



# GLASGOW

## STRATEGIC PLAN 2020



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



# Acknowledgements



## ■ City of Glasgow Elected Officials

Mayor Harold Armstrong  
Councilmember Terry L. Bunnell  
Councilmember Sheri Eubank  
Councilmember Patrick Gaunce  
Councilmember Brad Groce  
Councilmember Wendell Honeycutt  
Councilmember Marna Kirkpatrick  
Councilmember Chasity Lowery  
Councilmember James "Happy" Neal  
Councilmember Gary Norman  
Councilmember Freddie Norris  
Councilmember Joe Trigg  
Councilmember Marlin Witcher

## ■ Glasgow Strategic Planning Committee

Councilmember Terry L. Bunnell, Chairman  
Councilmember Marna Kirkpatrick  
Councilmember Gary Norman  
Councilmember Sheri Eubank  
Councilmember Wendell Honeycutt  
Councilmember James "Happy" Neal  
Cherie Vaughan, Business Owner  
Tara Bailey, Executive Director, Barren County Family YMCA  
Kevin Myatt, Planning Director of the Joint City-County Planning Commission

It is with immense gratitude the City of Glasgow extends our thanks to all citizens, as well as the Barren County and Glasgow High School students and administrators, who participated in the five public meetings held across the city. We further recognize those who supported this endeavor by providing meeting space and refreshments for the public meetings:

- Barren County High School Innovation Zone
- The T.J. Health Pavilion Community Center
- Lera B. Mitchell Clubhouse
- Boys and Girls Club
- Main Street Bed and Breakfast

Steven Austin, JD, ASLA  
Joe Black, UK Martin School for Public Policy, KLC Intern  
Jason Thomas, UK Martin School for Public Policy, KLC Intern  
Photo Credit: Sam Terry



# Introduction



The Glasgow City Council formed a Strategic Planning Committee in May 2019, for the purpose of seeking input from citizens of Glasgow about the future of the city and determining where the council should be focusing its energy.

Councilmember Terry L. Bunnell was appointed chairman and committee members included Councilmembers Marna Kirkpatrick, Wendell Honeycutt, James "Happy" Neal, Sheri Eubank, and Gary Norman, as well as, involvement by Cherie Vaughn, owner of Main Street Bed and Breakfast, Tara Bailey, executive director of the Barren County Family YMCA and Kevin Myatt, planning director of the Joint City-County Planning Commission.

The city contracted with the Kentucky League of Cities Community Development Services (KLC CDS) to assist the Strategic Planning Committee with outlining the work to be accomplished. This included conducting three community engagement

meetings; a kickoff to the strategic planning process in a large community meeting and two satellite meetings that were held in two additional locations.

Another public meeting was held on February 4, 2020. The consultants presented a broad framework of the strategic plan and provided the opportunity for the council, committee and public to ask questions and provide feedback on the general direction that the plan was taking. The final meeting was held on March 24, where the consultants presented the completed strategic plan to the public.

KLC CDS worked with local high school students, existing groups and local organizations, as well as individuals within the community to honor and amplify their work as part of the overall planning process. The results of these conversations are found in the following pages.

# Brief History



Glasgow is located in south-central Kentucky in Barren County. The community is served by Interstate 65 and the Cumberland Parkway, and sits halfway between Louisville and Nashville, Tennessee.

The first settlers to the area were the “long hunters,” many whom were soldiers of the Continental Army. They were awarded land grants for land between the Green and Barren Rivers after the Virginia Convention in 1789. One of those early settlers, a man named John Hall, offered land for the town on Beaver Creek. Another man, John Gorin, a Revolutionary War veteran, also offered land for the town. The residents voted and Gorin’s Revolutionary War comrades gave his offer the highest number of votes. One of Gorin’s selling points was the Big Spring located in Big Spring Bottom which is located one block off the north side of the current court square.

The spring provided water for consumption, cooling milk, watering cattle and horses, everything requiring plentiful water. Glasgow was named county seat of Barren County in 1799. The city was named for (Old) Glasgow, Virginia, in Amherst County. Its earliest settlers were from Glasgow, Virginia rather than Scotland.

Throughout the city’s history, the economic conditions have been positive. Early businesses included milling businesses, cotton gins and carding factories that flourished in Glasgow. The county has numerous caves where saltpeter was found, and powder mills were erected. Agriculture has always been a primary industry as well with area farmers growing tobacco as early as 1812.

Oil was discovered in the county in the 1840s. The greatest disaster faced by Glasgow happened in 1853 as the city was struck with



# Brief History

Asiatic cholera, brought in by a traveling circus and infecting the town's main water supply. The city came together to nurse the sick and Glasgow continued to thrive. A railroad was initiated following the Civil War.

