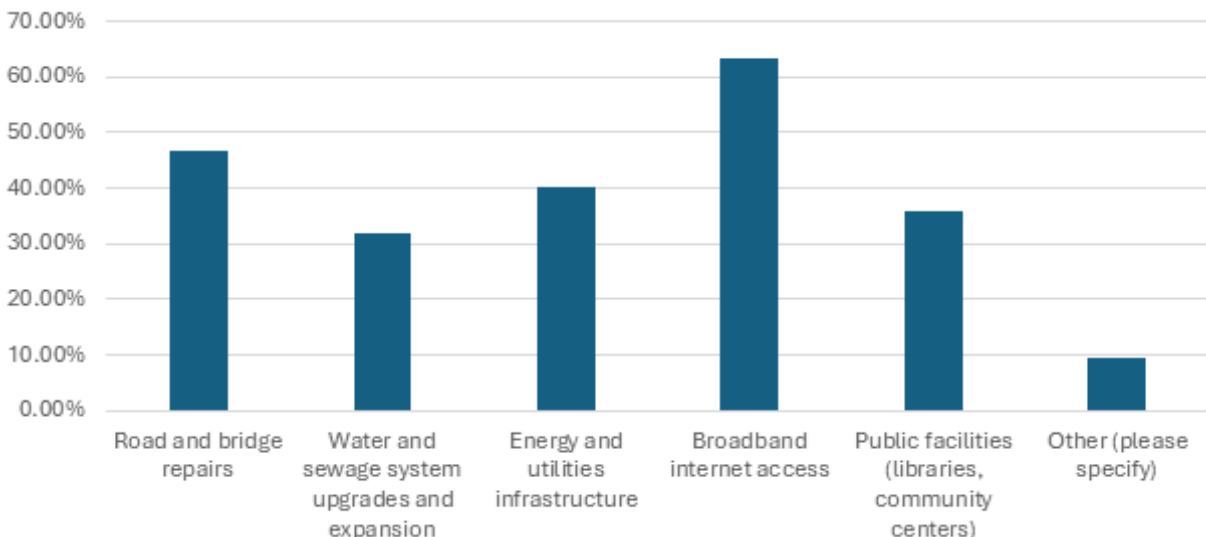
Q5) What types of industries or businesses do you think Roane County should attract or support for economic growth? (Select up to three)



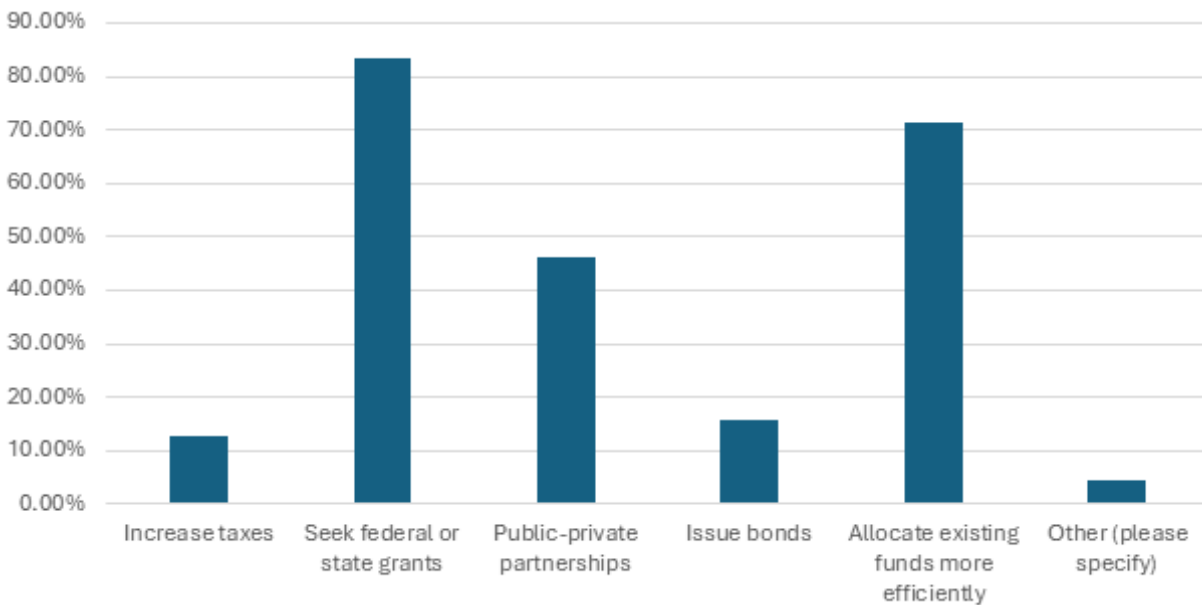
Q6) How would you rate the condition of Roane County's roads and transportation infrastructure?



