Eight of the 13 fire companies serving Franklin County are located on or near U.S. Route 220. There are four police stations in Franklin County; the Rocky Mount Police Department, the Franklin County Sheriff's Office, the Town of Boones Mill Police Department and the Ferrum College Campus Police Department.

Franklin County has three grade schools and Ferrum College are within the study area. In Franklin County, there is one public and one private library. The Franklin County Public Library is located in Rocky Mount and Ferrum College is home to the Stanley Library.

There is one active landfill located south of Rocky Mount in the study area. Curbside trash service is not provided, rather, a green box network is provided where citizens may bring their solid waste and recyclable items. There are 74 collection centers, including public buildings, 51 of which are in the study area. The county does not provide water and sewer services. Rocky Mount, Boones Mill and Ferrum have separate water treatment and sewer treatment facilities.

3.2.4.3 Henry County, Martinsville and Ridgeway

The main hospital serving Henry County is in Martinsville. Also the Health Department and a walk-in clinic provide care. Of the six volunteer rescue squads, five are located in the study area. Six of eight fire stations in Henry County are in the study area. The Sheriff's Office includes an elected sheriff and 87 employees. The City of Martinsville has its own Police Department.

There are 21 schools in Henry County with an enrollment of 9,052 students. There are six public schools in Martinsville and one community college. The Blue Ridge Regional Library in Martinsville serves both the city and county. Three branch libraries are located in the study area. The local college library and Planning District Library are in Martinsville.

Solid waste goes to the Martinsville City landfill, located northeast of the city off Clearview Drive. Henry County has 14 green box containers in the study area. The Henry County Public Service Authority provides water and sewer service. There are two water filtration plants in the county. The city of Martinsville owns and manages its water plant located in the northern portion of the city.

3.2.5 Farmlands and Forested Lands

Farming and forestry have been and continue to be some of the largest land uses and the products from those activities remain important components of the economy for much of the study area. The majority of land in the study area in southern Roanoke, western Bedford, southern Botetourt and Franklin and Henry counties is in either farmland or woodland uses (see Figures 3.2-6a through 3.2-6e). These are discussed in this section.

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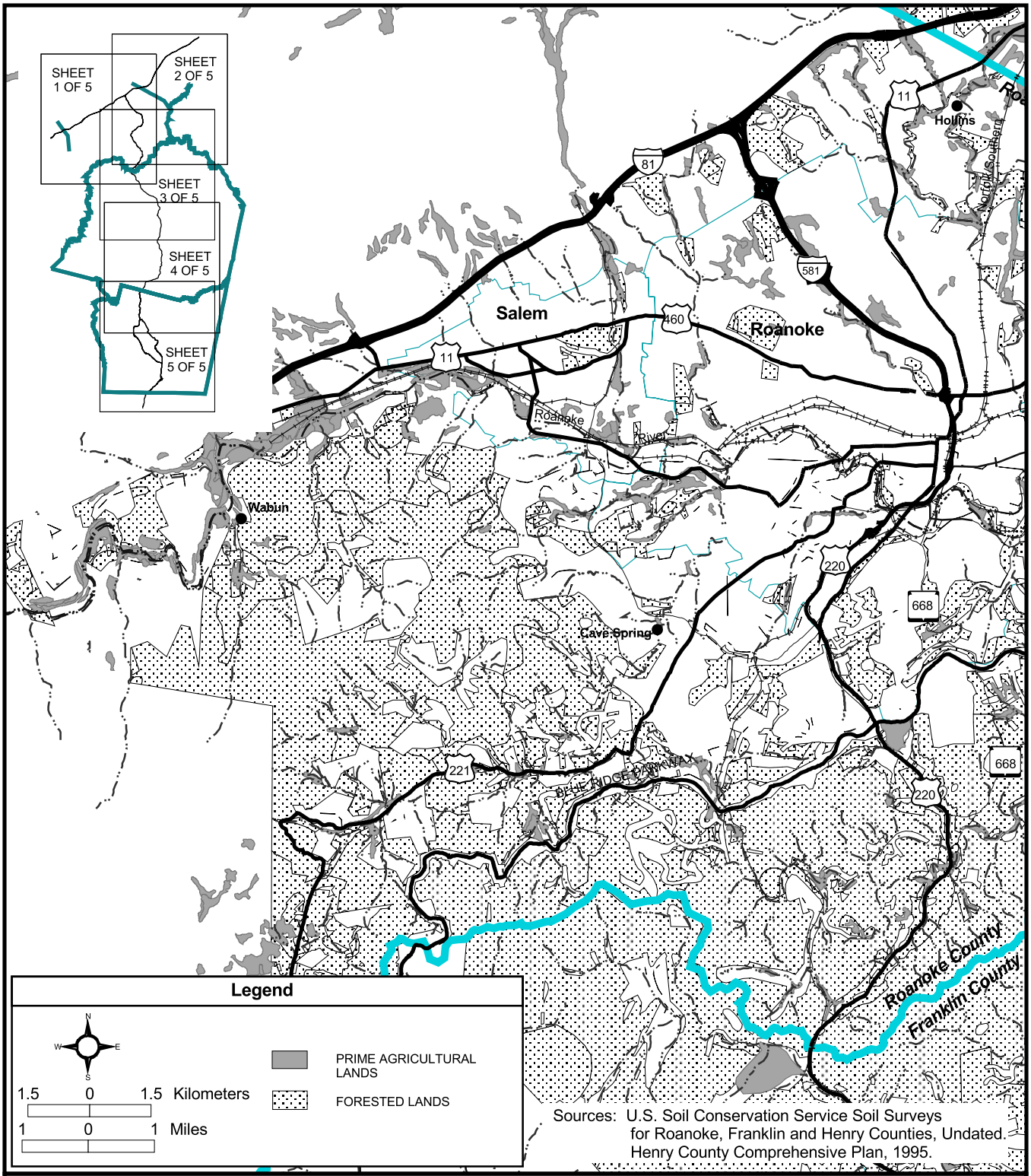
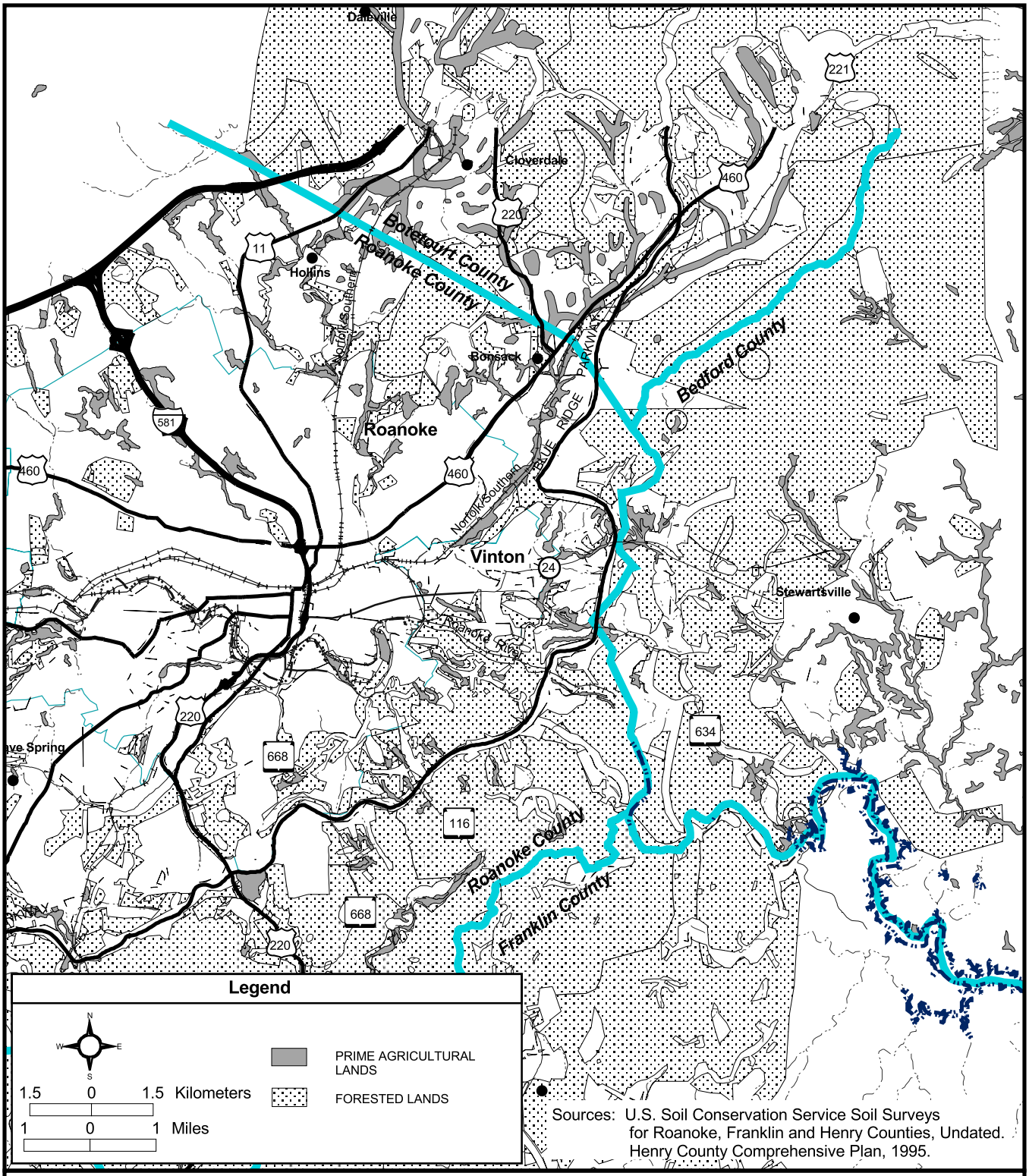


