

PLAN STRATEGIES

Strategies are more specific statements about how the plan's recommendations are to be implemented. This section of the plan provides decision-makers with the information needed for making appropriate choices of actions to be taken. The same format used in previous sections is followed to give consistency to the text and to facilitate the reader's understanding. The first plan element to be addressed is transportation.

TRANSPORTATION

As discussed in the plan assessment, Mason County has a well developed and diversified transportation system that provides adequate linkages with adjoining counties and regions. The highway system radiates outward from the City of Maysville in all directions (Figure 10) and facilitates the flow of vehicular traffic to important urban centers (Cincinnati, Lexington, Ashland, etc.). The railroads serve a heavy volume of north-south freight movement as well as passenger traffic east and west by Amtrak. The airport increasingly is becoming a focal point for general aviation traffic. The Ohio River provides Mason County with direct access to one of the major inland waterways in the United States.

Mason County presently has excellent east and west connections via the AA Highway. North-south linkages are somewhat weaker, limited by older two-lane highways. The William Harsha bridge has improved connections with communities in Brown County, Ohio. Current construction projects on U.S. Hwy. 68 in Nicholas and Bourbon Counties will improve Mason County's access southward to the Lexington Metro Area.

Traffic flow figures for 2009/2010 show average daily totals reaching 3,000 (3rd & Market Sts) and 14,000 (3rd & Bridge Sts) in the downtown Maysville area, 13,000 to 19,500 along interior portions of the AA Highway, and 1,000 to 6,000 at various points along the county boundary (KY Transportation Cabinet)

The 2010-2012 Six Year State Highway Plan includes the following projects for Mason County:

- a. Relocation of Highway 68 from one mile south of Washington to the AA Highway opposite the new Maysville bridge approach -

- a 3.8 mile improvement, with \$21.5 million for construction in 2011-2012.
- b. New route from U.S. 68 near Washington east to Ky. 11 and the AA Highway (2.7 and 2.9 miles respectively) - total estimated construction cost for both sections is \$66 million in 2014.
- c. Repair bridge on KY-11 over CSX Railroad and Strodes Run Pike using high strength steel reinforced polymer (srp) fibers. (FY09 FBRD Discretionary Funding).
- d. Major widening of the AA Highway to 4 lanes from the new Maysville bridge approach intersection west to Ky. 10 near Fernleaf (3.5 miles)- estimated construction cost is \$9.3 million in 2012.
- e. Construct a new access road via KY-3161 (Carmeuse Lime).
- f. Reconstruct/Improve KY 1448/Maple Leaf Road from KY-9 to US-68, construction FY 2012.

See Figure 8 for location of these projects.

The 2011 prioritization list from the KY Dept. of Highways included the following projects:

- a. Widen AA Highway to 4 lanes/increase capacity and decrease conflict points north of the junction with KY 435 to the Bracken County line; and then on in to Bracken County to mile-point 5.55 to support 2025 traffic volumes, address sight distance concerns, improve intersection safety and reduce speed differentials.
- b. Minor widening and improvements on US 68 from south of KY 324,

MP 4.5 to 1.0 mile south of Old Washington, MP 10.854. Add turn lanes to major intersections, evaluate need for additional passing lanes, cut slope revisions to improve intersection sight distances, add other safety measures.

- c. Make safety changes to the intersection of US 62/68 and KY 9 within existing right-of-way.
- d. Widen KY 9 to 4 lanes/increase capacity and decrease conflict points from the Lewis County line, to the Landfill Road (near MP 5) to support 2025 traffic volumes, address sight distance concerns, improve intersection safety, and reduce speed differentials.
- e. Construct right turn lane into Clarkson Sherman Road (Landfill, 4.740) to provide safety for motorists traveling along KY 9.

The projects with the greatest impact on future traffic flow patterns are the relocation of U.S. 68 from south of Maysville to the new bridge, and the new connector from near Washington to Highway 11 and the AA Highway in the east. These two projects together comprise a bypass around Maysville. These projects are being designed as a partial access highway improvements, with direct access allowed at major highway/road crossings. The proposed roadway cuts through rural farmlands and will play a major role in future land use decisions.

Figure 8

The City of Maysville, the Mason County Fiscal Court, and the Planning Commission joined forces to forward recommendations regarding the new South Loop, as follows:

1. Grade separations at all cross roads with grading for future ramps.
2. Limited access. This is critical in maintaining effective traffic flow.

