



Marion County

2040 Comprehensive Plan

Building a Thriving Community for All

Adopted Month, Date, Year

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- Kisha Jahner, Board Chair
- Steve McCombs, Board Member
- Jim Mueller, Board Member

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- Keith Davis, Member
- Leslie Miller, Member
- Kelly Mitchell, Member
- Sarah Treft, Member

Marion County Board of Adjustment

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- Dale Miller, Member
- Jan Szlachetka, Member
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Introduction



Located in central Iowa, Marion County is a vibrant community with rich history, natural beauty, and a growing economy. Through proactive and thoughtful comprehensive planning, Marion County will embrace opportunities to build a thriving community for all.

Marion County includes the incorporated cities of Bussey, Hamilton, Harvey, Knoxville, Marysville, Melcher-Dallas, Pella, and Pleasantville as well as the unincorporated communities of Attica, Columbia, Flagler, Newbern, Otley, Pershing, Swan, and Tracy



Source: Marion County Economic Development

The *Marion County 2040 Comprehensive Plan* updates the 2013 Marion County Comprehensive Land Use Plan, which was itself an update and supplement to the 1996 Marion County Comprehensive Plan.

The purpose of the *Marion County 2040 Comprehensive Plan* is to document a long-range vision for unincorporated Marion County and to guide land use and development policies while providing strategies that implement and achieve that vision.

In April of 2010, the Iowa Smart Planning Principles were signed into law as one of the three components of the Iowa Smart Planning Act in State Code Chapter 18B – Land Use and Smart Planning. The Law provides 10 smart planning principles and 13 elements of a comprehensive plan. The *Marion County 2040 Comprehensive Plan* addresses the Iowa Smart Planning Principles and Comprehensive Plan Elements.

Iowa Smart Planning Principles

1. Collaboration
2. Efficiency, Transparency, and Consistency
3. Clean, Renewable, and Efficient Energy
4. Occupational Diversity
5. Revitalization
6. Housing Diversity
7. Community Character
8. Natural Resources and Agricultural Protection
9. Sustainable Design
10. Transportation Diversity

Iowa Comprehensive Plan Elements

1. Public Participation
2. Issues and Opportunities
3. Land Use
4. Housing
5. Public Infrastructure and Utilities
6. Transportation
7. Economic Development
8. Agricultural and Natural Resources
9. Community Facilities
10. Community Character
11. Hazards
12. Intergovernmental Collaboration
13. Implementation

Planning Process and Community Engagement



Residents of Marion County bring valuable knowledge, experiences, and interests that help shape a shared vision for the future. Community engagement ensures that local residents are heard, and their voices are reflected throughout the planning process, creating a plan that is responsive to the needs and aspirations of those who live and work in Marion County.

To support this goal, the *Marion County 2040 Comprehensive Plan* prioritized meaningful public participation as a core element of the planning process. Over a thousand respondents provided valuable input throughout the course of the planning process.

The commitment to public involvement aligns with the Iowa Smart Planning Principles to guide city and county planning efforts. These principles emphasize the importance of public participation, recognizing that effective planning requires inclusive, informed engagement efforts that communicate the full range of voices within a community.

Phase 1: Community Engagement

The first phase of public input took place between May 2024 and May 2025 and focused on gathering input to help define the core topics for the Comprehensive Plan. During this period, MIPA staff facilitated public input through in-person events, using surveys and interactive sticker boards to collect community input.

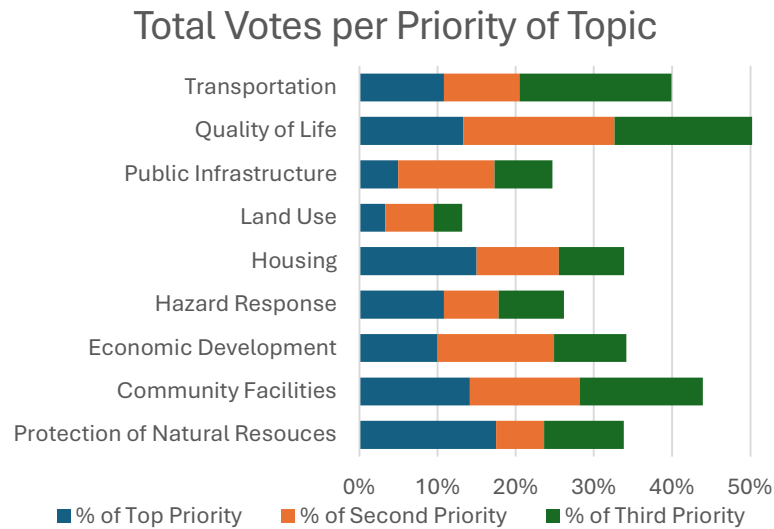
Community members ranked their top three priorities among nine proposed planning topics with stickers numbered one, two, and three to indicate priority. A total of 341 stickers were placed (120 for Top Priority, 113 for Second Priority, and 108 for Third Priority). Additionally, community members were asked to place priority stickers numbered one, two, and three on various aspects of Marion County they would like to promote. A total of 479 sticker dot responses were placed (164 for Top Priority, 160

for Second Priority, and 155 for Third Priority). To connect with a wider public, the Marion County Community Survey was made available online in March 2025 and concluded with 156 responses in May 2025. See Appendix for the Marion County Community Engagement Posters and Community Survey. Other Marion County community engagement efforts included press releases, radio advertisements, and engagement materials distributed throughout the county.



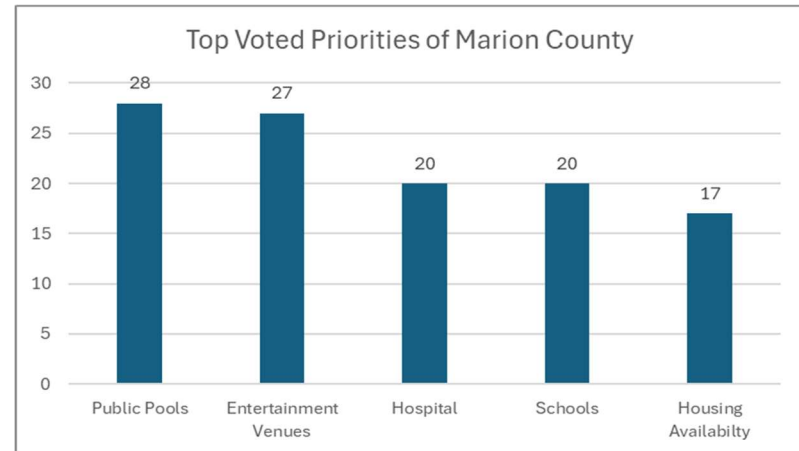
Source: MIPA

Respondents on both the paper survey and sticker boards were asked to rank their top three issues that Marion County should prioritize. A breakdown of the nine topics and their importance is shown. The percentages are based on the total number of votes each topic received by priority. Respondents used stickers with a one, two, and three icon to place votes by ranked priority.



Source: MIPA

Quality of life received the most votes (59), followed by Community Facilities (50), Transportation (44), and Housing (39).



Source: MIPA

When looking at the specific responses to the top priorities, quality of life amenities such as pools and entertainment topped institutions like hospitals and schools. Though, housing was also noteworthy to the respondents.



Source: MIPA

Phase 2: Community Discussions

On June 10, 2025, a Comprehensive Plan Work Session was held with Marion County supervisors and staff. The Work Session discussed the topics of transportation, lots and subdivisions, and land use.

The following is a summary of the Work Session:

- The County will determine whether to incorporate privately developed roads on a case-by-case basis
 - Privately developed roads should reserve the appropriate amount of right-of-way to adhere to county road standards if not constructed to county standards
- Current county standards regarding lot sizes and subdivisions are sufficient (three-acre net minimum and four parcels per 40-acres)
 - Public Health Department representatives supported that three-acre parcels are adequate for septic systems
- The County will align with each city's future land uses, especially outside city limits
- A matrix to evaluate future developments with regard to considerations such as paved road access, Corn Suitability Rating (CSR), and proximity to utilities, should be developed

Communications and meetings were also held with directors of various Marion County departments, including Conservation, Economic Development, Roads, and Public Health, to review the goals and objectives of the Marion County Comprehensive Plan.

Phase 3: Draft Plan Comments (Place holder for Draft)

The final phase of engagement included a 30-day public comment period and a public hearing on the draft plan. The public comment period began on January 30 with a notice posted in the Marion County Express. Members of the public were invited to provide written comments to MIPA staff regarding suggested changes to the draft plan. After the comment period closed on March 2, a public hearing was held at the March 17 Zoning Commission meeting where the public was invited to provide verbal comments on the draft plan.

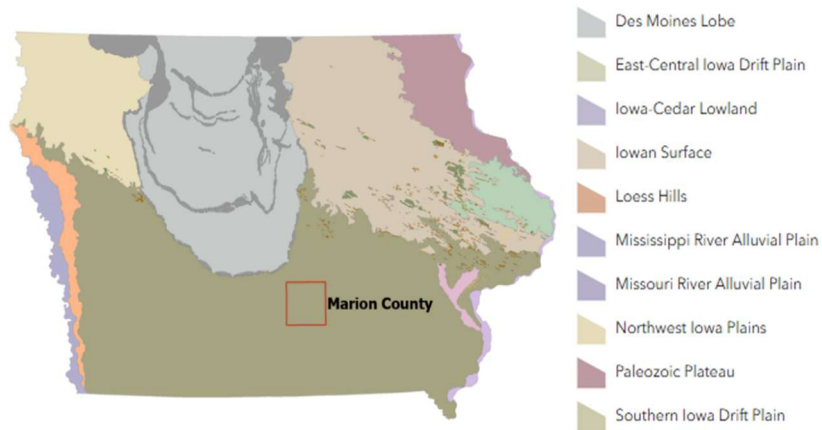


Source: MIPA

Heritage and Community Culture



Marion County has a rich heritage and vibrant community culture to be celebrated and shared with future generations.



Source: Iowa Landforms via Iowa DNR, Iowa Geological Survey, ISU GIS Facility

Nestled within the Southern Iowa Drift Plains, Marion County is shaped by erosion that smoothed out glacial features into rolling hills, carved stream valleys, and loess-covered uplands.¹ The loess soil and well-drained slopes have contributed to the county's scenic beauty and rich agricultural tradition.

Marion County was organized in 1845 and named in honor of Francis Marion, a brigadier general from South Carolina in the American Revolutionary War.² Knoxville, the county seat, was

¹ "Southern Iowa Drift Plain." Jean C. Prior. Iowa Geological Survey at University of Iowa College of Engineering.

<https://iowageologicalsurvey.uiowa.edu/iowa-geology/landforms-iowa/southern-iowa-drift-plain>

² "About Marion County, Iowa." Marion County.

<https://marioncountyiowa.gov/about/>

³ "A Brief History of Marion County." The IAGenWeb Project.

<https://iagenweb.org/marion/community/history/briefHistory.php>

established to be near the exact center of the county and named after General Henry Knox of the American Revolutionary War.³

The Sac (Osakiwug) and the Fox (Meskwaki) tribes first inhabited the central Iowa area, including the area of Marion County. In 1842, the Sac leader Chief Keokuk agreed to sell the tribe's land to the United States government in an agreement called the New Purchase. The agreement gave the tribes three years to move out of Iowa and to move west of the state's halfway point within the first year. The Red Rock Line, about 10 miles west of Pella, marked that boundary. The Sac and Fox tribes eventually relocated to Kansas, and the Meskawaki Tribe secured land in Tama County for a settlement in 1856.⁴

Agriculture and coal mining were among the most important industries in early Marion County.⁵ Mining of coal was first reported to fuel steamboats at Coalport, a former rivertown now submerged under Lake Red Rock, between 1847 and 1851.⁶ The first systematic coal mining operation in Marion County opened in Flagler around 1874 or



Melcher-Dallas Coal Mining and Heritage Museum

Source: Red Rock Area

⁴ "The Land Before The Dutch." Pella Preservation Trust.

<https://historicpellatrust.org/learning-walkway/the-land-before-the-dutch/>

⁵ "History of Marion County Iowa and Its People." John W. Wright and W.A. Young. Volume I. The S. J. Clarke Publishing Company. 1915.

<https://ia601305.us.archive.org/3/items/historyofmarionc01wrig/histor-yofmarionc01wrig.pdf>

⁶ Ibid.

1875, about the same time as the Chicago, Burlington, and Quincy Railroad (then the Albia, Knoxville, and Des Moines Railroad) was completed to Knoxville.⁷ The demand for coal then declined as railroads converted to diesel fuel in the 1950s and 1960s.⁸ The history of coal mining is still very much visible in Marion County, from the community identity in Melcher-Dallas through Coal-Miners' Day in June and the Melcher-Dallas Coal Mining and Heritage Museum to abandoned coal mines on private property and Iowa's largest open pit coal mine by the Sinclair and Wilkinson Coal Company from 1949-1963 (on the east side of T-17 approximately one mile north of Highway 5).⁹

In 1847, Pastor Hendrik Peter Scholte organized the emigration of about 800 Dutch, seeking religious freedom and economic opportunities, to Pella.¹⁰ They brought with them their Dutch culture, architecture, language, and traditions all of which have helped shape Pella. The Pella Tulip Time Festival began in 1935 and celebrates the town's Dutch heritage in May. Festivities include parades, Dutch dancing, markets and foods, and more than 300,000 blooming tulips.



Source: Greater Des Moines Partnership

⁷ Ibid.

⁸ "Full List of Signs Erected by the Rural History Buffs." <https://www.ruralhistorybuffs.org/the-signs>

⁹ Ibid.

¹⁰ "Why the Dutch Left Their Homeland." Pella Preservation Trust. <https://historicpellatrust.org/learning-walkway/why-the-dutch-left-their-homeland/>

After a series of floods along the Des Moines River, Red Rock and Saylorville were studied and chosen by the US Army Corps of Engineers for the construction of dams to reduce flood damage along the Des Moines River. The Red Rock Dam began



construction in 1960 and was completed in 1969.¹¹ In the process, six river towns (Red Rock, Cordova, Coalport, Dunreath, Rousseau, and Fifield) were submerged, and Lake Red Rock, Iowa's largest lake, was created.¹²

Source: US Army Corps of Engineers

The history of Marion County continues to remain visible throughout the built environment. The State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO) recorded 1,808 entries for Marion County in its Iowa Historic Property Inventory Database as of October 2025. Of the 1,808 entries, 1,615 entries (89.3%) have addresses with incorporated cities, and 190 entries (10.5%) have addresses with unincorporated areas. Almost all the entries (1,771 or 98.0%) are not listed in the National Register of Historic Places. As of November 2025, there are 4 Historic Districts, 21 Historic Buildings, and 3 Historic Structures in Marion County listed on the National Register.

¹¹ "About Us." US Army Corps of Engineers – Rock Island District. <https://www.mvr.usace.army.mil/missions/recreation/lake-red-rock/about-us/>

¹² "The Lost Towns of Lake Red Rock." Rural History Buffs of Marion County Iowa. <https://www.ruralhistorybuffs.org/lost-towns>

National Register of Historic Places Listings in Marion County		
Category	Name	City
District	Knoxville Veterans Administration Hospital Historic District	Knoxville
	Knoxville WPA Athletic Field Historic District	Knoxville
	St. Joseph's Roman Catholic Church and Cemetery Historic District	Lacona
	Collegiate Neighborhood Historic District	Pella
Building	Ellis, Evan F., Farmhouse	Bussey
	Coal Ridge Baptist Church and Cemetery	Knoxville
	Hays, E. R., House	Knoxville
	Marion County Courthouse	Knoxville
	Chicago, Rock Island and Pacific Passenger Depot-Pella	Pella
	East Amsterdam School	Pella
	First Christian Church	Pella
	Koelman, Philipus J. and Cornelia, House	Pella
	Pella High School	Pella
	Pella Opera House	Pella
	Peoples Nationals Bank	Pella
	Porter-Rhynsbarger House	Pella
	Scholte, Dominie Henry P., House	Pella
	Ten Hagen Cottage-Stegman Store	Pella
	Tuttle, Thomas F. and Nancy, House	Pella
	Van Asch, William, House-Huibert Debooy Commercial Room	Pella
	Van Den Berg, Hendrik J. and Wilhelmina H., Cottage	Pella
	Van Loon, Dirk, House	Pella
Structure	Hammond Bridge	Hamilton
	Harvey Railroad Bridge	Harvey
	Wabash Railroad Bridge	Pella

Source: National Register of Historic Places

The Marion County Historical Village in Knoxville was opened to the public in 1970 and consists of eight buildings (one room schoolhouse, log cabin, machine annex, Bussey Railroad Depot, museum, general store, stage coach inn, and Valley Chapel Church) that provide visitors with an immersive experience of Marion County and Iowa history. There are opportunities for Marion County to partner with local historical organizations, such as the Marion County Historical Society, the Rural History Buffs of Marion County, and the Pella Historical Society, to further historic preservation efforts and to continue public education about Marion County's history and heritage.



Source: Marion County Historical Society

The Cordova Park Observation Tower is one of the tallest observation towers in the Midwest. Located in Otley, Iowa, the observation tower was initially used as a water storage tower. After being decommissioned, the 123-foot tower was opened to the public in 1999 and more than 325,000 visitors have scaled the tower, enjoying breathtaking views.¹³



Source: My County Parks

Knoxville is home to the Knoxville Raceway, located on the Marion County Fairgrounds. The Raceway began for horse racing and held its first automobile race in 1901. After 1956, Marion Robinson took over as promoter for the Knoxville Raceway and formed the foundation for the current Knoxville Nationals. The Knoxville Raceway attracts race and car enthusiasts throughout the summer months in Knoxville.



Source: Knoxville Raceway

Beyond motorsports, the Marion County Fair, held at the Marion County Fairgrounds, welcomes visitors every year in mid-July. The Fair celebrates Marion County history and brings together the county with agriculture exhibits, contests and competitions, and live entertainment.

The seasonal activities continue with the Lake Red Rock Balloonfest. Since the 2010s, the Lake Red Rock Balloonfest celebrates summer and the art and sport of hot air ballooning near Lake Red Rock. The festival features competitive balloon flights, balloon glows, and community activities including a 5k/10k fundraiser and live music.



Source: Lake Red Rock Balloonfest

From rich history to historic buildings, to cultural festivals and activities, Marion County offers much for its residents to celebrate and take pride in. By honoring and sharing its past, Marion County continues to strive forward with a strong sense of identity.

¹³ “Durability Study: Cordova Park Observation Tower is Still a Winner After 20 Years.” Strongwell. <https://www.strongwell.com/cordova-park-observation-tower-is-still-a-winner-after-20-years/>

Goal: Preserve and Share Marion County's History and Cultural Heritage		
Objectives	Actions	Funding
Document and Preserve Historic Sites and Structures	Partner with local historical organizations for historic preservation efforts	- Local Funds - State Funds (Certified Local Government funding, State Historical Society grants) - National Funds (National Trust for Historic Preservation grants)
Promote and Educate About Historic Sites and Structures and Cultural Heritage	Partner with local historical organizations	- Local Funds - State Funds (Certified Local Government funding, State Historical Society grants) - National Funds (National Trust for Historic Preservation grants)

Community Demographics

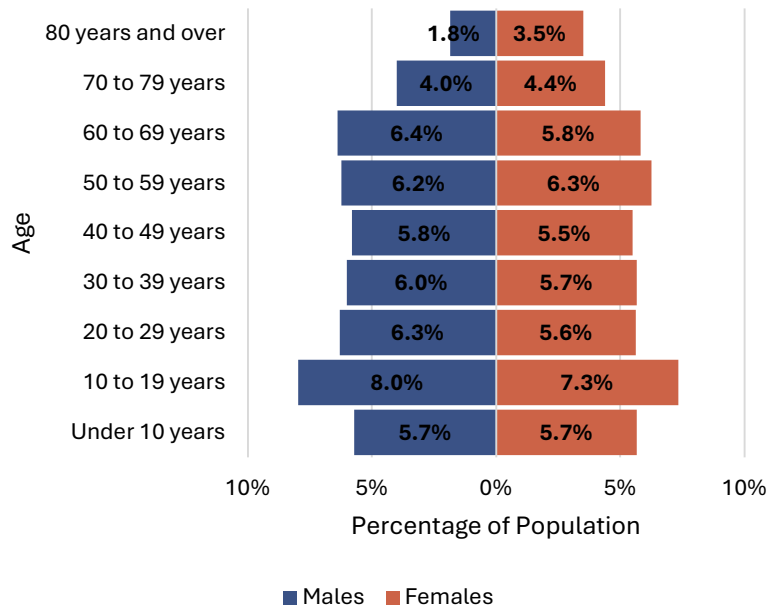


Existing Population

Marion County has seen steady population growth over the most recent decades, with most of the growth in the unincorporated areas of Marion County and in the largest incorporated cities of Pleasantville, Knoxville, and Pella. Based on historical data, Marion County is projected to continue its steady population growth into the future.

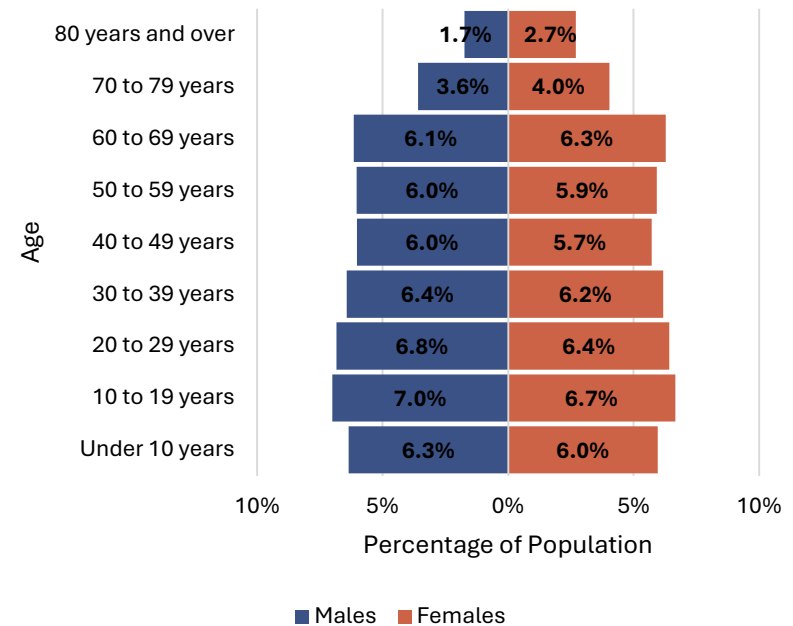
The distribution across different age groups is fairly even in Marion County, except for a slightly larger percentage of people age 10 to 19 years old. This discrepancy is likely from the college students enrolled at Central College in Pella. Overall, the age distribution of Marion County is similar to the age distribution of Iowa.

Marion County Population Pyramid (2023)



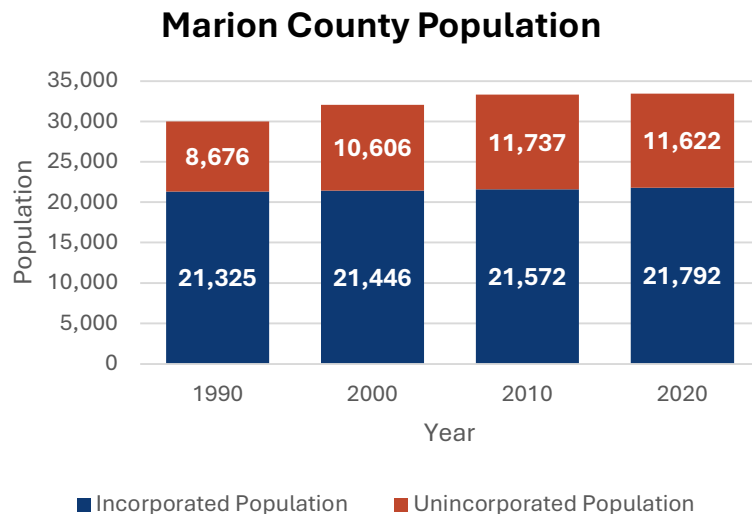
Source: American Community Survey (ACS) Estimates Table S0101

Iowa Population Pyramid (2023)



Source: American Community Survey (ACS) Estimates Table S0101

In the 2020 Decennial Census, Marion County's population was 33,414. The population of Marion County has grown by a total of 4% between 2000 and 2020. Incorporated areas in the county have both grown and decreased in population within the last 20 years. The population of unincorporated Marion County has been roughly one-third (33.1% - 35.2%) of Marion County's total population from 2000 to 2020. Unincorporated areas and Pleasantville experienced the greatest population growth, gaining more than 9% from 2000 to 2020. The majority of smaller communities, such as Swan, Melcher-Dallas, Marysville, Harvey, Hamilton, and Bussey, all experienced population decreases during this period. Meanwhile, larger communities such as Knoxville, Pella, and Pleasantville all experienced overall population growth.



Incorporated Population includes Bussey, Hamilton, Harvey, Knoxville, Marysville, Melcher-Dallas, Pella, Pleasantville, and Swan.
Source: US Census Bureau Decennial Census (1990-2020) via State Library of Iowa - State Data Center

Every neighboring county experienced a population shift from 2000-2020, with Warren County experiencing the highest growth of 29% and Lucas County experiencing the largest decline of 8%. Of its neighboring counties, Marion County had one of the highest population growths in the area.

Population			
Intra-Region	2000	2020	% Change (2000-2020)
Marion County	32,052	33,414	+4.2%
Bussey	455	387	-14.9%
Hamilton	144	119	-17.4%
Harvey	277	236	-14.8%
Knoxville	7,731	7,595	-1.8%
Marysville	54	44	-18.5%
Melcher-Dallas	1,298	1,195	-7.9%
Pella	9,832	10,464	+6.4%
Pleasantville	1,539	1,676	+8.9%
Swan	121	76	-37.2%
Unincorporated	10,601	11,622	+9.6%
Inter-Region	2000	2020	% Change (2000-2020)
Jasper	37,213	37,813	+1.6%
Lucas	9,422	8,634	-8.4%
Mahaska	22,335	22,190	-0.6%
Marion	32,052	33,414	+4.2%
Monroe	8,016	7,577	-5.5%
Warren	40,671	52,403	+28.8%

Source: US Census Bureau Decennial Census (1990-2020) via State Library of Iowa - State Data Center

Households and Families								
	2023		2020		2015		2010	
	Estimate	Percent	Estimate	Percent	Estimate	Percent	Estimate	Percent
Total households	13,409	100%	13,532	100%	12,978	100%	12,522	100%
Average household size	2.38	(X)	2.33	(X)	2.43	(X)	2.54	(X)
Family households	9,123	68.0%	9,331	69.0%	8,860	68.3%	9,062	72.4%
Average household size	2.91	(X)	2.84	(X)	3.02	(X)	3.07	(X)
Nonfamily households	4,286	32.0%	4,201	31.0%	4,118	31.7%	3,460	27.6%
Average household size	1.24	(X)	1.20	(X)	1.13	(X)	1.18	(X)
Total families	9,123	100.0%	9,331	100.0%	8,860	100.0%	9,062	100.0%
Average family size	2.87	(X)	2.79	(X)	2.97	(X)	3.03	(X)
Married-couple family	7,852	86.1%	7,827	83.9%	7,520	84.9%	7,854	86.7%
Average family size	2.90	(X)	2.90	(X)	3.02	(X)	3.05	(X)
Single householder family	1,271	13.9%	1,504	16.1%	1,340	15.1%	1,208	13.3%
Average family size	2.64	(X)	2.26	(X)	2.69	(X)	2.88	(X)

Source: American Community Survey (ACS) Estimates Table S1101

The number of Marion County households grew modestly from 2010 to 2023 by 7.1%, noticeably in nonfamily households which increased 23.9% while family households remained similar. Both average household size (from 2.54 to 2.38) and family size (from 3.03 to 2.87) declined, indicating a trend towards smaller living arrangements in Marion County.

Marion County, much like Iowa as a whole, has a highly homogenous population, with over 90% of residents identifying as white. From 2010 to 2020, the proportion of white residents within the county declined by 1.5%, while minority populations have steadily increased. These demographic shifts in Marion County mirror broader trends observed across the State of Iowa

Race and Ethnicity														
	White		Black or African American		American Indian and Alaska Native		Asian		Native Hawaiian and Other Pacific Islander		Other Race		Two or More Races	
	2010	2020	2010	2020	2010	2020	2010	2020	2010	2020	2010	2020	2010	2020
Marion County	97.1%	95.56%	0.5%	1.05%	0.3%	0.18%	1.1%	1.03%	0.0%	0.03%	0.1%	0.38%	0.9%	1.76%
Iowa	91.9%	89.09%	2.7%	3.72%	0.3%	0.33%	1.7%	2.52%	0.0%	0.13%	1.6%	1.26%	1.7%	2.95%

Source: American Community Survey (ACS) Estimates Table B02001

Population Forecasts

Using population from the Decennial Census since 1950 as historical values, several population forecasts for Marion County were developed out to the year 2050. The forecast methodologies can be divided into high growth (exponential, linear, and CAGR), low growth (power, logarithmic, and polynomial), and average of the high and low growth. For additional information regarding the forecast methodologies, see Appendix.

Using the average forecast methodology as the preferred option, Marion County's population is forecasted to be:

34,274 in 2030

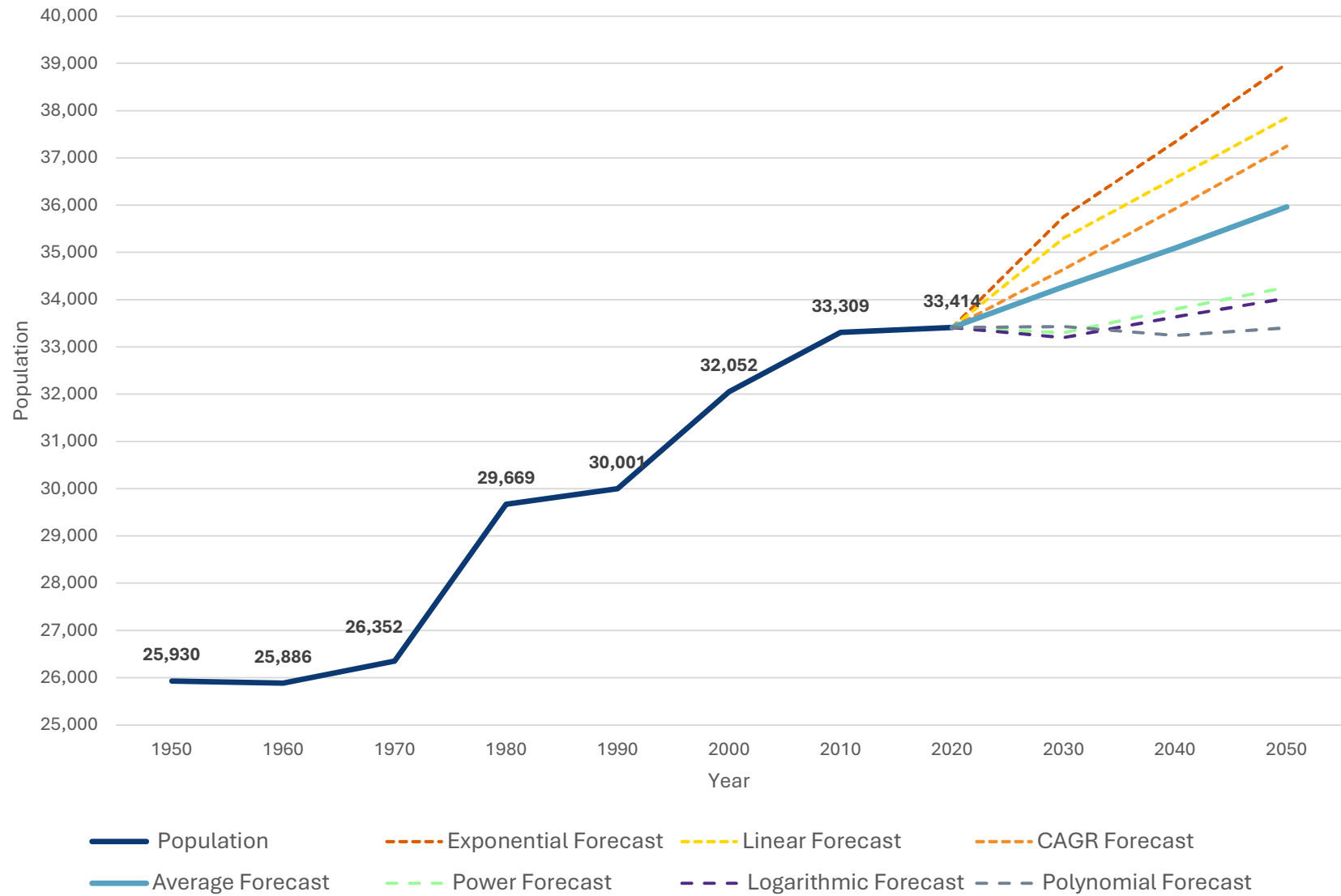
35,088 in 2040

35,966 in 2050

Year	Population						
1950	25,930						
1960	25,886						
1970	26,352						
1980	29,669						
1990	30,001						
2000	32,052						
2010	33,309						
2020	33,414						
Population Forecast							
Year	High Growth			Low Growth			Average
	Exponential	Linear	CAGR	Power	Logarithmic	Polynomial	
2030	35,759	35,305	34,647	33,301	33,198	33,433	34,274
2040	37,341	36,578	35,925	33,803	33,636	33,245	35,088
2050	38,994	37,851	37,250	34,264	34,032	33,406	35,966

Source: US Census Bureau Decennial Census (1950-2020) via State Library of Iowa - State Data Center

Marion County Population Forecast



Source: US Census Bureau Decennial Census (1950-2020) via State Library of Iowa - State Data Center

Housing



In the 2025 Marion County Community Survey, 13.8% of respondents selected Housing as one of their top three priorities. Housing is one of the core necessities for a community and having an affordable and diverse housing stock allows a community to accommodate the range of individual and household lifestyles over time, from starter homes for new families to older adults aging-in-place or moving into senior housing.

Existing Housing Stock

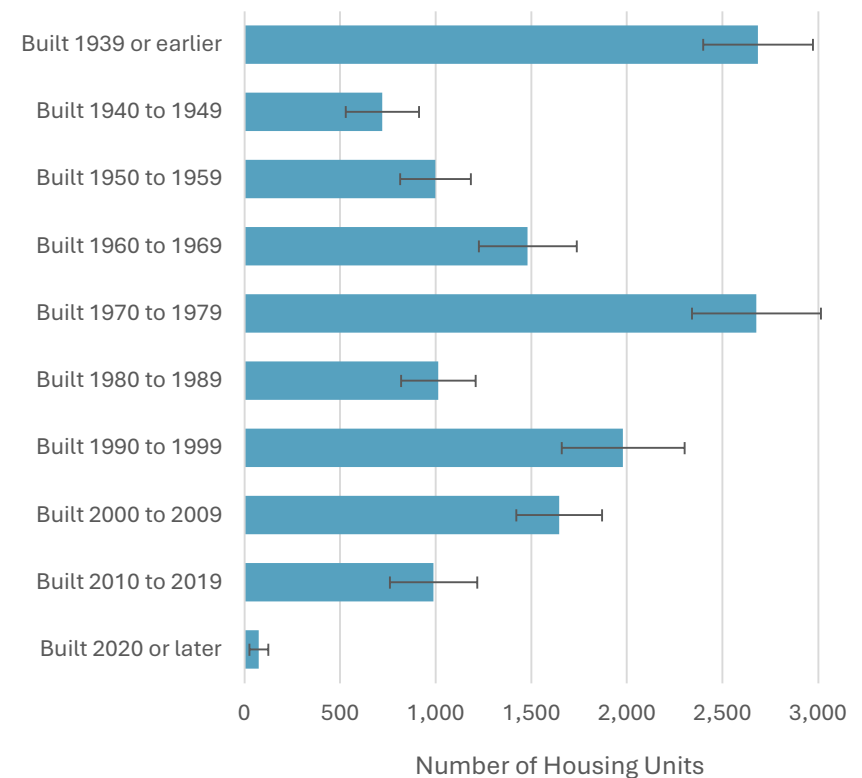
In 2023, the American Community Survey estimates there are about 14,268 housing units in Marion County.

Marion County Housing Tenure and Type		
Total Housing Units	14,268	100%
Occupied housing units	13,409	94.0%
Owner-Occupied	10,425 (77.7%)	
Owned with Mortgage	6,341 (60.8%)	
Owned without Mortgage	4,084 (39.2%)	
Renter-Occupied	2,984 (23.3%)	
Vacant housing units	859	6.0%
Housing Units by Type	14,268	100%
Single-Family, Detached	11,140	78.1%
Single-Family, Attached	431	3.0%
Two Units / Duplex	432	3.0%
Multi-Family	1,635	11.5%
Mobile Home and Others	630	4.4%

Source: 2023 American Community Survey (ACS) 5-Year Estimates
Tables B25002, B25024, B25081

The housing stock in Marion County is older. About 60% of the total housing units in Marion County were built before 1980 and about 40% were built after 1980. Newer construction is minimal, with an estimated 19% of housing units built after 2000.