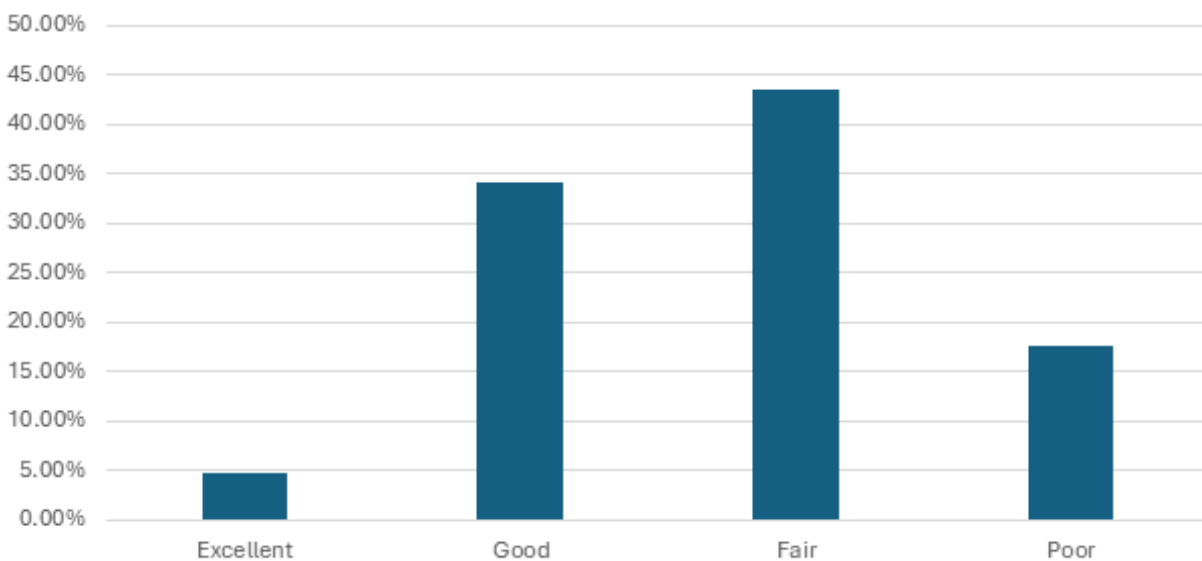
Q7) In your opinion, what are the most pressing infrastructure needs in Roane County? (Select up to three)



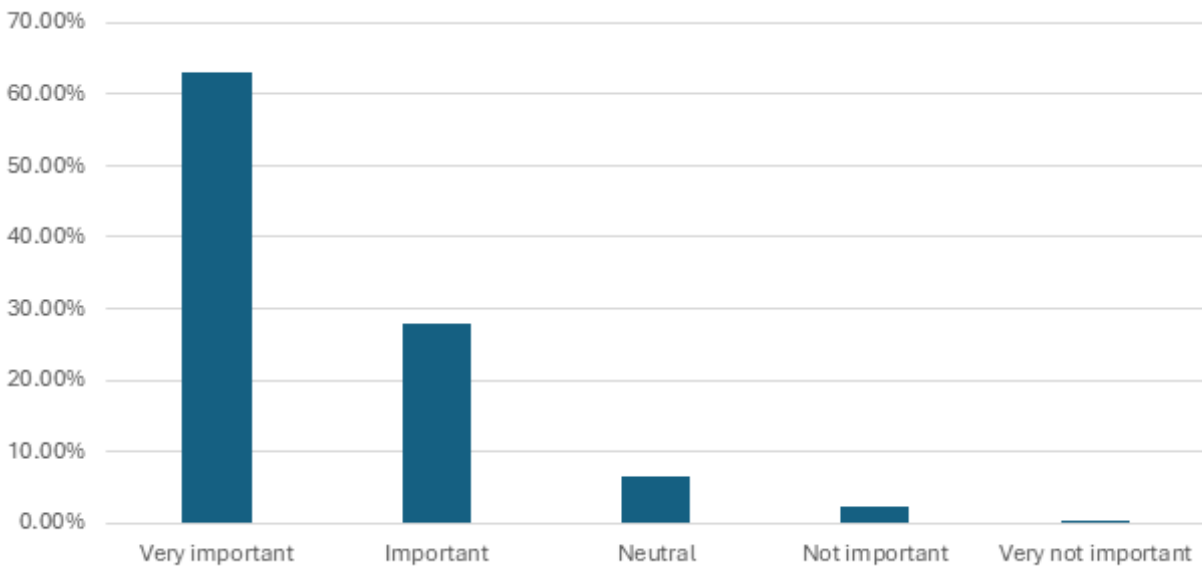
Q8) How do you think Roane County can best fund and finance infrastructure improvements? (Select all that apply)



