

"Pioneering the Future"

***Marietta City Comprehensive Plan – Report Card to the Community
May 15, 2013***



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Background

The Development Advisory Board (DAB) was created in January 2002 by the City of Marietta to prepare a City Comprehensive Plan as one of the stipulations of the Moratorium on the Construction or Continued Construction of the City of Marietta Municipal Building, passed by the community on November 6, 2001. This moratorium reads:

Concerned electors of the City of Marietta, whose signatures are attached hereto, endorse and support, through this Initiative Petition, the placement of a moratorium measure on the ballot of the November 6, 2001 General Election. The initiative, if adopted by the electors of the City of Marietta, would require the City of Marietta, through its elected administrative and legislative representatives, to place a moratorium on the construction or further construction of a Municipal Building for a period of twenty-four (24) months from the date the results of General Election are certified by the Board of Elections. The moratorium would require, and allow adequate time for, elected officials and community representatives to complete work on a Comprehensive Plan for the City of Marietta to include: (1) the evaluation of several sites and the selection of an appropriate site for the proposed Municipal Building Complex; (2) the provision for adequate parking for said Complex; (3) an evaluation of and provision for adequate space, including expansion space, for the Police and Fire Departments; (4) an evaluation of the space requirements of the Municipal Court; and (5) a provision for both internal and external expansion space for the Complex and each of its components. While the Moratorium only applies to the construction of the Municipal Building, it would allow sufficient time to consider and resolve, through the Comprehensive Plan process, other issues which directly impact on or are directly impacted by the proposed construction of a Municipal Building including: (1) the resolution of the use of the Armory Property; (2) the resolution of issues related to the Smith Trust Fund; (3) the construction of a municipal swimming pool; (4) the construction of a recreation center; and (5) the construction of a multi-tiered parking garage on the site of the Parking Partners parking lot.

The Report Card

Eleven years have past since the Marietta City Comprehensive Plan was presented to the community on October 1, 2003. The plan was adopted by the City Planning Commission in November of 2003 as the City's Master Plan. By statute (ORC 705.04), it is the vision and long-range planning tool for the City of Marietta.

The purpose of this document is to create a "report card" of the plan to see how much of each recommendation(s) made in the nine (9) focus areas have been completed. The Development Advisory Board (DAB) chose a percent (%) complete metric as we felt it would be easier for elected officials, community leaders, this board and the general public to understand. We also tried to include a rationale for each recommendation in the report card that addresses each recommendation made in the original plan. We had to take in consideration this

plan was created over 10 years ago and some items needed to be reviewed for their relevance today. Most of what we found still had a significant foundation for general long range planning and comprehensive thinking to the current challenges facing the City.

For reference, we left the original vision statement, narrative and recommendations in this report. The original 2003 report is in standard type, the 2013 Report Card findings are indented and italicized. Our Report Card findings and score are listed after each recommendation as “Report Card” and “% Complete.” The Vision Statement was created in the original Plan for what the Community was to look like or be 20 years from that date (2003). The original plan is still active and is on the City’s website in PDF format at: http://www.mariettaoh.net/site_pages/government/community_development/forms/City%20Comprehensive%20Plan%2010-1-03.pdf It contains the original Community Assets, Issues of Concern, Core Values and Vision Statement for each of the nine (9) focus areas. We omitted the first three of those here for efficiency of this report.

Challenges to the City

In the future the City may have to decide what kind of City it wants to be, including its size. In 1980, the population of Marietta was 16,467 (1980 Census). As of the last Census data (2010), the population is now approximately 14,072. This equates to a loss of over 17% (2395 residents) of the City’s population in a thirty year period. The City is not growing and the City’s population is aging. Economic opportunity for younger folks continues to be a challenge for the area in general. 100 years ago 80% of the nation’s population lived in rural areas. Now over 80% of the nation’s population lives in large urban areas inclusive of a magnitude of education, recreation, economic, and job and career growth opportunities.

But the overall living experience is very different in the City of Marietta. Marietta is neither a rural area, nor a large urban area. We like to think of it as “small town” America. There is a lot to be said for living in a small City. Of places to live on a national level, the cost of living index for Marietta is 90.1 with an average of the United States being equal to 100. As far as the Mid-Ohio Valley goes, Marietta continues to be the preferred place to live, work and play.

Still, challenges for the area remain to be the lack of robust economic activity to retain young and upward adults, high cancer rates and the overall air quality issues that remain in the Mid-Ohio Valley.

Acknowledgements

We would like to acknowledge the help and support that we received from many

City employees and individuals in the community: Mayor Joe Matthews, Safety Service Director Jonathan Hupp, Development Director Andy Coleman and his valued colleague Lisa Forshey. We want to thank our first City liaison, Cheyenne Oaks for her assistance and continued feedback of the information we were seeking.

We also wish to thank all the members of the various other City Departments who took time to help in developing this Report Card to the Community. We also thank our media partners the Marietta Times, the Anchor and WTAP-TV for providing generous press space and media time so that we could communicate our work and efforts to the Marietta Community.

BUSINESS AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

Vision Statement

Careful management and innovative expansion of our community resources will sustain and advance our local economy. The community offers unique opportunities to draw talented people, new ideas and business ventures. There are programs and qualified agencies in place designed to implement the economic growth of the area in terms of business, recreation, education and general quality of life. Economic development sustains the vitality of the business community in harmony with the continued high quality of life of the community.

Narrative and Recommendations

There has been positive change in the economic outlook for Marietta in recent years. Considerable investment has been made in the appearance of the downtown business areas on both sides of the river with removal of power lines, installation of new sidewalks and curbs, and planting of trees. Local business organizations such as the Marietta Area Merchants Association, Historic Harmar Bridge Company and Friends of Front Street sponsor activities such as Merchants and Artists Nights, Outdoor Living Days and Red White and Bluefest that attract people to the downtown area. Local business associations have funded decorative flower planters that line the streets, and the 2003 Telesis class is starting a 'Bridge of Flowers' project to enhance the historic train bridge. The city periphery has attracted national chain outlets (such as Lowes and WalMart), significantly adding to the retail sales within the city. Indeed, a recent study of Marietta and the surrounding area found that "Based on this initial retail market analysis, Marietta's local economy is found to be healthy and robust" (Irwin and Reece, 2002). The recent establishment of a Foreign Trade Zone and Port Authority should help advance regional commerce.

Washington County's tourism-based economy has fluctuated in recent years (Rovelstad & Associates and Longwoods International Economic Impact Study, 2000-2001). Achieving sustainable growth will require strengthening the market niche of the downtown business district. Large outlet stores along the city perimeter will likely

retail most of the convenience goods in the Marietta region, whereas the downtown business area will continue to be based largely upon tourism and retail of specialty items.

As astutely noted in the retail market analysis, “These two aspects of the retail economy support each other. Economic development efforts should continue to support both these (sic) parts of the retail economy and not sacrifice one for the other” (Irwin and Reece, 2002). Promotion of the downtown business district will require initiatives that strategically build upon the strengths already present in the community, and to a large degree this means historic preservation.

Preserving core qualities of the community also means that the Marietta community should not sacrifice quality-of-life for indiscriminate economic growth. Economic development should be planned so that newly developed areas of the city reflect existing city qualities. This will help promote development of new, clean industry and living wage employment opportunities. Yet, Marietta’s economic projections cannot be based on the assumption that major new employment opportunities will arrive to save us. It is important to recognize also that while area heavy industry and utilities are significant suppliers of jobs, their emission-intensive operations impact water and air quality creating an economic liability for the area.

Ultimately, the Marietta community’s long-term economic prospects are linked to all the focus areas of this comprehensive plan. The Community cannot take an insular view of cause and effect. The community relies upon historic qualities to promote tourism; therefore, it is clear that long-term viability of this economy will be linked to historic preservation. Successful economic competition in the 21st century also requires understanding and acting upon the connections between economic development and other city/community qualities, such as availability of modern transportation and public healthcare systems, dependability of city infrastructure, caliber of the local school systems, and environmental quality. These are important considerations that businesses will consider when deciding whether to locate or expand in this area. Perceived inadequacies in any of these other focus areas detract from opportunities for long-term community economic growth.

Finally, it is of interest to note that fundamentally, the recommendations for economic development of this plan resemble those put forth almost 20 years ago in a contracted Downtown Development Strategy (Woolpert Consultants, 1984). While some of the recommendations of this report such as improving the overall image of the downtown have been acted upon, most have not. Many of the same issues that existed in the early 1980s continue today, as do the opportunities for their resolution.

Our recommendations are for the City to:

- Establish a board that will have principal responsibility for marketing and promoting regional commerce opportunities. It is necessary that commercial development opportunities be vigorously promoted in the Marietta area. Currently there is no coherent strategy by which this occurs. It is essential that some agency or organization, possibly

the Chamber of Commerce assume this responsibility. Some of the ways in which this agency or organization could promote economic development include:

- 1) Maintaining an inventory of available commercial real-estate, commercial incentive programs, community development standards, and other information of value to prospective new businesses;

Report Card:

As far as a maintaining an inventory of available commercial real-estate, the Chamber of Commerce and the Port Authority have both tried to advertise a comprehensive list of vacant rentals and local real estate agents also maintain a list however, no central listing. The city does conduct a bi-annual inventory of business in the Central Business District but not for public use and it is used for CBD grant purposes.

0% Complete

- 2) Marketing of economic Business and Economic Development opportunities,

Report Card:

Currently we have a few entities that are working to promote Business and Economic Development opportunities in our region, those include: The Southeast Ohio Port Authority, Marietta Area Chamber of Commerce, Small Business Development Center, City of Marietta, and ReSTORE Marietta (downtown specific). Also the Good Life Marietta (goodlifemarietta.com initiative. Good Life Marietta was launched to showcase Marietta, Ohio as a desirable place for small town living.

Issues

1. *Seems to be no 'one-stop shop.'*
2. *Many of the sites are not update/kept current*
3. *Many of the entities are a membership organizations, meaning you cannot have your opportunity listed unless you pay to play.*
4. *No real consensus on whose responsibility it is*

50% Complete

- 3) Working with local educational institutions to provide educational opportunities for local business owners and workforce training,

Report Card:

The Principal Board still does not exist, but this information is available.

0% Complete.

Ohio Department of Job and family services has website links to all workforce development programs and other services including, Ohio education resources for workers in transition, workers with disabilities, worker investment act (WIA), green jobs, on the job training programs and many more.

The Washington State Workforce Development program seeks to match industry needs with the training and education programs available at Washington State Community College. The programs are work force development continuing education, one year certificate and the two-year associate's degrees that include the business, medical and industrial fields. Some two-year transfer programs are also available for those seeking a four-year degree and other state education facilities.

The links to the websites are listed below and we recommend the City add these to their website under the economic development or similar workforce development section.

<http://jfs.ohio.gov/owd/index.stm>

<http://www.wsc.edu/campus-a-community/workforce-development.html>

<http://www.wsc.edu/programs-and-certificates.html>

4) Establishing benchmarks and goals through which economic status of this region can be compared that of other communities,

Report Card:

0% Complete

5) Helping to secure capital financing for business startups. This agency or organization should work in close concert with the Washington County Economic Development Office.

