

# Welcome to the City of Roanoke, Virginia

Economic Development Director Position Available—Apply by Dec 22, 2017



Looking for a world class city to feature in this month's Sky Magazine, Delta Airlines already had briefs on Hong Kong, Lisbon, and New Orleans. It needed some place extra special. Its choice? Roanoke, Virginia! Surprised? You would not be if you had been here recently.

Roanoke is rich in history and natural beauty. As the largest city on the Blue Ridge Parkway, it has everything! Treasured national landmarks, engaging festivals and celebrations, award-winning cuisine, and outstanding artwork and performances. Its outdoor amenities are spectacular and include an outdoor amphitheater with many events, biking trails and lanes, clean rivers with easy access, hiking trails, and Greenways throughout the City that are connected to the





entire Roanoke Valley. At 12,700 acres, Carvins Cove is the second largest municipal park in the United States. With a population of almost 100,000, it has an incomparable mix of urban sophistication and down-home charm.

What really makes Roanoke special is its community pride and spirit combined with the desire of its residents to collaborate to achieve great things, their warm and welcoming attitude, and their “can do” approach. When its signature industries began to scale back their operations or leave, residents thought their chance for a big win in economic development were slim. With fortitude, they set about transforming their city and creating their own future. They wanted to make Roanoke the best it could be and attractive to all. It worked! The dynamic energy of its emerging technologies, combined with its stunning beauty and exceptional amenities, make Roanoke an incredibly inviting community. A decade ago, the U.S. Census found 15 people living in the downtown. Now there are over 2,000 and the City is recognized as a center/leader in neuroscience research.

Roanoke is a big city with a big heart. Everyone knows everyone and, in this case, that is a very good thing. It is a city where all are accepted and does not have the lingering race relations problems of many Southern cities. People just get along here and respect one another. More than 100 nationalities call Roanoke home and are welcome here.

A wide variety of housing options exist and prices are very reasonable. The school system is strong and children can get an excellent education here. Crime is at its lowest level in



15 years. Roanoke has an impressive array of amenities as well as an aggressive economic strategy to attract business development. It has outstanding cultural resources—orchestra, opera, drama and visual art. Numerous museums, galleries, and performing arts venues, including the Taubman Museum of Art and Center in the Square, call Roanoke home.

From the live sounds of jazz, rock and blues, old time mountain music, to house music on the dance floor, Roanoke's diverse music scene is filled with well-known acts and up-and-coming musicians. Downtown is host to performing arts venues such as The Spot on Kirk (a smaller, more intimate setting for music). Venues such as The Jefferson Center and the Berglund Center host the Roanoke Symphony and Roanoke Ballet Theatre along with other national touring acts and musicians.

Center in the Square recently completed a total renovation. The Science Museum of Western Virginia, Mill Mountain Theatre, the Harrison Museum of African American Culture, the Roanoke Pinball Museum, and four other organizations are located in the facility adjoining Roanoke's Downtown Market. The O. Winston Link Museum offers a unique collection of striking photographic and auditory works documenting the end of the steam engines that propelled the Norfolk & Western Railway and the communities and countryside along its right of way in the first half of the 20th Century. By combining multiple cultural and educational attractions in a central downtown location, Center in the Square has been a unique and decisive catalyst for downtown renewal and a focal point of the Roanoke community, as well as an attraction for western Virginia and beyond. Vibrant cultural districts hold strong appeal to younger people whose skills are seen as essential to the success and sustained growth of the region.

Center is vital to education in western and central Virginia. The programs offered by its organizations bring special opportunities to students offering hands-on learning

experiences that broaden their understanding and address differing learning styles.

One of the most iconic restored structures downtown is the Roanoke City Market Building that now serves as a venue for local food vendors along with a popular top-floor community gathering space. The interior of the building was completely renovated in 2010, and anchors the commonwealth's oldest continuously operating open-air farmers' market.

It did not happen overnight. The revitalized downtown core is the culmination of many years of dedication, hard work and cooperation between the public and private sectors—people who wanted Roanoke to reinvent itself and thrive! A prime example is a local developer who repurposed a number of properties such as the Patrick Henry Hotel with the primary goal of resurrecting Roanoke and not just to make a buck and move on. Encouraged by low-interest loans, building code changes, and financial incentives to rehabilitate older buildings, other individuals and developers are renovating vacant warehouses and the upper levels of office buildings into studio apartments, condominiums and upscale town homes.

