



# COMPREHENSIVE PLAN UPDATE

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## **Acknowledgements**

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Elizabeth Lolli, Monroe Local Schools Superintendent  
Stan Kappers, Institutional Representative (Executive Director of Mt. Pleasant Retirement Community)  
John MacDonald, Business Representative (MacDonald Insurance)  
Dan Paynter, Resident  
Larisa Sims/Travis Miller, OKI Regional Council of Governments  
Robert Snook, (Former) Lemon Township Trustee  
Harry Thomas, Residential Developer

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Carpenters and Millwrights Training Center

### **Stakeholder Interviews**

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## **EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

This 2010 Comprehensive Plan updates the City of Monroe's 2004 document and its completion comes at a time when the City is experiencing tremendous economic growth. This document will help guide future development over the next 5 to 10 years and assist the administration and Council with land use, transportation, and zoning decisions.

### **Plan Boundaries**

The plan includes an additional  $\pm 2,900$  acres of land extending into Lemon, Madison and Turtle Creek Townships for a total plan area of  $\pm 12,300$  acres (approximately 19 square miles).

### **Growth**

Monroe has grown from a village of 4,490 in 1990 to a City of 12,178 in 2008 (Census projection 2008), a 163% increase. The projected 2012 population is 13,151 and for the year 2025 approximately 18,000. Monroe has also grown geographically, from 9.3 square miles in 1990 to 16 square miles. With the major widening of I-75 and the completion of the Cincinnati Premium Outlet Mall, Monroe will no doubt experience continued growth in the future.

### **Land Use**

#### ***Residential***

The Plan calls for the City to preserve its existing residential neighborhoods located along the west side of the community and in the north and south central parts of the City. Some of the newer subdivisions have yet to be built out, in part due to the current downturn in the real estate industry. Overall, it is the City's desire to not introduce new residential areas, due to the current abundance. However, the long-term future plans account for new residential development in Lemon Township south of the Heritage Plaza Commercial Development, which is outside the current City limits.

#### ***Commercial***

More retail development will be encouraged for downtown, along Cincinnati-Dayton Road and SR 4 south of SR 63. Higher intensity commercial and office development will be encouraged along SR 63 between Cincinnati-Dayton Road and Union Road surrounding the highway interchange.

#### ***Industrial***

The City's older industrial areas are mostly to the west of I-75 and north of SR 63. The newer industrial areas are southeast of the I-75 and SR 63 intersection. It is this area that has the greatest potential for more industrial development. It has great transportation access, visibility, available land and the needed infrastructure and utilities to accommodate growth.

## **Transportation**

The key transportation improvements impacting Monroe are the 11 mile widening of I-75 from SR122 to Cincinnati-Dayton Road including the newly redesigned I-75 Interchange with State Route 63. Access and visibility will be improved providing the potential for more development in that vicinity. To manage this expected growth, the plan calls for the creation of overlay zoning for access management, to control land use, regulate signage and impose landscaping design standards. Since this SR 63/I-75 intersection will be a key gateway to the City, it is imperative that it be appealing and attractive.

To improve access and circulation, the plan calls for many roadway extensions and widenings, mostly to accommodate existing business and industries. A new I-75 intersection at Greentree Road is also proposed so that more land can be made available for economic development and to ease industrial traffic on State Route 63 and Cincinnati-Dayton Road.

New Bikeways have also been proposed that would connect various activity centers such as downtown, the schools, the library, residential neighborhoods and parks. With the Greater Miami Recreation Trail planned along the Great Miami River, connections to it have been proposed so that Monroe can be linked to the [Ohio Bike Bike Way Plan](#).

To increase connectivity, walkability and to accommodate other modes of transportation, the plan calls for the City to adopt the “Complete Streets Principle”. This would mean that when roadway improvements are made, that all modes of transportation be addressed such as providing sidewalks, cross walks, wide shoulders, bike paths, transit pull-outs, refuge islands for pedestrians and sidewalk bump-outs.

## **Downtown**

From public surveys and interviews held early in the planning process, many residents supported the revitalization of downtown making it a community focal point. Increased retail, other governmental offices and better access to downtown via more sidewalks and bike trails would be ways to attract more people. Additionally, having a central gathering place would greatly benefit the downtown such as a park, amphitheater, or well landscaped public space. Such a place would be a great gathering spot for civic functions, special holiday events, festivals, and art shows.

## **Sustainability**

Monroe will promote sustainable growth by protecting vulnerable lands whenever possible such as wetlands, flood plains, scenic vistas and natural habitats. Human scale development will be encouraged, new urbanism concepts will be explored and Traditional Neighborhood Development (TND) design concepts will be promoted in applicable areas. The City will also accommodate alternative energy sources such as wind, solar and geothermal devices and will make the necessary allowances in its codes.

### **Recreational Opportunities**

The City will attempt to develop an additional 43 acres (175 acres within the extended planning area) of park land to meet the needs of its residents. It will also attempt to work with the Miami Conservancy District or other responsible parties to maintain and improve its existing parks and develop the riparian corridor of the Great Miami River for walkways, parks, open space and natural habitats.

### **City Services**

It is the desire of the city to provide efficient and cost effective service to its residents and to provide quality of life amenities. To accomplish this, the City has proposed to possibly build a new fire station and police sub station on Mason Road east of I-75 or in the immediate vicinity to serve the southeast section of the city. The City also supports expanding the Monroe Lending Library and the development of a new Senior Center/Recreation facility.

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## **CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION & BACKGROUND**

### **Introduction and Background**

After realizing the need to review current goals and growth policies, the Monroe City Council authorized the updating of its 2004 Comprehensive Plan. A Comprehensive Plan is a general policy document intended to guide choices on long-term physical development. The City uses the Comprehensive Plan as a guide to make land use, zoning and development decisions to ensure public safety and conformity to established land use goals, growth policies, and urban design elements.

### **Planning Process**

The City retained Poggemeyer Design Group, Incorporated of Bowling Green, Ohio for assistance with the plan's development. Stanford H. Odesky and Associates, public opinion/marketing consultants from Toledo, conducted citizen surveys for public input.

City Council appointed a twelve member Planning Steering Committee to provide plan feedback to the Development Department and to the Poggemeyer representatives.

The City of Monroe Planning Steering Committee consisted of:

- Suzi Rubin, City Council
- Tracy Shell, City Council
- Mike Morris, Planning Commission
- Bob Kelley, City Council/Planning Commission
- Dan Paynter, Resident
- John MacDonald, Business Representative
- Jack Levermann, Commercial Developer
- Harry Thomas, Residential Developer
- Elizabeth Lolli, Monroe Local School Superintendent
- Stan Kappers, Executive Director of Mt. Pleasant Retirement Community
- Larisa Sims, OKI Regional Council of Governments
- Robert Snook, Lemon Township Trustee

The Planning Steering Committee met 8 times to review pertinent data and information in regards to demographics, housing, transportation, land use, the natural environment, economic development issues, public facilities, city services, downtown redevelopment, and parks & recreation. Future growth and development scenarios were also reviewed and assessed.

### **Planning Study Area**

One of the first decisions of the Steering Committee was to agree on the plan boundaries. The existing City boundaries (depicted on Map 1) were carefully analyzed taking into consideration adjacent political jurisdictions, school boundaries, City and bordering land uses, current and planned development projects and regional growth trends. For this Comprehensive Plan Update, the Committee opted to look beyond Monroe's corporate boundaries and include portions of Lemon, Madison and Turtle Creek Townships (Map

2). This additional land represents +2900 acres of the total +12,300 acres Plan Boundary area.

### **Community Engagement**

Citizen input is an important and integral component of the planning process. Reaching public consensus on key issues solidifies support and instills a sense of ownership to the comprehensive plan. Public engagement activities are designed to identify community assets and challenges, elicit general perspectives on governmental operations, and reveal community preferences. The findings from these activities establish the framework for future planning and community development initiatives.

As part of Monroe's planning process, the consultants conducted a community-wide telephone survey, interviewed community representatives chosen by the Planning Steering Committee and facilitated public meetings.

### **Telephone Survey**

To ascertain public opinion on city services, community facilities, the downtown district, the environment, housing options, and economic development issues, Stanford Odesky and Associates administered a community-wide telephone survey between mid-March and early April 2008. Using a residential telephone number list provided by the City utility department, 300 randomly selected households were interviewed. Although the terms of the survey dictated that the participants be over the age of 18, most respondents were in the 65 and over age group (30%) followed by the 35-44 group (19%).

#### **Key findings**

- Over half of the residents interviewed have lived in Monroe for less than 10 years
- 8 out of 10 residents expect to live in Monroe for 10 years or more
- 61% of respondents felt that "things" in Monroe have improved over the last 3 to 4 years
- Over 90% of the persons interviewed were very pleased and satisfied with fire, EMS and police services
- Monroe's strength included its friendliness, its small town community character, and its good schools
- The tax rate was considered a weakness
- In regards to development, residents wanted more open space and wooded lots, more high end housing, and connected bike/walking trails
- There was an overwhelming desire for more family and fine dining restaurants
- Many respondents saw a need for more retail stores, and offices/office parks (specifically corporate head quarters and training/research facilities).
- A majority of residents that were interviewed supported more land use controls (e.g. signage, landscaping, and access management) along SR 63 to the east and west of the intersection of Interstate 75
- Over 60% of the respondents were aware of the City's recently adopted Strategic Vision

## **Stakeholder Interviews**

To gather additional information about Monroe, the Planning Steering Committee selected 12 individuals to represent various interests throughout the community. The consultants interviewed these representatives individually during June and July 2008. The interview questions addressed issues such as the quality of life, city services, future residential and commercial/industrial development and opportunities, downtown development, transportation needs, and future growth and development scenarios.

### **Key findings from the Stakeholder Interviews**

- A majority of those interviewed were very satisfied with City services such as fire, EMT, refuse pick-up, water and sewer.
- All participants were very pleased with the quality of the schools.
- A majority of participants cited a need for restaurants, more shopping, bike/walking trails, and a permanent location for the library.
- Additional high end housing with ample open space and nearby recreational activities was considered desirable by many of the representatives.
- Interviewees felt that commercial development should be encouraged, especially along SR 63, Cincinnati-Dayton Road and the southern portion of SR 4. Specifically, retail shops, offices, restaurants and hotels were mentioned as a possibility.
- The redevelopment of downtown was favored by the majority of those interviewed. The type of improvements desired included: new sidewalks, lighting, curbs, landscaping, flower planters, banners, and street furniture. A revitalized central business district would serve as a great focal point and meeting place for community gatherings and other civic activities and functions.
- Over 90% of those interviewed wanted the City to continue its efforts in attracting more industry to create more jobs. Over 60% were supportive in the City providing economic incentives to businesses to accomplish this goal.
- To accommodate future growth, a majority of those interviewed were in favor of the City expanding geographically into the townships through annexation.

## **Public Meetings**

Proposed future growth scenarios were presented at a public open house at the Monroe High School on March 26, 2009. An additional business-focused open house public meeting was held during business hours on May 15, 2009 at Carpenter's and Millwright's Training facility with notices sent to all local businesses. Additionally, on April 8<sup>th</sup>, 2009 letters as well as maps indicating the proposed changes were sent to large property owners within the City offering to meet in person to discuss the proposed plan.

The Planning Commission discussed the plan at various meetings on April 21<sup>st</sup>, 2009, August 18<sup>th</sup>, 2009 and January 28<sup>th</sup>, 2010. Furthermore, meeting invitations were sent to the Butler and Warren County Planning Departments, the City of Middletown Planning Department, and trustees or township planning departments for each Steering Committee Meeting. All surrounding jurisdictions received a copy of the Draft Comprehensive Plan

document and were encouraged to provide comments. At the public meetings and open houses, participants were provided with comment cards so that they could share their opinions with the Planning Steering Committee. The Comprehensive Plan Update was adopted by the Monroe City Council on insert date here.

## **CHAPTER 2: COMMUNITY CHARACTERISTICS**

### **History**

Monroe was platted as a village in 1817 by John H. Piatt and Nathaniel Sackett. The settlement was named after President James Monroe, who had just taken office that year. He was the fifth president of the United States (1817 to 1825). Previously, President Monroe was a former Congressman and U.S. Senator. He also served as Secretary of War and Secretary of State under President Madison.

John H. Piatt was a Cincinnati businessman and an army contractor. Sackett was a local businessman originally from Fishkill, New York who moved to Ohio in 1816. It is believed that Sackett and Piatt originally purchased the land in Lemon Township as an investment. The original plat had a main street, three cross streets (now Lebanon, Church and Elm) and three alleys. In 1820, there were 20 houses, 2 stores, 2 taverns and a Presbyterian Church. In its early years, Monroe was predominantly a farming community and a major stagecoach stop on the Miami Turnpike. Early manufacturing in Monroe included blacksmiths, a wagon works shop, and the Paragon Plow Works Company.

On May 10, 1969, Monroe's downtown was hit by a category 4 tornado that caused major property damage and destroyed many of the City's historic structures.

### **Governmental Structure**

In 1995, Monroe reached a population of 5,000 which enabled it to achieve city status. Monroe is a charter city with a council-manager form of government. There are seven at-large City Council seats elected to four year staggered terms. The elected Council members choose a Mayor and Vice Mayor for two year terms. The council also appoints the City Manager.

### **Location**

The City of Monroe is located in southwest Ohio along Interstate-75 in the Dayton-Cincinnati corridor. Monroe is 26 miles north of Cincinnati and 26 miles south of Dayton. It is primarily situated in northeast Butler County with a portion of the City located in northwestern Warren County.

### **Region**

Both Butler and Warren Counties are within the Cincinnati-Middletown Metropolitan Statistical Area (MSA). This MSA consists of 14 counties from 3 states, Ohio, Kentucky and Indiana. The Ohio counties include: Brown, Butler, Clermont, Hamilton and Warren. The Indiana counties are: Dearborn, Franklin and Ohio. The Kentucky counties are: Boone, Bracken, Campbell, Gallatin, Grant, Kenton, and Pendleton.

## **Demographic Information**

### **Population**

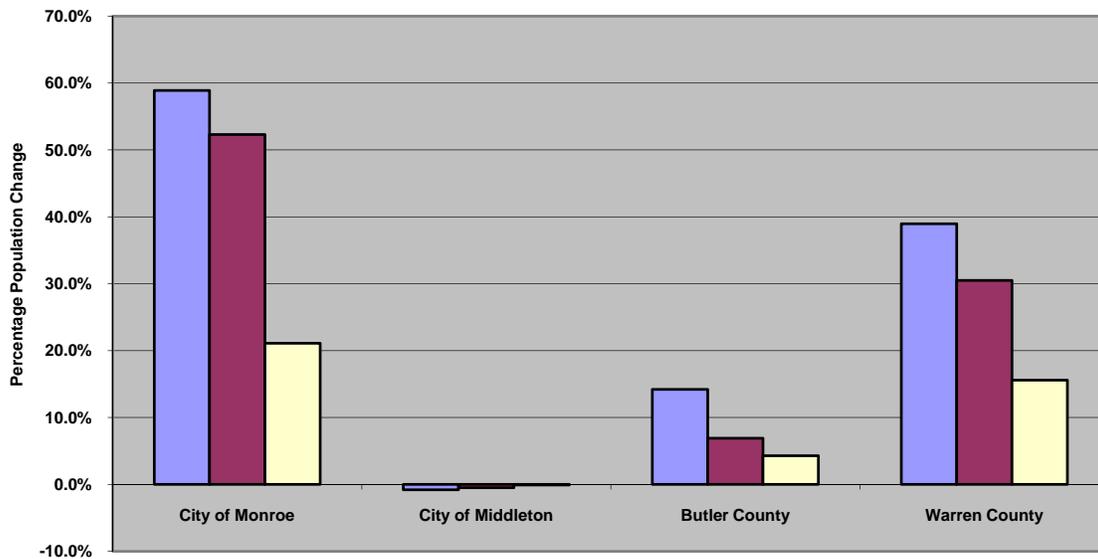
According to the 1990 U.S. Census, the City of Monroe (then a Village) had a population of 4,490. By 2000, the City had grown to 7,133 citizens, which represents an increase of 58.86%.

Population estimates from Claritas<sup>1</sup> place the population of Monroe in 2007 at 10,864, or an increase of 52.3% from the 2000 Census. The latest July, 2008 Census estimates list Monroe’s population at 12,178. Assuming 2.52 persons per household and multiplying by the known remaining platted lots (1308), Monroe’s anticipated population at its current approved plat build-out would be approximately 15,387. The projection does not consider additional development in the overall planning area including surrounding jurisdictions such as Lemon Township (also discussed in Chapter 8). The forthcoming 2010 Census will provide accurate counts and allow for future estimates to consider household size changes, etc. When considering current Census estimates, Claritas data, and the City’s building data, population estimates will vary especially in light of the recent decline in the housing market. It is most probable that the 2012 population estimates listed below should be viewed in the context of this recent decline, and makes the timing of growth more difficult to predict.

<b>Population Figures 1990-2012</b>				
<b>Location</b>	<b>1990</b>	<b>2000</b>	<b>2007</b>	<b>2012</b>
City of Monroe	4,490	7,133	10,864	13,151
City of Middletown	52,003	51,605	51,325	51,275
Butler County	291,479	332,807	355,739	370,885
Warren County	113,967	158,383	206,750	239,001

Source: U.S. Census Data - SF-1 Data and Claritas Estimates

**Population Change**



■ 1990-2000   ■ 2000-2007   ■ 2007-2012

<sup>1</sup> Claritas is a marketing information resources company based in Arlington, VA dedicated to helping companies engaged in consumer and business-to-business marketing. Claritas’ general and industry-specific marketing databases can be used to analyze geographic areas of a shape or size, and can provide 5-year demographics projections.

The City of Monroe has had phenomenal growth over the seventeen years. Similarly, both Butler County and Warren County have experienced high-growth rates over the same period. Warren County has grown 40% between 1990 and 2000, and 30% between 2000 and 2007. Butler County grew by 14% between 1990 and 2000 and by 7% between 2000 and 2007. To put this growth in perspective, the City of Middletown, which shares Monroe’s northern border, has maintained the same population since 1990.

The number of households in the City of Monroe has also grown rapidly since 1990. According the 1990 U.S. Census, there were 1,674 households in the City. By 2007, Claritas estimated that there were 4,270 households. This represents an increase of 155% from 1990.

<b>Number of Households 1990-2030</b>					
<b>Location</b>	<b>1990</b>	<b>2000</b>	<b>2007</b>	<b>2012</b>	<b>2030</b>
City of Monroe	1,674	2,685	4,270	5,283	7,571
City of Middletown	20,506	21,469	21,927	22,252	22,008
Butler County	104,535	123,082	133,870	140,726	170,461
Warren County	39,172	55,966	74,832	87,433	126,716

Source: U.S. Census Data - SF-1 Data, Claritas Estimates, and OKI Regional Council of Government

This increase in the number of households is reflective of the area the City of Monroe is located. Butler County has seen a 28.1% increase in households between 1990 and 2007, while Warren County has seen a staggering 91% increase in households over the same period.

