

**CITY OF MONROE  
RESOLUTION**

**A RESOLUTION OF THE MAYOR AND COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF  
MONROE, GEORGIA, ADOPTING THE 2022 COMPREHENSIVE PLAN  
UPDATE FOR THE CITY OF MONROE, GEORGIA**

**WHEREAS**, the 1989 Georgia General Assembly enacted House Bill 215, the Georgia Planning Act, requiring all local governments to prepare a comprehensive plan in accordance with the Minimum Planning Standards and Procedures promulgated by the Georgia Department of Community Affairs; and

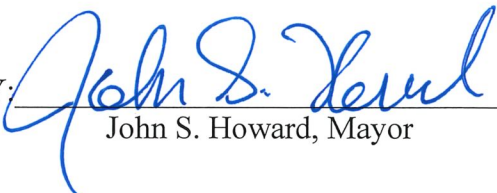
**WHEREAS**, the Comprehensive Plan Update for the City of Monroe, Georgia, was prepared in accordance with the Minimum Planning Standards and Procedures; and

**WHEREAS**, the city of Monroe, Georgia further enhanced its Comprehensive Plan Update through an exhaustive process incorporating public input with the assistance of a specialized consulting firm to establish the plan for quality, sustainable, and balanced growth;

**NOW THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED** by the Mayor and City Council of the City of Monroe that the Comprehensive Plan Update for the City of Monroe, Georgia dated 2022, as approved by the Georgia Department Community Affairs, is hereby adopted, and furthermore, that the Northeast Georgia Regional Commission shall be notified of said adoption within seven (7) days of the adoption of this resolution.

**ADOPTED** this 14<sup>th</sup> day of June 2022.

**CITY OF MONROE, GEORGIA**

BY:   
John S. Howard, Mayor

ATTEST:   
Debbie Kirk, City Clerk



**CITY OF MONROE, GEORGIA**  
**2022 COMPREHENSIVE PLAN UPDATE**

ADOPTED JUNE 14, 2022

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## INTRODUCTION

### PURPOSE OF THIS PLAN

This comprehensive plan envisions the long-term future of the City of Monroe and outlines its implementation. Over time, this plan will serve as a guide for cooperation and coordination between the City, its service providers, partners, and current and future property owners. The goals and strategies contained in this plan have been carefully crafted to support new development and redevelopment that is beneficial to the community and maintains its vision. The plan should be used to support decisions regarding growth management, transportation, housing, economic development, and quality of life over the next few decades. Furthermore, this plan fulfills Georgia Department of Community Affairs (DCA)'s requirements for local comprehensive planning and the requirements to maintain the City of Monroe's status as a Qualified Local Government.

The comprehensive Plan is organized as follows: This chapter introduces the comprehensive plan and briefly reviews the history of Monroe and previous planning efforts. The next section describes the extensive public engagement effort that served as the foundation of this plan. The next chapters summarize existing conditions and provide recommendations, goals, and policies based on public engagement, the Community Vision, and analysis of data and projections. The final section, Land Use and Development, outlines the sub-area plans. The sub-area plans provide guidance on the implementation of the recommended form based codes described in the City's Smartcode, a key component of the successful implementation of this plan.



## ABOUT MONROE

The City of Monroe is located in Walton County, approximately 40 miles east of Atlanta along US 78. Walton County is a historically rural area that has experienced significant growth pressure from metropolitan Atlanta in recent years. As its county seat and its largest city, these pressures have begun to be felt in Monroe, especially along the city's western side.

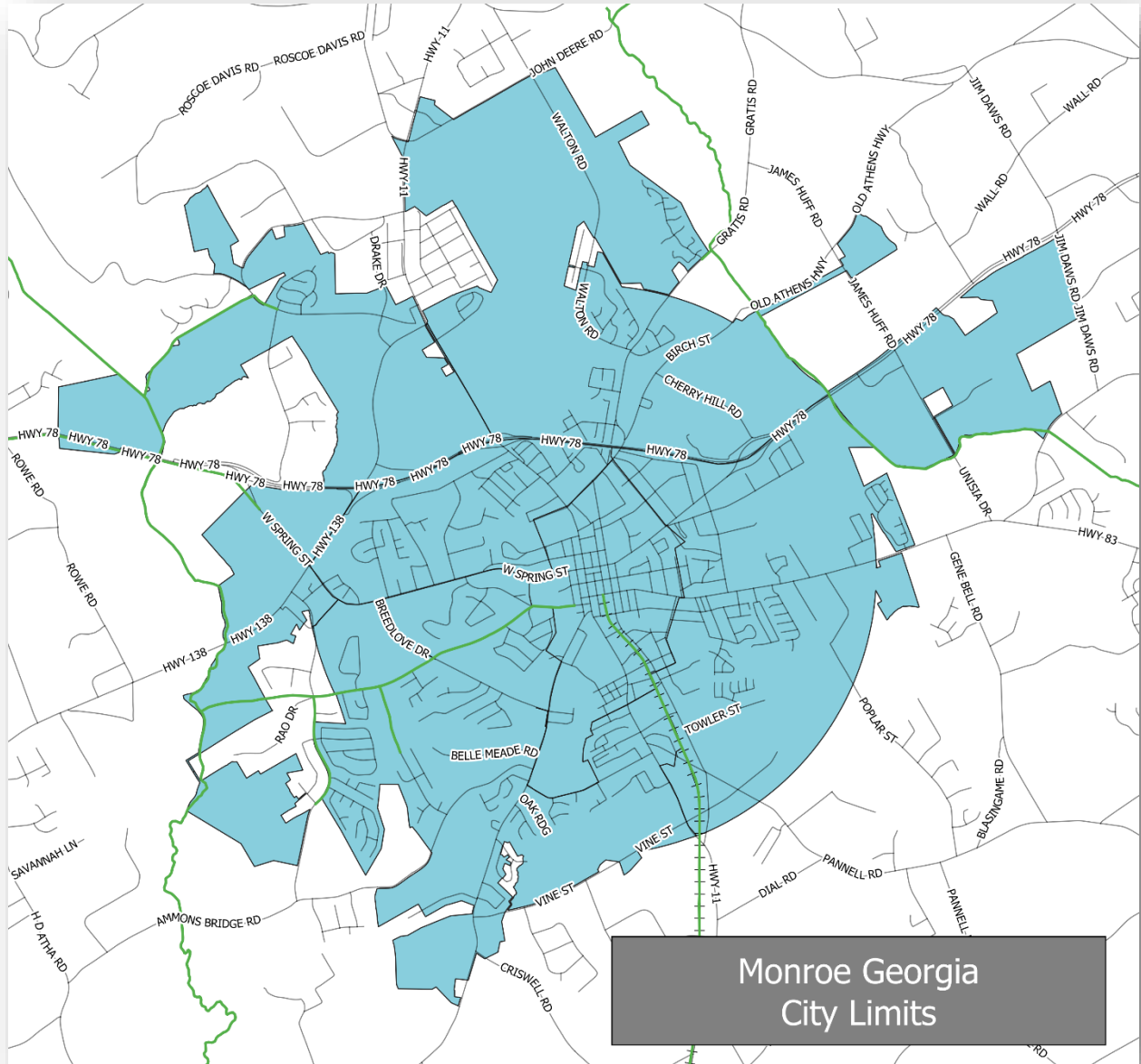
Walton County was laid out by the Lottery Act of 1818, was organized in 1819, and named in honor of George Walton, one of the three Georgians who signed the Declaration of Independence. Elisha Betts of Virginia offered a gift of land for county buildings, private and public cemeteries, and six additional acres. Betts suggested to give the town the name of "Monroe" in honor of James Monroe, fifth president of the United States. His offer was accepted, and Monroe became known as the county seat of Walton County in 1820. The City of Monroe was incorporated in 1821.

A fire in 1857 swept the entire downtown area of Broad Street between the streets now known as Spring and Washington. The Courthouse was the only building left standing. Following the fire, the first brick buildings were erected, many of which are still present today. The original City Hall building erected during the late 1800's still stands at the corner of Spring Street and Wayne Street, as does the second City Hall which was built in 1939 on South Broad Street. Many other homes and storefronts from the late 1800's and early 1900's still exist in Monroe today.

Monroe did not make very rapid progress until after the Civil War, but since that time, it has grown and prospered. Monroe became a bustling cotton and textiles mill town during the early half of the 20th century, as well as attracting local industries and building a strong business presence in both downtown and other areas of the city. Monroe also proudly claims the honor of being the "City of Governors," having furnished seven citizens to act as Governor of Georgia. Monroe also claims a native son who left Monroe for the West and later became Governor of Texas.



FIGURE 1: CITY OF MONROE MAP



## PREVIOUS PLANNING EFFORTS

Over the last decade the City of Monroe has developed and implemented a variety of plans. This Comprehensive Plan Update builds upon those plans. Many of the plans being implemented by the city focus on downtown and adjacent areas. The *Town Center LCI* is perhaps the most important. It serves as the starting point for most of the City's efforts to preserve and redevelop its central business district.

### 2017 COMPREHENSIVE PLAN UPDATE

As part of the planning process, the following items were determined to be Monroe's most important needs:

- Monroe's poverty rate has increased substantially, and owner-occupied housing rates are lower than both Walton County and Georgia. There is a need to develop anti-poverty programs and to improve the state of housing in the city to address the high rental rate and substandard housing.
- Design guidelines and other measures are needed to increase the variety of housing, and improve aesthetics in new developments, and preserve the community's character.
- There is a need for employment opportunities that are consistent with Monroe's vision and goals.
- Additional industrial development is needed to diversify the tax base.
- The causes of crime need to be identified and crime needs to be reduced.
- There is a need to increase recreation opportunities for residents of all ages.
- Walkability and bikeability could be improved and traffic congestion reduced with a Complete Streets Plan.
- There is a need for more local input on the state and US highways that traverse the city.

The following were identified as Monroe's most important 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 the Walton County and City's forces.
- Athens Technical College's Monroe campus creates education opportunities locally and proximity to Athens and Atlanta provide additional opportunities.
- Targeted planning and public investment can be used to trigger increased private-sector interest.
- Project Road Share, which encourages bicyclists has created outside interest in the community and should be seen as an opportunity to increase notoriety and economic activity.
- Economic growth and development provide an economic opportunity for the city and region. Care should be taken to ensure that new projects meet high development standards.
- Utilizing the Comprehensive Plan and other plans that reference and respect the community's natural and cultural resources could be a catalyst for quality economic development and high standard of living.

- There is a strong housing market in the city and Walton County and ample land and infrastructure capacity for planned development. Planned development may help improve housing quality and diversity.
- Greenspace preservation and tree canopy coverage improvement can protect air and water quality, protect sensitive habitat, create recreation opportunities, and attract visitors. The community could work with land trusts to acquire and conserve land and water resources. Additionally, promoting parks, art guild, golf course, and museum and trail development could have positive health benefits and attract activity and recreation-based businesses.
- Trail development is a worthwhile opportunity.
- The city is financially stable and has the opportunity to put in place lasting improvements, policies and programs that will serve the city long-term.
- Monroe can build on its strength as a provider of public water and provide conservation and recreation benefits.
- Coordinated planning efforts between Walton County and its municipalities provide a platform for informed decision making and effective investment.

## TOWN CENTER LCI

The Town Center LCI was adopted in 2008 and updated in 2013 and 2017. The LCI developed a long-term vision for promoting growth within Monroe’s downtown core, along Broad Street, and in nearby neighborhoods by promoting visual appeal, establishing a compatible mix of land uses, preserving local identity, ensuring multiple transportation options, reducing truck traffic, improving public safety, and supporting economic development. Monroe has successfully implemented many of the strategies in the LCI, including

- Beautification and revitalization of the Downtown area,
- Major sidewalk and streetscape improvements,
- Improvements in Downtown and along Broad Street,
- Creation of a Farmers Market,
- The beginning of housing development downtown, via ‘above retail’ lofts
- Revitalization in the historic Walton Mills district, and
- The establishment of a Georgia Initiative for Community Housing (GICH) team.

The 2008 Plan sought to increase the supply of housing in downtown neighborhoods, incentivize the mixed-use redevelopment of old mill properties in the Mill District, south of Downtown and undertake Affordable Housing Initiatives. The 2013 and 2017 updates confirmed and updated revitalization goals for the Town Center area, including downtown revitalization, transportation projects, parks, zoning, redevelopment tools, marketing, and downtown business promotion activities. The updates

- Expand and reaffirm the City’s affordable housing efforts, encourages new neighborhood development on vacant land connected to historic Mills and supports continued mixed-use development of those properties,
- Recognizes the City’s recent implementation of a major streetscaping project along South Broad Street, reaching down South Broad Street into the historic Mill District and to the site of Avondale Mills (now known as Walton Mill),

- Recognizes the City’s participation in Georgia DCA’s Georgia Initiative for Community Housing program and the formation of the Monroe GICH team to promote the rehabilitation and production of affordable and high-quality housing, and the revitalization of existing housing stock,
- Supports mixed-income housing in developing neighborhoods,
- Recognizes the DDA’s sponsorship of weekly Farmers Markets,
- Supports the ongoing development of Mixed-use and downtown housing,
- Supports rehabilitation of mill housing as preservation of neighborhood character, and
- Affirms the goal of branding Monroe as an Antiques destination for Georgia.

## YOUNG GAMECHANGERS

In 2019 the Young Gamechangers program developed “big idea” recommendations to address some of Monroe’s issues identified by the community. The Young Gamechangers, young professionals between the ages of 24 and 40 from a variety of sectors across the state, were divided into four groups to work on the four challenge questions crafted by the community steering committee. The plan provided strategies to address workforce development, entrepreneurship, intergenerational “Lifetime Community”, and utilizing its natural resources, trail system, and greenspace to connect all walks of life. The following strategies were recommended in the Young Gamechangers Plan.

### Workforce Development

- Create a Workforce Liaison position at each public high school in Walton County. This person will work alongside guidance counselors to provide students with college and career opportunities that are available to them upon completion of high school.
- Create the Walton Works Center, a one-stop shop center for workforce and career needs, to serve as a connector between industries and citizens looking to enter the workforce or change careers. The center would provide information about available jobs, training opportunities, and support programs to ensure progression through training programs.
- Create the Walton County Cooperative Group, a network of worker-owned businesses, to provide high quality job opportunities to underemployed or unemployed residents and supply goods and services that meet the needs of local employers.

### Entrepreneurship

- Establish a public-private partnership titled “Entrepreneur U.” Entrepreneur U is a partnership of high schools, local businesses, and colleges/universities supporting high school students to learn the skills of entrepreneurship and support student-led ventures.
- Create the Monroe Entrepreneurship Core. It will be the catalyst for developing an ecosystem to attract and grow the community’s next generation of entrepreneurs. The Core is designed to support future and current businesses by providing resources and training, and expert help to solve problems. The Core will specifically encourage participation from underserved demographics including women, people of color, low-to-moderate income residents, and youth to inspire the next generation of entrepreneurs.
- Create and sustain a collaborative community food and drink environment to strategically improve the perception and accessibility of Monroe for food and drink entrepreneurs by

offering lower-risk, lower-cost startup environment, local foodie events, and education opportunities, all in a collaborative community environment for residents and visitors to work, eat, drink, and socialize together. The plan includes a Food Hall/Incubator, partnership with Athens Technical College Culinary Program, business incubation, and mobile food options.

#### Intergenerational “Lifetime Community”

- Reestablish an Office of Community Engagement in the city government in order to foster engagement and collaboration with all citizens. Four new organizations would be overseen by this office: Diversity Advisory Board, Youth Council, Young Professionals Program, and Walton County Citizens Academy.
- Improve walkability downtown, implement a multi-use “Grow Monroe” space, develop a parking deck and pedestrian crosswalk, and boutique hotel.
- Create housing opportunities that ensure Monroe is a lifetime, multigenerational community for residents across the socioeconomic spectrum. The plan presents two major themes to be addressed by a variety of public and private sector actors. First, address the substandard housing options. Second, increase quality rental options and housing choice for both renters and homeowners. The plan includes strategies such as implementing a Quality Housing Ordinance, rental registry, a renters’ rights education program, land banking, and homeownership programs.

#### Natural Resources/Parks

- Create a Friends of the Monroe Parks Organization to support, improve, sustain, and provide programming for the existing and future parks system.
- Upgrade existing parks to create experiential destinations for citizens of all ages to enjoy.
- Develop new infrastructure to create a new destination experience along the Alcovy River and construct a connected greenway to link citizens across the city with key community destinations including the parks, downtown, schools, breweries, and shopping.

### **2021 COMMUNITY HEALTH NEEDS ASSESSMENT – WALTON WELLNESS, INC.**

The Community Health Needs Assessment was developed to identify the top health needs of Walton County by Walton Wellness Inc.<sup>1</sup> The assessment also worked with stakeholders, and strategically targeted focus groups to prioritize the needs and present relevant resources to address those needs within the community.

The plan focused on the items that impact the health landscape such as health behaviors, access to medical care, socioeconomic factors and physical environment. Although the plan focused on Walton County as a whole, the data presented provided information on the status of health issues relevant to Monroe. It did not provide solutions, rather it prioritized the main needs including

- Safe places to exercise,
- Access to affordable healthy food,

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<sup>1</sup> <https://waltonwellness.files.wordpress.com/2021/11/2021-chna-9-28-21.pdf>



- Transportation to care,
- Low income services for mental health and substance abuse, and
- Funding and the health literacy of the elected officials in control of the funding was cited as a barrier to improving health and quality of life in the county.

## 2009 MONROE MASTER PLAN AND SMART CODE

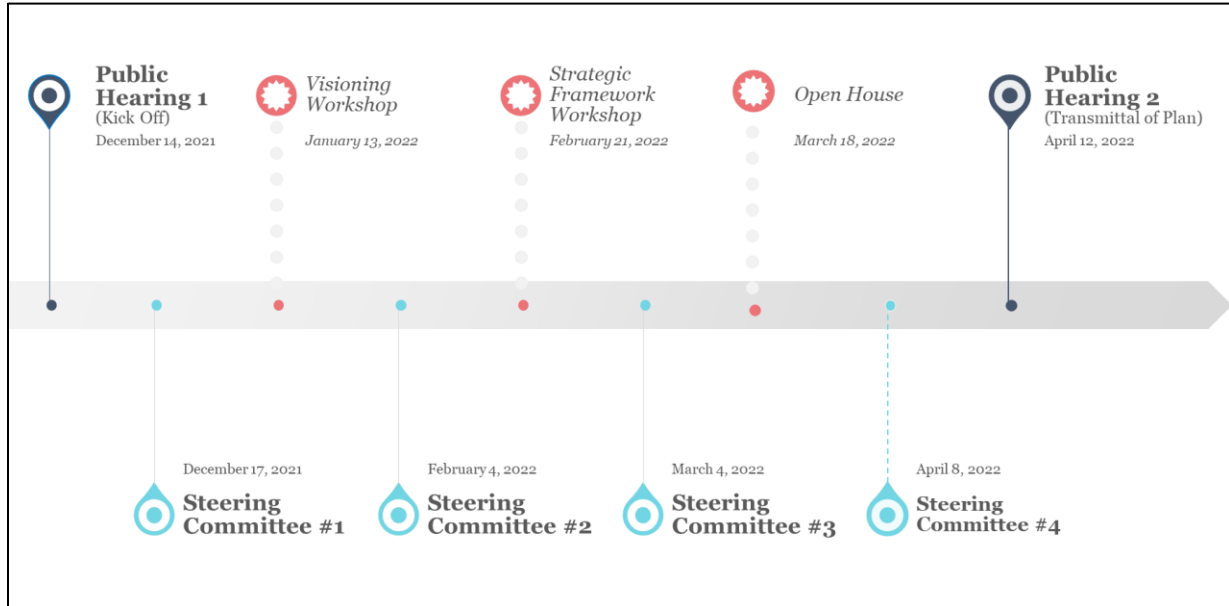
The City of Monroe contracted with Town Planning and Urban Design Collaborative LLC to develop a Livable Centers Initiative (LCI) master plan and associated smart code. The draft study and associated draft ordinance provides a framework for more form based zoning and rural-urban transects. Though the code was not adopted and only for the downtown and surrounding areas, the recommendation for this plan is to adopt it City-Wide following the guidelines of the sub-area plans discussed later.



# PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT

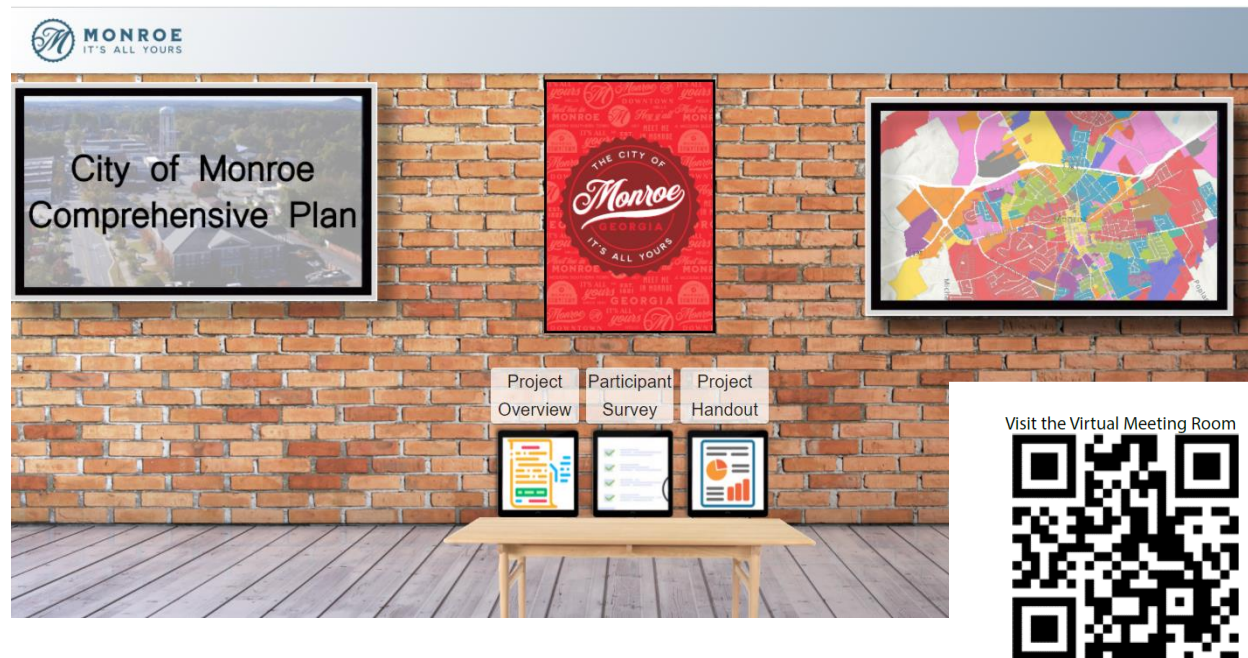
Public engagement and input are the cornerstone to a successful comprehensive planning process. The City of Monroe kicked off the process by laying out the foundation in a Community Engagement Plan. The plan was introduced to the City Council at a work session on December 7, 2021.

## COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT PLAN



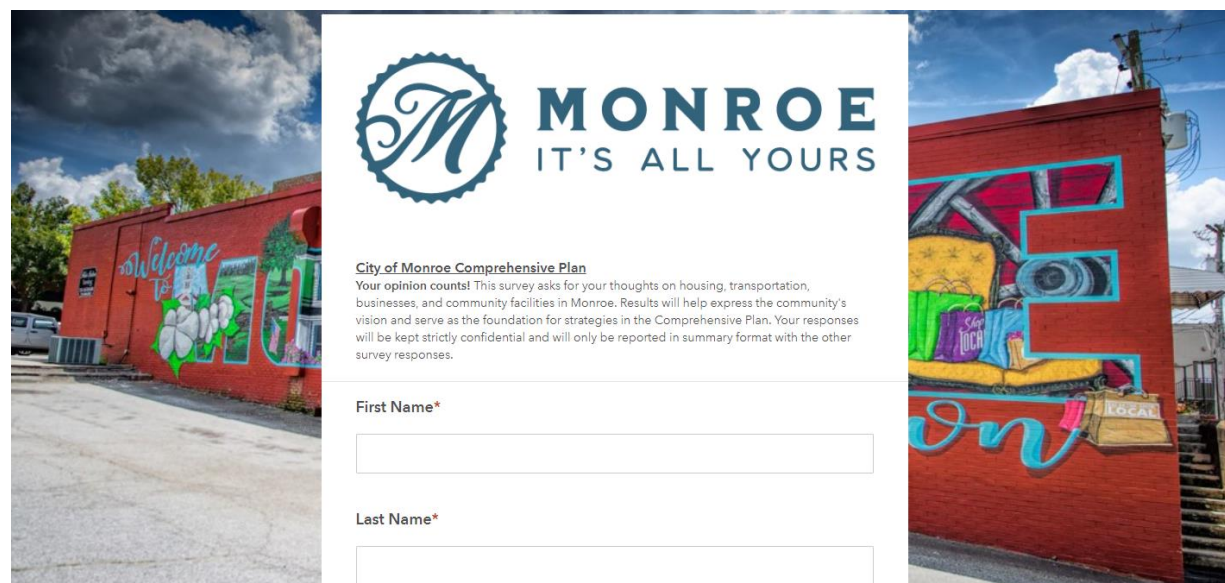
## WEBSITE

The project website [www.monroe-compplan.com](http://www.monroe-compplan.com) was launched at the project kick off and provided meeting content and planning documents to the public throughout the life of the project. It also included an interactive map that allowed visitors to choose different layers on the maps per their interests. The website housed the online survey, visual preference survey, and meeting materials.



## ONLINE SURVEY

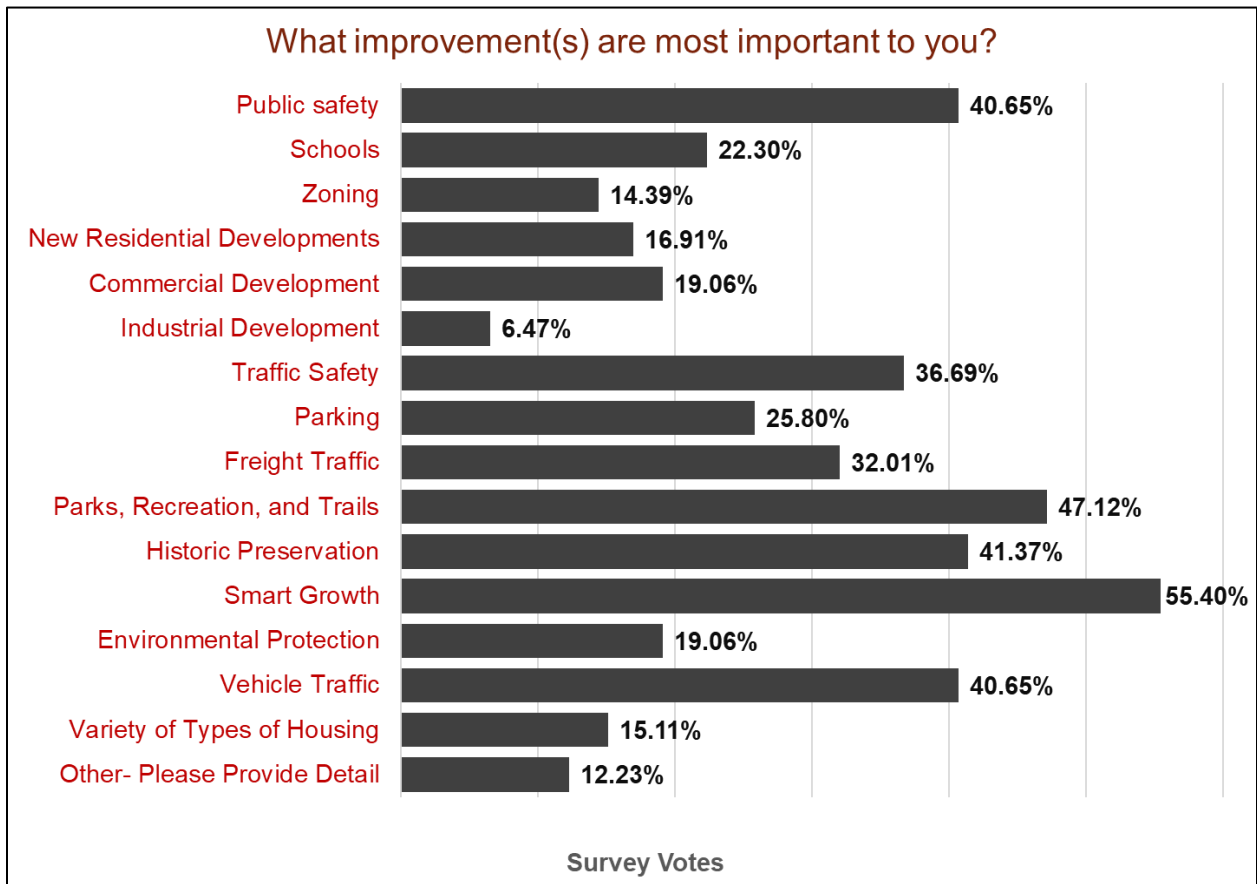
The online survey asked a series of questions about the community and the vision for the future. Almost 300 people completed the online survey.



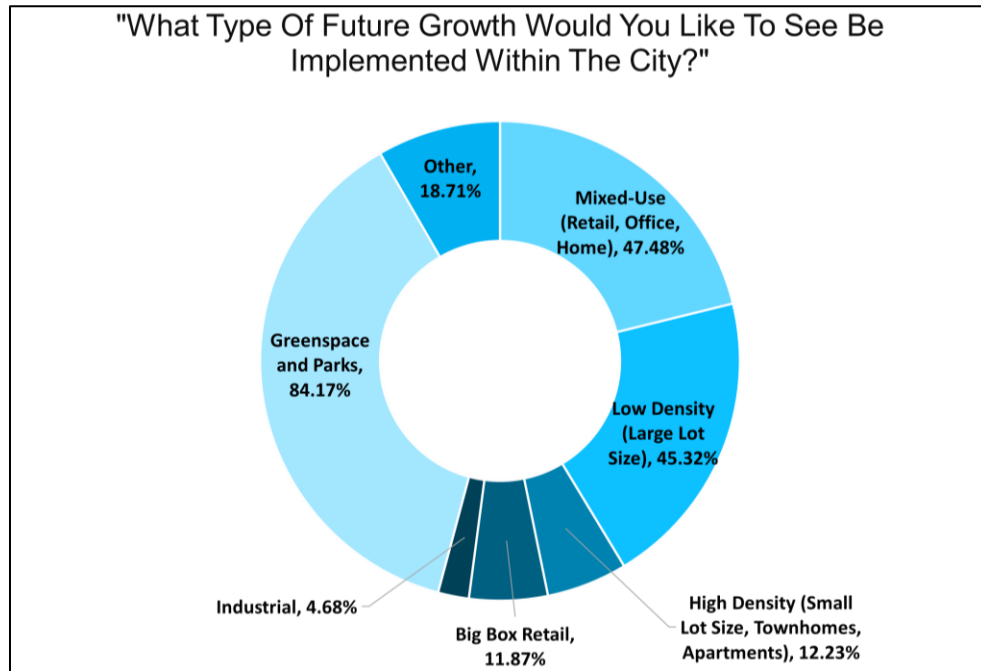
The online survey produced a number of different dashboards reflecting the results of the survey. Below is an example of a word cloud asking the participants why a particular focus area was important



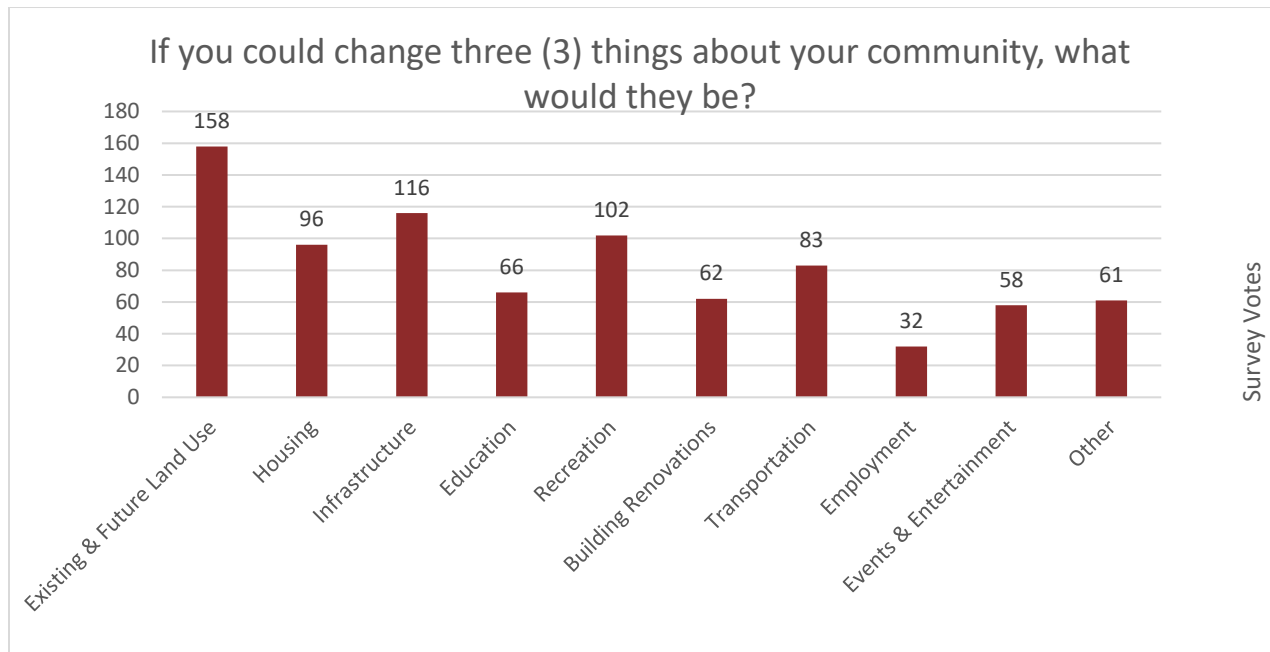
Example question and results of what improvements were most important to the participant.



