



City of Monroe 2013

Comprehensive Plan Update

November 2013

Prepared for the City of Monroe by



- Environmental Consulting
- Zoning/Planning
- Land Use Law

Placeholder for official ordinance

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Introduction of 2013 Comprehensive Plan Update

The City of Monroe is a growing dynamic and diverse hub of residential, retail, medical, educational, recreational, and cultural activity in Northeast Louisiana. Monroe has also experienced a great deal of change since the original Comprehensive Master Plan, *One City, One Future* was created in 2008. Since 2008, new companies have moved to Monroe and local entities have expanded, increasing employment and bolstering the economic base. Local and regional changes in government have also occurred that will affect the growth and development of Monroe in future years. In order to address the changes in Monroe since 2008, the City undertook this comprehensive planning process.

The 2013 Comprehensive Plan Update incorporates new data from the 2010 US Census, the most recent American Community Survey data, and ESRI projections through the year 2017. The 2013 Comprehensive Plan Update provides insight on how Monroe is currently faring and how it will develop and cope with the future. The 2013 Comprehensive Plan Update is intended to supplement the information presented in the 2008 plan, to revisit the areas of the 2008 plan that have experienced significant change, and to present new data and information. The 2013 Comprehensive Plan Update will provide new and updated information that the City of Monroe can utilize in making future decisions.

The 2013 Comprehensive Plan Update includes: an updated community profile chapter with new demographic information and data from the most recent United States Census, a chapter on land use, a chapter on resiliency, a chapter on economic development, and a chapter on housing policy. Additionally, the 2013 Comprehensive Plan Update includes goals and strategic recommendations for the land use, resiliency, economic development, and housing chapters. Last, the 2013 Comprehensive Plan update includes an implementation matrix with updated goals, recommendations, and timelines.

Chapter 1: Updated Community Profile

Introduction

This chapter presents a summary of demographic information, economic data, and projections for the City of Monroe with a focus on the years 2008 to 2017. While the 2008 Comprehensive Plan had to rely on census projections, the 2013 Comprehensive Plan Update utilizes data obtained in the 2010 Census as well as the most up to date projections for future years.

Data Information

The 2010 U.S. Census Bureau data is the only publicly available official source of demographic data for small geographic areas, such as a census block. A census block is the smallest geographic unit used by the Census Bureau for tabulation of 100-percent data (data collected from all houses, rather than a sample of houses). Several blocks make up block groups, which again make up census tracts.

While the U.S. Census Bureau has conducted annual population estimates for the entire city, there are few reliable neighborhood-level indicators available for preliminary review. For population projections, Villavaso & Associates has relied on Environmental Systems Research Institute (ESRI) Estimates and Projections for 2012 and 2017. ESRI is considered to be the world leader in geographic, planning, and demographics software and data.

The 2012/2017 ESRI Population Estimates and Projections will be used for the block groups in Monroe. To measure current population change by block group, ESRI models the change in households from three primary sources: InfoBase database from Acxiom Corporation; residential delivery statistics from the U.S. Postal Service; and residential construction data from Hanley Wood Market Intelligence; in addition to several ancillary sources. The U.S. Postal Service (USPS) publishes monthly counts of residential deliveries for every U.S. postal carrier route. This represents the most comprehensive and current information available for small, sub-county geographic areas.

Population and Demographics Profile

Table 1: Demographic and Income Profile Summary

Monroe, Louisiana: City of Monroe Demographic and Income Profile				
Summary	2000 Census	2010 Census	2012 Estimates	2017 Projections
Population	53,107	48,815	48,678	48,860
Households	19,421	18,445	18,336	18,487
Average Household Size	2.54	2.47	2.50	2.49
Families	12,157	11,242	11,122	11,186
Average Family Size	3.26	3.19		
Owner Occupied Housing Units	9,624	8,529	8,367	8,547
Renter Occupied Housing Units	9,797	9,916	9,969	9,941
Vacant Housing Units	1,857	2,125	2,295	2,396
Total Housing Units	21,278	20,570	20,631	20,883
Median Age	29.1	31.5	31.4	32.1
Revised Summary	2000 Census	2010 Census Revised	2012 Estimates Revised	2017 Projections Revised
Population	53,107	49,147	49,887	51,786
Households	19,421	18,570	18,850	19,568
Average Household Size	2.54	2.47	2.50	2.49
Families	12,157	11,318	11,489	11,926
Average Family Size	3.26	3.19		
Owner Occupied Housing Units	9,624	8,613	8,681	8,893
Renter Occupied Housing Units	9,797	10,014	10,092	10,340
Vacant Housing Units	1,857	2,146	2,163	2,216
Total Housing Units	21,278	20,773	20,936	21,449
Median Age	29.1	31.5	31.4	32.1

On December 10, 2012, in an official statement to the City of Monroe, the U.S. Census Bureau revised the 2010 Census Population and Housing Unit counts for the City of Monroe. The revised 2010 Population was 49,147 and the revised Housing Units Count was 20,773. The Revised 2012 Estimates and 2017 Projections for the City of Monroe were derived by Villavaso & Associates, LLC based on this new data.

Source: U.S. Census Bureau - 2000, 2010 Census of Population and Housing & 2010 American Community Survey; ESRI forecasts for 2012 and 2017, Villavaso and Associates data and revisions.

Table 1 displays demographic and income data for the City of Monroe from the 2000 Census and 2010 Census, as well as estimates for 2012 and projections for 2017. The first official release of 2010 Census data is shown Table 1 under the column **2010 Census**.

Per the request from the City of Monroe, Villavaso & Associates has included 2010 Census population revisions based on new information. On December 10, 2012, in an official statement to the City of Monroe, the U.S. Census Bureau revised the 2010 Census Population and Housing Unit counts for the City of Monroe. This data is shown in Table 1 under the column **2010 Census Revised**. The revised 2010 Population is 49,147 and the revised Housing Units is 20,773. The data in the columns **2012**

Estimates Revised and **2017 Projections Revised** for the City of Monroe were derived by Villavaso & Associates, LLC based on this new data provided by the City of Monroe.

Table 2: Projected Trends: 2012-2017 Annual Rates

	Monroe	Louisiana	United States
Population	0.07%	0.79%	0.68%
Households	0.16%	0.98%	0.74%
Families	0.11%	0.88%	0.72%
Owner HHs	0.43%	1.06%	0.91%
Median Household Income	3.31%	3.19%	2.55%

Source: U.S. Census Bureau - 2000, 2010 Census of Population and Housing & 2010 American Community Survey; ESRI forecasts for 2012 and 2017.

In general, the population of Monroe has remained stable since 2008, with small increases in population expected in the next five years. Additionally, all of the primary demographic indicators (shown in Table 1) are projected to show little change (less than 1% over 5 years) by 2017. In regards to Average Household Size and Median Age, Monroe follows both state and national trends.

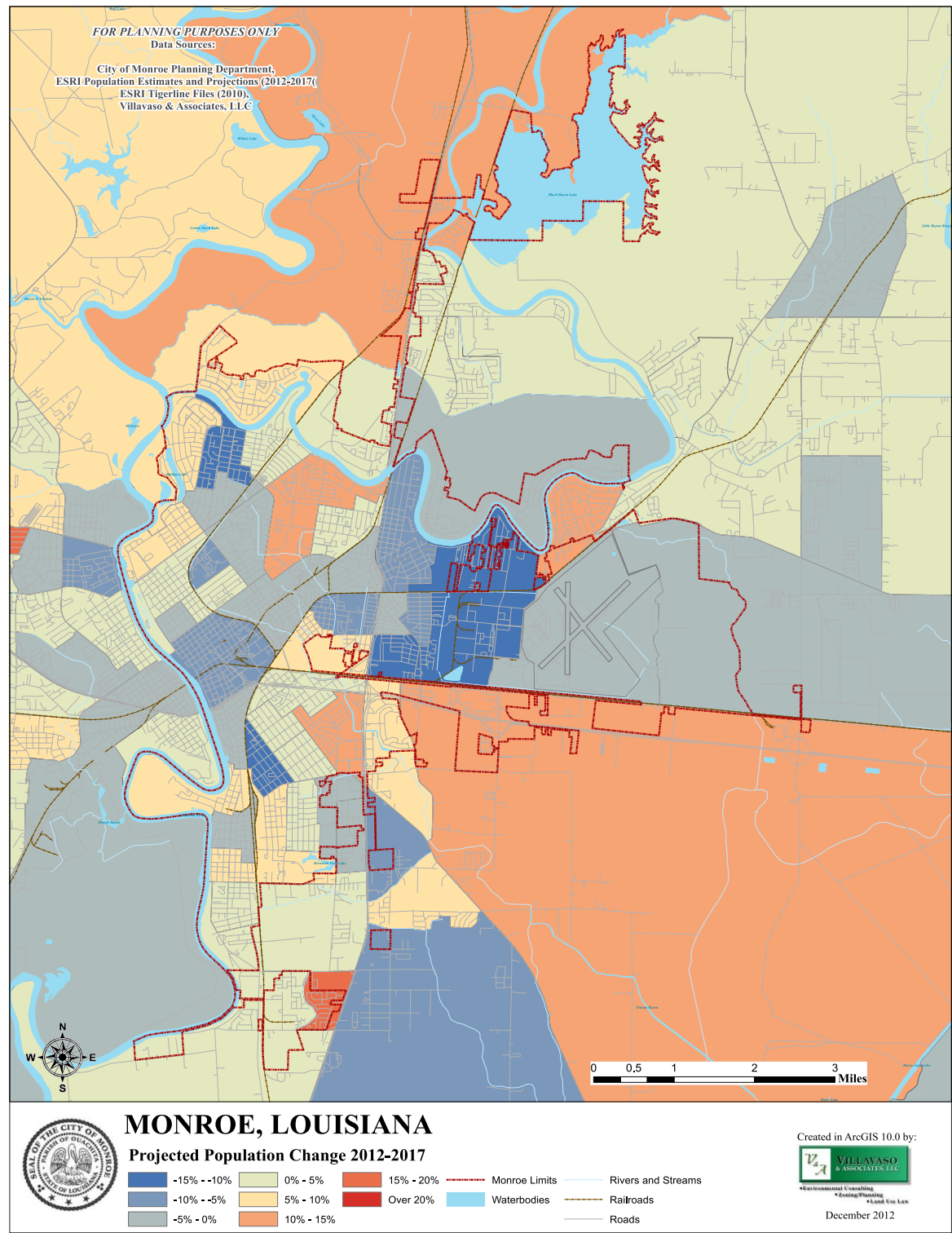
Table 3: Race and Ethnicity

	2010 Census		2012 Estimates		2017 Projections	
	Number	Percentage	Number	Percentage	Number	Percentage
White Alone	16,312	33.40%	15,786	32.40%	15,200	31.10%
Black Alone	31,189	63.90%	31,435	64.60%	31,930	65.40%
American Indian Alone	84	0.20%	94	0.20%	110	0.20%
Asian Alone	518	1.10%	571	1.20%	649	1.30%
Pacific Islander Alone	25	0.10%	25	0.10%	24	0.00%
Some Other Race Alone	154	0.30%	176	0.40%	236	0.50%
Two or More Races	533	1.10%	590	1.20%	710	1.50%
Hispanic Origin (Any Race)	560	1.10%	613	1.30%	771	1.60%

Source: U.S. Census Bureau - 2000, 2010 Census of Population and Housing & 2010 American Community Survey; ESRI forecasts for 2012 and 2017.

