

COMMUNITY ASSESSMENT

The purpose of this assessment is to gain a better understanding of the community through the acquisition and analysis of a wide range of information. In this plan the term community applies to the entire county. While there are several different political units in Mason County, for planning purposes it is important to view the area as one interrelated body.

The assessment is based on a wide range of information sources, both past and present. The effort started with a review of the 1987 plan to determine what had been planned, what had been accomplished, and which components were still applicable. Subsequently, the same effort has been put forth with the 2001, 2006, and 2011 plans. Other past plans (Downtown Revitalization, Market Study, etc.) were examined in a like manner. Several groups were surveyed (farm committee, rural homemakers, planning commission, etc.) to get input regarding the community's strengths and the problems that needed to be addressed. Several meetings were held with city and county officials in order to determine the present status of operations and to find out what plans and projects were underway or proposed.

The assessment step in the planning and development process serves as the information base which is drawn upon in completing the remaining steps in the process. The information needs to be as complete, current, correct, and comprehensible as possible (within the constraints of resources). Good planning and development is dependent upon good information.

The assessment begins with a look at the physical environment as the foundation upon which human activity takes place. It is essential that such elements as location, landforms, geology, soils, water resources, climate, vegetation, and wildlife be given strong consideration in any plans for development of the landscape. The natural environment provides the resources that are used in the natural state or processed into more useful products.

THE PHYSICAL SETTING

Location:

Mason County is located in the northeastern part of the state on the Ohio River. It has a strategic location in that it is situated within an hours drive of three metropolitan areas; Cincinnati/Northern Kentucky, Lexington, and Ashland/Huntington (Figure 2). In addition, it contains the largest city (Maysville) serving a seven county area that is largely rural/agricultural in its characteristics. Location played an important part in its early settlement and thereby its rich historical heritage. Location is one of the most valuable assets that Mason County has to offer.

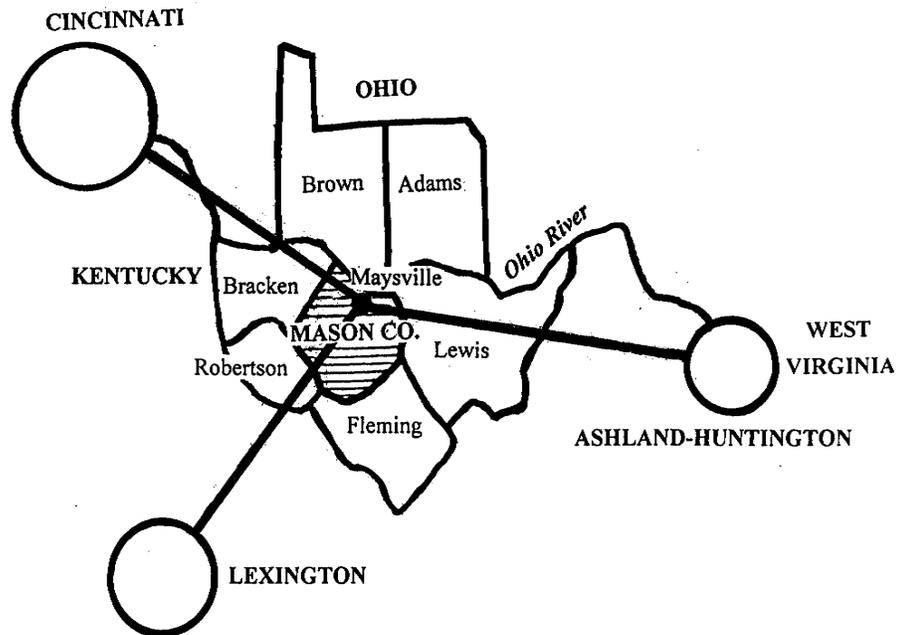


FIGURE 2. MASON COUNTY'S RELATIVE LOCATION

Landforms and Geology:

Mason County is situated in two physiographic regions: the Outer Bluegrass, and the Hills of the Bluegrass. The Outer Bluegrass comprises the majority of the county (central, southern, and eastern parts), and the Hills of the Bluegrass make up the remainder (northern and western). The relief ranges from rolling to very steep. The broadest ridges are found in the central and west-central parts of the county, while the steeper slopes are in the northern, eastern, and western parts of the county and along major streams. The northern third of the county drains to the Ohio River, with the majority of the county draining to the west by the North Fork of the Licking River. A small area in the southwest drains southwest through Robertson and Fleming counties into the Licking River.

Two geologic systems underlie most of the county; the Ordovician System, and the Silurian System. The Ordovician System is the more extensive of the two and consists of interbedded limestone, shale, and siltstone of the Preachersville Member of Drakes Formation, and the Bull Fork, Grant Lake, Fairview, Kope, and Clays Ferry Formations. The Silurian System underlies the eastern part of the county, and consists of dolomite and dolomitic limestone interbedded with clay shales of the Crab Orchard and Brassfield Formations.

Soils:

There are six major groups of soils in Mason County; 1) Wheeling-Nolin-Otwell, 2) Lowell-Faywood-Nicholson, 3) Eden-Lowell, 4) Cynthiana-Faywood-Lowell, 5) Fairmount-Cynthiana-Faywood, and 6) Beasley-Fairmount-Cynthiana (Figure 3). A brief description of soils for general planning purposes is given below:

<u>Soils</u>	<u>General Use</u>
Wheeling-Nolin-Otwell	Well suited to cultivated crops Suited for urban development (with Limitations)
Lowell-Faywood-Nicholson	Well suited to cultivated crops (on broad ridges and hillsides) Suited for urban development (with

	limitations)
Eden-Lowell	Poorly suited to cultivated crops Poorly suited for urban development
Cynthiana-Faywood-Lowell	Poorly suited to cultivated crops Poorly suited for urban development
Fairmount-Cynthiana-Faywood	Poorly suited to cultivated crops Poorly suited for urban development
Beasley-Fairmount-Cynthiana	Suited for cultivated crops (in smooth areas) Suited for urban development (with limitations)

Water Resources:

The Ohio River is obviously the most notable of Mason County's water resources. The county has approximately 20 miles of river front, with potential for commerce and recreation. There are three major watersheds within the county; 1) the North Fork of the Licking River is the largest stream, flowing through the central part of the county in a westward direction, 2) the southern portion of the county drains in the main tributary of the Licking River, and 3) the northern area drains directly into the Ohio River. Figure 4 identifies the major watersheds of Mason County.

