



MAIN  
STREET  
*Now*

APRIL 13-15, 2026

TULSA  
OKLAHOMA



# Thriving Through Construction: A Main Street Organization's Survival Guide

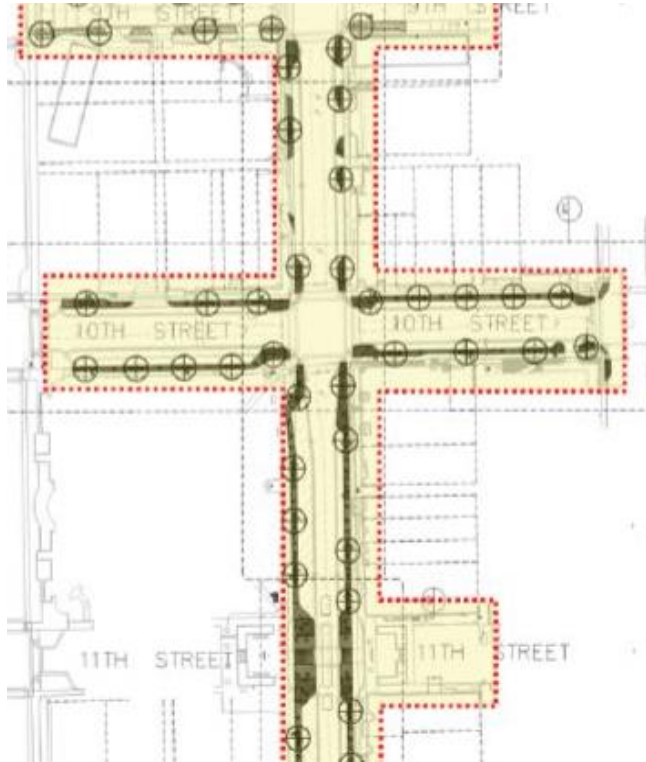
**Brooke Prouty (Cave)**

**Business Specialist, Main Street Iowa**



# What phase are YOU in?

## Planning



## Preparing Businesses

**UPTOWN IS GETTING AN UPGRADE**

**7TH AVENUE IMPROVEMENTS**  
Reconstruction, Streetscape & Plaza Project



**PROJECT OVERVIEW**

The 7th Avenue Reconstruction, Streetscape and Plaza project replaces underground infrastructure that is over 100 years old, and improves walkability, accessibility and overall safety in the historic Uptown Marion District.

This two year project is separated into five separate phases. Phase 1 began on July 13, 2021 and should be substantially completed by Fall 2021. Phases 2-5 will occur in the 2022 construction season with a tentative project completion date set for Fall 2022.

Phase 1 includes the complete reconstruction of 7th Avenue and streetscape improvements between 10th Street and 12th Street, 12th Street between 6th Avenue and 7th Avenue and a portion of the North Plaza.

**MORE INFORMATION**  
[cityofmarion.org/7thAveStreetscape](http://cityofmarion.org/7thAveStreetscape)



**City of Marion**  
LOWA



## Mid Construction





Positive attitudes from leadership and businesses makes all the difference.

“But isn’t it going to be great!”



# Streetscape Planning with City

- City & Main Street Partnership
  - Input, bid process
  - Ex. alley improvements



# Streetscape Planning with City

- Defined Roles
- Funding
- Added Position
- Chain of Command
- Protects Organization

## Uptown Marion Business Liaison Job Description

Title: Business Liaison, Uptown Marion 7<sup>th</sup> Avenue Streetscape Project

Reports to: City Manager

Status: Independent Contract

### Purpose of the Position

The Uptown Marion Business Liaison serves as the Main Street Reconstruction Task Force Liaison working cooperatively with the City of Marion, contractors, subcontractors, businesses, property owners and the community. The Uptown Marion Business Liaison is an advocate for the business community and works primarily to represent the best interests of Uptown Marion Main Street district during the streetscape reconstruction project. The Liaison also serves as a point person for project information and forwarding issues.

