



VILLAGE OF MONROE

COMPREHENSIVE PLAN UPDATE

Revised DRAFT FOR PUBLIC REVIEW

August 4, 2023



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CONTENTS

| | |
|--|----|
| 1. Introduction..... | 1 |
| What is a Comprehensive Plan? | 1 |
| Impetus for Comprehensive Plan Update | 1 |
| 2014 Comprehensive Plan and 2016-2017 Amendments | 2 |
| Changes Since Adoption of the 2014/2016 Comprehensive Plan | 4 |
| The 2023 Comprehensive Planning Process..... | 6 |
| 2. Planning Context | 8 |
| Regional Location and Setting | 8 |
| Hudson River Valley Greenway | 9 |
| New York Highlands Region..... | 10 |
| Town of Monroe..... | 11 |
| Orange County Comprehensive Plan..... | 12 |
| Mid-Hudson Region..... | 12 |
| 3. Existing Land Use and Zoning | 13 |
| Land Use..... | 13 |
| Residential Land Use | 13 |
| Commercial Land Use..... | 14 |
| Community Facilities and Cultural Uses | 15 |
| Recreation, Open Space, and Vacant Land..... | 16 |
| Zoning..... | 17 |
| Residential Zoning Districts | 17 |
| Commercial and Mixed-Use Zoning Districts..... | 18 |
| Open Space and Recreation Zoning District | 21 |
| Overlays..... | 21 |
| 4. Demographics and Socioeconomics | 22 |
| Population | 22 |
| Ethnicity..... | 23 |
| Age | 24 |
| Households..... | 25 |
| Income | 26 |
| 5. Vision..... | 28 |

| | |
|---|----|
| 6. Plan: Housing..... | 30 |
| Existing Conditions | 30 |
| General Housing Characteristics..... | 30 |
| Affordability..... | 36 |
| Related Comprehensive Plan Goals, Objectives, and Recommended Strategies | 38 |
| Goal H1: Expand housing opportunities within the Village to ensure that all residents of Monroe can continue to live in the Village following life transitions..... | 38 |
| Goal H2: Safeguard Monroe’s existing stable residential neighborhoods, and improve and enhance marginal areas, especially areas of investment conversions..... | 41 |
| 7. Plan: Recreation, Environment, Culture..... | 46 |
| Village Recreation Resources | 46 |
| Town Recreation Resources | 47 |
| County Recreation Resources..... | 47 |
| State Recreation Resources..... | 47 |
| Environmental Resources..... | 48 |
| Topography and Geology | 48 |
| Watersheds | 48 |
| Ramapo River | 49 |
| Satterly Creek | 50 |
| Aquifers | 50 |
| Wetlands | 51 |
| Historic Resources | 51 |
| A Brief History of Monroe | 51 |
| Historic Designations..... | 52 |
| Related Comprehensive Plan Goals, Objectives, and Recommended Strategies | 56 |
| Goal P1: Ensure the preservation and protection of the Village's historic resources..... | 56 |
| Goal P2: Protect the Village’s natural and scenic resources..... | 58 |
| Goal P3: Expand and enhance the already outstanding recreational facilities of the Village..... | 60 |
| 8. Plan: Connections..... | 62 |
| Road Network and Circulation..... | 62 |
| Related Comprehensive Plan Goals, Objectives, and Recommended Strategies | 68 |
| Goal T1: Improve the multi-modal flow of traffic through the Village, while respecting pedestrians and cyclists. | 68 |
| 9. Plan: Economics (Downtown and Commerce)..... | 75 |

| | |
|---|----|
| Existing Conditions | 77 |
| Related Comprehensive Plan Goals, Objectives, and Recommended Strategies | 79 |
| Goal E1: Create an active, convenient, and inviting downtown as the community's civic, cultural, and recreational center as well as a destination for dining, shopping, and personal services. | 79 |
| Goal E2: Transform the NYS Route 17M strip-commercial corridor to better address the evolving commercial market and to provide a sustainable balance of uses. | 83 |
| Goal E3: Transform Monroe's struggling heavy commercial and industrial areas..... | 84 |
| Goal E4: Increase the efficiency of local government | 84 |
| 10. Plan: The Future | 87 |

Tables

| |
|--|
| Table 3.1: Village Land Use |
| Table 3.2: Residential Land Use |
| Table 3.3: Commercial Land Use |
| Table 3.4: Community and Cultural Uses |
| Table 3.5: Recreation, Open Space, and Vacant Land |
| Table 4.1: Persons Per Square Mile |
| Table 4.2: Population Change – Villages in Orange County |
| Table 4.3: Population by Race/Ethnicity |
| Table 4.4: Place of Birth Among Foreign-Born Residents |
| Table 4.5: Population by Age Segment |
| Table 4.6: Population by Household Size |
| Table 4.7: Household Income |
| Table 6.1: Village of Monroe Housing Units and Occupancy |
| Table 6.2: Orange County Housing Units and Occupancy |
| Table 6.3: Village of Monroe Units in Structure |
| Table 6.4: Housing Units by Year Built |
| Table 6.5: Village of Monroe Owner-Occupied Housing Units by Value |
| Table 6.6: Owner-Occupied Housing Units by Monthly Costs |
| Table 6.7: Renter-Occupied Housing Units by Rent Paid |
| Table 6.8: Monthly Owner Costs as a Percent of Household Income |
| Table 6.9: Gross Rent as a Percent of Household Income |
| Table 6.10: Rental Affordability Gap |
| Table 7.1: Historic Status of Properties |
| Table 8.1: Means of Transportation to Work - ACS Estimates |
| Table 8.2: Travel Time to Work |

Figures

| |
|--|
| Figure 2.1: Regional Location |
| Figure 2.2: Greenway Communities |
| Figure 2.3: Hudson Highlands Region |
| Figure 6.1: Village of Monroe – Total Number of Bedrooms |

Maps

Map 3.1: Land Use
Map 3.2: Existing Zoning
Map 7.1: Topography and Ridgelines
Map 7.2: Aquifers and Watersheds
Map 7.3: Water Resources
Map 7.4: Historic Resources, Buildings, and Districts
Map 8.1: Roadway Functional Classification
Map 8.2: Average Annual Daily Traffic Volumes

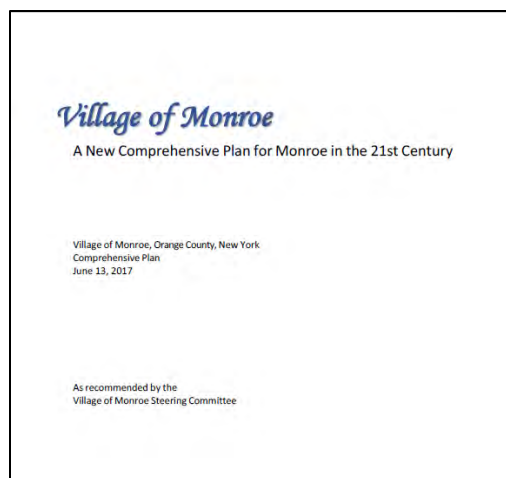
Appendices

Volume 2, containing data used in the preparation of this Comprehensive Plan is on file with the Village Clerk

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1. INTRODUCTION

WHAT IS A COMPREHENSIVE PLAN?



In the Spring of 2022, the Village of Monroe Board of Trustees (Village Board) began the process of updating its Comprehensive Plan.

A comprehensive plan is a document that describes the vision for a community's future and the goals and objectives that, through actions taken by the Village Board and other agencies, support that vision. An adopted comprehensive plan reflects consensus that is achieved through a participatory public input process, and contains the land use, environmental, and related policies that will guide the Village Board and its agencies

in their actions, until the plan is reviewed again. Before a plan can be adopted, the Village must also consider the generic environmental impacts of adopting the plan in accordance with the regulations implementing the New York State Environmental Quality Review Act (SEQRA).

A comprehensive plan is broad in nature. In some sections, the plan may be very specific about tools and recommended solutions, while in others it may simply present an overall goal that guides the Village Board in the adoption of specific local laws and regulations. The Plan is adopted to guide actions of the Village such as land acquisition and funding decisions.

New York State Village Law ("Village Law") regulates the preparation and adoption of a Village comprehensive plan. Section 7-722 of Village Law defines a comprehensive plan as:

"...the materials, written and/or graphic, including but not limited to maps, charts, studies, resolutions, reports and other descriptive material that identify the goals, objectives, principles, guidelines, policies, standards, devices and instruments for the immediate and long-range protection, enhancement, growth and development of the Village."

IMPETUS FOR COMPREHENSIVE PLAN UPDATE

In the last several years, the Village Board has observed a number of development projects and land use changes that have seemed out-of-character with established Village neighborhoods. Additionally, the Village has observed potential businesses having difficulty with the existing zoning law when trying to locate in downtown and other appropriate locations.

In recent years, there have been some changes in land use board membership and in the professionals advising land use boards. These board members and professionals, including land use attorneys, have noted code language that could lead to problems for the Village.

Concerns noted by the Village Board in recent years include:

- Code language that prevents certain small businesses from locating in downtown, contrary to the recommendations of the Comprehensive Plan.
- A proliferation of single-family residences being rented to multiple tenant households.
- Inappropriate paving and use of the right-of-way and front yard of homes for parking, including parking on sidewalks and along shoulders.
- The potential loss of historic structures.
- Increased bright LED lighting in residential areas causing glare and impacting neighborhoods and the night sky.
- Several developments that were poorly designed, and where the Planning Board felt ill-equipped to require architectural or site design changes.
- Marginal, poorly maintained business uses at the periphery of the Central Business District.
- Several code provisions that may be unenforceable.
- Inadequate provisions for the construction of schools and houses of worship leading to the use of existing inadequate structures in a manner inconsistent with the Building and Fire Codes.
- Certain regulations or requirements improperly placed in the definitions in a way that does not serve the intent of the regulation.
- Conflicting provisions regarding yards and setbacks.
- Additions to homes that are inconsistent with the overall architecture of the structure, and/or out of character with the neighborhood.

2014 COMPREHENSIVE PLAN AND 2016-2017 AMENDMENTS

In 2021, the Village Board retained Nelson Pope Voorhis (NPV), a Hudson Valley planning services firm, to investigate these concerns and propose local laws to remedy the growing list of concerns identified by the Village Board. One of the Principals of NPV had worked on developing the Comprehensive Plan adopted in 2014, so was aware of the state of the code prior to that update and was familiar with the public input and Committee deliberations that led to the 2014 Comprehensive Plan.

The 2014 Comprehensive Plan underwent a lengthy preparation process beginning in 2012 and involving significant public outreach and extensive deliberations by a committee of Village Staff,

residents, and business persons. The Comprehensive Plan was the first holistic look at land use in the Village since the Village's original 1960 Plan.

The intervening years between 1960 and 2015 were marked by a fluid regulatory environment, where zoning and land use regulations reacted to various development proposals. In 2014, the adopted Plan provided a new grassroots vision for the community along with goals and objectives based on public input and the recommendation of strategies for achieving the new vision.

Following adoption, the Village intended on proceeding with implementation of the various recommendations of the newly adopted plan. In practice, the comprehensive code amendments that were enacted in 2016 and 2017 largely implemented the recommendations of Village Staff arising out of their recent experience. Only a few of the code amendments were based on plan recommendations, namely:

- Eliminating the Architectural Review Board and empowering the Planning Board to conduct Architectural Review.
- Providing rules for accessory apartments and requiring owner occupancy of one of the two units.
- Providing rules governing the conversion of single-family residences to two-family residences and multifamily residences.

Some of the staff-recommended code changes conflicted with the 2014 Comprehensive Plan. In response to this, the Village adopted a local law amending the Comprehensive Plan. The substantive recommendations of the 2014 Plan that were changed based on staff recommendations included:

- Eliminating a recommendation that would have allowed additional traditional mixed-use downtown buildings (commercial ground story with apartments above) around the Millponds.
- Eliminating a recommendation to incentivize redevelopment of multifamily conversions along North Main Street.
- Changing a recommendation that would have deducted environmentally constrained lands from standard subdivisions to a recommendation to eliminate such deductions from average density subdivisions.
- Eliminating a recommendation for an aquifer protection overlay district prohibiting certain activities over the aquifer in favor of a recommendation to advise users of aquifer fragility.
- Eliminating a recommendation to institute minimum maintenance requirements for downtown buildings.

- Eliminating a recommendation to develop downtown design guidelines in favor of utilizing historic photos as an inspiration to downtown design.
- Eliminating a recommendation for the development of form-based codes.
- Eliminating a recommendation to institute a Technical Advisory Committee to the Planning Board procedures.
- Eliminating a recommendation to allow townhouse or multifamily development in marginal areas of the GB district.

It is noted that in the process of amending the Plan, a section of the plan that reported the recommendations of a Three-County Housing Needs Study was also amended in a manner that significantly overstated the number of units that Study recommended be built in Monroe. The amended language indicated affordable housing targets 12 times higher than were actually recommended in the study.

CHANGES SINCE ADOPTION OF THE 2014/2016 COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

Although not mandated by statute, Comprehensive Plans in New York State are typically drafted with target time horizons of 10-20 years. Based on this, one would normally assume that a Plan adopted in 2014 and amended in 2016 would remain relevant at least through 2024. Comprehensive Plans are living documents and should be able to be modified slightly over time to account for minor shifts in community preferences, market conditions, and emerging technologies.

The nine years since adoption of the 2014 plan have not been typical, however. Several transformational changes occurred locally, regionally, and nationally that have significantly impacted background conditions in the Village of Monroe. This includes:

The COVID-19 Pandemic.

In the winter of 2020, the first cases of the Novel Coronavirus of 2019 (COVID-19) were detected in the Village of Monroe. New York State would be one of the hardest hit states in the nation, especially during the first months of the global pandemic that would claim the lives of more than 1,200 Orange County residents, and more than 6.8 million lives worldwide. The pandemic challenged the Village of Monroe to provide government services to its residents during times of panic, quarantine, supply shortages, and danger from disease.

Recovery and rapid price increases in the real estate market.

The 2014 Plan was written on the heels of a national mortgage bubble collapse and recession in 2008. Because of this, much of the Plan's attention was focused on incentivizing redevelopment or reoccupancy of vacant or deteriorated structures. Attracting commerce to the Village – especially downtown – was a prime goal. In 2022-2023, this plan is being prepared on the heels of a very strong housing market, being driven largely by a flight of families from New York City

and more urban inner suburbs. This flight was largely triggered by the COVID-19 pandemic and a resulting fear of living in higher density communities. The strength of the current real estate market presents different priorities and challenges than those present when the 2014 Plan was prepared.

Continued weakening of the office and retail real estate market.

“Bricks and Mortar” retail and office space had been experiencing a broad market decline following the 2008 recession fueled in large part by the continuing rise in E-commerce and work-from-home technology solutions. The COVID-19 pandemic accelerated this decline dramatically as families were forced to use online retailers in the face of closed stores and supply chain disruptions, and to adapt to teleconferencing for everything from conversing with family, to doctor appointments, to educating their children. A large portion of the population became skilled with the technologies to work-from-home, and many employers also became accustomed to allowing work-from-home on a full-time or part-time basis.

Formation of the Town of Palm Tree

On January 1, 2019, the Village of Kiryas Joel and some of the surrounding areas of the unincorporated Town of Monroe were formed into the Town of Palm Tree. This significantly altered the finances of the Town of Monroe in which the Village of Monroe is located, and in which the Village of Kiryas Joel had previously been located. Since formation of the Town, and also in the wake of the COVID-19 pandemic, Kiryas Joel/Palm Tree has been growing at an astonishing rate with several housing developments under construction headlined by the 1600-unit Veyoel Moshe Gardens located just north of New York State Route 17. Kiryas Joel/Palm Tree is a community that is almost entirely comprised of residents of the Hasidic Jewish faith. This growth has drawn new observant Jewish families to the Village of Monroe, which has resulted in increased pedestrianism, increased household size, increased private school enrollment, increased water and sewer usage on a per-unit basis, and a demand for places of worship and other religious land uses within walking distance to families. As a secondary land use consequence for the Village of Monroe because of the rapid housing growth in Kiryas Joel/Palm Tree, there has been an increased demand in rental housing to accommodate tradespersons employed in the ongoing construction in the neighboring community as well as the service industries serving the growing high-density community.

Energy Independence.

The world has experienced petroleum and natural gas supply disruptions as a result of the Russian invasion of Ukraine. This is just the latest of global events impacting energy prices in the United States. In 2019, New York State adopted targets of carbon-free electricity by 2040 and a net-zero carbon economy by 2050. These state policies will impact the regulation of wind, solar,

and geothermal energy generation at the private, community, and utility-scale. It also impacts the need for energy storage facilities.

Cannabis Legalization.

In 2021, the personal recreational use of cannabis became legal for adults aged 21 and older in New York State. The state is building a framework for the growth and distribution of the formerly illegal substance, which includes a partial pre-emption of zoning for those communities that do not opt out of the State law.

THE 2023 COMPREHENSIVE PLANNING PROCESS

Having completed its review of the laws enacted after the 2014 Plan, and considering the drastic changes that have occurred since 2014, it was the recommendation of NPV that the Village undertake an update of its Comprehensive Plan.

The Village hired NPV to undertake this effort, which was originally envisioned to be the drafting of a completely new Comprehensive Plan and significant zoning amendments. The process outlined by NPV would include an initial Visioning Meeting with the public to get broad input on the issues facing the community, followed up by several additional topic-based meetings and possibly an on-line survey intended to gather additional input.

NPV compiled information to determine the extent to which the community has changed since 2014 and reviewed the information with the Village Board. Summaries of the compiled information are included in the various chapters of this report and the full reports are on file at Village Hall. Additionally, several meetings were held with the Village to further discuss concerns impacting the Village.

A public visioning meeting was conducted on September 29, 2022, and attracted 30+ residents and stakeholders representing a varied cross-section of the community including attendees from various neighborhoods, income levels, age groups, longevity in the community, ethnicities, and religions. These attendees provided input on the Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, and Threats (SWOT) facing the Village. This meeting was similar in format to a meeting held at the outset of the 2014 Plan.

Following the meeting, the Village reviewed the public input received, and determined that most of the input largely mirrored the input received during the 2014 Plan, except for several notable exceptions that mostly corresponded to the concerns that the Village Board had already identified as the impetus for this update. After reviewing the public input, the Village Board determined that the Village would be better served by updating the 2014 Plan to address these emerging issues and concerns rather than preparing a completely new Comprehensive Plan. The Village Board determined that additional public outreach was not necessary, and that resources

would be better spent on updating the zoning local law and other land use regulations to address the emerging concerns and to better implement the recommendations of this updated Plan.

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2. PLANNING CONTEXT

REGIONAL LOCATION AND SETTING

The Village of Monroe is an incorporated area within the Town of Monroe, Orange County, New York. Orange County borders and is on the west side of the Hudson River within the Hudson River Valley region and is also part of the larger New York City metropolitan region (**Figure 2.1, Regional Location**). The County is just north of and adjoins the New York/New Jersey state border but is physically separated from urbanized areas to the south by a swath of protected forested lands that constitute Harriman and Sterling Forest State Parks.

The Village is located within the Hudson Highlands region of New York, and it is a Hudson River Valley Greenway community.

The Village of Monroe is located in the south-central portion of Orange County and is surrounded by the unincorporated lands of the Town of Monroe on all sides (except for a single lot north of New York State Route 17M which abuts the Village of Harriman). It is also south of the Towns of Blooming Grove and Palm Tree, east of the Towns of Chester and Warwick, west of the Town/Village of Woodbury and the Village of Harriman, and north of the Town/Village of Tuxedo. New York State Route 17/U.S. Route 6 (the Quickway and future Interstate 86) parallels the Village's northeasterly boundary. New York City is approximately 45 minutes south of the Village by vehicle or train.

The Village has good access to the interstate highway system. New York State Route 208 begins at the northern boundary of the Village and travels north through the County and provides access to New York State Route 17/U.S. Route 6 (future Interstate 86), which travels east-west through the County. Route 17/6 provides access to Interstate 87 (NYS Thruway north-south) approximately 3 miles to the east, while Interstate 84 (east-west) is accessible approximately 15 miles to the west. Bus service to New York City is available from within the Village, while rail service is available within two miles. International air travel is available from Stewart International Airport, approximately 15 miles to the north.



Figure 2.1. Regional Location.

Source: Orange County GIS Division, 2022.

The Village also has excellent access to passive parks and natural resources with Bear Mountain, Goosepond Mountain, Harriman, and Sterling Forest State Parks all within 5 miles of the Village. The Hudson River is approximately 10 miles from the Village, and the Delaware River is approximately 20 miles. There are a number of lakes surrounding the Village, and, in fact, the Town of Monroe is referred to as the Lake Region, reflecting its historic role as a summer retreat. The most notable natural resources within the Village are the Millponds, which form the social, cultural, and aesthetic center of the community, if not quite the geographic center.

HUDSON RIVER VALLEY GREENWAY

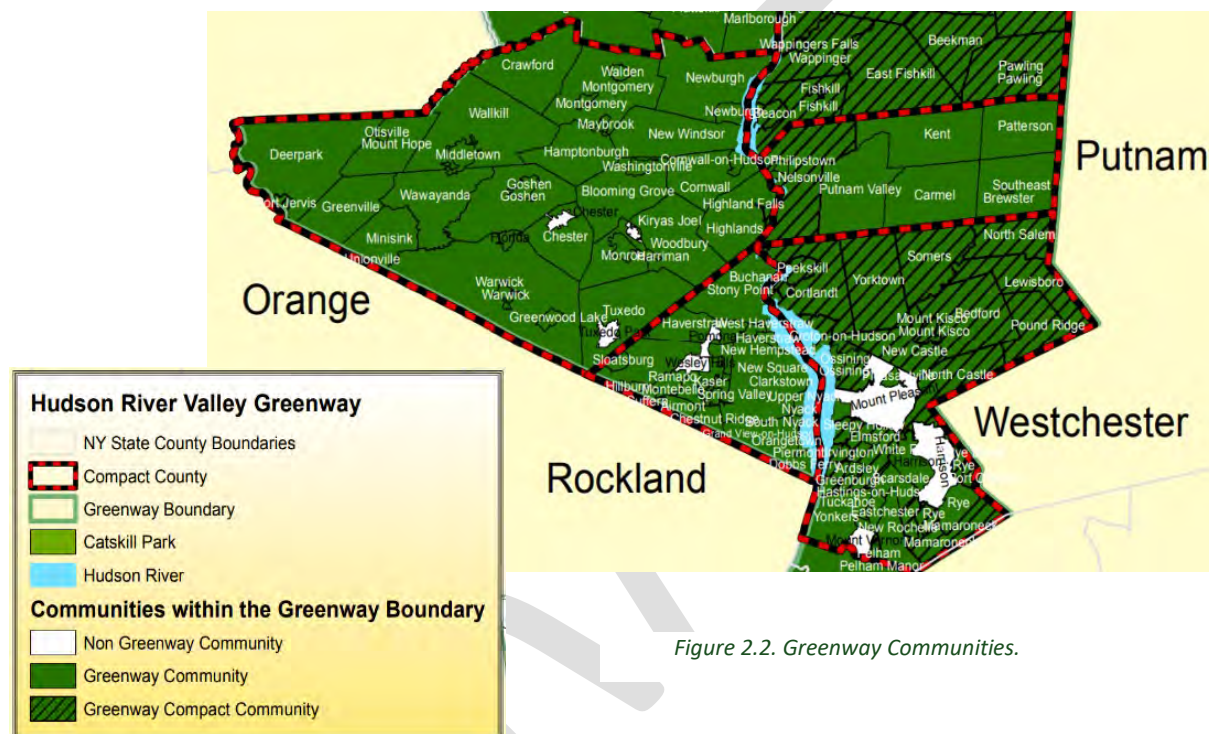


Figure 2.2. Greenway Communities.

Regionally, the Village of Monroe is located within the Hudson River Valley Greenway area and is a participating Greenway community member.

The Hudson River Valley Greenway Act of 1991 (the "Greenway Act") created a process for voluntary regional cooperation among 264 communities within 13 counties that border the Hudson River in order to facilitate a regional strategy for preserving scenic, natural, historic, cultural, and recreational resources while encouraging compatible economic development and maintaining the tradition of home rule for land use decision-making (**Figure 2.2, Greenway Communities**). The "Greenway criteria" serve as "the basis for attaining the goal of a Hudson River Valley Greenway" and are:

- *Natural and Cultural Resource Protection - Protect, preserve, and enhance natural resources including natural communities, open spaces and scenic areas as well as cultural resources including historic places and scenic roads.*

- *Economic Development - Encourage economic development that is compatible with the preservation and enhancement of natural and cultural resources including agriculture, tourism and the revitalization of established community centers and waterfronts.*
- *Public Access - Promote increased public access to the Hudson River through the creation of riverside parks and the development of the Hudson River Valley Greenway Trail System.*
- *Regional Planning - Communities can work together to develop mutually beneficial regional strategies for natural and cultural resource protection, economic development (including necessary public facilities and infrastructure), public access and heritage and environmental education.*
- *Heritage and Environmental Education - Promote awareness among residents and visitors about the Valley's natural, cultural, scenic, and historic resources.*

In 1996, the Hudson River Valley was designated the Maurice D. Hinchey Hudson River Valley National Heritage Area by Congress to recognize the importance of the history and the resources of the Hudson River Valley to the nation. The cities, villages, towns, and rural landscapes of the region display exceptional surviving physical resources spanning four centuries. The Village of Monroe is among many Greenway communities with a rich history.