Figure 3. Watersheds of Mason County

Climate:

The climate of Mason County is classified as humid subtropical. Summers are warm to hot, with moderately cold winters. Rains are fairly well distributed throughout the year. Snow falls nearly every winter but usually stays on the ground for only a few days. In summer the average temperature is 73 degrees, while winter temperatures average 33 degrees. The highest temperature on record (104 degrees) occurred at Maysville on July 15, 1954. The coldest temperature on record (-19 degrees) was reached at Maysville on January 29, 1963.

The total annual precipitation is 44 inches, with 55 percent of this coming from April through September. The heaviest daily rainfall recorded was recorded in Maysville in May of 1988, and 2011 will be one of, if not the wettest year on record. The average seasonal snowfall is 11 inches.

The average relative humidity in mid afternoon is about 60 percent. The sun shines about 70 percent of the time possible in summer and 40 percent in winter. The prevailing wind is from the south-southwest, and the highest average wind-

speed (11 mph) occurs in spring.

Vegetation and Wildlife:

Mason County is located in the western Mesophytic Forest Region with such trees as chinkapin oak, bur oak, white oak, hackberry, sugar maple, ash, black walnut, black cherry, Kentucky coffee tree, American elm, and shagbark and butternut hickories commonly found. Approximately 26,600 acres (17 percent of the land area) contains commercial wood. The central mixed-hardwood forest type is the most extensive, covering about 7,000 acres; oak-hickory comprises about 4,000 acres; redcedar-hardwood makes up another 4,000 acres; the remainder of the acreage is in maple-beech, elm-oak-cottonwood, white oak, oak-pine, and southern pine.

It is estimated that there are 34 species of mammals, 33 species of reptiles and amphibians, and 110 species of breeding birds in Mason County. Among the wildlife species that are hunted or trapped are the cottontail rabbit, gray squirrel, fox squirrel, white-tailed deer, raccoon, red fox, mink, muskrat, bobwhite quail, mourning dove, woodcock, and several species of waterfowl.

In summary, Mason County has a highly diversified natural environment. Its landforms are conducive to a wide range of human activities. Soils support a strong farm economy and under proper conservation and management techniques, lend themselves to development. The climate is generally temperate, but offers clear and distinctive seasonal variations. Vegetative cover is extensive and provides suitable habitat for a substantial wildlife population. Care should be given in future development to insure that natural resources are used wisely so that future generations may continue to benefit from their value.

THE CULTURAL LANDSCAPE

Historical Overview:

Mason County was initially organized as part of Bourbon County, Virginia, and then became the eighth county to be formed when Kentucky became a state in 1792. Settlement actually began before the American Revolutionary War. Christopher Gist came into the area in 1751 to conduct a survey for the Ohio Land Company. Twenty years later Simon Kenton entered the county and played a major

role in settlement of the county. The earliest settlers came from Virginia, Pennsylvania, Maryland, and New Jersey.

Maysville (initially named Limestone) was founded as a station on the Ohio River in 1784. It was established as a town in 1787 and eventually became the county seat in 1848. Kenton s Station also was established near the future site of Washington in 1784. One year later, Washington was laid out in a one square mile grid. It became a town in 1786 and served as the county seat when the county was first formed.

A buffalo trail (trace) led from the Ohio River to salt licks near Blue Licks. This trail developed into a wagon road and eventually into a turnpike connecting these settlements with Paris and Lexington. With the invention of the steamboat in the early 1800s, river traffic increased and trade by land to the south declined.

Agriculture was the primary economic activity in the early settlement with tobacco as the major crop. The legislature of Virginia opened a tobacco warehouse, the first in northern Kentucky, in 1787. Along with tobacco, farmers grew corn, wheat, flax, and hemp.

In the 20th century growth continued to take place, with Maysville becoming the center of activity and Washington experiencing a decline. New highways were constructed along with a bridge over the Ohio River, making Maysville more accessible to surrounding smaller rural communities. In recent years the city has become a diversified small growth center for a seven county area, and has seen a boon in retail trade and banking.

Population:

From its original settlements in the 1700s, Mason County has grown to over 17,000 people. Population changes since 1970 are indicated in Table 1 for both Mason County and the City of Maysville.

<u>Census Year</u>	<u>Mason County</u>		<u>Maysville</u>	
	<u>Total</u>	<u>Change Total %</u>	<u>Total</u>	<u>Change Total %</u>
1970	17,273		7,411	
1980	17,760	488 2.8	7,983	572 7.7

1990	16,666	-1,094	-6.2	8,113	130	1.6
2000	16,803	137	.8	8,993	880	10.9
2010	17,490	687	4.1	9,011	18	.2

TABLE 1. POPULATION CHANGES FOR MASON COUNTY AND MAYSVILLE, 1970 TO 2010.

* Official Census figures for 2000 are somewhat lower than the 1999 Census Bureau estimate of 16,825. The 1999 figure estimated that 39% of the increase was derived from natural increase (births over deaths), and the remaining 61% from net migration. Population numbers have not fluctuated very much over the past 40 years. Local officials feel that the population figures are inaccurate due to an undercounting by the Census Bureau. During the period 1990-1998, the county's population increased by 355, with 70.4% resulting from net migration, and 29.6% from natural increase (births over deaths).

There are three other incorporated areas in the county; Dover (population 252), Germantown (population 154), and Sardis, (population 103).

The sex and racial composition of the population are important characteristics to be noted in understanding the population. Females outnumber males (51.8% to 48.2%), and the majority of the county's population is white (90.3%).

		Totals	% Change from (2000)	
2010 Figures:	White Population	15,801	3.5	(15,268)
	Black Population	1,120	-6.9	(1,203)
	Hispanic	248	.55	(160)
	Females	9,056	4.4	(8,675)
	Males	8,434	3.8	(8,125)

TABLE 2. MASON COUNTY POPULATION BY SEX AND RACE (2010).

The county's population is growing older. The median age in 2010 was 40.3, above the state median of 38.1. The population distribution by age groups is given in Table 3 below:

Age Group	Totals	% Change from (2000)
0-17	4,265	NA
18 & over	13,225	3.75 (12,747)
20-24	975	3.72 (940)

25-34	1,893	-13.6 (2,190)
35-49	3,653	NA
50-64	3,652	NA
65 & over	2,645	1.58 (2,604)

TABLE 3. MASON COUNTY POPULATION BY AGE GROUPS (2010).

Males constitute a majority in the 0-17 and 18-24 age groups while females make up the majority in the other three groups. The 25-44 age group is the largest of the five categories, accounting for 28.3% of the total. The 0-17 and 65+ age groups are often referred to as the dependent sector of the population (outside the work force), and constitute 40.1% of the total population. Almost 16% of the people are 65 years of age or older.

