




# LANCASTER

## STRATEGIC PLAN 2014



Created by the residents of Lancaster, Kentucky with assistance from the Kentucky League of Cities.  Kentucky League of Cities





# History of Lancaster



The City of Lancaster and Garrard County is rich with history and a deep-rooted connection to the land. Because of its proximity to the Wilderness Road, the area began seeing pioneers in the early exploration of the west. It was the 25th county, in order of formation, established in 1796 by the state legislature, and named for the Kentucky Governor of that day, James Garrard.

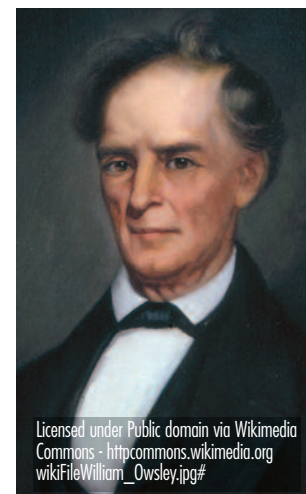
With Paint Lick Creek on the north, Dix River and Herrington Lake on the west, the Palisades of the Kentucky River on the north and the Knobs on the southeast, the county is beautifully situated. A welcoming site for many pioneers coming from the east.

In 1797 many of the settlers moving to the area were from Lancaster, Pennsylvania. They were drawn to the lush green hills, located in close proximity to Fort Boonesborough and Logan's Station. When Captain William Buford, a veteran of the Revolutionary War, donated 50 acres of his land for a public square, and asked Joseph

Bledsoe, Jr. to survey the site and draw up plans for the town, it was named for their former home, Lancaster.

#### Notable historic facts:

- ◆ Lancaster is home to three Kentucky governors: Robert P. Letcher, William Owsley and William O. Bradley.
- ◆ Tobacco, hemp and cattle were the early agricultural products, shipped by flatboats on the Kentucky River to downstream markets.
- ◆ A cholera outbreak in 1833 killed many people, including some instances where entire families died. The following year, a fever



# History of Lancaster

epidemic claimed the lives of many more.

Forty years later, cholera broke out again and many in the town left, causing one report to say that the town was nearly deserted.

- ◆ Camp Dick Robinson was established just seven miles north of Lancaster as the first Union station south of the Ohio River. During the war, enlistments from Garrard County ran about three to one in favor of the Union.
- ◆ After the Civil War, emotions still ran deep and during the election of 1873, a disputed race for circuit court clerk turned to violence. Two residents were killed and several wounded. The State Guard from Louisville was called in under martial law to restore order.
- ◆ The Stanford-Richmond line was completed as part of the Louisville & Nashville Railroad in 1868, spawning growth in the city.
- ◆ Lancaster is home to the author and editor Eugenia Dunlap Potts, known for nine novels, including *Idle Hour Stories* (1909) and for serving as editor of the magazine, *Illustrated Kentuckian*.





# Introduction



The City of Lancaster is the county seat of Garrard County, Kentucky. With a population of approximately 3,433, city officials find themselves grappling with modern-day concerns of growth potential, meager resources and a desire to improve the community for generations to come.

City leaders reached out to their member association, the Kentucky League of Cities (KLC) to learn what resources such as grants and strategic planning might be available. Staff from the KLC Community Consulting Services met with the council and described ways in which they could provide services, supplying samples of what other communities have achieved.

In time, the council determined it was in the best interest of the city to move forward – to engage the citizens of the community in a discussion about their future. In doing so, city officials worked to get

the word out across the community and made a special effort to have the youth participate as well.

During the listening phase of the data gathering, residents were invited to share their ideas, hopes and dreams verbally, then by using maps, markers, and photographs of the city to visually explain what they have in mind.

The following pages of ideas, recommendations and strategies are based upon the input obtained from Lancaster residents during two public meetings, a youth retreat with high school student leaders, and a review of the community's assets. This strategic plan is built around the core values of the residents of Lancaster and is intended to be a road map for the next few years, guiding leaders as they make decisions about the city and its residents.

