

# Economic Assessment

## Monroe, Oregon

June 10, 2019

Prepared for the City of Monroe by Constellation Planning



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# Executive Summary

This Economic Assessment presents the opportunities the City of Monroe has in achieving its “Monroe Tomorrow” community vision. Adopted in June 2018, the vision states: “Our city is a vibrant rural community welcoming opportunities for individuals, families, and local businesses to celebrate our agrarian heritage, neighborly culture, and natural environment.” It is the intention of this assessment to frame strategies and implementation steps concerning the economic development potential in Monroe within the context of regional economic and workforce trends.

The strategies outlined in this document also reflect a diversity of voices gathered through robust public engagement, offering ideas of how to reach the city’s adopted vision as well as alternative considerations. In collaboration with city staff, the planning commission, and community partners, Constellation Planning analyzed regional trends, available land, and demographics, in order to identify strategies for economic development that align with community perspectives on growth for the City of Monroe.

This document also presents the City of Monroe with a factual basis for strategic investment of resources moving forward, including a Buildable Lands Inventory (BLI), and integrates the opinion of local residents and visitors in order to guide decision-making. It lays the foundation to build a stronger narrative for the City of Monroe to use to tell its story effectively and authentically, celebrating its unique identity and local culture grounded in the current conditions of place.

# Monroe Context

## Overview of Comparative Advantages

The City of Monroe's comparative advantages have been identified to support in building strategies in this document. These are based on Constellation Planning's analysis of existing conditions in Monroe, through gathered community insight, and reflect some of the key findings from the Housing Needs Analysis (HNA) which was conducted concurrently to this assessment.

Various community engagement methods were employed to understand the perspectives of residents, visitors, city staff, planning commission, as well as regional and community partners on comparative advantages, which further highlighted the identity that the City of Monroe seeks to promote.<sup>1</sup> Constellation Planning also utilized existing planning documents, such as the Monroe Area Community Revitalization Summary (MACRO), which is described in detail in this document, as foundational to crafting community conversations and analysis.

## Comparative Advantages Unique to Monroe

Nestled in the mid-Willamette between Corvallis and Eugene along Historic Highway 99-West and the Long Tom River, the City of Monroe offers access to a multitude of attractions, services, and resources, offering opportunities for unique economic development strategies while maintaining its core identity. Celebrated community attributes include:

- Well-maintained public school system and community service infrastructure such as the Monroe Community Library;
- Recent infrastructure investments such as the Transportation Growth Management Grant with the Oregon Department of Transportation for a riverside district master plan and U.S. Army Corps of Engineer ecosystem restoration project;
- 106 acres of buildable land available for development;
- Proximity to the two major employment cities of Eugene and Corvallis, also known for their higher education services including the University of Oregon and Oregon State University;
- Access to nature including riverfront property, mountain biking trails, the nearby William L. Finley National Wildlife Refuge, and Alsea Falls Recreation Site;
- Active agricultural production including christmas tree farms, vineyards, and livestock;
- Regional historical significance celebrated locally (i.e. Monroe and Benton County Historical Museums);
- The launch of an annual festival, Vino Victory and Vintage, celebrating local producers and attracting visitors to the town;
- A growing Latino community, with emerging community networks in formation;
- Community networks to support small business development that are in formation, such as the Business Association of Monroe;

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<sup>1</sup> "Experience Monroe." (n.d.). The City of Monroe. Retrieved from <https://ci.monroe.or.us/experience-monroe/>

- Growing capacity and planning leadership as demonstrated by the comprehensive plan update underway;
- A seasonal farmers market recently created in partnership with local urban farmers.

### **Framework for Economic Development Planning in Oregon & Small Cities**

Rural areas with populations less than 10,000 face unique challenges due to limited resources, a lack of and/or aging infrastructure, narrow economic portfolios, and the increasing competition of expanding urban areas. These communities are also experiencing declining or static population growth, aging populations, and shifting demographic profiles that impact the character and potential for economic development. As these communities seek to re-establish and re-invest in their economic profiles, there is a need to understand their existing economic landscape, and to identify tactical approaches toward an aligned and credible community driven and informed economic development strategy.

### **Overview of its Disadvantages or Challenges**

In addition to its unique advantages, several challenges that Monroe faces to sustained economic vitality, and which have the potential to hinder the attainment of collective community economic development goals, were identified in the engagement process including:

- Incoherent or conflicting community identities;
- Missing services requiring residents to travel for essential care (i.e. emergency health services) and particular amenities (i.e. groceries, gasoline, and retail);
- Lack of ongoing planning capacity.

Through the Buildable Lands Inventory (BLI) and Housing Needs Analysis (HNA) conducted by Constellation Planning, several key considerations for Monroe emerged, including:

- Large amounts of vacant land despite the relatively small size of the city;
- Shortage of housing options for workers and local residents;
- Scarcity of sustainable employment opportunities within the city's urban growth boundary, requiring longer commutes to nearby towns.

# Conditions Impacting Economic Development in Monroe

## Demographics

Monroe’s forecasted population growth will impact workforce characteristics, and consequently economic development opportunities. Population attributes both reflect and are a cause of economic growth or decline, so an understanding of labor demographics can inform credible economic development strategies and appropriately define unique opportunities.

Forecasted population trends are sourced from Portland State University’s Oregon Population Forecast Program, which conducts coordinated population projections with 50-year forecasts for Oregon counties and cities on a 4-year cycle. Based on this forecast, Monroe is experiencing two demographic trends that will have implications for workforce needs:

- An aging population
- A growing Hispanic/Latino population

### Forecasted Population Trends

Monroe’s population is forecasted to grow modestly, reaching just over 700 by 2067 (Table 1). Monroe experienced an average annual growth rate of 0.3% in the previous decade, and this growth rate is expected to continue through the middle of the century. While this average annual growth rate is relatively low compared to other cities in Benton County, the expectation of consistent growth is not shared across other cities in the county.

**Table 1:** Historical and forecast populations for Benton County and its sub-areas

	Historical				Forecast			
	2000	2010	AAGR (2000- 2010)	2017	2035	2067	AAGR (2017- 2035)	AAGR (2035- 2067)
Benton County	78,153	85,579	0.9%	92,286	110,274	125,571	1.0%	0.4%
Adair Village	554	874	4.7%	928	2,026	2,255	4.4%	0.3%
Albany	5,104	6,463	2.4%	7,586	10,254	14,305	1.7%	1.0%
Corvallis	52,107	57,020	0.9%	61,449	73,164	84,495	1.0%	0.5%
Monroe	611	631	0.3%	637	668	705	0.3%	0.2%
Philomath	4,609	5,003	0.8%	5,169	7,222	8,546	1.9%	0.5%

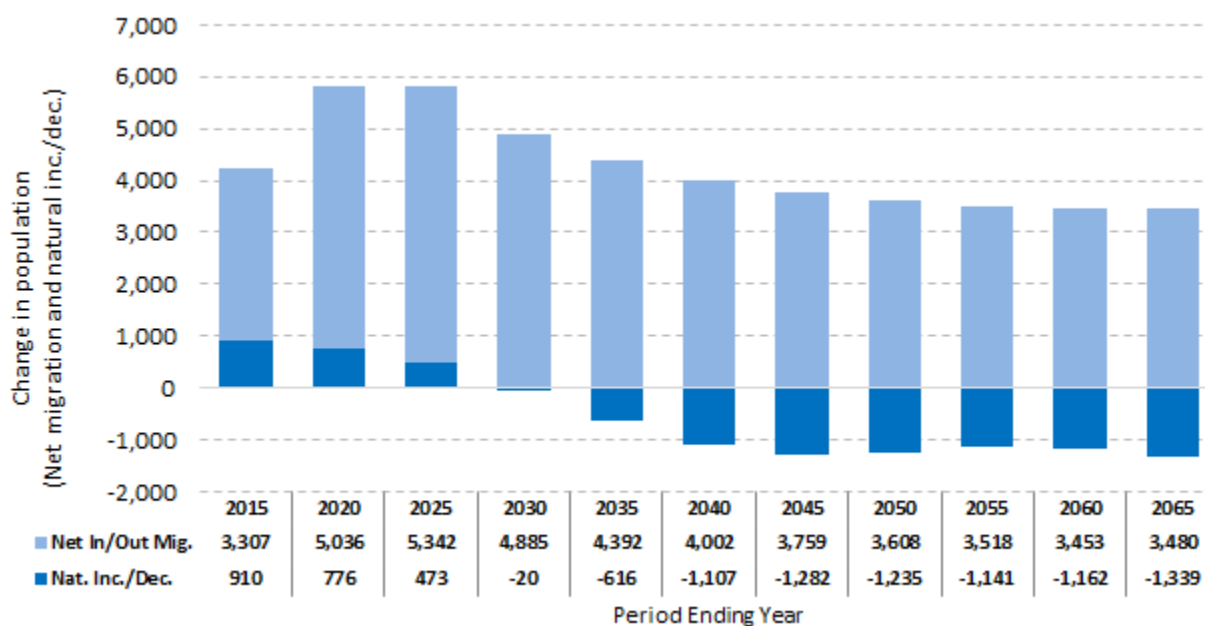


Outside UGBs	15,16	8	15,588	0.3%	16,517	16,940	15,265	0.1%	-0.3%
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Source: Census 2000, 2010. Forecast and table prepared by Population Research Center.

Growth in Benton County is expected to be fueled primarily by net in-migration, largely because an aging population will eventually result in more deaths (Figure 1). The number of deaths is forecast to outweigh the number of births by 2030, resulting in an expected natural decrease—or more deaths than births—that is forecast to continue through 2065.

**Figure 1: Components of population change, Benton County (2015-2065)**



Source: Data sourced from Population Research Center (PRC), July 1 Annual Estimates 2000-2015. Chart prepared by Population Research Center.

