

Marshalltown Comprehensive Plan

Draft Goals and Policies

The following goals and policies were developed from input received from community meetings, and the Comprehensive Plan Committee to achieve their vision for the community. Many important topics, issues and ideas were shared during these activities which have been translated into goals and policies for your review. Prioritizing goals and policies is an important step in order to be realistic about what can be accomplished. In that regard, four goals (and related policies) are suggested as "immediate" items that are of highest priority to continue guiding the City in important development and redevelopment related decisions in the near term. Along with edits to the text, the remaining goals and policies (within five other categories) need to be prioritized in short term (0-5 years), mid-term (5-10 years) and long-term (10+ years) time frames. Policies are not listed in any particular order of importance.

The terms "Goal" and "Policy" are subject to a wide range of interpretation and application. Since it is desirable to have a common frame of reference, the following definitions are included:

Goal: A general statement of community aspirations and desired objectives indicating broad social, economic or physical conditions to which the community officially agrees to try to achieve in various ways, one of which is the implementation of the Comprehensive Plan.

Policy: Definite courses of action which lead to general achievement. They serve as a guide to help make present and future decisions consistent with the stated goals.

Goals and policies assume various roles and responsibilities for the City. To better understand the City's role for each goal and policy, a number of the key terms are defined below, along with the City's corresponding responsibility:

Community: City of Marshalltown

Create: Bring about the desired goal, usually with City staff involved at all levels, from planning to implementation, and which may involve City financial assistance.

Continue: Follow past and present procedures to maintain desired goal, usually with City staff involved at all levels, from planning to implementation.

Encourage: Foster the desired goal through City policies, which may involve City financial assistance.

Endorse: Subscribe to the desired goal by adopting supportive City policies.

Enhance: Improve the current status through the use of policies, which may include financial support, and the involvement of City staff at all levels of planning.

Explore: Investigate the stated method of achieving the desired goal, which may involve City staff and financial resources to research and analyze such method.

Identify: Catalogue and confirm resource(s) or desired item(s) through the use of City staff and actions.

Maintain: Preserve the desired state of affairs through the use of City policies and staff. Financial assistance should be provided if needed.

Recognize: Acknowledge the identified state of affairs and take actions or implement policies to preserve or change them.

Prevent: Stop described event through the use of appropriate City policies, staff action and, if needed, finances.

Promote: Advance the desired state through the use of City policies and staff activity at all levels of planning.

Protect: Guard against a deterioration of the desired state through the use of City policies, staff action and, if needed, financial assistance.

Provide: Take the lead role in supplying the needed financial and staff support to achieve the desired goal. The City is typically involved in all aspects from planning to implementation to maintenance.

Strengthen: Improve and reinforce the desired goal through the use of City policies, staff and financial assistance, if needed.

Support: Supply the needed staff support, policies and financial assistance at all levels to achieve the desired goal.

Sustain: Uphold the desired state through City policies, financial resources and staff action to achieve the goal.

Work: Cooperate and act in a manner to create the desired goal through the use of City staff actions and policies.

Immediate Goals and Policies:

Goal 1: Promote a well-planned community with balanced land uses including residential, commercial, recreation and open space, and industrial areas.

Rationale: A carefully created Comprehensive Plan will ensure the community's ability to grow in a rational and responsible manner, preclude decision-making processes that overlook long-range land use implications, and help ensure fulfillment of residents' desires for a well-planned community and preservation of their quality of life.

Policy 1: Create a new land use plan that defines the types and locations of residential, commercial, industrial and recreation development that supports and enhances the community's ability to attract quality development.

Policy 2: Prepare transportation and infrastructure plans that will direct and support future growth and redevelopment.

Policy 3: Identify appropriate land uses within remaining developable land that have the potential to be served with an appropriate range of public services in a cost effective manner.

Policy 4: Update the annexation plans appropriately to ensure orderly development and extension of utilities.

Policy 5: Protect the sensitive natural features that make Marshalltown unique such as the river, creeks, high quality wetlands, natural open space and local parks through appropriate regulatory mechanisms.