NEW YORK HIGHLANDS REGION

The Village of Monroe is located within the New York Highlands physiographic region (**Figure 2.3, Hudson Highlands Region**). The Highlands region was recognized federally by the passage of the Highlands Conservation Act, signed by President George Bush on November 30, 2004. The Act recognized the high value natural resource region that forms a greenbelt around the New York City metropolitan area. The Act assisted the States of Connecticut, New Jersey, New York and Pennsylvania in conserving land and natural resources in the Highlands region by providing federal financial assistance for land conservation projects. The purposes of the Highlands Conservation Act are to:

- *recognize the importance of the water, forest, agricultural, wildlife, recreational, and cultural resources of the Highlands region, and the national significance of the Highlands region to the United States.*
- *authorize the Secretary of the Interior to work in partnership with the Secretary of Agriculture to provide financial assistance to the Highlands States to preserve and protect high priority conservation land in the Highlands region.*
- *continue the ongoing Forest Service programs in the Highlands region to assist the Highlands States, local units of government, and private forest and farm landowners in the conservation of land and natural resources in the Highlands region.*

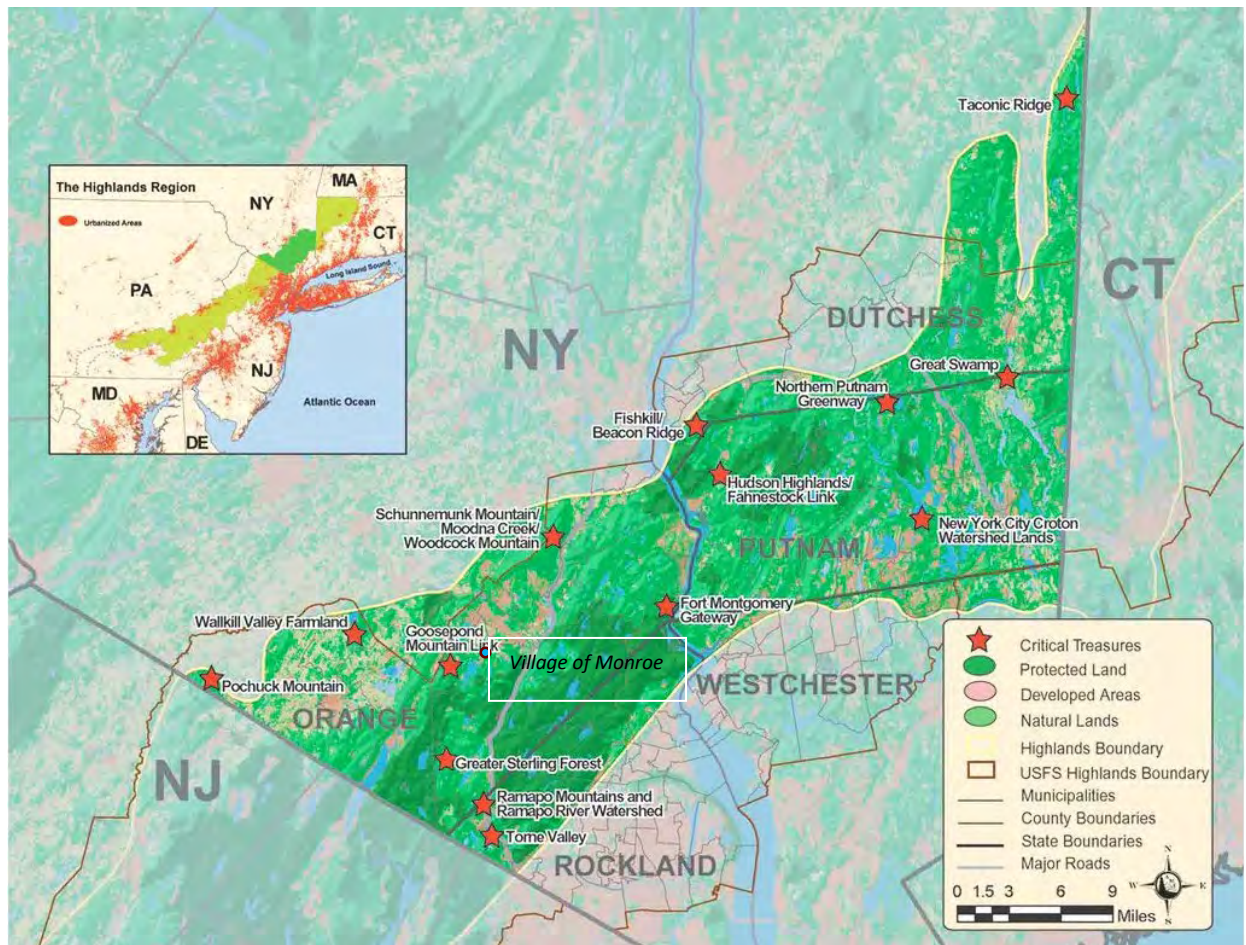


Figure 2.3. Hudson Highlands Region.¹

The landscape of the Highlands is characterized by a series of open high hills and ridges cut by deep narrow valleys that distinguish it from the surrounding rolling plains. The region is comprised of 108 municipalities in 12 counties – Monroe is specifically identified as a Highlands municipality². Like the Hudson River Valley Greenway of which the Village is a part, this Plan recognizes and affirms the Village’s position within the Highlands region.

TOWN OF MONROE

The Village of Monroe is an incorporated Village within the Town of Monroe, and the unincorporated area of the Town entirely surrounds the Village. The Village and Town share municipal services (tax assessor, trash collection, etc.) and share in its governance – Village of

¹ <https://www.summitpost.org/ny-highlands-map/409947>

² New York – New Jersey Highlands Regional Study: 2002 Update, USDA, Forest Service, December 2002.

Monroe residents vote in Town of Monroe elections. The Town of Monroe is guided by a comprehensive plan that was adopted on November 20, 2017.

ORANGE COUNTY COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

The Orange County Comprehensive Plan was last updated in 2018. This plan recommends the continued settlement of the County around existing settled nodes, such as Hamlets and Villages, known as priority growth areas, as opposed to strips along highways or development of remote outlying areas. The entire Village of Monroe is identified within the County's priority growth area. Other recommendations of the Plan include:

- Routes 208 and 17M within the Village are identified as Daily Congested Roadways.
- The Village is identified as highly suitable for EV Charging stations.
- The Village is identified as moderately prone to road flooding.

MID-HUDSON REGION

In 2013, ten Regional Councils were formed across New York State to develop long-term strategic plans for economic growth for their regions. These councils are public-private partnerships made up of local experts and stakeholders from business, academia, local government, and non-governmental organizations. The Regional councils have redefined the way New York State invests in jobs and economic growth with a more community-based approach.

The main goals of the Mid- Hudson Regional Economic Development Strategic Plan include:

- Job creation and investment in the region's developing technology-based industries;
- Initiatives to retain and stimulate existing mature industry; and
- Leveraging the region's outstanding natural resources, tourism and agriculture while recognizing that these attributes are critical to attracting and retaining high-quality jobs.

The Strategic Plan is now an element of consideration by most New York State Departments in awarding grant funding through the Consolidated Funding Application (CFA) process.

3. EXISTING LAND USE AND ZONING

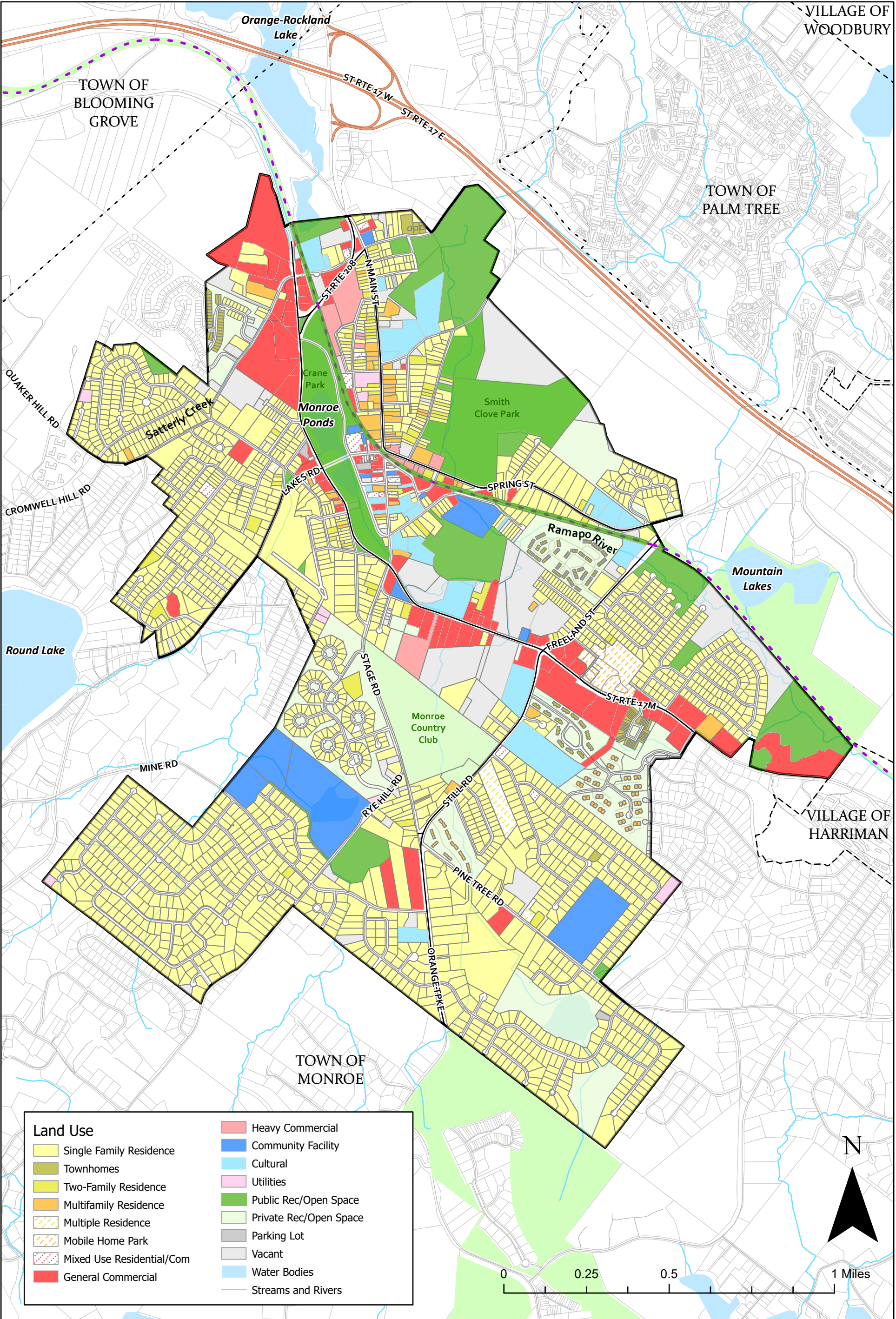
LAND USE

The Village of Monroe is approximately 3.45 square miles or 2,223 acres and is predominantly residential in character. In Monroe, residential land uses represent 49% of the land area and 88% of the tax parcels. **Map 3.1, Land Use**, shows the current land use patterns within the Village and **Table 3.1, Village Land Use**, quantifies the land uses and displays their area and parcel proportions relative to the Village as a whole.

| TABLE 3.1 VILLAGE LAND USE | | | | |
|---|--------------|--------------------|--------------|----------------------|
| Land Use | Acres | % Acres in Village | # of Parcels | % Parcels in Village |
| Single Family Residence | 950 | 42.7% | 2,096 | 65.3% |
| Two Family Residence | 26 | 1.2% | 66 | 2.1% |
| Townhouse | 28 | 1.3% | 306 | 9.5% |
| Multifamily | 56 | 2.5% | 304 | 9.4% |
| Multiple Residence | 9 | 0.4% | 6 | 0.2% |
| Mobile Home Park | 14 | 0.6% | 3 | 0.1% |
| Mixed Use Residential/Commercial | 9 | 0.4% | 31 | 1.0% |
| General Commercial | 151 | 6.8% | 105 | 3.3% |
| Heavy Commercial | 20 | 0.9% | 12 | 0.4% |
| Public Rec/Open Space | 274 | 12.3% | 30 | 0.9% |
| Private Rec/Open Space | 238 | 10.7% | 40 | 1.2% |
| Cultural | 53 | 2.4% | 22 | 0.7% |
| Community Facility | 90 | 4.0% | 15 | 0.5% |
| Parking Lot | 2 | 0.1% | 5 | 0.2% |
| Utilities | 8 | 0.4% | 9 | 0.3% |
| Roadway | 163 | 7.4% | 44 | 1.4% |
| Vacant | 132 | 5.9% | 115 | 3.6% |
| Total Area | 2,223 | 3,209 | 100.0 | 100.00 |
| Source: Village of Monroe 2018 Tax Data. Orange County GIS Parcel Data. | | | | |

RESIDENTIAL LAND USE

Table 3.2, Residential Land Use, provides the breakdown of residential land use within the Village of Monroe. In Monroe, 49% of the land area and 88% of tax parcels are dedicated to residential use. This land use data does not reflect the non-authorized conversion of existing dwellings to boarding houses, which has been observed on an accelerating basis in the Village. This issue was also identified in the 2014/2016 Comprehensive Plan.



| TABLE 3.2 RESIDENTIAL LAND USE | | | | | | |
|---|-------|------------------|------------------|-----------|------------------|--------------|
| | | | % Area | | % Tax Parcels | |
| Land Use | Acres | # Tax Parcels | % Residential | % Village | % Residential | % Village |
| Single Family Residence | 950 | 2,096 | 87.0% | 42.7% | 74.5% | 65.3% |
| Two Family Residence | 26 | 66 | 2.4% | 1.2% | 2.3% | 2.1% |
| Three Family Residence | 6 | 13 | 0.6% | 0.3% | 0.5% | 0.4% |
| Townhouse | 28 | 306 | 2.6% | 1.3% | 10.9% | 9.5% |
| Multifamily | 56 | 304 | 5.1% | 2.2% | 10.8% | 9.1% |
| Multiple Residence | 9 | 6 | 0.8% | 0.4% | 0.2% | 0.2% |
| Mobile Home Park | 14 | 3 | 1.3% | 0.6% | 0.1% | 0.1% |
| Mixed Use Residential/Commercial | 9 | 31 | 0.9% | 0.4% | 1.1% | 1.0% |
| Total Residential | 1,092 | 2,812 | | | | |
| Village Total | 2,223 | 3,209 | | | | |
| % Total | 49% | 88% | | | | |
| Source: Village of Monroe 2018 Tax Data. Orange County GIS Parcel Data. | | | | | | |

COMMERCIAL LAND USE

Table 3.3, Commercial Land Use, provides the breakdown of commercial business within the Village of Monroe. Commercial land uses in the Village of Monroe are concentrated along Route 17M and in the center of the Village at the intersection of N. Main Street and Lakes Road.

| TABLE 3.3 COMMERCIAL LAND USE | | | | | | |
|--|-------|------------------|-----------------|--------------|-----------------|--------------|
| | | | % Area | | % Tax Parcels | |
| Land Use | Acres | # Tax Parcels | % Commercial | % Village | % Commercial | % Village |
| Business/Medical Office | 47 | 34 | 27.3% | 2.1% | 27.9% | 1.1% |
| Retail Commercial | 54 | 31 | 31.6% | 2.4% | 25.4% | 1.0% |
| General Commercial | 9 | 12 | 4.9% | 0.4% | 9.8% | 0.4% |
| Automotive | 20 | 11 | 11.8% | 0.9% | 9.0% | 0.3% |
| Dining Establishment | 7 | 10 | 4.2% | 0.3% | 8.2% | 0.3% |
| Warehouse/Storage | 18 | 8 | 10.7% | 0.8% | 6.6% | 0.2% |
| Banks | 10 | 6 | 5.8% | 0.5% | 4.9% | 0.2% |
| Parking Lot | 2 | 5 | 1.2% | 0.1% | 4.1% | 0.2% |
| Fuel Storage | 1 | 4 | 0.7% | 0.1% | 3.3% | 0.1% |
| Overnight Accommodations | 3 | 1 | 1.7% | 0.1% | 0.8% | 0.0% |
| Total Commercial | 171 | 122 | | | | |
| Total Village | 2,223 | 3,209 | | | | |
| % Village | 8% | 4% | | | | |
| Source: Village of Monroe 2018 Tax Data. Orange County GIS Parcel Data | | | | | | |

COMMUNITY FACILITIES AND CULTURAL USES

Community facilities and cultural uses include governmental and non-profit land uses such as libraries, educational facilities (public and private), religious institutions, government offices and facilities, and other public services. These land uses represent 6% of the land area in the Village of Monroe and 1% of the tax units (Table 3.4, Community and Cultural Uses).

| TABLE 3.4 COMMUNITY AND CULTURAL USES | | | | | | | |
|---------------------------------------|-------------------------|---------|---------------|--------------------------|-----------|--------------------------|-----------|
| | | | | % Area | | % Tax Parcels | |
| Land Use | | # Acres | # Tax Parcels | % Community and Cultural | % Village | % Community and Cultural | % Village |
| Community Facilities | Police, Fire, Ambulance | 3 | 5 | 2.1% | 0.1% | 13.5% | 0.2% |
| | Library | 0.3 | 1 | 0.2% | 0.0% | 2.7% | 0.0% |
| | Educational Facility | 70 | 5 | 49.1% | 3.2% | 13.5% | 0.2% |
| | Government | 9 | 3 | 6.3% | 0.4% | 8.1% | 0.1% |
| Cultural Uses | Cultural landmark | 0.3 | 1 | 0.2% | 0.0% | 2.7% | 0.0% |
| | Recreational Club | 11 | 3 | 7.9% | 0.5% | 8.1% | 0.1% |
| | Religious | 34 | 12 | 23.7% | 1.5% | 32.4% | 0.4% |
| | Benevolent Association | 5 | 3 | 3.3% | 0.2% | 8.1% | 0.1% |
| | Cemetery | 10 | 4 | 7.2% | 0.5% | 10.8% | 0.1% |

| TABLE 3.4 COMMUNITY AND CULTURAL USES | | | | | | | |
|---------------------------------------|---|---------|---------------|--------------------------|-----------|--------------------------|-----------|
| | | | | % Area | | % Tax Parcels | |
| Land Use | | # Acres | # Tax Parcels | % Community and Cultural | % Village | % Community and Cultural | % Village |
| | Total Institutional | 142.6 | 37 | | | | |
| | Total Village | 2,223 | 3,209 | | | | |
| | % Village | 6% | 1% | | | | |
| | Source: Village of Monroe 2019 Tax Data. Orange County GIS Parcel Data. | | | | | | |

RECREATION, OPEN SPACE, AND VACANT LAND

The term “open space” generally refers to land in the Village of Monroe that is not developed with residential or commercial buildings (**Table 3.5, Recreation, Open Space, and Vacant Land**). Open space can be public or privately held, for the purposes of recreation, buffering of residential development, stormwater management, or ecological conservation. We include vacant land in this category, for while some vacant parcels may be improved with impervious surface, most vacant land in the Village is undeveloped. Several large parcels are identified as vacant and in private ownership, and therefore could be developed in the future.

| TABLE 3.5 RECREATION, OPEN SPACE, AND VACANT LAND | | | | | | |
|---|---------|-----------|-------------|-----------|-------------|-----------|
| | | | % Area | | % Parcels | |
| Land Use | # Acres | # Parcels | % OS/Vacant | % Village | % OS/Vacant | % Village |
| Residential Recreation/Open Space | 184 | 35 | 28.2% | 8.3% | 20.6% | 1.1% |
| Private Recreation/Open Space | 55 | 5 | 8.4% | 2.5% | 2.9% | 0.2% |
| Public Parks | 129 | 12 | 19.8% | 5.8% | 7.1% | 0.4% |
| Municipal Land | 126 | 17 | 19.4% | 5.7% | 10.0% | 0.5% |
| Utilities | 8 | 9 | 1.2% | 0.4% | 5.3% | 0.3% |
| Vacant | 149 | 92 | 22.9% | 6.7% | 54.1% | 2.9% |
| Total Vacant/Open Space | 651 | 170 | | | | |
| Total Village | 2,223 | 3,209 | | | | |
| % Village | 29% | 5% | | | | |
| Source: Village of Monroe 2019 Tax Data. Orange County GIS Parcel Data. | | | | | | |

ZONING

RESIDENTIAL ZONING DISTRICTS

SR - SUBURBAN RESIDENTIAL ZONING DISTRICTS

Most of the land in the Village of Monroe is zoned Suburban Residential (SR), as depicted in **Map 3.2, Existing Zoning**. Forty-five percent (42%) is zoned SR-20 which requires a minimum lot size of 20,000 square feet (roughly $\frac{1}{2}$ acre) and 23% is zoned SR-10 which requires a minimum lot size of 10,000 square feet (roughly $\frac{1}{4}$ acre). One-family detached dwellings are permitted as-of-right and are the predominant land use within these districts. Within these districts, the following land uses are permitted through Planning Board site plan approval:

- Agriculture/Horticulture
- Community recreation or park
- Religious Assembly

Special uses are those that require Planning Board approval and some additional standards or requirements:

- Accessory Apartment
- Bed-and-breakfast
- Convalescent Home
- Public utility structure or ROW

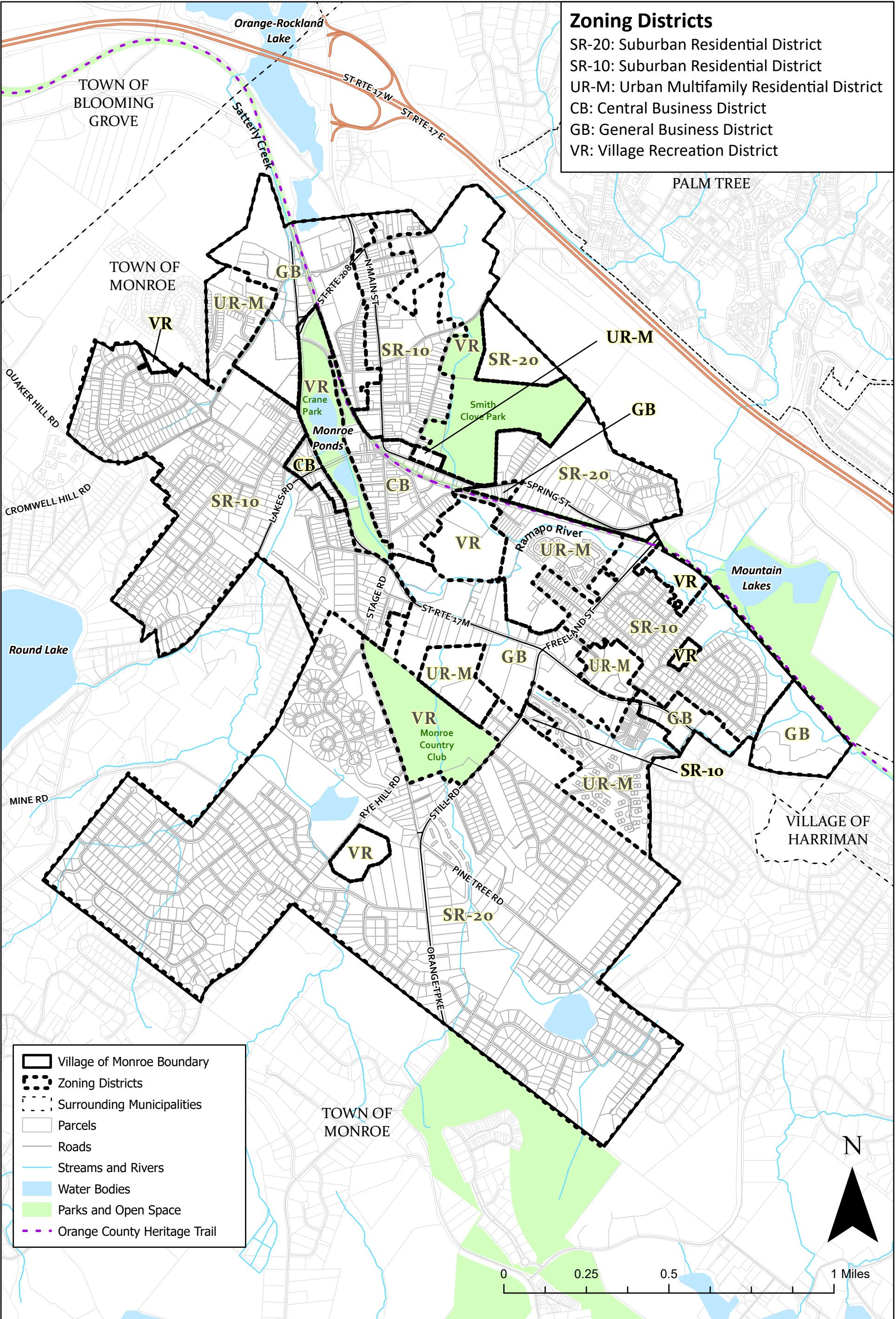
Both districts allow the same uses, but are governed by different bulk, or dimension requirements for lots.

UR - M - URBAN MULTIFAMILY RESIDENTIAL

The UR-M zoning district encompasses 192 acres, or 9% of the Village of Monroe, and is generally located adjacent to the General Business (GB) and Central Business (CB) districts. Permitted uses in this district include a variety of housing types.

Uses permitted through site plan approval include:

- Ambulance Service
- Community Recreation/Park
- Fire protection service
- One-family detached dwelling
- Religious assembly



Special permit uses, regulated through Article XII, Special Use Permit Procedures and Regulations include:

- Bed and breakfast
- Conversion of existing residential to multifamily
- Conversion of existing residential to two-family
- Mobile home court
- Multifamily residential (rental)
- Public utility structure or ROW
- Townhouse/condo (fee simple ownership)
- Two-family detached dwelling

The minimum lot size in this district ranges from 10,000 square feet for one-family dwellings to five acres for mobile home courts. Multifamily units, including townhomes, are allowed at a maximum density of 14.5 units per acre. Maximum height for all uses is two stories.

COMMERCIAL AND MIXED-USE ZONING DISTRICTS

GB - GENERAL BUSINESS ZONING DISTRICT

The Village of Monroe contains approximately 265 acres of land (12%) zoned for General Business (GB). This district generally follows the Route 17M corridor in the southern and northern areas of the Village and corresponds with a concentration of commercial uses. The minimum lot size for uses in the GB are 20,000 or 40,000 square feet, depending on the use. Maximum height is 35 feet or two stories.

