

Economic Development

Introduction

The Economic Development chapter provides an overview of Monroe's existing demographic and economic conditions and presents the City's economic development strategy. It also summarizes the economic development analysis contained in the Economic Development Strategy found in Appendix E.

Economic related goals, policies, and action items are included in Chapter 2. These goals, policies and action items guide plan implementation. They provide direction for infrastructure investment, land use actions and other economic development related initiatives.

Purpose & Relationship to the Growth Management Act (GMA)

The GMA lists 14 planning goals, RCW 36.70A.020 (5) relates to economic development:

"Encourage economic development throughout the state that is consistent with adopted comprehensive plans; promote economic opportunity for all citizens of the state, especially for unemployed and disadvantaged persons, and encourage growth

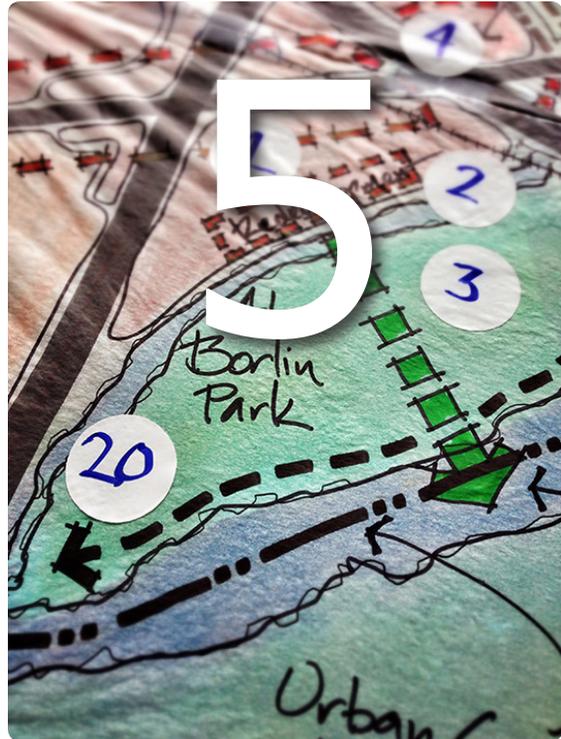


Figure 5.01 - Monroe's economic development strategy is a varied one, but leveraging the City's proximity to the Skykomish ranks among the top priorities. (Image source: Studio Cascade, Inc.)

*in areas experiencing insufficient economic growth, all within the capacities of the state's natural resources and local public facilities."*¹

The GMA requires economic development elements with provisions for economic growth and a high quality of life.² This requirement is contingent on the State providing local governments with funding to prepare such elements. The City of Monroe's inclusion of an Economic Development chapter, despite the lack of State funding, recognizes economic development's importance and the benefits of sustainable economic growth.

¹ RCW 36.70A.020(5)

² RCW 36.70A.070 (7), Chapter 154, Laws of 2002.



Figure 5.02 - Eighteen percent of Monroe residents identify themselves as Hispanic, more than double the percentage identified in Snohomish County. From housing and services, to transportation needs and economic development, Hispanics are an important factor in Monroe’s plans. (Image source: Studio Cascade, Inc.)

Existing & Forecast Conditions

The following sections provide data on trends that compare Monroe to the City of Snohomish, Snohomish County, the Puget Sound region, and Washington State.

Demographics

The demographic data presented in Table 5.01 shows the following characteristics for the City of Monroe:

- *Large families - Monroe attracts families. 71 percent of Monroe households are comprised of families, a figure between four and 10 percent higher than comparison areas*

- *Large households - Monroe has significantly fewer one and two-person households (49%) than the County, Puget Sound region, or state (all ranging from 57% to 63%). Average household sizes are larger in Monroe, at 2.97 persons versus 2.5 range averages seen with neighbors and across the state*
- *Younger residents - Monroe is home to more people in the 25 to 44 year-old age range than comparison areas, likely reflecting more affordable housing options, paired with accessibility to and from employment centers and recreational amenities*
- *Mid-range incomes - Median household incomes in Monroe (\$59,152) are slightly lower than County or the region (both around \$62,000), but higher than the statewide or City of Snohomish figures (both around \$55,000). Monroe is a middle-income area, with fewer households making below \$15,000 than the state or region, but also fewer households making above \$100,000*
- *Hispanic residents – Monroe has more than double the Hispanic population (18%) of the City of Snohomish (8%), the County (9%) or the Puget Sound Region (9%). While the reasons for this are unclear, good schools, a walkable core, quality housing and affordable downtown commercial space appear to be factors*
- *Education - 20 percent of Monroe residents have a bachelor’s degree or higher, versus the Puget Sound Region’s 37 percent and the statewide average of 31 percent. However, 37 percent of residents have some college or an associate’s degree - on par with the City of Snohomish and the County, and higher than the Puget Sound region or the state.*

As shown in Table 5.02, the City of Monroe has adopted a 2035 population projection of 25,119. City policy will influence the amount of growth experienced. Regional forces and broad demographic shifts will play a larger role in shaping the composition of Monroe’s population.

