



Marion County

Board of County Commissioners

Workshop

Meeting Agenda

McPherson Governmental Campus
601 SE 25th Ave.
Ocala, FL 34471
Phone: 352-438-2323
Fax: 352-438-2324

District 1 – Craig Curry, Commissioner
District 2 – Kathy Bryant, Commissioner
District 3 – Jeff Gold, Chairman
District 4 – Carl Zalak III, Vice Chair
District 5 – Michelle Stone, Commissioner

Wednesday, July 7, 2021

1:30 PM

**McPherson Governmental
Campus Auditorium**

2022-2026 Strategic Plan Empowering Marion Part II

INTRODUCTION OF WORKSHOP BY CHAIRMAN JEFF GOLD

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

ROLL CALL

WORKSHOP PRESENTATION

1. [Present 2022-2026 Strategic Plan "Empowering Marion for Success II"](#)

BOARD DISCUSSION AND CLOSING COMMENTS



Marion County

Board of County Commissioners Workshop

Agenda Item

File No.: 2021-3688

Agenda Date: 7/7/2021

Agenda No.: 1.

SUBJECT:

Present 2022-2026 Strategic Plan “Empowering Marion for Success II”

INITIATOR:

**Mounir Bouyounes, P.E.
County Administrator**

DEPARTMENT:

Administration

DESCRIPTION/BACKGROUND:

The existing Five (5) Year Strategic Plan “Empowering Marion for Success” is set to end on September 30, 2021. Over the past several months, staff has led an effort to evaluate the current status of our operation and develop our next Strategic Plan “Empowering Marion for Success II” for the upcoming five (5) years, 2022 through 2026. The intention of this workshop is to present our draft plan for Board discussion and feedback.

BUDGET/IMPACT:

None

RECOMMENDED ACTION:

For information.

Empowering Marion for Success **II**



Marion County Administrative Strategic Plan 2022 - 2026



Presented to:
The Marion County Board of County Commissioners
Chairman Jeff Gold
July 7, 2021



Table of Contents

| | |
|--|-----------|
| EXECUTIVE SUMMARY | 1 |
| ORGANIZATIONAL EXPERIENCE | 3 |
| RESOURCES AND FACILITIES..... | 24 |
| PLANNING & FUTURE GROWTH..... | 41 |
| PUBLIC INFRASTRUCTURE..... | 67 |
| PUBLIC SAFETY | 90 |

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

In our previous Strategic Plan for Fiscal Years 2017-2021, we determined the role of Marion County government to be providing exemplary customer service. In that five-year plan, county staff reviewed services and identified both challenges and opportunities requiring special attention. We also established the organizational framework and expectations to include our core values and guiding principles while implementing “Empowering Marion for Success”.

As we continue “Empowering Marion for Success” throughout the next five years, our Strategic Plan will reflect our initiatives and highlight specific elements.

As with the previous five-year plan, this plan continues to be the road map for our operations over the next five years so that we may deliver services at the highest possible level. County staff collaborated on the elements listed below, identifying and presenting key areas of emphasis and action items to consider.

Organizational Experience will continue to concentrate on staff development, work environment and public relations using technology in order to have a better-trained, fulfilled staff in order to provide the highest possible quality of customer service and experiences to our citizens.

In the **Resources and Public Facilities** section, we will focus on current operations and maintenance, future needs, outdoor assets, natural resources, and funding options that could offset the associated costs of the operation and maintenance of the over three million square feet of structures and public facilities under our purview, such as public buildings, libraries, and parks.

The **Planning and Future Growth** section illustrates Marion County’s continued growth within its large geographical area. In this section, we will be addressing housing demand in the community, improving the permitting process review, evaluating the current urban growth boundary, promoting infill within Marion Oaks and Silver Springs Shores, strengthening the Farmland Preservation Area, continuing the review of the Comprehensive Plan, and evaluating options to improve broadband internet service throughout the county.

The **Public Infrastructure** section addresses the value of interdepartmental coordination for the planned growth and development of the county. We will take careful considerations to encourage targeted growth complementing future land use and adjacent zoning, as well as to support existing development and promote diversified economic development. In doing this we will ensure the quality and supply of our critical water resources is maintained and update our Solid Waste Master Plan to reflect the growing needs of our county.

For **Public Safety**, we will establish an ongoing relationship with a regional and geographically diverse Public Safety Answer Points (PSAPs) of appropriate size and capacity to serve as a reciprocal backup site to Public Safety Communications (PSC). This will provide uninterrupted processing of 911 telephone calls and text messages and ensure we provide emergency response time without delay. Marion County Fire Rescue must continue to meet existing service demand while also looking to the future and projecting the resources required to meet increasing demands. The ability to deliver increased levels of fire and

emergency medical services (EMS) is dependent on several factors, including public infrastructure needs, emergency vehicles, and fire and EMS equipment.

In conclusion, we recognize that Marion County will continue to grow and change, and the implementation of each element detailed in this plan is essential in achieving Marion County's vision for success, financial stability and an exceptional quality of life for our citizens and visitors.

DRAFT

Empowering Marion for Success II



ORGANIZATIONAL EXPERIENCE

The Empowering Marion for Success plan became the building blocks and blueprint to empower Marion County's government to achieve overall excellence. We created a new mission statement, guiding principles and core values, also known as the "HICARD" which serve as the foundation of everything we accomplished. As we conclude the Empowering Marion for Success plan and move into a new five-year plan, many of the accomplishments over the past five years will be further enhanced as we continue to achieve new goals in order to better serve the citizens of Marion County.

Organizational culture was the biggest focus of the 2017-2021 strategic plan, with an emphasis on improving customer service. This meant concentrating on staff development, work environment and public relations in order to have a better-trained, fulfilled staff providing exemplary customer service to our citizens. Some major staff development accomplishments include an enhanced new-hire orientation, improved employee recruitment, a more enriching leadership program, an enhanced training system, and the addition of new workforce development programs with a greater focus on our employees' wellness and compensation. Accomplishments such as these have set the framework for a better workplace culture and a healthier and happier workforce.

In the area of work environment, we improved employee recognition, employee safety and overall morale. We added a safety incentive program, created an employee newsletter for more regular communication and recognition of effort, and disbursed regular announcements to bridge the communication gap between leadership and various county departments.

In public relations, our goal was to enhance the relationship between Marion County and its citizens and improve our overall communications by increasing public outreach and engagement, enhancing existing public information activities and telling our county's untold stories. Some of the accomplishments in this area include the addition of Marion County Day to help educate citizens on the services the county offers, adjusting the scope of the County Connection monthly newsletter to focus on key messages, and the inclusion of messages that specifically tie into the strategic plan.

Improving county services and focusing on key areas was also at the top of our list of goals. Our internal and external departments came together to focus on ways to improve customer service and other initiatives. We achieved this goal in various ways, including sending out satisfaction surveys to our customers, implementing newsletters and project update mailings to increase engagement, adding more

affordable housing units, participating in outreach to new areas of the county and adding new conferences within our Extension Services department. We also added features to our customer-used buildings such as roofing over the north area of the Southeastern Livestock Pavilion, implemented a pavement preservation plan and developed new purchasing techniques. We put new mobile applications were into service, including an application allowing citizens to report issues within the county. We also began our text-to-911 service to improve public safety throughout the county. Other features, such as digital signs and the installation of generators and a Citizens Convenience Center at Solid Waste, also became finalized during this time.

Although we had many of the achievements over the last five years, we realize that many of them would not have been possible without the extensive use of technology. We have made great strides in how we use technology to assist in the customer experience and in the employee experience. However, with all that has been accomplished, we recognize that we still have plenty of room to grow and improve. As we transition into a new five-year plan, we take into account all of the accomplishments and goals achieved and continue to expand upon them. The growth of Marion County's population is expected to be 9% in the coming years. With this, we recognize that we will have more citizens, more businesses, and more visitors to serve. We must plan for how we will continue to provide services to our existing customers while expanding our operations while expanding our technology needs. The Empowering Marion for Success II plan will continue to strive to enhance the customer and employee while building on our newly defined culture to prepare us for the continued growth and success of our community. The use of new technology will be imperative to this overall growth.

Employee Experience – Work Environment

| Task | Expected outcome | Lead department | Date | Cost |
|---|---|------------------------------------|--------------------------|--|
| Evaluate employee workload | Create an overall staffing plan to ensure staffing levels be evaluated in accordance with the population growth. | Human Resources | September 30, 2022 | Staff time and other costs TBD |
| Implement formal telework and flexible schedule policy | Consider the creation of a formal telework policy will be in place creating better effectiveness and efficiency in times of need. | Human Resources | September 30, 2022 | Staff time and other costs TBD |
| Implement electronic signatures | A more efficient and expeditious delivery of the document approval process allowing tracking and auditing. Additionally, security and integrity of signatures on original documents with greater accessibility. | Information Technology | September 30, 2023 | Recurring \$30/month per license or \$474/year per license. IdenTrust certificates at \$114 annually per certificate. BlueInk costs \$2,250 for 1,000 bundles. |
| Create department liaisons for records | Direct oversight of the records and retention management for the county. | Administration | September 30, 2023 | Records Management Association cost \$150 each |
| Create a document management manual | Electronic forms and documents will be more accessible for departments and customers to access. | Administration | September 30, 2025 | Staff time and license software TBD |
| Create a document management training program | Departments will have designated individuals to teach and maintain best practices in regards to document management for their departments. | Administration and Human Resources | FY 2021/2022 and ongoing | Staff time and other costs TBD |

This section builds upon the solid foundation developed in the 2017-2021 Empowering Marion for Success plan. The global workplace is changing, and the opportunities and expectations of employees are changing with it. Maintaining a work environment that competitively attracts and retains talented employees remains crucial to the success of this organization. We have the opportunity to leverage these successes and build upon them to ensure our ongoing competitiveness in a changing market.

Workload

Marion County continues to experience booming growth, with many new residents added each year. According to the Office of Economic and Demographic Research, Marion County ranks 18th of the 67 counties in Florida in population, with 1.7% of the state's population residing within the county. Based on estimates provided by the same source, population estimates for 2025 will exceed 394,000, representing a projected growth of 9.57%.

Growth of this magnitude creates several opportunities for Marion County. Departments that provide external services are seeing record service requests and, in many cases, record revenues because of this growth. However, departments that provide internal services remain constrained by staffing limitations. The consequences of the limitations include, but are not limited to, risk of error, compromises in terms of both quality and quantity, minimal time for new projects to meet changing conditions, increased costs for overtime, and lack of depth in staff ranks.

We propose staffing levels be evaluated in accordance with the population growth. An overall staffing plan should be developed in concurrence with the commencement of the Empowering Marion for Success 2.0 plan.

The staffing plan will be evaluated annually during the budget process to ensure that long-range planning is consistent with changes in the market.

Teleworking and Flexible Scheduling

Throughout 2020 into 2021, we learned a great deal about telework and its potential for widespread application. Marion County successfully leveraged technology to quickly and effectively allow teleworking for employees impacted by the "Safer at Home" order. Beyond this, teleworking offered several opportunities for increased efficiencies within various functions of our organization.

Teleworking can occur in various formats, as outlined below:

- Remote work, (commonly referred to as working from home), utilizing employer-provided equipment in conjunction with employee internet services
- Web-based meetings as an alternative to in-person meetings, reducing travel time
- Intermittent teleworking, a combination of working on-site part-time and remote work part-time

Specific considerations will need to be made to facilitate teleworking conditions. Some of these include:

- Operating hours (can the facility sustain telework and when)
- Work product (can the same goals be achieved remotely)
- Citizen interaction (is a physical presence needed to complete the work and serve the citizens)

- Flexibility (will there be situations in which telework employees will need to be physically on-site)

Teleworking also allows employees who may need to stay home due to illness, yet are still able to work, the opportunity to continue to contribute to the organization. This will also encourage employees to minimize the spread of illness while simultaneously conserving sick leave for illnesses that would prevent work.

In departments where telework may not be possible, Marion County recognizes there may be a need for flexibility in scheduling. Currently, most county departments operate from 8 a.m. to 5 p.m., Monday – Friday.

There are various ways our organization can offer flexibility options to employees. Examples include:

- Modified workday schedules
- Compressed workweek schedules
- Work-from-home as an option (further explained in Telework)
- Intermittent flex time

Some of these opportunities may be more informal in nature, but will be outlined in administrative policy to ensure consistency in implementation. The existence of these programs will be included in job descriptions when appropriate to assist with recruitment.

Develop Electronic/Digital Process for Document Management and Reduction of Paper

As demands for services increase, we must continue to modernize our network and operations in order to streamline our processes for our customers, both internally and externally. This initiative will require dedicated staff and resources to develop new organizational and training procedures. We recommend implementing necessary resources to receive or accept documentation electronically, thereby efficiently maintaining an archive that will allow the county to safely retain records for centuries. Electronic signatures are widely used by many organizations and could be implemented by Marion County, using an image of your signature along with a digital certificate to validate the authenticity of the signature, saving both time and hassle for all parties.

E-Signature

Electronic signatures, or e-signatures, are digital means to obtain consent and/or approval on electronic documents and forms. A digital certificate can be purchased to certify the authenticity and integrity of a document. A personal certificate is used to sign a document, while intermediate and root certificates are used to validate the document. The Florida Department of Transportation (FDOT) uses U.S. General Services Administration (GSA); Trusted Services list of approved providers in selecting a vendor for this service. E-signatures can replace the need for handwritten signatures for most standard documents. This would eliminate a massive amount of paper from the organization, reducing waste and making organization and archiving easier. E-signatures also enable co-authoring, which allows multiple users to edit a document concurrently, allowing various departments to more easily coordinate and collaborate on projects.

Steps:

- 1) Ensure legal review for e-signature being sufficient for real signatures
- 2) Ensure Finance approval
- 3) Ensure Audit approval
- 4) Ensure Clerk approval
- 5) Adopt Commission Policy and/or Administrative policy to allow e-signatures or digital signatures.
- 6) Work with Information Technology to obtain digital certificates at <https://www.fdot.gov/it/approveddigitalcertificateauthorities.shtm>

Cost: Adobe Sign at a recurring \$30/month per license or Microsoft Authenticode for \$474/year per license. IdenTrust certificates at \$114 annually per certificate. BlueInk costs \$2,250 for 1,000 bundles.

Benefits: Reduction of duplicate paper copies creates a more efficient and expeditious delivery of a defined document approval process allowing for tracking and auditing. Additionally, security and integrity of signatures on original documents; will empower employees by allowing them to access items to be further informed, whether onsite or at remote locations and adopting a policy that moves Marion County in this direction will help us do business more efficiently with our stakeholders.

Florida Courts currently allow e filing:

<https://www.flcourts.org/content/download/219028/file/Updated-E-Access-Standards-August-2017-v18-clean.pdf>

Other things to consider: Ensure the programs work with current organizational software; consider batch signatures; consider mobile signature process and self-hosting.

Department Liaisons for Records

Department Liaisons will be part of a subcommittee that oversees Records Retention and Document Management, as they will be the subject matter experts and points of contact. These liaisons will work with the Public Relations, Procurement Services, Information Technology, Human Resources and County Attorney as to retention schedule, document types being stored and storage needs. It can be determined if one person is dedicated to this initiative that will lead the department liaisons, for better oversight.

To achieve this, the following steps will be required:

1. Designating Department Liaisons that will be the lead
2. Department Liaisons will work with Public Relations, Procurement Services, Information Technology and Human Resources to determine document retention schedule, document types and storage needs for their individual storage
3. Work with Information Technology Department concerning the appropriate database systems that can house document

Cost: Florida Records Management Association Cost: \$150 – to be determined if needed; Annual conference costs may be needed. Webinars available here: <https://dos.myflorida.com/library-archives/records-management/records-management-training/webinars/>

Benefits: Department liaisons are well versed in departmental procedures to be aware of how items are stored.

This will take a lot of the liaison's time to help accomplish the next two tasks.

Document Management Manual

Additionally, the creation of a document management manual will be a necessary part of this plan. Electronic forms can be electronically signed and approved, while complying with ADA guidelines as they are created digitally. Items that are stored for final public use will be accessible to all departments and the public for access. The Committee will work with the Information Technology Department on the process in order to comply with any related protocols. This will require the following steps by staff:

- 1) Committee of department liaisons will collaborate on guidelines (document management strategy) for the following phases:
 - a) Evaluate the current processes, such as documents received, processed, approved/rejected, stored, and deleted, or disposed.
 - b) Determine the types of files to store internally versus publically accessed files.
 - i. Include the ERP work order module and flowchart to help retain documents pertaining to official records for public access.
 - ii. Work with Information Technology Department to determine access rights and usage, as well as needs based on departmental use.
- 2) Establishing goals to meet and planning phases to implementation:
 - a) Set key performance indicators to determine measurements of success
 - b) Determine a timeline for each phase until implementation can be completed.
- 3) Define the system:
 - a) Create naming convention that can be recognized by other departments and cross-referenced:
 - i. Metadata to include on documents
 - ii. Determining what system will cross-reference keywords so that documents can be indexed and retrieved easily
 - b) Committee will create standard operating procedures/manual so as to provide guidelines as to how to name and store documentation:
 - i. Committee will beta test with a department to work out any issues that need to be accounted for.
 - ii. Standard Operating Procedures/Manual will be presented to Administration
 - iii. Standard Operating Procedures/Manual will be presented for BCC review and adoption

Cost: Staff time and resources; License determination for software depending on usage.

Benefits: Standard of protocols for document management as to the type of files, naming conventions, etc. so that documents can be more easily found and organized for a central database. It will reduce duplication of inaccurate copies and empower employees to be able to access the correct documents to better help serve the citizens.

This will ultimately require staff time as this may take 1-3 years to implement.

Document Management Training Program

Department Liaisons will use the manual to begin scheduling training, which will teach their individual departments on the best practices to retain documents and to manage storage. The liaisons will also be able to analyze the benefits and track solutions that may be shared between them. This will enable county departments to move forward towards digital documentation and storage in order to provide equitable access to resources without the physical need to file or store this information. To do this will require the following:

- Department Liaisons will create frequently asked questions and an agenda for training sessions.
- Department Liaisons will work with Information Technology to create how-to videos.
- Department Liaisons will schedule webinars and classes for training individual departments.
- Department Liaisons will create a training schedule and coordinate with HR for it to be a required course.

Cost: Staff time and available resources.

Benefits: Training program can help with new hires and reaching all employees over time.

Departmental support and coordination with Human Resources staff and schedules is necessary and ongoing.

Compensation

| Task | Expected outcome | Lead department | Date | Cost |
|--|---|-----------------|--------------------|--|
| Ensure we remain competitive in wages for current and future employees | Have a consultant firm conduct a countywide employee classification and compensation study. | Human Resources | September 30, 2023 | TBD upon negotiation of a contract with consulting firm. |
| Educate current/future employees on benefit offerings and ensure we have an up-to-date, competitive benefit plan in place | Having a substantial benefit offering helps us to attract desirable candidates and retain qualified employees. In addition to assisting with attrition rates, a generous benefit offering can lead to higher employee morale and a healthier workforce. | Human Resources | September 30, 2023 | TBD upon negotiation of contract(s). |

Proper compensation in the workplace increases employee motivation, boosts employee loyalty, and increases both productivity and profitability. Marion County recognizes the importance of compensation the role it plays in our organization and our culture. Fair and competitive compensation is a critical part of any organization. Having a competitive compensation plan plays a tremendous role in attracting, retaining and developing employees. Furthermore, a fair and just compensation plan ensures all employees are paid impartially regardless of their demographic characteristics.

Additionally, with the changes approved by Florida voters in November of 2020, we must comply with the upcoming minimum wage changes. Florida voters approved changes to the state's minimum wage, which will gradually increase from the current \$8.65 an hour to \$15 an hour by September 2026.

Competitive Wages

Competitive wages and incentives for performance in the workplace are essential to the overall success of Marion County and our ability to recruit and retain qualified employees to provide quality, efficient services to our citizens.

As a prelude to this strategic plan, solicitation has been made through the Procurement Services department for a consultant to conduct a countywide employee classification and compensation study. The selection committee consists of the Executive Director of Administrative Services, the Executive Director of Internal Services and the Deputy Fire Chief of EMS Services. This study will encompass a full compensation analysis plan to include job position descriptions, position classifications, a salary survey, compensation ranges and a projected organizational impact of the implementation of the new minimum wage law.

Having a pay grade structure provides consistency within an organization, allowing employees to be paid consistently for the work they do in a given position. The salary range within the structure of the pay grades offers further flexibility in a compensation structure.

Benefit Options

The County currently offers a robust benefits package to our employees. Having a substantial benefit offering helps us to attract desirable candidates and retain qualified employees. In addition to assisting with attrition rates, a generous benefit offering can lead to higher employee morale and a healthier workforce. This all leads to better overall productivity from our employees. Our benefit options will continue to be regularly analyzed and updated. Additionally, we will develop a plan to help both employees and candidates better understand the value of the benefits we offer.

Staff Development

| Task | Expected outcome | Lead department | Date | Cost |
|---|--|------------------------|--------------------------------|---|
| Create a viable succession plan throughout the county departments to prepare for staffing shortfalls | Having a formal succession plan process can cut recruitment costs, eliminate lengthy training periods, and ensure customer service experiences do not decline. | Human Resources | September 30, 2024 | Staff time and other costs TBD |
| Continue to expand the County's Leadership Development program | The growth and expansion of the leadership development program will continue to grow and develop employees and management and management alike. | Human Resources | September 30, 2022 and ongoing | Staff time and other costs TBD |
| Continue existing security awareness training | Employees will continue to have a heightened awareness for cyber security issues in the workplace. | Information Technology | FY 2021/2022 and ongoing | Approx. \$60,694.89 Annually, through 3 year contract |
| Implement a digital training platform | Trainings will be provided in a digital format creating opportunities for improved efficiency and customer service across departments. | Human Resources | September 30, 2022 and ongoing | \$54,250 annually (inclusive of user costs and system maintenance fees) |

Employee empowerment can instill stronger trust in leadership, encourage employee motivation, embolden greater creativity, and improve employee retention. When employees are empowered, they have the ability to accomplish great things *and they know it*, ultimately providing them with confidence in their work. There are many ways to empower our employees, including giving them a voice by regularly soliciting and acting on their feedback, providing additional growth opportunities, frequently providing them with praise and recognition and ensuring they have the tools and training they need to excel.

Reinforcement is the key to ensuring proper employee development. Once employees have gone through training or have learned new skills or strategies, it is important to follow up with them. This helps supervisors understand how employees feel about their newly acquired skill(s), and it demonstrates the supervisor's interest in the employee's success. Additionally, proper guidance can steer employees to appropriate career paths and instill values to help them grow as individuals.

A carefully thought-out employee development strategy is important on multiple levels. It can benefit employees, managers and the organization as a whole. A well-trained employee is equipped to have superior job performance, the ability to handle unexpected situations, and exemplary customer service skills. Additionally, staff development strategies can help grow potentially good employees into great leaders who can engage and motivate their peers and help achieve the organization's goals.

Succession Planning

Succession planning is the process of planning towards the transition of leadership and key positions within the organization. Having a formal succession plan process can cut recruitment costs, eliminate lengthy training periods, and ensure customer service experiences do not decline.

Leadership Development

Marion County recognizes that leadership occurs at all levels. Continued development of Marion County leadership is essential to all areas of staff development. Marion County currently has a strong leadership program in place; however, in order to continue to grow and develop employees and management, this program needs to be expanded.

Furthermore, we are proposing the addition of a Culture Coach position in order to continue to foster the culture of our organization and infuse our guiding principles and core values into everything we do.

Security Awareness Training

KnowBe4, the provider of the world's largest security awareness training and simulated phishing platform, is used by more than 28,000 organizations around the globe. KnowBe4 aids organizations to address the human element of security by raising awareness about ransomware, fraud, and other social engineering tactics. Kevin Mitnick is an internationally recognized cybersecurity specialist and KnowBe4's Chief Hacking Officer. Mitnick helps design the KnowBe4 training based on his well-documented social engineering tactics. Tens of thousands of organizations rely on KnowBe4 to mobilize their end users as the last line of defense.

Notable Recent Awards

April 2020 - KnowBe4 was named a Leader in a new Forrester Wave™ report.

KnowBe4 was also named a Leader in the Gartner Magic Quadrant for Security Awareness Computer-Based Training in 2019.

| Item | Description | Estimate |
|------------------|---|-------------|
| KnowBe4 Security | Provides annual security awareness and topic-based security trainings to the organization. Also provides a test phishing email platform with analytics and reporting. | \$44,632.65 |
| KnowBe4 PhishER | Allows users to report phishing emails and provides advanced security scanning tools for the IT Security Team. | \$16,062.24 |

** While KnowBe4 is currently the industry leader, Marion County's Information Technology will continue to evaluate new companies and security training solutions to ensure the organization receives the best benefits and value.*

Digital Training Platforms to Employees

Providing training access to Marion County employees through a digital platform creates opportunities to increase efficiency and improve customer service across all departments.

The current Target Solutions platform could be expanded to include content produced and uploaded by Marion County staff or provided by vendors or other agencies. These materials could be assigned by department leaders or self-assigned by employees. For employees working from the field, training could be accessed via tablets at central locations. Also, the system is fully accessible from any internet connection and does not require the user to be logged into the Marion County network, allowing for greater ease of use.

We should expand the use of digital training platforms, with availability to 100% of Marion County employees by September 30, 2026 through automated self-assign and record reporting integration into ERP. Training content will include various Human Resources, customer service, technology and safety training courses as well as electronic messaging etiquette and brand awareness.

- Year 1 – Research the capability of platforms currently used by Marion County (ERP and Target Solutions). If current platforms will not meet our future needs, determine other available platform options. Evaluation of existing or potential platforms should include funding costs.
- Year 2 – Provide formal implementation plan to BCC for approval/funding.
- Year 3 – Implement platform to 25% of employees and evaluate platform and processes.
- Year 4 – Implement any needed changes identified from lessons learned and implement to next 25% of employees.
- Year 5 – Expand to remaining 50% of employees.

Customer Experience – Customer Service

| Task | Expected outcome | Lead department | Date | Cost |
|---|--|---|--------------------|--------------------------------|
| Increase overall visibility of the county, increasing public sentiment | We will be able to provide our customers services in an efficient, easy manner. By adding ease and accessibility to information and providing helpful interactive tools, we will provide a more expedient, easy process for our customers. | Public Relations and Information Technology | September 30, 2024 | Staff time and other costs TBD |
| Evaluate new or emerging social media and enhancement tools | The ability to reach more people and to share the untold stories and messages of the county. | Public Relations | September 30, 2024 | Staff time and other costs TBD |
| Create consistency in customer service throughout the county's departments | Customers will see clear and unified branding from the county and consistent messages. | Public Relations | September 30, 2023 | Staff time and other costs TBD |

Enhancing our ability to provide excellent customer service to the citizens of Marion County is interwoven into the entire Empowering Marion for Success plan. As we move into a new five-year plan, customer service will remain at the forefront of everything we do. Providing excellent customer service does many things to make an organization better.

First, happy customers build a better reputation for an organization. This reputation can help with attracting customers, such as businesses to our community or potential employees. Brand awareness also improves with positive customer experiences, and having a standard of excellence in customer service in the organization can help unite the team and ensure more efficient and effective services are being delivered to our customers.

Centralized oversight of all online accounts and tools are important in today's society to further enhance Marion County's reputation, progress and in providing accurate contact information. In doing so, staff recommends to increase or enhance the county's visibility locally, regionally, and nationally. Additionally, with the ever-changing trends in social media, we should evaluate new or emerging social media platforms and determine if they would be useful for county government communications.

In the previous five-year plan, we surveyed both our internal and external customers in order to have a better understanding of our improvement needs. We will use this as our foundation to build on in this plan.

Visibility

Visibility is a huge part of government customer service, as our goal is to be transparent in everything we provide for our citizens. This requirement of transparency leads directly into the goal of having improved customer visibility. This means providing full visibility in every customer interaction, from support calls, to emails, to providing services and even in accounting transactions. It means seeing live chat conversations, social media posts, live data on the status of services and having records of phone calls.

Customers want to obtain services in an efficient, easy manner. Streamlining processes, adding ease of accessibility to information and providing helpful interactive tools will lead to a more expedient, easy process for our customers. Methods such as customer notification systems, appointment software and wait-line paging systems will assist with making our customer experience easier to navigate. With the proposed addition of a Customer Service All-stars group with a member from each department included, messages should be easily distributed and monitored to meet these expectations.

Having up-to-date information on our website and dedicated staff that can quickly update content is vital to the professionalism and outstanding customer service to our citizens and is essential to our overall visibility. Having a dynamic website full of pertinent information as a primary vehicle and highlighting our organization is a valued resource in educating our citizens about county operations and services. Our first step is to develop content guidelines for the departments to follow. We will also develop staff training in order to update website information on a routine basis. Once this is achieved, measures could be put in place for analytical tracking of various subject matter.

We propose the following timeline:

- Year 1 – Information Technology evaluates existing content with departments and transition from PDF to online forms and content.
- Year 2 – Develop content guidelines and media calendar to promote and highlight certain aspects of the county at a time. Provide training to staff and timelines on content updates.
- Year 3 – Work with departments to create dynamic content such as videos and virtual tours.

Evaluate New or Emerging Social Media and Enhancement Tools

Currently, the county utilizes LinkedIn, Facebook and various trending platforms. Fire stations, libraries and community centers may be the largest users of today's social media platforms. To explore this objective further, staff recommends the following timeline:

- Year 1 – Research existing digital services provided to citizens to determine efficacy and undertaking an audience study to understand our growing community.
- Year 2 – Provide formal implementation plan to BCC for approval/funding.
- Year 3 – Implement and evaluate plan. Hire FTE Public Relations - Social Media & Online Platforms

Consistency

Customers in every organization expect a clear path to what they need in addition to a successful and satisfying customer experience. Providing consistency in customer service throughout our county departments is a top priority. In order to attain this consistency, we will use means such as reporting tools, heightened training, and transparency across different departments as to the level of customer service delivered.