<b>Family Households by Type 1990-2000</b>			
<b>Location</b>		<b>1990</b>	<b>2000</b>
City of Monroe	Family Households	1,322	2,041
	Married-Couple families	1,162	1,749
	Other family, male householder	47	106
	Other family, female householder	113	186
City of Middletown	Family Households	12,873	13,930
	Married-Couple families	9,648	9,851
	Other family, male householder	580	947
	Other family, female householder	2,645	3,132
Butler County	Family Households	77,931	87,892
	Married-Couple families	64,091	70,152
	Other family, male householder	2,940	4,590
	Other family, female householder	10,900	13,150
Warren County	Family Households	31,663	43,261
	Married-Couple families	27,195	37,035
	Other family, male householder	1,061	1,721
	Other family, female householder	3,407	4,505

Source: US Census Bureau

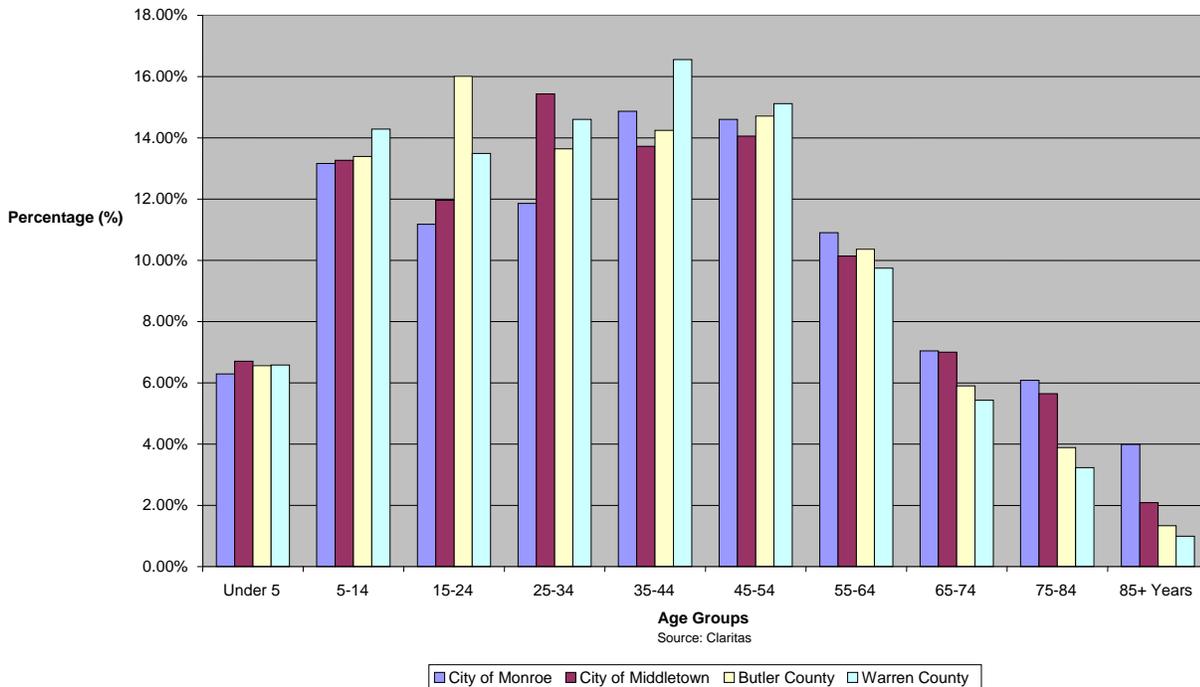
<b>Nonfamily Households by Type 1990-2000</b>			
<b>Location</b>		<b>1990</b>	<b>2000</b>
City of Monroe	Nonfamily Households	352	644
	Householder living alone	300	545
	Householder 65 years and over	154	251
City of Middletown	Nonfamily Households	5,489	7,539
	Householder living alone	4,854	6,360
	Householder 65 years and over	2,145	2,440
Butler County	Nonfamily Households	26,604	35,190
	Householder living alone	21,779	27,914
	Householder 65 years and over	8,065	9,335
Warren County	Nonfamily Households	7,487	12,705
	Householder living alone	6,387	10,591
	Householder 65 years and over	2,381	3,584

Source: US Census Bureau

**Age**

As depicted below, the City of Monroe, the City of Middletown, Butler County and Warren County have generally similar distributions of age groups. Monroe has a slightly higher percentage of the 55+ Years age groups than Middletown, Butler County and Warren County, presumably due to the presence of Mount Pleasant Retirement Community.

**Age Distribution**



Individuals between 25 and 44 are considered family age groups that place higher demands on the community for family services like school systems and child-care facilities. The distribution in Monroe also indicates that the City has a slightly higher number of such families in the 35-44 age group. This age group typically prefers larger houses.

Monroe also has a slightly higher number of individuals in the 45-54 age group which typifies the beginning of the empty nest syndrome. This age group now has adult children that will move out or who have moved. The slightly lower number of 15-34 years olds in Monroe seem to support such a conclusion. Empty nesters are typically looking to downsize their homes and yards. However, this age group typically has the largest disposable income and their general demand for smaller housing units does not necessarily indicate less expensive units. This age group is also fast moving towards the 65-year threshold, the elderly and/or senior households, which typically place higher demands on aging services and health care facilities in the community.

The City of Monroe has a higher percentage of its population age 65 and older, than Middletown, Butler and Warren Counties. This age group demands more aging services as well as more health care facilities.

### **Income**

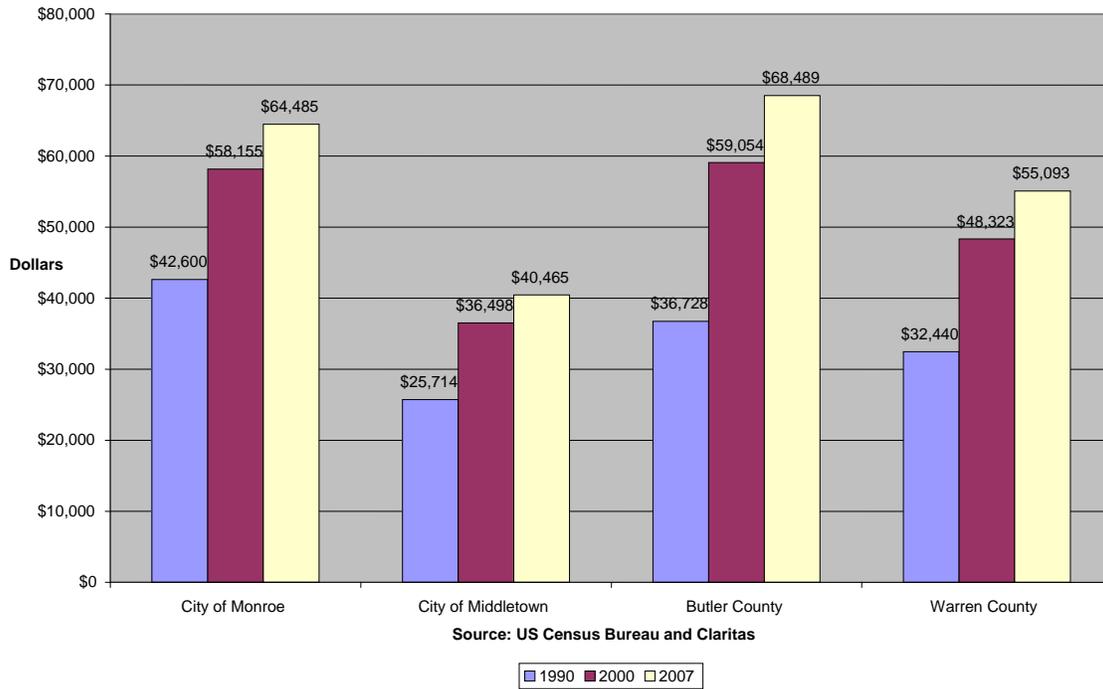
Household income can have a major impact on the economic viability of a region. There is a direct correlation between the ability to purchase goods and services and the level of household (and/or individual income). The median household income for the City of Monroe in 2007 was \$64,485.<sup>2</sup> That is an increase of 11% from the 2000 median household income (MHI) of \$58,155 (See Next Page).

A similar increasing trend in MHI occurred for Butler and Warren Counties and the City of Middletown, although the Butler County's increase was the most significant of the four. The increases in MHI over the past two decades may be attributable to the decline in the number of lower-income households (those making \$35,000 or less annually), and the significant increase in the households earning \$50,000 or more annually.

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<sup>2</sup> According to Claritas

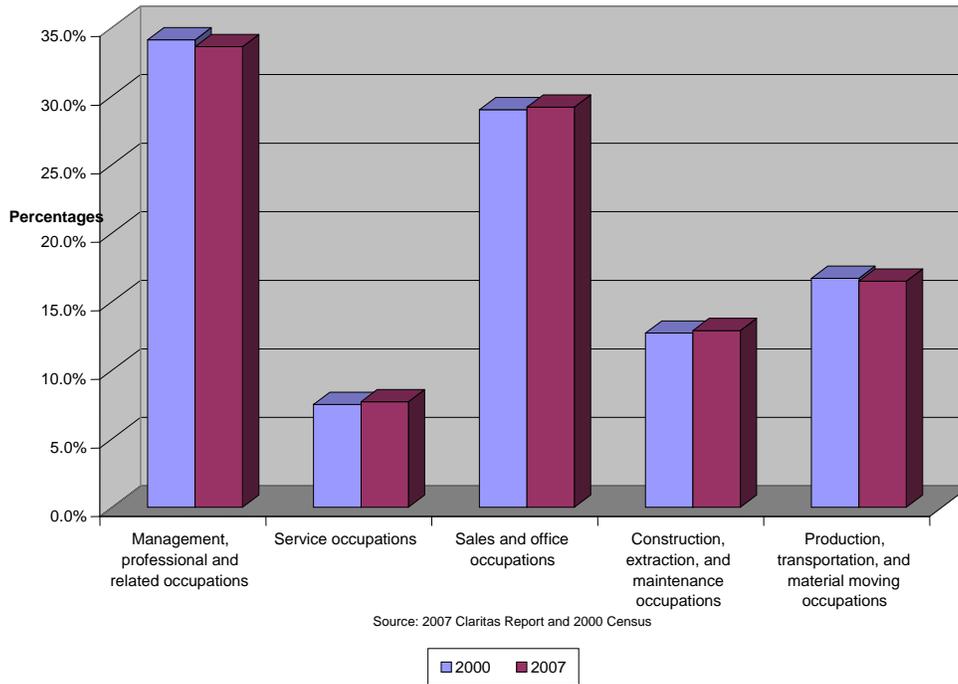
### Median Household Income



### Local Economy

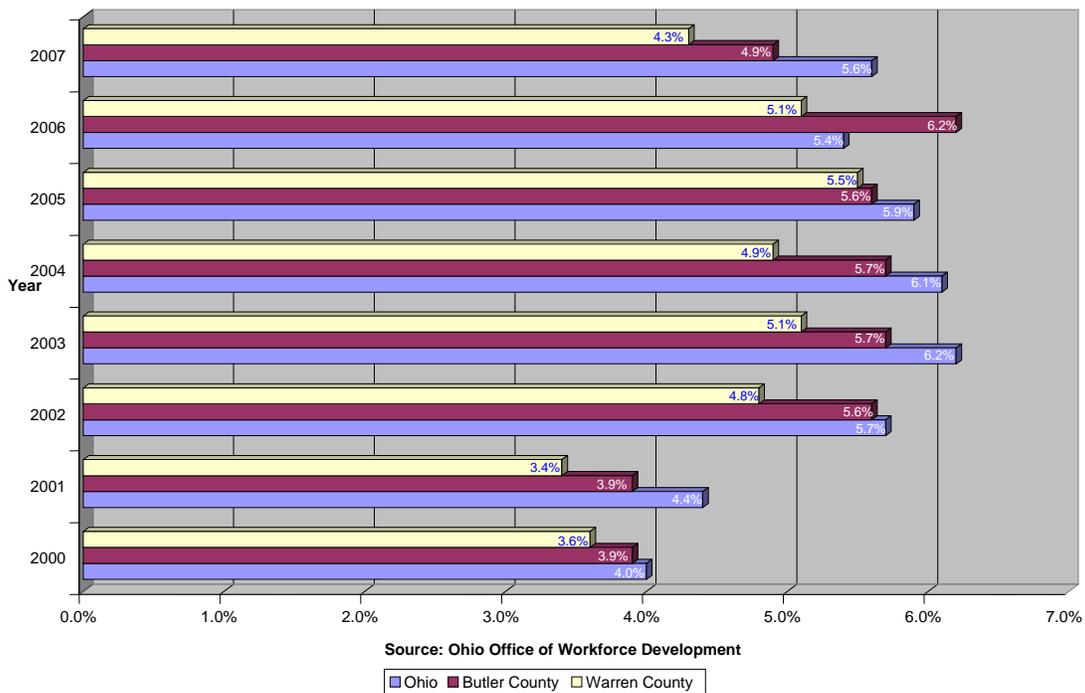
According to a 2007 Claritas report, the majority of residents, age 16 years and older are in the workforce (65.3%). Of the various classifications of occupations provided in the 2007 Claritas report, most Monroe residents are employed in the areas of Management, Professional, and Related Occupations (33.6%); Sales and Office Occupations (29.2%); Production, Transportation, and Material Moving Occupations (16.5%); Construction, Extraction, and Maintenance Occupations (12.9%); and Service Occupations (7.7%). These percentages are roughly unchanged from the year 2000 (See Next Page).

### Occupations 2000-2007



### Unemployment

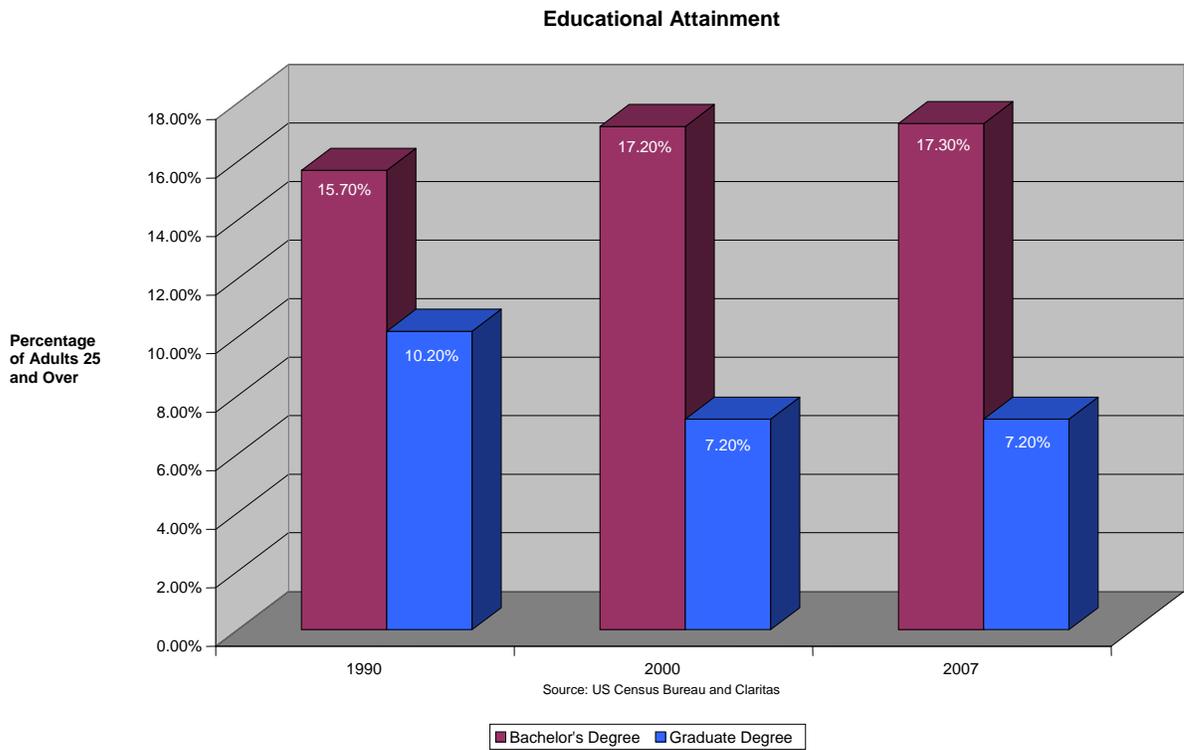
#### Unemployment Rates 2000-2007



According to the Ohio Office of Workforce Development’s Labor Market Information, the rate of unemployment in Butler and Warren Counties increased from 2000 through 2005 and then dramatically fell in 2007. The State of Ohio’s unemployment rate climbed to 6.2% in 2003, and then steadily fell back to 5.6% in 2007. However, Monroe has felt the economic impacts of the recent collapse of the housing market, financial challenges in the banking industry, and the decline of the automobile manufacturing industry and was at a staggering 10.8 percent in January 2010.

**Educational Attainment**

The majority of residents, age 25 and over, in the City of Monroe are at least high school graduates or have the equivalency of a high school diploma (90.9%). This is a slight increase from 1990 when 88.6% of the population, age 25 or older, was a high school graduate or higher. The percentage of individuals, age 25 and over, in the City of Monroe with advanced degrees, a Bachelor’s degree or higher, has remained steady since 1990. Roughly 25% of the population age 25 and over have a Bachelor’s degree or higher in the City of Monroe (See next page). These statistics are important when evaluating the City’s ability to provide industry with a viable workforce.



**Natural Environment**

**Topography**

Monroe’s average elevation is approximately 800 feet above sea level. The northeast elevations range from 670 feet to 700 feet as you enter the City from I-75. The southeast area of State Route 63 and I-75 is about 700 feet tapering down to about 670 feet to the furthest southeast leg of the City. As you proceed west from State Route 63 and I-75, the

southern area starts at about 750 feet and culminates at about 800 feet along Lebanon Street. The highest point in the City is in the north central part along Muskingum Circle and Mount Pleasant Drive where the elevation is 860 feet. The northwest elevation is at 700 feet tapering down to 630 and 650 feet along the Great Miami River. The southwest area rises to a high of 750 feet tapering down to 650 feet towards State Route 63 and State Route 4 and 630 feet towards the Great Miami River.

### **Floodplains**

The floodplain areas in Monroe are mostly located in the northeast. A small area is located along both sides of Dicks Creek north of Greentree Road. Another area is along Shaker Creek in both Butler and Warren Counties, which runs in a southeasterly direction past I-75. Another floodplain area runs along Millers Creek from Cincinnati-Dayton Road in a southeasterly direction towards I-75 along the Indiana & Ohio Railway System. The other significant floodplain area runs parallel to the Great Miami River along its western border.

## **EXISTING LAND USES**

### **Land Area**

The land area of Monroe was 9.3 square miles (5,952 acres) in 1990, 15.51 square miles (9,926.40 acres) in 2000 and 16 square miles (10,240 acres) in 2003 (as reported in the City's March 2003 Storm Water Management Plan).

### **Residential**

Monroe's residential areas are generally located in the north central, south central and far western parts of the City (please refer to Map #3). The yellow areas depict single family uses, the orange, two-family and the light brown, multi-family residential. One of the more established residential areas can be found south of State Route 63 and is bordered by the Heritage Green Plaza on the west, Liberty Township to the south and Main Street to the east. This residential section straddles Main Street in the downtown area. The newer residential portion east of Main Street surrounds Monroe Community Park and Mound Cemetery. The section to the west of Main Street surrounds Lemon-Monroe High School and is a mixture of new and old housing stock. Small pockets of multi-family housing can be found along East Avenue, Courtland Drive, Keswick Drive, Wyndcrest Court, and the south side of Lebanon Street. Another small section of multi-family housing can be found behind the Finke's IGA Grocery/Party Store off Main Street.

