



Introduction

This report presents the draft Comprehensive Plan for the City of Marion, Iowa. It sets forth long-range recommendations for the maintenance and enhancement of existing community areas, and for desirable improvements, developments and redevelopments within the City and its growth areas.

This draft Plan is the product of an extensive planning program, and incorporates much of the material included in previous interim reports such as the Phase I Existing Conditions Report prepared throughout the earlier phases of the planning process.

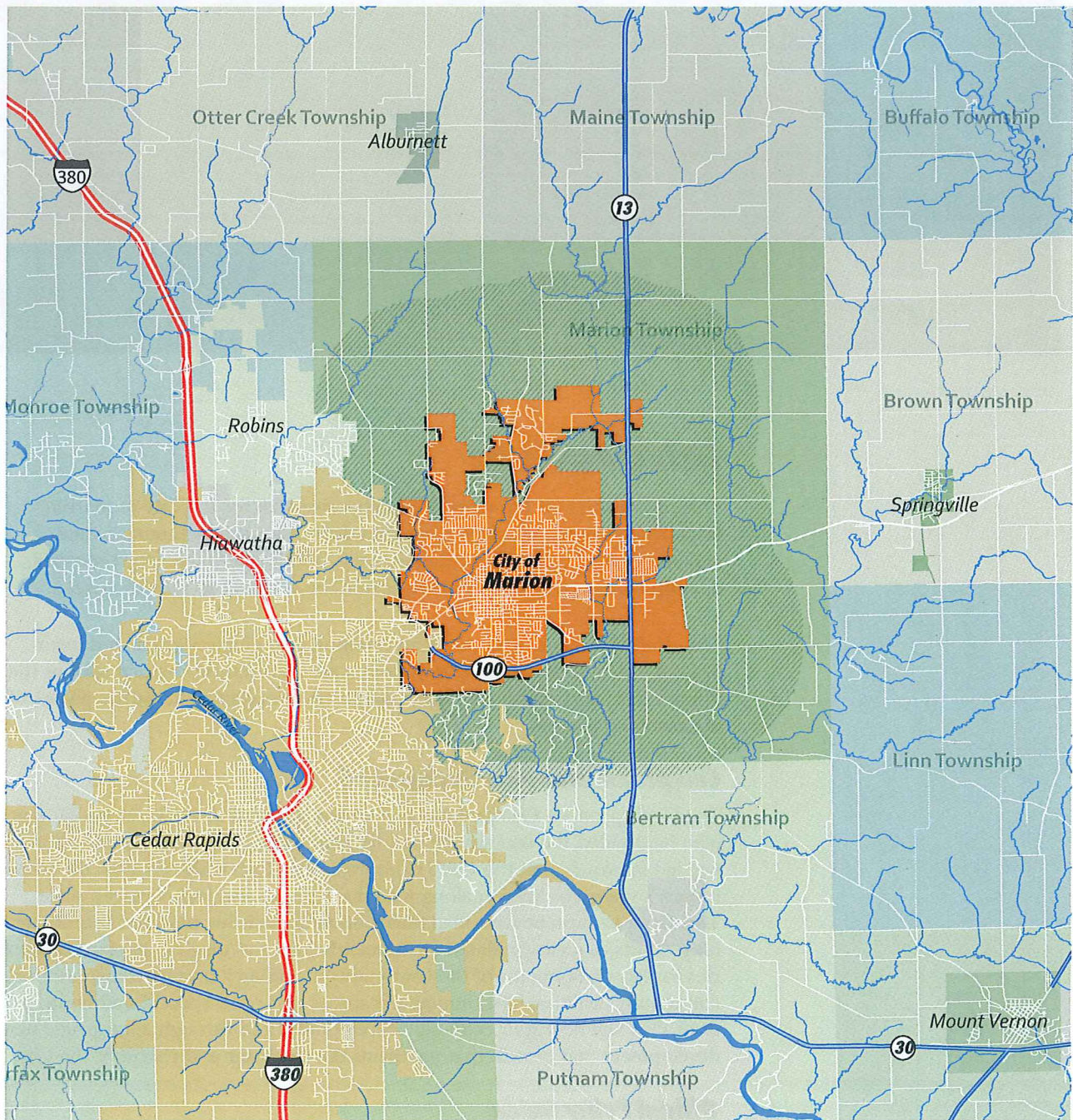
Comprehensive Plan Background

The City's previous Comprehensive Plan was adopted in 1998. Although that plan has guided the community well over the last twelve years, an update was needed to ensure that the City's Comprehensive Plan truly reflected the Community's vision for Marion along with the changes that had occurred since. This Draft Comprehensive Plan builds upon the existing plan and recent planning efforts to create updated recommendations and long-range plans and policies for key components of the community including land use, transportation, community facilities, environmental features, and open space. In addition, this draft Plan will help spur economic development and through appropriate new development and growth that maintains the character and charm of the City.


