2 IMAGINE MONROE AND GUIDING PRINCIPLES

Introduction

Monroe's 2044 Comprehensive Plan establishes the policies and actions to achieve Imagine Monroe, the City's aspirational vision. To implement Imagine Monroe, specific goals and policies will be implemented through actions and investments over time. This chapter describes the Imagine Monroe vision statement and establishes five Guiding Principles that expand upon components of Imagine Monroe, establish a broad framework for the comprehensive plan goals, and provide direction for the policies in each element.

History

Located against the foothills of the Cascade Mountains, near where the Skykomish and Snoqualmie rivers converge to form the Snohomish River, Monroe's origins trace back to the Indigenous Coastal Salish peoples. Coastal Salish refers to the language connecting 40 independent Nations between British Columbia, Canada, and northern Oregon.[1] Tribal groups that inhabited the region between modern-day Monroe and the City of Index since time immemorial include:

Skykomish River near Al Borlin Park
Source: Tyson Gillard, Outdoor Project,
https://www.outdoorproject.com/united-
states/washington/skykomish-river-al-borlin-park

the Snohomish Tribe of Indians and federally recognized Tulalip Tribes of Washington, Stillaguamish Tribe of Indians, and the Snoqualmie Indian Tribe. The dominant tribe in Monroe was the Snohomish. In 1855, the Treaty of Point Elliott was signed, requiring the Tribes to cede their ancestral lands in exchange for money, education, and medical care, and to relocate onto reservations.[2] These tribes continue to exist into the current day, and have reserved rights including inherent, sovereign, and treaty rights to the area in which the City of Monroe now exists, and beyond."

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1 *American Museum of Natural History. (n.d.). Coast Salish: We speak more than 20 languages. Retrieved September 6, 2024, from* *https://www.amnh.org/exhibitions/permanent/northwestcoast/coastsalish#:~=We%20speak%20more%20than%2020,our%20languages%2C%20which%20are%20related.*
2 *Washington State Governor's Office of Indian Affairs. (n.d.). Treaty of Point Elliott (1855). Retrieved September 6, 2024, from* *https://goia.wa.gov/tribal-government/treaty-point-elliott-1855*
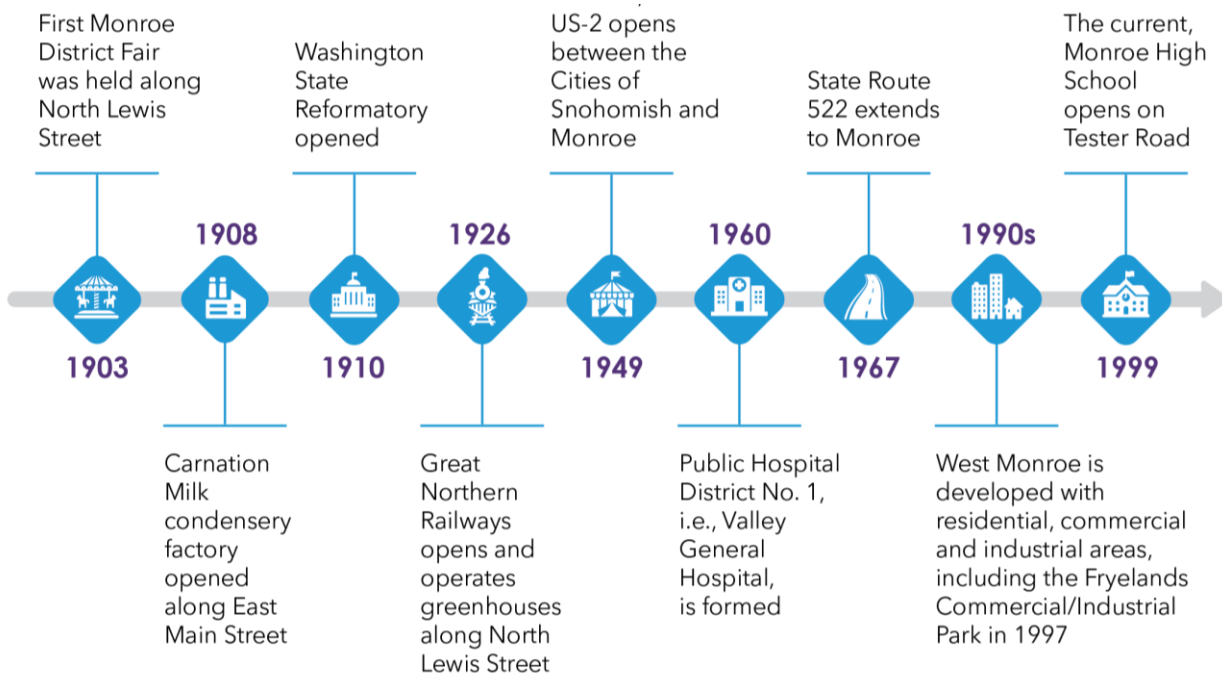
In the 1860s, the first Euro-American settlers began arriving in the Monroe area. Early settlements were centered around three agricultural areas: Woods Creek Valley, Tualco Valley and Park Place. The first post office was established in 1889 in what is now known as Park Place. When the Great Northern Railways located the railroad tracks further north and east of Park Place, the town relocated. Other major industries in the late 1880s and early 1900s included mills and dairy farms. Monroe was incorporated and became a city in 1903.[3]