### Aging Population

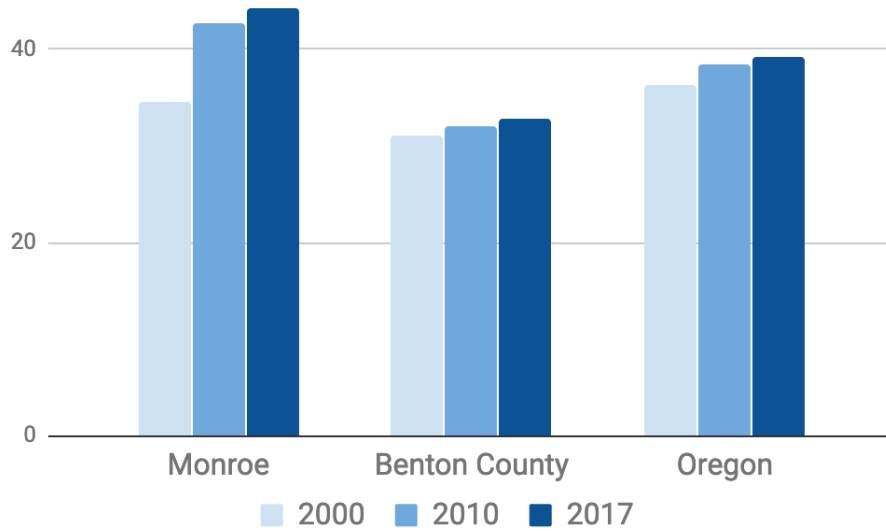
An aging population not only influences the number of deaths, but it also yields a smaller proportion of women in their childbearing years. Consequently, this may result in a slow-down or decline in births<sup>2</sup>. This labor demographic dynamic can strain those in the labor force, because the cost of maintaining a growing older adult population can fall on a workforce population that may be shrinking.

Monroe’s median age has grown from 35 in 2000 to 44 in 2017, compared to 33 for the county and 39 for the region in 2013-2017 (Figure 2). Benton County’s comparatively low median age is likely due to the presence of Oregon State University in Corvallis, which attracts a large

<sup>2</sup> “Coordinated Population Forecast, 2017 Through 2067: Benton County.” (30 June 2017). Population Research Center, Portland State University.

number of university-aged students. Still, Monroe's median age has over time exceeded that of Oregon as a whole, indicating that Monroe's population is aging relatively quickly.

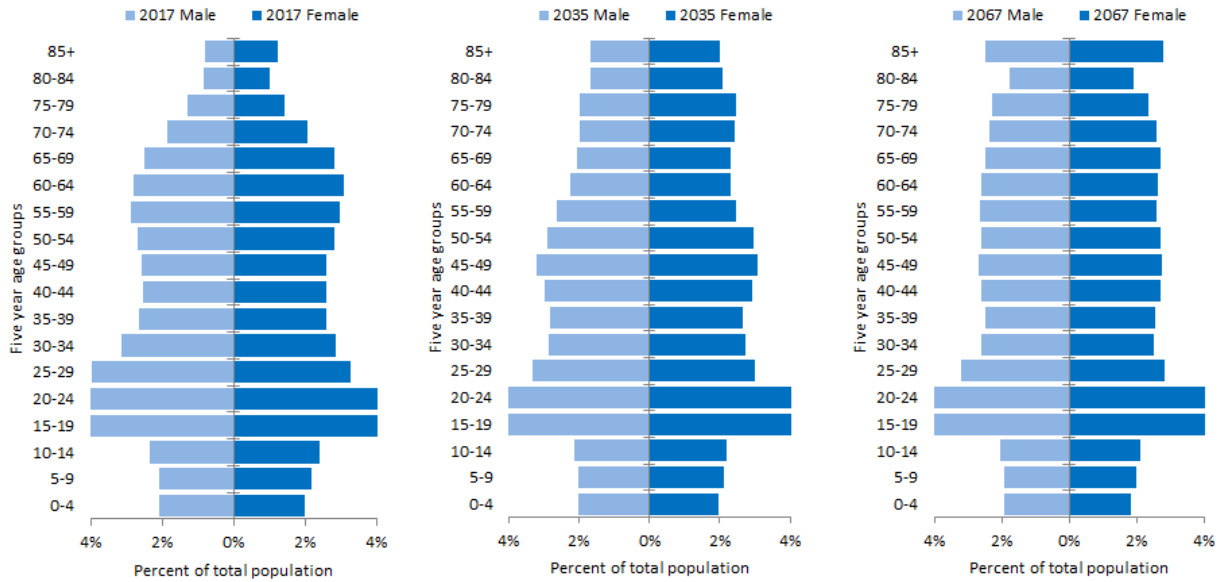
**Figure 2: Median age, Monroe, Benton County, Oregon (2000, 2010 & 2017)**



Source: Census 2000, 2010 Table P13; ACS 2013-2017 Table B01002

Further underscoring this trend, the 2017 age-sex distribution of Benton County reflects a bifurcation of the population for both sexes (Figure 3). The comparatively large share of residents ages 15 to 29 likely reflects the Oregon State University student population. Towards the top of the population pyramids, however, the large share of older residents is forecast to change over time. The county is expected to experience a more uniform population size across age groups for both sexes, though older adults cohorts will still make up a substantial share of the total county population.

**Figure 3: Population pyramids, Benton County (2017, 2035, 2067)**



Source: Forecast and charts prepared by Population Research Center.

Through 2035, the older adult cohorts are expected to grow as a share of Benton County’s total population at a comparatively faster rate than younger cohorts (Table 2). This shift in the age composition of Benton County’s residents will be reflected in Monroe’s future population, which will have implications for economic development.

**Table 2: Fastest-growing age groups, Benton County (2017-2035)**

	Growth (Absolute)	Growth (%)
Under 20 Years	2,169	12.1%
20-39 Years	2,606	14.5%
40-59 Years	5,534	30.7%
60+ Years	7,691	42.7%
<b>Total</b>	<b>18,000</b>	<b>100%</b>

Source: Forecast prepared by Population Research Center. Calculations by author.

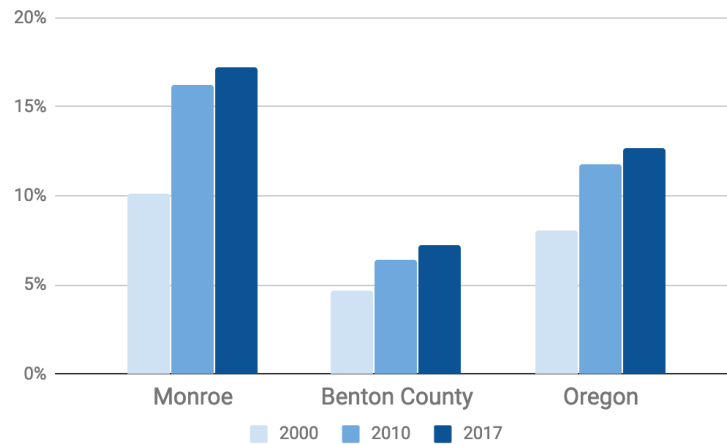
### Growing Hispanic & Latino Population

A major factor affecting the workforce characteristics and economic development opportunities in Monroe is the growing Hispanic/Latino community within the UGB. This population is increasing as a share of the total population over time, while the Non-Hispanic, White population

is decreasing. In addition, the Hispanic/Latino population is growing faster in Monroe than in Benton County and Oregon overall. This growing demographic should be considered and included in economic development strategies in Monroe.

The percent share of the Hispanic/Latino population in Monroe has risen from 10% in 2000 to 17% in 2017 (Figure 4). This share is much higher than that of both Benton County and Oregon, which is 2013-2017 is 7% and 13%, respectively.

**Figure 4: Hispanic/Latino population, Monroe, Benton County, Oregon (2000, 2010 & 2017)**



Source: 2000, 2010 Census Table P008, ACS 2013-2017 Table B03002

The relative population change for the Hispanic/Latino population from 2000 to 2010 of 50.0% underscores this trend (Table 3). Comparatively, the relative change for the Non Hispanic or Latino population is was only 7.5% during that same time period.

**Table 3: Hispanic/Latino and race, Benton County (2000 & 2010)**

Hispanic or Latino and Race	2000		2010		Absolute Change	Relative Change
	Count	%	Count	%		
Total population	78,153	100%	85,579	100%	7,426	9.5%
Hispanic or Latino	3,645	4.7%	5,467	6.4%	1,822	50.0%
Not Hispanic or Latino	74,508	95.3%	80,112	93.6%	5,604	7.5%
White alone	67,816	86.8%	71,552	83.6%	3,736	5.5%
Black or African American alone	637	0.8%	715	0.8%	78	12.2%
American Indian/Alaska Native alone	556	0.7%	493	0.6%	-63	-11.3%
Asian alone	3,493	4.5%	4,404	5.1%	911	26.1%

Native Hawaiian/Pacific Islander alone	175	0.2%	199	0.2%	24	13.7%
Some Other Race alone	173	0.2%	156	0.2%	-17	-9.8%
Two or More Races	1,658	2.1%	2,593	3.0%	935	56.4%

Source: Census 2000, 2010 Table P8

## Monroe Area Community Revitalization Summary (MACRO)

In the winter of 2016, a group of students from Oregon State University conducted a Monroe Area Community Revitalization Summary (MACRO). This summary included an analysis of the demographics, locational advantages, planning history, and case studies relevant to Monroe; presenting goals and strategies that have both been met and are in the process of being realized. Notably, great strides have been taken to align with the MACRO recommendations, yet many remain relevant considerations for the community.

MACRO worked to reconcile community perspectives with potential for growth in the Monroe region, while analyzing regional level trends. The recommendations centered on<sup>3</sup>:

1. Capacity Building
2. Communications
3. Business Development
4. Community Development and Infrastructure
5. Quality of Life
6. Community Aesthetics and Identity

## Potential Barriers

Strides have been made toward reaching the recommendations included in MACRO, yet barriers persist that limit economic development in Monroe. These include:

### Capacity Constraints

There is limited city staffing available to provide business support services, recruitment, or retainment. This also includes capacity to build and retain partnerships with economic development support networks including Travel Oregon or the Regional Accelerator & Innovation Network (RAIN). Community engagement efforts in addition to partnerships with these networks, can help bolster the Monroe identify and encourage visitation by residents of the surrounding areas. However, without sufficient capacity, community engagement efforts that are inclusive of the widespread community are limited.

