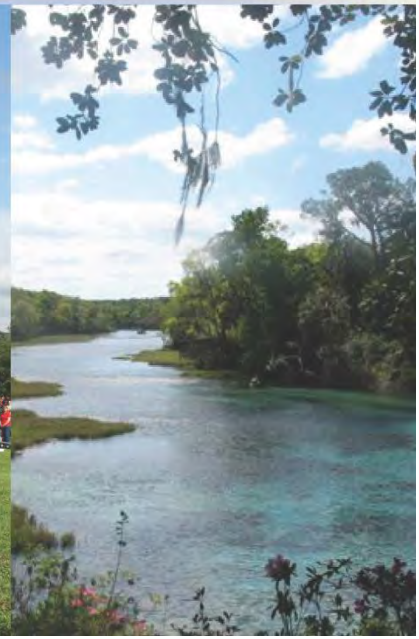




Empowering Marion for Success

Marion County Administrative Strategic Plan 2017-2021

PRESENTED TO:
The Marion County Board of County Commissioners
Chairman Carl Zalak III
Dec. 20, 2016





Empowering Marion for Success

Administrative Strategic Plan

Table of Contents

Executive Summary.....	2
Organizational Culture	
Work Environment.....	7
Staff Development.....	10
Public Relations.....	15
County Services and Key Areas of Focus	
County Services.....	18
Natural Resources and Outdoor Recreation.....	38
Fire Rescue and EMS.....	48
Transportation Infrastructure.....	52
Financial Challenges and Opportunities	
Financial Challenges and Opportunities.....	69

Executive Summary

The role of Marion County government is to serve its customers. To do this successfully, it is vital that we understand the needs of our internal and external customers, assess our current environment, and develop initiatives and strategies to address those issues and needs. In this five-year plan, we review services, identify challenges and opportunities requiring special attention, and establish the organizational framework and expectations that will guide us as we implement ***“Empowering Marion for Success.”***

This administrative strategic plan serves as a blueprint to empower county government to achieve excellence. The goals and guidelines contained within are focused on promoting exemplary customer service, a positive and forward-thinking organizational culture and setting the standard for what public service should be. Over the next five years, 2017-2021, the guiding principles and strategies contained within this plan will be tracked and evaluated to measure for successful outcomes.

Before we can enhance service to our customers in a long-term and impactful way, we must first look within. In doing so, we have established core values in collaboration with our employees, directors and administration. These six core values provide a foundation for the three guiding principles that form our mission, which our work at every level will exemplify.

Guiding Principles	Core Values
Dedication to Serve	Humbleness Respect
Professional Operations	Commitment Integrity
Resource Stewardship	Accountability Discipline

Mission Statement:

Leading public service in genuine dedication to our citizens through professional operations and resource stewardship.

Emphasizing these core values and guiding principles as part of our culture, we will work to advance our organizational priorities.

Organizational Priorities:

- Customer Service
- Economic Prosperity
- Fiscal Responsibility
- Natural Resources
- Public Infrastructure
- Public Safety

These priorities are broad but integral components of our county's success, and each are supported by one or more of the sections in this plan. Specifically, we establish goals and initiatives in the areas of:

- Organizational Culture
- County Services and Key Areas of Focus
- Financial Challenges and Opportunities

Each department has collaborated in identifying and presenting key areas of emphasis and action items to be addressed. This plan is an effort to lay out the road map for our operations over the next five years so that we may best deliver our services at the highest possible level. Each of the following elements support our overarching organizational priorities.

Organizational Culture:

This section emphasizes our new culture with enhancements to staff development and work environment, as well as external and internal communication efforts.

Staff Development includes recruitment, training, retention, wellness, compensation and succession planning. We will seek feedback from employees regarding common issues to help form solutions. Employee satisfaction leads to customer satisfaction which leads to operational results.

Work Environment will emphasize work safety, communication of our culture, positive leadership, team-building and employee recognition. We will build upon and strengthen this organization through a culture of humbleness, discipline and professionalism.

Public Relations will enhance communication with our customers. We will be more proactive in telling untold stories that represent our fundamental mission, more strategic in communicating our key priorities and more effective in reaching out to various sectors of our community.

County Services and Key Areas of Focus:

The **County Services** section includes department summaries, core services, specific tasks and key initiatives. Where applicable, departments' strategic plans are referenced with links for easy access.

The **Key Areas of Focus** are identified as areas of emphasis because they are either directly impacted by the sales tax initiative or by other specific Board direction. These also support the six organizational priorities and are described and detailed in the sections that follow.

Natural Resources and Outdoor Recreation play a major role in attracting visitors and guests to Marion County and represent a positive economic impact. This section discusses responsibly preserving and protecting Marion's unique environment, including springs, lakes, rivers and forests.

The **Fire Rescue and Emergency Medical Services** section provides an overview of opportunities and challenges including department funding, recruitment and retention, firefighter safety programs and planning for growth and community needs.

The **Transportation Infrastructure** section discusses challenges and opportunities relating to a reliable transportation network for our community's current and future business and residential needs. Topics include long term funding for pavement preservation, a proactive policy to implement assessment projects, the staffing of the routine maintenance programs and the proper planning for capacity projects.

Financial Challenges and Opportunities:

Over the past several years we have streamlined operations and improved efficiency to continue providing an adequate level of service without increasing the tax burden on our residents. We will continue to follow this formula to the extent possible and review the operation on a regular basis for efficiency-improvement and cost-reduction without impacting quality of service. This section of the plan identifies financial challenges and opportunities so we are better prepared as the state of our economy improves and demand on services increases. This includes:

The *Financial Challenges* subsection, which includes merit increases, health insurance costs and ambulance fees. Long-term challenges include planning for the future of septic abatement, pavement preservation, the Parks and Recreation master plan and the potential of a solid waste authority.

The *Financial Opportunities* subsection, which addresses grants, fees, public-private partnership opportunities, as well as performance management topics, such as business plan process evaluation and open data programs to enhance accessibility of information for staff and public use.

Customer Service

Quality customer service is the common theme throughout this plan, our mission and our culture. Any changes we make or new programs we implement will be tested for their effectiveness and contribution to customer service. As a governmental agency, we will position ourselves as a leader, setting the standard for public service. To the Marion County Board of County Commissioners, customer service means more than providing friendly assistance at the front counter. Customer service forms the foundation of our operations, infuses the principles that guide our actions, and shapes our organizational culture.

Dedication to serve: Genuine dedication to customer service isn't preached, it's lived. Dedication means that staff at every level will keep customer service at the forefront of their minds and leaders will use it as a standard to guide decisions.

Professional operations: Conducting professional operations involves employing qualified and skilled staff, encouraging professional development, maintaining effective communication, staying abreast of current trends and investing in the tools that enable employees to provide timely and quality service.

Resource stewardship: We have a duty to responsibly manage the county's resources. That means fiscal responsibility with the tax dollars that fund our operations, transparency and accountability in budgeting processes, and maintaining competitive and fair procurement practices. It also means being good stewards of our environment, including land, stormwater and natural resource management. Responsibly managing our human resources contributes to providing quality service, which is why a significant portion of this plan deals with internal communication and staff development, empowering employees to provide exceptional customer service.

In conclusion, this *Empowering Marion for Success* plan strives to enhance customer service, define key priorities and embrace our new organizational culture. Implementing this plan over the next five years will empower Marion County for success and set the standard for public service.



Marion County, Florida

Empowering Marion for Success

Mission Statement

Leading public service in genuine dedication to our citizens through professional operations and resource stewardship.

Guiding Principles

Dedication to serve
Professional operations
Resource stewardship

Core Values

Humbleness
Respect
Commitment
Integrity
Accountability
Discipline

Organizational Priorities

Customer service
Economic prosperity
Fiscal responsibility
Natural resources
Public infrastructure
Public safety



Organizational Culture

Work Environment | Staff Development | Public Relations



Work Environment

A successful work environment is one that has strong characteristics based upon the core values of the organization. Employees at all levels in county government will embrace a work environment characterized by a high regard for humbleness, professionalism and self-discipline.

- **Humbleness:** All employees will understand that all questions have merit and we are here to serve the public. Employees will be accepting of criticism while learning from mistakes. Mistakes are an opportunity for improvement.
- **Professionalism:** Employees will evaluate situations and provide options based on facts and data. All employees will maintain a high level of integrity, loyalty, honesty and trust and will conduct themselves in a professional manner by being prepared, self-aware and using good judgement.
- **Discipline:** Departments will keep plans and expectations practical and focused, and maintain realistic perspectives. They will actively anticipate potential outcomes and commit to operating within realistic parameters while strategically planning for the future.

Directors will be held responsible for the culture of their departments and will set the tone with positive leadership through training and open lines of communication. Marion County understands the needs of employees and respects their personal time. The county encourages a healthy family life outside of work, thus maintaining an appropriate work-life balance and further promoting a successful work environment.

Non-physical Environment

Task	Benefit	Date	Cost
Team building and positive social interactions	Help increase employee morale and participation within the community. Increase trust among employees and supervisor.	Jan.-March 2017	Staff time
Empowering and recognizing employees	Help increase employee morale and reduce turnover. Increase trust among employees and supervisor. Employees will feel more valued by directors, administration and the commission.	Jan.-March 2017	Staff time

The non-physical environment refers to the intangible characteristics of a workplace that we cannot reach out and touch, like positive leadership, confidence, communication and empowered employees. All aspects of the non-physical atmosphere should focus around the core values of our organization. This intangible environment impacts how employees feel at work. If they feel confident and empowered, they will be better able to provide good customer service.

Team building and positive social interactions will occur through increased staff participation in community and county sponsored events, department events and the wellness program. Administration and department directors will set the example by participating in events, encouraging participation and creating a team environment.

Empowering and recognizing employees: Directors will trust employees to make decisions within the realm of their job responsibilities. Recognition of employees will be a priority of administration and department directors. Employees will be praised in public and disciplined in private. Employees will be

encouraged to participate in Board of County Commissioners’ recognition events such as employee service awards presentations. County administration, commissioners and directors will be more involved in the day-to-day recognition of staff members. Supervisors will provide informal recognition to employees on a regular basis, which may consist of handwritten cards of recognition and frequent face-to-face appreciation. The Employee Recognition Committee (ERC) will focus on employee engagement and assist in countywide activities supporting the community. The Human Resources team will facilitate these efforts with administration and directors.

Physical Environment

Task	Benefit	Date	Cost
Including the mission and core values within the physical environment of all departments	Help increase employee morale and reduce turnover. Increase trust among employees and supervisors. Provide a visual demonstration of our commitment to our core values	Jan.-March 2017	Maximum of \$6,000
Safe work environments	A safe environment increases employee productivity and employee morale. A safe environment lowers the risk and liability to the county and overall will save the county money.	Jan.-March 2017	Absorbed in current budget. Funds will be used from safety incentives.
Workplace stewardship	Better prepared employees, more productive workforce.	April-June 2017	Staff time

The physical environment of any organization is important for the safety and effectiveness of the workforce.

Including the mission and core values within the physical environment of all departments will serve as a visual reminder of our culture and commitment to these values. Offices will display consistent signage in common areas to keep the county’s culture at the forefront of employees’ minds.

Safe work environments are a top priority of Marion County. Departments will continue to provide the appropriate supplies, tools and resources for employees to safely and effectively do their jobs. Employees will be provided proper safety equipment and, within the county’s ability to do so, a safe working environment (exceptions being job with an inherently dangerous nature). Additionally, Risk Management staff will conduct regular safety checks and inspections of work environments, as well as safety related trainings as appropriate.

Workplace stewardship: Employees will treat the property of Marion County with respect and maintain organized, professional workspaces, helping our workforce to be more productive and better prepared.

Internal Communication

Task	Benefit	Date	Cost
Bi-weekly department director briefings with county administrator	Opens lines of communication between county administrator/administration and department directors.	Oct.-Dec. 2016	Staff time
Internal surveys and/or focus groups	Establish the concerns of the employees, track success in making improvements and gain feedback from employees.	Jan.-March 2017	Within current budget

Regular announcements to staff to bridge the communication gap	Improves morale among employees while keeping them informed; opens lines of communication from county administrator to staff.	Jan.-March 2017	Within current budget
Employee newsletter	Communication and recognition of employees; increase awareness of programs and benefits available to employees.	Oct.-Dec. 2017	Staff time

All employees will recognize their role in promoting positive communication throughout the organization. Administration and directors will open lines of communication for all employees and make significant advances in keeping employees informed through the following initiatives:

Bi-weekly department director briefings with the county administrator: During the development of this plan, the county administrator recognized a need to implement a new avenue of direct communication with department directors. Since June 2016, the county administrator has held meetings with all directors and senior management on a bi-weekly basis, in addition to the already in-place quarterly department director meetings. These briefings give both the administrator and directors an opportunity to update each other on key initiatives and maintain constant communication.

Internal surveys and/or focus groups will be used to gain valuable feedback from employees, measure morale and identify areas in need of improvement. An anonymous survey given to employees on a semi-annual basis will disclose overall or more targeted staff concerns. After analysis of the results, senior management can strategize ways to implement necessary changes in areas needing improvement. For example, if communication seems to be a concern, we will strategize a plan to better improve communication to the employees or identify areas where it is breaking down.

Regular announcements to staff to bridge the communication gap: SharePoint (employee intranet) could be further utilized to deliver regular, internally-produced video messages to employees. This would include updates on county issues and upcoming events. The messages may vary in their delivery and content but would form a unifying and consistent stream of information using a method that will capture the attention of all employees.



Many of the messages would be delivered from the county administrator but if there is an issue such as something impacting health care, for instance, the message could originate from the risk staff or HR director. These messages would typically be short, no more than 10 minutes each, but would draw the employees together and help to inform them in a uniform and personal way. The videos could be saved in SharePoint so that field personnel and those working shifts or without computer access could view them at a later time or during a staff meeting.

An employee newsletter is another means by which to improve internal communication and share pertinent and helpful information with employees. Content could be rotated with articles that focus on key areas of interest in a given season or month and also include benefit updates and staff recognition sections.

Staff Development

The Marion County Board of County Commissioners understands our employees are our most important assets as they deliver the services expected by our customers. It is important that we invest in our employees through proper hiring, smart training and appropriate advancement opportunities. Staff development is a vital piece of improving the culture and service level of any organization.

Numerous studies demonstrate the link between morale of employees and customer service/satisfaction. Each employee is hired because of his/her expertise, knowledge and professionalism. However, employees should also perform with a sense of urgency, without panic, frustration or loss of focus. Each individual is expected to work hard and earn the trust and respect of our customers by being transparent, responsive and open minded. Addressing employee morale is the first step to improving customer service.

Customer service begins with our employees



Recruitment

Task	Benefit	Date	Cost
Improved new-hire orientation	Better introduce new-hires to the organization; the county administrator will have a more involved role to provide leadership; increase employee morale and reduce turnover.	Oct.-Dec. 2016	Staff time
Job fairs, university and trade school visits	Improve recruitment and recognition of the careers available within Marion County. Higher level of qualified candidates.	Jan.-March 2017	Entry cost of some job fairs; within current budget
Improved interview process; recruitment based on core values	Selected candidates will be a cultural fit and understand the core values and mission of the organization; lower turnover, increase in morale, productivity and customer service.	Jan.-March 2018	Staff time

It often takes a focused recruitment effort to find the perfect fit with the right skills, attitude and abilities.

Improved new hire orientation: The county administrator will attend each new hire orientation to welcome staff and start the commitment to the organization’s core values and mission.

Job fairs, university and trade school visits: The Human Resources team and representatives from county departments will attend local and state career fairs at high schools, colleges, trade schools and universities.

Improved interview process; recruitment based on core values: The Human Resources team will work with hiring managers to ensure the county is hiring the right person for the job. Recruiting will have additional focus on candidates being a cultural fit for the organization. Candidates will be asked a set of questions revolving around our core values. In order to be hired, the candidate will be a cultural fit and understand the core values and mission of the organization.

The talent manager will also invest additional time into proper training for hiring managers and interview panel members. Improving the interview process with a more informed interview panel looking for the right qualifications and qualities will provide diversity in developing a well-rounded team of employees and will help to lower turnover with a like-minded staff working toward common goals. As the quality of candidates hired improves, an increase in employee morale and productivity will also result in improved customer service.

Retention

Task	Benefit	Date	Cost
Employee Academy	Improve employee morale by better educating employees and giving them a better understanding of the role each department plays. The employee academy will add to the education of our employees and make them better equipped to move the county into the future.	Jan.-March 2018	\$1,500 and staff time
Preceptor program	This program will help new-hires to become better acquainted with county policies and procedures. The preceptor program will offer new-hires a point of contact with the knowledge and attitude to help the new-hire be successful. The immediate relationship will increase employee morale and reduce employee turnover.	Oct.-Dec. 2018	Staff time
Career development programs	Increase employee morale, lower turnover. Employees will take more ownership in their roles as county employees.	Oct.-Dec. 2019	Staff time

Once employees have made it through the new-hire phase it is important to keep them engaged and retain the good, qualified workforce that has dedicated themselves to serving the citizens of Marion County.

Employee Academy: Employees can apply for the program; those accepted must be approved by their director and assistant county administrator (ACA). The program will be similar to the Citizens Academy and will be an experience for employees to understand the way the county operates. This program will be monitored by the talent manager.

Preceptor Program: Long term employees that exemplify the county's core values and have graduated from the employee academy, will be matched up with a new hire. It will be the responsibility of the preceptor to keep in contact and document conversations with the new hire for the first 90 days of employment. A formal evaluation of the preceptor relationship will be communicated with the talent manager. A team from HR will monitor the program.

