

# MARION DOWNTOWN PLAN PLANNING REPORT

NOVEMBER 10, 2005



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## Introduction

There is a need for a Downtown Plan in Marion. The City completed a Smart Growth Comprehensive Plan in 2001 and adopted it on September 26, 2001. The Smart Growth Plan recommends the City prepare a Downtown Plan to deal with vacant buildings, blighted structures, need for off-street parking, utility improvements and the reconstruction of Highway 110. The Smart Growth Plan identified the need to prepare a detailed, parcel-by-parcel plan for the Downtown. Now is a most appropriate time to do the planning in order to coordinate with the reconstruction of STH 110. The Downtown needs planning and revitalization. Marion's prime economic base is manufacturing and is the home to many of the plant employees. The City needs a healthy Downtown to provide the retail and service commercial uses needed to maintain the residential population.

The plan will be used to guide redevelopment and rejuvenation of the Central Business District. The Downtown is blighted due to vacant and obsolete buildings, lack of permanent off-street parking and lack of pedestrian amenities. A healthy Downtown is recognized as a key element for the economic well being of the community.

## Issues and Problems

The Downtown has many problems. These include:

1. Blighted structures in need of replacement or rehabilitation
2. A need to address a changing function for the Downtown
3. Lack of off-street parking
4. The need to support the manufacturing economic base
5. Lack of pedestrian amenities
6. The temporary closing and then reconstruction during the summer of the main business street (also STH 110)
7. The high rate of low and moderate-income (68.2%) households in Marion
8. Vacant buildings
9. Commercial buildings that have been converted to residential uses
10. Low assessed values

## Opportunities and Potentials

1. Economic growth has been good along the Highway 45 corridor on the north edge of the City, but not in the Downtown. These economic improvements include a convenience store, banquet hall, trailer sales, bank, amusement park and construction equipment sales. The assessed values in this area exceed that of the Downtown.
2. There is sufficient economic activity in the City to stimulate growth in the Downtown. In addition, the City has been contacted by a local merchant to build a new retail store in the Downtown. The City sold a vacant parcel to the merchant so a new store could be constructed.

3. The reconstruction of STH 110 is a benefit to the Downtown. The project will result in improvements to safety, particularly as it relates to pedestrians. The plan will explore public improvements along STH 110 to improve pedestrian visibility including highway bump outs, better street lighting and better protection in the form of planters and bollards. The project will improve the Downtown, leading to an increase in assessed value to the existing development and the potential for new development. These actions will increase the tax base.
4. No overhead power lines on Main Street.
5. Post office, City Hall and the Library all Downtown.
6. The Library in a very desirable building with a great location and off street parking.
7. Many traffic generators or about 25 businesses plus an auto dealership and construction company.
8. About 1100 automobiles entering, parking and leaving the Downtown each day.

#### Existing Land Use

The existing land use in the Downtown is mixed. This includes service commercial uses, public uses, off-street parking, parkland and retail commercial uses. These uses would be expected. What would not be expected would be residential uses on the first floor, vacant land and vacant stores. Further, the true Downtown uses are separated by vacant parcels and residential uses. The Existing Land Uses are shown on Map-1.

#### Parking

Parking is a key issue to the success of the Downtown. Short term and long term or employee parking need to be available. A parking study was conducted on March 23, 2004, all the marked City spaces on the street and the three City off-street lots. This included 160 spaces as shown on Map-2. There is a private lot that could hold 27 to 36 cars, which was also surveyed. The survey was conducted from 7:30 a.m. to 5:30 p.m. every thirty minutes. The surveyor observed how many of the 160 spaces and 27 to 36 spaces were occupied. The overall observation was that many cars arrive and depart on a regular basis each day. Some vehicles only park for a few minutes and then leave. Others stay for thirty minutes or two hours and then leave. A few stay all day and are probably used by employees. The following table outlines the results of the survey. From a capacity standpoint the busiest time of the day is from 9:30 a.m. to 10:30 a.m. and then from 12:30 p.m. to 5:00 p.m. The most cars parked (77) in the area were observed at 2:00 p.m. Those areas using 40% or more of their capacity are:

1. The block in front of City Hall
2. The south side of the old bank north of Garfield St.
3. The block of the car dealership
4. The north side of the old bank south of Garfield St.

5. The block in front of Country Lights
6. The south side of the hardware store
7. The block in front of the beauty parlor and the Polaris dealer.
8. The block in front of Dupont's
9. The north side of the Library
10. In front of the Library
11. The area north of the post office
12. The block in front of the restaurant

TABLE 1: DOWNTOWN MARION PLAN - PARKING SURVEY RESULTS  
 SURVEY DATE: MARCH 23, 2004

Parking Area	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H	I	J	K	L	M	N	O	P	Q	R	S	T	U	V	W	X	Y	Z	AA	Total	Percent of Capacity
# of Marked Spaces	15	5	8	27	8	2	9	8	3	8	3	2	7	4	5	6	4	7	4	5	6	6	8	8	7	9	2	160**	
Count	1	0	1	5	3	0	1	1	0	2	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	2	1	0	1	2	3	2	0	26	16
7:30 a	1	0	1	4	3	0	2	1	0	3	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	4	0	21	13
8:00 a	1	0	1	5	3	0	2	1	0	4	0	0	1	2	0	0	2	0	1	0	1	0	0	0	6	5	0	42	26
8:30 a	2	1	1	5	7	1	4	3	1	4	1	0	1	1	0	1	2	0	1	0	2	1	1	6	7	0	54	34	
9:00 a	2	1	2	5	7	1	4	3	1	4	1	0	1	1	0	1	2	0	1	0	2	1	1	6	7	1	70	44	
9:30 a	1	1	1	5	5	1	4	3	3	6	1	0	2	1	1	1	2	3	4	1	2	1	8	7	4	2	74	46	
10:00 a	2	1	2	5	6	2	4	3	2	6	1	0	2	2	0	1	2	4	4	1	2	0	5	9	6	2	63	41	
10:30 a	1	1	4	5	1	2	3	4	2	3	1	0	2	1	2	1	2	4	2	1	2	0	5	2	5	2	1	60	38
11:00 a	1	1	4	6	3	2	3	4	2	3	1	0	3	1	2	2	2	2	2	0	2	0	3	2	2	3	1	60	38
11:30 a	0	1	3	6	4	2	3	5	2	4	1	0	4	2	3	3	2	3	2	1	1	1	3	3	1	1	1	61	39
Noon	0	1	4	6	5	1	3	5	2	6	1	0	2	2	2	3	2	3	2	0	1	1	3	1	5	5	2	71	44
12:30 p	1	2	5	7	4	2	2	3	2	7	1	1	2	4	1	2	2	5	4	2	0	2	0	0	1	5	2	71	44
1:00 p	3	2	5	5	5	1	2	5	2	8	3	1	3	4	0	2	2	4	4	3	2	1	1	0	0	3	0	71	46
1:30 p	2	3	4	6	5	2	4	5	3	7	3	1	4	2	2	3	2	4	3	2	2	1	1	1	1	7	0	77	48
2:00 p	2	3	5	6	2	1	3	4	2	7	3	1	2	2	2	2	2	5	3	1	2	2	1	2	1	5	0	70	44
2:30 p	3	5	4	6	3	1	2	5	2	4	3	1	4	2	2	2	2	4	4	3	1	2	0	0	0	5	1	60	38
3:00 p	2	2	3	5	6	0	3	5	1	2	3	1	5	1	1	0	0	4	3	2	2	2	0	3	4	1	0	71	44
3:30 p	2	2	1	7	2	1	4	6	1	5	1	1	4	3	2	0	3	3	2	3	2	2	2	3	1	5	1	69	43
4:00 p	2	2	2	7	5	1	4	4	1	6	0	2	6	3	3	0	3	3	2	0	2	2	2	3	1	5	1	77	48
4:30 p	0	4	4	7	6	1	2	3	1	2	1	1	5	3	2	1	2	5	2	2	1	3	2	4	3	2	0	61	40
5:00 p	0	3	4	7	4	1	2	3	1	4	1	1	4	3	2	0	2	4	4	1	1	3	2	3	2	6	0	61	40
5:30 p	0	4	4	5	0	0	1	1	1	3	1	1	5	1	2	0	2	5	5	2	2	1	3	1	4	5	0	58	36
Total Cars Parked	27	40	84	120	82	23	58	75	30	96	28	12	62	38	27	23	40	67	31	18	29	25	51	53	74	83	14	1236	
Avg. # Cars Parked/Time Period	1.3	1.9	3.0	5.7	3.9	1.1	2.7	3.6	1.4	4.6	1.3	0.6	3.0	1.8	1.3	1.1	1.9	3.2	1.6	0.9	1.4	1.2	2.4	2.5	3.5	4.2	0.7		
Percent of Capacity	8.6	38.1	38.1	21.2	43.4	54.8	29.6	44.6	4.76	57.1	44.4	28.6	42.2	45.2	26.7	18.3	47.6	45.6	40.5	17.1	23.0	19.6	30.4	31.5	50.3	46.6	33.3		

\*\* No Marked Spaces  
 \*\* Public Spaces

### Building Conditions

A survey was conducted of each building and vacant parcel in the Downtown. Criteria used to determine if a structure or parcel was blighted include those listed in the State Statute 66.1331-blighted area law. The survey identified 25 blighted structures and parcels and 8 standard structures. They are shown on Map-3.

### Assessed Values

The assessed values for the Downtown are those listed by the City Assessor as of January 1, 2003. The total land value is \$217,300 and the building value is \$1,511,900 with a total combined value of \$1,729,200. City owned property is not taxable so it is not assessed. The Post Office building is privately owned, so it is assessed. The Downtown represents only 2.9% of the assessed value of the City as a whole. This is a very small percentage. The assessed values are listed in Table 2 and are summarized by block on Map-4. The TIF district including the golf course and industrial park account for 9.3% of the City's assessed value and the TIF district including part of Marion Plywood and part of Marion Body Works account for 7.0% of the City's values.

**Table 2: Marion Assessed Values  
March 23, 2004**

Parcel #	Description	Address	Land Value	Improvement Value	Total Value
1	Marion Milling	N. Main St.	\$5,400	\$39,600	\$45,000
2	Nolan Sales	306 N. Main St.	\$5,000	\$50,200	\$55,200
3			\$6,500	\$11,700	\$18,200
4	Post Office	230/238 N. Main St.	\$9,500	\$90,600	\$100,100
5	Veterinary Clinic	218 and 222 N. Main St.	\$4,700	\$25,400	\$30,100
6	Restaurant	216 N. Main St.	\$4,700	\$63,700	\$68,400
7	Apartments	210 N. Main St.	\$9,500	\$75,400	\$84,900
8	Vacant Lot	N. Main St.	County Owned		
9	Vacant Store	202 N. Main St.	\$4,900	\$59,600	\$64,500
10	Video Store	112 E. Garfield	\$4,700	\$21,900	\$26,600
11	Vacant Lot	E. Garfield	\$4,800	-	\$4,800
12	Butcher's Corner	124 E. Garfield	\$9,200	\$113,800	\$123,000
13	Library	120 N. Main St.	City Owns		
14	Hardware Store	101 N. Main St.	\$7,400	\$53,300	\$60,700
15	Coin Laundry	105 N. Main St.	\$2,900	\$23,300	\$26,200
16	Brandenburg Publications	109 N. Main St.	\$6,100	\$29,100	\$35,200
17	Country Lights	113 N. Main St.	\$8,700	\$50,600	\$59,300
18	Bubba's	121 N. Main St.	\$3,800	\$47,000	\$50,800
19	Vacant offices and apartments	125 N. Main St.	\$5,900	\$69,500	\$75,400
20	Old Bank	201 N. Main St.	\$4,700	\$49,200	\$53,900
21	City Hall		No assessment		
22	Drug Store	221 N. Main St.	\$3,200	\$33,700	\$36,900
23 and 24	Vacant Parking Lot	N. Main St.	\$9,600		\$9,600
25	Matches	301 N. Main St.	\$4,700	\$93,200	\$97,500
25A	Storage	Perry St.	\$19,100	\$2,500	\$21,600
26	Marion Recreation	117 E. Perry St.	\$9,500	\$159,900	\$169,400
27	"	117 E. Perry	\$3,200	-	\$3,200
28	Marion Recreation	117 E. Perry	\$3,200	-	\$3,200
29	Dupont Inc.	104 S. Main St.	\$9,200	\$96,900	\$106,100
30	House	112 S. Main St.	44,900	\$38,700	\$43,600
31	Mary Bossell	105 S. Main St.	\$3,900	\$46,500	\$50,400
31A	John Davis	109 S. Main St.	\$18,000	\$65,700	\$83,700
32	Tavern	101 Main St.	\$5,700	\$73,500	\$79,200
33	Vacant Lot	121 E. Ramsdell	\$3,500		\$3,500
34	Vacant Building	121 E. Ramsdell	\$11,200	\$27,400	\$38,600
Totals			\$217,300	\$1,511,900	\$1,729,200

Historical Buildings

The Downtown has buildings built at various times over the last 120 years or so. Although the State Historical Society has not surveyed Marion for historical buildings, many of them would certainly qualify as historical. One of the advantages to a historical building is that the owner of a building that is being rehabilitated can receive tax credits for the rehabilitation effort. One of the

disadvantages of a historical building is it may be sufficiently obsolete, making it difficult to reuse. Buildings with potential historical significance are shown on Map-5. In an effort to specifically establish the historical significance of the existing buildings in the Downtown, a number of sources were researched. These include the National Register of Historic Places, the Wisconsin State Historical Society, the county Historical Societies in Shawano and Waupaca counties, the Marion City Clerk and the Marion Historical Society. None of these entities had any historical records or information that substantiated the fact that any of the buildings in Downtown Marion have historical significance.