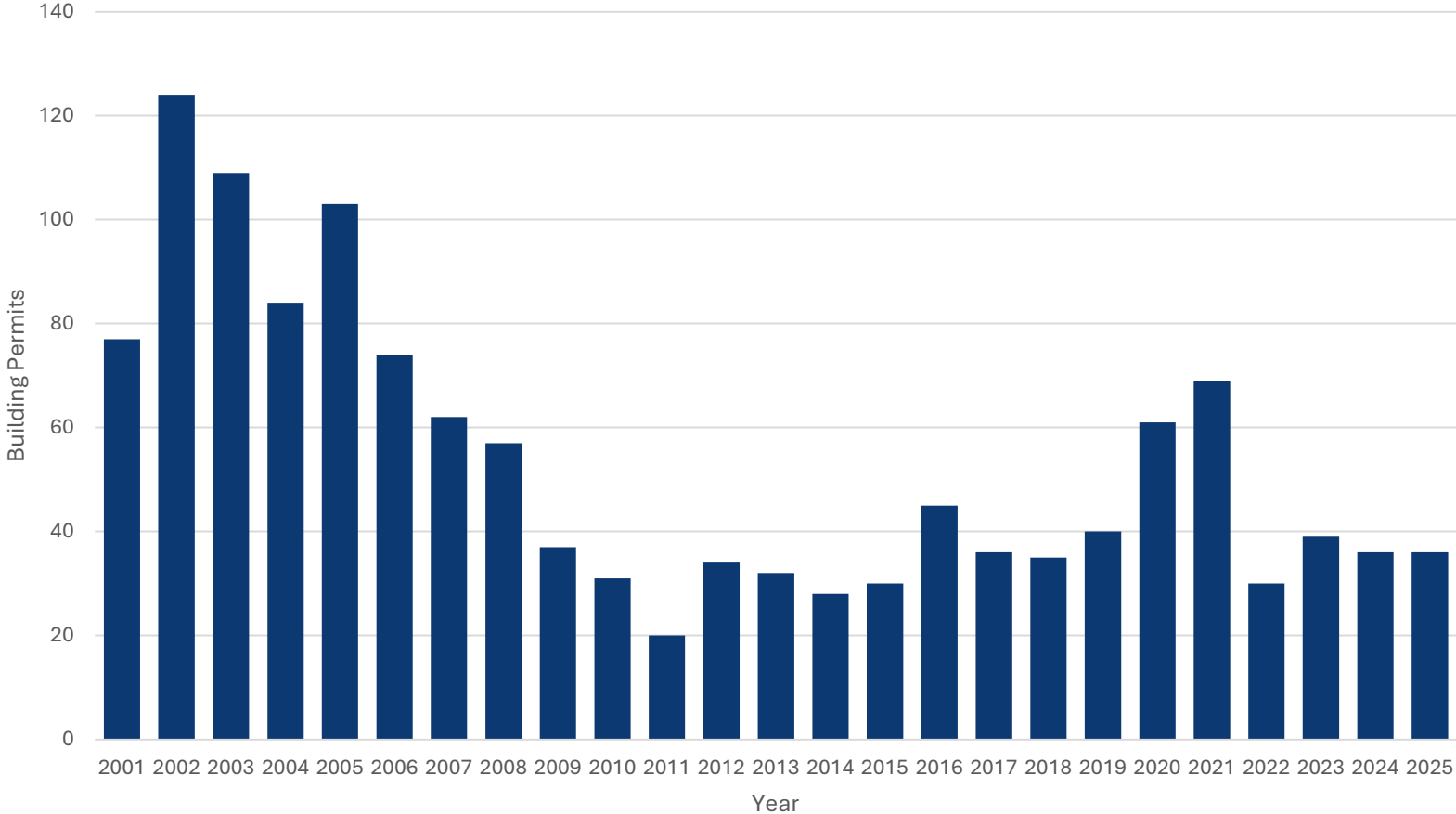
Year Structure Built



Source: 2023 American Community Survey (ACS) 5-Year Estimates Table B25034

Residential building permits in unincorporated Marion County had strong growth in the early 2000s but experienced a sharp decline in the late 2000s and early 2010s, following the 2008 Recession. There was moderate recovery in the 2010s and early 2020s, and levels have stabilized at lower levels though they have not returned to the historical highs of the early 2000s.

Unincorporated Marion County Residential Building Permits



Source: Marion County

The majority of Marion County's housing units are occupied and only about 6% of housing units are vacant. Of the occupied housing units, most are owner occupied. Of the owner-occupied housing units, about 61% have a mortgage.

Single family detached structures are the most prevalent housing type in Marion County followed by multi-family apartments. Of owner-occupied housing units, the majority are single family detached structures. Of renter-occupied housing units, commonly occupied structures are single family detached and apartments with three or more units.

Units in Structure	Owner-Occupied Units	Percent	Renter-Occupied Units	Percent
1, detached	9,568	91.8%	1,093	36.6%
1, attached	104	1.0%	296	9.9%
2 apartments	24	0.2%	328	11.0%
3 or more apartments	155	1.5%	1,244	41.7%
Mobile home or other type of housing	574	5.5%	23	0.8%
Total	10,425	100%	2,984	100%

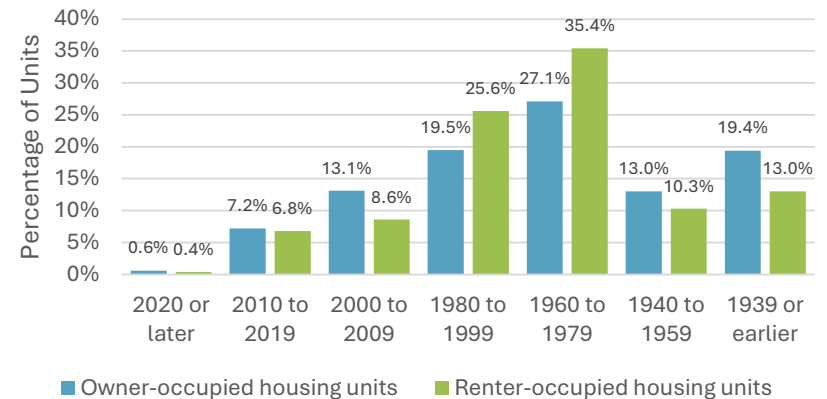
Source: 2023 American Community Survey (ACS) 5-Year Estimates Table S2504

About 59% of renter-occupied housing units and 60% of owner-occupied housing units in Marion County were built before 1980. Renter-occupied housing units (35.4%) and owner-occupied housing units (27.1%) were primarily built between 1960 and 1979.

The median owner-occupied house value in Marion County was \$211,100 in 2023 according to the American Community Survey. About 19% of the owner-occupied housing units in Marion

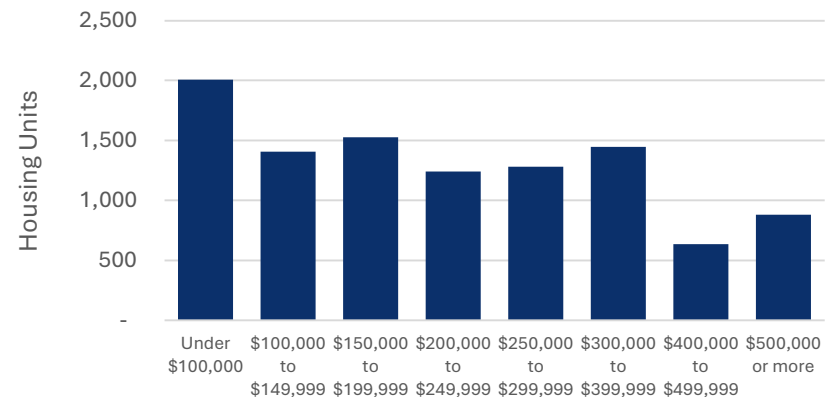
County were valued under \$100,000, about 47% valued under \$200,000, and about 72% valued under \$300,000.

Housing Units by Year Built



Source: 2023 American Community Survey (ACS) 5-Year Estimates Table S2504

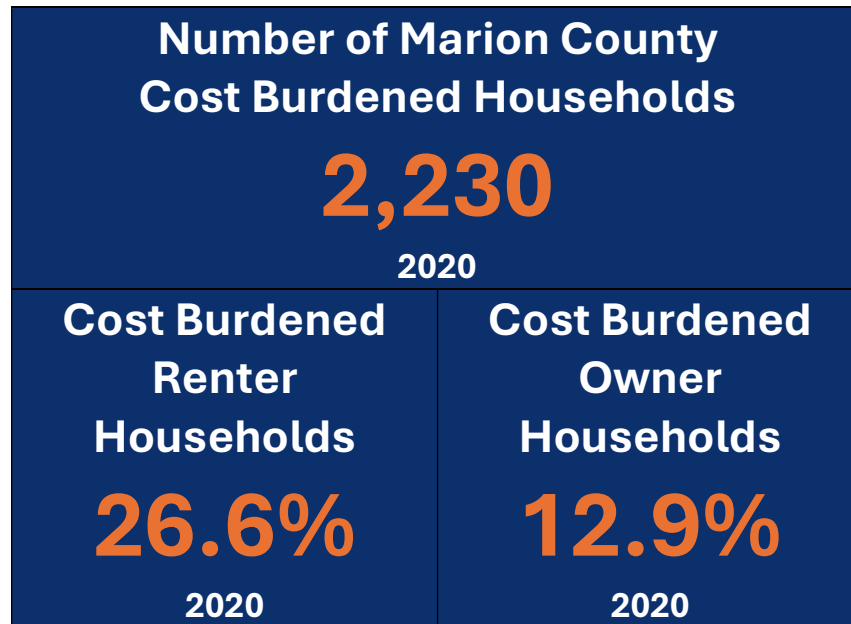
Owner-Occupied Housing Value



Source: 2023 American Community Survey (ACS) 5-Year Estimates Table B25075

Housing Cost Burden

According to the US Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD)'s Comprehensive Housing Affordability Strategy (CHAS) data, there were 2,230 cost-burdened households in Marion County in 2020. Housing cost burdened households are those that spend more than 30% of their household income on housing costs. Households spending 50% or more on housing are considered severely cost burdened. Less than 30% is considered affordable. For renters, housing cost is gross rent (contract rent plus utilities). For owners, housing cost includes mortgage payment, utilities, association fees, insurance, and real estate taxes. Of the 9,975 owner households, about 12.9% are cost burdened and 5.4% are severely cost burdened. Of the 3,555 renter households, 26.6% are cost burdened and 11.8% are severely cost burdened.



Source: HUD CHAS based on 2016-2020 ACS

Housing Needs Assessment

In 2024, Maxfield Research and Consulting prepared a Comprehensive Housing Needs Assessment for Marion County. Maxfield completed a Housing Demand Analysis and forecasted that Marion County is in need of 1,718 housing units between 2024 and 2035:

Market Rate Rental	398 Units
Affordable Rental	294 Units
Subsidized Rental	126 Units
For-Sale Single-Family	741 Units
For-Sale Multifamily	286 Units

In addition, Maxfield Research and Consulting forecasted that Marion County is in need of 1,349 senior housing units by 2035:

Active Adult Ownership	203 Units
Active Adult Market Rate Rental	294 Units
Active Adult Affordable	317 Units
Active Adult Subsidized	49 Units
Independent Living	192 Units
Assisted Living	146 Units
Memory Care	148 Units

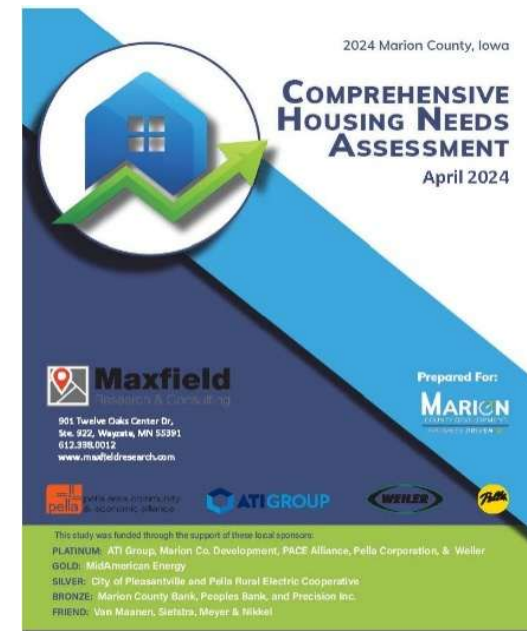
The Comprehensive Housing Needs Assessment for Marion County identified the following challenges and opportunities for developing the housing units that are needed in the county:

- Affordable Housing/Naturally Occurring Affordable Housing (NOAH)
 - The majority of affordable or naturally occurring affordable housing units in Marion County are older rental housing units. The median year built for rental housing in Marion County is 1973, and most rental housing units are missing contemporary amenities, such as in-unit laundry, covered parking, individually controlled heating and air conditioning, and Wi-Fi.

- **Builders and Increasing Costs**
 - Smaller, local builders make up most of Marion County's new construction market unlike the larger, regional production builders in the Des Moines metro area. These builders do not have the volume construction to capture economies of scale to lower construction costs. Furthermore, new single-family housing and entry-level housing have become more difficult and more expensive to develop and construct with limited construction labor and with increased costs of land, materials, labor, and fees. New construction in Marion County exceeds \$300,000 to \$350,000.
- **Short-Term Stay Housing**
 - There is demand for short-term rentals and additional hospitality accommodation is needed to support both business and leisure travel to Marion County.
- **Demographic Trends and Preferences**
 - The growth of the senior population in Marion County will increase demand for retrofits to housing units to age in place or alternative maintenance-free housing. There was strong housing demand in Marion County during the COVID pandemic as buyers preferred new construction and looked for more square footage, outdoor area, and flexible spaces for home offices away from their places of employment. Housing options will need to diversify as millennial and younger buyers have preferences that are not met with Marion County's older housing stock.

The Marion County Comprehensive Housing Assessment noted the limited number of housing programs and incentives from local and county jurisdictions for new housing development or existing housing improvements. There are opportunities for Marion County and local governments to collaborate on administrative reforms and develop housing programs and incentives to enhance housing options:

- **Review the Zoning Code and Subdivision Ordinance to Remove Barriers to Housing**
 - Allow smaller dwelling sizes for more efficient use of land
 - Remove parking minimums to expand housing development
 - Ensure a balance of rental and owner-occupied housing types
- **Establish Housing Programs and Incentives**
 - Attract additional builders and construction labor to Marion County
 - Provide financial support to seniors to retrofit their homes for accessibility and aging-in-place and to others to modernize older housing stock
 - Market and promote the housing, lifestyle, and amenities of Marion County to attract growth from the Des Moines metro



Marion County Comprehensive Housing Needs Assessment
Source: Marion County

Goal: Implement Administrative Reforms and Develop Housing Programs and Incentives		
Objectives	Actions	Funding
Review Marion County Zoning Code and Subdivision Ordinance to remove barriers to housing development	- Remove parking minimums for dwellings to expand housing development - Balance development of rental and owner-occupied housing types	- Local Funding - National Grants (AARP Capacity Building Microgrants)
Establish housing programs and incentives	- Attract additional builders and construction labor to Marion County - Provide financial support to seniors to retrofit their homes for accessibility and aging-in-place and to others to modernize older housing stock	- Local Funding - National Grants (AARP Capacity Building Microgrants)
Comprehensively develop workforce housing	- Explore partnerships with municipalities and community organizations, such as Homes for Iowa and Marion County Habitat for Humanity - Explore redevelopment of former industrial sites into workforce housing through adaptive reuse - Pilot down-payment assistance using Low-Moderate Income (LMI) funds - Partner with local banks to explore financing, such as short-term, interest-only financing to fund housing projects with repayment upon sale of house and goal of full-cost recovery	- Local Funding - State Grants (Workforce Housing Tax Credit; Brownfield and Greyfield Redevelopment Tax Credits)

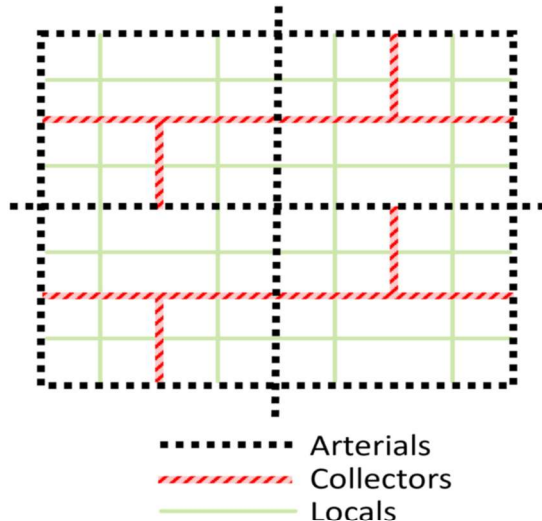
Transportation



Public infrastructure is one of Marion County's top community priorities with 14.2% of the responses from the 2025 Marion County Community Survey selecting it as their second highest priority.

Classification

Roads can be classified according to the Federal Highway Administration's Functional Classification, which organizes roadways according to their function in providing access and traffic flow. Arterials provide the most traffic flow and the least access, while local roads provide the most access and the least traffic flow. Collectors are in between and provide a moderate amount of both traffic flow and access.



Source: Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) Highway Functional Classification Concepts, Criteria, and Procedures (2023)

Marion County has an extensive network of more than 800 centerline miles of roadway. The main arterials through Marion

County are State Highways 5, 14, 92, and 163 that carry an annual average daily traffic (AADT) volume of more than 5,000 vehicles. County Highways G28, G40, G76, S45, T14, T15, and T17 further disperses traffic from the arterials across Marion County and carry an AADT of at least 1,000 vehicles.

Functional Classification	Arterial	Collector	Local
Distance Served and Length of Route	Longest	Medium	Shortest
Access Points	Few	Medium	Many
Speed Limit	Highest	Medium	Lowest
Distance between Routes	Longest	Medium	Shortest
Usage (Traffic Volume)	Highest	Medium	Lowest
Significance	Statewide	Medium	Local
Travel Lanes	More	Medium	Fewer

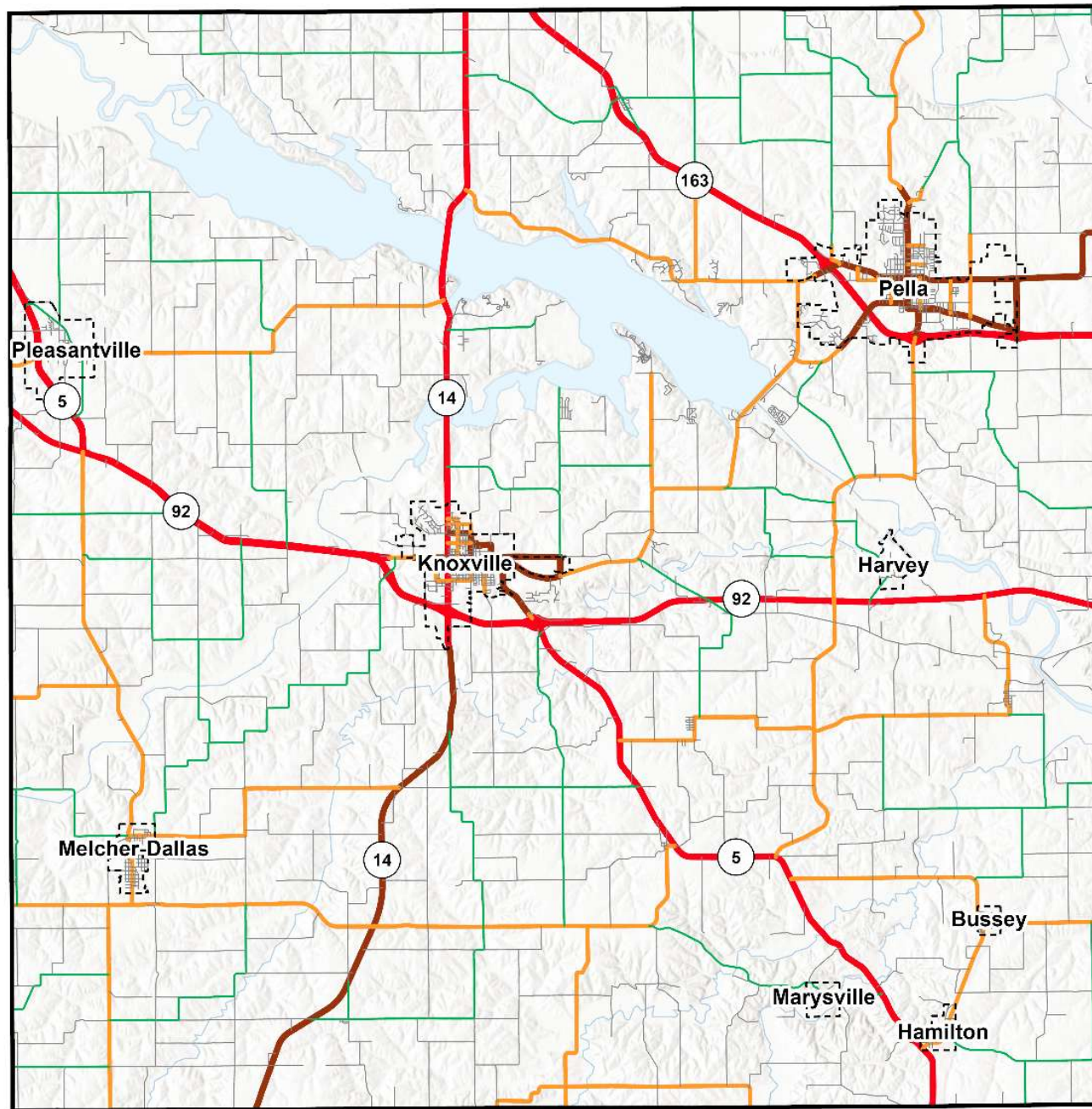
Source: Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) Highway Functional Classification Concepts, Criteria, and Procedures (2023)

Marion County's secondary roads, or county roads, can be divided into Area Service Roads and the Farm to Market network. The Iowa County Engineers Association describes Area Service Roads as mostly gravel and earth that connect vehicles to rural endpoints where trips start and end.¹⁴ The Farm to Market network is mostly paved and provides routes to destinations from Area Service Roads.¹⁵

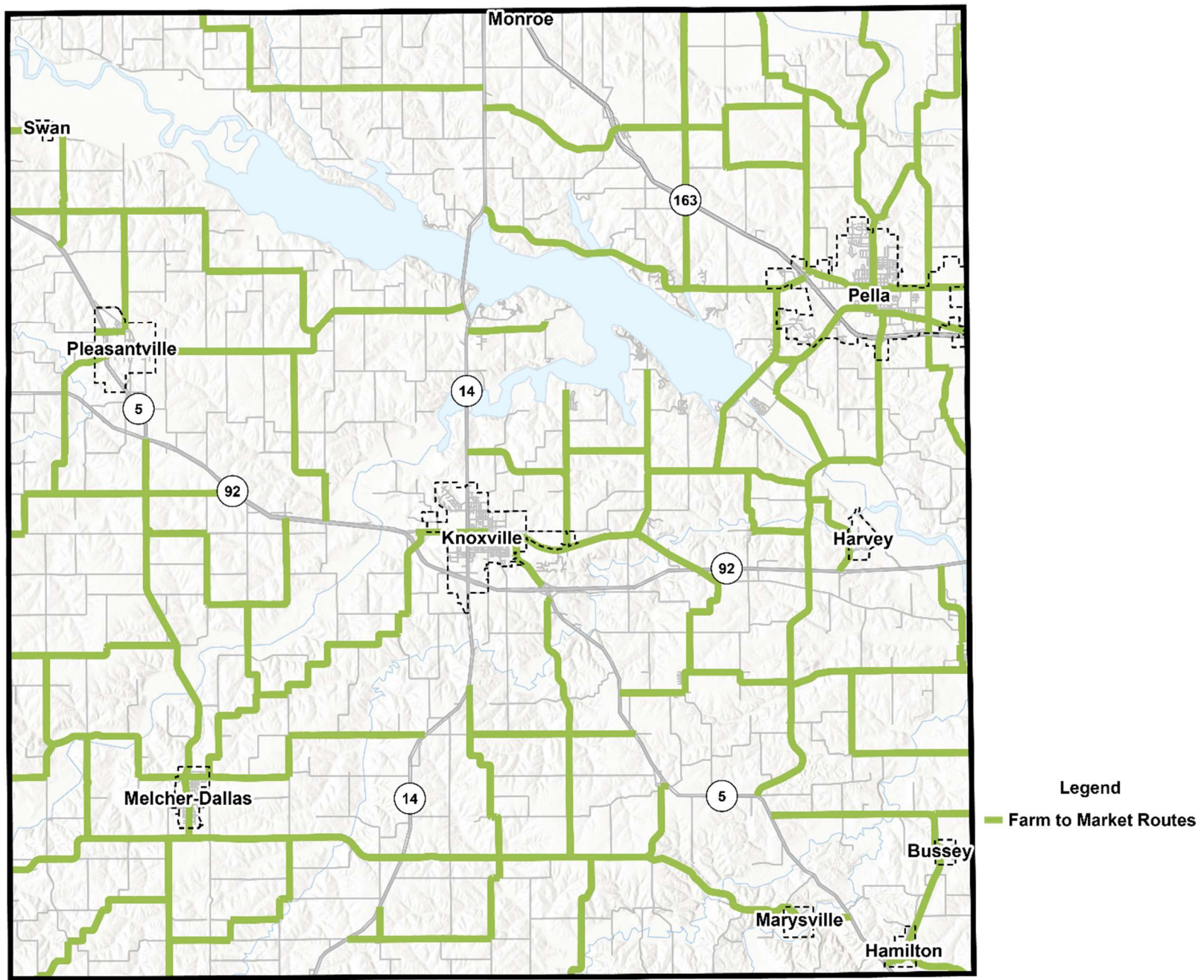
The Marion County Road Department works to provide convenient, efficient, and safe transportation that enables the movement of people and goods, from connecting residents to their school, work, and recreation, to delivering raw materials and finished products, to facilitating seeding in the spring and harvesting in the fall.

¹⁴ "About Secondary Roads." Iowa County Engineers Association. <https://www.iowacountyroads.org/about-secondary-roads>

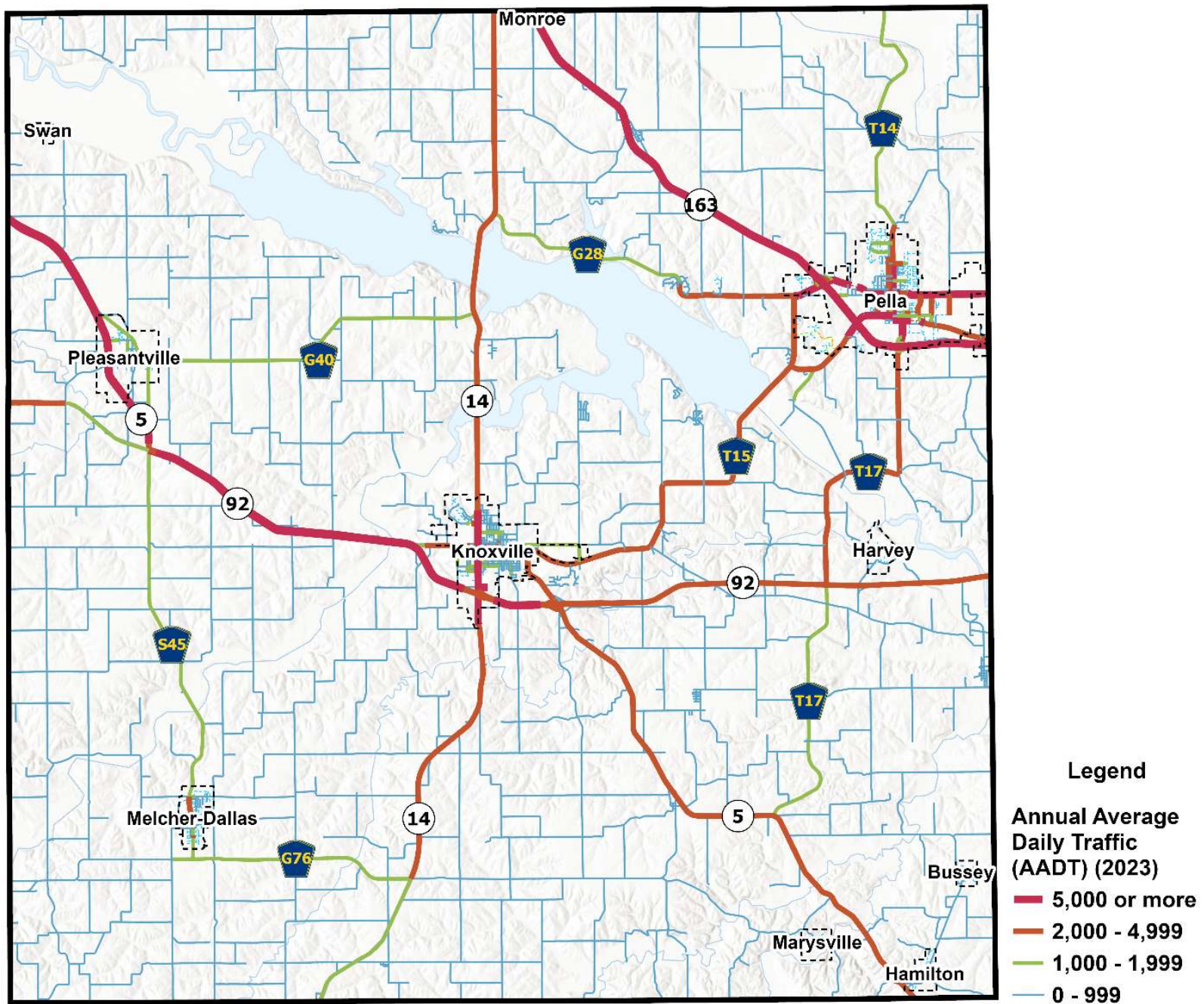
¹⁵ "About Secondary Roads." Iowa County Engineers Association. <https://www.iowacountyroads.org/about-secondary-roads>



Source: Iowa Department of Transportation (DOT)



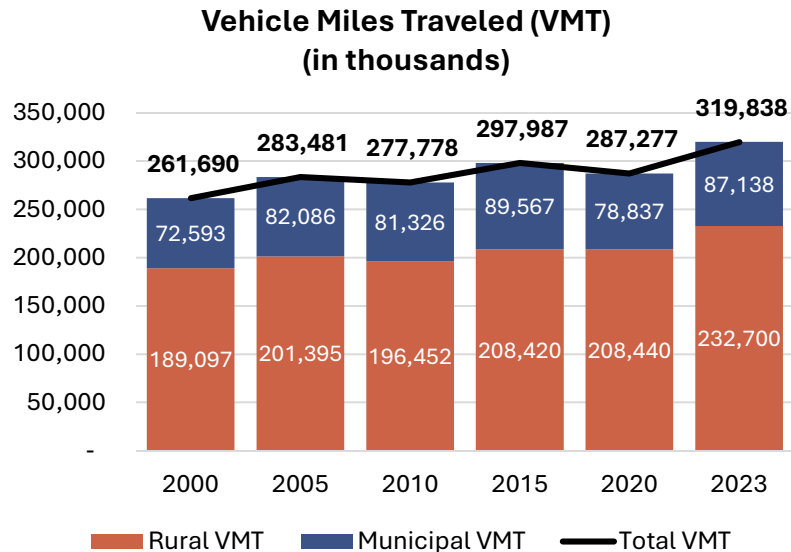
Source: Iowa Department of Transportation (DOT)



Source: Iowa Department of Transportation (DOT)

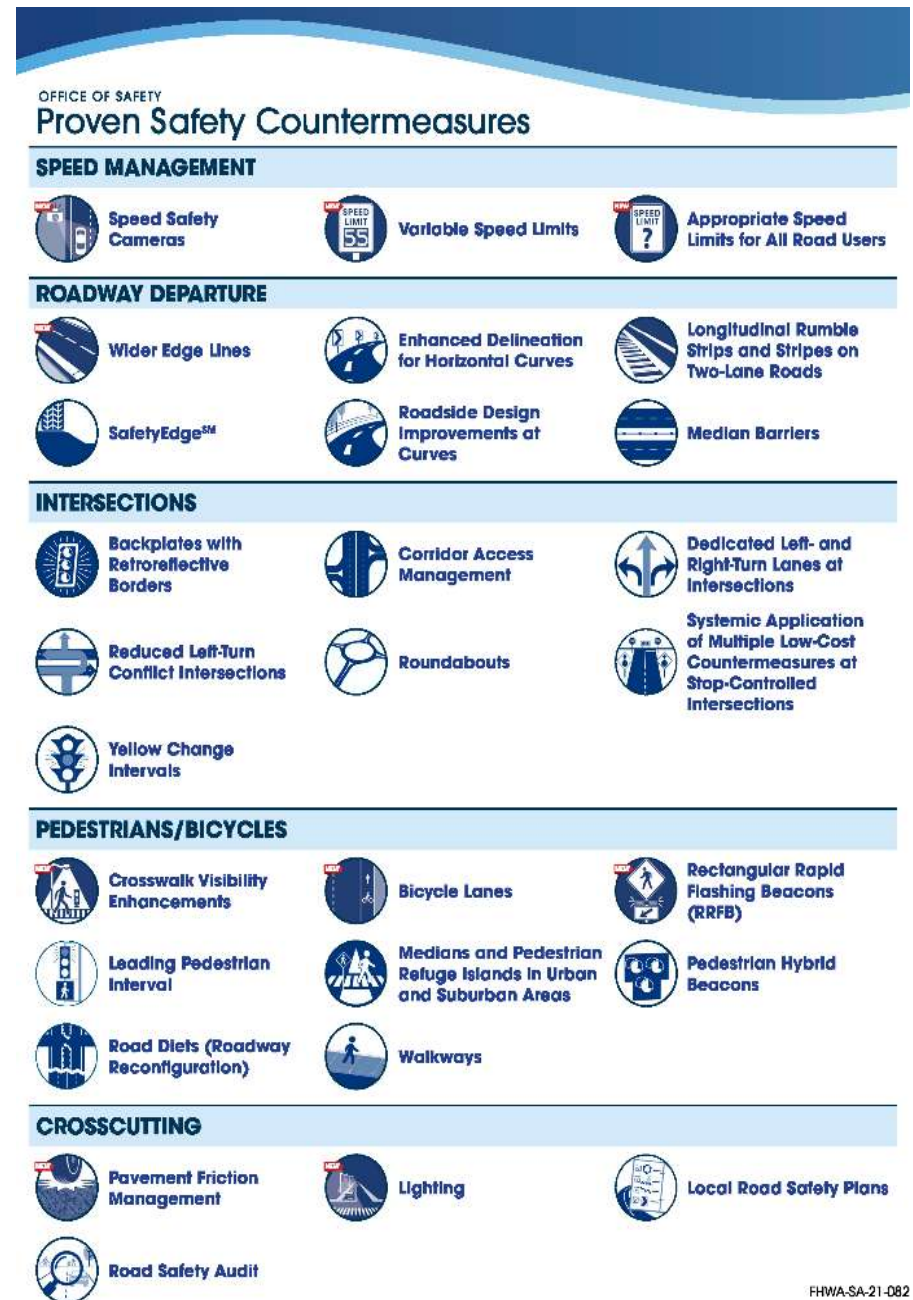
Safety

Vehicle miles traveled (VMT) has been steadily increasing in Marion County over the past two decades. The bulk of the VMT has continued to be on rural roadways and has increased on municipal roadways as well. With increased vehicular travel on roadways, roadway safety and pavement roughness are important considerations for the traveling public in Marion County.



Source: Iowa Department of Transportation (DOT)

Over the five-year period from 2020 to 2024, the Iowa Department of Transportation (DOT)'s Iowa Crash Analysis Tool (ICAT) recorded 2,698 crashes in Marion County, resulting in 24 fatalities and 74 serious injuries. About 41% of the fatal and serious injury crashes occurred on secondary roads in Marion County, while 33% occurred on Iowa routes and 26% on municipal roads. The major causes cited for more than half (58%) of the fatal and serious injury crashes were running off the road (29.5%), losing control (9.1%), operating vehicle in a reckless/erratic/careless manner (5.7%), failure to yield the right



FHWA-SA-21-082

Proven Safety Countermeasures
Source: Federal Highway Administration (FHWA)

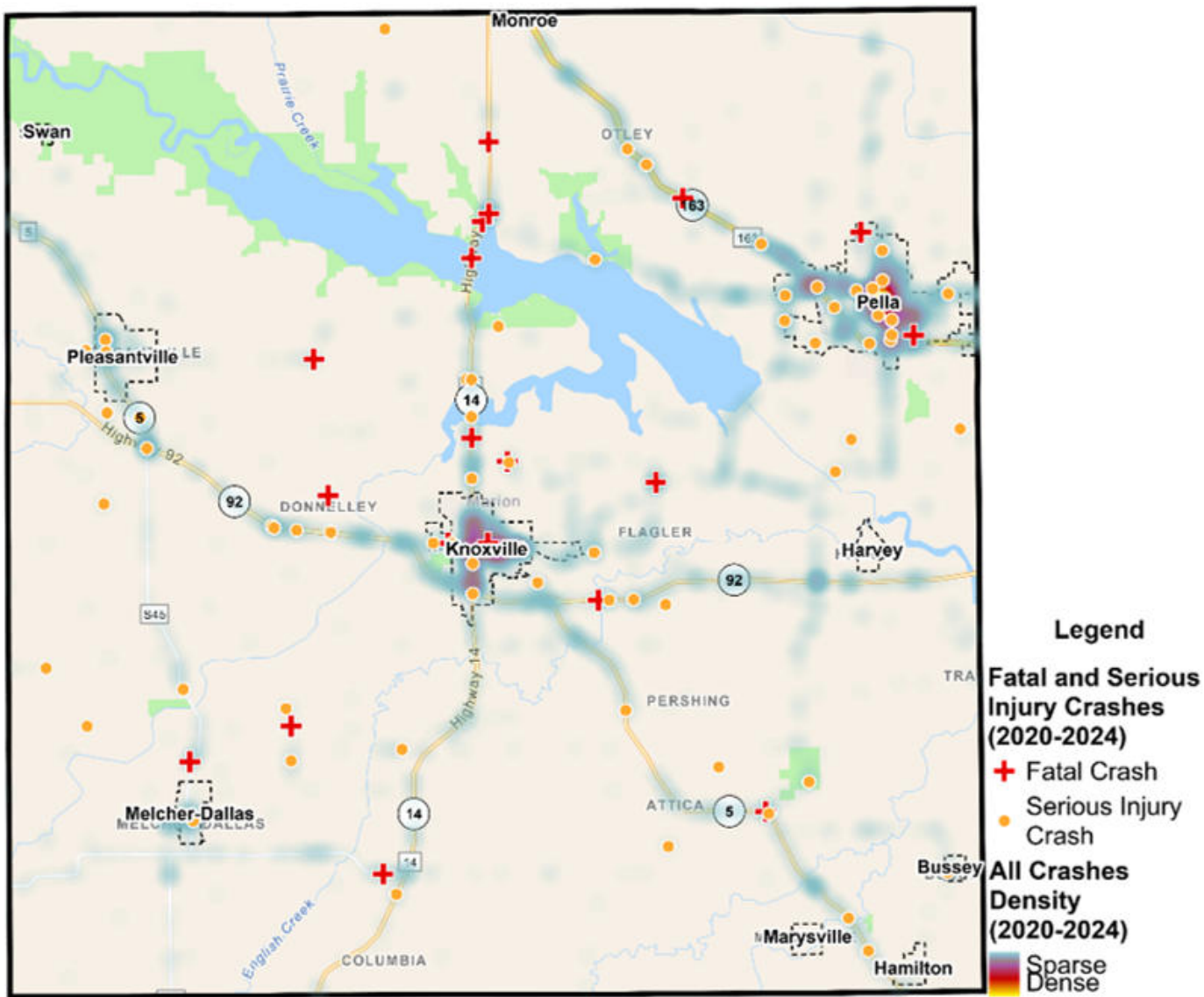
of way from a stop sign (4.5%), driving too fast for conditions (4.5%), and following too close (4.5%).

