



MONROE COUNTY **LINK**
TO THE **WORLD.** TO THE **REGION.** TO **YOU.**

2020

Year In Review



A Proud Part of Michigan's Cornerstone ... Monroe County

Executive Summary

The year 2020 presented many challenges for economic development. The COVID-19 pandemic affected the progress of the Link Plan initiatives but most of the Pillar Teams were able to pivot from in-person to virtual meetings and achieve significant milestones. The virtual meeting format became the norm.



Collectively, over 60 volunteers representing large and small businesses, local government and education institutions volunteered 369 hours in 2020 and collectively 1,442 since 2018, not including additional time spent outside the scheduled meeting times. This is a very impressive volunteer effort for the betterment of our community.

The volunteers were able to accomplish four significant initiatives:

1. A county-wide brand was developed that will serve to bolster tourism and promote quality-of-life amenities.
2. A program was started to beautify the county's I-75 interchanges by using eligible inmates from the county jail system for labor. The I-75 Beautification Program also includes a lawn maintenance certification opportunity that will provide a path to employment for inmates upon their release.
3. A business development hub was initiated that will provide business education resources, mentorship opportunities, funding opportunities and an overall comprehensive strategy for business development for start-ups and grow-ups. A shared workspace is one of the long-term goals.
4. One of the Link Plan Priority Development Areas located in Frenchtown Township was finalized resulting in a \$100 million investment in the County.

Let's take a closer look at these accomplishments!

Prepare for Investment

Barry Buschmann - The Mannik & Smith Group
Pillar Captain

Mission

Facilitate infrastructure knowledge and assist communities with strategies for Priority Development Areas

Vision

Communities well prepared for economic investment



The Prepare for Investment Pillar began the year by centering its goals around increasing engagement with county municipalities and continuing to seek out opportunities for additional Priority Development Areas (PDAs).

The Prepare for Investment Pillar established the following goals for 2020:

1. Increase Outreach to Communities:
 - a. Invite township, city and village leaders to monthly Prepare for Investment/Streamline meetings.
 - b. Present to county municipal boards on a quarterly basis.
2. Develop Additional Priority Development Areas:
 - a. Investigate additional properties throughout the county for new PDAs.
 - b. Develop Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) Communities and MOU Property Owners, as needed.
3. Continue to work with the County on the GIS on-sight selection tool.
4. Conduct an Annual Planning and Zoning Seminar — “Cannabis in Your Community.”

Summary

- Due to COVID restrictions mandated by the Governor, in-person meetings could not be conducted. The Team commenced to virtual meetings in March that continued for the remainder of the year. The attendance remained consistent averaging 11-12 participants per meeting.
- A sub-committee was created to work on a series of three webinars that will be conducted beginning in early 2021. The goal of the webinars is to increase economic development knowledge and training with existing and newly elected municipal officials.
- The Nike Site, a Link Plan Priority Development Area (PDA), was finalized in late spring by the developer InSite Real Estate and Frenchtown Township. InSite's proposal to rezone and redevelop the 269-acre site for a future Transportation, Distribution and Logistics (TDL) development represents an investment of \$100 million dollars in real property value. Ford Motor Company has committed to lease 1 million square foot of space in a soon-to-be-constructed building. This project will create over 200 jobs with wages starting at \$20+ per hour. With the pending devaluation of DTE's Fermi facility, a reduction in tax revenue to the county's public agencies was anticipated. Therefore, this new development is essential to bridge the revenue gap and maintain essential public services while providing job opportunities for the citizens of Monroe County and the surrounding area.
- Work continued on the county GIS site selection tool for developers to easily navigate potential development sites in Monroe County. The BDC has integrated several maps into their web page and is now using the mapping program to respond to requests for information. The Monroe County Property Information Map was introduced to the public in late 2020. The map includes parcel information along the topographic and flood plain information, all at no-charge. In addition, the GIS system will be used to develop a tool for visitors and residents to locate events happening throughout the county, while identifying other activities and attractions such as, restaurants, parks, bicycle and pedestrian trails, etc., thus having a positive impact on both Quality of Life and Tourism.