#### Identified Deficiencies

Storm sewer, curb and gutter will be reconstructed as part of the STH 110 project. The main deficiency is the block behind City Hall that has none of these. Water system and lead laterals are not an issue in the Downtown. Water pressure is adequate, although fire hydrants could be closer together in places. The water mains and laterals will be replaced on Main Street and new fire hydrants installed. Sidewalks on Main Street are all scheduled to be replaced. Some of them are in good condition, others are not. The sidewalks on the side streets for the most part are in good condition. The current conditions of the sidewalks are shown on Map-7.

#### Building Setbacks

In the Downtown, building setbacks need to be at the curb line. As shown on Map-8, nearly every building fronts on the sidewalk. New construction on the vacant lots should be at the sidewalk to continue the continuity.

#### Public Signage

Public signage is designed to provide instructions other than traffic information. Stop signs, highway markers, etc., would not be considered public signage. Public signage, shown on Map-9, is not numerous in the Downtown. Public signage is only located in six locations. The "new" Downtown should provide additional information signs.

#### Power Lines and Street Light Poles

The location of overhead power lines and street light poles are shown on Map-9. The Downtown is fortunate that it does not have any overhead power lines on Main Street.

#### Character Zones

Three character zones characterize the Downtown: 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> century buildings, late 20<sup>th</sup> century buildings and vacant land. These 3 zones are interspersed, creating a diverse pattern as shown on Map-6. It is important that the 2 vacant parcels on Main Street be redeveloped in a style and motif fitting the balance of the block. Facades on at least 3 buildings have been improved in the last 5 years. The owners of at least 5 buildings are proposing to improve the facades and in at least 2 cases improve the sides of the buildings visible to the

public. The treatments will be designed to unite the look of the Downtown. The City is attempting to obtain financial assistance for these businesses.

### Building Setbacks, Density and Mixed-use Problems

In the Downtown, building setbacks need to be at the curb line. As shown on Map-8, nearly every building fronts on the sidewalk. This is how it should be in the Downtown. New construction on the vacant lots should be at the sidewalk to maintain this continuity. The density in the Downtown is appropriate. There is room on the parcels for proper development, yet the parcels are small enough to facilitate easy pedestrian movement. The blocks are not so small that a large share of the Downtown is dedicated to streets and it is easy to walk or drive around the block. The Downtown has alleys, which further facilitate the business operations within the Downtown while not interfering with traffic or pedestrian movements. The mixes of land use are generally good. The public use areas within the commercial areas are good. Combining uses that generate destination traffic to the Downtown is also very good. The one heavy commercial use, the mill, is on the north edge of the Downtown and only slightly interferes with Downtown activities. The problem that has developed in recent years is the conversion of commercial space to residential use. It is believed the conversion of commercial space to residential space would solve the problem of vacant commercial space, which it partially did. The problem is these spaces provide no commercial traffic and provide commercial dead space within the Downtown.

### Apartment Vacancy

The residential vacancy rate in the Downtown is mixed. This includes first floor and second floor units. There are several units for rent and others vacant and not for rent. The problem most likely is they are not in a condition that makes them desirable for people to reside in. Further, apparently the cost to up grade the units is more expensive than what the owner would obtain as a financial return. In addition, at least 7 homes on Main Street north of the Downtown are vacant, indicating a possibly soft housing market.

### Street Surfaces

Street surfaces other than Main Street are satisfactory. Although not pristine, the streets are not a detriment to the development of the Downtown. The reconstruction of Main Street will provide the Downtown with a new look and new feel. Just the newest will make a great difference. Efforts to combine this with the curb realignment at the corners will provide a new, refreshing look to residents and tourists alike.

### Public amenities including vegetation, benches and trash receptacles

There is little vegetation in the Downtown. One nice exception is at the corner of Perry Avenue and Main Street where the City installed an evergreen tree with some flowers, a public telephone booth, handicapped parking space, scooter or moped parking and automobile parking. There are 3 benches and about 5 trash receptacles on Main Street. The benches appear to be serviceable, but the

receptacles could be improved. There is also the public phone, two handicapped parking spaces and directional signs.

### Public Lighting

There currently are 7 metal light poles with an extended light arm in the Downtown on Main Street. These lights provide adequate light, but not a Downtown "promoting" light. Lighting can be a wonderful method of distinguishing the Downtown as a special place. The new lighting should do just that. The newly lighted environment will provide a comfortable evening atmosphere. A friendly place to go and be seen.

### Describe why addressing the deficiencies is currently essential

Observations of the activity in the area support the fact that the Downtown still plays an important role in the city of Marion. Not too many years ago, about 95% or more of the commercial activity in Marion occurred in the Downtown. The Highway 45 by-pass did not initially attract business from the Downtown. The doctors' offices relocated to the southwest on Ramsdell Street and to the north on Main Street. Rather than redevelop the Downtown, businesses expanded to the fringe. This move has provided the City with a successful business park at the intersection of Main Street and Highway 45, but it has hurt the Downtown. Businesses opening in other communities further weakened local businesses and resulted in businesses in the Downtown closing. Vacant buildings were not re-utilized by other businesses. The weakened real state market resulted in property owners not maintaining their buildings. The area became blighted and the cycle repeated itself.

The Downtown is still important and still functional. It has the post office, city hall, Library, grocery store, restaurant, taverns, bowling alley, newspaper, drug store, hair shops, accountants, banking services, ancillary businesses, plus a veterinarian and a feed mill. Further, it has a good location, a millpond, parking, no overhead power lines, vacant land, the fire station, EMS station and soon new underground utilities and a new road with enhanced features.

The City is supported by both major employers doing business expansions, a new golf course, a business park with new businesses and room for further business expansion, particularly the type requiring large acreage.

With the stage set, now is a good time to work on improving the Downtown. The new road alone will point out the deficiencies in the Downtown. The new road will promote a positive attitude for the city, merchants, property owners and customers alike. To cash in on the new environment, now is the time for the City to deal with the deficiencies.

Three buildings have had façade improvements recently and 5 others are proposing to do so. There is a reason to be optimistic. One merchant report increases in business and others are looking to improve their business.

## Business Managers and Property Owners Survey Results

Surveys were conducted both person to person and by mail of the business managers and property owners in the Downtown. The survey revealed 8 businesses have proposed to fix their businesses to remove blighted conditions in the Downtown as shown in the pictures. The total cost of rehabilitating these 8 buildings would be \$181,005. These improvements will create 6 full time and 2 part time jobs. This represents an 8% increase in employment in the Downtown. These improvements will stimulate the rehabilitation of other buildings and the creation of additional jobs.

The survey responses to other questions are summarized as follows:

Describe any proposed improvements:

- Complete exterior remodeling doors, windows
- Interior bar and kitchen remodeling
- Handicap access ramp
- New rear entry door
- Bar interior improvements
- New storefront
- Handicap access ramps
- Flat roof to be replaced with Trusses

Discuss the factors you believe would stimulate commercial development and revenues in the Downtown area:

- Keep banking and other businesses Downtown
- Motel in industrial park
- Employee parking lot Downtown
- Condemn buildings
- Purchase buildings
- Attractive, inviting presence
- More industry = more people = more commercial sales
- Get rid of blighted buildings
- Level older buildings
- Bring in dollar store, bakery, sub restaurant, ice cream and Taco Bell
- Parking
- Promote "hometown" more trees and flowers by businesses and the Downtown
- Restore antique building fronts
- New industry
- Need a positive school administration –currently deterring people from relocating to Marion\*

Describe what you feel is needed to encourage other private investment in the Downtown area:

- Update and modernize existing businesses
- Main Street Designation
- Low interest loan for start up
- Show a need/desire for a commercial/retail business
- Help local businesses to be competitive
- Change the visual image

- Provide shops/services that draw younger people who spend money
- Develop wants that draw people from outside the community
- Be unique, provide goods/services that are not the same as elsewhere
- Create the need to come to Marion and Marion's Downtown
- More industrial jobs = more cash spent
- More people would support opening more Downtown businesses
- Place the police department in a more visible location – current vacant building
- Clean up Main St. very dirty
- Tax incentives
- Off-street parking opportunities on private property
- Work to increase the City's population

### Downtown Businesses and Property Owners ability to improve their Buildings

As shown by the survey of business and property owners, there is an interest in upgrading their properties and creating jobs. Business people are thinking positively. Even without the highway improvements, a number of positive developments are focused on the Downtown, as discussed earlier in this report. Attracting people to come to the Downtown is the most important factor. The automobile and pedestrian traffic must be supported so it will be maintained at its current levels. The improvements to the highway and buildings will promote an increase in traffic to the Downtown. To assist with these private improvements the City is seeking grants, exploring the possibility of including more of the Downtown in a TIF district and working with local banks to provide low interest loans. The number of trips to the Library has grown dramatically in three years. In 2003, 63,351 people visited the Library. With 1,800 Library cardholders, the users make multiple trips to the Library. It is calculated that about 50% of these cardholders are coming from outside Marion. This creates a very desirable situation for business in the Downtown. The City needs more people coming to the Downtown on a daily basis to increase business opportunities.

### Analysis of the Downtown Environment

Land Use – There is a good mix of land uses in the Downtown. As discussed previously in the report, public uses mix well with the commercial uses. The Library is a major draw to the Downtown. The few residential uses on the first floor are a negative. The vacant lots are currently a negative, but could be turned into a positive. The vacant buildings are a negative, but could be turned into a positive. The feed mill's appearance is a negative, but from a positive standpoint adds a small town amenity to the Downtown. If the mill ever ceases to be a mill, the building has redevelopment potential. The Mill Pond has additional potential to support the Downtown. Important commercial uses are located in Downtown, just off Main Street. These are the bowling alley, grocery store, video rentals and automobile repair shop. The vacated garage on Ramsdell Street east of Main Street is both a negative to the Downtown and the City. The site and adjacent vacant land has good redevelopment potential.

Facades – The facades are a mixture, as are the buildings. Some buildings were most likely constructed in the 1800's with 2 stories. Other buildings were probably constructed just before or after World War II with 1 story. This provides a variety of facades. Several buildings would be enhanced if the façade were

returned to its original appearance. Several need to be repaired, which would improve their appearance. Façade improvements could be financed by possible grants, low interest loans and tax credits.

Parking – Parking can best be described as comfortable. There are currently sufficient parking spaces to accommodate the many cars parking Downtown each day. Occasionally a block front was totally occupied, but then there were spaces across the street or around the corner. Parking will be more of an issue as the economic health of the Downtown improves. Currently, there is no time limit on parking duration, which is most desirable. If employee parking does not occupy spaces available for customers and clients and the large vacant lot on Main Street is not totally unavailable for parking, Main Street businesses should have satisfactory amounts of parking in the near term.

Assessed Values – The assessed values of the taxable property in the Downtown is \$1,729,200. This is not a small number. However, when compared to the balance of the City or the Business Park it is not as large as you would normally expect to find in a healthy Downtown. Rather than the current 2.9% of the City's assessed value, 10 % or more would demonstrate a major role. It is important that all new development have substantial value. This could include mixed-use developments.

Aesthetics – Aesthetics is an issue. The blighted buildings are a negative for the Downtown area. Building owners are showing an interest in improvements to their buildings. To do so would be the initial phase of turning around the Downtown. The new street, street lights and pedestrian features will begin to address the public improvement to the aesthetics problem. Now the private property needs to be improved. This could be done with grants, when and where available, tax credits and low interest loans from the City and private sources.

#### Means of Resolving the Issues

The highway improvements and pedestrian amenities will be significant. They will usher in a new era. From a public improvements standpoint the environment will have changed. The improvements on the public right of way will be both new and modern. The improvements will be useful. The curb turn outs will take getting used to, but will help set the Downtown apart from the balance of the community. These improvements will not detract from the possible historic integrity. The private improvements will vary. Buildings, which may have historical significance, should be restored to their original look as much as possible. Buildings not historically significant should be rehabilitated or maintained in an attractive manner. The appearance of stores and offices is very important to the success of a business. The “new” Library would be an excellent example of success by building attractiveness. Although the balance of the Downtown has a far different look, the rule of attractiveness would apply.

#### Street Graphics

The street graphics prepared by SEH provide a preview of the attractive street and pedestrian enhancements to be installed before the end of 2004. The Downtown street will have a new, fresh, user-friendly look. The first sketch shows the corner

bump outs, decorative light post, flower container and banner. The second sketch shows the decorative light, clock, benches and flower containers.

### Land Use Plan

The Downtown Land Use Plan is a refinement and extension of the Smart Growth Comprehensive Plan. The Downtown Land Use Plan is shown on Map 10. The Land Use Plan proposes a number of uses. A significant proposed use is a mixed land use on the same parcel. In most cases, this would include commercial on the first floor and residential on the second floor. In other cases, it would include parking, commercial and perhaps residential. Public uses play an important role, particularly the Library. There are also a number of retail and service and commercial uses. The shore of the Mill Pond should be held in public use for public enjoyment. The Land Use Plan also includes the location for Land Use Features. Among the significant ones would be identifying the Library block as the Marion "Town Square." This would be the area around which community events would be held.

### Parking Plan

The Plan for parking in the Downtown is to:

1. Continue to utilize all (even though a few spaces will be lost with the reconstruction) the marked spaces on the streets in the Downtown. These spaces are shown on Map 2. At this time, the City should not impose a time limit on length of stay.
2. Monitor employee parking so as it does not take the space needed by customers.
3. Require all new developments to provide employee and resident off street parking.
4. Insure the large vacant parcel on Main Street adjacent to the Drug Store is redeveloped with at least 10 off street parking spaces.
5. When parking availability becomes non-conveniently available utilize signs directing the parking to back street areas and the public areas.
6. Develop off-street parking areas and lots.