Transportation:

Mason County is fortunate to have a diversified transportation system; water, rail, air, and highway. Although its location on the Ohio River has not generated much commercial freight traffic, the river does contribute to the county's economy by the visit of river boats bringing tourists to the area.

The county is served by the CSX Railroad, the Trans-Kentucky Railroad; and Maysville is a stopping point on the AMTRAK system.

The Fleming-Mason Airport is located about six miles south of Maysville and has a 5,500 ft. (instrument approach) paved runway. The airport is heavily utilized by local industries, and is in the process of making improvements.

Mason County is served by U.S. Highway 62/68, Kentucky Routes 8, 10, and 11, and Kentucky 9 (AA Highway). The Simon Kenton Memorial Bridge connects Maysville with Highway 52 in Ohio. The William Harsha bridge connects Highway 9 in Kentucky with Highway 52 in Ohio and was completed in 2000. Mason County is located approximately 45 miles from Interstate 64 (Rowan Co., KY), and 75 miles from Interstates 75 and 71 (Boone and Kenton Co. KY).

Maysville has a public transportation system that operates within the city limits. Handicapped persons have access to a van that is also operated by the city. Taxi service is available through private companies.

A limited amount of river barge traffic originates from Mason County, but the total amount of freight moving on the Ohio River is extensive. Several river (tour) boats may dock at Maysville during the year.

The components of Mason County s transportation system are shown in Figure 4.

The Economy:

The local economy is comprised of four sectors; 1) the Primary Sector which includes extractive activities (farming, mining, logging, etc.), 2) the Secondary Sector which involves processing of raw or semi-finished materials, 3) the Tertiary Sector which is comprised of trade and services, and 4) the Quaternary Sector which is made up of information processing/high tech activities. As the economy develops (matures) its focus increasingly shifts from the primary sector toward the quaternary sector. Mason County s employment by industry classification for 2010 is shown in-(Table 4).

Industry Classification	Employment
Construction	274
Manufacturing	1,424
Trade, Transportation, & Utilities	1,754
Information	107
Financial Activities	223
Services	1,558
Public Administration	345

TABLE 4. EMPLOYMENT IN MASON COUNTY BY INDUSTRY CLASSIFICATION (KY Dept. for Economic Development)

As discussed previously, Mason County has a long history of agricultural production. From its early farm economy orientation, the county, with Maysville as the focal point, has become quite diversified in its economic offerings. It not only serves as a retail/service center, but in the past decade has become a major manufacturing center.

Agriculture is going through a difficult period of transition at the present time. The mainstay of the farm economy was tobacco, which has virtually been abolished in the past decade. Mason county s farm economy can be described as diversified or general farming, with a good mix of crops and livestock. A farmers market and produce/hay auction was established in Lewisburg in 2004. The recent Tobacco Settlement Funding Program (Phases I and II) has provided substantial funds for making adjustments to the decline in tobacco quotas. The section on Rural and Agricultural Areas (page 98) includes information from the county s Comprehensive Farm Plan developed by the Mason County Agricultural Development Council in conjunction with the Agricultural Extension Office.

Comparative figures through the last three agricultural census periods (1997, 2002, and 2007) show some of the major changes taking place in county farming (Table 5).

	1997	2002	2007	Change, 97- 07	
				Total	%
Number of Farms	751	726	753	2	0.27
Land in Farms (acres)	131,457	128,123	139,814	8,357	6.4
Av. Size of Farm (acres)	175	176	186	11	6.29
Av. Value of Land & buildings per acre (\$)	1,366	1,889	2,528	1,162	85.1
Crop Land Harvested (acres)	44,793	45,732	50,474	5,681	12.7
Pasture (acres)	39,188	41,294	27,982	11,206	-28.6

TABLE 5. CHANGES IN SELECTED FARM STATISTICS (USDA- Census of Agriculture).

In summary, the number of farms has increased by 2 (0.27%); the amount of land in farms has increased by 8,357 acres (6.4%); the average value of land and buildings per acre has increased by \$1,162 (85.1%); the amount of cropland has increased 5,681 acres (12.7%); and the amount of pasture has declined by 11,206 acres (28.6%).

Despite these trends, Mason County produced 4,883,089 pounds of burley tobacco in 2007, along with 503,918 bushels of corn, 89,846 bushels of soybeans, 27,688

bushels of wheat for grain, 67,157 tons of all hay, haylage, grass silage and greenchop. The county ranked 7th and 21st accordingly in the state in production of burley tobacco and alfalfa hay.

In addition, Mason County s farm economy continued to maintain a significant livestock sector. As of 2007 the county had 35,988 head of cattle and calves (14,937 beef cows). Milk production ranked 16th in the state with a value of sales at \$5,781,000 (2007). Agri-tourism has grown in the county and the River Valley Agri-tourism alliance was formed in 2005.

While agriculture has experienced its problems with the loss of a tobacco base, grain and cattle production has increased over the past decade. Manufacturing on the other hand, had a considerable growth spurt in the late 1990's, but has since been in decline. In 1989 there were 2,818 people employed in manufacturing, with that figure rising to 3,394 in 1998, a gain of 575 (20.4%); yet by 2009 that figure had dropped drastically to 1,531. The leading employers in 2009 included the following companies (Table 6):

<u>Name of Manufacturer</u>	<u>Employees</u>
Power Transmission Solutions	338
Green Tokai Co. Ltd.	268
Inland Paperboard & Packaging	106
Wald Manufacturing Co., Inc.	70
Mitsubishi Electric Automotive	204
Crouse Corporation	189
East Kentucky Power	206
Carmeuse Lime	200
Stober Drive	70
The Ripley Corp. Maysville	35
Meadowview Regional Hospital	300
Federal Mogul	182

TABLE 6. LEADING MANUFACTURING EMPLOYERS, 2011.
 (Figures are rounded. Source: Ky. Cabinet for Economic Development,
 Division of Research).

Trade and Services include transportation/communications/utilities, wholesale and retail trade, finance/insurance/real estate, services, and state/local government.

In 2009 there were 4,036 trade and service jobs in Mason County. This number has increased noticeably in the intervening five years. Most of the growth in trade and services in recent years has taken place on the Hill. Downtown Maysville, with its physical limitations has undergone a transition from retail/ office functions to predominantly office functions and has become a mainstay for the cultural arts. It is expected that proposed transportation system improvements (the bypass) will bring even more change to the distribution of economic activities in the county.