I-73 Location Study

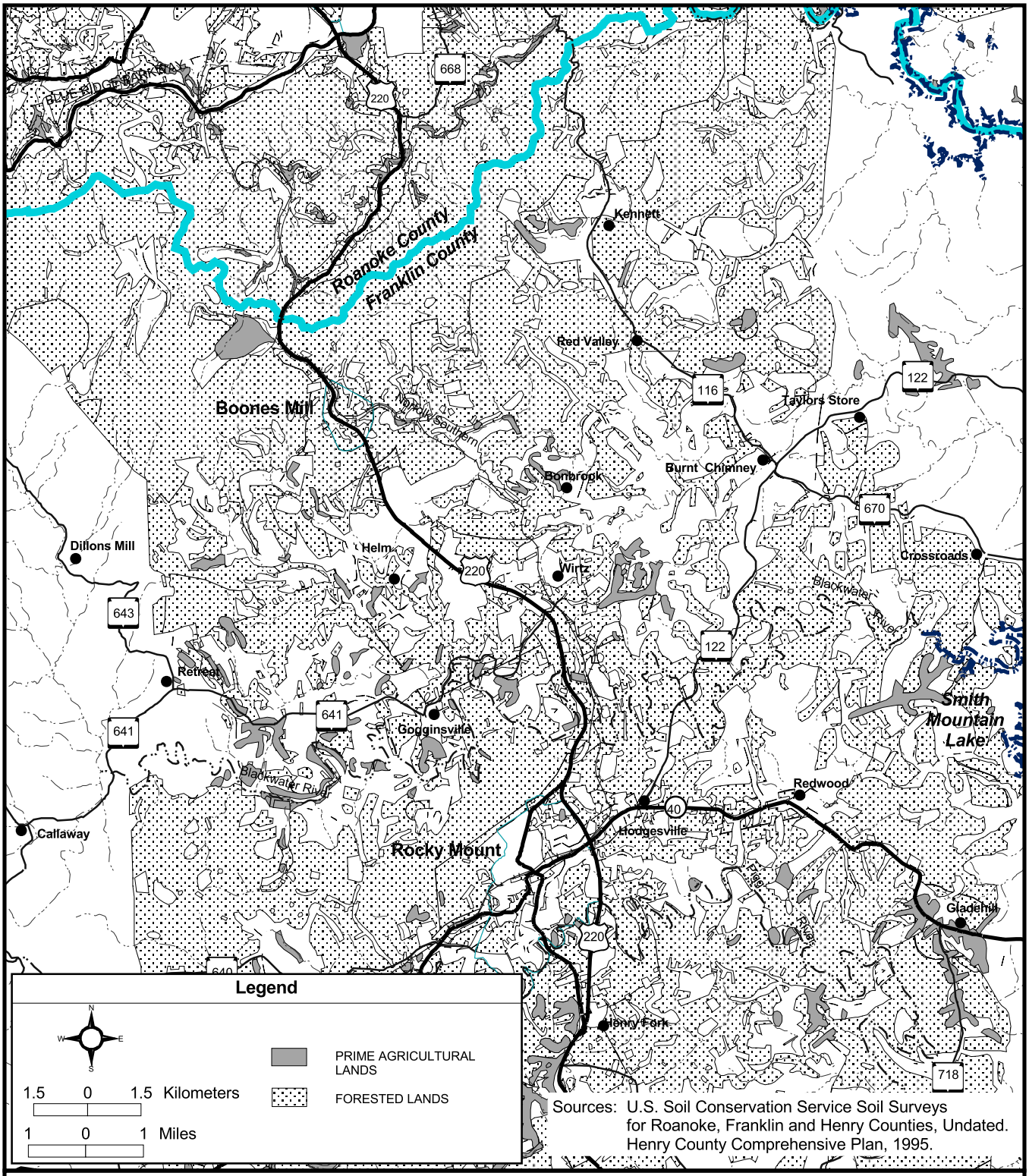
FIGURE 3.2-6a
PRIME AGRICULTURAL FARMLANDS & FORESTED LANDS
WESTERN ROANOKE COUNTY
(SHEET 1 OF 5)