Table 5.01 - Demographics: Monroe and Comparison Geographies

	City of Monroe	City of Snohomish	Snohomish County	Puget Sound Region	Washington State
Population (2013 OFM official estimates)	17,510	9,220	730,500	3,526,900	6,882,400
Median age (2012 estimate)	33.4	38.9	37.2	36.9	37.4
Average household size (2012 estimate)	2.97	2.41	2.63	2.48	2.52
Families as a percent of households (2012 estimate)	71%	61%	67%	62%	64%
Average family size (2012 estimate)	3.44	2.99	3.12	3.07	3.07
Median household income (2012 estimate)	\$59,152	\$55,448	\$62,235	\$62,069	\$55,073
Hispanic Origin (2012 estimate)	18%	8%	9%	9%	12%
Population by age (2012 estimate)					
0 to 24	35%	32%	33%	32%	33%
25 to 34	18%	13%	14%	16%	14%
35 to 44	17%	13%	14%	14%	13%
45 to 54	14%	16%	16%	15%	14%
55 to 64	8%	13%	12%	12%	13%
65+	8%	13%	11%	11%	13%
Housing Tenure (2012 estimate)					
Owner occupied housing	59%	49%	62%	56%	57%
Renter occupied housing	35%	44%	32%	37%	34%
Vacant housing units	6%	8%	7%	7%	9%
Households by Size (2010 Census)					
1 and 2 person households	49%	63%	57%	62%	62%
3 and 4 person households	35%	29%	32%	29%	28%
5+ person households	16%	8%	11%	9%	10%
Education (2005 to 2009 ACS)					
Less than high school	14%	16%	9%	9%	11%
High school or equivalent	28%	26%	26%	22%	25%
Some college	37%	37%	37%	32%	34%
Bachelor's or higher	20%	22%	28%	37%	31%

Source: ESRI, US Census, Washington State Office of Financial Management, Leland Consulting Group

Three demographic shifts projected for Snohomish County are also expected to affect Monroe. Between 2015 and 2035:

- *More older residents are expected - around double the number of 65-or-older aged persons by 2035 compared to 2010.*
- *Countywide population is expected to grow more slowly, down from its peak years in the 1980s and 1990s*
- *More households will be smaller and "non-traditional." This is related to an aging population (since older households are typically smaller) and expectations for the number of small household types - including singles, couples, single parents with children, and "non-family households" - to increase.*

Table 5.02 - 2035 Population Targets

Area	Est. Pop. (2013)	Projected Pop. (2035)	Increase
Monroe City	17,351	22,102	4,751
Unincorporated UGA	1,455	3,017	1,562
Total UGA	18,806	25,119	6,313

Source: 2035 Population Targets; Snohomish County

Figure 5.03 presents a "population pyramid" diagram showing Snohomish County data for 1985, 2010 and (projected) 2035. The figure shows more older residents in 2035.

An aging population may have several implications for Monroe. This includes the need for smaller housing types, a greater need for medical services and the possibility of households with increased purchasing power.

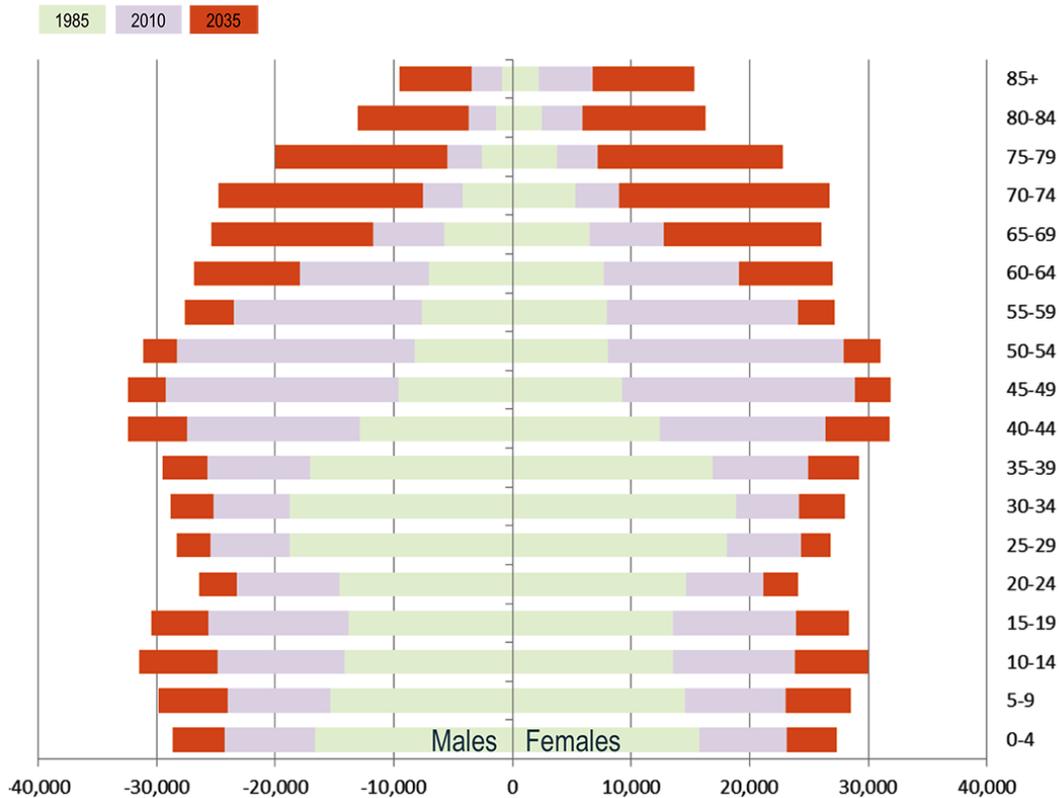


Figure 5.03 - Projections show significantly more older residents in Monroe's future - around twice the number aged 65 or more by 2035 compared to 2010. Growth of smaller, "non-traditional" households is also forecast, suggesting growing demand for smaller, more diverse forms of housing in Monroe (Image source: Snohomish County, 2015 GMA Comprehensive Plan Update)