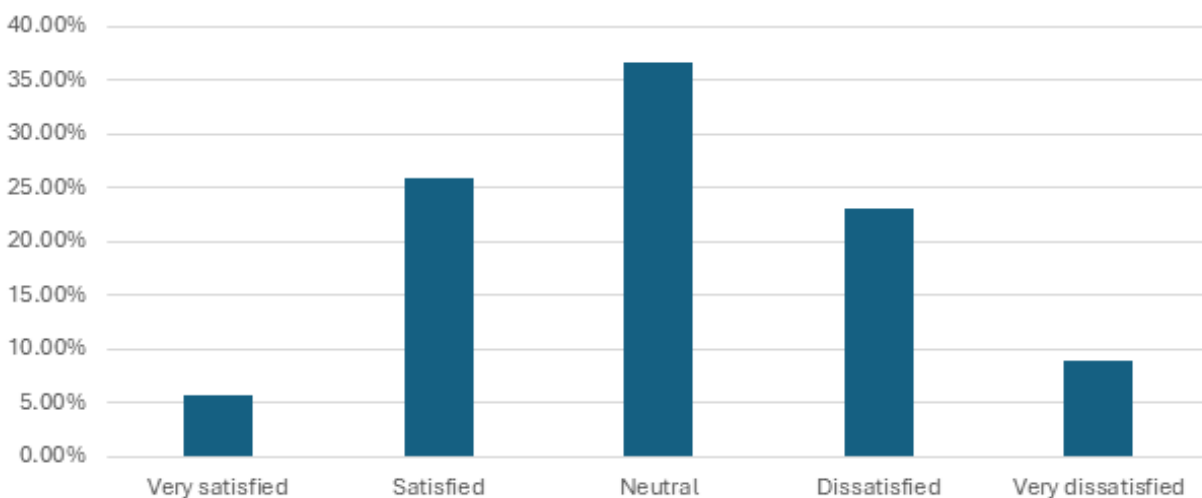
Q9) How would you rate the quality of education in Roane County? (Exp: Public Schools, Public College, and Trade Schools)



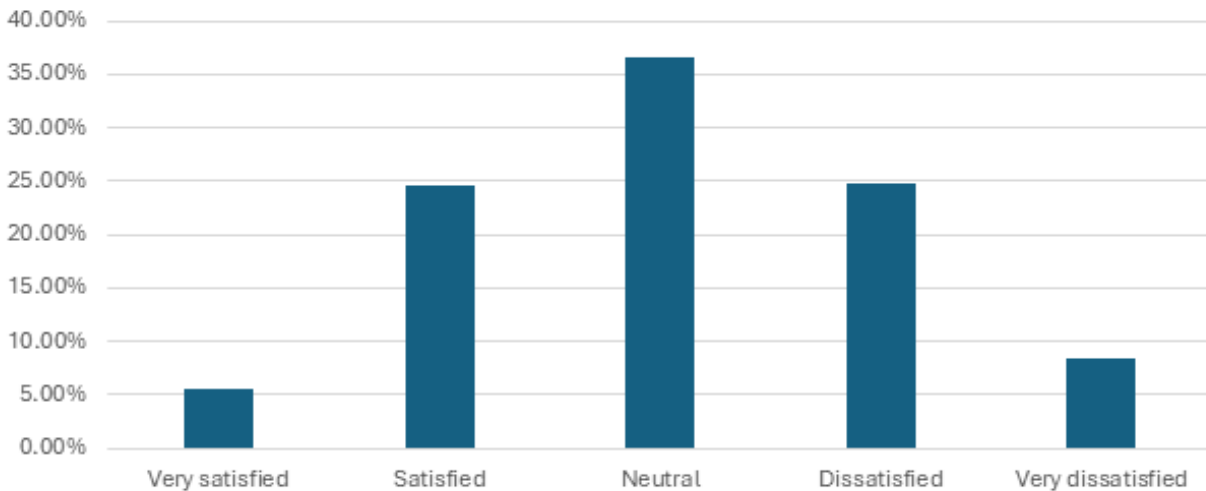
Q 10) How important is high-quality education to you? (University, advanced education...?, Up to date technology in classrooms?)



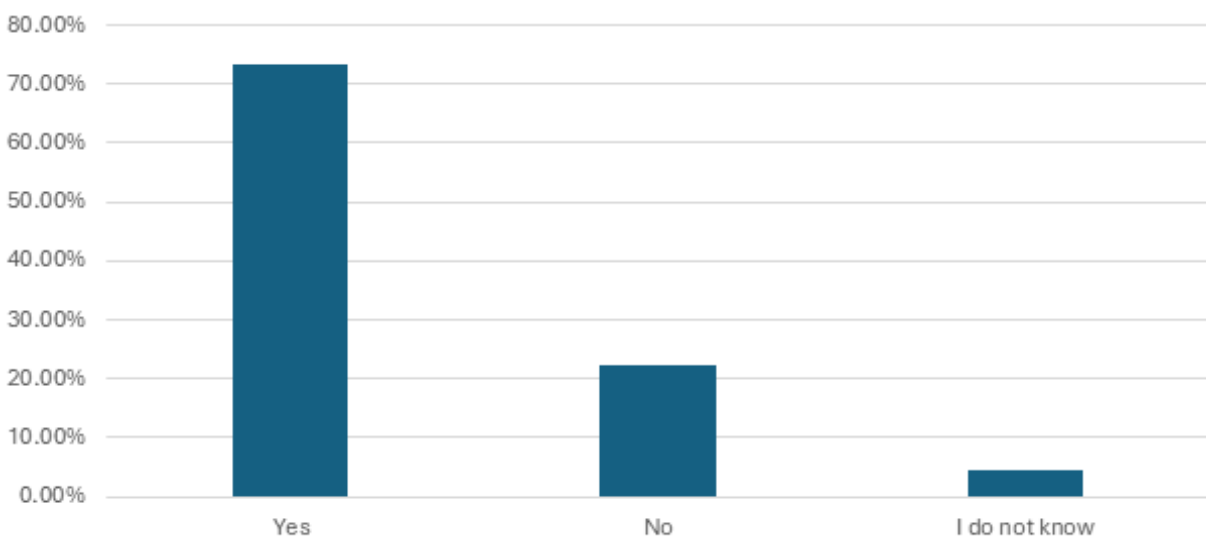
Q11) Are you satisfied with the availability of educational resources and facilities in Roane County? (Exp: Schools, College, and Trade Schools)



