

# MANCHESTER



## Strategic Plan

2013



# MANCHESTER STRATEGIC PLAN



*“Where there is no Vision, there is no Hope.”*

- George Washington Carver



# Manchester – City of Hope

## A Brief History



Manchester is comfortably settled within the Appalachian mountains of southeastern Kentucky. Lying along the banks of Goose Creek, this city is the county seat of Clay County and serves as the gateway to the Daniel Boone National Forest.

Long before the city of Manchester was to be named, explorers, adventurers, and long hunters were in the area. Buffalo created a well-worn path as they sought out salt licks in the area. This same path was followed by Indians for hundreds of years as they migrated from north of the Ohio River to the Smokey Mountains. When the pioneers arrived, this same path which runs through what is now Clay County became known as Warrior's Path.<sup>1</sup>

Goose Creek was known to have an abundance of salty water.<sup>2</sup> There was a salt mine in operation as early as the late 1700s. The salt industry became increasingly lucrative for Kentuckians, particularly in Clay County.

In sharing the history of the area, county historian Charles House writes:

*The arrival of the salt men coincided almost exactly with the arrival of their opposites, land-hungry immigrants who were discovering that all the land in the Blue Grass had already been taken by 1800. It is this mix of the ambitious salt families - wealthy, powerful and educated - with the powerless, largely Scotch/Irish settlers, who wanted nothing so much as to just be left alone, that scholars account for the roots of the unique character of Manchester and Clay County.*

*This character has resulted in widely publicized unruliness at times - the notorious feuds were largely the result of the powerful using surrogates to fight their battles; the slave-owning salt families were at odds with the largely pro-Union populace before and during the Civil War - but has produced a populace that includes people of uncommon purpose, valor, and achievement. ...It is awareness of this unique history that can help shape Manchester and Clay County in the coming decades as a community of people who take a back seat to no one in the Commonwealth.<sup>3</sup>*



# Manchester – City of Hope

## A Brief History

From its beginnings, Manchester has been unique.

The City of Manchester was founded in 1807 as Greenville, depictive of the beautiful, lush green environment that surrounds it. Upon learning that there was already a Greenville community in Kentucky, the city fathers changed the name to Manchester. This name was perhaps selected to honor the great success of the British industrial center located in Manchester, England.

From the early days of settlement the salt industry was the economic driver. Slave-holding families built up the mines and in time, feuding between these entrepreneurial families became fodder for the national press.

During the Civil War, both sides fought over the mines and in 1862, they were destroyed by the Union to keep salt out of hands of Confederates. In the 1880s and 90s, Manchester was the site of frequent stories in papers like the New York Times about growing violence in its streets, primarily in the square downtown.<sup>4</sup>

In the early decades of the twentieth century, things began to settle down. By the mid-1930s, salt works were replaced by the coal and timber industries. As these industries eventually waned, poverty began to creep into the area.

It was in the 1980s that Manchester, like many other communities in America, began to struggle with drug problems, particularly the cultivation of

marijuana. By the 1990s the marijuana trade was replaced with an even more deadly threat from prescription and home-manufactured drugs.

In 2004, residents of the community were fed up and took to the streets to reclaim their community. Sixty-two churches of every faith came together to take a stand on the drug problems within the community. More than 3,000 residents walked the streets of Manchester, praying for a miracle. The story was picked up by national media and their efforts took hold all across America.

For Manchester, the results of these efforts affected change almost immediately. Drugs busts went up, drug dealers and users began coming to church and were committing themselves to Christ. Their miraculous stories were so moving that hundreds of communities across the country followed their lead. Because of this national recognition, the Manchester city council voted in 2007 to change the name of their town to Manchester: City of Hope.<sup>5</sup>

Yes, Manchester is notorious for the unruliness of some of their local characters. Yes, Manchester has had lots of opportunity to abandon hope and lose its self-esteem. And yet, each time it has revived itself, standing up, resilient, believing that “good” will always overcome and thrive.

As Manchester continues to live up to its history and its moniker of Hope, this plan is the embodiment of those hopes, dreams and visions.

<sup>1</sup> <http://claycountykentucky.org/>

<sup>2</sup> House, Charles. Heroes & Skallywags: the People Who Created Clay County, KY (www.pubthis.com 2010) page 24.