Permitted land uses in this zoning district include:

- Ambulance Service
- Bank or financial institution
- Existing residential (single and two family)
- Fire protection service
- Funeral and interment service
- Kennel
- Laundry Service
- Office
- Personal service with floor area per establishment no less than 1,000 sf
- Religious assembly
- Retail stores of shops with floor area per establishment of no less than 1,000 sf
- Veterinary service/animal hospital

- Repair service, non-motor vehicle

Special uses are further regulated by Article XII, Special Use Permit Procedures and regulations, and include:

- Car wash
- Day care
- Drive through and drive-up establishment
- Food service sales-no wait staff
- Garden center
- Hotel/motel
- Light industry
- Membership Club
- Motor vehicle fuel station
- Motor vehicle repair and paint shop
- Motor vehicle sales
- Neighborhood shopping center
- Public parking lot
- Public transportation terminal excluding taxi business
- Public utility structure or ROW
- Recreational facility, indoor with a floor area per establishment of no less than 1,000 sf
- Recreation facility, outdoor
- Research facility
- Residential to commercial conversion
- Restaurant with a floor area per establishment of no less than 1,000 sf
- Sale and storage of lumber and building materials
- Self storage
- Shopping center
- Tavern
- Taxi business
- Theater or cultural center
- Warehouse

CB - CENTRAL BUSINESS DISTRICT

The policy of the Central Business (CB) District is to achieve a dynamic mix of higher-density uses that will generate mutually beneficial interrelationships between businesses and their clients; to provide ample supply of housing for those who would benefit from walking to places of employment and places providing access to goods and services; to achieve a reasonable

pedestrian scale that encourages walking, lingering, and relaxing; to provide adequate supply of short- and long-term municipal parking areas; and to generate a sufficient tax base to support public services and amenities.

The Central Business district is centered generally in the triangular area between Crane Park/the Millponds, the Heritage Trail, and Stage Road. It covers 64 acres or 3% of the Village. Minimum lot size and setbacks are not specified, except for residential uses which require certain square footages of livable floor area per bedroom. Maximum height in the CB district is 35 feet or 3 stories.

Permitted uses in the CB District include:

- Ambulance service
- Bank or financial institution
- Community recreation/park
- Existing residential (single and two-family)
- Fire protection service
- Funeral and intermittent service
- Laundry service
- Library
- Office
- Personal service
- Religious assembly
- Repair service, non-motor vehicle
- Retail stores or shops

Special uses allowed in the CB district are further regulated in Article XII and include:

- Commercial to residential conversion (single to two-family)
- Food service/sales-no wait staff
- Hotel
- Membership club
- Public parking lot
- Public utility structure or ROW
- Multifamily housing
- Recreational facility, indoor
- Residential to commercial conversion
- Restaurant
- Senior citizen housing
- Shopping center

- Theater or cultural center
- Tavern

OPEN SPACE AND RECREATION ZONING DISTRICT

VR - VILLAGE RECREATION DISTRICT

The Village Recreation (VR) district surrounds public recreation and open space land. The district covers 280 acres or 12% of the Village of Monroe and includes Smith Clove Park, Crane Park, Monroe Country Club (private recreation/open space) and other lands owned by the Village.

Uses permitted in this district through Planning Board site plan review and approval include:

- Agriculture/horticulture
- Community recreation and/or park

Special permit uses, regulated by Article XII include:

- Public utility structure or ROW
- Recreation facility, indoor
- Recreation facility, outdoor

OVERLAYS

It is noted that prior to the 2016/2017 zoning amendments, the zoning chapter included an environmentally sensitive overlay zone which applied to wetlands, water bodies, flood zones, or other sensitive environmental features. The 2014 Plan Update included objectives related to the protection of these environmentally sensitive features and maintaining the overlay zoning district protecting these resources, as well as adding an aquifer overlay. However, the overlay was removed in the zoning amendments adopted in 2016 and 2017.

4. DEMOGRAPHICS AND SOCIOECONOMICS

POPULATION

Table 4.1, Persons Per Square Mile, shows population density in New York State, Orange County, and several municipalities throughout Orange County. The Village contains 2,708.1 persons per square mile, which is much higher than the State (411.2) and County (459.3) rates.

| TABLE 4.1 PERSONS PER SQUARE MILE | | | |
|-----------------------------------|-----------------------|----------------|----------------|
| | Land Area | 2010 | 2020 |
| Jurisdiction | | | |
| New York State | 47,126.4 sq. miles | 411.2 | 428.7 |
| Orange County | 811.69 sq. miles | 459.3 | 494.4 |
| Village of Monroe | 3.45 sq. miles | 2,442.0 | 2,708.1 |
| Town of Monroe | 19.9 sq. miles | 1,998.0 | 1,070.4 |
| Village of Woodbury | 35.6 sq. miles | 300.1 | 323.8 |
| Village of Kiryas Joel | 1.11 sq. miles | 18,198.7 | 29,688.3 |
| Village of Chester | 2.1 sq. miles | 1,640.5 | 1,901.4 |
| Village of Warwick | 2.42 sq. miles | 2,785.2 | 2,748.8 |

Source: 2010 and 2020 Decennial Census.

Table 4.2, Population Change – Villages in Orange County, displays the population changes since 2000 for each of the villages in Orange County. Monroe is the third most populous of the eighteen villages and has the fifth highest growth rate.

| TABLE 4.2 POPULATION CHANGE - VILLAGES IN ORANGE COUNTY | | | | |
|---|--------------|--------------|--------------|------------------------|
| | 2000 | 2010 | 2020 | % Change: 2000-2020 |
| Jurisdiction | | | | |
| New York State | 18,976,457 | 19,378,102 | 20,201,249 | 6.0% |
| Orange County | 341,367 | 372,813 | 401,310 | 15.0% |
| Village of Monroe | 7,780 | 8,364 | 9,343 | 16.7% |
| Village of Woodbury | N/A* | 10,686 | 11,526 | 17.9%** |
| Village of Kiryas Joel | 13,138 | 20,175 | 32,954 | 150.8% |
| Village of Harriman | 2,252 | 2,424 | 2,714 | 17.0% |
| Village of Chester | 3,445 | 3,969 | 3,993 | 13.7% |
| Village of Warwick | 6,412 | 6,731 | 6,652 | 3.6% |
| Village of Greenwood Lake | 3,411 | 3,154 | 2,994 | -12.2% |
| Village of Florida | 2,571 | 2,833 | 2,888 | 11.0% |

| | | | | |
|--|-------|-------|-------|---------|
| Village of Montgomery | 3,636 | 3,814 | 3,834 | 5.1% |
| Village of Walden | 6,164 | 6,978 | 6,818 | 9.6% |
| Village of Maybrook | 3,084 | 2,958 | 3,150 | 2.1% |
| Village of Washingtonville | 5,851 | 5,899 | 5,657 | -3.3% |
| Village of South Blooming Grove | N/A* | 3,234 | 3,973 | 18.6%** |
| Village of Goshen | 5,676 | 5,454 | 5,777 | 1.7% |
| Village of Cornwall-on-Hudson | 3,058 | 3,018 | 3,075 | <1% |
| Village of Highland Falls | 3,678 | 3,900 | 3,684 | <1% |
| Village of Unionville | 536 | 612 | 592 | 9.5% |
| Village of Otisville | 989 | 1,068 | 969 | -2.0% |
| Village of Tuxedo Park | 731 | 623 | 645 | -12.0% |
| *The villages of Woodbury and South Blooming Grove were both incorporated in 2006. | | | | |
| **Rate of change represents population change between 2010 and 2020. | | | | |
| Source: 2000, 2010, and 2020 Decennial Census. | | | | |

ETHNICITY

In the last decade, there has been a notable decrease in the White Alone population corresponding with a notable increase in the Hispanic or Latino population and a more moderate increase in the Black alone population (**Table 4.3, Population by Race/Ethnicity**).

| TABLE 4.3 POPULATION BY RACE/ETHNICITY | | | | |
|--|-------------------|-------|---------------|----------------|
| | Village of Monroe | | Orange County | New York State |
| | 2010 | 2020 | 2020 | 2020 |
| Total Persons | 8,364 | 9,343 | 401,310 | 20,201,249 |
| White alone | 70.9% | 54.0% | 57.8% | 52.5% |
| Black alone | 3.6% | 6.8% | 10.3% | 13.7% |
| Hispanic or Latino | 19.6% | 29.9% | 22.4% | 19.5% |
| American Indian alone | <1.0% | <1.0% | <1% | <1% |
| Asian alone | 4.3% | 5.5% | 2.9% | 9.5% |
| Pacific Islander alone | <1.0% | <1.0% | <1% | <1% |
| Some other race alone | <1.0% | 1.0% | 3.0% | 1.0% |
| Two or more races | 1.3% | 3.0% | 3.5% | 3.6% |
| Source: 2010, 2020 Decennial Census ³ | | | | |

³ It is noted that these race and ethnic classifications are established by the US Census Bureau in accordance with standards maintained by the US Office of Management and Budget. The census asks two questions to survey respondents: (1) whether the survey is of Hispanic or Latino Ethnicity, and a second question regarding to race, which

The 2020 American Community Survey estimates that 1,407 Village of Monroe residents, approximately 18 percent of the population, were foreign-born. **Table 4.4, Place of Birth Among Foreign-Born Residents**, displays the place of birth of foreign-born residents of Monroe Village who entered the United States since 1990. Approximately 51 percent of foreign-born residents immigrated to the Village from Mexico or a country in the Caribbean.

| TABLE 4.4 PLACE OF BIRTH AMONG FOREIGN-BORN RESIDENTS | | |
|--|----------------|-------------------|
| Region | Village | Percentage |
| All Regions | 1,407 | — |
| Europe | 238 | 16.9% |
| Asia | 247 | 17.6% |
| Caribbean | 318 | 22.6% |
| Mexico | 400 | 28.4% |
| Other - Central America | 38 | 2.7% |
| South America | 71 | 5.0% |
| Other Areas | 89 | 6.3% |
| <i>Source: American Community Survey, 2020 5-Year Estimate</i> | | |

AGE

Table 4.5, Population by Age Segment, presents population by age group. The Village's population is aging and age distribution for the Village of Monroe is very similar to Orange County. Like much of New York State, the Village's median age is increasing, which reflects the aging baby boomer generation. The Village's 2021 median age is 39.5 years, which is 1.9 years older than the County, and an increase of 1.3 years in the last decade. ESRI Business Analyst projects that the median age for the Village of Monroe will continue to increase to 39.8 years by 2026. This trend has implications for the types of housing and services needed if existing Village residents are going to be able to "age in place".

| TABLE 4.5 POPULATION BY AGE SEGMENT | | | | |
|--|--------------------------|-------------|-------------------------------|----------------------|
| Jurisdiction | Village of Monroe | | | Orange County |
| | 2010 | 2021 | Change % 2010-2021 | 2021 |
| Age Group | | | | |

includes the other categories listed above. Where something is listed as "alone" in the categories above, it refers to persons that identified as that category who did not also identify as Hispanic or Latino.

| | | | | |
|--------------------------------------|-------|-------|------------|-------|
| 0-4 | 6.4% | 5.7% | -5.8% | 6.6% |
| 5-9 | 8.1% | 6.4% | -15.9% | 6.6% |
| 10-14 | 7.9% | 7.2% | -3.6% | 6.9% |
| 15-24 | 13.2 | 12.5% | <1% | 14.1% |
| 25-34 | 10.2% | 12.7% | 23.9% | 13.0% |
| 35-44 | 15.5% | 11.9% | -18.5% | 11.9% |
| 45-54 | 16.7% | 13.8% | -12.6% | 12.9% |
| 55-64 | 11.3% | 14.5% | 25.8% | 13.1% |
| 65-74 | 6.1% | 9.3% | 37.9% | 9.2% |
| 75-84 | 3.5% | 4.3% | 23.4% | 4.4% |
| 85+ | 1.2% | 1.7% | 34.4% | 1.8% |
| Median Age | 38.2 | 39.5 | +1.3 years | 37.6 |
| Source: ESRI Business Analyst, 2022. | | | | |

HOUSEHOLDS

The Village has slightly larger households and family sizes than the surrounding County (**Table 4.6, Population by Household Size**). The Village's 2021 average household size is 3.02, whereas the County household size is 2.86 persons. The average family size is 3.42 for the Village, which is slightly greater than the County's average of 3.39 persons. The Village also has more "family" households and a higher rate of married couples than the surrounding County.

| TABLE 4.6 POPULATION BY HOUSEHOLD SIZE | | | | |
|--|-------------------|------------------|---------------|------------------|
| Type of Households | Village of Monroe | | Orange County | |
| | 2019 | Percent of Total | 2019 | Percent of Total |
| Family Households | 2,169 | 85.0% | 89,693 | 70.1% |
| 2-Person | 844 | 33.1% | 32,068 | 25.0% |
| 3-Person | 327 | 12.8% | 21,318 | 16.7% |
| 4-Person | 499 | 19.6% | 19,637 | 15.3% |
| 5-Person | 231 | 9.1% | 9,337 | 7.3% |
| 6-Person | 118 | 4.6% | 3,713 | 2.9% |
| 7+ Person | 150 | 5.9% | 3,620 | 2.8% |
| Nonfamily Households | 383 | 15.0% | 38,323 | 29.9% |
| 1-Person | 316 | 12.4% | 31,685 | 24.8% |
| 2-Person | 41 | 1.6% | 5,708 | 4.5% |
| 3-Person | 26 | 1.0% | 535 | <1% |
| 4-Person | 0 | — | 230 | <1% |
| 5-Person | 0 | — | 59 | <1% |
| 6-Person | 0 | — | 106 | <1% |
| 7+ Person | 0 | — | 0 | — |

Source: ESRI Business Analyst, 2022.

INCOME

In the last decade, median and mean household incomes, as well as per capita income, have increased in the Village. In 2010, it was estimated that 8.6 percent of all households earned \$200,000 or more. In 2021, 18.3 percent of the population earned that amount (**Table 4.7, Household Income**). Note that incomes tend to rise as inflation and cost of living increases. The 2010 estimates also would reflect trends in income levels due to the “Great Recession”.

When compared to the County and State, residents of the Village of Monroe generate higher incomes. Approximately 32 percent of Village households make less than \$75,000 per year, whereas 44.2 percent of Orange County residents and 51.3 percent of New York State residents make less than this amount. In addition, the Village exceeds the County and State’s median household, mean household, and per capita incomes. According to Orange County statistics, of the 1,101 households that receive Section 8 vouchers in the 10950 zip code, only seventeen (17) households that receive Section 8 vouchers are located in the Village of Monroe.⁴

| TABLE 4.7 HOUSEHOLD INCOME | | | | |
|----------------------------|-------------------|------------|---------------|----------------|
| | Village of Monroe | | Orange County | New York State |
| | 2010 | 2021 | 2021 | 2021 |
| | % of Total | % of Total | % of Total | % of Total |
| <\$15,000 | 3.3% | 2.8% | 9.0% | 11.1% |
| \$15,000-\$24,999 | 7.1% | 4.4% | 7.5% | 7.7% |
| \$25,000-\$34,999 | 5.5% | 3.3% | 4.4% | 7.2% |
| \$35,000-\$49,999 | 8.1% | 11.4% | 9.4% | 10.2% |
| \$50,000-\$74,999 | 15.9% | 10.1% | 13.9% | 15.1% |
| \$75,000-\$99,999 | 12.8% | 13.8% | 14.3% | 11.8% |
| \$100,000-\$149,999 | 24.2% | 24.4% | 20.9% | 16.2% |
| \$150,000-\$199,999 | 14.5% | 11.5% | 9.9% | 8.6% |
| \$200,000+ | 8.6% | 18.3% | 10.6% | 12.1% |
| Median household income | \$97,863 | \$113,237 | \$83,396 | \$72,042 |
| Mean household income | \$105,781 | \$147,610 | \$104,586 | \$105,784 |
| Per capita income | \$44,363 | \$49,467 | \$35,742 | \$40,452 |

Source: ESRI Business Analyst, 2022.

⁴ The housing choice voucher program is the federal government's program for assisting very low-income families, the elderly, and the disabled to afford housing in the private market. Since housing assistance is provided on behalf of the family or individual, participants are able to find their own housing, including single-family homes, townhouses and apartments.

The Village of Monroe has a considerably low poverty rate. In 2020, the U.S. Census estimated the Village's poverty rate at 3.6 percent. This is lower than the Orange County rate of 11.4 percent, and the State's rate of 13.6 percent. The national poverty rate is 12.8 percent. However, there is a question as to the extent to which the census data are reflecting recent influxes of immigrants into the Village who generally have lower income than other established households.

DRAFT

5. VISION

Long range planning begins with a community's vision for its future. The Vision Statement provides a short, succinct statement against which all policies and proposals can easily be tested. The Village's Vision Statement is an evolution of its first expressed Vision as described in the 2014 Comprehensive Plan. The statement has been updated based upon significant citizen input received at a Visioning Meeting held on September 29, 2022. The word clouds below summarize the input received at the Visioning Workshop, both positive and negative. A full report of the workshop is on file in the office of the Village Clerk.



The Village Board used the input along with its own understanding of shifting public preferences; changing economic conditions; dwindling vacant land; dwindling water and sewer capacity; emerging concerns for sustainability; and desire for preservation of community character, historic resources and scenic resources to amend the Vision Statement as follows:

The Village of Monroe will remain a complete place providing: quiet peaceful neighborhoods for residents diverse in age, race, religion, economics, and capability to live free from traffic, noise, pollution, crime, and unsanitary conditions in residences consistent with the scale and densities of the Village's existing established neighborhoods; complete streets that provide safe and uncongested transport for people of all ages and capabilities, whether pedestrians, cyclists or motorists; opportunities for businesses and employment, particularly in downtown, but also along the Route 17M corridor in structures that are respectful of Monroe's traditional Village architecture; a robust range of recreational and cultural opportunities centered in Downtown and around the Millponds including preserved historic structures, sites and scenic vistas, which add to the character of the Village; and opportunities for social interaction and community involvement through recreation, education, volunteerism, worship and government.

The Vision Statement is the basis for amending the goals and objectives of the 2014/2016 Plan as described in the chapters hereafter.

6. PLAN: HOUSING

Throughout life, the typical person will spend more time at home than any other single location. This is especially true of children and older adults. Therefore, the homes and neighborhoods we choose inform our life experience perhaps more than any other locational factor. Because of this, most people have strong preferences about where they live. There is a diversity in the type of residences people choose for themselves and their families, but often economic realities reduce the number of options available, and often the realities imposed by aging or transitioning through various phases of life impose physical prerequisites on our housing choices. It is important to understand the type of housing available in the Village and the preferences of the current population to ensure that housing options are available to accommodate existing residents as they transition through life and confront economic changes, as well as accommodate new residents as the Village's remaining lands are developed.

EXISTING CONDITIONS

GENERAL HOUSING CHARACTERISTICS

The following census data indicates a decline in housing units between 2010 and 2020 which is believed to be due to sampling error caused by comparing 100% decennial census data from 2010 with 5-year estimates based on approximately 1% samples each year. Because the release of decennial census data was delayed until at least May of 2023, this data could not be updated. It is anticipated that when decennial census data is released, it will show modest growth in the number of households within the Village. During the ten-year period approximately 135 2-3 bedroom Townhomes of 1700+ square feet were constructed in the Hidden Creek Development (Silas Seaman Street). Approximately 25 of the large 4+ bedroom single-family detached Prestwick Gardens homes were built during this period, most with 3,000 square feet or more floor area. Approximately 50 of the 4+ bedroom Smith Farm Townhomes were also completed in this time period, each with more than 4,000 square feet of floor area but those units were not likely occupied at the time of the 2020 census. It is further believed that the number of single-family homes being rented to more than one household also increased, although this is based on anecdotal observations.

The decline in total housing units indicated hereafter is more likely to be an increase of at least 4%. The sampled increase in renter-occupied housing is believed to be accurate.⁵

⁵ Additional Census information was released in May of 2023 verifying these assumptions. Total housing units grew by 219 units (7.8%) to 3,201 units. 2020 rental units were correctly predicted (624 versus 628). Owned housing was significantly undercounted (1,924 versus 2,320). Table 6.1 has been updated with the more accurate Decennial Census Information, but since this matches the assumptions of the Village Board in preparing this plan, and because not all data is yet available, the full range of census data estimated from ACS will not be updated.

Since 2010, there has been a 39.3 percent increase in the number of renter occupied housing units, and a 3.9 percent increase in owner occupied housing units (**Table 6.1, Village of Monroe Housing Units and Occupancy**).

| TABLE 6.1 VILLAGE OF MONROE HOUSING UNITS AND OCCUPANCY | | | | | | | | |
|---|-------|---------------------|---------------|---------------------|--------------------------------|-------------|---------------------|----------------------------|
| | 2010 | | 2020 Estimate | | Est. % Change: 2010-2020 | 2020 Actual | | % Change: 2010- 2020 |
| | Units | Percent of Total | Units | Percent of Total | | Units | Percent of Total | |
| Total Housing Units | 2,901 | — | 2,793 | — | -3.7% | 3,201 | — | +10.3% |
| Occupied Housing Units | 2,681 | 92.4% | 2,552 | 91.4% | -4.8% | 2,944 | 92.0% | +9.8% |
| Owner Occupied | 2,233 | 77.0% | 1,924 | 69.0% | -13.8% | 2,320 | 72.5% | +3.9% |
| Renter Occupied | 448 | 15.4% | 628 | 22.5% | +40.2% | 624 | 19.5% | +39.3% |
| Source: American Community Survey, 2010 and 2020 5-Year Estimate. | | | | | | | | |

Within Orange County, there has been an increase in total housing units since 2010, and a slight increase in the proportion of renter-occupied housing units (**Table 6.2, Orange County Housing Units and Occupancy**). Orange County has a lower percentage of owner-occupied housing units (61.3%) than the Village (69.0%), in addition to having a higher percentage of renter-occupied housing units (29.1%) than the Village (22.5%)

| TABLE 6.2 ORANGE COUNTY HOUSING UNITS AND OCCUPANCY | | | | | |
|---|---------|---------------------|---------|------------------|------------------------|
| | 2010 | | 2020 | | % Change: 2010-2020 |
| | Units | Percent of Total | Units | Percent of Total | |
| Total Housing Units | 136,331 | — | 144,264 | — | 5.5% |
| Occupied Housing Units | 124,379 | 91.2% | 130,428 | 90.4% | 4.6% |
| Owner Occupied | 88,633 | 65.0% | 88,453 | 61.3% | <1% |
| Renter Occupied | 35,746 | 26.2% | 41,975 | 29.1% | 14.8% |
| Source: American Community Survey, 2010 and 2020 5-Year Estimate. | | | | | |

Table 6.3, Village of Monroe Units in Structure, shows an increase in Townhomes consistent with the Hidden Creek development, but there is no reason to believe that the number of 1-unit detached residences, structures containing 5-9 units, nor mobile homes has decreased. It is likely these are sampling errors.

| TABLE 6.3 VILLAGE OF MONROE UNITS IN STRUCTURE | | | | |
|---|-------|------------------|-------|------------------|
| | 2010 | Percent of Total | 2020 | Percent of Total |
| Total Housing Units | 2,901 | — | 2,793 | — |
| 1-unit, detached | 2,115 | 72.9% | 1,981 | 70.9% |
| 1-unit, attached | 208 | 7.2% | 337 | 12.1% |
| 2 units | 119 | 4.1% | 36 | 1.3% |
| 3 or 4 units | 192 | 6.6% | 234 | 8.4% |
| 5 to 9 units | 174 | 6.0% | 118 | 4.2% |
| 10 to 19 units | 7 | <1% | 22 | 1.0% |
| 20+ units | 28 | 1.0% | 22 | 1.0% |
| Mobile home | 58 | 2.0% | 43 | 1.5% |
| Boat, RV, van, etc. | 0 | — | 0 | — |
| Source: American Community Survey, 2010 and 2020 5-Year Estimate. | | | | |

The total number of bedrooms in a dwelling has implications for the types of households that may purchase a unit, and it also identifies the extent of housing variety that exists within a community. The majority (75.4 percent) of the dwelling units in the Village have three (3) or more bedrooms (**Figure 6.1, Village of Monroe – Total Number of Bedrooms**). As the 2020 estimates are suspected to undercount the number of single-family homes, it is likely this percentage of units with 3+ bedrooms is actually higher.

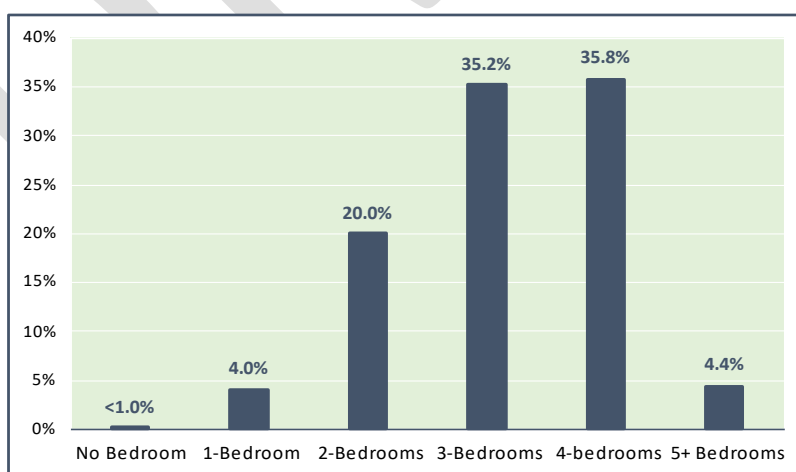


Figure 6.1. Village of Monroe – Total Number of Bedrooms⁶

The median year of construction for Village of Monroe housing is 1974 (**Table 6.4, Housing Units by Year Built**). Monroe is a historic Village with more than 15% of units built before the Second World War. Most Monroe housing was constructed during the period of rapid national suburbanization – between 1950 and 1990. Since then, housing construction has declined, largely due to the lack of suitable land to support new residential single-family construction. The Village has seen several new residential units approved and under construction, and an increase is anticipated after 2019. Developments approved or under construction after 2019 include:

- Approximately 50 townhomes in the Smith Farm development, mostly with 4+ bedrooms and more than 3500 square feet of living area.
- Approximately 34 2- and 3-bedroom apartments of approximately 1,200 square feet each in the Spring Hill Apartment development.
- Approximately 72 2-bedroom apartments in the development referred to as “The Q.”.

| TABLE 6.4 HOUSING UNITS BY YEAR BUILT | | | | |
|---------------------------------------|-------------------|------------------|---------------|------------------|
| | Village of Monroe | | Orange County | |
| | 2019 | Percent of Total | 2019 | Percent of Total |
| Total housing units | 2,722* | — | 143,252** | — |
| Built 2014 or later | 44 | 1.6% | 2,268 | 1.6% |
| Built 2010 to 2013 | 63 | 2.3% | 3,276 | 2.3% |
| Built 2000 to 2009 | 223 | 8.2% | 16,313 | 11.4% |
| Built 1990 to 1999 | 287 | 10.5% | 15,076 | 10.5% |
| Built 1980 to 1989 | 366 | 13.4% | 18,432 | 12.9% |
| Built 1970 to 1979 | 611 | 22.4% | 19,242 | 13.4% |
| Built 1960 to 1969 | 263 | 9.7% | 14,242 | 9.9% |
| Built 1950 to 1959 | 299 | 11.0% | 14,781 | 10.3% |
| Built 1940 to 1949 | 47 | 1.7% | 6,702 | 4.7% |
| Built 1939 or earlier | 419 | 15.40% | 31,213 | 22.0% |
| Median Year Structure Built | 1974 | — | 1972 | |

⁶ Source: American Community Survey 5-Year Estimate 2020.

