

APPENDIX B.

TOURISM

❖ B.1 Overview

Currently, nearly 8% of tourists in Virginia visit Roanoke. Of those who do visit Roanoke, 72% are traveling specifically to visit the city. For the other 28%, the city is *not* their primary destination, but they stop in Roanoke.

Roanoke stands to gain tourists under any of the three alternative alignments for I-73. With the Eastern Alignment, I-581 will continue to serve as a spur to the downtown area. The Central Corridor Alignment could potentially funnel more potential tourist traffic to the city, while the East Bypass would funnel traffic past the current I-581 spur into the city. With the West Bypass Alignment, the downtown area could be accessed if there are upgrades to US-221 on the West and/or US-220 on the South.

This appendix reviews the tourism sector of the economy. It covers the pattern of hotel rooms in the Roanoke area, trends in employment in tourist-serving sectors, the mix of tourist spending by type of accommodation, motivation for trips to Roanoke and top origins of tourists to Roanoke.

❖ B.2 Employment in Tourist-Serving Industries

Hotel Rooms. The city's hotel rooms are concentrated along I-581 North and in the downtown area. Table B-1 shows that there are nearly 5000 hotel rooms in 60 hotels in the Greater Roanoke area. Over 60% of rooms are outside of the city in Salem and Roanoke and Botetourt counties. Hotel occupancy is estimated at around 60% in the Roanoke Valley, a relatively healthy level.

	<u>Establishments</u>	<u>Rooms</u>
Roanoke City	23	2486
Roanoke County	19	1373
Salem City	11	671
<u>Botetourt County</u>	<u>7</u>	<u>458</u>
Total	60	4988

Source: Roanoke Valley Convention & Visitors Bureau