The survey provided a glimpse into the vision of the future according to the citizens. As seen below, greenspace and parks were the most popular with mixed use and low density development next. This data helped form some of the recommendations and priorities for the plan.



The data below identified existing and future land use, infrastructure, and recreation as the top three things to focus on.



FLYERS

The Steering Committee distributed flyers for public meetings with two examples shown below.

**MONROE**  
IT'S ALL YOURS

## What is your dream for Monroe?

Help us Plan for the Future  
**Comprehensive Plan**

The City of Monroe is developing its Comprehensive Plan, which will be the blueprint for growth and development over the next 20 years. The Plan will describe the community's vision for the future and outline how to achieve it.

**Visioning Workshop**

Date/Time	Location
January 13 <sup>th</sup> 6:00 PM	The Factory at Walton Mill 600 South Broad St

Housing Environment Public Facilities Economic Development Transportation Population Parks and Recreation Land Use UTILITIES

We look forward to you attending the Visioning Workshop.  
Visit our virtual meeting room for project information and online surveys at [www.monroe-compplan.com](http://www.monroe-compplan.com)

**Your Monroe - Your Future - Help Plan It!**

*You're invited to a Public Workshop*

## PLANNING FOR THE FUTURE

**When: February 21, 2022, at 6pm**  
**Where: Team Up**  
**601 S Madison Ave, Suite B**

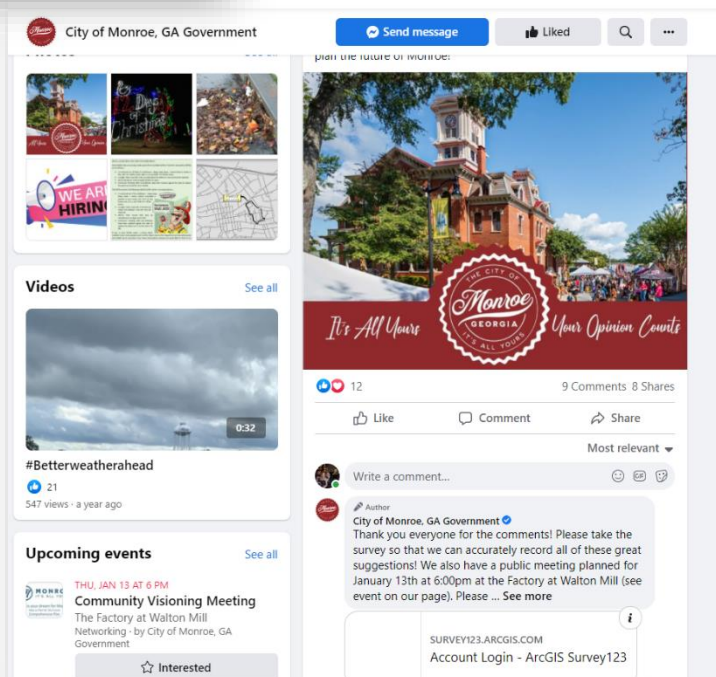
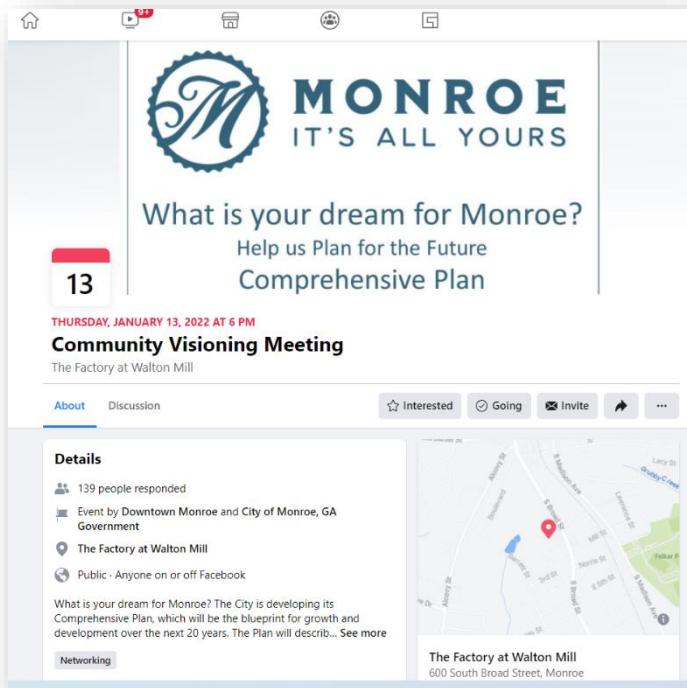
The City of Monroe is developing its Comprehensive Plan, the blueprint for growth and development over the next 20 years. Your Plan will describe the community's vision for the future and how to achieve it.

[www.Monroe-compplan.com](http://www.Monroe-compplan.com)

**Your Monroe – Your Future – Help Plan It!**

## SOCIAL MEDIA

The City of Monroe regularly used social media to promote the Comprehensive Plan and engagement opportunities.



## PUBLIC HEARING #1 – KICK OFF

A public hearing must be held at the inception of the local planning process. Per the DCA procedures, the purpose of the hearing is to brief the community on the process to be used, share the opportunities for public participation and to gain input on the overall proposed planning process. The City of Monroe's public hearing was held at City Hall on December 14, 2021.





## VISIONING WORKSHOP

Nearly 100 people attended the Visioning Workshop on January 13, 2022, at The Factory at Walton Mill. The format included a visual preference exercise on housing, commercial, retail and more followed by a PowerPoint presentation. The participants then discussed in small groups their visual preference choices and each team presented to the overall group. A second exercise was conducted using large maps of the city and each team were asked to identify areas where things should be within the city limits using color stars, crayons, and markers.




City of Monroe Visual Preference Survey  
2022 Comprehensive Plan

*Please use the number 0, 3 or 5 in the box to rank your preference.*


**Downtown Single-Family Infill Residential Options Within Historic Districts**

**1**



Negative = 0   Neutral = 3   Positive = 5  
Your Choice

**2**



Negative = 0   Neutral = 3   Positive = 5  
Your Choice

**3**



Negative = 0   Neutral = 3   Positive = 5  
Your Choice

**4**



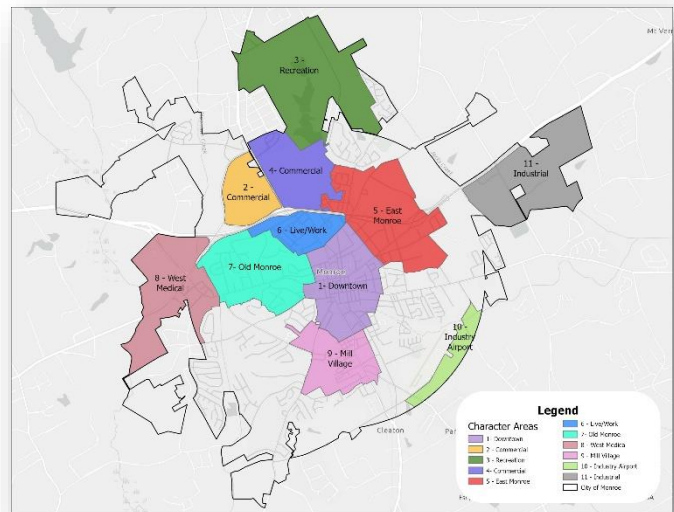
Negative = 0   Neutral = 3   Positive = 5  
Your Choice

Notes/Thoughts:



## STRATEGIC FRAMEWORK WORKSHOP

Held at Team UP, the second public workshop was held on February 21, 2022, and was attended by approximately 60 people. The format of this meeting consisted of a PowerPoint presentation and interactive discussion to vet the various plan topics issues and opportunities that had been developed by the consultant team as a result of interviews, steering committee meetings, and the visioning workshop. The interactive exercise consisted of a draft character area map where the participants were again divided into teams. They discussed the proposed Character Area names and attributes as well as the policies and guidance that would be associated with each area. Each team presented a summary of their maps to the group.



OPEN HOUSE



The final public workshop was held on March 18, 2022, at the Monroe City Hall Council Chambers and was conducted in a drop-in, open house format. Approximately 22 citizens attended the open house that was held from 4-7pm. There were four stations for participants to review content including a previous plans table consisting of previous planning studies that the comprehensive plan would be pulling ideas from, a prioritization of issues and opportunities table, the draft Walton County Character Area map from a separate effort, and the Character Areas Maps for the City of Monroe.

### KEY HIGHLIGHTS FROM EXISTING PLANS CITY OF MONROE AND WALTON COUNTY

**Town Center LC/Update**

- Revised the Town Center LC/Update to reflect the most current information and to address the needs of the community.
- Revised the Town Center LC/Update to reflect the most current information and to address the needs of the community.
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**Young Gamechangers**

- Revised the Young Gamechangers plan to reflect the most current information and to address the needs of the community.
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**2009 Monroe Smart Code Master Plan**

- Revised the 2009 Monroe Smart Code Master Plan to reflect the most current information and to address the needs of the community.
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**2021 Community Health Needs Assessment**

- Revised the 2021 Community Health Needs Assessment to reflect the most current information and to address the needs of the community.
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**2021 Comprehensive Transportation Plan Walton County**

- Revised the 2021 Comprehensive Transportation Plan Walton County to reflect the most current information and to address the needs of the community.
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- Revised the 2021 Comprehensive Transportation Plan Walton County to reflect the most current information and to address the needs of the community.

## STEERING COMMITTEE

The steering committee included residents representing a variety of organizations and backgrounds and met four times over the course of the planning process.

1. *December 17, 2021* – Kick off, Overview of planning process and expectations, SWOT analysis
2. *February 4, 2022* – Review visioning workshop results, issues and opportunities vetting, begin discussions of Character Areas
3. *March 4, 2022* – Discuss results of strategic framework workshop and further discuss Character Areas.
4. *April 8, 2022* – Key highlights of the Comprehensive Plan and Work Program

### Steering Committee Members:

Ava Atkism, Monroe Police  
 Ross Bradley, Avondale Mortgage  
 Hugo Bryan-Porter, Lighthouse  
 Ned Butler, Reliant  
 Randy Camp, P&Z Commission  
 Crista Carrell, Tree Board  
 Jami Cash, Monroe High School  
 Chris Collin, DDA  
 Rita Dickinson, Monroe Country Day

Kirklyn Dixon, County Commission  
 Chad Draper, JEC Development  
 Nathan Durham, New Beginnings  
 Fabersha Flynt, Athens Tech  
 Dawn Griffin, Monroe Museum  
 Marc Hammes, Walton Playhouse  
 Elizabeth Jones, HPC  
 Emilio Kelly, Entrepreneur

Pete McReynolds, Business owner/HOPE  
 Kim Mulkey-Smith, Monroe Museum  
 Jamie Nichols, Monroe High School  
 Blake Peters, Library  
 Teri Smiley, COC  
 Malisa Thompson, DCA/Resident  
 Julie Sams, Resident



## INTERVIEWS

A total of eleven people were interviewed. Each interview included conversations regarding the following questions.

- How has the City Changed in the last 20 years?
- What have been the City’s greatest achievements in the past 4-5 years?
- What has been the City’s biggest lost opportunity in the past 4-5 years?
- What do you believe are the most important issues the City of Monroe should address in the Comprehensive Plan Update?
- Which characteristics of the City should be maintained for the future?
- Which characteristics of the City should be changed as it moves forward?
- What activities or goals should be the City’s primary focus in the near term (5 years)?
- What long-range (10-20 years) activities or goals should the City focus on?
- Do you have any additional information that may be helpful for us to know or understand?

A summary of the results of the interviews can be found in the Appendix.

### Community Members Interviewed

<u>Name</u>	<u>Organization</u>
Lisa Anderson	Downtown Development Authority, URA, CVB
Simoan Baker	Community Member
Larry Bradley	District 4
Kimberly Brown	Community Member
Myoshia Crawford	District 2
David Dickinson	District 8
Nathan Franklin	Walton County Schools
Norman Garrett	District 5
Gregory Tyler	District 6
Lee Malcom	District 1
Paul Rosenthal	City Attorney; Downtown Developer

## PUBLIC HEARING #2 – DRAFT PLAN REVIEW

The final public hearing is to be held April 12, 2022. The purpose of the hearing is to brief the community on the contents of the plan, provide an opportunity for residents to make final suggestions, additions or revisions, and notify the community of when the plan will be submitted to the Regional Commission for review.

# COMMUNITY VISION

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## 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.”*

## NEEDS & OPPORTUNITIES

Through analyses and conversations with City staff, elected officials, the Steering Committee, and the community, a summarized list of needs and opportunities was developed to guide policy and project recommendations. Some of these needs and opportunities have been carried over from the previous comprehensive plan due to their relevance today.

### *Needs*

- Monroe’s poverty rate is significantly higher than the rates for both Walton County’s and Georgia’s. Programs to address poverty should be considered.
- Monroe’s rate of homeownership is significantly lower than Walton County and the state. Programming and partnerships to improve the state of housing in the city is needed.
- Measures are needed to increase variety and aesthetics for new developments. Guidelines for infill should ensure compatibility with small town, historic appeal of Monroe. Guidelines for areas outside of the downtown core should allow for a variety of housing types, sizes, and price ranges. Mixed uses and transportation options such as walking, and bikes should be a high priority.
- While new senior housing has been developed, there is a growing need for senior housing due to Monroe’s proximity to Atlanta, medical care, and quality of life.
- The city recently became responsible for parks and park planning. The city needs a citywide park system master plan that addresses maintenance and distributes park resources equitable to all residents.
- Monroe needs to ensure pedestrian connectivity in new and existing neighborhoods through a system of connected sidewalks and a trail system. Residents prioritized the need for “Ped-Sheds” and a gridded street system.
- Residents expressed the need for a cultural center to teach the community about the culture of Monroe through events, festivals, and workshops
- The continued loss of trees and natural vegetation to land development is a concern. There is a need to update the city’s tree protection requirements.
- Better workforce skills are needed to help lift people out of poverty.
- A jobs/housing ratio of 1.5 provides a good balance for a live/work community. The current ratio is 1.0 and new development needs to be geared to increasing the number of jobs at a higher rate relative to increases to housing.

### *Opportunities*

- Locations identified in the sub-area plans offer opportunity for the development of nodes of complementary uses to improve pedestrian connectivity.
- There are opportunities for adaptive re-use for vacant buildings and infill opportunities.
- A larger, more diverse population, along with those wishing to age in place, will create a market for residential and other development that is more walkable and lower maintenance.
- Athens Technical College's Monroe campus creates education attainment opportunities for residents throughout Walton County. Monroe can work with Athens Technical College to help implement and promote educational opportunities to improve workforce skills.
- Monroe's high quality of life will continue to attract new residents.
- Planned developments can offer quality affordable housing along with higher priced homes by providing for mixed uses and a variety of housing types, including apartments, townhomes, and single-family homes of different sizes.
- A Land Trust can be created to acquire land for preservation of natural resources and provision of affordable housing.
- The Young Gamechangers plan presents a plan for trails throughout the city. Implementing this plan, or a similar plan, would ensure pedestrian connectivity throughout the city.
- Monroe should continue to invest in infrastructure to keep ahead of the demands of growth and to continue its high level of service for the foreseeable future.
- The City's past participation in the Georgia Initiative for Community Housing (GICH) provides the opportunity to become part of the GICH Alumni Program. This program provides ongoing support and additional resources to address housing and poverty issues.
- Green Street Park is a one-acre site northwest of downtown on Mayfield Drive. The park includes a broken swing set and unkept basketball courts for the use of nearby residents. Revitalizing this park would provide recreation resources to underserved residents of city.
- There is an opportunity to harness the energy of individuals and community organizations to create a Monroe cultural center.
- There are opportunities for better working partnerships between Monroe and Walton County administrations.

## GOALS AND POLICIES

The comprehensive plan is intended to provide a guide to everyday decision-making for use by local government officials and other community leaders. Local planning requirements specify that the local government must include a goals element, with policies to provide ongoing guidance and direction to local government officials for making decisions consistent with addressing the identified needs and opportunities. In this plan Goals and Policies are included within each section as they apply to each section. The two goals below are more general, and apply to every decision the city makes, regardless of planning element.

### *General Goals and Policies*

- ❖ Meet resident needs and attract newcomers and tourists by providing quality housing, recreation, education, shopping, employment, and transportation choices.

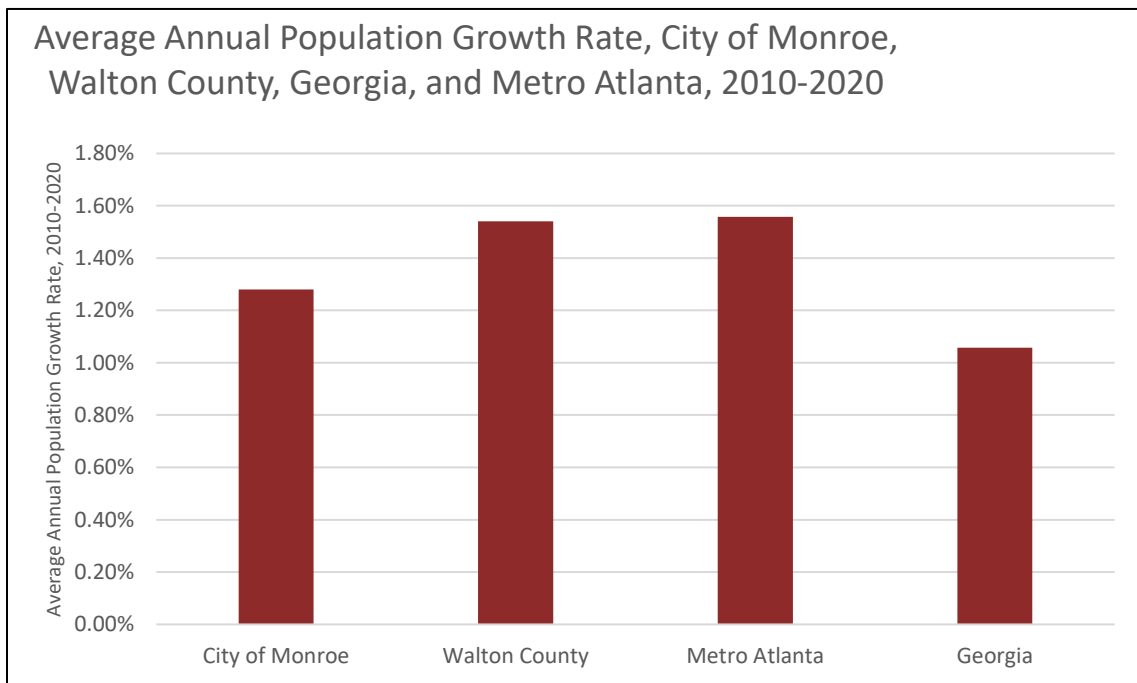
- ❖ Engage the citizenry in local government knowledge sharing and decision making and invest in volunteerism for the community’s betterment.

## POPULATION, HOUSING, & EDUCATION

### POPULATION GROWTH

As of April 2022, the City of Monroe had a population of 14,925, representing a 13% increase from 2010. This growth rate was somewhat lower than for Walton County, but greater than the state of Georgia. The Atlanta Metropolitan Area showed a growth rate of 16% over the same period, outpacing Walton County and the State.

FIGURE 2: AVERAGE POPULATION GROWTH RATE



Source: P1 TOTAL POPULATION, 2010: DEC Summary File 1, Universe: Total population and Source: P1 2020: DEC Redistricting Data (PL 94-171)

As of January 2022, the City of Monroe had 1,680 residential units in preliminary plat review, under construction, or somewhere in between. As such, the annual population growth rate through 2045 is expected to be 3.2% with a large amount of this growth being early in the planning period. According to the Governor’s Office of Planning and Budget, the state of Georgia is expected to grow by 1.0% and Walton County by 2.1% through 2045. With recent plans for development in the southern region of the County, the actual population growth in Walton County is likely to be larger.



TABLE 1: POPULATION PROJECTIONS

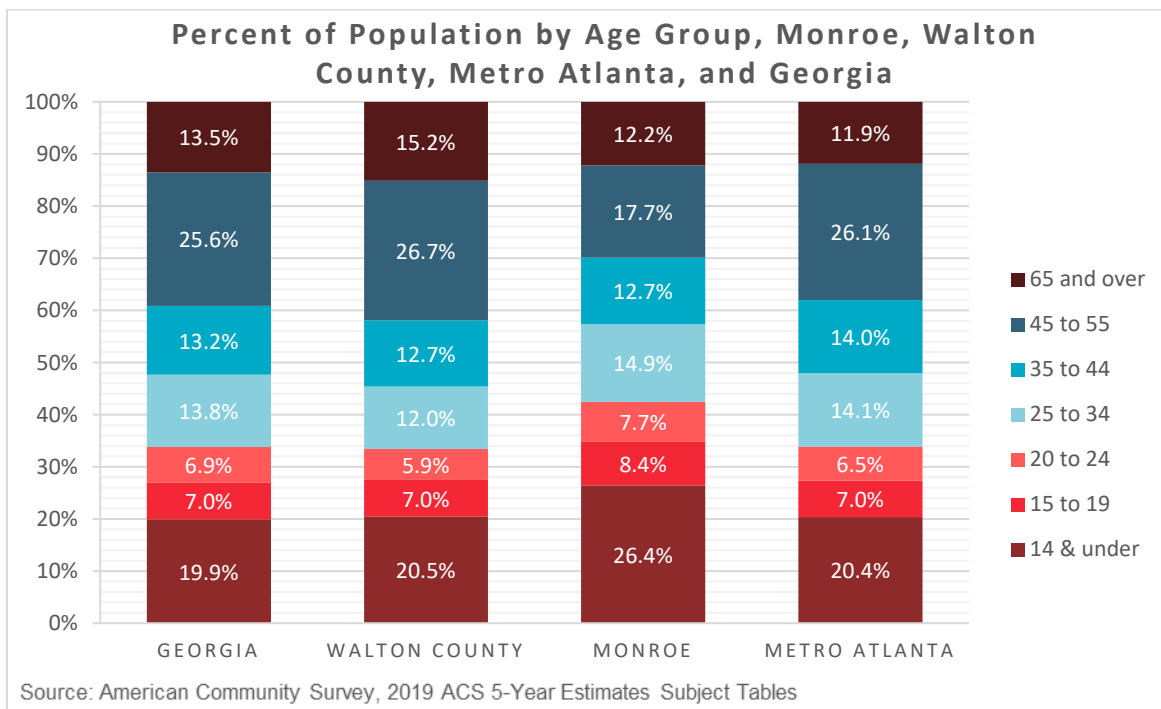
	2010	2020	2025	2030	2035	2040	2045
<b>Georgia</b>	9,687,653	10,707,203	11,335,283	11,979,787	12,496,324	13,006,562	13,479,451
<b>Walton County</b>	83,768	96,673	106,021	118,235	125,822	136,642	147,134
<b>City of Monroe</b>	13,234	14,928	16,888	21,688	23,079	25,064	26,988

*Source: 2010 & 2020 US Census, Governor's Office of Planning and Budget, Series 2020, Hall Consulting Calculations*

## AGE

Composition by age group varies throughout the region. Monroe has significantly more children under 19 and young adults under 25 than Walton County, Georgia, or Metro Atlanta. Walton County has the highest proportion of residents in retirement or nearing retirement. The disproportionately low number of older adults in Monroe may indicate a shortage of housing options available to meet their needs. As residents age they may seek options more suitable for older adults. During the public participation process, residents cited the need to provide amenities to retain young adults and housing appropriate for first time homeowners and older adults.

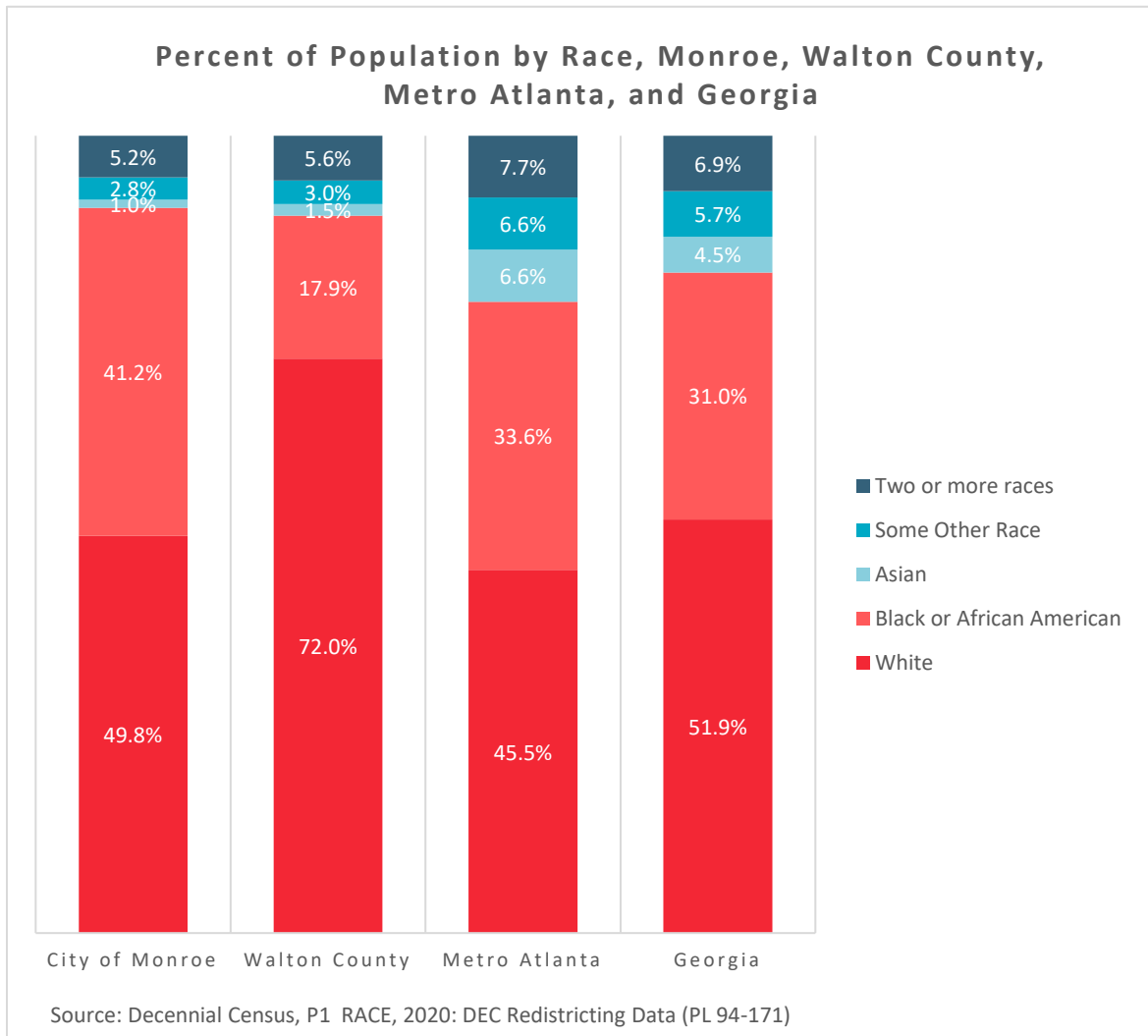
FIGURE 3: PERCENT OF POPULATION BY AGE GROUP



RACE AND ETHNICITY

White residents make up half of the population of Monroe and black residents make up 41%. About 9% of Monroe’s population is other than white or black, significantly less than Georgia and metropolitan Atlanta. Walton County has a much higher proportion of white residents than Monroe, metropolitan Atlanta, and the state.

FIGURE 4: PERCENT OF POPULATION BY RACE



## INCOME

Households in the City of Monroe tend to be in lower income categories than Walton County and Metro Atlanta. More than half earn less than \$35,000 per year and nearly 40% earn less than \$25,000. Residents in workshops and interviews noted that generational poverty is a serious problem in Monroe.

TABLE 2: INCOME

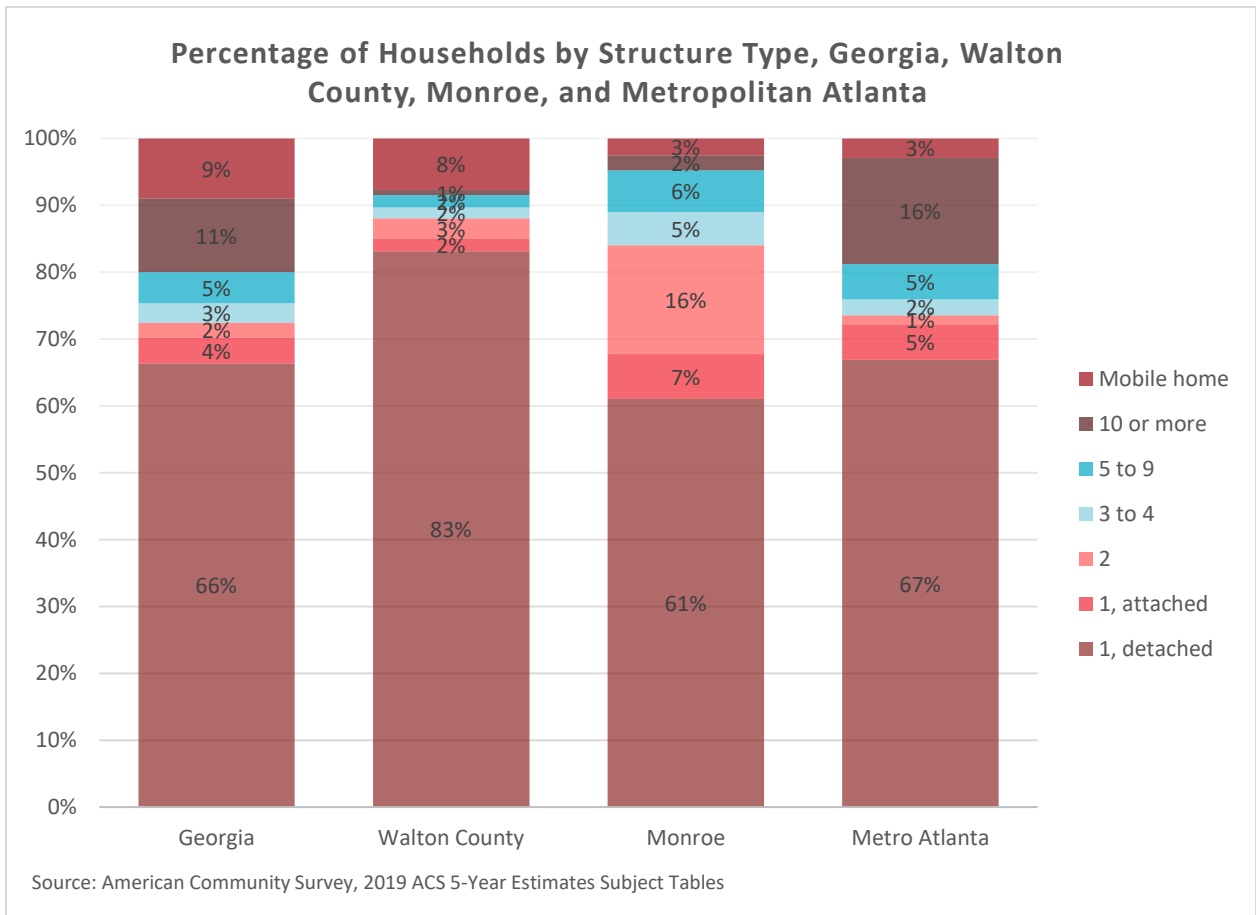
	<i>Georgia</i>	<i>Walton County</i>	<i>Monroe</i>
Median household income (in 2019 dollars)	\$58,700	\$61,599	\$31,740
Per capita income in past 12 months (in 2019 dollars)	\$31,067	\$27,889	\$15,960
Persons in poverty, percent	14.0%	11.4%	30.9%

Source: Census Quick Facts 2015-2019

## HOUSING

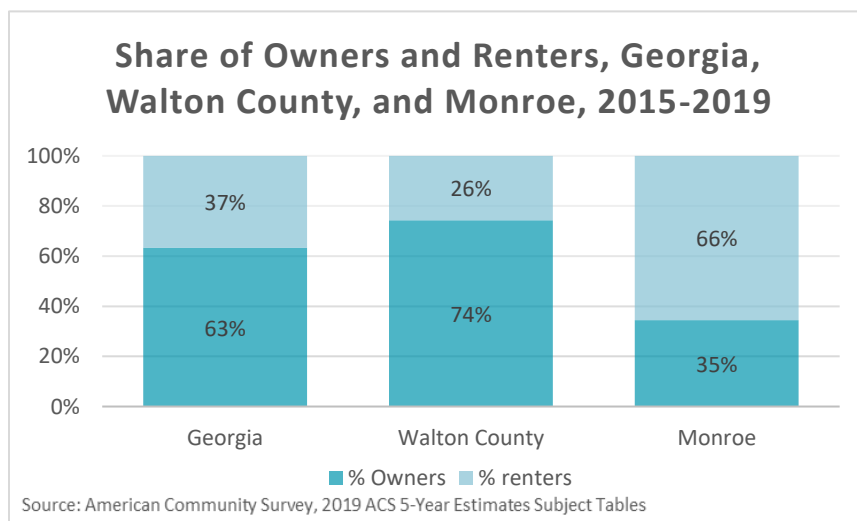
Single family, detached homes are the most common housing type in Monroe (61%). This is significantly lower than the percentage in Walton County (83%) but is fairly consistent with the percentage in the State of Georgia and Metropolitan Atlanta (66% and 67% respectively). Interestingly, Monroe has an above average percentage of attached single family homes and duplexes. Single family attached means a housing unit connected to another housing unit, generally with a shared wall, which provides living space for one household or family. Attached houses are considered single-family houses as long as they are not divided into more than one housing unit and they have an independent outside entrance. A single-family house is contained within walls extending from the basement (or the ground floor if there is no basement) to the roof. Townhouses, rowhouses, and duplexes are considered single-family attached housing units, as long as there is no household living above another one within the walls extending from the basement to the roof to separate the units.

