

City of Paducah >>> McCracken County >>>
**TO 2040
& BEYOND**
COMPREHENSIVE PLAN



Adopted January 28, 2025
by Paducah Board of Commissioners



Adopted February 17, 2025
by McCracken County Fiscal Court

AN ORDINANCE ADOPTING THE CITY OF PADUCAH-McCRACKEN COUNTY JOINT COMPREHENSIVE PLAN, PURSUANT TO KRS 100.193

WHEREAS, the Paducah Planning Commission, held a public hearing on November 19, 2024, to hear the objections and suggestions of all interested parties to adopt the City of Paducah-McCracken County Joint Comprehensive Plan along with the Statement of Goals & Objectives contained therein; and

WHEREAS, KRS 100.193 requires the Paducah City Planning Commission and the Board of Commissioners to adopt the Goals and Objectives of the City of Paducah Comprehensive Plan; and

WHEREAS, at a meeting held on November 19, 2024, the Paducah Planning Commission adopted the proposed joint City of Paducah/McCracken County Comprehensive Plan and referred it to the City of Paducah Board of Commissioners for approval as presented or with no major substantive changes.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT ORDAINED BY THE BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS OF THE CITY OF PADUCAH, KENTUCKY, AS FOLLOWS:

SECTION 1. Adoption of Joint Comprehensive Plan. That the City of Paducah hereby adopts the City of Paducah Comprehensive Plan and the attached Statement of Goals & Objectives included therewith recommended and adopted by the Paducah Planning Commission pursuant to the provisions of KRS 100.193. The Plan shall serve as the official guide for land use, development, infrastructure, and public policy decisions within the jurisdictional areas of the City of Paducah.

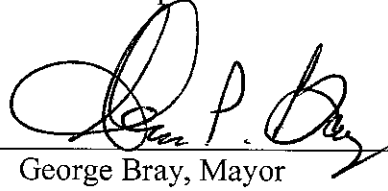
SECTION 2. Implementation and Enforcement. The City of Paducah hereby directs the appropriate City officials and staff to collaborate with McCracken County to implement the strategies and policies outlined in the Joint Comprehensive Plan, including but not limited to zoning adjustments, infrastructure projects, transportation improvements, and environmental considerations, as necessary.

SECTION 3. Review and Amendments. The Joint Comprehensive Plan may be reviewed and amended periodically as needed by mutual consent of the McCracken County Fiscal Court and the City of Paducah, with input from the public and relevant stakeholders.

SECTION 4. Conflicts. All ordinances, resolutions, orders or parts thereof in conflict with the provisions of this Ordinance are, to the extent of such conflict, hereby repealed and the provisions of this Ordinance shall prevail and be given effect.

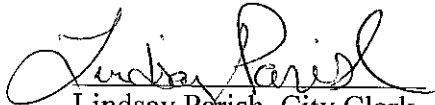
SECTION 5. Severability. If any section, clause, or provision of this ordinance is determined to be invalid or unenforceable by a court of competent jurisdiction, such invalidity shall not affect the remaining provisions of this ordinance, which shall remain in full force and effect

SECTION 6. Effective Date. This Ordinance shall be read on two separate days and become effective upon summary publication pursuant to KRS Chapter 424.



George Bray, Mayor

ATTEST:



Lindsay Parish, City Clerk

Introduced by the Board of Commissioners, January 27, 2025
Adopted by the Board of Commissioners, January 28, 2025
Recorded by Lindsay Parish, City Clerk, January 28, 2025
Published by *The Paducah Sun*, January 30, 2025

Ord\Comprehensive Plan Adoption 2025

City of Paducah/McCracken County Joint Comprehensive Plan
Statement of Goals & Objectives
January 28, 2025

This section of the Comprehensive Plan addresses requirements found in the Kentucky Revised Statutes Chapter 100. (KRS 100.193) Said statute requires the City of Paducah Planning Commission and the Paducah Board of Commissioners to adopt the Goals and Objectives of the City of Paducah/McCracken County Joint Comprehensive Plan. The remaining elements of the Comprehensive Plan are based on the Goals and Objectives.

The following are the goals and objectives from each chapter. The goals are the broadest policy statements, and there are only a few per chapter. Each goal has several objectives that refine and narrow the goal into elements that are more specific in terms of policy. Complete analyses of all objectives are found within the chapters of the plan.

Growth Capacity

Goal 1:

Adequate capacity of public infrastructure, and across key public services functions, to accommodate the area's desire to achieve increased population retention and growth.

Goal 2:

A growth trend and pattern in which new development in edge locations is balanced with ongoing promotion of infill development and adaptive re-use of properties in areas with public infrastructure and services already in place and/or prioritized for improvement.

Goal 3:

Pro-active planning and investment in ongoing maintenance and upgrades to public infrastructure and facilities, balancing new and extended infrastructure to support first-time development with necessary and equitable funding to rehabilitate aging components in previously developed areas.

Goal 4:

Ongoing support for continual improvement in police and fire capabilities to maintain the responsiveness expected by city and county residents and provide a safe and secure environment as the area grows.

Goal 5:

Ongoing collaboration with various partner agencies and organizations to advance strategies and projects that address regional issues involving utility infrastructure, flooding risk and emergency response, especially to:

- bolster the area's resilience and readiness to deal with and recover from natural hazards while also preparing for the implications of a changing climate;

- promote sustainable practices, especially effective management of public utilities to minimize adverse effects on the natural environment, along with the area's economic and fiscal sustainability; and to

- support ongoing efforts to streamline public service delivery and provide for the long-term fiscal health of City and County government, including by applying technology and by promoting and implementing energy-, water- and waste-reducing "green" practices.

Land Use and Community Character

Goal 1:

A land use allocation and pattern that advances the area's key objectives of achieving greater housing supply and variety and supporting its economic development and tax base needs.

Goal 2:

Consistent character of land use within areas intended for particular character types, from rural and suburban through auto-oriented and urban along the community character spectrum.

Goal 3:

Ongoing and effective coordination between land use and transportation planning to ensure a well-connected community with adequate means and capacity to accommodate multiple forms of circulation between area destinations.

Goal 4:

An ongoing focus on boosting the area's livability for current and prospective residents by offering desired retail and service uses, parks and recreation offerings, and other leisure opportunities and amenities in appropriate locations and designed for quality and residential compatibility.

Housing and Neighborhoods**Goal 1:**

A quantity and diversity of housing options that makes living in Paducah and McCracken County attainable and inviting for a wide range of age groups and income levels, including those critical to the area's economic success.

Goal 2:

Sustained integrity and value of the area's oldest established neighborhoods while promoting quality housing development and the long-term appeal of newer residential areas.

Goal 3:

Continued momentum in renewing housing and neighborhoods in greatest need, using a "complete communities" approach that uplifts areas and residents through attention to the entire range of physical, social, educational and recreational needs.

Goal 4:

Elimination of barriers to equitable home ownership while also addressing the basic housing needs of those who are at risk of losing shelter or experiencing homelessness.

Transportation**Goal 1:**

A mobility system that provides connectivity and options for getting to destinations in and around the area, including to employment centers, shopping and services, schools and parks, and locations for workforce training – and especially for swift emergency response.

Goal 2:

A continued focus on providing more – and safer – opportunities for residents and visitors to walk and bike within the area, with a focus on linking key destinations.

Goal 3:

An enhanced mobility system that supports local economic development and tax base growth through the City and County's own investments plus improvements achieved through partnerships and advocacy at the regional and state levels – including through the new Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) mechanism.

Goal 4:

A systematic approach to street maintenance, and advance planning for periodic rehabilitation and reconstruction of older roadways, using such opportunities to enhance bike/ped circulation and to add design elements that promote the city and county's image and aesthetics.

Economic Development**Goal 1:**

A resilient area economy with a diverse yet stable base built on established businesses, new sources of investment and job creation, a supportive environment for entrepreneurs, and a local

real estate market attractive for emerging development opportunities.

Goal 2:

A continued holistic approach to economic development that encompasses overall community renewal, enhancement and quality of place for the enjoyment of residents, workers and visitors.

Goal 3:

Community assets and infrastructure that support ongoing economic development momentum, including necessary transportation and utility infrastructure, technology, education, and attainable and appealing housing options.

Goal 4:

Continued capitalization on Paducah and McCracken County's position as the hub community of western Kentucky for health care, education, shopping and services, entertainment and culture, and transportation linkages, among many other assets and regional draws.

Goal 5:

A fresh identity and image for Paducah and McCracken County within Kentucky and beyond, appropriate to the area's renewed growth and economic stature.

Recreation and Amenities

Goal 1:

The area's sustained success as a vibrant hub of western Kentucky, for both residents and visitors, enlivened by a vibrant downtown and active riverfront, an array of arts, cultural and entertainment offerings, and popular community events and festivals throughout the year.

Goal 2:

Ongoing reinvestment in parks and playgrounds to keep their offerings inviting, safe and inclusive, and a more connected community through gathering places, paths and greenway trails accessible to all.

Goal 3:

Convenient and equitable access to parks and recreation facilities that enable all ages to stay active and fit, enjoy quiet places for connecting with nature, and pursue their indoor and outdoor wellness activities close to home.

Goal 4:

A community that thrives on and leverages the economic and social power of the arts and culture to enhance its fiscal strength, regional reputation and overall quality of life for residents of all ages.

Goal 5:

Continued protection and promotion of the area's physical and cultural heritage, especially where it is tangibly visible in historic architecture, designated districts and landmarks, and distinctive neighborhoods and notable sites.

Goal 6:

A more resilient city and county through enhanced protection of natural landscapes, reduced energy consumption and waste generation, and efficient use and conservation of land and water resources.

ORDINANCE NO. 2025-01
McCracken County Fiscal Court
Commonwealth of Kentucky

**AN ORDINANCE ADOPTING A JOINT COMPREHENSIVE PLAN BETWEEN
McCRACKEN COUNTY AND THE CITY OF PADUCAH, KENTUCKY**

WHEREAS, the McCracken County Fiscal Court recognizes the importance of cooperative planning and the need for comprehensive, strategic development within the region; and

WHEREAS, the City of Paducah, Kentucky, has recognized the need for an updated comprehensive plan to guide future growth, land use, and development strategies; and

WHEREAS, McCracken County and the City of Paducah, through collaboration, have developed a Joint Comprehensive Plan designed to address the growth, infrastructure, environmental stewardship, transportation, housing, and other critical aspects of development within the jurisdictional boundaries of both the City of Paducah and McCracken County; and

WHEREAS, the Joint Comprehensive Plan has been reviewed and discussed by the McCracken County Fiscal Court and the governing body of the City of Paducah; and

WHEREAS, both parties have agreed that the adoption of the Joint Comprehensive Plan will ensure coordinated and efficient development policies that benefit both the County and the City, and will allow for a unified vision of the future of the region; and

WHEREAS, the Joint Comprehensive Plan will serve as a guiding framework for future planning, zoning, development, and public investments within the City of Paducah and McCracken County.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT ORDAINED by the McCracken County Fiscal Court, Commonwealth of Kentucky, as follows:

Section 1. Adoption of the Joint Comprehensive Plan.

The McCracken County Fiscal Court hereby adopts the Joint Comprehensive Plan developed in cooperation with the City of Paducah, Kentucky. The Plan shall be effective upon passage and shall serve as the official guide for land use, development, infrastructure, and public policy decisions within the jurisdictional areas of both McCracken County and the City of Paducah.

Section 2. Implementation and Enforcement.

The McCracken County Fiscal Court hereby directs the appropriate County officials and staff to collaborate with the City of Paducah to implement the strategies and policies set forth in the Joint Comprehensive Plan, including but not limited to zoning adjustments, infrastructure projects, transportation improvements, and environmental considerations, as necessary.

Section 3. Review and Amendments.

The Joint Comprehensive Plan may be reviewed and amended periodically as needed by mutual

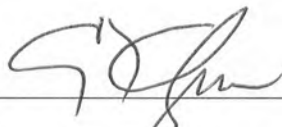
consent of the McCracken County Fiscal Court and the City of Paducah, with input from the public and relevant stakeholders.

Section 4. Severability.

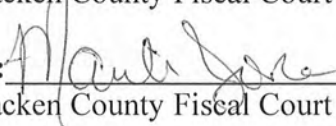
If any section, clause, or provision of this ordinance is determined to be invalid or unenforceable by a court of competent jurisdiction, such invalidity shall not affect the remaining provisions of this ordinance, which shall remain in full force and effect.

Section 5. Effective Date.

This Ordinance shall take effect immediately upon its adoption and publication in accordance with the laws of the Commonwealth of Kentucky.

Signed by: 

Craig Z Clymer, Judge/Executive
McCracken County Fiscal Court

Attest: 
McCracken County Fiscal Court

1st Read 1/27/25

2nd Read 2/17/25

Published in the Paducah Sun 2/22/25

Acknowledgements

Paducah-McCracken County Comprehensive Plan

McCracken County Officials

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Bill Bartleman	First District Commissioner
Richard Abraham	Second District Commissioner
Edwin A. Jones	Third District Commissioner

City of Paducah Officials

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Sandra Wilson	Mayor Pro Tem
Raynarldo Henderson	Commissioner
Robert “Buz” Smith	Commissioner
Dujuan Thomas	Commissioner

McCracken County Planning Commission

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Alberta Davis	
Brent Housman	
Diane Shrewsberry	
Carol Young	

City of Paducah Planning Commission

Bob Wade	Chair
Joseph Benberry	
Mickey Carman	
Trey Griffin	
Gayle Kaler	
David Morrison	
Allan Rhodes	

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<i>McCracken County Planning Commission</i>	<i>City of Paducah Planning Commission</i>
Alberta Davis	Allan Rhodes
Wayne Elliott	Bob Wade



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Randy Williams	County Road Engineer

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Bryan Veale	Project Manager

Thanks Also to ...

Individual residents, business representatives, property owners, partner agencies, local organizations and others who contributed their insights and ideas to the joint City/County long-range planning process.

Reader's Guide

Paducah-McCracken County Comprehensive Plan

For a QUICK READ of the highlights of this Comprehensive Plan document:

- A. Skim the **Introduction** section for background on the plan purpose, the process by which it was prepared, and how the plan is used by McCracken County, the City of Paducah and others.
- B. View the **Action Agenda** table in the Plan Implementation section, involving **20 key action items** from nearly 120 total actions in the plan.
- C. View the **Goals** in each plan focus area:
 - Goals for Growth Capacity.
 - Goals for Land Use and Community Character.
 - Goals for Housing and Neighborhoods.
 - Goals for Transportation.
 - Goals for Economic Development.
 - Goals for Recreation and Amenities.
- D. View the **Actions** for each plan focus area:
 - Actions for Growth Capacity.
 - Actions for Land Use and Community Character.
 - Actions for Housing and Neighborhoods.
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 - Actions for Economic Development.
 - Actions for Recreation and Amenities.
- E. View the **Future Land Use and Character map**, along with **descriptions of the map categories** – 11 for the City portion of the map, and 8 for the County portion.
- F. Review recent facts and figures about the area in the **Paducah-McCracken Today Report** which, along with community and leadership input, set the direction for the future-focused portion of the plan.
- G. Review the **results of a community survey** conducted in August-September 2023 in support of the Comprehensive Plan process.

Skimming these selected items will give a reasonable idea of what is contained in the overall plan document. Those wishing more details should consult the **Table of Contents** to locate specific areas of interest.

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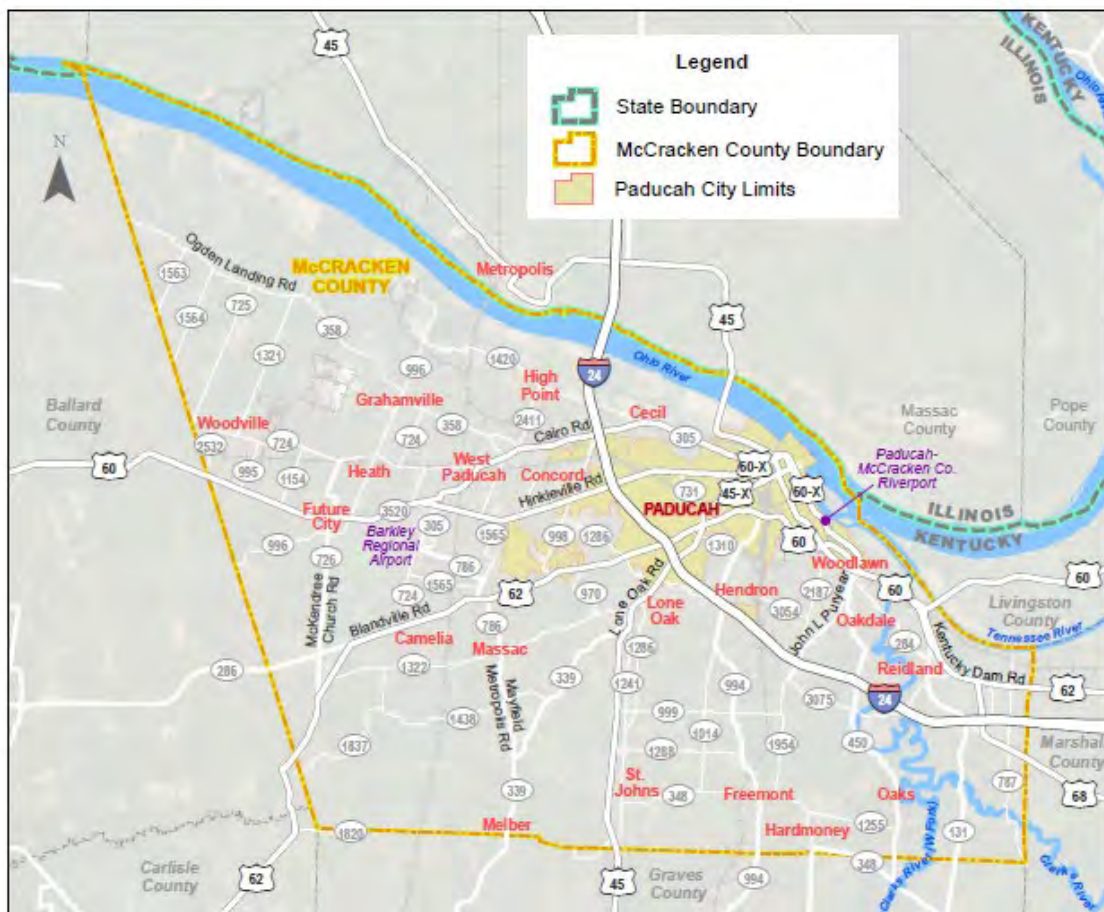
Introduction

Paducah-McCracken County Comprehensive Plan

The Paducah-McCracken County Comprehensive Plan is intended to guide future development, redevelopment and community enhancement efforts over the next 10-20 years. However, discussions during a community planning process often involve an even longer-range outlook, helping establish a vision of what the area could and should be in the future versus the trend line it is currently on. Based on this broader context, the purpose of this plan is to provide realistic goals and achievable strategies that residents, business and land owners, major institutions, civic groups and public officials prefer – and will support with sustained action – in the years ahead.

Geographic Coverage and Context of the Plan

This plan addresses the approximately 249 square miles of land within McCracken County in far western Kentucky. The City of Paducah includes nearly 21 square miles of incorporated territory within northeast McCracken County, is a home-rule Kentucky city and the county seat, and it is the largest city in the Jackson Purchase region. A final bend of the Ohio River forms McCracken County’s northern boundary before the Ohio meets the Mississippi River near Cairo, Illinois. Downtown Paducah is also along the Ohio riverfront, not far west from where the Tennessee River merges with the Ohio River.



Paducah and McCracken County are located roughly halfway between the major metros of St. Louis, Missouri, to the northwest and Nashville, Tennessee, to the southeast along the I-24 corridor. Paducah is 250 miles southwest of the Kentucky state capital of Frankfort, and slightly closer to the state’s largest city, Louisville, which is 217 miles northeast via Western Kentucky Parkway.

PROCESS

The process for updating the County and City’s Comprehensive Plans, and integrating them as a joint Comprehensive Plan, began in spring 2023. This new plan resulted from an approximate 22-month planning and community engagement process, followed by public hearings and plan adoption. The plan’s findings and action recommendations focus primarily on the physical and economic aspects of the area’s projected growth, development and redevelopment in the coming years. It provides overarching planning themes, goals and action priorities that will help County and City officials,

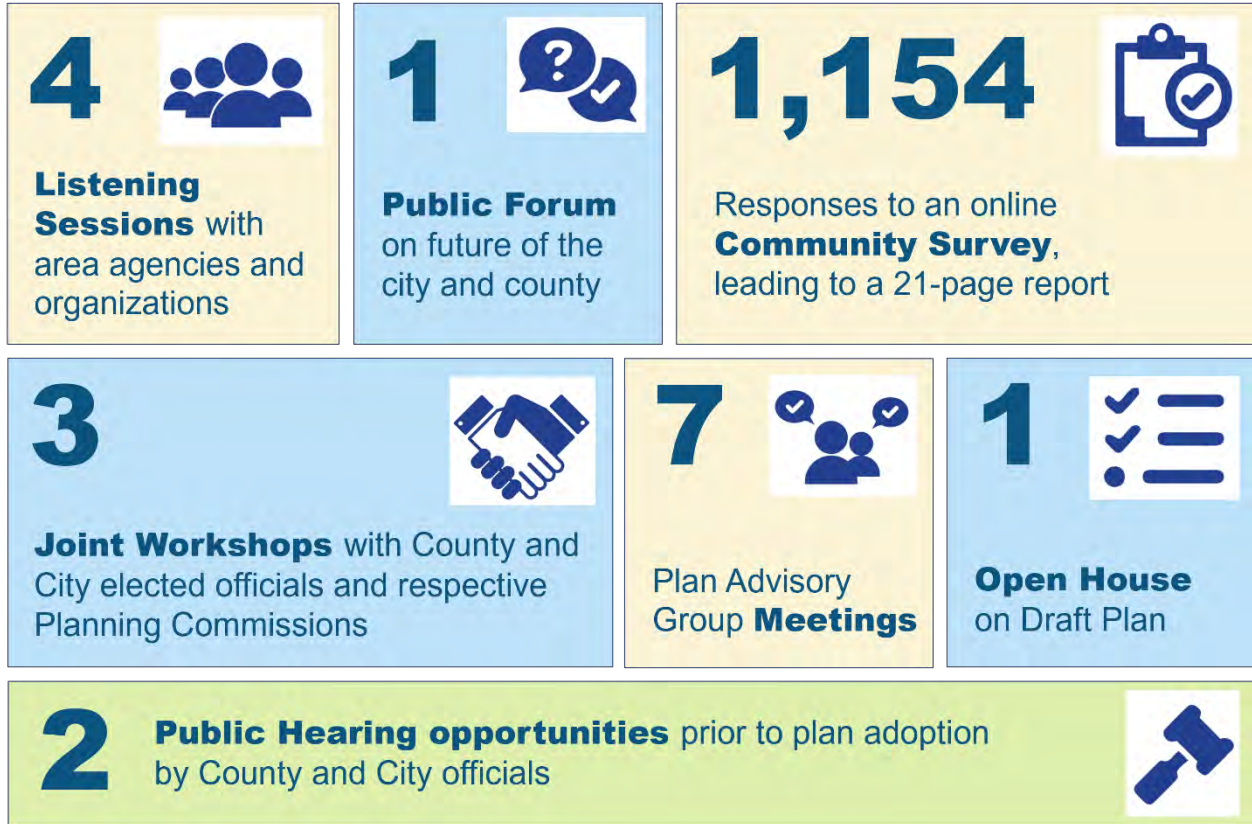


board/commission appointees and staff in prioritizing public improvements; updating and administering development regulations; and guiding reinvestment efforts. The plan also provides a basis for coordinating the actions of many different functions and interests within and outside of local government.

To facilitate the Comprehensive Plan update process, the County and City engaged Kendig Keast Collaborative, community planning consultants based in Sugar Land, Texas, and with personnel in the Louisville area.

Leadership and Community Engagement Activities

Multiple leadership and community engagement activities were hosted by McCracken County, the City of Paducah and the consultant team to help focus data gathering efforts during the Paducah-McCracken Today phase, focused on existing conditions and issues; to guide later planning during the Paducah-McCracken Tomorrow phase; and to obtain leadership and public feedback on the proposed draft and final plans. These engagement activities included:



PURPOSE OF THE COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

A comprehensive plan is one of the most important policy documents a local government prepares and maintains. It provides a “big picture” outlook and associated goals regarding the future growth and enhancement of the community. It is “comprehensive” in two ways, by:

- Considering at once the entire geographic area of the community, including areas where new development and redevelopment may occur, as opposed to more specialized plans and studies that focus on particular sub-areas such as a downtown, neighborhoods, unique districts, key roadway corridors, etc.
- Assessing near- and longer-term needs and desires across a variety of inter-related topics that represent the key “building blocks” of a community (e.g., land use, transportation, urban design, commercial development, redevelopment, neighborhoods, parks and recreation, utility infrastructure, public facilities and services, etc.).

Through a comprehensive plan, a community considers how best to accommodate and manage its projected growth, as well as the redevelopment of older neighborhoods and commercial and industrial areas. Like most similar plans, this Comprehensive Plan is aimed at ensuring that ongoing development and redevelopment will proceed in an orderly, well-planned manner so that public facilities and services can keep pace and residents’ quality of life will be enhanced. Significantly, by clarifying and stating the County and City’s intentions regarding the area’s physical development and infrastructure investment, the plan also creates greater predictability for residents, land owners, developers and potential investors.

Planning is ...
 the process of identifying issues and needs, establishing goals and objectives, and determining the most effective means by which these ends may be achieved.

The comprehensive planning process is intended to celebrate accomplishments of the past while providing an opportunity to anticipate and address challenges of the future. In some cases, this plan will offer guidance to decision-makers for challenges only now emerging while other sections reinforce established policies that should be carried forward as a sure and sound basis for future development and redevelopment. Whether an issue is a challenge or an opportunity, the utmost importance should be placed upon periodic comprehensive planning as an opportunity for thoughtful public discussion on the real and perceived challenges currently facing McCracken County and the City of Paducah and the opportunities that will shape their shared future.

Why Plan?

Local planning allows McCracken County and the City of Paducah to have a greater measure of control over their destiny rather than simply reacting to change. Planning enables the County and City to manage future development and redevelopment actively as opposed to reacting to development proposals on a case-by-case basis without adequate and necessary consideration of community-wide issues.

Long-range planning also provides an opportunity for the County and City’s elected and appointed officials to step back from pressing, day-to-day issues and clarify their ideas on the kind of community they are trying to create and maintain. The process required to prepare a new comprehensive plan may prove more valuable to the community than the plan itself since the document is ultimately only a snapshot in time. The planning process involves major community decisions about how much and where development and redevelopment will occur, the nature of future development and the community’s capability to provide the necessary public services and facilities to support this development. This leads to pivotal discussions about what is "best" for the community and how everything from taxes to "quality of life" will be affected.

Use of the Plan

This plan is ultimately a guidance document for local government officials and staff, who must make decisions on a daily basis that will determine the future direction, financial health and “look and feel” of the community. These decisions are carried out through:

- Targeted programs and expenditures prioritized through the County and City’s annual budget processes, including routine but essential functions across local government.
- Major public improvements and land acquisitions financed through the County and City’s capital budgeting.
- New and amended ordinances and regulations closely linked to Comprehensive Plan goals and priorities (and associated review and approval procedures in the case of zoning, subdivision and land development activities).
- Work plans for City and County departments, and associated resources allocated in key areas.

Important Reasons for Long-Range Planning in McCracken County and Paducah include to:

- Ensure adequate public infrastructure and services to meet the demands of future development and redevelopment.
- Achieve an efficient development pattern that reflects the values of the community.
- Promote the long-term protection and enhancement of the image and visual appearance of community.
- Provide a balance of land uses and services throughout the community to meet the needs and desires of its population.
- Involve local citizens in the decision-making process and reach consensus on future priorities for their community and its ongoing development and redevelopment.
- Identify finer-grain planning and studies needed to clarify action strategies and costs in particular areas of the County and City.

- Support for ongoing planning and studies that will further clarify needs, costs, benefits and strategies.
- Pursuit of external grant funding to supplement local budgets and/or expedite certain projects.
- Initiatives pursued between the County and City and in conjunction with other public and private partners to leverage resources and achieve successes neither could accomplish on their own.

Comprehensive plans focus primarily on the responsibilities of cities and counties in the physical planning arena, where local governments normally have a more direct and extensive role than in other areas that residents value such as education and social services. Therefore, the resulting plan may not address every challenge before the community, but it is meant to set a tone and motivate concerted efforts to move the community forward in coming years.

PADUCAH-McCRACKEN TOMORROW

While the Paducah-McCracken Today phase focused on compiling background and insights about the area as it is today, this Paducah-McCracken Tomorrow portion of the Comprehensive Plan focuses on the city and county as they intend to be in the years ahead. These aspirations are presented in topic areas that are central to the area’s physical growth and development as listed later in this Introduction. Each topical section highlights key issues and considerations followed by a Framework for Action portion. A final plan section on plan implementation considerations, priorities and procedures rounds out the Paducah-McCracken Tomorrow portion of the plan.

Planning Themes

Based on the leadership and community input generated during the Paducah-McCracken Today phase, the six planning themes below were compiled to capture the uppermost priorities identified and to guide the remainder of the comprehensive planning process:

Planning Theme 1:

Making the area more attractive to retain – or regain – youth who grew up here, and to attract younger individuals and families.

Planning Theme 1A:

Continuing efforts to diversify the area’s economic and employment base, for long-term economic sustainability and also to offer a wider range of job options to current and prospective residents.

Planning Theme 1B:

Increasing the quantity and variety of housing options.

Planning Theme 2:

Being a safe community with good City/County public safety services (police, fire, emergency medical service).

Planning Theme 3:

Improving infrastructure condition, particularly for stormwater management.

Planning Theme 4:

Sustaining momentum on neighborhood and corridor revitalization.

Planning Theme 5:

Taking greater economic advantage of the area’s location and transportation assets.

Planning Theme 6:

Building on the area’s tourism success, including through sustained commitment to arts, crafts and culture.

Plan Focus Areas

Focus areas within the Comprehensive Plan provide direction when setting program and funding priorities to enhance the quality of life in McCracken County and the City of Paducah. The six focus areas of this plan are highlighted below. These focus areas were considered in assessing the area’s existing conditions and issues during the Paducah-McCracken Today phase and helped orient this Paducah-McCracken Tomorrow portion of the plan.

**Growth
Capacity**



**Land Use &
Community
Character**



**Housing &
Neighborhoods**



Transportation



**Economic
Development**



**Recreation &
Amenities**



Goals and Action Priorities

The **Framework for Action** in each plan section also provides Goals and identifies priority Actions:

- A **Goal** is a statement of a desired outcome (“end”) toward which efforts are directed as expressed by more specific objectives and action steps (“means”).
- A plan **Action** involves seizing a special opportunity or addressing a particular challenge one faces, given limited resources — financial and otherwise — and recognizing that various routine and ongoing activities will continue in the meantime.

Pathways to Action

The action priorities in this Comprehensive Plan are presented in five categories that represent the major ways that plan goals and initiatives are typically advanced and accomplished:

Capital Investments



Local governments typically use a multi-year capital improvements planning process to identify and budget for “big ticket” projects, especially those that must be phased and/or coordinated with other initiatives. This may include street infrastructure; water, sanitary sewer and drainage improvements; parks, trails and recreation facility construction and upgrades; construction of public buildings; and purchases of land, vehicles or major equipment. With a typical five-year outlook, a Capital Improvements Plan (CIP) provides predictability regarding a jurisdiction’s capital investment plans and priorities for the benefit and awareness of citizens and private interests. Anticipating and adequately budgeting for major capital projects will be essential to implementing this Comprehensive Plan. Likewise, decisions regarding the prioritization of proposed capital improvements should reflect the direction and priorities of this plan.

Programs and Initiatives



Programs involve the routine activities of County and City departments and staff, as well as special projects and initiatives they may also undertake. As part of Comprehensive Plan implementation, this method may include initiating new or adjusting existing County and City programs and activities; expanding community outreach efforts; or providing specialized training to accomplish a priority objective more promptly and/or effectively. Other County and City partners – public, private and/or non-profit – may also have ongoing programs or choose to pursue new initiatives that lead to desired outcomes expressed in the Comprehensive Plan goals or in its specific action steps.

Regulations and Standards



Given that private investment decisions account for a vast majority of a community’s physical form, land development regulations and engineering standards are fundamental for plan implementation. Consequently, zoning and subdivision regulations and associated development criteria and technical engineering standards are the basic keys to ensuring that the form, character and quality of development reflect the area’s planning objectives. These codes should advance the community’s desire for quality development outcomes while recognizing economic factors. They should not delay or interfere unnecessarily with appropriate new development or redevelopment that is consistent with plan principles and directives.

Partnerships and Coordination



Some community initiatives identified in this plan cannot be accomplished by County or City government on their own. They may require direct coordination, intergovernmental agreements or funding support from other public entities or levels of government. Additionally, the unique role of potential private and non-profit partners to advance the community’s action agenda should not be underestimated. This may occur through cooperative efforts, volunteer activities and in-kind services (which can count toward the local match requirements for various grant opportunities), and from public/private financing of community improvements.

More Targeted Planning / Study



Various areas of County and City governance require more detailed study and planning, especially as required to qualify for external funding opportunities. These studies involve targeted planning work at a finer-grain level of detail than is appropriate for comprehensive planning purposes (e.g., utility infrastructure master plans, parks and recreation master plan, streetscape design plan, etc.). As such, some parts of this plan will be implemented only after some additional planning or special study to clarify next steps and associated costs and considerations, including clarification of roles and potential cost-sharing when partnering is involved.

PLANNING AUTHORITY AND REQUIREMENTS

This Comprehensive Plan was prepared in accordance with the provisions of Chapter 100 in the Kentucky Revised Statutes (KRS). Unlike some other states where comprehensive planning is left as a voluntary activity for local governments to choose to undertake, KRS Section 100.183 specifies that:

The planning commission of each unit [city, county or combinations of these] shall prepare a comprehensive plan, which shall serve as a guide for public and private actions and decisions to assure the development of public and private property in the most appropriate relationships.

This joint Paducah-McCracken Comprehensive Plan is structured to comply with the stipulations of KRS Section 100.187, Contents of Comprehensive Plan by including:

- Along with an overarching set of planning themes, goals and specific action items (equivalent to “objectives” in KRS Section 100.187(1)) in each topical plan section “to serve as a guide for the physical development and economic and social well-being of the planning unit.”
- A Land Use and Community Character section (equivalent to the “land use plan element” specified in KRS Section 100.187(2)), including a new joint Future Land Use and Character map, to indicate “the most appropriate, economic, desirable, and feasible patterns for the general location, character, extent, and interrelationship of the manner in which the community should use its public and private land ...”
- A Transportation section (equivalent to the “transportation plan element” specified in KRS Section 100.187(3)) to focus on “the most desirable, appropriate, economic, and feasible pattern for the general location, character, and extent of the channels, routes, and terminals for transportation facilities for the circulation of persons and goods ...”



- Multiple plan sections that address the considerations within the single plan section implied by the “community facilities element” in KRS Section 100.187(4), including:
 - A Land Use and Community Character section in this plan that speaks to “the most desirable, appropriate, economic, and feasible pattern for the general location, character, and the extent of public and semipublic buildings, land, and facilities ...”
 - A Housing and Neighborhoods section that emphasizes the importance of locating parks and recreation facilities, schools, public safety facilities and other public uses in or within close proximity of residential neighborhoods.
 - A Growth Capacity section that links public utilities to the area’s ability to absorb and accommodate projected growth, along with ongoing infill and redevelopment activity.
 - An Economic Development section that focuses on educational facilities, medical facilities and other assets that bolster the area’s efforts to retain and attract private business investment and associated employment, income and tax revenues – while also emphasizing the importance of “quality of place” to successful economic development, which touches on the area’s cultural facilities and other tourism draws.
 - A Recreation and Amenities section that, likewise, touches on the many components that comprise an area’s livability, including quality schools, appealing parks and recreation offerings, convenient healthcare options, and leisure and cultural spaces and activities.

Various plan sections also note the role of the area faith community in addressing housing and employment needs, providing social welfare programs and facilities, and otherwise supporting persons and families in need in partnership with local government and others.

- Planning themes, goals, actions and related narrative that go beyond the minimum required plan elements above and address the optional plan topics in KRS Section 100.187(6):
 - Community renewal in the Housing and Neighborhoods and Economic Development sections.
 - Housing in the Housing and Neighborhoods section especially, but also in Land Use and Community Character and Economic Development.
 - Flood control in the Growth Capacity section.
 - Pollution and conservation concerns in the Recreation and Amenities section especially, but also in Growth Capacity (pollution) and, with regard to neighborhood conservation, in both the Land Use and Community Character and Housing and Neighborhoods sections.
 - Regional impact in most every plan section (e.g., regional stormwater management solutions, land uses and transportation improvements of regional significance, recommended regional-level housing market analysis, role as a regional hub city/county within the western Kentucky economy, regional tourism destination now engaged in constructing a regionally-significant sports tourism athletic complex, etc.).
 - Historic preservation in the Recreation and Amenities section.

The Paducah-McCracken Today and Plan Direction phases of the plan update process involved work activities that satisfy the specifications of KRS Section 100.191, Research Requirements for Comprehensive Plan, including:

- Analysis of the newest available demographic and socioeconomic data for the area, together with historical perspective and future population projections out to 2045. (Section 100.191(1))

- An assessment of existing economic conditions and economic development efforts, leading to specific recommended initiatives to advance the area’s future economic prospects and priorities. (Section 100.191(2))
- Evaluation of the existing status of area land use, transportation, infrastructure and community facilities, leading to refreshed goals and specific action items within the plan elements itemized above, as well as preparation of a new joint Future Land Use and Character map that illustrates the locational considerations for these topics. (Section 100.191(3))

Growth Capacity

Paducah-McCracken County Comprehensive Plan

INTRODUCTION

Paducah and McCracken County must prepare for, and have the capacity to meet, the public service demands of current residents plus future new development and redevelopment. This plan section focuses on the utility infrastructure and other essential service needs the area will face in the years ahead, along with prudent growth management strategies. Growth can bring many economic and community benefits but must be balanced with reinvestment in established neighborhoods and nonresidential areas, which tax base expansion through revitalization will help to support.

Infrastructure and services are essential to secure investor interest and assurance to undertake private projects in the area. Likewise, the City and County depend on an adequate tax base from business activity and private property improvements to fund essential capital projects and ongoing maintenance.



Why This Comprehensive Plan Section Is Important For Paducah And McCracken County

- Together with the Land Use and Community Character section, focuses on the potential extent of growth in and around Paducah in the decades ahead, where this growth might occur including beyond the city and within the county, and the implications it could have for both City and County government.
- Highlights that, as in other mature communities, Paducah has aging infrastructure and public facility needs to address, including to maintain the capacity and efficiency of water and wastewater systems in compliance with applicable federal and state regulations.
- Points out that capital investments in public infrastructure such as utilities and streets can signal desired locations for growth, help maintain a high quality of life for residents, and create a framework for land development and revitalization.
- Emphasizes that absorbing some of the community's projected population growth within existing developed areas will inject new dollars and energy inside Paducah and developed areas of McCracken County, capitalize on public infrastructure and facilities that are already in place, and potentially lead to new housing options and commercial and mixed-use developments.
- Reinforces local government's role in growth management and related tools and methods, including:
 - Local development regulations that govern subdivision and re-platting activity, provide for the appropriate use of land through zoning, and set minimum standards for the nature and quality of development.

- Financing and special district mechanisms that advance the community’s growth and economic development objectives while supporting beneficial private development and reinvestment.
- Annexation of additional territory into the City where appropriate and when deemed fiscally sensible.
- Ongoing partnerships with other key public agencies, including Paducah Public Schools and McCracken County Schools, among others.



LEGACY OF PAST PLANNING

This new Comprehensive Plan builds on previous plans and studies completed by the City of Paducah, McCracken County and other partners. Those most relevant to the Growth Capacity topic include:

- City of Paducah Comprehensive Plan (adopted July 2007, amended June 2012, readopted June 2017)
- McCracken County Comprehensive Plan (adopted August 2013, amended November 2018)
- City of Paducah Comprehensive Strategic Plan (2020)
- Comprehensive Stormwater Master Plan (2018)
- Paducah-McCracken County Joint Sewer Agency Long Term Control Plan (2016)
- City Facilities Survey and Plan (2020)



Accomplishments

Progress and achievements resulting from past planning and implementation efforts were identified through leadership and community input to this plan, along with other documentation. Significant items cited that are most relevant to the Growth Capacity topic include:

- Grants success, including use of post-pandemic American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) funds for storm drainage (including several key projects identified in the City’s Stormwater Master Plan), bridge repairs and other infrastructure improvements, among other uses.
- Ongoing stormwater management improvements involving street rehabilitation projects, detention basins, pipe replacements, and planned updates to City ordinances and creation of a drainage manual.
- Public investments in infrastructure to support economic development (e.g., extension of sanitary sewer to Triple Rail site, added wastewater treatment at Barkley Regional Airport, etc.).
- Aggressive foreclosure and demolition efforts, to facilitate redevelopment and productive re-use of properties within the city.
- Crime reduction.



- Recent completion of the new Hendron Fire Department station (4300 Old Mayfield Road).
- City/County partnership and interlocal agreement to upgrade the area’s 911 radio system and equipment, including by securing external grant funds.

KEY PLANNING ISSUES AND CONSIDERATIONS

Through the Paducah-McCracken Today and Plan Direction phases of the comprehensive planning effort, numerous real and perceived community issues and needs were identified through leadership and public engagement activities, as well as through the work of the plan consultants and their interactions with an appointed Advisory Group and City and County staff. Additionally, the City’s Board of Commissioners identify annual strategic priorities, which in 2023 included City Facilities and Community Growth, with Stormwater added as a 2024 priority.

Key issues and considerations that led to the goals and action items in this Growth Capacity section include (along with specific points and suggestions from leadership and community input):

Desire to Grow

- Leadership and community interest in drawing more population to the area and retaining more existing residents.
- “How big do we want to be – and what will it take to support that growth?”
- Desire by some to grow internally versus in edge areas by revitalizing existing developed areas first, both residential and commercial.

Growth Management

- Avoid overdevelopment that causes people to relocate out of core areas.
- City use annexation to incorporate more developable area for new in-city development.
- Both City and County plan for park land needs and preserved green spaces as growth occurs.
- Growth capacity and management planning also needs to account for extra public service demands from daytime population and weekend visitor population, beyond the area’s resident base.

QUOTABLE from Community Survey

“We need to encourage population growth in the city and county.”

“Safety, and the responsiveness of our first responders, is important to me.”

“I appreciate our rural setting.”

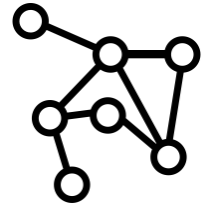
“We need cooperation between government entities.”

Infrastructure Focus

- Need to be more proactive on infrastructure, especially to leverage these public assets for economic development, along with enhancing the area’s broadband infrastructure.
- System-wide issues need attention given outdated infrastructure.
- Infrastructure rehabilitation and upgrades need sustained budget commitments, especially to resolve stormwater management issues.
- Need to incorporate “green infrastructure” design approaches and projects.
- Areas that experience sanitary sewer backups and overflows during heavy rainfall need equitable attention and solutions.
- Need to garner more attention and investment from state government.

FRAMEWORK FOR ACTION

This Framework for Action section builds off of the plan priorities confirmed with City and County officials during the transition from the Paducah-McCracken Today to the Paducah-McCracken Tomorrow phase of Comprehensive Plan development — especially Planning Themes 1, 2 and 3 for this Growth Capacity section. The plan goals and action strategies are aimed at “connecting the dots” between a set of community improvement fundamentals for the area that involve:



Planning Theme 1:

Making the area more attractive to retain — or regain — youth who grew up here, and to attract younger individuals and families.

Planning Theme 1A:

Continuing efforts to diversify the area’s economic and employment base, for long-term economic sustainability and also to offer a wider range of job options to current and prospective residents.

Planning Theme 1B:

Increasing the quantity and variety of housing options.

Planning Theme 2:

Being a safe community with good City/County public safety services (police, fire, emergency medical service).

Planning Theme 3:

Improving infrastructure condition, particularly for stormwater management.

Planning Theme 4:

Sustaining momentum on neighborhood and corridor revitalization.

Planning Theme 5:

Taking greater economic advantage of the area’s location and transportation assets.

Planning Theme 6:

Building on the area’s tourism success, including through sustained commitment to arts, crafts and culture.

What connects all of these planning themes is the desire to retain and attract more population to Paducah and McCracken County, including those who grew up here. The actions in this Growth Capacity section involve tangible steps that will lead to achievement of the goals:

GOALS FOR GROWTH CAPACITY

Goal 1:

Adequate capacity of public infrastructure, and across key public services functions, to accommodate the area’s desire to achieve increased population retention and growth.

Goal 2:

A growth trend and pattern in which new development in edge locations is balanced with ongoing promotion of infill development and adaptive re-use of properties in areas with public infrastructure and services already in place and/or prioritized for improvement.

Goal 3:

Pro-active planning and investment in ongoing maintenance and upgrades to public infrastructure and facilities, balancing new and extended infrastructure to support first-time development with necessary and equitable funding to rehabilitate aging components in previously developed areas.

A Goal is ...
 a statement of a desired outcome (“end”) toward which efforts are directed as expressed by more specific objectives and action steps (“means”).

Goal 4:

Ongoing support for continual improvement in police and fire capabilities to maintain the responsiveness expected by city and county residents and provide a safe and secure environment as the area grows.

Goal 5:

Ongoing collaboration with various partner agencies and organizations to advance strategies and projects that address regional issues involving utility infrastructure, flooding risk and emergency response, especially to:

- bolster the area’s resilience and readiness to deal with and recover from natural hazards while also preparing for the implications of a changing climate;
- promote sustainable practices, especially effective management of public utilities to minimize adverse effects on the natural environment, along with the area’s economic and fiscal sustainability; and to
- support ongoing efforts to streamline public service delivery and provide for the long-term fiscal health of City and County government, including by applying technology and by promoting and implementing energy-, water- and waste-reducing “green” practices.

“Resilience” is ...
 the ability to prepare for, absorb, recover from, and more successfully adapt to adverse events.
 National Academy of Sciences

ACTIONS

The actions below are categorized into the five types of plan implementation actions highlighted throughout this plan.

Action Leaders

With the support and direction of City and County elected officials, action leaders for most initiatives involving Growth Capacity will include:

- City of Paducah – Administration-Grants, Engineering, Finance, Fire, Planning, Police, Public Works, Technology
- McCracken County – Community Development, Emergency Management, Finance, Planning and Zoning, Sheriff’s Office
- Six area fire protection districts (Concord, Hendron, Lone Oak, Melber-New Hope, Reidland-Farley, West McCracken)
- Paducah Water
- Paducah-McCracken County Joint Sewer Agency
- Paducah-McCracken County Office of Emergency Management

Plan Actions Involve ...
 seizing a special opportunity or addressing a particular challenge one faces, given limited resources — financial and otherwise — and recognizing that various routine and ongoing activities will continue in the meantime.



Various advisory Boards and Commissions also have some role in Growth Capacity, including:

City Boards and Commissions

- Planning Commission
- Urban Renewal and Community Development Agency

County Boards and Commissions

- Planning Commission

Others

- Paducah-McCracken County Industrial Development Authority Board
- Paducah-McCracken County Joint Sewer Agency Board
- Paducah Power System – Electric Plant Board
- Paducah Water – Commissioners of Waterworks



ACTIONS Involving Capital Investments

1. Along with the Paducah-McCracken Joint Sewer Agency for sanitary and storm sewer system priorities, continue prioritizing capital projects related to public utility infrastructure and facilities (water, local government buildings/sites, etc.) through City and County multi-year capital improvement planning processes, to plan ahead for project financing needs, ensure appropriate sequencing of interrelated projects, and raise community and private investor awareness of the area’s public infrastructure/facilities outlook and priorities. Use of inter-departmental working groups for annual and ongoing capital improvements planning is a best practice, especially to coordinate on sequencing considerations for or across multiple inter-related projects.
2. Utilizing recommendations of the City’s Comprehensive Stormwater Master Plan, continue implementing key system improvements, along with phased maintenance and replacement of aged and undersized system components. Prioritize projects based on facility condition and cost of failure, along with other cost/benefit considerations.



ACTIONS Involving Programs and Initiatives

3. Follow an asset management planning and life-cycle strategy for tracking the condition and anticipating the timing of needed maintenance, rehabilitation or ultimately replacement of all components of public infrastructure and other facilities.
4. Continue pursuing infill and revitalization strategies that make it more realistic for more of the area’s projected growth to be absorbed within the interior of and contiguous to the Paducah city limits, to reduce the long-term public cost burden from a sprawling development pattern.
5. Maintain budget and community support to continue the accreditations of both the Paducah Police Department and the McCracken County Sheriff’s Office through the Kentucky Association of Chiefs of Police. Likewise, such support will enable the Paducah Fire Department to maintain its high rating through the Insurance Services Office (ISO) evaluation system (Class 2 rating, on a scale of 1 to 10, at the time of this Comprehensive Plan update). The county’s six fire districts also strive for the highest ISO ratings achievable for volunteer and rural fire agencies, considering the key rating factors (fire department quality in terms of training, staffing levels and fire station



locations; water availability for firefighting; quality of emergency communications; and community outreach to promote fire prevention and public safety).

6. If not already part of the area’s stormwater management strategy, establish an “Adopt a Drain” program to encourage citizen participation, refresh understanding of watersheds, and ensure that stormwater inlets and other facilities are clear prior to major storm events. Such grass-roots buy-in can benefit the community by reducing nuisance flooding in core neighborhoods and aiding the overall system performance by preventing solids accumulation that can disrupt stormwater flow.



7. Evaluate opportunities to manage stormwater through green infrastructure methods on publicly-owned properties, in coordination with partners, and to demonstrate effective methods for use on private properties. One approach is to install pervious pavement and pilot demonstrations of infiltration ditches and bioswales to reduce nuisance flooding in targeted neighborhood areas and edge growth locations. With minimal investment, a proof-of-concept installation can be constructed to provide residents, commercial property owners and other stakeholders an opportunity to familiarize themselves with these methods and their potential benefits.

8. Keep abreast of water conservation technologies and best management practices while promoting wise water use throughout the area, including through related grant opportunities, and as another way to extend water system capacity.



9. Utilize best management practices for publicly-maintained open spaces and facilities, such as efficient mowing, xeriscape (i.e., low-water, low-maintenance, and native plantings), reduced pesticide use, and energy and water conservation.

10. Identify lead persons and points of coordination across departments, along with targeted staff training, to advance green practices and enhanced resiliency within local government. This can include modified operations and maintenance practices that reduce water and energy use, stormwater runoff and the need for detention, and wastewater and solid waste generation.

11. Continually evaluate new technologies and options for improving public service delivery and communications/outreach, especially where this will contain costs and postpone the need for additional staffing. Also identify lead persons and points of coordination across all relevant functions – and with partner public agencies, as appropriate – to share effective technology tools and practices and potentially coordinate on training needs.

ACTIONS Involving Regulations and Standards

12. Update the City’s development regulations to modify or add provisions and standards based on recommendations in the Comprehensive Stormwater Master Plan. Given evolving climate trends and weather patterns, this should include periodically revisiting development requirements previously set by the City and County, especially for Special Flood Hazard Areas, to enforce flood control measures and reduce flood damage in the area.

13. Ensure consistency across adopted design and construction standards, development regulations and other relevant policies and criteria whenever new plans and studies are completed, such as utility system master plans.

