

# Town of Monroe

## Plan of Conservation and Development 2021 – 2031



Effective 5/7/21

# Acknowledgments

## Town of Monroe Planning and Zoning Commission

- Bill Porter, Former Chairman (in memoriam)
- Michael O'Reilly, Chairman
- Bruno Maini, Vice-Chairman
- Ryan Condon, Secretary
- Leon Ambrosey
- Robert Westlund
- Domenic J. Paniccia, Alternate
- Nicole Lupo, Alternate
- Ronald Schneider, Alternate

## POCD Advisory Committee Members

- Jonathan Formichella, Town Council
- Ray Giovanni, Economic Development Commission
- Tammy Julian, Past President Public School Parents' Council
- Barbara Thomas, Conservation Commission
- Ryan Driscoll, Conservation Commission Alternate

## Monroe First Selectman

- Kenneth M. Kellogg

## Town of Monroe Planning and Zoning Department

- Rick Schultz, Town Planner
- William Agresta, Planning and Zoning Administrator

## General Acknowledgments

Thank you to the many residents, property owners, business owners, Town staff, and other individuals who contributed to this effort via surveys, workshops, focus group meetings, and Planning and Zoning Commission meetings.

## Plan Produced By:











# Town of Monroe

## Plan of Conservation and Development

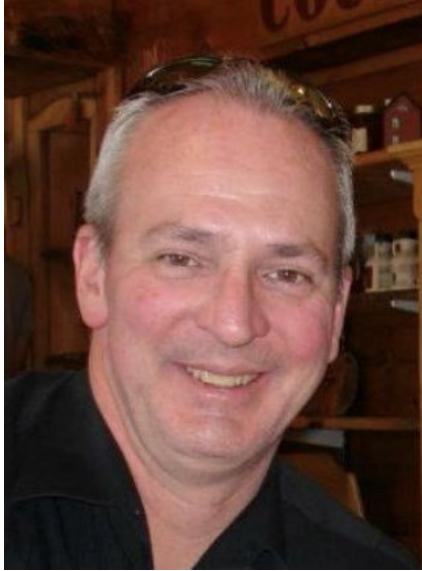
### 2021 – 2031

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## **In Memoriam**

### **Bill Porter, Former Planning & Zoning Commission Chairman**



Born on August 19, 1958, Bill grew up in Huntington, CT and attended Mohegan School, St. Lawrence, Shelton High School, and the University of New Haven. Throughout those years, Bill spent much of his time in Monroe at his grandparents' Pulaski Farm, as well as participating in the Police Explorers, volunteering as a charter member of the Monroe Volunteer EMS, and working at Grand Union. He made his home in Monroe with the love of his life and wife of 36 years, Mary Kuchma Porter. He most recently served the town he loved as Chairman of the Planning and Zoning Commission, always striving to demonstrate integrity and fairness in his role.

While raising his family, Bill was involved in his children's lives and the Monroe community through the Monroe Jaycees, school, church, scouting activities, and the small day-to-day moments that make a big difference when connecting with others. Bill was an active, respected, and well-known member of the American Society of Bayonet Collectors, fostering friendships around the world through this hobby. As a project manager with Kuchma Corporation of Bridgeport and in all of his relationships, Bill not only demonstrated, but also taught by example, the principles he learned early in his life as a Boy Scout (attaining the rank of Eagle Scout): he was trustworthy, loyal, helpful, friendly, courteous, kind, obedient, cheerful, thrifty, brave, clean, and reverent. Most importantly, he was loving and respectful to his wife and children.

This plan is dedicated to Bill as a tribute to his service and commitment to the community.



# 1.0 Introduction



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## About Monroe

Established in 1823, Monroe is a mid-sized Fairfield County town with approximately 19,800 residents. Monroe attracts residents for its excellent schools, natural beauty, quiet neighborhoods, access to goods and services, and proximity to major employment centers. Like many Connecticut towns, Monroe has multiple historic village centers spread out over its twenty-six square miles of area.

The Town is a member of MetroCOG, which is the regional planning organization for several surrounding towns and cities in the greater Bridgeport area. While located in Fairfield County, Monroe is proximate to both Litchfield and New Haven Counties. Reference to “region” in this plan may include surrounding towns, regardless of county or metropolitan planning organization membership.

## About the Plan

As a Plan of Conservation and Development (POCD), this Plan documents existing conditions relevant to the Town and provides a guide for its future; it provides a future vision that is based in the realities of the resources and constraints that are present in Monroe today.

The Plan establishes goals for Monroe’s physical form, economic and social health, and quality of life. Its vision and goals provide a foundation for policy and funding decisions and inform the Town’s zoning and municipal ordinances. The Plan also recommends strategies and actions necessary to achieve its goals and realize the vision.

This Plan was developed with extensive input from Town residents, businesses and stakeholders, elected officials, and Town staff. That outreach included multiple conversations with stakeholders via focus group meetings, a virtual public workshop and an online survey. In total, the Planning and Zoning Commission received input from over two-thousand stakeholders.

This plan meets Connecticut General Statutes which require that a municipal plan of conservation and development be updated every ten years. It is also consistent with both the State Plan of Conservation and Development and MetroCOG’s regional plan.

## How This Plan is Organized

This plan identifies a broad **vision** for Monroe to work towards. This vision is supported by five **goals** – one for each section of the Plan. The goal for each section is set forth at the end of that section, together with a set of **strategies** that provide guidance on how to achieve the goals. Specific **actions** (step by step methods of implementing strategies and achieving goals) are also provided in each section. Goals, strategies, and actions are consolidated in the implementation summary (Section 8).

### Vision

The vision describes what the people of Monroe value and what the Town will strive toward over the next ten years. The vision is an expression of the desires and aspirations of the community in a statement that is meant to guide Town leaders and frame the goals and strategies of this plan.

### Goals

Goals are commitments towards achieving the Plan’s vision. They are statements about what the community wants to achieve.

### Strategies

Strategies are the methods by which the goals will be achieved. They describe the interim outcomes that can lead to achieving the impact described in a particular goal.

### Actions

Actions are specific steps that can be taken to accomplish strategies. They are the first steps to be taken toward achieving the Plan’s vision.

## Consistency with the State Conservation and Development Policies Plan: Revised Draft 2018-2023

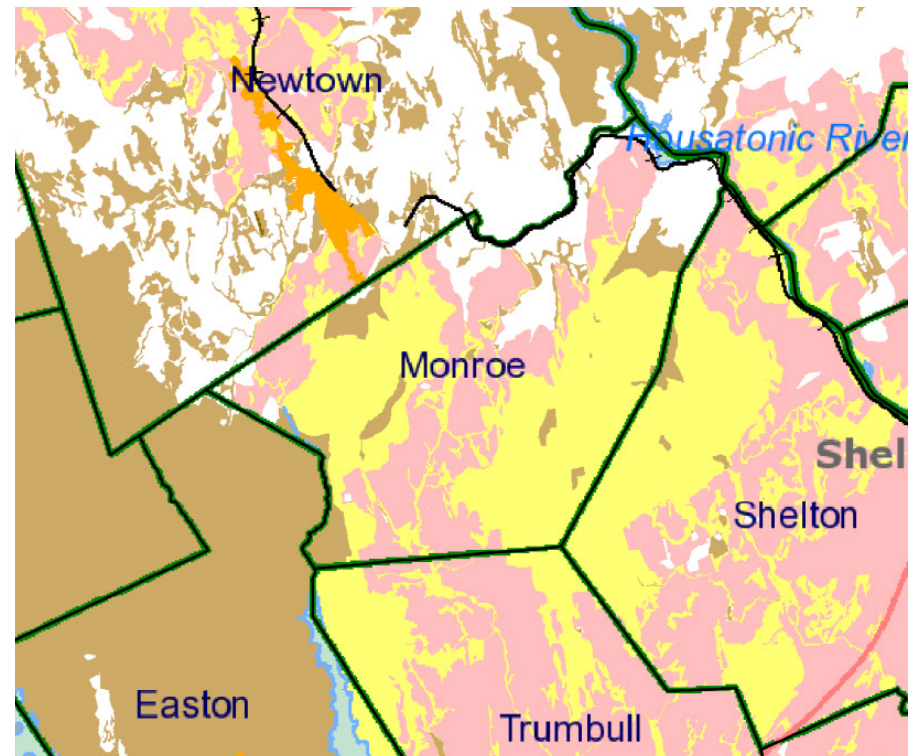
The recommendations of this plan were compared with the current State Conservation and Development Policies Plan (2018-2023 Revised Draft) for consistency. The 2018-2023 Plan provides a benchmark for municipal plans of development going forward.

The 2018-2023 Revised Draft Plan is organized around six growth-management principles. Municipalities must consider these principles as they update their plans of conservation and development:

1. Redevelop and revitalize regional centers and areas with existing or currently planned physical infrastructure.
2. Expand housing opportunities and design choices to accommodate a variety of household types and needs.
3. Concentrate development around transportation nodes and along major transportation corridors to support the viability of transportation options.
4. Conserve and restore the natural environment, cultural and historical resources, and traditional rural lands.
5. Protect and ensure the integrity of environmental assets critical to public health and safety.
6. Promote integrated planning across all levels of government to address issues on a statewide, regional and local basis.

The policies and strategies which comprise Monroe's 2021 Plan of Conservation and Development are complementary to the growth principles stated above.

The 2018-2023 Locational Guide Map (at right) identifies Priority Funding Areas, Balanced Priority Funding Areas, and Conservation Areas within Monroe. Funding areas are areas that are prioritized for State grants and investment. Most of Monroe is identified as a Balanced Priority Funding Area, which mostly corresponds to the Town's low density residential areas. Priority Funding Areas correspond to areas that are more densely developed and have better access to State highways and other infrastructure. A lesser share of Monroe is designated as Conservation Areas, which corresponds with designated open space in the Town. Areas shown in white are not a priority for funding or conservation.



*2018-2023 Conservation and Development Policies Plan for Connecticut Locational Guide Plan*

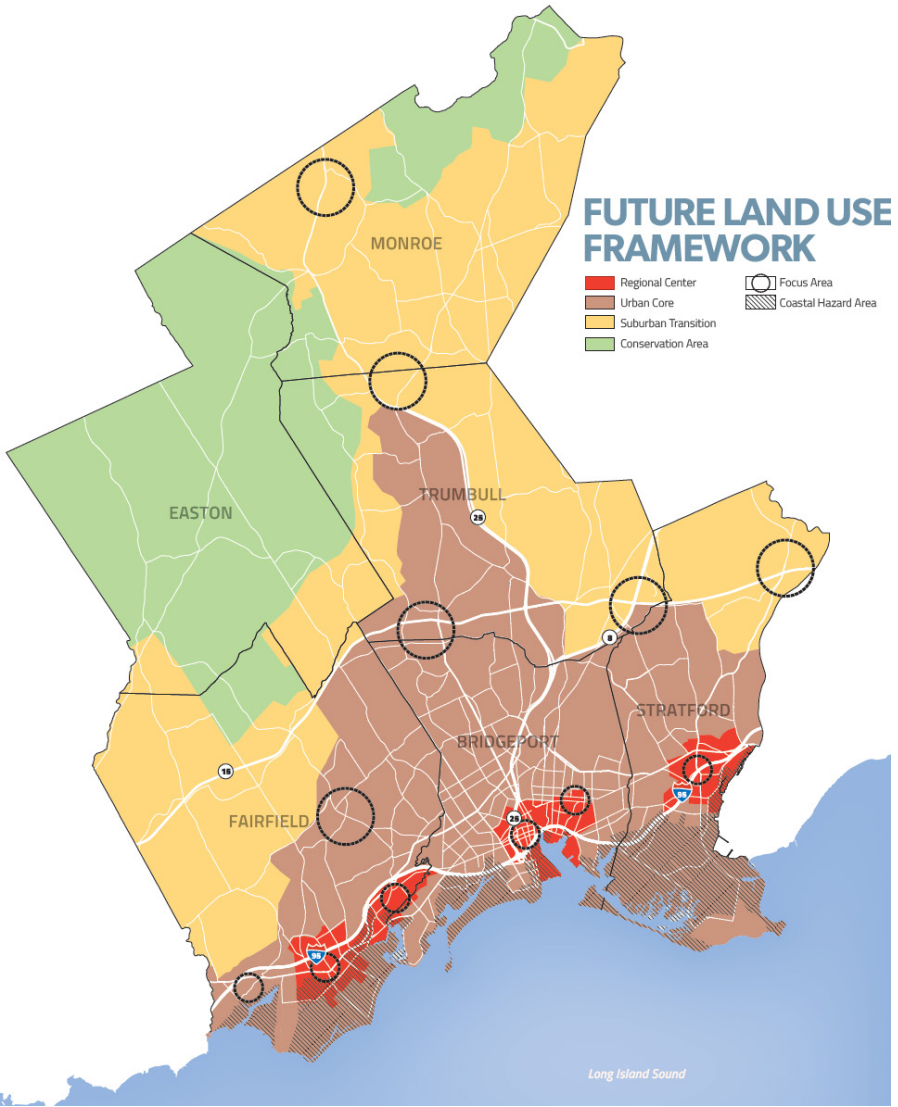




# MetroCOG 2020-2030 Regional Plan of Conservation and Development

Monroe is one of six municipalities in the MetroCOG region. MetroCOG is the regional planning for the area which also includes Easton, Trumbull, Fairfield, Bridgeport and Stratford. In 2015, MetroGOG adopted its 2020-2030 Regional Plan of Conservation and Development. The plan identifies three core principles: Reconnected, Revitalized, and Resilient. These principles represent a shared vision of the Region’s future and are intended to guide the Region’s municipalities in planning and land use decisions.

The 2021 Monroe POCD is consistent with the principles of the MetroCOG plan in that it seeks to improve connections within the Town and to the Region; revitalize its commercial districts and industrial properties; and by making resiliency a priority by advocating for increasing conservation, stewardship, and sustainable practices. Additionally, Monroe’s POCD recommendations, including its future land use map, are consistent with MetroCOG’s Future Land Use Framework (at right). The Framework identifies most of Monroe as Suburban Transition or Conservation Area with one area, the Pepper Street Industrial Area, identified as a focus area.



### RECONNECTED

A Reconnected METROCOG Region is a region where...

- Local governments, regional service providers, and the state government work together to solve common problems and investigate opportunities for shared services.
- Integrated networks of transportation, infrastructure, and public services provide a flexible response to evolving demands of a growing population.
- Public transit anchors new investments in mixed-use districts featuring housing, employment, commercial areas, and cultural amenities.
- A smarter road network minimizes congestion and travel times.
- Walking and biking are viable, safe, and attractive options for commuting, recreation, and everyday tasks.
- Access to bus, ferry, and commuter rail is easy and convenient and transitioning between these transit options is seamless.

### REVITALIZED

A Revitalized METROCOG Region is a region where...

- Downtowns and town centers act as cultural and economic hubs of the region, with new housing and employers supporting a growing number of businesses, retailers, and entertainment venues.
- Brownfields and vacant land provide fertile ground for the development of neighborhood centers, open space, and infill housing.
- A quality education system and investments in cutting-edge technology help produce a new generation of home-grown entrepreneurs.
- Quality neighborhoods retain existing families and welcome new families to refurbished homes and redeveloped lots.
- New industries are attracted to the Long Island Sound waterfront but the environmental integrity of the Sound is preserved and enhanced.

### RESILIENT

A Resilient METROCOG Region is a region where...

- Housing is concentrated in areas where residents can leverage existing investments in infrastructure, transportation, and established commercial districts.
- A strong and diverse employment base can adapt to shifts in the global economy.
- The unique, local sense of place of each community is preserved and promoted.
- Natural systems are integrated within new development, restored in established areas, and safeguarded in rural areas.
- The impacts of natural hazard events are minimized and short-lived.
- Local industries and construction are increasingly energy and resource efficient.
- An engaged and educated citizenry plays a critical role in implementing community-driven policies.

Future Land Use Framework of the MetroCOG 2020-2030 Regional Plan of Conservation and Development.

Key Principles of the MetroCOG 2020-2030 Regional POCD

## Monroe's Vision

Monroe's vision statement was developed in response to the community's feedback regarding their priorities for the Town and based upon discussion with the Town's Planning and Zoning Commission and Town staff. It is intended to be a brief, memorable statement that frames the Plan's recommendations. That vision is as follows:

**M**onroe is a residential community located in a rural environment that provides its residents with convenient access to the greater region. The Town values its future and takes actions necessary to provide high-quality education to its youth, create opportunities for future generations, and protect the environmental and historic character of the community. Monroe strives towards a vibrant economy that provides residents and visitors with access to goods, services, and employment opportunities. Growth and economic development are balanced with the protection of environmental resources and the Town's capacity to support growth. Monroe is a safe community that places a strong emphasis on providing quality services and well maintained infrastructure and facilities in a sustainable and fiscally responsible manner. Monroe's residents have a wide selection of housing choice that enables them to live in Town through various stages of life.

## Goals

The plan is organized around six goals that directly support the community's vision.

### Economic Development

Foster a vibrant economy that provides residents with access to goods, services, and employment opportunities while diversifying the Town's property tax base.

### Housing

Allow for a wide selection of housing choice that enables residents to live in Monroe through various stages of life and attracts new residents to the community.

### Facilities & Services

Provide high quality facilities and a high level of service to residents, property owners, business owners, and visitors in a fiscally responsible manner.

### Transportation & Infrastructure

Improve and expand transportation options to ensure greater connectivity within Town and to the region; maintain and improve infrastructure in an environmentally and fiscally responsible manner.

### Environmental Resources

Protect environmental resources, expand protection of open space, and conduct necessary measures to improve water quality in the Town's water bodies and courses.

### The Plan Update Process

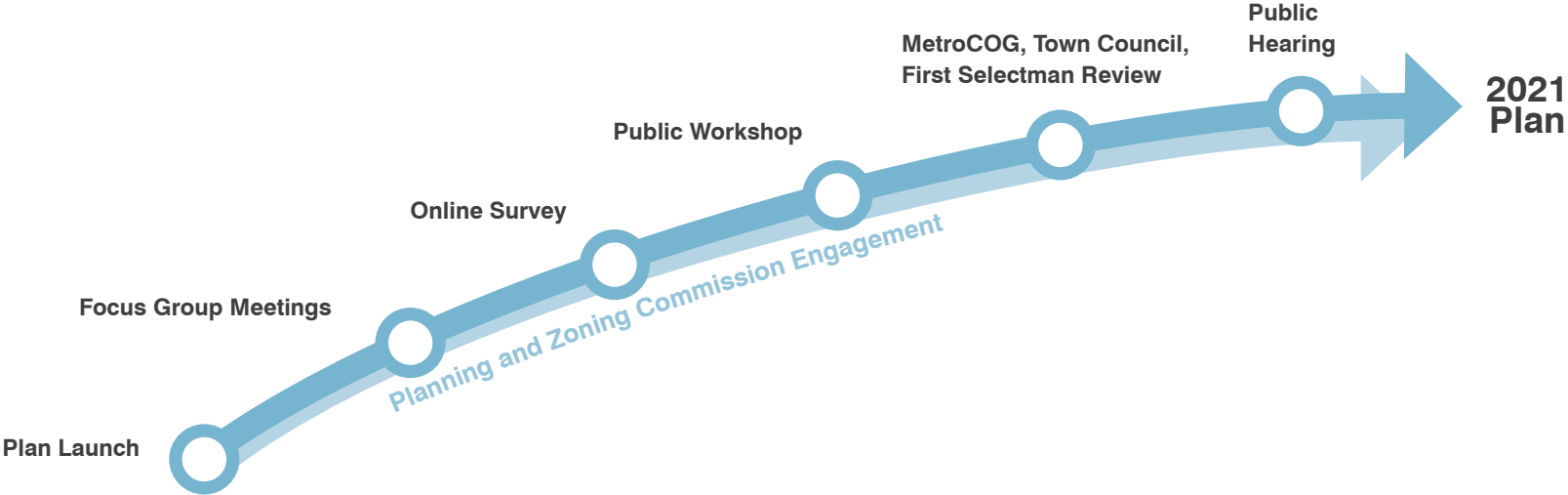
The Plan update process was initiated in 2019. The Planning and Zoning Commission established a POCD Committee, with broad representation from the community, to act as the steering committee for the project. The Planning Team was comprised of the Town Planner, Planning & Zoning Administrator, and staff members from Fitzgerald & Halliday Inc.

Community engagement was a central component of the Plan's update with the following engagement tools and strategies deployed:

- Planning and Zoning Commission: The Planning and Zoning Commission acted as the steering committee for the Plan update. The Commission met regularly with the planning team to discuss the planning process and review plan content.
- Focus Group Meetings: Seven focus group meetings were held with residents, property owners, business owners, board and commission members, and Town staff in February and March of 2020. The meetings were organized by topic.
- Online Survey: An online survey was conducted in August and September of 2020. Over two-thousand residents and stakeholders participated.
- Public Workshop: A public workshop was conducted in October of 2020. The workshop was conducted in an online virtual format due to meeting limitations surrounding COVID-19.
- MetroCOG, Town Council, and First Selectman's Review: February 2021
- Public Hearing: Adopted by the Planning & Zoning Commission on 4/28/21.



*Economic Development Focus Group Meeting  
Image Credit: Bill Bittar, The Monroe Sun*

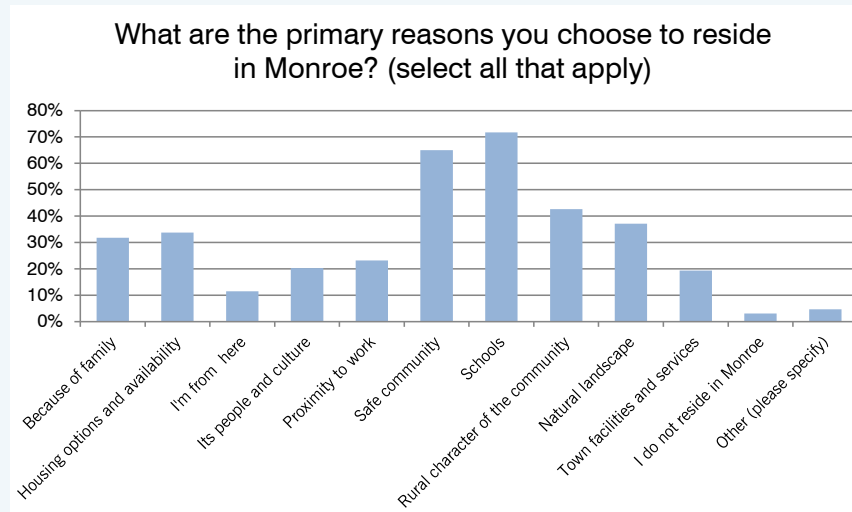


## Survey Response

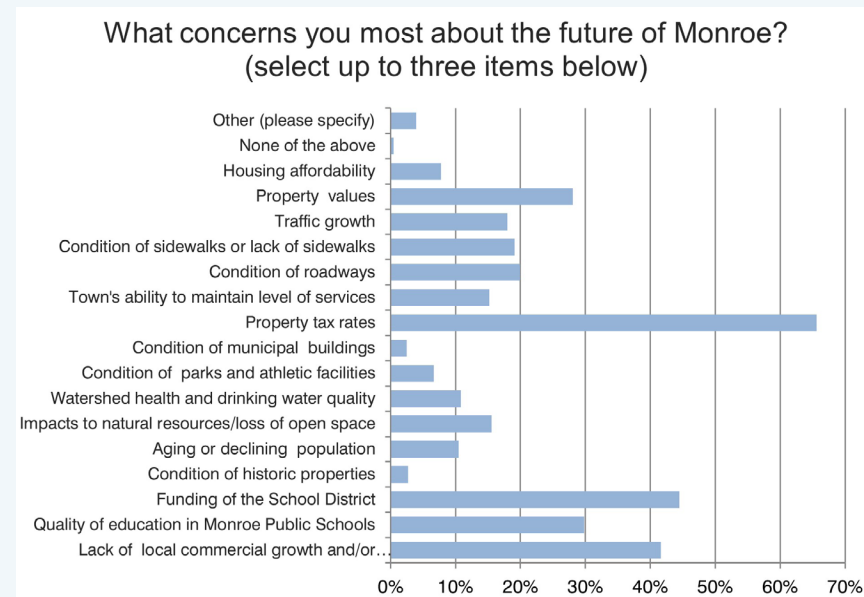
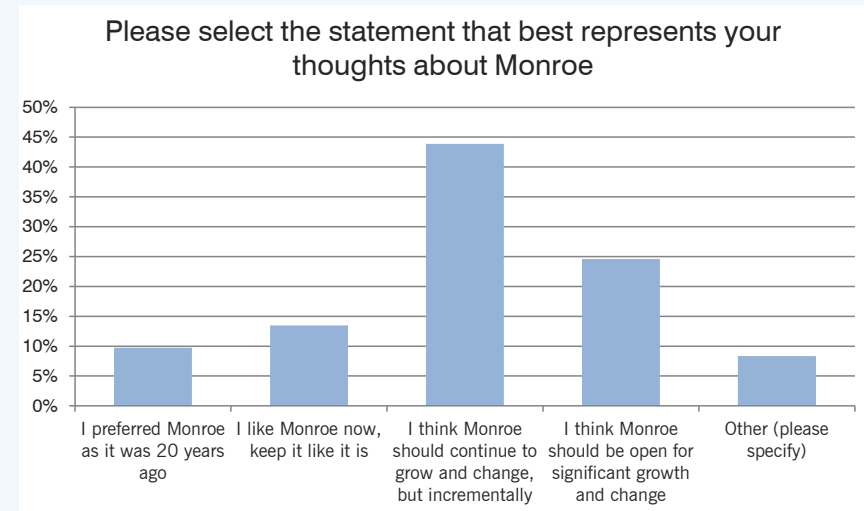
The Town conducted an online survey in the summer and fall of 2020 that had over two thousand responses. Respondents identified a range of priorities for the Plan and shared their concerns regarding the Town’s future. Ninety-six percent of respondents were Monroe residents with the remaining four percent of respondents having ties to the Town by way of property ownership, business ownership, or employment. Thirty-eight percent of respondents have lived in Monroe for more than twenty years.

Monroe’s schools, its perception as a safe community, and the rural character of the community were identified as the primary reasons that participants choose to reside in Monroe. Few respondents identified being from Monroe as the reason they choose to reside in Town.

When asked about their vision for growth and change in Monroe, most participants (44%) responded that “I think Monroe should continue to grow and change, but incrementally”. Approximately the same share of participants believe that the Town should be open to significant growth and change as the combined share of participants who preferred the way Monroe was twenty years ago or would like to keep the Town as it is now. These differing visions for Monroe are strongly correlated to the age of participants and their tenure in Monroe with younger residents that are newer to Town being more open to change and older residents who have resided in Monroe longer preferring to keep things as they are or closer to where the Town was years ago.



Participants identified property tax rates as their primary concern regarding the future of Monroe, followed by funding of the school district and lack of commercial growth.



## Public Workshop

A virtual public workshop was conducted on October 29, 2020. An online format was used so as to comply with public health guidance surrounding COVID-19. The three-hour workshop began with a presentation of the POCD purpose and planning process, online survey results, and demographic and socioeconomic trends in Monroe. This was followed by topic area discussions with participants specific to transportation and infrastructure, housing, economic development, and open space and environment. Key themes from those discussions is summarized below.

### *Transportation and Infrastructure*

- There is interest in providing on-road bicycle facilities and the POCD can provide recommendations although a dedicated bicycle planning process should be conducted.
- There is interest in better access to the Town's trails. While significant trail improvement projects are already underway, this could be studied further and recommendations made via a bicycle and pedestrian planning process.
- A more connected sidewalk network is needed, particularly along Route 25. Zoning regulations could be strengthened to require, rather than encourage, construction of sidewalks when a property is redeveloped along corridors such as Main Street and Monroe Turnpike.

### *Housing*

- There was acknowledgment that the real estate market currently favors multi-family dwellings for new housing construction. There is support for this type of housing in Monroe provided it is located in appropriate locations.
- Mixed-use development (housing over commercial) was discussed as a favorable development type and potentially appropriate for Monroe's commercial district.
- The Town should proactively plan for affordable housing so as to comply with the mandates of Connecticut General Statute §8-30g and reduce vulnerability to applications that would bypass the Town's zoning regulations.
- There has been a recent increase in demand for housing in Monroe, largely driven by New York residents migrating to Connecticut. Demand for condominium homes in particular has been high. It is unclear if this will be a continuing trend or a limited byproduct of the pandemic.

### *Economic Development*

- The Town is proactive in economic development and has an Economic Development Commission that works collaboratively with the First

Selectman, staff, and businesses. During the pandemic, a community and economic recovery coordinator role was created, and the First Selectman has proposed making such a role permanent.

- There is strong interest in redevelopment of the former Stevenson Lumber site, but also concerns about the nearby Halfway River. Any development on the site should be environmentally sensitive. Some have suggested a public use such as open space or a dog park, however, this parcel is in an ideal location for redevelopment for a commercial use. Soils are poor at the site which limits septic potential and consequently limits development type and intensity. There is currently an active proposal for redevelopment of the site although details have not yet been presented. The 2010 POCD recommended the creation of a village district for the site.
- The Industrial Park in the Pepper Street area and the active earthwork at one of the sites in the area was discussed. It was agreed that the industrial zoning of the area should be revisited and the POCD should provide guidance regarding potential additional uses, beyond industrial, that should be allowed in this area.
- The former Chalk Hill School site should be reused. It was acknowledged that the location on a school campus likely limits the redevelopment potential even for limited municipal use. A recreation use was discussed as most feasible. While the Town has been open to explore re-use of the existing facility, it has proven challenging to find acceptable uses to fully occupy and justify the high costs of operation and/or renovation.