**Total number of housing units is based on the 2019 ACS 5-year estimate, which approximates 71 less units than the 2020 ACS 5-year estimate.*

***Total number of housing units is based on the 2019 ACS 5-year estimate, which approximates 1,012 less units than the 2020 ACS 5-year estimate.*

Source: ESRI Business Analyst, 2022.

As noted in **Table 6.5, Village of Monroe Owner-Occupied Housing Units by Value**, the median home in the Village of Monroe is \$338,589.

| TABLE 6.5 VILLAGE OF MONROE OWNER-OCCUPIED HOUSING UNITS BY VALUE | | |
|--|-------------|-------------------------|
| | 2021 | Percent of Total |
| Total housing units | 2,284 | — |
| <\$50,000 | 29 | 1.3% |
| \$50,000-\$99,999 | 11 | <1.0% |
| \$100,000-\$149,999 | 22 | 1.0% |
| \$150,000-\$199,999 | 116 | 5.1% |
| \$200,000-\$249,999 | 272 | 11.9% |
| \$250,000-\$299,999 | 413 | 18.1% |
| \$300,000-\$399,999 | 723 | 31.7% |
| \$400,000-\$499,999 | 266 | 11.6% |
| \$500,000-\$749,999 | 363 | 15.9% |
| \$750,000-\$999,999 | 3 | <1.0% |
| \$1,000,000-\$1,499,999 | 34 | 1.5% |
| \$1,500,000-\$1,999,999 | 32 | 1.4% |
| \$2,000,000+ | 0 | — |
| Median value | \$338,589 | — |
| Mean Value | \$394,100 | — |
| <i>Source: ESRI Business Analyst, 2022.</i> | | |

| TABLE 6.6 OWNER-OCCUPIED HOUSING UNITS BY MONTHLY COSTS | | |
|--|-------------|----------------|
| | 2020 | % Total |
| Occupied units paying Mortgage | 1,456 | 100.0% |
| Less than \$500 | 0 | — |
| \$500 to \$999 | 22 | 1.5% |
| \$1,000 to \$1,499 | 88 | 6.0% |
| \$1,500 to \$1,999 | 187 | 12.8% |
| \$2,000 to \$2,499 | 193 | 13.3% |
| \$2,500 to \$2,999 | 275 | 12.0% |
| \$3,000 or more | 691 | 47.5% |
| Median (dollars) | \$2,933 | — |
| | 2020 | % Total |
| Occupied units Without Mortgage | 640 | 100% |
| Less than \$250 | 12 | 2.0% |
| \$250 to \$399 | 0 | — |
| \$400 to \$599 | 6 | <1.0% |
| \$600 to \$799 | 15 | 2.3% |
| \$800 to \$999 | 47 | 7.3% |
| \$1,000 to \$1,199 | 168 | 26.2% |
| \$1,200 to \$1,399 | 149 | 23.3% |
| \$1,400 or more | 243 | 38.0% |
| Median (dollars) | \$1,329 | — |
| <i>Source: American Community Survey, 2020</i> | | |

| TABLE 6.7 RENTER-OCCUPIED HOUSING UNITS BY RENT PAID | | |
|---|-------------|----------------|
| | 2019 | % Total |
| Occupied units paying rent | 628 | 100% |
| Less than \$500 | 0 | — |
| \$500 to \$999 | 50 | 8.0% |
| \$1,000 to \$1,499 | 239 | 38.1% |
| \$1,500 to \$1,999 | 233 | 37.1% |
| \$2,000 to \$2,499 | 25 | 4.0% |
| \$2,500 to \$2,999 | 0 | — |
| \$3,000 or more | 4 | 1.0% |
| Median (dollars) | \$1,358 | — |
| <i>Source: American Community Survey 2019 5-Year Estimate</i> | | |

AFFORDABILITY

The US Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) defines housing cost burden as the percentage of household income required to pay for rent or ownership costs. A family is considered housing cost burdened if they pay more than 30% of their income towards rent or ownership costs and housing is considered severely cost burdened if a household pays more than 50% of its income towards rent or ownership costs.

TABLE 6.8 MONTHLY OWNER COSTS AS A PERCENT OF HOUSEHOLD INCOME

| | Households | Percent Total |
|--|------------|---------------|
| Housing Units with a Mortgage | 1,449 | — |
| Less than 20.0 percent | 358 | 24.7% |
| 20.0 to 24.9 percent | 138 | 9.5% |
| 25.0 to 29.9 percent | 315 | 2.2% |
| 30.0 to 34.9 percent | 184 | 12.7% |
| 35.0 percent or more | 454 | 31.3% |
| Not computed | 7 | <1% |
| Housing Unit without a Mortgage | 620 | |
| Less than 10.0 percent | 180 | 29.0% |
| 10.0 to 14.9 percent | 134 | 12.6% |
| 15.0 to 19.9 percent | 102 | 16.5% |
| 20.0 to 24.9 percent | 28 | 4.5% |
| 25.0 to 29.9 percent | 42 | 6.8% |
| 30.0 to 34.9 percent | 4 | <1% |
| 35.0 percent or more | 130 | 21.0% |
| Not computed | 20 | 3.2% |
| <i>Source: American Community Survey, 2020 5-Year Estimate</i> | | |

TABLE 6.9 GROSS RENT AS A PERCENT OF HOUSEHOLD INCOME

| | Households | Percent Total |
|--|------------|---------------|
| Housing Units with a Rent | 544 | — |
| Less than 15.0 percent | 17 | 3.1% |
| 15.0 to 19.9 percent | 0 | — |
| 20.0 to 24.9 percent | 131 | 24.1% |
| 25.0 to 29.9 percent | 57 | 10.5% |
| 30.0 to 34.9 percent | 76 | 14.0% |
| 35.0 percent or more | 263 | 48.3% |
| Not Computed | 2 | <1% |
| <i>Source: American Community Survey, 2020 5-Year Estimate</i> | | |

A review of gross rent as a percent of household income (**Table 6.9, Gross Rent as a Percent of Household Income**) suggests a disproportionate number of renters (62.3%) are cost burdened. According to Comprehensive Housing Affordability Strategy data available from the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD), 26.1 percent of renters within the Village of Monroe are severely cost burdened. Approximately 44 percent of homeowners with a mortgage and just over 21 percent of homeowners without a mortgage are cost burdened (**Table 6.8, Monthly Owner Costs as a Percent of Household Income**). This amounts to 65 percent of all homeowners being cost burdened. According to the Comprehensive Housing Affordability Strategy, 7.5 percent of homeowners within the Village of Monroe are severely cost burdened.

NPV conducted analyses to determine how the median housing cost compares with the median income. NPV calculates that the median Income is more than adequate to support ownership of the median value housing unit.

Comparing Fair Market Rents (40th percentile rents plus utilities) and current median incomes in the Village, it is possible to calculate the affordability of Village rental units. Generally, 40th percentile rental housing is not affordable to the median income renter in Monroe (**Table 6.10, Rental Affordability Gap**).

| TABLE 6.10 RENTAL AFFORDABILITY GAP | |
|---|------------------|
| Apartment Type | 2 Bd |
| Fair Market Rent | \$1,412 |
| Monthly Wage Needed for FMR | \$4,706 |
| Yearly Wage Needed to Afford FMR | \$56,480 |
| Median Income Renters Only | \$50,417 |
| Monthly Median Income Renters Only | \$4,201 |
| Max Affordable Rent at Median Income Renters Only | \$1,260.30 |
| Monthly Rental Gap | -\$151.70 |
| Bd = Bedrooms Efficiency = No separate bedroom. | |
| Source: American Community Survey, 2020, U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development, 2020 | |

RELATED COMPREHENSIVE PLAN GOALS, OBJECTIVES, AND RECOMMENDED STRATEGIES

The following Goals, Objectives, and Recommendations are provided in order for the Village to achieve its Vision. We note that many of these Goals, Objectives, and Recommendations are carried forward from the 2014 Plan and 2016 Amendment, largely unchanged. Those that are new or significantly changed are identified below by blue text.

GOAL H1: EXPAND HOUSING OPPORTUNITIES WITHIN THE VILLAGE TO ENSURE THAT ALL RESIDENTS OF MONROE CAN CONTINUE TO LIVE IN THE VILLAGE FOLLOWING LIFE TRANSITIONS.

OBJECTIVE 1: CONTINUE TO ALLOW FOR APARTMENTS OVER RETAIL IN THE DOWNTOWN.

The downtown remains a viable opportunity for higher densities of multifamily residential. The prior Plan recommended strategies for allowing townhouses and multifamily in proximity to downtown, and this has resulted in the redevelopment of a long-blighted property with the Spring Hill Apartments. With the construction of this development and in light of the large amounts of multifamily housing being constructed in the region, the Village Board no longer feels proximity to the downtown is a sufficient reason for authorizing multifamily housing. New multifamily housing should only be allowed in the downtown itself – namely the CB District and only located over commercial structures, except as otherwise recommended hereafter as described in recommendation H.1.2.1.

Recommendation H.1.1.1: Clarify code to provide clear standards for residential density within the downtown. The CB zoning district already allows accessory apartments in the downtown. This multifamily housing is subject to minimum standards for usable outdoor and indoor recreation, as well as safety controls. Because housing within downtown must adhere to two separate code sections regarding accessory apartments and multifamily housing, there is some confusion as to which existing standards apply. The code needs to be revised to provide clear standards for downtown multifamily housing in mixed-use buildings. The intent should be to encourage downtown residency while ensuring that there is adequate parking, safety, and maintenance controls.

Recommendation H.1.1.2: Regulate minimum apartment size and number of bedrooms in downtown. There should be standards for minimum apartment sizes within the downtown to ensure quality units are provided. Apartments with more than two bedrooms should be prohibited, as the downtown is not an appropriate environment for families.

Often apartments on the third floor and higher are less expensive, and where large apartments are provided on these upper stories the apartments may become over-occupied by non-family

households and transient households seeking very inexpensive housing. These types of housing units are not the types of units being sought for the downtown. Therefore, apartments on the third and higher stories of buildings should be limited to one-bedroom or studios, unless an elevator is provided. This will help to reduce the population of walkup units and reserve higher units for singles or the newly married. It will also increase accessibility of housing to seniors and those with disabilities where restrictions encourage elevators to be installed.

Recommendation H.1.1.3: Reconsider requirements for outdoor recreation and on-site laundry facilities in downtown. Existing standards for outdoor recreation are superfluous given the presence of Crane Park. There are existing Village businesses that provide laundry service, and requiring on-site laundry for even small apartment buildings undermines their viability and success.

Recommendation H.1.1.4: Adjust downtown residential parking requirements and institute fee for residential units not providing parking. Existing off-street parking requirements of one space per unit are adequate for small efficiency and one-bedroom downtown apartments. However, standard two-space requirements are more appropriate for two- or more bedroom apartments. It is appreciated that downtown parcels provide limited capabilities for off-street parking, and that the Village does not want to encourage additional curb cuts throughout the downtown for access to individual parking lots. The Village should therefore also work to acquire land for municipal parking. Some of this parking can double as commuter bus parking since residential and commuter parking have divergent demand peaks.

The Village should also consider adjusting its payment-in-lieu of parking fee (PILOP) structure. Off-street surface parking can cost in excess of \$18,000 per parking space. Structured parking, which is the typical parking solution for downtown environments, often can cost in excess of \$36,000 per parking space. A one-time fee when a residential unit is approved, paired with an annual fee could provide funding for future Village parking expansion and potential future construction of joint parking facilities. An example of a reasonable fee could be \$2000 per parking space at the time of approval of an apartment plus \$250 per parking space thereafter annually. This fee could be assessed as part of the annual property tax. Such a fee should only be assessed where off-street parking is not provided on individual lots.

OBJECTIVE 2: PROMOTE TRADITIONAL VILLAGE NEIGHBORHOODS AND NEW HOUSING TYPES NOT FREQUENTLY FOUND IN THE REGION, PARTICULARLY TARGETED TOWARD THE ELDERLY, SINGLE-PERSON HOUSEHOLDS, CHILDLESS COUPLES AND NEW FAMILIES.

Recommendation H.1.2.1: Eliminate UR-M from any remaining vacant lands. The Village should rezone any remaining vacant lands currently zoned UR-M to SR-10. The public clearly indicated

that townhouses and multifamily housing is not a preferred option for remaining vacant land in the Village. These types of housing are common in the region and continued construction of townhouse and multifamily housing outside of the downtown has the potential to encroach on the existing single-family character of most of the Village's neighborhoods. The one exception to this is the UR-M district located in and around Evergreen Lane. This particular area of UR-M is proposed to be retained as an incentive for redevelopment of the area, which is viewed as substandard. Where the UR-M is retained, it is recommended that the zoning be amended to ensure that any new UR-M housing serve underserved targeted populations identified in Objective 2 and remain relatively affordable by imposing size and bedroom count restrictions on the future units. Where vacant UR-M lands have received preliminary or final approval for development, a reasonable period should be afforded to construct such projects before being subjected to SR-10 zoning.

Recommendation H.1.2.2: Promote small-lot single-family residential developments as an alternative to townhouses and multifamily development. Most housing built in the Village and region in the last 10-20 years is comprised of larger single-family residences with four bedrooms or more, and larger townhouses with three or more bedrooms. On the other end of the spectrum, rental multifamily and one- to three- bedroom condominium multifamily are also readily available in the Village and the region. The Village should promote "missing middle housing" designed to serve the declining 25-35 age cohorts as well as allowing seniors to age in place. Particularly small lot single-family housing on lots of 7500 square feet, built around traditional neighborhood design principles and with limited floor areas and bedroom counts, would help to serve identified underserved populations. Any such developments should be built with clear controls to ensure that the housing provides affordable homeownership or rental opportunities on an ongoing basis.

OBJECTIVE 3: RESPECT THE NEEDS OF MOBILITY-CHALLENGED PERSONS, SUCH AS THE DISABLED AND SENIORS IN THE DESIGN OF NEW HOUSING TYPES.

Recommendation H.1.3.1: Require new multifamily units meet ADA standards and enhanced accessibility standards immediately. All new multifamily units should be required to meet ADA accessibility standards. This could include only allowing units on floors higher than the second story where elevator access is provided, or limiting those units to efficiencies and one- bedroom units as an incentive for the provision of elevators. (See recommendation H.1.1.2.). This standard would exceed the existing Building Code. Additionally, all new multifamily housing proposing more than six units should provide 10% of units or at least one unit that is accessible without steps and via entryways, internal corridors, and doorways suitably wide to permit accessibility to those bound to wheelchairs (in excess of current ADA requirements). Such units should also

consider accessibility to wheelchair bound people in the design of bathrooms and other living areas.

GOAL H2: SAFEGUARD MONROE’S EXISTING STABLE RESIDENTIAL NEIGHBORHOODS, AND IMPROVE AND ENHANCE MARGINAL AREAS, ESPECIALLY AREAS OF INVESTMENT CONVERSIONS.

OBJECTIVE 1: PROTECT THE SCALE, DENSITY AND CHARACTER OF MONROE’S STABLE AND WELL-MAINTAINED NEIGHBORHOODS.

Recommendation H.2.1.1: Continue to exclude two-family uses in the SR-20 and SR-10 districts.

The majority of SR-20 and SR-10 zoned land within the Village, outside of the Multifamily Conversion Overlay District, is comprised of high-quality single-family detached neighborhoods. None of these areas have the appearance or character of a two-family neighborhood. In fact, only a handful of existing Village homes within the SR-20 and SR-10 zoning districts are two-family or multifamily. The 2014 Plan recommendation eliminating two-family residences from the SR-20 and SR-10 districts was implemented and this plan affirms that recommendation. Existing two-family dwellings should be permitted to be occupied as future existing non-conforming structures, limiting expansion and requiring conversion should the unit be vacant for more than one year or should the unit be significantly destroyed. Accessory apartments in owner-occupied single-family dwellings should continue to be permitted.

Recommendation H.2.1.2: Strengthen noise regulations in residential neighborhoods. As the number of renters and more mobile and transient populations have increased within the Village, Village stakeholders have noticed an increase in the prevalence of late night parties. The Village should consider strengthening its current noise ordinance to prohibit any outdoor amplified music, or indoor amplified music that can be reasonably heard on adjacent residential properties after a reasonable hour. Additionally, at all times no music should be permitted in a residential neighborhood that is of such volume as to be perceived indoors above the level of normal conversational speech.

OBJECTIVE 2: DISCOURAGE THE REUSE OF EXISTING LARGE HOMES FOR MULTIFAMILY RESIDENCES.

Recommendation H.2.2.1: Disallow multifamily conversions. There exist residential areas of the Village that are less maintained and present aesthetic challenges to the quality of existing adjoining neighborhoods. The 2014 Plan identified some of these areas as the residences along

North Main Street, the residences along Block Alley, and the residences in the vicinity of the intersection of High Street and Lakes Road. These areas of the Village correspond with areas of lower homeownership and greater landlord absenteeism. These are also areas that have greater numbers of two-family and multifamily structures, some of which have been found through code enforcement to be occupied by more than one household per living unit (over-occupancy). The previous plan proposed that these areas be provided a pathway to properly convert to multifamily residences. Since 2014, there has been a proliferation of illegal conversions, and almost no example of a successful, well-maintained multi-family conversion. In response to this, this plan recommends disallowing multi-family conversion of single-family homes anywhere in the Village.

Recommendation H.2.2.2: Require stricter property maintenance laws for multifamily residential uses. The appearance of ill-maintained multifamily conversions of large homes currently has a deleterious influence on the community. The Village should adopt a stricter property maintenance law for multifamily structures.

Issues to be controlled by the guidelines include - acceptable materials and uniformity of wall cladding and roofing material; appropriate and original sizing of wall openings (window and doors); location and screening of parking on the site; landscaping and maintenance of yards visible to the public right-of-way; acceptable location of fire escapes; location and screening of refuse containers and building mounted utilities including exterior cabling, meters, and satellite dishes; maximum paving of front yards; maximum size of curb cuts; and minimum requirements for street trees, sidewalk, front porches, and the pedestrian realm.

Additionally, all structures or lots within the Village containing one unit of rental housing should be required to designate an on-site or on-call superintendent that is authorized to make repairs or maintain the property on the order of the Building Department.

OBJECTIVE 3: ENGAGE IN INTENSIVE AND STRICT ENFORCEMENT OF STATE BUILDING CODES AND VILLAGE ZONING

Recommendation H.2.3.1: Increase capacity of Village to prosecute scofflaws and repeat offenders. The Village does not have the resources to engage in intensive enforcement of the Building and Zoning Codes. The longer that illegal conversions and overoccupied residences are allowed to exist, the more blighting conditions will spread through the Village's existing neighborhoods. To halt the proliferation of illegal conversions and illegal boardinghouses, the Village should immediately hire additional code enforcement officials to allow for investigations, prosecution, and court action.

Recommendation H.2.3.2: Increase fines for building violations. The Village should establish the highest reasonable fines for building code violations to act as a deterrent.

Recommendation H.2.3.3: Require the restoration of illegally converted residences to single-family residential. The Village should not issue variances where homes have been illegally converted in violation of the Zoning Local Law, except in the most extreme circumstances. Doing so encourages others to convert residences and then seek variances.

Recommendation H.2.3.4: Petition Orange County to create a Complaint Investigation unit. The Village should petition the County to undertake a program similar to Rockland County's Center for Codes Investigations whereby residents may file a complaint with the County, which is investigated by the County Health Department as well as the local Village Building Department. The County Health Department brings added authority and jurisdiction to investigate properties that are believed to have violated the State Building and Sanitary codes.

OBJECTIVE 4: RESPECT THE VARIETY OF MONROE'S OLDER VARIED NEIGHBORHOODS AND PROMOTE HOMEOWNER INVESTMENT BY TAKING A MORE FLEXIBLE APPROACH TO ZONING REGULATION.;

Recommendation H.2.4.1: Provide flexibility in yard and bulk requirements for older established residential neighborhoods. While subdivisions constructed more recently than the 1960s often conform with uniform shaped and sized lots, and with uniform placement of homes on lots, the older neighborhoods of the Village tend to be more varied. In these older neighborhoods, roads responded more to topography and less to uniformity. Those older neighborhoods are more likely to have lots of varying sizes on the same block, flag lots, lots accessed only by an alley, significantly undersized lots, and corner lots with little to no rear yards. Attempting to regulate lots that were created prior to zoning with strict dimensional standards results in an increased load on the Zoning Board, as many homes are not able to meet uniform lot sizes or yard standards that were established for the average lot. This also results in additional expenses for landowners wishing to enlarge or otherwise modify their lots or homes.

In order to encourage investment by existing landowners, the zoning regulations relative to older residential neighborhoods should be based on a practical approach to yards, setbacks and building heights that maintains the character of the neighborhood while allowing greater flexibility. For example, where an existing lot is undersized in a manner in which it cannot meet the full front and rear yard requirements, the full deficit is to be relegated to either the front or rear of the building. Instead, the front and rear yards should both be appropriately adjusted to result in a practical arrangement of the building on the lot that respects the character of the surrounding neighborhood albeit with a reduced building envelope and a smaller resulting

residence. These adjustments should be automatic and should not require the added expense of an appearance before the Zoning Board of Appeals.

An effective way to convey this adjustment method would be to provide a diagram showing how a lot building should be situated on the lot. Smart codes and form-based zones already address how to express variable yard and setback requirements across different sized lots in a community. The graphics used in form-based Smart Codes could be a vehicle for regulating flexibility with yards, heights, and building placement by establishing percentage requirements rather than strict distance requirements.

Recommendation H.2.4.2: Ensure that residences are built to the scale of their neighborhoods and the lots they are located on, and that they reflect traditional residential design. Following the 2017 Comprehensive Plan update, the Village adopted Floor Area Ratio restrictions. The Village should review those restrictions to ensure that they are adequate to achieve their intended purpose of controlling the scale of structures based on the size of the lot they are located on. Additionally, there are several neighborhoods with varying lot sizes. Building construction should also be regulated to prohibit an out-of-character home from being constructed within a given neighborhood. To this end, as a pre-requisite to building permit issuance, the building department should be required to review the height above grade, interior floor area, building coverage, and yard setbacks of nearby structures to ensure that the proposed structure does not exceed the character of the established neighborhood beyond a reasonable degree.

Recommendation H.2.4.3: Prohibit excessive site grading where such is proposed for the purpose of building taller structures that would not normally be permitted in the district. A trend has been observed in which certain residents have significantly regraded yards in order to technically meet the height requirements of the zoning local law, while failing to meet the intent of those regulations. The Village should revise zoning regulations regarding site grading and building height to close this loophole that can result in out-of-character residences.

OBJECTIVE 5: ALLOW FOR INHERENTLY BENEFICIAL USES TO LOCATE IN RESIDENTIAL NEIGHBORHOODS WHILE AVOIDING IMPACTS TO THE QUIET SECLUSION OF FAMILIES

Recommendation H.2.5.1: Require standard protections for any non-residential uses that locate within a residential district. Any non-residential use has the potential to be disruptive to the enjoyment of residences by families. Examples of facilities, uses, and practices requiring regulation include:

- Hours of operation.
- Screening of yards.

- Limits on lighting.
- Limits on noise.
- Limits on the appearance of parking.
- Limits on traffic generation.

Recommendations H.2.5.2: Allow for schools in residential neighborhoods. There is considerable law in the State of New York requiring that schools enjoy a privileged status in residential neighborhoods, as they are deemed “inherently beneficial.” The zoning should be revised to allow schools in all residential zoning districts and impose only the minimum controls as are necessary to ensure that the quality of residential neighborhoods is not impacted.

Recommendation H.2.5.3: More specifically define the scale of public assembly, including religious assembly that can occur in residential neighborhoods without resulting in adverse impact. Currently, only religious assembly is permitted in residential zoning districts and it is permitted without any restrictions. This fails to acknowledge that public assembly at varying scales has the potential to result not only in impacts to the neighborhood, but also to the potential safety of the assembled. Reasonable controls should be incorporated into the code that define limits to the number of persons that may assemble within a residence for any reason. The scale of public assembly within residential areas should be based on the availability of land area, road access, and be appropriate for the type of construction (building code standards). Larger assemblies should require larger facilities and larger lots.

7. PLAN: RECREATION, ENVIRONMENT, CULTURE

VILLAGE RECREATION RESOURCES



Crane Park is located in the heart of the Village and surrounds the Millponds (also referred to as the Goose Ponds). Crane Park is a focal point of the Village and continues to be one of the most frequently identified strengths of the Village. The Millponds are approximately 1.5 miles in circumference and are improved with walking trails and benches. Since

adoption of the 2014 Comprehensive Plan, use of the ponds has increased significantly. Lake Street between the north and south Millponds continues to be closed off for community events including the Monroe Cheesefest, Independence Day fireworks, and a summer concert series, among others. The great lawn area at the north end of Crane Park is now the site of an annual carnival. The chief draw of Crane Park remains the walking path around the ponds which is friendly to all age and ability levels.

