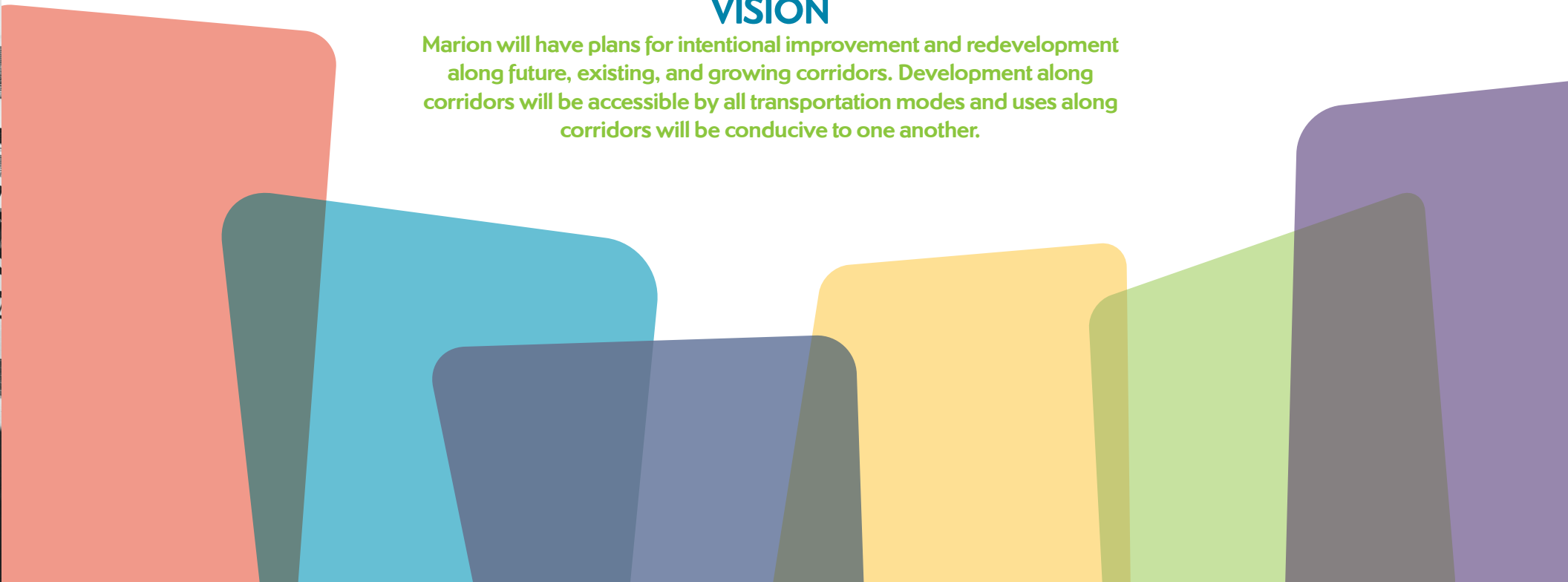


03

CENTERS & CORRIDORS

VISION

Marion will have plans for intentional improvement and redevelopment along future, existing, and growing corridors. Development along corridors will be accessible by all transportation modes and uses along corridors will be conducive to one another.



INTRODUCTION

The future land use map paints the overall land use and mobility directions. But many people experience Marion more granularly through its centers and corridors. Their development requires special design consideration beyond land use to create a positive experience for all users and surrounding neighborhoods.

A focus on the design of Marion's centers and corridors provides an opportunity to positively influence:

- People who live, work, and invest in Marion.
- People who come to Marion to work, learn, visit, and do business. They leave with the impression that these centers and corridors instill.

Priority centers and corridors are those in Figure 3.1. They are areas to develop special design considerations and strongly implement Marion's brand. These include:

Centers: Areas with an increase in activity because of their location and social, economic, or housing mix.

