Land Use

Figure 3.01 - This plan's land use objectives help retain Monroe's finest qualities, even as it grows in regional stature.

Introduction

The Land Use Chapter provides an overview of the City's history, land use conditions, a description of the plan's land use strategy, policy framework (reference Chapter 2 for goals and policies) and the Future Land Use Map (FLUM).

The FLUM is a policy-level document, which together with the plan's written policies, guides the full range of City implementation measures including future zoning, regulations, resource allocation, additional studies and plans, land divisions and other municipal directives.

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Purpose & Relationship to the Growth Management Act (GMA)

Land Use is concerned primarily with the City of Monroe's growth and land uses for urban activities. It has been developed in accordance with Section 36.70A.070 of Washington State's Growth Management Act (GMA) to address land use issues in the City and its adjacent Urban Growth Area (UGA) over the next 20 years.

This chapter has also been developed in accordance with Snohomish County-Wide Planning Policies. It has been integrated with all other planning elements to ensure internal consistency throughout the comprehensive plan. This chapter:

- *Considers the appropriate location, type and intensity of future development*
- *Assesses the need for additional public services*
- *Includes a detailed inventory and analysis of the distribution, location, and projection of current and future land uses*

Background

History

Land uses in Monroe have been influenced by the City's valley setting, Skykomish River, logging activities, and the railroad and highways that pass through the area. Prior to the arrival of pioneers, the area where Monroe now exists was home to the Snohomish and Snoqualmie tribes. The earliest settlers began arriving in 1860, with Henry McClurg, among the first, claiming land where the Skykomish and Snoqualmie rivers met to form the Snohomish River.

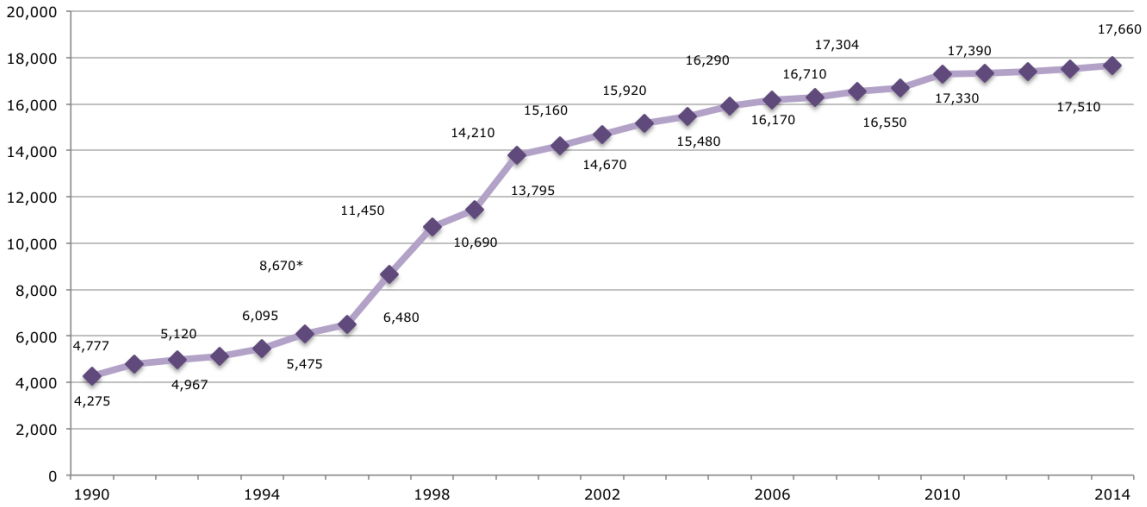

Figure 3.02 - Monroe experienced little growth until the 1990s, when it grew from approximately 4,300 persons to 14,000 by 2000. *(Source: WA Office of Financial Management, 2013. Note: population count includes prison inmates, added in 1996)*

In 1864, McClurg moved inland, creating the settlement of Park Place near today's 179th Avenue and Main Street. A later petition for a post office there revealed a requirement that post offices must have one word names, and McClurg was given the honor of choosing it. Thus, the settlement of Park Place was re-named "Monroe" in honor of James Monroe, the nation's fifth president.