Housing

Historically, the majority of the housing units developed in the city have been single-family. More recent trends (2012 and 2013) show gains in multi-family housing (See Figure 5.04).

Demographic trends, changing consumer preferences and ongoing population growth point to an interest in infill development. Infill enables residents to access goods, services, parks, and other amenities by foot and by car. Additionally, older households are expected to seek lower maintenance housing options when they relocate.

For these reasons, policies supporting single-family homes and townhouses, Main Street growth, housing infill, and housing variety are appropriate for Monroe.

Economy

Primary sectors of the region’s economy - including high tech, clean tech, aerospace, and international trade - are expected to grow vigorously during the 21st century. The professional and business services sector is projected to have the largest increase by

share of statewide employment, followed by construction, health care and social assistance. Government employment is expected to have the largest decrease in share of employment in the state through 2020, along with retail trade and financial activities. (See Figure 5.05)

Figure 5.06 compares the City of Monroe to Snohomish County and to the Puget Sound region by various employment sectors. The top employment sectors in Monroe (those above 10% of total City employment) include:

- *Public administration*
- *Educational services*
- *Healthcare and social assistance*
- *Manufacturing*
- *Retail trade*

According to the State’s employment projections, health care and social assistance is the only sector which falls within both Monroe’s top employment sectors and the State’s fastest growing sectors (See Figures 5.05 and 5.06).

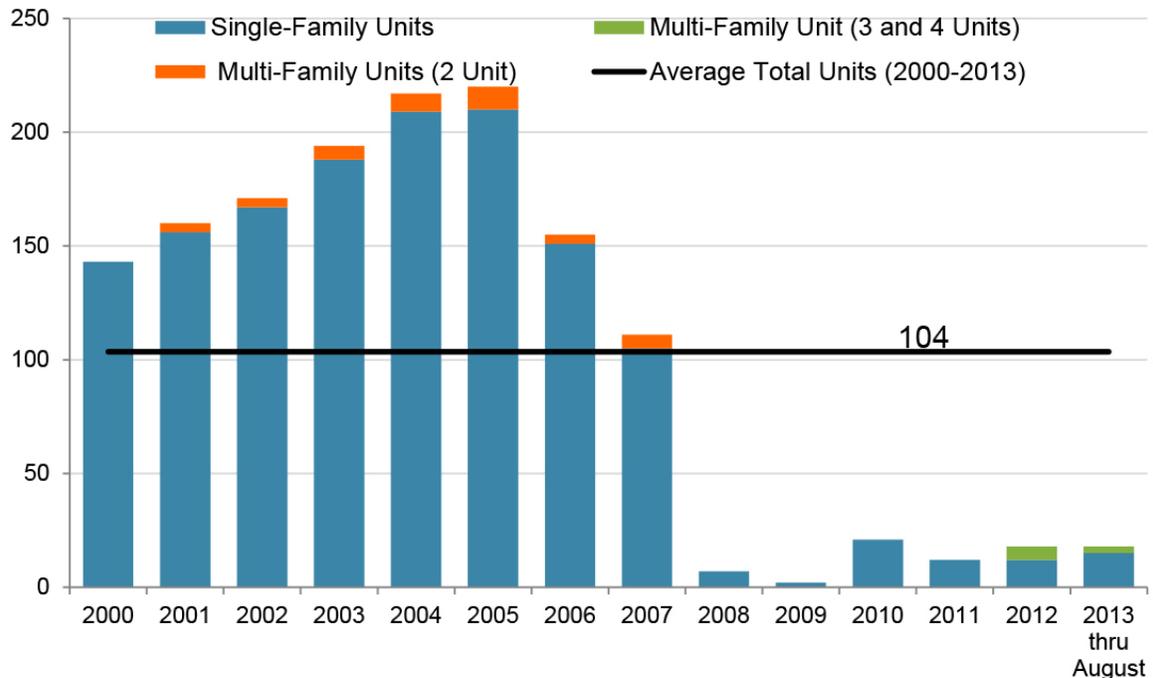


Figure 5.04 - Between 2000 and 2007, Monroe experienced a housing “boom”, corresponding with the completion of SR 522 and single-family housing built between SR 522 and Fryelands Boulevard. Newer housing has since been focused north of US 2, and includes higher-density archetypes. (Image source: *State of the Cities Database, Leland Consulting Group*)

