## CHAPTER II
### PAST DEVELOPMENT AND LAND USE CONFORMANCE WITH PLANS

The following list summarizes the County's previous plans relating to land use:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>YEAR</th>
<th>PLAN</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1966</td>
<td>Land Use Plan</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Central Business District Plan</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Public Buildings Plan</td>
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<td>Schools, Parks and Recreation Plan</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Public Utilities Plan</td>
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<td>1969</td>
<td>Major Highways and Thoroughfares Plan</td>
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<tr>
<td>1970</td>
<td>Land Use Plan</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Marion County Housing Report</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1971</td>
<td>Comprehensive Area-Wide Water and Sanitary Sewerage Plan</td>
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<tr>
<td>1972</td>
<td>Solid Waste Report</td>
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<td>Marion County Housing Plan</td>
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<tr>
<td>1973</td>
<td>Recommended Storm Drainage Facilities Plan</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Marion County Housing Plan</td>
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<tr>
<td>1975</td>
<td>Housing Assistance Plan</td>
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<td>1976</td>
<td>Housing Assistance Plan</td>
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<td>Criminal Justice Plan</td>
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<td>1977</td>
<td>Marion County Housing Plan</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Land Use Plan</td>
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</table>
1980  EDA Overall Economic Development Program  
Prospect, Caledonia, Green Camp, and LaRue Land Use and Housing Plans
1981  Transportation Plan Update
1982  Subdivision Regulation Update
1984  Marion Economic Development Strategy
1986  911 Implementation Plan
1988  Downtown Marion Plan
1989  Business Retention and Expansion Plan (RE Study with Chamber of Commerce)
1992  Preliminary Plan for Airport Industrial Park (with Airport Commission and Wilbur-Smith as consultant)
1994  City of Marion Community Housing Improvement Strategy
1998  Marion Outer Perimeter Transportation Study (ms Consultants)
1999  Farmland Plan (included Land Use Plan update)
2003  Marion Campus Master Plan (OSUM and Marion Technical College)
2004  Barks Road Development Plan  
Marion City Community Housing Development Strategy
2005  Marion County Community Housing Development Strategy
These plans have been followed with varying degrees of success.

1966 LAND USE PLAN

The 1966 Land Use Plan was the first land use plan to be done in Marion County. It was basically a much needed descriptive work on the land uses and development patterns of the City of Marion and surrounding area. The plan did evaluate and set goals for the development of the urban section of the county and these have been implemented by the Subdivision Regulations for Marion County and the City of Marion. In addition, the plan was implemented through the new zoning code for the City of Marion adopted in 1970, which generally followed the suggested land use area designations on the new map, except for specific minor modifications.

1970 LAND USE PLAN

While not the first land use plan published in Marion County, this was the first land use plan covering the entire county. It updated the 1966 plan for the urban area and it carried out the first analysis of existing and planned land use, for the remaining portion of the Marion County. As part of the project, an inventory of property and land use in the whole county was completed. In addition, background data on the natural conditions of the county were summarized. Growth projections were made and a plan was formulated for trying to keep growth in areas where the extension of urban utilities would be less expensive.

1977 LAND USE PLAN

The 1977 Land Use Plan provided an update of the 1970 Land Use Plan. Analysis focused on the effectiveness of the 1970 plan, on population and economic growth trends, on developing land use trends, and suggested policies to deal with these needs.

The report found commercial and industrial policies to be generally wise, but noted the requirement for additional commercial and industrial public infrastructure. Residential land use recommendations identified the need for creating more readily developable multi-family zoned land and toward forming selective policies to encourage more concentrated single-family housing development.
The report identified the need for a county soil survey and state enabling legislation permitting improved agricultural tax districts. Suggestions were also made to improve both professional input into land use planning decisions and citizen understanding of the planning process.

The following sections describe in more detail the degree of conformance that occurred with the 1977 plan.

**Residential Conformance**

Many of the 1977 Land Use Plan policies related to single-family homes and multi-family housing have been successfully implemented during the years following the adoption of the land use plan.

**Single-Family Housing**

Single-family home lots scattered throughout the county was identified as an issue in the 1977 Land Use Plan. In this instance, numerous single-family home lots were developed along existing township or county roads throughout the county and strip development (large number of homes developed in a linear fashion along one or both sides of the road) became prevalent especially in Pleasant and Richland Townships. This haphazard development pattern not only consumed farmland, but also made it expensive to serve areas of strip development with public utilities, should the need ever arise in the future because of the large frontages associated with many of these lots. Also, this type of development could bring residents into farming areas that truly do not understand the nature of farming, which may lead to conflict between residents and farm operators.