### *Open Space and Environment Discussion*

- A more extensive trail system, connecting open space resources, is desired.
- It is challenging to recruit volunteers and participants in many Town boards and commissions such as the Conservation Commission, which would take a lead on the expansion and maintenance of a trail system.
- There is a desire for the Town's zoning regulations to be more consistent with the POCD particularly with respect to environmental goals and protection.
- A commitment towards renewable energy is desired and the Town should track progress made towards that commitment. Accountability across the plan and tracking of all of its goals and recommendations is desired.
- There is a desire for a dog park, similar to some surrounding communities. Town officials have discussed this in the past, and would like to explore the concept whereby the Town provides open space for a dog park to be operated by a non-profit.
- Tree planting should be focused on, particularly with respect to their potential for carbon capture.
- A community garden in Town would be beneficial.

## Focus Group Meetings

Five focus group meetings were conducted as a means of identifying the key issues from the perspective of residents, business owners, property owners, Town staff, elected officials, and board and commission members. These meetings were conducted in small group formats of twenty or fewer people and consisted of discussions about strengths, issues, and ideas relative to each topic.

Meetings were conducted on the following topics: environmental resources, historic resources, parks and recreation, conservation, town services, land use and zoning, and economic development. This section summarizes the input received during these focus group meetings.

### **Environmental Resources**

- There is concern about water quality of the Town's rivers, particularly the Pequonnock River
- Town parks and forests need forestry plans to guide their forest management
- Trails should be expanded to better connect residents to natural resources and foster stewardship

### **Historic Resources**

- Traffic calming is needed in the Monroe Center Historic District to improve the experience of walking in the District.

### **Parks and Recreation**

- The Town needs more athletic fields, usage is beyond capacity.
- The Parks Department would benefit from indoor programming and storage space.
- Additional facilities such as more bathrooms in parks, splash pads, playgrounds, a concert pavilion, and a dog park are desired.

### **Conservation**

- Open space preservation is a concern
- Additional work needs to be done to educate residents about conservation and environmental stewardship.
- Sustainability and green building technologies deserve more attention by the Town.
- Riparian improvements are needed along the Town's rivers
- There is potential for the development of a greenway system in town, as envisioned in the 2010 POCD.

## **Town Services**

### *Fire Department*

- A Fire Department needs study was conducted in 2017-18. The three volunteer fire companies continue to address and implement enhancements identified in that plan
- Recruiting has become more challenging over time.
- Access to water is challenging in many areas of the Town that are not served by hydrants.

### *Emergency Management*

- The Emergency Management Department would benefit from additional storage and training space for their Community Emergency Response Team volunteers.
- The Department has been active in pursuing grants for equipment and supplies.
- The Town has three designated emergency shelters. Two have limited capacity, the largest, Masuk High School, would be most appropriate for a high-capacity shelter but would benefit from an upgraded emergency generator.

### *Emergency Medical Services*

- The EMS facility operates out of a facility on Jockey Hollow Road and a significant renovation and expansion project is underway to fully meet the needs of this service.
- EMS has a challenge recruiting and maintaining volunteer levels. This is partially due to the condition of their headquarters, which will be resolved.

### *Police*

- The Police Department is heavily community service oriented, crime rates are low and so policing is focused on many other community related issues.
- Police are increasingly called upon to provide social services and fill the void left by the disappearance of State social service programs. The Department is not sure how it will be able to sustain the social and mental health intervention services that it provides if these needs continue to grow.
- The Department's animal control shelter should be studied to determine improvements and options, and to ensure compliance with State Department of Agriculture standards.
- The technology infrastructure/capabilities of the Police Station building (renovated in 2012) are already becoming limiting. The space has been maximized by the Department.
- The Department needs a carport for police cars. This was planned for the 2012 improvements but funding did not allow construction at that time.

## Focus Group Meetings

### *Land Use and Zoning*

- Routes 25 and 111 will continue to be heavily trafficked areas and will continue to be attractive for commercial development although additional development along these corridors could increase traffic. Development along these corridors is challenged by wastewater disposal needs, adjacent waterways and flood and riparian zones.
- Retail spaces have been shifting towards service-based business such as restaurants and salons which have more intensive water and wastewater needs.
- The lack of sewers is a limiting factor to growth in the Town.
- The Town needs solutions to incentivize reinvestment in commercial properties, as many would benefit from improvements. A façade program should be considered.
- The challenge is to preserve the Town's character and identity and have economic development that will allow the Town to sustain itself.
- Development is and will be market driven and the Town needs to be open minded regarding different uses along its corridors.
- The Town's school system is challenging to maintain. There is concern about development adding to the school population and creating a greater challenge.
- Given the wastewater constraints in Town and concerns of septic systems risk of failure, the Town should study potential connections to a sewer system.
- Housing demand is almost exclusively in the form of multi-family and mixed-use housing driven by young professionals, young families (typically with one child at most) and "empty nesters".
- The Town's zoning regulations may not be flexible enough to allow development that the market demands
- More walkable and bikeable commercial areas are needed.
- Mixed-use development needs multimodal connectivity to make those developments attractive and supportive of local businesses.
- The Town needs to adopt the approach of shared parking resources and parking once and walking to multiple destinations.
- Mixed-use development along Routes 25 and 111 should be considered.
- Multiple developers feel that the Town should allow multi-family development in commercial areas.
- The Town has not qualified for §8-30g moratorium and is subject to an 8-30g affordable housing application. The lack of sewers in Town has held off viable §8-30g applications.

- The Town has properties on Route 25 that are viable for development.
- The Town's industrial properties are underutilized. The challenge is to encourage reuse and turnover of those properties.
- The Town needs more flexibility in its zoning to allow for mixed-use development.
- The Town should focus development in areas where infrastructure is existing

### *Economic Development*

- Vacant sites and retail spaces need to be occupied or redeveloped
- The Town has too many different commercial zones, should consider consolidating zones.
- The zoning should allow for smaller lots and reduced setback requirements.
- The Town should be more proactive in recruiting businesses.
- The zoning map and districts should be redrawn to create development opportunities.
- The zoning along Routes 25 and 111 should allow for development that is responsive to market conditions including mixed-use and residential development.
- Mixed-use development should be considered, particularly those with no more than one-bedroom apartments.
- More senior housing should be considered and should be considered in commercial districts.
- The Town's retail environment is not diverse enough to provide a range of goods and services to residents.
- The zoning and subdivision regulations should allow for the conservation of large, consolidated areas of open space in exchange for more intensive development of lots.
- The Town should consider focusing on tourism and recreation.
- Culture and the arts are limited in Monroe, the Town would benefit from more performance venues.
- The Town would benefit from more recreational/educational venues, particularly those aimed at children and families.
- Business facades along Routes 25 and 111 need improvement.
- Agritourism could be an opportunity for Monroe
- The permitting process should be streamlined, and the process expedited from application to approval and from approval to certificate of occupancy.
- The Town needs more diversity in housing options to retain and attract young adults, particularly housing in walking distance of goods and services.

## Key Demographics and Trends

### Population

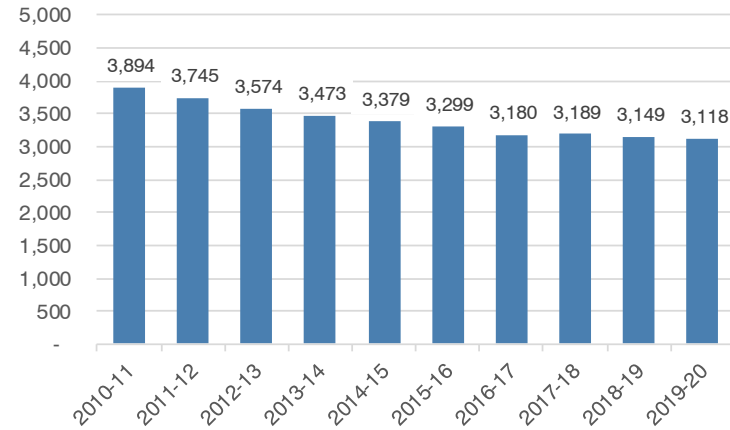
Monroe is a mid-size suburban town with a population of approximately 19,800 residents. Its population experienced significant growth in the 1970's, 80's, and 90's, but growth has since slowed, falling behind Fairfield County's growth rate. Population research available from the Connecticut Department of Economic and Community Development (CT DECD) projects a potential population decrease over the next two decades (*these projections are based upon 2010 estimates of existing demographic trends and are subject to change*). Population change is one of the most important factors facing Monroe as it plans for its future. The potential of a declining population is a call to action for the community to take measures necessary to stabilize population and provide housing that assists in retaining aging residents and attracting new residents.

Working counter to population trends and projections is recent population growth due to in-migration associated with new residents coming to Monroe and other Connecticut communities from the New York metropolitan area. This shift towards Connecticut's towns may stabilize population or result in population growth in communities such as Monroe.

Mirroring the population trends, Monroe's school enrollment steadily decreased between 2010 and 2019. Enrollment was 3,894 students during the 2010-11 school year but has since contracted to 3,118 students in the 2019-20 school year. Enrollment projections conducted for the school district suggest that enrollment will stabilize over the next decade (in a low-growth scenario) and could increase by as much as 12% (in a high-growth scenario).

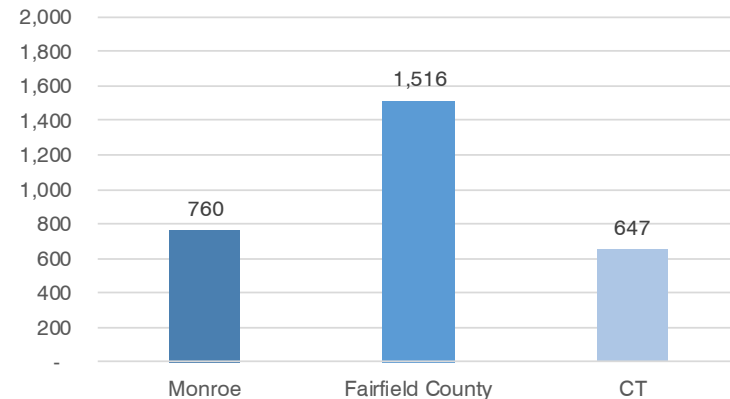
Monroe's population density (760 people per square mile) is half that of the Fairfield County average but is slightly higher than the State's (647 people per square mile). Population density steadily increased in Monroe between 1970 and 2000, but has since leveled off due to stagnation in population growth.

Monroe Public Schools K-12 Enrollment



Source: CT Department of Education

Population Density 2013-17  
(residents per square mile)



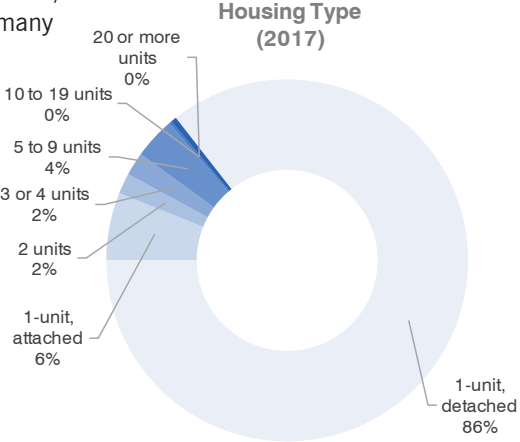
Source: US Census Bureau



**Housing**

Monroe has a range of housing types, although a majority (86%) of housing is single family (1-unit detached). The Town’s multifamily housing is mostly distributed in buildings and developments ranging from two units to nine units. Less than one percent of the Town’s housing stock is found in buildings with 10 or more units.

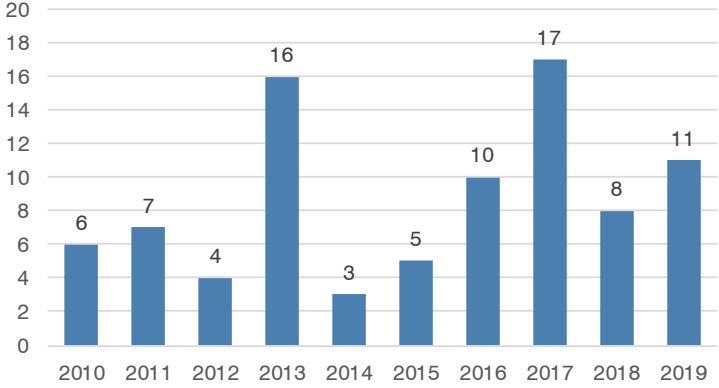
Like many communities in Connecticut, the cost of housing is a challenge for many of Monroe’s residents. Median gross rent in Monroe is \$1,462 which is comparable to Fairfield County’s but is higher than the State’s median. A significant share of rental households (65.2%) spent more than 30% of their household income on rent. This rate is ten percentage points higher than Fairfield County’s.



Source: American Community Survey 2013-17

Residential construction permit activity in Monroe has been low relative to the three decades prior to 2000. Permit activity has fluctuated from year to year, but has not exceeded 17 permits in each of the past ten years.

**Housing Permits (2010-2019)**

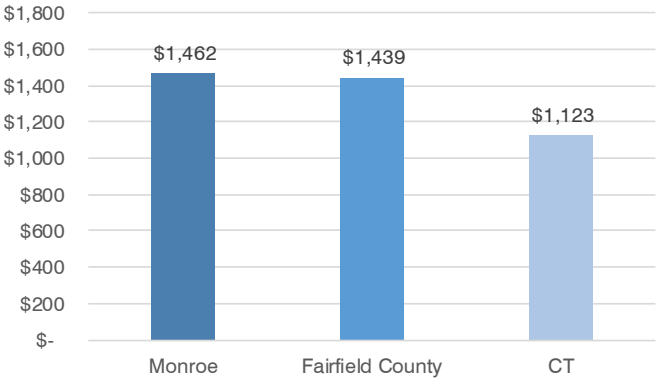


Source: CT DECD

**Income**

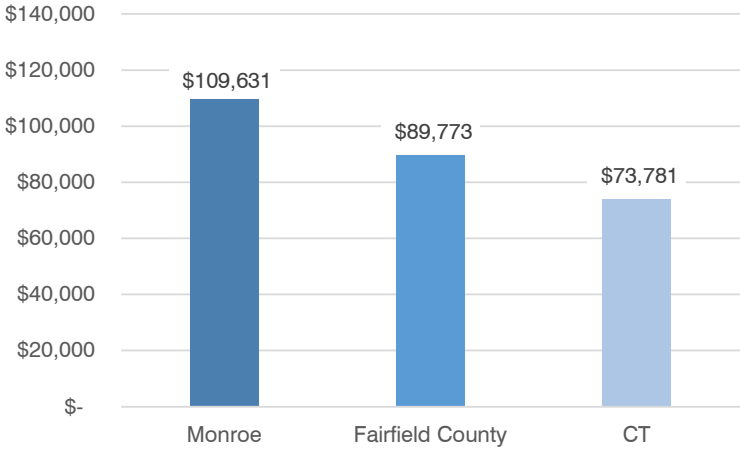
In comparison to both the State and County, Monroe has a high median household income. Over the 2013-17 census period, Monroe had a median household income of \$109,631 versus \$89,773 in Fairfield County and \$73,781 in Connecticut.

**Median Gross Rent (2013-17)**



Source: American Community Survey 2013-2017

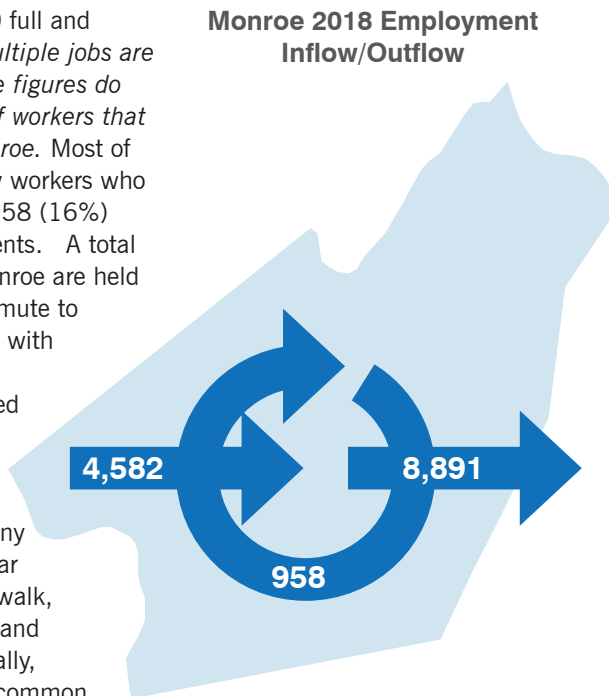
**Median Household Income (2013-17)**



Source: American Community Survey 2013-17

**Employment**

Monroe has a total of 5,540 full and part-time jobs. *Because multiple jobs are held by some workers, these figures do not represent the number of workers that commute in and out of Monroe.* Most of the jobs (4,582) are held by workers who commute to Monroe while 958 (16%) jobs are held by Town residents. A total of 8,891 jobs outside of Monroe are held by Town residents who commute to other communities for work; with Bridgeport being the most common destination, followed by Shelton, Trumbull, and Stratford. While most of the Town's residents work in nearby cities and towns, many residents also commute as far as Danbury, Waterbury, Norwalk, New York City, New Haven, and Stamford for work. Additionally, Monroe is the second most common work destination of workers that reside in Town. The recent shift towards work-from-home practices established during the Covid-19 period are may have a permanent positive impact on the number of jobs held in Monroe.



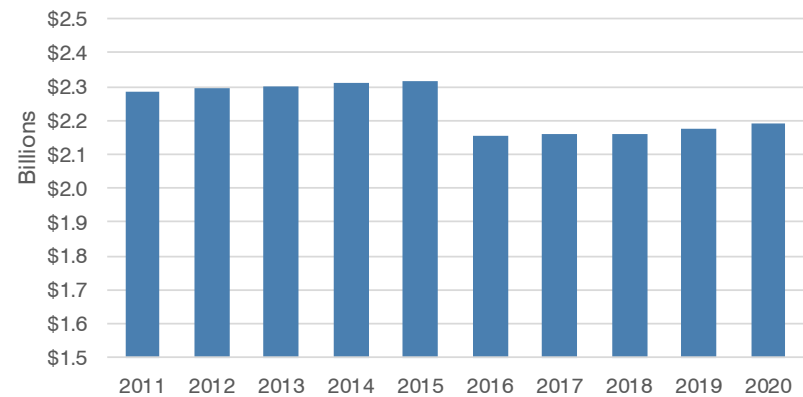
Source: US Census Bureau Longitudinal Employer-Household Dynamics Origin-Destination Employment Statistics

**Fiscal Trends**

The Town's grand list has been relatively stable since 2016, but contracted between 2015 and 2016, due in part to a revaluation applied in 2016. The grand list reached \$2.19 billion in the 2020 fiscal year. Properties that hold the greatest grand list value include Firstlight Hydro Generating Company (Stevenson Dam), Connecticut Light & Power and the Aquarion Water Company which together comprise \$69 million (3.2%) of the Town's grand list.

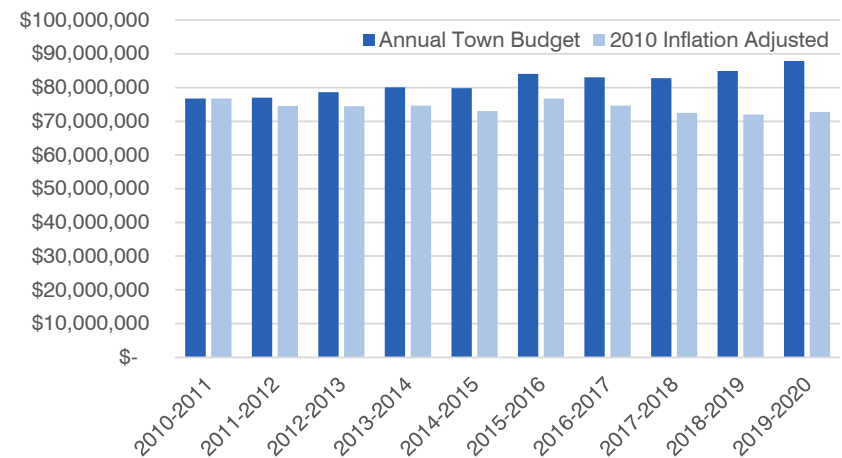
The Town's budget rose consistently between 2010 and 2019, with revenues and expenditures balanced in all fiscal years. The Town's 2010-11 budget was \$76.7 million; this grew to \$87.9 million in the 2019-2020 fiscal year, a 14.5% increase over that period. The rate of inflation over the same period was 17.2%. When corrected for inflation, the Town's budget slightly contracted since 2010.

**Net Grand List (2011-2020)**



Source: CT Data Collaborative CERC 2018 Town Profile, Annual Town Budgets

**Annual Town Budget vs 2010 Inflation Adjusted Town Budget (2010-2020)**



Source: Annual Town Budgets

**Schools and Educational Cost Trends**

Monroe's Schools are high-performing and attract many families to the community. GreatSchools.com rates the Town's schools at 8 or 9 (out of 10) and the District performs highly according to the Connecticut Department of Education's Next Generation Accountability System.

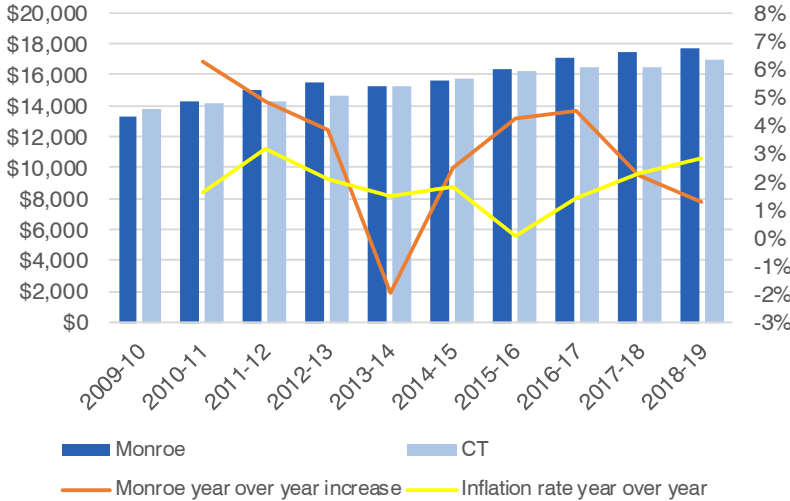
Two-thirds (66.4%) of the Town's budget is dedicated to its schools. Fiscal Year 2021 spending by the Town on education is approximately \$58.5 million per year. Educational expenditures grew 11% between the 2009-10 and 2018-19 fiscal years; the inflation rate over the same period was 17%. While educational expenditures grew at a steady rate below inflation, educational expenditures per student grew by 33% since the 2009-10 fiscal year. With a per capita education expenditure of \$3,333, Monroe schools cost 19% more per capita than across Fairfield County and 33% more than the State per capita education cost.

Both per student and per capita spending are a function of population size, if Monroe's population were to contract, these costs would most likely grow.



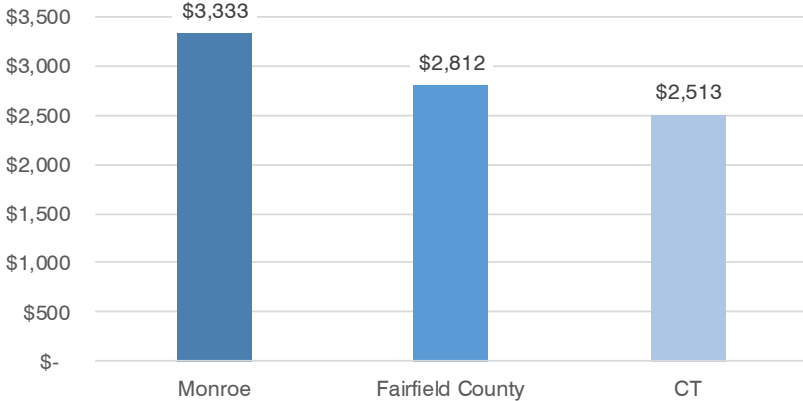
*Masuk High School, Image Credit: Valerio Giadone*

**Annual Public School Expenditure per Student**



Source: CT Department of Education

**Education Expenditures per Capita  
Monroe vs Fairfield County and CT (2017)**



Source: Town Budget, CT Department of Education

## Plan Priorities

Multiple goals, strategies, and actions are identified within this plan. While these items are all relevant to Monroe's needs and the purpose of this Plan of Conservation and Development, implementation of the Plan's strategies varies by urgency and importance.

The primary issue that Monroe faces is the threat of an aging population and population loss. Since 2000, Monroe has lagged behind Fairfield County in population growth and the median age of the Town's residents is four years older than the median for Fairfield County. Population research conducted by the Connecticut Department of Economic and Community Development projects population losses in both the Town and County over the next two decades. Those projected losses are more pronounced in Monroe than in Fairfield County. This potential loss of population threatens the viability of the Town's business establishments and could diminish property values, both of which have negative implications for the Town's grand list and tax revenues. Population loss correlates with a decrease in school enrollment (presently occurring) which may require restructuring, reduction of resources, or reallocation of facilities in order to manage costs. By example, the closure of Chalk Hill School was a result of contracting school enrollment.

Stabilizing the Town's population is critical to protecting property values, maintaining Town services, and achieving the other aims of this plan. This plan therefore prioritizes strategies that might be effective in stabilizing population in Monroe. By example, the Town should revise its zoning regulations to ensure that the regulations do not present a barrier to the development of housing that is attractive to new residents and the Town's seniors and young adults who might otherwise relocate for lack of housing options in Town. The Town should also seek to continue to invest in and maintain its facilities, services, and schools to make Monroe more attractive to new residents and to retain residents who might otherwise relocate to another community.

As Monroe makes the investments necessary to stabilize population and maintain its schools, facilities, and services, it will be challenged to control costs and manage property tax rates. An escalation in the Town's property tax rate may have the counterproductive effect of making Monroe less attractive to new residents and businesses and could result in a loss of residents and businesses. The Town should continue to play an active role in supporting economic development as a means of diversifying its tax base and reducing its reliance on residential property taxes. The Town should also remain proactive in acquiring state and federal funding via grant programs and reduce operating costs without adversely impacting services and while improving facilities.

The protection of Monroe's environmental resources is also a fundamental concern for the Town as these resources are central to the identity of the community. Monroe benefits from rich and diverse environmental resources; future economic or residential development should be located, designed, and constructed so as to avoid or minimize adverse environmental impacts.

Monroe's commercial and industrial tax base continues to evolve. The Town has hundreds of acres of undeveloped or underdeveloped land located in commercial and industrial districts. While there are development constraints related to the lack of infrastructure, specifically water and wastewater disposal infrastructure, the Town should fully support appropriate economic development within those districts.

The Town's policies and practices should continue to evolve in response to changing conditions such as the threat of population loss, changes in housing preference, and an evolving economic landscape.

### Priority Themes

This Plan's recommended strategies and actions are directly aimed at supporting the vision and goals identified in this Plan. These priorities are summarized in the themes below.

#### Grow Economic Base



Monroe's economy is changing and the Town should work towards encouraging and supporting a diverse economy that draws upon Monroe's strengths including access to state highways, available commercial and industrial land, and a strong business environment.

#### Retain Population and Expand Housing Choice



Monroe needs to take measures necessary to retain existing residents and attract and retain young residents and its seniors. The Town's economy, property values, services, and schools are dependent upon its resident population for viability.

#### Improve and Reinvest in Town Facilities



Monroe should continue to maintain and provide high-quality facilities for Town staff and residents in a fiscally responsible manner.

#### Protect and Open Space and Natural Resources



Monroe should continue to protect its open space and natural resources by expanding protected open space and mitigating the impacts of stormwater runoff.



Image Source: Patch.com

# 2.0 Economic Development

Monroe is home to a wide array of businesses many of which are small, locally-owned businesses. The Town has over nine hundred businesses (this includes home-based); those establishments are concentrated in business and industrial districts along Routes 25, 34, and 111 as indicated on the map at right. Monroe also has a number of commercial properties located in residential districts along Route 110. The Town has one limited office retail district located along the southern portion of Route 111 near the Trumbull line.

### Business Establishments

Monroe is comprised mostly of small businesses, with a range of retail and service establishments. The Town is comparable to others in Fairfield County in its range of business establishments, but differs in a few industry sectors. Compared to Fairfield County as a whole, Monroe has a greater share of establishments in the construction sector, and the administrative & support and waste management & remediation services. Monroe also has a smaller share of establishments in the transportation & warehousing; professional, scientific & technology services; and “other services” sectors. Like Fairfield County, Monroe’s greatest share of business establishments (12.5%) is in retail trade.