At the start of the 20th century, Monroe's population growth was driven by agricultural products and timber, and slowly grew from there.

The City made investments in building essential infrastructure (for example, new schools, libraries, hospitals, churches, and a state bank) to attract more residents to the area. Monroe's population remained relatively stable during its first century, fluctuating slightly from approximately 1,552 residents in 1910 to around 1,556 in 1950. However, the city began to experience renewed growth in the 1990s, with a significant increase in population after 2000, reaching approximately 19,699 residents—and it has only continued to grow since then.[4] Major events in Monroe's history are described in **Figure 2.1.**

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Figure 2.1 – TIMELINE OF MONROE IN THE 20TH CENTURY

First Monroe District Fair was held along North Lewis Street

Washington State Reformatory opened

US-2 opens between the Cities of Snohomish and Monroe

State Route 522 extends to Monroe

The current, Monroe High School opens on Tester Road

1908   **1926**   **1960**   **1990s**

1903   **1910**   **1949**   **1967**   **1999**

Carnation Milk condensery factory opened along East Main Street

Great Northern Railways opens and operates greenhouses along North Lewis Street

Public Hospital District No. 1, i.e., Valley General Hospital, is formed

West Monroe is developed with residential, commercial and industrial areas, including the Fryelands Commercial/Industrial Park in 1997

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3 Margaret Riddle, "Monroe – Thumbnail History," HistoryLink.org Essay 7877, posted August 9, 2006, accessed September 5, 2024, https://www.historylink.org/File/8325.
4 Wikipedia contributors. (2024, August 16). Monroe, Washington. In Wikipedia, The Free Encyclopedia. Retrieved September 6, 2024, from https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Monroe,_Washington.

Today

Monroe is a vibrant community that is home to over 20,000 people today. Monroe, once rooted in agriculture, has undergone a significant transformation, emerging as a major employer in the Skykomish Valley region for retail, industrial, and manufacturing sectors. Monroe remains committed to supporting the growth of small and locally owned businesses in the community.

From the streets of Monroe's historic downtown to the tranquil beauty of its natural surroundings, the varied landscapes contribute to its unique character, creating a dynamic environment where people from all walks of life can find a place to call home. Monroe offers a wealth of experiences for both residents and visitors alike. Monroe continues to meet the everyday needs of the community with its diverse array of shops and services, schools, parks and recreation spaces.

Fryelands Residential
Source: Provided by the City of Monroe

Vision Statement

Our vision statement is Imagine Monroe. It identifies the direction Monroe wants to take in the future. Imagine Monroe was developed through community input, adopted by the Monroe City Council in 2022 and is the foundation for the Monroe 2044 Comprehensive Plan. Imagine Monroe is a description of what we want to be today and who we aspire to be in the future.