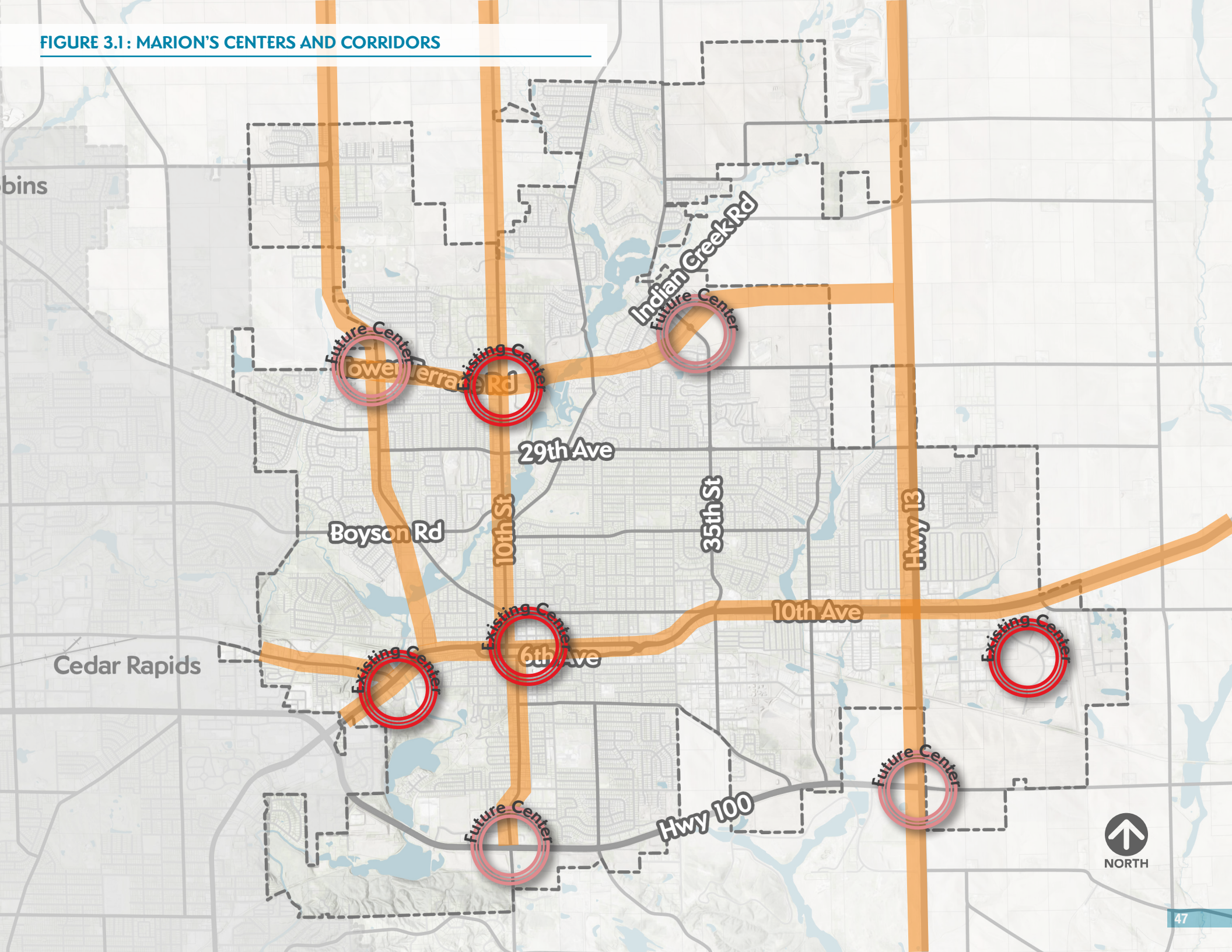
- Uptown Marion
- Tower Terrace Road Nodes
- Highway 100 and S 11th Street Entryway
- MEDCO Business Park Area
- Highway 100 and 13 Area (future)
- The Neighborhood at Indian Creek Plan at Tower Terrace Road and 35th Street (future under the existing adopted sub-area plan)

Corridors: Streets and their surrounding development that provide prominent connections across Marion and deserve higher quality design.

- Tower Terrace Road
- Blair's Ferry Road > 7th/6th Avenue > Highway 151
- 10th Street/S 11th Street
- Highway 13
- Alburnett Road
- County Home Road (future area outside of map context)

Centers and Corridors are the entryways into Marion and create the first impressions of the community. They should be held to high standards for building design, landscaping, and connectivity.

FIGURE 3.1 : MARION'S CENTERS AND CORRIDORS



CENTERS AND CORRIDOR GOALS

1.

**Create
welcoming
experiences at
all entrances to
Marion**

2.

**Develop and
maintain high
visual standards
for prominent
corridors**

3.

**Grow and
support centers
for Marion's
economic base**

4.