When the Great Northern Railway completed its track survey through the area in 1891, Monroe was too distant from the line to suit store owner John Vanasdlen, who moved his operations - including the post office - to downtown's present location. [1]

Early development in Monroe featured commercial areas near the railroad at Main Street and Lewis Street (SR 203). The city's first schools, churches, governmental facilities and homes were located in or near downtown. The first bridge was built at the south end of Lewis Street in 1894, and citizens voted to incorporate as a City in 1902.

In 1910, the Washington State Reformatory Unit (now known as the Monroe Correctional Complex) began operations just outside the city. Though established in 1903, Monroe's Evergreen State Fair found its present home along US 2 in 1946. From the early to mid-1900s, residential growth occurred mainly to the west of Lewis Street, both north and south of Main Street.

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Waves of residential growth began taking place along 179th, 154th, and along Robinhood Lane to the north in the 1960s, but the real boom occurred between 1990 and 2000. Whereas the resident population had been just 4,300 persons in 1990, the city grew to nearly 14,000 people by 2000 (see Figure 3.02). This was due primarily to annexation and strong growth in residential construction. The City annexed approximately 1,246 acres between 1993 and 2008; an additional 121 acres were annexed by 2011.

Another factor in the growth numbers is related to the inmate population at the Monroe Correctional Complex being included in population numbers, beginning in 1996.[2] In 2011, the estimated population of the Monroe UGA was 18,806.[3]

Development Patterns

Given its history, Monroe's development patterns are strongly influenced by at least five major factors, including:

1 Both store and post office were moved using skids and teams of oxen and horses. ("Park Place Exodus", Monroe Historical Society & Museum website, 2015.)

2 The total 2012 Monroe population includes approximately 2,500 inmates.

3 Snohomish County Demographic Trends & Initial Growth Targets 2014; Countywide Planning Policies 2013

- *Rivers - The Skykomish, Snohomish and Snoqualmie rivers and associated floodplains established locations for early settlement, and dictated future transportation routes. Today, wide floodplains define Monroe's southern edge, and provide residents with significant greenspace*
- *Farmlands - Monroe's initial economy relied heavily on agriculture, including dairy, berry and lettuce farming. Beyond the influence of waterways and geographic features, lot patterns and roadways outside the historic core reflect original farm platting*
- *Railroads - The arrival of the Great Northern Railway in 1893 set in motion the city's growth as an export stop for timber and agricultural products. The city's original center - then "Park Place" near the present middle school - was moved to greet the arrival of the new rail line. Though growth north of the tracks was quite limited for most of the city's history, the railway effectively divides the bulk of development today*
- *Highways - US 2 and SR 522 have arguably played the strongest role in Monroe's fortunes, most recently supporting the city's highway commercial district along US 2, and in the case of SR 522, driving the city's emergence as an affordable "bedroom community" outside the Seattle metro area* [4]
- *Northern ridge - This geographic feature worked to slow northward expansion though urban growth has today moved above the hillside.*

Resulting development patterns may be summarized as:

- *Traditional grid patterns in the city's historic core, along Main and Lewis Streets*
- *Lower-density, disconnected infill between North Kelsey and SR 522*

Figure 3.03 - A local economic development group, the "Commercial Club", recruited the Carnation milk condensery using donated land. It was an economic mainstay in Monroe from 1908 to the day it was destroyed by fire in 1944. *(Image source: Studio Cascade, Inc.)*

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- *Mixed-density, auto-oriented residential patterns north of US 2 and west of SR 522*
- *Highway commercial / retail growth along US 2*
- *Minimal development along shorelines and abutting wetlands, although the Fryelands were created from high water-table farmland, with Lake Tye built for stormwater control.*

The City of Monroe continues to evolve from rural town to a regional service and employment hub for smaller communities within a short radius from the city along SR 522, SR 203 and US 2. Monroe is home to institutions and events of regional, county, and statewide significance, and provides goods and services for the residential communities throughout East Snohomish County.

