



STAFF REPORT

DATE:	June 1, 2021
NATURE OF APPLICATION:	Adoption of the Riverside District Master Plan Overlay
APPLICANT:	City of Monroe
PROPERTY LOCATION:	Centered on Oregon Highway 99W and Territorial Highway
APPLICABLE CRITERIA:	Section (s) 2.700, 3.200(2), 3.510
STAFF CONTACT:	Patrick Depa, Associate Planner
FILE NUMBER:	PC2021-01

NATURE OF THE PROCEEDING

To consider the adoption of the Riverside District Master Plan (RDMP) to replace the current Highway Corridor Overlay District. It is recognized that the city's zoning districts, its development code and the comprehensive plan may require amendments to implement the RDMP.

The boundary of the Riverside District is centered on Oregon Highway 99W and Territorial Highway, extending from those roadways east to the Urban Growth Boundary (UGB) and approximately one block west inside City's Urban Growth Boundary (see attached map). The study area included the banks of the Long Tom River within the Monroe UGB as well as all areas of the Monroe UGB east of the Long Tom River, including the Monroe City Park.

The RDMP establishes a plan for improvement and future development inside the Riverside District. The RDMP makes recommendations for later consideration that identifies policies, plan designations, development regulations, and public improvement projects needed to improve conditions for businesses, residents, visitors, and the environment in the Riverside District.

COMMENTS

No public comments have been received at the time the staff report was written. Public Works, Police and Fire did not submit any comments.

BACKGROUND

In 2018 the City of Monroe received a grant from the Oregon Department of Transportation to create a Riverside District Master Plan project ("Project"). After selecting a consultant and assembling a Project Advisory Committee (PAC) the City and the consultant held a Project Kickoff Meeting in February 2020. The PAC consists of the City Administrator, Community

Development Director, business owners, appointed and elected officials, a DLCD representative, a County Planner, professionals and citizens. The PAC's responsibilities were to meet and review Project deliverables and provide guidance on the development of Project deliverables. As part of the kick off meeting the Project Manager presented an overview of City's goals for the Project and provided a tour of key sites in the Project Study Area.

Monroe was a city of 625 in 2017 according to Portland State University population numbers but has grown significantly due to the addition of fifty-five (55) new homes in the Red Hills Subdivision. Monroe serves as a commercial and civic center for the surrounding rural area with a population of roughly 3,000. Monroe is bisected by Oregon Highway 99 West (OR 99W) and Territorial Highway, which run primarily north-south direction through Monroe. Most commercial development in Monroe is located on or within one block of OR 99W, as well as Monroe High School, Monroe Community Library, and Monroe Grade School on Territorial Highway. The Long Tom River runs roughly parallel to Territorial Highway and OR 99W in Monroe.

The City has seen recent commercial development within the Project boundaries consisting of a Dollar General convenience store, the Long Timber Brewery, an artist studio and the recent purchase of the old Wilber-Ellis property. The old brick yard property in the northeast part of the city is partially inside the Project area and has received on going interest in developing its twenty-seven (27) acre property as new single-family homes.

All land within the Monroe UGB is located to the west of the Long Tom River - except City Park. City Park is Monroe's largest park and features an unimproved trail system along the eastern banks of the Long Tom River, a ball field, a dog park, and a picnic structure. OR 99W crosses the Long Tom River at the south end of Monroe's commercial district, and provides the only access to the Monroe City Park located east of the Long Tom River.

The Riverside District area currently lacks a cohesive land use pattern and transportation conditions necessary to support the culture of health, safety, and physical activity that the community values. Monroe is physically divided by OR 99W and is separated from its City Park by the Long Tom River. High traffic volumes on OR 99W can discourage walking and biking, particularly for trips that require crossing the street. Narrow sidewalks and shoulders on the OR 99W bridge over the Long Tom River are a significant barrier to walking and biking to Monroe City Park east of the river.