### Redevelopment Plan

The Redevelopment Plan identifies parcels that either have potential for development or redevelopment. The parcels are shown on Map 11. Some of the parcels are an opportunity waiting to happen. Others are a challenge and may need assistance. The redevelopment would consist of one or more of the following:

1. Significant rehabilitation of the building.
2. Development of new buildings.
3. Development of new uses for existing buildings.
4. Demolition of existing buildings to facilitate the construction of new buildings.

The intent of the redevelopment is to improve the urban environment. By making the Downtown more attractive, additional shoppers will come to the Downtown.

We want to assist the existing businesses to be more viable and to attract more businesses. We want to provide more services to our residents. We also want to increase the property values in the Downtown. Ideally, this would occur without City intervention or assistance.

To assist with redevelopment the City should conduct a study to determine the historical aspects of Downtown and its buildings. Buildings deemed to have historical significance could apply for tax credits, which could assist with the rehabilitation costs.

Funding for redevelopment could come from a number of sources including:

- Bank loans
- Grants
- Tax Credits
- City Loans
- TIF Loans and Costs
- Revolving Loans
- Foundation Funds

### Marketing Plan

One of the tools to be used in raising money for the Downtown businesses is the use of a Business Improvement District (BID). The BID is a self-assessing program run by the Downtown business and property owners. The City collects the money and BID members decide how to spend it.

For the vacant Parcels the following possible uses should be considered:

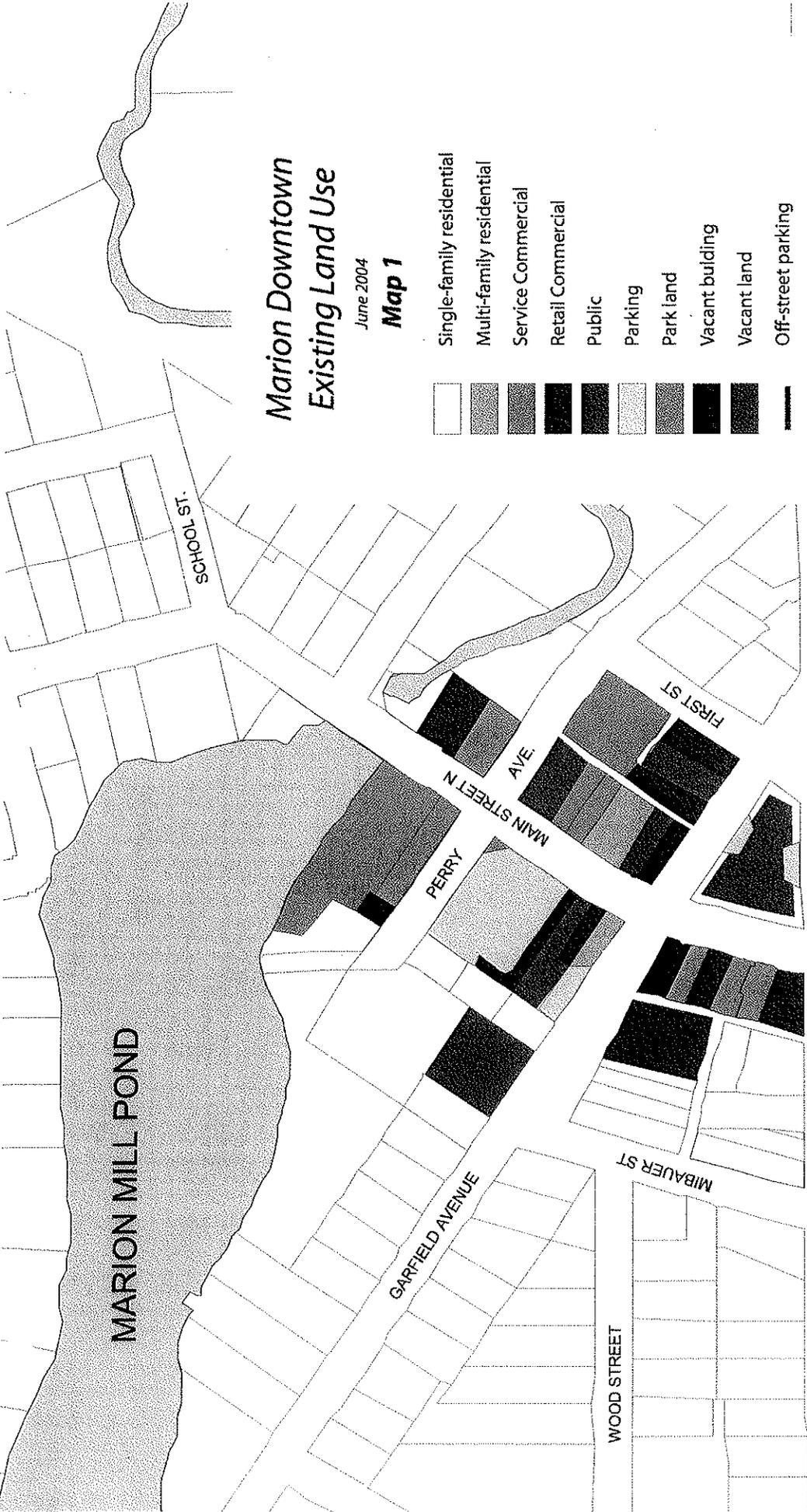
- Parking Lot
- Festival Grounds
- Community Flower Garden
- Memorial Park
- Concert Park
- Temporary Private Use Paying Rent
- Service Club Use

### Cultural Plan

The Cultural Plan is a key component. The impact of cultural activities is difficult to quantify, but there is no doubt that cultural activities make a difference in the quality of residents' life. Quality of life translates into many benefits for the community. Elements in the Downtown that will improve the quality of life include:

- Improved Urban Environment both on and off the public right of way
- Multicolored buildings or unique painting schemes
- Mall Murals
- "Town Square" with gathering and lunch plaza
- Farmers Market
- Craft Show
- Concerts on Garfield

- Special events such as car shows
- Banners
- Hanging Flower Baskets
- Planters
- Product display

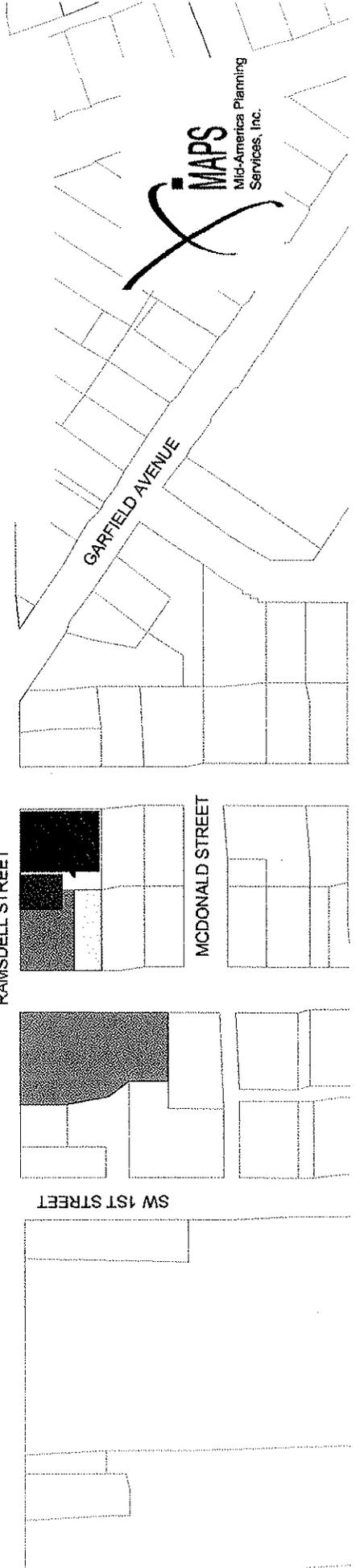


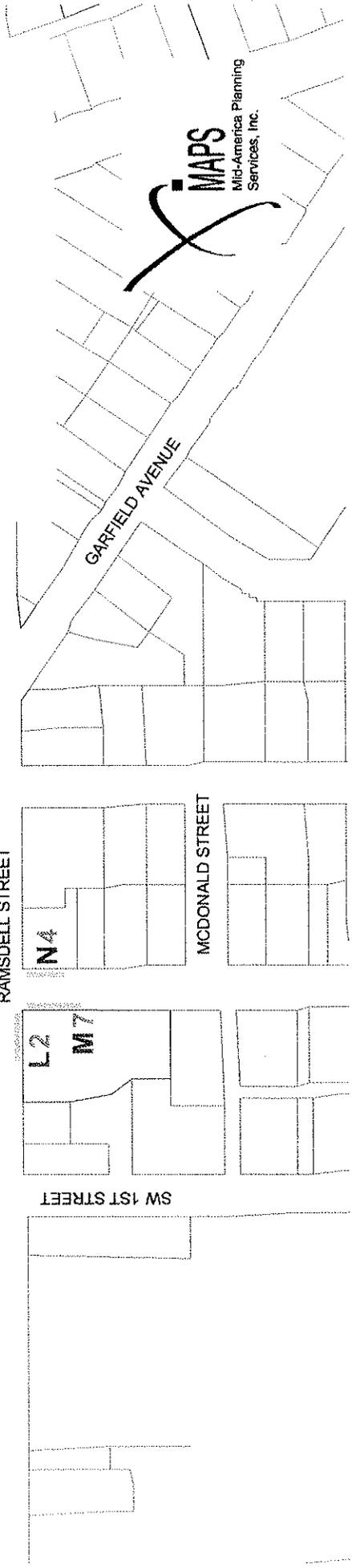
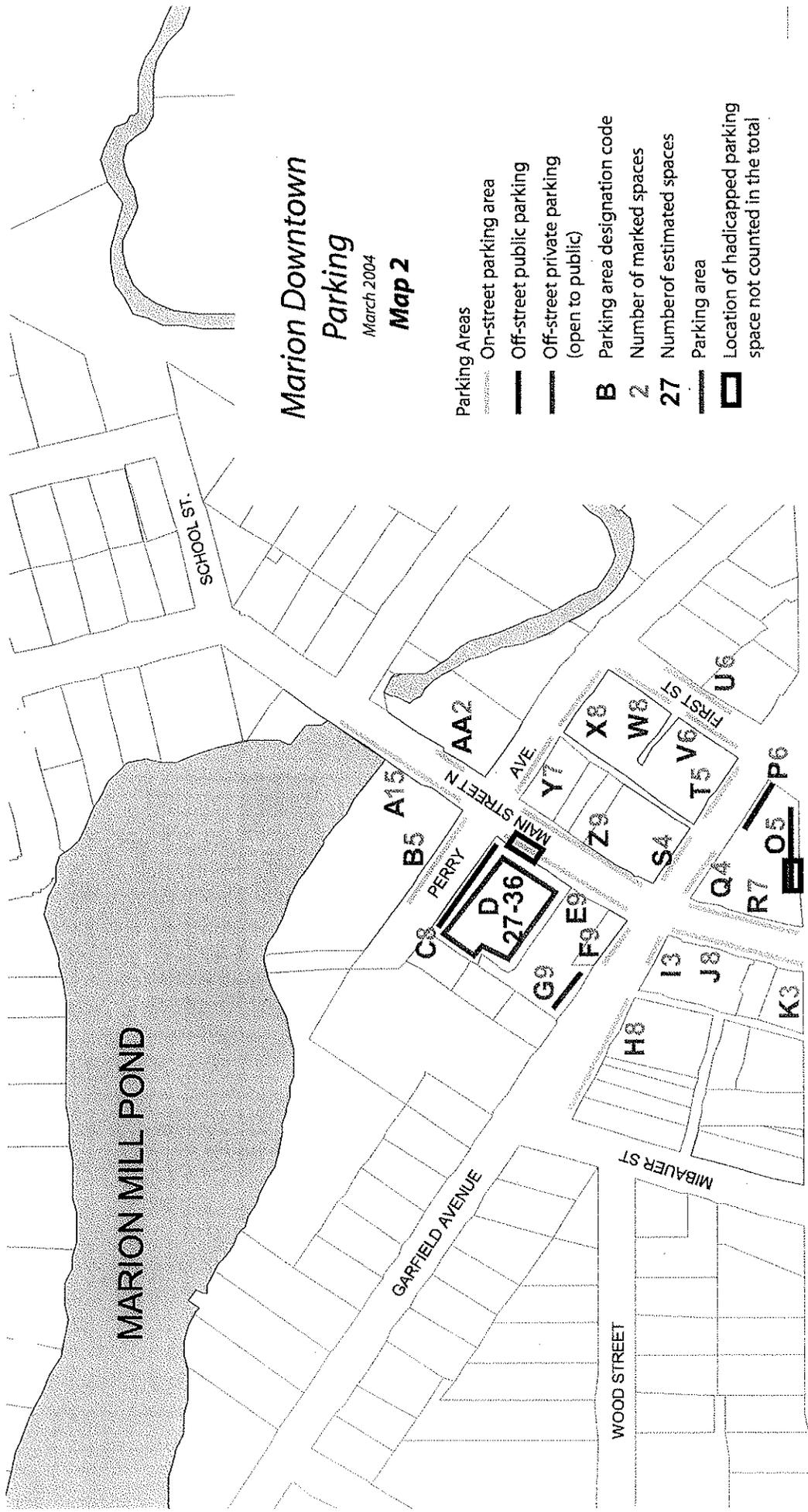
# Marion Downtown Existing Land Use

June 2004

## Map 1

- Single-family residential
- Multi-family residential
- Service Commercial
- Retail Commercial
- Public
- Parking
- Park land
- Vacant building
- Vacant land
- Off-street parking





MARION MILL POND

SCHOOL ST.