Monroe Race Track, off Clark Street, has been preserved as a nature preserve in cooperation with Orange County Land Trust. The former racetrack is maintained as a walking circuit, and naturalized meadow and wet areas provide opportunities for birding.

Smith's Clove Park (joint park with Town of Monroe), with access from Spring Street, consists of 80 acres of active and passive recreational land. The park is improved with three pavilions, restrooms, parking lots, a skate park, hiking trails, a fitness course, an illuminated football field, three baseball fields, three basketball courts, three age-specific playgrounds, indoor racquetball, tennis courts, an illuminated roller hockey rink, a dog park, volleyball court, handball courts, and a 2,600 square foot recreation building with multiple activity rooms. The park is maintained by a Joint Parks Commission with members from the Village and the Town. The cost of operation is shared evenly between the Village and the unincorporated Town. For over thirty years, the Joint Parks Commission has operated a summer youth program.

TOWN RECREATION RESOURCES

Mombasha Park is located off of West Mombasha Road. The Town established an Arboretum at the Park, and there are hiking trails, multipurpose fields, a pavilion, and a small children's playground.

Berry Road Park, located off of Berry Road, provides hiking trails - including up to the north end of Mombasha Lake. Berry Road Park also provides a campground for local scout groups.

Orange and Rockland Park adjoins the Village just north of the YMCA and is also accessible from the Heritage Trail. The Park is the site of an annual Food Truck Festival and provides opportunities for picnicking and passive enjoyment.

The Town of Monroe Dog Park is also located adjacent to the Village, sharing the site of the Town of Monroe Senior Center off of Mine Road. The Dog Park provides a dog course and sitting areas.

The Alex Smith Pavilion is a Town maintained boat launch and picnic facility on Round Lake. The site allows boat rentals and picnicking adjacent to the lake.

COUNTY RECREATION RESOURCES

The Orange County Heritage Trail provides a continuous multi-use path from the Village of Harriman to Middletown, NY. The closest access locations in the Village are currently at Airplane Park near the northern terminus of Mill Pond Parkway, and at the Village of Monroe Commuter Parking area along Mill Pond Parkway. Multiple access points exist throughout the Village's downtown along Carpenter Place/Lake Street and Spring Street, the old Erie Railroad Bridge which crosses over Mapes Place, as well as an access and a parking area at Clark Street near the Village DPW facility. The trail is a 10-foot-wide paved surface running approximately 25 miles along the former bed of the Erie Railroad through a bird/wildlife sanctuary and near historic landmarks, streams, and rolling meadows. The trail originates at East Main Street in the City of Middletown. The trail exists completely off-road within a former railroad right-of-way for most of its stretch, except for a stretch at the heart of the Village of Goshen, where it shares right-of-way with a number of parking lots and Grand Street.

STATE RECREATION RESOURCES

Walton Lake, located in the Town of Monroe, provides non-motorized boating and fishing. The lake is accessible via a New York State Department of Environmental Conservation parking and boat launch area accessed from Lakes Road in the Town of Monroe.

Sterling Forest State Park is located just south of the Village, extending through several Towns and Villages in Orange County, and comprises 21,935.08 acres of natural forest. It provides

habitat to a wide diversity of wildlife and flora, and is available for a range of passive recreation including, hiking biking, hunting, fishing, and snowshoeing. There is a gift shop and visitor's center with rest facilities, and recreational programs are offered.

Goosepond Mountain State Park is located just northwest of the Village and comprises 1,558 acres of passive forest with some meadows and open field. It is open for hiking and horseback riding but does not provide any facilities.

Harriman State Park/Bear Mountain State Park is located approximately 5 miles east of the Village of Monroe and is the second largest State Park in New York. It offers extensive recreational resources including over 200 miles of hiking trails, biking, snowshoeing, cross country skiing, horseback riding, boat rental, boat launch, cabins, camp sites, museums, fishing, ice fishing, grills, picnic tables, visitors centers, gift shops, conference centers, inns, restaurants, rest facilities, showers, carousel, pools, playing fields, and beaches.

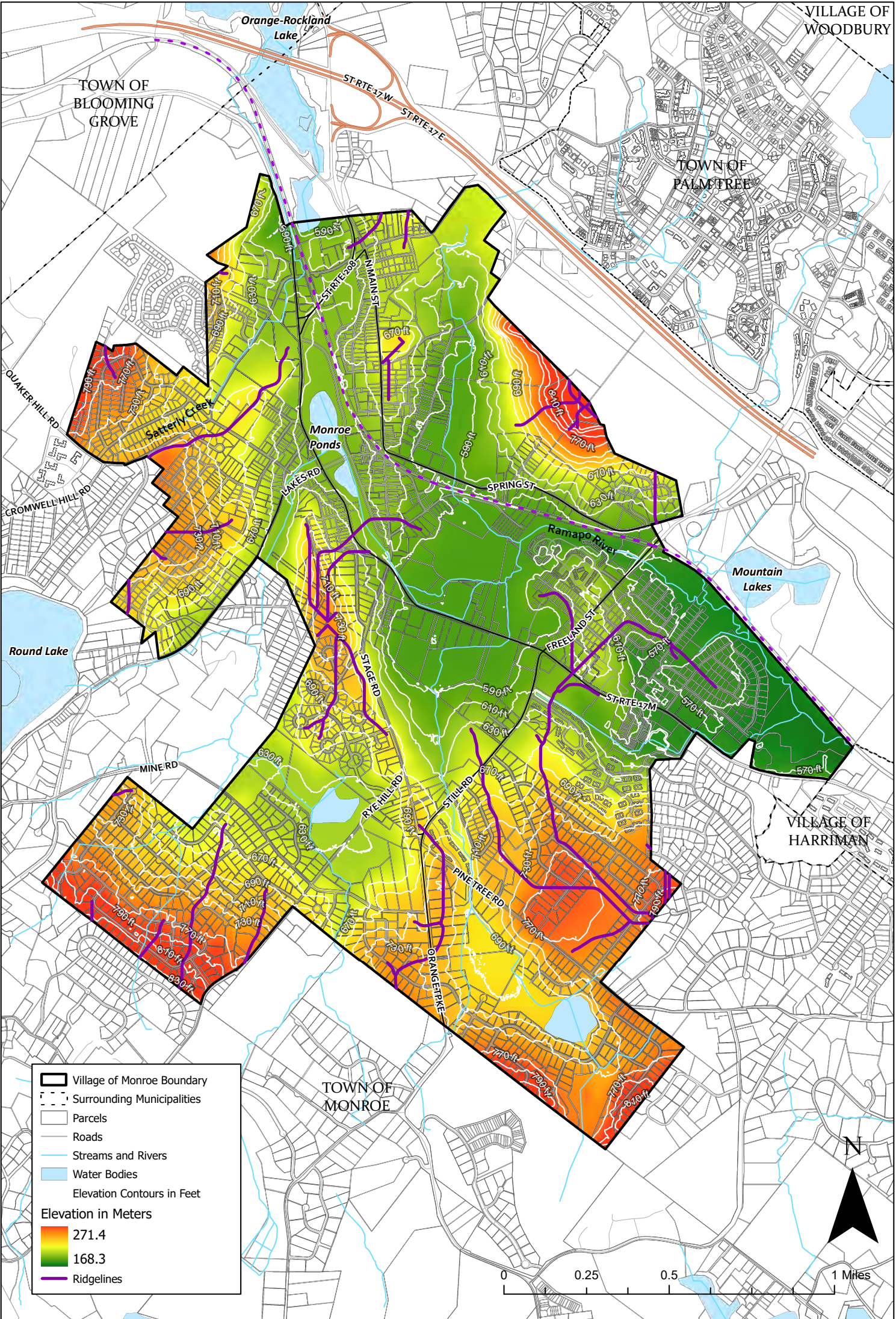
ENVIRONMENTAL RESOURCES

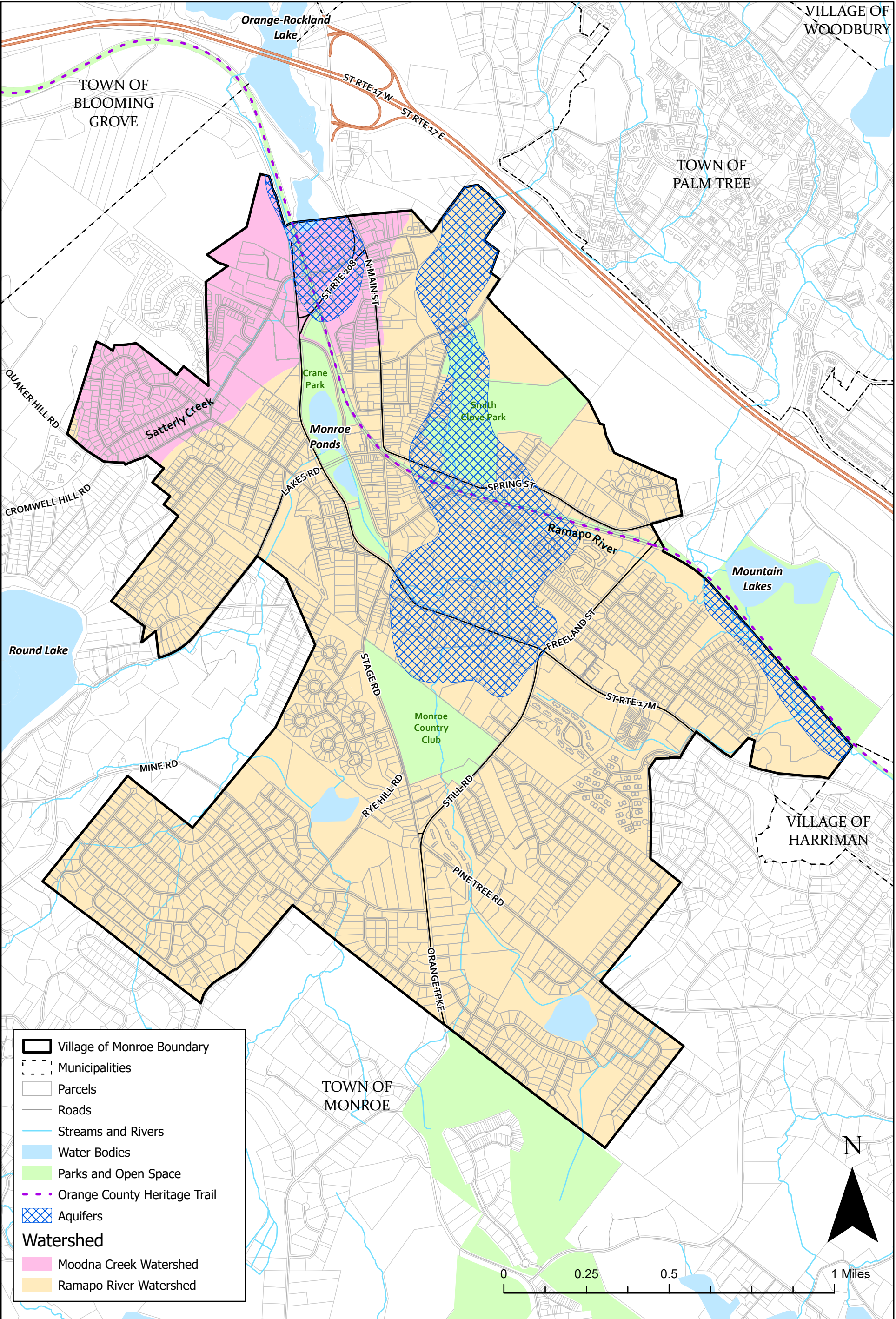
TOPOGRAPHY AND GEOLOGY

Located in the Hudson Highlands Region of New York State and within the greater Northern Appalachians section of the Appalachian Mountains, the Village of Monroe is characterized by rolling, sometimes steeply sloping mountains, hills, and valleys eroded over time by glaciers and streams. **Map 7.1, Topography and Ridgelines**, shows the topography of the Village. The feature known as Bald Hill, which rises to the northeast of Smith Clove Park, is the tallest point in the Village, reaching a height of approximately 873 feet above mean sea level (msl). Prominent ridgelines visible within the Village are also highlighted on **Map 7.1**. Approximately 45% of the Village overlies areas of shallow bedrock (within 2-4 feet of surface). Shallow bedrock presents challenges to development and typically results in higher rates of stormwater runoff.

WATERSHEDS

The Village of Monroe contains a number of ponds, fluvial features, and associated wetlands and floodplain areas that make up the Village's water resources. These features support a variety of ecological functions and also provide for drinking water as well as serve as limitations to human development and activities. A watershed basin is an area defined by topography, where stormwater and surface water all flow to the same discharge point. The majority of the Village lies over the Ramapo River Watershed, which is the smallest watershed in New York State, and drains into the Ramapo River. A small portion of the Village, in its northwest corner, is within the Moodna Creek Watershed, which drains into the larger Lower Hudson River Watershed. Watersheds are shown on **Map 7.2, Aquifers and Watersheds**.





RAMAPO RIVER

The Ramapo River is a United State Environmental Protection Agency (US EPA) designated Sole Source Aquifer. This designation means that the US EPA has determined that the aquifer system related to the Ramapo River has been determined to provide the only viable source of water for its two-million downstream users. The designation offers environmental protection to the region from any federally funded, approved, or initiated actions.

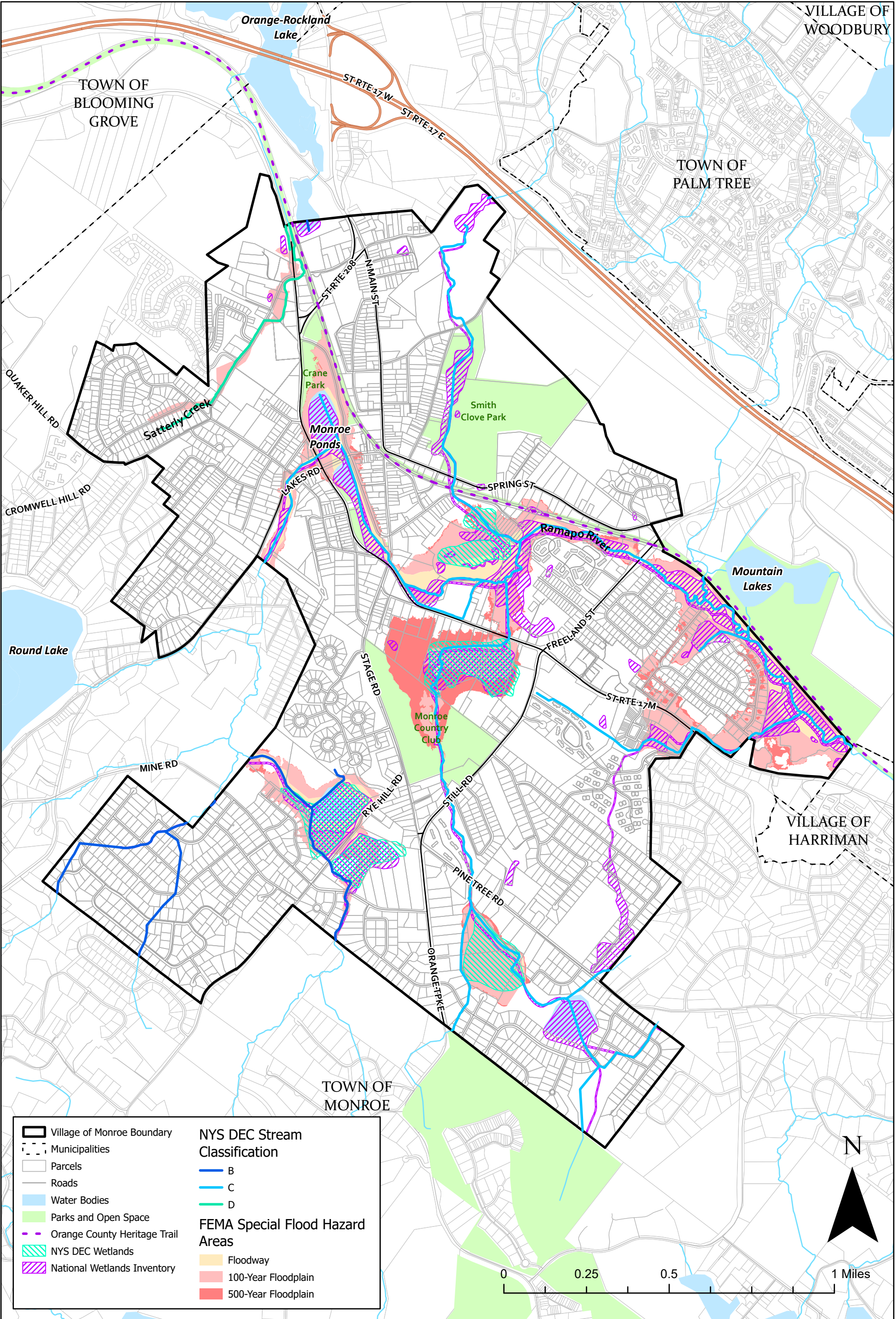
The environmental importance of the Ramapo River to the region is therefore demonstrated. The headwaters of the Ramapo River enter the Village of Monroe via the unnamed stream that runs just east of Lakes Road. This stream feeds the Millponds and then travels over the Millpond Dam, where it feeds the stream and wet areas near the Monroe Racetrack and joins a second tributary that enters at the south end of the Village near Amy Todt Road. From the Racetrack, the River travels through the recently constructed Hidden Creek Condominium Development, which has been approved with significant buffers for protection of the River. From there, the River meanders along the south side of the Heritage Trail (Erie Railroad Right of Way) where it exits the Village behind the former Monroe Ford dealership.

The NYSDEC maintains a comprehensive waterbody inventory of water quality classifications which summarizes general water quality conditions for surface water features throughout the State and denotes the uses which are appropriate for these waterbodies. Water quality for streams is tested, classified, and monitored by the NYSDEC into the following designations:

- Class AA/A – Drinking Water
- Class B – Public swimming and contact recreation activities
- Class C – Fishing and non-contact activities
- D – Impacted (does not support any of the uses listed above besides fishing)
- (T) – Supports Trout Populations
- (TS) – Supports Trout Spawning

Stream classifications in the Village are illustrated in **Map 7.3, Water Resources**.

Below the Millpond Dam, the Ramapo River and its tributaries are designated as Class C, or waters which support fishing and non-contact activities. This includes those tributaries entering the River below the Dam including the stream and ponds in the Pine Tree Road area of the Village up to Sapphire Lake in the unincorporated Town. Some of the tributaries are C(T) which means they support trout production. Above the Millponds Dam, the majority of the Ramapo's contributing tributaries in the Village are classified as Class B, allowing for swimming and contact recreation.



The path that the river takes corresponds with a flood zone, and much of the land along its path, and along the path of its tributaries, is inundated as wetlands. Because of this, the Village had designated an Environmentally Sensitive (ES) Overlay Zoning District that classifies all uses within the ES district, except for utilities, agriculture and park uses, as conditional uses requiring Planning Board review. The ES Overlay appears to have been eliminated following the 2017 Comp Plan updates despite the fact that the 2017 Plan mentions the ES overlay and its protections and does not recommend eliminating nor changing the overlay.

Below the Millpond Dam, the Ramapo River is listed by NYS Department of Environmental Protection as an impaired waterbody due to nutrient loading from phosphorus, low dissolved oxygen, and silt and sedimentation. The source of pollutants is urban runoff.

SATTERLY CREEK

The headwaters of Satterly Creek begin to form in the northwest portion of the Village before entering Orange-Rockland Lake. The Creek then exits the lake and meanders until it empties into Moodna Creek, which eventually flows into the Hudson River. Satterly Creek is listed as having a stream classification of D, meaning it is degraded to the point that accessing drinking water, swimming, or engaging in any contact recreation activities is not advisable.

AQUIFERS

Aquifers are subsurface water bodies and important resources for drinking water. Unconfined aquifers are those that are below the surface but receive water from the ground surface, while confined aquifers lie below an impermeable layer of rock or soil that prevents water from seeping into the aquifer from the ground. Orange County classifies aquifers into the following categories:

1. Stratified sand and gravel at land surface and below the water table
2. Stratified sand and gravel below clay or silt and the water table
3. Stratified clay and silt with no or thin layers of sand and gravel at land surface and below the water table
4. Stratified sand and gravel at land surface and above the water table

The Village of Monroe contains three unique aquifers, shown on **Map 7.2, Aquifers and Watersheds**. One follows the eastern boundary of the Village along the Orange County Heritage Trail near the Village of Harriman and has a classification of 2. Another larger aquifer, bearing the classification of 3, is situated near the approximate center of the Village and extends north through Smith Clove Park. The remaining aquifer is classified as 1 and is located just north of Crane Park and the Millponds, extending north towards Orange-Rockland Lake.

The Village does not regulate activity within aquifer areas, despite the 2014 Comprehensive Plan calling for such protections.

WETLANDS

Wetlands include swamps, marshes, bogs, and similar areas. Wetlands are some of the most productive ecosystems, and provide nesting, spawning, and breeding habitat for a diverse variety of wildlife and plants. They perform vital ecosystem services, such as water filtration and storage, which can assist in reducing flood impacts and improve water quality by absorbing pollutants and reducing turbidity. Additionally, wetlands provide groundwater discharge, assist in maintaining base flow in streams and rivers, and support ponds and lakes. They also provide opportunities for recreation, education and research, and provide natural open space.

In the Village of Monroe, wetlands are regulated under multiple jurisdictions; state and federal. Wetlands shown on **Map 7.3, Water Resources**, have been identified from two sources: the NYSDEC, and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service National Wetland Inventory (NWI). The U. S. Fish and Wildlife Service publishes a series of National Wetland Inventory (NWI) maps that illustrate the location of smaller wetland systems - these wetlands are typically regulated by the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (ACOE).

HISTORIC RESOURCES

A BRIEF HISTORY OF MONROE

During “prehistoric times”, Monroe was occupied by the Lenni-Lenape Indians, a branch of the Algonquin nation. Of the Lenni-Lenape branch, the Village was inhabited by the “Minsis” or “Munsee” tribe, and their principal totem was the wolf. The Munsee occupied the headwaters of the Delaware River in present-day New York, New Jersey, and Connecticut, extending south to the Lehigh River in eastern Pennsylvania, and also held the west bank of the Hudson River from the Catskill mountains in the north nearly to the New Jersey line to the south. Between 1888 and 1937, several Mastodon bones tusks and teeth were found in Willow Pond on the site of the present Smith Clove Park, the Monroe Millpond, and in the surrounding area.

Monroe was part of the Cheesecocks (originally Cheseekook) Patent. Six Patentees purchased the land comprising the Towns of Tuxedo, Monroe, and portions of Northwest Rockland County from the Munsee Tribe. The land was surveyed and divided into patents by Queen Anne of England in 1707.

Philip Livingston sold a part of his interest to David Smith of Smithtown, Long Island in the early half of the eighteenth century. David Smith purchased Lot 43 consisting of 276 acres, the site of the present-day Village of Monroe. The description is identified as a “sudden bend on the Ramapo”. In 1741, David Smith built a grist mill and a dam which are today at the south end of

Crane Park in the village (now known as Mill Pond). David Smith is buried in a family plot in the Monroe Community Cemetery. David Smith was father to the infamous Claudius Smith, a “Rebel” who supported the English crown prior to the Revolution. The whole Ramapo Valley, from Suffern to Mountainville, would come to be known as “Smith’s Clove” and was an instrumental region in the American War for Independence.

In 1807, the Orange Turnpike was created with private funding, also known as Stage Road and North Main Street within the Village. Railroad service arrived in the Village in 1841. The Monroe Masonic Lodge (McGarrah’s Tavern) is one of the many inns and taverns established during this time period of growth with the advent of the stagecoach road and railroad. This older part of the Village, between Route 17M and North Main Street, has been included in a National Register Historic District.

Abundant mining and a prosperous cheese and dairy industry in the Village and Town supported a thriving community and laid the foundations for its growth. The Village of Monroe was incorporated as a village in 1894.