While the Long Tom River runs parallel in close proximity to OR 99W, there is no access to the riverside from OR 99W in Monroe. The Long Tom River has been heavily impacted over the past century because of channelization and the allowance of improper land uses adjacent to the river both inside and outside Monroe. While the City seeks to encourage development in Monroe and improve access to the Long Tom River, this must be balanced

with the potential for development and activity along the river to further its ability to serve as a recreational, economic, and aesthetic resource.

The development pattern in the Riverside District is inconsistent, with a mix of historic structures, typical commercial strip development, and underutilized or vacant parcels. This combination of a lack of multi-modal transportation options, fragmented land uses, lack of access to community assets, and minimal environmental protection leave the area severely underperforming from an economic, environmental, and community well-being perspective.

The absence of a master plan that addresses the land use, transportation, economic, and environmental issues hinder Monroe's ability to guide future development appropriately. The need comes at a time when Monroe is experiencing near unprecedented commercial and residential development and anticipates it will continue.

DECISION CRITERIA/FINDING OF FACT

SECTION 2.700 AMENDMENTS

Decision Criteria. All requests for an amendment to the text, zoning map or comprehensive plan map of this Code may be permitted upon authorization by the City Council in accordance with following findings:

- (a) The proposed amendment is consistent with the intent of the Comprehensive Plan.**

CITIZEN INVOLVEMENT – GOALS & POLICIES

INCLUSION – Goal 1

The City of Monroe works to create an atmosphere of respect and cultivates community diversity and wisdom through inclusive, meaningful, and innovative community participation.

POLICY CI 1.3 Engage Community Organizations. Engage existing community organizations, such as civic groups, non-profits, community centers, health centers, and school districts to extend participation and engagement.

POLICY CI 1.4 Accommodate for Diverse Participation. Utilize community involvement best practices that accommodate for the diverse needs of citizens such as physical ability limitations, language barriers, and time constraints when appropriate and financially reasonable.

ENGAGEMENT – Goal 2

The City of Monroe implements and maintains a comprehensive citizen involvement program to promote outreach and engagement in land use and transportation-related projects, decisions, and initiatives.

POLICY CI 2.1 Citizen Awareness. Post notices of meetings of the City Council, Planning Commission, and Committees at City Hall, community centers (i.e. Monroe Community Library and Legion Hall), local businesses, and on the City website.

POLICY CI 2.2 Social Media. Develop and adopt a social media POLICY that utilizes social media platforms to enhance citizen involvement methods and techniques.

POLICY CI 2.4 Emerging Technologies. Utilize emerging technologies, methods, and techniques to enhance and extend public involvement.

LAND USE – GOALS & POLICIES

BALANCE OF LAND USES – Goal 1

Strive for an attractive, functional, economically vital community with a balance of different types of land uses in Monroe.

POLICY LU 1.4 Regional Coordination. Land use needs and classifications will be considered with a regional view and changes to codes and policies will be prepared in a way that ensures continuity with adjoining cities and the region as a whole.

EFFICIENT USE OF LAND – Goal 2

Ensure that property planned for residential, commercial, mixed, and industrial uses is used efficiently and that land is developed following principles of sustainable development.

POLICY LU 2.2 Mixed Use. Encourage the vertical and horizontal mixing of different land-use types in selected areas of the city where compatible uses can be designed to reduce the overall need for parking, create vibrant urban areas, create more business opportunities, and achieve better places to live.

DOWNTOWN MONROE – Goal 3

Ensure that property planned for residential, commercial, mixed, and industrial uses is used efficiently and that land is developed following principles of sustainable development.

POLICY LU 3.1 Develop Historic Downtown. Encourage development in the Downtown area, which includes the Historic Downtown Area, along Highway 99 West, former site of the Wilhelm Flour Mill (1890s) and location of Steamboat “Gypsy” loading flour on the Long Tom River (1900), Monroe State Bank (1911), Wilhelm House (1905), and the Applegate Trail area (1846), as a quality place for shopping, living, working, cultural and recreational activities, and social interaction. Provide walkways for pedestrian and bicycle traffic,

preserve views of the Long Tom River, in the Riverside District, and preserve the natural amenities of the area.