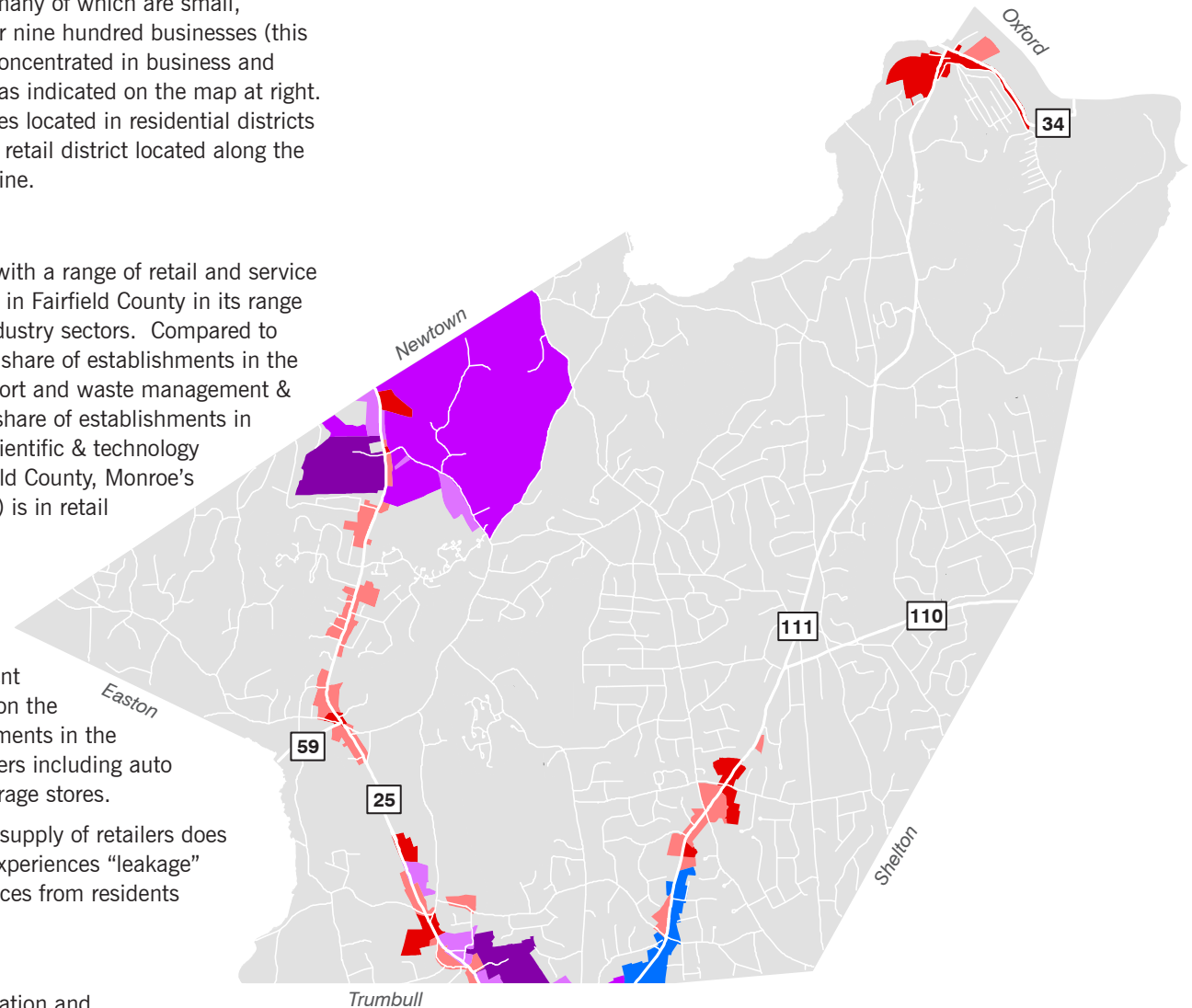
#### Retail

The Town’s retail establishments are primarily found along its State highways (Routes 25, 34, 110, and 111). This retail and service environment is supported by local residents and by thru-traffic on the State highways. The Town has multiple establishments in the retail trade sector, which includes a range of retailers including auto services; general merchandise; and food and beverage stores.

While Monroe has a range of retailers, the Town’s supply of retailers does not meet demand in most retail sectors. Monroe experiences “leakage” which means that the demand for goods and services from residents exceeds the supply provided by local businesses.

#### Accommodation & Food Services

Monroe has multiple businesses in the accommodation and food services sector, which includes restaurants and retail food establishments. Notably, Monroe does not have any hotel or lodging establishments.



#### Commercial and Industrial Zoning Districts

- B1: Business District 1
- B2: Business District 2
- I1: Industrial District 1
- I2: Industrial District 2
- I3: Industrial District 3
- LOR: Limited Office Retail

**Office**

Monroe has a limited supply of office space; most of the Town’s inventory is Class B and C space (which is often older and lacks space and amenities found in Class A space). Many of the Town’s offices spaces are small format spaces in converted residential or retail buildings. While the Town has a small inventory of office space, Monroe is well represented in finance & insurance, and professional, scientific & technology services, which suggests potential demand for office space to meet the demands of these establishments, although many may be operated from home offices.

**Commercial & Industrial**

Monroe’s heavy commercial and industrial base is limited, although Monroe is home to a sizable share of construction businesses. Monroe also has several manufacturing establishments and wholesale trade establishments. Many of these businesses are small enterprises with some of them being operated from homes.

Monroe has three industrial zoning districts with those districts located along Route 25 close to the Trumbull Town line and a large area located along the Newtown line in the Pepper Street/Corporate Drive/Cambridge Drive/Enterprise Drive area.



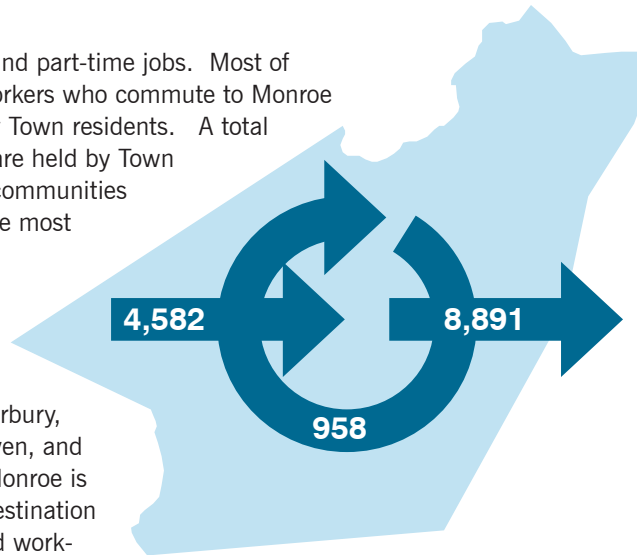
*Commercial Property in Monroe, Image Source: Cityfeet.com*



*Pepper Street Industrial Park, Image Source: Loopnet.com*

## Employment Trends

Monroe has a total of 5,540 full and part-time jobs. Most of those jobs (4,582) are held by workers who commute to Monroe while 958 (16%) jobs are held by Town residents. A total of 8,891 jobs outside of Monroe are held by Town residents who commute to other communities for work; with Bridgeport being the most common destination, followed by Shelton, Trumbull, and Stratford. While most of the Town's residents work in nearby cities and towns, many residents also commute as far as Danbury, Waterbury, Norwalk, New York City, New Haven, and Stamford for work. Additionally, Monroe is the second most common work destination of workers that reside in Town and work-from-home practices established during the Covid-19 period are likely to have a permanent impact on the number of jobs held in Monroe.



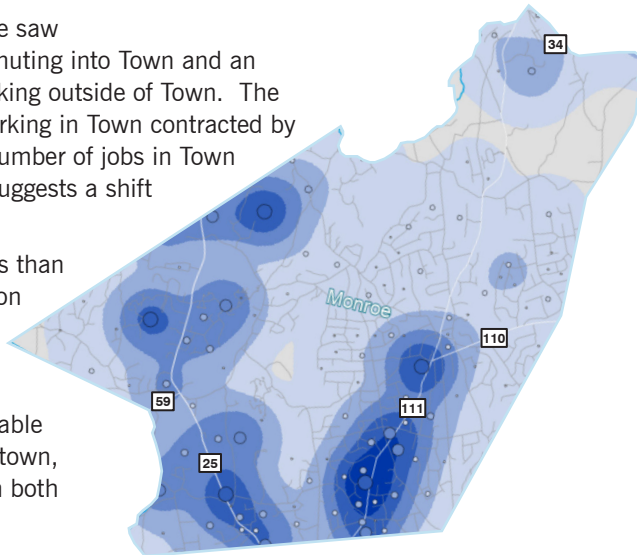
**2018 Employment Inflow/Outflow**

Source: US Census Bureau Longitudinal Employer-Household Dynamics Origin-Destination Employment Statistics

Between 2008 and 2018, Monroe saw a 4.6% decrease in workers commuting into Town and an increase of 4.2% in residents working outside of Town. The number of residents living and working in Town contracted by 14.1% over that period and the number of jobs in Town contracted by 5.5%. This trend suggests a shift towards a “bedroom community”.

Monroe has significantly more jobs than nearby communities such as Easton but lags Trumbull, Shelton, and Newtown in its number of jobs. When adjusted for population, Monroe has a comparable number of jobs per capita as Newtown, but has fewer jobs per capita than both Trumbull and Shelton.

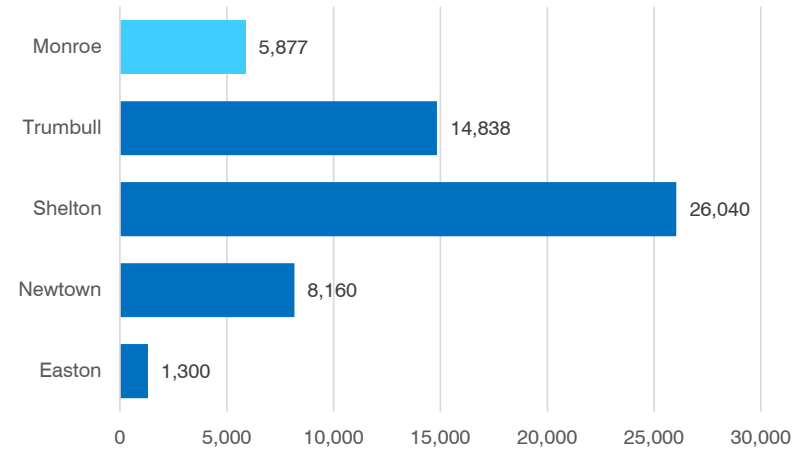
Monroe's jobs are concentrated along Routes 25 and 111 with the strongest cluster along Route 111 near the Trumbull Town line (see map at right).



**2017 Job Locations**

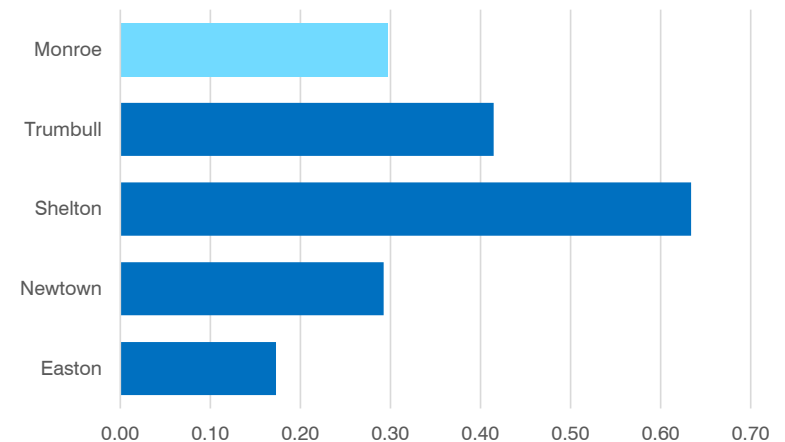
Source: US Census Bureau Longitudinal Employer-Household Dynamics Origin-Destination Employment Statistics

## Jobs in Monroe vs Neighboring Towns (2017)



Source: US Census Bureau Longitudinal Employer-Household Dynamics Origin-Destination Employment Statistics

## Jobs per Capita in Monroe vs Neighboring Towns (2017)



Source: US Census Bureau Longitudinal Employer-Household Dynamics Origin-Destination Employment Statistics



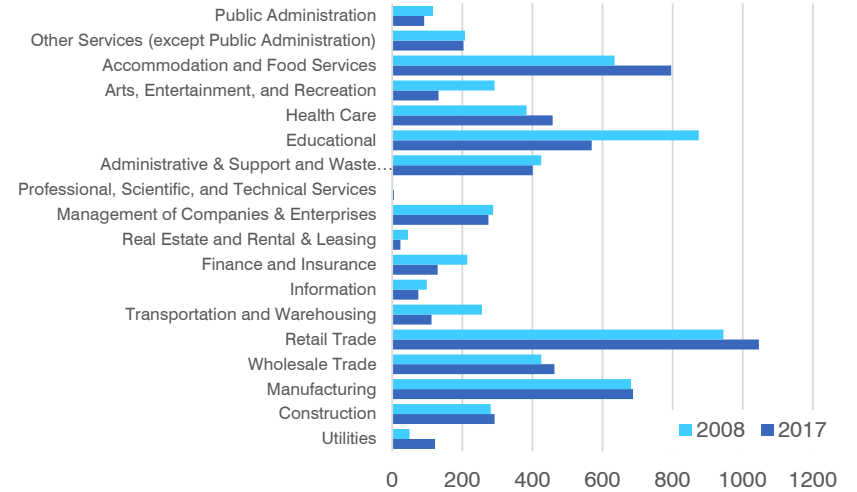
The Town experienced small changes to the number and types of jobs between 2008 and 2017 with a few exceptions. In total, Monroe lost 339 jobs over the ten-year period, but had notable gains in the accommodation and food services; health care; retail trade; and utilities sector. Losses were experienced in the arts, entertainment & recreation; educational; finance & insurance; and transportation & warehousing sectors.

Monroe's composition of jobs differs from the region. Compared to averages for Fairfield County, Monroe has a notably greater share of jobs in accommodation & food services; retail trade; manufacturing; construction sectors; and utility sectors. The Town, however, lags the region in jobs in the health care; professional, scientific & technical services; finance & insurance; and information sectors.



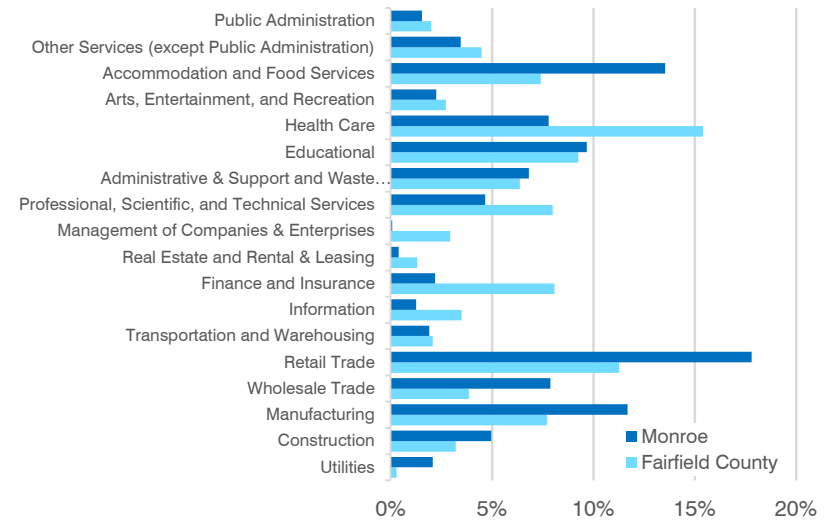
Recent business expansion ribbon cutting, Image Source: Monroe Sun

### Jobs in Monroe by Industry (2008 vs 2017)



Source: USCB Longitudinal Employer-Household Dynamics Origin-Dest. Employment Statistics

### Share of Jobs by Industry Monroe vs Fairfield County (2017)



Source: USCB Longitudinal Employer-Household Dynamics Origin-Dest. Employment Statistics

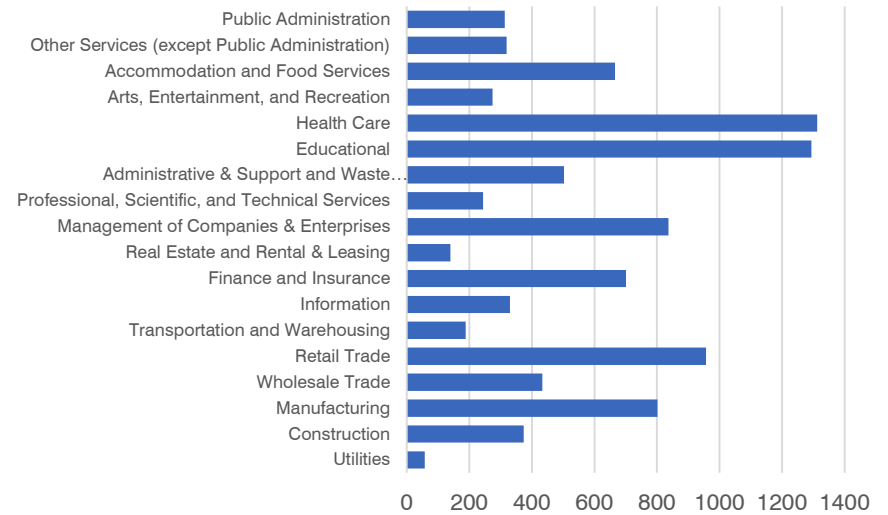
**Resident Labor Force**

Monroe's resident labor force is comprised of approximately 10,554 workers above the age of 16 according to the 2013-17 American Community Survey; the US Census Bureau Longitudinal Employer-Household Dynamics (LEHD) reports a lower figure of 9,757 for 2017. The LEHD data shows that Monroe's residents are engaged in a wide array of employment sectors with a significant share of residents employed in the healthcare & social assistance; educational services; retail trade; and management of companies and enterprises sectors.

Employment across sectors shifted between 2008 and 2017 with gains of ten percent or more of residents employed in sectors such as public administration; accommodation & food services; education; management of companies and enterprises; real estate and rental & leasing, and information. Monroe's share of residents employed in sectors such as transportation and warehousing; manufacturing; and construction experienced declines of more than ten percent.

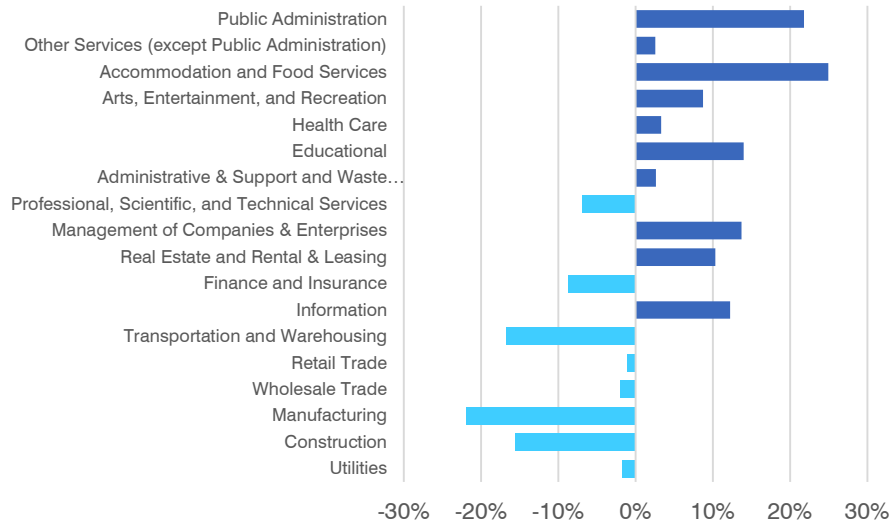
These trends reveals a shift away from residents employed in industrial and heavy commercial sectors and towards service industry and white-collar jobs.

**Resident Employment by Industry (2017)**



Source: USCB Longitudinal Employer-Household Dynamics Origin-Dest. Employment Statistics

**Resident Employment Shifts by Industry (2008 vs 2017)**



Source: USCB Longitudinal Employer-Household Dynamics Origin-Dest. Employment Statistics

## Economic Development Goal

Foster a vibrant economy that provides residents and visitors with access to goods, services, and employment opportunities while diversifying the Town's property tax base.

### Strategy 1

Collaborate with the local business community to ensure that the Town is responsive to the needs of the business community.

#### Supporting Actions

1. Continue First Selectman's Business and Industry Committee (FBIC) regular meetings.
2. Consider transition of the temporary Economic Recovery position into a permanent position.

### Strategy 2

Continue to develop informational materials and promotional materials designed to attract new businesses to Monroe.

#### Supporting Actions

1. The Economic Development Commission should work with the Monroe Chamber of Commerce and the Connecticut Department of Economic Development (DECD) to develop informational and marketing materials relevant to conducting and establishing a business in Monroe.
2. Actively promote Monroe and specific available properties as a desirable home for cultural institutions and entertainment venues.

### Strategy 3

Take actions that are necessary, as feasible, to reduce the amount of time it takes for a permit to be issued.

#### Supporting Actions

1. The Economic Development Commission should work with the Planning and Zoning, Inland Wetlands, and Building Departments to provide step-by-step guidance documents and online instruction that assists new businesses and applicants in navigating the permitting and licensing process.
2. The Planning and Zoning and Inland Wetland Departments and Commissions should continue to allow for elements of applications such as site plans to be reviewed administratively rather than referring to the Commissions and review the regulations and administrative practices to identify other types of review that could be handled administratively rather than by referral to the Commissions, providing they are briefed on pending and approved applications.
3. The Planning and Zoning, Inland Wetlands, and Building Departments should continue to review permitting process and complete their move towards online processing of permits so as to ensure that permits are processed in an efficient and timely manner.

### Strategy 4

Review the Town's zoning regulations and revise as needed to be more supportive of emerging business practices, business types, and land uses.

#### Supporting Actions

1. The Planning and Zoning Commission should continue to collaborate with the Economic Development Commission to review the Town's commercial and industrial zone standards and identify zoning amendments that may be needed to adequately support emerging business types and land uses, and to eliminate requirements that are determined unnecessary and inhibit the Town's ability to act quickly to provide approvals of desirable developments.
2. The Planning and Zoning Department should review zoning permit requirements to ensure that permits adequately accommodate new and emerging businesses and business practices.

**Strategy 5**

Review the Town's practices with respect to optional tax programs and make such modifications as are appropriate to support the goals of the Plan.

**Supporting Action**

1. The First Selectman, Town Council, and Board of Finance should review the Town's policies and practices with respect to optional tax programs such as commercial tax abatements and make such modifications as are appropriate to encourage economic development and support the goals of the Plan.

**Strategy 6**

Review the Town's zoning regulations and make appropriate amendments to incentivize investment and development that revitalizes properties and provides a civic amenity or benefit.

**Supporting Action**

1. The Planning and Zoning Commission should consider providing additional zoning tools and incentives to encourage reinvestment in, and transformation of, the Town's many aging shopping plazas and vacant tenant spaces.

**Strategy 7**

Remain proactive in facilitating a productive reuse of the former Stevenson Lumber and Pepper Street Industrial Park sites to ensure futures uses that are economically beneficial to the Town and compatible with the surrounding area.

**Supporting Action**

1. The Town should establish a committee or task force to conduct planning directed towards developing strategic plans for these areas.
2. The Planning and Zoning Commission should consider establishing a Special Development District that could be applied to these sites, or other redevelopment sites that would increase the flexibility of development proposals to respond to market, physical, and environmental conditions that are unique to each site.



Image Source: Al Filippone Associates

# 3.0 Housing



Monroe is a low-density suburban residential community. The Town's land use is dominated by residential development, with residential properties occupying more than half of the Town's land area. Monroe is oriented towards home ownership with 90% of homes being owner-occupied. The Town has approximately 7,300 housing units, more than one-third of those units are sixty years old or older. Monroe's homes were built over multiple generations although 82% of the Town's housing units were built in a fifty-year period between 1950 and 1999.

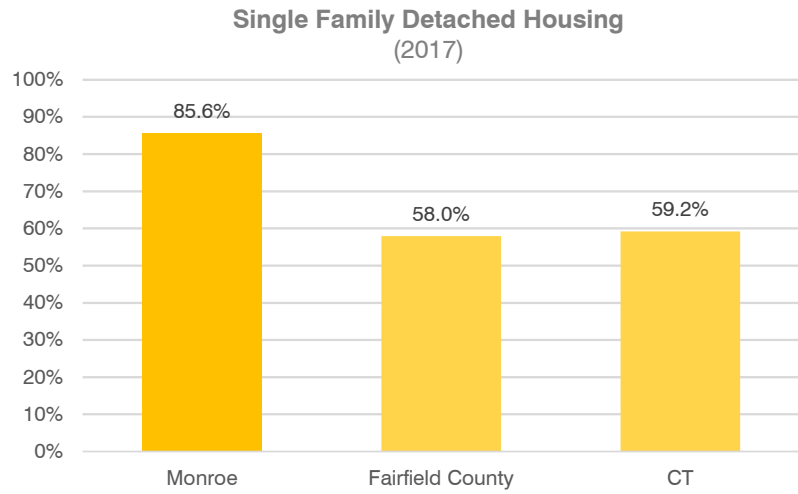
Through the Plan's community engagement process, residents expressed concern about housing choice in Monroe and the cost of housing in Town. While many residents believe that the Town needs more diverse housing options and new housing, other residents are concerned about the development of additional housing placing a burden on the school system and adversely impacting the character of the Town. While there is interest in diversifying housing stock by allowing mixed-use development in commercial zones, many residents feel that commercial zones should be reserved for commercial use.

**Housing Type**

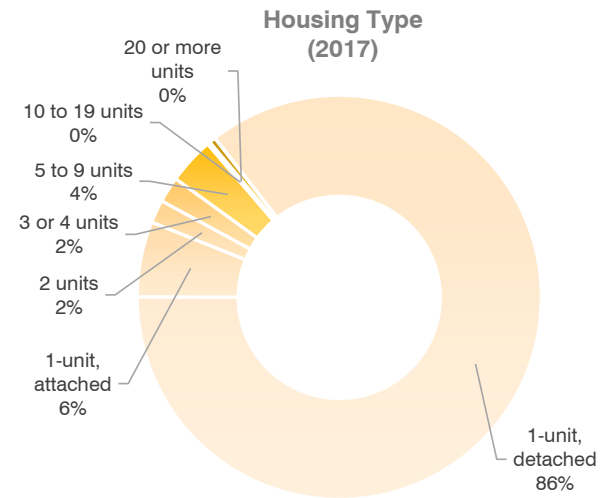
Most of Monroe's land area is occupied by single-family residences, but there are clusters of multi-family housing in Town. Nearly 86% of the Town's housing stock is single-family detached housing, which is significantly higher than the share found in Fairfield County and the State. The balance of the Town's housing stock is comprised of one-unit attached housing such as townhouses, 2 to 4 family homes, and apartment buildings. Less than 1% of housing units are in buildings or on properties with ten or more units.



Non single-family detached housing, such as The Hills of Monroe, comprises less than 15% of housing stock in Monroe. Image Source: Coldwell Banker



Source: American Community Survey 2013-17



Source: American Community Survey 2013-17

### Residential Zoning

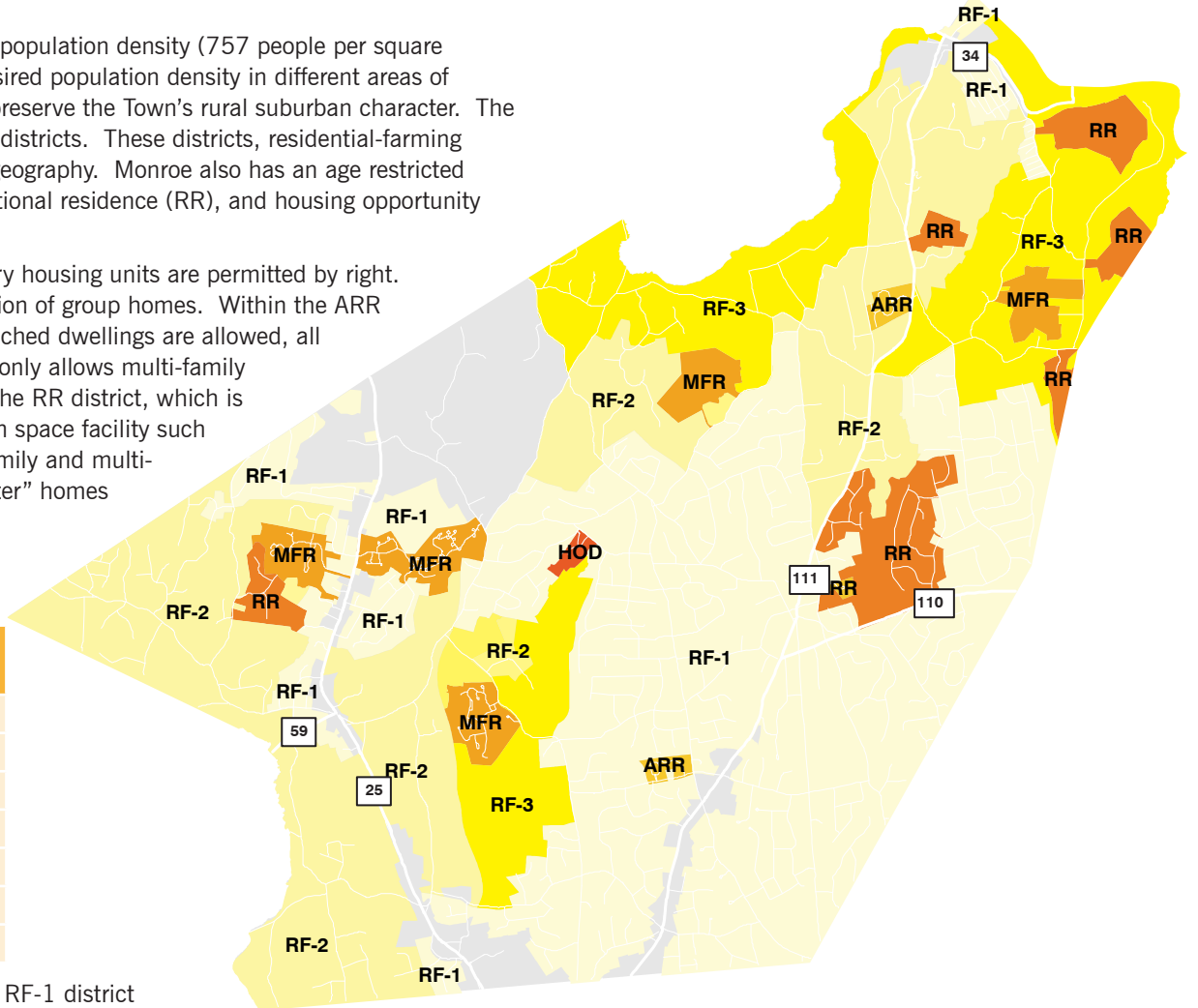
As a suburban community, Monroe has a relatively low population density (757 people per square mile). Monroe's current zoning generally reflects the desired population density in different areas of Town. Any future development should be designed to preserve the Town's rural suburban character. The Town's zoning is dominated by single-family residential districts. These districts, residential-farming (RF) districts, cover approximately 80% of the Town's geography. Monroe also has an age restricted residence (ARR), multi-family residential (MFR), recreational residence (RR), and housing opportunity (HOD) districts.