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<sup>3</sup> “MACRO: Monroe Area Community Revitalization Opportunities.” (Winter 2016). Prepared for the City of Monroe by GEO 452/552, Oregon State University.

Finally, capacity constraints pose a barrier to providing culturally relevant resources such as Spanish translation services for Latino entrepreneurs, limiting their ability for participation in business development efforts and opportunities.

### **Limited Size, Geography, and Population**

The basic fact of Monroe being a small size geographically (with a corresponding small population) places constraints on the potential for economic growth. This cycle is perpetuated as many youths leave Monroe seeking economic opportunity elsewhere, recognizing these constraints and limitations. In fact, this has become a part of the narrative for Monroe - the size being both celebrated and something to be proud of as well as a barrier.

Like other small, rural communities in Oregon, housing and amenities are spread apart. Monroe currently is the closest city that offers core services for the residents of the surrounding unincorporated areas. This limits the frequency of interaction between residents outside of community gathering points such as schools, the library, or retail services which could increase collaboration.

### **Limited Diversity of Workforce Pathways**

Lacking access to an array of employment opportunities, many local residents only live in Monroe, not work there. This implies that the youth will continue to move away, in search of alternative futures.

In addition, the nearby large urban centers of Corvallis and Eugene present competition for a talented workforce to invest in Monroe, which further limits the attractiveness for businesses to establish there.

Nearby, more established small centers such as Junction City offer amenities that overshadow the need for these to grow organically within city limits as local residents depend on offered services elsewhere.

# Understanding Regional Growth Factors

Monroe is a city in the greater Benton/Linn County region where a growing shift from timber and resource-based products have given way to a market increasingly dependent on healthcare, educational services, retail trade, and manufacturing<sup>4</sup>. Because economies are inherently regional, it is important to analyze trends taking place at the bi-county level to pinpoint forces impacting Monroe’s growth potential.

## Specialization and Diversification

Measures of specialization and diversification reveal important information about a given area, including whether a region is dependent on one industry, diversified, and competitive or weak in particular areas. Because a region’s economy changes over time, temporal comparisons of these measures can reveal trends that may impact future economic growth and development.

The coefficient of specialization, as one of such measures, reflects the share of regional employment that would have to be redistributed to match the national profile. Table 4 presents the coefficient of specialization in Benton and Linn Counties.

**Table 4:** Coefficient of specialization, Benton/Linn County

Year	Coefficient
2006	0.251
2017	0.232

Source: Quarterly Workforce Indicators, US Census

For the Benton/Linn region, the coefficients of specialization suggest roughly a quarter of the regional economy is “specialized” by one industrial category. This can be interpreted to mean that economic activity in the region, while not heavily concentrated, displays some concentrated specialization. At the individual County and industry level, Benton County’s highest industrial employment category is Educational Services at 25% (ACS 2017 5 YR) and Linn County’s is Health Care & Social Assistance at 16% (ACS 2017 5 YR). We can interpret this to understand that the Benton/Linn economy would be fairly susceptible to changes in these two regions.

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<sup>4</sup> “Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy 2015-2020, Volume 1: Basic Plan.” (September 2015). Cascades West Economic Development District.

**Table 5:** Hirschman-Herfindahl Index (HHI)

Year	HHI
2006	0.044
2017	0.046

Source: Quarterly Workforce Indicators, US Census

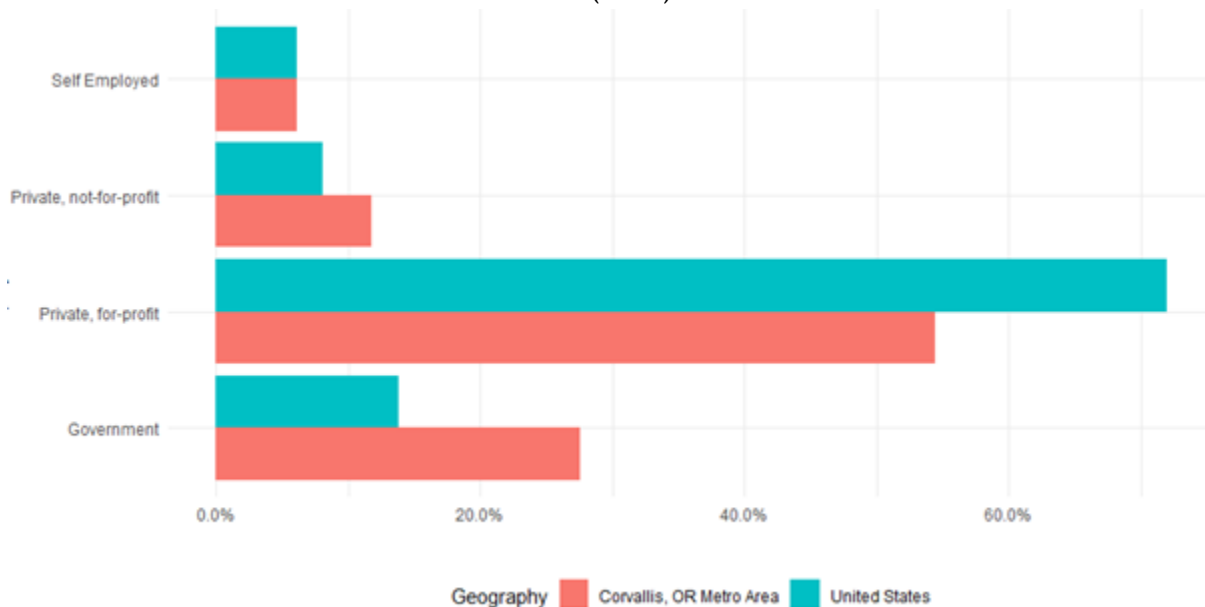
The HHI suggests that industry is diverse and considerably un-monopolized in the Benton/Linn region (Table 5). This low ratio of concentration of market actors in the region points to a regional economy that likely experiences natural market competition with many firms competing for many shares of the regional economy. When regional markets are competitive, this can also suggest lower barriers to entry in the regional economy – a potential indicator of a market appealing to small, locally owned firms and businesses.

## Occupational Trends

### Class of Worker

Though private, for-profit workers make up the largest share of the employed population of Benton County, the share is relatively small compared to that of the US as a whole (Figure 5). The County employs a relatively larger share of state government employees than the nation as a whole, likely due to the presence of Oregon State University—a state public research institution—in Corvallis.

**Figure 5:** Class of worker for civilian employed population, Benton County and United States (2017)



Source: 2017 ACS 5-year Estimates



## Occupational Employment and Wages

Trends in occupational employment and wages can provide insight into the occupational composition of a given geography, as well as how employment and wages in the given geography. Education, Training, and Library occupations, and Healthcare Practitioners and Technical occupations, are major employment sources in the region likely due, again to the presence of a large public university and healthcare provider (Table 6).

**Table 6:** Occupational employment and wages, Benton County & United States (2018)

Occupation	Benton County			MSA/US Comparison	
	Employment	Hourly Avg. Wage	Annual Avg. Wage	Location Quotient	Annual Wage Premium
<b>All Occupations</b>	<b>36,800</b>	<b>\$25.53</b>	<b>\$53,110</b>	<b>0.99</b>	<b>1.02</b>
Education, Training, and Library	5,050	\$28.86	\$60,020	2.24	1.06
Office and Administrative Support	4,590	\$18.42	\$38,320	0.82	0.98
Food Preparation and Serving Related	4,060	\$12.54	\$26,090	1.18	1.02
Sales and Related	3,090	\$15.73	\$32,710	0.83	0.78
Healthcare Practitioners and Technical	2,550	\$48.97	\$101,860	1.15	1.24
Management	1,950	\$51.03	\$106,140	1.0	0.87
Business and Financial	1,530	\$29.79	\$61,950	0.77	0.81
Production	1,430	\$20.09	\$41,790	0.61	1.07
Personal Care and Service	1,360	\$14.12	\$29,380	0.97	1.05
Building and Grounds Cleaning and Maintenance	1,330	\$14.53	\$30,220	1.17	1.01

Source: Occupational Employment Statistics Survey, BLS, May 2018.

While wages among these occupations are fairly comparable to the United States, those employed in Healthcare Practitioner and Technical occupations make much higher hourly and annual average wages in Benton County compared to the nation. Annual wage premiums, shown in Table 6, reveal that in addition to Healthcare Practitioner and Technical occupations, occupations in Education, Production, and Personal Care and Service have higher annual average wages compared to national averages.

This may suggest these industries are attractive employers, and growth in these industries could influence locational decisions and in-migration to the region. These industries may also

provide more stable employment pathways in the region, and should be considered for workforce strategy.

Wages in the region for Sales and Related occupations, Management occupations, and Business and Financial occupations are lower in the county versus the nation, indicating that jobs in these occupations are likely lower-skilled than those that may be available in other geographies. This trend could also be indicative of a lower demand for workers in this category.

Location quotients are used as measurements of relative concentration and can serve as an indicator of competitive advantage. Sectors with location quotients greater than 1.00 are ones in which the local geography is specialized, meaning that relative concentration of employment in that sector is greater than in the national economy.

Benton County exhibits a location quotient for Education, Training, and Library occupations. Location quotients are also fairly concentrated in Food Preparation and Serving Related occupations, Healthcare Practitioners and Technical occupations; and Building and Grounds Cleaning and Maintenance occupations. Of the top occupations listed in Table 6, Benton County is least concentrated in Business and Financial occupations and Production occupations.

### Legacy Industries: Logging and Agriculture

It is somewhat surprising the logging and agricultural occupations are not in the top occupations for the county, especially considering the area’s historic reputation of crop and timber production. These findings show that the area is primarily a knowledge-based, rather than natural resource-based, economy.