# Marion Downtown Blighted conditions including blighted buildings

March 2004

## Map 3

 Blighted parcels  
 Standard parcels

 # blighted  
 3-0 — # standard

25 blighted  
 8 standard



2-0

PERRY

3-1

MAIN STREET N  
AVE

3-0

5-1

MBAUER ST

0-1

7-3

RAMSDELL STREET

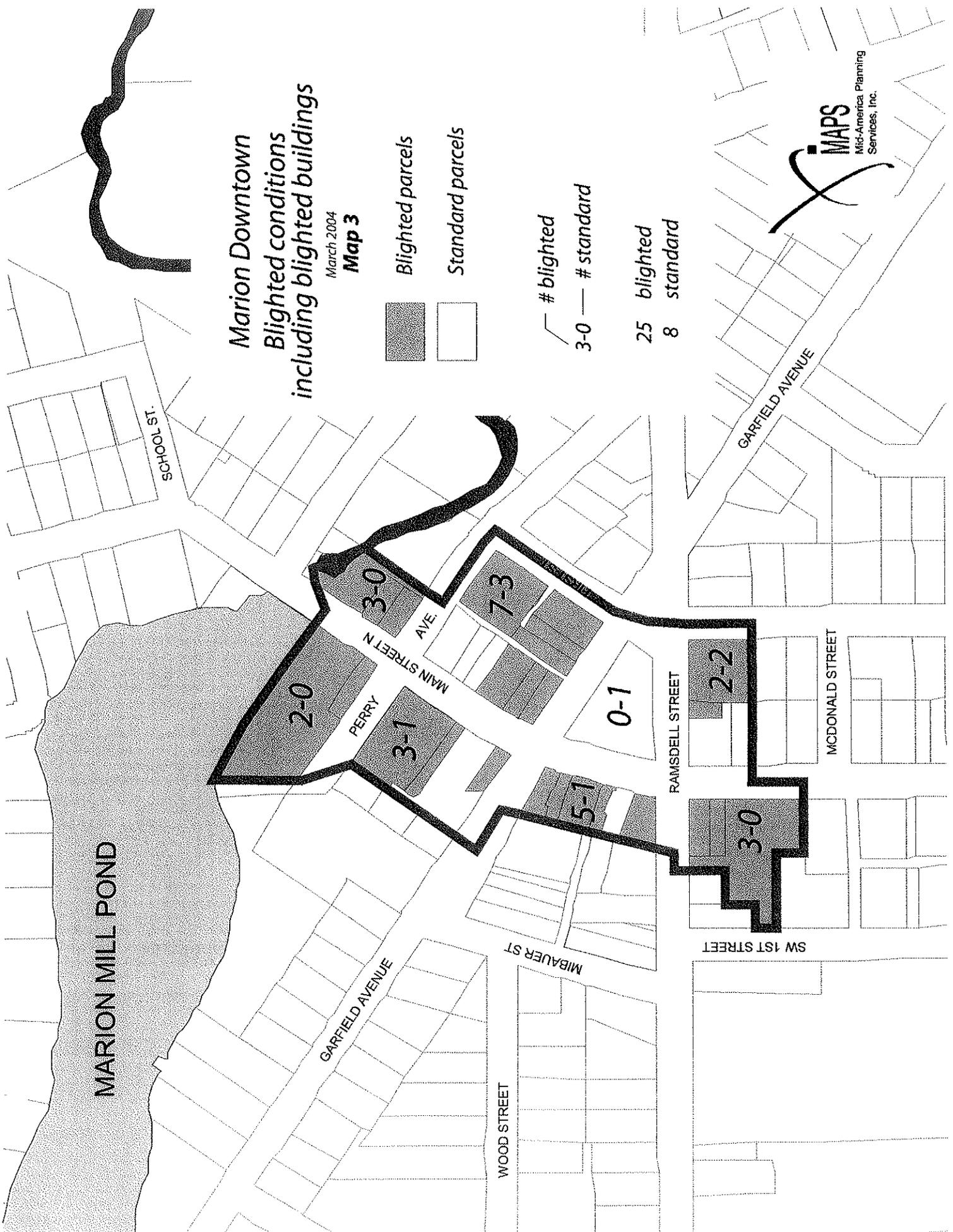
2-2

3-0

SW 1ST STREET

MCDONALD STREET

GARFIELD AVENUE



# MARION MILL POND

SCHOOL ST.

## Marion Downtown Assessed Values

March 2004

Assessed values by block or half block  
 27,600 Land  
 185,700 Improvements  
 213,300 Total

Total Downtown Assessed Values  
 217,300 for Land  
 1,511,900 for Improvements  
 1,729,200 Total Assessed Value

23,600  
95,700  
119,500

PERRY

17,500  
82,900  
100,400

GARFIELD AVENUE

16,900  
101,500  
118,400

MAIN STREET N

33,300  
314,700  
248,000

AVE.

34,800  
272,800  
307,600

MIBAUER ST

34,600  
295,600

FIRST ST

330,200

WOOD STREET

RAMSDELL STREET

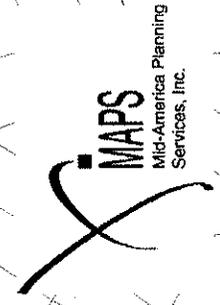
28,800  
163,000  
191,800

MCDONALD STREET

27,600  
185,700  
213,300

SW 1ST STREET

GARFIELD AVENUE



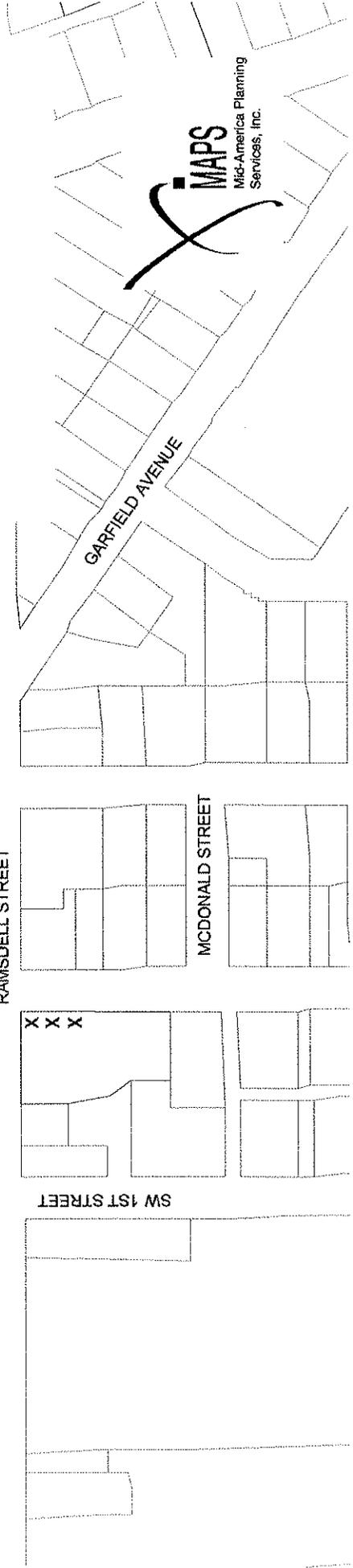
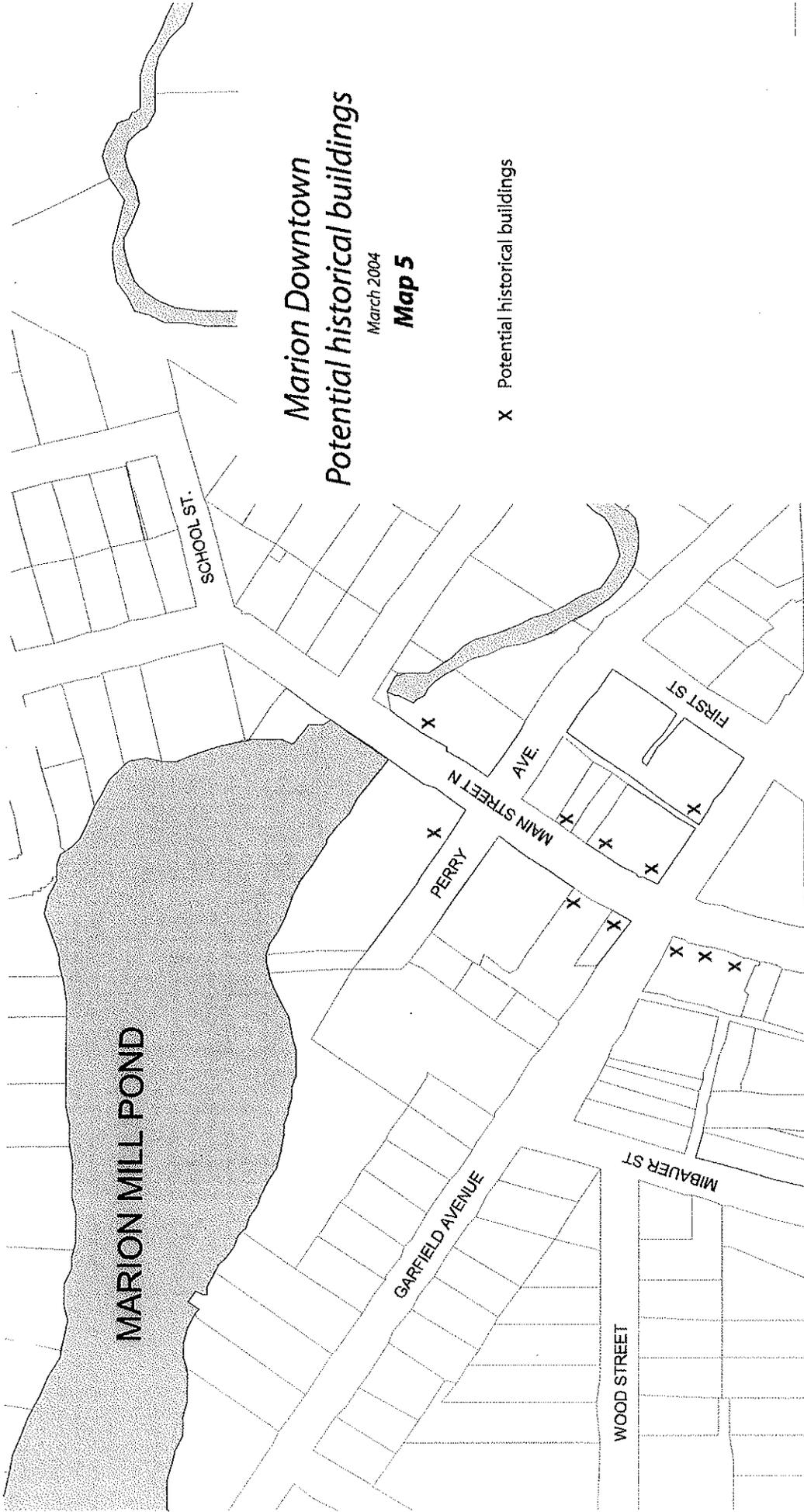
# MARION MILL POND

## Marion Downtown Potential historical buildings

March 2004

### Map 5

X Potential historical buildings



MARION MILL POND

SCHOOL ST.

# Marion Downtown Character Zones

March 2004

## Map 6

Character Zones



- 19th & early 20th century building
- Late 20th century building
- Vacant space

PERRY

MAIN STREET N

AVE.

FIRST ST

RAMSDELL STREET

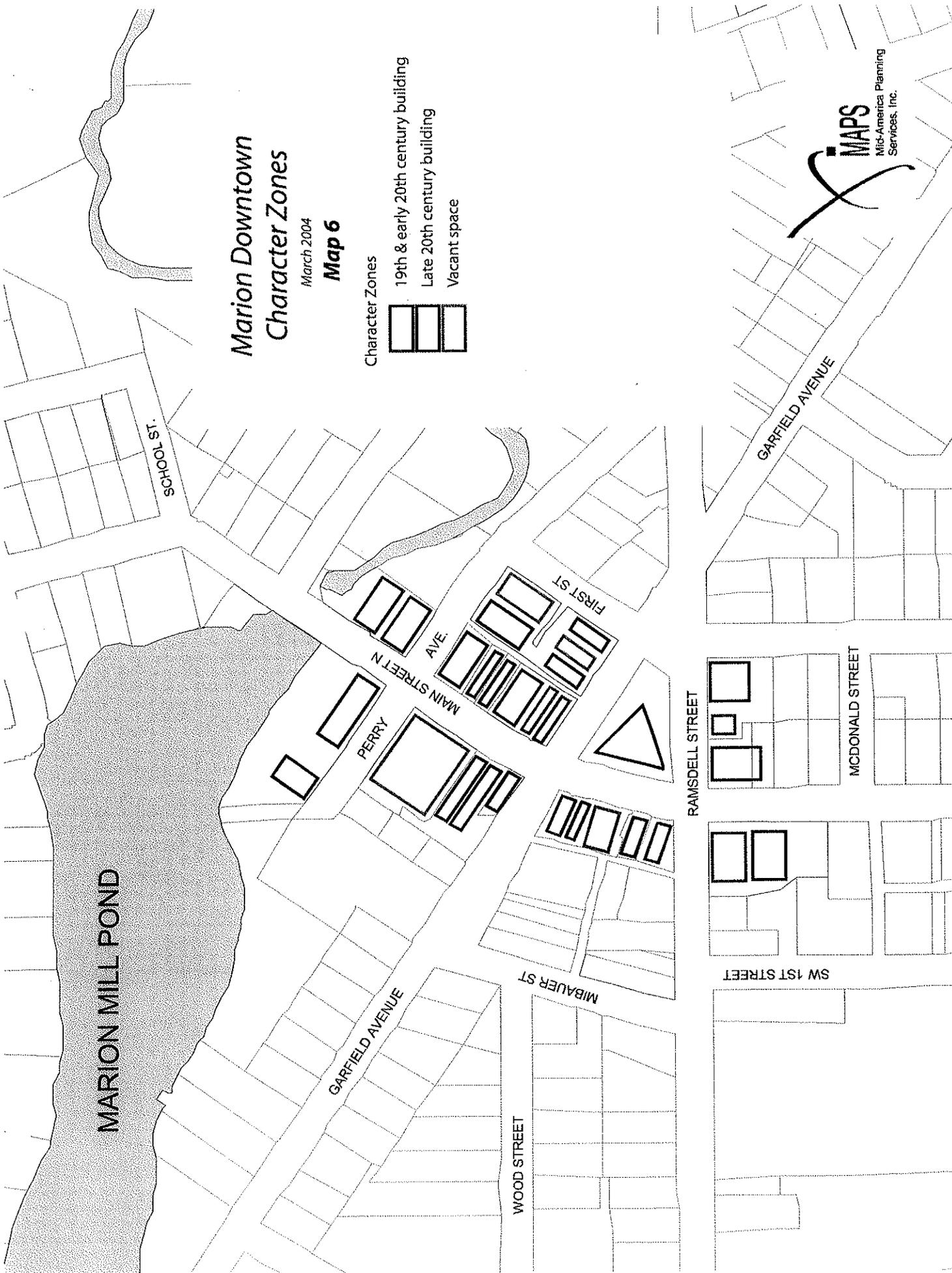
MCDONALD STREET

GARFIELD AVENUE

SW 1ST STREET

WOOD STREET

MIBAUER ST



MARION MILL POND

SCHOOL ST.

