



A DEVELOPER'S GUIDE:

Industrial, Commercial and Multi-Family Housing in the City of Marion, IA

Last updated: December 2022

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Why Marion?

All-Star Community

We're a back-to-back All-Star Community. Marion is one of only three Iowa communities recognized by the Iowa League of Cities in 2017, 2018, 2020, and 2021. The designation honors innovative efforts in urban renewal, collaboration or quality of life improvements.

Unique Sense of Community

As one of the fastest-growing cities in the state, Marion is intentional about maintaining its unique sense of community. A variety of festivals and cultural events bring families, friends and neighbors together. The Marion Arts Festival - held each spring - is ranked as one of the nation's best.

Healthy Living

The City of Marion maintains 600 beautiful acres of public green space, with plenty of manicured parks, trails and athletic complexes to make it easy to get out and get active. Healthy living is in our DNA.

Historic Uptown Marion

Savvy freethinkers escape the generic by spending their time and dollars in Uptown Marion. This Main Street Iowa District is home to small businesses that offer unique services, gifts, food, drinks and entertainment.

Best Place to Grow Your Business

No more than a 10-minute drive from some of Iowa's best schools, medical facilities, industrial parks and beautiful neighborhoods. Marion is the best place in Iowa to raise a family and grow a business.

Rich in Arts and Culture

Marion is creating a legacy for the future founded in high-quality, relevant and engaging public spaces. Look no further than the Uptown Artway, featuring nine permanent public art installations in a revitalized alley, or the Klopfenstein Amphitheater at Lowe Park, a functional work of art itself. The City and its community partners host dozens of free concerts and events each year.

Key Departments & Contacts

Community Development/Planning Division

Most projects start with the planning team. Their responsibilities include zoning oversight, subdivision review and providing technical assistance to the City Council, Planning and Zoning Commission, Zoning Board of Adjustment and the Historic Preservation Commission. This team also administers street and alley vacations, variances and conditional uses. When you submit a site plan, the Planning Division reviews it for compliance with the Zoning Ordinance. They'll make sure your project is a permitted use, building setbacks are correct and help you understand landscaping, parking, signage and other important considerations for your development.

Key Contact: Dave Hockett, Principal Planner

Phone Number: 319-743-6320

Email: dhockett@cityofmarion.org

Engineering Department

Engineering staff review all construction plans, verify all installations comply with the Statewide Urban Design and Specifications (SUDAS) and the City of Marion's Supplementals, identify engineering concerns on building permits and conduct necessary inspections during construction process (i.e. sanitary sewer service connections, sidewalk & driveway inspection, grading inspections).

Key Contact: Mike Barkalow, City Engineer

Phone Number: 319-743-6340

Email: mbarkalow@cityofmarion.org

Community Development/Building Division

This team administers the building, plumbing, mechanical, electrical and construction codes. They will also review your construction plans, issue permits and conduct the necessary inspections during your construction process.

Key Contact: Gary Hansen, Building Official

Phone Number: 319-743-6330

Email: ghansen@cityofmarion.org

Fire Department

Permits must be issued for any installation, modification or removal of fire alarm systems, sprinkler systems, suppression systems, smoke control systems or underground fire lines. Permits are also required for the installation, removal or abandonment of above ground or underground fuel tanks, the erection of tents over 600 square feet, fireworks or pyrotechnic displays and retail and commercial fireworks sales.

Key Contact: Chief Tom Fagan

Phone Number: 319-377-8237

Email: firepermits@cityofmarion.org

Key Departments & Contacts

Water Department

This team inspects all water main installations on new construction, enforces local, state and federal standards, reviews all plans of improvements, and coordinates installations with Fire Department. They also oversee a checklist of requirements to obtain approval for water main installation.

Key Contact: Todd Steigerwaldt, General Manager

Phone Number: 319-743-6310

Email: tsteigerwaldt@cityofmarion.org

Questions?

Please reach out to Brady Quinn at the Marion Economic Development Corporation (MEDCO). MEDCO exists to be economic development thought leaders who drive competitive advantage for Marion. MEDCO is a public-private partnership with a team of professionals working every day to make Marion the best place to grow a business and raise a family. MEDCO works directly with the business community as a concierge to help developers and business owners navigate the various steps required to invest and grow in Marion.

Key Contact: Brady Quinn, Business Retention & Small Business Specialist

Phone Number: 319-551-3763

Email: brady@medcoiowa.org

Approving Bodies & Schedules:

Marion City Council - Meets in work session the first and third Tuesday of each month at 4 p.m.

Regular session meetings are held at 5:30 p.m. on the Thursday following each work session.