3. Two lanes from AA Highway south to US Highway 68.
4. Two lanes, but grade and drain for four lanes, from US Highway 68 to Ky. 11.
5. At Ky. 11, grade and drain for future grade separation.
6. In order to address the dangerous intersection at the AA Highway and Ky. 11, the City requests that the present intersection be reconstructed to provide grade separation. Alternately, the situation can be addressed by expediting the construction of the remainder of the South Loop from KY. 11 to the AA Highway near Orangeburg. The intersection at that location should consist of a ramp from the South Loop to the AA Highway eastbound and a ramp and overpass from the AA Highway westbound onto the South Loop.
7. Grade and drain for frontage roads at selected intersections with the City of Maysville assuming ownership and maintenance of frontage roads. This will allow for orderly growth and development as public services become available at these locations. This also prevents landowner opposition based on lack of access and reduces political pressure for access to the South Loop.

The county road system consists largely of paved roadways that are less than 20 feet in width and not adequate to meet the needs of significant additional development. The system is quite extensive and is faced with difficulties in making future improvements due to limitations of the terrain. The county should design a five year plan for improvements with emphasis placed on those areas that are currently faced with development pressures. The minimum paved roadway width should not be less than 20 feet in order to adequately accommodate the level of traffic flow associated with intensive residential (and to some degree) commercial development.

A proposed major highway improvement through a predominantly rural/agricultural area of Northern Kentucky is being studied (Figure 9). The improvement is in the conceptual stage, with a proposed corridor that would extend from I-74 in Indiana, cross the Ohio River near the Markland Locks and Dam, proceeds in a southeasterly direction through Gallatin, Carroll, Owen, Grant,

Pendleton, Bracken, and Mason counties of Kentucky, crosses the Ohio River west of Maysville (new bridge) and terminates in Ohio with a proposed I-74 improvement corridor in that state. If built, the proposed highway would likely take the form of either, 1) a major arterial highway with partial control of access (that is, with at-grade intersections at major routes, but no other local access), or 2) an interstate highway with full control of access (that is, with interchanges at major routes, and no other local access).

This proposed improvement is at best a long-range project that would not have any appreciable impact on the Mason County area within the next 10-15 years. If it were to be built, it would pull additional traffic through Mason County, and serve as another focal point for development.

Mason County's greatest long-term need for regional accessibility is an improved north-south connection in Kentucky. The Harsha Bridge provides a better linkage northward to Highway 52 and Highway 32 (a four lane highway) in Ohio. Lexington is an important southern focal point for interaction with Mason County, but access is very limited by the existing two lane highway (US 68). Selected segments of US 68 are being reconstructed, and local officials should continue to press for the entire route to be upgraded. The section from Lexington to Paris is complete, and the section from the Paris by-pass to the north side of Millersburg is scheduled for construction in 2011.

Figure 9

The Fleming-Mason County Airport is located six miles south of Maysville just off of Highway 11. The airport facilities include a paved runway 75 feet wide by 5000 feet in length with lights. There is a localizer to direct aircraft in bad weather. A new terminal building was recently completed along with new hangers (total of \$430,000). Hangers and deck space can accommodate 40 aircraft. There are some 30 private aircraft presently based on site. Aircraft operations average about 550 flights per month, mostly private prop planes. Freight traffic averages about 3-5 planes per week.

The airport is funded jointly by Maysville and Mason County, and Flemingsburg and Fleming County. Fuel sales provide additional revenues. Other services include plane and pilot rental, flight instruction, certified maintenance personnel and aerial photography. Funding for major capital improvements comes from the

F.A.A. and the state. An Airport board comprised of three representatives from both counties oversees operation. Coleman Air Services is responsible for daily management of airport activities.

The taxiway has been extended the full length by widening the runway 100 feet, extending it 5,500 feet, and restriping and resealing it. They are currently (2011) in the process of purchasing more property to improve safety zones.

The airport is a vital element in the local economy. With future improvements, the level of activity is expected to increase and the airport's general aviation function should take on a much greater role in area growth and development.

Both the city and the county have applied for and received funds for Transportation Enhancement projects to include, the Bierbower House, Minerva Church, Maysville Bridge lighting, Russell Theater, Streetscape Phase II, underground utilities in Old Washington, downtown sidewalks, and the Harriet B. Stowe House.

Maysville-Mason County River Port Authority

Maysville and Mason County's location on the Ohio River is an important asset whose potential has been tapped only partially. Commercial river boats make periodic stops to allow travelers to take in the tourist attractions in the area, and significant quantities of coal and limestone move out of the area by river barge.

