

MONROE 2024 COMPREHENSIVE PLAN UPDATE: DRAFT EQUITABLE ENGAGEMENT PLAN – OCTOBER 2022

I. INTRODUCTION

Once every 10 years, the City of Monroe (City) has the opportunity to reassess its goals and priorities as part of the state mandated review and update process for the Monroe's twenty-year comprehensive plan. The last update process was completed in 2015. Since 2015, much has changed at the state, regional and local levels, including the city's adoption of the *Imagine Monroe* aspirational vision statement.

During the next 18 to 24 months, the residents of Monroe once again have the opportunity, as a community, to define who they want to be, where and how to focus growth, and how best to deliver the best municipal services and projects to the community with the resources available. Using *Imagine Monroe* as the guiding principle, the 2024 Comprehensive Plan Update (Update) will help refine the City's goals, policies and development regulations to protect the natural beauty surrounding Monroe, ensure residents, employers, and visitors have equitable and equal access to City services and facilities, to support business districts and a downtown that are thriving with locally-owned businesses and locally sourced products, to support a more robust variety of housing and employment choices, and to create and sustain Monroe as a safe place for all where everyone feels at home and everyone feels they belong.

At the center of the effort is an inclusive community engagement approach that intentionally solicits, listens to, and incorporates the thoughts, concerns, and hopes of the community. The results of this inclusive community engagement approach will inform the policies, priorities, and actions in the Update. These elements include, but are not necessarily limited to the location, intensity, diversity, and other characteristics of new and redevelopment; inclusive and equitable community engagement; actions to address and mitigate for climate change and to protect and enhance critical and natural resource areas; and balancing the public's responsibilities and priorities with individual's property rights and responsibilities.

The City of Monroe is committed to designing and implementing an intentional, inclusive community engagement approach to ensure that the Update is founded on robust and representative dialogue and responses from residents, employers, and other people with a genuine interest in or would be genuinely impacted by the project. The development of the Comprehensive Plan will require engagement across many different platforms. The approach is intended to be equitable in that the consultants and City personnel will identify deficiencies in the approach as its being implemented and, if necessary, adjust within the scope of work to better facilitate engagement. Where adjustments would be outside of the scope of work or budget or would impact schedule, discussions would occur between the consultants and City personnel. The goal is to ensure extensive awareness and the ability to participate in dialogue with and providing comment to City personnel or the consultant during the project and that no one is

limited or excluded because of any personal or societal characteristic (e.g., social norms, political philosophies, and economic conditions).

The **Equitable Engagement Plan (EEP)** outlines guiding principles grounded on the community values developed through *Imagine Monroe* (see Attachment A), key outreach strategies and methods, prioritizes audiences, communication tools and the proposed timeline for implementation with roles and responsibilities of City staff and the consultant team. The EEP is organized by the following topics:

- Approach
- Guiding Principles
- Key Audiences
- Phases of Engagement Activities
- Metrics of Success

II. APPROACH

The approach includes the following goals:

1. **Leverage Local Networks and Existing Community Engagement Efforts and Relationships.** Build on the variety and depth of existing community involvement initiatives in Monroe to engage the public effectively and efficiently in the Comprehensive Plan process. *Imagine Monroe* may provide insight into community priorities from a process that concluded less than a year ago. Contact existing community-based networks and to connect with a wider range of community members. This includes specifically leveraging the community connections, networks and trust that may have been established during the development of *Imagine Monroe* and through other city-led community engagement efforts.
2. **Create Opportunities for Inclusive and Equitable Participation with People.** Provide multiple and varied opportunities for a broad range of community residents, businesses owners and employers, and people and organizations with an interest in Monroe to share meaningful input. This engagement will focus on neighborhoods and local businesses throughout Monroe. Methods will be designed to specifically engage people and communities with lived experiences who have not typically participated in planning efforts.
3. **Build Long-Term Capacity for Public Engagement around Growth, Development and Community Design.** Build relationships with residents, employers and business owners, and service providers in Monroe, and support people who are engaged throughout the process and share their concerns and issues as well as solutions and strategies necessary to implement the Comprehensive Plan.