Report Card:

The Principal Board still does not exist, but this information is available.

0% complete.

Economic Development – City Website

http://www.mariettaoh.net/about/economic_development

Capital Financing for Business Start-Ups:

*-Buckeye Hills-Hocking Valley Regional Development District
*Revolving Loan Fund
Contact: Tina Meunier, 1400 Pike St., Marietta, OH 45750,
(740) 376-1033*

*-Appalachian Regional Entrepreneurship Group (AREG) at Ohio
University Voinovich School of Leadership
*Business Services help companies obtain the financial and human
resources needed to implement plans.
Contact: Lynn Gellermann, The Ridges Building 21, Athens,
OH 45701, (740) 597- 1722*

*-TechGROWTH Ohio
*Connects entrepreneurs with assistance. TechGROWTH offers
valuable tools for growth and sources of funding to all early-stage,
technologically-innovative companies.
Contact: 20 E. Circle Dr., Athens, OH 45701, (877) 476-9681*

*-US Small Business Administration (SBA)
* Several small business loan programs (7(a) most common).
www.sba.gov (800) 827-5722*

*-Adena Ventures
*Provides equity capital and operational assistance to high-growth
businesses in Appalachia.
Contact: 20 East Circle Dr., Suite 143, Athens, OH 45701, (740) 597-
1470*

*-Small Business Development Center (SBDC)
*Loan packaging program
Contact: Pamela Lankford, 308 Front St., Marietta, OH 45750,
(740) 373-5150*

• Strengthen the ties between the historic business districts on the East and West sides of the Muskingum River. Business districts on the east and west sides of the Muskingum River must strengthen their ties. A larger central business district is economically stronger than a smaller district, particularly for a tourism-based economy. It is, therefore, reasonable to expect that Front St./Putnam St and Harmar business districts will advance or decline together. The greatest opportunity for strengthening this linkage lies in the Harmar Railroad Bridge, which represents the single most direct conduit across the river. This bridge can be a major tourist attraction and offers the single most practical avenue for extending the bike path across the river. The recent work of Telesis to demonstrate the ‘Bridge of Flowers’ concept is encouraging; however, major investment will be necessary for the city to see all the benefits a fully restored bridge could provide. Two recent studies have assessed the condition of the bridge potential costs of restoration (Collins, 2001; Lock One Inc, 2001), and the more pessimistic assessment suggests restoration costs of over one million dollars. This is an attainable goal and the community should

support and facilitate all efforts by the nonprofit Historic Harmar Bridge Company to secure funding. Secondly, downtown business associations should become more united in the promotion of downtown economic development. While multiple organizations within the same community are not inherently bad, they become counter-productive when parochial interests obscure and obstruct cooperation. The economic vitality of the downtown business district will succeed or crumble as a whole.

Report Card:

1) Repairs to the pedestrian bridge were complete in May 2008. In 2010, The City of Marietta submitted a Letter of Intent to apply for Transportation Enhancement Funds to extend the River Trail across the bridge. That funding request was denied. There is no immediate plan to seek funds to extend River Trail across the bridge. There been some good efforts made to restore the bridge and the City should pursue its restoration to be a functional bridge for pedestrian and bicycle traffic. It remains a great asset to tie the east and west historic business districts together for future economic growth in the City as a whole.

15% Complete

2) For the second part of this recommendation, the Harmar Merchants Association, the Marietta Area Merchants Association (MAMA) and the Friends of Front Street have all gone under the ReStore organization.

100% Complete

- Establish a Historic Central Business District. The Community must accept fully that preservation of the historic character of the downtown business district is the key to its long-term community economic survival. To this end, Marietta should demarcate and promote a Historic Central Business District, as have other cities that draw heavily upon tourism. Such a District would describe, protect, and promote development and architecture that will support this economic imperative, and an ambience that is attractive to patrons of the business district.

Report Card:

Areas of Marietta and certain properties within are listed on the National Register of Historic Places through the National Park Service. The National Register of Historic Places is a tool for recognizing historic places worth preservation. Properties on or within areas on the Historic Register and receive public assistance must go through a Section 106 Environmental Review before alterations can commence. The work to have areas of Marietta included in the Register was done in the 1970's by a group of Marietta College students and Nancy Hoy.

The Historic District boundaries are as follows (waiting on maps from Ohio Historic Preservation Office, the following descriptions are approximate):

Marietta Historic District – Roughly bounded by Marion, Montgomery, Ohio, Greene, Butler, 2nd through 9th Streets, and Ohio and Muskingum Rivers.

Harmar Historic District – Roughly bounded by Lancaster, Harmar, Putnam and Franklin Streets, and the Ohio River, Fort Harmar Dr. and the Muskingum River.

The City of Marietta does not have an historic preservation ordinance. City Council must pass an historic preservation ordinance in order to protect the historical character and integrity of our Central Business District.

0% Complete.

- Promote development and activities that bring people to the downtown business area. The city promotes economic strength by giving people reasons to come to the downtown business district. The presence of a theater (progress toward the restoration of the Colony Theater is a positive step), restaurants, and services will spin-off retail activity. However, to promote tourism and casual shopping, incentives should be created that encourage development of retail stores on the first floor of downtown commercial properties. Strong business areas encompass residential housing and do not lead to its destruction or exclusion; thus, the city should revise zoning laws and Business and Economic Development create incentives to foster residential housing in and near business districts. However, all development in the downtown area should foster the historic character of the area.

Report Card:

Community Reinvestment Area (CRA)

The City of Marietta utilizes Community Reinvestment Area (CRA) legislation as a tool for economic development. The CRA program allows eligible property owners who renovate their properties to take advantage of a property tax exemption. The following is the maximum exemption and term as taken from Resolution 31 (08-09):

Within the Community Reinvestment Area, the percentage of the tax exemption on the increase in the assessed valuation resulting from improvements to commercial and industrial real property and the term of those exemptions shall be negotiated on a case-by-case basis in advance of construction or remodeling occurring according to the rules outlined in Ohio Revised Code Section 3765.67. The results of the negotiation as approved by City Council will be set forth in writing in a Community Reinvestment Area Agreement as outlined in Ohio Revised Code Section 3765.671. For residential property, a tax exemption on one hundred percent (100%) of the increase in the assessed valuation resulting from improvements as described in Ohio Revised Code Section 3735.67 shall be

granted upon proper application by the property owner and certification thereof by the designated Housing Office for the following periods. Residential applications must be filed with the Housing Officer no later than six months after construction completion.

- (a) Ten (10) years, for the remodeling of dwellings containing not more than two housing units and upon which the cost of remodeling is at least \$2,500, as described in Ohio Revised Code 3735.67*
- (b) Up to twelve (12) years for existing commercial and industrial facilities as negotiated on a case-by-case basis in advance of construction or remodeling occurring.*
- (c) Up to fifteen (15) years for new commercial and industrial facilities as negotiated on a case-by-case basis in advance of construction occurring.*

Any commercial real property exemptions of 50% or greater will have to be approved by the Marietta City Schools BOE.

95% Complete.

- Address parking issues for the downtown business area. The city cannot continue to tear down buildings for parking, and must plan now for future parking needs. Two issues should be addressed:

Zoning ordinances that currently couple parking space requirements to business square footage need to be revised. Current parking requirement for new businesses need to be based on the actual business needs.

Report Card:

The City should review Ordinance 1103.07 (Off-Street Parking) and further update this section of the code. Some of the code was last updated in 1988-1989 and some of code was updated in 2001. The main issue being for example, if a loft or second floor of a downtown building wants to be developed for business purposes, the code specifies the square footage of the business must have certain number of parking spaces. We recommend the City benchmark with other Communities that rely on “types” of business activities as related to required parking spaces. Some businesses may not need or generate any parking impact to the downtown, but still want to operate downtown.

The recourse is to go to the Planning Commission and get a variance to the current code. As stated before in the Plan, the City should update the code so this action can be avoided. Only true exceptions or special cases (true variance) should be placed in front of the Planning Commission for consideration. Also as stated in the earlier Plan, variances should be seldom brought to the Planning

Commission if various codes are up to date. It's simply not the role of the Planning Commission to meet only to consider variances.

10% Complete.

. Begin to plan now for future parking expansion. We do not advocate for building of a parking garage at Parking Partners because it would not be an aesthetic improvement and is not the most convenient location. We believe that the alley space between Front and Second Streets and Putnam and Butler streets affords the better location for parking expansion. A parking garage established in this site would serve the greatest sector of the downtown business community, particularly the parking-deprived Putnam Street area, and while having the least impact of the character of the district itself. We would hope that local business owners, who benefit most directly, could facilitate this plan with reasonable accommodations. The city should contract a feasibility study for such a plan.

Report Card:

Since the last report, the City has gained additional parking for downtown just north of the Putnam Street Bridge, at the Second and Butler Street location, and more space is available in the City lot that used to serve the Becky Thatcher, which is now gone from the downtown. The main City lot, Parking Partners, currently has 190 spaces. 125 are currently rented, which is capacity for rentals, and 65 are public spots. There are 35 spaces available north of the Putnam Street Bridge. The Second and Butler Street location contains 68 parking spaces. South and west of the Armory, there are a total of 82 spaces available for public parking adjacent to Front Street. In all, 250 spaces are available for free public parking in the downtown area from the 4 lots listed above. This does not take into account all the parking available on the public street system in the downtown area. One problem still remains is that business employees continue to parking on the street and in cases in front of retail businesses where off-street employee parking has been provided.

Given the current economic conditions in the region plus the fact that the parking problem appears to be perceived in the downtown area, the Board advises the City not to advance this section for completion. We do however, recommend the City look at a short range goal of developing a comprehensive informational signing strategy for public parking in the downtown area, similar to other tourist destination communities design for their downtown areas.

Do not advance garage recommendation.

EDUCATION

Vision Statement

Educational opportunities and achievement in Marietta are widely recognized and attract people and businesses to the area. The school system receives adequate financial support through state and local sources. The public school system educational programs prepare students of all abilities to make contributions to their communities through subsequent college, vocational or other training opportunities. There is a close relationship between the public school system and the local institutions of higher education.

Narrative and Recommendations

The Marietta area is well endowed with educational opportunities. Within the community are institutions that serve traditional post-secondary, vocational, and continuing educational needs. These institutions afford diverse career- and job-training opportunities, fostering an important foundation for future economic development. Through booster clubs and other volunteer activities, the public school system has received wide support from the community. The Marietta City School system, like many in the state, has suffered financial strains in recent years. The problems have arisen from a variety of causes, including recent cutbacks in state funding, changes in the commercial inventory tax code, regional demographic trends, students taking advantage of new educational options such as PSEO, and the City's use of tax incentives. Some of these factors lie outside the immediate control of the community, some within. Thus, long-term planning for improvements to the community educational system can and should involve broad community discussion.

