

**RESOLUTION
BY THE CITY OF MONROE CITY COUNCIL**

**ADOPTING A PLAN AMENDMENT
FOR
THE CITY OF MONROE**

WHEREAS, the 1989 Georgia Planning Act requires that all local governments submit a comprehensive plan; and

WHEREAS, O.C.G.A. 50-8-1 et seq. gives the Department of Community Affairs authority to establish standards and procedures for appropriate and timely comprehensive planning by all local governments in Georgia; and

WHEREAS, the City of Monroe City Council has identified an additional update required for the City's Comprehensive Plan, prior to the community's next required five-year plan update; and


WHEREAS, a copy of the Plan Amendment updates are attached to this resolution; and

WHEREAS, all portions of this Plan Amendment for the City of Monroe were completed by the City; and

WHEREAS, this document, the Short-Term Work Program for the City of Monroe, was reviewed by the Georgia Department of Community Affairs and was found in compliance with the Local Planning Requirements.

THEREFORE, be it resolved that the City of Monroe does hereby adopt a Short-Term Work Program Update for the City which relates to water and sewer infrastructure and economic development.

Signed and sealed this 12th day of June, 2018.



Mayor



City Clerk

**PROPOSED AMENDMENT TO THE
CITY OF MONROE SHORT TERM WORK PROGRAM 2017-2021**

Adopted: June 12, 2018

Proposed City of Monroe Minor Amendment to the Short-Term Work Program to be added to Community Facilities & Services on page 15:

Activity	Timeframe	Responsible Party	Cost Estimate	Funding Source
South Madison Avenue Target Area sewer improvements	2018-2019	Utilities	\$1,000,000	State, Local, CDBG

Proposed City of Monroe Minor Amendment to the Short-Term Work Program to be added to Economic Development on page 14:

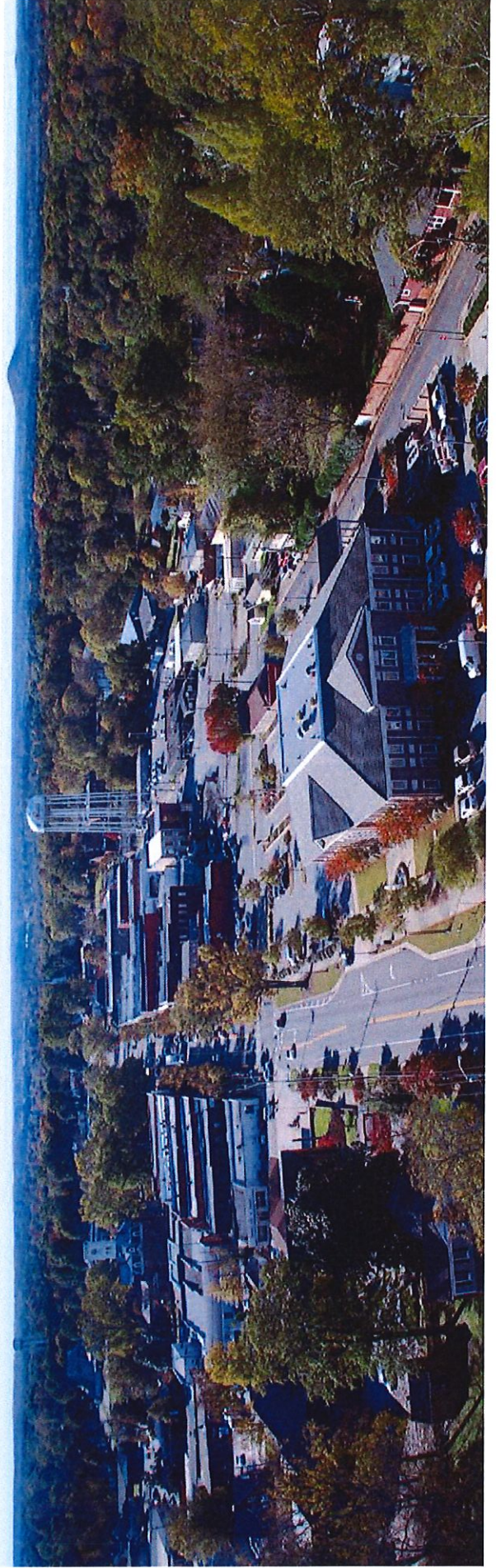
Activity	Timeframe	Responsible Party	Cost Estimate	Funding Source
Address infrastructure improvements (water, sewer, road, etc.) to support new and existing industries.	2018-2021	Utilities, streets and transportation, economic development	\$1,000,000	State and Local