<sup>3</sup> [www.cityofmanchester.org](http://www.cityofmanchester.org)

<sup>4</sup> <http://claycountykentucky.org/>

<sup>5</sup> <http://www.cbn.com/tv/1420536202001>

# Manchester Strategic Plan – The Process

In the summer of 2013, the mayor of Manchester convened a meeting of several local residents to discuss the possibility of creating a strategic plan for the city. Those in attendance represented a diverse cross section of the community and serve as a steering committee for the planning process. The meeting was led by staff from the Kentucky League of Cities, who has been engaged by the city to facilitate the strategic planning process.

The steering committee talked about how best to get other people within the community interested in

the process and willing to contribute their ideas. A public listening and design session was decided upon and from that, strategies for implementation will be crafted.

The public meeting was held in September with more than 80 residents attending. A SWOT analysis (strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats) was conducted and many ideas were generated through a visioning process of what the community could look like in the future.



# What Citizens Said



What are the things that set Manchester apart from other cities or places?

- ◆ The people
- ◆ Lots of green space
- ◆ Lots of growing space
- ◆ Beautiful nature
- ◆ Talented people
- ◆ Peaceful
- ◆ Safe community
- ◆ Great schools
- ◆ Lots of history
- ◆ Education of our kids – need to keep them here
- ◆ It's home
- ◆ We are poor/object of a lot of generosity with the right plan
- ◆ Great, hard workers, but a lot work out of town
- ◆ Blank slate with common purpose

## STRENGTHS

- ◆ Our park system
- ◆ Our belief in God – our faith is strong
- ◆ Safe communities
- ◆ When there is a disaster, we help each other, come together
- ◆ We don't have homeless, have somewhere to call home
- ◆ Every school came up to the new standards, number 57 in state, great increase
- ◆ Education with HS, guidance counselors doing a great job
- ◆ We have lots of social events, get together often
- ◆ Passionate people
- ◆ Caring people, determined - don't bet against us

## WEAKNESSES

- ◆ Lack of employment/jobs
- ◆ Absence of development in the downtown/social appeal/curb appeal
- ◆ Drugs
- ◆ Too many drug stores
- ◆ Lack of restaurants
- ◆ Underutilized resources (no different than Pigeon Forge)
- ◆ Need stuff to do – recreation
- ◆ Not enough career opportunities
- ◆ Not enough volunteers for community work
- ◆ Poverty
- ◆ Community labeled as crooks/drug dealers
- ◆ Nothing for young people to do
- ◆ Ways and means for each person being able to contribute to the community
- ◆ Dilapidated houses
- ◆ Lack of water supply – need a new lake
- ◆ Lack of venture capital
- ◆ Good ol' boy network

# What Citizens Said

## OPPORTUNITIES

- ◆ Kudzu – alternative heat source/business opportunity
- ◆ Rock – seven civilizations represented – historic significance
- ◆ Use Appalachian culture to advantage/products/heritage/crafts/canning
- ◆ Parkway toward Big Creek – potential
- ◆ Trail Town – hikers/bikers/horses/ATVs
- ◆ Promoting tourism – [www.claycountykentucky.com](http://www.claycountykentucky.com) – swinging bridge
- ◆ New folk life play – Monkey Dumplin’
- ◆ Old Langsford
- ◆ Salt Mine Village – Civil War battle site – Col. Garrard buried in Clay County
- ◆ Made in Clay – 2nd annual showcase of local arts and crafts
- ◆ What holds this community back – critical mass – start a reaction that renews itself
- ◆ Y-Hollow – hiking trails
- ◆ Need a BIGGEST and BEST that would bring people to Manchester/Clay County
- ◆ A 1,100-acre undeveloped industrial park – what can we do to make that site reach critical mass – build the biggest something on that road – let’s build the biggest monument in the world to something – 1000 foot tall statue of Jesus
- ◆ Build a replica of the ark/dinosaur museum/Titanic museum
- ◆ Sand at Bert T. Combs Lake - make a beach
- ◆ Carnivals at same time as Clay County Days
- ◆ Renovate factories/houses – like Lewisville
- ◆ Dinner train from Manchester to Barbourville
- ◆ Camp for pioneers – recreate history
- ◆ Rock with Christian/Greek/Hebrew inscriptions
- ◆ Clean up the old building that burned down in the downtown/maybe a picnic place
- ◆ Build a cross instead of Jesus
- ◆ Thursday Night Market – downtown shops open late/farmers bring in produce

## THREATS

- ◆ Lot of apathy and naysayers
- ◆ Lack of organization
- ◆ Drugs
- ◆ Lack of economic diversity
- ◆ Too few people, charging too many
- ◆ Complacency
- ◆ When help is needed, can’t find help
- ◆ Drinking and driving
- ◆ Lack of funding for great projects
- ◆ Great ideas in the past, but nothing happens...weakens our resolve
- ◆ Rumors that there are limits to new things – preventing/hindering the dream

# Community Core Values

As the conversations concluded, the core values of the community emerged. It is upon these core values that the community's strategic plan is built.