Policies of the plan sought to try and concentrate single-family home lots in moderate to high density major subdivisions preferably near established urban areas. Subdivision Regulation enforcement was adjusted to not approve a variance from the Planning Commission for any new single-family home lot developed, within a potential urban area for sanitary sewer or water (certain number of homes within a specified geographic distance) unless there was a hardship. Also, the review process was streamlined to make it easier for a developer to pursue the major subdivision route. In addition, several township zoning resolutions were adjusted to limit the number of small residential lots that could be created from the larger parent parcel. However, this split limitation could be waived if the developer followed the major subdivision route in developing residential lots or had the property rezoned to another residential zoning designation.

For the past several years, Marion City’s Residential Community Reinvestment Area policy has helped encourage some new single-family home construction on the west and north sides of the city.

Over the past 32 years, the subdivision and zoning regulatory adjustments noted above
coupled with “smart growth policies” have been a success with regard to moderate and high density single-family housing being developed in numerous major subdivisions located primarily in Marion City, Marion Township, the west central and north western portions of Pleasant Township, Grandview Estates, western Claridon Township, and various villages. In addition, the single-family home lot strip development prevalent in Pleasant and Richland Townships was essentially eliminated under the zoning regulations governing lot splits. Also, Marion City’s Residential Community Reinvestment Area policy has had some success in encouraging new single-family home construction on the west and north sides of the city.

### Multi-family Housing

Prior to 1977, very little land was zoned for apartment units. The 1977 Land Use Plan identified a community need for more multi-family housing. In the years after the adoption of the plan, Marion City and Marion Township made adjustments to their zoning maps that allowed for the construction of numerous new apartment units at various locations with public utilities. For the past several years, Marion City’s Residential Community Reinvestment Area policy has helped encourage new apartment construction on the west and north sides of the city.

Today there are many apartment unit complexes scattered throughout the Marion Urban Area providing numerous housing opportunities for persons of all income ranges. In addition, there is vacant land located in Marion City and Marion Township that is zoned for apartment units. These areas are located off of Barks Road along the south side of Marion City and have access to public utilities.

### Other Residential

#### Mobile Home Parks

Since the mid 1970's, only one new mobile home park has been constructed within Marion County and several other existing mobile home parks have expanded. The new mobile home park (Northwoods) is located in Marion City. The new and expanded existing mobile home parks are located near or within established urban areas and conform with the location policies outlined in the 1977 Land Use Plan.

#### Condominiums

Although not very prevalent in Marion County in the 1970's and 1980's, condominiums have become more popular in recent years. Numerous moderate to high density condominium developments have been constructed within Marion City, eastern Marion Township, and western Claridon Township. The locations of these condominium developments complies with the policies outlined in the 1977 Land Use Plan.
Use Plan, which sought to concentrate moderate to high density housing developments near established urban areas.

**Total Residential Conformance**

Over the last 32 years, the residential development policies adopted in the 1977 Land Use Plan and resulting amendments to the Subdivision Regulations and several township zoning resolutions as well as “smart growth strategies” have channeled moderate to high density housing developments into or near established urban areas. The new subdivision and zoning regulations also helped to limit strip development occurring primarily in the southern townships of the county. Thus, the overall residential development strategy in the 1977 Land Use Plan has been a success. Besides being a positive for long term land use, this has also enabled many more residents to be served economically by public sewer and water systems.

**COMMERCIAL CONFORMANCE**

The 1977 Land Use Plan noted, for the most part, commercial development conformed to the 1970 plan. Most new businesses located in areas identified for commercial uses. An unexpected consequence was a significant number of businesses created new curb cuts onto existing public roads rather than grouping together and sharing common driveways. The 1977 Land Use Plan credited township zoning in the area around Marion as a limiting factor in helping to contain the scattering of commercial development which could have become a problem.

One policy to come out of the 1977 Land Use Plan was to continue encouraging commercial development within and next to existing urban areas in designated commercial areas. This policy coupled with “smart growth” practices has been successful in directing commercial development into vacant areas zoned or rezoned for commercial use with appropriate public utilities in eastern Marion Township, western Claridon Township, and on east Barks Road in Marion City (see Map 22). Also Marion City Council, Marion City Planning Commission, and the Marion City Board of Zoning Appeals have worked with developers over the years and have been successful in redeveloping numerous existing commercial sites with new businesses in Marion City.