III. GUIDING PRINCIPLES

The Equitable Engagement Plan is based on the following guiding principles:

- **Authentic and Equitable.** One of the principles of this outreach effort is to start and continue authentic dialogue to inform the community and participants about the Update process and share planning research and data, and to establish a framework for future development and investments.
- **Inclusive and Flexible.** The Project Team will proactively and intentionally contact and engage with a diverse and representative of people and organizations interested in and/or potentially directly or indirectly affected by the Update across Monroe. The outreach process will accommodate engagement in a variety of settings, for both individuals and groups and will be tailored to ensure accessibility to people of all lived experiences to the greatest extent possible. Where accessibility would require work that is outside of the scope of work or budget or could impact schedule, the consultant will discuss alternatives with City staff.
- **Inclusive Community.** The Comprehensive Plan Update process will include a focus on social justice and equity. The consultant and City staff will take intentional actions to engage in dialogue with people with lived experiences that are under-represented in positions of leadership and management in the City of Monroe and in the Monroe community. The goal of the dialogue will be to establish relationships, share information about the city and the Update, ask for thoughts and comments regarding the Update, and listen and record responses. The Consultant Team will consider the results of the 2020 Census and other information, including recently completed outreach processes, in identifying which communities should be intentionally prioritized in the inclusive community involvement plan.
- **High-Touch and High-Tech.** Both in-person and remote engagement is critical to ensure all voices are heard and represented regardless of access to technology, income, or language proficiency. Outreach methods such as focus groups, interviews and pop-up events will allow the Project Team to interact with people in the Monroe community in a “high touch” fashion. Many of these same materials will be adapted to the digital environment to supplement a “high tech” aspect to the engagement through social media, online questionnaires, and websites. Spanish translation will ensure that the second largest demographic group in Monroe is represented and informed.
- **Clear, Focused, and Understandable.** Activities will have a clear purpose and use of the input will be plainly communicated. Language used will be easy to understand to ensure transparency.
- **Integrated Framework for Growth, Development and Community Design.** Our approach will focus on synthesizing the best of what is working in terms of growth policies, and creating new, and community-centered strategies for addressing Monroe's opportunities and priorities.

IV. KEY AUDIENCES

The Comprehensive Plan Update is an opportunity for Monroe to further build a network of increasingly diverse and engaged people. Community outreach will seek out and consider the perspectives and lived experiences of all people in Monroe. The key audiences, identified below, will be targeted through the appropriate engagement methods and recruitment will be led by city staff. The City and consultant will continue to add interested and/or impacted people or organizations to the list to ensure inclusive representation.

- Monroe Residents
 - Youth and students
 - Seniors and older residents
 - People with disabilities
 - Neighborhood associations (e.g., Foothills Homeowners Association, etc.)
- Employers and business owners, employees
 - Large employers and local businesses (e.g., Washington State Department of Corrections, Canyon Creek Cabinets, etc.)
 - Minority or Women Owned Businesses
 - Monroe Chamber of Commerce and business associations
- Civic Organizations
 - Monroe Boys and Girls Club, YMCA, Kiwanis Club of Monroe, Matthew House, Rotary of Monroe, Veterans of Foreign Wars (Post 7511), etc.
 - Monroe Gospel Women's Mission, St. Vincent de Paul of Snohomish County, Cascade Community Church, etc.
- Advocacy Groups
 - Transportation, public health, and environmental advocacy groups
 - Trail, park, and open space advocacy groups
 - Housing advocacy groups
- The Mayor and City Council
- City Departments
 - City Administrator's Office
 - Community Development
 - Economic Development
 - Emergency Management
 - Finance
 - Human Services
 - Parks & Recreation
 - Police
 - Public Works
- Partner Agencies
 - Snohomish County Fire District 7
 - County staff and departments
 - Transportation and utility providers (e.g., Community Transit, Snoqualmie Valley Transit, Snohomish PUD, PSE, etc.)

