



## Human Resources

### Employee committees:

#### **Team Marion: 6.4 – Enhance employee experience through a meaningful and intentional engagement model**

The Employee Experience Committee had a kickoff meeting with the City's new HR generalist. The committee discussed ideas and goals to establish a vision for the committee's future. An immediate goal is to get representation on the committee from each department to provide more comprehensive feedback/buy-in from employees. The committee is focused on employee activities, benefits, employee communications, onboarding/orientation, etc.

The Safety Committee will continue with efforts to finalize the City's comprehensive safety manual. Another goal for this committee is revamping accident reporting within the organization. The committee will then be able to review workplace accidents and help identify trends within the organization to ensure Marion University trainings are geared toward these trends to bring awareness and promote a safe workplace.

### Chapter 411 legislative update:

Staff is working with PDCM, Lynch Dallas and our comparable cities to make adjustments based on recent state legislation regarding Chapter 411 updates and public safety medical retirements. The update requires the City to cover expenses for the cause of medical retirements. Part of the analysis includes evaluating worker's compensation claim vendors. Look for more to come as additional information becomes available.

### Health Insurance Renewal:

Staff is working with PDCM on the renewal for the 2025 benefits year. Certain plan design aspects are currently being evaluated such as hearing aid benefits and over-the-counter prescriptions to reduce unnecessary costs while still providing a competitive benefit package for members of Team Marion.

## IT

### Community Development software:

#### **Efficient & Effective Government: 2.1 – Capitalize on new and existing operational strategies to maximize opportunities and reduce risk**

Staff has been working to implement new software for Community Development for permitting, inspections, licensing and rental housing management. The implementation began in March 2024. Staff



reviewed the data extraction with BS&A on Oct. 10 to refine any missing information. On Oct. 28, staff will work with BS&A to ensure a pre-go-live in preparation for the actual go-live on Nov. 12.

#### **Security Cameras:**

The cameras in the Uptown Artway have been replaced and now provide better resolution and analytics. The installation of cameras at Draper Park is underway and cameras will be installed at Thomas Park, the Lowe Park concession stand, the Lowe Park playground on Irish Drive, Hanna Park and Starry Park. Installation began on Oct. 7 and will take three weeks to complete.

#### **Public WiFi:**

##### **Vibrant Community: 1.4 – Enhance accessibility for residents and visitors through transit, sidewalk and other mobility-focused programs**

With progress on the Central Plaza project, staff met with ImOn on Sept. 30 to prepare for work to begin. Fiber optics installation is set to be complete by mid-October on the southeast corner of the Central Plaza. This is necessary to bring connectivity to the Central Plaza and the depot. Staff met with ImOn on Oct. 8 to determine equipment power enclosure locations.

#### **ImOn Master Services Agreement:**

ImOn provided a final draft of the renewal of the Master Services Agreement. This renewal will consolidate several individual accounts for telecommunication services into a single agreement and bring it up to date with the current needs of both ImOn and the City. The City Attorney is currently reviewing the agreement for final consideration of the terms and conditions. The agreement will be on the Oct. 17 Council agenda for review and possible approval.

#### **Communication optimization:**

Staff identified several analog phone lines that were consolidated to reduce expenses as part of an audit of our telecommunication services. This effort reduces expenses and maximizes our use of our services with ImOn in our Master Services Agreement. Next steps include exploring call recording options for specific departments or individuals and reviewing options for a text alert service to notify employees when there is severe weather or threatening activity in a City facility.

#### **Fiber optics assets:**

Staff is working to properly identify and inventory the current fiber within the community. Staff plans to utilize GPS to ensure the locations are more accurate. Staff is evaluating software to assist in managing the fiber assets and will include it in the budget request process. A full scope of work and timeline will be developed in December 2024.



## Finance

### Procurement Cards

**Efficient & Effective Government: 2.1 – Capitalize on new and existing operational strategies to maximize opportunities and reduce risk**

This project is now complete as procurement cards have been issued. The software integration with Payment Net (procurement card software), New World Systems (financial software), and Laserfiche (records software) is working seamlessly, adding efficiencies to the accounts payable process. The focus will now shift to the City's existing list of vendors and identifying which vendors should be paid with card rather than check.

### Cost allocation methodology:

A contract was signed with Cost Advisory Services, Inc. (CASI). The goal is for the cost allocation plan to be complete in December. Financial data has been shared with CASI and a meeting was held on Sept. 30 to collaborate on the structure of the plan.

## Police

### Staffing:

The Police Department is currently funded for 48 sworn officers. Following a medical retirement in September, the department is down to 42 sworn officers and another is scheduled to retire in November. Following the one-year suspension of the Civil Service Commission hiring requirements, the department has extended three conditional offers, with a fourth offer being extended soon. Three of the new officers are slated to start in late October and the next academy class starts in January.