ACTIONS Involving Partnerships and Coordination

14. Continue pursuing City/County partnership opportunities and joint projects and initiatives, when and where practical, to improve provision of public services in lieu of full consolidation of City and County government.
15. Continue grant pursuits to leverage local resources with regional, state and federal funding for area infrastructure improvements.
16. Along with maintaining the Paducah-McCracken County Emergency Operations Plan (and Emergency Operations Center), continue collaboration between City, County and the Purchase Area Development District on regional multi-hazard mitigation planning, which maintains the area’s eligibility for related grant opportunities especially through the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA).
17. Follow the numerous state and national agencies and organizations with publications, technical assistance, grant and funding opportunities, and other guidance and resources for local governments involving technology application, green practices, and community resiliency (especially the Kentucky League of Cities, Kentucky Association of Counties, International City/County Management Association, American Planning Association, U.S. Green Building Council, Esri, and Governing magazine, among others).

ACTIONS Involving More Targeted Planning / Study

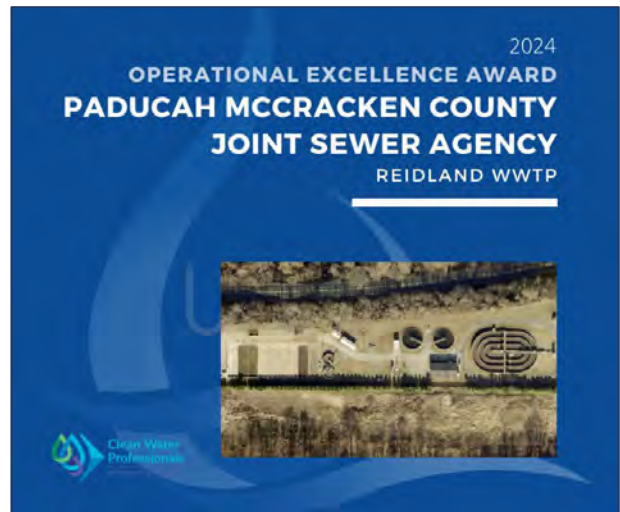
18. As stated in the City Commission’s strategic priorities, confirm the viability of establishing a stormwater utility as a new mechanism – widely used by local governments across the nation – for boosting financial resources that can be targeted directly to visible projects that make a clear difference in local drainage conditions, along with supporting ongoing system maintenance.
19. Explore the potential use of blighted properties for stormwater management purposes. Some core neighborhoods in Paducah are simultaneously facing problems of nuisance flooding along with deteriorating structures, property maintenance issues, and vacant and underutilized parcels in some locations. Utilizing otherwise unused space for this utility function can address both challenges while potentially providing a new physical feature and focal point for these neighborhood locations.
20. As part of overall water quality monitoring and improvement efforts in the area, utilize available funding to focus especially on reducing bacteria levels in area waters.

ONGOING AND POTENTIAL PARTNERS RELATED TO GROWTH CAPACITY

- Delta Regional Authority
- Greater Paducah Economic Development / Paducah-McCracken County Industrial Development Authority
- Jackson Purchase Energy Cooperative
- Kentucky Emergency Management Association



- Kentucky state government:
 - Kentucky 911 Services Board
 - Kentucky Commonwealth Office of Technology
 - Kentucky Community Crisis Response Board
 - Kentucky Department for Local Government
 - Kentucky Division of Emergency Management
 - Kentucky Division of Right of Way and Utilities
 - Kentucky Energy and Environment Cabinet
 - Kentucky Governor’s Office (Homeland Security)
 - Kentucky Infrastructure Authority
 - Kentucky Justice and Public Safety Cabinet
 - Kentucky Law Enforcement Council
 - Kentucky Public Service Commission
 - Kentucky State Police
- McCracken County Conservation District
- McCracken County Public Schools
- Paducah Public Schools
- Purchase Area Development District



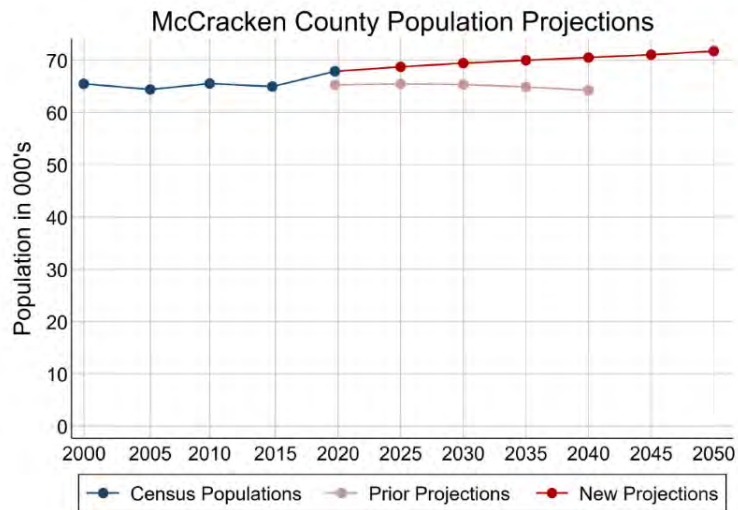
POPULATION OUTLOOK FOR McCRACKEN COUNTY

Population projections are an important component of a long-range planning process. They help determine and quantify the demands that will be placed on public facilities and services based on the potential pace and scale of the community’s physical growth. Projections reflect local, regional, national and even international trends and offer a basis to prepare for the future. However, forecasting population changes can be challenging, particularly for the long term, because it is often difficult to account for all circumstances that may arise. In fact, demographers caution that population projections become trickier as the geographic area gets smaller, making county- and city-level population the most difficult to forecast. This is because local population change is strongly influenced by less predictable factors such as housing prices and options, availability of vacant land to develop, results from economic development efforts, and potential future annexation of additional territory, which may already have existing residents and results in an instant increase in the citywide total.

Therefore, it will be important for the County and City to monitor population and economic growth continually to account for both short- and longer-term shifts that can influence development activity and trends in the community and larger region. The Population Projection Scenarios chart below provides a comparison of multiple possibilities for future population change in McCracken County. The projections build on the Census 2020 population count of 67,875 persons, and they identify potential population levels in five-year increments out to 2040. The first chart below from the Kentucky State Data Center shows how its earlier projections of population decline in McCracken County were revised upward based on the promising Census 2020 results for the area.

Bottom Line

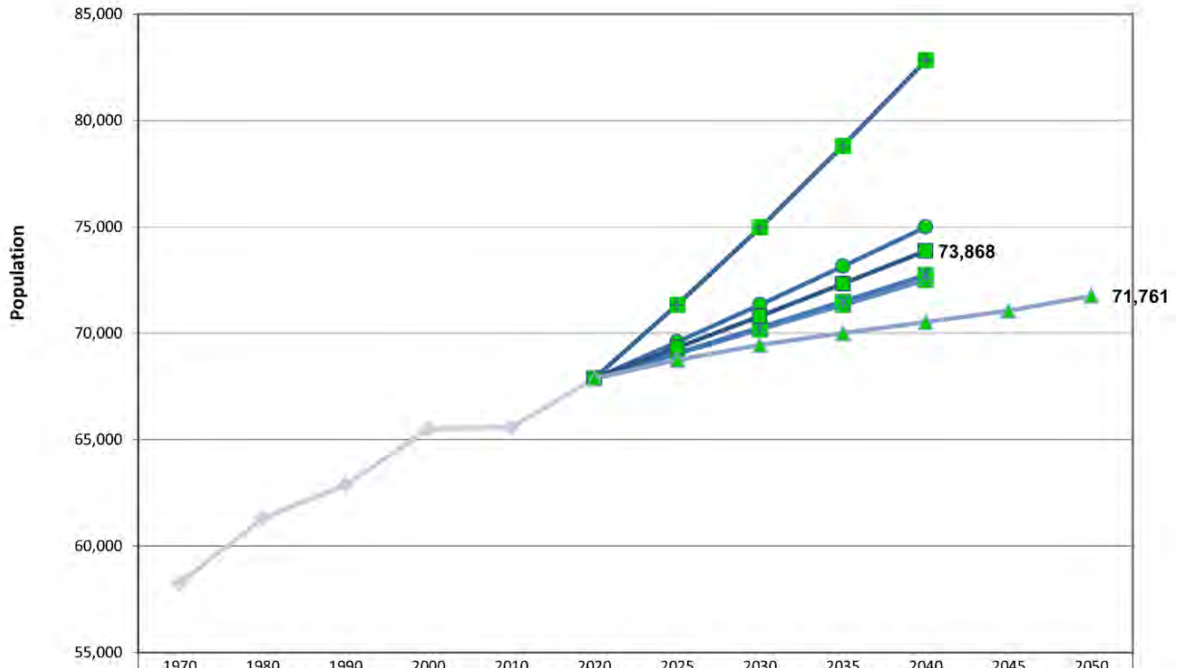
It is wise for counties and cities to think in terms of a range of potential growth rather than an absolute number given the uncertainty of any small-area forecast that extends beyond a few years. Generalizing from the various scenario outcomes below, **it is assumed for this Comprehensive Plan that McCracken County’s 2040 population will fall within a forecast range of approximately 70,500 to 75,000 persons.**



SOURCE: U.S. Census Bureau, Kentucky State Data Center, Kendig Keast Collaborative.

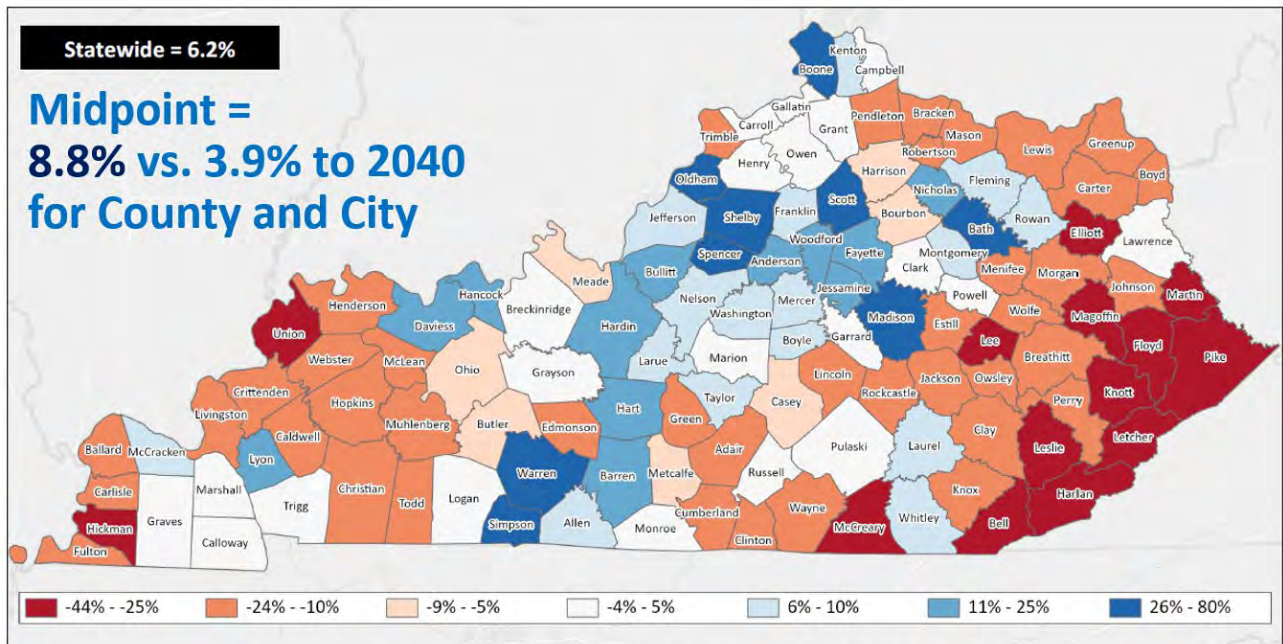
The projection line labeled Midpoint on the chart represents a calculated midpoint among the different scenarios. The Midpoint line indicates that **McCracken County would surpass the 70,000 population threshold in the 2030 timeframe and grow to nearly 74,000 residents by 2040.** This would mean an additional 6,000 residents from 2020, implying that **McCracken County could add the equivalent of 9% of its Census 2020 population by 2040.** The midpoint projection would put the county’s population at 69,325 in 2025; 70,806 in 2030; 72,321 in 2035; and 73,868 in 2040. Notably, this 2040 projection is higher than the Kentucky State Data Center’s 2050 projection of 71,761, by approximately 2,100 persons. The illustration that follows the population projection scenarios chart highlights that the Midpoint projection would represent 8.8% growth in McCracken County’s population through 2040 relative to 3.9% under the Kentucky State Data Center’s projection – and relative to the Center’s forecast of 6.2% growth statewide through 2040.

Population Projection Scenarios for McCracken County through 2045



	1970	1980	1990	2000	2010	2020	2025	2030	2035	2040	2045	2050
Historical Data	58,281	61,310	62,879	65,514	65,565	67,875						
Steady Numeric Growth (2,310 per decade)						67,875	69,020	70,185	71,331	72,495		
Steady Growth Rate (0.3% per year)						67,875	69,060	70,266	71,493	72,742		
Assumed Annual Growth Rate (0.5%)						67,875	69,589	71,346	73,148	74,995		
Assumed Annual Growth Rate (1%)						67,875	71,337	74,976	78,801	82,820		
MIDPOINT						67,875	69,325	70,806	72,321	73,868		
KY State Data Center						67,875	68,742	69,450	70,013	70,529	71,063	71,761

SOURCE: U.S. Census Bureau, Kentucky State Data Center (including map below), Kendig Keast Collaborative.



Projected Population Change, 2020-2050

Projections Based on Varying Quantities and Rates of Growth from Recent Trend

The **Steady Growth Rate scenario produces a 2040 projection of approximately 72,750 residents**, representing 6.8% growth from 2020 to 2040. This projection method assumes that the compound annual growth rate the county experienced from 2010 to 2020 (0.3%) will continue each year through the 20-year projection period.

The **Steady Numeric Growth scenario leads to a similar but slightly lower result of approximately 72,500 residents in 2040**. The lower outcome is because it is a “straight-line” projection method in which a steady number of people is added to the population every decade (2,310 persons in McCracken County’s case, the same as was added from 2010 to 2020). The prior steady-rate method produces higher numbers over time because the number of new residents added gets larger each decade while the rate of growth stays constant (0.3% in this case). This is similar to the power of compound growth in a savings account – the interest (i.e., growth) rate may not change, but it is being applied to an ever-expanding balance, resulting in larger and larger interest earnings over time. The Steady Numeric Growth method results in a declining rate of growth over time as the same new quantity of people is being added each decade to an ever-expanding base.

Projections Based on Assumed Rates of Growth versus Recent Trend

While the prior scenarios involve typical projection methods of extending historical trends to future years, the two Assumed Growth Rate scenarios consider the potential outcomes from varying McCracken County’s compound annual growth rate in future years:

- The first such scenario, labeled **Assumed Annual Growth Rate (0.5%)**, is based on a steady compound annual growth rate of 0.5% per year from 2020 through 2040. Even this slight increase from the annual 0.3% rate assumed in the Steady Growth Rate scenario produces nearly 2,250 more residents by 2040, at **74,995** (10.5% growth from Census 2020).
- The second scenario, labeled **Assumed Annual Growth Rate (1%)**, increases the annual growth rate assumption even more, in case McCracken County’s population growth were to begin to accelerate more over the next few decades. This leads to another 7,825-person increase in the 2040 population relative to the assumed 0.5% scenario above, to **82,820** (22% growth from Census 2020). This number is markedly different from the lower range of the other projection results.

Paducah Projection Based on City’s Share of County-Level Growth

Finally, if Paducah were to remain steady in accounting for approximately 40% of the total countywide population, including the city, in 2040 as it did in Census 2020 (27,137 of 67,875), then **Paducah would have 29,547 residents in 2040**. Under the Kentucky State Data Center’s lower growth projection for McCracken County, Paducah would have 28,198 residents in 2040 if still at 40% of the county total. (These numbers are based on the city limits as of Census 2020, meaning the share-of-county projection would need to be revisited if the City annexes significant additional land that has existing population and/or the potential for more development and population growth.)

Physical Implications of Projected Growth

The calculated midpoint projection from the chart above indicates that McCracken County could have 73,868 residents by 2040. To illustrate what this potential level of growth could mean for the county, the Pepper’s Mill subdivision in the south county just west of US Highway 45, was randomly selected to help quantify and visualize the implications. The accompanying aerial view of Pepper’s Mill, from fall 2023, shows an existing neighborhood of 85 single-family detached homes. Based on some further calculations below:



- A 2040 McCracken County population of 73,868 would mean 5,993 additional residents between 2020 and 2040.
- McCracken County would need 2,436 more housing units by 2040 to accommodate this added population based on an average household size of 2.46 persons (per the U.S. Census Bureau estimate for 2021).
- With 85 homes in Pepper’s Mill, McCracken County would need 28-29 more such subdivisions by 2040 for the calculated housing need.

As with the necessary year-to-year tracking of actual population growth relative to earlier projections, trends in the housing mix within the county and city should also be monitored as average household size differs among housing types. In many communities, the number of persons per household in multi-family housing is often somewhat lower than in single-family detached homes – and this is also affected by the age distribution of the local population (i.e., potential for lower average household sizes depending on the extent of young singles, “empty nesters,” seniors living alone, etc.). As of 2021, the Census Bureau estimated that 27.7% of McCracken County’s housing stock, and 47.5% of the city’s, was renter-occupied relative to owner-occupied housing. The land area needed for new housing will also be lower if more of the added population is absorbed into housing types other than single-family detached homes.

Monitoring Population Outlook Over Time

As explained above, all of these scenarios are projections of what *could* occur in McCracken County over the next several decades based on recent trends and/or specified assumptions. Some communities choose to adopt more conservative assumptions due to concerns about their growth capacity and/or the implications of growth in terms of density of development, increasing traffic, school impacts, loss of open space or other factors. On the other hand, some officials wish for their community to set its sights higher and aim to grow beyond the projected level in the coming decades.

The midpoint projection could be exceeded if the County and/or City promote growth more aggressively through programs that incentivize new development or redevelopment/infill. Other key factors include:

- The extent of available, developable land in the county and city that actually transitions to residential use, the pace and timing of such land development activity, and the housing types and densities involved;
- The projected capacity of the area’s infrastructure and public services (and of the county and city public school systems) to accommodate this growth in future years; and
- Community values and preferences regarding growth, which ultimately translates into capital projects and public services planning.

As emphasized several times in this discussion, the next step after any such projections is immediate and ongoing tracking of actual growth year to year. That way, assumptions and projections can be adjusted through annual reviews and periodic updates of this Comprehensive Plan. Finally, available data and/or local studies on trends in daytime population – the influx of workers and visitors who come into a hub community like Paducah and McCracken County on most weekdays and/or weekends – is another critical factor for gauging and anticipating cumulative demands on local infrastructure and public services.

Land Use and Community Character

Paducah-McCracken County Comprehensive Plan

INTRODUCTION

Land use involves how the properties in an area are allocated to an array of private and public activities, from housing, commercial and industrial uses to public needs such as streets, schools, parks, water treatment plants and other government-maintained facilities. Also of interest is the relative intensity at which land is developed in terms of the nature of the use (e.g., residential, industrial, etc.), building size and height, separation from adjacent land uses, and coverage of sites with structures and paved surfaces.

Land use considerations inter-relate with all other Comprehensive Plan topics. For instance, the transportation network provides access to land, which, along with real estate market factors, influences the type and intensity of development that may occur. The availability, capacity and condition of public utilities can dictate the location, amount and timing of development as can economic development efforts. Similarly, proximity to parks and public facilities promotes public health and safety and affects the development potential of an area. Development character and site design shape community aesthetics and the perceptions held by area residents, visitors and those considering investment in Paducah and McCracken County. Sound planning is essential to ensure that the community is prepared for anticipated land use transitions and new development, can serve it adequately with public services, and can manage its impacts to maintain compatibility of land uses and preserve community character.



Why This Comprehensive Plan Section Is Important For Paducah And McCracken County

- Communicates the desired character for the area and its downtown, neighborhoods, roadway corridors and other areas – today and in the years ahead – along with the anticipated land uses in these areas.
- Provides guidance to enable the County and City to plan effectively for future development and redevelopment, and for ongoing stewardship of areas intended to remain much as they are today.
- Offers predictability to property owners and investors regarding the community’s preferred development pattern and character, and helps local government prepare to serve future public infrastructure and service needs.
- Establishes the public policy basis for local development regulations, especially to promote compatibility between adjacent land uses and varying development intensities.
- Reinforces local government’s role in promoting and protecting the health, safety and welfare of its residents by ensuring that development conforms to local building codes and standards and that sufficient land is dedicated to public needs such as recreation and education.
- Links to other plan sections that help set priorities for local government programs and capital investments to support the desired development pattern and quality.

LEGACY OF PAST PLANNING

This new Comprehensive Plan builds on previous plans and studies completed by the City of Paducah, McCracken County and other partners. Those most relevant to the Land Use and Community Character topic include:



- City of Paducah Comprehensive Plan (adopted July 2007, amended June 2012, readopted June 2017)
- McCracken County Comprehensive Plan (adopted August 2013, amended November 2018)

Accomplishments

Progress and achievements resulting from past planning and implementation efforts were identified through leadership and community input to this plan, along with other documentation. Significant items cited that are most relevant to the Land Use and Community Character topic include:

- Results of City’s focus on neighborhoods and corridors and the County’s emphasis on other special areas (e.g., business/industrial parks, repurposing of the former Bluegrass Downs site for the new Sports Tourism Athletic Complex, etc.).
- Growth in Midtown area.
- Absorption of additional housing and commercial development within the county, in both edge growth areas near previous development plus rural subdivisions and scattered homesteads on larger properties.
- Renewed development of needed multi-family housing in both the city and county, along with further construction of smaller-format housing types.
- Periodic updates to City and County development regulations to address contemporary land use issues (e.g., short-term rental activity, allowance for accessory dwelling units on residential lots, large-scale installations of solar panels in rural areas, etc.).



KEY PLANNING ISSUES AND CONSIDERATIONS

Through the Paducah-McCracken Today and Plan Direction phases of the comprehensive planning effort, numerous real and perceived community issues and needs were identified through leadership and public engagement activities, as well as through the work of the plan consultants and their interactions with an appointed Advisory Group and City and County staff.

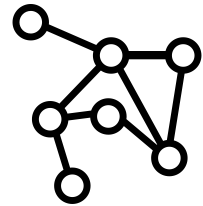
Key issues and considerations that led to the goals and action items in this Land Use and Community Character section include (along with specific points and suggestions from leadership and community input):

- Attractiveness of certain rural areas within the county for solar farm installations, and the need to further bolster County regulations and standards to limit adverse effects on nearby properties, preserve agricultural uses and protect overall rural character.
- Emphasis on building better climate resilience into new development and redevelopment, along with adaptability to changing conditions.

- Overcoming “Not in My Backyard” NIMBY-ism toward certain contemporary land use concepts and development/redevelopment approaches, especially to address crucial housing needs and affordability challenges.
- Ongoing concern with seismic risk and activity in the region.
- Continued attention to how short-term rentals are defined and regulated to minimize their negative effects within neighborhoods.
- Need for more shovel-ready business/industrial park areas as also emphasized in the Economic Development section of this plan.
- A desire to see more master-planned development that leads to communities with a mix of ages, incomes and races/ethnicities.
- Promotion of site design and development approaches that minimize removal of mature trees and tree stands.

FRAMEWORK FOR ACTION

This Framework for Action section builds off of the plan priorities confirmed with City and County officials during the transition from the Paducah-McCracken Today to the Paducah-McCracken Tomorrow phase of Comprehensive Plan development — especially Planning Themes 1, 1A and 1B for this Land Use and Community Character section. The plan goals and action strategies are aimed at “connecting the dots” between a set of community improvement fundamentals for the area that involve:



Planning Theme 1:

Making the area more attractive to retain — or regain — youth who grew up here, and to attract younger individuals and families.

Planning Theme 1A:

Continuing efforts to diversify the area’s economic and employment base, for long-term economic sustainability and also to offer a wider range of job options to current and prospective residents.

Planning Theme 1B:

Increasing the quantity and variety of housing options.

Planning Theme 2:

Being a safe community with good City/County public safety services (police, fire, emergency medical service).

Planning Theme 3:

Improving infrastructure condition, particularly for stormwater management.

Planning Theme 4:

Sustaining momentum on neighborhood and corridor revitalization.

Planning Theme 5:

Taking greater economic advantage of the area’s location and transportation assets.

Planning Theme 6:

Building on the area’s tourism success, including through sustained commitment to arts, crafts and culture.

What connects all of these planning themes is the desire to retain and attract more population to Paducah and McCracken County, including those who grew up here. The actions in this Land Use and Community Character section involve tangible steps that will lead to achievement of the goals:

GOALS FOR LAND USE AND COMMUNITY CHARACTER

Goal 1:

A land use allocation and pattern that advances the area’s key objectives of achieving greater housing supply and variety and supporting its economic development and tax base needs.

Goal 2:

Consistent character of land use within areas intended for particular character types, from rural and suburban through auto-oriented and urban along the community character spectrum.

Goal 3:

Ongoing and effective coordination between land use and transportation planning to ensure a well-connected community with adequate means and capacity to accommodate multiple forms of circulation between area destinations.

Goal 4:

An ongoing focus on boosting the area’s livability for current and prospective residents by offering desired retail and service uses, parks and recreation offerings, and other leisure opportunities and amenities in appropriate locations and designed for quality and residential compatibility.

A Goal is ...

a statement of a desired outcome (“end”) toward which efforts are directed as expressed by more specific objectives and action steps (“means”).

ACTIONS

The actions below are categorized into the five types of plan implementation actions highlighted throughout this plan.

Action Leaders

With the support and direction of City and County elected officials, action leaders for most initiatives involving Land Use and Community Character will include:

- City of Paducah – Engineering, Planning
- McCracken County – Community Development, Planning and Zoning

Various advisory Boards and Commissions also have some role in Land Use and Community Character, including:

City Boards and Commissions

- Planning Commission

County Boards and Commissions

- Planning Commission

Plan Actions Involve ...

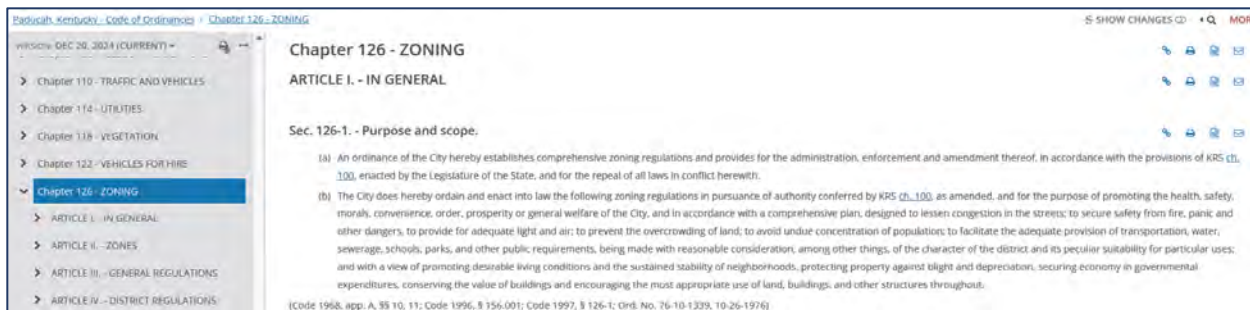
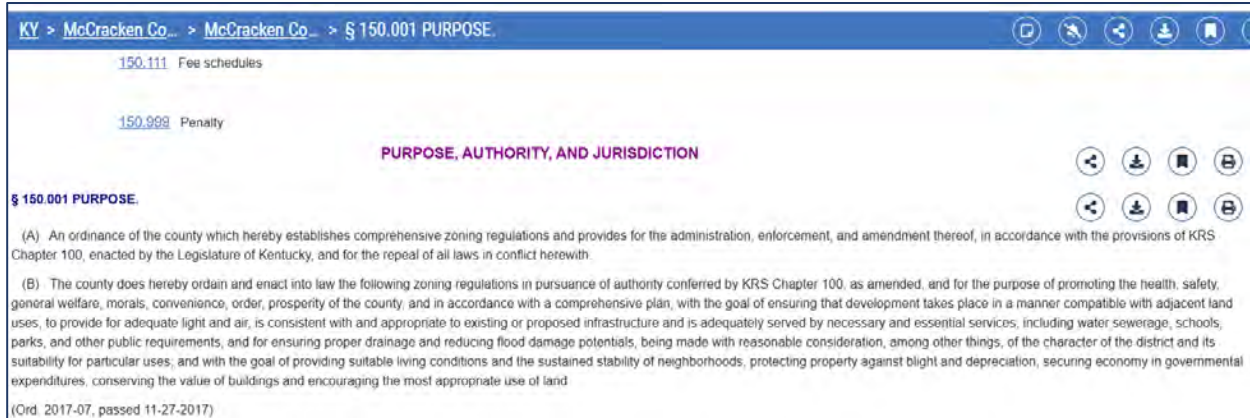
seizing a special opportunity or addressing a particular challenge one faces, given limited resources — financial and otherwise — and recognizing that various routine and ongoing activities will continue in the meantime.

ACTIONS Involving Capital Investments

1. Add criteria to capital improvements planning processes to ensure that potential interaction between public investments and land use outcomes or evolution is considered when identifying and prioritizing candidate capital projects.

ACTIONS Involving Programs and Initiatives

None for this plan section.



ACTIONS Involving Regulations and Standards

2. Review all aspects of the County and City development regulations, based on this new Comprehensive Plan, to identify potential regulatory and/or standards updates. This may include the possible need for additional or modified zoning districts. *Another source for possible updates is a development regulations evaluation completed by the Comprehensive Plan consultant, separate from this plan.*

- As part of potentially expanding on or refining the County’s zoning treatment of solar energy systems, also explore potential location criteria, and a possible allowance for co-uses with solar farm installations.
- Continue to explore zoning strategies and provisions for overcoming “nonconformities” that can stand in the way of beneficial use and re-use of property, including infill development and redevelopment activity. Nonconformities arise when a pre-existing condition does not comply with zoning regulations that were adopted or changed later, which is the case in various areas both inside Paducah and elsewhere in McCracken County. Aspects of a property that most commonly can end up nonconforming include its use; the size, width and/or depth of the lot; and the setback and/or height of buildings. The typical zoning framework prevents all nonconforming uses and buildings from expanding or being altered in certain ways, and nonconforming lots often cannot be built on feasibly. This approach usually locks nonconformities in place for the long term, sometimes contributing to disinvestment and blight.

However, mechanisms can be incorporated into local zoning to address nonconformities directly and more selectively, move non-nuisance properties into legal compliance, and free their uses and structures to expand or evolve where appropriate. At the same time, the issues and concerns that led to contemporary regulations must still be respected, requiring a balance between neighborhood protection and methods for eliminating nonconformities with minimum adverse effects. Only the most noxious uses and the most problematic buildings should remain nonconforming, with the intent of removing them over time. Without such solutions for resolving lesser nonconformities, many communities are plagued by a raft of variance requests from

property owners seeking regulatory relief. In turn, a community's land use and zoning objectives can be undermined if an overly sympathetic board of adjustment approves variances profusely.

3. Add new or amend current zoning provisions, as needed, that are directly linked to actions in other Comprehensive Plan sections related to housing attainability, neighborhood conservation and renewal, business retention and attraction, leisure and lifestyle related land uses, transit support, a more pedestrian- and cycling-friendly community, and park and open space protection.
4. Regularly review and update, as appropriate, the County and City's land development, building/ construction and infrastructure related fees to ensure adequate revenue generation in line with costs and based on regional trends across jurisdictions.

ACTIONS Involving Partnerships and Coordination

5. Coordinate future interim and major updates of this Comprehensive Plan to coincide with:
 - Periodic updates of the areawide Transportation Plan now to be maintained by the new Metropolitan Planning Organization, to ensure effective integration of land use and transportation analysis and decision-making.
 - Periodic updates of the area's key economic development strategy documents to ensure effective integration of land use with market analysis and other factors that drive business development efforts.
6. Continue close coordination with Paducah Public Schools and McCracken County Public Schools as essential partners for community building and maintaining school campuses as neighborhood anchors.

ACTIONS Involving More Targeted Planning / Study

7. Follow the completion of this overarching Comprehensive Plan with ongoing special area planning efforts, particularly for Downtown Paducah, key roadway corridors and the vicinity of the new Sports Tourism Athletic Complex (as also recommended in the Recreation and Amenities section of this plan).

ONGOING AND POTENTIAL PARTNERS RELATED TO LAND USE AND COMMUNITY CHARACTER

- Greater Paducah Economic Development / Paducah-McCracken County Industrial Development Authority
- Higher education institutions
- Kentucky state government:
 - Kentucky Department for Local Government
 - Kentucky Geological Survey
- McCracken County Public Schools
- Paducah Public Schools
- Purchase Area Development District
- Real estate/development community



FUTURE LAND USE AND CHARACTER MAP

Illustrated on the **Future Land Use and Character map** is the general pattern of uses anticipated and/or desired in the years ahead, and the intended character contexts in which uses occur in various cases. The map shows 11 future land use designations within Paducah and eight categories for the balance of McCracken County. Specific standards for land development based on these designations are articulated through the County and City’s implementing regulations (zoning, subdivision, etc.) as they currently exist and may be further amended over time based on this planning guidance.

Land Use Planning versus Zoning

The side-by-side comparison below highlights the distinct purposes and uses of a future land use map relative to a zoning map. Local government development regulations are among the primary tools for implementing the plan. The zoning and subdivision regulations, in particular, can play a significant role in establishing and protecting the physical character of the community. Zoning regulations delineate land use districts and the uses permitted within them, together with standards for buildings and site improvements. As a result, the zoning and subdivision regulations largely direct development outcomes. Although the Comprehensive and future land use map provide only general planning guidance, they become the basis for updates of the zoning and subdivision regulations and the official zoning map.

Aspect	Future Land Use Map	Zoning Map
Purpose	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Outlook for future use of land and character of particular areas of the community. ▪ Macro level, showing generalized development patterns. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Basis for applying different land use regulations and development standards in different areas of the community (“zones”). ▪ Micro level, with an area- and site-specific focus.
Use	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Guidance for zoning map and related decisions (zone change requests, variance applications, etc.). ▪ Baseline for monitoring consistency of actions and decisions with the Comprehensive Plan. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Regulating development as it is proposed or as sites are positioned for the future with appropriate zoning (by the property owner or the City/County).
Inputs and Considerations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Existing land use in the community. ▪ The locational aspects of community planning priorities involving housing, economic development, infrastructure, parks and recreation, public facilities, etc. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Comprehensive Plan and future land use map for general guidance. ▪ Zoning decisions that differ substantially from the general development pattern depicted on the future land use map will indicate the need for some map adjustments during the next plan update.

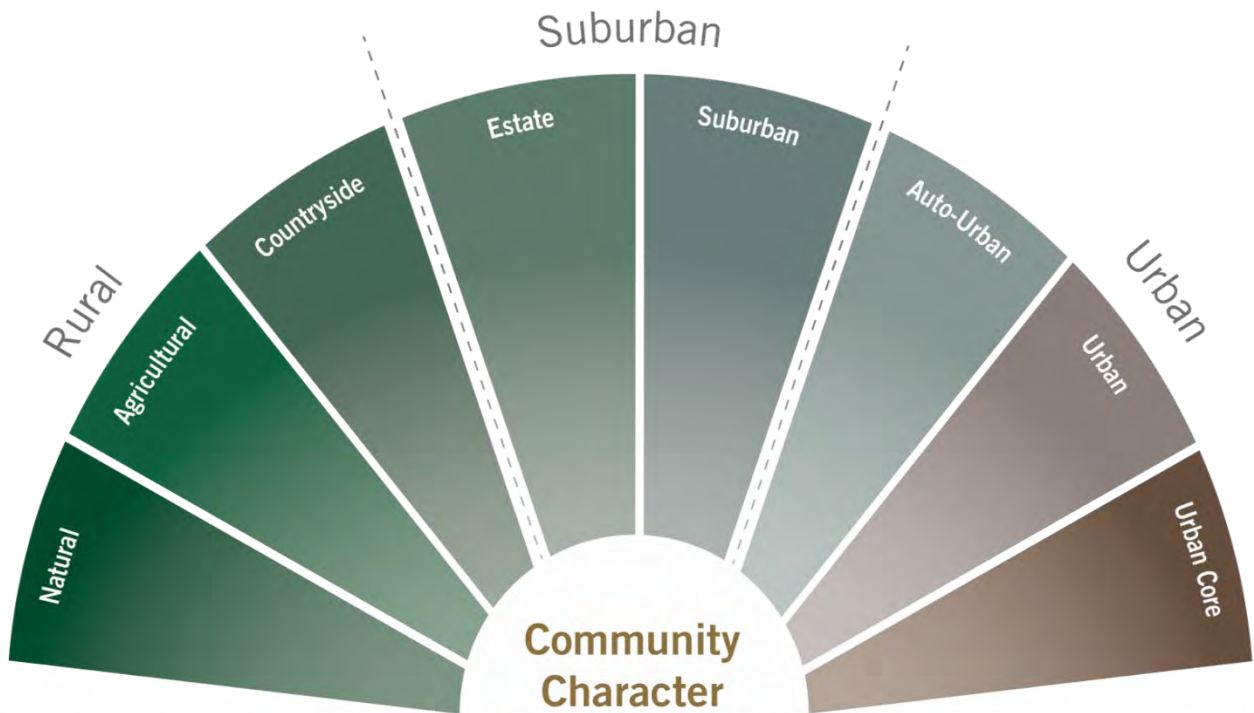
The map categories indicate the principal type of use that is expected to predominate in areas where land is currently undeveloped or, in previously developed areas, based on what is already on the ground and will likely remain or possibly evolve. Such transitions in use can occur through redevelopment of previously built sites, “infill” construction on a vacant parcel amid existing built sites, or repurposing of an existing structure for another use without significant site changes.

Along with the principal use types, other complementary uses will also remain or may emerge in particular areas of the community (e.g., small-scale, neighborhood-oriented retail and service uses within or near the edges of largely residential areas). Certain uses can be located amid other predominant use types, such as public facilities, parks and places of worship within predominantly residential areas, all of which should match the character of their vicinity. Mixing uses on sites is common in downtowns (e.g., upper floor office or residential above ground-floor retail) and may occur elsewhere in a community as the market accommodates and zoning allows. Master-planned communities are often intentionally designed to integrate and mix uses in certain areas as described above while other areas have one predominant use (e.g., single-family detached housing).

Some uses are highly market-driven, with their timing and particular location dictated by the extent and pace of other types of development. This includes the typical pattern of retail uses locating near new residential “rooftops” and often at key roadway intersections. The location and extent of various forms of residential development can also be difficult to predict amid broader housing market cycles and regional needs, combined with developer areas of expertise and interest in bringing single-family or multi-family products to market.

COMMUNITY CHARACTER FRAMEWORK FOR LAND USE PLANNING

This Comprehensive Plan reinforces an approach to land use planning that builds on the concept of **community character**. This approach looks beyond the basic use of land – residential, commercial, industrial, etc. – as only one factor that determines the ultimate compatibility and quality of land development within and near neighborhoods, in nonresidential areas and along roadway corridors.



The community character approach to evaluating and planning for land use emphasizes the variation in physical conditions experienced along a spectrum from natural and rural landscapes to a developed area's most urbanized environments, usually found in a core downtown area. A character-based approach focuses on the intensity and design of land uses, which encompasses:

- The density and layout of residential development;
- The scale and form of nonresidential development; and
- The coverage of land surfaces by buildings and paving relative to the extent of open space and natural vegetation or landscaping.

How the automobile is accommodated is a key factor in distinguishing character types, including how public roads and streets are designed, how parking is provided, and how buildings and paved areas are arranged on sites.

The **three major character classes** are described on the following pages, along with which class the various designations on the Future Land Use and Character map fall within. Not all areas of a community will be clearly distinguishable as one character type or another. Much past and contemporary development was designed and built without character in mind, which results in mixed character areas with features from the different character classes (e.g., Rural areas with auto-oriented subdivisions or retail sites, shopping centers in Suburban areas with large surface parking areas but enhanced with landscaping, traditional Urban downtowns with demolished buildings replaced by surface parking, etc.).

Character Emphasis

Community character accounts for the physical traits one can see in a neighborhood, on a busy roadway corridor, or along a recreational trail or country lane which contribute to its "look and feel" relative to areas of the community with much different character.

Nearly any land use can occur in a range of settings within a community, from the most rural and suburban to the most urban, provided the use is designed to match the character of its surrounding area.

Design and Character

Aesthetic enhancements such as architectural design, landscaping and screening, signage standards and site amenities also contribute to development appearance. But these factors can and should vary with the area character, which as defined here involves the interplay between buildings, paved surfaces and unbuilt areas. For example, in a downtown core like Paducah's relative to Suburban character areas, landscaping shifts more to the public realm where buildings have minimal setbacks and sites have limited yard areas.

URBAN

Character

Urban character areas exhibit the greatest pedestrian orientation, through a more compact scale and “architectural enclosure” of streets by buildings situated close to front property lines and sidewalks.



Future Land Use and Character Designations

City (in areas where Urban character predominates)

Neighborhood Conservation

Urban Residential

Multi-Family Residential

Commercial

Parks and Recreation

County (in areas where Urban character predominates)

None



Classic Urban character focused along the Broadway Street corridor in Downtown Paducah, but quickly giving way to Auto Urban elements where surface parking takes up much or all of certain downtown blocks.

Characteristics

- Urban character usually involves the most intensively developed area of a community in terms of the greatest coverage of sites with buildings and the least amount of private development area devoted to off-street parking and landscaped yards or open space. Instead, most parking is accommodated on-street and/or within public parking areas. This enables streets and other public spaces to be framed by buildings that abut the public sidewalk with zero or minimal front setbacks, creating “architectural enclosure” versus the progressively more open feel in Auto Urban, Suburban and Rural character areas. These elements, along with a predominance of mixed uses, makes Urban character areas the most conducive for pedestrian activity and interaction.
- In the “Main Street” core area of a traditional downtown, nearly all buildings have zero front setbacks and abut the public sidewalk, and multi-story buildings frame the street on most blocks.

The walkable street scene is “activated” by varied retail storefronts, restaurants and pubs, cultural venues, historic architecture and properties, coffee and confections, open-air sidewalk seating areas for dining, and streetscape and design treatments in the public realm. Local government design standards may also influence development outcomes and building renovations in the area.

- Many downtowns are bordered by areas that still accommodate a mix of uses but at a lesser intensity than in the core area. The mixed-use area typically provides a transition from the Urban core to other nearby neighborhoods and roadway corridors that are more uniform as areas primarily for single-family detached residential uses and commercial uses, respectively. The transition area is often supportive of the downtown core by accommodating complementary uses (e.g., professional offices, restaurants, art galleries and other cultural venues, varied residential options, etc.) and by retaining a walkability exemplified in Urban character areas before auto orientation begins to prevail elsewhere in the community. The vicinity around a core downtown usually also contains some of the community’s most historic sites and districts, with historic homes still in residential use and others converted to shops, cafes, offices, bed and breakfasts, and other uses.

Residential

- Urban character is especially reinforced where most residential blocks have rear alley access to properties, at least decreasing the possibility of an auto-oriented street scene where rear garages or parking are still widely used versus front driveways.
- Where **single-family** detached dwellings are found in Urban character areas, this is usually because of relatively small and often narrow and shallow lots, bringing the homes closer to the street and sidewalk and to each other.
- **Attached housing** forms (duplexes and multiplexes, townhomes, brownstones, multi-family, etc.) are also designed with limited on-site open space and surface parking, sometimes with greater reliance on on-street parking – and/or an on-site parking structure in more intensively developed Urban areas.

- **Neighborhood Conservation** typically involves established neighborhoods that are largely built-out and stable, and where no significant change in use types or prevailing character is expected or desired to preserve existing housing stock, structures with historical and/or architectural significance, etc. In other locations, this designation may encompass a neighborhood in



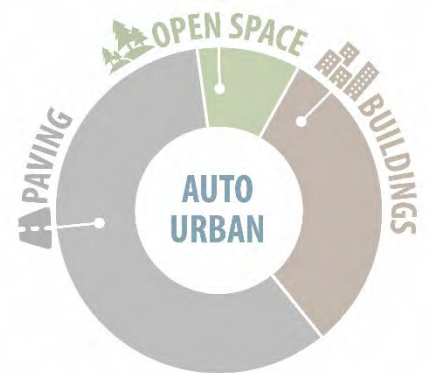
Urban character in Lower Town, with mid-block alleys and rear garages that eliminate front driveways, and with denser housing types integrated into the neighborhood.

transition, such as where older homes fronting on a perimeter street with increasing traffic volumes are allowed to convert to small-scale office and commercial uses over time while still maintaining a residential character and appearance.

Nonresidential

- Multi-story structures are typically encouraged – and sometimes required by local development standards – to bolster Urban character, encourage vertical mixing of uses among floors of taller buildings, promote retail viability and support transit ridership.
- **Public uses** should be designed to match the area’s Urban character.
- Design of the public realm should also reinforce the Urban character, typically with a grid street pattern, sidewalks on both sides of all streets, and pocket parks or other common open space. Streetscape enhancements in public ways are usually emphasized given limited area for private on-site landscaping. Along with bike lane improvements in some locations, Urban character areas should be the most conducive for pedestrian, bicycle and wheelchair circulation to nearby shopping, parks, public facilities, schools and other destinations.
- **Public squares, landscaped plazas and pocket parks** – and water-focused downtown parks in riverfront communities – can provide green space amid the Urban environment and a place to gather and host community events, along with periodic street closures.
- Often a focus area for infill and redevelopment activity within the community, which may require customized development and design standards to ensure compatibility with the established or intended area character. This may include controlling the scale of development where larger sites have been created through assembly of smaller parcels.
- May require development and design standards to avoid encroachment of uses designed with an auto-oriented character more suited to other areas of the community (e.g., gas stations, larger-scale car washes, etc.).
- Often the only place in a community where multi-level parking structures may make sense and be financially viable, other than large-scale institutional uses such as a hospital or a college campus.

Within the Urban class, the **Auto Urban** subcategory involves a particular – and widespread – community planning challenge as such areas are designed mainly to accommodate automobile circulation and parking. As a result, the combination of buildings and especially paved surfaces makes such areas nearly as intensive as Urban areas in terms of land cover. However, development is often more horizontal and spread out, introducing openness that is more characteristic of Suburban character areas. Bottom line, though, Auto Urban areas lack the greenness of Suburban character and the walkability of more compact and architecturally enclosed Urban character areas.



Future Land Use and Character Designations

City (where Auto Urban character predominates)

- Neighborhood Conservation
- Multi-Family Residential
- Commercial
- Industrial
- Parks and Recreation

County (where Auto Urban character predominates)

- Multi-Family Residential
- Commercial

Light Industrial
Heavy Industrial



Dominance of Auto Urban character in the commercial district around Kentucky Oaks Mall, along US Highway 60/ Hinkleville Road west of Interstate 24.

Characteristics

Residential

- Accommodation of the automobile is more visually dominant relative to more prominent green space in Suburban character areas.
- In **single-family residential** areas, site coverage in the form of dwellings, driveways and other paved surfaces usually predominates over green and open spaces (the flip side of Suburban character neighborhoods). This is typically due to relatively smaller and narrower lots, allowing for less openness and separation between dwellings – but also intended to achieve lower price points to expand homeownership opportunities. Auto Urban character especially prevails where driveways and front-loading garages dominate the front yards and front facades of homes.
- **Multi-family residential** sites, especially large apartment developments with multiple buildings, often have an auto-oriented character due to the extent of off-street parking needed.

Nonresidential

- **Commercial** areas with Auto Urban character have significant portions of development sites devoted to vehicular access drives, circulation routes, surface parking and loading/delivery areas, making pavement the most prominent visual feature. Buildings are typically set back toward the rear of sites to accommodate expansive parking areas and smaller pad-site uses in front, often resulting in less emphasis on architectural design. This also places loading/delivery activity and trash collection near the rear property line, which is often shared with adjacent residential use. Such “strip” developments in highway-adjacent locations usually desire to maximize signage to capitalize on site visibility to passing traffic for “big-box” retailers, chain restaurants and other high-traffic businesses.

- Neighborhood-oriented commercial uses may emerge over time and should be encouraged on corner sites or other locations at the edge of predominantly residential areas to encourage more walking and biking for short trips from home. Development standards for such uses may also limit their scale and require a site design that is compatible with nearby residential uses.
- **Industrial** uses typically have an Auto Urban character due to the extent of site coverage by buildings and paved areas, especially when they involve significant truck traffic. Along with their relative land cover, industrial uses vary in intensity from “light” to “heavy” depending on how their on-site activities may affect nearby properties (e.g., noise, vibration, light/glare, dust and particulate emissions, odors, truck traffic and/or direct rail service, hours of operation, as well as the sheer scale of some heavy industrial uses).
- Enhanced design and landscaping of **public and institutional** sites can influence the perceived character and appearance of largely auto-oriented areas.
- Certain intensive **publicly-owned uses** are best located within industrial areas because of their similar character and operations (e.g., public works facilities, fleet maintenance, treatment plants, fire training, etc.).
- Developments in Auto Urban character areas are often not conducive for access or on-site circulation by pedestrians or cyclists given their design orientation toward accommodation of the automobile.
- The Auto Urban nature of residential areas can be offset somewhat by landscaping, “anti-monotony” architectural standards, and limitations on “cookie cutter” subdivision layouts characterized by straight streets and uniform lot sizes and arrangement.
- Preservation of trees or other natural features, along with generous landscaping, can move a commercial site into the Suburban range of the character spectrum relative to auto-oriented sites where “gray” paved surfaces predominate over “green” open spaces.

SUBURBAN

Character

Suburban character areas have noticeably less intensive use of land than Urban character areas, with open and green spaces balancing – or, in Estate areas, exceeding – the extent of land covered by structures and paved surfaces.



Future Land Use and Character Designations

City (in areas where Suburban character predominates)

- Estate
- Suburban
- Neighborhood Conservation
- Multi-Family Residential
- Institutional
- Commercial
- Mixed Use
- Business Park
- Parks and Recreation

County (in areas where Suburban character predominates)

- Urban Residential
- Multi-Family Residential
- Commercial
- Parks and Recreation



Large-lot Estate residential character in The Woodlands subdivision (left) near Suburban residential adjacent to the Country Club of Paducah, where clustered homes on smaller lots (right) also benefit from open green spaces along the golf course.

Characteristics

Residential

- The relative openness in Suburban neighborhoods may be found in relatively large yard areas on individual lots and between homes and/or in common green spaces or water features.
- Accommodation of the automobile is less noticeable than in **single-family residential** neighborhoods with Auto Urban character, especially where driveways are on the side of homes rather than occupying a portion of the front yard, and where garages are situated to the side or rear of the dwelling.
- **Estate residential** areas often provide a transition between an area’s Rural fringe and more urbanized development patterns and intensities. As with Rural character, most of the land surface is still in unbuilt open space but with more land now occupied by buildings and paved surfaces. With home lots typically one to three acres or larger (especially where required if centralized water and/or wastewater service is not available or feasible), this provides substantial openness and separation between individual dwellings, and in larger-lots situations can even incorporate agricultural uses or an equestrian element. One-acre lots are usually adequate in wooded areas to achieve visual screening of homes from streets and adjacent dwellings. Three-to five-acre lots may be needed to achieve and maintain true Estate character in more open areas with less vegetation and/or topographic changes.
- Where **attached residential** types such as duplexes, patio homes or townhomes are permitted, the site and dwelling design, including building and garage placement and orientation, should be consistent with Suburban character. The additional residential density within such developments should also be offset by green and open areas. As needed, some of the planned open space and/or preserved vegetation should be along site boundaries to provide buffering between other character types or land use intensities. This designation sometimes provides a transition between residential areas entirely comprised of single-family detached dwellings and properties with larger-scale multi-family residential development.
- **Multi-family residential** development sometimes achieves – and blends in with – Suburban character through greater spacing between buildings, more set-aside of open space on and around the perimeter of the site (including for recreational area where required by local development standards), and more extensive landscaping and screening of surface parking areas. This use type can also provide a transition from primarily residential to mainly nonresidential areas, but the site design features above should be incorporated to offset the relative density of this residential type and provide buffering and screening between this and less intensive residential uses.
- Character-based zoning and development standards for Suburban character areas can discourage overly standardized subdivision designs – which often take on an Auto Urban character, even with larger home lots – and promote conservation design by allowing for smaller lot sizes than the baseline in exchange for greater open space set-aside. This approach can also enable some viable



use of sites partially constrained by topography, floodplain or other factors. It also provides flexibility for additional housing forms that blend with the area’s Suburban residential character through additional on-site open space and perimeter buffering where differing housing types and densities are adjacent.