FUTURE 73

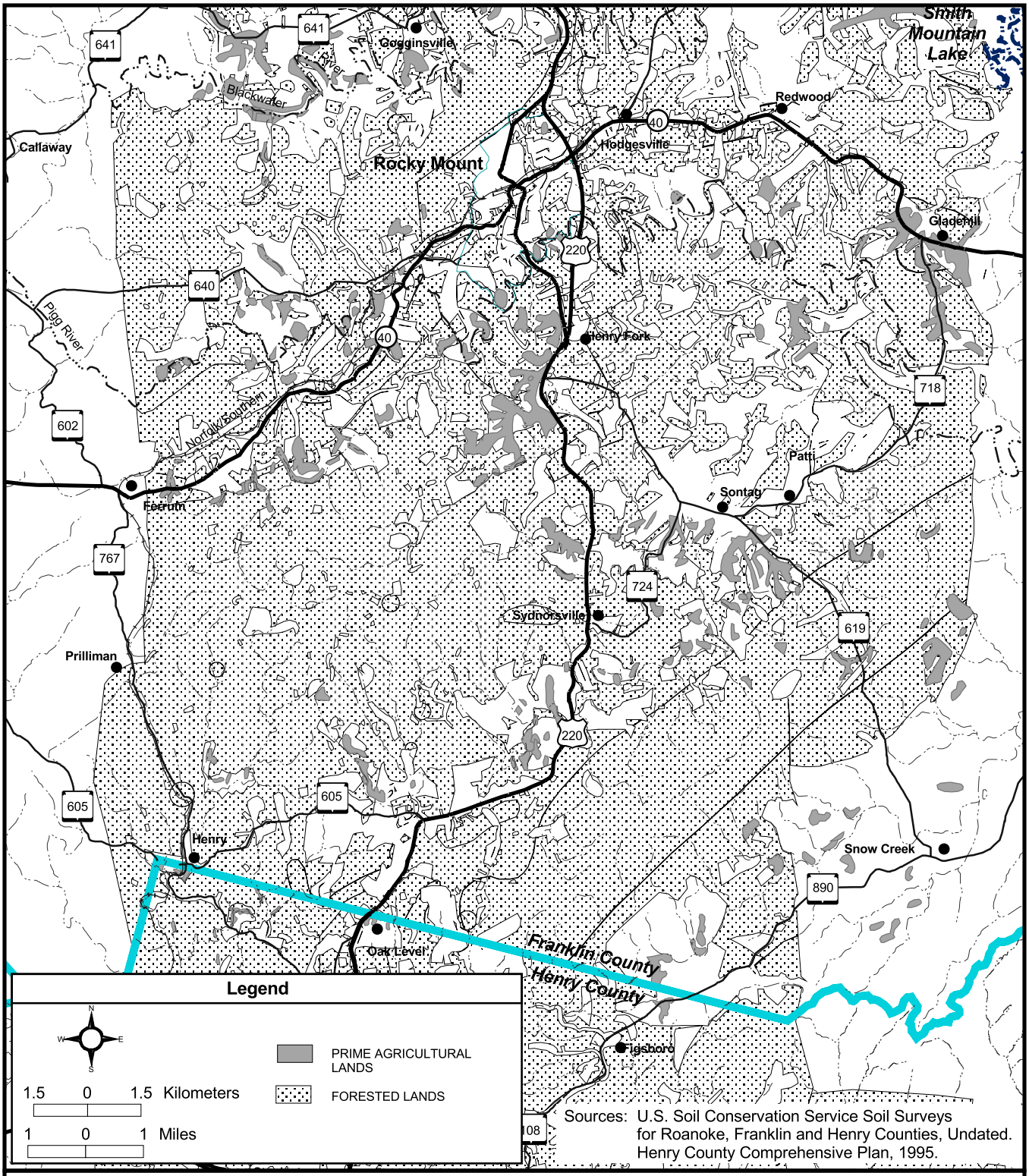
I-73 Location Study

FIGURE 3.2-6b
PRIME AGRICULTURAL FARMLANDS & FORESTED LANDS
EASTERN ROANOKE COUNTY
(SHEET 2 OF 5)



I-73 Location Study

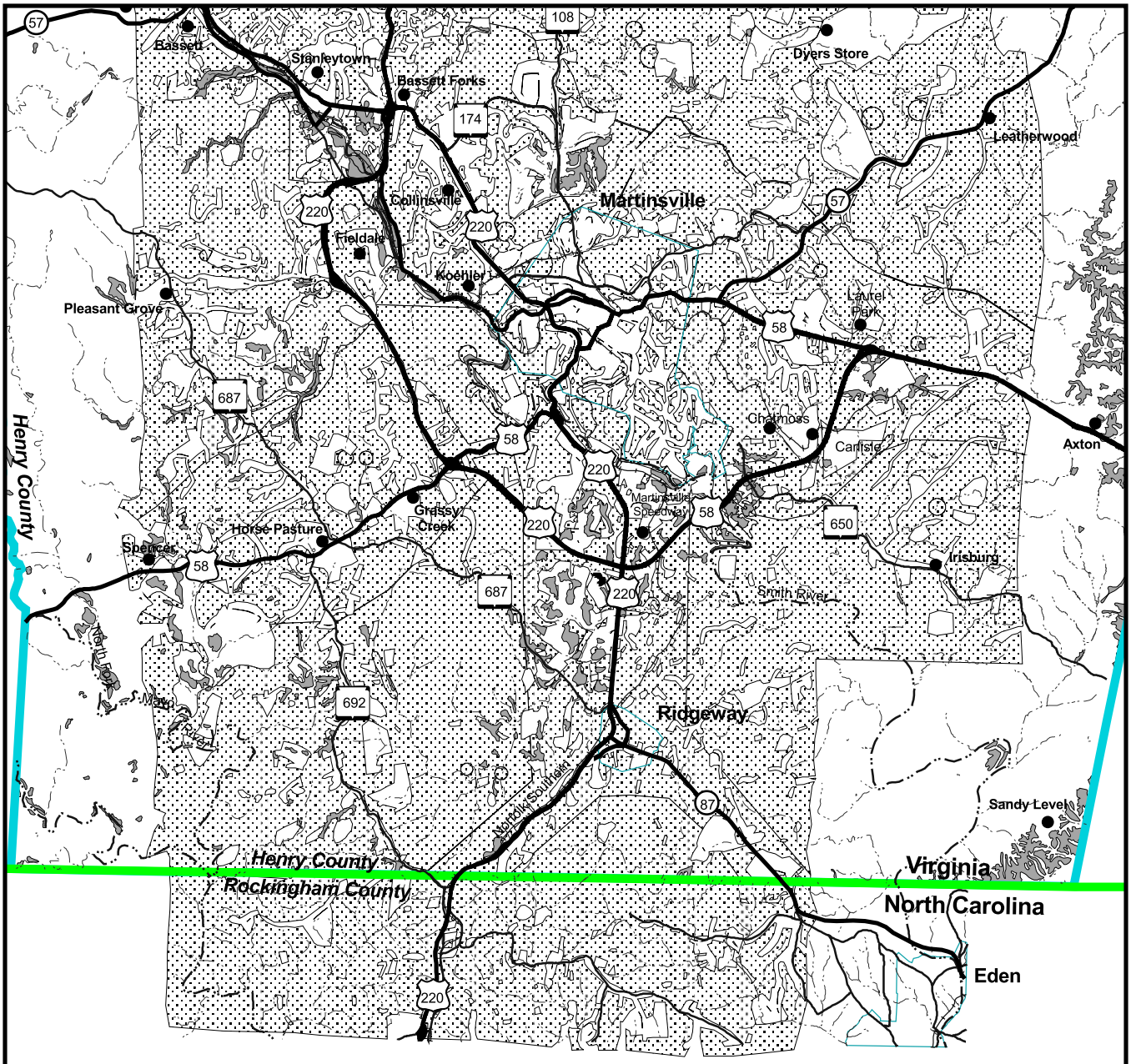
FIGURE 3.2-6c
PRIME AGRICULTURAL FARMLANDS & FORESTED LANDS
NORTHERN FRANKLIN COUNTY
(SHEET 3 OF 5)



FUTURE 73

I-73 Location Study

FIGURE 3.2-6d
PRIME AGRICULTURAL FARMLANDS & FORESTED LANDS
SOUTHERN FRANKIN COUNTY
(SHEET 4 OF 5)



Legend

N
W E
S

PRIME AGRICULTURAL LANDS

FORESTED LANDS

1.5 0 1.5 Kilometers

1 0 1 Miles

Sources: U.S. Soil Conservation Service Soil Surveys for Roanoke, Franklin and Henry Counties, Undated. Henry County Comprehensive Plan, 1995.