### Traffic cameras:

Staff submitted a 600-page request to the Iowa Department of Transportation (IDOT) for an automated traffic enforcement (ATE) permit on June 30. A total of 58 locations throughout the city were requested to address speeding and 29 were approved. All requests for fixed locations were denied for the speed cameras. Staff will connect with the IDOT to determine why each location was denied. This does not impact red-light cameras, and the Marion Police Department can continue to operate red-light cameras as they always have. Staff also requested to install an additional ATE sign on Highway 100 and move a sign on Highway 151 closer to the intersection for the red-light cameras. The cameras at these locations were shut off as of 4 p.m. on Sept. 30 and will be turned back on once the signage is installed. Additional information will be added on the City's website. Staff will update Council throughout the process.



## Fire

### **Staffing:**

Recruitment for Community Emergency Response Team (CERT) volunteers began in late July. Thirteen inaugural CERT volunteers completed their orientation on Sept. 26. These members will support community risk reduction and emergency management. With the transition of the paid-on-call volunteer firefighter program to the CERT program, the department has transitioned from a combination fire department to a career fire department.

### **Training Facility:**

Site grading and the foundation for the training tower are now complete. Construction of the training tower will begin this month and should be complete by the end of winter. Foundation design and specifications for the burn cell will go out for bid this fall, with plans to start construction in the spring of 2025. Total project completion is planned for fall 2025.

### **Firetruck Replacement:**

The replacement truck for Engine 94 has been delivered. It is currently being fitted with equipment and technology. It will go into service in November at Fire Station No. 3, with the radio and apparatus identifier of Engine 93. The new engine will be ceremoniously pushed in at the department's 150th anniversary event on Oct. 12.

### **Ambulance/Emergency Medical Services (EMS) Study:**

Public Consulting Group (PCG) was selected to complete an Emergency Medical Services (EMS) feasibility study in Marion. PCG connected with various stakeholders while onsite in September and created two ways to gather community input for the study. Residents were invited to a public engagement open house on Sept. 17 and an online survey was open until Oct. 7. The tentative timeline includes completion in February 2025.

### **Standard of Cover Study:**

Last week, the Marion Fire Department met with representatives from Area Ambulance, Cedar Rapids Fire, Linn County Public Health and other agencies, as well as instructors from the Center of Public Safety Excellence, to learn more about the development of Marion's first formalized Standard of Cover (SOC). The SOC is a detailed study of a community's characteristics, hazards and threats (risk), the capabilities of a fire department to respond to risks based on resources, historical response performance and recommendations for process improvement to provide reliable emergency service. The SOC is a



required component of the accreditation process tied to numerous core competencies and performance indicators. [Attached](#) is an example of the Lawrence-Douglas County Fire Medical SOC.

## Public Works

### Wastewater 28E:

**Efficient & Effective Government: 2.2– Broaden partnerships internally and externally within the community through collaborative shared services frameworks**

The 28E agreement with the City of Cedar Rapids is currently under review by legal. Any comments will be taken into consideration for a final agreement that will come before Council by the end of 2024.

### New Public Works facility:

**Sustainable Infrastructure & Services: 4.3– Implement and maintain the sustainable practices of waste management**

Staff has relocated to the new facility, and it is open to the public under a temporary occupancy permit. A ribbon cutting and open house event was held on Sept. 24. A few punch list items, including landscaping and adjusting the heating system, remain on the facility. Staff anticipates a final acceptance of the new facility at a Council meeting in the spring of 2025.

### Automated collection:

**Sustainable Infrastructure & Services: 4.3– Implement and maintain the sustainable practices of waste management**

The automated collection trucks have started to arrive and all carts have been delivered to residents. Automated collection will begin the week of Oct. 14.

### Stormwater Master Plan:

**Sustainable Infrastructure & Services: 4.1– Implement and maintain sustainable infrastructure for streets, sanitary and storm sewers, trees and water**

A contract with HDR was approved by Council on Sept. 19. Staff is gathering information pertaining to the existing storm sewer system and identifying gaps. This information will allow HDR to start building the model.

### Tower Terrace Road:

**Community & Economic Development: 3.1 – Support sustainable business growth to diversify the City's tax base**

- C Avenue to Alburnett Road Segment A (Meadowknolls Road to Alburnett Road)



Landscaping improvements and final punch list items are all that remain. This section of roadway will not be open to traffic or trail users until the Cedar Rapids section is complete and open to traffic. At last check, the Cedar Rapids portion has a completion date of Nov. 25, with Tower Terrace being open to traffic at that time.