The community has much to be proud of in its public school system, and has shown support in the last decade repeatedly with the passage of school levies and bond issues, Partners in Education Program, and volunteer involvement. In particular, these efforts have helped build exceptional extra-curricular programs and meet basic facilities maintenance needs. The PSEO and Open Enrollment programs are a mixed blessing, providing new educational opportunities for students but creating added financial burdens for the school system. Curricular changes have yielded better academic performance in recent years although there is still much room for improvement. The Marietta School System is currently rated by the State under Continuous Improvement (Ohio Department of Education, 2003a), meeting 9 of 27 indicators (the rating system includes five categories: Excellent, Effective, Continuous Improvement, Academic Watch, and Academic Emergency). All of the public school systems in Washington County are also rated at continuous improvement, and among the ten school systems across the state that are most similar to Marietta, six are rated as Continuous Improvement (three are rated at effective and one at excellent). Statewide for the 2002–2003 academic years, 35% of school districts received effective or excellent ratings and (Ohio Department of Education, 2003b). The state mandated three-year Continuous Improvement Plan (Marietta City School District, 2000-2001) should help the community improve its rating.

The Marietta City Board of Education is to be commended for taking decisive actions in response to short-term financial imperatives. While the recent school closings and financial cutbacks have helped the school system meet immediate budgetary shortfalls, long-term issues remain to be resolved. One of the most important issues will be the fate of the remaining neighborhood elementary schools. In this regard, the community must weigh the importance to community character of maintaining the remaining neighborhood elementary schools. We perceive this to be a community core value, but only the community can act in a way that makes it so. There are other pressing financial needs in the school system as well, including technology upgrades and maintenance, which cannot be ignored. Since the area is not likely to receive an external funding windfall anytime in the foreseeable future, the community will need to bear more of the financial burden of the school system if the long-term goals are to be met.

The School Board has begun to implement a Five-Year Plan (Marietta City School District, 2003) that begins to address the challenges confronting the district. The plan and its rationale were presented to the community at a public meeting earlier this year. It should be noted that there have been dissenting opinions from the public concerning the availability of information and opportunities for public involvement in the planning process.

Financing of education and economic development are intimately linked, and the community must plan strategically and have ordinances to protect tax revenues needed by public school system. For example; for lack of land development ordinances, the City unnecessarily sacrificed tax revenues during the recent Lowes development project. In applying TIF to the Lowes development, potential revenue for the school system was diverted for uses that should have been financed by the developer, there was collateral loss of tax revenue with the consequential closing of Wolohans, while relatively few high-salary jobs were brought to the area.

Our recommendations are for the City to:

- Reduce or eliminate tax incentives for retail and commercial store development. There is a place for tax incentives; however, economic benefit to the community is far greater from industrial development than retail and commercial outlets, and tax incentives for retail development may yield diminishing returns. Land-use development ordinances should include requirements of developers to finance infrastructure upgrades so that tax revenues are not diverted through use of TIFs.

Report Card:

Tax incentives are still being offered, but are not being used in a significant way by retail and commercial establishments. The most recent use was for the new Fairfield Inn and was the first one in a few years. The school board is finding that existing retail establishments i.e. Lowe's, Walgreen's, CVS are using a contractor to challenge the valuation of their properties so that their property tax

burden will be decreased. The MCS Board has hired a firm to fight these devaluations.

0% Complete

- Support future levies and bond issues for the public school system. Current political and economic trends suggest that additional funding for the public school system will have to come primarily from local sources. While residents who do not currently have children in the school system often feel that they have little to gain from tax dollars there invested, the quality of the educational system is one of the Education most important foundations upon which economic growth of the community is built, and the benefits of a strong school system extend broadly throughout the community.

Report Card:

A new operating levy was passed in the spring of 2011, and a renewal levy was passed in the spring of 2012.

75% Complete

- Become more involved in long-term planning for the public school system. For a chronically under-funded school system, public participation in the planning process is the single most effective means of fostering community support. Community members should attend School Board meetings and public presentations, but understand that difficult financial challenges have necessitated changes in the operations of the local school system. Citizens must be open to and respect the difficult decisions that school officials must make to resolve these problems. We encourage the school officials to make more readily available to the public the Five-Year Plan, Continuous Improvement Plan and other supporting information. The school system might post this information on the Web, as do other communities, or make it available in the public library. School Officials should also invite public involvement in the planning process. Marietta has a strong history of public involvement, and this, with effective leadership, could be rallied to help the community achieve long-term goals.

Report Card:

Work still to be done on this issue, but the school system in the past few years has implemented a program called 'Building Bridges to the Future', which provides the school systems with feedback from local employers and other Appalachian school systems to structure curriculum to meet needs of local employers and prepare students for post-secondary education. This feedback was instrumental in the addition of Chinese as a language option for high school students and an addition of a mandatory career readiness class for sophomores.

35% Complete

<http://www.mariettacityschools.k12.oh.us/BuildingBridges.aspx>

HISTORICAL PERSPECTIVES

Vision Statement

Marietta is the nationally recognized gateway to the history of the Northwest Territories. The Historic Business District supports a thriving tourism industry and is the hub of community activity through restaurants, theatre, casual walking, and shopping. The historic quality spreads outward through the residential neighborhoods along brick streets lined with trees and homes with a strong historic demeanor. The historic character of the community survives through restoration of historic structures, protection of historic areas, as well as historically appropriate new construction.

Narrative and Recommendations

Historic character is unlike any other quality of a community. Whereas modernization is a desired goal in all other areas of community structure, from city services and infrastructure to health care services and transportation, historic character resides in the preservation of something that already exists. The economic gain from historic character to a community like Marietta far exceeds the aggregate market value of individual structures—it is more than the sum of the parts—yet, the market value of each individual structure grows with historic preservation in the surrounding neighborhood. Furthermore, unlike other community qualities, once lost, historic character cannot be replaced by new construction.

Marietta is the guardian of a history important at state and national levels. We were the first settlement in the Northwest Territories and a connector in the Underground Railroad. Campus Martius, prehistoric earthworks and numerous historic houses, structures, and monuments are among the legacies in which we take pride. Marietta has few assets comparable in value to its historic character, and over the last several decades this has obtained elevated importance to the area's economy (Rovelstad & Associates and Longwoods International, 2000-2001) and to citizens' perception of quality of life. A promotional ad for Marietta reads: "Marietta –Where Ohio's History Resides" (Marietta, Washington County Convention & Visitors Bureau, 2003). Certainly historic character is the single most important attraction for tourism.

A community will always have its history, but possibly not the tangible manifestation of that history. Indeed this is what many other communities have already lost. In recent years a variety of programs have helped improve Marietta's appearance, including removal of utility lines in the downtown business district, installation of historic-looking street lamps, the Paint Marietta and Façade Improvement programs, and a policy of brick streets protection. These are important and valuable efforts; however, improving the appearance of a community is different than preserving architectural heritage. The recent reinventory of the Marietta Historic District showed that some areas (e.g., Marietta's South Side and the Cisler Terrace district) no longer qualified for historic designation (Hoy, 2001). Overall, the historic character of the community deteriorated in the last several decades as historic buildings were razed and architecturally inappropriate

renovation and new construction proliferated. Loss of historic architecture can potentially undermine Marietta's tourism industry, the specialized economic 'niche' of the downtown business area, and the sense of distinctiveness that citizens feel for living in the community.

The historic quality that brings people and business to the city does not emanate from any single structure or neighborhood, but rather in the ambience of the whole, and its preservation will require businesses and homeowners to make significant investments in the restoration of historic structures. This will only happen if the property owners have confidence that historic preservation of the surrounding community will afford long-term return on these investments. Thus, a supportive community policy can act as a catalyst for historic preservation. Marietta can only gain by preservation of its historic character and has much to lose with its erosion.

We perceive two key aspects of Marietta History that warrant attention. One is publicly owned historic monuments for which a system of oversight and maintenance is needed to avoid crisis-driven reactivity such as that currently spurring efforts to arrest deterioration of the Gutzon Borgum Start Westward monument. Preservation of privately owned historic buildings also will be important. Over 2,300 communities have established historic districts and 75% of these have design guidelines (Fine and Lindberg, 2003).

Historic preservation guidelines currently exist in FEMA guidelines and the Community Action restoration program, and there currently is much interest among citizens for expanded protection. This will require careful planning to balance individual property rights and the community common-good; since many other communities have resolved such issues, we believe that Marietta can do so also.

Our recommendations are for the City to:

- Establish Historic Preservation Legislation. The three primary goals of historic preservation should be to: 1) decrease the potential for unnecessary destruction of historic buildings, 2) assure that renovation of historic homes is architecturally appropriate for the surrounding area, and 3) assure that new construction is architecturally appropriate for the surrounding area. Restraining the conversion of single-resident homes for multi-occupancy is another issue that might be considered. Marietta should consider all mechanisms that further these goals, including revised zoning ordinances, public education, incentive programs, and historic preservation legislation that applies to the exterior of buildings in the designated historic districts. The Proposed Historic Preservation Ordinance (Hoy, 1999) previously submitted for adoption deserves reconsideration by City Council.

Report Card:

One attempt was made to approve Historic Preservation Legislation in 2005-2006. No attempts have been since that time.

10% Complete.

- Apply for participation in the Certified Local Government Program. The CLG program (National Park Service and The National Conference of State Historic Preservation Officers, 2000) provides support and guidance for communities to preserve their unique historic character. Funding from the CLG program can provide incentives for historic preservation and act as seed money for securing larger grants. Participation in this program requires that the City have acceptable historic preservation legislation.

Report Card:

There has been discussion in the City whether to join or not, but no action has been taken at this time. The City must first pass Historic Preservation Legislation to apply for CLG status.

1% Complete.

- Create a Historic Monuments Commission. Marietta is home to many historically significant monuments, including earthworks, sculptures, and memorials (Marietta Historic District, 2001). These monuments are an important reflection of the City's heritage and deserve appropriate preservation to prevent deterioration like that which affected the Start Westward monument. This could be achieved by formation of a City Commission of concerned citizens who would establish a proactive monitoring and maintaining monuments on public property.

Report Card:

A Board was trying to form and the City is interested in developing this commission. The current Administration developed an inventory of the monuments, all with a criteria rating.

5% Complete.

- Support Colony Theatre renovation. The efforts, planning and progress-to-date achieved by the Hippodrome/Colony Historical Theatre Association are commendable (Bentz, C.H., and Associates, Inc., 2002). The community and City Administration should provide all possible support for the efforts to restore the colony theatre, which can serve as an important catalyst for economic growth in the downtown area.

Report Card:

The City of Marietta began supporting the Colony Theater renovation financially in 2005 with allocations from the Community Development Block Grant. The City has committed \$140,000.00 to the project to date (ADA restrooms and sidewalks). The City also supports the Colony theater project through the granting of

Ordinance variances where feasible as well as development through grant assistance and support. Most recently Peoples Bank entered into an agreement with the Hippodrome/Colony Theater Association for naming rights to the theater in exchange for a \$250,000 donation – the largest single private donation to the restoration efforts.

50% Complete.

- Set a deadline for deciding the best use for the Armory building and lot. While we support in principle restoration of the Armory on Front St., the community cannot wait indefinitely for a viable use for this structure to develop. The Citizens Armory Preservation Society (CAPS) is to be commended for its efforts to prevent hasty razing of this building and find potential uses for it (Project Bullseye, 2000); however, the city needs to set a deadline for presentation of a qualified business plan, and in the interim develop several alternative uses for the site with cost estimates.

