

08

MOVING FORWARD



EQUITY APPROACH MOVING FORWARD

Everyone is welcome and should feel they can have a positive experience living, working, and recreating in Marion. Marion 2045: A Plan to Reach New Heights and its visions, goals, policies, and strategies all work together to promote high levels of diversity, equity, and inclusion for all in the community. Each chapter of this Plan correlates directly with diversity, equity, and inclusion, and vice versa.

Land Use

Allow a range of land uses for many different types of homes, businesses, and community spaces.

Centers & Corridors

Being accessible across the city and incorporating community based history, art, and events.

Mobility

Create a place where people can travel throughout the community by the mode available to them.

Housing

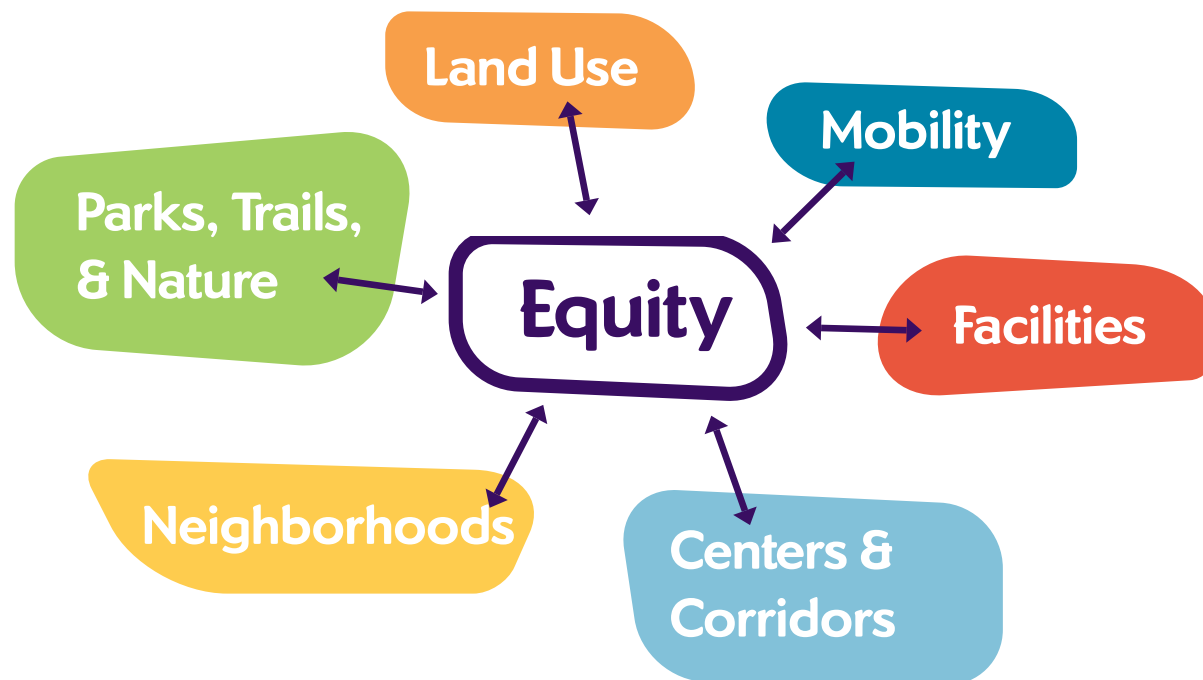
Provide a variety of housing types for all ages, incomes, and abilities.

Parks, Trails, & Nature

Provide enjoyable outdoor spaces for people of all ages and abilities that are accessible from every neighborhood.

Facilities

Ensure safe infrastructure and access to emergency services.



Diversity, equity, and inclusion are principles that bind us together to create a community where everyone belongs. The City of Marion is fully dedicated to addressing systems of inequity while building an accessible community where people of all cultures and identities can thrive. The City expects that its employees embrace this vision of inclusion and will strongly encourage its residents and community partners to do the same. By fulfilling this commitment, the City of Marion envisions a community that is inclusive and preserves the dignity of all people.

- Marion Equity Statement

MARION 2045 EQUITY APPROACH

1.

