

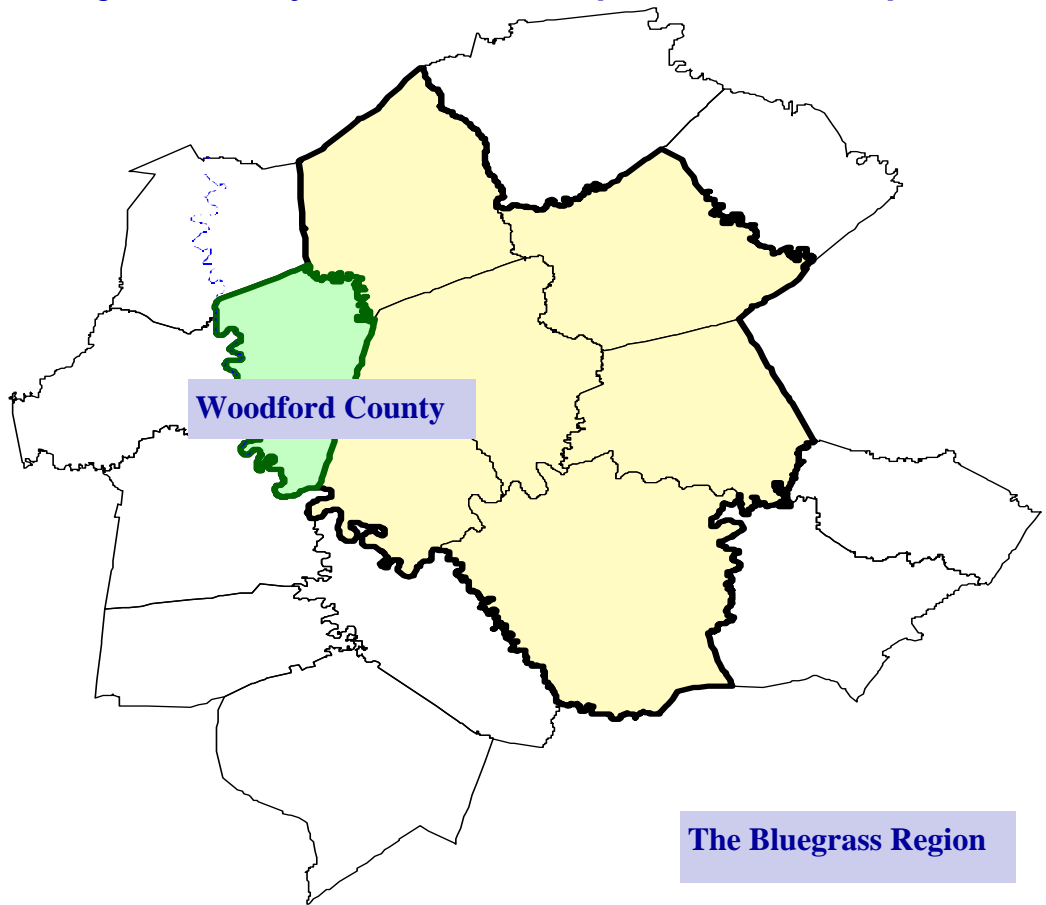
Regional Coordination in the Woodford Bluegrass

Versailles • Midway • Woodford County Planning Commission

Background Study for the 2003 Comprehensive Plan Update

Special points of interest:

- This is the fifth update in the history of planning in Woodford County (1969, 1977, 1989, 1997 and now).
- Some of the fastest growing census tracts in the Region are located on Woodford's borders
- Regional coordination to build the horse industry is needed
- Traffic from other counties is creating problems in Woodford



Inside this Report

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Chapter 3 includes a description of regional coordination efforts

A copy of this report (in PDF format), or any other Background Report can be downloaded from www.planningandzoning.com.

The Update Process

This Report is one of six Background Studies prepared for the Comprehensive Plan Update. Other studies include: Mobility; People, Jobs and Housing; Woodford Resources; Community Facilities and Services; and The Use of Woodford Land.

The purpose of Background Studies is to review historical trends and current conditions, and identify issues and opportunities for the community to address in the planning process.

Trends, issues and opportunities provide a "stepping-off"

point for the community. This information is helpful in measuring the success of prior plans and fine-tuning goals and objectives. This is a necessary first step in updating the Versailles, Midway and Woodford County Comprehensive Plan.

Regional Coordination

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Prologue

What role does Woodford County play in the Local and Bluegrass Region?

The purpose of this Background Report is to sketch a “regional context” for planning in Woodford County. Chapter 100 of the Kentucky Revised Statutes (the Chapter dealing with comprehensive planning) does not list Regional Coordination as a required or optional element of a comprehensive plan. However, it is included in the Woodford update process because of the recognition that the impacts of growth and development do not stop at county boundaries.

The People, Jobs and Housing Background Report, among others, identifies many of the ways that Woodford’s population and employment are increasingly tied to regional trends and conditions. The Mobility Background Report examines the regional context for transportation planning, and specifically identifies as an issue existing and future transportation service impacts resulting from Woodford’s position between two major employment centers – Frankfort and Lexington. As icing on the cake, so to speak, the Land Use Background Report discusses what impacts that Fayette County’s Urban and Rural Service Area policies could have on adjoining counties such as Woodford.

During the next twenty years, it will become increasingly difficult for Woodford County to chart a course toward achieving its goals and objectives without the active support and cooperation of not only the adjoining counties, but also others within the Bluegrass Region. Hopefully, this Background Report will help the Woodford community and Planning Commission to begin an ongoing dialogue with its neighbors to address common issues and opportunities.

Before starting, however, let’s be sure we are all speaking the same language. Just what do we mean when using the term “region”. The term “**Bluegrass Region**” as used throughout this text includes the following counties: Anderson, Bourbon, Boyle, Clark, Fayette, Franklin, Garrard, Harrison, Jessamine, Madison, Mercer, Scott, and Woodford. These counties are part of the Bluegrass ADD (Area Development

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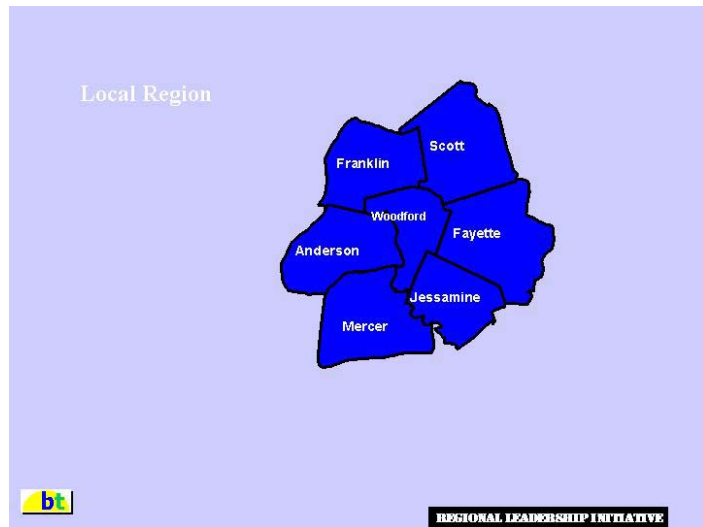
District), one of fifteen ADD’s in the state that perform a variety of “regional” planning and service delivery functions.



The term “**Lexington Metro**” includes a subset of the Bluegrass Region counties: Bourbon, Clark, Jessamine, Madison, Scott, and Woodford. This is an important region as it represents an area in which land use and transportation issues are most closely linked.



Finally, the term “**Local Region**” encompasses the counties bordering Woodford including: Anderson, Fayette, Franklin, Jessamine, Mercer, and Scott. These counties are most closely linked to Woodford for planning purposes, due to the KRS requirement that adjoining counties be advised of an update to the goals and objectives of a comprehensive plan.





How Coordination Occurs - Now

This Chapter's focus is on the entities and processes through which regional coordination of planning either does or does not occur. The Prologue clearly points out that Woodford County no longer holds all the keys to its future. The ability of the County and the Planning Commission to implement the *"Preserving Town and Country Program"* will be determined, in no small part over the next twenty years, by its ability to define a common agenda with other counties in the Local and Bluegrass Region related to economic development, rural preservation, transportation and land use.

The Case for Coordination - Why Is It Important?

Woodford County is bordered on three sides by some of the fastest growing census tracts in Kentucky. Recent Census data reveals 9 tracts with more than a 20% growth rate from 1990 to 2000. Of the 9 tracts, 7 grew at a much greater rate. Most startlingly, 3 tracts' growth exceeded 60%, with one exceeding 78%, and one over 94%! (See Figures 1.1 and 1.2)

This population growth has had, and will continue to have, impacts on Woodford County. Increased traffic is the most visible sign of this growth. Woodford County lies at the center of one of the most heavily traveled commuting corridors in the region (See Figure 1.3). Traffic is passing through Woodford County to destinations in Fayette, Franklin, Scott, and Jessamine Counties. This points out the importance not only of region-wide transportation planning, but tying regional economic development more closely with regional housing patterns.

A compromised environment is another impact of these rapid growth areas on Woodford's borders. The South Elkhorn Creek now carries more water than ever, resulting in higher flood levels¹. Water quality in the creek is suffering as well². Clear

¹ Kentucky Natural Resources and Environmental Protection Cabinet

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Creek, which drains much of western Jessamine County, also carries more water and suffers from decreased water quality. The Kentucky River itself is the focus of concerns related to flooding and water quality. (See Figure 1.5)

A looming issue related to high growth areas is increased development pressure on Woodford's rural lands. As the desire to move to rural areas increases across our region, due in large part from flight away from the blighted conditions of much of our cities and towns, developers and consumers can be expected to cast an eye on Woodford County.

These issues become even more important when considered against future population projections. The region is projected to add 189,735 people in the next 20 years, an increase of 30.25%³. Within that region, the Metro is projected to grow by 150,767 people, or 31.46%. This translates into a Metro growth increase of 80% of the entire region's projected population increase: put simply, the six counties that ring Fayette will see a vast majority of the region's growth. The counties that surround Woodford are projected to grow by 133,722 people, or 31.8 %. (See Figure 1.4 and Tables 1.1-1.4) As these figures show, by 2020 Fayette County's dominance as the prime population growth center will cease. Fayette's share of regional growth over the next 20 years is projected to be 35%: 65% of the growth will occur outside Fayette County. Fayette's share of the Metro's projected growth is 44%.

