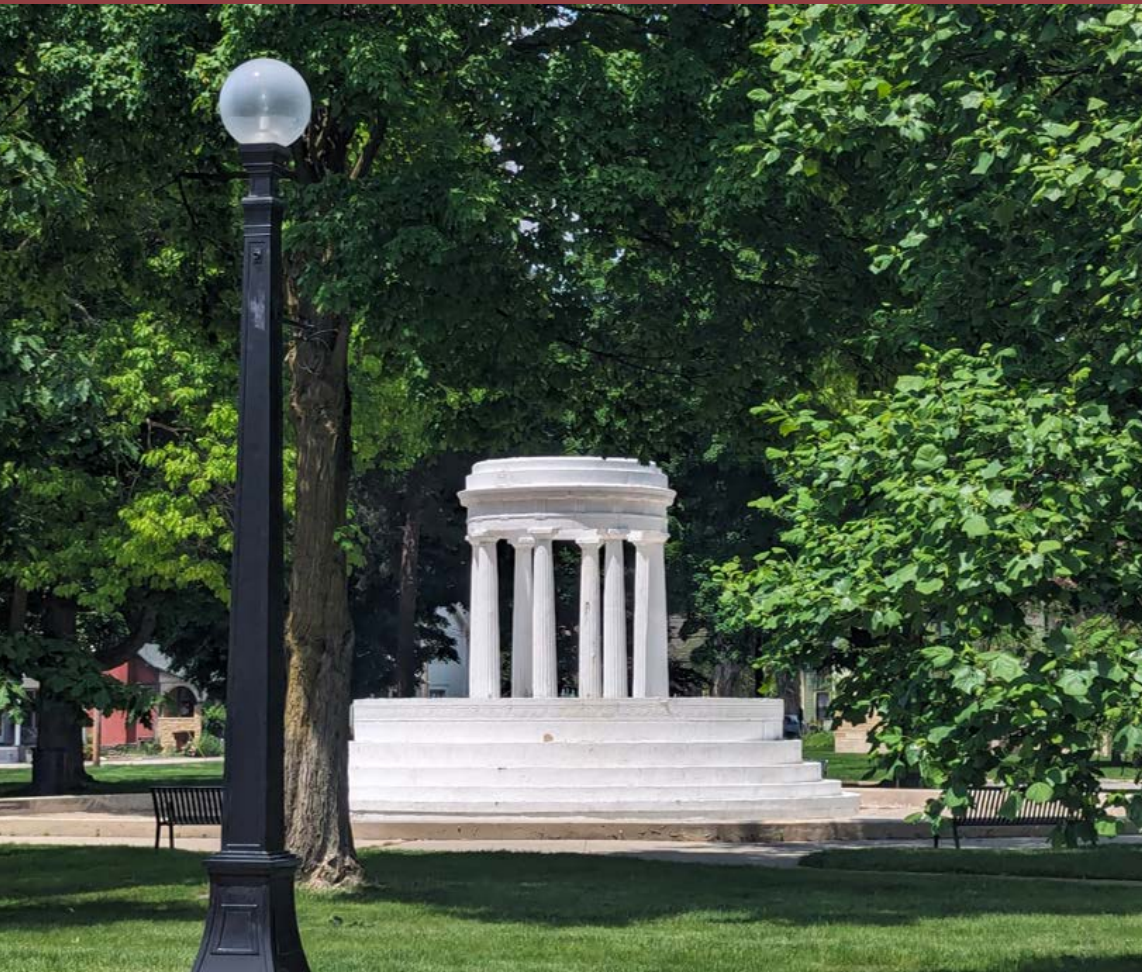


Marshall Michigan

A ULI Advisory Services Panel Report

May 19–23, 2024



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Marshall Michigan

Embracing the Future and Preserving the Past

A ULI Advisory Services Panel Report

May 19–23, 2024



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About the Urban Land Institute

THE URBAN LAND INSTITUTE is a global, member-driven organization comprising more than 48,000 real estate and urban development professionals dedicated to advancing the Institute's mission of shaping the future of the built environment for transformative impact in communities worldwide.

ULI's interdisciplinary membership represents all aspects of the industry, including developers, property owners, investors, architects, urban planners, public officials, real estate brokers, appraisers, attorneys, engineers, financiers, and academics. Established in 1936, the Institute has a presence in the Americas, Europe, and Asia Pacific regions, with members in 84 countries.

The extraordinary impact that ULI makes on land use decision-making is based on its members sharing expertise on a variety of factors affecting the built environment, including urbanization, demographic and population changes, new economic drivers, technology advancements, and environmental concerns.

About ULI Michigan

ULI Michigan carries forth the ULI mission to shape the future of the built environment for transformative impact in communities worldwide by fostering active dialogue and facilitating solutions to local and regional issues, helping to shape a sustainable and thriving future for the entire state of Michigan. We serve a diverse group of land use professionals, including urban planners, architects, developers, and more. Our goal is to provide best practices, share innovative ideas, and support professional growth within the land use and real estate sectors.

Peer-to-peer learning is achieved through the knowledge shared by members at thousands of convenings each year that reinforce ULI's position as a global authority on land use and real estate. Each year, thousands of events, both virtual and in person, are held in cities around the world.

Drawing on the work of its members, the Institute recognizes and shares best practices in urban design and development for the benefit of communities around the globe.

More information is available at uli.org. Follow ULI on [X \(formerly known as Twitter\)](#), [Facebook](#), [LinkedIn](#), and [Instagram](#).

About ULI Advisory Services

THE GOAL OF THE ULI ADVISORY SERVICES PROGRAM

is to bring the finest expertise in the real estate field to bear on complex land use planning and development projects, programs, and policies. Since 1947, this program has assembled well over 700 ULI-member teams to help sponsors find creative, practical solutions for issues such as downtown redevelopment, land management strategies, evaluation of development potential, growth management, community revitalization, brownfield redevelopment, military base reuse, provision of low-cost and affordable housing, and asset management strategies, among other matters. A wide variety of public, private, and nonprofit organizations have contracted for ULI's advisory services.

Each panel team is composed of highly qualified professionals who volunteer their time to ULI. They are chosen for their knowledge of the panel topic and are screened to ensure their objectivity. ULI's interdisciplinary panel teams provide a holistic look at development problems. A respected ULI member who has previous panel experience chairs each panel.

The agenda of an Advisory Services panel is tailored to meet a sponsor's needs. ULI members are briefed by the sponsor, engage with stakeholders through in-depth interviews, deliberate on their recommendations, and make a final presentation of those recommendations. A report is prepared as a final deliverable.

A major strength of the program is ULI's unique ability to draw on the knowledge and expertise of its members, including land developers and owners, public officials, academics, representatives of financial institutions, and others. In fulfillment of the mission of the Urban Land Institute, this panel report is intended to provide objective advice that will promote the responsible use of land to enhance the environment.

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ULI also thanks the more than 90 stakeholders who shared their experiences, perspectives, and insights with the panel, including members from ULI Michigan.

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Introduction

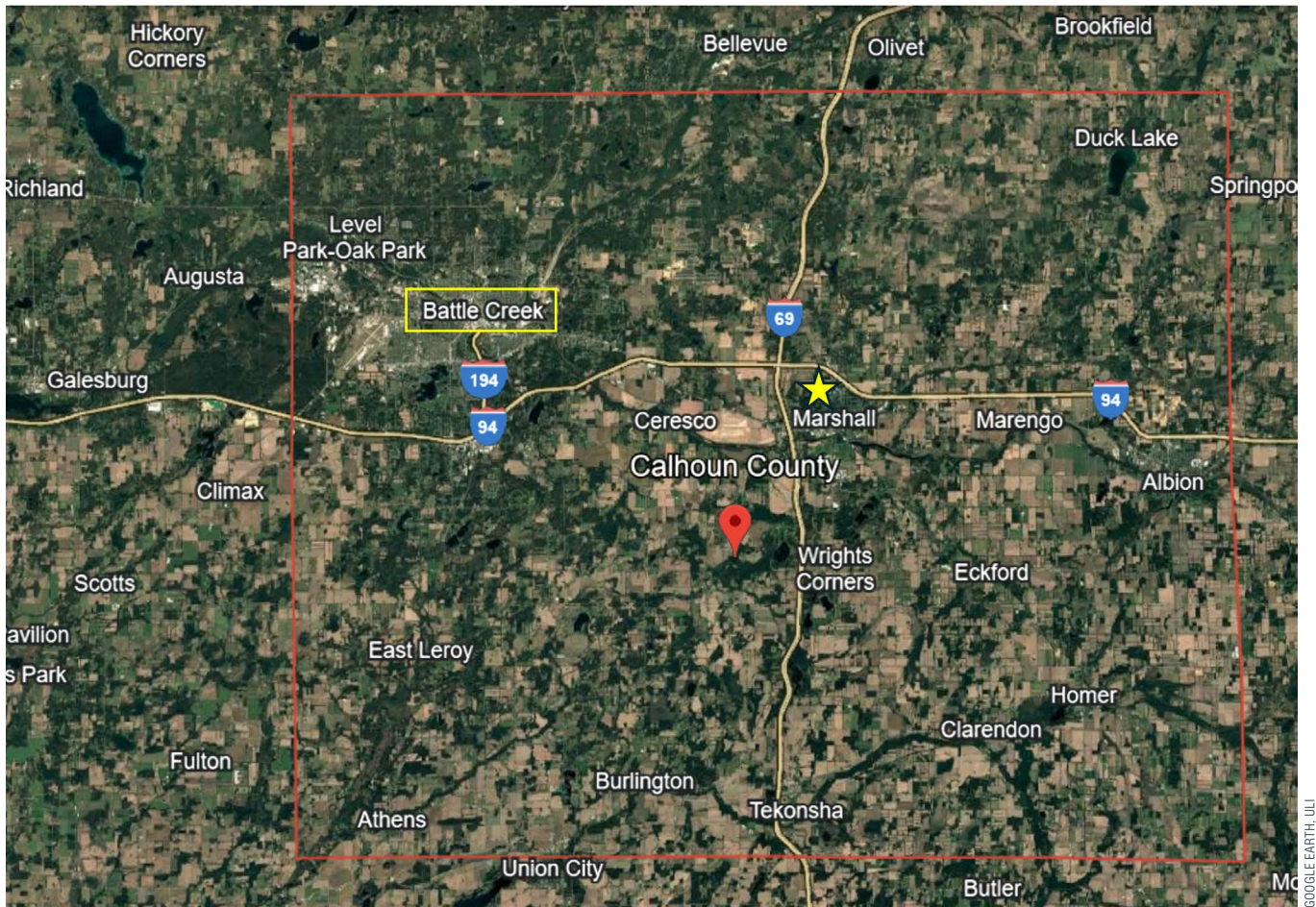
LOCATED IN SOUTHERN MICHIGAN, THE CITY OF MARSHALL is the county seat of Calhoun County, approximately a 30-minute drive from Battle Creek and a 45-minute drive from Kalamazoo. Based on U.S. Census Bureau estimates for 2023, Calhoun County has a total population of 133,366, reflecting a decline in population since 2010 (136,146). The county's largest city is Battle Creek with a population 52,175. The county's other cities include Marshall, population 6,774; Albion, population 7,329; and Springfield, population 5,281. Calhoun County has a median household income of \$58,191 in 2022 dollars, below the median income of \$75,149 for the United States. Outside of Battle Creek, the county is rural in character, with small townships and cities throughout.