- **RAISE/MPDG/CPF Funding**

Staff applied for the Multimodal Project Discretionary Grant (MPDG) for the portion of Tower Terrace Road between Interstate 380 and Highway 13 that is not currently funded through other sources. The awardees will be announced in November. In the meantime, staff is working with other agencies to receive Community Project Funding (CPF) going forward.

#### **Central Plaza construction:**

**Vibrant Community: 1.1 – Make Marion a regional, cultural and entertainment destination for residents and visitors**

Progress continues on Marion’s Central Plaza in City Square Park. Here’s a look at the latest [Construction Update](#). The project is on schedule and is expected to be completed this December.

#### **Citywide parking:**

**Safe Community: 5.2 – Protect lives and property through enhanced code enforcement policies and practices**

The City continues to make incremental progress in establishing “No Parking” zones along streets. Areas One and Two are complete. Area Three will include all cul-de-sacs that currently allow parking. Cul-de-sac locations have been mapped out with hydrant, mailbox and potential parking shown. Once staff work is complete, the listing will be taken to Council for consideration, potentially in November.

#### **Alburnett Road CPF grant:**

**Community & Economic Development: 3.2 – Ensure Marion’s growth is guided by planning principles and develops in a sustainable and resilient manner**

Staff continues to work with the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) to submit information they have requested and move through their approval process. As a reminder, this new layer of review at the federal level is required due to the award of CPF funding.

#### **ARPA sewer:**

**Sustainable Infrastructure & Services: 4.3– Implement and maintain the sustainable practices of waste management**

Bids were due for Segment VII (7) on Oct. 8. Staff will bring the selected bid to Council for consideration and approval. A project calendar was approved for Segment IV (4) and V (5) by Council on Oct. 3, with



letting to take place on Nov. 12. This segment contains both the sanitary ARPA and water ARPA funding.

#### **Brick streets:**

A survey was mailed to residents who live in historic neighborhoods and/or on existing or proposed brick streets. The results were presented to the Historic Preservation Committee (HPC). The HPC provided feedback which has been shared with Council. Staff is preparing materials to present to Council for feedback so a formal policy can be crafted and adopted.

## **Parks & Recreation**

#### **Outdoor Aquatic Center:**

**Vibrant Community: 1.1 – Make Marion a regional, cultural and entertainment destination for residents and visitors**

The Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) agreement to purchase land for the proposed outdoor aquatic center has been finalized. Staff is working to develop a timeline with various milestones for the duration of the project. Initial conversations with Waters Edge Design are happening regarding a future contract and staff has begun preparing for a bond vote in the fall of 2025. This project will continue to progress over the next 2-3 years.

#### **Reforestation Master Plan:**

**Sustainable Infrastructure & Services: 4.2 – Create an environmentally conscious community**

Council approved the plan on Sept. 19. As noted during the Council meeting, staff will utilize this tool to develop recommended projects to help inform our annual budget process.

#### **Draper Park development:**

**Vibrant Community: 1.3 – Preserve the historical character of the city**

To date, the site has been surveyed, cleared and graded to elevation, railroad ties were set, the refurbished caboose was transported to the site and electrical infrastructure has been installed. The section of Grant Wood Trail that is parallel to Draper Park will be closed for replacement on Oct. 15.

#### **Plaza capital campaign:**

Thanks to Mayor AbouAssaly, Jill Ackerman, Al Rowe and the Marion Parks & Recreation Foundation members, \$1,007,350 has been pledged towards the Central Plaza capital campaign to date. The brick sale campaign closed in August and the campaign committee met on Oct. 1 to discuss campaign close-out efforts. The committee identified potential donors to reach out to seek additional donations. Staff anticipates the project will be complete by the end of 2024.





### **Central Plaza operations:**

**Vibrant Community: 1.1 – Make Marion a regional, cultural and entertainment destination for residents and visitors**

Staff has been working on a draft operations plan that highlights general operations for the ice loop, hours, programming and other opportunities. Staff has been in contact with the Des Moines Parks and Recreation Department and are expected to shadow their ice rink set up in November 2024.

## **Community Development**

### **Comprehensive Plan & moratorium:**

**Community & Economic Development: 3.2 – Ensure Marion’s growth is guided by planning principles and develops in a sustainable and resilient manner**

The visioning committee will review the draft land use map and submit comments via an online portal through mid-October. A joint City Council and Planning and Zoning Commission meeting is scheduled for Oct. 23. The project remains on schedule for completion in March 2025.

The moratorium is set to expire on Nov. 9, with an anticipated renewal through July 1, 2025. The additional time will allow for the completion of the Comprehensive Plan and updates to the zoning code and map. As noted during the Oct. 1 Council work session, work will commence in concert with the Comprehensive Plan update to officiate zoning and any other code amendments to ensure our regulations align with the vision outlined in the Comprehensive Plan. This work will effectively address the moratorium issues.