- Educational institutions (schools and higher education institutions)
 - Monroe School District
 - Snohomish School District (at least extend an invitation – properties along Roosevelt Rd are in their district)
 - Everett Community College (East County Campus)
- Tulalip and Snoqualmie Tribes

Local Community and Nonprofit Partners

Partnering with community-based organizations (CBOs) is an effective approach to engaging and collaborating with those that have not been part of prior planning processes.

- **Inform.** Meet one-on-one with the organization's leadership team to describe why the Update is important to Monroe and the community the organization serves. These discussions should also link the comprehensive plan goals and key policy decisions to the mission of the CBO.
- **Clear and Defined Plan.** The Project Team can prepare talking points for the CBO to clearly identify out the potential engagement activities and the roles and expectations of the organization and city staff to engaging and gathering comments. The roles of the organization and expectation for level of input should be mutually agreed on by the organization and City staff.
- **Compensate.** Recognizing that the organization's time and resources are limited, compensation, whether monetary or in-kind, could be offered. Additionally, incentives for community members could be considered in exchange for individual time and input. **[NOTE: there is not currently project budget allocated for compensation.]**
- **Communicate and Update.** Following direct participation, the CBO or person should be continually updated throughout the duration of the project.

V. PHASES OF ENGAGEMENT ACTIVITIES

A. Prepare

Review and Finalize Equitable Engagement Plan (EEP)

Working together with the city, the Project Team will finalize the Equitable Engagement Plan. The team will integrate local and expert knowledge to refine the EEP, ensuring that it is inclusive and equitable and deploys a range of creative strategies to reach diverse populations. The EEP will explore how the 2024 Comprehensive Plan Update can capitalize on opportunities to coordinate with other City and County planning and engagement. The final EEP will also confirm the threshold for providing translation and interpretation services to community members for whom English is not their primary language. It will also indicate how engagement will be recorded to determine who is being reached and which stakeholders may need additional effort to engage. MIG will revisit the EEP at each planning phase to add the required detail on specific events, dates, etc.

Background Review of Current and Recent Community Input Efforts

The MIG Team will conduct a high-level background review of the community input collected through *Imagine Monroe* s and other current and recent planning processes and initiatives. The goal of this review is to mine the existing outreach comments and results that may have been collected from recent engagement efforts for common priorities, issues, and opportunities. This synthesis of community data and priorities will be used to not only inform the overall Comprehensive Plan Update process but also the overall EEP. Building on the contact lists from these community input efforts, the MIG Team will also work with City staff to compile a stakeholder database, which will be updated throughout the process.

Calendar of Community Events

In collaboration with the City, the MIG Team will develop a “consolidated calendar” of key community events and planning activities to strategically leverage our efforts and ensure timely participation. This primary calendar will allow the Project Team to participate in and build on existing community events. Examples of community events include the farmer’s market, Monroe PRIDE, the Monroe Community Senior Center Spaghetti Dinner, and existing recreation and library events, to name a few. A table of potential community events from the 2022 year is included as Attachment B, assuming that the same events will be offered in 2023.

B. Inform

This first stage of community engagement is to explain to the public and key partners why the comprehensive plan is important and why this update should matter to community members. The project process, milestones, and expectations will be outlined and defined, bringing the public along for the duration of the update process.

Project Website

The Project Team will create a dedicated webpage linked to the city website for the Update. The website will be used as an outreach tool to connect online with target audiences throughout each phase of the process. The website will provide a broad spectrum of information on the planning process including a library for documents, a schedule of events and plan updates.

The website will include information about meetings for the project. It will be used as a public portal to access and complete online surveys. When documents are available to the public, MIG will provide the documents in PDF format and make them available on the website. Our in-house webmaster will be responsible for managing and updating the website, including PDF files made available for downloading.