4 Historically, SR 203 (Lewis Street) provided the city's first route to Duvall and other communities south of Monroe. The first bridge along this route was constructed in 1894, with updates made in 1905 and replacement made in 1915. The current Lewis Street bridge was constructed in 1957.

Table 3.01 - *Existing Land Use Type, 2012*

Category	Acres *(Approx.)*	% of Total
Single Family Residential	1,854	46.96%
Multi-family Residential	122	3.09%
Mixed Use	175	4.44%
Commercial	281	7.12%
Industrial	193	4.88%
Open space, parks, water, and institutional	1,323	33.51%
Total	**3,948**	**100.00%**

Source: Snohomish County Buildable Lands Dataset, 2012

Planning History

The City of Monroe completed its first comprehensive plan in 1980. The plan was updated in the late 1980s to reflect planned urbanization in West Monroe. This led to the adoption of the Currie Road Sub-Area Plan in 1990, which paved the way for development of the Fryelands (a neighborhood of single-family homes, a community park and trail system, and public schools).

In 1999, the Comprehensive Plan was again updated, and included the North Area Community Plan, which incorporated growth and future development projections for the northern Monroe urban service area. In 2003, the North Kelsey Sub-Area Plan was incorporated into the Comprehensive Plan. More recently, the North Kelsey Sub-Area Plan was revised due to economic conditions.

A GMA mandated update of the Comprehensive Plan took place in 2005, although the plan has been amended on a yearly basis since then. In 2008, the City completed a Downtown Master Plan, which set in motion a number of initiatives, including some referenced in this plan's policy framework.

The land use alternative selected in the 2005 comprehensive plan sought to retain the "small-town feel" that characterized Monroe through most of its history. That alternative identified areas for higher density development and provided for the expansion of the Monroe UGA to the north and southwest. This expansion was approved by Snohomish County in 2005 and adopted by Monroe in 2006; this included an additional 251 acres, mainly to the north of the previous UGA.[5]

Environmental Conditions

Natural systems including water (lakes and rivers), soils, topography, plants, and animals play a strong role in determining land uses. To support GMA goals Monroe's land use policies ensure that the relationship between the built and natural environments is mutually supportive.

The policies contained in Chapter 2 reflect analysis associated with the City's critical areas regulations and the City's 2008 Shoreline Master Program (SMP). Summary information on critical areas and shorelines are contained in Chapter 9, Shorelines & Natural Environment.

Land Use Mix

Monroe's existing land use allocation (reference Table 3.01) is based on the Snohomish County Buildable Lands Report and is categorized by land use type. The table provides an estimated breakdown of existing uses by acres and percent of the total land. It also shows that Monroe is characterized by a predominance of single-family residential land uses, followed by educational, city-owned, and other institutional lands.

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Population & Employment Targets

Monroe's 2035 population and employment growth allocations were assigned through the cooperative planning process of Snohomish County Tomorrow[6] and are consistent with the Snohomish County countywide planning policies.

The allocation for population and employment are in Table 3.02 and Table 3.03. The allocation includes projections for the City limits and

5 City of Monroe 2005-2025 Comprehensive Plan, Land Use Element, amended in 2013

6 Snohomish County Tomorrow (SCT) is a cooperative and collaborative public inter-jurisdictional forum consisting of representatives from the county and nineteen of the cities as well as the Tulalip Tribes. SCT's primary function is to oversee the Countywide Planning Policies (CPP) which are written policies used solely for the purpose of establishing a countywide framework from which the county and cities' comprehensive plans are developed