POLICY LU 3.4 Develop Commercial Space. Encourage the development of a strong and healthy Historic Downtown retail, office, cultural, and residential center in Monroe.

POLICY LU 3.5 Community Plans. Implement Monroe’s Vision Plan – Monroe Tomorrow and **Monroe Riverside District Master Plan** (currently in development – 2019) with regulations and programs that support compatible and complementary mixed uses, including housing, hospitality services, restaurants, civic and institutional, offices, some types of industrial and retail uses, all at a relatively concentrated density.

POLICY LU 3.6 Connectivity. Improve connectivity for vehicles, bicycles, and pedestrians within Monroe and the South Benton community through master plans such as the Connectivity Plan and **Riverside District master plan** to improve links between residential areas and the community beyond.

POLICY LU 3.7 Riverside District. Develop the Riverside District area through the implementation of the Riverside District Master Plan (currently in development – 2019) to achieve a balance between the natural and built environments, including wildlife habitat, multi-family residential development, office and retail, and family recreation.

POLICY LU 3.8 Mixed Use Redevelopment. Monitor the redevelopment within the Downtown area and investigate the need to require retail and service uses on the first floor and limit residential and office uses to the second floor and above.

NATURAL RESOURCES AND OPEN SPACES – GOALS & POLICIES

ENVIRONMENTAL QUALITY – Goal 1

Protect and enhance the function, quality, and diversity of the City’s natural resources and ecosystems.

POLICY NR 1.3 Design with Nature. Support site development and design practices that incorporate and promote natural ecosystem elements, including native trees and vegetation, minimize effects on natural resources, and avoid the degradation or loss of wetland, watershed, and ecosystems.

REGULATORY FRAMEWORK – Goal 3

Establish a sensible, balanced regulatory framework that protects natural resources while supporting development.

POLICY NR 3.2 Protect the Environment while Supporting Economic Development. Facilitate concurrent strategies to balance the protection and improvement of both ecosystem health and economic development.

PARKS AND RECREATION FACILITIES - GOALS AND POLICIES

CONNECTIVITY – Goal 2

Create a citywide network of safe, interconnected recreation opportunities.

POLICY PRF 2.1 Active Transportation Network. Create a network of interconnected trails and on street bicycle and pedestrian facilities to extend the active transportation network, expand recreation opportunities, and to increase connectivity between recreation opportunities.

POLICY PRF 2.2 Greenways, Trails, and Waterway Recreation. Pursue the expansion of greenways, trails, and waterway recreation through and around the City to serve both as recreation resources and viable transportation alternatives. As new development, redevelopment, or other opportunities occur, pursue the creation of public access easements.

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT – GOALS & POLICIES

BUSINESS GROWTH – Goal 2

Connect to the existing businesses and future potential to enhance the Riverside District.

POLICY ED 2.2 Downtown Core Investment. Encourage investment in the Downtown Commercial Core, such as walkable amenities: gas station, coffee shops, restaurants, and grocery stores.

POLICY ED 2.3 **Support Riverside District Activities.** Support project activities in the Riverside District such as Monroe’s Vino, Vintage, & Victory Wine Festival, the Holiday Light Parade, the 1135 Continuing Authorities Project with the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers and more to come.

POLICY ED 2.4 Drive Beautification Efforts. Plan appealing, people-friendly streetscapes that make shopping downtown an enjoyable experience and accommodate public gathering for both residents and visitors.

POLICY ED 2.5 Promote Local Tourism. Encourage tourism activities through the promotion of recreational and historic sites such as the South Benton Community Museum, Findley Wildlife Refuge, Alsea Falls Recreation Site, multi-modal trails, and tourist related businesses.