Known for its small-town charm and sense of community, Marshall includes a National Historic Landmark District with more than 850 buildings built in the 19th and early 20th centuries. It also has an active and vibrant downtown corridor along Michigan Avenue with low vacancy.

Marshall's current population, according to U.S. Census Bureau estimates for 2023, is 6,774, reflecting a loss of population since 2010 (7,088). Almost a quarter (22.4 percent) of Marshall's current population is 65 years of age or over, compared with 17.7 percent nationwide. The population is

primarily white (96.8 percent), with the rest Hispanic or Latino. The median household income in 2022 dollars based on five-year estimates is \$72,813, less than \$3,000 below the national median household income, but more than \$14,622 above the median household income for Calhoun County.

According to the Marshall Area Economic Development Alliance (MAEDA), key employers in Marshall include Oaklawn Hospital, Tenneco (vehicle exhaust system manufacturing), Eaton (automobile parts), Autocam (automotive and medical parts manufacturing), and Marshall Excelsior (brass-fitting



GOOGLE EARTH, ULI

Marshall is located in the middle of Calhoun County, outlined in red, approximately 30–45 minutes from Battle Creek, outlined in yellow, and Kalamazoo.

manufacturing). Over the past 30 years, Marshall has lost more than 2,000 jobs with the closures of companies such as State Farm and Eaton’s Fluid Power Division operation.

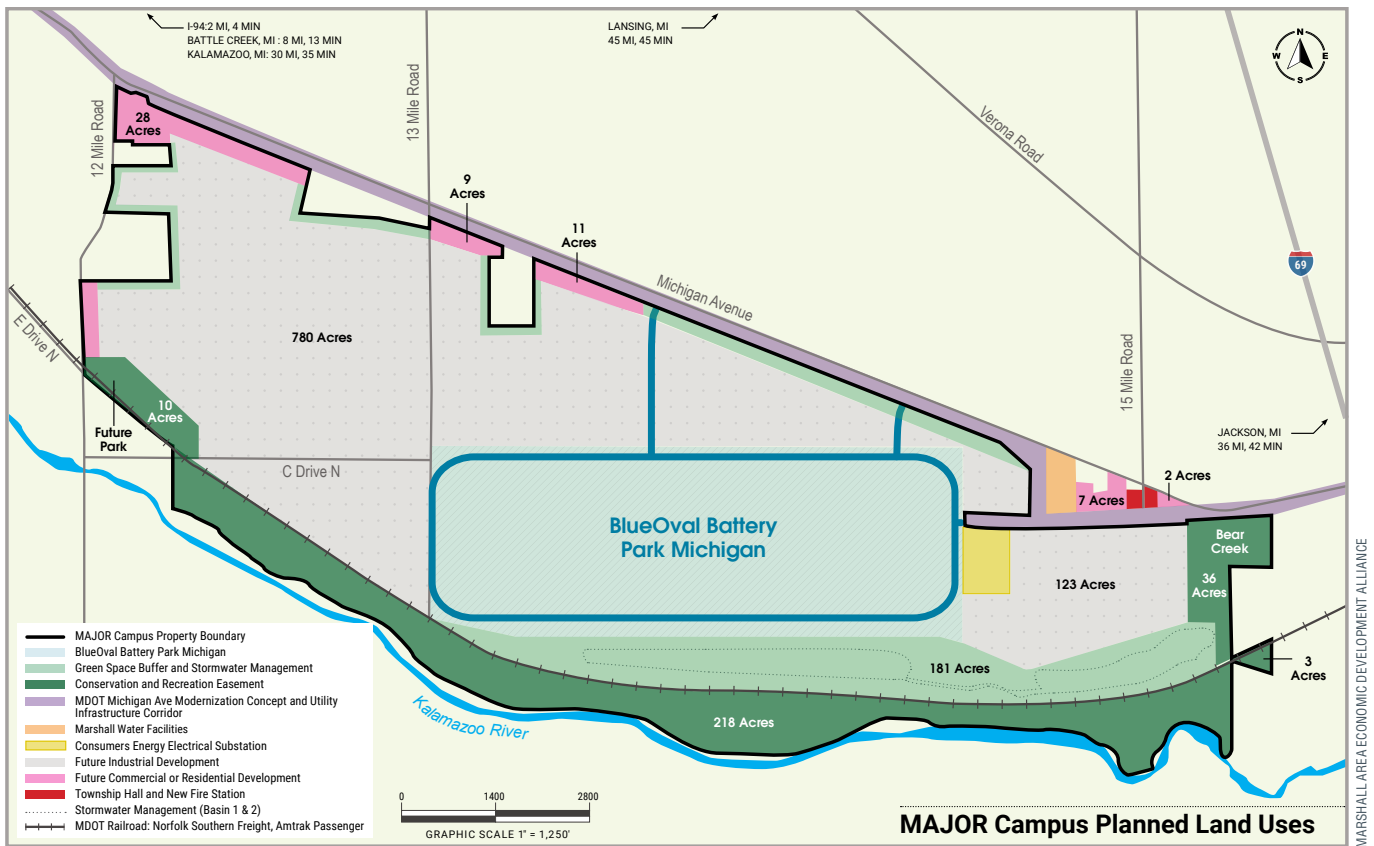
Study Area

The panel’s primary study area was defined as the greater city of Marshall, including a focus on the Marshall Area Jobs Opportunities and Recreation (MAJOR) Campus, which includes the associated development of the Ford Motor Company BlueOval Battery Park Michigan. The MAJOR Campus is a 2,000-acre site historically located in Marshall Township, a predominantly rural community with a strong focus on agriculture. The township surrounds the city of Marshall, primarily to the east and north. The MAJOR Campus was originally known as the megasite and since the 1960s has been zoned primarily industrial with the hope of attracting one or several large employers to develop on the site. Although the MAJOR Campus is zoned for industrial uses, it has been agricultural land for approximately 60 years and during that time provided scenic landscapes and open views. It is the



BETH POOVEY

Steps from downtown Marshall, Honolulu House was built in 1860 by Abner Pratt, a former chief justice of the Michigan Supreme Court and United States Consul to Hawaii as documented by the Marshall Historical Society.



Located in neighboring Marshall Township, the MAJOR Campus will be primarily industrial with a conservation easement and planned recreational and amenity area at Bear Creek.

panel's observation that, among other concerns, there has been community tension around the development of industrial uses, even when zoning permitted such uses, given how long the site remained undeveloped.

Today the MAJOR Campus includes approximately 1,000 acres for mostly future industrial development, but also some commercial and residential development and 500 acres of green space including a 218-acre conservation easement and 36 acres for a planned museum and nature center at Bear Creek. The remaining 500 acres are occupied by Ford BlueOval Battery Park Michigan, a significant investment by Ford to produce lithium iron phosphate batteries to support its electric vehicle business.

In February 2023, Ford announced that it had chosen a portion of the MAJOR Campus as the site for its next battery manufacturing facility. Construction of the facility began in August 2023 and production is scheduled to begin in 2026. Ford has announced plans for 1,700 jobs directly associated with the facility, which will likely include managerial, professional/technical, skilled, and semiskilled positions.

According to economic and demographic modeling by Regional Economic Models Inc. (REMI), over 20 years the facility's presence in the Marshall area is expected to indirectly create jobs across several sectors including manufacturing, retail trade, personal services, construction, education, health care, arts, entertainment, accommodations, and food services.

Panel Assignment

Community stakeholders acknowledge the impact that the initial Ford BlueOval Battery Park Michigan investment and anticipated subsequent development of the MAJOR Campus will have on the community. Therefore, MAEDA and the city of Marshall, with the support of Ford, asked ULI to convene an Advisory Services panel to form actionable recommendations on how to maximize the economic benefits of the Ford BlueOval Battery Park Michigan investment for the greater Marshall area, while enhancing and maintaining desirable community characteristics and amenities. The panel was also asked to provide recommendations on how MAEDA and the city of Marshall might best partner with Ford on this endeavor.



The ULI Advisory Services process includes a Meet-and-Greet event with local stakeholders and site tour, as well as other activities such as stakeholder interviews to learn more about the community.

Panel Process

The ULI Advisory Services panel met over five days. Using a process honed over 75 years, an Advisory Services panel has three key parts: listening and learning, panel deliberation, and presentation of expert recommendations. The listening and learning portion of this panel included a full day of on-the-ground experiences: a briefing by the sponsor team, a site tour, and a meet and greet in which the panel heard from residents and other stakeholders to learn their perspectives on the topic. The panel then conducted small-group interviews with more than 90 stakeholders representing a broad cross-section of interests. Using information gathered during these activities and briefing materials provided by the sponsor team, the Advisory Services panel team spent two days developing and drafting recommendations and producing a presentation. This presentation was made on the last day of the Advisory Services panel. Although time was limited, the panelists made every effort to incorporate what they learned and what they heard. The recommendations in this report reflect this effort and what the panel knew at the time.

What the Panel Heard

A critical part of the Advisory Services panel process is engaging with community and project stakeholders. From interviews and conversations with members of the community, highlights of what the panel heard are as follows:

- Many in the community are excited by the prospect of new jobs that will support economic growth.
- Many have questions and concerns about potential challenges:
 - Impacts on the environment, including the river, groundwater, and air quality
 - Housing shortages
 - Increased traffic
 - Infrastructure capacity, including public service, firefighting and police, schools, medical care, and transportation
 - Influxes of new people who have yet to develop a commitment to the community's special character and historic significance
- Everyone wanted more transparency; more timely, detailed, and consistent information; and, if the specifics are not presently known, a best estimate of when they will be available.

The panel agrees that all are valid concerns and topics that need to be addressed. At the same time, the panel is aware that both the city of Marshall and Calhoun County have seen population declines in recent years. The panel believes that it is important to remember that a vibrant and thriving community requires

continued economic growth and job creation. The current development of Ford BlueOval Battery Park Michigan and the remainder of the MAJOR Campus is not just about bringing in new jobs and residents, it is about creating a sustainable future for Marshall and Calhoun County. Economic growth builds a foundation for a diverse, vibrant community, opening opportunities for all residents and attracting new businesses and ancillary industries. The panel's recommendations focus on identifying what needs to be done so that this growth can have a positive impact.

The ULI Advisory Services Panel's Recommendations

The recommendations in this report reflect the views of the ULI panel and are based on information as it was provided during the panel week. The panel suggests that the leaders of the key entities involved in this effort take time to assess the recommendations and determine whether they are feasible and will hold up over time. Some recommendations have a strong likelihood of implementation while others may not.