Quaternary activities are difficult to extract from the tertiary sector. Past Census reports have not made a distinction between these two sectors. It can be assumed that a number of employees in Mason County are now involved in information processing, computer programming, research, etc., but the actual percentage is not known. Notable companies include: Carlson Software, TCS Service, and Courika Solutions.

Other measures of economic activity include wages paid, sales figures, bank deposits, and related statistics (Table 7).

Average Weekly

Wages Paid in 2009:

Manufacturing (millions of \$)	\$838
Wholesale and Retail Trade	\$534
Services	\$342
Government	\$583

Sales Figures (1992):	Retail and Wholesale	415.0 (millions of \$)
	Services	42.4

Bank Deposits (five banks/15 branches):	265 (millions of \$)
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Median Family Income (Mason County):	\$44,676
(2009) (Kentucky):	\$51,323
(U.S.):	\$62,363

Per Capita Personal Income: (Mason County):	\$21,023
(2009) (Kentucky):	\$22,284
(U.S.):	\$27,041

Percent in Poverty: (Mason County):	20
(2009) (Kentucky):	17.4
(U.S.):	13.5

TABLE 7. SELECTED ECONOMIC MEASURES FOR MASON CO.

Figure 5 identifies the major retail/service, and industrial employment centers.

Public Facilities and Services:

Local government provision of public facilities and services is an important component in the planning and development process. Government is called upon to provide an increasing amount and diversity of services. This plan element includes administration, streets/roads, utilities, recreation, tourism, education, fire and police protection, emergency services, planning and codes enforcement, and health services.

The City of Maysville has operated under the city manager form of government since 1958. Administration of city policies and programs is conducted by the mayor and board of commissioners (four members), with the city manager serving as the chief executive officer. Daily operations are handled through the following departments/agencies; City Attorney, Codes Enforcement, Comptroller, Personnel, Engineering, Fire Department, Port Authority, Industrial Development Authority, Police Department, Public Works, Tourism, and Water and Sewer.

County government operates under the commission form of government with commissioners elected at large from three districts, and the County Judge Executive presiding over the fiscal court. County departments/agencies include Maysville-Mason County Landfill and Recycling Center, Road Department, Sheriff s Office, Emergency Services, Health Department, County Attorney, Mason County Detention Center, Mason County Animal Control/Shelter, County Treasurer, County Property Valuation Administrator, and the County Clerk.

The county has an eight member joint planning commission with four members appointed by the city and four members appointed by the county. Their primary responsibilities include overseeing the completion and maintenance of the comprehensive plan, administering subdivision regulations throughout the county, and making recommendations on zoning changes within the City of Maysville and unincorporated areas of Mason County. In keeping with the requirements of K.R.S. 100, there are also separate city and county Boards of Adjustment established to deal with variances, conditional uses, non-conforming situations, and appeals on interpretations by the administrative official. Both boards are served by

the city Zoning Administrator and by legal counsel.

The city of Maysville operates a water treatment plant and sewage treatment plant. Both plants have sufficient capacity to accommodate additional growth at the present time. The sewage treatment plant presently handles an average of 1.5 million gpd, with a capacity of 3.4 million gpd. The system can hold up to 8.5 million gpd for a short time. Seven sewer pump stations have been upgraded recently. In the county, sewage disposal is primarily by means of on-site septic tanks. Reliance upon septic tanks creates an undesirable situation in most areas of the county since the majority of soils have severe restrictions for on-site sewage disposal. The state has approved a county sewer district, which became operational in December 2006 (Western Mason Sanitation District). The District serves approximately 430 households, and ties into the City sewer system. More than 3,800 customers are served by the city sewer system.

The city's water treatment plant pumps an average of 2.4 to 2.8 million gallons per day, peaking at 3 million gpd in the summer. The water treatment plant was upgraded in 1996 to a capacity of 4 million gpd.. Water storage includes 2.7 million gallons (in ground), and 350,000 gallons in tanks. New storage tanks have been constructed recently, and a new line is being extended to Industrial Park #4 on the west side of the city.

Water is sold by the city to five water districts in the county. The total number of customers being served is around 15,000 at the present time. The majority of waterlines within the city are 8 inch or larger while in the remainder of the county lines are 4 inches or less (Washington has some 3 and 4 inch lines). There are no accurate maps of older waterlines, especially in the downtown area.

Most of the demand for water and sewer services has been up on the hill in recent years. Completion of the South Loop and anticipated development in that area will necessitate further expansion of the systems.

Solid waste is disposed of at the Maysville-Mason County Landfill which is located in the eastern part of the county. This site is owned by the city and county and operated by the county. It serves as a regional landfill receiving some 300 tons of waste daily. The facility also has a recycling program (which also handles tires and white goods), composting, and a collection system for methane gas.

Mason County is served by a variety of recreation facilities, both public and private. There are small parks located at Dover, Germantown, and Mayslick. The Mayslick and Germantown parks have a walk path.

The 100-acre Cummins Nature Preserve, located off Pickett Lane in Mason County was recently awarded a \$10,000 grant to develop trails for additional recreational use. The area nature preserve fulfills the last wish of Dr. Claude E. Cummins, who wanted the land to be used as a preserve, while opening it for public use and enjoyment. Since 2002, the Mason County Fiscal Court has worked to turn the land into a nature preserve with nature trails, a primitive camp for Scouts and other groups, a wildlife educational area, a rustic shelter and small rest-room.

The largest park is the Maysville-Mason County Recreation Park, located just outside of Old Washington. This park encompasses 57 acres and includes an Olympic-size pool, a par-three golf course, miniature golf course, two softball fields, three tennis courts, picnic sites, a one mile walking path, and a 12 acre fishing lake. Smaller parks are also scattered throughout the city: January Park, Mulberry Park, the West End Park, Veterans Memorial Park, Wood Street Park, and Beechwood Park.

The Maysville Marina and Campground is located on the Ohio River on the eastern edge of town. This park features 30 camp sites, a boat dock and launch, a picnic area, and playground.

Other recreation facilities include the Limestone YMCA, the Tom Browning Girls and Boys Club, Paradise Breeze Waterpark, and three golf courses; Kenton Station Golf Course (public), Laurel Oaks Golf Club (public), and the Maysville Country Club (private). There are a number of small pocket-size parks scattered throughout the county.