### Job Functions

The Uptown Marion Business Liaison will report directly to the City Manager. Services to be provided, at levels approved and as directed by the City Manager and the Marion Chamber President, in consultation with the Uptown Marion Main Street Advisors, include:

1. Understand the project, construction sequencing, and schedule.
2. Establish a positive, synergistic and cooperative working relationship with the City of Marion, the contractor, businesses, property owners, residents and other involved parties.
3. Establish and maintain an on-site presence throughout the course of the project.
4. Coordinate the setup of a project office to provide a central location for businesses, property owners and residents to obtain project related information and discuss project related matters.
5. Respond promptly to inquiries and requests for assistance.
6. Work to resolve business and public concerns in a fair and equitable manner to minimize construction impacts while assisting to facilitate construction progress to remain on schedule.
7. Establish and maintain frequent contact with district businesses and property owners with bi-weekly meetings. To the extent practicable, work with business and property owners to identify and resolve logistical issues that could potentially cause unreasonable business hardships or disruptions.
8. Establish a pro-active public relations approach that fosters communication, understanding and develops a trust between the parties involved. Present business and building owner feedback to the City Project Lead.
9. Attend and offer assistance at Technical Committee and project-related meetings.
10. With the City Project Lead, assist in the coordination of Technical Committee activities and help manage the implementation of Technical Committee projects and activities.
11. Attend and participate in coordination meetings including the pre-construction conference and scheduled progress meetings with representatives of the contractor and City of Marion Project Lead.
12. Monitor the project schedule and related technical issues. Advise the City, Technical Committee, businesses, property owners, organizations, media and others of construction progress and upcoming activities. Produce a regular progress report to be disseminated to the business community and other involved parties.
13. Maintain a positive attitude to the extent that others can see and feel the goal and opportunity from which district stakeholders will benefit.
14. Coordinate and staff information booths at local events as requested. Develop FAQ sheets to be used by volunteers, ambassadors, and businesses.

