



Residential Areas Plan and Policies

Marion is predominantly a residential community of single-family neighborhoods with a mix of other residential types. These residential areas should be protected from incompatible land uses and, as development occurs, new residential areas should be integrated into existing neighborhoods with respect to roadway and pedestrian connections, architecture, green space, and urban design. The City should minimize outward growth and leap frog development and plan for the controlled and deliberate extension of city infrastructure and services.

The Residential Areas Plan builds upon the Land Use Plan, which identified five categories of residential land use: Single-Family Detached Residential, Single-Family Attached Residential, Transition Residential, Uptown District, and Conservation Development. The policies that apply to each of residential uses are detailed in this section and the locations of the residential areas are illustrated in Figure 4. General policies that apply to all residential areas as well as growth area policies for residential development are also discussed at the end of this section.

Single-Family Detached Residential Recommendations & Policies

The majority of the City's residential areas fall are single-family residential areas, characterized by detached single-family homes on 1/4-acre lots. Single-family residential areas are comprised of a mix of established neighborhoods and subdivisions arranged on mostly rectilinear street network. Garages are typically detached and located in the side or rear yard in older neighborhoods and attached in newer development.

Single-family detached residential development should continue to be the most significant land use within Marion. Single-family residential areas should be buffered from incompatible uses and new development should respect the character of nearby residential areas.

Infill Development

Townhomes can be located in these areas, but single-family homes should predominate. In instances where townhomes are proposed in or adjacent to previously established areas, the architecture of the new buildings should complement the existing neighborhood.

Enhancing Existing Neighborhoods

The age and quality of single-family residential development varies throughout the community. Many neighborhoods are in need for a consistent network of sidewalks with improved street lighting and landscaping. Several established single-family neighborhoods are in need of additional park space while some of the most recent residential developments are characterized by monotonous architecture and poor connectivity.

Policies

Policies specifically governing development and redevelopment of Single-Family Residential areas are:

1. Where residential units address major or minor arterial streets, vehicular and service access should be provided via *rear or side alleyways*.
2. Horizontal and vertical *buffering and screening*, including berms, fencing, and landscaping, should protect the single-family detached neighborhoods from abutting commercial or industrial land uses.
3. To soften building mass and create architectural interest, *the front elevation of structures should be well articulated*.

Single-Family Attached Residential Recommendations & Policies

Townhome residential developments consist of single-family attached units. Other dwelling units with shared interior walls including rowhomes and duplex condominiums are also considered part of this land use; however townhomes comprise the majority of units of this category.

The single-family attached residential areas illustrated on the Land Use Plan are intended to provide a wider variety of single-family housing options to Marion residents. Single-family attached units can function as a transitional land use between commercial areas or multi-family residential areas and lower density single family areas, however in instances where townhomes are proposed in previously established areas, the architecture of the new buildings should complement the existing neighborhood.

Policies

Policies specifically governing development and redevelopment of Townhome Residential areas are:

1. New townhome developments should provide *rear or side alleyways*, or internal parking and loading areas that are screened from the street. Garage door massing along the street frontage shall be discouraged.
2. The *maximum number of attached units* within a single structure should be six units. Eight units may be acceptable, but should be considered on a case-by-case basis.
3. To soften building mass and create architectural interest, the *front elevation of structures should be well articulated* and entryways should be visible from the front of the building.
4. Developments should meet *minimum site, open space, and landscaping requirements*.
5. Horizontal and vertical *buffering and screening*, including berms, fencing, and landscaping, should protect the single-family attached development from abutting commercial or industrial land uses.

Multi-Family Residential Recommendations & Policies

Multi-Family Residential uses designated in the Land Use Plan identify areas to be developed and maintained as apartment and condominium developments.

Future multi-family development should be limited to areas where it will serve as a transitional housing type between non-residential uses and single-family residential areas and along major roads as identified in the Land Use Plan. Multi-family residential development may also be a component of mixed-use development within the Uptown district.

Policies

Policies specifically governing development and redevelopment of Multi-Family Residential include:

1. New multi-family development should provide *rear or side alleyways*, or internal parking and loading areas, that are screened from the street.
2. Landscaped berms should be used to *screen multi-family areas* from abutting single-family residential areas.
3. Developments should meet *minimum site and open space landscaping requirements*.
4. *Accessory structures*, other than fully secured and enclosed garages should be prohibited.
5. Structures with several units should incorporate *varied setbacks* along the building frontage.
6. *Barracks-style multi-family buildings* with long, unvaried frontages and rooflines must be avoided.
7. *Exterior stairways* should be avoided. Where exterior stairways are necessary, they should be enhanced with quality materials and architectural detail that complement the larger structure.
8. *Height and bulk* of multi-family development should not negatively impact adjacent development.
9. Multi-family development shall be broken into several *structures of varied size and scale*.
10. Multi-family development should occur as a *component of a larger development* and integrated throughout, not clustered.
11. *Large-scale multi-family development* should be avoided.