# What Citizens Said

## Listening Session

- ◆ Pride in community
- ◆ Good workforce
- ◆ Work together
- ◆ Agriculture community
- ◆ Housing issues
- ◆ Need good jobs
- ◆ Locals need to support local economy
- ◆ Build on Grand Theater economy
- ◆ Expand youth opportunities



## Design Session

- ◆ Recreation facilities
- ◆ Expand city limits
- ◆ Local food
- ◆ Define the trail system
- ◆ Restore historic buildings
- ◆ Permanent farmers market
- ◆ Parks/pocket parks
- ◆ Housing





# What the Youth Had to Say

## What Youth Like

- ◆ Close-knit community
- ◆ Feel safe
- ◆ We know everyone
- ◆ Small town feel
- ◆ Close to other places
- ◆ The Grand Theater
- ◆ Nice school building
- ◆ Town Square
- ◆ Tobacco Festival



## What Youth Want

- ◆ Good school system
- ◆ Safe community
- ◆ Playground
- ◆ Rural areas
- ◆ Small town
- ◆ Job opportunities
- ◆ Hospital/better medical services
- ◆ Arts
- ◆ Food convenience



## Youth Concerns

- ◆ Lack of funds
- ◆ Attitude
- ◆ Lots of people leave
- ◆ No reason to stay
- ◆ Lack of pride
- ◆ Lack of things to do
- ◆ Outside perception – perceived as weak
- ◆ Too much turnover in school leadership

# Community Core Values



When residents came together for public meetings, there were several common themes that emerged during their conversations. These concepts give a general description of what local people value and find meaningful about their community.

When asked to describe what they value about Lancaster, there were a variety of responses, many of which were similar in nature. These principles emerged as the core values upon which the following pages of recommendations and strategies are built.

## ♦ Safety

Both the adults and high school students recognize the sense of safety they have in their city. They like the small town feel because they feel they know everyone, and believe it is a close-knit community. There is also a recognition of the location of the community being close to other places and easy to get around.

## ♦ Young People

Citizens of the community are deeply proud of their young adults. This is evidenced by the new school and the commitment of the leadership to focus energy and resources on future plans that include input from the younger population.

## ♦ Good People With a Strong Work Ethic

Citizens feel a sense of connectedness to their neighbors, likely rooted in their agrarian heritage. People want good jobs, and the ability to provide for their families. They are willing to work for a better life. There is also a strong faith-based component to the community, and an interest in doing the right thing.

## ♦ Farming Community

Lancaster is an agrarian-based community. Residents understand the commitment to hard work that goes into farming and making a living off the land. There is a lot of pride in their farming heritage as seen in the ongoing Tobacco Festival held in the community.

## ♦ Pride in Heritage

Participants are keenly aware of their heritage, expressing pride in being home to three Kentucky governors. They also mentioned historic properties such as the Owsley House and the buildings within the downtown area as something of value.



# What We Recommend

## Economic Development Strategies



Jobs! People want them and need them. What does Lancaster have to offer and what should Lancaster do to attract jobs? There really are two strategies: (1) grow local jobs through local people and resources, and (2) recruit high-end industries and businesses from outside the county. Many of

the ideas, strategies and implementation steps within this plan focus on growing local jobs through local people. It is our belief that when the quality of life is good, the workforce is educated, entrepreneurship is nurtured and local leaders lead, then traditional economic development, i.e. industry, will come. Why? Because major industries want to locate in a community where the quality of life is great!

We believe in an “and” strategy for economic development. Communities should pursue traditional industry, manufacturing and corporate business. At the same time, communities should also be improving the quality of life, updating infrastructure, creating local businesses, and supporting the philosophy of “Local First.”

For Lancaster to be successful economically, we believe that the following things must happen:

- ◆ The entire community must get on the same page about what kinds of jobs should be pursued.
- ◆ The community needs **ONE** person whose sole responsibility is community and economic development. If everyone is responsible for community and economic development, then no one is accountable for results.
- ◆ The community needs to be “Workforce Ready.”
- ◆ The community must market itself in a positive manner – through example and action.
- ◆ The community must include everyone in the discussion and decision-making.
- ◆ Leaders need to lead.

## First – A Few Facts

The top four occupations with the largest number of job openings due to growth in Kentucky between 2012 - 2022:

- ◆ Cashiers
- ◆ Retail salespeople
- ◆ Food service workers
- ◆ Waiters and waitresses

What kind of jobs does Lancaster want?

- ◆ Fast Food Workers \$7 an hour (\$13,125 annual)
- ◆ Retail Sales Clerks \$9 an hour (\$15,900 annual)
- ◆ Commercial Businesses \$26 an hour (\$50,000 annual)
- ◆ Industrial Engineers \$37 an hour (\$70,000 annual)

Source: [www.payscale.com](http://www.payscale.com)

# Economic Development Strategies



To determine what people in Lancaster are qualified to do, we recommend:

## **Conduct a Job Skills Inventory**

- ◆ What skills do graduates and residents have?
- ◆ What skills do existing businesses need?
- ◆ What skills do the companies that you envision for Lancaster need?
- ◆ Do these align? If so, target companies that require these skills and recruit. If not, commit and execute a four-year job skills development strategy.