Career development programs: The county will provide job-specific and career development training opportunities based around education, training and improved processes.

Training and Succession Planning

Task	Benefit	Date	Cost
Professional external trainings	Provide external education to better educate staff and leaders. Professional trainings will show employees we are investing in their education and will increase overall employee morale.	Oct.-Dec. 2016	Staff time plus \$7,000 included in FY 2017 budget
Positive leadership – training based on leadership qualities	Improve leadership qualities of supervisors and management. Increase productivity.	Jan.-March 2017	Staff time
Technology- based trainings	Employees and departments will have greater access to trainings. Trainings will be more convenient. Travel time will be saved.	April-June 2017	Staff time
Management tools, such as Four Disciplines of Execution (4DX)	Leadership training, such as implementation of the 4DX formula for executing on the most important strategic priorities.	Oct.-Dec. 2017	Approx. \$80,000
Training needs assessments	Ensure proper trainings for targeted topics. Measure outcomes of trainings. Improve overall effectiveness of training.	Oct.-Dec. 2017	Staff time
Cross training	Cross training of employees leads to employees prepared for promotion, provides for better coverage and results in increased employee morale and reduced turnover.	Jan.-March 2018	Staff time
Mentoring program	Improve employee morale, engage employee and directors and help increase the number of employees who are prepared for the next step in their career. A good mentoring program will help put the right employees in the right spot based on the needs of the county and the strengths of the employee.	Oct.-Dec. 2019	Staff time

In an effort to remain current and well-informed, training is an important piece of staff development and succession planning. Training, both formal and informal, should be effective, measurable and timely and should be focused on the goals of the organization.

Professional outside training: Either professional trainers will be brought in to conduct training or employees will be afforded the opportunity to attend outside professional trainings.

Positive leadership – training based on leadership qualities: The Human Resources team and each department director will engage in positive leadership by providing consistent and timely training. Supervisory training will be based more on leadership skills than policies and procedures. Clear expectations will be set between employees and management.

Technology-based training: Increase the use of technology with webinars, live streaming and online courses to reach more employees and make a bigger impact on staff development while saving money on travel.

Management tools, such as Four Disciplines of Execution (4DX): This task includes hiring a professional consultant to provide leadership training on implementation of 4DX throughout the organization.

Training needs assessments: Human Resources will conduct surveys with departments to ensure the trainings provided are relevant and effective. A trainer, selected by department director, will be

designated within each department to present at department staff meetings. The talent manager will provide important training points on various topics. The departmental trainers will make them applicable to their departments and present at staff meetings. This will be facilitated through the talent manager, and the trainers will be recognized for their efforts.

The talent manager will also attend external trainings and return and present the information learned to county employees. When applicable, this will include on-the-job training with departments. Trainings will be improved to be current and relevant based on current trends and needs of the county.

Cross training: Cross training is an important piece of succession planning and can apply across the organization or within departments. As we develop the employee programs such as the employee academy, cross training will become more valuable to the organization and the employees. Cross training will allow employees to be ready for a promotion should it arise, and also allows for coverage when needed.

Mentoring Program: Employees can apply as a mentor or mentee and will be paired with a suitable mentor/mentee based on interest and skills. Mentors must be approved by the ACA for their department. There will be different mentor levels. The program will be overseen by the talent manager.

Compensation

Task	Benefit	Date	Cost
Competency matrices	Competency matrices offer a progression for employees to further their career and receive compensation for obtaining additional certifications or education. This will improve morale and increase retention.	Oct.-Dec. 2016	Staff time and costs associated with promotions through matrix in each department.
Merit increase program	A merit increase program tied to performance of employees will increase employee productivity as well as employee morale. This program will encourage employees to hold themselves accountable and remain disciplined in the day-to-day operation of the county.	Oct.-Dec. 2017	Undetermined, based on budget constraints.
Loaded cost summaries	A loaded cost summary provided to each employee will improve employee understanding of the true cost to the county and the value of the employee benefits offered through the county.	Jan.-March 2018	Staff time
Wage survey	Wage surveys will provide the information needed to conduct an assessment of the county's current wages compared to organizations in the surrounding area and markets. Addressing the areas of inadequacies will increase retention, increase the recruitment of qualified candidates and improve employee morale.	Oct.-Dec. 2019	Staff time, some costs may be incurred. Any costs will be absorbed in operating budget. Estimate of \$1,500.

Fair and competitive compensation is an important piece to recruitment, employee retention and succession planning. It is vital for Marion County to offer competitive wages and benefits as well as a pathway of career development for employees.

Competency matrices: The Human Resources team is currently working with department directors to implement competency matrices.

Merit increase program: This will involve performance evaluations tied to increases. For additional budgetary information, see Financial Challenges and Opportunities section.

Loaded cost summaries: The Risk and Benefits team will work with Human Resources to provide employees with up to date benefits summaries to understand loaded cost and contribution from the county to employees' benefits to include health insurance, Florida Retirement System (FRS), etc.

Wage surveys: The Human Resources team will conduct competitive wage surveys as well as look at contracting with a vendor to provide the information.

Employee Wellness

Task	Benefit	Date	Cost
Increase awareness to our top risk areas identified from latest wellness health assessment	Healthier, more productive employees. Lower health care costs. Early detection of high cost claims.	Oct.-Dec. 2016	Staff time, money in wellness budget
Increased participants in wellness program	Healthier, more productive employees. Lower health care costs.	Oct.-Dec. 2016 ongoing	Staff time, wellness budget
Monitor high dollar claims	Identify trends and remain cognizant of issues relating to employee health that could lead to high dollar claims.	Oct.-Dec. 2017	Staff time

Each year, health care costs continue to rise. We must do our part to ensure our employees are educated on making healthy life choices. The employee wellness program will continue to lead initiatives countywide that encourage a healthy lifestyle. By increasing participation in the wellness program, encouraging annual physicals and educating our employees on the high risk factors that lead to high-cost claims, we can make our employees' health a priority while striving to lower our healthcare costs. In addition to the wellness program, the county will encourage participation in physical activities around the county and a healthy diet by continuing to improve the weekly farmers market.

Public Relations

Communicating effectively with our audiences is an important component of customer service and one of Marion County government’s primary goals. The practice of public relations ensures that this communication remains a two-way effort that garners important feedback and responds directly to the needs and consumption habits of our citizens.

Over the years, the public information role has significantly evolved to include the development and cultivation of meaningful community relationships. Public relations is at the core of everyday interactions between government and the diverse citizenry we serve. The intent of this section of the plan is to identify tactics for Marion County to enhance those relationships and improve communication by:

- **Increasing public outreach and engagement.**
- **Enhancing existing public information activities.**
- **Telling untold stories.**

These goals can be met through specific objectives relating to the following public relations initiatives:

1. Adopt key organizational priorities as themes to officially guide our public information messaging across all platforms.
2. Establish a Marion County Government Day and community workshops to engage individuals and families in activities that provide comprehensive information about all county departments and to increase staff/public interactions outside an office or business-like environment.
3. Enhance communication for citizen-preferred topics.
4. Develop strategic communications plans for larger, long-term county projects and priorities, such as the sales tax.
5. Establish a Speakers’ Bureau to better structure and market public outreach opportunities.
6. Investigate and expand appropriate additional communications platforms to facilitate the flow of information to more audiences.

Task	Benefit	Date	Cost
Adopt county priorities as guiding themes: 1 – Customer service 2 – Economic prosperity 3 – Fiscal responsibility 4 – Natural resources 5 – Public infrastructure 6 – Public safety	Better structure public information by aligning activities and messaging with county priorities.	Jan.-March 2017	Staff time

The Office of Public Information has an opportunity to adopt county priorities as themes that will officially guide its public information messaging across all platforms. This provides: unified voice (regardless of department or activity), clear definition of values, external accountability (messages will tie back to at least one county priority), message structure (for simplified information delivery) and potential presentation themes for a speakers' bureau. Adopting key themes will help focus activities and

shape our messages so they reflect the overarching agency values and priorities for its services and actions.

Task	Benefit	Date	Cost
Establish Marion County Government Day and community workshops	One-stop shop for citizens to get important information about all county services and interact with staff and county leaders.	Oct.-Dec. 2017	Maximum of \$10,000

Marion County government has an opportunity to lead and coordinate a comprehensive effort to bring local government closer to families and residents through establishing an annual Marion County Government Day that includes participation from a majority of county departments. The event would give residents an opportunity to interact with staff, senior management and commissioners in an informal (out-of-office) manner. In addition, departments would provide public education, including those that typically aren't able to participate in community events (e.g., roads crews). This is an opportunity to develop connections with residents so they are familiar with services offered and know where to turn for assistance in the future. This would also include similar events or community workshops in various areas of the county.

Task	Benefit	Date	Cost
Implement monthly strategic messaging of key priority topics to reflect citizen, department director and senior management input	Structured, consistent and better coordinated public information.	April-June 2017	Staff time

Seeking internal and external input in establishing and scheduling research-based key messages will help strategize efforts throughout the year and provide structured, relevant, more creative and better-coordinated public information that's more interesting and useful for our citizens.

Staff has an opportunity to promote these messages using a variety of tactics, including social media, video production, media days, community presentations or tours, submissions to community publications, articles/letters from commissioners, special events etc.

Task	Benefit	Date	Cost
Develop strategic communications plans for larger, long-term county projects and priorities, such as the sales tax	Increased project transparency and better communication with residents on important county projects and initiatives.	Oct.-Dec. 2017	Staff time

Marion County government has an opportunity to enhance its communications, increase transparency, and better tell untold stories by developing strategic communications plans for larger, long-term projects and initiatives.

Public Information staff would become an integral part of the planning phases for new initiatives and projects, and developing strategic communications (including identifying target audiences, timelines, goals, objects, strategies and tactics) would become a standard activity. Tactics could include: regular progress reports, community meetings, dedicated webpages, social media, fact sheets, videos, etc.

Task	Benefit	Date	Cost
Establish a Marion County Speakers' Bureau program with research-based plan and conduct at least one presentation per month.	Better structure and market public outreach opportunities.	July-Sept. 2017	\$1,000 for printed materials (handouts, posters, etc.) as well as staff time

Marion County has an opportunity to better structure and market public outreach, participation and civic engagement opportunities through establishing a speakers' bureau program. The program would simplify the process for residents requesting a county speaker, presentation or public education appearance, and having a structured program would optimize the program for better marketing. The speakers' bureau would be formed based on internal and external input and enhanced through continual feedback.

County Services and Key Areas of Focus

County Services | Natural Resources and Outdoor Recreation |
Fire Rescue and EMS | Transportation Infrastructure



County Services

Services provided by county departments include both internal support and external services to our citizens. Increasing our level of service while keeping the overall budget in line with revenues is a challenge which requires creative solutions. This section focuses on the key strategies to improve customer service or initiatives in the various county departments over the five years of this plan. The county departments under the purview of the county administrator are as follows:

Administration	Facilities Management	Library Services	Public Safety Communications
Airport	Fire Rescue	MSTU/Assessments	Solid Waste
Animal Services	Fleet Management	Office of the County Engineer	Tourist Development
Building Safety	Growth Services	Parks and Recreation	Utilities
Community Services	Human Resources	Procurement Services	Veterans Services
Extension Service	Information Technology		

Internal Support Services

Internal support services include Administration, Fleet, Facilities, Human Resources, Information Technology and Procurement Services. These departments provide support to all county departments as well as to other elected officials in some capacity. Improving support to these customers depends on proper dissemination of information, training of both support staff and their customers, attitude of employees and creation of more efficient processes.

External Services

Services offered to the citizens of Marion County are immensely varied. Many services benefit all citizens but there are some that will benefit targeted groups of citizens (e.g. Veterans Services and Community Services). Regardless of the type of services, making the citizens aware of how to benefit from these services and ensuring ease of access is important.

Included in this section are objectives from each department that will further the county’s overall mission. Many of the objectives and strategies listed in this section are further detailed in the individual department strategic plans.

Administration

The county administrator is the top administrative post in county government. The administrator is responsible for implementing commission policies and directives, leading the preparation of the county budget and overseeing daily operations for 23 departments. Additionally, the administrator manages all county-owned public facilities, as well as their maintenance and safety.

Departments reporting directly to the county administrator include: Fire Rescue, Human Resources, Office of Fiscal Review and Procurement Services. The county’s organizational structure includes two divisions, Public Services and Public Works, with each having an assistant county administrator to oversee the assigned departments.

The following departments operate under the Public Services Division: Animal Services, Community Services, Information Technology, Office of Public Information, Public Library System, Public Safety Communications, Tourist Development and Veterans Services.

The Public Works Division contains the following departments: Building Safety, Extension Service, Facilities Management, Fleet Management, MSTU, Office of the County Engineer, Parks and Recreation, Solid Waste and Utilities.

Task	Benefit	Date	Cost
External customer surveys	Establish public’s concerns, track improvements and monitor success in addressing concerns.	Jan.-March 2017	Performed within operating budget
Organizational credit card policy	Consistency in policies and guidelines for all departments in the organization	July-Sept. 2017	Staff time
Countywide customer service policy and procedure review	Improvement to customer service and consistency countywide.	July-Sept. 2018	Staff time

External customer surveys: Administration will encourage departments to conduct surveys of their customer groups to gauge customer satisfaction and identify concerns and areas for improvement. External customer surveys may not only be limited to general citizen surveys, but also may reach out to specific groups of citizens or customers. Surveys should be issued and analyzed through one department in cooperation with applicable departments so that the surveys are consistent and the results are shared and analyzed to develop benchmarks and plans of action. If a survey taker chooses to provide name or contact information, staff could also follow up directly. These surveys provide a valuable tool for improving service to our citizens.

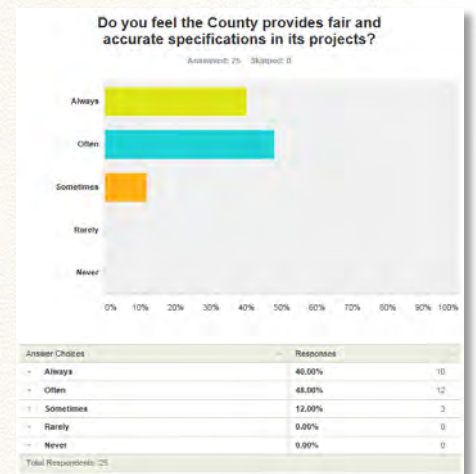


Figure 1: Excerpt from Procurement survey

For example, a survey conducted by Procurement Services helped them understand how the county could better engage with local businesses and improve the procurement or vendor payment process.

Organizational credit card policy: Administration will establish a countywide policy ensuring consistency for credit/debit card transactions. The fees charged for use of the card should be consistent across county departments and paid by the user of the service instead of absorbed by the county. Any specific department level policy should fall within the parameters of the countywide policy.

Countywide customer service policy and procedure review: A team will review the policies and procedures for each department to determine where customer service improvements can be made. The team will develop countywide core and department level metrics or key performance indicators to measure and test customer service, making recommendations with the goal of consistent improvement of service and efficiency. For example, addressing response times for customer inquiries could be addressed consistently countywide and incorporated into departmental policies and procedures that all citizens are responded to in a most efficient and timely manner.

Airport

The airport provides aviation services, quality facilities, and support to the general aviation community by providing convenient service at a reasonable price. The airport welcomes business development in Marion County and facilitates several businesses providing jobs for citizens.

The airport encompasses 792 acres and features two active, lighted runways. The airport office offers free Wi-Fi, conference and training rooms, pilots' lounge, flight planning office, dining area and competitively-priced aviation fuel. Flight training and aircraft maintenance are provided on the field by privately-owned businesses.

Task	Benefit	Date	Cost
Construct t-hangars and corporate hangars	Providing aircraft storage for permanent and itinerant aircraft	July-Sept. 2017	\$1,200,000
Automatic weather observation system	Provides up-to-date airport weather conditions	Oct.-Dec. 2017	\$150,000
Parallel taxiway	Efficient, safe transition for departing and arriving aircraft	April-June 2020	\$3,500,000
Mobile Fueling Trucks	Convenient fueling services and new revenue source	April-June 2021	\$275,000

Construct t-hangars and corporate hangars: Currently there are 70 customers on the hangar waitlist. Additional hangars will provide a needed service and increase revenue for the airport. Existing hangars accommodate storage of aircraft with a wingspan of 42' or less. The airport cannot facilitate the storage of larger general aviation aircraft, including turbine aircraft. The construction of four corporate hangars will allow the airport to accommodate the storage of larger aircraft at the airport moving closer to meeting demand. The cost for this project will be shared with FDOT Aviation funding (80 percent) and the airport (20 percent)

Automatic weather observation system: An automatic weather observing system (AWOS) provides continuous real-time weather reports, 24 hours a day, without human involvement. Using a computer-synthesized voice, AWOS can generate new weather reports every minute in a standard format familiar to pilots. The information may be broadcasted through common navigational aids or its own discrete VHF frequency.

The addition of an AWOS will provide actual airfield weather information and a 24-hour local altimeter setting for pilots using the airport. An AWOS at the airport will also enhance the existing and future instrument approach procedures. The landing minimums for the current published instrument procedures to Runway 23 are based on using the Ocala International Airport altimeter setting, which is approximately 10 nautical miles away. Once a local altimeter setting becomes available, the current and any future instrument approach procedures will likely have better landing minimums. FDOT aviation funding has already been approved, which will cover 80% of the costs, while the remaining 20% will be funded using airport funds.