Manufactured Housing Recommendations & Policies

Marion has four manufactured housing communities. Issues in these communities include poor maintenance, monotonous appearance, limited access, and poor conditions of local streets.

The Land Use Plan does not identify any new areas for manufactured housing. The Land Use Plan also does not anticipate any of the existing manufactured housing communities to remain over the long term. Prior to consideration of new manufactured housing a housing needs assessment should be completed to determine the marketability for additional manufactured housing.

Policies

Policies specifically governing enhancement of Manufactured Housing communities while they remain include:

1. Speed bumps on local streets should be removed in favor of other *traffic calming improvements* such as bulb-outs at mid-block pedestrian crossings and neckdowns at intersections.
2. New manufactured homes should be *ground set or installed on masonry skirting* with wheels and hitched removed.
3. New manufactured homes should *adhere to all general residential area policies* including those addressing monotonous architecture.



Uptown Residential Recommendations & Policies

The residential neighborhoods surrounding the Uptown district are characterized by single-family detached residences on small blocks of 300 to 350 feet in length, some of which are served by rear alleys.

There are three historic districts in this area, Uptown, Pucker Street, and Terrace Park. These three districts set the tone for the Uptown Residential housing. Many of the homes in these areas could be considered historic and there are several, including the Granger House, that are listed on the National Register of Historic Places.

To maintain the Uptown district as a vibrant historic area, adaptive reuse, reinvestment, remodeling, expansion, and restoration are preferred within the Uptown area; however, it is understood that some housing may be too far gone and beyond repair. When this cannot occur, infill and teardown redevelopment is encouraged, however such development should complement the existing housing and preserve the distinct architectural character of the existing neighborhood. The handful of brick paved streets and gravel alleyways that service the area add to the historic character of this neighborhood and should be retained and treated as a contributing amenity to the district.

While the history of the Uptown area is highlighted, many of the properties require reinvestment and renovation to halt deterioration evidenced by the poor condition of some homes, streets, and walkways. Single-family detached residential should remain the predominant land use in this area with any infill development or renovations closely following the architecture, design, and other aesthetic cues of surrounding development.

Policies

Policies specifically governing development and redevelopment of Uptown Residential include:

1. Assess the condition of *brick paved streets* and consider the replacement of some segments with asphalt while targeting areas of historical significance to be repaved with brick.
2. *Resurface deteriorating local streets* including the reconstruction of curb sections when necessary.
3. Establish a program for *replacement of the street trees* as they come to the end of their life and need to be removed.
4. Identify opportunities for the installation of *curb and gutter infrastructure* and transition open-swale drainage systems to curb and gutter.
5. Additions to existing structures should be *visually incorporated* into that structure through the use of similar design, materials, and architectural detailing.
6. Continue to pursue nomination of the *East 6th Street District* for the National Register of Historic Places.
7. Establish programs to *assist home owners in the renovation* and restoration of historic buildings.
8. Establish *historic gateway signage* for the historic districts which identify and reflect on the districts significance.

Conservation Development Recommendations & Policies

Traditional development is not appropriate for the areas to the south of Highway 100 and Secrist Road due to the varied terrain, sensitive natural areas, or cost of providing city services. Residential development in these areas should be characterized by larger lots, isolated subdivisions, conservation development, or agricultural uses, including riding stables and horse trails. Some of these areas are currently, and should continue to be, utilized for agriculture on a limited basis.

Within conservation development areas, the City should promote the use of conservation design techniques, including clustering, that maintain and preserve wetlands, floodplains, large wooded areas, or other natural resources. These techniques reduce minimum lot areas, but do not reduce the gross density of a development. Conservation development techniques will allow new development to minimize the impact on quality natural areas, preserving them for public enjoyment while maintaining the rural character of these areas. While existing development may or may not adhere to conservation guidelines that protect natural areas, the City should consider requiring this of all future development in the sensitive areas as identified in the Environmental Features Plan. For expanded discussion of Sensitive Areas refer the Parks, Open Space & Environmental Features Plan and Policies section.

In areas difficult to service, well and septic systems may be considered; provided adequate accommodations are made to ensure public safety can be provided. Development in this manner should not be allowed in order to develop areas which can be served in the future by standard City Services or areas that are simply not ready for development.