## **Take Stock of What You Have**

- ◆ High school metadata on student skill levels and qualifications
- ◆ Qualifications required by existing businesses
- ◆ Projections for what will be needed
- ◆ Survey of existing businesses
- ◆ Research data from Cabinet for Economic Development

## **What Will Make Lancaster a Success?**

Lancaster must develop and implement a series of strategies that will create a thriving, local and diversified economy.



# The Vision



Lancaster becomes the hub of the local economy movement in Kentucky.

This means:

- ◆ Local people meeting local needs;
- ◆ Building an integrated food system - including a community-owned co-op grocery;
- ◆ Developing a great quality of life based on education including a folk school;
- ◆ Teaching crafts, vernacular art, music, and writing; and
- ◆ Supporting entrepreneurial business development (services, manufacturing, crafts, trades, restaurants, hospitality, and animal husbandry – in order to take advantage of that quality of life).

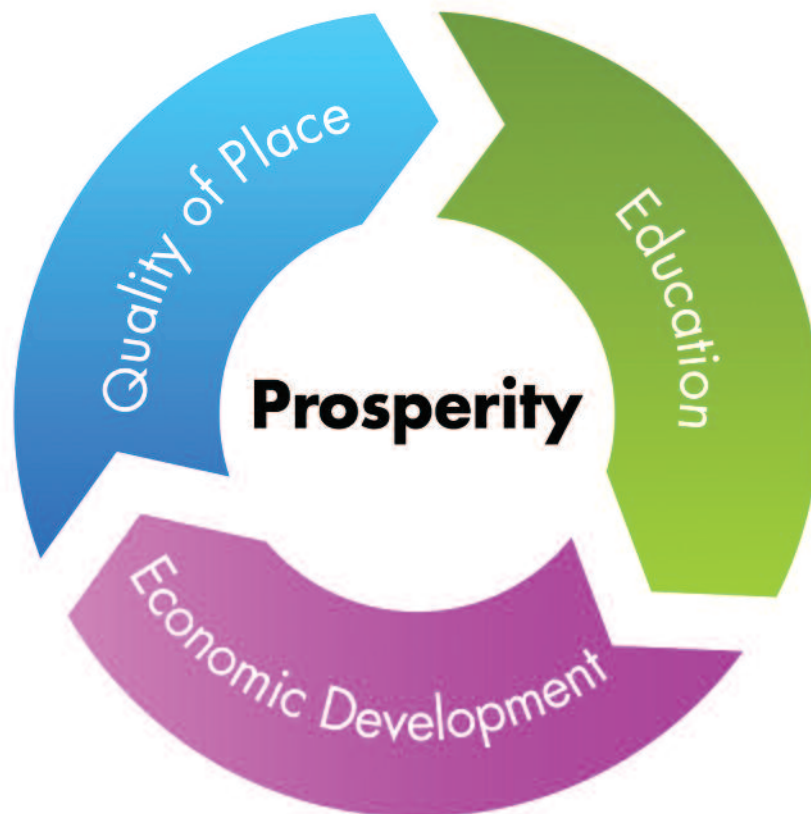
## Folk School Subjects May Include:

- ◆ Tool making
- ◆ Wood carving
- ◆ Furniture building
- ◆ Natural containers
- ◆ Environmental art
- ◆ Fiber arts
- ◆ Music
- ◆ Creative writing
- ◆ Blacksmithing
- ◆ Organic farming and gardening
- ◆ Paper arts
- ◆ Pottery and earthen kilns
- ◆ Knapping (stone tool making)
- ◆ Leather work
- ◆ Toy making
- ◆ Earth drawing
- ◆ Wood lathe turning
- ◆ History
- ◆ Philosophy
- ◆ Storytelling
- ◆ Stone wall masonry



# The Results

- ◆ The local community is energized to be a part of something unique and to share their lives with newcomers.
- ◆ Young people not only stay in the community but flock here because of authenticity and the opportunity to become entrepreneurs.
- ◆ Business opportunities increase as the barriers to entry are lowered.
- ◆ Economic gains generated in the community stay in the community.
- ◆ A sustainable tax base that increases.
- ◆ An economic eco-system is developed to support the Grand Theatre.
- ◆ Local buildings become viable again as incubators, businesses and living quarters.
- ◆ Visitors come to see a successful place and to enjoy the fruits of authenticity.
- ◆ Local values are respected and actually built upon, instead of degraded by unmanaged "growth."
- ◆ National media focus on such a positive only builds the buzz.
- ◆ Quality of life is improved as people develop a land and community-based economy.