INCLUSIVITY – Goal 4

Plan, develop, and enhance the urban built environment to meet the needs of community members of all ages, abilities, cultures, and incomes.

POLICY ED 4.2 Mix of Uses and Innovative Design. Advance a mix of uses and innovative architectural and site designs that integrate access to daily needs into neighborhoods and yield an active public realm that enriches the lives and health of the whole community.

HOUSING – GOALS & POLICIES

ECONOMICALLY SUSTAINABLE – Goal 1

Provide and maintain a balanced supply of affordable housing at prices and rents that meet the needs of current and future households. Also, ensure that the City has an adequate housing supply with enough land to support the community's growth.

POLICY HG 1.3 Multi-Dwelling Ownership. Support homeownership opportunities in multi-dwelling housing by encouraging the building of apartments and condominiums.

POLICY HG 1.4 Affordable Housing Compatibility. Encourage the development of a variety of housing to meet the needs of a diverse community.

POLICY HG 1.6 Fair Housing. Employ strategies that support the Fair Housing Act.

DENSITY – Goal 4

Establish minimum and maximum densities for all areas designated for residential or mixed-use on the Comprehensive Plan Map.

POLICY HG 4.2 Densities. Establish minimum and maximum densities for all areas designated for residential or mixed-use on the Comprehensive Plan Map, resulting in the building of at least 80 percent of the maximum number of dwelling units per net residential acre permitted by the applicable residential zone.

POLICY HG 4.4 High Density Residential Development. High-density residential development, not to exceed 18 units per net acre (not including right-of-ways), will be dispersed throughout the city **including around the central commercial area** or in areas with good access to collector or arterial streets.

LIVABILITY – Goal 5

Provide for the planning, development, and preservation of a variety of housing types and lot sizes.

POLICY HG 5.2 Livability Amenities. Integrate amenities such as enhanced open space, community gardens, community gathering spaces, and multi-use paths for connectivity in single-family, multi-family, and mixed-use development.

POLICY HG 5.3 Walk and Bike to Daily Needs. Support development of new retail and personal services in conjunction with housing in locations that are compatible with the surrounding area, including commercial areas that allow for ease of pedestrian and bicycling access, and enhance the ability of people to easily meet their daily needs.

POLICY HG 5.6 Compatible Development Patterns. Establish development patterns that combine residential with other compatible uses in mixed-use areas as appropriate, **such as downtown, Riverside District, etc.**

POLICY HG 5.15 Open Space Provisions. Foster the provision of land for open space and recreation for new and existing residents when developing housing.

TRANSPORTATION – GOALS & POLICIES

SAFETY – Goal 1

Develop and maintain a transportation system that seeks to eliminate fatalities and serious injuries.

POLICY TR 1.1 Safety for All Modes. Develop and maintain the transportation system to enable users of all modes, including pedestrians, cyclists, drivers, and those taking transit, to be equally safe and comfortable.

SYSTEM DESIGN – Goal 4

Plan and implement a City transportation system that accommodates current and future needs.

POLICY TR 4.5 Right-of-Way Protection. Identify and protect right-of-way for potential public use necessary to accommodate future needs and demands.

POLICY TR 4.6 Parking Supply. Establish and maintain context sensitive standards to ensure appropriate parking capacity for all modes, while also considering parking management for the efficient use of resources.

URBANIZATION – GOALS & POLICIES

GROWTH – Goal 1

Accommodate long-range population and employment growth within the City of Monroe's Urban Growth Boundary (UGB).

POLICY UR 1.2 Facilitate Infill. Facilitate the infill development of vacant or underutilized land consistent with City Comprehensive Plan land use designations.

POLICY UR 1.3 Compact, Mixed-Use Development in Centers and Along Highway 99W Corridor. Focus higher density, pedestrian-oriented, and transit-supportive mixed-use development near Transit Stations, the Riverside District, schools and neighborhood centers, and along the Highway 99W corridor.

POLICY UR 1.5 Targeted Revitalization. Prioritize investment in and revitalization of areas where private investment patterns are not accomplishing this objective.