# Marion Downtown Condition at sidewalks

March 2004

Map 7

Good

Poor



PERRY

MAIN STREET N

AVE

FIRST ST

RAMSDELL STREET

MCDONALD STREET

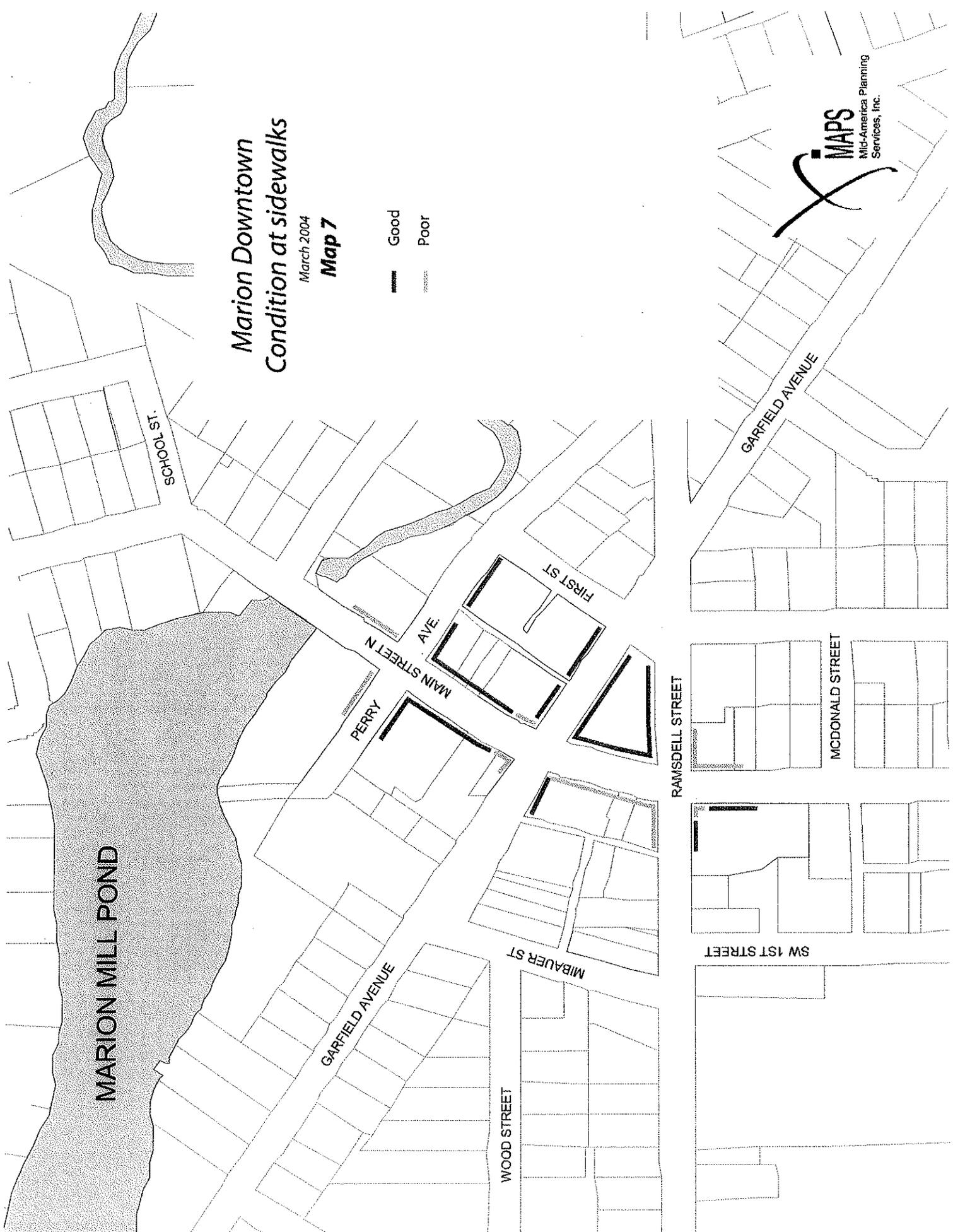
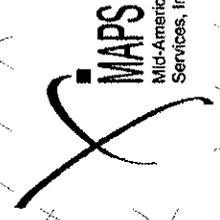
SW 1ST STREET

GARFIELD AVENUE

WOOD STREET

MIBAUER ST

GARFIELD AVENUE



MARION MILL POND

SCHOOL ST.

# Marion Downtown Building setbacks

March 2004

## Map 8

- X No setback
- Some setback

PERRY

MAIN STREET N

AVE

FIRST ST

GARFIELD AVENUE

WOOD STREET

MIBAUR ST

RAMSDELL STREET

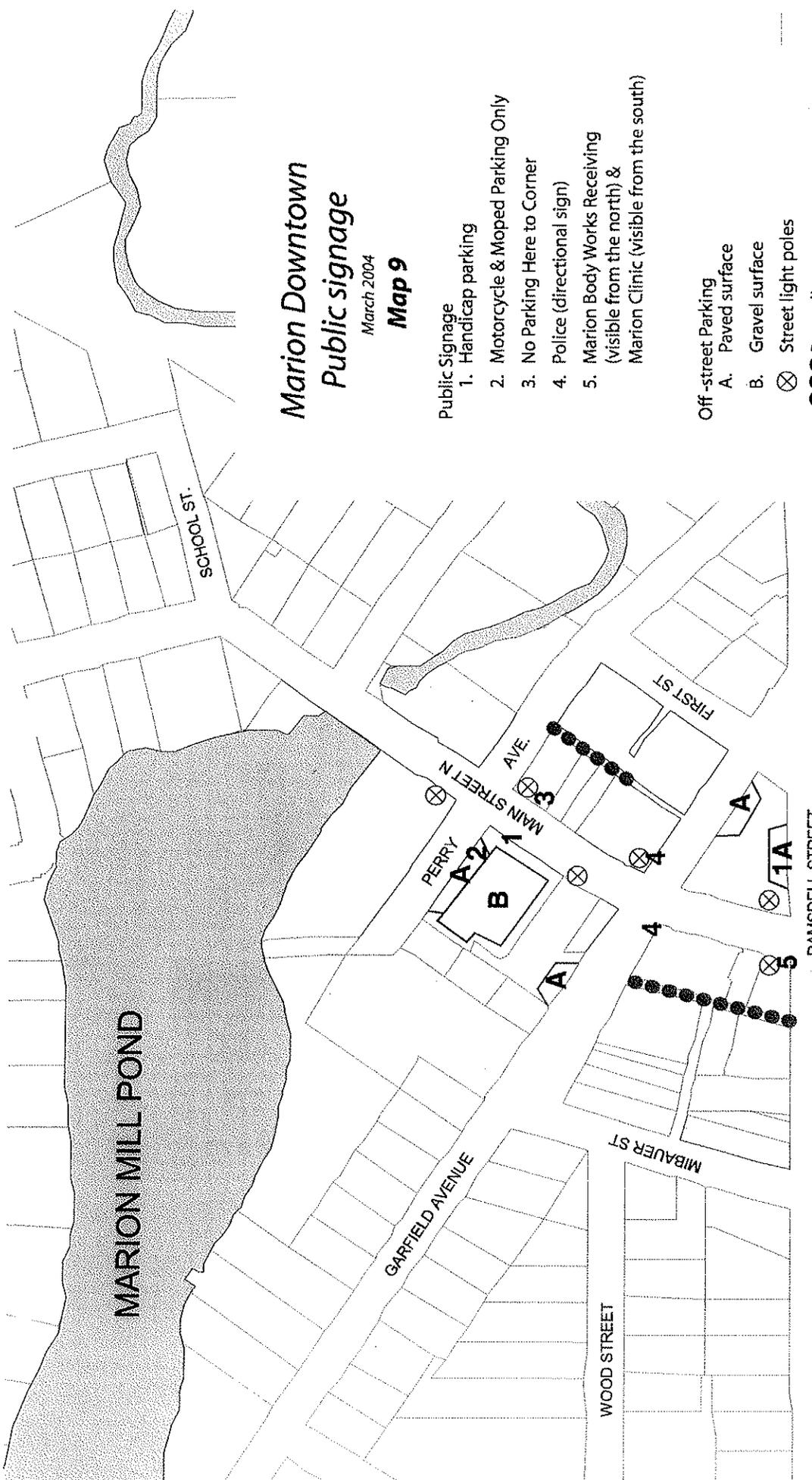
GARFIELD AVENUE

MCDONALD STREET

X X X

SW 1ST STREET





# Marion Downtown Public signage

March 2004

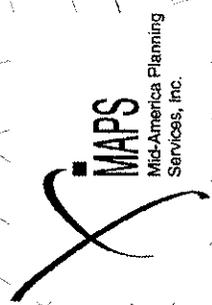
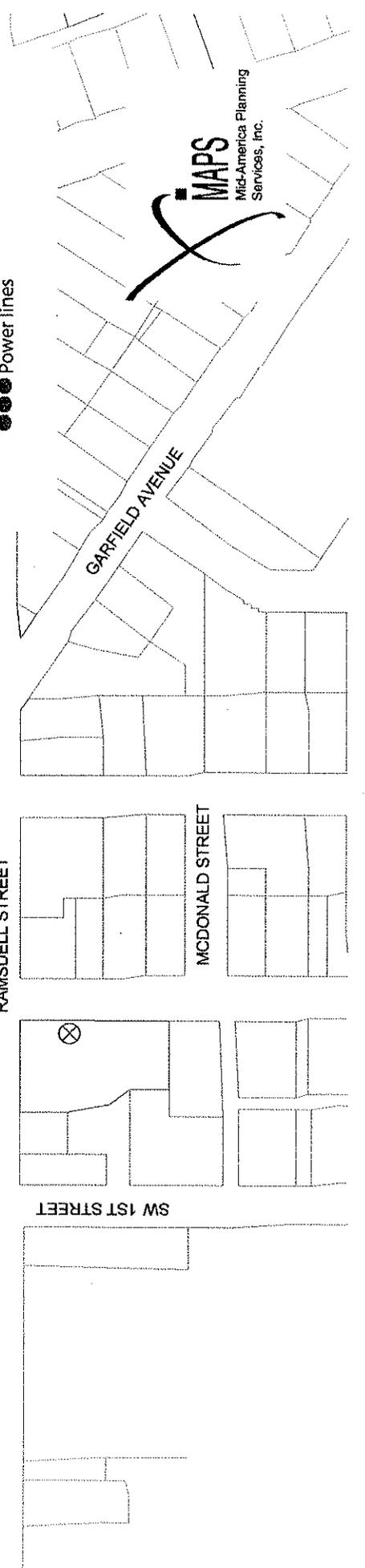
## Map 9

### Public Signage

1. Handicap parking
2. Motorcycle & Moped Parking Only
3. No Parking Here to Corner
4. Police (directional sign)
5. Marion Body Works Receiving (visible from the north) & Marion Clinic (visible from the south)

### Off -street Parking

- A. Paved surface
- B. Gravel surface
- ⊗ Street light poles
- Power lines



MARION MILL POND

SCHOOL ST.

# Marion Downtown Land Use Plan

June 2004  
Map 10

-  Retail & service commercial
-  Multi-family residential
-  Mix of retail & service commercial on the 1st floor and residential on the 2nd floor.
-  Public
-  Park & open space
-  Off-street parking

## Land Use Features

- 1 Gathering plaza
- 2 Flower garden
- 3 Farmers market & concerts on Garfield
- 4 Town Square



GARFIELD AVENUE

FIRST ST

PERRY

MAIN STREET N

AVE.

