

SECTION I THE VISION

***"It is vision that inspires,
motivates, and transforms desire
into action."***

A vision is a mental image that empowers individuals and communities by providing the foresight to guide events.

This section provides an overview of the process used to create the Municipality's vision for the future. This process consisted of three steps: (1) Issue Identification, assessing the Municipality's strengths and weaknesses; (2) Creation of a Vision Statement for the future; and (3) Development of broad goals that will guide the implementation of a plan that reflects that Vision Statement.

STEP 1 - ISSUE IDENTIFICATION: "STRENGTHS AND WEAKNESSES"

This step involved the assessment and organization of the existing conditions information and the results of the public information gathering processes¹ contained in the Environmental Scan by strengths and weaknesses.

The organization of this information in the form of strengths and weaknesses afforded the Community the opportunity to objectively see their assets, liabilities and challenges for the future.

The strengths and weaknesses are organized by specific areas of concern: land use; housing and neighborhood quality; community facilities and services; transportation; economic development; and the environment.

¹Public information gathering included key person surveys and two community meetings. Appendix II provides a summary of both community meetings.



The Old Stone Church, strongly identified with the Municipality of Monroeville, provides residents with a community asset and a link to the past.

It is important to note that the classification of key points by strengths and weaknesses is neither positive nor negative. This process is neutral and only shows areas upon which to build such as supporting and promoting an added level of cooperation between the citizen volunteers and the Municipality; and areas to improve, such as street signage and pedestrian access.

As indicated in Table 2, the Municipality of Monroeville has numerous assets as well as challenges for the future. Assets include: Regional Park; educational facilities; home rule government; community pride; school district; fire department; and the large number of active and devoted citizens.

Likewise, there are weaknesses that will challenge the Municipality of Monroeville in the future, including maintaining neighborhood quality; reducing traffic congestion; developing neighborhood and community park facilities; increasing senior housing options; attracting young families to the area; and providing pedestrian linkages.

Also identified was the lack of identity for the Municipality of Monroeville, no recognizable town center and major roadway corridors that are a mishmash of eras, uses and building.

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Table 2

SUMMARY OF STRENGTHS AND WEAKNESSES	
A. LAND USE	
<u>Strengths:</u>	<u>Weaknesses:</u>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Good business/residential mix • Rural and urban development pattern <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Large research institutions - Regional park - Regional shopping malls - Multi-story office complexes - High-low density residential • Strong commercial base • Initiation of the Streetscape Program for Business Route 22. • Managed residential conversions • Landscaping and sidewalks along most new commercial and office development in the Municipality • Enactment of Stormwater Management Ordinance in 1992 • Enactment of Land Disturbance Ordinance of 1995 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Coordination of regulations impacting: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Land use - Zoning - Subdivision - Building • Zoning Ordinance amended innumerable times • Zoning Ordinance in need of comprehensive rewrite: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Lack of clarity of procedural and review requirements. - Density controls in commercial districts. - Improvements needed for parking, landscaping and sidewalk requirements. - Revise home occupational procedures and criteria. • Limited recognition that different types of housing (single family, multi-family and low income) have different problems and needs • Enhancement and reuse of older "strip" commercial areas, including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Rehabilitation - Infill Development - Adaptive reuse - Landscaping • No sense of place, no identifiable town center; Route 22 is a mish mash of different development eras. • Monroeville is difficult to get to during peak shopping events with the congestion at the Turnpike, Parkway and Route 22. • Monroeville is losing its competitive edge as the areas premier shopping destination to emerging areas in Homestead, Robinson Township, Pine Township and others. • Sign clutter in commercial areas. • Limited sidewalk connections to promote pedestrian activities between strip commercial centers and other business uses.

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Table 2 (Continued)

A. LAND USE (Continued)	
	<p style="text-align: center;"><u>Weaknesses:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Presence of "strip commercial" suburban type sprawl development • Limited landscaping in older commercial areas • Numerous curb-cuts and lack of defined ingress/egress areas in many of the older commercial areas • Land dedication and fees-in-lieu of ordinance is not in compliance with the Municipalities Planning Code (MPC). • Many of the undeveloped vacant parcels of land have physical development constraints: • DEP (Department of Environmental Protection) has no schedule for addressing of the 10 mining problem sites in the Municipality <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Perception by residents that Municipality is over-commercialized
B. HOUSING AND NEIGHBORHOOD QUALITY	
<p style="text-align: center;"><u>Strengths:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Many defined and established neighborhoods • Predominately sound housing stock • Population mix/cultural diversity • Family and community pride • Stable population base • Median household income above county, state and national average • Diverse mix of housing types • Wide range of housing opportunities • Numerous neighborhood parks in older areas of Municipality, 1960 era (1st, 2nd, 3rd 4th, 5th, 6th and 7th Wards) • Residents can walk to neighborhood parks • Recreation Department sponsors activities for the community. 	<p style="text-align: center;"><u>Weaknesses:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Limited availability of affordable housing opportunities attractive to young families • Limited senior housing options in the older established neighborhoods • Need preservation of residential areas <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Application and maintenance of buffer zones - Restrictions around commercial uses • Lack of policy governing housing mix • Commercial parking in older residential areas • Lack of sidewalks in residential areas • Some small scattered pockets of deteriorating dwelling units located in the south section of the Municipality of Monroeville