FIGURE 5: PERCENTAGE OF HOUSEHOLDS BY STRUCTURE TYPE



Between 2015 and 2019, nearly three quarters of homes in Monroe were rentals. Walton County, on the other hand, has a 75% owner-occupancy rate.

FIGURE 6: SHARE OF OWNERS AND RENTERS



The typical home value of homes in Monroe is \$278,105. This value is seasonally adjusted and only includes the middle price tier of homes. Monroe home values have gone up 31.8% over the past year and 83% since 2016. Walton County has also seen more growth in home values than the state as a whole.

TABLE 3: HOME VALUES

	<i>Georgia</i>	<i>Walton County</i>	<i>Monroe</i>
<i>Home Value December 2021</i>	\$281,000	\$319,000	\$278,000
<i>Home Value December 2016</i>	\$169,000	\$181,000	\$152,000
<i>% change in home value 2016 vs 2021</i>	66%	76%	83%

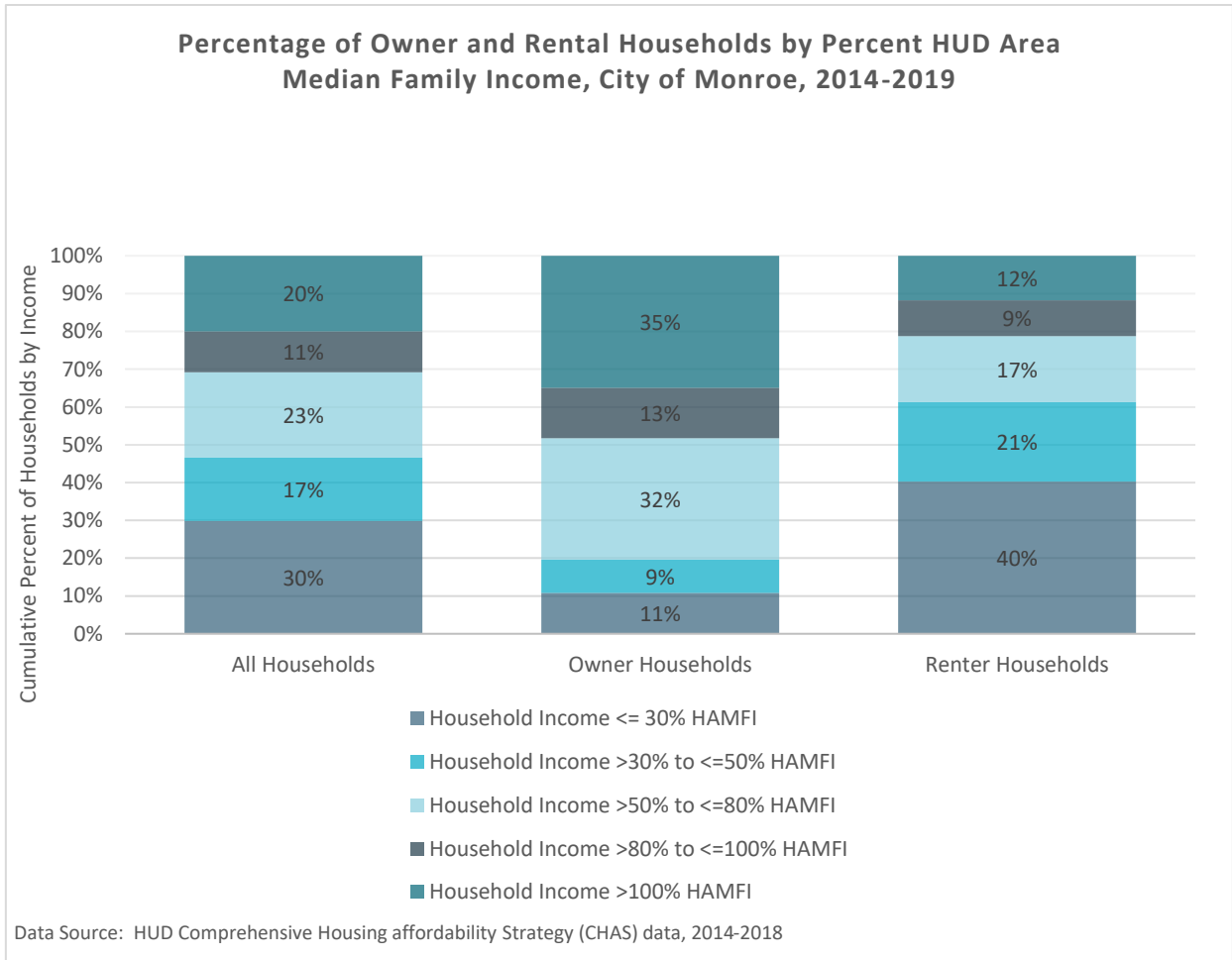
*Source: Census Quickfacts and Zillow Market Overviews, <https://www.zillow.com/monroe-ga/home-values/>, retrieved 1/28/2022*

## HOUSING

Several issues were identified upon reviewing recent housing supply data for the City of Monroe. Typically, housing studies utilize data from the US Census American Community Survey (ACS). The ACS provides annual estimates on variables such as tenure, housing type, number of units in building, etc. For a small city like Monroe, it is necessary to utilize the ACS 5-year estimate data. However, this data shows some inconsistencies with reality in the city. Specifically, the ACS 5-year estimate says that the number of housing units declined from 2014 to 2018 which is not true. As such, these numbers may be unreliable, so this report is supplemented with information from HUD Comprehensive Housing Affordability Strategy (CHAS) data.

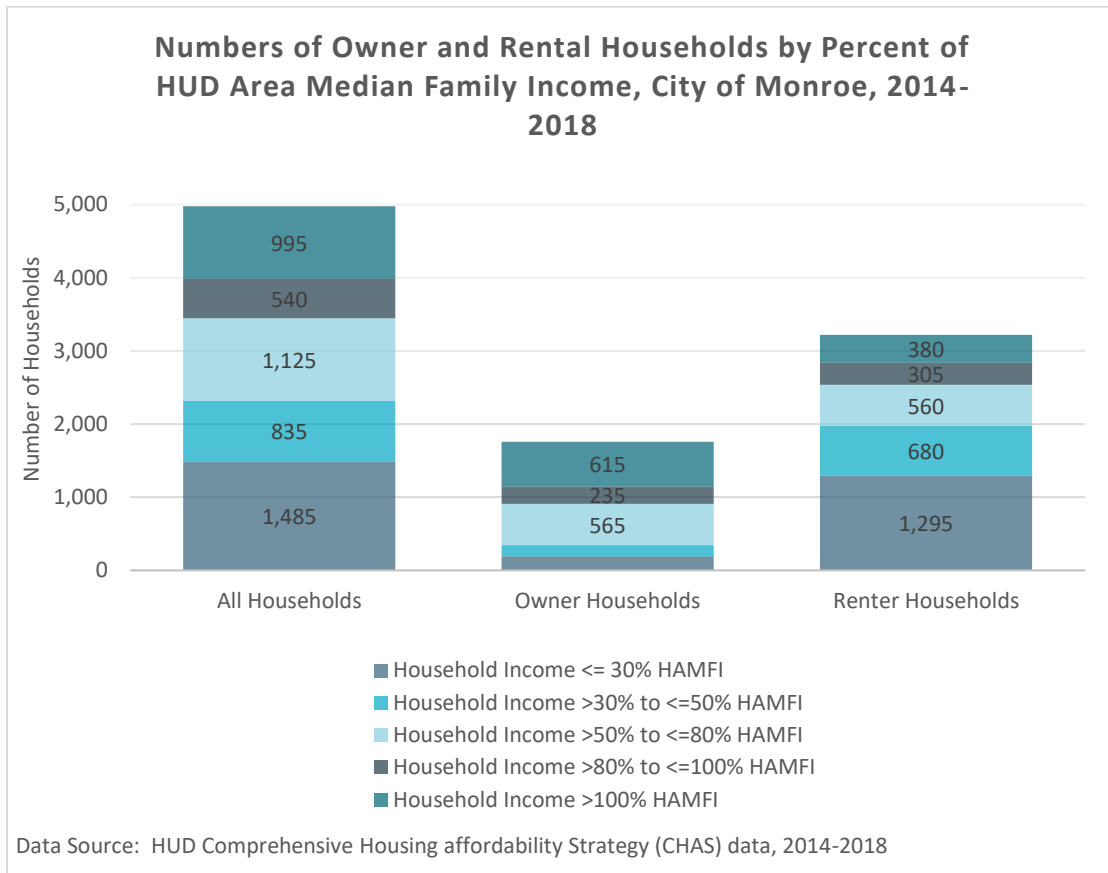
40% of renters in Monroe have incomes lower than 30% HAMFI. HAMFI stands for “HUD Area Median Family Income” (HAMFI). This is the median family income calculated by HUD to determine Fair Market Rents (FMRs) and income limits for HUD programs. 88% of renters and 80% of all households fall below HAMFI. While homeowners are doing better than renters, nearly half all of homeowners have incomes below 80% HAMFI.

FIGURE 7: PERCENTAGE OF OWNER AND RENTAL HOUSEHOLDS BY PERCENT HUD AREA MEDIAN FAMILY INCOME



Most households in Monroe rent their homes (64.7%) and a lower percentage are owners (35.4%). Renters outnumber owners in the lower income categories, while homeowners are more likely to fall in the mid to higher categories and to earn more than 100% HAMFI. Although homeowners account for only 35.4% of households, about one and half times as many owner households as renter households earn more than 100% HAMFI. (615 and 380 households respectively)

FIGURE 8: NUMBERS OF OWNER AND RENTAL HOUSEHOLDS BY PERCENT OF HUD AREA MEDIAN FAMILY INCOME



More than half of the households in Monroe are cost burdened or severely cost burdened. HUD defines cost burdened as monthly housing costs (including utilities) exceeding 30% of monthly income and severe cost burdened as monthly housing costs (including utilities) exceeding 50% of monthly income. A quarter of renters are cost burdened and more than a third of renters are severely housing cost burdened in Monroe. While renters are more likely to be cost burdened than owners, more than a third of homeowners are also cost burdened or severely cost burdened.

TABLE 4: HOUSING COST BURDEN

Housing Cost Burden	Total	Owner	Renter
No Burden	48%	64%	40%
Cost Burden	24%	22%	25%
Severe Cost Burden	27%	14%	34%
Cost Burden not available	1%	0%	1%
<b>Total</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>100%</b>

Data Source: HUD Comprehensive Housing affordability Strategy (CHAS) data, 2014-2018

## HOUSING AND POVERTY NEXUS

The federal Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) defines an "affordable dwelling" as one that a household can obtain for 30 percent or less of its income. But this varies from city to city.

For example: a household is considered "low-income" if it makes less than 80 percent of the median income in the local area (this is called Area Median Income, or AMI). So, by this definition, a dwelling is considered "affordable" for low-income families if it costs less than 24 percent of the area median income.

Participants in the public engagement effort suggested housing quality and maintenance may be a bigger problem than rent. The primary problem is housing quality. The rent may be affordable, but with the addition of utilities, the cost of housing is too high. Utility rates are not the main issue. The cost of utilities in Monroe is comparable to similar cities in northeast Georgia. The high utility burden is caused by low quality, poorly maintained housing. For example, a leaky pipe or toilet can cost a renter hundreds of dollars a month.

Housing quality is part of the problem, but poverty is likely a bigger issue. The median gross income for households in Monroe is \$33,097 a year, or \$2,758 a month. The median rent for the city is \$735 a month.

Households who pay more than thirty percent of their gross income are considered to be Rent Overburdened. In Monroe, a household making less than \$2,450 a month would be considered overburdened when renting an apartment at or above the median rent. 50% of households who rent are overburdened in Monroe. This overburden does not include the additional cost of utilities.

TABLE 5: MONROE, GA AFFORDABLE HOUSING SNAPSHOT<sup>2</sup>

Total Affordable Apartment Properties	10
Total Low Income Apartments	613
Total Housing Units with Rental Assistance	372
Percentage of Housing Units Occupied By Renters	63.18%
Average Renter Household Size	2.64
Average Household Size	2.76
Median Household Income	\$33,097 ±\$4,278
Median Rent	\$735 ±\$39
Percentage Of Renters Overburdened	50% ± 9.67pp
Total Population	13,476

<sup>2</sup> Source: <https://affordablehousingonline.com/housing-search/Georgia/Monroe>, 4/8/2022



## EDUCATION

Athens Technical College operates a campus in Monroe. They offer degree, diploma, and certificate of credit programs in various fields of study, as well as community and continuing education classes, adult literacy services, and career development assistance.

Monroe is served by the Walton County School District. (WCSD) The WCSD serves around 14,000 Pre-K through 12th grade students in 15 schools. There are 3 clusters each with 1 high school, 1 middle school and 3 elementary schools.

Monroe is served by the Monroe Area Cluster. Monroe Area High School was named amongst the top high schools in the nation by U.S. News and World Report. At this time, the Walton County School District has no plans of building a new school or cluster and has space in all of the schools to accommodate growth for the next several years. The district plans to conduct a professional study prior to determining where any future schools or clusters would need to be located.

Other k-12 schools include Monroe Country Day School and the George Walton Academy.



## POPULATION, HOUSING, & EDUCATION RECOMMENDATIONS

### *Become a GICH Alumni Community*

The Georgia Initiative for Community Housing (“Initiative” or “GICH”) offers communities a three-year program of collaboration and technical assistance related to housing and community development. The objective of the Initiative is to help communities create and launch a locally based plan to meet their housing needs. Monroe participated in the program from 2016-2019. The GICH team’s involvement sparked a citywide conversation surrounding what types of housing are needed most in the community and which practical solutions should be considered to address distressed properties. GICH created Monroe’s annual Housing Expo, providing an avenue to bring together those interested in problem solving for the future. The first local housing exposition drew over 200 attendees interested in homeownership opportunities. The team also facilitated the removal of 25 abandoned or dilapidated properties and worked closely with a Low-Income Housing Tax Credit developer to build a senior living development in the historic mill district of Monroe.

Becoming a certified GICH Alumni Community would allow the city to build on its success and to continue receiving special consideration on DCA program applications. The GICH Alumni Certification is valid for two years and Monroe’s has expired. The city will need to create a GICH housing and poverty team and submit a certification application every two years if they wish to remain eligible for the competitive advantage afforded to GICH communities on Low Income Housing Tax Credit (LIHTC) and Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) applications from the Georgia Department of Community Affairs (DCA).

*Diversify Housing stock through form based codes*

A balanced inventory of housing in terms of unit type, cost, tenure, and style promotes a range of housing options that are necessary to support an economically and socially diverse community. Form-based codes promote a wide range of housing options, including some that are affordable by design, many of which may not be permitted under conventional, density-based zoning that often limits unit and/or house sizes. Form-based codes create attractive places where people want to live, work and visit. Because there is a shortage of these kinds of places, the market tends to value them highly. In order to enable people at all income levels to enjoy the benefits of these highly valued places, Monroe must proactively adopt policies and programs that ensure this diversity is retained. Form based codes can support these policies, for example by allowing developers to increase density in exchange for affordable units.

*Renter Rights Programs*

Launch a renters’ rights education campaign that will help Monroe’s renters understand their basic rights outlined in recently passed state law HB 34618 which protects renters reporting maintenance issues and punishes landlords who try to evict them or unnecessarily raise rents. To remain neutral, this campaign should be led by GICH participants, or the Land Trust explained in the next section. Atlanta Legal Aid may be able to assist in this effort.

*Facilitate Creation of a Land Trust*

The city should explore the feasibility of a helping coordinate the creation of a Community Land Trust (CLT). CLTs are nonprofit organizations—governed by a board of CLT residents, community residents and public representatives—that provide lasting community assets and permanently affordable housing opportunities for families and communities. CLTs can develop rural and urban agriculture projects, commercial spaces to serve local communities, affordable rental and cooperative housing projects, and conserve land or urban green spaces. However, the heart of their work is the creation homes that remain permanently affordable, providing successful homeownership opportunities for generations of lower income families.

Community Land banks can facilitate the restoration of properties that have code violations, title complications, or have been foreclosed on. Typical reasons to create a land bank include large inventories of abandoned/vacant property with little market value, chronic code violations, title problems, and the need for more local control.

Land Trusts often provide education programs on things like budgeting, water conservation, renters rights, and other programs that can empower low-income people and help lift them out of poverty. The Athens Land Trust is a model of a successful land trust and is willing to provide guidance to people in Monroe who are interested in learning more about CLTs.

*Develop Pre-Approved Accessory Development Unit (ADU) Designs*

An ADU is an additional, self-contained dwelling on a typical single-family lot. It can be attached, such as in the lower level of the main dwelling or detached at the rear of the property. These smaller units represent the “missing middle,” filling the gap between single-family homes and multi-unit dwellings. Building on the momentum of the recently passed ADU ordinance in Monroe – the city should consider pre-approving several ADU designs that comply with city codes and market to homeowners and builders to create more ‘missing middle’ housing. Because the ordinance requires

one of the two properties to be owner-occupied, there is a built-in incentive for the ADUs to be maintained alongside the existing property. Many cities in the western United States offer pre-approved housing plans and some metro Atlanta municipalities are in the process of developing them.

### *Promote Education Opportunities*

Many residents of Monroe are unaware of the opportunities available at their Athens Tech campus. For example, Athens Tech has a 100% placement rate in its nursing program and graduates of its Machine Tools Certificate Program can expect starting pay of \$22/hour and \$29/hour after completing the 2-year degree program. There is an opportunity to lift residents out of poverty through education. Athens Tech is already working within the Walton County School District, but the school still faces a negative public stigma. The city should work with the school to provide free or low cost advertising through its publications, water bills, and other outlets.

### *Support Walton Works*

The purpose of Walton Works is to increase awareness of local employment opportunities for Walton County resident and to strengthen the workforce pipeline for local industries. They offer workforce programs that help local residents connect with jobs. Strengthening the impact of Walton Works within the City of Monroe could help raise residents out of poverty.

### *Encourage Infill Development*

Infill development converts once empty and dilapidated lots into residential developments. Focusing on creating infill affordable housing allows more accessibility to jobs and other resources for residents who may not have cars. Infill development occurs in existing urban areas, meaning that it is easy to integrate these new development into transportation and other infrastructure systems. Many people that would be living in affordable housing have limited access to cars, so being far from the urban center where a high concentration of jobs are located is an equity issue with greenfield development. Infill development allows residents to have easy access to existing transportation systems and promotes walkability, which is beneficial to those who may not have the financial means to cover the costs associated with owning a vehicle such as fuel costs, registration, and reserved parking, which can come at a premium in urban areas. In broader terms, infill development allows more people of various socioeconomic backgrounds to participate in the local economy.

### *Systematic Code Enforcement*

The city should replace its current complaint-based code enforcement system with a systematic code enforcement system. There are a variety of ways to do this. For example, the city could be divided into zones and each zone is inspected on a rotating basis. Residents and landlords would be given ample notice to address any issue before the inspection. The purpose is not to issue citations, instead it is to encourage compliance.

## POPULATION, HOUSING, & EDUCATION – GOALS AND POLICIES

**Goal:** Provide housing opportunities that ensure Monroe is a lifetime, multigenerational community for residents across the socioeconomic spectrum.

**Policy**

- Encourage more diverse housing types other than single-family detached homes to attract new residents and to accommodate the changing needs of the town's population. These include multi-family homes such as townhomes, in-law suites, apartments, condominiums, duplexes, triplexes, live/work units, and accessory dwelling units.
- Provide opportunities for affordable home ownership by allowing a diverse stock of housing intended for individual ownership such as condominiums, townhomes, cottages, and bungalows.
- Encourage mixed use developments that combine housing with office, retail, commercial, and/or industrial.
- Encourage infill development.

**Goal:** Address substandard housing

**Policy**

- Ensure no resident of Monroe has to live in unsafe or unsanitary conditions.
- Empower low income residents with information on renter's rights and other support.
- Support programs for weatherization, water conservation, and other efficiency programs to lower utility costs.
- Addressing substandard housing should be of equal or higher priority than providing new low-income housing.
- More robust enforcement of the existing code of Ordinances to help ensure higher-quality housing and better living conditions.

**Goal:** Address local poverty

**Policy**

- Work with Athens Technical College and Walton Works to implement programs targeting local poverty through workforce development and education.
- Addressing local poverty should be of equal concern to the GICH team as housing issues.

# TRANSPORTATION

The development of the Comprehensive Plan includes a look at current transportation conditions in order to identify potential projects that address existing and future transportation needs. The Walton County Comprehensive Transportation Plan (CTP) was completed and approved in December 2021. That plan addresses all modes of transportation. This study will evaluate many modes including bicycle and pedestrian, freight and the transportation infrastructure serving each mode. The plan is built upon existing work efforts to date and provide a mechanism for guiding future transportation decision-making. The priority projects that were identified in the Walton County CTP are not consistent with the City’s priorities. The city’s priority road projects are included in this section’s Goals and Policies.

## ROAD NETWORK

The City of Monroe’s Transportation network consists of a combination of Arterials (SR 11, SR 78) Collectors, and Local classifications. Traffic Counts from the Georgia Department of Transportation Average Annual Daily Traffic (AADT) for 2018-2020 are included in the table below. Also included is the percent of truck traffic on those corridors. Currently, SR 11 goes directly through the historic downtown and then US 78/SR 10 north of downtown and SR 138 to the west.

**Arterial Roads** – Main corridors where the main function is traffic movement.  
**Collector Roads** – Roads that collect traffic from other streets to other collectors, arterials, or highways.  
**Local Roads** – primary access from properties that connect to collectors. Usually have low traffic and low speeds.

Figure 10: *Future AADT if No Roadway Improvements Were Built* graphically illustrates the existing road network followed by the levels of traffic for existing AADT followed by a graphic showing the increase in traffic in the future if no improvements are built.

TABLE 6: ROAD NETWORK WITHIN CITY LIMITS

Corridor	Classification	AADT	Truck Percentage
<b>SR 11</b>	Principal Arterial - Urban	8,800 - 16,300	7%-14%
<b>US 78/SR 10</b>	Principal Arterial – Freeway/Expressway	20,500 - 22,400	9%-17%
<b>SR 138</b>	Principal Arterial – Urban	21,400	8%
<b>Business SR 10</b>	Principal Arterial – Urban	4,520 - 16,900	4%-5%
<b>Breedlove Drive</b>	Minor Arterial	4,520	-
<b>Alcove Street</b>	Minor Arterial	3,850	-
<b>Pinecrest Drive/McDaniel Street</b>	Minor Arterial	4250 - 5,390	-
<b>East Church Street</b>	Minor Arterial	4,510 - 8380	3%-4%
<b>South Madison Street</b>	Minor Arterial	4,080 - 4,600	-
<b>East Marable Street</b>	Minor Arterial	4,280 - 5,520	-

FIGURE 9: EXISTING AADT

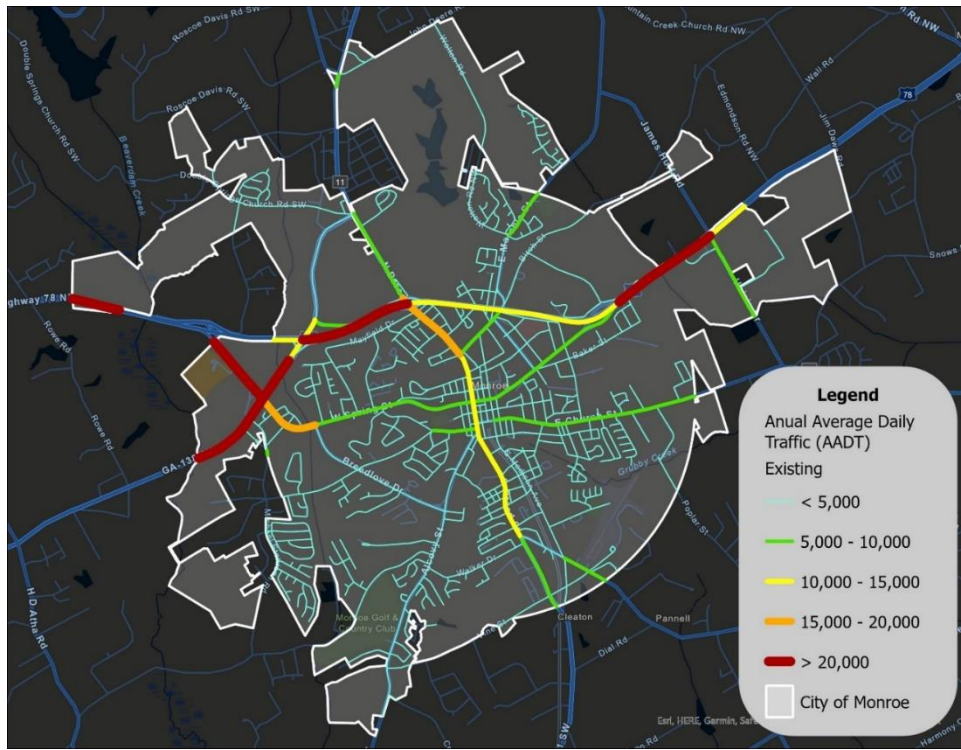
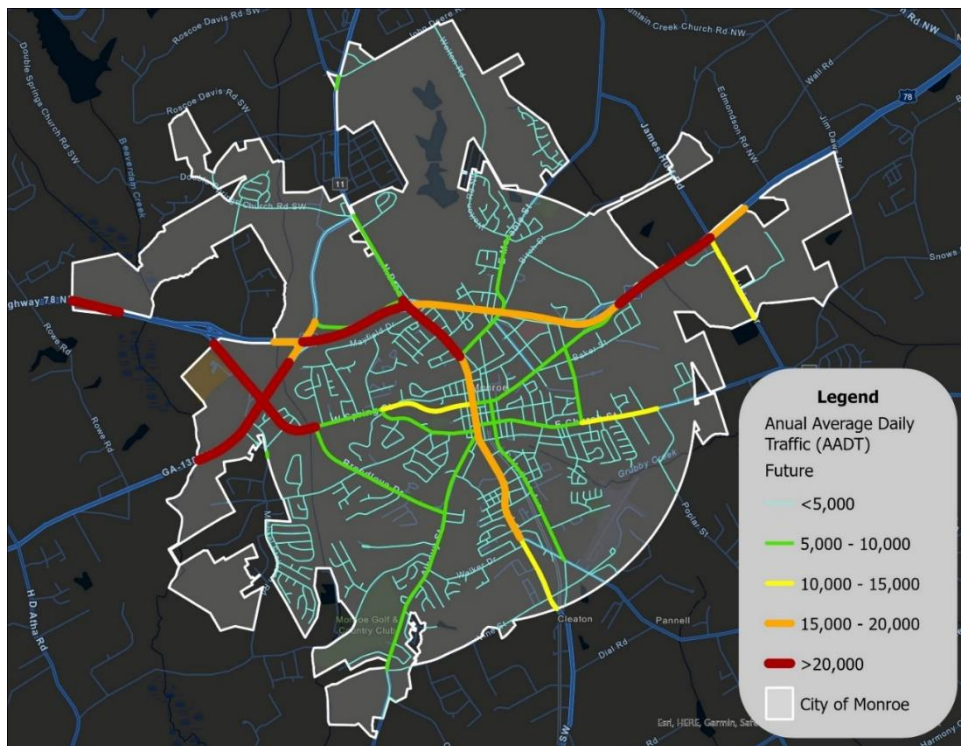


FIGURE 10: FUTURE AADT IF NO ROADWAY IMPROVEMENTS WERE BUILT



Safety is a major factor in the development and implementation of transportation projects. The following graphic shows the crash density within the city limits. The highest concentration of crashes are at the SR 138 intersection with MLK and Business 10/West Spring Street, the downtown area, and on SR 78 at Unisia Drive.

FIGURE 11: CRASH DENSITY



## PEDESTRIAN SAFETY

According to the 2018-2020 Georgia Pedestrian Safety Action Plan through the Georgia Department of Transportation. “From 2011–2015, 17,336 vehicle-pedestrian crashes occurred in Georgia. Almost 80% of pedestrian crashes resulted in an injury and 5% resulted in a fatality. Pedestrian fatalities rose sharply during this time period, accounting for an average of 14% of all traffic fatalities in Georgia. The highest share (44%) of vehicle-pedestrian crash incidents occurred on state-owned arterial roads in urbanized areas.”<sup>3</sup>

<sup>3</sup> [http://www.dot.ga.gov/DriveSmart/Travel/BikePed/5201%20ga%20bikes%20SAP%20report\\_3.pdf](http://www.dot.ga.gov/DriveSmart/Travel/BikePed/5201%20ga%20bikes%20SAP%20report_3.pdf)





**PARKING**

Based on the current population and business density, there are an adequate number of public parking spaces within the downtown core. However, as the population increases, there may be a need for a parking management plan in the future.

FIGURE 13: DOWNTOWN MONROE PARKING MAP



## TRAILS

There are no existing designated multi-use trails that were identified within the City of Monroe. The 2010 Northeast Georgia Plan for Bicycling and Walking mapped a future network of potential projects and facilities which is shown in the figure below. In the 2021 Walton County CTP (page 24), “the active transportation assessment identified corridors with existing or potential cycling usage and recommended signage to enhance safety for the active transportation users. Regional trails as well as miscellaneous funding for local sidewalk needs (sidewalk gaps near schools or complete street improvements within municipal areas) were also considered.” Trails were also included in the 2019 Young Gamechangers Report as a strategy to link neighborhoods, parks, and services.