FUTURE 73

I-73 Location Study

FIGURE 3.2-6e
PRIME AGRICULTURAL FARMLANDS & FORESTED LANDS
HENRY COUNTY
(SHEET 5 OF 5)

3.2.5.1 Prime Agricultural Soils

Prime farmland is one of several kinds of important farmland defined by the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA). In Virginia, no distinction is made between prime farmland and unique, statewide or locally important farmland. Overall, the total amount of prime farmland in the counties is limited. Table 3.2-3 presents the estimated acreage of soil types designated as prime farmlands and previous figures 3.2-6a - 3.2-6e show the locations of prime farmland soils in the study area.

TABLE 3.2-3
PRIME AGRICULTURAL FARMLANDS IN THE STUDY AREA

Area	Acreage	Hectares
Roanoke, Bedford, Botetourt counties	9,994	4,045
Franklin County	8,338	3,374
Henry County	1,104	447
Total	19,436	7,866

Source: Natural Resources Conservation Service Soils Mapping for Roanoke, Henry and Franklin counties, 1997 and Botetourt County (1994) and Bedford County (1989).

3.2.5.2 Farm Land Uses and Production

Table 3.2-4 summarizes farm size, production, amounts of land in various types of production, and market value of crops for all counties within the study area. Changes in agriculture in these counties include a reduction in the numbers of farms and overall acreage. Croplands, orchards and livestock are contributing agricultural land uses in this portion of Virginia.

TABLE 3.2-4
SUMMARY OF FARMS BY TYPES AND AREA

	1987	1992	1997
Farms (number)	3,409	3,233	3,154
Land in Farms (acres/hectares)	565,497 (228,856)	537,709 (217,611)	519,301 (210,154)
Average Size (acres/hectares)	166	166	165
Total Cropland (number of farms)	3,181	2,968	2,879
Total Cropland (acres/hectares)	256,348 (103741)	264,642 (107,097)	260,259 (105,323)
Harvested Cropland (number of farms)	2,802	2,593	2,506
Harvested Cropland (acres/hectares)	124,479 (50,375)	125,882 (50,943)	125,478 (50,779)
Land in Orchards (number of farms)	147	150	111
Land in Orchards (acres/hectares)	2,848 (1,153)	2,392 (968)	1,251 (506)
Market value of agricultural products sold ($1,000)	$83,959	$90,274	$84,470
Market value of agricultural products sold average/farm ($)	$24,629	$27,923	$26,782
Market value of crop, includes nursery and greenhouse crops ($1,000)	$13,440	$16,344	$17,527

Source: U. S. Census of Agriculture, USDA, 1997.

Agriculture is a smaller portion of Roanoke County's land use and economy when compared to Franklin or Henry counties. Agriculture is a major contributor to the Bedford economy, particularly in the western portions of the county. Bedford County has the greatest number of farms (1,240 in 1997) and the largest amount of acreage in farms of all the counties within the study area. Franklin County's agricultural base is the strongest of the counties in the study area although its role in the Franklin County economy is being reduced. Henry County's central-eastern, southeastern and southwestern sections contain the more concentrated agricultural activity. Farm products account for a large share of revenue in the counties of the study area.

3.2.5.3 Forested Lands and Timber Resources

Forest resources cover the largest land area within the study area. Silva culture contributes to the economies of all counties. Forested lands also contribute to the overall water quality and soil conservation. Table 3.2-5 presents information on timber production and stumpage fees for all five counties.

TABLE 3.2-5
TIMBER PRODUCTION AND STUMPAGE FEES

Category	Year		
	1994	1995	1996
Pine Production (cds[1])	48,144	40,438	45,825
Hardwood Product (cds)	53,900	63,202	37,847
Pine Production (mbf[2])	25,979	20,780	21,809
Hardwood Production (mbf)	89,460	55,397	57,028
Stumpage - Pine Pulp ($/cds)	$6.00 - $8.00	$6.00 - $9.25	$4.00 - $25.00
Stumpage - Hardwood Pulp ($/cds)	$5.00 - $6.50	$4.00 - $6.50	$4.00 - $8.00
Stumpage - Pine Saw Timber ($/mbf)	$70 - $85	$70 - $95	$70 - $100
Stumpage - Hardwood Saw Timber ($ per mbf)	$75 - $165	$85 - $160	$100 -$170
Value of Pine Pulp ($)	$359,167	$332,246	$526,221
Value of Hardwood Pulp ($)	$304,618	$362,678	$382,521
Value of Pine Saw Timber ($)	$2,049,452	$1,286,753	$1,993,405
Value of Hardwood Saw Timber ($)	$11,061,484	$7,152,016	$7,429,338

Source: Census of Timber Production, Virginia Department of Forestry and the U. S. Forest Service, as provided by Mr. John Scrivani, April 21, 1998 and May 11, 1999.
Notes: [1]cds. = cords
[2]mbf. = 1000 Board Feet (in 1000s of board feet and year of production $)

3.2.6 Socioeconomic Setting

3.2.6.1 Population

Slow population growth has been experienced in most of the study area, while some decline has occurred, as in the case of Roanoke City. Population changes reflect the different growth patterns of Virginia's Roanoke and West Piedmont regions. Table 3.2-6 presents the historic growth as well as forecasted growth through 2020.

Table 3.2-6
POPULATION HISTORY AND FUTURE FORECAST

	1980 Census	1990 Census	2000 Census	2010 Projection	2020 Estimate[3]
Roanoke County[1]	72,945	79,332	85,778	89,800	93,800
Roanoke City	100,220	96,509	94,911	94,500	94,500
Salem City	23,958	23,756	24,747	25,900	27,100
Botetourt County	23,270	24,992	30,496	34,300	38,100
Bedford County	34,927	45,656	60,371	71,600	82,800
Franklin County[2]	35,740	39,549	47,286	53,800	60,300
Henry County	57,654	56,942	57,930	56,900	55,900
Martinsville City	18,149	16,162	15,416	15,800	16,200

Source: Revised Census of Population and Housing; Virginia Population Projections 2010, Virginia Employment Commission, March 1999.

Notes: [1]Includes the growth for the Town of Vinton and the Boones Mill area.

[2] Includes the growth for the Town of Rocky Mount.

[3] There are no adopted growth forecasts for 2020 in Virginia. Estimates of future population are based on the growth projected between 2000 and 2010. No estimate of the continued downward trend in Roanoke City's population was made. This forecast has been held constant at the 2010 forecast level.

3.2.6.2 Housing Conditions

Tables 3.2-7 and 3.2-8 present the 1990 and 2000 census housing statistics for the cities and counties in the study area. The table includes total units, vacancy rates, median values and plumbing statistics.