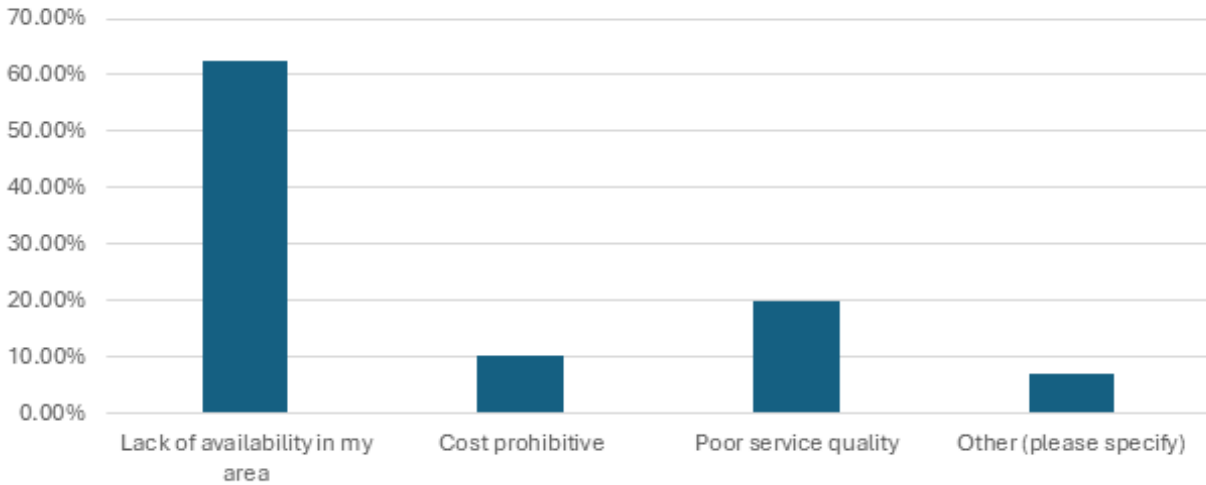
Q12) Are you satisfied with public educational offerings and programs in Roane County? (Exp: Public Schools, Public College, and Trade Schools)



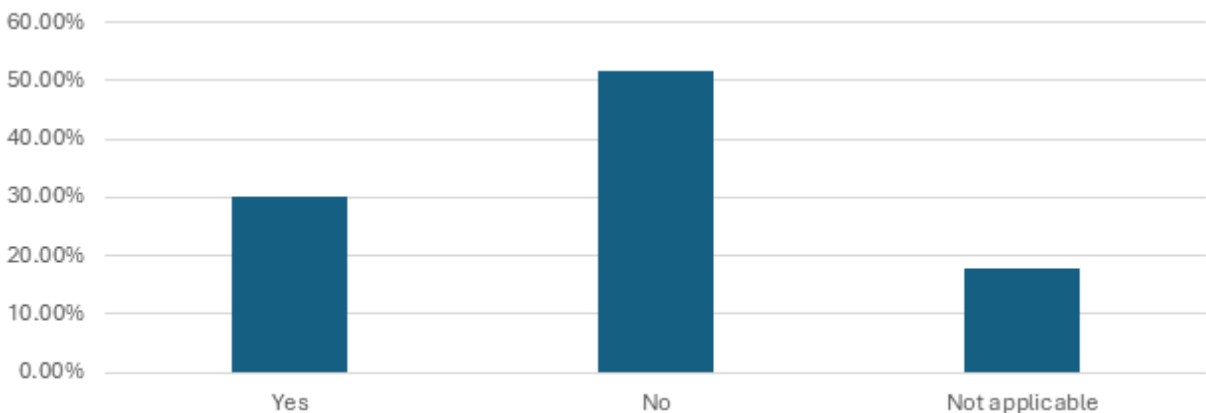
Q13) Do you have access to reliable high-speed broadband internet at your current residence?