Additionally, Marion County's desire to Empower Marion for Success must be clear and consistent across all departments through various media platforms made available to the public. Examples include paper and digital forms, flyers, social media posts, etc., which must all be consistent in branding usage. Reinforcing the community's confidence in our professionalism and our commitment to deliver the best customer service possible is the responsibility of every employee.

We recommend the following:

- Update all branding to "Empowering Marion for Success". Consistent logo usage and standards.
- Develop guidelines that incorporates how to create content that is consistent in styling and messaging with Empowering Marion for Success.

Communication

| Task | Expected outcome | Lead department | Date | Cost |
|--|---|---|--------------------|---|
| Improve external communication | Increase citizen access to County resources through existing and emerging technologies and platforms to include digital access, submission and processing of documents. | Public Relations and Information Technology | September 30, 2023 | Staff time and other costs TBD |
| Improve internal communication | Create a newly updated SharePoint system, allowing employees to stay engaged and informed, while allowing them to share information and enhancing their accessibility to resources maintained by department liaisons. | Public Relations and Information Technology | September 30, 2023 | Staff time and other costs TBD |
| Implement A public and employee messaging system across targeted county buildings | Consistent messaging to employees and the public to update them on various services offered upcoming events and more. | Public Relations and Information Technology | September 30, 2026 | Approx. up to \$1,000,000 – pending software platform and number of locations |

Communication is a twofold goal in this plan, affecting both the employee and customer experience. Communicating clearly to our employees provides precise expectations in regards to customer service. Additionally, being able to communicate effectively to our customers will help them better understand and place more confidence in our organization. We will do this by finding more ways to explain what exactly our various departments do and to educate the general public on exactly how and where tax dollars are being spent.

Implementing a focus on positive and consistent communication will lead to great accomplishments and a favorable working environment. Communication is a factor in every element of organizational culture and customer service. Without communication, none of the elements would be successful.

Improve external communication

External communication is how we communicate to our customers and citizens, day in and day out. All communications should be aligned with the vision and values of Marion County. Part of improving our external communication means educating our customers to have a better understanding of the role of Marion County government in our community. Formal external communication is the very first step in creating the appropriate organizational image. This includes anything from carefully crafted letters, reports, presentations or web pages.

Additionally, as more of the population moves to digital methods of accessing government resources, Marion County should strive to provide access to resources across multiple platforms. It is also imperative that this content meets the requirements of the Americans with Disabilities Act to allow all citizens equivalent access to resources.

By September 30, 2023, we should implement a comprehensive plan to increase citizen access to County resources through existing and emerging technologies and platforms to include digital access, submission and processing of documents/requests along with assistive technology to meet requirements of the Americans with Disabilities Act.

- Year 1 – Research existing digital services provided to citizens to determine efficacy as well as compliance with ADA requirements.
- Year 2 – Provide formal implementation plan to BCC for approval/funding.
- Year 3 – Implement and evaluate plan.
- Year 4 – Implement any needed changes identified from lessons learned.

Improve internal communication

Internal communication to employees is equally important to the success of Marion County. Internal communication shares information about the company so employees can perform their jobs well while keeping employees informed. Internal communication's purpose is to provide an effective flow of information between an organization's departments and colleagues. This applies both up and down the management/employee chain. It also works among employees who are interacting with each other in

the organization. Solid internal communication nurtures company culture and builds employee engagement.

It is equally important for employees to stay engaged and informed, while allowing them to easily share information and enhancing their accessibility to resources maintained by department liaisons. This can be achieved by developing an employee portal through SharePoint where staff can create, store, and share content across departments.

The current SharePoint site used by Marion County is out of date and in need of replacement. The new SharePoint portal could be managed by appropriate Information Technology staff. Marion County is entitled under its current license to update to the latest version of SharePoint. There will be a large upfront investment of staff time, primarily by Information Technology, to design and set up the new portal. Staff time by departments will be required for maintenance and upkeep after proper training.

We propose the following timeline:

- Months 1 – 2: Information Technology evaluates existing content with departments and discusses needs/goals for the new portal.
- Months 3 – 4: Develop content guidelines and design structure to fulfill needs. Start development and test with select departments for revisions.
- Months 5 – 6: Complete site components, provide training to staff responsible for maintenance, and make available to all departments.
- Ongoing: Requests for custom components will be reviewed by Information Technology and integrated/designed in conjunction with departments to ensure proper functions.

Public and Employee Messaging Systems

As employees, citizens, and visitors interact within Marion County's local government buildings, they may benefit from a digital messaging system. This provides the opportunity for consistent messaging to employees and the public to update them on various services offered, upcoming events and more.

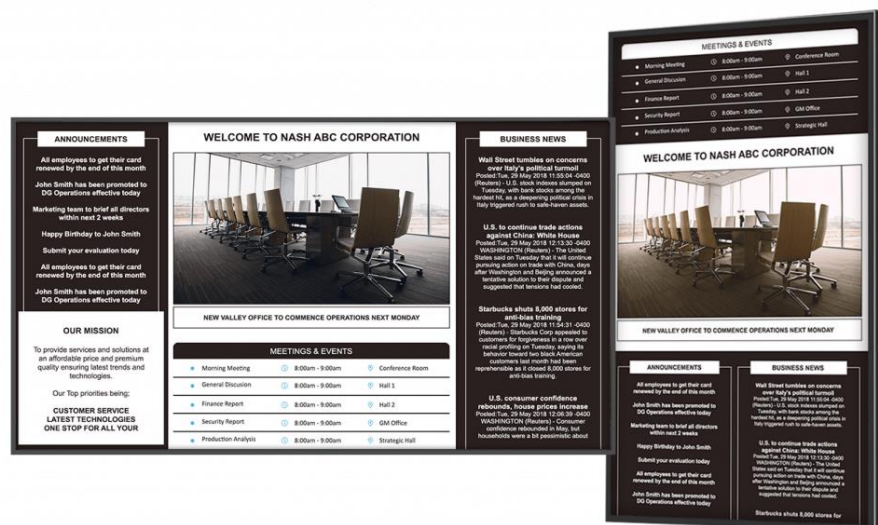
The components include a TV in each location that is connected to a network server, which publishes the material on each TV. The digital messaging on the screen can be divided into different areas of focus (i.e. a meeting schedule for the day in one quadrant, important news in another quadrant, services offered in another, etc.).

One of the opportunities for improvement most often stated by Marion County employees is to improve communication for our internal customers, our employees. Through implementation of various messaging platforms and processes, two-way communication may be improved between employees and various levels of leadership. Examples that may be included in the project are listed below. Some of this may be accomplished through a reimagined SharePoint site.

- New employees would receive a welcome message/tutorial upon logging into the computer the first time. This would also be available for employees moving from one position to another within the County. Similar to the “welcome” process that occurs the first time a user logs onto Windows.
- Leadership could have the option to send push notifications to employees as a pop-up window on their computer, rather than another e-mail in their inbox to potentially get lost.
- Information flow that allows submission of ideas/suggestions/feedback from line employees up through leadership.
- Central hub for surplus furniture, supplies, etc. instead of communicated out through e-mail.
- Implement a comprehensive, computer-based employee communication tool by September 30, 2023 to include onboard messaging for new employees, centralized employee messaging center and ability to provide input to senior leadership.
- Year 1 – Information Technology determines availability to provide over existing software/hardware. Provide formal implementation plan to BCC for approval/funding.
- Year 2 – Implement communication tool.

Marion County should implement a public and employee messaging system across 100% of targeted public buildings by September 30, 2026, providing employees and citizens with updated information from the Board of County Commissioners, Administration and individual departments.

- Year 1 – Determine the number of public lobbies and employee breakrooms to receive digital messaging boards. Research various platforms, configurations, hardware, etc. and associated costs.
- Year 2 – Provide a formal implementation plan to BCC for approval/funding which identifies capital purchases, non-capital purchases and installation/configuration plan.
- Year 3 – Implement initial beta sites as determined by committee.
- Year 4 – Implement any needed changes identified from lessons learned through beta test and expand program to achieve coverage of 50%.
- Year 5 – Complete expansion to remaining 50%.



Security – Advance Security Measures to Prevent Cybersecurity Threats

| Task | Expected outcome | Lead department | Date | Cost |
|--|---|------------------------|--------------------|---|
| Implement advanced endpoint protection | The risks of cyber-attacks will be minimized by implementing advanced endpoint security solutions. | Information Technology | September 30, 2022 | \$44,895 Software; \$3,295 Maintenance (Annually) |
| Implement multi-factor authentication for VPN | Criminals will be prevented from easily gaining access to the organization's network and systems, even if an employee's credentials have been compromised. | Information Technology | September 30, 2022 | \$28,800 Initial; \$20,000 Recurring |
| Create a password management solution for employees | Allows employees to seamlessly manage their login credentials for multiple systems. | Information Technology | September 30, 2023 | Approx. \$75,000 Annually |
| Implement privileged access management | A reduction in risks to the organization limiting administrative privileges, blocking privileged credential thefts, auditing malicious behavior, and strengthening the overall security of privileged accounts. | Information Technology | September 30, 2023 | Approx. \$113,923.40 Initial; \$17,703.40 Recurring |

Due to the growth in cybersecurity threats and a potential increase in remote workforce, Information Technology must continually advance security measures to keep Marion County's operations and confidential information secure. Using industry leaders like Gartner and Forrester, Information Technology is able to closely monitor emerging industry trends in order to help make informed business decisions.

Advanced Endpoint Protection

Organizations can minimize the risk of cyber-attacks by implementing advanced endpoint security solutions. These novel technologies replace traditional antivirus solutions and use machine learning and behavioral analysis to protect against new and evolving cyber threats.

e.g. Advanced endpoint protection has the capacity to identify common patterns by end users and alert IT if those patterns seem inconsistent. If you open/modify 25 files daily, this program will see this as a pattern. If there is a drastic change and 1000 files are opened/modified, the program can be configured to alert IT and lock down the computer.

| Item | Description | Estimate |
|-------------|-----------------------------|----------|
| Software | Cylance 1600 devices | \$44,895 |
| Maintenance | Cylance per device - 1 year | \$3,295 |

Multi-Factor Authentication for VPN

Multi-factor authentication has evolved into the single most effective method to protect organizations from remote cyber-attacks by preventing criminals from easily gaining access to the organization's network and systems, even if an employee's credentials have been compromised.

e.g. This technology is used with applications such as online banking and shopping websites where the end-user is sent a single-use code via email or text to verify their identity.

| Item | Description | Estimate |
|----------|--|----------|
| Software | Duo Access – 1 year, 400 users | \$20,000 |
| Tokens | 400 One Time Password Tokens for employees | \$8,800 |

Password Management Solution to Employees

Using a password management solution helps the end user to seamlessly manage their login credentials for multiple systems. Many of the solutions available will create random and complex passwords, auto-fill forms, and synchronize encrypted password information across multiple devices. This helps to protect critical business information and computer systems by improving employee password behaviors.

i.e. This will prevent the need for written passwords or the need to remember individual system credentials. The program will use one master password to access all other passwords stored securely in a digital encrypted vault.

| Option | Description | Estimate |
|----------|---|----------|
| LastPass | Enterprise Site License + Identity - 1 year | \$75,000 |

(The site license is sold as a block of 1,001 – 2,000 users)

Privileged Access Management

Privileged access management reduces risks to organizations by limiting administrative privileges, blocking privileged credential thefts, auditing malicious behavior, and strengthening the overall security of privileged accounts.

i.e. An employee is a P-card administrator that can issue cards and change credit limits. They are given a master password to use while this program automatically submits and updates individual passwords. If that same employee leaves the organization, the master password would be disabled and they would then no longer have access or knowledge of login credentials to that application.

| Item | Description | Estimate |
|-------------------------|--|-----------------|
| Implementation Services | Professional services for installation & configuration | \$13,750.00 |
| User Licenses | Per-user licensing for software – 30 users | \$60,000.00 |
| Virtual Appliance | Pair of redundant virtual appliances running solution | \$20,470.00 |
| Training | Virtual Instructor Training for 1 student | \$2,000.00 |
| User Maintenance | Maintenance for per-user licenses - 1 year | \$13,200.00 |
| Appliance Maintenance | Maintenance for virtual appliances - 1 year | \$4,503.40 |

DRAFT

Empowering Marion for Success II

RESOURCES AND FACILITIES

Marion County is responsible for the operation and maintenance of existing public facilities such as public buildings, libraries, and parks – encompassing an area over 3 million square feet of structures. Continuous growth and improvements also require identifying future needs and possible expansion/addition of facilities; exploring funding options, and prioritizing the implementation schedule based on customer service enhancement, maintenance concerns, operational growth and budget restrictions. In addition, there is a focus on our outdoor assets and natural resources to preserve their quality so they continue to define their character and play a major role in attracting visitors and guests to Marion County and represent a positive economic impact.



Operations and Maintenance

| Task | Expected outcome | Lead department | Date | Cost |
|--|---|-----------------------|--------------------|--|
| Analyze all County facilities for safety/security needs and develop an implementation plan. | Each facility will be evaluated as to the physical threat level and be designated as high, moderate or low risk. | Facilities Management | September 30, 2024 | Approximately \$300,000 and staff time |
| Create a comprehensive wayfinding program for County facilities that utilizes design elements of the Gateway Signage project. | A comprehensive, unifying wayfinding program to guide travelers from their main transportation corridors, to their destination, whether it be a library, a park or a meeting place such as the BCC auditorium. There should be consistency in colors, fonts, logos or other graphics. | Facilities Management | September 30, 2026 | TBD |
| Develop an Administrative policy and manual for construction project management. | Formalized construction project management via a variety of methods to include an administrative policy, a project management manual, project checklists, and other means as developed by Facilities Management. | Facilities Management | June 30, 2022 | Staff time |

Operations and Maintenance is focusing on three countywide objectives, Safety and Security as a priority for all departments, Signage and Wayfinding as a unifying enhancement, and Project Management as a process improvement. All three of these objectives have been addressed department by department, but not with a systematic approach.

Safety/Security

Safety and security is a top priority. Recent security measures have resulted in upgrades to a number of buildings, such as the Courthouse, Administration and Growth Management. Since Marion County offers a variety of services, the potential security solutions are as varied as our services.



Each facility will be evaluated as to the physical threat level and be designated as high, moderate or low risk. Various factors will be considered to determine the level of risk, such as the type and use of the facility, personnel present during the workday, number of staff and customers, and current security systems in place.

The facility risk designation will be reviewed annually and revised pending a significant change in the factors of consideration. Based on the designation of risk, the following systems will be installed to mitigate the potential threat:

| High Risk | |
|---|--|
| Multiple physical barriers: Designated checkpoint with security walls and window treatment. | |
| Security Personnel: The location will be reviewed for the necessity of designated or roaming security. | |
| Access Control: Installation of access control for any entrance and outflow of the checkpoint. | |
| Surveillance and Alarm: Installation of surveillance cameras and alarm system. | |
| Estimated Cost: | |
| \$169,204 | |
| Moderate Risk | |
| Access Control: Installation of access-controlled exterior entrances. | |
| Surveillance and Alarm: Review site for the necessity of the installation of surveillance cameras and/or alarm systems. | |
| Review each site for any additional need based on location and use. | |
| Estimated Cost: | |
| \$60,000 | |
| Low Risk | |
| Access Control: Installation of an access-controlled entrance of the building. | |
| Review each site for any additional need based on location and use. | |
| Estimated Cost: | |
| \$70,000 | |
| Very Low Risk | |
| Manual Control: The ability to lock the exterior doors in case of a threat. | |
| Estimated Cost: \$800 | |
| Total Estimate: | |
| \$300,000 | |

Signage and Wayfinding

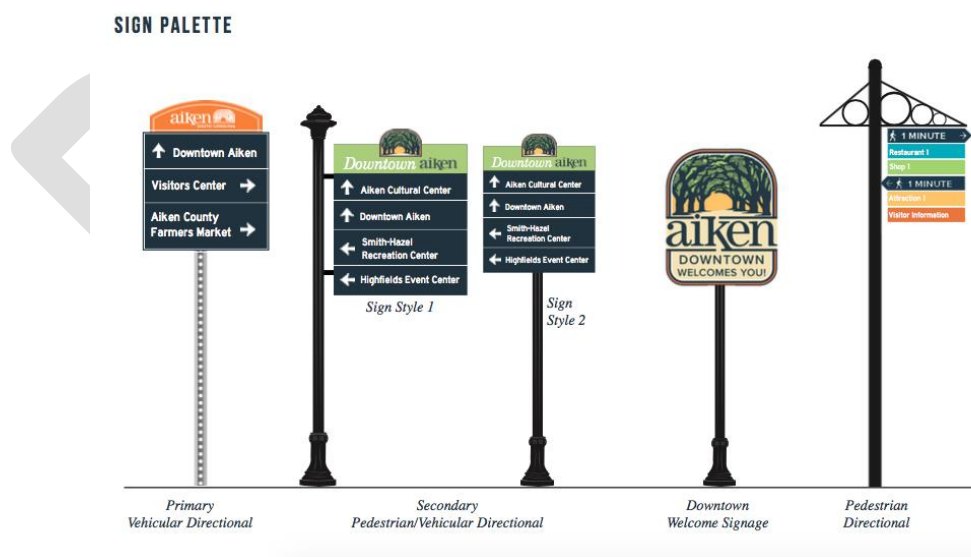
In 2019, the Board of County Commissioners approved gateway signage to be implemented along the interstate and at other major roadways for travelers as they enter Marion County. As a means to announce their arrival to the County, these markers also have the ability to serve as the starting points for visitors who seek to find their way to other County facilities, whether it is the McPherson Government Campus, County parks, libraries and other County destinations.

The Gateway project designs include features such as native limestone, blue metal base with an angled top edge and a specific font for the text. The monuments also include the Marion County seal which recognizes the horse industry, our natural environment, as well as, sun rays as a nod to the historic Marion County designation, “Kingdom of the Sun”. Aspects of these monuments can be used, in whole or in part, to create additional signage, entry features, and other designations such as building identifier, throughout the County.

A comprehensive, unifying wayfinding program should guide travelers from their main transportation corridors, to their destination, whether it be a library, a park or a meeting place such as the BCC auditorium. There should be consistency in colors, fonts, logos or other graphics.

Some ideas for a comprehensive program include:

- Create new roadway directional signs that include certain emblems or the County seal to set them apart from the typical roadway signs. All signs along public right-of-ways will meet the minimum design standards of the jurisdictional agency.
- Develop standard destination signage for places such as parks, libraries and governmental offices. While each site may have unique qualities that make that place special, by unifying site entry signs, the travelers will be able to clearly relate that they are at a Marion County facility.
- Improve signage and site maps at the McPherson Campus (You Are Here) so that visitors can direct themselves to their destination.
- Create systematic and clear building identification markers so that visitors can easily determine which building they seek.
- Carry the wayfinding concept to entryways as well as into buildings that have multiple departments sharing a space, such as the Growth Services building.



Project Management

There is a need to formalize aspects of construction project management and identify roles to improve communication and efficiencies. Formalized construction project management can be communicated

via a variety of methods to include an administrative policy, a project management manual, project checklists, and other means as developed by Facilities Management. Aspects to be addressed include:

- Defining the role of the project manager, the subcontractor and customer.
- Identifying when projects require the involvement of internal departments such as Facilities or IT.
- Developing broad countywide standards to be followed, including forms and checklists.

The administrative policy will address the life cycle of projects from the conceptual phase through final construction at a high level. The project manual will be more detailed and will assign roles and expectations for all stakeholders for each phase of the project. These clear expectations and roles will facilitate successful progression and communication throughout the project.

Future Needs

| Task | Expected outcome | Lead department | Date | Cost |
|---|--|---|--------------------|-------------------|
| Perform a General Fund building rehab/replace prioritization analysis | Once this analysis is complete, it should be possible to identify when buildings need rehabilitation and eventual reconstruction and develop a rehab/replacement schedule similar to replacements schedules of other assets (computers, vehicles, etc.). | Facilities Management | September 30, 2022 | Approx. \$100,000 |
| Determine the feasibility of a Marion County Government Center to replace aging buildings. | After prioritizing the buildings in need of rehabilitation and identifying the anticipated costs, we will evaluate if it is more feasible and efficient for both the public and county services to construct a centralized facility rather than to keep maintaining separate structures. | Facilities Management | September 30, 2024 | Approx. \$100,000 |
| Identify and prioritize new/expanded facility needs based on current service gaps and expected population growth for the next 10 years and determine funding source. | We will look ahead 10 years and consider areas that are currently underserved as well as areas undergoing a population boom. | Facilities Management, Library and Parks & Recreation | June 30, 2023 | Staff time |

Marion County continues to evolve and grow requiring the continuous examination of facilities that are currently maintained but in need of rehabilitation and facilities that are in need of expansion or construction.

Rehab Projects

In recent years, the budget target in the General Fund for Capital Improvement Program (CIP) projects has been approximately \$5M per year. With the unknowns of COVID, the FY 20/21 adopted budget is less, but years 2-5 continue to be projected at \$5M. This earmark funds all the major rehab, construction and expansion projects for General Fund departments including constitutional officers. In the current,

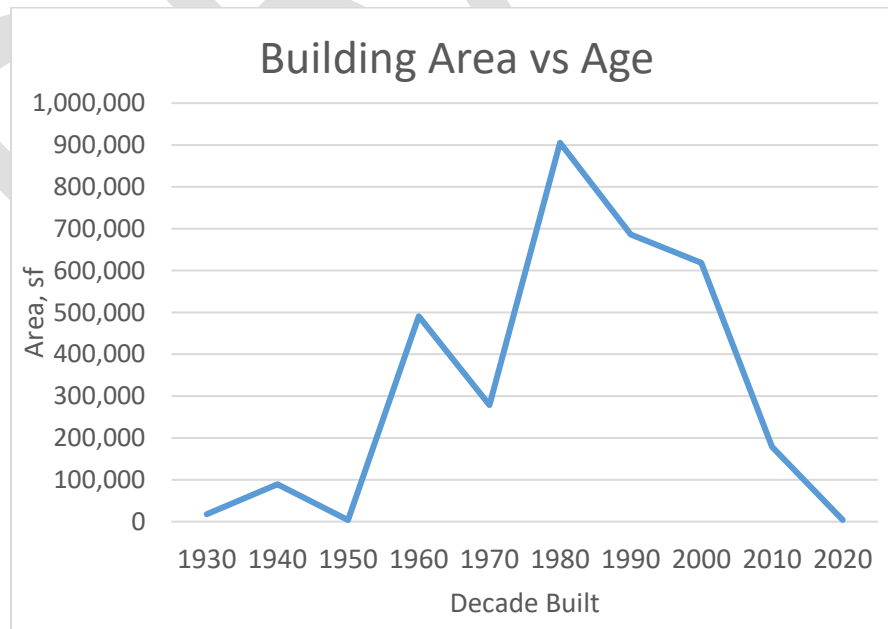
adopted 5-year CIP budget, a total of \$20.8M is budgeted with 70% (\$14.8M) for construction/expansion and 30% (\$6M) for rehab projects. (Of note is that this budget has contained many jail projects, which were recently shifted to the Surtax.)

| | FY 20/21 | FY 21/22 | FY 22/23 | FY 23/24 | FY 24/25 | Total |
|---|--------------------|--------------------|--------------------|--------------------|--------------------|---------------------|
| Facility Expansion | \$0 | \$1,650,000 | \$5,550,000 | \$3,620,000 | \$4,000,000 | \$14,820,000 |
| New Consolidated Fleet Facility | | | \$350,000 | \$1,000,000 | \$4,000,000 | |
| State Attorney Expansion and Courtrooms | | \$1,400,000 | \$1,600,000 | | | |
| Freedom Public Library Expansion | | \$250,000 | \$3,600,000 | \$2,620,000 | | |
| | | | | | | |
| Facility Rehab | \$1,495,110 | \$2,805,431 | \$651,836 | \$725,836 | \$344,696 | \$6,022,909 |
| Enterprise Resource Planning Capital | \$189,064 | | | | | |
| Courtroom Audio and Video Upgrade | \$601,296 | \$179,336 | \$165,836 | \$165,836 | \$144,696 | |
| Health Dept Replace Heating Boilers | | \$160,000 | | | | |
| JC Upgrade Elevators | \$225,000 | | | | | |
| JC1 Replacement Of Air Handler Unit | | \$800,000 | | | | |
| JC2 Replacement Of Air Handlers | | \$1,450,000 | | | | |
| MCSO Admin Remodel | | | | \$560,000 | | |
| MCSO Training Bldg. Enhancements | \$152,000 | | | | | |
| SELP Auditorium Av Upgrade | \$327,750 | | | | | |
| SELP Back Arena Announcers Booth | | | \$120,000 | | | |
| SELP Extension Auditorium Remodel | | \$216,095 | | | | |
| SELP Fans In Back Arena | | | \$176,000 | | | |
| SELP Sales Arena Remodel | | | \$190,000 | | | |
| SELP Wash Rack For Back Arena | | | | | \$200,000 | |
| | | | | | | |
| Total | \$1,495,110 | \$4,455,431 | \$6,201,836 | \$4,345,836 | \$4,344,696 | \$20,842,909 |

Risk Management provided a list of 1,073 county owned properties, which also included the estimated value of the properties. Of these properties, 464 include a structure, from a low of 52 square feet for a Utilities shed to a high of 567,159 square feet for the County jail. The building value of the 464 units

totals \$403,120,766. Shown in the table and chart below, most of the square footage was built between the 1960s and 2000s:

| Decade Built | Number of Buildings | Area of Buildings (sf) | Building Value |
|--------------|---------------------|------------------------|----------------|
| 1930 | 5 | 17,774 | \$1,941,768 |
| 1940 | 9 | 89,533 | \$4,860,237 |
| 1950 | 5 | 3,839 | \$304,300 |
| 1960 | 18 | 490,889 | \$91,365,908 |
| 1970 | 30 | 278,782 | \$38,098,003 |
| 1980 | 70 | 905,394 | \$135,235,132 |
| 1990 | 93 | 686,250 | \$39,684,748 |
| 2000 | 177 | 618,458 | \$80,845,555 |
| 2010 | 56 | 178,950 | \$10,630,115 |
| 2020 | 1 | 4,000 | \$155,000 |
| Grand Total | 464 | 3,273,869 | \$403,120,766 |



Approximately 75% of the structural inventory is in the General Fund. This means that \$1.2M (\$6M/5 years) is being budgeted annually for rehab projects in the General Fund to support \$300M in building

value. For an even starker view: Assuming \$313/sf as an average construction cost, it would cost \$768M to reconstruct all the buildings in the General Fund.

But of course all the buildings are not in need of reconstruction. To determine which buildings are or will be in need of reconstruction, additional considerations need to be taken into account, including: various aspects associated with the condition of the building, current and projected usage, capacity, historical significance, etc. This criteria needs to be objective but also cost effective to gather. All of the buildings need a one-time inspection and prioritization within a ranking system. Buildings that possess historical significance, consideration should be given as to how that building might be repurposed to its highest and best use.

Once this analysis is complete, it should be possible to identify when buildings need rehabilitation and eventual reconstruction and develop a rehab/replacement schedule similar to replacements schedules of other assets (computers, vehicles, etc.). This would help level the annual costs and identify how much should be budgeted. Based on the age of structures, conditions and usage, it is assumed that the amount needed may exceed the \$1.2M/year currently being budgeted. The most likely funding sources identified include additional millage or a surtax renewal that included general infrastructure.

Determine the feasibility of a Marion County Government Center to replace aging buildings

After prioritizing the buildings in need of rehabilitation and identifying the anticipated costs, it may prove to be more feasible and efficient for both the public and county services to construct a centralized facility rather than to keep maintaining separate structures. Below is a list of buildings that may be vacated and repurposed by moving departments to this centralized complex. This list would naturally need to be reviewed based on many factors, but is provided to demonstrate the potential.

| Decade / Building Description | Area of Buildings (sf) | Building Value |
|--|------------------------|----------------|
| 1930 | | |
| IT Building 2 | 3,262 | \$236,974 |
| 1940 | | |
| Fire Headquarters on Maricamp Rd | 11,687 | \$1,229,205 |
| 1960 | | |
| District 24 State Representative Office | 2,244 | \$184,992 |
| Green Clover Hall | 2,060 | \$157,544 |
| Administration/Commissioners/Attorney Building | 17,389 | \$2,189,072 |
| TDC | 16,605 | \$1,316,042 |
| 1970 | | |

| | | |
|-------------------------------------|---------|--------------|
| Engineering Building 2 | 8,524 | \$593,046 |
| Engineering Building 1 | 8,693 | \$793,266 |
| Growth Management Office | 54,440 | \$10,236,788 |
| Human Resources/Health Clinic | 7,569 | \$543,884 |
| IT | 4,152 | \$288,862 |
| Parks & Recreation Office | 4,140 | \$297,510 |
| US Congress Office | 1,554 | \$125,866 |
| 1980 | | |
| Procurement and Fire Offices | 20,160 | \$1,795,964 |
| Property Appraiser/Tax Collector | 48,642 | \$6,202,684 |
| 1990 | | |
| Solid Waste Administration Building | 2,770 | \$248,330 |
| 2000 | | |
| Engineering Building 3 | 8,288 | \$645,310 |
| Utilities Main Office/ Branch | 11,352 | \$1,063,900 |
| Grand Total | 233,531 | \$28,149,239 |

Additionally, the following rendering demonstrates a possible solution. This concept consists of two 3-story buildings totaling 200K square feet connected by a walkway.