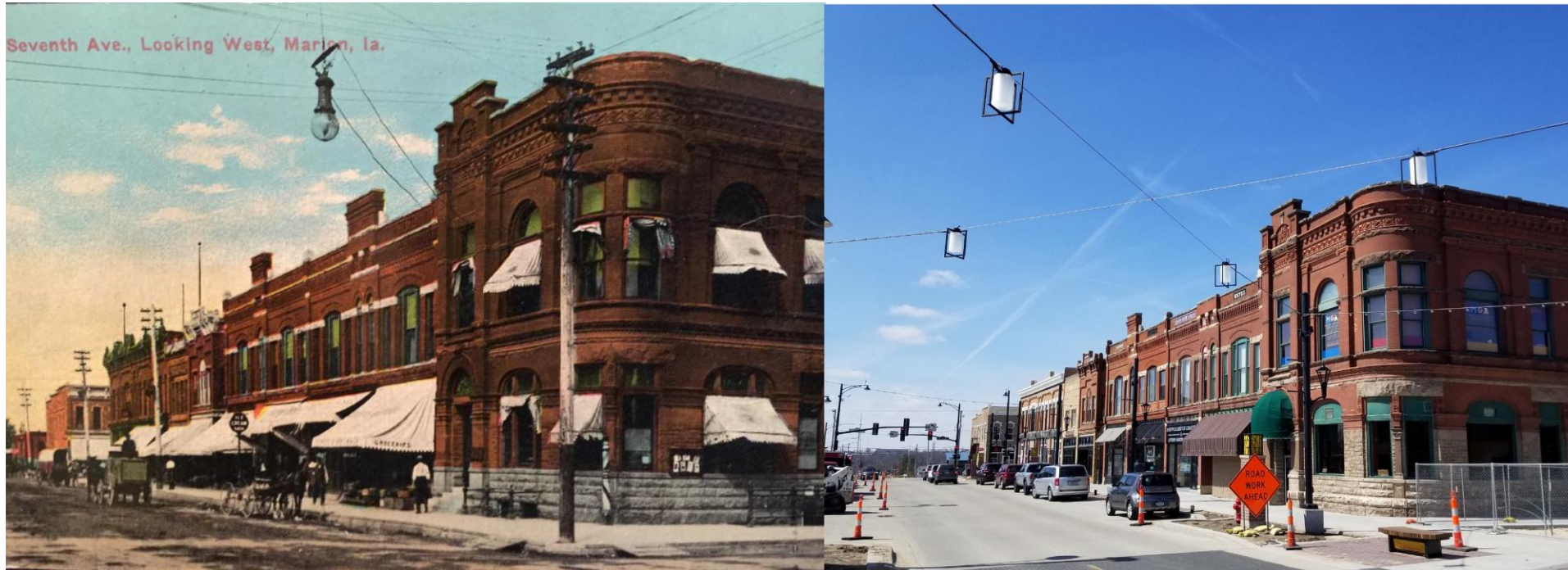
# Streetscape Planning with City

- Past Construction Practices, Signage, Marketing
- Phasing (Feedback?)
  - Timeline Incentives/Repercussions
- Engineer Plans Review
- Archeology Approval
- Lighting & Safety
- Parking Plan
- Communications Plan
  - Graphics & Marketing



# Streetscape Planning with Building Owners

- Tours for Engineering & Insurance
- Vibration Monitoring
- Engineer Plans Review by Owners
- Accurate Contact Information



# Streetscape Planning with Building Owners

- Building Owners Packet



### Uptown Marion: 7th Avenue Streetscape & Plaza Project

With the final segment of 6th Avenue to be constructed in the spring of 2021, the focus turns to a complete reconstruction of 7th Avenue and adjacent side streets between 8th and 12th Streets in the heart of the central business district. It also includes the addition of a plaza on 11th Street that stretches from the Uptown Artway south across 7th Avenue.

**UPTOWN MASTER PLAN UPDATE**  
The Community Development Department began working with RDG Planning and Design in May 2020 to update the Uptown Master Plan. The update focuses on the area between 7th and 16th Streets and between 5th and 8th Avenues. Public input, common themes and recommendations from previous plans contributed to the creation of the plan's four guiding principles:  
> Character of the District > Redevelopment  
> Programming > Infrastructure

An overarching goal of the project is to enhance the district for year-round enjoyment for all ages. The three plaza areas depicted in the plan create a cohesive connection between the new Marion Public Library and shops and restaurants by way of the 11th Street right-of-way. Outdoor dining and flexible lawn spaces, a more defined bicycle route from Grand Avenue to Indian Creek via 10th and 11th Streets, event space, outdoor play features, gardens and an art trail enhance the program offerings.

One key recommendation within this update is to complete a parking study once Uptown parking normalizes.

*"Marion is fortunate to be among the fastest-growing cities in the state. While the rate of development can present unique challenges, it is important for us as City leaders to balance the maintenance and upkeep of what is already existing while being visionary and forward-thinking to position our community for future success,"* said Marion Mayor Nicolas AbouAssaly. *"This is a project that is able to accomplish both."*

Initial estimates show a total project cost of \$6.5 million. This includes complete reconstruction of the right-of-way for nine City blocks and the replacement of underground utilities, sanitary sewer, storm sewer and water main, in addition to the construction of the North Plaza.

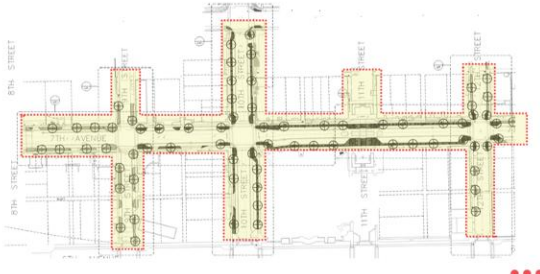
*"This project replaces underground infrastructure that is over 100 years old, improves walkability, accessibility and overall safety,"* said Community Development Director Tom Treharne. *"It also enhances our City's core, making it attractive to potential businesses, visitors and residents."*

Learn more about the project, which is part of the Uptown Master Plan, at [www.cityofmarion.org/7thAveStreetscape](http://www.cityofmarion.org/7thAveStreetscape).