Table 3.02 - *2035 Population Targets*

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

Source: 2035 Population Targets; Snohomish County

Table 3.03 - *2035 Employment Targets*

Area	Est. Emp. *(Baseline)*	Projected *(2035)*	Increase
Monroe City	7,662	11,456	3,794
Unincorporated UGA	117	325	208
Total UGA	**7,779**	**11,781**	**4,002**

Source: 2035 Employment Targets; Snohomish County

Table 3.04 - *Est. Population Targets & Capacity*

	Estimated Baseline Population	2035 Population Target	2035 Population Capacity	Capacity Surplus or (-Deficiency)
Monroe City Limits	17,351	22,102	21,360	-742
Monroe UGA	1,455	3,017	3,509	492
Total	**18,806**	**25,119**	**24,869**	**-250**

Source: 2035 Regional Growth Strategy using Final Draft BLR Population Capacity

Table 3.05 - *Est. Employment Targets & Capacity*

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	Estimated Baseline Employment	2035 Employment Target	2035 Employment Capacity	Capacity Surplus or (-Deficiency)
Monroe City Limits	7,662	11,456	12,316	860
Monroe UGA	117	325	642	317
Total	**7,779**	**11,781**	**12,958**	**1,177**

Source: 2035 Regional Growth Strategy using Final Draft BLR Population Capacity

Monroe's UGA. The projections have been evaluated with the City's long range vision and goals, levels of infrastructure investment, market conditions, and other factors. The City of Monroe expects to be able to accommodate its growth projections over the 20-year planning period as described in this comprehensive plan.

Buildable Land

Residential

Based on the County's 2012 Buildable Lands Report and the Puget Sound Regional Council (PSRC) growth strategy from 2013, the City of Monroe and its unincorporated UGA have a total population capacity of 24,869 (reference Table 3.04). The City has a population projection of 25,119 through 2035. Therefore, insufficient capacity exists to meet the 2035 population projection unless plan changes are made. In order to accommodate the additional population growth, this plan proposes increases to residential densities as described in this chapter.

Commercial & Industrial

Based on Snohomish County's 2012 Buildable Lands Report, the City of Monroe and its unincorporated UGA have an employment capacity for 12,958 jobs (reference Table 3.05). The City has an employment projection of 11,781 jobs through 2035. Therefore, sufficient capacity exists to meet the City's employment projection over the 20-year planning period (to 2035).

Objectives

This Comprehensive Plan proposes no significant change in the community's land use designations from the prior Plan update. However, it changes the way land use designations are managed and grouped in order to optimize development of land.

These changes are intended to accommodate forecast population (Table 3.02) and employment (Table 3.03). This plan's policy framework encourages increased mixing of residential and commercial uses, emphasizes the importance of neighborhood activity centers, stimulates investment activity in business development, and enhances opportunities for access to the Skykomish River greenway.

The Plan Concept Map, presented in Chapter 2, provides a strategic overview of plan's broad land use objectives and intended development patterns by area. The Plan Concept Map does not supplant land use policy expressed in the Future Land Use Map.

Envisioned land use patterns are also designed to help Monroe implement six key economic development strategies. These strategies are discussed in more detail in the Economic Development chapter (reference Chapter 6), but are summarized here to put the land use concept in context.

1) *Develop a Thriving Downtown with Vibrant Main Street Character - As people and businesses become increasingly mobile, quality of place is a critical piece of economic development, and a thriving downtown is key to that objective.*
2) *A Great Place to Start and Grow a Business - This focus recognizes that job and business growth leads to enhanced quality of life, higher household incomes, and more stable local government through additional property, sales, and other tax receipts.*
3) *Outdoor and Adventure Destination - This strategy builds on existing resources and opportunities to help Monroe attract residents and visitors interested in outdoor adventure sports, such as wakeboarding, skiing, river rafting, hunting or hiking.*
4) *Continued Growth and Development - This strategy notes that limited opportunities to expand outward mean Monroe needs to make the most efficient and effective use of the land within the city's boundary.*
5) *Complete Regional Retail Center - This strategy seeks to enhance Monroe's retail center on US 2, already an important generator of public revenues, jobs, and serving as one of the City's most recognized features.*
6) *Walkable, Accessible, and Interconnected Community - Employees and residents are increasingly attracted to communities with walkable neighborhoods where amenities are within easy reach; in concert with strategies #1 and #4, this aims to improve Monroe's overall walkability.*