Another residential section can be found north of State Route 63 to the City limits between Yankee Road on the west and Cincinnati-Dayton Road on the east. This is predominantly a new low density residential area. Some two-family housing can be found in the Overbrook Subdivision, Heritage Green, and the Mount Pleasant Retirement Community. Along the western area of Heritage Green Subdivision lies the main school campus for the Monroe Local School District. There are some light industrial uses to the northwest of this area. A swath of land north of Todhunter Road east of Holman past the

industrial uses towards Cincinnati-Dayton Road is vacant and zoned residential but is south of Middletown's AK Steel Plant.

The western residential area north of State Route 63 contains over ten subdivisions. The residential section south of State Route 63 contains Monroe Crossings, one of the newer subdivisions in the City, and the largest single subdivision. When completed, Monroe Crossings will have 890 homes, 150 apartments and office/retail space. The development includes a 27 acre public park and 16 acres of passive open space. Two small multi-family areas are located along State Route 4 south of State Route 63 and include the Reserve at Monroe Crossings and the Hawthorn Glenn Nursing Home. Additionally, there is a mobile home park to the west of State Route 4, southwest of Canal Street. The mobile home park is currently in the Lemon Township but within the current comprehensive plan boundaries.

### **Commercial**

Monroe's commercial areas (shown in red on Map #3) can be found along the major transportation nodes in the City: the intersection of State Route 63 and I-75; the intersection of State Route 63 and Cincinnati-Dayton Road; Heritage Plaza (on the south side of State Route 63 across from the Heritage Green Subdivision), Main Street/Downtown, the commercial area in front of the Monroe Crossings Subdivision (on the southern side of State Route 63 just east of State Route 4; State Route 4 south of State Route 63 along the west side; and a small section at the intersection of Cincinnati-Dayton Road and Greentree Road .

A significant commercial area lies along State Route 63 between Union Road on the east and Lawton Avenue on the west. This section includes both sides of the I-75 ramps. It includes the Treasure Aisles and Traders World Flea Markets, gas stations, truck stops, restaurants, a hotel, and some retail establishments. The south side of State Route 63 east and adjacent to I-75 houses the new Cincinnati Premium Outlets. The section of commercial uses along State Route 63 west of I-75 to Lawton includes gas stations, restaurants, and retail. To the rear of the commercial lands are industrial uses.

Downtown Monroe is comprised of the commercial section south of State Route 63 along Main Street. Additional commercial uses are also located on both sides of Cincinnati-Dayton Road just north of State Route 63. On the east side is a fast food restaurant and strip commercial (Monroe Shoppes). The west side consists of offices. Further north along Cincinnati-Dayton Road are some commercial uses on the east side of the road north of Todhunter. There are also commercial uses at the west side of the Greentree/Cincinnati-Dayton Road intersection. Downtown Monroe is also comprised of various single-family and multi-family uses. Further south of downtown exists a retail shopping north of Carson Road and east of Cincinnati-Dayton Road.

Another commercial area, Heritage Plaza, is a strip commercial project that includes a Kroger Store, and is located across the street of the Heritage Green Development along State Route 63.

The remaining commercial area is along State Route 4 south of State Route 63. This area includes the former Americana Amusement Park and some developing retail.

### **Industrial**

The City's major industrial areas are in two locations: on the east near I-75; and west along Salzman Road on both sides of State Route 63. The largest and most established area is on the east side of the City north of State Route 63 along Lawton Avenue and North Garver Road. The City has zoned most of the land west of Lawton leading to Cincinnati-Dayton Road as industrial. A significant area is south of State Route 63 east of the I-75 intersection, where two 650,000 square foot warehouses (one for the Home Depot Rapid Deployment Center,) have been recently constructed in the Corridor 75 Premier Logistics Park (430 acres). A new roadway, Gateway Boulevard, will provide ingress and egress for these two new warehouses. It will connect State Route 63 (east of I-75) to Mason Road, which is south and west of the warehouses. This new roadway will open up more land for industrial development. Another small section of industrial land is located in the southwest corner of State Route 63 and I-75. This horseshoe designed layout, along Breaden Drive, includes some of the city's older light industrial and small warehousing businesses.

Along the east side of Main Street, south of the entrance to the Monroe Community Park is an industrial use (Ball Brothers).

The western industrial area is located along the west side of Salzman Road south of State Route 63 and north of State Route 63. The southern portion includes two industrial parks totaling 220 acres, Park 63 and Summit Commerce Industrial Parks. Additionally, the Monroe Logistics Park contains 70 acres and presently houses a 720,000 square foot distribution facility. Future plans may include extending Clark south and east towards Salzman Road to accommodate additional development. On the north side of State Route 63 along Salzman Road, there is an 80 acre industrial park, Monroe Commerce Center which includes a Xerox warehousing facility. Located on the east side of Salzman Road is Kohl's 800,000 square foot Warehouse Distribution Center. Further north, along the north side of Todhunter Road between Yankee Road and Holman Avenue is another section of industrial lands. The Teppco Company and the City's public service department are located in this area. Further east along Todhunter Road, on the south side, there is another industrial lot owned by Duke Electric. The site contains an electric substation.

### **Agriculture**

Monroe's open/agricultural lands (shown in light green on Map #3) can be found in the following areas: on the far western part of the City west of the Great Miami River (the extended area of the comprehensive plan); the middle section of the City from Todhunter Road south to Hankins Road (in Lemon Township) which is also included in the new comprehensive plan boundaries; a rectangular section of land on the north side of Todhunter between Holman and Cincinnati-Dayton Road; a section of land on the east side of Cincinnati-Dayton Road between the Monroe Shoppes Development north

towards Todhunter; the northeast section of the City on both sides of I-75 north of the Benedict Enterprises Inc. on the west side and north of the Solid Rock Church; and the far southeastern leg of the City to Kyles Station Road. With the exception of the extended lands that go beyond the current City limits, most of the open/agricultural lands are zoned industrial. The land north of the Solid Rock Church on the east side of I-75 has been identified as a possible site for the casino-hotel complex.

## ZONING

The City of Monroe has twelve zoning classifications, planned unit development (PUD) regulations and a special well head protection designation. The zoning classifications are listed below.

- A-1- Agricultural District
- C-1- Neighborhood Commercial
- C-2- General Commercial
- C-3- Downtown
- L-I- Light Industrial
- H-I- Heavy Industrial
- B-P- Business Park
- R-1- Single Family Residential (Min. lot 40,000 sq. ft.)
- R-2- Single Family Residential (Min. lot 18,000 sq. ft.)
- R-3- Single Family Residential (Min. lot 15,000 sq. ft.)
- R-4- Two Family Residential (Min. lot 11,200 sq. ft.)
- R-5- Multi-family Residential (Min. lot variable sq. ft.)
- PUD- Planned Unit Development
- Wellhead Protection Area

Currently, the City’s general zoning classifications represent the following percentages of land usage (see below).

<b>CURRENT ZONING</b>		
USE	ACRES	PERCENTAGE
<b>Agricultural</b>	<b>829</b>	<b>8.83%</b>
<b>Commercial/Office</b>	<b>982</b>	<b>10.46%</b>
<b>Industrial</b>	<b>3815</b>	<b>40.65%</b>
<b>Residential</b>	<b>3569</b>	<b>38.03%</b>
<b>Open Space/Park</b>	<b>190</b>	<b>2.03%</b>
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>9385</b>	<b>100.00%</b>

\*area calculations are approximate

### **Agricultural Districts**

The agricultural districts are on the periphery of the City: a rectangular parcel west of State Route 4 north of the Tall Oaks Subdivision; a triangular piece of property adjacent and east of Salzman Road south of State Route 63; another rectangular section adjacent

and northeast of the Todhunter Heights subdivision; an area to the west of Cincinnati-Dayton Road and south of Todhunter Road; the far northeastern part of the City north of Greentree Road; the northwest corner of Kyles Station Road and Butler-Warren County Road; and the most southeastern edge of the City along Hamilton Road east of Nickel Road.

### **Residential Districts**

The residential districts are along the west side of town and the north and south central parts of the City. The R-1 districts are in the area northeast of Niederlander Lane. The R-2 and R-3 areas are on both the west side and east side of State Route 4 and include the following subdivisions: Greenridge Meadows, Green Ridge, Tall Oaks, Applegate, Whispering Oaks, Oak Knoll, Colonial Manor, Hughes Manor, Ridgecrest, Todd Glenn Reserve, and Monroe Crossings. The north central part of the City consists mostly of R-3 districts and includes the following subdivisions: Green Hill Manor, Todhunter Heights, Homestead Estates, South Terrace, Mount Pleasant, Willow Lake at Heritage Green, Wexford, Brittany Heights, Brittany Woods, Brittany Trails, Deer Run, Reserve at Brittany Woods, and Sunrise. An R-4 subdivision, Overbrook is located off Cincinnati-Dayton Road north of State Route 63. An isolated R-3 district, Pleasant View Acres along North Garver Road is completely surrounded by industrial zoning. The south central residential area (south of State Route 63 between the corporate boundary on the west and I-75 on the east) is mostly R-3 and included the following subdivisions: Peaceful Acres, Fairview Heights, Highview Acres, Wyandot Woods, Old Kent Acres, Monroe Meadows, Bridle Creek, Boyd, and Monroe County Estates.

The City's R-4 districts are northeast of downtown and include the Pleasant Meadows and Wyndcrest Subdivisions. Other R-4 areas are on the southwest and southeast corners of Old and Lebanon Streets, the west side of East between Courtland and Easton Manor, and the northwest corner of State Route 63 and Britton Lane. The R-5 areas include the Hawthorn Glenn Nursing Home at the corner of Hankins Road and Lesourdsville-West Chester Road, a section off State Route 4 south of State Route 63 adjacent to Monroe Crossings Park and the Villas of Heritage Green.

### **Commercial Districts**

The commercial districts are along major roadways in Monroe. There are some C-2 areas on the far southwestern part of the City along State Route 4 south of State Route 63. Other C-2 areas include the south side of State Route 63 which includes Heritage Plaza, the Finke's IGA Grocery/Party Store on Main Street, land to the northwest and northeast of State Route 63 and Cincinnati-Dayton Road, a section north of Todhunter Road on the west side of Cincinnati-Dayton Road, a rectangular section on the east side of Cincinnati-Dayton Road along Greentree Road, the commercial area on both sides of State Route 63 between Lawton on the west and Union Road on the east, and the land adjacent and to the east of I-75 south of State Route 63 where the new outlet mall has been constructed. The C-3 districts are along Main Street south of State Route 63. The only C-1 district is on the east side of Main Street north of William Groth Street. At present, no areas within the City are zoned Business Park.

### **Industrial Districts**

The light industrial districts (LI) on the west side of town include the land on the west side of the Norfolk-Southern Rail Road line that runs parallel to Salzman Road. This area includes the Park 63 and Summit Commerce Industrial Parks on the south side of State Route 63 and Monroe Commerce Center on the north side of State Route 63. Other L-I zoned areas in this vicinity include the land north of the Kohl's Warehousing Center south of Todhunter Road on both sides of the Norfolk Southern Rail line, and a parcel of land owned by Duke Energy on the south side of Todhunter Road.

The eastern L-I lands are predominantly on the east side of Cincinnati-Dayton Road. A large section of L-I lands is north of State Route 63 between Cincinnati-Dayton Road and North Garver Road. Smaller sections are further north on the east side of Cincinnati-Dayton Road. Another L-I area is a long rectangular strip of land that runs adjacent and to the east of I-75 just north of the Solid Rock Foundation Church. A couple other L-I areas include the industrial park along Breaden Drive and a small section off Main Street near Mason Road. The remaining L-I lands are on the most southeastern part of the City.

The heavy industrial districts are located in the following areas: along Todhunter Road on the north side of the street and west of Holman Avenue; on both sides of the Ohio and Indiana Rail road between I-75 on the west and Cincinnati-Dayton Road on the east; the Solid Rock Church; and the land southwest of the intersection of State Route 63 and I-75 which includes a portion of the 430 acre Corridor 75 Premier Logistics Park.

## **CHAPTER 3: VISION, GOALS AND OBJECTIVES**

In 2006, the City formed a committee of community representatives to create a vision for Monroe and the surrounding areas. The visioning committee consisted of representatives from City Council, the Monroe Local School District, Lemon Township, residents and local businesses. “A Strategic Vision for the City of Monroe: 2006-2012, Firmly Founded, Proudly Growing” summarizes the six goals for the City of Monroe as identified by the committee. These vision statements are paraphrased below.

### **Vision Statements**

#### **1. Pride of Place: A Monroe Tradition (Property Maintenance, Green Space, Streets, and Public Amenities)**

Monroe has had a history of determination, perseverance and foresight. The people of Monroe have worked together through good years and bad, for a steady and continued betterment for all who live here. Monroe seeks to honor and learn from its past, but will focus on the future. Monroe will maintain a welcoming attitude while keeping its small town feel. The quality of the City’s physical assets encourages community pride. Attractive amenities, green spaces and gathering places make people proud of where they live which is reflected in the upkeep of their personal property. The City’s standards will reflect these beliefs.

#### **2. Responsive and Caring Service Delivery**

Monroe’s Fire Department will continue to be known for its responsiveness, friendliness and performance. The Police Department will strive to meet the challenge of an increasing population and coverage area. The Administration will continue to be available, responsive, caring, and supportive. City employees will be encouraged to be friendly and welcoming which mirrors the Monroe citizens

#### **3. Managed Growth and Development**

The City will promote limited but diverse residential growth and support economic development initiatives that address population needs. The City will support the creation of a town center as a community gathering place that will become the heart of the community. Expansion of the City’s infrastructure will be managed to meet current needs and future growth. To guide orderly growth and development, the City is committed to maintaining existing zoning controls

#### **4. Community Involvement**

Monroe will encourage strong and productive relationships with local businesses and Home Owners Associations, nurture and support its elected officials; reach out to community groups, and utilize its website and related technology to communicate

effectively. The City will also seek partnerships with neighboring communities on issues, projects, and other matters of interest that would be of mutual benefit.

#### 5. Fiscal Responsibility and Stability

Monroe has established a solid foundation for continued financial stability through policies such as growth management and community involvement. The City must ensure that its financial stability remains a priority.

#### 6. Exceptional Schools

Great schools are the foundation of a healthy community. The City supports the Monroe Local School District and will therefore, do all that it can to foster the growth of the district and continue to nurture the strong ties between both organizations.

### **Comprehensive Plan Goals**

The following goals were jointly developed by the consultants and the Steering Committee:

#### Housing

- Monroe will have available a variety of quality housing options that continually meet future growth and changing needs of families and households.
- The City will explore additional service options for a Property Maintenance Inspection and Assistance Program.

#### Downtown

- Further delineate and enhance the Main Street/Town Center area with additional civic, capital, and streetscape improvements.
- Offer economic development incentives to existing and new businesses.
- Provide pedestrian and bicycle connectors from downtown to other activity centers.
- Work with the school board to redevelop the vacant Lemon-Monroe School site.
- Support events to bring the community together.
- Create a business district overlay for the “Main Street Town Center” that will complement the designated streetscape model, regulate signage, and encourage small business development.

#### Land Use

- Future development should be balanced, compatible to existing and adjacent land uses, served by adequate public infrastructure, accessible, and protective of environmentally sensitive lands.
- Support a recreational land use plan for the Great Miami River Corridor.

- Create a business district overlay for the I-75/State Route 63 interchange to improve aesthetic quality of developments including such items as building design, appropriate signage, and landscaping.

#### Transportation

- Monroe will have an accessible, safe, comprehensive thoroughfare system serving the needs of its residents, businesses, industry, and institutions.
- Monroe will adopt the “Complete Streets Principles” for new streets and roadways and/or for any street and roadway extensions and widenings. A Complete Streets policy is aimed at producing roads that are safe and convenient for all users. Complete Streets promote safe usage and access for pedestrians, bicyclists, motorists and transit riders.
- Develop a network of recreational trails throughout the City that will connect to the Great Miami Recreation Trail, specifically with the Hamilton to Middletown section that is planned along the Great Miami River.
- Support plans to enhance access management and aesthetic qualities of the State Route 63 Corridor within the city limits.
- Extend or construct various roadways to facilitate future developments and traffic flows.
- Improve various pedestrian opportunities and connections.

#### Economic Development

- Monroe will continue to promote development that will strive to maintain a land use ratio of 65% commercial/industrial and 35% residential to encourage job growth and to maintain a strong local tax base.
- Explore the re-establishment of a Monroe Business Group.

#### City Services/Public Facilities

- Monroe will provide adequate public services to its current residents, businesses & industry and maintain appropriate levels in the future.
- Work with Monroe Local schools to determine feasibility of school impact fees on new development.
- Encourage the development of a Senior Center/Recreation Center.
- Promote the expansion/new location of the Monroe Lending Library.
- Create a geographic information system (GIS) to enhance city service delivery.
- Collaborate with Monroe Local Schools to determine the feasibility of school impact fees on new development.

#### Parks, Recreation and Open Space

- Monroe will have available adequate parks and open space for recreational activities that are maintained and easily accessible to all residents and visitors.
- Support the redevelopment of the Great Miami River Corridor for recreational purposes by the Miami Conservancy District.
- Upgrade existing park facilities and playground equipment.

- Design, fund, and construct parks that will maintain and take advantage of the natural features of the site.

#### Sustainability

- Monroe will promote sustainable growth that will be sensitive to the natural environment and that will enhance the quality of human life for Monroe residents. Monroe will accomplish this by:
  - Promoting human scale development that will be pedestrian friendly.
  - Promoting regional and local designs that respect regional ecosystems and natural functions which support human communities.
  - Promoting the use of alternative energy sources such as wind and solar power.
  - Promoting cluster development, water conservation, and recycling of building material.

## CHAPTER 4: HOUSING

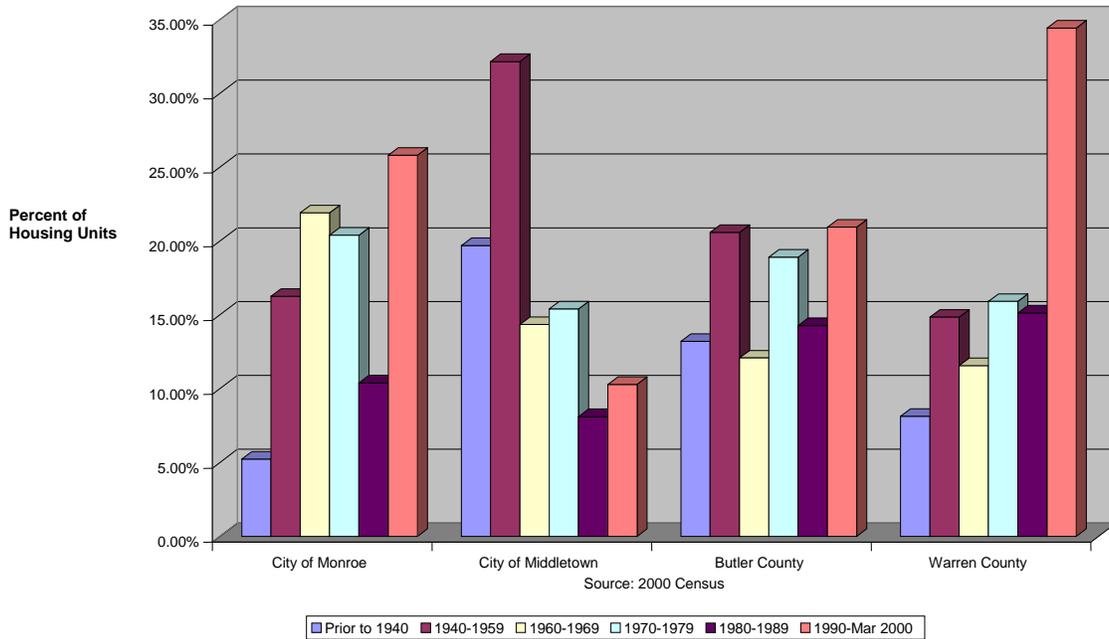
### Local Housing Stock

As income levels for the City of Monroe have increased over the last decade, the single-family housing stock in Monroe, much like that of Middletown, Butler County, and Warren County, has increased in size, value and cost. In contrast, the size of the households living in these larger more expensive homes has decreased. Essentially, the market has shifted towards bigger houses on smaller lots with fewer people living in them. This is reflective of State and National trends.