Parallel taxiway: At this time, the airport does not have a parallel taxiway for either of the two runways. There is only one taxiway access point for each runway located at the far end of one side of both taxiways, forcing aircraft to taxi the entire length of the runway to exit the runway after landing. The extended time on the runways required for taxi forces arriving aircraft to circle the airport until the

runway is vacated. The lack of a parallel taxiway on the main runway creates a safety of flight issue as the runway is closed while occupied by taxiing aircraft. The extended time on the runway required for taxi could easily result in catastrophic collision in reduced visibility conditions as an arriving aircraft may not see another aircraft on the runway until avoidance is unachievable. The construction of a parallel taxiway will enhance safety and streamline aircraft ground movement increasing the efficiency of the airport ground environment. This project is funded by the airport (2%), FDOT aviation funding (8% budgeted), and FAA AIP funding (90% budgeted).

Mobile fueling trucks: Mobile fueling will provide convenient full-service fuel to aircraft on the airport. At this time full service is only available to turbine aircraft at the fixed tanks on the airport. Full-service fueling requires the aircraft to be moved before and/or after fueling. The movement of the aircraft from or to the fuel tanks requires either an aircraft start-up or ground towing by airport personnel. Aircraft start-up is costly to the aircraft operator and ground towing increases risk of damage to the aircraft. Mobile fuel trucks will relieve the issue of moving aircraft while providing a convenience to the operator and creating an additional revenue source as full-service comes at a premium price compared to self-service. This project will be fully funded by the airport.

Animal Services

Marion County’s Animal Center is the only open-admission shelter in the county. This means the shelter does not selectively accept only the most adoptable animals; no animal is turned away, regardless of how sick, old, aggressive or potentially undesirable it might be to some. More than 11,000 animals enter the shelter each year. Staff places healthy and friendly animals up for adoption, and generally doesn’t impose time limits on how long they can stay. For animals that are too young, old or sick to be placed for adoption, staff often works to partner with foster homes or rescue groups.

Marion County Animal Services also provides animal control services within unincorporated Marion County and the City of Ocala, enforcing state laws and county ordinances relating to animals. Animal control officers respond to more than 10,000 calls a year and are on-call for emergencies 24 hours a day. They rescue injured, sick or stray domestic animals and investigate aggressive attacks, as well as animal cruelties that can range from one-animal cases to large-scale incidents involving hundreds of animals.

Task	Benefit	Date	Cost
Purchase proper farm equipment	Efficiency (currently need to borrow a mower when we can find one available), aesthetics (farm located in a residential neighborhood).	April-June 2018	\$25,000
Purchase new cat cages	Reduce upper respiratory and other diseases.	July-Sept. 2021	\$75,000

Purchase proper farm equipment: We currently maintain 40 acres at Shocker Field for animals confiscated for cruelty without proper equipment and dedicated staff. The equipment to be purchased is: a zero-turn mower, a golf cart (to deliver feed and help spray for weed control), and top board and fencing for the fields.

Purchase new cat cages: The cages we use are no longer sold because they don’t adequately protect from upper respiratory infection and other diseases among cats in close proximity. Staff is currently

seeking grants to help pay for costs to change out the old cages one room at a time. This cost amounts to \$75,000 (three cat rooms at \$25,000 each).

Building Safety

Marion County Building Safety strives to ensure the health, safety and public welfare of the built environment in Marion County by enforcing the Florida Building Code and related Marion County ordinances in an efficient and cost-effective manner. To ensure a safe built environment, the department issues permits, reviews plans, verifies contractor licenses and performs inspections for each project.

Task	Benefit	Date	Cost
Newsletter	Improves communication with contractors	Oct.-Dec. 2016	Staff time
Mobile inspections platform	Expedite the scheduled inspections process and provide customers with real-time inspection results.	Oct.-Dec. 2016	\$43K
Create a highly skilled building process liaison position to proactively assist customers with permitting process	Improve customer service and potentially expedite permitting process	Jan.-March 2018	Approx. \$80,000 (including salary and benefits)

Newsletter: A bi-monthly newsletter will be emailed to contractors with code changes, educational information and tips to help contractors pass inspections the first time. This will also help the contractors better understand the permitting process.

Mobile inspections platform (MIP): Previously, inspectors were required to come to the office each morning for inspection assignments. Inspections scheduled for the current date were downloaded, printed out and assigned to inspectors each morning. Inspection results were uploaded one to three times during the workday.

The MIP now automatically downloads inspection assignments to each inspector's laptop, eliminating the requirement for inspectors to come to the office, thus increasing each inspector's productivity by one hour per day. In addition, the MIP automatically uploads inspection results in real-time. Each morning, contractors/customers are automatically emailed/faxed notification with the name and phone number of the inspector assigned each inspection, eliminating approximately 150 calls to the permitting office each day.

Create a highly skilled building process liaison position to proactively assist customers with permitting process: In an effort to take Marion County Building Safety to the next level of customer service, this position is proposed to proactively serve our customers while maintaining quality control in the department's permitting and plans review process. This new position would require a high level of expertise and knowledge of the building code and permitting process. This position would serve as an advocate or ombudsman for contractors, developers and homeowners as they proceed through the permitting process to ensure they are satisfied and all questions are answered in a timely manner. The creation of this position should also result in an expedited permitting process while also providing status updates to customers and stakeholders.

Community Services

Community Services administers state and federal grants for affordable housing, community development, neighborhood stabilization and homelessness prevention programs. The grants include: SHIP, CDBG, HOME, NSP 1 and 3 and ESG. The department also oversees the state mandated and local indigent care initiatives which include the Health Care Responsibility Act (HCRA), Unclaimed Bodies, We Care and Indigent Care Services.

Task	Benefit	Date	Cost
Creation of affordable rental units	Reduce number of cost burdened renters.	July-Sept. 2017	HOME funds up to \$600k
Increase public awareness of assistance programs	Using targeted marketing, social media and county resources to increase public awareness will ensure timely expenditure of grant funds.	April-June 2018	Staff time

Creation of affordable rental units: The recent update of the Analysis of Impediments to Fair Housing identified a local vacancy rate of only three percent for affordable rental units. Local agencies confirm the lack of affordable rental units and further identify the need for smaller one- and two-bedroom units. Lower to middle income renters have difficulty finding affordable units and can spend up to 50 percent of their household income on housing costs. Staff will advertise the availability of federal HOME grant funds for projects creating affordable rental units, especially smaller units, tiny homes and/or workforce housing. Staff will use an open RFP process and accept proposals on a first-come, first-approved basis until funds are fully encumbered.

Increase public awareness of assistance programs: SHIP allocations were greatly reduced during the housing crisis, but have risen 88% in the past five years. We need to increase public awareness of the assistance programs available to increase the numbers of people being assisted to meet expenditure timelines for the grant process. Grant regulations require a minimum of 65 percent of the funds be expended to homeowners and a minimum of 20 percent of the funds be expended on special needs populations. In addition, the recent update of the Analysis of Impediments to Fair Housing identified that the local Hispanic population has doubled since 2000. Community Services will work with the county's Public Information Office to develop a marketing plan that achieves the following goals:

- Marketing of ADA accessibility and adaptive rehabilitation programs to special needs populations.
- Public awareness of Spanish language forms and brochures and availability of bi-lingual staff.
- Use of social media to increase public awareness of programs.
- Publicize assistance programs through: County Connection newsletter, media releases, rotating messages on TVs in county auditorium, inclusion in commissioner talking points, update of website and internal marketing to county employees.

Extension Service

The Marion County UF/IFAS Extension Service is a funding partnership between the Marion County Board of County Commissioners and the University of Florida. UF/IFAS Extension assesses the unique

education needs of each Florida county and staff is assigned to develop educational programs to address these needs. Agents deliver UF research information in agriculture, family and consumer sciences and youth development.

The University of Florida/IFAS Extension Service is in the midst of a 10 Year Strategic Plan: the Extension Roadmap, 2013 – 2023. Details are available at: <http://extadmin.ifas.ufl.edu/roadmap.shtml>. Within that plan, the Marion County Extension Service is focused on three parts of the initiative as follows:

Task	Benefit	Date	Cost
Increasing the sustainability, profitability, and competitiveness of agricultural and horticultural enterprises	Constant practice revision will maximize productivity, keep pace with food safety requirements and protect natural resources.	Oct.-Dec. 2016	Included in current budget
Protection of natural resources - Enhancing and protecting water quality, quantity, and supply through education.	Protection of quality of water. Best use of water resources to meet the needs of population growth, food production and protection of the environment.	Oct.-Dec. 2016	Included in current budget
Preparing youth to be responsible citizens and productive members of the workforce through 4H Program	The US economy is dependent upon a labor force that is responsible and productive. 4-H education programs develop these skills in youth.	Oct.-Dec. 2016	Included in current budget
UF Engagement	Coordination of UF resources with identified community needs.	Oct.-Dec. 2018	Included in current budget

Increase the sustainability, profitability, and competitiveness of agricultural and horticultural enterprises: Research conducted at University of Florida and other land grant universities will be communicated to producers via classes, symposiums, newsletters and private consultations to result in adoption of new practices. Agriculture in Marion County accounts for 28,362 jobs and \$1.2 billion in revenue. Using newsletters, seminars and farm visits, Extension agents will communicate recommended best practices to producers. Pre/post testing and post-conference survey will be employed to establish practice adoption.¹

Enhancing and protecting water quality, quantity, and supply through education: Florida’s population has recently surpassed 20 million and is projected to exceed 30 million by 2050.* Water is becoming a limiting factor for growth for Florida. Water conservation, water reuse and water quality protection are all critical elements to supply the water needs of the population, agriculture and the environment. Education of residents, particularly new residents, is critical in assuring the future of Florida’s water quantity, quality and supply. Best Management Practices (BMPs) must be continually stressed to commercial producers.²

Extension is addressing these water issues: 1) Educational programs in Florida Friendly Landscapes; SMART irrigation technologies; UF/IFAS-developed drought tolerant turf, Florida Water Star® in new building construction, and retrofits. 2) Quality through education on Agricultural Best Management

¹ Source: UF/IFAS Extension Economic Contribution Reports 2015

² Source: FDOT 2010-2050 Population Projections

Practices, license-training for the green industry and pesticide applicator certification, classwork to help residents understand their responsibility in adopting practices for water quality protection.

Preparing youth to be responsible citizens and productive members of the workforce through 4H Program:

4-H is a youth development program for young people ages 8-18. The 2010 US Census Bureau report indicates 19.4 percent of Marion County’s population (about 64,000) is under age 18. Currently 4-H has 37 local community clubs and 740 traditional 4-H club members. Another 2,500 youth participate in short-term education programs over the course of a year. 4-H uses a member-selected project and experiences at the local and county club level to teach four primary skills: responsibility, communication, leadership and citizenship. Through their participation in 4-H education over several years, young people develop skills that prepare them to be productive in the workforce and in their communities.

UF Engagement: The goal for this initiative is to facilitate new partnerships with the university to help address a multitude of issues, ultimately improving the prosperity and quality of life for all Floridians. Marion County Extension will be hosting this activity for the Central District of Florida in November 2018. Extension Director David Holmes has been appointed to Chair this activity. This will include recruiting a committee, goal-setting, developing an agenda, obtaining speakers and all associated local responsibilities (room set-up, meal, etc.). Additional information on the concept of the Engaged University is available in a comprehensive report published by the Association of Public and Land-grant Universities, titled *Returning to Our Roots: The Engaged Institution* (<http://www.aplu.org/library/returning-toour-roots-the-engaged-institution/file>).

Southeastern Livestock Pavilion

The Southeastern Livestock Pavilion, including the covered arena, barn, sales arena, and auditorium contributes over \$11 million annually to the local economy, with more than 250,000 people attending the 350 events hosted each year. With the construction of the cover over the north arena, this facility will accommodate and serve the citizens of Marion County, and visitors from many other states.

Task	Benefit	Date	Cost
Construct cover over north arena	Provide additional space to host events.	Oct.-Dec. 2016	\$1.8 million
Hire an additional staff member	Improve community relations and provide additional opportunities for citizens to utilize the Southeastern Livestock Pavilion and all of the amenities of the property	Oct.-Dec. 2017	\$28,000

Construct cover over North arena: Construction of Phase III (covering of arena) began in May 2016, with an expected completion in February 2017. This project will maximize the property’s potential by providing another location to hold events simultaneously. The cost of this project is covered by a combination of state and county funds.

Hire an additional staff member: Currently, the pavilion is open seven days a week, including some holidays. After the north arena is complete and available for renting, an additional staff member will ensure we can provide coverage for all the events with the expected level of customer service. The cost of the additional staff member (Building and Grounds Technician II) is expected to be offset by additional revenue accruing from the rental of the new arena.

Facilities Management

The Facilities Management department coordinates the planning, design and construction of all proposed county-owned facilities and maintains more than 300 existing county-owned and leased structures. Totalling more than three million square feet, these include office buildings, fire stations, the Clerk of the Court, Judicial Center, State Attorney’s office, Public Defender’s office, the Supervisor of Elections office, county libraries, county park structures, county jail facilities and Sheriff’s Office operations center and substations.

Task	Benefit	Date	Cost
Software upgrade	Improve efficiencies and decrease operating costs due to reduced staff time for data entry and reporting.	July-Sept. 2017	\$40,000 - 50,000
Implement apprenticeship training	Additional staff trained on multiple trades; hire new staff in FY 16/17 and begin apprenticeship training once fully staffed, by October 2017.	Oct.-Dec. 2017	\$89,370 (included in FY 16/17 budget)

Software upgrade: This software upgrade will allow Facilities to combine several processes, including warranties, repairs, maintenance and energy management into one software that will provide for a “snapshot” summary on all assets along with the ability to produce detailed reports. Facilities Management will work with Information Technology to procure software specifically created for Facilities Management or to review and possibly upgrade to the new Cartegraph system.

Implement apprenticeship training: Facilities Management is finding it more difficult to compete with private businesses for hiring facilities trade technicians. Because of the lack of local trade schools and apprenticeship programs, we hire entry level technicians with little to no experience and must train in-house on complex HVAC and energy management systems. This brings an entry level tech to a highly skilled Tech III. Total time for training could take 2-3 years minimum. Training will begin approximately October-December 2017. Facilities Management will work with Human Resources to develop a program that will allow us to provide apprenticeship training in multiple trades in order to develop in-house master trade technicians.

Fire Rescue ³

Marion County Fire Rescue (MCFR) is a progressive, professional fire rescue department dedicated to the health, safety and well-being of the community, providing excellent service, education and prevention in partnership with the citizens of Marion County. MCFR is the second-largest fire rescue department north of Orlando, with more than 500 employees, a \$52.8 million budget, and 31 fire stations. The department's full-time state-certified firefighter/paramedics, firefighter/EMTs, EMTs and paramedics serve more than 300,000 citizens, cover 1,600 square miles (which is larger than the state of Rhode Island) and respond to an average of 200 emergencies a day.

Fleet Management

Fleet Management provides total repair service for the county’s 1,400 vehicles and equipment from one central location. Most work, including preventive maintenance, is performed in-house. Labor-intensive

³ Detailed strategies for this department can be found in the Fire Rescue and EMS section of this plan, page 48-51

repairs such as major engine and transmission repairs, work requiring special tools and work requiring special certification are outsourced to maximize cost-effectiveness, efficiency and safety. Fleet Management has earned the nationally-distinguished National Institute for Automotive Service Excellence (ASE) Blue Seal of Excellence designation.

Task	Benefit	Date	Cost
Standardize rolling stock	A limited quantity of base models with options to customize the units to meet the department requirements.	Oct.-Dec. 2017	Will coincide with department budgeted amounts.

Marion County Fleet Management has the third largest fleet in the state of Florida according to the Florida Benchmarking Consortium. We are a very diverse Fleet with vehicles and equipment operating on three types of fuel. Our initiative to standardize our assets will provide a more uniformed fleet and allow us to cut down on parts inventory, also giving us bargaining leverage to approach vendors for better purchasing prices due to multi-unit purchases.

Example:

- High quality vehicles and equipment that meet the needs of the departments.
- Better purchase pricing with multiple unit orders.
- Less parts inventory.
- Positive county image for the look of the fleet.
- Base unit can be customized to meet the specific needs of the departments.
- Lower maintenance cost.
- Technical training on one style of equipment.
- Reduced cost for tooling shops.
- Less down time with diagnostics.
- Multiple fuel options.
- Ability to forecast purchase price and maintenance cost along with fuel consumption.

Growth Services

Marion County Growth Services plans, guides and protects timely growth and development in Marion County by engaging in proactive, inclusive and community-oriented goals and guidelines covered in the Marion County Comprehensive Plan and Land Development Code. The department works toward balancing community livability, economic viability and environmental sensitivity through its three service divisions: Code Enforcement, Planning and Zoning.

Task	Benefit	Date	Cost
Silver Springs CRA revitalization	Enhances commercial and residential communities by establishing gateway design standards for the Silver Springs SR 40 Corridor	Jan.-March 2017	\$25,000
Enhance communication among agencies	Bring all parties together, county/city/TPO/CEP when reviewing proposed development anywhere in Marion County.	July-Sept. 2017	Staff time

Establish searchable document management system	Immediate retrieval of historical and current documents; free square footage storage space throughout department.	April-June 2018	TBD
--	---	-----------------	-----

Silver Springs CRA revitalization: Redevelopment plan for the Silver Springs area to enhance the community. Staff plans to develop and obtain approval for CRA criteria standards for SR 40. Cost for this phase is \$25,000.