[www.cityofmarion.org/7thAveStreetscape](http://www.cityofmarion.org/7thAveStreetscape)


### Marion Uptown – 7th Avenue Street Improvements Project Area Diagram



### Be Informed

- A project website has been created to provide easy access to project renderings, planning documents and construction updates. Visit [www.cityofmarion.org/7thAveStreetscape](http://www.cityofmarion.org/7thAveStreetscape) for the latest information.
- Sign up for our 7th Avenue Streetscape & Plaza newsletter at [www.cityofmarion.org/about-us/enotify](http://www.cityofmarion.org/about-us/enotify). Weekly updates will be provided during construction.
- Reach out to the City's Engineering Department or Main Street Director as your first point of contact when questions or issues arise.
- Multiple staff members are working behind the scenes to support this project. Always feel free to share ideas that would help enhance outreach efforts.
- Help set the tone... Road, utility and streetscape construction projects present challenges, and few, if any, go exactly to plan. Even the best advance planning and troubleshooting cannot completely eliminate disruptions and the chance of unexpected surprises along the way. One thing we can control is our attitude. Maintaining a positive attitude—even in the face of disruptions and the most trying times—cannot be overstated. Customers, employees, neighbors, members of the media and others will take cues from you. Challenge yourself, everyday, to put on a good game face and be an advocate. Help others focus on the positives of a project that will usher in a new era of progress and prosperity for the district. This project will be a source of community pride for generations to come. Positive attitudes will keep people coming to Uptown and supporting the small businesses/tenant!

[www.cityofmarion.org/7thAveStreetscape](http://www.cityofmarion.org/7thAveStreetscape)



### Frequently Asked Questions Uptown Marion: 7th Avenue Streetscape & Plaza Project

**Why does this mean for parking in Uptown?**  
Any parking spots that will be removed as part of construction are expected to be relocated elsewhere in Uptown. During construction, extra effort will be made to encourage traffic to the local businesses and clearly identify parking options. Additional accessible parking will be created to comply with ADA guidelines. The City plans to do a parking study once construction is complete to better understand additional parking needs. As Marion continues to grow, increased demand for parking could lead to a paid parking model to be considered in the future.

**What does this mean for the business community?**  
When building and business owners were asked to rank their highest priorities on possible downtown enhancement efforts in the 2019 Uptown Marion Business Survey, improvements to the streets, sidewalks, lighting, furnishings, green spaces and trails in Uptown Marion returned as the highest priority. This project delivers on that request. The City's role in economic development is to facilitate an attractive business environment. Uptown Marion Main Street is a partner in this project, helping businesses navigate during construction and coordinating efforts. See the "Surviving Streetscape" webinar for more information.

**What will happen to the City Square Park events?**  
Even though events within City Square Park may need to be relocated during construction, events will continue to be held within the Uptown District. Future Plaza improvements will enhance events in the Uptown area and provide needed amenities for hosting festivals and special events.

**How will the streetscape and plaza be maintained?**  
The City of Marion will be working through a maintenance plan. Currently, building/business owners are responsible for snow removal and general upkeep of the sidewalks directly adjacent to their property. In many communities, Self-Supported Municipal Improvement Districts (SSMID) are created to assist with the additional costs of maintaining a downtown area.

**Why should building owners make repairs and improvements now?**  
Improvements will likely never be cheaper than they are now, and tax credits may not be available in the future. Once the new streetscape is in place, it will be challenging and expensive to make improvements that will tear out the new infrastructure. Building owners would be responsible for all costs of future improvements after the project. Water main and ADA improvements are designed to accommodate different business types and future uses. It is important for Uptown Marion to be accessible to customers. Fires are more common than we like to think and it is important to protect Marion's historic infrastructure. A fire in one building would be detrimental to the entire block of buildings.