The total number of occupied housing units in the City of Monroe (2,822) increased by 60.3% between 1990 and 2000. The table (see next page) demonstrates the age of the housing stock (as of March 2000) in the City and the surrounding areas. The age of a community's housing stock is important since many houses built prior to 1978 may have lead-based paint. Usually, the older the house, the greater the likelihood that it may contain lead-based paint hazards. Most of the housing stock in Monroe (25.81%) was built after 1990. More than half of all the housing stock was built after 1970. Housing construction grew rapidly in Monroe after 1940, and waned in the 1980s producing only 10 percent of the housing stock. Construction took off again in the 1990s.

From April of 2000 until February 2010, 1,656 permits for single-family residential housing units have been issued. Additionally, 320 multi-family units have been added. According to these figures, as of February 2010 there were an estimated 4,798 units (single and multi-family) in the City of Monroe. Almost 40% of the lots in the eighteen ongoing subdivision projects remain vacant (1308 units of the 3,264 total subdivided lots). Upon build-out of these single-family dwelling sites, from all approved and proposed subdivisions, the number of housing units in the City of Monroe will approach 6,106 +/- housing units. Overall, given the nature of the current tough real estate market, the rate of build-out has slowed.

### Age of Housing Stock



### Occupancy

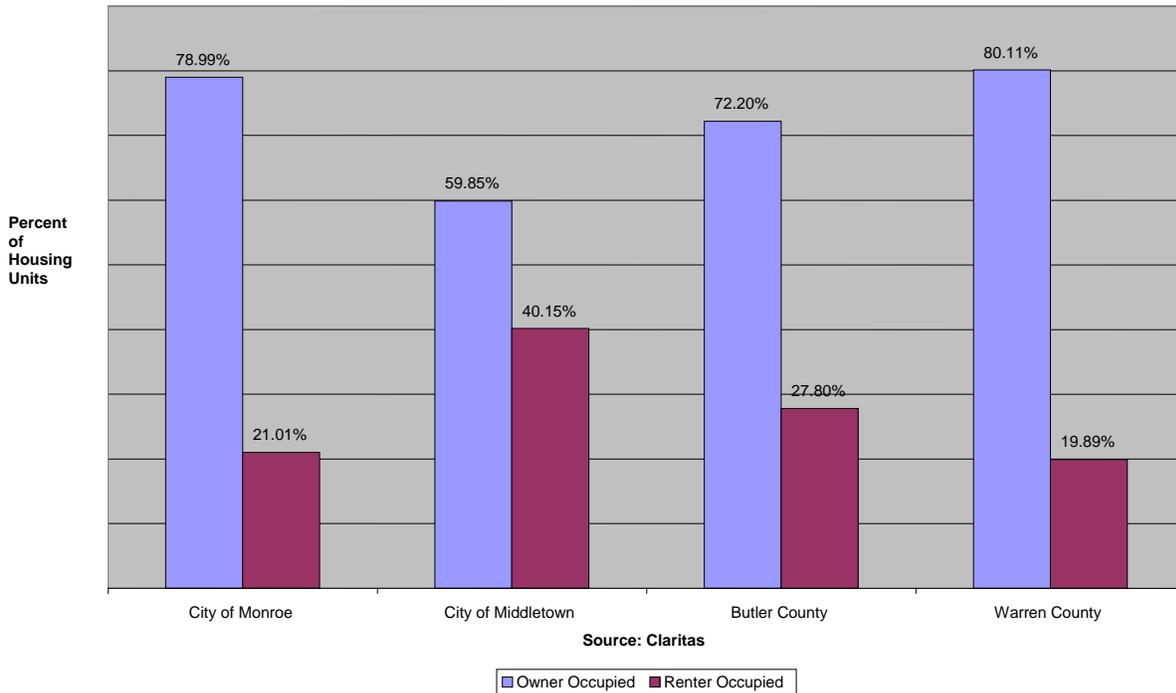
In 2000, of the total housing units in Monroe, less than 6% were vacant. The vacancy rate in Monroe (5.7%) was lower than that of Middletown (7.2%), but higher than Butler County (5.2%) and Warren County (4.6%). This low vacancy rate means that it is difficult for potential residents to locate available housing within the community, without building a new home. This is not unusual for a growing community.

### Tenure

Homeownership is generally valued as a stabilizing factor for communities and for its contributions to the local economy. To limit a discussion of home-ownership to economics, however, is to miss the very emotional and social aspects of owning a home. Most people do not look at their homes as investments, but as a place to live and raise children. According to a 2007 Claritas report, most residents in Monroe (78.99%) own their homes, which is a significantly higher percentage than the City of Middletown (59.85%) and Butler County (72.2%), but slightly lower than Warren County (80.11%). Please refer to the table below.

The proportion of homeowners decreased marginally by less than one percent since 2000. Homeownership appears to be stable in Monroe, but it should be noted that this slight decrease is in contrast to the national trend of increased homeownership.

### Owner vs. Renter Occupied Units



### Household Size

Influencing the increased demand for housing is the decreasing size of households, which is a current national trend. The City of Monroe's household size decreased marginally from 2.52 persons per household in 2000 to 2.45 in 2007. The trend was comparable to those found in Middletown, as well as in Butler and Warren Counties.

Decreasing household size may be attributed to a higher divorce rate, the increase of single-parent households, a growing number of empty nesters (aging couples or singles whose children have grown up and moved out), and longer life expectancy. This trend is particularly significant in communities where housing demand remains high despite a stable population.

### Median Home Value

The median value in 2000 of owner-occupied homes in the City of Monroe was \$126,000, compared with \$100,500 statewide and \$119,600 nationally. The median home value in Monroe has increased significantly between 1990 and 2000 by roughly 53% (See Exhibit 8). This increase is less than that the City of Middletown (59%), Butler County (69%) and Warren County (83%). It may be deduced that the new homes being built are targeted for the upper end of the housing market, and that this trend is driving the median home value up.

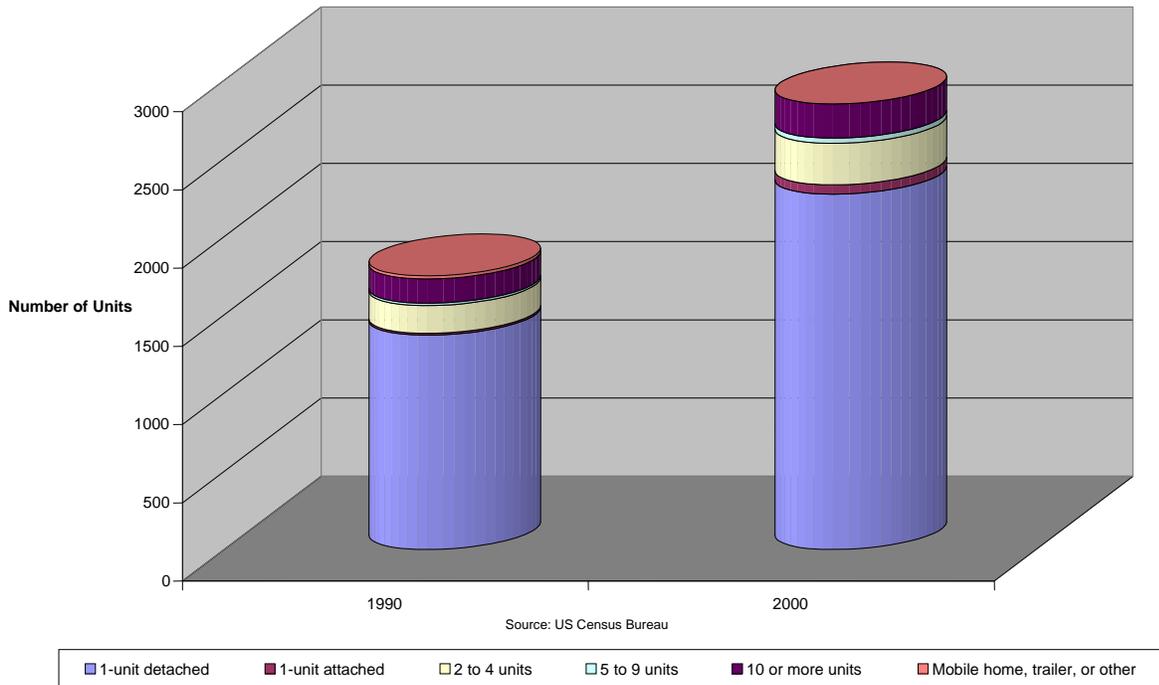
### Median Home Value



### Units in Structure

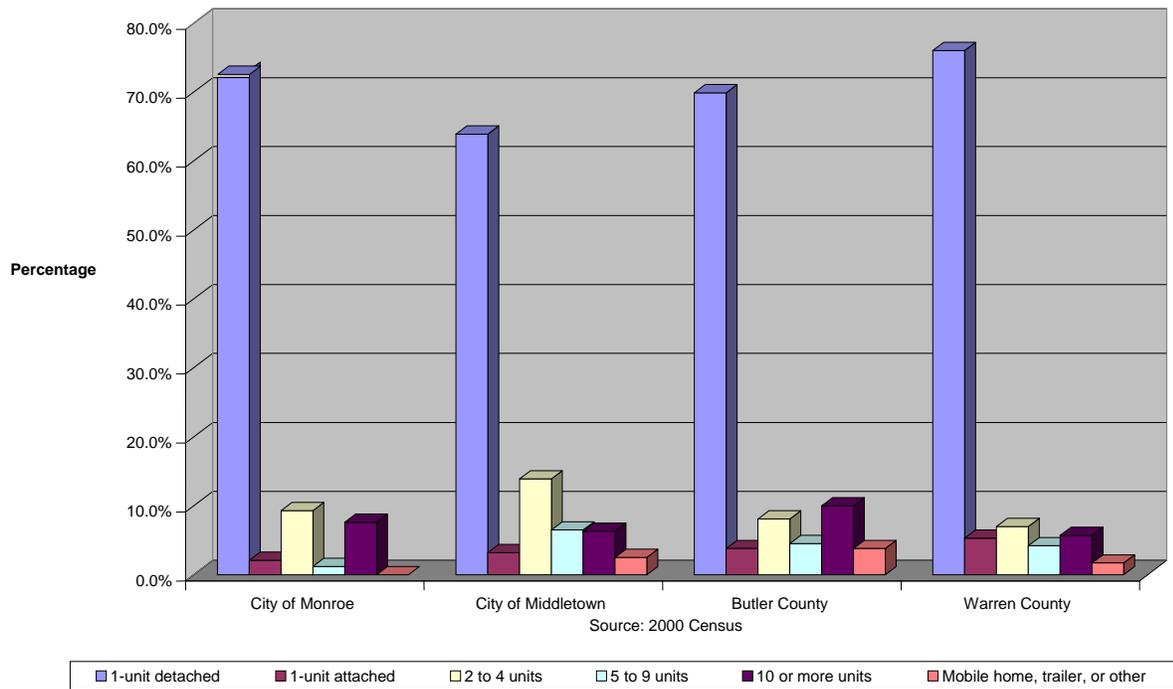
The City of Monroe has seen a great increase in the number of single-family detached homes since 1990. Monroe experienced a 66% increase in single-family detached homes between 1990 and 2000 (See next page). Monroe currently does not have very many multi-family units, which may lead to an affordable housing shortage in the future especially with the expected increase in warehousing and service jobs.

### Units in Structure



According to the 2000 Census, approximately 70% of the City of Monroe’s housing units are single-family detached homes (See table above). This ratio is similar to Butler County (70%) and Warren County (76%); and exceeds the City of Middletown (64%). While 320 new multi-family units have been added since 2000, the overall percent of single-family households have increased to an estimated 78% through the end of 2009.

Units in Structure (2000)



## CHAPTER 5: ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

Monroe is within Region 5 of the State's twelve Economic Development Districts (as reported by the Office of Policy Research and Strategic Planning of the Ohio Department of Development). This southwestern area encompasses four counties: Butler, Warren, Hamilton and Clermont. As of 2006, this region had a population of 1,572,165 and consisted of 1,726.7 square miles. Demographically, compared to the other 11 demographic regions, it had the youngest population. Warren County is one of the 100 fastest growing counties in the U.S.

### **Economy**

From a land use perspective, Region 5 has 36.98% of land coverage in cropland, 36.66% in forests, 17.67% in urban uses, and 7.29% in pasture. Butler County's major land uses are: cropland 51.45%, forest 23.24%, urban 12.77%, and pasture 11.30%. Warren County's major land uses are: cropland 55.80%, forest 29.35%, urban 7.60%, and pasture 6.45%.

In Region 5, there are 401,000 acres in farm use representing 3,390 farms. The average farm size consisted of 118 acres. From the 2002 Census of Agriculture, Butler County had 1,060 farms compared to 1,006 in 1997. In 2002, Butler had 138,044 acres in farms down from 142,128 in 1997. The average size farm in 2002 was 130 acres down from 141 in 1997. The market value of production in 2002 for Butler County was \$35,253,000 down from \$36,180,000 in 1997. Top crops in acreage were soybeans (39,463), corn for grain (28,537), forage (12,866) land used for all hay, haylage, grass silage and greenchop, wheat (3,337) and corn for silage (2,731). Top livestock inventory consisted of cattle and calves (14,848), hogs and pigs (8,694), and horses and ponies (2,613).

For Warren in 2002, there were 1,036 farms in 2002, up from 899 farms in 1997. Warren had 126,168 acres in farming in 2002 up from 123,503 in 1997. The average size farm in 2002 was 122 acres down from 137 acres in 1997. The market value of production in 2002 was \$29,619,000 down from \$34,132,000 in 1997. Top crops (in acreage) were soybeans (43,864), corn for grain (17,569), forage (9,899) land used for hay, haylage, grass silage and greenchop, and wheat (3,531). Top livestock inventory consisted of cattle and calves (6,095), horses (3,815), and hogs and pigs (2,834).

As reported by the Ohio Department of Development's Office of Policy, Research and Strategic Planning) employment in Region 5 (as of 2007) consisted of the following:

- 99,900 - healthcare/social assistance
- 99,588- manufacturing
- 85,857- retail trade
- 81,361- state & local government
- 65,111- accommodations & food service
- 56,749- administration/waste services

#### Butler County employment

- 19,783- manufacturing
- 18,964- state & local government
- 15,045- health care and social assistance
- 15,014- retail trade
- 13,079- accommodation and food service
- 10,280- wholesale trade

#### Warren County employment

- 12,842- manufacturing
- 8,606- state & local government
- 8,215- retail trade
- 6,029- accommodation and food service
- 5,049- health care and social assistance
- 4,886- administrative and waste services

#### The major employers in region 5:

- Manufacturing-AK Steel
- Insurance-American Financial
- Service-Cedar Fair/Kings Island
- Service-Convergys
- Financial-5/3 Banc Corp
- Manufacturing-Ford
- Manufacturing-General Electric
- Research & Development-International Paper
- Trade-Kroger
- Trade-Macys
- Government-Miami University
- Government- University of Cincinnati

#### Major employers in Butler County

- Manufacturing-AK Steel
- Manufacturing-Amylin Pharmaceuticals
- Manufacturing- Armor Holdings
- Government- Butler County Government
- Insurance- Cincinnati Financial
- Trade- Cornerstone Brands
- Government- Fairfield City Board of Education
- Service- Ft. Hamilton Memorial Hospital
- Government- Hamilton City Board of Education
- Government- Lakota Local Board of Education

### Major employers in Warren County

- Manufacturing- Aisin Seiki/ADVICS
- Manufacturing- Blackhawk Automotive Plastics
- Service- Cedar Fair/Kings Island
- Manufacturing- Cintas
- Manufacturing- HJ Heinz/Portion Pac
- Manufacturing- Luxottica Group
- Trade- Macy's
- Government- Mason Local Board of Education
- R&D- Proctor and Gamble
- Government- State of Ohio

### Major employers in the City of Monroe

- Kohl's 1,041 employees
- Deceuninck 392
- Precision Packaging 392
- Arkay Plastics 261
- Krispy Kreme 218
- Worthington 195
- Xerox Corporation 158
- West Chester Holdings 157
- Baker Concrete 117

The most recent projections state that Southwest Ohio is projected to grow by 9.2% by 2014. Although, based on the current recession that has prevailed over the last two years and continues to dominate our economy, the projection appears overly aggressive. Also, Region 5 had the highest level of education attainment compared to all of the other regions in the state.

### **Logistics**

Logistics is the movement and storage of goods from the beginning to the end of the supply chain. Ohio is a leader in logistics due to its geographical location. Ohio is equidistant to the east, south and Midwest population centers as well as their industries (it is the third largest manufacturing state). Regarding roadways, Ohio has the 7<sup>th</sup> largest highway system and 4<sup>th</sup> largest interstate system, and ranks 4<sup>th</sup> in railroads miles (it also ranks 4<sup>th</sup> in rail economic output at \$1.3 billion), and has close proximity to seaports and airports. Overall Ohio ranks third in the nation in the value of outbound and inbound shipments (\$907 billion) and first in the value of outbound trucking shipments (\$244 billion).

Transportation and warehousing is a \$12 billion industry and comprises 3.6 percent of the Ohio's gross domestic product. Since 2003 this industry has experienced steady growth adding 21,500 workers and is expected to average 2,000 workers annually through 2014. Public warehousing employs almost 30,000 workers and is a \$1.2 billion a year industry. Warehousing is the fastest growing transportation sector, adding 8,600 jobs from 2002

through 2005, a 41% increase. Monroe has contributed to this growth with its Kohl's Warehousing Distribution Center, and the Home Depot Rapid Deployment Center.

Both Butler and Warren Counties had negative net flows of 26,587 and 13,834 respectively. This means that more people are commuting to work outside these counties than are commuting in. Most of the outflow was to Hamilton County, 29% from Butler County and 27% from Warren County.

## CHAPTER 6: TRANSPORTATION

### I-75

A significant transportation asset is the City's proximity to Interstate I-75, which bisects the City in a north/south direction separating the smaller eastern section of the City from the larger western part. The major interchange and key entry point to the City is exit #29 where State Route 63 intersects with I-75. Situated halfway between Dayton and Cincinnati, Monroe is at the midpoint of this heavily traveled Dayton-Cincinnati corridor. The corridor's reputation is becoming a "life sciences and high technology hub" and is home to a number of high tech industries. In 2006, ODOT's Annual Average Daily Traffic (AADT) count indicated that 93,130 vehicles traveled I-75 between State Route 122 and State Route 63 and 96,130 vehicles between State Route 63 and State Route 129.