Another policy to come out of the 1977 Land Use Plan was to reduce the number of commercial driveways on public roads and where possible, establish common driveways used by several businesses. This policy has been successfully implemented for new businesses especially those that located on state highways in eastern Marion Township and western Claridon Township. The Marion County Regional Planning Commission, Marion County Engineer’s Office, Marion Township Zoning Commission/Trustees, and Claridon Township Zoning Commission/Trustees have worked with ODOT over the past 32 years and have been able to significantly limit the number of driveway requests for the former Kmart property, Walmart, Meijer, Legacy Plaza, Menards, East Lawn, Presidential Center, and New Park Drive commercial developments and where possible encouraged cross access easements for vehicular traffic between the various commercial centers.
Map 22

New Major Commercial / Industrial Areas 1977 to 2010
Marion City Council, Marion City Planning Commission, and the Marion City Engineer’s Office are also aware of the need to limit commercial driveway access onto public roads and have recognized this in the approval of several recent major commercial subdivisions on east Barks Road. In addition, the city has been able to realign the main driveways between two existing commercial centers on the east and west side of Delaware Avenue through the use of a commercial TIF agreement associated with the new Delaware Avenue Walgreens.

Overall, the majority of new commercial development over the past 32 years has been in conformance with the commercial development policies of the 1977 Land Use Plan.

**INDUSTRIAL CONFORMANCE**

The 1977 Land Use Plan indicated the majority of industrial expansion and new facilities in the early- to mid-1970's were in conformance with the 1970 Land Use Plan. For the most part, the new industrial facility sites were located near existing urban areas, had adequate utilities and access to transportation systems, and were in minimum conflict to surrounding land uses. Zoning was credited as a factor in preserving areas suitable for industry and preventing the scattering of industry around the Marion Urban Area.

In order to make Marion more competitive at the regional, state, and national levels in attracting new industrial development, the 1977 Land Use Plan identified the need to open large tracts of vacant land for new industrial development. The idea was that these sites would be “shovel ready” having adequate utilities in place and be located near rail and arterial roads. Areas identified for industrial development were located northwest of Marion City in Marion Township and the Marion City Airport in Claridon Township (see Map 22). While these areas had access to rail and arterial roads, they lacked adequate sanitary sewer service.

In 1985, the Regional Planning Commission staff applied for and received federal Economic Development Administration monies and a Department of Development Economic Development Grant which allowed Marion County and Marion City to build the Northwest Interceptor Sewer. This sewer was instrumental in the development of what would become the Dual Rail Industrial Park. In the mid-1990's, the Dual Rail Industrial Park site was annexed to Marion City which enabled the city to apply for and receive a Department of Development Grant and a low interest Department of Transportation loan which allowed the city to build Kellogg Parkway. At the time the park was created, tax increment financing (TIF) was established to repay the Department of Transportation loan and build a fund for future public improvements to the park and surrounding area. The park’s first industry was LTV Steel now ArcelorMittal. In addition to ArcelorMittal, the park hosts three other industries: US Yachiyo, Marion Industries, and Sakamura.

The other area identified for new industrial development was at the Marion City Airport. The Northwest Interceptor Sewer was extended to this area in the early 1990's. In 1995, Marion City applied for and received a Department of Development Economic Development Grant which constructed the first part of Innovation Drive. In 2001, Marion City applied for and received another
Department of Development Economic Development Grant which allowed the city to finish the
construction of Innovation Drive. The Airport Industrial Park is presently home to two industries:
Mopac and Silverline Windows.

Recently, the Northwest Interceptor Sewer was extended to the Marion Industrial Center to replace
an outdated force main. This sewer will allow for future industrial expansion at the site. One new
industry to locate at the site since the extension of the sewer is Marion Intermodal.

The industrial development policies that came out of the 1977 Land Use Plan have been successfully
implemented over the past 32 years. Industrial development has taken place at locations within the
Marion Urban Area at sites with appropriate utilities and access to rail and arterial roads. In
addition, this new industrial development has had a minimal impact on the surrounding land uses.