Enhance communication among agencies: Track and coordinate comprehensive meetings with all stakeholders from development proposal through permitting, for all incoming development proposals in Marion County. Growth Services will begin to coordinate intergovernmental planning and development staff meetings in year one, 4th quarter, coordinate CEP/Growth Services department quarterly meetings.

Establish searchable document management system: Growth Services plans to establish a state of the art document management system for conversion of paper land records into a secure, searchable database. This process requires completion of the Zoning Layer and Maps to a GIS format (early second year) and staff intends to begin scanning historical records near the third quarter of the second year. In order to fully implement this system, it is necessary to determine whether the BCC would like to approach document management separately by each department or by using one system county-wide for document scanning and retrieval. Costs are TBD pending direction, but the countywide estimate is \$250,000.

Human Resources ⁴

Marion County Human Resources provides employee services for the Marion County Board of County Commissioners. These include: recruitment and employment, training and development, benefits and compensation, labor relations, and operation of the employee health clinic.

The department focuses on delivering quality service to each of its clients and stakeholders, maintaining a highly-qualified, diverse workforce and creating a culture that promotes excellence throughout the organization.

Information Technology

Marion County Information Technology (IT) delivers and supports secure, reliable and innovative technological solutions in a cost-effective manner to the BCC, its departments and other local governmental agencies to help them serve our citizens. Advancing technology is of utmost importance in handling customer service. Whether it is the submission of electronic forms or developing an application for mobile devices, the county understands the need to provide the most current technology available and to continue updating it to meet demands. Significant opportunities exist to improve our service delivery and decision making processes through a wide range of technological devices and software applications. IT will work with various departments to delve further into researching the best and most cost-efficient ways to enhance our technological assets and services.

⁴ Detailed strategies for this department can be found in the Work Environment and Staff Development sections of this plan, pages 7-14

Task	Benefit	Date	Cost
Security policy update	Maintain enforceable security policies to comply with changing regulatory requirements.	July-Sept. 2017	Personnel
Establish disaster recovery plan	Ensure continuous service in emergency situations.	July-Sept. 2018	\$168,000
Mobile applications	Ease of access to county services and efficiency gains for employees.	July-Sept. 2019	\$70,000
GIS consolidation and technology enhancements	Consolidate and enhance GIS technology to gain efficiencies and potential cost savings.	July-Sept. 2020	\$99,000
Enterprise Resource Planning (ERP) solution	Consistent streamline effect and more comprehensive record retention.	July-Sept. 2021	\$2,500,000

Security policy update: Update and maintain enforceable administrative IT security policies to comply with regulatory requirements and generally accepted best practices. Establish guidelines to track, document, and report incidents to appropriate agency officials and/or authorities. Review the IT Security Policies Handbook annually and update as appropriate.

Disaster recovery: Along with county departments, IT will develop a comprehensive plan to address the organization’s mission-critical technology systems in regards to service level agreements and priority levels. This plan must be tested annually with departments to ensure that critical county systems are operational and available during and after a disaster.

Mobile applications: IT will continue to explore mobile applications for external use (e.g. Citizen Solution Center) and internal use (e.g. for use by field staff to enhance efficiency and customer service).

GIS consolidation: The GIS Steering Committee has reviewed consolidation opportunities, including establishing countywide standards and training, automating, cross organization collaboration and correcting inefficiencies in data handling practices. Directors from various departments serve on this committee, which is exploring the creation of a “Central GIS” and a GIS Coordinator position to implement the recommendations of the committee. The establishment of a GIS Users Group was also recommended to open communications between departments. These teams will also focus on ensuring that GIS technologies are efficiently deployed and utilized throughout the organization.

Enterprise Resource Planning (ERP) Solution: This technology will improve efficiencies and data sharing; promote enhanced business decisions; provide document management; automate workflow processes with electronic approvals; delivers executive dashboards, one-step reporting, modern online access and mobile technologies.

Municipal Services Taxing Unit (MSTU) / Assessments

The Marion County MSTU/Assessments department works with residential groups to procure services or resources in subdivision areas where property owners would like to see improvements. MSTU / Assessments programs, paid for specifically by those who use the services, offer property owners options to achieve their goals of road paving, road maintenance, street lighting, community centers and more for their subdivisions that would not otherwise be available through general tax dollars.

Task	Benefit	Date	Cost
Updating systems	Efficiencies and consistent processes.	July-Sept. 2018	Personnel cost
Bring the larger MSTUs up to current standards	Consistency of standards result in better product across all MSTUs.	July-Sept. 2019	TBD

Updating systems: MSTU will continue to update existing procedures and policies and increase efficiency throughout the county between the main MSTU office and remote offices within the MSTUs. This will include better use of existing technological resources. This task includes implementing internal training for staff in the remote MSTU locations and quarterly meetings with supervisors to discuss implementing standard for consistency.

Bring the larger MSTUs up to current standards: The goal will be to have the MSTUs consistent in procedures and policies that are in line with the rest of the county as well as among all of them. This will include the cost to utilize the facilities to residents and non-residents, as well as offering similar programs within each of the MSTU areas and developing new programs to meet the needs of both the younger generation and the aging members within the community.

Both goals will increase efficiency and demonstrate to employees the commitment management has to ensuring they have the best tools available for them to perform at the highest level possible and provide the best customer service to the citizens of Marion County.

Office of the County Engineer ⁵

The Marion County Office of the County Engineer provides efficient, economical and quality transportation and stormwater systems to satisfy diverse mobility needs, while ensuring the safety and welfare of the general public and the preservation of the environment.

Parks and Recreation ⁶

The Parks and Recreation department is responsible for operating and maintaining 50 parks spanning over 2,400 acres which attract more than 2 million visitors each year while providing recreation services to more than 25,000 residents through dynamic outdoor recreation opportunities. The department contributes not only to the community’s quality of life by providing spaces for people to relax and play and interact socially, it also fuels the local economy by creating and caring for destinations which citizens and visitors both use. From coaching for activities and for life, to connecting people to our environment and our history, to community investment and enrichment, “It Starts in Parks!”

Procurement Services

Marion County Procurement Services provides cost savings and transparency to county citizens by facilitating a proactive, competitive and efficient procurement process. Procurement Services also administers contracts, processes and tracks vendor payments and administers the purchasing card program.

⁵ Detailed strategies for this department can be found in the Transportation Infrastructure section of this plan, pages 52-68
⁶ Detailed strategies for this department can be found in the Natural Resources and Outdoor Recreation section of this plan, pages 39-47

Task	Benefit	Date	Cost
Create a spend analysis program	Cost savings, improved estimating	Oct.-Dec. 2018	Est. \$97,000 Personnel Operating. TBD for Software
Electronic workflow	Process efficiency and improved tracking	Jan.-Mar. 2020	TBD

Create a spend analysis program: Spend analysis is the process of collecting, cleansing, classifying and analyzing expenditure data from all sources within the organization (i.e. purchasing card, eProcurement systems, etc.). The process analyzes the current, past and forecasted expenditures to allow visibility of data by supplier, by commodity or service, and by department within the organization. Spend analysis can be used to make future management decisions by providing answers to such questions as: what, when and where items were purchased; how many suppliers were used and how much was spent with each; and how much was paid.

In the first year of implementation, spend analysis would involve coding each transaction to establish a baseline for trial analysis and for use as future benchmarking. The first year of data and subsequent analysis should begin to show us if inefficiencies, such as circumventing the procurement process, exist and where. It is then up to management and senior staff to develop methods to improve efficiencies. Additionally, data from the first year should also reveal where collaborative spending could be utilized across multiple departments. Small dollar spend on similar commodities or services over multiple departments could be combined to gain leverage with vendors through bulk purchasing or term contracts. Data obtained from subsequent years will be benchmarked against data from the first year to reveal the value of the spend analysis program.

Electronic workflow: The Procurement process involves many forms which have been combined or reduced to create a more uniform and consistent process. Currently these forms, in some instances, may be filled out online but then printed and sent through inter-office mail for the proper approvals. Electronic workflow would create a more seamless process where the form could be filled out online and submitted electronically for approvals. Procurement will work with IT to create a workflow process through the county’s Sharepoint site. This electronic workflow is currently being tested and improved on the new travel form and once working at full capacity, we can begin converting other forms to the electronic workflow.

Public Library System ⁷

The mission of the Marion County Public Library System is to connect citizens with information, ideas and experiences to strengthen and enrich our community and quality of life. To that end, the Marion County Public Library System is comprised of eight interdependent libraries offering broad-based print, non-print and electronic collections designed to make its total resources readily available and accessible to the community. Marion County residents are served by the Headquarters-Ocala Public Library in Ocala and locations in Belleview, Dunnellon, Forest, Fort McCoy, Marion Oaks, Reddick and the SR200 corridor.

⁷ The detailed Marion County Public Library System Strategic Plan 2015-2020 can be accessed at: <http://www.marioncountyfl.org/departments-agencies/departments-o-z/office-of-fiscal-review/strategic-plans>

Task	Benefit	Date	Cost
Incorporate customer service expectations into every aspect of our work: staff orientation, training, meetings and evaluations	Improved customer services. Quality customer service that is “top of mind” for each employee.	Oct.-Dec. 2016	Staff time
Review policy on grant applications	Ability to explore and implement new services.	Oct.-Dec. 2017	Staff time

Customer service expectations: Our customers, our diverse citizenry, are why the public library exists. The public library provides services our customers seek such as books, electronic materials, audio materials, computers, classes, programs, information and friendly and expert staff. When our customers seek public library services, it is vital that the library provide quality customer service, which requires attention, effort, consistency and follow-through. In order to be successful, it is imperative that we have staff buy-in and take a holistic approach. The library has formed a staff-driven Customer Service Effectiveness Team, which works with staff throughout the public library system to identify desired staff behaviors, develop a customer service statement and an implementation plan. This plan would address such areas as the interview process, new staff orientation, staff recognition, staff training, overall communications, procedural effectiveness and grounds/facilities maintenance.

Review policy on grant applications: Service grants enable the library to explore creative and innovative ways to offer services to our citizens, without utilizing local dollars. Any required local match is typically realized in time contributed by existing personnel to implement the activities of the grant.

Previously the library had been authorized to apply for grant funds which could be categorized as service or operational in nature. Typically the library sought Library Services and Technology Act (LSTA) grant funds, administered through the Department of State, Division of Library and Information Services. Some example of previous programs which utilized LSTA funds are as follows:

- Born to Read
- Ready to Read
- Relatives as Parents
- Assistive Technology

Public Safety Communications

Public Safety Communications is responsible for answering incoming emergency (911 and TTY calls) and non-emergency telephone calls 24 hours a day, 365 days a year. The department also works with citizens to properly address new and existing property parcels so that, among other things, locations can be properly identified in case of an emergency. Public Safety Communications also ensures the access and availability of radio communications within Marion County departments, provides emergency dispatching services for Marion County Fire Rescue, Marion County Sheriff’s Office, the City of Belleview Police Department and the City of Dunnellon fire and police departments to meet the needs of public safety and public service operations in Marion County.

Task	Benefit	Date	Cost
Replace 800 MHz end-user radio equipment	Allow for upgrade of radio equipment no longer supported after 2018.	Jan.-March 2017	\$8.18 million; sales tax initiative
Implement true text to 911 capability	Provides an additional and technological advanced method for citizens to reach emergency services.	April-June 2017	\$150,000
Add additional tower sites	Increases the reliability of radio communications in areas that the system currently does not cover well.	April-June 2018	\$636,725; sales tax initiative
Increase interoperability with local, state and federal agencies	Will provide regional back up with our surrounding counties.	Jan.-March 2019	TBD. CIP in place

Replace 800 MHz end-user radio equipment: New end-user radio equipment needs to be purchased to phase out equipment that will no longer be supported by the manufacturer. Public Safety Communications staff will work with the vendor and all departments to upgrade all end-user radio equipment (handheld and mobile radios) that will be phased out and to provide a smooth transition to the new radios.

Implement true text to 911 capability: This initiative will allow citizens to contact 911 via text messaging using their SMS enabled devices (cell phones, tablets). This functionality will allow users to communicate to 911 when voice contact is not an option, and will enhance the ability of the hearing impaired community to request emergency services.

Add additional tower sites: The additional tower sites, to be built in the south end of the county will increase the reliability of the radio system by filling in weak areas of radio coverage.

Increase interoperability with local, state and federal agencies: Staff intends to install and connect to a regional 911 network with our region 3 partners for the delivery of current and future emergency services. This allows for dynamic call routing and enables 911 calls and associated data to be routed to any Public Safety Answering Point participating in the network and will form the frame work for next generation 911 services.

Solid Waste

Marion County Solid Waste provides solid waste disposal and recycling opportunities for Marion County. Marion County residents who live in unincorporated areas of the county pay a solid waste assessment and can dispose of most materials at recycling centers located throughout the county at no additional cost.

Task	Benefit	Date	Cost
Build and implement a citizen convenience center	Provides a safe, efficient facility for hand-unloading citizens.	April-June 2018	\$1,825,000
Transfer station improvements	Transfer station to receive waste once the landfill is closed.	Oct.-Dec. 2020	\$ 433,621
Continue to investigate the viability of a Regional Solid Waste Authority	Provides members decision making powers and financial autonomy.	July-Sept. 2021	TBD

Build and implement a citizen convenience center: Marion County anticipates closure of Baseline Landfill in FY 21/22. Operations will transition from landfilling to a transfer process. Current landfill

operations will shift to our existing transfer station currently being used as a citizen drop-off location. This shift will require siting, designing and building a new citizen convenience center to accommodate hand-unloading. Separating hand-unload customers from commercial delivery customers provides for a safe and efficiently-operated system.

Transfer station improvements: Transitioning from a landfill operation to a transfer operation requires equipment, personnel and facility configuration (tipping floor evaluation, scale improvements, etc.) that adapts to the different handling, collection and transportation needs of a transfer station.

Continue to investigate the viability of a Regional Solid Waste Authority: The Regional Solid Waste Authority (a group of partnering members that determine the organizational framework, establish responsibilities for budget oversight, funding methods, borrowing and rate/fee setting for their group). An authority can provide economies of scale and expand opportunities for its members through combined waste streams and can contribute to alternative waste management methods that may not be feasible or economical for individual municipalities/governments. Marion County will determine interest among counties and municipalities within 100 mile radius of Heart of Florida landfill, build a timeline based on each community’s needs, and set up task force meetings to begin the process of forming a solid waste authority.

Tourist Development

The Tourist Development department, through the Ocala/Marion County Visitors and Convention Bureau (VCB), leads, markets and grows Marion County’s travel and tourism industry and enhances the local economy by using innovative and efficient methods to attract visitor dollars and contribute to Marion County’s recognition as a vacation destination. The VCB is funded by a four-percent tourist development tax collected on transient accommodations. The Marion County Board of County Commissioners and the nine-member, volunteer Tourist Development Council oversees the application of these funds to attract leisure and business travel to the community.

Task	Benefit	Date	Cost
Focus on building market share in key niche audiences to include outdoor adventure, equestrian, youth and adult amateur sports, small group meetings and military markets.	Knowing the best time to launch these attributes within our campaigns will allow us to be more laser targeted in reaching the right type of visitors for specific time periods of needs and will help in current and future advertising methods to reach those niche markets that were outlined and approved in the VCB’s 5 year Strategic Plan.	Oct.-Dec. 2016	\$167,988 for integrated media plan
Develop gateway signage	Gateway signage creates a sense of place and further enhances the local atmosphere of the destination. Helps validate which part of the area visitors are in and assists them in knowing if they are on the right route. Creating entry points to the destination will encourage visitors to stop by to see the various attractions, sights and events that take place, which can prolong their stay.	April-June 2017	TBD
Develop an innovative group travel technological platform	Provides more in-depth aid for the trip-planning process to ensure visitation as it would provide relevant content and planning features to further the sales funnel. This provides an e-commerce tool that functions 24/7 for international and domestic time zones to increase the amount of service provided to customers.	July-Sept. 2017	\$6,500 initial cost and \$22,000 annually

Focus on building market share in key niche audiences to include outdoor adventure, equestrian, youth and adult amateur sports, small group meetings and military markets: As a result of the visitor profile study in our research, key assets were documented as strengths to advance Marion County's visibility and create additional opportunity. With the help of creative digital marketing and a segmented itinerary builder, advancement in these areas allow for a stronger reach. Tracking tools help us measure the performance in these key markets to assist in the development of shoulder season campaigns to reach consumers targeted by these preference categories. In order to compete with larger counties in Florida, Marion County would be best suited to focus on the strengths related to niche audiences. The VCB will work with partners to maximize resources, expand media exposure to niche audiences, develop tools to increase coverage in new markets and strengthen the co-op plan to help partners become better brand ambassadors.

Develop gateway signage: Tourist development staff plans to partner with appropriate stakeholders to develop signage that will reflect the destination brand Gateway signage provides a sense of place for the community and events that attract overnight visitation. Gateway signage will help create an atmosphere that provides a stronger local presence; and events can also benefit when there are signs that provide direction and awareness. The initial joint workshop for gateway signage visioning has been conducted with the BCC/TDC. Staff is working with the agency assigned to the project to bring back the scope of work in quarter 1 of 2017.

Develop an innovative group travel technological platform: Work with interested Marion County tourism partners to develop a standardized e-commerce platform that will help provide better online customer service, immediate online booking, and niche-based vacation packages, accommodating visitor needs and helping to further sell the destination. This is not only convenient to Ocala/Marion County visitors, it is increasingly necessary for digitally minded markets as technological advances are made. This platform will provide visitors to our website with a streamlined complement to the current itinerary builder and give them the real-time availability and bookings they are seeking. By encouraging partners to use a standardized booking system and developing greater collaboration, Ocala/Marion County could gain a stronger position in the tourism market.