In 1996, OKI conducted a study of the I-75 corridor between I-275 and State Route 63. Phase I of the study considered the expected increased traffic as a result of the construction of State Route 129 (the Butler County Veterans Highway) and the Allen Road Interchange, and recommended the construction of an auxiliary lane in each direction of I-75 between I-275 and Cincinnati-Dayton Road between State Route 129 and Tylersville Road. The Phase I study also recommended expansion of bus service within the corridor, implementation of an expanded rideshare program, expansion of the Advanced Regional Traffic Interactive Management and Information System (ARTIMIS) to State Route 63, implementation of an incident management program, coordination of State Route 747 and US 42 signal systems, and improvement of access management along State Route 4, State Route 747, and US 42.

In 1999 OKI and the Miami Valley Regional Planning Commission completed Phase II of the North/South Transportation Initiative (NSTI), I-75 Corridor. This Phase included the I-75 corridor from northern Kentucky through north Dayton. The recommendations from Phase I served as the foundation for Phase II. Completed in 2003, this study's recommendations were classified into 3 separate categories:

- System modification alternatives- projects that improved the overall flow of the interstate mainline, as well as improvements to parallel roadways
- Access modification alternatives- projects that address new or modified interchanges on the interstate; and
- Corridor capacity alternatives- projects both roadway and transit designed to increase overall capacity of the interstate. This included having 4 continuous lanes on I-75 throughout the Ohio portion of the OKI Region with an auxiliary lane to be added in areas of congestion, high frequency light rail, enhanced bus service, and study of multimodal freight movement.

The NSTI is now in the design/environmental impact study phase (PE/EIS). This phase is being handled by ODOT.

Currently, there is a \$98 million widening project underway along I-75 between Cincinnati-Dayton Road in Butler County and State Route 122 in Warren County. Improvements include: 11 miles of pavement rehabilitation; the addition of one lane,

southbound and northbound in the median of I-75; grading; drainage and resurfacing of the existing pavement; major improvements to 12 mainline and overhead structures; new decks and overpasses at Bethany Road, Princeton Street, Millikin Road, and Kyles Station Road in Butler County; deck replacements for the Greentree and Hendrickson overpasses in Warren County; resealing of the structure decks at Tylersville Road and Hamilton-Mason Road; repaving of the ramps at Tylersville Road; installation of noise walls along I-75 from Union Centre Boulevard in Butler County north to State Route 63 in Warren County; construction of a Single Point Urban Interchange (SPUI) at the State Route 63 intersection, ramps in the State Route 63 intersection will be widened and reconfigured to accommodate the SPUI interchange and State Route 63 will be reconstructed on both sides of the interchange (from Lawton Avenue to the west, and to Corridor Park Drive to the east). Work began in 2009 with completion of the Interchange expected in mid 2010. These interchange improvements will dramatically improve the appearance of this gateway. Monroe has the opportunity to provide input into the design of the sound wall barriers, overpass aesthetics, lighting and landscaping. As the key gateway into the City, Monroe is pursuing Transportation Enhancement funds to create a welcoming and aesthetically landscaped entrance from I-75. Possible enhancements could begin in early 2011 and be completed by later in the year.

### **Other roadways**

ODOT classifies roadways based on their use, size and capacity. Arterials emphasize a high level of mobility for through movement of traffic with limited land access. Generally, travel speeds and distances are greater on these facilities compared to other classes. The highest level of arterials such as interstates and freeways are limited access to allow the free flow of traffic. Collectors are roadways that capture traffic from lower facilities and distribute it to higher volume roadways. Collectors provide mobility and land access. Generally, trip lengths, speeds, and volumes are moderate. Local streets are the third classification. Their primary role is to provide land access. Travel speeds, distances, and volumes are generally low and through traffic usually discouraged.

State Route 63 is the major east/west highway connecting I-75 to State Route 4. State Route 63 is classified as a collector between I-75 and State Route 4 and as a minor arterial from I-75 east towards Lebanon. ODOT AADT counts from 2007, indicate that there were 19,610 vehicles traversing State Route 63 between State Route 4 and I-75. State Route 4 on the western end of the City is a north/south roadway connecting Hamilton to Middletown. As a principal arterial, State Route 4 had AADT counts of 21,630 vehicles per day south of State Route 63 and 20,700 vehicles per day north of State Route 63.

Other major roadways in and near Monroe are listed below along with their ODOT classification:

- Cincinnati-Dayton Road south of State Route 63 is classified as a collector and as a minor arterial north of State Route 63
- Oxford State Road- Collector
- Greentree Road- Collector

- TodHunter Road- Collector
- Britton Lane- Collector
- Carson Road- Collector
- Hankins Road- Collector
- Furthermore, while not listed as official ODOT collectors, Macready Avenue and Lebanon Street serve as collectors of various residential subdivisions.

### **State Route 63**

For the past few years, the Butler County Engineer’s Office has been considering the extension of State Route 63 at State Route 4 westward connecting it to U.S. 127. The Engineer’s Office believes that the extension would improve travel efficiency and safety in northern Butler County while relieving congestion in the Trenton area, while providing a connection to Miller Brewing and other industries.

There have been a series of different alignments for the proposed State Route 63. Two options call for the intersection to be constructed south of the existing intersection while one option looks north of the current intersection with the new section of road commencing near Salzman Road. Early estimates put the cost of this extension (from State Route 4 west to U.S. 127) at about \$40.7 million. The recommended first phase of this State Route 63 extension (from State Route 4 west to Wayne Madison Road) was estimated to cost about \$27.7 million. The inability to raise the pre-requisite local matching funds has been the deterrent in this project not moving forward. From a planning perspective, this State Route 63 extension could open up the smaller commercial western area of Monroe for additional development which would require specific development plans. However, the Steering Committee as well as Planning Commission is concerned that increased traffic impacts along State Route 63, cost, as well as possible construction through developable land could be detrimental to the western portion of the City. As such, the Comprehensive Plan Steering Committee and Planning Commission have recommended that the Comprehensive Plan specifically state non-support for the proposed extension.

#### Other proposed roadway improvements

- Extension of Salzman Road northward to Todhunter Road
- Where feasible, improvement of Cincinnati-Dayton Road south of State Route 63 to Liberty Township
- Greentree Road/I-75 intersection
- Extension of Clark Boulevard south and east towards Salzman Road.

### **Bikeways**

Monroe is located in the southwest region of the Ohio Bicentennial bikeway. The western part of the City (west of State Route 4) is within the Greater Miami Recreation Trail, which is a planned 70 mile trail commencing in Fairfield and proceeding north through Hamilton, Middletown, Franklin, Dayton, Troy and Piqua (Miami County). The section

between Hamilton and Middletown will be along the Great Miami River traversing through the western part of Monroe. The Great Miami Recreation Trail runs parallel to the Ohio River to Lake Erie Bike Trail in Butler, Warren and Montgomery Counties. Currently, only preliminary design work and environmental studies have been done for the 8 mile stretch of the bikeway that will run from State Route 73 to Rentschler Forest, Fairfield, Liberty & Lemon Townships, and Monroe.

There are 3 segments in place in Liberty Township running parallel to State Route 129 but not currently connected to the Great Miami Recreation Trail. These 3 segments are:

- Reserves Park eastward to Westland Park at LeSourdsville- West Chester Road
- LeSourdsville- West Chester Road intersection of Maud Hughes Road and Princeton Road
- Liberty Park Path between Princeton and Yankee Road

Monroe has the opportunity to plan connectors/links to the Great Miami Recreation Trail from appropriate activity centers (schools, parks, downtown, etc.).

## **Rail**

Monroe is served by the Indiana & Ohio (I&O) Railway that connects Cincinnati to Lima, Michigan through Lima, Ohio. A spur from Union Township in Warren County runs in a northwesterly direction to Monroe, crossing I-75 north of the State Route 63 intersection. The I&O Railway connects to a Norfolk Southern line which is a major north/south line. Parallel and to the west of the Norfolk Southern line is another major railroad, CSX. This line runs north to Toledo and has major east/west connectors in Sidney and Lima. The Indiana and Ohio Railway system carries less than 1 million tons of freight on an annual basis, whereas the Norfolk Southern and CSX lines carry over 20 million tons of freight on an annual basis.

The Ohio Rail Development Commission (ORDC) has been studying the feasibility of expanding transportation capacity in Ohio by improving the railroad system for both passenger and freight trains. The HUB Studies have been looking at the feasibility of creating 7 intercity travel corridors within Ohio that would eventually be connected to a regional network. The most feasible corridor is the one linking Cincinnati-Dayton-Columbus-and Cleveland. This corridor has large end-point populations and many intermediate cities along the route that would generate ridership and revenue. The advantage of this route to Monroe is that it would be in close proximity to the line offering an additional mode of transportation to residents, travel flexibility and improved connectivity to other Ohio cities.

Furthermore, the recent opening of the nearby Franklin Yards Logistics Park in Warren County could provide various opportunities for Monroe manufacturers and distributors to be additionally served by rail. The multi-modal warehousing and rail transload facility can be utilized by businesses within a 50-mile radius to store and load or off-load while having their products and materials shipped via rail to any location in the nation.

**Air**

Monroe is about 30 miles from both the Dayton International Airport and the Cincinnati/Northern Kentucky International Airport. It is also within 10 miles from the Butler County Regional Airport and the Hook Field Municipal Airport.

**Connectivity**

From the survey questions and interviews, there was great interest in having the City become more pedestrian friendly. This would entail improving the existing sidewalks, constructing new walks to close gaps and eventually linking the sidewalks to the proposed recreational trails. The purpose here is to connect the various activity centers with safe walkways and bike trails.

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## **CHAPTER 7: COMMUNITY FACILITIES/SERVICES**

### **Utilities**

Electric service is provided to the City of Monroe by Duke Energy. Cable services by Time Warner, telecommunications by AT&T and Cincinnati Bell, and gas by Duke Energy.

Traversing through Monroe are oil and natural gas pipelines. The four major lines are located in the following areas: along the northern City boundary going west to east through the northwestern part of the City into Middletown and then to the northeast part of the City to Greentree; a diagonal line crossing near State Route 4 and State Route 63 going in a northeast direction crossing Todhunter Road; a north/south line from Kyles Station Road north crossing Carson Road, State Route 63 and Todhunter Road; a line in the southeast portion of the City coming from the intersection of Kyles Station Road and Cincinnati-Dayton Road proceeding in a northeasterly direction to Warren County south of the State Route 63/I-75 intersection. Most recently, the

### **Water/Sewer Services**

Water is provided by the City of Monroe (aquifer), and Butler County. Current usage is about 1.1 million Gallons per Day (GPD) with excess capacity for 8 million GPD. Monroe is divided into three service areas for water. The Eastern Service Area (northern region) covers the area east of Yankee Road and north of State Route 63 and is served by the City owned water plant. The Eastern Service Area (southern region) covers the area east of Salzman Road and south of State Route 63 and is served by Butler County. The Western Service Area covers the area west of Yankee Road and is served by the City of Middletown. Overall, the City's water treatment plant at Union south of State Route 63 provides about 43% of the City's water, Middletown provides 17% and Butler County 40%. The City has four water storage facilities: a 1.5 million gallon elevated storage tank (that is shared with the City of Middletown) off Yankee Road north of Todhunter; a 400,000 gallon elevated tank at Mound Cemetery; a 400,000 standpipe on Britton Lane and a 130,000 gallon standpipe on East Avenue. Monroe completed an update of its Water Master Plan in May 2007. The plan recommends additional water storage facilities by 2025 to address expected demand.

Sewer services are provided by Butler County Environmental Services (since 1975). The City is served by the LeSourdsville Wastewater Treatment Plant located along the Great Miami River and Gregory Creek, southwest of the City and (west of State Route 4). Excess capacity exists for 7.8 million Gallons per Day (GPD). In 2007, the Mount Pleasant lift station was replaced with a gravity system which will provide a savings on maintenance costs and repair and replacement of parts.

In regards to storm water, the City's Storm Water Management Plan (SWMP) was prepared, adopted and submitted to the USEPA in March 2003. The plan covers the approximately 16 square miles encompassing the City. The plan delineated specific

activities to monitor and control storm water drainage using the following six controls: public education and outreach; public participation & involvement; illicit discharge detection and elimination; construction site run-off control; post construction run-off control; and pollution prevention & good housekeeping. Monroe is within the Great Miami Watershed and most of the City drains into the Great Miami River through Dicks Creek, other unnamed tributaries, Shaker Creek and its tributaries including Augsbergers Creek, Clarks Run, and Millers Creek. Coldwater Creek drains a portion of the southwest quadrant of the City and flows into Gregory Creek before entering the Great Miami River. A portion of the southeastern section of the City in Warren County drains to the Little Miami River by means of Swamp Run, which flows into Little Muddy Creek within the City Boundary. Little Muddy Creek eventually joins Turtle Creek outside the City of Monroe which then flows into the Little Miami River.

### **Services**

Monroe has 36 full time Fire/EMT personnel. There are two stations, one on Main Street and one on State Route 4 across from the Tall Oaks Subdivision. Another fire station and Police substation is being contemplated to better serve the southeastern part of the City (near Mason Road and Butler Warren County Road).

There are currently 26 full time and 4 part time police officers.

Refuse services for the City of Monroe are provided by Rumpke at \$13.50 per month per household.

The City operates two cemeteries: Mound Cemetery (11.96 acres), on the east side of Main Street south of State Route 63 and the North Monroe Cemetery (9.03 acres) along the west side of Cincinnati-Dayton Road south of Todhunter Road. There are five parks within the City of Monroe: Community Park on South Main Street, Oaklawn Park on Oaklawn Drive within the Whispering Oaks Subdivision, (the southeast corner of State Route 63 and Main Street; the new Veteran Memorial site); the Baker Sports Complex, and Monroe Crossings, a 27 acre park off State Route 63 near State Route 4.

Monroe is also within a short distance to three Butler County Metro Parks: Woodsdale Regional Park, an 84 acre site in Trenton, the Chrisholm Historic Farmstead, a 17 acre National Register site also in Trenton, and the William F. and Cora Dudley Woods, a 64 acre park along Hankins Road in Liberty Township.

Public Transit- Monroe is served by the Butler County Regional Transit Authority (BCRTA) through an on-demand shuttle service that provides service between 6 AM until 6 PM Monday through Friday. BCRTA has divided Butler County into 3 zones: Zone 1 covers the southeastern part of the County, Zone Two the south central part and Zone 3 Lemon Township and the City of Monroe.

## **Schools**

The City of Monroe is served by the Monroe Local School District which includes Lemon Township. Currently, the school district operates four schools and is at capacity. The school district is looking at options to address future needs.

- Monroe Primary (preK-2 grades) located at 225 Macready Avenue with an enrollment of 603 students.
- Monroe Elementary (K-6) located at 230 Yankee Road with an enrollment of 1,150 pupils.
- Monroe Junior High (7 & 8) located at 210 Yankee Road with an enrollment of 325 students.
- Monroe Senior High School (9-12) located at 220 Yankee Road with an enrollment of 717 students.

With the expected continued growth in enrollment, the district is planning on providing four modular units to house second graders beginning in the 2010 school year. A recent assessment of the school district by the Ohio Schools Facilities Commission has determined a need for a new pre-kindergarten through 4<sup>th</sup> grade elementary school for 1,300 students.

The Schools Facilities Commission also recommended that the old Lemon-Monroe High School Building be torn down. It is currently leased to Butler Technology and Career Development Schools (Butler Tech) until 2012. Butler Tech is a career technical school based in Hamilton, Ohio providing education and training to 25,000 high school and adult students from 10 area school districts. Butler Tech maintains 17 sites/campuses in Butler County. The newer section of the school has been renovated and houses the Greentree Health Science Academy which was formed in partnership with the Warren County Career Center and the Atrium Medical Center to help meet the local need for healthcare professionals.

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## CHAPTER 8: FUTURE DEVELOPMENT

### Encourage Growth

The City of Monroe has decided to flourish and offer its residents more employment opportunities, improved public amenities and a better quality of life. Accordingly, the possibility of expanding geographically in the future to meet these goals resulted in the Planning Steering Committee deciding to expand the study area beyond the city boundaries by approximately  $\pm$  2,900 acres into Lemon, Turtle Creek and Madison Townships. These boundaries are depicted in Map #2.

Based on the latest 2008 Census estimates and staff analysis, demographic projections within the city limits call for an approximate additional 1000 persons, an 8% increase in population by 2012 and another 7,800 persons by 2025, thus bringing Monroe's total population to approximately 18,000. This population increase means another 290 households by 2012 and possibly 2,000 more by 2025. The projections include the possibility of developing future residential lands as well as acquiring additional residential units through possible annexation into the planning area. Thus, to accommodate this increased growth, the City will continue to concentrate on economic development activities to maintain a strong financial base.

In determining future growth options, the Planning Steering Committee looked at existing and proposed land uses within the City and townships, as well as utility, water/sewer availability and capacity, access, roadway capacity, planned new roadway projects, and regional growth trends. The previous plan included a land use stipulation that future development would be encouraged using a ratio of 65% commercial/industrial and 35% residential. The Planning Steering Committee felt that the commercial/industrial percentage might be too high based on what the commercial market can absorb as well the goal to leave areas reserved for agricultural or open space use but, generally agreed that the commercial/industrial percentage should be higher than the residential percentage and that the residential percentage should not exceed the 35%. As presently proposed, the land use areas will represent a decrease of approximately 8% in residential area within the City limits (based on current zoning). Commercial and industrial areas will represent approximately 55% of the land area with current zoning is approximately 51%. When considering the overall planning area, the total residential area is approximately 29% and future commercial and industrial uses are approximately 45%. When including the overall planning area, agricultural land area increases due to the large agricultural area located in surrounding townships.

### CITY LIMIT LAND USE COMPARISON

	CURRENT ZONING		CITY LIMITS - CURRENT LAND USE		CITY LIMITS - FUTURE LAND USE	
	ACRES	PERCENTAGE	ACRES	PERCENTAGE	ACRES	PERCENTAGE
<b>Agricultural</b>	<b>829</b>	<b>8.83%</b>	2991	31.72%	818	8.68%
<b>Commercial/Office</b>	<b>982</b>	<b>10.46%</b>	1011	10.73%	1817	19.27%
<b>Industrial</b>	<b>3815</b>	<b>40.65%</b>	1856	19.68%	3326	35.28%
<b>Residential</b>	<b>3569</b>	<b>38.03%</b>	2973	31.53%	2844	30.17%
<b>Open Space/Park</b>	<b>190</b>	<b>2.03%</b>	170	1.81%	233	2.47%
<b>Institutional</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0.00%</b>	427	4.53%	389	4.13%

### PLAN AREA LAND USE COMPARISON

	CURRENT ZONING		PLAN LIMITS - CURRENT LAND USE		PLAN AREA - FUTURE LAND USE	
	ACRES	PERCENTAGE	ACRES	PERCENTAGE	ACRES	PERCENTAGE
<b>Agricultural</b>	<b>829</b>	<b>8.83%</b>	5428	44.12%	2537	20.62%
<b>Commercial/Office</b>	<b>982</b>	<b>10.46%</b>	1065	8.65%	2010	16.33%
<b>Industrial</b>	<b>3815</b>	<b>40.65%</b>	1856	15.09%	3471	28.21%
<b>Residential</b>	<b>3569</b>	<b>38.03%</b>	3356	27.28%	3552	28.87%
<b>Open Space/Park</b>	<b>190</b>	<b>2.03%</b>	170	1.38%	345	2.81%
<b>Institutional</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0.00%</b>	427	3.47%	389	3.16%

#### **Existing Land Use Trends**

Most of the City’s highway commercial areas are located along the State Route 63 and the I-75 intersection, with additional commercial development areas along State Route 4, south of State Route 63. These areas are served by large arterials with good roadway capacity and access. Expansion of highway commercial in these locales would be compatible to the existing land uses, easily served by existing utilities and infrastructure and in accordance with the City’s goal of emphasizing commercial/industrial growth.