Report Card:

While there has been great effort to rehabilitate the Armory Building from a physical sense, there is still no qualified business plan available and a deadline was not set for the best use of the Armory building and lot. We did find that an attempt was made to produce a business plan, but we did not find the data to be complete at this time. These two recommendations were to be made to address the incomplete planning process of the proposed project before any construction phase work was to be considered. It appears the City has approached and moved forward with this recommendation in reverse order as the City continues to search for a viable use for the building, regardless of the condition of the funding mechanisms that may or may not be available.

5% complete.

INFRASTRUCTURE AND SERVICES

Vision Statement

Marietta is a vibrant, well-maintained city. Citizens and businesses understand the importance of vital city services and provide sufficient financial support through taxes to maintain and modernize these systems. City government reciprocates through careful planning and anticipation of city service needs. The results are city buildings that reflect the historic context of the city while meeting the service needs of the current century, and modern municipal utilities designed to meet current and projected needs. Land-use planning ensures that municipal services are adequate to support new development.

Narrative and Recommendations

City infrastructure and services are essential to a functional community. Citizens are particularly sensitive to the quality of city infrastructure as a particularly visible usage of tax dollars. City infrastructure must also, and increasingly, meet the expectation and mandates of external agencies. Thus, the city has important obligations in overseeing city-managed infrastructure (e.g., municipal buildings, water treatment facilities, street and parks, etc.), and ‘people’ services (e.g., Administrative offices, Engineering, Health Department, Police and fire protection, etc). With a few exceptions, the infrastructure of Marietta is reasonably sound, and current and previous city officials are to be applauded or effectively running the City. City employees are to be particularly commended for the quality of service that they provide, sometimes with a bare minimum of resources. Recent progress includes upgrading of city information technology capabilities and contracting of an IT director.

Staffing and space requirements of city departments were projected in the facilities study for the proposed City Hall Complex (DLZ Ohio, Inc/Freeman White, 2001). However, the staffing requirements to effectively run certain departments have been underestimated, in particular the Engineering Department and the Lands, Buildings and Parks Department. The Engineering Department, with a staff of four, is often subject to unwarranted criticism as it endeavors to manage an ever-increasing workload of engineering projects, inspections and code enforcement. The Lands, Buildings and Parks Department, with a fulltime staff of only three, does not have the resources to adequately maintain city facilities (including parks, recreation equipment, and city buildings). This department also provides support for the Recreation Department in the maintenance of park recreation equipment (needs of the Recreation Department are addressed in the Recreation focus area).

The city municipal water system, drawing from seven production wells located in an aquifer near the Muskingum River, appears to have adequate capacity to meet current and projected future demand (Water Treatment and Distribution Dept, 2002). However, the wastewater facility often runs near capacity and is subject to serious system deterioration. Although a significant system overhaul has not occurred since 1987, a Facilities Master

Plan is currently under contract and should provide guidance for the next major overhaul of the system.

In light of broad community support and commitment toward building a new Justice Center (Gegner Architects, 2002; Gehlauf and Associates, 2003) several assumptions and conclusions of the City Hall Complex Facilities Study (2001) need reconsideration. Construction of a new Justice Center will free space in City Hall, making more feasible the renovation and use of existing buildings for other administrative offices. Increasing the staffing and developing new facilities for the Fire Department are issues that need resolution and are addressed under Public Health and Safety. Unfortunately, city buildings have not been adequately maintained—buildings maintenance is the only area of city infrastructure that does not have a five-year plan—compounding the challenges (and costs) of future renovation.

Our recommendations are for the City to:

- Build the proposed new Justice Center. A feasibility study (Gegner Architects, 2002) for a new Justice Center was completed in 2002. Focus Group discussions (Gehlauf and Associates, 2003) were conducted in 2003 to assess public sentiment. These discussions and other evidence indicate strong support within the community for the building of a new Justice Center. While building the Justice Center at Parking Partners does have some advantages, for several reasons the proposed site behind City Hall should be pursued. On one hand, construction at the Parking Partners site will cost significantly more and, from a comprehensive planning standpoint, the City must reserve fund raising potential for other projects (such as an indoor Recreation Center). The current proposal allows most of the construction cost to be borne by the Court system itself. Furthermore, the need for new court facilities is critical and the City can little afford to further delay the planning process. Planning and design of the new Justice Center should honor Community Core Values set forth in this plan. Every opportunity should be taken to share information and progress with the public and to invite public input. In the construction of this facility, the City should model the design standards the community should expect in other future developments, both public and private. The building should be architecturally appropriate for the community, reflecting a strong historic aspect. Every effort should be made to avoid demolishing houses for parking lot construction. Parking lots serving the facility should implement design standards advocated for in this plan, including adequate green buffer zones and internal green spaces.

Report Card:

After many studies and design proposals; the final decision was made to renovate and redesign the former Ohio Job Services building at Third and Butler Streets for use as the Justice Center. This project was completed and opened to the Public in the summer of 2012 with formal Dedication Ceremony on Nov. 30, 2012. The renovated facility is fully ADA Compliant and houses our Municipal

Court, Probation, Clerk of Courts, and Law Director's Offices. It was a good example of re-use of a vacant building in the downtown area.

100% Complete.

- Begin planning now for renovation of the city buildings at 301, 304, and 308 Putnam Street. In light of progress toward construction of a Justice Center, planning for renovation of existing city buildings should begin now. Unfortunately, this should require a new facilities study, for which the fundamental issue should be how to renovate space in the existing buildings to best meet the current and anticipated needs through 2025.

Report Card:

For 301 Putnam Street:

The City is currently under contract with Pickering Associates to provide preliminary design for renovations to 301 Putnam Street. Pickering Associates lead architect is Traci Stotts and we currently have schematic design plans for each floor that would allow for:

- *All Police Department personnel to be moved up out of the basement, which is in the 100 year flood plain.*
- *Mayor's Office including Service Director, Assistant Service Director and two secretaries all to be in the same general area they are currently located but reconfigured for more efficient work flow.*
- *Treasurer's Office to be relocated from 308 to the area that was occupied by Clerk of Courts and Law Director's Office.*
- *Auditor's Office, various Police Department personnel and Server Room all to be located on the 2nd Floor of 301.*

Preliminary Floor Plans also show a new Elevator near the door entrance along 3rd Street and the renovation would bring us into compliance with current ADA Accessibility Requirements. Preliminary plans and an engineer's Opinion of Probable Cost for these renovations should be completed by the end of February. The Scope of the project will include electrical, HVAC, roof repairs and restoration of masonry walls including addition of insulation where needed to make the building more energy efficient.

For 304 and 308 Putnam Street:

The City is planning to sell 308 Putnam Street and relocate personnel in those buildings to 301 and 304 Putnam Street. Lighting upgrade was completed in 2010 for 301 and 304 Putnam Street to advance from T12 to T8 fluorescent lights. Window replacement was also done in 301 Putnam St. and for 1st floor and 2nd floors only in 304 Putnam Street. No plans are underway at this time regarding additional renovations of 304 Putnam Street.

55% Complete.

Related issues that should be addressed include:

1) Developing a more coherent system of document archival. The city invests significant public funds in studies and reports that should remain readily accessible to city officials and the public. Paper still forms the major means of information archival for city operations in an increasingly 'electronic' world. Rather than using valuable office space for document storage, a centralized archive should be established, and digitization of some documents should be considered. A 'library' of contracted studies, planning documents, budgets, and other documents of potential public interest should be established. Document storage might be moved off site.

Report Card:

This recommendation has been underscored recently by two lawsuits that were filed against the City of Marietta regarding Public Records Requests. The Engineering Department purchased a Canon iPF Plotter/Scanner in 2011 and City personnel have started scanning paper copies of drawings from all departments including Water, Wastewater, Streets and Lands, Buildings & Parks to create electronic images of these documents. The City has investigated a comprehensive document management and archival system and received a proposal from one vendor, OnBase by Hyland Software. At this time however, the City is focused on implementation of implementation of new citywide financial software by New World Systems.

5% Complete.

2) Upgrading of administrative Information Technology. Digitally interconnected departments and email service should be standard.

Report Card:

All departments are now interconnected via e-mail and also have access to the City's GIS System which has been developed by combined efforts of the Engineering Department and IT Department.

100% Complete.

3) Addressing handicap accessibility deficiencies in city buildings. The city is over ten years delinquent in meeting handicap accessibility per ADA requirement, and this should be a priority issue.

Report Card:

One of the drivers for the recently completed Municipal Court Building was a Mandamus Law Suit filed by Butch Badgett forcing the City to move forward with upgrading the Municipal Court facilities to provide proper ADA accessibility. The new Municipal Court was designed and constructed in accordance with the Department of Justice's ADA Standards for Accessible Design (2010). The renovations for City Hall at 301 Putnam Street will be designed and constructed in accordance with this same standard including parking and ingress and egress to and from the building. Again, there are no current plans or work associated with renovation of 304 Putnam Street.

25% Complete.

- Perform a new administrative staffing analysis and address administrative staffing needs. The Lands, Buildings and Parks Department needs additional staffing--facilities cannot be adequately maintained if there is inadequate staffing, and preventative maintenance should be considered an essential part of the process. The expanded community services provided by the Engineering Department also indicates a need for additional staff. At the bare minimum, the Recreation Department should be allowed to fill the second fulltime position already promised; additional staffing is likely necessary to effectively run the aquatic center.

Report Card:

*There has been no recent administrative staffing analysis that was performed, however staffing levels and responsibilities have been adjusted in many departments since 2003. Since 2003, the City has engaged the Auditor of State to conduct a **Performance Audit which was completed and presented to the City on January 24, 2008.** This document provides a fairly complete analysis of organization and management, administrative staffing and compares Marietta's City Government to three peer cities for purposes of benchmarking. The Performance Audit also provides recommendations that should be considered and evaluated for further study and/or immediate implementation.*

50% Complete.

- Adopt an improved system for prioritizing infrastructure maintenance. The city needs a more effective system for identifying, prioritizing, and funding maintenance of city facilities. Anticipated maintenance and preventative maintenance should be identified and prioritized projected 5 to 10 years into the future. City facilities should not be allowed to deteriorate, as was case for the Jackson pool, without a plan for maintenance or replacement. Administrative Departments should adopt a standardized format for planning documents and common system for prioritizing needs, such as identifying proposals as essential, desirable, acceptable, deferrable (Daniels, Keller and Lapping, 1995) or some similar methodology. Planning documents should be made readily available to the public.

Report Card:

The City of Marietta adopted an improved system for prioritizing maintenance and paving of streets and alleys and has been in use since 2007. The system is a nationally recognized pavement management system developed by the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers called MicroPaver. Marietta has 87 miles of roads and alleys and these are inspected by an independent company, JG3 located in the Columbus, OH area every other year to determine the Pavement Condition Index rating for each street. An executive report is prepared and the City can monitor and evaluate if the average composite PCI rating for the entire City is improving or declining over time. Similar systems are being looked at for implementation for Building Maintenance, Wastewater Treatment Plant, Water Treatment Plant, Municipal Court, Marietta Aquatics Center, etc. The Engineering Department recently viewed a webinar from a vendor that would provide a web-based system called Facility Dude that would provide comprehensive city-wide facility maintenance software for an annual cost of \$2527.