The Planning & Zoning Commission - Makes recommendations to the City Council regarding rezoning, preliminary and final plats, site plans and certain ordinance changes. The Planning & Zoning Commission meets on the second Tuesday of each month at 6 p.m.

Zoning Board of Adjustment – Considers requests for granting special exceptions, conditional use permits or variances. The board also considers citizen appeals of orders, requirements, decisions or determinations made by planning & development Staff. The Zoning Board of Adjustment meets on the third Tuesday of each month (as needed) at 7 p.m. in Marion City Hall.

Pre-Development

Pre-development simply begins when you inform us that you're **interested in developing or building in Marion**. To get started, we request that you **complete this pre-development meeting request form**. It will help City staff determine the appropriate team needed to discuss your project and get it on the quickest path for approval.

After submitting your request, City staff will be in contact by the end of the next business day to schedule a meeting. Staff reserves time twice a week for pre-development meetings. Depending on the project, these meetings can range from 30 minutes to an hour.

At the pre-development meeting we will discuss the general needs, plans and constraints of your project. This discussion will identify the codes, ordinances, infrastructure locations and department requirements that may affect the project.

Please come prepared with a sketch or basic vision of what you have in mind for the project. We also ask you to answer as many questions as possible on the **pre-development checklist**. This will allow us to better understand your project and provide the most accurate information to you. The end goal is to explain the development process you will be following, provide you with any applicable documentation including checklists, timing information and address any questions you may have. Finally, a primary contact person will be assigned to act as your liaison from the beginning to end of the process to facilitate the success of your project.

Minutes from this meeting will be recorded and provided so that all parties understand what has been discussed and what is expected as your project moves forward. A copy of the minutes will be emailed to all participants after the meeting.

Pre-development meetings are not required but are highly encouraged for the benefit of increased efficiency of the project development process.

****The Pre-development meetings and process have not yet been finalized but will soon be implemented. Check back for live links that will direct you to the pre-development meeting requests and checklist. Contact Brady Quinn with questions: 319-743-6018.***

Starting Your Project

Note: For Steps 1-4 that require approval by the Planning & Zoning Commission, there are monthly submittal deadlines to be placed on the following month's agenda. [Click here](#) to view that schedule.

STEP 1: Check Your Zoning - Before significant time is invested in your project, check the zoning map to ensure that your project complies with existing zoning codes or requires a zoning change in order to proceed.

The Zoning Map is available on the [City of Marion's website](#).

Want to dig deeper? [Zoning regulations can be reviewed here](#).

The purpose of Marion's Zoning Regulations are to establish standards and procedures that:

- Implement the Comprehensive Plan for the community
- Promote, preserve and protect the health, safety and general welfare of the community
- Preserve architecturally, historically and archaeologically signification areas of the community
- Preserve environmentally sensitive areas of the community
- Provide a balance between the rights of the landowners and the responsibility and authority of the City to review and regulate the subdivision of land and the installation of public improvements within the community
- Provide for a balance between the rights of individual land owners and the economic, social and environmental concerns of the public.

Amendments to Zoning Regulations are reviewed and recommended by the Planning & Zoning Commission to the City Council.

STEP 2: Request a Rezoning (if needed)- Rezoning requests must be made in writing and submitted to the Planning and Development Department. A Rezoning Application will outline the material needed to submit the request. The Planning and Zoning Commission must review the request, hold a public hearing and make a recommendation to the City Council. The City Council will then review the request, including three readings of the proposed ordinance change and hold a public hearing, before final action can be taken.

A rezoning process typically takes three to six months from submission to completion. We recommend that you attend both the Planning and Zoning Commission meeting and City Council meeting in which the request is acted upon.

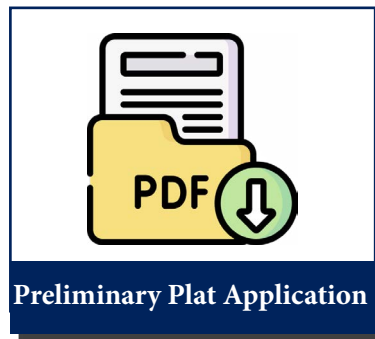
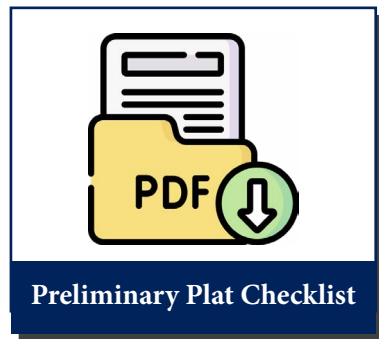
If you have any questions regarding the rezoning instructions and application, please contact Ama Bartlett at 319-743-6320 or at abartlett@cityofmarion.org.



