

City of Monroe Development Plan Introduction

*Securing Monroe's growth, prosperity,
and comfort for years to come*

Introduction

Through shared interests and ideas, the City and community at large have developed a framework for a plan that will take Monroe into the future.

As mandated by Washington State's Growth Management Act (GMA), the City of Monroe is updating its 2005 comprehensive plan (last update 2013). This update revises policies from that plan, includes new public input inspired policies, and incorporates policy direction from newer documents adopted following the 2005 plan adoption.

Having a Comprehensive Plan is a first step, there must also be a plan to implement and manage the plan. To that end there are three specific areas that must be addressed:

Refine: Develop specific departmental and area/topic-specific plans.

Regulate: Develop and adopt appropriate regulations.

Finance: Budgeting and initiating directed investments

The City has already taken several big steps in that direction having prepared:

- A Transportation System Plan
- A Utilities Systems Plan
- A Parks Recreation & Open Space Plan



Figure 1.01 - Monroe has a remarkable number of factors favoring long-term growth, most notably proximity to a booming metropolitan region. Policies in this plan will help Monroe embrace growth in ways that help preserve - or enhance - its most important qualities. (Image source: Studio Cascade, Inc.)

Plan Participants

This plan update included the combined efforts of:

- The Planning Commission
- The Parks Board
- The City Council
- The Community - Public outreach included:
 - A series of community "stakeholder" interviews
 - Several workshop meetings
 - A week-long "storefront studio" series
 - Electronic newsletters
 - Two project websites
 - A Citizens' advisory committee



Figure 1.02 - The City of Monroe, located here in its regional context and among its immediate neighbors. (Image source: Google™ maps, Studio Cascade, Inc.)

Plan Platform

- Reinforces positive aspects of the City while striving to overcome barriers to success.
- Balancing the need to encourage growth and investment with the need to sustain and enhance qualities residents already cherish.

Plan goal/policy updates are based on issues and priorities submitted by the community.

For purposes of the plan, the terms “Goal”, “Policy”, and “Action” are defined as:

- 1) *Goal* - Broad statements indicating a general aim or purpose to be achieved. A goal is a direction setter, an ideal future end, condition, or state related to the public health, safety, or general welfare toward which planning and implementation measures are directed.

- 2) *Policy* - A policy is a topic-specific statement providing guidelines for current and future decision-making. It indicates a clear commitment of the local legislative body. A policy is an extension of a plan’s goals, reflecting topical nuance as well as an assessment of conditions.
- 3) *Action* - Actions are budgetable steps envisioned or undertaken to implement plan policy. Actions may include the development of more detailed and localized plans, work to implement policies, formal agreements, regulations or other strategies.

Using This Document

Towns and cities generally employ two types of instruments to guide and enact legislation. Each is intentionally distinct, well-coordinated and complementary:

- *Policy Documents* - Such as comprehensive plans
- *Regulatory Documents* - Such as zoning or development regulations.

In using this document, it is important to understand that its intended role is:

- *An internal guide, providing City staff with goals, policies and actions leading work and budgeting activities*
- *A guide for elected and appointed leaders, providing direction on decision-making and in establishing regulation*
- *An agreement or understanding between residents and their leadership, articulating and establishing expectations regarding key issues, services and actions.*

Understand there are limits to this plan. It does not hold legal sway over City activities or automatically extend into land-use regulation. It is intended to provide a first comprehensive, coordinated step towards a large variety of community goals. Additional steps are just as essential:

- 1) *Additional study* – in some cases, the City will need to conduct relatively

simple inventories or studies; in other cases, the creation of more topic-specific or sub-area plans will be necessary

- 2) Consistency – the City’s set of development and zoning regulations may need to be updated and / or revised to implement the plan.

Those Plans updated in this document include:

- The Parks and Recreation Plan
- Transportation Plan
- Economic Development Plan

Those plans not included in this document that may need review for consistency are:

- Downtown Development Plan
- Monroe Branding Plan

- 3) Use and updates – City leaders and staff will need to use the plan, marking progress, considering revisions, and updating the plan
- 4) Public involvement – The community wants a participatory role in the City’s future. Residents must remain informed and included in establishing, achieving and monitoring the plan over time.