Race, ethnicity and economic data, estimates and projections have not been revised as only population and housing units count numbers were revised for the 2010 Census. Overall, the race and ethnicity mix of Monroe is not projected to change significantly over the next five years. Monroe is projected to experience a slight increase in Hispanic population and populations that identify as other race or two or more races.

Map 1: Projected Population Change 2012-2017



Monroe Household Income: 2000 - 2017
Table 4: Monroe Projected Household by Income: 2000-2017

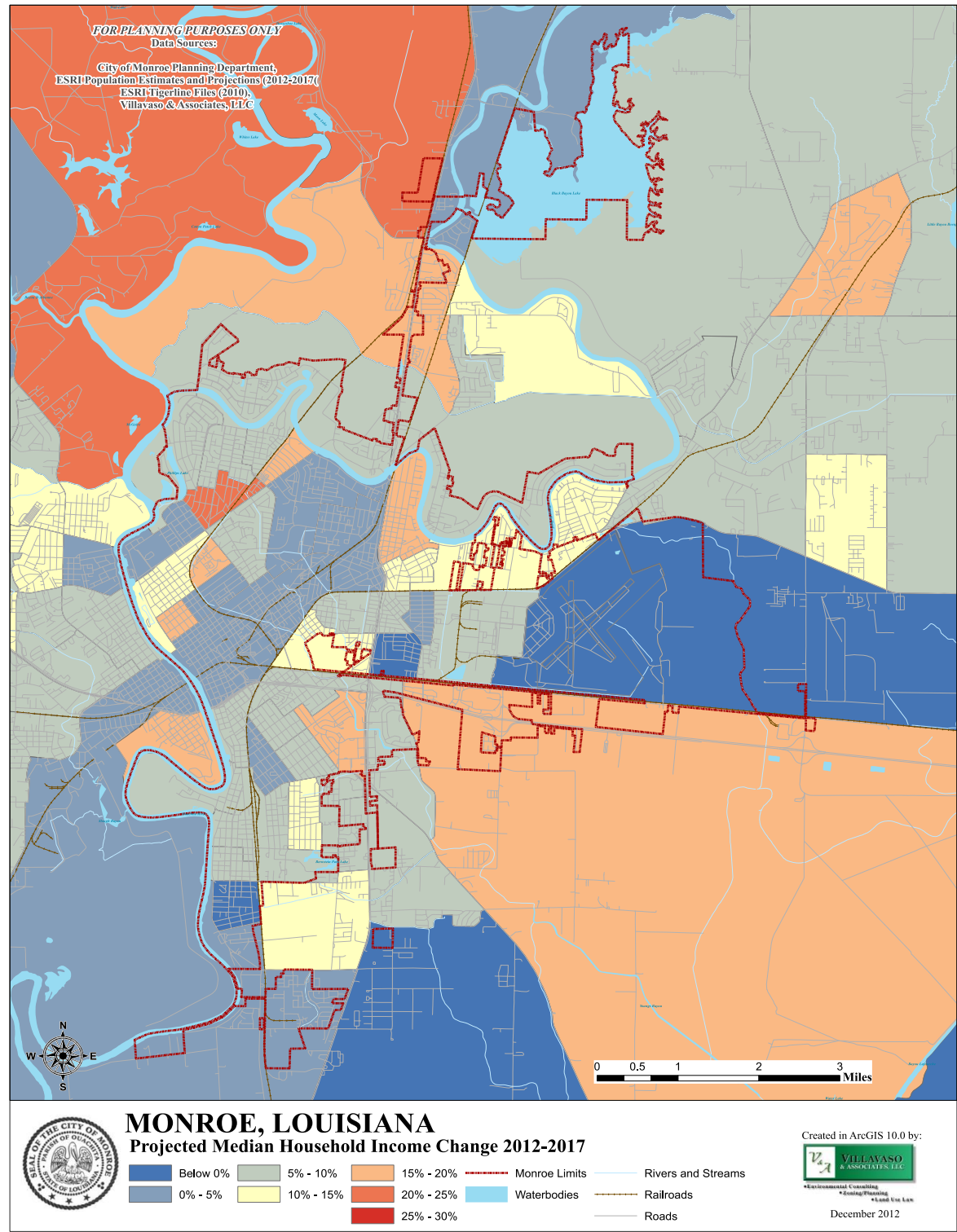
Households by Income	2000 Census		2010 American Community Survey		2012 Estimates		2017 Projections	
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
<\$15,000	6,615	34.0%	5,852	32.49%	5,375	29.3%	5,113	27.7%
\$15,000 - \$24,999	2,828	14.5%	2,316	12.86%	2,255	12.3%	1,759	9.5%
\$25,000 - \$34,999	2,438	12.5%	2,151	11.94%	2,160	11.8%	1,976	10.7%
\$35,000 - \$49,999	2,505	12.9%	2,243	12.45%	2,185	11.9%	2,195	11.9%
\$50,000 - \$74,999	2,336	12.0%	2,297	12.75%	2,524	13.8%	3,063	16.6%
\$75,000 - \$99,999	1,207	6.2%	1,093	6.07%	1,357	7.4%	1,577	8.5%
\$100,000 - \$149,999	786	4.0%	1,172	6.51%	1,383	7.5%	1,514	8.2%
\$150,000 - \$199,999	285	1.5%	448	2.49%	590	3.2%	741	4.0%
\$200,000+	447	2.3%	439	2.44%	506	2.8%	549	3.0%
Median Household Income	\$25,890		\$28,581		\$31,512		\$37,084	
Average Household Income	\$42,553		\$49,123		\$51,702		\$58,389	
Per Capita Income	\$15,933		\$19,350		\$21,630		\$24,337	

Source: U.S. Census Bureau - 2000, 2010 Census of Population and Housing & 2010 American Community Survey; ESRI forecasts for 2012 and 2017.

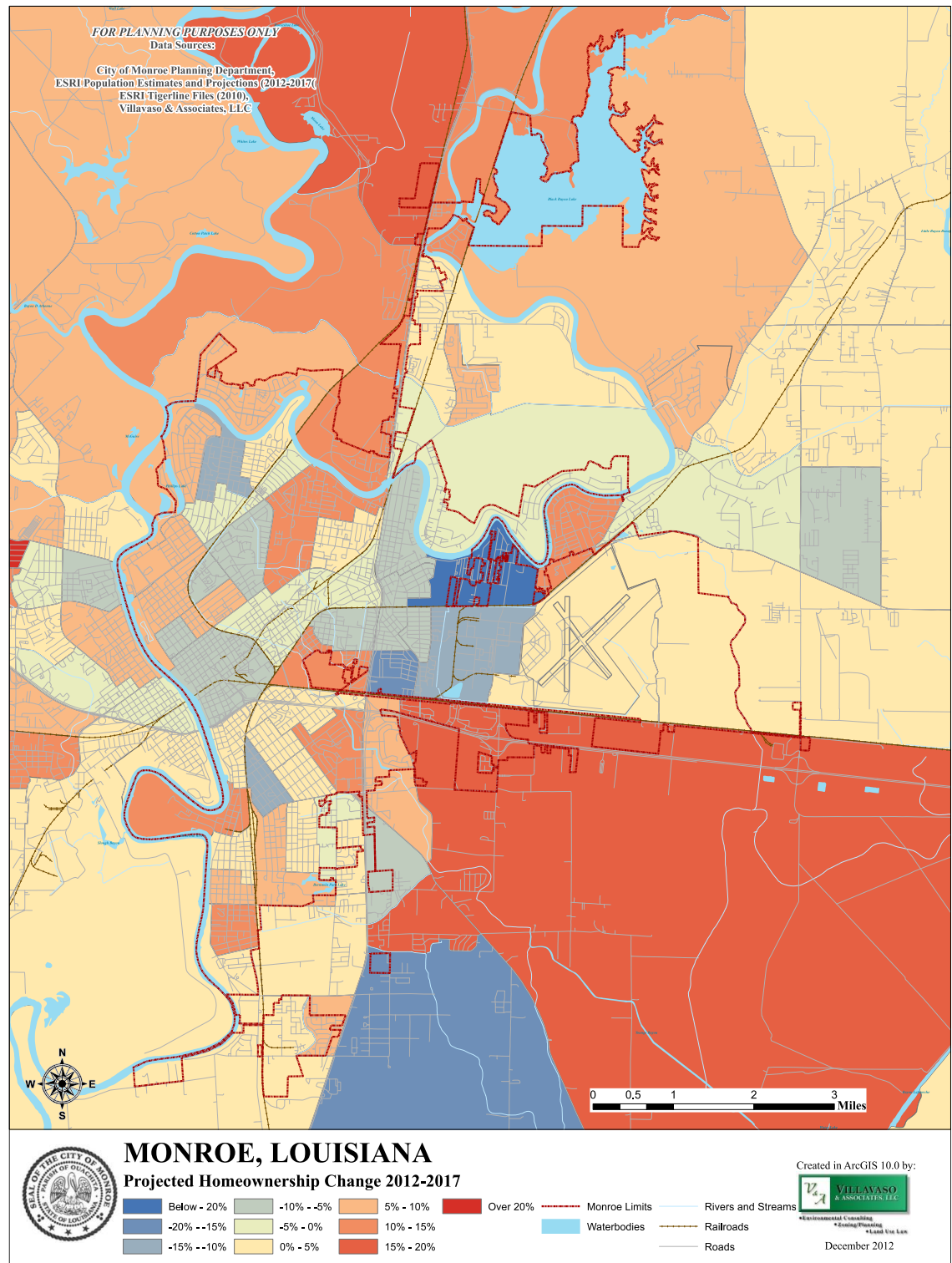
Median Household Income in Monroe is projected to increase by over \$5,000 over the next five years. This projected increase equates to an annual growth rate of 3.31%. This growth rate far outpaces both the projected state and national averages. Additionally, Monroe is projected to have a significant decrease in the number of household earning less than \$34,999 a year.