**Table 7:** Occupational employment and wages for farming and logging operations, Benton County & United States (2018)

Occupation	Benton County			MSA/US Comparison	
	Employment	Hourly Avg. Wage	Annual Avg. Wage	Location Quotient	Wage Premium (Annual)
<b>All Occupations</b>	<b>36,800</b>	<b>\$25.53</b>	<b>\$53,110</b>	<b>0.99</b>	<b>1.02</b>
Farming, Fishing, and Forestry	260	\$21.03	\$43,730	2.11	1.45
Logging Workers, All Other	70	\$20.77	\$43,200	74.43	1.06
Logging Equipment Operators	70	\$23.95	\$49,820	10.62	1.19
First-Line Supervisors of Farming, Fishing, and Forestry Workers	40	\$28.89	\$60,090	7.16	1.18

Source: Occupational Employment Statistics Survey, BLS, May 2018.

Though farming and logging are not top occupations for the region, wage premiums and location quotients for these occupations rank especially high in the region, which may suggest a small exclusive employment market for these industries (Table 7).

## Leading and Declining Industries

Analyzing the factors responsible for growing and declining industries in the bi-county region provides insight into what is primarily responsible for overall regional growth and decline. Shift-share analysis is a technique that provides insight into the components of economic change in a region, by separating economic change into the national growth effect, the industry mix effect, and the regional shift effect.

Economic growth for the Benton/Linn region is primarily influenced by national growth effect—or the change that would have occurred if the region grew at the same rate as the national economy (Table 8). Both the industry mix effect—or the share of growth due to concentration in particular industries that are growing faster or slower than the economy as a whole—and regional shift effect—or the share of growth attributable to unique, local competitive advantages—across all industries are negative for the region, indicating that these two components of economic change have experienced a recent decline.

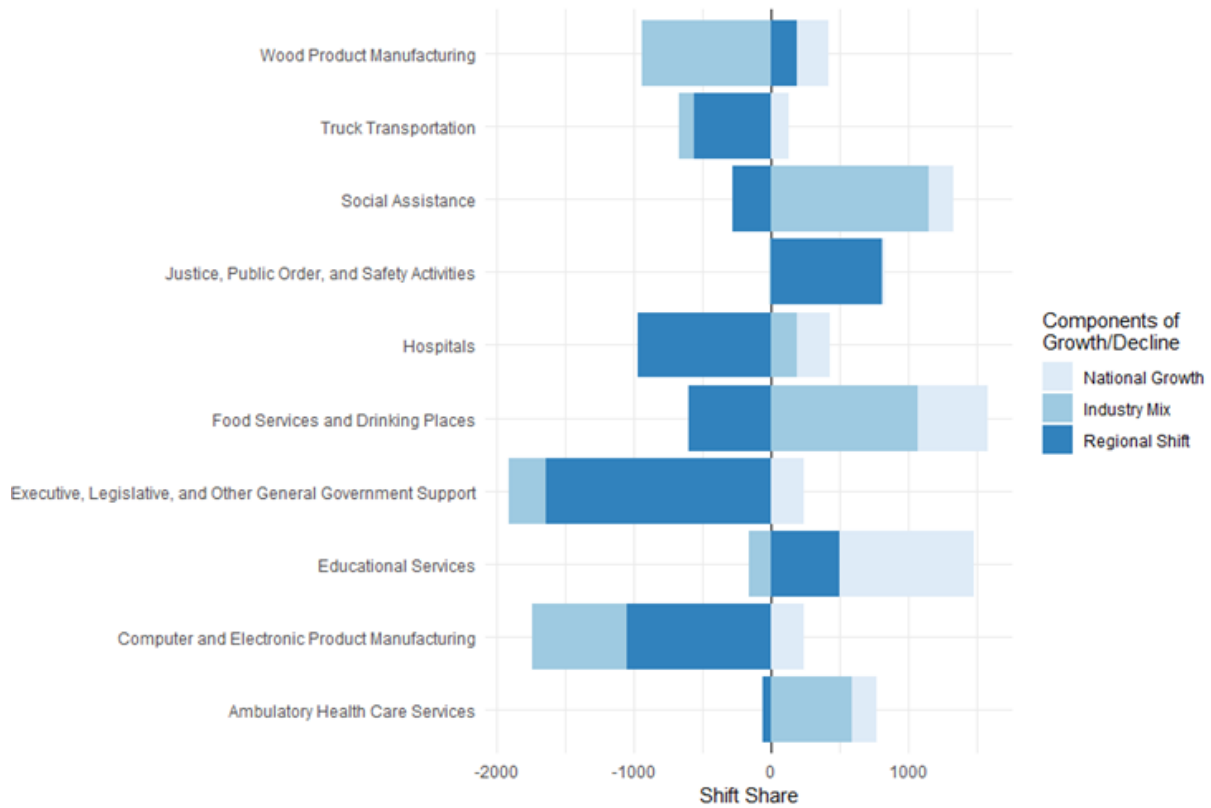
**Table 8:** Sums of shift-share components, Benton & Linn Counties (2007-2016)

Metric	Sum
National Growth	6,866.12
Industry Mix	-1,153.11
Regional Shift	-4,823.58

Source: QWI Data, Bureau of Labor Statistics; Shift-Share Calculated by Author.

Figure 6 shows shift-share analysis findings for the five industries with the greatest growth and the five industries with the greatest job losses in Benton and Linn Counties between 2007 and 2016. Table 9 shows the breakdown of shift-share components.

**Figure 6: Shift-share for fastest growing and declining industries, Benton & Linn Counties (2007-2016)**



Source: QWI Data, Bureau of Labor Statistics. Shift-share calculated by author.

**Table 9: Components of shift-share for fastest growing and declining industries, Benton & Linn Counties (2007-2016)**

<b>Industry</b>	<b>Shift-Share</b>	<b>National Growth</b>	<b>Industry Mix</b>	<b>Regional Shift</b>	<b>Rank in Growth/Decline</b>
Educational Services	1324	979.23	-156.87	501.65	1
Social Assistance	1048.75	181.43	1151.32	-284	2
Food Services and Drinking Places	986.25	510.42	1071.55	-595.72	3
Justice, Public Order, and Safety Activities	820.25	22.64	-12.75	810.36	4
Ambulatory Health Care Services	717.25	186.9	587.48	-57.13	5
Wood Product Manufacturing	-524.25	224.39	-941.11	192.47	85
Hospitals	-536.5	240.69	192.41	-969.6	86
Truck Transportation	-539.25	129.91	-106.47	-562.69	87
Computer and Electronic Product Manufacturing	-1500.25	239.31	-687.92	-1051.64	88
Executive, Legislative, and Other General Government Support	-1664.5	241.83	-265.47	-1640.86	89

Source: QWI Data, Bureau of Labor Statistics. Shift-share calculated by author.

All of the industries in Figure 6 for Benton/Linn experienced positive change as a result of the overall growth of the national economy, generally reflecting the fact that the nation's economy has grown between 2007 and 2016.

Of the five fastest growing industries, three experienced positive change as a result of the industry mix effect: 1) Social Assistance, 2) Food Services and Drinking Places, and 3) Ambulatory Health Care Services. This indicates that there is growth in those industries outside of the larger national growth rate, and because there is a level of concentration of these three industries in the region, these three industries are creating economic growth in the Benton/Linn County area.

The two remaining fastest-growing industries, Educational Services and Justice, Public Order, and Safety Activities, experienced a negative change in industry mix but a positive change in regional shift, meaning that growth in these industries can be attributed specifically to unique local characteristics.

Overall, positive change in these five fastest growing industries—and especially the two industries that showed growth due to local factors—may continue into the future. As such they

might be advantageous industries to focus future development resources, due to both their regional competitive advantage and growth potential.

Negative change experienced by four of the five industries with the greatest job losses—1) Wood Product Manufacturing, 2) Truck Transportation, 3) Computer and Electronic Product Manufacturing, and 4) Executive, Legislative, and Other General Governmental Support—is due at least in part to industry mix effect. This trend likely indicates that these industries are declining outside of larger national trends, and as a result, these industries are creating decline in the region. All of the decline in Wood Product Manufacturing, in particular, can be attributed to the industry mix effect, which is not surprising considering the hardship faced by the timber industry in recent years. This trend should be watched in future years; the demand for wood processing services is likely impacted by the demand for timber harvests, which influenced by a number of other unpredictable industries such as housing construction.

The four industries that experienced the greatest job losses—industries 2, 3, 4 mentioned above, plus Hospitals—saw a decrease in regional shift effect. This job loss indicates that the region may face some localized disadvantages that are causing job loss in these nationally-growing industries. These trends are worth further investigation, so that local factors contributing to growth can potentially be mitigating to slow further job loss.

Ultimately the findings of this shift-share analysis, and especially the decomposition of these ten quickly-changing industries in Benton and Linn Counties, can serve as the foundation for further targeted analysis of economic growth prospects that drive population, income, and economic change over time.