RAMSDELL STREET

MCDONALD STREET

SW 1ST STREET

MIBAUR ST

WOOD STREET

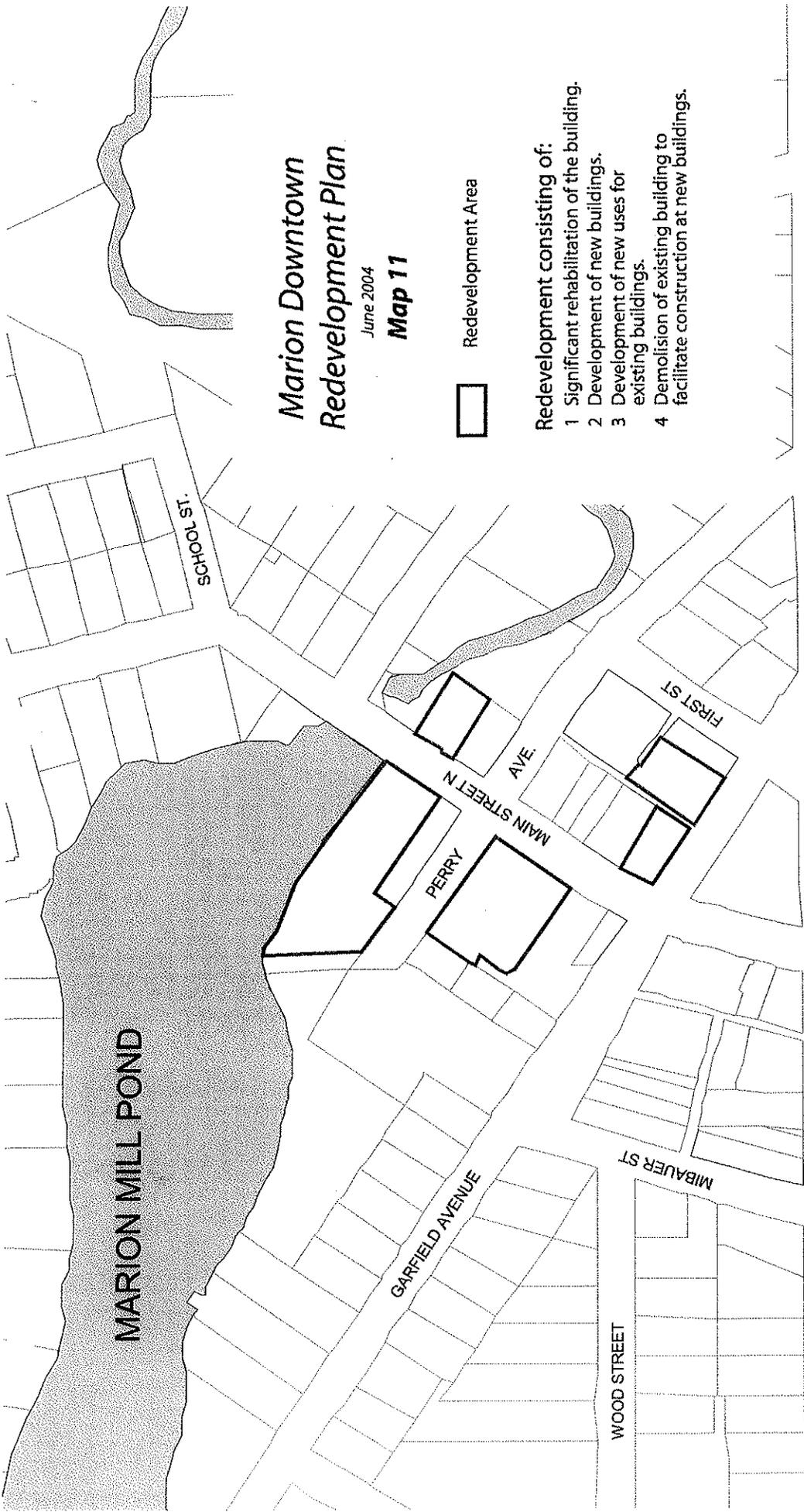
GARFIELD AVENUE

2

2

3

4



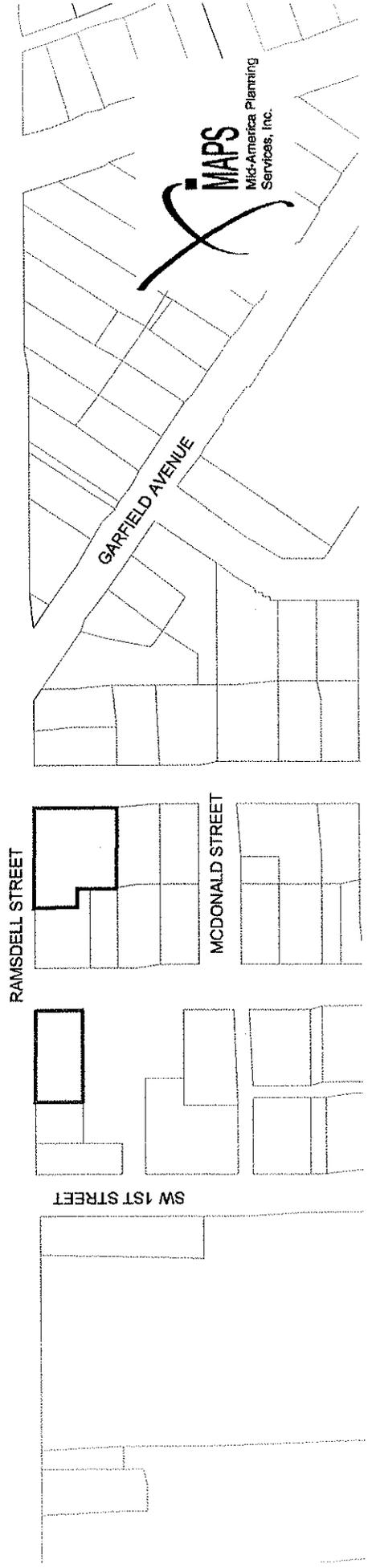
# Marion Downtown Redevelopment Plan

June 2004  
Map 11

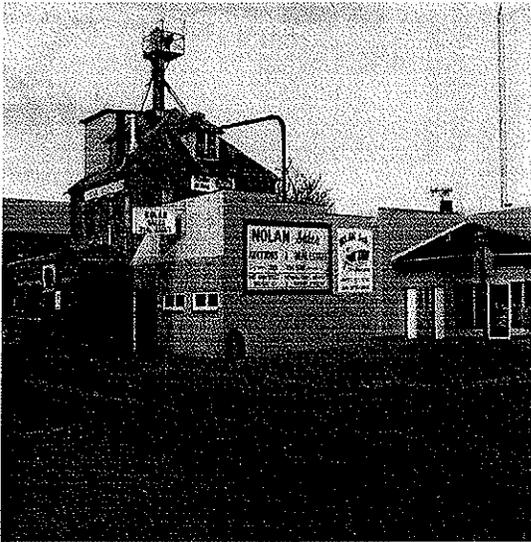


Redevelopment Area

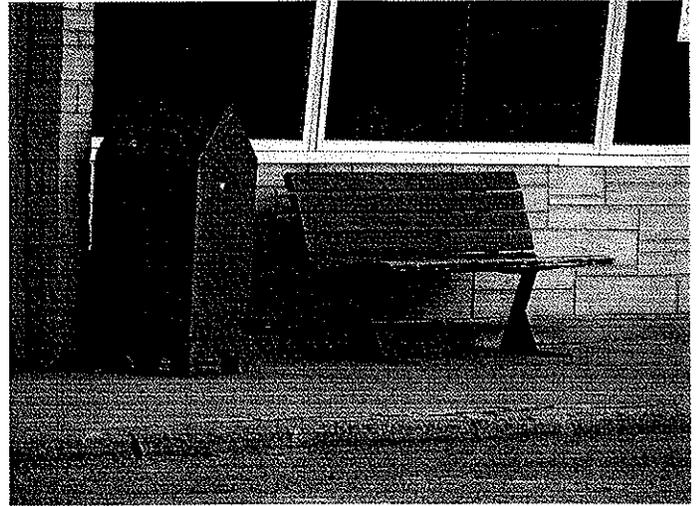
- Redevelopment consisting of:
- 1 Significant rehabilitation of the building.
  - 2 Development of new buildings.
  - 3 Development of new uses for existing buildings.
  - 4 Demolition of existing building to facilitate construction at new buildings.



## Marion Downtown Plan Photographs



Real estate office and feed mill



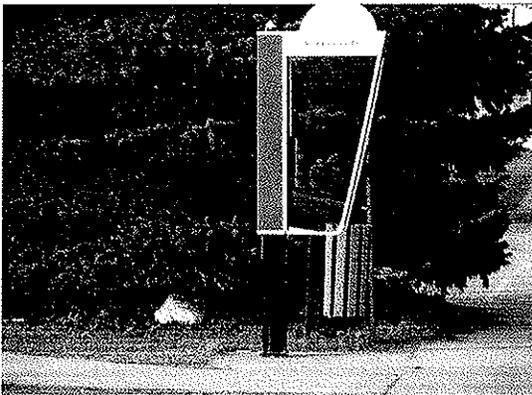
Pedestrian amenities



Buildings on Main St.



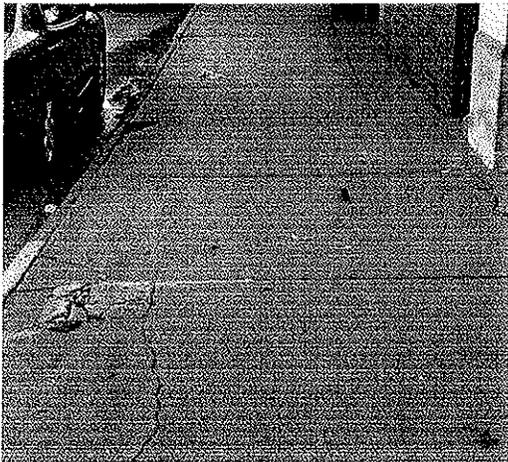
City Library



Public phone



One of two police directional signs



Deteriorated sidewalk



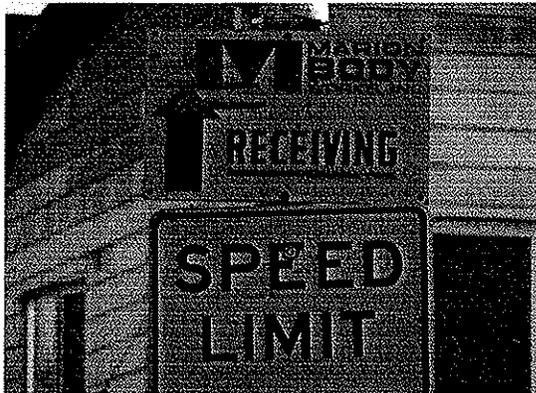
Insurance office



Pedestrian amenities and steps



Blighted building



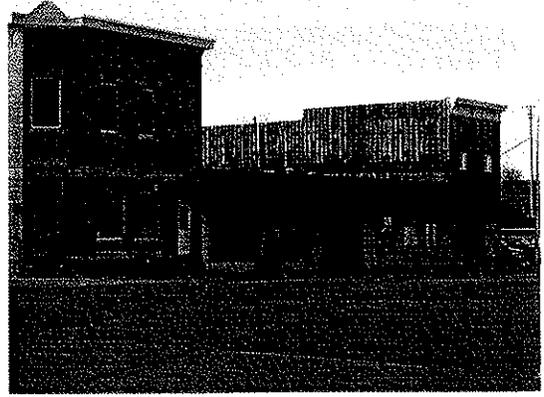
Directional sign



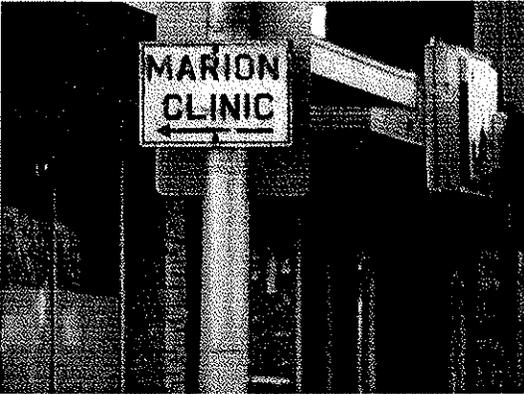
Possibly historic buildings



Deteriorated siding



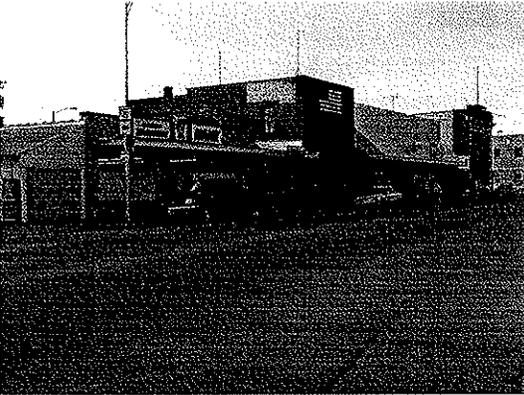
City Hall flanked by possible historic buildings