Figure 1.1 Bluegrass Region: Population Growth (as a percentage) by Counties

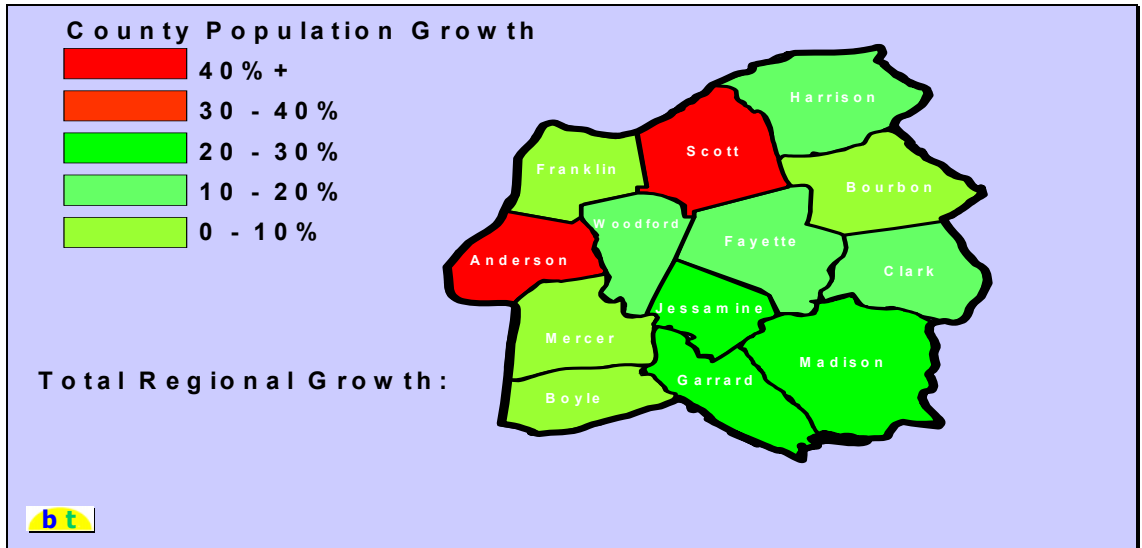


Figure 1.2 Population Growth by Census Tract: Bluegrass Region

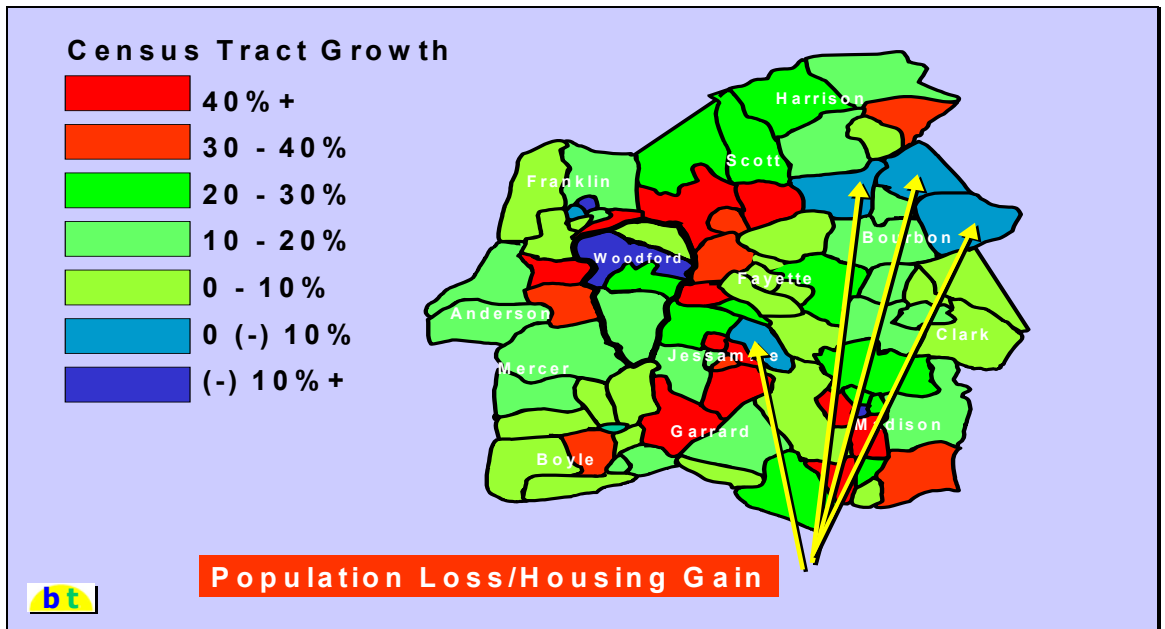


Figure 1.3 Growth Factors and Commuting Patterns Affecting Woodford County

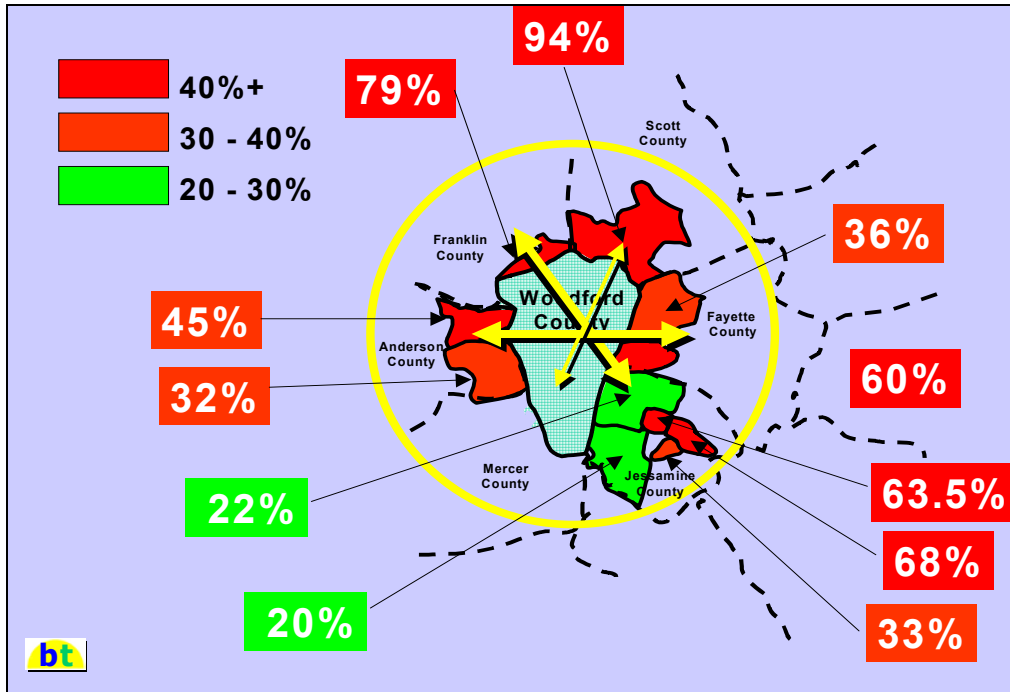


Table 1.1 Population – Bluegrass Region

Census 2000 Population Growth from 1990-2000				Surrounding Woodford Counties			
County	1990	2000	Difference	County	1990	2000	Difference
Anderson	14,571	19,111	4,540	Anderson	14,571	19,111	4,540
Bourbon	19,236	19,360	124	Fayette	225,366	260,512	35,146
Boyle	25,641	27,697	2,056	Franklin	43,781	47,687	3,906
Clark	29,496	33,144	3,648	Jessamine	30,508	39,041	8,533
Fayette	225,366	260,512	35,146	Mercer	19,148	20,817	1,669
Franklin	43,781	47,687	3,906	Scott	23,867	33,061	9,194
Garrard	11,579	14,792	3,213	Total	357,241	420,229	62,988
Harrison	16,248	17,983	1,735	% Change	17.6%		
Jessamine	30,508	39,041	8,533				
Madison	57,508	70,872	13,364				
Mercer	19,148	20,817	1,669				
Scott	23,867	33,061	9,194				
Woodford	19,955	23,208	3,253				
Total	536,904	627,285	90,381				
% Change	16.8%						
				Metro Area Change			
				County	1990	2000	Difference
				Bourbon	19,236	19,360	124
				Clark	29,496	33,144	3,648
				Fayette	225,366	260,512	35,146
				Jessamine	30,508	39,041	8,533
				Madison	57,508	70,872	13,364
				Scott	23,867	33,061	9,194
				Woodford	19,955	23,208	3,253
				Total	405,936	479,198	73,262

These pop charts will get worked on for interest and clarity

Table 1.2 Population Projections by County – Bluegrass Region

			Population Projections		2020	% Growth
	Census 2000	2005	2010	2015		
Anderson	19,111	21,977	25,036	28,495	32,347	69.3%
Bourbon	19,360	19,392	19,350	19,260	19,110	-1.3%
Boyle	27,697	28,503	29,273	30,085	30,888	11.5%
Clark	33,144	35,135	36,932	38,631	40,226	21.4%
Fayette	260,512	279,005	295,664	311,436	326,446	25.3%
Franklin	47,687	49,196	50,440	51,469	52,255	9.6%
Garrard	14,792	16,943	19,251	21,840	24,683	66.9%
Harrison	17,983	19,195	20,380	21,590	22,772	26.6%
Jessamine	39,041	43,521	48,116	53,174	58,647	50.2%
Madison	70,872	77,378	83,629	89,741	96,102	35.6%
Mercer	20,817	21,735	22,549	23,339	24,110	15.8%
Scott	33,061	38,696	44,851	51,981	60,146	81.9%
Woodford	23,208	24,896	26,427	27,897	29,288	26.2%
Total	627285				817020	189735
Total Change						30.3%



Table 1.3 Population Projections – Local Region

Surrounding Counties			
	Census 2000	Census 2020	Total Change
Anderson	19,111	32,347	
Fayette	260,512	326,446	
Franklin	47,687	52,255	
Jessamine	39,041	58,647	
Mercer	20,817	24,110	
Scott	33,061	60,146	
Total	420229	553951	133722
			31.8%

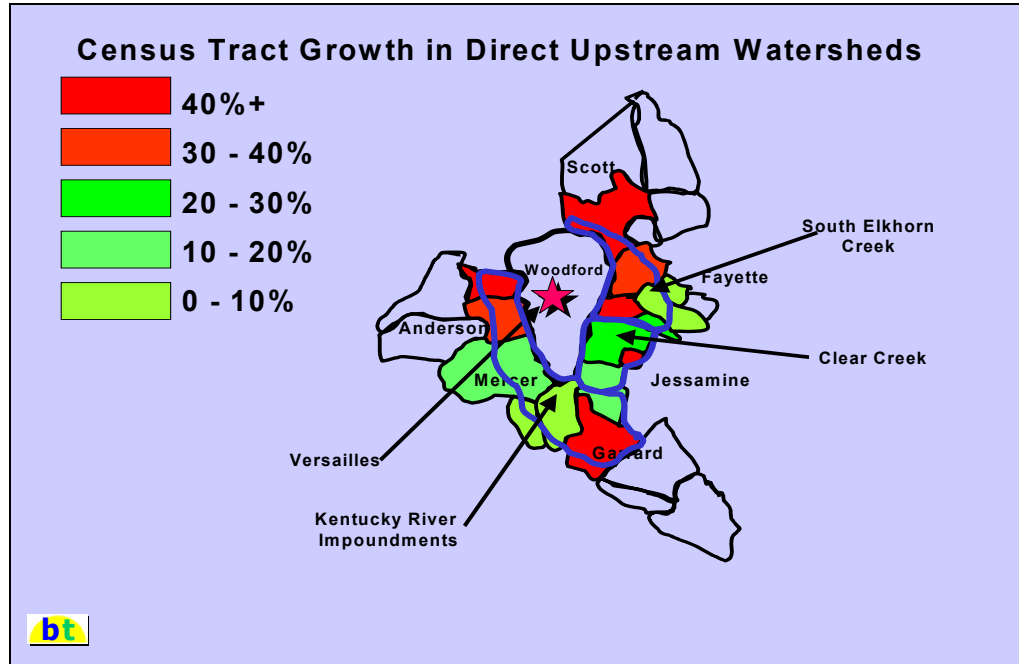


Table 1.4 Population Projections – Lexington Metro Area

Metro Area Counties			
	Census 2000	Census 2020	Total Change
Bourbon	19,360	19,110	
Clark	33,144	40,226	
Fayette	260,512	326,446	
Jessamine	39,041	58,647	
Madison	70,872	96,102	
Scott	33,061	60,146	
Woodford	23,208	29,288	
Total	479,198	629,965	150767
			31.5%
65% Change	of 13 Counties Within the Metro Area		
35% Change	of 13 Counties Remaining in Region		



Figure 1.5



Regional Transportation Planning and Implementation

As we have seen, the area contiguous to Woodford County may be expected to grow by over 133,000 people in the next 20 years. The region is also very mobile, with over 30% of the region’s employees working outside the county in which they live. This trend can be expected to intensify due to increasing population outside of Fayette County, coupled with continued large-scale job creation in Fayette and Scott Counties.

The Lexington Metro area is currently served by two transportation organizations. One, the Bluegrass Area Development District’s Transportation Planning Committee, is a group made up of regional citizens whose job is to recommend road projects to the Kentucky Transportation Cabinet. Committee recommendations to the Cabinet are advisory only and proposals may be assigned to the statewide long-range facility plan or placed on the state 6-year road program for funding. While this group seeks some regional consensus, essentially the planning efforts are focused on transportation projects in particular counties. This Committee is responsible for reviewing transportation improvement project proposals within Woodford County.

The other group is the Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO). This federally funded organization’s purpose is to coordinate transportation planning in

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Fayette and Jessamine Counties – which are included in the “ Lexington Urbanized Area” as defined by the U.S. Bureau of Census and Federal Highway Administration. The MPO is responsible for the development and implementation of a long-range transportation plan and 6 year funding program within its geographic area of responsibility. Woodford County is not an invited participant in the activities of the MPO, but can readily be impacted by its’ decisions related to long-range planning and facility improvements. (This shortcoming may continue despite the fact that 65% of the region’s population growth, and 55% of the Metro’s growth, is expected to occur outside Fayette County).

Planning for air travel is another important regional issue. Regions around the world are planning for, and building, new and expanded airports. Questions have been raised about Bluegrass Airport’s ability to provide for increased passenger and cargo flights. Yet there is no definitive study, which confirms or refutes that concern. If the Bluegrass Airport is unable to meet demand due to space and locational problems, where would the region’s airport be located? What issues would building a new regional airport raise for Woodford Countians, who presently enjoy the best access to Bluegrass Airport in the region?

Figure 1.6



From the perspective of mobility, Woodford County currently must compete with other counties in the Bluegrass ADD (as well as the KTC District) for the necessary state and federal funds to undertake improvements identified in its transportation

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plan. The challenge for Woodford is not the fact that it must compete for funds, but the fact that it must compete in the absence of a policy/priority framework for regional coordination. The competition for project funding becomes, therefore, a purely political process for individual counties.

A policy/priority framework for regional coordination can help to “level the playing field” by focusing on regional priorities including for example, mobility improvements that support the attraction of major new employers to the region, or improve access to existing employment centers for workers. Setting priorities can also have another effect of the selection of improvement projects that help to preserve communities – a problem that Woodford faces as the midpoint in the corridor between the employment centers of Frankfort and Lexington.

Regional Infrastructure Planning

Basic environmental services including potable water, sanitary sewer, stormwater management and solid waste have been planned and provided in the past through local government (usually at the County or City level) or private utility companies. Any type of regional coordination has generally occurred through the efforts of the Kentucky Public Service Commission, the BGADD or as a result of the land use policies of counties in the Local or Bluegrass Region.