# The How: How Do We Do It?

## Local First in All Decisions

Develop an educational campaign to help residents recognize the importance of local development by local people. By thinking local when making decisions in government services, education, and business development, the local economy will grow and prosper.

### Take Care of the Basics

- ◆ Work to see that quality of life for local residents is a priority.
- ◆ Government: consider every need from water, sewer, and roads, to fire and police protection.
- ◆ Business: think about medical care, the aging population, health and fitness of all citizens, housing needs and basic necessities.
- ◆ Education: consider areas of personal interests such as art, music, trade skills, crafts and hobbies as opportunities to continue educating the local population.
- ◆ Entrepreneurial opportunities will spring from these basic needs.

### Fill in the Gaps

- ◆ Identify gaps in local business and service provisions.
- ◆ Recruit people with business ideas to fill those gaps.
- ◆ Develop a small business incubator program – Greensburg, KY model.
- ◆ Advertise the need for these businesses in and outside of the community.

## Reduce Barriers to Entry

- ◆ Allow pop-up businesses, including food trucks.
- ◆ Streamline licensing and approval.
- ◆ Identify available properties for small business development. Build an inventory page on each property to include a photo, property and building measurements, parking availability, selling price, property owner contact information, if listed, and the realtors contact information.
- ◆ Provide entrepreneurial training and identify business savvy mentors for all adult age groups.
- ◆ Identify resources and tools that will assist existing businesses as well as incentivize new business development.

## Facilitate Strategic Business Opportunities

- ◆ Help create a community-owned co-op grocery.
- ◆ Value-added agriculture and resource development (including bio-fuels) – for example, Marksbury Farms.
- ◆ Help scale locally developed businesses in order to occupy land and/or buildings in the industrial park.



# A Grand Idea

## A Grand Idea...The Grand Theatre

The obvious local economic development strategy is to build on the energy and success of the Lancaster Grand Theatre. Eighty percent of the clientele is from other counties and states. The potential to capture new economic dollars has a huge upside. Scaling up spinoff businesses is a natural next step.

Some opportunities include:

- ◆ Locally owned restaurants serving local food
- ◆ Craft and art galleries
- ◆ Bed and breakfast type accommodations
- ◆ Bring music and art into the downtown area through identification and support of local artists – a steady stream of these will come from the Folk School