Utilities

Marion County Utilities, an award-winning department, provides water and wastewater services to nearly 32,000 water customers and over 20,000 sewer customers in the unincorporated areas of Marion County. The department strives to deliver safe drinking water and ensure the collection, treatment and environmentally friendly disposal of wastewater.

Marion County Utilities delivers a quality product that meets or exceeds all state and federal compliance regulations, protecting limited natural resources while attending to the needs of its customers. Water and wastewater standards are mandated by federal and state Environmental Protection Agency statutes. Additionally, the utility falls under the oversight of St. Johns River Water Management District and the Southwest Florida Water Management District.

Task	Benefit	Date	Cost
Replace outdated software	Improve customer service functionality and enable integration with key operating systems.	July-Sept. 2021	\$2.3M CIP budget
Payment kiosks	Increased customer convenience by allowing customers to process payments without waiting for a representative	July-Sept. 2021	TBD

Replace outdated software: The utility initiated the multi-year project, “Smart Water” in 2015 to review business practices and software integrations to develop a blueprint of working smarter to enhance customer service. This includes replacing outdated software, integrating systems for improved communication and data collection, and implementing new technologies for improved customer experiences.

The Smart Water project outlines a plan of action including:

- Replacing the customer information and billing systems, lending increased functionality and enabling integration with key operating systems. This will improve reporting capabilities and billing accuracy, reduce risk of unsupported software, be more labor-efficient and reduce customer wait time.
- Replace Integrated Voice Recognition system to improve our customers’ experience and reduce manual effort of providing outbound calls for bill reminders and emergency water alerts. Reduce risk of system failing and being unable to provide key services.

Payment kiosks: Utilities will evaluate kiosks which would reduce a customer’s wait time by allowing them to process their own payments and not wait for a representative. Kiosks would provide the following options:

- Bill pay
- Balance and due day lookup
- Address/phone number change with pin/password validation

Using a competitive process, a vendor would be chosen to provide the kiosks at no up-front cost to the county. The county would pay a monthly fee for the use of the kiosks as well as all maintenance and updates.

Veterans Services

Marion County Veterans Services staff helps residents obtain their Veterans Administration benefits, including compensation, pension, health care, education, and death and burial benefits. They also assist veterans seeking to replace lost medals awarded while serving on active duty.

Task	Benefit	Date	Cost
Expand outreach to SR 200 Corridor and rural communities.	Informing veterans of services offered	Oct.-Dec. 2017	Training material / staff time

Veterans Services staff will increase outreach education to veterans by reinitiating an outreach program at College of Central Florida aimed at contacting and educating younger veterans, conducting rural outreach programs in rotating areas throughout the county, and beginning a monthly veterans’ benefits

media release. Successful implementation of this initiative will require coordination with community service groups and various service agencies, as well as community advertising and marketing to ensure residents are aware of our programs. Following is a potential program outline subject to change:

Year 1: Dunnellon, Marion Oaks and SR 200 corridor

Year 2: Fort McCoy, Silver Springs Shores and SR 200 corridor

Year 3: The Forest, McIntosh and SR 200 corridor

Year 4: Dunnellon, Marion Oaks, Silver Springs and SR 200 corridor

Year 5: One rural outreach per quarter, revisiting each of the areas previously visited

Natural Resources and Outdoor Recreation

Marion County occupies over 1,600 square miles of land and water containing over 20 different natural communities creating a diverse tapestry of flora and fauna, waterways and forests, ecosystems and habitats, all of which provide limitless opportunities for recreation and relaxation. As Marion County works to advance an economic development strategy that can stimulate and broaden our economic base, it is of the utmost importance to protect and manage the abundance of natural resources and outdoor activities that attract both visitors and potential businesses to our county.

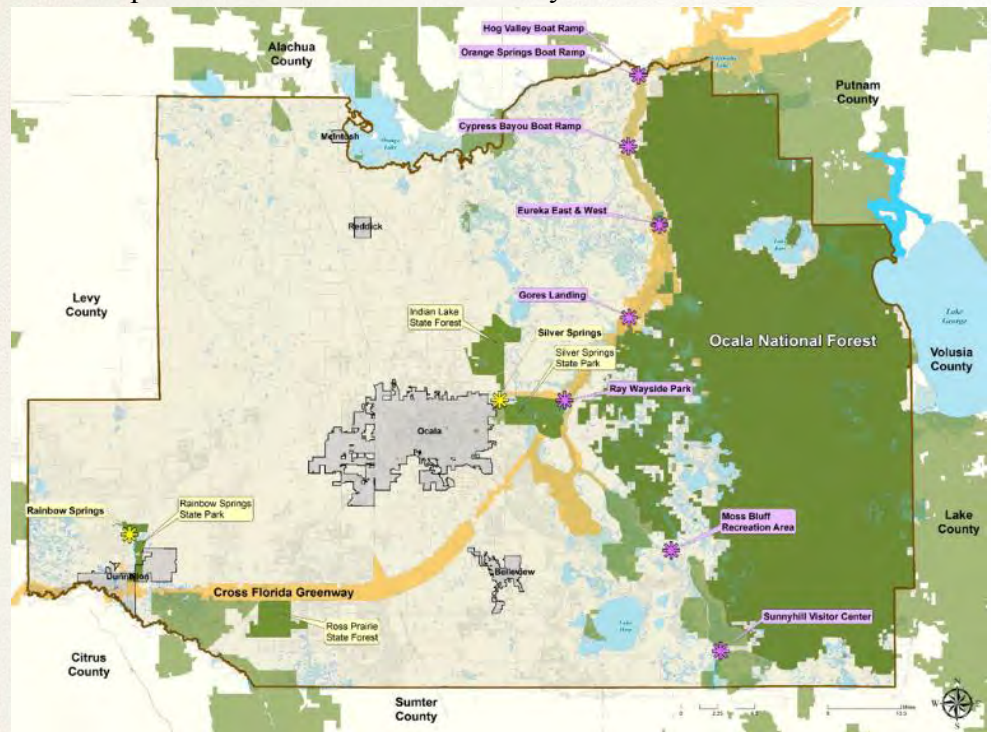
Marion County has the ability to position ourselves as the epicenter of outdoor recreation in this region. Open space and a strong park system are fundamental assets to a community when creating economic development initiatives for visitors, current and future businesses, and residents. It is vital that these core assets continue to be a focal point for economic development.

The main discussion of this section of the plan includes:

- Natural resources identification and protection
- Marion County outdoor recreation vision
- Tourism

Natural Resources

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



Identification and Protection

For the purposes of this plan, the identification and protection of natural resources is closely aligned with the recently-approved Natural Resources Plan (NRP).

The NRP includes three main groups of resources, identifies valuable assets and provides means for protecting and preserving them. The three groups are:

- Land and habitat
- Water resources
- Mining resources

Land and Habitat

Protecting land and habitat is key to maintaining healthy ecosystems that also provide opportunities for public use and enjoyment. Natural habitats also safeguard the quality and quantity of our water resources, which is vital for our community.

Identification

Task	Benefit	Date	Cost
Conduct conservation land survey as required by Florida Statute 253.87 (2)	Provides detailed inventory of all conservation lands with Marion County; identifies natural communities and potential public access points.	Jan.-March 2018	Staff perform under existing budget; field equipment: \$15,000

New legislation passed in 2016 requires the complete inventory of conservation lands within each county and municipality. This will include cataloging conditions and acreages of various ecosystems and identifying potential for public use, namely outdoor recreation and other revenue-generating operations. Conducting this survey will help Marion County fine-tune the existing data and verify records with the state.

Parks and Recreation has a park operation specialist with a focus on natural resource management who will complete this inventory. Based on priorities and management activities closely tied to the seasonal calendar, other typical operational activities (such as conducting prescribed fires, managing invasive species and maintaining waterway regulatory signs) will need to be postponed while the inventory is being completed. Technology such as GPS and mapping of the resources will help Parks and Recreation update its own inventory and will contribute to the department's goals of streamlining its asset management program.

Protection

Task	Benefit	Date	Cost
Improve land development regulations to protect sensitive lands	Protects specific habitats and ecosystems, which inherently provide protection of water resources.	July-Sept. 2017	Staff perform under existing budget
Use partnerships with state agencies to identify new opportunities for land and habitat protection	Leverages state's ability to acquire lands for long-term protection	Oct.-Dec. 2017 On-going	Staff perform under existing budget

About 36 percent of publicly owned land in Marion County is classified as conservation, which inherently provides protection for natural communities in some areas. Protection is addressed on private property through land development regulations. The two main documents which cover land use are the Marion County Comprehensive Plan and the Land Development Code.

The Land Development Code requires an environmental assessment for listed species for all commercial projects and large-scale residential developments. However, there is no requirement for habitat protection beyond acquiring state permits to relocate the species, even though preservation may be a feasible alternative. Policies should be implemented to encourage or incentivize development that avoids negative impacts to natural communities.

The conservation land survey will assist in identifying well-represented natural communities in the county vs. those that need additional protection, so that any new regulations or acquisitions address truly under-represented natural areas. Budgeted dollars and workforce for habitat protection can be augmented through partnerships with state agencies.

The LDC identifies certain areas within the county as being in an “Environmentally Sensitive Overlay Zone” (ESOZ). Development standards in ESOZ exceed typical standards by requiring structural setbacks and buffering from water bodies, wetland avoidance, enhanced stormwater criteria and other provisions. Currently, ESOZ only applies to lands within close proximity to certain waterbodies. However, the designation should be expanded to include vulnerable upland habitats. A number of tools developed by state agencies can be used to identify these habitats, including the Integrated Wildlife Habitat Ranking System and Florida Strategic Habitat Conservation Areas (FWC). Additionally, existing ESOZ criteria for properties adjacent to waterbodies and wetlands should be revised to incorporate new yard and shoreline best management practices, and littoral zone protections.

Water Resources

Marion County has more than 16,000 acres of lakes and ponds, 180 miles of rivers and streams, and one of the world’s most prolific aquifers producing three first magnitude springs. Our springs are windows into our aquifer, revealing insight as to the health of our primary drinking water supply and source of many of our waterbodies. Seeing indicators of stresses to our springs forces us to identify, protect, educate on and promote water quality and quantity needs. Staff members across various county departments are dedicated to these efforts and besides researching and implementing projects, they must also provide sound policy recommendations to leadership and the Board.

Identification

Task	Benefit	Date	Cost
Create the Marion County Water Atlas	Provides up-to-date information about water resources and provides open data through use of information dashboard.	Oct.-Dec. 2018, upon approval	\$175K for consultant to develop with in-house assistance. \$30K annually to keep updated.

Quite a bit of work has already been done to identify water resources and critical issues, including the Marion County Aquifer Vulnerability Assessment (MCAVA), county-wide watershed management plans (WMPs), Natural Resource Plan and utility master plans. MCAVA characterizes the natural vulnerability of the aquifer considering the intermediate confining unit thickness, the effective karst features, and the soil hydraulic conductivity. WMPs incorporate MCAVA, land surface features such as elevations, conduits and land uses to map the movement of water across the land surface, identifying what contaminants may be transported and which water body that contaminate is most likely to reach

whether through direct discharge or infiltration. The Natural Resource Plan and utility master plans identify future needs and specific projects. There are also state legislative requirements to develop action plans and implement strategies to reduce pollutant loading to water bodies. In Marion County, nutrients, mainly nitrogen, are the primary pollutant of concern, and Basin Management Action Plans (BMAPs) for both Silver Springs and Rainbow Springs have been adopted. Staff prioritizes the response efforts and incorporates them into five-year work plans.

There are several databases which include the different water resources within the county. Further refining this information and cataloging the data is an ongoing effort. The primary list is included in the GIS database which must be maintained and updated on a routine basis.

Protection

The protection of our water resources has been a priority of Marion County for many years. During the mid-2000s the county created a Springs Protection Blue Ribbon Task Force with the goal of creating smart land development regulations which allow for growth while protecting the aquifer. This effort was recognized as an important step in the right direction for protecting our springs. Marion County has been involved with writing legislation at the state level based on our understanding of springs and good land use decisions which has solidified our position as a leader in springs protection.

Our recent facilitation of two BMAPs for Silver Springs and Rainbow Springs has allowed staff to gain a strong understanding of the threats against healthy spring systems and the costs associated with restoration and protection of these important resources. Additionally, the NRP identifies needs and methods for additional efforts to protect surface water bodies within the county.

Impaired Waterbodies Restoration

Task	Benefit	Date	Cost
Retrofit drainage retention areas with bio-absorptive media	Removal of nitrogen transported in stormwater before it reaches the aquifer and first magnitude springs.	Oct.-Dec. 2016	\$5M through FY 2020/21
Utilities Master Plans for removing OSTDS around Silver Springs and Rainbow Springs.	Removal of nutrients from aquifer and first magnitude springs.	April-June 2017	TBD
Septic-to-sewer conversion projects	Removal of nutrients from aquifer and first magnitude springs.	Jan.-March 2019, upon approval	TBD
Decentralized wastewater plants removal	Removal of nutrients from aquifer and first magnitude springs and impaired waterbodies.	Jan.-March 2019, upon approval	TBD

Septic tanks and decentralized systems within the Silver Springs and Rainbow Springs springsheds along with excess fertilizer transported in stormwater have been identified as significant contributors of nitrates in both spring systems. Programs intent on removing nutrients, including removal of septic systems, the use of enhanced septic systems where disconnection is not feasible for an extended period, and adding a soil amendment to retention ponds are critical. Focusing these efforts to areas in close proximity to the springs will reduce impacts to the spring systems and help restore their health. Stormwater runoff contributes to both surface water bodies and the aquifer (and therefore springs) depending on whether it discharges via overland flow or if it infiltrates.

Public Education

Task	Benefit	Date	Cost
Develop comprehensive water education program.	Creates a comprehensive program of providing consistent messaging to the public on the facets of water protection (conservation, pollution reduction, recreation, BMPs, etc.)	Oct.-Dec. 2016	Staff perform under existing budget. Printing, binding TBD.

A Stormwater Education Plan and Water Use Efficiency Plan are produced annually. They focus on educating citizens on individual impacts to water bodies and the aquifer and best practices for pollution prevention. Campaigns range from “Be wise when you fertilize” to “Right Plant, Right Place” and irrigation effectiveness. A comprehensive outreach and education effort among local governments, various stakeholder agencies and FDEP has been identified as a strategy in the BMAPs. Marion County is facilitating this effort, with the purpose to “ensure that citizens are provided with consistent and accurate information about the impacts of stormwater runoff on spring water quality as well as advice on protecting and restoring [Rainbow and Silver] Springs. The project will maximize outreach efforts among coordination team members and enhance communication between team members.”⁸

Water Coordination Team

Task	Benefit	Date	Cost
Use the Water Coordination Team effectively to meet county water resource goals.	Requires all departments/office with water-related interests to work collaboratively while ensuring county water resource goals are met.	April-June 2017	Staff perform under existing budget.

The Water Coordination Team has been meeting for several years and over time the meetings have become a rather loose discussion of water resources and how each department is impacted by current issues or conditions. The meeting should meet regularly and have the attention of Administration and the Board so that water policy may be openly discussed and actionable items assigned. Recently the pace of legislation related to water has been frequent and fast. Using the team to stay on top of water legislation is an important duty to follow through on a consistent basis.

Mineral Resources

The first commercial mining in Florida took place in Marion County. Today, our extractive commodities include limerock, sand, peat and Fuller’s earth. Numerous mines dot the county’s landscape, but there is little understanding of available volume or potential future need for these materials or other mineral commodities that have not yet been identified for extraction within the county.

Mining operations are often incompatible with other land uses, making them difficult to permit. Local governments struggle with balancing the need for locally sourced construction materials and environmental and social effects of mining operations. For this reason, in the early 2000s, Florida’s Legislature contemplated taking jurisdiction over mineral resources statewide. It is important for the county to establish areas where mining may be feasible in order to plan for mineral extraction over the long term.

⁸ Source: *Basin Management Action Plan for the Implementation of Total Maximum Daily Loads adopted by the Florida Department of Environmental Protection in the Rainbow Springs Basin Management Area for Rainbow Springs Group Run and Basin Management Action Plan for the Implementation of Total Maximum Daily Loads adopted by the Florida Department of Environmental Protection in the Silver Springs Basin Management for Silver Springs, Silver Springs Group, and Upper Silver River.*

Identification

Marion County exports 447,289 tons of clay, concrete, glass or stone and a total of 1.5 million tons of non-metallic minerals annually (FDOT, 2013). Most of the limerock mined in Marion County comes from the Ocala Platform geological unit, which is also the location of the upper Floridan Aquifer that supplies groundwater for natural systems and drinking water.

Task	Benefit	Date	Cost
Create focused strategies for the regulation of mining inside and outside of the urban growth boundary	Allows Marion County to plan for future needs for resource extraction while providing certainty to mine developers and citizens who are concerned about quality of life issues that arise from intensive mining activities.	Oct.-Dec. 2018	Staff perform under existing budget.

The Marion County Comprehensive Plan includes a Future Land Use Map (FLUM) that identifies areas within the county that may be suitable for commercial extraction. This FLUM is strictly based upon a 1988 map, created by the Florida Geological Survey (FGS) as part of a statewide effort. The level of detail used in that analysis is too generalized for the purpose of policy development.