TABLE 3.2-7
1990 HOUSING CONDITIONS BY JURISDICTION

Jurisdiction	Total Housing Units	Percent Vacant	Median Value	Number without Complete Plumbing
Roanoke County	31,689	4%	$80,100	176
Roanoke City	44,384	8%	$53,700	186
Salem City	9,609	5%	$69,100	10
Bedford County	19,641	12%	$76,500	499
Botetourt County	9,785	7%	$72,900	393
Franklin County	17,526	20%	$63,100	446
Henry County	23,169	6%	$51,600	523
Martinsville City	7,310	7%	$51,400	38

Source: 1990 Census of Population and Housing Summary Tape File 3A, U.S. Census Bureau, August 1992.

TABLE 3.2-8
2000 HOUSING CONDITIONS BY JURISDICTION

Jurisdiction	Total Housing Units	Percent Vacant	Median Value	Number without Complete Plumbing
Roanoke County	36,121	4%	$118,100	140
Roanoke City	45,257	7%	$80,300	231
Salem City	10,403	4%	$104,200	25
Bedford County	26,841	11%	$127,000	385
Botetourt County	12,571	7%	$130,500	248
Franklin County	22,717	17%	$105,000	547
Henry County	25,921	8%	$75,500	374
Martinsville City	7,249	10%	$69,100	37

Source: 2000 Census of Population and Housing Summary Tape File 3A, U.S. Census Bureau, Census 2000.

Bedford County had the greatest increase in housing both in absolute terms and percent between 1990 and 2000. Roanoke City and Salem City both had less than 1,000 housing units added to their housing stock during the decade. The City of Martinsville actually had a decline in housing during the 1990s. While vacancy rates of declined in most of the northern jurisdictions, Henry County and the City of Martinsville have seen increase in vacancies.

Median housing values in Bedford County and Botetourt County have surpass Roanoke County and are among 5 jurisdictions in that have values greater than $100,000. Henry County and the City of Martinsville had the lowest percent increase in median housing value over the 10-year period. This is consistent with the fact that these jurisdictions had limited growth in new housing. Loss of job opportunities in this area may contribute to this condition.

3.2.7 Environmental Justice

Executive Order 12898, “Federal Actions to Address Environmental Justice in Minority Populations and Low-Income Populations,” focused the attention of federal agencies on the human and environmental conditions in minority and low-income communities. In June 1995, the USDOT published its Final Strategy on Environmental Justice. The 1995 Proposed Federal Order identifies minorities as Black, Hispanic, Asian American, American Indians and Alaskan Natives. The proposed order identifies low-income as “a person

whose median household income is below the Department of Health and Human Services poverty guidelines."

3.2.7.1 Minority Populations

Figure 3.2-7 and Table 3.2-9 provides a summary of Minority Populations for jurisdictions represented in the I-73 Location Study. The study area for this analysis is defined as all of Franklin County, Henry County, Roanoke County, the City of Roanoke, and the City of Martinsville. Due to their geographic proximity to the build options under consideration, only the southwest portions of Bedford County and Botetourt County are used for this analysis. Several sources were used for this analysis, mainly information gathered from the various PDCs, Chambers of Commerce, and the 2000 Census. The 2000 Census has been determined to be the most widely used and best available data for this study area. It is not expected that the population characteristics of this study area have changed since 2000 to the extent that a new independent survey would be warranted.

Historically, the development of I-581 and U.S. Route 220 has incurred minor impacts to low income and minority populations in the Lincoln Terrace housing development. During the late 1950's, Lincoln Terrace was first developed approximately north and west of the existing Orange Avenue and I-581 interchange. The subsidized housing development is currently owned by the Roanoke Redevelopment Authority and extends for approximately one mile along the western side of I-581. Construction of I-581 in 1964 and 1965 resulted in the loss of some Lincoln Terrace property, however no dwelling units were taken as a result of I-581.

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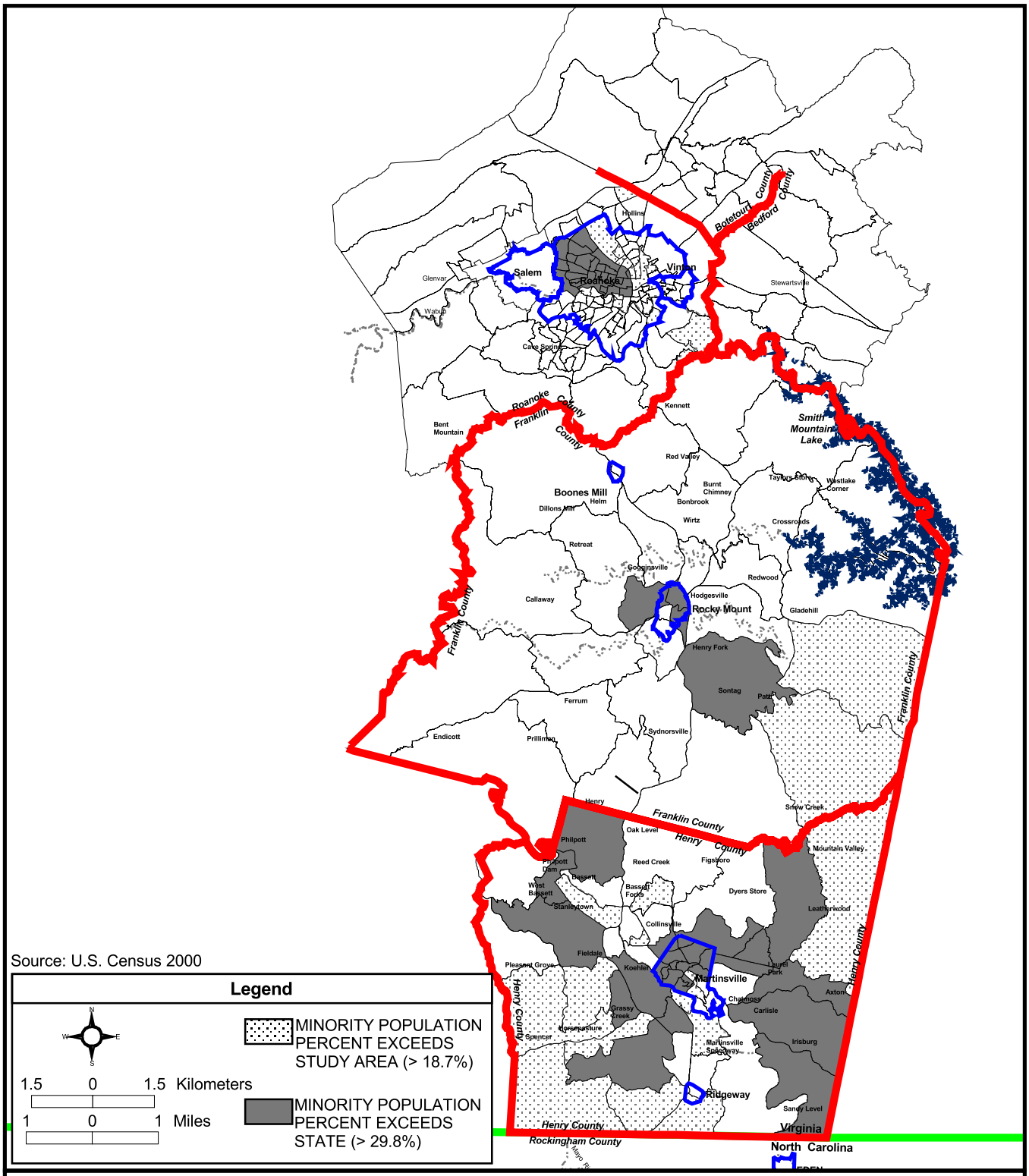