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This chapter ensures that the community's development protects the functions and values of the wetlands, sensitive habitats, floodplains, aquifer recharge areas and steep slopes. The City of Monroe has a critical areas ordinance and a shoreline master program in place. Policies in Chapter 2 acknowledge the importance that natural systems have in maintaining a livable community.

Future Land Use

The Future Land Use Map (FLUM, Figure 3.05) presents this plan's land use policy and is a guide for decisions on land use. It presents a land use pattern and identifies uses and densities to implement the community's long-range goals. Development regulations (e.g. zoning) must be consistent with the FLUM.

The FLUM is intended to satisfy the needs of an increasing population and employment base providing for a range of residential, commercial, and industrial land to meet anticipated demand. Table 3.06 describes the estimated land availability (in acres) for residential, commercial, and industrial land. The land availability data informed decisions regarding the type, location and character of residential, commercial, and

Table 3.06 - *Est. Housing, Commercial & Industrial Land (available acres, UGA)*

	Pending	Vacant	Partially Used	Redevelopable	Total
Low Density SFR	4.75	28.00	106.66	105.15	244.55
Medium Density SFR	1.81	21.18	63.23	17.11	103.33
High Density SFR	6.67	2.68	13.22	4.46	27.03
Multifamily	0.09	13.23	0.13	7.41	20.86
Commercial	45.79	10.40	5.99	22.12	84.29
Downtown Commercial	0.55	0.41		11.61	12.57
Mixed Use	0	2.72	10.95	41.30	54.97
Tourist Commercial	0	0.00	1.68	12.47	14.14
Industrial	0.75	10.29	1.72	13.83	26.58
Limited Open Space	0.00	11.56	0.00	0.00	11.56
Total	**60.41**	**100.47**	**203.58**	**235.45**	**599.90**

Source: 2012 Snohomish County Buildable Lands Report

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industrial land use designations included in this plan.

Land Use Designations

Many of Monroe's individual land use designations remain unchanged in this plan update. Limiting significant changes provide land use certainty for neighborhoods and property owners. There are changes that simplify the arrangement of plan map designations, drawing a closer relationship between land use designations and zoning districts, and using "gross density" rather than "net density" to describe expected residential development intensity.

Descriptions and expectations for each of the FLUM categories are provided in Table 3.07 below.