FIGURE 14: NEGA PLAN POTENTIAL TRAILS

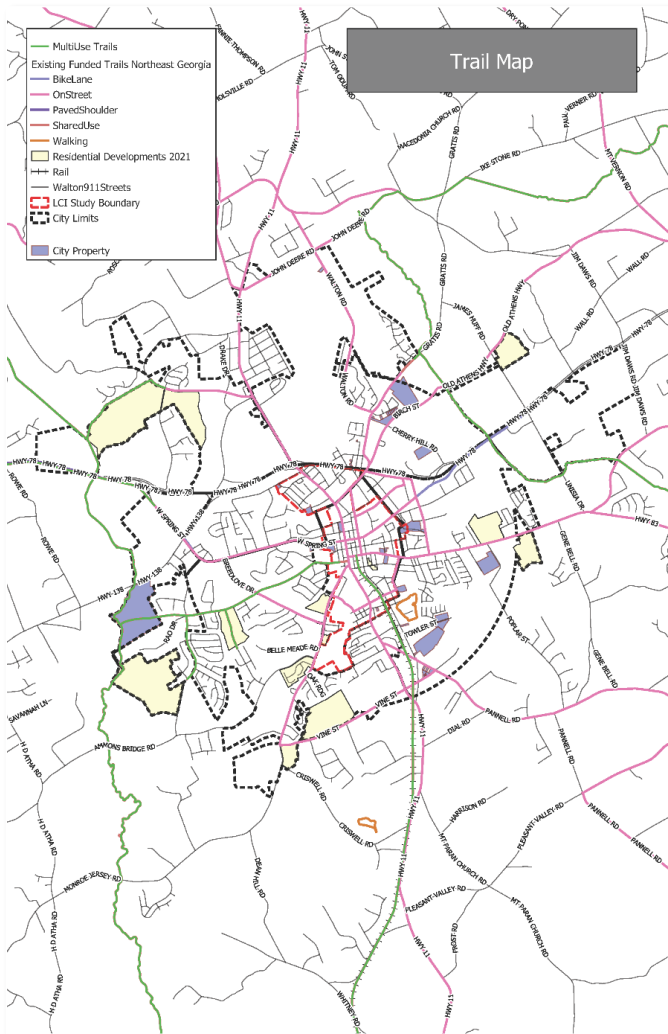
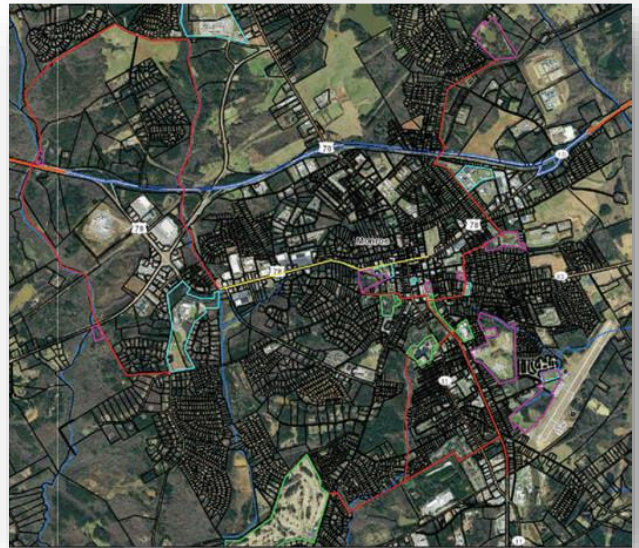


FIGURE 15: YOUNG GAMECHANGERS TRAILS

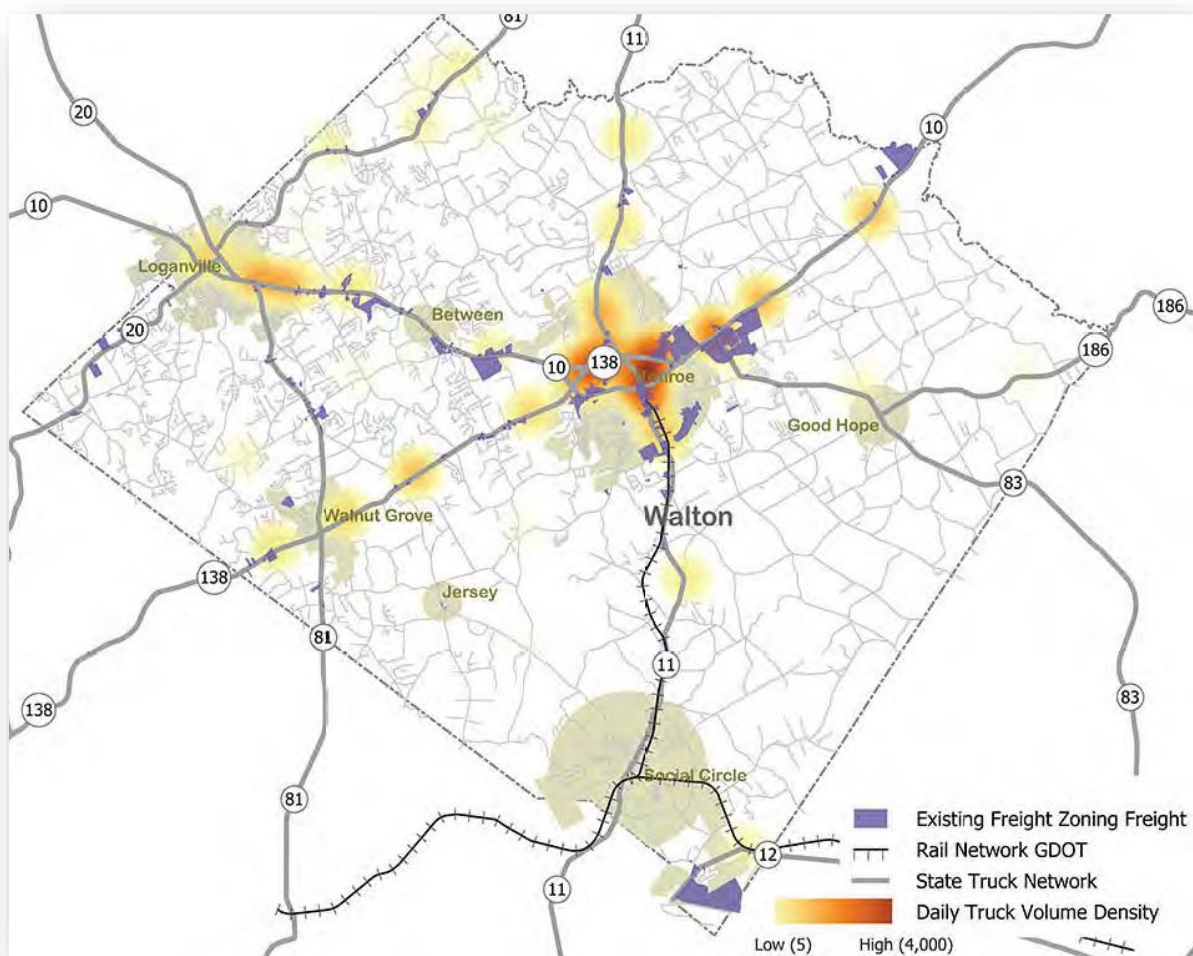


**FREIGHT**

The CTP mapped the 2019 truck volume data and developed a truck traffic density heat map shown below.<sup>4</sup> The CTP lists several freight related projects as a priority including:

- SR 11 at Bold Springs Road (intersection improvements)
- SR 138 from SR 81 to US 78 (operational improvements analysis and concept development)
- SR 11 from US 78 to Barrow County Line (concept development and operational analysis)
- SR 83 from 1,750 feet south of US 78 to 3,000 feet south of US 78 (widening)

FIGURE 16: EXISTING FREIGHT NETWORK



<sup>4</sup> Walton County Comprehensive Transportation Plan, December 2021, pg 18

**ROAD IMPROVEMENT PROJECTS**

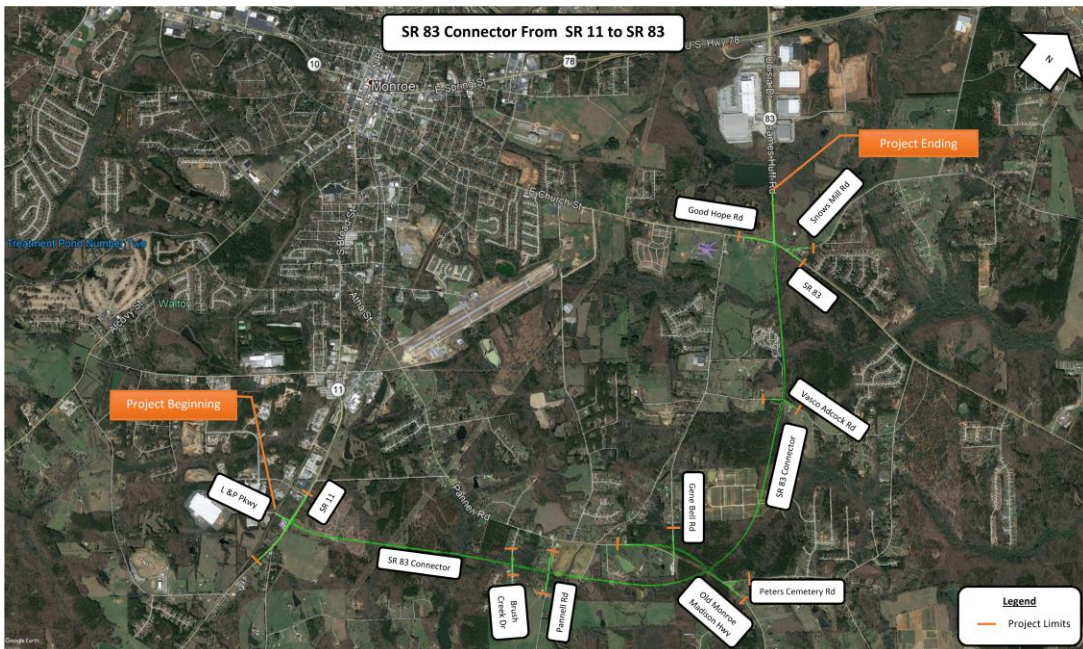
The Georgia Department of Transportation currently has five projects programmed within the city limits. These are projects that have funding associated with them and are in various stages of either planning, concept, preliminary design, final design, or ROW (right of way) acquisition .

**TABLE 7: PROGRAMMED PROJECTS WITHIN THE CITY OF MONROE LIMITS**

GDOT Programmed Project Number	Type	Location	Status
0000411	Bypass	SR 83 CONN FROM SR 11 TO SR 83	ROW and utility location
0015421	Ramp	SR 138 @ SR 10/US 78	Final Design
0015678	Ramp	SR 10BU @ SR 10	ROW complete
0016630	Bicycle/Ped. Facility	SR 11; HIGHLAND AVE & N LUMPKIN ST @ 3 LOCS IN MONROE	ROW
0017239	Bridges	SR 10/US 78 @ ALCOVY RIVER	Concept

The bypass, the largest programmed and needed project, is currently in design refinement and right-of-way. It is expected to Let in June 2022. Once the bypass is completed, truck traffic through the downtown corridor will be minimal.

**FIGURE 17: BYPASS ROUTE FROM GDOT CONCEPT REPORT**



## AVIATION

The Cy Nunnally Memorial Airport, formerly known as the Monroe-Walton Airport, is a public airport located on the southeast side of the city limits. The airport is situated on 170 acres and is owned and operated by the City of Monroe. The airport accommodates a variety of aviation-related activities that include recreational flying, corporate/business jets, ultra-lights, experimental aircraft, gliders, and skydiving. The Georgia Statewide Aviation System Plan prepared by the Georgia Department of Transportation Aviation Division includes the airport's report card. The following improvements and estimated costs are proposed for the airport on the following pages.<sup>5</sup>

FIGURE 18: AERIAL VIEW OF THE AIRPORT PROPERTY



<sup>5</sup> [https://www.monroega.com/sites/default/files/fileattachments/monroe-walton\\_county\\_airport/page/561/gsasp\\_monroe\\_report.pdf](https://www.monroega.com/sites/default/files/fileattachments/monroe-walton_county_airport/page/561/gsasp_monroe_report.pdf)

CITY OF MONROE COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

TABLE 8: MONROE-WALTON COUNTY AIRPORT REPORT CARD

Monroe-Walton County Airport Report Card					
AIRPORT NAME: Monroe-Walton County Airport			CITY: Monroe, Georgia		
COUNTY: Walton County			AIRPORT CODE: D73		
Monroe-Walton County Airport Report Card					
Actions Needed to Meet Facility and Service Objectives					
	Actual	Minimum Objective	Objective Met	Improvement Needed	Estimated Cost
Runway Length	5,000 Feet	5,000 Feet	Yes	-	-
Runway Width	75 Feet	100 Feet	No	Widen Runway 25 Feet	\$3,500,000
Taxiway	Full Parallel	Full Parallel	Yes	-	-
Primary Runway PCI	88	70 or Greater	Yes	-	-
Primary Runway Safety Area	300 Feet x 150 Feet	300 Feet x 150 Feet	Yes	-	-
Runway to Taxiway Separation	240 Feet	240 Feet	Yes	-	-
Lighting System					
- Runway	MIRL	MIRL	Yes	-	-
- Taxiway	None	MITL	No	Install MITL	\$470,000
Approach Type	RNAV (GPS)	Non-Precision	Yes	-	-
Weather Reporting	AWOS	AWOS or ASOS	Yes	-	-
Navigational Aids					
- Rotating Beacon	Rotating Beacon	Rotating Beacon	Yes	-	-
- VGSI	PAPIs/PAPIs	PAPIs	Yes	-	-
- Segmented Circle	Segmented Circle	Segmented Circle	Yes	-	-
- Wind Cone	Wind Cone	Wind Cone	Yes	-	-
Airfield Signage	Guidance	Hold Position, Location, and Guidance	No	Add RW Hold Position and Location Signs	\$160,000
Fencing	Full Perimeter	Full Perimeter	Yes	-	-
Hangared Aircraft Storage	26	60% of Based Aircraft Fleet	Yes	-	-
Apron Parking/Storage	32	40% of Based Aircraft Fleet Plus an Add'l 50% for Transient Aircraft	Yes	-	-
General Aviation Terminal/Administration	268 Sq Ft w/Restrooms and Pilots' Lounge	1,500 Square Feet of Public Use Space Including Restrooms, Conference Area, and Pilots' Lounge	No	Add 1,212 Sq Ft of Terminal Space and Conference Area*	\$850,000
General Aviation Auto Parking	40	1 Space for Each Based Aircraft Plus an Add'l 50% for Visitors/Employees	No	Add 21 Auto Parking Spaces	\$150,000
Fuel	AvGas and Jet A	AvGas and/or Jet Fuel	Yes	-	-
FBO	Full Service	Full Service	Yes	-	-
Maintenance	Full Service	Available	Yes	-	-
Rental Cars	None	Available	No	Offer Availability to Rental Cars	No fixed cost necessary
<b>Estimated SASP Facility/Service Project Cost</b>					<b>\$5,130,000</b>

\* Estimated project cost is derived from the Airport's recent 5-year CIP.

**CITY OF MONROE COMPREHENSIVE PLAN**

Monroe-Walton County Airport Report Card					
Runway Protection Zone Mitigation Projects					
Runway End	Estimated Land Cost	Estimated Residential/Commercial Property Cost	Estimated Road Cost	Estimated Railroad Cost	Total Estimated Cost
– RW 03	\$20,000	\$2,125,000	\$279,091	No Action	\$2,424,091
– RW 21	\$900	No Action	No Action	No Action	\$900
<b>Estimated RPZ Mitigation Project Costs</b>					<b>\$2,424,991</b>
Major Pavement Maintenance Projects Planned					
	Project Description				Estimated Cost
Runway 03/21	Major Maintenance & Rehabilitation (e.g. Mill & Overlay, Overlay, or Reconstruction)*				\$760,000
Runway 03/21	Global Preventative (e.g. Surface Treatment to Entire Pavement)				\$83,860
Runway 03/21	Local Preventative (e.g. Crack Sealing or Patching)				\$16,045
Taxiways	Major Maintenance & Rehabilitation (e.g. Mill & Overlay, Overlay, or Reconstruction)				\$48,269
Taxiways	Global Preventative (e.g. Surface Treatment to Entire Pavement)				\$49,317
Taxiways	Local Preventative (e.g. Crack Sealing or Patching)				\$236
Apron	Major Maintenance & Rehabilitation (e.g. Mill & Overlay, Overlay, or Reconstruction)				\$1,095,078
Apron	Global Preventative (e.g. Surface Treatment to Entire Pavement)				\$14,262
Apron	Local Preventative (e.g. Crack Sealing or Patching)				\$2,657
<b>Estimated Major Pavement Project Costs</b>					<b>\$2,069,724</b>
Capital Improvement Plan (CIP) Projects Planned 2018-2022					
Program Year	Project Type	Project Description			Estimated Cost
2018	Apron	Design New Terminal Area East Side			\$150,000
2018	Hangars	Design and Construct 1-8 Unit T-Hangar and Taxilanes			\$375,000
2018	Safety	Design and Construct Part 77 Obstruction Removal			\$80,000
2019	Apron	Construct New Terminal Area			\$900,000
2020	Hangars	Construct 2 Corporate Hangars			\$640,000
2020	Fuel	Short EA/Jet A Fuel Tank			\$120,000
2022	Hangars	Construct 2 Corporate Hangars			\$680,000
<b>Estimated CIP Project Costs</b>					<b>\$2,945,000</b>
<b>Total Estimated Project Costs</b>					<b>\$12,569,715</b>

\* Estimated project cost is derived from the Airport's recent 5-year CIP.

## TRANSPORTATION GOALS AND POLICIES

The city has additional priorities of transportation improvements including:

- **SR 83 Truck Connector Route (GDOT PI 0000411)** – new location roadway programmed by GDOT and in final design. This is the biggest priority for the city.
- **SR 138 at Michael Etchinson Road** - the connection would propose to tie into a future development installed roadway that will connect to US 78 farther to the north(west) and provide access directly from Michael Etchinson Road to US 78 without the need to travel through the SR 10/Spring Street intersection (noted in the CTP as I-50 as a Level 2).
- **Alcovy Street at Breedlove Drive/Shamrock Drive Roundabout** – proposed in 2019, the concept would add a roundabout at the intersection of Alcovy and Breedlove Drive/Shamrock Drive (not included in the CTP).
- **Mayfield Drive Connector** – A new location roadway that connects Mayfield Drive to SR 138 (not included in the CTP).
- **SR 11 & US 78 Multi phase design** – interchange improvements, (included as I-24 and Level 2 in the CTP).

**Goal:** Non-automotive transportation alternatives will be available to residents of all areas of the city, connecting people to downtown and activity centers through a network of safe sidewalks and trails.

### Policy

- New activity centers and developments should utilize complete street initiatives and funding sources.
- The city will prioritize the multi-use trail system.
- The street pattern throughout the city should model the mostly interconnected grid pattern and provide sidewalks in the downtown area.
- Include sidewalks and pedestrian facilities in new developments in all sub-areas.

**Goal:** Projects prioritized by the city need to be included in the GDOT projects list.

### Policy

- Identified list of priority projects, concepts and costs developed by the city that is different than the CTP needs to be shared with the GDOT District 1 Office and/or include on SPLOST.



## ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

The economic development element of the comprehensive plan provides for an analysis of the current economic conditions for the City of Monroe and provides recommendations for the next 20 years. In simple terms, economic development refers to the policy and programs implemented by a community to promote sustainable growth and economic health.

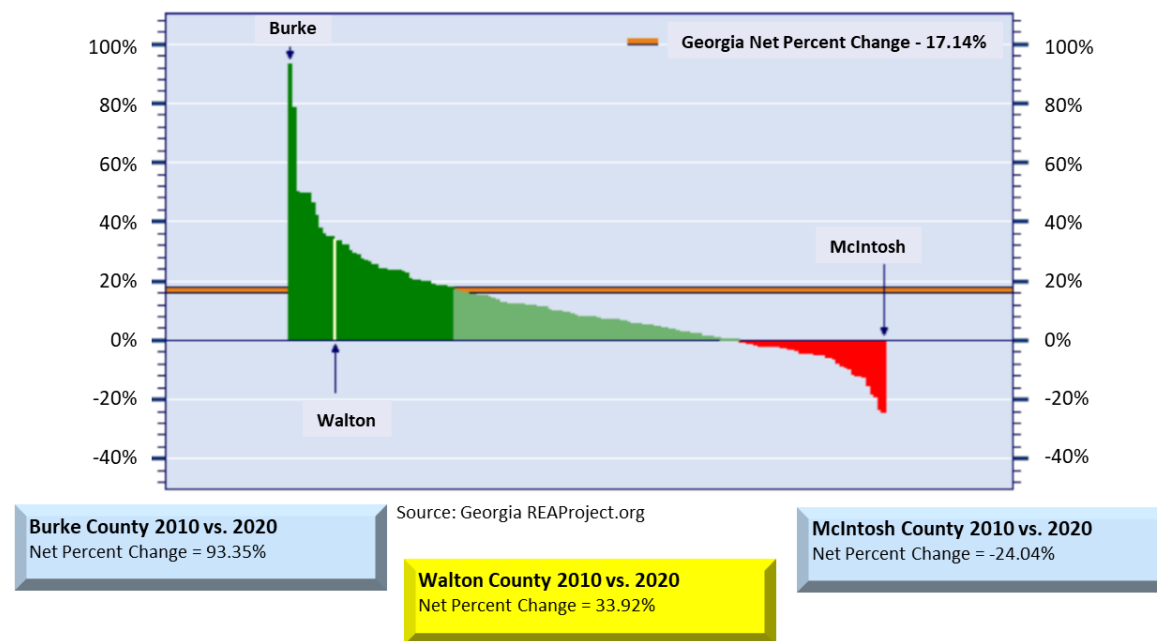
Data related to current economic conditions are usually provided at the regional or county level. Residents within the City of Monroe may work outside the city limits. Conversely, residents outside the City of Monroe may work inside the city. The result is work related commuting patterns on the main access roads into and out of the city. As such, understanding regional impacts are critical in developing policies or programs for economic withing the City of Monroe.

The following data was utilized to identify the historic and current economic conditions.

1. Regional Economic Analysis Project (REAP)<sup>6</sup>
2. Monroe GA Marketing Brochure
3. ECG Community Profile
4. Monroe Ga 2022 Budget
5. Monroe Ga 2020 Comprehensive Annual Financial Report

REAP provides county level analysis of economic activity. Walton County was ranked #13 in the state for employment growth. The shift-share table provides an analysis of the gain or loss of major industry in respect to the United States as a whole.

FIGURE 19: 10-YEAR EMPLOYMENT GROWTH IN GEORGIA BY COUNTY



<sup>6</sup> REAP can be found online at <https://georgia.reaproject.org/> and provides detail information down to the county level.

TABLE 9: SHIFT OF EMPLOYMENT IN MAJOR INDUSTRIES

Major Industry	Location Quotient <sup>4</sup>		National Growth <sup>5</sup>		Industry Mix <sup>6</sup>		Regional Shift <sup>7</sup>	
	2010	2020	Percent	Net	Percent	Net	Percent	Net
Farm Employment	1.15	1.30	10.34	50	-12.05	-59	8.09	39
Construction	2.50	2.36	10.34	363	13.37	469	18.23	639
Manufacturing	1.03	1.22	10.34	206	-4.43	-88	46.75	931
Wholesale Trade	1.16	1.50	10.34	116	-7.53	-84	58.03	650
Retail Trade	1.42	1.02	10.34	413	-8.19	-327	-12.78	-511
Information	0.45	0.29	10.34	24	-9.66	-22	-21.8	-51
Finance and Insurance	0.51	0.58	10.34	77	4.05	30	44.89	336
Real Estate, Rental & Leasing	0.91	0.91	10.34	115	5.68	63	25.73	287
Professional, Scientific & Technical Services	0.58	0.58	10.34	114	11.55	127	26.02	286
Management of Companies & Enterprises	0.14	0.09	10.34	5	21.65	10	-29.76	-13
Administrative and Waste Services	1.19	1.19	10.34	205	2.55	51	24.02	477
Educational Services	0.91	0.85	10.34	62	2.11	13	14.77	88
Health Care and Social Assistance	0.62	0.68	10.34	195	7.34	138	39.97	752
Arts, Entertainment & Recreation	0.53	0.60	10.34	33	-15.73	-51	35.11	113
Accommodation & Food Services	0.91	1.00	10.34	181	-8.72	-153	32.92	576
Other Services (Except Public Administration)	1.25	1.34	10.34	202	-2.49	-49	31.78	621
Federal Civilian	0.31	0.28	10.34	16	-12.08	-18	9.03	14
Military	0.80	0.68	10.34	28	-19.34	-52	2.70	7
State Government	0.31	0.21	10.34	28	-9.78	-26	-19.29	-52
Local Government	1.46	1.24	10.34	344	-12.67	-421	3.11	103
Other/Suppressed Industries	0.63	1.16	10.34	85	30.65	252	173.61	1,427
Total Employment	1.00	1.00	10.34	2,860	-0.72	-198	24.3	6,722

At the City level, the 2020 Comprehensive Annual Financial Report provides the top ten employers within the city. These employers provide 3,466 jobs which represent 55.9% of the total jobs in the city. The City of Monroe provides 238 of these. The remaining 44.1% or 2,734 or provided by smaller businesses.

Currently, the Monroe Economic Development department utilizes many programs offered by the State of Georgia for various business incentives. These include, opportunity zones, ports activity job tax and investment tax credits and new quality jobs tax credit. The City also participates in downtown development programs and with the Walton County Development Authority. Additionally, the Industrial Development Authority has the Walton Works program to help in training.

**WALTON COUNTY SNIPPETS:**

- Over 2010-2020, Walton County posted a 33.92% net gain in employment.
- Walton County was joined by forty-three other counties whose employment growth over 2010-2020 registered above the statewide average (17.14%).
- Ranked #13 among Georgia's 159 counties, Walton County's employment growth (33.92%) outperformed the statewide average of 17.14% by a 16.77% margin.
- Walton County's net employment growth (33.92%, #13) over 2010-2020 registered just above that of Atkinson County (33.74%, #14) and just below that of Henry County (34.81%, #12).
- Walton County's share of employment statewide rose from 0.53% in 2010 to 0.61% in 2020, resulting in a share-shift of 0.08%.

## ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT RECOMMENDATIONS

The City of Monroe and the surrounding area have had above average economic activity compared to the State of Georgia as a whole. Employment opportunities are available. However, as discussed in the population section, the percentage of households in poverty is significantly higher than both Walton County and Georgia levels.

Additionally, as part of the public input process, the community expressed a desire for more live-work-play areas within the city. This would allow more opportunity for residents to walk or bike to their place of employment. The current jobs-housing ratio is approximately 1.0. Various resources provide a target of 1.5 jobs per household for a good balance. Given these findings, a jobs-housing balance of 1.5 is recommended for the city.

## ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT GOALS AND POLICIES

**Goal:** Continue to seek out state and federal incentive programs.

### Policy

- Many programs have been developed in response to Covid-19 and may be applicable to the City of Monroe.
- Add any new links to the Monroe Economic Development website page for these additional programs that are applicable.

**Goal:** Future development should include a balance of residential, office, retail, and industry.

### Policy

- Given the objective of a 1.5 jobs/housing ratio, this would require a focus on non-residential uses in the near term. This will be discussed further in the Land Use and Development section.

# PARKS, RECREATION, OPEN SPACE & HISTORIC PRESERVATION

## PARKS

In 2019, the Monroe Buildings and Grounds Department took ownership of the parks within the city and is in the process of rehabbing them one by one. Parks services were formerly provided by Walton County. Walton County provides recreation services for the entire county. The county operates several recreation centers, including Felker Park located in Monroe's Mill District. Felker Park includes 4 soccer, 2 football fields, one large playground, restroom / concessions, and a walking trail. The new indoor recreation facility at Felker Park includes a gymnasium, fitness center, classrooms, and an indoor walking track. The property is also home to Monroe Boys and Girls Club. The 50 foot perimeter of the property and an adjoining piece will comprise approximately 14 acres of permanent green space. The County also operates several parks within a few miles of Monroe that offer active recreation opportunities.

The City of Monroe recently took responsibility of local parks from Walton County making them responsible for ten parks. The city is currently in the process of developing a master plan for its park system. The City's parks complement the County parks by offering local passive recreation and neighborhood scale parks for local residents.

The new responsibility of maintaining and developing the park system and open spaces will likely cause financial burden to the City of Monroe. As such, the city must utilize funding opportunities such as grants. There are several organizations that offer grants for parks and open spaces in Georgia. The Georgia Outdoor Stewardship Program, Georgia Recreation and Parks Association, Georgia State Parks, Georgia Department of Natural Resources, the Georgia Department of Community Affairs, and other groups offer grants and other funding assistance. Monroe should utilize these resources to ensure adequate open space, greenspace, and parks within the city.



Reliant Homes donated approximately 124 acres along the Alcovy River for the City to create a park. The concept plan includes paved walking, biking, and equestrian trails. Plan may also include frisbee golf, kayak takeout/put-ins, and playgrounds.

## OPEN SPACES AND GREENSPACE

Residents cited the need for greenspace protection during the public engagement process. Greenspace provides social, economic and environmental benefits that are intrinsic to biodiversity, and provide for people’s well-being. For example, a small greenspace downtown that includes shade trees and other vegetation provides heat island mitigation while also providing wildlife habitat and park amenities such as benches and small play areas.

The Land Use sections of this plan discusses open space and green infrastructure as it relates to new development and the quality of life goals of the city.



Currently about 35% of the land in Monroe is undeveloped, however this land should not be considered “open space” or “greenspace”. Open space is usually defined as any undeveloped piece of land that has no buildings or other built-up structures and is accessible to the public. Greenspace is any piece of land covered partially or completely with vegetation (grasses, trees, shrubs, etc.). Such spaces mainly include parks, community gardens and cemeteries. Unplanned rapid growth within the city poses a threat to open space and greenspace. The following are a few example strategies that can protect open space and greenspace within a city.

- Cluster developments are commercial, residential, or mixed-use developments in which a significant portion of the site is set aside as undivided, permanently protected open space or greenspace, while the buildings (houses, shops, etc.) are clustered on the remainder of the property. Monroe’s conservation subdivision ordinance is an example of a tool that can be used to encourage cluster development.
- Private development rights can be purchased to permanently protect open space, by a qualified conservation organization or government agency, to protect properties from development and preserve open space. Land trusts often fulfil this need.
- Pocket parks are greenspaces throughout a community that may be publicly owned or owned and managed by nearby residents and property owners. They provide free, open access to greenspace in urban areas and contribute to protection of wildlife and landscapes. They may feature the work of local artists, provide small-scale play equipment, or simply provide a welcome resting place for pedestrians. Monroe’s downtown Pocket Park serves as a duplicatable example. A “Friends of the Park” organization can spearhead the creation of pocket parks.

- Link existing parks and greenspaces with trails to create a greenway. The recommended trail system is included in the transportation section of this plan. Not only do trails provide greenspaces, but they also link important community resources and can reduce traffic congestion.

## TREE PROTECTION

Tree protection and open space were consistently voiced as concerns during the public engagement activities of this plan. The continued loss of trees and natural vegetation to land development signals the need to update the city’s tree protection requirements. An Urban and Community Forestry Grant from the Georgia Forestry Commission allowed the City of Monroe to establish a community forestry program in 2007. The Monroe Tree Board, comprising seven members serving staggered 1-3 year terms, administers the program with the support of City officials and staff, community partners, and volunteers. The board conducts events to educate the public on the benefits of trees and offers technical assistance to individuals involved in maintaining the community forest. The grant funded the development of a tree inventory for trees on public property. This was a detailed database that included tree species, management needs, and site descriptors by a certified arborist. The grant also funded a management plan that was based on the inventory. It guides the Public Works Department in the care of the tree canopy on public property. The city has changed significantly since 2008 and the tree inventory and management plan need updating.

## HISTORIC PRESERVATION

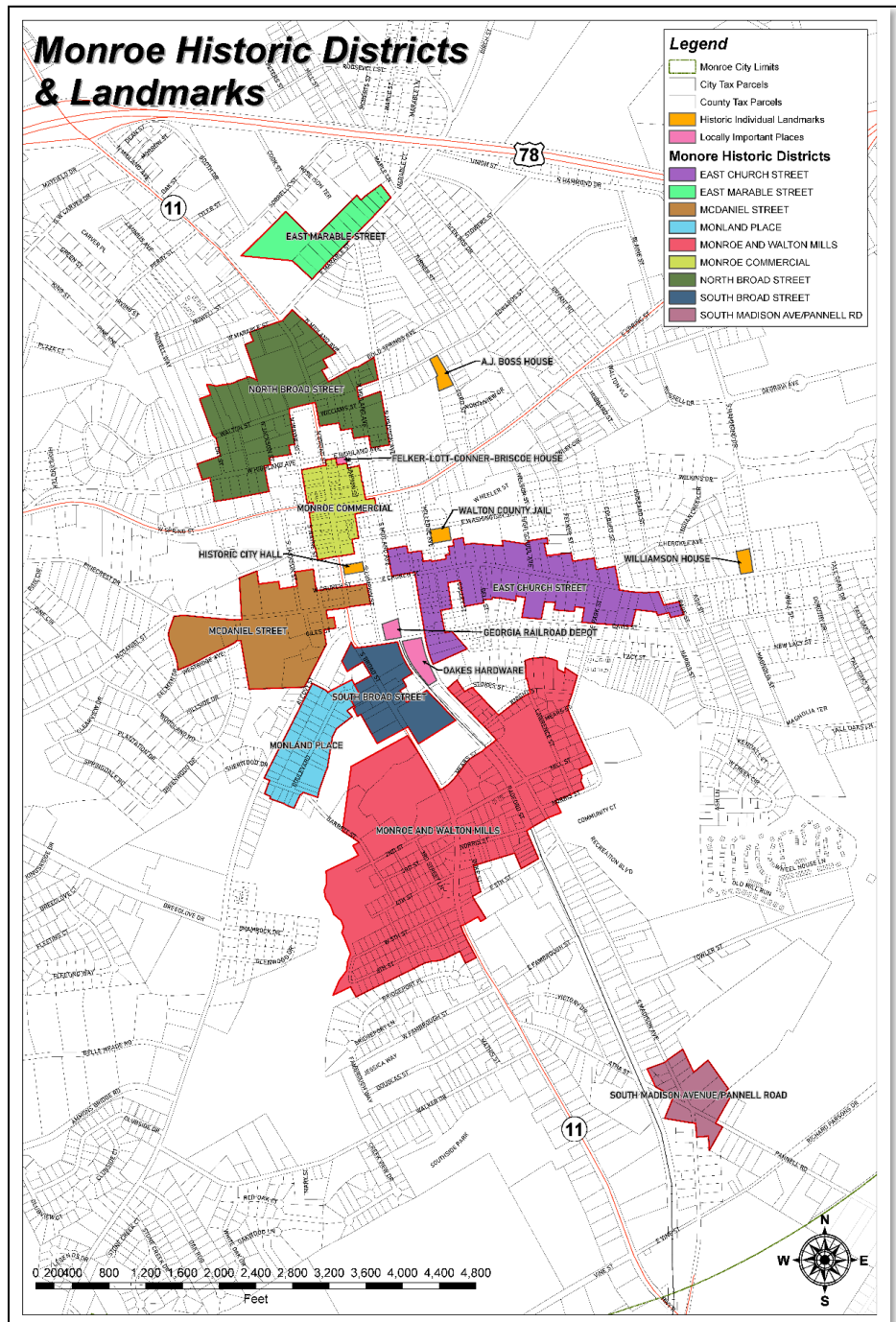
Currently, the City of Monroe has nine (9) National Register of Historic Places (NRHP) historic districts within the city limits and nine (9) individual properties listed on the NRHP. The last local survey of historic properties within the City of Monroe was conducted in the 1980s. All 18 historic districts and properties were listed in the National Register in 1983. In 1987, all nine (9) historic districts were locally recognized and included in the local historic preservation ordinance requiring



the review and approval of the Historic Preservation Commission for any rehabilitation or new construction. The design guidelines (*The Monroe Preservation Primer: Guidelines for Rehabilitation*

*and New Construction*) and local historic preservation ordinance are also from 1987. Through a grant received from the Department of Community Affairs, Historic Preservation Division (HPD), the City of Monroe is currently undertaking a comprehensive evaluation and inventory of its historic resources.