The City has an excellent commercial airport, outstanding healthcare and great opportunities for higher and continuing education, both within the City and in the surrounding area. The Roanoke Region is the center of a larger area encompassing 21 institutions of higher education. From liberal arts colleges to a prestigious research institution, the Region has nearly 125,000 undergraduate and graduate students being educated for the future.

The largest university in the area is Virginia Tech, a prestigious and internationally renowned research institution, with enrollment approaching 30,000. As a leader in scientific and technological development, Virginia Tech has educated thousands of scientists and engineers as well as leading business professionals and academics. It is also



making its presence felt in Roanoke. In 2007, it partnered with the Carilion Clinic to establish a medical school which is now among the most competitive in the nation. This year the school had over 4,600 applicants for its 42 spots. Other higher education institutions in the region include Roanoke College, Hollins University, Radford University, Washington and Lee University, VMI, Jefferson College of Health Science, Virginia Western Community College, and Ferrum College. The City itself strives for excellence in education, the environment, human development, and public safety.

Virginia Tech is now increasing its presence in the City through its partnership with Carilion. The resulting Virginia Tech Carilion Research Institute has some of the top researchers in neuroscience in the world and will soon start construction on a \$66 million expansion. The new facility will increase the number of research teams twofold to 50. They are working on everything from the decision-making patterns of drug addicts to the use of brain imaging in psychiatry.

## GEOGRAPHY

Roanoke is nestled in the mountains, but is by no means isolated. Located midway between New York City and Atlanta, it is within a days drive of two-thirds of the nation's population. The City and a few other small jurisdictions form the Roanoke Metropolitan Statistical Area (MSA) with a population of approximately 310,000.

## CLIMATE

The City has four distinct, but relatively mild seasons. During the winter months, the high temperatures average in the mid 40's with an average low around 30°F. Summer temperatures have average highs in the mid 80's with average lows in the 60's.

## COMMERCE

Roanoke has reinvented itself as a center for tourism, entrepreneurs, finance / insurance / real estate, small businesses, and neuroscience research and technology. Carilion Clinic (currently with more than 8,000 employees), Advance Auto Parts (1,200 employees in the City) and Virginia Transformer Corporation (the nation's leading transformer manufacturer) are headquartered in Roanoke.

Other significant employers include United Parcel Service, Anthem (Blue Cross and Blue Shield), Wal-Mart, Kroger, MW Manufacturers, and United Health Group.

New businesses find Roanoke to be an extremely desirable place to be. In 2016, Deschutes Brewery (ranked 8th in craft beer sales nationally) selected Roanoke over Charleston, SC, and Asheville, NC, for the location of its newest brewery. The facility will provide product to the East Coast and Europe.

Commerce and economic development in Roanoke is like everything else here and in the region—a partnership. The Roanoke Regional Partnership plays a leading role. With it, the City and neighboring towns and counties work together for what is best for the region.

When Eldor Corporation, an Italian auto parts company, was searching for a site, it approached Roanoke. Unable to find a suitable location in the City, the Roanoke Regional Partnership took the project to nearby Botetourt County. The result was in March of 2016, Eldor announced it would build and operate its first U.S. plant (a \$75 million venture which will create 350 new jobs) in the Botetourt Center at Greenfield.

Roanoke's downtown is vibrant! The residential component has returned with a number of older buildings being



converted to condominiums and apartments. Prices for these units are not inconsequential and can run as much as \$1,000,000 for a larger (4,400 square foot) unit.

Other bright spots are the Virginia Tech-Carilion School of Medicine and Research Institute located in the City. This public-private partnership leverages Virginia Tech's world-class strength in basic sciences, bioinformatics, and engineering with Carilion Clinic's highly experienced medical staff and rich history in medical education. Virginia Tech-Carilion improves human health and quality of life by providing leadership in medical education and biomedical and clinical research.

As with everything else about Roanoke, the future of commerce is very bright!

## THE GOVERNMENT

Roanoke is one of Virginia's 38 independent cities. As such, it functions in much the same way a county would in Virginia and in other parts of the country. The City is surrounded by Roanoke County, but is not in anyway a part of the County's local government.