A significant regional issue that has not been fully addressed is long-term potable water supply. This is an issue that is not only critical to ensuring a high quality of life, but to economic development as well. Several groups are currently involved in regional water issues⁴, but as yet, there has been no pronouncement that a viable solution to long-term water supply has been assured

There is also no regionally coordinated sanitary sewer planning. Rather each community has set its own plans independent of the possibility of cooperation. Regional solid waste disposal is another topic that has not been discussed at length. These issues will only become more pressing with the anticipated 189,000 person population increase over the next 20 years.

On-site, or “package”, sewage treatment facilities are permitted or active in Anderson, Mercer, Jessamine, Franklin and Scott Counties. These types of systems have notoriously poor environmental records. Continued proliferation of these systems could have dramatic long-term effects on the water quality in Woodford County. Presently, there is no regional mitigation plan for addressing the problems caused by these systems.

⁴ List of groups involved

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The reasons for a lack of coordination at a regional level stems primarily from the focus of state and federal regulations and policy governing the planning and delivery of services such as potable water. In Kentucky, and the Bluegrass Region, the focus for water supply planning has been on counties and the provision of a readily available central water supply delivery system. A shift in this focus to the challenges of multiple service providers and service areas, as well as supply issues, will benefit counties such as Woodford in the long term. Why? Streamlining the supply and delivery systems at the regional level could lead to a more efficient system and user rates.

Regional coordination will be particularly important in another service area – solid waste collection and disposal. Adding 183,000 plus new residents in the Bluegrass Region will certainly tax current facilities for waste disposal – particularly for more heavily urbanized portions of the Region. Woodford County could be adversely impacted by two aspects of future lack of coordination – the siting of future disposal facilities and rate increases from waste haulers to compensate for increased disposal fees or inefficiently located facilities.

Figure 1.7

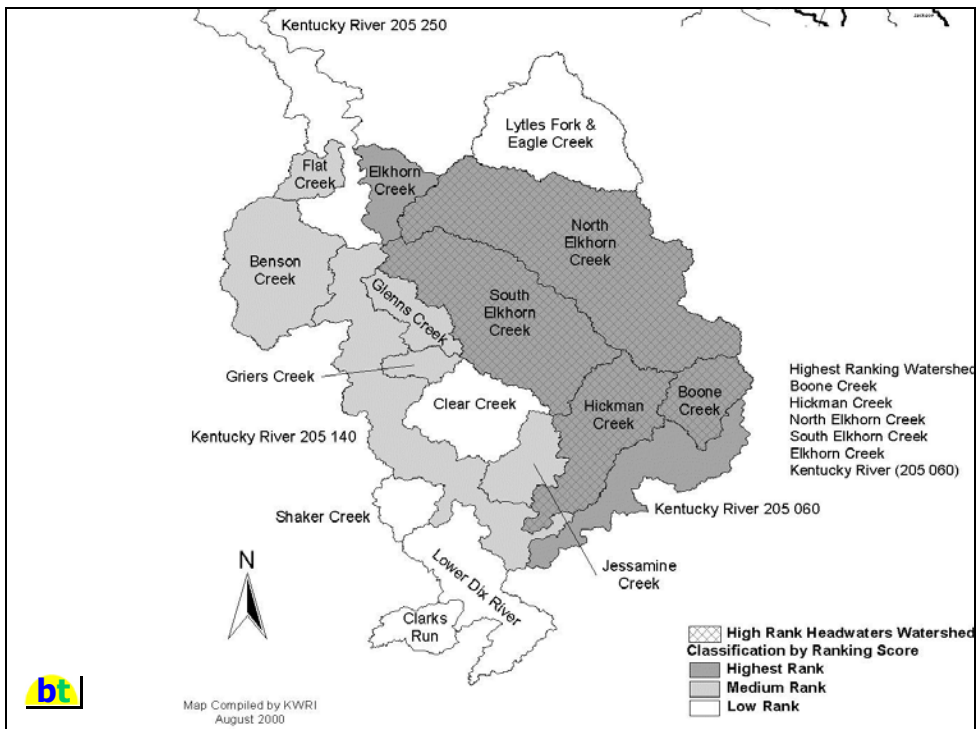


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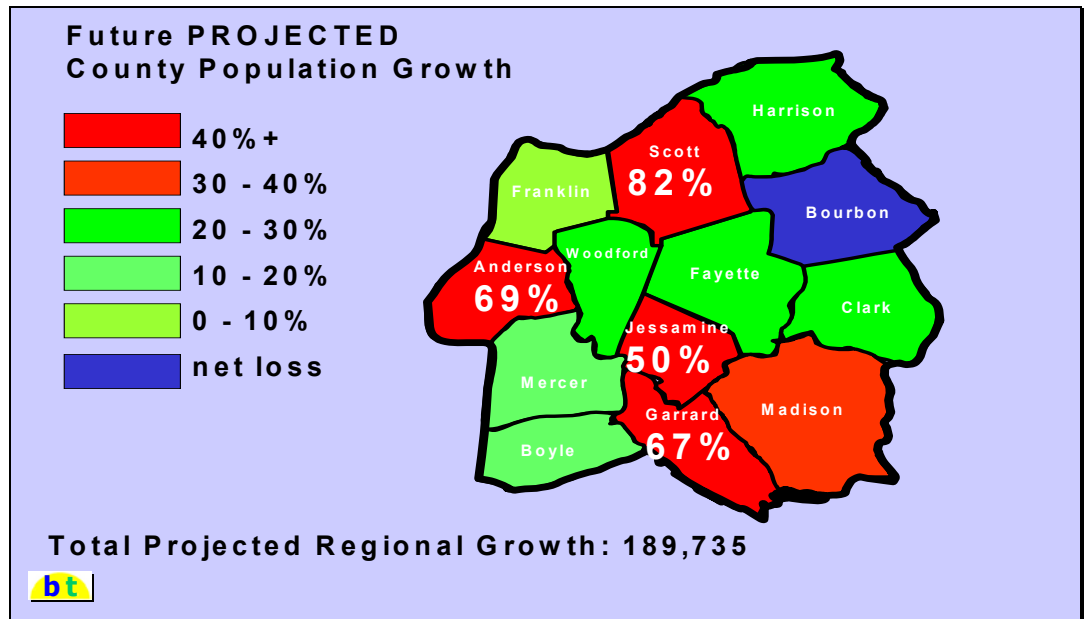
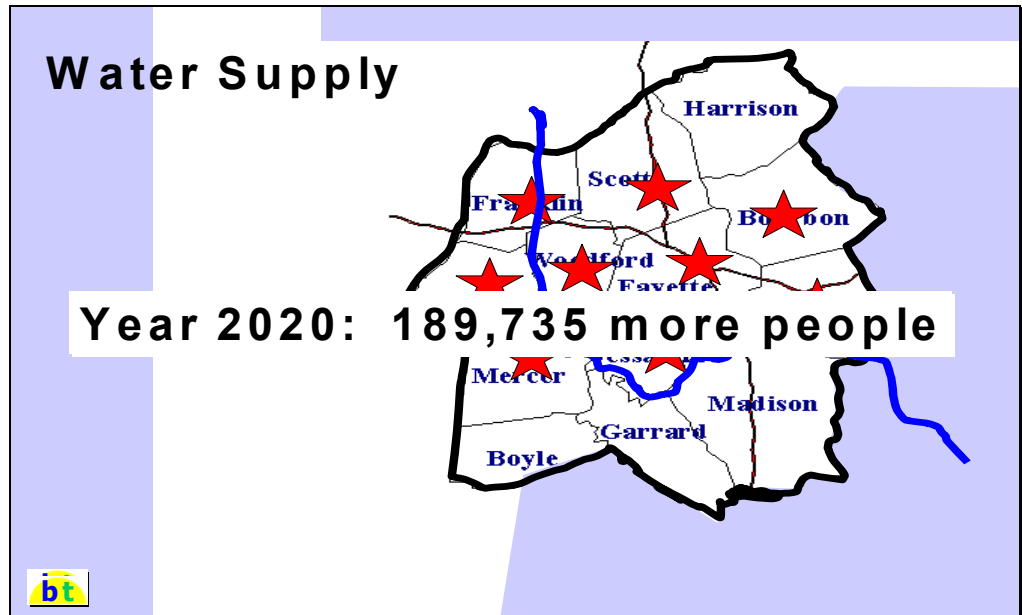


Figure 1.9



Regional Agriculture Trends

Agriculture lies at the heart of Woodford County's heritage and present sense of identity. The question arises whether it will remain so in the future.

Many counties in the region have seen dramatic decreases in land in farms and in agricultural income.⁵ These declines have been accompanied by additional urban level development in formerly rural areas. If the pace of development increases in outlying regional counties, even leading to over-building, more speculators, developers, and consumers may be expected to consider Woodford County.

But there are many positive agricultural indicators in Woodford and surrounding counties. Woodford County ranks 2nd state wide in total value of agricultural products as well as 2nd in the value of Thoroughbred horses nationally⁶. Four of the top six agricultural value counties border or are near Woodford County: Fayette, Bourbon, Jessamine, and Scott.⁷ The same order holds true nationally for Thoroughbred production as well.⁸ (See Figure 1.6)

Woodford's agricultural prominence is due to its location on the western edge of the most productive agricultural land in the state – the Bluegrass of Kentucky. (See Figure 1.11). Currently, no organization exists to manage this regional resource, or ensure continued increases in productivity and income. Fayette County individually, has instituted a Purchase of Agricultural Easements/Development Rights program to ensure that the most productive lands may remain in agricultural use or available for agricultural use.

⁵ Kentucky Department of Agriculture

⁶ Kentucky Department of Agriculture; The Bluegrass: A Finite Resource, University of Kentucky Landscape Architecture, 1999

⁷ Kentucky Department of Agriculture

⁸ The Bluegrass: A Finite Resource, University of Kentucky Landscape Architecture, 1999

Figure 1.10

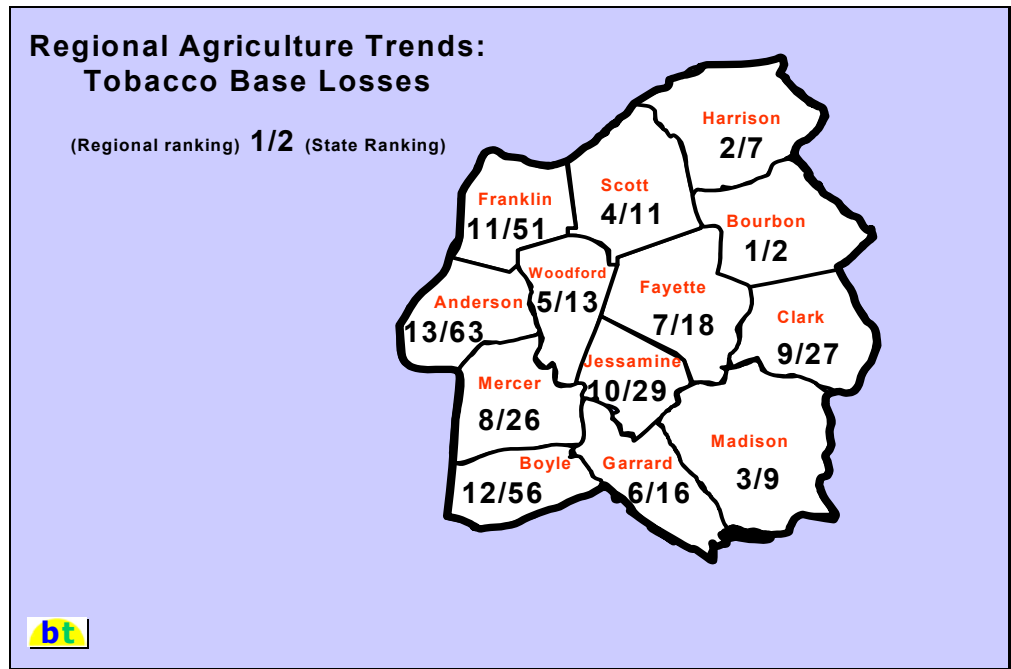


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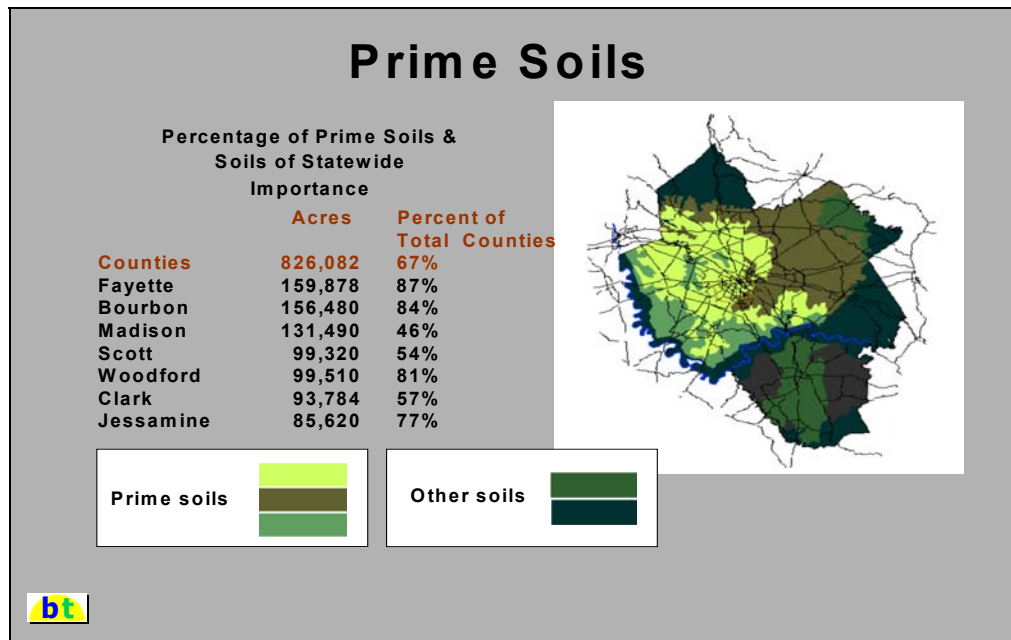


