



Human Resources

Employee committees:

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

The Employee Experience Committee is assessing providers for the City's Employee Assistance Program (EAP) and has interviewed two providers. Next steps include holding employee forums to ensure all employee questions are captured as they relate to EAP services. A wellness vendor assessment will follow the EAP evaluation.

The Safety Committee recently updated the accident reporting form to capture all aspects of safety. The form will be utilized to identify necessary safety training. Additionally, the committee drafted a Return-to-Work policy that will allow employees to work on a temporary job assignment while their injury heals.

IT

Community Development software:

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

The new Community Development software for permitting, inspections, licensing and rental housing management has been fully implemented. Staff is now phasing out the old software, including removing support and licensing for the previous modules. This should be completed by the end of March.

Security Cameras:

The installation of cameras in city parks is complete. This includes Draper Park, Thomas Park, the Lowe Park concession stand, the Lowe Park playground on Irish Drive, Hanna Park and Starry Park. Although cameras have been installed at Draper Park, work is yet to be completed to gain connectivity. Staff continues to work with ImOn to determine a date to complete their work on the connectivity. Completion is anticipated in February. Staff is currently reviewing proposals for the installation of cameras at the Public Works facility.

Public WiFi:

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



Due to weather delays, ImOn was unable to begin the installation process in December. They are now expected to begin installation next week.

Fiber optics assets:

Staff evaluated software solutions to help manage the City's fiber assets and included a request in the FY 26 budget. Staff continue to identify and inventory the current fiber within the community, and review agreements to ensure they are memorialized and incorporated into the City's records management repository.

Century Link audit:

As part of the Century Link audit, we identified analog lines used for services such as fax, fire alarms and 911 calls. Analog lines that were not being used were removed from the account with Lumen (formerly Century Link). Staff is in the process of migrating services for the remaining lines, using newer technology at a lower monthly cost.

Finance

FEMA Derecho Grant:

The City received the final payment in the amount of \$479,896 for a Citywide Vegetated Debris project in early January. The final Waterway Debris Removal project is nearing completion of the federal review process. The Donated Resources project, with no City share, and the Management Costs project are next on the list. Thank you to Ashley Hinson's office for helping advance these projects through the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) process.

Cost allocation methodology:

A draft cost allocation plan was received by the consultant, Cost Advisory Services, Inc. (CASI). Following staff review, a final plan is anticipated by the end of February. Through this process, staff has been identifying areas of improvement for the City's chart of accounts to ensure efficient tracking of costs by program.

Police

Traffic cameras:

On Oct. 1, 2024, the Police Department was issued a permit to continue operating the mobile unit. However, because there was no warning signage on Highway 100 at the city limits, the department was unable to deploy the mobile unit until signage was installed. The signage is necessary under the new



automated traffic enforcement (ATE) law. Because the signage would be on a major highway, the City needed a permit from the Iowa Department of Transportation (IDOT). The IDOT has issued the permit, and the signage was erected on Dec. 27, 2024. The signage is required to be in place for 30 days before the mobile unit can be deployed. Therefore, the first date the mobile unit can be deployed is Jan. 27, 2025. Red light cameras were not impacted by the lack of signage. The Police Department appealed permit denials on Nov. 7, 2024, for the fixed speed cameras and several locations for utilizing the mobile unit. The IDOT has 180 days to respond to appeals. In the interim, the department will deploy the mobile unit intermittently between the 29 locations that were approved.

Organization structure:

The Police Department currently has four vacant positions. Of the 44 officers currently onboard, three will participate in the academy starting this month. The department removed an officer from the Drug Enforcement Administration (DEA) Task Force to assist with the Patrol Division. There are plans to refill this position in the future. The department is placing a second sergeant in the Investigations Division, with a goal of adding a third sergeant in late spring 2025.

Fire

Training Facility:

Construction of the training tower is underway and should be completed by early spring. The foundation design and specifications for the burn cell went to bid in December. The public hearing will continue on Jan. 23, in hopes that Council approval of the contract with Draeger Inc. will follow. Construction should begin in the spring of 2025. Total project completion is planned for fall 2025.

Ambulance/Emergency Medical Services (EMS) Study:

The study, conducted by Public Consulting Group (PCG), is nearing completion and will be presented to Council in March.

Standard of Cover Study:

The Standard of Cover (SOC) study is underway and on schedule to be presented to Council in May.

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. Upon completion, the final agreement that will come before Council for review and approval. Staff tentatively anticipates this happening in February.

Automated collection:

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

Automated collection began the week of Oct. 14. The operators are getting more efficient and residents are getting used to the new process. The installation of the Angel Trax camera system on each truck has been completed and has already proven to help resolve customer service inquiries.

Stormwater Master Plan:

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

On Jan. 7, staff provided an update to Council demonstrating the GIS website that will be used to help inform the Stormwater Master Plan. Through the website, residents can give input on where they have experienced stormwater and drainage issues. The public comment period is open until Jan. 2026.

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 is open to traffic.
- **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. Unfortunately, we recently learned the City’s application was not selected for this round of funding. Staff is currently finalizing the RAISE grant application for a second round of funding. An economist reviewed the City’s previous grant application and provided feedback to strengthen the application. Staff is optimistic about the changes that were incorporated and continues to pursue other funding sources.

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. All concrete was poured prior to the latest cold snap and the ice loop concrete recently met its 28-day curing period. The contractor will provide an update and the timeline for completion at the Feb. 4 Council meeting.

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. Staff will bring a listing to Council for consideration in February.