The City has a city council composed of a mayor and six council members. The mayor is elected separately and all are elected at large. They serve staggered four-year terms with elections in May of even numbered years.

The Council Members are progressive and genuinely have the best interests of the City at heart. They all want a great city with great neighborhoods and great schools. They may occasionally differ on approach, but they are





collegial, genuinely respectful of, and enjoy working with one another. They also respect and support city staff.

City employees are dedicated and serious about their work. Numerous City departments are accredited and/or have achieved a variety of awards and recognition. The City provides a wealth of training programs for its employees including basic orientation, diversity awareness, supervisory skills, leadership development and technology training. The City has a variety of formal policies and procedures that govern processes within the government. A conservative culture surrounds its practices pertaining to procurement, contracting, employment and internal controls.

Roanoke has five constitutional officers including Clerk of Circuit Court, City Treasurer, Commissioner of the Revenue, Commonwealth's Attorney, and Sheriff (who oversees the jail and court security – the City has a separate Police Chief who reports to the City Manager).

The City follows the Council-Manager form of government although, in addition to the City Manager, the City Attorney, City Clerk and the Municipal Auditor report directly to the City Council. Finally, the City Council also appoints the School Board that oversees the operations of Roanoke City Public Schools.

The City provides all the services a county typically provides including building, economic development, emergency medical services, fire, housing and neighborhood services, human services, libraries, parking, parks and recreation, planning, police and public works. It also oversees City properties and projects such as the Berglund Center and the Roanoke City Market Building. Water and sewer services are provided by the Western Virginia Water Authority, a collaborative authority created by Roanoke and Roanoke County and expanded with participation by Franklin County and Botetourt County.

Overall the City (not including the School Board) has approximately 1,670 FTEs. The General Fund FY 2017–2018 budget is \$282 million. Given the recent economic situation, the budget has been relatively stable. The City's sound budget practices, conservative reserve policies, stable financial position and continued economic growth have resulted in Standards & Poor's giving it an "AA+" rating.

Approximately two-thirds of General Fund revenues are from local taxes, a quarter of the revenues from the State and Federal governments with the remaining from various fees and charges for services. Forty percent of local revenues (currently approximately \$80 million) of the operational budget is allocated to the Roanoke City Public Schools, \$67 million to public safety and \$37 million to health and welfare. The City's capital improvement program will average approximately \$28 million annually for the next four years. The Fund Balance has been relatively stable and was 10.6% of the operating budget at the end of the 2016 fiscal year.

## THE ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT DEPARTMENT

Roanoke is the economic center of Southwest Virginia. The City's goal is to "cultivate a thriving business environment and innovative workforce opportunities to ensure the prosperity of our community, recognizing our role in both the regional and global economies." The program is well defined and involves all city departments with the focus being centered in the Economic Development Department.

The City's approach is based on the four pillars of success: Human Capital Investment (job growth, job opportunity awareness, retaining and attracting people and higher wage jobs), Asset Development (building on existing natural, cultural, structural and leadership strengths to enhance wealth creation opportunities in the community), Business

Development (supported by responsive government processes, regional partnering, incentive programs, and tourism promotion) and Asset Promotion (information accessibility, brand awareness and marketing, and trusted, confident, and consistent leadership).

The Economic Development Department has 7.5 full time positions and a budget of approximately \$2.8 million.

## THE CHALLENGES AND OPPORTUNITIES

Nothing is broken in Roanoke in terms of economic development and nothing needs to be fixed. The principal challenge is to continue the outstanding success the City is currently achieving.

Roanoke is largely built-out and considered an urban environment. Further, it cannot annex new lands. Hence, economic development and redevelopment within the City limits often depends on land assembly.

The availability of green fields is limited and the City may not be able to attract some of the businesses that the surrounding county can. Recognizing that any new businesses relocating to the area will benefit the City, Roanoke works cooperatively with regional partnerships and neighboring jurisdictions to bring activity to the region.

The next Economic Development Director will need to continue the City's existing efforts to encourage business, entertainment and tourism. Roanoke wants to continue to capitalize on its many assets (principally the Carilion Clinic, a marvelous downtown, local universities, the outdoors, and a welcoming responsive government) and to continue the migration from "trains to brains." It wants to grow existing business and to add those that compliment what is already here.

