

A road map for Roanoke's future

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Congratulations to Mayor Nelson Harris for righting the ship and getting separate stadiums on our high school campuses. Community and school pride will go a long way in enhancing our students' academic performances.

Now that mettle is proven, take care of our citizens first, work from the inside out. Give us recreation and the migration will follow.

Put some nice athletic fields and positive recreation at the Victory Stadium site. Remember, it's in a flood zone. Let's lead the region. If we will create it, the masses will come and enjoy.

Leave Countryside Golf Course as it is and build on it with parks and trails. You have many hotels within walking and small motorized-vehicle trail distance. Make Countryside a five-star golf course within the city.

Give the city manager credit for developing the Interstate 581/Williamson Road site. Build an amphitheater sans the football stadium or make it a much-needed parking lot. Have an open-air or glassed skywalk from the site to the civic center.

And finally, the biggest mettle test to date. Is Harris going to be a progressive leader with keen foresight for today and many years to come or just another Christian mayor in our archives?

Demand that Interstate 73 is routed at Dixie Caverns to south of Salem to South Roanoke County to U.S. 220 (the western corridor). You have a mega-acre new-tech industry park sitting at the Dixie Caverns Interstate 81 exit (Glenmary). This routing would give us our first Interstate 581 beltway.

What's holding us up? A snail that 99.9 percent of our citizens know nothing or care to know about.

Worst-case scenario is to temporarily relocate the mollusk or crustacean. Stand up to the loudmouth and blowhard not-in-my-backyard antagonists. In 10 years, they will be benefiting as much as anyone else from this routing.

The beltway will have to happen in the next 20 years anyway. Do it now while it is less expensive.

Lead. Don't give in to the Hamlets and Burbias. Taking I-73 30 miles out of the way through a narrow, landlocked, fragile infrastructure is not sound. Using the western corridor, we can have our first section of the Star City loop built. Do your research and you will find that you have the grassroots support to get things started and done.

Harris does not have to be a visionary, just logical and adhere to common sense.

The air is much freer when you stand erect.