

Setting the Stage

What trends, issues and opportunities have been presented in the previous three chapters that may have an impact on the goals and objectives for long-range planning in Woodford County?

Without a doubt, Woodford County and its communities have undertaken a higher level of planning for mobility than most other areas of the Commonwealth. This is particularly true for a community that is not an official part of a recognized “urbanized area”. Its’ road system is currently adequate to meet demand, and improvements are on the drawing board to address expected future auto, pedestrian and bicycle travel demands.

These are the messages delivered via the planning studies referenced in Chapters 1 through 3. Is Woodford County doing everything it can to stay on top of the mobility situation? Certainly, it will be challenged to secure the funding for all of the recommended improvements and preserve its scenic and cultural heritage at the same time. These are important considerations for the 2003 Comprehensive Plan Update.

In order to “set the stage” for the community to develop planning goals and objectives, a number of trends/issues are identified in the pages that follow. These will serve as a basis for discussion about what steps Woodford County, Versailles and Midway may take in the future to achieve its vision and secure the best mobility system possible.

Trend/Issue No. 1

How will Woodford County secure the necessary funds to implement planned mobility related improvements?

This issue is at the top of every community's list of challenges for the 21st century. The list of essential roadway and other mode improvements to be made over the next twenty years can be priced at more than \$50,000,000 (placeholder number). However, very little of this amount has actually been committed by any agency – including the Kentucky Transportation Cabinet, the Federal Highway Administration, or local governments.

If Woodford and its constituent communities are to continue to prosper and enjoy a high level of mobility, how can expectations be maintained in light of this expected lack of funding? What avenues of revenue enhancement lay open to Woodford officials? Can developers and property owners play a greater financial role in providing mobility system improvements to meet new demand?

A related question is whether Woodford County, Versailles or Midway have the institutional capacity to support an ongoing “campaign” to lobby for an secure the level of funding necessary to implement its mobility plans? This is more often than not, the major underlying issue relating to plan implementation. Without a specific charge to someone, or some agency to aggressively pursue funding it is difficult to compete with the myriad of communities seeking the same “bite of the apple”.

Trend/Issue No. 2

What are the relative responsibilities of government, developers, property owners and associations for mobility system improvements?

In Chapter 2, it was suggested that government, developers/property owners and associations should all share in the responsibility for pedestrian and bicycle improvements. The 2020 Transportation Plan suggests that Woodford should evaluate the use of “impact fees” to offset costs of future growth related improvements. These suggestions strongly imply that government is going to need some help with capacity building.

What is the role of other parties in the funding issue. Should new development “pay its own way”?

Trend/Issue No. 3

How can Woodford County utilize future mobility system investments to secure economic development opportunities?

This may be one of the most important issues for the 2003 Plan Update. All of the Plans reviewed for this Background Report very adequately address the mobility system. None of the plans, however, provide any review of how mobility system improvements help or hinder other goals and objectives of the Comprehensive Plan.

It is suggested that the competition for improvement funding in the future will eventually result in the rewarding of community-based proposals that seek to achieve multiple objectives. This Background Study has suggested in a number of cases that mobility system improvements could help to foster economic development objectives – particularly in regard to eco and heritage based tourism.

Trend/Issue No. 4

Should the Southern Versailles Ring Road (the extension of the US 62-US 33 Connector) connect to US 60 at Paddock Place or further to the east?

Current transportation plans recommend that the Ring Road connect with US 60 through Paddock Place. This recommendation has been questioned, particularly in regard to the residents whose homes currently face Paddock Place.

Is this a viable transportation objective, particularly in light of the currently undeveloped properties to the east of Paddock Place that lie within the Urban Service Area Boundary?

Trend/Issue No. 5

How can Woodford County and the Kentucky Transportation Cabinet act to preserve the scenic qualities of US 60 and also maintain an adequate level of service?

This may become one of the most difficult challenges for the Comprehensive Plan program. Currently, there is in place a 500-foot setback requirement for future development. However, it is certainly easy to recognize that this standard will not be sufficient to preserve the scenic views that are Woodford's heritage. Will the combination of setbacks, urban service area boundaries and agricultural zoning be sufficient to the task of preservation?

Trend/Issue No. 6

What role does US 62 play in Woodford's mobility system, heritage preservation and economic development?

During the preparation of this Background Study research indicated that existing traffic levels on US 62, particularly for truck traffic are a significant concern within the Woodford community. Proposals for preservation of the corridor have been submitted for review and approval, with little success.

This ongoing community debate registers as an important issue for the Comprehensive Plan Update. The US 62 corridor not only is the major connection between Versailles and Midway, but it is also the second major connection to I-64. It is also one of the most scenic corridors in central Kentucky or the Commonwealth.

Trend/Issue No. 7

The continued growth of the Blue Grass Airport and the Local Region will place additional pressures on US 60 to carry more traffic. Is it feasible to consider the extension of the Bluegrass Parkway to I-64 as an alternative to US 60?

Although the Bluegrass Parkway extension to I-64 has been on the State's Long-Range Transportation Plan for some time, it has enjoyed little community support. It is assumed that the lack of support is due, in some part, to concerns about the expansion of urban development in the roadway corridor. It is also known there is local concern for the impact of a possible extension to the Pisgah Historic District.

The growth in traffic on US 60 does suggest that in the future an alternative path to I-64 may be warranted. However, does the Parkway extension represent a

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viable alternative. If it doesn't, this proposal should be removed from the State's Plan and future transportation efforts may need to focus on other alternatives.

It may be appropriate, as part of this community goal setting process, to also evaluate the possibility that the Bluegrass Parkway and US 60 merge east of Versailles with the intent of carrying trips to the Blue Grass Airport – instead of to I-64.