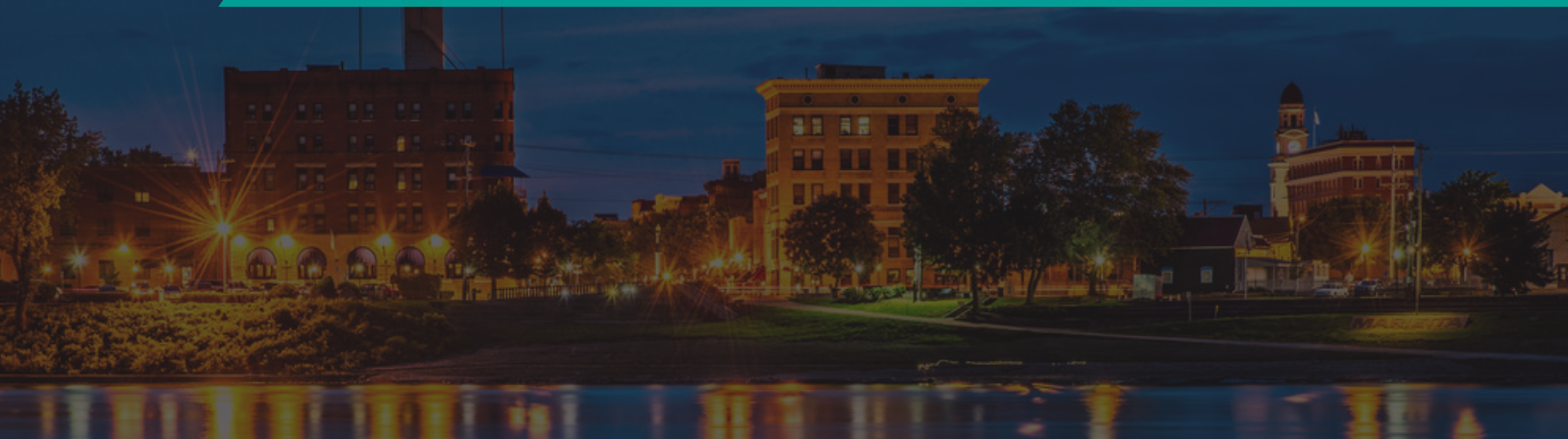




# ENRICH MARIETTA

## DOWNTOWN PLAN

JANUARY 2020



# ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

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Thank you to the steering committee members, stakeholders, and community members who invested their time and expertise in the creation of this plan for the future of Downtown Marietta.

**Mayor Joe Matthews** | City of Marietta

**Andy Coleman** | Development Director, City of Marietta

**Geoff Schenkel** | 4th Ward Councilman, Chair of PZHA

**Cristie Thomas** | Executive Director, Marietta Main Street

**Sam Tuten** | Previous Executive Director, Marietta Main Street

**Bret Allphin** | Development Director, Buckeye Hills Regional Council

**Carrie Ankrom** | President, Marietta Area Chamber of Commerce

**Dr. William Ruud** | President, Marietta College

**Tom Perry** | Vice President for Communication & Brand Management, Marietta College

**Heather Allender** | President and CEO, Marietta Community Foundation

**Jillian Clark Stull** | Peoples Bank

**Sarah Arnold** | Marketing & Community Relations, Washington County Public Library

**Deana Clark** | Executive Director, Marietta-Washington County CVB

**Dave Ballantyne** | Mid-Ohio Valley Climate Action

**Hunt Brawley** | Executive Director, Peoples Bank Theatre

**Nick Arnold** | Development Advisory Board

**Jared Perry** | Founder, IncSwell

**Andy Kuhn** | Executive Director, Southeast Ohio Port Authority

**Jayne Call** | Washington County Health Department

**Dr. Vicki Wood** | President, Washington State Community College

**Amanda Herb** | Vice President of Institutional Advancement, Washington State Community College

**Kevin Malcomb** | Vice President, Marietta Memorial Hospital

**Jona Hall** | Director of Curriculum, Marietta City Schools

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Plan prepared for:



Plan prepared by:



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*(Photo Source: The Lafayette Hotel)*





01

# INTRODUCTION

# Enrich Marietta

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## WHAT IS ENRICH MARIETTA?

In 2018, the City of Marietta and Marietta Main Street, initiated a process to create a plan to revitalize Downtown through strategic actions including identifying priority actions and developing a strategy to begin implementing those projects, policies, or programs within the next three to five years. The process brought together stakeholders from across organizations to determine what the priorities for Downtown should be. The plan includes an evaluation of the current condition of Downtown and is rooted in extensive engagement with stakeholders and the community. The Plan is intended to guide the City, Marietta Main Street, and other public and private stakeholders in bringing these strategic actions to fruition in a short to moderate timeframe.

## WHY WE ARE HERE

We believe in a vibrant future for Marietta and we know that by working together, our plans for revitalization and development across our beautiful city will come to life.

## OUR PROJECT PURPOSE

Enrich Marietta is a results-driven, inclusive process that guides our community through comprehensive projects and policies to enrich the experience Marietta's infrastructure, arts, education, and recreational assets.

## THE PROCESS PURPOSE

Create a process that builds alignment and consensus around a core vision for Downtown Marietta and includes short term and long term results.



## PROJECT PRINCIPLES

We believe the foundation for a better future starts with being hopeful and ends with actual results.

We value:

### RESULTS

DELIVERABLE OUTCOMES DERIVED FROM COLLABORATIVE APPROACHES GUIDED BY...

### INCLUSIVENESS

AN INCLUSIVE PROCESS, DEVELOPED BY COMPASSIONATE INDIVIDUALS WHO ARE INFLUENCED BY...

### CREATIVITY

THE INNOVATION, RESOURCEFULNESS AND STEWARDSHIP OF OUR COMMUNITY, AND WHO HAVE A...

### HOPEFULNESS

FOR A BETTER MARIETTA.

*(Source: Bruce Wunderlich)*

# INTRODUCTION

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## WHO WAS INVOLVED?

### Local Leadership

The City of Marietta, Marietta Main Street, and other community partners identified a need in the community for a collective vision for the future of Downtown and the creation of defined priorities to focus on in coming years. Staff from members of Marietta Main Street and the City led the process and provided ongoing guidance and expertise on Downtown. They also gathered many of the community's best and brightest stakeholders to convene and strategize. Working together, a blueprint for the future of Downtown was created.

### Steering Committee

A group of over 20 Marietta community members that included several organizations, businesses, and residents in the City were assembled to guide and inform the planning process. Their input was instrumental in defining initial priorities and creating the final plan.

### General Public

The public was invited to participate in several in-person meetings and events as well as provide input online through a survey. At these events and through the online survey, hundreds of community members provided input for the plan.

Throughout the process, the Enrich Marietta project website was also kept up-to-date with information about the process, project updates, and opportunities for participation for the public. A more detailed explanation of public meeting activities and results is outlined in Chapter 2: Community Context.

### OHM Advisors

OHM Advisors was retained to guide the planning process. OHM Advisors is an integrated engineering, architecture, and planning firm, specializing in community development and urban design.

## PROJECT PROCESS

Developing the Downtown Plan involved a year-long process where the planning team periodically met with local leadership, the steering committee, and the public, to help guide and inform the Plan. The project process is shown in Figure 1-2. This generalized diagram shows the parties involved, the process steps, and the results from each step.

## PLAN INPUTS

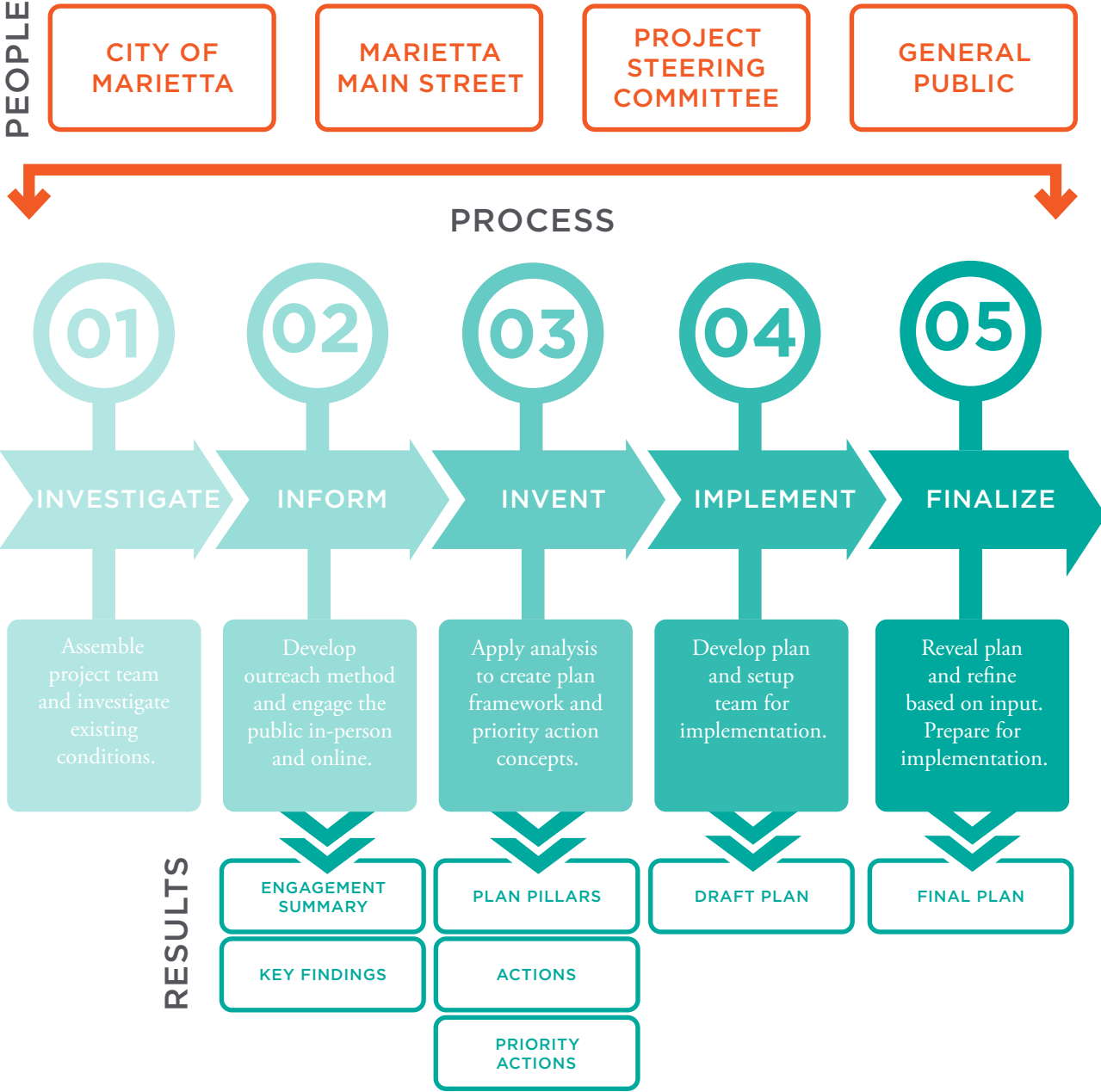
The Plan elements including the Plan Framework, actions, and priority actions were developed over time as the process yielded results from the public engagement and existing conditions analysis and was further supported by technical and professional expertise. These plan inputs, generally the community engagement, community context, and best practices in planning and urban design, came together to ensure the Plan was informed by both intuitive knowledge of the community and the physical realities.

FIGURE 1-1: Plan Inputs





FIGURE 1-2: Project Process



# INTRODUCTION

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## HOW TO USE THIS PLAN

The Enrich Marietta Downtown Plan is the starting point for a longer effort to begin implementation of catalytic projects, policies, or programs within the Downtown within next three to five years. The Plan is intended to serve as a guide for the City, Marietta Main Street, and other public organizations, private entities, and local residents to work collaboratively to plan, fund, and implement these initiatives. Although this Plan and the concepts have been created with extensive input and review from several stakeholders and leadership within the community, it is meant to be flexible to accommodate for future opportunities and constraints that may arise. The following offers guidance on how each entity should use the Plan.

### City of Marietta

City staff including each department and administrator should be cognizant of the contents of the Plan when preparing annual work programs, budgets, capital improvement plans, and economic incentives. As future plans, including the City's Land Use Plan and Zoning Code, are updated or created, the concepts and recommendations within the Downtown Plan should be appropriately incorporated.

This Plan should also be used as a tool to communicate with the general public and the development community on the desired vision for Downtown and the cost and implementation efforts necessary to achieve that vision. During implementation of the priority actions, the Plan should frequently be consulted to ensure the outcome aligns with the vision and intent of the initial concepts.

### Marietta Main Street

Marietta Main Street will be a major leader and organizing element in the implementation of the plan, as the organization is with many projects and programs in Downtown. Alongside the City, Marietta Main Street should be the long-term stewards of the Plan including the implementation

of priority actions. They should work collaboratively with the City to identify potential issues and opportunities around each project. They should act as ambassadors, communicating the intent and current status of priority actions, and exploring funding and fundraising opportunities. Also similar to the City, Marietta Main Street Staff should consider the Plan pillars and priorities when making programming or budgeting decisions within the organization.

### Other Public Entities

Other City, County, and institutional organizations should appropriately align their planning, budgeting, and funding efforts within the Downtown with this Plan. These public entities should seek opportunities where there are shared common goals between an organization and the planning efforts that can help implement this Plan.

### Private Entities

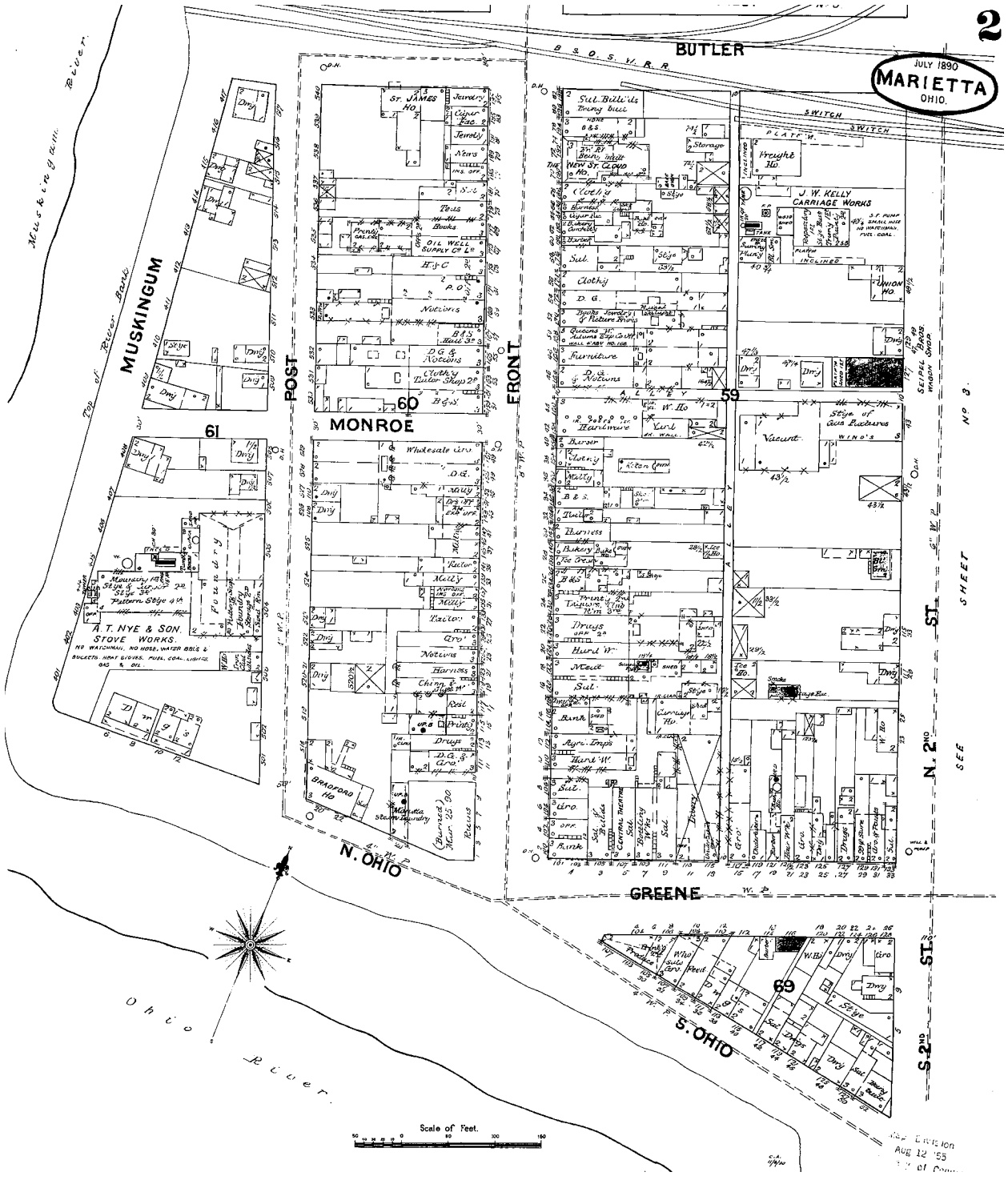
Private property owners and developers are integral to the implementation of this Plan. This is because they may hold the necessary capacity and financial resources to fully implement the Plan's pillars. Private entities with interests within the Downtown, especially in the priority action areas should consider the vision and concepts within this plan as they make investment decisions.