ARPA sewer:

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

Construction is underway on the next two sewer segments funded with ARPA funds. Segment VII (7) received six bids on Oct. 8 and Council approved an agreement with Pirc-Tobin Construction on Oct. 19. Segment IV (4) and V (5) received five bids on Nov. 12 and Council approved an agreement with Boomerang Corp. on Nov. 21.

CeMar Phase V:

Vibrant Community: 1.2 – Enhance educational, arts, culture and recreational opportunities

Staff is working on the final property acquisition and finalizing the environmental for this project. It will then be let by the Iowa Department of Transportation (IDOT).

Parks & Recreation

Outdoor Aquatic Center:

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

On Jan. 9, Council approved an agreement with Waters Edge Design for design and construction planning for the new aquatic center. The first phase of this planning process includes engagement with the Willowood Park neighborhood to determine future plans for the park as the pool nears its end of life. In addition, a steering committee was formed to assist in the project. Staff will provide Council with monthly project updates, with various decision points being brought forward over the next six months.

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 remaining work will be completed in the spring, followed by a ribbon cutting ceremony.

Central Plaza operations:

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

In a recent meeting with the project's contractors, Rinderknecht and B32, staff were made aware of a delay in delivery of dasher boards necessary for the ice loop. Work to finalize the ice loop is now expected to begin in late February. Due to the delays, staff recommends cancelling the soft opening to focus on training and preparing the plaza to open to the public.

Indian Creek Master Plan:

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

The City was awarded \$150,000 in REAP Grant funding for the implementation of Site One as identified in the Indian Creek Master Plan. The project will start later this year with an anticipated completion date in 2026. The site will include a parking area along the creek with access for kayaking or other water activities.

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 met for the last time in Dec. 2024 to review the draft plan. A joint City Council and Planning and Zoning Commission meeting took place on Jan. 16 with the consultant. The plan is scheduled to be reviewed and approved by the Planning and Zoning Commission in February, prior to review and adoption by Council in March.

Council approved a contract with RDG Planning & Design on Jan. 9 for code review and updates to uses permitted within the underlying zoning districts. It also includes review and recommendations for design updates and operational standards for uses identified within the moratorium, as well as landscaping, lighting and signage. The project is underway and will be completed in three stages, proceeding alongside the Comprehensive Plan update, ensuring zoning and other code amendments are aligned with the vision of the Comprehensive Plan.



Parking study implementation:

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

Staff continues to collaborate with Council to establish a committee by early spring. The committee will be composed of a diverse group of stakeholders, including local experts, community leaders and residents, all of whom will bring their perspectives to help address the parking needs within Uptown. The committee will use the recommended implementation strategies in the plan to provide parking relief.

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. The East Central Iowa Council of Governments (ECICOG) plans to make the draft available to the public for review and comment in late January. The final plan will be presented to Council in the spring.

International Code Council (ICC) code updates:

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

Staff is working to adopt the International Code Council’s (ICC) 2024 code updates, which is typically done early in the year following the codes publication. This has been an unusual year as the code books underwent formatting changes and were not published until August 2024. Completion of the updates is yet to be determined as the last of the significant changes has not yet been published.

Library

Bookmobile:

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

The bookmobile celebrated its launch with a ribbon-cutting ceremony on Dec. 6, 2024. The bookmobile will assist in bringing library services to members of the community who may not be able to reach the Uptown location. Since December, the bookmobile has been deployed to several different locations throughout the city. Staff expects additional routes and stops will be added to the program during the warmer weather months.



City Manager's Office

Broad & Main:

Council approved a new development agreement with DCI Group for this important project. DCI Group closed on the property on Jan. 14. Staff will be in contact with DCI Group to discuss next steps.

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 worked with the other partners on the recruitment of a position with the Cedar Rapids Metro Economic Alliance. This position was filled, and Jodi Schafer began service on Jan. 13. A funding request for Marion's share of this initiative is included in this year's budget proposal.

Wayfinding:

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

The project team received an updated draft of the Community-wide Wayfinding Master Plan on Oct. 31. They reviewed it and provided additional feedback and received the final plan on Jan. 15. A funding request for phased implementation was submitted as part of the CIP. The plan will be presented to Council in February.

Website refresh:

A refresh of the City website is currently underway. A project kick-off meeting was held with the Granicus project manager in November and a design workshop is planned for January. In addition to updating the look and feel of the site, the refresh provides departments with the opportunity to do a deep dive into their pages and work on revising the content to be most effective for our residents. In addition, we've added the GovDelivery module for eNewsletters and text notifications. We intend to go live in October 2025.

Mobile food units:

Staff has been working to develop an ordinance regarding mobile food units. Currently, mobile food vendors are licensed under our Solicitor, Peddler, and Transient Merchant code, which is not ideal as there has been a steady increase in food trucks coming to Marion. Staff reviewed sample codes from our comparable cities to create a draft code for Marion. This new chapter would require a license for all mobile food units in order to operate within the city. Licenses would be available annually or for a single



event. The Marion Chamber of Commerce and Uptown Marion have been involved throughout the process and are supportive of the recommended changes. A few edits remain before the final version will be presented to Council in March 2025.

Administrative Law Judge:

Staff is exploring the option of hiring an Administrative Law Judge (ALJ) for fiscal year 2027. The ALJ's primary responsibility will be conducting fair and impartial administrative hearings with defined jurisdiction. This would include cases related to zoning appeals, as well as housing and code enforcement. The specific details of the scope of work will be further defined based on the needs of the City, after several factors have been considered.

City Hall renovation:

Final concept drawings for the renovation are complete. Staff is working to engage a subject matter expert to carry out the planning and interior design work, as well as manage the overall project.