Nonresidential

- Suburban character in **commercial** areas, whether at a neighborhood-focused or larger scale, is achieved through lesser coverage of sites with buildings and especially paved areas, which makes such areas stand apart from most auto-oriented contemporary development. This may also require excluding some auto-oriented uses that cannot practically achieve a Suburban character (e.g., gas stations, car washes).
- Near residential properties and areas, the permitted scale and intensity of nonresidential uses may be limited to ensure compatibility (including adequate buffering/screening, criteria for placement and orientation of buildings and parking areas, height limits and residential-in-appearance architectural standards).



- **Mixed-use** projects are sometimes developed with a more Urban flair, involving a variety of uses on a relatively compact footprint for a pedestrian orientation that draws patrons to “destination developments” for longer, multi-purpose visits. Elsewhere, such developments are often master planned to incorporate quality design and generous landscaping in a less intensive setting more reflective of Suburban character. Along with retail, services, office and hospitality uses, the mix of uses may include residential, especially to provide additional housing options and forms within the community. Major public and/or institutional facilities may also serve as development anchors within a mixed-use project.
- **Business parks** away from city centers emerged in the automobile era and, when well designed, often embody Suburban character by incorporating significant green space and landscaping and relatively low site coverage, all in a campus-style layout as an attraction for business recruitment efforts (see *Commerce Park image on next page*). Development outcomes are often controlled by private covenants and restrictions that exceed local government ordinances and development standards.
- Even some large-scale heavy **industrial** uses can take on a Suburban (or even Rural) character when located in relatively remote areas, especially when they are surrounded by extensive separation and buffering from any nearby uses due to risk of fire, explosion or other potential adverse effects. In more typical industrial situations, the extent of outdoor activity and storage often requires screening where visible from public ways and residential areas, although heavy industrial uses may be difficult to screen aside from fencing, landscaping and/or berms along site perimeters.

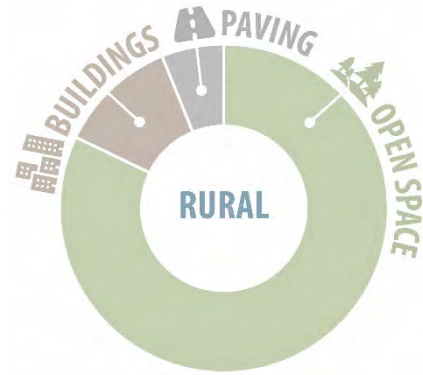
- Larger community **parks** and even smaller neighborhood parks are often developed with a variety of facilities for recreational play and fitness activities, but still with an abundance of green and open space on the site, including within sports-focused parks.
- Within the developed city, the Parks and Recreation designation may also include **preserved greenways, creek corridors and other natural features** that maintain green and open spaces, providing a respite from an often intensive urban environment. Most **cemeteries** also have a Suburban character given their openness and green space.
- Especially at key community entries and along high-profile roadway corridors, may involve development standards to yield less intensive and more attractive development outcomes relative to auto-oriented areas, including higher standards for landscaping (along street frontages and within parking areas), signs and building design.
- Design of **public and institutional sites** (e.g., colleges/universities, major medical centers, large-scale places of worship, etc.) should also reflect Suburban character, often achieved through a “campus” design with sizable green and open spaces – and sometimes with enhanced building design. Such uses often require substantial surface parking, which introduces an Auto Urban character element that can be offset by abundant landscaping within and around the perimeter of parking areas.
- The purposeful preservation or required inclusion of green and open spaces on development sites may provide more opportunity for natural and/or swale drainage (and stormwater retention/absorption) relative to concentrated stormwater conveyance in auto-oriented areas.



RURAL

Character

Rural character areas have wide open spaces where structures and paved surfaces occupy only a minimal portion of the landscape – or none at all in pristine or preserved natural areas. This results in minimal sense of enclosure and views to the horizon unbroken by buildings in most locations.



Future Land Use and Character Designations

City (in areas where Rural character predominates)

None

County (in areas where Rural character predominates)

Agricultural

Rural Residential

Parks and Recreation



Rural character in southwest McCracken County, where a crossroads gas station at US Highway 62/Blandville Road and Highway 286 (top center) is one of the few commercial uses for miles, and where some residents live in homesteads on large acreages, others in subdivision arrangements with shared streets (Joshua's Haven at left and Ken-Ali Ridge at left center), and still others live in a Countryside character pattern, in which homes are strung along rural roads with individual driveways (bottom center and right along Harris Road/Highway 1322).

Characteristics

- Consists of lands that are sparsely developed, with mainly agricultural activity and/or very low-density residential as the primary uses along with more natural areas. Such areas provide residents with the choice of relative seclusion within the countryside and away from a more developed setting.

Residential

- Scattered **residential** development on relatively large acreages, resulting in very high open space ratios and very low site coverage, and providing greater detachment from neighboring dwellings than in Estate Residential areas within the Suburban character class.
- Typically no (or limited) centralized water or sanitary sewer service available, with individual properties relying on water wells and on-site septic systems. Also much greater reliance on natural drainage systems, except where altered significantly by agricultural operations or regional storm water management projects and/or infrastructure.
- Potential for conservation developments that concentrate the overall development footprint through reduced-size home lots in a cluster design, with increased open space set-aside to maintain Rural character and buffer adjacent properties. This may also make small-scale community wastewater treatment methods feasible to eliminate the need for individual on-site septic systems.

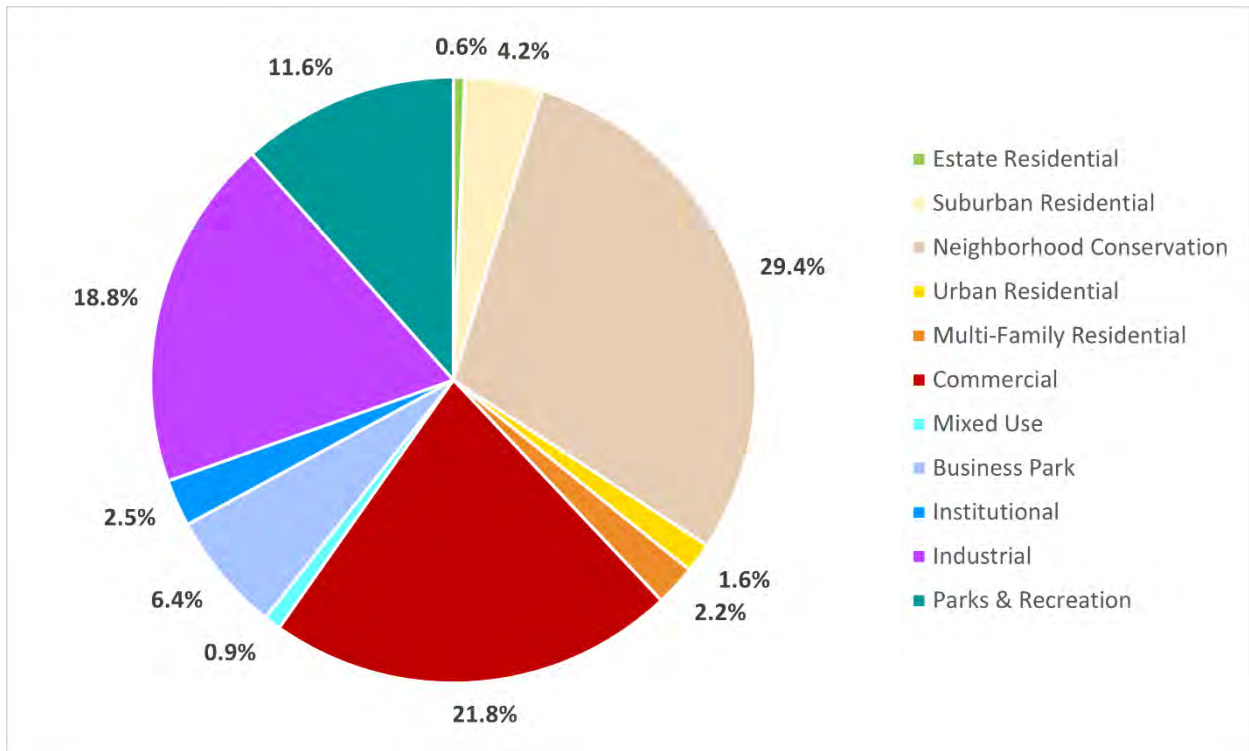
Nonresidential

- Potential for **agriculture-oriented businesses** (e.g., feed stores, tractor supply, etc.) and **small-scale shops and convenience uses** such as gas stations, often at rural crossroad intersections.
- **Parks** in rural areas typically have limited improvements or will remain in a more natural state, often as a designated nature preserve, for primarily passive use versus more intensive sports and recreational activities in Suburban and Urban parks.
- Many cities have limited Rural character areas within their incorporated limits, except in areas that have been annexed for eventual development or that are not suitable for future development. Some cities and counties intentionally preserve Rural character through the protections afforded by agricultural zoning.
- Floodplain areas may also retain their Rural character over the long term given their unsuitability for any intensive land development.

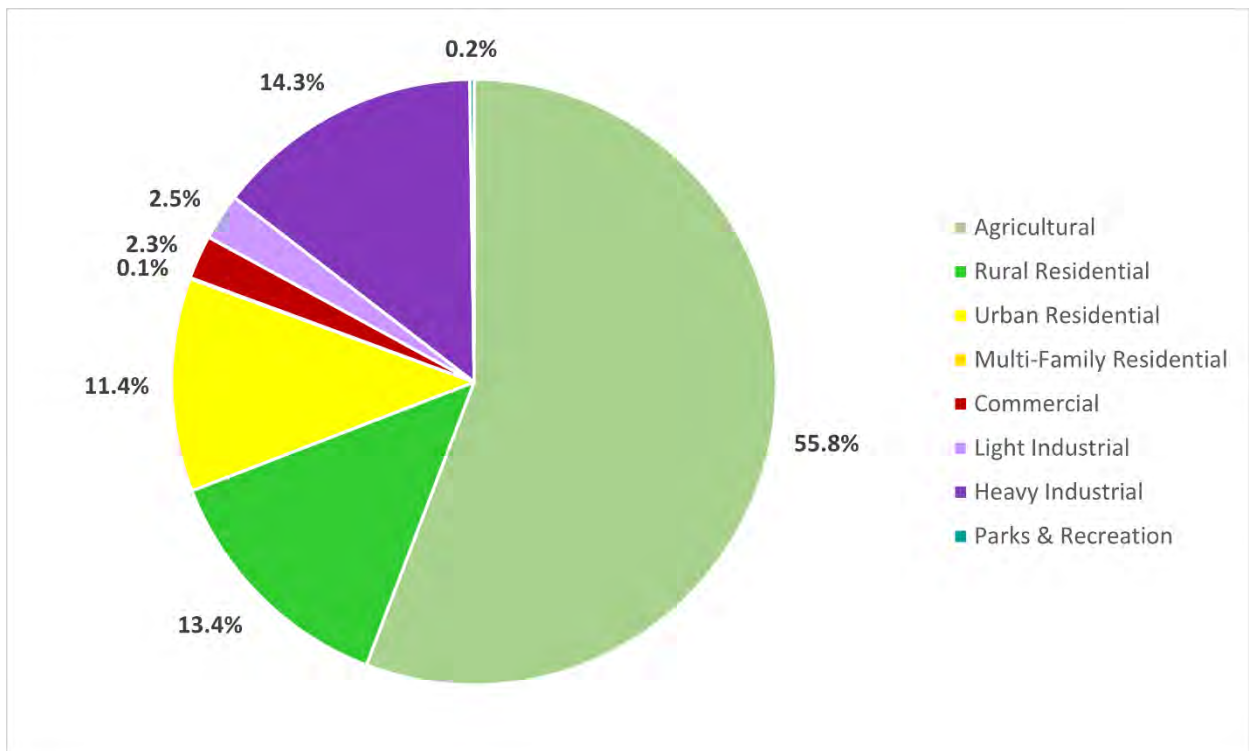
LAND USE QUANTITIES ON MAP

Illustrated in the charts below are the approximate acreage allocations within each designation shown on the Future Land Use and Character Map – one chart for the Paducah city limits, and another chart for the remainder of McCracken County outside the city limits. It should be noted that the extent of area initially designated for new residential use will ultimately be reduced. Commercial retail and service uses may emerge amid neighborhood areas, and some land will be set aside for recreational use, preserved open space, churches and/or public purposes and facilities (e.g., streets, drainage, schools, fire stations, etc.).

Future Land Use Allocation within Paducah City Limits



Future Land Use Allocation within Remainder of McCracken County



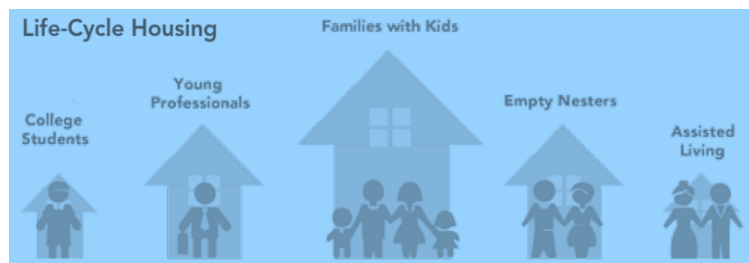
Housing and Neighborhoods

Paducah-McCracken County Comprehensive Plan

INTRODUCTION

Along with food and water, shelter is among the most basic of human needs. The concept of “quality of life” also begins at home, meaning that both individuals and local governments have reasons to prioritize quality, affordable housing within safe and comfortable neighborhood settings. As in many similar communities, economic development success for Paducah and McCracken County also depends, in part, on the ready availability of attractive residential options for current and prospective business owners and their employees.

Housing needs, gaps and challenges are central to any community-wide long-range plan. A key component of an area’s livability is whether its residents can find suitable and economical housing options at all stages of life to remain in the community they love. While the development of new residences and the rehabilitation of older housing occurs primarily through the private sector, local government and other public and non-profit partners have essential roles to play. Local government and other partners help protect residential investments over time, and strong neighborhoods support the local economy and tax base. Having a diverse stock of housing – new and old, big and small, ownership and rental – is crucial for offering choice and providing for the individual needs of all households, regardless of economic conditions.



Why This Comprehensive Plan Section Is Important For Paducah And McCracken County

- Together with the Land Use and Character section, establishes the public policy basis for community planning and local government development regulations, especially to protect residential areas from incompatible land uses and development intensities, promote a wide range of housing options and maintain desired neighborhood character.
- Builds on previous neighborhood planning and targeted revitalization efforts by the City of Paducah and other partners that have yielded notable successes.
- Provides guidance for if and when local government should take direct action to promote homeownership, spur neighborhood reinvestment, and monitor and enforce property maintenance standards.
- Reinforces local government’s role in promoting and protecting the health, safety and welfare of its residents by ensuring the quality and sustainability of new residential development and preventing older housing stock from falling into disrepair to the point of affecting the value and appeal of entire streets, blocks and neighborhoods.
- Links to other plan sections that address components of a satisfying living environment, including well-maintained public infrastructure, safe streets and accommodation of pedestrians and cyclists along with motorized vehicles, nearby shopping and services, and access to neighborhood parks, trails and community centers.
- Highlights the continuing need to promote equity in the area housing market and in public investment decisions that help sustain all neighborhoods, while also addressing the persistent challenge of homelessness.

LEGACY OF PAST PLANNING

This new Comprehensive Plan builds on previous plans and studies completed by the City of Paducah, McCracken County and other partners. Those most relevant to the Housing and Neighborhoods topic include:

- City of Paducah Comprehensive Plan (adopted July 2007, amended June 2012, readopted June 2017)
- McCracken County Comprehensive Plan (adopted August 2013, amended November 2018)
- Forward Paducah (2017 update)
- Fountain Avenue Neighborhood Revitalization Plan (2007)
- Lowertown Neighborhood Plan (2002)

“Third [in a three-part strategy for cultivating regional talent], we must continue to build a supply of diverse housing options for those demographics we seek to attract to our community.”

**Forward Paducah report
Greater Paducah
Economic Development**

Accomplishments

Progress and achievements resulting from past planning and implementation efforts were identified through leadership and community input to this plan, along with other documentation. Significant items cited that are most relevant to the Housing and Neighborhoods topic include:

- Promotion of population and community growth.
- Ongoing neighborhood revitalization efforts, with a recent focus on Southside (Steering Committee, residential and business incentive grants, Walter Jetton neighborhood planning).
- Ongoing downtown revitalization and enhancement efforts, including promotion of downtown residential opportunities (Upper Story Residential Grant Program through the Paducah Main Street program).
- City zoning ordinance amended to allow multi-family housing in the H-2 zone (Lowertown), add provisions for cottage homes and to regulate short-term rental activity, which can be a detriment in neighborhood settings if not properly managed.
- Emphasis on code and regulatory enforcement (noise, signs, etc.), along with community cleanup and beautification activities.
- Neighborhood outreach efforts, especially by the Paducah Police Department.
- The Dunlap development project at the historic Walter C. Jetton Middle School campus, involving “an innovative approach to affordable housing and economic development, incorporating art and music to enrich Paducah’s creative culture and economy.”
- Successful nomination in 2022 of the Northside neighborhood to the National Register of Historic Places — joining Paducah’s Downtown Commercial District, Lower Town Neighborhood District and the Jefferson Street-Fountain Avenue District on the National Register — which benefits property owners when they take advantage of state or federal tax credits for building rehabilitations.
- Successful designation by Kentucky’s governor and the U.S. Department of the Treasury of two census tracts within Paducah as Opportunity Zones under the Federal Tax Cuts and Jobs Act of 2017, with such zones intended to incentivize investments in distressed communities to spur business growth, housing improvements and infrastructure upgrades.



- Hosting of a Spring Clean Up Day with various partners, enabling Paducah and McCracken County residents to dispose of household hazardous waste, electronics and heavy trash items for free, funded in part through a Household Hazardous Waste Grant from the Kentucky Division of Waste Management.
- Paducah, in 2023, marking 31 consecutive years of recognition as one of more than 3,600 “Tree City USA” communities across the nation by the Arbor Day Foundation. This designation highlights the benefits of proper tree planting and maintenance of a community’s urban tree canopy, including improving the visual appeal of a neighborhood, increasing property values, reducing home cooling costs, removing air pollutants and providing wildlife habitat.
- Recognition of Paducah by the Kentucky League of Cities as its 2022 City Government of the Year, in part for the City Commission’s prioritization of Southside revitalization, including development of the Southside Rise & Shine Neighborhood Spruce Up initiative.



“Paducah city officials and employees made a unified commitment to embrace neighborhood empowerment and grow pride in areas of the city that have not always been at the forefront. The city’s impact is testament to the ability of city officials to reenergize communities, create new economic development opportunities, and enhance the quality of life.”

J.D. Chaney
Executive Director / CEO
Kentucky League of Cities

KEY PLANNING ISSUES AND CONSIDERATIONS

Through the Paducah-McCracken Today and Plan Direction phases of the comprehensive planning effort, numerous real and perceived community issues and needs were identified through leadership and public engagement activities, as well as through the work of the plan consultants and their interactions with an appointed Advisory Group and City and County staff. Additionally, the City’s Board of Commissioners identify annual strategic priorities, which in 2023 included Community Growth, Downtown, Housing, Neighborhoods, Quality of Life and Southside Enhancements.

QUOTABLE from Community Survey

“[Given inadequate housing options in our area,] I worry about the stability of the medical community both from a financial standpoint and a staffing standpoint.”

“We need more affordable housing for low-income families.”

Key issues and considerations that led to the goals and action items in this Housing and Neighborhoods section include (along with specific points and suggestions from leadership and community input):

Quantity of Housing

- Single-family and multi-family shortage in general — all categories, all price ranges.
- Limited supply indicated by wait lists, and how quickly new construction is taken.
- Seeing more construction activity, but still need more multi-family as current building is still catching up after post-1990s lull.
- More construction in Lone Oak, Reidland.
- Limited space and turnover in Housing Authority senior housing.



Quality of Housing

- Well-built housing at attainable price points versus cheap housing.
- Better-quality lower-cost rental housing, especially to retain retirees/seniors and younger population.
- Bring nice but vacant homes back into occupancy.

Variety of Housing

- More affordable “starter” homes for first-time homebuyers — although still better off here than in big cities.
- Mid-level “move-up” housing (above \$250,000 price point) beyond starter homes.
- Smaller homes — for downsizing “Boomers” and for young people wanting less house, yard, maintenance.
- Desire for more one-story, ranch style.
- “Missing middle” housing gap.

- More downtown upper-story living, but associated parking needs/impacts.
- More handicapped-accessible housing (given extent of older housing stock) — and neighborhood design.
- Need to develop "planned" communities for diverse population (age, race/ethnicity, etc.).
- More emergency housing for homeless, including veterans.



SOURCE: southernliving.com

Cost (“Affordability”) of Housing

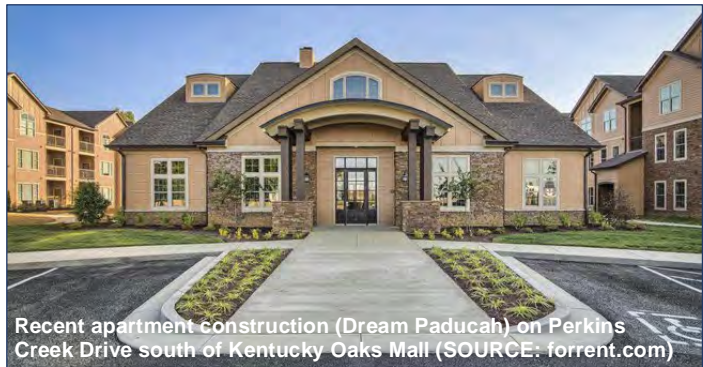
- Need move-in ready housing in \$250-\$400,000 range – without need for major and costly internal/external work (although some relocating from big cities can afford to renovate).
- Gap between apartments and high-end (\$700,000) homes.
- Filling the developer feasibility gap without excessive subsidies/incentives.
- Preserve existing housing already at attainable values/prices.

“Affordable Housing” requires ...

Diverse housing at various price points to provide attainable options for different income and qualifying levels.

Location and Context of Housing

- Limited rental options in more desirable neighborhoods.
- Protecting neighborhood integrity, adding amenities (parks, shopping).
- Inferior housing conditions in some areas — desire for even more demolitions, re-use of vacant lots.
- Neighborhood enhancement in low-income areas.
- Invest in affordable infill housing in Northside and Uppertown.
- Desire for swifter Southside revitalization, new housing (relative to other areas).
- Develop Uppertown and Southside with homes for veterans, single-senior living, group living for seniors.
- Turn Information Age Park into a work/LIVE/play community.
- Success of “but for” historic tax credit projects (Fountain Avenue, Lower Town, Downtown).
- Restoring neighborhoods to be more self-sufficient as they were in past.
- Need more sense of community, connection (parks, sidewalks, safe/clean streets).



Recent apartment construction (Dream Paducah) on Perkins Creek Drive south of Kentucky Oaks Mall (SOURCE: forrent.com)

Obstacles to Housing Solutions

- Rising pre-development costs (land, infrastructure) and construction costs (labor, materials).
- Property owners holding onto land in some areas.
- Cautious, risk-averse local developers.
- Maintenance challenge with older housing stock (Southside, Uppertown).
- NIMBY-ism — “Not in My Back Yard” opposition to varied housing types.
- Too much house flipping, investors buying up lower-cost housing stock (<\$175,000).
- Apartments in corporate versus local ownership and/or run by property management firms (level of resident service and maintenance).
- Too many short-term rentals (downtown and elsewhere) — need better regulation.
- Local adoption of Uniform Residential Landlord and Tenant Act (else uncertainty without uniform rules for landlords, property managers and tenants who had it in other places).
- Not much Low-Income Housing Tax Credit (LIHTC) activity/development.
- Housing Choice (Section 8) vouchers underutilized — shortage of landlords willing to accept them.
- Eliminate stigma of public housing — improve condition and appearance.
- Better-paying jobs and livable wages from employers to make housing attainable.
- Concerns about perceived cost of “green”/sustainable building practices.



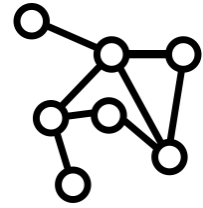
Side Effects from Housing Situation

- Housing stock mismatch for changing demographics.
- Housing as key part of overall economic health of individuals, families.
- Housing to support economic development, talent recruitment/retention.
- Housing to draw/retain younger population.
- Time spent by young adults/families and newcomers to find suitable housing.
- Longer commute after choosing to live elsewhere for desirable/affordable housing.
- Lower Town gentrification — affordability for relocating artists was earlier intent.
- Housing challenges detract from an otherwise appealing place.



FRAMEWORK FOR ACTION

This Framework for Action section builds off of the plan priorities confirmed with City and County officials during the transition from the Paducah-McCracken Today to the Paducah-McCracken Tomorrow phase of Comprehensive Plan development — especially Planning Themes 1, 1B and 4 for this Housing and Neighborhoods section. The plan goals and action strategies are aimed at “connecting the dots” between a set of community improvement fundamentals for the area that involve:



Planning Theme 1:

Making the area more attractive to retain — or regain — youth who grew up here, and to attract younger individuals and families.

Planning Theme 1A:

Continuing efforts to diversify the area’s economic and employment base, for long-term economic sustainability and also to offer a wider range of job options to current and prospective residents.

Planning Theme 1B:

Increasing the quantity and variety of housing options.

Planning Theme 2:

Being a safe community with good City/County public safety services (police, fire, emergency medical service).

Planning Theme 3:

Improving infrastructure condition, particularly for storm water management.

Planning Theme 4:

Sustaining momentum on neighborhood and corridor revitalization.

Planning Theme 5:

Taking greater economic advantage of the area’s location and transportation assets.

Planning Theme 6:

Building on the area’s tourism success, including through sustained commitment to arts, crafts and culture.

What connects all of these planning themes is the desire to retain and attract more population to Paducah and McCracken County, including those who grew up here. The actions in this Housing and Neighborhoods section involve tangible steps that will lead to achievement of the goals:

GOALS FOR HOUSING AND NEIGHBORHOODS

Goal 1:

A quantity and diversity of housing options that makes living in Paducah and McCracken County attainable and inviting for a wide range of age groups and income levels, including those critical to the area’s economic success.

Goal 2:

Sustained integrity and value of the area’s oldest established neighborhoods while promoting quality housing development and the long-term appeal of newer residential areas.

Goal 3:

Continued momentum in renewing housing and neighborhoods in greatest need, using a “complete communities” approach that uplifts areas and residents through attention to the entire range of physical, social, educational and recreational needs.

A Goal is ...
 a statement of a desired outcome (“end”) toward which efforts are directed as expressed by more specific objectives and action steps (“means”).

Goal 4:

Elimination of barriers to equitable home ownership while also addressing the basic housing needs of those who are at risk of losing shelter or experiencing homelessness.

ACTIONS

The actions below are categorized into the five types of plan implementation actions highlighted throughout this plan. Overall, the City and County, as appropriate, should continue pursuing or considering a range of measures intended to boost the **demand side** of the housing market, especially to make a home purchase viable upfront and in the early years of ownership:

- Zoning and other provisions to promote housing quality and neighborhood integrity
- Rental registration/inspection ordinances
- Targeted regulations (as done for short-term rentals)
- Rental subsidies (Housing Choice/Section 8 vouchers)
- Homeownership education, first-time homebuyer support
- Down payment assistance, closing cost grants
- First-year property tax waivers
- Utilities assistance
- Homeowner maintenance assistance (and handicapped retrofits)
- Promotion of historic preservation tax credits
- Neighborhood revitalization initiatives, including use of federal/state funds (e.g., Community Development Block Grant funds)

Plan Actions Involve ...

seizing a special opportunity or addressing a particular challenge one faces, given limited resources — financial and otherwise — and recognizing that various routine and ongoing activities will continue in the meantime.

Likewise, the City and County, as appropriate, should continue pursuing or considering a range of measures intended to support the **supply side** of the housing market, typically by reducing upfront development costs while also establishing expectations for dwelling quality, price point and neighborhood amenities:

- Zoning provisions and incentives to promote housing quantity and variety
- Government-initiated rezoning of land to suitable residential designations
- Land assembly, provision and/or transfer of individual lots for private development
- Street and/or utility infrastructure provision and/or cost sharing
- Property tax abatements
- Development fee waivers
- Direct local government property acquisition and housing construction
- Employer/institutional involvement in housing provision, other employee support
- Economic development organization involvement in housing promotion
- New downtown and neighborhood housing options through revitalization initiatives
- Targeted regulations (build-to-rent developments, accessory units, live-work units, etc.)
- Housing Authority and Community Development Corporation (CDC) models

- Affordable housing trusts, land trusts and land banking
- Promotion of Low-Income Housing Tax Credits
- GIS monitoring of unbuilt residentially-zoned acreage, City-initiated rezonings for housing
- Housing provision and programs for homeless population
- “Sweat equity” paths to homeownership (Habitat for Humanity)

Action Leaders

With the support and direction of City and County elected officials, action leaders for most initiatives involving Housing and Neighborhoods will include:

- City of Paducah Planning Department
- McCracken County Planning and Zoning Department
- McCracken County Community Development
- Housing Authority of Paducah



Various advisory Boards and Commissions also have some role in Housing and Neighborhoods, including:

City Boards and Commissions

- Board of Adjustment
- Building, Electrical, and Fire Code Appeals Board
- Code Enforcement Board
- Historical and Architectural Review Commission
- Municipal Housing Commission (Housing Authority)
- Paducah Main Street
- Planning Commission
- Southside Steering Committee
- Urban Renewal and Community Development Agency
- Tree Advisory Board

County Boards and Commissions

- Board of Appeals (property maintenance code enforcement)
- Planning Commission

ACTIONS Involving Capital Investments

1. Include criteria in the City’s capital improvements planning process to ensure consideration of neighborhood revitalization needs and enhancement opportunities when identifying and prioritizing candidate capital projects, especially to incorporate specific community-identified requests.

ACTIONS Involving Programs and Initiatives

2. Attract more residential developers to build within the city and county:

- Seek and arrange information meetings with a range of developers to provide them information about development processes in Paducah and McCracken County.
 - Prepare housing market information to make available on all key area websites (City, County, Greater Paducah Economic Development, etc.), with specific information available for prospective builders.
 - Use GIS mapping to maintain an inventory of vacant properties that are publicly-owned and zoned and available for infill and greenfield residential development. This property inventory should be marketed on the City and County websites along with information on incentive and assistance programs for residential development.
3. Pursue opportunities to advance the Paducah-McCracken County area as a lifelong community, including Age-Friendly certification from the American Association of Retired Persons (AARP).
 4. Develop a program to highlight successful neighborhood beautification efforts, such as a beautification spot-of-the month program, potentially in collaboration with local community groups.
 5. Continue the array of programs and initiatives the City is using to boost local housing opportunities:
 - Transfer of surplus City properties for redevelopment and home construction, including City-provided house plans for potential use.
 - Upper Story Residential Grant Program as part of overall downtown enhancement efforts.
 - Tax Increment Finance (TIF) district.
 - Residential incentive program for home rehabilitation and new construction in support of Southside stabilization and revitalization.
 - Education about and promotion of incremental and small-scale development approaches.
 - Use of incentives to attract residential development into the city in conjunction with voluntary annexations.
 - Leveraging the statutory authority of the City’s Urban Renewal and Community Development Agency to “purchase, lease, or acquire any real or personal property by negotiation or eminent domain within the City of Paducah for the purposes of redevelopment. Property owned by Urban Renewal can then be sold, rented, repaired, or managed by the board. Urban Renewal also has the authority to obtain loans, grants, or other sources of funds for redevelopment projects. The board may also develop building sites, make infrastructure improvements, and demolish buildings among other duties.”
 6. As done for new housing construction and rehabilitation through the City’s Surplus Properties program, consider providing pre-approved plans for accessory dwelling units (ADUs) that meet local building codes and zoning standards. Such plans should be easily adaptable to different lot sizes and configurations.
 7. Consider additional homeownership promotion mechanisms such as:
 - Community land trusts.
[\[https://www.nlc.org/resource/community-land-trusts-a-guide-for-local-governments/\]](https://www.nlc.org/resource/community-land-trusts-a-guide-for-local-governments/)



- Deed-restricted homeownership (limiting future sales of subsidized homes to income-eligible borrowers at an affordable price).
[<https://localhousingsolutions.org/housing-policy-library/deed-restricted-homeownership/>]
- Limited-equity cooperatives (residents purchase a share in the development versus an individual unit, with price restrictions on future resale to maintain affordability).
[<https://localhousingsolutions.org/housing-policy-library/limited-equity-cooperatives/>]

ACTIONS Involving Regulations and Standards

8. As part of potential development regulation updates that may follow adoption of this new Comprehensive Plan, explore the applicability to Paducah and/or McCracken County of contemporary community planning trends elsewhere in Kentucky and across the nation, including the trend toward:
 - reduced or eliminated minimum parking requirements in favor of more market-driven outcomes, especially to reduce the cost and/or boost the quality of residential development, along with encouraging greater use of shared parking arrangements where feasible; and
 - maximum caps on off-street surface parking where appropriate to eliminate excess parking supply and unproductive use of land, and to reduce associated storm drainage, “urban heat island” and aesthetic effects.
9. Define and permit within the City and County zoning codes a range of “missing middle” housing options for each residential and mixed-use zoning district, including analysis of allowing smaller lot sizes (i.e., more units per acre), reduced setbacks and facilitation of other design elements where appropriate. [<https://missingmiddlehousing.com/>]
10. Consider adopting the International Existing Building Code as a model code to reduce development costs of renovating and rehabilitating existing buildings facilitate rehabilitation and preservation of older single-family and multi-family structures.
11. Consider strengthening short-term rental use regulations to prevent loss of housing supply and protect neighborhood integrity while balancing tourism promotion efforts and economic opportunities for property owners, subject to explicit performance standards.

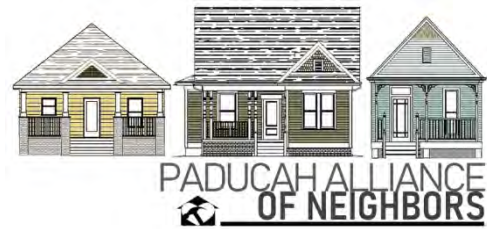
ACTIONS Involving Partnerships and Coordination

12. Maintain relationships with local and regional real estate/development representatives and with Greater Paducah Economic Development given its appreciation of housing attainability as critical to community success, along with public school system viability and the fiscal sustainability of local government.
13. Through local young adult leadership organizations and networks, conduct periodic focus groups on housing desires and challenges faced by this key demographic in Paducah and McCracken County related to dwelling types, costs, ownership versus rental, location/lifestyle options and related considerations for both public agencies and the development community.
14. Explore with the area’s major employers the feasibility of creating an Employer-Assisted Workforce Housing program in which employers help employees with rent, security deposits, down payment assistance, grants or loans (and possibly homeownership education and counseling) to live and work in Paducah or McCracken County. A public/private workforce housing task force can interact with selected employers, banks and others to better understand what price points and housing types are desired by area workers and forms of financial or other assistance that would be most effective for enticing prospective employees to accept jobs and live within the city or county.

Employer-Assisted Workforce Housing Programs

Employer-Assisted Workforce Housing programs are an employee benefit that some employers have been using to help retain their workforce and assist in providing affordable living solutions. At its core, this type of program is a direct financial benefit available for a company's employees. Indirectly, the unavailability of quality housing close to the employer's physical location creates difficulties for attracting needed workers. By offering housing benefits, employers are able to set themselves apart, improving their competitive position. This may also encourage new employees to live locally as opposed to commuting from more remote locations. Employer-assisted housing is not just for the employees. Such programs help build employee loyalty and increase productivity through improved morale, an enhanced employee work/life balance and decreased absenteeism. Increased retention saves companies money by reducing costs associated with employee turnover such as lost revenue, productivity and expenses related to hiring and training new employees.

15. If and when the Paducah Alliance of Neighbors transitions into a Community Development Corporation (CDC), this would give the area an added new mechanism for advancing neighborhood revitalization, attainable housing and overall life improvement objectives. The CDC should focus on actions for which it is uniquely suited and that address stated purposes in its bylaws or other governing documents, such as:



- Acquiring and potentially banking property — especially foreclosed properties — for both housing and other community development objectives as appropriate to each location.
- Directly constructing or otherwise supporting the added supply of attainable housing units (with some CDCs also involved in ongoing ownership and management of housing sites).
- Renovating existing housing and commercial buildings to improve physical conditions and eliminate vacancies, raise property values in targeted areas and, in some cases, providing free or low-rent space for retail and office tenants.
- Supporting mixed-use development and redevelopment projects that can address neighborhood housing, retail and service needs simultaneously.
- Undertaking specific neighborhood improvements, and leveraging local government projects (e.g., park and community center upgrades, tree plantings, litter clean-ups, upgraded lighting, sidewalk repairs, etc.).
- Filling gaps in existing area programs that provide financing support for both low/moderate-income prospective home buyers and small businesses, and supplementing existing workforce training and job placement programs.
- Establishing or supporting programs aimed at reducing poverty and moving individuals toward self-sufficiency, including for families, seniors, disabled persons and individuals at risk of becoming homeless (e.g., assistance with medical expenses, day care and school expenses, utility bills, tutoring, after-school programs, etc.).
- Providing assistance with transit expenses to connect individuals to expanded job options.
- Employing individuals directly to support CDC programming and provide needed jobs and income in targeted areas.

The websites below provide further guidance, examples and success stories from CDCs across the nation. Many such entities are established by — but operate somewhat independently of — local government so they can take an array of potential actions as a non-profit organization. Still, they are intended as a key partner to local elected officials and staff, along with other area public agencies and non-profits. Over time, a CDC can build its resources to sustain “a comprehensive asset-based approach to community development” (as done by the Bethel New Life non-profit in Chicago).

- National Alliance of Community Economic Development Associations (NACEDA, at <https://www.naceda.org>, including a site page titled, What is a Community Development Corporation?).
- Practitioners Leveraging Assets for Community Enhancement (PLACE, at <https://ncrc.org/place/>, now under the umbrella of the National Community Reinvestment Coalition).
- Why Start a Community Development Corporation guidance provided by Useful Community Development. [<https://www.useful-community-development.org/start-a-community-development-corporation.html>]

16. Continue to partner with the faith community, Paducah-McCracken County Habitat for Humanity and other community-based or non-profit efforts to address low-income housing needs in the area, especially through “sweat equity” approaches and to assist owners of older homes with rehabilitation and repair.
17. Continue to promote the micro-grants (\$1,000 each in 2024) awarded by the Community Foundation of Western Kentucky to non-profit organizations working to meet community needs, including in the area of Community Improvement.
18. As in other communities nationwide, continue to pursue a partnership-based approach to reducing homelessness in Paducah and McCracken County and its side effects, applying holistic strategies that encompass basic food and shelter needs, mental health and addiction recovery services, transitional housing, preparation for employability and self-sufficiency, and interagency response to concentrations and encampments of homeless individuals and related security and aesthetic concerns.
19. Maintain ongoing outreach to and communication with home owner associations (HOAs) and also to areas without HOAs or other organized means for neighborhood-level interaction with City and County officials and staff. Also consider hosting an annual Neighborhoods Summit as a high point for such outreach, to promote networking and information-sharing across neighborhoods, and to funnel input into the City and County’s annual budgeting and capital improvements planning.

Connecting with Neighborhoods through Special Events

Examples from places across the nation illustrate the multiple ways to maintain communication links to neighborhood leaders and representatives. Establishing a community-wide association or network of neighborhood councils can also lead to annual gatherings and/or other periodic meetings and seminars on issues of interest to all neighborhoods. Such forums can prove valuable for inviting “grass roots” input into, and notice of, capital improvement priorities, park and public facility upgrades, street and infrastructure projects, pending major developments, crime prevention activities, code compliance initiatives, etc. Some communities also host high-profile annual events focused on the interests and needs of neighborhoods, including:

The Neighborhood Conference in **Knoxville, Tennessee**, is held annually to host everyone who participates in a neighborhood organization. The free conference brings together neighborhood and City leaders in workshops and provides networking opportunities for those working to make their neighborhoods safer and more livable to come together. Knoxville also presents the Neighborhood Achievement awards at the annual conference, highlighting the work of neighborhood organizations in improving and enhancing their neighborhoods.



https://www.knoxvilletn.gov/government/city_departments_offices/neighborhoods/events/neighborhood_conference

Annual Neighborhood Conference hosted by the City of **Dayton, Ohio**.

<https://www.daytonohio.gov/1103/Neighborhood-Conference>

Annual Neighborhoods Conference and awards event in **Hillsborough County, Florida**, hosted by the County’s Office of Neighborhood Relations.

<https://hcfl.gov/departments/neighborhood-relations>

The City of **Littleton, Colorado**, holds annual “Meet, Greet, and Eats” in its community parks. The informal events provide an opportunity for residents to meet their City Council representative and neighbors, discuss neighborhood issues and receive information from City staff.

<https://visitlittleton.org/event/meet-greet-eat-2024-1-2/>

ACTIONS Involving More Targeted Planning / Study

20. Commission a Strategic Housing Market Analysis and Plan, in part to establish a post-pandemic baseline of area-specific housing market data and to identify a data-driven series of key action steps to expand and expedite new housing construction in Paducah and McCracken County.
21. In follow-up to the Strategic Housing Market Analysis and Plan, continue to build up and publish area-specific housing market data, especially involving:
 - Trends in local housing costs relative to personal and household income statistics, as well as the price ranges at which new ownership housing and rentals are being delivered to the local market, to inform and better frame discussions of housing “affordability” in Paducah and McCracken County.

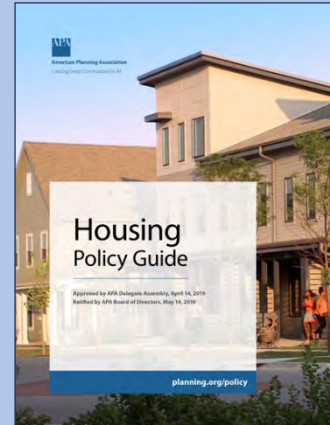
- Area cost-of-living indicators beyond monthly mortgage and rental payments including local government factors such as appraisals, tax rates, utility rates and differences in such factors between in-City and unincorporated areas.
 - Trends in other data points estimated annually by — or derived from — the U.S. Census Bureau through its American Community Survey, including ratios of housing to population and jobs to housing, average household size and the extent of housing cost-burdened households in the area — all of which were highlighted during the Paducah-McCracken Today phase of this Comprehensive Plan update process, along with comparisons to selected communities and the entire state.
22. Use GIS mapping to track the area’s supply of residentially-zoned acreage and existing available lots, which factors into the degree of market flexibility for developing diverse housing types in various locations across the city and in the county. Also document where the City, County and other potential partners own vacant properties in close proximity to identify land consolidation opportunities for creating larger development sites.
 23. As part of ongoing neighborhood planning and revitalization efforts, particularly focus on renewal of blocks in close proximity to public assets such as schools, parks, recreation facilities and community centers, and neighborhood-scale shopping and services.
 24. Monitor the growing nationwide trend toward housing developed from the start with rental in mind, but with a higher level of site design, amenities and ongoing property maintenance relative to many apartment developments, including to blend better in areas of predominantly single-family detached homes.

25. Take advantage of resources readily available through the American Planning Association and other sources to monitor trends and best practices for managing both the positive and concerning attributes of activities within neighborhoods such as accessory dwelling units, cooperative housing (“co-housing”) models, short-term rentals, increase in home occupation uses, commercial-to-residential building conversions (as well as conversion of vacant religious structures or construction of housing as a second use on an active church property), and the buying of older homes for renovation and “flipping.”



Housing Policy Guidance

Paducah and McCracken County are not alone in their housing challenges. Many communities across the nation are grappling with housing affordability, housing production and changing housing needs. The American Planning Association (APA) publishes policy guides on a range of planning issues. The policy guides lay out principles of good planning and are used by both APA and planners across the country to advocate for the adopted positions and principles contained within the guides. Keeping abreast of national trends and best practices can help the City and County position themselves to take advantage of resources as they become available. APA's 2019 Housing Policy Guide contains the following five high-level policy positions:



- Position 1: Modernize state and local laws to ensure housing opportunities are available, accessible, and affordable to all.
- Position 2: Preserve existing housing to maintain the quality and overall supply of affordable housing.
- Position 3: Encourage environmental sustainability and resiliency as critical elements of housing availability and affordability.
- Position 4: Ensure that public and private finance keeps pace and innovates to support increased housing availability and affordability.
- Position 5: Support funding and program flexibility to provide services, shelters, and permanent supportive housing for people experiencing homelessness, veterans, immigrants, and the formerly incarcerated.

ONGOING AND POTENTIAL PARTNERS RELATED TO HOUSING AND NEIGHBORHOODS

- Banking/lending/finance community
- Goodwill Kentucky
- Homebuilders Association of Western Kentucky
- Homeless and Housing Coalition of Kentucky
- Housing Authority of Paducah
- Jackson House
- Kentucky Affordable Housing Coalition
- Kentucky Department for Local Government (CDBG, etc.)
- Kentucky Department of Housing, Buildings and Construction
- Kentucky Housing Corporation
- Kentucky Section 8 Program
- McCracken County Public Schools

- Mercy Housing
- Merryman House
- Paducah Alliance of Neighbors (former Midtown Alliance)
- Paducah Board of Realtors
- Paducah Cooperative Ministry
- Paducah-McCracken County Habitat for Humanity
- Paducah Public Schools
- Property owners
- Purchase Area Development District
- Real estate/development community
- River City Mission
- Salvation Army (transitional housing for homeless)
- United Way (especially for post-disaster recovery)
- W.B. Sanders Retirement Center



paducah **cooperative** ministry

Doing God's Work with Human Hands

KENTUCKY AFFORDABLE HOUSING RESOURCES

Kentucky offers various statewide programs to support affordable housing initiatives, including rental assistance, homeownership programs, low-income housing tax credits and public housing. These programs are designed to address various needs, from immediate rental assistance to long-term solutions for affordable homeownership. They are available to residents across the state, with some programs focusing on specific counties or regions. An entity like the Paducah Housing Authority typically manages such programs locally, various of which it already does.

Rental Assistance

Kentucky Community Action Agency. Provides help with rent through non-profits in every Kentucky community, offering emergency rental assistance, funds for moving or security deposits, and free legal aid for low-income tenants.

Homeless Prevention and Rapid Re-Housing Program. Funded by the federal government, this program distributes funds across major cities and counties in Kentucky to prevent evictions and homelessness.

Team Kentucky Eviction Diversion Program. Assists eligible tenants with court-ordered evictions, covering past-due and future rent, and providing emergency relocation vouchers.

Homeownership Programs

U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) Community Development Block Grants (CDBG). Provides federal grant money to communities for assisting homebuyers.

HUD HOME Program. Offers grant money for rental assistance and other housing initiatives.

Kentucky Housing Corporation (KHC) Programs. Includes various homebuying programs such as the Conventional Preferred and Conventional Preferred Plus 80, which offer 30-year mortgages with fixed interest rates and down payment assistance.

U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) Rural Development. Provides programs that reduce homeownership costs for low- and moderate-income families.

Low-Income Housing Tax Credits

Housing Credit Program. Offers a 10-year tax credit for property owners who create units for low-income families, including new construction or substantial rehabilitation. Paducah has six “Qualifying Census Tracts” (QCTs) in the core of the city that are eligible for LIHTC programming but has seen limited use of this financing tool.

Public Housing

Kentucky Balance of State Continuum of Care. Implements a Coordinated Entry System for homeless individuals and families seeking housing and services.

Kentucky Housing Corporation Multifamily Programs. Provides incentives and programs to developers to promote affordable multifamily housing construction.

Transportation

Paducah-McCracken County Comprehensive Plan

INTRODUCTION

This plan section focuses on current, near-term and long-range transportation needs and priorities in and around Paducah and McCracken County. Some of these priorities are outward focused, involving regional and state-level entities and necessary coordination, recognizing the role of the City and County among multiple transportation partners in the Purchase region of western Kentucky. Various other priorities are inward focused, such as adding needed connections within the local road network plus ongoing street rehabilitation, sidewalk repairs, and other mobility and safety enhancements in particular areas of the city and county.

As in many communities, top transportation-related issues facing the area include improving traffic flow, safety and connectivity while adding more ways to move around the community on foot and by bike. Continued enhancement of the area mobility system will be necessary to accommodate the increased travel demand resulting from population growth and development, along with goods movement and additional visitor traffic. As the transportation system continues to evolve, it should address not only traffic and safety needs but also reflect the surrounding land use and character. Finally, public transportation services will continue to be a priority, especially for those without a personal vehicle or with special transportation needs, especially to reach jobs, education sites and essential services.



Why This Comprehensive Plan Section Is Important For Paducah And McCracken County

- Reinforces the importance of minimizing traffic congestion while also ensuring safe roadway conditions as a key quality of life component for Paducah and McCracken County residents.
- Highlights the role of street design in establishing and reinforcing the desired character of an area, whether in rural subdivisions, suburban residential neighborhoods or in Downtown Paducah and vicinity, where walkability and safe biking are desired as much, or more, than accommodation of the automobile in a more urban character setting.
- Emphasizes the fundamental priority placed on neighborhood integrity in the area, which is influenced by traffic conditions on residential streets and the safety of kids and adults when walking and biking in the community.
- Provides the public policy basis for City and County regulations and standards related to streets, sidewalks, bike lanes, parking and other mobility-related infrastructure and physical improvements.
- Recognizes that multiple state and regional agencies plan for and guide transportation upgrades and services in the area, enabling the City and County to focus on local issues and needs along with regional coordination.
- Supports the area's linking of roadway and corridor design to economic development and aesthetic objectives.

LEGACY OF PAST PLANNING

This new Comprehensive Plan builds on previous plans and studies completed by the City of Paducah, McCracken County and other partners. Those most relevant to the Transportation topic include:

- City of Paducah Comprehensive Plan (adopted July 2007, amended June 2012, readopted June 2017)
- McCracken County Comprehensive Plan (adopted August 2013, amended November 2018)
- Paducah Small Urban Area Study (2019)
- Planning and federal grant application for Better Utilizing Investments to Leverage Development (BUILD) funding through the U.S. Department of Transportation (2019)
- City of Paducah Sidewalk Study (2009)
- City of Paducah Comprehensive Strategic Plan (2020)
- Forward Paducah (2017 update)
- Paducah Parks and Recreation Master Plan (2020)
- City of Paducah neighborhood revitalization and special area planning related to mobility and connectivity, sidewalks, trails, etc.
- Renaissance Area [Downtown] Master Plan (RAMP, 2011, amended 2013)
- McCracken County parks and greenway/trails planning, including Master Plan Report for McCracken County Athletic Complex (2021)
- Barkley Regional Airport Authority studies and plans
- Paducah-McCracken County Riverport Authority studies and plans

Accomplishments

Progress and achievements resulting from past planning and implementation efforts were identified through leadership and community input to this plan, along with other documentation. Significant items cited that are most relevant to the Transportation topic include:

- A relative lack of traffic and congestion.
- A very walkable city, especially Downtown.
- Recent formation of a Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) for the area, which is a mechanism used in metro areas large and small across the nation for more coordinated areawide transportation planning and enhanced funding eligibility.
- The Friendship Road extension project with the Kentucky Transportation Cabinet, including an east connection to US 45/Lone Oak Road and a west connection across Old Highway 60 to US 60/Hinkleville Road.
- Ongoing street rehabilitation and improvements tied to storm drainage needs, including projects that have included addition of curbs, gutters, sidewalks, a stormwater conveyance system, striping and street resurfacing.