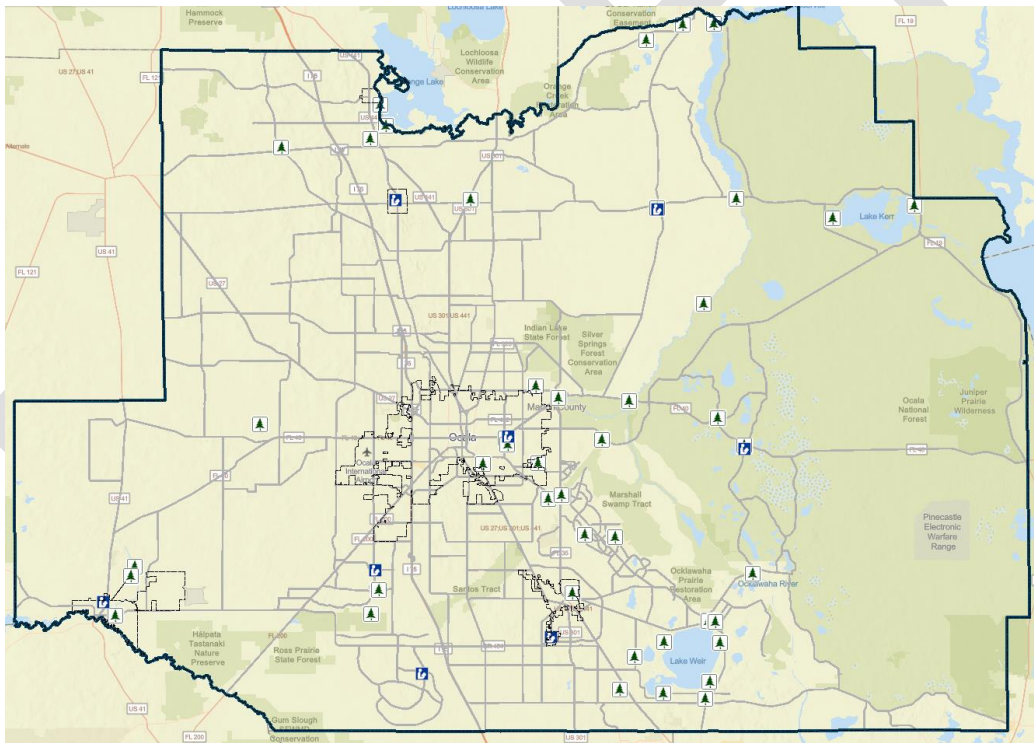
PROPOSED
MARION COUNTY GOVERNMENT CENTER
OCALA, FLORIDA

Table 1. Estimates of Population by County and City in Florida, 2020

(Continued)

| County, City, and State | April 1 2020 Estimate | Total Change 2010–2020 | April 1 2010 Census | <u>Revenue Sharing Use Only ‡</u> | |
|----------------------------|-----------------------------|------------------------------|---------------------------|-----------------------------------|--|
| | | | | Inmates | Estimates less Inmates April 1, 2020 |
| Marion County* | 368,135 | 36,832 | 331,303 | 5,323 | 362,812 |
| Bellevue | 5,330 | 838 | 4,492 | 5 | 5,325 |
| Dunnellon | 1,864 | 131 | 1,733 | 0 | 1,864 |
| McIntosh | 486 | 34 | 452 | 0 | 486 |
| Ocala | 62,023 | 5,708 | 56,315 | 216 | 61,807 |
| Reddick | 577 | 71 | 506 | 0 | 577 |
| UNINCORPORATED* | 297,855 | 30,050 | 267,805 | 5,102 | 292,753 |

Based on the historic, recent, and projected population growth, an analysis is needed for Parks' and Libraries' service gaps similar to what was completed by Fire Rescue in their recent Strategic Plan. It is recommended to look ahead 10 years and consider areas that are currently underserved as well as areas undergoing a population boom.



While identifying and prioritizing the next Parks to expand or the next Libraries to build is important, a related goal is to develop a program with consistent funding to create and implement a construction schedule. Similar to the building rehab funding, property taxes or a future surtax are likely candidates. But impact fees can also be considered for expansion projects related to new development.

Outdoor Assets

| Task | Expected outcome | Lead department | Date | Cost |
|--|--|---------------------|--------------------|---------------------------------------|
| Create a Destination Tour App (Horse Farm Tour App) | In an effort to connect Marion County with the equine community, we will work to develop a destination application. | Tourist Development | September 30, 2022 | \$37,000 (one-time) \$1,000 (monthly) |
| Create an equine/bike/walk trail map library | We will have a tool for the community and tourists to easily search, navigate and explore the county's entire network of trails, helping to encourage the use of Marion County trails and greenways and improve the user experience. | Parks & Recreation | September 30, 2025 | Staff time |

With over 468,000 acres of publicly owned lands and some of the most unique natural features in the world, Marion County is perfectly situated to become the go-to destination for outdoor enthusiasts. A combination of conservation lands, greenways and destination parks, the county will soon become an outdoor recreation and ecotourism mecca for the southeast region. These very resources and the amount of public lands contribute to our quality of life by protecting the environment for future generations while providing the setting for a prosperous recreation industry.

Creation of a destination application

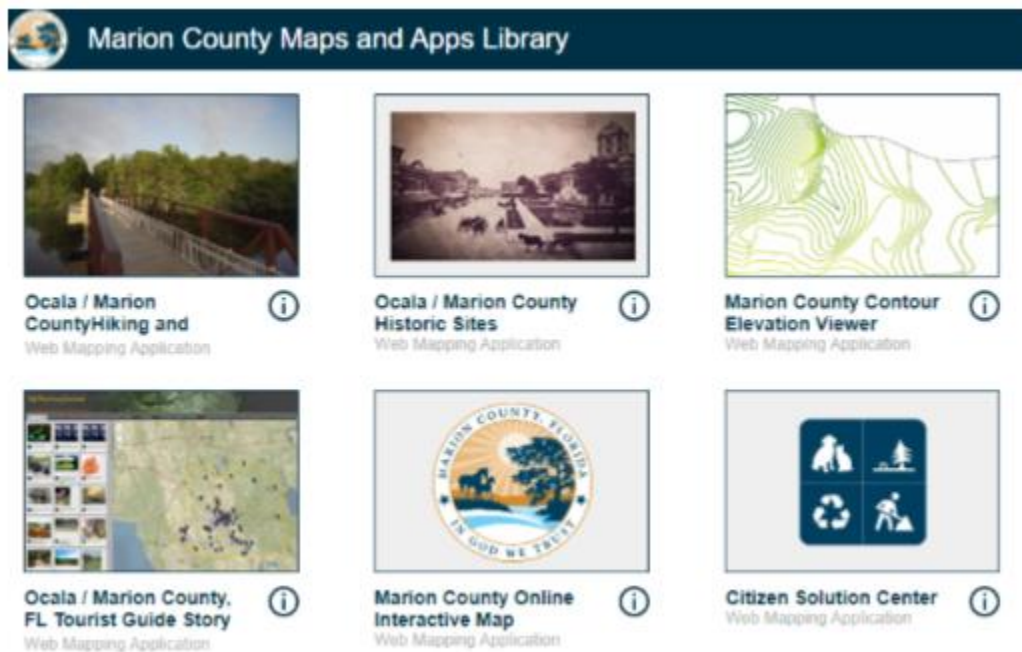
In an effort to connect Marion County with the equine community, the Tourist Development Department will work with the Information Technology Department to develop a destination application. The original concept for the app was to be dual purposed: provide information for each of the horses included in the previously proposed Walk of Champions project in Downtown Ocala and create custom horse farm tour experiences. As an additional feature, the app could provide guests with the opportunity to create customized tours or choose from a number of standard tours. The app would offer both passive and active tours and would be expanded to incorporate additional areas of interest.

Park and Community Trails Program

Trails and greenways are important assets to Marion County as they provide outdoor recreation and transportation opportunities for both residents and visitors. Trails offer a means of both preserving and protecting the environment, as well as promoting quality of life. Marion County offers hundreds of miles of trails on local, state and federal land—with no single library of all the trails available. To promote these trails and make it easier for residents and visitors to navigate all of the trail systems, it would benefit Marion County and the users of this resource, to build upon the existing geographic information system (GIS) hiking and biking trail map. In addition to expanding the trails featured on the existing map, making

the information more easily consumable offline, for uses such as brochures, would be advantageous for promotion and use.

Having a tool that allows for the community and tourists to easily search, navigate and explore the county's entire network of trails would be a valuable resource to encourage the use of Marion County trails and greenways and improve the user experience.



Natural Resources

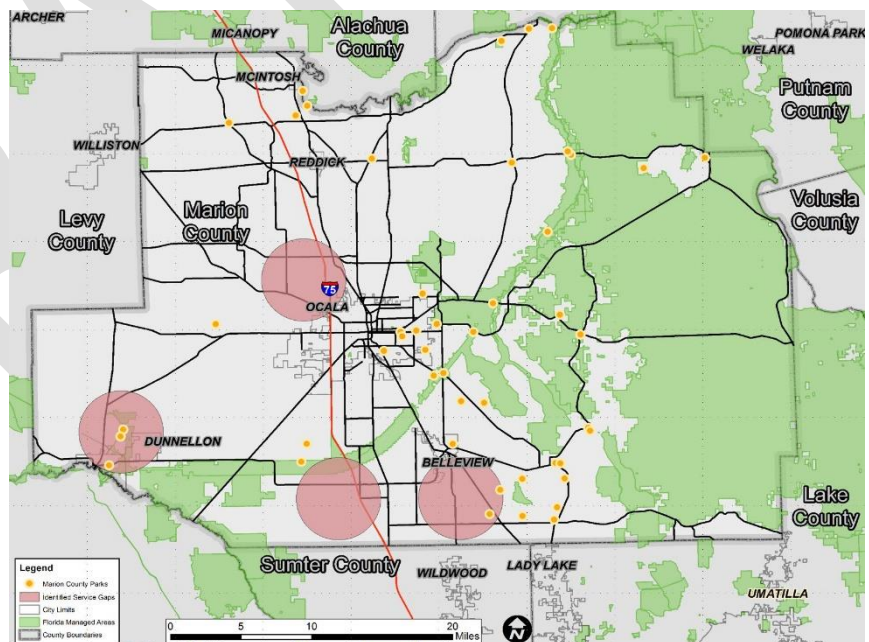
| Task | Expected outcome | Lead department | Date | Cost |
|--|--|----------------------|--------------------|------------|
| Develop a Conservation and Recreation Land Acquisition Program to acquire strategic properties. | Develop a framework to guide the identification and prioritization of conservation and recreation land acquisitions. | Parks and Recreation | September 30, 2026 | TBD |
| Create an Open Space Fund similar to the Sidewalk Construction Fund. | Provide residents within certain developments with some sort of outdoor spaces for their use and enjoyment. | Parks and Recreation | June 30, 2025 | Staff time |

The protection and use of our natural resources begins with developing a keen understanding of the resources and policies that guide decisions regarding their preservation, use, and mitigation of impacts. The majority of Marion County's stewardship program focuses on guiding new development, along with ongoing restoration and maintenance projects for improving water quality (both stormwater and wastewater). Marion County continues to develop solutions to protect our land, water and mineral resources through comprehensive programs while participating in larger, regional initiatives with the overall goal of protecting and conserving these resources for our use and enjoyment today, and for future generations.

Conservation and Recreation Land Acquisition

As Marion County continues to grow and lands are transformed into residential, commercial and industrial uses, it is important that we also develop a strategy to protect certain lands for future generations to enjoy or promote the quality landscape that makes Marion County such a great place to live, work and play. Marion County is known for its rolling pastures, picturesque tree canopies, pristine woodlands and unique ecosystems, some of which are endemic to this region. As ecotourism remains a focus for our tourism industry and a priority for Marion County, acquiring and developing lands which provide opportunities for outdoor recreation should also be considered equally important.

The last major public land acquisition program implemented by Marion County was the Pennies for Parks program, created in 1988, and which generated \$20,000,000 during the one year of collection. In 1991 the first lands (Brick City Adventure Park) were purchased using the voter approved limited tax bond referendum. Since then, many new parks were created and land was purchased and added to existing parks at a cost of \$8.6 million. As part of an amendment to the referendum, \$14.9 million was used to make capital improvements at new and existing parks across the county. In total, the program leveraged the initial bond value of \$20 million to \$23.5 million through the use of matching grants and interest gained on the initial value. The last major expenses paid through the bond revenues included the development of Wrigley Fields in Citra (\$5 million), and major site improvements at Carney Island Recreation & Conservation Area on Lake Weir (\$4.5 million).



After funding from the Pennies for Parks bond was made available, the Board of County Commissioners approved Resolution 89-R-14 establishing Parks and Environmental Land Acquisition Advisory Council (PELAAC). A priority for PELAAC was the creation of the Marion County Parks and Environmental Land

Acquisition Manual, which the Board of County Commissioners approved in July 1989. The purpose of the Manual was to be used as a “single document which contains the policies, standards, and procedures relating to land acquisition, preservation and improvement activities...” At the time, the manual also referred to the Comprehensive Plan since it contained goals, policies and objectives relating to land acquisition, preservation and improvement. The Board of County Commissioners continued to have the ultimate approval authority on the adoption and revisions of the manual and proposed actions made by PELAAC.

In 1996 the Manual was revised and approved by the Board of County Commissioners. Shortly after the revision, the Parks & Recreation Department produced the first Marion County Recreation Master Plan in 1998. The master plan included an inventory of existing recreation sites and open spaces, population projections, current and future recreational needs and proposed capital improvements for FY98/99. From there, a second Master Plan was adopted in 2003, a third in 2007 and most recently a fourth Master Plan was adopted, in 2018. The later Master Plans identified areas within the county that are lacking in parks for recreational purposes, there is no specific mention of conservation or environmentally sensitive land targeted for acquisition.

The objective is to develop a framework to guide the identification and prioritization of conservation and recreation land acquisitions:

- Conservation lands for the protection of habitat, environmental protection, etc.
- New park lands to address a growing population.

The steps involve drafting a Conservation and Recreation Land Acquisition Manual and providing a prioritized list of targeted lands prior to beginning the acquisition process.

Infill Projects

Development can happen at a whirlwind pace and before we know it, lands which could have been set aside for public use and enjoyment may be consumed in developmental wave. One of the primary focus areas of the Growth and Planning Committee (of the Administrative Strategic Plan) is to address “infill” projects for lands located within the Urban Services Boundary. These development project areas will inevitably become primarily residential developments with a standard density of homes or units, such as ¼-acre lots with a yield of four (4) dwelling units per acre. A typical 40-acre site can yield approximately 160 units after open space requirements are met, stormwater and roadway infrastructure are added and spaces such as buffers and other set-asides are accounted for. Using a 2.3 resident per unit average, these new Marion County residents, all of whom will require public services such as fire rescue, law enforcement, parks, libraries, etc. and it is essential that Marion County continue to plan for growth by identifying and acquiring lands in or near the areas where these types of developments are currently being planned.

Utilizing the information provided by the Growth and Planning Committee will help identify properties within the Urban Services Boundary for potential acquisition for conservation and/or recreational use.

Balancing Protection and Growth

In recent years, the local residential development growth has created some changes in the way new residential communities are being designed, sold and then developed. For many years, residential developments were being constructed by local business people who may/would have sold the

developments to local homebuilders. Recently, more of the residential developments are being sold to large home building companies who have a nation-wide presence in the residential home building sector. These companies typically have prescribed community development standards that include smaller home lots and a higher density per acre, with a goal of essentially maximizing the development potential within each of the planned communities.

Marion County has seen more frequent requests to reduce or waive open space requirements which currently exist in the Land Development Code. Residential developments are required to have as much as 20-percent of the overall site set aside as open space. There are many types of areas within a typical residential development that may be included in the site development calculations to count towards this requirement, yet the areas being categorized as such may not meet the need of the residents moving into these new developments. Examples of some previously approved open spaces include linear landscape buffers (ranging from five feet wide to 20 feet wide), stormwater management facilities and strips of right-of-way.

The intention of the open space requirements is to provide residents within these developments with some sort of outdoor spaces for their use and enjoyment. The open spaces can also be used to provide habitat, water recharge areas and other environmentally beneficial purposes. The current strategies of allowing some of the commonly approved spaces as open space, may not meet the intended goals. At the same time, with the more recent demand on more dense developments, it may be more appropriate to work with the development teams to create an option for them to not set aside open space and instead pay into an Open Space Fund, a payment in lieu-type program. This program would generate funding that could be used to acquire and develop Neighborhood, Community or even Regional parks that would be open to the public.

The intent is to create residential development models that include no dedicated open space requirement but rather a fee structure for payment into an Open Space Fund as follows:

- Buffers, stormwater and right-of-ways will no longer count towards open space calculations.
- Open Space Fund dollars may be required to be used within a prescribed geographic range from the contributing development.
- Certain restrictions apply.

The steps involve coordinating with the Development Review staff team to assess the potential of this initiative, engaging with the Land Development Review Committee; and presenting findings to the Board of County Commissioners.

Funding Options

| Task | Expected outcome | Lead department | Date | Cost |
|--|---|-------------------------|--------------------|---------------------------|
| Add Grants Coordinator position (or duties to another position) to help departments become aware of, apply for, and secure grants.acquire strategic properties. | Create a position that would work to seek grant opportunities, help departments apply as needed, and develop relationships with grantees. | Office of Fiscal Review | June 30, 2022 | Approx. \$70,000 per year |
| Explore collecting impact fees to pay for additional facilities such as Parks and Libraries. | Impact fee collection will be broadened to allow for construction of items other than Transportation. | Office of Fiscal Review | June 30, 2023 | Staff time |
| Place a Quality of Life Bond initiative on the ballot. | A Quality of Life bond that is paid back by property taxes, similar to Pennies for Parks, could be presented to the voters for approval. | Office of Fiscal Review | September 30, 2024 | Staff time |

Grants

Departments currently seek grants with Administration approval, but without any proactive, centralized coordination. We recommend adding a position in Administration to focus solely on securing grants. This individual would seek grant opportunities, help departments apply as needed, and develop relationships with grantees. Such a position should be able to pay for itself many times over in a given year.

Impact Fees

Impact fee collection could be broadened to allow for construction of items other than Transportation. This would be a natural way for growth to pay for the additional services that are expected in a community.

According to the 2019 National Impact Fee Survey from Duncan Associates, most Florida counties collect impact fees for Parks and nearly half collect them for Libraries.

Quality of Life Bond

A Quality of Life bond that is paid back by property taxes, similar to Pennies for Parks, could be presented to the voters for approval. As was done with the surtax, this would allow the community to communicate their priorities with their votes and money. This would be a one-time source of money that could address current capital needs for Libraries and Parks. As with the surtax, a specific schedule of Libraries and Parks would be created, to clearly identify to the public what would be funded.

Empowering Marion for Success II

PLANNING & FUTURE GROWTH

Economic Development is a cause and effect equation, which is the key to a thriving community. An influx in light industrial development equals additions to the labor force, resulting in a demand for housing. Marion County is presently experiencing an economic development surge due to the recent influx of industrial growth.

After recovering from the recession, the County set a path to diversify the community with different economic opportunities. By reaping the benefits of these opportunities, we transformed from a traditional bedroom community to a hub for prospering businesses and a home to a growing population. Business sectors such as eco-tourism, the equine industry, logistics and distribution, healthcare, and many others are securing a robust and diverse economy which will continue to thrive during future economic challenges.

Our community resilience has been tested during the COVID-19 pandemic, and many success stories have risen from the crisis. Unlike other jurisdictions, light industrial and residential construction continued apace in Marion County, including the construction of a 500,000 square foot logistics facility in less than six months and the ongoing development of the World Equestrian Center (WEC). Several phases of this project opened during the pandemic, and many more buildings are either under construction or planned for the future. Many other projects have succeeded in one of the most challenging times our community has faced. Our success is only possible with the continued support of all external and internal stakeholders working together to achieve common goals.

Guide Future Growth and Housing

| Task | Expected outcome | Lead department | Date | Cost |
|---|---|--|--------------------|--------------------------------|
| Prepare for growth demands | Identify Strategic Area that will promote economic development, infill, support affordable workforce housing and funding opportunities efficiently. | Growth Services and Community Services | September 30, 2022 | Staff time and other costs TBD |
| Identify and Evaluate Strategic Areas to Promote easily Developed Properties | Create an expanded housing inventory including both single and multifamily, while identifying, evaluating and promoting vacant land that supports generating housing opportunities. | Growth Services and Community Services | September 30, 2022 | Staff time and other costs TBD |
| Develop Incentive Options for the Development of Housing in identified Strategic Areas | Propose targeted development zones with specified incentives for qualified projects. The Incentives may include grant funding, bonding for developers, tax credits, waiver of impact fees, capital charge credits and expedited permitting. | Community Services along with Multiple Departments Involved in the development process | September 30, 2024 | Staff time and other costs TBD |
| Develop Architectural Standards for Housing in Strategic Areas | Revise the Housing Element of the Comprehensive Plan in order to promote multifamily developments. | Growth Services | September 30, 2022 | Approx. \$15,000 |
| Inform the community | Create internal processes for internal and external transparency for both developers and the residents of Marion County. | Community Services | September 30, 2022 | Staff time & \$10,000 |

Prepare for growth demands

According to the Bureau of Economics and Business Research (BEBR), Florida Population Studies, Bulletin 189, the population in Marion County was estimated at 368,135 as of April 1, 2020. For 2030, BEBR provides a range in anticipated population for Marion County from 379,800 to 457,100, with a median of 417,100. At the BEBR high, the growth would be approximately 2.2% per year for 10 years, or approximately 9,000 additional residents per year.

According to available Census data, between 2015 and 2019 the average persons per household in Marion County was 2.47. These growth projections would generate a demand for approximately 2,000 housing units (at BEBR medium) or 3,650 units (at BEBR high). For 5 years, there would be a demand of 10,000 to 18,000 units. The current inventory of vacant lots exceeds 18,000; however, many are not nearby employment areas, nearby services, lack infrastructure or amenities.

From May 25, 2020 to May 25, 2021, the Marion County Building Department issued 4,468 new residential permits. Although this figure suggests that the current pace of construction is outpacing the projected demand, the Ocala Metro Chamber & Economic Partnership (CEP) stated that there are years of unmet demand.

It is reasonable to consider the pace of homes that are being constructed will be sufficient to meet future demands, so long as the housing units being constructed are considering different income levels, nearby employment areas, nearby services and nearby quality of life amenities.

During the next five years, growth is expected to continue, with several projects in planning and development. Our strategic plan highlights three economic opportunity focus areas as well as infill opportunities in proximity to existing infrastructure and public services.

- Florida Crossroads Commerce Park, within Marion Oaks, at Highway 484 west of Interstate 75 (I75)
- Northwest 49th Street Interchange, between I75 and WEC
- Silver Springs Shores Employment Areas

Florida Crossroads Commerce Park, within Marion Oaks, at Highway 484 west of Interstate 75

According to the Ocala Metro Chamber & Economic Partnership (CEP), the area is expected to continue to develop, providing job growth and opportunities. Phase One of the Dollar Tree Distribution Center opened in August 2020, providing 240 local jobs. Phase Two of the project is currently under development and is expected to expand the facility to over one million square feet of space.

A unique aspect of phase two development is the increased building height allowed in the area. Marion County will have an economic advantage for this area, as the maximum building height in the area has been increased. This will allow companies to grow vertically, rather than horizontally. The reduction of land required for horizontal building allows for more development in the area overall. The ability to build to the increased height will make the area extremely attractive to developers. The area will be unique and provide for economic opportunities which Marion County has created to fill stakeholder needs. Likewise, the increase in building height will encourage the use of automation and robotics, allowing more opportunities for a



more technical and skilled workforce. Upon completion, the Dollar Tree Distribution Center is expected to provide 700 jobs to the area. The remaining portion of the Florida Crossroads Park is anticipated to provide in excess of two million square feet of industrial space and a potential 6,000 additional jobs upon completion.

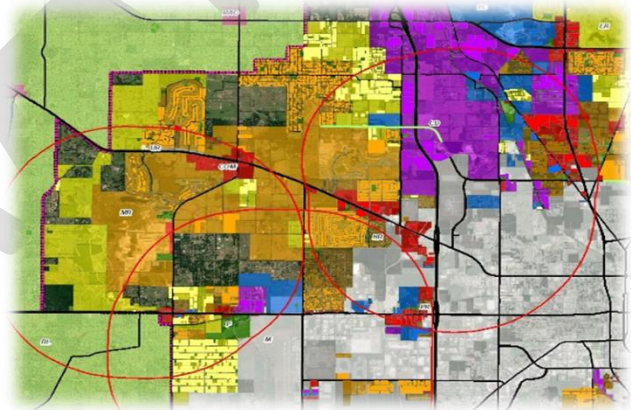
In addition to the Florida Crossroads Commerce Park, the area along Highway 484 west of Interstate 75 is anticipated to develop. A nearly one million square foot industrial spec building centrally located near Interstate 75 and Highway 484 is under construction. This logistics center is expected to bring an additional 500 jobs to the area. Continued growth is expected in the corridor with sufficient access to the Interstate. This location makes the surrounding vacant lands more attractive to potential developers and interested parties.

Marion Oaks contains several areas which can benefit from infill or building on lots already available in the area. Marion Oaks has several areas which vacant lots are located between existing homes. The building of these lots will increase the need for services but allow the increased population to be served more efficiently. Another consideration and economic opportunity is the building of multifamily homes in the area. Many residents prefer to live near where they work to reduce commute times. Developers offering multifamily dwellings to the residents of the area could prosper from the increased development and demand to support the job growth.

Northwest 49th Street Interchange, between I75 and WEC

This corridor consists of the areas adjacent to US Highway 27, SW 60th Avenue, SW 80th Avenue to north of State Road 40. Immediately east of I75 and the proposed NW 49th Street interchange is an area to be considered for the next commerce park once space is filled at the Florida Crossroads Commerce Park in Marion Oaks.

The corridor has existing access to Interstate 75 with interchanges at State Road 40, Highway 27 and Highway 326. Further opportunities may exist once a new interchange is built near NW 49th Street in the future. Once this road is constructed, it will provide better access to the area and to the evolving World Equestrian Center (WEC).



Although development of this area is expected to be less intense in the short term, interest is active in the community. The development of a one million square foot warehouse in the area is already underway. The CEP expects once the facility is operational, it will provide in excess of 1,000 jobs. A second project in the area is under development to provide 250,000 square feet of space to assist in the medical marijuana industry. This project is expected to provide 300 jobs with potential for future expansion. A third project is under consideration in the area which has the opportunity to add nearly one million square feet of space and create 500 new jobs. Additionally, a large tract of land is being explored to determine the feasibility of creating a new commerce park. The portions east of I75 will likely develop beyond the 5-year timeline of this plan.

Adjacent to this corridor is the World Equestrian Center (WEC). WEC has been actively building for several years and opened its first phase in December 2020. The development continues to evolve with construction of several additional buildings. Currently, WEC has over 2.5 million square feet of commercial buildings on the property. In May 2021, the first hotel opened, featuring more than 200 rooms in accommodations. A second hotel is under development which will provide more than 400 rooms for the complex. WEC continues to build and is actively bringing equine and other events to the community. One of the advantages at WEC is the ability to hold multiple events at the complex simultaneously. These events will bring visitors to the area who will shop in local stores, restaurants, and businesses. WEC has a considerable amount of land available for future growth, and additional economic opportunities appear to be possible.

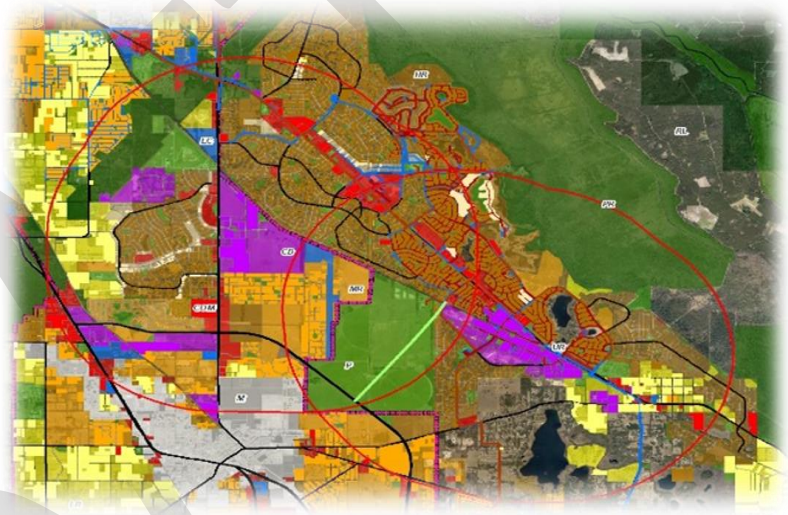
Silver Springs Shores Employment Areas

The community contains a mixture of residential areas and established commercial/industrial businesses. Future growth is expected for Lockheed Martin and other locations as business models continue to develop. Marion County has plans to add to the existing road network with new roadways which will provide for more economic growth.

The CEP expects Silver Springs Shores to continue to grow, with increased demand for commercial opportunities.

An existing warehouse along SE Baseline Road (former Associated Grocers) has potential to be marketed by subdividing the space. Developers may be interested in the space but may not require the entire building of more than 700,000 square feet. The location can also offer smaller operations of 50,000 square feet or less. The smaller buildings will allow for varied economic opportunities. Finally, Silver Springs Shores has the opportunity to be a business incubator. Smaller businesses requiring less of a physical footprint or can get their start from the incubator process. This allows smaller businesses to benefit from fewer overhead costs while refining their business model.

Many opportunities exist for developers to construct multifamily dwellings, allowing for affordable housing. The area contains larger areas of land which may allow for multistory residential homes to meet the increase in housing demand. One of the most important economic benefits to maximizing employment center type developments in this area is to potentially reduce traffic flowing to other areas. Residents of this community are commuting to Ocala and other locations in Marion County for employment. Providing employment and economic opportunities reduces the traffic demand on Southeast Maricamp Road.