ZONING CONFORMANCE

One key tool necessary for the implementation of any land use plan is zoning. The residential,
commercial, and industrial development policies identified in the 1977 Land Use Plan could not have
been successfully implemented without the help of zoning. When the 1977 Land Use Plan was
adopted, the following subdivisions had zoning:

Big Island Township
Claridon Township
Grand Prairie Township
Marion Township
Pleasant Township
Salt Rock Township (just adopted in 1976)
Marion City
Caledonia Village (1976)

The concept of county wide zoning was discussed at various meetings in the county in the mid-to
late-1970s, but did not gain much acceptance. Two issues of concern were identified with the
implementation of countywide zoning. They were:

1. The townships with zoning preferred to have local control.
2. The townships which did not have zoning were cautious about self-administered controls let
   alone controls administered by county officials.

The 1977 Land Use Plan credited zoning with stopping scattered commercial and industrial
development in the Marion Urban Area.

Since the adoption of the 1977 Land Use Plan, the following subdivisions have adopted zoning:

Grand Township
Montgomery Township
Prospect Township
Richland Township
Scott Township
Tully Township
Waldo Township
Green Camp Village
LaRue Village
Prospect Village
Waldo Village

Recently, a Green Camp Township zoning plan was defeated by township residents. Concern over property rights seemed to be a major issue.

The Regional Planning Commission staff has worked hard with the county’s many subdivisions on the issue of zoning especially in relation to the county’s 1977 Land Use Plan. For the most part, the generalized zoning shown in Map 23 is a direct reflection of the plan’s policies related to residential, commercial, and industrial development. The plan also recognized the importance of agriculture to Marion’s economy. Through zoning high density residential, commercial, and industrial uses have been concentrated within and around the Marion Urban Area and the seven incorporated villages. In the more rural areas of the county, zoning for lower intensity uses such as low density residential have been developed, which are generally compatible with agricultural activities.

Currently, the Regional Planning staff is working on a land use plan for Pleasant Township which will involve potential changes to their zoning map and zoning resolution.

**SUBDIVISION CONFORMANCE**

Subdivision regulation administration is not intended to necessarily control the location of land uses, but sets standards for development which then must be met. The subdivision regulations and the Marion County Health Department have been very successful thus far in insuring that development in outlying areas not served by public sanitary sewer or public water have adequate lot size to help forestall health problems. Future access for streets has been provided and new platted subdivisions have met high standards. As these new subdivisions become parts of developed areas, they will serve residents and the public for years and for the most part will maintain their value.

As alluded to under residential conformance, one problem identified in the 1977 Land Use Plan was gaining some control over scattered and strip development in the county. Subdivision regulation enforcement was adjusted to not approve a variance from the Planning Commission for any new single-family home lot developed within a potential urban area for sanitary sewer or water (certain number of homes within a specified geographic distance) unless there was a hardship. In addition, the subdivision regulation review process was streamlined to make it easier for a developer to pursue the major subdivision route.
The subdivision regulations have also been a vehicle by which the Planning Commission has been able to reduce the number of commercial driveways on public roads and where possible establish common driveways used by several businesses. This was a policy that came out of the 1977 Land Use Plan and has been successfully implemented for new businesses especially those that located on state highways in eastern Marion Township and western Claridon Township.

The Subdivision Regulations have from time to time been amended to incorporate new construction standards or new requirements from the Marion Public Health Department. The most recent amendment was in 2001. Presently, the Marion City Engineer’s Office and Marion County Engineer’s Office are proposing amendments pertaining to storm water drainage calculations and road pavement specifications.

Variance of Subdivision Regulations

One problem identified in the 1977 Land Use Plan involved the number of variances granted from the subdivision regulations. From 1970 to 1976 the Planning Commission granted a total 128 variances for minor and major subdivisions averaging 21.3 variances a year. Data from this time period indicates the most common type of minor land division variance granted was related to lot size while the most common type of major land division variance granted was related to Potential Urban Area for Public Water. In the years after adoption of the 1977 Land Use Plan, the staff has worked with the Planning Commission to enforce the subdivision regulations.

Regional Planning Commission minutes from 1989 to July 2009 indicate a total of 111 variances were granted from the Subdivision Regulations averaging 5.6 variances a year. Comparing the variance data from the two time periods it would appear the staff and Planning Commission have been successful in enforcing and minimizing the number of variances granted from the subdivision regulations.