## Community Core Values

As residents came together in a public meeting format they envisioned what they desire for their city in the next few years. During these conversations, several recurring ideas emerged. In distilling the meaning behind many of the words used to describe what citizens value about the community, the following community core values crystallized.

### Awareness

When talking about the strengths and weaknesses of the community, residents of Manchester and Clay County are matter-of-fact. There is a real sense of awareness among local citizens as to how others in the region, the state and even the nation perceive this community. Love it or hate it, the persona of the community has a long history, much of which has been broadcast for more than 200 years.

During the public meetings and in other community conversations, it became clear that today's residents are tired of being painted by the misdeeds of a small number of their residents. There is a burning desire to overcome these tawdry

depictions and replace them with a positive image of what their community is today and desires to be in the future.

### Youth and Education

The community is very proud of their youth, their schools and the level of education that is available to them. The schools have been recognized for increasing their status in statewide testing, a tremendous increase in just a few short years. There is also a strong desire to keep the youth in the community by providing good paying jobs.

### Creative Culture

Residents recognize the uniqueness of the community, both in its past history as well as today. There seems to be within the community a sense of entrepreneurship to develop jobs, new technologies, and new niches of economic development while supporting past traditions, embracing the diversity of community, and by encouraging young voices to be at the table.

### Caring People of Faith

Even with the colorful and sometimes sullied reputation the community has had since its inception, there is a keen sense of faith among residents. The resiliency of the people, caring about one's neighbor, belief in God, and looking out for one another were mentioned as strengths of this community. When combined with the march against drugs in 2004 by the citizens, there is no doubt that this is a caring community of faith.

### Natural Resources

The beauty of the land and the opportunities of the natural environment are central to the sense of place that residents feel. In discussing future opportunities for Manchester, wildlife, nature and tourism were prevalent throughout.



# The Vision: What Citizens Envision

A Design Session was held as part of the public engagement meeting and the following ideas were generated:

- ◆ Building on the Trail Town idea – focus on tourism
- ◆ Gateway signage
- ◆ Challenge parks (at Beach Creek)
- ◆ Build the local economy
- ◆ Surface water protection
- ◆ Public art
- ◆ Farmers market – central location
- ◆ Attention to details in town – cleanup, paint buildings, repair sidewalks, landscaping, lights
- ◆ Putt-Putt golf course
- ◆ Local arts and crafts in downtown area
- ◆ Wildlife at Y-Holler
- ◆ Fix the swimming pool at the park
- ◆ Dog run or dog park at one of the parks
- ◆ Improve Bridge Street
- ◆ Develop Pioneer Village along the river/festival
- ◆ Incorporate salt works, cabins and festival
- ◆ Bike lanes
- ◆ Fire pit at park for storytelling
- ◆ Virtual bulletin board for online conversations
- ◆ Involve high school students on boards and coalitions
- ◆ Shrubs/flowers/benches
- ◆ Teach crafts and trades to young people and visitors
- ◆ Swinging bridge tour
- ◆ Athletic fields on 1000 acres - Elk Hill project - three or four sports complexes



- ◆ Fresh food - farmers market in Manchester Square
- ◆ Focus on young people
- ◆ Develop entrepreneurs/small businesses
- ◆ More activities for everyone
- ◆ Museum
- ◆ Support local businesses – incorporate them in Clay County Days/keep them open during festivals
- ◆ Focus on young people/kid-friendly parks
- ◆ Accentuate guided tours – listing markets, swinging bridge, promote businesses, promote nature, photo opportunities
- ◆ Organized athletics – more opportunities
- ◆ Active living/trails/outdoor activities
- ◆ Monument Park – 1100 acres – statue of Jesus (or an iconic figure or symbol)
- ◆ Need parking downtown
- ◆ Want the entire county to benefit
- ◆ Develop commercial properties
- ◆ More housing development
- ◆ Assisted living facility – one of our #1 needs
- ◆ Grocery store for north end

# We Recommend

## **BIG VISION = BIG IDEAS**

The City of Manchester is fortunate to have several groups of committed citizens that are already engaged in the work of transforming the community. This strategic plan acknowledges and will build upon the good work that is taking place. We encourage more people to join these efforts and work together to achieve even greater results.