- Securing \$10.4 million in federal transportation BUILD grant funding for the Riverfront Commons project, with an additional \$3.5 million approved through the Kentucky General Assembly in 2024 (riverboat excursion pier and plaza, improved bike/ped connectivity between the Convention Center and Downtown, intersection and crosswalk improvements, wayfinding, bus shelters, improvements around Transient Boat Dock landing).
- Ongoing development of the area’s riverport facilities, with linkages to rail and other transportation modes, supported by \$16 million approved by the Kentucky General Assembly in 2024 for a new access road to the Riverport West/Triple Rail economic development site in west McCracken County.
- Granting of Foreign Trade Zone #294 to the Paducah-McCracken County Riverport in 2016, when the port also received the America’s Marine Highway Leadership Award from U.S. Department of Transportation Maritime Administration for its Container on Barge Project.
- Ongoing upgrades to Barkley Regional Airport, including the recent terminal project.



KEY PLANNING ISSUES AND CONSIDERATIONS

Through the Paducah-McCracken Today and Plan Direction phases of the comprehensive planning effort, numerous real and perceived community issues and needs were identified through leadership and public engagement activities, as well as through the work of the plan consultants and their interactions with an appointed Advisory Group and City and County staff. Additionally, the City’s Board of Commissioners identify annual strategic priorities, which in 2023 included Bike Lanes and Trails, with Beautification and Wayfinding, Downtown (parking, riverfront improvements), Quality of Life (speeding), added as 2024 priorities along with continuation of Trails and Bike Lanes.

Key issues and considerations that led to the goals and action items in this Transportation section include (along with specific points and suggestions from leadership and community input):

Mobility Options

- Opportunities to improve connectivity in general, for all modes of travel.
- Good walkability in older parts of city, need more mobility options outside of core area, especially sidewalks and crosswalks around neighborhoods with visible but underserved pedestrian activity.
- More fixed-route transit service in the area (a focus for further MPO study).
- Transit connections to Western Kentucky Community and Technical College, for access to workforce programs.

Area Transportation Assets

- Taking full advantage of local transportation infrastructure for economic development (Interstate Highways 24 and 69, four rivers and riverport facilities, level of freight rail service, regional airport).
- Level of passenger airline service, and therefore utilization of Barkley Regional Airport.
- Priority bridge improvements.



Regional and State Coordination

- Transition to a Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) structure for areawide coordination on transportation planning, improvements and funding.
- Need to garner more attention and transportation investment from state government.

Other Quality of Life Considerations

- Ongoing upgrades to walking and biking facilities and comfort in the Downtown area, along with safer opportunities for walking and biking across all city neighborhoods and developed areas of the county.
- Beyond just “improving” the sidewalk system, pursuing equitable provision of sidewalks in neighborhoods that never had them – and where walking is a necessity versus a luxury for residents.
- The pros and cons of the ability to waive sidewalk requirements in subdivisions developed within the county (i.e., the near-term perception of “sidewalks to nowhere” versus eventual requests from residents to add sidewalks after the fact).
- Downtown parking management, including accommodation of persons with disabilities.
- Noise along the I-24 corridor.
- Managing added traffic and circulation needs from weekend boost in population with visitors.

QUOTABLE from Community Survey

“It is an easy town to travel in.”

“We have low traffic congestion, very walkable and bikeable.”

“The new airport terminal is a positive, as is development of the port and riverwalk area.”

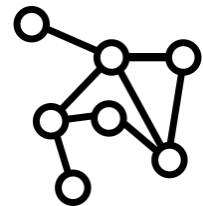
“We need safety for all modes of transportation, including walking, biking and buses.”

“Maintenance of streets and increased traffic safety are priorities for me.”

“I hope that more people realize the opportunity we have as a central location for transportation. This would include river, rail, air and highway.”

FRAMEWORK FOR ACTION

This Framework for Action section builds off of the plan priorities confirmed with City and County officials during the transition from the Paducah-McCracken Today to the Paducah-McCracken Tomorrow phase of Comprehensive Plan development — especially Planning Themes 1A, 2 and 5 for this Transportation section. The plan goals and action strategies are aimed at “connecting the dots” between a set of community improvement fundamentals for the area that involve:



Planning Theme 1:

Making the area more attractive to retain — or regain — youth who grew up here, and to attract younger individuals and families.

Planning Theme 1A:

Continuing efforts to diversify the area’s economic and employment base, for long-term economic sustainability and also to offer a wider range of job options to current and prospective residents.

Planning Theme 1B:

Increasing the quantity and variety of housing options.

Planning Theme 2:

Being a safe community with good City/County public safety services (police, fire, emergency medical service).

Planning Theme 3:

Improving infrastructure condition, particularly for stormwater management.

Planning Theme 4:

Sustaining momentum on neighborhood and corridor revitalization.

Planning Theme 5:

Taking greater economic advantage of the area’s location and transportation assets.

Planning Theme 6:

Building on the area’s tourism success, including through sustained commitment to arts, crafts and culture.

What connects all of these planning themes is the desire to retain and attract more population to Paducah and McCracken County, including those who grew up here. The actions in this Transportation section involve tangible steps that will lead to achievement of the goals:

GOALS FOR TRANSPORTATION

Goal 1:

A mobility system that provides connectivity and options for getting to destinations in and around the area, including to employment centers, shopping and services, schools and parks, and locations for workforce training – and especially for swift emergency response.

Goal 2:

A continued focus on providing more – and safer – opportunities for residents and visitors to walk and bike within the area, with a focus on linking key destinations.

Goal 3:

An enhanced mobility system that supports local economic development and tax base growth through the City and County’s own investments plus improvements achieved through partnerships and advocacy at the regional and state levels – including through the new Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) mechanism.

Goal 4:

A systematic approach to street maintenance, and advance planning for periodic rehabilitation and reconstruction of older roadways, using such opportunities to enhance bike/ped circulation and to add design elements that promote the city and county’s image and aesthetics.

A Goal is ...

a statement of a desired outcome (“end”) toward which efforts are directed as expressed by more specific objectives and action steps (“means”).

ACTIONS

The actions below are categorized into the five types of plan implementation actions highlighted throughout this plan.

Action Leaders

With the support and direction of City and County elected officials, action leaders for most initiatives involving Transportation will include:

- City of Paducah – Administration-Grants, Engineering, Parks and Recreation, Planning, Police, Public Works
- McCracken County – Community Development, Emergency Management, Parks, Planning and Zoning, Road Department, Sheriff’s Office
- Kentucky Transportation Cabinet (District 1)
- Paducah Area Transit System

Plan Actions Involve ...

seizing a special opportunity or addressing a particular challenge one faces, given limited resources — financial and otherwise — and recognizing that various routine and ongoing activities will continue in the meantime.

- Paducah-McCracken County Office of Emergency Management
- Purchase Area Development District
 - Paducah-McCracken Metropolitan Planning Organization (PMcMPO)

Various advisory Boards and Commissions also have some role in Transportation, including:

City Boards and Commissions

- Paducah Main Street Board
- Paducah Riverfront Development Advisory Board
- Planning Commission
- Urban Renewal and Community Development Agency

County Boards and Commissions

- Planning Commission

Others

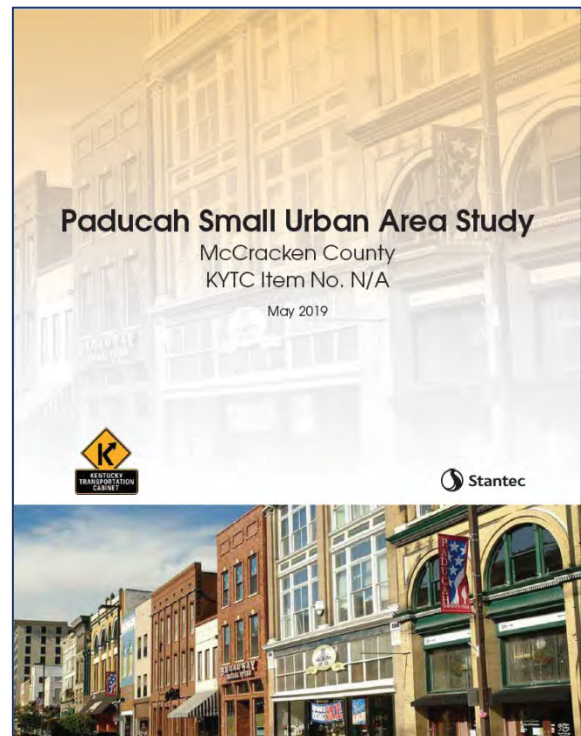
- Barkley Regional Airport Authority Board
- Paducah-McCracken County Riverport Authority Board

MPO Best Practices

With the recent creation of a Paducah-McCracken Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO), the Association of Metropolitan Planning Organizations (AMPO, ampo.org) can be a go-to source for publications and research, conferences and other events, legislative tracking, networking with similar MPOs in Kentucky and elsewhere, and for other resources, as well as AMPO's stated role as "Your Transportation Advocate for Metropolitan Regions."

ACTIONS Involving Capital Investments

1. Continue an "asset management" approach to monitoring the life cycles of area roadway infrastructure, using a Pavement Condition Index rating system to identify critical needs, determine the scope and potential cost of needed improvements, prioritize such improvements and categorize them for short-, medium- or long-term programming and funding.
2. Building on recent transportation plans and studies (e.g., 2019 Paducah Small Urban Area Study) – and even on still-relevant earlier efforts (e.g., 2009 Sidewalk Study), maintain an ongoing sidewalk improvement program to repair, replace or install new sidewalks, crosswalks and curb cuts in high pedestrian use areas in the city and county (e.g., around school campuses, near public buildings and spaces, in park vicinities, in Downtown Paducah and other activity centers in the city and county, etc.) and in other areas with the potential to accommodate more walking with appropriate improvements and safety measures.
3. Applying a "dig once" strategy, take advantage of opportunities to synchronize utility work with road construction projects to reduce the cost burden of digging up streets multiple times. Also seek opportunities to implement bicycle/pedestrian improvements in conjunction with street maintenance



and rehabilitation projects, utility installation and replacement projects, storm drainage projects and others.

4. Capitalizing on the continuing City strategic priority of Bike Lanes and Trails, identify high-priority trail segments, on-street bike lanes and/or shared-use path projects that will promote “active transportation” opportunities along with addressing the recreational needs of pedestrians and bicyclists – with similar targeted efforts in the most developed areas of the county.
5. Investigate key locations for potential installation of traffic signal preemption devices, to help reduce emergency response times in areas with documented delays and to improve traffic safety for both first responders and the public at such times.

ACTIONS Involving Programs and Initiatives

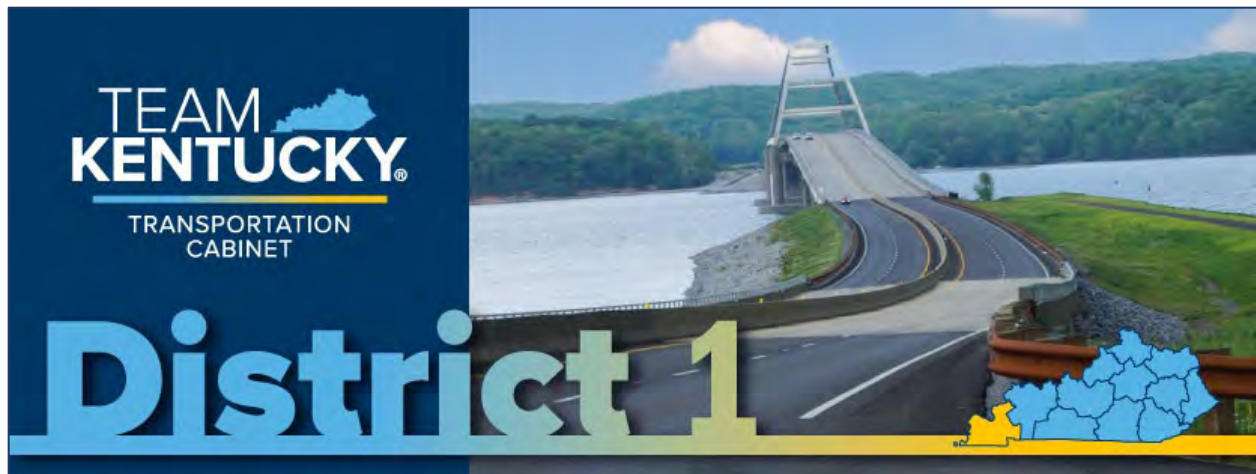
6. As reflected in the 2019 Paducah Small Urban Area Study, continue to apply a Transportation System Management (TSM) approach, which emphasizes efficient use of existing roadway capacity when added capacity projects are unlikely to happen in the near future, or ever, due to physical or fiscal constraints (e.g., improvements and turning movement enhancements focused at congested intersections, access management measures along roadways, improved roadway marking/signage/lighting, “pull-outs” at busy transit stops to remove stopped buses from travel lanes, traffic signal upgrades and use of “Intelligent Transportation System” or ITS technologies, etc.). TSM strategies can be applied elsewhere in the county based on the area context and level of development – and now with the MPO mechanism to pursue related funding opportunities.
7. In keeping with the nationwide Vision Zero movement, which aims to eliminate preventable injuries and fatalities suffered by motorists, pedestrians and cyclists, pursue local actions such as:
 - Committing to capital projects that expand and enhance bicycle and pedestrian circulation and safety, especially involving installation of protected bicycle/pedestrian lanes and facilities.
 - Evaluating whether speeds are a contributor to bicycle/pedestrian accidents and considering potential speed limit reductions in locations of concern, along with targeted traffic calming measures in both new development and existing developed areas.
 - Providing bicycling education and safety courses.
 - Co-hosting with area schools a National Walk and Bike to School Day event to promote safe biking/walking to and from school.
 - Focusing on large vehicle safety to avoid conflicts between such traffic and smaller, less protected road users.
8. Work to restore flight service between Barkley Regional Airport and a more central U.S. hub location such as Nashville, St. Louis, Chicago or Dallas-Fort Worth, versus the situation at the time of this plan of having service only to/from an eastern hub in Charlotte. Attracting “leisure” airlines geared toward lower-cost vacation and holiday travel is another possibility (e.g., Avelo, Allegiant, Breeze, Sun Country, etc.). However, Paducah and McCracken County need to avoid jeopardizing their existing minimum scheduled air service, which is supported by post-deregulation Essential Air Service (EAS) federal funding that provides subsidies to airlines to overcome profitability gaps that would otherwise preclude them from serving smaller, often rural, airports.

ACTIONS Involving Regulations and Standards

None for this plan section.

ACTIONS Involving Partnerships and Coordination

9. Actively participate in state-level and regional transportation planning efforts and funding processes to advocate for local area needs and advance projects of regional significance, focusing especially now on the new Paducah-McCracken Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) framework.
10. Continue regular dialogue and coordination with District 1 and state-level contacts within the Kentucky Transportation Cabinet (KTC) to ensure that its roadway and other mobility projects reflect local area needs and design preferences. As a regional hub community for daytime population and goods movement, as well as a tourist destination, also communicate about the status and timing of KTC construction projects that may be outside the immediate area but can affect routes and traffic flow within the city and county.



11. Work across City and County departments and with other agencies and partners to capitalize on opportunities to implement roadway and bike/ped improvements when maintenance or upgrades of other infrastructure are also in planning and design (e.g., water line repairs and rehabilitation, storm drainage projects, etc.).
12. In conjunction with area school systems, identify campuses that have significant trip generation, especially where a sizable share of students – and possibly some faculty or staff – walk and bike to/from school, to pinpoint potential locations for adding sidewalk or shared-use path segments, filling gaps in the existing sidewalk network, adding on-street bike lanes or implementing other improvements to encourage alternatives to driving and enhance safety. Also monitor periodic opportunities to apply for grant funding specifically for such school-vicinity improvements.
13. Strengthen partnerships between local law enforcement and area school systems regarding planning for on-street drop-off/pick-up queuing and related disruptions to usual traffic flow during peak periods, and for overall congestion management and safety around school campuses, especially at the start of school years. Also coordinate on clear public communications regarding such traffic management plans and to address Frequently Asked Questions in advance.

14. In partnership with the Paducah Area Transit System, pursue ways to leverage and expand existing marketing to area residents and workers – as well as to tourists and other visitors – about transit options and services, taking even greater advantage of social



media to disseminate information on how and where to ride local transit and thereby reduce peak-hour vehicular trips.

15. In conjunction with state and regional partners, emphasize resiliency in transportation network planning, including both redundancy in systems (e.g., multiple routes for reaching critical community facilities and key destinations) and protection from potential hazards and threats.

ACTIONS Involving More Targeted Planning / Study

16. Periodically update key transportation plans that establish overall principles for action and set the stage for local capital improvements planning and pursuit of external funding and grants (e.g., jurisdiction-wide transportation plan, pedestrian and bicycle master plans, transit system plan, etc.) – and now with the opportunity to elevate and maintain momentum in such planning through the new Paducah-McCracken MPO, including street network modeling/analysis and data-driven thoroughfare planning.
17. Conduct traffic studies at targeted locations, as needed, to better understand causes of congestion and to evaluate potential operational or lower-scale improvements that could improve traffic flow and safety short of roadway widenings or other significant and costly projects (e.g., access management measures, lane width adjustments and/or additional turning lanes at intersections, traffic signal adjustments or upgrades, etc.).
18. As done in the 2019 Paducah Small Urban Area Study, continue to identify corridors that could be candidates for “road diet” treatments (street retrofits that reallocate space within the available right-of-way to balance the movement and speed of motorized vehicles relative to the safe circulation of pedestrians, cyclists and disabled individuals). Such projects would incorporate “Complete Street” design principles and promote Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) compliance. Also monitor transportation funding opportunities intended to support such projects.
19. Investigate locations with the highest frequency of traffic incidents involving pedestrians and cyclists to assess the physical and operational characteristics, along with input from bike/ped advocates and roadway users to confirm higher-risk roadways and intersections. Also assess whether such high-frequency locations can be improved with low-cost enhancements such as curb bulb-outs, marked crosswalks, mid-road/median “refuge” areas, enhanced signage and/or better lighting.
20. Based on the locations of key employment clusters and workforce training centers (as identified in the Economic Development section of this plan):
 - Ensure transit routes and stops align with these essential locations.
 - Identify gaps in sidewalk coverage to get to employment opportunities from transit stops.
 - Factor these locations into bicycle network planning and priority improvements.
 - Monitor opportunities to apply for federal Economic Development Administration (EDA) grants to help build infrastructure that improves access to employment opportunities.
21. Periodically re-assess whether transit routes, stops and on-demand ride services are effectively meeting the mobility needs of seniors, persons with disabilities and areas with subsidized housing. Also confirm good sidewalk coverage between such housing locations and essential needs such as grocery stores, pharmacies and parks, trails and recreational facilities.



22. Periodically revisit whether a bike share program would be feasible – and acceptable – in and around Paducah’s downtown core area, including consideration of:
 - Projected costs of operations, maintenance and improving infrastructure for bike share stations.
 - Potential initial and sustainable funding sources.
 - Potential public or private partners to help start, maintain and sponsor a bike share program, including a role for local businesses and vendors that already provide bike rentals and maintenance.
23. Implement mobility-related improvements identified through a master plan prepared in conjunction with the National Park Service, including potential new bike lanes as part of an urban bike loop strategy, and a planned extension of the Greenway Trail into Southside.
24. Continue to plan for the local implications of transportation technology advancements such as more widespread use of electric vehicles, autonomous vehicles, electric bikes and scooters, ride-sharing services and drones (e.g., for package deliveries, etc.).



ONGOING AND POTENTIAL PARTNERS RELATED TO TRANSPORTATION

- Area land development community (development design, street lighting, etc.)
- Area transportation and logistics businesses (rail, trucking, waterborne commerce, etc.)
- Bike Walk Kentucky
- Chain Reaction Cycling Club (Paducah)
- Delta Regional Authority
- Goodwill Kentucky (Last Mile to Work program providing bikes to assist commuters)
- Greater Paducah Economic Development / Paducah-McCracken County Industrial Development Authority
- Higher education and training institutions (access)
- Kentuckians for Better Transportation
- Kentucky advocacy organizations for individuals with disabilities
- Kentucky Association of Transportation Engineers
- Kentucky Cycling
- Kentucky Emergency Management Association
- Kentucky Mountain Bike Association
- Kentucky Public Transit Association
- Kentucky state government:
 - Kentucky Department for Local Government
 - Kentucky Division of Emergency Management
 - Kentucky Division of Right of Way and Utilities
 - Kentucky Office of the Americans with Disabilities Act
 - Kentucky Public Transportation Infrastructure Authority

- Kentucky Transportation Cabinet
 - McCracken County Public Schools
 - Paducah-McCracken County Joint Sewer Agency (infrastructure coordination)
 - Paducah Public Schools
 - Paducah Water (infrastructure coordination)
 - University of Kentucky
 - Kentucky Transportation Center
 - Technology Transfer (T2) Program (designated by Federal Highway Administration as Local Technical Assistance Program for Kentucky)



Economic Development

Paducah-McCracken County Comprehensive Plan

INTRODUCTION

The City of Paducah, McCracken County and the area's lead entities for economic development — from Greater Paducah Economic Development (GPED) and the Paducah-McCracken County Industrial Development Authority to the Paducah Area Chamber of Commerce, Paducah Convention and Visitors Bureau, Paducah Main Street, Sprocket and the Purchase Area Development District — continue to work on key market factors they can directly influence. These include utility infrastructure availability and capacity, suitable locations and spaces for business investment and growth, the size and skills of the local workforce, networking and support among existing and prospective new local businesses, and processes for obtaining development approvals and permits.

Local governments create synergy by providing basic public services, on the one hand, while also supporting economic development initiatives.

Increased economic activity that creates a growing tax base better enables local government to provide the infrastructure and services desired by residents and businesses. In turn, the services, infrastructure and amenities provided are enticements that encourage further economic growth. Well-constructed economic development policies will provide Paducah and McCracken County the greatest opportunity to influence the quality, quantity and timing of development. Such policies create the ability to shift some of the risk of funding public improvements to private sector partners and will afford the opportunity to ensure that more of the area's growth "pays for itself."

Successful economic development also requires a focus on quality of place, capitalizing on the area's special character and Paducah's often-cited "charm" and "hometown feel" to attract and retain businesses and high-skilled workers – and to draw even more visitors seeking shopping, services, entertainment, recreation, arts and culture, and heritage tourism. The Recreation and Amenities section of this plan also emphasizes the contribution of a robust tourism sector as part of the area economy.

Why This Comprehensive Plan Section Is Important For Paducah And McCracken County

- Connects this Comprehensive Plan, which is focused on the area's overall growth, development and revitalization, to more detailed economic plans and strategies overseen by the area's lead entities for economic development.
- Builds on previous and ongoing efforts by the City of Paducah, McCracken County and other partners to encourage and accommodate new business investment in the area while working to revitalize older established areas.
- Reinforces local government's role in promoting the public's general welfare by broadening economic opportunity in the area, whether in terms of the range and quality of job opportunities, programs and resources for enhancing one's marketable skills, improved mobility to access employment and education sites, or the environment for supporting home-grown entrepreneurs.



Greater Paducah
ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

- Links to other plan sections that address the prerequisites for a vibrant economy, including public infrastructure capacity, available land for growth of new and existing business, all forms of transportation for moving workers and goods, and attainable housing options and a quality living environment to ensure an adequate labor pool to meet the needs of area employers.
- Highlights the continuing need to promote equitable access to the area’s economic opportunities to uplift the life prospects of all area residents.

Defining “Economic Development”

Economic development is a shared effort between local governments and the business community with the mutual benefit of increased economic activity and revenue.

At the core of all economic development programs is to attract and retain businesses, create jobs, stabilize and grow the local tax base, and enhance local quality of life. To achieve these goals, economic development programs encompass a wide range of activities:

- Business retention and expansion assistance.
- Business recruitment.
- Marketing and branding.
- Small business development.
- “Economic gardening” (a data-centric approach to identifying and assisting local high-growth companies).
- Incentives.
- Workforce development.
- Tourism, including cultural draws (art, historic, music).
- Improved public services, processes and infrastructure.

LEGACY OF PAST PLANNING

This new Comprehensive Plan builds on previous plans and studies completed by the City of Paducah, McCracken County and other partners. Those most relevant to the Economic Development topic include:

- City of Paducah Comprehensive Plan (adopted July 2007, amended June 2012, readopted June 2017)
- McCracken County Comprehensive Plan (adopted August 2013, amended November 2018)
- Forward Paducah (2017 update)
- Brownfields Assessment and Reuse/Redevelopment grant initiative (2022-present)
- Renaissance Area [Downtown] Master Plan (RAMP, 2011, amended 2013)

“Greater Paducah is the creative heart of Kentucky — building on a foundation of education, arts, and healthy living to inspire businesses and families to prosper.”

**Vision statement from
Forward Paducah report
Greater Paducah
Economic Development**

Accomplishments

Progress and achievements resulting from past planning and implementation efforts were identified through leadership and community input to this plan, along with other documentation. Significant items cited that are most relevant to the Economic Development topic include:

- Promotion of population and community growth.
- Ongoing growth of the area’s healthcare sector.
- Success of Sprocket as a “launchpad” for local entrepreneurs and start-up businesses, through financial support, physical coworking space and other programming.
- Improved relationship with and increased volume of economic development leads from the State of Kentucky, while still needing more state attention to and resources for western Kentucky.
- Continued recognition of West Kentucky Community and Technical College as one of the nation’s top community colleges (selected from more than 1,000 community colleges nationwide as a top-five Finalist with Distinction for the prestigious Aspen Prize in 2021, 2015 and 2011 — the first year of the biannual award program focused on student outcomes — and a top-10 Finalist in 2017 and 2013).
- Grant-funded improvements to the Triple Rail business park in West Paducah.
- Delta Regional Authority grant support for port improvements.
- Terminal upgrades at Barkley Regional Airport.
- Ongoing neighborhood revitalization efforts, including commercial incentives and other efforts to restore local business activity.
- Ongoing downtown revitalization and enhancement efforts.



KEY PLANNING ISSUES AND CONSIDERATIONS

Through the Paducah-McCracken Today and Plan Direction phases of the comprehensive planning effort, numerous real and perceived community issues and needs were identified through leadership and public engagement activities, as well as through the work of the plan consultants and their interactions with an appointed Advisory Group and City and County staff. Additionally, the City’s Board of Commissioners identify annual strategic priorities, which in 2023 included Community Growth, Downtown and Neighborhoods.

Key issues and considerations that led to the goals and action items in this Economic Development section include (along with specific points and suggestions from leadership and community input):

More Diverse Economy and Jobs

- Add wider variety, better-quality and higher-paying jobs — competing cities have surplus of unfilled jobs while our area is exporting labor.
- Build investment and employment in sectors with higher-paying jobs (beyond retail and services, tourism-driven jobs, etc.).

QUOTABLE from Community Survey

“I hope that more people realize the opportunity we have as a central location for transportation. This would include river, rail, air and highway.”

“I love how we encourage mom and pop owned business in downtown area. I like seeing the arts being a major focus.”



- Take better advantage of transportation assets and location.
- Future of gaseous diffusion plant site and area role in energy sector (National Energy Hub designation) — but caution on solar investment.
- Attract emerging industries and tech businesses, including manufacturing.
- Just outside the location sweet spot for electric vehicle investment.
- Build on medical concentration.
- Support small/family businesses.
- Access to capital for growth companies.
- Broadband upgrades.
- Unique Innovation Hub asset at Paducah Tilghman High School campus.

Workforce

- Population growth!
- Housing priority — plus child care, public transportation (pull workers closer in from large regional labor shed).
- Retain and attract families in 20-40 age range.
- Build on nationally-recognized workforce programs at West Kentucky Community and Technical College — but difficulty filling even their senior faculty positions (IT, nursing).
- Add programs for leading-edge sectors (robotics, Artificial Intelligence, green energy).
- Employer support for education and training to fill workforce needs — and lower minimum requirements.
- Divert “untapped” workforce from lower-paying retail and tourism jobs.
- Shortage of civil engineers and architects to design and expedite local projects.
- Equity in job market and economic opportunity.
- Link to criminal justice system and area social services — keep people out of system, and bring rehabilitated individuals back into workforce.

Retention is Job 1

According to the International Economic Development Council, estimates show that it takes eight times the effort (in staff time, marketing trips, site tours, etc.) to attract a new business than it takes to retain an existing one.

Data from the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics shows that 70% of new jobs in the U.S. are created by existing businesses. These facts highlight the importance of working with existing companies as local engines of job creation.

SOURCE: Congressional Research Service, Small Business Administration and Job Creation.

Land Availability / Site Readiness

- Acquire more business/industrial park space and make shovel-ready for investment.
- Cleared sites with infrastructure, storm drainage, utilities and broadband.
- Away from floodplain.
- Including for river access and rail proximity (era of grant funding for ports and rail, opportunities for public/private partnerships).

- Spec buildings for earlier-stage need for “shell space” before land/building purchases.
- Single point of contact by placing land under Industrial Development Authority.
- More attention, resources from State of Kentucky.

Area Framework for Economic Development

- Continue enhanced coordination efforts and definition of roles among area entities.
- Stronger regional economic development entity beyond limited regional Chamber role, West Kentucky Workforce Board.
- Staying competitive with other jurisdictions and regions through readiness to offer robust incentives when warranted, beyond what prospects see as routine and have come to expect most anywhere.
- Lack broader foundation support as in other places.
- Local investment environment for supporting large-scale commercial/ industrial development.
- City/County coordination to get things done versus negative public perception (especially due to nature of local media coverage).



Marketing and Branding

- “Who is telling our story — and to whom?”
- Multi-modal transportation infrastructure as key selling point.
- Communicate size of regional market and extent of tourism draw (daytime and weekend population).
- Spread message that Paducah has more and better amenities than most cities its size.
- Emphasize proximity to Nashville and St. Louis major metros — and cost-of-living advantage versus bigger cities.
- Communicate a welcoming and friendly culture.
- Need to “better understand and tap into the ‘magic’ of Paducah” — before people get here.

Economic Development Involves ...

The practice of building **resiliency, diversity and dynamism** into a local economy ... using programs, projects and tactical implementation tools and incentives (tax redirection, marketing branding, capacity-building, infrastructure investments, etc.) designed to grow the employment and tax base and position a community for emerging economic trends and opportunities at both the regional and global levels.

Arts and Tourism Contribution

- Build on area’s arts/crafts/culture history as one of nearly 300 global cities in UNESCO Creative Cities Network.
- Better understanding of economic impact (e.g., Quilt Week, outdoor recreation).
- Extent of pass-through traffic and visitation, including business travel (hotels, restaurants, traveler services) — and resulting transient room tax revenue from high hotel occupancy.
- Visitation from river cruises.

- National Quilt Museum and other tourism draws.
- Level of facilities (convention center, etc.) and annual events (Quilt Week, etc.).
- Outdoor recreation and nature-based tourism (Land Between the Lakes, rivers/dams).
- Sports Tourism Athletic Complex.
- Diminishing State of Kentucky support.



Quality of Place

- Regional hub city role (retail/services, health care, education, county seat, entertainment/culture, events/amenities).
- Downtown restoration and neighborhood revitalization efforts.
- Park and greenway/trail amenities — now adding sports complex.
- Quality of performing arts and events.
- Restaurant quality.
- Outdoor recreation close by.
- Level of medical services for size of city (because of 250K+ regional market).
- Protect and grow the image of big-city amenities with small-town atmosphere.
- Crime concerns.
- Not enough here yet to prevent “brain drain”? Starts with a good job and place to live.

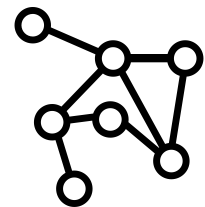
Driven by Data

Businesses base their location decisions on a variety of factors such as existing workforce skills and programs, site availability, access to transportation networks, and utility and infrastructure capacity. Retailers also focus on median income, disposable income, population size and density, and spending patterns. Municipal governments have little control over some of these factors. However, using this data can help determine where to focus economic development efforts and incentive policies.

The most effective economic development initiatives focus on unique community strengths and local advantages to businesses locating in your community.

FRAMEWORK FOR ACTION

This Framework for Action section builds off of the plan priorities confirmed with City and County officials during the transition from the Paducah-McCracken Today to the Paducah-McCracken Tomorrow phase of Comprehensive Plan development — especially Planning Themes 1, 1A, 4, 5 and 6 for this Economic Development section. The plan goals and action strategies are aimed at “connecting the dots” between a set of community improvement fundamentals for the area that involve:



Planning Theme 1:

Making the area more attractive to retain — or regain — youth who grew up here, and to attract younger individuals and families.

Planning Theme 1A:

Continuing efforts to diversify the area’s economic and employment base, for long-term economic sustainability and also to offer a wider range of job options to current and prospective residents.

Planning Theme 1B:

Increasing the quantity and variety of housing options.

Planning Theme 2:

Being a safe community with good City/County public safety services (police, fire, emergency medical service).

Planning Theme 3:

Improving infrastructure condition, particularly for storm water management.

Planning Theme 4:

Sustaining momentum on neighborhood and corridor revitalization.

Planning Theme 5:

Taking greater economic advantage of the area’s location and transportation assets.

Planning Theme 6:

Building on the area’s tourism success, including through sustained commitment to arts, crafts and culture.

What connects all of these planning themes is the desire to retain and attract more population to Paducah and McCracken County, including those who grew up here. The actions in this Economic Development section involve tangible steps that will lead to achievement of the goals:

GOALS FOR ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

Goal 1:

A resilient area economy with a diverse yet stable base built on established businesses, new sources of investment and job creation, a supportive environment for entrepreneurs, and a local real estate market attractive for emerging development opportunities.

Goal 2:

A continued holistic approach to economic development that encompasses overall community renewal, enhancement and quality of place for the enjoyment of residents, workers and visitors.

Goal 3:

Community assets and infrastructure that support ongoing economic development momentum, including necessary transportation and utility infrastructure, technology, education, and attainable and appealing housing options.

Goal 4:

Continued capitalization on Paducah and McCracken County’s position as the hub community of western Kentucky for health care, education, shopping and services, entertainment and culture, and transportation linkages, among many other assets and regional draws.

Goal 5:

A fresh identity and image for Paducah and McCracken County within Kentucky and beyond, appropriate to the area’s renewed growth and economic stature.

A Goal is ...

a statement of a desired outcome (“end”) toward which efforts are directed as expressed by more specific objectives and action steps (“means”).



ACTIONS

The actions below are categorized into the five types of plan implementation actions highlighted throughout this plan.

Action Leaders

With the support and direction of City and County elected officials, action leaders for most initiatives involving Economic Development will include:

- City of Paducah Administration, Planning Department
- McCracken County Community Development
- Greater Paducah Economic Development
- Paducah-McCracken County Industrial Development Authority
- Paducah Area Chamber of Commerce
- Paducah Convention and Visitors Bureau
- Sprocket

Various advisory Boards and Commissions also have some role in Economic Development, including:

City Boards and Commissions

- Creative and Cultural Council
- Paducah Convention and Visitors Bureau Board
- Paducah Main Street Board
- Paducah Riverfront Development Advisory Board
- Planning Commission
- Southside Steering Committee
- Urban Renewal and Community Development Agency



County Boards and Commissions

- Planning Commission

Others

- Barkley Regional Airport Authority Board
- Paducah-McCracken County Convention Center Corporation Board
- Paducah-McCracken County Industrial Development Authority Board
- Paducah-McCracken County Riverport Authority Board

ACTIONS Involving Capital Investments

1. Seek federal and state funding to upgrade broadband service in McCracken County where needed, especially from the federal Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act of 2021 and other sources.
2. Seek additional local Industrial Development Authority funding for further speculative shovel-ready site development, especially to satisfy the land and space needs of businesses in the area’s identified target industries.

Plan Actions Involve ...

seizing a special opportunity or addressing a particular challenge one faces, given limited resources — financial and otherwise — and recognizing that various routine and ongoing activities will continue in the meantime.

ACTIONS Involving Programs and Initiatives

3. Continue implementing GPED's targeted business attraction strategy focused specifically on the marine and logistics value chains (e.g., manufacturing, parts, suppliers, vendors, service providers), along with further growth in the medical and technology sectors.
4. Incubate a business cluster focused around clean energy investments, leveraging the area's National Energy Hub status and developing new curricula among area educational institutions.
5. Establish an online entrepreneur resource portal and clearinghouse based on a model program in the Kansas City area (kcsourcelink.com).
6. Seek funding to create an in-demand worker relocation program specifically for engineers, welders and medical workers, modeled after Paducah's signature artist relocation program.
7. Improve individuals' skills and employability in sectors primed for growth in the area, including through expanded apprenticeship programs and targeted technical training (e.g., AI, robotics, green energy, avionics, etc.).
8. Expand local labor force participation through outreach and support to target demographics (e.g., older workers, veterans and those overcoming time in the criminal justice system, such as through expungement clinics for minor offenders).
9. Continue attracting broad participation in the Paducah Area Chamber's leadership development and networking programs (Leadership Paducah, Paducah Young Professionals, Youth LEAD, Intern Initiative, etc.) which can also support youth and talent retention efforts.



10. In conjunction with related actions items in the Housing and Neighborhoods section of this plan, capitalize local gap-financing programs for new housing development.
11. Maintain Paducah's Tree City USA recognition from the Arbor Day Foundation (now for 31 consecutive years in 2023) and pursue more community recognitions and competitive rankings that are beneficial for economic development purposes and general marketing of the area — with All-America City honors through the National Civic League a potential next milestone to aim for.

ACTIONS Involving Regulations and Standards

None for this plan section.

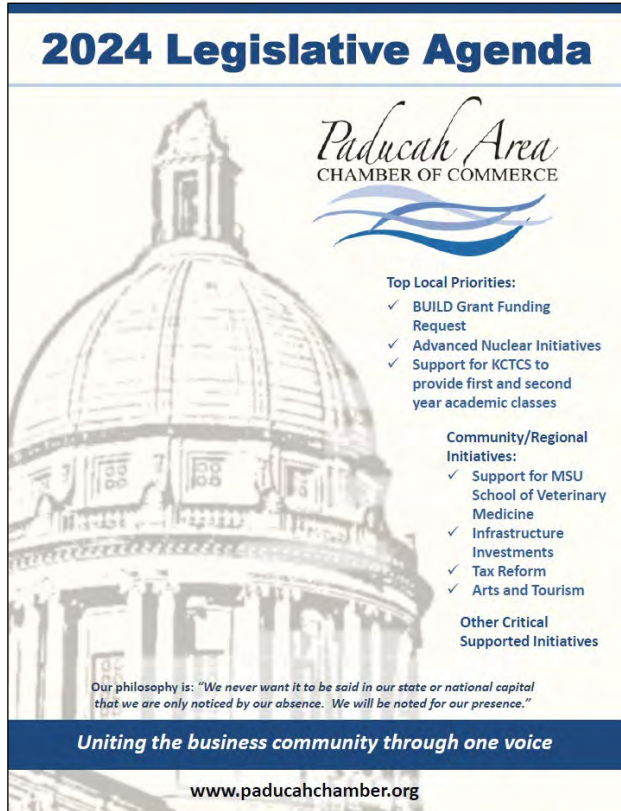
ACTIONS Involving Partnerships and Coordination

12. Convene the region's economic development leadership to discuss the potential creation of a new regional marketing and advocacy-based entity or subsidiary agency, to address the desire to present a more unified image and message through marketing efforts led by one area entity.
13. Organize a semi-annual, all-agency economic development summit to promote greater interagency coordination and to mobilize around ongoing and emerging regional economic priorities.

14. Create a multi-agency working group to focus on implementing and operationalizing particular opportunities cited in the Forward Paducah target industry study.
15. Seek additional corporate sponsorships (i.e., board seats) to enable Sprocket to expand its grant competitions and establish a health care accelerator.
16. Continue coordination with the area’s legislative delegation to secure more state support for arts and tourism promotion in western Kentucky, as well as statewide, as included on the Paducah Area Chamber’s 2024 Legislative Agenda.
17. Continue local government and community support for exceptional secondary and higher education to maintain the area’s longer-term talent pipeline.

ACTIONS Involving More Targeted Planning / Study

18. Conduct periodic reviews of unique or supplemental economic development incentives used by other Kentucky peer cities for possible use in Paducah and McCracken County.
19. Enlist area higher educational institutions to develop a white paper examining how McCracken County and the region can capitalize on the National Energy Hub designation.



ONGOING AND POTENTIAL PARTNERS RELATED TO ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

- Banking/lending/finance community
- Barkley Regional Airport Authority
- Delta Regional Authority
- Greater Paducah Economic Development / Paducah-McCracken County Industrial Development Authority
- Higher education and training institutions
- Jackson Purchase Energy Cooperative
- Kentucky Association for Economic Development
- Kentucky Association of Manufacturers
- Kentucky Chamber of Commerce
- Kentucky Small Business Development Center
- Kentucky state government:
 - Kentucky Arts Council

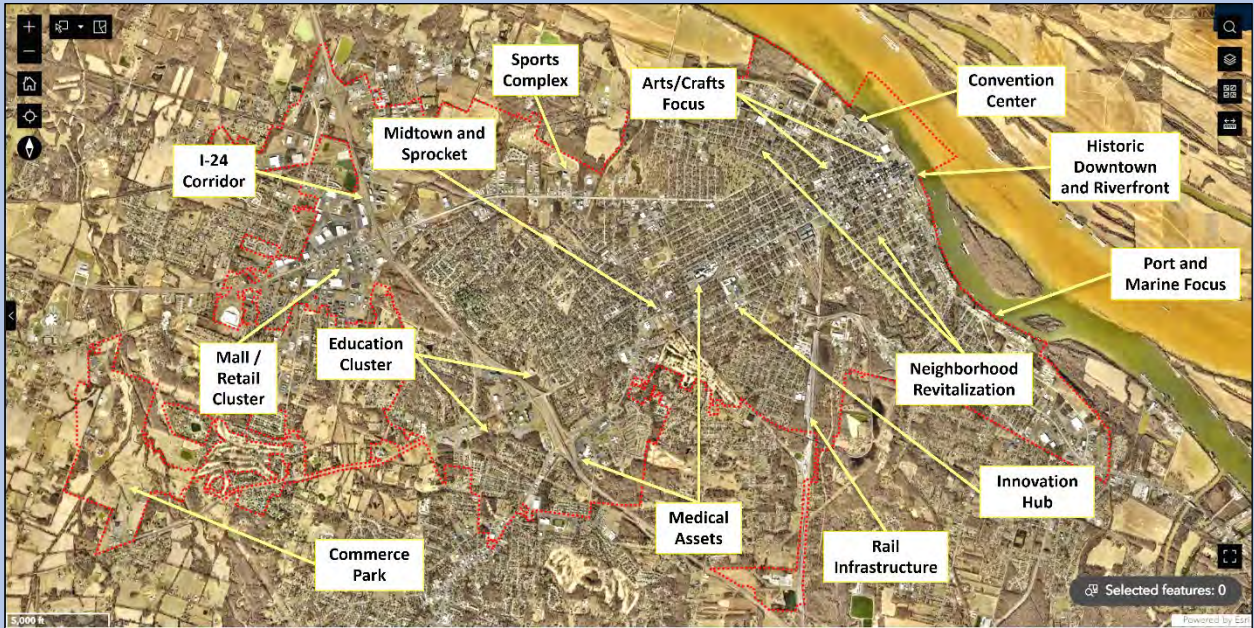


- Kentucky Cabinet for Economic Development (Team Kentucky)
- Kentucky Commonwealth Office of Technology
- Kentucky Council on Postsecondary Education
- Kentucky Department of Agriculture
- Kentucky Department of Education
- Kentucky Department for Local Government
- Kentucky Education and Workforce Development Cabinet
- Kentucky Energy and Environment Cabinet
- Kentucky Governor’s Office
- Kentucky Infrastructure Authority
- Kentucky Labor Cabinet
- Kentucky Product Development Initiative
- Kentucky Tourism, Arts and Heritage Cabinet
- Major employers, key business sectors
- McCracken County Schools
- Paducah Area Chamber of Commerce
- Paducah Convention & Visitors Bureau
- Paducah-McCracken County Convention Center Corporation
- Paducah-McCracken County Riverport Authority
- Paducah Public Schools (and Innovation Hub)
- Purchase Area Development District
- Real estate/development community
- Sprocket
- Utility providers
- Western Kentucky Workforce Board
- World Trade Center Kentucky

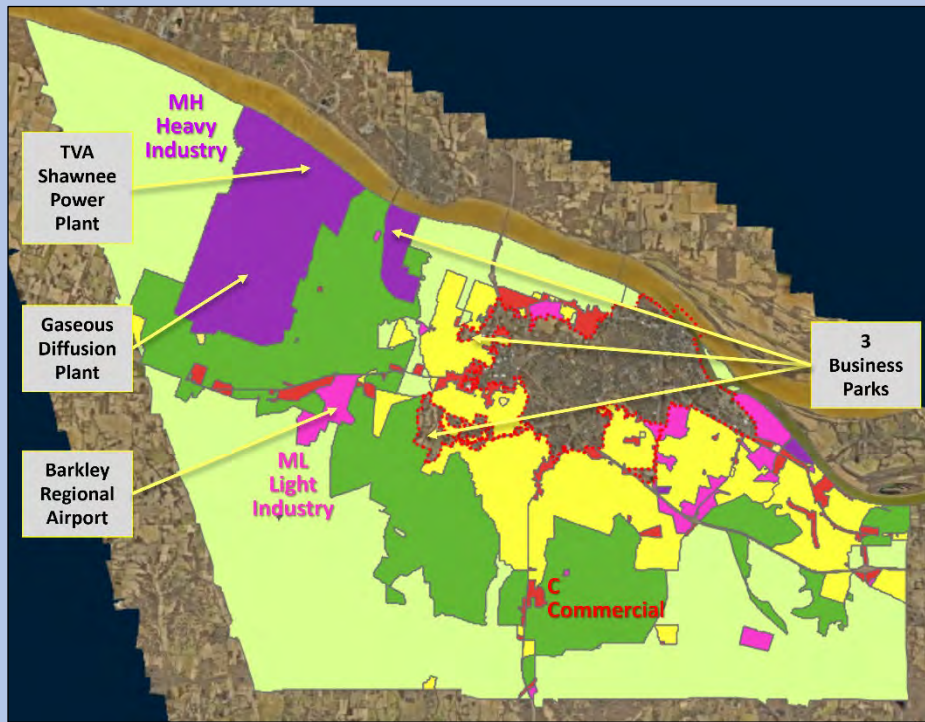


AREA ECONOMIC LANDSCAPE

City of Paducah and McCracken County



Also in McCracken County
(with applicable zoning)



Recreation and Amenities

Paducah-McCracken County Comprehensive Plan

INTRODUCTION

While all aspects of this Comprehensive Plan ultimately shape the livability of Paducah and McCracken County, this Recreation and Amenities section especially reinforces the quality of life their residents enjoy, along with the events, leisure and recreational activities, and cultural amenities that draw visitors to the area. At the time of this plan, City and County leaders and residents were already thinking in general about all the elements that help make their area of western Kentucky appealing – and ways that it can be a more complete community in the future.



With renewed population growth in the area and ongoing transition of land for new housing and other development, it is important to maintain and enhance existing parks and to increase the quantity and quality of developed recreational acreage, along with greenways, trails and other recreation offerings. This will benefit not only current residents but also those who will make Paducah and McCracken County their home in the decades ahead.

Why This Comprehensive Plan Section Is Important For Paducah And McCracken County

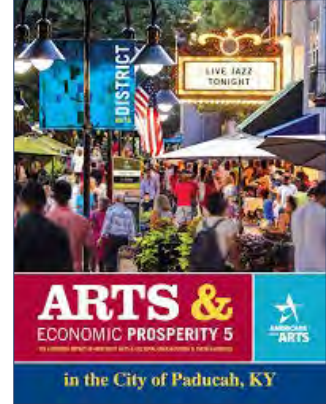
- Emphasizes that parks, open space and recreation facilities are an essential part of a healthy and sustainable community, offering relaxation and exercise outside of the home and work and beyond school activities.
- Underscores that much like streets, utilities, and police and fire protection, parks are another component of the core services provided by local government – and often among the public services most valued by residents and also enjoyed by visitors.
- Highlights that along with the area’s unique heritage and appreciation for arts, crafts and culture, Paducah and McCracken County also offer close proximity to other regional assets such as Land Between the Lakes National Recreation Area, Kentucky Dam Village State Park, the area’s four rivers in Kentucky Tourism’s “Western Waterlands” Region, the major metro areas of Nashville and St. Louis, and historic sites and leisure destinations in various small communities across western Kentucky.
- Reinforces that the quality of land, water and air resources is also essential to the character and livability of a community, especially for an area that is endowed with an abundance of green and rural landscapes and scenic beauty.

LEGACY OF PAST PLANNING

This new Comprehensive Plan builds on previous plans and studies completed by the City of Paducah, McCracken County and other partners. Those most relevant to the Recreation and Amenities topic include:

- City of Paducah Comprehensive Plan (adopted July 2007, amended June 2012, readopted June 2017)
- McCracken County Comprehensive Plan (adopted August 2013, amended November 2018)
- City of Paducah Comprehensive Strategic Plan (2020)
- Paducah Parks and Recreation Master Plan (2020)
- Renaissance Area [Downtown] Master Plan (RAMP, 2011, amended 2013)

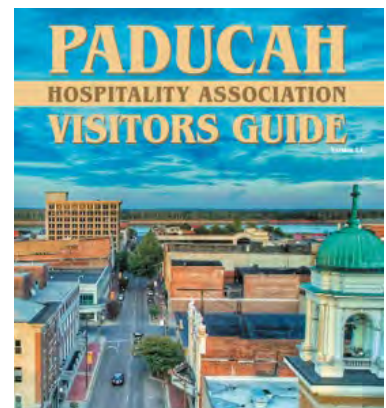
- McCracken County parks and greenway/trails planning, including Master Plan Report for McCracken County Athletic Complex (2021)
- Arts and Economic Prosperity in the City of Paducah study (2017)
- Creative and Cultural Council Strategic Plan (undated draft)
- City of Paducah Public Art Policy: Administrative Guidelines for the Creative Cultural Council (undated draft)



Accomplishments

Progress and achievements resulting from past planning and implementation efforts were identified through leadership and community input to this plan, along with other documentation. Significant items cited that are most relevant to the Recreation and Amenities topic include:

- Further reinforcement of Paducah and McCracken County as a regional hub of western Kentucky, as highlighted in the Economic Development section of this plan, including for shopping, entertainment and leisure, recreation and cultural activities.
- The extent and variety of parks found within the city and county, as well as nearby in western Kentucky, in part from implementation activities following park system master plans.
- Additional connectivity achieved between the Clyde F. Boyles Greenway Trail, the McCracken County trail system and the riverfront – and other community destinations reachable from this network.
- Ongoing improvements to McCracken County parks and recreation facilities through an annual \$500,000 budget allocation.
- Formation of the McCracken County Sports and Tourism Commission and related steps toward the upcoming new Sports Tourism Athletic Complex, also as a joint City-County initiative.
- Ongoing grants success, including use of post-pandemic American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) funds for the Sports Tourism Athletic Complex, among other uses.
- A recent River, Trails and Conservation Assistance Program Technical Assistance Grant to the City from the National Park Service (NPS), through which NPS personnel helped prepare a master plan for extending the Greenway Trail, obtain community input for an urban bike loop plan, and prepare for a future application to become a designated Kentucky Trail Town.
[\[https://www.kentuckytourism.com/things-to-do/outdoors/trail-towns\]](https://www.kentuckytourism.com/things-to-do/outdoors/trail-towns)
- Benefits accrued since Paducah’s recognition as a United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) Creative City, enabling the local creative community to “work with like-minded people around the world.”
- The area’s recognition also for its culinary scene, with a variety of quality restaurants.
- People drawn by the renewed vibrancy of an “intact” and “charming, restored” downtown that offers “walkability in a compact area” and “historic resources unlike other cities.”
- Increased riverfront activity and river cruise stops, with the tourism they bring.
- An active convention center, along with relatively high hotel occupancy year-round and the transient room tax revenue this generates.