City of Monroe Comprehensive Plan

2017 Update

Developed by the Planning & Government Services Division of the Northeast Georgia Regional Commission



Acknowledgements

Walton County Unified Comprehensive Plan Steering Committee
Kevin Little, Chairman, Walton County
Mike Martin, Planning Director, Walton County
Charna Parker, Assistant Planning Director, Walton County
Ashley Blackstone, Mayor, Between
Jimmy Guthrie, Mayor, Good Hope
Randy Carithers, Mayor, Jersey
Dan Curry, Mayor, Loganville
Robbie Schwartz, Project Specialist, Loganville
Greg Thompson, Mayor, Monroe
Pat Kelley, Planning Director, Monroe
Hal Dally, Mayor, Social Circle
Adele Schirmer, Manager, Social Circle
Lamar Lee, Mayor, Walnut Grove
Shane Short, Executive Director, Development Authority of Walton County
Mike Owens, President, Axis Risk Consulting
Eddie Sheppard, resident
William Malcolm, resident
Chip Dempsey, resident

Northeast Georgia Regional Commission
James Dove, Executive Director
Burke Walker, Director of Planning & Government Services
John Devine, AICP, Senior Planner (Project Lead)
Eva Kennedy, Project Specialist

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Chapter 1

Introduction & Overview

Purpose

This comprehensive plan serves as a decision-making guide for local government officials and community leaders. Based on input from the public and a steering committee, the plan identifies needs and opportunities, goals and policies, land use practices, and an implementation framework for key elements.

Process

The comprehensive plan process follows the rules of the Georgia Department of Community Affairs (DCA), Minimum Standards and Procedures for Local Comprehensive Planning, effective 3/1/2014.

Public Involvement

Public Input & Steering Committee

The planning process began with a public hearing and was followed by a community input session during which the public and a local steering committee were invited to discuss local trends and aspirations. Following the initial public meetings, several work sessions were held with a steering committee, with citizen, staff, and elected official membership. An online questionnaire provided additional feedback opportunities, as did the availability of steering committee members to take questions and comments throughout the process (as presented at the first public hearing). A final public hearing was held before submittal of the plan to DCA for review.

NEGRC's Role

The Northeast Georgia Regional Commission's Planning & Government Services Division oversaw the development of this plan, including facilitating public and steering committee meetings.

Chapter 2

Needs & Opportunities

The following list of needs and opportunities results from a Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, and Threats (SWOT) analysis conducted at the first input meeting, with both steering committee and public present, as well as professional analysis of relevant data and results of the online questionnaire.

**Italicized entries indicate high priorities*

Population

Needs

- Monroe's poverty rate has increased substantially and remains significantly higher than both Walton County's and Georgia's; anti-poverty programs should be considered

Opportunities

- *Leadership identified the opportunity to create a volunteer corps for the benefit of the city*
- *The Georgia State Patrol's Post 46 is headquartered in Monroe, and presents an opportunity for enforcement and education in cooperation with county and municipal forces*
- Athens Technical College's Monroe campus creates vast educational attainment opportunities for residents throughout Walton County, while proximity to other major institutions in Athens and Atlanta also contributes