Starting Your Project

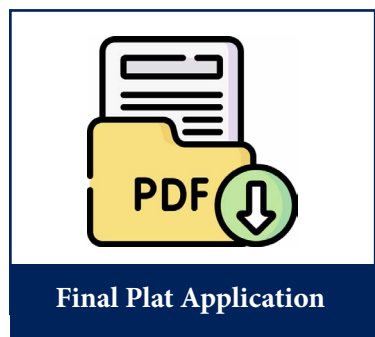
STEP 3: Does your property need to be platted? Preliminary Plats indicate how unplatted land will be subdivided between individual lots, out-lots and right-of-way prior to being final platted. Preliminary plats involve a lot of details that must be completed by a civil engineer. A preliminary plat must be received no later than 4:30 PM on the second Monday of each month in order to be considered at the following month's Planning and Zoning Commission meeting.

Once the commission has acted on the request, it is forwarded to the City Council for final consideration. This process typically takes two months from submission to final consideration.



Final Plats are required to create the subdivided legal parcels of ground illustrated by a preliminary plat. Final plats are recorded with the County.

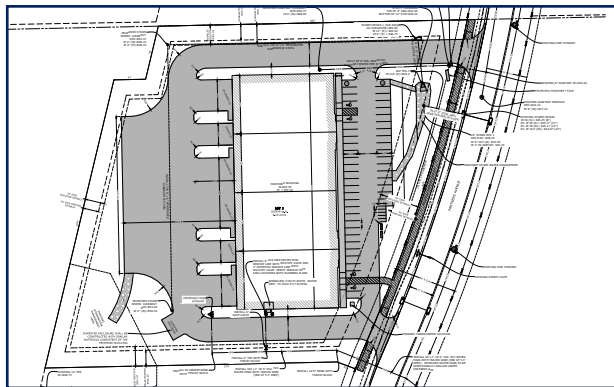
Once the Final Plat application has been submitted, City staff will forward it to the Subdivision Review Committee prior to proceeding to a City Council meeting. Once City staff has received any revised documents, associated fees, a signed memorandum of agreement and a request from the applicant to proceed to Council, the plat is forwarded to the City Council for final consideration. This process typically takes one month from submission to final consideration.



Starting Your Project

For a final plat to be approved, the developer is required to pay a Storm Water Drainage Fee equal to \$400/acre. It is due prior to the City Council approving your final plat. This fee goes towards expenditures for stormwater management to accommodate additional runoff from new development. Final plat's may have sanitary/storm hookup or access fees due with submission. Associated fees can be found in Chapter 100 and 100A of the Marion City Code.

STEP 4: Submit a Site Plan – A site plan is a dimensional representation of your project that includes basic layout information, landscaping, signage locations, architectural sheets, engineering details and other important specifications about your project. A fee is required with the submittal of your Site Plan. Use this check list as you complete your site plan and application.



After submitting your initial site plan, City staff will prepare written comments and invite you to attend a review meeting with various city departments. Depending on the size of the site, different stormwater detention practices are required. For sites over one acre, the Iowa DNR requires a permit application and the City of Marion requires a Major Erosion Control Permit. For questions or concerns regarding any stormwater or sanitary sewer related issue, please call the City of Marion Engineering Department.

Based on your project type/location/zoning, there will then be two possible approval paths.

Path 1: If staff determines that the proposed site plan/building elevations do not require additional review, the applicant will receive written notice of the approved site plan. The site plan will then need to be resubmitted with the formal building plans to ensure no changes have occurred. Approved site plans expire 120 days from the notice of approval.



Path 2: If City staff determines that your site plan and associated building elevations require City Council approval, a tentative approval timeline will be developed during the site plan review. Depending on your project location, additional review may be required by the Uptown Marion Main Street Design Committee, the Historic Preservation Commission, as well as the Planning & Zoning Commission.

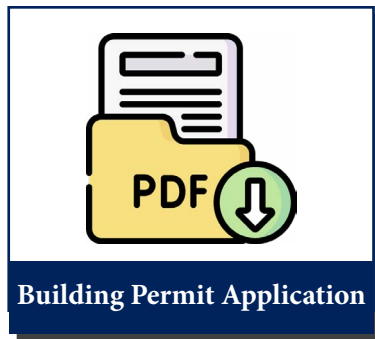
Starting Your Project

STEP 5: Apply for Permits – A variety of permits may be required for your project to commence. Complete information about required permits can be found [here](#).