Celebrate diversity

Related Marion 2045 Goals:

- **Centers and Corridors.** Create welcoming experiences at all entrances to Marion
- **Parks, Trails, and Nature.** Enhance and expand recreational opportunities to meet local and regional needs.
- **Facilities.** Budget to maintain all facilities and adapt to meet changing needs

Approaches

- Incorporate public art that celebrates diversity in parks, centers, and corridors
- Use public spaces as opportunities to educate, inform, and celebrate Marion's history and culture

2.

Proactively attract and welcome diversity and inclusion of all residents and business owners of all demographic and economic backgrounds

Related Marion 2045 Goals:

- **Centers and Corridors.** Grow and support centers for Marion's economic base
- **Centers and Corridors.** Tactfully incorporate centers and corridors into neighborhoods
- **Neighborhoods.** Support attainable housing options through partnerships, policy, and public incentives
- **Neighborhoods.** Have home variety across living types and price points

Approaches

- Include other languages on city-issued material where most needed
- Ensure information for programs for small businesses is easy to find and understand

MARION 2045 EQUITY APPROACH

3.

Build social connections across different neighborhoods and organizations

Related Marion 2045 Goals:

- **Neighborhoods.** Expand options for older adults to age in the community
- **Mobility.** Create and maintain a safe and well-connected, multi-modal network
- **Parks, Trails, and Nature.** Provide and maintain parks and recreational facilities throughout Marion
- **Parks, Trails, and Nature.** Plan for a system of interconnected trails and greenways
- **Facilities.** Seek partnerships with the school districts and other organizations to share facilities

Approaches

- Continue adding diverse programming offered by the city's different departments, such as programs offered by the library or parks department
- Incorporate education on different cultures into youth and adult programming

4.

Have policies, programs, and codes that remove barriers and promote equitable outcomes and inclusion in Marion

Related Marion 2045 Goals:

- **Mobility.** Coordinate transportation and land use plans, focusing on critical connections
- **Mobility.** Plan and budget for transportation improvements in older neighborhoods
- **Neighborhoods.** Broadly maintain and upgrade core neighborhoods
- **Facilities.** Strategically invest in older parts of Marion

Approaches

- Encourage diverse membership across appointed boards for decision making
- Overhaul codes to bolster uses of land for more people, for example multi-generational families and lower income households
- Maintain adequate accessibility standards for development

IMPLEMENTATION APPROACH

Annexation Procedure

While Marion has land within city limits for future growth, there is not enough to meet the 2045 future land use needs. Therefore, annexation is a feasible goal for the City. Annexation should follow the intent of growth in the Future Land Use Plan. The phasing of growth should occur in a way to not over strain city budgets or ability to service. Annexation may be needed for several reasons:

- To provide more choices for development and support flexibility in the market for development
- If residents petition to be annexed into Marion
- If opportunities present themselves where annexation would:
 - Support development principles in this Plan
 - Increase connectivity
 - Protect environmental features
 - Promote economic development in Marion
 - Increase public safety
 - Protect orderly growth of the city

A Cedar Rapids-Marion Annexation Agreement is in place that limits growth to the west. The Future Land Use Plan reflects this agreement. The agreement is active through 2034 and should be reevaluated at that time.

The following annexation strategy should apply:

- 1. Pursue Voluntary Annexation.** Marion should use the “voluntary annexation” provisions of Iowa annexation law (including the 80/20 rule) and avoid annexing areas under “involuntary” procedures. The drawbacks of involuntary annexations include:
 - *A more complex annexation process*
 - *Confrontation with landowners*
 - *Susceptibility to court challenges*
 - *Costly extension of city services mandated within a short period, even if development is not imminent*

The benefits of voluntary annexation are:

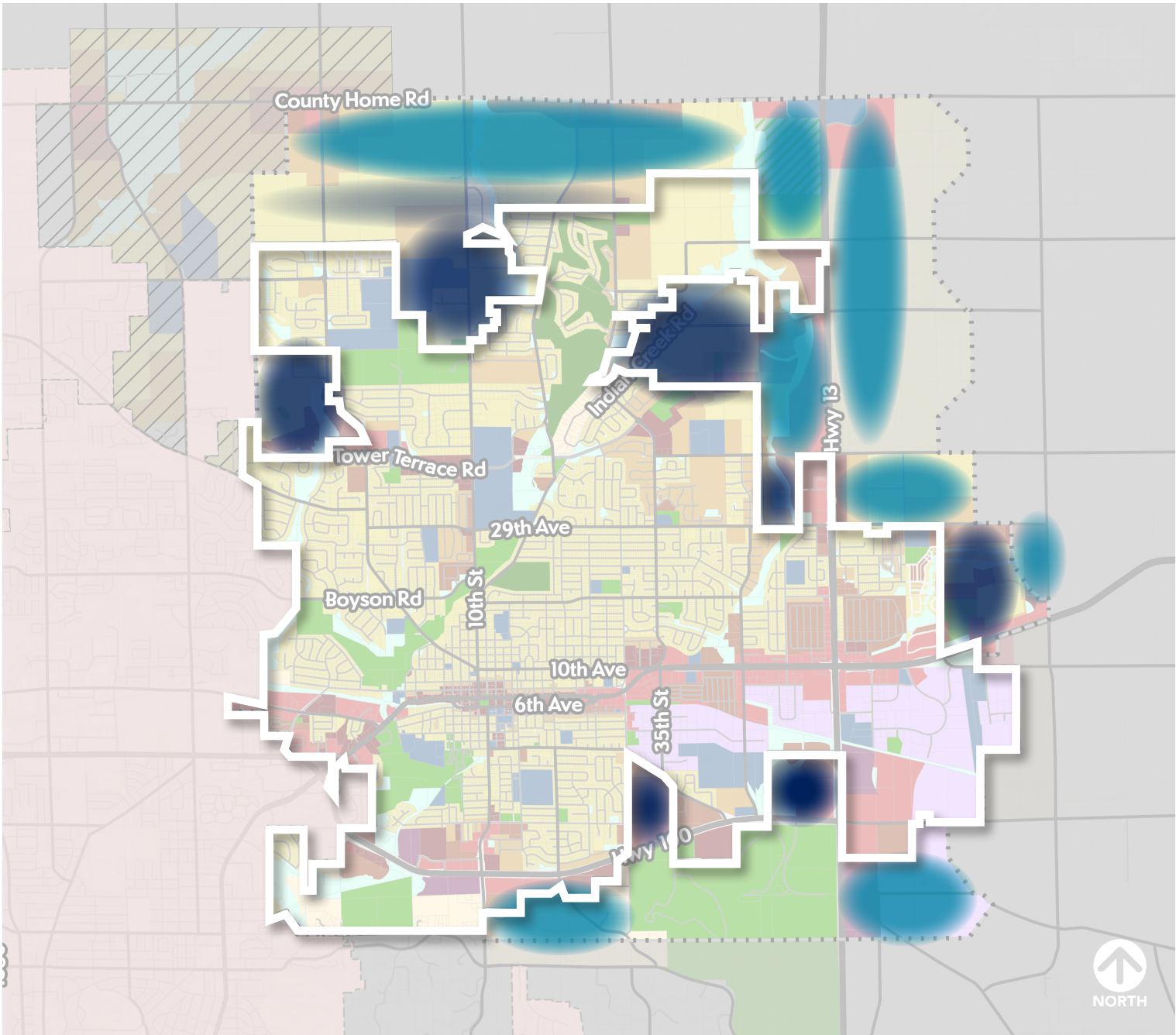
- *Allows the City to promote areas for development without having to install costly infrastructure ahead of that development*
- *It does not require the City to pick “winners and losers” among potential annexation areas, the private market determines development timing and location*
- *Simpler process, less controversial*
- *If necessary, use the 80/20 rule for voluntary annexation, which allows up to 20% of the total annexed area to be included without property owners’ consent. This allows for the “squaring off” of annexation areas to logical boundaries to avoid creating unincorporated “islands,” which are not permitted by state law. While full consent from property owners is ideal, there may be situations where the 80/20 rule is necessary to follow state laws and achieve long-term City goals.*