### Marietta Community

The Enrich Marietta Downtown Plan is meant to identify a vision and actions that will improve the character and success of Downtown. The community, including residents and business owners, Downtown and regionally, should be closely involved in the implementation of these projects, policies, and programs to ensure they meet the needs and desires of the local community. The Marietta community should encourage local leadership and stakeholders to continue to implement the Plan in order to best serve the community.



ENRICH MARIETTA DOWNTOWN PLAN



This Sanborn Map depicts the existing development pattern in 1890. While buildings and businesses have changed, the historic street network remains mostly intact (Source: Ohio Public Library).

# INTRODUCTION

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## HISTORY OF PLANNING

Marietta has a rich history in planning for the future of its community. Enrich Marietta aims to build upon existing and previous planning efforts, including initiatives of private and community organizations, to envision future growth, development, and the quality of life in the Downtown area. Understanding prior planning efforts, successes, and challenges helps create a feasible Plan and ensures cohesion across implementation strategies.

### Marietta 200 (1984)

Marietta's Mayor, Council, and Bicentennial Commission worked with nine sub committees (Events, History, Finance/Fundraising, Permanent Structures, Restoration/Beautification, Publications, Education, Marketing/Souvenirs, Religious) for 4 years leading up to Marietta's bicentennial in 1988. Work identified during that process continued beyond 1988 and prepared Marietta for the Community 20/20 effort. Completed projects from the Plan include the railroad walking bridge, streetscape improvements, East Muskingum Park enhancements including the Gazebo, and Levee improvements including the fountain seating, brick walkways, bollards, and trees.

### Community 20/20 (2000)

Using a community wide, asset-based approach to planning, Community 20/20's director, project manager, office manager and the Marietta Community Foundation guided a two-year planning process. As part of the plan, eight constituency groups were established (Art, Communications, Education, Environment, Human Services, Land Use, Recreation, Tourism). Meeting on a monthly basis, these working constituencies encouraged citizen participation and guided implementation of the Plan recommendations. Community 20/20 facilitated ongoing implementation efforts that continued into the early 2000s.

Accomplishments of the planning process include an operational strategy for the Marietta Harbor's tourist



## PLANS OVERVIEW

- 1984 - Marietta 200
- 2000 - Community 20/20
- 2003 - Pioneering the Future
- 2012 - Creative Economies

season, restoration of the Peoples Bank Theatre, streetscape improvements to Front Street, school nutrition programming, establishment of the Ely Chapman Education Foundation, and revitalization of the River Trail.

### Pioneering the Future (2003)

“Pioneering the Future” was a comprehensive planning exercise executed by key contributors from Downtown Marietta, City Administration and members of the surrounding community to help forecast and lead development opportunities as Marietta continued to evolve. The document identified Downtown Marietta as a core focus area and provided recommendations for future growth and development on an array of topics. Projects and programs implemented since adoption of “Pioneering the Future” include business enhancement strategies, formation of Marietta Main Street, increased investment and long-range planning in public education, historic preservation, Downtown beautification, expanded recreational offerings, and expansion of multi-modal transportation. Additionally, the plan addressed Marietta's aging infrastructure and issues of public health and safety. The outcome of this planning culminated in an update to the “living document” that each subsequent Advisory Board uses as reference throughout ongoing development efforts in downtown and beyond.

In 2013 a new collection of Development Advisory Board members gathered to review progress made on



*Downtown Marietta in 1960, when the double lock and dam was still present in the Muskingum River (Source: News and Sentinel).*

the document and evaluate the current progress of how well the community had used the ideas, goals, and suggestions made in the plan to encourage growth and development in Downtown and surrounding areas.

### Creative Economies (2012)

Completed in June of 2012, the Creative Economy – Entertainment District Planning Grant Report took the initial planning steps in creating a downtown theatre and entertainment district in Marietta in anticipation of the re-opening of the Peoples Bank Theatre. The report included an inventory of downtown Marietta's creative entities and summarized the current and projected economic

impacts of the creative industry on the Marietta community. This document was submitted with multiple grant proposals to help secure funding for arts related projects in Downtown Marietta, including the renovation of the Peoples Bank Theatre, and eventually lead to the creation of a Public Art Committee housed within Marietta Main Street. This Committee continues to work collaboratively towards implementing the projects outlined in the plan.





**ENRICH MARIETTA DOWNTOWN PLAN**

The City of Marietta and Marietta Main Street have initiated a project to create a downtown plan for the Town of Marietta, Georgia. This project will include a study to identify the needs of the City and its residents, and to develop recommendations regarding zoning, land use, and policy for the downtown.

**Project Objectives:**

- 1. Identify the needs of the downtown area.
- 2. Develop recommendations for zoning, land use, and policy.
- 3. Create a downtown plan that meets the needs of the City and its residents.

**Project Timeline:**

- Phase 1: Study and Recommendations (Q1-Q2 2023)
- Phase 2: Plan Development (Q3-Q4 2023)
- Phase 3: Implementation (Q1-Q2 2024)

**Contact:**

City of Marietta, Georgia  
 Downtown Development Department  
 123 Main Street, Marietta, GA 30060  
 Phone: (770) 576-1234  
 Email: downtown@marietta-georgia.com





WHAT DO YOU LIKE BEST ABOUT DOWNTOWN?

WHAT DOES DOWNTOWN DO NEXT?

# 02

## COMMUNITY CONTEXT

# Community Overview

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## OVERVIEW

This chapter is intended to lay a foundation for the Plan Framework by providing insight on the community's priorities and preferences, alongside data and analysis from physical and social conditions within Downtown. An analysis of both the public input and existing conditions for Downtown helps identify areas of strength and areas for improvement. Building upon these conditions and trends will help identify not only the wants and needs of current residents and businesses Downtown, but can also shine a light on the needs and preferences of future residents that the Downtown may strive to attract.

## CITY OF MARIETTA

As the heart of the City of Marietta, Downtown Marietta is very much interrelated with the City as a whole. Located in southeastern Ohio, at the confluence of the Ohio and Muskingum Rivers, Marietta has benefited from its strategic location for transportation and recreational opportunities since its founding. In more recent years, while the City has experienced a slight population decrease, median household income and home value have continued to increase.

## STUDY AREA

Downtown Marietta, the study area for this project includes both the central business district on the east side of the Muskingum River and the Harmar neighborhood on the west side. These two areas, connected by Putnam Bridge and Harmar Bridge, create a synergistic Downtown that has significant character, culture, and amenities to offer residents, workers, and visitors.



Figure 2-1: Context Map - Downtown Marietta

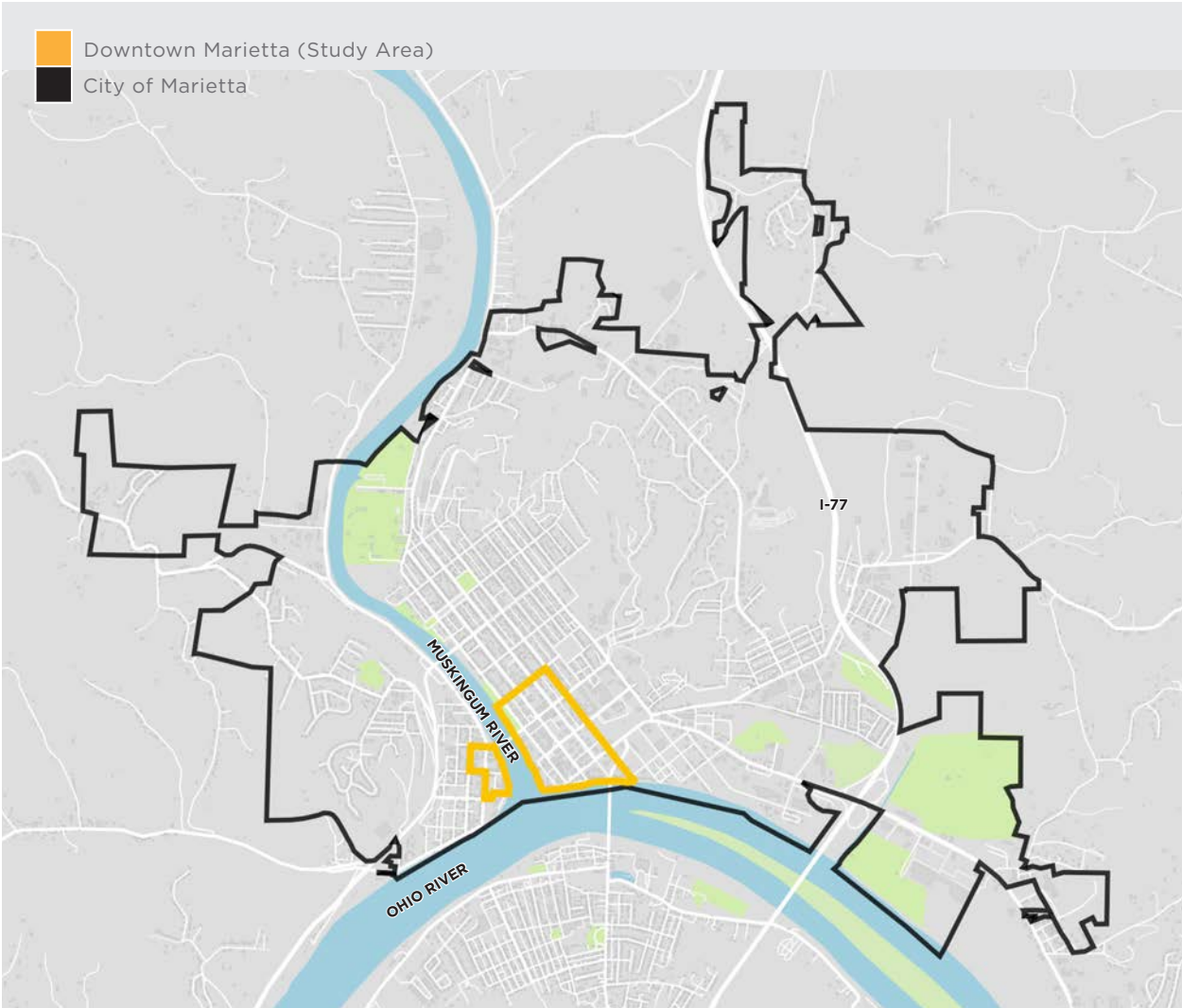
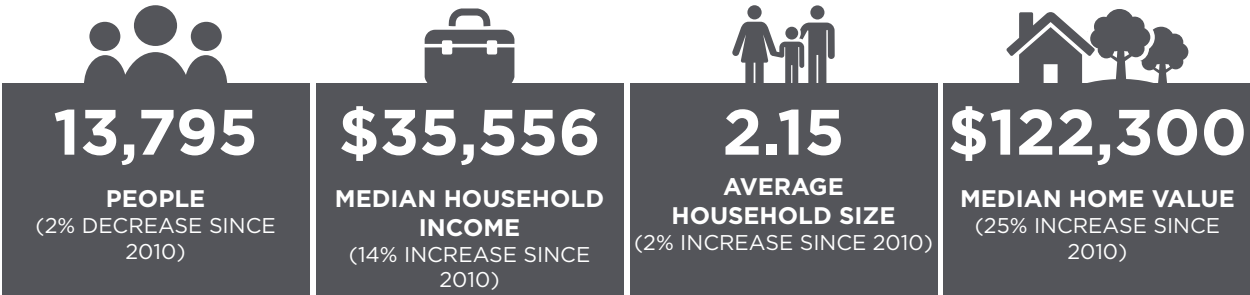


Figure 2-2: City of Marietta Population Overview



(Source: U.S. Census and Zillow Real Estate Research)

# Community Engagement

## OVERVIEW

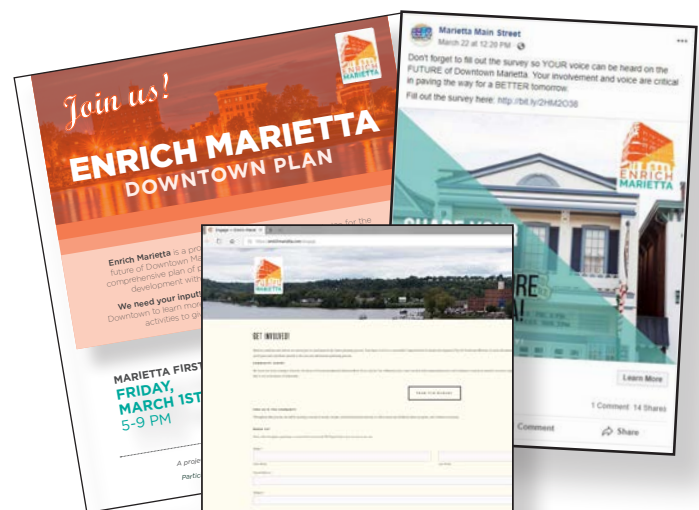
Outreach and engagement was integral to the planning process to ensure the Plan was rooted in the values and aspirations of the community. Marietta residents, employees, businesses, and visitors were invited to participate throughout creation of the Plan to share their individual thoughts and help shape a collective vision for the future of the Downtown. The feedback gathered from the public was instrumental in shaping the outcomes of the Plan including recommendations for future public projects and investments. In total, over 1,000 people were engaged through formal meetings, community events, and online activities. The following section highlights findings from the public engagement efforts.

## OUTREACH

A variety of outreach methods were used by the planning team to effectively communicate updates and opportunities for the public to engage in the process. The project website, Enrich Marietta, provided updates on the planning process and posted opportunities to participate. Additionally, public engagement opportunities were advertised digitally on Facebook and in-person with paper flyers and business cards. Throughout the process, local news stories also kept the community updated about the process and results.

## ENGAGEMENT SUMMARY

<b>75+</b>	<b>FIRST FRIDAY (MARCH 1)</b>
<b>100+</b>	<b>MARIETTA COLLEGE (FEBRUARY 2)</b>
<b>25+</b>	<b>HARMAR NEIGHBORHOOD (FEBRUARY 17 &amp; MARCH 19)</b>
<b>828</b>	<b>COMMUNITY SURVEY (JANUARY - APRIL)</b>



*Feedback from the community was integral in developing Plan Pillars and Actions for the future of Downtown.*

## ENGAGEMENT

In lieu of a formal town hall setting which can limit participation from those with restricted schedules, the planning team offered flexible, convenient community engagement opportunities by meeting community members at prominent City functions. Attendees of the events were presented information about the planning process and invited to participate in planning activities, the results of which are summarized in this section. Community members who did not attend the events were also able to learn more about the Plan and submit ideas through the project website and the community survey.

## MARIETTA COLLEGE

The planning team attended Marietta College’s Winter Weekend which hosted both Men’s and Women’s Basketball games as well as an Alumni basketball game on February 2nd, 2019. In attendance were Marietta residents, visitors, past alumni, and college students. Attendees were offered the opportunity to participate in the planning process through various activities including:

- **Like Best/Need Next:** What do you like best about Downtown? What does Downtown need next?
- **P-E-T Mapping Activity:** What places in the Downtown area are most appropriate for Preservation? Enhancement? Transformation?

## FIRST FRIDAY

First Friday presented an opportunity to capture a wider audience of community engagement. The planning team visited a local coffee shop and brewery with information on the planning process and opportunities for Plan feedback during the First Friday event on March 1, 2019. In addition to the activities offered at Marietta College (Like Best/Need Next; P-E-T Mapping Activity), First Friday participants also completed the following activity:

- **Project Prioritization:** Which of the listed projects do you think should be a priority for Downtown?



Participants at First Friday were invited to learn more about the planning process and provide feedback on their priorities for the future.

“ I WOULD LIKE TO SEE A STATE OF THE ART PLAYGROUND DOWNTOWN THAT WOULD ATTRACT TOURISTS TO THE WATERFRONT. ”

-Community Member, Harmar Elementary School Meeting, 2/17



# COMMUNITY CONTEXT

## HARMER COMMUNITY MEETINGS

In an effort to engage specifically with the Harmar neighborhood, Marietta Main Street and Enrich Marietta committee members hosted community meetings for Harmar residents. The first meeting was held at Harmar Elementary School on February 17th, 2019 and the second was located at the West Side Carry Out, a local convenience store within Harmar Village on March 13th, 2019. Both meetings included opportunities for community members to participate in the planning process using the same activities as those offered at the First Friday and Marietta College event.

## IN-PERSON ENGAGEMENT RESULTS

### Like Best/Need Next

All public engagement events provided an opportunity for community members to share their thoughts regarding the following questions:

- What do you **like best** about Downtown?
- What does Downtown **need next**?

In general, activity participants identified community events, the friendly people, and the physical beauty of Downtown as characteristics they liked best. Looking to the future, respondents expressed a general desire for more entertainment options Downtown, enhanced connectivity, better communication efforts from the City and businesses, and greater use of the riverfront. Infrastructure and streetscape improvements suggested for the future of Downtown largely related to enhancing assets that were mentioned as elements the community “likes best” about Downtown.