FIGURE 20: MONROE HISTORIC DISTRICTS & LANDMARKS



## REGIONAL WATER PLAN AND ENVIRONMENTAL CRITERIA

The City of Monroe is in the Upper Oconee River Watershed.<sup>7</sup> The key water resource issues addressed in the 2017 Upper Oconee Regional Water Plan that apply to the city are water use efficiency, strategic wastewater management, and reducing point and non-point source pollution. The city's water utility encourages water use efficiency with an increasing block rate structure. The more water that is used, the more it will cost, thereby discouraging wasteful water use. The city is planning for wastewater system improvements and has a stormwater program to address water pollution.



According to data compiled through the National Wetlands Inventory, there are wetlands centered in the Dear Acres area. While wetlands aren't a big concern for the city, there are FEMA 100-year flood zones that may impact future development. Monroe's development standards comply with the Rules for Environmental Planning Criteria for Wetlands.

Currently, the City of Monroe is involved in a GIS mapping program that will be used to locate and record each location of its stormwater infrastructure. There are 102 detention/retention ponds within the city limits, including 25 privately owned residential ponds. These detention ponds are a vital and necessary part of the stormwater infrastructure. The City of Monroe inspects all the detention/retention ponds annually and communicates the findings to property owners. The city complies with the high standards for continued maintenance for these stormwater structures set by the Georgia Environmental Planning Division.

The City of Monroe's Development Regulations and this comprehensive plan include policies that reference and are consistent with the Upper Oconee Regional Water Plan and the Part V Environmental Planning Criteria of the Georgia Planning Act.

## PARKS, OPEN SPACE, NATURAL RESOURCES & HISTORIC PRESERVATION RECOMMENDATIONS, GOALS, & POLICIES

### *Facilitate Creation of "Friends of the Parks"*

The Young Gamechangers Plan recommends the formation of a tax-exempt "Friends-of-the-Parks" organization separate from the City of Monroe municipal government. This organization will be eligible for funds from partnering foundations and can be an attractive partner to individual donors. This organization will serve to articulate concrete, visible park needs and goals throughout Monroe's continued development of its natural resources. In addition to increased fundraising capacity, a non-

<sup>7</sup> <https://waterplanning.georgia.gov/water-planning-regions/upper-oconee-water-planning-region>



profit oversight organization can engage in outreach and marketing efforts, organize volunteers, build community stewardship, and conduct remedial maintenance. The City of Monroe should facilitate the creation of the “Friends of the Parks” organization.

***Master Plan for Park System***

The city is currently working on a master plan for the park system. Participants at the workshops for this Comprehensive Plan place the highest priority on completing the Town Green. The master plan should consider completing the Town Green first. The parks plan should also ensure that recreation opportunities are available throughout the city to all residents by including parks, recreation, and open spaces in all sub-area plans.

***Update Tree Inventory, Management Plan, and Ordinance***

The continued loss of trees and natural vegetation to land development signals the need to update the city’s tree protection requirements. The city has changed significantly since the tree inventory and management plan were developed in 2008 and need to be updated.



***Include Greenspace and Open Space in new code***

There are many different approaches to regulating the type, scale, form and intensity of allowable development in a form-based code. Protection and inclusion of greenspace and open space should be explicitly incorporated when the city is developing the new form-based code. For example, Chapter 42, Article VII of the City of Monroe’s codes allow for Conservation Subdivisions. If the city’s form-based codes continue the use of conservation subdivisions, the city should

strengthen the ordinance to allow for density bonuses. This provides an incentive to developers to build Conservation Subdivisions by allowing them to build more units that they could under the existing zoning designation.

**Goal:** 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.

**Policy**

- Develop a comprehensive system of paths and trails for safe, healthy walking and bicycling, gathering, and community building.
- Park planning will include a trail network and recreational resources within all planning sub-areas.
- Utilize Monroe’s natural and cultural resources, trail system, and greenspaces to create a connected community that encourages healthy living.

**Goal:** Preserve natural and cultural resources by concentrating development in and around established areas and in all sub-areas

**Policy**

- Use form-based codes to encourage preservation of natural and cultural resources.

**Goal:** Complete inventory of historic housing stock and features to have an accurate account of historic housing and revisit historic district boundaries to either expand or reduce.

**Policy**

- Utilize grants and other funding along with the Find It program to complete inventory
- Review local historic boundaries and update to either expand or reduce based on survey.
- Revisit the Historic Preservation Ordinance and update if needed, including Design Guidelines and process for HPC. Hire a Preservation consultant to train the HPC.
- Educate residents and business owners on the strategic economic benefits of preserving historic structures to gain support for preservation.



## COMMUNITY FACILITIES, UTILITIES & BROADBAND

The community facilities element of the comprehensive plan provides for an analysis of the current community facilities serving City of Monroe residents and businesses and provides recommendations for the next 20 years. The community facility section of the Comprehensive Plan focuses on city owned assets only and do not include privately owned publicly accessible properties.

Data related to community facilities have been provided by the city. The city maintains an asset listing providing initial cost, depreciation and current net value. The city budget provides request for capital needs covering the next 5 years.

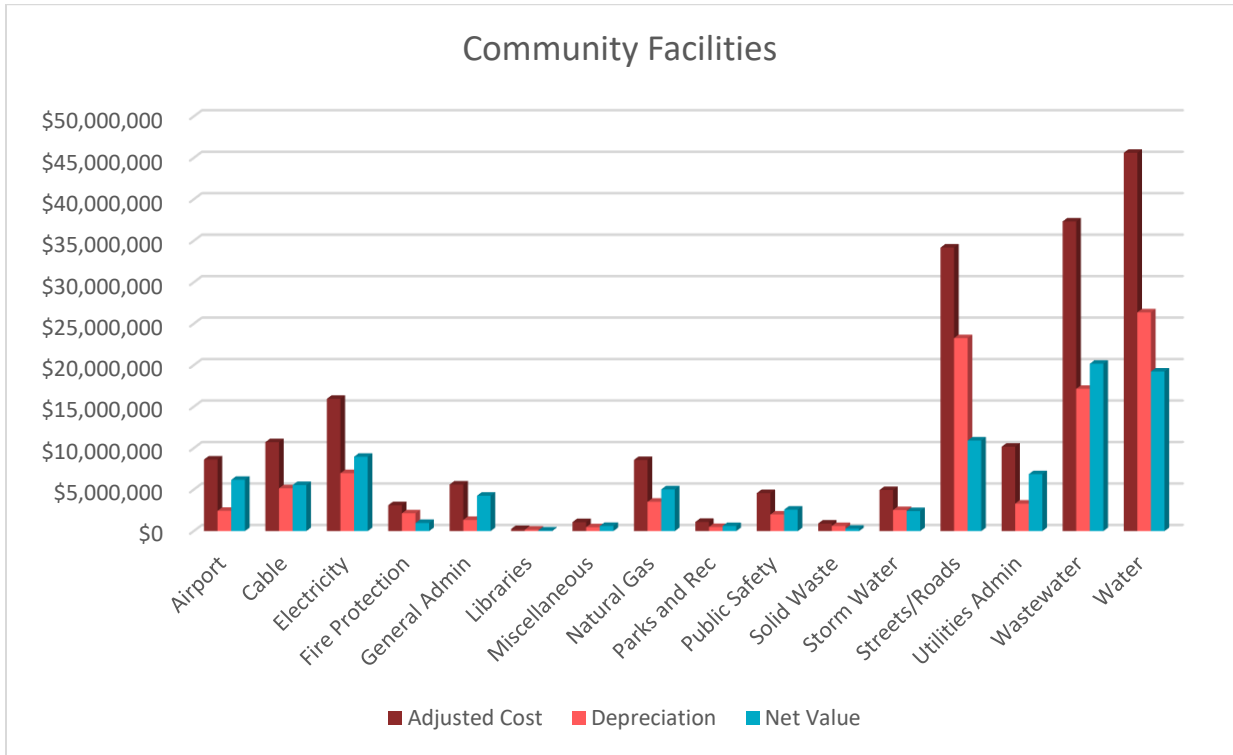
The City of Monroe has invested in community facilities that serve residents, business owners and visitors. These include parks, road network, airport, various utilities, public safety, and libraries. Most assets are located within the various utility services provided by the city. The highlighted values represent the highest for that column. The depreciation provides for an overall estimate of the age of the facility related to its book life.<sup>8</sup>

TABLE 10: COMMUNITY FACILITIES ASSET VALUE

	Adjusted Cost	Depreciation	Net Value	Percent Depreciated
<b>Airport</b>	\$8,630,718	\$2,447,183	\$6,183,535	28%
<b>Cable</b>	\$10,722,996	\$5,166,155	\$5,556,841	48%
<b>Electricity</b>	\$15,949,049	\$6,986,783	\$8,962,266	44%
<b>Fire Protection</b>	\$3,122,430	\$2,141,564	\$980,866	<b>69%</b>
<b>General Admin</b>	\$5,610,175	\$1,342,386	\$4,267,789	24%
<b>Libraries</b>	\$248,599	\$171,023	\$77,576	<b>69%</b>
<b>Miscellaneous</b>	\$1,081,941	\$465,902	\$616,040	43%
<b>Natural Gas</b>	\$8,574,028	\$3,539,504	\$5,034,524	41%
<b>Parks and Rec</b>	\$1,112,004	\$498,084	\$613,920	45%
<b>Public Safety</b>	\$4,583,046	\$1,997,106	\$2,585,940	44%
<b>Solid Waste</b>	\$908,781	\$612,028	\$296,753	67%
<b>Storm Water</b>	\$4,950,394	\$2,536,452	\$2,413,941	51%
<b>Streets/Roads</b>	\$34,189,689	\$23,266,379	\$10,923,310	68%
<b>Utilities Admin</b>	\$10,177,473	\$3,310,898	\$6,866,575	33%
<b>Wastewater</b>	\$37,337,689	\$17,155,370	<b>\$20,182,318</b>	46%
<b>Water</b>	<b>\$45,610,977</b>	<b>\$26,369,315</b>	\$19,241,662	58%
<b>Grand Total</b>	<b>\$192,809,987</b>	<b>\$98,006,133</b>	<b>\$94,803,855</b>	<b>51%</b>

<sup>8</sup> Book life is used in accounting for determining depreciation schedules. Since many assets are maintained, useful life can be much longer than book life, however, depreciation can be used as an indicator for asset renewal needs.

FIGURE 21: COMMUNITY FACILITIES ASSET VALUE



The City of Monroe has an existing budget process to address community facility needs. The latest budget for 2022 was made available in February of this year and provides capital requests by management for the next 5-years. During the public input process, most responses were related to the need for more parks and trails. High utility bills were also discussed. Additionally, as part of the Comprehensive Plan development, management and stakeholders were interviewed to discuss any additional needs.

The following table provides an overall estimated cost of these needs<sup>9</sup>. Approximately \$56 million is identified over the next 5 years. During discussion with water and wastewater personal, an additional need for wastewater treatment capacity and fire flow pressure for the northern portion of the City was discussed. This could potentially add \$80 million in projects to the community facility needs. A list of individual projects is provided in the community work program.

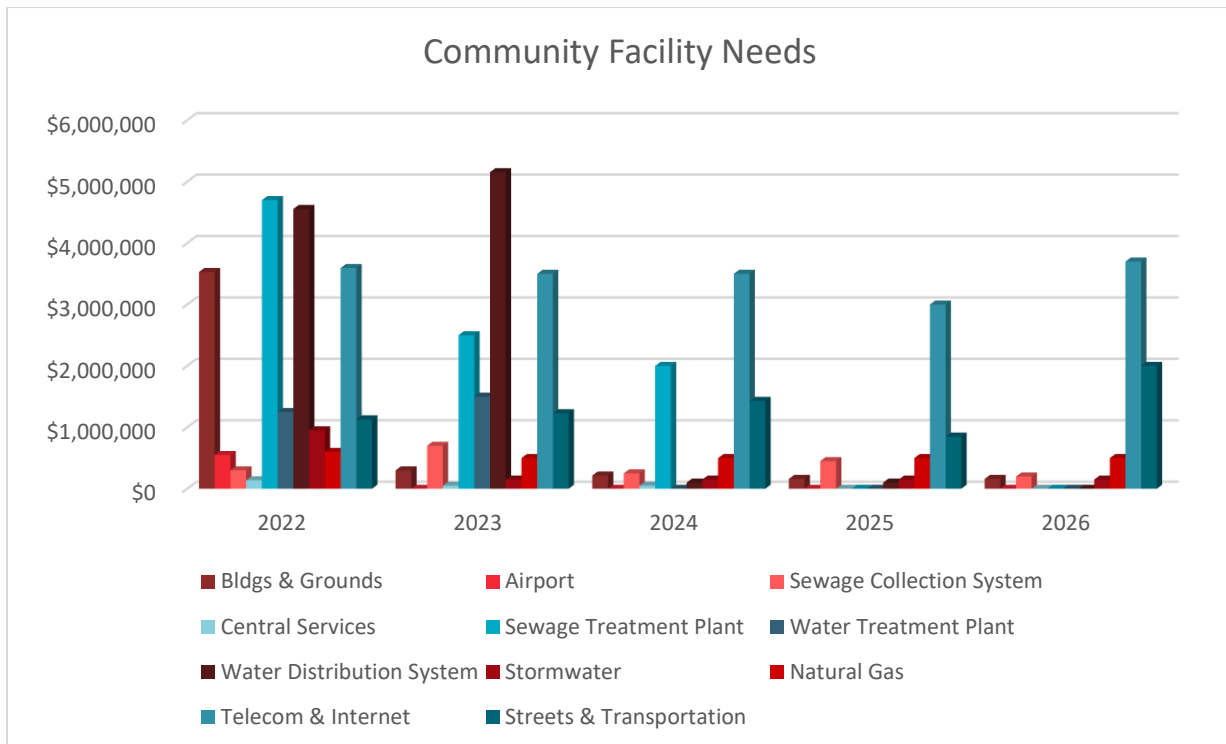
<sup>9</sup> Vehicles and equipment are excluded from these numbers and viewed as an operating capital need in the budget rather than a community facility need as part of this Comprehensive Plan.

CITY OF MONROE COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

TABLE 11: MONROE GA COMMUNITY FACILITIES NEEDS

Responsible Party	Needs	2022	2023	2024	2025	2026
<b>Bldgs &amp; Grounds</b>	\$4,365,000	\$3,530,000	\$300,000	\$215,000	\$160,000	\$160,000
<b>Airport</b>	\$550,000	\$550,000	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
<b>Sewage Collection System</b>	\$1,900,000	\$300,000	\$700,000	\$250,000	\$450,000	\$200,000
<b>Central Services</b>	\$238,500	\$138,500	\$50,000	\$50,000	\$0	\$0
<b>Sewage Treatment Plant</b>	\$9,200,000	\$4,700,000	\$2,500,000	\$2,000,000	\$0	\$0
<b>Water Treatment Plant</b>	\$2,750,000	\$1,250,000	\$1,500,000	\$0	\$0	\$0
<b>Water Distribution System</b>	\$9,910,000	\$4,555,000	\$5,155,000	\$100,000	\$100,000	\$0
<b>Stormwater</b>	\$1,550,000	\$950,000	\$150,000	\$150,000	\$150,000	\$150,000
<b>Natural Gas</b>	\$2,600,000	\$600,000	\$500,000	\$500,000	\$500,000	\$500,000
<b>Telecom &amp; Internet</b>	\$17,295,000	\$3,595,000	\$3,500,000	\$3,500,000	\$3,000,000	\$3,700,000
<b>Streets &amp; Transportation</b>	\$6,640,000	\$1,130,000	\$1,230,000	\$1,430,000	\$850,000	\$2,000,000
	<b>\$56,998,500</b>	<b>\$21,298,500</b>	<b>\$15,585,000</b>	<b>\$8,195,000</b>	<b>\$5,210,000</b>	<b>\$6,710,000</b>

FIGURE 22: COMMUNITY FACILITY NEEDS



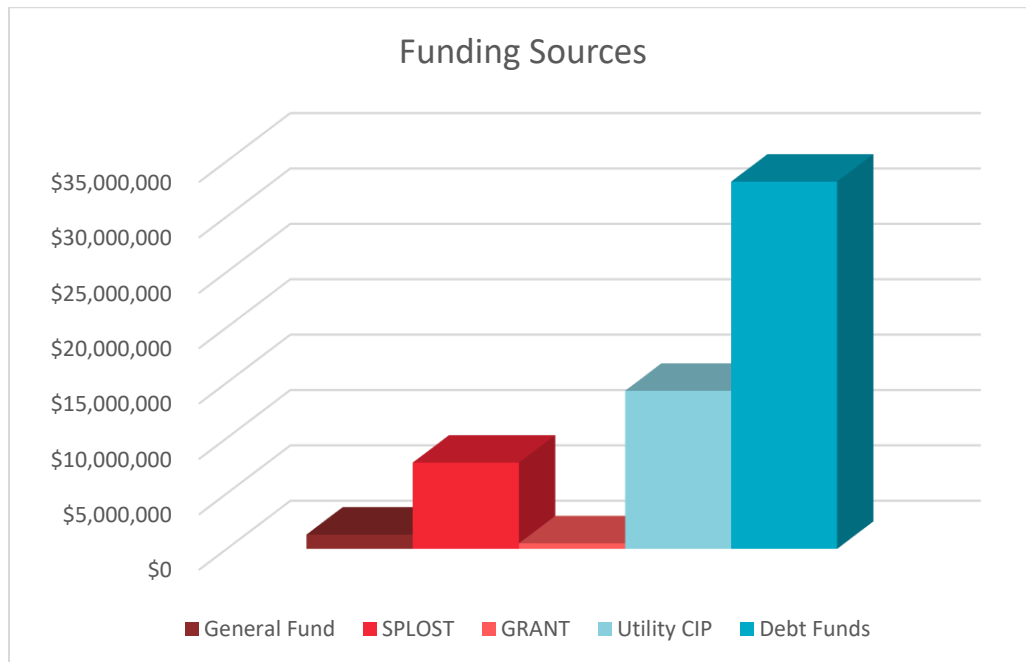
Several funding sources have been identified to pay for these community facilities. These include the General Fund (mostly from property taxes, local sales taxes and other fees) Special Local Option Sales Tax, (additional sales tax), state and federal grants, utility income (rates, fees and charges) and finally debt proceeds. The debt proceeds identified are for utility related projects and would be

repaid from utility customers. Water and wastewater have connection fees for new connections. There are no development fees charged for other community facilities<sup>10</sup>.

TABLE 12: SOURCES OF FUNDS FOR COMMUNITY FACILITIES NEEDS

Responsible Party	Needs	General Fund	SPLOST	GRANT	Utility CIP	Debt Funds
<b>Bldgs &amp; Grounds</b>	\$4,365,000	\$0	\$1,865,000	\$500,000	\$2,000,000	\$0
<b>Airport</b>	\$550,000	\$0	\$550,000	\$0	\$0	\$0
<b>Sewage Collection System</b>	\$1,900,000	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$1,900,000	\$0
<b>Central Services</b>	\$238,500	\$25,000	\$0	\$0	\$213,500	\$0
<b>Sewage Treatment Plant</b>	\$9,200,000	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$200,000	\$9,000,000
<b>Water Treatment Plant</b>	\$2,750,000	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$2,750,000
<b>Water Distribution System</b>	\$9,910,000	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$4,210,000	\$5,700,000
<b>Stormwater</b>	\$1,550,000	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$1,550,000	\$0
<b>Natural Gas</b>	\$2,600,000	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$2,600,000	\$0
<b>Telecom &amp; Internet</b>	\$17,295,000	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$1,595,000	\$15,700,000
<b>Streets &amp; Transportation</b>	\$6,640,000	\$1,268,395	\$5,371,605	\$0	\$0	\$0
	<b>\$56,998,500</b>	<b>\$1,293,395</b>	<b>\$7,786,605</b>	<b>\$500,000</b>	<b>\$14,268,500</b>	<b>\$33,150,000</b>

FIGURE 23: FUNDING SOURCES



<sup>10</sup> Georgia state law allows new development fees to help offset the cost of community facilities for certain services.

A high-level analysis of the City’s financial position is provided in the cover letter to the latest Comprehensive Financial Report. The city has undergone many initiatives to economic development and had significant improvement in economic activity. An excerpt on financial policies is provided below.

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*Relevant Financial Policies*

*The purpose of the City of Monroe’s financial management policy is to ensure that the City conducts its investment, cash and debt management activities in a responsible manner in full compliance with Federal and State Law. The city is committed to providing adequate cash flows to meet all current and future obligations. Adherence to this policy has allowed the City to maintain financial stability, all cash funds are properly collateralized and no short-term financing has been needed to meet operations.*

*Additionally, it is the City’s policy to maintain budgetary controls to ensure compliance with legal requirements of the State of Georgia. Policies are amended and kept up-to-date as often as possible to ensure legality and efficiency in our controls. The budget development is led by the City Administrator who according to local ordinance shall prepare and submit the annual operating budget and capital budget to the Mayor and Council. The annual appropriation resolution approved by the Mayor and Council is adopted for all fund types with the legal level of control at the department level. Finally, a public hearing is advertised and held and the final budget is advertised. The adopted budget may be revised during the year only by formal action of the City Council in a regular meeting and no increase shall be made without provision also being made for financing same. During the year the budget was amended by Council; further detail on these amendments can be found in the MD&A.*

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The City of Monroe is well positioned financially to implement their capital needs. Most of the funding sources are from utilities or SPLOST. Additional grant money may be available and General Fund dollars are used at minimum. The current debt capacity of the general fund is approximately \$50 million of which no general fund obligations exist. There are outstanding revenue bonds and notes of approximately \$68 million paid by user fees and excluded from the general fund limitations. The total debt is approximately \$5,000 per capita paid over the term of the obligation. Since many of these are tied to utility fees, the largest consumers pay the majority of this debt.

## **BROADBAND**

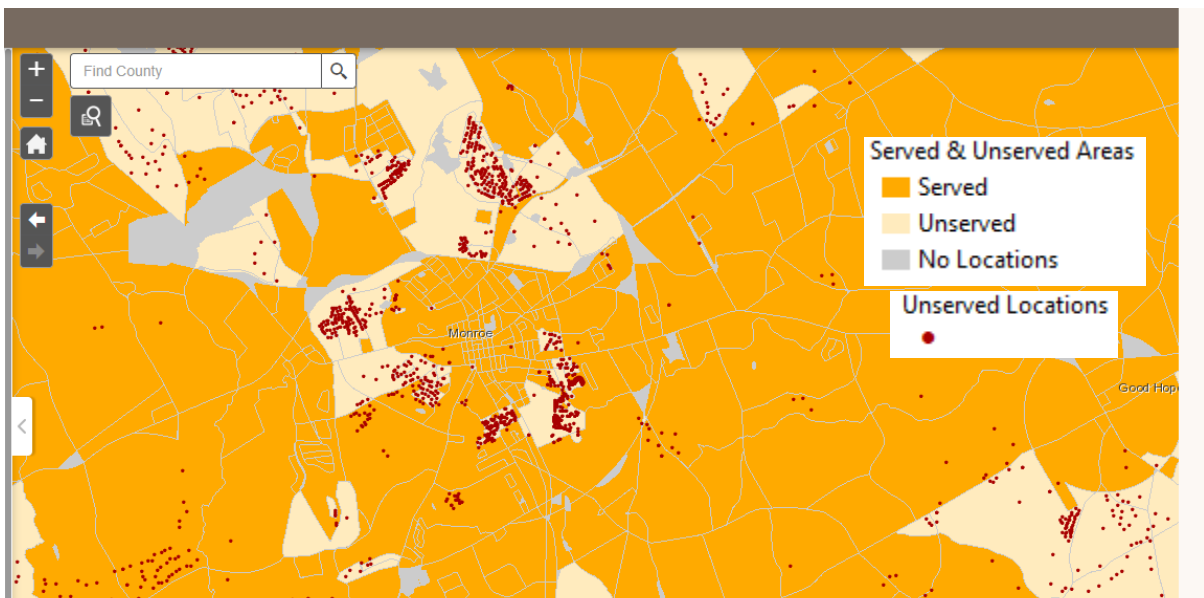
According to the Department of Community Affairs, “the purpose of a community amending their comprehensive plan to include a broadband element is to ensure that a community adopts a strategy that demonstrates the promotion of broadband within the community. DCA has developed and approved the rules for the new element required for a community to include in their

comprehensive plan. The rules are being communicated to local governments and Regional Commissions. Plans must include the update prior to being eligible to apply for a Broadband Ready Community Designation.”<sup>11</sup>

The City of Monroe is a full-service municipal utility provider offering customers electric, cable television, broadband cable internet, and more. The city first deployed fiber to support the downtown business district and has increased its service to all Walton County Schools and the Piedmont Walton Hospital. The city is currently implementing a plan to provide fiber to the entire city and Wi-Fi to the downtown business district.

According to the DCA Broadband map, several areas within the City of Monroe limits are considered underserved and could be eligible for grants or financial assistance. If the city adopts a model broadband ordinance, it can then apply for a Broadband Ready Community Designation (O.C.G.A. §50-40-40).

FIGURE 24: BROADBAND SERVED AND UNSERVED AREAS



Source: <https://broadband.georgia.gov/2021-georgia-broadband-availability-map>

## COMMUNITY FACILITIES, UTILITIES, & BROADBAND RECOMMENDATIONS, GOALS, AND POLICIES

The City of Monroe has significant community facility needs over the next five years and beyond. Their economic initiatives have provided a strong financial position to address funding needs. SPLOST and Utility revenues cover most of these needs and are passed onto the consumer. Public input discussed high utility bills as an issue for the community. The University of North Carolina provides a water and wastewater rate dashboard for various states including Georgia. Based on their dashboard, a 5,000-gallon water and wastewater bill is calculated to be \$65.67. Given the

<sup>11</sup> <https://broadband.georgia.gov/general-information>



median value of \$78.55 for all utilities within 50 miles of Monroe, it would appear that, at least for water and wastewater, that cost is below typical. Analysis of electricity rates also review below average cost. However, gas utility rates were much higher than average. Since customers may have multiple services on their bill, it may be driven by natural gas or other services.

Given these findings the following recommendations are provided for the 20-year Comprehensive Plan.

*Development Impact Fees*

Calculate and implement development fees to offset a fair share of cost for new community facilities as allowed by state law. This will require the inclusion of a Capital Improvement Element into the Comprehensive Plan and annual update.

*Recalculate Connection Fees*

Recalculate connections fees for utilities to be sure they are at an appropriate level given the need for wastewater treatment capacity and need for fire flow improvement in the northern portion of the City.

*Regularly Present Typical Bills*

A comparison of typical bills for the various services offered by Monroe with similar communities should be added to the budget or annual financial report.

*Become a Broadband Ready Community*

Adopt a model broadband ordinance and apply for a Broadband Ready Community Designation to be eligible to receive funding for Broadband.

## HEALTH AND WELLNESS

The health and wellness element provides an assessment of current health and wellness resources within the City of Monroe. It also provides recommendations for the next 20 years. Much of the data gathered came from the 2021 Community Health Needs assessment, statistics from the Piedmont Walton Hospital and the Walton County Health Department.



The Community Health Needs Assessment (CHNA), completed in 2021, was developed to identify the top health needs of Walton County by Walton Wellness Inc. The assessment also worked with stakeholders, and strategically targeted focus groups to prioritize the needs and present relevant resources to address those needs within the community. The plan focused on the items that impact the health landscape such as health behaviors, access to medical care, socioeconomic factors, and physical environment. Although the plan focused on Walton County as a whole, the data presented provided information on the status of health issues that also affect city residents. Unfortunately, the plan did not provide solutions; rather it prioritized the main needs.

As part of the comprehensive plan, and due to the higher poverty rate within the City of Monroe, an additional analysis was also completed to review food deserts, access to healthy activity options, mental health and access to resources and services.

Piedmont Walton, located on the northwest side of the city limits, is a 77-bed acute care hospital serving Walton County and the surrounding area. According to the hospital's 2020 data, Piedmont Walton has:

- 418+ Employees
- 270+ Physicians
- 80+ Contract Employees
- 24 Volunteers
- 355 Newborn Deliveries
- 31,829 Emergency Department Visits
- 2,532 Surgeries
- 6,225 Outpatient Encounters
- 3,005 Inpatient Admissions



The Walton County Health Department is also located within the Monroe city limits and is one of 18 clinics in the Northeast Georgia Health District. Their goal is to offer free or low-cost services to all people within the area and to promote healthy lifestyles.

An evaluation of locations to purchase food products within the city limits showed that most grocery stores, convenience stores, and markets were located along the main transportation corridors. The USDA Food Access Research Atlas<sup>12</sup> shows limited access to healthy food in Monroe. The new Publix Pavilion will alleviate some of the city's food access issues. One issue impacting access to healthy

<sup>12</sup> <https://www.ers.usda.gov/data-products/food-access-research-atlas/go-to-the-atlas/>

food, as identified by the USDA Food Access Atlas, is limited vehicle access of the residents of Monroe. As described in the Population, Housing, and Education section, Monroe has a high rate of poverty. As a result, many residents do not have access to the vehicular transportation necessary to get to a grocery store. To help address this problem, Walton Wellness has a mobile “Farmacy Bus” that will deliver healthy foods to those who need assistance and qualify for the service. They also promote a healthy lifestyle, provide healthy recipes and cooking demonstrations.

A farmers market and online farmers market are available to citizens of Monroe and the surrounding area that have the following goals.

- Provide local growers an outlet to showcase and market products,
- Publicize the importance of locally grown products,
- Provide opportunities for presentations and demonstrations related to agriculture, gardening, food safety and preparation, and
- allow citizens of Monroe and the surrounding area the opportunity to buy healthy, locally grown products.



## HEALTH AND WELLNESS GOALS AND POLICIES

**Goal:** Provide safe places to exercise

**Policy**

- Integrate trails, exercise equipment and recreation activities in parks
- Expand trail system

**Goal:** Provide education and awareness regarding health and wellness resources

**Policy**

- Incorporate available health and wellness resources within the City and County as part of the overall education and awareness efforts

## INTERGOVERNMENTAL COORDINATION

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The Intergovernmental Coordination Element of the Comprehensive Plan plays an important role in the overall development and coordination of the Comprehensive Plan, with agencies within the community as well as those with which the city interacts. Monroe is located in Walton County and the county provides many services to city residents. During the public engagement process, residents expressed concern over traffic, housing, land use, and other issues that could better be addressed with the county and the city working together. There appears to be conflict between the city and county. For example, Monroe used to be a member of Atlanta Regional Commission but were removed by the county because of conflicting goals.

Another example is Animal Control. One interview respondent said that animal control is a problem in Monroe, but “Animal Control” is within the Walton County government and city does not have much influence there. School planning was also brought up by city residents and a Walton County School District representative. Schools, Cities, and Walton County should communicate better when making decisions affecting schools. Quarterly public meetings to communicate future growth plans were suggested.

### INTERGOVERNMENTAL COORDINATION RECOMMENDATIONS, GOALS, & POLICIES

Based on interviews, public engagement responses, and planning best practices the following recommendations will encourage cooperation with all other levels of government in the pursuit of shared goals, policies and objectives.

- Consider municipal boundary expansion opportunities as appropriate, and when unincorporated property owners petition for annexation.
- Ensure that goals and implementation programs of the city’s comprehensive plan are consistent with adopted coordination mechanisms and consistent with applicable regional and state programs.
- Regional cooperation should be encouraged in setting priorities, identifying shared needs, and finding collaborative solutions, particularly where it is critical to success of a venture, such as protection of shared natural resources and economic development activities.
- Periodically assess and update existing intergovernmental agreements and develop new agreements as appropriate.