Economic Development

Needs

- *Monroe retains only 15.7% of its workforce for employment within the city limits, and 87.9% of the jobs in the community are filled by commuters; this shows a need for employment opportunities that are consistent with Monroe's vision and goals*
- *Stakeholders identified limited earning potential with existing employers as a weakness in the SWOT analysis and pointed to a need for a more diversified tax base, particularly regarding industrial development*

Opportunities

- *Input from stakeholders lists the downtown area as a critical component of Monroe's vision, while the DDA and Main Street program were identified as strengths; targeted planning and public investment can be used to trigger increased private-sector interest*
- *Monroe's Project Road Share, which encourages bicyclists to ride in and around the area, has created great outside interest in the community and should be seen as an opportunity to increase notoriety and economic activity*
- *Continued development of the Stanton Springs area is a major economic opportunity, not only for Walton County and its municipalities, but for Northeast Georgia and beyond; care should be taken to ensure that new projects there and elsewhere in the community meet high development standards*
- *A unified vision based upon the stated goals in this plan and its predecessor of encouraging growth that references and respects the community's natural and cultural resources*

could be a catalyst for quality economic development and a high standard of living

Housing

Needs

- *Monroe's rate of owner-occupied housing is significantly lower than both Walton County's and the state average, while its share of renter-occupied and vacant units is far higher; this points to a need for programming and partnerships to improve the state of housing in the city*
- *Stakeholder input noted tract (or, "cookie cutter") housing development as a threat within Walton County; design guidelines and other measures to increase variety of and quality in aesthetics may be needed*

Opportunities

- *Monroe's stakeholders indicated that "good planning" is a strength of the city's and see planned development as an opportunity; housing may represent an area in which the potential for improvement exists, as they also cited dilapidated housing, the high rental rate, and substandard housing as weaknesses*
- *After significant nationwide decline, stakeholders cite a strong housing market in Walton County and point to ample land and infrastructure capacity for planned development, especially in the higher end of the price range; Monroe would like to ensure that any development is of a high caliber*

Natural & Cultural Resources

Needs

- *Development and environmental regulations can help alleviate the potential for stakeholder-identified threats of sprawl and industrial accidents damaging Monroe's natural resources*
- *"Rural charm" was listed by stakeholders as a strength of Walton County's; preserving the community's character and resources should be a priority*

Opportunities

- *Open space and greenspace preservation can improve water quality, protect sensitive habitat, create recreational opportunities, and attract visitors; the community could work with land trusts to acquire and conserve land and water resources*
- *Increasing tree canopy coverage within the community can help improve air quality*

Community Facilities & Services

Needs

- *Leadership, police, recreation staff, social service agencies, and others should work together to identify causes of and reduce crime*

Opportunities

- *Good finances, stability of staff and elected leadership, and police and fire service were identified as strengths; Monroe should capitalize on this significant opportunity to put in place lasting improvements, policies, and programs that will serve the city long-term*
- *Stakeholders cite Monroe's recreational resources and activities, including parks, an art guild, a museum, and a golf course, as strengths; promoting these could have health benefits and contribute greatly to the community's vision for attracting activity- and recreation-based businesses*
- *Public water is seen by stakeholders as a strength within Walton County, and Monroe-specific input also showed community projects and utilities as positives; the city sees this as an opportunity to build on these attributes while providing conservation and recreation benefits*

Intergovernmental Coordination

Needs

- As individuals and families continue to express an interest in recreation for all ages, service agreements between municipal and county governments may help address this need

Opportunities

- Coordinated planning efforts between Walton County and its municipalities, as took place during the development of this document, provide a platform for informed decision making and effective investment

Transportation

Needs

- An existing transportation network that includes stakeholder-identified strengths such as a countywide airport and a network of major thoroughfares could be improved and made more comprehensive by achieving Monroe's goals of walkability and bikeability within the city; a complete streets plan would be appropriate and could help address the issue of traffic congestion
- Several state and US highways traverse Monroe and Walton County, and stakeholder input identified a need for increased local impact on decisions regarding these roads

Opportunities

- Communities across the country are building trails for walking and bicycling as a means to improve health, transportation choices, recreation, social interaction, and economic development; local leadership sees trail development as a worthwhile opportunity
- A well-maintained system of local and county roads was listed as a stakeholder-identified strength; keeping the roads in good condition by performing preventive maintenance represents an opportunity to avoid heavy repair and reconstruction costs in the future

Chapter 3

Vision Statement

Monroe envisions a thriving community with a vibrant downtown at its center and revitalized neighborhoods connected to a variety of businesses via a network of greenspace and safe places for walking and bicycling.