Policies

Policies specifically governing Conservation Development include:

1. *Significant environmental features, topography, and natural areas* should guide development and shape the potential development area of a site.
2. Housing should be located to *minimize impact to natural features* and maximize views.
3. Appropriate *lot sizes should vary* based on the size and character of nearby existing and planned residential developments and local environmental conditions.
4. Lot lines and street and trail locations should be defined, in part, by the presence and absence of *conservation areas*.
5. A significant portion of a conservation development site should be *protected as open space*.
6. *Agricultural uses* located within Conservation Development areas should be permitted to remain in perpetuity.
7. Existing agricultural uses should implement *Best Management Practice's (BMP's)* to protect natural areas and limit environmental impacts to neighboring property.
8. An ordinance should be developed which specifically identifies the *characteristics of sensitive areas* and identifies parameters for development within these areas.

General Residential Area Recommendations & Policies

There are several planning goals and objectives that relate to all residential areas, regardless of housing type or location.

Monotonous Architecture

As a component of the general residential area policies, the City should establish policies that foster a unique sense of identity within new residential areas. The architectural style and layout of some recent residential development within the City is repetitive, monotonous, and fails to establish unique neighborhoods with a sense of place and unique location within Marion. New development, regardless of the number of builders and developers involved, should be diverse and contribute to the mosaic of residential neighborhoods and instill a sense of pride and place. When monotonous development patterns prevail, sense of place is lost, and neighborhood identity and pride is almost absent.

The City should establish guidelines and policies to prevent monotonous architecture and repetitive development, and enhance the character and value of residential neighborhoods. These policies should also ensure anti-monotonous development practices and the establishment of unique neighborhoods and subdivisions in the City. These policies should be structured such that they are not cost prohibitive and do not place an undue burden on the development community. Simple additions to and variations of common development practices can be utilized to achieve a more diverse and desirable stock of housing.

Development Costs

Overall, the infrastructure and service costs related to residential development in Marion are not covered by residential property taxes. When residential development does not pay for itself, the revenue generated by other uses such as commercial or industrial development is used to maintain service levels and infrastructure and cannot be applied to other city projects. Such a situation is not fiscally sustainable and will slow progress and limit improvements to the City. The City should strive to achieve a situation in which revenues from residential taxes adequately cover costs related to such development.

Policies

The following policies apply to all residential development areas within the City:

1. *Sidewalks* should be provided on both sides of all public rights-of-way within residential areas with well lit and demarcated pedestrian crossings.
2. *Street trees* should be provided on both sides of all public rights-of-way within residential areas.
3. Infill and new development should be encouraged to *bury on-site utility lines* and screen utility boxes from view of the public rights-of-way.
4. Require the installation of *curb and gutter infrastructure*.
5. Consider programs, including financial assistance opportunities, to *aid residents* in making property improvements and encourage the upkeep of existing residential areas.

6. The City should establish a new *park land dedication ordinance* that requires new development to adhere to minimum park land dedication standards.
7. The City should establish *new parks within existing, underserved residential areas* as outlined in the Parks and Open Space Plan.
8. Infill development should be comparable to existing homes within the surrounding neighborhood with respect to *scale, style, setbacks, and orientation*.
9. Naturalized stormwater retention and detention basin areas and other *Best Management Practices (BMPs)* should be encouraged in new development.
10. New development should protect and *incorporate natural features* of an area such as local topography, water features, and high-quality vegetation.
11. New development and infill development should incorporate a *mix of housing unit types* to provide for a more diverse resident population.
12. New development and infill development should incorporate a *range of materials and colors* within the roofing and siding of new structures.
13. Developers should provide a *variety of roof lines and styles* within new development.
14. The *placement of garages and entryways* should vary between adjacent structures and units.
15. The *orientation of main entryways* should be toward the public right-of-way.
16. *New residential development should be sustainable and “pay its own way”* through impact fees and tax levies. Future development should not overburden or further tax the existing infrastructure without paying for its impact on the community.
17. *In-fill development should be encouraged, outward growth should be discouraged, and leap frog development should be prevented* to allow the City’s service providers to better coordinate their provision and expansion of services, minimize strain on the City’s resources, and maximize the value of existing investments in infrastructure.

Residential Connectivity Recommendations & Policies

Residential connectivity is a significant issue in Marion. In addition to gaps in the local transportation network, sidewalks, street “stub” practices, and grade separation have all artificially limited the ability of residents to walk, bike, or drive throughout the community.