Within the RF districts, single-family units and accessory housing units are permitted by right. Multifamily dwellings are not permitted with the exception of group homes. Within the ARR district, age restricted (55 and older) attached and detached dwellings are allowed, all other types of housing are restricted. The MFR district only allows multi-family dwellings. Only single-family dwellings are allowed in the RR district, which is designated for housing built in conjunction with an open space facility such as a golf course. The HOD district allows both single family and multi-family dwellings and is intended to accommodate "starter" homes and provide affordable housing opportunities.

Minimum lot size requirements vary by district in accordance with the table below:

Residential District	Abbrev.	Min. Lot Size
Residential & Farming District 1	RF-1	1 acre
Residential & Farming District 2	RF-2	2 acres
Residential & Farming District 3	RF-3	3 acres
Age Restricted Residence District	ARR	10 acres
Multifamily Residence District	MFR	70 acres
Recreational Residence District	RR	25 acres
Housing Opportunity District	HOD	20 acres

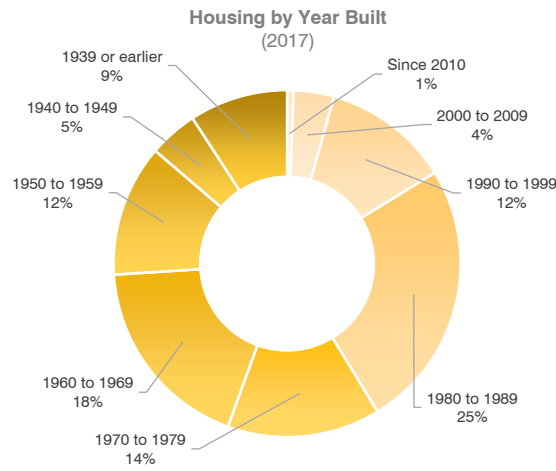
These districts are distributed across the Town with the RF-1 district occupying much of the southeastern side of Monroe and the RF-2 and RF-3 districts located on the western and northern sides of the Town. MFR, ARR, and HOD districts are limited, with only two ARR districts, and only one HOD district in the Town.



**Residential Zoning Districts**  
(Zoning standards establish the desired population density in Monroe)

### Age of Housing

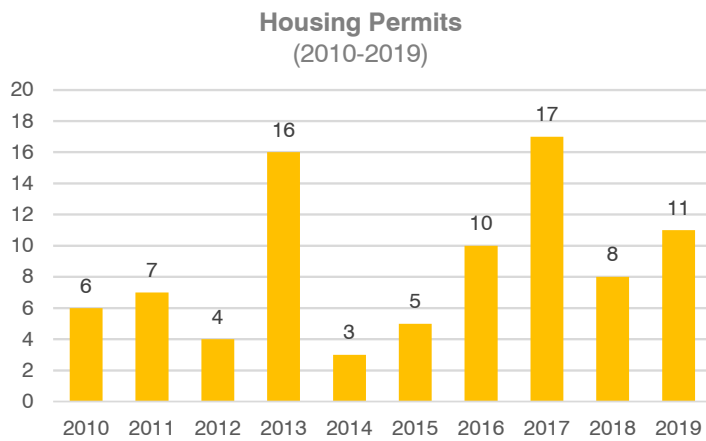
Monroe's housing stock was constructed over several decades with a majority of housing constructed in the three decades spanning 1960 to 1989. The 1980s saw the greatest volume of housing production of any decade with 25% of the Town's housing stock built in those ten years. Housing construction contracted each decade following the 1980s with only 1% of the Town's housing stock constructed since 2010.



Source: American Community Survey 2013-17

### Housing Construction

Between 2010 and 2019, only 87 housing unit permits were issued with 25 demolition permits issued over that period of time. This suggests a net gain of only 62 housing units over the ten-year period. Permit activity has been relatively low since 2014, although 2017 saw a spike in permits with 17 housing permits issued. An average of 9 housing permits were issued per year over the ten years between 2010 and 2019; by comparison, an average of 183 housing permits were issued per year in the 1980's.

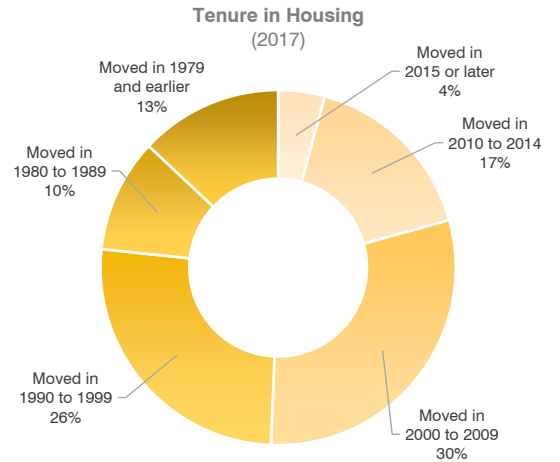


Source: Connecticut Department of Economic & Community Development

### Housing Tenure

Monroe's housing tenure is comparable to both Fairfield County and the State. Over half (51%) of residents have lived in their homes since 2000, almost one-third (30%) of residents moved into their homes between 2000 and 2009. Only 21% of residents have lived in their current homes for ten years or less.

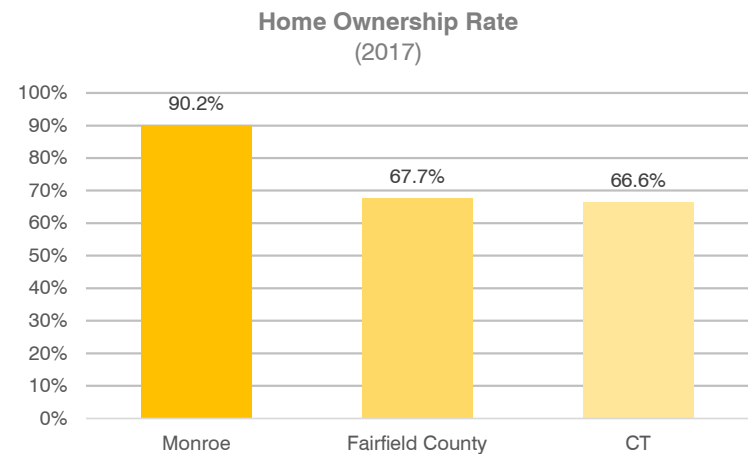
This distribution suggests a relatively low turnover in housing which limits new home ownership and rental opportunities for existing residents seeking different housing in Town and for prospective residents seeking housing in Monroe.



Source: American Community Survey 2013-17

### Home Ownership

A majority of homes in Monroe (90.2%) are owned by their occupants. This is higher than the share of single-family detached homes, suggesting a low rental rate of single-family homes and a sizable share of attached and multifamily units that are owned by their occupants. Monroe's home ownership rate is significantly higher than the home ownership rate in Fairfield County and the State. The high ownership rate is correlated with the Town's high share of single-family detached housing which has higher ownership rates than multifamily housing.



Source: American Community Survey 2013-17



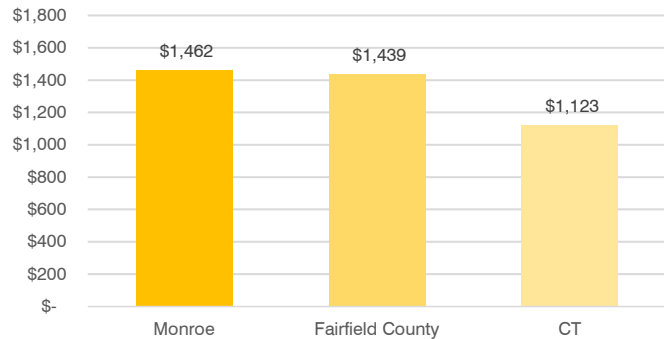
### Housing Cost

The cost of entry to Monroe's housing market is higher than in Connecticut as a whole, but housing is generally more affordable than in Fairfield County. The exception to this is the Town's rental housing, which costs slightly more than the average in Fairfield County and costs 30% more than rental housing in Connecticut.

Home sales prices are also higher in Monroe than State, but are lower than Fairfield County as a whole. The median home list price in Monroe was \$320,000 in October of 2019 compared to \$393,000 in Fairfield County and \$237,000 in the State. Additionally, the Town's median owner-occupied home value of \$363,400 is lower than home values in Fairfield County (19% lower) but is higher than the State's (35% higher).

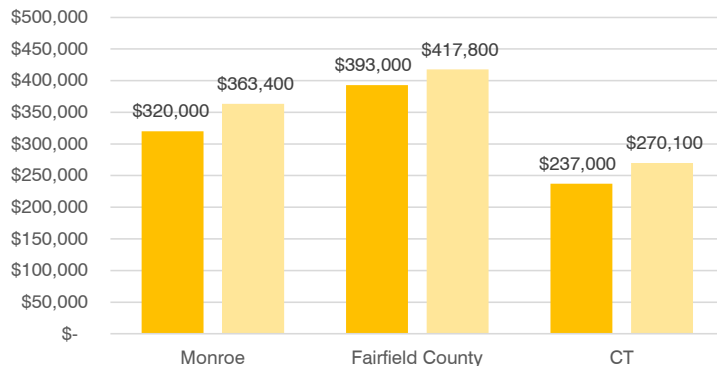
Monroe's housing stock varies considerably in cost as measured by both rental cost and housing value. Over half of the Town's rental housing (54%) costs less than \$1,500 per month, with 27% of rental housing costing less than \$1,000 per month. Owner-occupied housing values are well distributed with 32% of housing valued at less than \$300,000. However, only 6% of housing is valued at less than \$200,000.

**Median Gross Rent (2017)**



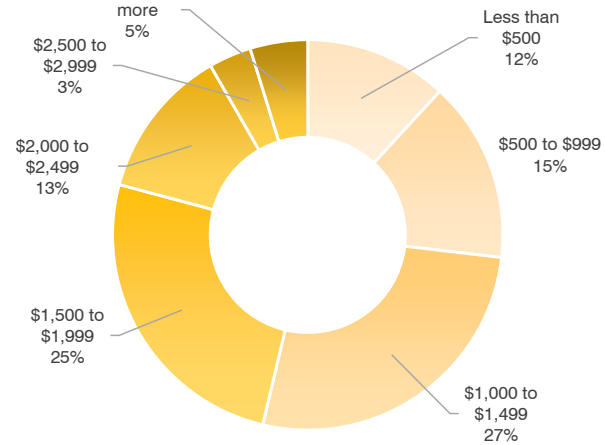
Source: American Community Survey 2013-17

**Median Home List Price and Value**



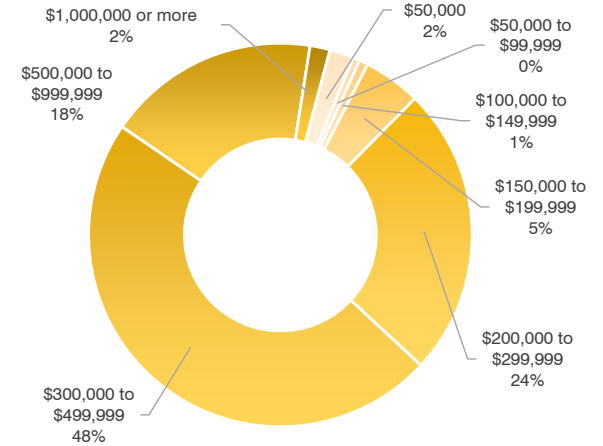
Source: American Community Survey 2013-17, Zillow.com

**Gross Monthly Rent (2017)**



Source: American Community Survey 2013-17

**Owner-Occupied Housing Value (2017)**

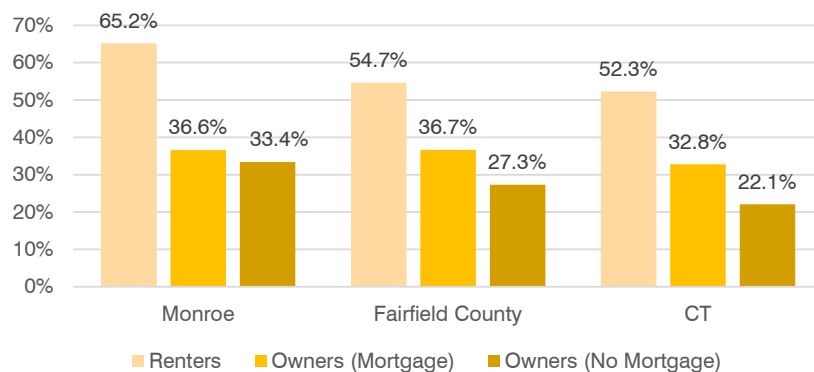


Source: American Community Survey 2013-17

### Housing Affordability

Monroe's renters are more housing cost burdened than renters in the region or state. More than 65% of rental households spend thirty percent or more of their income on housing compared to 55% in Fairfield County and 52% in the State. The share of housing cost burdened homeowners in Monroe is comparable to Fairfield County, but is higher than the State. This is true of homeowners with and without a mortgage and is related to higher housing costs in Monroe when compared to communities outside of Fairfield County. Monroe does, however, have a greater share of owners without a mortgage that are housing cost burdened (nine percentage points more) than does Fairfield County. This suggests that many households struggle with housing costs related to property taxes and other housing costs. A large share of housing cost burdened households without a mortgage are typically seniors in retirement.

**Share of Households with Housing Costs of 30% or more of Household Income (2017)**

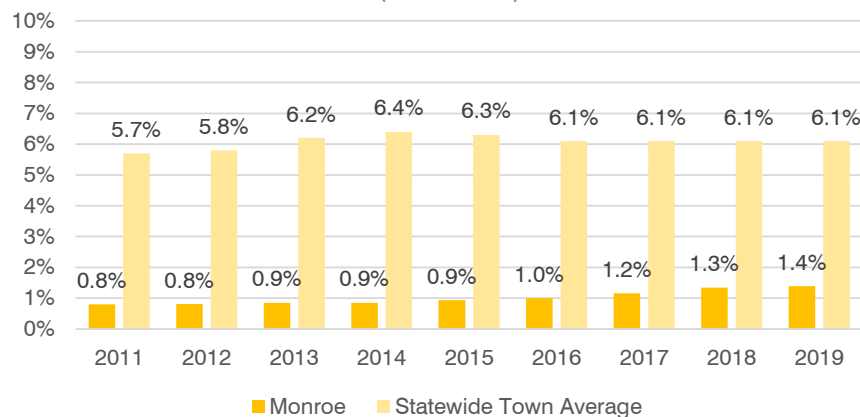


Source: American Community Survey 2013-17

Like all of Connecticut's communities, Monroe is subject to Connecticut General Statute Section §8-30g which establishes a goal of ten percent "Affordable Housing" in all of the state's municipalities. For the purposes of this statute, Affordable Housing is defined as governmentally assisted housing units, tenant rental assistance households, CHFA/USDA mortgages, and deed restricted units. Monroe's share of Affordable Housing comprised 1.4% of its housing stock as of 2019. To provide context, only 15 communities in Connecticut have a rate that is below Monroe's.

Monroe has a total of 96 Affordable Housing units in Town. The share of Affordable Housing in Monroe has grown by less than one percent over the past decade. Statewide, the average rate of Affordable Housing grew at roughly the same rate and is currently 6.1%, 4.7 percentage points above Monroe's share. Because Monroe is below the State's ten percent Affordable Housing goal, the Town is not exempt from Affordable Housing appeals that allow developers to bypass local zoning codes in the development of Affordable Housing. The Town can qualify for a four-year moratorium of the §8-30g applicability by increasing its Affordable Housing stock by two percentage points over 2010 levels or providing units sufficient to meet the State's scoring criteria. This would require the addition of approximately two hundred Affordable Housing units. The Planning & Zoning Commission has recently incorporated regulations to require ten percent of housing to be affordable in all new mixed-use developments.

**Share of Affordable Housing (2011-2019)**

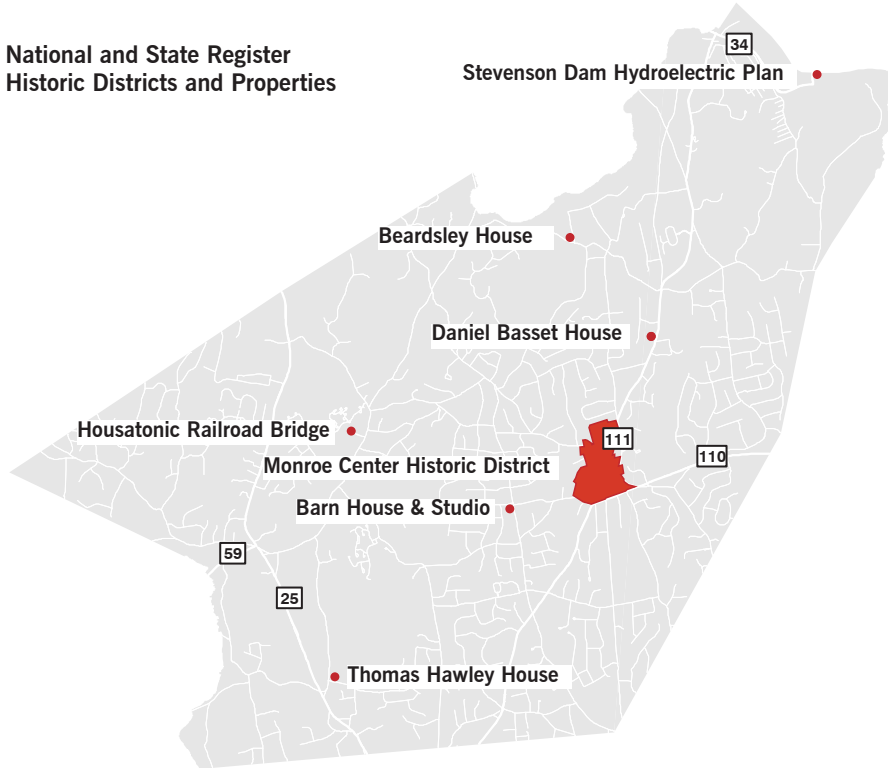


Source: Connecticut Department of Housing

**Historic Districts and Properties**

A small share of the Town’s housing is located within the Town’s only historic district, the Monroe Center Historic District. The District is both a National Register Historic District and a Local Historic District, which gives Monroe’s Historic District Commission authority over the construction and modification of structures in the District. The District has a limited geographic area (near the intersection of Monroe Turnpike and Shelton Road). In addition to its historic district, Monroe has three properties that are on the National Historic Register. Two of these are residential properties (Daniel Bassett and Thomas Hawley Houses) and one is a non-residential property, the Stevenson Dam.

**National and State Register Historic Districts and Properties**



Exact locations of the Mary Smith House, Elisha Hawley House, and Milton Hawley House are not provided in the State Register. The Judge Beardsley House is located within the Monroe Center Historic District.



Thomas Hawley House: A National Register and State Register property  
Image Credit: Preservation CT

District	National Register	Local Historic District
Monroe Center Historic District	✓	✓

**Historic Districts in Monroe**

Source: National Park Service, CT Trust for Historic Preservation

Property	National Register	State Register
Barn House and Studio		✓
Beardsley House		✓
Daniel Basset House	✓	
Elisha Hawley House		✓
Judge Beardsley House		✓
Milton Hawley House		✓
Thomas Hawley House	✓	✓
Housatonic Railroad Bridge		✓
Stevenson Dam Hydroelectric Plant	✓	

**Individually Listed Historic Properties in Monroe**

Source: National Park Service, CT Historic Property Database

## Housing Goal

Allow for a wide selection of housing choice that supports the retention of residents in Monroe through various stages of life and attracts new residents to the community.

### Strategy 1

Continue to explore the development of housing in commercial districts through the expansion of mixed-use districts.

### Supporting Actions

1. The Planning and Zoning Commission should review the effectiveness of the Town's recently approved mixed-use zoning regulations after a period of one year to assess whether the regulations as they stand are adequately supportive of the development of housing in commercial districts.
2. The Planning and Zoning Commission should incrementally expand the geographic areas within the B-1, B-2, and LOR where mixed-use development is permitted to allow for such development on any lot in those districts, meeting the requirements of the zoning regulations, with direct frontage and access via Route 25, Route 111 and/or Route 34.

### Strategy 2

Maintain an open line of communication with the Housing Authority.

### Supporting Action

1. The Town continue to maintain an open line of communication with the Housing Authority to ensure that the Authority has the resources it needs to meet the needs of disabled and senior residents.

### Strategy 3

Implement policies and programs designed to facilitate the development of affordable housing.

### Supporting Actions

1. The Planning & Zoning Commission should work collaboratively with developers seeking to build affordable housing to accommodate such development via amendments to the zoning regulations provided said proposals are located in an appropriate area and possess a quality of design that makes them beneficial, and not disruptive, to the area in which they are built and the community as a whole.
2. The Planning & Zoning Commission should update the Future Land Use Map of this Plan on a reoccurring basis as needed to identify areas that have been found to desirable for the development of affordable and/or multi-family housing. The recommendations of the Affordable Housing Plan should be considered in an update of the Future Land Use Map.
3. The Planning & Zoning Commission should produce and adopt an Affordable Housing Plan that specifies how the Town will increase its number of Affordable Housing units, as mandated by the State.
4. In developing the Affordable Housing Plan, the Planning & Zoning Commission should review the Town's zoning regulations and make necessary changes to ensure that local regulations fully support and are not a barrier to the development of affordable housing. A similar review of the subdivision regulations should be conducted.
5. In developing the Affordable Housing Plan, the Planning & Zoning Commission should review the Age Restricted Residential, Multi-Family Residential, and Housing Opportunity District regulations to determine if any aspect of the regulations are excessively stringent and to ensure that the development of housing via these districts is reasonably feasible.



# 4.0 Facilities & Services

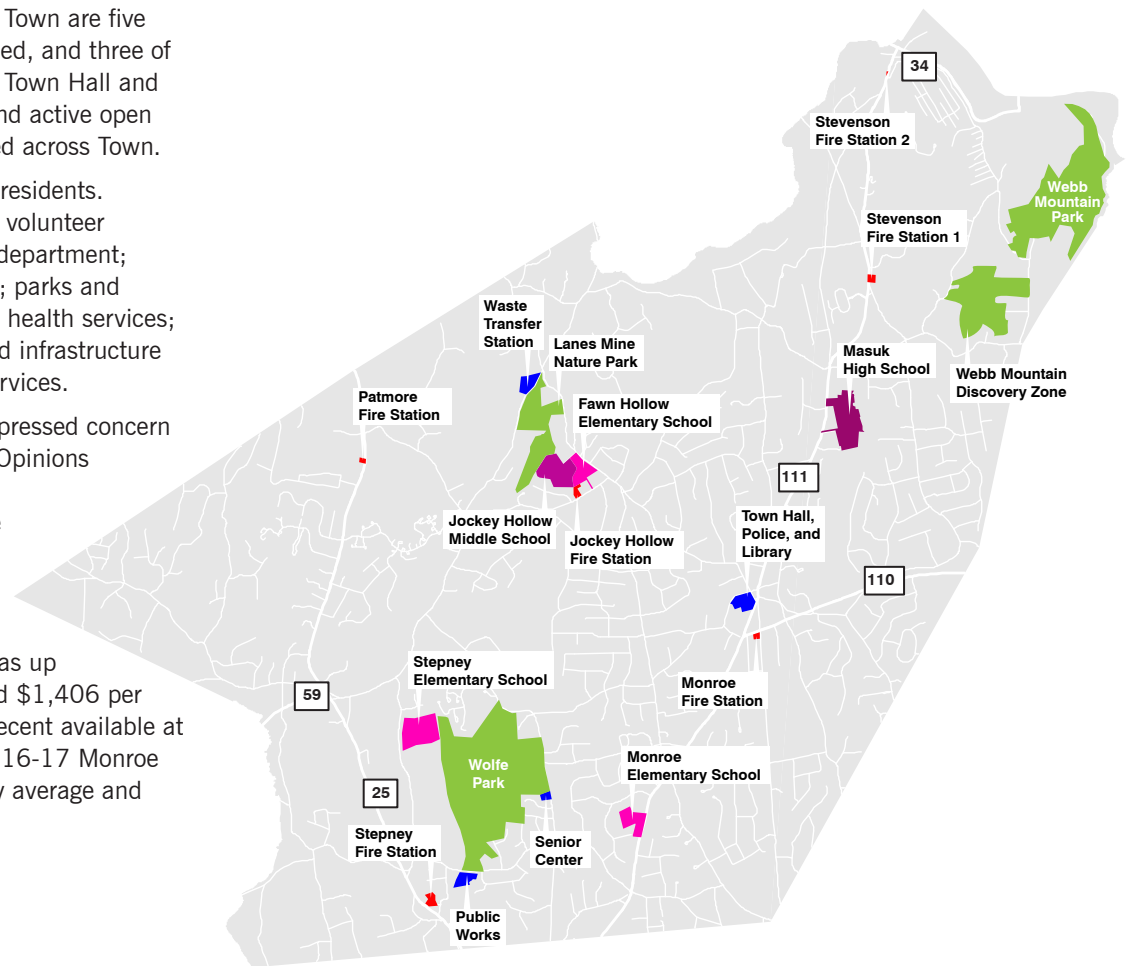
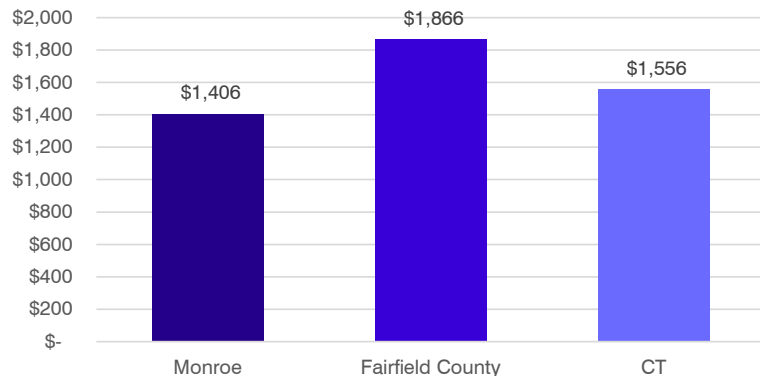
Monroe has a range of municipal and school facilities. Within Town are five schools, six fire stations (three of which are municipally owned, and three of which are owned by the fire companies), a police station, library, Town Hall and Town Hall Annex, a senior center, and three parks with passive and active open space. The Town's schools, parks, and fire stations are distributed across Town.

From these facilities, the Town provides a range of services to its residents. Services are typical of a mid-sized community and includes three volunteer fire departments; a volunteer-based emergency medical services department; police services; animal control; library services and programming; parks and recreation programming; multiple senior services; social services; health services; a public works department that provides street, public facility, and infrastructure maintenance and sanitation services; and Town administrative services.

Through the Plan's community engagement process, residents expressed concern about property tax rates and funding of Monroe's school district. Opinions were split about funding of the schools, with some respondents concerned that budget cuts to the schools would compromise the quality of education in the District while others expressed concern about education cost and property tax rates.

Monroe's 2019-20 municipal expenditures, excluding education expenditures, was \$28.9 million or \$1,464 per resident. This was up slightly from the 2016-17 fiscal year when expenditures averaged \$1,406 per resident. Compared to 2016-17 fiscal year expenditures (most recent available at county and state levels) across Fairfield County and the State, 2016-17 Monroe municipal expenditures were 25% lower than the Fairfield County average and 10% lower than the statewide average.

**2016-2017 Municipal Expenditures per Capita**  
(Excluding Educational Expenses)



**Town Parks, Facilities, and Schools**

**Town Facilities**

Monroe owns, maintains, and operates multiple buildings and facilities from which it provides services. These facilities total approximately 149,000 square feet, the largest of which is the Town Hall and Police Station building. With exception of the Edith Wheeler Memorial Library and the Senior Center, all other facilities are nearly thirty years old or older. Facilities vary considerably in condition, amenities, and accessibility.

**Town Hall and Police Station**

The Town Hall and Police Station building was constructed in 1972. The most recent significant improvements involved improvements to the Police Station in 2012. The total building area is 51,150 sf and it is located on a 7.2 acre site.

**Fire Stations**

Monroe has three municipally-owned fire stations. The volunteer fire companies own three older fire stations. The fire stations were constructed between 1947 and 1983. The Jockey Hollow Road fire station is also home to the Town’s emergency medical services. This facility is planned for a renovation and addition to permanently house EMS operations.

**Edith Wheeler Memorial Library**

The library is the newest municipal building constructed in Monroe. It was constructed in 2006 and has 33,740 sf of space and sits on a 2.5 acre site located next to the Town Hall site. The library recently underwent minor updates.

**Public Works Complex**

The public works complex sits on an 8.2 acre site and is comprised of four buildings and several accessory structures. The complex’s buildings were constructed between 1954 and 1991.