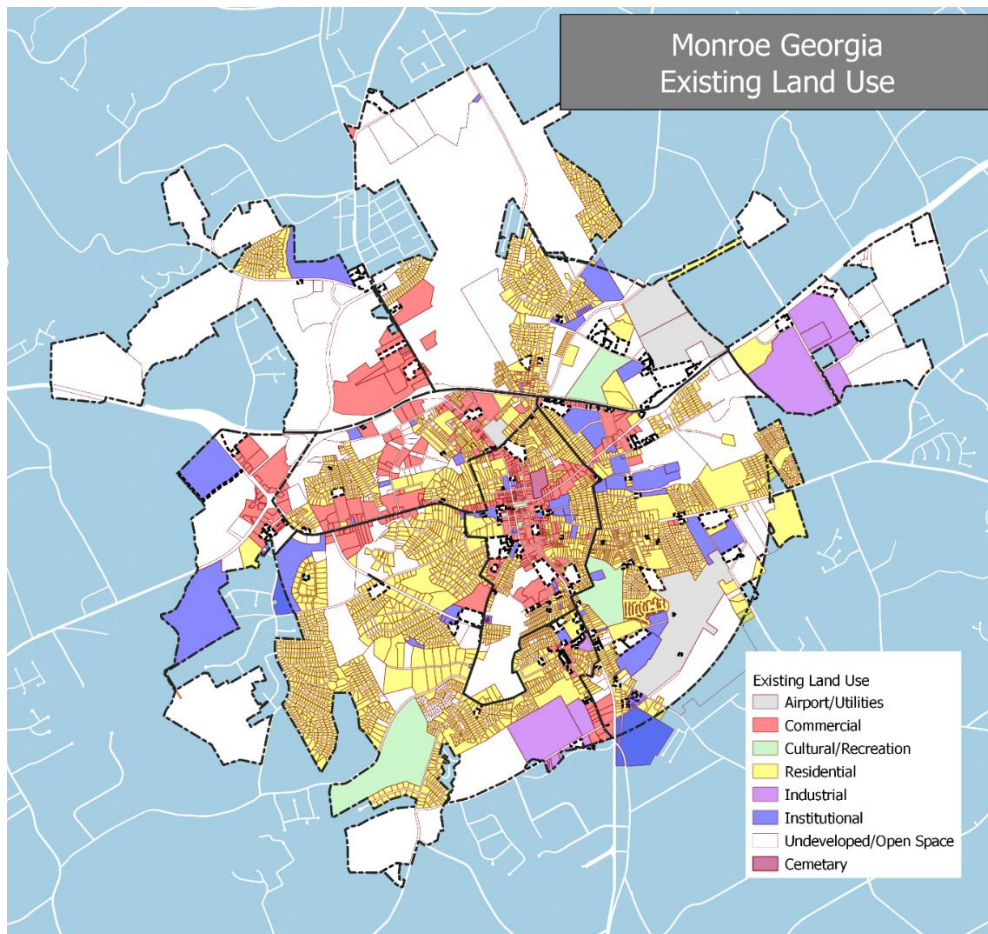
## LAND USE & DEVELOPMENT

The Comprehensive Plan provides a guide to city staff and council members in the development approval process. The 2042 vision for the city consists of a gridded, walkable community that balances residential, commercial, recreational, and industrial land uses to optimize the health, safety and welfare of its residents and business owners.

### EXISTING LAND USE

The City of Monroe has a well-defined urban core surrounded by residential land use. Institutional and industrial uses dot the perimeter of the city. Additional commercial extends out from the center along major collectors and arterials. Monroe has a general airport to the southwest and a golf course to the south. Currently the City uses a Euclidean type zoning where each parcel is identified for a set of specific uses.

FIGURE 25: EXISTING LAND USE MAP



## FUTURE LAND USE

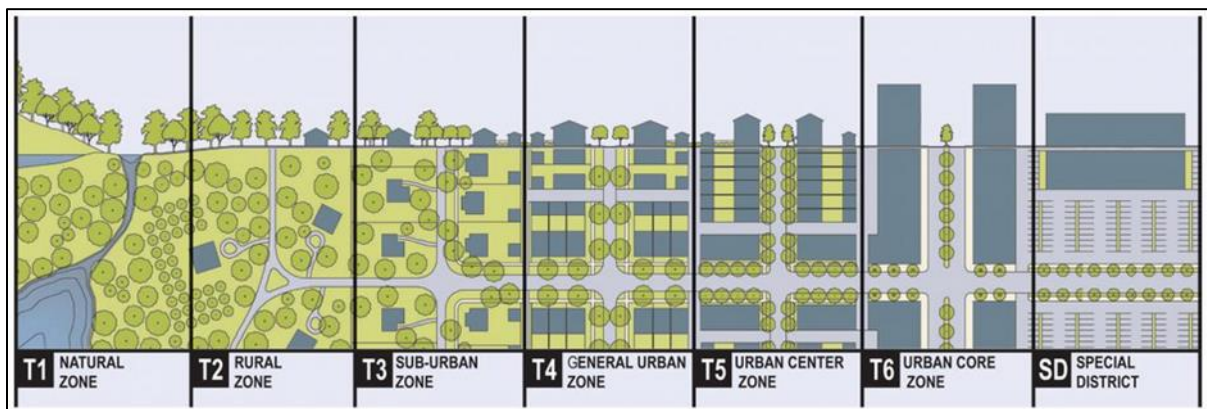
The 2017 Comprehensive Plan uses Character Areas for guiding future land use. Originally, for this update, character areas were developed based on feedback from the steering committee. After the second public involvement meeting and subsequent discussion with the steering committee, character areas were replaced with sub-area plans. Though existing and proposed character is still considered for future land use purposes, each sub-area plan provides greater flexibility in how this character is implemented. The sub-area plans build upon Monroe’s previous efforts to develop form-based codes based on transects.

A form-based code differs from the traditional Euclidean zoning code in that emphasis is on how development fits into the urban environment rather than focusing on specific land uses. The City of Monroe developed a Smartcode, a form-based code, as part of the Livable Centers Initiative. This work can be applied to the entire city. *The emphasis of the overall plan for the City is for mixed use and interconnected cities. The New Urbanism Best Practices Guide by Steuteville and Langdon 4<sup>th</sup> Edition should be used for determining if new development proposals adhere to the specific transect designation.*

### THE TRANSECT

The urban-to-rural transect is an urban planning model created by the New Urbanist Andrés Duany. The transect defines a series of zones that transition from sparse rural farmhouses to the dense urban core. Each zone is fractal in that it contains a similar transition from the edge to the center of the neighborhood. The transect is an important part of the New Urbanism and smart growth movements. Duany's firm DPZ has embodied the transect philosophy into their Smartcode generic planning code for municipal ordinances. This model is currently part of the City of Monroe’s draft Smartcode.

FIGURE 26: THE URBAN TO RURAL TRANSECT



Other transects exist and are provided below. These visualizations will help the reader to understand the relationship between the different land use zones. FIGURE 27 is from the Florida Department of Transportation. This version provides an oblique angle to illustrate urban form. Also below are the urban to rural transect used in Gabon, which provides additional detail including street and corridor views. Finally, in Sheffield, the transect includes actual pictures.

FIGURE 27: THE URBAN TO RURAL TRANSECT (FLORIDA DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION)



Source: Adapted from Florida Department of Transportation Transect

FIGURE 28: THE URBAN TO RURAL TRANSECT (GABON)

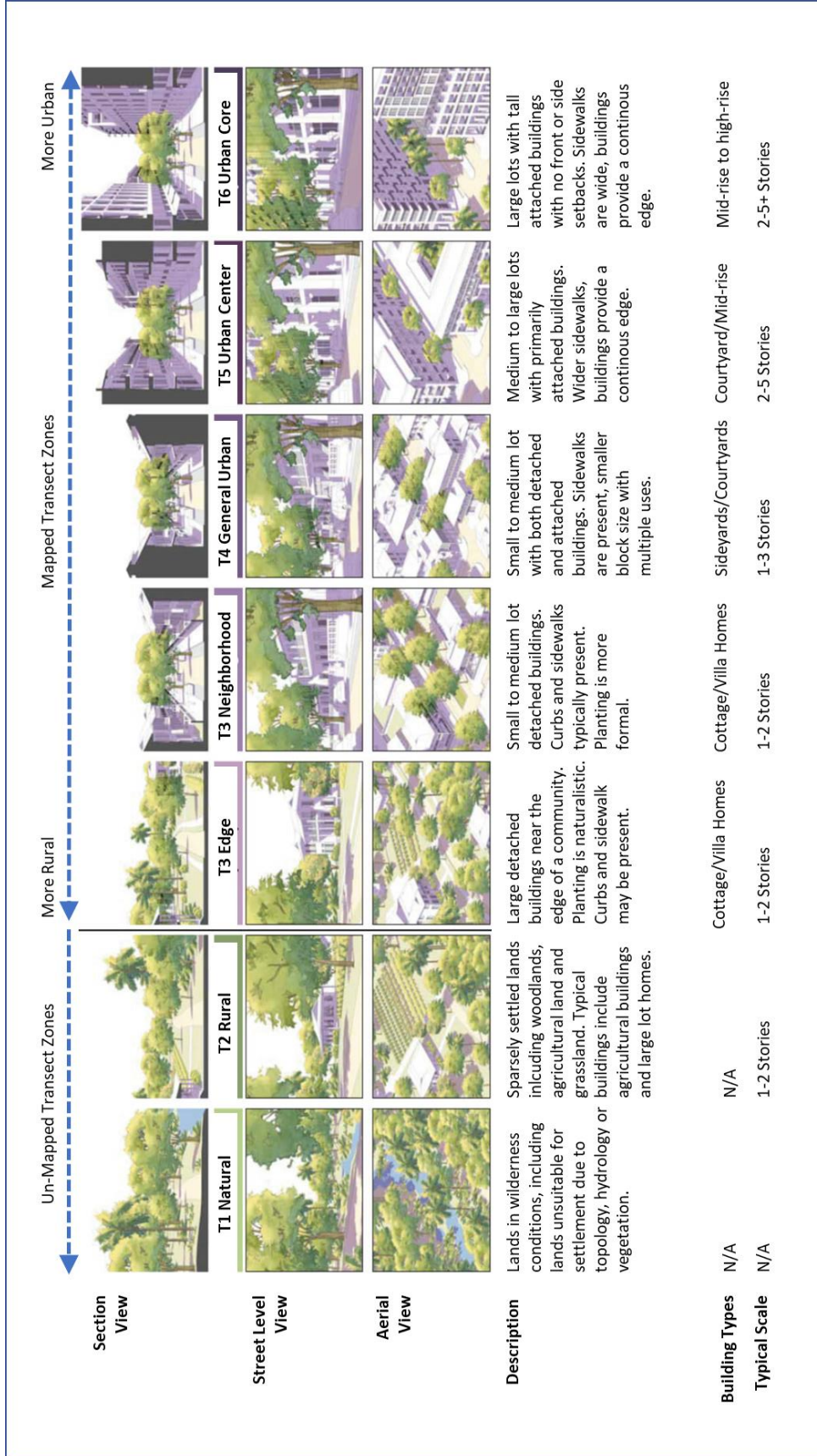
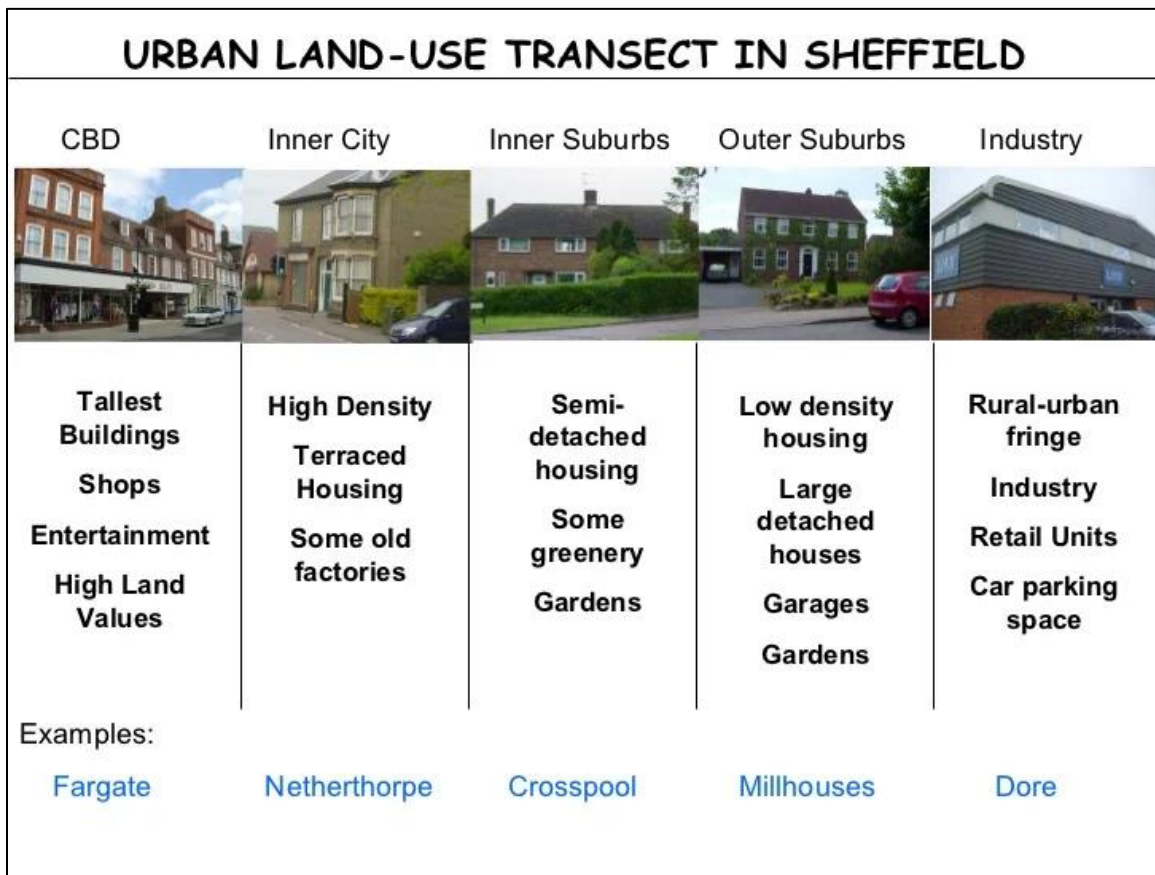




FIGURE 29: THE URBAN TO RURAL TRANSECT (SHEFFIELD)



### CITY INFRASTRUCTURE/SERVICES – IMPACTS OF GROWTH

It is expected that the city will experience significant growth in population over the next decade. Currently, there is agreement with Walton County to provide reciprocal fire and police services to address growth at the edge of the city. Additional parks and/or open space was identified during the public involvement process. It is anticipated that increase library services will be a function of the anticipated population growth.

Water and wastewater services are available in the northern part of the city. However, it has been identified that fire flow will need to be improved there. Additionally, both the water and wastewater treatment plants will need to be expanded to address future population growth. Other utilities such as natural gas and electricity were not identified as an issue as part of the public involvement process.

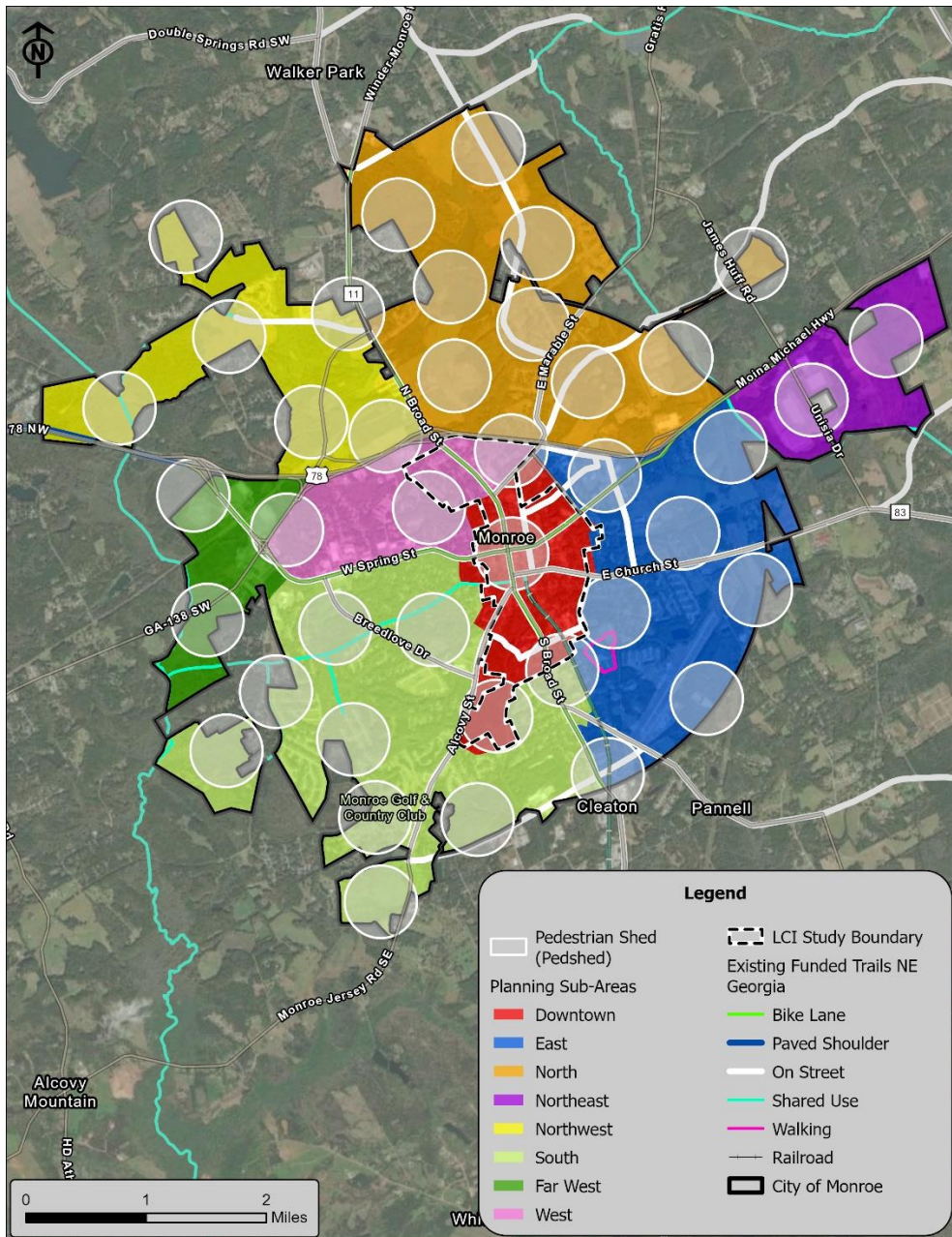
The road system will need upgrades related to the complete streets discussion in the transportation element. Other road improvements are warranted under current conditions. The truck by-pass and more pedestrian friendly development should help relieve some traffic issues.

All new development should include low impact development standards and other stormwater runoff mitigation best practices. Green infrastructure and other best management practices should be utilized concerning stormwater.

### PEDESTRIAN SHEDS

The streets are mostly interconnected in a grid pattern and provide sidewalks in the downtown area. The LCI plan encourages continue pedestrian friendly development. The pedestrian shed (Pedshed) concept is recommended for all new development outside the downtown area as well. Below show existing and new opportunities for Pedsheds.

FIGURE 30: PEDESTRIAN SHEDS



## SUB-AREA PLANS

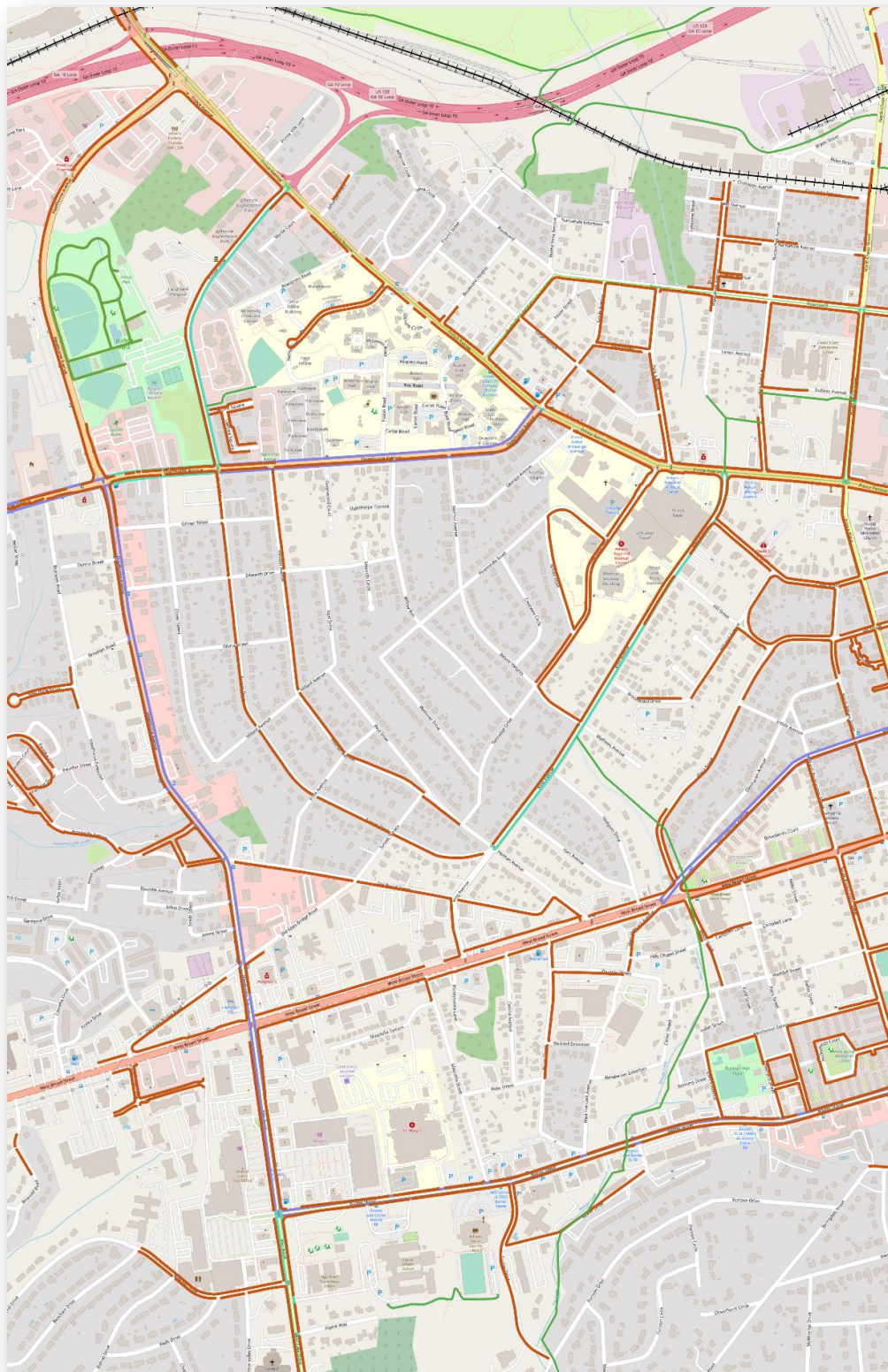
Developers will be given additional options for land use for each area with focus on achieving overall walkability and mixture of uses within the sub-area as a whole. Activity nodes are recommended and can float depending on newly proposed site plans, recently approved site plans and existing development. The overall goal of each sub-area will be to provide a walkable, gridded urban form that provides a balance live-work-play uses. Some existing developments may not be able to connect into the grid until redevelopment occurs.

The following are examples of a residential neighborhood in Athens Georgia. The first show how tree canopies are possible in urbanized areas. The second shows how the grid pattern is slightly curved and there are multiple connections to collector roads. A commercialized area known as Normal Town is located to the northeast of this area. Also nearby is a large recreational area (Bishop Park), a regional hospital and other medical facilities.

FIGURE 31: EXAMPLE OF TREE CANOPY IN URBAN AREA



FIGURE 32: EXAMPLE OF CURVED GRID STRUCTURE



Using the population projections from the population element we can project an employment need based on improving the jobs/housing ratio. A target of 1.5 is recommended to help achieve a balance of workers and employment. This will not eliminate the need for commuters into the city or out of the city for employment purposes but can help reduce that need. There will always be specialized skills that will need to be addressed and location preferences of individuals.

The tables on the following page calculate the number of jobs and associated land use needs for the entire city. The tables use the following assumptions.

- Total land available would increase due to future annexations.
- These are planning level acreages and provide magnitude amounts.
- The overall goals of the plans should be re-evaluated every five years as part of the Comprehensive Plan update.
- Additional annexation for industrial opportunities may be warranted.

FIGURE 33: EXAMPLE OF URBAN CORE



**CITY OF MONROE COMPREHENSIVE PLAN**

**TABLE 13: PROJECTION OF LAND USE NEEDS**

<b>Population and Employment Projections</b>						
	<b>2020</b>	<b>2025</b>	<b>2030</b>	<b>2035</b>	<b>2040</b>	<b>2045</b>
<b>Population</b>	14,928	16,888	21,688	23,079	25,064	26,988
<b>Employment</b>	5,975	8,380	10,785	13,190	15,595	18,000
<b>Jobs/Housing</b>	1.0	1.2	1.2	1.3	1.4	1.5
<b>Population per dwelling unit</b>	2.44	2.41	2.38	2.35	2.32	2.30
<b>Housing Units</b>	6,130	7,007	9,113	9,821	10,803	11,734
<b>Employment Type Projections</b>						
<b>Employee Percentage</b>		<b>2025</b>	<b>2030</b>	<b>2035</b>	<b>2040</b>	<b>2045</b>
<b>Retail</b>	36%	3,017	3,883	4,748	5,614	6,480
<b>Office</b>	36%	3,017	3,883	4,748	5,614	6,480
<b>Industry</b>	25%	2,095	2,696	3,298	3,899	4,500
<b>Local Government</b>	3%	251	324	396	468	540

<b>Acreage Needs by Land Use</b>						
<b>Employees Per Acre Needs</b>		<b>2025</b>	<b>2030</b>	<b>2035</b>	<b>2040</b>	<b>2045</b>
<b>Retail</b>	10.0	302	388	475	561	648
<b>Office</b>	10.0	302	388	475	561	648
<b>Industry</b>	6.0	349	449	550	650	750
<b>Residential</b>	9.0	2,000	2,410	2,564	2,785	2,999
<b>Local Government</b>	15.0	17	22	26	31	36
	50	2,969	3,657	4,090	4,589	5,081
<b>Acreage Needs by Land Use (Other)</b>						
		<b>2025</b>	<b>2030</b>	<b>2035</b>	<b>2040</b>	<b>2045</b>
<b>Parks &amp; Recreation</b>	155.0	184	213	242	271	300
<b>Transportation</b>	145.0	156	167	178	189	200
<b>Utilities</b>	45.0	51	57	63	69	75
<b>Other</b>	45.0	51	57	63	69	75
<b>Undeveloped/Redeveloped</b>		6,270	5,535	5,055	4,509	3,969
<b>Total</b>		<b>6,712</b>	<b>6,029</b>	<b>5,601</b>	<b>5,107</b>	<b>4,619</b>
<b>Total Land Available</b>	9676.0	9,681	9,686	9,691	9,696	9,700

The following sections provide sub-area plans for the City of Monroe. The overall plan is designed around a pedestrian shed concept. This sub-area plans provide land uses to balance living, working and recreational activities within walking and biking distances of each other. In each sub-area, character is described related to existing land use and urban form. As examples, certain areas of Monroe have an industrial character, downtown character, low density residential character, etc. Recommendations are provided regarding future development using the city’s draft Smartcode to help guide the future urban form and land uses to support the existing or future character of the area, as well as meet the overall goal of a future walkable community.

*As subdivisions of the state, a municipality has the power to protect the health, safety, and welfare of the citizens. It can achieve this with municipal/development code and zoning to guide future development, and providing police, fire and health services. However, the 14th amendment prevents infringing on the privileges and immunities of united states citizens without due process of law. To avoid a “Takings” situation, zoning and development codes need ensure that a reasonable economic use of an undeveloped or developed property still exists.*

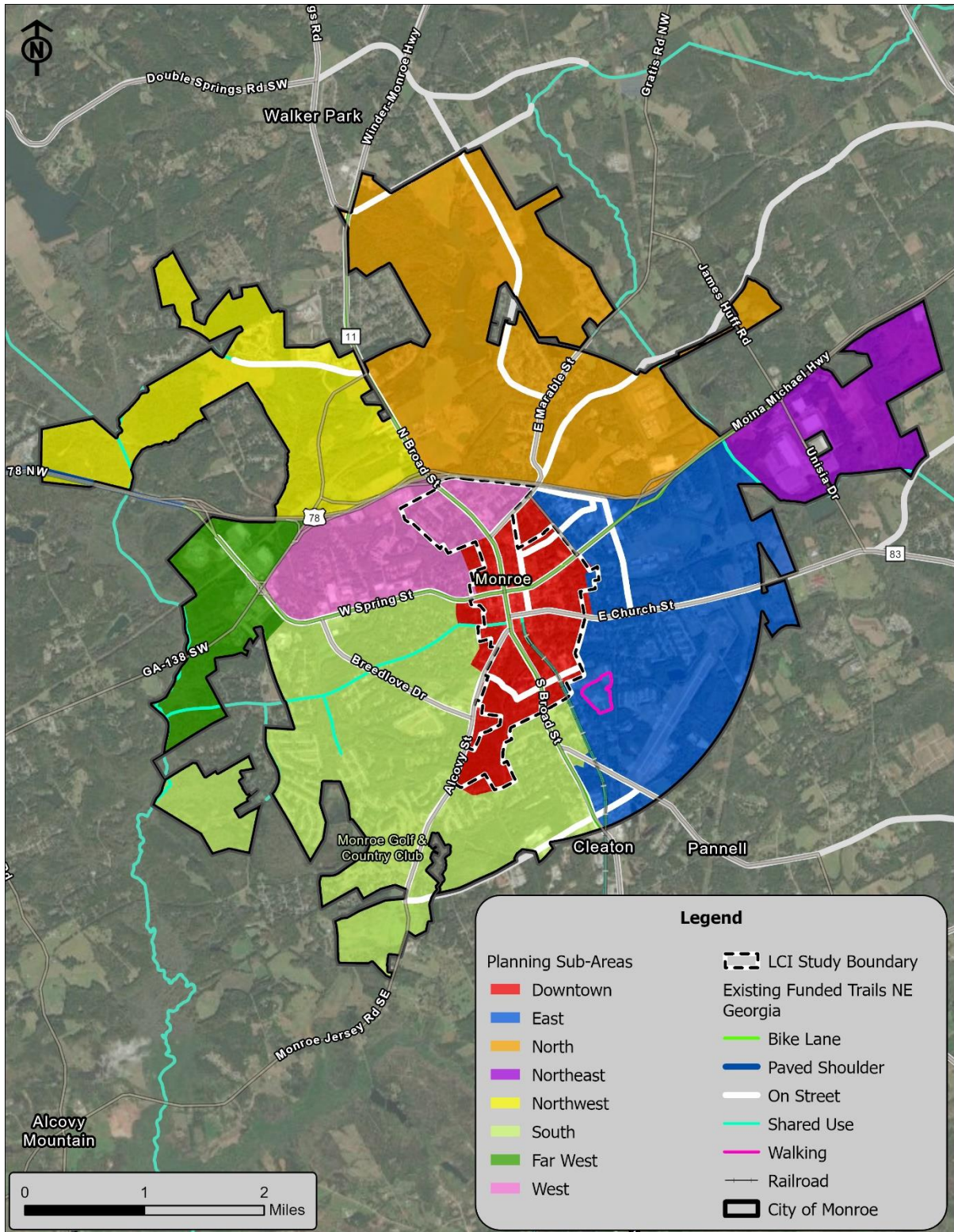
The City of Monroe should look to partner with developers for a win-win relationship. This includes streamlining the development approval process and avoiding the loss of a reasonable economic development of their land. The city can relax density limitations and plan review requirements if developers can provide site plans that meet the overall urban form and land use quantities desired for each sub-area. Even if certain portions of the property resulted in reduced development potential, it is the overall property development potential that is used for determining “takings” and the requirement for reimbursement by the community.

A current development moratorium is in place while the City considers future infrastructure needs and approval of the Comprehensive Plan. Upon completion and approval of the Comprehensive Plan, the City of Monroe should conduct a developer workshop to share the overall Comprehensive Plan concept and opportunities in each sub-area.

The following map provides the sub-area planning areas used in this Comprehensive Plan.

Sub-areas	
<b>Downtown</b>	East
<b>North</b>	Northwest
<b>Northeast</b>	Far West
<b>South</b>	West

FIGURE 34: SUB-AREA BOUNDARY MAP

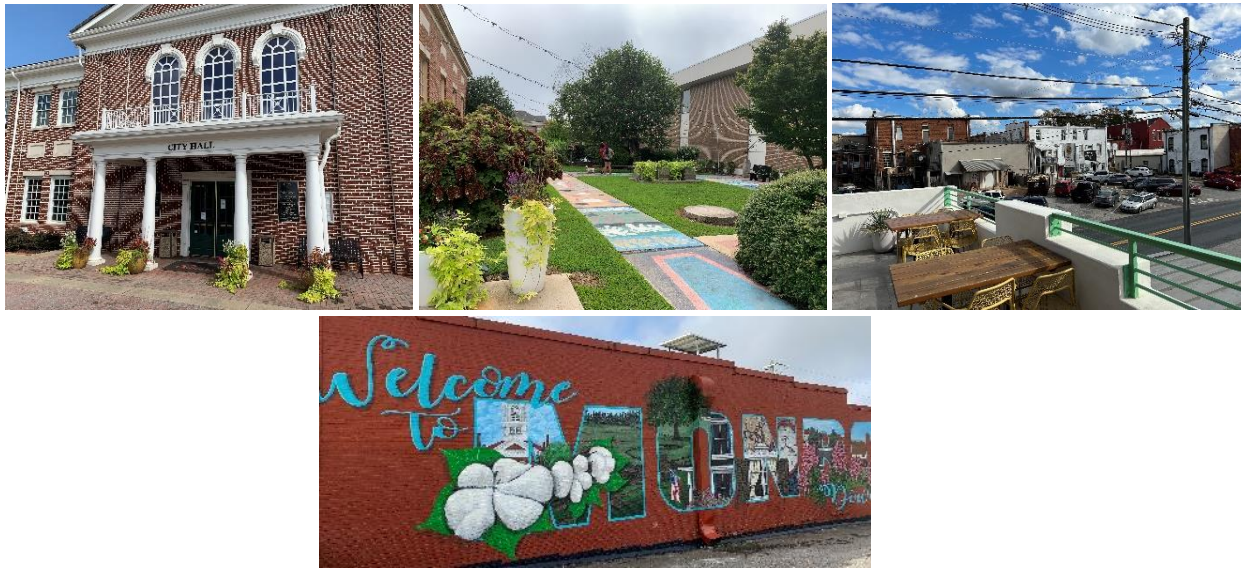




**DOWNTOWN SUB-AREA PLAN**

*Existing General Character*

The Downtown Monroe sub-area boundary is shown on the following page. This area is fairly developed with a mixture of retail, office, and residential. It also is home to many governmental uses, including City Hall, the Courthouse, and Water Treatment Plant.