- 2. Only Annex as Needed.** Marion should annex land only as the opportunity arises or to help achieve housing or land use needs. By only annexing what is needed when it is required, the City avoids unnecessary maintenance of infrastructure and potential conflicts with landowners. Coupling this approach with creating annexation agreements will protect the City’s long-term growth areas.
- 3. Initiate Outreach to Property Owners.** Initiate ongoing communication with owners of properties in growth areas.
- 4. Negotiate Development Agreements.** Development opportunities in growth areas should be pursued on a “negotiated development agreement” basis, with zoning, infrastructure extensions, and any applicable development incentives as part of the negotiation process. The Future Land Use Map should serve as the guide for uses within the annexation areas.
- 5. Zone Appropriately.** Discussion of appropriate zoning, consistent with the Future Land Use Map, should be a part of the process.
- 6. Prioritize Contiguous Parcels.** Annexation priority should go to parcels contiguous to current city boundaries. It is not recommended to annex property that is not contiguous to existing city property and would not be permitted by state law in most circumstances.

FIGURE 8.1 : ANNEXATION PRIORITY AREAS

Subdivisions in growth areas outside of city limits should be held to the same standards as those in the city limits. This will ensure that any development in the city's long-term growth area that may eventually be annexed into the city meets city standards for design and infrastructure, and does not interfere with the City's long-term plans for transportation connections.

Figure 8.1 shows annexation possibilities in the short and long-term based on market directions, land availability, and public servicing feasibility. However, it is not meant to dictate annexation and opportunities should be evaluated as they arise.



IMPLEMENTATION APPROACH

Marion 2045 is a comprehensive guide for future city decisions, but by itself does not implement any policies or actions directly. Implementation will require partnerships like those among the Visioning Committee members to create the Plan - among city entities, the development community, private property owners, and all Marion residents.

Implementation Policies and Strategies

1. Update the annual action and capital improvement program that implements the recommendations of the Plan. The actions of the Plan will require funding and other continuous support. This program should be coordinated with Marion's existing capital improvement planning and budgeting process, even though many of the Plan's recommendations are not capital items. This annual process should be completed before the beginning of each budget year and should include:

- *A 1-year work program for the upcoming year that is specific and related to the City's financial resources. The work program will establish which plan recommendations the City will address during that year.*
- *A 3-year strategic program that provides for a multi-year perspective, aiding the preparation of the annual work program.*
- *A longer-term capital improvement program that is merged into Marion's current capital improvement program.*

2. Undertake an annual evaluation of the Plan, with a full update every 8-12 years. City staff should undertake an annual evaluation of the Plan. This evaluation should include a written report to the Planning & Zoning Commission and City Council that:

- *Summarizes key land use developments and decisions during the past year and relates them to the Plan.*
- *Reviews actions taken by the City during the past year to implement the Plan's recommendations.*
- *Defines any changes that should be made in the Plan. This Plan is dynamic and can adapt in response to changing conditions, resources, and opportunities. The Plan was created through a public process, and therefore, any official changes to the Plan should be made through a public process. The City has an established amendment process for its Comprehensive Plans. Amendments should comply with the spirit of the vision and goals, as articulated throughout.*

3. Define Leadership and Partners. The primary groups that will implement the Plan are the City Council, City Staff, and the Planning & Zoning Commission. However, it is essential for these groups to partner with other entities interested in implementing the Plan's recommendations. Figure 8.2 recommends potential partners. This is not an exhaustive list and is not intended to exclude any group that would like to take the lead on a project or policy.

Implementation Schedule

Figure 8.2 on the following pages presents a summary of the Plan policies and strategies.

TYPE

- **Policy.** Continuing efforts over a long period. In some cases, policies include specific regulatory or administrative actions.
- **Action.** Specific efforts or accomplishments by the City or community.
- **Capital.** Investments and public capital projects that will implement features of the Plan.

TIMING

- **On-going.** Most of the recommendations fit into this category. These are matters related to general policy and operations and have no completion date.
- **Short Term.** Implementation within five years.
- **Medium Term.** Implementation in 5-10 years.

Plan Leadership and Partners

It is essential for these groups to partner with other entities interested in implementing the Plan's recommendations.