Map 2: Monroe Projected Median Household Income Change: 2012-2017

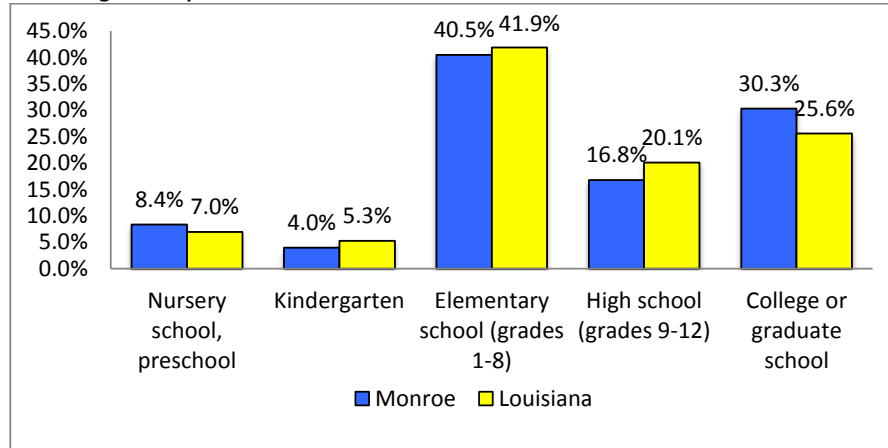


Map 3: Monroe Projected Homeownership Change 2012-2017



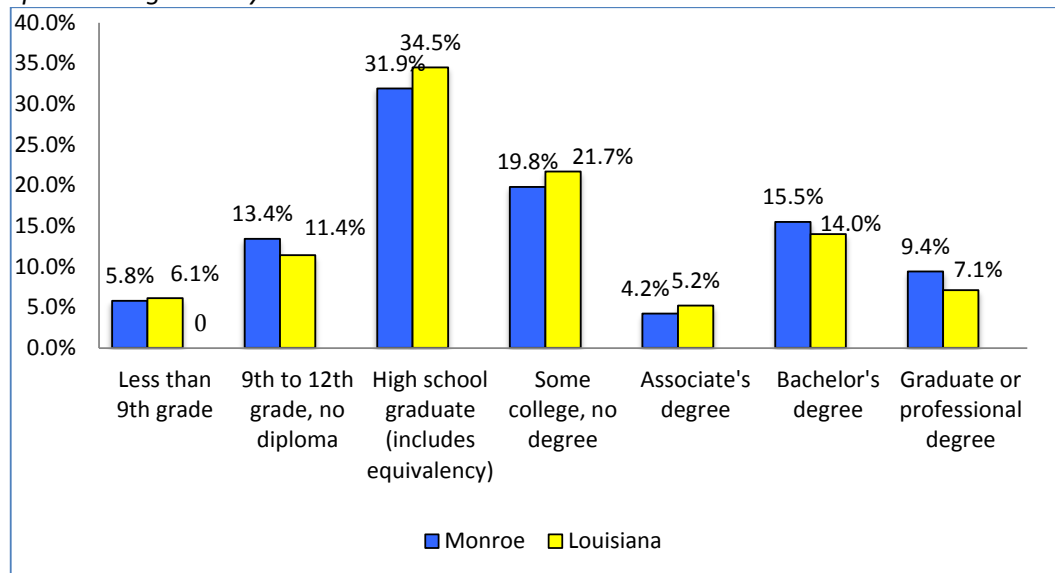
Education

Chart 1: Population Age 3+ by School Enrollment: 2011



Sources: U.S. Census Bureau - 1990, 2000, 2010 Census of Population and Housing Summary File 1; American Community Survey 1 & 3 Year Estimates (2011)

Chart 2: Population Age 25+ by Educational Attainment: 2011



Sources: U.S. Census Bureau - 1990, 2000, 2010 Census of Population and Housing Summary File 1; American Community Survey 1 & 3 Year Estimates (2011)

Community Profile Summary

The City of Monroe is projected to experience modest population growth over the next five years. The population and age trends in Monroe mirror those of the country as a whole, average household size is decreasing, families are having less children, and the overall age of the population is increasing as the baby boomer generation enters retirement age and lives longer than previous generations. While Monroe is not projected to experience a significant increase in owner occupied households when compared to the state and country as a whole, Monroe is projected to see a significant increase in average household income. This projected increase in average household income combined with a projected decrease in the number of households making less than \$34,999, indicates the City still provides solid economic opportunities for its citizens.

Overall, the City of Monroe should continue to be a diverse, economically stable community over the next five years.

Chapter 2: Future Land Use 2013

Goal: Future Land Use in the City of Monroe should encourage new development and redevelopment opportunities in appropriate areas while equally considering the needs of current and future residents and businesses; protect natural resources; provide adequate open spaces and recreational opportunities; and, support appropriate and sustainable infrastructure and services that meet the needs of a changing community.

Introduction

The City of Monroe's original land development focused on creating a town that was supported by trade along the Ouachita River, and later, the railroad system. Today, the landscape of downtown Monroe still displays some of that development pattern from the late 1800s and early 1900s. In the following years the City began to grow and expand, at first north and south along the Ouachita River, and eventually east away from the river. This eastern growth was spurred on in part by the relocation of Highway 80 (Louisville Avenue), and later the construction of Interstate 20. Today, the western boarder of the City of Monroe is still the Ouachita River, however land development within the city limits extends north and east along Bayou Desiard, north along Highway 165 to Black Bayou Lake, south along 165 past Buckhorn Bend, and approximately 6-7 miles east along Interstate 20. Additionally, the City of Monroe has three local historic districts and two nationally recognized historic districts that cover parts of downtown Monroe and several of the older neighborhoods in the City.

Despite the fact that the city limits of Monroe are largely built out, there are a number of undeveloped areas in the City with development potential. Additionally, along both Louisville Avenue and Highway 165 there are a number of commercial sites, large and small, that are either vacant or underutilized. There are also redevelopment and infill opportunities in many of the older core Monroe residential neighborhoods. Future Land Use in Monroe should maintain the current high quality residential and commercial development in Monroe, while also helping to provide a framework for addressing the areas mentioned above.

Development of 2013 Existing Land Use

The map, City of Monroe 2008 Existing Land Use by Parcel, served as the base map for cataloging 2013 Existing Land Use updates. Over several months the planning team cataloged existing land use “lot by lot” in Monroe utilizing the following methods:

- Windshield surveys of every neighborhood in Monroe;
- Detailed land use cataloging of major commercial corridors in Monroe;
- On the ground survey of Downtown Monroe;
- Review of detailed aerial photography;
- Review of Planning and Zoning Department records and data; and
- Comments from City Staff and Citizens.

Using the City of Monroe 2008 Existing Land Use by Parcel Map as a base map, the planning team entered the data into GIS and created a new map, 2013 City of Monroe Land Use by Parcel. This map utilizes the following existing land use categories:

Residential (Low Density): Areas along the Ouachita River levee south of Interstate 20 and other rural areas with low density and rural residential development as well as some agricultural development.



Single Family Residential: Single-family residential areas include most of the single-family platted neighborhoods. A number of the existing single-family residential areas, especially those in the older sections of Monroe, also contain a large number of two family structures. This is the largest existing land use in Monroe.



Multi-family Residential: Areas where the majority of the existing land development includes structures with 3 or more units as well as apartment developments.



Commercial: Areas where a majority of the existing land development is commercial. This land use includes most of downtown Monroe as well as the major commercial corridors such as Louisville Avenue, Highway 165, and the Pecanland Mall area.



Institutional/Public & Semi-Public Services: School campuses, University of Louisiana-Monroe, large medical institutions including the St. Francis Hospital campuses, and large governmental and public structures.



Industrial: Areas of existing industrial and in some cases heavy transportation-dependent commercial development.



Transportation: Monroe Airport and associated land development.



Park/Open Space/Recreational: Monroe public parks, large private recreational areas, Louisiana Purchase Gardens and Zoo, and other large green space areas.



Land Use Changes from 2008 – 2013

When observing land use in general terms, the existing land use in Monroe has not dramatically changed since 2008. However, there are a few areas of the City that have experienced noticeable change since 2008, discussed below.

Residential Growth: Most of the residential areas in the City of Monroe are built out without any growth resulting from reuse or rehabs of existing residential structures or increased density of development. There are several new subdivisions under development in the northern areas of the City, especially along Bayou Desiard. Further, it is important to note that there is a large amount of residential growth in Ouachita Parish north and south of the city limits along Highway 165.

Commercial Growth: Since 2008, there has been significant commercial growth in the areas bounded by Louisville Avenue, North 18th Street, Lamy Lane, and Tower Drive. Several new big box stores have opened in and around Pecanland Mall accompanied by multiple new hotels, and a number of new restaurants have opened in the Riverfront area. Further, Highway 165 North of Bayou Desiard has quite a few new businesses and is also home to the corporate headquarters of CenturyLink, Inc. a leading national IT services and communications provider.

Industrial Growth: The new Monroe Airport opened in 2012 and has helped to spur new industrial development in the surrounding areas.

Development of 2013 Generalized Future Land Use Map and Categories

The 2013 Future Land Use Map provides a framework that will help inform the City of Monroe in making development decisions, infrastructure decisions, and capital and financial investments in the future. The 2013 Future Land Use Map will also help inform the 2013 update of the Monroe Comprehensive Zoning Ordinance. The development of the 2013 Future Land Use Map included an examination and review of the following:

- Fieldwork, data collection, and surveys of existing conditions;
- Public comments and public meetings for both the Comprehensive Zoning Ordinance update and the 2013 Comprehensive Plan update;
- Comments and input from the Planning Commission and Board of Adjustments;
- Review of 2008 Monroe Comprehensive Plan;
- Comments and input from the City of Monroe Planning Department as well as review and comments from other City of Monroe departments;
- Current and projected demographic data;
- Projected future infrastructure and transportation needs;
- Projected open space and recreational needs;
- Community resiliency needs; and
- Floodplain development best practices.

Based on the data and information above, the planning team developed “Generalized” Future Land Use categories. There are two key ideas to keep in mind when discussing Generalized Future Land Use. First, Generalized Future Land Use categories are not homogenous in nature, rather they focus on describing the general nature of the land use in a specified area and the manner in which that land use develops and changes. Second, while the existing land use categories help to inform future land use, existing land use only represents what is currently “on the ground,” whereas the purpose of future land use is to express the future vision for growth and development in a community. While some of the nomenclature is similar, existing land use should not be equated with future land use.

