Known as the Star City of the South, Roanoke, Virginia, located on Interstate 81 and adjacent to the Blue Ridge Parkway, is the center of one of Virginia’s largest metropolitan regions and a hub of transportation, finance, and industry for the southwestern part of the state. Roanoke City, bisected by the Roanoke River, is independent of the surrounding Roanoke County.

Roanoke’s Neighborhoods

A major attraction in downtown Roanoke, the City Market, has a long history as a renowned public square. From its inception, the Market has served as the site for local farmers to sell their produce. Open year-round, the farmers have been joined by artisans offering handcrafted items, jewelry, and other art objects. In addition, the City Market houses an International Food Court. Also downtown, Elmwood Park provides a view of the distant mountains. The park includes a festival performance area and a link to the Market Square, the “Magnolia Walk.”

Roanoke City consists of 48 diverse neighborhoods, all of which have active neighborhood associations and neighborhood plans dedicated to their maintenance and improvement. Roanoke began as “The Town of Gainsborough,” later Gainsboro, just north of the City Market, and became the center of the Roanoke Valley’s African-American community with its own institutions, businesses, and leaders. A section of historic Gainsboro is on both the National Register of Historic Places and the Virginia Landmarks Register. Other neighborhoods close to downtown, such as Belmont-Fallon, grew around the railroad to provide housing for workers. Belmont-Fallon offers large parks, a mixture of businesses, closely spaced houses, and narrow streets. The suburban Garden City neighborhood is geographically isolated from the rest of Roanoke, as it lies in a valley between several mountains and is shielded from the city behind Mill Mountain. Greater Deyerle has gradually transitioned from a sparsely populated rural area to a low-density suburban community surrounded by commercial development on its edges. Hollins/Wildwood has a fairly stable housing stock with some of the newest construction in the city. These are just a few of the varied neighborhoods to explore in Roanoke.

Parks and Recreation

Roanoke’s cultural life includes the new Taubman Museum of Art, the O. Winston Link Museum, Harrison Museum of African American Culture, Virginia Museum of Transportation, the Roanoke Symphony Orchestra, the Science Museum of Western Virginia, and the Jefferson Center for the performing and visual arts.

Carvins Cove Natural Reserve, located near Hollins University, is the second-largest municipal park in the nation. Within its 12,700 acres are many recreation opportunities. Five greenways, open-space corridors reserved for recreational use, can be found along the rivers, ridgelines, and other scenic routes that run through the city and provide running, hiking, and biking paths. These greenways range in length from 1 mile to almost 3 miles. In addition, Roanoke City has 68 parks and plazas as well as a recently renovated skate park.

Education

Roanoke City is served by 21 elementary schools, 6 middle schools, and 2 high schools. The Roanoke Higher Education Center offers over 200 programs of study through the Center’s 15 partner colleges and organizations in a mix of traditional classroom instruction, computer-assisted instruction, and distance learning instruction. Jefferson College of Health Sciences and Virginia Western Community College, two of the participants, are located in Roanoke City, but other participants are located elsewhere in Virginia.

Health Care

Roanoke City has one hospital system comprising 825 licensed acute care beds.

Roanoke City Stats

<table>
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<th>Population (2007)</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>City</td>
<td>93,504</td>
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<tr>
<td>Metropolitan Statistical Area</td>
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<tr>
<td>Per capita personal income, Roanoke (Independent City) (2006)</td>
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