Goal 2: Coordinate transportation with land use planning.

Rationale: Understanding the impact of land use on transportation systems is an important element to supporting growth and development.

Policy 1: Analyze the traffic generation characteristics of proposed land uses to incorporate the capacity of local, county, and regional roadways.

Policy 2: Consider the impacts to neighborhoods when planning new or upgrading existing roadways.

Policy 3: Support transportation projects that maintain the compact, orderly development of the City.

Policy 4: Encourage shared parking facilities or access for commercial, industrial and mixed use projects to reduce impervious surface, minimize land consumption and minimize traffic.

Goal 3: Support the expansion of existing businesses and attract and encourage a balance of new commercial, light industrial, heavy industrial and knowledge-based enterprises, along with professional services.

Rationale: Marshalltown's commercial, light industrial and heavy industrial development is concentrated primarily along its existing business corridors and in its industrial areas. This provides opportunities for a diversified economic base, expanded employment opportunities and maintaining conformity with the existing commercial, light industrial and heavy industrial land use patterns.

Policy 1: Protect designated industrial areas from encroachment by residential development and marginal land uses that will preclude the highest economic use of land available for commercial, light industrial and heavy industrial development.

Policy 2: Work with local, county and regional business organizations to encourage business park development that attracts research and development, energy technology, value-added agricultural and knowledge-based businesses which provide quality employment and higher wages.

Policy 3: Work with property owners using available financial tools to redevelop existing commercial or industrial sites that are in disrepair, are obsolete with respect to design, have environmental concerns and/or are incompatible with neighboring land uses.

Policy 4: Encourage site upkeep and quality maintenance through code enforcement to support and promote the character of the community.

Policy 5: Encourage development of new commercial nodes within identified redevelopment sites, or within growth areas (undeveloped areas within city limits).

General Goals and Policies

Goal 1: Maximize the potential of the community of Marshalltown as a thriving center for business and healthy recreation, while maintaining and enhancing its livability as a residential community.

Rationale: Marshalltown has a high quality of life with opportunities through its increasing diversity. Emphasis on planning to create new growth and increased tax base that can provide greater enhancement to its residents.

Policy 1: Promote the development and implementation of a Comprehensive Plan that effectively and efficiently plans for land use, community facilities, transportation, housing, economic development, recreation and natural spaces, and technological advancement for the Marshalltown area.

Policy 2: Update the Plan periodically, with an annual review by the Plan and Zoning Commission, City Council and City staff, and comprehensive updates to various elements as needed. Utilize this plan to guide all zoning changes to ensure consistent development policy, resource allocations, and administrative policies.

Policy 3: Formulate and enforce City ordinances to ensure development in accordance with the Comprehensive Plan.

Policy 4: Continue to plan for land uses to support and enhance Marshalltown's ability to attract quality development by existing and new businesses, by providing adequate areas for business growth and expansion.

Goal 2: Renew Marshalltown's positive identity within the community and the region.

Rationale: Creating and maintaining a strong image supports not only economic development but reinforces pride in the residents and those who operate or do business in the City, while also attracting new residents and businesses.

Policy 1: Establish a cohesive image for the entire community through development and promotion of a community wide brand.

Policy 2: Immediate community marketing and or branding to communicate Marshalltown's strengths and opportunities.

Policy 3: Continue to be proactive in addressing community issues, concerns and communications that may detract from the community's identity.

Goal 3: Retain and create high quality infrastructure and visual attractiveness of properties showcasing the City's aesthetic character to its residents and visitors.

Rationale: At the many entrances to Marshalltown, and the main arterials that run through the City, it is important to portray a visually pleasing and attractive community to the residents and all visitors.

Policy 1: Create and maintain appealing gateways and entry points into the City with a particular focus on Highway 14/South Center Street and US 30 Bypass; Highway 14/North 3rd Avenue and County Highway E35/Main Street. Develop a plan to keep the City's gateways attractive by maintaining and enhancing signage, lighting, landscaping or other features at City entrances.