Table 3.07 - *Land Use Designations*

Designation	Description
Low Density SFR	The Low Density Single-Family Residential designation will develop at an approximate gross density of three to five units per acre. This is a gross density, applying this density to every acre within the designation regardless of physical constraint. By using a gross density – and not one tied specifically to a particular lot size – developers can explore clustering or other creative design approaches when their sites include constraints imposed by critical areas, easements or rights of way. In cases where land is relatively free of constraint, single-family subdivisions in this designation may have individual lots ranging from about 9,000 square feet to 14,500 square feet. In highly constrained areas individual lots may be smaller. The Low Density SFR designation allows for parks. The Low Density SFR designation allows for neighborhood scale retail and commercial developments along arterials.
Medium Density SFR	The Medium Density Single-Family Residential designation is based on gross density. Unlike the Low-Density SFR designation, these areas can develop at a higher intensity, ranging from approximately five to seven units per acre. Where sites are unconstrained, this can result in individual lot sizes of about 6,000 square feet to 9,000 square feet. The Medium Density SFR designation would allow for parks.
High Density SFR	The High Density Single-Family Residential designation is intended to facilitate redevelopment and transformation in the area generally east of SR 522, south of US 2, north of Main Street, and west of the King Street alignment. Development intensity is set at one unit for every 3,000 square feet of lot area, permitting higher-density housing types, including attached housing like town-homes, on parcels larger than 6,000 square feet in area. This helps to maintain consistency of housing types on infill lots within already subdivided neighborhoods while also allowing the introduction of more compact housing forms on larger sites. This approach is consistent with the intent of the City's existing infill development standards, but the guidance in this plan is to amend those development standards to more closely implement plan policy and to be easier to use, overall. The High Density SFR designation allows for parks.
Multifamily	This designation shall provide for multiple-family residential developments at a range of densities between 12 and 25 dwelling units per acre where the full range of public facilities and services to support urban development exist. Generally, this designation is appropriate for land that is located convenient to principal arterials and to business and commercial activity centers. This designation is intended for areas of infill housing such as the Downtown and the western area of the West Main Street corridor as well as for senior housing developments and other special housing groups.
Downtown Commercial	This designation shall comprise retail and service businesses that cater primarily to pedestrian traffic, including retail shops, personal services, entertainment or restaurants and bars, mixed use and residential uses. Downtown commercial users typically do not include (or cater to) automobile-dependent uses. Mixed-uses can occur within a single building or as multiple structures on the same property. In general, residential uses will be above or behind the primary commercial uses.
Tourist Commercial	The Tourist Commercial designation anticipates a new generation of planning and development in the vicinity of the airport and County Fairgrounds. It welcomes visitor accommodations, entertainment, events, and ancillary commercial development, yet it still may permit business park or related development that may eventually replace the airport. This part of Monroe is geared to serve those who visit, with direct access to a range of transportation infrastructure and unique regional facilities.
General Commercial	This designation comprises most retail, dining, entertainment and similar businesses that are conducted primarily indoors. Commercial uses generally provide services or entertainment to consumers for household use or for business services. Such uses may include, but are not limited to, eating and drinking places, lodging, finance, real estate and insurance, and personal services. Commercial uses may also involve outdoor display and/or storage of merchandise and tend to generate noise as a part of their operations. Such uses include but are not limited to shopping centers, large retailers, grocery stores, retail sales, food and drink establishments, auto, boat and recreational vehicle sales, automobile repair, and equipment rental, and other related uses. Uses within the Commercial designation may also include personal and professional service businesses that commonly locate in office buildings, such as banks, medical and dental clinics, accounting, law, real estate, insurance, travel agencies and similar businesses.

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Table 3.07 - *Land Use Designations*