Figure 1.04 illustrates how this comprehensive plan is structured, flowing from broad “vision” concepts through increasingly defined goals and policies to various plans and regulation.

This plan update contains five main components:

- 1) Vision - a long-range community vision, with goals suggesting how that vision relates to community objectives related to topics addressed in individual elements.
- 2) Goal, Policy and Action Framework - A Table of goals, policies and actions for all plan elements. While this update incorporates the Shoreline Master Program (SMP) by reference, it also includes shorelines and environment-related goals and policies developed through this process as compliments to the SMP.
- 3) Plan Elements

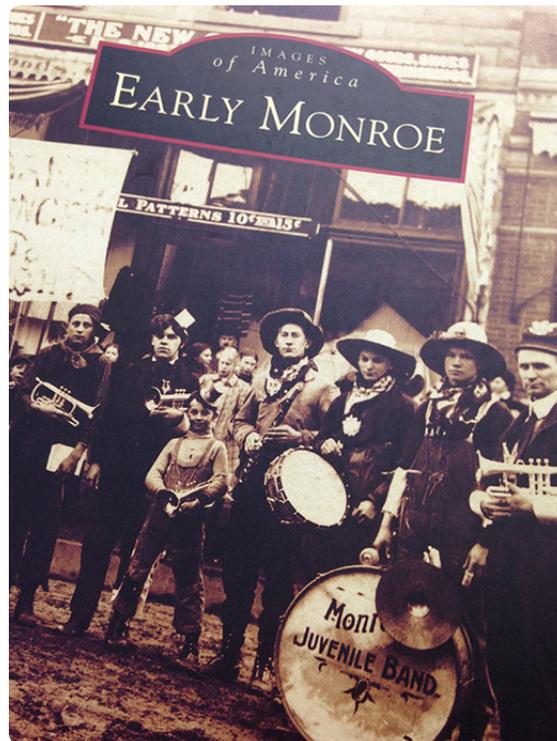


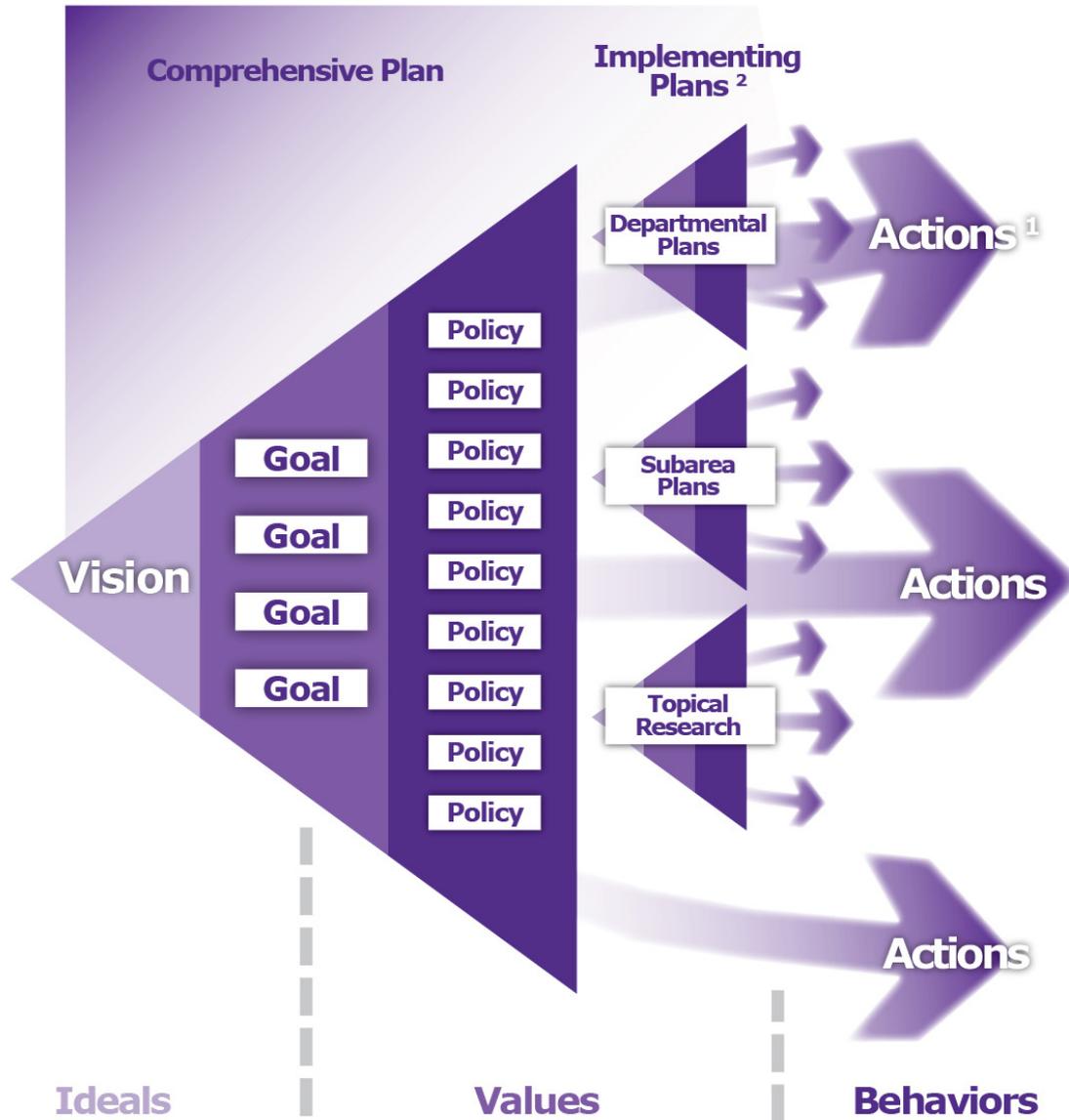
Figure 1.03 - Even in the midst of the logging boom, Monroe’s first settlers helped recruit what became economic mainstays of the community, offering land to attract the Carnation milk plant and securing the state reformatory, now the Monroe Correctional Complex. (Image source: Camera exercise participant.)

- a) Update the Elements (chapters) from the previous plan:
 - Land Use (Chapter 3)
 - Transportation (Chapter 4)
 - Economic Development (Chapter 5)
 - Housing (Chapter 6)
 - Parks & Recreation (Chapter 7)
 - Capital Facilities (Chapter 8)
- b) Capture Environmental Policy
- c) Incorporate (largely by reference)
 - City Parks Recreation and Open Space Plan
 - Transportation
 - Capital Facilities Plan
 - Shoreline Master Program (SMP).

Each Element introduces its topical focus, articulates conditions and key objectives the community intends to address, and references relative policies and action items from the full policy framework.

Planning Schematic