The Ohio River extends a distance of 981 miles from its origin at the confluence of the Allegheny and Monongahela Rivers in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, ending in Cairo, Illinois where it flows into the Mississippi River. The Ohio River Basin covers parts of six states, and is home to more than 27 million people (almost 10% of the U.S. population total). The Ohio River System is considered to be the most modern in the country from a navigational standpoint. There are 20 dams and 40 power generating facilities on the river, and a nine-foot minimum depth is maintained for navigation. More than 242 million tons of cargo are transported on the river each year, with coal and other energy products making up 70% of the commerce traveling by barge.

The Meldahl Hydroelectric Plant in Foster, KY, approximately 30 miles down river from Maysville, is being developed under a partnership with American Municipal Power, Inc. and the city of Hamilton, Ohio, which holds a 51 percent

share in the ownership of the plant. Plans for distribution of the future power production are being made. An application was made with the Ohio Power Siting Board to run a 138 kilovolt electric transmission line from the Meldahl hydroelectric site to the existing 345 kilovolt Zimmer-Spurlock transmission line, approximately two miles inland from the Ohio-side landing of the river crossing. With an estimated average annual gross output of 558,000 megawatt hours of electricity, completion of the cofferdam means the Ohio River and any flooding issues will be contained. Operation is slated to begin in 2014.

Pittsburgh has the nation's largest inland port, with almost 53 million tons shipped in 1998. Huntington, West Virginia ranks 27th with 24.7 million tons, Cincinnati, Ohio, 50th with 12 million tons, and Louisville, Kentucky 61st with 8.6 million tons.

Kentucky ranks 11th in the United States in waterborne traffic with 89.6 million short tons (1998) as a result of its location on both the Ohio and Mississippi Rivers.

There are numerous smaller ports situated along the length of the river (Portsmouth, Ohio; Mt. Vernon, Indiana; Owensboro, Kentucky, etc., Figure 12); Portsmouth, Ohio, located about 63 miles upstream from Maysville, has recently reclaimed a 130 acre brownfield site for riverfront industrial development. Most of the counties in Ohio that are on the river are considered to be priority investment areas, with prospective companies qualifying for higher tax credits, lower than normal interest rates on financing, and other incentives. The Maysville - Mason County River Port Authority could tap into similar economic incentives offered by the Cabinet for Economic Development in Kentucky.

The Maysville-Mason County River Port Authority was established to provide a local means of promoting and developing river-related industry, agriculture, and commerce along the Ohio River. The Authority receives revenues from industrial development for its operation. The River Port Authority may borrow money from any source on its own credit in anticipation of revenue to be derived from taxes,

appropriations, or other income, and for such purposes the authority may pledge the taxes, appropriations or income anticipated.

A study should be undertaken to determine the feasibility of developing river-related services and facilities. Included in this mix could be a small commercial port to facilitate the shipment of existing export items along with other products (agricultural, industrial); and the development of a marina/river park.

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

Mason County's economy has undergone major changes since the 1987 Plan. That plan called for major emphasis to be placed on attracting new industries to the county. As discussed in the community assessment, manufacturing has made significant gains and now plays a major role in the economic mix. The plan also called for retail growth, promotion of tourism, development of a port, and diversification of the farm economy. Those general goals continue to be applicable in the new plan.

The economy is the primary generator of the other components that comprise the community. Economic development is responsible for the creation of job opportunities, production of goods and services for consumers, the generator of revenues for both the public and private sectors, and in many ways impacts the overall quality of life in the community. It is essential that community leaders have a strategic plan in place for strengthening the economy.

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT PRINCIPLES:

There are a number of important principles that should be considered in the city/county economic development plan:

1. Place emphasis on **basic** economic activities - those that bring new money into the community from outside. These activities will in turn have a **multiplier effect** on the local economy, generating additional non-basic or supporting activities (restaurants, grocery stores, etc.).
2. Stress the **retention of the viable components** of the local economy.

Identify and encourage those businesses and industries that are alive and well by providing assistance as needed.

3. Look for **expansion opportunities**. Identify and encourage those entities that are considering an expansion to their operation and provide appropriate assistance.
4. Continue to **attract** new businesses and industries into the community. Emphasis should be placed on those businesses and industries that will enhance the local economy and will be good community partners.
5. Continue to **diversify** the economy. In the process of attraction and expansion, give consideration to those entities that will broaden the economic base, both across and within the different economic sectors.
6. **Concentrate** economic activities in selected areas. Guide new businesses and industries into those areas that are zoned for those kinds of activities, and where the advantages of agglomeration may be maximized.
7. **Entrepreneurship development**. Encourage both local people and outside interests to become involved in the creation of new ideas and start-ups through provision of incubator facilities and training programs.

THE FARM ECONOMY:

Farming is an important component of Mason County's economy. The number of farms has increased, the amount of land in farms has increased, but more intensive land uses are encroaching into farming areas, and the primary source of farm

income, tobacco, has been diminished. Recommendations for dealing with these problems are discussed in the plan element entitled Rural/Agricultural Areas on pages 99-102.