Monroe has limited office space, approximately 49,000 square feet, scattered along Main Street and State Route 63. According to commercial realtors, most of the Cincinnati-Dayton’s region’s office space is located south of the City at the I-75 and Union Center Boulevard interchange. Until August 2009, the commercial retail market in Monroe was also limited with about 249,000 square feet of space. As with the office space, most of the retail has been built further south off I-75 at Union Center, Tylersville Road, and Cincinnati-Dayton Road. Additional retail is located to the north in Middletown at the I-75 and SR 129 interchange as well. The retail numbers have dramatically changed now that 400,000 square feet of space has been added with the Cincinnati Premium Outlets grand opening in August 2009.

The City has six major industrial areas:

1. The west side of I-75 north of State Route 63, which includes the Miami Valley Industrial Park and several large farms along I-75 and Greentree Road;
2. The north side of State Route 63 at Salzman Road, which contains the Monroe Commerce Center, a 90 acre industrial park;
3. The south side of SR 63, west of Salzman Road, which includes two industrial parks, Park 63 and Summit Commerce Park providing 230 acres for industrial development as well as the newer Monroe Logistics Center with 70 acres for industrial development;
4. The north side of Todhunter Road, west of Holman Avenue, where Teppco Propane is located;
5. A 420 acre area southeast of State Route 63 and I-75 that includes the Corridor I-75 Premier Logistics Park where two warehouse/distribution facilities have been built and eight more are possible; and
6. A small industrial park along Breaden Drive southwest of State Route 63 and I-75. This horseshoe designed development has light industrial businesses and small warehouses.

With the exception of the Todhunter Road site, the City's other industrial areas have adequate access, are near major arterials and/or are adjacent to I-75. Because of the proximity of the Monroe Local Schools complex off Yankee Road and the related safety considerations, the Planning Steering Committee has proposed that new commercial/industrial uses east of Salzman Road (in Lemon Township) be less intensive and have minimal truck traffic. The committee designated this area as transitional or planned light industrial with heavy landscaping and urban design guidelines for uses such as office parks, call centers, and research and development (R & D) facilities. Such uses would be compatible to uses in the Park 63 and the Summit Commerce Park.

The City's residential neighborhoods are established along SR 4, in areas north and south of SR 63 east of Cincinnati-Dayton Road (Main Street), and along both sides of Main Street, south of State Route 63. Residential growth will continue in the long term as a wide availability of developable residential parcels exist within the City boundary.

### **Future Land Use Strategies**

The Steering committee supported the following future land use strategies:

Strategy 1. Locate high-intensity commercial projects with existing similar development areas along State Route 63, I-75, Cincinnati-Dayton Road, and State Route 4 (south of State Route 63). This will reinforce existing trends by keeping commercial uses along major thoroughfares for visibility and access.

Strategy 2. Encourage retail development near existing retail uses along State Route 63, Main Street, Cincinnati-Dayton Road, and State Route 4 (south of State Route 63). These

areas are strategically placed along existing retail areas and busy roadways that will provide easy access for residents of nearby neighborhoods.

Strategy 3. Concentrate industrial/warehousing/logistics facilities along I-75 to capitalize on the area's excellent access, high visibility, available utilities, infrastructure and land. This will also serve to help limit the truck and employee traffic to the I-75 and State Route 63 intersection.

Strategy 4. The City should encourage expansion of existing institutional uses such as schools, churches, governmental offices such as the post office, and the Monroe Lending Library to meet the needs of future residential development.

Strategy 5. Encourage lot sizes larger than the typical R-1 lots size (40,000 square feet) in low density residential areas south of Heritage Plaza, in Lemon Township, to meet anticipated long term housing demand from future office/business park employees. The minimum lot size recommend is 5 acres.

Strategy 6. Improve existing parks and recreational facilities and develop new facilities to accommodate future growth near the Yankee Road school complex and to the south of State Route 63 near Carson Road. Using the development industry's recommendation of 10 acres of parkland for every 1,000 residents, Monroe will need about 200 acres of parkland by 2025. Monroe currently has about 103 acres of parkland. Please see Map #6.

Strategy 7. Enhance one of the city's unique natural assets- the land along the Great Miami River into waterfront parks, recreational/bike trails and open space.

Strategy 8. Promote sustainable growth and development that will be sensitive to the natural environment while enhancing the quality of life of its residents. Consider adopting local regulations that will promote clustering, encourage pedestrian friendly development, improve quality design that respects regional eco-systems and addresses the use of alternative energy sources.

## **Future Land Uses**

### **Future Commercial Uses**

As depicted in Map #5, commercial and industrial development should be encouraged along I-75 to complement existing commercial and industrial land uses and take advantage of available land and utilities. With I-75's forthcoming additional travel lanes and the new SPUI interchanges off SR 63, this area will become more attractive to large scale office complexes, research and development parks, highway commercial uses, logistics facilities, and light industrial uses. The 400,000 square foot outlet mall located along I-75 and south of this intersection will also attract highway commercial development in the vicinity. Additional commercial uses would also be appropriate in the following locales:

- the land to the south of the outlet mall on the east side of I-75 (the Millen Farm parcel, currently zoned A-1),
- the land north of the Solid Rock Foundation Church,
- the land alongside Greentree Road,
- the northeast corner of State Route 63 and Cincinnati-Dayton Road,
- Heritage Plaza,
- the land east of Salzman Road and south of SR 63,
- the northwest corner of Todhunter Road and Cincinnati-Dayton Road, and
- the land bounded by Breaden Drive, Gallagher Road, I-75 and Liberty Township

### **Future Industrial Uses**

Future industrial development opportunities were identified for the following areas:

- the land north of SR 63, south of Todhunter, and west of Yankee Road (north of the Kohl's warehousing distribution center),
- the land east of Salzman Road identified as "transitional uses" (east of Park 63 and Summit Commerce Park),
- the land south of Park 63 and the Summit Commerce Park towards Hankins Road,
- the area north of SR 63 and east of Cincinnati-Dayton Road shown as light industrial in Map #5,
- the land south of Greentree Road and east of Cincinnati-Dayton Road, and
- the area east of I-75 and north of Nickel Road.

### **Future Residential**

With the projected growth of 240 new households through 2012 and 2,000 more by 2025, additional housing will be necessary. Of the City's eighteen current subdivisions, almost forty percent of the buildable lots remain vacant, representing about 1,308 parcels (as of March 2010). More housing may need to be built after 2012 however, due to the downturn in the residential market; this scenario may take a much longer period for development. A future area identified by the Steering Committee as suitable for residential development is in Lemon Township north of Hankins Road between Salzman Road and South Sands Avenue and south of State Route 63. Low density residential development was seen as the most appropriate use. It is recommended that any new area that may be annexed contain a minimum of 5 acre single family lots, which may entail a new zoning code classification to meet minimum lot standards. Please see Map #4.

Overall, the City presently contains an abundance of available residential parcels that will provide for a number of years for future growth. The Planning Steering Committee attempted to be sensitive to the current Lemon Township Land Use Plan, which designates much of the township area for multi-family and single family development. The committee, while recommending new additional future residential developments in the Lemon Township area (within the study area), was cautious and not generally supportive regarding any new areas for residential growth due to the impact upon city services and the Monroe Local School District in the foreseeable future.

A major land use and environmental concern is a proposed new coke plant to be built in the City of Middletown adjacent to the City of Monroe's northwestern boundary. This

\$340 million facility to be constructed on a 157 acre site off SR 4 would be very close to a single family residential neighborhood in Monroe (to the northeast of Niederlander Lane). The 100 oven facility would produce coke and generate electricity to be used by AK Steel of Middletown. From a land use perspective, such a facility would have a significant negative impact on Monroe's residential neighborhoods along State Route 4 and the proposed bike trail, park and recreational improvements planned for the area alongside the Great Miami River.

### **Future Park and Recreational Uses**

As depicted in Map #6, new park land would be appropriate in the areas north of State Route 63 near the school complex off Yankee Road. These potential sites were chosen for amenities such as new ball diamonds and soccer fields and because of their proximity to the schools and residential neighborhoods.

Another park is proposed on land north of Carson Road. This new park will serve the new low-density housing that is proposed for that vicinity and the existing residential neighborhoods to the east.

The riparian corridor along the Great Miami River has also been identified as an ideal site for waterfront park development, walking trails and bike paths, scenic overlooks, and maintained natural wetlands. This area along the river is within the Greater Miami Recreation Trail, a 70 mile connector linking Fairfield and Piqua through Monroe. The City should plan to build bike/walking trail connectors to link the trail with the schools, residential neighborhoods, downtown, and other city parks.

### **Transportation**

As noted in Chapter 3, one of the transportation goals of the City is to have an accessible, safe, comprehensive thoroughfare system that adequately serves the needs of the residents, businesses, industry and institutions. The significant improvements that will have a major impact on the city are the widening of I-75 (from SR 122 on the north to Cincinnati-Dayton Road on the south) and the improved interchanges at Exit 29 where State Route 63 and I-75 connect. The City has already started to construct new roadways and connectors to facilitate this development.

To spur development along Cincinnati-Dayton Road and the Miami Valley Industrial Park area, new roadways have been proposed that will provide better access to State Route 63 and Cincinnati-Dayton Road. Other connectors include extending Clark Boulevard from State Route 63 to Salzman Road and having another north/south link from Edison Drive to State Route 63.

A key extension has been connecting Salzman Road north to Todhunter Road. This would open up more land for development and route some traffic off State Route 63 to Todhunter Road.

Improvements of Main Street from State Route 63 south to Liberty Township have also been supported to accommodate through traffic and pedestrian traffic and spur more development.

An interchange at I-75 and Greentree Road would provide additional development opportunities and alleviate some of the congestion at Exit 29 further south.

To improve circulation, ease congestion and reduce safety concerns, intersection improvements are needed along State Route 63 at North Garver Road, New Garver Road, American Way, Lawton Avenue and Main Street.

Furthermore, providing signal coordination/management along the State Route 63 Corridor to maximize efficiency and utilization of exist lane geometry should be pursued.

Another significant project is the extension of State Route 63 at State Route 4, west to US 127. The lack of pre-requisite local matching funds has stymied this project (refer to page 6-3 regarding city opposition).

One of the recommendations from the public has been to create a network of recreational trails for bikes and pedestrians throughout the City. As shown in Map #7, the City is proposing to link the Greater Miami Recreation Trail that will run along the Great Miami River to the Monroe Schools Complex by locating on the gas/power line right-of-ways running just north of Stone Ridge Lane. Another link would connect the Trail at the River east along Hankins Road to Yankee Road, and then north to Carson Road where it will proceed west to Yankee Road and then north to the School Complex. Another leg would proceed east on Carson Road to Main Street where it would connect to the Community Park, downtown and the Monroe Lending Library.

Providing new sidewalk connections should be encouraged throughout all of the City's developments. Future connections to new retail, office, and residential areas will provide recreational as well as alternative options for access within the City. One connection of importance will be providing connections between the City Building and the Community Park and providing pedestrian access to the new Cincinnati Premium Outlets along Mason Road area.

### **Downtown**

The redevelopment of downtown Monroe is supported by the majority of residents as revealed by a recent survey. Downtown Monroe is located south of State Route 63 along Main Street. The boundaries are Lee Price Avenue on the west, East Avenue on the east, SR 63 on the north and Lebanon Street on the south. It covers about 12 city blocks. Additional retail opportunities, improved streetscape amenities and a civic gathering place such as a town center or amphitheater were some of the suggestions made for the downtown.

The challenges to the revitalization of downtown are its lack of commercial buildings, limited retail, and distance from the SR 63/I-75 interchange. The Category 4 tornado that

hit downtown Monroe on May 10, 1969 destroyed many of its historic commercial buildings, leaving gaps along the storefronts and diminishing the massing of buildings important to downtowns/central business districts. Many of the remaining buildings that comprise the downtown are converted residential structures that add little to the look and feel of a downtown.

Its distance to the SR 63/I-75 interchange, which is about a mile and a quarter, will also have it competing for some of the retail development and traveling customers off I-75. Downtowns that are closer to the interstate usually can capture both the local trade and the out of town customers/travelers.

To improve downtown, better access from the northern gateway at SR 63 is needed. The intersection at SR 63 and Main Street needs to be improved to ease congestion at peak hours, improve the turning lanes and better accommodate pedestrian and bicycle traffic. Some have recommended widening Main Street from SR 63 south towards Liberty Township. If this occurs, a coordinated planning effort will be needed to include streetscape work, urban design elements, parking, and access management.

To spur downtown development, the city has built a fire station and city administration building along Main Street. To continue to build a town center, other governmental and institutional buildings should be encouraged to invest in downtown. A new library would attract people, more activity, and a need for more retail opportunities. The redevelopment of the partially vacant Lemon-Monroe High School into a central square, town center or amphitheater would provide a much needed community gathering place while eliminating an underutilized building.

Downtown should also be linked and connected via improved sidewalks, bike paths and walking trails to adjacent neighborhoods, parks, the current Monroe Lending Library and schools. Such connections would make it easier to get to downtown, creating a demand for more retail shops, public gathering places, community activities and an overall interest in the downtown. Additionally, downtown should encourage stricter building design criteria with buildings encouraged to locate on the front portion of lots, along wide sidewalks with parking areas in the rear accessed by alleys.

### **Agriculture/Agriculture – Transitional**

Agricultural lands comprise a significant percentage of area within the city and planning area boundaries. Preserving agricultural lands as well as open space serve to provide buffers between uses, protect the rural character and viewshed when travelling along the major routes such as State Route 63, and support the major state industry of farming. As such, the planning steering committee recognized that not all areas can have a definite plan and that much of the agricultural lands available, especially, in the township areas should be carried out with respect to applicable township policies. If developed, recommended agricultural areas should be developed in a conservation or clustered development pattern and further strategic planning of agricultural areas should occur to ensure sensitivity to the rural environment.

**Figure 1**



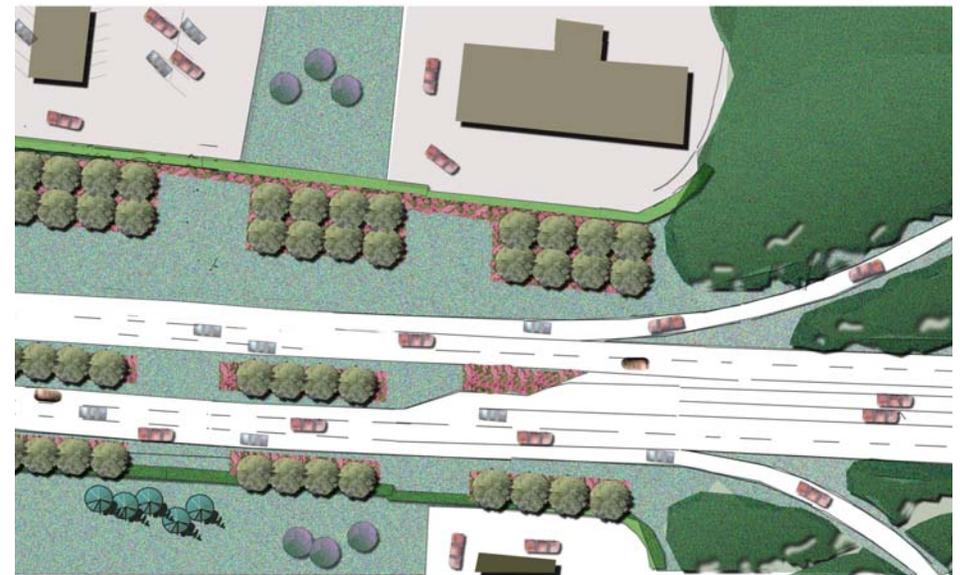
*Street Level View*

**Streetscape Improvements:**

- Formal groupings of large deciduous ‘canopy’ street trees to frame expansive vehicular corridor
- Utilize hedges and landscape screens to screen expansive vehicular parking and service areas
- Promote limited ‘shared access’ points to enhance vehicular safety and enhance corridor image
- Unify and cluster development signage to eliminating visual clutter and provide easily recognizable visual keys to motorist

**Streetscape Design Objective:**

- Create positive image that will attract quality development
- Provide safe vehicular access to businesses by providing shared access points
- Unify development signage and eliminate visual clutter



*Plan View*

**Business 63 Corridor - east and west of I-75 between Main St. and Union Road**

**Figure 2**



*Street Level View*

**Streetscape Design Objective:**

- Retain and restore Rural Character of corridor
- Encourage low density non commercial development while discouraging retail strip sprawl
- Discourage signage visual clutter by providing realistic signage size and design requirements



*Plan View*

**Streetscape Improvements:**

- Preserve existing rural hedge rows
- Informal groupings of large deciduous and evergreen street trees
- Low flowering meadow in highly visible road medians
- Extensive use of native plants
- Utilize low monument signage that reflects rural character

**Rural 63 Corridor - Main Street west to SR 4**

**Figure 3**



*Street Level View*

**Streetscape Improvements:**

- ❑ Distinctive district street lights
- ❑ Uniform spacing of primary streetscape elements (district street lights, street trees, benches...) to create a unified and identifiable ‘Downtown Centre’
- ❑ Use of special pavement to enhance pedestrian routes and identify roadway pedestrian crossings
- ❑ Incorporate unique district signage (street signs, banners promoting downtown/community, signs identifying civic/community building and public open spaces)
- ❑ Relocate power lines away from street frontage

**Streetscape Design Objective:**

- ❑ Create a walkable and vibrant ‘Downtown Centre’ that includes both civic and commercial uses
- ❑ Create a unique and identifiable Downtown District character that promotes ‘specialty commercial’ redevelopment
- ❑ Take advantage of simple economies of scale by linking ‘Downtown Centre’ to Outlet Mall via shuttle service
- ❑ Incorporate traffic calming measures including; on street parking, low speed limits, and designated pedestrian crossings



*Plan View*

**Downtown Centre – Main Street**

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## **CHAPTER 9: IMPLEMENTATION**

The following implementation steps have been formulated by the Planning Steering Committee, the City's Department of Development staff, and the consultant. These activities and initiatives are based on the future development scenarios outlined in Chapter 8.

Most of these recommendations will require the creation of new ordinances and/or revisions to existing ones (e.g. new zoning categories, overlay zoning, new urban design criteria, etc.) New land use regulations should reflect the City staff's capacity to carry them out. It is counterproductive to enact new ordinances that cannot be adequately administered or enforced.

The proposed physical improvements (new roadways, bike paths, parks, etc.) will most likely require a commitment of local funds along with outside financial and technical assistance. Thus, the City Manager and City Council should prioritize the improvements listed below in accordance with the needs of the City and the available resources.

### **Encouraging Quality Design**

One of the City's mission statements (outlined in Chapter 3) recognizes the importance of creating "Pride of Place" through high quality physical assets and attractive amenities. For the City to continue to stand out as a desirable community, it must ensure that its physical presence is aesthetically pleasing to residents and visitors through well-designed structures that complement the overall architectural feel of the community.