We strongly believe, however, that Manchester must have some really BIG IDEAS to maximize the impact of those efforts and to bring local, regional and national attention to the City of Hope. Citizens said that they want to “acknowledge the community’s challenges and failures, but it’s time to write a different story - a story that is positive and brings people from surrounding areas, maybe the entire world, to Manchester to witness the transformation that is taking place.” We agree with that sentiment and challenge the citizens of this city to show the world that Manchester is a genuine and authentic place. For that story to become a reality, the community must first face its foundational challenges.

## Priorities

- ◆ Natural environment – focus on tourism and job creation
- ◆ Youth
- ◆ Reimagine downtown
- ◆ Connections – parks

## Foundational Challenges

- ◆ Health
- ◆ Environment
- ◆ Education
- ◆ Economy
- ◆ Governmental Accountability



# Health



## Set a Community Goal to Become the Healthiest City in Appalachia

To achieve this goal will take tremendous commitment from everyone. There are many ways to tackle the health issues of community. Here are a few ideas:

- ◆ Weight - institute a weight loss challenge – a “Biggest Loser” initiative. Some organizations may already conduct this type of challenge. We recommend a BIG effort that community institutions coordinate including government, healthcare system, schools, clubs, churches and other organizations. Strive to lose some amount of weight collectively. If the community lost an average of 20 pounds per person, it could be called the Manchester 20,000 Pound Challenge.

Take these additional steps:

- ◆ Contact “The Biggest Loser” show. Announce the challenge to the world.
- ◆ The event must be highly organized.

- ◆ The entire community must be committed.
- ◆ Results must be collected regularly and posted in a very visible and visual way.
- ◆ Make it a competition among the community’s various organizations.
- ◆ Do it together. Losing weight is very difficult when done alone.
- ◆ Celebrate milestones.
- ◆ Engage the healthcare community to measure the extra benefits that result from weight loss such as decrease in high blood pressure, diabetes and hypertension.
- ◆ Create a website offering weight-loss advice, nutrition tips, health benefits and a map of the city’s parks and trails. The campaign can include “Manchester on the Move” type events, walks and fun runs on a regular basis. This type of community-wide challenge becomes the driver for the development of more trails and paths to connect the community.

# Health



Simultaneously, incorporate other aspects of a healthy lifestyle through challenges, education and tourism. People want to work, live and visit a community that is committed to a high quality of life. These efforts could also spur new business and attract entrepreneurs who see the business opportunities associated with a healthy community, particularly one that takes on a challenge as big as this one. Some other ideas include:

- ◆ Smoking – at the same time, Manchester could institute a “smoke out” along the same lines as the “Biggest Loser.” Create visible signage in places of business, offices and even homes that measure the number of “smoke-free days.” Again, the effort must be widespread, highly visible and organized.
- ◆ Active living – set an annual per person walking, biking, target and run along the same lines as above.
- ◆ Healthy food – a local food economy is a big business in cities all across the country. Local food could become a cornerstone of all community activities. Rural areas like Manchester and Clay County have a rich tradition of being self-sufficient. A local food economy gets Manchester back to its agricultural and natural roots. The community will become more authentic by remaining true to its historical values. In addition, this generation can pass along the heritage of local self-sufficiency to a new generation of young people by teaching and mentoring them to grow, preserve and cook their own food.
- ◆ These efforts also become great ways to bring in financial support through grants and corporate support.



# Environment

## **Manchester Should Strive to be the Cleanest Community in Appalachia**

Nothing is more visible to residents and visitors than trash and filth. A clean environment includes more than picking up trash. It also includes clean water, new tree plantings, clean air and clean neighborhoods. This goal fits nicely with the goal to become the healthiest city in Appalachia.

Some ideas to get things started:

- ◆ Conduct a Filth Assessment.
  - Document the entire community through photos.
  - Identify target areas for cleanup.
- ◆ Create street or neighborhood challenges. The City of Mayfield, Kentucky has been very successful in this regard. Do a city exchange visit and learn from their best practices.
- ◆ Document every success. Hold a neighborhood or street party to celebrate.
- ◆ “Spotlight” a property owner or business owner that is making a difference by cleaning up their properties each week or month in the local paper or on the city’s website.
- ◆ Create an award certificate. Make this effort highly visible.
- ◆ The key to success is to recognize that while this is a long-term effort, it starts with one step, one person, and one success at a time.
- ◆ Enhance code enforcement. Review and update local ordinances. KLC can assist the city with a review of its current ordinances and make recommendations for the city to consider.
- ◆ Make it more profitable to cleanup than trashup. This effort will take some political willpower and considerable local support. The idea is not to punish people, but to recognize and reward positive behavior and results. Make it more profitable to be clean than trashy.
- ◆ Crackdown on polluters and litterbugs.