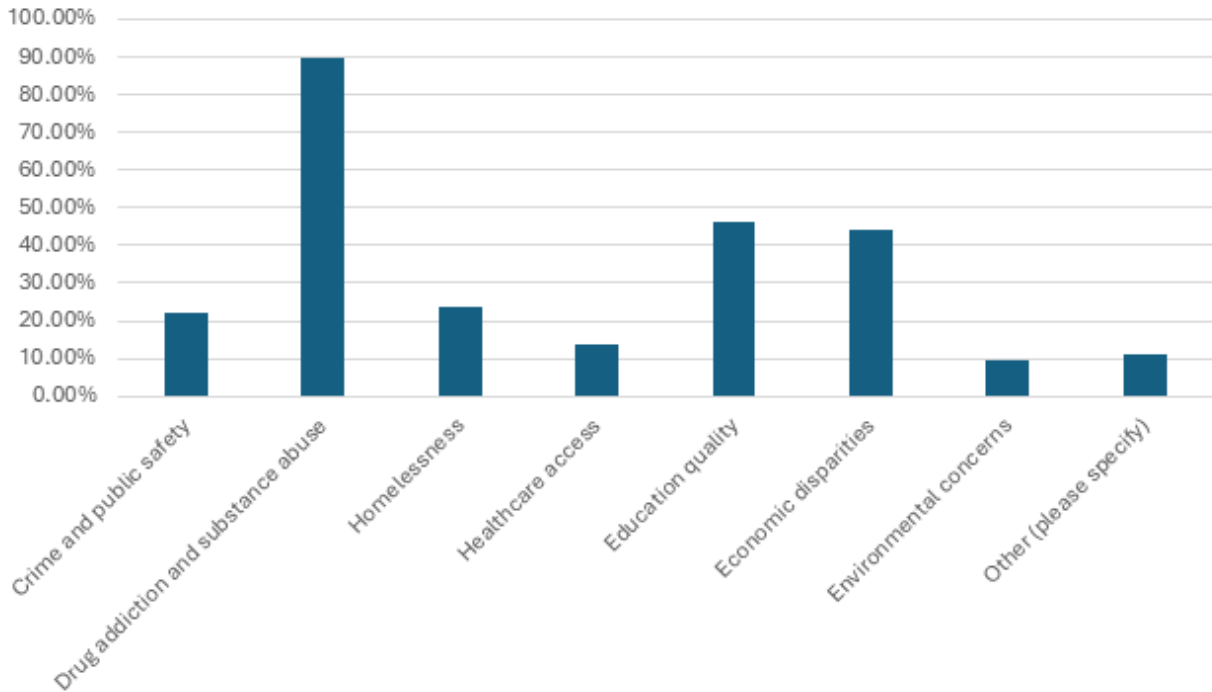
Q14) (Optional) If you answered "No" to the previous question, please specify the main reason for your lack of broadband internet access:



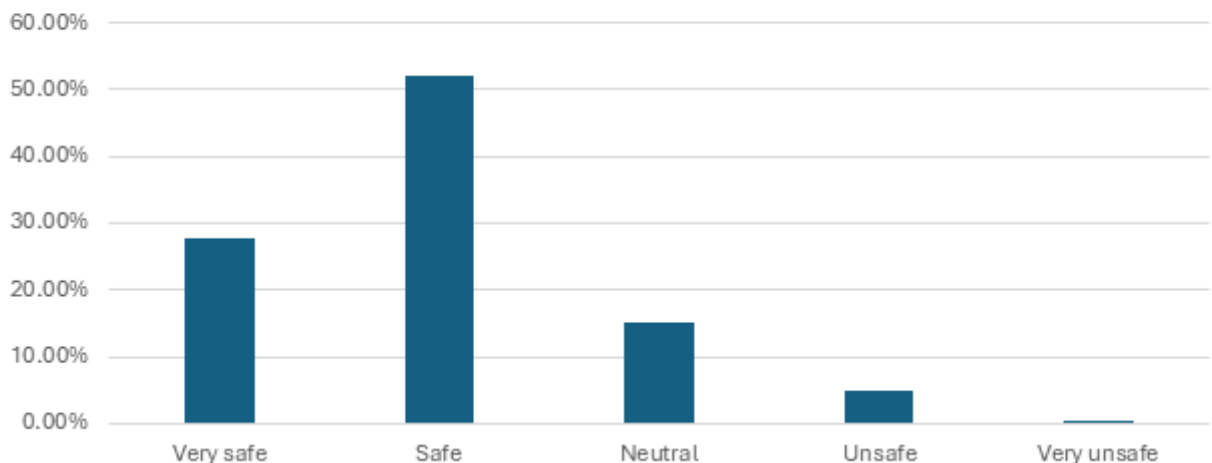
Q15) Have you or someone in your household faced challenges related to remote work, online learning, or telehealth due to inadequate internet access during the past year?