The 2013 Generalized Future Land Use Map includes nine land use categories. Two of the categories are residential in nature, four are predominately commercial in nature, and the other three categories include Industrial, Institutional, and Parks and Open Space.

2013 Generalized Future Land Use Categories

Low Density Residential – Areas where the predominant land use will be single family detached residences.

In Monroe, Low Density Residential is a generalized future land use category that describes most of the residential neighborhoods in the City. The predominant residential structures are single-family residences, some with accessory structures. In some of the older neighborhoods two-unit type developments (duplex, traditional double, etc.) are somewhat prevalent; however the general nature is still residential. Outside of permitted home occupations, very limited commercial land uses should be considered and those should not interfere with the quality of life of the nearby residential uses. Institutional uses that are compatible and complimentary to the surrounding neighborhood with low residential densities may be considered, such as churches, schools, and libraries. In older areas of Monroe, infill development on vacant land should be considered.

Medium Density Residential –Areas where predominate land development will consist of a mix of housing types including two-family houses, doubles, townhouses, and apartment complexes.

In Monroe, Medium Density Residential is a generalized future land use category that describes predominantly residential areas that encourage more density and more varied types of residential development than the low-density residential category. This category encourages the development of medium density residential uses including single-family homes, two-family structures, townhouses, and multi-family with appropriate development standards. As in the low density residential land use category, limited compatible and complimentary institutional uses will be allowed including neighborhood schools, small churches, small parks and playgrounds, libraries, small-scale home occupations, and small day-care facilities. Additionally, infill development and redevelopment including appropriate commercial uses should be encouraged in this land use, however it is important that residential is the primary use in these areas.

Low Intensity Mixed Use – Areas with a mix of residential and commercial uses of limited size and scale that might include small professional businesses and offices, specialty shops, boutiques, small restaurants, and personal services.

In Monroe, Low Intensity Mixed Use is a generalized future land use category that encourages a mix of medium density residential uses and commercial development that is of similar size

and scale to the nearby residential uses. Commercial uses should have limited impact on adjacent residential areas especially in terms of lighting, signage, traffic, noise, and hours of operation. Institutional uses that are compatible and complimentary to the surrounding neighborhood may be considered, such as churches, schools, libraries, and daycare facilities. Additionally, infill development for both residential and commercial uses should be encouraged.

Medium Intensity Mixed Use – Areas with a mix of residential and commercial uses including live-work spaces and mixed use developments.

In Monroe, Medium Intensity Mixed Use is a generalized future land use category that encourages a mix of residential and commercial development that emphasizes live-work spaces and more dense development in areas such as downtown Monroe or new Traditional Neighborhood Developments (TNDs). Varied land uses may exist side-by-side on adjacent lots, sites, or individual tenant spaces in a multi-tenant building, or vertically within buildings (e.g. shops on the first floor with apartments or offices on upper floors). Although this land use encourages vertical mixed use, the scale and type of development should create an attractive streetscape with enhanced walkability components, pedestrian access, and access to public transportation. Both residential and commercial uses should be encouraged in this land use category. Institutional uses that are compatible and complimentary to the surrounding neighborhood may be considered. Infill development for both residential and commercial uses should be encouraged.

Commercial Neighborhood – Predominately commercial areas that services nearby residential and mixed-use areas.

In Monroe, Commercial Neighborhood is a generalized future land use category that encourages development of commercial corridors that service nearby neighborhoods. Commercial uses should be compatible with surrounding development (both residential and commercial) in terms of scale and building design. Additionally, commercial uses should also utilize appropriate development guidelines for lighting, signage, traffic control and access, noise, and hours of operation that minimize impacts on nearby residential areas. Institutional uses that are compatible and complimentary to the surrounding neighborhood may be considered, such as churches, schools, libraries, and daycare facilities. Additionally, infill development for both residential and commercial uses should be encouraged.

Commercial Urban – Predominately commercial areas with access to arterial roads and highways that serve the City of Monroe as well as the surrounding areas, and include large

mixed-use developments, large retail and shopping centers, restaurants, and entertainment establishments.

In Monroe, Commercial Urban is a generalized future land use category that encourages development of high intensity commercial areas. Commercial uses should be compatible with surrounding development in terms of scale and building design and should also utilize appropriate development guidelines for lighting, signage, traffic control and access, noise, and hours of operation. Additionally, development in this land use should provide adequate off-street parking, connection and access to local public transportation, and an acceptable level of infrastructure and municipal services. Institutional uses that are compatible to the surrounding commercial uses and meet the same standards, as commercial uses should be allowed.

Industrial – Areas that include a wide range of employment-generating office, light industrial, manufacturing, processing, and warehousing uses.

In Monroe, Industrial is a generalized future land use classification that encourages industrial land uses with adequate buffering and design standards that limit the negative impact of these uses on adjacent land uses and the community as a whole.

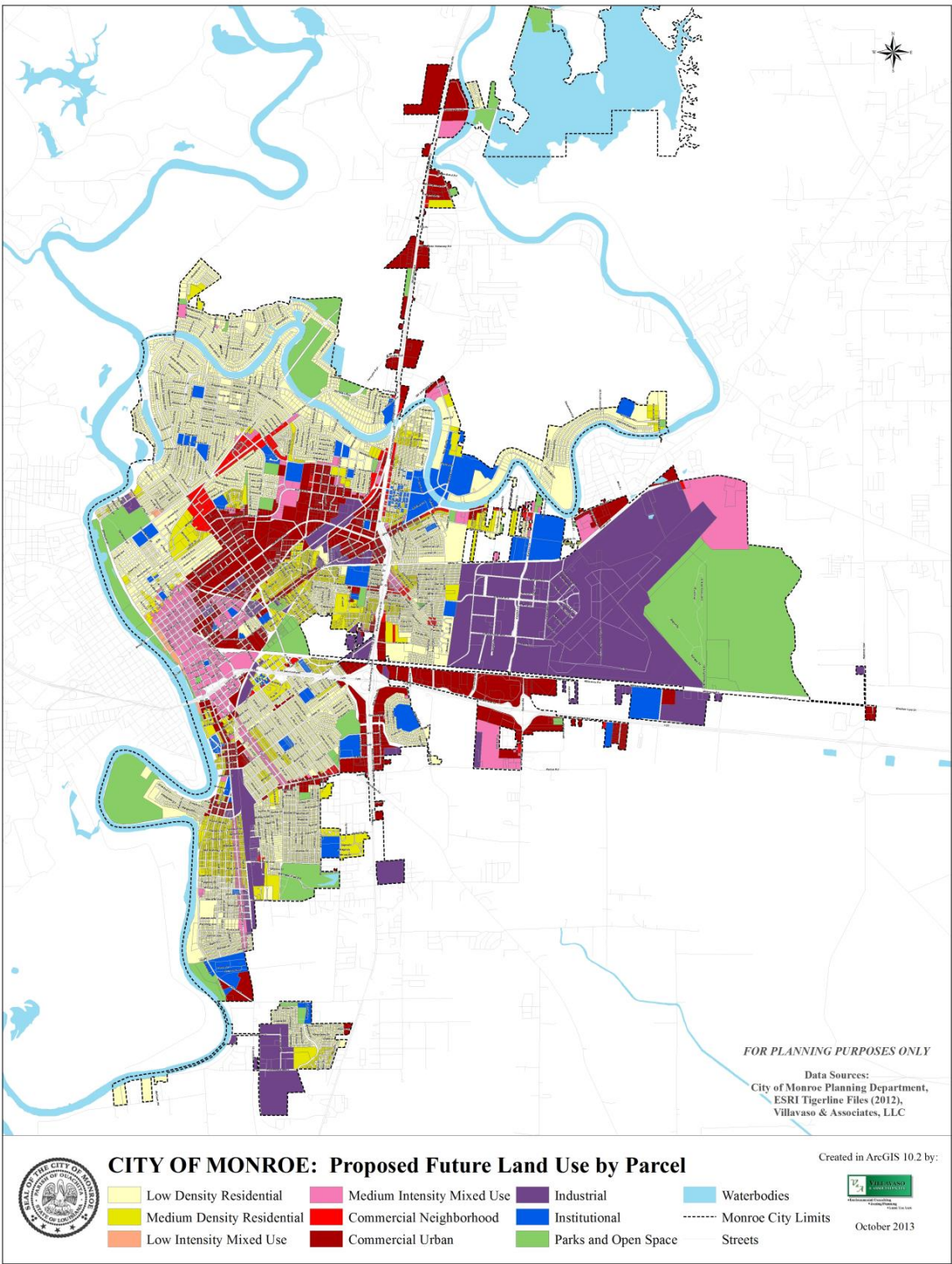
Institutional – Establishments that serve the religious, municipal, and educational needs of the community. Such uses include, but are not limited to, educational facilities, places of worship, hospitals, community centers, libraries, and civic /government buildings and administrative support for each use.

In Monroe, Institutional is a generalized future land use category that encourages community, municipal, and educational uses. These facilities take many forms, ranging in size from neighborhood schools to government facilities and large medical campuses. Depending on the size and impact of these facilities, additional controls such as site plan review may be considered for new development to minimize the impacts on surrounding neighborhoods. Small-scale institutional uses such as small churches, medical clinics, and municipal offices are not necessarily delineated within the plan because they are considered compatible and complimentary to other land uses.

Parks and Open Space – Areas include public and private recreational facilities and activities, as well as environmental preservation needs.

In Monroe, Parks and Open Space is a generalized future land use category that encourages parks, playgrounds, recreation centers, golf courses, wildlife refuges, and land reserved for environmental preservation and conservation. Within these land use areas, there may also be the provision of car and bike parking facilities, as well as ancillary buildings and structures required for operating and maintaining the parks or open spaces.

Map 4: 2013 Generalized Future Land Use Map



Future Land Use Strategic Recommendations

- 1) The City of Monroe should develop, adopt, and update land use regulatory policies, including an updated Comprehensive Zoning Ordinance that enhances, protects, maintains, and preserves natural resources and green space, established neighborhoods, mixed-use and commercial areas, business/industry areas, and public, quasi-public, and institutional land areas.

- 2) The City of Monroe should consider future land use compatibility and the Generalized Future Land Use Map when making land use, zoning, infrastructure, and/or development related decisions or when developing new ordinances and policies.