Imagine Monroe: A lively center surrounded by nature. A place of beauty and goodwill.

Our parks, waterways, and environment are healthy and accessible for everyone to enjoy. Our historic downtown and business districts are thriving and full of locally owned businesses and locally sourced products. We can find everything we need with regional connections and with a variety of choices for work, housing, dining, shopping, arts, and activities.

Friendly and responsive, we strengthen connections through gathering spaces, events, services, and community-centered infrastructure – creating a safe space for all.

In Monroe, everyone feels at home, and everyone feels they belong.

During the April 2023 Community Kickoff event, meeting attendees ranked key components of the vision to identify priorities that helped establish Guiding Principles (described below), further launching the vision as part of a broader policy framework for the Comprehensive Plan.

Guiding Principles

The Guiding Principles provide direction for decision-making in the City of Monroe. They are major themes that address one component of Imagine Monroe and incorporate public input gathered throughout the Comprehensive Plan process. They are further defined by goals and policies to guide future land use and development decisions to help achieve the Plan's vision. While goals and policies in the Comprehensive Plan may be amended over time, Guiding Principles do not change unless there is a significant shift in direction for the City.

Safe and Accessible

Monroe is a diverse and welcoming community where everyone feels safe, and everyone feels they belong. We aspire for all to have access to safe, dependable, efficient services, and multimodal transportation options. This includes access to parks, schools, health care, police, social services, and fire services. Community services are located in areas that are accessible to everyone in Monroe.

Connected and Active

Monroe strives for interconnected neighborhoods where people of all abilities can access services, parks, and community gathering places through a variety of travel options. Safe and inviting trails, sidewalks, and bicycle routes provide access to our locally owned businesses and neighborhood gathering spaces. Monroe is a place where people can enjoy the outdoor amenities in Monroe without needing a vehicle.

Local and Community Driven

Monroe is a community of people that support locally owned businesses, locally made products, arts, and culture. All residents support one another to grow and flourish in Monroe. We actively participate in civic activities, community events and cultural experiences because it strengthens our relationships with each other and the Monroe community.

Affordable and Diverse Housing

In Monroe, everyone has a place to call home. Monroe residents have a wide range of incomes and diverse housing needs that may change over time. Monroe will have housing options for all and meet the needs of existing and future residents.

Equity-Centered

Monroe is a community that is a safe place for all, where everyone feels at home, and everyone feels they belong. Equity is central in achieving Imagine Monroe as it addresses opportunity, power, influence, and resources to meet the needs of all people. Equity is the principle that institutions proactively adopt policies to take genuine actions to eliminate inequitable adverse impacts and to facilitate increased access to resources, opportunities, and representation in planning and decision-making processes to everyone, including historically marginalized and underrepresented people and communities. Equity shall be incorporated into all aspects of land use planning and development to ensure everyone has access to the services, opportunities, and activities to meet their essential needs and advance their well-being.

Vision Policy Framework
Element-Specific Goals, Policies, and Actions

The Monroe 2044 Comprehensive Plan is broken into elements, each with a set of goals, policies, and actions aligned with the Imagine Monroe Vision and Monroe 2044 Guiding Principles. State, regional, and county planning policies, along with community discussions and priorities, have been incorporated into the goals, policies, and actions. They are sorted by Plan element to provide clarity on how each part of the Plan is working to implement the Imagine Monroe Vision and Monroe 2044 Guiding Principles.

- **GOALS** are statements that help set direction for future policies and actions.

- **POLICIES** are statements that provide guidance for implementing goals through one or more actions. There are one or more policies within each Goal.

- **ACTIONS** are projects, programs, or activities that support implementation of goals and policies and are measurable. Not every policy is supported by an action. Certain policies reflect direction and expectations.

The Policy Framework is an essential element of the Comprehensive Plan. It is both visionary and measurable (**Figure 2.2**).

Figure 2.2 – VISION AND POLICY FRAMEWORK