**How else will this affect my property?**  
Unlike standard street reconstruction, the streetscape improvements incorporate many additional amenities to attract people to Uptown and enhance the environment. Improvements are expected to generate traffic, which could lead to an increase in profits for businesses. Improvements will also enhance the accessibility and walkability of the district.

**How long will construction last?**  
The streetscape improvements are expected to last two construction seasons, starting Spring 2021 and ending Fall 2022. Future phases include the 11th Street plaza, Marion Square Park improvements, depot improvements and Library plaza extension. Efforts will be made to minimize disruption to businesses and maintain access points where feasible.

**How is it being paid for?**  
The 7th Avenue reconstruction and streetscape improvements will largely be funded by Local Option Sales Tax (LOST) and bonding through the City Capital Improvement Program. These improvements are the heart of the community go above and beyond typical street improvements. Building owners will not be assessed for the overall project but will be expected to cover costs of necessary improvements directly related to their property. A combination of grants, tax credits and matched city funding are available to assist with those costs.



# Streetscape Planning with Building Owners

- Building Owners Packet



## Water Line & Sewer Improvements Uptown Marion: 7th Avenue Streetscape & Plaza Project

As part of the 7th Avenue reconstruction project, all water lines and sewer services will be replaced. The new infrastructure will be capable of supporting a built-in fire suppression system for each building.

The historic buildings in Marion are a treasured piece of Marion and an asset of utmost importance to protect. Given the historic nature of the district and proximity between buildings and businesses, the Marion Fire Department, with the support of Marion City Council, will be requiring water main upgrades to support sprinkler systems in each building. The following upgrades will be made with costs associated:

### Sewer Services

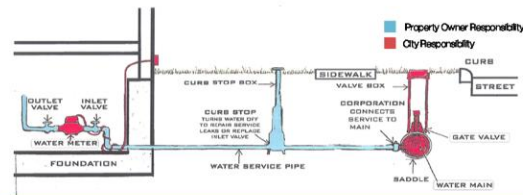
A new sewer service line will be run from the new main sewer line into each building. This will be at no cost to the building owner.

### Domestic Service Line

This is your standard water service line. It will be replaced at no cost in its current configuration or up to a two-inch line. Additional changes to water lines and upgraded sizes or additional meters will have costs associated if requested. Future improvements will be expensive to replace the new infrastructure and also be at full cost to the property owner.

### Fire Suppression Mainline

Installation of this six-inch line is required for current or future sprinkler system hookups. It is expected to cost about \$10,000 per building. The City of Marion will cover up to half of the costs associated with the fire suppression mainline. Building owners will be responsible for covering the other half of the costs. Payments can be made to the City of Marion in one lump sum or over 10 years.



## ADA Improvements Uptown Marion: 7th Avenue Streetscape & Plaza Project

For some, this may be an ideal time to make improvements to your building to better accommodate the physical needs of customers and/or residents.

The City is offering financial assistance to the owners of buildings located within the Central Corridor Urban Renewal Area by paying for 50% of the improvement cost or \$5,000, whichever is less, associated with the costs of installing ADA improvements to the entrance(s) or exits of said buildings. Additionally the building owner may be able to receive tax incentives and tax deductions to apply to the remaining costs.

### Tax Credit Incentive for ADA (Section 44)

The tax credit, established under Section 44 of the Internal Revenue Code, was created in 1990 specifically to help small businesses cover ADA-related eligible access expenditures. A business that has (for the previous year) revenues of less than \$1 million, or fewer than 30 full-time employees may take advantage of this credit. The credit can be used to cover a variety of expenditures, including:
 

- Purchase of adaptive equipment
- Removal of architectural barriers in facilities or vehicles (alterations must comply with applicable accessibility standards)
- Fees for consulting services (under certain circumstances)

### Tax Deduction for ADA (Section 190)

The tax deduction, established under Section 190 of the Internal Revenue Code, is a maximum of \$15,000 per year. A business (including active ownership of an apartment building) of any size may use this deduction for the removal of architectural or transportation barriers. The renovations under Section 190 must comply with applicable accessibility standards.