Areas identified as peat and clay on the FGS map reflect only historic mining operations, and do not take into account other areas of the county where those resources are available, but no mines exist. Policy 3.1.4 of the Comprehensive Plan requires the county to create a focused strategy for the regulation of mining activities outside of the urban growth boundary. The importance of developing such a strategy becomes apparent when comparing the FGS/FLUM Commercially Viable Minerals map to the Marion County Aquifer Vulnerability map. Much of the Commercially Viable Minerals areas also overlie aquifer areas identified as “Most” and “More Vulnerable.” Also, a large area within the Farmland Preservation Area is identified as having limited potential for resource extraction, however one of the county’s most prolific mines is located in that region. If sufficient sources can be obtained elsewhere in the county, it may be beneficial to designate areas where mining should be excluded.

Outdoor Recreation

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

Value of Public Parks and Open Spaces to the Community	
Community revitalization	Economic development
Create safer neighborhoods	Community engagement
Green infrastructure	Help children learn
Promote public health	Promote the arts and cultural programs
Tourism	Smart growth

The Marion County Parks and Recreation department continues to provide locations where these values are achieved and continues to pursue opportunities to the community to reap the benefits of these items. Currently, two of the ten values are receiving high attention by Marion County: tourism and economic development.

Tourism

Task	Benefit	Date	Cost
Develop a marketing campaign showcasing natural resources with emphasis on county parks.	Economic impact and national and international exposure to visitors and media.	Jan.-March 2017	Unknown. Scope to be written pending approval and then solicited.

The growth of tourism within Marion County is nothing new. Visitors have been coming to this area for over a hundred years, although the main thrust of tourism was associated with places like Silver Springs and Six Gun Territory. As those “original tourist attractions” faded away, tourism here began to focus more on the outdoors, namely with the Ocala National Forest. Today, the Forest attracts over 2,000,000 visitors per year providing excellent outdoor recreation such as camping, canoeing, hiking and off-road vehicle experiences.

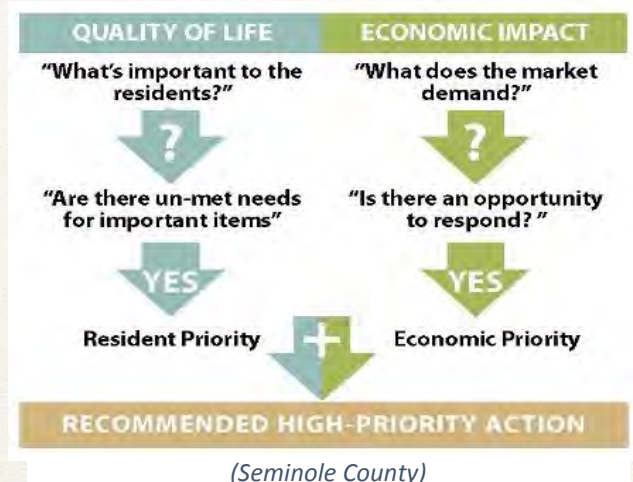
This task would further utilize www.ocalamarion.com as a hub for visitors and residents alike to plan and coordinate their time in Ocala/Marion County. Specific elements relative to outdoor adventure are featured and indicate these opportunities as key differentiators of Ocala/Marion County. The benefit of leveraging ocalamarion.com is that the site is featured prominently in current Ocala/Marion County marketing tactics and is available to the consumer 24/7.

Economic Development

We have always known that local and regional public parks add significant value and benefits to their communities, yet beyond that, local and regional park agencies are also engines of economic activity in their communities. The nation’s local and regional public park agencies generated nearly \$140 billion in economic activity and supported almost 1 million jobs from their operations and capital spending alone in 2013⁹. When the spending at local and regional parks is combined with that of national and state parks, public parks are responsible for more than **\$200 billion in annual economic activity**. These are the key findings of research conducted by the Center for Regional Analysis at George Mason University.

In Florida alone, the economic impact from local parks and recreation departments totals over \$7 billion. Marion County sees this impact through three major state parks (Silver Springs State Park, Rainbow Springs State Park and the Cross Florida Greenway) and the major sports complexes which alone deliver over \$2 million locally.

Parks have the unique trait of accomplishing two goals simultaneously: they increase the quality of life and provide economic impact at the same time. Smart park planning and a strategic plan for implementing new park development and improvements must be developed for this process to be successful.



⁹ Source: National Recreation and Park Association

Sports Tourism

Marion County has become a destination for several sports tournaments and events throughout the year. Parks such as Rotary Sportsplex, Shocker Park, and Belleview Sportsplex host several tournaments each year, including major events (e.g. 12U Cal Ripken World Series) and smaller tournaments (e.g. Docs for Life event held at Shocker Park). During the FY 15-16 period, Parks and Recreation supported 10 of these events which generated over \$2 million in direct economic impact to our community at a cost of \$65,503. A substantial portion of this cost was reimbursed through the Visitors and Convention Bureau and the Tourism Development Council through the bed tax revenue.

Task	Benefit	Date	Cost
Work with state agencies to increase diversity of outdoor recreation offerings	Provides unique opportunities for outdoor enthusiasts.	July-Sept. 2017	Staff perform under existing budget.
Conduct market study for trail facility and sports complex development	Determines the carrying capacity for new or enhanced facilities and helps prevent excessive operating costs.	Oct.-Dec. 2017	Unknown. Scope to be written pending approval and then solicited.

Baseball and softball are not the only sporting events which draw economic impact to Florida communities. Sports such as soccer, football, lacrosse, sand volleyball, etc. can all be facilitated at the existing parks and with the right investments, more facilities can be constructed to attract new trending sports. Other recreational events such as fishing tournaments, extreme adventure races (e.g. Spartan Races and Mud Runner) can be hosted at lakes with adequate facilities and open spaces where such races are compatible.

Parks and Recreation Master Plan

Task	Benefit	Date	Cost
Adopt the 2016 Parks and Recreation Master Plan	Creates vision for the Department for the next ten years. Engages the community. Provides recommendations for economic development.	Oct.-Dec. 2016	\$168,000

The 2016 Parks and Recreation Master Plan update will include research and recommendations on improving our existing facilities and the creation of new parks with a focus on supporting economic development. Examples of facility upgrades includes investment in parks which can serve as trailheads to the coming paved trail system as well as “blueways” like the Ocklawaha River which offers an experience unique to Marion County.

The Master Plan provides a fresh look at our current park system, engage the community to determine their needs and satisfaction with the current system and outlines a plan for the next 10 years. Important topics such as economic development, marketing for the parks system, and solutions for improving the health of our citizens will also be included. Once the plan is adopted by the Board, the next steps will be to work with Administration and the Board to create the department’s strategic plan to develop funding strategies for implementation.

Trails

The State of Florida, through the SUNTrail System (Shared-Use Non-motorized Trails), is dedicating \$25 million per year towards the completion of the state-wide off-road paved trail system. Part of this

larger vision includes the Heart of Florida Loop trail which is planned to run through the Cross Florida Greenway, and into the Ocala National Forest connecting Citrus, Sumter, Lake, Marion, Volusia, Seminole and Orange counties. These long distance trails are an important component of Marion County's comprehensive outdoor recreation vision.

The excellent economic benefits of these local and regional trail systems is important to Marion County and our local businesses.

A study of the Seminole County trail system found that the average trail visitor spent \$15 per trip. In 2011, the total estimated economic impact from the Seminole County trail system was \$14 million and the support of 174 jobs. The recent data about the local trails continues to be positive and voters continue to support such investments.



Investments in trails are smart investments. Both quality of life and economic impact increase in the communities where these investments take place. There are several studies which highlight these benefits and soon, Marion County will be enjoying a very similar paved trail system.

Fire Rescue and EMS

Delivering fire and rescue services to citizens is a core function of local government. Marion County Fire Rescue responders answered over 74,000 fire and EMS calls in FY 2015/2016. Customer service is paramount in delivering fire-rescue services to the community, whether assisting customers at a fire scene or in the office environment. Regardless of whether a citizen calls 911 to report a fire, motor vehicle accident or a medical emergency, the following points will determine the ultimate outcome to our customer:

- Quick response times (staffing levels and adequate equipment)
- Skilled performance once on scene (training and experience)
- Positive interaction with the public (culture of the department)

In addition, it is often the little things we can do to show compassion to those in need. Whether it is a paramedic giving a teddy bear to a child whose mother has been involved in a motor vehicle accident, or firefighters taking time to carry out treasured photo albums from a house to prevent them from further fire/water damage, these acts can mean everything to our citizens.

While it is often our first responders who garner the most attention from the public, we recognize the department could not function without all of our divisions working together to serve proudly. It is often our hard-working Monday-Friday employees who deal directly with citizens in our ambulance billing, fire-prevention, logistics, training, safety and other essential support functions.

This section details four critical areas for our department going into 2020:

- Funding
- Staffing
- Safety
- Vigilance

Funding

Task	Benefit	Date	Cost
Non-ad valorem fire assessment	Will adequately fund current level of services at current population.	Oct.-Dec. 2016	\$300,000 - \$2,400,000.
Capital purchases analysis	Ensure proper equipment matches department needs vs. department “wants.”	Oct.-Dec. 2016 (ongoing)	Staff time
Ambulance revenue enhancement	Reduce gap between funding and operational expenses	Oct.-Dec. 2016 (ongoing)	Staff time; add additional FTE and revise current competency matrix = \$50,000
Sales tax initiative	Provides for capital expenses.	Jan.-March 2017	Sales tax

Funding continues to be a challenge for Marion County Fire Rescue. The Non-Ad Valorem assessment remained the same for 10 years from 2006 and the Fire/EMS millage was lowered from .83 to .77 in 2011.

Non-ad valorem fire assessment: Updating and approving the 2016 fire assessment, which can help fund operations, was essential for maintaining current service levels that can be impaired by staffing shortages. Employee loss is directly related to competitive salaries nearby and across the state.

Capital purchases analysis: Our revised capital improvement program and fiscal scrutiny during budgeting will ensure wise fiscal prudence and good stewardship.

Ambulance revenue enhancement: Increased coordination between MCFR divisions to improve upon correct and timely revenue collection. This includes a department-wide culture change and a new software reporting system which has challenged various divisions to communicate and work much closer together than in the past.

Sales tax initiative: The sales tax initiative provides a bridge towards where we need to be as a department, funding improved capital expenditures such as fire trucks, radios and a station. While the sales tax is collected beginning Jan. 1, 2017 and extends for four years, the capital expenditure plan extends for five years.

Staffing

Task	Benefit	Date	Cost
Succession planning	Build a more effective department and leadership team.	April-June 2017 (ongoing)	Staff time
Competitive salaries	Maintain experienced employees.	ongoing	Dependent on funding
Recruiting initiatives: Career Academy, Explorer Program	Recruit local talent which are much more likely to stay with department.	ongoing	\$10,000 to \$30,000
National Testing Network	Improve applicant hiring pool while passing testing liability along to private provider.	ongoing	Potential \$50K savings

Succession planning: Marion County Fire Rescue is committed to succession planning. Planning takes quality time, intentional thinking and decisive execution on tangible goals. An effective succession plan and leadership program will enhance morale as staff and leaders develop further. Achievements will be made in building a workforce that is ready for additional leadership responsibilities through consistent training and continual planning.

Competitive salaries: Maintaining minimum staffing for our department is critical to safely accomplishing our mission to serve the citizens. It is imperative that we recruit, hire and retain the best employees. If we are unable to retain our employees, we lose our investment and entertain mediocrity on multiple levels. In order to maintain or improve current service levels and hire the best employees, our salaries need to be competitive. This component is worked with the Collective Bargaining Agreement (CBA) for the line and Captains, however losing valuable employees and institutional knowledge has recently hampered us greatly in other divisions such as Prevention where our fire statistic oversight has been reduced for now and the coming year due to employee losses. Moving forward with a plan to include a competency matrix and other incentives for employees is paramount, providing our employees with a career development path.

Recruiting initiatives: Career Academy, Explorer Program: A key strategy in our hiring and retaining the “best” starts local. We recently began implementing our Career Academy, which targets those who are more likely to stay within our community due to having roots in the community. We are continuing our successful Fire Explorer program as well. Our goal is to promote the exciting and fulfilling career and challenge our young citizens to join the ranks of MCFR.

National Testing Network: Hiring the best employees and retaining them is critical. The National Testing Network will assist us in working smarter by replacing our current physical agility testing and adding an aptitude component we presently do not use. We currently administer testing on a 5-week rotation. Marion County Fire Rescue will save time and money by not allocating department resources on the initial phases of the testing process and instead focusing our time on EMS testing and interviews to determine the candidates who are best suited for our department. Implementation of this program will assist us during these difficult times when staff time is at a premium. The savings will initially be realized through the county not paying for instructors to test candidates.

Safety

Task	Benefit	Date	Cost
Minimum staffing engine company (3)	This is a safety and mission critical task; a true morale booster.	Ongoing	Current budget w/ overtime
Firefighter cancer prevention	Minimize exposure and increase quality of life:	April-June 2017	Minimum \$100,000 annually
Establish dual safety committee process	Empower all levels of department to review and make recommendations.	April-June 2017	Staff time

Safety to the public safety professional is paramount for our employees as well as those we serve. We must do our best to manage risks in an innovative and practical manner while working with our internal partners such as Risk Management and Facilities.

Minimum staffing engine company: A key foundational principle; the minimum staffing level on an engine company should be no less than three firefighters. This is essential for accomplishing our mission and for employees to operate safely on scenes.

Firefighter cancer prevention: Cancer prevention is a priority as we must protect our employees while they are working with us and make every effort to prevent cancer both during their MCFR career and during retirement. We have proposed to install industry-recognized cancer-preventive systems in our newly constructed fire stations to assist in this effort. Such a system will be installed in the scheduled Rolling Greens station construction for the first year of this plan. Additionally, in the years following, we are planning to add turnout-gear cleaning stations and considering a five-year plan to allow for an extra set of turnout gear for firefighters.

Establish dual safety committee process: While we have long had safety committees and practiced risk management on the fire ground, we must continue to use updated best practices via the Incident Command System (ICS) and provide relevant training to our employees. The two ongoing committees (one peer/labor led and one led by management) will be assessed and revised as to have a comprehensive approach whereby both committees communicate and the information is shared with the department at large.

Vigilance

Task	Benefit	Date	Cost
Bed delays	Ability to respond with resources in a timely manner.	Ongoing	Staff time/ partnerships/ potential revenue
Growth monitoring	Ability to add capacity/resources to our department to address population and call load increases.	Evaluate April-June 2017 and annually thereafter	Depends upon rate of growth (see below)

Remaining vigilant is mandatory in the public safety realm. We must be flexible enough to address a sudden crisis as well as changing trends.

Bed delays: We cannot adequately deliver fire rescue services when our system is overcome by bed delays. We will continue to partner with local facilities in development of strategies to ensure bed delays are minimal. We will continue bi-monthly meetings in order to monitor delays and address as needed. Board direction has been positive and remaining firm is paramount to resolving or mitigating this crisis.

Growth monitoring: We are operating at full capacity presently in the urban areas, SR 200 Corridor and the Summerfield/Villages areas. We have recently experienced a sharp uptick in residential development build outs, commercial development and a large amount of assisted living facilities (ALFs). Any increased growth and rise in population will require additional resources. While the current revenue sources and taxing structure may adequately fund the needed capacity, rapid and explosive growth will require a new plan to address the incoming challenges. A comprehensive plan must be developed to identify incoming challenges and equip our department with the necessary resources to continue the same level of fire/rescue services our community currently receives.

Transportation Infrastructure

The Office of the County Engineer (OCE) plays a key role in the everyday lives of Marion County citizens by maintaining transportation infrastructure while striving to preserve the environment. It is important that the department continues to provide services at current or improved levels while evolving with increasing citizen demands. There is an expectation that all roads be safe, efficient and comfortable to drive or ride on, and provide convenient access to homes, businesses or other destinations. This expectation is dependent not only on the quality of the roads themselves, but on the efficiency of the traffic and drainage systems, which are equally critical components of the transportation infrastructure. To further enhance our efforts, the department continues to focus on *operation and maintenance, local streets, capacity projects and pavement preservation*.

Operation and Maintenance

Task	Benefit	Date	Cost
Improve proactive maintenance programs - grading routes	Improve efficiency and production by optimizing the route, and potentially adding more roads to the route	Jan.-March 2017	Staff time
Improve proactive maintenance programs - asphalt patching	Improve efficiency and production by optimizing the route, and potentially adding more roads to the route	April-June 2017	Staff time
Improve proactive maintenance programs - core training	Improve efficiency and production by restructuring maintenance teams and focusing on core team training	ongoing	Staff time
Improve travel safety / mobility – intelligent transportation system	Improve traffic mobility (reduced travel time and accidents) with updated technology and equipment	Oct.-Dec. 2018	approx. \$1.6M
Address flooding of major roads	Improve traffic mobility and reduce long term maintenance cost	ongoing	approx. \$2.1M from 10/2016 - 9/2021

OCE routinely inspects transportation infrastructure components and uses those results to prioritize efforts by considering capital construction of new infrastructure, major maintenance or rehabilitation of existing infrastructure, and routine maintenance. Five-year plans, known as the *Transportation Improvement Program (TIP)* and the *Stormwater Implementation Program (SIP)*, are developed and updated annually to allocate funding and scheduling of capital construction and major maintenance / rehabilitation projects.