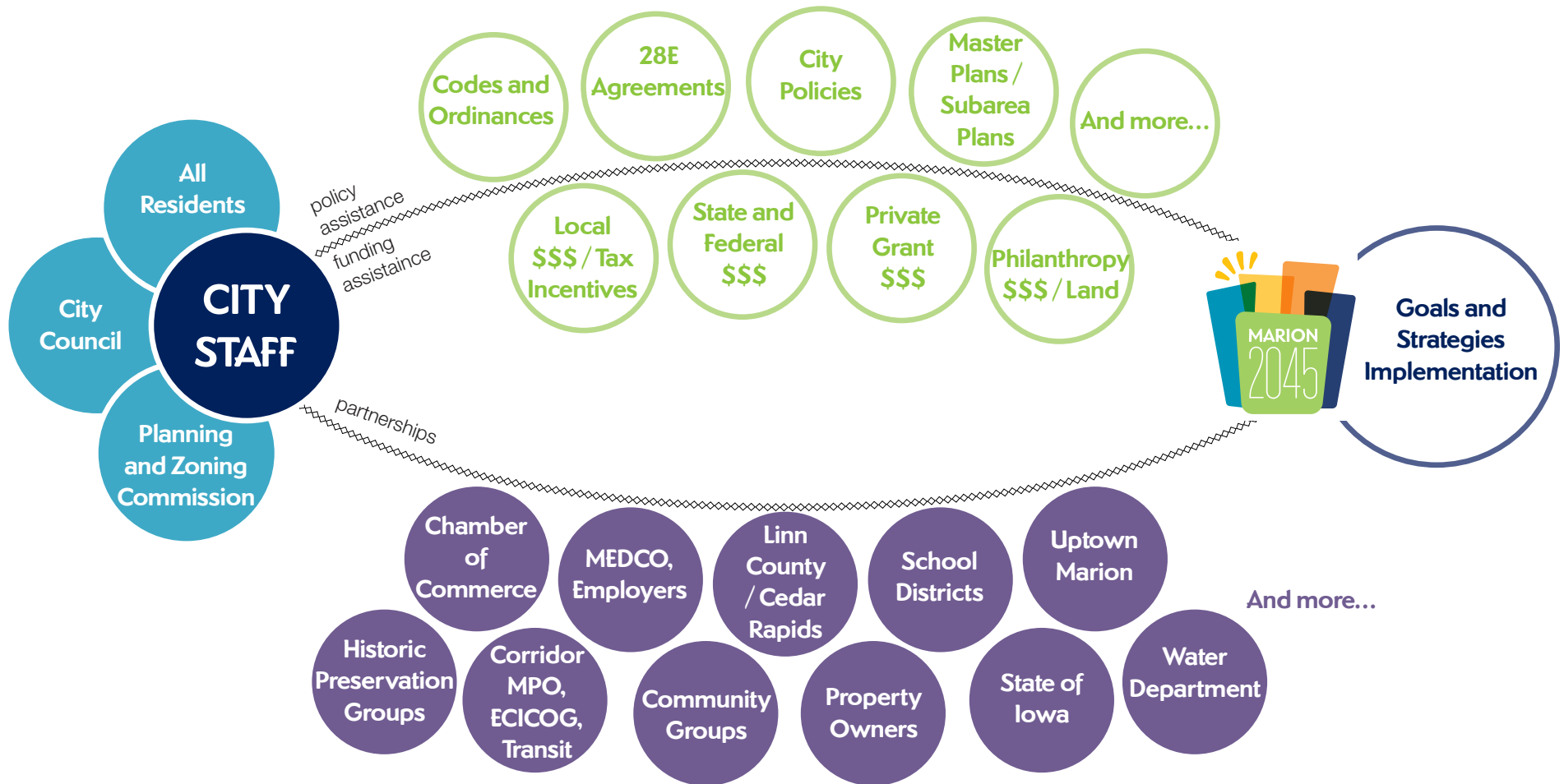


FIGURE 8.2: IMPLEMENTATION SCHEDULE TABLE

Goals + Strategies	Partners	Type	Time frame
Land Use			
Goal 1: Encourage mixing of housing types and businesses	All	Policy	On-Going
Goal 2: Preserve the environment	All	Policy	On-Going
Goal 3: Be flexible but purposeful	All	Policy	On-Going
Centers & Corridors			
Goal 1: Create welcoming experiences at all entrances to Marion			
Implement the Gateway and Wayfinding System	MEDCO, Chamber, Uptown Marion	Action, Capital	Short-Term, On-Going
Goal 2: Develop and maintain high visual standards for prominent corridors			
Implement High Quality Corridor Design	Property Owners	Policy	Short-Term, On-Going
Goal 3: Grow and support centers for Marion's economic base			
Target market sectors that align with the goals of this Plan	MEDCO, Chamber	Action	On-Going
Maintain a pool of economic development incentive options to use in appropriate circumstances that align with the vision and goals of the Plan	MEDCO, Chamber	Capital, Policy	On-Going
Keep Uptown active and seek other areas to replicate Uptown's success	Uptown Marion, Chamber	Capital, Policy	On-Going
Implement other portions of the Plan to market Marion and attract businesses	MEDCO, Chamber	Action, Capital, Policy	On-Going
Goal 4: Tactfully incorporate centers and corridors into neighborhoods			
Use design guides on prominent corridors and centers in Marion	Property Owners	Policy	Short-Term
Promote projects that assist in the redevelopment and/or restoration of substandard and deteriorating uses in existing centers and corridors	MEDCO, Property Owners	Policy	On-Going
Update Zoning Codes and Design Standards to Achieve Connectedness without Conflict		Action	Short-Term
Mobility			
Goal 1: Coordinate transportation and land use plans, focusing on critical connections			
Reserve right-of-way for future roadways	Property Owners	Policy	On-Going
Coordinate with the Corridor MPO and other regional planning partners on land use and transportation decisions of mutual importance	Corridor MPO, ECICOG	Policy	On-Going
Complete Multi-Modal Improvements on Tower Terrace Road		Capital	Short-Term
Ensure subdivision codes have standards for traffic calming approaches in appropriate situations		Action	Short-Term
Goal 2: Create and maintain a safe and well-connected, multi-modal network			
Install sidepaths along all existing and future collector and arterial streets	Property Owners, Corridor MPO	Capital	On-Going