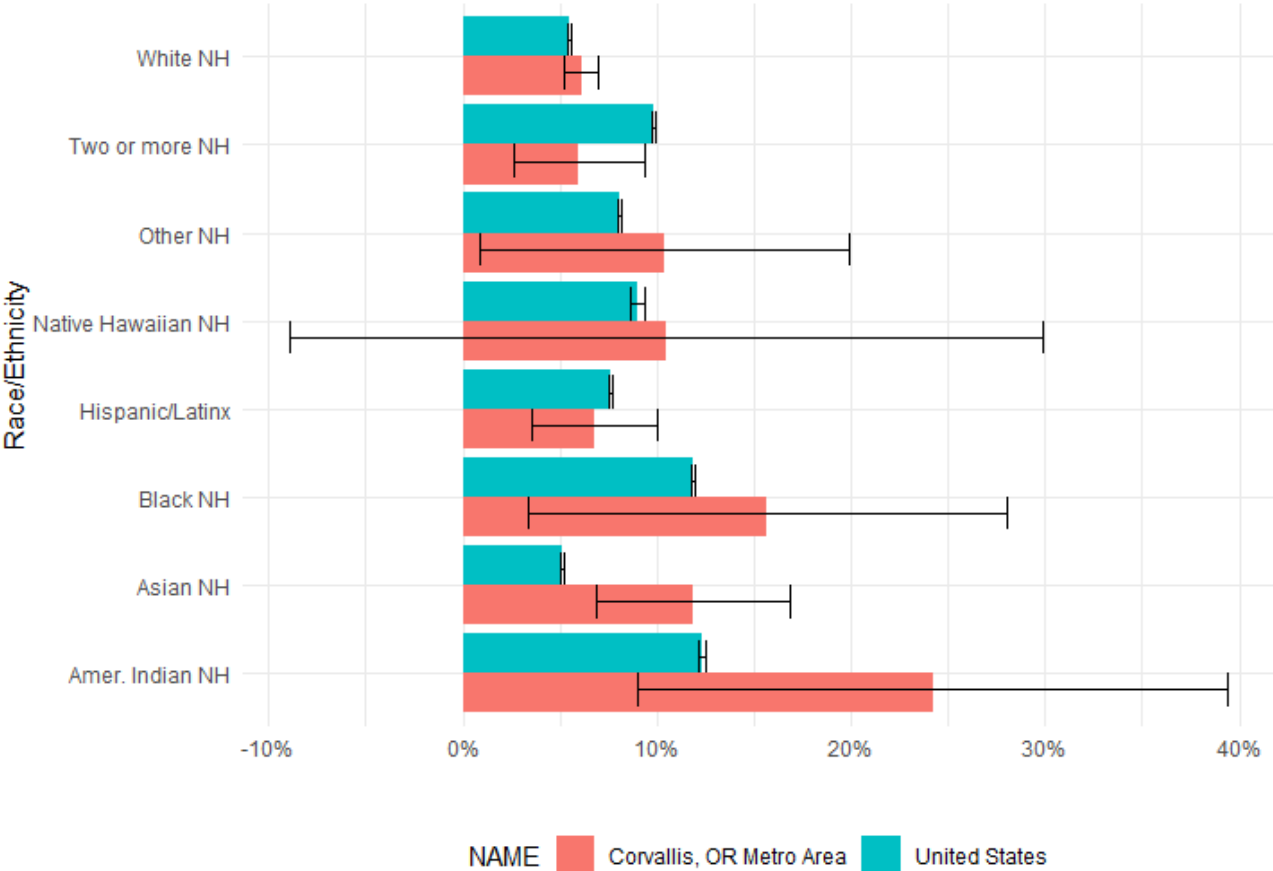
# Regional Community Stability Indicators

Understanding community stability indicators is foundational to assessing economic development opportunity. Community stability also correlates to the concept of resiliency, or the ability for a community to recover from economic shocks or stressors. While the previous section of this assessment attempted to reconcile industry and employer stability, the following section seeks to reconcile social stability by analyzing trends in unemployment, poverty indicators, and access to housing.

## Unemployment Rates

Unemployment in the Benton/Linn region reveals disparate trends in labor market participation, especially when rates are broken out across different groups (Figure 7). The cumulative unemployment rate for Benton County in 2013-2017 was 6.7%.

**Figure 7:** Unemployment by race/ethnicity, Benton County and United States (2013-2017)



Source: 2017 ACS 5-year Estimates

Unemployment is notably low among the White, Non-Hispanic populations in the county, while Black, Non-Hispanic and American Indian, Non-Hispanic populations show the highest rates of

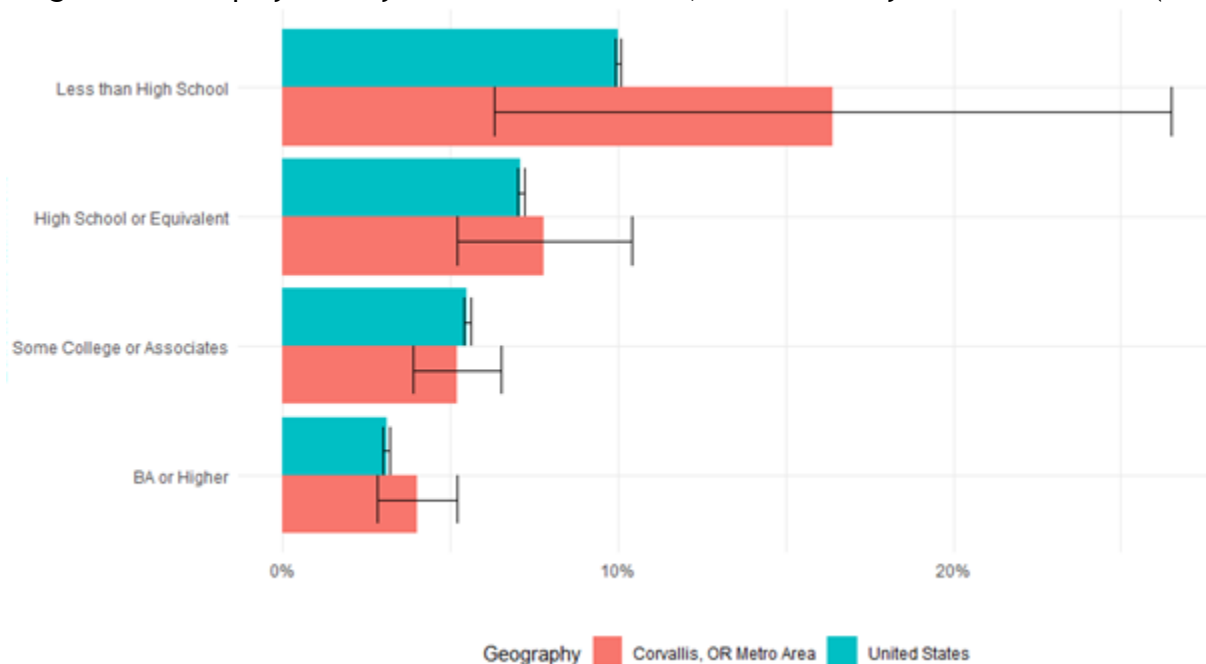
unemployment. Interestingly, the region does deviate from national trends among the Asian, Non-Hispanic population, showing especially high rates relative to the US.

Understanding how different populations experience access and tenure of employment is important for understanding which populations may not proportionally enjoy increases in employment or economic development for a region, and workforce policy interventions should be reflective of this.

## Educational Attainment

Unemployment in Benton County is lowest among those that are the most educated, and highest among those that are the least educated (Figure 8). The County shows especially high unemployment rates for those with less than a high school degree, suggesting that education, like all places, is paramount to employment opportunity. The region's particularly high unemployment rate for those not obtaining a high school degree is important for considerations when crafting economic development strategies with education institutions and partners.

**Figure 8:** Unemployment by education attainment, Benton County and United States (2017)



Source: 2017 ACS 5-year Estimates

## Social Security Income Dependence

Due to the shifting age composition of the Benton/Linn region toward an older demographic, the unique community stability indicators relevant to older persons can assess capacity for resiliency, and the strength of self-sufficiency for this vulnerable population. Income stability is a major component to self-sufficiency, and for the Benton/Linn region, 27% of persons age 65 and older are completely dependent on social security for income (Table 10). Considering the



average 2019 social security benefit is \$1,461<sup>5</sup>, this could indicate potential vulnerabilities for a significant portion of the 65+ population. Especially as individuals age, and health care, and other needs could become more expensive, it is helpful to understand that over a quarter of the bi-county region’s population over 65 are entirely dependent on a considerably low and static source of income.

**Table 10:** Share of population over 65 completely dependent on Social Security for income

	<b>Estimate</b>	<b>Total</b>	<b>Share</b>	<b>Std. Error</b>
Entirely Dependent	9,296	34,235	27.2%	0.011
Not Entirely Dependent	2,4939	34,235	72.8%	0.016

Source: 2017 ACS 5-year estimate PUMS

## Housing Stability

Housing stability can be a reflective indicator of community stability as access to housing and family-appropriate housing significantly impacts workforce stability, commute patterns, and household self-sufficiency. Cost burdens experienced by community members can provide context for assessing the ability of households to access basic resources, and furthermore, their ability to invest or divert financial resources toward economic mobility indicators such as education, transportation, and child care (Table 11).

**Table 11:** Cost burdened households by race/ethnicity, Benton/Linn County

<b>Race/Ethnicity</b>	<b>Estimate</b>	<b>Total</b>	<b>Share</b>	<b>Std. Error</b>
White / Non-Hispanic	24,511	69,452	35.3%	0.0086
Black/African American	289	518	55.8%	0.126
Native American/Alaska Native	376	638	58.9%	0.0977
Asian	827	2,057	40.2%	0.0487
Native Hawaiian/Pacific Islander	84	126	66.7%	0.235
Other	3	36	8.3%	0.0606