### Project Prioritization

Participants of the public engagement activities at First Friday and Harmar School gatherings were also asked to evaluate the initial priority projects identified by the steering committee and planning team. The project prioritization activity helped provide a greater understanding of what issues are

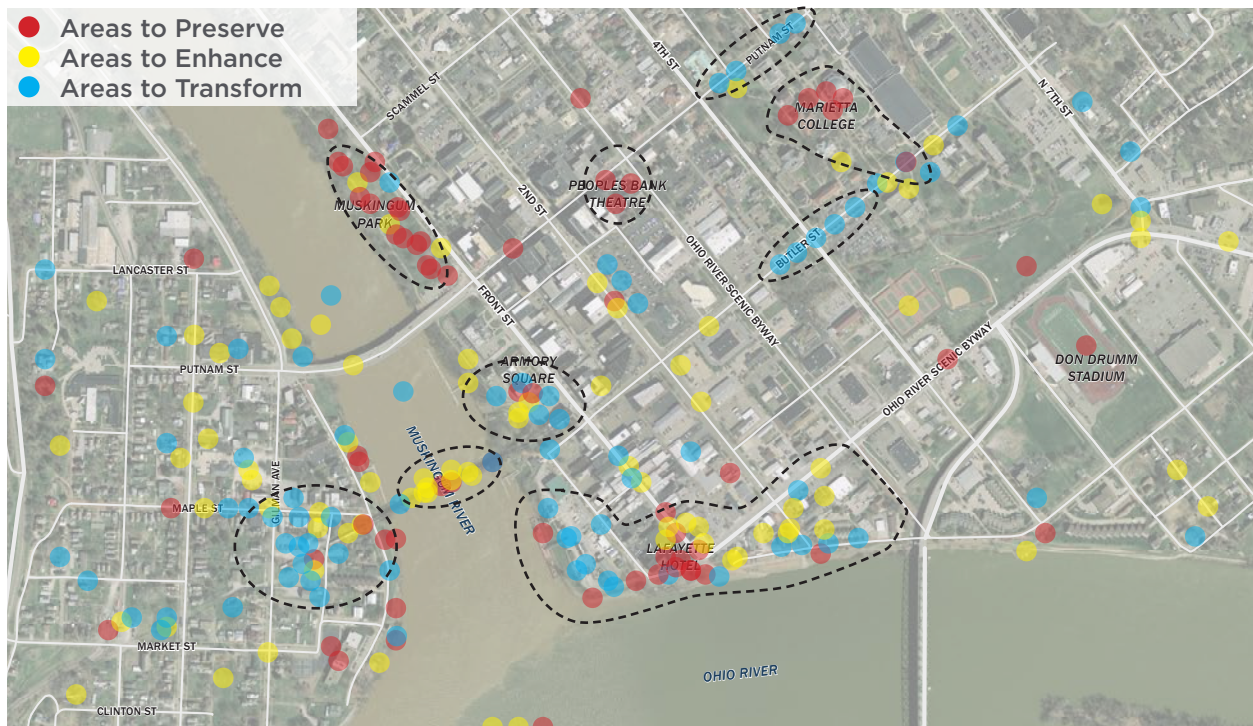
Figure 2-3: Project Prioritization

Priority	# of Votes
Riverfront Development	19
Complete Streets And Walkability	10
New/Revitalized Public Spaces	9
Maintain And Grow Existing Programming	6
Improve parking and signage	5
Improve Traffic Flow Into Downtown from RT 7	4
Create upper-story living	3
Marketing & Branding Plan	3
ADA Transition Plan	2



The mapping activity encouraged community members to consider places in Downtown Marietta most appropriate to preserve, enhance, and transform.

Figure 2-4: P-e-t Mapping activity



most important to community members when considering the allocation of limited resources and funding. Results are displayed in Figure 2-3.

Riverfront development was overwhelming selected as the top priority. Complete streets and public spaces were ranked second and third, respectively.

### P-E-T Mapping Activity

To help visualize the future of Downtown Marietta, activity participants were asked to create a P-E-T map by placing color-coded dots to show places that they think need to be preserved, enhanced, or transformed. The results are displayed in Figure 2-4. Muskingum Park, Marietta College, the Levee near the Lafayette Hotel, the Peoples Bank Theatre, Front Street, and Fort Street were identified as community assets which should be preserved.

Places recognized by activity participants as prime for improvement were the Harmar Pedestrian Bridge and the area around the Ohio Riverfront Levee. Other non-clustered dots were also placed at various

points near the Muskingum and Ohio Riverfronts. The support for enhancement of areas along the Riverfront aligns with the project prioritization results, which emphasized riverfront development.

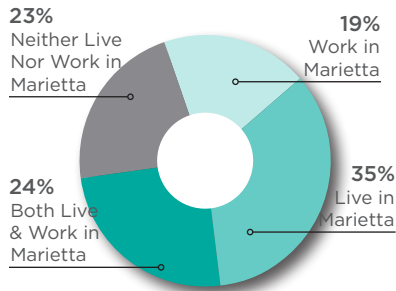
The gateway into the Harmar Historic District from the Harmar Pedestrian Bridge, the Armory Square area, the Butler Street and Fourth Street intersection area, and Putnam Street north of Fourth Street were selected as places appropriate for transformation. Generally speaking, the Muskingum River and Ohio River fronts were also identified as ready for transformation.

# COMMUNITY CONTEXT

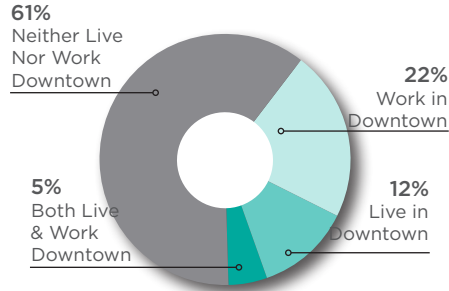
Figure 2-5: Profile of Community Survey Respondents

## 828 TOTAL RESPONSES

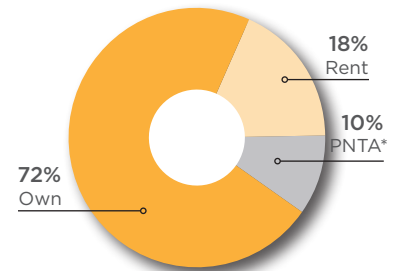
**Q: Do you currently live or work in the *City of Marietta*?**



**Q: Do you currently live or work in *Downtown Marietta*?**

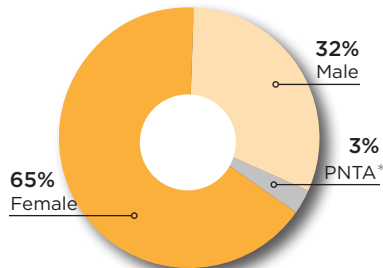


**Q: Do you own or rent a home?**



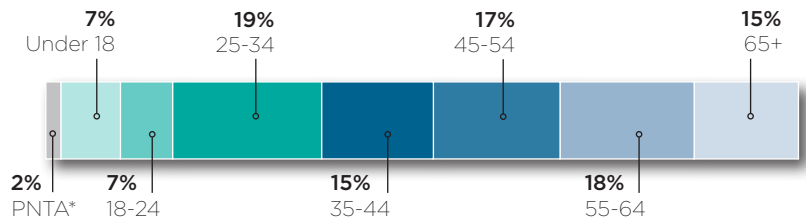
*Citywide, 54% of homes are owner occupied.*

**Q: What is your gender?**

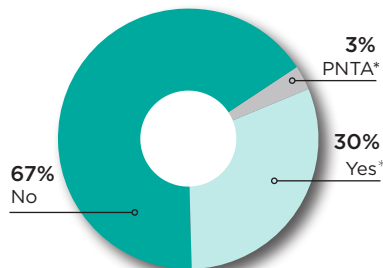


*Citywide, 53% of the population is female*

**Q: How old are you?**

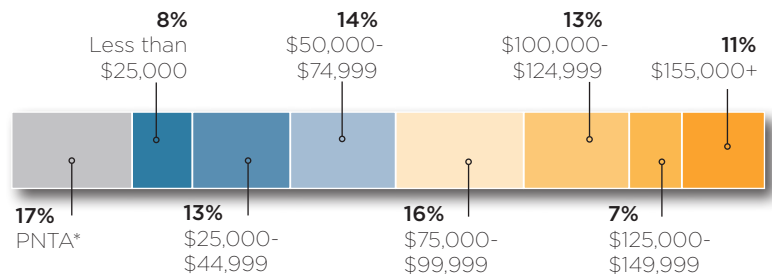


**Q: Do you currently have children (<18) living in your household?**



*Citywide, 23% of households include own children under 18.*

**Q: Which category best describes your annual household income?**



\*PNTA: Prefer Not To Answer



## COMMUNITY SURVEY

In addition to the public engagement activities at community events, the public was invited to participate in a community survey. The survey, available online and as hard copies, asked questions about the current conditions of Downtown Marietta and preferences on the future of growth and development. The following section provides an overview of the community survey results.

### Overview

Survey participants generally believe that the City should prioritize Downtown revitalization and think there are several viable options to pursue that revitalization. In general, the community survey results reflect a desire for riverfront redevelopment, enhanced public gathering spaces, events and activities, and more residential options.

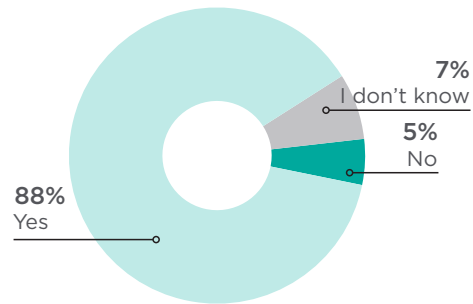
Understanding the demographic profile of respondents helps provide context to the responses, highlights their relationship with Downtown, and indicates potential biases that may impact conclusions drawn. As demonstrated in Figure 2-5, the majority of respondents live or work in the City of Marietta, but not in Downtown. Survey participants disproportionately represent homeowners, households with children, and females. Individual ages and household incomes were distributed across the spectrum.

### Downtown as a Destination

Almost three-fourths of respondents (70%) visit the Downtown at least once a week. Given the fact that 61% of survey respondents do not live or work Downtown, this means there are amenities or attractions which pull visitors to the Downtown on a regular basis. When asked the primary reasons that they visit Downtown, the most popular response was restaurants/bars (82%). More than half of respondents also identified entertainment/events, (64%) and retail (54%) as reasons for visiting.

Figure 2-6: Survey: Identity

Q: Do you believe the Downtown has a distinct identity?



### Image & Branding

Nearly 90% of survey respondents believe Downtown Marietta has a distinct identity (Figure 2-6). When asked to elaborate as to what they believe that identity is, the following common themes emerged:

- Small, quaint town
- Historic
- Charming, beautiful
- Welcoming, community-oriented
- Unique local shops
- Business-friendly
- Riverfront town
- Tourist destination

In looking to the future, the survey also asked the public “What would you like the identity of Downtown Marietta to be?” Similar themes to the previous question emerged, with an emphasis on:

- Beautification improvements
- Riverfront development
- Enhanced commercial and recreation amenities
- Historic preservation
- Arts

# COMMUNITY CONTEXT

## Future Growth & Development

### Project prioritization

The survey asked the public to rate a list of preliminary planning initiatives on how important they would be to the improvement of Downtown. Results are shown in Figure 2-7. The fact that all of the initiatives received an average rating of at least 3.0 may suggest that the planning team correctly identified pressing issues within the Downtown and/or that a wide array of planning initiatives are desired to enhance the area. As was the case for the public engagement activity at First Friday, redeveloping the riverfront was the top priority for survey respondents.

### Public Space & the Riverfront

Creating new or enhanced public spaces was identified as important in both survey and in-person engagement results. Figure 2-7 shows the types of public and open spaces that the community would like to see Downtown and along the riverfront. The strong desire for more events aligns with the emphasis on arts and cultural amenities in earlier questions related to identity and image. Majority of respondents also want to see more opportunities for gathering with seats, tables, and recreational paths.

Figure 2-8: Survey: Public Spaces

**Q: What types of public/open space amenities would you like to see more of Downtown?\***

Events	83%
Public seating / tables	61%
Trails and bike paths	46%
Water access	44%
Passive open space	43%
Recreational facilities	40%
Playground or play elements	36%

Figure 2-7: Survey: Priorities

**Q: Please rate each of the following initiatives on how important they would be to the improvement of Downtown with 0 as “not at all important” and 5 as “very important.”**

Priority	Avg. Rating
Redevelop the Riverfront	4.1
Maintain and grow existing programming	4.0
Improve property maintenance	4.0
Prioritize roadway improvements to make Downtown more walkable, bikeable, and ADA accessible	3.8
New/Revitalized public spaces	3.7
Improve parking signage and accessibility	3.5
Create upper-story living	3.2
Improve traffic flow Into Downtown from I-77 along SR 7	3.0

**Q: What types of public/open space amenities would you like to see specifically along the Riverfront?\***

Public seating / tables	72%
Trails and bike paths	58%
Events	56%
Passive open space	52%
Water access	48%
Playground or play elements	27%
Recreational facilities	22%

\* Respondents were able to select multiple responses.

### Roadway Improvements

The desire for more seating and table options Downtown and along the riverfront was also reflected in roadway improvements. When asked what are the most important public improvement for Downtown streets, the top responses were:

- Patio seating (59%)
- Street furniture (53%)
- Public art (43%)
- Improved crosswalks (36%)

Bike lanes were voted a top three priority by about one-fourth of respondents. Overall, the results highlight a desire for enhanced pedestrian comfort and activity Downtown.

### Housing

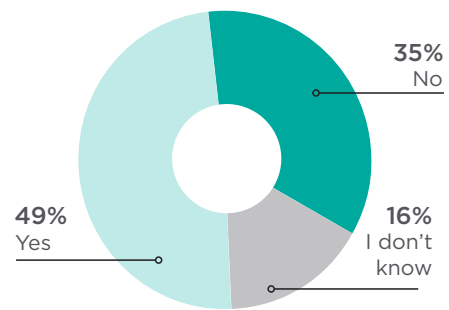
More residential offerings present an opportunity to increase the mix of uses Downtown and help provide a more vibrant, 24-hour community. Notably, 578 respondents (71%) said that they would consider living Downtown or within walking distance if their preferred choice of housing were available. Figure 2-9 shows what types of housing options respondents interested in living Downtown would prefer. The most popular option was single-family homes, though all housing types were of interest to at least one-third of those willing to consider moving Downtown. Additionally, about 50% of respondents said that 2nd and 3rd floor residential living above commercial spaces would increase their interest in living Downtown.

### Economic & Workforce Development

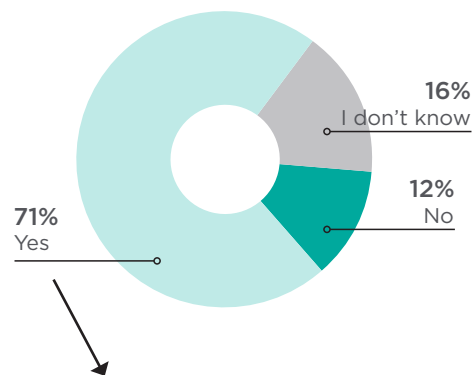
When describing the desired identity of Downtown and what the area needs next, public engagement and survey participants mentioned a preference for more activities and businesses.

Figure 2-9: Survey: Housing

**Q: Would mixed-use, 2nd and 3rd floor “loft-style” residential living above commercial spaces increase your interest in living Downtown?**



**Q: If your preferred choice of housing were available, would you consider living Downtown or within walking distance?**



**Q: If you were looking to move into Downtown, or within walking distance, which would you consider as a potential housing option?**

Type of Housing	# of Votes
Single-family home	369
Condominium	245
Apartment	225
Duplex / Townhome	206



### KEY FINDINGS - PUBLIC ENAGEMENT

In reviewing and analyzing the feedback from the community, the following key findings were developed. These key findings inform the Plan recommendations including pillars, actions, and priority actions.



#### **KF1 - Downtown Revitalization.**

Residents and visitors place a high priority on downtown revitalization.



#### **KF6 - Downtown Living.**

There is an interest in living downtown across all housing options.



#### **KF2 - Riverfront Enhancements.**

People value the riverfront and want it to be enhanced to improve access and enjoyment.



#### **KF7 - Gathering Spaces.**

There is a desire for more informal gathering areas for seating and outdoor dining. This could be in both public and private areas.



#### **KF3 - Additional Events/Activities.**

Existing programming downtown is well-liked but people would like to see additional events and activities.



#### **KF8 - Multimodal Connectivity.**

Increasing connectivity across all modes of travel is important.



#### **KF4 - Maintenance.**

General upkeep of roadways and building maintenance should be improved.



#### **KF9 - Cultural Hub.**

Downtown is the cultural hub of the arts and historical assets.



#### **KF5 - Shopping & Entertainment.**

Additional restaurants and shopping downtown including availability outside of normal business hours is desired.



#### **KF10 - Harmar Reinvestment.**

Harmar and Harmar Bridge are priority areas for reinvestment.