MANUFACTURING:

As described in the Community Assessment, manufacturing has experienced a significant increase in employment in the past decade. There are presently 20 manufacturers in Mason County, employing over 3,600 workers, and producing a variety of products. In 2011, Browning Manufacturing (Emerson Power Transmissions) is was the leading employer with some 441 employees, followed by Mitsubishi (204), Federal Mogul (182) and Green Tokai (261). A complete listing of manufacturers and their products is included in the Appendix.

TOURISM:

Tourism and travel contribute some \$19 million to the local economy (33rd among the state's 120 counties). Travelers spend about \$505.00 per trip on the average according to the Travel Industry Association of America (1999). In order for Maysville and Mason County to maximize the revenues that come with tourism, the local area must function as a destination for more tourists rather than serve as an intervening opportunity.

The single most important tourism attraction in Maysville and Mason County is **history**. Downtown Maysville, Old Washington, and rural Mason County are rich in historical assets. The major focal points for tourists include Civil War History, the Village of Old Washington, the National Underground Railroad Museum, the Kentucky Gateway Museum Center, Russell Theater, Limestone Landing, Washington Opera Theater, Cox Building and May's Lick, Germantown and Minerva. Estimates for total visitations to Old Washington are figured to be between 15,000 and 20,000 per year. The Underground Railroad Museum, Opera Theater, and Kentucky Gateway Museum Center are being renovated at costs of \$273,000, \$2,000,000, and \$4,000,000 respectively.

In addition to historic sites and structures, there are many special events held in Maysville and other local communities. Almost every month of the year has a special activity designed to draw people from surrounding areas. These special events and their activities are listed below:

January:		
February:		
March:	Rotary Club	
	Farm Equipment Sale	
April:	Chocolate Festival	
May:	Asparagus Festival	Garden, asparagus-cooking
	(May s Lick)	contest, arts, crafts, food, music
	American Road, Horse	
	and Pony Show	
	Buffalo Trails Multi-sport	5K, Duathalon, and Triathalon
	Racing	In Downtown Maysville
June:	Maysville Uncorked	Wine tasting featuring
	(Downtown Maysville)	Kentucky vineyards, arts music
		and food
July:	4 th of July Parade & Fireworks	parades, entertainment, 5-K
	(Downtown Maysville)	run, contests, fireworks
August:	Old Reliable Germantown	Bandstand music, horse shows,
	Fair (Germantown)	baby/beauty contests, rides
	Oktoberfest	Authentic German cuisine and
		beverages
September:	Simon Kenton Festival	Historic re-enactments, pioneer
	(Old Washington)	life, old fashioned parade,
		drama
	Rosemary Clooney Concert	Concerts on Friday and
	(Downtown Maysville)	Saturday nights
	Rotary Club Horse Show	
	Pig Out in Maysville	BBQ Festival
October:	R Farm Pumpkin Fest	
	(Strodes Run Road)	
	Halloween	
	(Downtown Maysville)	
November:	Veterans Day Parade	
	Downtown Maysville	
December:	Twilight Christmas Parade	Parades, Santa s arrival, open
	(Downtown Maysville)	houses for merchants
	Frontier Christmas	Pioneer exhibits, carolers,
	(Old Washington)	Shopping, food, walking tours

Downtown Christmas
Open House
(Downtown Maysville)

Emphasis should be placed on retention and enhancement of those events that appear to be successful in attracting visitors. There should be an effort made to add even more special events to the present list. A study such as the one recently conducted in Old Washington might be expanded to examine other sites and structures, identifying needed improvements, and proposing strategies for future development.

Most visitors to Maysville and Mason County arrive by automobile. In addition, a number of bus tours include the local area on their itinerary, and the American Queen makes periodic stops at Limestone Landing (which, according to employees of the boat, is one of the best docks along the Ohio River), allowing travelers several hours to tour local attractions. Many of the visitors are senior citizens on fixed incomes who do not spend much during their visits.

A vital component of the city's tourism development plan is the availability of meeting space. At the present time, facilities for hosting conventions or other sizeable meetings are inadequate. The city received \$450,000 initial funding from the state to develop a new conference center, which was completed in 2005. The Maysville Conference Center's expansion into the newly renovated Cox Building will be complete in 2012.

In addition, the community has increased its ability to accommodate the traveling public. There are opportunities for three bed/breakfast inns at the present time, along with five motels/hotels that contain more than 350 rooms.