All permits can now be applied for online by State of Iowa registered contractors [here](#). The online permit service allows for viewing of past and current permits for all property in the City of Marion. Contractors are also able to track status, pay for permits online and view inspection results.

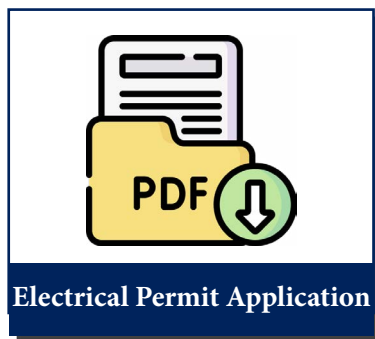
If you have questions or need assistance in completing an application please contact the Building Division at 319-743-6330, via email, buildingpermits@cityofmarion.org, or by visiting us on the second floor at City Hall - 1225 6th Avenue, Marion, IA 52302.

Permit Types



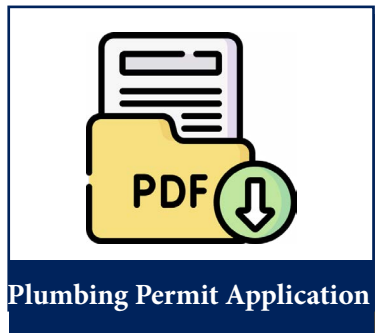
Building Permits - Applicants are required to submit a digital set of plans for review (include site plan, storm water detention with calculations, landscaping, foundation plans, elevations, floor plans with all dimensions, square footage, building and stair cross sections soil reports, structural calculations). Approval of a building permit can take up to three weeks depending on your building size and complexity.

[Applications](#) can be submitted online.



An Electrical permit is required to install, alter, replace or remodel any electrical system. Once your application has been submitted, City staff typically is able to approve the permit within 1-2 business days. Plans are to be submitted with the application.

[Applications](#) can be submitted online.



A Plumbing permit is required for any plumbing work involving construction, alteration and relocation of the water drain, waste or vent systems. Once your application has been submitted, City staff typically approves the permit within 1-2 business days. Plans are to be submitted with the application.

[Applications](#) can be submitted online.

Permit Types



Mechanical Permit Application

A **Mechanical permit** is required when installing, altering or replacing a mechanical system. Once your application has been submitted, City staff typically approves the permit within 1-2 business days. Plans are to be submitted with the application.

[Applications](#) can be submitted online.



Fire Alarm Application

Fire Permits – Sprinkler and Alarm: The City of Marion requires contractors to have permits prior to any installation, modification or removal of fire alarm systems, sprinkler systems, suppression systems, smoke control systems or underground fire lines. Plans are to be submitted with the application.

[Application](#) can be submitted online.



Fire Sprinkler Application

Plans and applications can be submitted to firepermits@cityofmarion.org. These will be distributed to the various City departments for review and the applicant will be notified upon completion in 2 to 4 weeks.



Sign Contractor License Application

Sign Permits are required to be filed with the Planning Division. Signs installed in the City of Marion must be installed by a licensed sign contractor to ensure proper installation and conformance to City Code. Once your application has been submitted, staff will review your application to verify that the requirements have been met. The review process for a Sign Contractor's License typically takes up to one week. The review process for a Sign Permit typically takes one to two weeks.

[Applications](#) can be submitted online.



Sign Permit Application

Permit Types

Online Permit Service

The online permit service allows for viewing of past and current permits for property in the City of Marion, Iowa. Contractors are also able to apply for permits, track status, pay for permits online and view inspection results. [Learn more.](#)

Utility Information

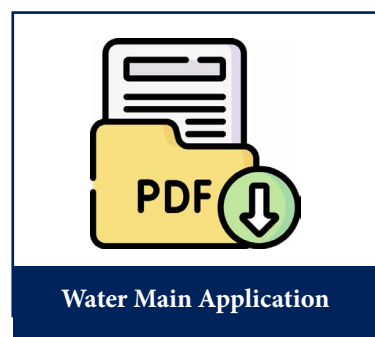
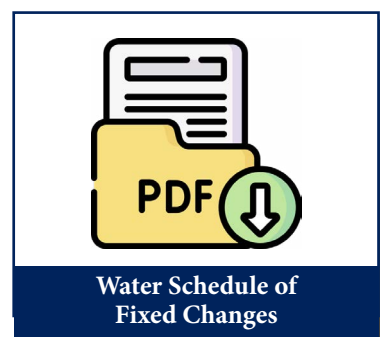
Installation of Water Mains: Developers/builders must purchase new water meters from the Marion Water Department. The Marion Water Department will set the new meter as part of your project. Builders must use copper water pipe unless approved prior to installation. Builders must size the water meter and call the department to order. Non-stock meters have long lead times, please order large meters as early as possible. Both new and remodeled commercial and industrial buildings need to have a Reduced Pressure Backflow Device (RPZ) installed for each water meter service.