HISTORIC DESIGNATIONS

The NYS Office of Parks, Recreation, and Historic Preservation Website was consulted to determine what properties are listed on the National Register of Historic Places (NRHP), or which have been determined to be eligible. **Table 7.1, Historic Status of Properties**, provides a list of historic resources within the Village. The historic eligibility of several properties has not been determined and is noted. **Map 7.4, Historic Resources, Buildings, and Districts**, illustrates the locations of the historic properties in the Village.

| TABLE 7.1. HISTORIC STATUS OF PROPERTIES | | |
|--|----------------|--------|
| Name | Address | Status |
| Monroe Village Historic District (98NR01380) | | Listed |
| j. Gregory House | 167 Stage Road | Listed |
| MC GARRAH/GOFF HOTEL (HULSE RESIDENCE) | 300 STAGE RD | Listed |
| Julius Smith-Ryder-Webb House | 310 Stage Road | Listed |
| METHODIST MANSE | 49 MAPLE AVE | Listed |
| MONROE METHODIST CHURCH | 47 MAPLE AVE | Listed |
| MONROE PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH | 142 STAGE RD | Listed |
| JUDGE WILLIAM SEAMAN HOUSE (BUSH RESIDENCE) | 160 STAGE RD | Listed |
| GRIST MILL OPERATOR'S HOUSE (BUSH RESIDENCE) | 315 STAGE RD | Listed |
| 22 MAPLE AVE | 22 MAPLE AVE | Listed |
| 36 MAPLE AVE | 36 MAPLE AVE | Listed |
| Presbyterian Manse | 131 STAGE RD | Listed |

| TABLE 7.1. HISTORIC STATUS OF PROPERTIES | | |
|---|------------------|--------------|
| Name | Address | Status |
| SS LEWIS HOUSE | 42 MAPLE AVE | Listed |
| DR SOLOMON EZRAY HOUSE (BUSH RESIDENCE) | 154 STAGE RD | Listed |
| 139 STAGE RD | 139 STAGE RD | Listed |
| SEAMAN CARRIAGE HOUSE (BUSH STORAGE & GARAGE) | 21 MAPLE AVE | Listed |
| CB KNIGHT HOUSE; OFFICE | 138 STAGE RD | Listed |
| J GREGORY HARNESS SHOP; HOUSE | 169 STAGE RD | Listed |
| 128 STAGE RD | 128 STAGE RD | Listed |
| 132 STAGE RD | 132 STAGE RD | Listed |
| 425 STAGE RD | 425 STAGE RD | Listed |
| MF TENEYCK HOUSE (DAVIDSON RESIDENCE) | 127 STAGE RD | Listed |
| PHINEAS & OSCAR V BROOKS HOUSE (HALL RESIDENCE) | 157 STAGE RD | Listed |
| 52 MAPLE AVE | 52 MAPLE AVE | Listed |
| 403 STAGE RD | 403 STAGE RD | Listed |
| MODERN COMMERCIAL BUILDING | 20 MILL POND | Listed |
| MONROE CHEESE COMPANY | 30 MILL POND | Listed |
| Rest Haven (17NR00015) | 236 High St | Listed |
| ABRAHAM SECOR HOUSE (KOSCA RESIDENCE) - | 153 STAGE RD | Listed |
| SEAMAN TENANT HOUSE (BUSH TENENT HOUSE) | 158 STAGE RD | Listed |
| JOHN MAPES HOUSE (WHITE RESIDENCE) | 163 STAGE RD | Listed |
| DAVID SMITH HOUSE (KNIGHT RESIDENCE) | 400 STAGE RD | Listed |
| 20 MAPLE AVE | 20 MAPLE AVE | Listed |
| 32 MAPLE AVE | 32 MAPLE AVE | Listed |
| METHODIST PARSONAGE | 117 STAGE RD | Listed |
| CHAPEL OF THE SACRED HEART | 151 STAGE RD | Listed |
| MONROE THEATER | 34 MILL POND | Listed |
| MONROE CEMETERY | NY 17M | Listed |
| Mill Pond Dam | Mill Pond Dam | Listed |
| G.T. Smith Farmhouse | 85 Gilbert St | Eligible |
| Roscoe Smith property | Lakes Road | Eligible |
| Residence (1920 - Bungalow) | 207 Oakland Ave | Eligible |
| HM GALLOWAY HOUSE; (MONYHAN RES) | 75 MAPLE AVE | Undetermined |
| SAMUEL SMITH BARN; NOZELL BARN | FREELAND ST | Undetermined |
| RESIDENCE | 111 HIGH ST | Undetermined |
| WAGON MAKER & TIN SHOP; GARAGE | 2 CARPENTER PL | Undetermined |
| S BOSS MILLER HOUSE | 45 NORTH MAIN ST | Undetermined |
| MRS SECOR HOUSE (KERR RESIDENCE) | 607 STAGE RD | Undetermined |
| GEORGE FOWLER HOUSE (STEVENS RESIDENCE) | 627 STAGE RD | Undetermined |
| 60 Prospect St | 60 Prospect St | Undetermined |

| TABLE 7.1. HISTORIC STATUS OF PROPERTIES | | |
|---|-------------------|--------------|
| Name | Address | Status |
| SEAMAN/TURNER (GAUNT RESIDENCE) | 1 FREELAND ST | Undetermined |
| H RYDER HOUSE | 110 STAGE RD | Undetermined |
| 28 Midoaks Street | 28 Midoaks Street | Undetermined |
| JOHNATHAN MAPES HOUSE (FARREL RESIDENCE) | 150 FRANKLIN AVE | Undetermined |
| JOHN BROOKS GRANITE HOUSE APTS | 00 NORTH MAIN ST | Undetermined |
| Source: New York State Office of Parks, Recreation and Historic Preservation, State Historic Preservation Office, 2022. | | |

The area around the Millponds on Route 17M is historically significant as the site of the earliest settlement in the Village. As previously mentioned, David Smith, from Smithtown, Long Island, established his grist mill here in 1741. Today, the visually and historically prominent Mill Pond (ca. 1741) and numerous mill ruins mark the site of the Village's earliest settlement. This area retains a high level of visual and architectural integrity as well as an identifiable orientation and cohesiveness. Architectural styles include Early Republic/federal, Mid-19th Century/Greek Revival, Gothic Revival, Late Victorian/Italianate, Second Empire, and Queen Anne styles. Its historic land uses include domestic - single family dwellings, religious facilities and related residences, and industry/manufacturing facilities. The Village's downtown contains a relatively large historic district, listed on the National Register of Historic Places in 1998, which was integral to its formation and history. This district, also known as Smith's Mill Historic District, consists of 81 total acres and approximately 36 properties. The largest properties are the Millponds, Monroe Cemetery, and the former Monroe Racetrack Site. The district is an abstract shape, but is generally bounded by New York State Route 17M, Lake Street, Carpenter Place, Oakland Avenue, Orchard Terrace, and Ramapo Street, extending as far west as the historic racetrack.

Of the over 70 structures in the district, 47 buildings and 9 structures are considered historic resources (though none are listed on the National Register separately). Other historic structures within the district include the following:

The David Smith House (400 Stage Road) also known as the "Little Yellow House" is a one and a half story saltbox house built possibly as early as 1741. This building is one of the oldest buildings in Monroe and is currently used as the office of the Village Historian.

The David Smith-Jeremiah Knight House (315 Stage Road) was a two- and- one- half- story federal-style house with portions dating back to 1741 and an adjacent Grist Mill which operated on the Monroe Millpond as early as 1750. The mill closed in 1915, was converted to an auto garage in 1921, and was finally destroyed by fire several years later. Only portions of the foundations and dam of the original gristmill remain today.

McGarrah's Inn, located at 300 Stage Road and recently purchased and renovated by the local Masonic society, was first built around 1800 by John McGarrah and expanded in 1839. After serving as a popular stagecoach stop, it also served as residence of former Village Mayor and Nuremberg Trials prosecutor Frederick Hulse. Despite a number of renovations, the original third floor meeting room has remained largely untouched and preserved.

The remains of the Monroe Cheese Company, located at 30 Mill Pond Parkway, is a three-story Italianate factory that was originally built by Julius Wettstein in 1873. It was at this location that Velveeta was invented in 1923. The front wooden portion of the building was removed for the construction of Crane Park in the 1930's, while the brick section, as well as the underground cheese curing cellars, remain.²

First Presbyterian Church, located at 142 Stage Road, is a Greek Revival-style church built in February of 1853. Its large, fluted columns make it one of the most recognizable buildings in Monroe. The Manse, or pastor's residence, (shown at right) was built across the street at 131 Stage Road three years later. This house was renovated in 1868 but mainly used for residential purposes throughout its existence.

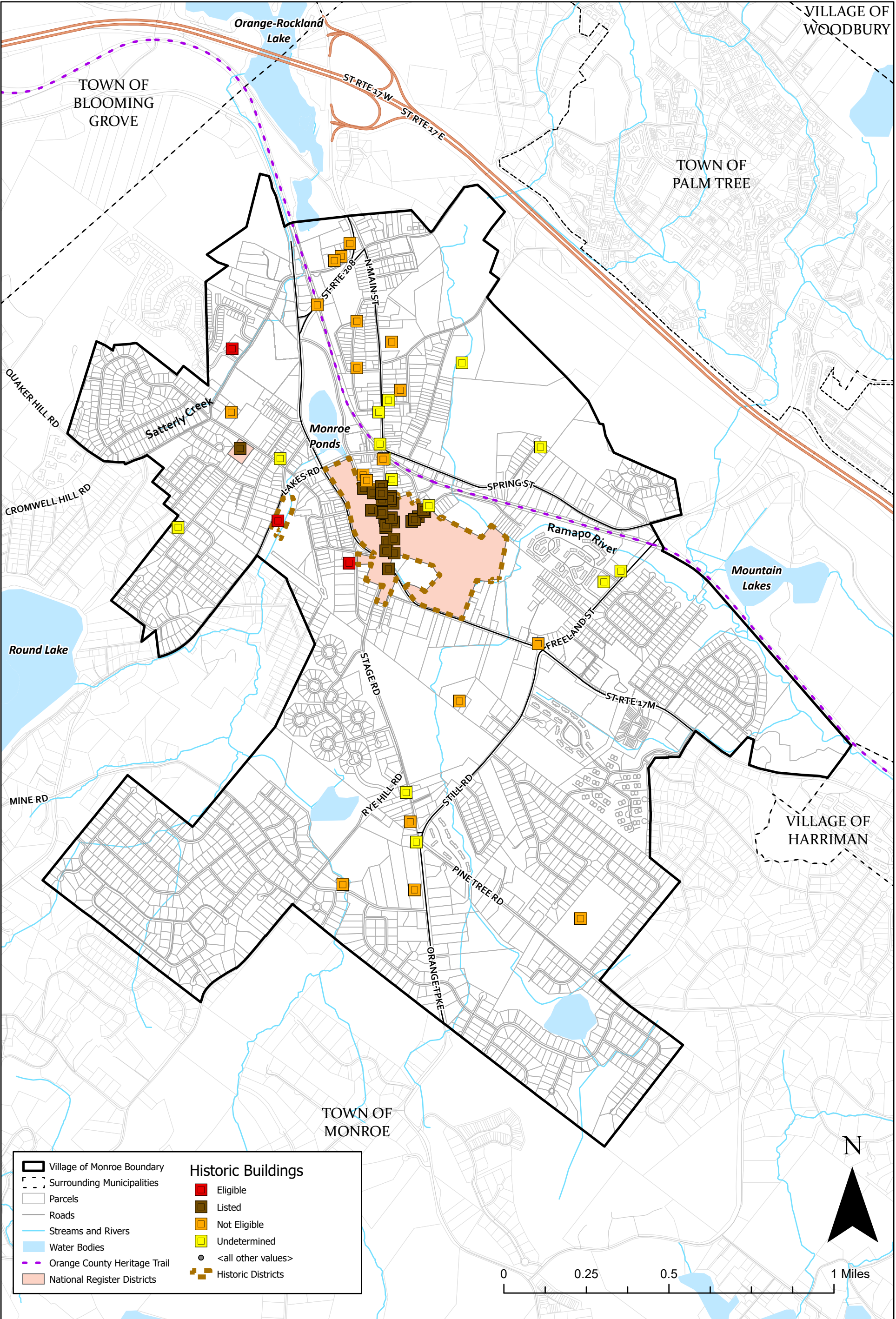


Judge William Seaman House (160 Stage Road, shown below right) was first built as a tavern in 1809 and was moved and renovated in 1850.



The Reed and Conklin Buildings are located where Lake Street and Carpenter Place meet. The original Reed building was built by local businessman George Reed in 1894, with the larger Conklin building built shortly thereafter adjacent to the Reed building with a matching early art-deco architectural style. These buildings were recently renovated and are currently utilized as multi-family residences.

Village Hall (7 Stage Road) was originally constructed in 1865 as a retail store with apartments on upper levels. Fire gutted the building in 1915. Over the life of the building, it has served as a dress shop, shoemaker's workshop, grocery, and restaurant before being gifted to the Village in 1960 to be used as the Village Hall.



RELATED COMPREHENSIVE PLAN GOALS, OBJECTIVES, AND RECOMMENDED STRATEGIES

The following Goals, Objectives, and Recommendations are provided in order for the Village to achieve its Vision. We note that many of these Goals, Objectives, and Recommendations are carried forward from the 2014 Plan and 2017 Amendment, largely unchanged. Those that are new or significantly changed are identified below by blue text.

GOAL P1: ENSURE THE PRESERVATION AND PROTECTION OF THE VILLAGE'S HISTORIC RESOURCES.

OBJECTIVE 1: CONTINUE TO DISTINGUISH MONROE'S HISTORIC RESOURCES THROUGH LANDMARKING, SIGNAGE AND RECOGNITION.

Recommendation P.1.1.1: *Map existing historic resources and make available to the public.*

Working with the local historian, historical society, and Chamber of Commerce, distribute a map of the historic district with information about local historic resources and the Village's history in local places of assembly, the local library, and popular shops.

Recommendation P.1.1.2: *Start a local historic plaque program to recognize renovated or well-maintained historic buildings.* Encourage local landowners within the Historic District to provide plaques in front of their buildings including the history and/or original pictures of a site. Village Hall should provide a similar plaque as an example. This will encourage walking and draw pedestrians through the entire central Village corridor. This effort could be funded through the Chamber of Commerce or by the Village, as funds permit. Alternatively, the New York State Museum erects and maintains signs with historical information throughout the State. Once a Landmarks Preservation Committee is established, it should work with State and County officials to enhance or add markers in the Village, and to establish locally administered signage programs to identify historic streets, sites, and/or structures.

Recommendation P.1.1.3: *Feature the history of Monroe in promotional materials such as printed and online walking guides and an expanded Village website presence.*

The Village Website should provide a resource that details the rich history of Monroe. The material from this Comprehensive Plan inventory of Historic Resources should be incorporated into an expanded web presence promoting the Village's history, and could be supplemented by materials from the Monroe Historical Society. Walking guides and signage should be developed to enhance visitor and resident experiences as they travel through the Village.

Recommendation P.1.1.4: *Partner with other historic Hudson River towns. Team with the "TravelStories" App.*

The Village of Monroe has a story to tell. TravelStorys is a free app that uses your location to share authentic stories by locally sourced audio guides. The Village should work with TravelStorys to get a walking guide with historical stories onto this app for distribution to encourage technically savvy visitors to tour Monroe. (See <https://www.travelstorys.com>)

OBJECTIVE 2: PRESERVE AND PROTECT THE REMAINING CULTURAL RESOURCES WITHIN THE VILLAGE

Recommendation P.1.2.1: *Adopt a Landmarks Preservation Law and seek Certified Local Government Status.* The Village should identify and designate landmark buildings, provide standards for their preservation, and prohibit demolition or alterations that may damage their historic or architectural integrity. The State of New York provides municipalities with a Model Landmarks Preservation law for this purpose. This model includes provisions to regulate alterations, demolition, and removal or relocation of designated landmark buildings. Demolition is permitted only if a series of specific criteria are met.

The law provides for the establishment of a Historic Preservation Commission. The Commission may designate an individual property as an individual landmark if:

- It exemplifies or possesses special character, or historic or aesthetic interest or value as part of the political, economic, or social history of the Village; or
- The property is identified with persons or events significant in local, state, or national history; or
- It embodies the distinguishing characteristics of a type, period or method of construction or design style, or is a valuable example of the use of indigenous materials or craftsmanship; or
- It is representative of the work of a famous designer, architect or builder; or
- It represents an established and familiar visual feature of the community by virtue of its unique location or singular physical characteristic, represents an established and familiar visual feature of the community; or
- It has yielded or may be likely to yield information important in prehistory or history.

Under the model law, such a property may not be altered or demolished unless the applicant can prove an extraordinary economic hardship, through a stringent process. Violation of such a local law would be deemed an offense punishable by fines and/or requirements to restore the property to its historic condition.

In our experience, appointing a local preservation committee and training them to discharge the responsibilities of the Landmark Preservation Law may take a significant amount of time. The Village Board may wish to execute the role of the Landmarks Preservation Committee and also identify initial landmarks in order to protect any structures or properties suspected of being important local landmarks. Such landmarks can be designated on a temporary basis until such a time that the Landmarks Preservation Committee can review and ratify all or some of such interim designations.

Recommendation P.1.2.2: Require Landmark Preservation Committee review for structures within the Village's Historic District, and alert local building owners to funding opportunities.

The Landmarks Preservation Law should require review of any structures located within a National Register, State Register, or Local Historic District, whether said structure is eligible as a contributing structure or not. The Landmarks Preservation Committee should work closely with the local historian, its advisors, and the NYS Office of Parks, Recreation, and Historic Preservation for input on properties within the Historic District and those that may have impacts on this district. Architecture and site design should be such that it does not detract from the historic or architectural integrity of the district. Landowners should be made aware that the NYS Historic Preservation Office has funding opportunities and other financial preservation incentives for historic preservation efforts.

Recommendation P.1.2.3: Identify Additional Areas Containing a Preponderance of Historic Resources and Establish Additional Historic Districts. The Village should look beyond the designated historic district reviewed by the State, and perform a Village-wide reconnaissance of historic resources. It is evident that there are additional structures, outside the National Register Historic District, that are critical and exemplary of the Village's history and that maintain a degree of architectural integrity. These include buildings fronting on Lake Street in the Downtown, structures on North Main Street, Charlton Street, Brooks Avenue, Oakland Avenue, and High Street, among others. Even where the State's criteria for Historic Districts is not met, these areas may be worthy of designation as Local Historic Districts after further study.

GOAL P2: PROTECT THE VILLAGE'S NATURAL AND SCENIC RESOURCES

OBJECTIVE 1: PROTECT WATER QUALITY WITHIN THE VILLAGE AND WITHIN THE DOWNSTREAM RAMAPO RIVER SOLE SOURCE AQUIFER SYSTEM INCLUDING SURFACE WATERBODIES, WETLANDS AND GROUNDWATER.

Recommendation P.2.1.1: Deduct constrained lands such as land under water, wetlands, floodzones, and steep slopes, from lot area calculations for new subdivisions. The 2014 Plan

recommended that such deductions be applied to standard subdivisions so as not to act as a deterrent to cluster subdivisions. Instead, in 2017 this recommendation was amended in order to remove existing lot area deductions entirely. The purpose of the deduction of environmental constraints is to recognize that construction over or near to areas of environmentally constrained lands will result in degradation of natural resources, as well as potential erosion and exacerbation of flooding. We recommend that slopes over 20%, wetlands, water bodies, and flood zones be deducted from lot area for the purposes of subdivision and zoning. Where lands are constrained, this would impact the density of allowable development as well as the size of structures, as this deduction should also apply to lot coverage and floor area ratio.

Recommendation P.2.1.2: Aquifer protection. Generally, water within a sand and gravel aquifer is interrelated. Contamination over one area of the aquifer has the potential to impact potable water pumped from other areas of the aquifer. Currently, there are several heavy commercial and auto related uses located within the aquifer, including the Village Department of Public Works (DPW). These users should be provided with information on the fragility of the aquifer resources and Best Management Practices should be employed, such as the storage of salt and other chemicals in an enclosed building, which is currently done by the Village DPW. It is noted that the Village is looking to potentially locate new wells within the sand and gravel aquifer that underlies Racetrack Park.

OBJECTIVE 2: PRESERVE THE VILLAGE SCALE AND COMMUNITY CHARACTER.

Recommendation P.2.2.1: Dark Sky Lighting Requirements. The Village of Monroe is a suburban Village in a rural setting. The Village finds that a starry nighttime sky is of significant importance to the character of the community. With the proliferation of LED light fixtures, and the availability of commercial grade light sources at local home improvement stores, the nighttime sky is endangered. Such LED lighting presents intensities and sources of glare that were not previously available to consumers and that until recently, would usually be subject to Planning Board review. Such sources of glare can make driving on Village Streets, especially at dusk and during foul weather, uncomfortable and dangerous.

The Village should adopt comprehensive lighting requirements governing the use and installation of lighting in various areas of the Village. Model ordinances are available from the International Dark Sky Association in cooperation with the Illuminating Engineering Society. The lighting local law should follow their guidance allowing for lighting zones, maximum lighting per site and requirements for limits on Backlight, Uplight, and Glare (BUG). In all residential areas, lighting with a color temperature of more than 3000K should be prohibited.

As high-intensity, high-glare lighting has already been proliferating throughout the Village, the Village should impose an appropriate amortization period over which non-compliant lighting must be removed.

The addition of exterior lighting fixtures on structures within a historic district or on a Village Landmark structure should be subject to Landmarks Preservation Commission review.

Recommendation P.2.2.2: Adopt Site Design Guidelines for nonresidential or mixed-use districts within the Town. The Village should consider creating architectural, landscaping, and site design guidelines specific to the Central Business and General Business districts. Such guidelines should not be overly prescriptive but should ensure minimal standards for quality of construction and landscaping as well as ensure best practices for site design are incorporated.

Recommendation P2.2.3: Establish Ridgeline Protection Measures and Require Tree Plantings for All New Development. Recent construction in the Village has demonstrated that improperly planned development can significantly alter the wooded character of the community. The Village is generally characterized by tree-lined roads and wooded hillsides, and where new development rises above the ridgeline or does not provide sufficient trees along roadways, the result can look overly urban and/or poorly planned. Generally, no structure rooflines should rise above an established ridgeline, and all subdivisions and site plans should require robust planting of medium and large trees along streets, in between yards and in parking lots. Wherever possible, established stands of forest should be incorporated into the design of subdivisions and site plans.

GOAL P3: EXPAND AND ENHANCE THE ALREADY OUTSTANDING RECREATIONAL FACILITIES OF THE VILLAGE.

OBJECTIVE 1: ENHANCE THE TYPES OF RECREATION AVAILABLE AT CRANE PARK AND AIRPORT PARK TO ENCOURAGE ADDITIONAL USAGE AND MORE ACTIVITY NEAR THE DOWNTOWN.

Recommendation P.3.1.1: Increase passive use amenities at Crane Park. The Village should seek to actively increase the passive use amenities of the park. Examples of potential amenities include picnic tables, Chess/Checker tables, and fitness stations. Installing small-scale amenities along Millpond Parkway will serve as a recreational resource to residents of the downtown and will make the ponds more attractive to lunchtime users.

A decorative bridge to the gazebo in Crane Park in place of the causeway could improve the appearance of the park, water circulation, and offer an additional fishing resource. Currently,

fishing is concentrated at the Lakes Road crossing, where sidewalks are narrow, and walkers conflict with casting.

A butterfly garden or other natural wildflowers could provide an educational opportunity for children to identify flowers, birds, and butterflies.

The Village's summer concert series currently uses a portable stage along Lake Street. The Village may wish to consider installing a permanent band shell in this location.

Recommendation P.3.1.2: Pursue public funding for parkland improvements. This funding may be a good source of financing to provide a raised walkway, parking area, and/or interpretive elements in support of the recently acquired Monroe Racetrack Park. It could additionally be used to implement Crane Park improvements as described above.

Recommendation P.3.1.3: Investigate ways to expand upon existing park facilities. The Village Board finds that there remains a need for parkland facilities to serve the needs of residents. Many of the Village's resources, including Crane Park, are highly used not only by Village residents, but also by residents of other area communities. Similarly, many of the Village's programmed events including the Fourth of July Celebration, Concert Series and Cheese Festival also draw people to the Village from outside the community. The Village should ensure that Village residents have adequate opportunities for socialization and recreation through expanded parkland facilities such as pocket parks, or increased facilities focused towards residents such as sports fields, sports courts, additional walking trails and bike trails.

Recommendation P.3.1.4: Look to Preserve the Monroe Country Club as a Historic, Scenic and Recreational Resource. The Monroe Country club, built in 1922, was designed by William S. Flynn, a recognized pioneer in golf course design. Additionally, the unobscured green open space is a significant element of the Village's character and provides an entry to the game of golf for all economic groups, with green fees starting at just \$18 for an early weekday 9-hole tee time. The Village should consider measures to preserve the course including but not limited to acquiring rights of first refusal, purchasing development rights, or purchasing the course as parkland.

8. PLAN: CONNECTIONS

A community's street network provides the framework upon which all land uses depend upon. The basic purpose of roads is to provide legal physical access to real property. However, the form of a network has implications beyond simple access and conveyance of people and property. During the period of rapid growth from the 1960s through the 1980s, road networks were designed principally with the aim of conveying motor vehicles through a network with the least amount of delay. This led to wide lanes of free-flowing traffic, multiple turning lanes, signalized intersections, and relatively high speeds.

In the late 1980s and into the 1990s, planners began to consider the implications that this approach had. Wide roads designed principally for vehicles were not well suited to pedestrian and bicycle traffic, encouraged high speeds, led to large volumes of stormwater runoff, and were costly to maintain.

Increasingly, communities have been looking to calm traffic, rather than expand roads to accommodate it. As the nation's largest generation enters retirement, there is also a new appreciation for pedestrian and bicycle access and mass transit. The need for a street system that respects pedestrians, bicyclists, and those with special mobility needs is becoming more apparent.

The design of facilities such as sidewalks and curb cuts at crosswalks are being reconsidered, as an obstacle as small as an eight-inch curb is equally as daunting to a senior citizen, young child, or middle-aged veteran bound to a wheelchair. Even with motor vehicle conveyance, communities are looking at new approaches to accommodating traffic. Many communities are beginning to understand that poor traffic access and circulation is an impediment to economic development. Consumers are choosing to patronize commercial establishments with easy vehicular access and plentiful parking, even if those uses are more distant than traditional downtowns amidst congested intersections and sparse parking.

With this in mind, communities are looking at ways to make community road systems more "human-scale." Safe speeds are considered just as important as shortened travel times; pedestrian and bicycle traffic are given equal consideration to motor vehicle access; stress-free access to the downtown is as vital as accommodating volume on arterial highways.

ROAD NETWORK AND CIRCULATION

New York State (NYS) Route 17M is the principal arterial thoroughfare within the Village of Monroe (**Map 8.1, Roadway Functional Classification**). It originates at NYS Route 17 in the Village of Harriman to the south, runs northwest through the Village, and provides access to the central part of the County. Just north (and east) of NYS Route 17M, a former rail line physically separates

the northwestern section of the Village with cross-access only at NYS Route 208, Mapes Place (an extension of Lakes Road), and Freeland Street.

Just north of the Heritage Trail, Orange County Route 105 parallels NYS Route 17M within the Village as North Main Street and Spring Street, before heading west toward the Villages of Kiryas Joel and Woodbury. NYS Route 208 terminates at NYS Route 17M just north of the Millponds and provides access from the Village to the major regional highway system via future Interstate 86 (NYS Route 17/U.S. Route 6).

Lakes Road/Lake Street intercepts NYS Route 17M in the Village downtown, forms Monroe's "main street" business district, and travels west into the unincorporated Town of Monroe, Town of Chester, Town of Warwick, and ultimately provides access to the Village of Greenwood Lake.