Additionally, there were 34 crashes involving non-motorists which resulted in 2 fatalities (1 pedalcyclist and 1 other non-motorist) and 7 serious injuries (2 pedalcyclists, 4 pedestrians, 1 skater, personal conveyance, or wheelchair user). More than half (66.7%) of the fatal and serious injury non-motorized crashes occurred in or around the urban areas of Knoxville and Pella. Major causes for most (55.6%) of the fatal and serious injury non-motorized crashes were not identified, but failure to yield to pedestrian (22.2%), other improper action (11.1%), and running off the road to the right (11.1%) accounted for the remaining major causes.

To address roadway safety, Marion County is participating with 96 other counties through the Iowa County Engineers Association (ICEA) to develop a Comprehensive Safety Action Plan (CSAP) and apply for federal funding through the Safe Streets and Roads for All (SS4A) grant program to implement proven roadway safety improvements. Marion County is also collaborating with the Central Iowa Regional Transportation Planning Alliance (CIRTPA) on their CSAP and implementation for the municipalities within the county.

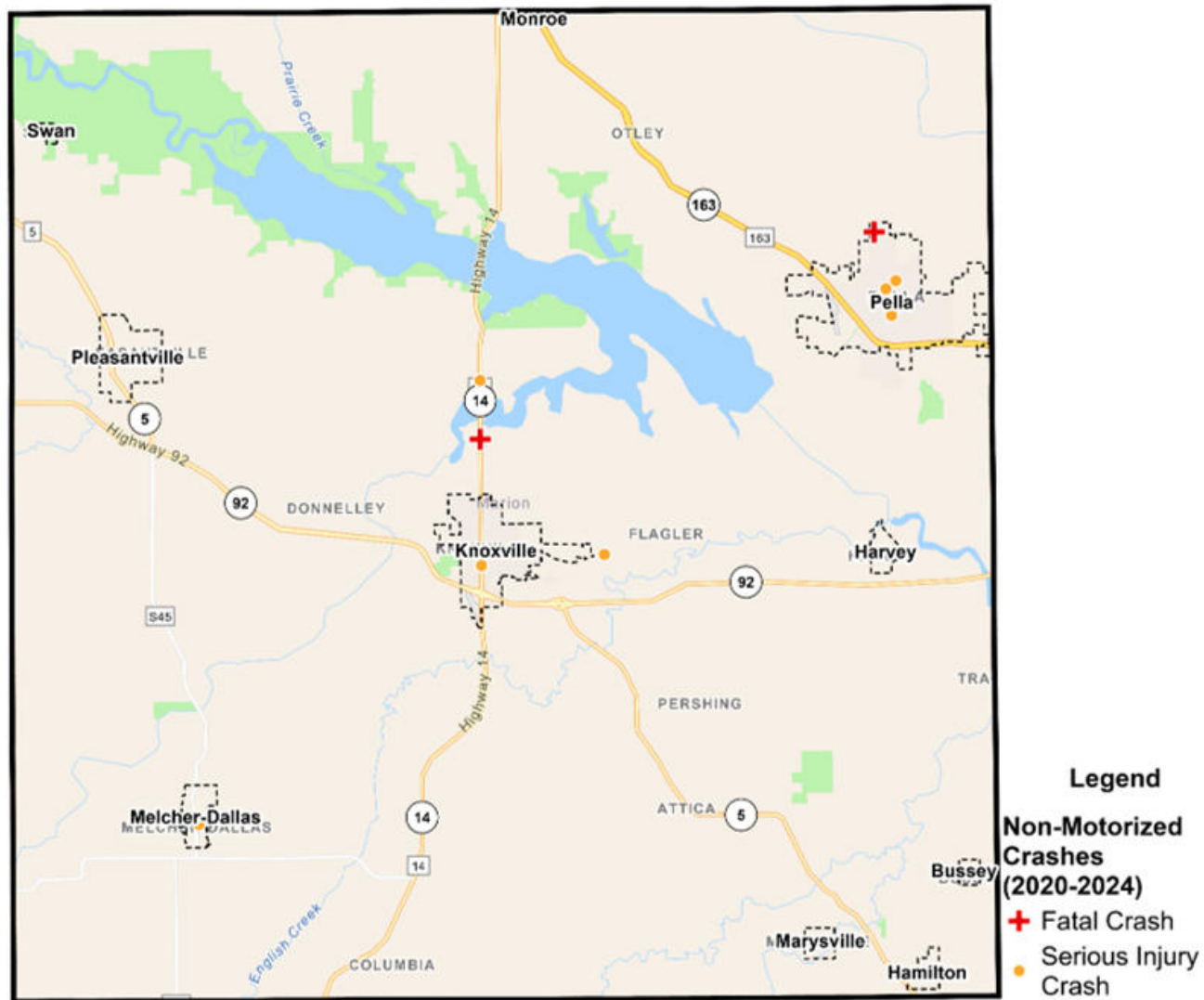


G28 approaching Hwy 14 Source: Marion County Road Department



Source: Iowa Crash Analysis Tool (ICAT)

Source: Iowa Crash Analysis Tool (ICAT)



Source: Iowa Crash Analysis Tool (ICAT)

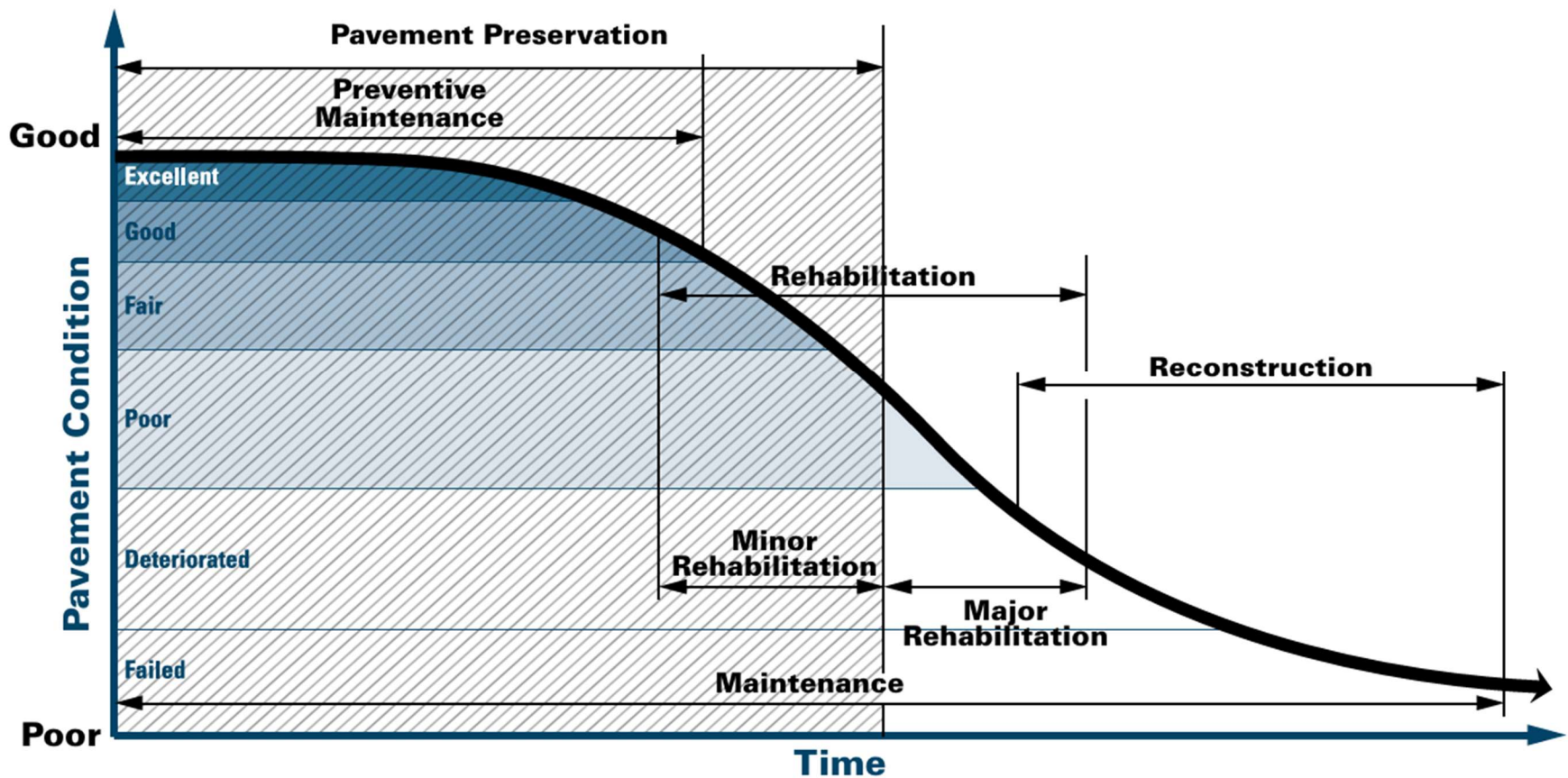
Source: Iowa Crash Analysis Tool (ICAT)

Condition

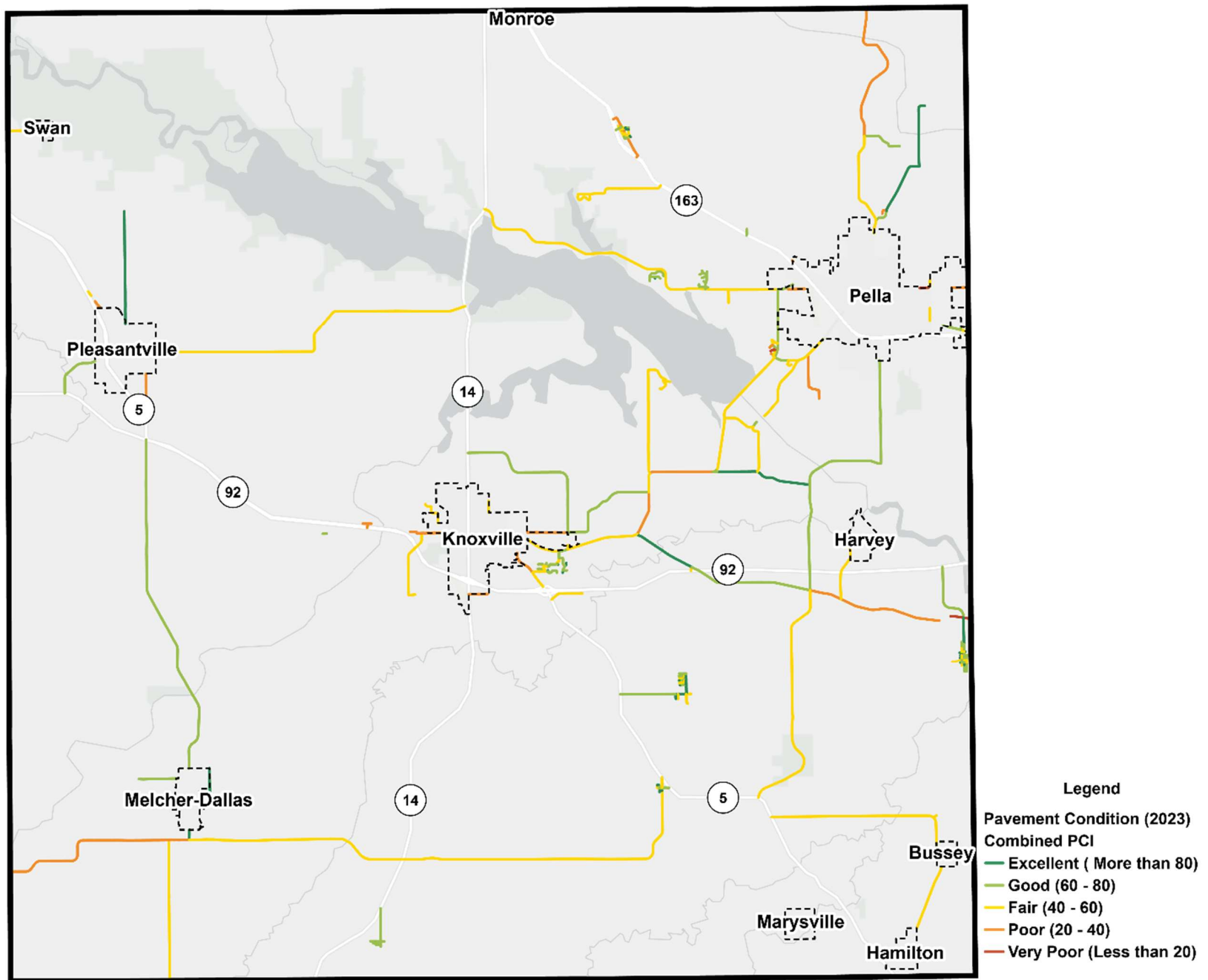
Roadway pavement conditions are collected every 4 years by the Iowa Department of Transportation (DOT) through the Iowa Pavement Management Program (IPMP) at the Institute for Transportation (InTrans) at Iowa State University (ISU). The most recent data collection for Marion County was in 2023 for non-National Highway System (NHS) federal-aid eligible roads. The Pavement Condition Index (PCI) is a numerical measure of pavement condition from 0, representing failed pavement, to 100, representing new pavement. Of the approximate 161 miles

of county roads in Marion County reported in the 2023 period, the median Pavement Condition Index (PCI) was 61 and the average PCI was about 62, indicating the conditions of Marion County roads generally lie between Fair and Good.

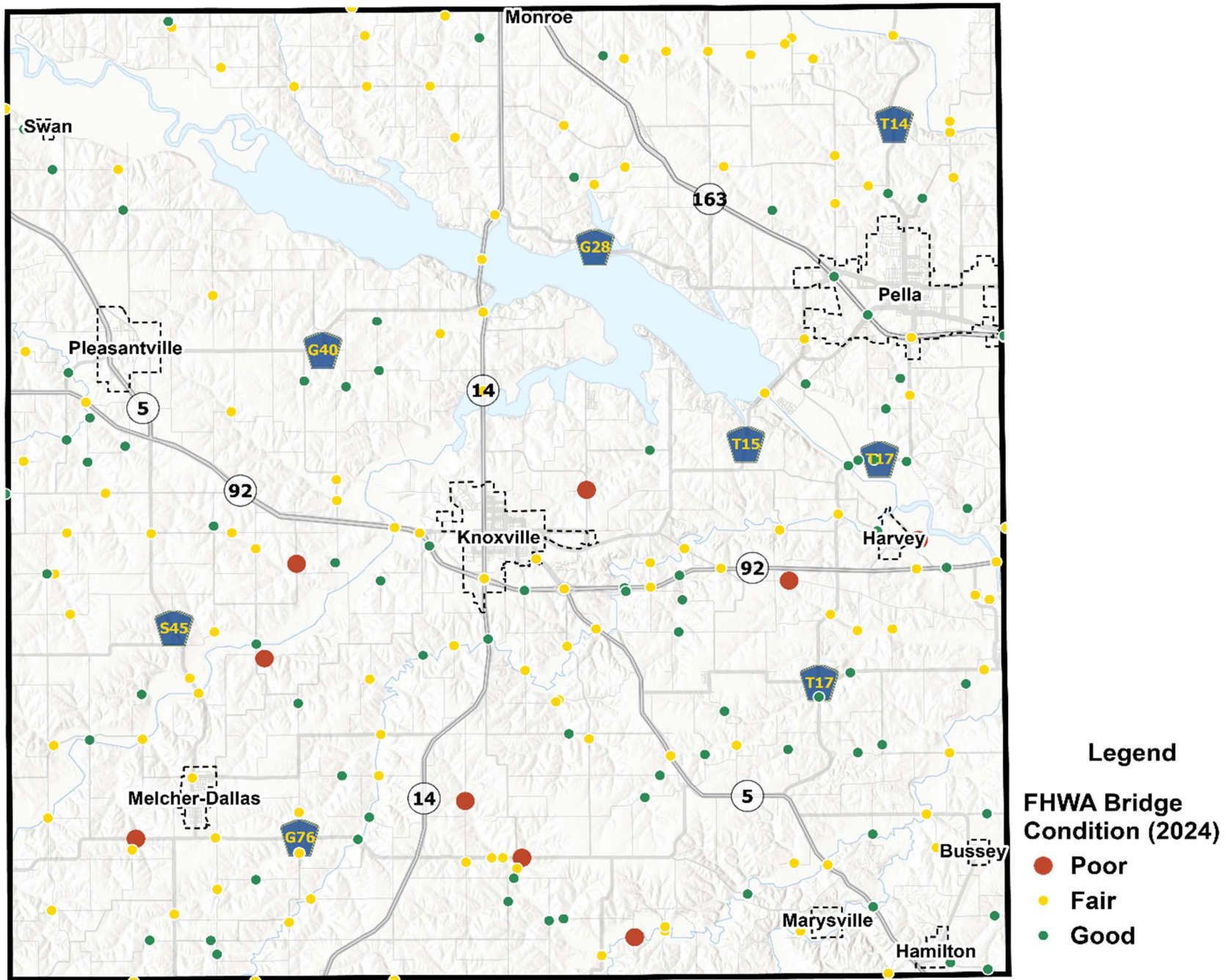
Through investments in regular pavement condition assessments and timely maintenance, Marion County can extend the life of pavement, reduce expensive rehabilitation and reconstruction costs, and enhance the safety and experience for road users.



Source: Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) Concrete Pavement Preservation Guide (2014)



Source: Institute for Transportation (InTrans) at Iowa State University (ISU) / Iowa Department of Transportation (DOT)



Source: Iowa Department of Transportation (DOT)

Marion County has a few historic bridges. These are the Red Rock Dam Bridge (constructed 1967), Wabash Railroad Bridge (constructed 1882), and Harvey Railroad Bridge (constructed 1878 but partially collapsed in March 2025 and demolished summer 2025).

The Federal Highway Administration evaluates the 214 vehicular bridges in Marion County as part of the National Bridge Inventory (NBI) program. The median year of bridge construction was 1982. More than half (57%) of the bridges in Marion County are in Fair condition. About 39% of the bridges are in Good condition. Only 4% of the bridges are in Poor condition.

To rehabilitate bridges in poor condition, Marion County, in collaboration with other counties, cities, and the Iowa Department of Transportation will apply to the various grants and other funding sources.

Railroads

Beyond the road network, Marion County has more than 56 miles of rail lines owned and operated by three Class I Railroads: BNSF, Norfolk Southern, and Union Pacific. The U.S. Department of Transportation (DOT) Surface Transportation Board (STB) classifies railway companies based on their operating revenue.

As of 2023, Class I railroads are categorized by yearly operating revenues of more than \$1.05 billion.¹⁶ According to the Iowa Department of Transportation (DOT)'s Railroad Profiles, the most common commodities that the three railroads carry across Iowa include coal, chemical and allied products, food and kindred products, farm products, and miscellaneous mixed shipments.¹⁷

Airports

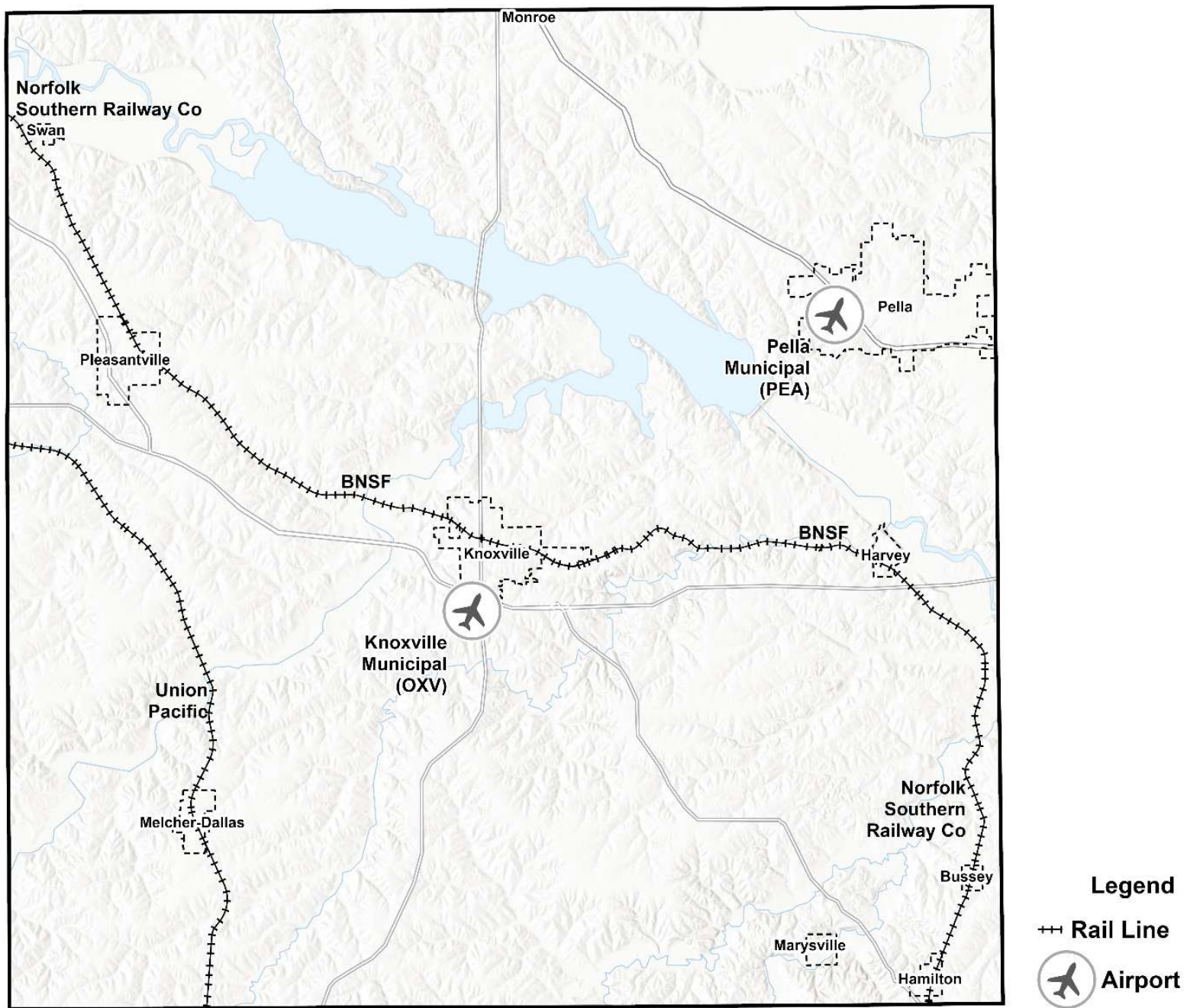
Marion County is also served by two municipal general service airports: Knoxville Municipal Airport (OXV) and Pella Municipal Airport (PEA). As general service airports, both have runways over 4,000 feet and serve small and medium sized business jets for personal flying, business, aircraft services, and aerial applications. According to the Iowa Department of Transportation (DOT)'s 2020 Iowa Aviation System Plan, aircraft storage, aircraft rental/charter, and an airport layout plan are recommended improvements for the the Knoxville Airport; aircraft storage, paved auto parking, and terminal amenities are recommended improvements for the Pella Airport.¹⁸

Marion County supports projects that enhance and improve the infrastructure and operations of rail and air transportation.

¹⁶ Surface Transportation Board (STB). Economic Data.
<https://www.stb.gov/reports-data/economic-data/>

¹⁷ Iowa Department of Transportation (DOT). Iowa's Railroad Profiles.
<https://iowadot.gov/iowarail/iowa-freight-rail/profiles>

¹⁸ Iowa Department of Transportation (DOT). Iowa Aviation System Plan.
<https://iowadot.gov/aviation/studiesreports/systemplanreports>



Source: Iowa Department of Transportation (DOT)

Goal: Maintain Transportation Infrastructure in a State of Good Repair		
Objectives	Actions	Funding
Maintain Paved Roads and Bridges	• Ensure Paved Roads and Bridges are to Legal Standards and Capable of All Systems Over Weight Permit • Provide Proactive Maintenance (crack sealing/filling, seal coating, etc.) • Apply to Federal Land Access Program (FLAP) for Road Improvements • Apply to Better Utilizing Investments to Leverage Development (BUILD)	• Local Funds • State Funds (Farm-to-Market) • Federal Grants (FLAP - Federal Land Access Program, BUILD - Better Utilizing Investments to Leverage Development)
Reduce the Number of Bridges in Poor Condition	• Replace Bridges as Needed • Apply to the Competitive Highway Bridge Program (CHBP) • Apply to Bridge Investment Program (BIP)	• Local Funds • State Funds (Farm-to-Market) • Federal Grants (FLAP - Federal Land Access Program, BUILD - Better Utilizing Investments to Leverage Development, CHBP - Competitive Highway Bridge Program, BIP - Bridge Investment Program)
Goal: Support Transportation Safety and Efficiency Improvements		
Objectives	Actions	Funding
Apply for Safety and Efficiency Improvement Grants	• Apply to Federal Land Access Program (FLAP) for Road Improvements • Apply to Better Utilizing Investments to Leverage Development (BUILD) • Apply to Safe Streets and Roads for All (SS4A)	• Federal Grants (FLAP - Federal Land Access Program, BUILD - Better Utilizing Investments to Leverage Development, SS4A - Safe Streets and Roads for All)

Goal: Enhance Multi-Modal Transportation Options		
Objectives	Actions	Funding
Collaborate with Marion County Conservation to Expand Trails	- Create soft surface trail (hiking trail) around Marion County Park Lake - Expand trail network around Lake Red Rock and connect with other regional trails in Central Iowa	- Local Funds - Federal Grants (FRT - Federal Recreational Trails) - State Grants (SRT - State Recreational Trails, State TAP - Transportation Alternatives Program) - Regional Grants (CIRTPA TAP - Transportation Alternatives Program)
Collaborate with Marion County Zoning on Privately Developed Roads	- Determine whether Marion County will incorporate privately developed roads on a case-by-case basis - Revise Marion County ordinances and codes to ensure that privately developed roads reserve the appropriate amount of right-of-way, if not constructed to county road standards	- Local Funds - State Funds (RISE - Revitalize Iowa's Sound Economy)
Support Public Transit, Railroad, and Airport Projects	Provide support for any public transit, railroad, and airport projects as needed	As needed

Economic Development



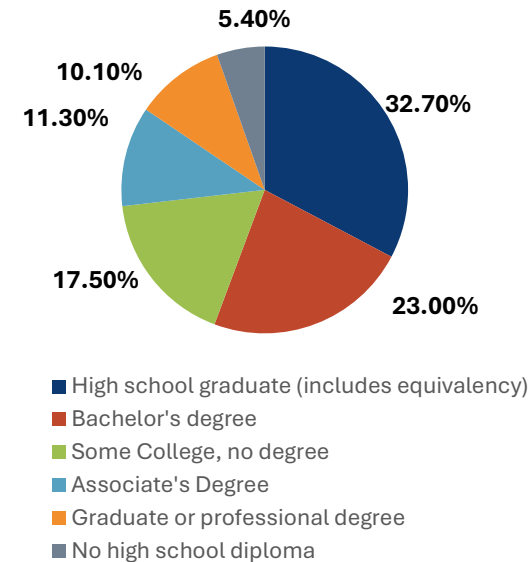
Economic development is one of Marion County's top priorities with 16.8% of the responses from the 2025 Marion County Community Survey selecting the topic as one of the top three priorities. Economic development provides a means for Marion County to proactively and intentionally influence the local economy to guide development and ensure a good and productive quality of life.

Income

Marion County residents with higher educational attainment have higher median earnings, and Marion County has higher median earnings than neighboring counties, with the exception of Polk and Warren Counties. For the population age 25 and over in Marion County, about 95% have high school diplomas or higher and about 33% have bachelor's degrees or higher. These rates are similar to the statewide rate of high school diploma or higher of about 93% and the rate of bachelor's degree or higher of about 31%.¹⁹

Marion County's median and average household incomes are above most of its neighboring counties and Iowa, but below Polk County and Warren County. In 2023, the median household income in Marion County was \$78,059 and the average household income was \$100,349. The distribution of households by income brackets in Marion County is similar with its neighboring counties and the state. Even with higher household incomes, about 63% of households in Marion County have household incomes below \$100,000, and about 48% of households in Marion County have household incomes below \$75,000.

Educational Attainment in Marion County



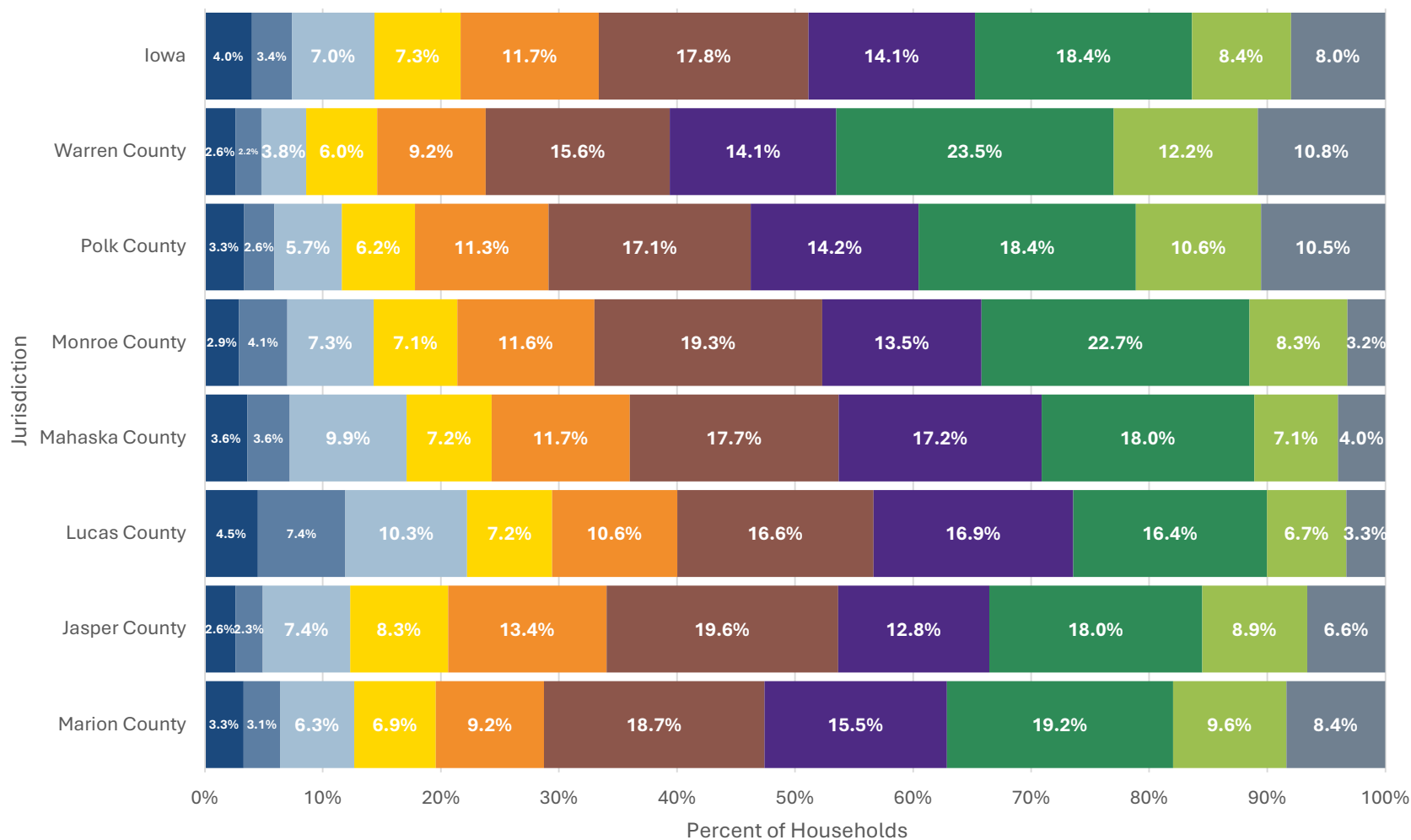
Source: 2023 American Community Survey (ACS) 5-Year Estimates Table S1501

	Median Household Income	Average Household Income
Marion County	\$78,059	\$100,349
Jasper County	\$70,128	\$93,350
Lucas County	\$67,921	\$77,148
Mahaska County	\$69,019	\$84,768
Monroe County	\$72,518	\$82,429
Polk County	\$81,621	\$106,356
Warren County	\$92,990	\$111,116
Iowa	\$73,147	\$95,968

Source: 2023 American Community Survey (ACS) 5-Year Estimates Table S1901

¹⁹ US Census Bureau American Community Survey (ACS) 5-Year Estimates 2023-2019. Table S1501.

Households by Income



■ Less than \$10,000 ■ \$10,000 to \$14,999 ■ \$15,000 to \$24,999 ■ \$25,000 to \$34,999
 ■ \$35,000 to \$49,999 ■ \$50,000 to \$74,999 ■ \$75,000 to \$99,999 ■ \$100,000 to \$149,999
 ■ \$150,000 to \$199,999 ■ \$200,000 or more

Source: 2023 American Community Survey (ACS) 5-Year Estimates Table DP03

Educational Attainment	Median Earnings in the Past 12 Months							
	Marion County	Jasper County	Lucas County	Mahaska County	Monroe County	Polk County	Warren County	Iowa
Less than high school graduate	\$32,292	\$29,215	\$42,540	\$26,957	\$40,313	\$32,452	\$36,800	\$35,519
High school graduate (includes equivalency)	\$44,359	\$42,317	\$44,852	\$40,149	\$48,516	\$40,770	\$47,399	\$40,329
Some college or associate's degree	\$50,684	\$46,319	\$43,056	\$41,565	\$51,020	\$50,366	\$52,611	\$46,344
Bachelor's degree	\$61,512	\$63,132	\$50,357	\$50,323	\$56,705	\$68,100	\$69,211	\$61,245
Graduate or professional degree	\$80,761	\$78,868	\$69,018	\$69,137	\$59,333	\$83,591	\$83,620	\$78,533
Total	\$53,483	\$47,200	\$45,513	\$44,056	\$52,515	\$54,313	\$58,575	\$49,543

Source: 2023 American Community Survey (ACS) 5-Year Estimates Table B20004

Employment

As defined by the US Census, “industry” is the kind of business that employs a person, while “occupation” is the kind of work that a person does at their job. About half (50.8%) of employment in Marion County is in the manufacturing industries (25.1%) and educational services and healthcare and social services (25.7%). This distribution is similar to the neighboring counties of Mahaska and Monroe, where the two industries make up 46.9% and 49.9% of employment, respectively. Meanwhile in Iowa, about 50.3% of employment is spread across the industries of manufacturing (14.7%), retail trade (11.4%), and educational services and healthcare and social services (24.2%). The percentage of employment by occupations within Marion County is similar to the distribution in neighboring counties and in Iowa. Nearly 60% of employment in Marion County is in the occupations of management, business, science, and arts (40.8%) and production, transportation, and material moving (19.0%).

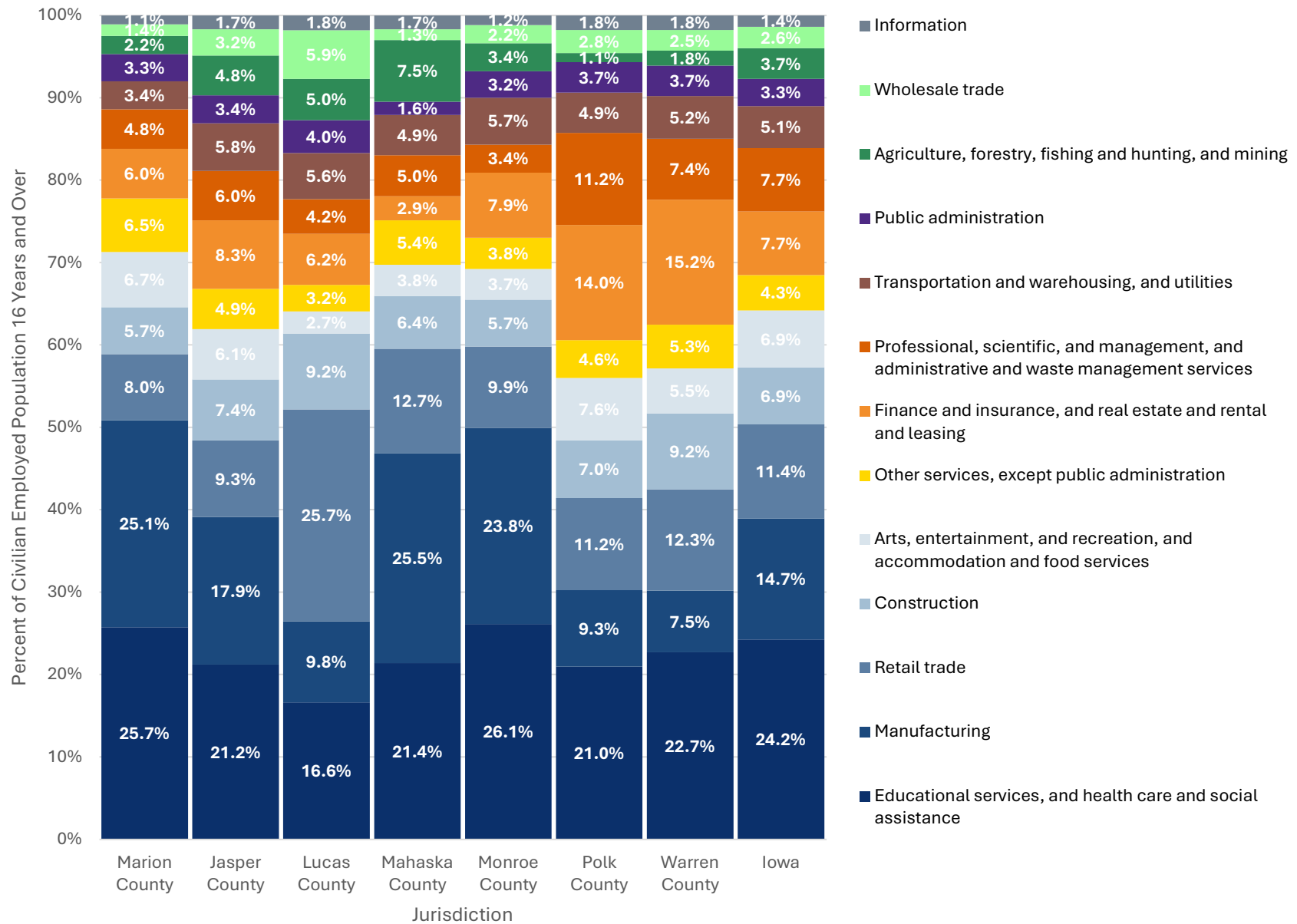
As of July 2025, the largest employers in Marion County with more than 250 employees are Pella Corp, Pella Regional Health, 3M, Weiler, Christian Opportunity Center, and Vermeer Corp.²⁰ For a list of the top five employers by industry in Marion County, see Appendix. There are opportunities for Marion County to support the retention and expansion of businesses and to assist businesses with exit and continuity planning.