Significant Infrastructure Components (or assets) the County is Responsible for Maintaining	
2,534 miles of Paved Roads (OCE)*	116 Traffic Signals
391 miles of Unpaved Roads (OCE)*	2,440 Drainage Retention Areas (DRAs)
153 miles of Paved Roads (MSTU)*	221 Drainage Structures
18,655 acres of ROW	161 miles of Drainage Pipe or Culvert
86,902 Traffic Signs	*Totaling 3,078 miles of county-maintained roads

Routine maintenance includes traffic signal upkeep, sign maintenance, pavement marking repair and installation, pavement repair and surfacing, washout repair and grading, drainage repairs and restoration,

vegetation control, shoulder repair and safety improvements. The level of service provided and the priority given to our response efforts are outlined in the department's guiding document - *Transportation, Maintenance and Operation Standards*. However, weather greatly influences the scheduling of our response, maintenance and repair efforts.

The operation and maintenance efforts have an approximate reoccurring cost of \$10M+ annually and are supported primarily by a gas tax revenue with only a modest growth rate. We struggle to keep up with our current level of service, let alone the increased demands of new infrastructure associated with both capacity projects and the acceptance of historical subdivisions. Additional revenue sources are necessary. Considerations include seeking legislative changes to the gas tax formula, bonding, and service-based funding.

Outside of funding, there are other challenges to being able to provide an effective and cost-feasible transportation infrastructure, as outlined in the preceding table of tasks:

Improving our efficiency and production by further development and implementation of proactive maintenance programs. Grading routes need to be updated to reflect density changes within subdivisions and actual routes that are being used more frequently than others. Patching routes need the same update, as well as possible operational changes considering location of asphalt plants.



Further enhancing core staff training. In the recent past, well-rounded staff development was the focus, with staff being cross-trained as much as possible. While that is still important, there is a current need to also provide core team training and team building within work programs, increasing efficiency and production.

Address flooding issues along the major road network. This will improve traffic mobility and reduce maintenance costs associated with pavement remediation and storm event response. Flooding issues are included in the annual evaluation and prioritization process and scheduled for remediation in the SIP. Approximately \$2.1M is allocated to flooding issues in the FY16/17-20/21 SIP.



Improving traffic safety/mobility by reducing crashes and delays through the integration of Intelligent Transportation Systems (ITS) technology.

ITS allows traffic/pedestrian movements and signal operations to be observed and adjustments made in real time. This technology is scheduled for completion by 12/31/2018 along portions of the SR 200, CR 484, US 441, SR 326, SR 35, CR 25, US 27 and CR 464 corridors (while many of these are US or state corridors, Marion County provides signal oversight by agreement).



Local Streets

Task	Benefit	Date	Cost
Review policies	Determine if acceptance and maintenance policies meet current Board expectations and are cost feasible.	Jan.-March 2017	Staff time
Improve proactive maintenance programs	See Operation and Maintenance for details to improve efficiency and production, and the following section for details on absorbing more roads into maintained system.	April-June 2017	Staff time
Research non county-maintained subdivisions	Determine dedication (legal authorization) and effort needed.	ongoing	Staff time

There are 1,315 miles of paved subdivision local roads and alleyways that have been accepted for maintenance into the county road network. OCE is also responsible for the maintenance of approximately 391 miles of unpaved roads.

We believe that more than 1,500 miles of subdivision-type roads have not been accepted into the county road network. While many of these are private and therefore have mechanisms to provide for their own maintenance, others are dedicated to the public or have no formal dedication and look to the county for assistance. Although the timing is unknown, there is great potential for these roads to become county-maintained. The types of local streets and their conditions widely vary. They range from:

- residential to industrial/commercial road subdivisions,
- graded to paved roads, and
- publicly dedicated to no dedication at all.

Some may:

- have been constructed to a county standard,
- not have completed approved construction,
- have been identified by the county as having deficiencies,
- have adhered to no particular construction practice at all.

Each situation requires its own analysis and plan for assistance. Several examples of this local street issue are at the end of this section.

The county has a successful history of utilizing special taxing or assessment units to assist property owners seeking to improve or maintain levels of service that exceed what the county provides within its maintained road network. Municipal Service Taxing Units (MSTUs), Municipal Service Benefit Units (MSBUs) or special improvement assessments should be explored to fund the needs of the local streets whether on a regional or neighborhood scale. Other considerations should include leveraging all opportunities, including any potential grant funding and combining financing and/or construction for similar type projects.

Capacity Projects

Task	Benefit	Date	Cost
Increase traffic capacity on existing roads	Improve road connectivity and traffic mobility and support economic development.	Oct.-Dec. 2016	Approx. \$86M for road capacity projects from 01/2017 through 09/2021
Increase traffic capacity by developing new road corridors	Improve road connectivity and traffic mobility and support economic development.	Oct.-Dec. 2016	Approx. \$5M per mile, but varies greatly
Develop regional stormwater facilities	Improve traffic mobility and support economic development.	ongoing	Project-specific and to be included in the SIP
Continue seeking grants from FDOT, WMD and other agencies	Reimbursement of agreed expenses; historically this ranges from 50% to 100%.	ongoing	Reduced net cost is realized

As our population and citizen expectations increase, it is critical that the transportation infrastructure grow as well, considering not only road capacity and connectivity, but traffic mobility too. We continue to seek opportunities to add capacity on existing roads, be strategic about providing new roadway corridors, and optimize traffic flow. These infrastructure enhancements, along with developing regional stormwater facilities, should also support further economic development in our community. The needs are planned at a regional scale and implemented as funding permits.

Planning

The Ocala/Marion County Transportation Planning Organization (TPO) provides a forum for a coordinated, comprehensive, and continuous planning process for all transportation-related issues in Marion County. One of the primary duties of the TPO is the development of a Long Range Transportation Plan (LRTP). The LRTP identifies how our area should address transportation needs based on population and related traffic growth projected over a 25-year planning horizon.

Transportation projects, whether new or rehabilitation projects, typically require significant time for design and permitting, potential land acquisition, and actual construction. The department develops a five-year TIP and updates it annually to allocate funding and scheduling of each road and traffic capital improvement project. A five-year SIP is similarly developed to provide for additional stormwater needs.

Funding

Over the past 12 months the Board of County Commissioners as well as the voting public has recognized the need for more transportation-related improvements by reinstating impact fees and voting in a referendum for a four-year, 1 percent sales tax, both of which provide for capacity-related transportation improvements. These new revenue sources are scheduled to be effective on Jan. 1, 2017 and are projected to provide approximately \$56 million in capacity projects from the start of collection until the end of FY 2020/21.

Task	Benefit	Date	Cost
Implement sales tax funded road rehabilitation projects	Improves road condition and increases overall level of service.	Oct.-Dec. 2016	Estimated \$30M from onset of collection thru FY 2019/20
Continue seeking grants from FDOT	Reimbursement of agreed expenses; historically this ranges from 50 to 100 percent.	ongoing	Reduced net cost is realized
Use alternative methods for paved road surfaces	Less expensive product may suffice on lesser-travelled roads.	ongoing	Reduced net cost is realized
Establish long term reoccurring funding mechanism	Maintain road condition and increases overall level of service.	ongoing	Approx. \$15M annually



Pavement Preservation

A considerable challenge is preserving our existing roads. Currently, the maintained road network undergoes a pavement condition analysis and the road segments are rated with a Pavement Condition Index (PCI) number. The PCI process is a nationally-recognized system used to evaluate roadway conditions with a scale from zero through 100, with 100 being the most desirable. The most recent data indicates a continuing deterioration in overall condition with the exception of the arterial roadways (these road segments were boosted with the infusion of approximately \$13M in federal reimbursements from 2010 through 2014). The average pavement condition of the county's maintained roads (excluding subdivision local roads) fell from a rating of 74 in 2006 to 67 in 2015.



As a pavement ages, deterioration occurs at a slow rate for the first ± 10 years. After this initial period, an accelerated rate of deterioration begins. Prior to deterioration reaching the point that reconstruction is needed, it is economical to take preemptive measures, such as resurfacing, so that roads are kept in the higher indices. If a road segment deteriorates too far, measures like resurfacing are no longer effective and more costly measures such as reclamation, and, as a last resort, reconstruction, are necessary. Reconstruction can cost up to seven times more than simply resurfacing in extreme cases.

Based on observations of pavement condition analyses, the county-maintained road network is losing approximately one point each year in PCI values at our current funding of approximately \$3.5-4.0M annually for rehabilitative measures.

The department has estimated a \$15M annual need to maintain our current pavement condition rating. Helping to provide the needed additional funding are the fuel tax distribution rates which were approved in 2013 and a one percent sales tax which will be collected for four years beginning Jan. 1, 2017. The new fuel tax distribution provides approximately \$2M per year more than the previous rate and is in effect for a 30-year time frame. The sales tax is estimated to provide a much larger sum of money (approximately \$30M total), but over a much shorter time frame. The sales tax infusion will bolster the PCI ratings, but during this four-year window we must find a continuous funding mechanism for pavement preservation. Otherwise, we will be in the same situation of declining PCI ratings just as we have generally observed over the last ten years.

Examples of Local Street Issues

Cedar Shores Industrial Park

- Industrial/Commercial type neighborhood recorded in Plat Book U, page 51 as publically dedicated (roads and drainage).
- Accepted for county maintenance.
- Located just west of the Southeast 58th Avenue and Maricamp Road intersection. Southeast 53rd Avenue is a cul-de-sac road approximately 0.25 miles long and one linear drainage feature (ditch).
- Road classification is Subdivision Local.
- 2015 PCI of 24.64 or failed condition (PCI of 0-25).
- Contains 20 improved parcels, 4 unimproved parcels.
- In general, road damage/repair areas are predominantly where the driveways meet the road and at the approach to the stop sign at Maricamp Road. Road crews have patched these areas to where the road is rough and many patches are on top of each other.
- Needs minimally include: road to be milled and resurfaced, minimal traffic striping, some removal of high shoulders, some tree trimming, some drainage clean-up (ditch is not being routinely maintained).



(Left) Southeast 53rd Avenue facing south to Maricamp Road. (Right) Southeast 53rd Avenue facing north to cul-de-sac

North Ocala Industrial Park

- Industrial/Commercial type neighborhood recorded in Plat Book V page 50 as publically dedicated (roads and drainage).
- Accepted for county maintenance.
- Located off of North US 441, to the west, Northwest 58th Lane is a cul-de-sac road approximately 0.35 miles long with one drainage retention area (DRA).
- Road classification is Subdivision Local.
- 2012 PCI of 14.22 or failed condition (PCI of 0-25).
- Contains 14 improved parcels, 4 unimproved parcels.
- In general, road damage/repair areas is/are the entire driving surface. Road crews have patched these areas to where the road is rough and many patches are on top of each other. DRA is under mowing contract.
- Needs minimally include: road to be milled and resurfaced, minimal traffic striping, some removal of high shoulders, drainage ditches need to be reestablished in the right-of-way.



Northwest 58th Lane looking west from US 441

Bob Nichols Industrial Center

- Industrial/Commercial type neighborhood recorded in Plat Book Z page 8 as publically dedicated (roads and drainage).
- Not accepted for county maintenance.
- Located off of Northeast 36th Avenue, Northeast 47th Place is a cul-de-sac road approximately 0.10 miles long with one DRA.
- No road classification on roads not yet accepted.
- No PCI on roads not yet accepted.
- Contains 2 improved parcels, 6 unimproved parcels.
- In general, the road, curb and gutter appear to be in good condition.
- Needs to be researched why it has not been accepted into the county-maintained system and if it should be (likely has not meet code requirement of 60% occupancy).



Northeast 47th Place looking east from Northeast 36th Avenue

Anthony Acres

- Graded road residential type subdivision recorded in Plat Book M, page 76 as publically dedicated (roads and drainage).
- Accepted for county maintenance.
- Located off Northeast Jacksonville Road, to the west, consisting of Northeast 90th Place, Northeast 91st Place, and Northeast 17th Court, totaling 0.60 miles of roads and one DRA.
- Road classification is Subdivision Local.
- No PCI for unpaved roads.
- Contains 21 improved parcels, 0 unimproved parcels.
- Road damage/repair areas is/are periodic with potholes and minor washouts on the driving surface. on OCE's Routine Grading Route Grading crews focus on grading four times per year and respond to issues as needed. DRA is under mowing contract.
- Needs minimally include: driving surface requiring less attention, high shoulder work, minor tree trimming, and drainage to be evaluated.



Northeast 17th Court looking north from Northeast 90th Place

Orange Ave Suburban Heights

- Primarily graded road residential type subdivision recorded in Plat Book F page 36 as publically dedicated (roads, no drainage provided or dedicated).
- Accepted for county maintenance.
- Located in the southeast corner of the Southeast 80th Street and South Magnolia Avenue intersection, consisting of Southeast First Avenue, Southeast Third Court, Southeast 80th Place, Southeast 81st Street, Southeast 81st Place, and Southeast 82nd Place totaling 1.10 miles of roads and no drainage facility.
- Road classification is Subdivision Local.
- No PCI for unpaved roads; Paved portion of SE First Avenue's 2013 PCI is 64.78 or fair condition (PCI of 55-79).
- Contains 54 improved parcels, 27 unimproved parcels.
- Approximately 300 feet of SE 1st Avenue is paved. Approximately half of the unpaved platted roads are on OCE's Routine Grading Route Grading and therefore graded approximately four times per year. Road damage/repair areas is/are periodic with potholes and minor washouts on the driving surface.
- Needs minimally include: driving surface requiring less attention, high shoulder work, major tree trimming and possible removal for road improvements, and drainage.



Southeast 81st Street looking west from Southeast Third Court

Nest-A-Way Terrace

- Graded road residential type subdivision recorded in Plat Book N, page 63 as publically dedicated (roads and drainage easements).
- Accepted for county maintenance.
- Located off County Road 42, to the south, consisting of Southeast 175th Street, Southeast 175th Place, and Southeast 289th Avenue totaling 0.60 miles of roads and no drainage facility.
- Road classification is Subdivision Local.
- No PCI on unpaved roads.
- Contains 13 improved parcels, 12 unimproved parcels.
- On OCE's Routine Grading Route, therefore grading approximately four times per year and responding to issues as needed. Road damage/repair areas is/are periodic with potholes and minor washouts on the driving surface.
- Needs minimally include: s driving surface requiring less attention, high shoulder work, major tree trimming, and drainage.



Southeast 175th Place facing west from Southeast 289th Avenue

Fore Acres 1st Addition

- Paved road residential type subdivision recorded in Plat Book H page 77 as publically dedicated (roads, no drainage provided or dedicated).
- Accepted for county maintenance.
- Located off NE 49th Street, consisting of Northeast 18th Court, Northeast 20th Avenue, Northeast 22nd Avenue, Northeast 50th Street, Northeast 50th Place, Northeast 51st Place, and Northeast 52nd Street totaling 2 miles of roads and two DRAs.
- Road classification is Subdivision Local.
- 2012 PCI ranges from a failed condition (PCI of 0-25) to poor condition (PCI of 27-54).
- Contains 132 improved parcels, 0 unimproved parcels.
- In general, road damage/repair areas is/are the entire driving surface. Road crews have patched these areas to where the road is rough and many patches are on top of each other. DRAs under mowing contract.
- Needs minimally include: road to be milled and resurfaced, minimal traffic striping, and some high shoulder work.



Northeast 50th Street looking east from Northeast 18th Court

Forests' Edge

- Paved road residential type subdivision recorded in Plat Book V page 47 as publically dedicated (roads, with drainage both public and private).
- Accepted for county maintenance.
- Located off CR 316, consisting of Northeast 146th Court, Northeast 154th Street, Northeast 147th Avenue, Northeast 147th Court, and Northeast 153rd Street totaling 0.67 miles of paved roads and two private DRAs.
- Road classification is Subdivision Local.
- 2012 PCI for all roads is a failed condition PCI of (0-25).
- Contains 25 improved parcels, 11 unimproved parcels.
- In general, road damage/repair areas is/are the entire driving surface. Road crews have patched these areas to where the road is rough and many patches are on top of each other.
- Needs minimally include: road to be milled and resurfaced, minimal traffic striping, some removal of high shoulders, some tree trimming, drainage to be evaluated, and research to clarify acceptance.



Northeast 146th Court looking north from County Road 316

Oakhurst #1 Subdivision

- Paved road residential type subdivision recorded in Plat Book B page 258 as publically dedicated (roads).
- Accepted for county maintenance.
- Located off Southeast 58th Avenue, consisting of Southeast 20th Street, Southeast 21st Lane, Southeast 22nd Street, Southeast 22nd Place, Southeast 23rd Lane, Southeast 55th Terrace, and Southeast 56th Terrace totaling 1.6 miles of roads and some drainage.
- Road classification is Subdivision Local.
- 2013 PCI for all roads range from failed condition (PCI of 0-25) to fair condition (PCI of 55-79).
- Contains 108 improved parcels, 4 unimproved parcels.
- In general, road damage/repair areas is/are a majority of the driving surface. Road crews have patched these areas to where the road is rough and many patches are on top of each other. DRAs are under mowing contract.
- Needs minimally include: road to be milled and resurfaced, minimal traffic striping needed, some removal of high shoulders, some tree trimming and research regarding drainage (appear to be DRAs and easements, but not by plat).



Southeast 56th Terrace looking north from Southeast 23rd Lane

Sun Country Estates II

- Paved road residential type subdivision recorded in Plat Book V page 90 as publically dedicated (roads and drainage).
- Accepted for County maintenance.
- Located off SR 200 consisting of Southwest 85th Place, Southwest 86th Street, Southwest 86th Place, Southwest 87th Street, Southwest 87th Place, Southwest 87th Place Road, Southwest 88th Street Southwest 88th Place, Southwest 65th Court, Southwest 66th Avenue, Southwest 66th Terrace, and Southwest 67th Court totaling 1.90 miles of roads and two DRAs.
- Road classification is Subdivision Local.
- 2013 PCI for all roads range from failed condition (PCI of 0-25) to fair condition (PCI of 55-79).
- Contains 110 improved parcels, 19 unimproved parcels.
- In general, road damage/repair areas is/are the entire driving surface. Road crews have patched these areas to where the road is rough and many patches are on top of each other.
- Needs minimally include: road to be milled and resurfaced, minimal traffic striping, some removal of high shoulders, some tree trimming, and drainage to be evaluated.