RENAISSANCE KENTUCKY

The City of Maysville received Silver Status for their involvement in the Renaissance Kentucky program established in 1996. The City elevated to Gold Status in 2001. The city has received \$1,100,000 to place utilities underground in a large area of the downtown, along with \$7,000 for planning, \$250,000 for environmental improvements at the Russell Theater, \$66,000 for facade improvements, \$300,000 for the development of a conference center, \$95,000 for

downtown economic development, and \$835,000 for restoration improvements at the Opera Theater.

ECONOMIC REVITALIZATION:

There are sites and areas in Maysville and Mason County that were formerly a viable part of the local economy that have subsequently experienced decline or abandonment. An important strategy in any economic development plan is to redevelop/revitalize these sites and areas so that they will make a positive contribution to the community. Included among these areas are downtown Maysville, Old Washington, and selected rural communities in the county.

Old Washington's revitalization concerns are discussed on page 108.

Mason County has three small incorporated places, Dover (252), Germantown, (154), and Sardis (103). These three communities have the basic ingredients in place for serving as small growth centers. In addition, there are several small rural communities in various stages of economic viability (Orangeburg, May's Lick, Plumville, Lewisburg, Minerva etc.). Some of these communities could be revitalized to serve as small growth centers. As rural growth centers, these communities could meet some of the future residential, commercial, recreational, and religious needs of the surrounding areas. A more detailed discussion of this concept is included in the plan element dealing with Land Use Management.

RETENTION AND EXPANSION:

There are a number of businesses in Maysville and Mason County that are in a marginal situation in regards to their continuation. Some of these businesses have very little potential for retention or expansion. On the other hand, there are small businesses with potential for growth, but need some direction from someone with business experience.

In order to further assist the recruitment and retention of business, the Maysville Community and Technical College has created a regional entrepreneur center. The office is located within the Chamber of Commerce on East Third Street and assists existing businesses with current and future needs, as well as entrepreneurs looking

to locate in the Maysville/Mason County area.

RETIREMENT POTENTIAL:

Mason County should be promoted as a destination for people who desire to retire and get away from the problems and pace of living that go with large urban areas. Over the years many former residents of Mason County have migrated to other places in search of better job opportunities. Some of these people are now senior citizens and might be enticed to come back home. Kentucky people have strong ties to the land and maintain those ties throughout their lives. Some of these former residents might be financially able and willing to invest money in development projects in Mason County.

People looking for retirement destinations are usually concerned about quality of life issues. They are searching for a place that is not too heavily populated (small town atmosphere), has a good selection of goods and services (to include health/medical services, recreation, continuing education programs), is attractive (aesthetic values), with a relatively low cost of living, housing options, a moderate climate, and recognizable historic reference points associated with the seniors generation. Mason County has most of these qualities in place. There is a need to develop additional housing and recreation opportunities, and to enhance the attractiveness of the area (through cleanup programs, removal of substandard conditions, etc.).

There are a number of publications that are designed to meet the needs of retired people, such as Activetimes Magazine (circulation - 7 million), Mature Outlook (circulation - 725,000), and Modern Maturity (circulation - 20.5 million). Advertisements should be considered for these publications as well as for regional metro newspapers such as Cincinnati, Louisville, Dayton, and Lexington.

REGIONAL ECONOMIC CENTER

Mason County should be promoted and marketed as the Regional Growth Center for Northeast Kentucky/Southeast Ohio, in addition to present promotional/marketing efforts. Mason County is presently the strongest economic center between the metro areas of Cincinnati, Lexington, Dayton, and Ashland/Huntington. The county dominates the industrial, retail trade, and service functions of a seven county area in Kentucky and Ohio. In addition, it is the focal point of significant historic assets, medical/health facilities, art/culture,

educational resources, and transportation. Its locational advantages are being enhanced by on-going transportation, and socio-economic improvements. The completion and implementation of an up-to-date comprehensive plan also adds to its competitive position above other small regional urban centers. A Regional Tourism Marketing Plan was established in 2004.

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT FUNDS:

Buffalo Trace Area Development District has been heavily involved in securing state and federal funding for a variety of public projects. Both the city and county should continue to utilize the expertise available in the BTADD office to tap government programs and to provide badly needed technical assistance in selected areas. A summary of the primary funding sources is listed in the Appendix.

THE LAKE PROJECT:

Development of a lake in Mason County would be a major attraction for residential development and supporting services. A study should be conducted to determine if a lake project is needed, and whether or not it would be economically feasible. The original proposal called for a very large lake extending across the county and requiring the acquisition of significant rural farmland (Figure 13). The study could look at other options including a smaller lake and other potential sites. In addition to its overall economic impact, the lake would be a major recreational asset for the local population.