Weiler Operations Source: Marion County Development

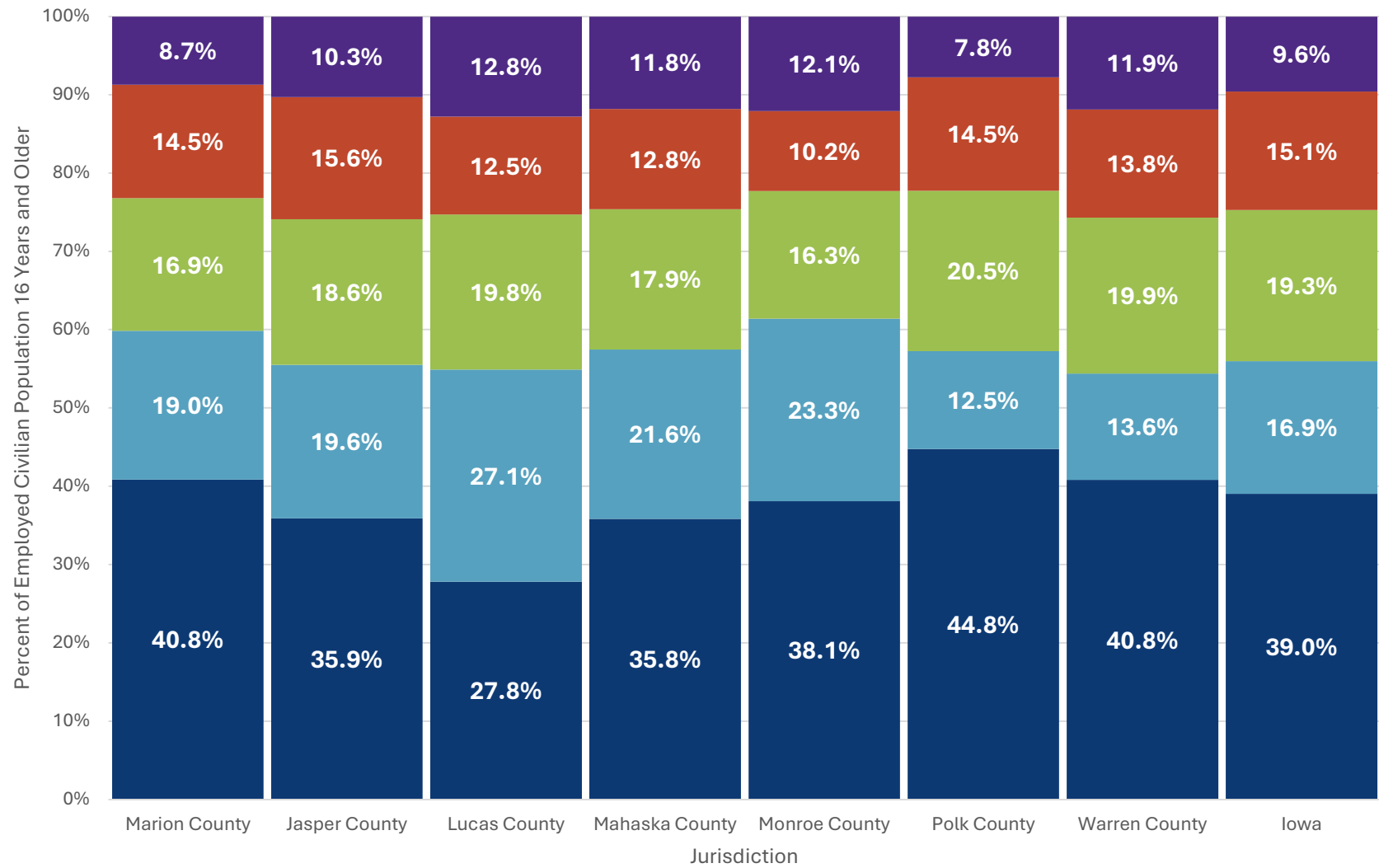
²⁰ Employer Database. Iowa Workforce Development. July 2025. <https://workforce.iowa.gov/labor-market-information/industry-employers/employer-database/data>

Employment by Industry



Source: 2023 American Community Survey (ACS) 5-Year Estimates Table DP03

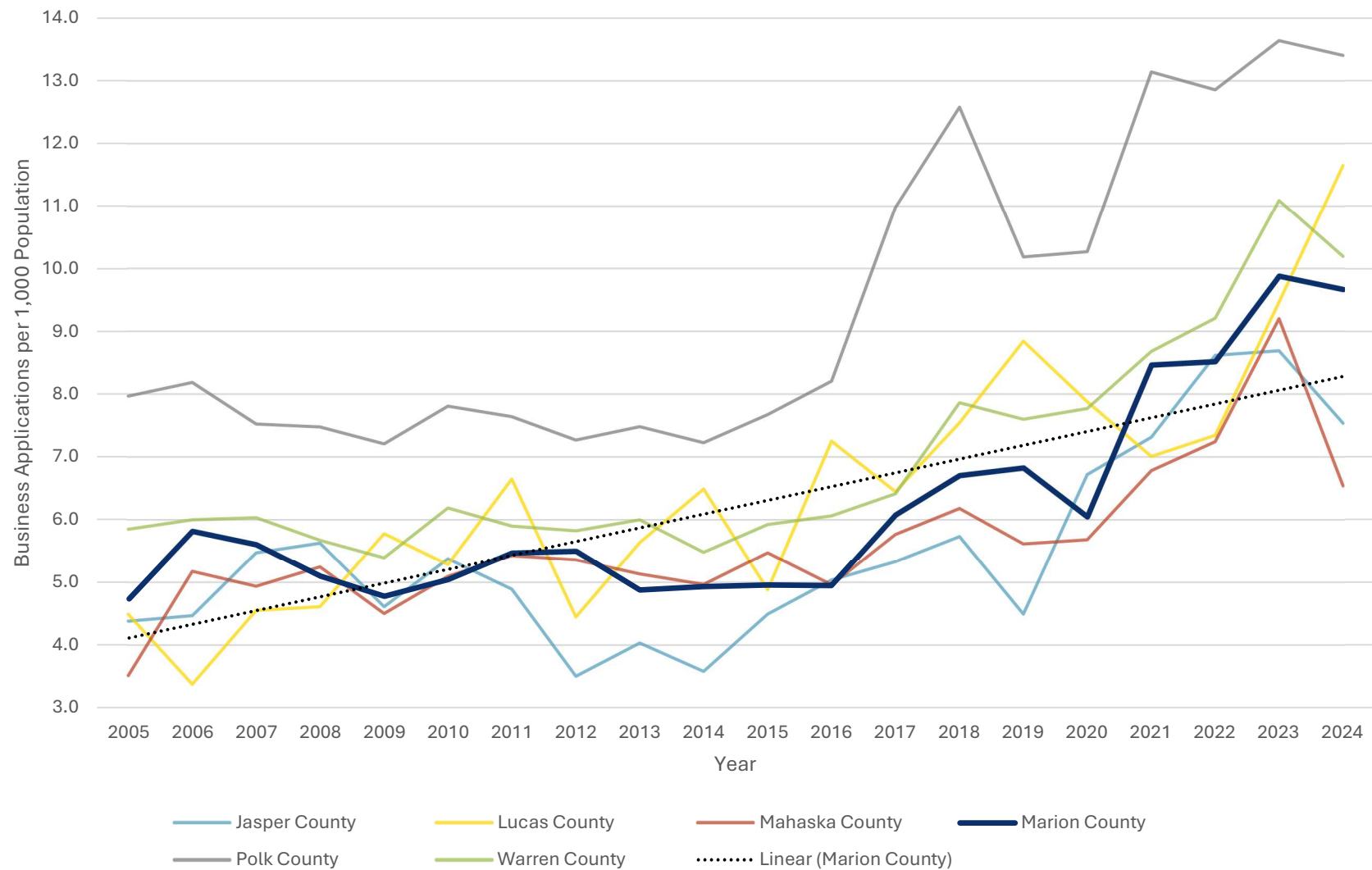
Employment by Occupation



- Management, business, science, and arts occupations
- Production, transportation, and material moving occupations
- Sales and office occupations
- Service occupations
- Natural resources, construction, and maintenance occupations

Source: 2023 American Community Survey (ACS) 5-Year Estimates Table DP03

Business Applications



Source: US Census Bureau

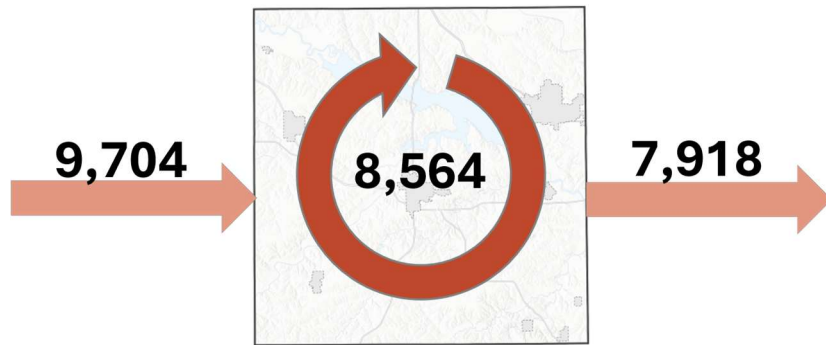
Business formation in Marion County through annual business applications has steadily been trending upwards since 2005. In comparison with neighboring counties, Marion County ranks in the middle for the number of annual business applications per

thousand population. Though the COVID-19 Pandemic caused a sharp decline, Marion County has since recovered strongly. Marion County continues to support and cultivate the entrepreneurial and leadership environment.

Commuting

Marion County serves as an employment center. This is shown best by the commuting flow data from the US Census Bureau. In 2022, it is estimated that 8,564 people were employed in and lived in Marion County. About 9,704 people lived outside of Marion County and worked in Marion County, while only 7,918 people lived in Marion and worked outside of Marion County. Marion County is a net importer of workers, though inflow, outflow, and people staying in Marion County are all very similar.

Commuting Flows of Marion County



Source: US Census Bureau, Center for Economic Studies, Longitudinal Employer Household Dynamics (2022)

When comparing these figures to neighboring counties, Marion County stands out for having more people enter the county than leave for work. The inflow of workers in Marion County exceeds its neighbors by both number of workers and as a percentage of county workers. Most neighboring counties experience a significant outflow of workers on a daily basis. Marion County has a strong need for workers. The large manufacturing companies in Marion County undoubtedly help to draw in workers from around the region.

On the flip side, those 9,700 workers who travel to Marion County for work do not live in Marion County. In the future, Marion County should support policies that entice traveling workers to plant roots in Marion County and live where they work.

Commuting Flows of Neighboring Counties			
County	Inflow	Within	Outflow
Marion	9,704	8,564	7,918
Jasper	3,902	3,710	10,259
Lucas	1,502	777	2,244
Mahaska	4,235	2,775	5,938
Monroe	1,408	775	2,115
Warren	5,750	3,226	18,543

Source: US Census Bureau, Center for Economic Studies, Longitudinal Employer Household Dynamics (2022)

The vast majority of people (about 80%) in Marion County drove alone to work. Some noticeable changes in transportation to work include a decrease in carpooling and an increase in working from home after the COVID-19 pandemic. According to the American Community Survey (ACS), the share of people who carpoled in Marion County decreased from 8.5% in 2015 to 5.8% in 2023. The share of people who worked from home in Marion County increased from 5.8% in 2015 to 9.7% in 2023.

Means of Transportation to Work	
Drove Alone	79.1%
Worked from Home	9.7%
Carpooled	5.8%
Walked	3.7%
Taxi, motorcycle, or other means	1.1%
Bicycle	0.3%
Public Transportation (excluding taxi)	0.2%

Source: 2023 American Community Survey (ACS) 5-Year Estimates Table S0801

Tourism & Retail Sales

Tourism and its economic impact in Marion County have rebounded in recent years since the COVID pandemic. Visitor spending fell to a low of \$33.86 million in 2020 but increased to \$49.17 million in 2022, exceeding pre-COVID levels. Of the \$53.3 million in direct visitor spending in Marion County in 2023, spending was largest in the categories of transportation (\$14.7 million or 27.6%) and food and beverage (12.6 million or 23.7%) followed by lodging (\$9.3 million or 17.4%), recreation (\$8.9 million or 16.7%), and retail (\$7.8 million or 14.5%). Local taxes related to tourism have not yet recovered to pre-COVID levels. There is opportunity to increase tourism in Marion County, such as capitalizing on natural and cultural amenities.

Category	Direct Visitor Spending by Category (millions)				
	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023
Transportation	\$12.7	\$8.8	\$11.8	\$14.0	\$14.7
Food and Beverage	\$10.4	\$8.5	\$10.3	\$11.1	\$12.6
Lodging	\$8.7	\$5.1	\$7.6	\$8.6	\$9.3
Recreation	\$9.1	\$5.6	\$7.4	\$8.1	\$8.9
Retail	\$7.6	\$5.9	\$7.1	\$7.3	\$7.8
Total	\$48.4	\$33.9	\$44.3	\$49.2	\$53.3

Source: Tourism Economics via Iowa Tourism Office

Retail sales in Marion County have also been increasing in the most recent years. Though real sales per capita in Marion County saw a slight decline from fiscal year 2000 to fiscal year 2011, there has been growth in real sales per capita since fiscal year 2011. In fiscal year 2024 (which began July 1, 2023 and ended June 30, 2024), real sales per capita was \$13,719 in Marion County.



Source: Marion County Development

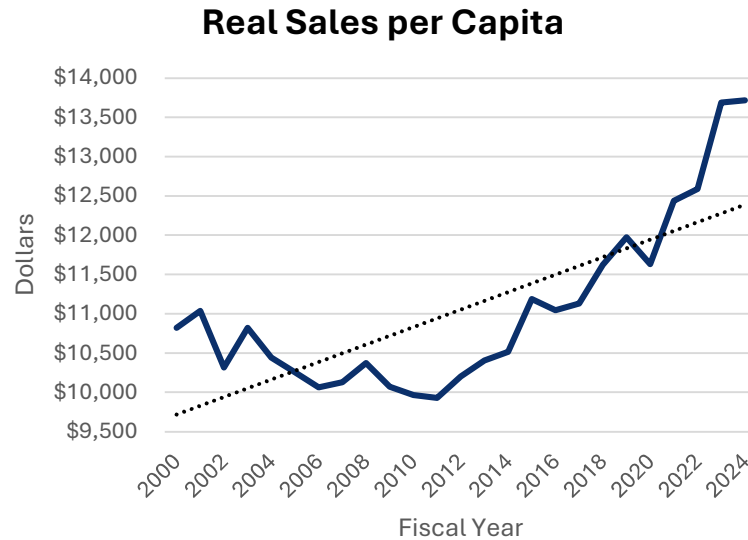


Source: Tourism Economics via Iowa Tourism Office

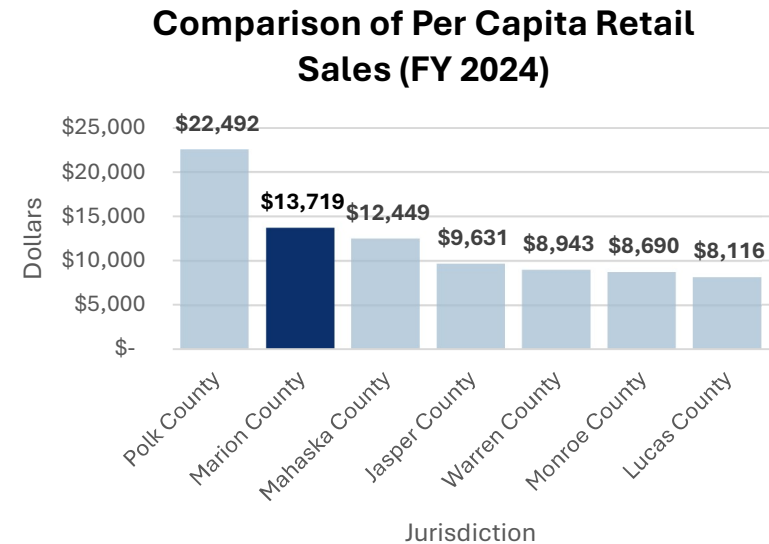
Compared with its neighboring counties, Marion County has one of the highest per capita retail sales. The only other neighboring county with higher per capita retail sales is Polk County.

Category	Local Taxes (millions)				
	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023
Direct Local Taxes	\$2.80	\$2.21	\$2.44	\$2.54	\$2.67
Total Local Taxes	\$4.47	\$3.68	\$4.00	\$4.13	\$4.27

Source: Tourism Economics via Iowa Tourism Office



Source: Iowa Department of Revenue Annual Sales and Use Tax Report via Iowa State University (ISU) Retail Trade Analysis



Source: Iowa Department of Revenue Annual Sales and Use Tax Report via Iowa State University (ISU) Retail Trade Analysis

Goal: Support Existing Businesses and Continue Diverse Economic Development		
Objectives	Actions	Funding
Retain and expand businesses	- Annual visits to prime employers to identify trends and opportunities for growth - Update Annual Business Report and Direct Economic Development Strategy	Local Funds
Assist with exit planning and continuity planning	Work with local businesses and UNI's Advance Iowa on business exit and continuity planning	Local Funds
Goal: Attract, Retain, and Upskill Workforce Talent		
Objectives	Actions	Funding
Leadership Red Rock	Promote and increase participation in Leadership Red Rock	Local Funds
Startup Red Rock: Future Founders Initiative	Promote and increase the next generation of entrepreneurs with a startup bootcamp series, micro-grants for student startups, scholarships for top entrepreneurs, expanded pitch competition, entrepreneur-in-residence program, and field trips to innovation hubs	- Local Funds - Grants (Rural Business Initiative)
Top 10 Under 40	Promote and continue the Top 10 Under 40 to recognize outstanding young professionals, share their stories, and honor their accomplishments	Local Funds
Comprehensively develop workforce housing	Work with other Marion County departments and community partners to comprehensively develop workforce housing	- Local Funds - State Grants (Workforce Housing Tax Credit)
Goal: Promote Marion County for Business, Tourism, and Living		
Objectives	Actions	Funding
Increase promotion of Marion County	- Brand Marion County for digital marketing campaigns in workforce attraction, tourism, and business development - Apply to the Iowa Tourism Marketing Grant	- Local Funds - State Grants (Iowa Tourism Marketing Grant)
Develop attractions within Marion County, such as cultural amenities and natural and recreation amenities (Lake Red Rock)	Work with partners to develop Marion County attractions and apply for grant funding	State Grants (Community Attraction and Tourism Grant, Destination Iowa Grant)

Public Infrastructure & Utilities

A photograph of a city street at dusk. In the center is a long, narrow canal that reflects the surrounding environment. On either side of the canal are brick buildings with large windows. Street lamps with warm yellow light are positioned along the sidewalks. A black metal railing runs along the edge of the canal. In the background, a church with a tall spire is visible. The sky is a mix of blue and grey, indicating twilight. The overall atmosphere is calm and urban.

Public infrastructure is one of Marion County’s top community priorities with 14.2% of the responses from the 2025 Marion County Community Survey selecting the topic as their top three priorities. Roads and pavement are covered in the Transportation Chapter.

Electricity and Natural Gas

Marion County is serviced by multiple electrical providers. MidAmerican Energy provides electricity for the majority of Marion County. In 2024, MidAmerican’s generation capacity consisted of 62% wind, 22% coal, 11% natural gas/other, 4% nuclear, and 1% solar.²¹ The remainder of Marion County is serviced by Pella Cooperative Electric Association, Chariton Valley Electric Cooperative, and Interstate Power and Light Company. The City of Pella is serviced by its own municipal electrical utility.

The Red Rock Reservoir has a hydroelectric generating facility



Source: Missouri River Energy Services (MRES)

built and operated by Missouri River Energy Services (MRES). The Red Rock Hydroelectric Project (RRHP) is the second-largest hydropower generating facility in Iowa and has a rated capacity of 43.1 megawatts but is capable of up to 55 megawatts.²²

²¹ “Our Energy Mix.” MidAmerican Energy.

<https://www.midamericanenergy.com/energy-mix>

²² “Hydroelectricity.” Missouri River Energy Services (MRES).

<https://www.mrenergy.com/energy-resources/generation/hydroelectricity>

As of September 2025, there is approximately 90.4 miles of natural gas pipeline in Marion County according to the National Pipeline Mapping System. The Natural Gas Pipeline Company of America has 55.8 miles, MidAmerican Energy has 27.4 miles, and Alliant Energy has 7.2 miles.

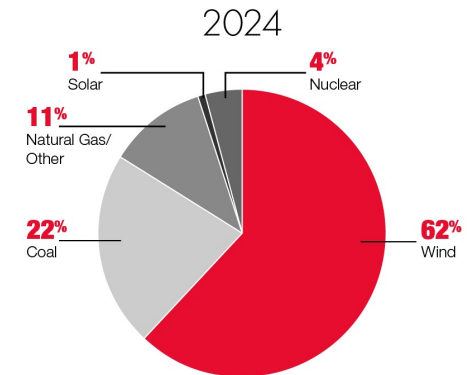
The Natural Gas Pipeline Company of America’s interstate pipeline runs east-west through Marion County. The National Pipeline Mapping System (NPMS) shows pipelines branching off towards Pleasantville, Melcher Dallas, Attica, Harvey, Knoxville, and Hamilton.

The National Renewable Energy Laboratory (NREL) modeled Marion County’s energy use by sector in 2025.²³ About 91% of Marion County’s energy use are from non-electric transportation (36.4%), industrial electricity (22%), industrial natural gas (21.2%), and residential non-electricity (10.9%).

Households across Marion County have different household energy and transportation burdens, which is the proportion of household income spent on housing energy and transportation (excluding public transportation) fuel costs. Households that spend more than 6% of their income on energy bills are defined

²³ Information based on modeled results that have not been calibrated against historical data. Model did not include air, marine, or train transportation.

GENERATION CAPACITY



Source: MidAmerican Energy

as having high energy burden.²⁴ Households that spend more than 4.2% of their income on transportation fuel costs are defined as having high transportation burden.

Overall, the total energy burden on Marion County households is 6.81% of household income. Housing energy burden is low (2.93%), though transportation fuel cost burden is medium (3.88%).



Source: National Renewable Energy Laboratory (NREL)

Of the Census Tracts in Marion County, there are three Census Tracts with the highest energy burden: Tract 304.01, Tract 306, and Tract 307. Census Tract 306, in southwestern Marion County, has the largest energy burden (9.94%) with medium housing energy burden (4.57%) and high transportation fuel cost burden (5.37%). Census Tract 304.01 and Census Tract 307 are similar in total energy burden (7.65% - 7.94%) with low housing energy burden (3.25% - 3.26%) but high transportation fuel cost burden (4.39% - 4.69%).

Census Tract	Housing Energy Burden	Transportation Burden	Total Energy Burden
304.01	3.25% (Low)	4.69% (High)	7.94%
306	4.57% (Medium)	5.37% (High)	9.94%
307	3.26% (Low)	4.39% (High)	7.65%
Marion County	2.93% (Low)	3.88% (Medium)	6.81%

Source: National Renewable Energy Laboratory (NREL)

Some opportunities to reduce housing energy burden and transportation energy burden in Marion County²⁵ include:

- Upgrade electric furnaces to variable-speed heat pumps in residential housing units and direct expansion rooftop units (DX RTUs) to advanced hybrid RTUs (variable air volume fans) in commercial units
- Add heat recovery system to central air handling units
- Use of LED lighting
- Insulate (basement wall, attic, roof, wall sheathing and insulation) and seal (air sealing, duct sealing)
- Low-emissivity storm doors in residential housing units
- Use of smart thermostats
- Increase adoption of fuel efficient vehicles, especially among low-income households²⁶

²⁴ "How High Are Household Energy Burdens?" American Council for an Energy-Efficient Economy. 2020.

<https://www.aceee.org/sites/default/files/pdfs/u2006.pdf>

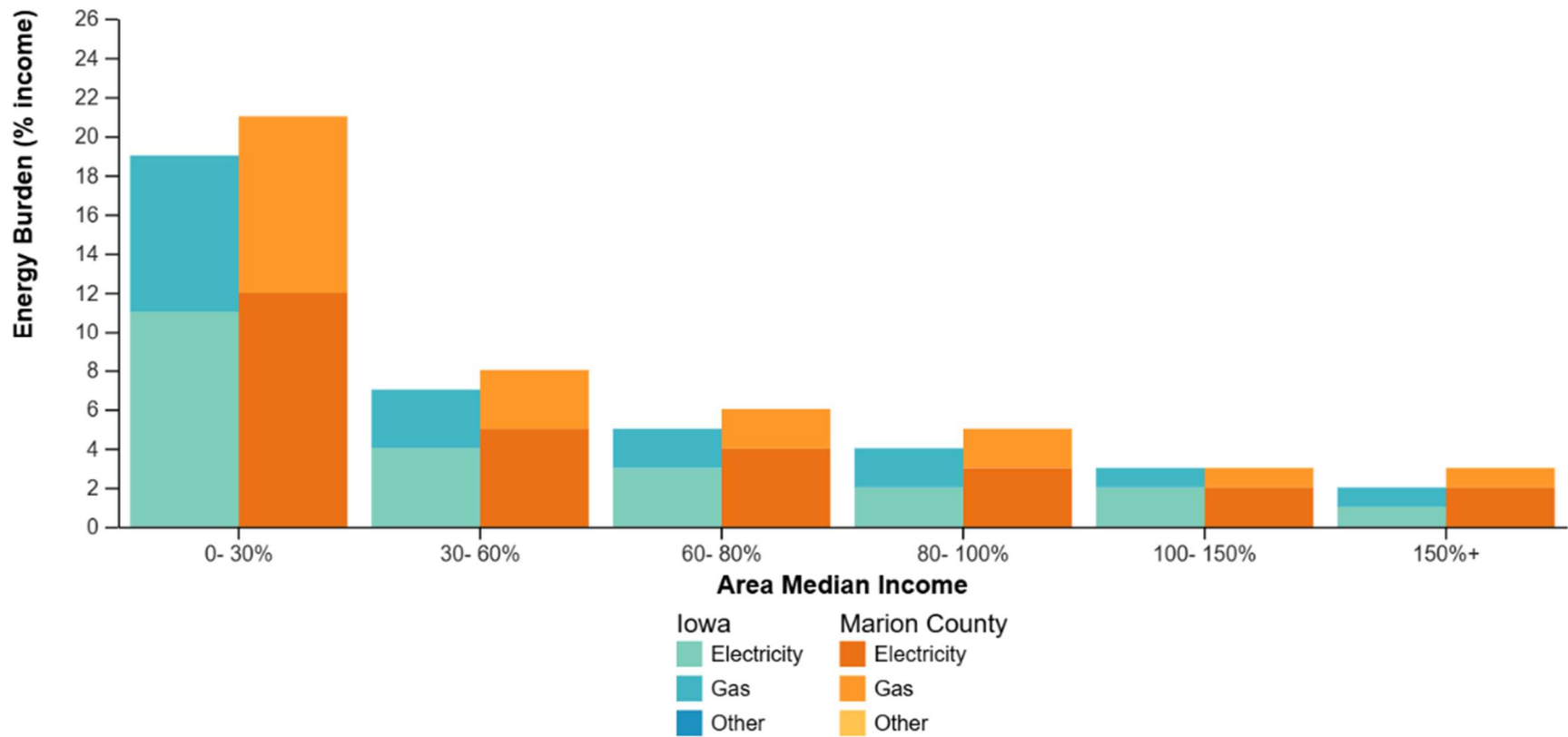
²⁵ "Scenario Planner Energy Planning Guide." SLOPE: State and Local Planning for Energy. National Renewable Energy Laboratory (NREL).

November 26, 2025. <https://maps.nrel.gov/slope/energy-planning-guides/scenario-planner?geoid=G1901250#about>

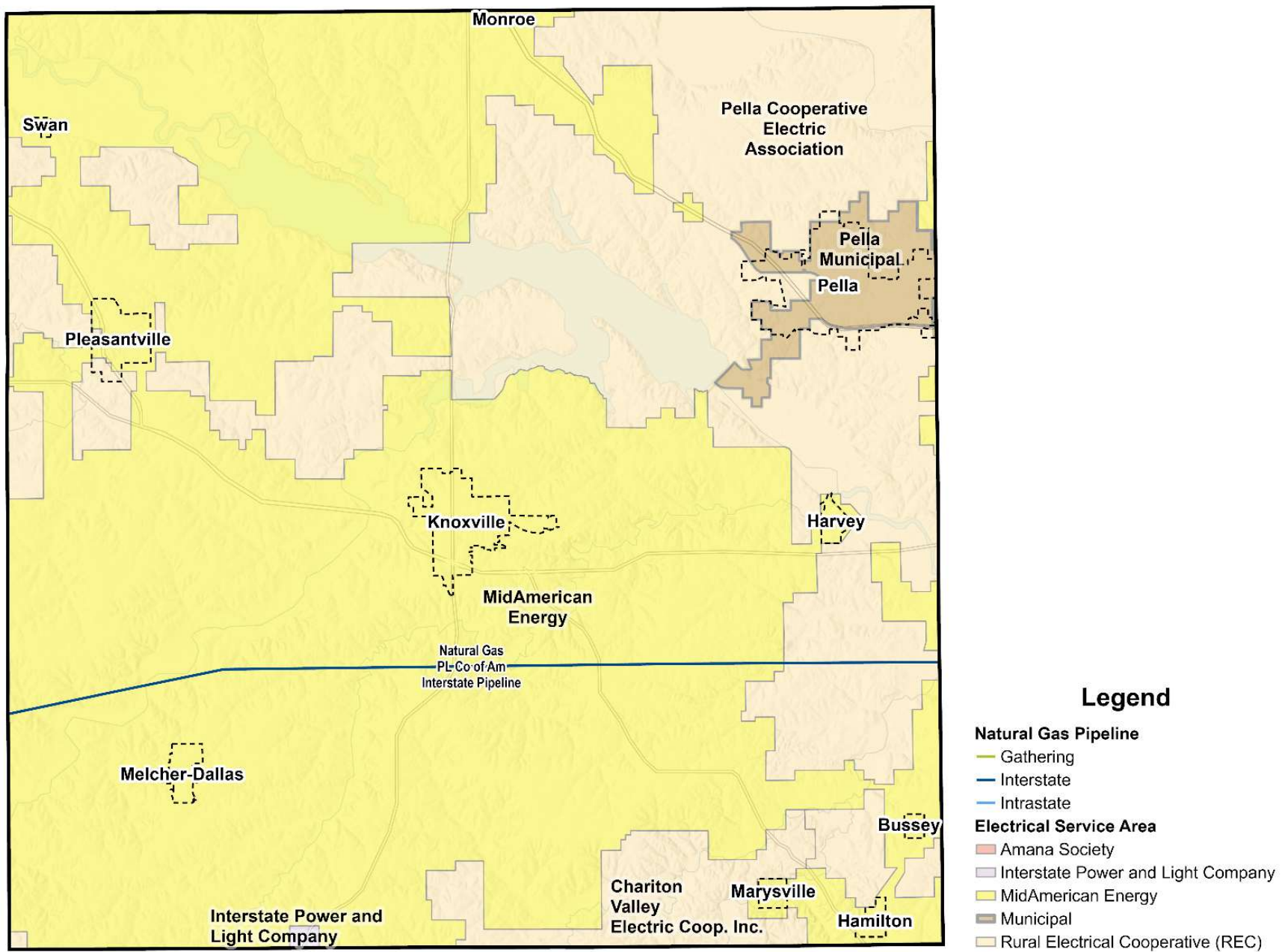
²⁶ "Affordability of Household Transportation Fuel Costs by Region and Socioeconomic Factors." Energy Systems Division, Argonne National Laboratory. December 2020.

<https://publications.anl.gov/anlpubs/2021/01/165141.pdf>

Energy Burden for Iowa and Marion County

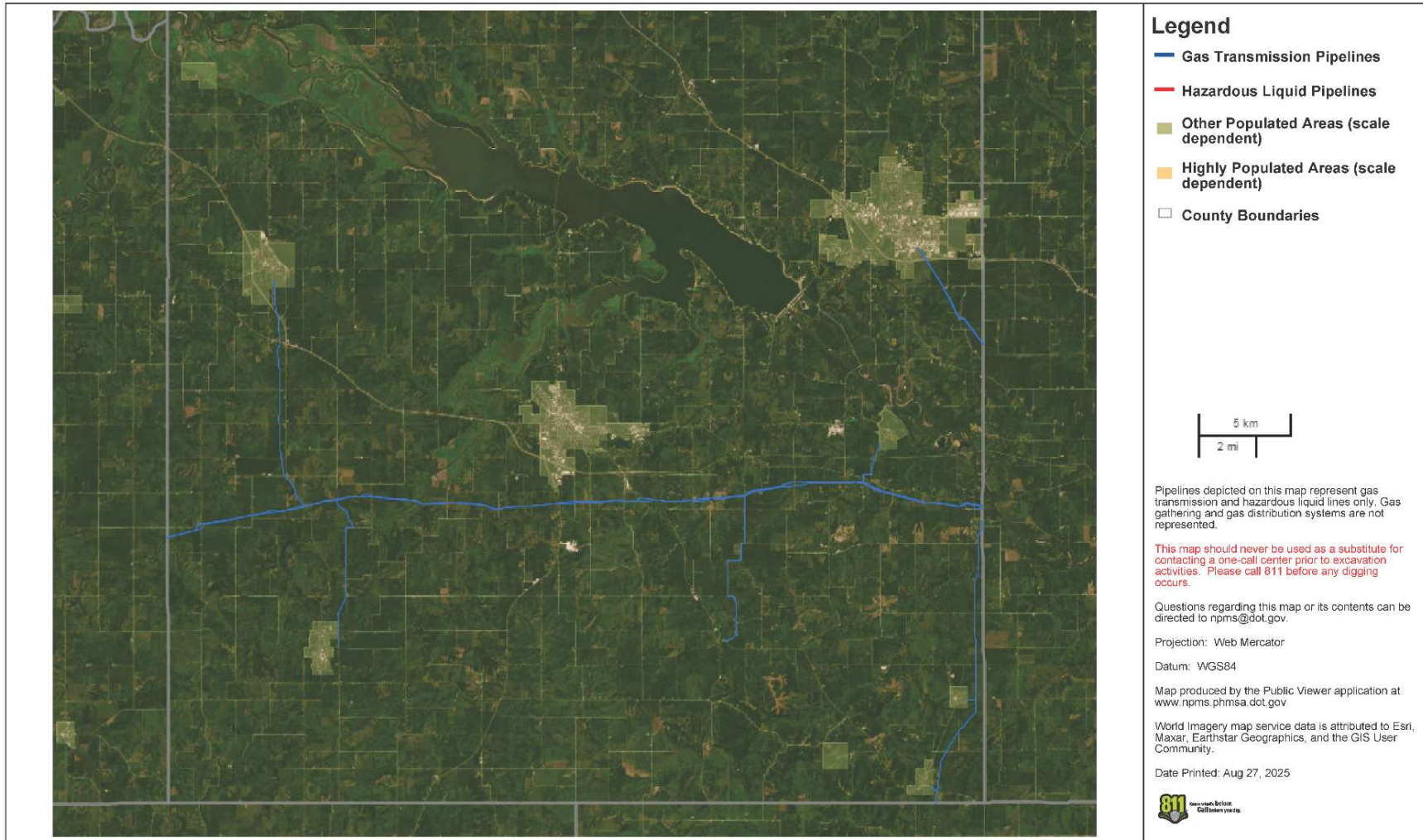


Source: US Department of Energy Low-Income Energy Affordability Data (LEAD) Tool (2022)



Source: Iowa Utilities Commission; US Department of Homeland Security

NATIONAL PIPELINE MAPPING SYSTEM



Source: National Pipeline Mapping System (NPMS)

Water

Marion County is serviced by three water districts: Iowa Regional Utilities Association (IRUA) doing business as Central Iowa Water

Association (CIWA), Marion

County Rural Water District, and Rathbun Regional Water Association. Marion County Rural Water District serves most of unincorporated Marion County, including Swan, and sources their water from groundwater, purchased from Knoxville Water Works and Pleasantville Water Works. IRUA contracts with Newton, Marshalltown, and Pella Waterworks for its water supply to serve the northern portions of Marion County. Pella Waterworks' water is sourced from the Cambrian-Jordan and Cambrian-Ordovician aquifers and from Alluvial wells along the Des Moines River. IRUA also provides water to South Shore Heights, with groundwater purchased from Knoxville Water Works, and to Pershing Utilities, with groundwater purchased from Pleasantville Water Works and Knoxville Water Works. The Rathbun Regional Water Association serves the southern portions of Marion County and sources their water from the Chariton River and Rathbun Lake.