### **Improving the Gateway**

It is especially important that the entrances to the City look attractive and inviting with appropriate landscaping, lighting, and appealing signage. Monroe has six significant gateways:

- Cincinnati-Dayton Road at the Middletown-Monroe boundary (north)
- Main Street (Cincinnati-Dayton Road) at the Liberty Township-Monroe boundary (south)
- State Route 63 at the Turtle Creek Township-Monroe boundary (east)
- State Route 63 and State Route 4 at the Lemon Township-Monroe boundary (west)
- Along I-75 between the northern and southern City limits

While many of the gateways to the community are nondescript and could benefit from signage and landscaping that complements the brick architecture established by the various city buildings and newer signs throughout town, the I-75 gateways are highly visible and present unique challenges to creating a sense of place that reflects the rest of the community. At this time, several local businesses have substantial outdoor storage, dilapidated or abandoned buildings, or showy signage and decorations. For many

businesses, there is little to no screening or landscape buffering between the roadway and the business. While some businesses, such as the flea markets, appreciate the visibility on I-75, the overall appearance of the community to passing motorists is often one of clutter and traffic congestion. Billboards and the wide variety of signage along the I-75 corridor contribute to this perception of disorder. With more consistent signage, reduced in height and scale, increased buffering through decorative elements and landscaping, and stronger design criteria, the businesses along I-75 would better match the overall feel of the City and thereby improve the public's perception of the area. These improvements could be accomplished through landscape ordinances, better buffering requirements and urban design elements within the city's subdivision regulations.

### **Implementing Urban Design Standards, Including Zoning Overlay Districts**

Urban design standards facilitate complementary development by incorporating design standards into the planning processes through the zoning code or overlay districts. Design guidelines should be comprehensive and unambiguous with the objective of having streets, buildings and public spaces that are aesthetically appealing, compatible with adjoining land uses and constructed in a way that promotes or creates a sense of place. These standards should address the requirements for signage, lighting, landscaping, and buffer area, as well as acceptable building materials, colors, façade designs, and architectural elements that the City deems appropriate for future development of the community.

To guide development along State Route 63, the City should develop overlay zoning for this road from Union Road to State Route 4. The overlay zoning for this area should take into consideration the varied nature of State Route 63 in Monroe. For example, retail and commercial uses tend to locate on the eastern part of State Route 63 while the western edge of the corridor tends to be more rural or industrial in nature.

As a result of this dichotomy, the overlay zoning requirements that would apply from Union Road to Cincinnati-Dayton Road would be more conducive to intense highway commercial, large office, light industrial and logistics uses while the overlay district requirements for the remaining part of State Route 63 would support a more rural environment with residential, institutional and light industrial uses.

As shown in figure 1, the design objectives for the eastern segment of State Route 63 would be to create a positive image that will attract quality development, provide safe vehicular access to businesses through shared access points and unify signage to eliminate visual clutter. Streetscape improvements for this business corridor should include formal groupings of large deciduous "canopy" street trees to frame the expansive vehicular corridor, hedges and landscape screens to buffer expansive parking and service areas, requiring limited shared access points to enhance vehicular safety and corridor image and unifying and clustering development signage to eliminate visual clutter and to provide easily recognizable visual keys to motorists.

As shown in figure 2, the design objectives for the western segment of the corridor would be to retain and restore the rural character, encourage low density non-commercial development, discourage retail strip sprawl and eliminate signage visual clutter through signage design requirements. Recommended streetscape improvements include preserving the existing rural hedge rows, planting informal groupings of large deciduous and evergreen trees along the street and flowering meadows in the road medians, using of native plants wherever possible, and installing low monument signage for businesses and local amenities.

### **Defining the Downtown Area**

Public interest and involvement are essential to downtown development. A vibrant downtown must have commercial uses and be a gathering place for civic functions and special events. While the City of Monroe does have a downtown area, it has not fully reached its potential. Developable parcels still exist, and some structures in the area would be best suited for demolition and redevelopment. One of these structures, the former Lemon-Monroe High School site along Macready Avenue, has the potential to become a central focus of the downtown area if it was redeveloped into an amphitheater or community center building. Similarly, a well-designed and landscaped public plaza would serve the same purpose at a more reasonable cost.

Infrastructure improvements to the downtown area should endeavor to make the area more pedestrian-friendly and define the boundaries of downtown through unique adornments and signage. To encourage walkability, traffic calming measures such as on-street parking, low speed limits, and designated pedestrian crossings should be utilized. Please see figure 3.

Streetscape improvements for downtown should include distinctive street lights. To create a unified and identifiable “downtown centre”, uniform spacing of the primary streetscape elements (district street lighting, street trees, street furniture) should be carried out. Please see figure 3. Using special pavement material to enhance pedestrian routes and to identify roadway crossings will also improve safety and walkability. Incorporating consistent yet unique district signage such as street signs, banners promoting the downtown and community, signs identifying civic and community buildings and public open spaces will further identify and promote the district and make it a more welcoming place. Power lines should be relocated away from the street frontage or buried underground.

In order to better market its new downtown area and encourage specialty commercial shops and neighborhood establishments, the City may want to undertake a community outreach campaign that would create an identity for the downtown through initiatives such as naming the area, offering recreational programming that appeals to all age groups, and encouraging local businesses to market their products together.

## **Protecting the Environment Through Sustainability**

Monroe should promote sustainable growth practices that are sensitive to the natural environment.

- Wetlands, flood plains and other natural habitats will be protected as City policy through land use regulations or by converting such lands to park land.
- Scenic views will be preserved through the appropriate location of telecommunication towers and improved control of billboard locations.
- The City will promote pedestrian friendly development.
- Traditional Neighborhood Development (TND) design concepts will be encouraged for areas targeted for denser urban development. A TND design refers to a pattern of land planning and development that emulates the towns and neighborhoods built in the early to mid-20<sup>th</sup> century. While the conventional developments built since the 1960's have stressed a separation of uses and greater emphasis on the automobile, TND design stresses a walkable scale, an integration of different housing types and commercial uses, and the development of a "village/civic center or plaza" as a public gathering place. TND projects have a mix of uses, varying housing types at differing price ranges, an interconnected street network (rather than a reliance on cul-de-sacs), a town center, and a pedestrian-oriented design that locates garages to the rear of house lots and places parking lots behind commercial buildings instead of in front of them.
- The City will encourage the use of alternative energy sources such as solar, wind and geothermal heating systems by revising its zoning code and subdivision regulations where applicable to accommodate these new energy sources.
- The City will consider adopting a Conservation Design Residential Zoning District to encourage more innovative subdivision designs (e.g. protection of open spaces and natural areas, provision for parks, promoting cluster development) that will provide incentives and guidance to developers of these areas targeted for conservation design (such as the land in Lemon Township just north of Liberty Township and south of Carson Road).
- Promote residential cluster development whenever possible, water conservation, and recycling of building material.
- Monroe will encourage park development that will preserve and take advantage of the natural features of the site(s).
- The redevelopment of the Great Miami River riparian corridor for recreational, open space and scenic purposes will be carried out in a way that protects and conserves the natural beauty and habitat of the waterway.

### **Improving Access, Traffic Circulation, and Capacity**

A city's thoroughfare system needs to be safe, accessible, comprehensive and able to serve the current and future needs of its residents, businesses, industries and institutions.

The eleven mile widening of I-75 from State Route 122 in Middletown to County Road 19 (Cincinnati-Dayton Road), installation of noise barriers, and reconfiguration of the ramps at State Route 63 will positively benefit the Monroe interchange through improved accessibility and aesthetics. Work on these I-75 and State Route 63 interchange improvements began this year (2009) and should be completed by 2011. The total investment cost is approximately \$98 million. The upgrades are expected to encourage more development interest in the general vicinity.

The City has the opportunity to make this gateway to the City an attractive entry point that is visually appealing and welcoming with distinctive signage, appropriate landscaping, and accent lighting. Many communities along the interstate have attractive overpass railings, walls, lighting and community markers that integrate the city's logo. These improvements further enhance a community's identity and uniqueness.

To plan for the impact of these interchange improvements, the City should undertake the following steps:

- Develop a business corridor overlay zone along State Route 63 between Main Street and Union Road. The overlay zone would focus on access management, signage, and landscaping requirements
- As delineated on Map #7, extend Gateway Boulevard from Corridor 75 Premier Logistics Park in two directions: southwesterly towards Mason Road and southeasterly towards Union and Hamilton Roads. This extension would open up more land for economic development activities.
- Add a road parallel to I-75 from Hamilton Road to the Cincinnati Premium Outlets Center to enhance development opportunities with visibility along I-75.

Other infrastructure improvements that will provide better connectivity with major roadways and spur development throughout the city include:

- A connector from State Route 63 northeast to Lawton Avenue with an extension west to Cincinnati-Dayton Road. This will open up more land at the Miami Valley Industrial Park.
- A northern extension of Lawton Avenue with an eastern connection to Cincinnati-Dayton Road at Todhunter Road. These connectors would make the Miami Valley Industrial Park more accessible.
- An extension of Edgewood Drive east to Cincinnati-Dayton Road, which would provide access to the Brittony Woods and Deer Run subdivisions and vacant land along Cincinnati-Dayton Road.

- An extension of North Garver Road just north of Reed Road parallel and to the east of the Pleasant View Acres subdivision. This roadway extension would provide access to the industrially zoned land adjacent to I-75 northeast of the Norfolk & Southern Railroad.
- A looping road emanating from Emerald Way proceeding east of Cincinnati-Dayton Road to Greentree Road and then north and west back to Cincinnati-Dayton Road to the intersection with Oxford State Road. This loop would provide access to acres of land for commercial/industrial development. This is shown on Map #7 in the northeast part of the city.
- A proposed new I-75 intersection at Greentree Road would greatly benefit the northeastern part of the City by providing interstate access to undeveloped land for economic development projects. It would also provide better access to Oxford State Road and Middletown's industrial areas. This proposed interchange would be about 1.9 miles north of the State Route 63 interchange (Exit 29) and about 1.7 miles south of the Middletown interchange at State Route 122 (exit 32) which should meet ODOT's interchange distance requirements.
- For better access to the undeveloped land in Lemon Township, a proposed extension of Heritage Green Drive from State Route 63 south to Carson Road would provide access to undeveloped land slated for residential development. A loop from this extension west to Yankee Road is also proposed for additional accessibility.
- A southern extension of Yankee Road at Carson Road curving east to Yankee Road in Liberty Township has been proposed to have an extended north/south roadway connecting Liberty Township to State Route 63 through Lemon Township.
- To provide better access to the Park 63 and Summit Commerce Industrial Park west of Salzman Road, Clark Boulevard should to be extended south and east to Logistics Way. A traffic light is also proposed at the intersection of Clark Boulevard and State Route 63.
- A parallel road east of Clark Boulevard, Orton Drive, connecting State Route 63 to Logistics Way is also planned to provide better circulation and access to the industrial parks.
- To open up more land for development and to redistribute some of the industrial traffic off Yankee Road and State Route 63, extension of Salzman Road north to Todhunter Road has been proposed.

### **Bikeway Improvements**

As described in Chapter 6, the Great Miami Recreation Trail, which is a 70 mile bike trail that will connect the City of Fairfield with the City of Piqua, will follow the Great Miami River within Monroe’s western plan boundaries. Please see Map #7. To take advantage of this, bikeway connections throughout the City have been proposed. A major connector would follow the gas line right-of-way from the Great Miami River, east through the Tall Oaks Subdivision, and north of the Colonial Manor Square development to the school complex at Yankee Road. Another bikeway would be located further south from the Great Miami River along Hankins Road to Yankee Road. At Yankee Road, the bike trail would go north to Carson Road and continue north on Yankee Road to the school complex. The bike trail would also continue eastward in parallel paths along Carson Road and Hankins Road to Main Street, and then north to the downtown district and the Community Park.

Phase Two of the bike path network would link the school complex to the eastern residential neighborhoods on Britton Lane and Cincinnati-Dayton Road. At Cincinnati-Dayton Road, the bike path would then continue south to the downtown and southern bike paths.

### **Adoption of the Complete Streets Principles**

Monroe should consider adopting the “Complete Streets Principles” as a City policy. These principles require the construction of bike lanes, sidewalks or walking paths, and transit lanes where applicable when any new public street or roadway is extended, refurbished, or constructed. Complete Streets promote safe usage and access for pedestrians, bicyclists, motorists, and transit riders. The goal is a safe and efficient network that allows functional travel to school, local businesses, jobs, and recreation opportunities throughout the community.

These policies differ from typical bicycle and pedestrian plans in that they are not limited to roads that are part of a designated bicycle or pedestrian network, but cover all roads, or at least all major roads in the system. The U.S. Department of Transportation recently issued design guidance in TEA-21 in a report entitled “Accommodating Bicycle and Pedestrian Travel” stating that “bicycling and walking facilities will be incorporated into all transportation projects unless exceptional circumstances exist.” Some of the requirements that these policies call for include:

- new street standards encouraging narrower roads and wider sidewalks;
- refuge islands for pedestrians;
- bike lanes;
- raised crosswalks;
- audible pedestrian signals;
- wide shoulders;
- medians;
- raised crosswalks;

- bus pull outs and special bus lanes; and
- sidewalk bump-outs at intersections to slow traffic and for easier street crossing.

### **Creating Recreational Opportunities**

The City has five parks which total approximately 103 acres of land. General planning principles indicate that a community should have 10 acres of parkland for each 1,000 residents; thus, the City will need an additional 101 acres of parkland by 2025 when its population is expected to increase to 20,400. This Comprehensive Plan calls for maintaining and upgrading the city's existing parks and developing additional parks and ball fields near the school complex and along Carson Road in Lemon Township. Please see Map #6. Additionally, the redevelopment of the Great Miami River Riparian Corridor into waterfront parkland, walking trails and bike paths will add acreage. All of the parks should be connected via recreational trails that can accommodate both pedestrians and bikers. As indicated above, these trails should also be connected to the main activity centers throughout the community (e.g. downtown, the schools, the library, churches, government/public offices) and the city's residential neighborhoods.

### **Attracting Business and Encouraging Economic Development**

The Ohio Department of Development has created 12 regional economic development districts throughout the state. The regional staff is responsible promoting and assisting with various development activities and projects within their respective areas. Monroe is within Region 5, which encompasses Butler, Hamilton, Warren and Clermont Counties. Of the 12 regions, Region 5 has the youngest population and the most educated workforce. Currently, the healthcare and manufacturing industries have the greatest number of employees within this region. The largest employers in both Butler and Warren Counties are in the manufacturing sector according to the Ohio Department of Development. The largest employers in Monroe include the Kohl's distribution center and Mount Pleasant Retirement Village. With the Cincinnati Premium Outlets, another 800 workers will be added to the City's workforce. The momentum of recent commercial and industrial development around the I-75 and State Route 63 interchange and the infrastructure improvements to that intersection will further enhance Monroe's ability to attract more businesses and industry. Monroe is a desirable business location for many reasons, including:

- available land suitable for development;
- access to the local and interstate thoroughfare system;
- visibility off I-75;
- location in a growing region with access to the Cincinnati and Dayton markets; and momentum.

### **Attracting Industrial Development**

The city should pursue continued industrial development within its five industrial parks that have approximately 797 acres of land combined. To take advantage of strong access, high visibility and available land, additional industrial projects should be concentrated where appropriately zoned along the southeastern border of the city and along the east and west side of I-75 north of State Route 63.

Another interchange off I-75 at Greentree Road should be a priority for the city. A new interchange at that location would open up more land for both heavy commercial and industrial development. Many community residents and business owners were in favor of such a new interchange at Greentree Road and voiced their support for it at a public meeting held on March 26, 2009 at Monroe High School.

If the extension of State Route 63 starting at State Route 4 and continuing west to U.S. 127 comes to fruition based on Butler County and the OKI Regional Council of Government plans, Monroe should take advantage of possibilities for economic development through annexation and a targeted plan of development for the area. While, such an extension could improve travel efficiency and safety in northern Butler County, the City should cautiously approach any extension in the context of traffic impacts, effects on current residential neighborhoods and other surrounding land uses, the potential for continuation of the bike trail along the Great Miami Corridor, and the funds needed to significantly enhance this western gateway entrance to the City, similar to the proposed Interstate 75 and State Route 63 Interchange improvements. Thus, the City does not support the extension at this time. .

### **Promoting Highway Commercial Development**

Future highway commercial development would be suitable along I-75 south of State Route 63 on both the east and west sides of the interstate. The LB Ranch property, currently zoned for residential use, should be rezoned to commercial use to encourage office or business park development. The land directly south of the outlet mall should also be zoned for general commercial or light industrial use. Such uses would be compatible to the outlet mall and take advantage of the increased activity.

### **Attracting Commercial and Retail Development**

With the improved interchange at State Route 63 and I-75, additional highway retail may develop between Main Street and I-75 along State Route 63 and neighborhood retail uses along Cincinnati-Dayton Road, north of the State Route 63 intersection. Commercial realtors have acknowledged that increased retail opportunities will occur as a result of the new outlet mall but cautioned that the possibility of most of the quick service restaurants will be located within the mall complex itself and not along State Route 63. Excluding the Cincinnati Premium Outlets, current retail opportunities encompass about 250,000 square feet of space. With the recent addition of another 400,000 square feet at the Outlets, the total retail space is approximately 650,000 square feet. The opportunity exists for increased office space along the State Route 63/I-75 intersection now that it will have improved access, visibility and compatible uses. Monroe currently has

approximately 50,000 square feet of office space, so there is ample room for growth and expansion.

Additional retail development should be encouraged in the downtown area to attract foot traffic and along State Route 4, south of State Route 63, to serve the residential development along the western side of the City. Expansion of commercial and retail uses in Heritage Plaza and near Todhunter Road and Cincinnati-Dayton Road should also be encouraged.

### **Guiding and Promoting Economic Development**

The city's aggressive leadership has resulted in a recent proliferation of significant economic development projects. The city also uses the following economic development financing incentives to promote development:

- Community Reinvestment Area (CRA)- businesses may receive up to 100% property tax abatement on eligible real property improvements
- Tax Increment Financing (TIFs)- finances infrastructure improvements through the increased tax revenues generated by the completed development project
- Special Assessments- provides infrastructure improvement financing for eligible projects

The use of such incentives to attract economic development projects that generate jobs was strongly supported by the community through the telephone survey and one-on-one interviews.