50% Complete.

- *Modify the financing of city enterprise utilities (municipal water and wastewater systems) to allow long-term planning of maintenance and upgrading. These operations are funded through the fees charged to users. We believe that the fee schedule for these operations should provide sufficient funding to meet a schedule of anticipated maintenance and upgrading projected over a 20 year period. These systems should have an established plan for upgrading and not be allowed to deteriorate as has occurred for the wastewater treatment facility.*

Report Card:

Significant progress has been made with the execution of an Intergovernmental Agreement with Washington County Commissioners to take in outlying areas such as Devola, Oak Grove and Reno and provide treatment of sanitary sewer from these areas. This will ultimately increase revenues by approximately 11.7% which will help offset the cost of major upgrades to the waste water treatment plant. The costs of these upgrades are expected to exceed \$20,000,000.

The City has published a five year capital plan for the time frame 2012-2016. Enterprise Fund capital/infrastructural additions as well as those capital initiatives that attach to the Capital Improvement Fund are included in the plan. An updated five year planning exercise is currently underway which will cover the 2013-2017 planning horizon.

The City presently attempts to match financing sources with asset lives with the employ of various long term debt instruments to fund long lived infrastructure needs.

The maturity of the debt instrument is intended to be congruent with the useful operational life of the asset in question and the service requirements that attach to this debt are known in advance. Debt service costs are provided for in the

water and or sewer rate billing structure and since the debt is amortized over the life of the asset revenue streams generated by the asset provide for adequate capability for pay down and rate stability is promoted.

A twenty year planning horizon has not yet been attempted in the long range plan as the present vision does not yet extend that far into the future. The financing approach employed currently is forward looking and it aligns with the underlying assets income generation capabilities along with the fact that the water/sewer customer is paying for an asset in service rather than being asked to fund a future consideration which is not yet providing a benefit.

20% Complete.

- Contract for a study of the storm sewer system to assess its current condition and capacity now and for future needs. The location of much of the city on the floodplain creates special challenges to storm water discharge. There are several areas that are now particularly prone to flooding, even before the Ohio and Muskingum Rivers breach their banks. The potential for flooding is being accentuated in lower areas as new developments are raised above the 100 year floodplain level. Federal requirements will also soon place greater obligations on municipalities like Marietta to manage runoff water. It is time for Marietta to include this issue in its long-term planning agenda.

Report Card:

The Engineering Department has previously obtained proposals for a Comprehensive Storm Water Needs Analysis and included funding for this study in previous recommended Streets Budget only to have that line item cut out of the budget due to fiscal constraints. It is the opinion of the City Engineer that this is a very solid recommendation and needs to become a top priority for the City.

1% Complete.

Assets to be added in the Comprehensive Plan update for 2014.

Community Assets:

- GASB 34 is a required accounting of all City owned assets and should be included with our annual audits as a matter of Public Record. The list of Community Assets needs to be expanded to include new facilities such as the Marietta Aquatic Center and the new Municipal Court Building.
- Another community asset is our Public Right of Way. Our City does not currently have a Right of Way Ordinance and the purpose of a comprehensive Right of Way Ordinance to allow the City the means to be reimbursed for costs associated with managing this asset.

NATURAL ENVIRONMENT

Vision Statement

People are attracted to Marietta and the surrounding area by a high standard of environmental quality that sustains healthy human existence and wildlife. Marietta's understanding of the importance of a healthy human environment shows in its grass and tree-lined streets, abundant parks, and advocacy for the environmental health of the entire Mid-Ohio Valley. Marietta opposes uncontrolled sprawl, and recognizes that open space and greenways contribute to both human quality of life and a healthy economy. The City's concern for wildlife is reflected in its care for natural areas, which includes waterways, riverbanks, wetlands and forests.

Narrative and Recommendations

Marietta has a responsibility for the protection and betterment of the natural environment within the city limits and in the surrounding area. There is a strong interest among area residents for environmental issues, reflected in strong, consistent participation in recycling programs and the annual Washington County Household Hazardous Waste Day, and in media coverage of local environmental issues. However, like many other communities, Marietta has not done much too actively foster environmental protection through local public policy, and like those other communities, Marietta has experienced significant deterioration in environmental quality. Since recommendations concerning air and water quality are in the section on Public Health and Safety, this section will focus on land use issues.

The historic layout of the city with its wide lawnstrips and large parks suggests that the founding fathers understood the importance of green space to the community. While many of these areas remain intact and support a significant urban forest, subsequent development has lacked similar vision. There has been an incremental loss of community green space in the older residential neighborhoods and business district through nonessential coverage of city right-of-way and archaic design of parking lots. (These practices have also created expansive impervious surface areas from which water flow often exceeds the capacity of the storm water system Csee Infrastructure Section). Furthermore, subdivisions have been allowed to develop without an expectation for lawnstrips, sidewalks or parks C qualities that add much to the character (and property value) of the older neighborhoods.

Marietta's riverbanks are among the major defining characteristics of the community. Indeed, the Ohio and Muskingum riverbanks serve several critical functions for the human community and wildlife, and form the visual frontispiece of Marietta. Yet, lack of attention and planning has caused deterioration of the city's riverbanks, and left many in eroded or unsightly condition. Care of the riverbanks should be a city priority.

Our recommendations are for the city to:

- Develop a Green Space Protection and Development ordinance. It is doubtful that any modern guide to community planning does not emphasize the importance and need for green space protection (as examples see Ardenndt, 1994; Daniels, et al., 1995). Thus, Marietta should develop ordinances that afford stronger protection of green space in city right-of-way and during development projects, set standards for green space and buffer zones for parking lots, and as part of subdivision planning, require lawnstrips and sidewalks, park space and greenways.

Report Card:

The City of Marietta is yet to develop a Green Space Protection and Development Ordinance. The City does have green space requirements in certain ordinances pertaining to parking lots and building development for residential, commercial and manufacturing sites. Granted variances and lack of enforcement of the current ordinances continue to degrade the City as a whole under the green space protection section. The City has tried to address the issue, but it appears not in a comprehensive manner.

As to parking lots:

1107.04 General Requirements: (c) "Green space areas shall include screening with a minimum height of 3' of landscaping, grade berms or woodland preservation."

1107.05 Green Space Requirements for New or Expanded Parking Lots: (a) "New parking lots or expansion of existing parking lots shall have green space areas along street frontage and perimeters and internal areas. See Table."

5-15 Spaces 4' wide perimeter strip. 8' wide street frontage. 0% interior.

16-160 Spaces 8' wide perimeter strip. 8' wide street frontage. 5% interior

160 + Spaces 8' wide perimeter strip. 8' wide street frontage. 10% interior

(b) Restoration of Lawn Strip: "New parking lot or expansion of existing parking lots shall be configured in such a manner as to result in a minimum loss of lawn strip and where lawn strip has been lost it shall be restored as green space to the maximum extent possible.

1107.6 (a) Green Space Requirements for Existing Parking Lots: "The minimum green space for reconstructed parking lots shall be 5% of the parking area or the return area of the redesigned parking area."

(b) Parking Lot Street Frontages, Interior Areas and Perimeter Areas: "The order of priority for green space placement shall be street frontage, then interior, then perimeter. Parking area shall include green spaces in the area as provided by the return area of the redesigned parking lot. The minimum width of the street frontage area shall be 4'."

As to Building Development:

*Residential Building: 1101.01: Set back area is to be a minimum of 25'. 25% of the setback area of front yard is to be landscaped and maintained as green space.
1143.09 Sidewalks: Sidewalks must be on at least one side of the street with a minimum of 2' grass strip between the walk and the curb. Variances may be granted through the Planning Commission where restrictions would make a sidewalk impractical to construct.*

*Commercial Building: 1123.04: Side yard must be screened by a strip of plantings at least 5' width.
1123.05: One 2 ½" caliper deciduous tree must be planted for every 30' of street frontage.
1125.04: Set back area is to be a minimum of 25'. 25% of the setback area of front yard is to be landscaped and maintained as green space.*

*Manufacturing Building: 1129.01: Side yard must be screened by a strip of plantings at least 5' width.
One 2 ½" caliper deciduous tree must be planted for every 30' of street frontage.
Set back area is to be a minimum of 25'. 25% of the setback area of front yard is to be landscaped and maintained as green space.*

50% Complete.

- Require greenspace, greenways and natural areas as part of land-use planning for new development areas. An insight of Marietta's founding fathers, it is again clear to city planners that greenspace is an essential part of community development. Thus, land use planning along the city periphery should require incorporation significant greenspace. Without it, urban sprawl of the worst kind will occur, as has already begun along the City's east side. City planning should preserve natural areas that can serve as parks and for refuge of wildlife. The availability of green 'corridors' through new areas of development also provides location for placement of walking paths and bike trails.

Report Card:

The City of Marietta has yet to develop a land use plan to address a requirement for greenspace, greenways and natural areas for new development areas. The City has tried to address the issue, but not in a comprehensive manner.

Note: The City is yet to require greenways and natural areas as part of land-use planning for new development areas. However Marietta does continually seek land for permanent green space for the City with the primary source of funding being the Clean Ohio Conservation Fund. Through this fund the City acquired the Chris-Mar woods property in 2006, The Krivchenia Ohio River property in 2010 and has been awarded a 2013 grant to acquire the Boersma link property. The Kroger Wetlands was secured in 2007 through a grant from the Ohio EPA.

Many trails have been, or in the case of the Boersma property, will be established in all of these areas of green space. These trails connect to the River Trail as well as trails at Marietta Middle School and Marietta High School providing many miles of trails throughout the City.

Included are the sections of the Codified Ordinances of Marietta Ohio that address green space requirements.

As to Building Development:

Residential Building: 1101.01: Set back area is to be a minimum of 25'. 25% of the setback area of front yard is to be landscaped and maintained as green space. 1143.09 Sidewalks: Sidewalks must be on at least one side of the street with a minimum of 2' grass strip between the walk and the curb. Variances may be granted through the Planning Commission where restrictions would make a sidewalk impractical to construct.

Commercial Building: 1123.04: Side yard must be screened by a strip of plantings at least 5' width.

1123.05: One 2 ½" caliper deciduous tree must be planted for every 30' of street frontage.

1125.04: Set back area is to be a minimum of 25'. 25% of the setback area of front yard is to be landscaped and maintained as green space.

Manufacturing Building: 1129.01: Side yard must be screened by a strip of plantings at least 5' width.

One 2 ½" caliper deciduous tree must be planted for every 30' of street frontage.

Set back area is to be a minimum of 25'. 25% of the setback area of front yard is to be landscaped and maintained as green space.

50% Complete.

- Develop a comprehensive plan for managing riverbanks and parks and cemeteries. A plan should be developed that stabilizes areas currently prone to erosion, such as the Muskingum Riverbank along Kiwanis park; assures adequate direct and visual access to river views; protects natural, undisturbed areas that serve wildlife; and assures that the riverbanks look as good from a river vantage point as from above. Although trees in the parks are managed by the City Tree Commission, currently, there is no plan for management and replanting of the trees in publicly owned cemeteries, a situation that will lead to the loss of character of these areas.