Small businesses can use these incentives in combination if the expenditures incurred qualify under both Section 44 and Section 190.

[www.cityofmarion.org/7thAveStreetscape](http://www.cityofmarion.org/7thAveStreetscape)



### ANNUAL INCENTIVES

One consideration to keep in mind is that the tax credit and deduction can be used annually. You may not carry over expenses from one year to the next and claim a credit or deduction for the portion that exceeded the expenditure limit the previous year. However, if the amount of credit you are entitled to exceeds the amount of taxes you owe, you may carry forward the unused portion of the credit to the following year.

### EXAMPLE:

A small business uses of both tax credit and tax deduction for \$25,000 cost of access improvements (removal of steps and add ramp) - \$5,000 maximum credit (Section 44) - \$5,000 maximum City reimbursement - \$15,000 remaining for deduction (Section 190)

It is recommended that you consult with a tax specialist to determine the best course of action for your situation.



## Fire Sprinkler Systems (optional) Uptown Marion: 7th Avenue Streetscape & Plaza Project

Buildings with sprinkler systems or dry line sprinkler systems will be connected to the new fire suppression mainline. Building owners without sprinkler systems are encouraged to seriously consider installing one due to the timing of construction and current tax incentives that could cover 100% of the cost.

There has never been a better time to retrofit or upgrade fire sprinkler systems in existing commercial structures thanks to significant tax incentives included in the Coronavirus Economic Stabilization Act (CRESA) of 2020. The tax incentive only applies to improvements made by a taxpayer to an interior portion of an existing building that is nonresidential, commercial real property. Under the new law any sprinkler system in an existing commercial structure that is installed or upgraded from Sept. 27, 2017 - Dec. 31, 2022, can be fully expensed, allowing the property owner to immediately deduct the full cost of the sprinkler system.

A professional tax advisor can help a business determine precisely how the new incentives will impact its bottom line.

### BENEFITS OF INSTALLING FIRE SPRINKLERS

- prevent loss of life and injury to occupants
- protect firefighters and other first responders
- protect property and investment
- prevent economic loss due to business interruption and closure
- generate insurance savings and decreased liability risks
- prevent potential unoccupied building danger to community (post-fire)

## Contract & Temporary Easement

Please see the attached contract for additional details including the right-of-entry that will be necessary to make the improvements.

Completed contracts should be submitted by May 3, 2021 to the City Clerk at Marion City Hall, 1225 6th Avenue, Marion, IA 52302.

[www.cityofmarion.org/7thAveStreetscape](http://www.cityofmarion.org/7thAveStreetscape)



MAIN STREET  
Now  
2026



# Streetscape Planning with Businesses

- State Training?
- Events (Yours AND Others)
- Regular Meetings
- Signage
- Marketing Materials
- Snow Removal



**UPTOWN IS GETTING AN UPGRADE** 7TH AVENUE IMPROVEMENTS  
Reconstruction, Streetscape & Plaza Project

**PROJECT OVERVIEW**  
The 7th Avenue Reconstruction, Streetscape and Plaza project replaces underground infrastructure that is over 100 years old, and improves walkability, accessibility and overall safety in the historic Uptown Marion District.  
This two year project is separated into five separate phases. Phase 1 began on July 13, 2021 and should be substantially completed by fall 2021. Phases 2-5 will occur in the 2022 construction season with a tentative project completion date set for Fall 2022.  
Phase 1 includes the complete reconstruction of 7th Avenue and streetscape improvements between 10th Street and 12th Street, 12th Street between 6th Avenue and 7th Avenue and a portion of the North Plaza.