To further enhance its economic development potential, the city is considering the following additional strategies:

- continuing with its success in the logistics sector.
- enhancing the availability and use of broadband technology working in concert with Butler County to provide cabling throughout the City
- obtaining federal, state, regional, and local funds for projects that enhance or create development and recreational opportunities
- Look into obtaining Economic Development Administration Funds for industrial projects
- Look into securing funds from the state's department of development such as the Industrial Site Infrastructure Fund (ISIF), the job creation tax credit program, the R&D tax credit program,
- Look into ODOT funding programs such as the transportation enhancement program (TEP) for streetscape and roadway improvements, Safe Routes to School Grants,
- Look into ODNR for park and bike path improvements

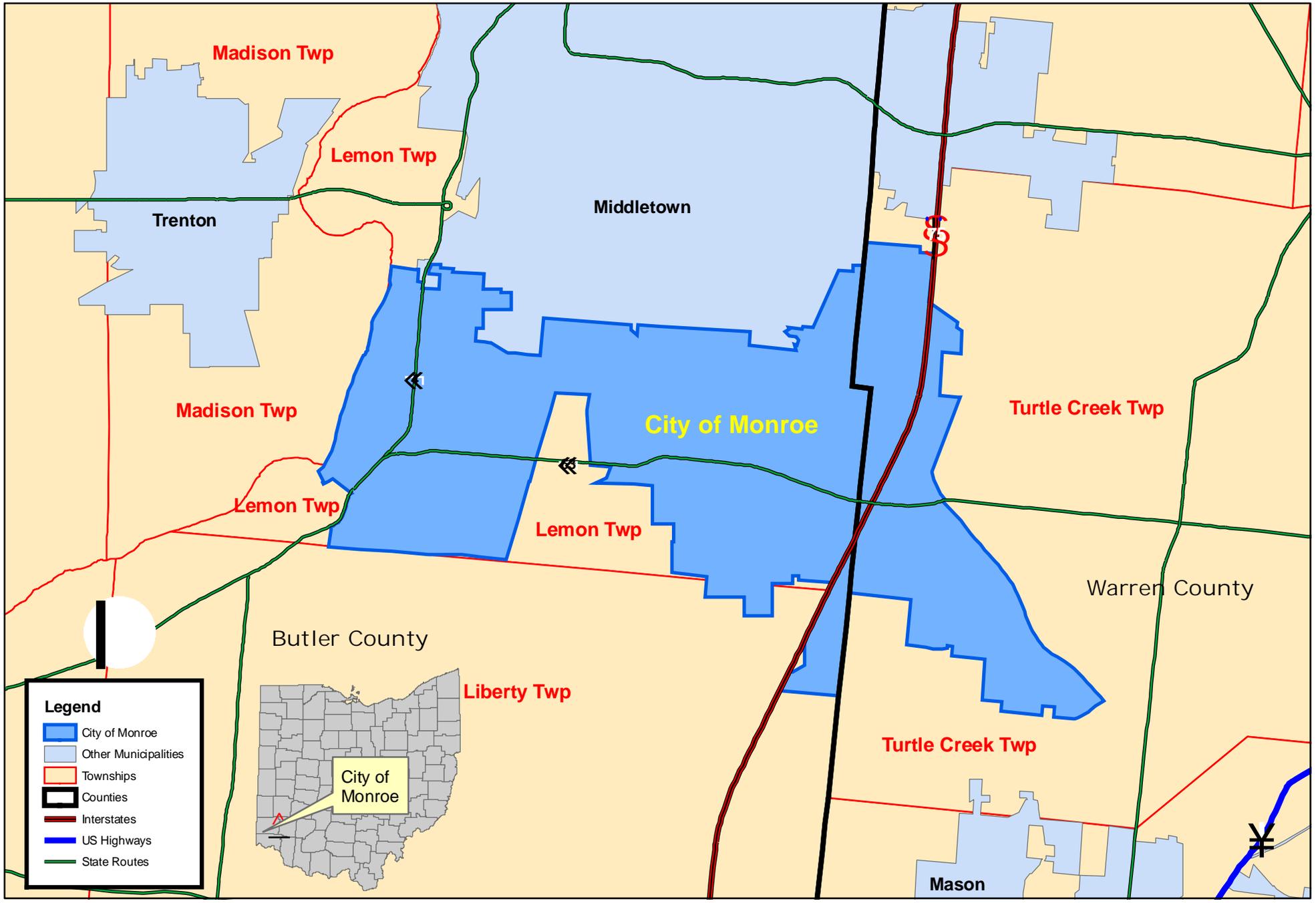
- Continuing working through the Monroe Community Improvement Corporation to facilitate economic development projects, and possibly future site assembly and interim financing.
- Work towards resurrecting the Monroe Business Group as an advocate and partner in economic development
- considering establishing a Sister City Program for Monroe for goodwill purposes and for international business interests.
- considering creating Joint Economic Development Districts with adjacent townships to share tax revenues

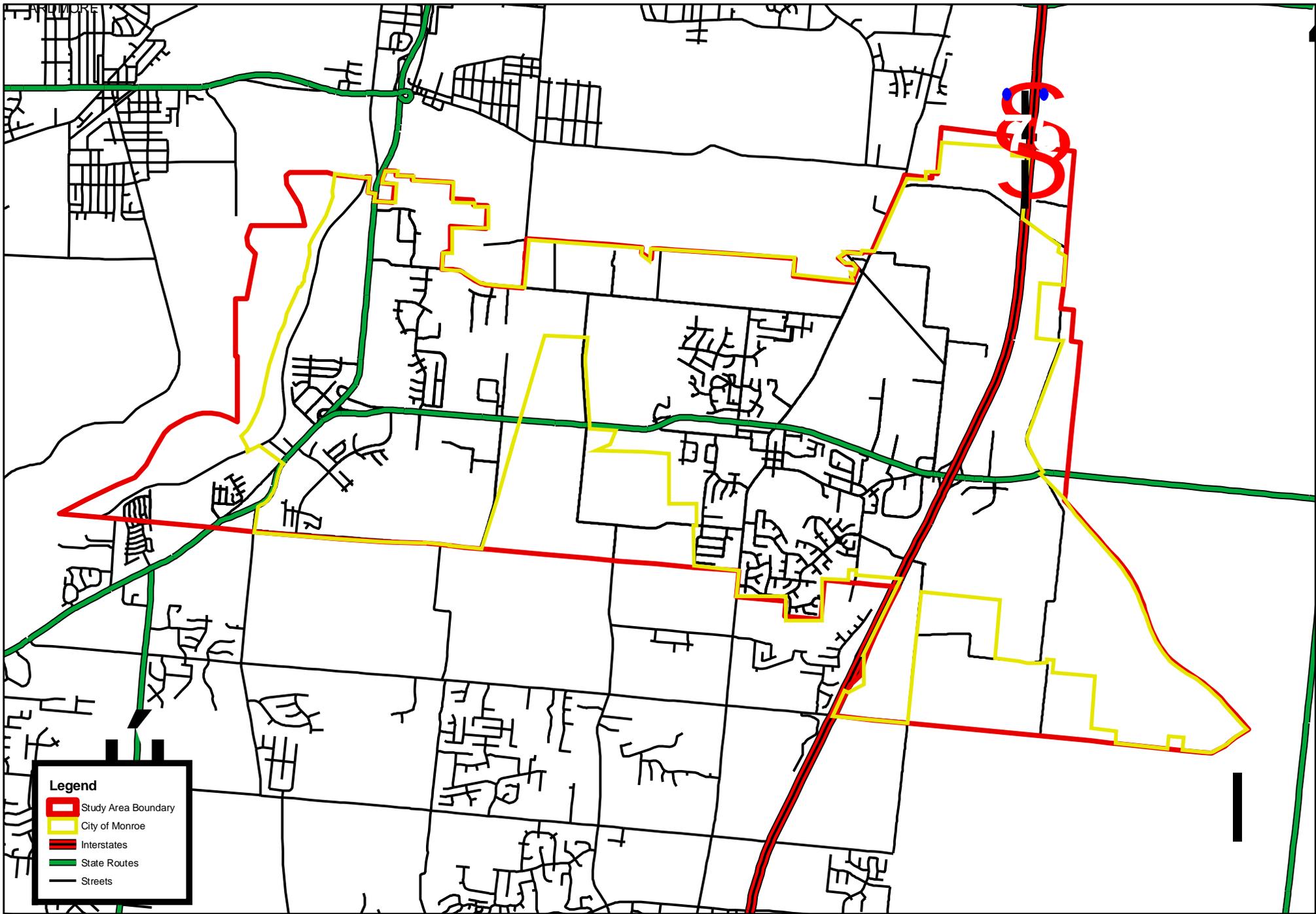
### **Improving City Services and Public Facilities**

Many of the following recommendations to improve city services and public facilities were suggested during the City's 2006 Vision Statement process. The Planning Steering Committee felt that these suggestions were still valid and should be included in the Comprehensive Plan update.

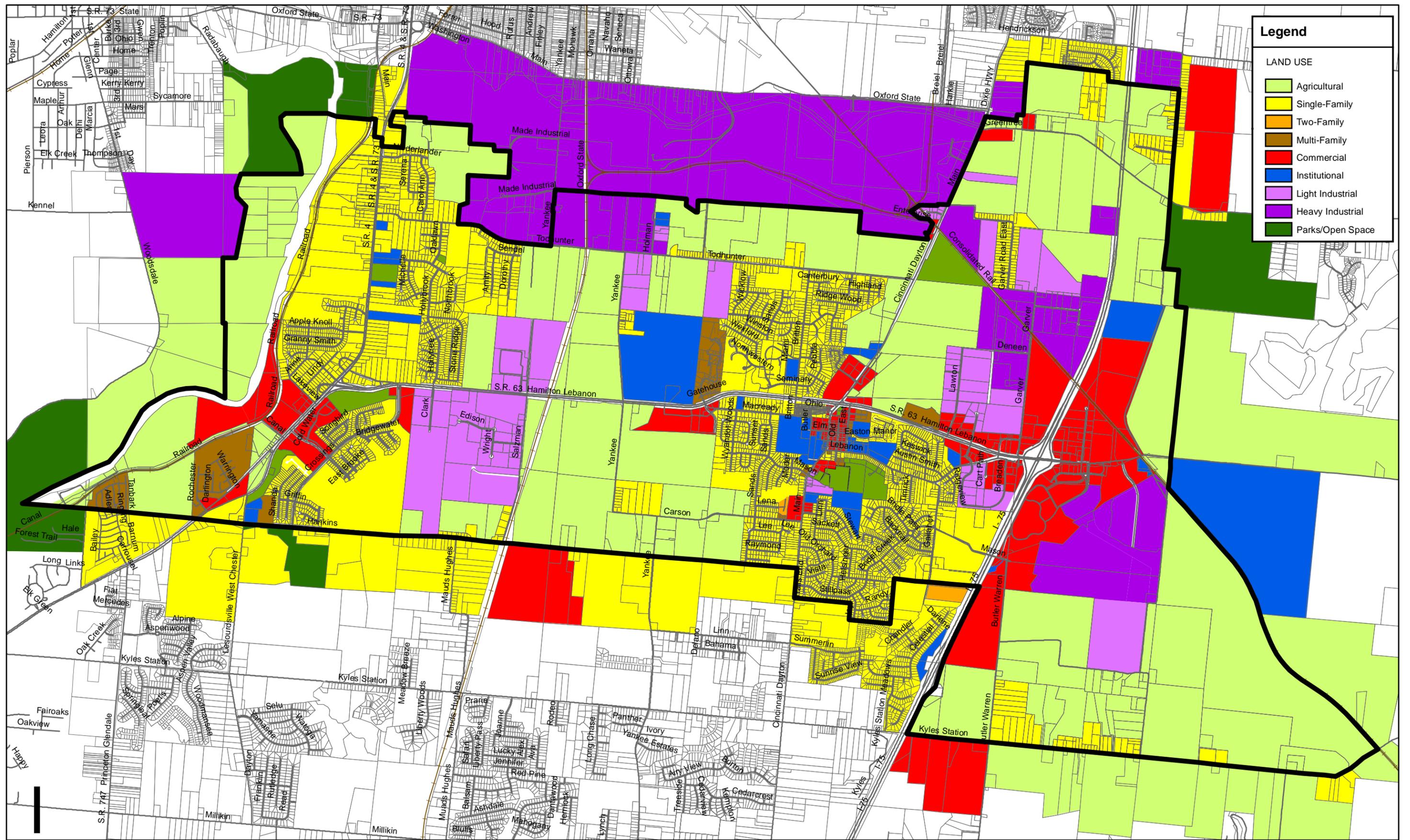
- Build a new fire station and police substation to serve the growing southeast side of the City.
- Promote the expansion of the Monroe Lending Library.
- Support the development of a new Senior Center Recreation facility.
- Work with Monroe Public Schools to assist them with their facility needs and to determine the feasibility of school impact fees on new development.
- Create a geographic information system (GIS) database to enhance the delivery of essential city services.

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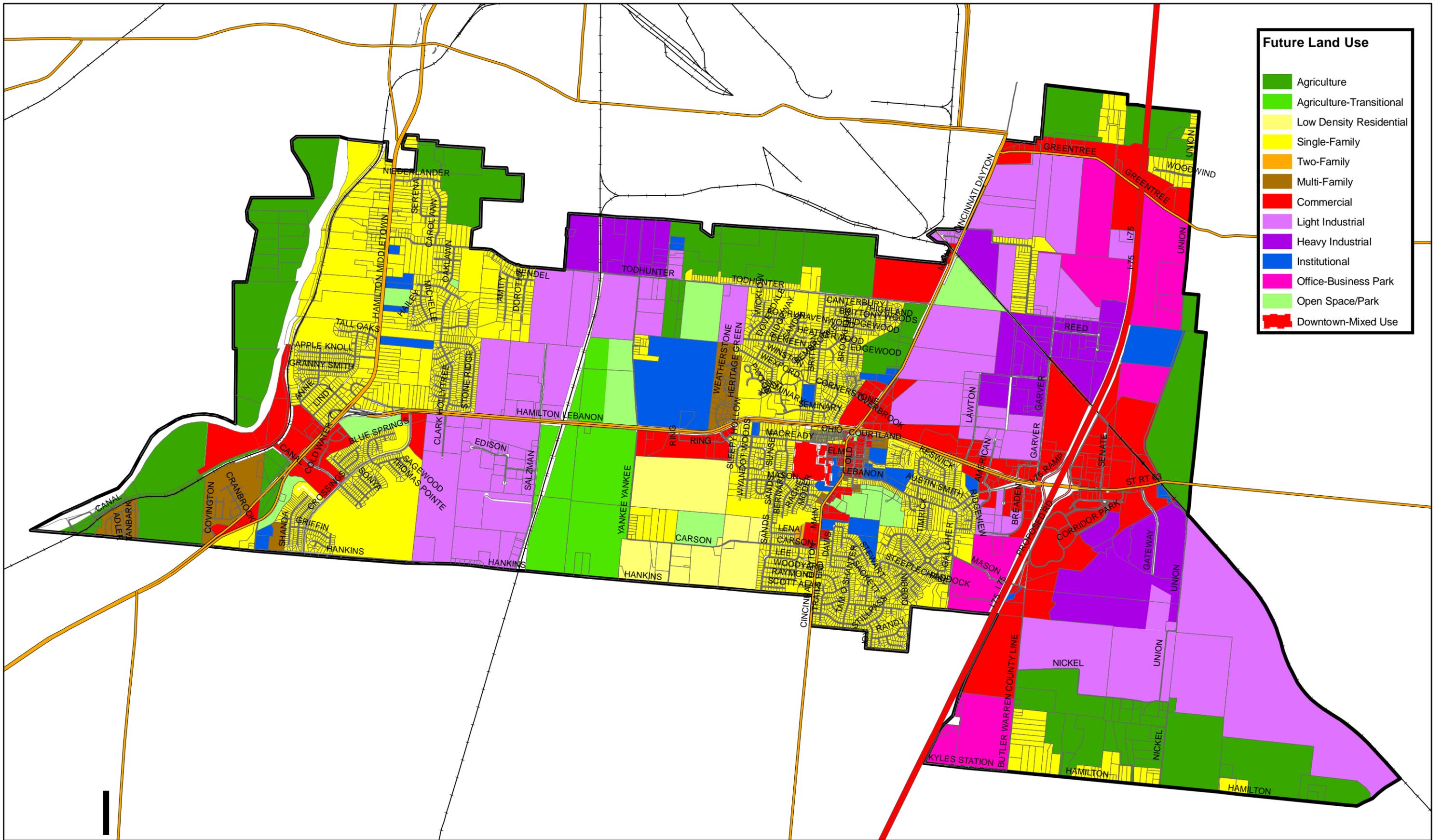
LAND USE

- Agricultural
- Single-Family
- Two-Family
- Multi-Family
- Commercial
- Institutional
- Light Industrial
- Heavy Industrial
- Parks/Open Space

**City of Monroe Comprehensive Plan - Existing City Land Uses & Future Land Uses of Adjacent Communities** **Map 3**

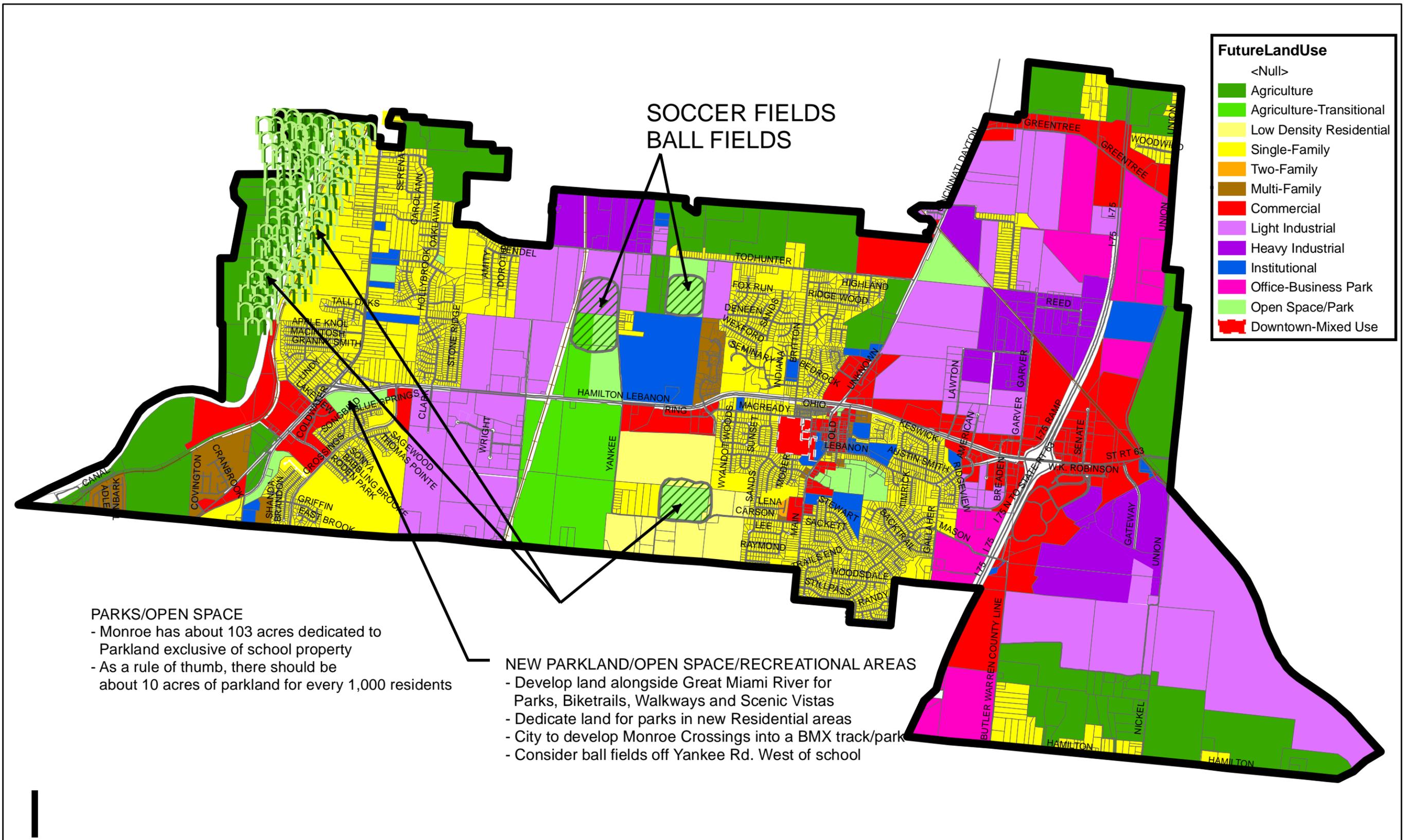
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\* Retail, Office & Industrial data obtained from Grubb & Ellis/Westshell Commercial Retailers

**City of Monroe Comprehensive Plan - Existing Land Use Map & Future Residential/Commercial/Industrial Uses Map 5**



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