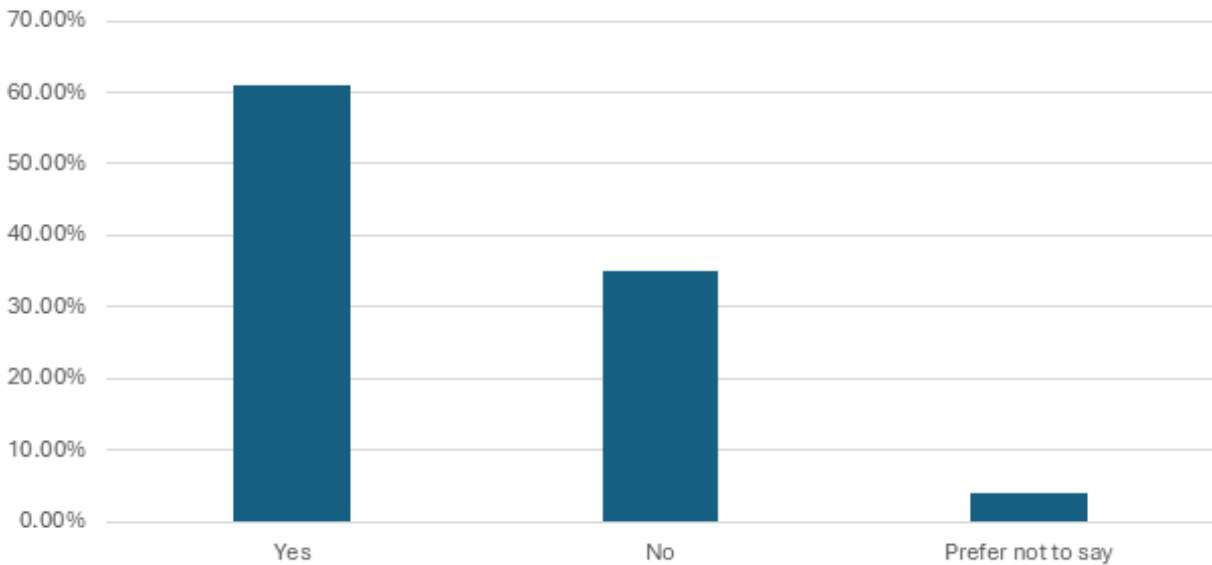
Q16) In your opinion, what do you consider to be the greatest challenges facing Roane County today? (Select up to three)



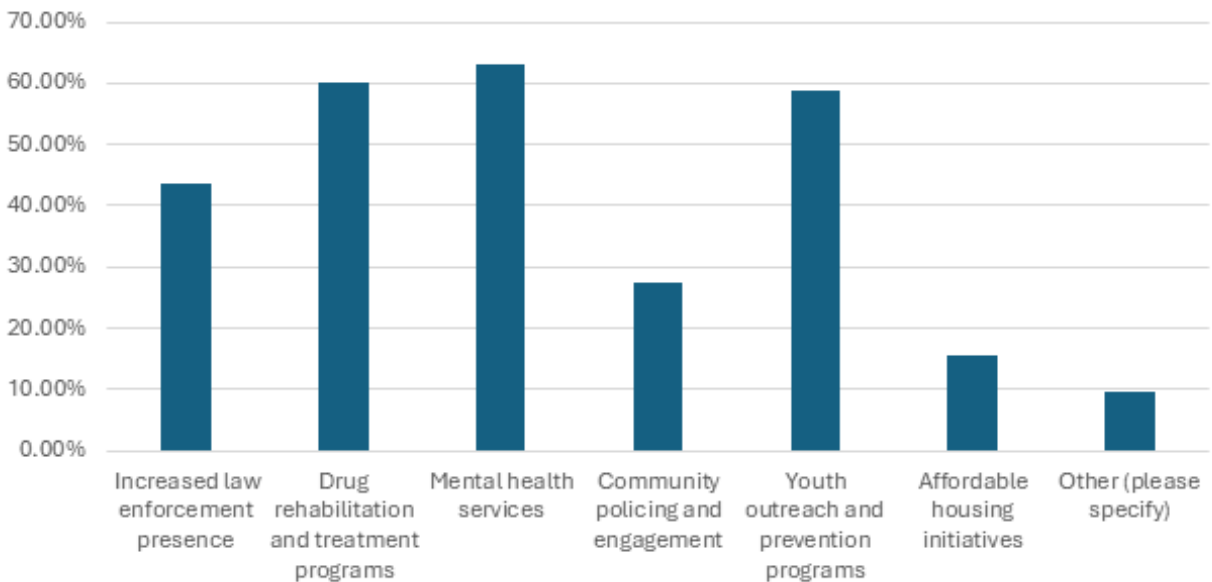
Q17) How safe do you feel in your local neighborhood in terms of crime and public safety?



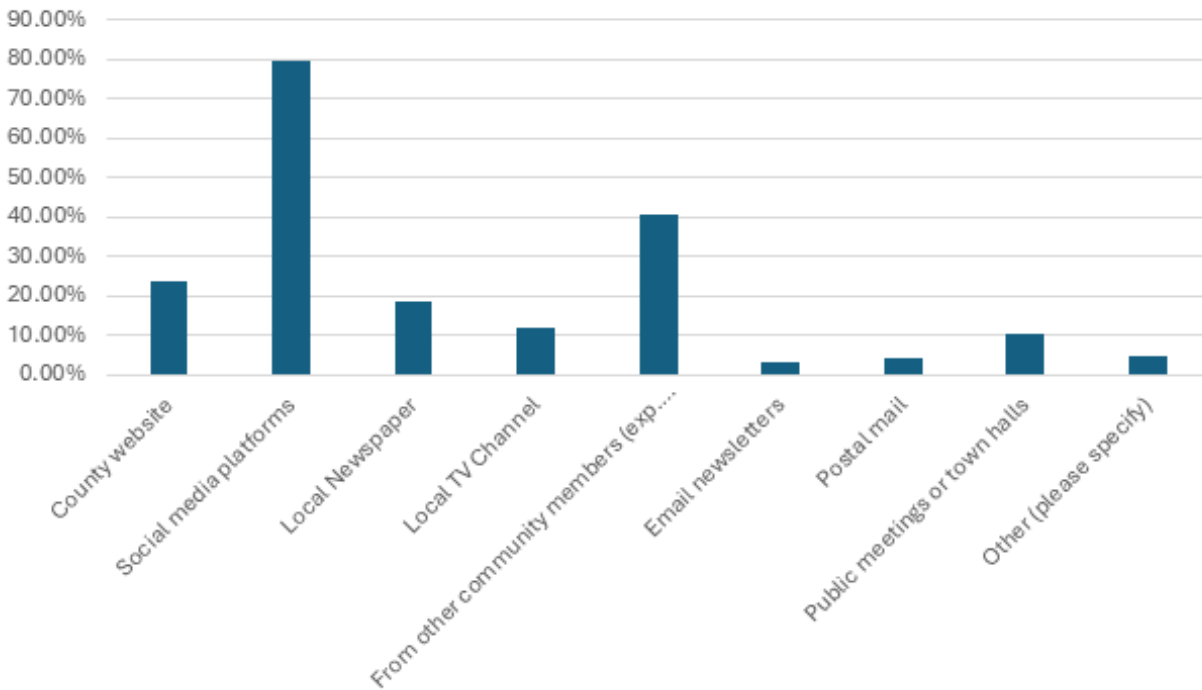
Q18) Have you or someone you know been directly affected by issues related to drug addiction or substance abuse in Roane County?