# Community Analysis

## OVERVIEW

The information summarized in this section is intended to provide insight on population trends and geographic features of Downtown Marietta, which are summarized in key findings at the end of this section. Further understanding of the people and place which make-up the Downtown community is foundational in developing a plan which responds to the needs and desires of residents for their downtown as well as the physical realities of the place. The Pew Research Center, National Association of Realtors, and Urban Footprint were the main sources of data aggregated for this section.

## NATIONAL TRENDS

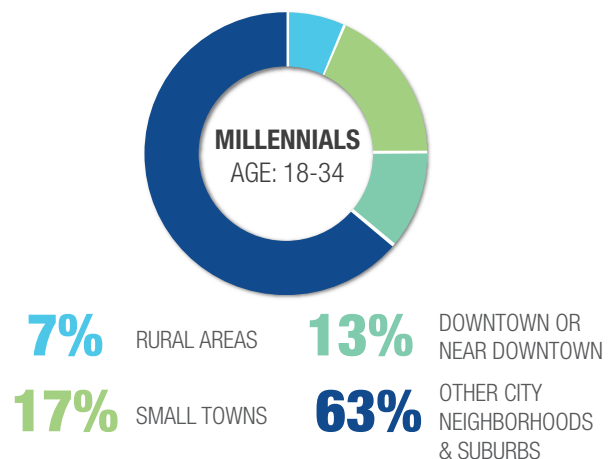
Particularly relevant to Downtown Marietta are the large shifts in demographics and housing preference that is expected to occur nationally in the coming years. According to national trends, baby boomers and millennials will represent the majority of growth and currently account for roughly 45% of the nation's population. This is significant because these groups overwhelmingly prefer a different type of housing than what currently exists in many communities across the U.S. These age groups tend to prefer attached housing with smaller lots over larger lots which provide less maintenance and more walkability than traditional single-family housing. At the state level, approximately 56% of Ohioans would like to live in walkable, mixed use

communities, while only 20% currently have this option. In Downtown Marietta, these housing options and lifestyle currently exist for some, and there is an opportunity to create additional housing of this nature in the future.

## GEOGRAPHIC ANALYSIS

Maps on the following pages summarize geographic findings from the analysis. Generally, Downtown Marietta has a strong urban fabric and character through its streets, buildings, and riverfront. However, there are opportunities to create a stronger Downtown through public projects and private investments, ensuring the Downtown continues to be an asset for the region.

Figure 2-10: What types of Places do Millennials prefer to Live?





# NATIONAL TRENDS

Figure 2-13: National Age Range of Population

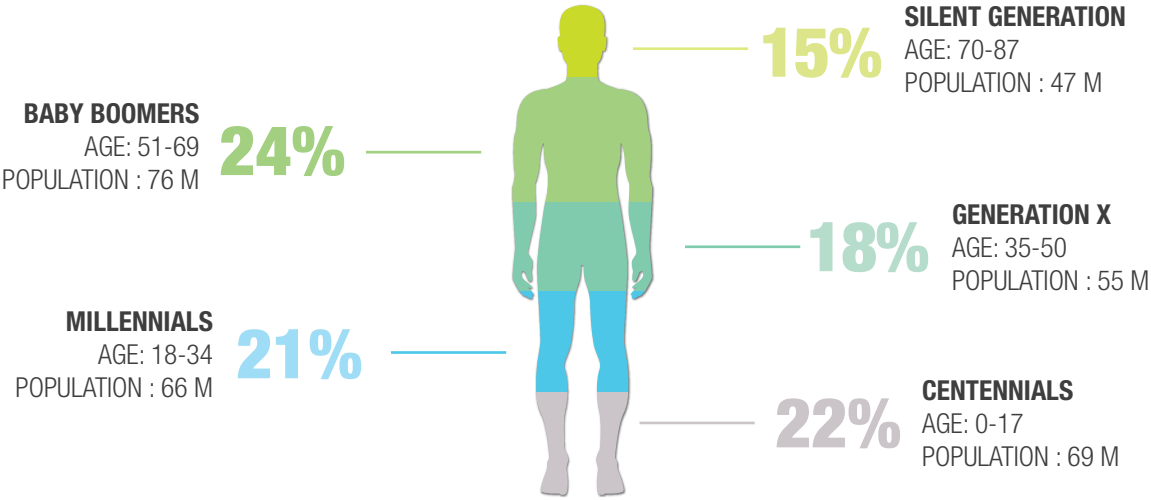


Figure 2-12: What type of house are people currently living in?

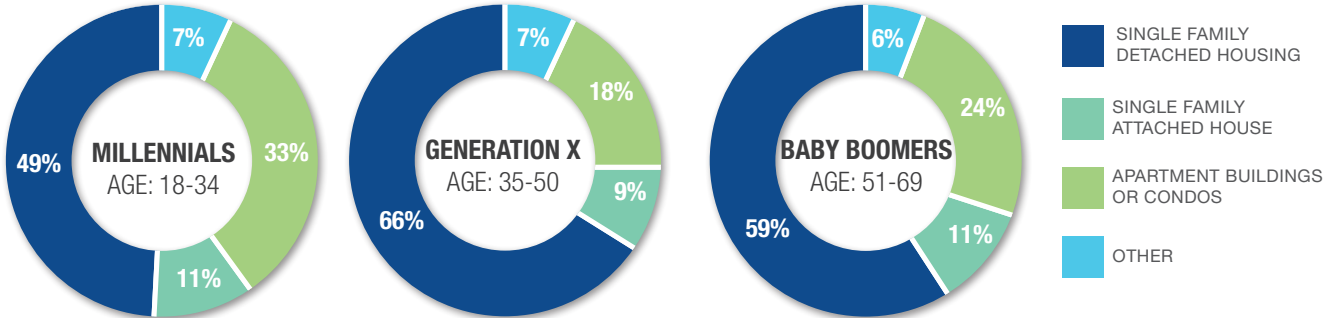
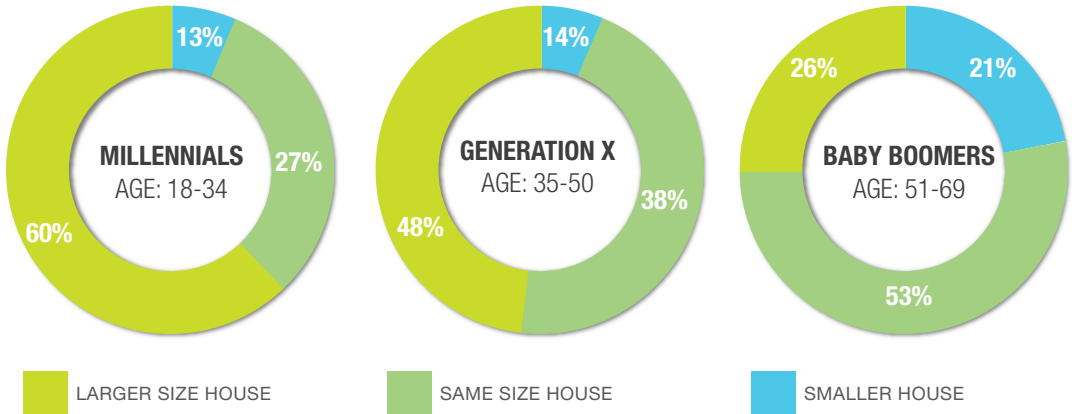


Figure 2-11: What size house are people looking to move into?



Source: (Pew Research Center; National Association of Realtors)

# COMMUNITY CONTEXT

Figure 2-14: Existing Land Use

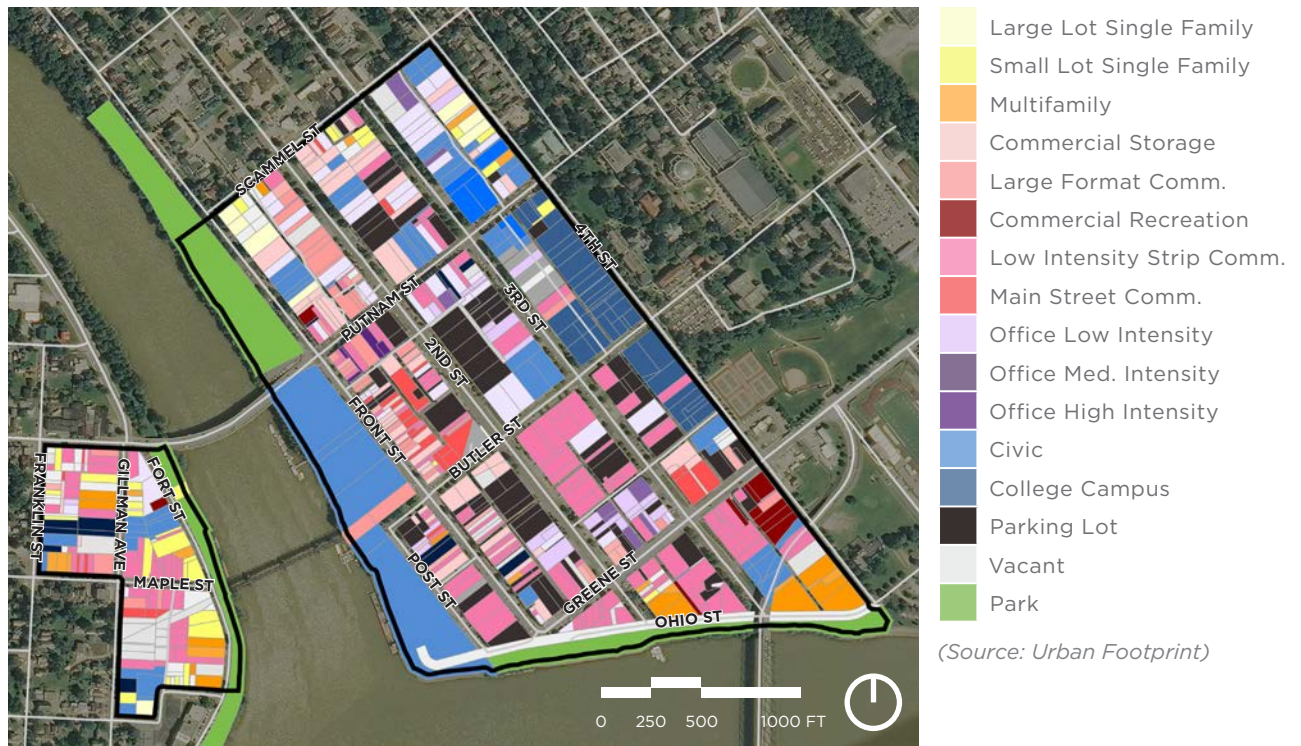
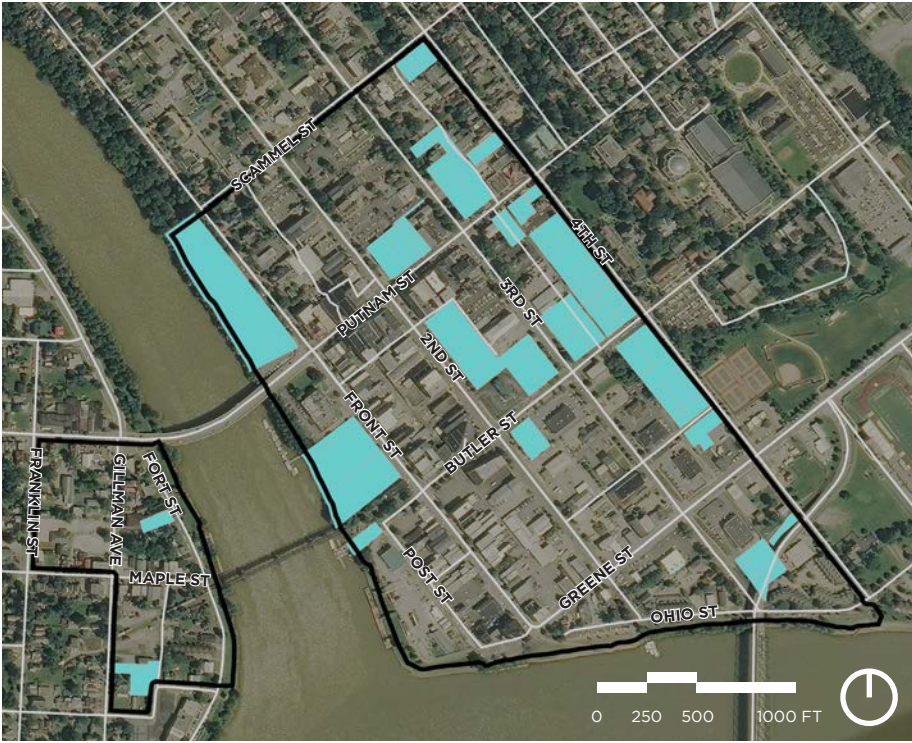


Figure 2-15: Existing Zoning





Figure 2-16: Publicly Owned Properties

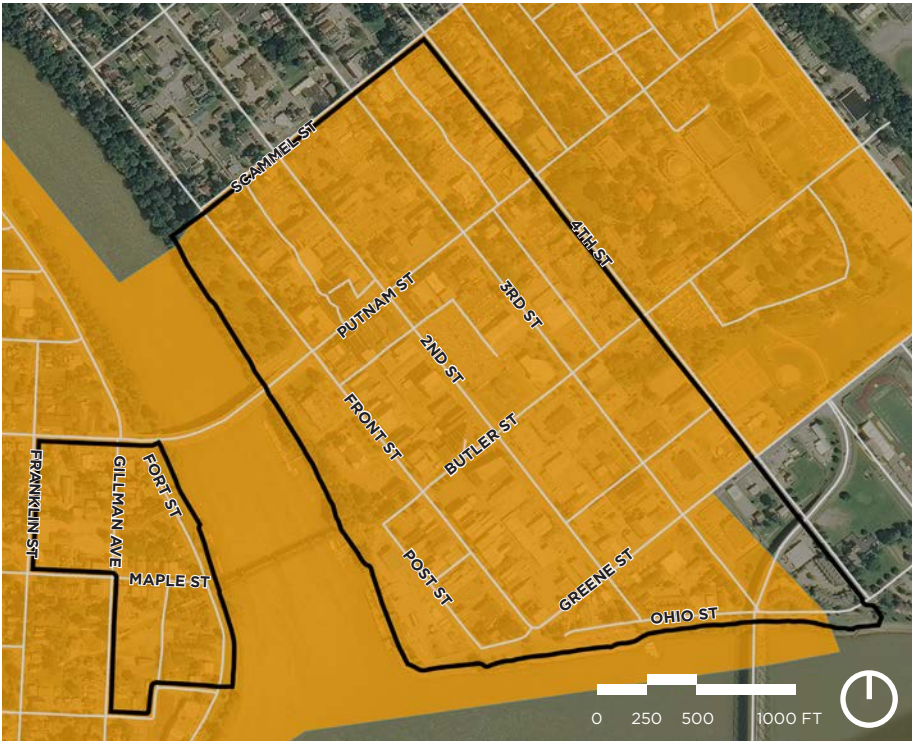


Public Ownership

While there are many publicly owned parcels, the majority of property is privately owned in Downtown.

(Source: Buckeye Hills Regional Council)

Figure 2-17: Opportunity Zones



Opportunity Zone

In Downtown Marietta, Census Tract 205 has been designated an Opportunity Zone, which provides capital gains tax incentives to private investors investing in the area. See page XX for more information on Opportunity Zones.

Source: (Urban Footprint)



# COMMUNITY CONTEXT

Figure 2-18: Walk Access To Retail

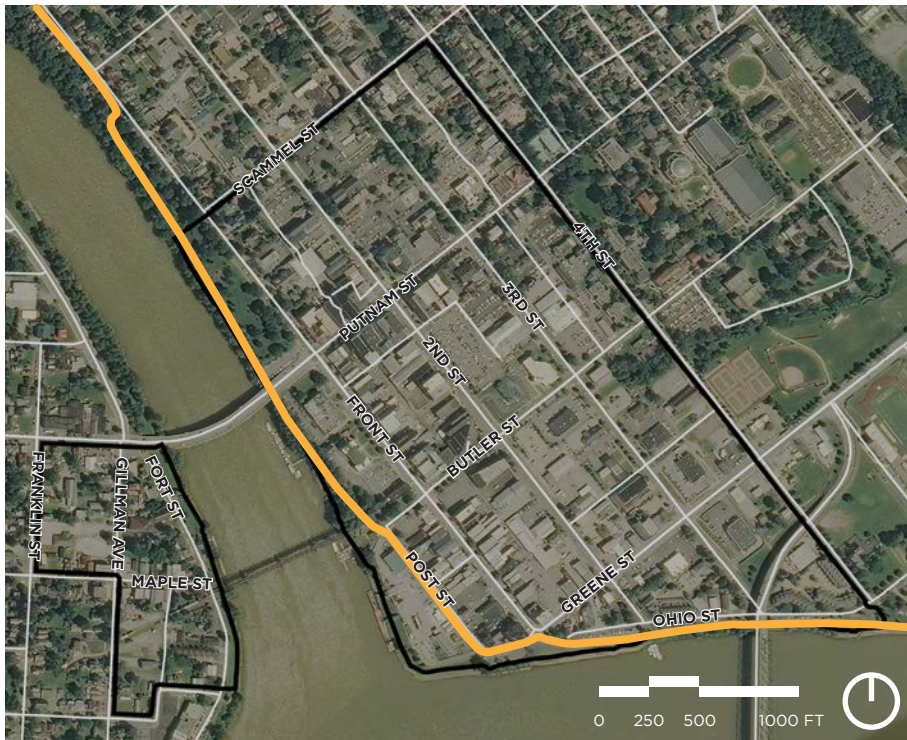


- 0 - 1 Minute
- 1 - 2.5 Minutes
- 2.5 - 5 Minutes

The existing street network makes Downtown highly walkable. However, there may be needed improvements to increase comfort and safety of pedestrians.