## THE IDEAL CANDIDATE

As previously noted, the City has been very successful over the past five years in economic development and wants someone to maintain the momentum. It does not need a change agent. Rather, it wants someone who thrives on solving problems, thinks quickly, creatively and strategically and wants to be part of an exciting, progressive team-oriented organization.

The City is seeking someone who can recognize its potential, further its economic development objectives and work with the business community as an integral partner, someone who will be a supporter and advocate for city growth. It wants someone who is intelligent, upbeat, outgoing, hardworking, ethical, organized, flexible, innovative, creative, congenial, politically sensitive and progressive—someone with a "can do" attitude.

The ideal candidate will be an exceptional manager, one who focuses on leadership and management of the Department, including mentoring professional staff, utilizing technology effectively, and continuing the current excellent coordination among city departments, the business community and regional entities on economic development issues. He/she must be approachable, and open with the ability to communicate with people from a variety of backgrounds. The Director will be a competent professional who does not care about who gets the credit - as long as the deal gets done.

The ideal candidate will be someone who possesses the ability to articulate the City's development's vision and understand the underlying financial complexities of deals. The candidate may be someone on their way up or someone who is looking for a change in lifestyles or environment.

The successful candidate will be a proven economic development professional with knowledge of the full range of economic development and strategic planning for economic growth, business retention, property rehabilitation, and effective change in an urban/central city setting. He/she must be a calculated risk-taker in an uncertain economic environment and be able to communicate risks/benefits to senior city officials. A deep appreciation for customer service as well as excellent written and oral communication skills in addition to exceptional listening and presentation expertise are essential.

The position requires a Bachelor's degree from a four-year college or university with major course work in economics, business or a related field. A Master's degree in an appropriate field is preferred.

The successful candidate should possess ten (10) years of increasingly responsible experience in economic development as well as five years in a supervisory role. Responsible managerial or executive level experience in a comparably sized public or private organization is a plus.

The selected candidate will be expected to make a commitment to Roanoke. This position should not be viewed as a stepping stone, but as a gem in its own right.

## COMPENSATION

The starting pay range is \$95,000 to \$115,000 and the actual salary will depend on qualifications, experience and demonstrated success.





Benefits are excellent and the City has its own defined benefit retirement plan. When evaluating the salary, candidates should be aware that the cost of living is quite a bit lower in Southwestern Virginia than in many other parts of the state and the country.

## THE MOST RECENT ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT DIRECTOR

The current Economic Development Director is retiring after five very successful years with the City.

## RESIDENCY

Residency in the city is required within one year of employment.

## HOW TO APPLY

E-mail your cover letter and resume to [Recruit22@cb-asso.com](mailto:Recruit22@cb-asso.com) by December 22nd. Faxed and mailed resumes will not be considered. Questions should be directed to Colin Baenziger at (561) 707-3537 or Lynelle Klein at (425) 658-7025.

## CONFIDENTIALITY

Under Virginia law, the recruitment process may be kept confidential. As such, if a candidate requests, the City will keep the individual's application confidential. No candidate names will be released without the candidate's permission.

## THE PROCESS

Applications will be screened between December 23rd and January 9th. Finalists will be selected by January 10th. Interviews will be held on, or around, January 30, 2018. A selection will be made shortly thereafter.

## OTHER IMPORTANT INFORMATION

The City of Roanoke is an Equal Opportunity Employer and strongly encourages women, minorities and veterans to apply.

## ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

For additional information about the city visit:

[www.roanoke.org](http://www.roanoke.org)

[www.roanokeva.gov](http://www.roanokeva.gov)

[www.visitroanokeva.com](http://www.visitroanokeva.com)

[www.downtownroanoke.org](http://www.downtownroanoke.org)

[www.foundationforroanokevalley.org](http://www.foundationforroanokevalley.org)

[www.roanokeoutside.com](http://www.roanokeoutside.com)

[www.deltaskymag.com](http://www.deltaskymag.com)

[www.politico.com/magazine/story/2016/09/roanoke-virginia-redevelopment-what-works-214247](http://www.politico.com/magazine/story/2016/09/roanoke-virginia-redevelopment-what-works-214247)

[www.brookings.edu/blog/metropolitan-revolution/2017/04/20/the-reality-of-main-street](http://www.brookings.edu/blog/metropolitan-revolution/2017/04/20/the-reality-of-main-street)

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