Report Card:

The City is yet to develop a comprehensive plan for managing riverbanks and parks and

cemeteries. The Tree Commission does manage the replacing of the trees in publicly owned cemeteries but there have been some instances where this was done and has damaged areas of the mounds and earthworks.

1% Complete.

PUBLIC HEALTH AND SAFETY

Vision Statement

Marietta provides a safe, crime-free environment, in which citizens can enjoy peace of mind. City neighborhoods boast wide streets with sidewalks for pedestrian traffic. Public service organizations collaborate to meet the ever growing health and human service needs of the community. The Washington County Community Health Council continues to strategically plan for health and human services in both private and public sector to address a diverse population.

Narrative and Recommendations

An essential responsibility of government is to provide high quality fire/emergency and police protection, and to ensure healthful air and water quality. Providing for the basic health and safety needs of citizens has always been a priority for the Marietta community. A diverse array of health and human service agencies currently offers much needed services such as free or reduced dental care, immunizations and well-baby checks, hearing clinics, and prescription assistance. Citizens are able to receive health care within the community without having to travel for essential services. Planning is needed to ensure that these services will meet the future needs of the community, such as for the growing elderly population. A proactive approach is necessary to ensure healthful water quality, and particularly, air quality in the area.

Public welfare interest groups have had recent successes in securing basic funding with community endorsements of Senior Citizens, 911 Emergency System, and developmental Disabilities levies. The need for public healthcare in the future will undoubtedly increase. As in many communities, there is a growing societal and public health problem with illicit drug usage among adults and teenage citizens. The 2000 census for Marietta and Washington County showed population growth for the County of only 1.6% and a 3.4% population decline for the City between 1990 and 2000 (Irwin and Reece, 2002; US Census). A key year in recent Washington County history was 1994-1995 when more citizens moved out than into the county (Ohio Department of Development, 2002). During this same time period the area has seen growth of the 65-plus age population. National growth projections for this age group are staggering, and senior populations in this area are expected to mirror national trends. The American Association of Homes and Services for the Aging predicts that the 65-plus age group will increase by 135% over the next 50 years, raising the 65-plus population in Marietta from 2500 to over 3400. People over 85, those most likely to have chronic care needs, are the fastest growing age group

(Administration on Aging, 2002; American Association of Homes and Services for the Aging).

While the aging population continues to grow, so does the area covered by the service departments of the city. Annexation of city land has increased the area of protection by 43% in the past 30 years (Marietta Fire Department Plan, 2002). Marietta provides this protection through paid police and fire/emergency services—one of only two communities within Washington County that provides paid fire protection. The ability of emergency services to meet community needs have been particularly stretched by the changing demographics.

Air quality in the Mid-Ohio Valley poses a significant health concern. While changes in Federal environmental standards have led to reductions in emissions by local industries, the air quality in Washington County still compares poorly with that of other regions at both state and national levels. At a national level, Washington County ranks among the worst counties in emissions of carbon monoxide (CO), nitrogen oxides (NO_x), sulfur dioxide (SO₂) and volatile organic compounds (VOCs); total environmental releases; land releases; and the health risks created by these pollutants (Environmental Defense, 2003). At the state level, Washington County has consistently had the highest or second highest total emissions over the last decade (Ohio EPA, 2002). Peak ozone levels have been higher than in New York City and Boston (Ohio Environmental Council, et al., 2000), and recent monitoring in Marietta has recorded levels of airborne PCBs significantly higher than those of neighboring cities (ORSANCO, 2002). While the poor area air quality in the Mid-Ohio Valley generates national attention, there is also reason for concern about water quality. The aquifer that supplies Marietta's municipal water is highly susceptible to contamination. The presence in municipal water sources of toxic pollutants such as trichloroethylene (TCE) in Marietta and ammonium perfluorooctanoate (C8) in neighboring communities have created public concern. The City currently employs a diversionary well to reduce TCE (from an unknown source) in municipal water. The health implications of groundwater C8 contamination are still unclear. Overall, air and water quality do not represent an asset for this area; they discourage movement of new citizens and businesses into the area.

Our Recommendations are for the City to:

- Develop a plan that allows fire/emergency services to meet national standards now and with future projections. Planning for fire/emergency services should reflect type and frequency of runs as opposed to total runs. While annual fire runs over the past 12 years have fluctuated between a high of 379 and low of 287, actual growth in total responses over the past 12 years reflects the increase in emergency medical services (EMS) calls. The state of Ohio does not mandate that local career fire departments follow the National Fire Protection Act (NFPA; National Fire Protection Association, 2001); however, this act provides national benchmarks to which the City should compare its performance. According to NFPA Article No.1710, first response providers should arrive within four minutes of the fire. Marietta does not currently meet this benchmark, and aging

population, population growth, and future land annexation will all further stretch the deficiency. To better meet community needs:

o EMS should be expanded to meet national benchmarks. EMS staffing should allow the City to meet the standards of NFPA 1710, which calls for a four minute response time for Basic Life Support and 8 minutes for Advanced Cardiac Life Support. The City should consider all possible strategies for funding this service.

Report Card:

The City currently meets the four minute response time for Basic Life Support, but we do not meet the 8 minute response for Advanced Cardiac Life support. The current City Administration recommends implementing EMS pay based on the certificate held. This would keep basic EMT's at the same pay rate, while providing an incentive to others who have/or will obtain higher EMS certification. This will in the near future allow for ALS on every squad run, increasing billing revenues, and providing better service to the community. This is already a practice of the City in other departments that hold pay levels for certificates held. The final part of this plan, is that once EMS pay incentives are instated, the Administration would strongly recommend on changing the hiring practices, so that new hires from that point on will hold a minimum of EMT-I certification.

50% Complete.

o Additional fire stations should be considered as part of future land-use planning and involve a cost-benefit analysis. Model plans are available from other communities (e.g., City of Wichita, 2000). It is recommended that Total Reflex Time to a fire be evaluated using a method that accurately measures travel times from fire stations to additional locations. The City should invest in available software that can help in the decision making by evaluating census maps, GIS mapping, safe travel speeds, and future community growth.

Report Card:

The Administration believes as the City continues to grow in the Pike Street direction, consideration should be given to locating a 4th fire station out Pike Street, to both encompass the existing business district, and to allow for the possibility of expansion of coverage outside of the current City limits in that direction. This would be an additional benefit to the City, as it would allow for an additional squad to reduce response time, and possibly generate additional revenues for the City, if expansion of services occurs in the future. The development of such a strategy would need to be tied into an overall land use plan to maximize efficiency of City services.

0% Complete.

o Other measures that reduce demand on fire and emergency services should be considered. For example, the city should reevaluate the sprinkling requirements for new and renovated structures. Sprinkling requirements will decrease the severity and speed of a fire, potentially reducing manpower and response time needs. Additionally, the city should consider an enforced electrical inspection that ensures that residential buildings meet fire safety codes.

Report Card:

The Administration believes that city ordinance(s) to require new construction to install sprinkler systems would help to goal. With existing construction, the first step would be to work toward fire alarm systems in existing structures. This would decrease the delay before the fire department is alerted to an event. The Administration also believes that a knock box should be required with every fire alarm system installed. This allows quick access to the building in question, while helping to reduce damage caused trying to gain access on alarms. This could begin with an ordinance from City Council.

Hiring of a building code enforcement officer for the city continues to be debated and funding available to do this is an issue. A timeline might be developed to debate and decide the matter in a series of public hearings since public safety is at the forefront of this issue.

0% complete.

- Ask the Ohio EPA to determine the source and risks posed by the elevated levels of PCBs recorded in Marietta's air. PCBs (polychlorinated biphenyls) are well documented as serious chemical pollutants. The recent ORSANCO (2002) finding that levels of airborne PCBs in Marietta are significantly higher than in surrounding communities is of great concern. Especially in conjunction with the various other air pollutants of the mid-Ohio valley, the presence of PCBs creates a more dangerous mixture that should not be ignored. Should it be determined that this presents a health hazard, then remedial action should be sought.

Report Card:

We believe ORSANCO came to the conclusion that the PCBs they detected in the air monitors was as a result of disturbed sediments releasing them to the airshed and not an ongoing release.

100% complete.

- Pass a resolution endorsing and supporting the Ohio Environmental Council "Hometown for Healthy Air" Campaign. (Ohio Environmental Council, 2003) Air quality in the Mid-Ohio Valley is among the worst in the country, and Marietta should affiliate itself with other progressive communities that understand that public and economic

health are connected with environmental quality. Passing a resolution in support of this campaign allows Marietta to take a leadership role among communities in the mid-Ohio Valley in taking a stand on regional air quality, and thereby distinguishes and better positions itself to attract new, higher technology corporations to the area.

Report Card:

The City endorsed and became a part of Hometowns for Clean Air, but that overall program has long since expired.

100% complete.

- Take additional measures to ensure clean and safe drinking water for the citizens of Marietta:
 - o Sewer and water line inventory should be updated to accurately reflect location, age and condition of water and sewer lines within the city.
 - o New development and construction that create a potential risk of groundwater contamination should require a plan to protect the water supply.
 - o The city should enact a communications plan for adequate and timely notification of boil advisories due to water breaks or line flushing.

Report Card:

The city has begun to use social media (facebook) to alert the public about health and safety issues as they arise, but has the opportunity to improve communication with the public by creating text message alerts and twitter alerts for both emergency and day to day concerns. The city does not have a formal communications plan or a Twitter account. The City is currently developing a groundwater and water well protection ordinance.

50% complete.

RECREATION

Vision Statement

Marietta provides recreational opportunities that are a model for other communities. While encouraging development of privately-owned facilities, the city provides affordable public facilities for use by residents of Marietta and the surrounding area, as well as by visitors. Marietta also provides for ‘recreation of the mind’ through its support for theatrical, musical, artistic and other cultural activities.

Narrative and Recommendations

The availability of modern, diverse recreational facilities contribute to the economic attractiveness and public well-being of a community. Although little development of significant new recreational facilities has occurred in Marietta for several decades, recently there has been encouraging progress along several lines (e.g., planning of a bike path and new pool). However, this momentum must be sustained to address other existing community needs, revitalize worn existing facilities, and to prevent future stagnation. The Recreation Department is to be commended for supporting a wide-range of programs, recreational activities and special events (Marietta Recreation Department Report, 2002). It is of concern that although promised a second fulltime position, the Recreation Department has not been allowed to fill the position; however, it is reasonable to expect that Recreation Department staffing will be increased with planning of the new aquatic center.

At the time of writing this Comprehensive Plan, much progress has been made toward construction of a new outdoor aquatic center, with a completion date set for July 2004. Successful completion of this project will remedy the closing of the Jackson Park pool due to deterioration and absence of planned replacement. However, this project has been pursued as a default alternative to building a larger, Community Center that also would have provided indoor recreational facilities— a proposal defeated at the ballot by city residents. While the reasons for failure of the proposal are debatable, the continued deficiency in indoor recreational facilities is not; nor is the desire for such facilities among area residents.

In the last 5 years there have been several studies of area recreational facilities and citizens’ attitudes toward recreational needs. These studies include “Community Recreation Improvements Study” (Brailsford and Dunlavel, 2000), and the “Community Recreation Center Feasibility Study” (Ballard*King and Associates, 2002). Ballard*King and Associates inventoried the recreation service providers in the Marietta market area and concluded that these were inadequate to meet the community need. These studies pointed to deficiencies in a wide range of indoor recreational facilities needed for various age groups.