The following table lists variances granted by type and number for the 1989 to July 2009 time period:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variance Type</th>
<th>Number</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Potential Urban Area for Sanitary Sewer Variances</td>
<td>37</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lot Frontage Variances</td>
<td>32</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lot Shape Variances</td>
<td>19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Elevation Variances</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Block Length Variances</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Minimum Lot Size Variances</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Drainage Requirement Variance</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Road Setback Variance</td>
<td>1</td>
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<tr>
<td>Sidewalk Variance</td>
<td>1</td>
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A review of the above table reveals the top three variances granted are related to Potential Urban Area for Sanitary Sewer, lot frontage, and lot shape. These three variances comprise about 80% of all variances granted during this time period.

CONFORMANCE WITH OTHER PLANS

Major Thoroughfares Plan - 1969

This is a long range plan from the late 1960's that analyzed the existing Marion Urban Area road network and made recommendations for a future primary perimeter road system, widening of certain existing primary roads, and targeted certain existing secondary roads for extension. Throughout the years various land use decisions and major subdivision developments have been adjusted to conform with the Major Thoroughfares Plan.

This plan was updated in 1981. The update prioritized the construction of various segments of the future primary perimeter road system, widening of certain existing primary roads, and targeted specific secondary roads for extension. The update also included new elements such as the widening of the eastern end of Barks Road, extension of three existing secondary roads, and a new road connector on the east side of Marion City between Carolyn Drive and Edgefield Boulevard. This connector provides a north-south road link between S.R. 309 and Marion-Edison Road to the developing S.R. 95 commercial areas.

However, the idea of a connector road between Carolyn Drive and Edgefield Boulevard was abandoned when it was realized that too high a volume of traffic would use these residential subdivision roads as a means to reach the commercial areas on S.R. 95. In 1999 and 2000, the Regional Planning Commission Transportation Committee reinforced the development idea of University Drive, originally shown on the 1969 Major Thoroughfare Plan, as a high development priority and endorsed the extension of Jamesway Drive to Marion-Edison Road.

Four benefits of University Drive and Jamesway Drive connectors are:

1. University Drive provides the north-south connector between S.R. 309 and Marion-Edison Road to the S.R. 95 commercial areas lost when the connector road idea between Carolyn Drive and Edgefield Boulevard was deemed to be impracticable.

2. These connectors provide a more direct means to reach the S.R. 95 commercial areas especially for residents residing in the southern and southeastern portions of the county that presently drive through existing residential neighborhoods to reach the S.R. 95 commercial areas.

3. These connectors will help alleviate some of the through traffic using residential subdivisions, especially University Heights, to reach the S.R. 95 commercial areas.
4. These connectors help lessen the back and fourth traffic on S.R. 95. Currently several elements of the 1969 Major Thoroughfare Plan have been implemented or are in the process of being implemented. A residential developer has platted the remaining portion of Jamesway Drive between where it currently ends and Marion-Edison Road. However, due to the economy the developer has asked for and been granted a time extension to delay the development of this subdivision. Hopefully, this section of Jamesway Drive will be built in the next few years.

A portion of University Drive between S.R. 95 and S.R. 309 was built several years ago as part of the East Lawn Commercial Subdivision. The Marion County Commissioners plan to complete the balance of University Drive between where it currently ends and S.R. 309 using a combination of Issue I grant and loan monies and general obligation bonds. The loan and bonds will be repaid through commercial TIF’s established in this area of S.R. 95 over the past several years. The county has also been working with Ohio State University officials at the Marion Campus to locate University Drive along the west side of the campus.

Construction of one segment of the primary perimeter road system has recently begun. The Northwest Industrial Connector Road will link S.R. 95 with Marion-Williamsport Road. This road will allow industrial traffic serving Whirlpool and other industries located on the west side of the city a more direct and convenient route than the current route, which takes some west side industrial traffic through downtown Marion City. This road is being funded by both Marion City and Marion County and involves many different funding sources: Issue I grant and loan monies, Rail Commission monies, several Dual Rail Park industrial TIF’s, and Federal Stimulus monies.

**Marion County Farmland Plan - 1999**

In 1999, the Marion County Agricultural Plan Task Force with the help of the Regional Planning Commission Staff and the OSU Extension Office prepared a Farmland Plan for Marion County. The purpose of the plan was to develop local policies for the preservation of the county’s prime farmland which is approximately 95% of the county’s land area.