Source: MIPA

Solid Waste

Formed in 1994, the South Central Iowa Solid Waste Agency (SCISWA) is an inter-governmental organization that manages the waste for Lucas, Marion, Monroe, and Poweshiek

Counties. The SCISWA Landfill, formerly the Marion County Landfill, is located near Tracy in Marion County on approximately 600 acres, once the site of a strip coal mine.²⁷ SCISWA operates a transfer station near Malcolm in Poweshiek County, where waste is collected and hauled daily to the SCISWA Landfill in Marion County. SCISWA provides additional services, including a wood chipper for counties and cities to rent at no charge.²⁸



Source: South Central Iowa Solid Waste Agency (SCISWA)

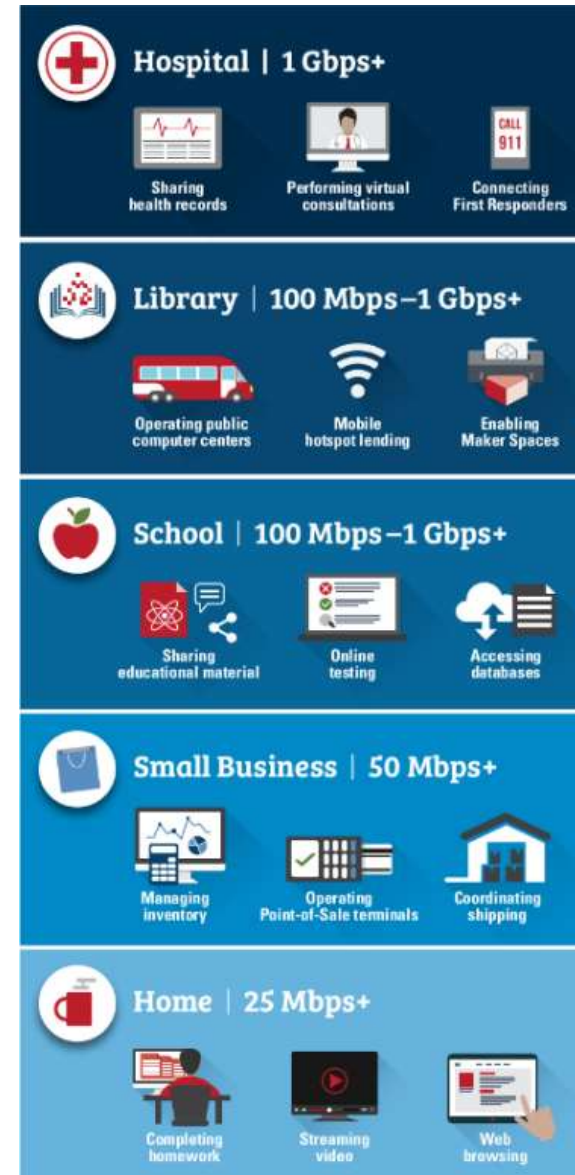
²⁷ "About Us." South Central Iowa Solid Waste Agency (SCISWA). <https://sciswa.org/about/>

²⁸ "Municipal Wood Chipper Rental." South Central Iowa Solid Waste Agency (SCISWA). <https://sciswa.org/municipal-services/municipal-wood-chipper-rental/>

Broadband

In March 2024, the Federal Communications Commission (FCC) increased its broadband speed benchmark to downloads of 100 megabits per second (mb/s) and uploads of 20 megabits per second (mb/s).²⁹ With increasing connections to the internet for various activities from work to education and social connections to shopping, broadband access and speed is more important than ever. The National Telecommunications and Information Administration (NTIA) provides examples of the different broadband speeds and different usage.

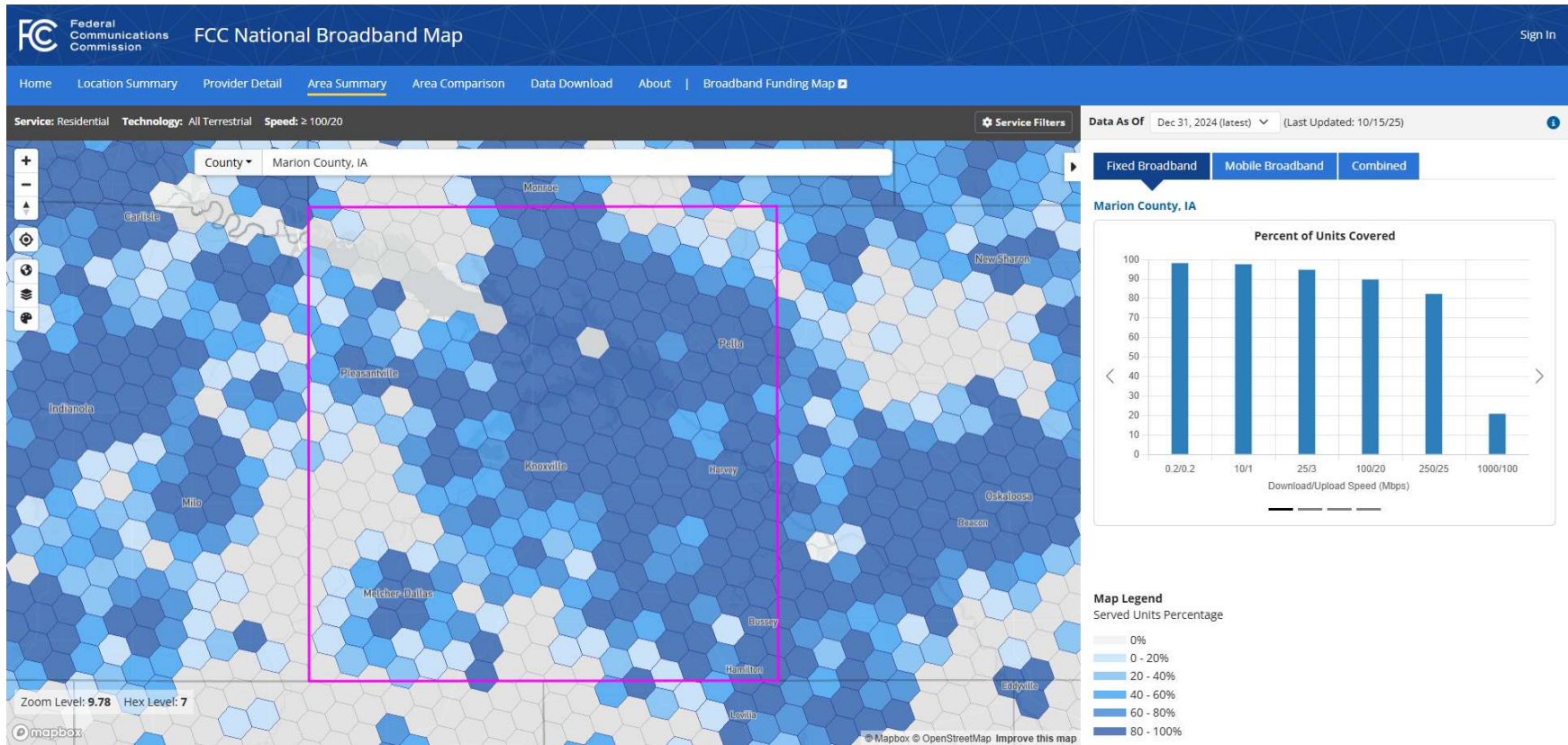
With terrestrial broadband, about 90% of residential units and 89% of business units in Marion County are covered by 100 mb/s download and 20 mb/s upload broadband service. The southwestern portion of unincorporated Marion County, near Melcher-Dallas, is the most underserved for fixed broadband.



Categories of Broadband Speed and Usage Examples

Source: NTIA/BroadbandUSA

²⁹ “FCC Increases Broadband Speed Benchmark.” Federal Communications Commission (FCC). March 14, 2024. <https://www.fcc.gov/document/fcc-increases-broadband-speed-benchmark>



National Broadband Map and Dashboard for Residential Broadband (100 mb/s download; 20 mb/s upload) in Marion County as of Dec 31, 2024
Source: Federal Communications Commission (FCC)

Goal: Support Energy, Water, Waste, and Broadband Projects and Infrastructure		
Objectives	Actions	Funding
Support projects that reduce the energy burden on Marion County residents	• Work with utilities and other partners on energy production and energy efficiency/conservation projects	• Local Funding • State Funding (REAP - Rural Energy for America)
Support projects that improve water for Marion County residents	• Work with utilities and other partners on water projects	• Local Funding • State Funding (WTFAP - Wastewater & Drinking Water Treatment Financial Assistance Program, CDBG Water & Sewer Fund, Clean Water State Revolving Fund)
Support projects that reduce solid waste in Marion County	• Work with other partners on solid waste projects	• Local Funding • State Funding (SWAP – Solid Waste Alternatives Program) • Federal Funding (SWIFR – Solid Waste Infrastructure for Recycling, Solid Waste Management Grant)
Support projects that expand broadband for Marion County residents	• Work with other partners on broadband projects	• Local Funding • State Funding (Empower Rural Iowa Broadband Grant) • Federal Funding (BEAD – Broadband, Equity, Access, and Deployment Grant)

Community Facilities & Services



The community facilities and services in Marion County exemplify the commitment to the health, safety, and welfare of county residents. These essential services assist community members in their everyday lives and at times of emergency or need.

Education and Childcare

There are seven school districts that serve Marion County:

- Knoxville Community School District
- Melcher-Dallas Community School District
- Prairie City Monroe (PCM) Community School District
- Pella Community School District,
- Pleasantville Community School District
- Southeast Polk Community School District
- Twin Cedars Community School District.

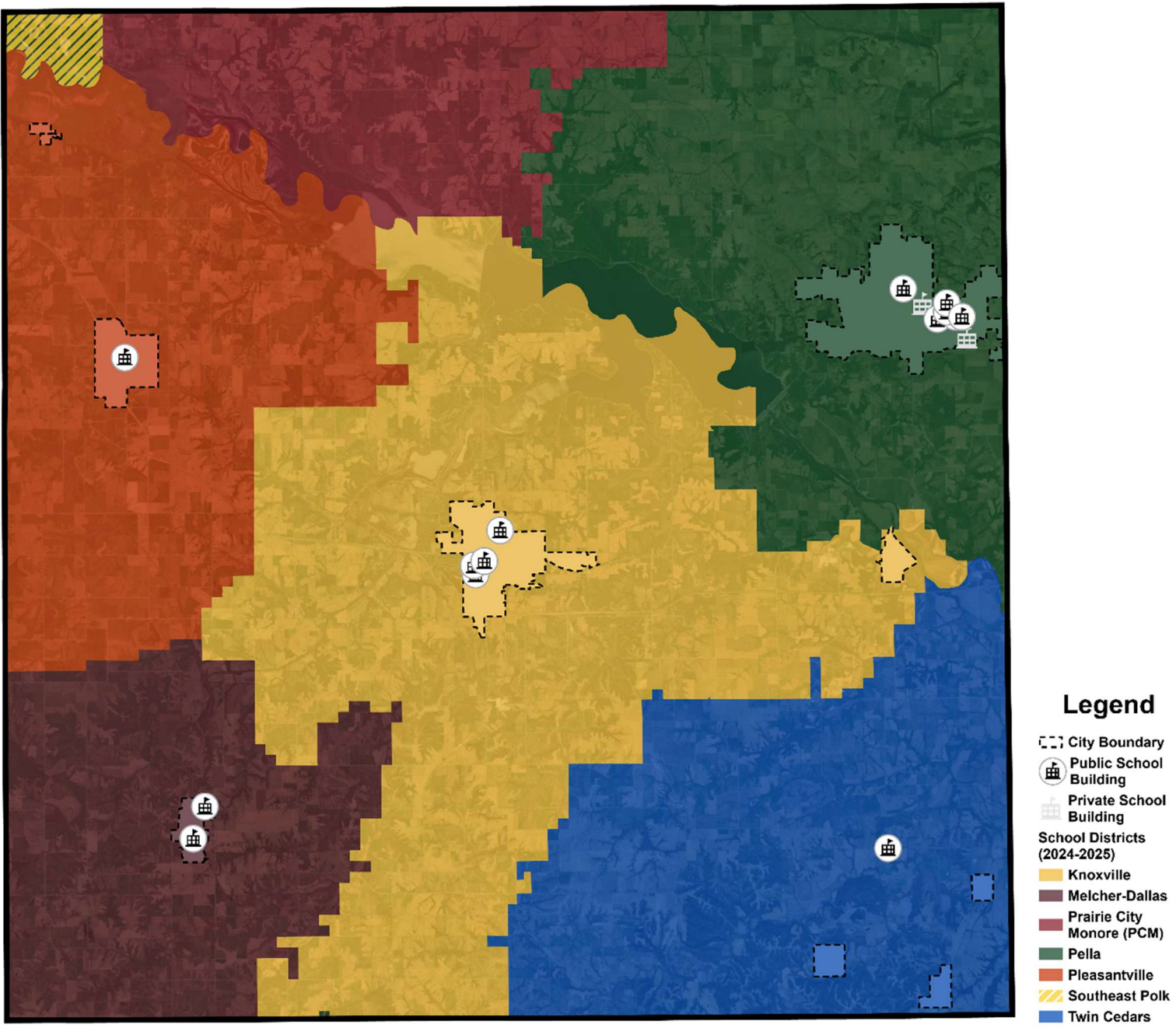
Of the seven school districts, there are five school districts (Knoxville, Melcher-Dallas, Pella, Pleasantville, and Twin Cedars) that have school buildings in Marion County. In addition to public schools, there are two private schools in Pella: Pella Christian Grade School (PK-8) and Pella Christian High School (Grades 9-12).

For higher education, Central College is a private, four-year college in Pella. There are no community colleges in Marion County, but Marion County is served by Des Moines Area Community College (DMACC). Through the Career Advantage program, DMACC offers classes that earn college credit for high school students enrolled in their home high school in Marion County, at DMACC, or online.³⁰

School District Name	School Name	Location	Grades	2024-2025 District Certified Enrollment
Knoxville Comm School District	West Elementary	Knoxville	PK-2	1,719
	Northstar Elementary School		3-5	
	Knoxville Middle School		6-8	
	Knoxville High School		9-12	
Melcher-Dallas Comm School District	Melcher-Dallas Elementary	Dallas	PK-6	287
	Melcher-Dallas High School	Melcher	7-12	
Pella Comm School District	Viersen Early Learning Center	Pella	PK	2,135
	Lincoln Elementary School		PK-3	
	Madison Elementary School		PK-3	
	Jefferson Intermediate		4-6	
	Pella Middle School		7-8	
	Pella High School		9-12	
Pleasantville Comm School District	Pleasantville Elementary	Pleasantville	PK-6	699
	Pleasantville Middle School		7-8	
	Pleasantville High School		9-12	
Twin Cedars Comm School District	Twin Cedars Elementary School	Bussey	PK-6	291
	Twin Cedars Jr-Sr High School		7-12	

Source: Iowa Department of Education

³⁰ “About Career Advantage.” DMACC.
<https://www.dmaccc.edu/careeradvantage/about.html>



Source: Iowa Department of Education

In Iowa, there are three types of regulated childcare: licensed centers, child development homes, and childcare homes.

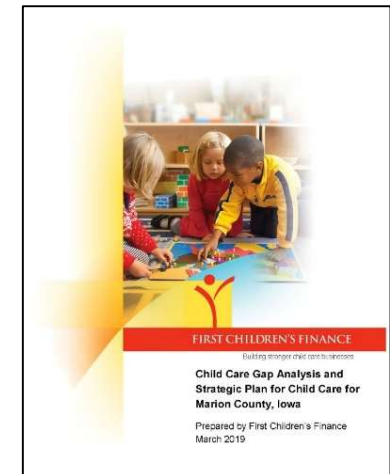
According to the Iowa Department of Human Services' Child Care Client Portal, there are

9 licensed childcare centers, 7 registered Child Development Home B providers, and 4 Child Development Home C providers in Marion County. Licensed childcare centers are businesses that follow state requirements and provide care for dozens of children.³¹ Child Development Homes are any person who provides childcare in their home and are categorized into one of three categories. A Child Development Home A has a total maximum of 8 children in care at any time, Child Development Home B has a total maximum of 12 children in care at any time, and Child Development Home C (2 providers) has a total maximum of 16 children in care at any time.³² A childcare home is any person who provides childcare in their home and are not required to be registered if they provide care to five or fewer children, or six or fewer children if at least one of the children is school-aged.³³ All childcare providers are required to complete First Aid, CPR, Mandatory Child Abuse Reporter Training, and other trainings.³⁴



Source: Marion County Development

Marion County has an imbalance of childcare supply and demand. As of October 2025, on Iowa Child Care Connect's Supply & Demand Dashboard, there is a demand of 4,624 children and only a supply of 1,233 registered/licensed childcare slots, translating to 3.75 children per slot.³⁵ In addition to high demand, childcare costs are also high in Marion County. For a family in Marion County earning the median income (\$82,662) that has an infant in childcare, they are estimated to pay 11% of their income before taxes if their child was in a registered home or 16% of their income before taxes if their child was in a licensed center.³⁶ Affordable childcare is considered to be 7% of income before taxes.³⁷ In 2018, the Marion County Development Commission commissioned First Children's Finance, a national nonprofit organization, to study childcare in Marion County. The resulting "Child Care Gap Analysis and Strategic Plan for Child Care for Marion County, Iowa" documented community childcare goals as well as implementation projects for the Bussey, Knoxville, Pella, and Pleasantville subareas.



2019 "Child Care Gap Analysis and Strategic Plan for Child Care for Marion County, Iowa"

Source: Marion County Development

³¹ "Child Care." Iowa Department of Health and Human Services. <https://hhs.iowa.gov/programs/programs-and-services/child-care>

³² "Requirements for the Different Types of Child Care Providers in Iowa." Child Care Provider Portal via Iowa Department of Human Services. <https://ccmis.dhs.state.ia.us/providerportal/childcarerequirements.aspx>

³³ "Child Care." Iowa Department of Health and Human Services. <https://hhs.iowa.gov/programs/programs-and-services/child-care>

³⁴ Ibid.

³⁵ Supply & Demand Dashboard. Iowa Child Care Connect. <https://iachildcareconnect.org/supply-demand/>

³⁶ "Marion County." Iowa Child Care Resource & Referral. <https://stage.worklifesystems.com//iowa?county=Marion>

³⁷ Ibid.

Sheriff's Office

The Sheriff's Office patrols 576 square miles of Marion County, including the cities of Hamilton, Marysville, Bussey, Harvey, Swan and all unincorporated areas of Marion County including Tracy, Otley, Columbia, Pershing, and Attica. The Sheriff's Office is responsible for enforcing federal, state, and county ordinances, as well as duties related to civil processes. The Sheriff's Office provides dispatching of law enforcement and fire and EMS services in Marion County, except for Pella. From November 2020 to December 2024, the Marion County Sheriff's Office responded to a low of 45 incidents (April 2024) to a high of 85 incidents (June 2022) in a month.



Marion County Law Enforcement Center
Source: MIPA

Fire Service

According to the 2025 Iowa Fire Department Census, there are 9 fire departments registered in Marion County. The majority of the fire departments are staffed by volunteer firefighters.

Fire Departments	
Name	Headquarters
Columbia Fire Department	Columbia
Harvey Fire Department	Harvey
Indiana Township Fire Department	Attica
Knoxville Fire Department	Knoxville
Knoxville Township Rural Fire Department	Knoxville
Melcher-Dallas Fire Department	Melcher Dallas
Pella Fire Department	Pella
Pleasantville Emergency Services	Pleasantville
Clay Township Fire Department	Tracy

Source: Iowa Fire Department Census

Emergency Medical Service (EMS)

Marion County declared Emergency Medical Service (EMS) an essential service in September 2024. An EMS Advisory Council was approved in December 2024 and consists of 11 voting representatives from local EMS services, including five elected city representatives, six elected county representatives, and seven non-voting representatives.

Marion County Sheriff's Office Dashboard (2017-2024)



MCSO Dashboard

Overview

Year: Quarter: Month: Day:

Overview

Arrests/Charges

Incidents

Citations

Jail Info

11/7/2025 9:30:16 AM
Date Last Refreshed

Arrests
8,980

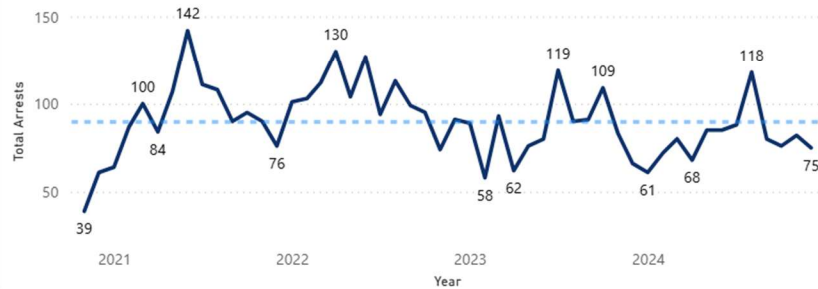
Total Charges
22,764

Total Incidents
5,945

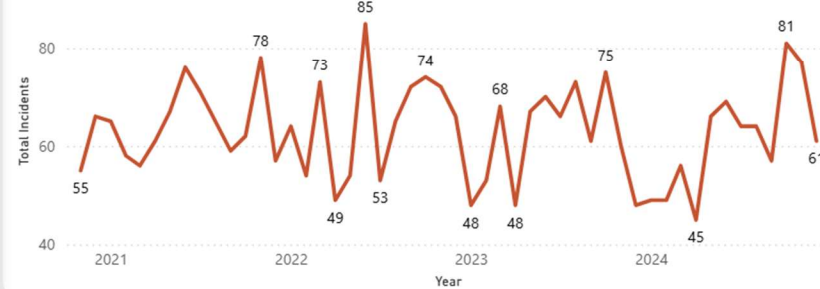
Citations
28,595

☐ In County
☐ Out of County

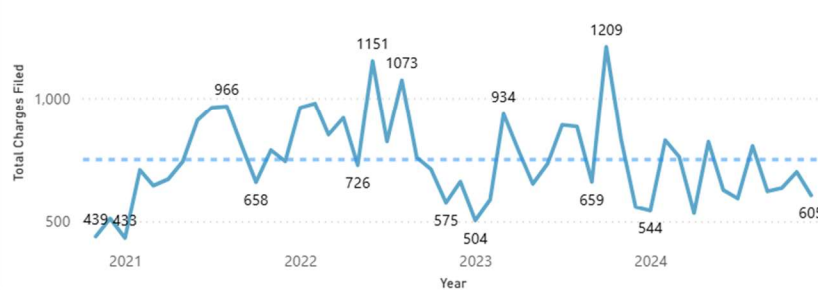
Total Arrests by Year and Month



Total Incidents by Year and Month



Total Charges Filed by Year and Month



Number of Traffic Stops by Year and Month



Source: Marion County Sheriff's Office

Marion County Health Profile

According to the Marion County Population Health and Well-Being Report conducted by the County Health Rankings & Roadmaps, Marion County fairs slightly better than the average county in Iowa and the average county in the nation for population health and well-being. Population Health metrics used to measure the quality of population health and well-being for Marion County include life expectancy, health behaviors, death counts and causes of death, access to health care providers, access to public insurance and federal assistance programs, and socioeconomic indicators. The tables below compare these health metrics in Marion County to the state of Iowa and, in some instance, to the nation.

Years of Life Expectancy				
	Marion County		Iowa	
	2015-17	2019-21	2015-17	2019-21
Life Expectancy	79.3	78.4	79.5	78.1

Source: Iowa State University Data for Decision Makers - Marion County Health Profile

Life expectancy in Marion County is similar to life expectancy in Iowa. But recently, there has been a slight decline in life expectancy in both Marion County and Iowa.

The rates of smoking, excessive drinking, obesity, diabetes, and inactivity are fairly similar in both Marion County and in Iowa. Of note, a considerable percentage of the population in Marion County encounter health challenges of obesity (36.8%), inactivity (22.6%), excessive drinking (21.5%), and smoking (15.7%).

Selected Health Data			
	Marion County		
	2019	2020	2021
Smoking	16.5%	16.3%	15.7%
Excessive Drinking	23.5%	23.5%	21.5%
Obesity	35.0%	33.5%	36.8%
Diabetes	8.6%	8.0%	8.0%
Inactive	25.2%	20.9%	22.6%
	Iowa		
	2019	2020	2021
Smoking	17.4%	16.8%	15.5%
Excessive Drinking	24.6%	24.7%	23.1%
Obesity	34.3%	37.2%	36.9%
Diabetes	9.0%	8.9%	8.5%
Inactive	26.1%	22.7%	23.8%

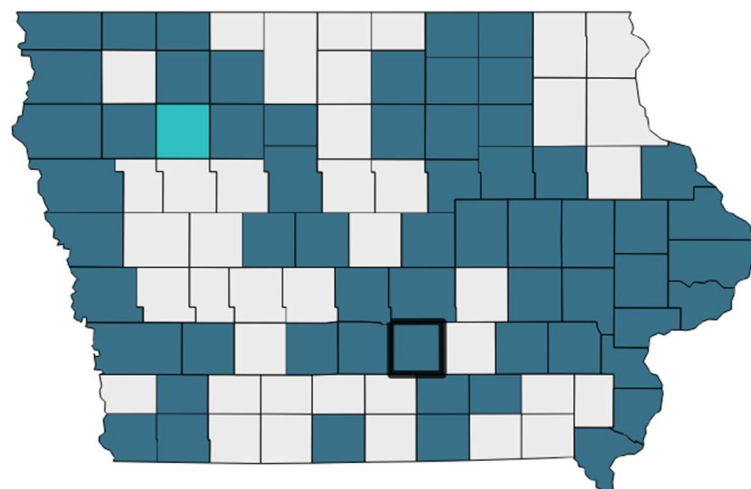
Source: Iowa State University Data for Decision Makers - Marion County Health Profile

According to the Iowa Cancer Registry / 99 Counties Project, Iowa has the second highest rate of new cancers in the United States, with a rate 14% higher than the national rate. Iowa also has the 23rd highest rate of cancer deaths in the United States, with a rate 3% higher than the national rate.

Marion County is no exception and has a cancer incidence rate that is above the national average, ranking 33 of 99 counties in Iowa (with 1 being the highest). Cancer mortality in Marion County is also higher than the national average, ranking 19 of 99 counties in Iowa (with 1 being the highest). While pediatric and adolescent cancer incidence rates in Iowa are not different than the national rate, young adult cancer incidence rates are higher than national.

The top cancers in Marion County are female breast cancer, prostate cancer, lung cancer, colorectal cancer, and melanoma. Marion County recognizes the rising health challenge of cancer

and will work with health partners to reduce cancer disparities and improve outcomes for all residents.



■ Above National Average
 ■ Below National Average
 ■ Similar to National Average

2018-2022 Incidence

Source: Iowa Cancer Registry / 99 Counties Project

Marion County has two Critical Access Hospitals (CAHs): Knoxville Hospital and Pella Regional Health Center. CAHs are a designation given to eligible rural hospitals that have 25 or fewer acute care inpatient beds, are located more than 35 miles from another hospital with some exceptions, maintain an annual

³⁸ “Critical Access Hospitals (CAHs).” Rural Health Information Hub. <https://www.ruralhealthinfo.org/topics/critical-access-hospitals>

³⁹ “Federally Qualified Health Centers (FQHCs) and the Health Center Program.” Rural Health Information Hub.

average length of stay of 96 hours or less for acute care patients, and provide 24/7 emergency care services.³⁸ Additionally, Marion County has one Federally-Qualified Health Center (FQHC): Infinity Health (formerly Community Health Centers of Southern Iowa) in Knoxville. FQHCs are outpatient clinics that provide primary care to medically underserved populations regardless of ability to pay.³⁹ Knoxville also has an outpatient VA Clinic that provides primary care services and select specialty services such as podiatry, laboratory, pathology, and mental health care.⁴⁰ Marion County also has four nursing facilities: Accura Healthcare of Pleasantville, Accura Healthcare of Knoxville, West Ridge Specialty Care in Knoxville, and The Cottages in Pella.

While the number of hospitals, hospital beds, and nursing facilities have remained constant in Marion County, there was a slight decrease in the number of nursing facility beds from 2019 to 2021. Whereas statewide, there were reductions in healthcare capacity.

Number of Hospitals, Nursing Facilities, and Beds				
	Marion County		Iowa	
	2019	2021	2019	2021
Hospitals	2	2	122	120
Hospital Beds	50	50	11,771	11,423
Nursing Facilities	5	5	419	414
Nursing Facility Beds	301	291	29,581	28,474

Source: Iowa State University Data for Decision Makers - Marion County Health Profile

<https://www.ruralhealthinfo.org/topics/federally-qualified-health-centers>

⁴⁰ “Knoxville VA Clinic.” U.S. Department of Veteran Affairs. <https://www.va.gov/central-iowa-health-care/locations/knoxville-va-clinic/>

New Cancers in Marion County

All cancer types, average counts and rates, 2018-2022

Each year, there are about

232

new cancers diagnosed in Marion County

Cancer incidence rates in Marion County are **higher than the U.S. average**

Ranks #33 of 99 counties

Cancer incidence rates are typically higher in men than women



Cancer deaths in Marion County

All cancer types, average counts and rates, 2019-2023

Each year, there are about

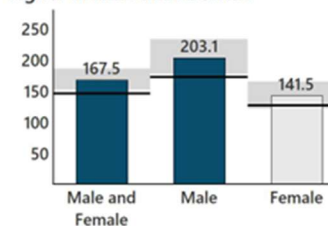
81

cancer deaths in Marion County

Cancer mortality rates in Marion County are **higher than the U.S. average**

Ranks #19 of 99 counties

Cancer mortality rates are typically higher in men than women



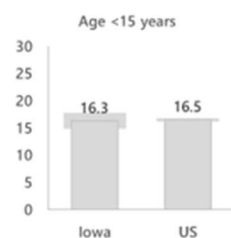
Age-Adjusted incidence rate per 100,000 (2018-2022)



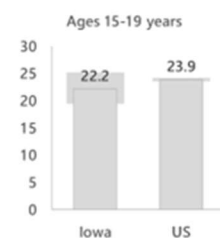
Age-Adjusted mortality rate per 100,000 (2019-2023)

Pediatric, Adolescent, and Young Adult New Cancers in Iowa

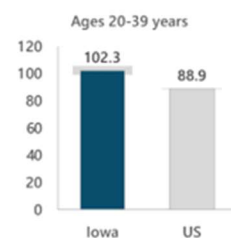
Pediatric cancer incidence rates in Iowa are **not different** than the U.S. rate



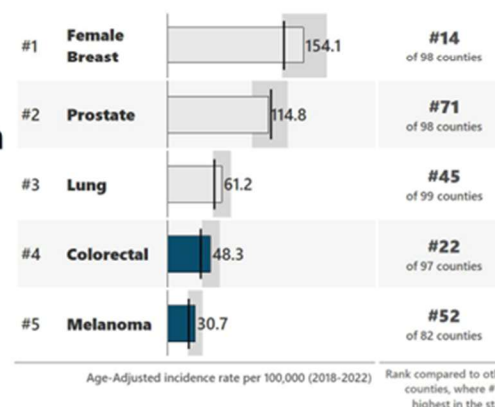
Adolescent cancer incidence rates in Iowa are **not different** than the U.S. rate



Young Adult cancer incidence rates in Iowa are **higher** than the U.S. rate



Top cancers in Marion County



Age-Adjusted incidence rate per 100,000 (2018-2022)

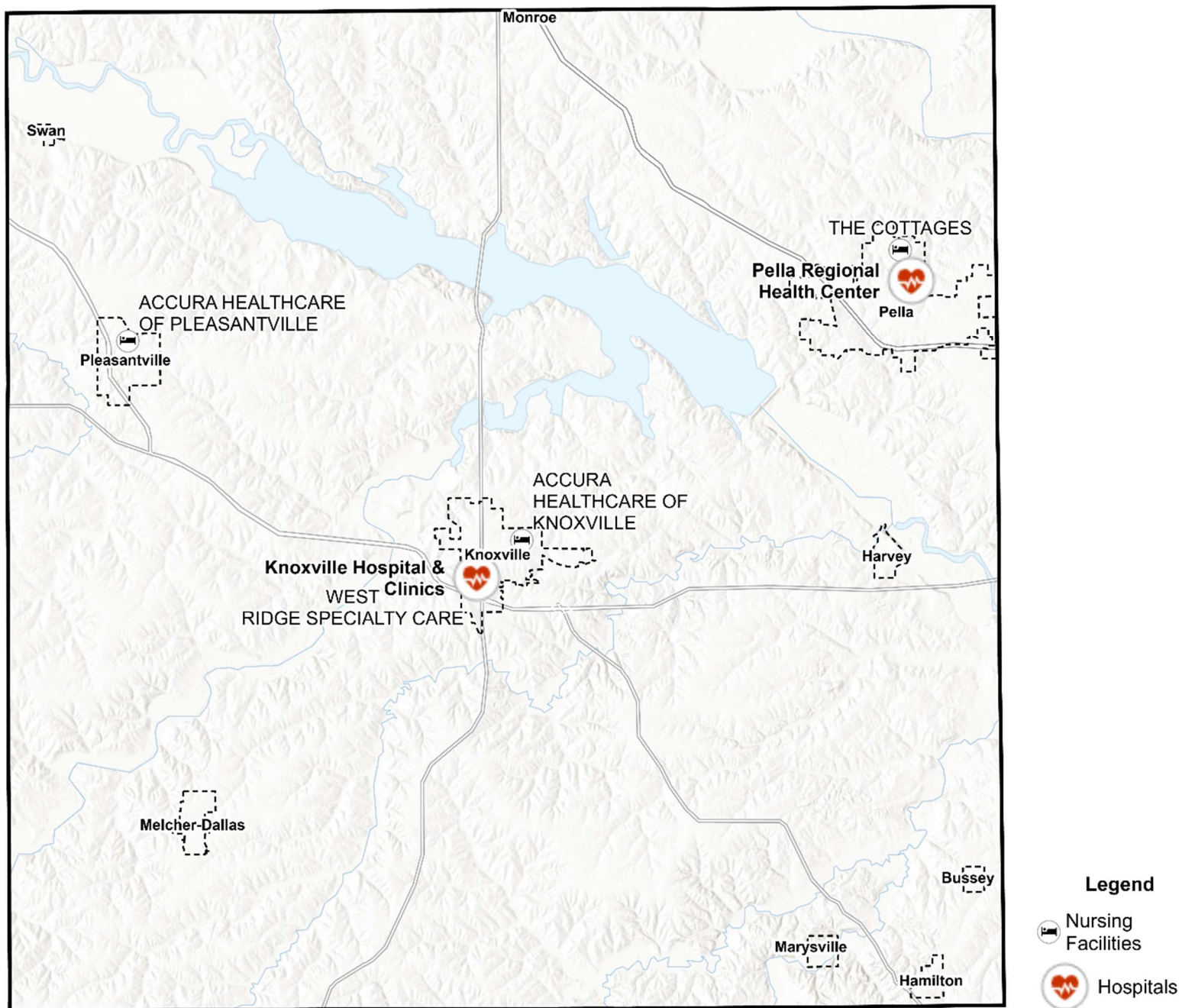
Rank compared to other counties, where #1 is highest in the state



Age-Adjusted incidence rate per 100,000 (2018-2022)



Source: Iowa Cancer Registry / 99 Counties Project



Source: Iowa Direct Care Worker Registry & Health Facility Database

Beyond medical conditions and facilities, non-medical factors that affect health and quality of life are known as social determinants of health. The social determinants of health are grouped into five categories: economic stability, education access and quality, healthcare access and quality, neighborhood and built environment, and social and community context. Patients seeking medical treatment in Marion County, as reported by both the Knoxville and Pella hospitals, are now more medically complex from the interplay of the various social determinants of health.

Select Population and Well-being Data			
	Marion County	Iowa	United States
Health Infrastructure			
Access to Exercise Opportunities	71%	80%	84%
Food Environment Index	9.0	8.5	7.4
Primary Care Physicians	1,040:1	1,390:1	1,330:1
Mental Health Providers	640:1	470:1	300:1
Dentists	1,680:1	1,410:1	1,360:1
Quality of Life			
Poor Physical Health Days	3.5	3.5	3.9
Poor Mental Health Days	4.6	4.7	5.1
Poor or Fair Health	12%	16%	17%
Frequent Physical Distress	10%	10%	12%
Frequent Mental Distress	15%	14%	16%
Feelings of Loneliness	35%	35%	33%

Source: County Health Rankings (2025)

Marion County has mixed health infrastructure and quality of life metrics compared to state and national metrics. Marion County has a high Food Environment Index of 9.0 from a scale of 0 (worst) to 10 (best), indicating access to healthy foods and general food security, and good access to primary care physicians with a ratio of 1,040 to 1. However, Marion County has challenges with mental health and dental care access compared

to the state and the nation. Other quality of life metrics (poor physical health days, poor mental health days, frequent physical distress, frequent mental distress, and feelings of loneliness) are comparable with the state and the nation, though a smaller percentage of people in Marion County report they are in poor or fair health. The expansion of preventative measures addressing the social determinants of health in addition to increased mental health and dental services would benefit Marion County.



Source: Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC)

Over the last two decades, Marion County saw increases in deaths from alcohol or drugs but was below the state's rate. While suicides in Marion County followed a similar increase statewide, homicides decreased in Marion County compared to the state. Transport deaths remained fairly constant, but other accidents became a larger cause of death in Marion County. Continuing to address behavioral health, including substance use and abuse, as a leading cause of death would benefit Marion County.

Ten-Year Counts of Selected Causes of Deaths								
	Marion County				Iowa			
	2004-13	Percent	2014-23	Percent	2004-13	Percent	2014-23	Percent
Deaths, 10 Year Counts								
Total Deaths	3,273		3,591		278,642		316,814	
Alcohol or Drugs	49	1.5%	67	1.9%	4,459	1.6%	8,436	2.7%
Suicides	42	1.3%	60	1.7%	3,695	1.3%	4,955	1.6%
Homicides	5	0.2%	2	0.1%	571	0.2%	879	0.3%
Transport Accidents	41	1.3%	45	1.3%	4,314	1.5%	3,951	1.2%
Other Accidents	96	2.9%	122	3.4%	8,179	2.9%	12,085	3.8%
Average Annual Count (rounded)								
Total Deaths	327		359		27,864		31,681	
Alcohol or Drugs	5	1.5%	7	1.9%	446	1.6%	844	2.7%
Suicides	4	1.2%	6	1.7%	370	1.3%	496	1.6%
Homicides	1	0.3%	0	0.0%	57	0.2%	88	0.3%
Transport Accidents	4	1.2%	5	1.4%	431	1.5%	395	1.2%
Other Accidents	10	3.1%	12	3.3%	818	2.9%	1,209	3.8%

Source: Iowa State University Data for Decision Makers - Marion County Health Profile

Marion County has a slightly higher percentage of people with a disability than Iowa. The prevalence of a disability increases with age. About a quarter (25.4%) of Marion County residents aged 65 to 74 have a disability, while more than half (54.5%) of Marion County residents aged 75 and over have a disability. The most common types of disabilities in Marion County are ambulatory (7.1%) and independent living (5.7%). Cognitive (4.3%) and hearing (4.2%) difficulties are present as well. The community services and facilities through Marion County can be tailored towards older adults and those with disabilities.

Marion County has a high rate of insured population. Less than 3% of Marion County residents are estimated to be uninsured.