Goals & Policies

1. Develop a comprehensive system of paths and trails for safe, healthy walking and bicycling, gathering, and community-building
2. Preserve natural and cultural resources by concentrating development in and around established areas
3. Meet resident needs and attract newcomers and tourists by providing quality housing, recreation, education, shopping, employment, and transportation choices
4. Encourage recreation-based activity and commerce
5. Preserve and beautify the downtown area to spur private investment and business development
6. Increase sense of community and encourage healthy living by developing parks, playgrounds, passive and organized recreation opportunities, safe spaces for walking and bicycling, greenspace, and accessibility for all abilities and ages
7. Engage the citizenry in local government knowledge sharing and decision making, and invest in volunteerism for the community's betterment
8. Work with other local governments inside and outside of Walton County to achieve the vision of this plan
9. Target public investment to guide private development to the locations and in the manner favored by the community

Chapter 4

Land Use

These future land use (FLU) categories correspond to the map that follows. While zoning and development regulations vary, FLU represents a standardized approach to envisioning and planning for desired scenarios. As such, it is natural that certain areas may appear to be inconsistent between the FLU and zoning maps because FLU presents a blueprint for what is to come.

Residential

Predominantly single-family homes. Certain civic and recreational uses are typically allowed.

Commercial

Retail, office space, and highway-commercial land uses, though small-scale neighborhood shops or offices may be desirable in certain places. Often restricted to nodes and arterial/major collector roads.

Industrial

Manufacture and storage of goods and services. If permitted within the community, facilities such as factories and warehouses would typically be found here.

Public/Institutional

Federal, state, local, and institutional land uses. Uses such as government offices, public safety posts, libraries, schools, religious institutions, cemeteries, and hospitals, are representative.

Transportation/Communication/Utilities

Infrastructure such as water treatment, sewage treatment, communications towers, utility providers, airports, power plants, and transportation.

Parks/Recreation/Conservation

Dedicated to preserving the natural environment, protecting historical and cultural resources, and providing space for passive recreational opportunities.