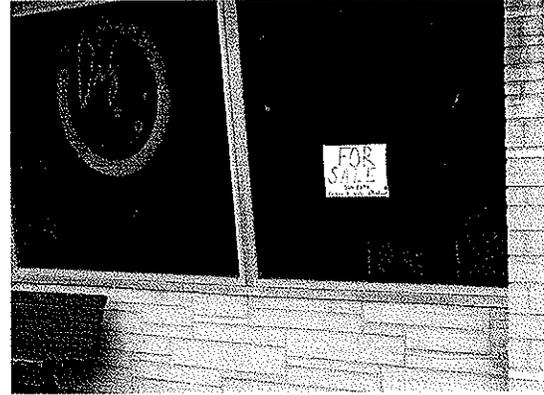
Directional sign



Deteriorated sidewalks, curbs and gutters



Several possible historic buildings



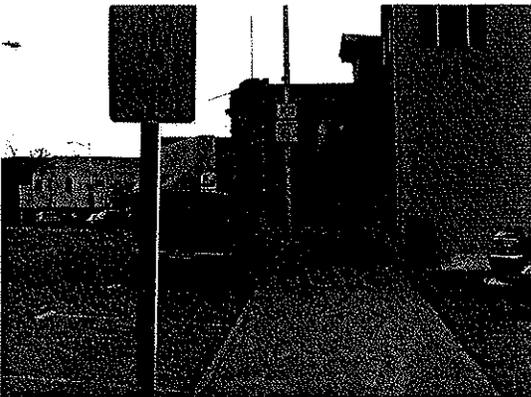
Vacant store



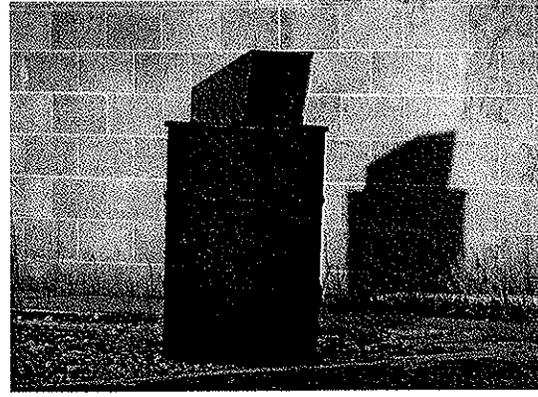
Information sign and drive-up mailbox



Trash receptacle



One of two handicap parking spaces



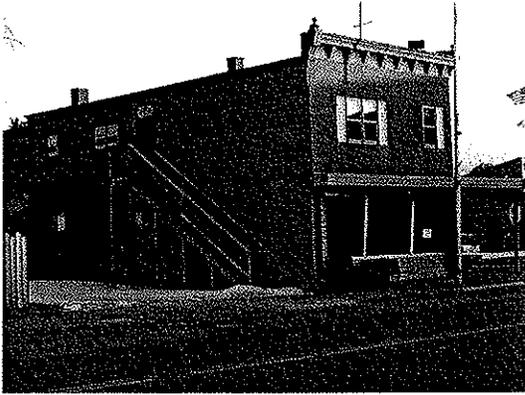
Trash receptacle



Information sign



Blighted vacant building with pedestrian amenities



Blighted vacant building with pedestrian amenities



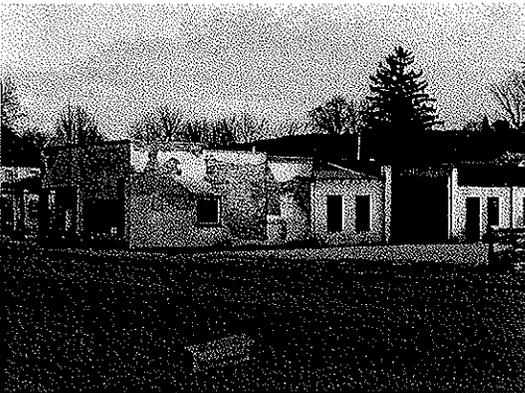
Off-street parking by the library



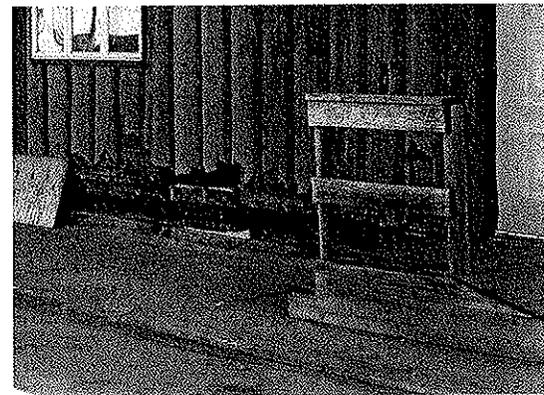
Vacant, possibly historic buildings



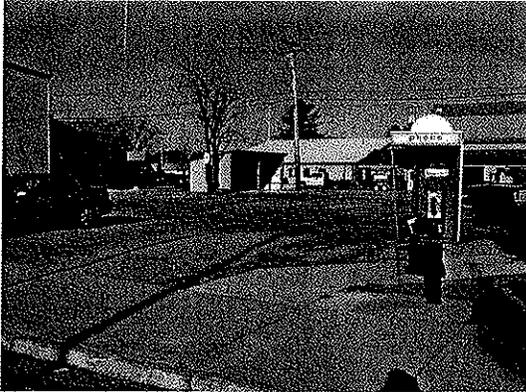
Off street parking by the library



Vacant, blighted building



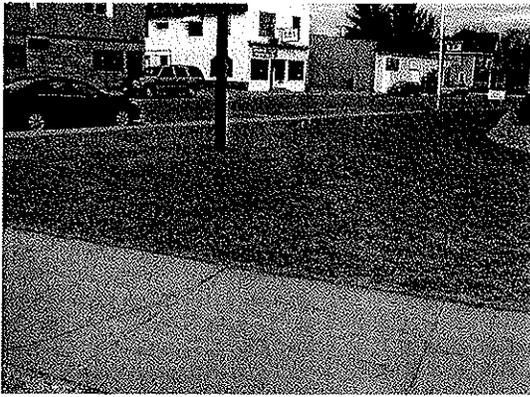
Deteriorated siding



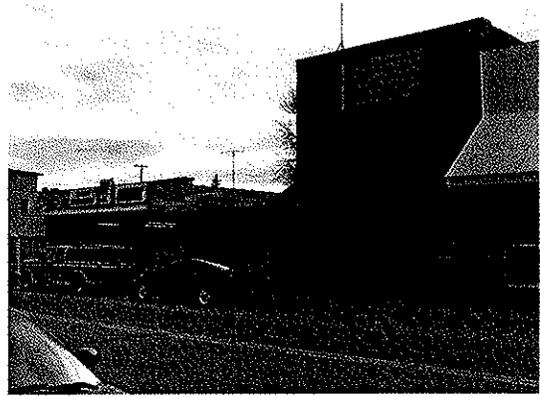
Vacant lot on Main St.



Tourist business and accounting business



Lawn at the library



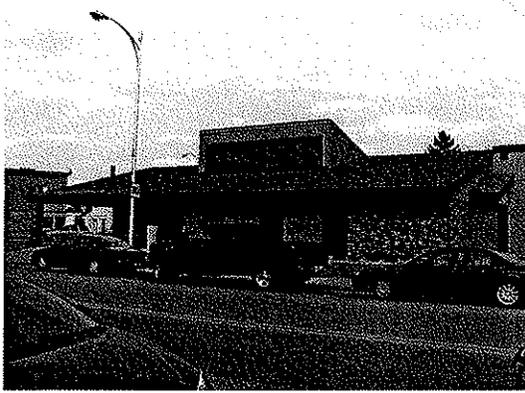
Newspaper, laundromat and hardware store



Vacant building on the right next to a tavern



Tavern, hair stylist and auto repair



Library, formerly a bank



Apartments, restaurants, veterinary services and post office



Vacant building, video store and grocery store



Steps encroaching on the sidewalk



Vacant building and vacant lot. Bench and trash receptacle in front.



Tavern



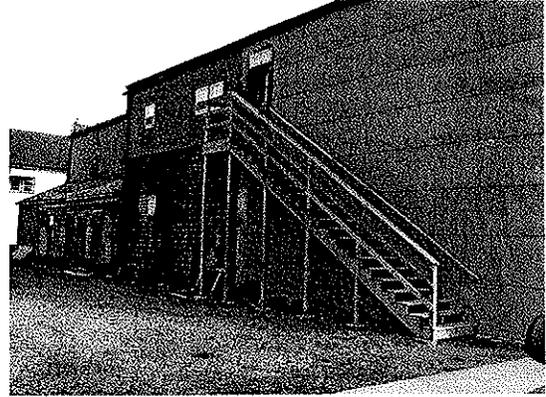
Post office and bowling lanes



Side or front of Main St. building to be resided



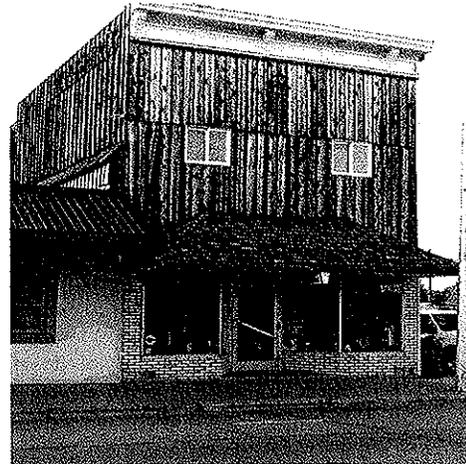
Movie rental store



Side 4 of Main St. building to be resided



Sides 1 and 2 of Main St. building to be resided



Drug store to be refinished



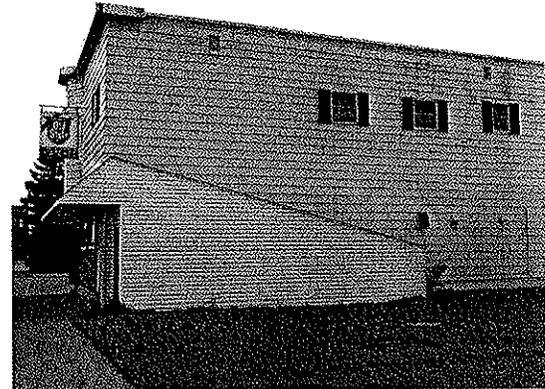
Steve and Mary's Restaurant to be redone and entrance improved