**Tactfully
incorporate
centers and
corridors into
neighborhoods**

CENTERS AND CORRIDORS POLICIES AND STRATEGIES

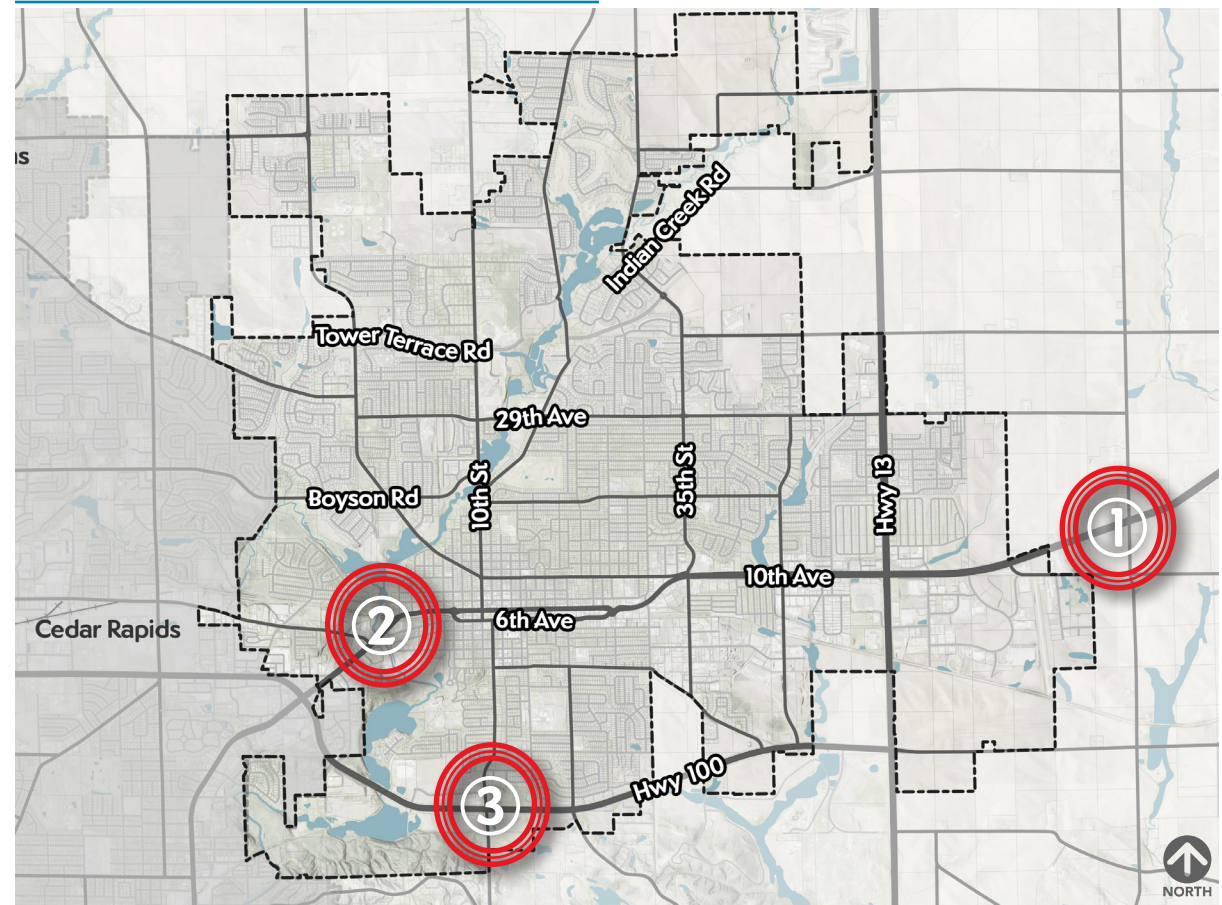
Create welcoming experiences at all entrances to Marion.

- **Implement the Gateway and Wayfinding System.** Depending on the direction, Marion's position creates several distinctly different experiences when entering the city.
 - North. Transitioning from the country to growing residential areas as most people enter from County Home Road. The boundaries of the city are clearly expanding north.
 - South. Most enter from Highway 100 or 151, coming into the Marion at higher speeds and from neighboring cities.
 - East. Most enter on Highway 151 and experience a transition from the country to heavy commercial areas.
 - West. A blurred boundary where Cedar Rapids transitions to Marion. One has to pay close attention to small entry signage or watch for the street name signs to change to know for sure.

The experience entering Marion is very important for first and lasting impressions. Marion completed a wayfinding design guidelines document in 2024. The document provides direction on entryway sign locations, which Figure 3.2 summarizes:

1. Highway 151 and Hindman Road.
2. 7th Avenue and Blair's Ferry Road at Thomas Park.
3. S 11th Street and Highway 100.
4. County Home Road intersections at Alburnett Road, 10th Street, and Lucore Road (outside of map context to the north).

FIGURE 3.2: MARION'S GATEWAYS



Develop and maintain high visual standards for prominent corridors.

- **Implement High Quality Corridor Design.** Streets are Marion's largest public space and provide one of the best opportunities to convey a positive, unique brand. Like entryways, Marion can use its streets to project its brand through banners, light pole fixtures, walkway and bikeway improvements, and further wayfinding. Continuing a mindful strategy for new corridors will create amenities and economic opportunities for Marion.