**MORE INFORMATION**  
cityofmarion.org/7thAveStreetscape

City of Marion

**PREPARING FOR CONSTRUCTION**  
INFO, HINTS AND TIPS FOR BUSINESSES AND PROPERTY OWNERS  
Uptown Marion 7th Avenue Improvements Project | Marion, Iowa

**In This Together**  
Road, utility and streetscape construction projects in traditional downtown and neighborhood business districts pose menacing challenges to commerce and a community's way-of-life. We know that construction is messy and inconvenient, and that can make it more difficult for customers to reach your door. But with the right information, planning, communication and coordination, your business can not only survive, but maybe even thrive during construction.  
Our mutual goals, shared by all with an interest in the project, are simple:  
— Complete a quality project in a timely fashion.  
— Minimize disruptions to businesses and the Uptown Marion way of life.  
— Retain customers and businesses.  
So, let's work together to make history again. After all, we're all in this together.

**The Project—and What We Know Today**  
Current as of February 2, 2021 | Learn more at: [bit.ly/marion7](https://bit.ly/marion7)  
**At-a-Glance: Project Scope and Timeline**  
The Uptown 7th Avenue Street Improvements project encompasses the reconstruction of public right-of-way along 9 city blocks with a project cost estimate of \$6.5 million (including the North Plaza). The reconstruction will include a new road surface along with new storm sewer, sanitary sewer, water main/services into existing buildings, sidewalks (including working with businesses and building owners to provide ADA accessible entrances), and underground utilities.  
**Construction Schedule and Phase One**  
The first phase of construction is anticipated to include the 7th Avenue streetscape between 10th Street and 12th Street, 12th Street between 6th Avenue and 7th Avenue, and a portion of the North Plaza.  
The tentative schedule for this initial phase anticipates:  
— Final Design (Complete by February 2021)  
— Letting Phase (February – March 2021)  
— Construction (April 2021 to November 2022)  
A more refined construction schedule will be posted in early Spring 2021 following the project bid letting and pre-construction meeting with the contractor awarded the project by City Council.

**Are You With Us?**  
Questions? Want to help?  
📞 Call us: (319) 743-4726  
✉ Email us: [uptownmarion@marioncc.org](mailto:uptownmarion@marioncc.org)  
📺 Follow us: [facebook.com/uptownmarion](https://facebook.com/uptownmarion)

Uptown Marion February 2021 © (319) 743-4726



# Prepping with Businesses

- Building Relationships
- Setting the Tone

These people don't let a little construction stop them from visiting **Uptown Businesses!**



**#shoplocal**  
Final phase 8/16/22

## UPTOWN IS GETTING AN UPGRADE



Updates at [cityofmarion.org](http://cityofmarion.org)

7th Avenue reconstruction has begun! Come out and support small businesses. You're going to DIG what we're doing!

Shopping & Dining in Uptown? Follow me!



Legend:  
Road Closures (Red)  
Detour Route (Green)  
Parking (Blue)  
Shopping Access (Orange)

Frydae 28m · 📍

👏👏👏 Exciting things are happening over here today... and for the next few months - through June I hear 🙌🙌🙌

• We know it isn't necessarily 🌟EASY🌟 to visit us right now, but we sure do need you to KEEP COMING.


• To make us a little more accessible, we've got a parking lot available for 🍌Frydae🍌 guests on the corner of 8th Ave and 10th St. Warm weather is right around the corner - so the less than 1 minute walk will be enjoyable. Soon.

• Our front sidewalk should be open through most of the streetscape, but when it isn't, our back door is easily accessible through the beautiful Uptown Marion District Art Way.