Photo courtesy of [www.daycountky.org](http://www.daycountky.org)

# Economy

Manchester should strive to get back to its roots as a self-reliant mountain town. This means that local goods and services are prized above all others. THIS is what people will want to come and visit. THIS is an **authentic** community.

Manchester and Clay County have an active and committed economic development authority. Like most communities, everyone clamors for manufacturing and industrial jobs because of the good pay and benefits that come with those economic sectors. The reality is that smokestack chasing is a highly competitive endeavor and other places may have more to offer in terms of incentives, transportation and a skilled workforce. We are not recommending that the community abandon its efforts. We are encouraging you to intensify the “AND” strategy of allocating resources and efforts toward entrepreneurship and growing local businesses. The aforementioned foundational challenges will draw attention to the community; however, the focus must be on LOCAL businesses. If a large employer comes to the community, then that’s just an added bonus. New business will locate in your community because of a commitment to the local economy. Take care of your own first!

A few ideas to build a local economy:

- ◆ Do a service gap analysis.

- ◆ Tie these other recommendations into business opportunities.
- ◆ Local food becomes a business focus.
- ◆ Create a shared work space entrepreneurial hub downtown. A shared work space provides the space and resources needed for small businesses, independent workers, designers, developers, educators, and entrepreneurs to work on their own projects. Coworking spaces are a great way to attract talent to the locality, maintain the energy and motivation of people, and help share resources. A local food hub could be developed here as well.
- ◆ Reimagine and repurpose existing buildings in the downtown core.
- ◆ Offer local businesses the same incentives you would offer to an outside company seeking to locate in your community.
- ◆ Formally develop a sharing economy system that includes local transportation, food and ideas. There is a lot of energy and good results happening around this strategy right now throughout the country.



# Entrepreneurship

Working in the City of Hope provides a variety of options, building upon the idea of the downtown as the economic engine of the community.

Collaborate with other leaders and stakeholders within the community to reimagine the downtown.

- ◆ Review existing zoning ordinances to see if they align with a tourism strategy.
- ◆ Assess what Manchester offers that will draw new business.
- ◆ Identify resources and tools that might incentivize new business development and will encourage existing businesses as well.
- ◆ Work with technology specialists to bring affordable or free broadband to the community. This may be an opportunity for the city to develop its own cable infrastructure. (Check with USDA's Rural Utility Service grants/loans for this specific need.)
- ◆ Assess current job skills of workers and determine what needs exist to educational curricula.
- ◆ Contact state government affiliates to discuss the city's strategies and preparedness.
- ◆ Investigate programs such as Paint the Town and Repair Affair for conceptual assistance with downtown building revitalization.
- ◆ Identify groups (churches, Boy Scouts, veterans, and others) that are willing to donate labor for rehab events.

Use the community's sense of creativity and parlay this unique asset into the development of jobs, new technologies, web apps, new niches of economic development as well as traditional employment options.

- ◆ Find those people that can do this type of thinking.
- ◆ Embrace the diversity of the community.
- ◆ Bring young voices to the table.
- ◆ Work with ECU and the community college to align courses and curricula to support entrepreneurship and tourism-related jobs.
- ◆ Develop an Angel Fund for new concepts.
- ◆ Use city-owned buildings for potential incubators.
- ◆ Use programs such as Kick-Starter to launch new enterprises.

Investigate Awesome Inc. and the Governor's School for Entrepreneurs, (<http://gse.kstc.com/>) and work with partners such as the community college, chamber of commerce, tourism, and the high school to establish a youth entrepreneurship mentoring program. Help young people learn how to start, manage, and grow a business.

Build wealth from within the community. Partner with the Clay County Community Foundation efforts to establish a community foundation focused on entrepreneurship, business development and job creation.

# Education

Manchester and Clay County have achieved some outstanding successes in the past couple of years. Two Clay County schools were recognized as being among the best and most improved schools in the state of Kentucky. It is important to capitalize upon these successes by challenging the other schools in the county to do the same thing.