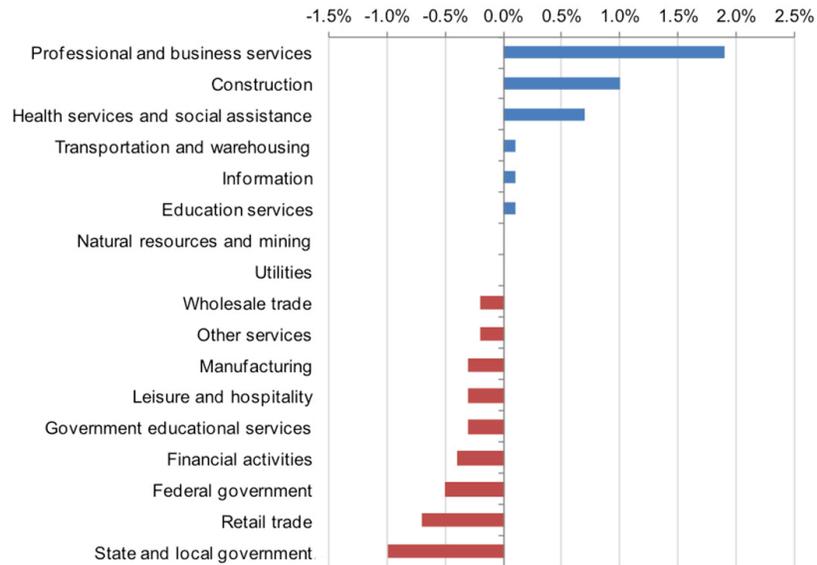


Figure 5.05 - Changes in employment share for Washington State 2011 through 2021, shows larger increases projected in professional and business services, construction, warehousing, health/social services and education. (Image source: 2013 Employment Projections, LMEA/Washington State Employment Security Department, Leland Consulting Group)

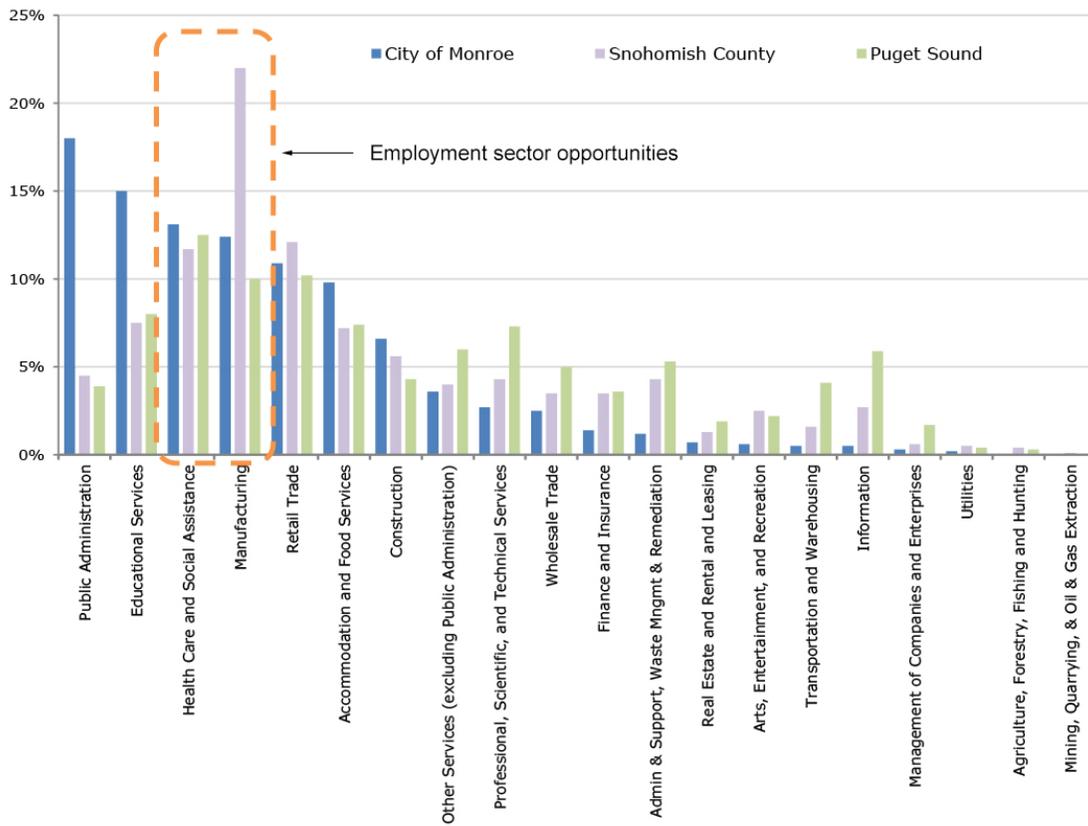


Figure 5.06 - Employment sectors in Monroe, Snohomish County, and the Puget Sound Region MSA. (Source US Census, LED On the Map, 2011)

Based on Monroe’s current employment sector strengths and future employment projections, opportunities in Monroe include:

- *Health care - The City can encourage job growth and development at EvergreenHealth Monroe Hospital and related health care facilities.*
- *Manufacturing - Monroe currently captures a greater share of manufacturing than the Puget Sound region, but falls below the capture rate of Snohomish County. This indicates an opportunity for Monroe to continue to attract businesses from further west in the County.*

While Monroe is known as a residential community, it is also an employment center. Monroe has more jobs than total employed residents. Working residents of Monroe tend to commute to larger cities to the west within the Puget Sound region. Employees working in Monroe tend to come from smaller communities from the east (See Table 5.03, Table 5.04).