Designation	Description
Mixed-Use	Mixed-Use areas should be concentrated in areas of the city characterized by a diverse fine-grained mix of land uses; where there is the ability to develop land efficiently through the consolidation and infill of under-utilized parcels; and where infrastructure, transit and other public services / facilities are available or where the city or proponent can provide public services. Mixed-use areas encourage office, retail, and light-industrial uses; compatible high-technology manufacturing; institutional and educational facilities; public and private parks and other public gathering places; entertainment and cultural uses; and attached residential units up to 25 dwelling units per acre integrated throughout the district, within the same property, or inside a single building. Design standards will increase compatibility among the mixed-uses on both the site and structures. Standards to integrate development may include but not be limited to coordinated building design, signage, landscaping, and access configuration. The city will implement this designation by more than one zoning classification. Individual development proposals will take into account the density of adjacent existing development and the capacities of existing and planned public facilities.
Industrial	This designation comprises both light and general industrial uses and may include small-scale ancillary commercial uses. Light industrial includes non-polluting manufacturing and processing, wholesaling, warehousing and distribution and other similar activities, which tend to require large buildings and to generate more large-truck traffic than other types of land uses. General industrial comprises more intensive manufacturing and processing operations than those in light industrial zones. However, all heavy industrial uses (as well as light industrial uses) must meet the performance standards in the zoning ordinance to prevent undue adverse impacts from noise, smoke, dust, glare and other bulk controls.
Institutional	This designation shall include county, state, or federally-owned and operated facilities located within city limits or the urban growth area. These include the Washington State Reformatory, Public Library, and the Evergreen State Fairgrounds, all of which are regional uses, as well as large sites dedicated to school or municipal use.
Parks	This designation shall include public neighborhood, community and regional parks, recreational facilities, and undisturbed natural open space preserved through acquisition by the city or other public entity, transfer of development rights, dedication or other mechanism. Potential sites for parks, recreation facilities and dedicated open space shall be denoted on the plan map to indicate that use is appropriate, but the exact location may not yet be determined. Private parks which may be open to the public but not dedicated to the City are not included in this designation.
Limited Open Space	This designation shall provide for residential uses at a maximum density of one dwelling unit per five acres. Land in this category is appropriate for very low-intensity development because it may lack availability of public services and be impacted by critical areas. Limited Open Space areas can be suitable for buffers between development types or as a low-intensity land use along the edge of the urban growth area. Limited open space areas can also provide for enhanced recreational facilities and linkages to existing or proposed trails and open space systems.
Shoreline Industrial	This designation applies only to the property hosting the existing and continuing Cadman gravel operation. It permits the processing of rock, a land use that was once only appurtenant to the operation's gravel mining that was happening on site. This land use designation acknowledges the continuation of the processing operations, even as the mining portion of the operation phases into reclamation.
Transportation	The transportation designation is applied to large landholdings dedicated to regional transportation purposes. This includes the US 2 corridor, the SR 522 corridor, the railroad corridor and the land owned by WSDOT for the future US 2 bypass. It does not include City owned right-of-way.
East Monroe Study Area	This study area is applied to the portion of east Monroe north of US Highway 2 and at the foot of the bluffs, consisting of approximately 45 acres. This area is the subject of a series of comprehensive plan amendments and zone change requests, with the Growth Management Hearings Board (GMHB) now considering the adequacy of the City's environmental review for a commercial designation on the property. The East Monroe Study Area is not considered a designation and is in place only to indicated that the Limited Open Space land use designation may be reconsidered in light of the GMHB order and the City's response. That will allow this comp plan/EIS to proceed with the understanding that supplemental environmental study and an upcoming land use re-designation is in the works.

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Figure 3.04 - Inside the UGA, artifacts from Monroe's rural past are disappearing - but in many areas, street patterns and lot divisions still reflect the city's agricultural origins. *(Image source: Studio Cascade, Inc.)*

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Policy Overview

The land use related goals, policies, and actions contained in Chapter 2 address critical themes including:

- *Maintaining the scale and improving the vitality of Monroe's neighborhoods*
- *Making downtown a focal point of Monroe and improving its overall vitality*
- *Improving the City's functional relationship with the Evergreen State Fairgrounds*
- *Promoting growth and infill at the Fryelands light industrial areas*
- *Promoting the growth of healthcare-related activities surrounding Evergreen Health Monroe*
- *Keeping Monroe relatively compact, accommodating growth within existing UGA boundaries*
- *Promoting general access to the Skykomish river shoreline*
- *Improving connectivity throughout the community, making non-motorized access to day-to-day needs a viable option for all*
- *Preserving and enhancing Monroe's natural and open space areas.*

These policies guide the City in accommodating growth in a way that improves and preserves Monroe's strengths. Over time these will lead to more vital commercial centers, more walkable, compact land use patterns, and Monroe's increased recognition of its greenbelts and scenic resources.