Improve Workforce Development & Education

Stephen McNew — Monroe County
Intermediate School District
Co-Pillar Captain

Gregory Pitoniak — Southeast Michigan
Community Alliance (SEMCA)
Co-Pillar Captain



Mission

Create a dynamic, sustainable talent
development ecosystem

Vision

A robust economy with a talent development system responsive to the needs of employers

The Talent Development Pillar Team consists of representatives from the public school system, work force development agencies and the manufacturing sector. Team meetings came to an abrupt halt when all attention was focused on educating students and workplace safety due to COVID-19. In March, all meetings were canceled for the remainder of the year as our education partners' attentions were directed to their student/staff's health and safety. Although not much progress was made, their 2020 Goals were representative of the strategy to develop Career Technical Education opportunities for high school graduates in collaboration with local manufacturers. Introducing seventh and eighth grade students to career opportunities was also an important part of the goals.

The Talent Development Pillar established the following goals for 2020:

1. Develop a CTE Pilot Program.
2. Work closer with Monroe County Community College to fulfill the Talent Development Pillar Mission.
3. Determine the feasibility of creating a CTE Hub.
4. Continue Workplace Training Programs with Michigan Works.
5. Continue to implement Career Awareness programs.
6. Align Perkins Funding.

Summary

- A sub-committee, led by the superintendent of the Monroe Public Schools and assisted by supervisors of two manufacturing companies, was formed to implement a CTE Pilot program in Monroe Public Schools. The Pilot Program's goal was to determine if select students were able to successfully complete the Manufacturing Skill Standards Council (MSSC) Certified Production Assistance Test. Based upon the test results, the Pilot Program would indicate whether MSSC is the appropriate test to assess the skill level of high school graduates who apply for local manufacturing jobs.

The Pilot Program deliverables were defined as:

- Monroe Public Schools to become a certified testing site — accomplished
- Administer the Certification Test
- Evaluate students' performance
- Determine if the MSSC is the best choice
- Analyze the test results
- Trial test at two local manufacturers

Note: The Pilot Program could not be completed due to COVID-19.

- Manufacturer's Day was held virtually in November with about 350 students tuning in for the instructional videos. These videos have been archived and are available to all teachers should they wish to use them in their classrooms now and in the future.

Enhance the Local Image and Brand

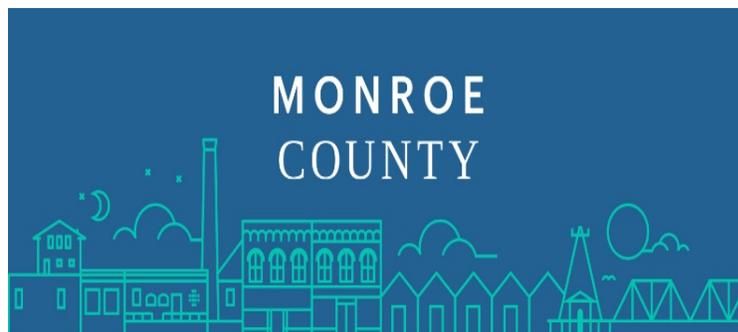
Michael Bosanac — County of Monroe
Pillar Captain

Mission

Enhance the overall image of the County

Vision

Create a unifying county-wide brand that promotes the character and culture of our community



The COVID-19 pandemic did little to curb the enthusiasm of the Image and Brand Pillar Team. The Team accomplished both of their 2020 Goals! These two initiatives had never been attempted in the entire history of Monroe County's existence. They will both place a spotlight on Monroe County as a destination place.

The Image and Brand Pillar established the following goals for 2020:

1. Create a county-wide regional branding campaign that provides facts about the region's competitive advantages, regional assets, and quality of life amenities.
2. Implement highway beautification efforts along the I-75 corridor.