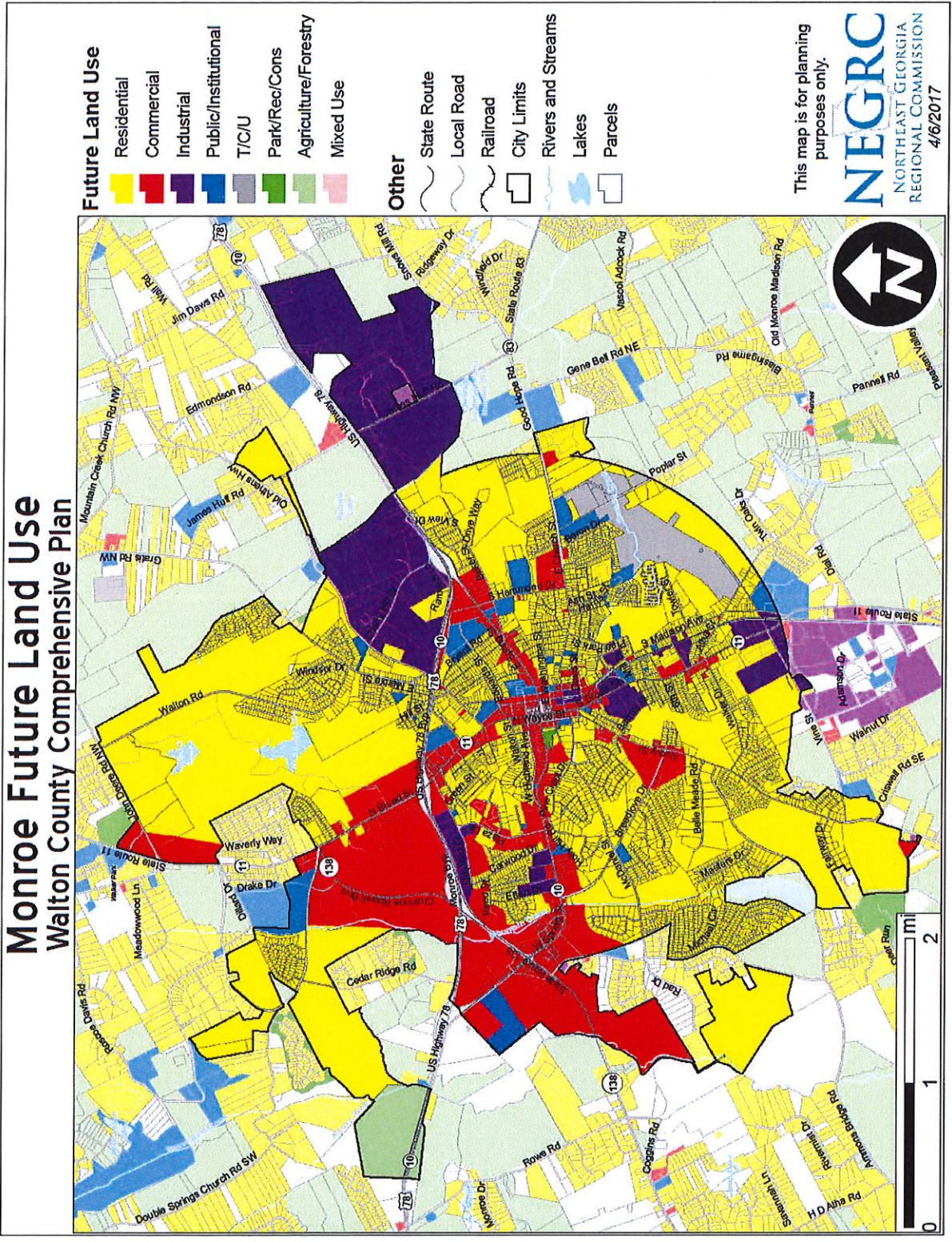
Agriculture/Forestry

Farms and timberland. Residential development should maintain a rural character with single-family detached homes on large lots.

Mixed Use

Developments with an integrated mix of single- and/or multi-family housing, commercial, office, and/or public/institutional uses to promote a work/live/play environment.

Monroe Future Land Use Walton County Comprehensive Plan



Chapter 5

Transportation

Since Monroe is located within the Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) boundary of the Atlanta Regional Commission (ARC), the State of Georgia requires its comprehensive plan to include this transportation element. MPOs are federally-mandated organizations that provide regional context to transportation planning in urbanized areas. This section and the ARC's Regional Transportation Plan (RTP) should be used together when considering local transportation decisions.

Local and Regional Transportation Considerations

Transportation discussions are found throughout this comprehensive plan. Additionally, the community has identified the following *Objectives and Policies* from the ARC's RTP (2016, p47) as desirable in Monroe:

- 1.1 Prioritize data-supported maintenance projects over expansion projects.
- 1.2 Promote system reliability and resiliency.