Summary of Key Recommendations

- Consistent and transparent communication is essential, including enhancing the frequency of communications and providing regular project updates. Develop a values-based communications strategy and design a user-friendly website (MAJOR Campus Hub) with easy navigation and clear categories for different aspects of the Ford BlueOval Battery Park Michigan project, such as construction updates, community impacts, economic opportunities, and events. Expand the MAJOR Campus Hub website to offer additional valuable information as the project progresses and the MAJOR Campus develops.
- Create strategic county-level working groups and establish a countywide leadership team of key stakeholder groups to address topics related to the anticipated increased impact of Ford BlueOval Battery Park Michigan over the next five years. Create a regional economic development organization that encompasses all communities in the county and shift focus from solely city-level to county-level capacity building to ensure that economic development initiatives are comprehensive and inclusive of all communities within the county.
- Collaborate with small-business assistance centers or local community colleges to provide technical assistance and support for small businesses. Enhance support for local businesses through regular communication and partnerships with organizations regionally and statewide.
- Provide additional communication to the community about environmental protection plans and controls for the Ford BlueOval Battery Park Michigan project.
- Plant prairie grasses and other plants and develop a vegetation strategy for the MAJOR Campus to manage stormwater, prevent erosion, and visually buffer and integrate the industrial buildings, roads, and parking lots into the agricultural surroundings.
- Adopt and coordinate the effort to build a connection to the North Country Trail. Plan and adopt a greenway loop that connects the MAJOR Campus, Bear Creek, the community of Ceresco, and downtown.
- Work with the Michigan Department of Transportation to affect the realignment of Michigan Avenue to support the rural character and address through-traffic in the historic downtown.
- Create a Downtown Resiliency Plan that includes consideration for the potential impacts of new commercial and retail development in other places. Create design standards for new downtown construction that support the existing architectural character.
- Expand the historic district to ensure that contributing areas are included within protection zones and identify historic streetscape and open-space elements that contribute to the character of the historic neighborhoods.
- Take proactive steps to secure housing at currently affordable price points to help prevent displacement and encourage housing developments that promote walkability, diversity, sense of place, and quality.
- Identify new districts to enable growth that supports unique living experiences such as the riverwalk area.

This report includes recommendations based on the panel's extensive experience and industry best practices. These recommendations are captured under four main topics: community and economic impacts, communications, countywide approach, and land use and character.



Community and Economic Impact

PART OF WHAT MAKES MARSHALL SPECIAL is the feeling of a safe, welcoming community, which residents seek to preserve. Through the briefings and stakeholder interviews, the panel heard repeated references to the safety of downtown, the security of the neighborhoods, and the welcoming, caring nature of the residents of Marshall.

The panel also noted that a great degree of apprehension exists about the future, given the scale of the MAJOR Campus and the Ford BlueOval Battery Park Michigan. How will development of Ford BlueOval Battery Park Michigan and the rest of the MAJOR Campus affect the community? They offer several potential positives such as adding jobs, strengthening the economy, and stemming the local population decline. However, in interviews, many stakeholders voiced concerns regarding environmental protection, traffic, fear of changes to the historical nature of the built environment, anxiety about schools and child care, and new residents potentially not appreciating or integrating into the current values and culture of the Marshall (and county) community. The panel also understands that some

of the concerns may be influenced by past experiences that, for some, still loom large. In any major undertaking to foster future economic growth, change is necessary and change fundamentally includes risk. The critical steps to addressing that risk include identifying the risks, developing and implementing mitigation plans, and communicating the risks, plans, and implementation.

Sensitivity to the concerns voiced by community members is essential, and the panel applauds the work that MAEDA, the city, and Ford have done so far to lay the foundation for the community to benefit from the investments in the MAJOR Campus and assuage the concerns. Yet, the panel's

impression is that concerns and uncertainty remain. This section focuses on recommendations to further the existing efforts to address community concerns about environmental impacts, transportation impacts, the city's welcoming culture, the built environment, and community services. This section also highlights ways in which the Marshall area, through the leadership of MAEDA, can support the potential economic benefits for the community.

Environmental Impacts

In interviews and meetings, the community voiced significant concern about the potential harm to the environment from new industrial development at the MAJOR Campus. This concern was heightened by the Enbridge oil spill in 2010, which affected more than 35 miles of the Kalamazoo River for longer than two years and cost more than \$1.2 billion to remediate. Some of the community concerns expressed about industrial development at the MAJOR Campus related to discharge of stormwater containing oil and grease, road salt coming off the parking lots and sediment from disturbed ground going into the Kalamazoo River, the impact on the Marshall wastewater treatment plant of industrial wastewater discharges from plants like Ford BlueOval Battery Park Michigan, and spills of hazardous materials from process piping, material storage, or transport vehicles.

Under Michigan law, the MAJOR Campus site, including the area of Ford BlueOval Battery Park Michigan, is subject to regulation by the Michigan Department of Environment, Great Lakes, and Energy (EGLE) to provide for the protection of public health, safety, and the environment. These regulations require control of stormwater runoff, pretreatment of industrial wastewater, an air emissions construction and operating permit [e.g., a permit to install (PTI), which shall be obtained prior to the commencement of installation activities for any process equipment that has the potential to emit air contaminants onsite] to manage air emissions, secondary containment for the storage of regulated materials, spill prevention plans, training, and communication with first responders and the public about potential hazardous material exposures.

Stormwater: It is the panel's understanding that stormwater for the MAJOR Campus will be managed by collecting runoff and routing it to two large infiltration basins. The infiltration basins use the site's native soil to enhance filtration. By slowing the flow of stormwater runoff, the basins allow suspended sediment particles to drop out of suspension. This prevents the sediment from being transported off site, protecting surrounding water quality. In the event of precipitation events that exceed

the capacity of the infiltration basins, excess runoff will be discharged at a rate less than the predeveloped condition to the Kalamazoo River at two recently replaced discharge culverts. It is the panel's understanding that stormwater management in the Ford BlueOval Battery Park Michigan employee parking lot will be enhanced through the implementation of bioswales/bioretenion areas, which will provide natural filtration and reduce pollutant loading.

The panel recommends planting native prairie grasses and other plants in the yet-to-be developed and buffer areas of the MAJOR Campus to increase the removal of contaminants from stormwater and create wildlife habitat. In addition, it is the panel's understanding that any future construction activities at the MAJOR Campus that disturb one or more acres of land will necessitate a separate stormwater construction permit. This permit will be the responsibility of future business entities undertaking the construction on the MAJOR Campus. It is also the panel's understanding that EGLE has approved the measures undertaken by MAEDA to manage stormwater runoff from the MAJOR Campus to revegetate soil disturbed by its construction. The panel recommends MAEDA develop a consistent strategy for the planting and maintenance of vegetation for both erosion and sediment control of the site that will apply to the entire MAJOR Campus.

Wastewater: The panel recommends that, to protect the Kalamazoo and ensure proper wastewater treatment, all industrial process wastewater from the MAJOR Campus be pretreated on site before discharge to the Marshall Wastewater Treatment Plant.

Air emissions: It is the panel's understanding that air emissions for any operations on the MAJOR Campus will be managed through an air pollution control permit that will be issued by EGLE. The department requires builders to obtain a PTI before the construction of any process or process equipment that may emit air contaminants.

It is the panel's understanding that EGLE must approve the environmental controls that Ford will install before the onset of manufacturing. In addition, the panel notes that EGLE provides various public participation opportunities as part of its regulatory process.

Hazardous waste: It is the panel's understanding that due to the nature of its manufacturing operations, Ford BlueOval Battery Park Michigan may be classified as a large quantity generator (LQG) of hazardous waste. While the site activities and management of hazardous waste will not require a permit



BETH POOVEY

East Michigan Avenue is the “Main Street” of Marshall’s downtown.

from EGLE even with this classification, it is the panel’s understanding that Ford will implement a comprehensive waste management plan to meet all EGLE requirements. Requirements also apply to the shipping, receiving, and storage of hazardous materials and the notification of first responders, medical personnel, and the community on the use and release of hazardous materials.

Key recommendations: While the potential for accidental release is inherent in any facility, the panel notes that even with full compliance with state regulations on potential environmental impacts, members of the community may be unaware of the significance of the standard safeguards and measures required by law for facilities developed on the MAJOR Campus. Therefore, the panel recommends that each of the key stakeholders play a role in demystifying environmental mitigation efforts for the community.

Regarding Ford BlueOval Battery Park Michigan, the panel recommends that Ford communicate to the community the environmental protection plans and controls that are being installed as part of the plant design and future operation. Ford BlueOval Battery Park Michigan should continue to work with first responders to enable adequate response in case of an accident at the plant or in the transportation of materials to the site. The panel also suggests that the Ford BlueOval Battery Park Michigan work with local hospitals to make them aware of the potential injuries that could be caused by the materials

involved in the manufacturing operations as well as to the safety of the health care workforce. Emergency plans should be communicated to the community as they become available.

For the MAJOR Campus as a whole, the panel recommends that MAEDA be more transparent in its communications with respect to the stormwater management system that has been installed to protect and improve the condition of the Kalamazoo River. The city of Marshall should also communicate the nature of the wastewater that it will be receiving from the new plant so that the community understands that its wastewater treatment plant will be protected.

Transportation Impacts

The panel heard stakeholders express concerns about the amount and type of traffic that development of the MAJOR Campus will generate, starting with the development and opening of Ford BlueOval Battery Park Michigan. Specific concerns relate to changes currently underway to West Michigan Avenue to the north of the MAJOR Campus and likely changes to the volume of traffic through Marshall’s downtown corridor along East Michigan Avenue. The panel believes that although additional development and jobs generated from the MAJOR Campus will likely affect traffic in and around the Marshall area, there are ways to address some of the concerns raised by community stakeholders.



As the population grows, the need for additional housing supply will increase over time.

The panel recommends that the city of Marshall work with the Michigan Department of Transportation to find ways to limit truck traffic on East Michigan Avenue to maintain safety in the vibrant downtown business district. The panel also recommends that MAJOR Campus users request that trucks associated with their operations avoid East Michigan Avenue and downtown Marshall, and applauds current efforts to achieve this. As the planned changes for West Michigan Avenue are finalized, the panel strongly recommends that the city of Marshall, Marshall Township, and MAEDA facilitate the dissemination of these changes to all residents, whether directly or indirectly affected. As discussed elsewhere in greater detail, the panel also recommends that key stakeholders consider multimodal options, such as extending the riverwalk from South Kalamazoo Avenue to the MAJOR Campus to add safe walking and biking access to the planned recreational amenities and potential employers on the campus.

Welcoming Culture

The panel observed the importance that the quaint, small-town culture of Marshall has for residents and the pride that residents have in the culture of being welcoming and a good neighbor. Like in other small communities experiencing rapid growth, there is concern that the character and values that make Marshall unique will change. The panel acknowledges

this concern and observes that as the community welcomes a new, diverse population, it is important to trust that new residents will appreciate the characteristics that residents clearly love about Marshall. Because of this, the panel highlights the importance of residents and key stakeholders within the community acting together in a way that encourages new residents to become involved and invested in the community. As discussed in detail later, there is also an opportunity to further activate downtown and the riverwalk to provide additional opportunities to engage new populations of residents.

Change itself can add stress and generate tension within any community. The panel emphasizes that many critical decisions remain to be made in the development process for Ford BlueOval Battery Park Michigan and for future development of the MAJOR Campus and that these decisions may continue to produce contentious conversations. The panel believes it is essential to strengthen civility and trust from everyone, for everyone, throughout the community. It is the responsibility of residents to work together to reach consensus regarding community needs and to listen to community leaders and representatives of the companies moving to the MAJOR Campus to help inform that consensus. It is the responsibility of community leaders to create an environment where all residents feel welcome and heard.

Built Environment

During the Advisory Services panel, panel members observed that Marshall values the historic nature of its built environment, but that there are concerns and fears about its future in the face of growth. Although population growth does result in change, the panel believes it is essential to the future of Marshall because communities that do not grow eventually fade away. The panel recommends that this reality be clearly communicated to residents. As the community continues to evolve, it will be vital for the city of Marshall to work together with residents to proactively and thoughtfully plan for growth that will maintain and enhance key aspects of the built environment that the community values—like its historic character and small-town feel. The panel also recommends that historic preservation play a role in future city planning and zoning efforts to ensure the preservation of key community assets.