**Manchester and Clay County should strive to be the most educated community in Appalachia.**

An idea of this magnitude may seem out of reach to a lot of folks. The fact is that this goal is becoming a reality given the recent success of the local school system. Taken together with the availability of higher education opportunities through the Eastern Kentucky University campus in Manchester and the Hazard Community and Technical College, young people in Manchester and Clay County have many opportunities to receive college degrees and technical certifications in the trades.

In addition, the community has a rich tradition of high school sports. The fact that the reigning Junior PGA champion is from Clay County is an example of what can be achieved with hard work and determination. You don't have to have the best to be the best. The entire community should be proud of these kinds of achievement and use them as rallying points for continuous improvement.

You won't find a lot of recommendations for educational improvement in this plan. The school system is already onto the keys to success. Our recommendation to the school district is that those successful efforts be intensified and multiplied throughout the school system. Our recommendation to the community is that successful students – whether academic scholars, sports champions or just good students – be held up as role models and examples for what the community wants and expects all of its young people to be.





# Governmental Accountability

Citizens have expressed their disappointment and disillusionment with public officials over and over. Several people have asked “How can we trust anyone?” Trust is a difficult issue to address particularly in a community where distrust has been the norm for so long.

It is probably an oversimplification to simply say that “trust begins with you.” But this is a true statement. You can only be accountable for you. There are, however, some steps that local government and agencies can take to assure accountability and transparency in their public dealings. With that thought in mind, we recommend that Manchester become **the most accountable and transparent local government in Appalachia.**

Some steps to begin:

- ◆ Conduct all public business “in the sunshine.” Give no one an opportunity to accuse local officials of conducting public business behind closed doors.
- ◆ Invite and welcome the Kentucky Auditor of Public Accounts to conduct an audit of the city’s financial records and control system.
- ◆ Require all elected officials, appointed officials, boards and commissions to complete ethics training. Several nonprofit organizations can provide this training at minimal cost.
- ◆ Insure that all accounting duties are properly segregated to minimize the opportunity for fraud and theft.
- ◆ All municipal elected officials should attend KLC’s City Officials Academy to learn about legal requirements and best practices related to good local governance.

We want to acknowledge that the City of Manchester has already instituted policies and practices designed to improve public trust and we commend them for their efforts. In today’s climate, however, public officials have to go the extra mile to build trust among the citizens. It is also important to fully and continuously inform the public about the ways their local officials are being transparent and accountable.

# Symbols of Hope – The Community’s Self-esteem

Symbols or icons have a powerful effect on people. They inspire emotion, awe or wonderment in people. There is a sentiment in this proud community that hope is about all that is left. People want to believe that good things can happen, but it seems so distant and difficult. During the listening session, some people were passionate about the need to have an icon or symbol that embodies hope for the future. It needed to be so big and visible that people would flock to the community to see it.

One of the suggestions made at the Listening Session was to place a large statue of Jesus Christ on the mountaintop near the parkway. The statue would be similar to “Christ the Redeemer” in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil. Others suggested a cross.

### **We Recommend**

If a statue is going to become the symbol of hope for the community, it should be located where it will

have the most impact. We recommend that it be located on the mountain in the downtown area. This location has some obvious advantages that other locations do not. A statue near the parkway does not compel people to stop in Manchester. The downtown location could serve as a driver for tourism and funnel potential business into the downtown. People would exit the parkway and come downtown to walk or ride to the peak of the mountain. They would spend more time (and money) in the downtown business district which would boost the local economy. It could become an engine for local business and entrepreneurship. In addition, most people who live within the city would be able to see the statue from their homes or any location in the city limits. It would be a daily reminder that hope does exist in Manchester and is exhibited by all of the good things that already happening.



# Bridges – Manchester’s Signature Icon and Brand



Swinging bridges were once prevalent throughout the United States. In Clay County, swinging bridges provided access to the larger community. Many school children crossed a swinging bridge to catch the school bus. In the hollers of eastern Kentucky, particularly, bridges were connectors that provided safe access across a stream or creek.

## We Recommend

A swinging bridge should be used as a marketing brand for the community. Bridges connect the past to the future. They are symbolic of the connections that so many people fear losing in the age of technology. They are the ultimate symbol of hope that many citizens want for their city. The restoration of the swinging bridge downtown has generated a lot of enthusiasm in the city. Residents and former residents alike have taken to Manchester’s Facebook page to share stories and memories of crossing and playing on the old swinging bridge.





