PLAN FORWARD
A Comprehensive Plan for Monroe County

MEETING MINUTES
Steering Committee Kick-Off
August 11, 2021, 3:00-4:00 p.m.

Location
CityPlace, Multipurpose Room
Virtual (Zoom)

Attendees

Adam J. Bello, County Executive
Ana Liss, County Planning Director

Steering Committee Members
Kyle Banks
Simeon Banister
Enid Cardinal
Alex Castro
Scott Copey
Kathleen Graupman
Dr. Seanelle Hawkins
Kerry Ivers
Dr. Katrina Smith Kormacher
Andrea Lista
Gay Mills
Dr. Shaun Nelms

Dave Seeley
Jamie Saunders
Julie Tedesco

County Planning + Consultants
Pat Gooch, County Planning
Yixuan Lin, County Planning
Rochelle Bell, County Planning
Jane Nicholson, EDR
Rose Keady, EDR
Aileen Maguire Meyer, C&S
Alys Mann, Alys Mann Consulting
Peter Fairweather, Fairweather Consulting
Kavon Travis, Phu Concepts

Introductions

Jane Nicholson, EDR, started the meeting at 3:03 pm and welcomed Monroe County Executive, Adam J. Bello, Monroe County Director of Planning and Development, Ana Liss, and the Steering Committee attendees to the Comprehensive Plan kick-off meeting, and thanked them for their participation in the process. Ana Liss and County Executive Bello each gave a brief welcome and introduction to the meeting. County Executive Bello provided a brief background on the importance of establishing a unified vision through a community-driven process, and how the plan will serve as a roadmap for decision-making moving forward. He further unveiled the "Plan Forward" concept which will serve as the identity for the project.

Jane followed up with an overview of the meeting agenda and introduction to the consultant team which consists of EDR, C&S, Fairweather Consulting, Alys Mann Consulting, and Phu Concepts. She then asked each Steering Committee member to introduce themselves, the organization they represent, and to provide a brief background on previous planning experiences and what they are looking forward to most about the County planning process.

Developing a County Comprehensive Plan

Jane presented the key components of developing a County Comprehensive Plan. She explained the difference between municipal planning at the County and local scale, noting that towns and villages leverage Comprehensive Plans to establish the regulatory landscape. County plans differ in that they are broad in context and serve to

address topics of inter-community interest and their associated countywide impacts. The County Comprehensive Plan will provide a framework for encouraging and facilitating public-private partnerships, and providing support to local municipalities to achieve a shared vision.

Jane further presented the framework for the planning document, including the vision and guiding principles, theme development, goals and policies, action items, and an implementation strategy that will outline key timeframes for achieving the identified goals. Jane reviewed a brief list of potential topics that may be explored during the process. She noted that these are common themes that arise in County planning projects, and that they would be identified and refined through the process.

Jane explained that a robust community engagement effort is required to create a unified County vision and a critical component of theme development. A Community Engagement Plan is being developed that outline targeted meetings, events, and activities throughout the life of the plan, including:

- Steering Committee meetings
- Stakeholder meetings comprised of local businesses, institutions and organizations
- Public Meetings & Workshops
- Online engagement, including a project website, e-news, and social media channels that can be shared with the Steering Committee's networks
- Unique and fun community engagement activities such as pop-up events at the farmers market, and
- Municipal circuit meetings

Jane noted that the role of the Steering Committee is to help champion public outreach efforts and to advocate for the planning process. She helped Steering Committee members understand their role as an advisory board, and that they are encouraged and welcome to participate in all engagement opportunities. They will further be asked to inform the planning process by providing local knowledge, reviewing draft documents, and ultimately making a final recommendation to the County Legislature.

Jane concluded the presentation with an overview of the project schedule, expected Steering Committee meeting dates, and an overview of the website and branding effort.

Challenges and Opportunities

The meeting concluded with a "big picture" discussion to encourage Steering Committee members to start thinking about the challenges and opportunities in the County. Each Steering Committee member was asked to identify three challenges facing Monroe County and three opportunities in Monroe County, and transcribe their answers on sticky notes or in the virtual chat box. The notes were organized into thematic areas and presented by Aileen Maguire Meyer, C&S. A summary of the responses follows below:

Challenges

Cooperation & Collaboration

+ Few incentives/support for regional collaboration
+ Limited tools for shared governance/coordination
+ Competing municipal priorities and needs
+ Urban/suburban divide
+ Lack of coordination among municipalities
+ Too focused on individual projects

- + Is the city of Rochester represented here w/ the steering committee? If not = challenge
- + Silos

Health

- + Health and wellbeing
- + Trauma
- + Pandemic
- + Health disparities

COVID-19 Complications

- + Limitations on gathering as a group
- + Difficulties in masked meetings and hybrid meetings

Infrastructure

- + Limited transit
- + Staying attractive to industry
- + Aging infrastructure

Resources

- + Equal resources for schools regardless of school district
- + Limited funds/resources
- + Limited time to invest on everyone
- + Sprawl
- + Poverty / Concentrated Poverty / Extreme Poverty (5)
- + Disinvestment in urbanized areas
- + Plagued by violence

Employment

- + Unemployment
- + Lack of employment opportunities
- + Lack of strategic workforce readiness programs like apprenticeships in high school
- + Skills gap workforce

Opportunities

Natural Environment

- + Natural environment
- + Water / Waterfronts
- + Waterway access
- + Industrial infrastructure
- + Natural and built environment – attraction/features
- + Green economy

Education

- + Universities (2)
- + Higher education and keeping grads here
- + College students

Sense of Community

- + Sense of community
- + Many community-focus organizations
- + Large amount of able leaders and organizations

- Many organizations with leaders that are willing to help – the County needs to coordinate and organize efforts
- Strong community minded developers
- Public-nonprofit partnerships
- Great nonprofit outreach opportunities
- Innovative spirit
- Innovation

Uniting through equity

- Shared problem solving (for similar issues)
- RASE report – racial and structural equity report
- Opportunity to create and utilize plans as roadmaps to design outcomes based on current innovations and best practices

Other

- Tourism
- Vibrant deaf community
- Cultural amenities
- Workforce development

County Executive Bello noted that the majority of the opportunities on the board **align themselves** with the stated challenges – this provides a clear direction for problem-solving.

The meeting adjourned at 4:00 p.m.