**Senior Center**

The Town’s Senior Center was constructed in 2003 and sits on a 2.5 acre site adjacent to Wolfe Park. The building has 11,991 square feet of space.



Town Facilities	Year Built	Recent Rehab	Area (sf)	Site Area (ac)
Town Hall & Police Station	1972	2012	51,150	7.2
Edith Wheeler Memorial Library	2006	2019	33,740	2.5
Jockey Hollow Fire Station/ EMS Station	1983	Planned for 2021	13,204	2.4
Monroe Fire Station	1947		12,344	1.0
Patmore Fire Station	1988		15,405	1.0
Stepney Fire Station	1925		12,042	3.9
Stevenson Fire Station #1	1983		13,416	2.0
Stevenson Fire Station #2	1952		4,984	0.1
Senior Center	2003		11,991	2.5
Public Works Complex	1954-1991		26,568 (4 buildings)	8.2

Source: Town of Monroe Assessor’s Database

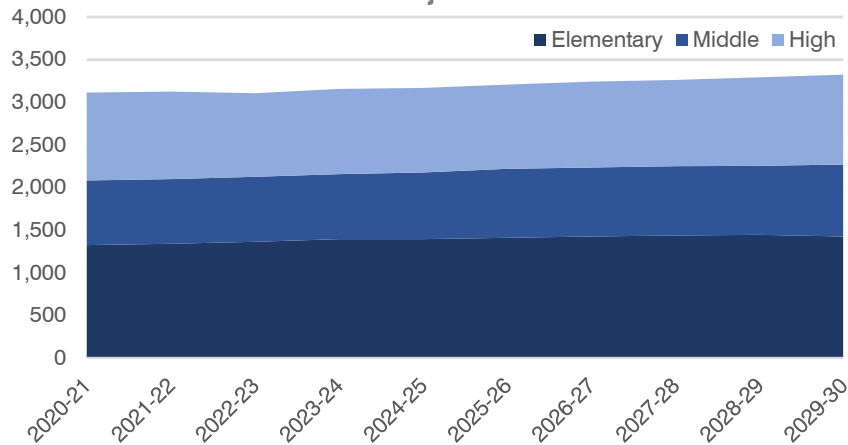
## School Facilities

Monroe has five public schools in total; three elementary schools, one middle school, and a high school. The facilities vary in age and condition. The total school capacity under standard class sizes, in instructional classrooms only, is 3,660 students. The District's 2019-20 enrollment was 3,136 students (86% of total facility capacity). Enrollment has remained relatively stable since 2015 with minor year-to-year fluctuations.

4.0

The Town and Monroe Schools conducted a facilities study in 2015 that identified \$44 million in recommended improvements to the Town's schools, \$9 million of which was classified as high priority (top two of five priority levels). In addition to the occupied schools identified below, the Chalk Hill School building is a closed school owned by the Town; there are no plans to reuse the facility as a school. Enrollment projections conducted for the School District in 2019 anticipates modest growth in student enrollment through 2030. Future enrollment could be permanently impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic although potential impacts are currently difficult to ascertain.

**Monroe Public Schools  
2019 Enrollment Projections for 2020-2030**



Source: 2019 Monroe Public Schools Enrollment & Demographic Study



Image Credit: Monroe Schools

### ***Fawn Hollow Elementary School***

Fawn Hollow Elementary has grades K through 5. The school was built in 1966 and was last expanded or updated in 1988. The school sits on approximately 17 acres of a 43-acre campus shared with Jockey Hollow Middle School and the former Chalk Hill School. The school has 66,005 square feet of building space. The school has capacity for 625 students, 2019-20 enrollment was 570 students (91% capacity).

### ***Monroe Elementary School***

Monroe Elementary has grades K through 5. The school was built in 1934 and was last expanded or updated in 1983. The school sits on 15.3 acres and has 526,061 square feet of building space. The school has capacity for 450 students, 2019-20 enrollment was 362 students (80% capacity).

### ***Stepney Elementary School***

Stepney Elementary has grades K through 5. The school was built in 1960 and was last expanded or updated in 1989. The school sits on 32.5 acres and has 59,092 square feet of building space. The school has capacity for 672 students, 2019-20 enrollment was 430 students (64% capacity).



**Jockey Hollow Middle School**

Jockey Hollow has grades 6 through 8. The school was built in 1996 to accommodate grades 7 to 8 but was expanded to the 6th grade after closure of Chalk Hill School. No significant expansions or renovations have been conducted since the school was constructed. The school sits on approximately 14 acres of a 43-acre campus shared with Jockey Hollow Middle School and the former Chalk Hill School. The school has 106,392 square feet of building space. The school has capacity for 625 students, although the 2019-20 enrollment was 755 students. This includes approximately 225 students who attend the STEM program at Masuk. The net enrollment is therefore 530 students (85% capacity).

**Masuk High School**

Masuk High School has grades 9 through 12 and is attended by both Jockey Hollow STEM students and high school students. The school was built in 1957 and was last updated in 2002. The campus is comprised of 102 acres and has 260,235 square feet of building space. The school has a capacity of 1,288 students; 2019-20 enrollment was 997 high school students. Including Jockey Hollow STEM students, there were approximately 1,220 students on the campus in the 2019-20 school year (95% capacity).

Schools	Year Built	Last Rehab	Area (sf)	Site Area (acres)	Capacity (students)
Fawn Hollow Elementary School	1966	1988	66,005	17*	625
Monroe Elementary School	1934	1983	52,061	15.3	450
Stepney Elementary School	1960	1989	59,092	32.5	672
Jockey Hollow Middle School	1996	-	106,392	14*	625
Masuk High School	1957	2002	260,235	42.6	1,288

Source: *Town of Monroe Facilities and Demographic Assessment, Town of Monroe Assessor’s Database.*

\*Share of 43-acre site that includes Fawn Hollow, Jockey Hollow, and the former Chalk Hill School.



**Masuk High School** Image Credit: Joe Kobza, via Twitter

## Parks & Recreational Facilities

Monroe has three parks that are owned, managed, and maintained by the Town and one Town-owned open space property that is privately managed. The parks range from passive open space sites to active parks with ball fields and courts. In total, Town-owned parks comprise approximately 660 acres. In addition to the park facilities, the Town's school athletic and playground facilities are available for use by residents.

### Lanes Mine Nature Park

Lanes Mine Nature Park is a passive open space property that includes hiking trails. The site is 42.8 acres and is located between Gardner Road and Fan Hill Road immediately north of Jockey Hollow and Fawn Hollow schools.

### Webb Mountain Park

Webb Mountain Park is a 208.5-acre passive open space in the northeast corner of Monroe overlooking Lake Zoar and the Housatonic River. The park has camp sites that can be reserved by residents and non-residents.

### Wolfe Park and Great Hollow Lake

Wolfe Park is a 303-acre park that includes Great Hollow Lake and features multiple recreational amenities. These amenities include two baseball diamonds, five softball diamonds, a football game field and a football practice field, four soccer fields, seven tennis courts, two pickleball courts, two basketball courts, sand volleyball, three playscapes, a pool, bathhouse, picnic areas, and a lake with a beach, boating, and fishing.

### Webb Mountain Discovery Zone

The Town also owns a 106-acre parcel of open space south of Webb Mountain Park known as the Webb Mountain Discovery Zone. The property was purchased by the town of Monroe for open space in 2004 and oversight of the area was assigned to the Monroe Conservation Commission whose first initiative was to conduct a comprehensive review of the property. The review identified significant opportunities to leverage the land's unique biodiversity for educational purposes at several grade levels. The property is currently managed by Webb Mountain Discovery Zone, Inc., which provides educational programming.



Pool at Wolfe Park Image Source: Monroe Parks & Recreation

Parks	Features	Site Area (acres)
Lanes Mine Nature Park	Trails, passive open space	42.8
Webb Mountain Park	Camping, trails	208.5
Wolfe Park and Great Hollow Lake	Ball fields, athletic courts, playscapes, trails, pool, bathhouse, picnic areas, lake with a beach, boating, and fishing	303
Webb Mountain Discovery Zone (privately operated)	Trails, passive open space	106

School Athletic/ Recreation Facilities	Features
Jockey Hollow and Fawn Hollow Schools	2 soccer fields, 2 playscapes, 2 basketball courts
Masuk High School	2 softball fields, one baseball field, multi-purpose field, synthetic turf football/soccer/lacrosse field, running track
Monroe Elementary	Soccer field, multipurpose field, play court with basketball, playscape
Stepney Elementary	2 playscapes, play court

## Town Services

The Town provides a range of services typical of a small to mid-sized community. These services include a combination of administrative services and direct services to residents. Most services are entirely municipal, but the Town also has regional partnerships.

### **Administrative and Fiscal Services**

The Town's fiscal and administrative services include the Assessor's Department, Registrars of Voters, Finance Department, Human Resources, Tax Collector, and Town Clerk.

### **Building Department**

Monroe's Building Department ensures building safety for the general public and upholds the State Building Code. It oversees building construction and building safety and acts as a liaison between the public and contractors. The Building Department also provides enforcement, investigating complaints and taking enforcement actions as necessary.

### **Emergency Management**

The Monroe Office of Emergency Management holds the responsibility of comprehensive planning for all types of disaster, whether man-made or natural. The Office also provides planning and coordination for large special events such as major gatherings, visiting dignitaries, etc. This department also oversees the local volunteer Community Emergency Response Team.

### **Planning and Zoning Department**

The Planning and Zoning Department provides administrative and professional technical services to the Planning and Zoning Commission, Zoning Board of Appeals, associated local Boards and Commissions, Federal agencies, State agencies, and the general public, in order to assist the Town of Monroe in guiding the orderly development and use of land to provide housing and employment opportunities; to stabilize the property tax base; to foster and enhance the visual image and vernacular character of the Town; and to protect open space and areas of sensitive and unique natural resources within the Town.

### **Parks and Recreation**

The Department offers a variety of cultural and educational programs for community members of all ages. This includes after school programs, summer camps and fitness programs. The Department also manages the Town's park system including property maintenance and scheduling of facilities.



**Monroe Parks and Recreation Summer Fun Days Camp** Image Source: Monroe Sun

### **Police Department**

The Monroe Police Department strives to provide a safe and orderly environment in Monroe through professionalism, dedication, and active partnership with the community to enhance the quality of life for all people. The Department is comprised of a Patrol Division, Detective Division, Supporting Services Division, Records Unit, a K-9 Unit, and an Animal Control Unit that is responsible for enforcing state laws and Town ordinances pertaining to animals.

### **Health Department**

The Health Department provides community, environmental, and emergency preparedness services. The Community Health Services provides monitoring, investigating, and responding to reports of disease in the community and providing outreach and education to the public, schools, businesses, and act as a resource for public health information.

The Environmental Health Services focuses on enforcement of the Connecticut Public Health Code including inspections in facilities such as restaurants and hair salons, conducting soil testing, review of plans for subsurface sewage disposal systems, and investigation of complaints.

Emergency Preparedness services are further supported by the Stratford-Trumbull-Monroe Medical Reserve Corps which is a regional partnership of medical and non-medical volunteers organized to respond to public health emergencies in the three-town region.

### ***Edith Wheeler Memorial Library***

The mission of the Edith Wheeler Memorial Library is to enrich lives, foster success, and build community by bringing people, information, and ideas together in a welcoming environment.

### ***Public Works***

The Public Works Department provides a range of services with a mission to enhance the quality of life for residents of the Town of Monroe through the safe, responsive, efficient and effective delivery of services to every neighborhood.

### ***Senior Center***

The Monroe Senior Center's purpose is to be a hub for activities and services for older persons and a visible symbol of the community's concern for its older residents. The Center's primary goal is to provide a balance of social, recreational, educational, health maintenance, home management, economic and financial programs to the senior population.

### ***Department of Community & Social Services***

The Department's mission is to provide resources, information, referrals, and assistance in order to maintain and improve the quality of life of all residents of Monroe. The includes operating a community food pantry and providing clinical social services and elderly services.

### ***Volunteer Fire Departments***

Monroe has three volunteer fire departments, the Monroe Volunteer Fire Department, Stepney Volunteer Fire Company, and Stevenson Volunteer Fire Company. The Departments and companies have six fire stations and multiple apparatus. The Fire Marshall's office is a paid department operated out of Town Hall.

4.0



***Monroe Volunteer Fire Department*** Image Source: *Monroe Volunteer Fire Department*

## Facilities & Services Goal

Provide high quality facilities and a high level of service to residents, property owners, business owners, and visitors in a fiscally responsible manner.

### Strategy 1

Finalize and implement strategic recommendations of the ongoing Municipal Space Needs Assessment.

### Supporting Actions

1. The Town should finalize the Municipal Space Needs Assessment.
2. The Town should create or designate a committee to identify which recommendations of the Municipal Space Needs Assessment should be prioritized and oversee the implementation of the Assessments recommendations.
3. The Town should commit fiscal resources via the Town's capital improvement plan towards facility modifications and improvements recommended in the Municipal Space Needs Assessment and initiate those improvements.

### Strategy 2

Conduct an ADA assessment of municipal facilities.

### Supporting Actions

1. Upon completion of the Space Needs Assessment, the Town should conduct an ADA assessment of municipal facilities (with the exception of Town Hall and the Library where an assessment has already been completed) to ensure that facilities are compliant.
2. The Town should commit funding for ADA improvements identified by the assessment in its capital improvements plan.

### Strategy 3

Develop a parks and recreation masterplan and expand and enhance parks and recreation facilities in accordance with the plan.

### Supporting Actions

1. The Town's Park and Recreation Commission, with support of the Parks & Recreation Department, should update the parks & recreation masterplan to identify recreation facility and programming needs.
2. Complete ongoing improvements at Wolfe Park. The expansion of athletic fields and other facilities at Wolfe Park should be a priority of the recreation masterplan.
3. The masterplan should seek opportunities to develop small playgrounds and other facilities such as dog parks in areas of town that are distant from and under-served by recreational facilities.
4. The Town should provide the funding necessary to support a parks & recreation masterplan update, should a consultant be needed to produce the plan.
5. The Plan should explore opportunities for improving access to Lake Zoar for recreation.

### Strategy 4

Strategically implement recommendations of the MetroCOG 2019 Hazardous Mitigation Plan.

### Supporting Actions

1. Conduct a town wide hydrologic analysis that addresses flooding, stormwater, and water conveyance needs to identify projects that can be implemented to reduce risks to infrastructure and people.
2. Upgrade the generator at Masuk High School to strengthen use of the school as an emergency shelter.

### **Strategy 5**

Support energy efficiency and renewable energy sources.

#### ***Supporting Actions***

1. The Town should include energy efficiency and renewable energy projects in the Town's capital improvement plan.
2. The Town should oversee the implementation of energy efficiency and renewable energy improvements at its buildings and facilities.
3. The Town should coordinate with Monroe Public Schools to support them in implementing energy efficiency and renewable energy projects.

### **Strategy 6**

Plan for and maintain public safety facilities in accordance with evolving space and technology needs.

#### ***Supporting Actions***

1. Complete the renovation and addition to the Jockey Hollow Road facility to permanently house EMS operations.
2. Ensure that the Police Department has the space and technology required to meeting current and future needs.
3. Strategically implement recommendations of the Monroe Fire Department facilities study.



Image Credit: Bill Bittar, Monroe Sun

# 5.0 Transportation & Infrastructure

Monroe's transportation network is comprised of local roadways, state roadways, and a limited network of sidewalks and pathways. Monroe is approximately ten miles north of Bridgeport and has connections to State and interstate highways such as Route 8 and I-84 via Route 25, which traverses the west side of the Town. As a rural/suburban community, Monroe's transportation network is auto-centric with approximately 151 miles of roads and 2 miles of public sidewalks.

Through the Plan's community engagement process, the community expressed a strong desire to have a more robust and higher quality sidewalk network and to have a network of pathways that could accommodate bicycles. Residents generally feel that the Town does a good job of maintaining roadways, but expressed concern about traffic safety of multiple locations along Routes 25 and 111, which are maintained by the State. Older residents communicated a desire to have more transit options and improved senior shuttle services.

The Town's transportation network is vital to providing access to jobs, housing, schools, open space, goods and services, and recreation. As such, it should maximize access for all users and accommodate a wide array of transportation modes. A comprehensive transportation network is central to economic development and the vitality of a community.

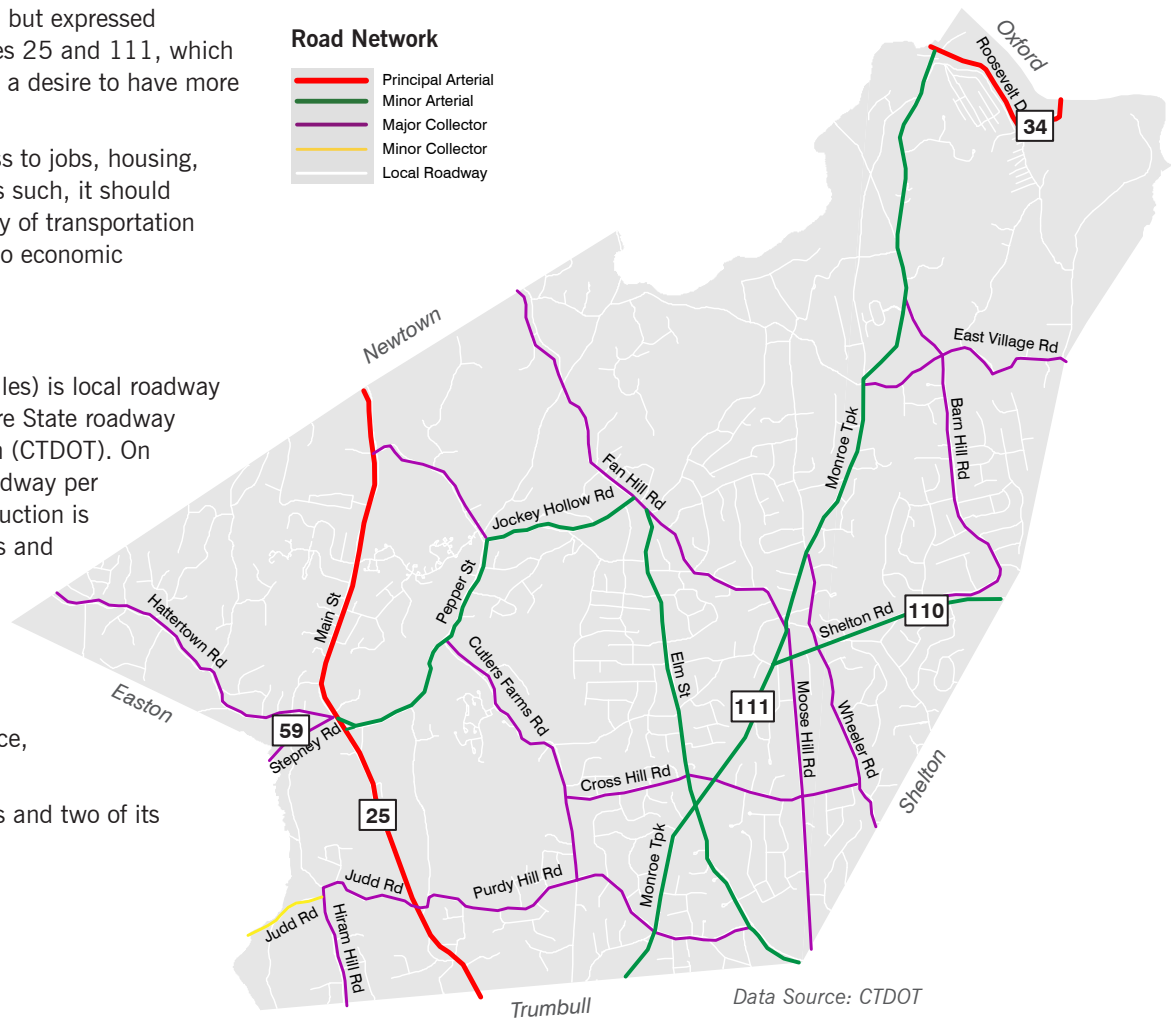
### Roadway Network

Approximately 90% of the Town's roadway network (136 miles) is local roadway that is maintained by the Town; the remaining 14.7 miles are State roadway maintained by the Connecticut Department of Transportation (CTDOT). On average, the Town resurfaces approximately five miles of roadway per year. The Town's overall budget for road paving and reconstruction is currently \$2 million per year, an increase over previous years and has resulted in a significant increase in the Town's overall Pavement Condition Index from 64 in 2010 to 75 in 2018, as determined by an independent consultant. The Town also has a policy of addressing drainage issues and infrastructure when restoring roadways and completes approximately 2.5 miles of drainage inspections, maintenance, and/or improvements per year.

State routes are located on all of the Town's arterial corridors and two of its collector roadways. State routes in Monroe are:

- Route 25 (Main Street)
- Route 34 (Roosevelt Drive)
- Route 59 (Stepney Road)
- Route 110 (Shelton Road)
- Route 111 (Monroe Turnpike)

With 19,800 residents, Monroe has 36 linear feet of local roadway per resident. This is nearly twice the share of local roadway per resident when compared to Fairfield County as a whole and forty percent higher than the State average. The challenge of rural/suburban communities like Monroe is to maintain a large roadway network with a modest tax base.



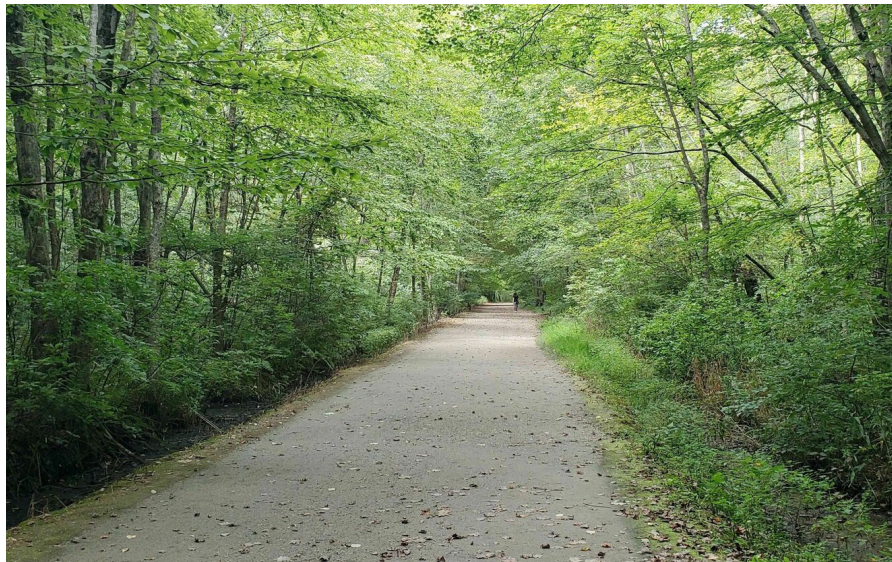


### ***Bicycle and Pedestrian Facilities***

Monroe has approximately two miles of public sidewalk; comprised mostly of concrete sidewalks located primarily along Route 111 and Route 110. Most of these sidewalks are relatively new and are in good condition although the network is limited and contains many gaps between sidewalk segments. Pedestrian crossings of the Town's major corridors are limited; there are few marked crosswalks and signalized pedestrian crossings across corridors such as Route 111 and Route 110.

The most prominent bicycle or pedestrian facility in Town is the Pequonnock River Trail (also known as the Housatonic Rail Trail) which travels north and south connecting to Trumbull and Newtown. The trail is a 16 mile multi-use, linear trail that runs from Bridgeport through Trumbull and Monroe along the Pequonnock River. The trail varies in its accommodations ranging from a dirt path to gravel with segments that are on-street. A conceptual plan for a continuous pathway connection was provided in the 2019 Engineering Planning Study for Route 25 and Route 111. Substantial improvements to the trail are planned between Maple Drive and the existing trailhead at Wolfe Park, passing the Town's DPW site and crossing Purdy Hill Road. Those improvements are expected to commence in 2021.

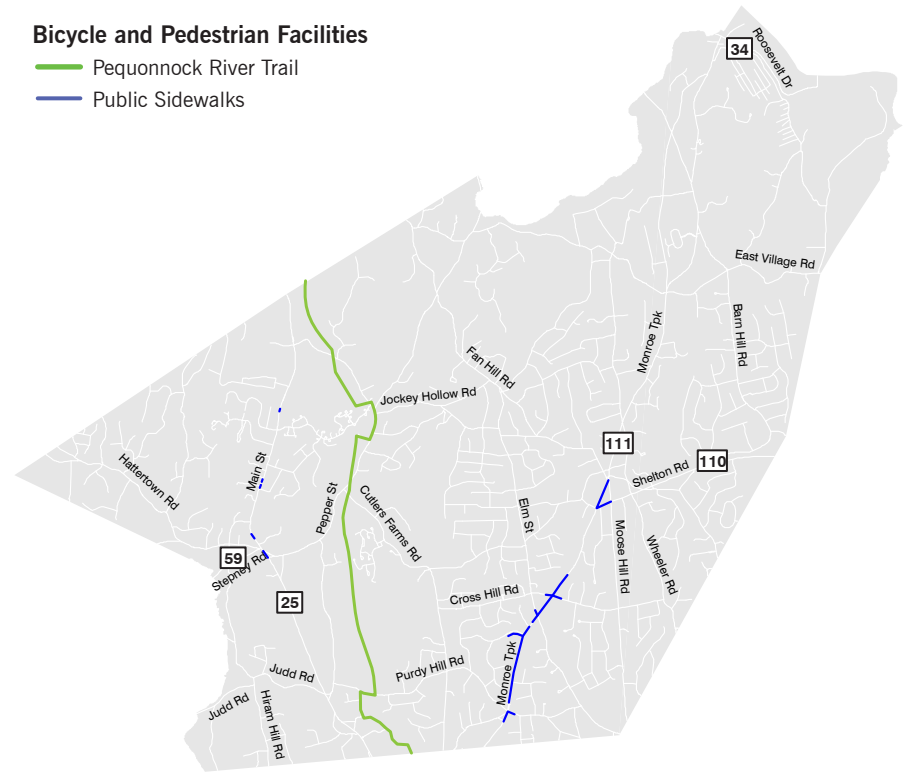
While Monroe is popular with recreational bicyclists, bicycling as a means of commuting and running errands is very low in Monroe (zero percent of Monroe residents commute to work by bike). Monroe also lacks facilities such as bike lanes and paved bicycle paths, but has many low volume roadways that are suitable for bicycling.



***Pequonnock River Trail***  
*Image Credit: Sam Ferreira*

### **Bicycle and Pedestrian Facilities**

- Pequonnock River Trail
- Public Sidewalks



### Monroe's Bridges

Monroe has four bridges in its jurisdiction, one bridge on a state roadway and the remaining three bridges on local roads. Those bridges date from 1919 to 2002 with conditions that range from poor to fair and good as documented by the 2019 National Bridge Inventory.

The Connecticut Department of Transportation (CTDOT) is currently planning to replace the Route 34 bridge over Stevenson Dam and the Housatonic River. CTDOT has determined that routine maintenance as well as limited scope rehabilitation projects performed on the existing structure have been ineffective at improving the condition of and maintaining the long-term viability of the bridge, therefore a complete bridge replacement is being proposed. It is anticipated that the proposed bridge cross-section will include two 12-foot travel lanes, two 8-foot shoulders, and a 5-foot sidewalk on one side of the bridge.

The present schedule indicates that the environmental document, public involvement program and design will be completed by 2025, with construction anticipated to start in 2026, assuming acceptance of the project, availability of funding and receipt of any required right-of-way and environmental permits.

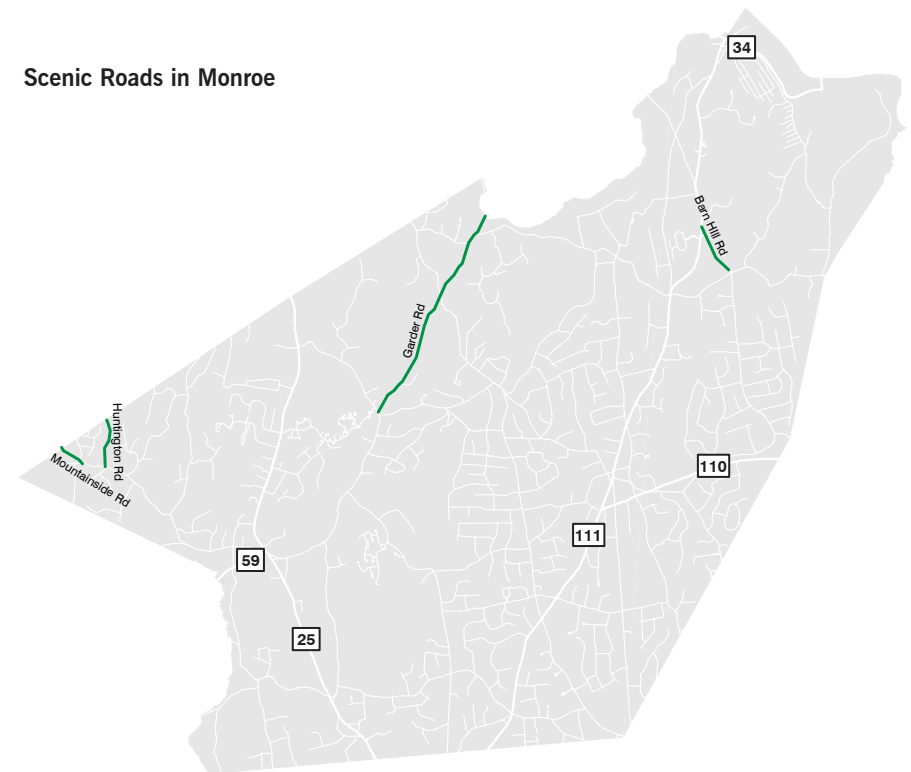
Bridge #	Year Built	Facility Carried	Feature Spanned	Condition
01843	1919	Route 34	Stevenson Dam/Housatonic River	Poor
04928	2002	Bagburn Hill Road	Halfway River	Good
04929	1950	Judd Road	Mill River	Fair
06516	1995	Maple Drive	W. Branch of Pequonnock R.	Good

### Scenic Roads

Monroe has a local ordinance that gives the Planning and Zoning Commission power to designate a Town road that is longer than one-half mile in length as a scenic road if at least three of the following criteria are met: unpaved; bordered by mature trees or stone walls; no more than 20 feet wide; offers scenic views; blends naturally into the surrounding terrain; or parallels or crosses over brooks, streams, lakes or ponds.