Insurance Coverage				
	Marion County	Percent	Iowa	Percent
Insured Population	32,370	97.5%	2,996,553	95.1%
Uninsured Population	844	2.5%	153,063	4.9%

Source: 2023 American Community Survey (ACS) 5-Year Estimates
Table S2701

Disability Characteristics				
	Marion County	Percent	Iowa	Percent
Population with a Disability	4,440	13.4%	390,431	12.4%
Disability by Age				
Under 5 years	7	0.4%	1,229	0.7%
5 to 17 years	161	2.7%	30,131	5.5%
18 to 34 years	552	8.1%	56,265	8.0%
35 to 64 years	1,411	11.3%	138,102	11.9%
65 to 74 years	883	25.4%	71,812	22.0%
75 years and over	1,426	54.5%	92,892	42.9%
Disability by Type				
Hearing difficulty		4.2%		3.8%
Vision difficulty	1,408	1.8%	118,843	1.9%
Cognitive difficulty	601	4.3%	61,118	5.0%
Ambulatory difficulty	1,360	7.1%	148,634	5.8%
Self-care difficulty	2,237	2.1%	171,166	2.1%
Independent living difficulty	669	5.7%	60,956	5.1%
	1,437		123,342	

Source: 2023 American Community Survey (ACS) 5-Year Estimates
Table S1810

Marion County Public Health

Marion County Public Health works to promote the health, safety, and welfare of its residents through providing “health guidance and enforcement for [our] citizens to have the opportunity to make informed decisions regarding their health and wellness, strive for a clean and safe environment, and the assistance to access needed health related services”. Community programs provided by Marion County Public Health include:

- Care for Yourself (free or low-cost breast and cervical cancer screenings)
- Foot Care Clinics (routine foot and nail care as well as sensory testing for diabetic patients)
- Public Health Nursing (promote public health activities, education, foot clinics, health screenings and assessments, and immunizations)
- General Assistance (emergency help such as with rent, utilities, food, eyeglasses, and cremation assistance)
- Senior Nutrition (meals for seniors in Marion County)



Marion County North Annex
Source: MIPA

In the 2023 Marion County Community Health Assessment, eight strengths were identified for Marion County Public Health’s primary service area and community health.

Community Health Assessment Strengths	
Home ownership and high school graduation rates are high in communities.	Low unemployment rates reported for county, employment opportunities, services for poverty needs (program) are available.
Compliance with exercise and screenings (healthy choices), high use of preventive care services.	High rating for dental, eye, family practice, hospice, and pharmacy services
Improvement in preventable hospital stays	Continued reduction in premature births an indication of women’s health services.
High compliance with preventative screenings and preventative care	Improvement in teen health (births) compared to other counties in Iowa (2020 goal)

Marion County Health Department synthesized six opportunities for improved community health from a town hall meeting of stakeholders.

Town Hall - Community Health Opportunities Identified	
Mental Health: Increase the provided and breadth of services for Mental Health needs in the communities. Mental Health needs: increase providers, access, employment for providers, reimbursement shortage – barrier for services, community responses (example: EMT), and transportation to and from services in other communities.	Substance Abuse: Reduce the concern for and presence of substance abuse related health/safety issues. Drugs and substance use and presentation services/response Ranking high in use of substances within the communities, health/safety concerns related to substance use, and decreased access to services.
Workforce Shortages: Collaborating with community partners to attract and retain healthcare and other employees to the county. Housing for low-income workers available to the communities.	Childcare Services/ Access: Continue to address the access to childcare services within the communities. Continue to work with Partnership study.
Transportation services: Continue to address the needs of transportation services for emergency management and medical treatment needs for the community, including but not limited to the elderly in the communities.	Health and Housing Stability Coalition for County: Continue to work on services for the elderly in the community including housing, In-home support, Staffing, Day/acute services, and funding resources.

Additionally, a Community Health Assessment Survey reported the following results of opportunities and needs for health concerns.

Community Health Assessment Survey – Results of Opportunities
1. Mental Health / Mental Illness (81.1%) 2. Public transportation for healthcare (36.9%) 3. Public awareness of healthcare (35.7%) 4. Elder assistance services (33.3%) 5. After hours pharmacy services (31.7%) 6. Wellness options (30.9%) 7. Care transitions assistance (24.9%) 8. Chronic disease prevention (24.5%) 9. Home health / public health (24.5%) 10. Healthy eating options (23.7%)
Community Health Assessment Survey – Needs for Health Concern
1. Mental illness (82.6%) 2. Aging Dementia (51%) 3. Obesity (49.8%) 4. Teen health (48.2%) 5. Childcare services (47%) 6. Drugs and illegal substances (45.8%) 7. Suicide (44.7%) 8. Abuse and violence (43.1%) 9. Nutrition (41.1%) 10. Chronic diseases (38.7%)

As outlined in the Marion County Community Health Improvement Plan (CHIIP), Marion County is committed to pursuing the stated goals and actions to enhance and improve the health, safety, and welfare of county residents.

Goal: Expand Available and Affordable Childcare		
Objectives	Actions	Funding
Work with community and private partners, such as childcare providers, to increase affordable childcare options	Convene taskforce to implement projects in “Child Care Gap Analysis and Strategic Plan for Child Care for Marion County, Iowa” (2019)	- Local funds - State Grants (Early Childhood Continuum of Care, Child Care Business Incentive Grant, Rural Child Care Planning Grant)
Goal: Support Successful Educational Outcomes		
Objectives	Actions	Funding
Work with schools and colleges to support successful educational outcomes	Provide support to schools and colleges on their projects and initiatives, as requested	- Local funds - State Grants
Goal: Assess and Support Depth and Breadth of Services for Mental Health Needs in the Communities		
Objectives	Actions	Funding
See Marion County Community Health Improvement Plan (CHIIP) & Tactics 2023-2028		
Goal: Assess and Support Depth and Breadth of Services for Substance Use and Abuse in the Communities		
Objectives	Actions	Funding
See Marion County Community Health Improvement Plan (CHIIP) & Tactics 2023-2028		
Goal: Provide Data and Support to the EMS Advisory and Board of Supervisors		
Objectives	Actions	Funding
See Marion County Community Health Improvement Plan (CHIIP) & Tactics 2023-2028		
Goal: Decrease the Spread of Communicable Disease		
Objectives	Actions	Funding
See Marion County Community Health Improvement Plan (CHIIP) & Tactics 2023-2028		
Goal: Services for the Medically Needy and Elderly Living in Their Homes in the Community		
Objectives	Actions	Funding
See Marion County Community Health Improvement Plan (CHIIP) & Tactics 2023-2028		
Goal: Prepare for Continued Inflation, Economic Hardship		
Objectives	Actions	Funding
See Marion County Community Health Improvement Plan (CHIIP) & Tactics 2023-2028		

Agriculture & Natural Resources



The landscape of Marion County is both agriculturally productive and naturally scenic. Marion County's prime farmland and its water resources are its assets to protect and revitalize. Marion County continues to restore its natural heritage and enhance recreational opportunities.

“Land stewardship is essential for our county and land owners. Our future depends on it!”

-Comment on Marion County Community Survey

Agricultural Resources

Marion County generally has high potential for crop production. The Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) of the US Department of Agriculture (USDA) prepares the National Commodity Crop Productivity Index (NCCPI) to rate soils according to their capacity to grow commodity crops without irrigation. NCCPI ratings are from 0 to 1, with 1 being the most productive. The areas with low potential for crop production are wetlands and areas along waterbodies, like the Des Moines River and Lake Red Rock, as well as lower potential in the southwestern quadrant of the county around Melcher-Dallas.

The NRCS also provides the Corn Suitability Rating 2 (CSR2), a soil productivity rating specific for Iowa that ranges from a low of 5 to a high of 100. According to Soilscape, the county-wide CSR2 for Marion County is 58.⁴¹ A CSR2 below 65 is considered low and indicates there are productive soils with limitations.⁴² An average yield for this CSR2 category below 65 is 176 bushels per acre, based on estimates from 2018 to 2021.⁴³ Marion County's 2014-2023 ten-year average for corn yield is 186.6 bushels per acre, with a high of 211.2 bushels per acre in 2021 and a low of 173.8 bushels per acre in 2014.⁴⁴



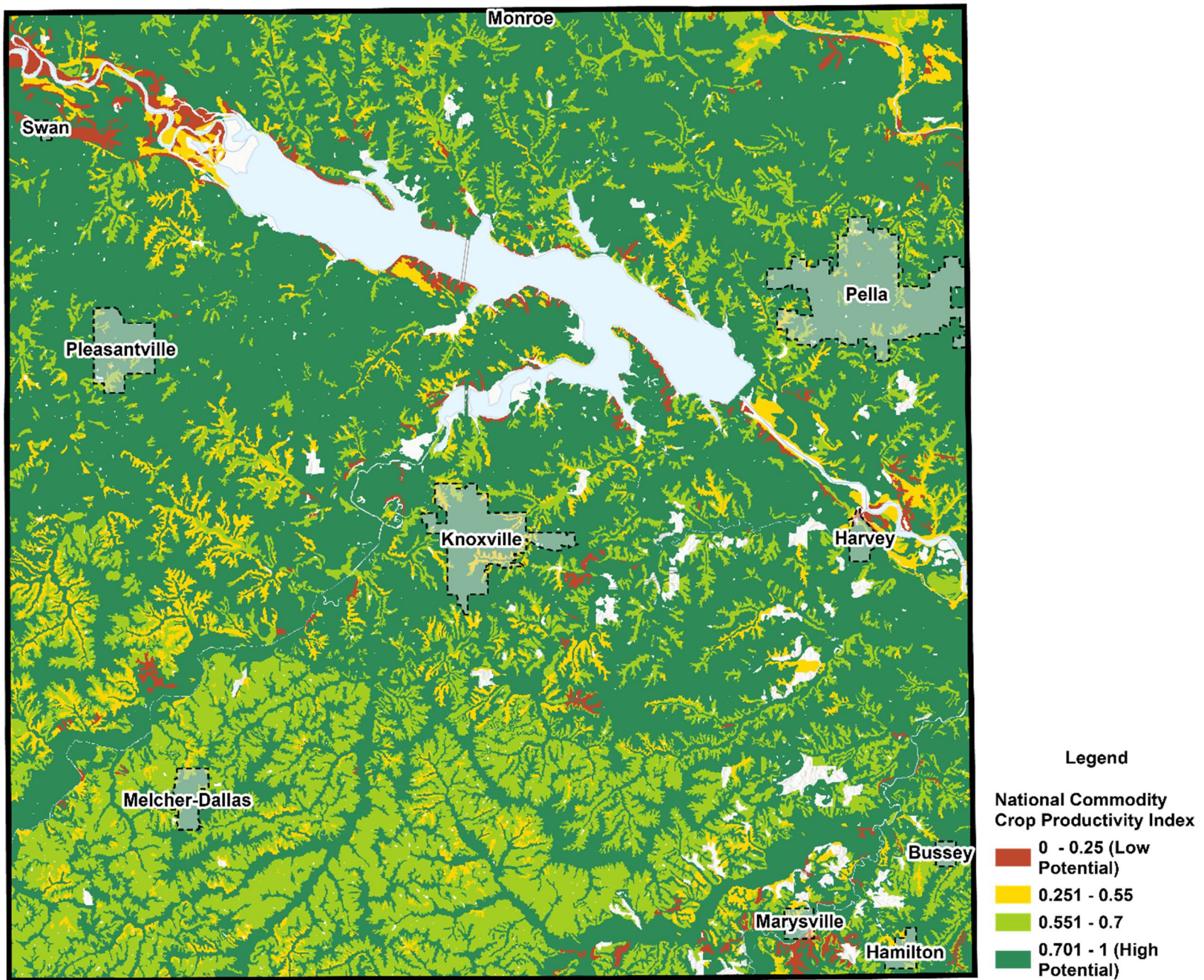
Round Bales Southwest of Knoxville Source: MIPA

⁴¹ Soilscape is a collaboration between Iowa State University's Geographic Laboratory for Soil Informatics (GLSI) and Michigan State University's Remote Sensing & GIS Research and Outreach Services (RS&GIS). <https://soilscape.org/>

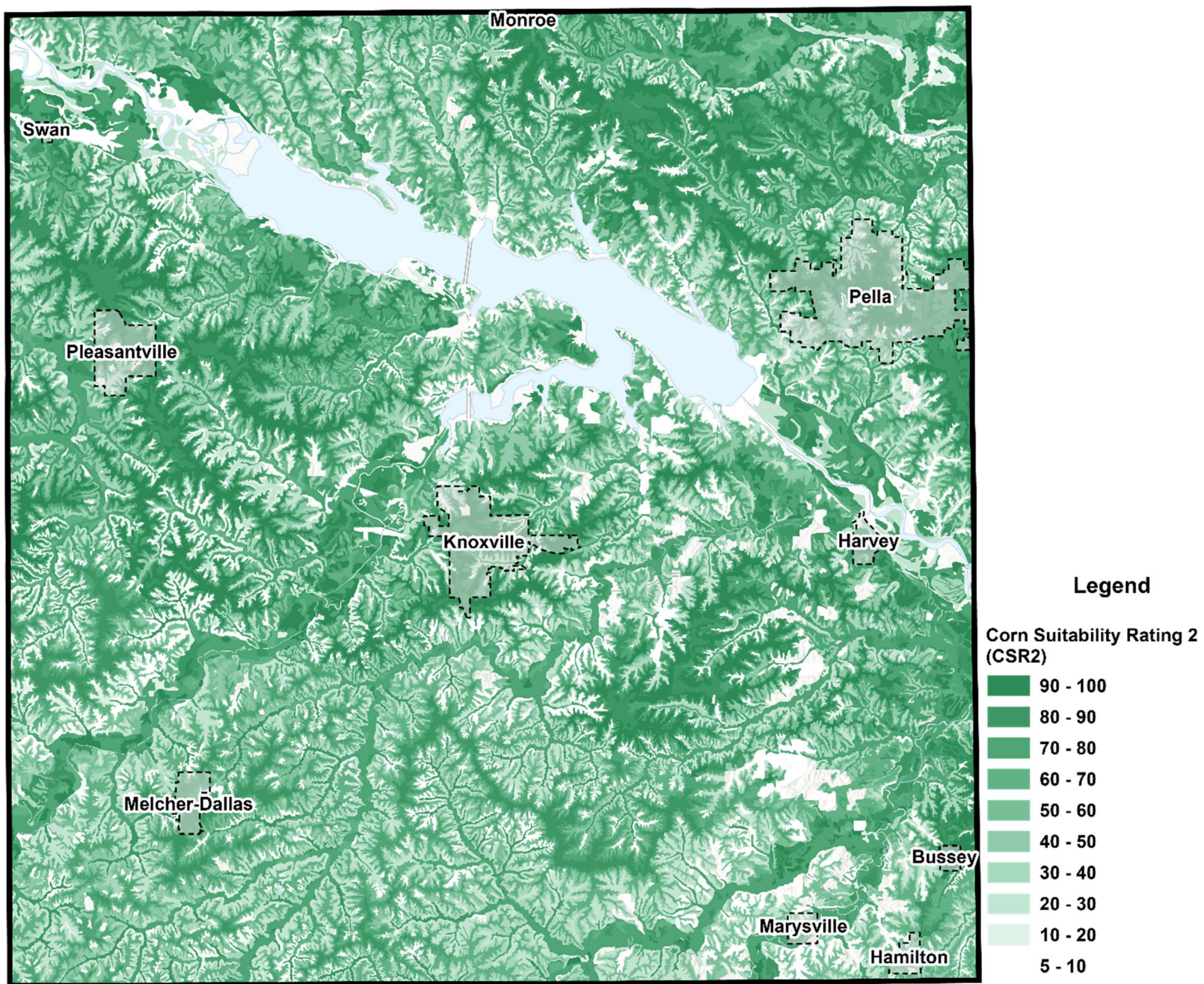
⁴² Mandrini, German. "Understanding Iowa's Corn Suitability Rating index (CSR2)." Farmers' Business Network. Published May 9, 2023. <https://www.fbn.com/community/blog/iowa-corn-suitability-rating-index-csr2>.

⁴³ Mandrini, German. "Understanding Iowa's Corn Suitability Rating index (CSR2)." Farmers' Business Network. Published May 9, 2023. <https://www.fbn.com/community/blog/iowa-corn-suitability-rating-index-csr2>.

⁴⁴ Johanns, Ann. "Iowa Corn and Soybean County Yields (USDA RMA)." Iowa State University Ag Decision Maker. Published Oct 2024. <https://www.extension.iastate.edu/agdm/crops/pdf/a1-14.pdf>



Source: US Department of Agriculture (USDA) - Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS)



Source: US Department of Agriculture (USDA) - Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS)

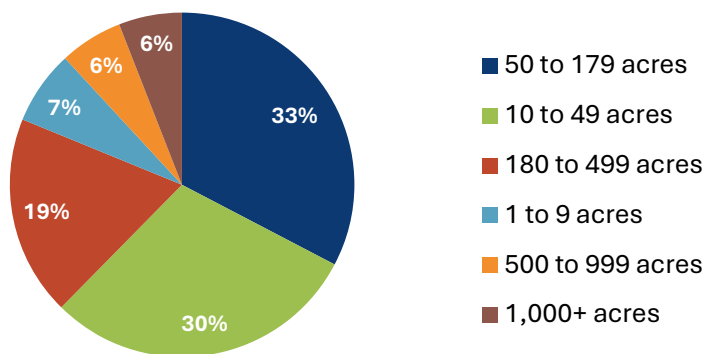


Century Farm and Heritage Farm Signs
Source: Iowa Farm Bureau

The USDA conducts a Census of Agriculture every five years. The most recently completed Census of Agriculture was in 2022. The Census of Agriculture reported 947 farms in Marion

County, with an average size of 254 acres. Most farms (82%) are 50 to 179 acres (33%), 10 to 49 acres (30%), or 180 to 499 acres (19%). About 92% of farms are family farms, and about 29% of producers are new and beginning farmers. As of 2024, according to the Iowa Department of Agriculture and Land Stewardship, Marion County is home to 165 century farms (farms owned for more than 100 years) and 20 heritage farms (farms owned for more than 150 years).

Marion County Farms by Size (2022)

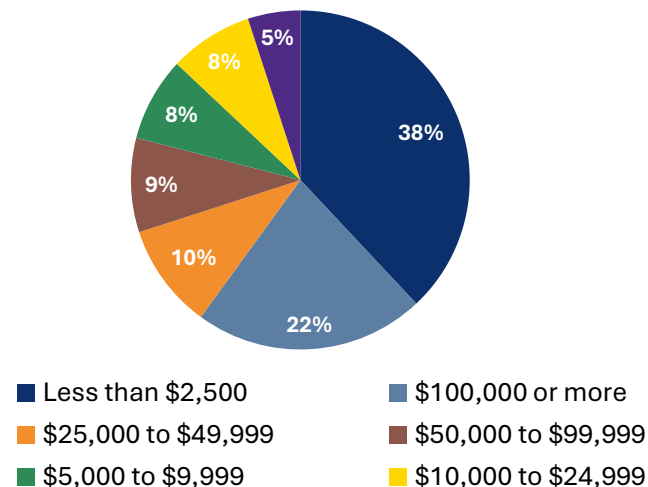


Source: USDA Census of Agriculture

The majority of farms in Marion County sell crops (83%), and the remainder sell livestock, poultry, and products (17%). The top

crops planted by acre are soybeans for beans (45.6%), corn for grain (44.3%), forage (hay/haylage) (9.5%), corn for silage/greenchop (0.2%), and oats for grain (0.2%). Livestock raised include hogs and pigs (45.6%), cattle and calves (39.2%), layers (5.1%), sheep and lamb (4.9%), and others (broilers and other meat-type chickens, goats, horses and ponies, pullets, turkeys) (5.2%). Of note, Marion County is ranked around the top fifth of counties in Iowa for other crops and hay (18 of 99 counties) and for sheep, goats, wool, mohair, and milk (25 of 99 counties). Nationally, Marion County is in the top fifth for crops (657 of 3,074 counties), especially for grains, oilseeds, dry beans, and dry peas (517 of 2,917 counties), and for hogs and pigs (419 of 2,814 counties) and sheep, goats, wool, mohair, and milk (388 of 2,967 counties). Most farms (70%) had sale values of less than \$2,500 (38%), \$100,000 or more (22%), or \$25,000 to \$49,999 (10%).

Marion County Farms by Value of Sales (2022)



Source: USDA Census of Agriculture

Market Value of Agricultural Products Sold for Marion County (2022)					
	Sales (\$1,000)	Rank in Iowa	Counties Producing Item	Rank in US	Counties Producing Item
Crops	128,260	84	99	657	3,074
Grains, oilseeds, dry beans, dry peas	120,743	86	99	517	2,917
Fruits, tree nuts, berries	215	35	96	1,258	2,711
Other crops and hay	2,889	18	99	1,105	3,035
Livestock, poultry, and products	26,064	93	99	1,569	3,076
Cattle and calves	14,082	83	99	1,061	3,047
Hogs and pigs	11,190	92	99	419	2,814
Sheep, goats, wool, mohair, milk	511	25	99	388	2,967

Source: USDA Census of Agriculture

Mine Reclamation

In October 2024, the Iowa Department of Agriculture and Land Stewardship announced the Pella North and Pella South (Dutch Hollow) abandoned mine land (AML) reclamation project in Marion County as the largest project the Department has taken

⁴⁵ “Secretary Naig Announces 7 More Abandoned Mine Land Reclamation Projects, Including the Largest in the Program’s History.” Iowa Department of Agriculture and Land Stewardship. October 2, 2024. <https://iowaagriculture.gov/news/7-abandoned-mine-land-reclaimed>

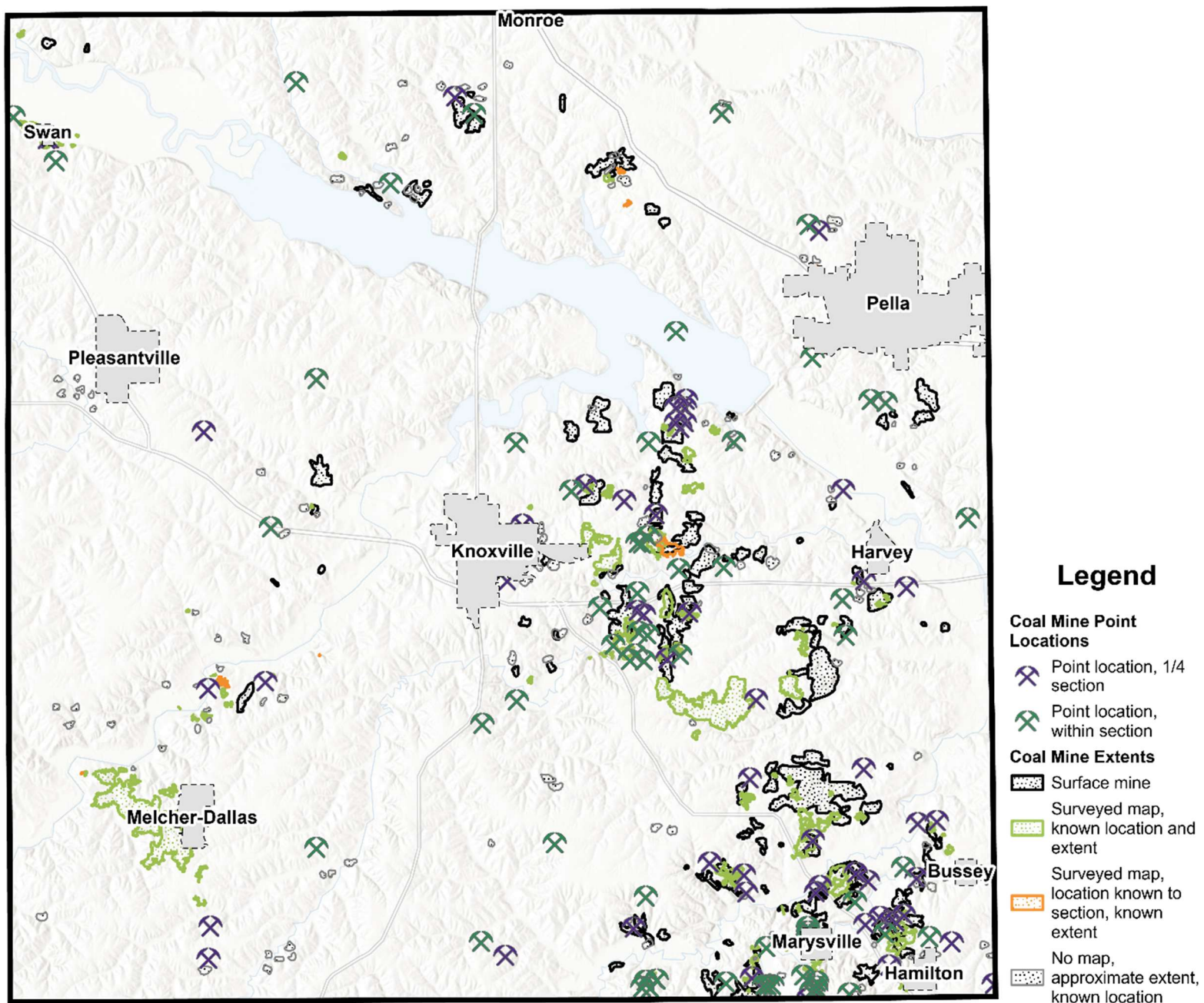
on, in one contract, in the program’s history.⁴⁵ AML sites may have dangerous piles, embankments, high walls, pit ponds, and base acidic soils that need to be graded and neutralized for reclamation. The approximately 162 acre “Dutch Hollow” reclamation project will

return the site to pre-coal mining conditions by moving earthwork, adding lime to neutralize the soil, mitigating clogged stream lands, removing piles and embankments, cleaning up water bodies, and planting oak trees and restoring native prairie. The anticipated result will benefit the public with new opportunities for wildlife viewing, hiking, and hunting. The federal government’s Surface Mining Control and Reclamation Act of 1977, which requires companies to remove hazards and stabilize coal mines after their mining operations have completed, lead to the Iowa Department of Agriculture and Land Stewardship’s AML program, which began in 1983. Funding for the Iowa AML cleanup comes from the 2021 Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act (also known as the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law) allocated to the Abandoned Mine Land program from the federal Office of Surface Mining, Reclamation and Enforcement (OSMRE) in the United States Department of the Interior.⁴⁶



Abandoned coal mine land in the Pella Wildlife Area
Source: The Iowa Department of Natural Resources via The Des Moines Register

⁴⁶ “Iowa field day highlights new reclamation project funded by Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act.” Emily Isaac. US Department of Interior Office of Surface Mining Reclamation and Enforcement. May 30, 2023. <https://www.osmre.gov/news/stories/IowaFieldDay>



Source: Iowa Department of Natural Resources (2025)

Natural Resources

Parks, trails, and wildlife areas in Marion County cover more than 3,400 acres. These areas include Bauer Park, Cordova Park, Horns Ferry Bridge Area, Marion County Park, Paul Todd Wildlife Area, Roberts Creek Park, and the Wilcox Wildlife Area.

- Bauer Park is located about 5 miles southwest of Melcher-Dallas. The 13-acre park includes a 1.4-acre fishing pond, a small picnic area, and a wildlife area.
- Cordova Park has an area of 1,100 acres on bluffs overlooking Lake Red Rock. There are cabins and a 106-foot observation tower.
- Horns Ferry Bridge Area is 3.5 miles south of Pella and provides a viewing area on a pedestrian bridge for bald eagles, the Des Moines River, and the Gladys Black Bald Eagle Refuge.
- Marion County Park is 140 acres and Marion County's oldest recreation area. There are campgrounds, shower/restroom facilities, picnic shelters, playground equipment, a 7-acre fishing lake, and recreational fields. The Marion County Historical Society maintains a historical village at the park.
- The Paul Todd Wildlife Area is a natural area east of Marysville with tree and shrub plantings. Hunting is allowed in the area.
- Roberts Creek Park is 1,535 acres and has campgrounds, rental cabins, woodland and grassland areas, playground equipment, and access to fisheries and boating.
- The Wilcox Wildlife Area is a 470-acre public hunting and fishing management area.

Other parks in Marion County include Lake Red Rock (including the Volksweg Trail), Elk Rock State Park, Gladys Black Bald Eagle Refuge, and the Pella Wildlife Management Area. In close collaboration with the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, Marion County Conservation Department works diligently to maintain and enhance the natural and recreational amenities of the county, including environmental education and outreach programs.

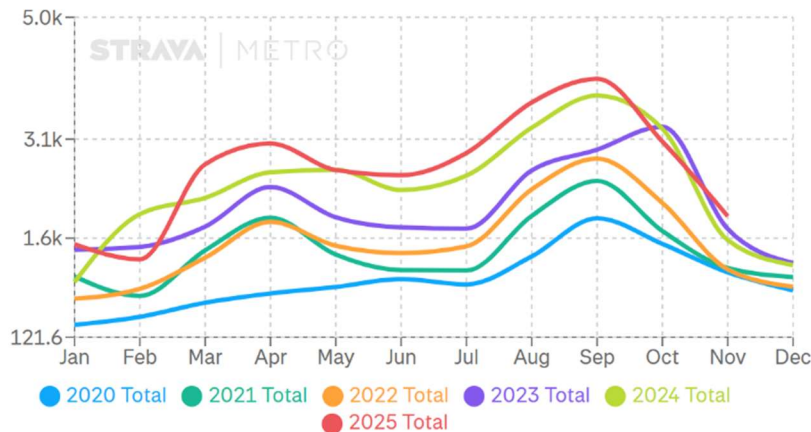


Source:
Marion
County
Conservation

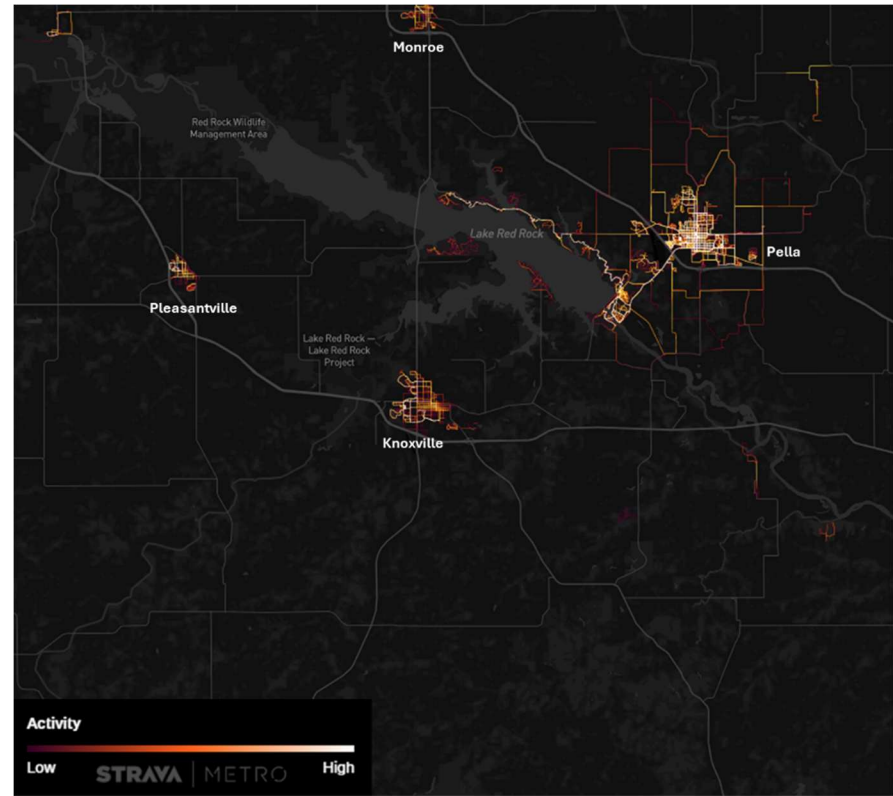
Strava, a fitness platform, allows users to track their outdoor activities such as walking, running, hiking, or bicycling using GPS-enabled devices. Strava Metro is a data service by Strava that aggregates and anonymizes user activity data in which organizations can request access to analyze active transportation and recreation.

Based on Strava Metro data from 2020 to 2025, Strava-users who walked, ran, or hiked in Marion County made the most trips in the months of April and September.

In 2025, Strava-users walked, ran, or hiked mostly within the cities of Pleasantville, Knoxville, and Pella but also in the parks (Cordova Park, Howell Station Recreation Area, Whitebreast Park, Elk Rock State Park) and trails (Volksweg Trail) around Lake Red Rock.



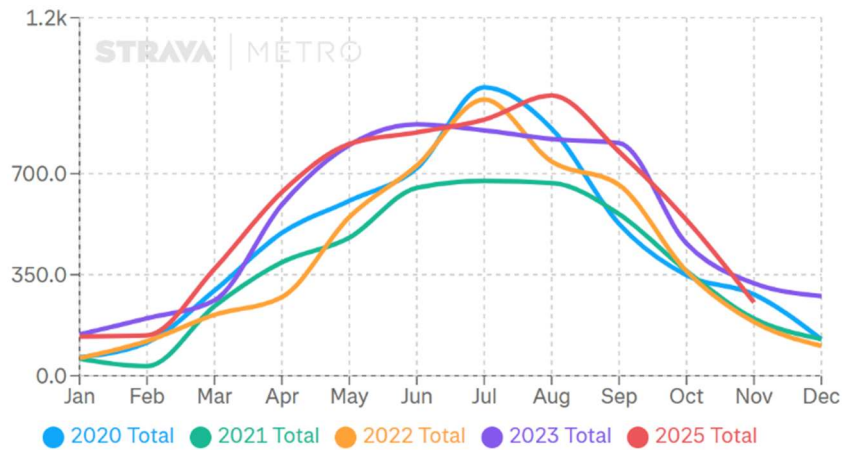
Strava-recorded Walking/Running/Hiking Trips by Month (2020 to 2025)
Source: Strava Metro



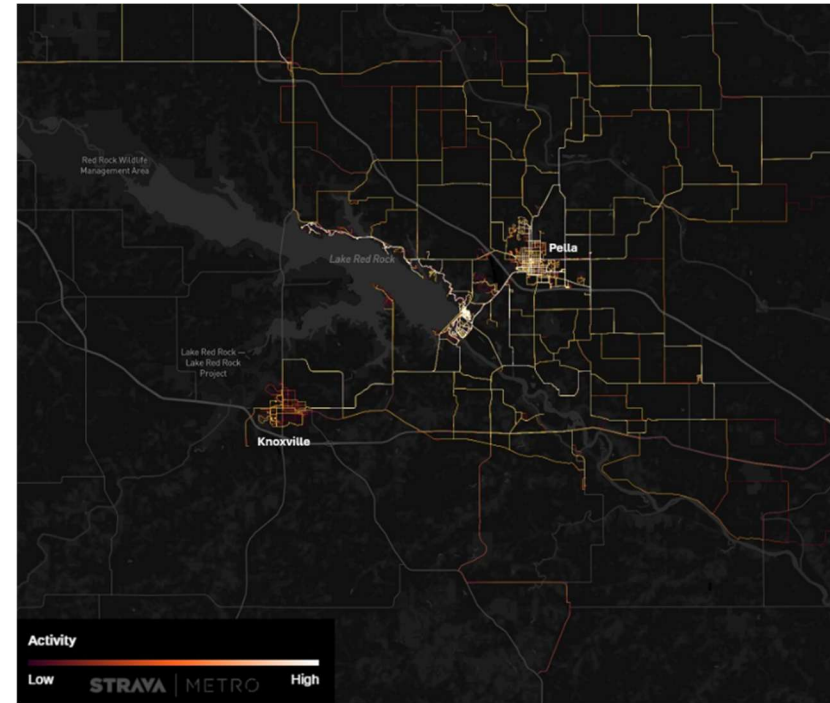
Heat Map of Walking/Running/Hiking Strava Users (December 2024 – November 2025)
Source: Strava Metro

Based on Strava Metro data from 2020 to 2025,⁴⁷ bicyclists who used Strava in Marion County made the most bicycling trips in the summer months of July and August.

In 2025, bicyclists who used Strava biked most within the cities of Knoxville and Pella, the roadways around Pella, and on the trail system (Volksweg Trail) and parks (Howell Station Recreation Area) around Lake Red Rock.



Strava-recorded Bicycling Trips by Month (2020 to 2025)
Source: Strava Metro

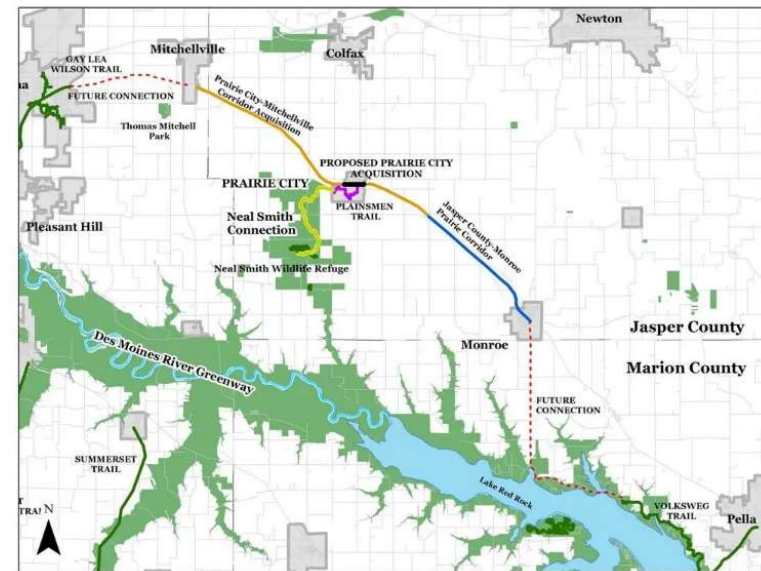


Heat Map of Bicycling Strava Users
(December 2024 – November 2025)
Source: Strava Metro

⁴⁷ 2024 was excluded due to abnormal data.

Marion County looks to expand trail usage and enhance its outdoor recreation opportunities by connecting its trail system with the greater central Iowa regional trail system.

The Red Rock Prairie Trail connects Mitchellville, Prairie City, and Monroe and is part of a long-range goal of linking Saylorville Lake with the Neal Smith National Wildlife Refuge and Lake Red Rock. The trail segment between Prairie City and Monroe was completed in August 2022, and the trail segment between Mitchellville and Prairie City was under construction as of 2025. A future connection between Monroe and the Volksweg Trail along the eastern edge of Lake Red Rock will connect Marion County trails with the central Iowa trail system and will greatly expand trail and outdoor recreation for residents and visitors of Marion County. Marion County is open to additional opportunities to better connect its park and trail system, such as a trail connection from Knoxville to Lake Red Rock.