While surroundings are different, good corridor design has several common attributes, even at different scales and contexts. For example, Uptown versus an arterial street. Improvements along corridors should use design metrics such as:

- **Variety.** A logical sequence of trees and street landscaping, furniture, paving, lighting, art, and other elements that are designed for character and pedestrian amenities.
- **Development.** Require future buildings and adjacent developments to contribute to the quality of the street environment and enhance the experience of travelers along the corridor.
- **Lasting materials.** Attractive and durable materials that are proven to last with both functional and aesthetic purposes.
- **Walkability.** Sidewalks or pedestrian paths with clear and comfortable edges between pedestrian and motor vehicle domains.
- **Lighting.** Attractive and functionally appropriate street lighting that reinforces a consistent image.
- **Branding.** Materials, street furniture, and other features that consistently evoke the character of the street and/or community.
- **Sign scale.** Controlled signage to avoid visual clutter.
- **Directions.** A wayfinding system that includes direction for motorists and pedestrians.
- **Greenery.** Tree canopies with a diverse set of street trees and landscaping to provide street appeal, shade, and comfort near walking routes.
- **Efficient parking.** Site design that shares parking areas and access drives.



Variety and Development Character



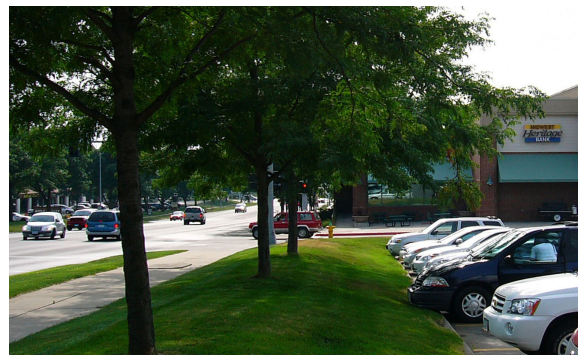
Walkability



Lighting



Branding, Signage, and Wayfinding



Greenery



Efficient Parking

Grow and support centers for Marion's economic base.

People want to live in Marion. Marion needs a strong diversity in commercial uses for the City to continue serving all residents at a high level. Business and industry growth will be contingent on providing adequate infrastructure, building efficient transportation connections, and reserving centers for business activity.

- **Target market sectors that align with the goals of this Plan.** Policies and strategies should focus on providing high levels of public service, including well-maintained infrastructure and strong employer partnerships that add value to Marion through employment growth, taxable valuation, community-oriented site design, and filling service gaps for residents.
- **Maintain a pool of economic development incentive options to use in appropriate circumstances that align with the vision and goals of the Plan.** This may include focusing on shovel-ready sites for business development.
- **Keep Uptown active and seek other areas to replicate Uptown's success.** While the structures and bones of Uptown are unique, the programming and proactive public role in it's success can be used to stimulate other centers in Marion, such as in The Neighborhood growth area.
- **Implement other portions of the Plan to market Marion and attract businesses.**
These elements include:
 - *Connectivity and Highway access*
 - *Diversity of uses*
 - *Support regional Transit efforts*
 - *Workforce attainable housing*
 - *Land uses for business growth*
 - *Quality water, sewer, electric, technology, and street services*

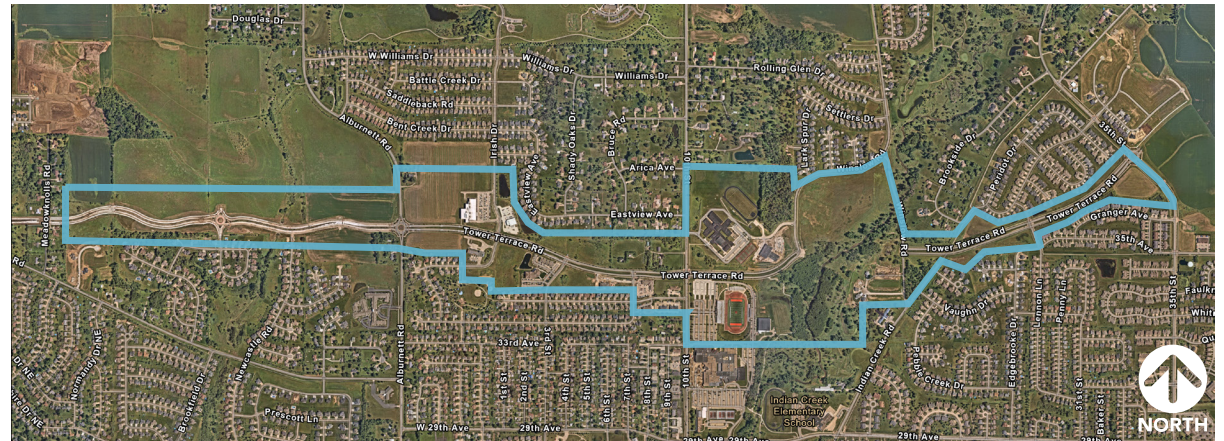
Tactfully incorporate centers and corridors into neighborhoods.

Some centers, like those around the airport area, belong in their own non-residential atmosphere that allows broader synergies of business operations and easy Highway access. However, many non-residential uses with more commercial and service-oriented objectives can integrate into almost any neighborhood.