A need for additional recreational facilities among area residents has been documented in a phone survey of Washington County residents by a Marietta College class (Marketing

Research Class, 2000). A survey of Marietta High School Students (Young Democrats, 2002) found additional recreational facilities to be the most desired community improvement. A large number of Community meetings during the last few years have uniformly shown strong community support for additional recreational facilities. Indeed, preceding its defeat at the ballot in November 2001, the debate about the proposed Community Center centered largely on the funding mechanism and not the need. The recent construction of a recreation center on the Marietta College campus has provided new recreational opportunities for a particular sector of the community; however, a need for and strong public interest in additional indoor recreational facilities exists in Marietta and needs to be a central element of city planning.

The Recreation Department does a good job inventorying the condition of facilities and scheduling necessary maintenance on a yearly basis. However, there is little funding or staffing for preventative maintenance, and essentially no planned replacement, with the result that much of the park recreational facilities are in a perpetual ‘fatigued’ condition.

Our recommendations are for the city to:

- Complete the bike path project; and then pursue its expansion. This project is far along the planning process, with funding is secured, and has wide public support. The bike path will provide a valuable new recreational activity, encourage healthy life styles, and provide an alternative transportation conduit through the city. Although the current plan only will complete the path from the Putnam Bridge to Indian Acres, expansion of the bike path should be vigorously pursued, and this issue is further discussed in the Transportation section.

Report Card:

The City of Marietta has completed Phases 1 and 2 of River Trail extending from The Aquatic Center at Indian Acres, south and east to Fourth and Ohio Streets. Phase 3 is currently in the construction phase and will extend from Fourth and Ohio Streets to Jefferson St. with completion scheduled for summer of 2013. Phase 5 has been designed and is currently in the funding stage. Phase 5 will continue from Jefferson St. between the interstate and the Ohio River, cross Duck Creek, and conclude at Wal-Mart. Note: Phase 4 is designated as the portion that will cross the old train bridge and connect Harmar. This phase has been set aside for future consideration due to issues and expense associated with the bridge. Phase 6 of River Trail, which is proposed to connect the start of the trail at Indian Acres to Devola is just now under discussion.

55% Complete.

- Complete the swimming pool project at Indian Acres and establish plan to assure adequate maintenance. This project is far along in the planning process and sufficient financial resources are available. There is a clear and pressing need for a new pool to replace the aged facility at Jackson Park. Yet, to avoid mistakes of the past, the city must

assure that financing will be adequate to provide for future maintenance and upgrading of the facility.

Report Card:

The Marietta Aquatic Center was completed in the summer of 2004. The Aquatic Center is maintained by the Facilities Department and is financially self-sustaining with its own account in the City budget.

100% Complete.

• Reinitiate now the planning process for a community indoor recreation center. The community currently has the best window of opportunity to accomplish this goal: the YMCA and the City both need new facilities, the City has the land, the YMCA has managerial expertise and fundraising ability, and interest rates are favorable. There is overwhelming evidence that the community needs, desires and would benefit from an indoor recreation center. The most promising avenue toward its construction appears to be through a cooperative arrangement with the YMCA. Other communities have built shared facilities and therefore this approach is also feasible in Marietta. The planning of the facility should begin immediately with the drafting of a mutually acceptable collaborative operating agreement between the City and the YMCA. Quite likely the size of the facility will need to be scaled back from that proposed by Ballard*King and Associates; however, aesthetic considerations should remain a priority.

Report Card:

City Rec. Center: This plan has died. The plan was reinitiated by the Mayor in 2003, as the Aquatic Center was being constructed, with much of the planning work being done. The project was in the funding stage with one grant having been awarded and others being sought in 2005, however the new Mayor and Council moved the funding from the Recreation Center to The Armory project. There has been no movement on the plan since.

YMCA: The Marietta Family YMCA recently completed a strategic planning process and will begin a long range facilities planning exercise in the fall of 2013. As part of that process they will be accessing the needs of the community and the ability of their existing facility to meet those needs.

One possible solution is for a partnership to develop with public and private entities to address community recreational needs. Also consideration must be given to using the Armory for future City Recreation needs with regard to space and programming.

15% Complete.

- Provide additional resources for maintenance of parks, riverfronts and recreational facilities. From the riverbanks, to parks and picnic facilities, there is evidence of neglect and disrepair—as would be expected of any responsible property owner, the city must assume responsibility for the care of its lands and facilities. The City should critically assess the resources needed to maintain its public areas in admirable and not merely passable condition. Understaffing within the Lands, Buildings and Parks Department and Recreation Department (as noted in the Infrastructure and City Services section) should be addressed.

Report Card:

This recommendation has actually gone in the opposite direction. At the time of the recommendation, in 2003, The Lands, Buildings and Parks Department had 4 employees, The Cemeteries Department had 4 employees and the Recreation Department had 2 employees. In 2009 the Mayor combined all three departments into the Public Facilities Department and the staffing was cut to 4 people for Lands, Parks and Cemeteries and 1 person for Recreation. A total staff reduction of 50%.

0% complete.

TRANSPORTATION

Vision Statement

The Marietta region has a multi-modal transportation system linking the area with a global economy while preserving Marietta's small-town character and the rural nature of the surrounding areas. Streets are tree-lined and have well-maintained sidewalks. Bridges at the city perimeters effectively divert heavy commercial traffic around the central business and residential areas of the city. The transportation system in the Historic Downtown District is particularly well planned and facilitates easy flow of automotive traffic, bicycles, wheelchairs and pedestrians. Coordination with local, state and federal agencies, prevents urban sprawl and traffic congestion, and is integrated into an overall land use development plan.

Narrative and Recommendations

The City of Marietta has been a transportation hub throughout its history. Water transportation brought our forefathers to the confluence of the Ohio and Muskingum rivers and helped to establish Marietta as an early economic center. Today, Marietta has a much more diverse system of transportation that encompasses autos, buses, pedestrians, bicycles, boats and air (Zande and Associates, 2002).

The Ohio River is navigable by commercial, including barge tows and recreational vessels. The Muskingum River, reaching rural areas of the county just north of the City, is navigable by light commercial and recreational vessels. The Little Muskingum is limited to seasonal, recreational small craft activity. A landing/launch area is located downtown at the levy and is mainly used for multi-passenger vessels. Recreational public access boat land/launch facilities are located in Indian Acres Park. The Marietta Harbor located downtown serves recreational boaters and gives good access to the historic downtown, City parks and various monuments.

Certainly, in the 21st century roads and highways have the greater role in the commerce and transportation. State and county highways of particular significance to the area include Interstate 77, US 50, and SRs 7 and 60. State Routes 26, 550 and 676 are all classified as collectors and connect Marietta to the rural parts of Washington County. Although US 50 is located to the south of the City, it is an important east/west conduit into the area. Nationally this route begins in Washington, D.C. and terminates in Sacramento, CA. Recent completion of sections of US 50 from Coolville to Athens and Corridor D through Parkersburg will extend four-lanes from Clarksburg, WV to western Ohio. Interstate 77 is a four-lane limited access highway facility extending from Cleveland, OH to Columbia, SC, bordering the east Marietta Corporation limit. Since completion of Interstate 77 in 1968, the community has experienced urban sprawl-like growth and land development near its intersection with SR 7. How the City plans and manages future growth is a concern not only for the citizens, but for the safety of the traveling public as well.

There are approximately 73 miles of streets with the Marietta corporation boundary (Marietta Engineering Office, 2001). Citizens contribute to the management of transportation issues through the Traffic Commission and Brick Streets Commission. Overall, the city streets are well maintained, although alleys vary considerably in their condition. Vehicular parking is an issue in both commercial and residential areas and interfaces with several components of this Comprehensive Plan; a recommendation for a new downtown parking facility is presented in the Cross-Category Recommendations section. The construction of large numbers of curb-cuts (street-access routes), excessively large curb-cuts, and poorly positioned curb-cuts have created safety issues for both vehicles and pedestrians, contributed to urbanization of the City, and deteriorated aesthetics of neighborhoods.

All of the bridges that support traffic flow across the Rivers are of relatively modern construction. The Historic Harmar Bridge, limited to pedestrian usage, is in a deteriorated condition. Planned major projects impacting the City will be the rehabilitation of the Washington Street Bridge and widening of SR 7 north of Marietta should ease traffic congestion and increase safety for drivers and pedestrians (Wood-Washington-Wirt Interstate Planning Commission, 2000). Significant truck traffic flow proceeds along SR60 through Marietta to SR 7. There have been discussions of developing a north Muskingum River crossing to help redirect this traffic out of the residential areas and to create a new economic corridor.

Non-motorized transportation is important to the community. The U.S Census identified 12-20% of the homes in the census tracts in the central Marietta community as “zero-car” households (Zande and Associates, 2002). The historic layout of Marietta provided the central neighborhoods of the community with satisfactory sidewalks for pedestrian traffic. However, existing sidewalks in some areas are not well maintained, in a number of places commercial development has eliminated sidewalks, and more recently developed areas often lack sidewalks. The proposed bikeway facility is under final design development at this time for a connection from downtown, north to Indian Acres Park. The community would benefit from the expansion of this system in the future (Alternate Transportation Advocacy Committee, 1997).

Public transportation includes cab and bus service. The Community Action bus lines (CABL), a subsidized local transit system operated by local government agencies, serves a variety of clients including serving some of the outlying rural areas. The City of Marietta and Washington County are both served by Mid-Ohio Regional Airport (previously known as the Wood County Airport), located 5 miles south of Marietta. A small commercial passenger commuter operation by US Airways Express flies about 5 trips per day to the hub of Pittsburgh, PA. The airport is a self-sufficient facility receiving no subsidy from Wood County. It also serves local and enthusiast pilots and has some flight instructional programs (Wood County Airport Authority, 2003). Air travel as such is not a major economic force in the area, but expanded service could help stimulate economic development. Wood County officials have recently reached out to Washington County for new perspectives and to present a more unified cooperative front when trying to attract new service providers and Congressional support for airport initiatives. A bi-

state governing body will be created with daily operations remaining the responsibility of Wood County and policy issues such as marketing and promotion residing with the regional Authority.

Our Recommendations are for the City to:

- Develop a long-range plan for an expanded ‘Shared Use Path’ (Walking/Bike Path) system. Walking and riding a bicycle are valuable modes of transportation and should be given full consideration when addressing transportation issues in the City and immediate surrounding communities. The current plan to develop a bike path along the Muskingum River is a excellent start, and the City’s long-range plans should envision additional connector routes from the Marietta downtown to the Devola and Reno areas, the west side of Marietta (over the Historic Harmar Bridge) and Washington State Community College. Toward Reno, consideration should be given to creating a green corridor along the Ohio River under Interstate 77 through the old rail pass way built into the embankment.