Communications and Media Roll-Out

MIG will provide the City of Monroe prepared content related to the Comprehensive Plan for use on web portals and/or social media accounts. E-blasts, social media posts and website updates will coincide with key milestones and/or dates to educate, inform, and promote activities. To the extent possible, the content will be containing images, graphics, and otherwise be visual in nature. The City will be responsible for disseminating on social media. The outreach and media rollout will

draw on established communication channels (e.g., the project webpage, Facebook, Twitter, NextDoor, etc.) and key news outlets (e.g., La Raza, The Everett Herald and Tribune, etc.). While maintaining flexibility, the content updates will include:

- Project kickoff with a project description
- Promotion of pop-up events and workshops
- Promotion of online surveys
- Posting visualizations and plan development
- Posting of final reports/plan

Translation Services (on-going)

MIG will coordinate with the City to translate materials in Spanish. Meeting notices and written materials, as appropriate, will be translated into Spanish. The project website will use Google Translate or similar for website text. Meetings and workshops facilitated in English will offer translation services. In addition, executive summaries for all technical documents will be produced in English and Spanish.

Task 2.5 JOINT PC AND CC WORK SESSION

MIG will present the regulatory and equity audit and EEP at a joint Planning Commission and City Council work session. The project schedule and process will also be incorporated.

C. CONSULT, INVOLVE, AND COLLABORATE

MIG, with City staff, will consult and collaborate with the public to acknowledge concerns and aspirations, and document how public input has influenced the decisions and direction of the Update process. This will be completed in the following ways:

Task 3.2 Focus Groups/Individual Interviews

MIG and CAI will conduct up to ten individual meetings or focus groups to identify key issues and opportunities and determine ways to partner with and engage people in Monroe. Interviews and focus group participants will be determined with collaboration with City staff.

Task 3.3 Community Advisory Committee Meetings (on-going)

MIG will assist City staff in preparing for and facilitating a series of up to six Community Advisory Committee (CAC) meetings to provide guidance on the Update. The CAC will meet at key points in the project to provide feedback on work products such as the baseline analysis, Land Use and Circulations Alternatives, and Draft Comprehensive Plan. MIG will work with City staff at the outset of the project to determine the appropriate meeting topics and target dates for the CAC. A senior MIG staff person will facilitate and attend all meetings. MIG assumes that the CAC will include one to two members from the Planning Commission and City Council and a member from each advisory Board.

Task 3.4 Public Engagement Toolkit

Partnering with community leaders, CBOs, and other departments is central to successful public

engagement. MIG will develop an outreach toolkit to assist community partners and City staff to communicate project updates, solicit, and collect feedback. The staff and CBOs and other volunteers will be able to administer the toolkit activities in a variety of settings, such as regular meetings of community organizations or at a gathering of interested neighbors.

Using the Public Engagement Toolkit, the City will conduct a series of pop-up events to “meet people where they are” and engage them in leisurely settings or at events that they were going planning to attend. Traditional meetings and workshops often attract a regular and active group of residents to planning events. To attract a larger audience beyond the usual participants, pop-up events will be held in a popular area such as the Monroe library or community events that draw in the public.

The pop-ups will be visual, colorful, and allow for brief interactions so a person can participate on their own terms. The pop-ups will include information about the planning process, visualizations and the related graphics/imagery completed to date, and an interactive exhibit that solicits feedback from community members. When possible, the pop-up will include a method to collect demographic information to understand how representative the participation is. The MIG Team will look for opportunities to join established events (e.g., Community Egg Hunt, Earth Day Celebration, USA Birthday Bash & fireworks, etc.) with pop-up activities to reach a larger audience. Appendix A provides a preliminary list of potential venues for pop-up outreach and engagement.

Youth Activities

MIG will coordinate with the City to identify ways that it could work with the Monroe school district to create tailored events and classroom programs to allow youth and teachers the opportunity to engage in the project in a fun and informative way. Youth focused activities could include photo or drawing contests, team design competitions (usually tied with civics or architectural design classes), class presentations, and youth-led outreach events. Community events and workshops could also include a performance to encourage attendance and generate energy and excitement. For example, a high school or senior musical, choral, or dance group could be arranged to perform. Pop-ups using the meeting toolkit at sporting events may also be a good opportunity to engage youth and family audiences.