- Invaluable word-of-mouth marketing and awareness-raising about the area, described as “a gem of western Kentucky” and a “surprise” – “a place where a lot is going on but is still unexpected.”
- An increasing variety of amenities and activities sought by younger demographics.

KEY PLANNING ISSUES AND CONSIDERATIONS

Through the Paducah-McCracken Today and Plan Direction phases of the comprehensive planning effort, numerous real and perceived community issues and needs were identified through leadership and public engagement activities, as well as through the work of the plan consultants and their interactions with an appointed Advisory Group and City and County staff. Additionally, the City’s Board of Commissioners identify annual strategic priorities, which in 2023 included Bike Lanes and Trails, City Facilities, Downtown and Quality of Life, with Protecting Key Historical and Cultural Resources, and continuous improvement to Paducah Sports Park added as 2024 priorities along with continuation of Downtown, Quality of Life, Trails and Bike Lanes, and continuous improvement to City Facilities.

Key issues and considerations that led to the goals and action items in this Recreation and Amenities section include (along with specific points and suggestions from leadership and community input):

Needs of People

- Overall “quality of life,” including health and wellness, lifelong learning and cultural enrichment.
- The “things to do” connection to retaining and attracting population as highlighted elsewhere in this plan.
- Human-scale design.
- Life quality and opportunities for personal growth in inner-city neighborhoods.
- More activities for children
- More social inclusivity – “respect and celebrate diversity.”
- Consider the needs of all cultures and age ranges.
- Related to Community Facilities Goal #2 in the County’s previous Comprehensive Plan: “Provide an adequate amount and variety of recreational opportunities to satisfy the full range of needs of the population.”
- Keep the area a safe place to live.

Long-Term Parks and Trails Maintenance – and the Desire for More of Both

- Adequate funding for implementation of master plans.
- Ongoing capital project and maintenance/repair needs beyond just funding basic operations (e.g., Pavilion Dome).
- Hopes for new Sports Tourism Athletic Complex to boost revenue.
- More ... urban trails, bike trails within the city and into the county, and pocket parks.
- Need for new parks in growth areas.

Leadership in Arts/Crafts/Culture and How it Boosts the Area’s Image

- Link to the Economic Development section emphasis, within this plan, about building on the area’s arts/crafts/culture history as one of nearly 300 global cities in the UNESCO Creative Cities Network.
- Affordability challenges for the creative community (cost of spaces to live and work).
- Advocacy to fund the historic Columbia Theatre restoration as it would “add another layer to the area’s arts and culture focus, maintain a lynchpin between Downtown and Lowertown, avoid another empty space (and the associated demolition cost), and add more entertainment appeal for younger demographics.”



Strong Tourism Base to Build On

- Extent of unique assets (architectural, cultural, historical, natural).
- Achieving longer stays beyond pass-through travelers, business travel and weekenders.
- Growing international appeal.
- Ongoing riverfront enhancement, activation and engagement of visitors arriving by boat.
- More outdoor activities.
- Logistical challenges with the extent of area events and festivals.
- Accommodating a growing tourist desire for diverse and inclusive places to visit.
- Coordination and communication among the Downtown/tourism/hospitality community, including on cross marketing and internal marketing efforts to address typical complaints about not enough “things to do.”
- Better connection between the Convention and Expo Center and Downtown.
- Support for architectural preservation and restoration.
- Advocacy for state funding and support for the tourism sector, beyond just advertising.

Natural Resources Preservation

- A greener and better utilized riverfront.
- Tree preservation and avoidance of clear-cutting of development sites, as well as maintaining Paducah’s Tree City USA status.
- Maintain the area’s urban tree canopy, especially given climate trends and increasing exposure to heat.

QUOTABLE from Community Survey

“The up and coming sports complex will not only help our city economically but will have something to offer children to keep them engaged in positive activities.”

“I love our commitment to quality of life for our citizens. The Greenway Trail, Noble Park, Riverfront, downtown entertainment district all contribute to a healthy, exciting lifestyle.”

“We have a thriving artist community which contributes to our community and tourism.”

“I like our connected community. How we as a collective strive to be a unit of one. This is a wonderful place to raise your children.”

“Revitalize the buildings we have.”

“Please leave our riverfront as intact as possible.”

“Our community needs to be safer and provide more options for healthy lifestyles – safer bike routes, more bike trails, etc.”

“More activities at the Carson Center, Convention Center and Cherry Civic Center.”

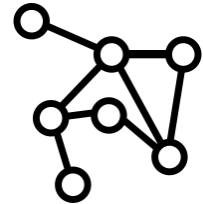
“Make sure all residents are heard. Make everyone feels welcome.”

“I hope to see Paducah and McCracken County work to make the whole city walkable, bikeable and a place for young people to want to stay.”

- Water quality in area rivers and streams.
- More green and less paving, including for the storm drainage benefits.
- Expanded recycling.
- Tax incentives to preserve natural areas.

FRAMEWORK FOR ACTION

This Framework for Action section builds off of the plan priorities confirmed with City and County officials during the transition from the Paducah-McCracken Today to the Paducah-McCracken Tomorrow phase of Comprehensive Plan development — especially Planning Themes 1, 2 and 6 for this Recreation and Amenities section. The plan goals and action strategies are aimed at “connecting the dots” between a set of community improvement fundamentals for the area that involve:



Planning Theme 1:

Making the area more attractive to retain — or regain — youth who grew up here, and to attract younger individuals and families.

Planning Theme 1A:

Continuing efforts to diversify the area’s economic and employment base, for long-term economic sustainability and also to offer a wider range of job options to current and prospective residents.

Planning Theme 1B:

Increasing the quantity and variety of housing options.

Planning Theme 2:

Being a safe community with good City/County public safety services (police, fire, emergency medical service).

Planning Theme 3:

Improving infrastructure condition, particularly for stormwater management.

Planning Theme 4:

Sustaining momentum on neighborhood and corridor revitalization.

Planning Theme 5:

Taking greater economic advantage of the area’s location and transportation assets.

Planning Theme 6:

Building on the area’s tourism success, including through sustained commitment to arts, crafts and culture.

What connects all of these planning themes is the desire to retain and attract more population to Paducah and McCracken County, including those who grew up here. The actions in this Recreation and Amenities section involve tangible steps that will lead to achievement of the goals:

GOALS FOR RECREATION AND AMENITIES

Goal 1:

The area’s sustained success as a vibrant hub of western Kentucky, for both residents and visitors, enlivened by a vibrant downtown and active riverfront, an array of arts, cultural and entertainment offerings, and popular community events and festivals throughout the year.

A Goal is ...
 a statement of a desired outcome (“end”) toward which efforts are directed as expressed by more specific objectives and action steps (“means”).

Goal 2:

Ongoing reinvestment in parks and playgrounds to keep their offerings inviting, safe and inclusive, and a more connected community through gathering places, paths and greenway trails accessible to all.

Goal 3:

Convenient and equitable access to parks and recreation facilities that enable all ages to stay active and fit, enjoy quiet places for connecting with nature, and pursue their indoor and outdoor wellness activities close to home.

Goal 4:

A community that thrives on and leverages the economic and social power of the arts and culture to enhance its fiscal strength, regional reputation and overall quality of life for residents of all ages.

Goal 5:

Continued protection and promotion of the area’s physical and cultural heritage, especially where it is tangibly visible in historic architecture, designated districts and landmarks, and distinctive neighborhoods and notable sites.

Goal 6:

A more resilient city and county through enhanced protection of natural landscapes, reduced energy consumption and waste generation, and efficient use and conservation of land and water resources.

ACTIONS

The actions below are categorized into the five types of plan implementation actions highlighted throughout this plan.

Action Leaders

With the support and direction of City and County elected officials, action leaders for most initiatives involving Recreation and Amenities will include:

- City of Paducah – Administration-Grants, Engineering, Parks and Recreation, Planning (including Main Street)
- McCracken County – Community Development, Parks, Planning and Zoning

Various advisory Boards and Commissions also have some role in Recreation and Amenities, including:

City Boards and Commissions

- Brooks Stadium Commission
- Civic Beautification Board (and Garden Clubs)
- Creative and Cultural Council
- Golf Commission
- Historical and Architectural Review Commission
- Main Street Board
- Planning Commission
- Public Monument Committee
- Riverfront Development Advisory Board

Plan Actions Involve ...

seizing a special opportunity or addressing a particular challenge one faces, given limited resources — financial and otherwise — and recognizing that various routine and ongoing activities will continue in the meantime.



- Tree Advisory Board

County Boards and Commissions

- Carson Park
- Civic Beautification
- Convention Center
- Library
- Planning Commission
- Sports and Tourism Commission

Others

- Paducah Convention and Visitors Bureau
- Paducah-McCracken County Convention Center Corporation

ACTIONS Involving Capital Investments

1. Continue to implement specific capital projects identified in the City’s Parks and Recreation Master Plan, prioritizing projects which promote active and healthy living opportunities for all ages. Also pursue more extensions of, and links between, the City and County trail systems, including for improved access to the Perkins Creek Nature Preserve.
2. Continue to invest in new acreage for future parks and recreation purposes, particularly within areas that are currently underserved by parks (e.g., as identified in the City’s Parks and Recreation Master Plan).
 - Invest in acreage, as available, that is classified as higher-risk flood zones or in other difficult to develop areas.
3. As new playground equipment is needed in parks, continue to consider inclusive playground equipment that is accessible to children with a variety of physical and sensory needs and abilities.
4. Along with recreational trail projects, prioritize sidewalk extension and repair projects and crosswalk improvements in areas where sidewalks are the main way to provide continuity in, and improved access to the trail system.
5. Take advantage of opportunities to link the design and construction of specific capital projects to community beautification objectives, such as along corridors and at high-profile gateways to the city and county. This can include supplementing public infrastructure with art and design elements that help to improve the aesthetics of and/or screen an otherwise utilitarian capital project. Possibilities include overpasses and viaducts (with the Kentucky Transportation Cabinet), ground and elevated water storage tanks, utility cabinets and fire hydrants. In downtown areas, this can include

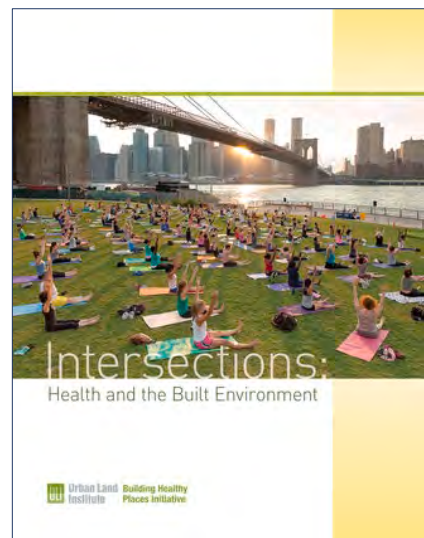
Parks and Health

Well-designed parks and trails can encourage and allow a safe place for exercise and community interaction, also providing mental health benefits such as stress reduction. Local governments and other public agencies can use tools such as Health Impact Assessments (HIAs) to quantify and qualify the potential public health effects of proposed policies, plans or development projects. This includes the distribution of benefits and costs within the community.

Health Impact Assessments commend strategies for monitoring and managing health and for bringing public health issues to decision-makers outside of the public health field, such as in transportation and land use. The assessments can be voluntary or regulatory processes that focus on health outcomes.

HIAs can be completed specific to recreational projects to evaluate how best to maximize the positive impact of new park and trail investments on public health.

SOURCE: Intersections: Health and The Environment, Urban Land Institute (2013).



creative designs for street furniture, bike racks, trash containers, signage and lighting fixtures, as well as enhancements during alley improvements.

ACTIONS Involving Programs and Initiatives

- 6. Maintain Paducah’s designation as a Tree City USA through the Arbor Day Foundation as one way to continue reaping the environmental, economic and aesthetic benefits of a healthy and robust urban tree canopy.
- 7. Enhance the appearance of more primary gateways and high-profile roadway corridors within the city and county, using these opportunities to establish “first impressions,” promote the area’s image and communicate community values.
- 8. Continue the area’s event planning focus, across City and County departments and with community partners, especially for the Downtown and riverfront area. Also ensure responsiveness to feedback and suggestions from residents, visitors and those involved in event planning, staffing, security and other support roles.
- 9. As also included in the Growth Capacity section of this plan, continually evaluate new technologies and options for improving dissemination of all City and County information, including for recreational programming and community events.
- 10. As also recommended in the Housing and Neighborhoods section, pursue opportunities to advance the Paducah-McCracken County area as a lifelong community, including Age-Friendly certification from the American Association of Retired Persons (AARP). Also explore principles and resources available from the 8-80 Cities non-profit organization, which advocates that “if everything we do in our cities is great for an 8 year old and an 80 year old, then it will be great for all people.”
- 11. Build on Paducah’s past award recognitions (Enterprise Cities, Great American Main Street) and pursue more community recognitions and competitive rankings that are beneficial for economic development purposes and general marketing of the area (e.g., All-America City honors through the National Civic League, Scenic City certifications through Scenic America, Kentucky Trail Town designation through Kentucky Tourism, etc.).



ACTIONS Involving Regulations and Standards

- 12. In conjunction with related action items in this plan related to targeted corridor planning and enhanced appearance of gateways and high-profile corridors, re-evaluate all aspects of local zoning and development standards that factor into community appearance (e.g., site and building design standards, signs, landscaping, fences, etc.), especially as they apply to corridor-fronting properties.

ACTIONS Involving Partnerships and Coordination

- 13. Continue mutually beneficial arrangements with property owners and developers to add to the local public park and trail inventory and links to public parks.
- 14. Continue to pursue sponsorships, donations and other forms of partnerships that extend the reach of public park and recreation offerings for residents.
- 15. Maintain positive and productive interactions with key partners for advancing shared heritage planning and preservation priorities (e.g., Paducah Historical Preservation, Kentucky Center for African

American Heritage, Kentucky Heritage Council/State Historic Preservation Office, Kentucky Historical Society, Preservation Kentucky, etc.).

16. Continue to strengthen and grow partnerships among the many local agencies and entities involved in tourism promotion, advocacy and external/internal marketing of the area.
17. Building on the Paducah Ambassadors model, coordinate with community organizations, the local faith community and others to welcome newcomers into the Paducah-McCracken County community, raising their awareness of events, family activities and “things to do,” along with opportunities to plug in for networking and volunteer service.
18. Pursue targeted land conservation efforts with willing property owners and land conservancy partners, especially given resident desire to preserve some sense of country in McCracken County and the area’s rural and agricultural heritage amid projected growth and change.

ACTIONS Involving More Targeted Planning / Study

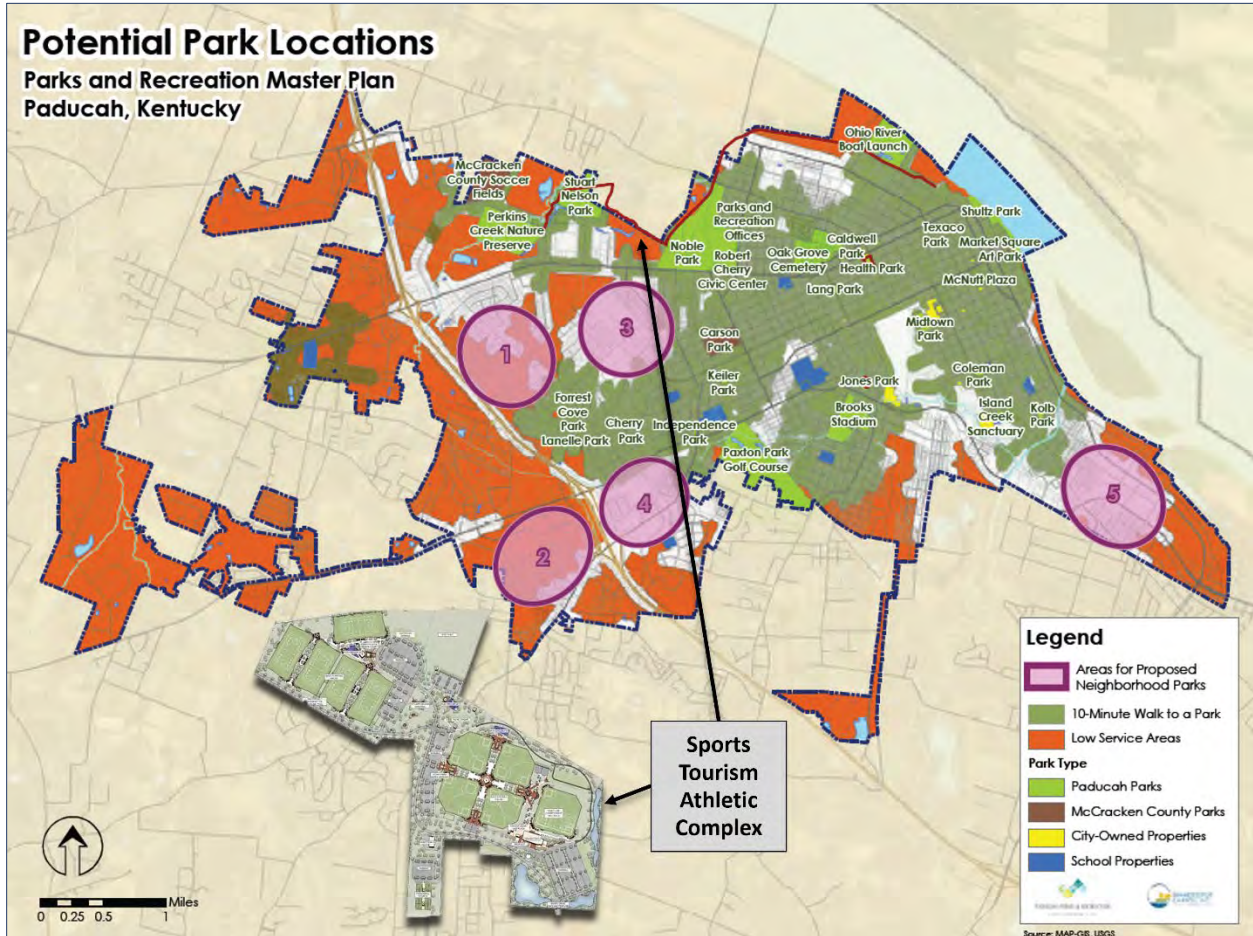
19. Conduct special area planning for the vicinity of the Sports Tourism Athletic Complex, to promote master-planned and coordinated development outcomes around this new public asset, accommodate potential new lodging and other hospitality uses, and maximize the economic multiplier of this public investment.
20. Complete a thorough update to the City’s current Parks and Recreation Master Plan from 2019, especially to maintain competitiveness for external funding. Then complete ongoing interim updates every five years at most, highlighting implementation progress and successes – especially through partnership efforts – while continuing to communicate the area’s park, recreation, trail and open space priorities to funding partners and private development interests. Future updates should increasingly focus on parkland needs in east, south and west Paducah as highlighted in the 2019 master plan.



- Also consider, in follow-up to this joint Comprehensive Plan, a joint City/County Parks, Trails, Recreation and Open Space Master Plan for a more holistic assessment of recreation and land conservation needs and opportunities across the area, and additional partnership possibilities to advance significant projects as done for the Sports Tourism Athletic Complex.

21. Implement highest-priority projects identified through a master plan prepared in conjunction with the National Park Service, including: (1) a planned extension of the Greenway Trail into Southside, linking the neighborhood to the riverfront and City parks; (2) new bike lanes as part of an urban bike loop; and (3) application to become a designated Kentucky Trail Town through Kentucky Tourism.
22. Through the Creative and Cultural Council and as cited in its recent Strategic Plan, continue to pursue development of a Public Art Master Plan for the area, with the Louisville Public Art Master Plan cited as a potential model (<https://louisvilleky.gov/government/arts-culture/resources>).
23. Continue to explore a potential “percent for the arts” approach for City and County capital projects as done by numerous state and local governments across the country, who budget into major public investments an allocation for associated image and beautification enhancements as part of design and construction (some locales also pursue such percentage allocations as part of private development projects). This approach was included in a recent Creative and Cultural Council Strategic Plan.

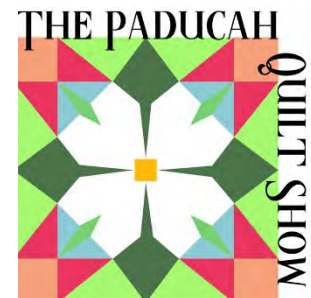
The organization Americans for the Arts offers guidance and resources, including an inventory of percent for art ordinances from across the nation, with many example programs readily available online through a “percent for the arts” browser search (<https://www.americansforthearts.org/by-program/reports-and-data/legislation-policy/naappd/percent-for-art-ordinances>).



The figure above, from the 2019 Paducah Parks and Recreation Master Plan, shows areas in need of additional neighborhoods parks, along with orange shading on areas found to have low service levels in terms of park access (location of new Sports Tourism Athletic Complex added to figure by Kendig Keast Collaborative). Along with McCracken County’s Carson Park (and County Fairgrounds) and the Heath and Reidland Community Centers, other recreational assets in the county include the tennis and youth baseball facilities in Lone Oak, and the bike Pumptrack near the County soccer fields.

ONGOING AND POTENTIAL PARTNERS RELATED TO RECREATION AND AMENITIES

- American Quilters Society (Quilt Week)
- Area faith community
- Area museums, including Hotel Metropolitan, Inland Waterways Museum, National Quilt Museum and Paducah Railroad Museum
- Area performing arts community, including Carson Center for the Performing Arts and Market House Theatre
- Art Guild of Paducah
- Beautiful Paducah

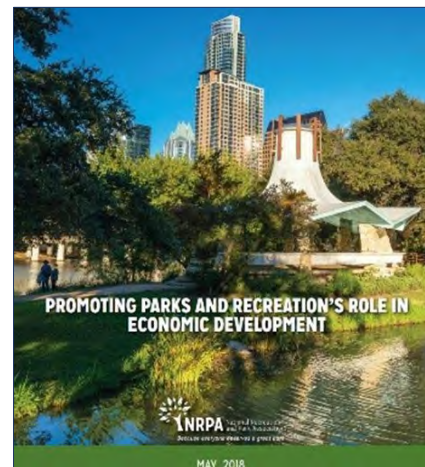


- Greater Paducah Economic Development
- Higher education institutions
- Kentucky Association for Environmental Education
- Kentucky Conservation Committee
- Kentucky Conservation Foundation
- Kentucky Environmental Foundation
- Kentucky Land Trusts Coalition and its member organizations
- Kentucky Natural Lands Trust
- Kentucky Recreation and Parks Society
- Kentucky Resources Council
- Kentucky state government:
 - Kentucky Economic Development Cabinet (Team Kentucky)
 - Kentucky Energy and Environment Cabinet
 - Kentucky Tourism, Arts and Heritage Cabinet
 - Kentucky Department of Fish and Wildlife Resources
 - Kentucky Department for Libraries and Archives
 - Kentucky Department for Local Government
 - Kentucky Department of Natural Resources
 - Kentucky Department of Parks
 - Kentucky Department of Tourism
 - Kentucky Arts Council
 - Kentucky Center for African American Heritage
 - Kentucky Heritage Council (State Historic Preservation Office)
 - Kentucky Heritage Land Conservation Fund
 - Kentucky Historical Society
 - Kentucky Humanities Council
- Kentucky Tourism
- Kentucky Travel Industry Association
- Local arts, crafts and cultural venues/organizations
- Local youth sports and adult recreational interest organizations
- McCracken County Conservation District

Parks and Economic Development

Parks contribute to perceptions of a community and its overall quality of life. Quality of life elements, including parks and recreation, can make a community more attractive to potential residents, businesses and their workers. Well-maintained parks also increase property values of nearby properties, which in turn enhances local tax revenues. Additional tourism-related spending occurs when parks host out-of-town visitors for events, festivals or sports tournaments.

SOURCE: National Recreation and Park Association (2018).



- McCracken County Fair
- McCracken County Public Library
- McCracken County Public Schools
- Paducah Ambassadors
- Paducah Area Chamber of Commerce
- Paducah Historical Preservation Group
- Paducah Hospitality Association
- Paducah-McCracken County Convention and Expo Center
- Paducah Public Schools
- Paducah School of Art and Design, West Kentucky Community and Technical College
- Preservation Kentucky
- Purchase Area Development District
- Tennessee RiverLine



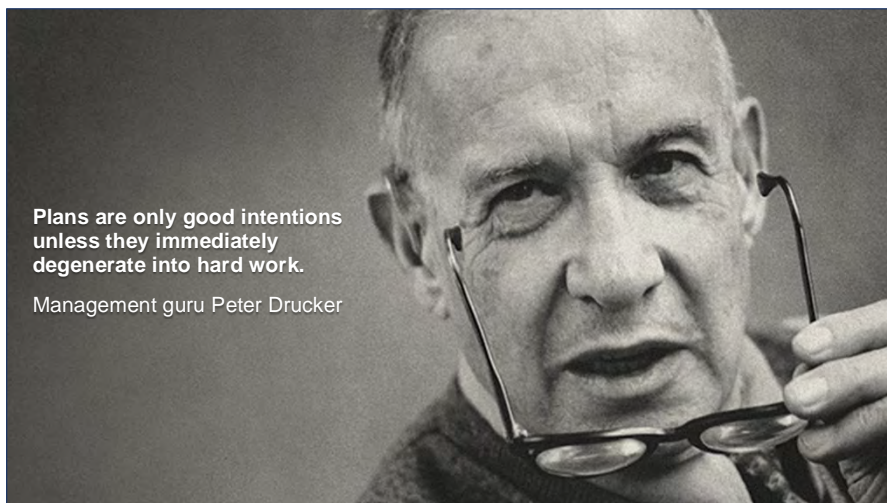
Plan Implementation

Paducah-McCracken County Comprehensive Plan

INTRODUCTION

With this refreshed and now joint Comprehensive Plan, McCracken County, the City of Paducah and their various partner agencies and organizations will have an essential new document that should be frequently referred to for guidance in community decision-making. The plan should be a “living document” that is responsive to ongoing change. Its key planning considerations, goals and action strategies must be revisited periodically to ensure that the plan is providing clear and reliable direction on a range of matters including land development issues and public investments in infrastructure and services.

Implementation goes well beyond just a list of action items. It is a challenging process that will require the commitment of County and City elected and appointed officials, staff, residents, business owners, major institutions, other levels of government, and other organizations and individuals who will serve as champions of the plan and its particular direction and strategies. Among its purposes, this final plan section highlights specific roles, responsibilities and methods of implementation to execute priority plan recommendations. Equally important are formalized procedures for the ongoing monitoring and reporting of successes achieved, difficulties encountered, and new opportunities and challenges that have emerged since plan adoption. This is in addition to any other change in circumstances, which may require rethinking of plan priorities. Scheduled plan evaluations and updates, as described later in this section, will help maintain its relevance and credibility as an overarching policy and action guide.



Why This Comprehensive Plan Section Is Important For Paducah And McCracken County

- Emphasizes the importance of not only creating a plan but translating it into real action and tangible, beneficial results.
- Adds a shorter-term strategic perspective to what is otherwise intended as a guide to the area’s long-term development and enhancement over the next 20 years.
- Includes a list of priority actions for the County, City and other plan implementation partners to focus on during the next several years after plan adoption.
- Underscores the need to keep the plan fresh and relevant through annual review and reporting procedures and periodic updates (review at least once every five years, and amend as necessary and/or readopt per Kentucky Revised Statutes (KRS), Section 100.197, Adoption of Plan Elements – Periodic Amendment or Readoption).
- Advocates for ongoing community engagement as the plan is implemented.

Signs of an Effective Plan

- Endorsed by partner public agencies and area organizations, reflecting its importance as a “community plan” and not just a County- or City-adopted plan.
- Routinely referenced in County Fiscal Court and City Board of Commissioners meetings, and in board/ committee sessions, as a basis for key actions and decisions.

- Synchronized with County and/or City strategic plans and policy agendas that originate from the elected official and management levels, as well as from grass-roots community engagement. Also applied as a guidepost for next updates of more specific master plans for utility infrastructure and drainage, transportation, public safety services, parks and recreation, arts and culture, special areas (e.g., Downtown), branding/marketing, etc. See the accompanying illustration of how some jurisdictions layer all these pieces into a framework for integrating plans and policies, and for coordinating efforts across all functions and down to the individual staff level.



- Regularly cited as a source of decision guidance for major budget initiatives, zoning cases, capital projects planning, partnership efforts, bond referenda presented to voters, etc.
- A main driver of deliberations and ultimate action on amending local land development regulations to advance particular plan goals and priorities.
- Used as the starting point and source of areawide perspective for more targeted planning efforts involving particular neighborhoods, unique districts, major roadway corridors and other community locations in need of finer-grain analysis and area-specific strategies.
- Shared with regional planning and funding agencies to communicate and advocate for the area’s uppermost goals and priorities, especially those that coincide with priorities of such agencies and other communities in the region.
- Used to make the case for grant applications and other pursuit of external and partner funding.
- Provided to new elected officials, appointed board/commission members, new department directors and staff, and others as part of orientation for their local government roles and awareness of community aspirations and expectations.
- Implementation progress reported on annually as part of yearly plan reviews and adjustments, setting up for more in-depth five-year plan refreshes (per KRS Section 100.197) and significant full plan updates every 10 years at most.

- City and community accomplishments celebrated as often as possible, with credit to sound planning and methodical and enthusiastic plan implementation!

ACTION AGENDA

The goals in this Comprehensive Plan will ultimately be attained through a variety of specific actions itemized in each plan section. Compiled in the **Action Agenda table** below is a set of **20 key action items** derived from the nearly 120 total actions across the various plan sections. The table does not include every recommendation found throughout this plan, a number of which aim to reinforce or expand upon existing beneficial activities by the County, the City and their partners. Instead, it details a shorter “to do” list of initial strategic priorities deemed most important to pursue first after plan adoption, along with who is responsible for initiating, administering and participating in the implementation process (action leaders in bold text).

Capital projects typically require lead time for additional feasibility analysis, construction documentation, specifications and detailed cost estimates.



	ACTION	Where in Plan	Action Type	Action Leaders and Key Partners
A	Utilizing recommendations of the City’s Comprehensive Stormwater Master Plan, continue implementing key system improvements, along with phased maintenance and replacement of aged and undersized system components. Prioritize projects based on facility condition and cost of failure, along with other cost/benefit considerations.	Growth Capacity Action 2	Capital Investments	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • City Engineering • City Public Works
B	Continue pursuing infill and revitalization strategies that make it more realistic for more of the area’s projected growth to be absorbed within the interior of and contiguous to the Paducah city limits, to reduce the long-term public cost burden from a sprawling development pattern.	Growth Capacity Action 4	Programs and Initiatives	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • City Planning • County Planning & Zoning • County Community Development
C	Evaluate opportunities to manage stormwater through green infrastructure methods on publicly-owned properties, in coordination with partners, and to demonstrate effective methods for use on private properties. One approach is to install pervious pavement and pilot demonstrations of infiltration ditches and bioswales to reduce nuisance flooding in targeted neighborhood areas and edge growth locations. With minimal investment, a proof-of-concept installation can be constructed to provide residents, commercial property owners and other stakeholders an opportunity to familiarize themselves with these methods and their potential benefits.	Growth Capacity Action 7	Programs and Initiatives	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • City Engineering • City Public Works • County Community Development • County Road Engineer
D	Identify lead persons and points of coordination across departments, along with targeted staff training, to advance green practices and enhanced resiliency within local government. This can include modified operations and maintenance practices that reduce water and energy use, stormwater runoff and the need for detention, and wastewater and solid waste generation.	Growth Capacity Action 10	Programs and Initiatives	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • City Public Works • City Engineering • County Community Development • All relevant departments • Paducah Water • Paducah-McCracken Joint Sewer Agency

	ACTION	Where in Plan	Action Type	Action Leaders and Key Partners
				<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Paducah Power System
E	<p>Review all aspects of the County and City development regulations, based on this new Comprehensive Plan, to identify potential regulatory and/or standards updates. This may include the possible need for additional or modified zoning districts. <i>Another source for possible updates is a development regulations evaluation completed by the Comprehensive Plan consultant, separate from this plan.</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • As part of potentially expanding on or refining the County’s zoning treatment of solar energy systems, also explore potential location criteria, and a possible allowance for co-uses with solar farm installations. • Continue to explore zoning strategies and provisions for overcoming “nonconformities” that can stand in the way of beneficial use and re-use of property, including infill development and redevelopment activity. Nonconformities arise when a pre-existing condition does not comply with zoning regulations that were adopted or changed later, which is the case in various areas both inside Paducah and elsewhere in McCracken County. Aspects of a property that most commonly can end up nonconforming include its use; the size, width and/or depth of the lot; and the setback and/or height of buildings. The typical zoning framework prevents all nonconforming uses and buildings from expanding or being altered in certain ways, and nonconforming lots often cannot be built on feasibly. This approach usually locks nonconformities in place for the long term, sometimes contributing to disinvestment and blight. <p>However, mechanisms can be incorporated into local zoning to address nonconformities directly and more selectively, move non-nuisance properties into legal compliance, and free their uses and structures to expand or evolve where appropriate. At the same time, the issues and concerns that led to contemporary regulations</p>	<p>Land Use & Community Character Action 2</p>	<p>Regulations and Standards</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • County Planning & Zoning • City Planning • County and City Attorneys

	ACTION	Where in Plan	Action Type	Action Leaders and Key Partners
	<p>must still be respected, requiring a balance between neighborhood protection and methods for eliminating nonconformities with minimum adverse effects. Only the most noxious uses and the most problematic buildings should remain nonconforming, with the intent of removing them over time. Without such solutions for resolving lesser nonconformities, many communities are plagued by a raft of variance requests from property owners seeking regulatory relief. In turn, a community’s land use and zoning objectives can be undermined if an overly sympathetic board of adjustment approves variances profusely.</p> <p><i>[Other regulatory action items in Growth Capacity (Action 12); Housing & Neighborhoods (Actions 8-11); and Recreation & Amenities (Action 12).]</i></p>			
F	<p>Attract more residential developers to build within the city and county:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Seek and arrange information meetings with a range of developers to provide them information about development processes in Paducah and McCracken County. • Prepare housing market information to make available on all key area websites (City, County, Greater Paducah Economic Development, etc.), with specific information available for prospective builders. • Use GIS mapping to maintain an inventory of vacant properties that are publicly-owned and zoned and available for infill and greenfield residential development. This property inventory should be marketed on the City and County websites along with information on incentive and assistance programs for residential development. 	Housing & Neighborhoods Action 2	Programs and Initiatives	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • County Planning & Zoning • City Planning • Greater Paducah Economic Development
G	<p>As done for new housing construction and rehabilitation through the City’s Surplus Properties program, consider providing pre-approved plans for accessory dwelling units (ADUs) that meet local building codes and zoning standards. Such plans should be easily adaptable to different lot sizes and configurations.</p>	Housing & Neighborhoods Action 6	Programs and Initiatives	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • County Planning & Zoning • County Inspections • City Planning

	ACTION	Where in Plan	Action Type	Action Leaders and Key Partners
				<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • City Code Enforcement (Fire)
H	<p>Commission a Strategic Housing Market Analysis and Plan, in part to establish a post-pandemic baseline of area-specific housing market data and to identify a data-driven series of key action steps to expand and expedite new housing construction in Paducah and McCracken County.</p> <p><i>[Then Action 21, regarding ongoing publication of area-specific housing market data, follows from this action.]</i></p>	Housing & Neighborhoods Action 20	More Targeted Planning / Study	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • County Planning & Zoning • City Planning • Housing Authority of Paducah • Banking / lending / finance community • Homebuilders Association of Western KY • Real estate / development community
I	<p>Building on recent transportation plans and studies (e.g., 2019 Paducah Small Urban Area Study) – and even on still-relevant earlier efforts (e.g., 2009 Sidewalk Study), maintain an ongoing sidewalk improvement program to repair, replace or install new sidewalks, crosswalks and curb cuts in high pedestrian use areas in the city and county (e.g., around school campuses, near public buildings and spaces, in park vicinities, in Downtown Paducah and other activity centers in the city and county, etc.) and in other areas with the potential to accommodate more walking with appropriate improvements and safety measures.</p> <p><i>[See related Action 4 in Recreation & Amenities.]</i></p>	Transportation Action 2	Capital Investments	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • County Community Development • County Road Department • City Engineering • City Public Works
J	<p>Capitalizing on the continuing City strategic priority of Bike Lanes and Trails, identify high-priority trail segments, on-street bike lanes and/or shared-use path projects that will promote “active transportation” opportunities along with addressing the recreational needs of pedestrians and bicyclists – with similar targeted efforts in the most developed areas of the county.</p>	Transportation Action 4	Capital Investments	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • County Road Department • County Parks • City Engineering • City Parks & Recreation

	ACTION	Where in Plan	Action Type	Action Leaders and Key Partners
K	<p>In keeping with the nationwide Vision Zero movement, which aims to eliminate preventable injuries and fatalities suffered by motorists, pedestrians and cyclists, pursue local actions such as:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Committing to capital projects that expand and enhance bicycle and pedestrian circulation and safety, especially involving installation of protected bicycle/pedestrian lanes and facilities. • Evaluating whether speeds are a contributor to bicycle/pedestrian accidents and considering potential speed limit reductions in locations of concern, along with targeted traffic calming measures in both new development and existing developed areas. • Providing bicycling education and safety courses. • Co-hosting with area schools a National Walk and Bike to School Day event to promote safe biking/walking to and from school. • Focusing on large vehicle safety to avoid conflicts between such traffic and smaller, less protected road users. 	Transportation Action 7	Programs and Initiatives	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • County Road Department • City Engineering • Chain Reaction Cycling Club • McCracken County Public Schools • Paducah Public Schools
L	<p>Seek additional local Industrial Development Authority funding for further speculative shovel-ready site development, especially to satisfy the land and space needs of businesses in the area's identified target industries.</p>	Economic Development Action 2	Capital Investments	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Greater Paducah Economic Development • Industrial Development Authority
M	<p>Incubate a business cluster focused around clean energy investments, leveraging the area's National Energy Hub status and developing new curricula among area educational institutions.</p>	Economic Development Action 4	Programs and Initiatives	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Greater Paducah Economic Development • Higher education and training institutions • Purchase Area Development District

	ACTION	Where in Plan	Action Type	Action Leaders and Key Partners
N	<p>Enhance the appearance of more primary gateways and high-profile roadway corridors within the city and county, using these opportunities to establish “first impressions,” promote the area’s image and communicate community values.</p> <p><i>[See related Action 5 in Recreation & Amenities, related to linking the design and construction of specific capital projects to community beautification objectives.]</i></p>	Recreation & Amenities Action 7	Programs and Initiatives	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • County Road Engineer • County Community Development • City Engineering • City Civic Beautification Board • Beautiful Paducah
O	<p>As also recommended in the Housing and Neighborhoods section, pursue opportunities to advance the Paducah-McCracken County area as a lifelong community, including Age-Friendly certification from the American Association of Retired Persons (AARP). Also explore principles and resources available from the 8-80 Cities non-profit organization, which advocates that “if everything we do in our cities is great for an 8 year old and an 80 year old, then it will be great for all people.”</p> <p><i>[See related Action 3 in Housing & Neighborhoods.]</i></p>	Recreation & Amenities Action 10	Programs and Initiatives	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • County Planning & Zoning • City Planning
P	<p>Pursue targeted land conservation efforts with willing property owners and land conservancy partners, especially given resident desire to preserve some sense of country in McCracken County and the area’s rural and agricultural heritage amid projected growth and change.</p>	Recreation & Amenities Action 18	More Targeted Planning / Study	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • County Planning & Zoning • County Parks • City Planning • City Parks & Recreation • McCracken County Conservation District • Property owners • Kentucky land trust and conservancy organizations

	ACTION	Where in Plan	Action Type	Action Leaders and Key Partners
Q	Conduct special area planning for the vicinity of the Sports Tourism Athletic Complex, to promote master-planned and coordinated development outcomes around this new public asset, accommodate potential new lodging and other hospitality uses, and maximize the economic multiplier of this public investment.	Recreation & Amenities Action 19	More Targeted Planning / Study	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • County Community Development • County Planning & Zoning • City Planning • Greater Paducah Economic Development • Paducah Hospitality Association • Real estate / development community
R	Along with a thorough update to the City’s current Parks and Recreation Master Plan from 2019, also consider, in follow-up to this joint Comprehensive Plan, a joint City/County Parks, Trails, Recreation and Open Space Master Plan for a more holistic assessment of recreation and land conservation needs and opportunities across the area, and additional partnership possibilities to advance significant projects as done for the Sports Tourism Athletic Complex.	Recreation & Amenities Action 20	More Targeted Planning / Study	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • County Community Development • County Parks • City Parks & Recreation
S	Implement highest-priority projects identified through a master plan prepared in conjunction with the National Park Service, including: (1) a planned extension of the Greenway Trail into Southside, linking the neighborhood to the riverfront and City parks; (2) new bike lanes as part of an urban bike loop; and (3) application to become a designated Kentucky Trail Town through Kentucky Tourism. <i>[See related Action 22 in Transportation.]</i>	Recreation & Amenities Action 20	More Targeted Planning / Study	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • County Community Development • County Parks • City Parks & Recreation • City Engineering • Paducah Convention & Visitors Bureau

	ACTION	Where in Plan	Action Type	Action Leaders and Key Partners
T	Through the Creative and Cultural Council and as cited in its recent Strategic Plan, continue to pursue development of a Public Art Master Plan for the area, with the Louisville Public Art Master Plan cited as a potential model (https://louisvilleky.gov/government/arts-culture/resources).	Recreation & Amenities Action 22	More Targeted Planning / Study	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • City Creative & Cultural Council • City Planning • County Community Development • Beautiful Paducah • Paducah School of Art & Design

The Action Agenda table provides a starting point for determining immediate, near-term and longer-term task priorities. This is an important first step toward plan implementation and should occur in conjunction with the County and City’s annual budget processes, during Capital Improvements Plan (CIP) preparation and in support of departmental work planning. This involves the essential exercise of breaking down larger efforts into “first and next steps” to lay the groundwork for measurable action and build momentum toward targeted outcomes. This often requires any further clarification of objectives and a realistic assessment of resources and capabilities to move an initiative forward. Also see the accompanying discussion on Various Means — and Perspectives — for Setting Priorities.

Then, once the necessary funding is committed and roles are defined, a lead staff member at both the County and City should initiate a first-year work program in conjunction with the County Deputy Judge Executive and City management, other County and City departments, and other public and private implementation partners.

The near-term action priorities should be revisited annually by elected officials and staff to recognize accomplishments, highlight areas where further attention and effort are needed, and determine whether some items have moved up or down on the priority list given changing circumstances and emerging needs. It should be kept in mind that early implementation of certain items, while perhaps not the uppermost priorities, may be expedited by the availability of related grant funds, by a state or federal mandate, or by the eagerness of one or more partners to pursue an initiative with the County and/or City. On the other hand, some high-priority items may prove difficult to tackle in the near-term due to budget constraints, the lack of a lead entity or individual to carry the initiative forward, or by the community’s readiness to take on a complex or potentially controversial new program.

Progress on the immediate and near-term items should be the focus of the first **annual review and report** one year after adoption of this Comprehensive Plan as described later in this section. Then, similar to multi-year capital improvements programming, the entire Action Agenda – and all other action strategies within the plan sections – should be revisited annually to decide if any additional items are ready to move into a sooner action timeframe.

Various Means – and Perspectives – for Setting Priorities

Action priorities can be set in multiple ways, which vary depending on the roles, needs and expectations of those involved:

- **“Picking the low-hanging fruit,”** which involves items that are relatively quick and easy to accomplish. This is usually a priority for those responsible for managing budgets and limited resources, and needing to show tangible results relatively soon (i.e., elected officials, local government administration).
- **“Bang for the buck,”** which emphasizes cost-effectiveness and return on investment. This is also usually a priority of those cited in the previous item, plus agencies that provide grants and foundations that target their funds toward community enhancement.
- **Tangible results,** where the focus is on producing visible outcomes. This is a universal need and desire, whether near-term results are essential or in cases where it is understood that patience and perseverance will be needed while working toward longer-term objectives.
- **“Chunking,”** which requires diligence to take on longer-term or more complex initiatives that must be pursued in piecemeal fashion over time, but which will ultimately prove very beneficial. This is especially the world of managers and hands-on project leads or teams that are committed to an ongoing process of breaking down ambitious objectives into manageable pieces, directing efforts toward interim progress and “small wins,” and staying on target and constantly making adjustments along a “critical path.” A classic example is the high-stakes, extreme-pressure and groundbreaking “moonshot” work — and ultimate success — of the National Aeronautics and Space Administration (NASA) during the 1960s.
- **“Follow the money,”** which elevates items with an obvious, available funding source — or where prospects are good for securing external funding such as through state or federal grants, foundation opportunities, partnerships, etc. This is another common emphasis for elected officials and local government management, as well as all who wish to expedite certain outcomes.
- **“Follow the leader,”** which underscores the importance of having a willing, available and enthusiastic “champion” to carry a priority initiative forward. This may be someone associated with a partner agency or entity (e.g., leaders from the business community, civic or philanthropic organizations, or non-profits) when logical in-house candidates are already committed to other vital programs and projects.

Along with these considerations for setting priorities, another fundamental factor that will determine the ability to achieve desired outcomes, whether near-term or beyond, involves asking:

- **What Do We Control?** What unique authorities, capabilities, tools and resources can we apply to each of the potential priority initiatives in front of us?

- **What Can We Influence?** If we do not fully control the path forward and can only influence our destiny, how and when can we best assert our means for influencing resource allocation, priority setting and similar processes that others control?
- **What Do We Not Control?** Where we have no control and only minimal influence, how can we design our initiatives and methods to work around external factors and reduce risk?

KEY IMPLEMENTATION ROLES

Planning Commissions

The County and City Planning Commission should take the lead in the following general areas:

- Ensuring that recommendations forwarded to the respective County and City governing bodies are reflective of plan goals and action priorities.
- After holding one or more public hearings to discuss new or evolving community issues and needs, making recommendations to the respective County and City governing bodies regarding plan amendments and plan updates.

County/City Management and Staff

County and City staff should take the lead in the following general areas:

- Managing day-to-day implementation of the plan, including ongoing coordination through interdepartmental plan implementation committees with representatives of all key County and City functions.
- Completing capital improvement planning efforts.
- Managing the drafting of new or amended land development regulations.
- Conducting studies and developing additional special-purpose and/or special area plans.
- Reviewing land development applications for consistency with the plan.
- Negotiating the specifics of intergovernmental and other agreements.

Elected Official Approval and Oversight

Most all actions based on this new Comprehensive Plan require action by County and/or City elected officials, such as:

- Adoption of **annual budgets**.
- Adoption of new or amended **ordinances**, and repeal of ordinances deemed no longer necessary.
- Approval of **contracts and agreements**.
- Approval of the **local match** for grant applications.
- Adoption of other **specialized plans**, and acceptance of **targeted studies**.



City and County officials met jointly at three points during the Comprehensive Plan process, in this case for the midpoint Plan Direction joint workshop in January 2024.

- Administering collaborative programs and ensuring open channels of communication with various private, public and non-profit partners.
- Maintaining an inventory of potential plan amendments, as suggested by County and City staff and others, for consideration during annual and periodic plan review and update processes.

IMPLEMENTATION MONITORING AND PROGRESS REPORTING

While remaining firm in its fundamental principles and reflection of community values, the Paducah-McCracken County Comprehensive Plan should still be a flexible document that allows for adjustment to changing conditions over time. Shifts in political, economic, physical, technological and social conditions – and other unforeseen circumstances – may influence and change the priorities and fiscal outlook of the County and/or City. As the area evolves, new issues will emerge while others will no longer be as relevant. Some action statements may later be found impractical or outdated while other plausible solutions will arise. To ensure that it continues to capture the core goals of the community and remains relevant over time, the Comprehensive Plan must be revisited regularly to confirm that the plan elements are still on point and the associated goals and action strategies are still appropriate.

Key activities – all of which should involve ongoing community dialogue and input – include:

- **Annual Report.** County and City staff should each prepare an annual progress report for presentation to their respective Planning Commissions and governing bodies – with the potential for a joint annual review and reporting process that leads to a joint workshop of the County and City governing bodies, with their Planning Commissions in attendance. This ensures that the plan is consistently reviewed and that any needed modifications or clarifications are identified and completed in a timely manner. Ongoing tracking of consistency between the plan and the County and City’s development regulations should also be an essential part of this effort.
- **Five-Year Review and Evaluation.** An Evaluation Report to the governing bodies should be prepared every five years in accordance with KRS Section 100.197. This report should be prepared by County and City staff with input from all departments, the County and City Planning Commissions, and other boards and commissions. The report process involves identifying successes from the current plan, considering what circumstances have changed over the last five years, and making recommendations on how the plan should be modified in light of those changes. KRS Section 100.97 then requires that the plan be amended as necessary and/or readopted at least every five years.
- **10-Year Full Plan Update.** Every decade at most, the County and City should revisit all aspects of their joint Comprehensive Plan and prepare a thorough update, to be adopted in satisfaction of KRS Section 100.97. This update should take into account:
 - Major actions taken and accomplishments based on the previous plan.
 - Plan actions not pursued or completed to re-assess their continued relevance and/or revise them appropriately, along with discussion of any barriers encountered, missed opportunities and lessons learned.
 - Ongoing, evolving and new community issues.
 - Changes in assumptions, as well as in trends and data about the area.
 - Changes in local government organization, resources, in-house skills, and tools and methods for advancing priority initiatives.
 - Changes in federal or state laws, regulations or other external factors that may influence plan priorities and/or the County and City’s implementation capabilities.

Criteria for Amending the Future Land Use and Character Map

Along with procedures for monitoring and periodically updating this Comprehensive Plan, another specific issue involves consideration of proposed amendments to the adopted Future Land Use and Character map. A first consideration is whether a map amendment is necessary immediately, such as in conjunction with a particular rezoning request? Or, can a potential map adjustment wait so that it may be examined more holistically, along with any other map changes under consideration, through the next interim review and update of the entire Comprehensive Plan?

The following items should be reviewed and addressed, especially by the County and/or City Planning Commission, when a Future Land Use and Character map adjustment is proposed:

- **Scope of Amendment:** Is the proposed map change limited to one or a few parcels or would it affect a much larger area?
- **Change in Circumstances:** What specific conditions have changed sufficiently to render the current map designation(s) inappropriate or out-of-date (e.g., area's population size and/or characteristics, area character and building form, property/structure conditions, infrastructure or public services, market factors including need for more land in a particular designation, etc.)?
- **Consistency with Other Plans:** In addition to the Comprehensive Plan, is the proposed map change consistent with the intent and policy direction of any other applicable plans (utility infrastructure or drainage plans, public safety plans, parks and recreation master plan, etc.)?
- **Adequate Information:** Do County and/or City staff, the County and/or City Planning Commission, and/or the County and/or City governing bodies have enough and appropriate information to move ahead with a decision (e.g., utility capacity, potential traffic impacts, other public service implications, resident/stakeholder concerns and input)?
- **Stakeholder Input:** What points, concerns and insights have been raised by area residents, property owners, business owners, partner agencies/organizations or others?