*Future Character*

This sub-area is the main focal point for the city, offering a variety of commercial uses. A livable center initiative (LCI) plan was developed and being followed. It is anticipated that this area will continue to serve as the central business district with core urban form. To encourage development of a hotel, building height allowance may need to be raised. This will require an adjustment to the smart code which caps building height to no higher than the Courthouse. The recommendation is to allow up to 4 stories in the sub-area, with up to 6 stories in the central business district.

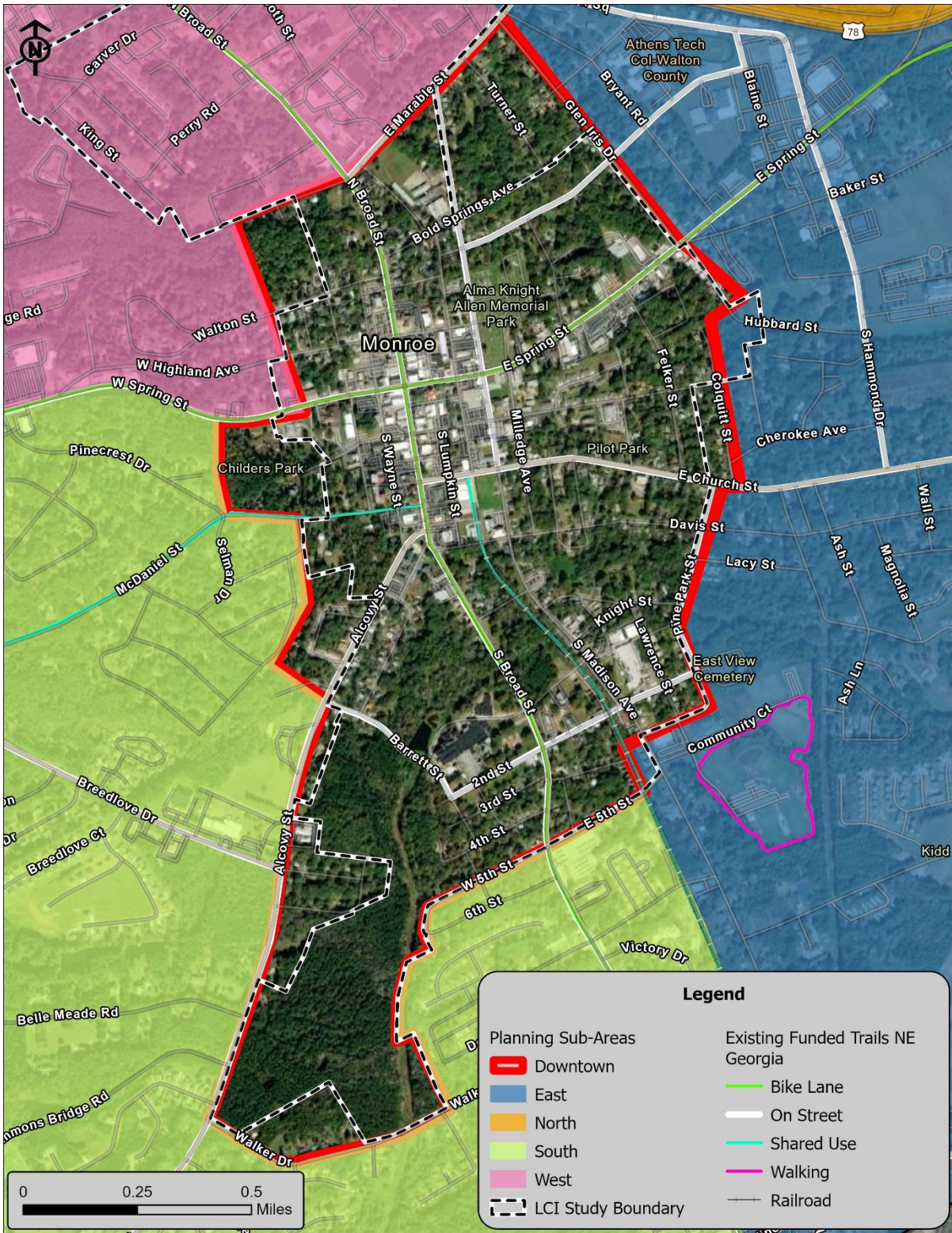
*Land Use Goal Percentages*

In the following table are recommended ranges for site approval considerations. The urban transect is T5 and T6 for purposes of development form. There is no SD form within this sub-area.

TABLE 14: DOWNTOWN SUB-AREA LAND USE GOALS

Land Use	Low	High
Industrial	5%	10%
Office	20%	35%
Retail	20%	35%
Parks/Recreation	5%	10%
Residential	10%	20%

FIGURE 35: DOWNTOWN SUB-AREA PLANNING BOUNDARY



**NORTHEAST SUB-AREA PLAN**

*Existing General Character*

The Northeast Monroe sub-area is shown on the following page. This area is primarily zoned for industrial uses. To meet live-work-play objective of the Comprehensive Plan, zoning/codes should adjust to allow higher density residential, commercial, and recreational uses.



*Future Character*

Given the existing industrial characteristics of this part of Monroe and access to SR78, a continued industrial character is anticipated into the future. To achieve the live-work-play objective of the community, form-based codes and zoning should support inclusion of residential, commercial, and recreational uses to balance the predominantly industrial character.

There is currently proposed a residential workforce development for the area. Since this area is mostly owned by the Industrial Development Authority, the City of Monroe should work with the authority to best achieve the goal for economic development and supporting urban form. Industrial land use is planned to dominate this sub-area with focus on light manufacturing (low noise and pollution).

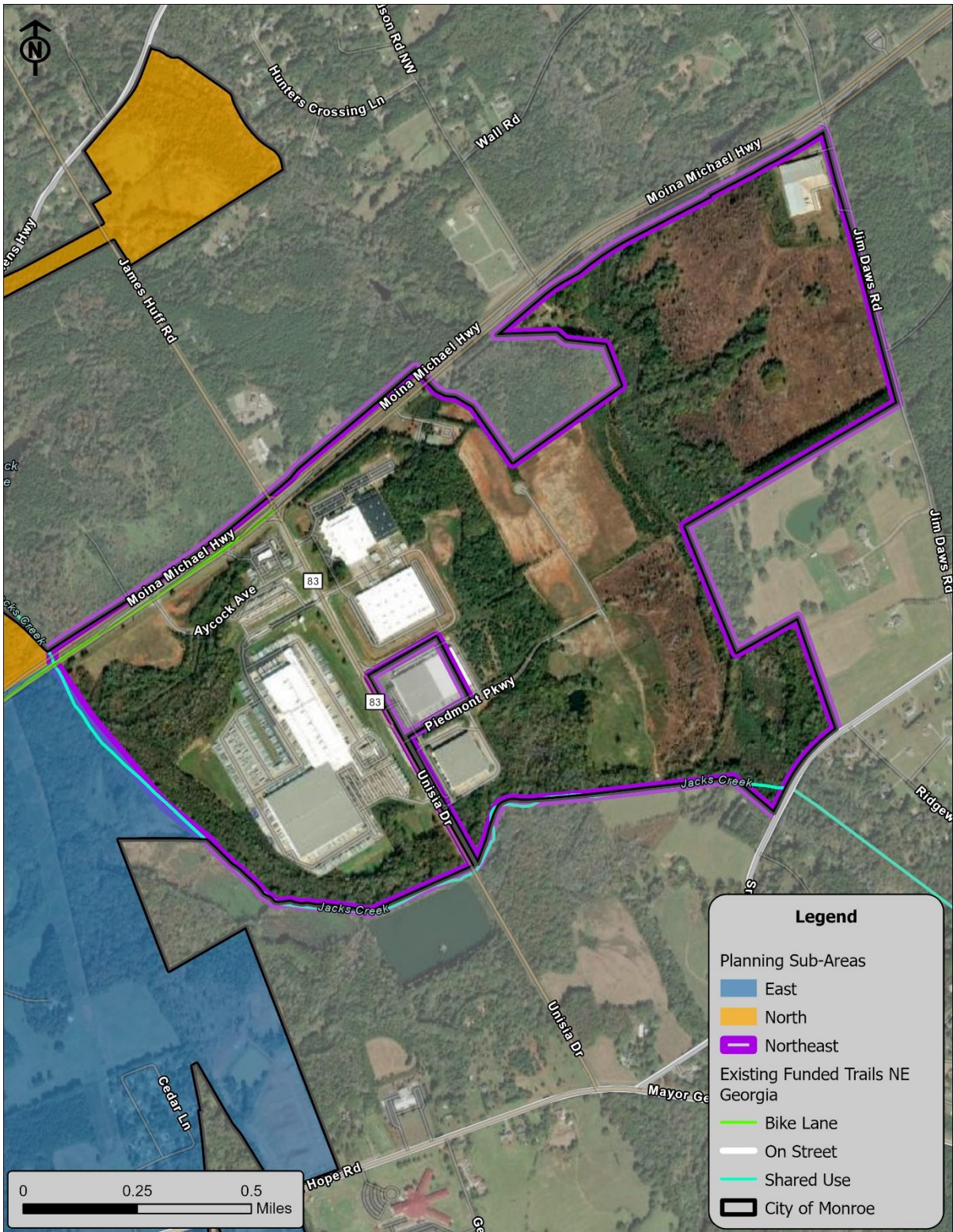
*Land Use Goal Percentages*

The following table shows recommended ranges for site approval considerations. The urban transect is T4 - SD for purposes of development form.

TABLE 15: NORTHEAST LAND USE GOALS

Land Use	Low	High
Industrial	75%	85%
Office	2%	4%
Retail	2%	4%
Parks/Recreation	2%	4%
Residential	5%	10%

FIGURE 36: NORTHEAST SUB-AREA PLANNING BOUNDARY



**NORTH SUB-AREA PLAN**

*Existing General Character*

The North Monroe sub-area is shown on the following page. This area is fairly undeveloped with recent activity related to the Publix development nearby. To meet live-work-play objective of the Comprehensive Plan, zoning/codes should adjust to allow higher density residential, commercial and recreational uses.



*Future Character*

The area will be predominantly single-family larger lot with focused areas of higher density mixed use and recreational areas. Activity areas with pedestrian and bike access would provide a live/work environment. New development should have interconnected streets and connect with existing neighborhoods as possible. Land use should be mixed as shown below.

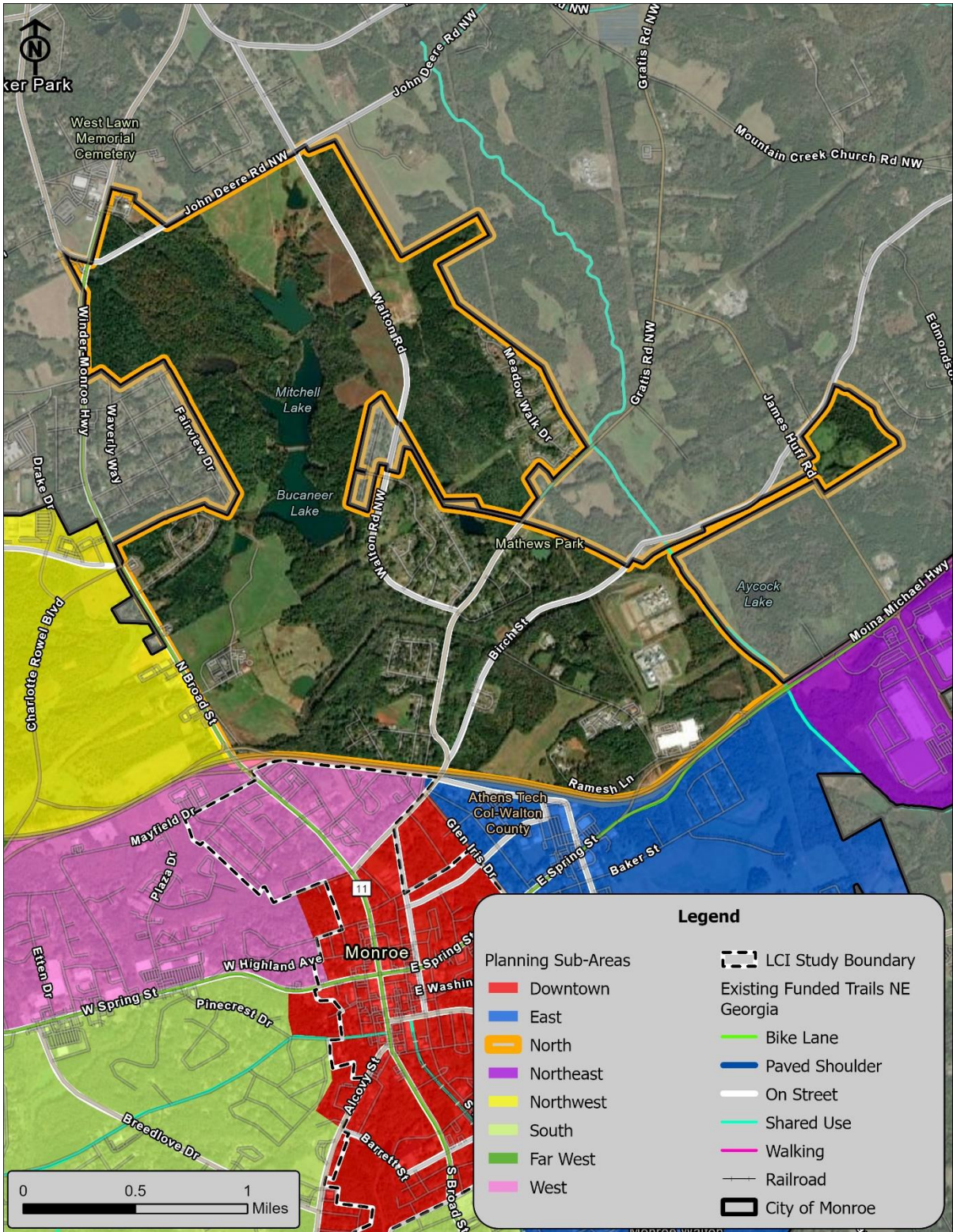
*Land Use Goal Percentages*

The following table provides recommended ranges for site approval considerations. To achieve the goals of the community, the urban form transect would range from T2 through T5 and allow for activity areas. There is no SD form within this sub-area.

TABLE 16: NORTH SUB-AREA LAND USE GOALS

Land Use	Low	High
Industrial	5%	10%
Office	5%	10%
Retail	5%	10%
Parks/Recreation	15%	25%
Residential	40%	60%

FIGURE 37: NORTH SUB-AREA PLANNING BOUNDARY



North Sub-Area

**NORTHWEST SUB-AREA PLAN**

*Existing General Character*

The North Monroe sub-area is shown on the following page. This area is fairly undeveloped with recent activity related to the Publix development and a few new residential subdivisions. To meet live-work-play objective of the Comprehensive Plan, zoning/codes should adjust to allow higher density residential, commercial and recreational uses.



*Future Character*

The area will be predominantly single-family larger lot with focused areas of higher density mixed use and recreational areas. Activity areas with pedestrian and bike access would provide a live/work environment. There is no SD form within this sub-area.

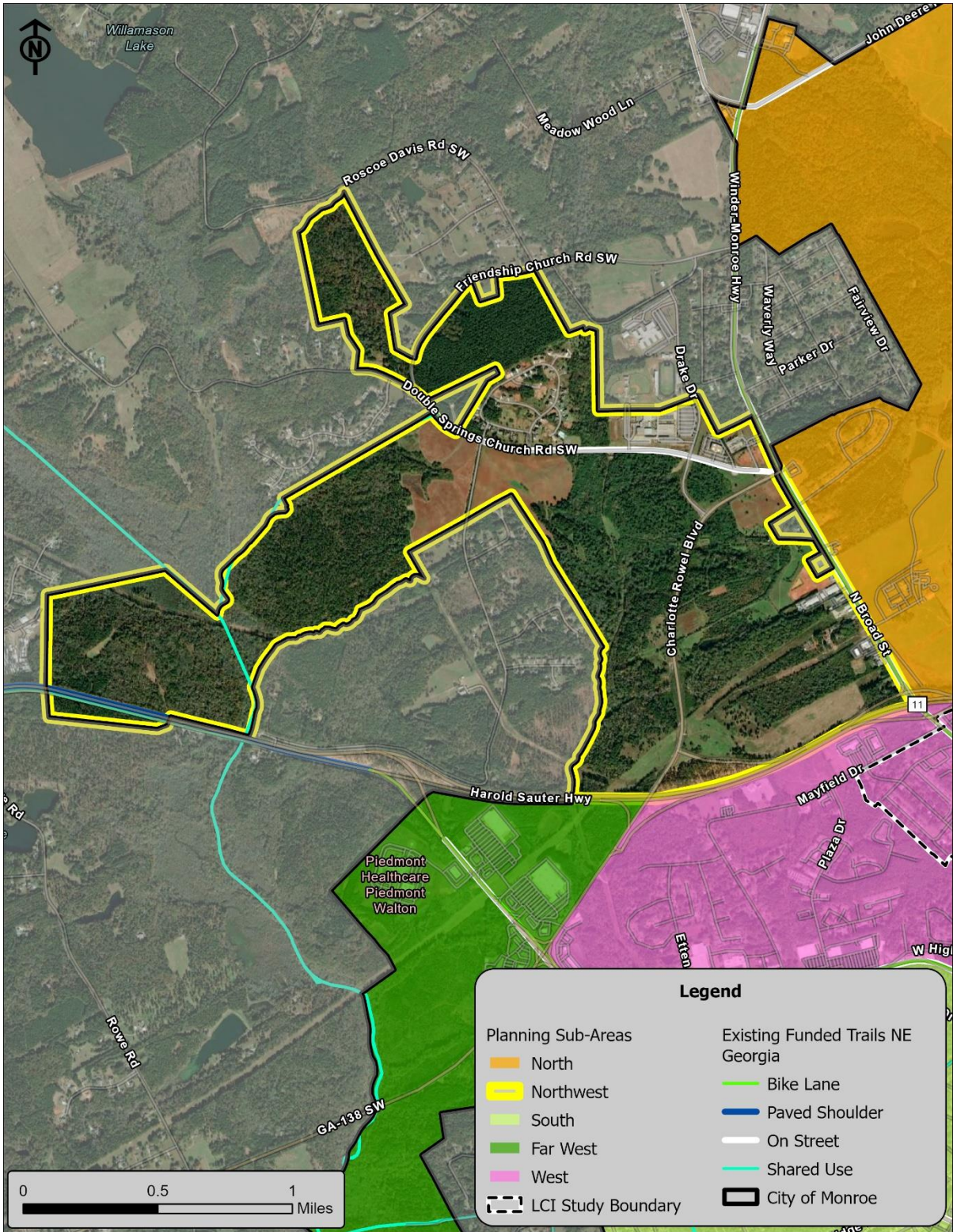
*Land Use Goal Percentages*

The following table provides recommended ranges for site approval considerations. To achieve the goals of the community, the urban form transect would range from T2 through T5 and allow for activity areas.

TABLE 17: NORTHWEST SUB-AREA LAND USE GOALS

Land Use	Low	High
Industrial	5%	10%
Office	5%	10%
Retail	5%	10%
Parks/Recreation	10%	15%
Residential	50%	70%

FIGURE 38: NORTHWEST SUB-AREA PLANNING BOUNDARY

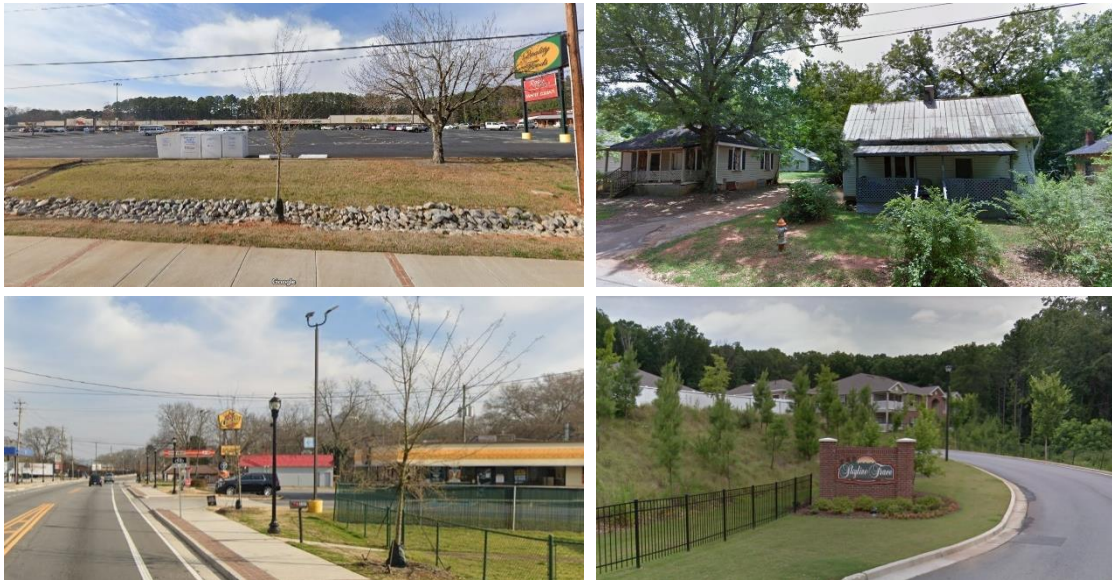




**WEST SUB-AREA PLAN**

*Existing General Character*

The West Monroe sub-area boundary is shown on the following page. This area is fairly developed with a mixture of retail, office, and residential. The existing LCI boundary cross into the eastern portion of the sub-area.



*Future Character*

This sub-area will provide higher density residential and commercial uses. The city currently owns some property to the west for potential open space and road network enhancements.

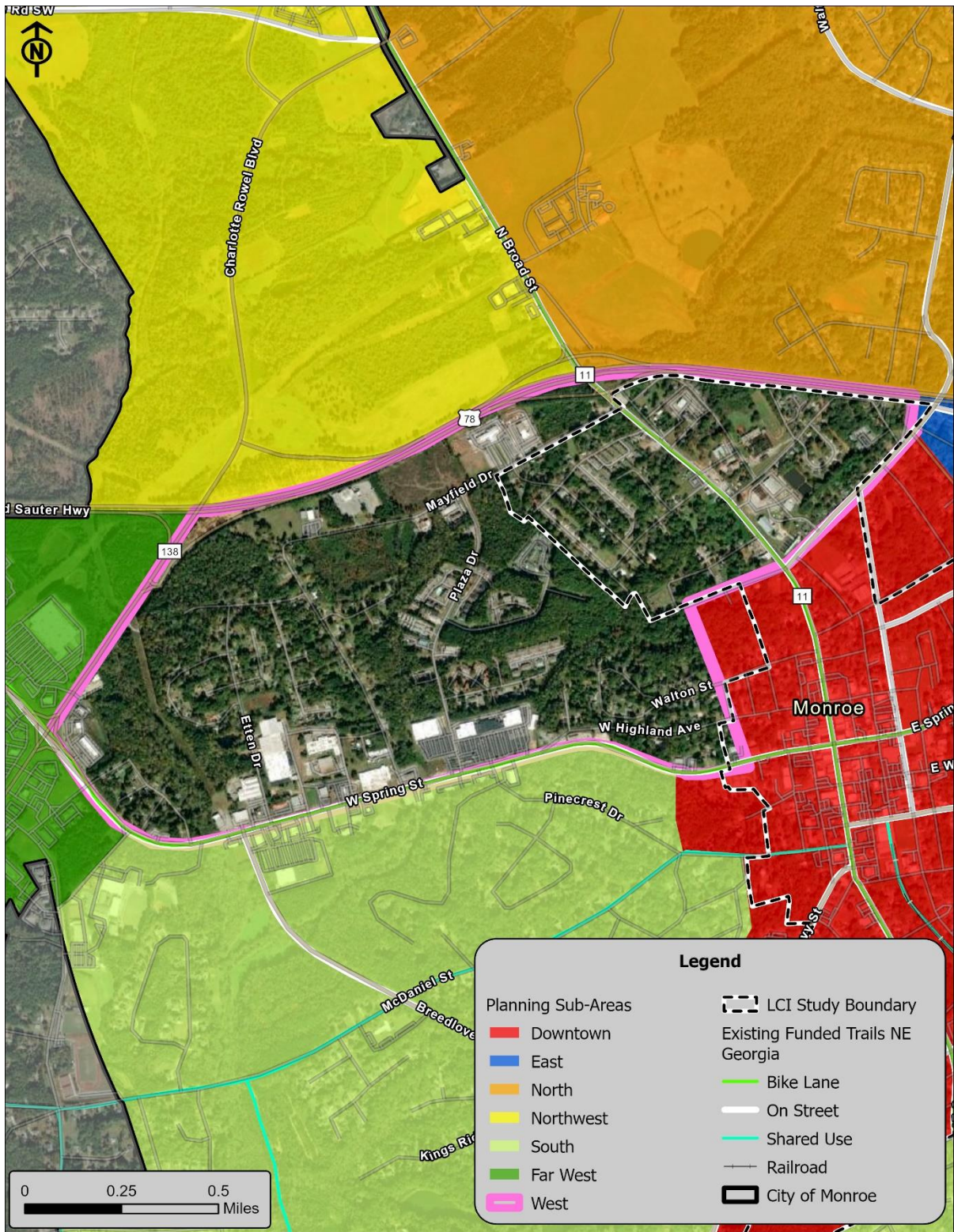
*Land Use Goal Percentages*

The following table shows recommended ranges for site approval considerations. The urban transect is T4, T5, and T6 for purposes of development form. There is no SD form within this sub-area.

TABLE 18: WEST SUB-AREA LAND USE GOALS

Land Use	Low	High
Industrial	5%	10%
Office	15%	25%
Retail	15%	25%
Parks/Recreation	15%	25%
Residential	15%	25%

FIGURE 39: WEST SUB-AREA PLANNING BOUNDARY



**FAR WEST SUB-AREA PLAN**

*Existing General Character*

The Far West sub-area is shown on the following page. This area includes the hospital, Home Depot, and Walmart and other commercial uses. A large undeveloped area is recommended to develop as mixed use commercial and multifamily.



*Future Character*

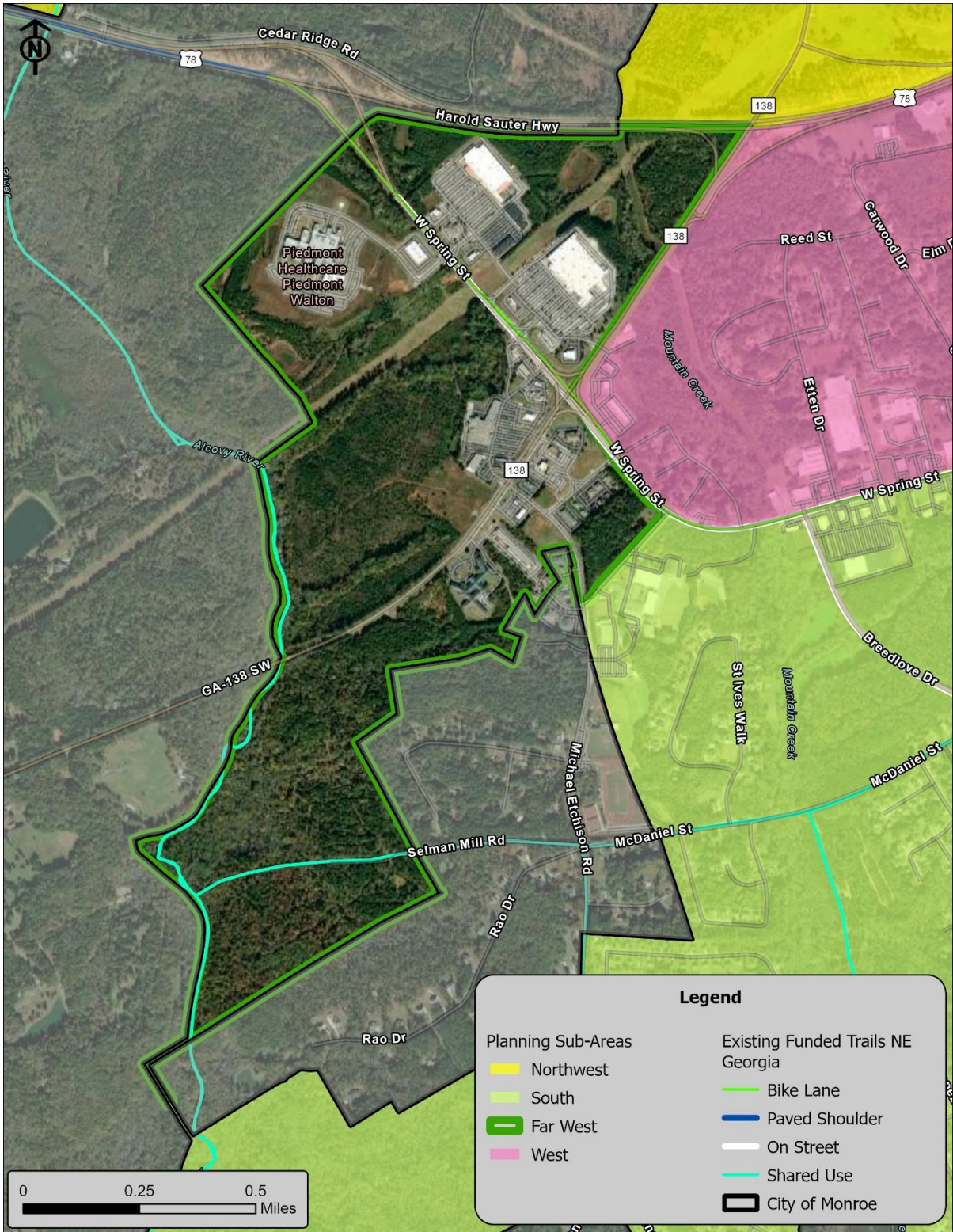
This area has an existing commercial character with a few big-box retail and strip mall development. Future development should include mixed use multifamily and commercial uses. Very light industrial would also be appropriate. New development should include a grid pattern for the road network. Given the availability of undeveloped land, there is an opportunity for the City of Monroe to have larger parks and recreation facilities in this area. This sub-area also has two gateway entrances from SR138 and West Spring Street. Given the proximity of the hospital, medical offices would be an appropriate use.

The following table shows recommended ranges for site approval considerations. The urban transect is T3 through T5 for purposes of development form. There is no SD form within this sub-area.

TABLE 19: FAR WEST SUB-AREA LAND USE GOALS

Land Use	Low	High
Industrial	0%	5%
Office (Emphasis on Medical)	15%	25%
Retail	15%	25%
Parks/Recreation	20%	25%
Multifamily	10%	15%
Single Family	5%	10%

FIGURE 40: FAR WEST SUB-AREA PLANNING BOUNDARY



Far West Sub-Area

**EAST SUB-AREA PLAN**

*Existing General Character*

The East Monroe sub-area is shown on the following page. This area is fairly developed with the municipal airport in the south, several residential subdivisions, a commercial area, Carver Middle School, and Athens Tech on the northern portion. To meet live-work-play objective of the Comprehensive Plan, zoning/codes should adjust to allow higher density residential, commercial, and recreational uses.



*Future Character*

The area will be predominantly residential smaller lot and multifamily focused. Activity areas with pedestrian and bike access would provide a live/work environment. Potential for industrial south of the airport exists.