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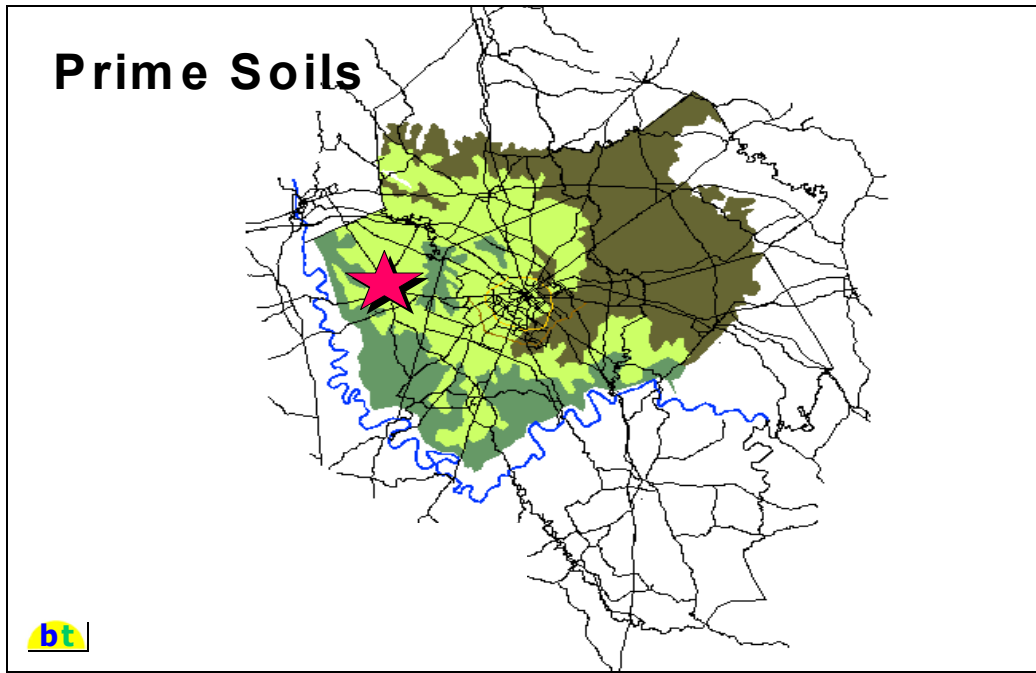


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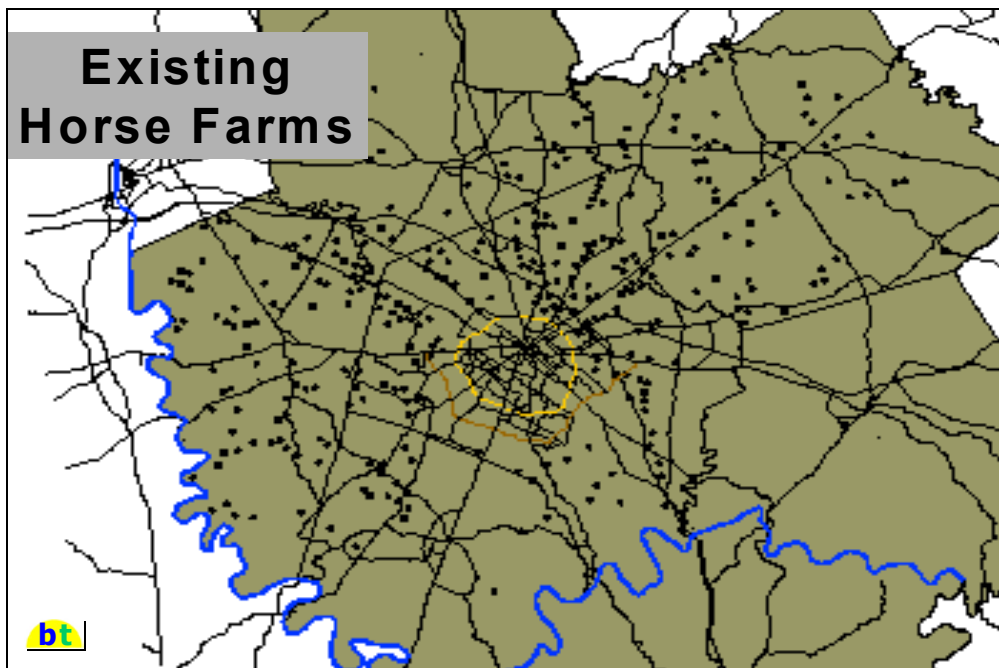


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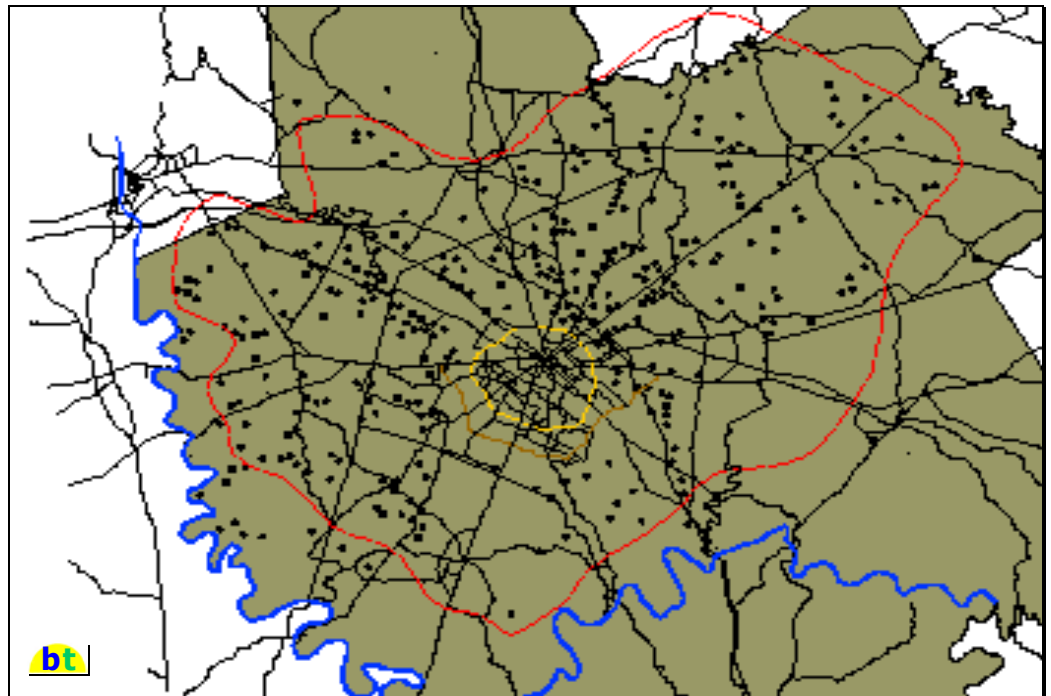


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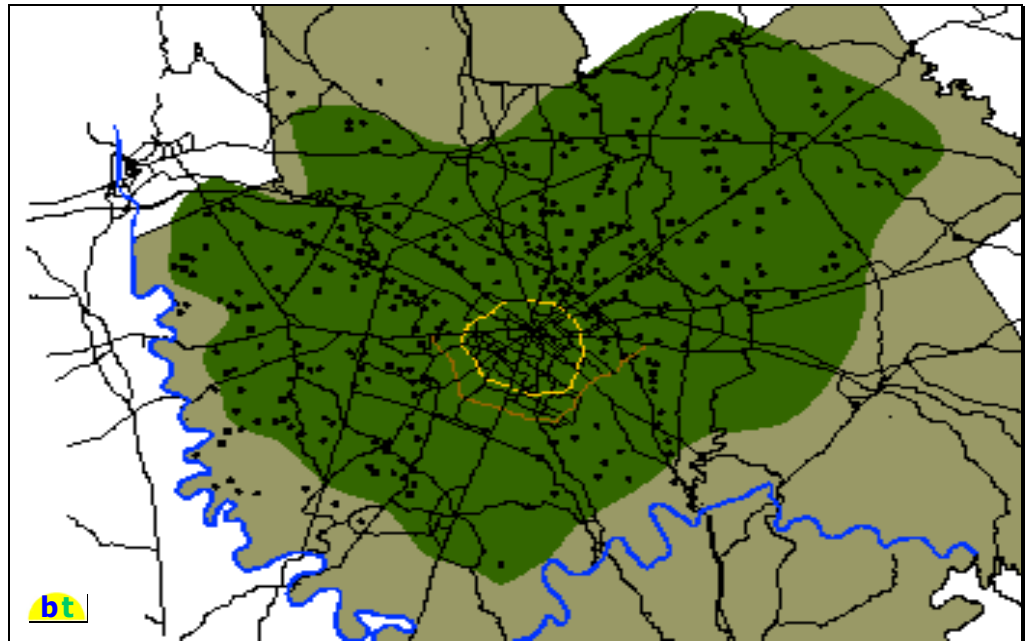


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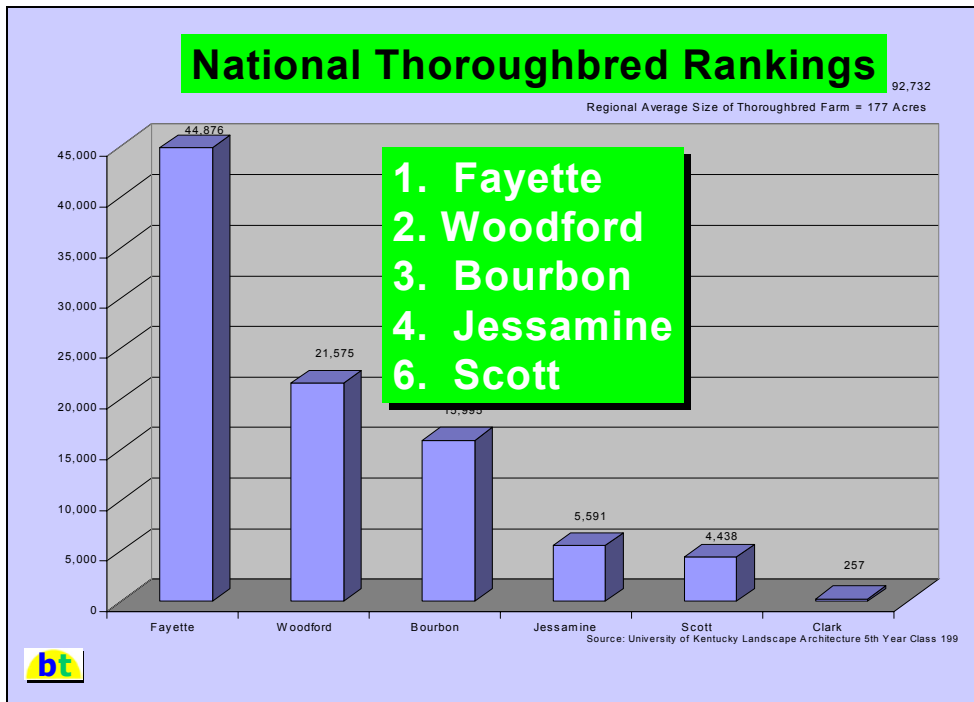