Identify and Evaluate Strategic Areas to Promote Easily Developed Properties

In order for a Community to prosper, a balance between importing and exporting, within the workforce, needs to be struck. When a community imports too much of its workforce from other communities, the local infrastructure such as supermarkets, convenience stores and downtown restaurants cannot endure and turnover is prevalent. This materializes when a mixture of housing opportunities within the inventory doesn't support each rung of the salary ladder and locating outside the jurisdiction is the only option. This is true for both affluent and modest employees.

According to information provided by the CEP, Marion County is one of the top 25 fastest growing areas in the U.S. In addition, it is also home to the Ocala National Forest, more than 1200 farms, a large agricultural industry, and vast undeveloped areas. The growth is partially attributed to the job creation from large brands, such as World Equestrian Center, Dollar Tree, Fed-Ex, Chewy, and Amazon choosing Marion County as one of their prime locations. Marion County serves 39% more people comparatively to Orlando and Tampa on its I-4 corridor. This is attractive due to central location within the state and ease of access to major roadways such as I-75 which passes through the county.

Despite socio-economic indicators which unfavorably lag relative peer county comparisons, Marion County continues to grow within its large geographical area. The current population is estimated at 373,000 and has recently been increasing annually at a rate of 2.2% - approximately 150 families a week have moved into Marion County in the past five years. Currently at any given point there are less than 1000 homes for sale on the open market and less than 100 rentals available.

In an effort to create an expanded housing inventory including both single and multifamily, the County shall identify, evaluate and promote vacant land that supports generating housing opportunities. By matching current wages and employment hubs to prescribed properties which efficiently utilize the County's financial resources within their infrastructure expansion.

In order to encourage development within these identified areas, the connection between infrastructure and the market exists and to focus development efforts there. This can be accomplished by:

- Creating a GIS layer identifying current vacant lots by subdivisions.
- Assessing growth (recent and projected) to determine the type of housing needed to support housing stability for the jobs created (considering wages/household income, transit, etc.)
- Summarizing Developed and applied rating system for vacant land by area: raw shovel-ready projects and housing units currently in development. This will help to quantify the need by each area.
- Reevaluating land use and zoning to allow for a variety of development options.
- Updating and revising current land use and zoning to allow for turnkey development.
 - Update Housing Element of Comprehensive Plan if necessary

Develop Incentive Options for the Development of Housing in identified Strategic Areas

In order to direct development to areas with existing infrastructure and growth, specifically around employment hubs and opportunity zones defined by the state, the County staff will propose targeted

development zones with specified incentives for qualified projects. The Incentives may include grant funding, bonding for developers, tax credits, waiver of impact fees, capital charge credits and expedited permitting. Objective includes:

Drafting a voluntary inclusionary zoning policy to allow for density bonuses, develop a County Land bank reserved for housing in Strategic Areas that can utilize Community Services (CS) funding for land acquisition. Community Services leverage Housing Grants to help subsidize the 20% set aside as funding allows. To include reviewing and revising Affordable Housing Advisory Committee (AHAC) incentive strategies.

Developing an Incentive structure for builders and buyers (with addendums if required to County's 2035 Comprehensive Plan, Local Housing Assistance Plan, the Five Year Consolidated Plan, the Five Year Strategic Plan and its Chamber & Economic Partnerships Plan)

Ensure the development review process and permitting process is expedited for these specific areas with Affordable Housing projects.

Review the Policy and procedures to address expedited permitting and designate a County Team to review these development request and ensure expedited permitting is established for strategic areas and Affordable Housing.

Consider creating a position of a permitting Ombudsman.

Develop Architectural Standards in identified Strategic Areas

The housing inventory in Marion County lacks variety due to the overabundance of single family homes versus multifamily homes. In an effort to promote multifamily developments, it would be helpful to create a predictable standard for housing opportunities promoting Townhome, Duplex and Apartment living. Developing Architectural standards to promote developments that are cohesive and complimentary to existing neighborhoods. This standard would embrace the character of the surrounding developments while providing a variety of housing opportunities for residents at different life stages.

This could be accomplished by:

- Revising the Housing Element of Comprehensive Plan

Inform the Community

As a project comes to fruition, several departments play a role in its development. Often, it is not clearly indicated which department or with whom an applicant or developer should meet with to get the project off the ground. In an effort to promote an efficient and cohesive approach, an established internal process shall be created and promoted for internal and external transparency for both developers and the residents of Marion County. This could be accomplished by:

- Developing a process and making it user friendly for County Staff and external customers
- Publicizing the process through a broad marketing effort to include: website, social media, radio, online applications, interactive calculators, and or checklist for the variety of project types related to housing.

Coordinating with the Public Relations Department (PR) to share final results, public campaign to also include and ensure all County Staff who is involved with development understands it.

Improve Permitting Process Review

| Task | Expected outcome | Lead department | Date | Cost |
|---|---|-----------------------------------|--------------------|-------------------------------------|
| Evaluate the existing processes | To have a standardized, streamlined permitting process in place. | Growth Services | September 30, 2023 | Staff time |
| Evaluate the current review process | Improve the overall experience of the permitting process. | Growth Services & Building Safety | September 30, 2023 | Staff time |
| Create How-To guides for the public and staff | To ensure full understanding from staff and be transparent and as user friendly as reasonably possible. | Growth Services & Building Safety | February 28, 2024 | Staff time and other costs TBD |
| Evaluate the need for an agent position to oversee processes and ensure compliance | Determine the need for a full-time position to oversee the process and ensure compliance. | Growth Services & Building Safety | January 1, 2022 | Staff time and other costs TBD |
| Analyze staffing levels of similar communities to see if departments are adequately staffed per the growth seen in the community | Ensure we are staff appropriately to avoid burnout and/or boredom. | Growth Services & Building Safety | September 30, 2024 | Staff time and consultant costs TBD |

Everyday more people are joining our community and making Marion County their home. In response, the building and development community are busy turning those new residents' housing dreams into realities. Behind the scenes, Marion County also participates in turning those dreams into realities. Staff interfaces with the building and development community through multiple permitting and approval processes. The efficiency and effectiveness of the processes are at the core of providing outstanding customer service to the builders/developers/owners in the community. To help make the construction of a new development or new home as seamless as possible, we must be committed to continuously improving our processes to ensure they are unparalleled in the State. Over the year's staff has received feedback from the builder and developer communities that we have room for improvement in the

processes. Some of the main feedback staff hears is that the processes could be faster, more transparent and less cumbersome.

With this feedback in mind, it will be the goal as a County to improve processes and achieve the highest level of customer service satisfaction possible. The specific goals and action items highlighted below will aid in first quantifying the need for improvement and then implementing relevant improvements to make building in Marion County the best it can be.

Evaluate the existing processes

To improve the overall experience of the permitting process staff should evaluate the need for an in-house single point of contact for all permittees. This/these individual(s) would be the in-house expert of the processes and aid experienced and rookie permittees through the processes with ease. This single point of contact could take the form of a Full Time Employee (FTE) that serves the function of permit expeditor or coordinator. Staff may want to consider two or three positions to accommodate for sick leave and vacation time. Staff may want to consider a consultant company for these positions. For customers that demand special accommodations or desire to skip to the head of the line, perhaps a VIP permitting process could be created and paired with a fair fee for the service. The following will help with this objective:

- Study the need for and establish positions/hire consultant within 12 months of the adoption of the Strategic Plan. Human resources and Building Department to take lead.
- Study the need for and establish a VIP permitting system within 12 months of the adoption of the Strategic Plan. Human resources and Building Department to take lead.

Evaluate the current review process

Evaluate the internal review process and propose structural/procedural improvements. There are many moving parts to reviewing and releasing a permit and/or DRC approval. There are several departments, several individuals, and many rules that need to be considered for each approval. Improving the processes begins with fully understanding them ourselves. Take a deep dive into writing out procedures (and maybe creating flow charts, graphics, etc.) and then giving them a good honest review for inefficiencies. The following actions will help with this objective:

- Establish SOPs for processes within 24 months of adoption of the Strategic Plan. This will likely require bringing directors and their staff into multiple comprehensive “meeting of the minds” between all departments.
- Create Flow charts of all processes – Create graphic of process and look for opportunities for streamlining and simplifying our processes. Create swim lanes for the process. Staff to develop flow charts within 24 months of adoption of Strategic Plan.
- After reviewing processes and developing some modification consult the building and development industry representatives for feedback. Hold this review and solicit feedback within 12 months of concluding our internal review.

Create How-To guides for the public and staff

In addition to making sure staff fully understand their own processes, it is important to ensure that those processes are as transparent and user friendly as reasonably possible. Develop an internet based “Knowledge Hub” for prospective permittees and applicants. If done properly this knowledge hub could act as a resource for internal and external training and education. This could be a useful resource for staff to point customers to when they have frequently asked questions. The following actions will help with this objective:

- Create high quality checklists for each of the permit submittal processes.
- Create high quality videos that explain the review processes and identify all departments involved with each process. Sometimes just understanding how complex a review process is can help applicants be more patient.
- Develop and publish expected turnaround times for different permit types. Sometimes just understanding what a reasonable turnaround time is can help applicants be more patient.
- Develop and answer development “frequently asked questions” and publish to the Knowledge Hub.

Evaluate the need for an agent position to oversee processes and ensure compliance

After the establishment of goals for permit and approval turnaround times, the County will evaluate the need to establish a proper enforcement agent who shall ensure that things get done when they are supposed to be. The Human Resources department and Growth Services department would work together to create a full-time agent position that reports directly to the Assistant County Administrator of Public Works and Growth Services. This person would be responsible for multiple tasks including analyzing permitting data to determine points of failure leading to extended permitting times and following up with departments that are holding up approvals.

Analyze staffing levels of similar communities to see if departments are adequately staffed per the growth seen in the community

After evaluating processes and making improvements, staff should evaluate how Marion County’s staffing levels compare with similar sized communities experiencing similar growth rates. If we desire to provide the best possible service, it’s a fair to assess whether we have adequate staff for converting the vision to a reality. Additionally, if we as an employer expect to recruit and retain top tier talent, we must ensure we are right-sized to avoid burnout and/or boredom. An employee who is not challenged due to overstaffing will likely have the same level of job satisfaction as someone who is overworked due to understaffing or bad processes.

Analyze Current Urban Growth Boundary

| Task | Expected outcome | Lead department | Date | Cost |
|---|---|------------------------|--------------------|-------------------------|
| Evaluate Urban Growth Boundaries | Determine efficacy of boundaries for existing and future development and evaluate the existing goals created for the UGB. | Growth Services | September 30, 2022 | \$25,000 and staff time |
| Unified Departmental Development Front | Reduce bureaucracy and create defined direction for both staff and developers. | Administration | September 30, 2022 | Staff time |
| Long-term Infrastructure Master Planning | With a course of action mapped, the predictability of development inside the Urban Growth Boundary will allow for long-term infrastructure master planning. | Environmental Services | September 30, 2024 | Staff time |

The Urban Growth Boundary (UGB) is a defined urban area where the County focuses long-term capital improvements sufficient to create and support compact growth opportunities in an effort to build long term viability. Marion County's UGB was established by a goal within the Comprehensive Plan:

"To direct new development and redevelopment activities to appropriate areas of the County in order to provide the necessary public facility and service infrastructure in a cost-effective and efficient manner."

The defined area is just shy of 200 square miles (125,000 acres) and encompasses the city of Ocala. This area possesses vast amounts of vacant land with direct access to main transportation routes; however, it has not been developed either commercially or residentially as predicted. This has contributed to two main issues:

1. Enforcing the hardline boundaries, limiting large residential developments outside the defined area;
2. Vacant areas outside the boundary are more affordable and vested for development.

This contributes to developments being approved that do not embrace the premise behind the Urban Growth Boundary due to the lack of supporting infrastructure. This further contributes to a population of residents not having access to basic accommodations such as supermarkets, schools and retail

development. The shortcoming listed above create two further issues: 1) County decision makers don't have a meaningful boundary to use prohibit further development and 2) County staff doesn't have the ability to develop meaningful long term plans. The end result is that developers are proposing and getting approval for developments outside of the UGB without much resistance or consideration of the UGB. And while each department makes the best decisions they can with the information they have at the time of the decision, a comprehensive long term infrastructure plan should be enacted to allow effective use of resources funded by the residents.

As a result of these issues, an evaluation of intent and designation of the Urban Growth Boundary is essential to efficiently utilizing existing resources and guiding development to areas suitable to support future populations.

Evaluation of the Urban Growth Boundaries

The 2045 Comprehensive Plan developed the UGB and standards for maintenance, planning and modification. These standards were set in an effort to guide growth to areas that can support dense development by providing services to support both commercial and residential growth. In order to evaluate the value of the Comprehensive Plan Goals and Policies for the UGB, the following should be conducted:



- Review the form and function of existing UGB with staff and stakeholders to determine efficacy of boundaries for existing and future development.
- Evaluate the existing goals created for the UGB by the Comprehensive plan by establishing an inter-departmental committee to make recommendations to County Administration and/or Board in a series of workshops within 18 months of Strategic Plan adoption. Feedback to be used for subsequent action items.
- Growth services staff to propose revised UGB within 24 months of adoption of Strategic Plan.

Unified Departmental Development Front

Addressing development within the Urban Growth Boundary should be consistent and clearly defined in an effort to reduce bureaucracy and create defined direction for both staff and developers. Policies should be developed to address how the County will or will not participate with development within the UGB. Developers often times want the County to participate in the cost of infrastructure (roads and utilities) that would otherwise be "cost prohibitive" for the development to occur. And oftentimes developers use this against the County staff and Administration. The County has already worked with developers via developer agreements in the past to form mutually beneficial arrangements to aid with development. The following actions will help in achieving this objective:

- Review existing policies, formal or informal, to create "standards of practice" into transparent policies.
- Formalize general guidelines for developer agreements, and each Director's or Administration's ability to negotiate with developer's agreement by agreement.
- All applicable departments (Utilities, Office of the County Engineer, Parks, etc.) to examine comprehensive policies for addressing County participation in developments that fall within the

urban growth boundary. Policies for development incentives within the UGB and address limitations of participation outside the UGB.

- Conduct a workshop with all applicable departments the Board of County Commission to discuss policies and create a unified front moving forward.

Long-term Infrastructure Master Planning

Once a standard has been created and a course of action mapped, the predictability of development inside the Urban Growth Boundary will allow for long-term infrastructure master planning. Commercial and Residential development require infrastructure needs outside of utilities however without both water and sewer available and ready to be tapped, development will lag. With the intent of the UGB clear and policies adopted to guide County participation with development, the following should occur:

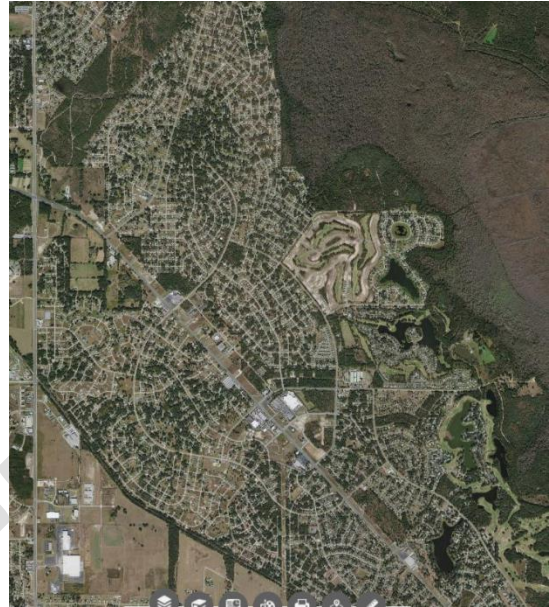
- County infrastructure should be planned around providing service within the Urban Growth Boundary. Long range planning should be conducted to determine required infrastructure to service the revised urban growth boundary.
- All applicable departments (Utilities, OCE, Stormwater, Parks, etc.) to complete review of existing capital improvement programs in support of the revised UGB within 24 months of the Strategic plan adoption.
- Applicable departments to meet semi-annually to coordinate capital programs.

Promote Infill within Marion Oaks and Silver Springs Shores

| Task | Expected outcome | Lead department | Date | Cost |
|---|--|-------------------------------------|--------------------|--------------------------------------|
| Evaluate Marion Oaks and Silver Springs as Planned Service Areas (PSA) | Create PSAs, designation, and infrastructure plan for Silver Springs & Marion Oaks. | Growth Services | September 30, 2023 | Approx. \$75,000 plus staff time TBD |
| Identify Infrastructure Gaps | Identify different levels of infrastructure needs for each community that would support current and future development. | Environmental Services | September 30, 2024 | Staff time |
| Incentivize Planned High Density Development | Explore different incentives that would encourage high-density development within Marion Oaks and Silver Springs Shores. | Growth Services, Community Services | September 30, 2023 | Approx. \$50,000 plus staff time TBD |

As Marion County's population and industry services continues to grow, the County needs to identify areas that will serve the rising need for work force housing. Some of the identified areas for growth would be Silver Springs Shores and Marion Oaks due to the existed platted lots however there are limited services provided for infrastructure to encourage dense development.

Marion Oaks and Silver Springs Shores are located outside of the current Marion County Urban Growth Boundary (UGB). The question has arisen to possibly designate another UGB in Marion County or possibly two that would encumber both communities due to their population growth. Although these areas are high density designation, there are still several key factors that hinder a modification to the existing UGB or create new boundaries.



In accordance to the Comprehensive plan, the Urban Growth Boundary ensures that adequate infrastructure will be available within this targeted growth area. It is designed to encourage compact, efficient development and discourage development that is costlier and consumes natural resources.

A designated UGB would be supported by local government with planned infrastructure for current and future growth. Currently local government is working to adjust to growth in these unplanned communities by adding in infrastructure after the current development. This poses several costly problems for Marion County Utilities and Roads.

Neither location is large enough to support the designation for an Urban Growth Boundary (UGB) in Marion County. Research has shown that if UGB is too small, "the lack of adequate land for new development will push up the cost of new housing and other developments. This can shift new development to other neighboring cities or counties." By guiding growth, we create more livable and desirable communities within populated areas, while also preserving the suburban and rural lifestyles and our numerous environmental and agriculture assets.

Evaluate Marion Oaks and Silver Springs as Planned Service Areas (PSA)

The Comprehensive Plan outlines several criteria that need to be met before the Urban Growth Boundary can be modified. These standards are:

1. **Market Demand:** An analysis of the requested expansion or reduction of the UGB shall be provided to show why a change in development form is required to accommodate the population, housing or employment needs of the County projected over the planning horizon of this Plan or adjustments that may be needed due to market conditions.
2. **Contiguity to Existing Urban Development Patterns:** It must be demonstrated that the expansion area is contiguous to existing urban patterns of development.

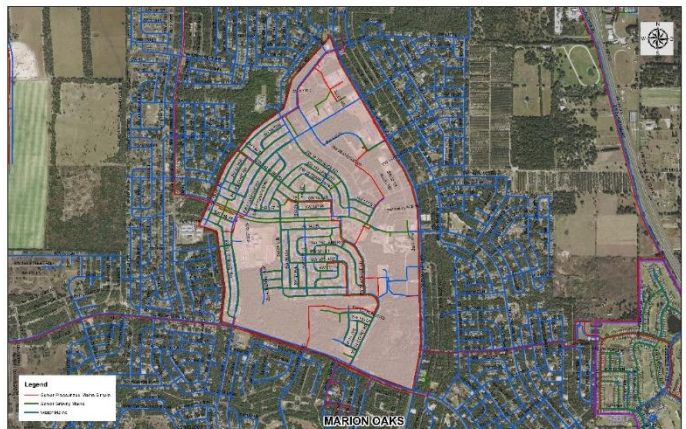
3. **Availability of Urban Infrastructure:** A projection of requirements for public facilities and services must be completed and the ability to provide those facilities and services to serve the proposed development through private or public means shall be demonstrated.
4. **Compatibility:** An evaluation of existing land uses and environmentally sensitive areas within the expansion area must be completed. Appropriate policies shall be written and adopted into this Plan to provide appropriate protections for the transition of land uses adjacent to rural development, to provide for non-interference with agricultural or conservation activities, and to provide for protection of environmentally sensitive lands.
5. **Urban Sprawl:** It must be demonstrated that the expansion area and development within it will discourage urban sprawl.
6. **Water Supply:** It must be demonstrated that there is available water supply for the proposed expansion area.

Both Silver Springs Shores and Marion Oaks do not meet the criteria however an alternative to an Urban Growth Boundary designation could assist with further development of these areas while providing needed services to those residents. To facilitate that, the following must occur:

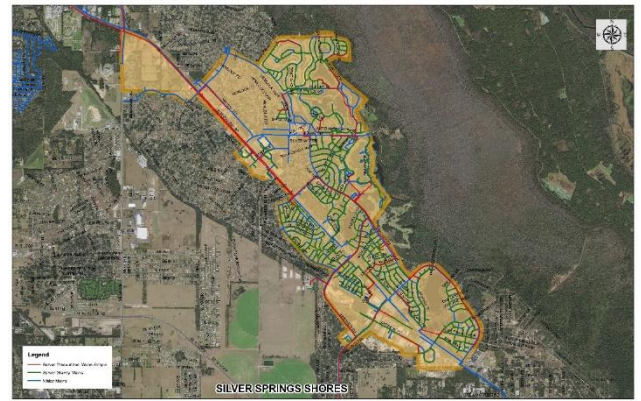
- Create criteria for Planned Service Area (PSA) designation for Silver Springs and Marion Oaks in an effort to both allow further development in these vested developments.
- Complete a needs assessment for both areas to further facilitate the current development, community services and the anticipated future growth.
- Explore designation benefits and how they will encourage smart development or redevelopment in the designated areas.
- Once designations have been identified, staff will develop a plan of action to enact the designation to the BOCC.

Identify Infrastructure Gaps

Silver Springs Shores and Marion Oaks are examples of growth outside of the Urban Growth Boundary (UGB). These two communities have expanded exponentially due to the amount of affordable land parcels and housing opportunities within these developments and their vicinity to recent economic growth. With the population boom in these areas it has caused the need for Marion County to step back and identify the infrastructure gaps and needs for future growth. The following actions will help facilitate this objective:



- Identify the different types of infrastructure that is currently within the Marion Oaks and Silver Springs Shores would be beneficial for the planning of future services areas and development.
- Focus on designated areas within each location that have minimum infrastructure such as roads, water and sewer services would allow smart growth without the need of large amount of concentrated public investment.
- Identify different levels of infrastructure needs for each community that would support current and future development.
 - Level 1- Roads, Water, Sewer and Broadband
 - Level 2- Schools, Fire, Police and Transportation
 - Level 3- Local Government Services I.e. Parks, Libraries, Animal Services and etc.
 - Level 4- Private Sector Economic Investment



Incentivize Planned High Density Development

High density planned development encourages investment within the community in multiple ways such as density and diversity multi-use tenants, infrastructure, future long term development phases and community improvement amenities.

Marion Oaks and Silver Springs Shores current community development challenges are from multiple low density developments without community planning involved. With this heavy sprawl outside of the Urban Growth Boundary this has caused several infrastructure issues to the community as a whole.

Currently Marion Oaks has 28,000 potential residential units and Silver Springs Shores has 30,000 potential resident units available for development. There is opportunity for high density development but it has to be done in a rational way to phase the expansion of urban growth within these communities. Planned high density development would benefit both communities and bring expansion opportunities previously unattainable.

- Identify available lots that are in the designated areas of Marion Oaks and Silver Springs Shores
- Marion County staff will develop a strategy to encourage developers to invest in the development or redevelopment within the designated areas.
- Explore different incentives that would encourage high density development within Marion Oaks and Silver Springs Shores.
- Marion County staff will develop incentive options that would encourage smart growth within the designated areas.

Strengthen the Farmland Preservation Area

| Task | Expected outcome | Lead department | Date | Cost |
|---|--|-----------------|--------------------|----------------------------------|
| Create an FPA inventory for Analysis | Analyze the existing conditions of the area when reviewing the efficiency of the designated area to guided protection and appropriate growth | Growth Services | September 30, 2022 | Staff time |
| Family Division Analysis | Research and review the family divisions that have occurred in the past and analyze the effectiveness by determining if said family division remains with in the family ownership. | Growth Services | September 30, 2022 | Staff time |
| Opportunity Zones & Farmland Preservation Overlap Analysis | Analyze the validity of this designation and make recommendations to explore the efficacy of retaining the FPA within an Opportunity Zone. | Growth Services | September 30, 2022 | Staff time |
| Protect the rural character of the Farmland Preservation Area by creating additional buffering | By providing buffer alternatives, future development will have a predictable specification which will ease new development while preserving the rural character of this resource. | Growth Services | September 30, 2022 | Approx. \$15,000 plus staff time |
| Review and Modify the Transfer of Development Rights Program | Review the Transfer Development Rights program and propose changes if need to insure maximum effectiveness of the program. | Growth Services | September 30, 2022 | Staff time |

Marion County's Farmland Preservation Area (FPA) element in the Comprehensive Plan defines policies intended to preserve and protect the rural and Equestrian/Agricultural character of the area. In an effort to bolster the validity of the Comprehensive Plan, these goals outline strengths and weaknesses of the FPA and initiate strategies to aid in this effort.

In an effort to continue the efforts outlined in the Comprehensive Plan, identifying the existing condition within the FPA is a priority to maintain the effectiveness of the designation.



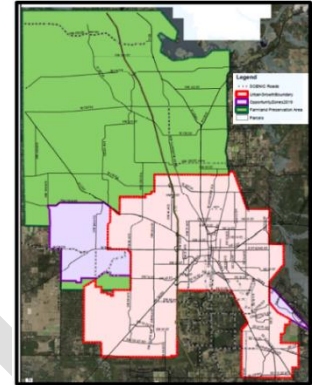
Create an FPA inventory for analysis

- Analyze the designated FPA and create an inventory of the existing farmland including location, acreage, zoning, physical land use and any other designation.
- It is beneficial to analyze the existing conditions of the area when reviewing the efficiency of the designated area and promoting guided protection and appropriate growth in this area.

Family Division Analysis

Within the FPA, family divisions have been allowed as a way to avoid subdividing farmland into several smaller parcels that may not support the effort of preservation.

- Research and review the family divisions that have occurred in the past and analyze the effectiveness by determining if said family division remains within the family ownership.
- The Land Development Code allows for existing Agriculturally (A-1) zoned parcels to be subdivided into 3-acre family divisions versus the 10-acre minimum standard for non-family members. This portion of the LDC allows parcels of record as of January 1, 1992 and located within the Rural Land designation to subdivide parcels for immediate family members for their primary residences. The FPA has the future land use designation of Rural Land. This regulation was created to create smaller parcel tracks for families to allow for family residences while preserving the larger farm parcel.



Opportunity Zones & Farmland Preservation Overlap Analysis

Opportunity Zones (OZ) are used to encourage economic development in areas that may be distressed due to lack of investment due to low-income communities. Within the FPA, Morriston has been identified as an opportunity zone. There is a portion of this zone that is also located within the FPA which may need additional evaluation.



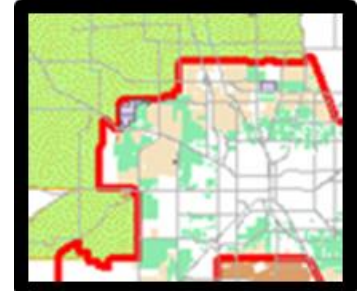
Analyze the validity of this designation and make recommendations to explore the efficacy of retaining the FPA within an Opportunity Zone.

This OZ is also located adjacent to the Urban Growth Boundary which is a designation used to guide dense intense development to areas with infrastructure to handle it. This also allows for the preservation of those agricultural and rural lands to remain pristine. Any future subdividing of the land lying in the OZ would have to adhere to the 10-acre lot size due to being located within the Farmland Preservation Area which is contradictory to the purpose of the OZ.



Protect the rural character of the Farmland Preservation Area by creating additional buffering

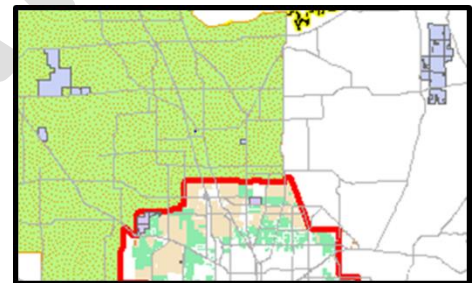
One of the key components within the Comprehensive Plan Policy for the FPA is preserving the rural character. The protection of the viewshed along the roadways through the roughly 300 square miles of the designation is a priority. Although there are a few roadways with the scenic byway designation, the remainder need to be protected from land clearing and other visual intrusions associated with development. In conjunction with preserving the rural character of the roadways, protecting the agricultural uses or farming practices and creating a harmonious transition for those uses not yet proposed for the lands that are located within UGB and share a property line with the FPA.



- Create three alternatives for buffer options along the roadways to protect the rural character of the area while maintaining the form and function for agricultural uses within the FPA.
- By providing buffer alternatives, future development will have a predictable specification which will ease new development while preserving the rural character of this resource.
- Propose buffer requirements for those land uses or zoning changes along the boundary of the FPA and the UGB to create a protected barrier for those agricultural uses within the FPA.

Review and Modification of the Transfer of Development Rights Program

Another component within the Comprehensive Plan is Transfer of Development Rights for lands with a Rural Land designations. The intent of this program is for landowners within the FPA to voluntarily sell their development rights to increase density, or other incentives, of a development within the UGB.



- Review the Transfer Development Rights program and propose changes if need to insure maximum effectiveness of the program. The program has transferred 699 credits with 2,105 remaining.