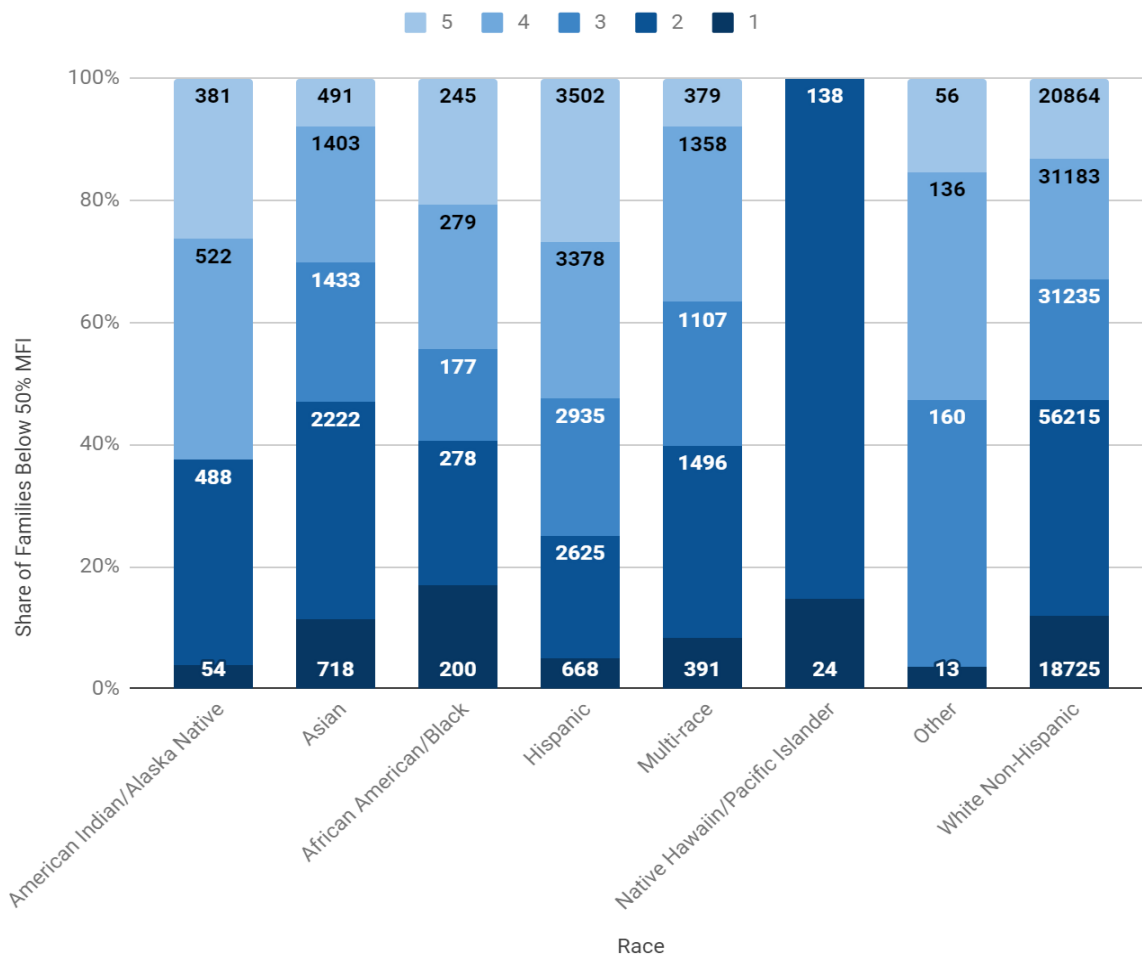
<sup>5</sup> “Fact Sheet- Social Security”. Social Security Administration. Accessed via [www.ssa.gov](http://www.ssa.gov)

Multi-race	699	1,501	46.6%	0.0622
Hispanic	1,930	3,997	48.3%	0.045

Source: 2017 ACS 5-year estimates

Assessing potential qualification for government assisted housing can be a useful tool for understanding resiliency factors. Proportions of households in the Benton/Linn region at 50% Median Family Income and below vary across race, illustrating gaps in needs experienced by different populations (Figure 9). This suggests that unequal outcomes related to increases in persons in the household across populations exist, and that familial growth is experienced differently across populations. This is an important consideration for understanding potential interventions for families participating in the local workforce.

**Figure 9:** Absolute share of families below 50% median family income by race, Benton-Linn County PUMA (2017)



Source: 2017 ACS 5-year estimates, OHCS 2018 HUD Rent Income Limits

Reader assistance: This graph shows the absolute number of families per family size per race below 50% MFI. For example, 1,433 3-person Asian families are below the 50% MFI line, about 20% of all Asian families below 50% MFI. Note that data is unavailable for some race/family size combinations.

## Factors Affecting Locational Decisions for Monroe

Where employers and households choose to locate are affected by a variety of factors, often overlapping. These include proximity, transportation, comparable markets, and workforce characteristics which all contribute to economic viability for businesses to locate and thrive in a place.

### Workforce and Business Development

While there are limited employment opportunities within Monroe's UGB, workforce development opportunities in and nearby Monroe do exist, including professional development and mentorship available for community members to support career growth and entrepreneurship. Through engagement efforts, community members identified multiple reasons why more people may choose to locate in Monroe, providing insight into potential opportunities to increase both the availability of local future employees and employers.

Opportunities to increase this likelihood include capitalizing on partnerships with nearby universities. The following universities offer satellite workforce training programs:

- Oregon State University Extension Services provides technical assistance for rural communities, including business training programs.
- Monroe School District, specifically the high school, offers students opportunities to explore different career pathways through the Work Skills program.
- Linn-Benton Community College, Small Business Development Center offers mentorship and courses on small business development. The center also hosts a series of traveling day-long workshops, one of which happens in Monroe annually.
- The nearby location of University of Oregon and Oregon State University also presents a unique opportunity for Monroe to not only connect to resources but additionally attract and retain a talented workforce.

While currently the City of Monroe does not have the capacity to offer services that provide direct access to capital, there are regional government, non-profit, and private partners that offer resources for entrepreneurs to scale and grow regionally. These include:

- Oregon Entrepreneurs Network (OEN)
- The Oregon Regional Accelerator and Innovation Network (RAIN)

Tapping into these larger regional networks and programs can serve as a leverage point for Monroe to achieve its economic vision.

## Transportation

Monroe is located directly on Highway 99-West and currently has a moderately built out street grid, meaning it is easily accessible by car. Some streets are dirt or gravel and may require paving within the comprehensive planning period. Car access remains necessary to maintain as a vast majority of Monroe residents work outside of Monroe, and most Monroe workers live outside of Monroe (Figure 10, Table 12).

**Figure 10: Ingress/egress commute flows, Monroe (2015)**



Source: Census OnTheMap (LEHD-derived) (2015)

**Table 12: Commute origin of Monroe workers (2015)**

City	Count	Share
Corvallis city, OR	33	15.8%
Eugene city, OR	16	7.7%
Albany city, OR	13	6.2%
Junction City city, OR	12	5.7%
Monroe city, OR	5	2.4%
Alpine CDP, OR	4	1.9%
Harrisburg city, OR	4	1.9%
Lebanon city, OR	3	1.4%
Portland city, OR	3	1.4%
Springfield city, OR	3	1.4%
All Other Locations	113	54.1%

Source: Census OnTheMap (LEHD-derived) (2015)

Transportation is a key concern as Monroe continues to grow. Monroe is not served by any transit agency, has minimal bicycle infrastructure, and lacks sidewalks on a large number of streets. Transportation projects tend to require significant capital which poses a challenge for future improvement projects. However, there are roundabout ways that Monroe can take to build out missing infrastructure through system development charges (SDCs) or development

requirements. There are also grant opportunities through the Oregon Department of Transportation, and other state agencies which may help finance such projects.

## Community Perspectives on Growth & Resiliency

Assessing indicators of industrial, employer, and community stability should be supplemented with an understanding of shared local perspectives on growth and community resilience, including the indicators shared by community members. In order to gather community perceptions on economic development potential, various engagement methods were utilized including activities with youth, point-intercept interactions at a local festival, facilitated discussions at a variety of ongoing community events, a focused community workshop, and one-on-one interviews with various stakeholders.

### Monroe Grade School: 8th Grade Classroom Activities

In order to incorporate youth perspectives into ongoing planning efforts, which includes economic considerations, the Constellation Planning team led a group discussion with two 8th grade classrooms at the Monroe Grade School, reaching a total of 30 students. Using maps of the BLI and the City of Monroe as a jumping off point, these conversations included brainstorming opportunities for new development and programming in Monroe. Students shared what they enjoy about living and attending school in Monroe, what amenities and services they feel Monroe is lacking, and ways that Monroe can improve overall.

#### Takeaways

- Many of the students held positive perspectives on Monroe's small, walkable size.
- There were conflicting levels of interest in expansion, with some students discussing wanting to grow by highlighting the need to "be more enjoyable", and that there is "not a lot to look at here" citing that more people are needed as it was a "ghost town" while others shared they liked it "nice and quiet."
- They expressed pride in the schools, noting the importance of the sports teams in the community.
- A participant shared that "communities all around Monroe consider themselves Monroe."
- Students emphasized the fact that many services and amenities were missing including hospitals, restaurants, gas stations, and groceries, which means that they have to travel to Junction City, for example.
- In regards to additional services or investment, entertainment and recreational amenities were the most popular responses for the students. When asked what they would like to see included in Monroe in the future including investment in parks, sports fields, movies, concerts, and shopping.
- Students also commented on opportunities for improvement that included attracting businesses, improving safety, transportation, and public spaces. One student stated, "try to appeal to businesses to move or start here for more job options."

Reflecting youth perspectives in the economic strategies employed by Monroe moving forward can strengthen potential policies related to workforce pathways. A clear desire to invest in the community was evident and presents an opportunity for Monroe to enhance its livability for current and future residents.

### **Vino, Vintage, Victory! (V3) Festival**

The V3 Festival was the first of its kind in Monroe, attracting over 1,000 visitors over the course of the day. The festival consisted of wineries in the area and artisan vendors, as well as food trucks, a band, and tables for local organizations to promote themselves and their current projects. The event brought visitors from the surrounding region to Monroe and offered a reason to stop in the town, bringing attention to Monroe and its offerings. Constellation Planning tabled at the event interacting with both residents from Monroe as well as visitors from the surrounding areas.

In an effort to gather community perspectives on economic growth, a visioning activity was created presenting three 'future economic scenarios' that were crafted in order to understand steps to reach goals as well as unanticipated feedback. The scenarios included:

- 1) The agricultural town: capitalizing on agricultural proximity as an amenity and opportunity for development; access to local wineries, artisans, crafts-makers capitalized for arts, culture, and tourism.
- 2) Industrial innovation: capitalizing on innovation and technology and reinvesting in industry; emphasizing rural small business incubator programs, redevelopment of vacant industrial sites, and forming collaborations with nearby universities.
- 3) Destination recreation: capitalizing on access to the river, mountain bike trails, countywide trail systems, nature reserves; the recognizes access to nature and parks as a driver for economic activity, both for residents and tourists.