BEFORE



AFTER





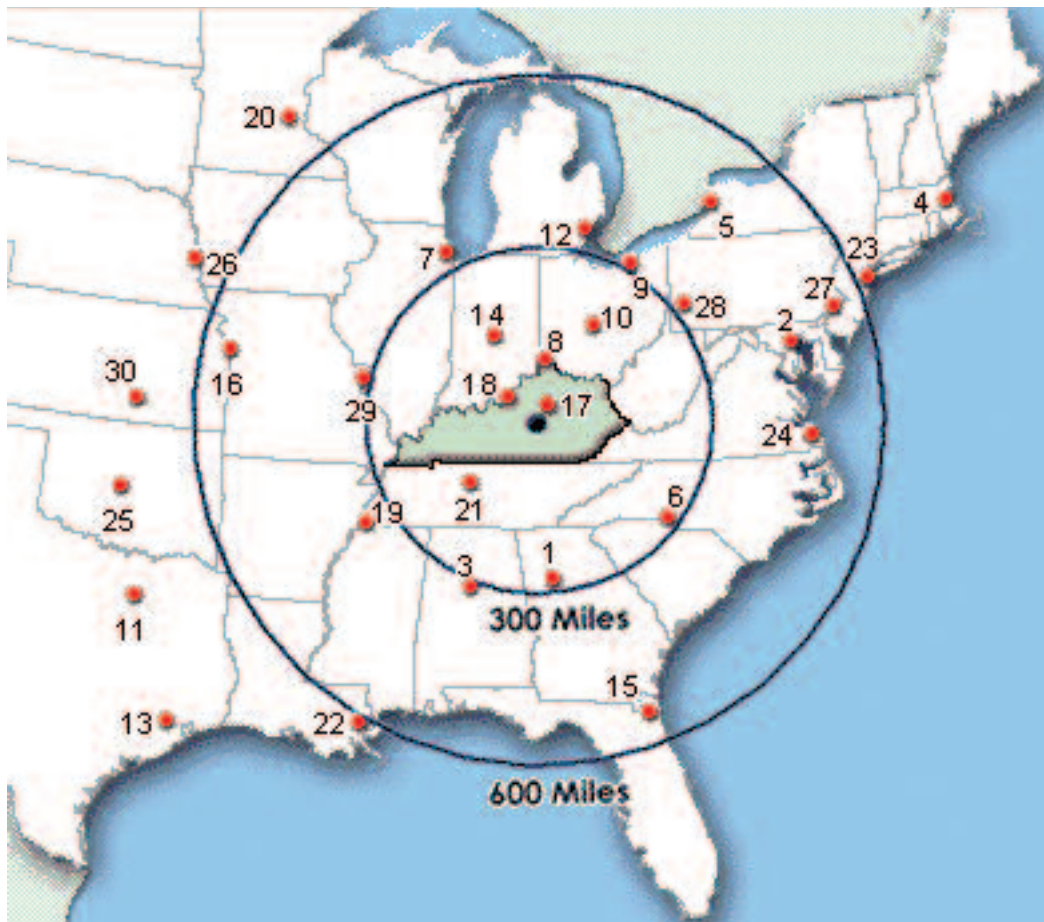
# A Grand Idea

## A Grand Idea...

- ◆ Tie the Grand Theatre experience to a Grand Experience Tour
- ◆ Historic walking tour downtown
- ◆ Historic cemetery tours
- ◆ Historic church tours
- ◆ Tour of governors properties
- ◆ Bike, hike and paddle around town and down the Dix River
- ◆ Overnight accommodations B&B, specialty hotels (local)

## We Recommend That Local Leadership Visit Successful Cities for Ideas

- ◆ The City of Paducah and its Lower Town Arts District
- ◆ The City of Bardstown with its small town charm
- ◆ The Cities of Jenkins and Williamsburg with their water parks
- ◆ The City of Georgetown with the Pavilion, a recreational facility



**22,000,000 people are within a half-day drive of Lancaster**

# Quality of Life Strategies

## Education Strategies

- ◆ “Reskilling – Teach to the new jobs that are needed
- ◆ Work to develop the “Dix River Folk School” to teach traditional skills and grow local businesses and products – Who would want to attend that? (See Wisconsin example.)
- ◆ All education requires mentors – pass on institutional community knowledge.
- ◆ Using the Governor’s School for Entrepreneurs, (<http://gse.kstc.com/>) as an example, develop a youth entrepreneurship mentoring program to teach young people how to start, manage, and grow a business.
- ◆ Adapt high school and college curriculum – to give more formal and broader education leading to diplomas and/or certificates in:
  - Culinary arts
  - Business management
  - Hospitality services
  - Science and technology-related professions



## Quality of Place Strategies

### Physical Improvements

- ◆ Town Square makeover
- ◆ Pocket parks
- ◆ Implement “Repair Affair” and “Paint the Town” programs
- ◆ Ecological (stream restoration, habitat, edible city)
- ◆ Quality housing for all income levels
- ◆ Address blighted housing issues