Review Comprehensive Plan

| Task | Expected outcome | Lead department | Date | Cost |
|--|--|-----------------|--------------------|-------------------|
| Strengthen our Planning Principles within defined Boundaries or Areas | Update the Comprehensive Plan and Land Development Code for consistency. | Growth Services | September 30, 2024 | Staff time |
| Create standard submission requirements | Update the Comprehensive Plan to have a standard submission requirement. | Growth Services | September 30, 2024 | Staff time |
| Address additional inconsistencies within the other elements of the Comprehensive Plan | Fix the shortfalls within the other areas of the Comprehensive Plan to ensure it is in line with the policy and procedures of the county. | Growth Services | September 30, 2024 | Staff time |
| Consider additional Planners or consultants to address all sections of the Strategic Plan | The addition of two full time senior planners to Growth Services to allow studies, analysis, and other land use documents to created/updated without hiring outside consultants. This would allow the Growth Services Department to be proactive to development, economic developments and consider the best opportunities for the County. | Growth Services | September 30, 2022 | Approx. \$140,000 |

Strengthen our Planning Principles within defined Boundaries or Areas

A Comprehensive Plan is the leading document that guides growth in a community. The policy and procedures created within this document are reinforced by the Land Development Code. The Strategic Plan considers specific items that require short term consideration. The goals indicated in this document require consistencies with the Comprehensive Plan and Land Development Code in order to follow through with the objectives. Several items below reflect these updates needed:

- Review Future Land Use Element (FLUE) 3.1.2

- Promote higher densities and intensities on infill. There are infill projects that are not consistent with this policy. Reviewing this policy may allow for clarification of what is desired and what is required within the UGB.
- The UGB is very large and has areas that are developed and areas that are mostly undeveloped. Another tool in the toolkit to provide for more consistent and better growth management.
- Review Future Land Use Element 3.1.6 Urban Areas outside of UGB
 - Need to include Planned Service Areas (PSAs) and potentially differentiate urban areas (that hopefully will be PSAs) and commercial/residential nodes out in the rural areas or historic towns. So that we can recognize them as being different. Possibly, down the road, do some sort of Main Street Programs for these historic towns to allow some expansion but preserve the historic character of the area. More so than just asking developers to not put a modern looking building there.
 - Everywhere is growing, and character is important. Especially in the older rural towns.
- Review FLUE 3.2 PSAs (or Call them Urban Service Areas)
 - This is a major priority and should be. This is the growth management strategic plan in 5 year periods (guiding urban growth)
 - This needs to be updated because compact dense growth provides connected communities with options for urban amenities and are less of a burden on the taxpayer (clarify goals). They seemed to have changed once the PSAs left the hands of planning.
 - Add an Objective to better address bonus densities related to the UGB and PSA, but not or more limited in general “Urban Area” along with qualifying that development and/or bonus densities related to affordable or workforce housing tie back to the state and county program definitions.
- Review FLUE Goal 9 - Farmland Preservation Area needs to be strengthened
 - There are groups working on the FPA uses already so that means it is an area of need.
 - Over the next 5 years there could be drastic change in how the County views the FPA. There is a movement to make the FPA a legitimate overlay zone and the comp plan should reflect that.

Create standard submission requirements

As part of the expedited permitting process, the Comprehensive Plan outlines certain requirements for each application for land development. In order to implement the expedited permitting objectives, standardized submission requirements are needed.

- Review FLUE 5.1.2, clarify what is required for submission of Comprehensive Plan Amendments (CPAs), Rezoning, and Special Use Permits (SUPs). Right now there is a list for all of them but the SUPs side should be left out.
 - This item needs to be reviewed because staff does not require it on applications and it should be for larger developments or changes. Other applications not so much (single lot rezonings or minor SUPs).

- Applications for CPAs and Rezonings would be more comprehensive with data showing why this change is needed as well as how the intended change will interact with the surrounding area.

Address additional inconsistencies within the other elements of the Comprehensive Plan

While addressing the above items, review shortfalls within other elements:

- Review Housing Element (HE)
 - HE 1.2.4 - Match language qualifying where/how bonus densities may be allowed and how they relate to affordable or workforce housing tie back to the state and county program definitions.
 - Provisions related to historic and archaeological resources and the Historical Commission seem oddly placed, may be better suited to FLUE.
- Review Transportation Element (TE)
 - Goal 6 – Update to reflect that transit is now provided by both the TPO (Marion Transit) and the City of Ocala (SunTran).
 - TE 6.1.3. Consider revisions to coordinate transit, etc. not only Regional Activity Centers but also with key economic driver sites (e.g., new I-75 & NW 49th Street interchange).
 - TE 6.1.4. Expand to provide for addressing with all development in some way rather than just for new road development.
 - Add a TE 6.3.3 – Seek to promote regional fixed-route interconnectivity within the County and with key adjoining communities and governments.
 - Consider adding components related to elder road users (e.g., driving, bicycle, and pedestrian) safety.
- Review Conservation Element
 - Increase potential for “tie-backs” to the TDR/TVR programs, and emphasize the use of credits for reductions in development open space requirements.
- Review Recreation and Open Space
 - Related to CE 1.3.4 - Enable that application of the open space 2 AC per 1000 persons LOS can be adjusted to allow seeming “credit” for part of the standard depending on the level or extent of active amenities provided (in addition to the TDR/TVR options); consider allowing monetary contributions to Parks & Rec for “improvements” but within a geographic limit of a development (a type of mitigation bank / voluntary impact fee to allow the developer of a small project to not have to provide such items and create a maintenance obligation on the small development).

Consider additional Planners or consultants to address all sections of the Strategic Plan

The policy and procedures located within the Comprehensive Plan needs direct attention to accomplish the goals and objectives set forth in this plan. The addition of two full time senior planners to Growth Services would allow studies, analysis, and other land use documents to be created without hiring outside consultants. This would allow the Growth Services Department to be proactive to development, economic developments and consider the best opportunities for the County.

Improve Broadband Service Countywide

| Task | Expected outcome | Lead department | Date | Cost |
|--|--|------------------------|--------------------|--|
| Determine the unserved areas of the county and develop a granular map of county service areas | Evaluate and develop a granular map of county service areas to have a better understanding of the current status of broadband internet services in the community. | Growth Services | October 31, 2023 | Staff time and other costs TBD |
| Develop potential funding strategies | Find ways to pursue and leverage federal and state funding (in partnership with the private sector) to meet the County's broadband goals. | Legal & Administration | June 30, 2024 | Staff time and other costs TBD |
| Evaluate the need for a dedicated position for the coordination | Evaluate the need to have a person to serve as point of contact for DEO and broadband information, helping with the communication and activities between federal, state, county, and municipalities as well as industry officials necessary for the implementation of this goal. | Legal & Administration | September 30, 2024 | Staff time and possible FTE cost (TBD) |

Over the past 20 years, Internet access has evolved from a luxury to a necessity. Marion County lacks accessible, reliable, affordable, broadband Internet service throughout much of the county with many unserved and underserved areas. The recent COVID-19 pandemic highlighted the weaknesses of broadband infrastructure within Marion County. Some citizens have access to a variety of internet services, but many locations have no internet services available at all. With schools transitioning to remote learning during the pandemic, students needed Internet access to attend class, complete homework and to study. Online shopping became a way of life with store closures and limited hours. Telemedicine and telehealth services became in some cases the only option for medical care. More and more workers were forced to work from home and new work-from-home job opportunities are now growing rapidly. Broadband has now become essential community infrastructure. Just as communities had to take on the task of building and maintaining roads in the early twentieth century, communities must now provide basic broadband infrastructure as a matter of community and business survival.

Broadband access is also critical for the economic growth of Marion County; as, the lack of broadband connectivity in many areas throughout the county directly impacts economic development in a variety of industries. Broadband access can attract new businesses, improve existing businesses, connect public safety agencies and officials to communicate and respond to natural disasters and create employment in rural areas.

Because of the challenging economics of broadband deployment in rural areas, private providers likely will not invest in broadband infrastructure in currently unserved parts of the county absent some sort of financial support. State and federal funding programs may present the county and its potential partners with incremental opportunities to fill some broadband gaps, but there exists far more need for such funds nationally than current funding can address. Given the gap between the need and the available funding, developing a solution for the unserved and underserved areas of Marion County may require a period of years.

Recognizing the growing importance of Internet service, both the Florida Legislature and federal government have passed legislation to assess the need for broadband Internet service and provide a roadmap for eventual nationwide coverage. In 2009, the Florida Legislature authorized the Department of Management Services (DMS) to work collaboratively with Enterprise Florida, state agencies, local governments, private businesses, and community organizations to assess the needs for broadband Internet service. In 2020, the Legislature designated Department of Economic Opportunity (DEO) as the lead state agency to facilitate the expansion of broadband Internet service in the state. The Office of Broadband (Office) within DEO's Division of Community Development DEO was created for the purpose of developing, marketing, and promoting broadband Internet service in the state. The Office was tasked with developing data and maps for a baseline assessment of the availability and speed of broadband service throughout Florida; creating a strategic plan to increase the use of broadband Internet service in Florida; building local technology planning teams; encouraging the use of broadband Internet service, especially in rural, unserved, and underserved areas of the state through grant programs; and monitoring, participating and providing input in proceedings of the FCC and other federal agencies related to geographic availability and deployment of broadband Internet service as necessary to ensure that Florida's rural, unserved, underserved areas are best positioned to benefit from federal and state broadband deployment programs.

In 2021, the Florida Legislature saw several proposed Broadband bills. HB 1239-Broadband Internet Infrastructure was passed adopting provisions from several of these bills to create a multifaceted approach to addressing the Digital Divide in Florida. Two new programs were created to support the expansion of broadband internet service to consumers without access. An Opportunity Grants program was created within the Office to award grants to application who seek to install or deploy infrastructure that expands broadband service to unserved areas with fewer than 25 megabits per second (Mbps) download speed and 3 Mbps upload speed. The program is limited to awards of no more than 50% of the total cost of the project, or no more than \$5 million per grant and it prohibits grants awards for projects that receive other federal funding and where broadband is "already deployed by at least one provider". Additionally, municipal electric utilities must now offer broadband service providers a discounted rate of one dollar per attachment per year for any new pole attachment necessary to make broadband service available to underserved or underserved consumers within the utility's service territory through July 1, 2024. The municipal electric utilities are prohibited from raising their current pole attachment rates for broadband providers before July 31, 2022. DEO is required to develop geographic information system maps with annual updates, in collaboration with specified entities and consistent with certain federal reporting standards by June 30, 2022 to identify gaps of broadband internet coverage.

On a federal level, in 2009, the U.S. Department of Commerce's National Telecommunications Information Administration (NTIA) launched the State Broadband Initiative (SBI) to implement two federal laws, the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009 and the Broadband Data Improvement Act of 2008, which has awarded grants totaling \$183.7 million for broadband infrastructure, sustainable adoption, and public computer center projects in Florida. Among those grants, DMS was awarded a total of \$8,877,028. In January 2020, the Federal Communications Commission (FCC) established the Rural Digital Opportunity Fund (Fund) to fund the deployment of broadband networks in rural America over the next decade. The first phase of the program will make available up to \$16 billion to target census blocks that are wholly unserved with fixed broadband speeds of at least 25 megabits per second (Mbps) downstream and 3 Mbps upstream (25/3 Mbps). Using more precise data to be developed through a new FCC mapping effort, the second phase will make available at least \$4.4 billion to target census blocks where some locations lack access to 25/3 Mbps broadband.

In addition, the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA), through its ReConnect Program, offers federal loans, grants, and loan/grant combinations to facilitate broadband deployment to rural areas without access to sufficient broadband service. Eligible entities include cooperatives and non-profits, for-profit companies, and state and local governments and their agencies and political subdivisions.

Recognizing the need for county-wide broadband Internet service, the county should define and promote a vision and goal of a “connected” county and support that with strategies to partner with both public and private stakeholders as well as citizens at large.

Determine the unserved areas of the county and develop a granular map of county service areas

By evaluating and developing a granular map of county service areas we will have a better understanding of the current status of broadband internet services in the community. We will also be able to determine why the areas are unserved and underserved.

This will include:

- Completing a Broadband Feasibility Study and broadband speed testing.
- Meeting with representatives of internet service providers (ISP) operating in the county (or with potential interest to operate in the county) to learn what market forces, grants, or county support might lead them to invest in the county.
- Formalizing broadband friendly policies, procedures and regulations, and incorporate best practices into county projects including roads, water, sanitation and parks.
- Creating a database of publicly-owned assets (towers, buildings, parks) that could be used to locate broadband facilities.

Develop potential funding strategies

The county will look for ways to pursue and leverage federal and state funding (in partnership with the private sector) to meet the County’s broadband goals.

Additionally, we will analyze a range of federal and state funding opportunities to identify potential sources of grants or loans (to the county or to ISPs) that might support the expansion of broadband services in unserved areas.

The County will also consider options to fund broadband expansion to rural areas including public private partnerships and special tax districts.

Evaluate the need for a dedicated position for the coordination

The county will have communication and activities between federal, state, county, and municipalities as well as industry officials necessary for the implementation of this goal. A dedicated employee would serve as the point-of-contact for engagement regarding the coordination of information with DEO's Office of Broadband as well as all communication between the different organizations. Staff will work to identify a person to serve as point of contact for DEO and broadband information.

Empowering Marion for Success II

PUBLIC INFRASTRUCTURE

As Marion County grows, public infrastructure must be maintained and improved to meet the demands of a growing community. We must consider ways to encourage investments complementing future land use as well as supporting existing development. Public infrastructure must also promote diversified economic development.

Marion County's public infrastructure is primarily organized to include:

- A transportation network that is safe, efficient, and capable of providing convenient access to homes, businesses or other destinations; multi-modal components; and quality traffic and drainage systems.
- The delivery of safe drinking water and the collection, treatment and environmentally sound disposal of wastewater for County utility customers.
- The environmentally sound disposal and recycling of solid waste.
- The maintenance of both quality and quantity of surface water and groundwater and their relationship to property improvements and the environment. Marion County is also faced with a need to explore options to implement septic-to-sewer programs and reduce nutrients in stormwater runoff. Marion County is home to three first-magnitude springs, including world-renowned Rainbow and Silver Springs, five second-magnitude springs, and countless smaller springs that fill our aquifer, flow into our rivers, and serve as the drinking water source for much of north-central Florida. As the steward of these unique water resources, Marion County must make deliberate efforts to protect and preserve their quality and quantity so they continue to define our character and play a major role in our community lifestyle and economic prosperity.



Provide for Existing Needs and Future Growth

| Task | Expected outcome | Lead department | Date | Cost |
|--|---|--|---|--------------------------------|
| Providing for Transportation and Utility Infrastructure | Continue with the Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) 5-year plan and the Environmental Services – Utilities Department’s Capital Improvement Project is a 5-year plan and work on creating new plans. | Office of the County Engineer and Environmental Services, with Growth Services | FY 2021/2022 and annually thereafter | Staff time and other costs TBD |
| Establish plans for ongoing interdepartmental coordination | Coordinated efforts provide cost savings, increased efficiency, and improved customer service. | Office of the County Engineer and Environmental Services, with Growth Services | Quarterly in year 1; March and Sept. of each fiscal year thereafter | Staff time and other costs TBD |
| Create infill incentives and promote economic development opportunities | Continued infill and redevelopment of property allows concentrated, efficient infrastructure support. | Growth Services, Environmental Services, and Office of the County Engineer | September 30, 2023 | Staff time and other costs TBD |

Marion County’s historic growth and development primarily radiated out from the cities and along the north-south and north-southwest transportation corridors that are commonly known today as US 441 and SR 200. Prior to Florida’s comprehensive planning legislation of 1985, other numerous pockets of subdivision and commercial development occurred throughout the County along other transportation corridors including SR 40. This diverse development pattern resulted in dispersed area of urbanized sprawl and varying levels of supporting infrastructure. As part of its continuing comprehensive planning efforts, Marion County later established an Urban Growth Boundary (UGB) to frame the preferred areas of denser development and a Farmland Preservation Area (FPA) in the northwest portion of the county to encourage the preservation of our natural resources and protection of our valuable agricultural lands.

The County is responsible for supporting existing developments and maintaining the existing infrastructure that currently supports the County. Balancing existing development and infrastructure must also be considered as the County seeks to



| | | |
|--|---------------------------------|--|
| | | |
| | | |
| | | |
| Transportation: | Utilities: | Solid Waste: |
| 3,084 total miles of roadway | 39 water treatment plants | Baseline Facility |
| 2,693 miles of paved roads | 673 miles of water mains | 3 decommissioned landfills (Davis, Martel, Newton) |
| 389 miles of unpaved roads | 5 wastewater treatment plants | 18 recycling centers |
| 21,849 acres of right-of-way | 237 miles of gravity sewer main | |
| 89,146 traffic signs | 128 miles of sewer force main | |
| 125 traffic signals | 172 lift stations | |
| 2,476 drainage retention areas (DRAs) | 14 miles of reclaimed water | |
| 161 miles of culverts and drainage pipes | | |

promote infill within the UGB, improve interconnectivity of existing systems, and hardening those systems for resiliency and modernization.

The County is **currently** responsible for maintaining the following public infrastructure components (or assets):

Providing for Transportation and Utility Infrastructure

Infrastructure projects require proper planning and permitting to implement. They are costly and can take months to several years to accomplish. For this reason, the coordination of infrastructure projects is arranged using 5-year plans that are prepared by the Office of the County Engineer and Environmental Services that are then annually updated and adopted by the Board. Projects in future years are based on forecasts of funds available.

The current Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) 5-year plan includes preliminary engineering efforts, design, right-of-way acquisition and/or construction of:

- 22.6 miles of additional 2-lanes being added to existing roadways
- 4.9 miles of new 2-lane roadways
- 2.5 miles of new 4-lane roadways
- 1 new interchange with I-75 at NW 49th/35th Street
- 85.4 miles of rehabilitating or resurfacing existing roadways
- 7.6 miles of new sidewalk
- 10.7 miles of new trails not adjacent to new roadways
- Other miscellaneous improvements considering signalization, signage, striping, guardrail, drainage, etc.



The Environmental Services – Utilities Department’s Capital Improvement Project is a 5-year plan for public physical improvements) Projects are in varying stages of implementation (pre-design, design, permitting, construction, evaluation, etc.) and are categorized as:

- Water Mains are improvements within the Water Transmission/Distribution Systems, such as extensions and interconnections of water mains, annual fire hydrant replacements and annual service line replacements.
- Relocation of Utilities are for water and/or wastewater infrastructure impacted by roadway projects.
- Water Treatment Plant (WTP) improvements are at the plants themselves, and include PLC and SCADA improvements, well upgrades, and construction of a new lower Floridan well.
- wastewater Treatment Plant (WWTP) Improvements are at the plants themselves, as well as grease and grit removal for the Vac-Con® station.
- Reclaimed Water Improvements include work on the mains, station, and the storage tanks.
- Lift Station and Collection Lines provides for routine work at the various lift stations, converting to master lift stations, running new/replacement collection lines, as well as annual lift station rehabilitations, inflow and infiltration (I&I) remediation efforts, odor control, line cleaning (commonly known in the industry as “pigging”) services, and lift station lightning protection program.

As we continue to build infrastructure to support both existing and future growth, there are several geographical areas envisioned as being critical to promoting desired infill and economic development. It is essential that, as those projects develop, county staff responsible for the implementation of public infrastructure look for any available opportunities to partner with one another.

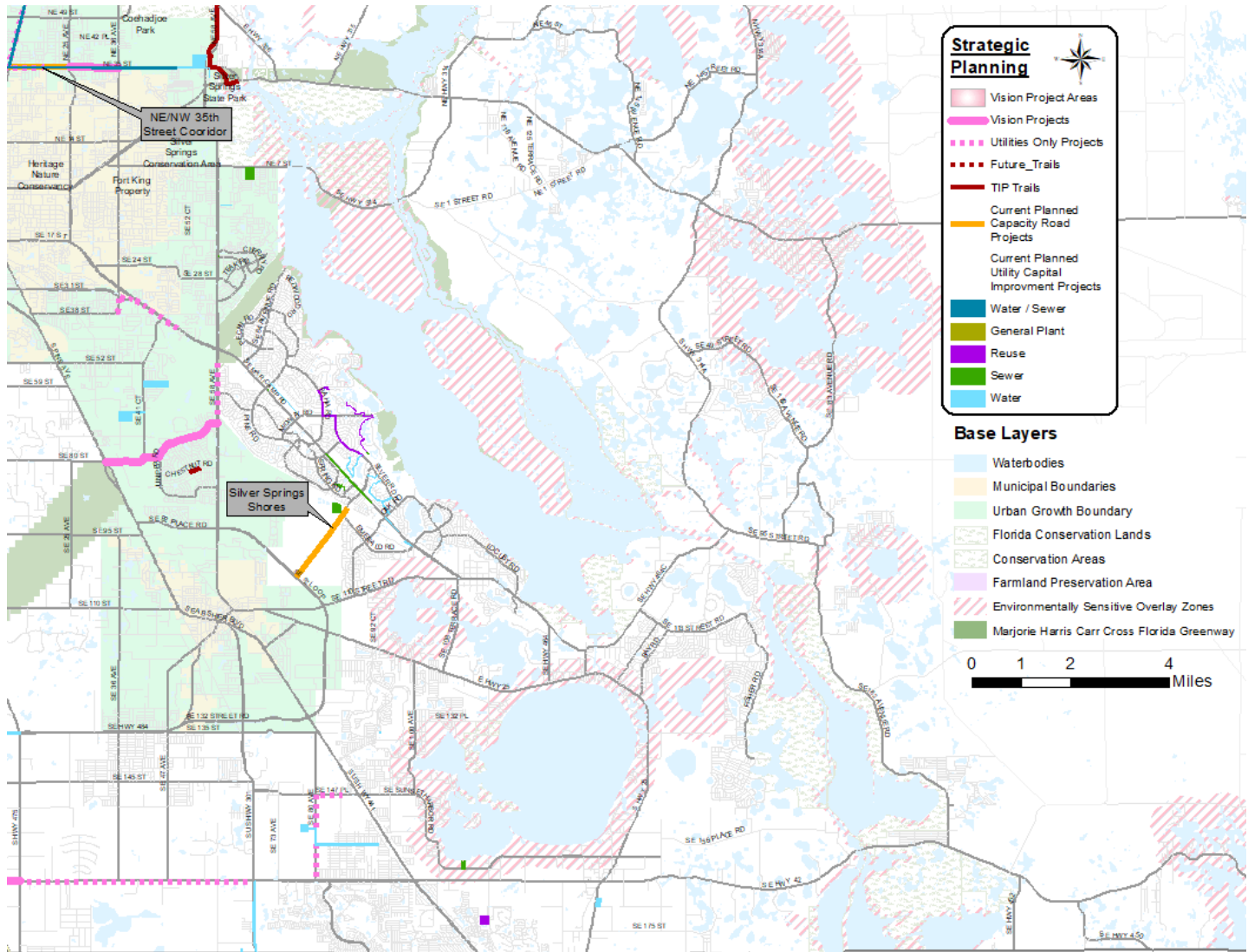


Establish plans for ongoing interdepartmental coordination

We will work to establish ongoing opportunities for interdepartmental coordination. Coordinated efforts provide cost savings, increased efficiency, and improved customer service.

During the annual development of the various 5-year capital improvement plans, staff can improve coordinating efforts to provide cost savings, plan projects to run concurrently and share corridors whenever possible. For example, whenever possible, water, sewer and/or reclaimed water should occur alongside road construction or reconstruction. Too often, roads are resurfaced prior to planned utility line extensions, leading to inefficiencies in our efforts. By establishing routine communication, we anticipate reduced project costs

and streamlined design and construction processes, ultimately saving taxpayer dollars and reducing disruption to affected customers during infrastructure construction.



Create infill incentives and promote economic development opportunities

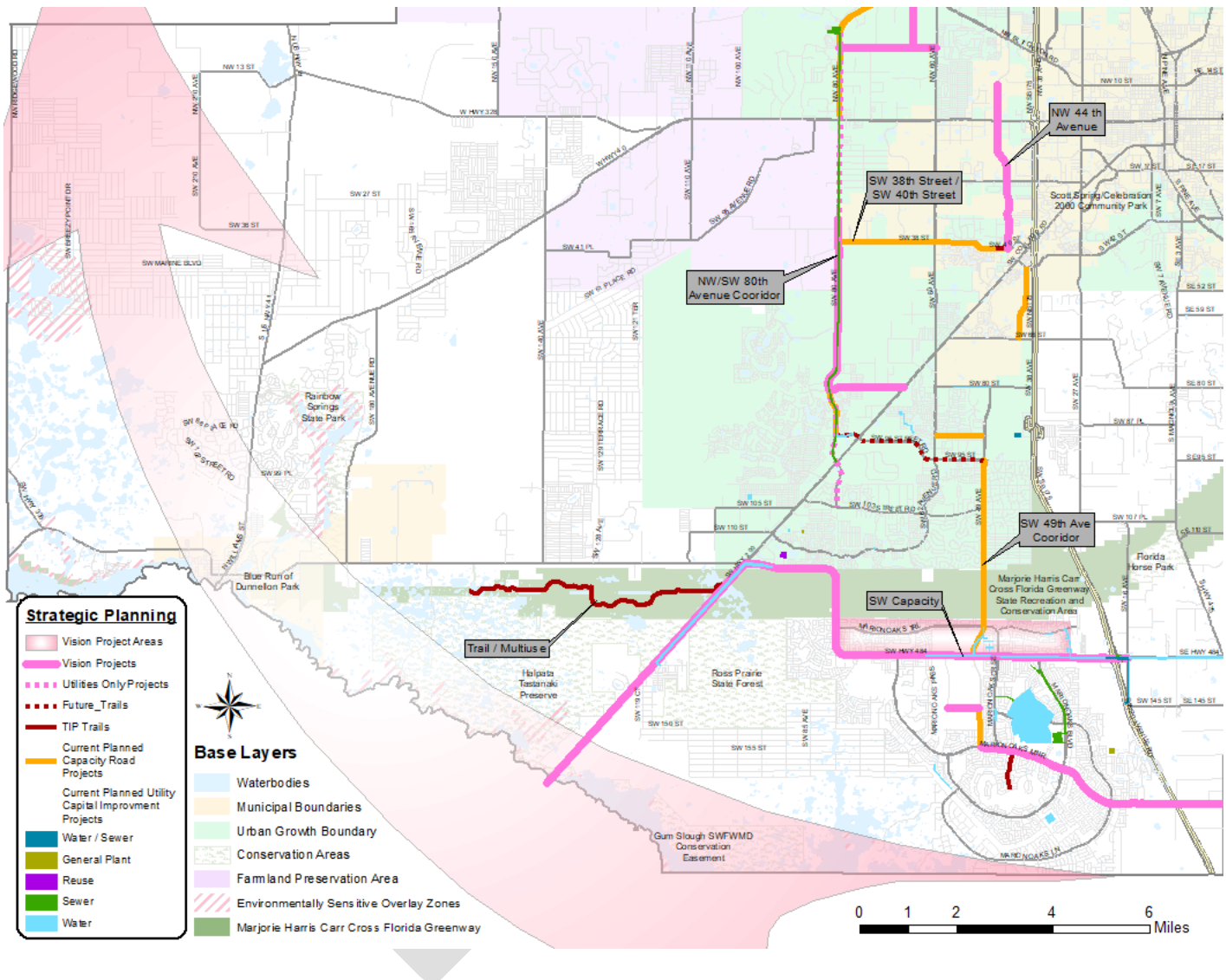
We will consider how to incentivize infill. Continued infill and redevelopment of property allows concentrated, efficient infrastructure support. Staff needs to review the transfer of development rights programs and standardized developer agreement concerning transportation impact fees and utility capacity fees.

We will also work to identify and plan for geographical areas to promote economic development opportunities.

In the **southeast quadrant** of the county, the Silver Spring Shores (SSS) subdivision was platted in the early 1970s and is a community of up to 30,000 residential lots and multi-family units. Due to its density

and proximity to Silver Springs, converting well and septic systems to public utilities is identified in the BMAP, which will require us to expand existing utility systems.

While there is a sophisticated internal road network within the subdivision, there is limited road access connecting the subdivision to other areas of the County. SSS is also home to several successful industrial and manufacturing businesses. There is room for additional growth in this area, supported by an active rail spur.



In the **southwest quadrant** of the county, there has been tremendous growth and development over the last 10 years. While the county races to install a new 4-lane transportation corridor (SW 49th Avenue) in this quadrant connecting Marion Oaks to the City of Ocala, residential, commercial and industrial projects continue to infill along the CR 484 corridor and within the Marion Oaks community. The Marion Oaks subdivision was platted in the early 1970s and contains up to 28,000 residential lots and multi-family units. It is similar to SSS in its development pattern and another area to easily focus expanding water and sewer utilities.

The creation of the Florida Crossroads Commerce Park (FCCP) in the heart of Marion Oaks has already provided significant infrastructure connectivity. Further commerce park development in the vicinity of the I-75 interchange is also underway. The new north-south SW 49th Avenue corridor serves both the FCCP and the Marion Oaks community, and eventually, per the County's long range plans, will continue into the southeast quadrant by transitioning east along Marion Oaks Lane and across I-75 to connect with CR 42.

While portions of CR 484 are 4-laned and SR 200 are 6-laned, there are segments of these roads that need to be widened to serve existing and increasing traffic. The constraints created by the limited number of crossings or interchanges with I-75, the Greenway, the Withlacoochee River and other environmentally sensitive lands necessitate that the infrastructure of the existing corridors be improved as needs continue to grow.