### **Takeaways**

Festival attendees were asked to vote on which scenario they thought resonated most with Monroe. Attendees identified their place of residence by voting with three different color dot-stickers (Monroe, South Benton, and other). Over a hundred votes were collected, and results suggested that both residents and non-residents wanted to see Monroe go down the path of capitalizing on agriculture. Destination recreation came in second. Attendees also noted that a blend of agricultural and recreation would be desired. Common themes included:

- Monroe is a gateway to adventure and recreation.
- Potential to tie into wineries in the area.
- Keep the town small, rural, and maintain its country feel. "Keep the old town aesthetic" (V3 direct quote)
- As Monroe has always been an agricultural town, find ways to promote owner-operator businesses, and invest in what currently exists.

There was general disinterest in becoming a town focused on industrial reinvestment. Comments regarding this scenario noted that the proximity to Eugene and Corvallis would hinder these efforts since technological innovation is already occurring and increasing there. It was also noted that Monroe doesn't have the infrastructure to support this scenario.

## Community Roundtable

Building off of the goals from the "Monroe Tomorrow" visioning process, a community workshop was held with a devoted discussion session focused on strategizing opportunities for Monroe's economic development. In the session, participants were asked a range of questions from desired business typology to ways the entrepreneurial energy in Monroe can be captured.

### Takeaways

Some of the pinpointed opportunities for economic growth in Monroe that were shared generated several overarching themes.

A desire for smaller, locally sourced businesses:

- Community members participating readily emphasized that art, maker, craft and artisan culture is strong in Monroe.
- The desire to support and assist growth for these local businesses was expressed as a preferred method for economic growth.

A desire to support the small entrepreneur and capitalize on existing business networks:

- There was an expressed vision of the future of economic growth in Monroe being the culmination of many small businesses and home-based businesses.
- Community members saw the need for "hubs" or designated spaces that could incubate and strengthen the existing business network by allowing a space for connection and cooperation.

A desire to support and grow agricultural assets:

- Agriculture was a common theme for community members who expressed that agriculture is inextricably linked to the identity, economy, and legacy of Monroe.
- Ideas were shared about supporting small farmers and strengthening the city's resilience through food and other ecologically oriented systems.

A recognized need for improvement and investment:

- Recognizing Monroe's geographical proximity to other larger cities, ideas were expressed about how to attract a workforce who work remotely, or would be capable of working remotely, including:
  - Real estate or communal space being identified in the community for flexible workspace with telecommuting possibilities.

- Potentially utilizing rural grant opportunities for better Internet, broadband.

### **Facilitated Discussions at Amigos de Monroe Group**

A monthly meeting organized by Health Navigators from the Benton County Health Clinic in Monroe, the Amigos de Monroe is a group of Latinos residing both within the UGB as well as the surrounding areas. The group offers resources and support for the Latino community.

While the main topics covered in facilitated discussions at Amigos de Monroe group events were not focused on economic opportunity, as housing was identified as the primary concern for participants, it is important to note the feedback of the Latino community in this assessment. Participants have shared that they face the most barriers to both engagement with the city as well as the option to anchor in Monroe.

### **Takeaways**

- Touching on access to economic opportunity, participants discussed how many residents are earning less and therefore can't afford to buy a house, which would allow for people to stay in the community in the long term, expressed as a desire by some.
- Discussing opportunities for future investment locally, people shared some example ideas that included increased programming for children such as indoor playgrounds, art in the park, and sports activities.
- Recreation and transportation infrastructure was also mentioned as critical, including a party kiosk at the park that could be rented, trails, playgrounds, and parking.
- Missing amenities were emphasized, especially food services, gas stations, and health care services (specifically emergency).

With a growing Latino population, it is critical to identify the communities needs, generating inclusive avenues for people to stay and grow, which will translate into an investment back in the community, benefiting all.

### **Interview Findings**

Interviews conducted with local organizations focused on economic development both in the greater region and specifically in Monroe. Interviewees included representatives of Rural Development Initiatives, Corvallis Economic District, the Small Business Development Center at Linn-Benton Community College, and the Business Association of Monroe (BAM). Future research should continue to reach out to business owners in Monroe. These individuals brought perspectives on the economic assessment process as well as provided insight on opportunities, challenges and needs for Monroe in terms of economic development.

### **Opportunities**

- The proximity of the wine industry to Monroe makes it an economic asset. The number of wineries in the region provides an opportunity for Monroe to capitalize on. Wineries attract an affluent demographic, and the region has become acknowledged nationally



and internationally for its high-quality vineyards. This industry already has a strong following and is well-marketed.

- There is a growing percentage of individuals working remotely in Oregon. Investing in resources to allow the individuals to live and work in Monroe would be an economic advantage.
- The new brewery in town, Long Timber Brewing, will be an attraction that helps encourage passers-through to stop and spend time and dollars in Monroe.
- Close proximity to Eugene and Corvallis allows for a multitude of opportunities to access business development resources and allows residents easy access to amenities.
- The Long Tom River has been noted to be an advantage - particularly if Monroe can create public access to it.
- Surrounding area has ample mountain biking trails and hiking trails connecting through Monroe.

### Challenges

- There are many independently owned businesses in Monroe, but many are operated out of the home. This makes it difficult to identify and create a business directory for Monroe.
- Regionally, the economy is moving away from traditional agriculture which has been Monroe's primary industry in its narrow economic portfolio.
- Monroe currently lacks amenities to attract new residents such as coffee shops, a gas station, and health care.

### Needs

- Businesses in Monroe are difficult to locate because there is no business directory and there is little signage. Monroe should invest efforts into creating a business directory, and providing signage or other infrastructure to help visitors locate them.
- Investing in a co-working space can help attract remote workers and offer an option for current residents who work from home an outside office.

## Reconciling Community Perspectives and Trends

There is a spectrum of economic opportunities that Monroe is capable of capitalizing on. Community feedback highlighted three major local trends specifically, including:

### Growing agriculturally centered market

The portfolio of Oregon agriculture-based products is expansive, and the Willamette Valley remains a foundational component of the state's unique agricultural assets. As of 2017, Benton County reported 964 farming operations, distinguishing the county as the 7th largest agricultural producing county<sup>6</sup>. Harnessing growth in this market is a preferred opportunity for economic development reflected throughout the community engagement process because it will carry on the legacy of Monroe's agricultural heritage.

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<sup>6</sup> "2017 Benton County Agricultural Scorecard." Accessed via [agcensus.usda.gov](http://agcensus.usda.gov)

## Trends in outdoor recreation and tourism

The tourism industry in Oregon is a viable and strong economic driver, experiencing significant growth in the past two decades. In 2018, visitor spending in Oregon's cities comprised a \$6.5 billion market, and generated \$246 million in tax revenues<sup>7</sup>.

"Tourism in Oregon is an \$12.3 billion industry. Our industry directly generates more than 115,400 jobs in Oregon – with secondary impacts that create another 60,000 jobs."  
Travel Oregon<sup>8</sup>

Monroe has the ability to take advantage of Oregon's tourism industry, particularly through agritourism and provision of hospitality services for people visiting the Willamette Valley. An economic visioning exercise at Monroe's inaugural V3 Festival revealed a strong preference for an agritourism-based trajectory, with a secondary interest in a recreation town. Leveraging these preferences puts Monroe in prime position to experience economic growth via an already successful and prevalent tourism industry in Oregon.

## Trends in the artisanal wine and maker market

The wine industry in Oregon, and in particular the Willamette valley represents a substantial economic driver for the region. Wine production, sales, and service contribute to over 9,000 jobs, and wine-related tourism continues to show steady growth for the Oregon economy. Impacts from this multifaceted economic good produced over \$155 million in taxes and licensing fees to state and local governments in Oregon in 2016, and the industry is expected to continue to grow as Oregon Pinot Noirs in particular gain international recognition<sup>9</sup>.

Monroe is located within 11 miles of 9 different winery operations<sup>10</sup>, and commercial development—including a new brewery with a wine tasting component and a seasonal wine retailer—are prominent components of Monroe's local business community. The wine economy was a growth opportunity that community members expressed interest in at various engagement events. Sentiments shared included how the wine industry is a compatible industry for the city's historical agriculturally based economy, as well as how capable the industry is for producing tourism and visitors.

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<sup>7</sup> "Creating Meaningful Jobs: Driving Economic Growth." (April 2019) Travel Oregon. Accessed via <http://industry.traveloregon.com/content/uploads/2019/04/44853-TO-Meaningful-Jobs.pdf>

<sup>8</sup> Travel Oregon. Accessed via <http://industry.traveloregon.com/>

<sup>9</sup> "The Economic Impact of the Wine and Wine Grape Industries on the Oregon Economy." (2017). Full Glass Research, Oregon Wine Board. Accessed via [industry.oregonwine.org](http://industry.oregonwine.org)

<sup>10</sup> The Willamette Valley Visitors Association Map Explorer Accessed via [www.oregonwinecountry.org](http://www.oregonwinecountry.org)

## Understanding the Supply of Land

As part of a Buildable Lands Inventory (BLI), cities are required to consider available land for employment uses. Monroe has two employment zones: Commercial (“C”), which broadly covers retail uses, and Manufacturing (“M”), which broadly covers industrial uses.

### Available Employment Lands

Monroe has 22.5 buildable acres for employment lands based on current zoning (Table 13), which can be broken down further by zoning type (Table 14).