Chapter 3: Resiliency

Goal: Monroe is, and will continue to be, a sustainable community that meets the needs of its citizens without undermining the natural resources and environmental quality upon which life in the community depends in the long term. Monroe will use its adopted plans, ordinances, policies, and strategies to guide development and redevelopment such that the current needs of its citizens are met without compromising the ability of future generations of city residents to meet their needs.

Introduction

Resiliency—the ability or capacity to rebound from adversity, trauma, crisis, or disaster—is key to any community’s long-term success. Resiliency is built through preparedness (the time to develop qualities associated with resiliency is not after disaster strikes), a prior-planning activity, which is vital for crisis management. Of course it is always better to avoid hazards, but if this is not possible the next best thing for the community is to find ways to bounce back quickly and to become more resilient after the hazard has struck. Creating a more resilient Monroe is a community-wide effort that not only includes municipal decisions about infrastructure and the environment, but also includes personal decisions about where and how individuals choose to live. Additionally, increasing resiliency in Monroe can have the following benefits: preventing loss of life and injury, reducing property damage to homes and businesses, reducing business interruption and revenue loss, and helping to lower emergency response and disaster recovery costs.¹

Local Ordinances and Tools that Address Resiliency

The City of Monroe has a number of ordinances and codes that affect the resiliency of the community. Each of the following ordinances and plans plays an important role in strengthening the City’s overall ability to sustain itself in the long term and to efficiently bounce back after a disaster, restoring quickly both commercial activities and governmental functions.

Chapter 13 – Drainage and Flood Control

This chapter of the Monroe Code of Ordinances is Monroe’s floodplain ordinance. The goal of this ordinance is to “minimize public and private losses associated with flooding by implementing measures that will minimize prolonged business interruptions and limit damage to public facilities and infrastructure.” This ordinance includes recommendations for reducing flood loss, general standards for new developments, and permitting, variance, and appeal processes.

¹ Building Community Resilience by Integrating Hazard Mitigation: Social and Economic Benefits, fema.gov, www.fema.gov/multi-hazard-mitigation-planning

Chapter 30 – Storm Water Quality

This ordinance was adopted in 2011 and ties the City of Monroe to the requirements of the National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System (NPDES) Phase II Municipal Separate Storm Sewer System (MS4) General Permit (approved by the Louisiana Department of Environmental Quality). This ordinance has standards for storm water quality, connection and discharge points, and construction storm water management. The primary objective of this ordinance is to protect the quality of water in the City's drainage ways and subsequent discharge points.

Monroe Hazard Mitigation Plan

The Monroe Hazard Mitigation Plan (HMP) is based on a process of collectively assessing hazard threats, determining their community vulnerabilities, and building achievable action plans that will mitigate the hazards identified in Monroe in the future. The plan is also designed to take into consideration other plans existing in the community, such as the comprehensive plan and municipal department strategic plans, and incorporate these plans and their recommendations into the mitigation planning process. The Monroe HMP includes Hazard Profiles and Hazard Risk Assessments of the possible occurrence of disaster events in Monroe and a list of repetitive loss areas and properties (areas and individual properties where multiple disaster events occurred). In Monroe, this includes areas and properties that have experienced repetitive flooding.

Monroe Comprehensive Zoning Ordinance

The Monroe Comprehensive Zoning Ordinance (CZO) is the legal instrument that controls how land is used in the City. The CZO delineates residential, commercial, and industrial districts throughout the city, regulates the size, height and shape of buildings, and also defines specific standards for landscaping, parking areas, and other site standards. The CZO can be used to address resiliency in building and site design as well as allowing and creating standards for sustainable development practices.

Monroe Subdivision Regulations

The Monroe Subdivision Regulations determine how land is divided into parcels for development. Subdivision Regulations also control installation of municipal utilities and services for new developments as well as the provision of green and recreational spaces.

Block-by-block and Neighborhood Approaches – Reducing Energy Costs

There are a number of approaches that can be utilized to improve resiliency either on a single lot, for an entire block, or for an entire neighborhood. Many of these approaches listed in this section are low cost and easy to implement without a large municipal investment. This section also provides the appropriate local ordinance or tool(s) for implementation.

Solar Energy

Solar energy, generally defined, is using the sun as fuel to create heat or electricity. Solar power can be obtained through installing solar panels or solar cells in areas with access to direct sunlight. A number of communities have developed incentives for encouraging the preservation of solar access in site designs and for the installation of solar panels.

Geothermal

Geothermal energy is an alternative source of heating and cooling that draws on stable near-surface ground and/or water temperatures to control building temperatures above ground. Geothermal systems can be installed on individual parcels or for entire blocks.

Green Buildings

A Green Building is a building that is constructed and operated in a manner that promotes the healthiest possible environment and the most efficient and least disruptive use of land, water, energy, and resources. Green buildings can vary in size, design, materials, and use, but they generally focus on the following five elements: Sustainable Site Design; Water Conservation and Quality; Energy and Environment; Indoor Environmental Quality; and, Conservation of Materials and Resources.²

Key Implementation Tools: Comprehensive Zoning Ordinance, Subdivision Regulations, Chapter 13 – Drainage and Flood Control

Block-by-block and Neighborhood Approaches – Reducing Stormwater Runoff

Another key resiliency technique that can be used to address flooding risk is reducing stormwater runoff that enters the system. This can be accomplished in both urban and rural areas through the efficient use of irrigation, appropriate mix of plant materials, recycling water elements, and regular maintenance of landscape areas. Additionally, harvested storm water can be used for landscaping

²Governor's Green Government Council, Building Green in Pennsylvania.
http://www.epa.gov/statelocalclimate/documents/pdf/12_8_what_is_green_GGGC.pdf

and other non-potable applications which reduces demand on municipal water systems and decreases the amount of energy that is required for water treatment processes.

Green Roofs

A green roof can be any area atop a roof surface on a building, open to sky and air, which is surfaced with soil and living plant materials for the purpose of retaining rainwater. Green roofs also absorb heat from sunlight, thus reducing energy cost.

Rain Barrels and Cisterns

Rain barrels can be placed outside a building at roof downspouts to store rooftop runoff for later reuse in lawn and garden watering. Cisterns store rainwater in significantly larger volumes in manufactured tanks or underground storage areas. Rainwater collected in cisterns may also be used in non-potable water applications such as toilet flushing. Both cisterns and rain barrels can be implemented without the use of pumping devices by relying on gravity flow.

Landscaping Tools and Techniques

There are numerous landscaping and vegetation techniques that help to absorb storm water runoff. Basic techniques that are used on individual parcels but are also effective on larger projects include: planting trees and vegetation planting areas, installing rain gardens, and using permeable paving materials such as pervious concrete, gravel and other small aggregates, and grass pavers. Other techniques that are often used in large developments include: vegetation and sand filters, bioswales, and retention basins.

Key Implementation Tools: Comprehensive Zoning Ordinance, Subdivision Regulations, Chapter 13 – Drainage and Flood Control, Chapter 30 – Stormwater Quality

Citywide Approaches – Municipal Stormwater Management

A community's municipal infrastructure approach to stormwater management should focus on the reduction of urban runoff and mitigation of the effects of new development, re-development, or infill development on the existing drainage system. This can be accomplished through the following strategies: 1) Establishing and maintaining high-performing landscapes throughout the City by providing standards related to the quality, design, and functional aspects of the landscape; 2) Ensuring the preservation of permeable surfaces and requiring the installation of Stormwater Best Management Practice (BMPs) to slow surface flow of stormwater runoff and promote filtration, plant uptake, absorption and infiltration into sub-soils to reduce subsidence rates; and, 3) Providing for the

conservation of water resources through the efficient use of irrigation or designs that include appropriate mixes of plant materials, recycling water elements, and regular maintenance of landscaped areas.

It is important to note that many of these recommendations match those included in the previous section that addresses block-by-block and neighborhood approaches for reducing stormwater runoff. It is also important that the framework and strategies developed on the municipal level are integrated with block-by-block and neighborhood strategies and tools utilized by individual property owners.

Key Implementation Tools: Subdivision Regulations, Chapter 13 – Drainage and Flood Control, Chapter 30 – Stormwater Quality, Hazard Mitigation Plans

Citywide Approaches -- Transit/ Transportation Policy

An effective and efficient transportation network is another key component of a resilient community. In order to contribute to resiliency, the local transportation network in the community should be multi-modal (able accommodate all modes and types of transportation including, vehicular, transit, bicycle, and pedestrian) and accessible for all residents. One way to help create a resilient transportation system is to use a Complete Streets framework that considers the accessibility needs of all users in the planning, design, and maintenance of the transportation networks.

Key Implementation Tools: Comprehensive Zoning Ordinance, Subdivision Regulations

Citywide Approaches - Land Use and Development Review Policy

Resiliency and Sustainability in a community can be impacted through land use and policy decisions. The major development ordinances of Monroe (Comprehensive Zoning Ordinance and Subdivision regulations) should include standards and policies with tools and techniques that promote sustainability and resiliency. Additionally, land use ordinances should:

- 1) Focus on increasing compatibility between abutting land uses and between land uses and public rights-of-way by providing landscape screening or buffers;
- 2) Protect public health, safety, and welfare by preserving and enhancing the positive visual experience of the built environment, minimizing public and private property loss due to flood conditions, providing appropriate transitions between different land uses, preserving neighborhood character, enhancing pedestrian and vehicular traffic safety, and protecting and improving environmental quality;

- 3) Promote stormwater best management practices (BMP) for use on streets, driveways, parking, and vehicular and pedestrian access areas that minimizes runoff, increases infiltration, recharges groundwater, and improves water quality; and,
- 4) Assist in reducing the urban heat island effect and promoting biodiversity by increasing native tree canopy and landscaping and plantings with evapo-transporative elements.

Key Implementation Tools: Comprehensive Zoning Ordinance, Subdivision Regulations, Hazard Mitigation Plan

Resiliency Strategic Recommendations

- 1) Use the document, Recommendations for Sustainability and Resiliency and Monroe City Codes and Plans³ produced in January 2013, as a guide for making updates to appropriate city ordinances and plans that will help Monroe to become a more resilient community.
- 2) The City of Monroe should work to ensure that the revised and updated comprehensive zoning ordinance and subdivision regulations include standards and tools discussed in this chapter that promote resiliency and sustainability in future development in the City of Monroe.
- 3) The City of Monroe should conduct periodic, comprehensive reviews (at a minimum every three to five years) of the Flood Protection ordinance, Storm Water Management ordinance, and the Hazard Mitigation Plan and create a list of recommended updates for each of the ordinances to ensure that theses ordinances and plans promote sustainability and resiliency and are consistent and supportive of one another.