Southwest 88th Place looking south from Southwest 66th Terrace

Alejandria Estates

- Paved road residential type subdivision recorded in Plat Book 001 page 13 as publically dedicated roads, privately dedicate drainage.
- Not accepted for County maintenance.
- Located off Southwest 103rd Street Road consisting of Southwest 56th Avenue, and Southwest 104th Street totaling .20 miles of roads and two private drainage easements.
- No road classification on roads not yet accepted.
- No PCI on roads not yet accepted.
- Contains 20 improved parcels, 1 unimproved parcels.
- In general, road damage/repair areas are minimal but defects are starting to appear.



Southwest 56th Avenue looking east from Southwest 103rd Street Road

Financial Challenges and Opportunities




Financial Challenges and Opportunities

The Marion County Board of County Commissioners is a fiscally-responsible organization that operates within its means while providing necessary services to its citizens. But like all entities, it experiences occasions when funding is a challenge. While not a comprehensive review of every cost associated with this plan; it is the intention of this section to summarize the most critical funding challenges presented and begin to lay the groundwork for developing strategies to address funding needs in order to effectively implement initiatives.

Financial Challenges

Task	Benefit	Date	Cost
Develop 5-Year CIP budget	Prioritizes capital repairs and construction.	April-June 2017	Staff time
Seek bond funded by reinstating Pennies for Parks	Improve the quality of life for citizens by improving parks infrastructure.	April-June 2018; to make the August 2018 ballot	TBD

Develop 5-Year CIP budget: Marion County will begin 5-year budgeting for the Capital Improvement Program (CIP) budgets when creating the FY 17/18 budget in the spring of 2017. Staff will develop guidelines for the CIP to include repair projects based on urgency of need and new facilities based on a combination of need, payback and available grants. Consistent amounts of revenue will be annually planned for use in the CIP. The CIP has typically been a 5-year plan with only the first year projects funded in the General Fund. The current CIP has 90% of the project costs unfunded as shown below:

		Marion County Board of County Commissioners Adopted Capital Improvement Program - Summary By Category Fiscal Years 2016 thru 2020					
Category / Funding	Appropriated To Date	FY 2016	FY 2017	FY 2018	FY 2019	FY 2020	Five Year Total
General Capital Improvements							
General Fund - Operating	508,064	1,739,630	0	0	0	0	1,739,630
General Fund - Grants	172,195	1,274,785	0	552,000	0	0	1,826,785
General Fund - Unfunded	0	0	10,919,408	24,514,000	400,000	400,000	36,233,408
Capital Projects Fund	898,045	18,526	0	0	0	0	18,526
Local Option Sales Tax	1,252,044	586,863	0	0	0	0	586,863
Total General Capital Improvements	2,830,348	3,619,804	10,919,408	25,066,000	400,000	400,000	40,405,212

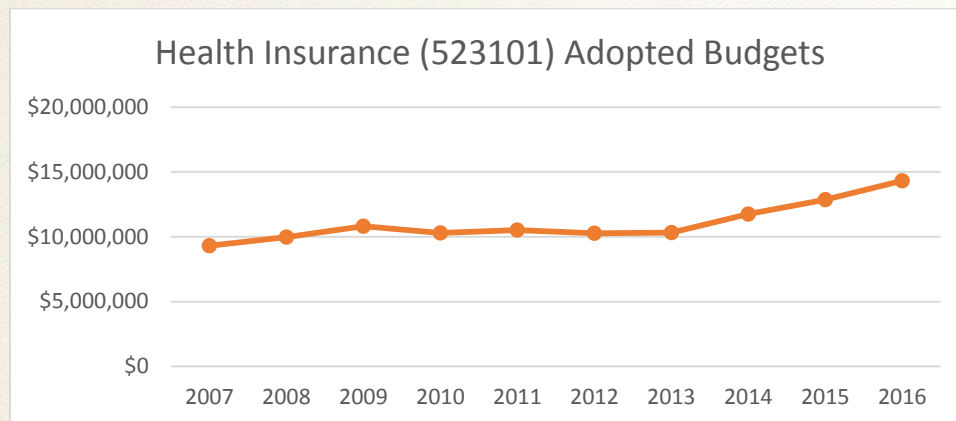
Seek bond funded by reinstating Pennies for Parks: The Parks and Recreation department is faced with an estimated \$7M backlog in capital expenditures at existing park and recreation facilities. One way to fill this funding gap is the pursuit of another bond (Pennies for Parks) which will help modernize facilities and make necessary repairs. A bond would provide a large infusion of funding in a short period of time compared to the longer time needed for funding to accumulate through the Parks and Recreation Fees Fund.

Merit increase program ¹⁰

The annual cost of the merit increase program detailed in the Staff Development section will vary based on the makeup of several factors including amount of increase, which employees receive the increase, the future cost of fringe benefits, etc. A ballpark estimate of a 1% across the board salary increase (including union, constitutional officers, benefits, etc.) is about \$1.4M.

Health insurance ¹¹

Health insurance costs for the county are rising as shown in the chart below for countywide adopted budgets in the Health Insurance account (523101). The average increase over the last four years was \$1.2M, although the increase was only \$800K in 2017. It is important for Marion County to continue current efforts promoting health and wellness as a tool to minimize cost increases.



Environmental issues ¹²

Implementation of the Basin Management Action Plan (BMAP) outlined in the Natural Resources and Outdoor Recreation section of this plan is expected to be a costly endeavor. While many efforts have been programmed through traditional funding sources and budgeted programs (stormwater retrofits of water retention areas and wastewater treatment plants, upgrades of municipal infrastructure, use of best management practices in agriculture), other wastewater improvements are needed. Initial estimates of \$40M in each springshed have been identified to run infrastructure, connect up to 266 septic tanks and/or five package plants to central sewer, and build or upgrade the receiving treatment plant. A funding source would need to be identified/developed for this initiative.

Pavement preservation ¹³

The maintenance responsibility for a large number of paved roads for which maintenance is funded by gas taxes continues to be a critical issue for the County Engineer as mentioned in the Transportation Infrastructure section. Marion County expends about \$3M annually on pavement rehabilitation, but an estimated \$15M is required. It is imperative a new long term funding source is developed to accommodate the \$12M shortfall.

¹⁰ See task details in the Staff Development section of this plan, page 14

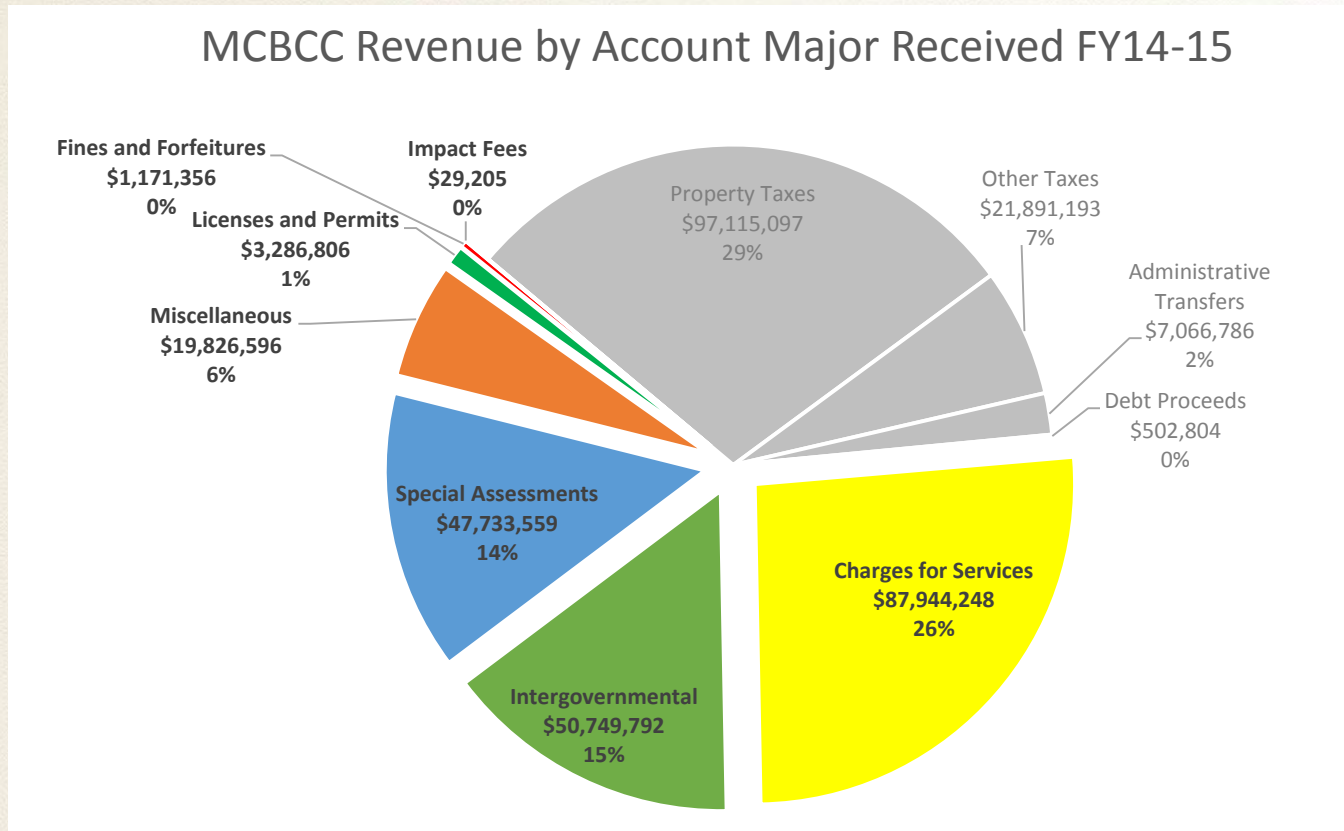
¹¹ See task details in the Staff Development section of this plan, page 15

¹² See task details in the Natural Resources and Outdoor Recreation section of this plan, pages 39-47

¹³ See task details in the Transportation Infrastructure section of this plan, pages 52-68

Financial Opportunities – Increase Revenue

Marion County will explore ways to increase revenue including increasing current methods and studying the feasibility of new approaches. It is understood that not all services have a measurable return on investment. The following chart shows the breakdown of revenue received in FY 2014/15. Marion County staff and management can affect the seven pie pieces which are broken out in detail following the chart.



Task	Benefit	Date	Cost
Annually review fee schedules and revenue	Ensures fees reflect current costs and market pricing.	Oct.-Dec. 2016	Staff time
Evaluate two new assessment opportunities per year	Targets the funding of services to the beneficiaries instead of the entire county.	Jan.-March 2017	Staff time
Increase use of grants for capital improvements	Allows county resources to go further.	Oct.-Dec. 2016	Staff time
Evaluate two new sponsorship opportunities for county facilities per year.	Increase county revenue and increase visibility of sponsors.	Jan.-March 2017	Staff time

Annually review fee schedules and revenue: It is important to constantly monitor the county’s revenue. Each year, a review of the expected revenue and fee schedule for each department will be completed prior to the start of the budgeting process. Fees should cover the cost of the service and/or align with

market pricing. Additional items on which to charge usage fees will also be considered. (See Charges for Services, Miscellaneous, Licenses and Permits, Fines and Forfeitures, and Impact Fees in the chart above showing the revenue from FY 2014-15.)

Evaluate two new assessment opportunities per year: Marion County has implemented a variety of assessments over the years. These are funding mechanisms that relieve the cost burden from the general population by shifting it directly to the beneficiaries. It is the county’s intention to expand these methods of revenue generation. (Shown as Special Assessments in the chart on previous page)

Increase use of grants for capital improvements: The county will continue to pursue grants, especially those that fund capital improvements. Grants with strings attached or that fund recurring operations will not be encouraged. (Shown as Intergovernmental in the chart on previous page)

Evaluate two new sponsorship opportunities for county facilities per year: Marion County will explore new and creative ways to increase revenue by studying the feasibility of adding sponsorships to facilities. Initial ideas to explore are corporate advertising banners at sports fields and the livestock pavilion and commemorative bricks in select parks. Other public/private partnerships will also be considered.

Financial Opportunities – Quality Improvement

Task	Benefit	Date	Cost
Feasibility analysis for a convention center/multi-purpose facility	Research-based information analyzing the need, size and location of a convention center/multi-purpose facility	April-June 2017	\$50,000
Evaluate use of plans and measures	Confirms that the plans and data are being utilized to their fullest.	Oct.-Dec. 2017	Staff time
Develop business dashboards	Gives management and staff quick insight into the performance of a process.	Oct.-Dec. 2018	Staff time and part of open data (see below)
Create open data	Transforms our data into information that is accessible and useful to staff and the public.	Oct.-Dec. 2018	\$50K-\$100K depending on scope
Establish a regional solid waste authority	Provides for long term cost control.	Oct.-Dec. 2019	TBD

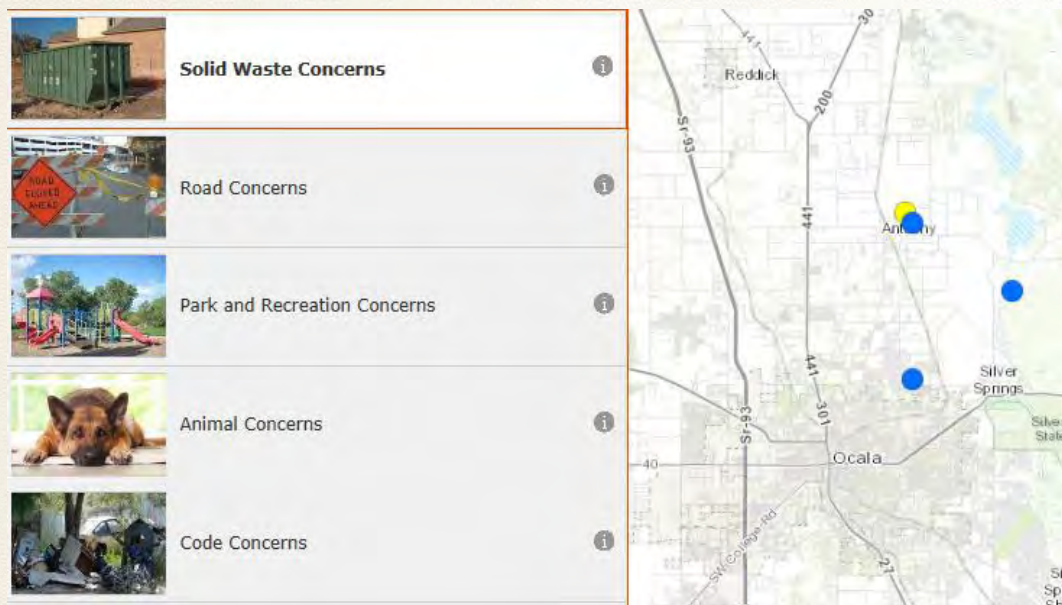
Feasibility analysis for convention center/multi-purpose facility: This would evaluate the potential need for a convention center/multi-purpose facility, and make recommendations for size and location of such an investment. The analysis could also include:

- An economic and demographic overview of Marion County and our regional competitive markets.
- An overview of the characteristics and trends in the tourism industry as it relates to a convention center/multi-purpose facility.
- Identify and inventory all existing assets within Marion County as they relate to sports venues and traditional tourism venues that can cater to groups within the county.

- Industry sectors and business opportunities that would be relevant to our market to create short- and long-term economic generators (to once again attract year-round visitors and ensure targeting).
- Assess our market’s ability to create niche audiences Marion County can target and differentiate from our competitors.
- The size of the land needed to develop a multi-phased approach where we build what is relevant to our market today and then plan for future year expansions if need be.

Evaluate use of plans and measures¹⁴: Marion County has a history of using plans (Master, Business, and Strategic) and Measures (Performance and Benchmarking) to improve performance. A review of the Departments’ use of these will be done to ensure they are being fully utilized.

Develop business dashboards: Many organizations are data rich, but information poor. To ensure that Marion County is not one of these, business dashboards will be implemented to make data available and usable to management and staff. Business dashboards are powerful tools that summarize complex information and present it in an easily digestible way. The Information Technology department has already created some for GIS (see screenshot on following page) and the plan is to expand this use to other departments as applicable.



Create open data: An open data program makes county data easily accessible to anyone, at any time, through the internet. Consistently sharing and using data to act on community interests will lead to a culture of evidence based decision making in which data becomes essential for good governance.

¹⁴ Various county plans are accessible online at the following website:
<http://marioncountyfl.org/departments-agencies/departments-o-z/office-of-fiscal-review>

Many government organizations have already embraced the use of this technology, including the Information Technology Department GIS group. The screenshot to the right of the Montgomery County, Maryland website provides an example of how that county has made Open Data available to the Public.

Establish a regional solid waste authority: Marion

County plans to fill the Baseline Landfill and transition to transporting waste and activating the Heart of Florida Landfill contract. As of March 2015, the capacity analysis indicates that the anticipated closure date will be January 2021. In addition to implementing the projects required for this transition, Marion County will seek to establish a Solid Waste Authority as a long term solution.