- **Use design guides on prominent corridors and centers in Marion.** Update zoning and development codes accordingly.
- **Promote projects that assist in the redevelopment and/or restoration of substandard and deteriorating uses in existing centers and corridors.** The City should take an active role to assist in relocating businesses that fall under these land use redirection areas. For example, heavier industrial uses along the 6th and 7th Avenue Central Corridors may be better elsewhere.

POLICY APPROACH: TOWER TERRACE ROAD

Tower Terrace Road through Marion includes areas that are developed with residential and significant civic uses, and other areas that are yet to be developed with many possibilities for future change. This environment exists along what will become one of the primary east/west continuous connections across the northern part of Marion. Regardless of future use, the framework for the urban environment should be efficient, pleasant, and multi-modal. Change, when it comes, is and should be incremental and occurs over time. The Tower Terrace Road policy area is a tool to guide that evolution.



| Tower Terrace Road Area

Use the Following Development Policy for Tower Terrace Road

- **Encourage a mix of destinations.** There are several community civic destinations along the corridor, the YMCA and Linn Mar High School in particular, and neighborhood commercial businesses are precisely the destinations that people want to live near.
- **Link the sidewalk, trail, and bicycle system.** Nearby Lowe Park is a major asset for the region and underscores the importance of convenient, safe pedestrian and bicycle connections across and through the corridor, and to the front door of businesses. The corridor's location can generate a large number of potential trips under one mile, making low-cost alternative modes feasible and comfortable for more people.
- **Respect existing neighborhoods.** The corridor spans many neighborhoods and contributes to the experiences of nearby residents who transverse through and live by the corridor. Preserving neighborhood quality is a primary objective.
- **Allow market driven incremental change.** Marion and its corridors are long-term processes. Tower Terrace Road includes many property owners, all making individual decisions. A policy that wills things to be done in the face of economic and market drivers rarely succeeds. Actual change will occur through individual decisions responding to markets, trends, and goals at the time.
- **Gradually increase the number of community services immediately around the corridor.** Residential development has been very important to Marion's growth, school districts, and living desirability. But the relatively convenient availability of retail and service assets is missing for northern neighborhoods where commercial development becomes far more spotty. Open land along and near Tower Terrace Road can fill some of these gaps.
- **Offer a rewarding environment.** People experience Tower Terrace Road in different ways. The corridor must be scaled at the detail and quality necessary to engage pedestrians. The street environment should be engaging at three basic speed levels: pedestrians (3 mph), scooters and bicycles (12 mph), and motorists. There should be nodes and visual rhythm that provide both interest and orientation along the street (see Goal 2).
- **Connectedness without conflict.** Respond to the needs of both residents and businesses. Business and residents have individual requirements that are sometimes in conflict. Businesses need parking, exposure, identification signs, lighting, and service areas, while residents need calmer streets, landscape, walkways, and, for many, a reasonable level of peace. These conflicting needs often lead to the physical separation and buffering of uses - this does not have to be the case. This physical separation can defeat many mixed-use development goals in the overall plan for Marion. Technique and regulation approaches are on the next page.

Update Zoning Codes and Design Standards to Achieve Connectedness without Conflict



1. Orient commercial and residential service areas toward each other, or locate commercial service areas in places that avoids traffic into neighboring residential development.



2. Generally, opt for placing new lower-density single-use residential farther away from Tower Terrace Road.



3. Manage the size and visibility of commercial signage by focusing signage toward Tower Terrace Road.



4. Use topography, landscaping, and fencing at commercial to residential transitions at rear property lines.



5. Place buildings closer to Tower Terrace Road with parking on the side or rear when screening can limit visibility from residential properties. Exceptions could be for gathering spaces like outdoor dining, seating, plazas, and greenspace.



6. Hide equipment and facilities as much as possible from public and residential views. Above-ground utility equipment, such as utility boxes should be designed to blend into street design, landscaping, or public art.



7. Require lighting in pedestrian areas, but ensure that light fixtures have a cut-off or beveled top cover that directs light toward the ground to reduce off-site illumination.



8. Discourage non-local traffic into adjacent residential areas. One technique are “neck downs” – curb extensions that reduce the width of local streets, which suggests traffic should use Tower Terrace Road over local streets.