The purpose of the designation is to ensure that the characteristics of the roadway are preserved. Any proposal for alteration or improvement, outside of routine maintenance, requires Planning and Zoning Commission review and approval. The Town has four scenic roads totaling three miles in length.

#### Scenic Roads in Monroe



**Recently Completed Transportation & Infrastructure Projects**

The Town and/or State completed the following projects within the past several years:

- Route 110/111: Roundabout and associated roadway and sidewalk improvements.
- Route 34: Bridge (culvert) rehabilitation at Boys Halfway Brook.
- Route 25: Bridge (culvert) replacements and roadway reconstruction. Replacement of two culverts and raising of the roadway to address flooding issues, from Knollwood Street to Judd Road.

**Planned and Ongoing Transportation & Infrastructure Projects**

The Town and State are active in planning improvements to, and reconstructing, the Town’s transportation network. These projects include:

- Route 34: Replacement of the bridge at Stevenson Dam.\*
- Brook Street: Culvert replacement at Pequonnock River.\*
- Judd Road: Bridge replacement (application with the Town of Easton for LOTCIP funding).
- Pepper Street: Full reconstruction with vertical realignment. Includes culvert replacement at the Pequonnock River, and off-road multi-use trail construction.\*
- Intersection improvements at Route 110 and Wheeler Road (LOTICP funded).
- Pequonnock River Trail: Project will connect to completed sections of the trail in the Maple Drive vicinity and Wolfe Park. The total length of this section trail is approximately 4,500 feet and includes the existing bridge crossing of the West Branch of the Pequonnock River.

*\*Identified in MetroCOG’s Metropolitan Transportation Plan*

**Commuting Preferences and Patterns**

Like most of Connecticut’s rural or suburban communities, Monroe’s residents overwhelmingly drive to work alone (88%) exceeding Fairfield County (84%) and the commuters across the State (78%). Only 12% of Monroe residents travel to work by other means, this includes 4% of residents who carpool and 5% of residents who work at home. Only one percent of the Town’s residents walk to work.

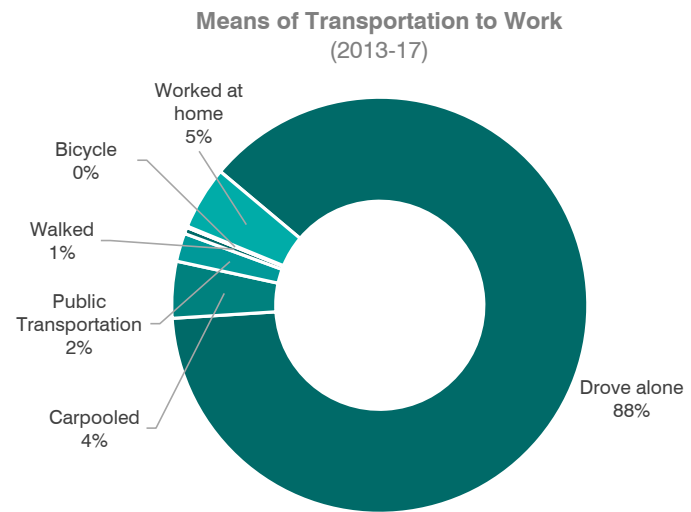
More than half of Monroe residents work within ten miles of their homes. Compared to residents across Fairfield County and the State, Monroe residents work closer to home.

Monroe is the most common work destination of workers that reside in Town. A total of 8,891 workers who reside in Monroe commute to other communities for work. Bridgeport is the most common destination, followed by Stamford, Norwalk,

Shelton, New York City, and Trumbull. Residents also commute to cities such as Danbury, Hartford, New Haven, and Waterbury.

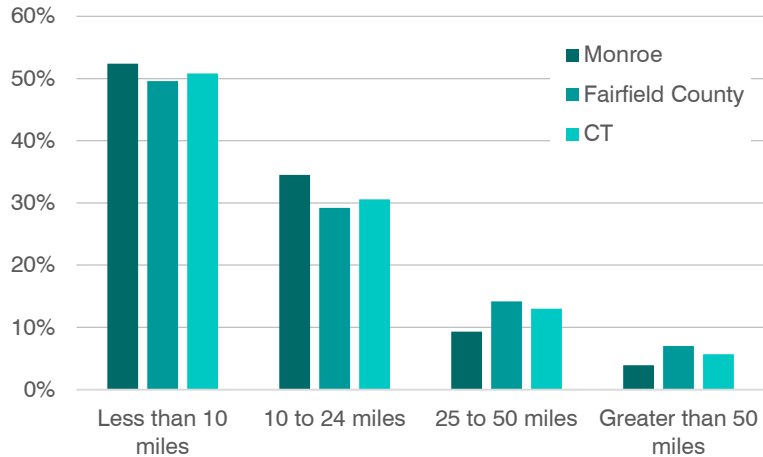
Commuting patterns shifted over the ten-year period between 2008 and 2017, with fewer residents working in Monroe, Bridgeport, Stamford, and Norwalk and more residents working in New York City and in other destinations.

This shift is partly attributed to a major loss of employers in Connecticut over the ten-year period that has required residents to make longer commutes as well as to seek new employment opportunities in places such as New York City.



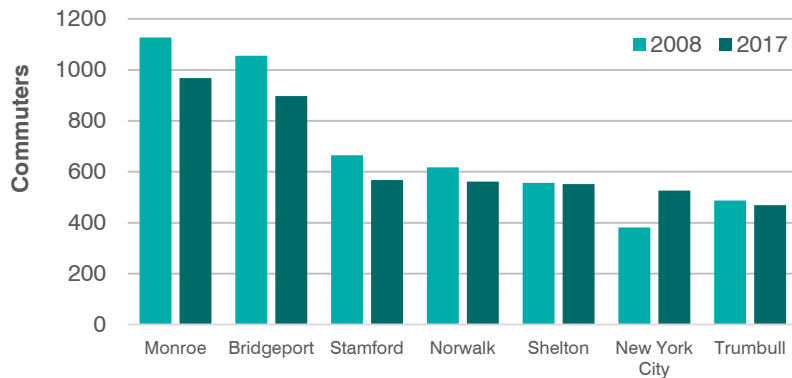
Source: US Census Bureau 2013-17 ACS

### Distance to Work (2017)



Source: US Census Bureau Longitudinal Employer-Household Dynamics (2017)

### Top Work Destinations (2008 vs 2017)



Source: US Census Bureau Longitudinal Employer-Household Dynamics (2017)

### Transit

Transit service is provided by Greater Bridgeport Transit (GBT) with one route (Route 19x) that connects Monroe to Trumbull and Bridgeport. Route 19x travels Monroe Turnpike to Cross Hill Road where it returns to Bridgeport via Cross Hill Road and Elm Street. Prior to November 2017, the Town had two additional bus routes, Route 14, which also traveled along Monroe Turnpike and Route 20, which traveled along Main Street to Upper Stepney. Those routes were terminated by GBT due to funding limitations and low ridership.

The 2019 Engineering Planning Study for Route 25 and Route 111 recommended extending the existing Route 19x service to Monroe Center, with a turnaround at the new roundabout. That study also recommended providing bus stop enhancements such as paved waiting areas and shelters at existing bus stops. There is currently no schedule or funding for implementing these recommendations.

### Motor Vehicle Traffic

Monroe's most heavily traveled corridors are Route 25 (Main Street), which carries approximately 20,000 vehicles per day, Route 111 (Monroe Turnpike) which carries up to 13,000 vehicles per day, and Route 34 which carries approximately 11,000 vehicles per day. State roadways carry the highest volume of traffic in the Town, although no other roadway carries as many vehicles per day as Route 25.

### Transportation Safety

Monroe's crash volume is comparable with that of the region, but lower than found in larger cities. Additionally, the Town's per capita crash rate (23.6 per 1,000 people), is relatively consistent the statewide average for towns with a population of 10,000 to 25,000 (22.8 per 1,000 people).

Monroe's crash volume ranged between 430 to 476 crashes per year over the three-year period between 2017 and 2019. After declining between 2017 and 2018, crashes increased to 466 in 2019.

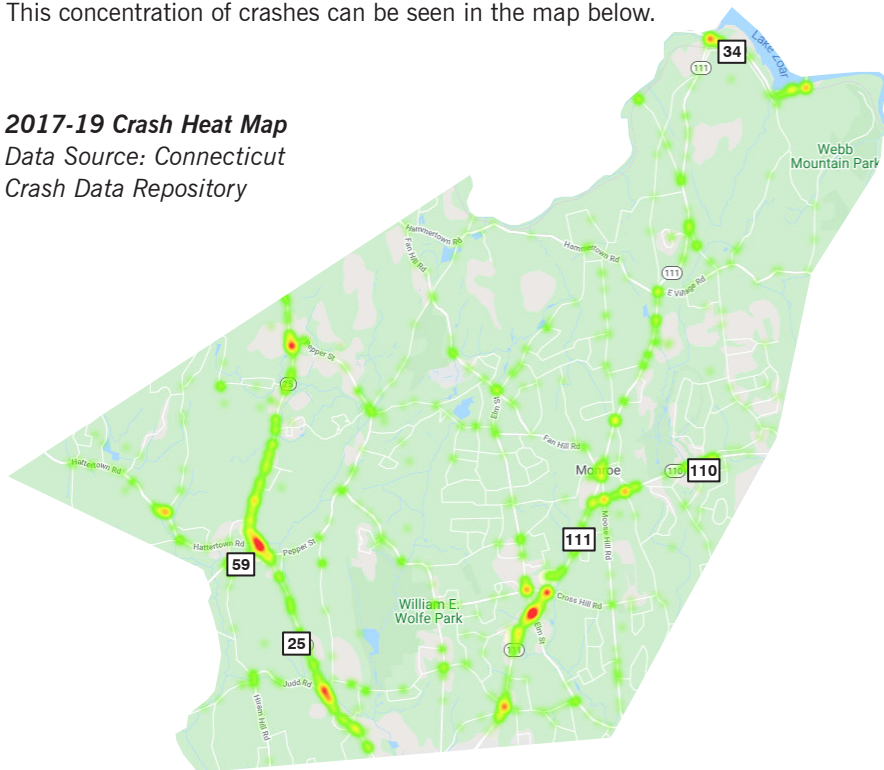
Over the three-year period, there was a total of 1,372 crashes comprised of one fatal crash, 325 injury crashes, and 121 property-damage-only crashes. This ratio of crash severity has been relatively consistent over the past several years.

Monroe had a relatively low incident of pedestrian or bicycle related crashes over the three-year period which included four pedestrian crashes involving ten people and three bicyclist involved crashes.

Over half (57%) of crashes occurred on State highways with 27.8% of crashes occurring on Route 25 and 18.3% occurring on Route 111. This concentration of crashes can be seen in the map below.

### 2017-19 Crash Heat Map

Data Source: Connecticut  
Crash Data Repository



**Route 110 at Wheeler Road:** Signage improvements were recently implemented to reduce crashes at this intersection. Image Source: Monroe Sun

**Stormwater Infrastructure**

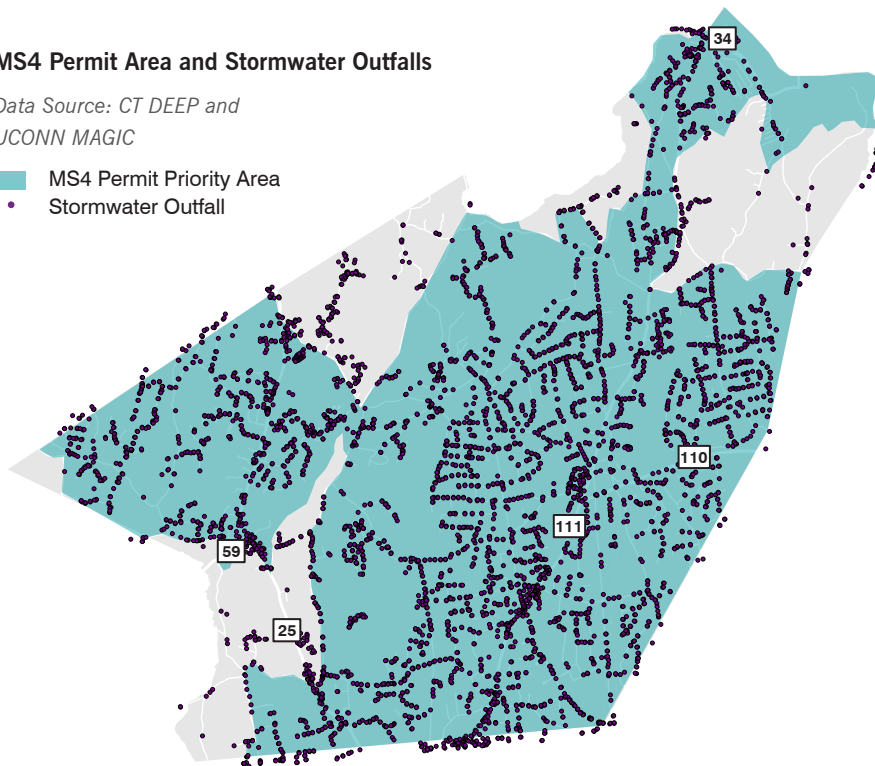
The Town’s stormwater infrastructure is an important component of its transportation system. This infrastructure processes stormwater from Town and State roads in Monroe, keeping roadways passable during storm events. This system is regulated by the State under the MS4 permit program. A 2019 analysis conducted for the Town as required by the MS4 permit program identified Directly Connected Impervious Areas (DCIA) and a number of “Priority Areas” which consist of “Urbanized Areas” (as defined by the US Census Bureau) and local basins that discharge directly to impaired waters.

The MS4 permit requires a special focus on improvements to the stormwater system and reduction of stormwater discharge within the Priority Areas. The MS4 permit requires the Town to work towards a goal to disconnect 2% of its DCIA by 2022. This may be accomplished by reducing impervious surface on municipal and/or private properties. The Town is required to report on progress towards this goal in its annual stormwater management report and may be required to submit a plan for meeting the disconnect goal if not achieved by the end of the permit period (2022).

**MS4 Permit Area and Stormwater Outfalls**

*Data Source: CT DEEP and UCONN MAGIC*

- MS4 Permit Priority Area
- Stormwater Outfall



**Sewers**

Monroe lacks a municipal sanitary sewer system. Homes, businesses, Town and school buildings and other structures are serviced by individual and/or community septic systems. There are multiple private community subsurface wastewater systems in Monroe that are regulated by the Connecticut Department of Energy and Environmental Protection and the Monroe Health Department. The continued compliance of these systems is critical to protecting the local watershed. Monroe has no current plans for the development of a municipal sanitary sewer system.

Monroe is proximate to a municipal sewer network which has service on Route 111 and Spring Hill Road terminating at or near the Monroe town line.

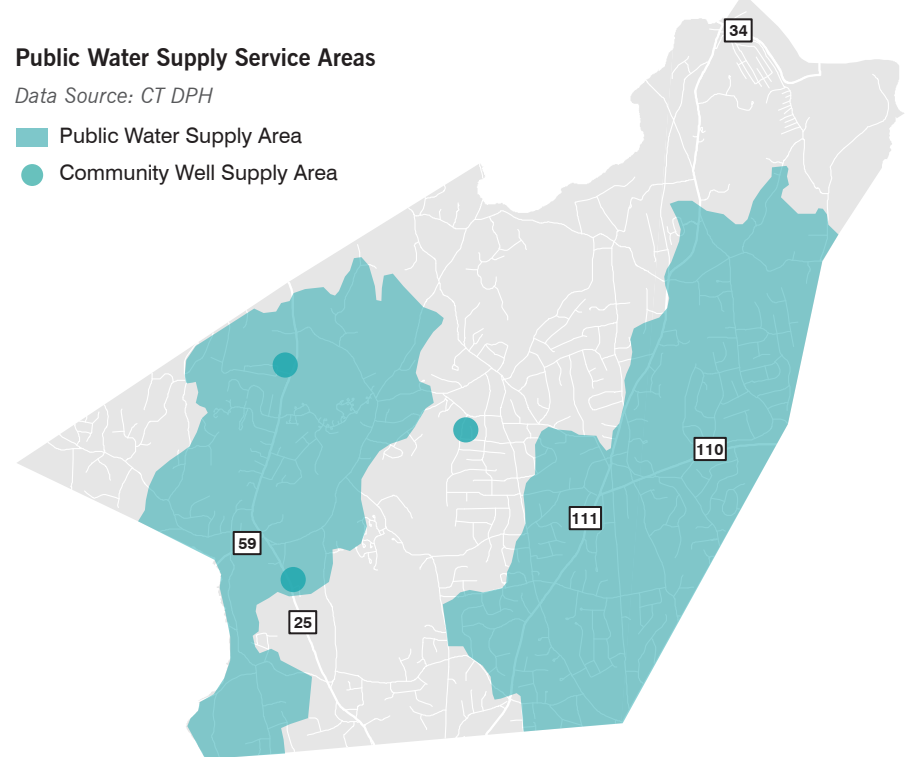
**Public Water Supply Areas**

Monroe has an extensive public water supply systems serviced by the Aquarion Water Company in two large areas on the east and west sides of Town. Approximately half of the Town’s geographic area is serviced by the public water supply system.

**Public Water Supply Service Areas**

*Data Source: CT DPH*

- Public Water Supply Area
- Community Well Supply Area



## Transportation & Infrastructure Goal

Improve and expand transportation options with a focus on alternative modes of travel to ensure greater connectivity within Town and to the region; continue to maintain and improve infrastructure in an environmentally and fiscally responsible manner.

### Strategy 1

Improve traffic safety throughout Town.

#### Supporting Actions

1. Continue to work with MetroCOG to obtain grant funding for high priority safety areas identified by the study from programs such as the Local Road Accident Reduction Program.
2. Implement traffic safety and traffic calming measures in areas such as Monroe Center and Stepney as well as other areas of need as identified by a Town-wide traffic and traffic safety study.

### Strategy 2

Continue to evaluate small bridges and culverts.

#### Supporting Actions

1. Maintain capital plan to fund evaluation.
2. Integrate specific needed improvements into the Town's capital improvement plan.

### Strategy 3

Continue improvement and expansion of the Town's pedestrian network.

#### Supporting Actions

1. The Department of Public Works (DPW) should identify existing sidewalk network in need of repair or replacement and estimate cost for repair or replacement.
2. The Town, via the Planning and Zoning Department and with assistance from MetroCOG, should pursue State grant funding for expansion of the sidewalk network. Grant programs to pursue include but are not limited to Community Connectivity and LOTCIP grants.
3. The Town should discuss during future budget cycles the ongoing operating and capital costs for the construction, repair, maintenance (including snow and ice removal), replacement, and expansion of sidewalks. This will allow Town officials and taxpayers to determine the scope of the Town's appetite for sidewalks in the community.

### Strategy 4

Continue to increase maintenance of the Town's roadways.

#### Supporting Actions

1. The Department of Public Works should identify and document annual maintenance requirements necessary to maintain roads, bridges, and sidewalks in a state of good repair. DPW should make that information available to other Town Departments.
2. The Town should continue to budget sufficient fund and to maintain the Town's roadways in a state of good repair.

**Strategy 5**

Continue to expand and improve the Pequonnock River/Housatonic Rail Trail.

**Supporting Actions**

1. Complete the gap in the trail network between Maple Drive and Wolfe Park
2. Improve trail conditions with attention on drainage issues and surface quality

**Strategy 6**

Support and advocate for the implementation of recommendations of the Route 25/111 Study that are beneficial to the Town of Monroe.

**Supporting Actions**

1. The Planning and Zoning Commission should review the Town's zoning regulations and implement recommendations of the Study's access management plan which includes expanding access management design standards to all zoning districts along Routes 25 and 111.
2. Work with MetroCOG and GBT to expand Route 19x bus service north to Monroe's municipal campus as recommended by the plan.
3. Initiate discussions with MetroCOG and GBT regarding reinstating Route 20 bus service which had served Route 25.
4. Coordinate with MetroCOG and CTDOT to identify traffic and intersection improvement recommendations of the Study that the Town is interested in advancing.

**Strategy 7**

Maintain and improve stormwater infrastructure to comply with MS4 permit requirements.

**Supporting Action**

1. Review the stormwater management plan and commit to taking actions and making investments necessary to comply with the MS4 permit requirements.





*Image Credit: Town of Monroe*

# 6.0 Environmental Resources



Monroe's environmental resources are diverse and strongly contribute to the Town's identity. They include ridgelines; forest areas; farms and pastures; municipal parks; water resources such as surficial aquifers, rivers, streams, lakes, ponds, wetlands, and riparian areas; and the soil, water, flora, and fauna that comprise these areas.

Through the Plan's community engagement process residents expressed strong interest in the Town playing an active role in protecting natural resources and preserving open space. Residents identified the Town's environmental resources as one of its greatest assets. Monroe's landscape and rural environment are strong factors in many residents' decision to live in Monroe. Residents feel that the town should continue to protect these resources, particularly in light of the potential redevelopment of large sites across Town.

**Water Resources**

Unlike some neighboring towns, Monroe does not have a designated aquifer protection area, although the Town does have surficial aquifer potential and many of the Town's residents are dependent upon groundwater supply via private wells.

Protecting Monroe's water resources requires the preservation of forest and wetland habitats that play critical roles in recharging local aquifers and protecting water quality. Development, particularly in the form of impervious surface, challenges this ecological system and should be carefully considered with respect to its impact on surface and groundwaters. Similarly, agriculture requires environmentally responsible and sustainable practices to protect water quality.

Monroe's major rivers and brooks include the Pequonnock River, Halfway River, Farmill River, Mill River, and Means Brook. The Town also has multiple smaller brooks and rivers. Monroe is also home to lakes and ponds including Lake Zoar, Housatonic Lake, Guskie Pond Great Hollow Lake, Smith Ponds, Stepney Pond, and many other unnamed or smaller ponds.

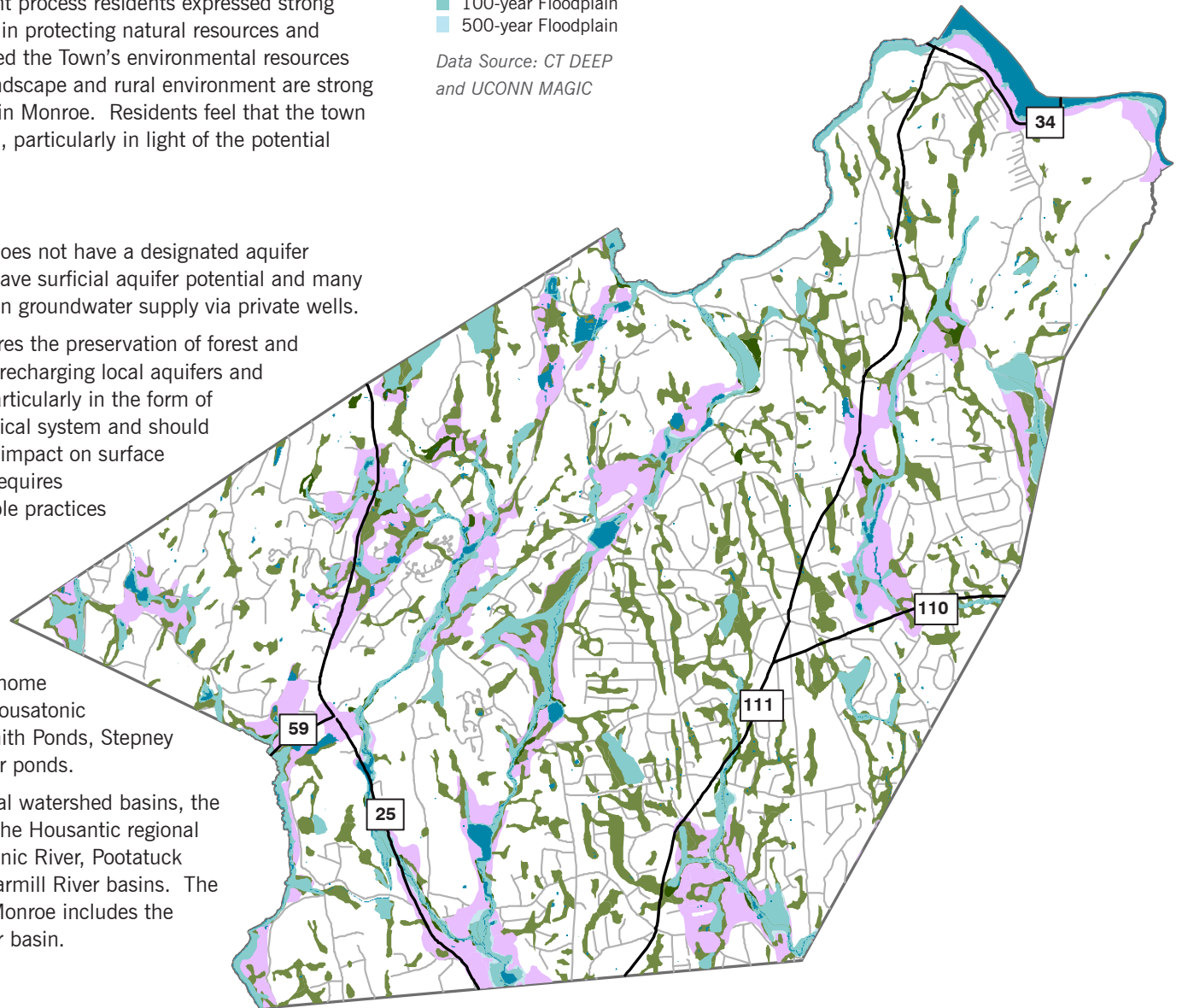
Monroe is divided into two primary regional watershed basins, the Housatonic and the Southwest Eastern. The Housatonic regional basin within Monroe includes the Housatonic River, Pootatuck River, Halfway River, Means Brook, and Farmill River basins. The Southwest Eastern regional basin within Monroe includes the Pequonnock River basin and the Mill River basin.

**Water Resources**

Legend

- Watercourses
- State Wetlands
- Federal Wetlands
- Surficial Aquifer Potential
- 100-year Floodplain
- 500-year Floodplain

*Data Source: CT DEEP and UCONN MAGIC*

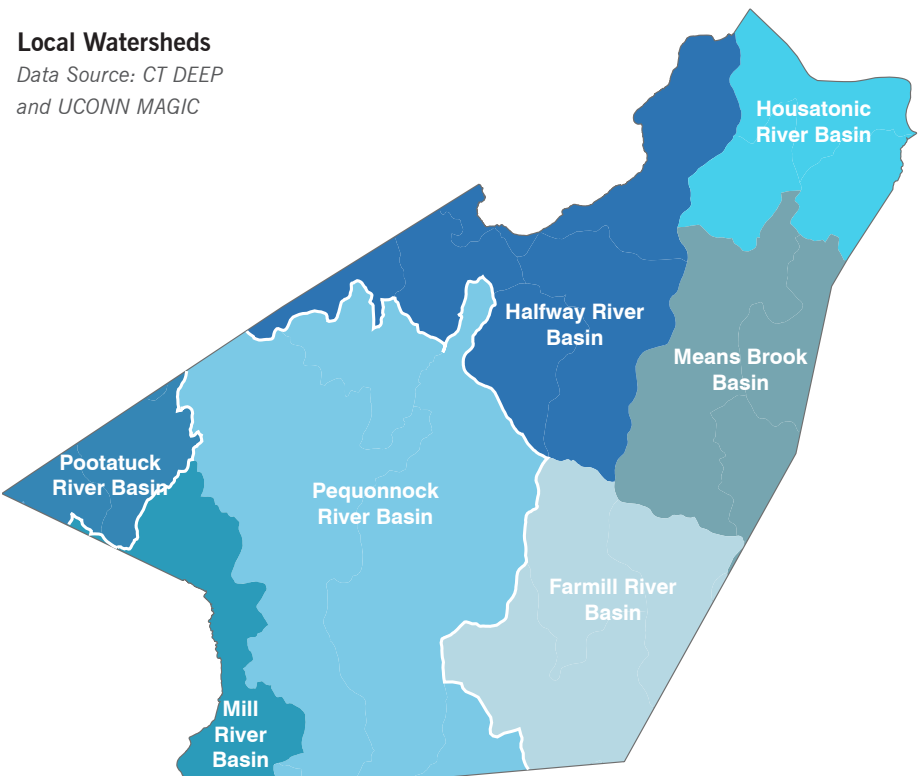


Approximately one-third of Monroe is within the Pequonnock River Basin, which flows south into Trumbull. Development activity in Monroe consequently has an impact on water quality for residents in downstream communities and users of water provided by the Aquarion Water Company, which has reservoir watershed in Monroe. Water from Monroe's rivers and brooks contributes to the Aquarion's Easton Lake, Farm Mill, and Means Brook Reservoirs, which provide drinking water to several communities in Fairfield County.