Summary

- The Image and Brand Pillar successfully completed the development of a county-wide brand. Beginning in 2019, a sub-committee, a separate stakeholder group committee, and the BDC Team worked closely with Phire Group, our community brand agency of choice, for over 18 months. The process was very inclusive to insure a broad perspective of opinions from county residents. Key stakeholders were interviewed as a first step. Then seven virtual focus groups convened to provide feedback on the creative options. The last community engagement tactic was a survey launched on social media. The creative option favored by the majority was Michigan's Cornerstone.

The soft launch of the County-wide Brand occurred on November 12th during the BDC's Focus on the Future annual event. The immediate response was very positive and created a lot of buzz. The event generated over 220 Ambassadors that will assist in the continued roll out of the Brand.



- The I-75 Beautification Program was developed to enhance the landscape of Monroe County's I-75 intersections. The Beautification Program utilizes the county's inmates who are eligible to participate in the County Jail's Red Shirt Program. Their tasks consisted of maintaining the grass and foliage along the intersections. In addition, the program provides inmates the ability to enroll in a certificate program developed with the assistance of local lawncare companies and Michigan Works. The certificate program provides the inmates a path to employment upon release.

Quality of Life and Tourism

Doug Chaffin — BDC Chairman
Pillar Captain

Mission

Improve the Quality of Life and Strengthen
Tourism

Vision

A world-class community where people
want to visit, play and stay



Early in the year, the Team focused on conducting research on housing and quality-of-life amenities. An executive from the Monroe County Home & Builders Association joined the Team to provide his expertise on housing and real estate.

The Quality of Life and Tourism Pillar established the following goals for 2020:

1. Conduct a Tourism/Amenities Research Study.
2. Conduct a Housing Study.

Summary

- The Pillar Team worked closely with LandUseUSA's principal owner, Sharon Woods, through the month of June on the research proposal. The decision was made to table the studies due to the restrictions on in-person gatherings needed for effective community engagement. The limited availability of funding for the project was also a determining factor.
- During the third quarter of 2020, a joint sub-committee of members from the Quality of Life/Tourism Pillar and the Image and Brand Pillar began to meet to work on projects that were cross functional. Both Pillars' objectives were oftentimes aligned in relation to Quality of Life, Tourism, and Image & Brand strategies. It is anticipated the two Pillars will combine and continue their efforts as one team or a hybrid advisory panel organizational structure.

Grow Strategically

Scott Laskey — Laskey LLC
Co-Pillar Captain

Paul Pirrone — Bedford Township
Co-Pillar Captain

Mission

Create an environment for successful new business formation and growth

Vision

A strategic network that facilitates and promotes a thriving entrepreneurial community



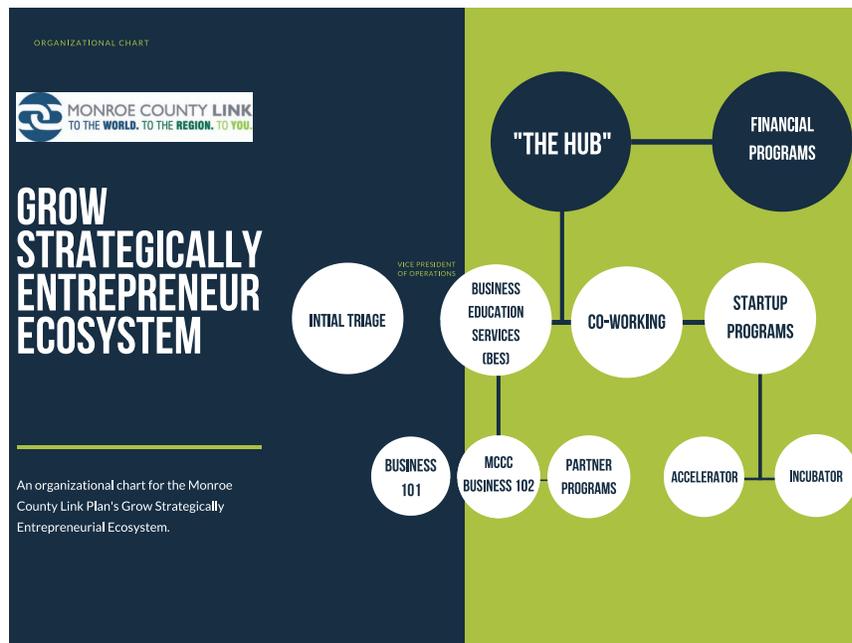
COVID-19 caused the Grow Strategically Pillar to increase its focus on small business viability. As businesses worked to stay afloat, it became apparent that assisting them to increase their general business knowledge would be beneficial by increasing the sustainability of our small business community. Financial knowledge, business education and mentorship were some of the knowledge gaps that became apparent.