The plan recognized, the fact, that while the county has large areas of good soil and good growing conditions, the county does not have any unique pockets of soil nor do we have areas of unique farmland because of climate or geography. Because of this situation, the Farmland Plan recommended not investing any local public monies (although state programs would be welcome) into saving any individual farms through preservation programs but:

1. Keep high density residential, commercial, and industrial growth next to Marion City or the villages through careful sanitary sewer and highway extension policies, i.e. “Smart Growth.” Marion has already had some success with “Smart Growth” based on policies established in the 1970 and 1977 Land Use Plans.
2. Encourage urban in-fill through zoning, public works projects and brownfield redevelopment. This is also now part of what is called “Smart Growth.”

3. Recommended the Ohio Environmental Protection Agency (OEPA) mandate inspections of rural septic systems, especially aerators, so that homeowners and taxpayers in the future are not hit with large expenses for otherwise unnecessary sewer extensions out into the county, which would then open the door for high density sprawl.

4. Recommend the State of Ohio strengthen the ability of township zoning and county subdivision regulations to limit the number of land divisions in rural areas. This is seen as more effective than large lot zoning, which raises the price of housing and ends up using extra acreage. The intent is to allow land divisions for people who truly want to move out to the country and understand country living versus encouraging a large number of semi-urban developments lacking urban service.

The Farmland Plan recognized the net effect of the above policies will be to:

1. Help preserve the farmland economy across the whole country versus selected areas.

2. Reduce the likelihood of high future assessments on rural landowners, farmers, and homeowners out in the country.

3. Save tax dollars on infrastructure.

4. For the time being, save tax dollars by not purchasing farmland or development rights of farmland.

The Farmland Plan also recognized two special situations:

1. Wetland Compensation Development

Future land being purchased by the state for wetland development should be monitored. Local counties and townships should be given a voice in this process.

2. Factory Farms

The committee is size neutral on farms, recognizing that larger farms for both crops and livestock production will be the future trend.

On factory farms, however, some newer reasonable laws are needed before a few bad operators completely tear apart rural communities eventually hurting all farmers.
Besides changes in OEPA and Department of Agriculture rules, some limited local health and zoning review is badly needed based on projected impact.

Shortly after the completion of the Farmland Plan in 1999, the Marion County Regional Planning Commission amended the 1977 Land Use Plan by adopting the Farmland Plan as a land use component for future development decisions in the county. It is worth noting that the development policies and recommendations outlined in the Farmland Plan were already being implemented by the Regional Planning Commission in its land use decisions and development strategies prior to 1999.

Mitigation Plan for Natural Disasters - 2006

In 2006, the Marion County Mitigation Planning Committee with the help of the Marion City / County EMA Director and the Regional Planning Commission staff prepared the Mitigation Plan for Natural Disasters for Marion County. The purpose of the plan was to identify structures and populations within the county that are most at risk from the adverse impacts of natural disasters. The plan identified the various natural disasters that could impact the county: Class II dam failure, drought/extreme heat, earthquake, flood, hailstorm, severe winter storm, tornado, and windstorm.

The Marion County Mitigation Planning Committee analyzed and rated each of the identified natural disasters for mitigation potential. Flood, severe winter storm, and tornado all ranked high for mitigation potential. Extreme heat ranked moderate and all other natural disasters ranked low for mitigation potential. Mitigation goals, activities, and actions plans were developed for the natural disasters that received a high rank for mitigation potential. The plan asked the Marion County Regional Planning Commission, to integrate, as necessary mitigation components within existing Marion County plans and to consider supporting the possible development of a county wide building code to deal with making structures and buildings more wind resistant.

The plan was adopted by various political subdivisions in Marion County and approved by FEMA in 2006. In early 2007, the Marion County Regional Planning Commission amended the 1977 Land Use Plan by adopting the Mitigation Plan for Natural Disasters as a land use component for future development decisions in the county. Prior to the adoption of this plan, the Regional Planning Commission worked to reduce flood hazards within the county to structures and people by discouraging high density or non-appropriate development in flood prone areas. Sometime in 2011, the Planning Commission staff will begin working with townships that have flood hazard areas within their jurisdictions to adjust their zoning resolutions to develop conservation regulations for these flood areas.