Based on what the panel learned about the existing housing supply, new developments, and anticipated growth, the panel anticipates that although housing is not currently a pressing issue, it will become one as growth accelerates. Safe, secure homes are vital to maintaining secure families. It is the panel's experience that supply must keep pace with demand if affordability is to be maintained. Securing the housing of existing residents will allow them to both benefit from, and be protected from, rising home values. The panel recommends that the city of Marshall work with the philanthropic community to secure housing before the market accelerates, which will make housing more expensive and efforts to secure units less likely to succeed. Maintaining affordable housing units over time for those at the lower end of the employment wage scale will require a unified, regional strategy.

The panel recommends that the city work to establish zoning that supports these values in the plans for future growth. The panel applauds the decision to dedicate land specifically to industrial development in certain areas in the community. By focusing on the MAJOR Campus, resources can be allocated to a specific area while reducing development pressure on other parts of the Marshall area. One notable benefit is the preservation of agricultural and other land uses.

Community Services

Over the course of the week, panel members heard a range of concerns about community services and the need to expand existing services or add new ones, to invest in the human

capital of current and future households. The following areas were highlighted during conversations with community stakeholders where the panel recommends additional focus.

- Demand for daycare will only increase as the numbers of employees and residents in the Marshall area increase.
- The schools and Kellogg Community College, in partnership with Ford and future MAJOR Campus tenants, should work together to provide workforce education, to develop a pipeline for future workers. It is the panel's understanding that efforts in this area are underway related to Ford BlueOval Battery Park Michigan, and it believes that these efforts should continue.
- MAEDA should connect with Marshall's major employers to help fulfill their existing workforce training needs.
- Health care providers should improve their capacity to handle both the expanded workforce and the increased population.
- Public safety will need to expand to fill the additional demands generated by increases in traffic, workforce, and population.

Some of these services might be suited for corporate or nonprofit partnership to formally support implementation.

Economic Impact

To fully take advantage of the investment in Ford BlueOval Battery Park Michigan and the anticipated development of the MAJOR Campus, the panel recommends that MAEDA take the lead in providing support to more fully develop a comprehensive set of services to support local businesses and attract new ones. If MAEDA has not already done so, the panel recommends that it partner with the Michigan Economic Development Corporation to obtain an up-to-date economic impact study on the Ford BlueOval Battery Park Michigan development, to help further inform the potential for development in the Marshall area from the perspectives of both economic and community impacts.

Following are recommendations to improve business attraction and retention, and small business development, to best leverage the anticipated economic impacts of this catalytic investment and perhaps further ongoing efforts in this area.

Business attraction:

- Develop marketing strategies to promote the advantages of Marshall as a location for businesses in various sectors, such as industrial, retail, and services.
- Highlight key selling points such as infrastructure, workforce quality, incentives, and quality of life.
- Use digital marketing channels, industry conferences, and networking events to reach potential investors and businesses.

Business retention:

- Establish a regular communication schedule with local businesses to understand their needs and challenges.
- Use this information to inform policy decisions related to business support, workforce development, regulatory issues, and real estate development.
- Forge partnerships with organizations such as Michigan Works! to leverage their resources and expertise in supporting local businesses.

Small business assistance:

- Collaborate with small business assistance centers or local community colleges to provide technical assistance and support for small businesses.
- Offer workshops, training programs, and one-on-one consultations to address issues related to business planning, marketing, financial management, and access to capital.
- Facilitate connections between small businesses and resources such as grants, loans, and mentorship programs.

Procurement

- Assist local firms in navigating procurement processes, particularly for opportunities related to the Ford BlueOval Battery Park Michigan project and other major projects in the region.
- Provide guidance on bid preparation, compliance requirements, and supplier diversity initiatives.
- Foster relationships between local suppliers and larger companies to create mutually beneficial partnerships and supply chain opportunities.

By focusing on these areas, MAEDA can play a vital role in supporting the growth and success of businesses in Marshall and attracting new investment to the area.



Communications

MANY OF THE PEOPLE WITH WHOM THE PANEL SPOKE during the panel week expressed a desire for more information regarding the project, uncertain how it might affect them, their families, and their community. It is the panel's understanding that community engagement and communications efforts have been underway for the rebranding of the MAJOR Campus and the development of Ford BlueOval Battery Park Michigan. Given the stakeholder feedback, the panel feels it is important to place added focus on developing and implementing strategies that will improve trust and create a shared awareness of the evolution of Ford BlueOval Battery Park Michigan and how it may affect the Marshall community and the Calhoun County region.

The panel suggests that MAEDA, the city of Marshall, and Ford work collaboratively to develop a values-based communications strategy to achieve this goal. To do so, the panel recommends first identifying the community's values and then highlighting ways in which the activities related to the project will support these values. Examples include providing good jobs at family-sustaining wages and making sure that children have good educational and employment options. The panel recommends that this strategy have three critical elements.

Identify the audience: The strategy must acknowledge the audience it needs to reach. That audience is not site selectors

for potential development at the MAJOR Campus, but instead the residents of Marshall and the surrounding communities and townships. It is the panel's observation that the residents want and deserve accurate information regarding the project and its ancillary activities and impacts. Messaging needs to respond to the demographics, interests, and values of the target audience, which includes residents of all ages, local businesses and industries, and community organizations.

Build trust and establish lines of open communication: Trust and understanding are more apt to develop when regular updates are provided. The panel acknowledges that already

several websites address various aspects of the Ford BlueOval Battery Park Michigan project, but they lack the most current information. By sharing project status and projected timelines with the community, project and area representatives can ensure that residents will begin to understand what to expect and when. Most people generally acknowledge that not everything is going to happen on time or without some glitches, but being open and honest in communications helps residents feel more comfortable in dealing with the unknown. The panel recommends using visuals to creatively show progress and stresses that project updates should aim to inform, not persuade.

Reach a broad audience: The panel recommends that different communication channels be combined to reach the broadest possible audience. Not everyone gets information from the same places, so the panel recommends focusing on at least two delivery channels, including in-person community engagement activities and an informative internet site.

In-Person Community Engagement

Community engagement should be a targeted process, identifying groups that are directly affected by the project and requesting an invitation to attend their meetings to provide information and regular updates. These groups include faith-based organizations, community service groups, and neighborhood associations.



In-person community engagement efforts continue to be critical to setting expectations and understanding about current and future projects at the MAJOR Campus.

The panel also recommends using a community open house format to set expectations and understanding about the project and then periodically sharing new information as it becomes available. The intention is that these events be open to the entire community. The panel recommends that leadership from MAEDA, the city of Marshall, and Ford BlueOval Battery Park Michigan, as well as relevant staff and subject matter experts from these organizations and from appropriate regional or state agencies be available at these open houses. One format to consider might include a 15- to 20-minute presentation from leaders followed by making subject matter experts available at tables to address questions on topics such as workforce training, hiring, construction, environmental and mitigation activities, and traffic concerns.

It is recommended that these meetings be held in places where public meetings do not typically occur and that are welcoming and accessible, with refreshments. Locations can be rotated to ensure people from across the entire county may participate.

For engagement that involves in-depth group discussion, the panel recommends using professional facilitators to provide neutral ground and a structured process, which fosters effective communication. Use of tools such as real-time polling can also create multiple avenues for participation and allow everyone's opinions to be quickly gathered and displayed, which make it possible for more people to engage in a meaningful way.

MAJOR Campus Hub (New Community Website)

A well-designed website branded as the go-to source for project information and promoting the project effectively within the community can ensure that residents have access to accurate and timely information to address their questions and concerns. This effort not only will foster mutual understanding and trust, but also will strengthen community engagement and participation in the project's success. As the MAJOR Campus Hub, this website would focus initially on Ford BlueOval Battery Park Michigan but should include future developments on the campus as well. The panel recommends the following key elements for the MAJOR Campus Hub.

Website development: Design a user-friendly website with easy navigation and clear categories for different aspects of the Ford BlueOval Battery Park Michigan project, such as construction updates, community impacts, economic opportunities, and events. Ensure that the website is mobile-friendly and accessible to users of all devices.

Branding: Develop a strong brand identity for the website, including a memorable name, logo, and visual elements that convey trustworthiness, reliability, and community engagement. The branding should reflect the website's role as the go-to source for information on the project and related activities.

Content creation: Populate the website with comprehensive and up-to-date content that addresses common questions and concerns from the community. This content includes information such as project timelines, construction updates, job opportunities, housing developments, and community events.

Incorporating construction updates and project information into the website keeps stakeholders informed, and it also enhances understanding of the project and fosters community engagement. Using a dashboard to display real-time progress and milestones can provide a comprehensive overview of ongoing projects. In addition, integrating time-lapse videos of the construction process would add an engaging visual element that showcases the transformation over time.

Ensuring that the website offers accurate and up-to-date information on current and upcoming projects, such as the Michigan Avenue spur and potential riverwalk improvements, is crucial for keeping the community well informed. Such information could include project timelines, key features, and any potential disruptions or changes to the original plans. The site could also provide contact information for those who have questions not covered on the site. This element fosters trust between, collectively, Ford, MAEDA and the City of Marshall, and the community.

Promotion: Promote the website through various channels, including social media, local newspapers, community newsletters, and public announcements. Place QR codes for it in prominent public spaces, such as community centers, libraries, and city halls, to make it easy for residents to access the website using their smartphones.

Engagement and feedback: Encourage community engagement by providing avenues for residents to ask questions, share feedback, and participate in discussions related to the project. Incorporate features such as contact forms, forums, and interactive maps to facilitate communication between stakeholders and project organizers.

By leveraging digital tools and effective communication strategies, the website can become a valuable resource for

stakeholders, residents, and anyone interested in development projects within the area.

Website expansion: Expanding the website to offer additional valuable information as the project progresses and the MAJOR Campus develops is a great way to continue engaging the community and fostering economic and educational opportunities. The panel has these suggestions on how the website could evolve:

- **Skill development programs:** Providing information on skill development programs and initiatives that offer training in fields relevant to upcoming projects can empower residents to acquire the skills needed to participate in local job opportunities. This could include details on training providers, program durations, and specific skills targeted.
- **Job opportunities:** Keeping residents informed about job openings related to the development projects, along with the requirements and application processes, can help match qualified individuals with employment opportunities. Posting job listings and hiring requirements on the website ensures that residents have easy access to these opportunities.
- **Housing developments and availability:** Offering information on new housing developments, including availability, pricing, and amenities, helps meet the housing needs of residents and newcomers to the area. This information could include details on affordable housing options and incentives for residents.

By continuously updating the website with relevant information and resources, Marshall residents and those in the region can stay informed about opportunities for personal and professional growth, as well as enjoy the benefits of a thriving community.

By serving as a platform for public pride, information, trust, and mutual understanding, the MAJOR Campus Hub website can become an invaluable resource that strengthens the fabric of the community and promotes its continued growth and success. The panel recognizes that this will be a notable effort and that there are ongoing efforts to engage with the community and answer their most pressing questions. However, the panel believes it is not possible to communicate too frequently—many times and in multiple ways.

Countywide Approach

MAEDA AND THE CITY OF MARSHALL brought a huge economic investment to the area, which will draw on the broader region's workforce and can contribute to growth and vitality across Calhoun County. Over the next five years, significant resources will be needed to scale up the availability of housing, workforce development, child care, transportation, green space, and emergency services to address the pressure generated by the employment opportunities and increased population associated with Ford BlueOval Battery Park Michigan coming online. To coordinate this work, identify new resource needs, and maximize the benefits of new investments, the panel recommends countywide collaboration across these issue areas. The panel recommends that this effort begin with the Ford BlueOval Battery Park Michigan project, but it will be equally appropriate for the future development on the entire MAJOR Campus as the challenges present now will only become greater as the vision for the MAJOR Campus becomes a reality and the collaboration established in the near term will set the county on the right path for the future.