Policy 2: Support efforts to improve the appearance of commercial developments along City highways, within downtown, at key entry points and industrial parks through use of building rehabilitation, screening and landscaping.

Policy 3: Seek necessary funds to implement signage plans designed to direct residents and visitors to key community features, activity and recreation areas and the downtown.

Goal 3: Work with properties that detract from the established image goals and quality of life.

Rationale: A few blighted properties can bring down a block or neighborhood. Enforcing community standards on the worst cases will do the most for community appearance.

Policy 1: Requie compliance with all city codes through effective enforcement strategies and follow through directly with the property and/or building owner.

Policy 2: Promote private reinvestment in Marshalltown.

Policy 3: Provide assistance and information with regard to available programs that may assist property owners in building renovation, expansion, enhancement and beautification.

Policy 4: Develop a plan for the use of incentives, if available, for infill development, removal of substandard buildings, and consolidation of land.

Policy 5: Promote establishment of neighborhood associations, through city supported efforts, as a mean of promoting neighborhood maintenance, safety and reinvestment.

Goal 4: Promote community spirit and unity to enhance Marshalltown's character and identity.

Rationale: Marshalltown has a dynamic and diverse population with strong community involvement by its residents providing opportunities to expand cross-culturally. This engagement should be fostered and encouraged to continue into the next generation.

Policy 1: Encourage volunteerism, participation in community activities and acceptance of City leadership positions.

Policy 2: Encourage and utilize residential participation in local decision-making processes.

Policy 3: Create opportunities through community, school or other civic events that provide for increased interaction and communication between residents of all ages and cultural heritages.

Policy 4: Improve communication and interaction between the City and its business community through active participation with the Chamber of Commerce and other civic groups.

Policy 5: Protect and enhance important historical and natural resources as a means to maintain the integrity, heritage and local character of the community.

Policy 6: Protect both the general well-being and individual choices of Marshalltown residents. Ensure that decisions that are made by the community reflect the needs of current residents and business owners.

Goal 5: Enhance community and neighborhood, health, safety and livability.

Rationale: A sense of security and livability is important to the quality of a neighborhood and maintaining property values, and attracting employees to live and work in our community.

Policy 1: Maintain and ensure strong community support for the City's public safety departments.

Policy 2: Promote effective cross cultural communication between residents and the City's Fire, Emergency Medical Response/Ambulance and Police Departments

Policy 3: Encourage, promote and support neighborhood organizations in Marshalltown.

Policy 4: Embrace all cultural heritages present in Marshalltown through communication and interaction.

Policy 5 Require the creation of parks, trails and green space within new developments to ensure that residential neighborhoods have adequate access to park and recreation facilities, green space and community amenities.

Land Use – Commercial

Goal 1: Expand and diversify the City's tax base by supporting existing businesses and the redevelopment of existing commercial properties and encouraging new commercial development to enable Marshalltown to fulfill its role as a regional trade and service center.

Rationale: Support for existing businesses and continued growth of commercial businesses through redevelopment supports the City's residential population with jobs and services, provides an increased tax base, and attracts new residents and businesses.

Policy 1: Provide for sufficient commercial land to accommodate growth and business expansion.

Policy 2: Promote and seek to expand a broad range of, retailing, entertainment, retail and service uses within the commercial areas of Marshalltown.

Policy 3: Proactively understand existing business and recognize their needs and create ways to support and retain these existing businesses.

Policy 4: Promote the redevelopment and expansion of existing businesses within the City to obtain a higher level of sales and business attraction.

Policy 5: Promote private reinvestment in the commercial properties by offering assistance, when appropriate, to facilitate the private investment.

Policy 6: Support the expansion, growth and relocation needs of all businesses.

Policy 7: Promote pedestrian walkways and green spaces with commercial zones.

Goal 2: Encourage the redevelopment of commercial sites that display building deterioration, obsolete site design, land use compatibility issues and a high level of vacancies.

Rationale: Aged retail areas offer a great opportunity for redevelopment that not only provides for new goods and services for residents to enjoy, but increased tax base utilizing existing infrastructure.

