

1. Welcome

Members of the Monroe County Planning Department and Consultant Team, EDR, welcomed members to the second Steering Committee (SC) meeting for the development of the Comprehensive Plan. Each member formally introduced themselves and the organization they represent.

2. Schedule Updates

Jane Nicholson, EDR, began the presentation with updates relative to the overall project timeline. She explained efforts currently underway include the website development and communications strategy, an upcoming presentation to the Council of Governments (October), branding and marketing material, and topic development approach which will be the primary focus of this meeting. The project team is in the process of planning for Municipal Focus Groups in November, as well as identifying pop-up events to attend as part of the Public Awareness Campaign.

Steering Committee feedback:

- + Should include an awareness campaign – What is a County Comp Plan? Define consistency. There was also interested from the Steering Committee to see examples of County level plans and best practices.
- + [Municipal Focus Groups] East/West/City – may not be the right approach – intentionally mix discussions

3. Topic Development

Sarah Krisch, EDR, guided SC members through the process of starting to develop topics as an organizing framework to develop the plan. She explained that the project team started with an exhaustive list of topics that are of current interest or relevance to the County. This initial list was organized by People, Nature, and Places. The project team worked to organize the topics based on feedback from the SC, MCPD, C.E. Bello transition plan, and other ongoing or emerging County studies.

Steering Committee feedback:

- + Need to be aspirational in early stages – positive and forward thinking. Plan should also be realistic and attainable.
- + How do we engage communities to ensure inclusive communities? What do we anchor it to? History of place.
- + Plan should address what County can implement but also what other stakeholders can implement
- + Use “non-planner” language or provide sub-descriptions/tangible examples
- + Note other ongoing County studies and initiatives:
 - o Active Transportation Plan
 - o Climate Action Plan
 - o Farmland Protection Plan
 - o Look back at 1979 Plan and how it changed where we are today – County Planning

This resulted in the identification of three “Guiding Elements” – lenses through which to consider and assess all topics, goals, and strategies within the plan. Guiding Elements include Equity and Social Justice, Resilient Landscapes, and Healthy People and Communities.

Steering Committee feedback:

- + Quality of life addresses current state not equity and social justice
- + Need to address arts and culture
- + Suggest forward highlighting historical perspective – how did we get here, e.g. Houston/Dallas plan
- + Nomenclature matters – be clear but not decisive – “climate change”
- + Resilient landscape should be defined as not just the built environment

The draft topics were presented as follows:

1. Regional Collaboration – This topic focuses on intergovernmental cooperation and facilitation, expanding and facilitating public-private partnerships, and recognizing opportunities in the higher education system inclusive of post-graduate retention, workforce development, and town-gown relations.

Steering Committee feedback:

- + Human Services (County largest provider) in connected systems, and County response to public health crises
- + Disparity of resources in public schools
- + PPP to include non-profits
- + Add human services delivery
- + Tourism and investment > public health and response
- + City core = strong region
- + Disparity in resources

2. Connected Systems – This topic is defined as the physical infrastructure in our communities, including high-capacity transmission techniques, public utilities, and transportation (highways, roads, connectivity).

Steering Committee feedback:

- + Add distributed energy generation and waste/recycling
- + Acknowledge utilities is tied to land use
- + Energy infrastructure

3. Intentional Environments – This topic is focused on how we intentionally manage limited critical and sensitive resources, with particular attention on parks, trails, and open space, waterfronts, protecting and restoring natural lands, urban nature, water quality, and stewardship.

Steering Committee feedback:

- + Define; natural spaces with built overlay
 - + Design natural spaces
 - + Equitable access to open space and amenities
 - + Built environment
4. Integrated Food Systems – The process of how we support, access, and localize our food system. This topic is inclusive of agriculture and working lands, public market / regional market, food access, agritourism, and agricultural business, technology, and innovation.

Steering Committee feedback:

- + Health
 - + Industry, workforce
5. Strong Centers and Destinations – This topic is inclusive of community quality of life (cultural and historic resources, and community safety), and the design of community (development and land use patterns, housing market, and thriving local economies).

Steering Committee feedback:

- + Targeted focus on land use; built environment and amenities
- + Land use; targeted goals
- + Tourism and economic development
- + Individual wealth creation
- + Economic growth and investment and innovation hubs
- + Aging in place

4. Next Steps

The project team is working to develop the inventory and analysis (existing conditions and trends), and municipal profiles. The Municipal Focus Groups will be held in November, and will be the focus of the next SC meeting which will be held on December 2nd, 2021.