Official Policy Guide

Once adopted, the draft Comprehensive Plan will be the City's official policy guide for physical improvement and development. The Plan considers not only the current needs and issues within the community, but also presents a plan for guiding new improvements and developments for the next 15 to 20 years. The Plan establishes the ground rules for private improvements and developments and provides the framework by which the City can review and evaluate private development proposals. In addition to private improvements, the draft Plan presents a number of public improvements that can help to ensure that local dollars are spent effectively.

Figure 1
Community Setting



 **City of Marion**

 **Extraterritorial Planning Area (Growth Area)**
includes the unincorporated areas outside of Marion and within the City's 2-mile planning jurisdiction.

Community Setting & History

As illustrated in Figure 1, the City of Marion is located northeast of Cedar Rapids in Linn County, Iowa. Marion was named for the American Revolutionary War Hero Francis Marion and became the original County Seat of Linn County in 1839. The City once served as a “division point” between Omaha, Nebraska and Chicago, Illinois on the Chicago, Milwaukee, St. Paul, and Pacific Railroad line. The railroad became a significant contributor to the growth and prosperity of Marion in the late 19th and early 20th centuries.

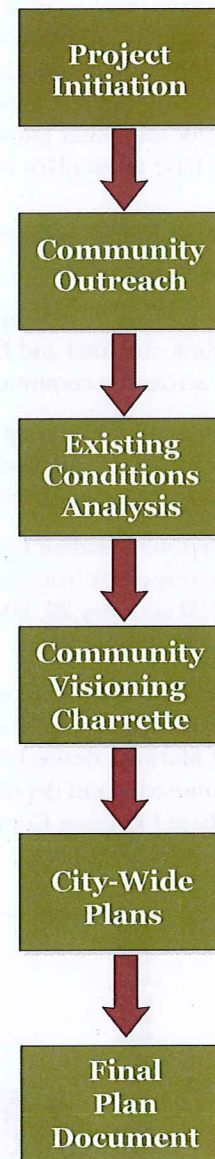
Marion is known for its friendly community and top-tier school districts. The City’s close proximity to Cedar Rapids, Iowa City, and multiple regional highway systems provide residents and visitors with easy access to the community and the greater region. Marion’s rural surroundings provide the City with excellent annexation and development opportunities which will play a significant role as the City grows.

Planning Process

The creation of Marion’s draft Comprehensive Plan involved a six-step process over the course of several months. The project was initiated with community workshops and the creation of an online questionnaire and project website used to obtain input from the Marion community. This was followed by an inventory and description of the existing conditions undertaken to better guide the development and creation of the draft Comprehensive Plan document. All of this information was compiled and summarized in Existing Conditions Report which is now on file at Marion City Hall.

Following review and comment of the Synthesis Report from the Comprehensive Plan Advisory Committee (CPAC), a community workshop was conducted and the vision statement and preliminary goals and objectives were crafted. Based on the Vision and work completed in the initial stages of the process, preliminary plans for land use, transportation, open space and environmental features, and community facilities as well as preliminary design and development guidelines were prepared. These plans form the “core” of the draft Comprehensive Plan and reflect community input and the City’s Goals and Objectives.

In the next and final steps of the planning process, the draft Comprehensive Plan was reviewed with the CPAC and the public and a Final Comprehensive Plan document was prepared. This document was then be revised based on further comment from City Staff and the CPAC. The Final Comprehensive Plan was submitted to the Marion City Council and adopted on July 15, 2010. The Plan has been designed not only to serve as a legal document for guiding land use and development, but also as a guide for future land use policy and for prioritizing, promoting and implementing new development and redevelopment projects and actions within the City.

