

DRAFT Vision, Goals and Objective Village of Monroe Comprehensive Plan



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Introduction

Long range planning begins with a community's vision for its future. The Vision statement provides a short succinct statement against which all policies can easily be tested. This vision is then translated into a list of goals and objectives. These goals and objectives provide a framework describing the aspirations of the community. Once goals and objectives are identified, they will serve as the framework for the policy recommendations of the Comprehensive Plan.

The Visions Statement, goals and objectives have been developed based on a visioning meeting conducted on May 19, 2012 and upon the deliberations of the appointed Master Plan Committee. The draft Vision for the Village of Monroe is:

Proposed Vision Statement

The Village of Monroe will have a strong, attractive, economically vibrant downtown core and adjacent transitional heavy commercial areas, a sustainable mix of more intensive uses along the Route 17M corridor, a range of new housing options for young families and empty nesters within walking distance to downtown, high-quality stable single-family and two-family neighborhoods and abundant recreational and cultural opportunities.

Proposed Goals and Objectives

The following goals and objectives are intended to carry out the above vision statement and have been derived from the most commonly mentioned issues brought up during the Visioning meeting and previous steering committee meetings. The committee should discuss these, refine and add to them as appropriate.

It is noted that the Goal is generally a broad aspiration such as, *Transform Monroe's struggling heavy commercial and industrial areas*. An objective is more narrowly defined and usually progress toward meeting objectives can be objectively measured. An example of an objective would be, *Allow for a range of new and innovative uses that leverage the scale of existing buildings in Monroe's existing heavy commercial areas*. After the identification of goals and objectives, the next step in the process will be to identify a number of strategies to achieve these objectives. Many of these strategies have already been discussed at Steering Committee meetings as "good ideas," before the particular goal and objectives were identified. An example of a strategy that would serve the above-cited goal and objective would be to allow indoor recreation in former warehouse space. We will be working to identify these types of strategy as the Committee undertakes the Downtown Design Charette. The objectives and future recommendations should be guided and tempered by the existing conditions reports already provided to the committee. The following are suggested goals and objectives

Goal: Create an active, convenient and inviting downtown as the community's civic, cultural, and recreational center as well as a destination for dining, shopping and personal services:

1. Decrease the number of vacant ground-level spaces in the downtown;
2. Increase accessibility of the downtown to residents of the surrounding area;
3. Provide easy and convenient parking to service downtown businesses and address actual and perceived parking problems;
4. Improve the appearance of downtown especially in areas open to significant public view such as the Ponds;
5. Improve access, connectivity, walkability and lighting with respect to both roads and pathways/sidewalks in the downtown area;
6. Provide a resident population that will frequent downtown businesses;
7. Improve the pedestrian experience in downtown including landscaping, street furniture and appropriate delineation of public and private areas;
8. Actively market downtown business, local events, volunteer opportunities, and local resources such as parks and historic properties;
9. Seek to better engage and coordinate with the local civic and institutional organizations such as the Chamber of Commerce;
10. Enhance connections from the downtown to Ponds Park, the Monroe Racetrack, the Heritage Trail, Smith Clove Park and other recreational areas;
11. Respect the scale and character of downtown buildings by promoting appropriate building heights at the entrance to downtown from the ponds;

Goal: Expand housing opportunities within the Village to ensure that all residents of Monroe can continue to live in the Village following life transitions:

1. Provide appropriate higher densities of quality residential use within and near downtown allowing residents to walk to businesses and services without depending on vehicular use;
2. Provide a supply of affordable and market rate housing designed for senior citizen and active-adult occupancy as a way to allow long-time residents to remain in the community;
3. Provide a supply of high-quality affordable ownership and rental housing for young professionals and new families;
4. Respect the needs of mobility-challenged persons such as the disabled and seniors in the design of new housing types;

Goal : Safeguard Monroe's existing stable residential neighborhoods, and improve and enhance marginal areas, especially areas of investment conversions:

1. Protect the scale, density and character of Monroe's stable and well-maintained neighborhoods;
2. Require development of any remaining vacant tracts to be built in a manner and character respectful of existing adjacent areas;
3. Discourage the reuse of existing large homes for multifamily residences;
4. Provide for appropriate property maintenance laws to maintain the quality of neighborhoods;

5. Develop creative strategies to address overcrowding and illegal uses in struggling neighborhoods;
6. Respect the variety of Monroe's older varied neighborhoods and promote homeowner investment by taking a more flexible approach to zoning regulation;

Goal: Transform the Route 17M Strip-Commercial Corridor to Better Address the Evolving Commercial Market and to Provide a Sustainable Balance of Uses

1. Reduce the amount of automobile-dependent convenience commercial uses along the Route 17M corridor to better reflect the current retail demand;
2. Promote larger commercial uses along the Route 17M corridor that cannot be accommodated in downtown;
3. Promote a building-on-street appearance, relegating parking to rear yards where possible;
4. Allow new uses in marginal areas to break -up the commercial strip and form nodes rather than corridors thereby considering the particular suitability of different areas of the corridor for different types of uses;
5. Allow for mixed-uses where appropriate and subject to strict design requirements;
6. Promote guidelines to insure design quality, while instructing future applicants of the Village's design expectations;

Goal: Improve the multi-modal flow of traffic through the Village, while respecting pedestrians and cyclists:

1. Allow for easier access to downtown from outlying areas and the surrounding communities;
2. Work with the State and County to provide innovative solutions that will improve vehicular traffic flow along Route 17M and into and out of the downtown;
3. Provide enhance facilities for cyclists and pedestrians connecting downtown, commercial areas, residential areas and parks;
4. Provide a trail system along the Ramapo River and its attendant waterbodies;
5. Improve connections at the Village's gateways, especially at the intersections of Route 208 and Route 17M and at the intersection of Freeland Street/Still Street/Route 17M;
6. Enhance the accessibility and convenience of public transportation options;
7. Appreciate the pedestrian design needs of less mobile populations such as senior citizens, the disabled and children;

Goal: Ensure the preservation and protection of the Village's historic, scenic and natural resources:

1. Continue to distinguish Monroe's historic resources, through landmarkings, signage and recognition;
2. Guarantee the quality of water discharged into the Ramapo River Sole Source Aquifer System;

3. Continue to leverage the protection of environmental and natural resources through appropriate use for recreational and interpretive purposes;

Goal: Transform Monroe's struggling heavy commercial and industrial areas:

1. Allow for a range of new and innovative uses that leverage the scale of existing buildings in Monroe's existing heavy commercial areas;
2. Enhance accessibility to heavy commercial areas from Route 208 and other area roadways;
3. Leverage the presence of the Heritage Trail and promote safe pedestrian and bicycle access to and through these areas;

Goal: Increase the efficiency of local government

1. Streamline development approval processes to make Monroe a small-business-friendly environment;
2. Take advantage of provisions to streamline the State Environmental Quality Review process;
3. Leverage the efforts of local civic, religious and institutional organizations by coordinating events, services and the efforts of the Village's local government, while respecting the boundaries between these organizations;
4. Improve communications and planning efforts between the Village, the Town, surrounding Villages and Towns and Orange County;
5. Take advantage of grant funding available from New York State where appropriate;