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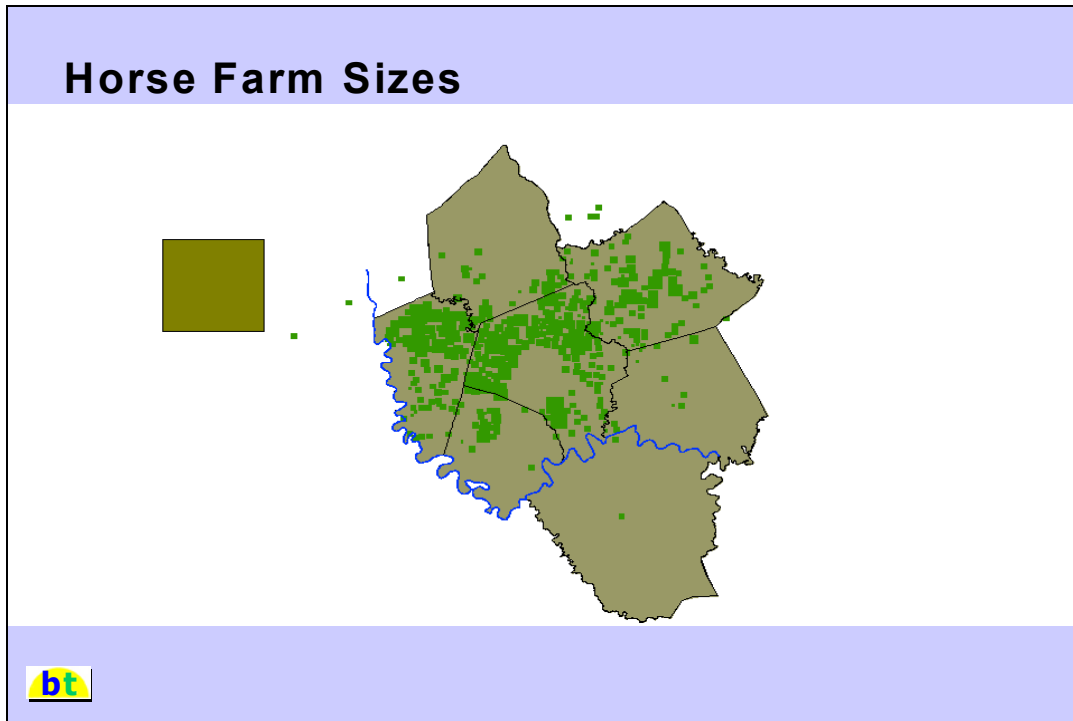


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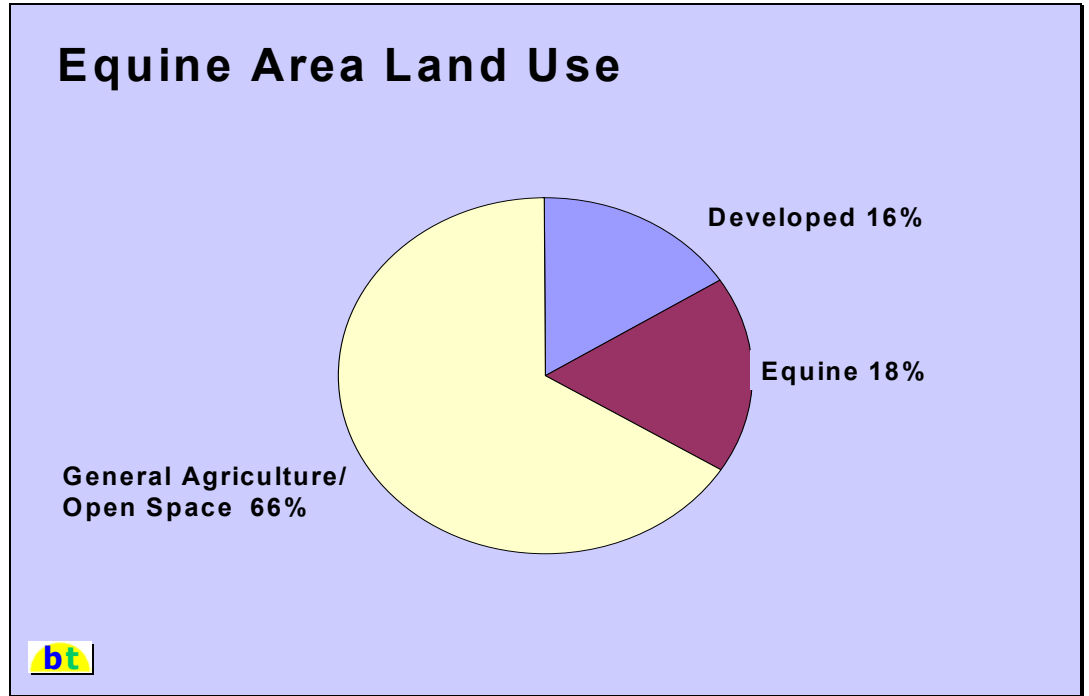
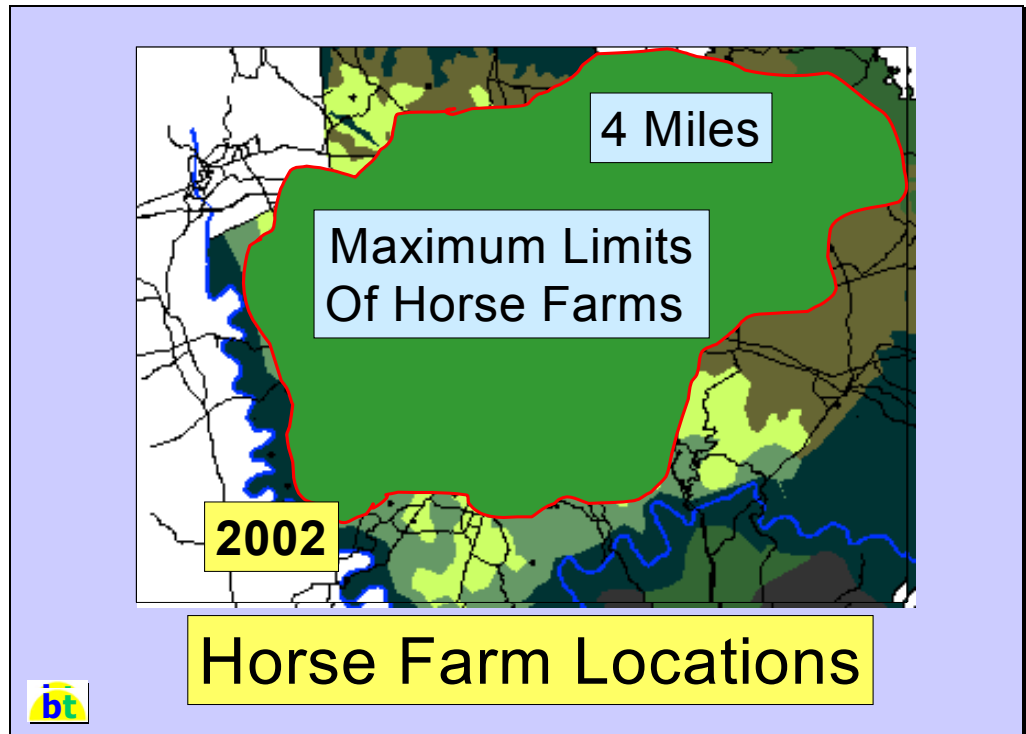


Figure 1.19



Regional Land Use Issues

The predominant form of urban development in the region is for communities to sprawl outward from their historic centers. No community has resisted this trend. Besides being inefficient with land and service funds, these low-density development patterns threaten the separate identity of every town in the region.

Few communities are concentrating significant redevelopment efforts within the established cores of their towns. This lack of investment, or in many cases, actual disinvestment, helps to spur this sprawling growth. Woodford County has seen this effect most dramatically on its borders with Fayette and Franklin Counties.

Other concerns relate to disparate land values in the region because of varying land use policies. A community with carefully planned growth will have higher land prices than one with a more liberal attitude toward development. This in turn affects regional commuting patterns as has been mentioned.

Many communities are also concerned about the lack of understanding of the consequences that occur when Fayette County makes significant land use decisions. This was most recently felt when Fayette County increased its minimum rural lot size to 40 acres and Woodford determined in the early 1990's to increase the minimum lot size to 30 acres for a large portion of the county.

Figure 1.20

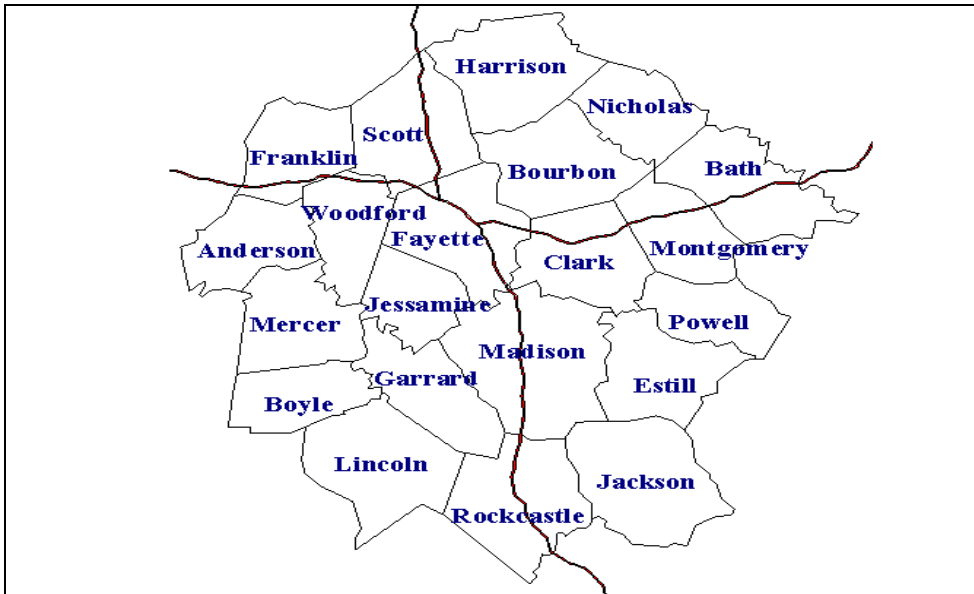


Figure 1.21

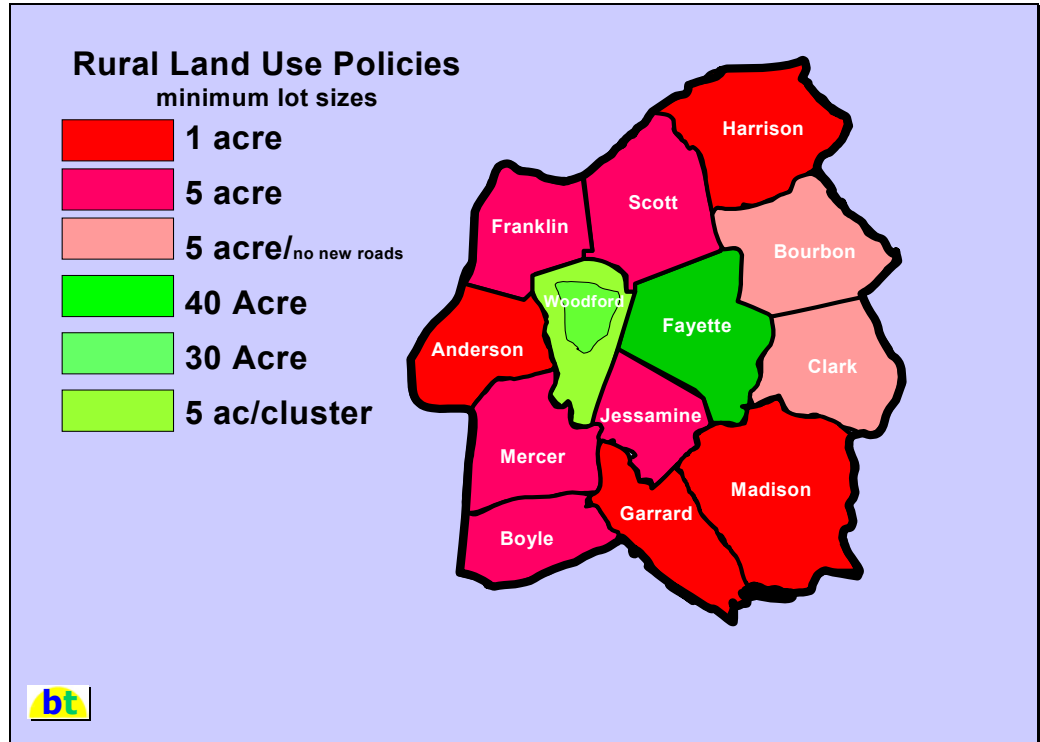
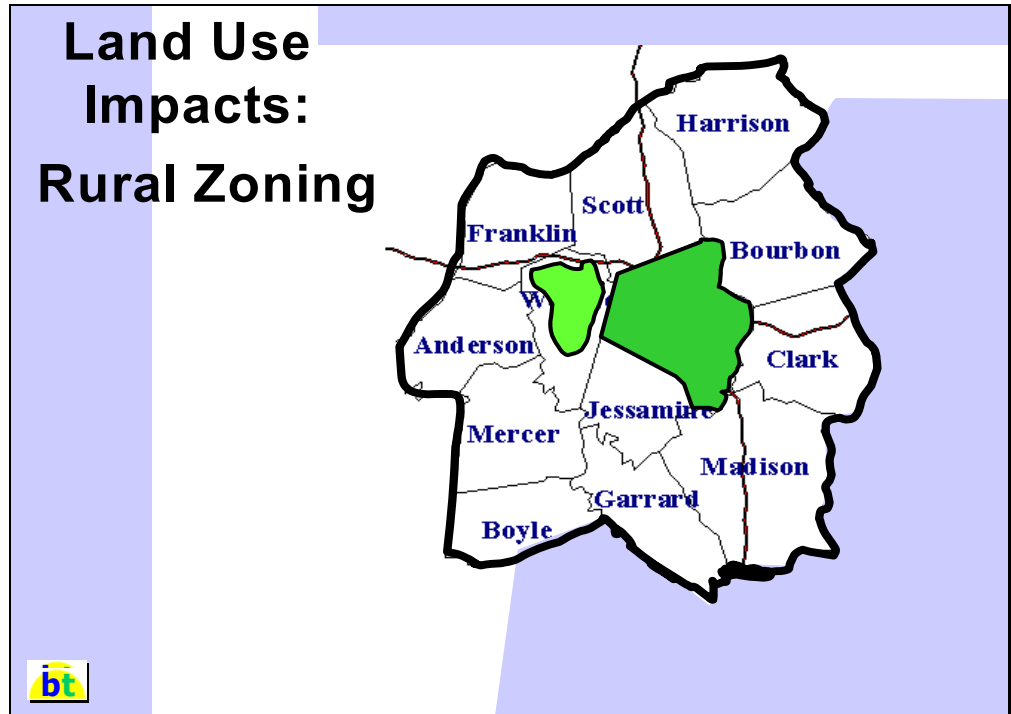


Figure 1.22



Regional Economic Issues

The present pattern of economic development has created a regional set of winners and losers. The economic gainers are those counties with interstate access. The economic losers are those communities without interstate access but with high residential growth rates.