From vision to action, typical plan structure



¹ Actions include programs, capital investments, regulations, etc.

² Examples only. Implementing plans may include a wide variety of plan types

Figure 1.04 - This image, developed from a slide presented at the first community workshop, shows the basic structure of this plan, including the relationship between broad-brush ideals (vision) leading to policies, implementing plans and actions. (Image source: Studio Cascade, Inc.)

- 4) *Implementation - List various programs, suggested timeframes and leading agencies responsible for setting the plan into motion and over time keeping progress measurable and consistent over time.*
- 5) *Appendices - Present information relevant to this comprehensive plan, as well as the component topic-specific plans that will help activate the comprehensive plan's policies, including:*
 - a) *State Environmental Policy Act (SEPA) documentation developed for the plan's adoption*
 - b) *The goal, policy and actions table*
 - c) *A glossary*
 - d) *An accounting of the public process used to develop this update*
 - e) *The Transportation Plan*
 - f) *An economic development strategies report*
 - g) *The Parks and Recreation Plan*
 - h) *The Capital Facilities Plan*

PSRC Vision 2040 – Statement of Conformity

The Puget Sound Regional Council (PSRC) is a metropolitan planning organization that develops policies and makes decisions about transportation planning, economic development, and growth management throughout the four-county Puget Sound metropolitan area. As a partner in the Puget Sound region's growth and development, the City of Monroe has taken consistency requirements with the PRSC and VISION 2040 seriously. The Monroe comprehensive plan addresses VISION 2040's multi-county planning policies and conforms to the GMA.