Employees who work in Monroe are significantly more likely than Monroe residents to be engaged in public administration, education, accommodation, and food services.

Table 5.03 - Where Monroe Employees Live, 2011

Commute to Monroe from:	Count	Share
Total All Jobs	7,255	100%
All Other Locations	4,128	57%
Monroe	976	14%
Everett	376	5%
Woods Creek CDP	365	5%
Marysville	311	4%
Lake Stevens	271	4%
Snohomish	199	3%
Sultan	190	3%
Seattle	181	3%
Chain Lake CDP	144	2%
Maltby CDP	114	2%

Source: US Census, LED On the Map, 2011

By contrast, Monroe residents are more likely to be employed in white collar, professional, and technical fields. Monroe residents are significantly more likely than employees who work in Monroe to be engaged in:

- *Professional, scientific, and technical services*
- *Trade, finance and insurance*
- *Administration and support*
- *Information*
- *"Other services" (a broad Census category that ranges from equipment repair to dry cleaning)*

This is important because professional and technical jobs are projected to be the fastest growing in the nation, state, and county and tend to provide relatively high wages and likely result in relatively high levels of discretionary incomes and property investment. These jobs are relatively mobile. White collar professionals have the potential to develop firms where they live or work from home.

This plan supports more Monroe residents finding work in Monroe than they do today. Approaches to achieve this include:

- *Increasing employment opportunities in sectors that are projected to grow and*

Table 5.04 - Where Monroe Residents Work, 2011

Commute from Monroe to:	Count	Share
Total All Jobs	6,354	100%
All Other Locations	1,925	30%
Monroe	976	15%
Seattle	971	15%
Everett	559	9%
Redmond	538	9%
Bellevue	498	8%
Kirkland	264	4%
Bothell	206	3%
Woodinville	156	3%
Lynnwood	135	2%
Maltby CDP	126	2%

Source: US Census, LED On the Map, 2011

where Monroe has existing resources. This includes health care services and manufacturing

- *Attracting satellite locations in those business categories to which residents commute today*

Retail

Monroe's downtown and the US 2 corridor are the primary retail locations. Downtown contains a mix of smaller mostly locally-owned businesses. Monroe's biggest retailers are located along the US 2 corridor.

Downtown

Street level storefronts in downtown have good visibility from Main Street and Highway 203 traffic. However, access from US 2 to downtown can be challenging at times due to train congestion.

This plan recognizes the revitalization of downtown and Main Street is important for several reasons:

- *Regional Draw - Downtown has the potential to be a greater draw for visitors and tourists since a majority of travelers seek unique and different experiences that downtowns offer*
- *Walkability - Walkable environments are popular with both young and old. A Main Street with a full range of retail shops and restaurants is a desirable amenity to attract residents, businesses and visitors*
- *Fiscal Efficiency - Tax revenues from dense development are high, and the cost of new infrastructure is less than for "greenfield" development*

US 2 Corridor and North Kelsey

In terms of size and scale of retail and commercial space, Monroe's US 2 Corridor is significantly larger than downtown. Monroe's biggest retailers have all been attracted to the US 2 area because of significant drive-by traffic. US 2 and State Route 522 both see at least 24,000 trips per day.

Several retail categories have excess demand. This suggests opportunities for future retail in Monroe. Some of these categories include:



Figure 5.07 - The Evergreen State Fairgrounds are County owned and run, but events there provide a significant boost to Monroe's economy. Policies in this plan seek effective coordination with fairground management. (Image source: Snohomish County)

- *Full-service restaurants*
- *Specialty clothing stores,*
- *Motor vehicle and parts dealers*
- *Higher-end grocery stores*

The Economic Development Strategy (Appendix E) offers additional detail on this topic.

Office

Office space is primarily located in Downtown, the Fryelands, and along US 2. Other possible locations include redeveloped areas near the Al Borlin neighborhood, at 179th near the hospital, near Park Place Middle School, and along Main Street.

CoStar Market Analytics™ identifies approximately 285,000 square feet of office space in the City. Net office absorption has averaged about 8,600 square feet per year over the past 15 years. The office vacancy rate as of

the second quarter of 2014 was 12 percent. This indicates a slightly over-supplied market.³

Office development is likely to continue to be slow as office tenants seek locations that are in or close to the larger cities in Snohomish and King counties. Office rents (generally \$22 to \$24 full-service) in Monroe do not support construction costs associated with new buildings.

Due to the challenges associated with new office development, approaches for office growth in Monroe include:

- *Rehabilitation and upgrade, of existing offices downtown.*
- *Conversion of some industrial space in the Fryelands to office space*
- *Development or adaptive re-use of buildings for office/"value-added" production facilities north of downtown between the BNSF tracks and US 2*
- *Development of space associated with mixed-use projects at the school district administration building, along Main Street, or supporting hospital-related enterprises*
- *Improving assets like walkability and access to active sports and the outdoors that are likely to attract white-collar workers.*

Industrial

Monroe has approximately 2.2 million square feet of industrial space. The majority of this space is located in the Fryelands industrial park. Other industrial space is located along the railroad corridor and east of downtown.