- 2.3 Promote bicycle transportation by developing safe and connected route options and facilities.
- 2.4 Promote pedestrian-friendly policies and designs.
- 2.5 Enhance and expand Transportation Demand Management (TDM) programs.
- 3.1 Prioritize solutions that improve multimodal connectivity.
- 3.3 Road expansion projects in rural areas should support economic competitiveness by improving multi-modal connectivity between centers.
- 3.4 Implement a complete streets approach on roadway projects that is sensitive to the existing community.
- 4.1 Promote and enhance safety across all planning and implementation efforts, including support for the state strategic highway safety plan.
- 4.2 Coordinate security and emergency preparedness programs across transportation modes and jurisdictions.
- 5.1 Maintain and expand transportation options that serve the region's most vulnerable populations.
- 5.4 Increase access to areas with essential services, including healthcare, education, recreation, entertainment, and commercial retail.
- 6.1 Provide safe and reliable access to freight land uses and major intermodal freight facilities.
- 6.3 Preserve industrial land uses in proximity to existing freight corridors.
- 7.1 Pursue the application and use of advanced technologies.

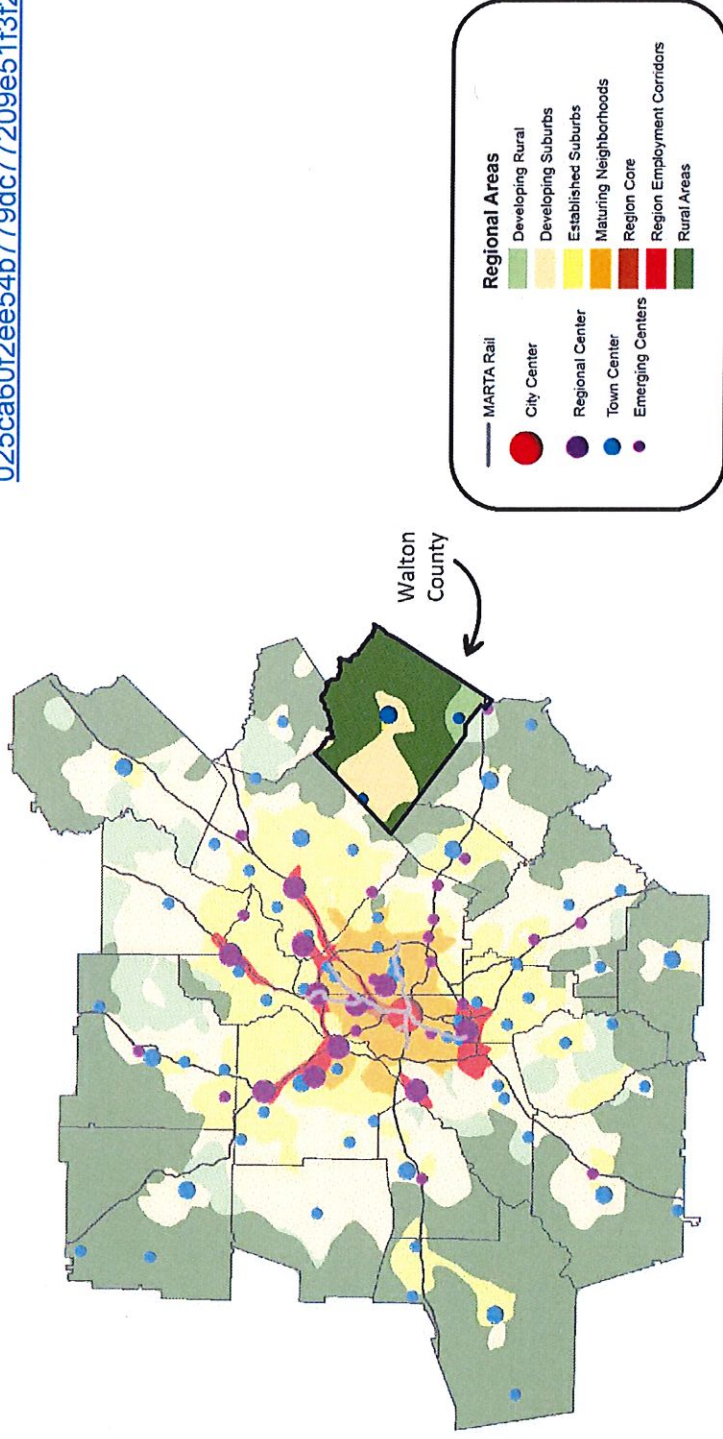
Growth and Development

Monroe's Future Land Use vision, which is detailed in Chapter 4 and around which additional discussion takes place throughout this plan, prioritizes downtown development, neighborhood-based residential life, and connected greenspace. The ARC RTP's Unified Growth Policy Map, which describes Monroe as a Town Center, is relatively consistent with the community's desired growth patterns. Despite this basic level of agreement, the local government and the ARC should refer to the growth vision and future land use found in this comprehensive plan rather than the RTP's UGPM.