Tourism for the county is handled by the Maysville-Mason County Convention and Visitors Bureau located in Maysville. Activities center around the number of historic sites and structures found through-out the county, and on special events that are held throughout the year. One of the leading historic sites is Old Washington, a historic village dating back to the late 1700s. It contains a number of shops, historic buildings, and museums, including the Harriet Beecher Stowe Slavery to Freedom Museum. The Russell Theater features Spanish Colonial Revival architecture dating back to 1930. Limestone Landing, in downtown Maysville has attractive historic murals painted on the floodwall. The Landing is a

stopping point for the American Queen. Visitors can also stop by the Kentucky Gateway Museum Center, which includes the Kaye Savage Browning Miniature Collection, and Washington Opera Theater.

May s Lick is another settlement dating back to 1787. The community has formed a guild to help promote its history and artistry. The Baptist Church in Minerva, built in 1793 by stonemason and minister Louis Craig, is one of the five oldest still standing structures in Kentucky. The issue of slavery split the church in 1805, and the slave balcony still exists.

Special events and festivals attract a great number of visitors from throughout the region. A list of these activities includes Halloween, Christmas in downtown Maysville, Maysville Players, The Old Reliable Germantown Fair , the Maysville Rotary Club Horse Show, Chocolate Festival, Simon Kenton Festival, Frontier Christmas, Asparagus Festival, Rosemary Clooney Concert, Maysville Uncorked, Oktoberfest, Twilight Christmas Parade, Pigout in Maysville, Buffalo Trace Balloon Race, and the Buffalo Trails Multi-sport Racing.

The citizens of Maysville and Mason County have access to information from a number of different sources. The Ledger-Independent Newspaper provides news coverage throughout the seven county trade area; WFTM Radio (AM/FM) is located in Maysville; cable television services and internet are available through Limestone Cablevision; telephone and internet services are provided by various commercial entities.

Mason County Schools

The Mason County School District serves all of Mason County and has a student population of 2,875 students- preschool through twelfth grade (2011/2012). The Mason County School district consists of Charles Straub Elementary School with a student population of 818 (preschool through second grade); Mason County Intermediate School with a student population of 584 students (third through fifth grades); Mason County Middle School with a student population of 656 students (sixth through eighth grades); and Mason County High School with a student population of 817 students (ninth through twelfth grades). Student/teacher classroom ratios range from 14:1 for Straub Elementary to 25:1 for Mason County High School.

The Mason County School District is committed to maintaining a technology

program designed to provide students and staff with the best educational technology available. Every school is equipped with 21st Century Classrooms including wireless internet access. Students have access to computer labs, library media centers, and numerous technology instructional devices such as iPads. Content specific educational software or applications (apps) are available on technology instructional devices to enhance student achievement. Students have exposure to both Mac and Windows computer platforms. Teachers have a choice between an Apple MacBook or Dell notebook with Microsoft Office. Ultimately the district is striving toward a 1-1 student to instructional device ratio. Currently our schools are making progress toward this goal by omitting computer desktops, and then replacing the desktops with iPads. The Mason County Technology Program continues to advance by constantly changing with technology trends. A look into the near future envisions the schools with all desktops being replaced by mobile devices, textbooks will be obsolete because of digital textbooks, online testing will be the norm, cloud based applications become standard, and eventually paperless classrooms will prevail.

Every school in the Mason County School district currently has a Student Technology Leadership Program (STLP). This program provides students an opportunity to advance individual capabilities and creates leadership opportunities through the use of technology. Some of the skills performed by our STLP students are: general maintenance, problem solving, showcase work, community involvement, student and teacher training, program setup, product production, website maintenance, and troubleshooting. During the past school year, Straub Elementary, and Mason County High School received the Gold School Status and competed in the STLP state championship.

The Mason County School District implemented a network infrastructure using fiber optics and high speed data lines that connect all buildings, classrooms and offices to The Kentucky Department of Education Wide Area Network. The Mason County School District Local Area Network is equipped with wireless access points in every classroom. Wireless access is available in every location throughout our schools for student, teacher, and community members.

The Mason County School system provides an information technology department staffed with three technicians. The technicians provide technical assistance, maintain the network, and complete technical repair requests on computer equipment.

Engaging students through content specific technology applications is a major focus of Mason County Schools. Every classroom within the district is equipped with Intelligent Classrooms. The standard classroom setup includes items listed below:

- * Projection system
- * Ceiling speaker array with amplifier
- * Document camera
- * Interactive Smart Board
- * DVD/VCR Combo
- * Minimum of two student instructional devices per classroom

All classrooms and office areas in the school district are networked and have internet access available. There are some 1,000 computer workstations, with an average of one computer for each three students. The Distance Learning Lab at the high school is linked to more than 150 sites throughout Kentucky. Mason County has the largest middle level School Technology Leadership Program in Kentucky. Mason County is one of eight districts in Kentucky that is recognized as a Technology Innovation Center.

The Mason County School District has been recognized on the state and national levels for school improvement efforts. Students scored above the state average in all content areas on the ACT, which is administered to all high school juniors. Based on the 2010 Kentucky Transition to Adult Life Data from the Kentucky testing system, 100% of high school graduates were successful with 40.3% attending college, 5.9% going to the military, 23.1% transitioning directly to the workplace, 2.2% attending vocational technical institutes, and 28.5% are attending school part-time, while being part of the work force. In addition, the National School Board Association awarded Mason County Schools with the distinguished Magna Award in 2010, the only district in Kentucky to ever receive the distinction. Approximately 75% of students at Mason County High School participate in extracurricular activities and many of these programs and clubs have been recognized for their exemplary performance. One hundred percent (100%) of teachers are designated as highly qualified by the Kentucky Department of Education. In addition, there has been tremendous growth in the number of volunteer hours from 8,964 hours in 2001-02 to 70,677 hours in 2010-11.

Private Schools

St. Patrick s School

St. Patrick's is a parochial school, grades kindergarten through twelve. The school is accredited by the Kentucky Department of Education and the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools. The grade school program offers nine years of education in religion, language arts, math, science, social studies, practical living, and arts and humanities. Students at this level have extracurricular activities in sport competitions, 4-H, girl scouts, boy scouts, and academic teams.

The high school offers a comprehensive program that is primarily college-prep in focus. However, students also have access to vocational education in cooperation with the local state vocational school. High school students who attend St. Patrick's are required to complete a minimum of 27 credits for graduation. Eighteen and a half of those credits must meet the requirements of the Kentucky Department of Education. Students must also meet the school requirement of 4 credits in theology.

Students come from all parts of the socio-economic spectrum. Many faiths are represented in the student body, of which approximately 70% are Roman Catholic. The total enrollment of St. Patrick's School in 2011-2012 school year was 237 students.