As of the second quarter of 2014, industrial vacancy was at its lowest rate in five years due to corporate relocations including Natural Factors Inc., Canyon Creek Cabinets, and others.⁴

Industrial lease rates, generally between \$0.50 and \$0.70 per square foot per month, are about five cents less than in Woodinville. After several years of activity between 2000 and 2006 industrial development has slowed considerably. This is likely due to the diminishing amount of

buildable land in Monroe's industrial areas and the great recession that began in 2008.

Monroe's opportunities to add industrial land are limited. Based on interviews with industrial brokers and visual surveys, there are 15 to 25 buildable acres in the Fryelands depending on how potential constraints are included.

If future industrial development densities approximate those in the past, then 250,000 to 390,000 square feet of additional new building space might be built. This is a 12 to 18 percent increase over the current industrial building stock and is a six to nine-year supply of space. Because the available land is held by a small number of owners with varying levels of interest in development, it is likely that industrial land will develop slowly.

Other opportunities for industrial expansion include:

- *FirstAir Field might provide an opportunity for new employment uses or for other uses complementing or in association with the Evergreen State Fairgrounds*
- *Development or adaptive re-use of buildings for "value-added" production facilities may be feasible north of downtown between the BNSF tracks and US 2*
- *"Opportunity sites" where industrial, commercial, and housing development could be added within the current UGA are described in the "Continued Growth and Development " section later in this Chapter.*

Branding

In 2007, the City commissioned a branding plan that sought ways to establish a stronger regional identity, spur visits from the approximately 3.6 million people that live within 60 miles of Monroe, and revitalize downtown. The report, adopted in 2011, recommended that Monroe establish itself as an adventure-sports center building upon its considerable outdoor and sports-related assets.

The report described these "adventures" as:

- *The Evergreen State Fairgrounds, speedway, and equestrian center*

³ 10 percent vacancy is typically considered "stabilized."

⁴ Vacancy rates Q2 2014 at 6.0% versus 15.8% five-year average (CoStar Commercial Real Estate, Leland Consulting Group).



Monroe, WA
September 2007

Branding Plan

Destination
Development

Figure 5.08 - The City's 2008 Branding Plan outlined ways for Monroe to leverage its beautiful setting and natural features to establish a reputation as a place for adventure sports. (Image source: City of Monroe)

- Proximity to hunting, fishing, rafting, hiking, and skiing in the North Cascades
- The city's extensive parks and trail systems
- Ready access to the Skykomish River
- Other assets such as downtown

The City and its partners have made progress on implementing the branding plan since the report's release including:

- Investments in new all-weather sports fields
- City's Parks and Recreation is looking at ways to improve access and features along the Skykomish River
- The City has adopted a new logo and the slogan "The Adventure Starts Here" in marketing materials and on its website
- Implementing recommendations for new wayfinding elements

Other recommendations include attracting specific types of dining, retail and hospitality features downtown and creating a downtown plaza for gatherings and special events.

Conditions Summary

Several key factors will influence Monroe's economic development. Demographic information shows that Monroe is attracting people in the 25 to 44 year-old age range. This reflects Monroe's affordable housing options and accessible outdoor amenities. This is also a key home buying and family formation age group. The demographic trend involving a growing senior population means older households may seek smaller, lower- maintenance housing with access to features that Monroe offers.

Development of medium and higher density housing north of US 2, areas adjacent to downtown, and along Main Street is on-going. This will serve growth objectives and help retain Monroe's reputation as a place for family-friendly and affordable housing.

Downtown's role could be significant. Downtown can provide housing options, capture specialty retail and restaurant market share, provide professional office space, and become the "identity" district that attracts visitors and residents.

Office and industrial growth have varied potential for growth. Some growth for local office users such as real estate, insurance agents, medical and dental offices is expected. Health care and social assistance falls within both Monroe's top employment sectors and the state's fastest growing sectors. Long term industrial growth will require creatively leveraging existing industrial land for such uses or adding industrial land to the Urban Growth Area.

Economic Development Strategy

Monroe needs to conduct economic development efforts with a regional perspective. This requires acting on strategies that recognize and leverage Monroe's most distinctive qualities, improving

those qualities, and attracting businesses that support the community's overall direction.

As detailed in the Economic Development Strategy (Appendix E), six themes have emerged as economic development strategic priorities:

- *Develop a thriving Downtown with vibrant "Main Street character"*
- *Provide a Great Place to Start and Grow a Business*
- *Become an Outdoor and Adventure Destination*
- *Continue Growth and Development*
- *Maintain Monroe's US 2 Regional Retail Center*
- *Be Walkable, Accessible, and Interconnected*

Each key theme is discussed in more detail below. The themes provide a foundation for the City's economic development efforts and have been integrated into the goals, policies, and action items included in this plan (Reference Chapter 2).

Develop a Thriving Downtown with Vibrant Main Street Character

Downtown should be a place where residents and visitors are connected to because of its history, design, and authentic local merchants and restaurants.

Nationally, healthy downtowns are an indicator of communities' overall economic health, a recruitment tool for new residents and businesses and a key component of local tourism strategies. For these reasons, a thriving downtown is important to economic development.