• ...And there's always DoorDash 🍷

🍷 Wild Blueberry Cobbler sundae

#smallbusiness #localbusiness #friesbeforeguys #icecream #finallyfrydae #art #iowa #blueberry #construction

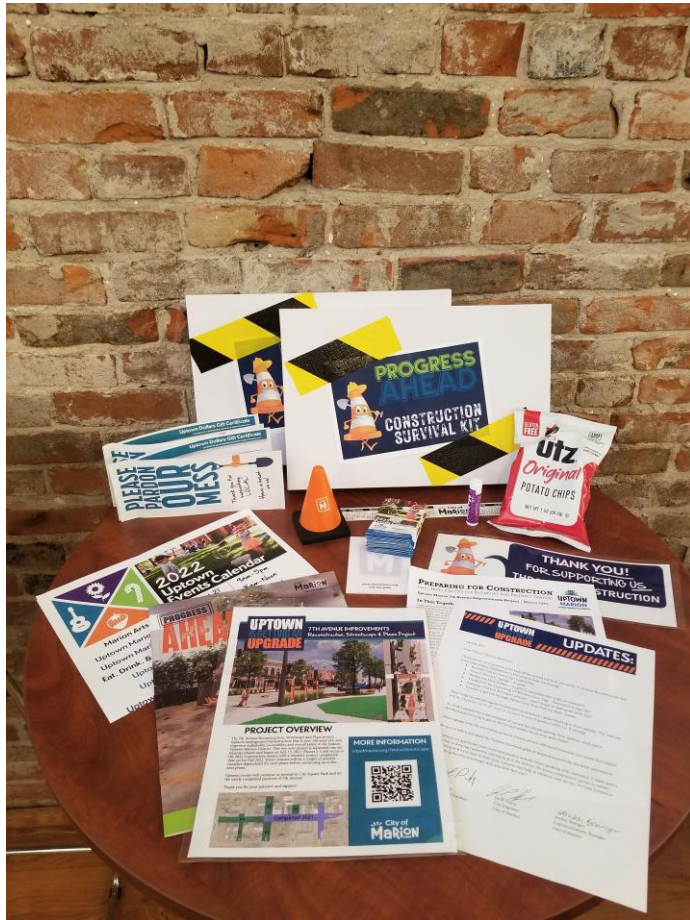


# During Construction

- Communication, Communication, Communication



# HAVE FUN WITH IT!!!



# HAVE FUN WITH IT!!!



# HAVE FUN WITH IT!!!



**HAVE FUN WITH IT!!!**



# Things Will Go Wrong



# Share the Success!



## Thoughtful Features of the Uptown Streetscape Project



**Curb-less Streets** enhance the festival experience allowing for the street to be closed for large events and easy pedestrian and ADA access to the park and businesses!



**Unique gathering places** with artistic seating and fire tables for year-round activity.

**Evening Lighting**, for ambiance and safety, is incorporated into decorative piers and benches. The yellow pier tops were created by local Uptown artist Cara Briggs-Farmer.



Brad McDonough with Rustic Roots Wood Co. in Solon created this bench out of a Derecho tree. The bench symbolizes a storm that destroyed and splintered many parts of the community but Marion came together to make something beautiful and rebuild even stronger out of the storm. Included are three small wooden hearts for you to find hidden in the bench.



**Inlaid leaf pavers** reflect the City's Tree City USA status since 1993 and shape of the Klopfenstein Amphitheater at Lowe Park.

Features honoring the past such as festoon lighting over 7th Avenue.

# CELEBRATE!







# Resources Folder

- Main Street Iowa Construction Check List
- Main Street Iowa Business Tips & Tricks Sheet
  
- Communication Plan Example
- City Contract Example
- Building Owners Packet Example
- Signage Example



**“But isn’t it going  
to be great!”**



MAIN  
STREET  
*Now*  
2026

**Brooke Prouty**

**Main Street Iowa**

**(515) 348-6182**

**[Brooke.prouty@iowaeda.com](mailto:Brooke.prouty@iowaeda.com)**

**THANK YOU!**

# WE APPRECIATE YOUR FEEDBACK!

Please review this session on the Mobile Event Guide:

- 1 Download the “Main Street Now 2026” app
- 2 Locate this session and scroll to “Session Feedback”
- 3 Complete your review

*Need help?* See your conference program or a volunteer for assistance.