Connect the trail system so it can be used for recreation, everyday commuting, and community marketing	Corridor MPO, Property Owners	Action, Capital	On-Going

FIGURE 8.2: IMPLEMENTATION SCHEDULE TABLE

Goals + Strategies	Partners	Type	Time frame
Goal 3: Plan and budget for transportation improvements in older neighborhoods			
Coordinate and conduct bi-annual evaluations of streets, sidewalks, and trails in Marion's older neighborhoods	Property Owners	Action	Short-Term, On-Going
Work with property owners to repair and replace sidewalks in residential areas	Property Owners	Capital	On-Going
Goal 4: Embrace new transportation modes for the future			
Transit	Corridor MPO, ECICOG	Capital, Policy	Short-Term
Electric Vehicles	Corridor MPO, ECICOG	Capital, Policy	Short-Term
Autonomous Vehicles	Corridor MPO, ECICOG	Capital, Policy	Short-Term
Neighborhoods			
Goal 1: Support attainable housing options through partnerships, policy, and public incentives			
Review and update ordinances and building codes, where possible, for barriers to housing diversity	Community Groups	Policy	Short-Term On-Going
Coordinate with private developers to discuss barriers to building mixed-income developments	Community Groups	Action, Policy	Short-Term On-Going
Goal 2: Expand options for older adults to age in the community			
Encourage through incentives that large scale projects to incorporate accessible design standards into at least a portion of units	Community Groups	Policy	Short-Term
Consider Universal Design standards for at least a portion of all units within a more substantial project or subdivision	Community Groups	Policy	Short-Term
Goal 3: Have home variety across living types and price points			
Stay tuned to the market	MEDCO, Employers, Chamber	Action	On-Going
Update regulations to align with the Future Land Use plan		Action, Policy	Short-Term
Accommodate innovation	Community Groups	Policy	On-Going
Use data from the most recent Housing Needs Analysis to develop & encourage policy that provides mixed-use neighborhoods	Property Owners, Community Groups	Policy	Short-Term
Goal 4: Broadly maintain and upgrade core neighborhoods			
Complete Studies of Core Neighborhoods	Property Owners, Community Groups	Action	Short-Medium Term
Neighborhood Engagement Programs	Property Owners, Community Groups	Action	Medium-Term
Identify programming that can leverage federal, state, and local funds to assist on neighborhood redevelopment or improvements	Corridor MPO, ECICOG	Action	On-Going