A variety of committed and capable organizations are currently doing this work and, in some cases, are already collaborating effectively. The panel believes this coordination and collaboration needs to be elevated and directly linked with decision-makers at Ford BlueOval Battery Park Michigan and elected leaders from across Calhoun County, to more effectively share information, direct resources, and move toward collective

goals specifically related to this initial investment at the MAJOR Campus.

The panel recommends creating strategic working groups to address these key topics related to the anticipated increased impact of Ford BlueOval Battery Park Michigan over the next five years, as construction is completed, a workforce is hired, and the plant opens and begins operations. The working groups

will benefit from access to information about the expected workforce, including wages and job types, when available so that they can take the steps needed to respond. The panel believes these working groups will provide a means to quickly prioritize courses of action, keep each entity apprised of individual and mutual progress, and identify resource needs. Members would include relevant individuals from the sponsor team, as well as community groups and public agencies with subject matter expertise that can substantively tackle these issues, implement solutions, and provide an avenue for communication with their constituencies. Representatives from each group would have frequent, recurring meetings with a leadership group of decision-makers from Ford BlueOval Battery Park Michigan and elected leaders from across the county so that decision-makers can be responsive to community concerns and informed about opportunities for collaboration and so that the group members have direct access to needed information.

Keys to Success

These working groups will be effective only if they have basic administrative support to facilitate their participation, as they are each working with minimal resources to begin with. Therefore, the panel recommends funding an administrative staff person to be responsible for scheduling the working groups, taking meeting minutes, and organizing the communications efforts outlined in this report. This role will require an administrative “home” that facilitates collaboration at the county level, and the panel recommends that this effort cover the geography of the entire county, with overarching responsibility for all parties involved.

The panel also recommends the establishment of a countywide leadership team for the work, convened and chaired by the mayor of Marshall and co-chaired by the Ford BlueOval Battery Park Michigan chief executive officer as a key area business leader, with public, private, philanthropic, and nonprofit leaders as members. The panel recommends reassessing the utility of the working groups after five years, to address future trends. The working groups might be refocused on future projects as other growth drivers emerge.

Working Groups

The following working groups and suggested participants are purely recommendations to be used as a starting point for further discussion and decision-making and are not exhaustive.

Transportation

Example members:

- Recently created Multi-City Transit Committee (bus service)
- Michigan Department of Transportation
- Regional planning organization
- Relevant Ford BlueOval Battery Park Michigan and Ford staff
- Local planning and public officials
- Other major regional employers

Recommended next steps: Explore transportation infrastructure needs related to current and future business needs of the MAJOR Campus, including the Ford BlueOval Battery Park Michigan and other industrial and supplier entities, and the impact of increased traffic on Marshall and the surrounding area.

Workforce Development and Child-Care Access

Example members:

- Relevant Ford BlueOval Battery Park Michigan and Ford staff
- Michigan Works!, school districts, education-focused nonprofits
- Local planning and public officials
- Other major employers

Recommended next steps: Continue to work on aligning curriculum and certifications at local educational institutions, inventory child-care resources, and identify potential child-care models for expansion.

Housing

Example members:

- Calhoun County Land Bank
- Local economic development groups
- Michigan State Housing Development Authority (MSHDA)
- Local developers
- Local planning and public officials
- Relevant Ford BlueOval Battery Park Michigan and Ford staff

Recommended next steps: Identify key elements to consider for the development of a housing plan to support the housing needs of the community, including the anticipated workforce.

Green Space

Example members:

- Local groups focused on conservation and open space
- Economic development agencies
- Local planning and public officials
- Relevant Ford BlueOval Battery Park Michigan and Ford staff

Recommended next steps: Design and develop cost estimates to develop distinct segments of the North Country Trail, Bear Creek Trailhead, nature center and museum, Ketchum Park, and others.

Emergency Services

Example members:

- Local fire departments
- Local law enforcement departments
- Local planning and public officials
- Relevant Ford BlueOval Battery Park Michigan and Ford staff

Recommended next steps: Develop and share an emergency response plan specific to Ford BlueOval Battery Park Michigan.

Major Employer Executive Group

Example members:

- Chief executive officers of major local employers

Recommended next steps: Create a forum for sharing best practices for ongoing corporate citizenship and shared challenges in employee retention, training, transportation, child care, and the like. Support continued diversification of industries by addressing broad workforce needs.

The panel strongly recommends that these working groups of cross-regional entities be formalized as soon as possible. In concert, they will be key to maximizing the benefits of each entity's expertise, resources, and ability to implement change in response to the needs of the regional employee base and population.

Potential State-Level Engagement Opportunities

The following recommendations outline a strategic approach for MAEDA, the city of Marshall, and Ford to engage the state of Michigan to effectively support and maximize the benefits of large economic development projects in rural areas, such as Ford BlueOval Battery Park Michigan and the MAJOR Campus and their impact on communities in Calhoun County. The panel recognizes that the recommendations included within this report will require funding and personnel to implement when local and county resources may already be allocated elsewhere. The panel believes that this offers an opportunity to engage with the state to supply resources and can help further frame the efforts of the countywide working groups by emphasizing the need to prioritize critical activities in each topic area and understanding their associated timelines.

Advocate for state involvement in local working groups:

Encourage the state to actively participate in local working groups to make sure that state resources are aligned with community needs. This collaboration ensures that resources are targeted where they are most needed.

Replicate successful models: Promote the replication of successful models such as the Michigan Infrastructure Office Technical Assistance Center and the Michigan Council of Foundations Statewide Equity Fund Strategic Support Pilot. These programs provide valuable assistance to under-resourced communities in accessing state and federal funding to address their needs.

Emphasize long-term, diversified state support: Stress the importance of longer-term state support for megasite communities beyond just financial incentives. This support should focus on enhancing community infrastructure such as child care, transportation, and broadband, to sustain economic growth.

Use Calhoun County as a model: Showcase the effectiveness of state and federal resources in supporting rural economic development by using the development of Ford BlueOval Battery Park Michigan in Calhoun County as a model. Highlight the successful partnerships and outcomes achieved through collaborative efforts.

Build economic development infrastructure: Strengthen the existing economic development infrastructure in Calhoun County by creating a regional economic development organization that encompasses all communities in the county. This unified approach allows for better coordination of resources and services to support businesses and communities.

Augment existing capacity: Consider hiring or contracting certified economic development professionals to augment existing capacity at a regional level. This ensures that there are sufficient resources and expertise available to support economic development initiatives effectively.

Develop requests for proposals: Develop requests for proposals to secure additional support until permanent staffing arrangements can be made. This allows for temporary assistance to address immediate needs while long-term solutions are being implemented.

Explore a partnership or merger: Explore the possibility of forming a partnership, coalition, or merger of existing economic development organizations in the region. Consolidation can lead to greater efficiency, resource pooling, and comprehensive support for economic development efforts.

Focus on county-level capacity building: Shift focus from solely city-level to county-level capacity building to ensure that economic development initiatives are comprehensive and inclusive of all communities within the county.

By implementing these recommendations, the communities in Calhoun County can adopt a more holistic approach to economic development, leveraging state resources effectively and serving as an example for the state and its ability to support rural communities and maximize the benefits of large-scale projects like Ford BlueOval Battery Park Michigan. This approach not only fosters economic growth, but also builds resilient communities that are equipped to handle future challenges and opportunities.



Land Use and Character

MARSHALL AND THE REGION OFFER A HIGH QUALITY OF LIFE that is cherished by its residents and visitors. It is the panel's observation that the addition of industrial uses to largely rural, agricultural-based communities can change resident values, impact quintessential scenic vistas, and elevate land values such that farming and ranching are no longer viable on the land. Marshall's history, agriculture, rural setting, active downtown, and shady neighborhoods are enviable and need to be protected and celebrated. At the same time, Marshall and the region need to look forward to both timeless and innovative approaches that will create the frameworks, processes, and capacity to grow appropriately into the future in ways that will enable it to take full advantage of the opportunity created by efforts to promote and protect its community, and the new opportunities associated with the MAJOR Campus development. This is a moment in time when Marshall and the region can reorganize for a highly prosperous future, and one that can elevate its already enviable sense of place and quality of life.

Overall Vision

To frame its recommendations, the panel developed an overall vision for its approach to land use and the preservation of character throughout the community:

Marshall and the region have an opportunity to build upon existing physical infrastructure to support existing residents, new residents, and visitors in ways that preserve existing community character and history, promote

inclusivity, expand quality-of-life opportunities, elevate image and brand, and point toward a new and exciting future. Part of this vision includes building additional capacity to provide best-in-class community services, such as education, child care, health care, and community support services that meet the needs of its citizens.

Outlined in this section are goals to help realize this vision, accounting for existing assets and potential challenges, and

strategies to consider moving forward. These are grouped into the following categories:

- Public Realm
 - Streets
 - Open space
- The MAJOR Campus
- Downtown
- Historic Neighborhoods
- Housing and New Neighborhoods

Within these subsections are opportunities to invest in the community in ways that reflect the commitment to enhancing and preserving the historic small town and rural character in the Marshall area as the MAJOR Campus is developed. The panel recommends that identifying and investing in these visible signs of progress take priority as they are essential to demonstrating this commitment.

Public Realm—Streets and Open Space

Goal for streets: Create design and development standards for the public realm that promote walking, biking, social interaction, connectivity, and social interaction and implement them in existing neighborhoods that do not have them, and in new neighborhoods and districts that will be developed in the future. Streets and gathering spaces should reflect the quality, character, and scale of historic Marshall, while also integrating innovative approaches that promote cultural, social, and environmental sustainability and unique identities from district to district.

Assets and challenges:

- Marshall and the region can invest in the transportation grid to promote transportation choices so that people of all ages and abilities can travel comfortably and safely, while supporting the role of the streets as visual faces of the community. The panel recommends favoring “complete streets” that include bicycle and pedestrian facilities, parking, lighting, street trees, safe travel speeds, and a balance between car travel and other forms of travel.
- Overengineering roadways, leaning away from pedestrians toward trucks and car convenience, and not considering the elements of the street that promote

character and sense of place can lead Marshall and the region into a future that has less character and sense of place than it currently enjoys.

- Downtown Michigan Avenue is challenged by fast travel speeds around the large traffic circle, and truck traffic that upsets the ambiance of the downtown environment.
- Michigan Avenue traveling west from downtown Marshall negatively affects the area’s sense of place and pedestrian safety:
 - It houses stand-alone, pad-oriented commercial uses, strip center retail, and other uses that are located behind large parking lots.
 - Curb cuts promote a discontinuous sidewalk pattern and safety issues.
 - There are no bicycle facilities, and the road is not planned for a future that might include public transportation.
 - Future road design may pose more challenges, with more and wider travel lanes sized for truck traffic, and without streetscape improvements focused on placemaking.

Recommended strategies:

General

- Create a signage and wayfinding program that highlights the bike and trail network, showing the links that connect the city to the greenway, and the city to other assets and destinations.
- Seek opportunities to work with the Michigan Department of Transportation to effect the realignment of Michigan Avenue to support the rural character and through traffic in the historic downtown.
- The rural roads that surround Marshall and connect the region are beautiful place makers, providing a counterpoint to the urban streets downtown and in the neighborhoods. These rural roads should be protected as much as the downtown environment so that routes between cities and towns retain their rural experience, scenography, tree cover, and road design. The panel recommends recognizing the powerful difference between rural roads and urban streets and creating design standards for the future growth of rural roads (should it be required) that will retain their rural character.