³ Recommendations For Sustainability and Resiliency in Monroe Codes, Villavaso and Associates, January 2013

Chapter 4: Economic Development

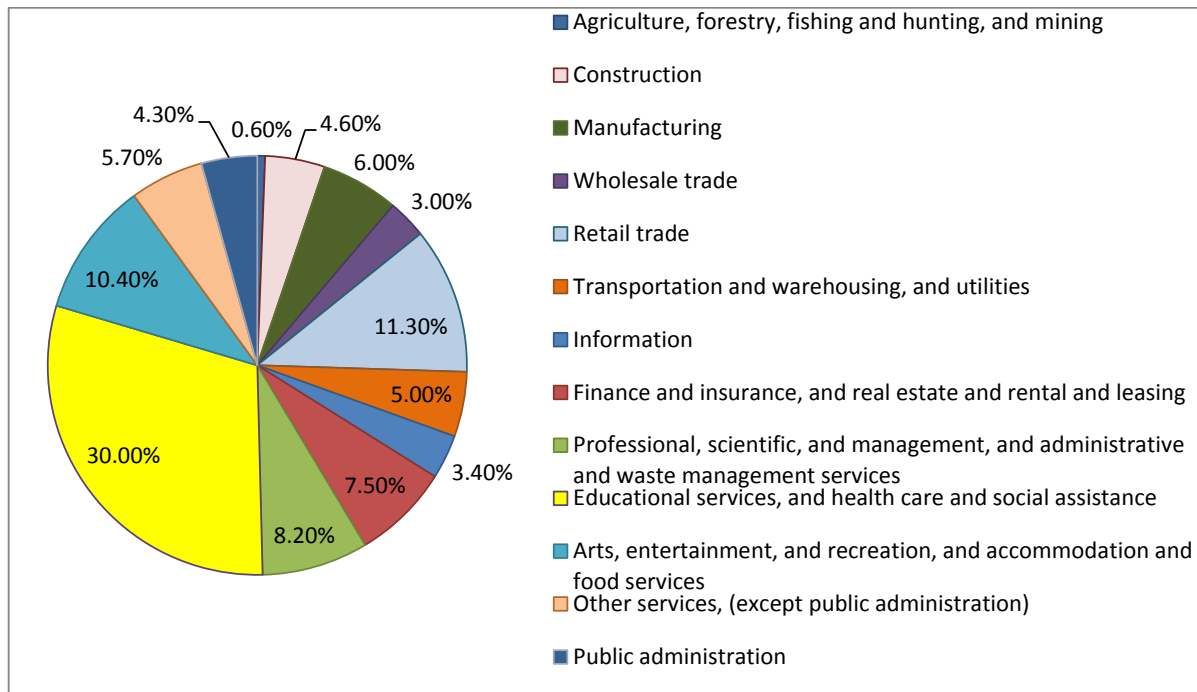
Goal: Monroe will continue to function as the economic center of Northeast Louisiana by supporting downtown development, coordinating economic development by expanding partnerships with local, regional, and state entities, and creating opportunities to promote the City as a great place to do business for large companies and employers to small local businesses and entrepreneurs.

Introduction

Monroe is the largest city in Northeast Louisiana and is the economic driver of the region with several assets that are encouraging for economic growth and development. Among Monroe's most valuable resources are its important location on Interstate 20 and its multimodal transportation access, the presence of a large public university and a regional community college, and a lower cost of doing business compared to other areas of the country. Further, the City of Monroe is home to a Fortune 500 company and the downtown area is currently experiencing a renaissance of new development.

Monroe Industry and Employment Data

Chart 3: Monroe, LA Proportion of Industry-2010



Source: 2006-2010 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates

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Chart 3 illustrates the labor force characteristics of Monroe. According to the 2010 Census there were 23,444 employees in Monroe. The top 3 performing industries by employment were **educational services, health care, and social assistance** at 30.0%; **retail trade** at 11.3%; and, **arts, entertainment, and recreation, and accommodation and food services** at 10.4%.

Table 5: Industry of Employment-2010

2010 Employee Statistics by NAICS Code	Employees, Total (by Place of Work)
Forestry, Fishing, Hunting, and Agriculture Support	10
Mining	38
Utilities	0
Construction	627
Manufacturing	644
Wholesale Trade	774
Retail Trade	2,940
Transportation and Warehousing	179
Information	466
Finance and Insurance	2,130
Real Estate and Rental and Leasing	562
Professional, Scientific and Technical Services	3,505
Management of Companies and Enterprises	162
Admin, Support, Waste Mgt, Remediation Services	2,540
Educational Services	426
Health Care and Social Assistance	4,886
Arts, Entertainment and Recreation	288
Accommodation and Food Services	2,159
Other Services (Except Public Administration)	1,108

Source: United States Census Bureau, US 2010 Census NAICS Data

Another source for employment data is the North American Industry Classification System (NAICS). NAICS is the standard used by Federal statistical agencies in classifying business establishments for the purpose of collecting, analyzing, and publishing statistical data related to the U.S. business economy. It is important to note that NAICS classifications are often different from those identified by the Census and the data is collected from different sources. According to the NAICS data the three industries with the greatest number of employees in Monroe are **healthcare and social assistance**; **professional, scientific and technical services**; and, **retail trade**.

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Key Developments in Monroe Since 2008

The following section reviews several projects and developments in Monroe that either began after 2008, or have experienced major changes since 2008. This section is not meant to function as a comprehensive list of every new development the City of Monroe since 2008, but to present a brief overview of large projects that will have an effect on both the local and regional economy. Additionally, while not discussed in detail here it is important to note that the Monroe School Board has announced plans for several schools facility upgrades and improvements and both the University of Louisiana Monroe and Delta Community College have built new facilities or expanded current facilities since 2008.

Downtown River Market and Downtown Development

A key focus area of new development in the City of Monroe is downtown Monroe and Ouachita River riverfront. One of the new attractions in downtown Monroe is the Monroe Downtown River Market. The Monroe Downtown River Market opened in 2012 and is a French-style market and gathering space on the banks of the Ouachita River on South Grand Street. Each Saturday in the spring and fall the River Market hosts a traditional farmer's market. The goal of this market is to showcase a variety of food, handmade art, and entertainment in a town square setting. Additionally, The River Market is used for fairs, festivals, and concerts, and the River Market also functions as a public park and amenity enjoyed by downtown residents, workers, and visitors.⁴

The design and construction of the River Market was funded by several organizations including the City of Monroe, the State of Louisiana, the Monroe-West Monroe Convention and Visitors Bureau, and Monroe Renaissance. Many new businesses and offices have located downtown since 2008, and several new restaurants have opened just north of the River Market area. Additionally, Monroe's Downtown Economic Development District (DEDD)⁵ and the Main Street organization, Monroe Downtown⁶, have worked to promote Downtown Monroe and to identify and obtain funding for new projects in the area.

Pecanland Mall - Interstate 20 Commercial Corridor

Pecanland Mall, located inside the Monroe city limits on Interstate 20 near Highway 165, has operated as a major regional commercial development that provides shopping, dining, and

⁴Downtown River Market, <http://www.downtownrivermarket.com/>

⁵ Downtown Economic Development District, Monroe, Louisiana, <http://www.downtownmonroe.org/>

⁶ Monroe Downtown, <http://www.monroedowntown.com/about>

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entertainment since opening in 1985. The mall has approximately 1 million square feet of retail space and nearly 5,000 parking spaces and attracts customers from a 100-mile radius that includes northern Louisiana and southern Arkansas. Pecanland Mall has several large anchor stores, over 100 specialty retailers, a large food court, and a movie theater.

Pecanland Mall also anchors a thriving commercial corridor on Interstate 20 between the Highway 165 interchange and the Garrett Road Interchange. The mall itself has several restaurants and hotels located on outparcels. Several commercial strip centers, restaurants, hotels, and big box stores including Sam's, Lowe's and Home Depot are also located in this commercial corridor.

Since 2008 this area has continued to thrive as a regional destination for the City of Monroe. Pecanland Mall has undergone renovations and is attracting new tenants. Several new restaurants and retail stores including a Dick's Sporting Goods, have opened in the corridor. Additionally, there are several undeveloped parcels of land in this corridor that are expected to develop in the near future.⁷

Gardner Denver Thomas Expansion

Gardner Denver Inc. manufactures compressors and pumps and is the leading worldwide manufacturer of rotary, vane, and reciprocating compressors as well as liquid ring pumps and blowers for various transportation applications. The company also produces pumps used in petroleum and industrial markets and other fluid transfer equipment serving chemical, petroleum, and food industries. Gardner Denver Thomas (GDT), a subsidiary of Gardner Denver Inc., has had a manufacturing facility in Monroe for a number of years that employed less than 100 employees. In 2009 GDT made the decision to consolidate manufacturing operations for its Thomas Products Division at the Monroe location. In November 2011, the GDT opened its expanded facility in Monroe. This new facility increased the number of employees from less than 100 to approximately 300, including 40 to 45 management positions. The new jobs have an average salary of \$37,000 plus benefits, well above the city and state average.⁸

Local and state leaders worked with economic development officials to develop an incentive package for the expansion. The state offered incentives including a performance-based grant

⁷ GGP Properties, Inc, Pecanland Mall Fact Sheet,
http://www.ggp.com/content/corporate/Data/mallfacts/Pecanland%20Mall_mallfact.pdf

⁸ Office of the Governor, State of Louisiana,
<http://www.gov.state.la.us/index.cfm?md=newsroom&tmp=detail&articleID=1146>

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for relocation expenses, assistance with employee recruitment, and a grant for Delta Community College to train certified manufacturing specialists for companies similar to GDT. Further, the City of Monroe agreed to provide a 124,000 square foot building expansion with a discounted lease.⁹

St. Francis Medical Center New Facilities

St. Francis Medical Center is the largest hospital in Northeast Louisiana and the largest employer in Ouachita Parish. St. Francis has three locations within the city limits of Monroe, St. Francis Medical Center – Downtown, located in Downtown Monroe on Jackson Street; St. Francis Medical Center-North, located off Hwy 165 North; and, St. Francis Community Health Center, located on Oliver Road near the intersection of Louisville Avenue and North 18th Street.¹⁰

Since 2008, St. Francis Medical Center has undertaken two major projects. In 2011, St. Francis broke ground on an expansion of its downtown emergency facilities. The Kitty DeGree Emergency Center has 38 beds, expanded fast track capability, an in-house CT scanner, and the latest in digital radiology technology.¹¹ The project cost neared \$6 million and included approximately \$3 million in new technology, equipment, and furnishings. Additionally, in spring 2013 St. Francis broke ground on a new \$30 million Community Health Center on the corner of Tower and Fulton Drive.¹²