Plan for the Red Rock Prairie Trail to connect Saylorville Lake, Mitchellville, Prairie City, Neal Smith Wildlife Refuge, Monroe, and Lake Red Rock

Water Resources

A watershed is an area of land that drains into a lake or stream. Each drainage area is classified by the United States Geological Survey (USGS) by Hydrologic Unit Code (HUC). HUC 10 and HUC 12 represent drainage Watersheds and Subwatershed, respectively. The largest watersheds in Marion County are the Calhoun Creek-Des Moines River, Cedar Creek, Cherry Creek-South Skunk River, Bluff Creek-Des Moines River, White Breast Creek, North Cedar Creek, English Creek, and Coal Creek.

Name	Digits	Average Size (SqMiles)	Example Code
Region	2	177,560	17
Subregion	4	16,800	1706
Basin	6	10,596	170601
Subbasin	8	700	17060102
Watershed	10	227	1706010201
Subwatershed	12	40	170601020101

Table of Hydrologic Units
Source: ESRI

Water resources have an important role in Marion County, but a major challenge is water quality. Nonpoint source pollution is a major water quality problem in Iowa.⁴⁸ Nonpoint pollution occurs when surface or groundwater picks up pollutants, such as sediment, chemicals, or waste, during its flow and deposits them into water bodies. According to the Iowa Department of Natural Resources (DNR), sediment is the leading nonpoint source pollutant in Iowa.⁴⁹ Sediment may come from agricultural

practices, such as cropland tillage, or from construction site activities.⁵⁰ Excessive sediment fills water bodies, covers and destroys fish and wildlife habitats, and reduces visibility in water affecting aesthetic and recreational value.⁵¹ Nutrients, especially nitrogen and phosphorus, are another major pollutant in Iowa.⁵² Nutrients may come from fertilizers, either through agricultural or residential uses, and from organic sources, such as manure and human sewage.⁵³ Bacteria from organic sources can cause health problems, while excessive nutrients can cause algal blooms that kill fish and wildlife and require costly treatment to be made safe for drinking.⁵⁴

⁴⁸ "Basics of Watersheds." Iowa Department of Natural Resources (DNR). <https://www.iowadnr.gov/environmental-protection/water-quality/watershed-improvement/basics-watersheds>

⁴⁹ Ibid.

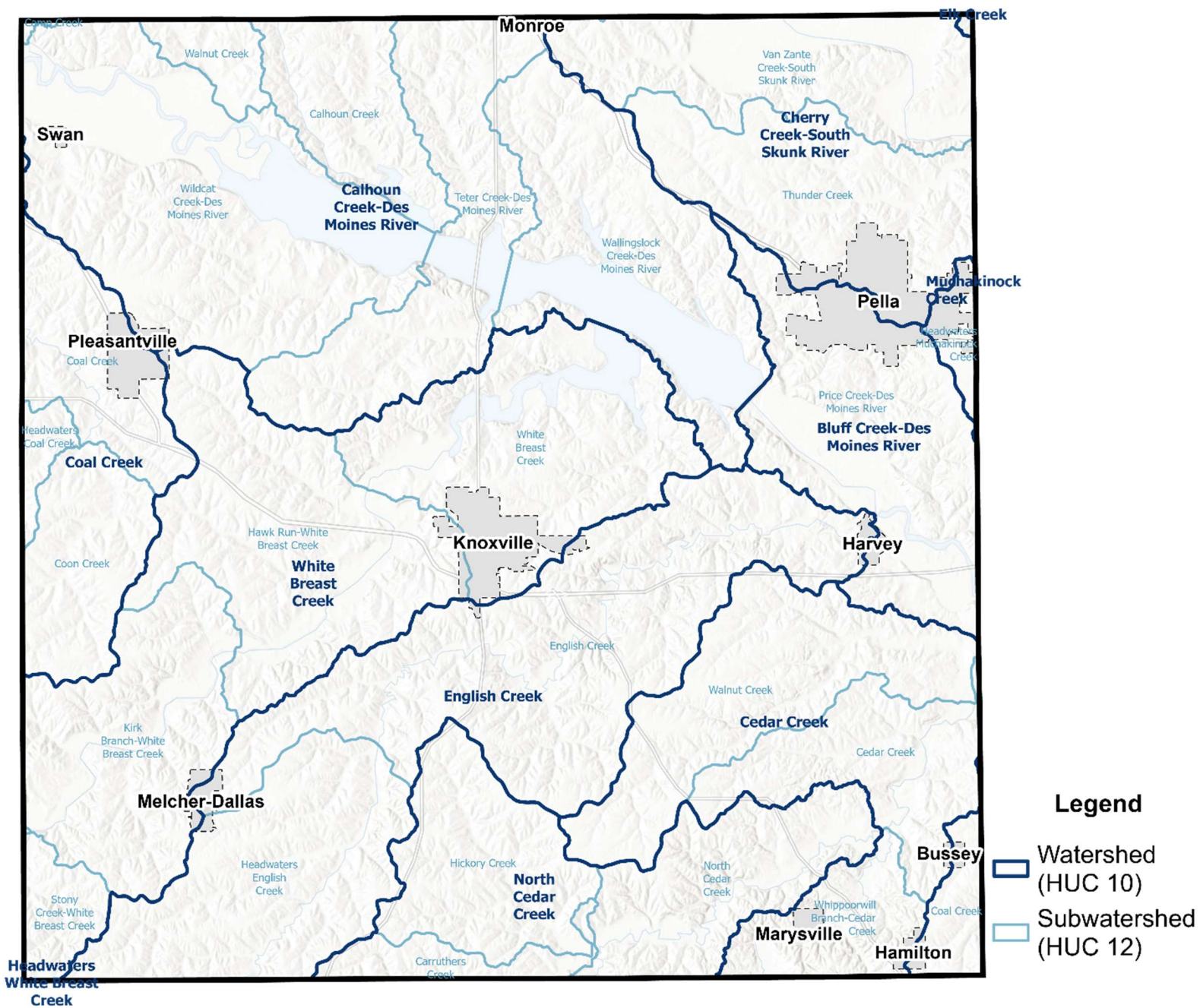
⁵⁰ Ibid.

⁵¹ Ibid.

⁵² Ibid.

⁵³ Ibid.

⁵⁴ Ibid.



Source: Iowa Department of Natural Resources (DNR)

Lake Red Rock is the largest continuous public land and waters in Iowa⁵⁵ and one of Marion County's premier natural resource and public recreation assets.



Source: Visit Pella

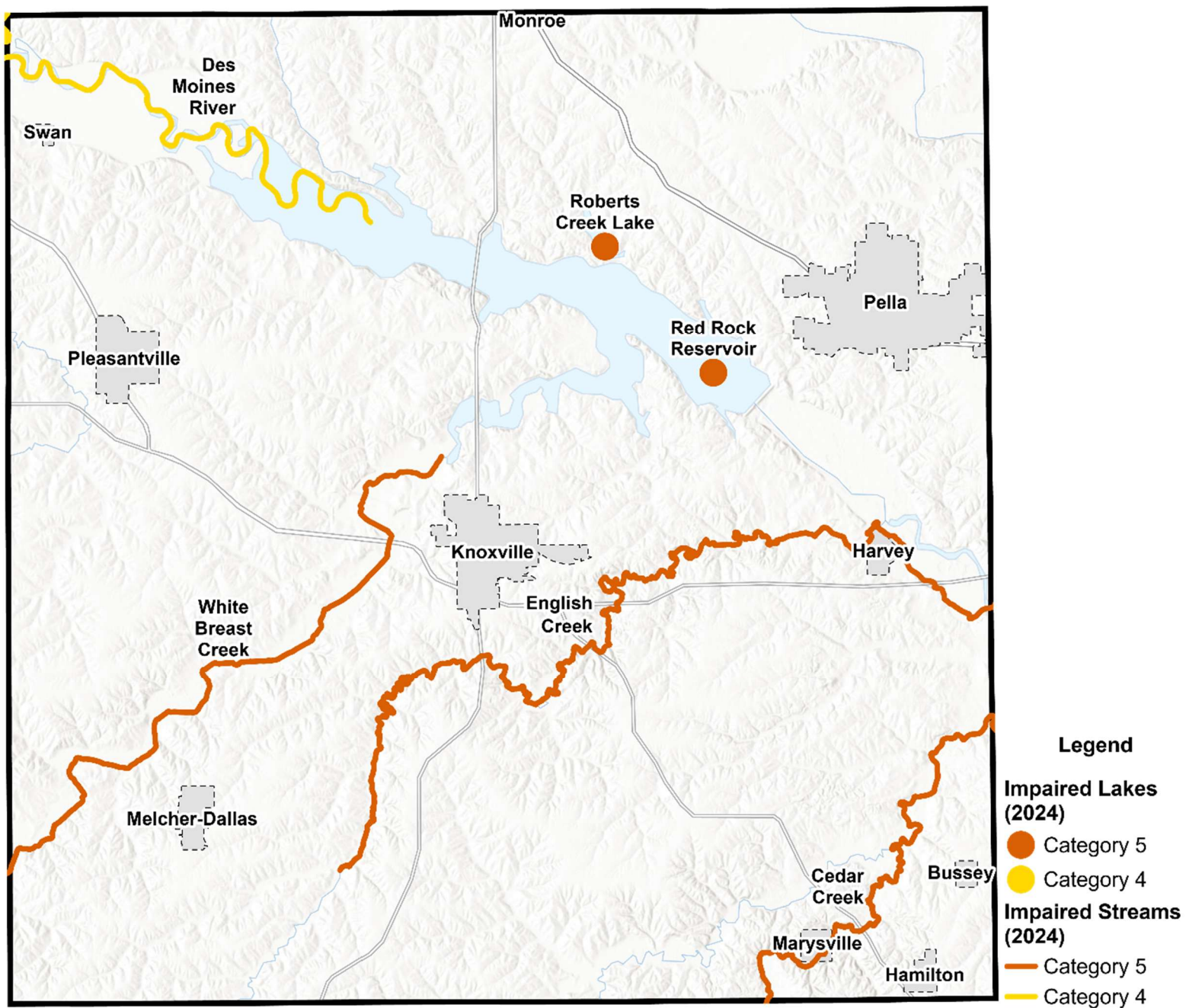
Most of the impaired waterbodies in Marion County are for recreational use and are impaired by the presence of the e. coli bacteria. The prioritization of addressing the impaired waterbodies in Marion County ranges from Tier I (high social impact; low complexity/cost) to Tier IV (low social impact; high complexity/cost). Addressing impaired waterbodies in Marion County, such as the Des Moines River and Lake Red Rock, will not only improve water quality but also expand recreational opportunities for residents and visitors of Marion County.

Section 303(d) of the Clean Water Act requires states to assess the water quality of their waterbodies every other year. Waterbodies are deemed impaired if they do not meet the water quality standards for their primary use. In the 2024 Report, the Iowa Department of Natural Resources (DNR) determined there were 2 impaired lakes and 4 impaired streams in Marion County. The two main categories of impairment are Category 5 and Category 4. A Category 5 Impairment requires the impaired waterbody to be added to the state's Section 303(d) list and requires a total maximum daily load (TMDL), or a watershed improvement plan, to reduce the pollutant. A Category 4 Impairment does not require the impaired waterbody to be included on the state's Section 303(d) list and a TMDL is not required.

⁵⁵ Lake Red Rock Master Plan. US Army Corps of Engineers.
<https://www.mvr.usace.army.mil/missions/recreation/lake-red-rock/master-plan/>

Marion County Impaired Lakes (2024)				
Name	Designated Uses	Impairment Category	Impairments	TMDL Prioritization
Red Rock Reservoir	A1 - Primary contact recreational use	5a	Indicator Bacteria – E. coli Turbidity	Tier II (High Social Impact; High Complexity/Cost)
Roberts Creek Lake	A1 - Primary contact recreational use	5a	Turbidity	Tier I (High Social Impact; Low Complexity/Cost)
Marion County Impaired Streams (2024)				
Name	Designated Uses	Impairment Category	Impairments	TMDL Prioritization
Cedar Creek	A1 - Primary contact recreational use BWW2 - Smaller, perennially flowing stream for resident aquatic community but lack flow and habitat for game fish populations	5p 5b-t	Indicator Bacteria – E. coli Low fish biological integrity (IBI)	Tier III (Low Social Impact; Low Complexity/Cost)
Des Moines River	A1 - Primary contact recreational use	4a	Indicator Bacteria – E. coli	N/A
English Creek	BWW2 - Smaller, perennially flowing stream for resident aquatic community but lack flow and habitat for game fish populations	5b-v	Low aquatic macroinvertebrate biological integrity (IBI)	Tier IV (Low Social Impact; High Complexity/Cost)
White Breast Creek	A1 - Primary contact recreational use	5a	Indicator Bacteria – E. coli	Tier III (Low Social Impact; Low Complexity/Cost)

Source: Iowa Department of Natural Resources (DNR)



Source: Iowa Department of Natural Resources (DNR)

Goal: Provide High-Quality Outdoor Experiences		
Objectives	Actions	Funding
Maintain and Improve Existing Hard Surface Roads at Marion County Park and Campground	Maintenance and improvements as needed	Local funds
Replace Hard Surface Road to the 3-bedroom Cabins at Cordova Park	Prepare for replacement	Local funds
Maintain Hard Surface Trails	Maintenance as needed	Local funds
Maintain and Improve Existing Park Facilities (cabins, campgrounds, shelter houses, playgrounds, observation tower, restrooms, shower facilities, etc.)	- Construct or replace various playground equipment - Construct a restroom building at the parking lot of the Cordova Park trail head - Improve parking at the Cordova Pavilion and Observation Tower - Improve/repair Cordova Boat Ramp	- Local Foundations (Marion County Community Foundation, Pella Rolscreen Foundation, Vermeer Charitable Foundation) - State Grants (Water Recreation Access Cost Share)
Maintain Existing Infrastructure (electrical, water, sewer) in all Parks (Cordova, Roberts Creek, and Marion County Parks)	Maintenance as needed	Local funds
Goal: Protect and Revitalize Natural Heritage		
Objectives	Actions	Funding
Improve Habitats in Parks, Public Hunting, and Wildlife Areas	- Remove invasive plants - Plant native grasses, forbs, and hardwoods - Improve pond at Bauer Park	- State Grants (Habitat Stamp, Fish Habitat) - NGOs (Ducks Unlimited, Pheasants Forever)
Offset the Loss from Emerald Ash Bore	Replant a variety of native trees in all parks affected by Emerald Ash Bore	Local funds
Partner with Other Agencies and Organizations to Improve Soil and Water Quality	Work with Iowa Department of Natural Resources, Iowa Department of Agriculture, US Army Corps of Engineers, Marion County Soil and Water Conservation District, ICON Water Trails	State Grants (Fish Habitat Promotion for County Conservation Boards, Iowa Water Trails Mini Grants, Water Recreation Access Cost-Share, Watershed Improvement Grants, Iowa Abandoned Mine Land Reclamation Program)

Goal: Enhance and Expand Recreational Opportunities		
Objectives	Actions	Funding
Collaborate with Marion County Engineer to Expand Trails	• Create soft surface trail (hiking trail) around Marion County Park Lake • Expand trail network around Lake Red Rock and connect with other regional trails in Central Iowa • Install trail counters on Marion County trails to track trail usage	• Federal Grants (Federal Recreational Trails) • State Grants (State Recreational Trails, State Transportation Alternatives Program) • Regional Grants (CIRTPA Transportation Alternatives Program)
Investigate Further Development of Parks for Expansion of Camping and Cabin Facilities	• Conduct expansion and feasibility study	• Local funds • State Grants (Community Attraction and Tourism)
Expand Environmental Outreach and Education Programs	• Develop additional outreach and education programs • Identify various grants to expand outreach and education	• Local funds • State Grants (REAP Conservation Education Program)

Hazards

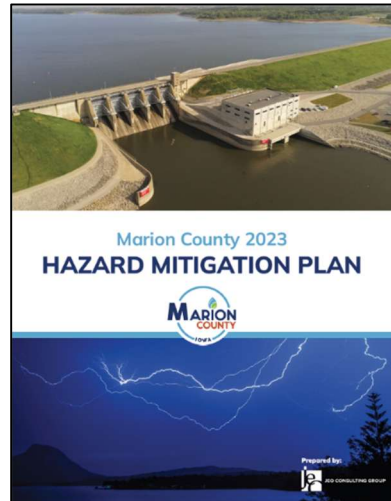


The Office of Emergency Management for Marion County is located in Knoxville, Iowa. The Office of Emergency Management, governed under Chapter 29C of Iowa State Code, is responsible for implementing county emergency planning developed by Iowa Homeland Security and Emergency Management.



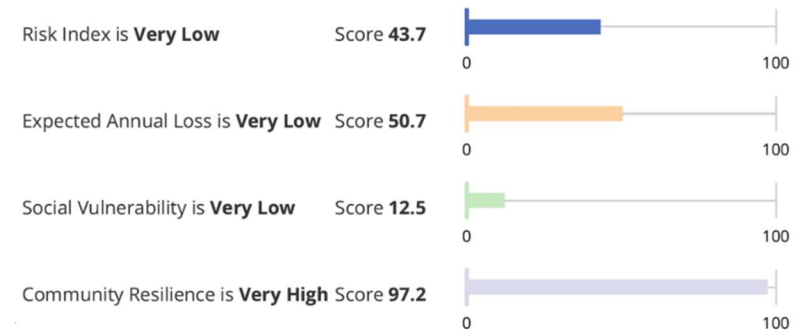
The U.S. Congress passed the Disaster Mitigation Act of 2000, amending the Robert T. Stafford Disaster Relief and Emergency Assistance Act. The DMA of 2000 requires state and local governments to develop, adopt, and update a hazard mitigation plan to be eligible for pre- and post- disaster mitigation funding. These funding mitigation programs include the Hazard Mitigation Grant Program (HMGP), Building Resilient Infrastructure and Communities (BRIC),⁵⁶ and the Flood Mitigation Assistance Program (FMA).

In 2022, Marion County contracted JEO Consulting Group to update the Marion County Hazard Mitigation Plan (HM Plan). The Hazard Mitigation Plan was approved by Iowa Homeland Security and Emergency Management (HSEMD) and the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) and adopted by Marion County in 2023. The Plan identifies high-risk hazards, at-



Source: Marion County

risk populations, threats and vulnerabilities to those populations, and implementable mitigation strategies. The FEMA National Risk Index for Marion County is summarized below.



Source: FEMA National Risk Index

Hazards vary by type and occurrence, dependent on a community's location, prevalence of industries, and natural environment.

Potential hazards with the corresponding probability of



Emergency Management Trailers

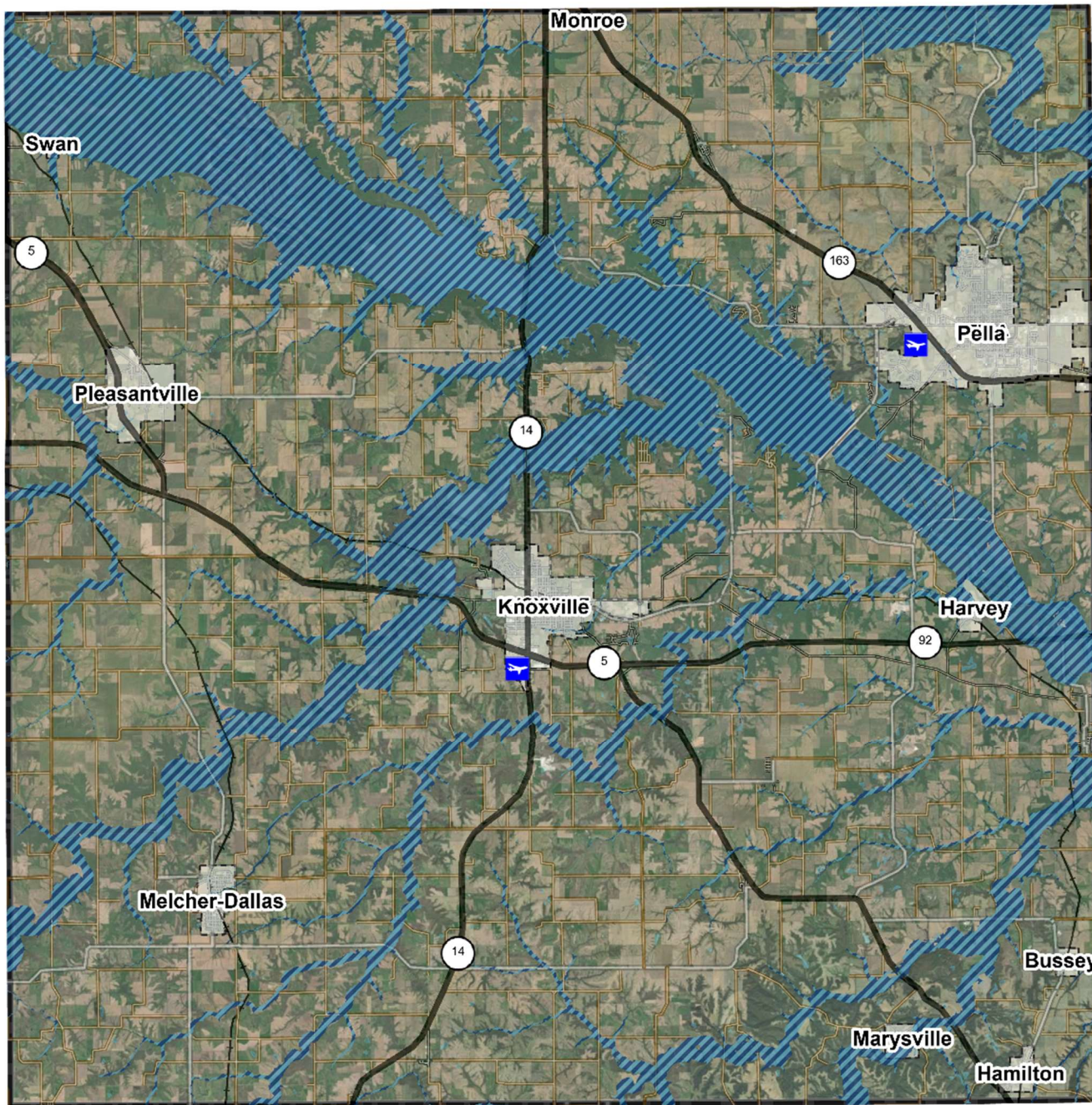
Source: MIPA

occurrence and estimated annual loss (EAL) are listed on the next page. For Marion County, the most probable hazards are weather related events, such as flooding, severe thunderstorms, severe winter storms, and tornadoes/high winds. The top three hazards based on estimated annual loss in Marion County are tornadoes, strong winds, and flooding.

⁵⁶ As of April 4th, 2025, FEMA eliminated the Building Resilient Infrastructure and Communities (BRIC) program.

Hazard	Previous Occurrences	Approximate Annual Probability*	Likely Extent
Agricultural Plant and Animal Disease	Animal Disease: Unavailable	Unknown	Unknown
	Plant Disease: 18	Plant Disease 9/22 = 41%	Crop damage or loss
Dam Failure	0	Less than 1%	Varies by structure inundation of floodplain downstream from dam
Drought	489/1,532 months	28%	Mild Drought (D1)
Earthquakes	0	Less than 1%	Less than 5.0 on the Richter Scale
Expansive Soils	Unknown	Unknown	Varies by event
Extreme Heat	Heat: Avg 2 day/year	29/84 = 35%	Max Temp ≥100°F
Flooding	133	21/27 = 78%	Some inundation of structures and road closures. Some evacuations of people may be necessary.
Grass and Wildland Fire	39	5/15 = 33%	Avg. 6 acres
Hazardous Materials Release	Fixed Site Spill: 25	17/33 = 52%	Avg Liquid Spill: 125 gallons Avg Gas Spill: 3,057 lbs.
	Transportation Spill: 6	5/52 = 10%	Avg Spill: 3,358 lbs of product
Human Infectious Disease	2 major outbreaks	Unknown	Unknown
Infrastructure Failure	Unknown	Likely to occur annually	Varies by event
Landslide	Unknown	Less than 1%	Varies by event
Severe Thunderstorms	428	27/27 = 100%	>1" rainfall, Avg. 75 mph winds, Avg. hail 1.2"
Severe Winter Storms & Extreme Cold	Storms: 72	24/27 = 89%	1-8" snow 25-35 mph winds
	Cold: Avg 4 days/year	68/84 = 81%	Max Temp ≤ 10°F
Sinkhole	Unknown	Less than 1%	Varies by location/event
Terrorism and High Civil Disorder	0	Less than 1%	Varies by event
Tornado and High Winds	Tornadoes: 25	13/27 = 48%	Mode: EF1, Range: EF0-EF3
	High Winds: 31	19/27 = 70%	Avg: 56 mph, Range 40-73 mph
Transportation Incident	Auto: 5,640 Aviation: 22	11/11 = 100% 16/61 = 26%	Damages incurred to vehicles involved and traffic delays; substantial damages to aircrafts involved with some aircrafts destroyed
	Rail: 46	18/48 = 38%	
* Annual Probability = Total Years with an Event Occurrence / Total Years of Record			
Source: Marion County 2023 Hazard Mitigation Plan			

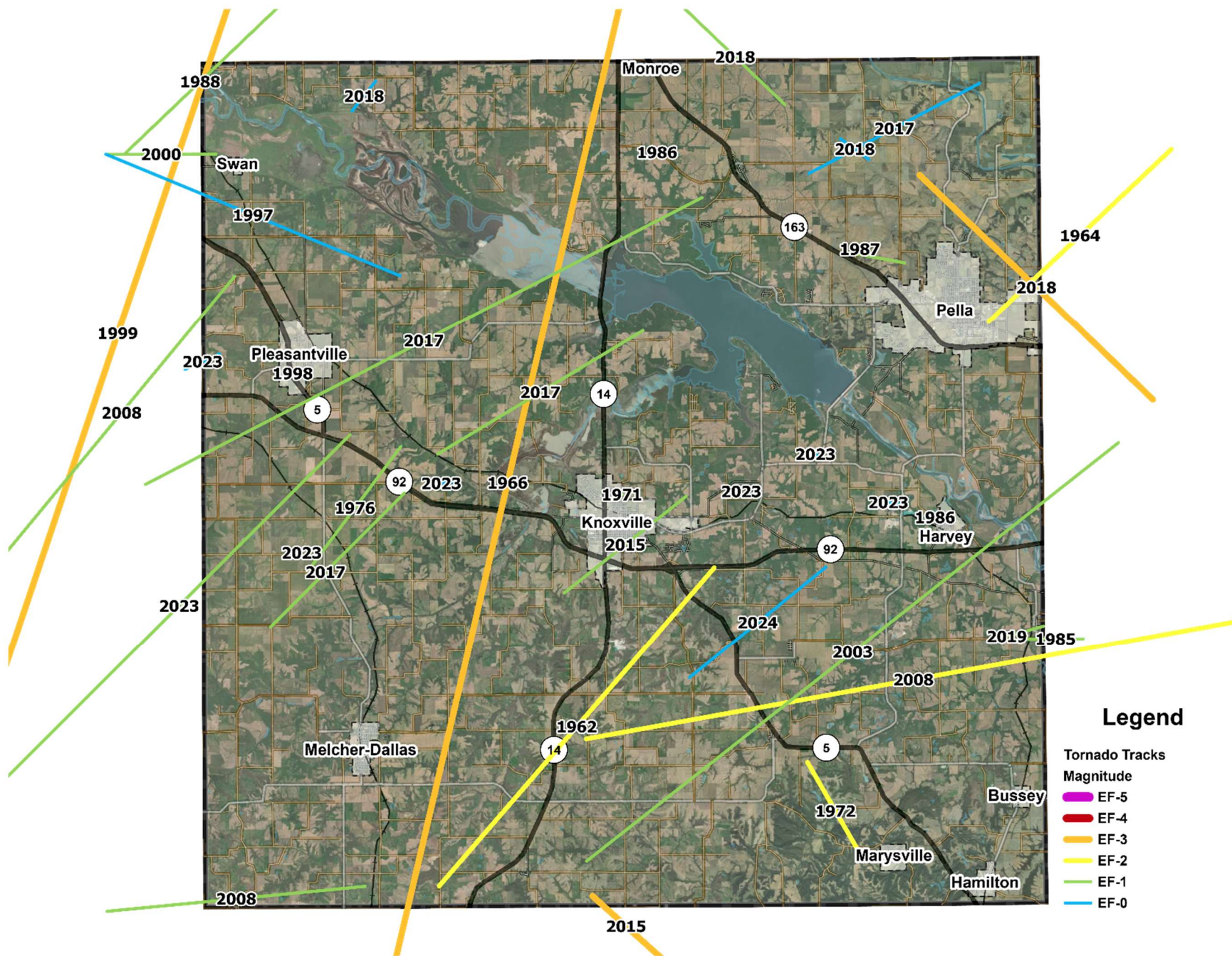
Hazard Type	EAL Value	Risk Value	Risk Index Score
Tornado	\$2,519,631	\$2,442,723	70.4
Strong Wind	\$924,580	\$889,234	76.8
Riverine Flooding	\$804,306	\$740,926	60.1
Hail	\$328,831	\$316,323	72.2
Drought	\$287,319	\$269,161	79.2
Cold Wave	\$223,283	\$209,880	69
Winter Weather	\$144,125	\$138,920	71.9
Lightning	\$72,187	\$70,050	37
Earthquake	\$54,728	\$52,581	33.8
Ice Storm	\$38,887	\$37,575	39.2
Wildfire	\$31,703	\$30,016	44.8
Landslide	\$21,900	\$20,449	20.8
Heat Wave	\$18,353	\$17,680	27.7
Hurricane	\$4,391	\$4,213	3.9
Total	\$5,474,224	\$5,239,731	
Source: FEMA National Risk Index, January 3rd, 2025			



Legend

 Flood Zone (100-year Floodplain)

Source: Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA)



Source: Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA)

The Marion County Hazard Mitigation Plan provides mitigation strategies for the identified hazards.

Hazard	Mitigation Strategies
Agricultural Plant and Animal Disease	• Geographic Information Systems (GIS) Mapping • Public Education and Awareness
Dam Failure	• Emergency Preparedness Drills and Preparedness Program • Public Education and Awareness • Install Standby Pumps • Upgrade Radios
Drought	• Public Education and Awareness
Earthquake	• Emergency Preparedness Drills and Preparedness Program • Public Education and Awareness
Expansive Soils	• Public Education and Awareness
Extreme Heat	• Preparedness Program • Public Education and Awareness
Flooding	• Uphold Building Codes and Ordinances • Install Backflow Devices • Flood-Prone Structures • Public Education and Awareness • Install Impervious Manhole Covers and Perform Water and Sewer Line Maintenance • Standby Pumps • Stream Modifications • Study Illegal Sump Pumps
Grass and Wildland Fire	• Emergency Vehicle Tracking • Multi-Family Fire Extinguishers • New Fire Truck and Ambulance • Upgrade Equipment, Fire Station, and Radios

Hazard	Mitigation Strategies
Hazardous Materials Release (Fixed Site and Transportation Spills)	• Emergency Preparedness Drills and Preparedness Program • Chemical Container Removal • Improve Hazardous Incident Response • Public Education and Awareness
Human Infectious Diseases	• Emergency Preparedness Drills • Public Education and Awareness
Infrastructure Failure	• GIS Mapping • Storm Water Drainage • Public Education and Awareness
Landslides	• Emergency Preparedness Drills • Public Education and Awareness
Severe Thunderstorms	• Backup Jurisdictional Files and Records in Alternative Locations • Bury Power Lines or Harden Critical Infrastructure • Civil Service Improvements • Design and Construct Storm Shelters and Safe Rooms • Emergency Preparedness Drills and Preparedness Program • Install Backflow Devices • Public Education and Awareness • Purchase and Install Backup Power Generators for Redundant Power • Storm Water Controls

Hazard	Mitigation Strategies
Severe Winter Storms and Extreme Cold	• Backup Jurisdictional Files and Records in Alternative Locations • Bury Power Lines or Harden Critical Infrastructure • Civil Service Improvements • Incorporate Use of Snow Fences to Protect Vulnerable Transportation Routes • Purchase and Install Backup Power Generators for Redundant Power • Public Education and Awareness
Sinkholes	• Emergency Preparedness Drills • Public Education and Awareness
Terrorism and Civil Disorder	• Emergency Preparedness Drills and Preparedness Program • Improve Local Security System for Critical Facilities • Public Education and Awareness
Tornadoes and High Winds	• Bury Power Lines or Harden Critical Infrastructure • Design and Construct Storm Shelters and Safe Rooms • Emergency Preparedness Drills and Preparedness Program • Public Education and Outreach
Transportation Incidents	• Emergency Preparedness Drills and Preparedness Program • Road Bypass Projects • Public Education and Awareness

Source: Marion County Hazard Mitigation Plan (2023)

While hazards are a threat to Marion County, implementing a hazard mitigation plan promotes collaboration amongst community leaders to engage in emergency preparedness. When the plan is implemented, the County can best prepare for potential disasters while staying compliant with the federal government, allowing local leaders to apply and receive funding for disaster mitigation and recovery efforts. Intergovernmental collaboration is an important aspect of a hazard mitigation strategy, ensuring decision makers in the community are aware of protocols and mitigation strategies to keep their communities safe. The following table lists the local jurisdictions that would be involved in hazard mitigation.

Participating Jurisdictions	
Marion County	Knoxville Community School District
City of Bussey	Melcher-Dallas School District
City of Harvey	Pella Christian Schools
City of Knoxville	Pella Community School District
City of Marysville	Twin Cedars Community School District
City of Melcher-Dallas	
City of Pella	
City of Pleasantville	

According to the Marion County HM Plan, each participating jurisdiction is responsible for monitoring (annually at a minimum), evaluating, and updating the plan during its five-year lifespan. A complete update must occur every five years at a minimum. Each participating jurisdiction's governing body is responsible for implementing recommended projects. When projects or mitigation efforts are implemented, the timeline of each project should be maintained by the governing body responsible. Local planning members should engage with the public and relevant stakeholders while conducting reviews and making amendments to the Hazard Mitigation Plan. It is encouraged that local planning officials and stakeholders consider public input and research best practices, such as

FEMA's and American Planning Association's Hazard Planning program, prior to implementing mitigation strategies or making amendments to the Hazard Mitigation Plan.

Implementing hazard mitigation strategies can be cost burdensome on local governing bodies. To reduce the burden, governing bodies can apply for funding opportunities available through the federal and state government, and private entities. The following is a list of potential funding providers. It should be noted that this list is not comprehensive and funding streams from these sources may be limited due to changes in the federal and state government.