St. Patrick's High School and Maysville Community and Technical College have a dual credit agreement for the following courses: Calculus/Statistics, US History, Advanced Biology, and College English.

The school had two National Merit scholars in 2003, and since 2006 has had 100% graduation rate. 2011 senior class of 32 students was offered total scholarship monies in the amount of \$2,197,646.

Highland Christian School

Highland Christian School began in the basement of the Highland Christian Church in the fall of 1999 with three faculty members, twelve students, and three grades ranging from Jr. Kindergarten to First grade. Within four years, the school experienced growing pains from the lack of space and an obvious need to expand into further grades.

The school was able to purchase the large building previously occupied by E. A. Robinson at the bottom of the hill on US 68. This purchase took place in May 2003 and the school re-opened for the 2003-2004 school year in September 2003. At the grand opening, six classrooms were fully operational and staffed, a cafeteria was now in operation, and plans for an outdoor playground were on the drawing board.

The school continued to grow and meet community needs by implementing a daycare facility in the spring of 2005. What began with fifteen children has now grown to a current enrollment of 90+ and an average daily attendance of 70. The school also operates an after-care program allowing working mothers and fathers to leave their children after school in a safe and secure environment. Currently, several students from the Mason County public school system ranging in grades from headstart to early elementary are transported by bus on a daily basis from the Mason County schools to Highland Christian School and Daycare to use its after-care program.

Highland Christian School and Daycare ended the 2010-2011 term with an enrollment of 101 students and grades ranged from Preschool to Twelfth Grade. In May, they celebrated their first senior graduation. They began the 2011-2012 school year with 95 students and 70 enrolled in the daycare and are continuing to grow on a daily basis.

Nativity Montessori School

In 1916 a community preschool was started at the Episcopal Church of the Nativity in Maysville, and in 1974 it became the Episcopal Day School. In 2004, the classrooms were converted into one large room and the Nativity Montessori School was born. They had 26 students enrolled in 2011/2012 with three of the students receiving partial scholarships and one receiving a full scholarship.

Their goals for the next 10+ years are below:

1. Attain KY and or National Montessori Accreditation by the beginning of the 2012-2013 school year
2. Continue to remain a financially viable school in uncertain economic times, while remaining a leading High Quality and affordable education for the area.
3. Continue to increase viable financial aid options for our students and families.

4. Maintain and grow Nativity s involvement in the Maysville/Mason County greater community
5. Explore growth and expansion options to Grade 1 and beyond.

Maysville Church of the Nazarene

In 2011, the Church of the Nazarene received a conditional use permit from the Maysville Board of Adjustment to establish a private school. The Church was initially equipped with classrooms when constructed in 1998, and their goal is to start with 36 students, with a total capacity for 100.

Licking Valley Head Start

Licking Valley Head Start provides a comprehensive child development program for low income children three and four ears of age. The four major components of Head Start are: Education- the Educational program is designed to meet each child's needs. Every child receives a variety of learning experiences to foster intellectual, social, and emotional growth/ Health- Head Start arranges for every child to receive comprehensive health care, including: medical, dental, mental health, and nutrition services. Parent involvement- An essential part of every Head Start program is the involvement of parents in Parent Education program planning and operating activities. Social Services- Services are provided that will build upon individuals strengths of families to meet their needs. Ten percent of the enrollment is available for children with disabilities. Disabled children and their families receive the full range of Head Start developmental services. Head Start also subcontracts with Fleming, Lewis, and Robertson Boards of Education to provide KERA-Preschool services to eligible 3 and 4 year old children.

Colleges/Technical Schools

Maysville Community and Technical College, a unit of the Kentucky Community and Technical College System, offers a number of Associate degree programs, and presently enrolls some 1,800 students each semester. The college teaches classes off campus in several locations, including Cynthiana and Morehead. The use of computers and related technology is emphasized, and the college plays a vital role in preparing local and areas students for careers in the information-based economy. For example, they offer dual credits with Mason County High School that enables

the students to obtain college level credits. A new technology facility was built on the campus in 2002. The College also participates with Morehead State University's Small Business Development Center, with its variety of programs and services, and they have a working relationship through distance learning agreements with several colleges for Bachelor of Arts Degrees.

The Mason County Area Technology Center serves high school students by enhancing and expanding student career options that lead to continuation of education at the postsecondary level and/or successful employment upon graduation from high school. Feeder schools include: St. Patrick's, Mason County, Bracken County, Robertson County, Augusta Independent, and Tollesboro Christian School. Students are able to learn skilled trades including: auto-body repair, electrical technology, health sciences, welding technology, and automotive technology. The role of the area technology center is vital in the overall scheme of economic development and provides an additional avenue for business and industry personnel to be trained.

Other Services

Home health service, rural home health and personal touch home care services are provided through the Meadowview Regional Medical Center, the Buffalo Trace Cancer Care Center, the Dialysis Clinic, Inc., the County Health Department, Comprehend, Inc., Mental Health-Mental Retardation Board, the Maysville-Mason County Ambulance Service, Hospice of Hope, Hayswood Home Health, Cancer Fighters United Resource Center founded by Janie Hord, and the Radiation Therapy Center. Meadowview has a medical staff of 34 active physicians, 37 courtesy physicians, 87 registered nurses, 20 licensed practical nurses, and 23 nurses aides. There is also a private regional transport service that transports patients from facility to facility. In 2011, Hospice of Hope began construction on a 32 room assisted living facility as well as an 8 bed in-patient facility located on Rosa Drive between the AA Highway and Kenton Station Golf Course. Both facilities are designed with room to expand.

The City of Maysville has a fire department manned by 20 full-time public safety officers who are trained as firemen and EMTs or paramedics. Equipment includes three pumper trucks, 77 ft. ladder truck, and four ambulances. The fire department responds to calls within the city limits while ambulance service is county-wide. They have two stations: Downtown Maysville, and Kenton Station Road near the hospital.

The Washington-Maysville Volunteer Fire and Rescue Department has 129 members who supplement the paid department and serve outside the city limits. Their equipment includes a pumper, tanker, boat, and a variety of rescue items.

Fire protection in the county is provided by volunteer fire departments located at several sites. Each volunteer fire department has some 24 trained firemen and adequate equipment to cover the unincorporated areas of the county.

Police protection is provided within the City of Maysville by a department with 23 full-time police officers. The department has a trained Emergency Response Team, cross-trained K-9 unit, bike patrol, and a Criminal Investigation Section. Officers utilize twenty-six cruisers for patrolling the area inside the city limits. Police protection is provided in the unincorporated parts of the county through the County Sheriff's Office and the Kentucky State Police. A new county wide communication system is housed at the Maysville Police Department.