Paducah-McCracken Today Report

Paducah-McCracken County Comprehensive Plan

This report provides background information about Paducah and McCracken County as they are today. This information is presented in topic areas relevant to both jurisdictions' ongoing focus on being a place that is attractive for living, working, investing and boosting one's quality of life.

The report is intended to avoid duplication of existing data profiles about the area already available from other sources. Instead, the facts and figures in this report highlight specific indicators that tell a story about key planning issues facing the city and county, and help put such issues in context. This will set the stage for the Paducah-McCracken Tomorrow portion of an updated Comprehensive Plan by capturing key community needs and desires for the next several decades. The content of this Paducah-McCracken Today report is based on initial background studies to date by the City and County's community planning consultant, Kendig Keast Collaborative (of Sugar Land, Texas), as well as leadership and community input to this point.

Leadership and Public Engagement

Multiple leadership and community engagement activities were hosted by the City of Paducah, McCracken County and the consultant team to help focus data gathering efforts for this report and to guide later planning during the Paducah-McCracken Tomorrow phase. These initial engagement activities included:

- A **first joint workshop** with the City Board of Commissioners, County Judge Executive and Commissioners, City Planning Commission and County Planning Commission for initial "big picture" discussion of area trends, issues and needs. [April 2023]
- A series of four **informal "listening session" discussions** with other area public agencies and organizations focused on housing and development, economic development, education, tourism, and arts and culture, along with City and County department representatives. [April and June 2023]
- A **Forum on the Future of Paducah and McCracken County**, held at the Paducah-McCracken County Convention & Expo Center, which included a series of interactive activities for obtaining community input to the Paducah-McCracken Today phase. [June 2023]
- Two **workshop meetings** with an Advisory Group for the plan process to obtain further input to and guidance for the Paducah-McCracken Today phase. [June and August 2023]
- An **online community survey** as another way to obtain broad input to the City and County's joint Comprehensive Plan effort from area residents, business community and others, and to supplement and reinforce the in-person outreach activities above. The survey was widely promoted and also drew local media coverage. [Survey available early August-early September 2023, completed by 1,154 individuals]

REPORT ORGANIZATION

After initial sections on the area’s physical characteristics and history, the information in the rest of this report is especially meant to support and elaborate on the overriding theme that became a foundation for the City and County’s new joint Comprehensive Plan:

PLANNING THEME 1:

Making the area more attractive to retain – or regain – youth who grew up here, and to attract younger individuals and families.

PLANNING THEME 1A:

Continuing efforts to diversify the area’s economic and employment base, for long-term economic sustainability and also to offer a wider range of job options to current and prospective residents.

PLANNING THEME 1B:

Increasing the quantity and variety of housing options.

Theme 1 and its two associated subthemes emerged as the uppermost planning priorities from early leadership, community and other stakeholder input, and were later reinforced by the results of a community survey conducted in August-September 2023. Themes 2 through 6 below reflect other broad priorities that were rated of highest importance in the survey and also figure prominently in the new plan:

PLANNING THEME 2:

Being a safe community with good City/County public safety services (police, fire, emergency medical service).

PLANNING THEME 3:

Improving infrastructure condition, particularly for stormwater management.

PLANNING THEME 4:

Sustaining momentum on neighborhood and corridor revitalization.

PLANNING THEME 5:

Taking greater economic advantage of the area’s location and transportation assets.

PLANNING THEME 6:

Building on the area’s tourism success, including through sustained commitment to arts, crafts and culture.

Comparison Communities

While the focus of this report is the city and county’s existing conditions, it can be helpful to benchmark local data points against other communities and geographies to provide additional context. In this report, a handful of other Kentucky cities and counties were used for comparison of certain data points, along with some comparisons to all of Kentucky:

- **Bowling Green** as a gateway community to western Kentucky, situated on both Interstates 65 and 166, that has experienced much more significant population growth in recent decades.



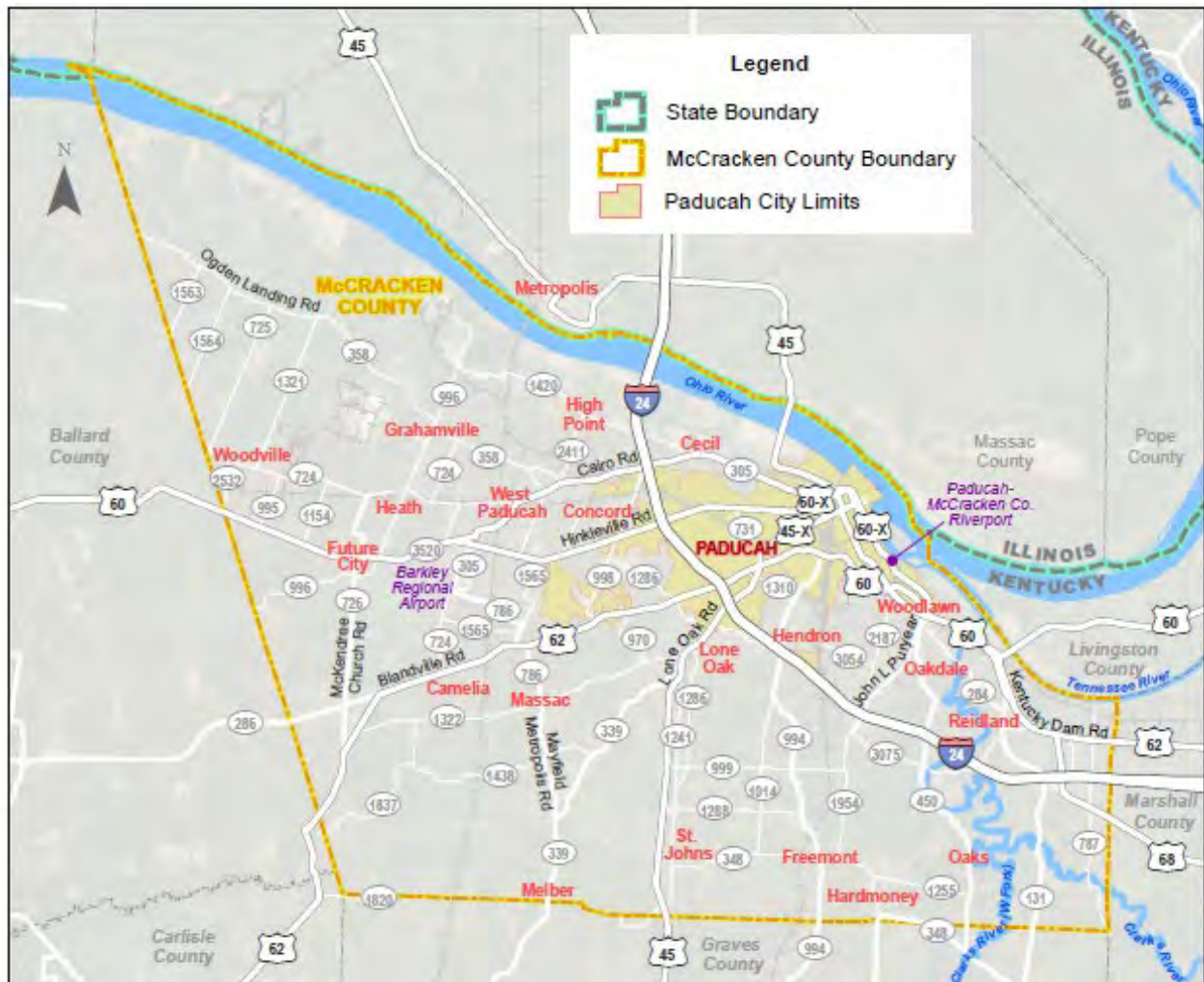
- **Owensboro** as a common comparison community for Paducah, with limited growth in recent decades, that is also situated along the Ohio River and at the northern terminus of Interstate 165.
- **Christian County**, with a similar population size as McCracken County and home to Hopkinsville, also along Interstate 24 between Nashville and St. Louis, and with Interstate 169 also traversing the county.
- **Daviess County** as home to Owensboro, along the Ohio River, and also traversed by Interstate 169.

PADUCAH AND McCRACKEN COUNTY SETTING AND CONTEXT

Location and Access

McCracken County encompasses approximately 249 square miles of land in far western Kentucky, with a final bend of the Ohio River forming its northern boundary before the Ohio meets the Mississippi River near Cairo, Illinois. Downtown Paducah is also along the Ohio riverfront, not far west from where the Tennessee River merges with the Ohio River. McCracken County is bordered by the Kentucky counties of Livingston to the northeast, Marshall to the east, Graves to the south and Ballard County to the west. Southern Illinois is across the Ohio River, including the community of Metropolis across the Interstate 24 bridge over the Ohio.

MAP 1: McCracken County



MAP 2: City of Paducah



The City of Paducah includes nearly 21 square miles of incorporated territory in northeast McCracken County, is the largest city in the Jackson Purchase region, and is a home-rule Kentucky city and the county seat of McCracken County. The eight-county Kentucky portion of the Purchase region (which historically included all of Tennessee west of the Tennessee River) is bounded by the Mississippi River to the west, the Ohio River to the north and the Tennessee River to the east. It encompasses nearly 3,400 square miles or about 6% of Kentucky's land area, with Paducah as its largest city and economic hub, followed by Murray and Mayfield.

Paducah is also the principal city of the five-county Paducah, KY-IL Micropolitan Statistical Area as defined by the U.S. Census Bureau (McCracken, Ballard and Carlisle counties in the Purchase region plus Livingston County, Kentucky, and Massac County, Illinois). The Micropolitan Statistical Area had a Census 2020 population of 103,481. The larger Paducah-Mayfield combined statistical area (CSA) had 140,138 residents in Census 2020. It is one of nearly 200 CSAs designated nationwide by the U.S. Office of Management and Budget, representing combinations of adjacent metropolitan and micropolitan statistical areas that have economic or social linkages, especially in terms of commuting for employment plus overlapping media markets.

Paducah and McCracken County are located roughly halfway between the major metros of St. Louis, Missouri, to the northwest and Nashville, Tennessee, to the southeast along the I-24 corridor. Paducah is 250 miles southwest of the Kentucky state capital of Frankfort, and slightly closer to the state's largest city, Louisville, which is 217 miles northeast via Western Kentucky Parkway. Along with the area's interstate highway access:

- U.S. Highways 60 (Hinkleville Road) and 62 (Blandville Road) link west into Missouri and Interstates 57 and 55. U.S. 60 later passes through Springfield, Missouri; Amarillo, Texas; and Phoenix, Arizona, before terminating at Interstate 10 in western Arizona. U.S. 62 passes through New Madrid, Missouri; Bentonville and Fayetteville, Arkansas; Oklahoma City; Paducah and Lubbock, Texas; and Carlsbad, New Mexico, before terminating near the U.S./Mexico border in downtown El Paso, Texas.
- To the east, U.S. 60 (Irvin Cobb Drive / Clarks River Road) eventually links to Henderson, with connections to Evansville, Indiana, then on to Louisville, Frankfort, Lexington and beyond to the Ohio River at Ashland – ultimately reaching Richmond, Newport News and Norfolk, Virginia, before terminating on the East Coast at Virginia Beach.
- U.S. 62 east (Reidland Road / Kentucky Dam Road) roughly parallels I-24, then I-69 and then Western Kentucky Parkway to Elizabethtown before meandering northeastward all the way to Maysville on the Ohio River before crossing into Ohio. It later passes through Columbus, Ohio; through Pennsylvania up into New York, through Buffalo and terminating at Niagara Falls near the U.S./Canada border.
- U.S. Highway 45 (Lone Oak Road) connects south to I-69 and Purchase Parkway at Mayfield, then parallels the Parkway until crossing into Tennessee at Fulton – ultimately terminating at the Gulf Coast in Mobile, Alabama. To the north, U.S. 45 crosses the Ohio River to Brookport, Illinois, then continues north eventually to Chicago's western suburbs and O'Hare International Airport; through Milwaukee, Wisconsin; and to its terminus at Ontonagon, Michigan, on Lake Superior.

A network of other state and county roads provides access to various locations within McCracken County.

Physical Conditions

McCracken County is in the northeastern part of the Mississippi embayment of the Gulf Coastal Plain. Four major rivers converge in the region – the Ohio, Cumberland, Tennessee and Mississippi. As a result, flooding periodically occurs in the county and within Paducah during storm events over both headwater and backwater locations.

Land surface elevations across the county range from 500+ feet above sea level, in the south along the Tennessee Valley divide near St. Johns, to the 300-foot range at points along the Ohio River, where no bluffs are present along the county shoreline. Elevation in downtown Paducah at the McCracken County Courthouse is 341 feet relative to 400 feet at both Reidland and Barkley Regional Airport and 475 feet at Lone Oak. Higher elevations are also found in the uplands between Mayfield Creek and the west fork of Massac Creek in the southwestern part of the county, where ridges and knolls reach elevations in excess of 490 feet. Greater local elevation change occurs in the vicinity of Clarks River and Mayfield Creek, where hills commonly rise 100 feet or more above the broad valley flats. The upland portion of McCracken County is rolling, but large areas of level land are present between some of the area’s streams and their headwater. These areas are typically located in the western part of the county and along flood plains of the Ohio, Tennessee and Clarks Rivers.



SOURCE: USDAproperties.com

Climate

At a latitude of 37.1 degrees north of the equator, Paducah and McCracken County are placed in a warm/mild temperate zone on the globe by the Köppen climate classification system. The area generally experiences warm, humid summers but is cooler in winter than states closer to the Gulf Coast – although this demarcation is likely to transition in the decades ahead as climate change extends the warm/mild temperate zone farther north toward the Great Lakes area.

National Weather Service (NWS) data for the Paducah area between 1991 and 2020 show a year-round mean average temperature of 58.8 degrees, ranging up to a mean maximum of 69.3 degrees and down to a mean minimum of 48.2 degrees. January continues to be the coldest month, with a mean average temperature of 36 degrees over the 30-year data timeframe. July is the peak heat month with a mean average temperature of 79.7 degrees. Summer temperatures periodically range into the 90s and sometimes above 100 degrees, while temperatures below freezing occur periodically in the winter months. Such statistics are increasingly in flux due to global climate trends. The area wind pattern is generally from the south to southwest, ranging from 7 miles per hour on average during May-October and from 10 miles per hour during November-April.

The same NWS data show average annual rainfall of 50.3 inches during the 1991-2020 period. Average rainfall remains relatively steady throughout the year with no particular wet or dry seasons, although periods of particularly dry or wet weather can occur from year to year. Over the 30-year timeframe, April was the wettest month with an average total precipitation of 5.2 inches. August typically brings the least rain, with an average of 3.1 inches. McCracken County typically experiences periodic snow and ice from November through March. Total annual snowfall over the 30-year window averaged 8.9 inches with average peaks of 3.0 inches in February and 2.7 inches in January.

Seismic Activity

Previous comprehensive plans for the area have documented the region’s earthquake risk but also noted issues with the reliability of probability-based predictions and potential risk level. Previous planning by McCracken County Emergency Management noted that:

- The earthquake threat for Kentucky’s western 24 counties, including McCracken County, comes from two seismic zones: the New Madrid Seismic Zone (NMSZ) and the Wabash Valley Seismic Zone (WVSZ). The recurrence intervals for large quake events on the NMSZ are from 500 to 1,000 years and for the WVSZ from 2,000 to 5,000 years.

- Earthquakes in recent decades prove the WVSZ is active. More famously, the NMSZ saw at least three quakes during the winter of 1811-12 with an estimated magnitude of near or greater than 8.0 on the Richter Scale. Earthquakes along this zone occur every year, but most are of a magnitude less than 2.0 Richter.
- The Kentucky Geological Survey (KGS, at the University of Kentucky) advises accounting for the possibility of a background quake in the 5.0 Richter range even though these fault systems do not extend directly into Kentucky.
- Past probabilities from the U.S. Geological Survey (USGS) and the Center for Earthquake Research and Information at the University of Memphis suggested a 7-10% chance over a 50-year period for a repeat of the 1811-12 NMSZ quakes (magnitude 7.7-8.0 Richter) and a 25-40% chance of a magnitude 6.0 Richter or greater. But a 2010 KGS analysis indicated a much more moderate seismic hazard in the Paducah region.
- As reported by APNews.com in October 2016, a KGS study at that time concluded, as previously suspected, that USGS maps and predictions overstate the earthquake hazard for western Kentucky and the central U.S. along the NMSZ due to methodology and limited actual severe quake events and data. The study recommended revising downward the NMSZ hazard level on national seismic hazard maps.

This topic will be addressed further in the Paducah-McCracken Tomorrow portion of the Comprehensive Plan. It is especially significant to the region given how overstated risk projections have affected costs of land development, all types of building construction and insurance due to overly stringent building codes and policies based on the federally-mapped seismic risk areas. Local leaders, plus the KGS study, underscore how this situation has diminished the region's economic development potential, including by limiting the area's ability to attract federal facilities as they are prohibited from locating in areas with the level of quake risk shown for the NMSZ, which includes western Kentucky.

SOURCE: National Geographic Society, National Weather Service, APNews.com, previous City/County plans.

Community Heritage and Milestones

Paducah, originally known as Pekin, was settled around 1815. American and European migrants were attracted to the area due to its location at the confluence of the Ohio and Tennessee Rivers. McCracken County was originally part of Hickman County, but as population growth occurred, the territory was divided into Hickman, Graves, Calloway and McCracken counties. McCracken County was formed on January 15, 1825, and named after Captain Virgil McCracken, who had been killed in the Michigan Territory during the War of 1812.

1827 William Clark (pictured), Superintendent of Indian Affairs for the Mississippi-Missouri Region, arrives at Pekin with a title deed to the land he now owned as validated by the U.S. Supreme Court. The town was platted and named in honor of the Padouca Indians, whom Lewis and Clark had encountered on their western journey.

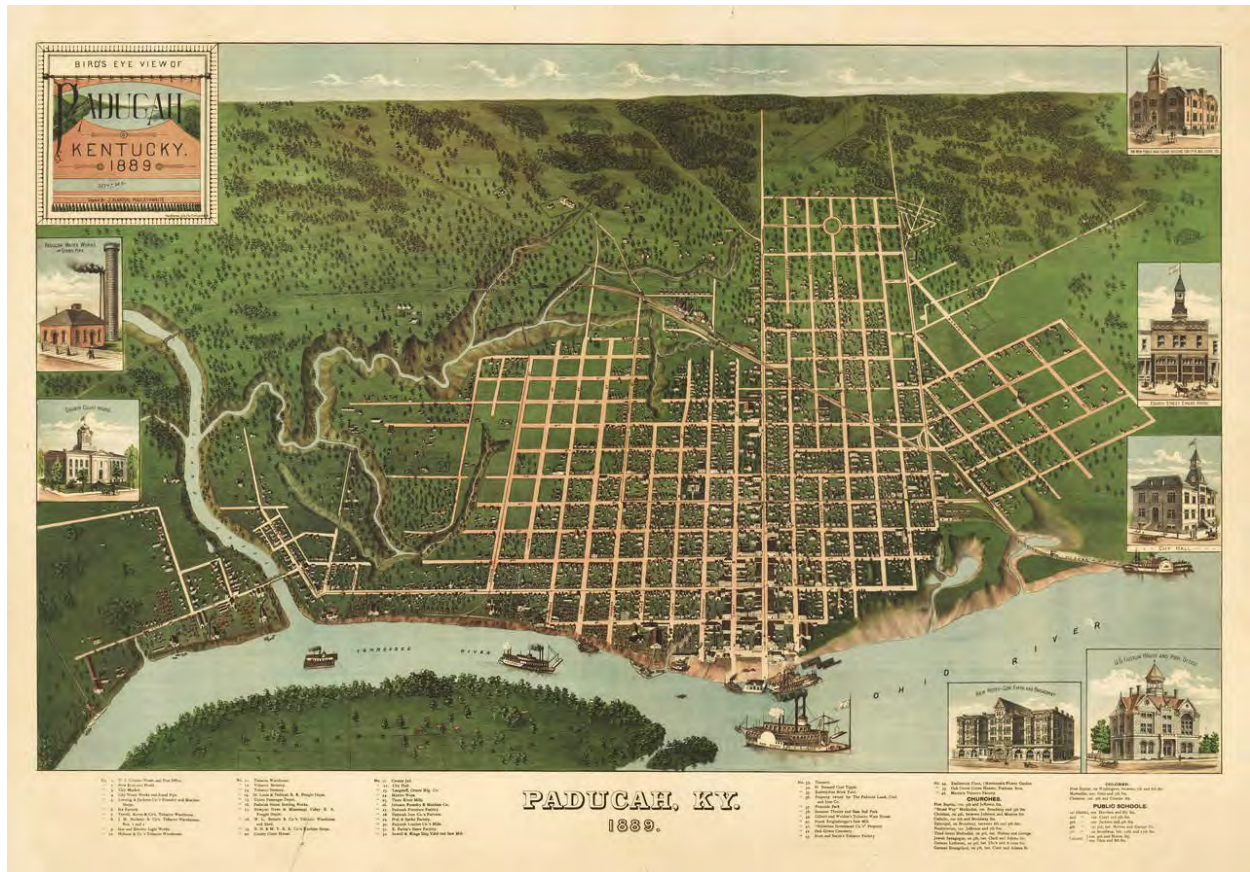


SOURCE: commons.wikimedia.org

1828 First Paducah post office opens.

1830 Paducah is formally established as a town and later incorporated as a city by the Kentucky Legislature in 1838. A fire department and board of health are also established in 1830. A first wharf is built, a ferry service across the Ohio River begins, and the Exchange Bank of Paducah opens.

1832 Paducah becomes the county seat of McCracken County.



SOURCE: worldmapsonline.com

- 1836** First Market House is built to facilitate trade.
- 1852** First charter established to build a railroad for Paducah, enabling Lloyd Tilghman of the New Orleans & Ohio Railroad to construct the first seven miles of track, connecting Paducah to Florence Station, Kentucky.

1856 Paducah is chartered as a city. Despite the coming disruption of the Civil War, the community continues to capitalize on its geographic location by becoming the site of dry dock facilities for steamboats and towboats and, in turn, headquarters for various barge companies. Paducah also becomes an important railway hub for the Illinois Central Railroad (ICRR) due to its proximity to the coal fields in Kentucky and Illinois. The ICRR is the main north-south railway between the industrial cities of Chicago and East St. Louis to the Gulf of Mexico at Gulfport, Mississippi, and New Orleans. The ICRR also provides east-west links to the Burlington Northern and the Atchison, Topeka and Santa Fe Railways (which later merged to become the BNSF Railway).



SOURCE: explorekyhistory.ky.gov

- 1861** Longest pontoon bridge ever constructed is built at Paducah, linking Kentucky to Illinois.
- 1917** The Nashville, Chattanooga and St. Louis (NC & St L) Railway and the Chicago, Burlington and Quincy Railway jointly construct a rail line and a double-track bridge between Paducah and Metropolis.

1922 Murray State University is founded 50 miles southeast of Paducah in Murray, Kentucky. One of its regional campuses is later established in Paducah (currently at 4430 Sunset Avenue near the I-24/U.S. 62 interchange).

1925 Paducah Freight House depot is built by the NC & St L Railway. Today, the repurposed historic building houses the Paducah Area Chamber of Commerce and a noted restaurant, with the Paducah Railroad Museum also nearby.

1937 Due to 18 inches of rainfall in 16 days along with ice sheets on the river, the Ohio River at Paducah rises over its 50-foot flood stage, cresting at 60.8 feet in early February – considered to be the worst natural disaster in Paducah’s history. Some 27,000 residents had to move to higher ground in the county or elsewhere for nearly three weeks. Buildings in downtown Paducah still have historic plaques that show the high-water marks. As a result, Congress authorizes the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers to build a flood wall to replace an ineffective previous earthen levee.

1938 Tennessee Valley Authority (TVA) begins construction of Kentucky Lake, completed in 1944. During the process, entire towns, families, homesteads, farms and infrastructure had to be relocated for the permanent flooding of the Tennessee River.



1941 U.S. War Department, through the efforts of then Senator and later Vice President Alben Barkley, converts a military surplus airport into a training ground for B-17 bomber headed overseas. The airport is deeded to the City and County after the war for commercial use, with a first DC-3 departure in 1946. The facility was renamed Barkley Field in 1949. A new terminal building was recently constructed at what is known today as Barkley Regional Airport.

1950 The former Kentucky Ordnance Works site is selected by the U.S. Atomic Energy Commission for development of a new uranium enrichment plant, located in the rural western portion of the county near Grahamville. Opening in 1952, the plant is a government-owned, contractor-operated facility producing low-enriched uranium (further refined at other locations) to fuel military reactors and for use in nuclear weapons, then primarily for nuclear power plants from the 1960s on.

1964 Paducah-McCracken County Riverport is established by the City and County under an equal ownership agreement. The port operates as a quasi-governmental agency that provides essential maritime services for the rural regions of western Kentucky, southern Illinois, southeast Missouri, and northwestern Tennessee. The operating port facility is located along the Tennessee River bank near its confluence with the Ohio River, and approximately 30 miles from the confluence of the Ohio and Mississippi rivers.

1965 New Paducah City Hall with renowned architectural design is dedicated, representing an early step in ongoing downtown revitalization efforts.

1974 First segment of Interstate 24 opens in Kentucky through McCracken County, including completion of the Ohio River bridge linking U.S. Highway 60 in Paducah to U.S. Highway 45 in Metropolis, Illinois.



1991 The Museum of the American Quilter’s Society (National Quilt Museum) opens downtown, drawing quilters from around the world.

1999 Paducah McCracken Joint Sewer Agency (JSA) is formed as a non-profit regional utility service, taking over the operation and maintenance of Paducah and McCracken County’s combined sanitary and storm sewer system and sanitary-only sewer system. JSA is governed by a seven-member Board of Directors, three appointed by the Paducah City Commission, three by the McCracken County Fiscal Court and one by joint appointment.

2000 Paducah’s Artist Relocation Program is started, offering incentives for artists to move to its historic downtown and Lower Town neighborhood as another way to spur their revitalization. The program has become a national model for using the arts for economic development, receiving the Governor’s Award in the Arts, a Distinguished Planning Award from the Kentucky Chapter of the American Planning Association plus an APA National award, and the Kentucky League of Cities' Enterprise Cities Award. The

2004 Luther F. Carson Center for the Performing Arts opens in downtown Paducah, with total usable area of nearly 100,000 square feet and seating in the main theatre hall for just over 1,800 persons.



SOURCE: thecarsoncenter.org

2008 First completed section of the Clyde F. Boyles Greenway Trail opens, covering 1.5 miles from County Park Road to Noble Park, after initial planning, donations and fundraising that began in 2001.

2010 Paducah Main Street receives a 2010 Great American Main Street Award from Main Street America for its downtown revitalization success and ongoing performance, serving as a model for other Main Street programs nationwide.

2013 Paducah is accepted into the Creative Cities Network of the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), joining nearly 300 other cities worldwide and designated as a Creative City of Crafts and Folk Art. This recognition reflected cumulative successes such as the Artist Relocation Program, the National Quilt Museum, the "Wall to Wall" floodwall murals initiative and the Paducah School of Art and Design.

2013 After commercial uranium enrichment was conducted at the Paducah Gaseous Diffusion Plant through a lease arrangement since 1993, the last contractor ceases operations and returns the facility to the U.S. Department of Energy Environmental Management program for decontamination and decommissioning. The plant had been the only operating uranium enrichment facility in the U.S. during 2001-2010. The plant ultimately covered 750 acres of a total site just over 3,500 acres. During enrichment operations approximately 1,200 workers operated the plant. Since cessation of enrichment activities, the site continues to employ some 1,400 workers through contractors involved in maintaining the site and remediating environmental contamination, including in groundwater on and off the site, leading to eventual demolition of inactive portions of the facilities.

2021 West Kentucky Community and Technical College (WKCTC) is recognized as one of the top five U.S. community colleges by the Aspen Institute, honored as a Finalist with Distinction for Community College Excellence from among more than 1,000 community colleges nationwide. WKCTC is one of the most-lauded colleges in the history of the Aspen Prize (awarded every other year since 2011), also as a top-five Finalist with Distinction in 2011 and 2015, and a top-10 finalist in 2013 and 2017.



Ongoing Special events draw visitors to and enliven the area, including the annual American Quilter's Society Quilt Show and Contest ("Quilt Week") in April, the Lower Town Arts and Music Festival in May, and BBQ on the River in September.

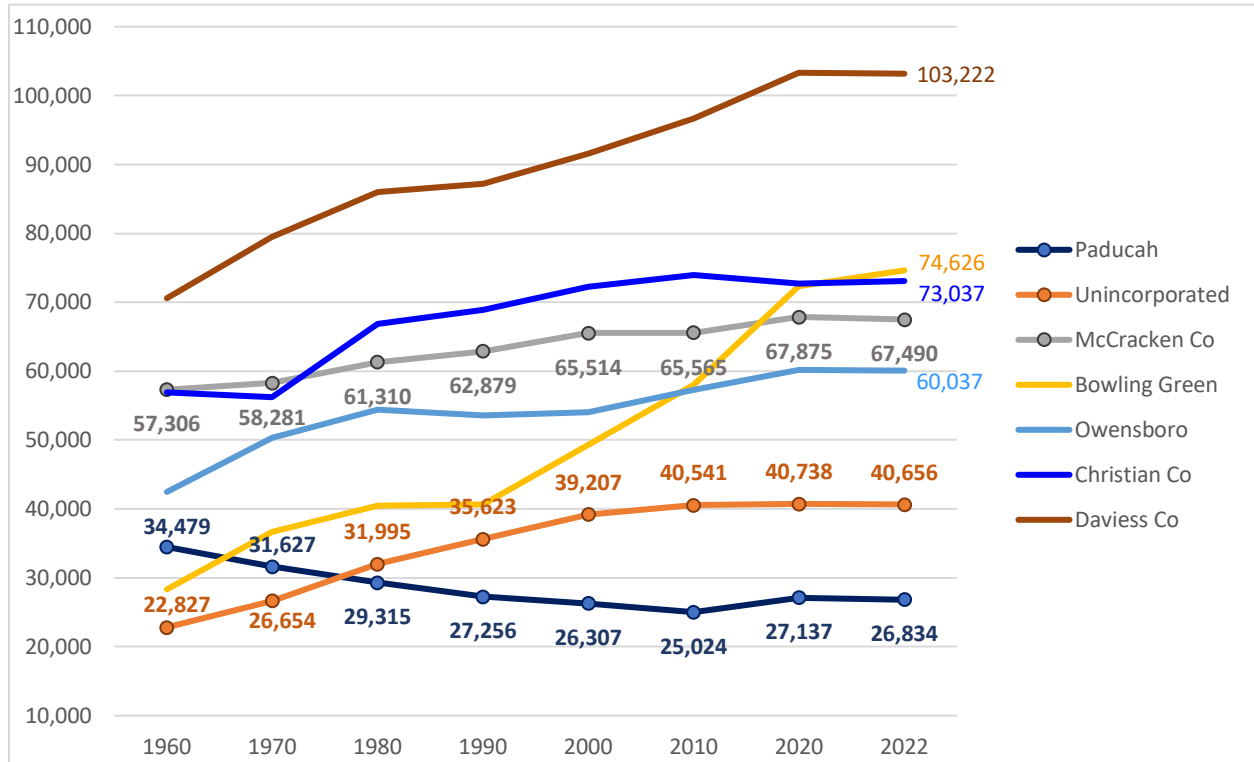
SOURCE: City of Paducah and past City plans, Paducah Area Chamber of Commerce, Paducah Railroad Museum, Inland Waterways Museum, Market House Museum, West Kentucky Community and Technical College, Kentucky Historical Society, Kentucky Atlas and Gazetteer.

PLANNING THEME 1:

Making the area more attractive to retain – or regain – youth who grew up here, and to attract younger individuals and families.

As in many other small regional hub areas like Paducah and McCracken County, early discussions for this Comprehensive Plan update included repeated emphasis on the need to make the area more attractive to its homegrown young population and prospective residents in the same demographic.

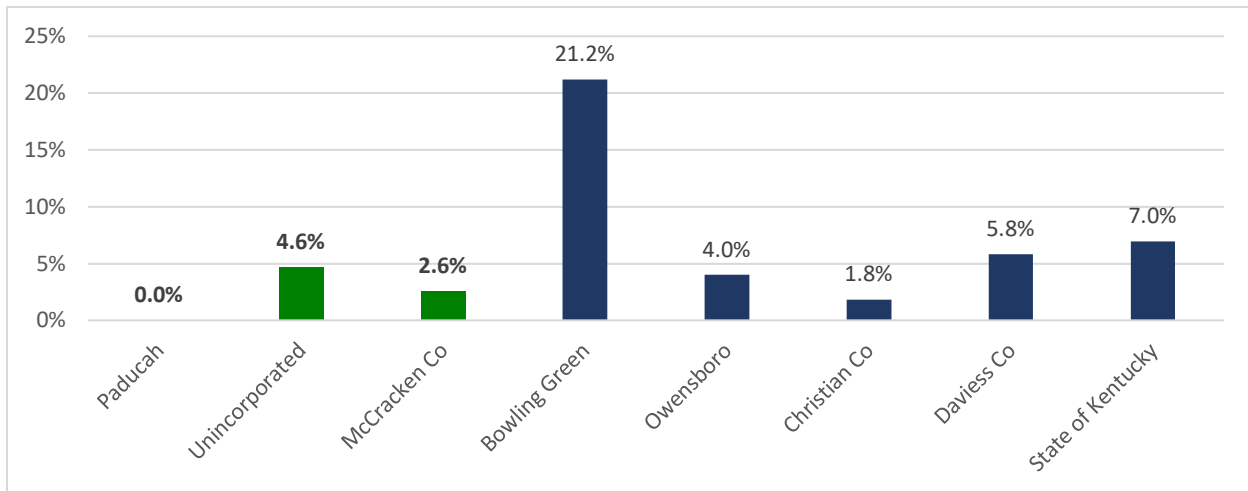
Population History and Newest Estimates



SOURCE: U.S. Census Bureau, Table DP105 (American Community Survey Demographic and Housing Estimates, 2022). Kentucky State Data Center from U.S. Census Bureau July 2022 Population Estimates (released 05.19.23).

- Paducah had lost population for five consecutive decades, from 1960 to 2010 (27.4% total population decline), before seeing an **8.4% population increase between Census years 2010 and 2020** – nearly reaching the 27,000 population range last seen in 1990. The newest available population estimate from the Kentucky State Data Center indicates some drop-off through mid-2022, but such fluctuations can happen over shorter timeframes.
- **McCracken County** steadily added just over 10,000 residents from 1960 to 2020 (18.4% growth), **approaching 68,000 residents in Census 2020**. Like Paducah, however, the entire county was estimated to have lost a small increment of population through mid-2022.
- Based on the 2022 estimated population, Paducah ranked as the **16th largest city in Kentucky** among 419 total. Meanwhile, **McCracken County rated 13th largest** by population among the state’s 120 counties.
- During this historical timeframe, the entire state of Kentucky grew from 3,038,156 persons in 1960 to 4,506,836 in Census 2020 (48.3% growth over 50 years) – with a 2022 estimate of 4,512,310 persons.

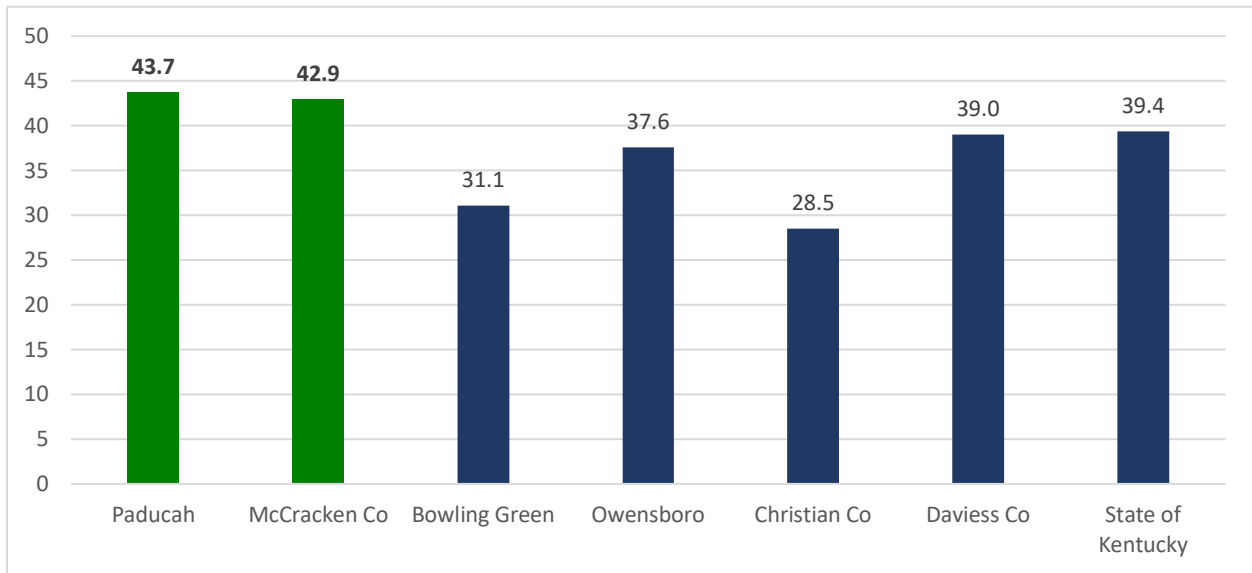
Average Population Growth Rate by Decade (1990-2020)



SOURCE: U.S. Census Bureau.

- When averaged by decade since 1990, **Paducah has effectively seen no growth in population over the last 30 years** relative to the substantial growth experienced in Bowling Green and average 4% growth by decade in Owensboro.
- The **unincorporated portion of McCracken County had the highest area population growth since 1990**, averaging a 4.6% gain by decade. The **countywide average growth rate by decade was 2.6%**, which placed McCracken between the 1.8% average rate of Christian County and the nearly 6% average rate achieved in Daviess County, relative to 7% statewide.

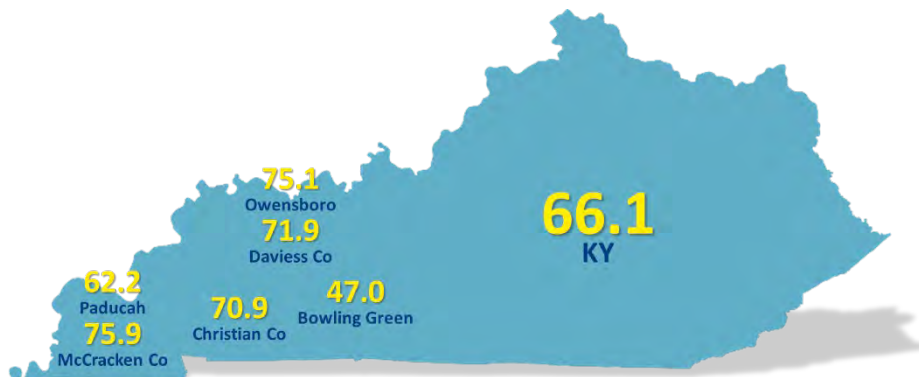
Median Age (2022)



SOURCE: U.S. Census Bureau, Table DP105 (American Community Survey Demographic and Housing Estimates, 2022).

- At 43.7 years, **Paducah’s estimated median age in 2022 was the highest among all the comparison jurisdictions**, indicating a relatively “grayer” population.
- **McCracken County** was not far behind, with the **second highest** median age (42.9) among the group.

A demographic indicator called the Age Dependency Ratio compares the extent of youth (under age 18) and senior population (age 65+) in an area relative to the “working-age” population in between (ages 18-64). The latest Census Bureau estimates for 2022 show an **Age Dependency Ratio of 62.2 for Paducah and 75.9 for all of McCracken County**. The graphic below shows the ratios for all of Kentucky plus the comparison cities and counties. College towns like Bowling Green often have the lowest age dependency ratios, sometimes below 50, given the extent of student population in the age 18 through 20s range, plus if it is an attractive retirement location that draws senior population back.

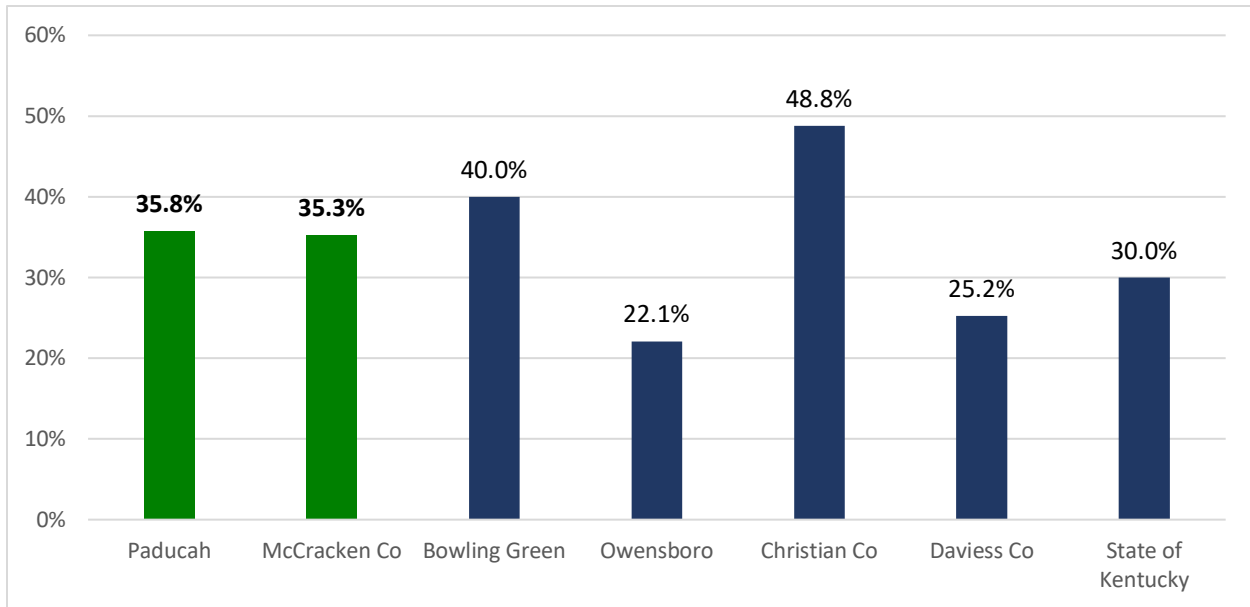


SURVEY LINK

In the community survey conducted in support of this updated Comprehensive Plan:

- The largest share of resident respondents (34.8%) was in the age 65-80 range.
- 74% of resident respondents reported having no one in their household 18 years of age or younger.
- Just over half (51.2%) of resident respondents had lived in Paducah and/or McCracken County for 20 or more years. About one-fifth (19.6%) were new to the area within the last five years.

Share of Local Residents Native to U.S. Who Were Not Born in Kentucky (2021)



SOURCE: U.S. Census Bureau, Table B05002 (American Community Survey Place of Birth by Nativity and Citizenship Status, 2021).

- Despite their difficulties in retaining and attracting population, **both Paducah and McCracken County still compare favorably in terms of their share of population that is not native to the area or even to Kentucky.** For both the city and county, just over one-third of current residents in 2021 were estimated to have migrated here from outside the state at some point in life.

While the Paducah-McCracken County area is lauded for its livability in terms of recreational, entertainment and cultural amenities, two key factors were called out as fundamental to the population challenge: (1) better-quality jobs, and (2) adequate and appealing housing.

SURVEY LINK

In response to this statement on the survey:

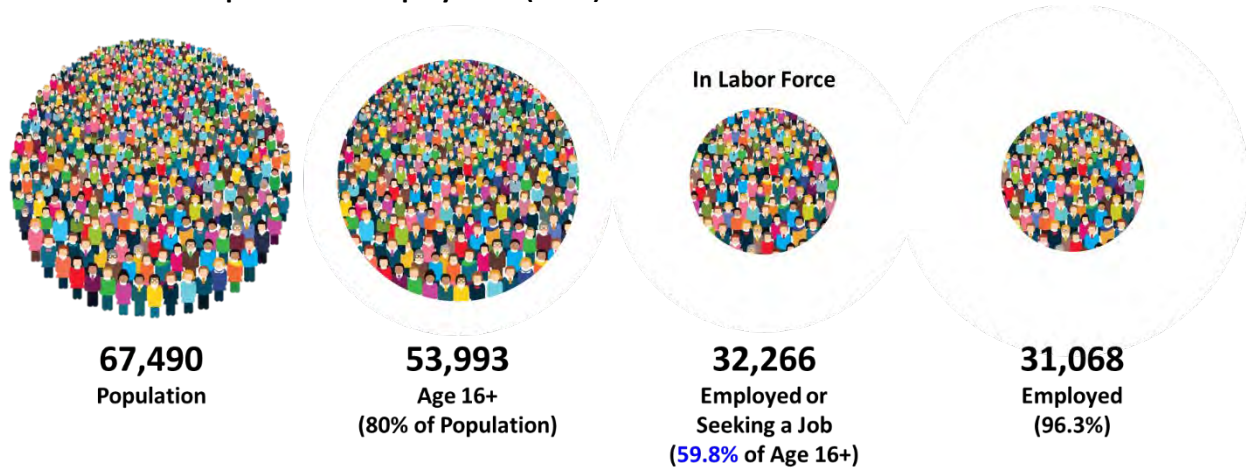
“The City and County should treat as ‘Job 1’ economic development that generates well-paying jobs in key and emerging industries, especially to retain and attract young adults and other workers who are already drawn by the area’s recreational and cultural assets.”

- The combination of agree (66.2%) and somewhat agree (26%) was over 90% (92.2%) – the highest percentage among the series of Agree/Disagree questions on the survey.

PLANNING THEME 1A:

Continuing efforts to diversify the area’s economic and employment base, for long-term economic sustainability and also to offer a wider range of job options to current and prospective residents.

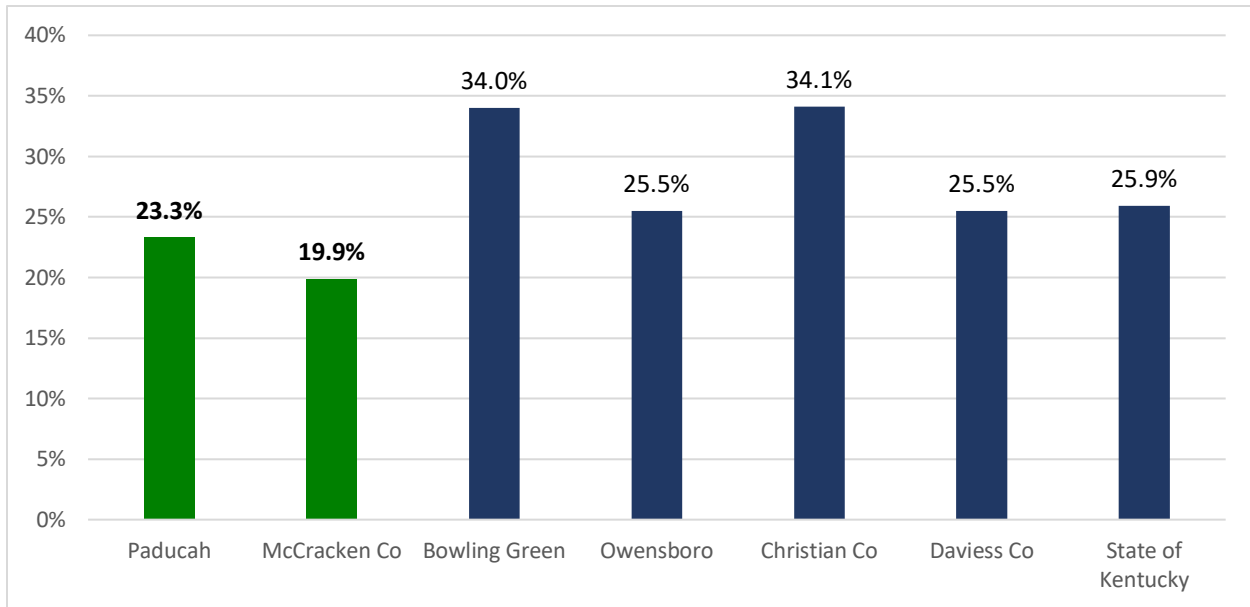
Labor Force Participation and Employment (2022)



SOURCE: U.S. Census Bureau, Table DP03 (American Community Survey Selected Economic Characteristics, 2022).

- Of the estimated 2022 McCracken County population that was age 16 or over, **80% were participating in the labor force** by working or actively seeking work – and **approximately 96% of those were employed**, indicating a relatively low unemployment rate at the time. The county’s labor force number had increased by 4.3% since 2010 when it was 30,937, which was also faster than countywide population growth (2.9%) over the same 12 years through 2022.
- The county’s 2022 labor force participation rate was somewhat below 63.5% nationwide, likely reflecting an older population locally, but effectively identical to the statewide participation rate of 59.9%.

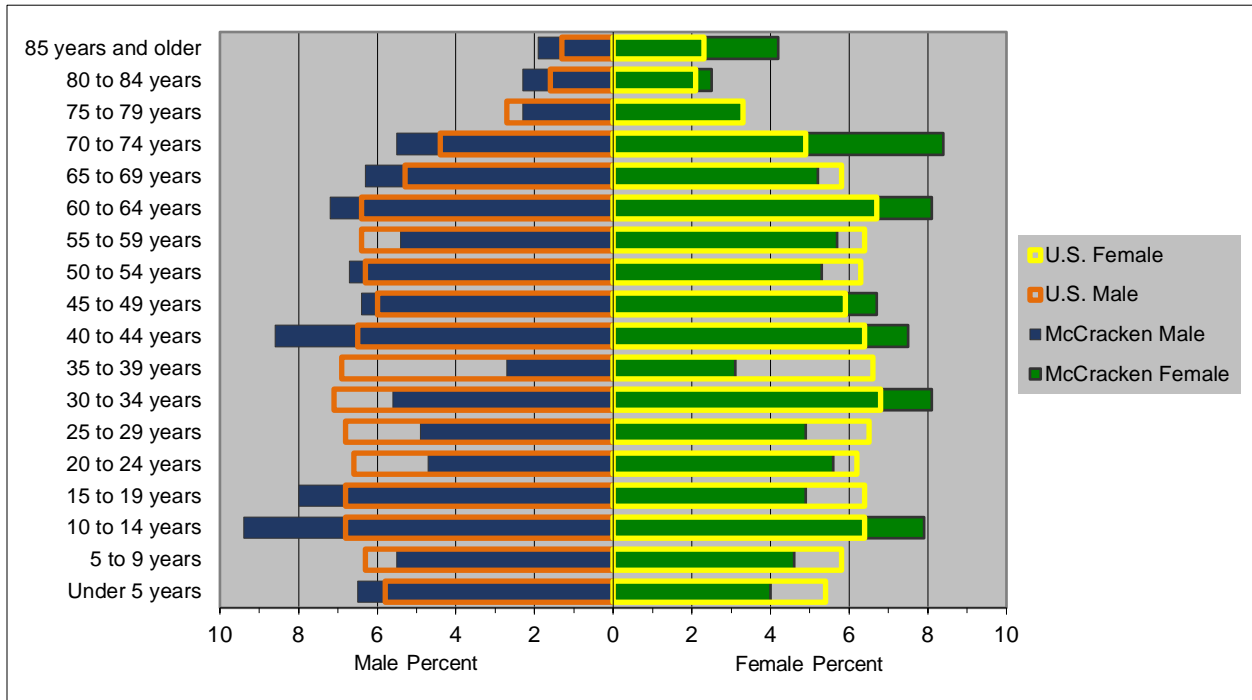
Share of Young Adult Population, Ages 20-39 (2022)



SOURCE: U.S. Census Bureau, Table SO101 (American Community Survey Age and Sex, 2021).