POLICY UR 1.6 Range of Commercial Lot Sizes. Manage commercial (employment) land to provide a range of lot sizes that accommodate a variety of employment types.

- (b) There is a public need for the proposed amendment to comply with changing conditions or new laws.**

Increased development pressure and sale of significant properties in the riverside district represent conditions that require an integrated master plan to achieve the public interest of cohesive design, infrastructure, and public amenities. There are no new laws that necessitates the adoption of the Riverside District Mater Plan.

- (c) The amendment will not unduly adversely impact adjacent areas or the land use plan of the City.**

The adoption of the Riverside District Master Plan will have a positive impact on addressing land use decisions more accurately and will compliment and improve the connections with residential zoned property, the Long Tom River and the city as a whole.

- (d) The amendment will not have an undue adverse environmental impact.**

The Master Plan and future uses will adhere to all applicable environmental policies and goals. Development will occur in a matter to assure no adverse impacts will be occurred. None of the proposed amendments change any environmental policies or goals.

- (e) The amendment will not have an undue adverse impact on public facilities.**

The proposed Riverside District Master Plan will have no undue adverse impact on public facilities. The Master Plan includes a “Public Improvement Plan” that details the needed improvements to City facilities (streets, sewer, water, and stormwater) as development in the Riverside District occurs over time. Further engineering of improvements will be addressed at the time of development.

- (f) The amendment will not have an undue adverse impact on transportation.**

All the recommendations in the RDMP address data and areas of development that are specific to transportation goals outlined to accommodate future growth. The Riverside District Master Plan was developed to reflect the goals and policies adopted in the City’s Transportation System Plan (TSP), and includes a Transportation Analysis that has been conducted in partnership with ODOT.

- (g) The amendment will not have an undue adverse impact on the economy of the area.**

The proposed Riverside District Master Plan will not have an undue adverse effect on the City as it encourages commercial and residential growth, tourism, recreation and sustainability. The Comprehensive Plan’s overall goal for the City is to encourage economic development within the City that is compatible with maintaining the area’s livability. All of the suggested amendments will impact the city’s economy in a positive manner by addressing current housing needs through its recommendation for mix-use development and for allowing the city to make better informed land use decisions on its commercial and residential zoned lands.

- (h) The amendment is consistent with the intent of the applicable Statewide Planning Goals.**

Adopting a Riverside District Master Plan (RDMP) has a significant focus on the connection for the residents to public use supports **Goal 8 – Recreation**. This Long Tom River runs directly adjacent to the center of town and will act as a destination place for recreation and future city events.

The preliminary population projection from Portland State University, the state’s official population researchers, reports that Monroe’s population will significantly increase in the next 20 years. The RDMP concurs with the increased need for housing options and provides choices and alternatives that will accommodate the new growth which supports **Goal 10 - Housing**.

Comprehensive plans and policies shall contribute to a stable and healthy economy in all regions of a City. Such plans shall be based on inventories of areas suitable for increased economic growth and activity after taking into consideration the conditions of the current economic base. The RDMP evaluated the opportunity that exists inside the specific overlay area and provides a blueprint of options and ideas to increase the City of Monroe's economic base which supports **Goal 9 – Economic Development**.

CONCLUSION

The findings presented in the decision criteria support the adoption of the Riverside District Master Plan (RDMP) amendment to the Comprehensive Plan and Map by replacing the Highway Corridor Overlay District with the RDMP overlay. The amendment will have no adverse impact to the city and is in concert with the goals and policies needed to anticipate growth in a proactive fashion.

The proposed Comprehensive Map change will assist the City of Monroe in meeting its goal to create a vibrant city center and accommodate the future needs of the residents.

RECOMMENDED MOTION

“I move to adopt the findings outlined in the “Decision Criteria” as presented in the staff report (or modified by the Planning Commission) and recommend approval to City Council to adopt the Riverside District Master Plan.