Land Use and Mobility Context - Achieving Connectedness without Conflict on Tower Terrace Road

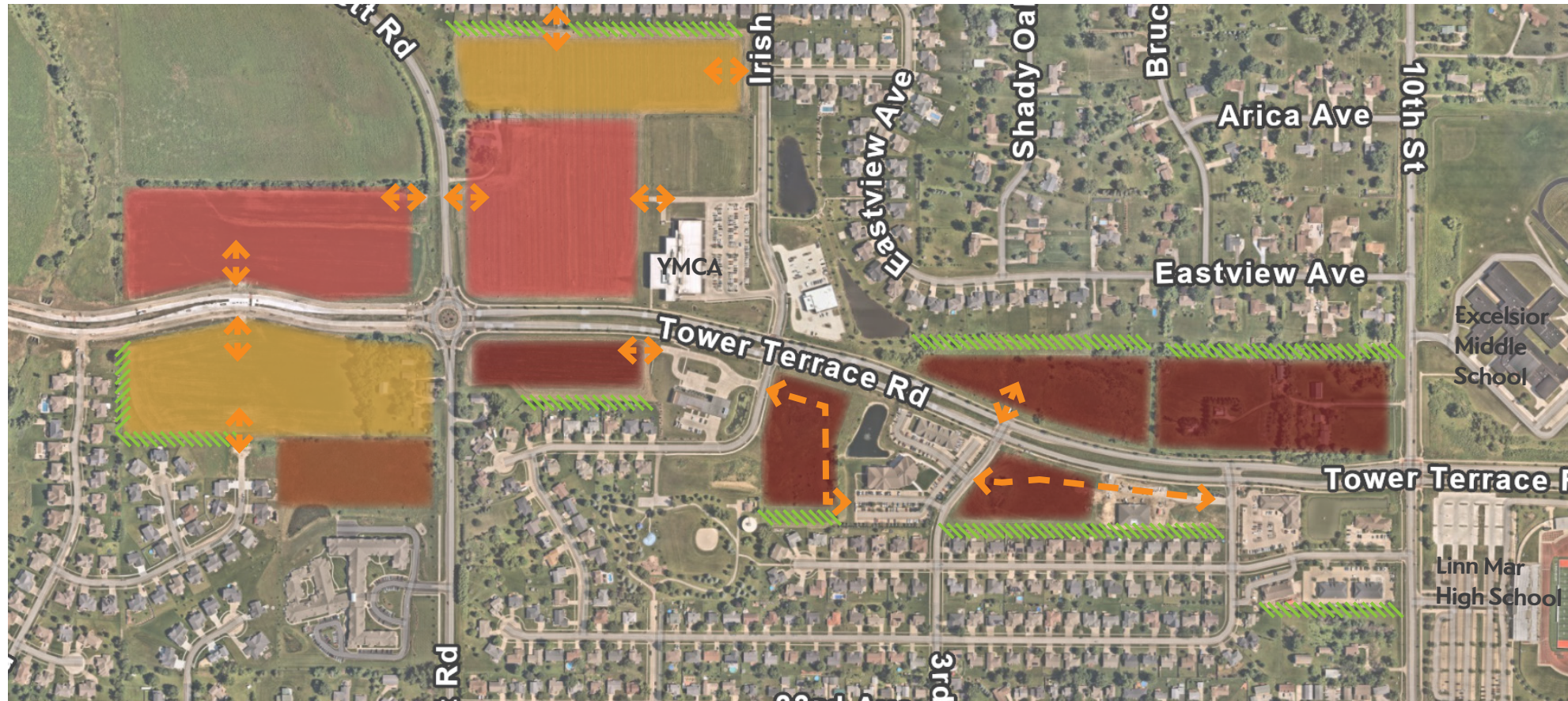


FIGURE 3.3: TOWER TERRACE ROAD AREA LAND USE AND MOBILITY PLAN

- Commercial
- Mixed-Use
- High-Intensity
- Medium-Intensity
- Parks
- Landscape or buffer treatment
- Vehicle connection



FIGURE 3.3: TOWER TERRACE ROAD AREA LAND USE AND MOBILITY PLAN

- Commercial
- Mixed-Use
- High-Intensity
- Medium-Intensity
- Parks
- Landscape or buffer treatment
- Vehicle connection

POLICY AREA APPLICATION: CENTRAL CORRIDOR

Most people who live or visit Marion probably associate some of their memory of Marion with traveling its Center Corridor - 6th and 7th Avenue. The Central Corridor continues to evolve with changing markets for redevelopment and activity. The 2019 Central Corridor Districts Plan guides development with land use policy and zoning. The goals and objectives from the 2019 plan still continue to align with the community vision for the corridor in 2024. The Marion Future Land Use Map reflects land use that is consistent with the 2019 District Plan. The development strategies are important to reference here, while noting changes and opportunity sites from the 2019 plan.