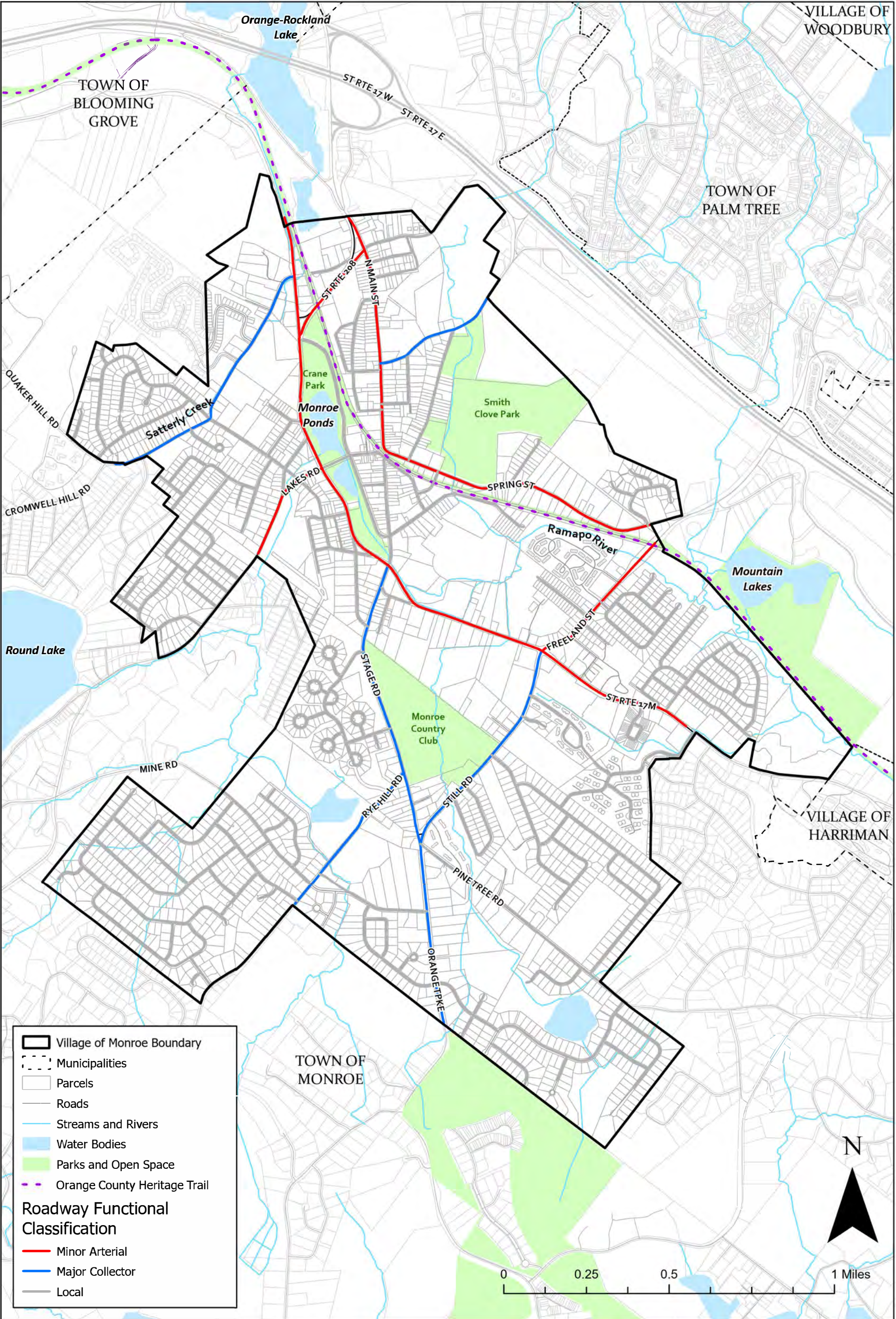
Freeland Street/Still Road/Orange Turnpike intercepts NYS Route 17M further to the south within the Village. It starts to the northwest at Orange County Route 105 and ultimately heads south into the unincorporated Town of Monroe and intercepts NYS Route 17 at Southfields (Town of Tuxedo), where it provides access to points south.

PEDESTRIAN CONNECTIONS

Sidewalks generally run along both sides of the streets in Monroe's Central Business District. Lake Street, Millpond Parkway, and Stage Road provide sidewalks along both sides of the street while Carpenter Place provides sidewalks along one side. There are sidewalks along both sides of North Main Street, but many residential landlords along North Main Street have replaced concrete curbs and sidewalks with asphalt drop curbs and parking in front yards to support multifamily conversion.

The Village has constructed stamped and painted asphalt crosswalks at the intersections of Lake Street with Stage Road, Lake Street mid-block in the downtown, Lake Street with Millpond Parkway, Lake Street with NYS Route 17M, Stage Road with Millpond Parkway, and at Airplane Park. These paths and improved curb cuts improve accessibility and function for those with disabilities. They are also more durable than painted sidewalks and provide a better distinction between the shared and vehicular-only realm. Lastly, they improve the aesthetic quality of the downtown and invite Millpond users to venture downtown.

A continuous 10-foot wide asphalt bike path is provided around much of the Millponds. However, the 10-foot wide multi-use path transitions to concrete sidewalk at certain choke points, including at the south end of the ponds, and near the intersection of Millpond Parkway and Lake Street/Lakes Road.



Sidewalks are intermittent along NYS Route 17M north of Stage Road, with most commercial uses providing sidewalks along the highway. South of Stage Road, there are no sidewalks along NYS Route 17M.

The presence of sidewalks in the Village's residential areas varies. Generally, in residential subdivisions since the late 1960's, sidewalks have been provided. Older residential neighborhoods generally tend not to have sidewalks. Lack of sidewalks has continued to be identified by the Public as a weakness in the Village.

The most notable lack of sidewalks is along Spring Street between Mapes Place and Smith's Clove Park. This particular area would support safer pedestrian traffic between the Village's major recreational facility, used by children, and the downtown. The Spring Street Apartments that are under construction at the time this plan is being prepared provide a vital connection between the existing Spring Street sidewalk west of Franklin Avenue and Mapes Place.

The Orange County Heritage Trail is a 10-foot wide paved pathway that runs from Goshen to Harriman Village within the right of way of the Erie Railroad. This path provides safe pedestrian and bicyclist access to the downtown from much of the Village. The Heritage Trail continues to be identified by the public as a significant strength and economic development opportunity within the Village.

PUBLIC TRANSPORTATION

Coach USA/Short Line bus offers bus service south to New Jersey and New York City and to shopping and services along NYS Route 17M, as well as along NYS Route 32 in the Village of Woodbury with service continuing to Middletown and Westchester County. The main bus stop in the Village of Monroe is the Park and Ride facility located on Millpond Parkway, which provides service to the Port Authority Bus Terminal in New York City. This is a limited facility providing 100 spaces, which also double as parking for the Heritage Trail. A larger facility is located at Museum Village in the Town of Blooming Grove, which provides service to Westchester County and multiple Manhattan locations. Although it has a capacity of 589 spaces, this lot is heavily used with vehicles parking on the grass and along internal roadways.

Transit Orange provides Main Line Bus Service from the Monroe Bus Depot on Millpond Parkway. Riders can access Orange Regional Medical Center, Orange Plaza in Wallkill, the Galleria Mall in Middletown, the County Government Center and VA Clinic in Goshen, the Chester Shop-Rite Plaza, Harriman Commons (Home Depot and Wal-Mart), and Woodbury Commons Outlet Mall.

A Metro North Railroad station is located on NYS Route 17 approximately 2 miles south of the Village border. Rail service provides connection to New York City Penn Station via Secaucus transfer and north to Port Jervis.

Town of Monroe Dial-a-Bus service is available Monday through Saturday by reservation to shopping areas throughout the Town and Village of Monroe. This service is funded by the County with State grants and a small rider fare.

COMMUTERS

The Village has seen a significant increase in public transportation usage for commuting between 2010 and 2019 (**Table 8.1, Means of Transportation to Work - ACS Estimates**).

| TABLE 8.1 MEANS OF TRANSPORTATION TO WORK – ACS ESTIMATES | | |
|--|---------------------------------|----------------|
| Means of Transportation | 2019 ACS 5-Year Estimate | |
| | Persons | Percent |
| Workers 16 years and over | 3,991 | 100% |
| Drove alone | 2,277 | 57.1% |
| Carpooled | 644 | 16.1% |
| Public Transportation (excluding taxicab) | 431 | 10.8% |
| Taxicab | 158 | 4% |
| Bicycle | 49 | 1.2% |
| Walked | 100 | 2.5% |
| Other means | 74 | 1.9% |
| Worked at home | 258 | 6.5% |
| Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2015-2019 American Community Survey. | | |

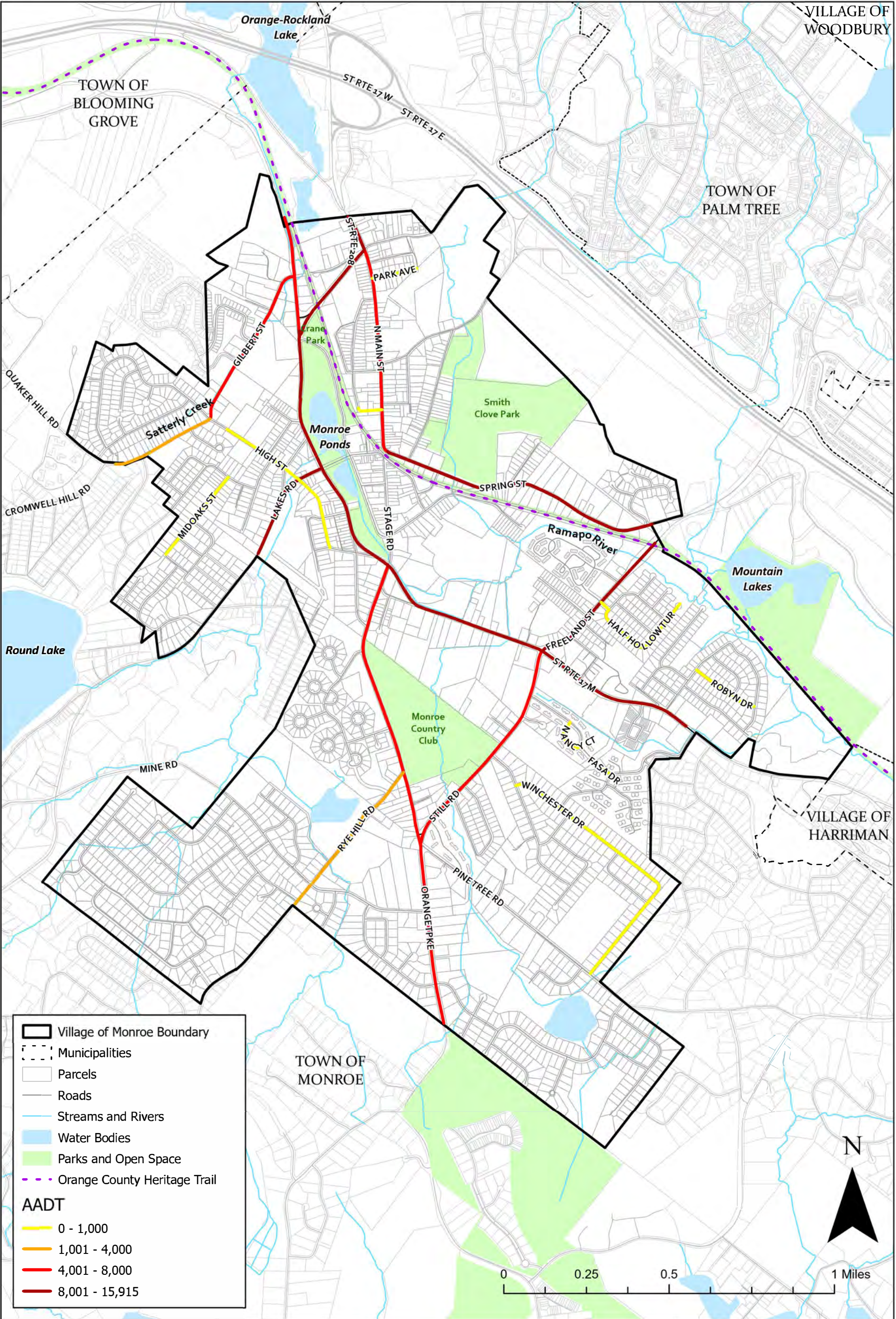
Commuters driving alone decreased from 70% to 57.1%. Carpooling remained surprisingly high, but public transit ridership also increased from 3.5% to 10.8%.

| TABLE 8.2 TRAVEL TIME TO WORK | |
|--|----------------------|
| Travel Time | 2019 ACS 5-Year Est. |
| | Percent |
| Less than 5 minutes | 1.2% |
| 5 – 9 minutes | 10.0% |
| 10 – 14 minutes | 16.5% |
| 15 – 19 minutes | 9.8% |
| 20 - 24 minutes | 3.6% |
| 25 – 29 minutes | 5.0% |
| 30 – 34 minutes | 9.3% |
| 35 – 39 minutes | 6.9% |
| 40 – 44 minutes | 4.2% |
| 45 – 59 minutes | 6.9% |
| 60 – 89 minutes | 18.0% |
| 90 or more minutes | 8.6% |
| <i>Average Travel Time to Work (in minutes)</i> | 36.4 |
| Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2015-2019 American Community Survey. | |

It is believed that some of the prevalence of carpooling may be to nearby employment destinations in the Village of Kiryas Joel and in the large retail areas of the Villages of Woodbury, Harriman, and unincorporated Town of Monroe. Estimates also show a significant increase in the travel time to work (**Table 8.2, Travel Time to Work**). While in 2010 approximately half of residents worked within 15 minutes of their employment, only 27.7% did in 2019. This is believed to be due to a sampling error in comparing the 2010 100% sample data with 2020 1% sample data.

CONGESTION

There are clearly areas throughout the Village that are subject to significant traffic congestion, especially during the peak AM and PM weekday commuting hours (**Map 8.2, Average Annual Daily Traffic Volumes**). One cause of this congestion is the fact that the Erie Railroad/Heritage Trail divides the majority of the community from the regional highway system (NYS Route 17/U.S. Route 6 - Future Interstate 86). This funnels traffic through three crossing points within the Village at NYS Route 208, Lake Street/Carpenter Place/Mapes Place, and at Freeland Street. There are additional crossings in Harriman at River Road and NYS Route 17, and two additional crossings north of the Village at Museum Village Road and the Monroe Park and Ride lot. Additionally, just



north of the Village, NYS Route 17/U.S. Route 6 (future Interstate 86) also funnels traffic into three major crossing points, NYS Route 208, Orange County Road 105, and NYS Route 32/17. An additional crossing exists at Forest Avenue providing access to the Village of Kiryas Joel. The traffic funneling effect caused by these two major dividing thoroughfares has resulted in major traffic congestion throughout the Village.

Traffic congestion at the interchange of Interstate 87 (NYS Thruway) and NYS Route 17/U.S. Route 6 (future Interstate 86), as well as the nearby intersection of NYS Route 32, has resulted in regional traffic detouring onto NYS Route 17M and Orange Turnpike, and thus into the Village. This is especially apparent on summer and early fall Thursdays, Fridays, and Sunday when traffic is headed north toward the Catskills, or returning South to New Jersey, New York City, Long Island, and the lower Hudson Valley.

The 2014 Comprehensive Plan included a review of recent traffic impact analyses and determined that the following intersections are the worst in the Village in terms of traffic congestion at peak commuter hours, but especially during Catskill Tourism season:

- NYS Route 208 - North Main Street - Schunemunk Street
- NYS Route 208 – NYS Route 17M
- Lakes Road – NYS Route 17M
- Freeland Street/Still Road – NYS Route 17M

Since the 2014 Plan, improvements have been made to the intersection of NYS Route 208 and NYS Route 17M. This has eased traffic delays heading into the Village. However, traffic congestion heading onto Schunemunk Road has increased significantly since 2014 and the queues caused by these delays now sometimes block the southbound lanes of NYS Route 208 heading into the Village. This has also been exacerbated by the fueling stations located at this intersection.

The congestion has resulted in bypass traffic increases on the following roads:

- High Street, especially at its intersections with Gilbert Street/Quaker Hill Road, at Bridge Street, and at Mill Street
- Maple Avenue
- Swezey Place
- Reynolds Road
- Mine Road
- Now, bypass traffic is also observed heading onto Orange and Rockland Road in order to bypass delays at NYS Route 208/North Main Street/Schunemunk Road.

Traffic congestion continues to be noted as a significant weakness in the Village and a threat to the community. Traffic congestion not only impacts the lifestyle of residents, but it also decreases pedestrian and cyclist safety as motorists become frustrated and take more risks such as running yellow and red signals, failing to stop at stop controls, passing on the shoulder, cutting through private parking lots, or increasing speeds.

Additionally, traffic congestion makes it less likely that motorists will stop vehicles to patronize local businesses, as they become intent on making it through the high-traffic area. Local residents are also less likely to venture out of their homes during peak traffic times, and regional residents may seek to avoid the Village, which also impacts local businesses.

RELATED COMPREHENSIVE PLAN GOALS, OBJECTIVES, AND RECOMMENDED STRATEGIES

GOAL T1: IMPROVE THE MULTI-MODAL FLOW OF TRAFFIC THROUGH THE VILLAGE, WHILE RESPECTING PEDESTRIANS AND CYCLISTS.

OBJECTIVE 1: ALLOW FOR EASIER ACCESS TO DOWNTOWN FROM OUTLYING AREAS AND THE SURROUNDING COMMUNITIES; WORK WITH THE STATE AND COUNTY TO PROVIDE INNOVATIVE SOLUTIONS THAT WILL IMPROVE VEHICULAR TRAFFIC FLOW ALONG ROUTE 17M AND INTO AND OUT OF THE DOWNTOWN.

Recommendation T.1.1.1: Prioritize flow over speed and traffic time. The primary strategy to address congestion within the Village will be to approach roadway design and pedestrian systems in a manner that prioritizes flow over speed and travel time. This will make Village traffic less stressful during peak traffic times.

Recommendation T.1.1.2: Prohibit the construction of any new cul-de-sacs, except where no other arrangement is viable. While the Village should not encourage the interconnection of existing roads in a manner that would impact existing residential neighborhoods in significantly adverse ways, it should require new neighborhoods to interface with existing streets at multiple locations. Additionally, where interconnection of neighborhoods via the elimination of cul-de-sacs is viable and will not result in increasing traffic beyond that volume which is consistent with quality residential neighborhoods, such interconnection should be required and/or implemented.

Recommendation T.1.1.3: Explore traffic roundabouts at select congested intersections. The Village highly favors the introduction of traffic roundabouts to increase flow at high volume

intersections within the Village. The Village should work with the State and County to explore the replacement of existing congested signalized intersections with traffic roundabouts or mini-roundabouts. Traffic roundabouts are small traffic circles, comprised of an often single-lane, counterclockwise, circular travel way surrounding a landscaped island. Usually, the center island has mountable curbs to allow larger trucks to adequately navigate the circle. Traffic entering the circle must yield to traffic within the circle, which slows traffic along roads approaching the circle, but allows this slowed flow to continue through the circle without stopping. In 2014, the idea of traffic roundabouts was somewhat foreign to Monroe residents. With the major transportation improvements made to the intersection of NYS Route 32 and NYS Route 17, as well as the access improvements to Legoland in nearby Goshen, several roundabouts were added to the local transportation environment, and local residents are much more familiar with how they operate.



Matching Roundabouts at Nining Road and Route 32

Mini-roundabouts, are less formalized than roundabouts but operate under the same basic premises. By channeling all vehicles into a singular travel lane, they eliminate stop controls and reduce the number of conflict points as compared with a standard four-way intersection.



Mini Roundabout from Urban Street Design Guide: National Association of City Transportation Offices.

Recommendation T.1.1.4: Reopen North Main Street to Lake Street and downtown. The Village should encourage the reopening of the intersection of North Main Street and Spring Street with Lake Street and Carpenter Place. This will require an interruption of the Heritage Trail, but the Village of Monroe believes that this opening will significantly alleviate traffic congestion (by providing an alternative route) at the intersection of NYS Route 208 and North Main Street.

Further, the current roadway configuration discourages utilization of the downtown, by making downtown businesses more remote for people travelling south along North Main Street. The opening of this intersection would increase accessibility and pass-by traffic through the downtown. If this intersection were opened, Mapes Place at Spring Street could be closed to vehicular traffic. The traffic light at this intersection could then be reprogrammed to remain green for Spring Street, except for pedestrian activation. Along with sidewalk and/or bicycle path improvements along Spring Street, Carpenter Place and Maple Avenue, this could help provide a safe route for pedestrians and cyclists between Crane Park, Smith's Clove Park, the Heritage Trail, the Monroe Racetrack Park, and downtown.

Recommendation T.1.1.5: Reopen the Gilbert Street Extension to NYS Route 17M. Extend the Gilbert Street Extension across the Heritage Trail through to NYS Route 17M. Again, the Village

respects the desire to limit the crossing of the Heritage Trail, however, the intersection of the Gilbert Street Extension and NYS Route 208 currently poses a danger to motorists. Site distances are limited at the intersection of NYS Route 208 and the Gilbert Street Extension, and the complex intersection geometry makes left turn movements from NYS Route 208 north onto the Gilbert Street Extension confusing and dangerous. This left turn movement also further deteriorates the level of service of the NYS Route 208/North Main Street intersection, as vehicles often queue behind vehicles waiting to make this left turn, while the signal for the left turn movement (northbound) at the intersection with North Main Street is green.

It is noted that the Gilbert Street Extension currently contains the South Orange Family YMCA. Extending Gilbert Street will not only improve the safety of the children and families accessing this site by vehicles, but with sidewalk improvements along NYS Route 17M, will also provide for safe pedestrian access for these users.

The Village retains ownership of the original Gilbert Street right-of-way and should work with the County to design a crossing that addresses potential conflicts with users of the Heritage Trail. One potential arrangement would be to install a speed table with an alternative surface treatment such as stamped, colored, asphalt crosswalks. The elevation and texture change associated with such an arrangement would inform motorists that they are entering the pedestrian realm.

Recommendation T.1.1.6: Reconsider No-Turn on Red Control at Orange County Route 105 and Spring Street. Work with the County to eliminate right turn on red restrictions, specifically, at the intersection of Orange County Route 105 and Spring Street (just over the Village border in the unincorporated Town of Monroe). This does not appear to be warranted, and in fact, it appears that it may be possible that a realigned turning lane could allow a yield control at this intersection.

Recommendation T.1.1.7: Improve the Intersection of Spring Street and Mapes Place. The Village should consider a redesign of the intersection of Spring Street and Mapes Place. The existing no-turn-on-red restriction at this intersection should be reconsidered. With clearing of brush at this intersection, there would be adequate sight distance for right turns on red. Additionally, a left-turn lane should be considered from westbound Spring Street onto Mapes Place. Currently, traffic heading westbound queues at this intersection as vehicles turning left wait for oncoming traffic to pass.

Recommendation T.1.1.8: Prohibit any new significant traffic generating uses until traffic congestion issues are addressed. Under SEQR, the standard for identifying a traffic impact is if a given project results in a failing level of service or significantly increases delay at an intersection that already is congested. Due to the scale and intensity of the Village's existing traffic issues, the Village should consider making any non-residential or multifamily residential use that would result in significant traffic generation a special permit use of the Village Board. Further, the

general special permit use criteria should establish that no use generating significant traffic shall be permitted unless intersections impacted by the proposed use are operating at acceptable levels of service.

OBJECTIVE 2: PROVIDE AND ENHANCE FACILITIES FOR CYCLISTS AND PEDESTRIANS CONNECTING DOWNTOWN, COMMERCIAL AREAS, RESIDENTIAL AREAS, AND PARKS.

Recommendation T.1.2.1: Construct new on-road and off-road facilities for bicyclists and pedestrians connecting Crane Park to Smith's Clove Park. This stretch of new sidewalk and bike path is perhaps the highest priority. It is critical, since it will allow children to safely access Smith's Clove Park from a much larger area of the Village. There are currently no bike or pedestrian facilities providing access to the park.

Recommendation T.1.2.2: Install additional pedestrian and bicycle connections linking existing neighborhood sidewalks into a unified network. The Village should commission a study determining where gaps exist in the current sidewalk network, and prioritize construction of those sidewalks that would provide the greatest increased access by residents to the downtown, parks, schools, library, places of worship, and other similar destinations. The Planning Board should require sidewalks along all collector roads within the Village, and require all nonresidential uses to provide sidewalks for their entire road frontage.

OBJECTIVE 3: PROVIDE A TRAIL SYSTEM ALONG THE RAMAPO RIVER AND ITS ATTENDANT WATER BODIES.

Recommendation T.1.3.1: Provide a trail along the Ramapo River. The course of the Ramapo River lends itself to an off-road trail. Such a trail could originate at the south end of Crane Park, where it would travel along the riverbank to Racetrack Park, and then could parallel the Heritage Trail all the way south to the Village boundary with Harriman. From the Millponds, a trail could be constructed from High Street south through the former Roscoe Smith property south to the Village boundary.

OBJECTIVE 4: IMPROVE THE VILLAGE'S GATEWAYS, ESPECIALLY AT THE INTERSECTION OF NYS ROUTE 208 AND NYS ROUTE 17M AND AT THE INTERSECTION OF FREELAND STREET/STILL ROAD/NYS ROUTE 17M.

Recommendation T.1.4.1: Beautify intersections at major Village gateways and Re-locate Village entry signs to more appropriate locations. The Village should consider planting dense, colorful flowers beds and/or other decorative landscape treatments at the corners of these

intersections. Such plantings would have to be maintained by the Village but would help to improve the identity of the community. Currently, signs are located at the intersection of Millpond Parkway and NYS Route 17M and at the intersection of Lakes Road and NYS Route 17M. These particular signs would be more appropriately located closer to the NYS Route 17M and NYS Route 208 intersection, or additional similar signs could be provided.