HAZMAT 8 is a regional response team that responds to incidents to try and stop a contaminate that has spilled or leaked into the environment, and refine and contain it. The City and County have ordinances that pertain to hazardous material incidents. The ordinance requires the owner of a product to provide the clean-up measures, and bear the cost whenever an incident occurs.

Statistics from the Kentucky Transportation Center at the University of Kentucky regarding traffic safety are shown in Table 8.

2388 total accidents
181 alcohol-related accidents
30 pedestrian accidents
12 bicycle accidents
72 motorcycle accidents
316 truck accidents

TABLE 8. SELECTED TRAFFIC ACCIDENT DATA, 2006-2010

Figures 6A & 6B shows the location of public facilities in Maysville and Mason County.

Housing:

The latest detail information on housing was provided in the 2010 Census of Population and Housing. The 2010 Census information is useful in getting a general view of the housing situation, while recognizing that a number of changes have taken place in the past ten years.

In 2010 Mason County had a total of 8,105 housing units, with 4,477 units located in the City of Maysville, and 3,628 units located in the remainder of the county. The breakdown on county housing units is as follows:

Type Unit	Number of Units	Percent
Single-family residences	5,763	71.5
Multi-family residences	1,376	17.1
Mobile homes	922	11.4
Total:	8,061	100.0

TABLE 9. HOUSING TYPES IN MASON COUNTY, 2005-2009, 5 yr estimate.

In 2010, approximately 57.4% of the county s occupied housing units (6,847) were at least 30 years old. Only 2.2% of all housing units (7,754) lacked complete plumbing facilities, and 2.9% lacked complete kitchen facilities. Within the City of Maysville 2,228 of the 3,856 housing units (58%) were owner occupied, and 1,628 (42%) were renter occupied. Single-family units accounted for 72% of the units, multi-family 25%, and mobile homes 3%. The median value of housing was \$41,100. The homeowner vacancy rate was 1.7% and the rental vacancy rate was 6.6%. A total of 166 people lived in group quarters. There were 3,088 households, with 1,920 (62.2%) being family households, and 1,168 (37.8%) being non-family households.

The Housing Authority of Maysville and Mason County Fiscal Court both operate public housing units.

The Housing Authority of Maysville operates 260 units of Low Income Public Housing in 11 locations, mostly on the East end of Maysville. The average occupancy rate varies between 91% and 95%. The average yearly gross income for a public housing resident is \$9,786.77, which produces an average family rent of \$188.82 per month. The gross income reported in the 2006 Comprehensive Housing Plan compared to the 2011 gross income reported reflects a \$387.89 increase in the public housing resident s annual income. This increase impacts the family s rent by a mere \$8.92 increase over what had been previously reported in

2006.

The Section 8 Rental Assistance Program operates up to 108 units within the community and targets families and individuals meeting the regional Very Low Standard. The Section 8 units have always been inspected using Housing Quality Standards, which are the minimum standards set forth by Housing & Urban Development. The Housing Authority of Maysville has contracted with the City of Maysville to have the Section 8 units inspected by the HQS Inspector, Building Official and Inspector Gary Wells. Since contracting with the City of Maysville the Housing Authority of Maysville has seen an increase in the Section 8 Rental units building integrity. This partnership has had a positive effect not only for the Section 8 client, but the landlord as well. The whole community has benefited from the partnership.

The Housing Authority of Maysville operates several programs for the benefit of all residents:

- Assistance with activities of daily living for any willing elderly or disabled participant.

- Masters of Computer Basics program teaching keyboarding, Microsoft products, Internet, email and Quickbooks accounting (18 stations at the Amo Peters Community Center).

- Summer Lunch Program starting on the day after the last day of school in the spring and finishing on the day before the first day of school in the fall.

- Partnership with Maysville Community and Technical College to offer GED classes at the Amo Peters Community Center.

The need for affordable housing was expressed by a number of citizens during the assessment process, both in the city and the county during the creation of the 2001 Plan. Most of the population in the Maysville area is an aging population. Housing facilities that would target our elderly population are greatly needed. Ground-level one and two bedroom apartments are highly needed for our elderly/disabled citizens.

The Housing Authority of Maysville has 100 units in our current portfolio that are 62 years old. We have made the decision to replace the original 1948" windows with more energy-efficient double-pane windows and central air conditioning. Hopefully this will help make these units more marketable to our clients. As more funding becomes available, we will upgrade each unit kitchen and bath.

The current economic conditions alone indicate that there is a very strong need for affordable housing. Housing goals are achieved through rent from the tenants, subsidy from the federal government and grant money that can be obtained from competitive funding. With many housing authorities nationwide facing extreme budget cuts for both public housing and section 8 we are concerned how we can maintain our existing services. We must look to the future for innovative ways to continue to achieve our housing goals through cooperative partnership with non-profits and individuals.

The Mason County Fiscal Court operates a senior citizen housing complex in which occupants must be 65 or older, and must meet low income guidelines. Five buildings were constructed in 2000, with four more recently being built.

Churches play an important role in the community's well-being, as do a number of civic/volunteer organizations. The Maysville-Mason County Chamber of Commerce Resource Guide lists 77 churches and 48 local organizations. Hundreds of individuals contribute their time and energy to a wide array of programs benefitting the community.

Land Use and Development:

Most of the land in Mason County is used for agricultural activities. There are three small incorporated cities in the western part of the county; Sardis, Dover, and Germantown. Additionally, there are several small rural communities dispersed throughout the county, and a few fairly sizeable residential subdivisions. **Figures 7A, 7B, 7C & 7D** show the general land use patterns for the City of Maysville and Mason County.

Land use within the City of Maysville and unincorporated parts of the County are guided by the land use ordinance. The land use ordinance is closely linked to the comprehensive plan and serves as a means of implementing the plan. Uses of land and structures are regulated to encourage the harmonious arrangement of land uses, and to minimize negative impacts of development on the quality of life in the city and county.

The negative trends affecting tobacco farming are expected to result in more interest in the conversion of rural farmland into urban type developments. Impact on tobacco farming is expected to result in more pressure being exerted to develop rural land. The plan will recommend an approach for dealing with these problems.

The current pattern of development can be illustrated by examining the records of the city's Codes Enforcement Office for the period 2006 through 2010 (Table 10). New single-family residential construction took a hit during the 2008/2009 recession, but new commercial construction was consistently strong throughout the five year period while multi-family, and industrial construction was minimal.