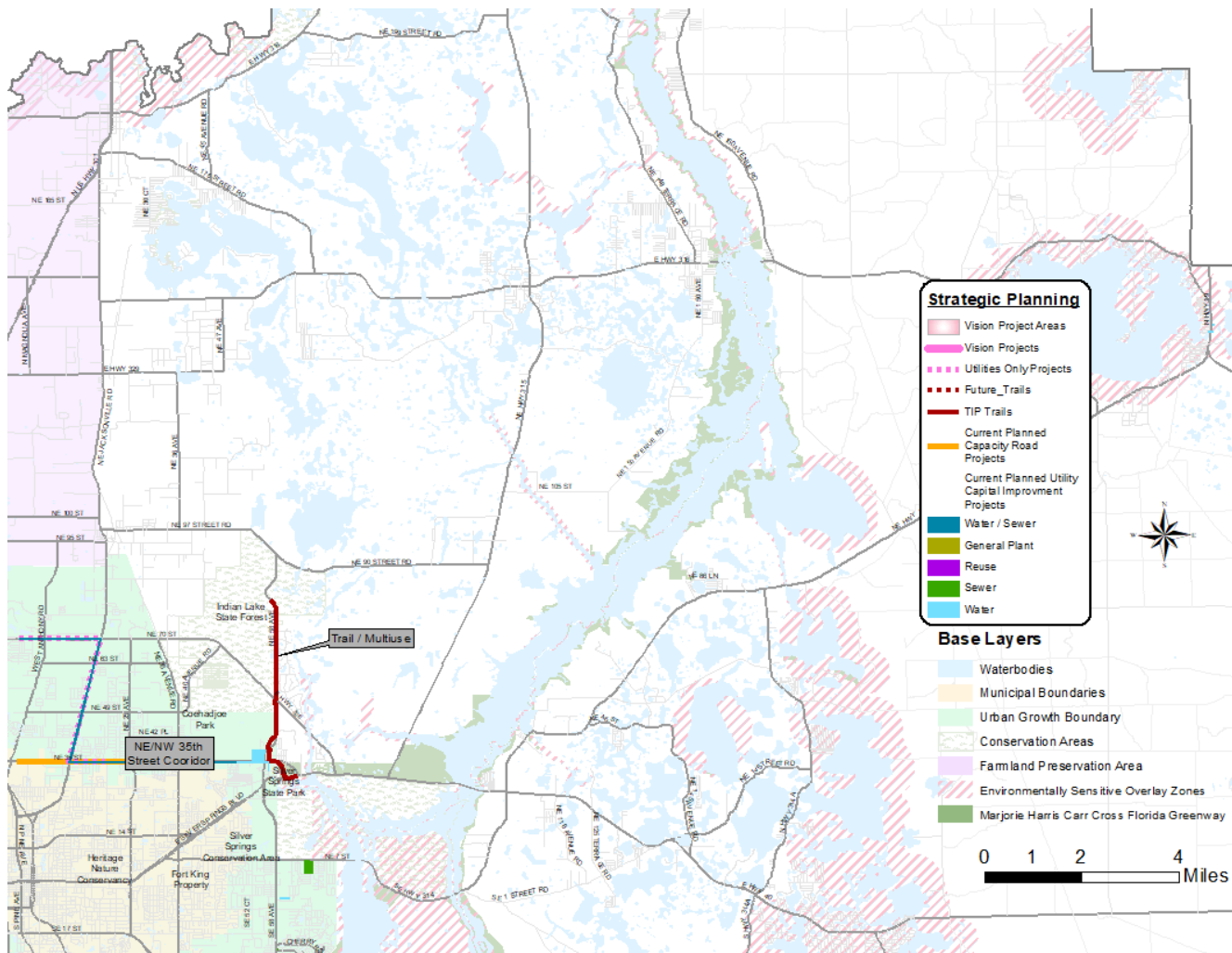
The State of Florida is considering an extension north of the Florida's Turnpike System and is also seeking to promote trail opportunities and other infrastructure improvements (broadband connectivity). We will continue to be mindful of how these potential State improvements can impact our community and potentially complement our efforts.

The continued 4-laning of SW 80th Avenue from SR 200 north into the northwest quadrant is a significant project that includes water, wastewater and reclaimed water. The east-west SW 80th Street corridor that connects SR 200 to SW 80th Avenue is a consideration for 4-laning. The east-west SW 38th Street corridor connects the southwest corner of the City of Ocala in an area that is rapidly growing and developing near the Heathbrook Mall and SW 43rd Street Road (an existing I-75 flyover). The County's long range plans include 4-laning SW 38th Street between SR 200 and SW 80th Avenue.

The area bordered by SR 200, SW 80th Avenue, SW 80th Street and SW 38th Street is within the UGB and already has approved development at various stages, ranging from inactive to significant daily construction. Should infill occur in this area, we are readily able to provide public infrastructure.

connectivity for the area and support continuing economic development opportunities surrounding the Ocala International Airport via the additional future I-75 interchange.

NW 44th Avenue runs parallel to I-75 from US 27 to CR 326; while the south end is 4-laned, the north segment between NW 63rd Street and CR 326 is not. Residential, industrial and warehouse development all have access to this corridor, and as more development occurs around the new interchange, level of service needs will dictate 4-laning the rest of NW 44th Avenue.



In the **northeast quadrant** of the county, the new I-75 interchange will connect NW 49th Street to NE 35th Street, a 4-laned corridor serving the Ocala/Marion Commerce Park (OMCP), home to FedEx, AutoZone, Chewy and Amazon. Long-range plans include further 4-laning of NE 35th Street to NE 58th Avenue and SR 40, near the community of Silver Springs.

A national fueling/convenience store has shown interest in developing on the east side of the I-75 interchange. Private property owners east of I-75 have further indicated that additional investors are poised to come to this area, before the interchange is completed (estimated to be in 2028), if a parallel road is built from the existing terminus NE 35th Street N to SR 326 parallel to I-75, like NW 44th Avenue to the west. Such a roadway will expand the economic development opportunities initiated with the OMCP, and utilities will follow this same north-south corridor, continuing efforts to interconnect the central water system and expanding wastewater collection availability to these areas.

Tourism and recreation activities are also key focuses for the northeast quadrant due to the presence of national and state resources such as the Ocala National Forest, Silver Springs State Park, and the Cross Florida Greenway, along with other state and regional agency land holdings. State and regional management and recreation plans are either in place or under development to increase opportunities for beneficial land use. The County has initiated the Silver Springs Community Redevelopment Area (SSCRA) to support revitalization of the area as a potential eco-tourism hub. Northern portions of the quadrant include agriculture holdings similar to the northwest quadrant, including unique operations such as the University of Florida Institute of Food and Agricultural Sciences (FAS) and a significant private investment to create a large organic livestock processing operation and facility near Fort McCoy.

These areas have typically lacked significant utility infrastructure and have limited transportation connectivity. The lack of utility infrastructure has been a crucial concern of maintaining the character and water quality of Silver Springs as identified by the BMAP. Privately-implemented central water and wastewater systems were acquired by County Utilities and are being integrated with other existing systems, and we are preparing for expansion, extension and long-term connectivity throughout the region.

As noted previously, we expect the 4-laning of NW/NE 35th Street to extend west from I-75 to SR 40. The coordination of the road widening with utility and multi-modal infrastructure will be an opportunity to support and encourage eco-tourism to further economic development for the Silver Springs community.

Improve Solid Waste Infrastructure and update Solid Waste Master Plan

| Task | Expected outcome | Lead department | Date | Cost |
|--|--|------------------------|--|--|
| Update Solid Waste Master Plan; analyze gate rates and capacity limitations | By monitoring growth within the community, The County will develop a scheduled approach to funding, planning and permitting of additional disposal options while increasing intake capacity at its facilities. | Environmental Services | 2021 with updates every 5 years for master plan and every 2 years for capacity analysis. Review gate rates annually. | Estimated Cost: approx. \$150,000 for the master plan, approx. \$5,000 for capacity study and approx. \$15,000 annually for on-going gate rate analysis. |
| Build recycling center at the Baseline Landfill | Increasing the capacity of the recycling centers and improvement of the level of service (LOS) in the community. | Environmental Services | 2023 and review annually | Staff time and other costs TBD |
| Implement Limited Universal Collection for Targeted Areas in the County | Increased LOS in the community and may reduce the potential of littering in and around the recycling centers and community with closed collection vehicles. | Environmental Services | 2023 and review annually | Staff time and other costs TBD |

Solid Waste in Marion County was historically disposed of in unlined landfills scattered throughout the county. As regulations changed, these facilities were consolidated to the lined Baseline Landfill, and eighteen convenience-recycling centers were constructed across the county where residents would dispose of waste, which we would then transport to the Baseline Landfill. With the closure of the Baseline Landfill and the opening of the Baseline Transfer Facility in 2019, we now operate a transfer operation. Solid waste is loaded at the Baseline Transfer Facility and hauled to Sumter County to be disposed at the Heart of Florida Landfill, a private landfill.

Baseline Recycling Center

With the closure of the Baseline Landfill and the opening of the Baseline Transfer Facility in 2019, the County now operates a transfer operation. Solid waste is loaded at the



Baseline Transfer Facility and hauled to Sumter County to be disposed at the Heart of Florida, a private landfill.

The existing convenience recycling centers continue to be reviewed to increase proficiencies and capacities to ensure that the demands of growth do not reduce the LOS. A new Baseline Recycling Center to promote ease of access and better efficiencies for the citizens of Marion County will be reviewed as well.

Update Solid Waste Master Plan; analyze gate rates and capacity limitations

As Marion County continues to grow, we must update our Solid Waste Master Plan to include capacity milestones alongside our projected population growth. The plan will need to consider a scheduled approach to funding, planning and permitting of disposal options. These may include purchasing additional airspace capacity at the Heart of Florida Landfill, purchasing capacity at another landfill, permitting and construction of a new landfill, permitting and construction of a waste to energy plant, or continuing to explore other waste disposal alternatives and/or recycling efforts.



As the western portion of the County continues to be developed, we should consider the construction of a Class III Landfill and Vegetative Waste Processing facility west of Interstate 75. This will require an amendment to the County's Comprehensive Plan. This is an opportunity for us to establish a public-private partnership. This facility would decrease the pressure on existing facilities located east of Interstate 75 and would improve the level of service (LOS) in the western portion of the County.

Implement Limited Universal Collection for Targeted Areas in the County

We will continue to review our existing recycling centers to increase their efficiencies and capacities to ensure that the demands of growth do not reduce the LOS. As existing developments in the unincorporated portions of the County continue to fill in, we should explore the option of universal waste collection (curbside service). This may ease the pressure on the existing recycling centers and reduce our need to expand existing recycling centers to meet the demands of future growth. This service also has the potential for reducing litter by providing a controlled waste collection and transportation system.

Protect Water Resources

| Task | Expected outcome | Lead department | Date | Cost |
|----------------------------------|--|--|--|--------------------------------|
| Inform the community | Empower our citizens, visitors, and businesses by providing accurate educational material on how to protect our most vital resource is a critical need. | Office of the County Engineers' Water Resources Program/ Stormwater Program and Environmental Services | Some completion by 2022 and finalized by 2023 | Staff time and other costs TBD |
| Wastewater improvements | Develop an outline to provide an effective septic system remediation plan. | Environmental Services with Office of the County Engineer | Year 1; Ongoing evaluation of successes thereafter | Staff time and other costs TBD |
| Water system improvements | To monitor and manage the Floridan Aquifer's water quality and quantity | Environmental Services with the Office of the County Engineer | Year 3 with ongoing evaluation thereafter | Staff time and other costs TBD |
| Stormwater improvements | Address flooding issues along the major road network to reduce pollutants picked up by additional waters staging on land surfaces, as well as increasing traffic mobility and safety among other issues. | Office of the County Engineer | Year 1; Ongoing evaluation of successes thereafter | Staff time and other costs TBD |

Marion County is home to numerous water features such as Rainbow Springs, Silver Springs, Lake Weir, Lake Kerr, the Silver River, and the Ocklawaha River. Many of these are world-

renowned for their unique clarity and ecosystems, fisheries, and recreational enjoyment. Marion County also overlays the prime recharge area of the Floridan Aquifer, a unique freshwater source that serves key environmental features of the county, region, and state, as well as providing drinking water for much of the state, particularly north-central Florida. Maintaining the quality and supply of this critical water source is of key concern for the health, safety, and welfare of our residents and visitors.



The Silver Springs and the Rainbow Springs Groups are two of the largest freshwater spring formations in the world. Both springs groups are part of the 30 Outstanding Florida Springs established by the 2016 Florida Springs and Aquifer Protection Act approved by the Florida Legislature. Under the Act, the Florida Department of Environmental Protection (FDEP) furthered state and federal mandates to achieve pollutant reduction goals, focusing on nitrogen as the primary pollutant of concern. After engagement with other stakeholders, FDEP adopted Basin Management Action Plans (BMAPs) that “contain a comprehensive set of solutions, such as permit limits on wastewater facilities, urban and agricultural best management practices, and conservation programs designed to achieve pollutant reductions established by a total maximum daily load (TMDL).... Sources of nitrogen in these systems can include wastewater, water from septic tanks, stormwater runoff, and fertilizer runoff from both urban and agricultural lands.” Implementation of these practices are recognized as being critical to the success of reducing pollutants in our water resources.

Inform the Community

Empowering our citizens, visitors, and businesses by providing accurate educational material on how to protect our most vital resource is a critical need. Our citizens are bombarded with a wide variety of information which can be overwhelming and even contradictory. Providing educational information to protect water resources is also a requirement of Marion County’s various permits, as well as those of the private sector. Facilitating opportunities for community education will serve to increase participation and “ownership” of such efforts and reflect positively on the health of the resource and the community as a whole.



While educational aspects are required for permit compliance, providing our citizens and visitors with further knowledge of these resources will empower them further. Information such as how they will be personally affected and what best management practices they can use to reduce non-point source and personal pollution will be provided.

By developing education materials for existing OSTDS users on operations, maintenance and their environmental impact, updating fertilizer education materials to augment BMAP requirements and those of other agencies (FDACS, SWFWMD, etc.) we will ensure this information is accurate and ready for easy distribution. Additionally, the creation of a consolidated resident guide will help to identify best management practices related to the needs of OSTDS, fertilizers, waste disposal, litter, etc. to promote and emphasize the health and maintenance of Marion County's water resources (recreational, drinking, environmental health). We will continue to identify and maximize delivery mechanisms of created and updated education materials (print vs web) to target audiences.

This will also include the distribution of these newly created and updated education materials while conducting biennial reviews of the materials for needed updates. New and improved education delivery mechanisms will be put in place to include items such as print, social media, and other media with a

biennial review to evaluate and update methods accordingly. Furthermore, publication initiatives and presentations for community engagement meetings and workshops will also be created and distributed.

Wastewater Improvements

Onsite Sewage Treatment and Disposal System (OSTDS) remediation efforts, including either upgrading or eliminating septic systems, are required by the Rainbow and Silver Springs BMAP as contribution to the nitrogen loading to groundwater from OSTDSs was identified to be 20 percent for the Rainbow Springs Group and Rainbow River BMAP area and 29 percent for the Silver Springs and Upper Silver River BMAP area. Solely making improvements to Marion County's municipal wastewater systems is not sufficient to meet the nitrogen load reduction goals.

While Marion County is not the responsible agent for permitting OSTDS, we are still invested in improving the health of the affected water bodies. The number of developed areas using these systems creates unique opportunities to implement septic-to-sewer conversion programs.

With the development of the Marion County Master Wastewater Feasibility Report, we have developed an outline to provide an effective septic system remediation plan. Key elements of the Report are a septic system inventory, wastewater capacity and infrastructure assessment, necessary infrastructure upgrades determination, priority project list, and cost-effective project solutions and financing options evaluation to fund selected projects.

Water System Improvements

Marion County's unique location atop the Floridan Aquifer has readily accommodated the use of individual onsite wells for potable water consumption. Access to quality potable water is critical for all development; however, unrestricted and unmonitored access to the aquifer is a concern as we consider the need to monitor and manage the aquifer's water quality and quantity. Each well represents a point of vulnerability for contaminants and a source of depletion potentially affecting the long-term flows that create Marion County's unique springs and rivers. As development and density increases, these issues become more important under the Water Management Districts' Minimum Flows and Levels (MFL) program and the previously referenced BMAP.

The maintenance of existing systems and the interconnection and expansion of systems, particularly in areas with increased densities or vulnerable areas identified by the BMAP, is a focus of concern.

Stormwater Improvements

Development, such as roads, buildings and other impervious surfaces, produces stormwater runoff. Stormwater becomes the vehicle for any pollutant it picks up while running over the land surface – oils that leak from cars, brake dust, excess fertilizers, etc. These pollutants are transported into a stormwater treatment system or a natural water body. Stormwater treatment techniques have traditionally relied on the ground to filter pollutants, but we have come to



realize that many pollutants are not trapped in the ground, but instead continue to infiltrate and enter our groundwater, aquifers and surface water bodies.

Because of Marion County’s size and stormwater infrastructure, we are regulated by FDEP as a municipal separate storm sewer system (MS4). We are required to report annually on six minimum control measures which are meant to reduce the discharge of pollutants into our water resources:

- Public Education and Outreach
- Public Participation/Involvement
- Illicit Discharge Detection and Elimination
- Construction Site Stormwater Runoff Control
- Post-Construction Stormwater Management in New Development and Redevelopment
- Pollution Prevention/Good Housekeeping for Municipal Operations

Each year, a Stormwater Implementation Program (SIP) 5-year plan is adopted, prioritizing structural and non-structural efforts to meet the permit requirements and County’s goals. Some projects, such as public outreach and education, are long-term, while others, particularly structural construction, will be active for relatively short periods of time (between two months to three years).

The need to retrofit drainage retention areas with bio-absorptive media to remove nitrogen transported in stormwater before in reaches water bodies such as the Floridan Aquifer and springs has been discussed and is currently in the works. Additionally we will be addressing flooding issues along the major road network to reduce pollutants picked up by additional waters staging on land surfaces, as well as increasing traffic mobility and safety.

Funding Strategies

| Task | Expected outcome | Lead department | Date | Cost |
|-----------------------------------|---|--|--------------------------------|--------------------------------|
| Determine best methods of funding | Put a plan in place to help fund public infrastructure needs due to growth and expansion in the county. | Office of the County Engineer and Environmental Services | Year one and ongoing annually. | Staff time and other costs TBD |

Funding public infrastructure is a dilemma faced by municipalities nationwide. A few minutes lost to traffic congestion or a few gallons of water lost because of water main leaks are concrete examples inherent to our mission to provide for existing and historic needs. Growth simply compounds these issues with additional demands for service. Sizable developments contribute to their proportionate share of payment for an infrastructure improvement, but improvements are always playing catch-up to meet those needs as well as the incremental growth that has occurred around them.

Traditionally, we rely on the following recurrent mechanisms to fund public infrastructure:

- Capacity Fees for utilities
- Gas Tax for transportation
- Impact Fees for transportation
- Sales Tax
- Special Assessments for solid waste and Stormwater
- Tipping Fees for solid waste
- Utility Rates for utilities

More recently, the County has all implemented a Local Option Sales Tax.

There other funding options that can be pursued but need to be further researched and vetted by our Staff. With additional information, these can be presented to the Board for consideration. Staff sees this strategic plan as an opportunity to evaluate these alternatives and share them for further discussion.

Determine best methods of funding

Each of the funding options are described further below in alphabetical order.

- **Bonds**

Bonds are a resource available for use; however, funds must be repaid with interest, creating an additional cost for the life of the bond. Additionally, bond options are subject to the implications of market forces, which can also affect the short- and long-term costs. As such, the county has often deferred the use of bonds unless the activity was deemed warranted due to unique circumstances. Bonds may be contemplated as part of a large coordinated plan as the initiatives of the strategic plan are balanced. These activities typically require repayment with interest on the initial amount of funds obtained.

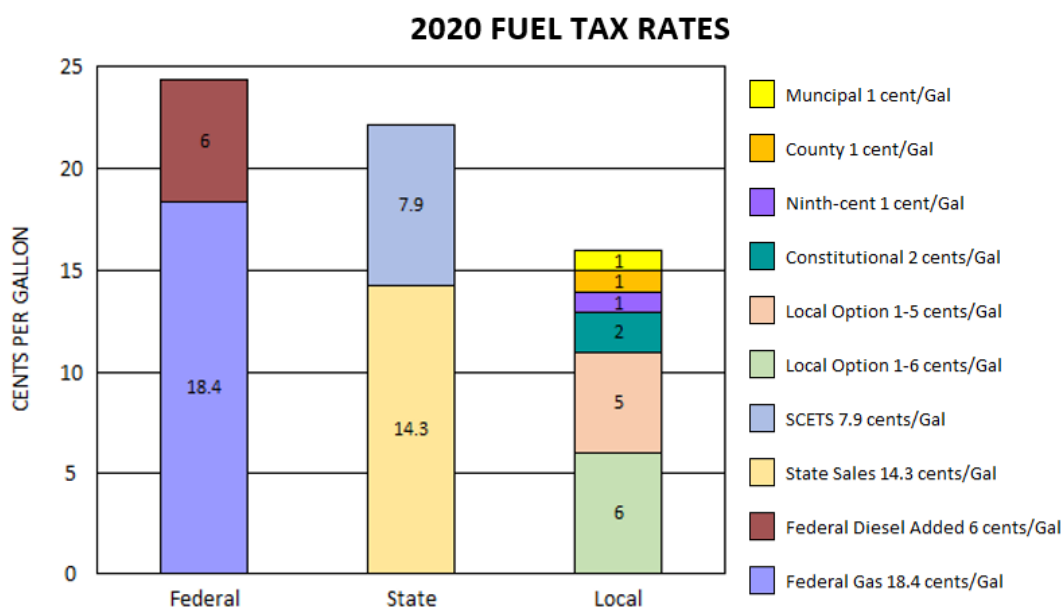
- **Capacity Fees**

Marion County receives capacity fees in relation to its central potable water, wastewater, and reuse operations. These fees are used to fund the physical facilities necessary to produce, process, and transmit the particular utility resource. Capacity fees are revisited regularly and typically focused on “current costs”. Further study may be warranted to begin efforts to address long-term utility capacity needs, particularly as significant improvement, upgrades, or replacements arise.

- **Gas Tax**

Marion County receives 16 cents of tax for every gallon of gas sold in Marion County. The other 24.4 cents and 22.2 cents collected per gallon are Federal and State allocations. Florida is recognized as being a donor state to the Federal Department of Transportation and other States' systems. Marion County, like most other Florida Counties, has exercised its right to collect all local option gas tax available to us. Gas tax funds are currently restricted, due to both the limitations of the assessment method (which is not indexed, thereby limiting overall collection amounts and disregarding inflation) as well as the distribution limitations of the federal and state agencies. Further, as vehicles become more fuel efficient and rely on alternative fuel sources, this fund is further stressed.

Gas tax monies are the traditional funding revenue for the County's transportation infrastructure, as allowed in Chapters 206 and 336 of Florida Statutes. Approximately \$3-5M annually of Gas Tax is put towards pavement rehabilitation projects (resurface or reconstruction), but an estimated \$15M annually is required to keep our roads maintained at the desired level of service.



- **Grants**

There are a variety of grants available that Marion County may take advantage of. Typically, many grant programs are offered based on federal and state programs, while other unique or private-source grants may also be available. Grants often require matching funds.

State and federal agencies such as water management districts, FDEP, EPA, US Department of Agriculture, etc. provide grants that can offset costs associated either with septic-to-sewer programs or other connections and integrations of utility systems, as well as stormwater projects and water resource education. The Florida Department of Transportation (FDOT) and its federal counterparts can provide funding for transportation infrastructure.

Recently, the State Legislature and the Governor's Office have expressed significant interest in the impact of septic tanks on the state's sensitive water bodies, such as Silver Springs and Rainbow River and Springs. Florida Department of Environmental Protection (FDEP) recognizes the financial magnitude of the septic-to-sewer projects in Florida and the support that will be required to address this issue throughout the state and within Marion County. To assist local government in moving septic-to-sewer programs forward, the State has dedicated funding from both state and federal resources toward the elimination of septic tanks. With proactive lobbying efforts, Marion County will aim to take advantage of grant dollars to mitigate the cost of septic-to-sewer projects to ultimately provide a proactive approach to protecting our water quality and meeting future regulatory requirements within Marion County. The Marion County Community Redevelopment Agency has also initiated a grant program to facilitate connections to central water and wastewater services.

- **Impact Fees**

Impact fees are a method of assessing new development to recover costs associated with providing services to the new development. Marion County has currently enacted impact fees related to both transportation and education in partnership with the county's local municipalities and Marion County Public Schools (MCPS). However, the county currently discounts the rates of collection for the transportation impact fee and, at the direction of MCPS, has suspended collection of the education impact fee. The county is eligible to assess impact fees for other public services, although at this time, none are currently enabled. As growth and development continue, we may need to re-evaluate the use of impact fees to address key community needs and demands.

- **Sales Tax**

Marion County receives sales tax monies in a variety of forms, considering a state allocation, as well as a local option 1 cent sales tax. The additional 1 cent sales tax was voter approved twice, first for a 4-year collection period between 2017 and 2020 and again, with collection sunseting in 2024. The first 4-years of collection generated over \$167M and the second 4-year collection is estimated to provide \$196M of additional revenue. Approximately 60% of the collection is and has been directed towards transportation infrastructure projects and 40% toward county-wide safety association with our Sheriff, Fire and 9-1-1 Public Services. For the transportation infrastructure projects, the funding not only allowed us to build new roads and add capacity to the roadway system, it also provided a well-needed infusion for the maintenance (reconstructing/rehabilitating/resurfacing) of the existing road network. Without continuing this funding support for the transportation network, another new funding source must be established.

While a septic-to-sewer initiative is not included in the current sales tax project list, sewer and water projects could be added in the future due to their regional environmental benefit.

Since the sales surtax has only been approved in four-year increments, such funding would presumably only pay directly for project construction and would not be used for debt service financing of projects, since no assurance of future sales tax could be relied upon beyond the designated period. Visitors contribute to a sales surtax collection, helping fund these infrastructure projects. If Marion County includes utility projects in future sales surtax referenda, the use of 3 percent of existing revenue would generate approximately \$1.50 million in funding per year.

- **Special Assessments**

Marion County is enabled by the State to provide for special assessments for specific services in response to community needs or requests. Such assessments are typically addressed through a Municipal Service(s) Benefit Unit (MSBU) or a Municipal Service(s) Taxing Unit (MSTU) and may be established for a limited geographic area or on a county-wide basis when a clear and direct benefit is made. Marion County offers both such options and has used county-wide options to address specific services including solid waste, stormwater, and emergency services. Such assessments may be useful in addressing specific needs, particularly areas attempting to balance the needs of existing and future growth in an effort to avoid potential conflicts between existing property owners and future expected owners.

- **Solid Waste**

Marion County collects a solid waste special assessment from residents in unincorporated areas of the county that serves to fund the recycling center, landfill maintenance, and transfer operations alongside tipping fees collected from non-residential operations. The assessment is generally applied as a benefit unit rather than a taxing unit.

- **Stormwater**

Marion County collects a stormwater special assessment that provides for responses to the county-wide mandates of the NPDES permit, TMDLs and BMAPs, as well as routine maintenance of the county's stormwater system, stormwater retrofits, watershed mapping, public education and outreach, and construction enforcement/compliance. The stormwater assessment generates approximately \$3.7M annually. It is currently being evaluated by outside counsel to ensure compliance with the assessment methodology.

- **Utilities**

Special assessments (MSTUs or MSBUs) may be an option when considering the placement of utilities. Considerations include conducting planning-level activities for a limited duration and for parcel-specific areas. This funding is not appropriate for a countywide infrastructure project. Typically, large utility programs are only financially feasible if assessments are mandatory at the time of availability. A challenge for any assessment is verifying how the parcels being assessed receive benefit from the program funding.

One difficulty we will need to address is how vacant parcels would benefit and be charged for the availability, since non-ad valorem assessments are tested by the benefit they provide.

- **Tipping Fees**

Marion County receives tipping fees from those disposing waste at Marion County recycling centers or the Baseline Transfer Station who either do not pay a solid waste assessment or are disposing waste on commercial or industrial scale. Tipping fees are established periodically; however, such fees are often limited to current operating costs. Further study may be warranted to address long-term solid waste operations and disposal opportunities.

- **Utilities Rates**

- **Rates**

Marion County receives utility fee payments in return for the services provided in relation to its central potable water, wastewater, and reuse operations. These fees are used to fund the operational costs of the facilities and operations necessary to produce, process, and transmit the particular utility resource. Utility rates are revisited regularly and typically focused on “current costs” and further study may be warranted to begin efforts to address long-term service needs, particularly as significant improvement, upgrades, or replacements arise.

Marion County Utilities (MCU) serves a portion of Marion County, and since a future utility program would be administered by MCU for future customers, any rate increases would be paid by the new utility customers. The rate increases would also be funded by existing customers that would presumably be receiving some environmental benefit. However, other areas in the County not served by MCU (such as residents of the Cities of Ocala and Belleview) would not be contributing to this funding source. Based on MCU’s FY 2021 budget of \$25 million in revenue, Table 8-2 shows rate increases that are dedicated to fund new utility projects that could generate the following:

| MCU Rate Increase | Annual Revenue (\$ million) | % of Funding for 650 Septic Tanks/Year |
|-------------------|-----------------------------|--|
| 2% | \$0.50 | 2.6% |
| 5% | \$1.25 | 6.4% |
| 10% | \$2.50 | 12.8% |

- **New Rate Margins**

Another funding source from new utility customer’s properties is the improved rate margin. Funding from MCU rate increases, as discussed above, was limited to those funds generated from rate increases to all customers. The benefit would be recognized through these new

utility customers. At current flat monthly rates of \$57 for sewer-only service, the marginal cost of serving these customers can be expected to be much lower. This financial margin could be earmarked to benefit the utility program and support a portion of service on the associated debt. For example, if the additional operating cost for maintenance and operations for each new utility customer is \$42 per month, a \$15 per month margin would be available for MCU to support the utility program.

As an example, for 6,000 gallons, an incremental cost of \$42 equates to \$7.00 per thousand gallons. This incremental cost allowance would include additional electric service for pumping and treatment, maintenance, labor and renewal and replacement reserves.