Multi-Generational Engagement

A multi-generation approach to engagement connect youth with aging adults in their community and/or their guardians is an effective way of engagement through non-traditional methods. MIG will prepare a questionnaire as part of the stakeholder interview task for teachers to distribute to middle or high school students to interview their parents or guardian with questions focused on current perceived or real barriers or issues to health, safety, equity, development, economic, and growth opportunities for the future direction of Monroe.

The public engagement toolkit will also include a facilitator’s guide that can be used to engage existing programs at the Monroe Community Senior Center, with the Historical Society, or with the Veterans of Foreign Wars group to host small group discussions.

Task 3.5.1 Community Kickoff and Scoping

The first interactive community workshop will focus on introducing the project and process, confirm the Imagine Monroe vision and values, present major trends, and discuss future urban form. This will also include discussions about neighborhood cohesiveness, economic development, housing affordability, smart development and growth, economic mobility, and redevelopment.

Required topic areas to be covered for SEPA will be identified, meeting the requirements for a SEPA scoping meeting.

After a brief presentation to introduce the project and answer questions, participants will be separated into small groups for a table-facilitated discussion to confirm the current vision for the future of Monroe and the most challenging issues people want to see the City address to achieve that vision. This includes a discussion on what likely conditions and events will drive how the community looks in the future—changes to the climate, natural resources, economic shifts—and how in turn the community can become more responsive.

MIG will also provide table maps for each group, on which participants can identify specific issues that are geographically based and/or preliminary ideas about where changes in land use may be appropriate. After the small group discussions, participants will reconvene in a large group to share reports back summarizing the vision and challenges each group identified.

Promotion Materials

MIG and the City will distribute mailers, post on the website and social media that provides information about the event. The mailer will be prepared for by MIG and distributed by the city.

Task 3.5.2 Community Priorities Workshop

Following the land use scenarios development and analysis, MIG, subconsultants, and the City Staff will plan, attend, and facilitate a workshop to review the alternatives with the community and work toward identification of a preferred scenario.

MIG will work with City staff to define the approach for the workshop but anticipate that they will include a presentation of the alternatives and the results of the analysis undertaken in the baseline analysis and equity audit. MIG will describe the relative benefits, trade-offs, and potential impacts of the alternatives.

Following the presentation, participants will break into small, facilitated groups with maps of each alternative. Each group will be asked to create its own preferred future land use and circulation scenario and report their findings back to the larger group. Participants will be encouraged to assemble components of the starting point alternatives in any combination they desire, plus add new ideas. As with other meeting as part of this process, meetings may be conducted in English or Spanish and, if appropriate, will offer simultaneous interpretation into the two languages, with outreach materials in multiple languages.

The interactive scenario workshop will illustrate how the guiding principles and values inform key plan recommendations. There will be focus on review and discussion of Areas of Stability and

Change, preliminary place types, street typologies, placemaking and how each relate to values articulated through the Imagine Monroe process and at the community kick-off meeting. This discussion will also include input on initial mapping of these concepts.

Promotion Materials

MIG and the City will distribute mailers, post on the website and social media that provides information about the event. The mailer will be prepared for by MIG and distributed by the city.

Task 3.5.3 Draft Future Land Use Map Open House

During this meeting, MIG will facilitate an open house to present and receive feedback on the Draft Future Land Use Map and land use designations with the community. MIG will work with City staff to define the approach for the open house, but MIG anticipates that it will include a presentation of a summary of public feedback to-date, an overview of the Draft Future Land Use Map, how the map accommodates projected population and employment growth. This feedback will help inform the final selection of a Preferred Scenario that will be used as the basis for the updated Comprehensive Plan.

Promotion Materials

MIG and the City will distribute mailers, post on the website and social media that provides information about the event. The mailer will be prepared for by MIG and distributed by the city.

Task 3.5.2 Community Priorities Workshop and 3.5.3 Draft Future Land Use Map Open House Online Surveys

As a complement to physical materials and face-to-face outreach, MIG will also use on-line tools to engage community members. These tools include online comment and discussion forum features with a variety of options, such as map-based and prioritization exercises that enable people to participate in the Comprehensive Plan Update process when it is convenient for them. The digital engagement strategy will include online surveys that provide opportunities to weigh in on priorities and land use and circulation concepts, as well as tools to assist in outreach and information gathering prior to, during, and following community workshops. These tools will connect the Monroe community in a professionally facilitated forum that builds public awareness of and trust in the Comprehensive Plan Update process, without constraints on the time, place, or method of public input.