Barks Road Economic Development Plan - 2004

This plan (see Appendix C) identified the economic importance of the Barks Road corridor.
for redevelopment of existing industrial facilities and commercial buildings and future
growth of industry, commercial, office, and residential development on the south side of
Marion City and Marion Township. This plan identified 10 infrastructure needs within this
corridor that are critical to continued growth along Barks Road. Depending on location,
either the Marion City Planning Commission or the Regional Planning Commission will
have jurisdiction for review and approval of a new development.

Recently, several infrastructure improvements have been completed on Barks Road. Firstly,
two recent developments within Marion City on Barks Road (Center Park and Barks
Crossing) utilized TIF’s to complete necessary Barks Road infrastructure improvements
along each development’s frontage. These and future TIF’s on Barks Road will be able to
help complete the identified infrastructure needs within this entire corridor. Secondly, due
to increased rail traffic the state recently completed the construction of an overpass over the
Norfolk and Southern Railroad tracks located at the western end of Barks Road. This
overpass allows county residents residing in the southwestern areas of the county unimpeded
access to medical, office, retail, and food services on the south side of Marion City and
Marion Township.

Recognizing Barks Road is of major importance to the continued growth of the south side
of Marion City and Marion Township, both the Marion City Planning Commission and the
Regional Planning Commission have adopted this plan and added it as a component to the
1977 Land Use Plan when reviewing redevelopment and new development in this corridor.
In addition, Marion City Council and the Marion County Commissioners have adopted
general TIF policies for new development throughout Marion City and Marion County.

City of Marion: Community Housing Investment Strategy (CHIS)- 2004

The Community Housing Investment Strategy (CHIS) for Marion City is a strategy dealing
with the needs of low- to moderate-income and special needs households. The strategy
covers issues related to owner- and renter-occupied housing improvement and rental
vouchers.

Specifically, the Regional Planning Commission administers the Community Housing
Improvement Program (CHIP) for Marion City. This program focuses on owner- and renter-
occupied housing repair for households with an income of less than 50% or 80% (Section
8 limits) of the area median income or special needs. The program addresses mechanical,
structural, accessibility, and minor lead issues. Grants and deferred loans for home repair
and private owner rehabilitation programs address minor and major housing needs for owner
occupied and upgrades to rental housing is encouraged with matching grants from the private
rental rehabilitation program and tenant based rental assistance. In addition, the Regional
Planning Commission administers the local CDBG fair housing program and various other
programs aimed at educating low-income home owners on foreclosure and predatory lending.
Since one of the main goals of the Community Housing Investment Strategy is the improvement of the existing owner- and rental-housing stock in Marion City, this strategy conforms with the “smart growth policies” of the 1977 Land Use Plan. As noted above, these polices identified the need to redevelop or improve existing properties and buildings within existing urban areas.

The city, county and Marion County Regional Planning Commission also are represented on the Continuum of Care to Prevent Homelessness Committee that deals with gaps in housing and low-income care programs. Other agencies include: Marion Area Counseling Center, Ohio Heartland Community Action Commission, Marion Community Foundation, Habitat for Humanity, Salvation Army, United Way, Turning Point, Marion Homeless Shelter, and the Center Street Community Clinic. The Marion Area Counseling Center has a 10-year plan to eliminate homelessness in Marion County.

Federal tax credit programs have been used for renovation or new building construction of affordable housing. Marion City gives priority for projects at in-fill locations in the downtown area or city neighborhoods. In addition, priority is given for projects in unincorporated areas near amenities such as medical facilities and retail establishments. One example of these programs is the Harding Hotel which was renovated into affordable senior housing using low-income and historic tax credits.

Marion Economic Development Plan - 2007

The Marion Economic Development Plan is an extension of the Envisioning the 21st Century Process. During the update of the Envisioning the 21st Century Process in 2006, the Marion Community identified specific economic development goals:

1. Target high-paying manufacturing and medical jobs that provide better opportunities for our workforce.
2. Establish Marion as a strong regional retail center
3. Continue efforts to revitalize Marion’s downtown
4. Establish an entrepreneurial-friendly environment
5. Preserve our agricultural heritage and farmland

This plan was written to address the above goals and was developed by representatives from the Marion Chamber of Commerce, United Way, Marion City and County Government, Whirlpool Corporation, Marion County Regional Planning Commission, CANDO, The Ohio State Bank, The Ohio State University at Marion, Tri Rivers Career Center, and Marion Technical College. The intent of the plan is to set forth a vision for Marion’s economic future and to outline broad steps the Marion Community can take toward achieving that vision.