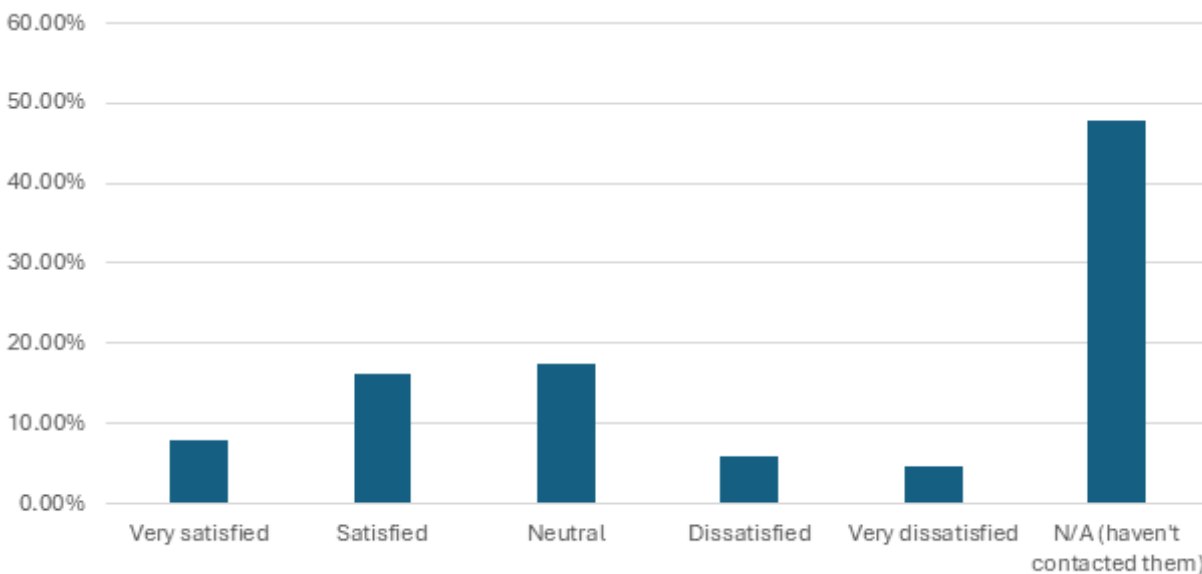
Q19) In your opinion, what strategies or initiatives should Roane County prioritize to address the challenges of crime and drug addiction? (Select up to three)