Techniques to do so include using soft shoulders, retaining an environmental curtain on road edges, retaining agricultural landscapes, not allowing curb cuts, and establishing large setbacks.

- Create design and engineering standards that include provisions for complete streets. Consider adopting the American Association of State and Highway Transportation Officials Urban Street Standards or similar standards. Lead an effort to have the Michigan Department of Transportation adopt complete streets standards. The panel notes that the department is currently considering and gathering input on complete streets.
- Create bicycle trails plans that link bicycle infrastructure across the community with public gathering spaces, amenities, and other destinations.
- Share street standards with the region so that there is consistency from place to place.

Downtown streets

Recognizing that, as in other towns in the region, downtown Marshall is the heart of the community:

- Prioritize walkability in downtown.
- Establish a truck route that removes trucks from downtown, except for those serving businesses located downtown.
- Use parking as a physical buffer between the roadway and the pedestrian activity zone, prioritizing the pedestrian experience.

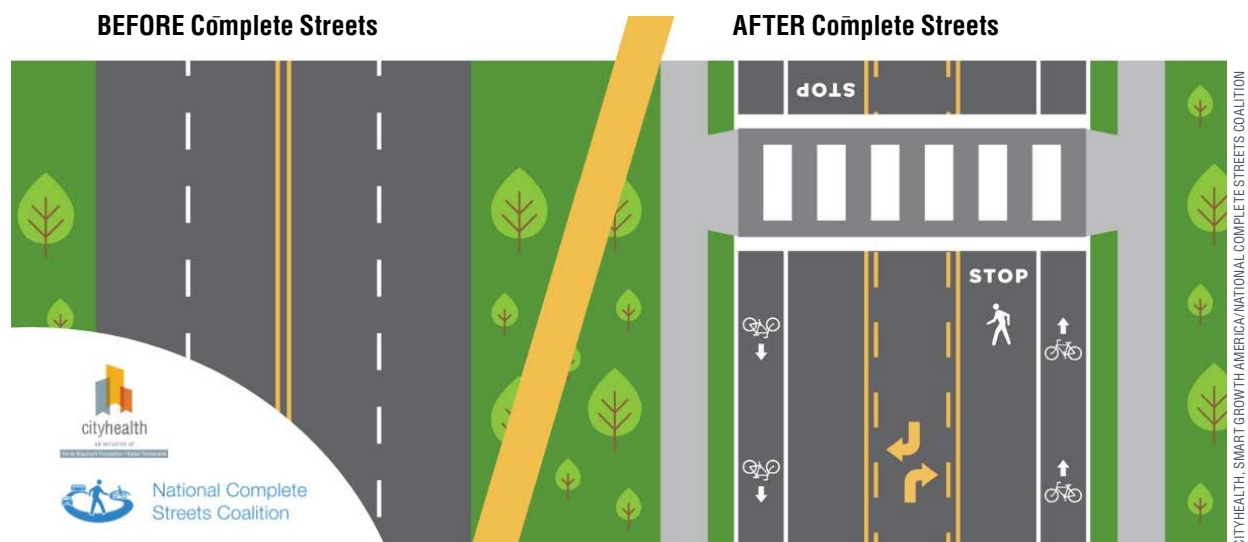
- Establish speed limits at 25 mph within downtown.
- Continue funding the effort to provide sidewalks on as many streets as possible across the community.

Commercial Corridor/Michigan Avenue

- Provide complete streets, with separated pedestrian and bike facilities physically separated from the roadway with a green buffer.
- Create a corridor plan that addresses land use, the public realm, and urban design for Michigan Avenue West so that new development and redevelopment follows a pattern that supports the public realm and sense of place in Marshall. Creating street standards that include elements of complete streets will enhance living and moving around Marshall and the region, and will elevate the value of Marshall's neighborhoods and downtown.
- Create a landscape and bicycle and pedestrian plan for Michigan Avenue West improvements.

Rural roads

- Protect the rural views. Viewsheds in the region are characterized by open pastoral views and large maturing trees. The natural cadence of open and enclosed views is beautiful and should be preserved.
- Create a memorandum of understanding for maintenance and funding of sidewalks and trails in the townships.



Before-and-after illustration of the implementation of a complete streets concept that includes defined areas for pedestrians, bicycles, and vehicles.



Maintaining rural viewsheds when possible is essential to maintaining the character of the Marshall area as it grows.



BETH POOVEY

Goal for open space: Marshall’s and the region’s parks, trails, and open spaces can provide an interwoven system of green infrastructure that weaves together the rural landscape, the small-town character, the river, and the communities, providing a rich natural resource that protects the heart of the community while enhancing and protecting natural assets.

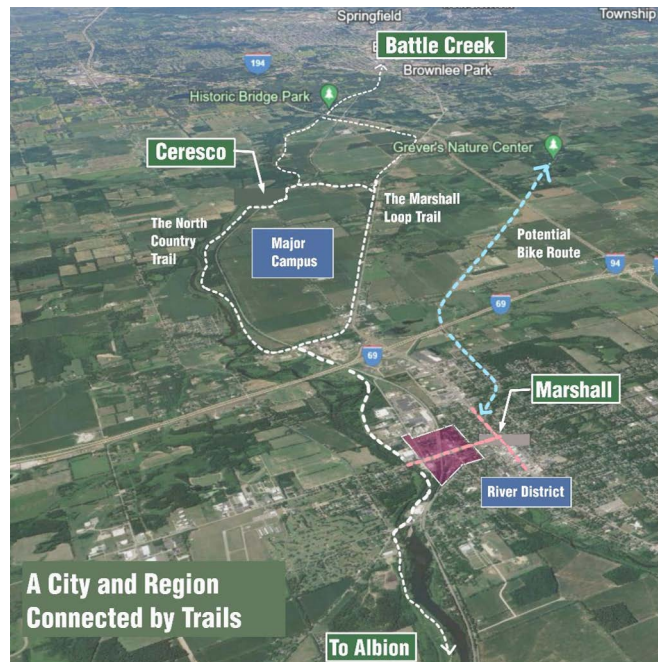
Assets and challenges: Marshall’s parks and trails are undermaintained. There is an opportunity to elevate the community character that everyone is so proud of through a larger investment in the public open space to connect key assets and increase opportunities for community gathering.

Recommended strategies:

- Adopt and coordinate the effort to build a connection to the North Country Trail, a regional greenway/trail system that connects regional assets such as downtowns, historic sites, and key bodies of water such as the Kalamazoo River.
- Increase the maintenance of existing parks and trails.
- Brand all the public open spaces through a palette of quality materials (outlined by design guidelines), signage, and wayfinding.
- Provide dedicated staff to plan, seek funding, maintain, and activate parks and greenways, as well as a regional coordinator to help build a regional vision of connectivity.
- Plan and adopt a greenway loop connecting the downtown, through the redeveloped area along the river

and an expanded riverwalk, into the MAJOR Campus, the community of Ceresco, and Bear Creek, and looping back along the redeveloped Michigan Avenue into downtown.

- Adopt the national standard of every household having access to public open space within a 10-minute walk, and through this effort address sidewalk connectivity and access to trails.
- Develop Bear Creek into a community gathering space with multiple uses such as a community park.



Greenway loop concept to connect key regional trails, landmarks, and recreational amenities.

JULI

- Along the Kalamazoo River and its tributaries, use natural protection and linear amenities such as trails.
- As the heart of the community, downtown Marshall needs a gathering space that can host large events such as the farmers market, concerts, community festivals, and other opportunities to come together. It should function daily as the central location for play, respite, and social activities.
- Coordinate with regional partners to plan for a future regional facility to ensure existing and new residents have access to regional recreational facilities such as fields, courts, indoor recreation, and potentially swimming.
- Support Ceresco in its efforts to protect its unique character, scale, environment, and sense of place.
- Explore the use of conservation easements funded by the farm bill to help preserve agricultural lands.

The MAJOR Campus

Goal: Create a setting for the campus that fits the rural character by establishing a landscape program, site design guidelines, and engineering guidelines that promote environmental sensitivity and rural character.

Assets and challenges:

- Development of the MAJOR Campus is in its early stages.
- The MAJOR Campus is surrounded primarily by rural land.
- Appropriate environmental protections need to be in place.
- Planned infrastructure, such as stormwater ponds, can serve multiple purposes.

HICKORY, NORTH CAROLINA: INVESTING IN PUBLIC OPEN SPACE TO ELEVATE A DECLINING COMMUNITY

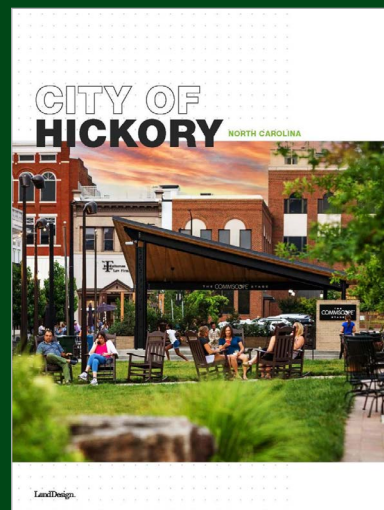
Hickory was losing population. Historically, this community is known as the furniture manufacturing center of the Southeast. Everyone grew up making furniture or in the furniture industry, which eventually declined and went elsewhere. The residents and leaders of Hickory knew they had to act, or the community would continue to decline. They wanted to preserve their mill and furniture-making history while positioning themselves for a future that embraced new industry to attract and retain a diverse mix of employers and residents.

This effort began with a brand: “Life. Well crafted.” This brand spoke to their history but also to the vision for their future. The community then looked at how investments in the public realm could be a tool to spur growth. The city developed an Inspiring Spaces Plan that focused on improving public assets to make them regional destinations, connect them through a trail system, and ensure that all investments supported the brand concept and were authentic to Hickory. The vision was to connect the downtown to the river (an overlooked asset), reinvest in the streetscapes, prioritize pedestrians and bikes and trails, add wider sidewalks, and reinvent the downtown park.

Community engagement was a key component throughout the process. Hickory established community committee groups for each of the projects. The groups were

composed of residents, town staff, and community leaders. This led to a groundswell of support and the passing of a \$40 million bond package that funded the projects and matched grant funds. The community also formed a nonprofit group, Friends of Hickory, that raised its own money and built a project. Since the completion of these efforts, Hickory has attracted more than 1,400 new jobs and a State University satellite campus.

For more information, visit [Life Well Crafted Brand and Partnerships Information | City of Hickory \(hickorync.gov\)](https://www.hickorync.gov/life-well-crafted-brand-and-partnerships-information).