The Grow Strategically Pillar established the following goals for 2020:

1. Develop a strategic plan to create a shared co-working space.
2. Gap Analysis: Ongoing analysis of business/entrepreneurial resources available within Monroe County and resources located outside the county but available to Monroe County residents.
3. Develop a county-wide Marketing and Communication Plan for business/entrepreneurial resources.
4. Expand stakeholder/resources.

Summary

The Pillar Team was determined to jump start its mission and vision by creating a comprehensive Business Development Ecosystem. The Ecosystem encompassed all the 2020 Goals established and will be sustainable. The ecosystem was branded “Launch 734.”



- The Gap Analysis confirmed the need for local small businesses and entrepreneurs to gain more general business knowledge and have access to more resources.
- A Field trip was taken to Jackson’s Lean Rocket Lab to gain best practices for shared working space.
- The Business Services Dean from the Community College joined the Pillar Team to increase the Team’s knowledge and collaboration with the College.

Grow Monroe As A Logistics Gateway

Tim Lake — Monroe County Business
Development Corporation
Pillar Captain

Mission

Promote the multimodal assets of Monroe County's location to site selectors and developers

Vision

Robust business and industry growth throughout the region



The Grow Logistic Pillar was inactive during 2020.

In Closing

We made it! The year 2020 is one for the memory books in many ways. We were all required to adapt to life in a pandemic that affected us both personally and professionally.

When I reflect on my 2019 summary in which I wrote, "Although not all has progressed as planned, the challenges and obstacles that were encountered will only fuel innovation, creativity and more collaboration. I have no doubt our community will benefit as a result.," little did I know that my words of 2019 would be even more relevant in 2020.

I would like to thank all 60+ Link Plan volunteers and the BDC Team who worked tirelessly to sustain the Plan's forward progress and address the needs of the business community. It was truly a collaborative effort! I am looking forward to 2021 and continuing these exemplary efforts.

We welcome more volunteers. If you are passionate about contributing to the economic growth and overall success of Monroe County and would like to serve on one of pillar teams, please contact me or one of the BDC Team (contact information below).

MONROE COUNTY LINK
2020 YEAR IN REVIEW

You may view our website for additional information as well at <https://monroecountybdc.org/monroe-county-link/>.

Once again, a sincere congratulations to all volunteers for a job well done!

Regards,



Florence Buchanan
Project Manager
Monroe County Link Plan
fbuchanan@monroecountybdc.org
fbuchanan@customerexp360.com
419-654-1934

Florence Buchanan, President and Founder of Customer Experience360 has over 28 years of experience in strategic marketing, general management, strategic planning, new product launches and executive leadership. She is a passionate leader who has guided cross-functional teams to deliver leading results, profitable growth, exceptional brand consideration and employee engagement by connecting customer perceptions with product and operational priorities.

Certifications include: Women Business Enterprise (WBE), Woman Owned Small Business (WOSB), Net Promoter Score®(NPS), customer loyalty metric.



For questions or comments on the BDC or the Monroe County Link Plan, you may any of the staff members:

Tim C. Lake
President & CEO
tlake@monroecountybdc.org
734-241-8081 x101

Matthew R. Vanisacker
Vice President
Business Development
mvanisaker@monroecountybdc.org
734-241-8081 x103

LuAnn Hogberg
Communications &
Operations Manager
lhogberg@monroecountybdc.org
734-241-8081 x102

