

and institutional uses. Vacancy in city and suburban locations averages a relatively healthy 8% to 11%. The city center has retained a vital niche as the region's center of producer services. It is critical that the option selected for the alignment of I-73 supports downtown's role as a center of producer services, healthcare, entertainment, and tourism.

**Dominant Industries.** Table A-2 compares employment trends in growth and concentration of 10 major economic sectors in the city and the suburbs. Location Quotients (LQ's), comparing the concentration of employment in each sector in the city and suburbs, are shown. A location quotient of 1.0 means that the sector has the same proportion of jobs as the state average. An LQ of more than 1.0 indicates concentration of an industry in a local area, while an LQ of less than one indicates that a sector is less important in a given local area than in most of the state. Key findings are discussed below.

Table A-2

Employment Trends in Major Industries: Roanoke City & Metro

Sector	City				Rest of the Metro Area			
	1988	1998	Change	% 1998 LQ	1988	1998	Change	% 1998 LQ
Wholesale Trade	5,616	4,975	-11%	1.44	3,163	4,621	46%	1.42
Trans, Com., Utilities	4,543	5,423	19%	1.39	991	1,466	48%	0.40
Retail Trade	16,116	16,638	3%	1.19	8,752	10,561	21%	0.99
Finan, Ins, Real Est.	4,841	4,805	-1%	1.16	2,856	5,039	76%	1.09
Services	16,940	24,851	47%	1.11	10,041	14,724	47%	0.71
Construction	4,482	4,493	0%	0.99	3,440	4,050	18%	1.20
Non-Durable Mfg	4,605	3,498	-24%	0.76	2,993	4,070	36%	1.03
Durable Mfg.	4,881	3,463	-29%	0.71	7,474	7,905	6%	2.41
Government	6,997	8,002	14%	0.58	8,119	9,727	20%	0.93
Agric, Forestry, Mining	34	446	62%	0.55	689	907	32%	1.01
Totals	69,363	76,594	11%	NA	48,518	63,070	30%	NA

Source: Virginia Employment Commission ; calculations by Economic Development Research Group

Roanoke is an important distribution center for the surrounding rural area. This is reflected in the fact the most highly concentrated industry in both the city and suburbs is wholesale trade, with a location quotient of 1.42. Many of the distribution firms in the city are clustered in the Roanoke Center for Industry and Technology (RCIT) and along I-581 near the airport. As illustrated on Chart E-1, however, jobs in wholesaling have declined by 11% (641 jobs) since 1988, while those in the suburbs have risen by 46% in the city (1458 jobs). Jobs in the next