⁹ Office of the Governor, State of Louisiana, <http://www.gov.state.la.us/index.cfm?md=newsroom&tmp=detail&articleID=1146>

¹⁰ St. Francis Medical Center, <http://www.stfran.com/>

¹¹ Project will expand St. Francis emergency room, create jobs. Thenewsstar.com, <http://www.thenewsstar.com/article/20110227/BUSINESS/110227014/Project-will-expand-St-Francis-emergency-room-create-jobs>

¹² St. Francis breaks ground for \$30 million facility in mid-town Monroe. Thenewsstar.com, <http://www.thenewsstar.com/article/20130417/NEWS01/130417010/St-Francis-breaks-ground-30-million-facility-mid-town-Monroe>

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CenturyLink, Inc. Headquarters Expansion

CenturyLink, Inc., the third largest telecommunications company in the United States, has its corporate headquarters in Monroe, Louisiana. CenturyLink is a Fortune 500 corporation and is also a member of the S&P 500. The company provides data, voice, and managed services locally, nationally, and internationally.¹³

Beginning in 2008, CenturyLink has planned and or/completed several major expansions of its corporate headquarters in Monroe. In 2009, the company announced a 350 job expansion and another expansion of 800 jobs in 2011. Additionally, in spring 2013 CenturyLink broke ground on the Technology Center of Excellence, a 250,000 square-foot expansion of its existing 365,000 square-foot corporate headquarters. Upon completion of the expansion CenturyLink will have 2,600 employees in the City of Monroe. Additionally, the new expansion is expected to create over 1,000 new indirect jobs and over 300 construction jobs at peak activity.¹⁴



Monroe Regional Airport Expansion

The Monroe Regional Airport (MLU) is owned by the City of Monroe and located in eastern Monroe north of Interstate 20 and Pecanland Mall. In 2009, work began on a new \$35 million, 60,000 square foot terminal building. The full project includes four new buildings, a new terminal, renovation of the existing terminal for baggage claim and rental car services,

¹³ CenturyLink, <http://www.centurylink.com/Pages/AboutUs/>

¹⁴ CenturyLink Begins Construction On Monroe, Louisiana Center of Excellence. The Columbus Region, <http://www.areadevelopment.com/newsitems/3-5-2013/centurylink-expands-headquarters-monroe-louisiana234789.shtml>

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and new landscaping, streets, and parking areas. Work on the terminal was completed in late 2011.¹⁵

Since 2008 Monroe has seen a number of exciting new developments and projects. The Interstate 20 retail corridor is a major regional destination with a number of new businesses and many opportunities for continued future growth. Further, CenturyLink continues to be an incredible asset for the community, not just as an employment generator, but also as a company that works within the community to foster a sense of civic pride. Additionally, there are opportunities for growth and expansion in the health care community in Monroe.

Economic Developments Strategic Recommendations

1. Monroe should continue to support investment in infrastructure and expansion of the Interstate 20 commercial corridor. Additionally, the City should also identify opportunities for new commercial and retail development in other commercial corridors in Monroe (Louisville Avenue, 18th Street, Highway 165) and identify infrastructure and local investment needed to support new development opportunities.
2. Monroe should continue to work with both regional and state officials in creating incentive packages for new businesses, especially industrial and manufacturing operations that can utilize the multi-modal transportation options available in Monroe. Additionally, the City should find opportunities to replicate the model of using both the university and community college to create workforce and specialized skills training programs that will help to develop the workforce needed for high paying industrial and manufacturing jobs.
3. Monroe should continue to focus on development and redevelopment of the downtown area, utilizing the River Market and other new downtown projects as anchors. Monroe should also work on identifying projects that will help improve connectivity to downtown from residential areas of the City while also creating opportunities for new residential development downtown.

¹⁵Opening a new terminal is a 'defining moment'. Thenewsstar.com
<http://www.thenewsstar.com/article/20111010/NEWS01/110100314/Opening-new-terminal-defining-moment->

Chapter 5: Housing

Goal: The City of Monroe recognizes the importance of quality, affordable housing for all residents and will work to ensure that a wide range of housing options are available for all residents including senior citizens and special needs populations. The City of Monroe will also encourage and promote policies that create and preserve affordable housing and residential neighborhoods that enhance the community.

Introduction

The City of Monroe is a community with a large range of housing options. The predominate housing type in Monroe are detached single family residences on a single parcel of land; however, there are a large number of two-family residences and small multi-family developments, especially in older residential areas of the City. Monroe also has a few large multi-family housing apartment developments, mostly located near the University of Louisiana Monroe, along Highway 165 North, and in the middle of the City near Forsythe and 18th Street. Further, the City of Monroe has a few large affordable housing developments spread throughout the city that are operated by the Monroe Housing Authority.

Additionally, Monroe has a small amount of mixed-use housing development, located mainly in the downtown area. However, there are several opportunities for new mixed use style housing developments especially downtown and near the university.

The City of Monroe Community Development Division (CDD) plays a vital role in housing policy by monitoring housing and community development programs. CDD manages and oversees housing and community development plans and projects, and also administers the Community Development Block Grant (CDBG), HOME Investment Partnership (HOME), and Emergency Shelter Grant (ESG) programs.

<http://www.ci.monroe.la.us/community-development.php>

The Monroe Housing Authority (MHA) provides affordable housing opportunities in the City of Monroe. The MHA owns and manages over 1,500 residences for low income families, seniors, and the developmentally disabled. The MHA also administers almost 1,500 housing choice vouchers and manages over 600 non-profit and tax credit residences for senior citizens.

<http://monroehousing.com/index.htm>

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Current Housing Conditions in Monroe

In order to receive funding from the U.S. Departments of Housing and Urban Development (HUD), the state and city must create a Consolidated Housing Plan. The goal of this plan is to develop a consolidated strategy to further the HUD goals of providing decent housing and a suitable living environment and expanding economic opportunities through a collaborative process by establishing a unified vision for community revitalization. The State of Louisiana consolidated plan, the Fiscal Year 2010-2014 Consolidated Plan, analyzes housing statewide and in each of the metropolitan areas, including Monroe. The Consolidated Housing Plan is both a statewide and local plan, and a tool that should assist the City of Monroe in addressing housing needs. The Consolidated Housing Plan establishes the following priorities:¹⁶

- 1) Increase homeownership opportunities for first time and low income homebuyers;
- 2) Increase the supply of decent, safe and sanitary rental housing that is affordable for very low, low and moderate-income families;
- 3) Rehabilitate substandard housing owned and occupied by low and very low income families;
- 4) Increase the supply of housing with supportive services for special needs populations (i.e. elderly, physically handicapped, mentally ill, homeless, single parent families); and,
- 5) Build the capacity of communities to address their housing needs through the creation of partnerships between local governmental units, nonprofit organizations, and private lending institutions, for-profit developers, and State and Federal governmental units.

The plan also includes specific analysis and data on each of the metropolitan areas in the state. The following are comments and feedback from the Monroe Housing Authority:

- The Monroe Housing Authority had 350 Section 8 vouchers, all of which were leased;
- Both housing authorities (Monroe and Ouachita Parish) agreed that there is an adequate supply of affordable, quality housing;
- Monroe Housing Authority stated that while they can always use more landlords, they do not have any significant housing issues and their rents are affordable; and
- Their biggest difficulty in Monroe is the demand, which has increased over the past three years. The struggling job market in Monroe has left many people unemployed.¹⁷

¹⁶ State of Louisiana Fiscal Years 2010-2014 Consolidated Plan

¹⁷ State of Louisiana Fiscal Years 2010-2014 Consolidated Plan

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The consolidated plan, the current housing market in the City, and the demographic trends and patterns help to identify what the housing market in Monroe will look like in future years. Although the City of Monroe experienced an economic downturn in previous years (in line with the nation as a whole), as the Monroe economy continues to rebound there will continue to be an increase in demand for housing, especially workforce housing. Additionally, in communities similar to Monroe where there may be an adequate supply of affordable housing, there is often a gap in the number of quality housing options. Last, Monroe as a community is getting older. As people get older many people want to stay in their current communities, but are often limited by availability of supportive housing options and services.

Monroe Housing Priorities

- 1) Pursuit of housing choice and housing opportunities of all types including predominately single-family subdivisions to multi-family housing and housing included in mixed-use development;
- 2) Promote quality housing opportunities for lower incomes as well as workforce housing;
- 3) Encourage new and improved housing opportunities for older residents and for special needs populations; and,
- 4) Encourage infill development of housing in neighborhoods and code enforcement to improve substandard structures.

Housing Choice

One of the qualities of a great community is availability of housing for all of its residents. The City of Monroe has many wonderful residential neighborhoods and residential areas; however, for the City of Monroe to thrive, it is important that the City has safe, quality housing for all members of the community. The City of Monroe should encourage a variety of housing choices through preservation, rehabilitation, and new development. Additionally, all existing and new housing and residential areas in Monroe should have the following attributes: environmental features and open space, adequate community facilities and services, quality site and architectural design, and the separation and buffering of uses considered incompatible with residential uses.

Affordable Housing

The Future Land Use Plan and development ordinances should encourage and allow for development of a wide range of housing types while recognizing the City's historically residential character. This includes allowing for high quality multi-unit homes or small-scale

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apartments on appropriately sized lots consistent in design and scale to existing neighborhoods. Monroe development ordinances should include design standards to guarantee that multi-family and mixed-use developments enhance the character of the City. Additionally the City of Monroe and the Monroe Housing Authority should continue to identify and work with non-profit homeownership providers such as Habitat for Humanity and the Volunteers of America to increase the supply of quality affordable housing for lower income households. The City of Monroe should also require that quality design and appearance be important factors in the official review and approval process for new low- and moderate-income housing developments.

Mixed-Use Development

Mixed-Use Development can also be utilized to provide housing choice in a community. Mixed-use developments can be used to create new housing opportunities in close proximity to services and essential needs. Mixed use development is not a new concept, but developers are using new tools and ideas such as Traditional Neighborhood Development (TND) to create mixed-use neighborhoods that respect the community identity and desired scale of development. Another benefit of mixed-use development is the flexibility to develop on both small and large parcels.

Downtown Monroe

There are opportunities for new residential development in existing structures in downtown Monroe. Residential development in downtown Monroe serves several purposes such as encouraging re-use of historic buildings, allowing people to live in close proximity to jobs and essential services, and helping to revitalize an important area of the City.