# Tourism

Many in the community recognize the potential opportunities related to tourism. There are several elements to consider when considering this approach to community economic development.

## Tourism Considerations

- ◆ Build the sportsmen brand – hunting and fishing
- ◆ Features/draws/attractions
- ◆ Infrastructure
- ◆ Visitor services
- ◆ Marketing and promotions

## Points to Consider

- ◆ What does Manchester and Clay County offer that you can exploit?
- ◆ What do you have that no one else in the region, state, or nation offers?
- ◆ What is already in play that you can build upon?
- ◆ Where is the energy and means to create what you'd like to have?
- ◆ What does the region offer that you can connect to?

## Potential and Existing Tourist Attractions

- ◆ Nature - include trails and park connections
- ◆ Petroglyphs and Jesus or cross statue
- ◆ Arts, crafts and sports – entrepreneurship, wall murals, downtown as economic engine, golf pro
- ◆ History – swinging bridge, "B" School, Salt Mine Village and exciting past history

## Hope of Civilization

### Red Bird River Shelter Petroglyphs

While some historians believe this is an artifact featuring eight Old World alphabets, others believe it is a remnant from the Cherokee nation when they lived in Kentucky. Regardless of which argument is factual, the rock is protected as a site on the National Register of Historic Places and commands great interest around the world.





# Tourism

## Hope of Art

Promote the creative class of individuals within your community and encourage entrepreneurship through incubators, public art such as the wall murals, and arts and crafts fairs.



“Stay in Clay” is a local group of citizens who have made an incredible impact on the community through its productions of local storytelling like “Monkey Dumplin” and the creation of wall murals in the downtown. You can find “Stay in Clay” on Facebook. They are looking for more volunteers!

Reimagine downtown Manchester as the trail head for all tourists. Hiking and bike trails could flow out of downtown like the spokes on a wheel to connect every part of the city. Local businesses could provide all of the necessities for hikers and bikers including equipment for purchase or rent, repair shops, eateries, a downtown climbing wall and bed and breakfast establishments.



## Hope of History

### Salt Works

This community was founded on the abundance of salt and the Goose Creek Salt Works Village provides a link to this past. Riverside Park already has a master development plan and a small portion has already been constructed. Connecting the downtown to the old salt works would drive tourism to Pioneer Village. Samples of salt could be bagged and sold as mementos of the visit.



# Tourism

## Hope of Nature

Inclusiveness - park system provides links to connect all the icons, one to another as well as the residents of entire community.



Unique attractions already exist in Manchester and Clay County. Some things you may want to consider:

### Strategies for Tourism Attractions

- ◆ Develop a tourism plan that embraces your icons of hope.
- ◆ Develop a market strategy for the tourism plan.
- ◆ Identify local businesses that support the local attractions.

- ◆ Identify gaps – determine what the community is lacking in terms of supporting local attractions.
- ◆ Insert history, genealogy, nature, and faith aspects into the tourism plan.
- ◆ Provide professionally managed tours of iconic sites.
- ◆ Connect trail system to Daniel Boone National Forest.
- ◆ Develop and expand other tourism activities such as golf, nature hikes, mountain biking, equine trails, faith-based youth rallies, sports tournaments, and small conferences for history buffs.
- ◆ Include existing tourism businesses such as restaurants, hotels and attractions in planning.
- ◆ Build Manchester’s “leaf-peeping” brand to draw visitors from the surrounding states

### Infrastructure Strategies

If you’re having company, you want them to enjoy their stay and come back again.

What do the city’s entrances, sidewalks, signage, streets and buildings say to a first time visitor? Invite another community to visit and conduct a windshield tour of the entire community, giving you feedback.

- ◆ Develop a conceptual design for entrances to the city.
- ◆ Conduct walking tours throughout town to identify weaknesses.
- ◆ Identify properties that need attention.
- ◆ Develop tools and resources for property owners to update their buildings.
- ◆ Determine if all the trails and sidewalks are in good condition – safety is paramount!

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## Visitor Services

- ◆ Consider using one of the city-owned buildings to establish a visitor center downtown.
- ◆ Talk with other cities (Mayfield and Greensburg) about volunteers to staff the visitor center.
- ◆ Consider a Welcome to Manchester program (see Paducah's Red Coats program as an example).
- ◆ Develop training workshops for frontline employees that will be greeting visitors. Arm them with information about the community, region and state.