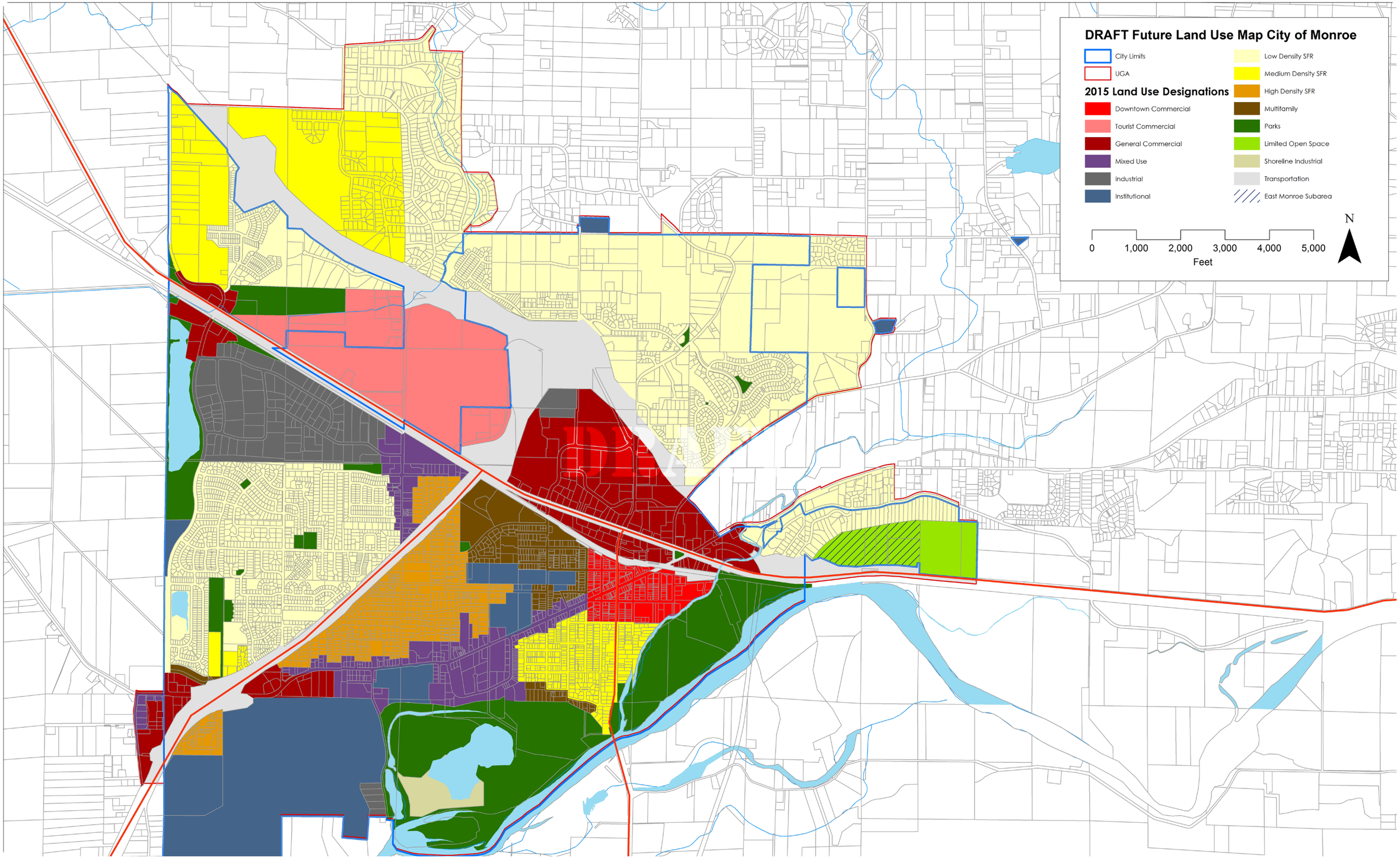

Figure 3.05 - Monroe's 2035 Future Land Use map (FLUM), indicating policy intent for categories and locations of land uses throughout the community and its UGA. *(Image source: City of Monroe, Studio Cascade, Inc.)*