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Table 2 (Continued)

C. COMMUNITY FACILITIES AND SERVICES	
<u>Strengths:</u>	<u>Weaknesses:</u>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A new municipal building. • Home Rule Municipality • Form of Government and Department Heads within the governmental structure • Many active community organizations • Available infrastructure & community services • Diversity of recreation facilities and activities • Good open space, park facilities & programs • Good Fire Department, Police and EMS • Numerous educational, recreational, and cultural amenities • Citizens are satisfied with garbage collection • Strong support for library & senior center • Number of persons 65 years and over increasing/number of persons 18 years and under decreasing • 1000± acres of park, conservation and recreation land • Numerous recreation programs • Quality of service good versus level of staffing • Good school system. • Allegheny County Greenway Project has identified areas in the Municipality of Monroeville • Municipality is proactive in bringing playground equipment in line with consumer safety products guidelines • Parks are incrementally being brought into compliance with ADA requirements (working toward that end) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lack of community recreation center. • Ability to maintain the level of public services - need growth in tax base • Limited sidewalks in residential areas and pedestrian linkages to services and commercial areas • School taxes are too high for facilities available • No meeting rooms for community groups • No youth/teen center • Number of persons 65 years and over increasing/number of persons 18 years and under decreasing • Lack a true community park with pool, adequate fields, amphitheater, etc. • Age of school buildings - many structures are 30 - 40 years old • Need upgrading of school technical support (computers), more focus on more challenging requirements of school staff and students • School needs to address the changes in the community and related family issues • Lack of activities for teens • Residents perceive taxes as high (especially school taxes)

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Table 2 (Continued)

D. TRANSPORTATION	
<p style="text-align: center;"><u>Strengths:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Good regional location and access (except to downtown), including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - PA Turnpike - I-376 - Route 22 • Rail transportation access for commercial and industrial users • Good access to downtown during non-peak travel time (access to cultural and social events) 	<p style="text-align: center;"><u>Weaknesses:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Traffic congestion due in part based upon commuting patterns. • Lack of local government-formed task force that will lobby local legislators, state and federal agencies for highway improvement projects. • Lack of full access to the proposed Monroeville-Fayette Expressway. • Poor peak hour access to downtown. • Lack of conveniently located Park 'n Ride Lots. • Located near to Pittsburgh International Airport • Competitive edge is affected by lack of adequate transportation access and improvements relative to new development. • Lack of traffic control improvements • Traffic congestion in general • Parkway exits onto Route 22. • Turnpike exits onto Route 22. • Lack of coordinating and improvement of traffic signals • The enforcement of the speed limit • Lack of improvements to Route 22 and Route 48 intersection <p>Lack of public transportation</p>
E. ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT	
<p style="text-align: center;"><u>Strengths:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Locational regional transportation access • Quality shopping • High-tech facilities located in Municipality • Increased availability of major/quality health care • Solid and secure tax base • Home of many major business headquarters. 	<p style="text-align: center;"><u>Weaknesses:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Application of the business privilege tax • Strict codes, perceived as "not business friendly" • Effect of transportation issues in economic development • Reuse and enhancement of older commercial structures/sites • No Formal Agency to market vacant structures in the core business district

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Table 2 (Continued)

F. ROUTE 22 BUSINESS CORRIDOR*	
<p style="text-align: center;"><u>Strengths:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Self- contained “Edge City” with a mix of uses and services • Major commercial center in Pennsylvania • Accessibility – convergence of major highways • Good government services • Civic center, hospitals and schools • Good neighborhoods • Monroeville Mall and Expomart • Transit service to Pittsburgh • Coordinated traffic signal system and parallel road network. • Commercial properties are renewed 	<p style="text-align: center;"><u>Weaknesses:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Route 22 is Ugly, no consistent character or quality • Traffic Congestion on weekends • Too many curb cuts on Route 22 • Proliferation of ugly signs and poles • No Downtown that is identified as the center of Monroeville where people can work, walk, eat and shop • Underutilized properties and vacant buildings • Lack of trees, landscaping and parks • Bridge over Route 22 near the municipal building is a detriment to future widening projects on Route 22 • Inconsistent sidewalks and dangerous street crossings • Left turns across three lanes of traffic from continuous left turn lane
<p><i>*Information gathered from Public Meetings and Three Day Charrette by Urban Design Associates</i></p>	
G. ENVIRONMENT	
<p style="text-align: center;"><u>Strengths:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Unique and interesting development pattern - ridgelines and valleys • Large concentrated areas of woodlands • Turtle Creek • Magnificent views and vistas 	<p style="text-align: center;"><u>Weaknesses:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Past development in steep sloped areas • Storm water control • Growing deer population (problem on roads and backyards) • Mine acid leaching into surface water • Soil limitations: Landslide prone & unstable • Past mining activities have left 10 "mining problem areas" listed by the DEP Inventory for AML Program (Abandoned Mine Lands)