Monroe and the ARC MPO

Monroe does not participate directly in the Atlanta MPO. It is represented through the Walton County government on the Transportation & Air Quality Committee and Transportation Coordinating Committee, and as part of the ARC's Municipal District 6, which includes other cities within Walton, Barrow, and Gwinnett counties. The ARC RTP includes a North Broad Street Pedestrian and Bicycle Improvements project within the city limits and a new alignment project for the Monroe East Connector road immediately to the east and south of the city limits

(<http://garc.maps.arcgis.com/apps/webappviewer/index.html?id=025ca60f2ee54b779dc7209e51f3f25/>).



Chapter 6

Community Work Program

The Short-Term Work Program (2017-2021), updated every five years, provides a list of specific activities that the community plans to address as immediate priorities. A Report of Plan Accomplishments, which provides status commentary on the previous work plan (2012-2016), follows.

Short-Term Work Program, 2017-2021

(*entries with an asterisk represent carryover items from the previous STWP)

#	Activity	Timeframe	Responsible Party	Cost Estimate	Funding Source
POPULATION					
1	Designate staff member or elected official to serve as public engagement officer to create a volunteer corps and foster participation in local government activities (meeting notices, social media, etc.)	2017	City council	\$35,000	Local
2	Create a poverty-related committee or task force with the mission of reducing and alleviating the effects of poverty, with membership from government, education, employers, social service, housing, health, etc.	2017-2021	P&Z, economic development, GICH team	None – volunteer	NA
3	Prepare for emergencies by establishing a volunteer response unit and participating in countywide disaster mitigation planning	2017-2021	Fire, police, P&Z, code, utilities	\$50,000	Local
ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT					
4	*Update and revitalize downtown buildings, landscape, and parking	2017-2018	DDA, Main St., streets and transportation	Staff time	Local
5	Work with local merchants groups to create a “Buy Local” program	2017-2018	Economic development and public relations liaison	Staff time	Local
6	Develop branding and marketing plan to promote city, especially regarding its recreational resources	2017-2019	Economic development and public relations liaison	Staff time	Local
7	*Develop incentive programs for investment in new development	2017	Economic development, utilities, finance	Staff time	Local
8	Conduct a basic, qualitative analysis and needs assessment of housing, employment, recreation, etc. to identify ways to attract new residents who already work in Monroe	2017-2018	P&Z, economic development, GICH team, streets and transportation	Minimal	Local