Federal	State	Other
CDC*	Iowa HSEM*	Local funding options
FEMA	Wellmark Foundation Grants	Public-Private Partnerships
US Forest Service	Iowa Department of Natural Resources Clean Water State Revolving Fund	Private Foundations
US Army Corps of Engineers	Derelict Building Program	
US Bureau of Reclamation – WaterSMART	Iowa Silver Jackets	
US Department of Agriculture		
US Department of Agriculture Rural Development Funding		
US Department of Energy		
US Department of Housing and Urban Development		
US Economic Development Administration		
US Environmental Protection Agency		
US Fish and Wildlife Service		

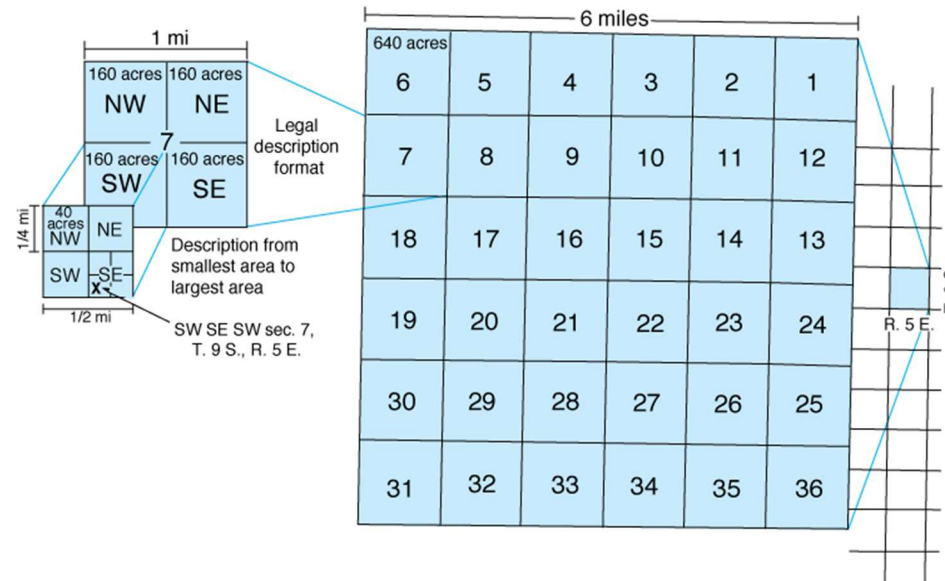
Goal: Protect the Health and Safety of Residents		
Objectives	Actions	Funding
Reduce or Prevent Damage to Property or Prevent Loss of Life or Serious Injuries	See Marion County Hazard Mitigation Plan (2023)	
Goal: Reduce Future Losses from Hazard Events		
Objectives	Actions	Funding
Provide Protection for Existing Structures, Future Development, Critical Facilities, Services, Utilities, Vulnerable Areas or Population, and Trees	See Marion County Hazard Mitigation Plan (2023)	
Develop Hazard Specific Plans, Conduct Studies or Assessments, and Retrofit Buildings and Facilities to Mitigate Hazards and Minimize Their Impact		
Minimize the Impact of Hazard Events Through Enacting or Updating Ordinances, Permits, Laws or Regulations		
Goal: Increase Public Awareness and Education Regarding Vulnerabilities to Hazards		
Objectives	Actions	Funding
Develop and Provide Information to the Public and Property Owners About Their Risk and Vulnerability to Hazards	See Marion County Hazard Mitigation Plan (2023)	
Goal: Improve Emergency Management Capabilities		
Objectives	Actions	Funding
Develop or Update City and/or County Emergency Response Plan(s) and Procedures and Increase the Capability to Respond	See Marion County Hazard Mitigation Plan (2023)	
Develop or Improve Evacuation Plans and Procedures		
Improve Warning Systems and Ability to Communicate to the Public During and Following a Disaster or Emergency		
Goal: Pursue Multi-Objective Opportunities (Whenever Possible)		
Objectives	Actions	Funding
When Possible, Use Existing Resources, Agencies, and Programs to Implement the Projects	See Marion County Hazard Mitigation Plan (2023)	
When Possible, Implement Projects that Achieve Several Goals		
Goal: Enhance Overall Resilience and Promote Sustainability		
Objectives	Actions	Funding
Incorporate Hazard Mitigation and Adaptation into Updating Other Local Planning Endeavors (e.g. Comprehensive Plans, Zoning Ordinance, Subdivision Regulation, etc.)	See Marion County Hazard Mitigation Plan (2023)	

Land Use

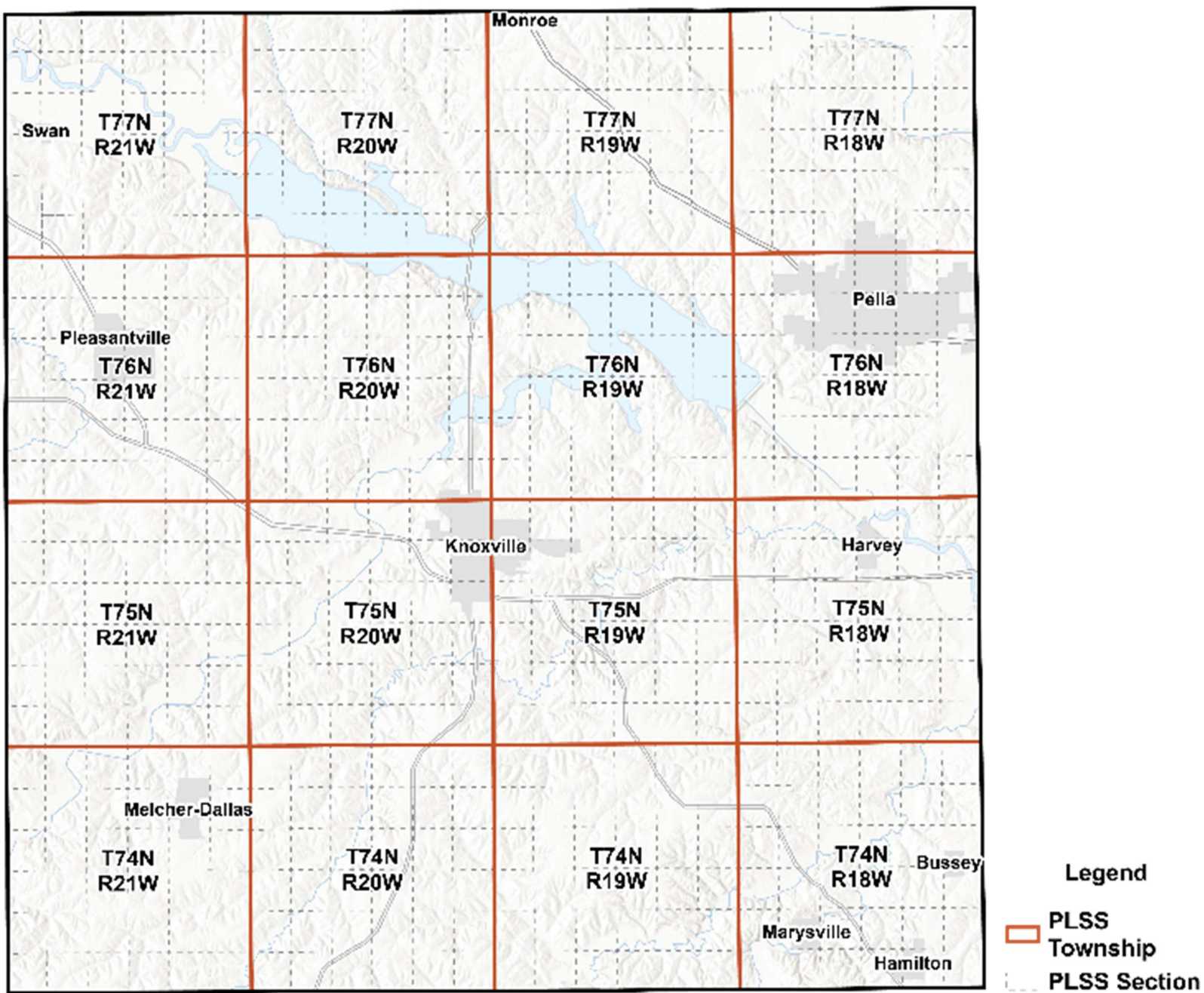


Marion County uses the Public Land Survey System (PLSS) to geographically subdivide and describe land. The PLSS divides Marion County into 16 townships, with each township 6 miles in length north to south (vertically) and 6 miles in width (horizontally) for a total of 36 square miles or 23,040 acres. Townships are subdivided into 36 sections, with each section 1 mile in length north to south (vertically) and 1 mile in width (horizontally) for a total of 1 square mile or 640 acres. Sections can be further subdivided into quarter sections or quarter-quarter sections.

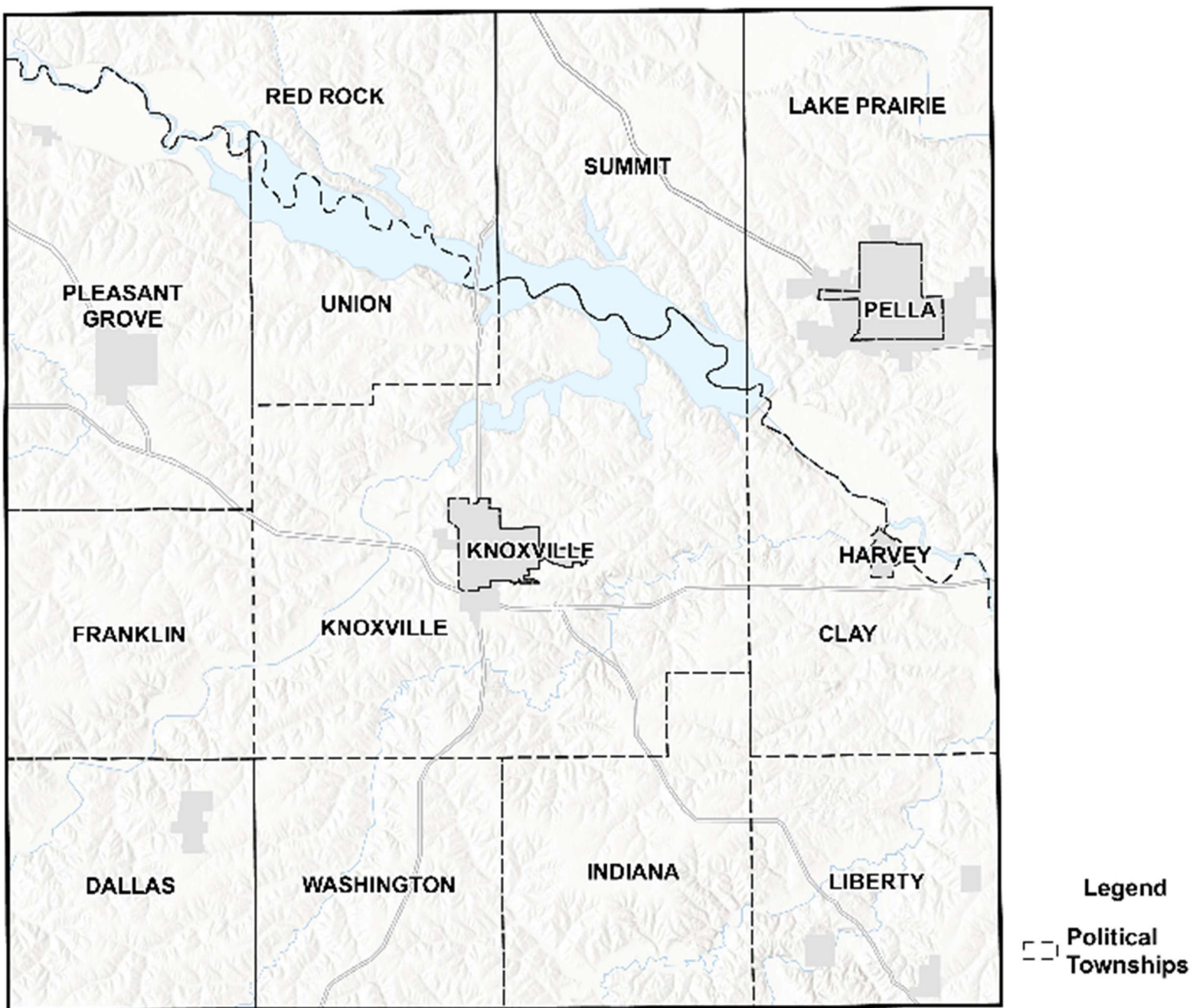
In addition to geographic townships, Marion County is organized into political townships of Clay, Dallas, Franklin, Indiana, Knoxville, Lake Prairie, Liberty, Pleasant Grove, Red Rock, Summit, Union, and Washington.



Example of the Public Land Survey System (PLSS)
Source: Kansas Geological Survey of The University of Kansas



Source: Iowa Department of Transportation (DOT)



Source: Iowa Department of Transportation (DOT)

Zoning

The Marion County Zoning Ordinance was adopted “for the purpose of promoting public health, safety, morals, comfort, and general welfare; to conserve and protect property and property values, to secure and provide the social and economic advantages resulting from an orderly planned use of land resources; and to facilitate adequate, but economical provisions for public improvements, all in accordance with a Comprehensive Plan.”⁵⁷

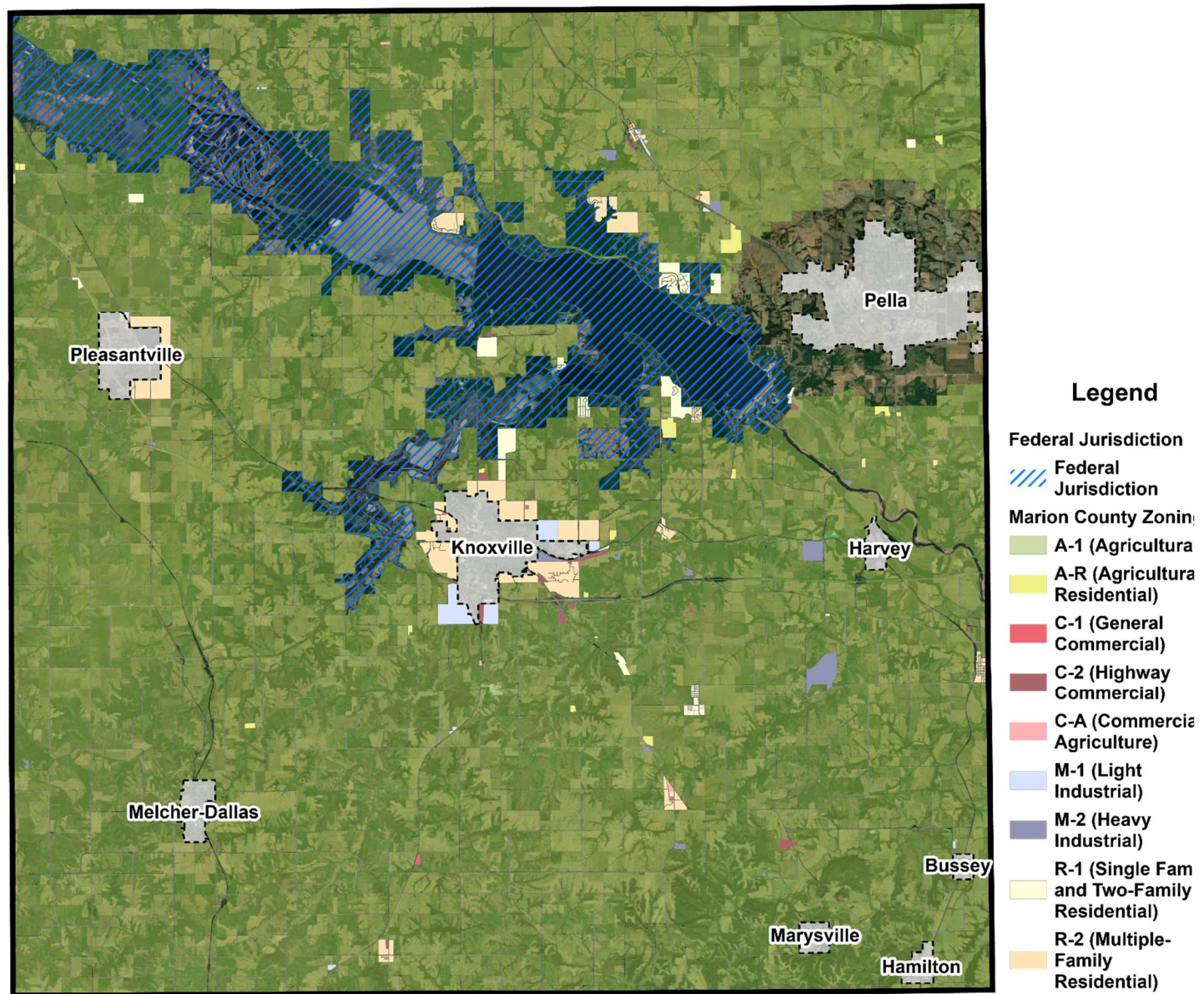
The majority of unincorporated Marion County is currently zoned A-1 (Agricultural). Federal lands are not zoned in unincorporated Marion County and are the next largest zoning district by acres. Other zoning districts with considerable acres in unincorporated Marion County are R-2 (Single-Family and Two-Family Residential).

The City of Pella maintains a 1-mile zoning jurisdiction outside their city limits.

Zoning District in Unincorporated Marion County	Percentage of Zoned Acres
A-1 (Agricultural)	89.14%
A-R (Agricultural Residential)	0.16%
C-1 (General Commercial)	0.01%
C-2 (Highway Commercial)	0.11%
C-A (Commercial-Agriculture)	0.01%
M-1 (Light Industrial)	0.22%
M-2 (Heavy Industrial)	0.21%
R-1 (Single-Family Residential)	0.40%
R-2 (Single-Family and Two-Family Residential)	1.11%
Federal Land (US Army Corp and Others)	8.64%
Total	100%

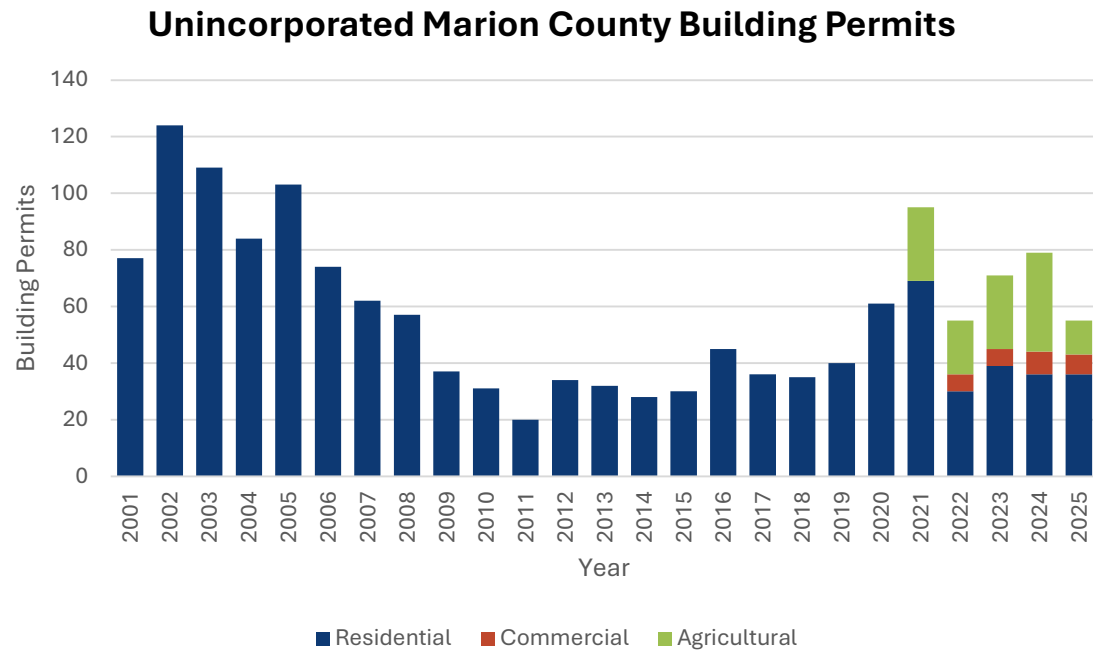
Source: Marion County

⁵⁷ Marion County, Iowa, Zoning Code. Chapter 55 of the Code of Ordinances of Marion County, Iowa. September 9, 2025.



Source: Marion County

Over the past two decades, unincorporated Marion County saw robust residential growth in the early 2000s and then weaker residential growth in the late 2000s and early 2010s. Since 2021, agricultural building permits have been a considerable share of unincorporated Marion County's building permits, but residential building permits have not yet returned to levels of the early 2000s. Still, there is growth and development momentum in unincorporated Marion County, and land resources should be used efficiently and sustainably.



Source: Marion County

Future Land Use

The long-term vision for growth and development in unincorporated Marion County is illustrated through future land uses. Future land uses provide an orderly framework to guide land use decisions, ensuring that growth and development align with community needs, priorities, and goals of the Comprehensive Plan. While future land uses provide an idealized vision of growth and development, they are intended to be flexible and adaptable to proposals and alternatives compatible with the Marion County Comprehensive Plan, while maintaining codified development policies such as the 4 buildable lots per 40-acre tract. The following describes the designated future land use categories and their intended purposes. The City of Pella

“Land use is important to determine how best to grow”

-Comment on Marion County Community Survey

maintains a 1-mile future land use jurisdiction outside their city limits.

Parks and Open Space



Wilcox Wildlife Area

Source: Marion County Conservation

The Parks and Open Space future land use category offers recreational opportunities, protects natural resources, and preserves landscapes of scenic or cultural value. This includes lands owned by the US Army Corps of Engineers, the Iowa Department of Natural Resources (DNR), and Marion County Conservation. Development in this future land use category is limited, especially in floodplains and floodways, but may include improvements for active and passive recreation, environmental education, or natural conservation.

Similar to Current Zoning Districts:

A-1 (Agricultural), C-A (Commercial Agriculture), A-R (Agricultural Residential), Federal lands

Agricultural



Farm south of Twin Cedars High School
Source: Land.com

The Agricultural future land use category preserves land for farming, livestock, or other agricultural uses and activities. These are often 40-acre parcels with limited to no infrastructure or development.

Similar to Current Zoning Districts:

A-1 (Agricultural), C-A (Commercial Agriculture), A-R (Agricultural Residential)

Rural Residential



House on 25th Place
Source: Marion County Assessor

The Rural Residential future land use category is intended for low and medium density housing on larger lots to preserve open space and agricultural land. These residences generally rely on rural water/individual wells and septic systems and are located away from incorporated urban areas.

Similar to Current Zoning Districts:

A-1 (Agricultural), A-R (Agricultural Residential)
R-1 (Single Family Residential), R-2 (Single and Two Family Residential), R-4 (Mobile Home Park Residential)

Urban Residential



House on South View Drive (Knoxville Estates)
Source: Google Maps

The Urban Residential future land use category accommodates low to high density housing, including single-family, duplexes, townhomes, and multi-family developments, in proximity to incorporated urban areas. These residences may have rural water/individual wells and septic systems or be served by public water and sewer systems in addition to other urban development characteristics, such as paved roadways, curb and gutter, or sidewalks.

Similar to Current Zoning Districts:

R-1 (Single Family Residential), R-2 (Single and Two Family Residential), R-3 (Multiple Family Residential), R-4 (Mobile Home Park Residential)

Commercial



Animal Health Center of Knoxville
Source: Marion County Assessor

The Commercial future land use category includes a range of retail, office, entertainment, and service uses for residents and visitors. Developments in this future land use category are often located in proximity to paved roadways and are compatible with adjacent land uses while maintaining quality design, landscaping, and buffering.

Similar to Current Zoning Districts:

C-1 (General Commercial), C-2 (Highway Commercial)

Industrial



LDJ Manufacturing
Source: Marion County Assessor

The Industrial future land use category includes manufacturing, processing, warehousing, and distribution. Developments in this future land use category are generally located along major paved transportation corridors to facilitate the movement of materials and goods and have mitigated impacts with adjacent land uses, especially residential or commercial.

Similar to Current Zoning Districts:

M-1 (Light Industrial), M-2 (Heavy Industrial)

Civic



Twin Cedars High School
Source: KNIA - KRLS

The Civic future land use category is for public and semi-public facilities that serve a community purpose, including government buildings, emergency services, community centers, schools, libraries, museums, places of worship, cemeteries, water and sewage treatment, and landfills.

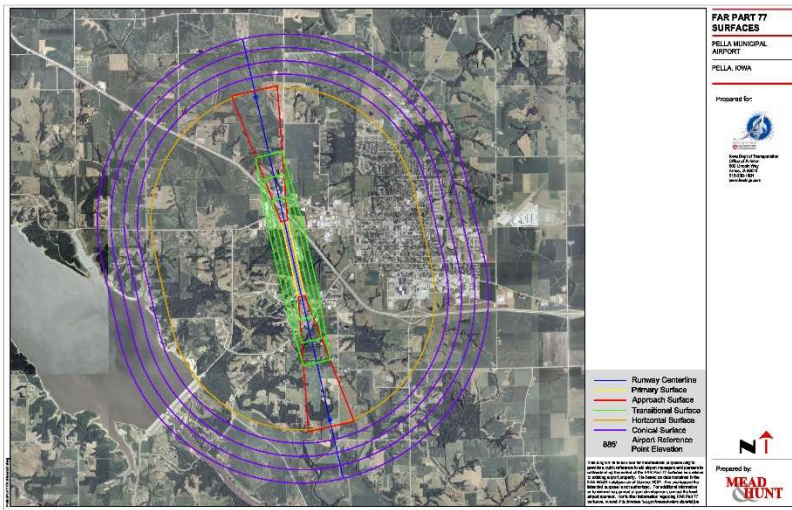
Similar to Current Zoning Districts:

A-1 (Agricultural), C-A (Commercial Agriculture)

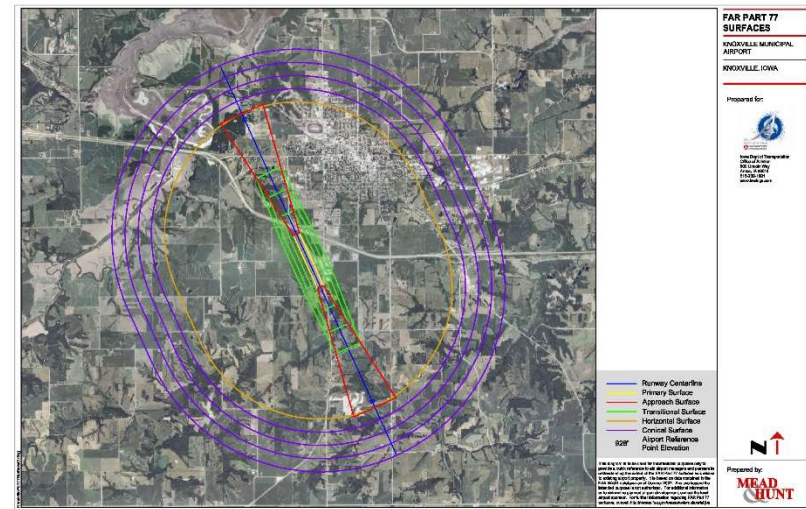
C-1 (General Commercial), C-2 (Highway Commercial)

M-1 (Light Industrial), M-2 (Heavy Industrial)

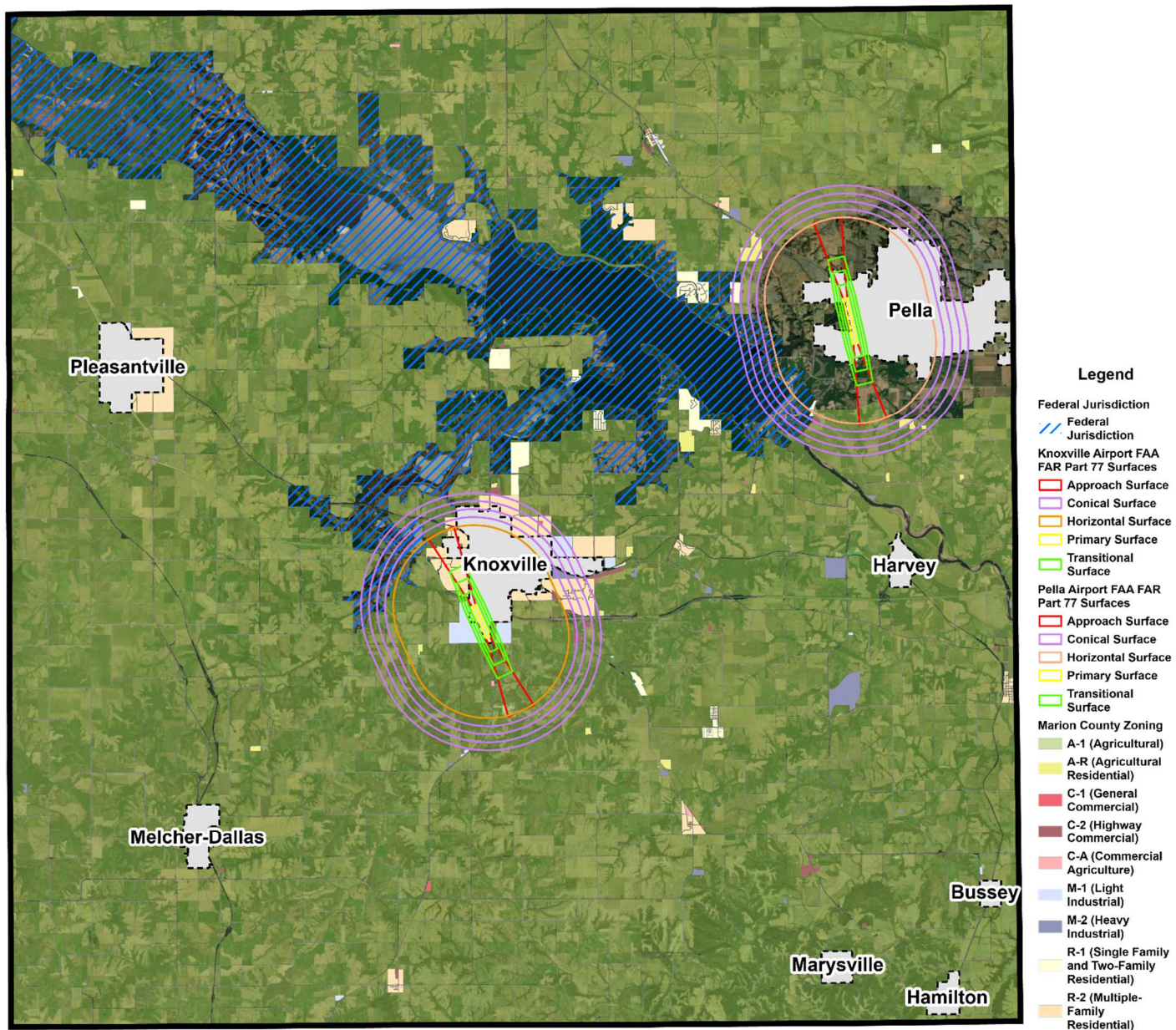
Future land uses and developments, especially near the Knoxville and Pella municipal airports should integrate the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA)'s Federal Aviation Regulations (FAR) Part 77, which establishes distance and height thresholds for structures to ensure compatibility with safe aircraft operations. Proposed construction or alterations are required to notify the FAA using Form 7460-1 "Notice of Proposed Construction or Alteration." By identifying and incorporating these considerations, Marion County ensures future growth aligns with federal aviation safety standards and preserves airport functions.

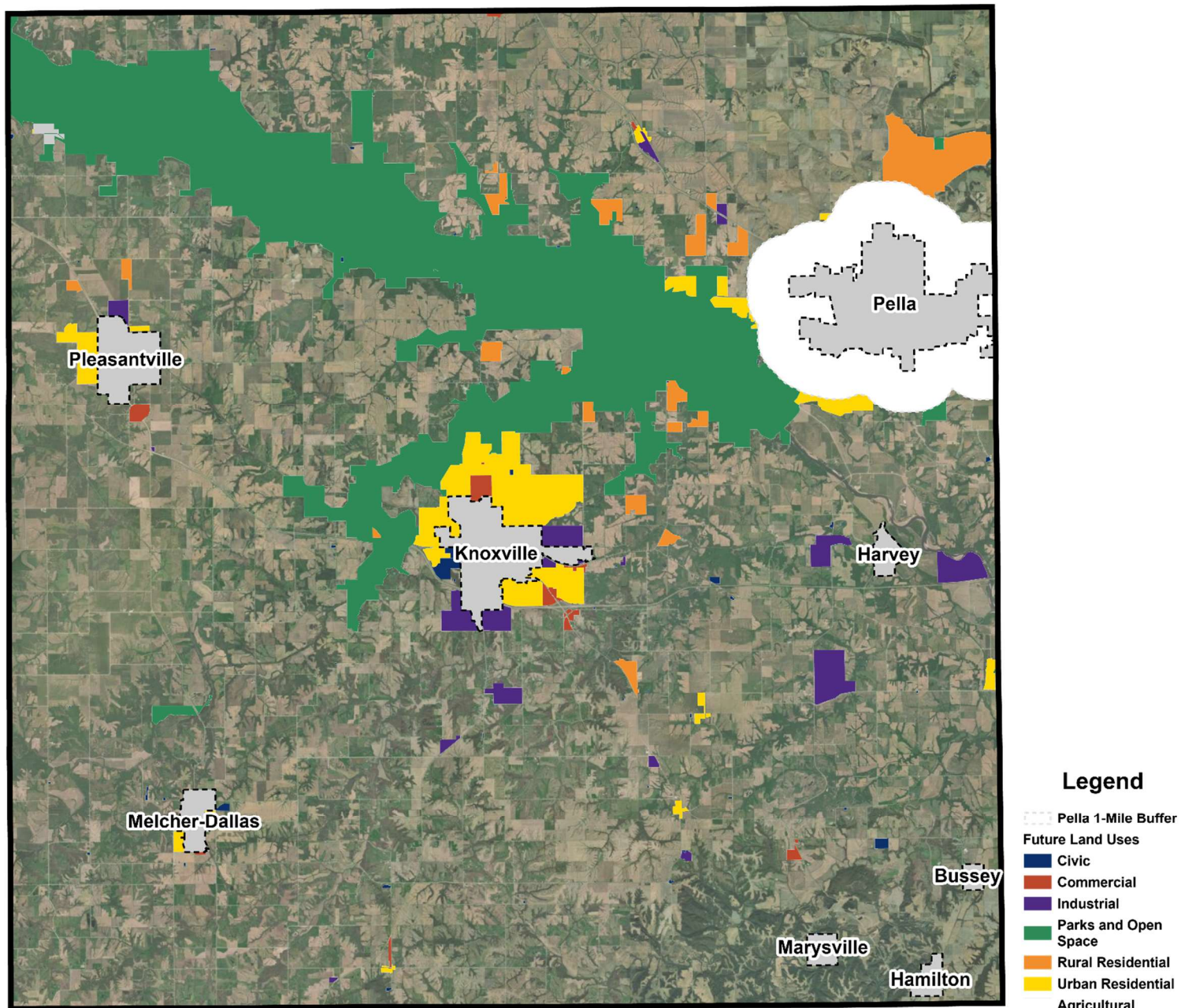


Pella Airport FAR Part 77 Surfaces
Source: Iowa Department of Transportation (DOT)



Knoxville Airport FAR Part 77 Surfaces
Source: Iowa Department of Transportation (DOT)





Marion County Future Land Use Map
Source: Marion County

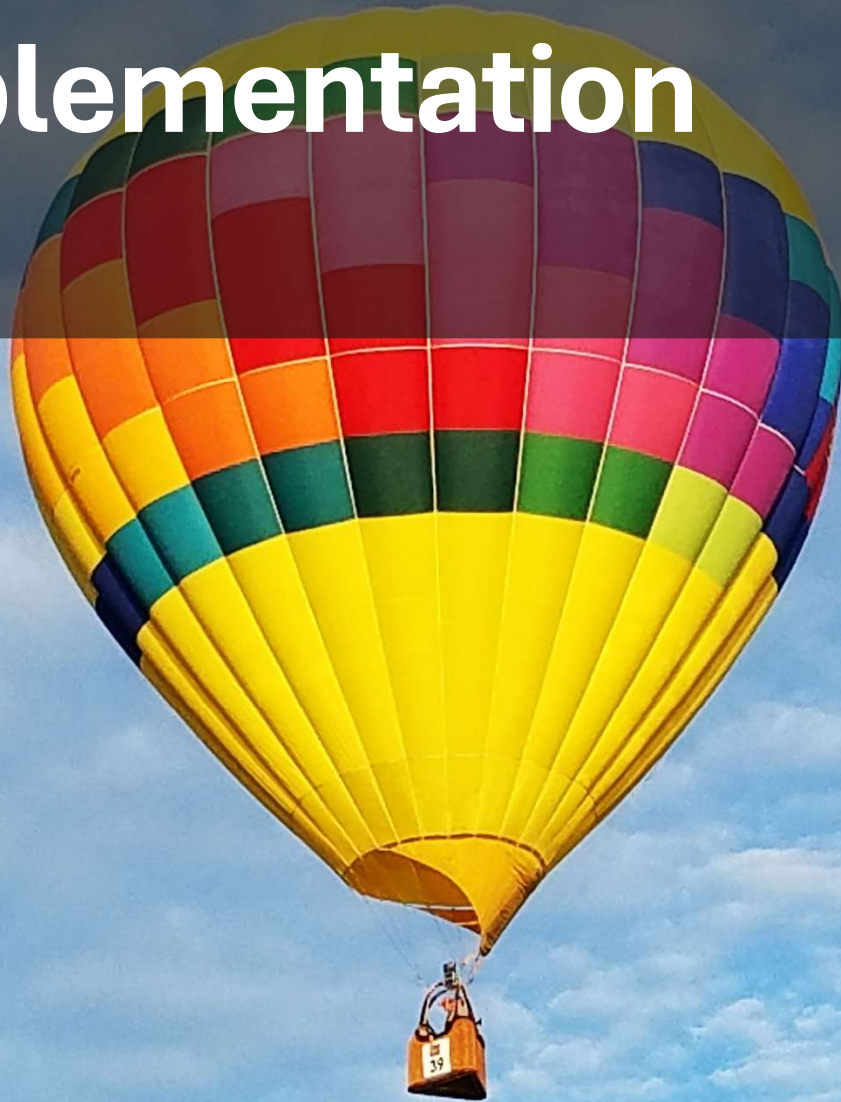
Marion County Future Land Uses Compatibility Table

Classification		A	B	C	D	E	F	G
Parks, Open Space	A	1	2	2	2	3	1	1
Agricultural	B	1	1	2	2	2	2	2
Civic	C	2	2	1	2	2	2	2
Commercial	D	2	2	2	1	2	2	2
Industrial	E	3	2	2	2	1	3	3
Rural Residential	F	1	2	2	2	3	1	1
Urban Residential	G	1	2	2	2	3	1	1
Compatibility Code 1. Proposed land use is identical to or is mostly compatible with adjacent land uses. Developments should follow good planning practices. Minimal conflicts are expected. 2. Proposed land use is possibly compatible with adjacent land uses. Developments may have conflicts with adjacent land uses that can be effectively mitigated through planning and design. 3. Proposed land use is mostly incompatible with adjacent land uses. Significant conflicts are expected, and impacts may not be effectively mitigated.								

Adapted from Marion County Comprehensive Land Use Plan (2013)

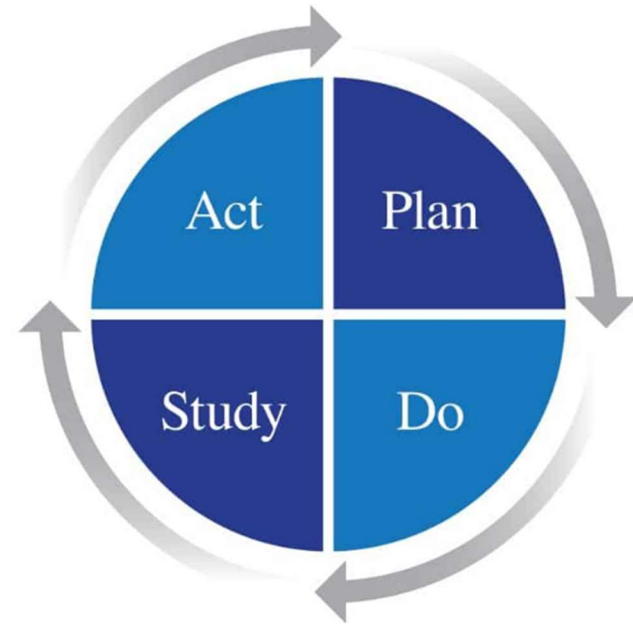
Goal: Promote Efficient and Sustainable Land Uses and Developments		
Objectives	Actions	Funding
Review and evaluate proposed developments in unincorporated Marion County for efficient and sustainable land use	Develop a matrix tool to review and evaluate proposed developments, considering factors such as Corn Suitability Rating (CSR)/USDA Prime Farmland, paved road access, utilities, etc.	Local Funding
Ensure Marion County land use and development decisions within a 2-mile buffer of city limits are consistent and supportive of municipal plans	- Update 28E Agreements with incorporated cities in Marion County to formalize coordination and cooperation - Continue joint review process for developments within the 2-mile extraterritorial jurisdiction area	None
Maintain current residential development standards of three-acre net minimum and four parcels per 40-acres for Agricultural Districts	None	None

Implementation



The *Marion County 2040 Comprehensive Plan* provides a vision for Marion County with goals, objectives, and actions to build a thriving community for all. As a living document, the *Marion County 2040 Comprehensive Plan* is not static and should be regularly maintained and updated as the city grows and evolves.

The Comprehensive Plan itself is the first phase of the Plan, Do, Study, Act (PDSA) cycle. The next phase, Do, requires County staff, cities within the county, and community partners to begin implementing the goals, objectives, and actions. County leaders should work with stakeholders to prioritize and assign actions which will disperse the work and support better implementation. Next, the Study phase will monitor outcomes of the actions. Annually, the Marion County Board of Supervisors and department directors will evaluate progress and identify any causes of failure or slow movement. The final phase, Act, will make necessary adjustments to continue successes. These adjustments can even include adapting or abandoning actions that need improvement or do not serve the best interest of County residents or County progress.



Source: The W. Edwards Deming Institute

