

**Roanoke Pod Convening – March 28-29, 2017**  
**Overview of Site Visit Options**

**Overview:** On the first afternoon of the Roanoke pod convening, participants will have the opportunity to take part in one of three simultaneous site visits, each with a topical theme (outlined below) and led by members of Roanoke’s Invest Health team and local stakeholders. All three site visits will conclude at the Goodwill campus, where we will join in an interactive wrap-up/reflection, and enjoy some light refreshments.

**Site Visit Option 1: The Past, Present, and Future of Roanoke’s Evolving Libraries**

Libraries have always been important to the citizens of Roanoke, who consistently rate libraries as one of the most beloved and important elements of their local community.

In recent years, the Roanoke Public Libraries (RPL) have pursued both a major shift in the programs and services offered, and also significant changes in its physical library branches. With the goal of connecting to the neighborhood surrounding each branch, these renovations have been tailored to the needs of local residents. Each library branch reflects the unique flavor of its surrounding community.

Join us as we explore the evolution of libraries in Roanoke from the past (the 2014 update to the oldest continuously operating library in Roanoke, the Main Library in Elmwood Park); to the present (the Raleigh Court branch, RPL’s most recently completed renovation); and onto the future (the new location of the Melrose branch – a groundbreaking partnership between the City of Roanoke and Goodwill Industries).

**Site Visit Option 2: Moving from Conundrum to Collaboration in Food Access**

We are what we eat, right? Access to fresh food affects individuals, community, and our collective health. But what if we don’t all have access to the same food resources? How do we create a more equitable system that makes fresh, healthy food available and affordable to all?

In this site visit, we will dig into some of the physical and structural barriers that make it hard for people to buy/grow fresh food, as well as opportunities for how, as a community, we can address these concerns. While we still have a long way to go to create a strong, equitable and resilient food system, we will explore how

# **INVEST HEALTH**

## ***Strategies for Healthier Cities***

A Project of the  
*Robert Wood Johnson Foundation*  
and *Reinvestment Fund*

collaboration has played a vital role in some of Roanoke's successes related to food access.

The tour will include stops that represent current projects and successes as well as struggles, including a local urban farm, community gardens, a farmer's market, and local food hub. Please join us to get your hands dirty, eat fresh produce, and share in the conversation.

### **Site Visit Option 3: Economic Development Tour**

Like many urban communities across the country, Roanoke experienced economic challenges beginning in the 1970's that resulted in people, businesses, and investment exiting from downtown and many neighborhoods.

Several years ago, the City began pursuing a new approach to its economic development efforts. Rather than sprinkling limited Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) and U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) funding through all eligible neighborhoods in Roanoke – diluting the impact of the funding – the City began deploying this funding in “target areas” to enhance impact and spur private sector development.

On this tour, we will explore economic and community development strategies in our now vibrant downtown and two neighboring target areas -- West End (target area for 2013-16) and Melrose-Orange (target area for 2017-21). Our site visit leaders will review the tools used to improve these areas (e.g., historic tax credits, enterprise zones, tax abatements) and discuss the important roles that local government, the private sector, not-for-profit organizations, and community partners play in revitalization efforts.