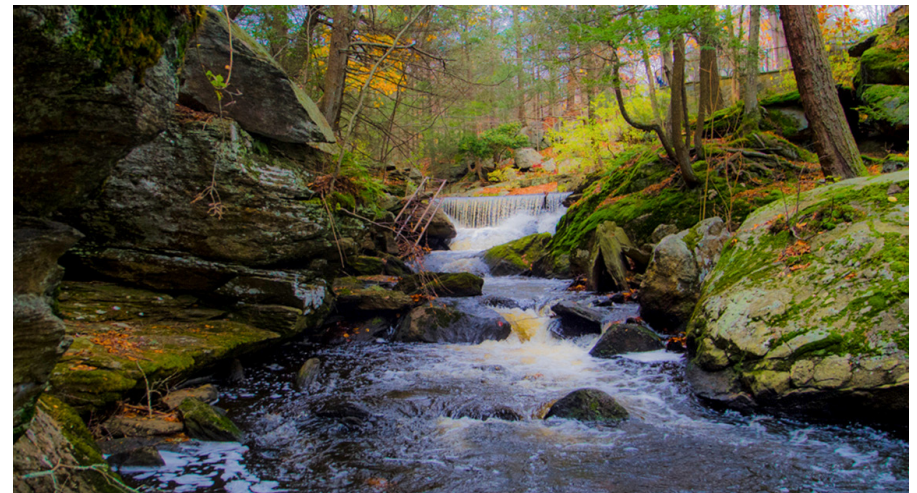
Monroe, along with Trumbull and Bridgeport, is a member of the Pequonnock River Initiative. In 2011 the Initiative produced a Watershed Based Plan that identifies areas of needs and provides recommendation for improving and protecting water quality within the watershed. The Plan identifies Lake Zoar, and Lake Housatonic as priority waters for action plan development.

Water quality of the Town's water resources varies. With the exception of Lake Zoar and Housatonic Lake, which are classified as water quality B and are impaired waters, all other assessed waterways are classified as A or AA, the two highest quality levels. Water quality assessments available for the Town's water resources, as presented in the table below, indicate that water bodies such as Lake Zoar, Housatonic Lake, and the Farmill River do not support recreation due to water quality. Only the Pequonnock River, north of Purdy Hill Road has been designated as fully supporting both aquatic life and recreation. Additionally, the West Branch of the Pequonnock is designated as an impaired water.

Water Quality Assessments (2020 CT 305 B)		
Waterbody	Aquatic Life	Recreation
Lake Zoar	Fully Supporting	Not Supporting
Housatonic Lake	Not Assessed	Not Supporting
Farmill River	Insufficient Information	Not Supporting
Halfway River	Fully Supporting	Not Assessed
Means Brook	Fully Supporting	Not Assessed
Mill River	Fully Supporting	Insufficient Information
Pequonnock River	Fully Supporting	Fully Supporting
Pequonnock River (south of Purdy Hill Road)	Not Assessed	Fully Supporting
Pootatuck River	Fully Supporting	Not Supporting
West Branch Pequonnock River	Insufficient Information/ Not Assessed	Fully Supporting



6.0



Pequonnock River, Image Credit: Kenneth Casper

**Land Cover**

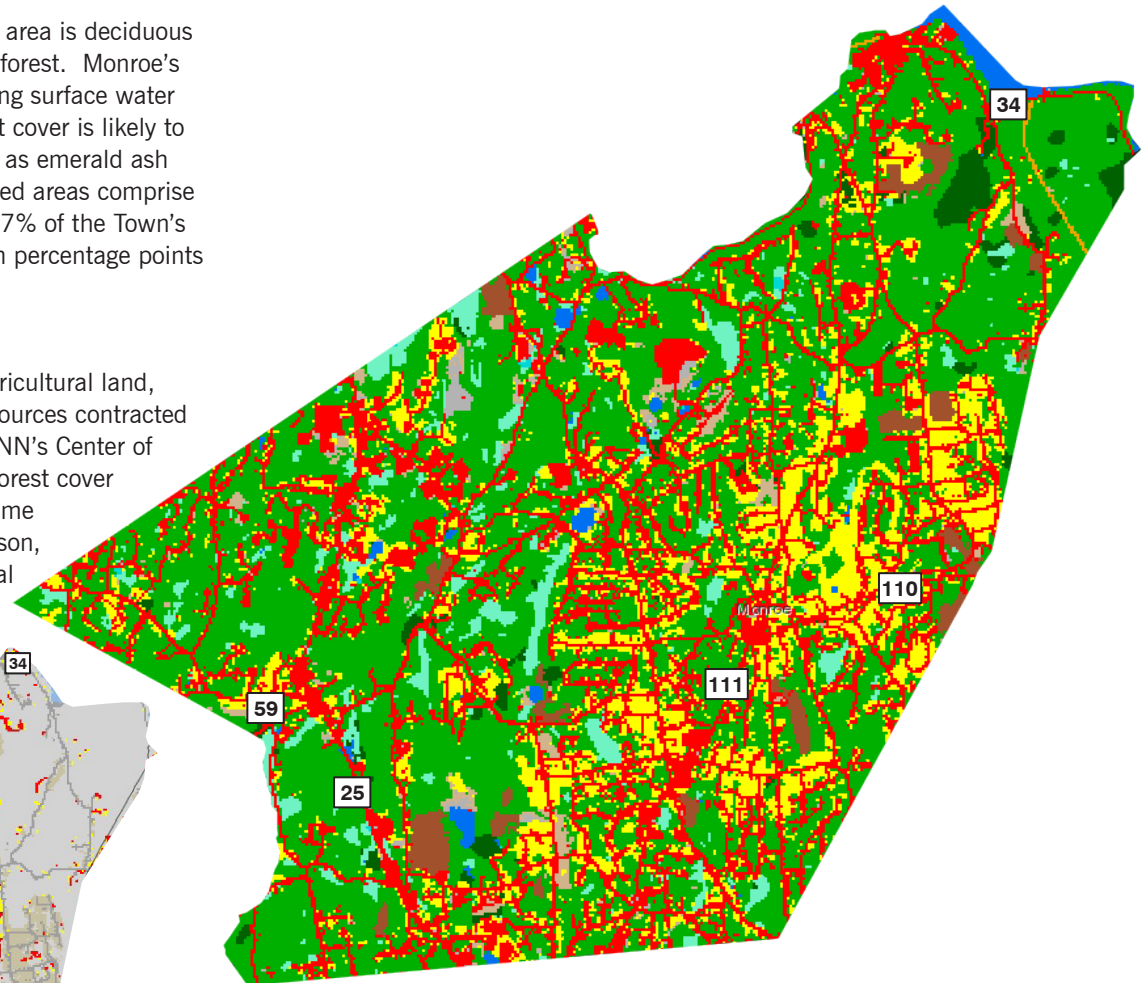
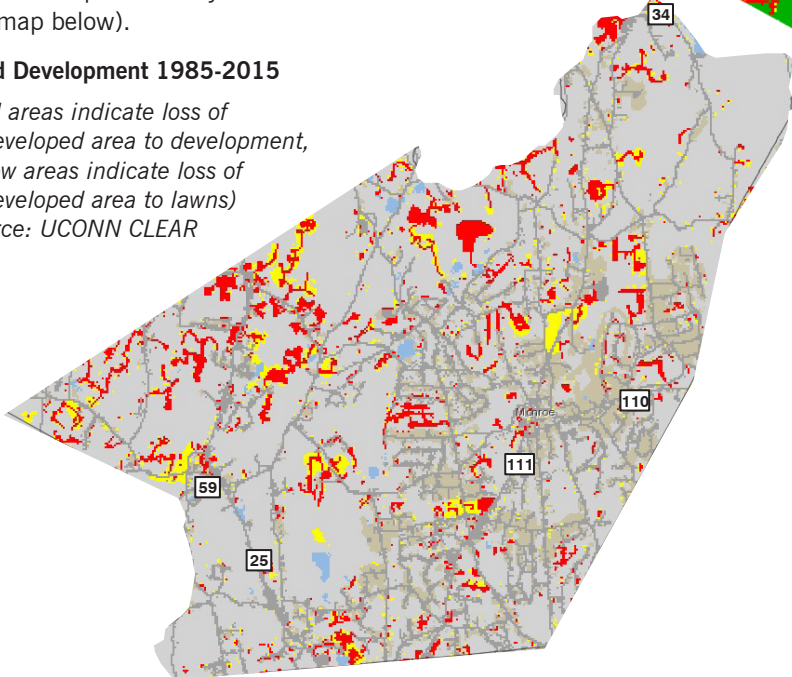
More than half (58%) of Monroe is forested. Most of that forest area is deciduous forest with a small amount of area that is coniferous or wetland forest. Monroe's forest areas play a significant role in providing habitat, moderating surface water temperatures, and reducing stormwater runoff. The Town's forest cover is likely to change in composition over the next decade due to threats such as emerald ash borer, woolly adelgid, and rising average temperatures. Developed areas comprise 24% of the Town's land cover. Including turf and grass areas, 37% of the Town's land area has been impacted by development, an increase of ten percentage points over the thirty-year period between 1985 and 2015.

**Landscape Change**

The Town's undeveloped land cover, such as forest cover and agricultural land, currently comprises over 60% of Monroe's land area. These resources contracted slightly between 1985 and 2015. According to a study by UCONN's Center of Land Use Education and Research, the Town lost 12.7% of its forest cover and 39.4% of its agricultural fields, primarily to single-family home residential development, over the thirty-year period. By comparison, Connecticut lost 6% of its forest cover and 16% of its agricultural fields over the same period. Development between 1985 and 2015 was spread evenly across the Town (as shown in the map below).

**Land Development 1985-2015**

*(Red areas indicate loss of undeveloped area to development, yellow areas indicate loss of undeveloped area to lawns)*  
 Source: UCONN CLEAR



**Land Cover Legend**

- Forest
- Agricultural Field
- Turf and Grass
- Developed

Data Source:  
 UCONN CLEAR

Land Cover (2015)	Acres	Share
Forest	9,709	57.7%
Agricultural Field	356	2.1%
Turf & Grass	2,204	13.1%
Developed	4,005	23.8%

### **Farmland Soils**

Agricultural soils cover much of Monroe's land area. Most of the existing farmland is located on soils classified as "prime farmland soil" or "statewide important farmland soils". Monroe's farmland soils are primarily associated with its brook and river valleys and adjoining floodplains.

Prime farmland soils are soils that have the best combination of physical and chemical characteristics for agricultural and forestry uses. These lands have soil quality, growing season, and moisture supply needed to economically produce sustained high yields or crops when treated and managed, including water management, according to acceptable farming practices. Because the supply of high-quality farmland is limited, the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) encourages local governments to protect this land for agricultural use. Prime farmland soils are potentially eligible for conservation easement funds administered by the Natural Resource Conservation Service of the USDA.

Statewide important farmland soils are soils that fail to meet one or more of the requirements of prime farmland, but are important for the production of food, feed, fiber, or forage crops. They include those soils that are nearly prime farmland and that economically produce high yields of crops when treated and managed according to acceptable farming methods.

### **Habitat**

Monroe has a diversity of habitats associated with its forests, wetlands, and surface waters. The Town's habitat is critical to supporting biodiversity, with greater biodiversity having a positive correlation with ecological health.

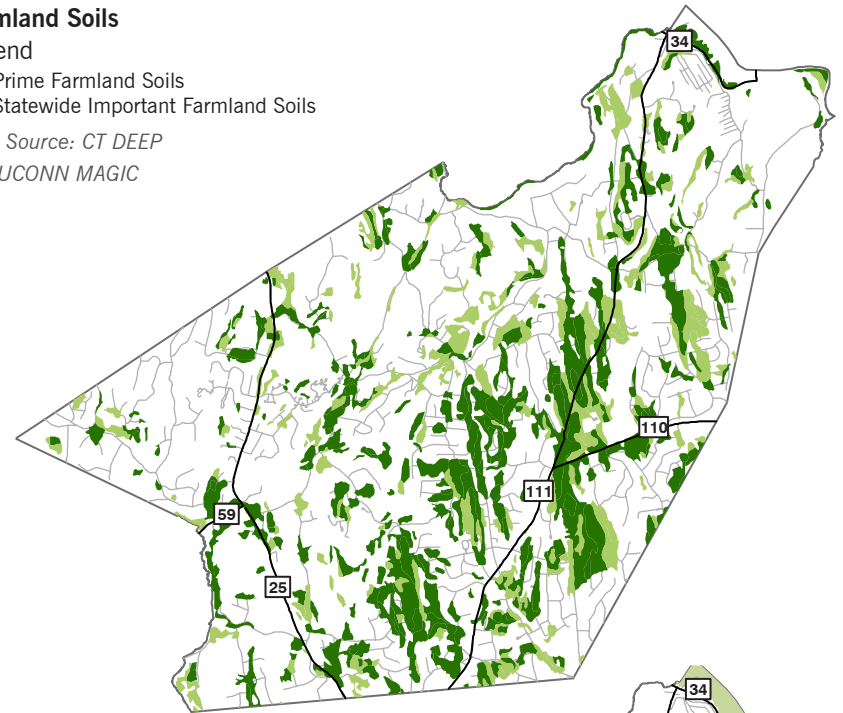
There are no areas designated as critical habitat by the Connecticut Department of Energy and Environmental Protection in Monroe. Monroe does have several areas that are designated as Natural Diversity Database Areas. Those areas represent approximate locations of endangered, threatened and special concern species and significant natural communities in Connecticut.

### **Farmland Soils**

#### **Legend**

- Prime Farmland Soils
- Statewide Important Farmland Soils

*Data Source: CT DEEP and UCONN MAGIC*

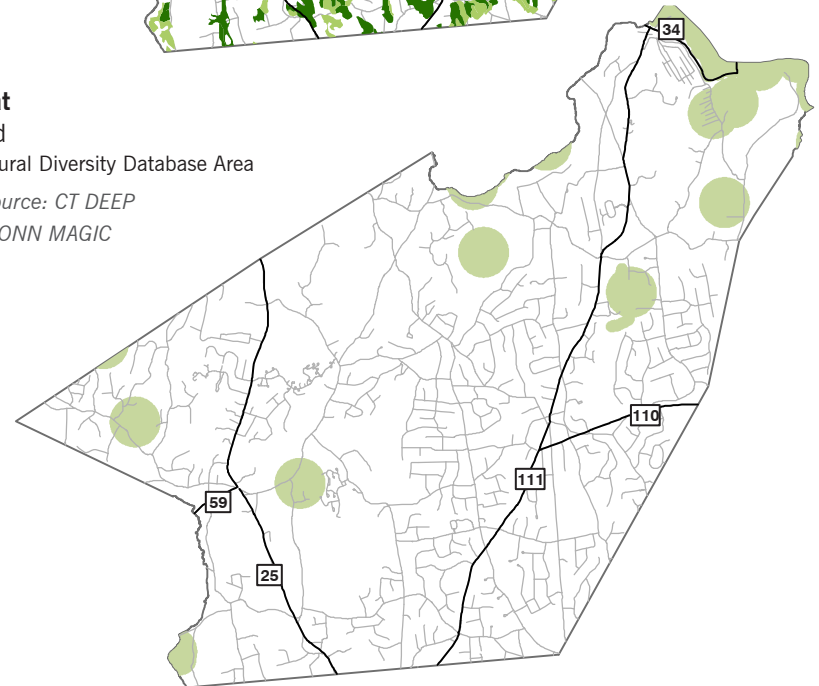


### **Habitat**

#### **Legend**

- Natural Diversity Database Area

*Data Source: CT DEEP and UCONN MAGIC*



## Open Space Inventory

Connecticut's 2016 Comprehensive Open Space Acquisition Strategy (Green Plan) establishes a goal of 21% protected open space statewide by 2023. This target is intended to be met through State, municipal, and private acquisitions. The Green Plan provides a strict definition of "protected" open space as "any area of land with a restriction that would limit its use to open space". This includes lands subject to conservation restrictions, deed restrictions, or certain reserved rights. The Plan defines "preserved open space" as "any area of land that has been acquired and is used for open space purposes". This includes State parks, forests, and wildlife areas and Class I and II watershed lands.

In addition to the open space described above and shown on the map at right, Connecticut Public Act 490 (PA490) is utilized by many landowners to help keep their land undeveloped. PA490 (Connecticut General Statutes Sections 12-107a through 107-f) allows a farm, forest, or open space land to be assessed at its use value rather than its fair market or highest and best use value (as determined by the property's most recent "fair market value" revaluation) for purposes of local property taxation. The intent of this designation is to encourage the preservation of farmland, forestland and open space land that might otherwise be developed because of the property tax burden placed upon those lands. PA490 lands help add to the rural character and preserve the agricultural history of Monroe and by keeping (at least temporarily) the land from being developed; also with PA490 land additional town services are not required which helps to keep taxes in check. It is important to note that PA490 land is not permanently protected and is generally not open for use by the public.

Based upon the Green Plan's definition, CTDEEP's 2010 mapping, and open space mapping provided by MetroCOG, Monroe has 3,341 acres (not including privately owned PA490 land) of open space – not all of it is legally protected.

Some open space properties are legally protected to remain as open space. Land legally protected includes: Connecticut State Centennial Watershed land (Class I & II), land trust properties, town parks, and trails, wetlands, and parcels in developments deeded to Monroe.

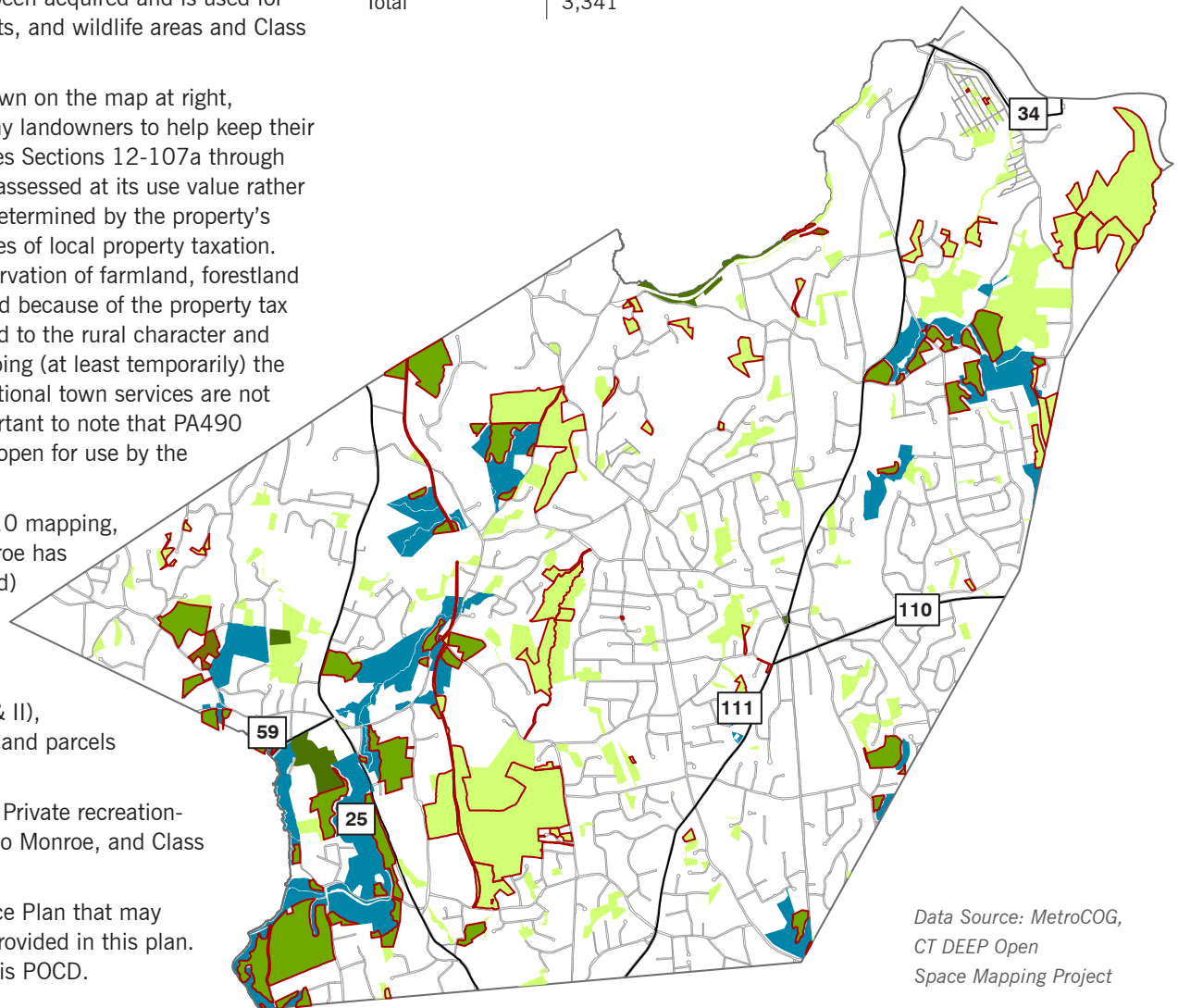
Properties not legally protected as open space include: Private recreation-oriented open space, parcels in developments deeded to Monroe, and Class III watershed lands (Aqurion owned in Monroe).

The Town is in the process of developing an Open Space Plan that may provide more detailed information than the inventory provided in this plan. That plan, once approved, will be a supplemental to this POCD.

Open Space	Acres
Municipal	1,755
State	611
Private	75
Land Trust	20
Water Company	880
Total	3,341

### Open Space Legend

- Municipal
- State
- Private
- Land Trust
- Water Company
- Protected Open Space



Data Source: MetroCOG,  
CT DEEP Open  
Space Mapping Project

## Open Space Preservation and Protection

This Plan recommends the preservation and/or protection of additional open space in Monroe based upon ongoing open space planning being conducted by Monroe's Conservation and Water Resources Commission. Preserved or protected land is intended to preserve water quality for current and future residents, preserve land that will help protect Monroe and surrounding towns from flooding and erosion, protect fragile flora and fauna in a changing climate, create opportunities for a wide range of recreational uses important for physical and mental health, and/or preserve Monroe's character as an historic and scenic town. While commercial and residential development will continue, open space planning should strive to balance both and not have one to the detriment of the other.

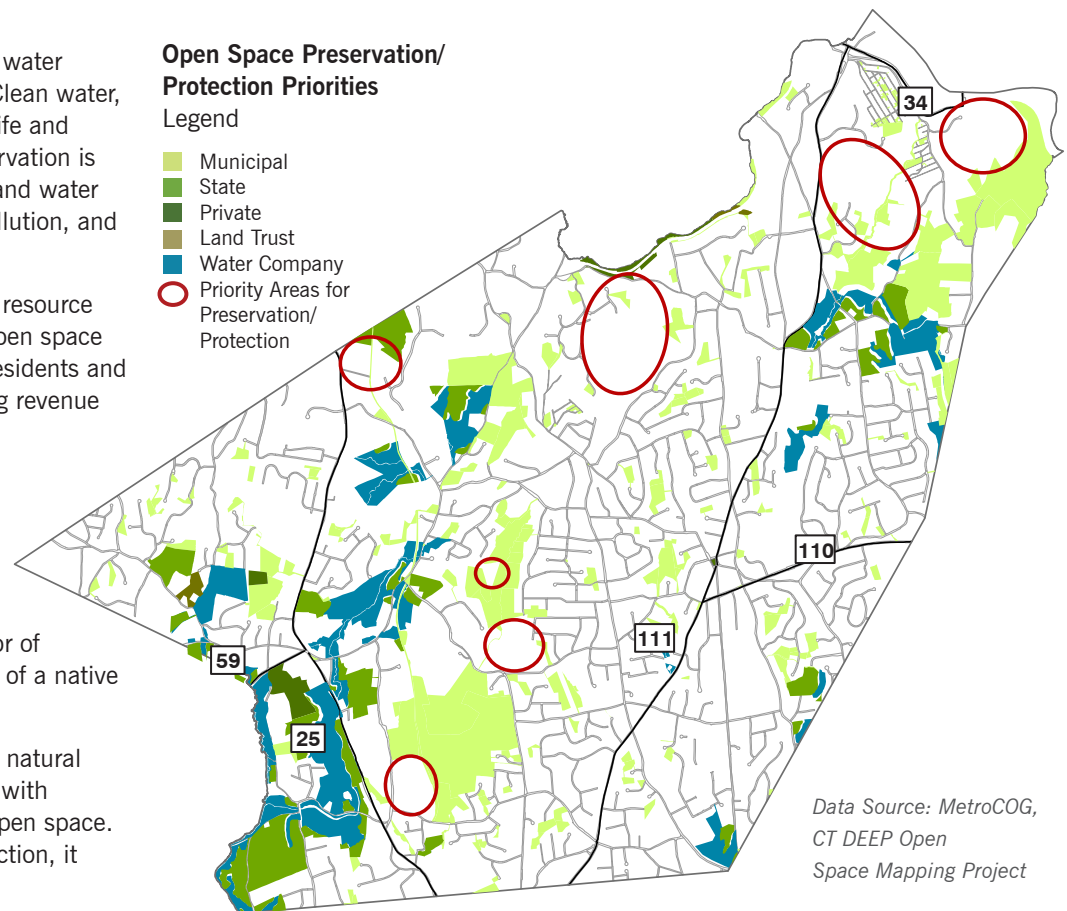
Open space has a range of functions and values. The following important open space attributes should be considered in identifying priority lands for preservation or protection.

1. Lands that serve to protect high-quality natural waters and drinking water resources – The CT Green Plan gives priority to these acquisitions. Clean water, including in our rivers, lakes, and inland wetlands, are essential to life and provide some of the richest wildlife habitat in the State. Land conservation is an important part of watershed management for protecting habitat and water quality against impacts by fragmentation, climate change, runoff pollution, and other threats.
2. Recreation opportunities – Natural lands are a valuable recreational resource for such activities as hiking, bicycling, bird watching, and others. Open space that provides recreational opportunities improves quality of life for residents and visitors and also enhances property values. The properties can bring revenue to the Town by attracting non-residents who use the resources.
3. Ecosystem and habitat preservation – Open space lands provide habitat for plant, insect, and animal species essential for the healthy ecosystem we depend on. Many of our plants, insects, and animals are threatened by loss of habitat to development. Strong consideration should be made for preservation of habitat for native plant or animal species listed as threatened, endangered or of special concern and/or a relatively undisturbed outstanding example of a native ecological community.
4. Preservation of historical or agricultural heritage or preservation of a natural landscape feature – There are specific open space sites in the Town with historical or other cultural importance that merit their retention as open space. While the most important function of agricultural land is food production, it also contributes greatly to the visual qualities of the community.

Additional considerations in evaluating open space opportunities include:

- Proximity or contiguity to other open space can enhance the value of both spaces. Parcels, even if they are small, that connect spaces and create wildlife corridors can be particularly important.
- Long term strategic planning – Evaluation of prospective parcel acquisitions should also consider the future potential of the acquisition to, for example, create a greenway corridor and enhance an existing trail system, expand a town park, and other opportunities.

Based upon these considerations, the Conservation and Water Resources Commission recommends prioritizing several areas of the Town for preservation or protection as indicated on the map below.



## Stormwater Management

Monroe has a State issued permit (MS4 Permit) for the discharge of stormwater from its stormwater system into the Town's surface waters. The permit requires a stormwater management plan (produced in 2017) to reduce the discharge of pollutants in stormwater. The permit program prioritizes stormwater improvements in areas with impervious coverage greater than 12% in an effort to reduce the amount of stormwater pollution reaching surface waters. Eighteen percent of Monroe has impervious coverage of 12% or more.

6.0

The stormwater management plan addresses the following stormwater control measures with best management practices identified for these measures:

- Public education and outreach
- Public involvement and participation
- Illicit discharge detection and elimination
- Construction site stormwater runoff control
- Post-construction stormwater management in new development and redevelopment.
- Pollution prevention/good housekeeping for municipal operations.

The Town files an annual report, as required, outlining the steps being taken towards these measures. Recently, the Town collaborated with MetroCOG to digitize all town owned stormwater assets, test water quality at various outfall locations, and produce a Town-wide stormwater viewer.



*Arbor Day in Monroe, Image Credit: J.P. Sredzinski via Twitter*

## Environmental Resources Goal

Protect environmental resources, expand protection of open space, and conduct necessary measures to protect and improve water quality in the Town's water bodies and courses.

### Strategy 1

Support the Recommendations of the Town's Open Space Plan so as to expand and effectively manage and maintain Town-owned open space.

### Supporting Actions

1. In conjunction with relevant boards and staff, the Conservation & Water Resources Commission should draft a plan for maintenance and uses for Monroe's current open space.
2. The recently reconstituted Town Council Open Space Preservation & Acquisition Committee should continue to meet regularly to review and consider open space preservation opportunities.
3. The Town should consider funding opportunities, through grants, donations of open space, and capital budgeting for the acquisition of open space for the purposes of conservation.

### Strategy 2

Adopt and implement low impact policies and practices.

### Supporting Actions

1. The Planning & Zoning Commission should review and amend the Town's zoning and subdivision regulations to ensure that the regulations encourage or require Low Impact Development (LID) practices in new developments.
2. The Town should work towards the adoption of sustainable practices at Town parks and facilities, capturing rainwater for irrigation use, reducing water usage, reducing the use of chemicals on athletic fields, and improving recycling and reducing solid waste.



### **Strategy 3**

Obtain and commit financial resources to the expansion and maintenance of Town-owned open space.