Please use the Marion Water Department Water Main Application Form for all new water main installations in Marion. There is a \$100 charge for plan review per application, the plan review charge is increased at the Water Board's discretion. Some of the most common additional fees are detailed below:

- \$200 per tap plus materials on all new water mains. Water Department installs taps up to 2" in diameter.
- \$279 + tax for new 3/4" water meter for all new homes and businesses (price depends on meter size).
- \$1 per linear foot for new water main installation or \$500 minimum charge which covers inspection and testing costs. Please contact the office for most up to date water meter pricing due to price depending on the exact meter size needed.

New "public" water mains that are dedicated to the City will need to complete the [DNR Water Permits](#).

Builders must call **319-743-6310** for installation of a water meter as soon as internal water lines are installed and tested. Buildings must have permanent heat source operating. Temporary construction meters and fire hydrant meter sets are available upon request. A deposit is required prior to placement. Call **319-743-6310** for more information.

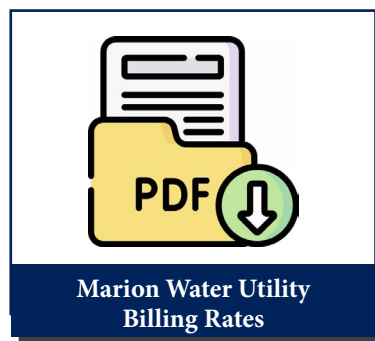
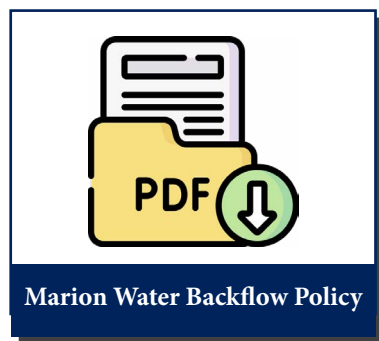


Water Billing Information

New businesses need to establish an account for City services by calling the Marion Water Department at 319-743-6310. A deposit is required for leased sites and businesses with high water use. The deposit amount varies based on anticipated water consumption. If the premises is new construction, a water meter must be installed by the Marion Water Department and purchased by the new owner.

All businesses need a RPZ backflow prevention device installed on the water service line. These devices need to be certified and inspected annually by a licensed tester. More information can be found below by reviewing the Marion Water Backflow Policy.

The stormwater utility fee for non-residential properties will appear on your water bill. This fee is calculated based on the amount of hard, or impervious, surfaces on your parcel. Impervious surfaces include, but are not limited to, parking lots, sidewalks, roof tops and compacted gravel. A credit policy has been established providing a discount of up to 50 percent off the non-residential stormwater utility fee for property owners who have implemented proper measures to control stormwater on their property.



Other Utility Contacts

MidAmerican Energy (Gas)

Contact: Greg Wildebour

Phone: 319-298-5162

www.midamericanenergy.com/home

Alliant Energy (Electric)

Contact: Dave Blank

Phone: 319-786-1947

www.alliantenergy.com

Linn County REC (Electric and Gas)

Contact: Bob Vesley

Phone: 319-377-1587

www.linncountyrec.com

Mediacom (Phone and Internet)

Contact: Fred Rohmberg

Phone: 319-395-9699

mediacomtoday.com

ImOn Communications (Phone and Internet)

Contact: Matt Kearney

Phone: 319-450-0653

www.imon.net

CenturyLink (Phone and Internet)

Contact: Brent Giese

Phone: 563-321-3860

www.centurylink.com

Business Incentives & Financial Assistance

The City of Marion has a strong track record of collaborating and partnering with businesses who make certain investments in our local economy. The City of Marion has adopted an Economic Development Policy that guides decisions to best support our local business community with fiscally responsible public assistance. Businesses and projects seeking assistance from the City of Marion should follow the application process outlined below. Any questions should be directed to Marion Economic Development Corporation. MEDCO facilitates the process for any Marion companies pursuing incentive and tools at both the state and local level. All applications for financial assistance should be submitted to MEDCO.

[Learn more.](#)

Key Contact: Nick Glew, MEDCO President

Phone: 319-743-4724

Email: nick@medcoiowa.org

Web: www.medcoiowa.org



Financial Assistance
Application



Marion Incentives