# Quality of Life Strategies



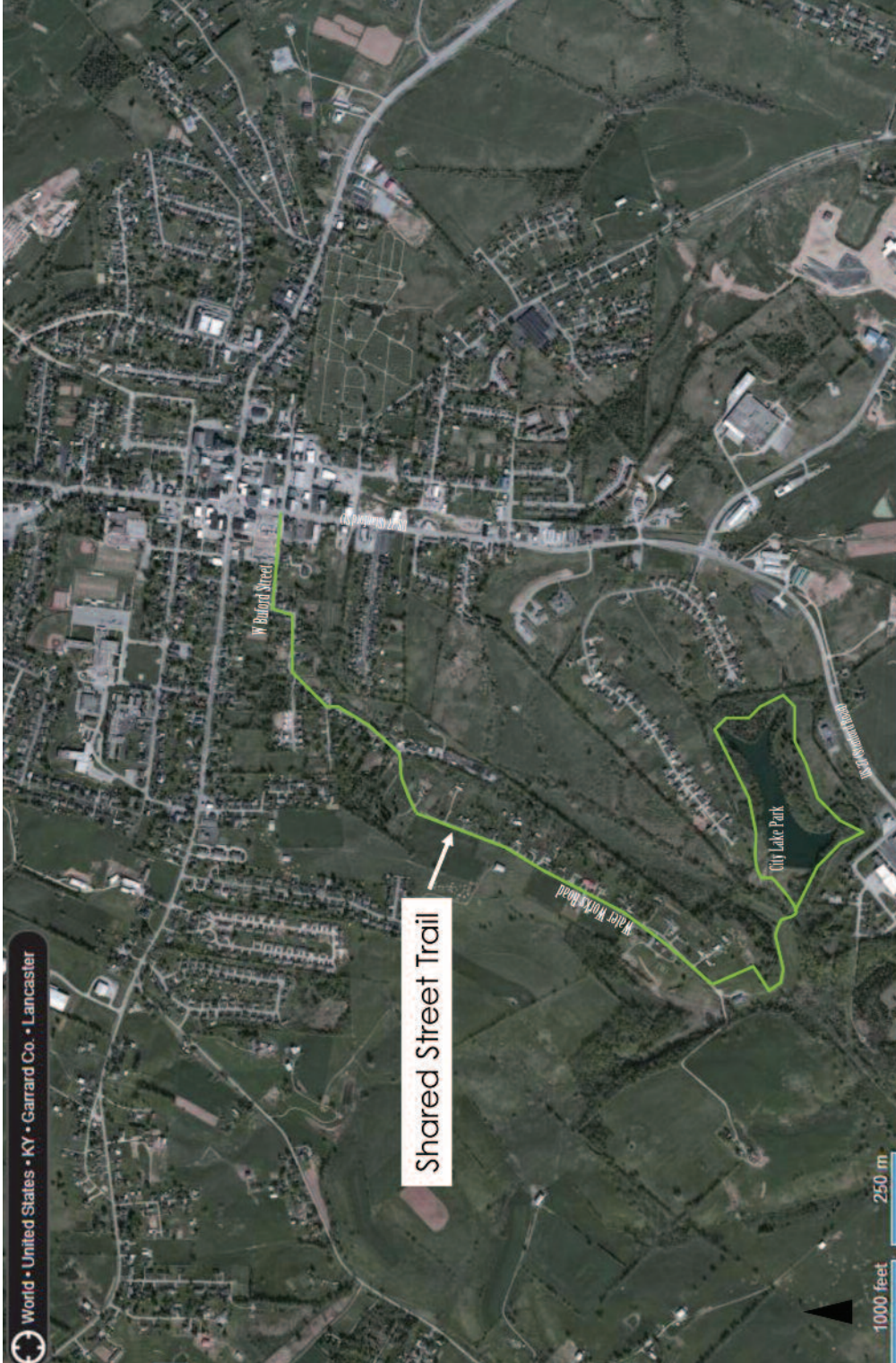
Mini Park

Downtown "Necklace"  
linking historic sites and mini parks

Trail to  
City Lake Park



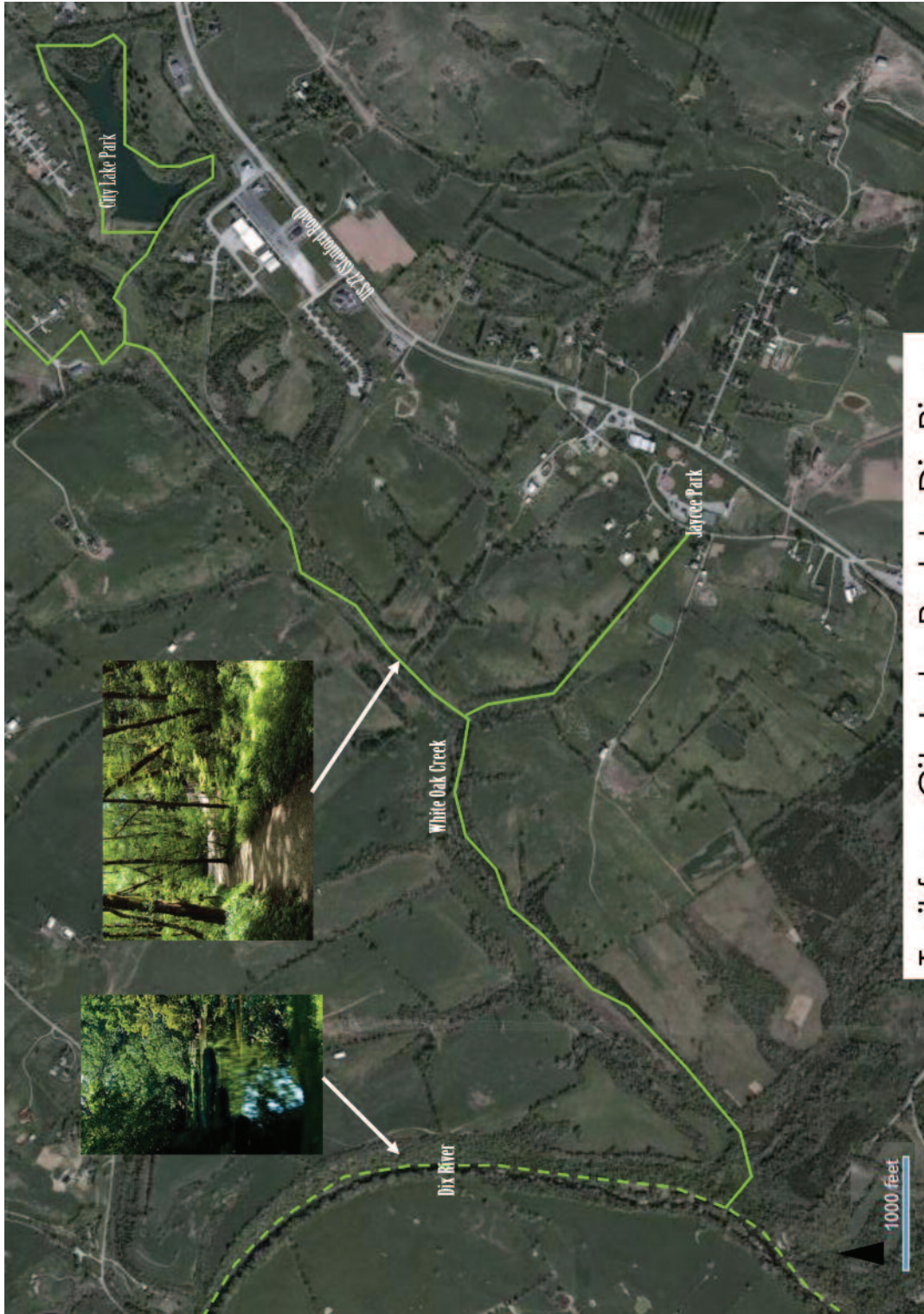
# Quality of Life Strategies



Trail from Downtown to City Lake Park



# Quality of Life Strategies



Trail from City Lake Park to Dix River



# Quality of Life Strategies

## Social Environment

- ◆ Commitment to good health through food, exercise, no smoking, and weight loss campaigns
- ◆ Social openness – “Everyone’s Welcome” campaign
- ◆ You-Tube – “Local Lancaster” channel by high school students featuring local news and events
- ◆ Encourage youth to become more involved in the community

## Emotional Environment

- ◆ Commit to a positive attitude about the community



- ◆ Incorporate positive components into every element of home, school and work
- ◆ Provide examples of how to increase positivity in all aspects of academics and sports to local schools, youth organizations, and churches

## Living and Housing Environment

Quality affordable housing is an issue for many Kentucky communities. Lancaster is no exception. The city should reach out to the following potential funders to kickstart a housing initiative.



- ◆ Blight/Affordable Housing/Rehabilitation – Kentucky Housing Corporation – [www.kyhousing.com](http://www.kyhousing.com)
  - GAP Pool Financing Grants – Open deadline
  - Community Housing Development Organizations (CHDO) – Consider establishing a CHDO to implement a comprehensive housing strategy
  - HOME Program – new construction, rental, rehabilitation
- ◆ Housing and Community Investment - Federal Home Loan Bank of Cincinnati - <https://web.fhlbcin.com/Pages/fhlbcin.aspx> - FHLB has many housing and community investment programs including:
  - The Affordable Housing Program (AHP)
  - Welcome Home Program (WHP)
  - Community Investment Programs (CIP)
  - Zero-Interest Fund (ZIF)
  - Accessibility Rehabilitation Program (ARP)

In addition, the city has several tools available to address blighted and abandoned housing. Many Kentucky cities have implemented tough ordinances to clean up their neighborhoods.

# Quality of Life Strategies

The Kentucky League of Cities can provide the City of Lancaster a list of cities to contact and sample ordinances to get started. This process is long-term and sometimes painful. We recommend that the city also conduct neighborhood cleanup days, utilize volunteers to help residents fix-up and paint their homes, and celebrate the successes within the community by initiating a “spotlight” moment to showcase some of the city’s residents who have cleaned up their properties. Before and after photos make the point more emphatically. This is a matter of community pride. The city will become more attractive to both residents and “potential” residents.