- The previous chart shows that **McCracken County has relatively high labor force participation among those who do want to work, and a relatively low unemployment rate (as of 2022).**
- However, the chart above confirms that **Paducah and McCracken County in 2021 had the lowest estimated shares of their population below age 40** relative to the comparison jurisdictions, particularly countywide. This appears consistent with anecdotal concerns that too much of the area's younger population is being drawn elsewhere for employment.

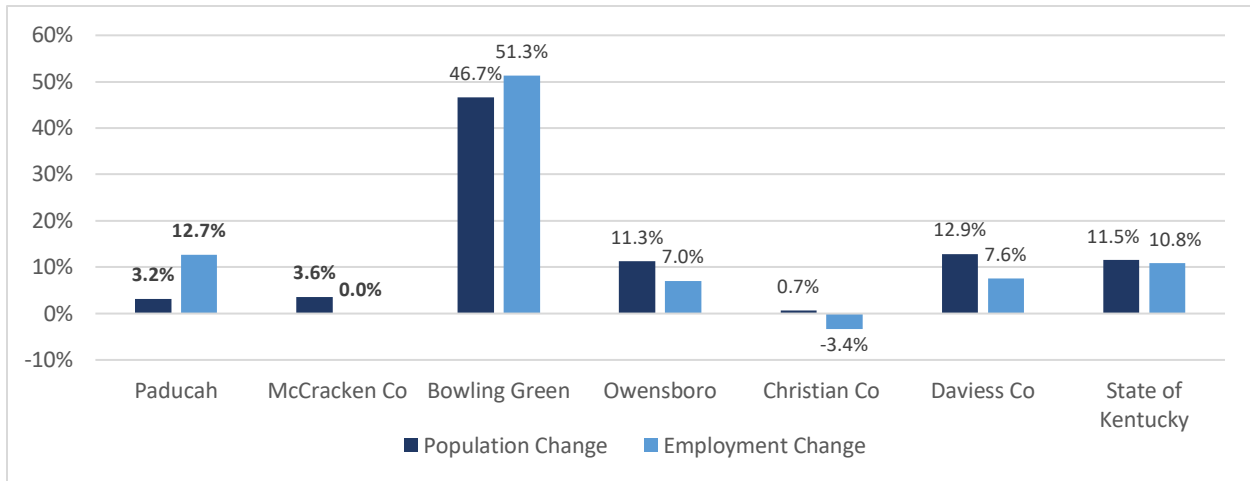
Age and Gender Distribution (2021)



SOURCE: U.S. Census Bureau, Table S0101 (American Community Survey Age and Sex, 2021).

- The comparison to the nationwide age and gender distribution, estimated for 2021, **confirms again that McCracken County had a notably lower share of its population in the age 20-39 age cohorts** – with the interesting anomaly that the local female share in the age 30-34 range was higher than the national share.
- On the other hand, **most of the local shares in all the age 40+ age ranges exceeded the national percentages**, though more often among the local male versus female population – although the county had significant shares of senior female population in the age 70-74 and 85+ cohorts.
- At least in this time period, the numbers show the county having a **much higher share of male youth in the age 0-19 cohorts than nationally**, while only the age 10-14 female cohort is above the national percentage.
- Comparing against the percentages captured in Census 2010, the county had a **larger age 0-19 youth population overall in 2021 (25.2%) than in 2010 (24.4%)**. Not surprisingly given the aging Baby Boom population nationwide, the **local senior population age 65+ increased to 20.8% of the total in 2021 compared to 17.3% in 2010**.

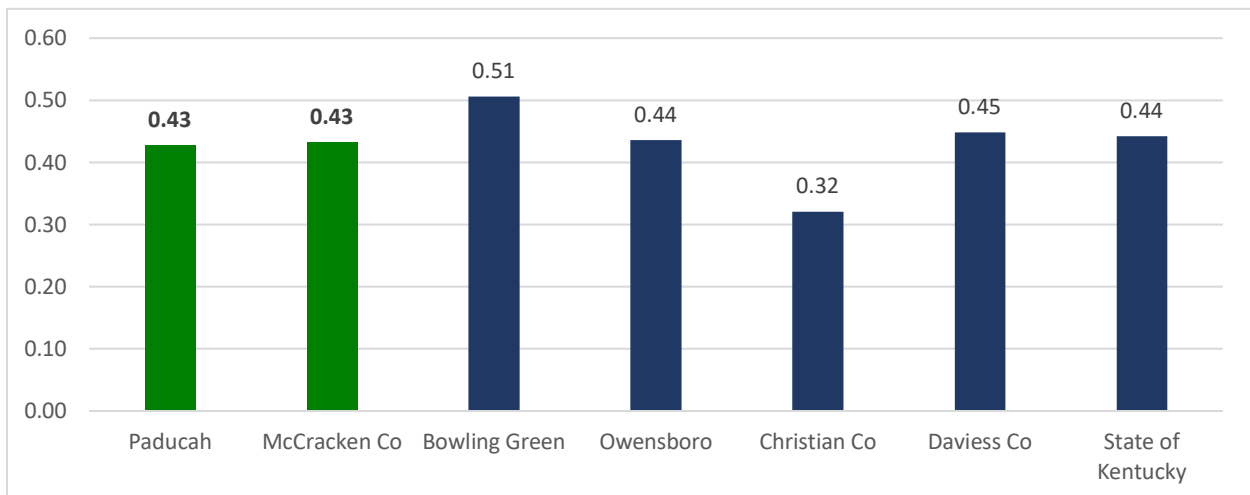
Change in Employment Relative to Population, 2000-2020



SOURCE: U.S. Census Bureau, Table DP05, Demographic and Housing Estimates (ACS 2020); Table DPO3, Selected Economic Characteristics (2020, 2000).

- Among all the comparison jurisdictions, **only Paducah and Bowling Green had their number of employed persons grow at a faster rate than population from 2000 to 2020**. All of McCracken County was at approximately the same number of employed persons in 2020 (29,366) as in 2000 (29,359) despite 3.6% growth in population.

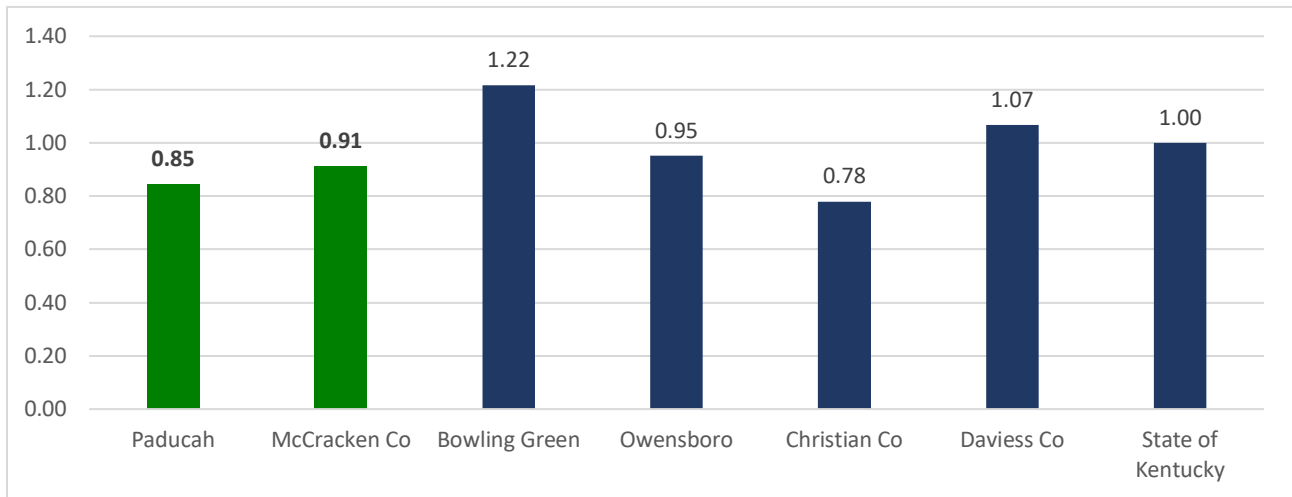
Ratio of Employment to Population in 2020



SOURCE: U.S. Census Bureau, Table DP05, Demographic and Housing Estimates (ACS 2020); Table DPO3, Selected Economic Characteristics (2020).

- **Paducah and McCracken County had about the same ratios of employed persons to population in 2020 relative to the comparison jurisdictions**, other than Bowling Green with its 0.51 ratio and Christian County with a much lower 0.32 ratio.

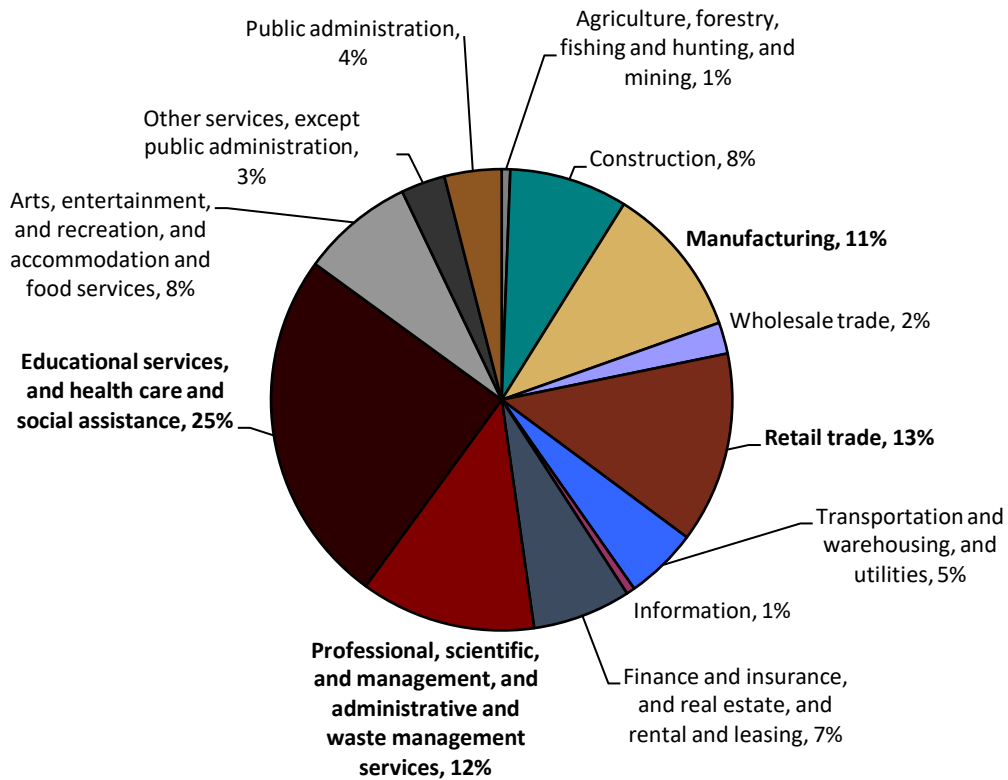
Ratio of Employment to Housing in 2020



SOURCE: U.S. Census Bureau, Table DP05, Demographic and Housing Estimates (ACS 2020); Table DPO3, Selected Economic Characteristics (2020).

- Relative to the previous chart, this chart shows that **Paducah’s ratio of employed persons to housing was effectively double its ratio of employed persons to population in 2020, which is another indicator of housing supply challenges. All of McCracken County was even a bit higher than the city in this ratio comparison.**

Employment by Industry Type in McCracken County (2022)



SOURCE: U.S. Census Bureau, Table DPO3, Selected Economic Characteristics (2022).

- Among McCracken County’s civilian employed population age 16 years and over in 2022, **nearly two-thirds (61%) were working in the four industry sectors with bold labels on the chart above.**
- **By far, the largest share of local employment (25%) was in the Educational services, and health care and social assistance category**, accounting for nearly 7,800 estimated jobs. All other industry sectors besides the three others highlighted were in the single digits in terms of share of local jobs.
- **The top four employment categories highlighted for 2022 accounted for only 54% of local employment as of Census 2000**, increasing to 61% since. **Industries showing the largest gains** in share of local employment were:
 - Professional, scientific, and management, and administrative and waste management services – at 12.3% in 2022 versus 6% in 2000.
 - Educational services, and health care and social assistance – at 25% versus 20.6%.
 - Finance and insurance, and real estate, and rental and leasing – at 6.9% versus 4.1%.
- **Industry sectors that have dropped off the most – although not by much – in their share of local employment were:**
 - Wholesale trade – down 2.7% from 4.9% in 2000 to 2.2% in 2022.
 - Manufacturing – down 2.2% (12.9% versus 10.7%).
 - Arts, entertainment and recreation, and accommodation and food services – down 2% (9.9% versus 7.9%).

- Comparing against the employed population for all of Kentucky:
 - The Educational services, and health care and social assistance category is similarly significant statewide, accounting for 23.8% of employed persons relative to 25% in McCracken County.
 - Retail employment has the next largest share statewide, although at 11.5% relative to 13.4% locally, reflecting Paducah-McCracken County’s role as a regional hub community for shopping and various other services. As another example, the Finance and insurance, and real estate, and rental and leasing category has increased to a 6.9% share locally relative to 5.5% statewide.
 - Manufacturing accounts for a somewhat higher share statewide at 14.5% relative to 10.7% locally.
 - Transportation and warehousing, and utilities has a 7.3% share statewide relative to 5.1% locally.
 - The Professional, scientific, and management, and administrative and waste management services category is 9.4% statewide relative to its doubling since 2000 to 12.3% locally.
 - The local share of employment in Arts, entertainment and recreation, and accommodation and food services is not much different locally (7.9%) relative to statewide (7.6%) – and having declined locally from 9.9% in 2000.

Top 5 Industries in McCracken County by Location Quotient (2022)

A location quotient (LQ) indicates an area’s industrial specialization relative to a larger geographic unit, in this case the entire nation and in terms of employment. An LQ greater than 1.0 means the area has a greater share of its employment concentrated in a particular industry than does the larger comparison geography.



SOURCE: Community and Economic Development Initiative of Kentucky (CEDIK), University of Kentucky.

- The 2022 LQ data confirms that **employment in McCracken County is driven especially by:**
 - Continuing activity at the **gaseous diffusion plant**, which falls within the Utilities industry sector.
 - **Port-related activity and other businesses tied to transportation and warehousing/distribution.**
 - The city and county’s **“hub community” role for the surrounding region** including for retail activity.
 - The area’s location along Interstate 24, between Nashville and St. Louis, which brings a **steady flow of visitors in need of overnight lodging, plus the area’s draw as a tourism and culinary destination.**
 - Also serving as a **hub for medical services**, although the LQ advantage is less significant here given ongoing growth in the health care sector to accommodate an aging U.S. population.

Largest Employers in McCracken County

The largest employers in the county, as tracked by Greater Paducah Economic Development, are:

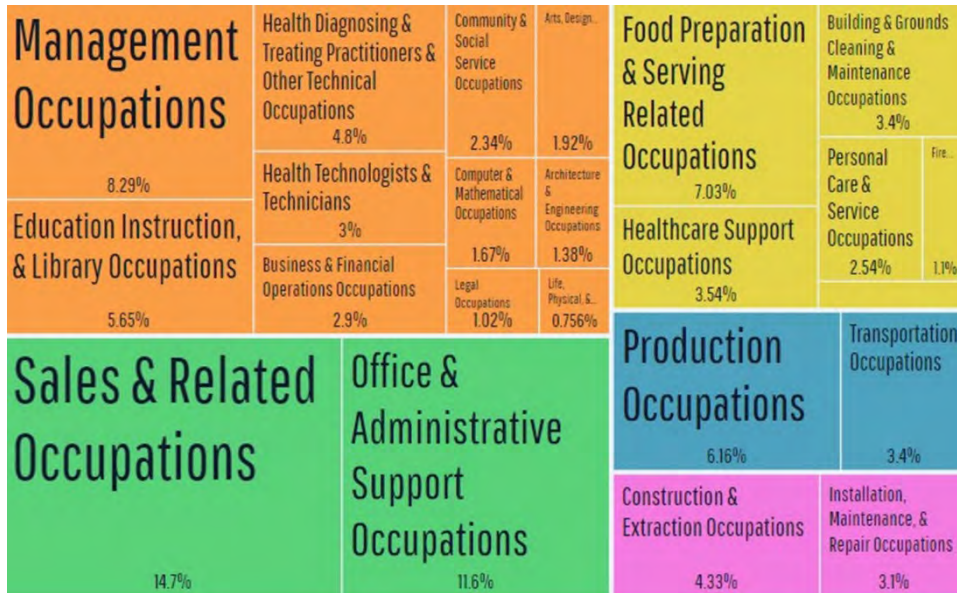
1,000+ Employed

Baptist Health-Paducah	Hospital
Mercy Health-Lourdes	Hospital

500+ Employed

Four Rivers Nuclear Partnership	Clean-up contractor for gaseous diffusion plant
James Marine	Inland marine/barge manufacturing
Marquette Transportation Co.	Marine transportation (headquarters)
McCracken County Public School	K-12 education
Walmart (2 locations)	Retail

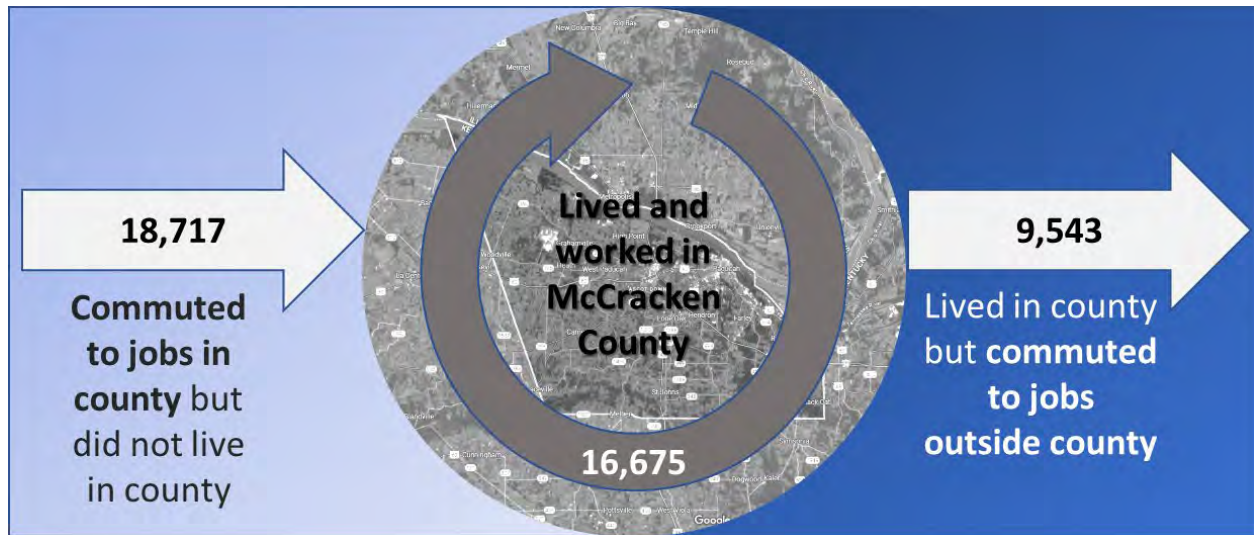
Allocation of Occupations in McCracken County (2021)



SOURCE: Community and Economic Development Initiative of Kentucky (CEDIK), University of Kentucky.

- The CEDIK infographic above shows that **workers in McCracken County, as of 2021, were distributed across a wide range of occupations, with no predominant types.** The largest shares were working in:
 - Sales and related occupations (14.7%).
 - Office and administrative support occupations (11.6%).
 - Management occupations (8.3%).
 - Food preparation and serving related occupations (7%).

Commuting Patterns for McCracken County (2020)



SOURCE: U.S. Census Bureau - OnTheMap resource.

- McCracken County had **96% more inbound than outbound commuters** in 2020. Since this data only becomes available several years later, the newest commute data is from the height of the COVID pandemic. Future data releases should indicate whether commuting volumes and directions have returned to traditional patterns or if a “new normal” is here to stay.
- The 2020 numbers indicate that **just over one-third (36.4%) of the county’s employed residents traveled outside the county to their place of work**. Employment locations in **Marshall County to the east (1,315 McCracken County residents)** and **Graves County to the south (1,096 County residents)** were the most common destinations of outbound commuters.
- The **largest share of inbound commuters employed in McCracken County in 2020 were also from Marshall County (2,815) and Graves County (2,501)**, followed by Massac County across the Ohio River in Illinois (1,660). Only 515 McCracken County residents commuted to Massac County.
- Along with other draws that bring daily and weekend visitors into McCracken County (shopping and services, health care, education, restaurants and entertainment, parks and recreation, arts and culture, special events, lodging and tourist destinations, etc.), these inbound commute figures indicate the extent of additional wear and tear on area roadways – plus other public service demands – the City and County must address given a **much higher daytime population versus McCracken County’s actual resident population** (the Paducah Police Department cites the Paducah Area Chamber of Commerce estimate that peak daytime population within the city at times can exceed 100,000 relative to approximately 27,000 actual city residents and nearly 68,000 in the entire county).

PLANNING THEME 1B:
Increasing the quantity and variety of housing options.

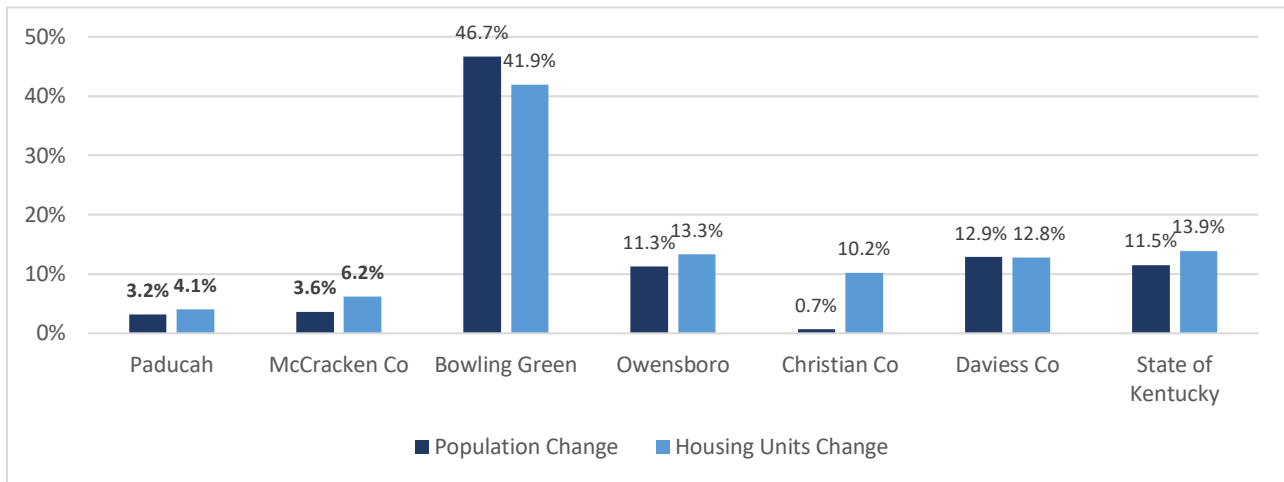
SURVEY LINK

In response to this statement on the survey:

“For our area to be more successful in its economic development efforts, the City, County and other community partners must first prioritize ways to spur more local housing development, of all types, to be more appealing to both prospective residents and businesses.”

- 42.3% agreed and 34.2% somewhat agreed, for a combined total exceeding three-quarters (77.4%) of respondents.

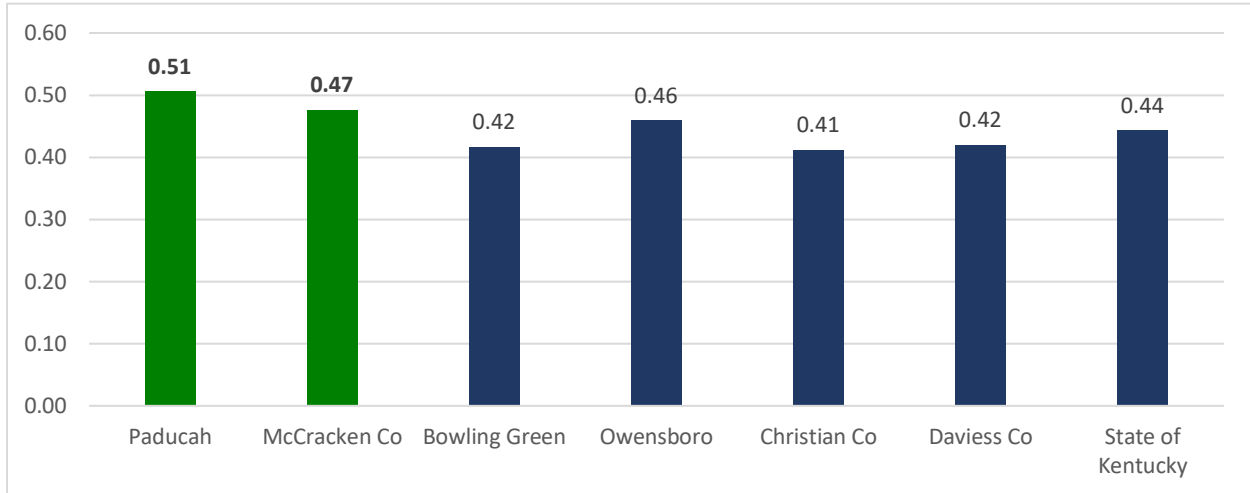
Change in Housing Units Relative to Population, 2000-2020



SOURCE: U.S. Census Bureau, Table DP05, Demographic and Housing Estimates (ACS 2020); Table H001, Housing Units (2000).

- **Paducah and McCracken County both added to their total housing inventory from 2000 to 2020 at a higher rate than their respective population growth** (city housing stock increased from 13,178 to 13,713; county housing stock increased from 30,361 to 32,237). This indicates that housing cost and appropriate options for prospective buyers may be the essential issues more than basic housing supply – although it was pointed out during Comprehensive Plan discussions that some area housing construction in recent years still involved “catching up with needs” rather than getting fully ahead of current housing demand.

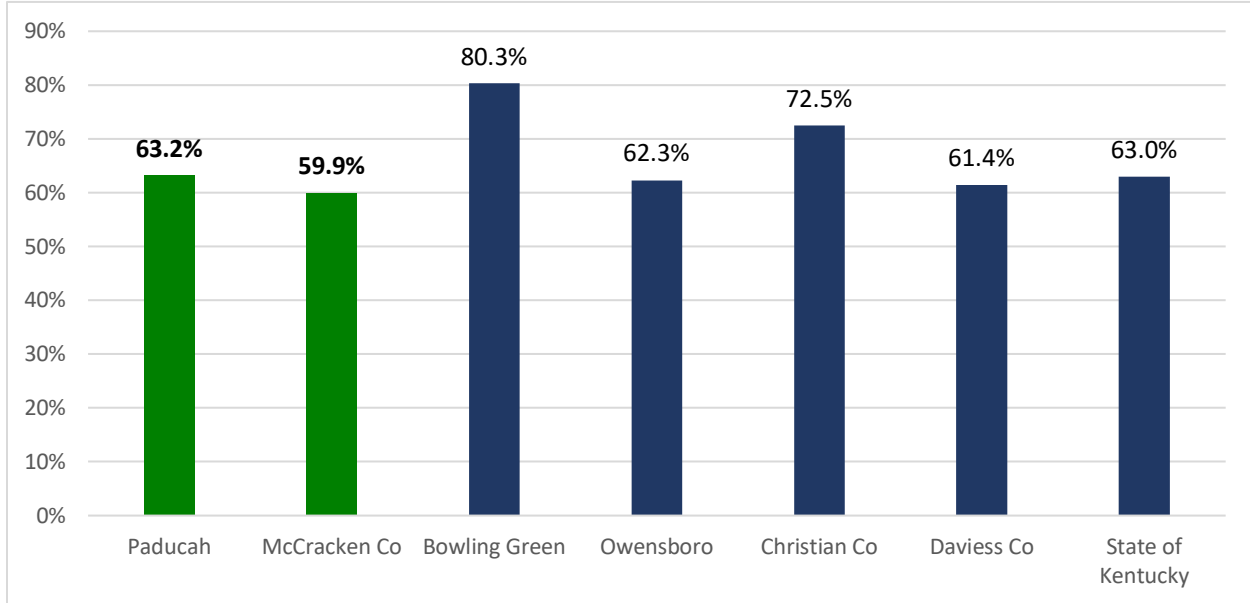
Ratio of Housing Units to Population in 2020



SOURCE: U.S. Census Bureau, Table DP05, Demographic and Housing Estimates (ACS 2020).

- **Paducah and McCracken County also had the highest ratios of housing quantity to population in 2020 relative to the comparison jurisdictions.** This is another indication that sheer supply may not be the issue as much as the housing variety, price points and rent levels that current residents and newcomers to the area encounter when searching for housing.

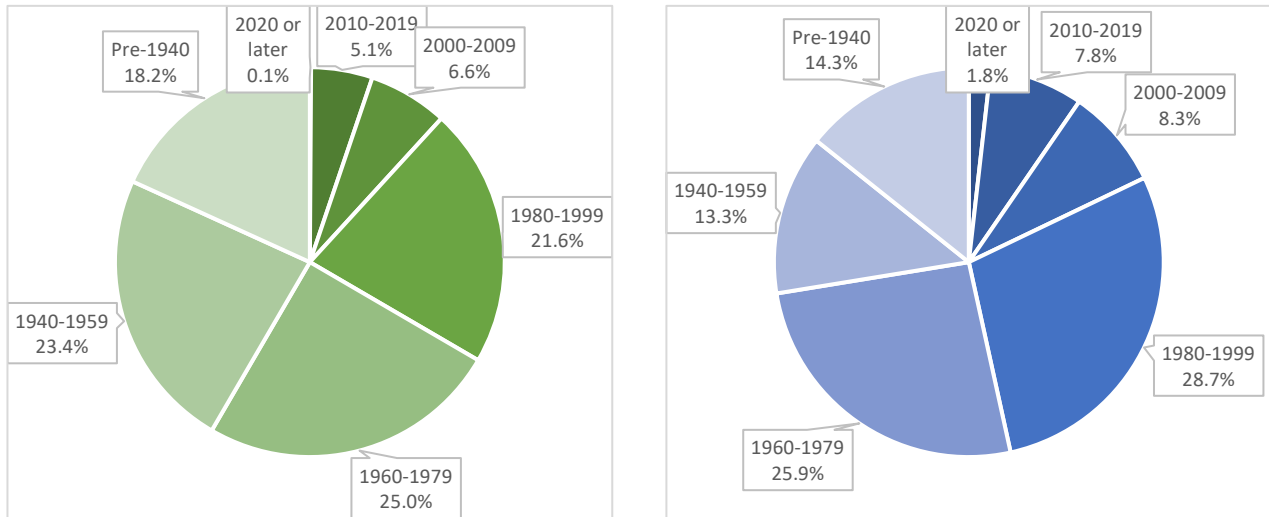
Share of Occupied Housing Units Where Householder Moved In Since 2010 (2021)



SOURCE: U.S. Census Bureau, Table S2502 (American Community Survey Demographic Characteristics for Occupied Housing Units, 2021).

- Setting aside the dynamism of housing occupancy year to year in a college town like Bowling Green, which makes it an outlier on the chart above, **Paducah compares favorably to the other jurisdictions in terms of the extent of occupancy change in local housing in recent years**, with nearly two-thirds of its housing occupied by a new householder at some point since 2010.
- **McCracken County was the lowest in this comparison** at 59.9%, but still not markedly different from most of the other jurisdictions in the extent of its housing occupancy change.

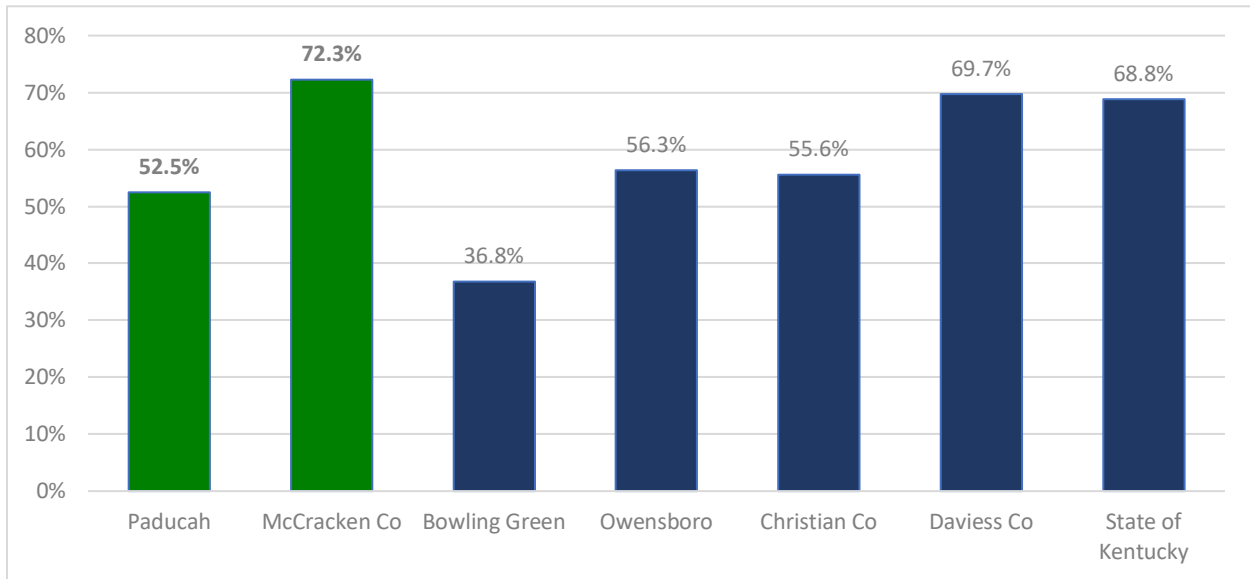
Age of Occupied Housing Units, Paducah and McCracken County (2021)



SOURCE: U.S. Census Bureau, Table S2504 (American Community Survey Physical Housing Characteristics for Occupied Housing Units, 2021).

- Despite the positive indications of local dynamism in housing occupancy from the previous chart, the charts on this page confirm the experiences heard from newcomers to the area – and from those already local who are looking to move up in the area housing market – that newer housing with the latest features and construction quality is difficult to find in Paducah and McCracken County. This leaves many weighing the cost/benefit of investing in substantial upgrades to an older home, or else considering newer rental options.
- As of 2021, an estimated **5.2% of all occupied housing units in Paducah had been built since 2010**. The comparison number **for all of McCracken County was 9.6%**. **Two-thirds (66.6%) of all occupied dwellings in the city were built before 1980**, and the comparable **percentage countywide was still over half (53.5%)** of all housing dating to 1979 or earlier.
- Owensboro had the same percentage built since 2010 as Paducah at 5.2%, but Bowling Green had seen 20.2% of its occupied housing built since then. The county-level comparisons also exceeded the McCracken County percentage, with 13.0% built in Christian County since 2010 and 11.1% in Daviess County. Statewide, the percentage built since 2010 was 12.0%.

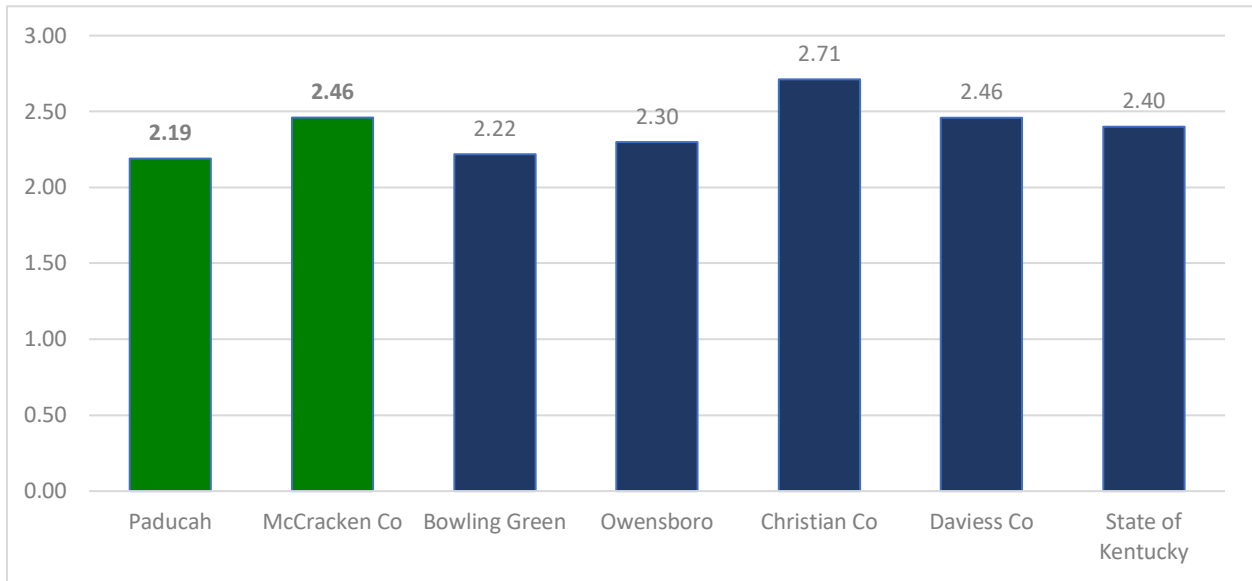
Share of Owner-Occupied Housing Units (2021)



SOURCE: U.S. Census Bureau, Table S2504 (American Community Survey Physical Housing Characteristics for Occupied Housing Units, 2021).

- Again, setting aside the college town situation of Bowling Green, **Paducah in 2021 had the lowest estimated percentage of owner-occupied housing (52.5%)** across the comparison communities. This could reflect multiple factors such as limited availability of ownership housing – in terms of sheer quantity and/or time on the market, or an affordability mismatch between sales prices and the purchasing power (and/or mortgage qualification) of area buyers, forcing them toward rental options.
- On the other hand, **McCracken County had the highest owner-occupancy share at 72.3%**, likely reflecting the lagging supply of multi-family housing in the area as noted anecdotally in Comprehensive Plan discussions.

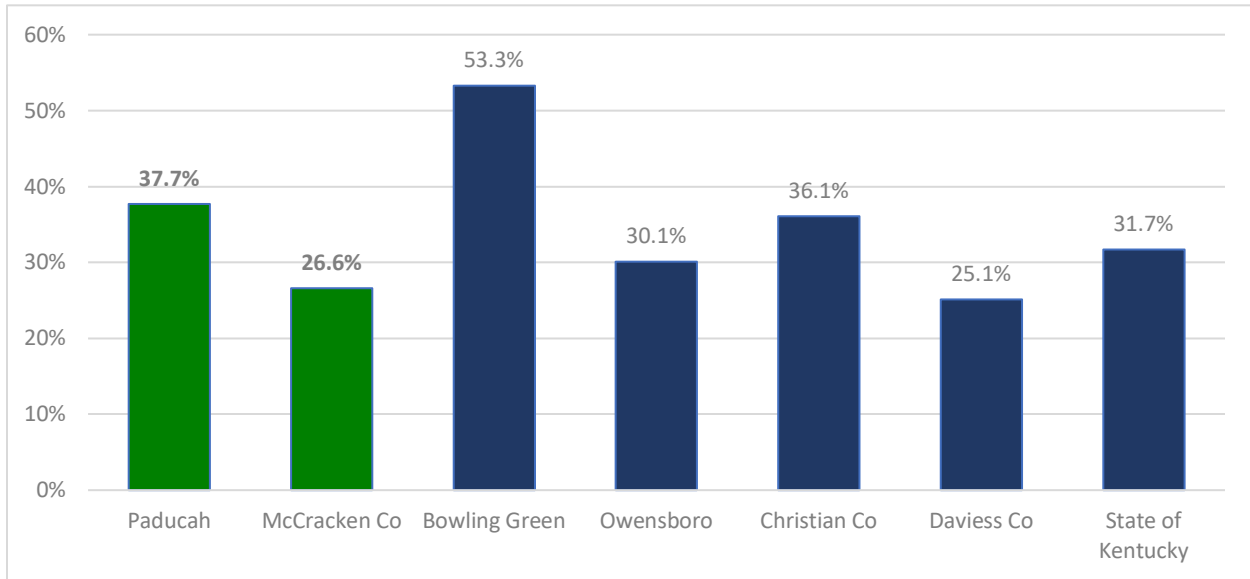
Average Household Size (2021)



SOURCE: U.S. Census Bureau, Table S1101 (American Community Survey Household and Families, 2021).

- Meanwhile, **Paducah has a relatively low average household size**, possibly indicating a greater need for alternative housing types that would still promote home ownership but in smaller dwelling sizes or styles than traditional single-family detached homes with a number of bedrooms and bathrooms to accommodate families and larger households.
- The **average household size countywide is toward the higher end of the comparisons**, likely reflecting the relatively high share of traditional single-family detached homes shown on the next chart.

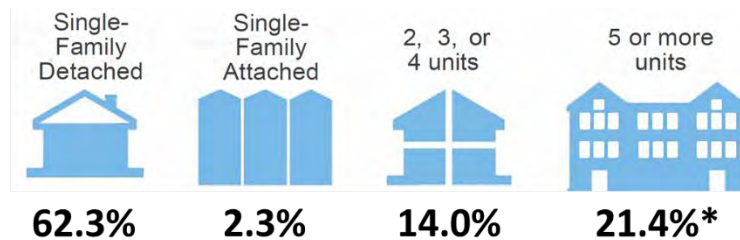
Share of Occupied Housing Units of Other Types than Single-Family Detached (2021)



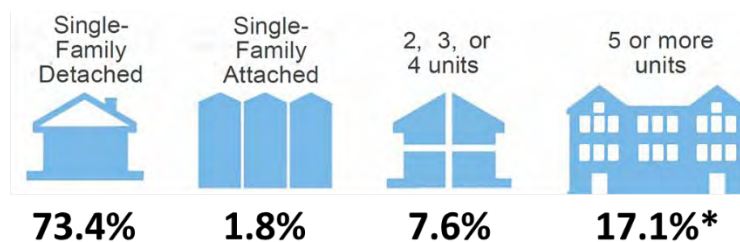
SOURCE: U.S. Census Bureau, Table S2504 (American Community Survey Physical Housing Characteristics for Occupied Housing Units, 2021).

- Similar to the earlier chart showing shares of owner-occupied housing units, this chart confirms that **Paducah has a relatively high percentage (37.7%) of housing supply in forms other than single-family detached dwellings** (again excluding Bowling Green as college towns tend to have much more varied housing types).
- On the other hand, all of **McCracken County is relatively low in its share of housing types other than single-family detached** at 26.6%.

City of Paducah Housing Mix in 2021

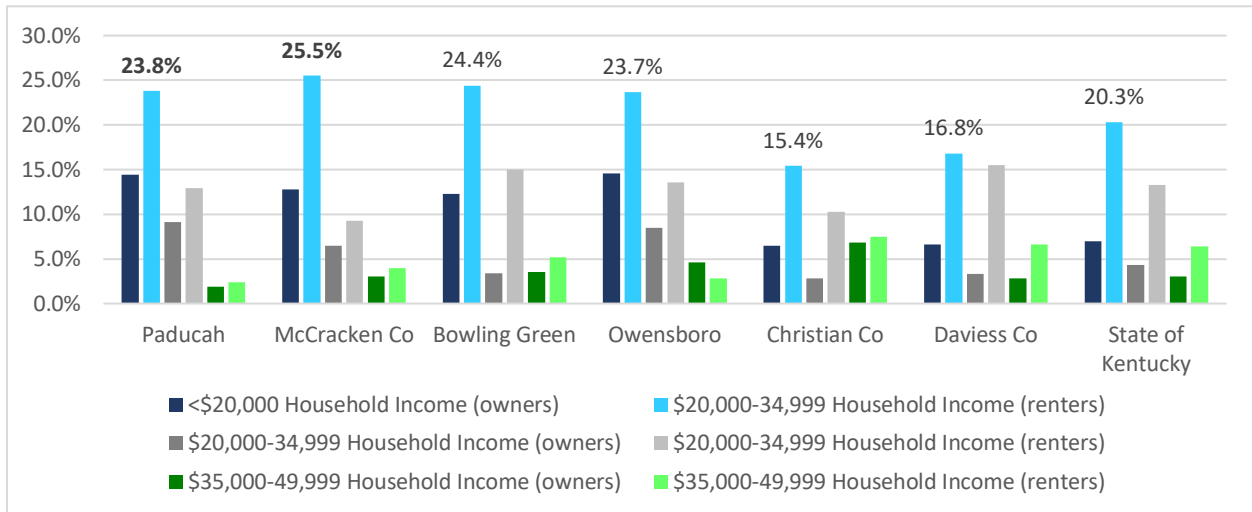


McCracken County Housing Mix in 2021



* Includes mobile home units and other miscellaneous housing types (2.7% of total for city, 7.7% of total for county).

Share of Home Owners and Renters Paying more than 30% of Income in Housing Costs (2021)



SOURCE: U.S. Census Bureau, Table S2503 (American Community Survey Financial Characteristics, 2021).

- Based on 2021 estimates, **nearly a quarter (23.8%) of the lowest-income renters within Paducah and 25.5% of the same group across all of McCracken County were paying more than 30% of their income toward monthly housing costs** – a common indicator of housing unaffordability. The numbers for both city and county at higher income levels were not as unfavorable as in some other parts of the U.S. regarding the burden of housing costs. However, such numbers remain in flux given adverse market conditions and inflation pressures across the nation the last few years.
- Relative to nearly all the comparison cities and counties plus statewide, except for Owensboro, **Paducah and McCracken County had the highest share of their lowest-income home owners above the 30% housing cost threshold.**
- At income levels of \$50,000 and higher in both the city and county, only a few percentage points of owners and renters were cost-burdened by their current housing situation in 2021.

The table below, based on additional rules of thumb for housing affordability, shows that a Paducah resident earning the 2021 estimated median household income (\$42,024) could afford a home worth up to \$126,072. The estimated median home value that same year was slightly higher at \$134,300, indicating that much of the lower end of the in-city housing market – somewhat below the median value – would be attainable to the median earner. But many prospective home owners are aiming higher, wanting newer housing with contemporary amenities and not in need of significant repairs or renovation before move-in. The numbers for McCracken County show that its median earner in 2021 (\$64,082) could afford a home nearly \$10,500 above the estimated countywide median home value at the time (up to \$192,246). However, a \$250,000 house price was cited multiple times in Comprehensive Plan discussions as the minimum threshold to more desirable housing styles and sizes that residents and newcomers are seeking.

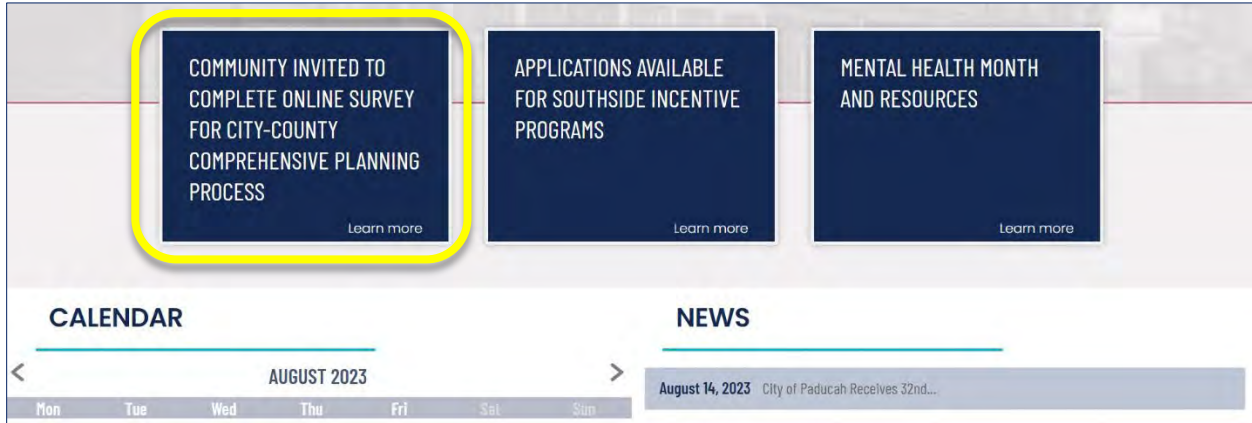
	Median Household Income (2021)	Maximum Home Price Affordable to Median Household Income	Median Home Value (2021)	Minimum Household Income to Afford Median-Priced Home
City of Paducah	\$42,024	\$126,072 [3x Median Household Income]	\$134,300	\$44,766 [0.33x Median Home Value]
McCracken County	\$64,082	\$192,246 [3x Median Household Income]	\$181,900	\$60,633 [0.33x Median Home Value]

SOURCE: U.S. Census Bureau, Table S2503 (American Community Survey Financial Characteristics, 2021);
Table S2506 (ACS Financial Characteristics for Housing Units with a Mortgage, 2021).

Community Survey Highlights

Paducah-McCracken County Joint Comprehensive Plan

As another way to obtain broad input to the City and County’s joint Comprehensive Plan effort from area residents, business community and others, a survey was made available online to supplement and reinforce in-person outreach activities completed during April-June 2023. The survey was available for four weeks starting in early August. It was promoted on the City and County websites and through other usual public notification means, and the survey effort also drew local media coverage. The survey closed on September 8 and received **1,154 total responses**.



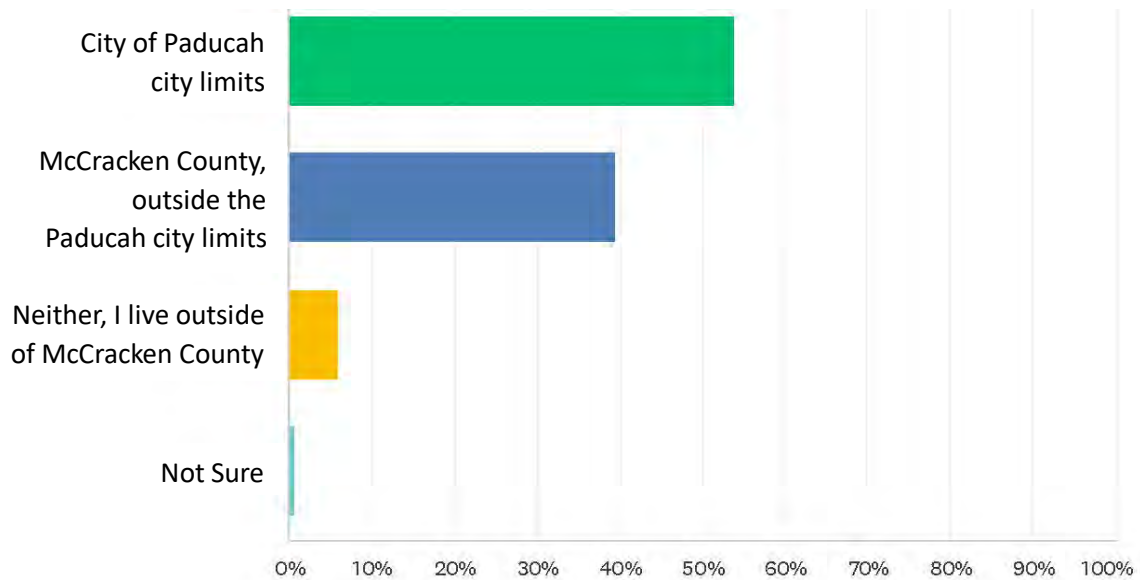
The survey included 24 questions, providing a mix of multiple-choice and open-ended response question types. On average, respondents took 9 minutes to complete the survey and answered 71%, or 17 of the 24, survey questions. Respondents were not required to answer every question to proceed through the survey. The response rate for each question is provided in this summary report.