FIGURE 8.2: IMPLEMENTATION SCHEDULE TABLE

Goals + Strategies	Partners	Type	Time frame
Parks, Trails, & Nature			
Goal 1: Provide and maintain adequate parks and recreational facilities throughout Marion			
Maintain or increase park level of service		Action, Capital	On-Going
Budget adequately based on a routine assessment of maintenance needs		Capital	On-Going
Evaluate recreational trends, demands, and facilities that adapt parks appropriately		Policy	On-Going
Reinvest in existing parks, especially those located near neighborhoods with limited parks within walking distance		Capital	On-Going
Goal 2: Enhance and expand recreational opportunities to meet local and regional needs			
As new trends emerge and are discovered, continue to incorporate them into new parks and updates to existing parks		Action	On-Going
Explore opportunities to use the Cedar Rapids/Linn County Solid Waste Agency landfill site as community space following the landfill's closure	Linn County	Action	Medium-Term
Complete a new aquatics center	Property Owners	Capital	Short-Term
Explore ways to incorporate more variety in park space and amenities in southern Marion	Property Owners	Action	Short-Term
Goal 3: Sustain fiscal responsibility with increased maintenance needs			
Work to identify funding sources early in the planning process for any new project	Chamber, State of Iowa, Corridor MPO, ECICOG	Policy	On-Going
Continue to foster partnerships and invite and welcome new partnerships	School Districts, Employers, Community Groups	Policy	On-Going
Complete a study to determine the feasibility of sports facilities in Marion	School Districts, Chamber	Action	Short-Term
Include facilities that are sustainable and adaptable to support neighborhoods and communities		Policy	On-Going
Goal 4: Plan for and provide a system of interconnected trails and greenways			
Coordinate with the Corridor MPO and other regional planning partners to develop and implement cross-community trails	Corridor MPO, ECICOG, Cedar Rapids, Linn County	Capital, Policy	On-Going
Host community events at places that connect to the trails and use these as an opportunity to educate all residents on the trail network	Community Groups	Action	On-Going
Integrate amenities along trails	Community Groups	Capital	On-Going
Fill gaps in the existing trail system	Property Owners, Corridor MPO, ECICOG	Capital	Short-Medium Term
Goal 5: Implement recent plans			
Follow the recommendations of the Reforestation Plan, Parks Master Plan, Trails Master Plan, and Indian Creek Master Plan	Refer to respective plans	Action, Capital, Policy	Short-Medium Term
Follow the recommendations to reforest the community methodically and quickly	Refer to respective plans	Action, Capital, Policy	Short-Term

FIGURE 8.2: IMPLEMENTATION SCHEDULE TABLE

Goals + Strategies	Partners	Type	Time frame
Facilities			
Goal 1: Continue to involve all city departments in development review			
Development review schedules		Policy	On-Going
Ensure all City departments understand the vision and goals of Marion 2045 and act together		Policy	Short-Term
Goal 2: Budget to maintain all facilities and adapt to meet changing needs			
Budget for studies to regularly evaluate facility and resource needs every 5-7 years, including expansions, satellite locations, or co-sharing locations		Action, Capital	Medium-Term
Use the 2021 Sanitary Sewer Master Plan to guide investments that support growth	Property Owners	Capital	Short-Medium Term
Plan for land investments in the northern part of Marion for a shared building with Parks and Public Works equipment that adds improved response times for snow removal and repairs	Property Owners	Capital	Medium-Term
Goal 3: Strategically invest in older parts of Marion			
Implement a stormwater master plan		Action, Policy	Short-Term, On-Going
Identify a neighborhood and centers investment phasing plan		Action	Short-Term
Goal 4: Monitor fire and rescue response times with growth to determine needs for additional facilities			
Explore areas for the relocation of Fire Station #3	Property Owners	Action	Short-Term
Continue to evaluate and act on equipment and space for emergency personnel		Action, Capital	On-Going
Continue to monitor police and fire response time and consider additional facilities when and where needed		Action	On-Going
Goal 5: Seek partnerships with the school districts and other organizations to share facilities			
Recreation facilities and active transportation connections	School Districts, YMCA,	Action, Capital	On-Going
Youth programs	School Districts, YMCA, Community Groups	Action, Policy	On-Going