Source: (Urban Footprint)

Figure 2-19: Downtown Bikeways



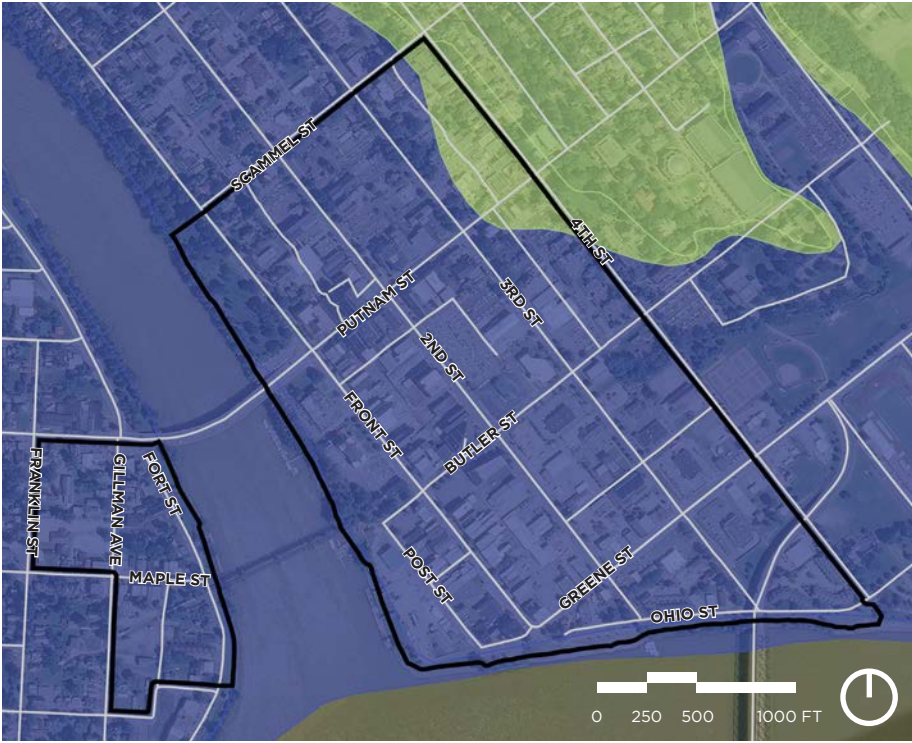
- Ohio River Trail

The Ohio River Trail is a significant asset for Downtown, increasing accessibility and recreation for residents and visitors. There is also an opportunity to strengthen bicycle amenities infrastructure in additional areas.

Source: (Buckeye Hills Regional Council)



Figure 2-20: Flood Hazard Areas



- Minimal Flood Hazard
- 100-Year Floodplain

Downtown’s location along two river fronts is a unique feature. However, it also makes the area susceptible to flooding, which will require thoughtful planning as development and redevelopment occurs.

Source: (Urban Footprint)

Figure 2-21: Year Building Constructed



- Less than 1950
- 1950 - 1975
- 1975 - 2000
- 2000+

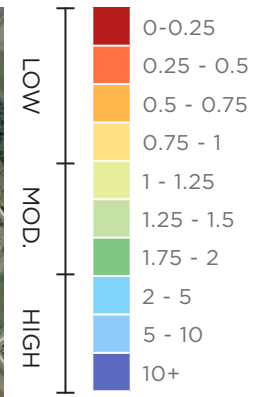
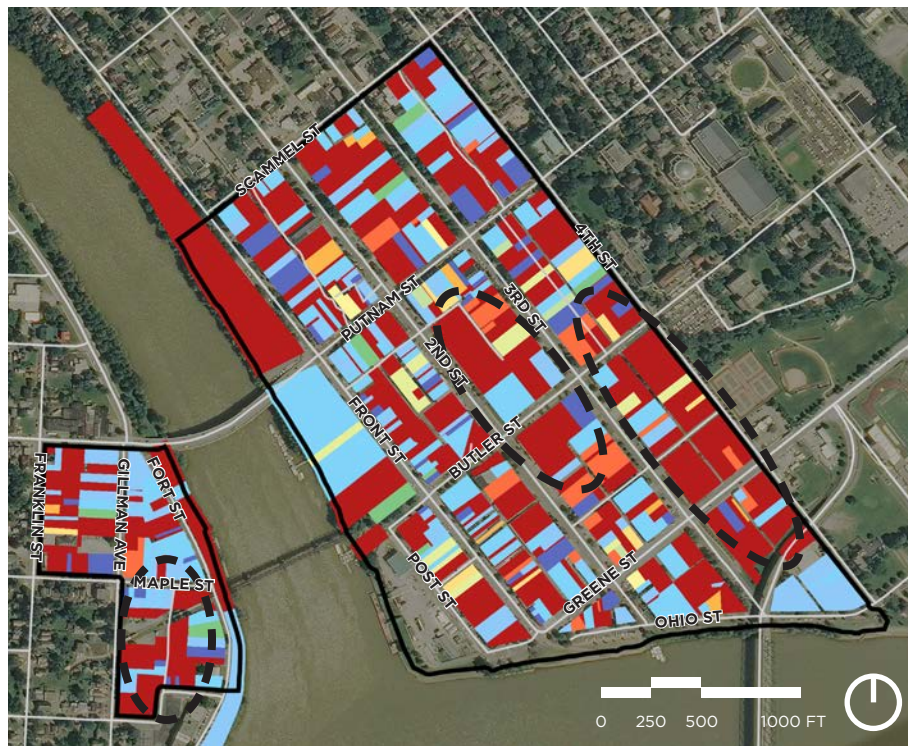
Downtown has many structures over 50 years old, which adds to the charm and character of the area. However, new development may be required to fill needs for housing and commercial space.

Source: (Urban Footprint)



# COMMUNITY CONTEXT

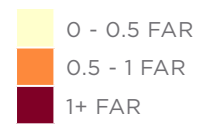
Figure 2-22: Improvement to Land Value Ratio



Property improvement to Land Value Ratio reveals areas that may need reinvestment in the future (i.e. Greene Street, 3rd Street, 2nd Street, and areas in Harmor).

Source: (Urban Footprint)

Figure 2-23: Floor Area Ratio (FAR)



Floor area ratio shows how dense development is, with denser areas tending to feel more urban. Some areas in Downtown are less dense due to the suburban development pattern or expansive parking lots.

Source: (Urban Footprint)



## KEY FINDINGS - COMMUNITY ANALYSIS

In reviewing and analyzing a range of existing conditions in the Downtown, the following key findings were developed. These key findings have informed the Plan recommendations including the pillars, actions, and priority actions.



### **KF11 - Walkable Places.**

Growing Millennial and Baby Boomer populations that seek walkable places to live and work. Ohioans also show a preference for walkable places.



### **K15 - Pedestrian Safety.**

The street network makes downtown highly walkable, although improvements are needed for safety and comfort.



### **KF12 - Residential Options.**

Growing desire for smaller residential options.



### **K16 - Opportunity Zone.**

Opportunity Zone can be leveraged to attract new investment



### **KF13 - Greene Street Reinvestment.**

A need for reinvestment along Greene Street to increase value and market potential.



### **K17 - Bike Network.**

Bike network throughout Downtown can be enhanced through infrastructure and amenities upgrades.



### **KF14 - Harmar & 2nd Street Reinvestment.**

There is an opportunity to increase development/redevelopment intensity along 2nd Street and in Harmar.



*(Photo Source: OZinOhio)*



03

PLAN  
FRAMEWORK



# Plan Framework

## OVERVIEW

The Marietta community has strength in the dedicated individuals and organizations that are passionate about revitalizing Downtown. This is important as downtown revitalization will require a focused and continuous effort by many people.

The Plan Framework is meant to assist City and organizational staff, elected officials, residents, and business owners in advocating for and advancing the recommendations in this Plan. The planning process itself has already started to build momentum in the Downtown. During this process, the community has had conversations around what is most important and what is desired for the future of Downtown. This conversation should continue, as recommendations are implemented and as priorities may change overtime.

## PLAN FRAMEWORK

The Plan Framework was developed by the planning team through input from the community and an analysis of existing conditions and trends. At the heart of the Plan Framework are the Plan pillars that are supported by focused actions. This chapter includes all Plan pillars and related actions, while priority actions are further defined in the following chapter.

### PILLARS

Plan pillars are the overarching goals or future vision

for Downtown. These statements can be used to guide decision making for Downtown and assess whether a project, policy, or program aligns with the vision of Downtown.

### ACTIONS

Plan actions are projects, policies, or programs meant to support and help achieve a Plan pillar. Each action has a timeframe, general funding level, and potential partners, meant to help guide implementation of that action. When working with the steering committee, **priority actions** emerged, which were then vetted through the public engagement process. These priority actions were identified as key elements to implement and therefore, are detailed further in the following chapter.

### TIMEFRAME

Each action has been assigned a timeframe to help organize actions and evaluate progress. The timeframe for each action may be:

- Short (0-2 years)
- Medium (2-5 years)
- Long (5+ years or greater)
- Ongoing

While actions with a shorter timeframe will likely need to be focused on immediately, longer term actions may require a greater effort. It will be important to begin implementing these actions so the timeframe is met.

## PLAN FRAMEWORK

### PILLAR 1: Public Space & Programs

*An array of public spaces and programs that connect people, promote the community, and grow the local economy.*

- ACTION 1.1
- ACTION 1.2
- ACTION 1.3
- ACTION 1.4

### PILLAR 2: Mobility

*A strong, non-motorized transportation network, that connects people, places, and natural systems.*

- ACTION 2.1
- ACTION 2.2
- ACTION 2.3
- ACTION 2.4
- ACTION 2.5

### PILLAR 3: Community Appearance, Identity, & Promotion

*A clear identity that honors historic elements, unique natural systems, and future complementary development.*

- ACTION 3.1
- ACTION 3.2
- ACTION 3.3
- ACTION 3.4

### PILLAR 4: Development, Housing & Neighborhoods

*A diverse, vibrant commercial center that is supported by a range of housing options including new construction and revitalized historical structures.*

- ACTION 4.1
- ACTION 4.2
- ACTION 4.3
- ACTION 4.4
- ACTION 4.5
- ACTION 4.6
- ACTION 4.7
- ACTION 4.8

*Orange actions denote a Priority Action. See the following chapter for more details on Priority Actions.*

## PRIORITY ACTIONS

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### COST

A cost for each action is provided as a general guide, as budgets are updated and financial commitments are made. While capital expenditures are important, maintenance and costs of long-term stewardship should also be considered. Generally, cost is organized by:

- Low Cost: \$0 - \$100,000
- Medium Cost: \$100,000 - \$500,000
- High Cost: \$500,000+

### POTENTIAL PARTNERS

Potential partners have been identified for each action. In some cases, one person or group may be responsible and in other cases many groups may be responsible. By assigning a person, department, or group to each action, this creates clarity and responsibility for whom should carry out that action, helping to ensure the action is implemented. Potential partners should frequently revisit and evaluate progress on their assigned actions.



*Marietta Main Street has a Public Art Committee that organizes installation of local art in the Downtown (Marietta Main Street).*



PILLAR 1

# Public Space & Programs

*An array of public spaces and programs that connect people, promote the community, and grow the local economy.*

	TIMEFRAME	COST	POTENTIAL PARTNERS
<p><b>Action 1.1 - Create a riverfront master plan with a renewed public space at Greene and Front Street.</b> A riverfront master plan should include a comprehensive assessment of existing amenities and conditions along all riverfronts in Downtown, including Harmar, and a cohesive plan for maintenance, upgrades, and capital investments. Riverfront Park, the most prominent public riverfront area, should be re-imagined and refreshed.</p>	LONG	\$ \$ \$	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• City of Marietta</li> <li>• Lafayette Hotel</li> <li>• Property owners</li> <li>• Riverfront Roar Committee</li> <li>• Sternwheel Committee</li> <li>• Riverbank Committee</li> <li>• USACE</li> </ul>
<p><b>Action 1.2 - Enhance, integrate, and promote the riverfront trail in Downtown as part of future public and private developments.</b> This could include not only improvements and extensions to the bike trail but also incorporating bicycle-related amenities into downtown such as bicycle parking, storage, and repair stations.</p>	ONG.	\$ \$	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Washington County CVB</li> <li>• City of Marietta</li> <li>• River Valley Mountain Bike Association</li> <li>• Property owners</li> <li>• Marietta Main Street</li> </ul>
<p><b>Action 1.3 - Create public art elements that also function as a programming and entertainment element (e.g. Mice on Main - Greenfield, SC bronze mice).</b> While Downtown Marietta already supports art installations in the public realm, there is an opportunity to build on this with programming around art such as art walks, tours, scavenger hunts, and other activities.</p>	SHORT	\$	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Marietta Main Street</li> <li>• City of Marietta</li> <li>• Washington County CVB</li> </ul>
<p><b>Action 1.4 - Re-envision Butler Street and Harmar Bridge as a multi-purpose, dynamic community space, vital connection, and trailhead for the riverfront trail.</b> With planned improvements including upgrades and maintenance, this area should function as a community space and strong connection between Downtown, the riverfront, and Harmar.</p>	LONG	\$ \$ \$	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• City of Marietta</li> <li>• Marietta Main Street</li> <li>• Harmar Bridge Company</li> <li>• River Valley Mountain Bike Association</li> <li>• USACE</li> <li>• Property owners</li> <li>• Waso and the Harbor</li> </ul>

## PRIORITY ACTIONS

### ART AS PROGRAM: MICE ON MAIN

*THIS CASE STUDY SUPPORTS ACTION 1.3*

As the cultural center of cities, vibrant downtowns tend to incorporate art work into the public realm such as murals and sculptures. However, there is an opportunity to install more interactive art pieces to increase entertainment and the allure of downtown.



*Lifesize bronze mouse statues are a part of a scavenger hunt in Greenville, South Carolina (Visit Greenville, SC).*

In Greenville, South Carolina, a student's senior project has become a popular attraction downtown. Nine bronze mice statues have been located within the downtown. Visitors are encouraged to use clues to locate each mouse as part of

a scavenger hunt. Since the addition of the mice to Main Street in 2000, they have become a beloved activity downtown.

Marietta, known as "Ohio's First Adventure," could build

on this idea of interactive art in the Downtown to add to this adventurous identity.

For more information:

- [VisitGreenvilleSC.com](http://VisitGreenvilleSC.com)
- [MiceonMain.com](http://MiceonMain.com)

### COMMUNITY DESIGN: THE BETTER BLOCK

*THIS CASE STUDY SUPPORTS IMPLEMENTATION OF MANY ACTIONS.*

The Better Block project is a tool that can be used to gather ideas and support for new projects in a city. A Better Block event can be organized around a potential project which involves creating a temporary installation of the project such as a bike lane, plaza or pop-up business. People are invited to use the space and provide feedback on how to improve.

excitement and a sense of ownership for the project. Streetscape improvements are expected to be installed in 2020. For many of the planned improvements in Downtown Marietta, especially physical projects, the Better Block concept can be a tool to assist in design of the project and create support from the Downtown community and beyond.