Key steps to responding to this theme are to:

- *Prepare and adopt an implementation strategy that prioritizes the actions proposed by the Comprehensive Plan and identifies when they will be accomplished*
- *Have a thriving Chamber of Commerce*
- *Encourage the establishment of a downtown development authority to champion and coordinate investment and revitalization*

- *Explore operations, marketing and maintenance funding sources such as a Business Improvement District (BID) or other funding program*
- *Explore capital funding sources including private capital investment, Community Revitalization Financing (CRF), Local Infrastructure Financing Tool (LIFT), Local Revitalization Financing (LRF), and other grant and loan programs*
- *Encourage/create role of Downtown Development Expediter/Ambassador*
- *Refine and implement the sidewalk, storm water, streetscape, and other infrastructure improvements currently proposed for Main Street*
- *Select and implement one or two key infrastructure improvement projects (gateway, streetscape, landscaping, etc.) that have the potential to be a catalyst for private investment*
- *Implement signage that directs travelers from Highway 2, to Downtown Monroe*
- *Identify and develop a demonstration real estate redevelopment project (housing, office, retail)*
- *Consider creating a façade improvement program including grants to Main Street property owners*
- *Encourage additional retail and dining establishments to locate in Downtown*
- *Create a targeted retail recruitment plan*
- *Enhance the pedestrian environment*
- *Host more events and festivals*
- *Encourage a variety of housing options near Downtown at varying price points*

Provide a Great Place to Start and Grow a Business

Monroe has concentrations of jobs in the manufacturing, health care, education, and retail sectors, although about 85 percent of Monroe residents still commute to jobs out of Monroe.

Residents are interested in retaining as many local jobs as possible, and promoting Monroe as a great place to start and grow a business. Job and business growth leads to enhanced quality of

life, higher household incomes, and a more stable local economy.

Key steps to responding to this theme are to:

- *Keep Monroe "open for business"*
 - Champion Monroe regionally as being "open for business"
 - Provide great customer service at City Hall; focus on what can be done versus what cannot be done
 - Create an environment where business can thrive with minimal government involvement
 - Actively support the retention of commerce and industry and encourage diversification of the economy
- *Provide a regulatory environment supportive of business*
 - Periodically evaluate fees to ensure Monroe is competitive with other cities in the region
 - Support local business through efficient regulation, licensing, and permitting procedures
 - Identify regulatory and financial incentives for starting or growing new business and industrial uses
- *Identify opportunities for growing and expanding existing industry clusters within Monroe, Snohomish County, and the Puget Sound region, for instance:*
 - Technology
 - Manufacturing
 - Professional services
 - Health care
 - Retail
 - Active sports and recreation
 - Aviation