With regards to the 1977 Land Use Plan, many of the polices and goals outlined in the land
use plan were implemented laying the foundation for achievement of many of the economic
development goals outlined in the Marion Economic Development Plan i.e. creation of
manufacturing jobs (some high paying), development of new retail centers on S.R. 95 at U.S.
23 in Marion and Claridon Townships and on the south side of Marion City, development
of a plan to revitalize downtown Marion, and the creation of the a Farmland Preservation
Plan in 1999.

In addition, the establishment of Enterprise Zones, Community Reinvestment Areas, and
Tax Increment Financing (TIF) Districts has helped encourage corporate investment in
certain areas. TIF financing was critical in developing the road through the Dual Rail
Industrial Park and will play a significant role in the development of the Northwest Industrial
Connector Road. Also, TIF financing has played a key role in development of commercial
property on S.R. 95 near U.S. 23 in Marion Township and along Barks Road in Marion City.

The Marion Economic Development Plan recognized many of the existing policies and
strategies from the 1977 Land Use Plan as still being valid and incorporated them into
achieving the economic development goals outlined above. Specifically, long- and short-
term policies were developed for residential, commercial, industrial, agriculture, recreation-
conservation, institution, and utility-transportation.

The 2007 Plan stressed training and workforce needs, as well as, quality of life issues to:

A. Improve the workforce
B. Increase opportunities to attract professional positions back to Marion

One of the most important parallel needs for economic development was the need to clean
up and revitalized older neighborhoods as the condition of houses and businesses could deter
some companies or individuals from moving to Marion.

Downtown Marion Physical Improvement and Economic Plan - 2006

The last comprehensive plan for downtown Marion was written in 1988. Over the years,
this plan was updated from time to time. The updates were prepared by the Regional
Planning Commission in coordination with Envisioning the 21st Century (1999) and
Downtown Marion (2000). The primary focus of the updates was on how to best implement
the National Main Street Program which emphasizes a “Four Point Approach” to downtown
development. The four points being: Organization, Promotions, Design, and Economic
Restructuring.

The 2006 Downtown Marion Physical Improvement and Economic Plan recognized the
efforts of the previous plan and updates and noted the numerous physical, economic, and
organizational improvements that have occurred in downtown Marion since 1988. The plan
recognized the revitalization efforts occurring in the public and private sector and noted that
often times these undertakings were joint ventures of public-private partnerships. The goal of this plan was to continue the momentum of the public-private cooperation by identifying the current physical and economic condition of downtown Marion and identify a course of action for future downtown improvements. The overall plan vision is to make downtown Marion the heart of our region - a vital place that will thrive as a business, cultural, governmental and residential center.

To achieve the goals and visions identified above, the plan focused on (and where necessary provided recommendations) on the following items:

1. Current situation
2. Major land use
3. Land and building owners
4. Building occupancy rate
5. Traffic conditions
6. Parking information
7. Market analysis
8. Market profile
9. Market strategy
10. Promotions
11. Condition of public improvements and buildings

Presently, many of the items of concern and recommendations identified in this plan are being carried out. Overall, this plan conforms to the smart growth polices identified in the 1977 Land Use Plan, which encourages urban redevelopment of existing urban areas in Marion County.

2003 Marion Campus Master Plan

In 2003, OSU released a master plan for the development of the OSUM and Marion Technical College Campus. The campus master plan identified the locations of new academic/service buildings, residence facilities, athletic fields, parking areas, bike path, and an arterial road located on the west side of the campus (see Recommended Master Plan in Appendix F).

This campus master plan conforms to the 1970 and 1977 Land Use Plans and the 1969 Transportation Plan. Previous county land use plans and the transportation plan identified the need to site an arterial road on the west side of the campus to allow for a north/south corridor for vehicular traffic movement within S.R. 95 commercial corridor.

Currently, one major concern with the current campus layout with regard to further development is the fact the campus only has one major entrance/exit onto S.R. 95. From a public safety standpoint, a natural or man made disaster that closes the S.R. 95 entrance/exit
will seriously limit the ability to move safety personal and equipment into the campus in a
timely manner, in the event of an emergency. The recommended master plan alleviates this
concern by providing two new entrance/exits on the proposed arterial road which provides
three total major access points into the campus in the event of a disaster or emergency.