FUTURE 73

I-73 Location Study

FIGURE 3.2-7
STUDY AREA
MINORITY POPULATION

Table 3.2-9
MINORITY POPULATIONS ACROSS THE STUDY Area

PLACE	TOTAL POPULATION	WHITE NON-HISPANIC	MINORITY	PERCENT MINORITY
Virginia	7,078,515	4,965,637	2,112,878	29.8%
Roanoke City	94,911	65,256	29,655	31.2%
Salem City	24,747	22,594	2,153	8.7%
Roanoke County	85,778	79,809	5,969	7.0%
Botetourt County[1]	21,424	20,254	1,170	5.5%
Bedford County[1]	15,397	14,910	487	3.2%
Franklin County	47,286	41,749	5,537	11.7%
Henry County	57,930	42,087	15,843	27.3%
Martinsville City	15,416	8,336	7,080	45.9%
Study Area	362,889	294,995	67,894	18.7%

Source: Census 2000 Summary File 1 (SF 1) 100-Percent Data, U.S. Census Bureau, June 2001.
[1] Only the southwestern portions of Bedford County and Botetourt County were included as part of the study area for this analysis.

The percent of minority population for the Commonwealth of Virginia is 29.8 percent. The study area as a whole is below the Commonwealth figure at 18.7 percent. The jurisdictions represented in the study area are varying in relation to minority composition. Salem City, Franklin County and Roanoke County and the portions of Bedford County and Botetourt County used for this analysis have lower percentages of minority populations compared to the study area. The minority populations of these areas are less than 12.0 percent. Roanoke City and Henry County have percent minority populations well above the percentage for the study area but are consistent with the Commonwealth. Martinsville City has a percent minority population above both Virginia and the defined study area.

Also, ground verification was used to determine the number of minorities throughout the study area. However, no contact was made with any of the residents included in 600' corridor. Information was obtained by windshield surveys from agents in the field. Also, through visual observation and comments from the planning districts, there do not appear to be any significant concentrations of minorities located within the study area but instead, they are scattered throughout the study area.

In Franklin County the Oak Hill German Baptist Brethren were found to be dispersed throughout the county with larger concentrations in the central and eastern sections of the county. The Oak Hill German Baptist Brethren hold common fundamental and conservative religious beliefs, are typically engaged in agricultural activities and dress in a distinctive and plain attire. They are generally ambivalent to local and state government and believe in non-participation in war and "worldly amusements". The Oak Hill German Baptist are often mistakenly compared to the Mennonites of the lower Valley of Virginia or the Amish of Pennsylvania. Unlike the Amish, the Oak Hill German Baptist Brethren are not adverse to modern technological applications to improve their agricultural practice. The Oak Hill German Baptist Brethren of Franklin are not considered a minority population nor are they a low income population and therefore, they have not received any special consideration under Environmental Justice Executive Order 12898.

3.2.7.2 Low-Income Populations

The DEIS provided low-income population data based upon 1990 census data (see Table 3.2-10). The following discussion has been updated to reflect the 2000 census. Figure 3.2-8 and Table 3.2-11 present the populations of low-income families and individuals from the 2000 Census. The sources used for this analysis were gathered from the various Planning District Commissions, Chambers of Commerce, and the 2000 Census. The 2000 Census has been determined to be the most widely used and best available data for this study area. Poverty, according to the Census Bureau, is not defined for people in military barracks, institutional group quarters, or for unrelated individuals under age 15 (such as foster children). They are excluded from the poverty universe--that is, they are considered neither as "poor" or as "nonpoor." It is not expected that the population characteristics of this study area have changed since 2000 to the extent that a

new independent survey would be warranted. The defined study area for this analysis is the same as that used for the minority population discussion.

Historically, the development of I-581 and U.S. Route 220 has incurred impacts to low-income, non-minority populations in the Southeast section of the City of Roanoke. During the late 1950's, housing subsidies were provided to numerous single-family homes, duplexes and homes with rental apartments in the Southeast section of the City. Construction of I-581 in the mid-sixties resulted in the loss of several dwelling units in this section of Roanoke. There is no way to determine if the dwellings in question were actually below the low-income threshold at that time. Much of the decline in the Southeast section of the City is attributed to plant closings in the industrial neighborhood including:

- The closing of the American Viscose Corporation's plant in 1958 putting 5,000 blue collar wage earners out of work.

- The conversion of Norfolk and Western's motive technology from steam to diesel resulting in the loss of 2,000 blue collar jobs in the mid to late 1950's.

Construction of I-581 and the Roy Weber Freeway in the mid 1960's facilitated the isolation of the Southeast section of the City. Efforts are underway now by the City to revitalize the Southeast neighborhood.

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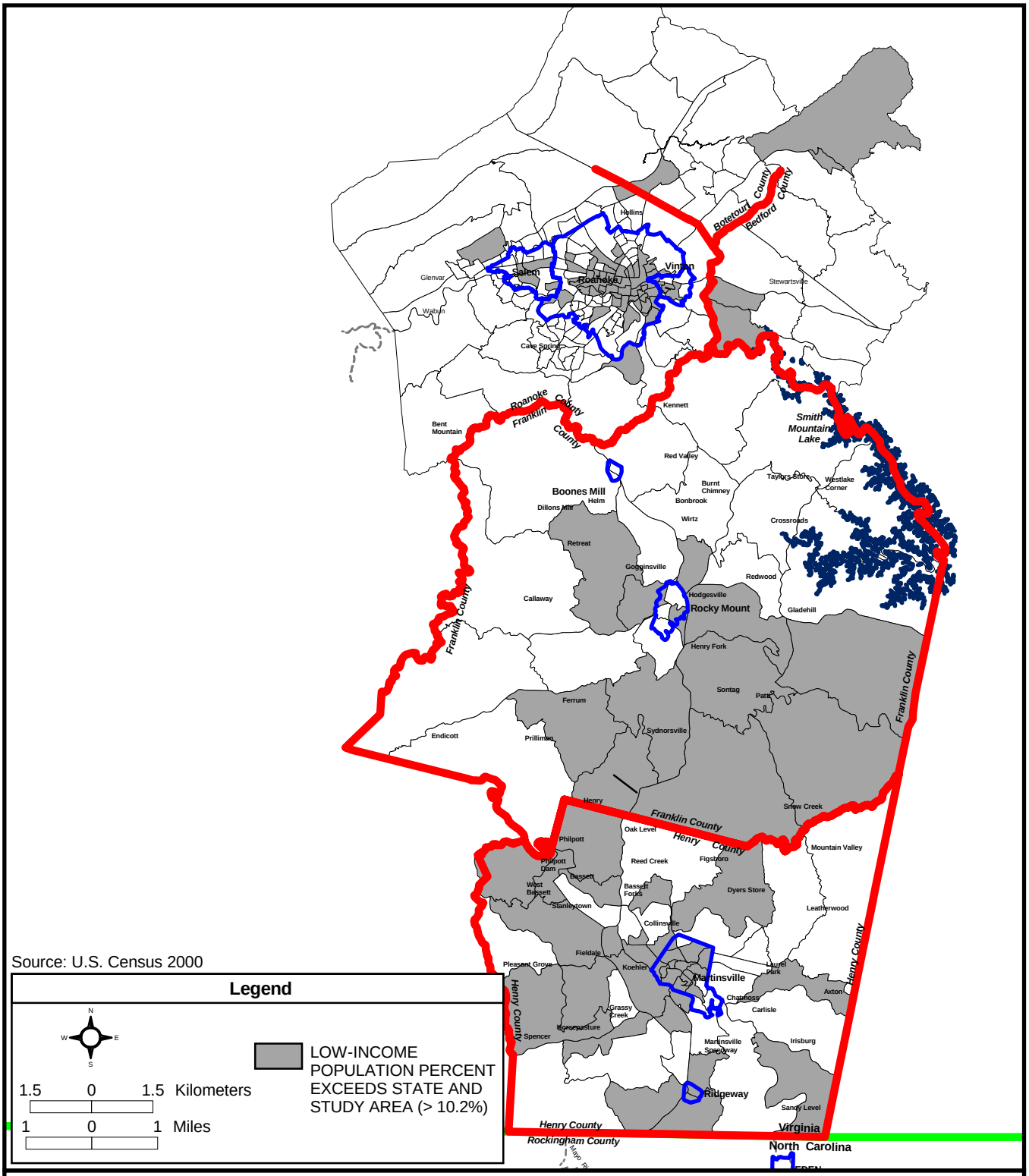