## Marketing and Promotions

- ◆ Develop a comprehensive marketing strategy for the overall community. This should include a calendar of events, a listing of attractions and a community-wide marketing campaign. As you develop the plan:
  - Keep in mind both audiences, tourists and local citizens.

- Identify which tourist audiences are most important, such as families, hunters, campers, mountain bikers, adventure tourist, genealogists, or history buffs, then develop outreach strategies aligned with each audience.
- Make it easy for visitors to find what they're looking for in your community.
- Have consistent marketing materials with a professional appearance. Avoid too much information, too many marketing fliers, websites, and pamphlets.
- Have an ongoing list of what you want visitors to know about your community.
- Consider kiosks of information and tourism maps at key attractions.
- Encourage businesses to operate with a "mall mentality." This may include coordinating hours, advertising, and entertainment.
- Continue building web presence - [www.welovemanchester.com](http://www.welovemanchester.com) and [www.claycountykentucky.org](http://www.claycountykentucky.org) are great community websites.





# Housing

The lack of affordable and market-rate housing was identified as a major need within the city. Assess city-owned properties and explore highest and best use. Several empty lots within the downtown core may be available for building.

Invite representatives from Kentucky Housing Corporation to the community to assist in establishing the current housing situation and provide recommendations.

Seek a planning grant (with assistance from KLC CCS) to pay for the preparation of a housing study to evaluate the housing market in the community, particularly related to market-rate housing; or work with the Kentucky Housing Corporation or your Area Development District to conduct a complete housing inventory and overall strategy.

Determine

- ◆ number of abandoned properties
- ◆ current needs for market-rate housing as well as senior housing, patio homes and apartments
- ◆ future opportunities for additional housing
- ◆ if there are properties that could be considered for new uses

Evaluate existing codes and ordinances; adjust as needed to encourage compliance. Use the Kentucky League of Cities legal staff to assist in addressing current code enforcement options.

Investigate the use of the Repair Affair and Habitat for Humanity concepts and the use of volunteers to assist property owners, particularly the elderly and disabled, who are unable to care for their own properties.

Evaluate expanding the city's boundaries as an option to offer new areas within the community for new home construction.

Clean up the neighborhood! Work with volunteers and existing organizations such as neighborhood associations, to conduct neighborhood cleanup events. The city or county may wish to provide a dumpster, and volunteers may offer free pickup from homebound residents. Have refreshments available and provide trash bags. Some communities make this a competition between neighborhoods and nearly always some sort of competition will arise from one street or block to another.



# Funding

All of these ideas are great, but how do we pay for them? That's the question that will be on most people's mind. There are some simple steps to help answer that question.

- ◆ Take the long-term view. Everything can't be done at once.
  - ◆ Pick one. Do one.
  - ◆ Prioritize your projects.
  - ◆ Identify people who have an interest in working on each project. Engage them. Empower them. Let them go!
  - ◆ Identify potential private donors who have an interest in a particular project.
  - ◆ Use crowdfunding and crowdsourcing. Pick five projects that will have an impact on the community. Invite the public (and potential donors) to select one project. Fund it on the spot with pledges, if possible.
  - ◆ Utilize online fundraising tools such as Kickstarter.
- ◆ Seek out foundations and corporations for grants and donations.
  - ◆ Develop a business model around a project. Create a pro forma budget to demonstrate sustainability of the project. Seek angel investors or venture capitalists to get the project up and going.
  - ◆ Seek government funding through grants or budget allocations (local, state, and federal).

Some people will say "this will never happen." Unless someone starts, those people will be right. The City of Hope will only turn into the City of Action if you step up and do your part!

# In Conclusion...

Manchester has so many opportunities to do great things that it is hard to imagine that it will fail to do so. You, the citizens of Manchester, are selling yourself short if you think you can't achieve anything that you put your mind to doing. When you look at your accomplishments, you should be filled with pride. So many people are doing so many wonderful things and, in the process, you are creating a better quality of life for those of the next generation.

You said that you wanted a big plan. We've given you just that. We encourage you to embrace all of your creative ideas and push to achieve your dreams. Manchester is a rich city. Rich in good people. Rich in ideas. Rich in opportunities. People will come to your city. They are only waiting for a reason. Give them an opportunity to see what we have seen. Tell your story to everyone. People like winners, and Manchester is a winner. The story just hasn't been told yet.

*“Everything that is done in the world is done by hope.”*

- Martin Luther

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**Kentucky League of Cities**

Created by the residents of Manchester, Kentucky  
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