#### **Supporting Actions**

1. The Town Council's Open Space Preservation & Acquisition Committee, in collaboration with the Conservation & Water Resources Commission should identify critical improvements and maintenance needed at town-owned open space properties and produce a summary and list of needs.
2. The Conservation & Water Resources Commission should work with the MetroCOG and the Southwest Conservation District to identify and recommend grants and other resources that can be pursued by the Town to enhance and support stewardship of existing town-owned open space properties.
3. The Town should consider funding strategies for improving and maintaining town-owned open space based upon the improvement and maintenance recommendations identified by the Town Council's Open Space Preservation & Acquisition Committee.

### **Strategy 4**

Continue the protection of environmentally sensitive areas.

#### **Supporting Actions**

1. The Town should continue to adequately staff land use departments and provide sufficient resources to carry out their duties.
2. The Planning and Zoning Commission, Conservation & Water Resources Commission, and Inland Wetlands Commission, should review the Town's land use regulations including zoning regulations, floodplain regulations, subdivisions regulations, and inland wetland regulations, to ensure that the regulations adequately protect environmental resources and encourage sustainable development. The respective Commissions should amend the regulations as necessary, and expand protections as needed, in favor of environmental protection that is fully supportive of the goals of this plan.

### **Strategy 5**

Actively work towards protecting and improving water quality of the Pequonnock River.

#### **Supporting Action**

1. The Conservation & Water Resources Commission should work with the Southwest Conservation District to determine how best to address and pursue implementation of the recommendations of the Pequonnock River Watershed Based Plan.

### **Strategy 6**

Improve stewardship of forests on Town-owned open space.

#### **Supporting Actions**

1. The Town should seek the assistance of a university forestry program to develop a forest management and invasive species control plan for all town-owned open space and forests.
2. The Town should continue to allocate financial resources towards forestry so as to adequately respond to the need for forest and roadside tree maintenance and removal, the need for which has been exacerbated by infestation by invasive species such as Emerald Ash Borer.

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# 7.0 Future Land Use



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## Future Land Use

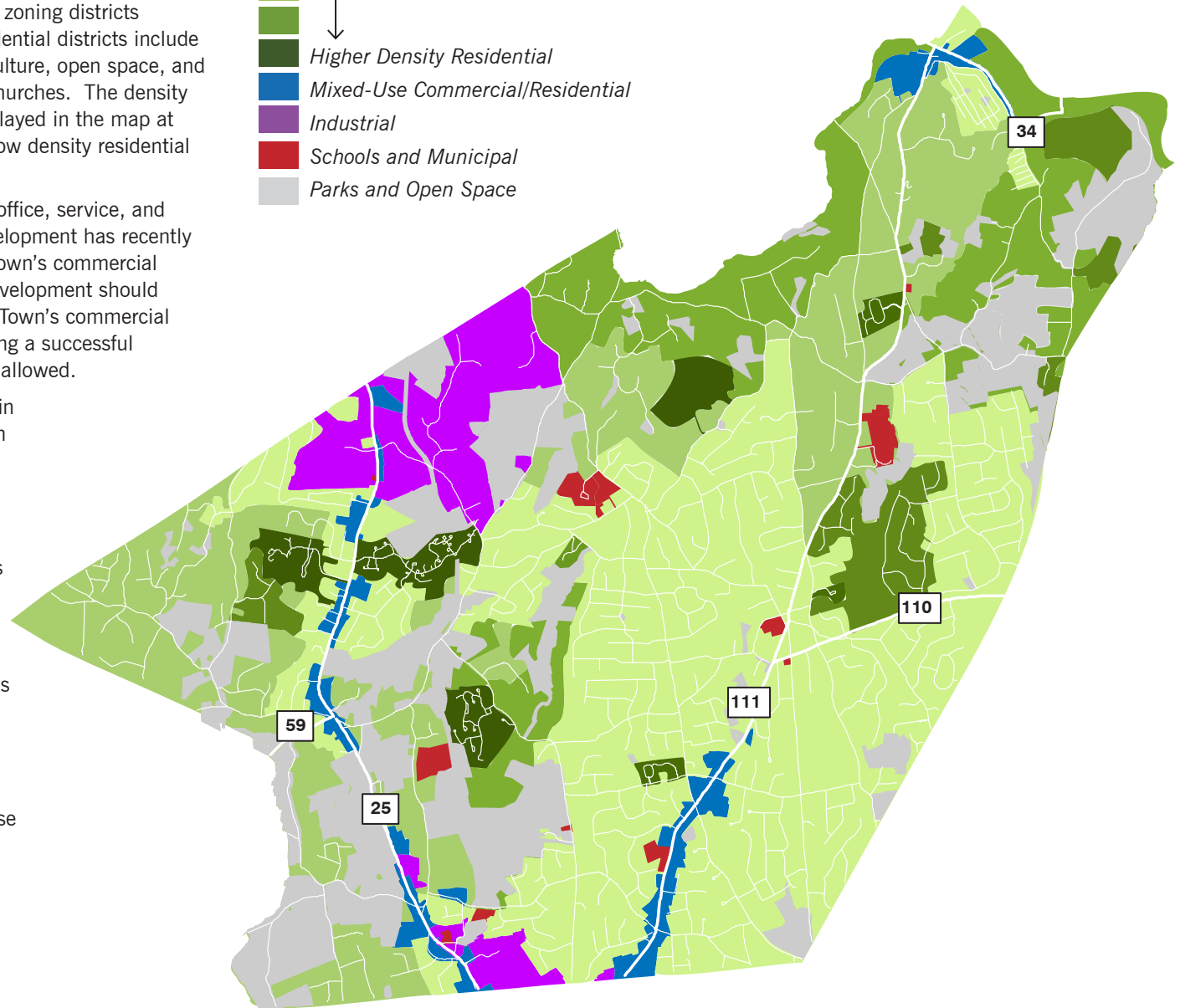
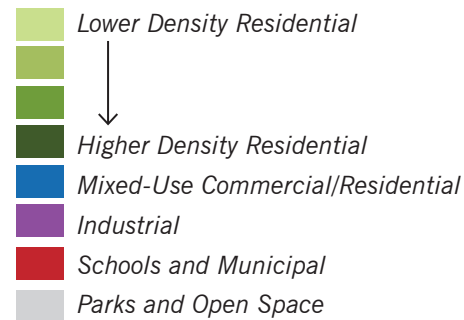
Monroe's proposed future land use is based upon the Town's zoning districts and existing land uses. Monroe is primarily a residential community with residential zoning districts covering much of the Town. These residential districts include complementary land uses such as agriculture, open space, and institutional uses such as schools and churches. The density of development varies by district as displayed in the map at right. Much of the Town is covered by low density residential districts.

Commercial districts in Monroe include office, service, and retail uses. Additionally, mixed-use development has recently been approved for limited areas of the Town's commercial districts. The allowance of mixed-use development should be phased in over time across all of the Town's commercial districts as noted on the map and pending a successful experience in areas where it is currently allowed.

Monroe's industrial districts are located in proximity of Route 25 along the northern and southern borders of Town. These areas are not fully built out and have potential for growth. Monroe's zoning of these areas should remain flexible to adequately respond to market conditions affecting potential development of properties within these districts.

The Town's school and municipal properties such as the Town Hall campus are identified for continued use in their existing capacities. Additionally, the Monroe's parks, legally protected open spaces, and water company watershed lands are identified for continued land use as park or open space properties.

### Future Land Use Legend



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*Image Credit: Kevin Zimmerman, Westchester and Fairfield County Business Journal*

# 8.0 Implementation Summary



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The preceding chapters set forth Monroe's vision, the goals that support that vision, and strategies that support those goals. Supporting data is also provided relevant to the realization of the vision, goals, strategies, and action items. In this section, we provide recommended priority levels, and identify the organizations or departments that would take the lead with respect to each action item as well as the organizations or departments that should be involved in and/or assist with the implementation of each action item.

This implementation summary is not comprehensive and that there may be other actions necessary to complete the implementation of the goals and strategies that are not included in the summary. Due to resource constraints, the completion of all of these items during the ten-year time frame of this plan may not be feasible however implementation of the important recommendations of this plan should be prioritized and completed.

Many of the recommended strategies and actions will likely be ongoing efforts and some of the actions may become established as a regular practice. The speed of implementation of each action item will be dependent on resources available. Some projects may move faster than expected because grants or other sources of funding, volunteer hours or other support not currently anticipated. Other projects may take longer than contemplated due to unavailability of staff, funding, or unexpected complications.

While the Plan presented is a ten-year plan, the Planning and Zoning Commission is responsible for overseeing its implementation. In that capacity, the Planning and Zoning Commission intends to review the implementation summary at least once a year to assess the progress that is being made to consider whether the target to complete various actions should be adjusted.

The lead and supporting organizations identified within the Plan include the Town's boards, commissions, committees, departments, and offices. Private organizations and other public organizations such as the Metropolitan Council of Governments are also identified as resources within the implementation summary. See table on the following page for a list of organizations.

Many of the plan's strategies and actions will have costs associated with their initiation and implementation. This Plan's recommendations have been carefully considered and its recommended goals, strategies, and actions are intended to directly contribute to the long-term sustainability of Monroe. To address the needs of fiscal sustainability of the Town, this Plan recommends that the lead organization of each of the Plan's strategies prepare a cost estimate for implementation of the strategy upon initiation of the strategy or prior to any significant investment. Lead organizations should also seek to identify outside funding sources such as state, regional, and private grants to fund or subsidize initiatives.

The Plan's strategies are identified by their priority theme. Those themes are:

- **Grow Economic Base**

Monroe's economy is changing and the Town should work towards encouraging and supporting a diverse economy that draws upon Monroe's strengths including access to state highways, available commercial and industrial land, and a strong business environment.

- **Retain Population and Expand Housing Choice**

Monroe needs to take measures necessary to retain existing residents and attract and retain young residents and its seniors. The Town's economy, property values, services, and schools are dependent upon its resident population for viability.

- **Improve and Reinvest in Town Facilities**

Monroe should continue to maintain and provide high-quality facilities for Town staff and residents in a fiscally responsible manner.

- **Protect and Open Space and Natural Resources**

Monroe should continue to protect its open space and natural resources by expanding protected open space and mitigating the impacts of stormwater runoff.

**Economic Development Goal: Foster a vibrant economy that provides residents and visitors with access to goods, services, and employment opportunities while diversifying the Town's property tax base.**

	<b>Strategies &amp; Actions</b>	<b>Lead Organization</b>	<b>Partner Organizations</b>	<b>Priority Level</b>
<b>1</b>	<b>Collaborate with the local business community to ensure that the Town is responsive to the needs of the business community.</b>			
1.1	Continue First Selectman's Business and Industry FBIC committee regular meetings.	FSO	FBIC	Medium
1.2	Consider transition of the temporary Economic Recovery position into a permanent position.	FSO	TC, BOF, EDC	High
<b>2</b>	<b>Continue to develop informational materials and promotional materials designed to attract new businesses to Monroe.</b>			
2.1	The Economic Development Commission should work with the Monroe Chamber of Commerce and the Connecticut Department of Economic Development (DECD) to develop informational and marketing materials relevant to conducting and establishing a business in Monroe.	EDC	COC, DECD	Low
2.2	Actively promote Monroe and specific available properties as a desirable home for cultural institutions and entertainment venues.	EDC	COC	High
<b>3</b>	<b>Take actions that are necessary, as feasible, to reduce the amount of time it takes for a permit to be issued.</b>			
3.1	The Economic Development Commission should work with the Planning and Zoning Department and Building & Inspection Department to provide step-by-step guidance documents and online instruction that assists new businesses and applicants in navigating the permitting and licensing process.	EDC	PZD, BID	High
3.2	The Planning and Zoning and Inland Wetland Departments and Commissions should continue to allow for elements of applications such as site plans to be reviewed administratively rather than referring to the Commissions and review the regulations and administrative practices to identify other types of review that could be handled administratively rather than by referral to the Commissions, providing they are briefed on pending and approved applications.	PZD, IWD	PZC, IWC	High
3.3	The Planning and Zoning, Inland Wetlands, and Building Departments should continue to review permitting process and complete their move towards online processing of permits so as to ensure that permits are processed in an efficient and timely manner.	PZD, IWD, BID		High
<b>4</b>	<b>Review the Town's zoning regulations and revise as needed to be more supportive of emerging business practices, "green businesses" and small-scale businesses and home-based businesses.</b>			
4.1	The Planning and Zoning Commission should continue to collaborate with the Economic Development Commission to review the Town's commercial and industrial zone standards and identify zoning amendments that may be needed to adequately support emerging business types and land uses, and to eliminate requirements that are determined unnecessary and inhibit the Town's ability to act quickly to provide approvals of desirable developments.	PZC	EDC, PZD	Medium
4.2	The Planning and Zoning Department should review zoning permit requirements to ensure that permits adequately accommodate new and emerging businesses and business practices.	PZD		Low

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**Economic Development Goal: Foster a vibrant economy that provides residents and visitors with access to goods, services, and employment opportunities while diversifying the Town's property tax base.**

	<b>Strategies &amp; Actions</b>	<b>Lead Organization</b>	<b>Partner Organizations</b>	<b>Priority Level</b>
<b>5</b>	<b>Review the Town's practices with respect to optional tax programs and make such modifications as are appropriate to support the goals of the Plan.</b>			
5.1	The First Selectman, Town Council, and Board of Finance should review the Town's policies and practices with respect to optional tax programs such as commercial tax abatements and make such modifications as are appropriate to encourage economic development and support the goals of the Plan.	FSO, TC, BOF		Medium
<b>6</b>	<b>Review the Town's zoning regulations and make appropriate amendments to incentivize investment and development that revitalizes properties and provides a civic amenity or benefit.</b>			
6.1	The Planning and Zoning Commission should consider providing additional zoning tools and incentives to encourage reinvestment in, and transformation of, the Town's many aging shopping plazas and vacant tenant spaces.	PZC	PZD	Medium
<b>7</b>	<b>Remain proactive in facilitating a productive reuse of the former Stevenson Lumber and Pepper Street Industrial Park sites to ensure futures uses that are economically beneficial to the Town and compatible with the surrounding area.</b>			
7.1	The Town should establish a committee or task force to conduct planning directed towards developing strategic plans for these areas.	FSO	PZD	High
7.2	The Planning and Zoning Commission should consider establishing a Special Development District that could be applied to these sites, or other redevelopment sites that would increase the flexibility of development proposals to respond to market, physical, and environmental conditions that are unique to each site.	PZC	PZD	Medium

**Housing Goal: Allow for a wide selection of housing choice that supports the retention of residents in Monroe through various stages of life and attracts new residents to the community.**

	<b>Strategies &amp; Actions</b>	<b>Lead Organization</b>	<b>Partner Organizations</b>	<b>Priority Level</b>
<b>1</b>	<b>Continue to explore the development of housing in commercial districts through the expansion of mixed-use districts.</b>			
1.1	The Planning and Zoning Commission should review the effectiveness of the Town's recently approved mixed-use zoning regulations after a period of one year to assess whether the regulations as they stand are adequately supportive of the development of housing in commercial districts.	PZC	PZD	Medium
1.2	The Planning and Zoning Commission should incrementally expand the geographic areas within the B-1, B-2, and LOR where mixed-use development is permitted to allow for such development on any lot in those districts, meeting the requirements of the zoning regulations, with direct frontage and access via Route 25, Route 111 and/or Route 34.	PZC	PZD	Medium
<b>2</b>	<b>Maintain an open line of communication with the Housing Authority.</b>			
2.1	The Town continue to maintain an open line of communication with the Housing Authority to ensure that the Authority has the resources it needs to meet the needs of disabled and senior residents.	FSO	TC, BOF	Low
<b>3</b>	<b>Implement policies and programs designed to facilitate the development of affordable housing.</b>			
3.1	The Planning & Zoning Commission should work collaboratively with developers seeking to build affordable housing to accommodate such development via amendments to the zoning regulations provided said proposals are located in an appropriate area and possess a quality of design that makes them beneficial, and not disruptive, to the area in which they are built and the community as a whole.	PZC	PZD	Low
3.2	The Planning & Zoning Commission should update the Future Land Use Map of this Plan on a reoccurring basis as needed to identify areas that have been found to desirable for the development of affordable and/or multi-family housing. The recommendations of the Affordable Housing Plan should be considered in an update of the Future Land Use Map.	PZC	PZD	Low
3.3	The Planning & Zoning Commission should produce and adopt an Affordable Housing Plan that specifies how the Town will increase its number of Affordable Housing units, as mandated by the State.	PZC	PZD	High
3.4	In developing the Affordable Housing Plan, the Planning & Zoning Commission should review the Town's zoning regulations and make necessary changes to ensure that local regulations fully support and are not a barrier to the development of affordable housing. A similar review of the subdivision regulations should be conducted.	PZC	PZD	Medium
3.5	In developing the Affordable Housing Plan, the Planning & Zoning Commission should review the Age Restricted Residential, Multi-Family Residential, and Housing Opportunity District regulations to determine if any aspect of the regulations are excessively stringent and to ensure that the development of housing via these districts is reasonably feasible.	PZC	PZD	Medium

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**Facilities & Services Goal: Provide high quality facilities and a high level of service to residents, property owners, business owners, and visitors in a fiscally responsible manner.**

	Strategies & Actions	Lead Organization	Partner Organizations	Priority Level
	<b>1 Finalize and implement strategic recommendations of the ongoing Municipal Space Needs Assessment.</b>			
1.1	The Town should finalize the Municipal Space Needs Assessment.	FSO	PBC	High
1.2	The Town should create or designate a committee to identify which recommendations of the Municipal Space Needs Assessment should be prioritized and oversee the implementation of the Assessments recommendations.	FSO	PBC	High
1.3	The Town should commit fiscal resources via the Town's capital improvement plan towards facility modifications and improvements recommended in the Municipal Space Needs Assessment and initiate those improvements.	BOF	FSO, TC	High
	<b>2 Conduct an ADA assessment of municipal facilities.</b>			
2.1	Upon completion of the Space Needs Assessment, the Town should conduct an ADA assessment of municipal facilities (with the exception of Town Hall and the Library where an assessment has already been completed) to ensure that facilities are compliant.	DPW	ENG	Medium
2.2	The Town should commit funding for ADA improvements identified by the assessment in its capital improvements plan.	BOF		Medium
	<b>3 Develop a parks and recreation masterplan and expand and enhance parks and recreation facilities in accordance with the plan.</b>			
3.1	The Town's Park and Recreation Commission, with support of the Parks & Recreation Department, should update the parks & recreation masterplan to identify recreation facility and programming needs.	PRC	PRD	Low
3.2	Complete ongoing improvements at Wolfe Park. The expansion of athletic fields and other facilities at Wolfe Park should be a priority of the recreation masterplan.	PRD	DPW	High
3.3	The masterplan should seek opportunities to develop small playgrounds and other facilities such as dog parks in areas of town that are distant from and under-served by recreational facilities.	PRC	PRD	Low
3.4	The Town should provide the funding necessary to support a parks & recreation masterplan update, should a consultant be needed to produce the plan.	BOF		Low
3.5	The Plan should explore opportunities for improving access to Lake Zoar for recreation.	PRC	PRD	High
	<b>4 Strategically implement recommendations of the MetroCOG 2019 Hazardous Mitigation Plan</b>			
4.1	Conduct a town wide hydrologic analysis that addresses flooding, stormwater, and water conveyance needs to identify projects that can be implemented to reduce risks to infrastructure and people.	DPW	ENG	Low
4.2	Upgrade the generator at Masuk High School to strengthen use of the school as an emergency shelter.	DPW	EMD, ENG	Medium
	<b>5 Support energy efficiency and renewable energy sources.</b>			
5.1	The Town should include energy efficiency and renewable energy projects in the Town's capital improvement plan.	DPW	ENG	Medium
5.2	The Town should oversee the implementation of energy efficiency and renewable energy improvements at its buildings and facilities.	DPW	ENG	Medium
5.3	The Town should coordinate with Monroe Public Schools to support them in implementing energy efficiency and renewable energy projects.	FSO	DPW, ENG	Medium

**Facilities & Services Goal: Provide high quality facilities and a high level of service to residents, property owners, business owners, and visitors in a fiscally responsible manner.**

	Strategies & Actions	Lead Organization	Partner Organizations	Priority Level
●	<b>6 Plan for and maintain public safety facilities in accordance with evolving space and technology needs.</b>			
6.1	Complete the renovation and addition to the Jockey Hollow Road facility to permanently house EMS operations.	DPW, ENG	EMS	High
6.2	Ensure that the Police Department has the space and technology required to meeting current and future needs.	FSO	DPW, ENG, PD	High
6.3	Strategically implement recommendations of the Fire Department facilities study.	FSO	DPW, ENG, FD	High

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**Transportation & Infrastructure Goal: Improve and expand transportation options with a focus on alternative modes of travel to ensure greater connectivity within Town and to the region; continue to maintain and improve infrastructure in an environmentally and fiscally responsible manner.**

	Strategies & Actions	Lead Organization	Partner Organizations	Priority Level
●	<b>1 Improve traffic safety throughout Town.</b>			
1.1	Continue to work with MetroCOG to obtain grant funding for high priority safety areas identified by the study from programs such as the Local Road Accident Reduction Program.	PZD	ENG	Medium
1.2	Implement traffic safety and traffic calming measures in areas such as Monroe Center and Stepney as well as other areas of need as identified by a Town-wide traffic and traffic safety study.	ENG	DPW	Medium
●	<b>2 Continue to evaluate small bridges and culverts.</b>			
2.1	Maintain capital plan to fund evaluation.	ENG	DPW	High
2.2	Integrate specific needed improvements into the Town's capital improvement plan.	FSO	TC, BOF	High
●	<b>3 Continue improvement and expansion of the Town's pedestrian network.</b>			
3.1	The Department of Public Works (DPW) should identify existing sidewalk network in need of repair or replacement and estimate cost for repair or replacement.	DPW	ENG	High
3.2	The Town, via the Planning and Zoning Department and with assistance from MetroCOG, should pursue State grant funding for expansion of the sidewalk network. Grant programs to pursue include but are not limited to Community Connectivity and LOTCIP grants.	PZD	ENG	High
3.3	The Town should discuss during future budget cycles the ongoing operating and capital costs for the construction, repair, maintenance (including snow and ice removal), replacement, and expansion of sidewalks. This will allow Town officials and taxpayers to determine the scope of the Town's appetite for sidewalks in the community.	FSO	TC, BOF	Medium

**Transportation & Infrastructure Goal: Improve and expand transportation options with a focus on alternative modes of travel to ensure greater connectivity within Town and to the region; continue to maintain and improve infrastructure in an environmentally and fiscally responsible manner.**

	Strategies & Actions	Lead Organization	Partner Organizations	Priority Level
●	<b>4 Continue to increase maintenance of the Town's roadways.</b>			
4.1	The Department of Public Works should identify and document annual maintenance requirements necessary to maintain roads, bridges, and sidewalks in a state of good repair. DPW should make that information available to other Town Departments.	DPW	ENG	High
4.2	The Town should provide funding in the Town's budget sufficient to maintain the Town's roadways in a state of good repair.	FSO	TC, BOF	Medium
●	<b>5 Continue to expand and improve the Pequonnock River/Housatonic Rail Trail.</b>			
5.1	Complete the gap in the trail network between Maple Drive and Wolfe Park	DPW	ENG, DPZ	High
5.2	Improve trail conditions with attention on drainage issues and surface quality	DPW	ENG	Medium
●	<b>6 Support and advocate for the implementation of recommendations of the Route 25/111 Study that are beneficial to the Town of Monroe.</b>			
6.1	The Planning and Zoning Commission should review the Town's zoning regulations and implement recommendations of the Study's access management plan which includes expanding access management design standards to all zoning districts along Routes 25 and 111.	PZC	PZD	Medium
6.2	Work with MetroCOG and GBT to expand Route 19x bus service north to Monroe's municipal campus as recommended by the plan.	PZD	MetroCOG, GBT	Low
6.3	Initiate discussions with MetroCOG and GBT regarding reinstating Route 20 bus service which had served Route 25.	PZD	MetroCOG, GBT	Medium
6.4	Coordinate with MetroCOG and CTDOT to identify traffic and intersection improvement recommendations of the Study that the Town is interested in advancing.	ENG	MetroCOG, CTDOT	High
●	<b>7 Maintain and improve stormwater infrastructure to comply with MS4 permit requirements.</b>			
7.1	Review the stormwater management plan and commit to taking actions and making investments necessary to comply with the MS4 permit requirements.	ENG	DPW	High

**Environmental Resource Goal: Protect environmental resources, expand protection of open space, and conduct necessary measures to protect and improve water quality in the Town's water bodies and courses.**

	<b>Strategies &amp; Actions</b>	<b>Lead Organization</b>	<b>Partner Organizations</b>	<b>Priority Level</b>
<b>Support the Recommendations of the Town's Open Space Plan so as to expand and effectively manage and maintain</b>				
<b>1 Town-owned open space.</b>				
1.1	In conjunction with relevant boards and staff, the Conservation & Water Resources Commission should draft a plan for maintenance and uses for Monroe's current open space.	CC	PRC, PRD	Medium
	The recently reconstituted Town Council Open Space Preservation & Acquisition Committee should continue to meet regularly to review and consider open space preservation opportunities.	OSPAC	CC	Medium
1.2	The Town should consider funding opportunities, through grants, donations of open space, and capital budgeting for the acquisition of open space for the purposes of conservation.	FSO	TC, BOF, CC	Medium
<b>2 Adopt and implement low impact policies and practices.</b>				
2.1	The Planning & Zoning Commission should review and amend the Town's zoning and subdivision regulations to ensure that the regulations encourage or require Low Impact Development (LID) practices in new developments.	PZC	PZD	Low
2.2	The Town should work towards the adoption of sustainable practices at Town parks and facilities, capturing rainwater for irrigation use, reducing water usage, reducing the use of chemicals on athletic fields, and improving recycling and reducing solid waste.	DPW	PRD	Medium
<b>3 Obtain and commit financial resources to the expansion and maintenance of Town-owned open space.</b>				
3.1	The Town Council's Open Space Preservation & Acquisition Committee, in collaboration with the Conservation & Water Resources Commission should identify critical improvements and maintenance needed at town-owned open space properties and produce a summary and list of needs.	OSPAC, CC	PRC, PRD	Medium
3.2	The Conservation & Water Resources Commission should work with the MetroCOG and the Southwest Conservation District to identify and recommend grants and other resources that can be pursued by the Town to enhance and support stewardship of existing town-owned open space properties.	CC	MetroCOG, SWCD	High
3.3	The Town should consider funding strategies for improving and maintaining town-owned open space based upon the improvement and maintenance recommendations identified by the Open Space Preservation & Acquisition Committee.	TC, OSPAC	FSO, BOF, CC	Medium
<b>4 Continue the protection of environmentally sensitive areas.</b>				
4.1	The Town should continue to adequately staff land use departments and provide sufficient resources to carry out their duties.	FSO, TC	BOF	Low
4.2	The Planning and Zoning Commission, Conservation & Water Resources Commission, and Inland Wetlands Commission, should review the Town's land use regulations including zoning regulations, floodplain regulations, subdivisions regulations, and inland wetland regulations, to ensure that the regulations adequately protect environmental resources and encourage sustainable development. The respective Commissions should amend the regulations as necessary, and expand protections as needed, in favor of environmental protection that is fully supportive of the goals of this plan.	PZC, CC, IWC	PZD	High
<b>5 Actively work towards protecting and improving water quality of the Pequonnock River</b>				
5.1	The Conservation & Water Resources Commission should work with the Southwest Conservation District to determine how best to address and pursue implementation of the recommendations of the Pequonnock River Watershed Based Plan.	CC	SWCD	High

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**Environmental Resource Goal: Protect environmental resources, expand protection of open space, and conduct necessary measures to protect and improve water quality in the Town's water bodies and courses.**

	<b>Strategies &amp; Actions</b>	<b>Lead Organization</b>	<b>Partner Organizations</b>	<b>Priority Level</b>
	<b>6 Improve stewardship of forests on Town-owned open space.</b>			
6.1	The Town should seek the assistance of a university forestry program to develop a forest management and invasive species control plan for all town-owned open space and forests.	CC	PRD	Medium
6.2	The Town should continue to allocate financial resources towards forestry so as to adequately respond to the need for forest and roadside tree maintenance and removal, the need for which has been exacerbated by infestation by invasive species such as Emerald Ash Borer.	FSO	TC, BOF	Medium

<b>Board, Commission, Committee, Department, Office, or Organization</b>	<b>Abbreviation</b>
Architectural Review Board	ARB
Board of Education	BOE
Board of Finance	BOF
Board of Health	BOH
Building and Inspection Department	BID
Conservation & Water Resources Commission	CC
CT Metropolitan Council of Governments	MetroCOG
Department of Public Works	DPW
Economic Development Commission	EDC
Edith Wheeler Memorial Library	EWML
Emergency Management Director	EMD
Engineering Department	ENG
Fire Department	FD
First Selectman's Office	FSO
First Selectman's Business & Industry Committee	FBIC
Historic District Commission	HDC
Housing Authority	HA
Inland Wetlands Commission	IWC
Inland Wetlands Department	IWD
Monroe Chamber of Commerce	COC
Monroe Land Trust and Tree Conservancy	MLT
Monroe Public Schools	MPS
Old Monroe Historical Society	OWHS
Open Space Preservation & Acquisition Committee	OSPAC
Parks and Recreation Commission	PRC
Parks and Recreation Department	PRD
Planning and Zoning Commission	PZC
Planning and Zoning Department	PZD
Police Department	PD
Public Buildings Committee	PBC
Senior Services	SS
Southwest Conservation District	SWCD
Town Council	TC
Water Pollution Control Authority	WPCA
Zoning Board of Appeals	ZBA