Source: U.S. Census 2000

I-73 Location Study

FIGURE 3.2-8
STUDY AREA
LOW-INCOME POPULATION

TABLE 3.2-10
1990 LOW-INCOME AND POVERTY CHARACTERISTICS

Place	Median Household Income	Families Below the Poverty Level	Persons for Whom Poverty Level is Determined	People Below the Poverty Level	Percent of People Below the Poverty Level
Virginia	$ 33,328	126,897	5,968,596	611,611	10.2%
Roanoke City	$ 22,591	3,281	94,754	15,238	16.1%
Salem City	$ 29,047	195	21,629	1,116	5.2%
Roanoke County	$ 36,886	634	77,032	3,164	4.1%
Botetourt County[1]	$ 33,079	160	15,939	683	4.3%
Bedford County[1]	$ 30,712	279	12,764	1,061	8.3%
Franklin County	$ 26,357	967	37,927	4,228	11.1%
Henry County	$ 25,834	1,163	56,243	5,241	9.3%
City of Martinsville	$ 22,446	599	16,045	2,504	15.6%
Study Area	NA	7,278	332,333	33,235	10.0%

Source: 1990 Census of Population and Housing Summary Tape File 3A, U.S. Census Bureau, 1990.
[1] Only the southwestern portions of Bedford County and Botetourt County were included as part of the study area for this analysis except for median household income.

TABLE 3.2-11
2000 LOW-INCOME AND POVERTY CHARACTERISTICS

Place	Median Household Income	Families Below the Poverty Line	Persons for Whom Poverty Level is Determined	People Below the Poverty Level	Percent of People Below the Poverty Level
Virginia	$ 46,677	129,890	6,844,372	656,641	9.6%
Roanoke City	$ 30,719	3,155	92,768	14,793	15.9%
Salem City	$ 38,997	279	23,022	1,545	6.7%
Roanoke County	$ 47,689	677	83,620	3,732	4.5%
Botetourt County[1]	$ 50,268	208	21,061	963	4.6%
Bedford County[1]	$ 39,059	253	15,300	1188	7.8%
Franklin County	$ 38,056	1,014	46,182	4,481	9.7%
Henry County	$ 31,816	1,502	57,327	6,679	11.7%
City of Martinsville	$ 27,441	571	14,798	2,839	19.2%
Study Area	NA	7,659	354,078	36,220	10.2%

Source: Census 2000 Summary File 3 (SF 3) – Sample Data, U.S. Census Bureau, August 2002.
[1] Only the southwestern portions of Bedford County and Botetourt County were included as part of the study area for this analysis except for median household income.

The percent of persons below the poverty level for the Commonwealth of Virginia was 9.6 percent according to the 2000 census. The study area as a whole is above the Commonwealth average at 10.2 percent. While Virginia experienced a decline in the percent of persons below the poverty level between 1990 and 2000, most jurisdictions in the study area have had increases. Only Roanoke City and the portion of Bedford County that falls within the study area had percent declines. Roanoke City also had a decline in absolute numbers of persons below poverty. Henry County and the City of Martinsville had notable increases in percent of persons below poverty. This is consistent with the loss of job opportunities in this area.

Also, ground verification was used to determine the number of low-income households throughout the study area. However, no contact was made with any of the residents included in the 600 foot (183 meter) corridor. Information was obtained from windshield surveys by agents in the field. Also, through visual observation and comments from the planning districts, no significant concentrations of low-income housing has been identified within the study area, instead they are scattered throughout the study area.

3.2.8 Adopted Goals and Policies

The following section describes the land use and transportation plans and policies from county, city and town plans within the study area. Most plans focus on economic development, enhancing and/or maintaining quality of life, providing adequate public services, and ensuring adequate safety and accessibility in the transportation system.

3.2.8.1 Land Use and Transportation Plans and Policies

The transportation goals and objectives generally outline the same issues. These jurisdictions want to ensure safe and efficient modes of transportation, preserve their natural and cultural resources, preserve their rural character, and maintain consistency with other jurisdictions goals.

The City of Roanoke downtown plan, called Outlook, focuses on redevelopment through a five-point strategy. These strategies emphasize improving street circulation and signage, rebuilding "gateways" to downtown, and developing downtown districts with unique characteristics and attractions. The plan also emphasizes the need for a stable base of downtown residents and improved connections to the neighborhoods surrounding the downtown. Beyond these strategies, the plan has no stated goals or objectives relevant to the I-73 Location Study.

Beginning in 1995, Roanoke County has been involved in an extensive outreach program to involve its citizens in the development of the Roanoke County Community Plan, January 1999. There are five issues/principles of action that were brought to the visioning process: regionalism, sustainability, community identity, scenic beauty, and quality of life. The plan acknowledges the status of I-73 as proposed and provides background information to date, but does not provide any alignment for consideration.

The Roanoke Valley Area MPO Long-Range Transportation Plan 2025 (February 2004) includes I-73 under the "Interstate System Financially Constrained List" for preliminary engineering from the southern MPO study boundary to I-581/Elm Avenue. The southern MPO study boundary is generally at or just north of the Franklin County line. Corridor wide improvements are identified for I-581, which would be part of I-73, from I-81 to Elm Avenue. The Plan also identifies I-73 on the "Interstate System - Vision List" as a 4 to 6 lane facility from the southern MPO study boundary to I-581 at Hershberger Road. U.S. Route 220 is listed under the "Regional Primary System Financially Constrained List" as an 8-lane facility from Wonju Street to Elm Avenue and a 6-lane facility from south of Route 715 to Route 419.