Policy 1: Identify and coordinate redevelopment efforts of underutilized commercial areas to create site designs that promote attractive shopping environments, easy accessibility, and wide range of business users. Site specific redevelopment planning efforts should include the mall, 13th Street retail area, sites along Center Street, North Third Avenue, Linn Creek/Center Street Area and Iowa Avenue and other scattered commercial nodes throughout the city.

Policy 2: Encourage through redevelopment efforts, specific retail and service providers that would compliment the existing commercial land uses.

Policy 3: Consider mixed use alternatives in redevelopment of commercial sites to create a higher level of activity, community gathering spaces and appropriate residential land uses.

Policy 4: Create an enforce city ordinances for all commercial areas including building and signage design guidelines, streetscaping, and the inclusion of green space, trails and sidewalks that connect commercial areas to neighborhoods.

Goal 2: Improve and enhance Downtown Marshalltown in its role as the hub the of City.

Rationale: Downtown is an important historical and commercial core of the City that provides a unique setting and community identity.

Policy 1: Promote downtown as the center of commercial activity and social interaction through support of existing business and the attraction of new businesses and events to downtown.

Policy 2: Develop strategies, including financing mechanisms, to stimulate rehabilitation or redevelopment of under-utilized or vacant sites in the downtown.

Policy 3: Inventory and coordinate the planning of all parking facilities within the downtown, including consideration for safe and attractive pedestrian and biking routes.

Policy 4: Continue to implement City Center plan for providing housing opportunities in the downtown area.

Policy 5: Promote revitalization of Tall Corn Towers for housing, retail and conference space.

Land Use- Industrial

Goal 1: Retain and expand Marshalltown's industrial land uses to ensure a diverse tax base and local employment opportunities.

Rationale: Marshalltown's existing industrial uses are an essential provider of jobs and tax base to the local economy.

Policy 1: Encourage and facilitate the expansion of existing industries.

Policy 2: Examine and modify city ordinances as a means of providing site design flexibility to accommodate existing industrial expansion.

Policy 3: Protect industrial land from incompatible encroachment and development.

Policy 4: Enhance communication between MEDIC, City and County with local industries to track available building space and changing industrial needs.

Policy 5: Require site design to ensure high quality industrial construction, building durability, an aesthetically attractive appearance and pedestrian and bicycle accessibility.

Policy 6: Attract new industrial businesses to fully utilize the City's industrial areas.

Land Use-Housing

Goal 1: Provide a variety of housing types, densities and choices to meet the life-cycle housing needs of residents.

Rationale: Incorporating a wide variety of densities that also supports a range of housing styles for home ownership and rental housing in attached and detached formats increases the opportunities for meeting life-cycle, market and workforce housing needs.

Policy 1: Through new development, infill and redevelopment efforts, increase life-cycle housing opportunities in the City.

Policy 2: Encourage private development through the use of federal, state, county, local and other available resources and incentives to promote varied housing opportunities.

Policy 3: Develop zoning districts and standards to correspond to the land use plan to ensure developers can prepare plans to meet the intended densities.

Policy 4: Promote creative use of site planning, building design and flexible development of infill lots to increase density and provide greater housing opportunities.

Policy 5: Explore and support the potential of downtown buildings to provide market rate housing and additional housing choices.

Goal 2: Improve availability of workforce and life-cycle housing.

Rationale: To thrive, Marshalltown must respond to the housing needs of its residents, from entry level through retirement and beyond.

Policy 1: Work with developers to identify innovative strategies and incentives for providing all housing types and expanded choices for all residents.

Policy 2: Use redevelopment tools made possible by various federal, state and non-profit programs or City-funded activities to revitalize aging residential properties.

Policy 3: Explore ways, methods and resources to create and preserve long-term affordable housing ownership, such as housing trust funds.

Policy 4: Explore opportunities for housing ownership made available by various federal, state, local government and other non-profit agencies.

Goal 3: Maintain or enhance existing housing stock to ensure a high-quality environment in all residential neighborhoods through code enforcement.