- **Marion Mitigation Fund (MMF)**

The funding sources described above specific to utility rates would be part of the MMF. The MMF is to offset direct costs to property owners with septic-to-sewer conversions, recognizing the wider environmental benefit this creates throughout the County. These County funding sources are distinct from assessments to those properties where central sewer will become available.

Empowering Marion for Success II

PUBLIC SAFETY

Many Marion County departments work in conjunction with one another to ensure the community's safety, which is of the utmost importance. This effort includes elements as disparate as radio coverage for our first responders, countywide animal control, and voluntary fire sprinkler installation, as each aspect is vital to keeping our citizens safe. The objective of **public safety** is to address the operational needs of our existing and future public safety resources while exploring funding options in order to protect life and property with honor, compassion, and respect.



911 Management & Public Safety Communications upgrades

| Task | Expected outcome | Lead department | Date | Cost |
|--|--|--|--------------------|---|
| Implement ESInet | Substantially enhanced technical capabilities that will permit further implementation of novel technologies and provide opportunities for reciprocal operational redundancies with contemporary PSAPs. | 911 Management and Public Safety Comm. | September 30, 2024 | TBD due to the technology currently in development but with an anticipated availability within the next three to five years |
| Regional Back-Up Plan | Achievement of an appropriate backup for continuing 911 inbound telephone call and text message processing that is geographically diverse and sized consistent with existing PSC PSAP operations and is capable of handling call volume. | 911 Management and Public Safety Comm. | September 30, 2023 | Staff time and other costs TBD |
| Implementation of next generation 911 Core Services | Increased capabilities such as the transmission and reception of voice and data-rich information such as text messages that can include photos and/or videos over a highly reliable, resilient, and redundant network. | 911 Management | September 30, 2024 | Staff time and other costs TBD |

Overseen by Marion County's 9-1-1 coordinator, 9-1-1 Management supports countywide addressing and the multivariate technological infrastructure that Public Safety Communications (PSC), the county's primary public safety answering point (PSAP), utilizes in service to the citizens of Marion County. In addition to processing more than 140,000 annual emergency and nonemergency requests for service received by telephone call and text message, PSC manages and maintains the Marion County radio system that was the first Project 25 (P25) radio system developed in the state of Florida after the terrorist attacks of September 11, 2001. Nearly 20 government departments and divisions, municipal law enforcement departments, area hospitals, and the county's chief public safety agencies—Marion County Fire Rescue (MCFR) and Marion County Sheriff's Office (MCSO)—rely on the more than 2,400 deployed radios that connect to the radio system.

Implement ESInet

ESInets are a critical first step toward Next-Generation 911. These are broadband-enabled networks that support the transmission of video, images and other bandwidth-intensive data files, thus enabling the sharing of emergency data between public safety answering points (PSAPs).

ESInets are considerably more robust than legacy 911 systems and many emergency communications centers (ECCs) in the United States are clamoring to implement them as soon as possible. The broadband capabilities of an ESInet system enable transmission of high-bandwidth files, such as videos and building floorplans. When this enormous volume of data is analyzed and contextualized effectively, it becomes actionable. This dramatically enhances situational awareness, which enables emergency responders to do their jobs more safely and effectively, resulting in more lives and property saved. Additionally, substantially enhanced technical capabilities will permit further implementation of novel technologies and provide opportunities for reciprocal operational redundancy between PSC and other contemporary PSAPs.

In order for the ESInet system to be successful, we will determine a clear and approachable manner of acquainting and educating all necessary authorities as to what an ESInet is. Information will be prepared in an easy-to-digest manner and shared via the creation of committees to help better disseminate the information.

In order to determine the overall scope of the project and the costs involved for implementation, we will first need to collaborate with the established wireline and wireless service providers and vendor specialists, CenturyLink and Airbus.

After determining the scope and costs, we will collaborate with senior administration for initial support and direction. At this time, if a request for proposal (RFP) is necessary, we will submit to the appropriate vendors, process applications and select a vendor to assist with the completion of the project.

Finally, we will implement the ESInet in collaboration with the Public Safety Communications (PSC) Department as well as the Ocala Police Department (OPD) in order to migrate 911 traffic from the present network to a redundant, diverse and highly secure network.

Regional Back-Up Plan

Substantially enhanced technical capabilities will permit further implementation of novel technologies and provide opportunities for reciprocal operational redundancy between PSC and other contemporary PSAPs.

Establishing an ongoing relationship with a regional and geographically diverse PSAP of appropriate size and capacity to serve as a reciprocal backup site to PSC for uninterrupted processing of 9-1-1 telephone calls and text messages will ensure that Marion County's citizens are responded to without delay.

Establishing an ongoing relationship with a regional and geographically diverse PSAP of appropriate size and capacity to serve as a reciprocal backup site to PSC for uninterrupted processing of 911 telephone calls and texts will ensure that Marion County's citizens receive emergency services without delay.

In order to have a baseline and better understanding, we will need to first determine the level of need for incoming 911 and non-emergency call and text message volume concerning the available surrounding communications and dispatch operations. A comparable PSAP will be geographically diverse and seized consistently with our existing PSC and PSAP operations and be able to handle call volumes.

After thorough research to determine adequate needs, we will begin to engage comparable and compatible regional PSAPS to advise our interest and intent to enter into a professional reciprocal mutual aid arrangement between both operations. This arrangement will incorporate each PSAP accepting the other's incoming 911 telephone calls and text messages.

Once a comparable and compatible regional PSAP is determined, we will form a joint committee. A mutual aid arrangement will be reached between both operations, including a memorandum of understanding (MOU) to be ratified by the appropriate parties.

Implementation of next generation 911 Core Services

Replacing Marion County's legacy 911 network will enable next generation 911 Core Services to increase efficiencies by enabling emergency telecommunicators to more readily handle calls for service through reliable 911 systems that quickly locate callers, unify 911 and computer-aided dispatch (CAD) system workflows, and integrate text and data. It will also increase workflow efficiency, provide intelligent call routing and provide additional content, greater resiliency and survivability of our 911 system services.

In order to complete this implementation, standard operating guidelines (SOGs) will need to be created for the proposed intake of the new technologies for the PSAP, such as video, streaming video, pictures, etc.

Implementation of security upgrades

| Task | Expected outcome | Lead department | Date | Cost |
|--|--|---------------------|--------------------|------------------------------|
| Securing the Combined Communication Center | Prevention of any interruption to the highly sensitive operations. | Public Safety Comm. | September 30, 2022 | Approx. \$17,500 to \$20,000 |
| Enhance cyber security for mission-critical systems | Prevention of any interruption to the highly sensitive operations. | Public Safety Comm. | September 30, 2022 | Approx. \$30,500 - \$49,000 |

The Combined Communication Center (Center) is one of the county's most strategically vital and critical fail points. Currently, the Center has multiple security weaknesses that must be corrected to ensure

continuous and uninterrupted operations. Upgraded security features will help prevent an interruption of the multiple simultaneously ongoing and highly sensitive public safety operations that occur therein.

Nationwide, communication centers have proven to be an attractive target to a variety of threats, both physical and cyber, by bad actors who would force the shutdown of critical emergency communications infrastructure. The expense to fortify PSC's physical site and computer systems in an effort to mitigate against the impact of criminal actors would be minimal in comparison with the potentially tragic outcomes of any avoidable interruption and consequent compromise of the public trust.

Securing the Combined Communication Center

The first priority in enhancing security upgrades is to secure the area and location where critical equipment and information is housed, in the Center itself. This includes securing the entryway from the shared corridor into the center lobby with a door card reader, the installation of networked surveillance equipment and the installation of an intercom system at the corridor entryway and in the interior hallway of the building.

Additionally, the reception area at the main entrance will need to be equipped with the capability to monitor and permit access of visitors into the secured areas. This will include an enhanced identity verification system and the modification of the vestibule/reception area with a secure pass-through point. Windowed openings will also need to be evaluated. Those openings that are at thresholds that could permit access into the Center floor will need to be reinforced with ballistic glass and two-way mirrored film.

Enhance cyber security for mission-critical systems

Currently, Center operations are substantially exposed to a variety of threats that could be mitigated at a minimal expense when compared with that of a possible interruption caused by a bad actor. By evaluating options for contracted public-safety-focused cybersecurity firm to assess, proactively defend, and immediately respond to cyber-attacks targeting the multiple mission-critical systems employed by PSC we can take a more proactive approach to ensure security.

Radio system upgrades & refurbishment/expansion of existing infrastructure

| Task | Expected outcome | Lead department | Date | Cost |
|---|---|---------------------|--------------------|---|
| Radio system upgrades | Expanded redundancy, increased capacity for enhancements to the radio system, and improved reporting and resolution of trouble tickets. | Public Safety Comm. | December 30, 2021 | Already budgeted, other costs TBD |
| Refurbishment and expansion of existing infrastructure | Concluding the county's long-term capital improvement plan to refurbish the radio system's legacy P25-compliant hardware and infrastructure and mutual aid equipment of the final three tower sites. | Public Safety Comm. | June 30, 2022 | \$1,425,000 and other costs TBD |
| Expansion of the radio system | Significantly increase range, coverage area, operable versatility, and compatibility with current and developing technologies for first responder safety and in preparation for the county's continuous growth. | Public Safety Comm. | September 30, 2025 | \$1.95 million – \$8.8 million based upon the interest of the public safety agencies, MCFR and MCSO, and direction of county administration |

Following the World Trade Center tragedy on September 11, 2001, the public safety industry determined that the P25 standard was the appropriate next step for digital voice communications. In 2007, Marion County built out Florida's first state-of-the-art P25 radio system. Upon the completion of Initiative 2 of the radio tower upgrade and renovation, the radio system will be brought current; moreover, with the completion of Initiative 3 of the radio system enhancement and expansion, the radio system will again be state-of-the-art, spanning 15 total tower sites to provide a level of coverage for the first responder that is second-to-none. Marion County's radio system coverage will be expanded beyond the mobile coverage model (a radio hardwired into a vehicle) to full portable (a radio able to travel with personnel). This expansion will enhance essential communication abilities for first responders whether they are in their vehicle or on foot in areas with commercial and residential structures, as well as improve in-building coverage. This expansion will also create a platform capable of hosting assistive technologies that will permit both the real-time geo-tagging and tracking of units and their users and Wi-Fi connectivity to further augment the in-building functionality provided by Marion County's radio system.

Radio system upgraded to multi-protocol label switching (MPLS) and Ethernet from Transmission System 1 (T1) lines to provide internet protocol (IP) simulcast.

Pursuant to the 6-year Motorola Solutions System Upgrade Agreement (SUA II) entered into by Marion County, Motorola provides direct coordination and implementation of hardware refreshes, software updates, and professional services. Systems would also need to be updated to Motorola version 21.1.

Figure 1: Radio System Areas of Concern

The current countywide in-building coverage for mobile radios is shown in the map, with sufficient coverage indicated by green, and areas of concern by white. The current system was developed for mobile radio coverage; however, the proposed enhancement of the system will permit equivalent portable coverage as well as improved penetration into buildings with the equipment currently in use by public safety agencies.



Marion County Existing Astro 25 System RSM in 10dB Buildings

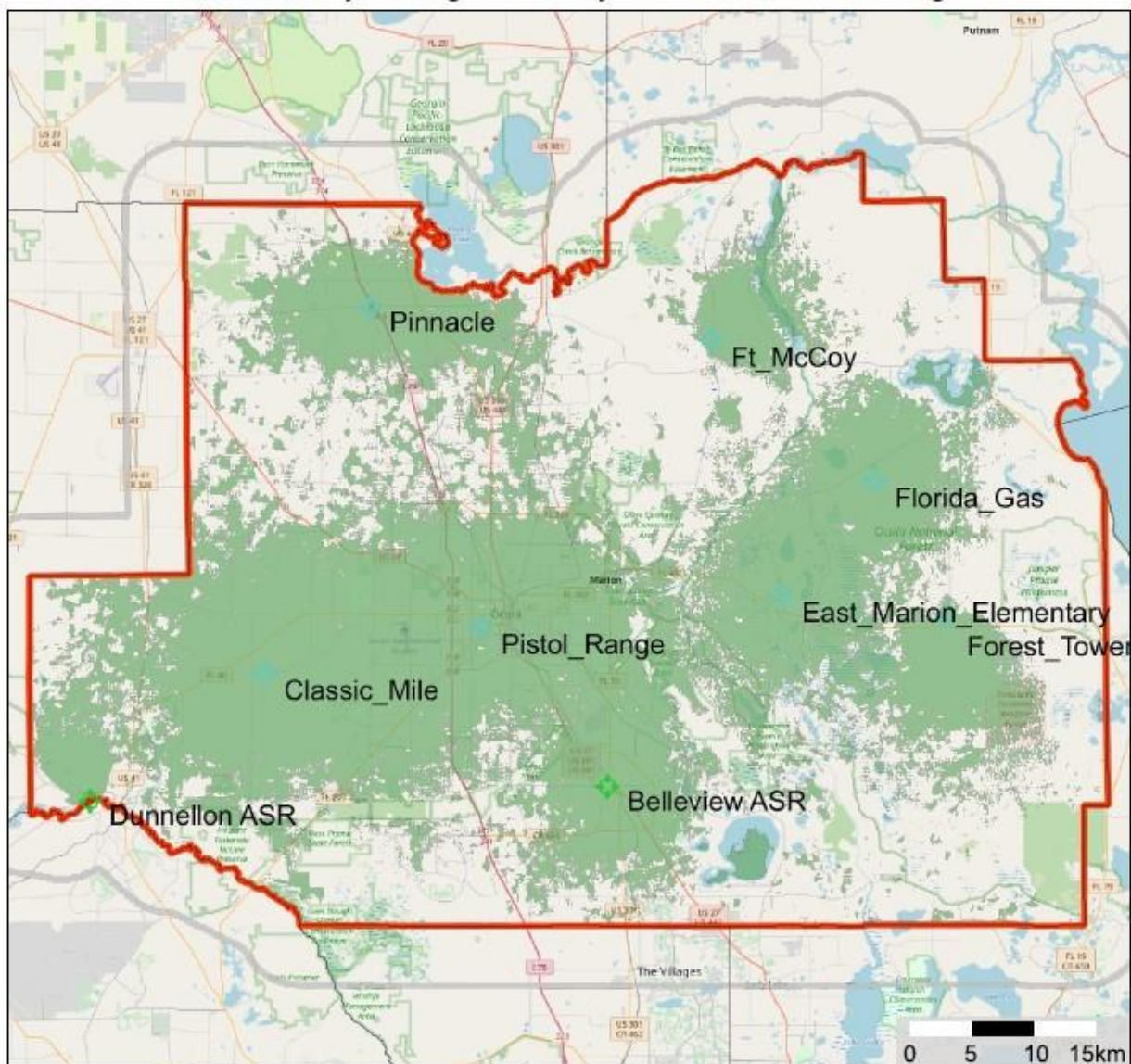


Figure 2: Proposed Radio Tower Sites

Numbered ovals indicate the proposed sites for additional radio tower sites situated such that radio system *areas of concern* are addressed by improving both street-level and in-building coverage for deputies, firefighters, paramedics, and all other users of the Marion County radio system to receive and transmit communications with their county-issued portable radios. The order and final radio tower site locations will be subject to change based upon a detailed engineering study of the radio system, frequency and volume of incidents, and feedback solicited from the public safety agencies.



MOTOROLA

Marion County Existing Astro 25 System RSM in 10dB Buildings

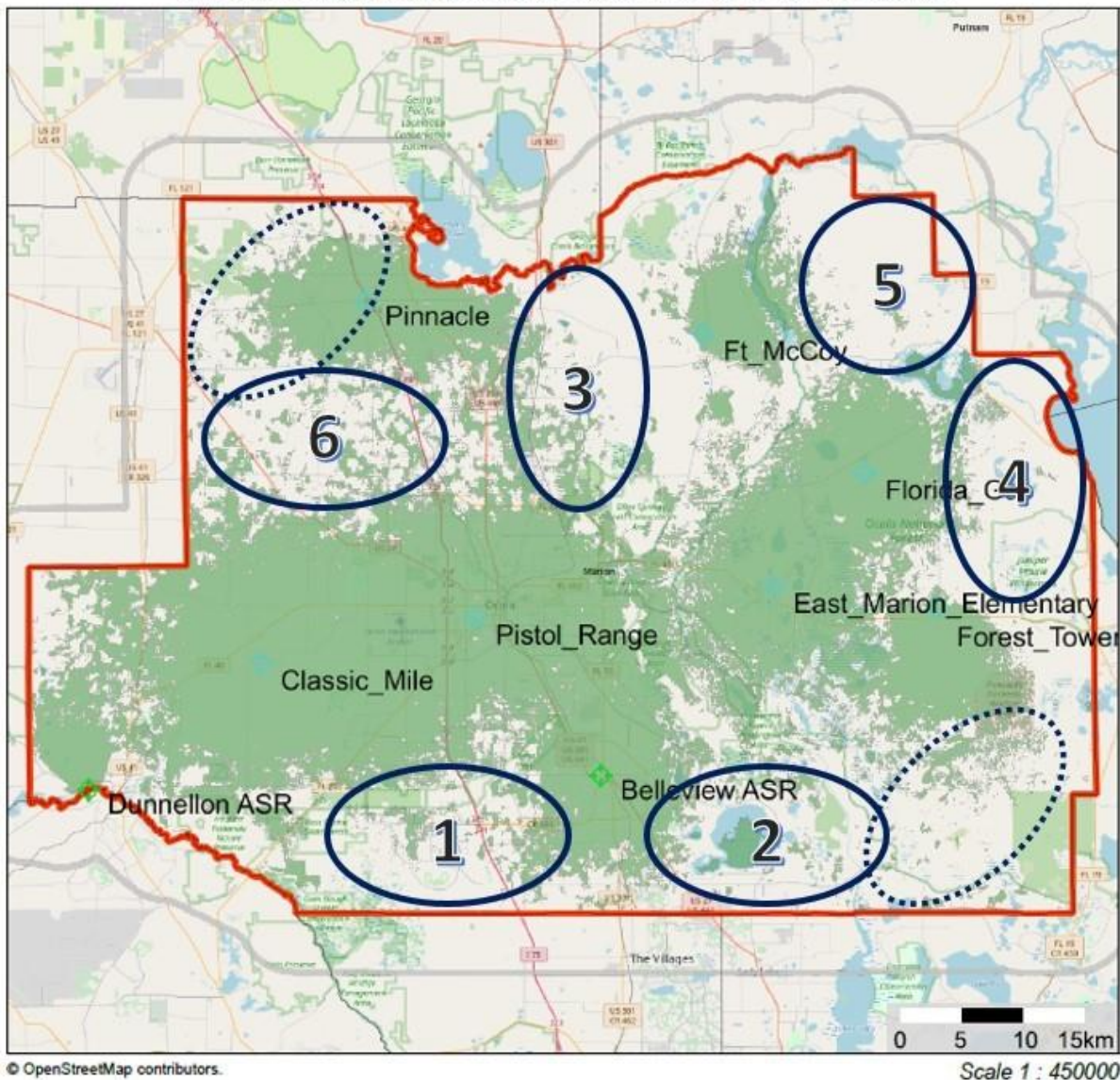


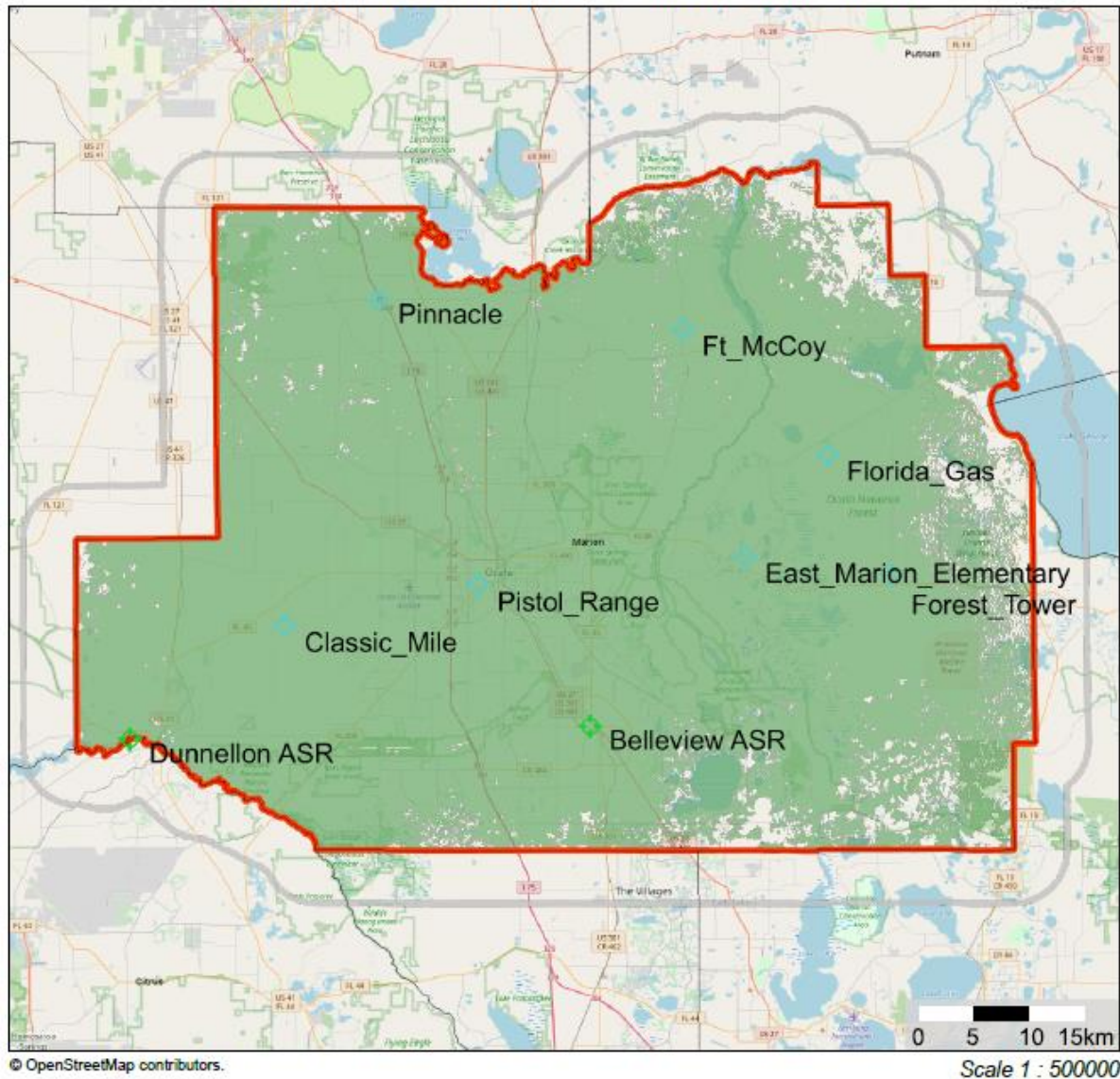
Figure 3: Street Level Portable Coverage

The projected street-level portable radio coverage is shown in the map, which will be accompanied by improved coverage inside of buildings and in developing and developed areas with commercial and residential structures.



MOTOROLA

Marion County Existing Astro 25 System RSM on Street



Legend

95% Area inbound BER 402m APX6000
POS

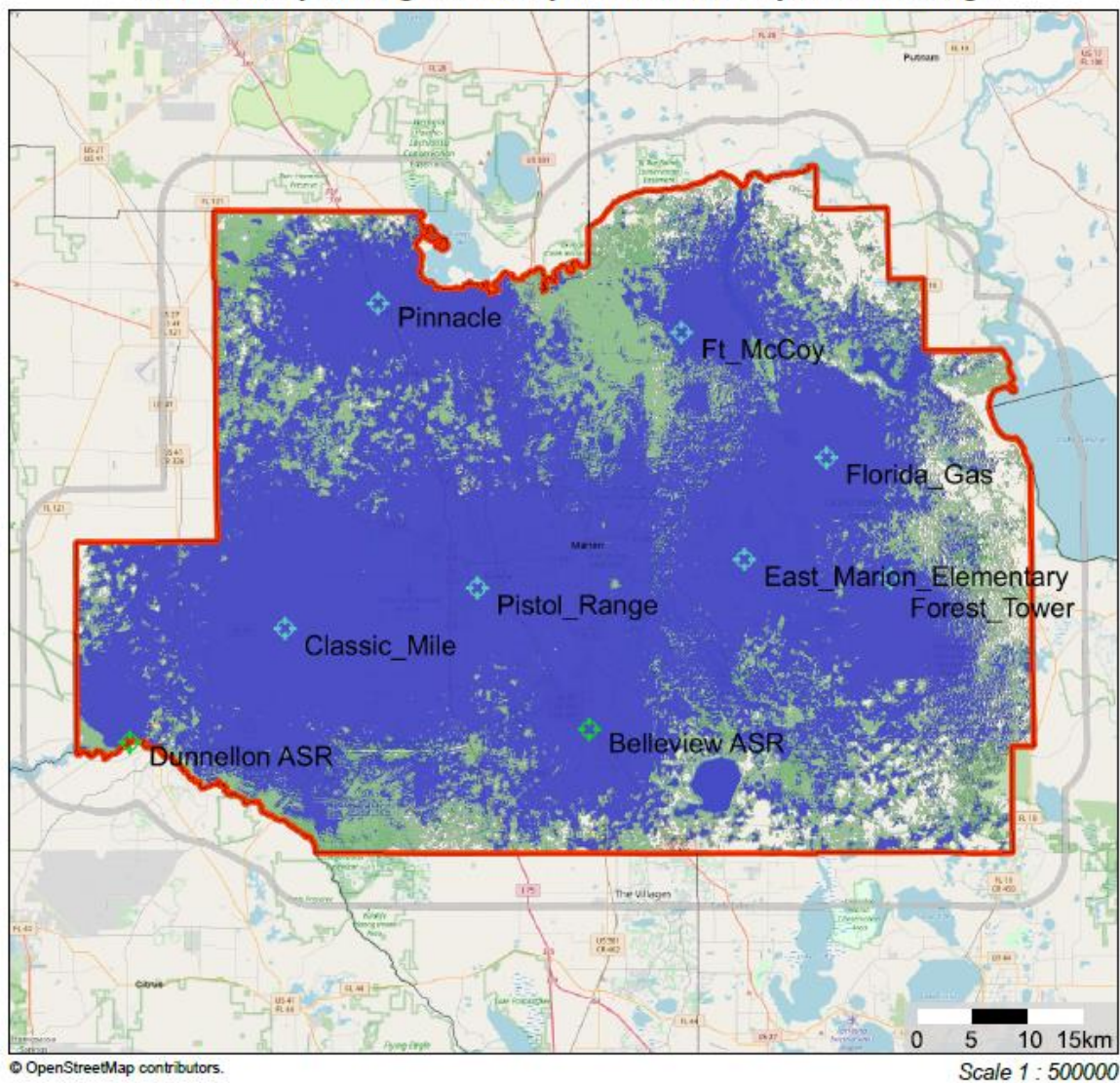
Figure 4: Light In-building Portable Coverage

Current map of the Marion County radio system portable coverage with an overlay in blue to indicate the ability of the radio signal to penetrate light buildings (e.g., a single-family home) with an interference rating of 6 decibels (dB). DB-ratings are a measurement of the interference in a building that makes it more difficult to send and receive transmissions by radio. The higher the dB-rating of a building, the more difficult it is to communicate via radio when indoors.



MOTOROLA

Marion County Existing Astro 25 System RSM Overlay in 6dB Buildings



Legend

- 95% Area inbound BER 402m APX6000
6db BLDG
- 95% Area inbound BER 402m APX6000
POS

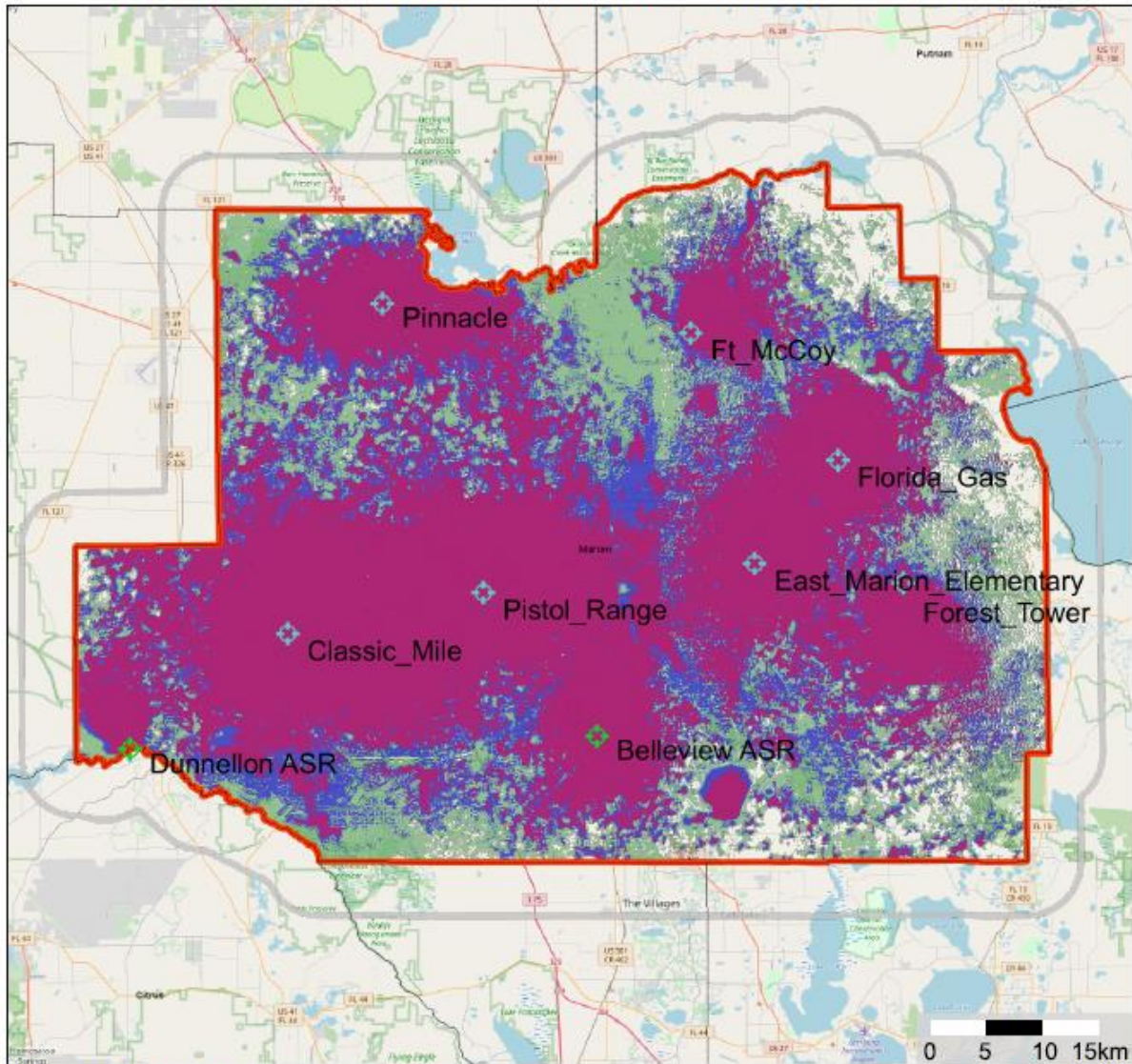
Figure 5: Heavy-Light In-Building Portable Coverage

Current map of the Marion County radio system portable coverage with an overlay in magenta to indicate the ability of the radio signal to penetrate heavier than light buildings (e.g. a Dollar General) with an interference rating of 10 decibels (dB).