As this was an open online survey, the first question asked whether the respondent lived in the City of Paducah, McCracken County or outside of the county. If a respondent answered “Outside of McCracken County” or “Not Sure,” they were able to answer only questions 1, 2, 7, 8 and 9 – with 8 and 9 the same as questions 10 and 11 for residents of the city and county.



PADUCAH-McCRACKEN COUNTY COMMUNITY SURVEY HIGHLIGHTS

QUESTION 1: Do you live in ...

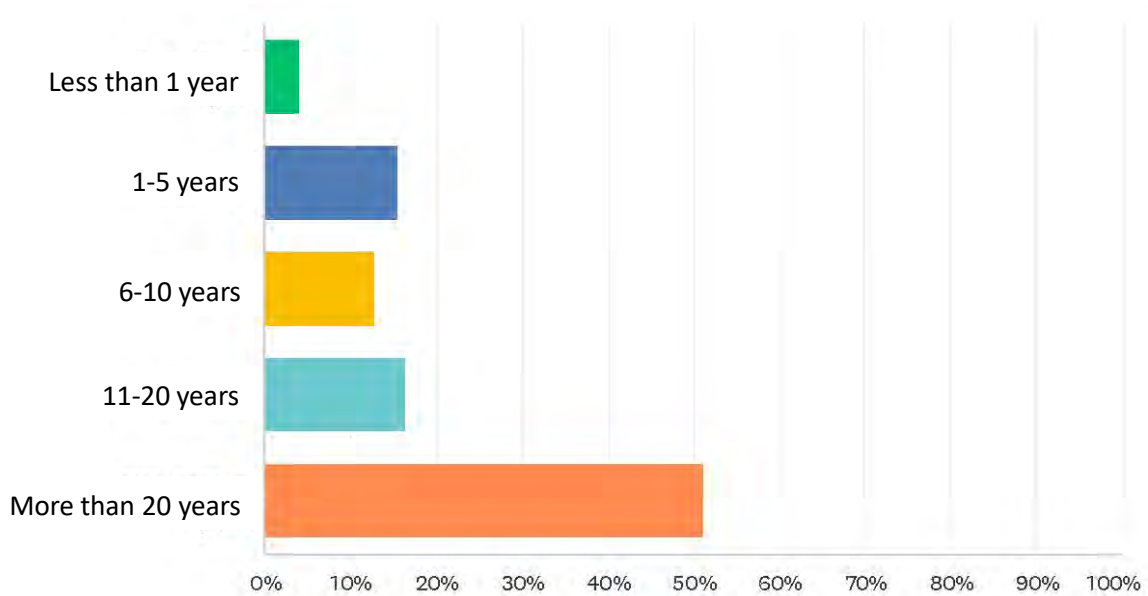


- 1,152 of the 1,154 survey respondents answered this question – only 2 did not.
- 54% of respondents live within the city, 39.4% live in the county outside the Paducah city limits, 5.9% live outside of McCracken county, and 0.69% were not sure.

QUESTION 2: Physical Location

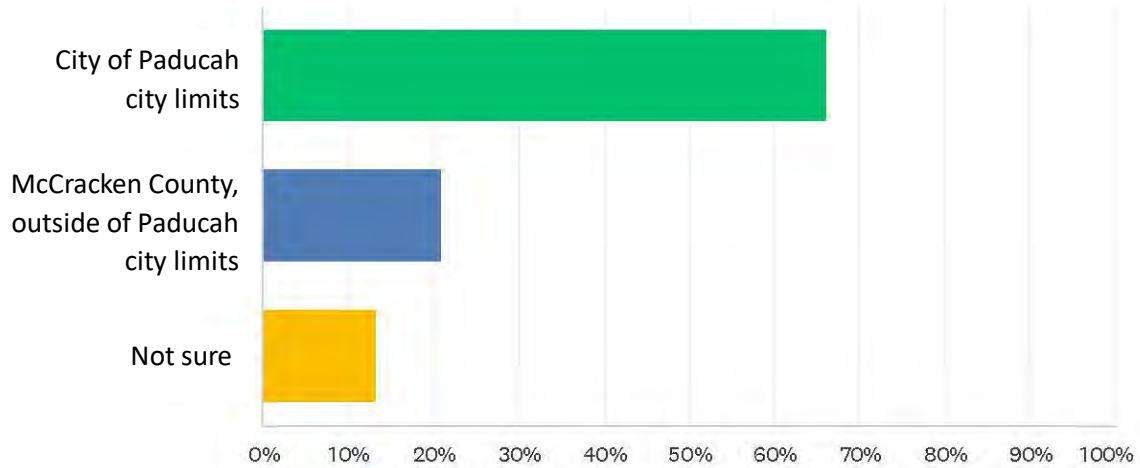
This question asked participants who live within the city or county to provide their address (or nearest intersection) so the general geographic coverage of the survey response could be made visual on a map. Of the 1,086 respondents eligible to answer this question, 857 (81.2%) provided an answer. However, only 454 (53.0%) of the 857 responses provided enough detail to pinpoint a specific location, so the map illustration was not pursued. However, a broader review of the Question 2 responses confirmed that the survey was completed at various locations across the county based on references to place names such as Camelia, Concord, Lone Oak, Reidland, St. Johns, West Paducah, etc.

QUESTION 3: How long have you lived in the city or county?



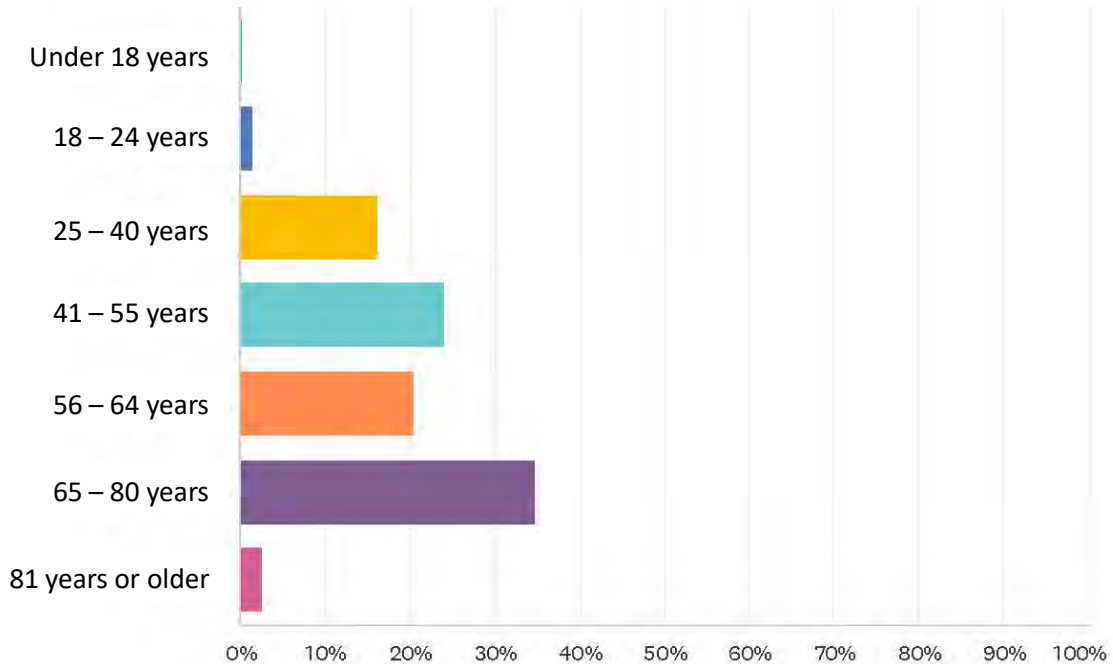
- 995 (91.6%) of the 1,086 eligible resident respondents answered this question.
- 51.2% of respondents have lived in Paducah and/or McCracken County for 20 years or more.
- 19.6% of the respondents are fairly new to the city and county, having moved here within the last five years.

QUESTION 4: Is your place of business or employment in:



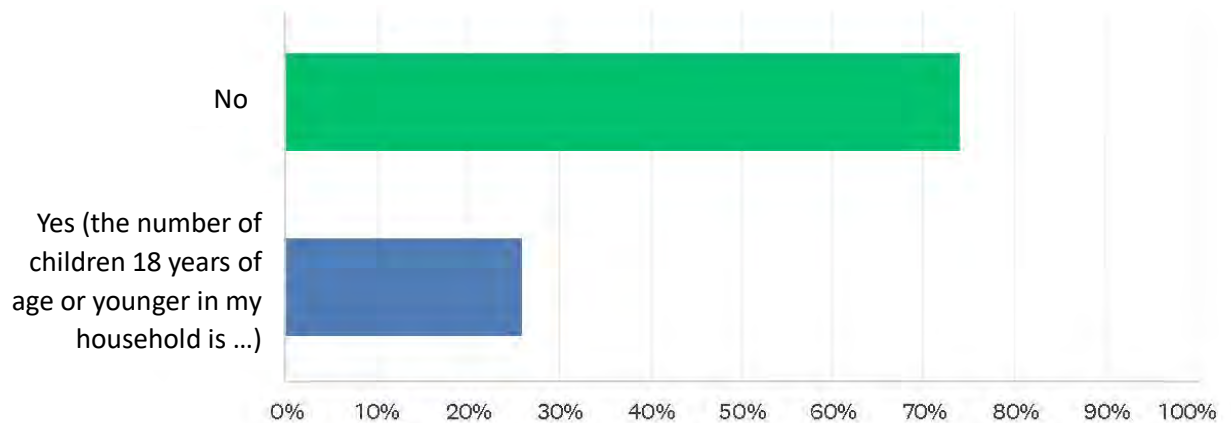
- 793 (73.0%) of the 1,086 eligible resident respondents answered this question.
- 66.1% of the respondents work within the City of Paducah, while 20.8% work outside of the city limits but within the county.

QUESTION 5: In which age range are you?



- 994 (91.5%) of the 1,086 eligible resident respondents answered this question.
- Just over one-third of respondents (34.8%), and the largest share of respondents to this question, noted that they are 65-80 years old.
- The second largest group of respondents (24.1%) included people between ages 41-55.

QUESTION 6: If you are an adult, do any children 18 years of age or younger live in your household?



- 987 (90.9%) of the 1,086 eligible resident respondents answered this question.
- 26% of respondents answered “Yes,” with anywhere from 1 to 10 children age 18 years or younger in their household.

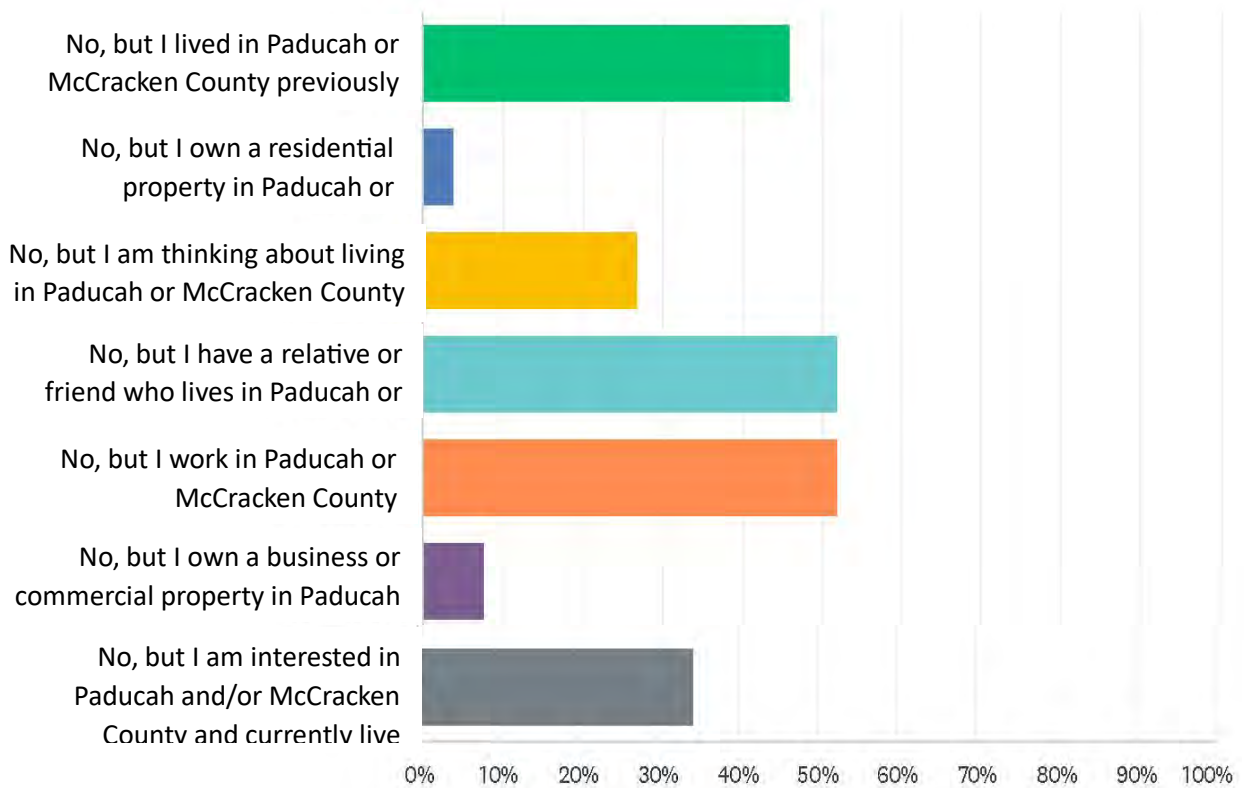
QUESTION 7: Non-Resident Reasons for Interest in Paducah and/or McCracken County

Those who identified as non-residents in Question 1 were asked to check all that apply out of seven options shown on the chart below. Among the 52 (76.5%) of the 68 eligible respondents who answered, the top three responses were:

- No, but I lived in Paducah or McCracken County previously. (46.2%)
- No, but I have a relative or friend who lives in Paducah or McCracken County. (51.9%)
- No, but I work in Paducah or McCracken County. (51.9%)

18 respondents (34.6%) chose the last option – “No, but I am interested in Paducah or McCracken County and currently live elsewhere” – and provided their current locations. These included Ballard County, Calloway County, Graves County, Marshall County, Kentucky Lake, Kevil (KY), Louisville (KY), Sharpe (KY), Clarksville (TN), Knoxville (TN), Unionville (IL), Humble (TX), Missouri, Illinois and Wyoming.

PADUCAH-McCRACKEN COUNTY COMMUNITY SURVEY HIGHLIGHTS



QUESTION 10:

What positives about Paducah and/or McCracken County today and into the future energize you most?

For this open-ended question, 708 (65.2%) of the 1,086 eligible resident respondents answered. Representative quotations are included below, and similar responses were consolidated. **[Question 8 posed the same question to non-residents, whose responses are compiled below after the resident list.]**

- Safety and responsiveness of first responders.
- School system.
- Good medical facilities and physicians.
- Excitement about the new sports area/sports complex.

“The up and coming sports complex that will not only help our city economically but will have something to offer children to keep them engaged in positive activities.”

- Parks, trails and green space, including the greenway and dog park.

“Our commitment to quality of life for our citizens. The Greenway Trail, Noble Park, Riverfront, downtown entertainment district all contribute to a healthy, exciting lifestyle.”

- Development of downtown area.

“I was born and raised in Paducah, left in 1989 and moved back in 2021. I can tell that the city is trying to bring the downtown area back to life (good thing).”

- Rural setting.
- Diverse cultures.

PADUCAH-McCRACKEN COUNTY COMMUNITY SURVEY HIGHLIGHTS

- Events, entertainment and the arts.

"We have a thriving artist community which contributes to our community and tourism."

- Growth of new businesses.

"I love how we encourage mom and pop owned business in downtown area. I like seeing the arts being a major focus."

- Services for senior citizens.
- Geographic location to other large cities.
- Small town feel with big city amenities.

"It is an easy town to travel in, the cost of living is reasonable, efforts continue at work to enhance the quality of life in the area – retail offerings, recreational options, cultural offerings."

- Low traffic congestion, walkable and bikeable.
- Activities on the waterfront and new riverfront projects.
- Public library.
- Restaurants and breweries.
- Positive, friendly people and a sense of community.

"I like our connected community. How we as a collective strive to be a unit of one. This is a wonderful place to raise your children."

- Growth and jobs.
- Family events and activities.
- High quality of life and affordable cost of living.
- Tourism opportunities.
- New airport terminal.
- Cooperation between government entities.

Of the 68 non-resident respondents, 41 (60.3%) responded to the same question. Their responses included:

- New development.
- Arts, entertainment and events.
- Parks.
- Proposed sports complex.
- Job opportunities.
- Location in the region.
- Cost of living.
- Small town feel, big city amenities.
- Downtown revitalization.
- Riverfront work.
- New businesses.

PADUCAH-McCRACKEN COUNTY COMMUNITY SURVEY HIGHLIGHTS

- City and County cooperation.
- Community focused organizations.
- Educational opportunities.

QUESTION 11:

What concerns you most about Paducah and/or McCracken County today and into the future?

For this second open-ended question, 751 (69.2%) of the 1,086 eligible resident respondents answered. Representative quotations are included below, and similar responses were consolidated. **[Question 9 posed the same question to non-residents, whose responses are compiled below after the resident list.]**

- Losing the small town feel.
- Cost of living and high taxes.
- Condition of infrastructure.
- Lack of job opportunities at large employers.
- Types of retail and services available.
- Lack of coordinated approach to economic development.
- Increase in crime.
- Poor property upkeep.
- Not keeping up with growth in the area, and losing out on opportunities for the community.
- Local governments that are not cooperative.
- Lack of affordable housing.

"I worry about the stability of the medical community both from a financial standpoint and a staffing standpoint."

- Lack of cultural diversity.
- Lack of youth programming.
- Slow pace of development.
- Vacant buildings.

"Older buildings not being used to their full potential for the good of the community. For example, commercial property prices are too high and those spaces could be used to house homeless, etc."

- Lack of safe transportation for all modes, not just cars.
- A clear vision for growth.

Of the 68 non-resident respondents, 38 (55.9%) responded to the same question. Their responses included:

- Education.
- Maintenance of City and County facilities, including parks and recreation facilities.
- Small business decline.
- Attraction of large employers.

PADUCAH-McCRACKEN COUNTY COMMUNITY SURVEY HIGHLIGHTS

- Lack of cooperation between City and County governments.
- Potential traffic issues with new growth.
- Lack of unified vision for the area.
- Challenge of attracting and retaining educated young professionals.
- Flooding concerns after rain.
- Lack of affordable housing.
- Increase in crime.
- Lack of diversity and inclusion.

QUESTION 12:

Top 5 priorities from a list of 20 items frequently mentioned in early leadership and public input for the current Comprehensive Plan update process.

For this question, 795 (73%) of the 1,086 eligible resident respondents answered. The following items were ranked among the top five most often, in this order:

- Safe community and City/County public safety services (police, fire, emergency medical service). (44.5%)
- Infrastructure condition and capacity (streets, water, sanitary sewer). (42.9%)
- Make the area more attractive to retain – or regain – youth who grew up here, and to attract younger individuals and families (i.e., quality jobs, housing, amenities, etc.). (42.5%)
- Storm water management, mitigation of flooding risks and readiness to deal with and recover from natural hazards. (39.6%)
- Continue efforts to diversify the area’s economic and employment base, for long-term economic sustainability and also to offer a wider range of job options to current and prospective residents. (38.1%)

Other options on the list of 20 selected most often for the top five included:

- Increased quantity and variety of housing options. (31.7%)
- Preservation of the area’s natural resources and landscapes. (29.6%)
- Continue to build on the area’s success as a tourist destination. (25.8%)

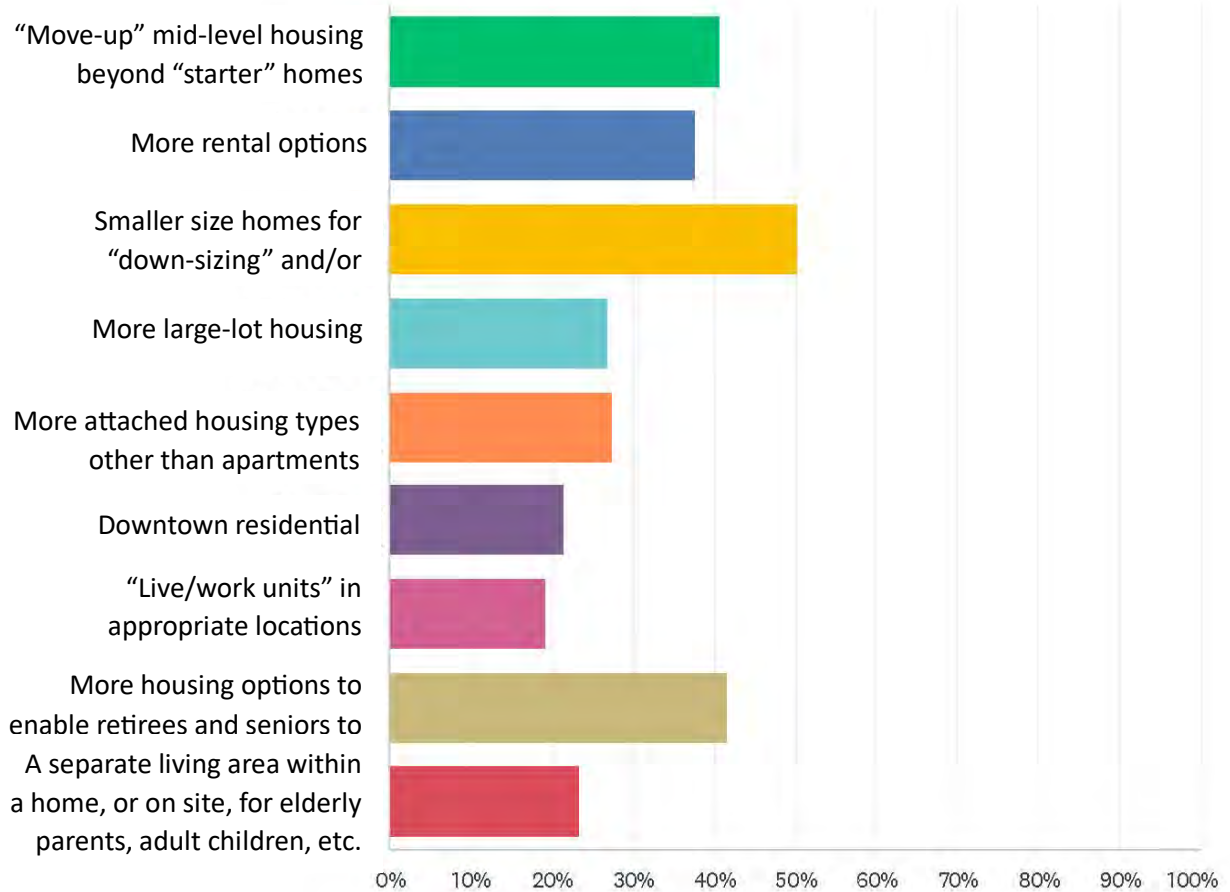
QUESTION 13:

Do you have other priorities for the Comprehensive Plan review that are not included on the list above?

Following the previous question, resident participants were given the opportunity to identify other top priorities to address beyond those listed. Two-thirds, or 717 (66.0%) of the 1,086 eligible resident respondents answered this question, 220 of whom (30.7%) said “yes.” Similar responses were consolidated.

- Maintenance of streets.
- Clean up the river.
- Attract more diverse and family-owned businesses.
- Increase traffic safety.
- Safety for all modes of transportation including walking, biking and buses.
- Attract more jobs in additional industries.
- Attract businesses and services specifically for residents, such as areas in need of a grocery store.
- Reduce crime and increase police presence in neighborhoods.
- Plan for future parks and green spaces.
- Increase efforts to include diverse cultures and voices.
- Offer a wider range of housing options and price points.
- Additional emphasis on the arts.
- Equal attention to the needs of all parts of the community.
- Attention to economic development efforts.
- Increase collaboration between City and County governments.

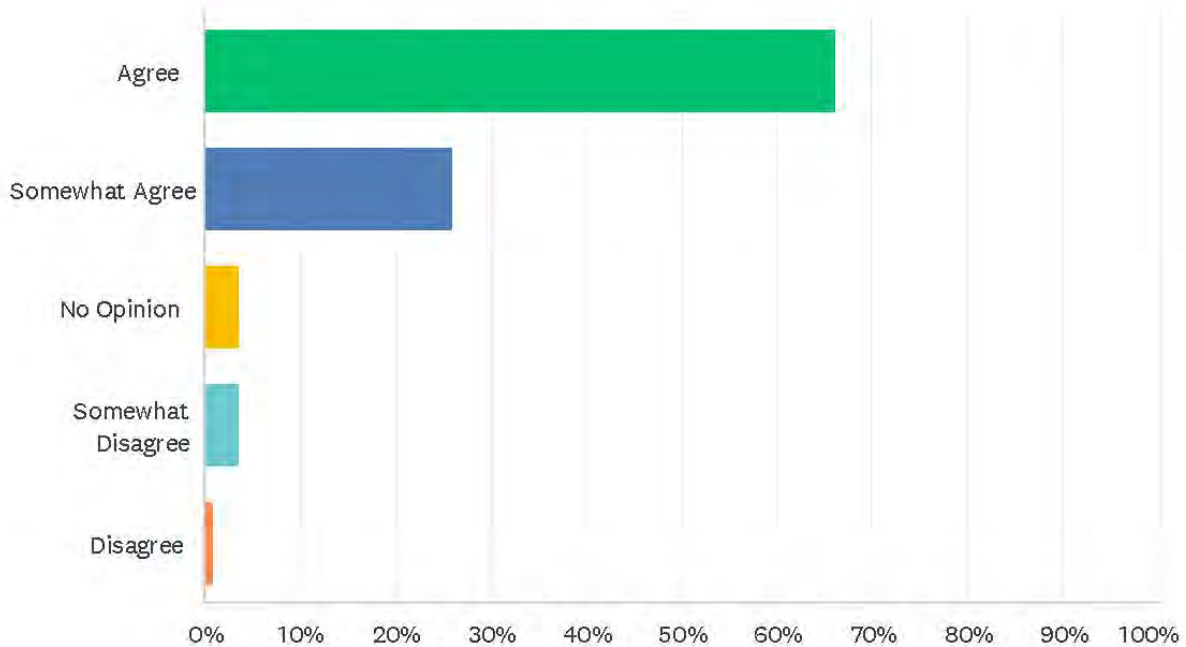
QUESTION 14:
Housing is a key concern in Paducah and McCracken County as in many parts of the nation. What housing options does this area need more of? Please check all that apply.



- 709 (65.3%) of the 1,086 eligible resident respondents answered this question.
- Half of the respondents (50.4%) selected the option to increase the amount of "smaller homes for 'down-sizing' and/or affordability."
- The second and third most selected options nearly tied, with 41.6% and 40.6% respectively – "More housing options to enable retirees and seniors to stay in the area" and "'Move-up' mid-level housing beyond 'starter' homes."

QUESTION 15:

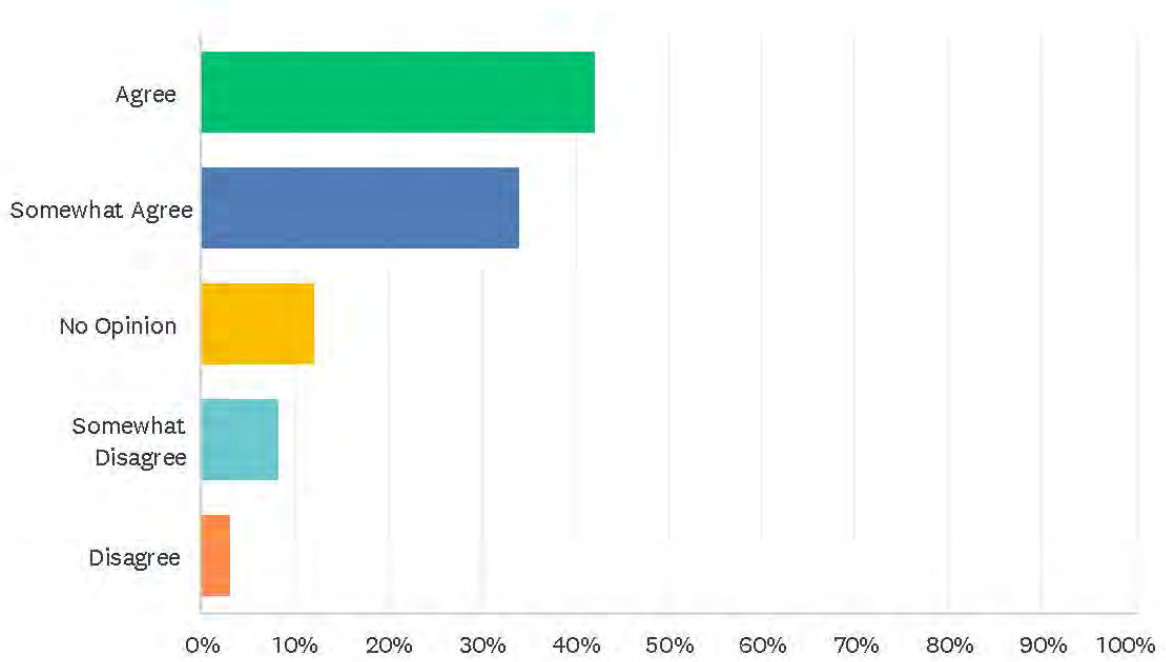
The City and County should treat as “Job 1” economic development that generates well-paying jobs in key and emerging industries, especially to retain and attract young adults and other workers who are already drawn by the area’s recreational and cultural assets.



- 766 (70.5%) of the 1,086 eligible resident respondents answered this question.
- 66.2% agree.
- 26.0% somewhat agree, making the combination of agree and somewhat agree over 90% (92.2%) – the highest percentage among the series of Agree/Disagree questions that continue through Question 19.
- The remaining 7.8% have no opinion or somewhat disagree or disagree.

QUESTION 16:

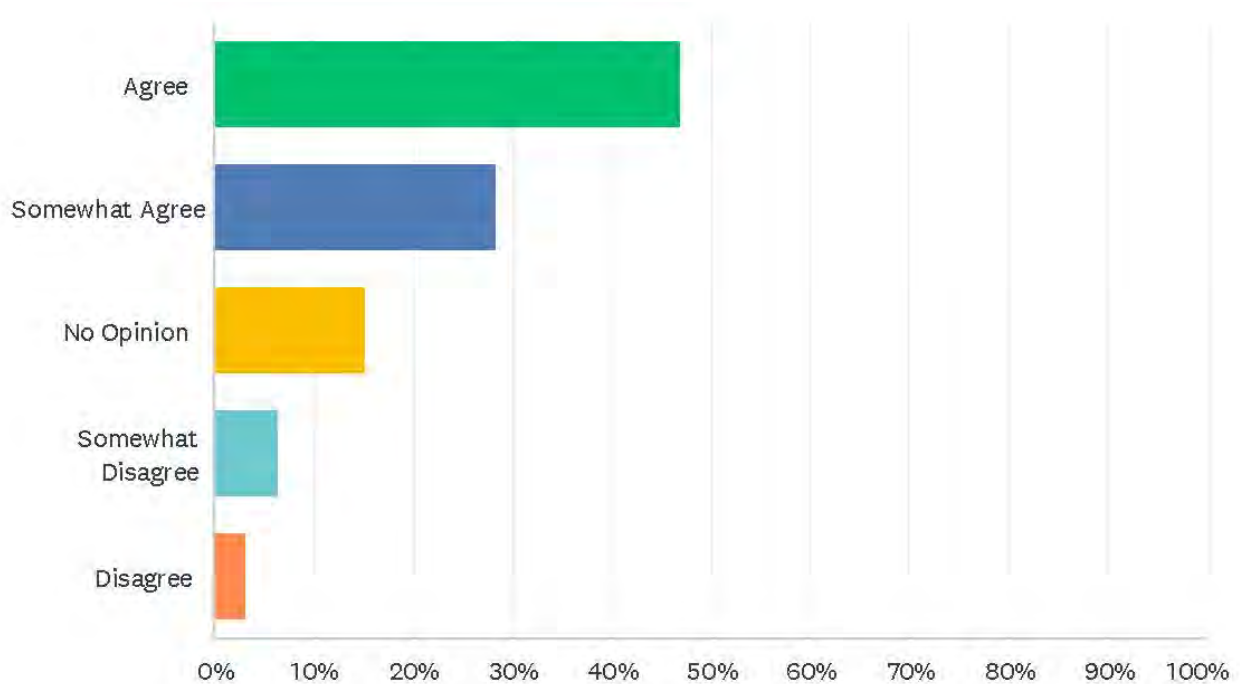
For our area to be more successful in its economic development efforts, the City, County and other community partners must first prioritize ways to spur more local housing development, of all types, to be more appealing to both prospective residents and businesses.



- 764 (70.3%) of the 1,086 eligible resident respondents answered this question.
- 42.3% agree.
- 34.2% somewhat agree, making the combination of agree and somewhat agree just over three-quarters (77.4%).
- 8.3% somewhat disagree, and 3.1% disagree.
- 12.2% have no opinion.

QUESTION 17:

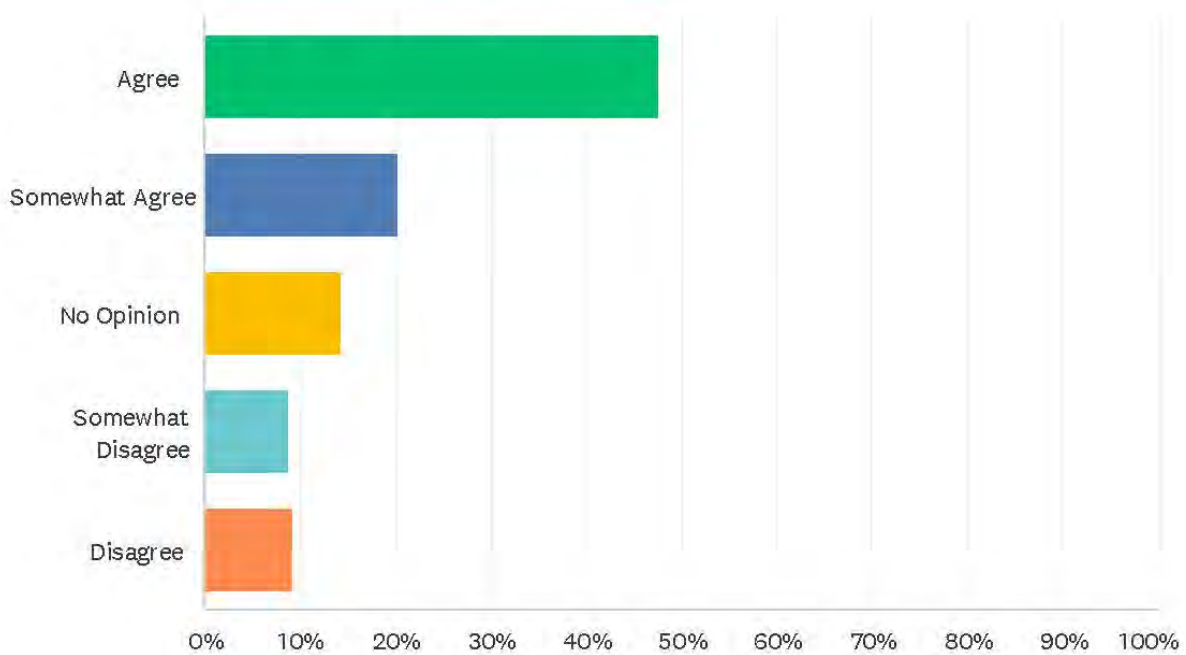
Among its long-term planning priorities, McCracken County should focus on protecting agricultural activity in the county and preserving rural character and landscapes while accommodating beneficial housing and economic development in appropriate locations.



- 764 (70.3%) of the 1,086 eligible resident respondents answered this question.
- 47.0% agree.
- 28.3% somewhat agree, making the combination of agree and somewhat agree approximately three-quarters (75.3%).
- 9.6% somewhat disagree or disagree.
- 15.2% have no opinion.

QUESTION 18:

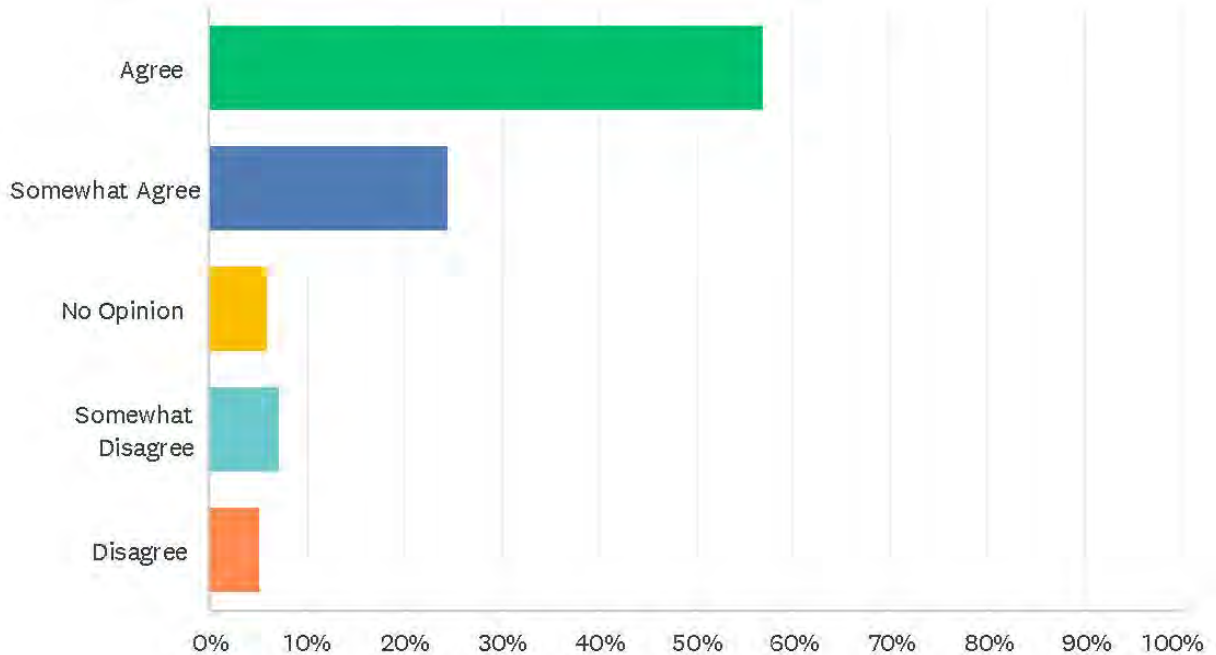
The City and County should strive to sustain and reinvigorate the area's commitment to the arts, crafts and culture as a key driver of both the economy and residents' quality of life, building on Paducah's 2013 acceptance into the UNESCO Creative Cities Network among nearly 300 other cities worldwide.



- 767 (70.6%) of the 1,086 eligible resident respondents answered this question.
- 47.6% agree.
- 20.2% somewhat agree, making the combination of agree and somewhat agree just over two-thirds (67.8%).
- 18.0% somewhat disagree or disagree.
- 14.2% have no opinion.

QUESTION 19:

The City and County should continue to invest in upgrading Paducah’s historic riverfront as a “front door” to the area, especially with increasing riverboat visitation, and for the year-round enjoyment of area residents along with a vibrant downtown.



- 766 (70.5%) of the 1,086 eligible resident respondents answered this question.
- 56.9% agree.
- 24.5% somewhat agree, making the combination of agree and disagree 81.4%.
- 12.5% of respondents somewhat disagree or disagree.
- 6.0% have no opinion.

QUESTIONS 20-22:

Adjectives that describe a better version of Paducah and/or McCracken County you would like to see upon your return if you had to leave the area and came back in 20 years to live here again.

Approximately half (47-52%) of the 1,086 eligible resident respondents took the opportunity to type in one or more adjectives – or other words – that came to mind in response to this “imagine if” question. The word cloud graphic on the next page provides a visual summary of the top 100 responses, with larger word sizes indicating the words mentioned most. A list of all the words provided, across the three response opportunities, follows the word cloud graphic.

PADUCAH-McCRACKEN COUNTY COMMUNITY SURVEY HIGHLIGHTS

Responses for Adjective 1 (Question 20) included:

Growing, Local business, Safe, Walkability, Vibrant, Infrastructure, Housing, Change, Culture, Roadways, Beautiful, Growing, Revitalized, Spacious, Sprawling, Thriving, Walkable, Clean, Diverse, Highly Educated, Clean, Road connectors, Excellent, Better streets, Greener, Less Homeless, Stay separate, Confident, Inclusive, Black, Invigorated, Improved sewer, Open, Lower town, Patriotic, Beauty, Vibrant, Progressive, Beautification, Equality, Easy to travel, No panhandling, Diversity, Maintained, Low taxes, River Aquarium, Dynamic, Accessible, Welcoming, Green, Input, Fun, Accommodating, Indoor Pool, Affordable, Friendly, Active, Well-kept, Consolidated, Picturesque, Eclectic, Senior Friendly, More Sidewalks, Less Crime, Bustling, Vital, Progressive, Less Regulation, Parking, Working, Local, Unchanged, Bible community, Charming, Energetic, Expensive, Sustainable, Radiant, Industry Jobs, River City, Prosperous, Jobs, Rural, Rapid, Activity filled, Healthy, Entertainment, Biking trails, Quaint, Small town, Responsive, University, Tax free, Consistent, Friendly, Well-preserved, Stormwater, Awakened, Downtown, Heritage, Bus friendly, Cohesiveness, Visionary, Well-balanced, Eventful, Opportunity, Metro Government, Classy, Historic, Collaborative, Local vibe, Artsy, Expanded, Manufacturers, Competitive, Modern, Green, Cornucopian, Imaginative, Homeowners, Grounded, Cheap housing, Homeless shelter, Rec facility, Better shopping, Parking deck, Quiet, Responsible, Retail variety, Enlivened, Better airport, Rental homes, Urban renewal, Outdated, Alive, School issues, New shops, Robust, Restaurants, More activities, Connected, Educated, Traffic control, Similar, Family friendly, Safe roadways, Peaceful, Less drugs, Tolerance, Restored, Charitable, Unique, Resilient, Prepared, Lively, Quilt show, Downtown nice, Streets marked, Bigger, Less flooding, Closer-knit, Ambitious, Nature, Happy, Affluent, Less racist, Flights.

Responses for Adjective 2 (Question 21) included:

Beautiful, Reidland better, Developed, Quaint, Bikeable, Upgraded, Thriving, Manufacturing, Change, Restore housing, Innovation, Healthy, Vibrant, Accepting, Matured, Greener, Urbanized, Value, Attractive, Safety, Rejuvenate, Walkable, Progressive, Creative, Centrist, Affordable, Improved, Tax Incentives, Diversified, Cheaper housing, Invested, Northside, Welcoming, Robust, Traffic flow, Progressive, Housing, Charm, Strong, Comfort, Expanded, Young, Cleanliness, Community led, Great parks, Keep rural feel, Opportunity, Organized, Arts & music, Mall area park, Inclusive, Smoking-free, Shady, Small, More prosperous, Better jobs, Roads, Preserved, Attractive, Lower tax, Affordable homes, Gorgeous, Riverfront, Equality, Connected, Exciting, More police, Recreational, Well planned, New homes, infrastructure, Quilting needle, Peaceful, Free worship, Kid centered, Green, Historic, Charming, Retirement, Intentional, Engaged, Expansion, Active, Hospitable, Culture, No woke, Thrifty, Concert/event, Steady, Open, New industry, Sincere, City renovation, Family-friendly, Energetic, Lively, Conservative, Medical care, A+ schools, Well rounded, Ambitious, Well kept, Serene, Adaptive, Upgrade, Answers, Fair judicial, Multicultural, River, Interesting, Pretty, Secular, Safe schools, Teeming, Theater, Senior-friendly, Locally owned, Tech start ups, Focused, Busy, Free venues, Better roads, Efficient, Stunning, Better biz area, Green all year, Youth sports, Jobs, Diverse dining, Merged, Flourishing, Prosperous, Proud people, Storm drains, Less homeless, Sports complex, Good bones, Economic boom, Disable program, Planned growth, Industrialized, Proactive, Not too big, Help for all people, Downtown Thrive, Christian-like, Intermodal, Caring, Parks nice, Secure, Strong, Intact, Decent jobs, Enjoyable, Grocery store, Renewed, Skilled, Hip, Openness, Practical, God-fearing, Young, Attractive, Eco-friendly, Ambitious.

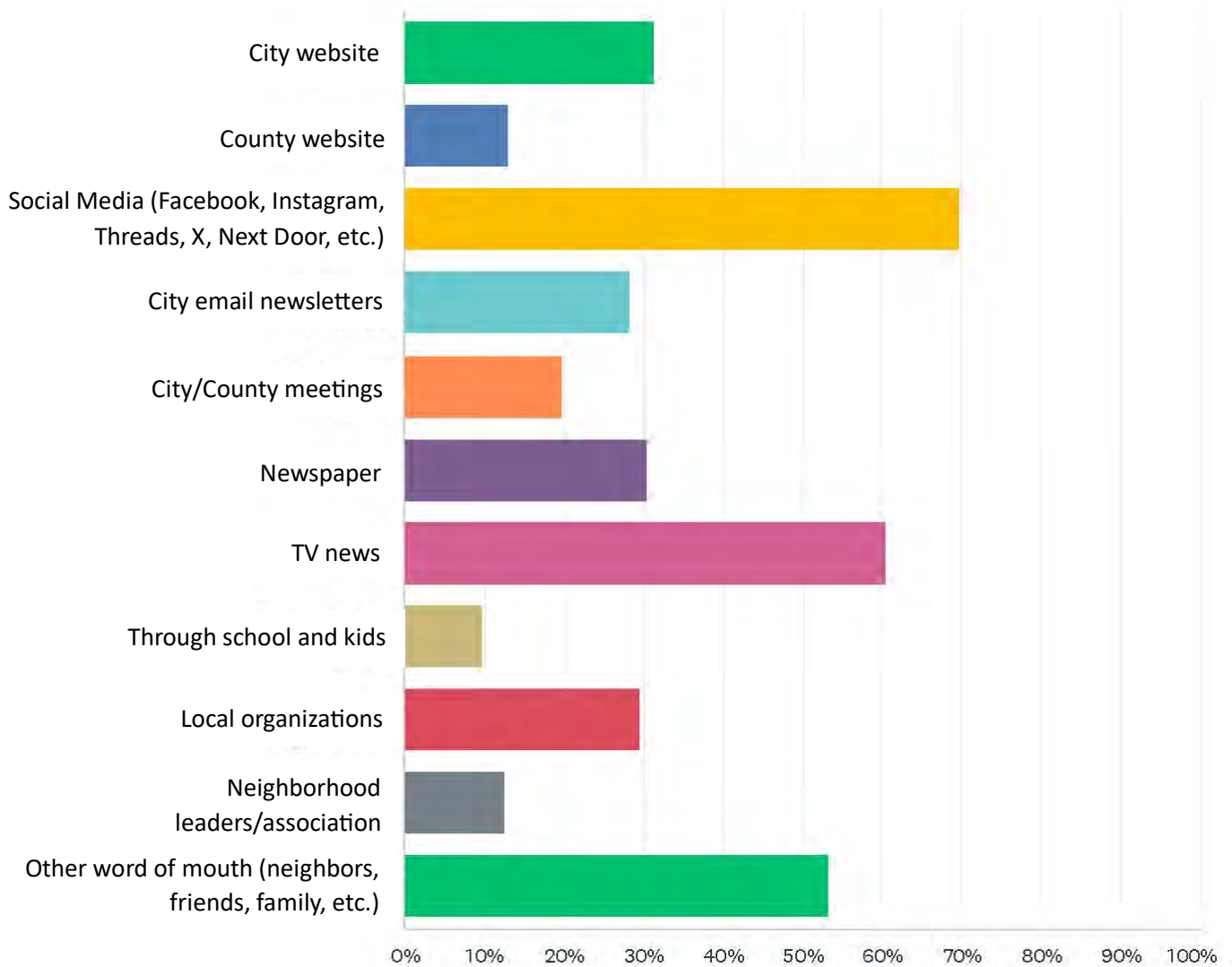
PADUCAH-McCRACKEN COUNTY COMMUNITY SURVEY HIGHLIGHTS

Responses for Adjective 3 (Question 22) included:

Safe, Walking trails, Comfortable, Friendly, Industry, Functional, Diverse, Variety, Change, Better jobs, Housing, Expanded, Clean, Imaginative, Diversified, Beautified, Recreational, Opportunistic, Inviting, Progressive, Family friendly, Vibrant, Educated, Productive, Developed, Medical system, Congenial, Artsy, Metro-ized, Growing, Gentrification, Rural, Cleaner city, Parks, All-American, Vital, Improved, United, Active/healthy, Sidewalks, Transparent, Fun, Sustainable, Low crime rate, Less homeless, Flourishing, Educational, Giving, Beautiful, Well-educated, Healthy, Better pay, Community, Affordable, Lively, Art, Memorable, Dynamic, Parks, Unique, Historic, Kind, Airport options, Access, Peaceful, Profitable, Friendlier, Nice eateries, Eco-conscious, Homey, Carson Park, Desirable, Culinary, Family friendly, Welcoming, Parking, Quiet, Shopping, Local focused, Enticing, Educated, River expansion, Drug free, Proudful, Inclusive, Stabilized, Successful, Target, Taxes, Urban, Neighborhood, Efficient, Communing, Cultural, Compassionate, Artistic, Working, Neighborly, Quality dining, More fun, Equitable, Accountability, Informative, Christian, Diverse economy, Open, Not overcrowded, Adaptable, Bustling, Charming, Reliable, Industrious, Opulent, Eco-friendly, Hidden gem, Better parking, Flowering, Cooperative, Better pay, Food banks, Flood control, Future-looking, Safer roads, Fix abandoned, Cosmopolitan, Self-sustaining, Classy, Respect nature, Less police, Unified, Policed, Open-minded, Caring, Recycle school, Simple, Young leaders, Familiar, Dynamic, Innovative, Smarter, Happy residents, 911 Service, Churches, Educated, Inexpensive, Shopping/mall, Helpful, Morality, Love, Welcoming, Two airlines, Intriguing, Harmonious, Gun-free safety, Care of parks, Large lots, Live music, Entrepreneurial, Connected, Tree-lined, Advantageous, Less slum lords.

QUESTION 23:

Where do you get information about what’s going on in the city and county? Please check all that apply.



- 700 (64.5%) of the 1,086 eligible resident respondents answered this question.
- Over two-thirds (69.7%) of respondents get information from social media, the highest percentage among the sources listed.
- Next highest were from TV news (60.6%) and word of mouth (53.3%).

QUESTION 24:

As you think about the future of Paducah and McCracken County, do you have any other hopes or concerns that you did not see covered in the questions above?

661 (60.1%) of the 1,086 eligible resident respondents answered this final, open-ended survey question. Just under half of the respondents (48.7%) answered “yes” and provided a write-in answer. Representative quotations are included below.

- “Better restaurants, food trucks and businesses.”
- “More benefits/activities for residents.”
- “Development of Port/river walk area.”
- “More affordable housing for low-income families.”
- “Lack of variety food and store choices.”
- “More activities at the Carson Center, Convention Center and Cherry Civic Center.”
- “Make sure all residents are heard. Make everyone feel welcome.”
- “There are empty lots and lots with dilapidated homes on them throughout the city and county.”
- “I hope to see Paducah and McCracken County work to make the whole city walkable, bikeable and a place for young people to want to stay.”
- “Save our trees and neighborhoods.”
- “Build more parks and create more attractive green space.”
- “Our community needs one unified metro government.”
- “Safer and more options for healthy lifestyles – safer bike routes, more bike trails, etc.”
- “Please leave our riverfront as intact as possible.”
- “We need to encourage population growth in the city and the county.”
- “I hope that more people realize the opportunity we have as a central location for transportation. This would include river, rail, air and highway.”
- “Revitalize the buildings we have.”