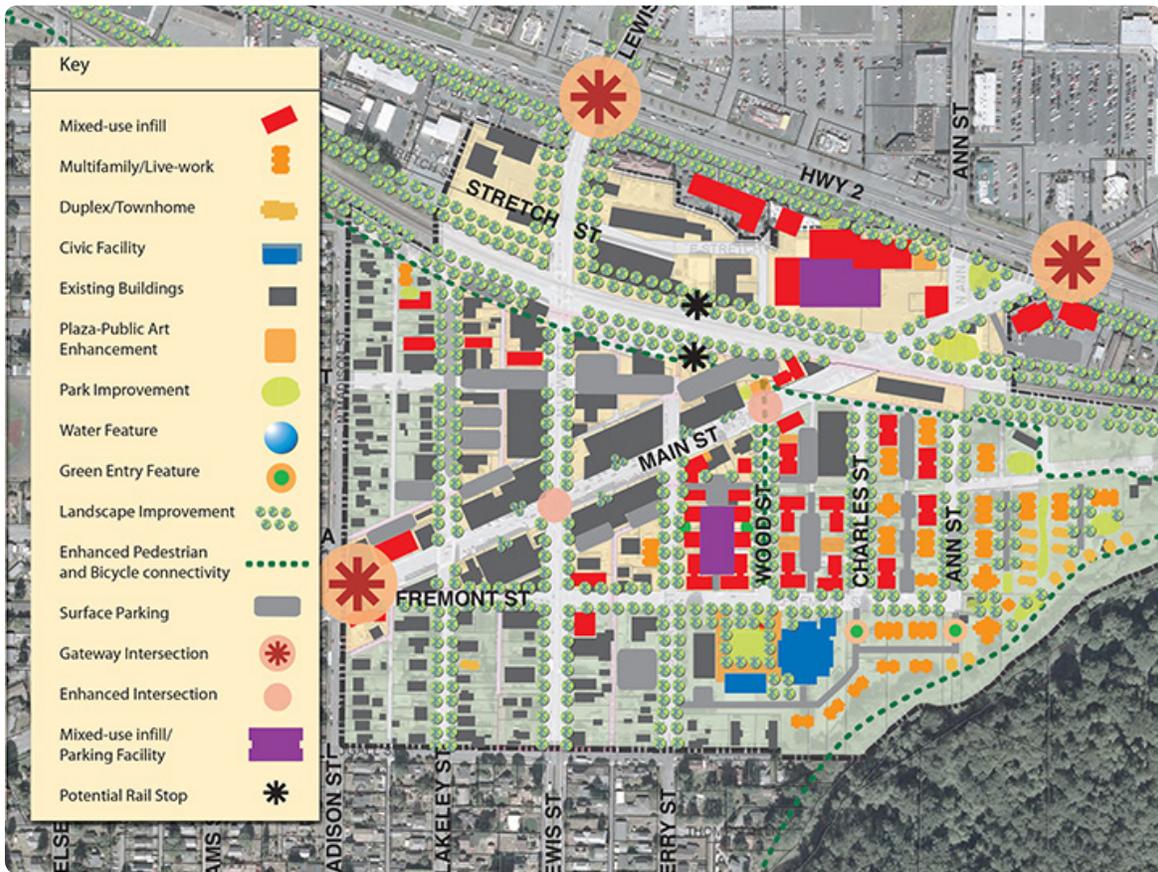


Figure 5.09 - Many of the objectives contained in the 2008 Downtown Master Plan still resonate today, offering benefits for the entire community and its economic goals. (Image source: City of Monroe)

- Food production and value-added agriculture
- Educational services
- Convene business executives who live in Monroe and commute to jobs elsewhere to determine what assistance and incentives could encourage them to relocate a business to Monroe.
- Assign a point person to advocate for and coordinate economic development within Monroe
- Explore potential for industrial and commercial incubator space and support network⁵
- Collaborate with local colleges to locate satellite campuses in Monroe

Become an Outdoor and Adventure Destination

Monroe is a destination and gateway to adventure- whether that adventure is kayaking, river rafting, hunting, hiking, or watching an event at the Evergreen Speedway or Fairgrounds.

Building on this identity is a natural way for Monroe to support community pride, attract visitors that patronize Monroe’s businesses, and support local outdoor and active sports activities.

Key steps to responding to this theme are to:

- *Promote Monroe as an active sports and outdoor adventure destination*
- *Visually and physically connect central Monroe to its natural assets including the Skykomish River, Cascade Mountains, bike and pedestrian trails, and surrounding open spaces*
- *Support the parks system with the opportunity to connect to the Centennial Trail*
- *Encourage an active lifestyle and events for both residents and visitors*
- *Build the capacity of the lodging and tourism sectors to grow business and host more visitors for longer stays.*
- *Explore attracting an upscale or boutique hotel that focuses on*

⁵ An incubator space helps new and startup companies to develop by providing services such as management training or office space

connecting visitors with the area’s natural assets

- *Continue to attract active sports and outdoor adventure themed events to key areas such as Lake Tye, Downtown, and the Skykomish River*

Continue Growth and Development

Due to limited opportunities to expand outward, it is even more important for Monroe to make effective use of land within the city’s boundary. Effective use of land means building expansions and additions where appropriate. This creates construction and permanent jobs. Infill development typically requires much less additional public infrastructure.

Key steps to responding to this theme are to:

- *Complete a focused area plan for sites that have potential for infill, repurposing/reuse, or redevelopment within the following potential candidates for focused area planning:*
 - Main Street Corridor (between US 2 and 522)
 - Al Borlin Neighborhood and Park
 - Riverfront sites including the Cadman site
 - FirstAir Field
 - County Fairgrounds
 - Fryelands Industrial Area
 - EvergreenHealth Monroe and health care cluster
 - Properties owned by the School District and other public agencies
- *Determine catalyst commercial, housing, and employment sites*
- *Stategize capital improvements (roads, utilities, etc.) to support private development and redevelopment in key focus areas*

Maintain Monroe’s US 2 Regional Retail Center

Monroe’s US 2 regional retail center is an important job center and one of the City’s most important gateways. It is important that this area remain economically healthy, competitive, and offer the most attractive reception possible.

Key steps responding to this theme are to:

- *Use signage or other means to increase the visibility of the Monroe brand*
- *Identify key gateway intersections or nodes that may deserve additional landscaping or design*
- *Look for opportunities to better connect commercial development on US 2 to Downtown in order to create a "complete" retail center that provides visitors with both national brand names on US 2, and local vendors in Downtown*
- *Expand and broaden retail offerings available in Monroe.*
- *Encourage and promote the development or enhancement of retail areas to achieve a vibrant shopping, dining and entertaining experience in the downtown corridor*

Be Walkable, Accessible, and Interconnected

People are increasingly attracted to communities with walkable neighborhoods having nearby amenities. They are interested in living in complete communities where restaurants, libraries, services and other daily necessities are easily accessible.

To be competitive, Monroe should strive to provide a range of transportation modes and ensure housing options for people of all demographics.

Key steps responding to this theme are to:

- *Create a pedestrian environment, especially in and near downtown*
- *Promote interconnected neighborhoods and look for ways to mitigate north-south and east-west barriers*
- *Strive to ensure accessibility for all citizens*

Policy Overview

The economic-related policies and programs contained in Chapter 2 cover topics, themes and objectives including:

- *Leveraging private investment with public investment in streetscapes,*

transportation infrastructure, and public facilities

- *Working on a local and regional level to create an efficient transportation system especially servicing high-growth industries such as health care*
- *Providing a supportive business environment that encourages small businesses to open or move to Monroe*
- *Working to serve the City's relatively youthful, child-rearing population by providing facilities that attract them such as parks and walkable neighborhoods*

The policies contained in Chapter 2 have been organized to follow the goals to which they most closely relate. Similarly, each policy includes column indicators that show which plan chapter or chapters it supports. A set of action items is also included in Chapter 2.