**Table 13: Overall buildable employment lands, Monroe UGB (2019)**

Development Status	# of Parcels	Gross Acreage	Net Buildable Acres
Vacant	24	28.1	21.5
Partially Vacant	2	1.0	1.0
Utilized	39	11.0	0.0
Omitted	11	3.0	0.0
<b>Total</b>	<b>76</b>	<b>43.2</b>	<b>22.5</b>

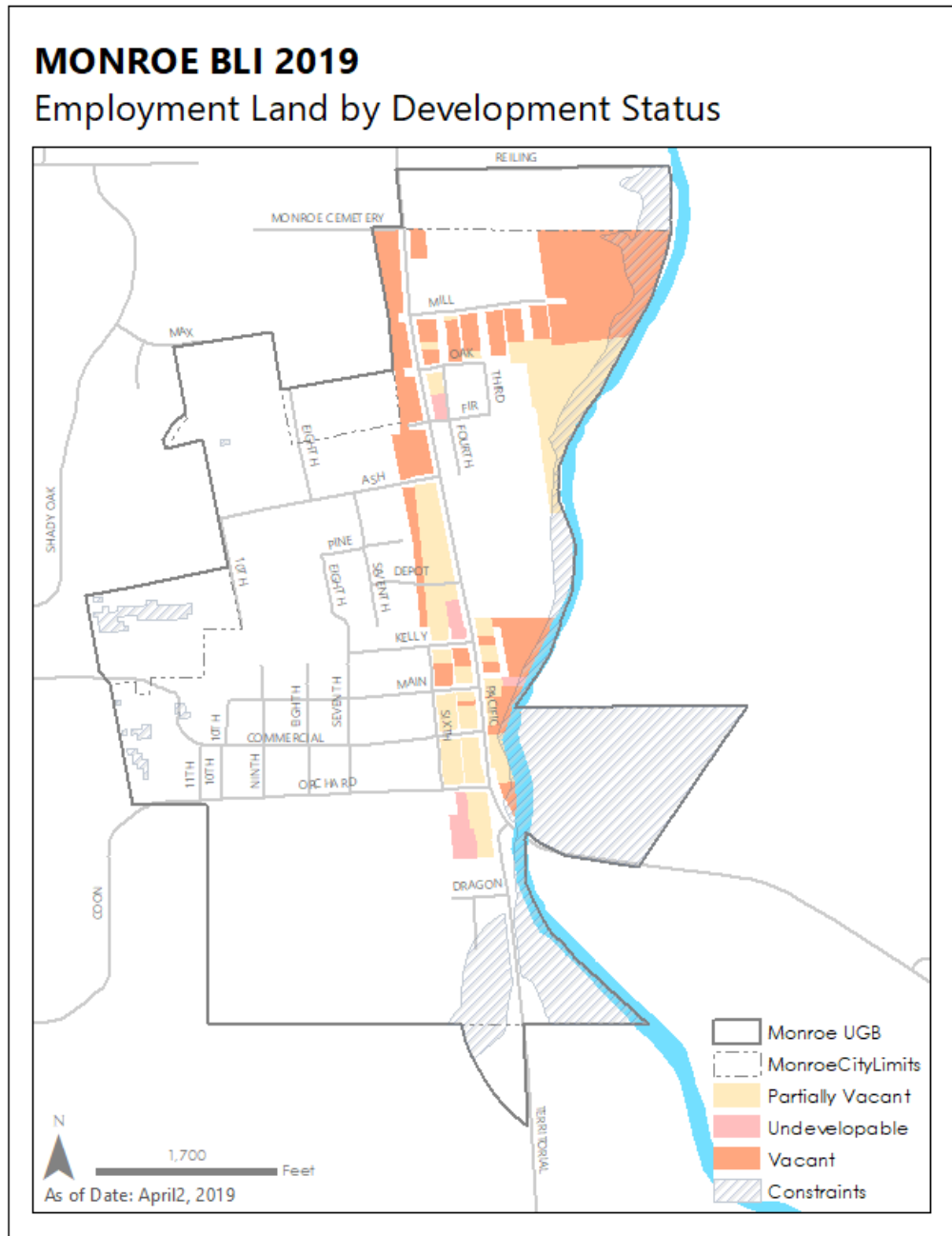
Of the 62.7 acres of publicly-zoned land in Monroe, 36.6 are owned by the Benton County School District. The vast majority of the rest are owned by utility companies and the City of Monroe, but are presently committed to city parks.

**Table 14: Buildable employment lands by zoning type, Monroe UGB (2019)**

Zoning Designation	Parcels	Designations (acres)						
		Gross	Utilized	Undevelopable	Constrained	Omitted	Mismatched	Buildable
C	61	19.9	5.5	0	2.4	3.0	3.5	5.6
M	18	23.3	2.1	0	4.1	0.1	0.0	17.0

Almost the entirety of buildable employment land is along Highway 99-West, the Long Tom River, and near the old brickyard property (Figure 11). Generally, industrially-zoned land is in the northern part of the city, where larger lots are available.

Figure 11: Employment land by development status, Monroe (2019)



## Reconciling Supply and Demand

Even as Monroe runs low on employment land, it has a large excess of residential land that can be rezoned for commercial uses. In addition, the introduction of more mixed-use development may enable new commercial opportunities.

Of 395 total parcels, there are 265 property owners (67 percent). The City of Monroe does not own a significant portion of vacant or partially vacant land. Ownership along most corridors is varied, and generally no property owners possess an overwhelmingly large number of parcels. The lone exception is in the northeast section of the city, where two property owners possess a vast majority of land (around 30 acres).

The main commercial street of Monroe is Highway 99-West, and it is categorized by a variety of uses despite being zoned largely commercial. This includes a number of surface parking lots combined with plentiful on-street parking, as well as numerous vacant lots near the Long Tom River. In general, parcels near the river are not significantly constrained.

Given the large number of individual property owners, the City may need to rely on policy over negotiating with individuals for future development, particularly along Highway 99-West. The brickyard property is a notable exception to this, having over 30 acres of vacant land. This section of land may benefit from a subdivision or master planning process to be more deliberate about how it develops over the coming years.

There are also a significant number of vacant industrially-zoned parcels, particularly in the north portion of the city, which may be more effectively utilized for commercial uses, given the excess of industrial land and uncertain public feedback on an industrially-focused future.

# Economic Development Strategies and Opportunities for Implementation

The recommended goals and strategies are based on the priorities and interests identified through robust community engagement. The implementation opportunities corresponding with each of these strategies build off the MACRO study as well as existing programming and partnerships. They incorporate best practices that have been investigated by Constellation Planning as viable opportunities for Monroe.

## Goals

- **Capacity** building for sustained planning leadership;
- **Opportunities** for economic and community development, in order to anchor the community identity with businesses that reflect its vision;
- **Strengthening** community identity by outlining what makes Monroe unique.

## Strategies

### Strategy #1: Support and promote workforce and education based opportunities

Many Monroviaans express interest in investing in their local community or starting a business, but face barriers to do so. This requires the development of targeted partnership opportunities with regional workforce training providers to address a spectrum of needs for potential or emerging entrepreneurs.

#### Implementation Opportunities

- Expand partnerships with local universities, community colleges, and incubator/accelerator programs, generating stronger pathways for local residents to access educational resources and capital.
  - These partnerships can be fostered within local school networks, such as Monroe High School work skills training program.
  - They can also be in combination with fundamental educational programming such as GED or English classes, recognizing non-traditional pathways to entrepreneurship for local residents.
- Use these partnerships to leverage access to the capital ecosystem.
- Support workforce needs like affordable housing by providing ample land for mixed-use, manufactured, accessory dwelling, and multi-family housing.

## **Strategy #2: Support individual businesses by investing in emerging networks**

A strong entrepreneurial spirit exists in Monroe. Physical proximity fosters collaboration and innovation. It has been identified that a physical community hub could be an opportunity to anchor leadership.

### **Implementation Opportunities**

- Utilize existing real estate to incubate and accelerate small businesses through ongoing programming. This can include an investment in a community hub which can serve as a focal point for resource sharing and collaboration, offering programming such as Design Competitions, Startup Week, and Pitch Festivals. Support the existing and emerging businesses by generating awareness via communications and marketing - both locally creating new avenues as with BAM as well as strengthening linkages to larger regional entities.
- Foster economic development leadership. Mentorship programs can provide increased access to networks both locally and regionally, tapping into surrounding employment centers. Existing businesses in Monroe can mentor emerging ones, which also builds leadership.

## **Strategy #3: Investigate zoning overlay and special zones that encourage microenterprise economic development opportunities**

Land use decisions are the localized and specific place-based tools used to harness regional economic trends and potential. Utilize zoning and development code opportunities to strategically focus economic development opportunities for investments.

### **Implementation Opportunities**

- Update the current zoning code to include a targeted area for growth.
- Research Enterprise Zones models, which provide tax abatements for businesses to grow and place funds to be reinvested into workforce development programming.

## **Strategy #4: Develop a cohesive city-wide marketing strategy to attract investment, promote tourism, and build collective impact opportunities**

Unifying the above strategies will allow for a more coherent community identity and a corresponding story that can not only achieve the vision, but also provide motivation for local residents to coalesce their energy around shared economic development goals. By packaging the vision of various stakeholders into a stronger narrative, Monroe can solicit the type of investment the community has identified it wants, as well as growing, attracting, and retaining local talent. This has the opportunity to support the growth of the missing amenities that many stakeholders identified.

## Implementation Opportunities

- Work with local groups and businesses to develop a marketing pitch deck that capitalizes on Monroe's locational advantages which will increase the potential to attract business, as well as promote recreational and tourism economic activities.
- Marketing strategies should be targeted toward attracting complementary businesses identified in the vision such as those focused on local production, artisan and craft makers, and agri-related business.

## Strategy #5: Prepare for and seek to acquire economic development resources

Development projects require capital, and there are numerous funding and capacity building opportunities for Monroe to tap into.

## Implementation Opportunities

- Investigate federal, state, and philanthropic funding available to Monroe.
  - Federal grants are offered by USDA-Rural Development (USDA-RD) including: Business Development Grants, and Economic Development Loans and Grants. USDA-RD also offers programs to support infrastructure projects such as those improving broadband in rural areas through the Community Connect program.
  - State grants for business development are offered by Business Oregon through their Community Development Block Grant program. The Council of Governments' also provides support through the Economic Development Business Lending program. State grants also support community development projects including Safe Routes to School grants offered by Oregon Department of Transportation.
  - Foundational grants offered by The Ford Family Foundation and Oregon Community Foundation support community development projects. These types of grants can support projects that include building development and land acquisition.
- Support volunteer and donation fueled resources. There are potential and interest in efforts to invest in the town's future. There are multiple volunteer committees existing in Monroe focused on community development including:
  - Beautification Committee
  - Vision & Revitalization Committee
  - Farmers Market Committee
  - Business Association of Monroe