Task 4.11 Planning Commission and City Council Meetings

MIG with the City, will jointly present at up to ten meetings to review and gather input from the Planning Commission and City Council. The following project milestones are where MIG anticipates meetings to take place.

- Following completion of the baseline analysis and draft EEP are completed
- Following the development of land use scenarios
- During the land use scenario analysis

- Following the land use scenario analysis and the community priorities workshop
- Before and after the Draft Land Use Map Open House and survey
- Following the development of the draft comprehensive plan elements and during the review
- Adoption of the draft comprehensive plan

D. EMPOWER

Task 3.5.4 Draft Comprehensive Plan Open House

MIG will facilitate and present the Draft Comprehensive Plan to the Monroe community. MIG will work with City staff to define the approach for the meeting but anticipate that it will include an Open House format where display boards summarizing the major themes and content of the Draft Comprehensive Plan will be shown during the open house and can travel to various community events.

MIG staff will be available to answer questions about the project and the draft Comprehensive Plan elements. This will provide an opportunity for members of the public to provide feedback on the draft elements, including the vision, goals, policies, and programs. MIG will prepare large boards or posters that describe each of the draft elements, highlighting new policy concepts and major changes from the existing Comprehensive Plan. MIG, in coordination with City staff and the Project Team, will be responsible for developing the content, printing materials, and facilitating the workshop.

For presentation of the boards at events that MIG is not attending, comment cards can be designed and printed for participants to provide real-time feedback.

VI. METRICS

The Community Engagement Plan will be evaluated based on the targeted objectives outlined below:

1. **Accessibility.** The process should serve multi-generational community members and those of diverse needs.
 - Engagement activities will be held in a variety of locations and formats to accommodate hard-to-reach groups such as youth, seniors, communities of color, low-income families, and people with disabilities.
 - Engagement activities will be scheduled at varying times to allow participation by people who have diverse work schedules.
 - Meetings will be held at ADA accessible venues that are served by public transit (as feasible).
2. **Extent.** Reach of the process to involve and inform as many members of the public as possible.

3. **Diversity.** Range of people that reflects the diversity of age groups, ethnicities, incomes, geographies, and special needs of the Monroe population.
 - Outreach efforts will be designed to reach community members that are reflective of the demographics of Monroe community members, specifically, with consideration of age, ethnicity, language, and income.
 - Outreach efforts will include a variety of groups and organizations that are representative of the community geography, interests, and constituencies.
4. **Impact.** Ability of the public outreach process to inform the decision-making process for the Comprehensive Plan.
 - Major themes and trends identified through the public engagement efforts will be presented to City staff, Planning Commission, and City Council for their consideration.



ATTACHMENT A: ENVISION MONROE

ATTACHMENT B: PRELIMINARY LIST OF POTENTIAL VENUES FOR OUTREACH AND ENGAGEMENT

The Project Team developed this preliminary list of community events and existing meetings to target for pop-up outreach and engagement. These recurring events allow the Project Team to establish rapport with community partners and to meet people where they are.

Event/Venue	Date	Promotions	Staffing Needs
Community Egg Hunt	April	Social media announcement / flyers / recreation guide	
Monroe Farmer's Market	May - August	Social media announcements / Choose Monroe	
Sky Valley Trout Unlimited Kid's Fishing Day	April	Website	
Historic Downtown Monroe First Thursdays		Mailers / Flyers	
Monroe PRIDE	June	Social media announcement / flyers / recreation guide	
Music in the Park	June- August	Social media announcement / flyers / recreation guide	
Movies Under the Moon	June- August	Social media announcement / flyers / recreation guide	
USA Birthday Bash & Fireworks	July	Social media announcement / flyers / recreation	



		guide	
--	--	-------	--