Housing Opportunities for Senior Housing

The demographic trends show that the population of Monroe is getting older. This is a national trend, but an important trend to understand and plan for. As the senior population grows, where and how this population lives will change. Studies conducted by the AARP have shown that older citizen populations largely want to “age in place.” The availability of affordable, accessible housing options is a component in providing opportunities to age in place in communities.¹⁸

The housing development community has responded to this demographic change in several ways including promoting traditional senior housing and assisted living facilities as well as newer

¹⁸ Aging in Place. AARP, <http://www.aarp.org/home-garden/livable-communities/info-11-2011/Aging-In-Place.html>

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developments such as Active Adult Retirement Communities and planned developments that cater to senior citizens. Some of the factors that developers look for when planning these communities include: access to significant employment cores, access to major highways and/or airports, presence of local character and social and cultural outlets, proximity to retail and personal services, and proximity to medical facilities. The City of Monroe offers many of these assets including two major regional hospitals with a number of programs that cater to senior citizens, a large public university that offers educational, cultural, and recreational opportunities for the community, and a large regional shopping center and other areas with concentrations of retail and personal services. Additionally, the City of Monroe has a relatively low cost of living which is also attractive to senior citizens.

Infill Development and Quality Housing

Although Monroe has wonderful residential areas and neighborhoods, there are locations in Monroe where there are opportunities to create new housing stock and improve the current housing stock. One of the methods to accomplish this is encouraging infill development in existing neighborhoods. While demolition of existing housing structures is appropriate where the health and safety of the neighborhood is compromised, it is important that the City of Monroe track vacant lots, blighted structures, and housing in need of improvement or renovation and develop a plan to address these structures. Additionally, infill development strategies promote resiliency and sustainability by reducing sprawl and using existing infrastructure and utilities.

Enforcement

One of the most important ways to affect the quality of housing in a community is through the permitting and enforcement process. Currently the City of Monroe is in the final stages of reviewing new comprehensive zoning regulations and subdivision regulations. It is important that the City of Monroe utilize these tools and enforce the rules for both new and existing development. Additionally, the City of Monroe should continue to provide assistance with compliance of City codes through the use of housing rehabilitation programs, where applicable, to help upgrade housing for senior citizens, disabled persons, and other eligible residents.

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Housing Strategic Recommendations

1. The City of Monroe will adopt plans and policies to create and preserve housing choice, affordable housing, and housing opportunities of all types including predominately single-family subdivisions, multi-family housing, downtown housing developments, and mixed-use development.
2. The City of Monroe will work to develop new and improved housing opportunities for older residents and for special needs populations.
3. The City of Monroe will encourage the rehabilitation of substandard units, the development of vacant lots, and the preservation, renovation, code enforcement, and rehabilitation of its older housing stock. However, while an emphasis on enforcement is needed, City officials will work to provide developers and property owners flexibility so that they can achieve high quality design and develop infill projects that strengthen existing neighborhoods.

Chapter 6: Implementation and Implementation Matrix

The Implementation Matrix includes all of the Goals and Strategic Recommendations found in the 2013 Comprehensive Plan Update. The following tables prioritize this information; describe the tools, policies, and actions required to implement these goals; and establish priorities and implementation timing for each strategic recommendation.

Each matrix is organized as follows:

- Goal Statement;
- Strategic Recommendations;
- Major Implementation Tools;
- Priority; and
- Implementation Timing (Short or Long Term).

The Goal Statements and Strategic Recommendations are discussed in detail in each chapter of the 2013 Comprehensive Plan Update. The Implementation Tools describe the types of tools needed to implement the objectives and strategies. Major Implementation Tools include:

- Development Regulations: Update regulations and tools, such as the zoning ordinance, subdivision regulations, overlay zones, urban design requirements, impact fees, to ensure consistent and successful implementation;
- Capital Improvement Programs: Improvements need to be included in a Capital Improvement Program;
- Budget Process and Funding: Additional funding by the City and/or other sources including grants are needed to implement;
- Program Development and Implementation: New programs need to be developed and absorbed into the City's service structure;
- Area Plans and Strategic Issue Plans: Geographic area studies or studies of strategic issues develop specific recommendations that can be implemented through one of more of the Implementation Tools;
- Facility Plans: Plans for City facilities, such as parks or libraries are required; and
- Coordination: Recommendations that need to be coordinated with Parish, Regional, and State authorities; and
- Enforcement: Enforcement of existing codes and regulations by responsible City administrators.

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Each matrix assigns a priority level to each strategy from 1 (highest) to 3 (lowest). The criteria for selecting these priority levels are:

- Is the policy or action a precedent for further actions?
- Does the policy or action address critical City needs?
- Is there current pressure for imminent change that needs direction and guidance?

Finally, the anticipated Implementation Timing for each of the strategies is provided in the final column. Timing is divided into two categories:

- Short-term (ST): Implementation is needed in 1 to 3 years
- Long-term (LT): Implementation is anticipated in 3 to 10 years

Future Land Use 2013			
<i>Goal: Future Land Use in the City of Monroe should encourage new development and redevelopment opportunities in appropriate areas while equally considering the needs of current and future residents and businesses; protect natural resources; provide adequate open spaces and recreational opportunities; and, support appropriate and sustainable infrastructure and services that meet the needs of a changing community.</i>			
Strategic Recommendations	Major Implementation Tools	Priority 1-2-3	Timing
The City of Monroe should develop, adopt, and update land use regulatory policies, including an updated Comprehensive Zoning Ordinance that enhances, protects including an updated Comprehensive Zoning Ordinance, which enhances, protects, maintains, and preserves natural resources and green space, established neighborhoods, mixed-use and commercial areas, business/industry areas, and public, quasi-public, and institutional land areas.	Development Regulations, Enforcement	1	ST
The City of Monroe should consider future land use compatibility and the Generalized Future Land Use Map when making land use, zoning, infrastructure, and/or development related decisions or when developing new ordinances and policies.	Development Regulations, Capital Improvement Programs, Budget Process and Funding, Program Development and Implementation, Area Plans and Strategic Issue Plans	2	ST

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Resiliency			
<p><i>Goal: Monroe is, and will continue to be, a sustainable community that meets the needs of its citizens without undermining the natural resources and environmental quality upon which life in the community depends in the long term. Monroe will use its adopted plans, ordinances, policies, and strategies to guide development and redevelopment such that the current needs of its citizens are met without compromising the ability of future generations of city residents to meet their needs.</i></p>			
Strategic Recommendations	Major Implementation Tools	Priority 1-2-3	Timing
Use the document, Recommendations for Sustainability and Resiliency and Monroe City Codes and Plans produced in January 2013, as a guide for making updates to appropriate city ordinances and plans that will help Monroe to become a more resilient community.	Development Regulations, Program Development and Implementation, Area Plans and Strategic Issue Plans, Facility Plans, Coordination	1	ST
The City of Monroe should work to ensure that the revised and updated comprehensive zoning ordinance and subdivision regulations include standards and tools discussed in this chapter that promote resiliency and sustainability in future development in the City of Monroe.	Development Regulations, Enforcement, Area Plans and Strategic Issue Plans, Coordination	1	ST
The City of Monroe should conduct periodic, comprehensive reviews (at a minimum every three to five years) of the Flood Protection ordinance, Storm Water Management ordinance, and the Hazard Mitigation Plan and create a list of recommended updates for each of the ordinances to ensure that theses ordinances and plans promote sustainability and resiliency and are consistent and supportive of one another.	Development Regulations, Capital Improvement Programs, Budget Process and Funding, Enforcement, Program Development and Implementation, Coordination	2	ST

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Economic Development			
<p><i>Goal: Monroe will continue to function as the economic center of Northeast Louisiana by supporting downtown development, coordinating economic development by expanding partnerships with local, regional, and state entities, and creating opportunities to promote the City as a great place to do business for large companies and employers to small local businesses and entrepreneurs.</i></p>			
Strategic Recommendations	Major Implementation Tools	Priority 1-2-3	Timing
Monroe should continue to support investment in infrastructure and expansion of the Interstate 20 commercial corridor. Additionally, the City should also identify opportunities for new commercial and retail development in other commercial corridors in Monroe (Louisville Avenue, 18th Street, Highway 165) and identify infrastructure and local investment needed to support new development opportunities.	Capital Improvement Programs, Budget Process and Funding, Program Development and Implementation, Area Plans and Strategic Issue Plans, Coordination	2	ST,LT
Monroe should continue to work with both regional and state officials in creating incentive packages for new businesses, especially industrial and manufacturing opportunities that can utilize the multi-modal transportation options available in Monroe. Additionally, the City should find opportunities to replicate the model of using both the university and community college to create workforce and specialized skills training programs that will help to develop the workforce needed for high paying industrial and manufacturing jobs.	Capital Improvement Programs, Budget Process and Funding, Program Development and Implementation, Area Plans and Strategic Issue Plans, Coordination	2	ST,LT
Monroe should continue to focus on development and redevelopment of the downtown area, utilizing the River Market and other new downtown projects as anchors. Monroe should also work on identifying projects that will help improve connectivity to downtown from residential areas of the City while also creating opportunities for new residential development downtown.	Capital Improvement Programs, Budget Process and Funding, Program Development and Implementation, Area Plans and Strategic Issue Plans, Coordination	1	ST,LT

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Housing			
<p><i>Goal: The City of Monroe recognizes the importance of quality, affordable housing for all residents and will work to ensure that a wide range of housing options are available for all residents including senior citizens and special needs populations. The City of Monroe will also encourage and promote policies that create and preserve affordable housing and residential neighborhoods that enhance the community.</i></p>			
Strategic Recommendations	Major Implementation Tools	Priority 1-2-3	Timing
The City of Monroe will adopt plans and policies to create and preserve housing choice, affordable housing, and housing opportunities of all types including predominately single-family subdivisions, multi-family housing, downtown housing developments, and mixed-use development.	Development Regulations, Program Development and Implementation, Area Plans and Strategic Issue Plans, Facility Plans, Coordination	1	ST,LT
The City of Monroe will work to develop new and improved housing opportunities for older residents and for special needs populations.	Capital Improvement Programs, Program Development and Implementation, Coordination	2	LT
The City of Monroe will encourage the rehabilitation of substandard units, the development of vacant lots, and the preservation, renovation, code enforcement, and rehabilitation of its older housing stock. However, while an emphasis on enforcement is needed, City officials will work to provide developers and property owners flexibility so that they can achieve high quality design and develop infill projects that strengthen existing neighborhoods.	Development Regulations, Program Development and Implementation, Area Plans and Strategic Issue Plans, Facility Plans, Coordination	1	ST,LT