## Additional Growth Strategies

- ◆ Expanding the City’s Boundaries – During the community meetings, future growth was discussed. Many citizens expressed a desire to expand the city’s boundaries so that more residents will receive city services. In addition, this form of growth will increase the city’s tax base and provide an equitable return to the city for the services it already offers.
- ◆ Healthcare Services – As Lancaster’s population ages, healthcare will become the fastest growing economic sector of the community. Healthcare is viewed by economists as an “industry” and, as such, many of the same economic development strategies and best practices must be applied to take advantage of this opportunity. Recognizing that several healthcare agencies have regionalized and left Lancaster, the city should explore the kinds of healthcare businesses that would thrive in Lancaster. A needs assessment through a community survey would give the city’s leaders a good idea of the types of healthcare needs that could be met locally. The community is fortunate to still have local doctors that provide for the needs of its residents. An urgent treatment clinic might be one possibility that the city could pursue.
- ◆ Connectors – Lancaster is ideally located on a major north-south highway (U.S. 27) and is poised to link with I-75 via a new corridor to the east. Lancaster and Garrard County must be unified in pushing for completion of the connector to the interstate.
- ◆ City-County Cooperation – While this strategic plan is focused on the City of Lancaster, it is evident that the success of the city and county are inextricably linked. The successes and failures of one directly impacts the other. It impacts the external image across the state, the viability of the community as an economic development hub and the impression that newcomers instantly recognize. It is possible for each to fully represent its own constituency. It is also possible to work in a cooperative spirit to the benefit of both. Cooperation is not only a matter of leadership, it is also a barometer for measuring the economic and social viability of a community.



# What is it Worth?

**Generational Change** – The natural cycle of life requires that responsibility for the growth and prosperity of Lancaster passes from one generation to the next. City leaders, families and the community must work together to insure that the next generation is prepared to move Lancaster forward. This cycle requires three things:

- ◆ Commitment – To creating jobs, local wealth, education, and “civic responsibility.”
- ◆ Implementation – Moving from “planning” to “doing” by identifying residents who are passionate about some aspect of the plan and that are willing to invest their time, talent and money in the future of Lancaster.
- ◆ Investment – Lancaster needs to provide a way for its citizens to invest in the community. This can be accomplished in many ways including special fund-raising campaigns spearheaded by local civic organizations to accomplish a particular project; using online fund-raising websites such as [www.GoFundMe.com](http://www.GoFundMe.com) or [www.kickstarter.com](http://www.kickstarter.com); establishing a community foundation; or simply informing people that they can provide a gift to the community through their will.

**Transfer of Wealth** – The Kentucky Philanthropy Initiative conducted a study of the collective wealth of every county in the state of Kentucky. The purpose of the study was to identify how much wealth transfers from one generation to the next at the time of death over the years. The study estimates the amount of wealth that could be used for community development if only a small portion of the transfer was bequeathed to the community through a will. Below is only an example of the wealth that will be transferred in Garrard County over the next 20 years.

- ◆ Net Worth of Garrard County (PV) = \$980,000,000
- ◆ 20 YR Capture = \$33,000,000
- ◆ 5% Payout = \$1,600,000



Of course, not everyone – maybe only a few – would even consider leaving money from their estate to the community for public projects. The point is that over the past 200+ years of history in the United States, many of our great historic treasures and public places were built because local people wanted to leave a legacy within the community. What are the possibilities for Lancaster? And, who is willing to consider giving back to the community?

<http://www.kyphilanthropy.com/>



# What's Next?

The next steps for any community are always a challenge. We recommend "Pick One. Do One." Form working groups around each strategy and create mini-strategic plans. We have created an implementation guide for you to follow with a sample plan.

## Immediate Project Implementation

1. Identify your project/issue. Describe it in detail.
2. What needs to be done?
  - a. What does the end product look like?
  - b. How will you know you've been successful?
3. Who needs to be on board with the project? (Stakeholders)
4. How much will it cost? (Budget)
5. Who will pay for it? (Funding sources)
6. What is the first step? And then what?
7. Who will lead and do each step? (Take action)
8. When will it be done? (Time line and accountability)
9. How will you tell the story? Who do you want to hear the story? (Marketing)



IMPLEMENTATION PLAN			
Project	Planning Entity	Funding	Implementation
Parks and recreation plan	Advisory board, rec department and board	Grant requests, city match, fundraising	2 years
Remove outdated signs	Advisory board and public works leadership	n/a	6 - 9 months
Establish dialogue with business owners	Volunteer committee members	n/a	Ongoing
Tree ordinance	Advisory board	n/a	4 - 6 months
Streetscape design	Advisory board and volunteer committee	Grant, TEA-21, city	1 year plus
Blight control	Volunteer committee and code enforcement	Recycling funds	Ongoing



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