Guiding Development Strategies for the Central Corridor

- **Transitions.** Transition from residential uses to the corridor district by respecting the relationship to adjacent residential and encouraging buildings to orient towards 6th and 7th Avenue.
- **Walkability.** Encourage a pedestrian environment.
- **Historic Preservation.** Preserve and promote the historic context of the Uptown area and historic districts.
- **Scale development.** Locate higher density and scale mixed-use around major intersections.
- **Street environment.** Broadly encourage commercial buildings to be closer to the street with parking in the rear or side of the lot.
- **Minimize parking.** Share parking lots between adjacent uses when possible.
- **Quality buildings.** Place priority on high quality building materials and architectural design.
- **Sign management.** Manage sign clutter through height, quantity, and quality materials.
- **Mixed-uses.** Create a broadly mixed-use environment with residential opportunities.
- **Incremental change.** Sites that are subject to change to meet the community vision for the Central Corridor will happen slowly over time through redevelopment as property ownership changes, public projects are complete, and voluntary relocations of successful businesses occur.

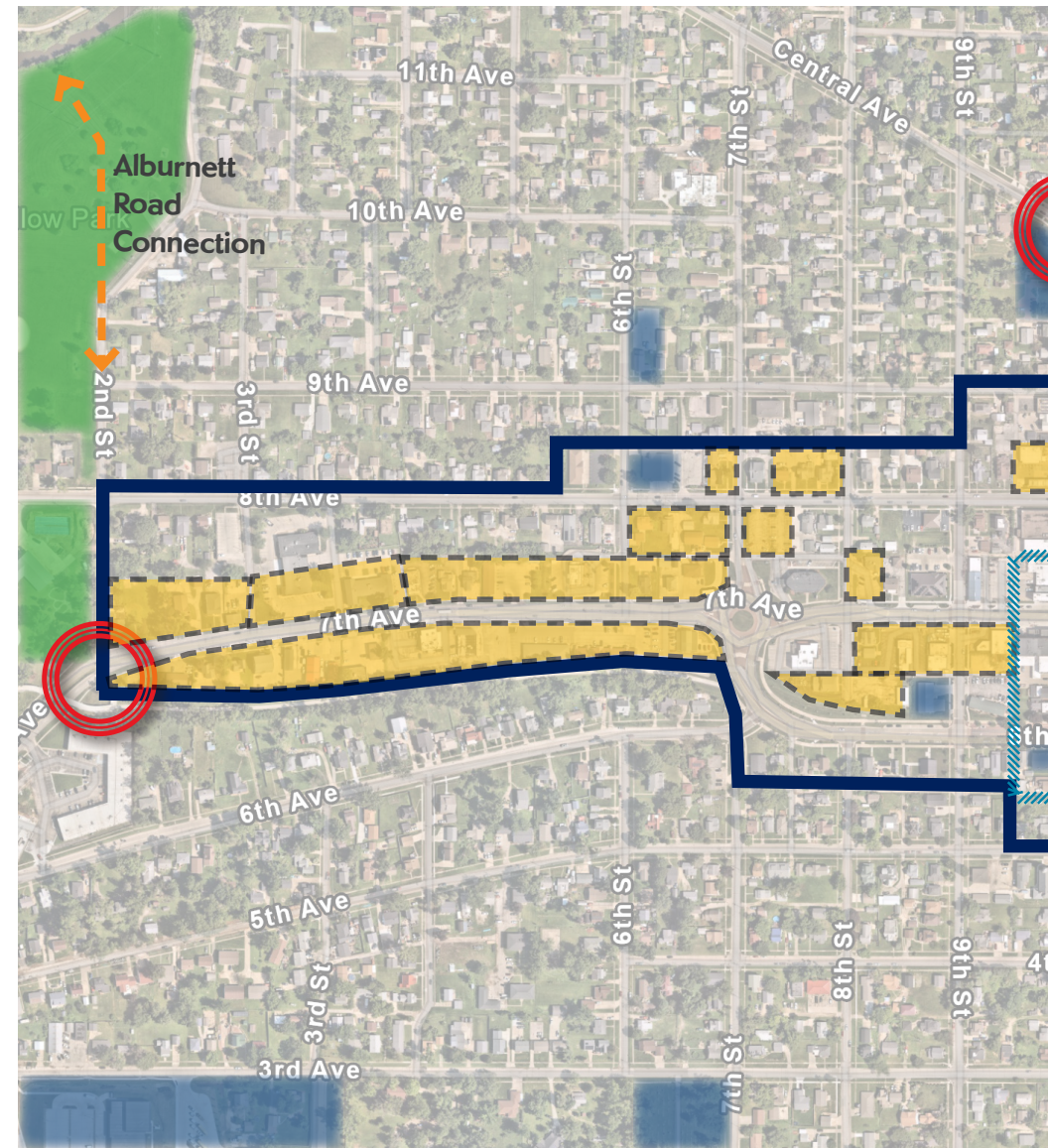
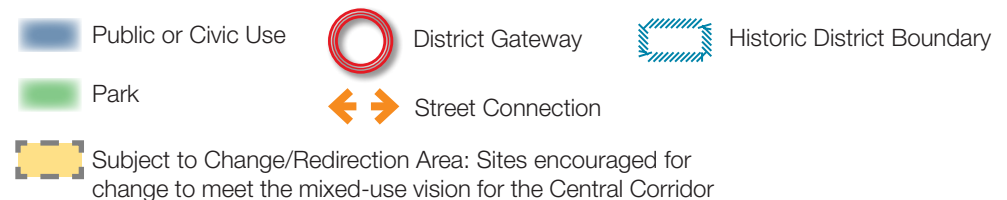