*A temporary crosswalk installation at Kent's Better Block event (Kent, Ohio).*

Recently, Kent, Ohio organized a Better Block event to gather input on planned street improvements and create

For more information:

- [BetterBlock.org](http://BetterBlock.org)
- [KentMillDistrict.com](http://KentMillDistrict.com)

## PILLAR 2

# Mobility

*A strong, non-motorized transportation network, that connects people, places, and natural systems.*

	TIMEFRAME	COST	POTENTIAL PARTNERS
<p><b>Action 2.1 - Re-imagine Post Street as an inviting multi-modal connection that links existing and future development along the riverfront.</b> Post Street, with its existing multi-purpose path, can be improved to provide a more comfortable and inviting user experience. Long-term, Post Street may be an important access point to riverfront redevelopment at the USACE site.</p>	SHORT	\$	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• City of Marietta</li> <li>• Marietta Main Street</li> <li>• Public Art Committee</li> <li>• Washington County CVB</li> <li>• Property owners</li> <li>• River Valley Mountain Bike Association</li> <li>• USACE</li> </ul>
<p><b>Action 2.2 - Continue to invest in Harmar Bridge to restore it as a community asset and important pedestrian and bicycle linkage to the Harmar Historic District.</b> Harmar Bridge is an important piece of history and provides pedestrian and bicycle access. However, it is need of maintenance to improve safety and longevity.</p>	MED.	\$ \$ \$	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• City of Marietta</li> <li>• Marietta Main Street</li> <li>• Harmar Bridge Company</li> <li>• Washington County CVB</li> <li>• Buckeye Hills Regional Council</li> </ul>
<p><b>Action 2.3 - Enhance Greene street from S.R. 60 to Front Street.</b> As a prominent gateway into Downtown, Greene Street should be improved through transportation and streetscape upgrades.</p>	MED.	\$ \$ \$	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• City of Marietta</li> <li>• Mayor's Alternative Transportation Advisory Committee (MATAC)</li> <li>• Ohio Department of Transportation</li> <li>• City of Williamstown</li> <li>• Property owners</li> </ul>
<p><b>Action 2.4 - Improve ease and access to parking through signage and shared parking agreements.</b> With an existing wayfinding plan in-place, efforts to install signage and work through shared parking agreements should begin.</p>	SHORT	\$ \$	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• City of Marietta</li> <li>• Marietta Main Street</li> <li>• Downtown property owners</li> </ul>
<p><b>Action 2.5 - Develop an ADA transition plan.</b> With this effort already underway, existing and future development in the Downtown should ensure ADA accessibility.</p>	SHORT	\$	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• City of Marietta</li> <li>• ADA Compliance Officer</li> <li>• Code Enforcement Officer</li> <li>• City Engineer</li> </ul>



## PRIORITY ACTIONS

### PILLAR 3

# Community Appearance, Identity & Promotion

*A clear identity that honors historic elements, unique natural systems, and future complementary development.*

	TIMEFRAME	COST	POTENTIAL PARTNERS
<p><b>Action 3.1 - Promote the Downtown as a premier Ohio outdoor destination.</b> Marietta benefits from plentiful natural features that encourage recreation. Existing promotional efforts should be built upon to ensure Downtown is a destination within the region for outdoor adventure.</p>	MED.	\$	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Washington County CVB</li> <li>River Valley Mountain Bike Association</li> <li>City of Marietta</li> <li>Marietta Main Street</li> </ul>
<p><b>Action 3.2 - Create unique physical gateway elements into the Downtown.</b> Gateway elements such as signage or arches introduce and welcome people to Downtown, identifying the place and adding to the aesthetic character.</p>	ONG.	\$ \$	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Marietta Main Street</li> <li>City of Marietta</li> </ul>
<p><b>Action 3.3 - Enforce the existing property maintenance code.</b> Ensuring property maintenance including building upkeep and signage can greatly improve the aesthetics of Downtown and support a safe and inviting place.</p>	SHORT	\$	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>City of Marietta (Code Enforcement)</li> </ul>
<p><b>Action 3.4 - Create a communication and marketing strategy to market the Downtown locally, regionally, and throughout the state.</b> While many individuals and organizations undertake marketing and communications for the City and/or Downtown, an organized and clear strategy can help ensure efforts are effective and the desired message is reaching target audiences.</p>	SHORT	\$	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>City of Marietta</li> <li>Marietta Main Street</li> <li>Washington County CVB</li> <li>Marietta Area Chamber of Commerce</li> </ul>

PILLAR 4

# Development, Housing, & Neighborhoods

*A diverse, vibrant commercial center that is supported by a range of housing options including new construction and revitalized historical structures.*

	TIMEFRAME	COST	POTENTIAL PARTNERS
<p><b>Action 4.1 - Build upon Marietta's unique assets and identity to promote living, working, and shopping in the Downtown.</b>                      Downtown offers a unique experience for those living, working, or visiting. To be successful, a community of residents, visitors, and workers should be supported, by promoting Downtown's assets such as walkability, local goods, and community events.</p>	ONG.	\$	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Washington County CVB</li> <li>• Marietta Area Chamber of Commerce</li> <li>• City of Marietta</li> <li>• Marietta Main Street</li> </ul>
<p><b>Action 4.2 - Work collaboratively with existing businesses to identify needs and opportunities to further promote shopping and services within the Downtown.</b> On a regular basis, business owners should be consulted to help define current issues they are experiencing and opportunities for improvement.</p>	ONG.	\$	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Marietta Main Street</li> <li>• Business owners</li> </ul>
<p><b>Action 4.3 - Market the Opportunity Zone designation as an incentive for private investment in the downtown.</b> As part of a portfolio of economic tools, the Opportunity Zone should be marketed to local and regional investors to spur economic growth Downtown.</p>	SHORT	\$	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• City of Marietta</li> <li>• Marietta Area Chamber of Commerce</li> </ul>
<p><b>Action 4.4 - Work collaboratively, with educational institutions and local private partners, to locate offices or incubation space downtown.</b> This will support more activity in the Downtown.</p>	SHORT	\$	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• City of Marietta</li> <li>• Marietta Main Street</li> <li>• Marietta Area Chamber of Commerce</li> <li>• Marietta College</li> </ul>

## PRIORITY ACTIONS

	TIMEFRAME	COST	POTENTIAL PARTNERS
<p><b>Action 4.5 - Create a focused redevelopment strategy for Greene Street.</b> In addition to improvements within the public realm (Action 2.3), private property owners should be encouraged to upkeep and maintain properties along Greene Street and longterm, some areas may be redeveloped.</p>	LONG	\$ \$ \$	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• City of Marietta</li> <li>• Marietta Main Street</li> <li>• Property owners</li> <li>• Marietta College</li> <li>• Community Improvement Corporation</li> </ul>
<p><b>Action 4.6 - Encourage and promote residential development in the Downtown.</b> Additional residents in the Downtown will support existing businesses and neighborhoods and provide a unique living opportunity for residents. This should include renovating existing buildings as well as new construction.</p>	ONG.	\$ \$	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Marietta Main Street</li> <li>• City of Marietta</li> <li>• Local Developers</li> <li>• Property owners</li> <li>• Community Improvement Corporation</li> </ul>
<p><b>Action 4.7 - Consider an incentive program for businesses or public entities to subsidize an employee owning or renting a home in the Downtown.</b> Through collaboration with local colleges, incentive programs can encourage additional residents to live Downtown and provide a workplace incentive for employees.</p>	SHORT	\$	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Marietta College</li> <li>• Washington State Community College</li> <li>• City of Marietta</li> <li>• Marietta Main Street</li> <li>• Property owners</li> </ul>
<p><b>Action 4.8 - Utilize economic incentives such as abatements to create or enhance the desired housing stock downtown.</b> This may include examining and analyzing the success of existing incentives offered for residential housing, researching additional incentives, and creating a suite of economic development tools that encourage additional residential units in the Downtown.</p>	MED.	\$ \$	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• City of Marietta</li> <li>• Marietta Area Chamber of Commerce</li> </ul>



## ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT: OPPORTUNITY ZONES

*THIS CASE STUDY SUPPORTS ACTION 4.3*

In 2017, Congress created the Tax Cuts and Job Act which included the creation of Opportunity Zones (OZ) and Opportunity Funds. This is an economic development tool available to distressed communities and is meant to spur economic growth and job creation. When an investor has excess capital, they have the ability to roll those gains into investments in an OZ, creating capital gains tax incentives. Portions of Downtown Marietta are included in an OZ designation.

Although this is a new tool and it requires time for investors to realize benefits, communities can begin to prepare and market their OZ. This can include creating bundled packages of economic incentives (in addition to an OZ), offering streamlined approval processes, creating public-private partnerships, and identifying specific projects that can be funded through an OZ. For more information:

- Fundrise.com
- JDSupra.com



*Opportunity Zones are one of many economic tools to spur investment in Downtown (Marietta Main Street).*

## UNIVERSITY EMPLOYEE DOWN PAYMENT ASSISTANCE

*THIS CASE STUDY SUPPORTS ACTION 4.6 AND 4.7*

Educational institutions are great partners for the communities where they are located. Oftentimes, the successes of a place and of an educational institution are interrelated. In Columbus, Ohio, Ohio State University understood this connection when they created a homeowner, down payment assistance program for employees that chose to purchase a home in nearby, select neighborhoods. This has encouraged investment in the neighborhoods surrounding the University and offered



*Offering down payment assistance to employees spurred investment in struggling neighborhoods around Ohio State University (Campus Partners).*

employees an additional workplace incentive.

With multiple colleges located within or near Downtown Marietta, there is an opportunity to rehabilitate and construct additional housing

Downtown and offer incentives for institutional employees to call Downtown home.

For more information:

- CampusPartners.org





*(Photo Source: Tim Hoeflich)*





# 04

## PRIORITY ACTIONS



# Priority Actions

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## OVERVIEW

Similar to many downtowns across the midwest and nation, the Downtown Marietta community has identified a wide range of ideas and opportunities to increase the vibrancy and quality of place in Downtown. However, to truly be effective and enact instrumental change, efforts must be focused and those involved must be aligned on priorities and a plan of action.

Therefore, as part of the Plan, priority actions have been identified due to their importance to the community and their ability to greatly advance Downtown. These nine priority actions are catalytic projects, programs, or policies that are important to the community and will strengthen the local economy and improve quality of place. While many of these priority actions have long been priorities in the community, others may be new or recent priorities. As implementation of the Plan and these priority actions is undertaken, stakeholders must continue to have conversations around priorities for Downtown to ensure efforts are focused, effective, and aligned.



**PRIORITY ACTIONS** -- catalytic projects, programs, or policies for the downtown that will strengthen the local economy and improve quality of place.

# PRIORITY ACTIONS

Figure 4-1: Priority Actions with Geographic Locations







## PRIORITY ACTIONS












### OVERVIEW

Located at the confluence of the Ohio and Muskingum Rivers, Marietta has always been deeply connected to these waterways for commerce, transportation, and recreation. Representative of this importance, the bicentennial for the City was celebrated through public improvements to the Ohio Riverfront Park along the Ohio River in the late 1980's. However, decades of aging and use have rendered the riverfront park in need of maintenance and improvements to create a modern and iconic riverfront park, representative of the unique history and offerings of the City.

### KEY FINDINGS SUPPORT

Revitalizing the riverfront was found to be a high priority throughout the public engagement process. The public felt the riverfront was a part of the City's identity. However, it was identified as a place that was in need of enhancements and transformational change so there could be greater use of the riverfront. In addition to specifically referencing the importance of improving the riverfront, the public also showed preference for the types of amenities and public spaces that the riverfront currently offers or could offer, including bikeway

Figure 4-3: Relevant Key Findings

-  **KF1 - Downtown Revitalization**
-  **KF2 - Riverfront Enhancements**
-  **KF3 - Additional Events/Activities**
-  **KF4 - Maintenance**
-  **KF5 - Shopping & Entertainment**
-  **KF7 - Gathering Spaces**
-  **KF8 - Multimodal Connectivity**
-  **KF11 - Walkable Places**
-  **KF17 - Bike Network**



connections, gathering spaces, events, and water access. Enhancing the riverfront could also alleviate issues with maintenance.

## CURRENT CONDITION

Stretching along the Ohio River shoreline from the convergence of the Muskingum River east to 2nd Street, the Ohio Riverfront Park currently accommodates several spaces for seating, walking, biking, and parking. There is also a decorative fountain at the terminus of Front Street and plaques dispersed in multiple places in the park. Many events are hosted along the riverfront including the Ohio River Sternwheel Festival, which brings thousands of visitors to Downtown Marietta every year.

Although the park functions for current events and users, the aging facilities and design do not support what the park could be for the Downtown and overall City. With the location and acreage of the park along the riverfront, the park could attract many more visitors to Downtown for recreation and enjoyment of the Ohio River on both a daily basis and for planned events.

## CONCEPT

The riverfront has been re-imagined as a first-class public space that is dynamic, alive, and will serve as space for events and everyday use. On the western portion of the site, a reconfigured parking that can also be used for events allows for an enlarged boardwalk with additional space for seating and enjoying the riverfront. The central portion of the site is refreshed with updated, low-maintenance materials and landscaping. At Front and Greene, a gateway feature announces the park space and creates a clear definition between the roadway and park. An ADA accessible pathway creates access east and west to the river. To the east, a concrete seating area surrounds a defined stage for large and small events and a boat access ramp for events is located at Ohio and 2nd Street. Overall, the riverfront is intended to be a flexible and inviting space for both everyday use and large events.





# PRIORITY ACTIONS

Figure 4-5: Ohio River Park Concept

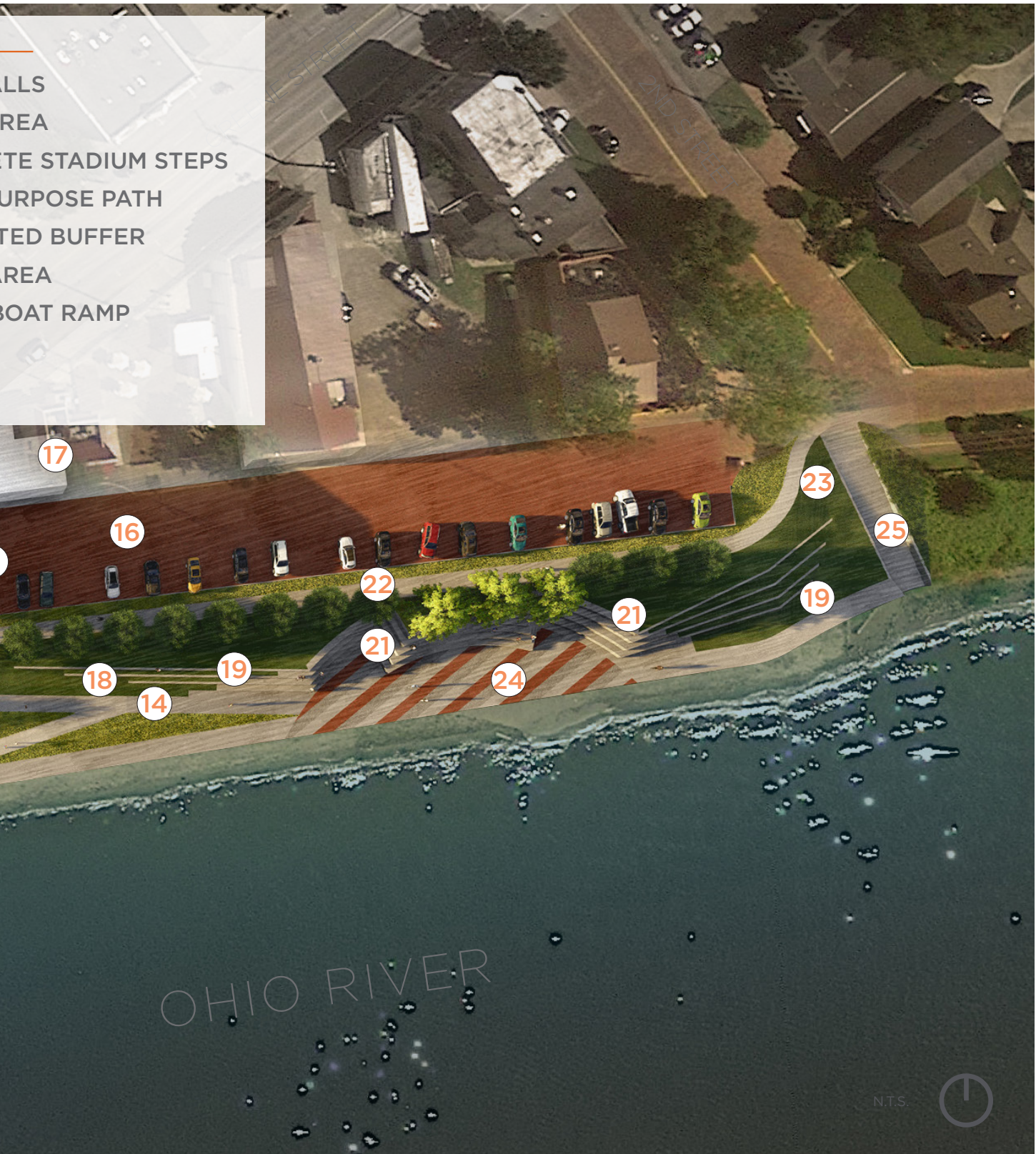
## SITE DATA

- |                             |                           |             |
|-----------------------------|---------------------------|-------------|
| 1: BRICK INTERSECTION       | 10: BOARDWALK             | 19: SEATWA  |
| 2: REMOVE / UPDATE FOUNTAIN | 11: BIOSWALES             | 20: LAWN A  |
| 3: BRICK PLAZA WITH SEATING | 12: LOW PLANTINGS         | 21: CONCRE  |
| 4: REMOVABLE BOLLARDS       | 13: CONCRETE EDGE         | 22: MULTI-P |
| 5: ENTRY SEATWALL/ SIGNAGE  | 14: SLOPED WALK           | 23: VEGETA  |
| 6: SWINGING BENCHES         | 15: ARCHITECTURAL TRELLIS | 24: STAGE A |
| 7: RECONFIGURE PARKING      | 16: MARKET/ MOVABLE TENTS | 25: EVENT B |
| 8: CONNECTION TO HOTEL      | 17: FUTURE PLAZA SPACE    |             |
| 9: OVERLOOK                 | 18: TERRACE SEATING       |             |





ALLS  
AREA  
SITE STADIUM STEPS  
PURPOSE PATH  
TED BUFFER  
AREA  
BOAT RAMP





# PRIORITY ACTIONS



OHIO RIVERFRONT PARK (LOOKING NORTHEAST)



OVERLOOK & CONCRETE DOCK



OPEN LAWN AND STAIRWAY ACCESS





ENTRY SIGNAGE AT FRONT & GREENE ST.