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STEP 2- THE VISION STATEMENT

After the strengths and weaknesses had been identified, our next step involved the citizens group utilizing consensus building to create a Vision Statement. Set in the future, the participants develop a Vision Statement to foretell their aspirations for the community in which they live, what they want it to look like physically, socially and environmentally. Figure 1 presents the Monroeville's Vision for the Future.

This Vision Statement will be very important in the development of the Comprehensive Plan. It establishes an agreed upon point of reference, as the elements of the Comprehensive Plan are being composed, this common image will assist in determining the goals, objectives and strategies the Municipality of Monroeville must adopt to guide this Vision Statement to fruition in the years to come.

Figure 1

MUNICIPALITY OF MONROEVILLE'S VISION FOR THE FUTURE

****“The Municipality of Monroeville is a thriving, proactive and cohesive community with unique and viable neighborhoods that access an extensive system of safe and well-maintained neighborhood parks, active recreation areas and linear open space trails that meander through the Municipality's wooded hillsides. Opportunities for housing in the community consist of a diverse mix and range and include various styles for all ages.*

A new downtown center is set in motion for Monroeville, through the multi-phasing of a new grid of streets on Route 22, the business district is moving away from the strip center orientation and its super block appearance. Through the cooperation and foresight of business owners, developers and government officials, this linear stretch of roadway has experienced a transformation, with the introduction of street-front retail in a well-designed environment. Residents and visitors alike are witnessing the evolution of the Route 22 area with the introduction of new amenities such as public gathering spaces, town squares and plazas; as they further anticipate a mix of entertainment and cultural activities, residential opportunities and offices in a downtown setting. Monroeville has regained its prominence as a premier destination, as people are drawn to Monroeville's new vibrancy and diversity with its growing downtown center.

The diversity in the Municipality's strong economic base ensures that business and industry strike a balance between opportunities and needs that in turn provides the community with economic security and stability. Residents, decision-makers, business owners, and developers have a solid partnership and take an active role in the promotion of economic development, recreation, education, and quality growth and redevelopment.

Community facilities and services have kept pace with growth and redevelopment as a result of the partnerships formed between community groups and associations, the Municipality and the School District. The partnerships are a source of pride in the community, which add to many quality of life amenities that Monroeville has to offer.

The public/private transportation system is efficient, meets the needs of the community, and is designed to facilitate the joint use of streets between pedestrian and vehicular travel. The Municipality's streetscapes are well maintained and include a comprehensive system of sidewalks, pedestrian lighting, landscaping and shade trees.

*Overall, the citizens of Monroeville are proud of their community, the balance struck between commercial and residential development, and the public/private partnerships that have formed over the years.” ****

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**STEP 3
COMMUNITY GOALS**

Finally, the last step in creating the vision of the future was the development of Community Goals. The community goal statements are broad, and based upon community identified ideas and issues. The goal statements establish in writing what was deemed important to a wide cross section of the Citizens of Monroeville.

Table 3 presents the "Key Community Goals." These Goals will provide the framework later in the Comprehensive Planning Commission as the Strategic Action Plan for Issues involving Land Use, Housing and Neighborhood Quality, Community Facilities and Services, Transportation, Economic Development, Route 22 Business Corridor and the Environment.

Table 3

MUNICIPALITY OF MONROEVILLE KEY COMMUNITY GOALS	
AREA OF CONCERN	GOALS
LAND USE	To address and encourage the revitalization and reuse of the older commercial and residential infill areas while protecting the integrity of undeveloped land. To maintain a balance between residential and commercial development in order to preserve Monroeville's unique sense of community and quality of life.
HOUSING AND NEIGHBORHOOD QUALITY	To preserve and enhance the strong residential base and mix of housing types while promoting increased pedestrian access and park and recreation opportunities throughout the community.
COMMUNITY FACILITIES AND SERVICES	To ensure that municipal administration, services and facilities are provided and coordinated in an efficient and effective manner to meet the changing needs of the community.
TRANSPORTATION	To improve the safety and flow of traffic and reduce the overall traffic congestion while encouraging multiple modes of public/private transportation in the municipality.
ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT	To market the Municipality's locational advantage and encourage a desirable business environment while promoting diversified employment opportunities.
ROUTE 22 BUSINESS CORRIDOR	To develop a new downtown by phasing a new grid of streets and development blocks; evolving away from the strip center orientation and towards a storefront retail in a well designed and maintained environment.
ENVIRONMENT	To continue to protect environmentally sensitive areas and support the preservation and expansion of green spaces with the Municipality.

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