#	Activity	Timeframe	Responsible Party	Cost Estimate	Funding Source
LAND USE, HOUSING, AND DEVELOPMENT					
9	Identify suitable locations for commercial development that is consistent with the community's vision	2017-2021	P&Z, economic development	Staff time	Local
10	Review and, if appropriate, update zoning and development code to ensure that new development is compatible with the community's vision	2017-2019	Development, P&Z, code	Staff time	Local
11	Inventory housing stock and develop plan to eradicate blight	2017-2021	P&Z, economic development, GICH team	None – volunteer	NA
12	*Develop a plan and initiatives for affordable housing	2017-2019	GICH team, P&Z	Staff time	Local
13	Create greenway along creek in Avondale Mills area	2017-2020	Property owner/developer	\$2 million- \$5 million	Private
NATURAL AND CULTURAL RESOURCES					
14	Establish a tree-planting program	2018	Tree board	None – volunteer	NA
COMMUNITY FACILITIES & SERVICES					
15	SR 138 sewer extension/infrastructure improvement	2017	Utilities	\$1.2 million	Local
16	5th and 6th St. water, stormwater, curb, and gutter infrastructure	2017-2018	Utilities	\$500,000	State, local, CDBG
17	Gas line relocation for SR 78 bridge	2017	Utilities	\$400,000	Local
TRANSPORTATION					
18	Develop a local complete streets and trails plan with a pronounced focus on reducing automobile vehicle-miles traveled	2018-2020	Streets and transportation	\$50,000	Local
19	Develop an informal plan to improve local impact on decisions regarding state and federal highways	2017-2018	City leadership, County, ARC MPO, GDOT	Minimal	City, ARC, GDOT
20	Implement sidewalk master plan	2017-2020	Streets and transportation	\$5.9 million	SPLOST, CDBG
21	Airport: Repair and upgrade aprons and runways, construct eastside terminal area, remove obstructions, install a jet A fuel tank, construct eight-unit T-hangar and four corporate hangars	2018-2022	Airport committee, P&Z, streets and transportation, finance	\$6.1 million	Federal, state, local
22	Resurface 12 centerline miles throughout the city	2017-2021	Streets and transportation	\$975,000	SPLOST
23	New sidewalk construction throughout the city	2017-2021	Streets and transportation	\$475,000	SPLOST
24	Spring St. sidewalk project	2017-2018	Streets and transportation	\$2 million	SPLOST, local

#	Activity	Timeframe	Responsible Party	Cost Estimate	Funding Source
25	N Broad St. LCI streetscape project	2017-2018	Streets and transportation, P&Z, finance, utilities	\$2.5 million	Federal, state, local
26	SR 83 truck connector	2020	GDOT	TBD	Local (\$400,000), state TBD
27	Prioritize transportation needs for inclusion in future community and regional plans (ex.: SPLOST and T-SPLOST)	2017-2018	City council, administrator, P&Z, streets and transportation	None	NA

Report of Plan Accomplishments, 2012-2016

ACTIVITY	STATUS	NOTES
Update and revitalize downtown buildings, landscape and parking	Underway	2018 completion
Aggressively market available development sites identified in the Livable Communities Initiative (LCI) Plan	Abandoned	The private sector has been identified as a more appropriate implementer
Develop incentive programs for new investment	Underway	2017 completion
Follow the future land use map when locating new development	Underway	(Ongoing; will not be carried over into subsequent STWP)
Develop affordable housing initiatives	Underway	2018 completion
Promote mixed-use land use and downtown housing	Underway	(Ongoing; will not be carried over into subsequent STWP)
Promote and encourage use of state and federal tax-incentive programs for rehabilitation of historic properties	Postponed	(Ongoing; will not be carried over into subsequent STWP)
Create greenway along creek in Avondale Mills area	Underway	2020 completion
Install landscaping buffer in front of City of Monroe Utilities warehouse area	Underway	2018 completion
Improve and expand water and wastewater systems as needed to ensure the effectiveness of distribution systems and their ability to accomplish growth	Underway	(Ongoing; will not be carried over into subsequent STWP)
Improve utility and transportation infrastructure to meet community needs	Underway	(Ongoing; will not be carried over into subsequent STWP)
Continue to improve signalization and signage in congested areas of the city	Underway	2020 completion
Improve and repair transportation infrastructure according to community needs	Underway	(Ongoing; will not be carried over into subsequent STWP)
Implement sidewalk master plan	Underway	2018 completion
Conduct study of Broad Street/Alcovy Street and Broad Street/Mears Street intersections	Completed	
Replace/revitalize light fixtures on Broad Street	Completed	

ACTIVITY	STATUS	NOTES
Incorporate comprehensive plan into planning review	Underway	(Ongoing; will not be carried over into subsequent STWP)
Update of local comprehensive plan with LCI recommendations	Completed	
Prepare amendments to zoning code	Completed	

Appendix

Appendix: Participation Records