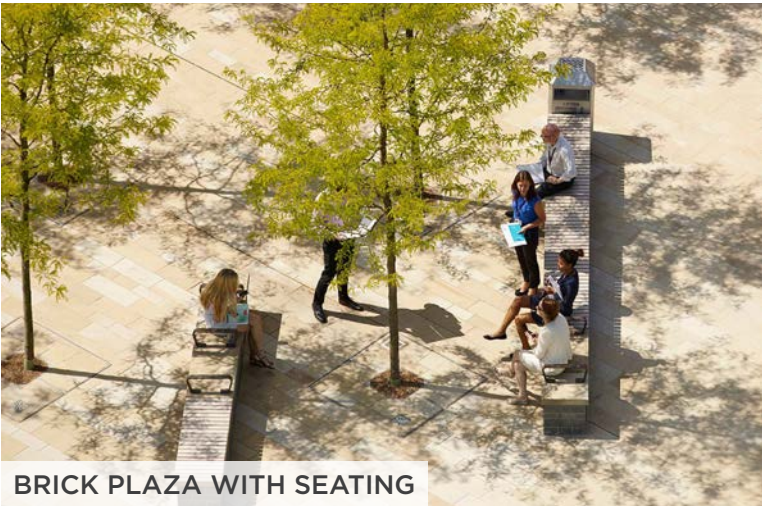
ARCHITECTURAL SHADE STRUCTURE



LARGE EVENT STAGE



# PRIORITY ACTIONS



## IMPLEMENTATION

The following are potential next steps, costs, and funding options to help improve the Riverfront Park area.

### Next Steps

- Create a detailed master plan and cost estimate (2020)
- Create a phasing plan and strategy to allow for the park to be constructed in phases allowing for flexibility in the construction of the park (2020)
- Identify funding plan and dedicate/apply for funding (2020)
- Finalize construction documents and bid project and/or project phases (2021)
- Construct project (2022)
- *Note - This schedule puts a high priority on this project that aligns with the feedback and prioritization of the community and project steering committee.*

### Project Cost\*

- \$5-\$8 million

### Potential Funding/Financing

- Clean Ohio Trail Fund (Ohio EPA)
- Land and Water Conservation Funds (ODNR, National Park Service)
- Recreational Trail Program (ODNR, FHWA)
- Natureworks (ODNR)
- Private Organizations (e.g. Knight Foundation, local businesses)
- Special taxing districts (TIF, SID, or New Community Authority)
- Ohio Water Development Authority Alternative Stormwater Infrastructure Loan Program (Ohio Development Services Agency)
- Local Government Safety Capital Grant Program (boat launch and access for emergency response) (Ohio Development Services Agency)

\*Opinion of Probable Cost



## PRIORITY ACTIONS

# Butler Street & Harmar Bridge

*Priority Action 2 - Re-envision Butler Street and Harmar Bridge as a multi-purpose, dynamic community space, vital connection, and trailhead for the riverfront trail.*

## OVERVIEW

Butler Street is a vital corridor for Downtown with its location roughly at the mid-point of the central business district, its connection west to the Harmar neighborhood through Harmar Bridge, and its connection east to Marietta College. Butler Street also provides access to the Marietta Harbor and the Ohio River Trail, two important recreational amenities for residents and visitors. Enhancing this link, especially between Front Street and Post Street on Butler Street, and potentially creating a more pedestrian and bicyclist friendly zone, will increase visual and physical access to these important areas in Downtown.

## KEY FINDINGS SUPPORT

Making improvements to Butler Street and the connection west through Harmar Bridge, supports many aspects that the public and existing conditions assessment identified as important for the Downtown. This area directly connects to the riverfront by Marietta Harbor, an area that could benefit from updates and maintenance. The public also showed support for increasing walkability and bikeability in Downtown. Butler Street is an important node for access to the bike trail, whether



**KF1 - Downtown Revitalization**



**KF2 - Riverfront Enhancements**



**KF3 - Additional Events/Activities**



**KF4 - Maintenance**



**KF7 - Gathering Spaces**



**KF8 - Multimodal Connectivity**



**KF10 - Harmar Reinvestment**



**KF11 - Walkable Places**



**KF14 - Harmar & 2nd St. Reinvestment**



**K15 - Pedestrian Safety**



**KF17 - Bike Network**

that be for people looking to rent bicycles or bring their own.

The Harmar Bridge and reinvestment in the Harmar neighborhood were also important to the community. By better linking Butler Street to the Harmar Bridge and providing maintenance and upgrades to the bridge, both residents and visitors will be able to more easily move between Harmar and Downtown, increasing the viability of the neighborhood.

## CURRENT CONDITION

Although Butler Street and the Harmar Bridge currently function as thoroughfares for drivers, walkers, and bikers, they can be greatly enhanced to strengthen connectivity, elevate the identity of Downtown, and create additional public space for events and activities. Currently, Butler Street is a two-way road with a sidewalk and street parking on the south side, and a multi-purpose path and street parking on the north side. The multi-purpose pathway, which goes through the park is disjointed and provides no clear access on public land to Harmar Bridge and the River Trail. This creates conflicts between riders and the private property to the north. Gateway Memorial Park, which includes a plaza with seating, a historical marker, and a large wayfinding sign, is at the corner of Butler Street and Front Street. South of Marietta Harbor, the U.S. Army Corp of Engineer's property with barned wire fencing creates an unwelcoming feeling.

Harmar Bridge, although privately owned, is a piece of Marietta's history and the bridge span, which can be turned to accommodate river traffic, is a unique example of bridge engineering. Today, the bridge also serves as a critical link for pedestrians and cyclists to and from Harmar and the east side of Downtown. However, the bridge is in poor condition and in need of millions of dollars in upgrades and repair to ensure safety and longevity. Although in recent years the bridge has been repaired to restore access, restoring this bridge and preserving its unique history will take a concerted effort from both public and private entities.





# PRIORITY ACTIONS

Figure 4-6: Butler Street and Harmar Bridge



## SITE DATA

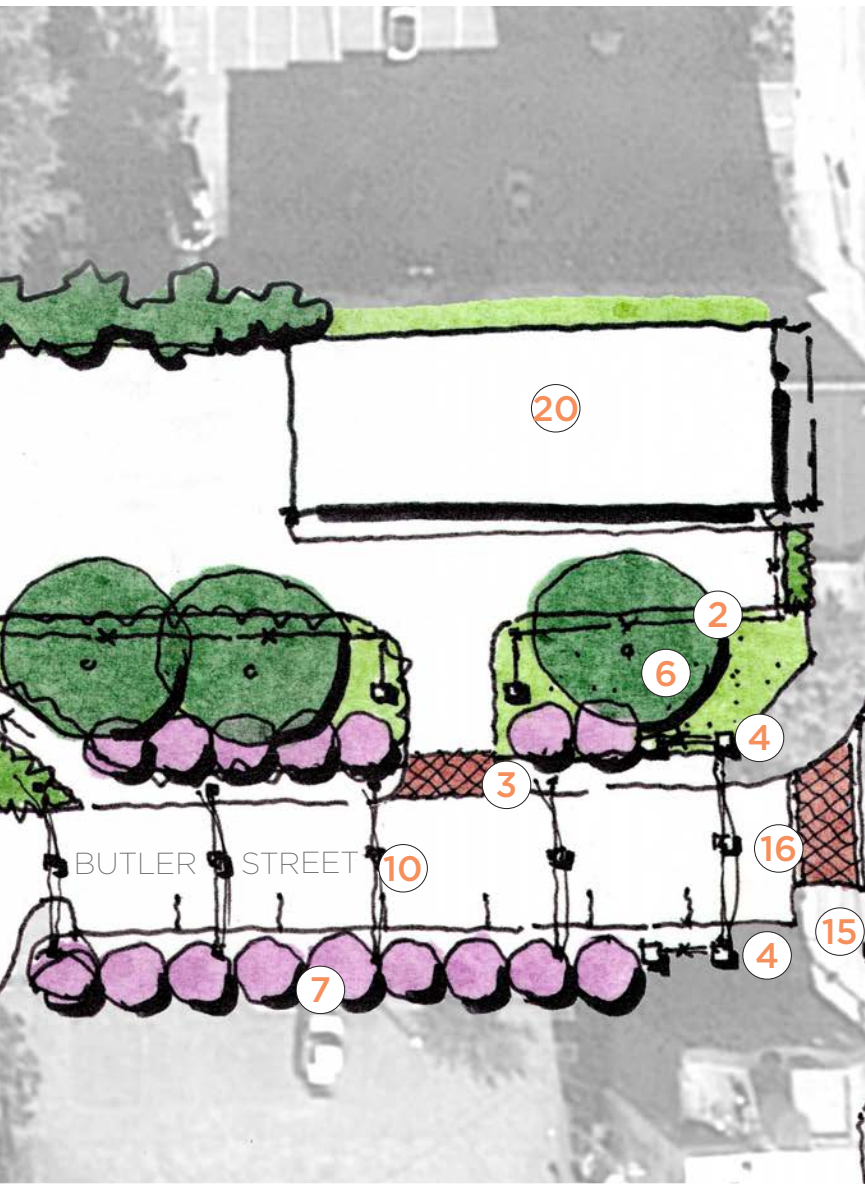
- |                          |                      |                            |
|--------------------------|----------------------|----------------------------|
| 1: ENTRY PLAZA           | 6: EXISTING PARK     | 11: PROPOSED PARKING       |
| 2: DECORATIVE FENCE      | 7: STREET TREES      | 12: RE-ALIGNED PATHWAY     |
| 3: BIKE CIRCULATION PATH | 8: ARMY CORE ENTRY   | 13: ROUNDABOUT             |
| 4: GATEWAY COLUMNS       | 9: UPDATED OVERLOOKS | 14: PROPOSED STEPS         |
| 5: EXISTING PARKING      | 10: CATENARY LIGHTS  | 15: ENHANCED INTERSECTIONS |



## CONCEPT: COMMUNITY SPACE AND TRAILHEAD

The Butler Street area is renewed and upgraded to create a distinct public area that supports important connections to the Muskingum River, Harmar Bridge, the Harmar neighborhood, and the River Trail and provides an opportunity for intimate, community events. The Butler and Front Street intersection would be upgraded with mast arm stop lights and brick paver crosswalks, reducing visual clutter and improving the quality of the intersection. As people move west into the space, gateway features and removable bollards define the street as a unique, public space. Overhead catenary lights and consistent street trees, create an intimate experience. The Marietta Harbor building and surrounding plaza and overlooks would receive updated materials and furniture intended to complement other public spaces in the Downtown. These features come together to create a dynamic and flexible area that can function as a roadway or a event space.

To define and improve multi-modal connections, the pathway on the northern side of the street is realigned, pulling it closer to the roadway and creating clear, accessible routes to the River Trail and Harmar Bridge. Although on-street parking is removed, this reduces conflict between the public right of way and private property for users. Upgrades and maintenance to the Harmar Bridge, would create a safe and comfortable connection from Front Street to the Harmar neighborhood, increasing access for residents and encouraging visitors to the neighborhood.

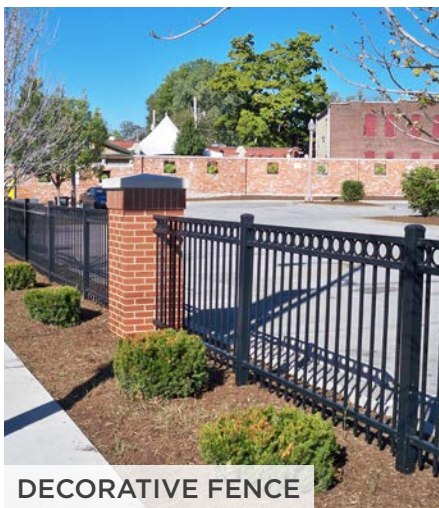


- 16: BOLLARDS
- 17: BRIDGE MAINTENANCE
- 18: ENHANCE TRAIN DEPOT
- 19: EXISTING HARBOR BUILDING
- 20: EXISTING BUILDING





# PRIORITY ACTIONS





## IMPLEMENTATION

The following are potential next steps, costs, and funding options to help improve the Butler Street area.

### Next Steps

- Create a detailed master plan and cost estimate (2022)
- Finalize master plan, phasing, and cost estimate (2022)
- Identify funding plan and dedicate/apply for funding (2022)
- Finalize construction documents and bid project (2023)
- Construct project (2024)
- *Note - This schedule has the implementation of this project starting after the completion of design, funding, and bidding of the Riverfront Park.*

### Project Cost\*

- \$1.5-2 million (does not include Harmar Bridge upgrades/maintenance)

### Potential Funding/Financing

- Clean Ohio Trail Fund (Ohio EPA)
- Land and Water Conservation Funds (ODNR, National Park Service)
- Recreational Trail Program (ODNR, FHWA)
- Safe Routes to School (Department of Transportation)
- Community Development Block Grant (Ohio Development Services Agency, HUD)
- Transportation Alternative Program (Activity 3)
- Private Organizations (e.g. Knight Foundation, local businesses)
- Special taxing districts (TIF, SID, or New Community Authority)

\*Opinion of Probable Cost

## PRIORITY ACTIONS















### OVERVIEW

Post Street, located just west of Front Street, is a roadway that provides many functions for a variety of users. This includes back-of-house activities for businesses fronting Front Street, parking for employees and visitors, an access link for bicyclists on the Ohio Trail, and the boundary line of the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers site. With all of these activities occurring along the street, the roadway can create many visual and physical conflicts for users. However, Post Street is a vital link for cyclists in the Downtown and, in the future, may front new development, if the Army Corps site is redeveloped.

### KEY FINDINGS SUPPORT

Enhancing Post Street and, long-term, redeveloping the Army Corps site supports implementation of many of the key findings from the public engagement and existing conditions work. This is because improving the environment for bikers and walkers supports active transportation in the Downtown, while redeveloping the Army Corps site opens opportunities for new residential, commercial, and open space development in the Downtown.

-  **KF1 - Downtown Revitalization**
-  **KF2 - Riverfront Enhancements**
-  **KF4 - Maintenance**
-  **KF5 - Shopping & Entertainment**
-  **KF6 - Downtown Living**
-  **KF7 - Gathering Spaces**
-  **KF8 - Multimodal Connectivity**
-  **KF11 - Walkable Places**
-  **KF12 - Residential Options**
-  **K15 - Pedestrian Safety**
-  **K16 - Opportunity Zone**
-  **KF17 - Bike Network**



## CURRENT CONDITION

Post Street was improved in recent years to create a one-way roadway that included the installation of a multi-purpose path, defined on-street parking, and some landscape elements. Post Street is one section of Marietta's multi-purpose River Trail which is a three mile trail that runs from the Indian Acres Boat Ramp along the river to East 8th and Jefferson Streets, behind K-Mart. This trail is an important amenity and attraction for the area.

Currently, on the west side of the street, Post Street has both angled and parallel parking depending on the section of roadway. This side of the street also abuts to the Army Corps site, bordered by a chain link fence. On the eastern side of the street, many businesses including Lafayette hotel, tire services, restaurants, and boutiques use Post Street for parking, trash collection, and undefined outdoor space. This creates a haphazard condition and can feel uncomfortable and uninviting for people using the trail.



## PRIORITY ACTIONS

### CONCEPT: ENHANCED MULTI-PURPOSE PATHWAY

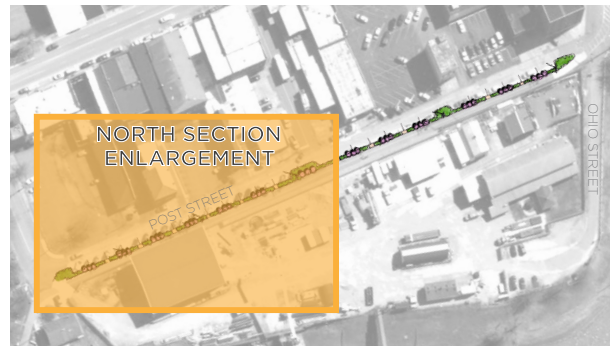
Along Post Street, the River Trail is envisioned as a comfortable and inviting space for bikers and walkers using the path. Simple, yet effective improvements like adding a lush, landscape buffer between on-street parking and the trail will soften the space and better define uses. Art installations that reflect Marietta's history and people will add visual interest and create a unique space. This could include sculpture pieces, murals, or decorative banners or fencing slats. Art elements could be more permanent in nature or be a part of an organized, rotation, creating an opportunity for more local artists.

Making these improvements do not require significant capital investments, but they do require planning and organizational efforts. Additionally, creating more space for landscaping and art may require reducing existing parking spaces. The current configuration shown would reduce on-street parking from 34 to 26 spaces. However, the River Trail is a popular amenity and public feedback shows that multi-modal travel is important.