The Botetourt County Comprehensive Plan (1998) did not include any primary or interstate transportation improvements within the area of Build Options 1 and 1a. It recommended opposition to the proposed Build Alternative within Botetourt County as being incompatible with existing and proposed land uses and services. The Botetourt County Board of Supervisors felt a second interstate with an interchange on existing I-81 is highly undesirable, negating past land use planning activities and having adverse, irreversible impacts on current and future planning efforts as well as its economic development program. Botetourt County adopted a new comprehensive plan "Envision Botetourt: Botetourt County Comprehensive Plan" in October 2004. The new comprehensive plan continues to oppose the construction of I-73 through Botetourt County.

The 1988 Bedford County Comprehensive Plan recommends concentrating development in growth areas and rural service nodes. The plan emphasizes maintaining the rural character of the County. Deteriorating roadway conditions are attributed to the poor access between the population and activity centers in the county. Several other strategies in the plan call for the improvement of access to Smith Mountain Lake. Bedford County is in the process of developing the Bedford County 2025 Comprehensive Plan, which is not expected to be adopted until June 2005.

The Comprehensive Plan for the City of Salem, adopted December 13, 1993, has no specific transportation element incorporated within the plan and no reference to I-73.

The Inventing Franklin County's Future, 1995 Comprehensive Plan reflects the jurisdiction's goal to retain its rural character, while addressing the public service needs associated with creating employment opportunities and developing Smith Mountain Lake. The plan is the only one reviewed for this study to recommend two transportation corridors for the new location of I-73. Franklin County is in the early stages of updating their comprehensive plan. Completion of this work is not expected to occur until 2005 or 2006.

The 1997 Smith Mountain Lake Corridors Study takes a regional look at access. The study's goal was to document existing conditions, identify problems, and make recommendations to improve the safety and efficiency of travel. It concludes that Smith Mountain Lake and other facilities' access are at low capacity, winding, and steeply graded roadways. Recommendations include providing direct access from Smith Mountain Lake to a future I-73 location and further analysis on county road intersections and Route 40 West.

The County of Henry Comprehensive Plan , focuses on the needs of its changing economy while preserving natural resources. Henry County is planning to update their comprehensive plan, with a completion date sometime in 2005. This update will involve minor revisions based on resources such as the 2000 Census. The City of Martinsville's 1996 plan update, Vantage: Taking Control of the Future, focuses on social and economic transitions, emphasizing public-private initiatives for plan implementation.

3.2.8.2 Economic and Investment Incentives Areas

Several economic development programs exist in the study area. The area participates in two of Virginia's 18 Regional Economic Development Advisory Councils. The Region 10 Council includes Henry, Patrick and Pittsylvania counties, and the cities of Martinsville and Danville. The Region 3 Council includes Franklin County. Regional economic development efforts include a number of jurisdictions. The West Piedmont PDC (including Franklin and Henry counties and Martinsville) has an extensive economic development strategy that identified the U.S. Route 220 area as a barrier to continued economic growth in the southern portions of the study area. Each local government has Virginia Enterprise Zones in place to promote industrial development.

The location and extent of the economic development in the study area provide the basis for a comparison of the I-73 Location Study alternatives for which proximity, rather than avoidance, is an important measure. Access to these areas via connecting access roads and interchange locations is a measure of proximity. The following sections present the economic priorities established within the study area. See the Land Use Technical Memorandum for further details on the incentive programs offered by each jurisdiction.

3.2.8.3 Farmlands and Forestry Preservation Policies

Roanoke County's Comprehensive Plan (Roanoke Vision, Comprehensive Development Plan for the City of Roanoke; Virginia 1985-2005) update and the 1998 Revised Draft Roanoke County Community Plan identify guidelines for prime agricultural lands. The guidelines identify the following purposes of protecting prime agricultural land:

- Productive agricultural land is an important element of the County's economy. Its protection maintains a rural life style for residents who prefer one, deters sprawling development, channels urban development into more appropriate areas and helps maintain the overall aesthetic qualities of the community.

Roanoke County will investigate methods for protecting prime agricultural land including:

- Property tax relief through the land valuation method, use of Agricultural Districts, application of agricultural zoning, and acquisition of development rights or conservation easements.
- Cooperate with soil conservation districts to inform farmers of agricultural erosion reduction techniques.
- Recommendations included in the Roanoke County Soil Survey.

There are no other MPOs with jurisdiction in the study area. Consequently, there are no other MPO-developed long-range plans that include I-73. Instead, VDOT identifies the needs of these rural areas through the development of a statewide highway plan which is simply a fiscally unconstrained vision plan. Presently, I-73 is not included in the list of recommended improvements or new roads in VDOT's 2025 State Highway Plan. In contrast, a multi-modal long range transportation plan with a statewide focus was recently completed by Virginia to serve as a blueprint for shaping the state's future. This plan, *VTrans 2025*, was approved by the Commonwealth Transportation Board in November of 2004. In this document, I-73 is listed along with 10 other projects as illustrative multi-modal investment projects with no funding identified for its implementation.

Botetourt County's Comprehensive Plan (November 1998) has one objective outlined to enhance the rural character of the County, including the preservation of prime agricultural and forested lands. Recommendations that support this objective include the following:

- Future studies conducted to investigate prime agricultural land and possible conservation areas.
- Strong consideration given to the impact of rezonings and subdivisions on agricultural and rural lands.
- Provide for proper erosion and sediment control through the implementation of and enforcement of best management practices (urban and agricultural).

The Bedford County Comprehensive Plan (1988) states that agricultural areas will be maintained and will remain the predominant land use in the County, thus preserving the rural character of the area. Agricultural areas comprise the major land use pattern in the County and also include forest and unproductive lands. Guiding principles and strategies supporting this objective includes:

- Development will be discouraged in agricultural areas except for low density residential, farm or forestry activities and prime agricultural land will be protected from premature development.
- A land use ordinance was adopted to protect prime agricultural and environmentally sensitive areas.

Franklin County's comprehensive plan acknowledges farmland and timber resources through land use designations as well as its environmental goal and several specific policies.

Goal: Preserve and improve the quality of the county's soil, water, air forests and farmland.

The Plan includes an objective to protect sensitive areas from development:

- Identify prime farmland, woodland habitat and forest areas and continue incentives for its preservation and conservation.

An objective to develop an effective public education program to improve and encourage conservation of the county's air, land, water, soil, farm, forest and wildlife resources.

- Support the efforts of federal and state programs that help conserve farm and forest land and develop outreach programs to explain the basis for environmental regulation regarding groundwater, soil erosion, storm water management, floodplain and wetland protection, and the preservation of prime farm and forestlands and wildlife habitat.

Policies have been developed to address minimum lot sizes, agribusiness, prime farmland, soil, water and watershed conservation and nutrient management. County policies preserve forest interests using practices to control erosion and siltation and create flexible but effective siting standards for forestal operations.

Henry County's Comprehensive Plan recognizes the linkages of farm and forestlands with the issues of watershed preservation. The plan includes a goal that encompasses farmland and forestland.

Goal: Preserve and protect the county's natural resources and historic heritage.

Farmland and forestland objectives in the plan recommend:

- Establishment of and the support of existing programs to reduce the decline of agriculture as a viable sector of the county economy; and to ensure that the forestal industry remains strong.

Strategies include discouraging the conversion of prime farmlands to other land uses and continuing the support of land use valuation taxation programs that provide tax relief for agricultural and forestal lands.

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