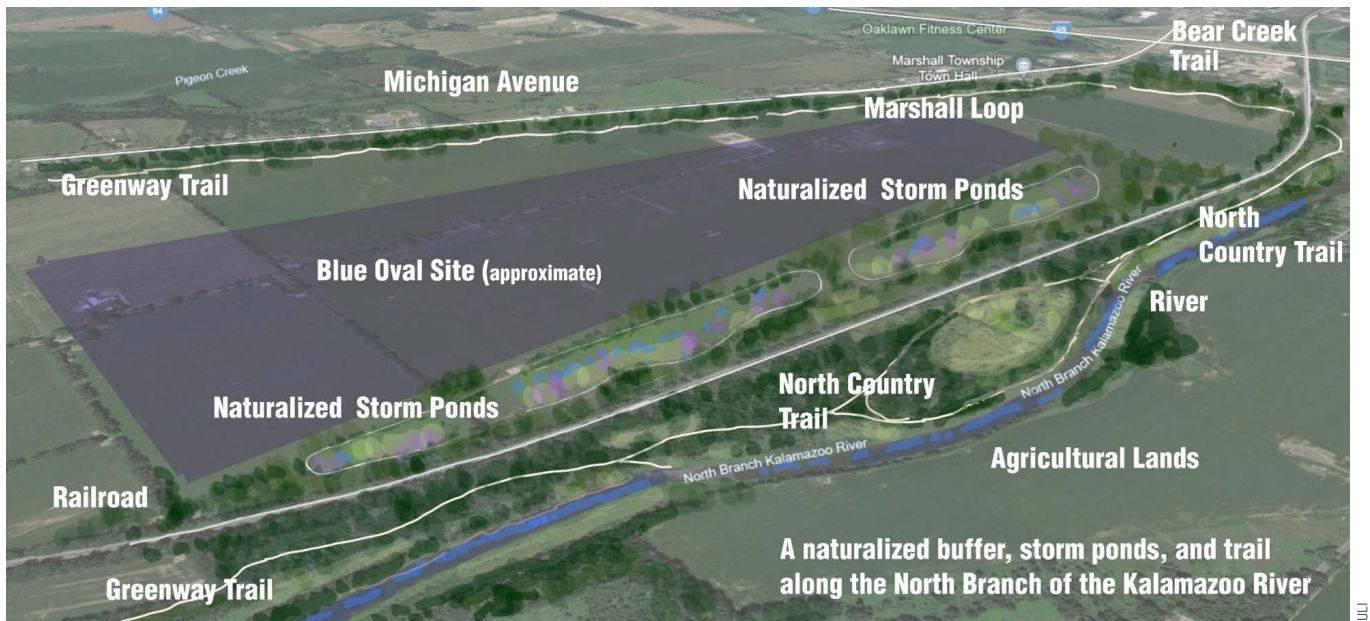


Illustration of the MAJOR Campus and its planned and potential natural and recreational assets.

Recommended strategies:

- Elevate environmental protection above requirements.
- Use the Sustainable SITES Initiative (SITES) or Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design (LEED) best practices to inspire design and development standards for the MAJOR Campus.
- Design stormwater ponds to be an amenity, create site character, and support habitat.
- Create a landscape for the MAJOR Campus that reflects the rural landscape and environmental responsibility.
- Consider the promotion of a powerful story for the MAJOR Campus that is about environmental responsibility and character or another meaningful theme, such as the use of conservation easements.

Historic Neighborhoods

Goal: Allow and enable Marshall to grow and thrive into the future in ways that protect its value, character, and sense of place attributable to its historic neighborhoods and assets.

Assets and challenges: The historic neighborhoods of Marshall reflect a strong foundation of shared history within the community. The historic properties are not only residential but also institutional and commercial structures; however, there are limited protections and guidelines to support the preservation of these community assets.

Recommended strategies:

- Expand the historic district as needed to ensure that contributing areas are included within protection zones.
- Consider changing zoning within overlay districts so that the zoning for historic areas supports the existing character.
- Identify historic streetscape and open-space elements that contribute to the character of the historic neighborhoods.
- Prepare and adopt design guidelines to support the preservation of and reinvestment in structures and open-space features.
- Identify funding mechanisms that support reinvestment in historic neighborhoods and their structures.
- Continue to support and expand community programming, including tours, walks, and events.

Housing and New Neighborhoods

Goal: Promote housing types that create diversity, promote affordability, and enhance the community character while accommodating the demand that the MAJOR Campus will create. Embrace the new demand for housing with smart growth tools, and view it as an opportunity to attract new energy, families, young adults, and diversity.

Assets and challenges:

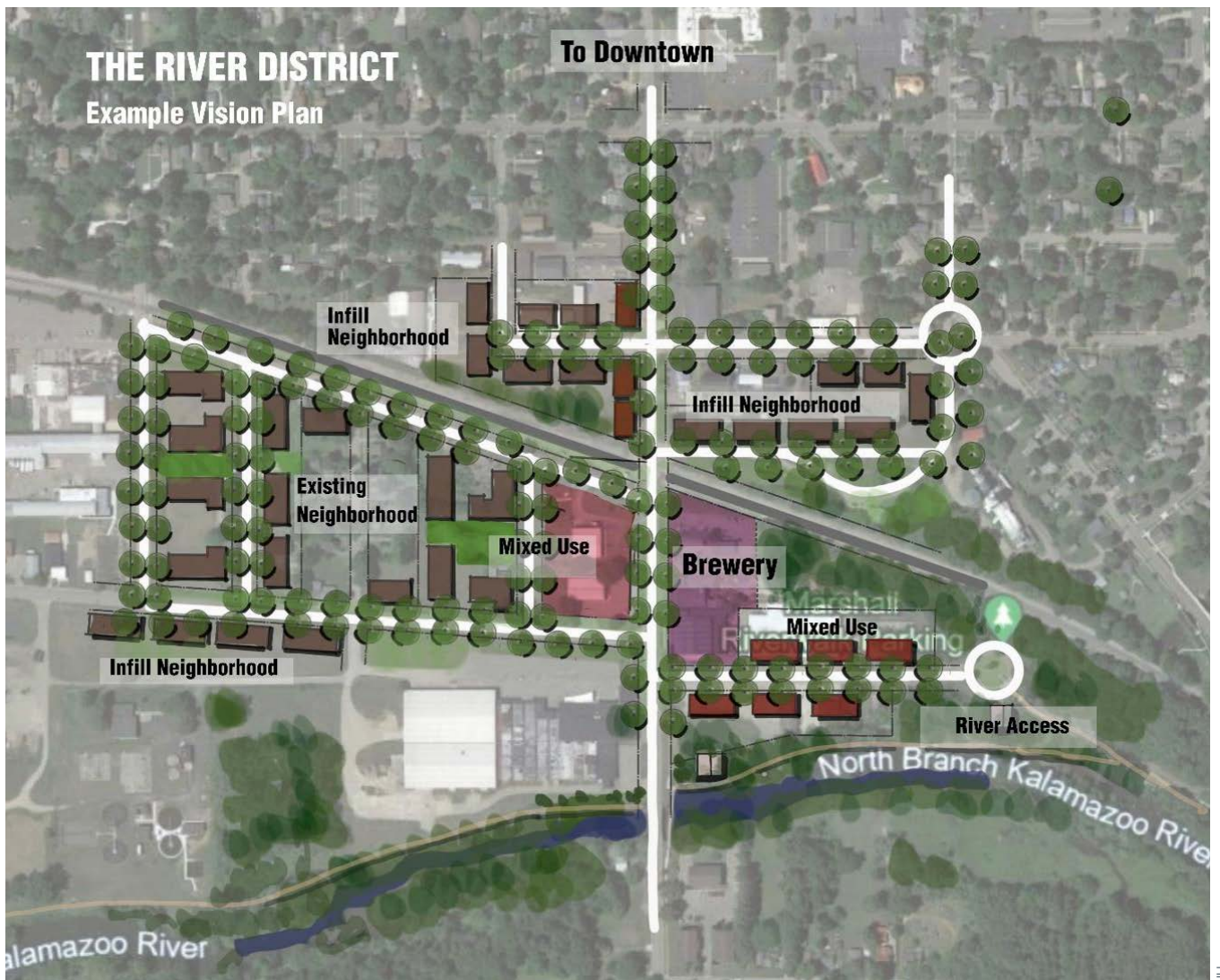
- Marshall faces challenges in delivering housing supply to meet current demand, which is small. The population has been in decline, which has affected the development of new housing units.
- The development of the MAJOR Campus will accelerate the need for housing of all types, especially in the “missing middle.”
- Housing also presents an opportunity for the region to participate in the prosperity posed by the development of the campus. Neighboring Albion to the east and other communities, for instance, have land that could be put to residential use, which would provide support for the growth and revitalization of downtown, and offer a different living experience than in Marshall.
- Participation with townships and towns in regional coordination will be necessary to provide housing and neighborhoods of high quality, promote the dispersal of housing across the region, and help deliver the housing supply needed for the campus and future growth.
- Decisions to extend water and sewer lines should be carefully considered, as they can impact growth management. The panel recommends referring to smart growth principles in determining when and where to extend existing infrastructure.

Recommended strategies:

- Encourage housing developments that promote walkability, diversity, sense of place, and quality. These developments can add to the tapestry of living experiences that already exist, while also anticipating future market desires and demands. To promote neighborhoods of high quality and character, efforts should be made to do the following:
 - Ensure homes are located on complete streets, with easy access to parks, open spaces, public services, jobs, and shopping.
 - Compose neighborhoods with diverse housing types, densities, building architecture, and price points.

- Ensure high levels of street and trail connectivity that promote biking and walking.
- Consider new districts that enable growth that supports unique living experiences. For instance, small area plans could be considered for Marshall’s River District to promote a new and funky neighborhood that caters to younger and active residents and visitors. District plans should be created that achieve the following:
 - Expand pedestrian and bike connectivity between open spaces, neighborhoods, and downtown.
 - Provide unique living experiences and an identifiable image.
 - Cater to both existing and new residents.
 - Offer new destinations within the city, without negatively affecting the downtown.
 - Move the city into the future positively and with added value.
 - Potentially offer new development and land use standards to best fit with the type of community Marshall intends to become.
 - Promote mixed-use and form-based approaches.
- Several projects in various stages of entitlement will add units that will respond to pent-up demand, as well as new demand from the MAJOR Campus and future industrial or commercial development. Continue efforts to create pathways for those developers to begin the process of developing those units to meet near-term demand, and to allow the city to build the capacity to plan appropriately for new development opportunities.
- Actively participate in strategies that will best help to maintain housing affordability for as many residents as possible:
 - Allow for accessory dwelling units that will provide long-term rental opportunities or space for extended family members to live on existing properties.

- Expand and continue to support and invest in the Calhoun Land Bank, to purchase vacant land and redevelopment sites to create housing for the “missing middle.”
- Create a revolving loan fund and financial assistance for first-time homeowners.
- Develop incentives for lot consolidation, preapproved building plans, and tax abatement, as well as other incentives to promote infill housing.
- Coordinate housing-related issues across the region to make sure that there are no gaps in providing housing that meets all market segments in highly functioning neighborhoods.
- Coordinate with MSHDA to explore state resources to support affordable and attainable housing, including low-income housing tax credits and the Housing Tax Increment Financing Program.
- Explore public/private partnerships to ensure Marshall’s new neighborhoods support the character valued by the community.



Example vision plan of a River District that offers a neighborhood experience that caters to younger and active residents and visitors.

Downtown

Goal: Protect, curate, and promote Marshall's downtown so that it continues to thrive with the MAJOR Campus development and remains a downtown that is a friendly neighbor to surrounding residential areas, while supporting a mix of uses that allow for living, working, and shopping.

Assets and challenges: Marshall's downtown is thriving, with walkable, vibrant, and active streets. It is the heart of the community with unique and local businesses, blending seamlessly into historic residential neighborhoods.