FIGURE 3.4: CENTRAL CORRIDOR ASSESSMENT MAP - 2024 UPDATE



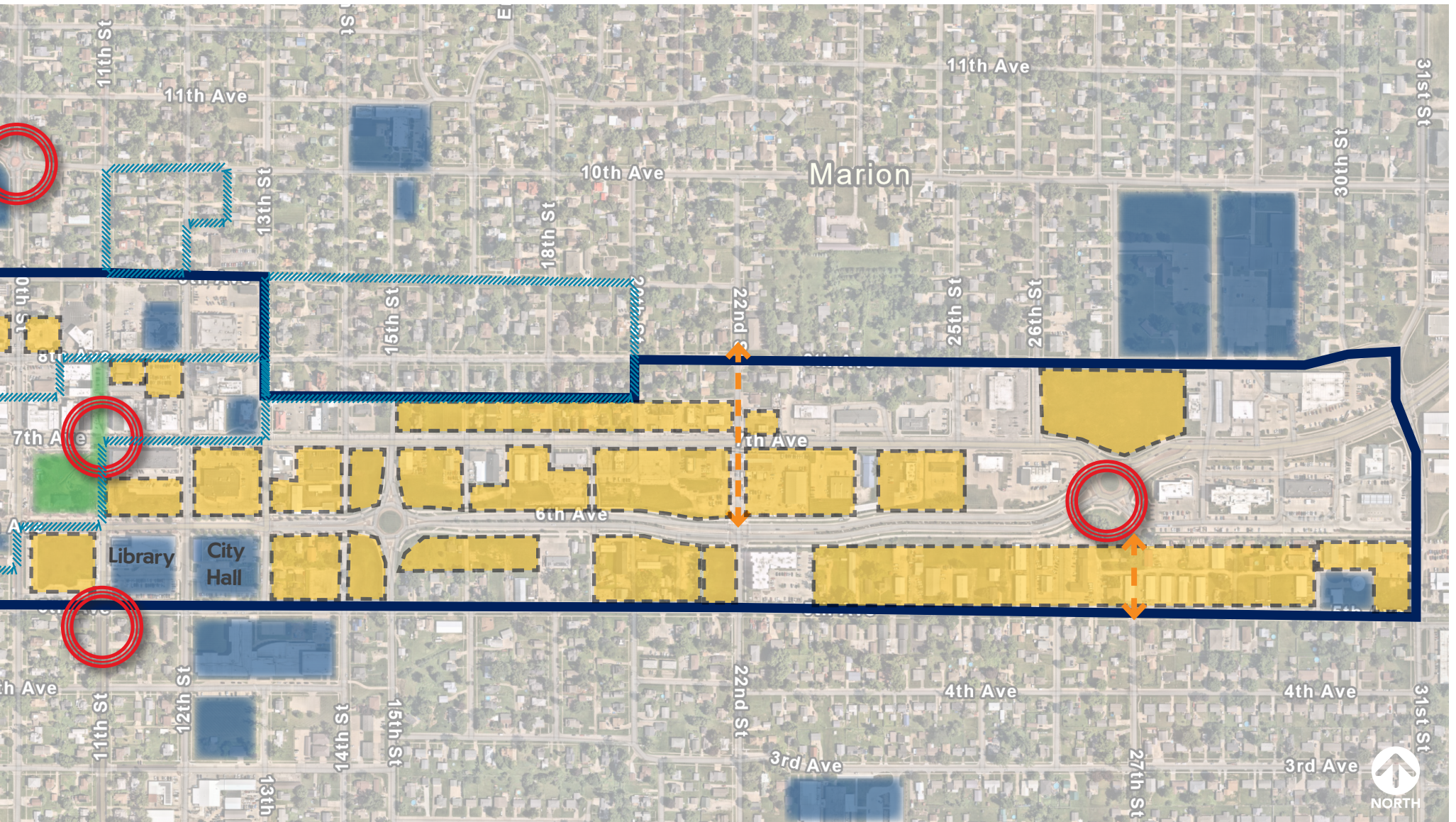


FIGURE 3.4: CENTRAL CORRIDOR ASSESSMENT MAP - 2024 UPDATE

- Public or Civic Use
- District Gateway
- Historic District Boundary
- Park
- Subject to Change/Redirection Area: Sites encouraged for change to meet the mixed-use vision for the Central Corridor
- Street Connection