Report Card:

The City of Marietta has completed Phases 1 and 2 of River Trail extending from The Aquatic Center at Indian Acres, south and east to Fourth and Ohio Streets. Phase 3 is currently in the construction phase and will extend from Fourth and Ohio Streets to Jefferson St. with completion scheduled for summer of 2013. Phase 5 has been designed and is currently in the funding stage. Phase 5 will continue from Jefferson St. between the interstate and the Ohio River, cross Duck Creek, and conclude at Wal-Mart. Note: Phase 4 is designated as the portion that will cross the old train bridge and connect Harmar. This phase has been set aside for future consideration due to issues and expense associated with the bridge. Phase 6 of River Trail, which is proposed to connect the start of the trail at Indian Acres to Devola is just now under discussion. At this point there is no discussion of connecting the Reno Area or Washington State Community College. The City of Marietta has allocated a line item of the budget for River Trail maintenance beginning in 2013 and has discussed adding River Trail to the streets maintenance plan. Significant and continuous progress toward the goal of a completed River Trail has made a great contribution to the community.

50% Complete.

- Support development of a north Muskingum River bridge, but only in conjunction with a land-use development plan. There have been previous efforts to secure funding for construction of a new bridge over the Muskingum River north of the City to create a new economic corridor in the county and divert through-traffic away from the residential neighborhoods in Marietta; however, previous proposals have not met public approval at the ballots. We believe that future efforts should be coupled to creation of a land-use plan worked out between City and County agencies. The plan should clearly identify the

nature of the development that would be allowed to occur along the proposed new economic corridor and prevent urban sprawl.

Report Card:

ODOT District 10 engaged an engineering firm to do a Feasibility Study which included determining the best location and developing a preliminary cost estimate of the North Muskingum River Bridge. Unfortunately, TRAC funding was not available to move this project forward as the project did not score high enough in the rating criteria. No significant progress or developments have been made regarding this recommendation since the Feasibility Study was completed and presented by the engineering firm. The City is still served by two bridges over the Muskingum River and two bridges over the Ohio River for surface transportation. A new Ohio River crossing for United States Route 50 near the Blennerhassett Island has been completed for the corridor "D" portion of the Appalachian Highway System. The Wood-Washington-Wirt Metropolitan Planning Organization (WWW-MPO) still carries this proposed project on their long range (20 year) plan.

10% Complete

- Develop a process to expand and better maintain the brick street system. The City would gain much from the restoration of historic brick streets. Bricked streets reduce speed, enhance safety and promote livability (Burden, 2001). Although restoration would be expensive, brick streets are more durable than asphalt and easier to repair. The City Brick Streets Commission could spearhead this initiative beginning with an updated inventory of brick streets and their conditions, developing a long-range plan for potential brick street restoration, and seeking funding opportunities. Also, "scabbed" areas in brick streets (patches of asphalt, concrete or other non-brick material) should be restored to the original brick surface.

Report Card:

There has been some progress in that the City's MicroPaver Program has essentially established a database that identifies all City Streets and Alleys that are brick surface and assigns a Pavement Condition Index rating for each street and alley. The average PCI Index for all brick streets and alleys was reported as 76 out of 100 and a complete summary of the brick streets is available from the City Engineering Department. There is a brick streets mitigation ordinance where no "net loss" of the brick street system is to be permitted.

The Engineering Department works with the Street Department to survey and identify streets and alleys from this PCI Index Rating and from physical inspections which sections and areas of those streets and alleys that will be repaired. Unfortunately, the City Brick Streets Commission has not been active recently and has not spearheaded or undertaken this initiative. It may be

appropriate to have the Administration review membership and interest level of the City Brick Streets Commission to see if they would be willing to take on this task.

30% Complete

- Develop a better process for prioritizing maintenance of the alley system. Many citizens are frustrated because of the poor condition of alleys and difficulty in understanding when repairs will occur. It appears problems lies in the lack of a long-term plan for alley repairs. To remedy this problem, alleys should be inventoried and evaluated according to a standard set of criteria, and a maintenance plan and schedule be developed and publicized.

Report Card:

There has been some progress in that the City's MicroPaver Program has essentially established a database that identifies all City Alleys and the type of surface and then assigns a Pavement Condition Index rating for each alley. The average PCI Index for all alleys was reported as 48 out of 100 and a complete summary of the alleys from the 2012 Report is available from the City Engineering Department.

There has been significant progress in a better process for prioritizing the maintenance of the alley system and there has been increasing pressures on the Streets Budget resulting in lack of funding for the maintenance and reconstruction of these alleys. Therefore, the conditions of our alleys continue to decline.

75% Complete

- Improve and expand the city sidewalk system and enforce pedestrian right-of-way. Sidewalks provide a safe and efficient mode of transportation. They influence the essential character of a community and should be a requirement of all new subdivisions. In many areas, existing sidewalks are in poor condition. An inventory of city sidewalks should be developed to allow monitoring of sidewalk condition and maintenance. The City should assume greater responsibility for sidewalk maintenance or enforce existing ordinances requiring maintenance by residents. The city should take measures to restore sidewalks in areas where they have been eliminated by commercial expansion into the city right-of-way. New pedestrian crosswalk signs should be reinstalled and maintained, and violators should be cited.

Report Card:

The City of Marietta has introduced the Walk Marietta program which will be a physical inventory of all of the sidewalks in the city, all issues with the sidewalks, the causes of the issues and recommendations for correcting the issues. The problem with this program to date is the lack of qualified manpower. Currently

the City is still in the inventory phase but the work is being completed by volunteers lacking the expertise to determine the proper condition of the sidewalks to meet state and ADA standards such as grade, cross-slope etc. so while this program, as it is currently implemented, may be able to address broken and crack sidewalks it does not in compass the entirety of the issues which will, or should, result in rework.

Currently the City does not have a code enforcement officer to enforce the ordinance of home owner responsibility for sidewalks. Currently there is not a plan to restore sidewalks lost to commercial expansion.

Note: The City's effort in this area is so lacking that, at the time of this report, a development is being considered within the City limits and the required sidewalk specification maybe waived by City Council.

The City has replaced pedestrian crosswalk signals in most areas with even greater measures being taken at areas with the greatest pedestrian traffic and mid-block crossings including overhead signals with lights and speed bumps.

30% Complete.

- Revise vehicle access (curb-cut) ordinances to emphasize safety and greenspace preservation. We believe that curb-cuts should no longer be routinely issued in residential neighborhoods where, historically, they have not existed. In other areas, the width of curb-cuts should be kept to a minimum set by established standards. Safety issues and impacts on traffic flow should be priority considerations when considering permits for curb-cuts. Land-use planning of service roads in newly developed commercial areas should be implemented to reduce traffic congestion and hazards.

Report Card:

The City continues to issue curb-cuts without regard to safety, access management, and in some cases over neighborhood objections.

0% Complete.

- Develop standards for traffic flow patterns and pedestrian movements within large parking lots. Parking lots merge movements of pedestrians and vehicles, and confusing traffic flow patterns create hazards to both. The inclusion of grassy islands and trees not only softens the harsh urban environment created by parking lots, but also helps clarify traffic flow patterns and creates pedestrian walkways. Design standards should be developed that parking lots should be required to meet.

Report Card:

No action has been taken at this time.

0% complete.

- Advocate for expanded service to the Mid-Ohio Regional Airport. The city should encourage the newly created regional Port Authority to help bring in new grants and to advocate for improved and or competitive service for the area.

Report Card:

This could get started with an ordinance from City Council.

0% complete.

CROSS-CATEGORY RECOMENDATIONS

There are several recommendations that we believe cut across several focus areas or which are process-oriented for city governance and citizen involvement in city projects.

- Prepare a comprehensive land-use development plan. Essentially all aspects of city planning –e.g., economic development, infrastructure planning, police and fire services, greenspace management, etc.—are influenced by the effectiveness of land-use planning. Land-use planning needs to be applied to regions within the city corporate borders and to areas of anticipated future development along the city perimeter. We believe that the essence of land-use planning already exists in the city zoning ordinances, although these should be revisited as part of a comprehensive land-use planning initiative. The most important pressing need for land-use planning is for areas outside the city borders where most future economic growth will occur. It is crucial to the quality of life in the city and surrounding areas that this future growth does not result in continued urban sprawl such as that along Pike Street and Route 7 east of the City. No community benefits from urban sprawl, and the City, Township and County Officials must work together to develop a mutually beneficial plan.

Report Card:

No action has been taken at this time.

0% complete.

- Improve the methods used to obtain public involvement in community projects. City government and community groups pursuing projects should employ effective strategies for obtaining public involvement. This will require using tools for public involvement that effectively achieve the intended objectives (Ohio Department of Transportation, 2002). For example, strategies that communicate information to a general audience often are not effective when trying to determine a public consensus. Appendix 2 provides a summary of different public involvement tools and the communication objectives for which they are most appropriate. Involving more ad-hoc citizens committees helps to bring the efforts of the most knowledgeable and enthusiastic members of the community to bear on a particular project, while relieving some of the burden of project development from City Officials.

Report Card:

Improvement still needed in this area.

30% complete.

- Review requests to vacate public lands and right-of-ways in context of city long-term planning. There have been a number of instances in the past in which the city has been asked to vacant land and unopened streets or alleys. We recommend that all such lands be

reviewed for potential uses in city long-term planning. Proposals to vacate such lands should be reviewed in context of the City Comprehensive Plan and receive a full public hearing.

Report Card:

No action has been taken at this time.

0% Complete.

- Review policies concerning the issuance of variances. This topic has broad implications for the fairness in which City Ordinances are applied. A summary of 135 decisions on variance applications between March 2001 and March 2003 indicated 126 variance approvals, several over neighbor's objections. Marietta was reprimanded by FEMA several years ago for too readily issuing floodplain variances, a lesson that should elevate awareness and concern about lax policies toward variances. Issuance of variances should not be routine; when they become routine then either variances are being issued without sufficient rigor or the underlying ordinances are defective. City elected officials should determine where the problem lies and make the necessary corrections.

Report Card:

Under the previous Administration the City transferred permitting, and thus the issuance of permits/variances to the County. City permitting should be returned to the City and the City should set a deadline to get this accomplished.

0% Complete.

- Seek first right-of-refusal on the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers maintenance building on Post Street. Located at the confluence of the Ohio and Muskingum Rivers, this facility occupies a strategic site in the city downtown, a site that could provide new economic and recreational opportunities for the community. The City should make clear a desire to assume ownership should the Corps of Engineers decide to vacate this property.

Report Card:

To date the City has not sought first right of first refusal on the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers maintenance building. The current right of refusal is 1) Federal 2) County 3) City. This could get started with an ordinance from City Council. Retain for 2014 Plan.

0% Complete

... and lastly:

- Replace the “Pet Defecation” signs in public areas. These signs are an embarrassment to the community. The wording “Permitting pet defecation is prohibited” is crude and somewhat illogical (the act cannot be prohibited) and the widely varied height of the signs is inexplicable (one at the Mound Cemetery appears directed to the pets themselves, another in Sacra Via Park to birds). We suggest new signs with more pleasant wording such as “Please pick up after your pet: City Org 920.03” installed at a height convenient to pet owners.

Report Card:

The signs have been replaced with signs showing an image of a dog with “NO” symbol; a circle surrounding the image with a slash line through it. The sign heights have been adjusted to the proper level.

100% Complete.

End