Rationale: A strong base of existing housing stock, in good condition, maintains property value in neighborhoods while also providing an important source of moderate and affordable housing.

Policy 1: Promote the improvement of the existing housing stock and encourage the rehabilitation or redevelopment of substandard housing.

Policy 2: Encourage in-fill housing where appropriate.

Policy 3: Prepare and enforce a City-wide housing maintenance code utilizing staff inspectors to maintain housing stock.

Policy 4: Encourage the preservation of historic structures through strengthening the site plan review board.

Policy 5: Promote community education resource information to residents on regarding responsible home ownership including home maintenance, repair, renovation, expansion and assistance opportunities.

Community Facilities/Recreation

Goal 1: Promote the creation and use of community facilities for all Marshalltown residents.

Rationale: Facilities serving a variety of legitimate public needs are a hallmark of successful communities and will serve to enhance Marshalltown's quality of life.

Policy 1: Promote the use of all existing athletic and community facilities in a manner that distinguishes them as gathering places for Marshalltown residents and visitors.

Policy 2: Explore and support opportunities for public art and related artist activities within the park system and entire community.

Policy 3: Examine existing facilities for multi-use functions in order to provide facilities for residents changing active lifestyles and cultural needs.

Policy 4: Explore funding for new facilities and the maintenance of existing facilities using creative approaches including public-private partnerships.

Policy 5: Involve the residents of the community in determining the types of youth recreational programs and facilities most needed.

Goal 2: Preserve and promote a park system and green spaces that enhances the well-being of all residents of the City.

Rationale: Areas for active and passive recreation and green space enjoyment is essential to the quality of life for residents of Marshalltown.

Policy 1: Ensure that there is an equitable distribution of parks, green spaces, and trails with a balance of active and passive recreational facilities throughout the City.

Policy 2: Identify areas necessary for addition, expansion or connection of the pedestrian and bike trail network between neighborhoods, schools and community facilities.

Policy 3: Update and replace park equipment and facilities to assure safety and accessibility and to attract users to Marshalltown's park system.

Policy 4: Explore and support funding for implementation of the Linn Creek Riverwalk plan.

Policy 5: Develop Riverview Park with additional recreational amenities, and in the process beautify the north entrance to the community.

Policy 6: Partner with as many community groups and organizations as possible to enhance limited resources and to facilitate a wide array of programs that would not be possible exclusively by the City.

Goal 3: Promote an active and healthy community.

Rationale: Community planning and incorporating healthy community design can have effective benefits to resident's physical and mental health and enhance attractiveness of our workforce.

Policy 1: Continue the development of pedestrian trails and bikeways that meet the recreational needs of citizens, and facilitate biking and walking as a means of transportation.

Policy 2: Continue healthy living initiatives including Pioneering Healthier Communities, Blue Zone Coalition and Project and others aimed at local efforts towards community wellness and health.

Policy 3: Provide convenient access to healthy food for all residents by allowing and encouraging farmers' markets and urban agriculture owned properties such as schoolyards, recreation centers and neighborhood parks.

Policy 4: Explore implementation of sustainability planning efforts through updates to the city ordinances and administrative policies and procedures.

Transportation

Goal 1: Develop and maintain a transportation and pedestrian system that accommodates the safe and efficient movement of people and goods by motorized vehicles, bicycles, or walking.

Rationale: Because Marshalltown has the potential for new growth, policy makers will face decisions that will affect the existing and future transportation facilities.

Policy 1: Plan for, design, and construct roadways to accommodate existing traffic demand and anticipated traffic growth.

Policy 2: Integrate pedestrian and bicycle trails into the design of roadway facilities throughout the community.

Policy 3: Promote cooperation between the City, Marshall County, IDOT, private industry and other agencies involved in transportation planning, to provide the most efficient transportation system for Marshalltown.

Policy 4: Review financing policies for street, sidewalk, and trail construction, replacement and maintenance.

Policy 5: Investigate new financing opportunities for pedestrian and biking enhancements to the transportation network.