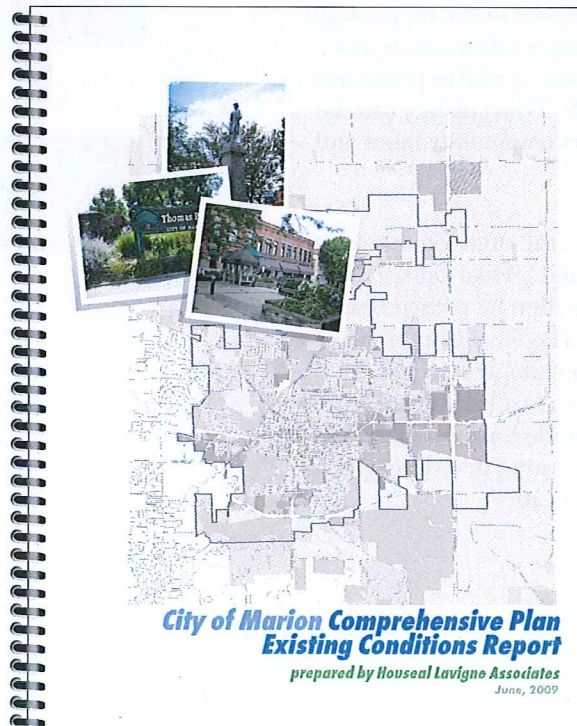


Community Outreach

Several different Community Outreach efforts were undertaken by the Consultant to involve community residents, elected and appointed officials, property owners, and business persons in the planning process. These outreach efforts provide the City with important insight on local issues, concerns, and opinions from residents, community leaders, the business community, and other participants. The following community outreach activities have taken place as part of the comprehensive planning process:

- A Project Initiation Meeting was held on February 12, 2009 with City Staff and the CPAC.
- A Community Workshop was held on May 4, 2009 at the Best Western Longbranch Hotel and Convention Center. Approximately 23 residents from across the community attended and participated in the Workshop.
- A Community Visioning Workshop was held on June 23, 2008 at the Lowe Park Arts and Environmental Center. Dozens of residents provided their input on the community's collective vision for the City of Marion.
- An On-Line Resident Questionnaire was available on the Project website where responses from the Marion community were collected between April 20 and May 26, 2009. Approximately 166 responses to the questionnaire were received.

Input received from these community outreach efforts was used, in conjunction with an assessment of existing conditions, to establish an informed vision of Marion's desired future and provide direction to the planning process. Summaries and detailed results from each outreach event are provided in the Phase I Existing Conditions Report on file at City Hall.



Comprehensive Plan Sections

The draft Comprehensive Plan is divided into the following 10 sections:

Section 1: The Future of Marion - This section describes the community's desired future for the City of Marion in general terms. It provides a narrative sketch of how Marion will become a better place to live, work, over the next 20 years.

Section 2: Goals & Objectives - This section presents goals and objectives that provide specific actions for the City and its draft Comprehensive Plan as it strives to achieve the vision established in the previous section.

Section 3: Land Use Plan - The Land Use Plan illustrates and describes in general terms the type and location of future land uses within the City of Marion and its growth areas.

Section 4: Residential Areas Plan & Policies - This section provides specific recommendations and policies to guide future growth, enhance existing residential neighborhoods over time, and improve the long-term quality of life for Marion residents.

Section 5: Commercial Areas Plan & Policies - This section provides recommendations and policies targeted at the improvement of Marion's commercial areas and the provision of future sufficient commercial development throughout the City.

Section 6: Transportation Plan & Policies - The Transportation Plan is intended to ensure an adequate transportation network exists to accommodate the efficient movement of vehicles and pedestrians throughout the community.

Section 7: Community Facilities Plan & Policies - This section identifies the future need for community facilities and offers long-range recommendations for future facility locations and improvements to ensure that residents are adequately served by the City and its service providers.

Section 8: Parks, Open Space & Environmental Features Plan & Policies - This section provides recommendations intended to protect and enhance Marion's natural areas, expand the park and trail system in growth areas as well as established residential neighborhoods, and improve access to regional assets.

Section 9: Neighborhood Planning Areas - The City has been divided into several planning areas to better facilitate the detailed implementation of the Plan. This section assesses the planning influences impacting development of Marion's planning areas; identifies opportunities for improvement and development sites; and provides targeted improvement guidelines.

Section 10: Implementation - This section presents specific actions, as well as potential funding sources, that the City should pursue as it endeavors to implement the recommendations of the Comprehensive Plan.

THE UNIVERSITY OF CHICAGO

PH.D. PROGRAM IN POLITICAL SCIENCE

MEMORANDUM FOR THE RECORD

DATE: 10/15/2001

TO: [Name]

FROM: [Name]

SUBJECT: [Topic]

1. [Text]

2. [Text]

3. [Text]

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