The City’s earliest residential neighborhoods were established around a rectilinear street grid that facilitated the efficient provision of infrastructure and services and created a pedestrian friendly, walkable environment. With the advent of larger “planned” neighborhoods, the suburban development plan, with courts, circles and cul-de-sacs, hampered connectivity. Marion’s more recently developed residential subdivisions reflect this bad practice and are poorly connected to street network and internal circulation is highly segmented.

Large block lengths of over 2,200 feet in some areas begin to limit the opportunity to walk or drive between adjacent neighborhoods. These development practices have exaggerated the need to use local roadways, created unnecessary access points along the City’s major roadways, and increased the cost of providing local infrastructure and services.

Sidewalks

Sidewalk and trail connectivity is also important and needs to be maintained in all development. Currently there are areas of the community where sidewalks were not required, have been deferred, or simply do not exist. Sidewalk and trail connections should be completed in conjunction with development and other right-of-way improvements such that future gaps or inconsistencies do not exist.

Street “Stubs”

Many of Marion’s newer subdivisions also contain street “stubs” leading into adjacent, undeveloped land that is typically being used for agricultural purposes. While this is good practice, in the process of developing new areas, it is often difficult to connect to these stubs. There is often resistance from local residents who fear the potential for fast moving through traffic and a loss of community character related to inconsistent architecture, design, or construction quality.

While street stubs are intended to be temporary, the lifetime of a street stub varies and is dependent upon local residential development pressures. Given the uncertain nature of street stubs, it is important that the roadway and adjacent areas are well maintained, in good condition, and do not pose a safety threat or nuisance to residents living nearby.

Grade Separation

Also hampering residential connectivity is the difference of grade between developments. Many times individual developers do not take appropriate measures to ensure that the physical grading of one development will not detrimentally impact the adjacent property owners ability to develop in a manner that blends the two neighborhoods together. While this does not provide a physical connection, it does segment neighborhoods and results in a loss of connectivity. Many times physical barriers (e.g. walls, berms or ditches) are created by such techniques that make the connectivity more difficult.

Policies

Policies related to residential development connectivity include:

1. New development should *establish a local street grid* that connects to existing streets, street stubs, and trails. Mid-block pedestrian crossings should also be provided on residential blocks of a ¼ mile in length or more. Block length should also be reduced to enhance neighborhood connectivity.
2. Where possible, *local streets and sidewalks should be extended* into existing manufactured housing communities to improve access to these areas.
3. Signage should be placed at the entry points of *street stubs* indicating the temporary nature of the stub and that the street is part of a larger planned roadway network and will eventually lead to adjacent development.
4. *Sidewalks and trail connections* should be considered as part of the public improvement and completed in conjunction with other public improvements and prior to acceptance by the City.
5. New development that will connect to an existing street stub in adjacent established neighborhoods should utilize similar design and architectural components that *complement existing developments* and create transition between developments.
6. The components of a new development that abut existing residential neighborhoods should be *comparable in scale, orientation, architectural style* to nearby homes.
7. The City should *reassess its construction permitting process* to ensure that street stubs and adjacent areas are free of construction debris and that the condition of a street stub does not negatively impact the surrounding residential neighborhood.
8. The grading of property and corresponding impacts to adjacent property shall be thoroughly reviewed and assessed at the time of platting to avoid the creation of physical barriers that hinder either the *physical connection to adjacent neighborhoods* or sense of connectivity.

Residential Growth Area Recommendations & Policies

The areas beyond the corporate limits, but within the City's two-mile planning jurisdiction have been identified as growth areas for the City of Marion. These growth areas, which lie primarily to the north, northeast, and east, are characterized by:

1. Existing agricultural land uses;
2. A general lack of municipal water supply and sanitary sewers; and
3. An overall inadequate street system to serve future development.

The City should discourage substantial development in these growth areas until existing areas of the City have been largely built out. As indicated in the Residential Areas Plan and Commercial Areas Plan, future land uses in the growth areas should consist primarily of single-family uses with single-family attached and multi-family residential uses comprising a small component of larger development, where they can diversify housing options while at the same time buffering primary roadways and non-residential development. Neighborhood commercial uses should also be considered appropriate at key intersections with larger regional commercial areas located along the Major Arterials.

Community facilities, including parks, schools and fire stations should be provided within the growth areas as needed. A more detailed discussion of the City's growth policies with respect to public infrastructure and services can be found in the Community Facilities Plan.

DECLARATION OF WORKS

The undersigned hereby certifies that the works mentioned in the attached schedule are the result of his own research and are not derived from any other source.

Done in _____ at _____ on _____

Signature of the author: _____