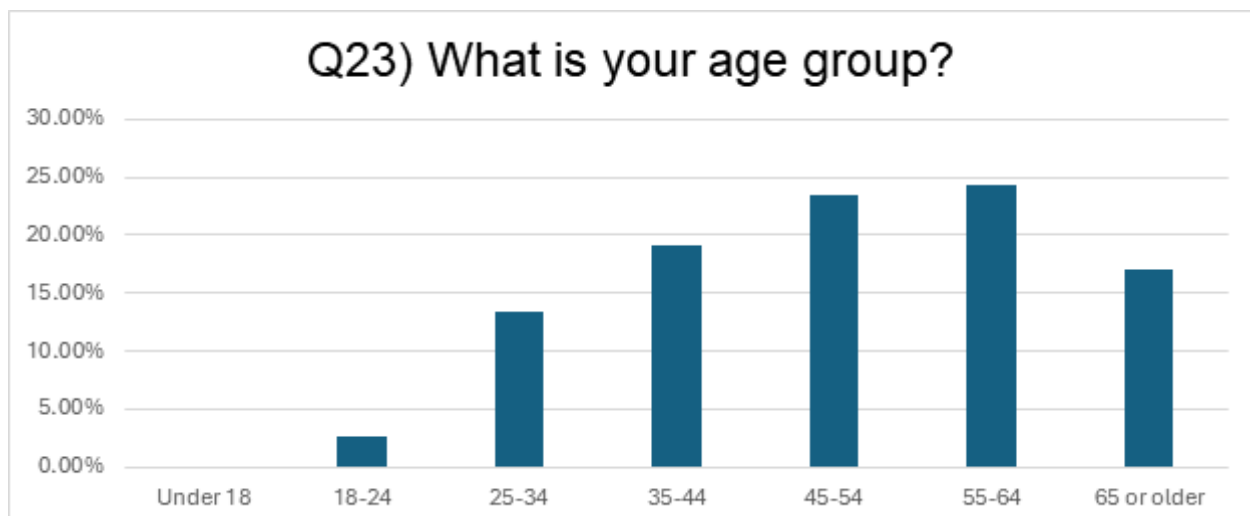
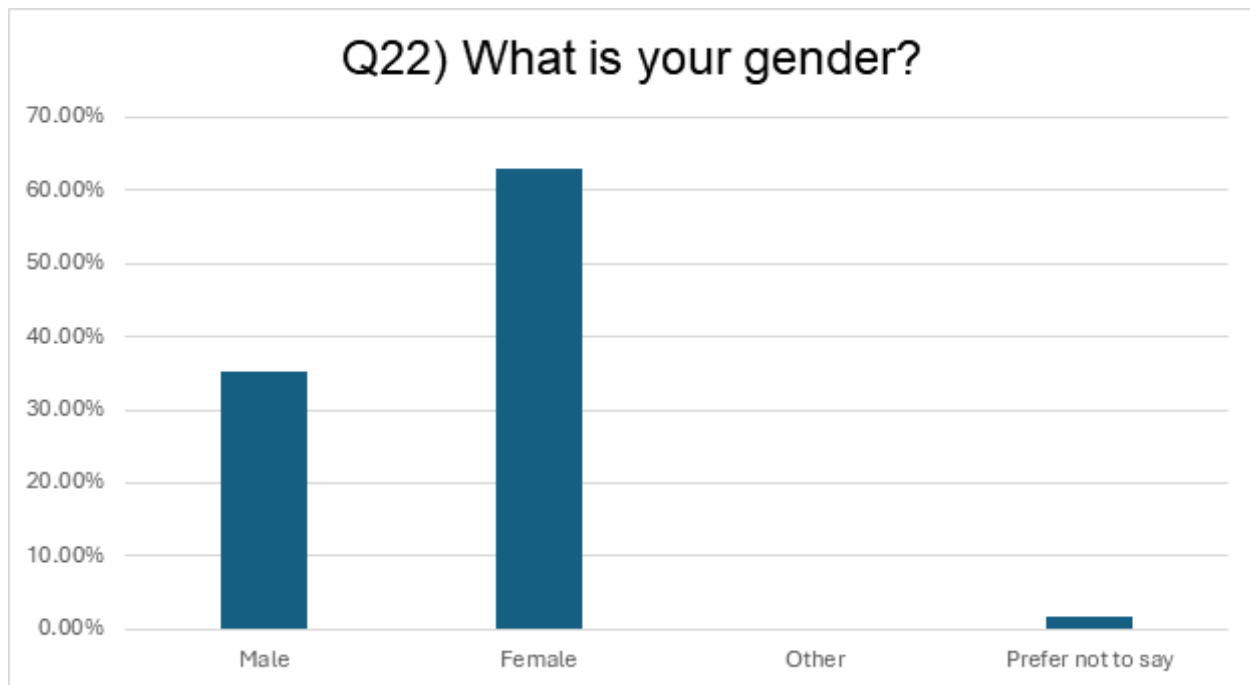


Q20) How do you typically receive information and updates from the Roane County government? (Select all that apply)

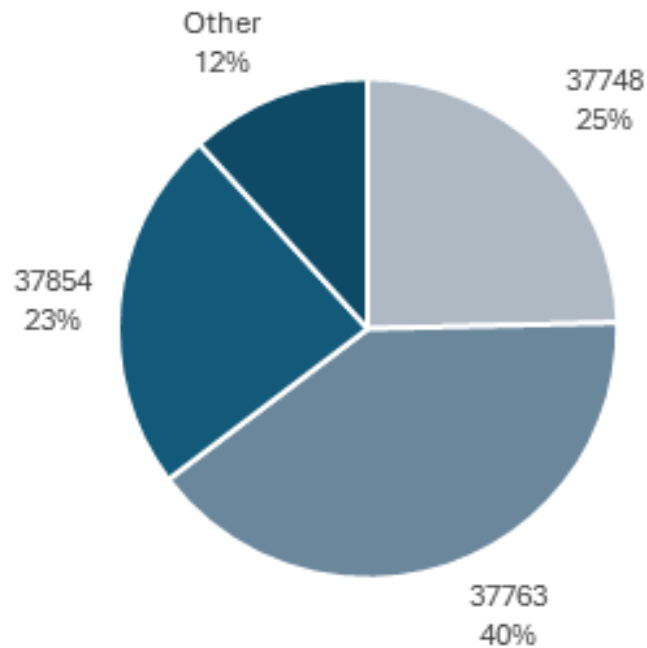


Q21) If you have contacted Roane County government, how satisfied were you with their response and resolution of your inquiry?





Q24) What zip code do you live in?



Q25) What is your Ethnicity/Race? (Select all that apply)