Recommendation T.1.4.2: Ban or require permits for temporary signage within Village rights-of-way. The Village should pass a local law banning or requiring a permit for the posting of signage within public rights-of-way within a certain distance of key Village intersections. Many communities ban posting of signs within public rights-of-way altogether; however, signage is especially unattractive at the Village's key gateways. Such a law should authorize and instruct any Village employee to remove such signage at any time. Special exceptions should be given for the posting of events, which should require a simple permit from the Village Clerk. Fines should be levied for businesses which post "bumper-sticker" type signage on structures within the public right-of-way. Time limits should be imposed for any temporary signs including political signs, requiring limits to how long before and after an event the sign may be posted.

OBJECTIVE 5: ENHANCE THE ACCESSIBILITY AND CONVENIENCE OF PUBLIC TRANSPORTATION OPTIONS.

Recommendation T.1.5.1: Provide expanded bus facilities near downtown. The Village enjoys successful bus transit ridership from a CoachUSA depot on Millpond Parkway near the downtown. The Village should make every attempt to encourage additional transit ridership from this location. Such encouragement could be accomplished via provision of expanded parking, provision of rest facilities for transit riders, and heated bus enclosures. Should the Village require a fee for use of public transit parking, such fee should be limited and go towards further parking expansions, as well as maintenance of any transit supportive facilities that are provided.

Recommendation T.1.5.2: Locate future government facilities near the park and ride to allow for dual use of facilities. As a means of increasing government efficiency and decreasing cost, if possible, the Village should consider locating any future contemplated Village use adjacent to existing or planned transit parking. This would allow the rest facilities necessary for the Village use to also be used by transit riders, and could provide shelter by double-tasking a lobby area, courtroom or meeting room that does not normally get used during the day.

Recommendation T.1.5.3: Provide direct mid-block alley access from parking fields to Lake Street. To the extent possible, the Village should promote direct access via an alley or walkway to the businesses along Lake Street in the downtown. Such access will allow restaurants and cafes to serve food and coffee to morning commuters and allow returning commuters to stop in for

take-out meals, fresh meat, groceries, or baked goods in the evening. This may require coordination with private property owners, although such owners may be willing to dispose of existing alleys to the extent that doing so may relieve them of liability.

OBJECTIVE 6: APPRECIATE THE PEDESTRIAN DESIGN NEEDS OF LESS MOBILE POPULATIONS SUCH AS SENIOR CITIZENS, THE DISABLED, AND CHILDREN.

Recommendation T.1.6.1: Promote Complete Streets. Promote redesign of existing streets into "Complete Streets" that include facilities for safe pedestrian and bicycle travel as well as motor vehicle travel. The idea of a "complete street" is a street that allows access by all persons and users. Elements of complete streets include:

- Separate travel lanes for pedestrians, cyclists, and motor vehicles;
- Measures to reduce conflicts between users - such as reducing curb cuts;
- Slowing speeds to less than 20 miles per hour where cyclists and vehicles share the roadway;
- Physically separating bicycle traffic where higher speeds are allowed; and
- Providing adequate facilities for the disabled including curb cuts, crosswalks with pedestrian signals (push-to-cross).

Recommendation T.1.6.2: Install benches or other types of street furniture. Functional and aesthetically pleasing street furniture can contribute to a vibrant outdoor walking environment and an atmosphere of streets as public space. Examples of street furniture include benches, pedestrian-scaled lighting, bike racks, informational signs and kiosks, and waste receptacles. When locating such items within sidewalks, it is important to consider the width of the sidewalk so as to not preclude the free movement of people, including those with disabilities. It is also important to locate them near to businesses that generally stay open late, so that such businesses can police loitering issues.

Lastly, the street furniture should be designed to discourage "riding" by skateboarders, that will often use benches and tables if such furniture is low. Where seats are provided, slats may be oriented from front to back rather than lengthwise to discourage skateboarding use.

9. PLAN: ECONOMICS (DOWNTOWN AND COMMERCE)



The Village of Monroe's downtown was the historic economic and social center of Village life. It sprang up around the railroad depot, which existed at the corner of Lake Street, Stage Road, and North Main Street (today, the building exists but is vacant). The front gateway of the Village was the grand, Venetian-style, four-story buildings shown in the picture above (the Reed and Conklin buildings). These buildings were recently renovated and today appear as they did in the early 20th century. From these buildings, Lake Street travelled west to the Millponds, which in fact supported a mill, an icehouse, and a cheese factory, among other heavy commercial uses at the time.

North Main Street supported the grand homes of the upper class, while workers generally lived in smaller homes around the ponds. Several large mansions were constructed on large lots surrounding this Village core development pattern.

With the proliferation of the automobile in the mid-20th century, the Village's downtown underwent a significant physical change. The railroad line was physically separated from the

roadway to increase safety. Carpenter Place was extended and Mapes Place was constructed to eliminate the at-grade railroad crossing. This segmented the business district in half.

The business areas east of the division became more oriented toward heavy commercial, wholesale, and industrial uses. This in turn led to the decline in value of North Main Street residences for residential occupancy, which led to the division of large single-family homes into multifamily residences.

Heavy commercial businesses located west of the railroad tracks and outside of the downtown, especially around the Millponds, but dwindled and closed, and the ponds and the lands around them were donated to the Village for parklands. Primary access to the Village became NYS Route 17M, and after the New York State Thruway (Interstate 87) was constructed, primary access became NYS Route 208 from NYS Route 17/U.S. Route 6, now future Interstate 86.

Railroad service ceased operation in 1986, and commuter rail service was consolidated to Harriman on the Port Jervis Line. Over time, Orange County bought the railroad line and removed the tracks.

The once prominent gateway of the downtown, and the Village, became the back door to the downtown. The lower-scale back end of the downtown along Millpond Parkway became the front.

During the rise of the automobile, there was a significant transformation in consumer behavior. Small butcher shops, vegetable stands, and bakeries dwindled with the rise of the grocery store. Easy vehicular access became the primary quality desired by retailers. Retailers no longer sought to be located near complimentary businesses. It was during this time that the Village's several retail strip centers along NYS Route 17M were constructed. Several automotive dealerships located within the Village, as did larger-scale commercial trades businesses. The flight of retailers from the downtown to outlying retail strip commercial centers heralded the decline of the downtown.

The rents for residential apartment space in the downtown declined as businesses departed, and people no longer sought to be close to retail businesses. This made it difficult to maintain buildings in their original state. For example, when brick facades began to age, they were covered over with aluminum paneling or siding rather than repointed and/or repainted. The architectural features that were prevalent on original buildings, such as decorative building cornices, window lintels, decorative kick plates, were diminished over time.

More recently, consumer behavior has increasingly looked to greater consolidation of retail. Consumers sought out lower prices and increased selection available from larger scale retailers at "big-box," "mega-mall," and "super-store" locations near regional highways. This led to an

increased decline in the marketability of downtown retail space and weakened more local highway strip commercial businesses.

However, trends have come full circle more recently, and large floor plate regional retailers have begun to struggle against online mega-retailers. The COVID-19 pandemic hastened this trend as all but “necessary services” bricks-and-mortar retailers were forced to shut down for an extended period. Consumers were forced to consider on-line retailers in the absence of the regional mall and superstores. Meanwhile, opportunities were introduced for small retailers looking to open “showroom” style stores, or stores specializing in local goods or consumer experiences. The COVID-19 pandemic also resulted in significant impacts to marginal restaurants and businesses. Those businesses that emerged from the pandemic tended to be stronger and more resilient.

EXISTING CONDITIONS

In 2014, the Village was experiencing high rates of vacancy or frequent turnover of commercial spaces throughout its geography. This was especially true of the area that is identified as Monroe's Downtown, namely the area located along both sides of Lake Street from Millpond Parkway to Stage Road, and down to Smithfield Court, including the movie theater.

The 2014 Comprehensive Plan detailed the strength of the various markets, with the following conclusions:

- The regional housing market was extremely weak and was predicted to improve only slowly. The Village was dealing with zombie houses and residents with underwater mortgages in the wake of the 2008 recession. Exceptions were moderately priced multifamily and fee-simple townhouses.
- The retail market was weak, although some believed the weakness may have been partially due to artificially high lease rates for commercial space. Generally, it was believed that Monroe was only able to capture the local trade area – typically the area providing goods and services that one is willing to travel 15 minutes or less to obtain.
- The office market was very weak except for medical offices, which enjoyed a strong market for spaces suitable for multi-doctor cooperative practices.
- The heavy commercial/industrial markets were strong in certain segments, particularly self-storage and for flex-space warehousing. The demand for other types of heavy commercial and industrial were limited due to the lack of large parcels in the Village.

Uses in high demand were identified as:

- Auto-repair and auto-related uses
- Movie theater
- Large multipurpose indoor sports facilities, especially for soccer, lacrosse, dodge ball, kickball, and possibly hockey, but only if very actively programmed;
- Large Kosher food store (35,000 square feet or so)
- Child Day Care
- Doggy Day Care/Kennels
- Ethnic foods and restaurants
- Boat, motorcycle, and RV dealers
- Furniture stores
- Lawn and garden stores
- Health and personal care stores
- Gas stations
- Sporting goods
- Book stores
- Hobby stores
- Pet supplies
- Restaurants and drinking places of all types

Generally, conditions remain similar in 2023. Much of the local retail market is impacted by the prevalence of the Woodbury Commons Outlet Mall and large regional retailers available near the NYS Route 32/17 interchange. The rapid growth of Palm Tree and the surrounding communities continues to impact the demand for construction trade goods, home furnishings, kosher and gourmet food stores, and household goods. In the wake of the COVID-19 pandemic, there has been an increase in patronage of more local recreational retail and services, such as the local movie theater and restaurants or coffee shops (as opposed to a regional multiplex or larger fast casual restaurants).

Additionally, with many people purchasing durable and more expensive items online, there is increased demand for smaller outlets of goods that were typically purchased from regional megastores before the pandemic (such as home improvement, clothing, and furniture).

Lastly, perhaps due to stricter regulation in surrounding communities, it appears that auto-related businesses continue to enjoy a strong market in Monroe.

RELATED COMPREHENSIVE PLAN GOALS, OBJECTIVES, AND RECOMMENDED STRATEGIES

GOAL E1: CREATE AN ACTIVE, CONVENIENT, AND INVITING DOWNTOWN AS THE COMMUNITY'S CIVIC, CULTURAL, AND RECREATIONAL CENTER AS WELL AS A DESTINATION FOR DINING, SHOPPING, AND PERSONAL SERVICES.

OBJECTIVE 1: DECREASE THE NUMBER OF VACANT GROUND-LEVEL SPACES IN THE DOWNTOWN.

Recommendation E.1.1.1: Expand permitted uses and allow changes of use without costly or lengthy review. The Village should revisit its code requirements for the downtown to allow the widest range of retail, personal service, restaurant, and other commercial uses within downtown spaces. Transition from one permitted use to another should not automatically require site plan approval, but instead a new “Change of Use” review should be conducted. This change of use review would allow an applicant to appear before the Planning Board and simply describe operational differences between uses, such as hours of operation, parking requirements, and signage. The Planning Board has the ability (see Village Code § 200-72.C) to waive the public hearing for permitted uses and should be encouraged to do so. No public hearing would be required, unless the Planning Board makes a finding that the change of use may result in substantial public controversy on the basis of noise, odors, traffic, lighting, or other externally identifiable impact.

A similar review process should be undertaken for the change of use from one restaurant to another. Such applications should similarly be permitted to proceed to the Planning Board without a site plan so that the applicant can describe the proposed changes to the restaurant operations including kitchen equipment, hours of operation, parking requirements, signage, percentage of alcohol sales versus food sales, and number of bar seats. Any increase in the percentage of alcohol sales or bar seating, or applications to introduce alcohol sales as a new use, should require a public hearing.

With any change of use, the Planning Board should be empowered to require reasonable controls for the mitigation of noise and odors, traffic, lighting, and safety of future patrons and area residents, especially with regard to alcohol sales. However, it is the intent of this change of use provision that the process for receiving approval be within a short time period (no more than two meetings), and at minimal cost.

Recommendation E.1.1.2: Develop marketing prospectus for Monroe Downtown. Package the updated 2023 retail market place data collected for this Plan and develop it into a prospectus for the Monroe Downtown. Make it available to local property owners to use in attracting potential commercial tenants.

Recommendation E.1.1.3: Relocate Village Hall and utilize the existing Village Hall as a business incubator. Consider relocating Village Hall to a new, modern, energy efficient, and ADA-compliant building on the periphery of the downtown. Form a Local Development Corporation (LDC) and lease the former Village Hall to the LDC as a business incubator space with new retail, service, and restaurant spaces possible on ground floors, and new offices available on upper stories. Consider partnering with local medical conglomerates to train medical services professionals in upper floors to attract additional health-related businesses to Monroe. Since an LDC is not subject to taxation and a low monthly lease can be negotiated with the Village, the LDC should be able to offer very low rents.

Alternatively, the LDC could issue bonds and purchase a different existing space within the downtown for similar purposes. There is some belief that removal of the existing Village Hall structure may increase the function of the downtown. An Empire State Grant award may be possible for funding the relocation of Village Hall and construction of a business incubator.

OBJECTIVE 2: PROVIDE EASY AND CONVENIENT PARKING TO SERVICE DOWNTOWN BUSINESSES AND ADDRESS ACTUAL AND PERCEIVED PARKING PROBLEMS.

Recommendation E.1.2.1: Expand downtown parking. The Village should expand the number of surface parking spaces within the downtown by acquiring and developing unused land adjacent to existing parking. Lands north of Lake Street may also be used to expand commuter parking, which can be shared with downtown residential use. Areas to the rear of the offices and restaurants along Stage Road, as well as to the rear of the library, may also be acquired and used to expand parking for the downtown and the movie theater.

Recommendation E.1.2.2: Beautify downtown parking. New and/or improved parking areas adjacent to downtown should be beautified by the installation of decorative trees, landscaped islands, and green or paver yards adjacent to existing downtown buildings. Such yards can double as outdoor spaces for dining or relaxation. Require that refuse containers be fully screened from parking areas. Promote/require central refuse container locations for use by area tenants, businesses, and landlords. The Village should seek moneys earmarked for green infrastructure in order to install rain gardens and street trees in existing parking areas to accommodate stormwater runoff in situ.

OBJECTIVE 3: IMPROVE THE APPEARANCE OF DOWNTOWN ESPECIALLY IN AREAS OPEN TO SIGNIFICANT PUBLIC VIEW SUCH AS THE PONDS.

Recommendation E.1.3.1: Draft and require conformance with minimum maintenance standards for downtown buildings. Such maintenance standards should require minimum basic exterior appearance standards governing the appearance of paint, wall cladding, condition of balconies, fire escapes, landscaping, windows, satellite dishes, cables and utilities, and other visible elements.

Recommendation E.1.3.2: Draft and require conformance with downtown design guidelines. The Village should develop guidelines for the acceptable types of wall cladding, colors, signage, awnings, pattern of wall openings, decorative architectural elements, type of windows, and other architectural features. The Village should require that any building permit in the downtown for exterior alterations be approved by either the Planning Board or the Landmarks Preservation Commission after reviewing applications against such guidelines.

Recommendation E.1.3.3: Improve the appearance of the Millponds. The Millponds are one of the greatest economic and aesthetic assets to the Village and its downtown. However, over recent years, there has been increasing volumes of algae and aquatic vegetation due to the reduced depth and flow of the water in the ponds. This has led not only to a deterioration of appearance and occasional odor issues, but also has increased the maintenance costs by requiring frequent removal of pond vegetation and use of chemical treatments.

At some point, the Village will be faced with the capital expense of dredging the ponds. It should be acknowledged that it is the policy of the Village that the ponds are vital to Monroe's character and economic health, and that the cost associated with pond maintenance is a necessary and prudent investment. The same policy is applied to required improvements to the dam at Stage Road and NYS Route 17M, which also will likely require improvement over the next several years.

OBJECTIVE 4: IMPROVE ACCESS, CONNECTIVITY, WALKABILITY, AND LIGHTING WITH RESPECT TO BOTH ROADS AND PATHWAYS/ SIDEWALKS IN THE DOWNTOWN AREA.

Recommendation E.1.4.1: Improve alleyway connections between existing parking areas and the front of businesses along Lake Street. Consider taking fee title to existing alleyways. Promote murals by gifted local artists where blank walls exist along alleys. Install lighting, and consider installing cameras at alleyways with blank walls to promote appearance of safety.

Recommendation E.1.4.2: Install curb extensions at mid-block locations to promote safe pedestrian travel from one side of Lake Street to the other. Incorporate curb extensions and/or speed-tables into the downtown streetscape design to calm traffic and clearly define the downtown as a pedestrian realm.

Recommendation E.1.4.3: Restripe parking spaces to serve as drop-off zones where appropriate. Where there is a preponderance of uses catering to children, such as schools for dance, martial arts, painting, music instruction, etc., consider retasking parallel parking to a drop-off zone.

Recommendation E.1.4.4: Install decorative street lighting with integrated planters, waste receptacles, and downtown signage. Extend lighting into and around Crane Park.

OBJECTIVE 5: ACTIVELY MARKET DOWNTOWN BUSINESSES, LOCAL EVENTS, VOLUNTEER OPPORTUNITIES, AND LOCAL RESOURCES, SUCH AS PARKS AND HISTORIC PROPERTIES.

Recommendation E.1.5.1: Work with local religious and institutional uses to expand upon their current schedule of festivals and events held in and around Crane Park. Currently, the Village promotes the Monroe Cheese Festival, a Summer Concert Series, Independence Day Fireworks, and the Memorial Day and Veteran's Day parades. The Village should consider adding additional events that would draw people to Crane Park and the adjacent downtown.

Recommendation E.1.5.2: Continue to hold weekend Farmer's Markets in the Village's commuter lot near the downtown. The Village of Monroe could also consider providing an open-air pavilion structure that could accommodate such a farmer's market on the weekends that could double as a bus shelter during the week. Funding for such improvements may be available through the Department of Transportation and/or through the Department of Agriculture and Markets.

Recommendation E.1.5.3: The Village should commission the preparation of a digital business location map that would be updated as tenants within the downtown change. Such a map should identify downtown businesses within walking distance of Crane Park. The business map can be hosted in kiosks at select points near to Crane Park, such as the intersection of NYS Route 17M and Lake Street, NYS Route 17M and Millpond Parkway, and Millpond Parkway and Lake Street.

GOAL E2: TRANSFORM THE NYS ROUTE 17M STRIP-COMMERCIAL CORRIDOR TO BETTER ADDRESS THE EVOLVING COMMERCIAL MARKET AND TO PROVIDE A SUSTAINABLE BALANCE OF USES.

OBJECTIVE 1: LIMIT AREA ALONG NYS ROUTE 208 TO HEAVY COMMERCIAL AND OFFICE USES

Recommendation E.2.1.1: Favor heavy commercial uses along NYS Route 208. The commercial area branching off of NYS Route 17M and along NYS Route 208 at the north end of the Village is zoned General Business, but is not well suited for frequent consumer vehicle access. The two gas stations in this vicinity are a source of traffic congestion given the complex traffic alignment in the area. The Village should promote more limited uses in this area, favoring heavy commercial, industrial, warehousing, and office uses instead.

OBJECTIVE 2: PROMOTE LARGER COMMERCIAL USES ALONG THE NYS ROUTE 17M CORRIDOR THAT CANNOT BE ACCOMMODATED IN DOWNTOWN.

Recommendation E.2.2.1: Establish a minimum floor area per tenant space for any new commercial building constructed within the Village but outside of the downtown (CB District). The Village should limit new small-lot and small tenant space commercial uses along the NYS Route 17M corridor. There is already an oversupply of small retail and commercial spaces within the Village, and small spaces remain vacant throughout the Village's downtown and strip commercial centers. The Village should establish a minimum floor area per tenant space for any new commercial building constructed within the Village but outside of the downtown. The Village should look to attract businesses over 2,000 square feet in floor area for any new stand-alone restaurants or commercial spaces.

OBJECTIVE 3: PROMOTE A BUILDING-ON-STREET APPEARANCE, RELEGATING PARKING TO REAR YARDS WHERE POSSIBLE.

Recommendation E.2.3.1: Promote a more traditional building- on- street appearance. The Village should promote an aesthetic that places buildings and structures on the road, and relegates parking to the rear or sides of structures. Not only is such design more aesthetically pleasing, but it also allows signage and architecture to be more visible from the street without requiring additional pylon signage.

Recommendation E.2.3.2: Promote traffic flow between adjacent parking facilities in separate ownership. Wherever possible, any new development along the NYS Route 17M corridor should provide cross easements to adjacent properties to allow the interconnection of parking facilities. This will in turn allow the Village to reduce the number of necessary curb cuts and improve traffic flow.

GOAL E3: TRANSFORM MONROE'S STRUGGLING HEAVY COMMERCIAL AND INDUSTRIAL AREAS.

OBJECTIVE 1: ALLOW FOR A RANGE OF NEW AND INNOVATIVE USES THAT LEVERAGE THE SCALE OF EXISTING BUILDINGS IN MONROE'S EXISTING HEAVY COMMERCIAL AREAS.

Recommendation E.3.1.1: Allow for a wider variety of uses for existing, large former-industrial buildings. The current structures and land in the Village's remaining industrial and heavy commercial areas are generally large and suited for a variety of uses. The Village should allow a wide variety of uses within these buildings including:

- Industrial, manufacturing, warehousing, and distribution (subject to performance standards limiting odor, noise, air emissions, etc.)
- Indoor recreation such as gyms, indoor sports fields, pools, climbing gyms, bowling, ice rinks, go carts, batting cages, etc.
- Professional offices
- Self-storage
- Storage/office flex space
- Contractor's storage
- Research, laboratory

GOAL E4: INCREASE THE EFFICIENCY OF LOCAL GOVERNMENT

OBJECTIVE 1: STREAMLINE DEVELOPMENT APPROVAL PROCESSES TO MAKE MONROE A SMALL-BUSINESS- FRIENDLY ENVIRONMENT.

Recommendation E.4.1.1: Simplify zoning and subdivision regulations. To the extent possible, the Village's development regulations should be simplified in language and in protocol.

Definitions should be modernized, and the code should be brought into compliance with current State laws regarding procedures for the State Environmental Quality Review Act (SEQRA) and the issuance of variances. The regulations should be illustrated where doing so promotes greater understanding.

Recommendation E.4.1.2: Consider Instituting a Sketch Plan and Technical Advisory Committee or similar processes to streamline the Planning Board and Zoning Board application process.

By the time an applicant submits a plan fully meeting the submission and technical requirements of the Village's Zoning Code, often a substantial investment has already been made in plan preparation. This process results in applicants feeling committed to their initial plans. To allow a more creative first step to the planning process, where the Planning Board can talk with the applicant about options and alternatives, a sketch plan submission process should be permitted and encouraged for site plans and subdivisions. Such a sketch plan process would start with simply the submission of a hand drawn schematic layout plan (sketch plan) showing proposed building locations, roadways, parking locations, and accessory structures. Such hand drawn sketch plans may be drawn on an approximation of the survey and need only convey a general/broad sense of what the applicant would like to accomplish.

Upon receipt of a sketch plan application, the applicant should be immediately scheduled for one initial meeting with the Planning Board for no fee or a reduced fee, and not subject to technical review costs of Planning Board consultants. The Planning Board can discuss the sketch plan with the prospective applicant, and raise concerns and potential alternatives early in the planning process. On the option of the Planning Board and applicant, a fact-finding site visit could be scheduled to observe existing site conditions. Only one sketch plan meeting should be allowed per application to avoid plans being developed in an ad-hoc fashion without Planning Board consultant guidance.

The purpose of the Technical Advisory Committee (TAC) will be to meet with prospective applicants more frequently in order to more quickly review technical and submission requirements of applications prior to submission to the Planning Board. The Committee will meet with applicants, review site plans, subdivision plans, and applications for special permits, and provide its comments to applicants regarding stormwater control requirements, adherence to adopted design guidelines, zoning or other statutory conformance, and the need for Zoning Board or Architectural Board review. The TAC process is intended to follow the sketch plan process, and would be the first step should an applicant not wish to submit a sketch plan.

Members of the Planning, Zoning, or Village Board should be welcome and encouraged to attend such meetings (but without quorum), and the meetings should be open to the public. All reviews

of the Technical Advisory Committee should be memorialized in memoranda and the Village Board, as well as Planning Board, should be copied on all such memoranda to be apprised of the status of applications, and to inform those Boards of the Committee's recommendations.

Once the Technical Advisory Committee has vetted all relevant technical issues and the submission requirements have been satisfactorily met, the Committee should forward the application to the relevant land use review Boards. Any applicant before the Technical Advisory Committee should be permitted to directly access the Planning Board should that applicant feel the application is being unduly delayed.

OBJECTIVE 2: TAKE ADVANTAGE OF PROVISIONS TO STREAMLINE THE STATE ENVIRONMENTAL QUALITY REVIEW PROCESS.

Recommendation E.4.2.1: Designate local Type 2 SEQRA list. The State Environmental Quality Review Act (SEQRA) allows local municipalities to designate their own Type 2 lists for uses that are not likely to result in environmental impacts. The Village should avail itself of this ability especially for small commercial uses and changes of uses within existing structures.

10. PLAN: THE FUTURE

The final recommendation of this Plan is that a local law be adopted which requires a review and report regarding the status of Comprehensive Plan implementation be commissioned and delivered to the Village Board each year before the Village Board adopts its annual budget.

For this purpose, it is suggested that the Village Board assemble a three- to five- member Comprehensive Plan Review Committee to be comprised of a Village Board member, a member of the Planning Board, and such other members as are chosen by the Village Board. This group should review the Comprehensive Plan and its implementation matrix and identify which recommendations have been implemented and prioritize those recommendations which have not yet been implemented. The Committee should also make recommendations as to what issues may have arisen over the preceding year that may require a partial or thorough reexamination of the Plan.

It is suggested that instituting such a process will make it more likely that the goals and objectives identified herein may be made a reality, and that this Plan will become an intrinsic element of Village local government, thereby unifying the efforts of the Village, its Planning, Zoning and other development review boards, as well as the local business community.