For example, Jessamine County – which is not located on an Interstate route - accommodated nearly 10% of the entire region's population growth (11.6% of the metro growth) yet added less than 4% of the region's jobs⁹. By contrast, Scott County – which is located on an Interstate route – accommodated over 10% of the entire region's population growth (12.55% of the metro growth), and added over 20% of the new jobs in the region¹⁰.

This imbalance affects the economic losers through a dramatic need for services-providing payroll taxes. For example, 55% of Jessamine County's workers leave the county each day¹¹. They leave their payroll taxes in other counties, but return home each evening with expectations of a high level of community benefits. There is currently no discussion, nor has there ever been, for regional revenue sharing.

A picture of this imbalance becomes clear when considering that nearly 50% of all jobs in the Lexington Metro region are within three miles of downtown Lexington¹². This percentage ranks Lexington as having the second most dense employment center in the nation¹³. While Lexington's economic efforts have been successful for itself, what impact are they having in the region?

Another economic issue that is often over-looked, or even sometimes resented, is the importance of the Thoroughbred industry to the local and state economies. Over 80,000 jobs are directly tied to this industry and the state gains over \$3 billion in revenues as well¹⁴. Too often, in our region we conceive economic development to be about attracting factories. Yet the Thoroughbred industry is simply a factory without a roof and should be factored into all economic development plans.

⁹ Bluegrass Tomorrow: Framework for a Regional Plan, 1999

¹⁰ Ibid

¹¹ Ibid

¹² Brookings Institute, 2001

¹³ Ibid

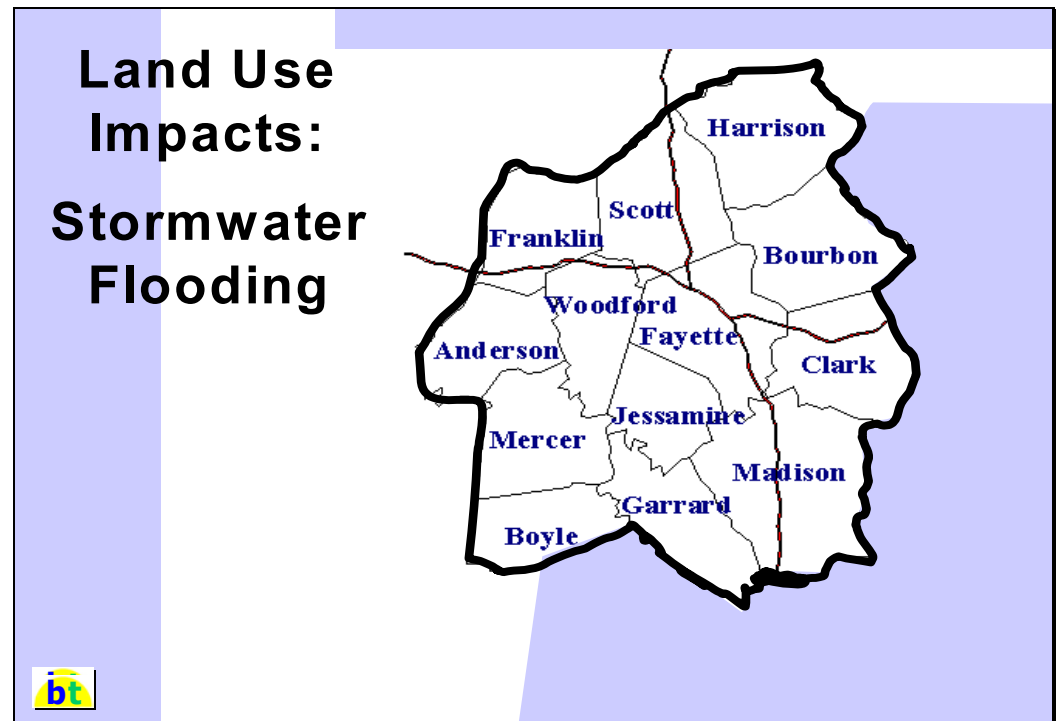
¹⁴ Kentucky Thoroughbred Association

Regional Environmental Issues

As previously mentioned, compromised environmental quality often results from rapid unplanned development. In Woodford County's case, increased flooding, lowered water quality and damaged ecosystems have occurred¹⁵.

Another critical environmental issue is the use of the Kentucky River. The Kentucky River provides the drinking water to a sizable portion of the County. Obviously then, protecting the water quality of the River should be highest on local citizen's priority list. But land use along the river is not regulated to ensure this. For example, in Woodford, Mercer, and Anderson Counties, extensive rural developments on septic systems are permitted anywhere in the direct watershed of the River.

Figure 1.23



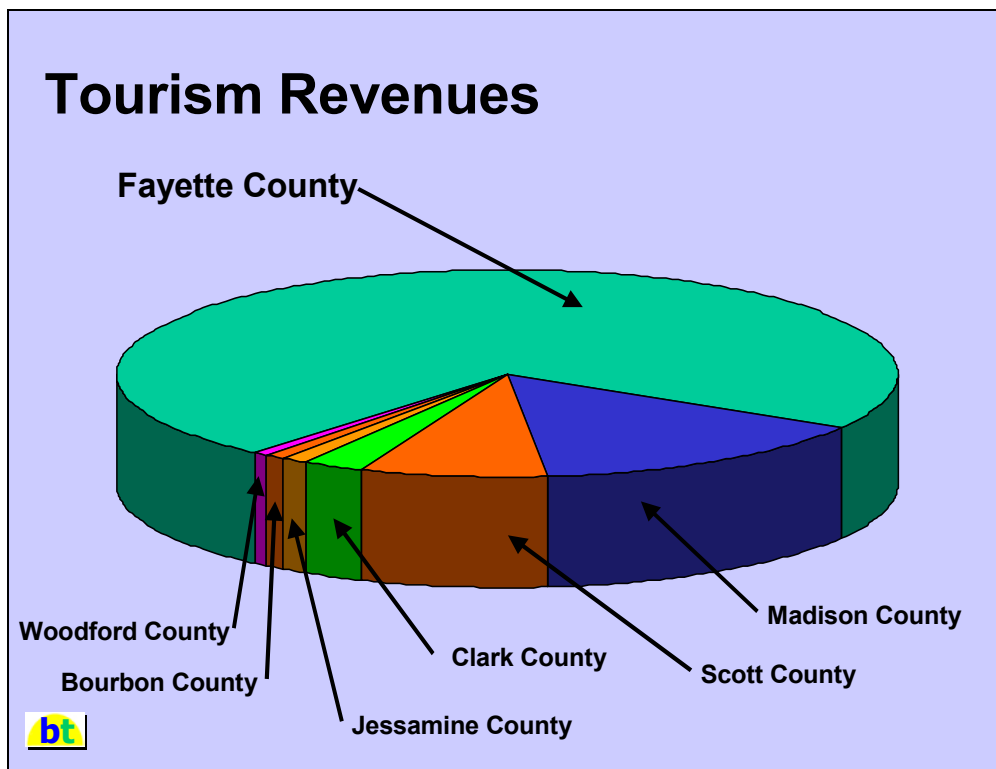
¹⁵ Kentucky Natural Resources and Environmental Protection Cabinet

Regional Tourism

Although many speak of the importance of tourism to the future of their community, few understand the economic importance of tourism to the regional economy. In the late 1990's, tourism accounted for nearly \$1 billion per year in the region¹⁶. Yet this money was not evenly distributed. For example, in 1998, Woodford County had **100 times** less tourism revenue than Fayette County¹⁷. Other regional counties fared similarly.

This disparity may be due in part to the fact that there is no true regional tourism promotion and coordination organization.

Figure 1.24



¹⁶ Lexington Convention and Visitors Bureau, 1999

¹⁷ Ibid

Coordination and Neighboring Counties

Are any of Woodford's neighbors talking about regional coordination? More importantly, are they doing anything about it?

Woodford County, over the last 10 years, has assumed a leadership position in community planning. No other community in the Local Region has pushed itself to move farther ahead with visionary, necessary planning. This fact cannot be overstated: Woodford County is **the** region's planning leader. The *Preserving Town and Country* program is a good alternative template available to other communities in the region upon which to model their planning efforts. However, like our neighbors the Woodford template lacks a fully developed perspective on regional coordination. In order to develop this perspective and address the topic of regional coordination we will review and evaluate the plans of neighboring communities.

Comprehensive Plans...An Inventory

All the counties that border Woodford have planning commissions and comprehensive plans. These plans have all been created on a similar template and as such they share similar language. For example, all the plans place primary emphasis on the importance of preserving the unique character of the individual community.

The language employed to frame goal and objective statements is also very similar from county to county. An initial review of these goal and objective statements reveals consensus on several items of regional importance:

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Environment: All comprehensive plans stress the importance of protecting the environment, including specific areas such as the South Elkhorn Creek and the Kentucky River.

Agriculture: Most plans have strong goals and/or objectives regarding the importance of growing the community's agricultural economy and preserving the best farmlands.

Only Lexington, however, puts forth a strongly worded goal concerning the importance of the Thoroughbred industry to the community. This is a serious oversight in Scott, Jessamine, and Bourbon Counties in that they comprise 3 of the top 6 Thoroughbred producing counties in the nation.

(Madison County, which contains the lowest levels of prime farmland in the metro region, also makes little mention of the importance of promoting or preserving agriculture lands).

Recreation: Each county has adopted goals that state the importance of recreation facilities. Many discuss the importance of providing larger facilities, which often times is outside the financial capacity of an individual community.

No plan has a goal relating to regional coordination of recreation planning or creation of facilities. This often causes serious conflicts, such as the recent proposal for the large marina on the Kentucky River that was proposed independently of any regional consensus.

Tourism: Most plans acknowledge the importance of tourism to the individual community, yet most are vague as to what tourism strategy they are promoting. (Scott County appears to be a significant exception, although it could be that tourism will be promoted generally by the community's efforts in implementing the comprehensive plan). There is no region-wide effort to "brand" our touristic identity in ways similar to what has occurred in Napa Valley, the Berkshires, the Cotswolds, or even Tuscany.

Cultural/Historic Resources: Each plan in the region has a section on the preservation and promotion of cultural and historic resources. Yet, as should be apparent by now from review of other sections, there is no uniformity from community to community about which structures and lands should be preserved and how and to what purpose.

Redevelopment: The importance of this category is that success in directing growth to urban areas will prevent further outward development at the fringes of towns as well as into the rural areas. Most plans have adopted goals to encourage this type of development.