Figure 4-7: North Section Enlargement



Figure 4-8: Post Bikeway Enhancements



### CONCEPT KEY

- 1: EXISTING POWER LINES
- 2: ON STREET PARKING
- 3: EXISTING PATH
- 4: PASS-THROUGH WALKWAY
- 5: STREET TREES
- 6: PLANTINGS
- 7: ENHANCE FENCING





DECORATIVE FENCE BANNER



ART SCULPTURE



LANDSCAPE BUFFER



LANDSCAPE BUFFER



INFORMATIONAL PIECE



DECORATIVE FENCE SLATS



## PRIORITY ACTIONS

### U.S. ARMY CORPS OF ENGINEERS SITE

At the confluence of the Ohio River and Muskingum River, the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (USACE) has an approximately four acre site that is used as a repair station. While the repair station is currently an active use, there may be an opportunity in the future, as the USACE updates operations, to redevelop the site for another use.

In the mid-to-long-term, the vision for the site is of development with a mix of uses that may incorporate housing, retail, restaurant, office, and open space. These uses would take advantage of the prime location along the riverfront, maximizing viewsheds of the river and opening this portion of the river to public access. Furthermore, redevelopment of this site could allow the realignment of the River Trail to along the riverfront, as opposed to along Post Street. To help align city and USACE plans, both organizations should continue to have an open dialogue about existing and future plans for the site.

Figure 4-9: U.S. Army Corps of Engineers Site





## IMPLEMENTATION

The following are potential next steps, costs, and funding options to help improve the Post Street area.

### Next Steps

- Finalize streetscape design and cost estimate (2020)
- Local design competition for mural/public art (2020)
- Create/launch sponsorship campaign for murals (2020)
- Budget funding in City CIP (2020)
- Finalize construction documents and bid project (2021)
- Fabricate and install murals (2021)
- Construct project streetscape (2022)

### Project Cost

- \$300,000 - \$500,000\*

### Potential Funding/Financing

- Ohio Public Works Commission (streetscape enhancements and connectivity)
- Public art (local sponsorship/donation)

\*Opinion of Probable Cost

## PRIORITY ACTIONS













### OVERVIEW

As a major corridor for the City, Greene Street is the primary access point for those entering Downtown from I-77 and the Marietta-Williamstown Bridge. Therefore, it may be the first introduction of visitors to Downtown Marietta, creating an opportunity for a welcoming, first-impression to the City. However, Greene Street does not currently reflect the unique charm and character of other areas in Downtown, such as Front Street. This may discourage potential residents, visitors, and business owners from visiting or locating in the Downtown. Improving both the public realm and private properties along Greene Street, can greatly increase the desirability of the entire Downtown.

### KEY FINDINGS SUPPORT

While Greene Street, specifically, did not arise as a priority for the public, improving the Greene Street corridor supports many other priorities for Downtown including revitalization and maintenance as well as increasing options for downtown living and shopping and entertainment. Greene Street in its current state also negatively impacts the beauty of Downtown, a trait that many residents cited as a positive feature. Enhancing Greene Street through

-  **KF1 - Downtown Revitalization**
-  **KF4 - Maintenance**
-  **KF5 - Shopping & Entertainment**
-  **KF6 - Downtown Living**
-  **KF9 - Cultural Hub**
-  **KF11 - Walkable Places**
-  **KF12 - Residential Options**
-  **KF13 - Greene St. Reinvestment**
-  **K15 - Pedestrian Safety**
-  **K16 - Opportunity Zone**



streetscape improvements and redeveloping key properties, can also improve the walkability of Downtown. With few historic properties along the corridor, this area may be well-suited for redevelopment that utilizes the Opportunity Zone designation.

## CURRENT CONDITION

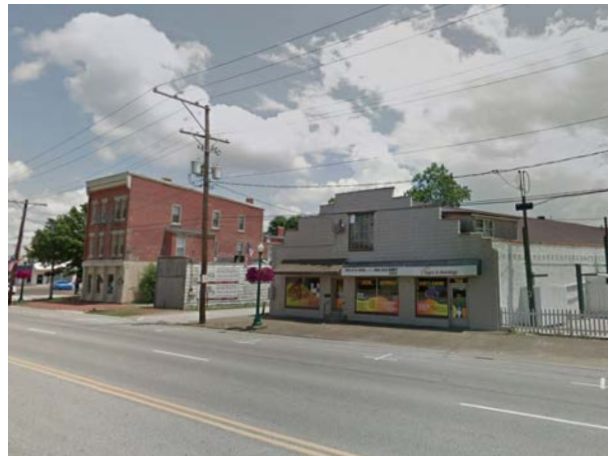
The stretch of Greene Street from Route 60 to Front Street has a high variation in the type of development, age of buildings, site layout, and overall maintenance condition. This creates a disjointed and haphazard feel as people move through the corridor to Downtown. People unfamiliar with the area may not even realize they are entering Downtown. The development pattern and roadway condition is also uninviting and, in some areas, unsafe for pedestrians.

## CONCEPT: RENEWED CORRIDOR

Re-imagining Greene Street will take a concerted effort by both public and private entities. However, streetscape improvements can do much to improve the look and feel of the corridor and show investment within the area.

The concept shows the eastern portion of the corridor with a secondary streetscape which includes a less intense investment such as maintaining sidewalks, installing pedestrian lighting, reducing curb cuts, and buffering parking lots with landscaping or seat walls for screening. As the corridor transitions into the heart of Downtown, just before Front Street, a more intense streetscape includes secondary streetscape elements as well as street trees, street furniture, and landscape bump-outs. Burying utilities along the length of the corridor should also be considered.

A successful Greene Street would also require investment from private landowners. Some initial properties have been identified as potential redevelopment sites due to their current condition, location, and size of property. These properties



# PRIORITY ACTIONS

Figure 4-10: Butler Street







create opportunities for additional residential, commercial, and open space in the Downtown. The following is the intended use and character for each site, should redevelopment occur:

- Site A: Multifamily / Student Housing. Located near Marietta College, this site is envisioned as offering primarily off-campus apartment housing for students. Multi-story buildings are oriented towards the street to create a more urban feel, while natural materials, like brick and stone, contribute to the character.
- Site B: Adaptive Re-use. Located adjacent to the Ohio River Trail, this site is envisioned as a mix of public and private space. Existing buildings on 2nd Street would remain, while the one story brick building would be re-used as a community house or market. As the site narrows, a plaza would connect to the riverfront park.
- Site C & D: Mixed Use: Accommodating commercial space and residential uses, these sites would support of a mix of activity. Buildings would be oriented towards the street, creating a more urban feel.

## IMPLEMENTATION

The following are potential next steps, costs, and funding options to help enhance Greene Street in the coming years.

### Next Steps

- Activate CIC (2019)
- Work with the City to align funding to CIC (2020)
- Facilitate redevelopment of target areas (2021/Ongoing)
- Plan streetscape improvements (2021)
- Apply for funding (2021)
- Construct streetscape (2022 2023)

### Project Cost

- \$1.8-\$2.5 million (streetscape)

### Potential Funding/Financing

- Ohio Public Works Commission
- Alternative Stormwater Infrastructure Loan Program (Ohio Development Services Agency)
- Safe Routes to School (Department of Transportation)
- Economic Development Tools (TIF, New Community Authority, SID)

*\*Opinion of Probable Cost*

## PRIORITY ACTIONS



# Parking & Wayfinding

*Improve ease and access to parking through signage and shared parking agreements.*

## OVERVIEW

Access to parking through signage and shared parking agreements can support more visitors to a downtown for shopping, entertainment, and other activities because they are not deterred by a real or perceived parking shortage. Unique wayfinding elements, while functional, can also be a part of the brand and identity of a place.

Currently, a plan is already in place for vehicular and pedestrian wayfinding within the Downtown (see Figure 4-13) and some of these improvements have already been funded through a grant. The City as a whole has also discussed signage options at major gateways such as the I-77 Exit Ramp. Wayfinding efforts in the City and Downtown should be coordinated across departments and organizations. Shared parking agreements are also an important strategy for alleviating parking frustrations in Downtown. Efforts should be made to increase shared parking agreements through education and creating a clear path to agreements and implementation.

## IMPLEMENTATION

The following are potential next steps to improve parking and wayfinding in the Downtown:

- Implement the Vehicular and Pedestrian Wayfinding System plan.
- Study parking demands within the downtown to examine shared parking opportunities.
- Educate owners and tenants on shared parking and the associated costs.
- Identify a city official to broker parking agreements between parties.
- Collaborate with ongoing City wayfinding efforts.








-  **KF3 - Additional Events/Activities**
-  **KF5 - Shopping & Entertainment**
-  **KF6 - Downtown Living**
-  **KF8 - Multimodal Connectivity**
-  **KF11 - Walkable Places**
-  **K15 - Pedestrian Safety**
-  **KF17 - Bike Network**

Figure 4-13: Downtown Sign Family



(Source: Marietta, Ohio Parking and Wayfinding Plan)



# ADA Transition Plan

*Develop an Americans with Disabilities Act Transition Plan.*

## OVERVIEW

Creating an accessible Downtown for people of all abilities helps build an inclusive community. The Americans with Disabilities Act requires all public agencies to ensure services, programs, and activities are accessible to people with disabilities. This includes ensuring Downtowns are physically accessible to all.

The City has already initiated a process to create an ADA Transition Plan and this includes the Downtown area. To support this effort, areas for ADA improvement should be evaluated within the Downtown and needed improvements should be considered in the City budget.

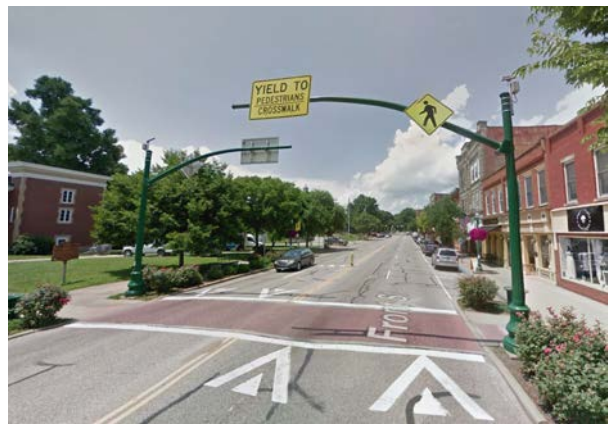


Figure 4-14: Walk Access To Retail

## IMPLEMENTATION

The following are potential next steps to support the ADA Transition Plan in the Downtown:

- Evaluate ADA access for curbs, sidewalks, pedestrian crossings, pedestrian signals, shared use trails, parking lots, and access to public buildings within the Downtown.
- Coordinate Downtown capital improvements with the City's ADA transition plan.



**KF4 - Maintenance**



**KF8 - Multimodal Connectivity**



**KF11 - Walkable Places**



**K15 - Pedestrian Safety**



- 0 - 1 Minute
- 1 - 2.5 Minutes
- 2.5 - 5 Minutes

*The existing street network makes Downtown highly walkable. However, there may be needed improvements to increase comfort and safety of pedestrians. Source: Urban Footprint*

# Communication & Marketing Strategy

*Create a communication and marketing strategy to market the downtown locally, regionally, and throughout the state.*

## OVERVIEW

Creating a clear and effective communication and marketing strategy can be a strong economic development tool for Downtown. While there are ongoing efforts to market and communicate the Downtown and City as a whole, there is an opportunity to develop a strategy to organize efforts and ensure messaging and target audiences are effective and clear.

A communication and marketing strategy for Downtown should go beyond a well-designed logo and promote an experience and distinct activities and offerings in order to attract people to the Downtown. This will take a comprehensive effort, where a stakeholder group identifies what is distinct about Downtown Marietta and how this will be shared with the regional and national community.

## IMPLEMENTATION

The following are potential next steps to create a communication and marketing strategy in the Downtown:

- Identify a key stakeholder group to manage the process. This should include others that are marketing/communicating within the City.
- Conduct general research of successful communication/marketing strategies for Downtown for successful cities (less than 30,000 people).

- Perform initial due diligence with available funding (private commitments, grants, etc.).
- Issue a request for proposals for a marketing/communication consultant.
- Identify and engage a consultant to further define concepts as well as lead the collaboration with existing partners on shared messaging.
- Identify one person responsible for marketing the Downtown including communication to prospective visitors and employers.



**KF3 - Additional Events/Activities**



**KF5 - Shopping & Entertainment**



**KF6 - Downtown Living**



**KF9 - Cultural Hub**



**K16 - Opportunity Zone**





## OVERVIEW

Downtowns with a significant residential population tend to be more vibrant and successful because they have a 24/7 population that supports local businesses and activity. While Marietta does have a residential population in Downtown and in the Harmar neighborhood, there is a desire from the public and an opportunity to encourage more residential units Downtown. These residential options can vary significantly and may include apartments, townhomes, and single family homes as well as a variety of ownership types including rental, condominium, and single ownership.

## IMPLEMENTATION

The following are potential next steps to increase residential options in Downtown:

- Activate and align the local CIC to the priority.
- Work with the City to fund the CIC to assist with property acquisition and redevelopment (e.g. bed tax).
- Identify priority redevelopment sites in the Downtown.
- Determine if acquisition is appropriate and acquire properties as necessary.
- Create redevelopment/capacity plans for each site.
- Align incentives to each development opportunity.

- Solicit private development interest through working with local real estate agencies or a developer request for proposals.



**KF1 - Downtown Revitalization**



**KF6 - Downtown Living**



**KF10 - Harmar Reinvestment**



**KF12 - Residential Options**



**KF13 - Greene St. Reinvestment**



**KF14 - Harmar & 2nd St. Reinvestment**

## PRIORITY ACTIONS

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### CASE STUDIES: FINANCE FOR RESIDENTIAL AND OTHER DEVELOPMENT

#### Newark, Ohio - CIC

The City of Newark, Ohio was facing a common problem of many small Midwest cities: a shrinking downtown area with crumbling infrastructure and deteriorating, historical facades. In response, the City enacted the Newark Downtown Revitalization Project, aimed at growing the City's population, jobs, economic opportunity, and civic pride through a succession of infrastructure improvements and public-private partnerships.

In order to pay for such an ambitious project, the City managed to secure funding from six different sources, ranging from local sources and grants, to federal dollars. The City of Newark also utilized their very effective Community Investment Corporation (CIC), the Newark Development partners. CICs are typically not-for-profit arms of municipal governments, usually headed by a board of public officials and local business owners and stakeholders. This makes it easier for cities, such as Newark, to make quick decisions and invest in properties in a more expedited and efficient manner.

By doing so, the City was able to invest \$30 million to improve the Downtown area, adding attractive streetscapes and replacing the antiquated utilities systems, which made Newark more enticing for

local and outside private investors, procuring a subsequent \$60 million dollars in investment. New key features include Canal District, restored historical buildings like the iconic Midland Theater, and the addition of over 60 residential loft units. The latter successfully turned the area into a 24/7 district, a part of town that continues to stay active after normal business hours. Achieving their goal of historic preservation and new upper floor residential units, the City introduced a number of historical improvement tax credits, and established the Downtown Revitalization Fund, which gives grants to stakeholders to improve the facades of historical structures and other renovations.





### Gahanna, Ohio - TIF

In the early 90's, the City of Gahanna, Ohio expressed interest in revitalizing an underdeveloped area close to its Downtown in the hopes that the public investment in greenspace and infrastructure would spur private investment in residential and commercial development. The project, Creekside, required a significant financial undertaking and the City used a variety of tools to finance the project, namely the successful implementation of Tax Increment Financing (TIF), and use of the City's Community Improvement Corporation (CIC). While Gahanna was able to secure a \$250,000 Nature Works Grant from Franklin County, a majority of the funding was provided by the TIF which operates by diverting future property tax revenues from a defined district towards the public improvement project.

In the case of Creekside, increases from the tax revenue from the land value growth as the result of the infrastructure improvements were used to subsidize the improvement project itself rather than going into the City's budget. The policy was so successful that the Council of Development Finance Agency selected Gahanna as having the best TIF program in the nation, noting the expertise and efficiency in the local initiative. In total the public sector invested around \$16.7 million which, attracted around \$45 million in private investment, creating a signature space within Gahanna.



### Xenia, Ohio

Xenia, Ohio is a small Ohio city with aspirations to have a vibrant and active downtown, while preserving the traditional and historical parts that make it a unique place to live and work. Like Newark and Gahanna, Xenia made extensive use of CIC's, historic, and new housing tax credits, while budgeting for street improvements, building facades upgrades, and signage at gateways, in order to delineate the Downtown district from the rest of the City. The City also made it a priority to make safer bike lanes and improve existing trails, as the City is a prominent stop in a network of bike trails, attracting many families and enthusiasts to visit. Xenia was also awarded a HUD Hope VI-Main Street grant, enabling the opening of five upper-floor apartments at the historic Litt Brothers Building.

Overall, these three cities, Newark, Gahanna, and Xenia focused on making conditions in Downtown ready for private investment, whether that meant building new infrastructure, creating tax credits or grants for builders and renovators, or marketing and branding the City. In these cases, it was the close cooperation of the public and private entities to reinvent these cities to help them become the dynamic and flourishing communities they are today.