MOTOROLA

Marion County Existing Astro 25 System RSM Overlay in 10dB Buildings



© OpenStreetMap contributors.

Scale 1 : 500000

Legend

- 95% Area inbound BER 402m APX6000
10db BLDG
- 95% Area inbound BER 402m APX6000
6db BLDG
- 95% Area inbound BER 402m APX6000
POS

Refurbishment and expansion of existing infrastructure

There are nine radio tower sites that are in need of refurbishment. We recommend a comprehensive assessment of the radio tower systems and a priority allocation of the tower sites, based upon the condition of legacy equipment and infrastructure, to determine the order of completion.

In order to refurbish these towers, we would need to replace weathered equipment and infrastructure that was part of the original 2007 P25 system. The complete refurbishment of this equipment would include the replacement of antenna(s), transmit and receive line, mounting hardware, tower top amplifiers, microwave transmitters and mutual aid equipment.

The nine (9) towers that are in need of upgrades and/or refurbishing include:

Pistol Range, Pinnacle, Florida Gas, Master Site, Forest Tower, Classic Mile, Dunnellon, Ft. McCoy, and Daystar.

Expansion of the radio system

With a focus on the evolution of Marion County's P25 radio system, the entirety of the field-based emergency communications infrastructure will be brought current. The radio system will then be brought from current to once again state-of-the-art and expanded by 66% to 15 total tower sites and full portable coverage. This expansion would significantly increase range, coverage area, operable versatility and compatibility with current and developing technologies for first responder safety in preparation for the county's continuous growth.

Whether in their vehicle or on foot with a portable radio, first responders will be secured through readily available communications provided on a system adapted to Marion County's continuing development. The system will also serve as a platform capable of hosting other assistive technologies, including real-time geo-tagging and tracking of units and their users when away from their vehicle, Wi-Fi connectivity to further augment the improved in-building functionality provided by upgrades to the system, and surplus tower space for future growth and expansion of installed technology.

This expansion will require the establishment of a committee with representatives from MCFR and MCSO to determine degrees of need, interest, and support for substantial enhancements to the Marion County radio system comprising achievement of 95% portable coverage area, range, and manner of end-user radio operation.

Additionally, we would collaborate with established service providers and vendor specialists, Motorola and Tri-Co respectively, to determine project timelines and implementation expenses for varying degrees of overall project scope. Specifically to determine tower construction or lease, in-building coverage by mobile or portable radio and building type (light, medium, high density).

The initial development plan for the expansion of the Marion County radio system would be broken into six key areas, five of which, (Marion Oaks, Kerr City, Weirsdale, Citra, and the Ocala National Forest) have histories of deficiency in radio coverage, quality, or both. Fixing these issues would vastly improve the overall system for end users.

In order to allow for this expansion, we would need to identify and secure options to construct tower sites on purchased, if not county-owned land or to lease space on existing towers based on the preference and direction of county administration. Once this is complete, we will begin construction of towers in the areas of deficit coverage in order of critical need first with the development of less critical area towers to be constructed at the rate of two per year over three years.

The overall cost of this undertaking is \$1.95 million – \$8.8 million based upon the interest of the public safety agencies, MCFR and MCSO, and direction of county administration regarding the six areas of coverage deficit. The approximate cost for the construction of a radio tower site is \$1.3 million. To construct six such sites would cost approximately \$8.8 million for the entire expansion. Equipping a leased tower space is approximately \$325 thousand. The total would be based upon the determined course of action.

Manage the increased demand for emergency services

| Task | Expected outcome | Lead department | Date | Cost |
|---|--|-----------------|-----------------------------------|--|
| Addition of resources to the fire stations | The ability to offer fire rescue services to a larger number of citizens in need is directly related to the number of resources available. | Fire Rescue | Annually until September 30, 2026 | Capital of \$1,115,000 and staffing of \$7,270,000 |
| Complete projection for new station location(s) based on growth and other factors. | A clear plan in place for the addition of new fire station location(s) due to the growth of the community. | Fire Rescue | September 30, 2023 | Approx. \$30,000 and other costs TBD |

As our community grows, the nature of the services needed are ever changing. Population density and characteristics play a part in the direction of those changes. Traditionally, public safety agencies served more of a response-only method of service in a reactive stance to the demands for service. In modern times, these agencies have realized the value to the community and its citizens by serving in more directly involved roles to prevent some of the demands for service from occurring on an emergent basis. Various initiatives encompass this change in roles.

Addition of resources

As Marion County Fire Rescue continues to respond to meet existing service demand, it must also look to the future and project the resources required to meet the increased demand for service.

The ability to determine these resources is multi-factor and includes call concurrency, workload, response time performance, etc.

We are proposing the following:

- Add an additional non-transport unit to Station 21, Station 10, Station 17, and Station 20.
- Add an additional transport unit to Station 1 zone, Station 11 zone, Station 17 zone, Station 20 zone and Station 22 zone.

Additionally in order to cover staffing concerns, we are looking to implement an on-call staffing program for single-certified transport units. On-call staff could be use as necessary to help with coverage and workload concerns.

Complete projection for new station location(s) based on growth and other factors

As we continue to grow as a community, our emergency services will need to keep up. Fire Rescue would conduct a station location analysis for potential new station(s). This analysis will look at the current locations, new population growth and distance in order to prepare for the future.

Community Paramedicine & Opioid Response

| Task | Expected outcome | Lead department | Date | Cost |
|---|--|-----------------|--------------|--|
| Promote access to community wellness resources | Reduce healthcare spending while improving the overall health of the residents of Marion County. | Fire Rescue | FY 2021-2025 | Included in \$250,000 being offset through community partnerships. Other costs TBD |
| Provide increased access to primary care resources | Reduce healthcare spending while improving the overall health of the residents of Marion County. | Fire Rescue | FY 2021-2025 | Included in \$250,000 being offset through community partnerships. Other costs TBD |
| Increase access to care for mental health and substance abuse | Reduce healthcare spending while improving the overall health of the residents of Marion County. | Fire Rescue | FY 2021-2025 | Included in \$250,000 being offset through community partnerships. Other costs TBD |
| Add additional Community Paramedicine resources based on system demand | Reduce healthcare spending while improving the overall health of the residents of Marion County. | Fire Rescue | FY 2022-2024 | Included in \$250,000 being offset through community partnerships. Other costs TBD |

Access to healthcare, particularly primary care services, is a growing concern within our community. Primary care providers are in short supply and the uninsured population is on the rise. As a result, there has been high utilization of 911 and emergency department services. A large portion of 911 services and subsequent emergency department (ED) visits fall into the category of avoidable use resulting from patients seeking non-urgent care or ED care for conditions that could have been treated and/or prevented by utilizing a primary care provider.

Marion County's Community Paramedicine approach, mission, and purpose is to reduce healthcare spending while improving the overall health of the residents of Marion County. The

Community Paramedicine program targets the uninsured and underinsured residents who currently lack access to primary care services, those residents who consistently use 911 services, and those who may seek readmission to the hospital post-discharge. The Community Paramedicine program provides services in line with the Marion County Fire Rescue mission statement: "To protect life and property with honor, compassion, and respect." The Community Paramedicine program provides patient-centric services such as alternative destinations, homeless outreach, public health collaboration, in-home patient assessments, fall assessments, readmission avoidance, and care coordination. All program initiatives are team-based, integrating multiple providers from both clinical and non-clinical roles to address all the unmet needs of our community's most vulnerable patients.

The "Access to Care" section and initiatives outlined in the Marion County Community Health Improvement Plan (CHIP) for 2020-2024 would need to be addressed. These include the following:

Promote access to community wellness resources

This would include:

- Delivering vaccinations to homebound citizens and those who cannot get to a vaccination site.
- Providing follow-up program management to reduce hospital readmissions.
- Addressing high system utilizers with reoccurring issues to achieve sustainable solutions for better quality of life and health care.
- Providing medication reconciliation for recently discharged patients.
- Developing and implementing educational tools within the community which will increase the cardiovascular health knowledge of Community Paramedicine patients and empower patients with hyperlipidemia and hypertension to better understand and manage their cardiovascular diseases.

Provide increased access to primary care resources

- Create a workflow option for 911 crews to electronically refer patients to the Community Paramedicine program. This will include clinical criteria for potential undiagnosed persons that have activated the 911 system. Criteria will be created using current evidence-based guidelines that alert the 911 provider to submit a referral to the Community Paramedic program for communication back to the patient for options to engage patient in care.
- Create a workflow option for 911 crews to electronically refer patients to the Community Paramedicine program. This development will connect patients with community resources and alternatives to emergency room and 911 services.

Increase access to care for mental health and substance abuse

This will entail the creation of a workflow option for 911 crews to electronically refer patients to the Community Paramedicine program regarding mental health treatment needs. This development will include clinical criteria for potential undiagnosed persons that have activated the 911 system. Criteria will be created using current evidence-based guidelines that alert the 911 provider to submit a referral to the Community Paramedic program for communication back to the patient for options to address access to care issues.

Add additional Community Paramedicine resources based on system demand

We will conduct demand usage analysis of Community Paramedicine resources. Then establish geographical divisions for offering Community Paramedicine services. Then develop trigger points for adding additional resources. Then implement additional Community Paramedicine resources as demand dictates.

Overall, The ability to offer program services to a larger number of citizens in need is directly related to the number of resources available. This initiative will provide the metrics and data analysis needed to determine the need for additional resources to meet this demand.

Increase Animal Services' ability to provide services

| Task | Expected outcome | Lead department | Date | Cost |
|--|--|-----------------|-------------------|--|
| Ensure adequate staffing levels | Have appropriate staffing levels at the shelter to ensure public safety and assist the community. | Animal Services | FY 2021–FY 2024 | Current cost of an animal control dispatcher is \$55,000, an animal control officer is \$115,000, and an animal care technician is \$42,000. |
| Rehabilitate the animal shelter | Improve shelter safety, animal living conditions, provide more space for veterinarians to perform necessary surgeries. | Animal Services | FY 2021 – FY 2023 | The rehabilitation of the Animal Shelter cost TBD based on sales tax. |

Marion County Animal Services exists to ensure public safety and animal welfare by addressing a wide variety of animal control issues. These include dangerous animal scenarios such as bites, attacks and safety concerns; animal welfare concerns such as stray, injured, abandoned or neglected animals and animal cruelty investigations; and nuisance concerns. Overall, animal

related public safety concerns have increased significantly over the last decade to include an increase of over 200% in bites alone. Dangerous dogs are an increasingly serious and widespread threat to citizen safety and welfare, with unprovoked attacks causing injury to persons and domestic animals. Animal control officers investigate, educate, and ensure the public safety and the welfare of pets in our community through the enforcement of state/local laws and regulations. The Animal Center provides a facility to monitor and quarantine dangerous and bite dogs as well as to provide care and rehabilitation to sick animals and victims of cruelty needing long-term care during litigation.

Ensure adequate staffing levels

With the increase in animal-related complaints, we must increase staffing in order to provide adequate public safety. The goal is to add a dispatcher and animal control officers. The dispatcher will assist with the high volume of incoming calls, increasing customer service and officer efficiency. Additional officers will improve overall response times and greatly improve coverage provided in municipalities where, previously, limited services were provided due to interlocal agreements.

The addition of the following key positions within the Animal Services Department would assist in keeping up with the growth of the community:

- Animal Control Dispatchers will assist with the high volume of incoming calls, provide better customer services and increase efficiency of animal control officers.
- Animal Control Officers will increase response times and compensate for the volume of cases per capita.
- Animal Care Technicians will improve the standard level of care of our Animal Center and maintain the capacity to care, increasing the live release rate (LRR).

Rehabilitate the animal shelter

The Shelter Rehabilitation project will meet and exceed many of the recommendations of the University of Florida. Some of the changes include sound abatement, an isolation kennel wing, a high-volume spay and neuter clinic, an office dedicated to animal control dispatch, workstations for staff, and additional parking and lobby rehabilitation.

The completion of this project would help improve safety in animal living conditions and staff work environment by completing a kennel sound abatement, which will reduce the noise in our kennels. Additionally, the construction of an isolation kennel wing would assist with the decrease in transmission of communicable diseases and provide a safe location to house animals that pose a risk to public safety. Furthermore, the rehabilitation of the Animal Center would give proper space for veterinarians to perform surgeries in an effort to ensure more community animals are spayed / neutered and decreasing abandoned, stray and unwanted animals and transmission of diseases in our community.

Public Safety Equipment

| Task | Expected outcome | Lead department | Date | Cost |
|---|---|-----------------|-----------------------|--|
| Maintain a schedule of emergency vehicle replacement and refurbishment | Increase the safety and reliability of the emergency vehicle fleet to ensure rapid delivery of service to citizens. | Fire Rescue | Ongoing, FY 2021-2025 | Varies on specific items purchased. Estimated \$2.5 Million. |
| Upgrade Fire and EMS equipment | Enhances the ability of fire units to provide lifesaving and fire suppression functions with modern tools and equipment, which increases the effectiveness of fire personnel in delivering service to the citizens. | Fire Rescue | Ongoing, FY 2021-2025 | Medication control box upgrade – Approx. \$190,000. Other items to be included in surtax purchases as equipped during the proposed schedule. Estimated at \$3.5 million. |

The ability to deliver high levels of fire and emergency medical services (EMS) is dependent on several factors including infrastructure needs, emergency vehicles, and fire and EMS equipment. Having appropriate and strategically located stations helps to ensure delivery of service to areas in the most efficient time possible. Having adequate station sizes ensures the facility is able to accommodate the expanding crew size and fleet needed to meet the growing service needs of the community. Emergency vehicles are one of the core needs of emergency services. These emergency vehicles deliver first responders and their lifesaving tools and equipment to the emergency scene and transport patients to the hospital for definitive care. Maintaining a modern fleet of apparatus helps ensure the ability to consistently and efficiently deliver this service. Lastly are the tools and equipment used. The equipment used in the public safety environment provides first responders with the ability to deliver lifesaving and fire rescue services. The highly specialized tools and equipment used must be maintained and upgraded regularly in order to adapt processes to maximize service delivery and to keep up with the intense demands of their use. These strategic planning goals seek to ensure that each of these aspects are strengthened and that the highest levels of emergency service are delivered to our citizens.

Analyze the need for additional apparatuses

Maintaining a regular replacement program increases the safety and reliability of the emergency vehicle fleet to ensure rapid delivery of service to citizens. Adding new emergency vehicles including additional rescues, aerial devices, and other support vehicles ensures the needs of the growing and changing demographics of Marion County are met.

Items currently needed include:

- An additional aerial device
- An additional heavy rescue
- A replacement training trailer

Upgrade Fire & EMS Equipment

Fire and EMS tools and equipment are highly specialized and are used under demanding conditions, often limiting their useable life. Furthermore, the technology used in many devices changes regularly, particularly in emergency medicine, as the ability to deliver prehospital care continues to evolve. The new technology and improvement in equipment enhances the ability to deliver emergency medical care and fire rescue services at the highest levels to the citizens.

In order to continue to provide the utmost care to our citizens, we are looking to upgrade medical control boxes within our EMS equipment, add specialized rapid intervention ladders to rescues to enable rescue companies access to buildings through first-floor windows for search and rescue, and replacing vehicle mounted radio repeaters to provide enhanced radio communications. The addition of a 2-foot hose suppression apparatus and the upgrade of vehicle extrication equipment and other needs will also need to be determined.

Fire Rescue Needs

| Task | Expected outcome | Lead department | Date | Cost |
|-----------------------------------|---|-----------------|-------------------|---|
| Station and facility needs | With the addition of this infrastructure, we will better meet the needs of our rapidly growing organization and community. | Fire Rescue | FY 2021- FY 2024 | Expenditures are currently projected in the proposed one-cent infrastructure sales surtax project expenditure schedule. |
| Obtain MCFR accreditation | With the addition of the accreditation, we will be seen as a more community-focused, data-driven, outcome-focused, strategic-minded, well organized, properly equipped, and properly staffed and trained. Accreditation is an international recognition of achievement. Additionally our community will see that the agency is continually self-assessing, looking for opportunities for improvement, and is transparent and accountable through third party verification and validation. | Fire Rescue | FY 2025 – FY 2026 | Travel costs, approx.. \$6,000 for the on-site assessment and \$1,500 for the team leader's travel to the CFAI hearing. Once accredited, annual fee will be 1/5th of the current applicant agency fee for the population that is served. For Marion County, the fee would be \$9,900. |

In order to continue to provide excellent service to our citizens, Marion County will need additional infrastructure to meet the needs of a rapidly growing organization and to provide adequate space for equipment and staffing needs, while ensuring the locations of fire and EMS stations are strategically located to provide the highest level of service delivery.

Station and facility needs

In order to meet these demands, we need to provide stations and facilities that serve the citizens through strategic placement and ensure our facilities meet the growing demands of equipment and staffing needed to deliver excellent service.

In order to do this, we would like to:

- Strategically relocate and build Ocala Central EMS station to serve downtown and eastern city areas.
- Rebuild Citra Station 2 to provide an enhanced facility.
- Locate a strategically placed site and build a new EMS station that will serve the southwest Ocala area.
- Relocate and rebuild Reddick Station 11 to provide an enhanced facility.
- Rebuild Orange Lake Station 9.
- Remodel Marion Oaks Station 24 to add capacity to the current station.
- Identify, acquire property, and design a new fire station.
- Build a shared, state-of-the-art training facility to provide for highly trained and skilled first responders.

MCFR Accreditation

In addition to these infrastructure needs, Marion County Fire Rescue's goal is to work towards achieving and maintaining accreditation in order ensure this continuation of providing excellent customer service. This includes providing greater community alignment, encouraging quality improvement, facilitating input from and building positive relationships with labor as well as identifying areas of strengths and weaknesses. Additionally it will allow for establishment of a plan for improvement, provide for data supported decision-making, communication of management and leadership philosophies, and ensure MCFR has a defined mission and related objectives, and encouraging the development of organizational procedural documents.

In order to complete accreditation through the Center for Public Safety Excellence (CPSE), Inc. and the Commission on Fire Accreditation International (CFAI) we will need to:

- Complete application and ensure accreditation manager has completed the required training.
- Ensure current systems have capability of collecting and reporting the data and managing the records and policies outlined within the CFAI model.
- Initiate accreditation process in FY 2022/2023.

In doing this, we hope to obtain a higher level of credibility in our community. Accredited agencies are often described as being community-focused, data-driven, outcome-focused, strategic-minded, well organized, properly equipped, and properly staffed and trained.

Accreditation is an international recognition of achievement. It shows to your community that your agency continually self-assesses, looks for opportunities for improvement, and is transparent and accountable through third party verification and validation.

Budget Impact: \$585 for three years of registered agency status. If our agency becomes an applicant agency within one year of becoming a registered agency, CPSE will apply the \$585 towards the applicant agency fee. The applicant agency fee is \$9,900 for our population. There is no specific fee for candidate agency status; however, our agency is responsible for the travel costs of the peer assessors that conduct our onsite assessment as well as the travel costs for the peer team leader to present our agency's accreditation report during a CFAI public hearing. It is recommended that agencies budget approximately \$6,000 for the on-site assessment and \$1,500 for the team leader's travel to the CFAI hearing. Once accredited, the agency will be invoiced an annual fee that is 1/5th of the current applicant agency fee for the population that is served. For Marion County, the fee would be \$9,900.

These projects provide needed infrastructure to meet the needs of a rapidly growing organization and provide adequate space for equipment and staffing needs, while ensuring the locations of fire and EMS stations are strategically located to provide the highest level of service delivery.

Budget Impact: For station and facility needs, expenditures are currently projected in the proposed one-cent infrastructure sales surtax project expenditure schedule. \$585 for three years of registered agency status. If our agency becomes an applicant agency within one year of becoming a registered agency, CPSE will apply the \$585 towards the applicant agency fee. The applicant agency fee is \$9,900 for our population. There is no specific fee for candidate agency status; however, our agency is responsible for the travel costs of the peer assessors that conduct our onsite assessment as well as the travel costs for the peer team leader to present our agency's accreditation report during a CFAI public hearing. It is recommended that agencies budget approximately

Public Safety Regulations

| Task | Expected outcome | Lead department | Date | Cost |
|--|---|-------------------------------|--|--|
| Voluntary Sprinkler System Installation | Increase public knowledge of fire sprinkler systems and the life safety and property conservation benefits of their installation. | Fire Rescue & Building Safety | FY 2021-FY 2023 and continuous for some items. | Staff time, travel, and per diem as required for conferences and meetings. Cost of any media relations materials once developed. Associated FTE costs for the public education assistant. Other costs TBD. |
| Institute and incentives program | Increase public knowledge of fire sprinkler systems and the life safety and property conservation benefits of their installation. | Fire Rescue & Building Safety | FY 2021 and continuous | Varies depending on board action on incentives offered and other funding sources. |

Many regulations exist in the form of codes, standards, and local ordinances in order to provide for the safety and welfare of the public. Public safety is the primary mission of many different departments as Marion County works collectively to provide for the common good of the community. Each department works with many public and private stakeholders in order to achieve this task. Specifically, Marion County Fire Rescue and Marion County Building Safety work in conjunction with one another in order to ensure public safety. By statute, Marion County Fire Rescue must adopt the Florida Fire Prevention Code as the minimum fire and life safety standards in the jurisdiction. The Florida Fire Prevention Code is developed from national codes and standards written and developed by the National Fire Protection Association (NFPA). NFPA creates and publishes the codes and standards used in jurisdictions across the nation. Similarly, Marion County Building Safety derives its code application regulations from the Florida Building Code. The Florida Building Code is based on the International Building Code and developed in

similar fashion as NFPA. Although each department is tasked with its mission from federal, state, and local regulations, public safety is top priority.

As the local authority, jurisdictions can create local regulations that address local specific hazards or concerns. The local regulations are commonly referred to as ordinances or local codes used to enhance the state codes. Local codes can be made to strengthen state codes but can never reduce the requirements of state codes in their effectiveness or enforcement. Adoption of local codes is critical to mitigate any potential local life safety concerns and to continue to provide for a safe community.

Voluntary Sprinkler System Installation

Mandatory installation of sprinkler systems is regulated by state and national codes based on building size, use, and occupancy. Buildings are required to install fire sprinklers and other life safety systems in order to comply with code regulations and provide occupant safety. An opportunity exists to encourage building owners to install fire sprinkler systems in buildings that may not specifically be required to install fire sprinklers per code. Sprinkler systems are designed to contain a fire to a smaller portion of the building and reduce damage and out of service times. Fire Rescue and Building Safety have seen success stories in the past when a fire sprinkler was activated in a fire and saved a large portion of the building. Businesses have less down time and are able to reopen faster with built-in fire sprinkler protection. A potential incentive to consider is reduction in permit fees and potential savings on the first year of assessments.

In order for this program to be successful, we will need to:

- Provide education to the new public education position through formal educational classes at the Florida State Fire College. The public educator must be knowledgeable of fire sprinkler systems and be able to accurately disseminate information to the public. Classes include but are not limited to Private Fire Protection Systems I, Private Fire Protection Systems II, and Fire Prevention Practices.
- Collaborate and meet with other Florida fire departments and municipalities who have established a voluntary sprinkler program. Learn from their implementation, successes, and challenges.
- Participate and attend the annual Fire and Life Safety Educator's conference in order to network with other professional fire and life safety educators in the state of Florida. Conference is held in June of each year with professional fire and life safety educators from across the state of Florida.
- Establish networking contacts and develop partnerships with different industry associations to gain information and support for the fire sprinkler program. Some of the industry partners would include the Florida Fire Sprinkler Association, Safety Coalitions, Marion County Building Industry Association, Community Services, National Fire Protection Association, and others.

- Initiate and develop a public education campaign to provide information about the effectiveness and benefits of fire sprinkler systems. Development would be in cooperation with other Marion County stakeholders in order to provide for a consistent message.
- Begin public education efforts and modify as necessary to educate the public on fire sprinkler systems. Mediums would include billboards, community meetings, professional meetings, and marketing materials.
- Recruit and hire a fire public education assistant to assist with this initiative and others. Public education is responsible for developing an all hazards approach. This will be one of many efforts tasked within the public education position.
- Increase staff knowledge and provide for the ability to educate the public about fire sprinkler systems and their effectiveness. Reduce fire-related injuries and fatalities and reduce property loss with an effective program.

Institute and incentives program

In order to further incentivize building owners to install fire sprinkler systems that go above and beyond building codes we would like to offer a financial reward. In order to do this we will need to:

- Identify and gain board approval for the exemption of permit and inspection fees for the voluntary installation of fire sprinkler systems.
- Collaborate and collaborate with internal Marion County stakeholders in the permit and inspection process to coordinate the waiver of fees for identified projects.
- Collaborate with Marion County Utilities to waive connection fees to encourage voluntary installation of fire sprinkler systems. Explore the possibility to extend the program to other private utility providers and gain support for waiver of fees.
- Partner with local insurance representatives to determine the cost savings for insurance premiums in buildings protected by fire sprinkler systems. Develop materials to educate the public on premium savings extended throughout the life of the building. Inclusion of cost escalation to account for inflation and cost increases with the project adds to the financial savings.
- Research and develop materials highlighting the potential tax savings for fire sprinkler system installation. Continuously monitor tax incentives offered and provide education as needed.
- Identify and research any grant opportunities for the voluntary installation of fire sprinkler systems. Consider with board approval matching grant funding or providing for an exemption of the interim fire assessments charged during the permit application process.

Alternative Firefighting Water Supplies

| Task | Expected outcome | Lead department | Date | Cost |
|---|---|--|--------------------|---|
| Establish policies and procedures for areas which do not contain municipal water for fire protection | Provide fire department water sources in the rural areas which require longer response times due to population density. Improve firefighting capabilities and reduce loss with access to dedicated water sources in designated areas. | Fire Rescue & Building Safety and MSTU | September 30, 2022 | Staff time and other costs TBD. |
| To establish a funding mechanism to address water supply in established areas without fire protection or municipal water mains | Obtain board approval to establish a fund for the creation of installing fire protection tanks in areas not served by municipal water mains. | Fire Rescue, Building Safety & OCE | September 30, 2022 | Staff time and other costs TBD depending on Board action and other funding sources. |

Many areas of Marion County do not have a central water supply or system for fire protection needs. One method that has been used for many years is the installation of fire protection storage tanks in rural areas. Even with this requirement, providing for fire protection in certain areas can be challenging with a lack of central water lines. Likewise the current economic conditions have created an opportunity for many landowners to divide their properties into smaller portions.

Establish policies and procedures for areas which do not contain municipal water for fire protection

The division of land assists with marketing of the property and may maximize sales with the reduction in property size. In addition, the reduction in size of the land allows the property to become more affordable. In many rural areas, a 100 acre farm containing minimal buildings can be divided into 10 separate home sites. This increases the potential for fire service needs in the rural area which does not have a reliable fire department water supply. Consideration should be made on establishing the maximum number of lots a property can be divided into prior to providing for fire department water supply.

In order to effectively establish policies and procedures for areas, the following will need to take place:

- Based on direction from the board, establish the maximum number of lots which can be created prior to the requirements for fire department water supply.
- Collaborate with the MSTU director to determine the feasibility of establishing a MSBU for fire protection tanks in rural areas. Potential to create MSBU in order to cover the installation and ongoing maintenance costs of fire protection tanks.
- Modify the Marion County Land Development Code to reflect the board adopted maximum division of land. Provide for public education and workshops with stakeholders in order to educate on new policies.

Establish a funding mechanism to address water supply in established areas without fire protection or municipal water mains

In order for this funding mechanism to happen, the following needs to occur:

- Obtain board approval to establish a fund for the creation of installing fire protection tanks in areas not served by municipal water mains
- Collaborate with other internal department stakeholders who have established funding sources such as sidewalks and tree mitigation efforts. Determine the feasibility and collection of these fees with the other internal stakeholders and legal.
- Locate and identify potential Marion County owned sites for tank location placement to increase water supply in the rural areas.
- Collaborate with industry stakeholders and provide education and information on the need for fire protection resources.
- Identify and research any potential grant funding opportunities from state or federal partners for fire department water supply in rural areas.
- Provide for fire protection in remote areas and provide for a funding mechanism to assist with associated costs.