Vision 2040 Statement

Monroe's comprehensive plan provides guidance to decision makers, staff, and residents regarding an approach to growth and development in the



Figure 1.05 - Residents helped develop this plan update through meetings, questionnaires, photographs, and committee gatherings. (Image source: Studio Cascade, Inc.)

City. The plan emphasizes practices and decision-making that protect the natural, social, and economic environments.

This plan's goals, policies, and actions protect, conserve, and enhance Monroe's ecosystems, habitat, resource lands, and water-related resources. These goals, policies, and actions affirm Monroe's commitment to preserving and protecting Monroe's water, land, and cultural heritage.

The Comprehensive Plan also includes goals, policies, and actions that address local employment, shopping, and other urban services to reduce the need for residents to travel outside the area. Monroe seeks to reduce greenhouse gas emissions through its land use and transportation-related policies that encourage a healthier community, promote a multi-modal transportation system, and encourage mixed use development in the downtown and activity centers.

Finally, the plan includes provisions that ensure a healthy environment remains available for future generations. The goals, policies, and actions related to land management allow for innovation and flexibility so that the environment is not degraded and so that urban uses do not create public hazards or nuisances. The City will adopt development regulations that allow development of land while protecting sensitive lands.

Policy Overview

Understanding the overall direction of this plan is critical for elected officials, city staff and interested citizens. See the "Plan's Vision and Goals" and the "Plan Concept Map" (Figure 2.03) in Chapter 2 for a more concise summary of the plan's objectives and City direction.

The concept map is intended as a descriptive and not a regulatory or policy statement. It outlines five character areas in Monroe, summarizing policies and actions to enhance:

- 1) *The "Regional Benefit Area" - Addressing key features that serve the entire Sky Valley - including:*
 - a) *Policies work to fill and optimize the Industrial Park as a jobs Center*
 - b) *Promote economic opportunities related to the airport and fairgrounds*
 - c) *Optimize US 2/Kelsey as an area-wide shopping destination*
 - d) *Improve Lake Tye and surrounding park lands*
- 2) *The "Central Monroe" area - including:*
 - a) *Close-in neighborhoods and areas South of US Route 2, with a policy focus on supporting connectivity*
 - b) *Creating a more vital mixed-use Main Street corridor and downtown*
 - c) *Supporting infill opportunities West of downtown, and enhancing ties to the Skykomish River.*
- 3) *The "West Monroe" area - including:*

- a) *Close-in neighborhoods, west of SR-522, south of the Fryelands Industrial Park with a policy focus on supporting connectivity.*
- b) *Improving access to SR 2.*
- c) *Identify and promote recreational activities.*
- 4) *The "Skykomish Greenway" area - including:*
 - a) *Al Borlin Park, shoreline areas, Cadman Pit*
 - b) *Policies aim to unite and create a contiguous, feature-rich greenbelt park along the river*
 - c) *Improving access and ties to the entire community.*
- 5) *The "Northern Neighborhood" area - including:*
 - a) *Land generally from the WSDOT right-of-way Northward*
 - b) *Policies supporting additional housing and infrastructure that serves Monroe's long-term needs consisting of:*
 - *Walkable street networks*
 - *Ties to potential trail tracing WSDOT lands*
 - *Better connectivity to the Kelsey area*

Few, if any of the various goals, policies or programs in this plan should be considered isolated from the larger whole. It is important to understand that although this plan attempts to order itself by chapter and subject for the sake of accessibility, it does not imply that this ordering presents a complete, or even best representation, of the plan's comprehensive objectives.

Some, such as City staff, may wish to review individual chapters to assess project budgeting or compliance with plan objectives. Others may value individual chapters as a more immediate, accessible way of understanding topical objectives. But for those wishing to gain a more comprehensive understanding of the plan, it should be reviewed in its entirety.