Figure 2.1



Figure 2.2

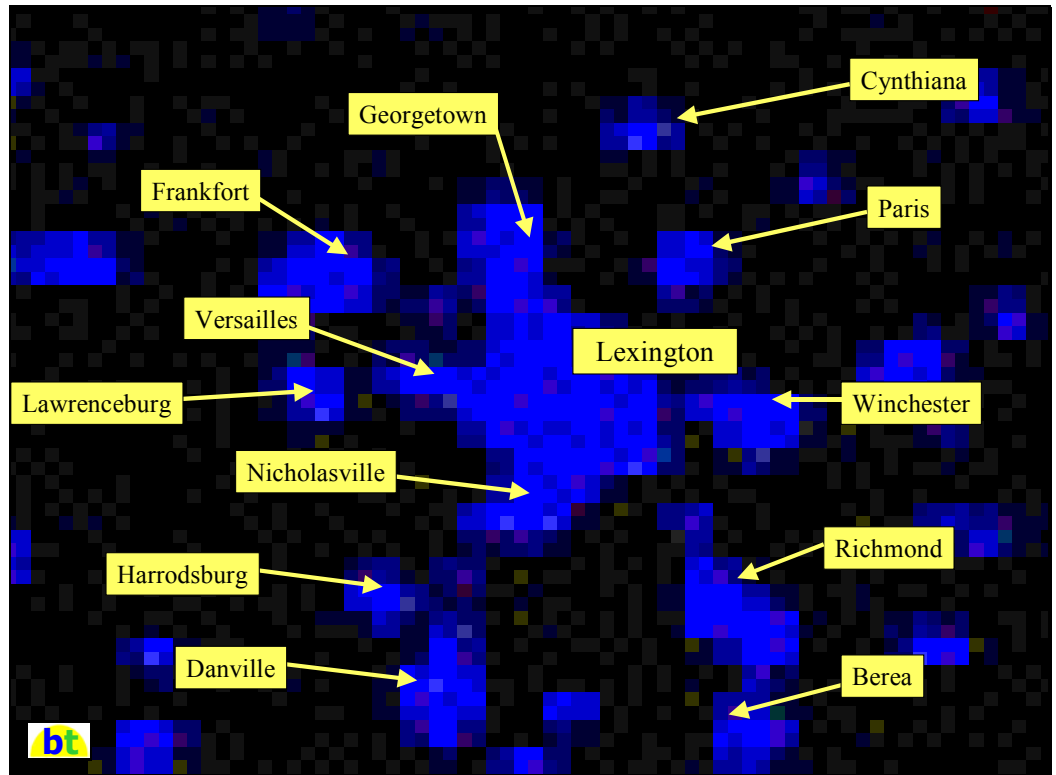
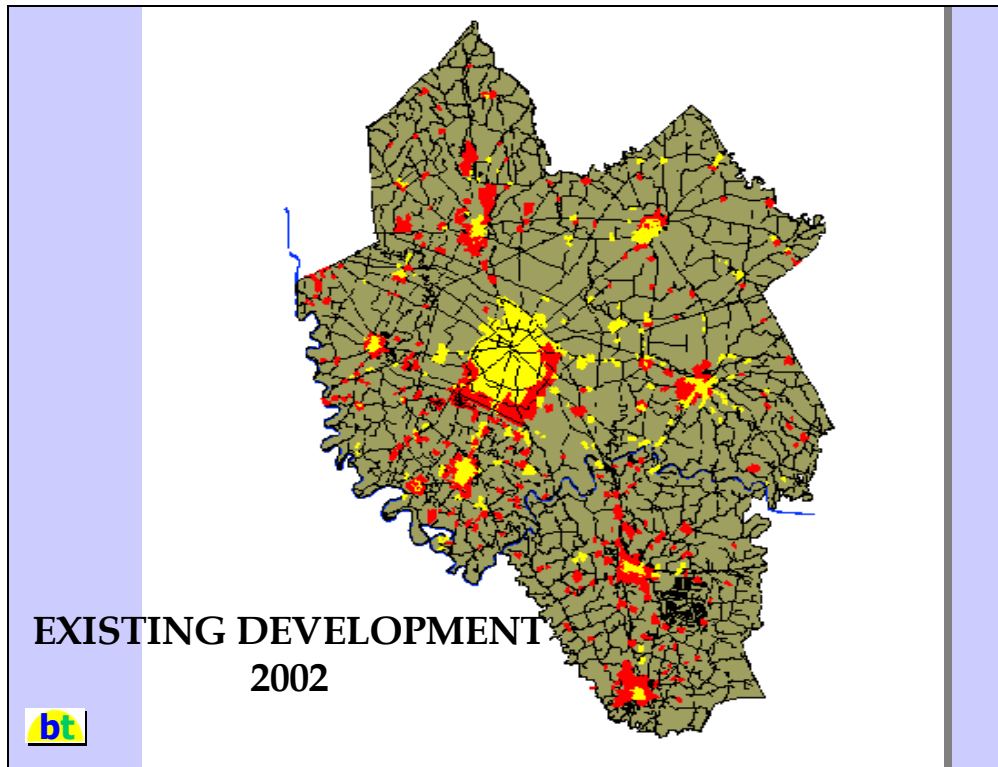


Figure 2.3



Harrodsburg presents a significant exception. The capacity and disrepair of sewer lines within the core of the city severely limit the ability of the community to direct or encourage urban growth to the established core. The result of this is that as population increases in Mercer County, more and more people will find housing outside of the established core¹, most likely in rural areas of the county. This could further the process of transforming the character of Mercer County from predominately rural to predominately suburban.

Urban Land Use: Central Kentucky is greatly distinguished in planning circles in that most of the cities - in the Metro area at least - have urban growth boundaries – outside of which no substantial urban development may be permitted. Lexington’s was the first urban growth boundary in the nation. The Metro communities with other urban growth boundaries include:

¹ Legacy Plan: A Vision for the Future of Mercer County, University of Kentucky Department of Landscape Architecture, 2002

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Georgetown, Midway, Paris, Winchester, Wilmore, Nicholasville, Versailles

Metro and regional cities without growth boundaries include:

Cynthiana, Lancaster, Lawrenceburg, Harrodsburg, Frankfort, Richmond, Berea

While the Kentucky River provides a buffer to encroaching urban growth from the west, the lack of a strong urban boundary in Frankfort should be of great concern to Woodford Countians.

Rural Land Use: Perhaps the largest disparity in planning philosophy throughout the region is in rural land regulation. Each county has a different regulatory system in place. For example, Franklin County allows 1.5 acre tracts if they can be served with water and sewer. Scott County allows 5-acre tracts anywhere in the County. Mercer County is considering reducing the minimum lot size from five acres to two and one-half acres.

Housing Affordability: Many communities across the country have made dedicated efforts to subtly reject “undesirable” citizens through their housing and zoning policies. This has an undesirable social effect because areas of poverty are often concentrated. This also has an adverse economic impact on an overall region in that a large segment of workers become harder to come by in a given area because they have been forced out, or never included, and cannot easily reach jobs due to a lack of transportation.

Each community in the region has goals that encourage the creation of adequate levels of affordable housing. Further research is necessary to determine if any community is “dumping” lower income residents.

While there appear to be no visible efforts at housing discrimination, community desirability and planning policies have made certain communities unaffordable for much of the working population. Median home values vary dramatically across the region. For example, in 2000, the median home value in Woodford County was \$117,100², which was the highest in the region. Across the Kentucky River in Anderson County, the median value was \$83,800³.

Infrastructure: The strongest regional tie that exists in the Bluegrass is the water system. Currently all the communities in the counties that surround Woodford and all but two in the Lexington Metro gain their water from the Kentucky River. Since

² 2000 U.S. Census

³ Ibid

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1990, the region has grown by nearly 75,000 people without one new ounce of water being added to the system⁴.

Only Lexington's comprehensive plan tackles the important issue of ensuring adequate regional water supply squarely. No other community's plan states more than that water supply should be ensured and quality protected.

Economic Development: Each community's plan puts forth a self-reliant posture regarding economic growth. No plan mentions the importance of pooling resources, sharing ideas, or building a regional economic growth coalition. (Only Lexington's plan mentions the importance of attracting capital to the larger region)

Many plans place great emphasis on commercial – shopping center - growth as economic development. In its current forms, this may mean more large, single-use commercial areas on the region's arterial roads and in locations outside of Fayette County.

Transportation Planning: Most plans stress the need for multi-modal transportation planning. But the plans are community-centered, and none envisions a regional transportation system of any sort.

Regional Planning: As obviously similar on the surface as these plans are, a reader perhaps could come to the conclusion that regional planning is a favored concept. This is not the case. **Only one plan (Lexington's) does more than mention regional planning or coordination in passing and most do not mention it at all.**

Lexington's planning goal states: *"Promote regional planning and coordination throughout the Bluegrass."*

⁴ Bluegrass Area Development District, Bluegrass Water Consortium

Figure 2.4

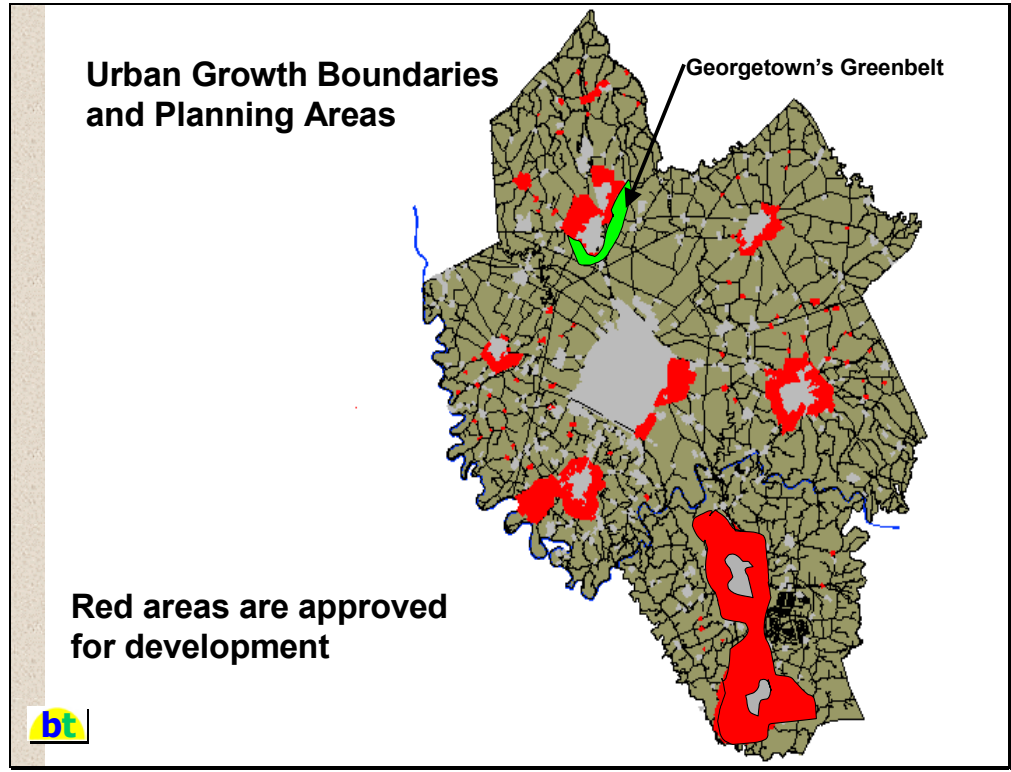


Figure 2.5

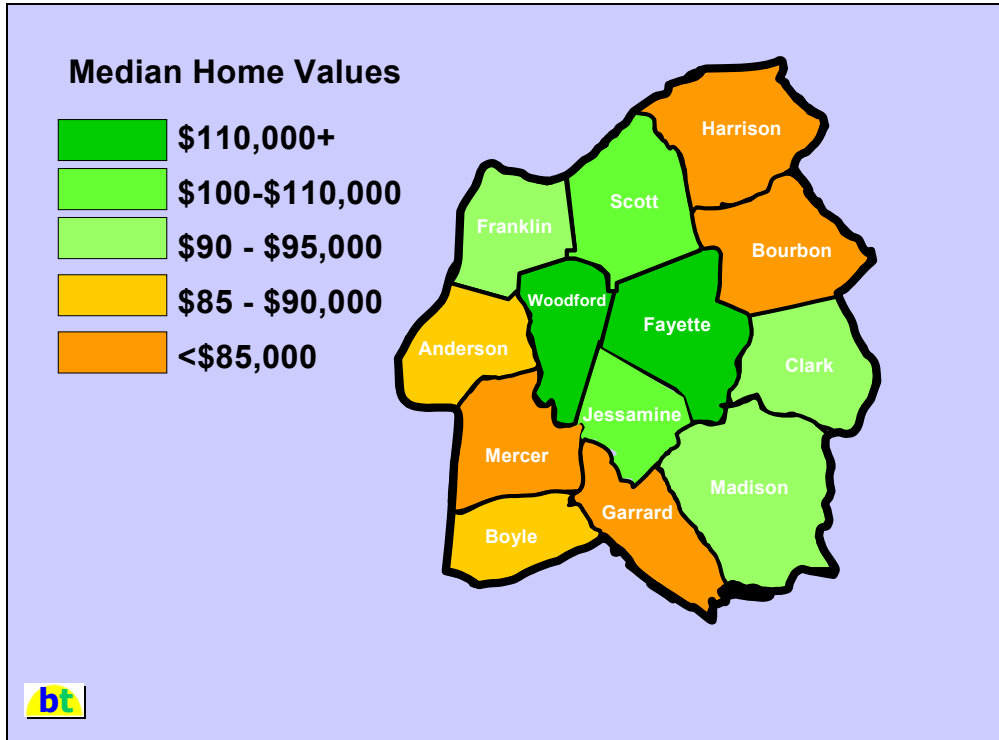
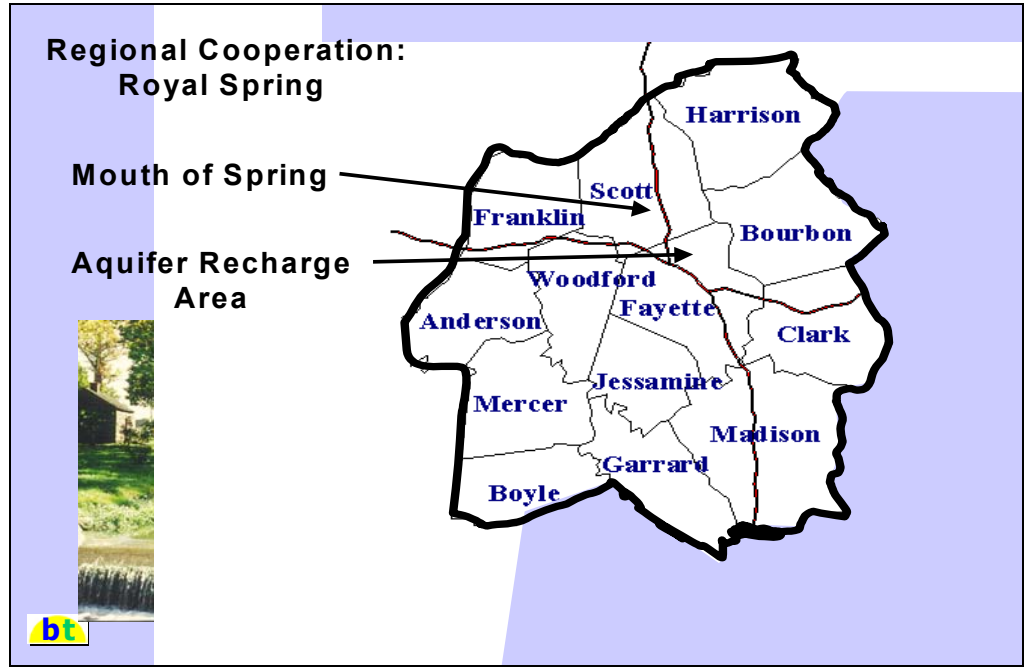