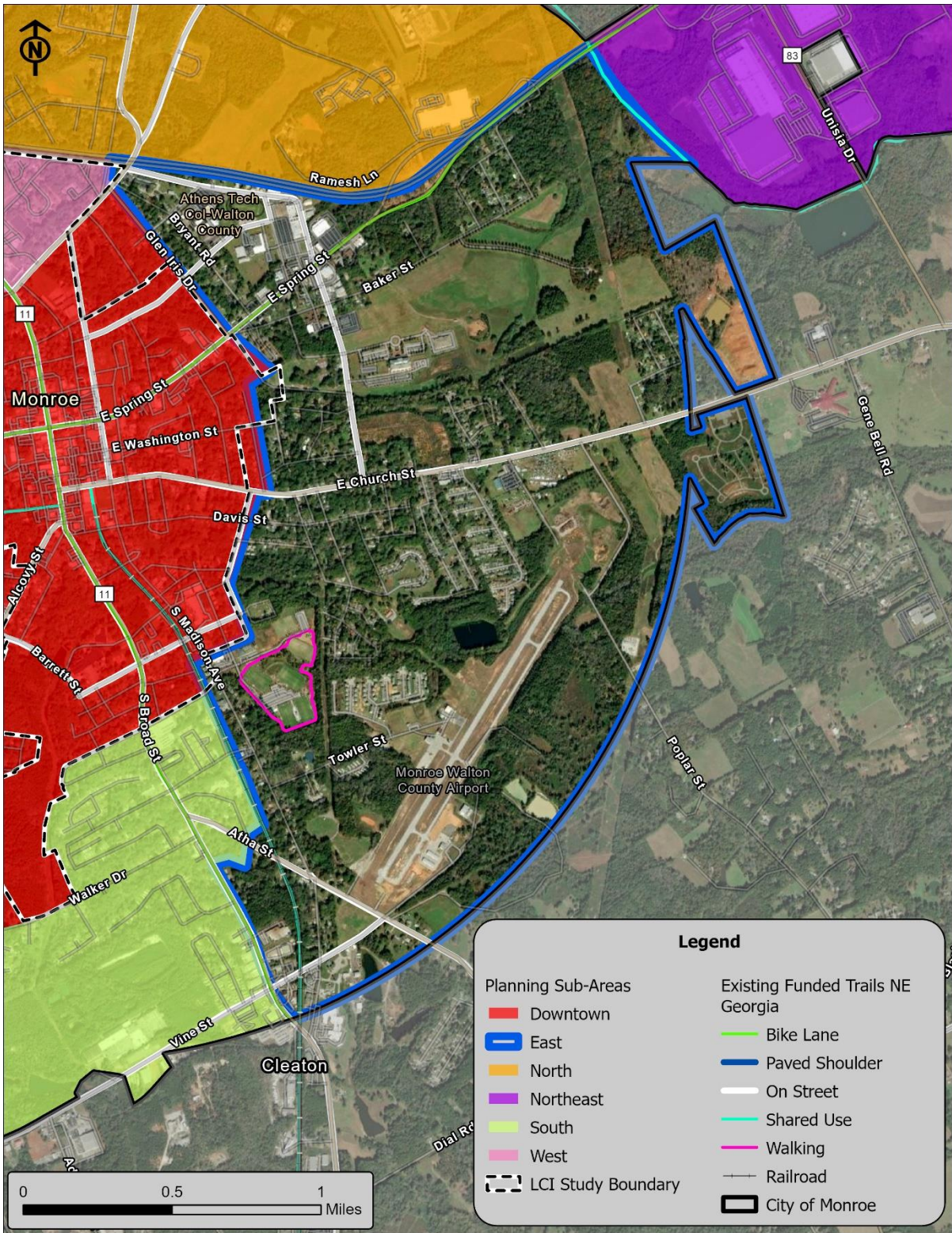
*Land Use Goal Percentages*

The following table shows recommended ranges for site approval considerations. To achieve the goals of the community, the urban form transect would range from T3 through T4 and include SD only for the airport and allow for activity areas. There are planned government facilities within this subarea that should comply with the form based code T4 or T5 if feasible.

TABLE 20: EAST SUB-AREA LAND USE GOALS

Land Use	Low	High
Industrial	5%	10%
Office	5%	10%
Retail	5%	10%
Parks/Recreation	10%	20%
Residential	40%	60%

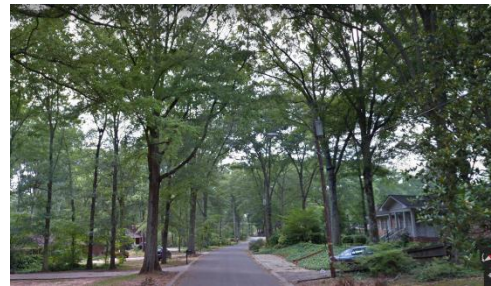
FIGURE 41: EAST SUB-AREA PLANNING BOUNDARY



**SOUTH SUB-AREA PLAN**

*Existing General Character*

The South Monroe sub-area is shown on the following page. This area is fairly developed with a golf course, several residential subdivisions and redevelopment of mobile home park into industrial uses. To meet live-work-play objective of the Comprehensive Plan, zoning/codes should adjust to allow higher density residential, commercial and recreational uses.



*Future Character*

The area will be predominantly single-family larger lot focused. Activity areas with pedestrian and bike access would provide a live/work environment.

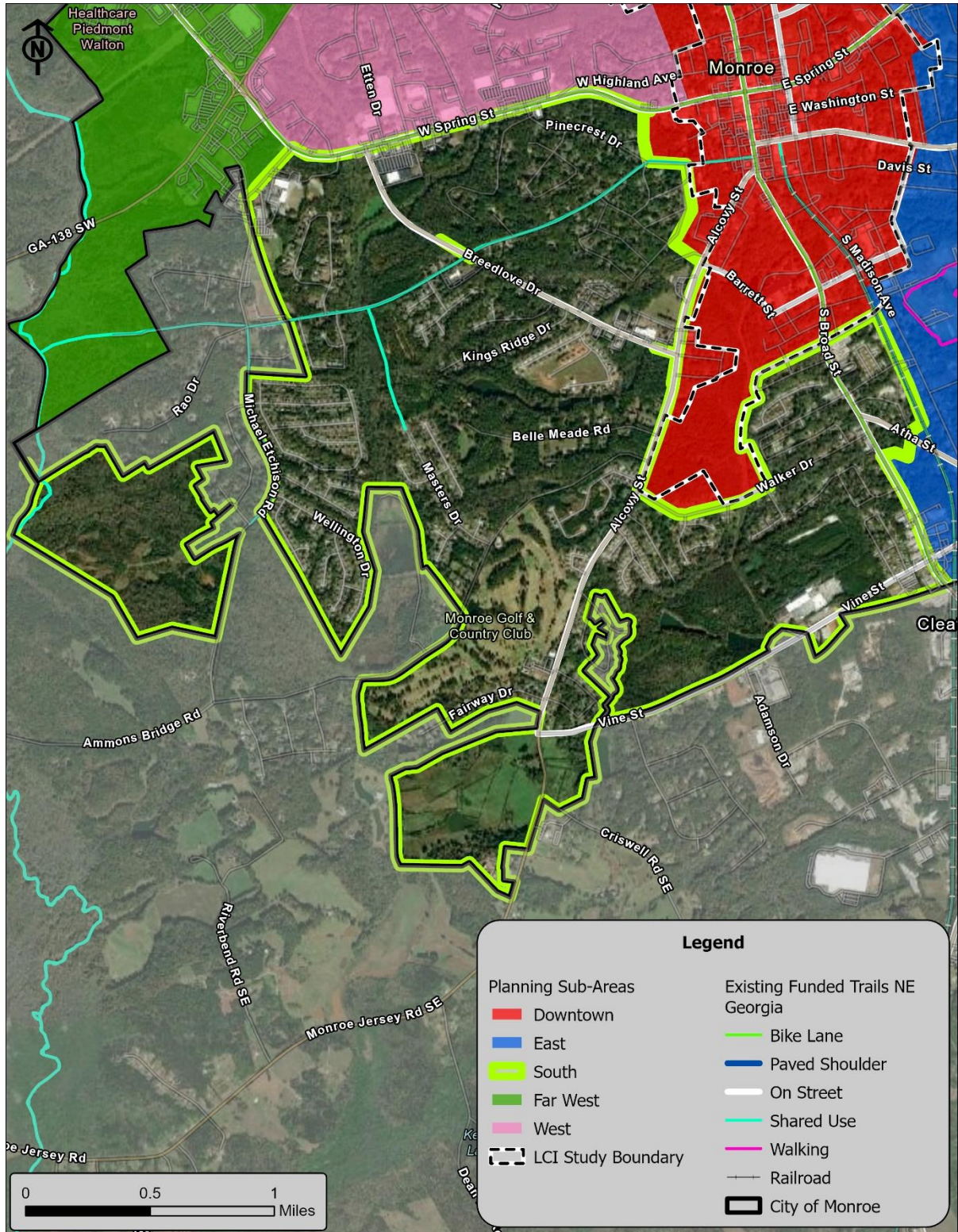
*Land Use Goal Percentages*

The following table are recommended ranges for site approval considerations. To achieve the goals of the community, the urban form transect would range from T3 through T4 and include SD for industrial and allow for activity areas.

TABLE 21: SOUTH SUB-AREA LAND USE GOALS

Land Use	Low	High
Industrial	5%	10%
Office	5%	10%
Retail	5%	10%
Parks/Recreation	10%	20%
Residential	40%	60%

FIGURE 42: SOUTH SUB-AREA PLANNING BOUNDARY





## LAND USE RECOMMENDATIONS, GOALS, AND POLICIES

When all sub-area plans are considered, the overall future land use of the City of Monroe will address the following community goals:

1. Improve economic base of the city
2. Reduce poverty through additional employment opportunities
3. Development of affordable housing
4. Walkable interconnected (grid based) community
5. Provide a variety of housing choices

### *Develop Form Based Codes*

Form-based codes will need to be developed and replace existing Euclidean style zoning. The Smartcode developed for the LCI project can be used and adjusted as needed. Though focus will be on urban form in terms of building placement, street design and grid pattern, a target balance of use will still be warranted. Rather than fix specific uses however, focus will be on creating the appropriate land use activity nodes surrounded by a compatible use. These will be discussed for each planning sub-area.

### *Developer Workshop*

The city should host training sessions for developers so they understand the purpose of the Comprehensive Plan and opportunities in each sub-area. Developers seeking site plan approval should consider the goals of the comprehensive plan in terms of walkability. Node placement within the sub-area is flexible, with emphasis on balancing mixed uses based on target percentages provided for each sub-area. Subsequent placement of activity nodes should be at least  $\frac{3}{4}$  miles apart from approved site plan nodes.

### *Unified Development Ordinance*

The city should form a Development Review Committee to streamline the development process and adopt a Unified Development Ordinance. (UDO) A UDO is a single regulatory document that guides development within a jurisdiction. This may include zoning and subdivision regulations, infrastructure requirements, design guidelines, landscaping standards, sign regulations, etc. Currently, there are multiple development regulations in different places in Monroe's ordinances and a developer needs to consult with several city departments for plans approval. A unified development ordinance would streamline these documents into one combined document that would be more easily accessible to the public, designers, and city staff reviewers.

## COMMUNITY WORK PROGRAM

The community work program is a 5-year detailed plan of activities for the City of Monroe. These could be additional plans, programs and community facilities as well as rehabilitation of existing community facilities. The activities in the work program are derived from the recommendations in each of the previous sections of this comprehensive plan. Grants are competitive and may not necessarily be awarded.

#	Activity	Year	Responsible Party	Cost Estimate	Funding Source
<b>ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT</b>					
1	City Branding Imagery	2024	Central Services	\$200,000	General/Enterprise Fund
2	Atlanta Regional Commission Participation	2023	Community Development	staff time	General Fund
3	Impact Fees (Roads, Libraries, Public Safety, Parks/Recreation)	2022	Planning & Development	\$50,000	Enterprise Fund
4	Internship Programs with Local Schools/Businesses	2023	Community Development	staff time	General Fund/Grants
5	Support Walton Works Organization	Ongoing	Community Development	staff time	General Fund
<b>HOUSING</b>					
6	Georgia Initiative for Community Housing (GICH) Alumni recertification	2023	Community Development	staff time	General Fund
7	Create pre-approved ADU plans	2023	Planning & Development	staff time	General Fund/Grants
<b>LAND USE AND DEVELOPMENT</b>					
8	Unified Development Code	2023	Planning & Development	\$125,000	General Fund
9	Form Based Codes	2023	Planning & Development	\$25,000	General Fund
10	Plan First	2023	Planning & Development	staff time	General Fund
11	Conduct a developer workshop to share the overall Comprehensive Plan concept and opportunities in each sub-area.	2023	Planning & Development	staff time	General Fund
<b>POPULATION/POVERTY</b>					
12	Assist Athens Technical College and Walton Works with marketing	2023	Community Development	staff time	General Fund

**CITY OF MONROE COMPREHENSIVE PLAN**

#	Activity	Year	Responsible Party	Cost Estimate	Funding Source
<b>COMMUNITY FACILITIES</b>					
13	Impact Fees (Roads, Libraries, Public Safety, Parks/Recreation)	2022	Planning & Development	\$50,000	Impact Fee Fund
<b>NATURAL AND CULTURAL RESOURCES</b>					
14	Update Tree Inventory, Management Plan, and Ordinance	2023	Tree Board	staff time	General Fund/Grants
15	Update Historic Preservation Ordinance and Design Guidelines	2024	Planning & Development	\$50,000	General Fund/Grants
16	Cemetery Rehabilitation	2024	Buildings & Grounds	\$150,000	SPLOST
17	Cultural Center (Partnership with others)	2024	Community Development	\$3,000,000	General Fund/Grants
<b>UTILITIES</b>					
18	Sewer Replacement Glen Iris, Stowers, Edwards St.	2022	Sewage Collection System	\$100,000	Enterprise Fund
19	Sewer Replacement Glen Iris, Stowers, Edwards St.	2023	Sewage Collection System	\$500,000	Enterprise Fund
20	Sewer Replacement	2024	Sewage Collection System	\$50,000	Enterprise Fund
21	Sewer Replacement	2025	Sewage Collection System	\$250,000	Enterprise Fund
22	Sewer Main Rehab	Ongoing	Sewage Collection System	\$1,000,000	Enterprise Fund
23	Alcovy River Gravity Sewer	2024	Sewage Treatment Plant	\$4,000,000	Debt
24	Plant Rehab to 5 mgd	2023	Sewage Treatment Plant	\$5,000,000	Debt
25	Wastewater Pump Station Electrical	2022	Sewage Treatment Plant	\$200,000	Enterprise Fund
26	WTP Upgrade 10 mgd to 12 mgd	2023	Water Treatment Plant	\$2,750,000	Debt
27	North Planning Area Fire Flow	2024	Water Distribution System	\$3,500,000	Enterprise Fund
28	Fire Hydrant Replacement	2023	Water Distribution System	\$110,000	Enterprise Fund
29	Water Main Extensions	2025	Water Distribution System	\$600,000	Enterprise Fund
30	Water Tank/Piedmont Industrial Park-Cherry Hill Rd.	2022	Water Distribution System	\$2,500,000	Debt

CITY OF MONROE COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

#	Activity	Year	Responsible Party	Cost Estimate	Funding Source
31	Water Tank/Northside	2023	Water Distribution System	\$1,500,000	Debt
32	Transmission Main to Social Circle	2022	Water Distribution System	\$1,700,000	Debt
33	Stormwater Facilities Rehab/Repair	Ongoing	Stormwater	\$500,000	Enterprise Fund
34	Storm Infrastructure	Ongoing	Stormwater	\$250,000	Enterprise Fund
35	North Madison Stormwater Rehab	2022	Stormwater	\$400,000	Enterprise Fund
36	Master Plan	2022	Stormwater	\$400,000	Enterprise Fund
37	Gas Main Renewal	Ongoing	Natural Gas	\$1,600,000	Enterprise Fund
38	Gas Extensions	Ongoing	Natural Gas	\$1,000,000	Enterprise Fund
39	Fiber Expansion	2026	Telecom & Internet	\$15,700,000	Debt
40	New Subdivision Telecom	2024	Telecom & Internet	\$1,595,000	Enterprise Fund
41	Water First	2022	Monroe Utilities Dept.	staff time	General Fund
42	Become a Broadband Ready Community	2022	Telecom & Internet	\$0	General Fund
43	Downtown Wi-Fi	2022	Telecom & Internet	\$0	General Fund
44	Utility Specifications/Development	2022	Monroe Utilities Dept.	staff time	General Fund
45	System Development Charge Update (Water/Wastewater)	2022	Monroe Utilities Dept.	\$20,000	Enterprise Fund
<b>TRANSPORTATION</b>					
46	Trails Master Plan	2024	Parks & Recreation	staff time	General Fund
47	Complete Streets	2023	Planning & Development	staff time	General Fund
48	Vehicle Replacement	2022	Central Services	\$38,500	Enterprise Fund
49	Gateway Entrance Signage/Landscaping	2022	Buildings & Grounds	\$30,000	SPLOST
50	Terminal Building	2022	Airport	\$550,000	SPLOST/Grant
51	Traffic Calming	2022	Streets & Transportation	\$500,000	Enterprise Fund
52	Wayne St. Streetscape	2023	Streets & Transportation	\$1,000,000	Enterprise Fund

CITY OF MONROE COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

#	Activity	Year	Responsible Party	Cost Estimate	Funding Source
53	Mayfield Dr to Hwy 138 Connector	2026	Streets & Transportation	\$2,400,000	General Fund/SPLOST
54	Joint Transportation Hwy 11/78 Interchange	2025	Streets & Transportation	\$750,000	SPLOST
55	Joint Transportation Hwy 11/78 On-ramp	2022	Streets & Transportation	\$400,000	SPLOST
56	Michael Etchison Connector	2024	Streets & Transportation	\$1,200,000	SPLOST
57	New Sidewalks	2024	Streets & Transportation	\$255,000	SPLOST
58	Street and Sidewalk Rehab	2024	Streets & Transportation	\$135,000	SPLOST
<b>PARKS &amp; RECREATION</b>					
59	Facilitate Creation of "Friends of the Parks"	2023	Central Services	staff time	General Fund/grants
60	Town Green Improvements	2022	Buildings & Grounds	\$3,200,000	SPLOST/Grant/Enterprise Fund
61	Parks Rehabilitation	Ongoing	Buildings & Grounds	\$750,000	SPLOST
62	Sunshade Structures	2026	Buildings & Grounds	\$85,000	SPLOST
63	Park Restroom Facilities	2023	Buildings & Grounds	\$150,000	SPLOST
64	Parks and Recreation Master Plan	2023	Parks & Recreation	--	General Fund
65	Implement Parks Master Plan	2024	Parks & Recreation	--	General Fund/Grants

## APPENDIX A: REPORT OF ACCOMPLISHMENTS

#	Activity	Timeframe	Responsible Party	Cost Estimate	Funding Source	STATUS	NOTES
<b>POPULATION</b>							
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	complete	Position created and person hired. When person left the activities moved to different departments
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	not-complete	This activity will be moved into the Housing of the updated STWP and included as part of maintaining GICH alumni status
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	complete	Collaborated with county to complete Hazard Mitigation Plan

## APPENDIX A: REPORT OF ACCOMPLISHMENTS

### ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

4	*Update and revitalize downtown buildings, landscape, and parking	2017-2018	DDA, Main St., streets and transportation	Staff time	Local	ongoing	Ongoing implementation of LCI and other plans
5	Work with local merchants groups to create a “Buy Local” program	2017-2018	Economic development and public relations liaison	Staff time	Local	complete	Downtown Dollar program implemented by Chamber of Commerce
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	complete	Branding package and look book complete.
7	*Develop incentive programs for investment in new development	2017	Economic development, utilities, finance	Staff time	Local	not-complete	Not needed because market forces have been so strong
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	complete	Young Game Changers Plan and others
9	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	underway	

## APPENDIX A: REPORT OF ACCOMPLISHMENTS

### LAND USE, HOUSING, AND DEVELOPMENT

10	Identify suitable locations for commercial development that is consistent with the community's vision	2017-2021	P&Z, economic development	Staff time	Local	complete	New Publix shopping area
11	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	complete	Overlay district
12	Inventory housing stock and develop plan to eradicate blight	2017-2021	P&Z, economic development, GICH team	None – volunteer	NA	complete	Developed options were not formalized and include stronger code enforcement
12	*Develop a plan and initiatives for affordable housing	2017-2019	GICH team, P&Z	Staff time	Local	not-complete	Comp Plan update will include a Housing Study in STWP
13	Create greenway along creek in Avondale Mills area	2017-2020	Property owner/developer	\$2 million- \$5 million	Private	not-complete	This is private property so not feasible. Will be removed from STWP.



**APPENDIX A: REPORT OF ACCOMPLISHMENTS**

**NATURAL AND CULTURAL RESOURCES**

14	Establish a tree-planting program	2018	Tree board	None – volunteer	NA	underway	City invested \$50,000, Tree Ordinance needs updating
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**COMMUNITY FACILITIES & SERVICES**

15	SR 138 sewer extension/infrastructure improvement	2017	Utilities	\$1.2 million	Local	underway	
16	5th and 6th St. water, stormwater, curb, and gutter infrastructure	2017-2018	Utilities	\$500,000	State, local, CDBG	complete	
17	Gas line relocation for SR 78 bridge	2017	Utilities	\$400,000	Local	complete	
18	Southe Madison Avenue Target Area sewer improvements	2018-2019	Utilities	\$1,000,000	State, local, CDBG	complete	

## APPENDIX A: REPORT OF ACCOMPLISHMENTS

### TRANSPORTATION

19	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	partially completed	Need a master plan for complete streets and trails. Young Gamechangers is a start.
20	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	ongoing	Joint City/County task force
21	Implement sidewalk master plan	2017-2020	Streets and transportation	\$5.9 million	SPLOST, CDBG	ongoing	Need to update master plan. Older portion of plan is complete.
22	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	complete	
23	Resurface 12 centerline miles throughout the city	2017-2021	Streets and transportation	\$975,000	SPLOST	complete	actually resurfaced more
24	New sidewalk construction throughout the city	2017-2021	Streets and transportation	\$475,000	SPLOST	complete	
25	Spring St. sidewalk project	2017-2018	Streets and transportation	\$2 million	SPLOST, local	complete	
26	N Broad St. LCI streetscape project	2017-2018	Streets and transportation, P&Z, finance, utilities	\$2.5 million	Federal, state, local	complete	

CITY OF MONROE COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

26	SR 83 truck connector	2020	GDOT	TBD	Local (\$400,000), state TBD	underway	Right of way acquisition is in underway, construction to start in 2022
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	complete	



## APPENDIX B: PUBLIC OUTREACH SUPPLEMENT

### SUMMARY OF INTERVIEWS

As part of the Update of the Comprehensive Plan City elected officials and other stakeholders were interviewed. The purpose of the interviews was to identify issues and opportunities, facilities needs, growth trends, and to identify any additional factors that are important to the Comprehensive Plan. City staff created a list of persons to interview.

A total of eleven people were interviewed. Interviewees were informal, and generally were asked the following questions:

- How has the City/County Changed in the last 20 years? (or in the time you have lived or worked here.)
- What have been the City’s/County’s greatest achievements in the past 4-5 years?
- What has been the City’s/County’s biggest lost opportunity in the past 4-5 years?
- What do you believe are the most important issues the City of Waycross and/or Ware County should address in the Comprehensive Plan Update?
- Which characteristics of the City/County should be maintained for the future?
- Which characteristics of the City/County should be changed as it moves forward?
- What activities or goals should be the City’s/County’s primary focus in the near term (5 years)?
- What long-range (10-20 years) activities or goals should the City/County focus on?
- Do you have any additional information that may be helpful for us to know or understand?

The following section summarizes the results of the interviews.

Community Members Interviewed		
<u>Name</u>		<u>Organization</u>
<b>Lisa</b>	Anderson	Downtown Development Authority, URA, CVB
<b>Simoan</b>	Baker	Community Member
<b>Larry</b>	Bradley	District 4
<b>Kimberly</b>	Brown	Community Member
<b>Myoshia</b>	Crawford	District 2
<b>David</b>	Dickinson	District 8
<b>Nathan</b>	Franklin	Walton County Schools
<b>Norman</b>	Garrett	District 5
<b>Gregory</b>	Tyler	District 6
<b>Lee</b>	Malcom	District 1
<b>Paul</b>	Rosenthal	City Attorney; Downtown Developer

## INTERVIEW RESULTS

### *Economic Development*

After the recession Monroe was not doing well. Downtown had empty storefronts. The City's financials were sound, but the local economy was not good. Needed more sales tax and better local economy. Downtown redevelopment and growth helped rebuild the city. Downtown events helped by bringing more people downtown, allowing businesses to flourish. Businesses like Story Shop, Walton Tribune and Scoops made downtown more family friendly. Little boutiques popped up, Coffee Camper. More reinvestment downtown due to this. The reinvestment lead to More outdoor socialization and gave younger families a place to go.

The YMCA and the new Publix Pavilion are examples of new developments outside the downtown that are viewed positively by almost all interviewees. Those with negative views of the Publix development described it as a strip mall and a sign of sprawl.

Much of the economic activity has been attributed to good leadership in the city's government that lead to enhancing the zoning ordinance by rewriting city code, creating the opportunity zone, LCI, T-Grant for north and south gateways, Church street green, DDA façade grants, Infill overlay, Childers Park, etc.

The city was able to leverage its inclusion in the ARC MPO to develop and start implementing the Downtown LCI Plan. Unfortunately, Monroe was removed from ARC by Walton County, thereby eliminating LCI Grant opportunities – North and South Broad street improvements were from LCI grants.

### *Poverty, Diversity, and Housing*

Interviewees all agree that addressing housing is the most urgent issue in the city. Another pressing issue is poverty. Interviewees suggested focusing on improving income, through improved jobs and education. Education has improved in Walton County, but the workforce needs educational opportunities. One interviewee said the schools used to have a career academy at Athens Tech, but it closed.

Interviewees said the city has tried to move in a direction that is more inviting with things like beautification of sidewalks and a vibrant downtown. They are happy to have the downtown looking good but need to figure out how to make it more inclusive. There is less segregation than in times past, but there is still a long way to go.

There is a racial divide in the city. Black leaders feel disenfranchised. One interviewee said that Monroe now is moving in a direction (not sure if calculated or not) of moving people in but possibly at the expense of those who have lived there. They are worried that the city may not be as diverse in the future as it is currently and that is concerning. Another interviewee said that the businesses and people downtown are not a reflection of the community as a whole and that the City does not care about black people. Interviewees suggested that the city should hire more people of color into high level positions to improve diversity.

Historically, Monroe has had a lot of slum housing. There are a handful of slumlords that own large numbers of properties. Not all the properties are rundown, but many are. Interviewees state the need to either tear down and replace blighted properties or force landlords to bring them up to standards.

Renters are getting pushed out of their homes because of rising rents. People can't afford to live in Monroe anymore. Elderly people on fixed income are struggling the most. Some interviewees suggest educating tenants that low rent plus high utilities is worse than high rent and lower utilities. Education is a better long term solution than FISH and government housing.

Interviewees state that more affordable homeownership opportunities are needed. The market for housing is so strong that homes are not affordable. To help with housing problems, mixed housing is needed – apartments and diversity of housing stock. At least one interviewee hopes to see a tiny house development as an experiment. They said that there is a developer that wants to do it and would like to work to see what can be done, but it is not a solution for everything.

Interviewees support cleaning up the areas in Monroe that have slumlord housing, but are concerned about displacement of those residents. Where can they go and what will the new place look like? They prefer near downtown, over another place for relocation, but the other areas could redevelop in place. For example, Old Carver area, the HS was torn down but gym remains. There are old run down apartments across from new sidewalks and streets to revamp area. More work can be done to get it up to par with downtown. There are similar issues near the Old Mill.

Monroe needs a neighborhood revitalization program. Gwinnett/Walton habitat is a good example. Partner with other organizations provide incentives to update homes. Give people pride of where they live.

#### *Infrastructure and Services*

Many of the interviewees focused on the parks in the city. County parks provide recreation and sports, and County parks within the City were in disrepair so the City took responsibility for them. Maintenance costs will become an issue. Also, the investments in parks has not been distributed equally throughout the community. The impoverished areas of the city do not have maintained parks. Coker Field, Hammond Park, and the park on Green Street were all mentioned as needing investment.

Interviewees are very excited about the new river park on 138 and the Alcovy River.

One interviewee suggested that they will need a new fire station to accommodate growth around public and to serve the west side. He hopes the Comprehensive Plan will identify a need for a fire station because there is no strategic plan for fire services.

Interviewees suggested the need for a civic center on hwy 11 north, across 78 on the right. They desire a civic center like the one in Oconee County. They also cited the need for hotels, as there are no hotels in Monroe.

Finally, Code Enforcement should do a better job cleaning up the city. Also, Animal Control is provided by Walton County and dog breeding/tethering is a problem in Monroe. The County is not as helpful as the city.

#### *Land Use and Transportation*

Interviewees support replacing the traditional Euclidean zoning that “does nothing but create suburban sprawl”. Codes and ordinance should focus on form, density, and walkability. Residents need to change the way they think about transportation. They complain about traffic. We need to get people out of cars

and walking, biking, golf carts, etc. Planning and zoning commission need to understand the purpose of ordinances, so they support the intent of the overlay district and future code changes. They also need to be more involved in City affairs, and need more training.

Parking is not a problem if people are willing to walk a couple of blocks. There are 800 parking spaces downtown, but those spaces may not be close to the restaurant they want or don't know where they are.

There are communication issues between the schools and city and county. They need to plan for growth together. Or, at the minimum, the schools should be made aware of incoming developments that impact population density and school registrations.

## VISUAL PREFERENCE SURVEY SUMMARY

Every participant at the Visioning Workshop on January 13, 2022 completed a VPS. They ranked a series of photos of types of development for appropriateness in the historic districts and outside the historic districts. Participants were seated at 9 tables and shared their individual results with others at their tables and determined what they had in common with each other. Then each table shared their results with the entire group.

### GENERAL COMMENTS:

Workshop participants expressed great concern over affordability. A few commented that none of the options on the VPS would be affordable. (with the exception of #13 and #14)

### DOWNTOWN SINGLE-FAMILY INFILL RESIDENTIAL OPTIONS WITHIN HISTORIC DISTRICTS (PHOTOS 1-4)

Some participants expressed concern that high density development will increase traffic and parking. One person mentioned that density limits the ability for families to enjoy their yards and do gardening. Also, not everyone wants to live in a historic home and none of the options presented appear to be affordable.



This design stood out as a favorite and is representative of homes in the City. One table said that the homes were too close together. One table said that having the homes close to the road is inviting. Another said that it looks walkable. One person suggested that there would be a parking problem.





This was the least favorite type of development for SF homes in the historic districts.



This was a very popular option for the downtown area. The look and scale matches the Mill District. Participants stated that is nice to see high-quality smaller homes. They like that is looks like old, revitalized housing.

NEW SINGLE-FAMILY DEVELOPMENT OPTIONS OUTSIDE OF DOWNTOWN (PHOTOS 5-8)



This was a favorite.



This was the least favorite of the SF photos for outside the historic district. The homes look “cookie cutter”. Some participants mentioned that this could possibly be affordable, which is a good thing because affordable housing is desperately needed.



Participants like this photo, especially the middle house. They liked the common spaces



Some tables liked the open space in this photo while others found it inappropriate for the City.

### DOWNTOWN MULTI-FAMILY INFILL RESIDENTIAL OPTIONS WITHIN HISTORIC DISTRICTS

The general consensus on multi-family downtown is that the design and type depends on where it is located. For example the new apartment building at Walton Mill was brought up as a positive example. It is made of high quality materials and fits with the desired atmosphere of the Mill District. Affordability was a concern. None of the choices presented appeared affordable.



This was a popular choice.



These were unpopular. The comment “too much like Snellville” got some laughs.



This was a popular choice.



This was a popular choice for downtown. Reusing existing buildings for multi-family and multi-use works well within the historic district.

## NEW MULTI-FAMILY DEVELOPMENT OPTIONS OUTSIDE OF DOWNTOWN

Participants shared some general comments about multi-family housing outside of downtown. First, there needs to be affordable housing. The choices offered did not appear affordable, with the possible exception of 13 and 14. Also, some participants said they did not want multi-family with “large footprints”. In other word, smaller developments are preferable to larger ones. Lack of maintenance was also brought up.



This apartment complex was unpopular because it appears “cookie cutter” and “corporate”. They also mentioned here that lack of maintenance could be a problem if quality materials are not used. One table liked this the best, affordable.



This photo was only mentioned once. It was “cookie cutter”.



This was popular among participants.



This was a favorite. Participants liked the modern look.

## PARKING DOWNTOWN

To stay on schedule, the group decided to end on Parking. Some people think there is a parking problem downtown, while others said that better awareness of where the parking is would solve the problem. They added that in the future there may be more of a real parking problem. One person would like some greenspace for people with pets. Some mentioned EV parking is needed.



The idea of a parking deck was very popular. However, they prefer a deck that is more attractive than the one in the photo. Adding multi-use to parking decks was suggested. Some participants expressed concern over personal safety in parking decks while others mentioned how expensive they are to build.



Most participants like on street parking the best.

SIGN IN SHEETS

SIGN-IN SHEET

City of Monroe Comprehensive Plan  
Public Meeting - Visioning Workshop  
Thursday, January 13, 2022

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Tyler Ferrugia	1292 Rowe Road Monroe, GA 30655		
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Crista Carroll	630 Riverbend Rd Monroe, GA 30655		
Pat Rosenthal			

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Steering Committee 4/8/2022

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Kim Smith	Monroe Museum
Sadie Frawley	City of Monroe
Jami Cash	MAHS
HUGO BRYAN-PATRICK	
Cynthia Conell	Washoe Hill Events
NED BUTLER	Reliant Homes
BRAD CAULDER	CITY OF MONROE