"Matches" Tavern to be repaired



Veterinary clinic



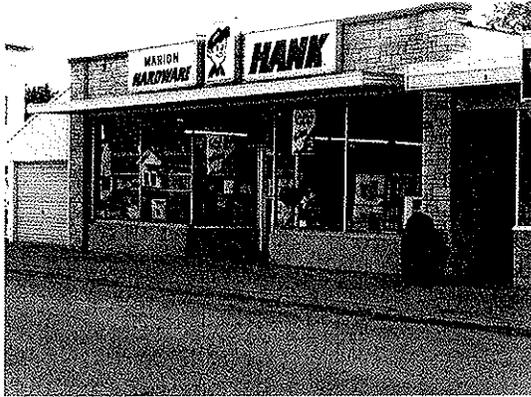
"Matches" Tavern to be repaired



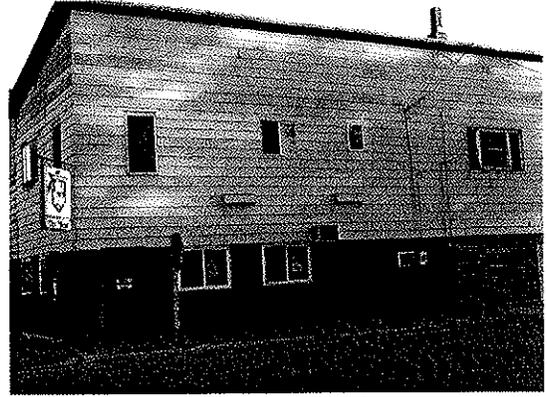
Downtown vegetation



Location of the Gathering Plaza



Hardware store



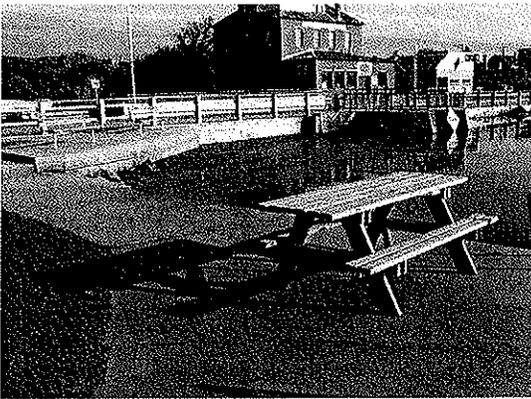
The "Nose" tavern to be sided



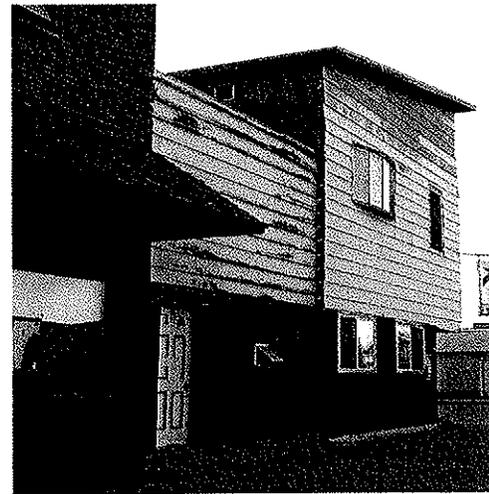
Coin laundry



The "Nose" tavern to redo entrance



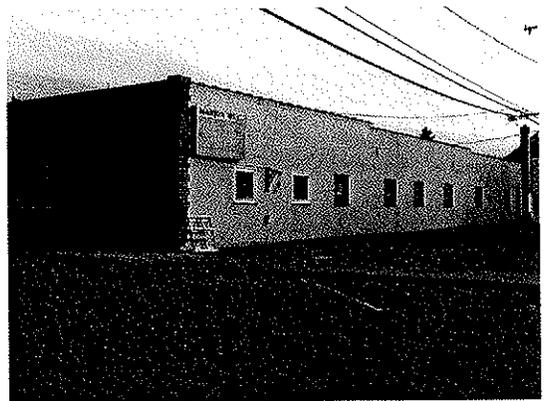
Dam and mill



The "Nose" tavern to be resided



Handicap entrance to be added



Exterior of the bowling alley to be completely redone



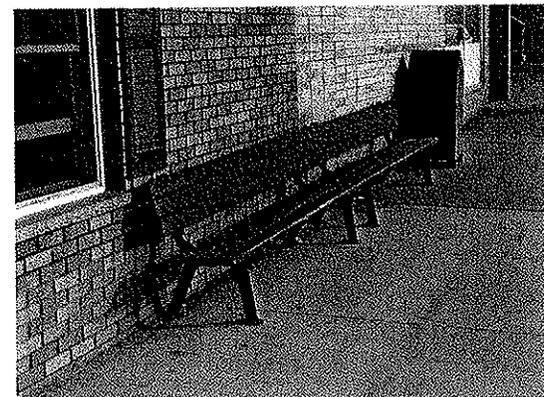
Handicap entrance to be added



Not an inviting gathering place



Exterior of the bowling alley to be redone



No an inviting gathering location



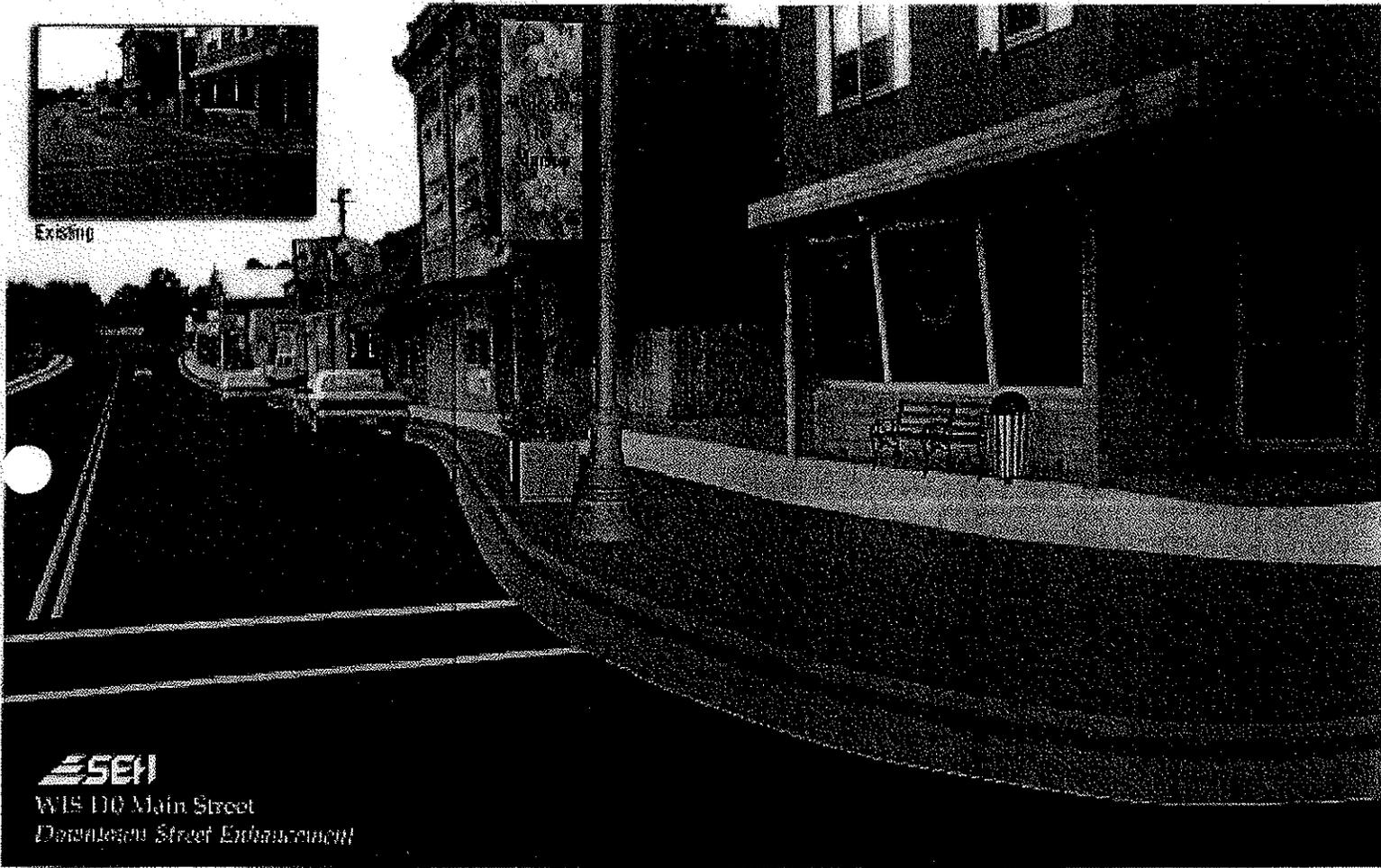
Existing



WIS 110 Main Street  
*Davenport Street Enhancement*



Existing



WIS 110 Main Street  
Downtown Street Enhancement

COPY

**Air Transportation**

Within a 50-mile radius around the City there is a number of public use airports offering a full range of facilities (Exhibit E-3). The airports at Clintonville and Shawano are the closest public use airports to the city of Marion. They accommodate typical general aviation needs including pleasure flying and business travel.

Austin Straubel International Airport is the closest airport with full commercial passenger service and general aviation facilities as well.

As shown in Table E-3, it is expected that during 2000, the number of aviation operations<sup>1</sup> at Clintonville Municipal Airport will be about 25 percent higher than at Shawano Municipal Airport. Based on projections contained in *Wisconsin State Airport System Plan – 2020* use over the next 20 years at Clintonville Municipal Airport will grow by 9.5 percent, while aviation operations will grow at a slower rate of 7.7 percent at Shawano Municipal. Both of these growth rates are significantly lower than the statewide average of 16.4 for all types of airports, but only slightly lower than for all general aviation airports.

Exhibit E-3. Public Use Airports in Region

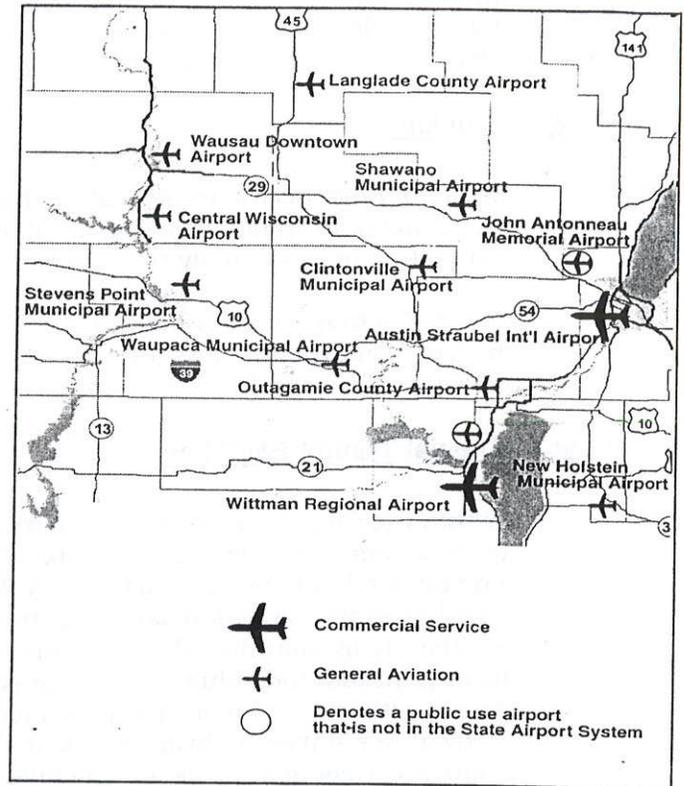


Table E-3. Projected Aviation Operations; Clintonville and Shawano Municipal Airports: 2000 - 2020.

Airport	2000	2010	2020	Percent Change 2000 - 2020
Clintonville Municipal Airport	19,020	19,620	20,820	9.5
Shawano Municipal Airport	14,300	14,300	15,400	7.7
Statewide Average				16.4

Source: Wisconsin State Airport System Plan - 2020

**Railroad Facilities**

Options for moving rail freight in the region are rather limited. The closest railroad lines are operated by Wisconsin Central Limited and Fox Valley & Western both operated by the Wisconsin Central Transportation Corporation. Amtrak provides passenger service between Minneapolis - St. Paul and Milwaukee and points beyond. The closest Amtrak Stations to this route are located in Tomah, Wisconsin Dells, and Portage. Amtrak recently began operating a line from the Fond du Lac area to Milwaukee and Chicago.



**Water Transportation**

The city of Marion does not have immediate access to any major waterway or harbor that would offer water transportation options. The Port of Green Bay, approximately 45 miles from the City, affords the closest access to a major waterway. The Port of Green Bay is strategically located on the westernmost point of Lake Michigan and offers a direct route for shipments linking Midwest and international markets. The port is served by a major railroad, the Wisconsin Central Division of the Canadian National Railroad, and several nationally known

<sup>1</sup> An airport operation is defined as either a landing or a takeoff. A plane that takes off and returns would account for two operations.

truck lines provide overnight delivery within a 400-mile radius. The average annual tonnage handled is approximately 1.8 million metric tons. The terminals located on the adjacent Fox River include 14 capable of handling dry bulk commodities and 4 firms capable of handling bulk liquids. Two general cargo docks can handle wood pulp, machinery, bagged agricultural commodities and forest products.

### \* Trucking

With no direct access to rail, all the freight movement in the region is dominated by trucking. Given national trends trucking is will remain the national mode of freight transportation. It is estimated that nationally the number of truck miles will double in the next twenty years.

Marion Plywood is a particularly large user of trucking. The raw material, logs, are brought in by truck and the finished product, plywood, is shipped by truck. Other industries and businesses rely on truck service.

### \* Special Transit Facilities

Within the City there are no public transit facilities. However, the Shawano County Department of Social Services, Aging and Disability Resource Center, and the Department of Community Programs administer regularly scheduled and as requested transportation programs for the elderly and people with disabilities. In addition, the Volunteer Escort Program staffed exclusively by volunteer drivers offers transportation services to older adults for personal and medical needs. Individuals using the service make nominal payments based on the mileage driven. Other than medical appointments that may be eligible for reimbursement through Medical Assistance, individuals using the county-based services also pay a nominal fee for using these services based on the mileage driven. There is also one private transportation vendor available for specialized transport of persons requiring vehicles that offer lifts and other special accommodations.

In Waupaca County there are similar specialized transportation services available through the Department of Health & Social Services. The Department administers regularly scheduled and as requested transportation programs for the elderly and people with disabilities. These services include a volunteer program staffed exclusively by volunteer drivers, which offers transportation services to older adults primarily for medical and related needs. Individuals using the service either make nominal payments based on the mileage driven or have their costs reimbursed through Medical Assistance. In addition the Waupaca Freedom Bus offers transportation services to meet the personal needs of residents such as shopping, family visits, personal appointments, etc. Individuals using the county-based services also pay a nominal fee of \$3/day or \$2/day if they are going to a local Nutrition Site. Individual transports are also arranged for those handicapped residents served by the Division of Vocational Rehabilitation who require transportation to work sights in the area.

## ■ Review of Existing Transportation Plans

### Bicycle / Walking Trails

Within the City there are no formally designated bike paths or routes. The low traffic volumes and road widths on most residential streets accommodate bicycle traffic quite easily. There is a walking path that starts at the state-maintained wayside along US Highway 45 and winds generally to the west and terminates near the athletic fields. Although there are currently no designated bike paths or routes in the City, the Department of Natural Resources has plans to extend a bicycle trail between New London and Split Rock that would run through the city of Marion. This is discussed in more detail in the final section of this element.

**Ordinance 2005 - 04**

**An Ordinance of the Marion City Council  
Amending its Smart Growth Comprehensive Plan  
Marion, Wisconsin**

WHEREAS, sections 62.23(2) and (3) of the Wisconsin Statutes authorizes the City to prepare and adopt a comprehensive plan as defined in sections 66.1001(1)(a) and 66.1001(2) of the Wisconsin Statutes; and

WHEREAS, the City of Marion adopted such a plan on September 26, 2001; and

WHEREAS, the City desires to include its Downtown Plan into the Comprehensive Plan and add information on water, trucking and special needs transportation; and

WHEREAS, the Plan Commission has prepared such information for inclusion in Marion's comprehensive plan as an amendment; and

WHEREAS, the City Council adopted a public participation plan to facilitate public review of the proposed technical amendment; and

WHEREAS, the Plan Commission held one public meeting to consider the proposed amendment; and

WHEREAS, the Plan Commission by a majority vote of the entire commission recorded in its official minutes, has adopted a resolution recommending to the City Council the adoption of the amendment; and

WHEREAS, the City Council, in compliance with the requirements of section 66.1001(4)(d) of the Wisconsin Statutes, held a public hearing, with proper public notice, on November 10 \_\_, 2005, to receive public comment on the technical amendment; and

WHEREAS, the City Council has reviewed the amendment and has considered the public input it has received; and

WHEREAS, the City Council has determined that the smart growth comprehensive plan, as amended, is internally consistent; and

WHEREAS, the City Council has determined that the City's smart growth comprehensive plan, as amended, is in the public interest and that it is needed for guiding and accomplishing the coordinated, adjusted and harmonious development of the City and its extraterritorial area which will, in accordance with existing and future needs, best

promote public health, safety, morals, order, convenience, prosperity or the general welfare, as well as efficiency and economy in the process of development; and

WHEREAS, the City Council has determined that the requirements of the public participation plan have been satisfied.

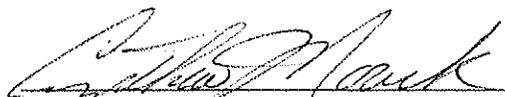
NOW THEREFORE, the City Council, by majority vote of the entire Council, adopts the technical amendment.

NOW THEREFORE, the City Clerk, pursuant to section 66.1001(4)(b) of the Wisconsin Statutes, is directed to send a copy of the technical amendment along with an explanatory cover letter to the following: Wisconsin Land Council, East Central Wisconsin Regional Planning Commission, Shawano County, Waupaca County, the towns of Grant, Pella, Dupont, and Larabee and the Marion Public Library.

Adopted this 12 day of December, 2005.

Attest:

  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Bruce Stuhr, Mayor

  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Cynthia J. Noack, City Clerk