Figure 2.6



Figure 2.7



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Analysis of 1997 Plan...Regional Coordination Opportunities and Issues Identified

Does the 1997 Comprehensive Plan for Versailles, Midway and Woodford County provide a basis for ongoing planning coordination with adjoining cities and counties and within the Bluegrass Region?

Overview

Generally, the community's existing plan contains many of the positives, and suffers from many of the drawbacks, as most of the region's plans. The plan is conventional in that it follows the "if we take care of ourselves, we will be OK" approach. There appears to be little understanding, or concern, of forces and trends occurring outside the county.

What follows is a specific accounting of the areas analyzed regionally

Environment: Woodford's Plan recognizes the importance of protecting the natural environment. However, a shortcoming is that the goal does not stress the importance of working with other communities whose policies may negatively affect Woodford's environment.

Agriculture: Unlike the topic above, the Plan's goal for agriculture contains mandatory action language – "protect" – in relation to the County's agriculture economy and character. Neither the goal nor related objectives speak of regional action designed to protect and promote agriculture.

Recreation: The Plan recognizes recreation as a vital and desirable community service. Neither the goal nor related objectives speak of regional action designed to coordinate

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recreation planning or for the provision of a regional recreational resource. This is perhaps an oversight in that Buckley Wildlife Sanctuary is of statewide importance and draws visitors from a large area. The importance of the Kentucky River – and its shared possession - should also have guided the drafters of the plan toward regional recreation planning goals.

Tourism: The Plan acknowledges the importance of increased tourism to achieving other community goals, such as small town and rural character and agricultural development. The goal does not speak of regional action designed to coordinate tourism planning yet an objective hints at broader cooperation by stating, “To support new and innovative means to encourage tourism and to seek the assistance of state and local governments, as needed to bring this about.” For the most part, however, the Plan concentrates on improving cooperation among local interests, as well as increasing Woodford’s share of the Bluegrass tourism pie.

Cultural/Historic Resources: The Plan stresses the importance of these resources. No mention is made on developing coordinated preservation criteria across the region.

Redevelopment: Since the 1997 Plan allowed for basically no enlargement of the urban growth boundaries of Versailles and Midway, the plan necessarily promotes development and redevelopment of existing areas. This is a strategy that must have time to work.

Urban Land Use: As stated, the 1997 Plan’s desire to limit continued outward expansion of the county’s growth boundaries, has thus increased the effort for redevelopment in the existing centers and for more efficient new suburban development within the existing growth boundaries.

The groundbreaking planning that occurred in 2000 and was incorporated into the **Preserving Town and Country in The Bluegrass** document stands as a model for the rest of the region. Many communities are fearful that a decision to limit continued expansion of their urban growth boundaries would result in a cessation of growth. Woodford’s work is a demonstration that a balance can be achieved.

Rural Land Use: Woodford County’s goals, objectives, and policies, taken as a whole when relating to rural land use, are the most progressive in the region. While there is no specific goal relating to rural land use, the effect of the entire collection is to strongly limit rural development in conventional forms. Instead, rural housing growth is encouraged in existing small communities and in cluster developments. There is no apparent understanding, however, of the impact that other communities’ policies may have on Woodford’s rural areas.

Housing Affordability: The Comprehensive Plan Goals do not mention ensuring housing affordability. Woodford’s County’s 1997 policy of not expanding the Urban Service Boundaries of either Versailles or Midway, without an immediate increase in infill development, may be directly responsible for increasing the housing prices to the highest level in the region.

Infrastructure: The Plan ties growth rates to service provision. No mention is made of ensuring water supply or for acting regionally for water service.

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Economic Development: The Plan blandly approaches traditional economic development (ie. factories) with this goal: “To accommodate industrial development that will assist in providing for a broad and stable economic base conducive to the character of the area.” The goal’s objectives are more focused with industrial compatibility and environmental sensitivity than with defining a economic development strategy. The Plan makes no mention of regional economic development or of any possibility of sharing in the economic windfalls that other communities are enjoying.

Transportation Planning: Positively, the transportation planning goal seeks to provide for movement in a variety of modes. Negatively, no mention is made of regional transportation planning or coordination for automobiles or airplanes.

Regional Planning: As noted throughout this section, the Plan makes almost no mention of regional cooperation or coordination within any of the stated goals and objectives. Not surprisingly then, there is no goal statement regarding regional planning.

Other Regional Planning Efforts

Bluegrass Tomorrow’s *Framework Elements for a Regional Plan*

Bluegrass Tomorrow, after much regional dialogue in 1997 and 1998, put forth a guide to creating a regional plan. This was the first attempt of this scale in Kentucky. This document is not so much a regional plan but rather it is a prescription for unified action at the local level.

The intent of the document is to provide a context for coordinating local actions regionally in order to maintain the traditional patterns of development that have created such a high quality of life. Building on Bluegrass Tomorrow’s grass roots *Regional Vision*, the document outlines planning techniques to ensure that our communities remain separate and distinct, that our roadways remain safe, efficient and beautiful, that our best farmlands remain secure and productive, and that we are sensitive to our fragile environment. The document proposes that if we can achieve these ideals locally, and thus across the region, that we will ensure a high quality of life as well as a competitive edge in securing a front-line place in the global economy.

The document lays out several tools for achieving each of the vision points. For example, in order to ensure that our communities remain separate from one another and distinct from “Anywhere, USA”, the document proposes greenbelts and employing traditional development patterns. While Woodford County has embraced traditional development patterns, it has no experience with implementing a greenbelt around either of the two urban service boundaries in the County. Yet, Scott County does, and thus Woodford may learn from them.

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Tools to ensure roadway safety, efficiency, and beauty include adopting context sensitive design standards. The Kentucky Transportation Cabinet is a national leader in this type of planning, and Bluegrass Tomorrow and the Cabinet jointly developed a first-of-its kind planning and training manual to ensure that this philosophy is transmitted across the state.

The document recommends purchasing development rights, clustering development, and increasing minimum lot sizes as methods of ensuring that the best farmland in region remains secure and productive. The document also recommends suitable placement of rural septic tanks to ensure environmental quality, more dense urban development in order to stay away from sensitive land, and forming a regional environmental commission to constantly monitor the state of our environment.

Bluegrass Tomorrow is committed to implementing the recommendations contained in the document. To that end, Bluegrass Tomorrow has undertaken the region's most extensive public education campaign in order to illustrate issues, trends, and solutions. To date, Bluegrass Tomorrow, has spoken to nearly 400 regional groups comprising over 8,000 people.

Lexington Greenways Plan

The Lexington-Fayette Urban County Greenspace Commission recently completed work on a first-ever Greenway Master Plan. This plan is a comprehensive effort to identify opportunities and plan for their development. The plan hints at regional greenway ideas but does not make any recommendations for regional action in planning for or establishing them.

Paris-Lexington Road

In the early 1990's, Fayette and Bourbon counties created a first ever inter-county collaboration for road planning and land use development along what is commonly referred to as "Paris Pike". The road is now under construction, and the land use policies have been adopted by Fayette County. Bourbon County has yet to adopt the more restrictive policies that Fayette has.

Royal Spring Aquifer

In the late 1990's, Fayette and Scott Counties undertook a collaborative effort to protect Georgetown's drinking water supply. The source of this drinking water is the Royal Spring Aquifer. Most of this aquifer lies under Lexington, including some of the developing industrial land of Coldstream Research Park. Scott County, rightfully concerned about potential contamination, has worked with Fayette to ensure that development in this area is environmentally sensitive. Fayette has agreed to this, even

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though it gains little benefit for itself. This is a great example of regional cooperation on a vital issue.

Elkhorn Creek Inter-County Consortium

The elected leaders of Fayette, Scott, Franklin and Woodford Counties formed the Elkhorn Creek Land and Nature Trust in the early 1990's. Its purpose was to coordinate environmental, recreational, and promotional activities in the Elkhorn Creek watershed. While much was done through the early 1990's, little has been done since.

Kentucky River Authority

The Authority is responsible for a water supply plan for the entire Kentucky River watershed. Another area of responsibility is the planning of parks along the River, with a goal of creating a Kentucky River State Park. Little coordination has been accomplished on this goal, however, and recreational plans remain within the purview of local governments along the River.

Bluegrass Area Development District

In 1993, the Bluegrass Area Development District published a "Regional Land Use Plan" for the 17 counties of the Bluegrass ADD region. The Plan assessed the current status of planning activities in each of the communities it served. Elements of the Plan included housing, transportation, population projections, economic trends, environmental resources, community facilities, and historic resources. Bluegrass ADD literature states that the Plan "provided regional land use policies to be taken into consideration when local governments develop comprehensive plans, zoning ordinances, and other planning tools." According to the ADD, it was hoped that "all local planning units and legislative bodies should examine the recommendations of the Regional Land Use Plan and utilize them in the decision making process when appropriate."

Prospectively, the Plan did include sections on how to implement cluster regulations, sample goal and objective language, and exhortations to plan wisely, among other things. But in the final analysis, the Plan was little more than a review of current local plans and policies.

The major weakness of the Plan was that it contained no call for coordinated regional action on specific issues such as the Bluegrass agricultural landscape, recreational opportunities, or economic development. Perhaps the Plan's shortcomings are best demonstrated by a map entitled "Existing and Future Land Use in the Bluegrass Area Development District": it simply is a catalogue of existing land

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use plans. There are no regional natural resource preservation areas identified, no areas of prime farmlands to be protected, no analysis of the conflicts between plans.

In Woodford's case, this has dramatic consequences: the map shows all of southern Franklin County as being a development area, while adjoining portions of Woodford are shown to be in an agriculture preservation area. A true regional plan would have identified this conflict and made a recommendation to alleviate it. Now, nearly 10 years after the completion of this Plan, this area of Franklin County is one of the fastest growing in the state, whose visual character, traffic patterns, and proximity are beginning to negatively impact Woodford County.

Summary

Three opportunities and issues seem to stand out from the discussion and analysis. From an economic development perspective, one of the best opportunities for regional coordination involves promotion of the equine industry and preservation of the farms and natural resources that support this regional asset. Not only is this industry a major employer, but it also a major ingredient in capturing additional tourism related revenues for Woodford and the region. Woodford County should move aggressively to promote regional efforts in this area.

The second opportunity/issue lies in the mobility arena. Transportation facilities are one of the critical influences of and determinors of land use patterns. Woodford's geographic position in the Local Region, between two major employment centers, is an issue for this Plan Update. Regional coordination efforts should better recognize Woodford's mobility needs and support transportation improvements designed to accommodate this travel demand. In other words, promote regional coordination to prioritize road improvement designed to support travel between Lexington and Frankfort without damaging Woodford communities, i.e, Midway and downtown Versailles.

Finally, Woodford's significant frontage on the Kentucky River gives it a prime position, and significant responsibility, in any effort to ensure that the River will be a continuing potable water resource to the region, and that it's flow, water quality, and water storage features are preserved for future generations. This may be the most difficult of the challenges given the fact that other regional counties and communities do not touch on the resource and are removed from direct experience of the importance of this resource. This alone is a primary reason for Woodford to take a leadership position on this issue.