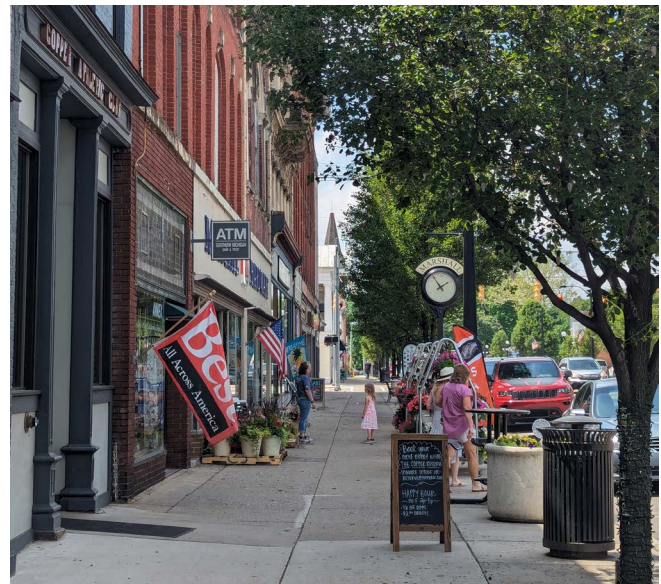
Recommended strategies:

- Create a Downtown Resiliency Plan to ensure that downtown businesses have the support, tenant mix, public realm, and branding that will allow them to continue to thrive.
- Include consideration for the potential impacts of new commercial and retail development in other places, such as in Marshall Township.
- Facilitate grants and other incentives to refresh downtown building facades and encourage investment in properties and infill development.

- Create design standards for new downtown construction that support the existing architectural character.
- Create strong and safe pedestrian and bike links from existing and new neighborhoods and districts into downtown.
- Continue to promote residential uses downtown.
- Manage through-truck traffic so that it avoids downtown.
- Increase the use of traffic calming measures and prioritize pedestrian activity over vehicular traffic.
- Maintain parking options that enhance the walkability and vibrancy of downtown.
- Seek an opportunity to create a community gathering place downtown. The Brooks Memorial fountain serves as a visual heart but is not easily accessible for community-wide events.
- Provide and enhance pedestrian and bike access to the riverfront that is well demarcated, safe, and separated from traffic.



Thriving and walkable downtown Marshall.



BETH POOVEY



Implementation

THIS REPORT OFFERS A RANGE OF RECOMMENDATIONS that reflect the panel's experience and what they learned during their visit to Marshall. Some recommendations can be advanced in the near term, but others may take months or years to plan and execute. While the panel stands by its recommendations, an important part of the implementation process will be to further evaluate all the recommendations to determine their relative priority, and the availability of staff and funding resources for implementation.

The panel recommends that MAEDA, the City of Marshall, and Ford take the time to carefully identify priorities and develop a timeline for the recommendations within this report. During this period, the panel recommends that efforts to build relationships and trust among all stakeholder groups are continued and enhanced and that initial steps are taken to organize and convene the countywide working groups. Most important, during this period, focus should be placed on frequent and consistent communication to all community

members, throughout the city, county, and state, about ongoing work and activities associated with the Ford BlueOval Battery Park Michigan project and the MAJOR Campus. Prioritizing the recommendations and developing a timeline for those priority initiatives will be extremely valuable and will serve to ensure all involved parties are in agreement and are working in partnership to successfully achieve the vision for a strong, vibrant City of Marshall and Calhoun County.



Conclusion

THE PANEL'S OBSERVATIONS OF THE CITY OF MARSHALL were strongly positive. Residents' passion for the area's historic significance, the agricultural and rural character, the neighborhood and family orientation, and the peaceful serenity and natural beauty were all evident to the panel.

The panel was equally impressed with the early undertakings and progress on many aspects of the MAJOR Campus and its possible effects on the area. The panel considers that thus far those involved in the analysis and planning are thinking broadly and are being methodical and cautious in their deliberations and decision-making, and it commends this approach. The MAJOR Campus is a significant undertaking for any community, and it fully warrants very careful consideration.

The investment of Ford in Ford BlueOval Battery Park Michigan and the anticipated development of the MAJOR Campus create an opportunity to breathe new life into the local economy while

preserving the attributes that make Marshall unique. Vaclav Havel, the first president of the Czech Republic, once said:

"The future is not a result of choices among alternative paths offered by the present, but a place that is created—created first in mind and will, created next in activity. The future is not some place we are going to but one we are creating."

The panel believes that by working together it is possible for Marshall to create that future, ensuring that the community remains a vibrant, thriving place for generations to come.

About the Panel

Lynn Thurber

Panel Chair
Hamilton, Montana

Lynn Thurber serves as the chair of the board of JLL Income Property Trust and is a trustee of Acadia Realty Trust. Previously, at LaSalle Investment Management, the global real estate investment management subsidiary of JLL, she served as chief executive officer from 2000 to 2006 and chair from 2007 to 2017. Her early career was in Morgan Stanley's corporate finance and real estate divisions, followed by leading Alex Brown Kleinwort Benson Realty Advisors as chief executive officer.

Thurber has been actively involved with ULI for more than 20 years, serving as the global chair from 2013 to 2015 and a global governing trustee from 2004 to the present. She was instrumental in the founding of ULI's Center for Sustainability and Economic Performance and chaired its Advisory Board for a number of years. She has served on four ULI Advisory Services panels.

Thurber serves on the Bitter Root Land Trust Board and has served on its Executive, Finance, Governance and Strategic Planning Committees since 2016. Rural Ravalli County, where Hamilton is located, faces significant changes with rapid population growth. Thurber is committed to the Land Trust's mission "to partner with landowners and our community to conserve clean water, wildlife habitat, and working farms and ranches in and around the Bitterroot Valley for present and future generations" while supporting economic growth and places for community members to live, work, and play.

Thurber holds a master's of business administration from Harvard Business School and a bachelor's degree from Wellesley College.

Nicki Hellenkamp

Boise, Idaho

Nicki Olivier Hellenkamp was born and raised in Boise, Idaho, and has worked in the affordable housing world since her first job out of college as a volunteer coordinator for a housing and homeless services provider in Philadelphia. After graduating with her master's in social work from the University of Washington, she served as a policy manager for the Housing Development Consortium Seattle-King County, where she helped local governments with analyzing and advancing policies related to affordable housing development, and as a senior civil rights analyst for the Seattle Office for Civil Rights, where much of her work focused on allegations of housing-related civil rights violations. Hellenkamp has worked for the city of Boise as the mayor's housing adviser since July 2021, conducting research and analysis on housing issues, developing strategic policy recommendations, and maintaining collaborative partnerships across all levels of government and the community to ensure the implementation of effective housing policies.

Stacey Mosley

Philadelphia, Pennsylvania

Stacey Mosley is the director of research at Brandywine Realty Trust, providing data-driven market analysis, development support, oversight of the organization's Neighborhood Engagement Initiatives, and development of strategies to take on emerging industry trends. She has spent her career at the intersection of data and real estate, developing solutions to efficiently identify redevelopment and leasing opportunities. After studying manufacturing and design engineering at Northwestern University, Mosley applied her interest in products and process at the city of Philadelphia, working on both the Vacant Property Strategy and the Open Data Initiative before starting her own property technology company, Stepwise.

She is a board member of the Economy League of Greater Philadelphia, the co-chair of the Women's Leadership Initiative

at ULI Philadelphia, a member of NAIOP's national Visionaries program, and a regular speaker at Drexel University, Temple University, and the University of Pennsylvania for courses in urban planning and spatial analysis.

Beth Poovey

Charlotte, North Carolina

Beth Poovey is a principal at LandDesign and the firm's director of greenways, parks, and open space. She leads a multidisciplinary studio that specializes in public open space and recreation amenities. As an advocate for public and private investment in attainable green infrastructure, she believes the open-space experience should begin with the first step out the door and include networks of multimodal streetscapes, neighborhood parks, and recreational amenities all within walking, biking, or scootering distance. Combining her background bachelor's degree in sociology and anthropology with landscape architecture, Poovey strives to capture the spirit of a community and influence the vision of a memorable open-space experience that aligns with local goals and values.

Joe Reidy

Columbus, Ohio

For more than 35 years, Joe Reidy has been working with buyers, sellers, developers, and lenders throughout the United States on environmental and development issues associated with their projects. He began working with Wagenbrenner Development (now Thrive Companies) as its outside environmental attorney in 2003 on the Harrison Park project in Columbus, Ohio, and has been part of its brownfield development team ever since.

In 2016, he joined Wagenbrenner as its general counsel and vice president of development. In 2021, he transitioned to a part-time role with Thrive Companies as its director of environmental services and vice president of development. He is a member of

the Advisory Board of the Ohio State University Center for Real Estate and past chair and governance chair of ULI Columbus.

Reidy received his bachelor of science in biology from the University of Cincinnati in 1977 and a master of arts in zoology in 1979 from DePauw University. He then worked as an aquatic biologist at the Ohio Environmental Protection Agency in Columbus until 1985. In 1985, he received his juris doctorate from Capital University Law School.

Sue Southon

Bloomfield Hills, Michigan

Sue Southon is a development professional, trainer, and strategic planner with more than 30 years of experience in community, economic development, and affordable housing production. At ICF, she works in both the Community Development and Housing Division and the Disaster Management Division. She has managed technical assistance engagements for the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) in states including Michigan, where she provided senior expertise on program design, organizational structure and staffing requirements, budget development, regulatory compliance, and project underwriting.

She has aided major disaster recovery initiatives including in Louisiana, New Jersey, the commonwealth of Pennsylvania, the U.S. Virgin Islands, the city of Houston, California, and Oregon. She has served as a HUD technical assistance provider to Community Development Block Grant recipients and has helped grantees directly to develop a variety of disaster recovery programs and community development programs. This support includes guidance on creation of organizational structure, staffing projections, and monitoring and compliance protocols. She is recognized as a subject matter expert in redevelopment, program design, policies, procedures, document templates and checklists, and provision of technical assistance with regulatory issues. Southon garnered this expertise through years of working with states and localities where she served as a strategic adviser to local governments, community

development organizations, and private developers. She served as a trainer for the International Economic Development Council, Professional Certification Program, the Economic Development Institute, and the National Association of Workforce Boards.

Glenn Walters

Asheville, North Carolina

Glenn Walters has more than 35 years of experience planning neighborhoods, communities, towns, and counties as a planner, landscape architect, and developer. He has led projects internationally and in all corners of the United States and has collaborated and honed his process with the brightest, most innovative minds in the real estate, design, and planning professions. While with Design Workshop, he was a leader in new community planning, small area planning, corridor planning, and comprehensive planning. While there, he learned that great and lasting places sit at the intersection of landscape, culture, environment, placemaking, and economy. He has practiced during the various eras of thought related to master-planned communities, new urbanism, green urbanism, “agri-hoods,” and transit-oriented development. This allows him a broad and open minded point of view. Mostly, his work celebrates and makes visible the cultural and environmental attributes that residents cherish and that make places unique.

John Watt

Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania

John Watt is a senior managing director of the Pittsburgh office. With more than 35 years in real estate, Watt has experience in residential and commercial construction as well as extensive experience in valuation and market analysis across a broad geographical area and wide array of property types. Clients include lending institutions, developers, legal firms, nonprofit organizations, private individuals, and insurance companies.

Watt specializes in land development, vacant land, multifamily (market rate and affordable) and special purpose assets. He also has experience in retail, industrial, and office facilities. His appraisal experience includes assignments for financing, right-of-way acquisition, fair value, market analysis and consulting, litigation, and estate planning. Watt holds degrees in political science and public policy from Bethany College (West Virginia) and the University of Pittsburgh and the MAI designation from The Appraisal Institute.



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