### **Parking study implementation:**

**Community & Economic Development: 3.1 – Support sustainable business growth to diversify the City’s tax base**

Following Council support of staff’s recommendation, staff will work with Council to establish the committee by early winter.

### **Linn County Metro Hazard Mitigation Plan:**

**Efficient & Effective Government: 2.2 – Broaden partnerships internally and externally within the community through collaborative shared services frameworks**

Linn County is currently updating its Multi-Jurisdictional Hazard Mitigation Plan which includes all cities, unincorporated areas, and school districts in the county. The plan identifies how communities can minimize the negative impacts of hazards like tornadoes, drought, and flooding. In addition to the





benefits of planning ahead, communities with a FEMA-approved hazard mitigation plan qualify for Hazard Mitigation Assistance (HMA) grant programs to complete projects that minimize the negative impacts of hazards. Staff worked with the East Central Iowa Council of Governments (ECICOG) to complete surveys and review plan updates. Staff anticipates bringing the final plan to Council for review and approval in December.

#### **Safe Routes to Schools:**

Staff applied for a Transportation Alternatives Program (TAP) grant to assist with the construction of a 10-foot trail along the east side of 15th Street from 3rd Avenue to the Marion Independent High School. The sidewalk oversizing was identified in the Safe Routes to School (SRTS) plan as a priority project due to the number of students who live in the surrounding neighborhoods and utilize the walkway. Grant awardees are expected to be announced in January 2025, with project letting in October 2025. Staff continues to work with the school districts and ECICOG to implement the SRTS plan elements including identifying sidewalk gaps throughout the community and determining strategies to complete installation.

#### **Owen Block/Maidrite redevelopment:**

Work continues on the exterior of the building. Tuckpointing and railings were to be complete by Oct. 1, but an extension was granted until Oct. 30.

## **Library**

#### **Bookmobile:**

**Vibrant Community: 1.2 – Enhance educational, arts, culture and recreational opportunities (e.g. walkable trails) in the community**

The bookmobile is complete and will be delivered by Oct. 14. A third-party inspection will be completed to ensure the vehicle has been manufactured and finished to the contractually agreed-upon specifications. The initial inspection yielded a few minor punch list items that were mitigated the week of Sept. 30. Once the vehicle arrives, it will be outfitted for operations and deployed for outreach to the community. A ribbon-cutting ceremony will be scheduled to debut the bookmobile.

## **City Manager's Office**

#### **Lobbying efforts:**

The city manager continues to work with the City's lobbyist to foster positive relationships with state legislators. In response to requests from legislators, and in collaboration with a few peer communities, a



list of legislative proposals have been shared with key legislators in Des Moines. Additionally, the city manager was invited to participate as a panelist for the Iowa Taxpayers Association Annual Symposium in December. This item will transition to a regular work plan item.

#### **Collaborative Growth Initiative:**

Council received and filed a draft Greater Cedar Rapids Marketing Strategy report on April 18, 2024. The report was prepared by the Development Counsellors International (DCI). Mayor AbouAssaly has been working with the other partners on the recruitment of a position with the Cedar Rapids Metro Economic Alliance. This position will be responsible for coordinating activities in line with the report.

#### **Policy Review:**

**Efficient & Effective Government: 2.2 – Broaden partnerships internally and externally within the community through collaborative shared services frameworks**

This effort is currently focused on implementing new policies for Public Works and completing regularly scheduled departmental reviews. The final/adopted policies will be placed on the City's website by December 2024 and will transition to a regular work plan item.

#### **Wayfinding:**

**Vibrant Community: 1.4 – Enhance accessibility for residents and visitors through transit, sidewalk and other mobility-focused programs**

The lighted pillars for the CeMar bridge will be installed the week of Oct. 14 and a lighting ceremony with the Marion Chamber is planned for later in October. The City received a draft of the Community-wide Wayfinding Master Plan and the project team is currently reviewing it. The consultant provided a presentation to Council in September and the plan is expected to come before Council next month.

#### **Grow housing:**

The purpose of Grow Housing is to develop a strategy to address housing affordability challenges and create a more equitable and sustainable living environment in our community. Staff is exploring and gathering data to take a proactive approach to revitalizing older neighborhoods in collaboration with our local partners. The goal is to improve housing conditions and create healthy homes with increased property values. Staff has been working with MEDCO and a group of local partners to develop surveys to identify owner-occupied single-family homes, as well as single-family homes that are used as rental properties. This information will assist in establishing the needs of our homeowner and renter populations, and tailor rehabilitation programs accordingly.



**BellTower Lofts economic development:**

The development agreement is finalized and will be discussed with Council on Oct. 17 as the public hearing is set for Nov. 7. The tentative timeline includes demolition and asbestos removal starting in December 2024 with full project completion in October 2025.