The Mason County Fiscal Court adopted the Kentucky Building Code and Kentucky Residential Code in 2005. This code, which was previously in place in the City, regulates the construction of residential, commercial, industrial, and accessory structures. The County, in agreement with the City, uses the City Building Inspector for all structural inspections.

Historic Preservation/Revitalization:

History is one of Maysville's and Mason County's outstanding assets. As documented earlier in the text, Maysville and Mason County have an abundance of historic sites and structures, from the early settlement days of the late 1700s, to the Civil War involvement, to distinctive architecture of the 1800s and 1900s. The city has a Tourism Director who oversees efforts to preserve the historic values of downtown Maysville while encouraging the physical and economic revitalization of that area. The Maysville-Washington Board of Architectural Review also plays an important role in preserving the historic and architectural heritage of the community. Great care should be given by all responsible parties to insure that the community preserves these historic treasures while supporting their use (as appropriate).

COMMUNITY ASSESSMENT (SUMMARY STATEMENT)

Opportunities and Challenges:

In order to determine the directions to be taken in the plan, it is necessary to

assess the status of the community and its resources. Part of this community assessment process consisted of asking various individuals and groups for their perception of the community's strengths and problem areas. The statement of goals and objectives, as well as the plan strategies are based on an understanding of those things that need to be changed, and on the community's ability to deal with those changes. The following lists summarize the findings of the community assessment:

Community Strengths:

1. **Location** on the Ohio River roughly within an hour's drive of three metropolitan areas, with two bridges, a diversified transportation system, and a surrounding largely rural-agricultural landscape, gives the county strategic advantages for the future
2. Probably the single most important strength the community has is its **people**. The population is regarded as friendly, willing to support local activities, hard-working, capable of making adjustments to changing circumstances, a positive outlook about the future, etc.
3. The community's **diversified economy** is a major asset. The farm economy has remained strong and viable over the years. With a well-established trade and service sector and an expanding industrial base, the county's economy should be able to weather the short-term ups and downs that will occur from time to time.
4. **Educational resources** are considered to be one of the county's strong points. Improvements in academic measures and the availability of technology in the county and private schools, along with the resources of the community college should help to improve employment opportunities and augment the quality of life for citizens.
5. **Pending Transportation Improvements** will help to alleviate some of the congestion problems, improve access throughout the county, and improve linkages with surrounding counties.

6. The great number of **churches** and the many **civic-volunteer organizations** are seen **as stabilizing factors** in the community.
7. The **richness of historic values** in the community provides strong reference points, and offers additional opportunities for tourism development.
8. The **small size and relative compactness** of the county lends itself to effective administration and community closeness.
9. **Excellent medical facilities and health services.**
10. The **availability of land and the quality of soils for farming.**
11. The **potential** to strengthen the community's role **as a small regional growth center.**
12. The **assistance** of Buffalo Trace Area Development District resources as well as state and federal government offices.
13. **Cooperation of local financial institutions** in local development projects.
14. **People from outside the community** who have been **willing to invest** in preservation and other projects.
15. Cooperation between City and County Governments and the local Area Development District.
16. The emergence of a vibrant cultural arts district including the Maysville Players, Downing Academy of Performing Arts, Maysville Community and Technical College's Culinary Arts Program, Ohio River Valley Art Guild, Kentucky Gateway Museum, local high school art students, and the Arts Commission.
17. The positive impact of commerce via the Ohio River.

Problem Areas:

1. **Inadequate sewage disposal** in the rural areas of the county leading to pollution problems and possible health concerns. Steps should be taken

to see that future concentrated development is not dependent upon septic tank systems for sewage disposal.

2. **Visual blight** resulting from littering, dumping of garbage/trash, substandard structures, junkyards, etc., and **lack of attention** being **paid to aesthetic values**. Most people desire to live in an attractive environment. In addition, a clean landscape is an important component in any tourism development program.
3. The **aging of the population** and the related need for support services, housing, etc. As the local population continues to grow older, it will be necessary to spend more time planning for their needs and to allocate additional resources to this segment of the population.
4. The **need for revisions to the plan and the tools used to implement the plan**. The 1987 plan is being revised through this document, to include recommendations for improving upon the policies and programs needed to carry out the plan's proposals.
5. The impending **problems related to tobacco farming** and the need to fill the void created by its decline. The problems related to the decline in tobacco farming are far reaching, but with the disposition of settlement funds other areas are being explored, such as cattle, increased grain production and agri-tourism.
6. The **need for more assisted/affordable housing**. It is increasingly difficult for a large segment of the population to find decent affordable housing. Increases in land values, housing costs, and down-payments, together with low vacancy rates all contribute to this problem.
7. The **low level of citizen involvement** in community issues. Citizens have a tendency to stay away from meetings on public issues unless there is a very direct/personal tie to their property or to financial concerns.

8. **Inadequate protection of watersheds.** Development is taking place without adequate attention being paid to drainage and soil erosion.
9. **Inadequate protection of historic sites and structures.** As indicated in the list of assets, Mason County has a unique quality due to its rich historic resources. These historic sites and structures cannot be replaced, and their retention should be a high priority item.
10. **Inadequate infrastructure in rural areas** to meet the needs of more intensive development. Much of the county has roads that are too narrow for heavy traffic, waterlines that are too small for domestic use or fire flow, and septic tanks that do not function well.
11. Aging infrastructure, including the sewer and floodwall systems in the City and road system in the County.
12. The **lack of sufficient local governmental resources** (money, staff, etc.) in meeting increasing demands for services. It is anticipated that both the city and the unincorporated portions of the county will continue to experience growth and development. With most of the economy/revenues concentrated in the city, it will be increasingly difficult for county government to provide an adequate level of services without new revenues.
13. **Traffic congestion** in some areas (largely during peak hours in a few spots). There are a few spots in Maysville where traffic flow reaches undesirable levels. Completion of pending road improvements should help to reduce these problems.
14. The need for **additional recreational resources** and the **conservation** of natural areas.

Concluding Remarks:

Many of the findings of this assessment parallel the findings of the 1987 Comprehensive Plan. The 1987 plan stressed the needs of the City of Maysville and placed a high priority on industrial development, transportation (highway) improvements, and land use controls. The recommendations regarding industrial development and transportation were largely acted upon, and since the adoption of the 2001 Plan, recommendations on countywide land use controls have been addressed. The 2011 plan shifts the emphasis to a more broad-based approach to meeting the needs over the next 15-20 year period. This shift will become more apparent in the statement of goals and objectives and in the development of strategies for implementing the plan.