Glasgow is conveniently located near many recreational attractions. Mammoth Cave National Park, the world's longest surveyed cave, attracts millions of people each year. Barren River Lake State Resort Park provides activities that range from swimming to hiking, cycling, horseback riding, fishing and swimming.

Glasgow is renowned for its annual Highland Games, a celebration of Scottish heritage that began in 1986. The city was named for (Old) Glasgow, a town in Amherst County, Virginia, that ceased to exist when most of the residents moved to the newly formed Barren County and named their new home Glasgow. Populated with dozens of descendants of Scotch-Irish immigrants, Glasgow has capitalized on sharing its name with the Scottish city by hosting the Glasgow Highland Games.





# Brief History

*Contributed by local historian Sam Terry:*

Glasgow was given a name with a Scottish reference until 1930. That happened when the Glasgow High School football team played in the state championship football game two consecutive years, 1928 and 1929. They lost in 1928, but they won the state championship in 1929.

They were the Blue Warriors and their mascot was a blue eagle. Malcolm Black was a local freelance sportswriter working for the *Glasgow Times* and he was interviewed by one of the big city newspapers about the team. They were tired of repeating "Blue Warriors" and asked Malcolm for another word they could use for the team. Malcolm responded, "How about Scotties since they come from a town with the same name as the city in Scotland?"

Scotties was used in a couple of newspaper columns and in 1930-31 the students began using the term and it caught on. Eventually, the school adopted the Scotties; the kilted bagpiper came along thanks to former Mayor Charles Honeycutt who was the band director and decided to dress the band in kilts so they would stand out in competitions. His grandmother and great-aunt made all 100 of the original kilt uniforms by hand.





# Community Core Values



## Community Core Values

- People dedicated to one another
- Access to outdoor activity
- Medical facilities
- Location
- Safety
- Being local

## What Residents Think About Glasgow

### • Strengths

School system  
Community  
Location  
Size  
Access to outdoor activities  
Safety

### • Weaknesses

Lack of new development  
Young people are leaving

Lack of a quality workforce  
Loss of jobs and industry  
Poverty  
Crime/drugs  
Housing

### • Threats

Flight of talent and youth  
Attitudes  
Apathy  
Lack of workforce development  
Losing our downtown—the heart  
Lack of city identity  
Dependence on factories for jobs

### • Design Ideas

Enhance downtown with recreation and retail  
Grow trails and parks  
Create an identity  
Local food economy  
Tourism  
Blue Zone designation

# Community Core Values



## What Students Said

### • Strengths

- Size – not too big and not too small
- Small-town feel
- Safe and peaceful
- Dual school systems
- Job opportunities for students

### • Weaknesses

- Infrastructure, roads, heavy traffic, forgotten backroads, sidewalks, Haywood area
- Lack of high-tech jobs
- Lack of teenage entertainment
- Empty buildings and declining businesses

### • Threats

- Lack of housing options
- Downtown needs revitalizing
- Lack of high-tech jobs

### • Opportunities

- Public recreational opportunities

Entertainment possibilities

Growth of shopping/development of the square

Focus on the environment





# Core Values Juxtaposed to the Current Situation



During the public meetings, residents said they are dedicated to one another.

Yet, public discourse and community statistics paint a very different picture.

The public said they value their agricultural heritage, access to outdoor activities and the community's local identity. Yet, the Highland Games brand has lost its appeal among citizens, and the farmland is being gobbled up for new development leaving abandoned properties in its wake.

Citizens said they value their medical facilities and enjoy a sense of safety. Even so, the poverty rate among children is one of the highest in the state, leading to chronic problems across every socioeconomic register.

## What is Believed About Glasgow

- Excellent schools helping students with career paths
- Practical job opportunities
- Glasgow is an iconic and respected Kentucky city
- People genuinely care about the city
- There is a core group of dedicated citizens already at work improving the city and making a difference for its future

## Some Gaps to Overcome

- 33% of children living in Barren County live in poverty compared to 22% statewide (Source: CountyHealthRankings.org)
- 25% of the population under the age of 65 is shown to have ambulatory disabilities
- 20% of the population has less than a high school degree
- Women in Glasgow have higher education rates but have dramatically higher poverty rates
- According to Indeed.com there are 281 jobs in Glasgow proper
  - 106 are full-time, entry level and pay \$30,000+
  - 257 are full-time, entry level and pay \$20,000+
  - 645 full-time, entry level paying \$20,000+ within 25 miles of Glasgow
- Even so, local companies struggle to find employees

(Source: 2018 American Community Survey)

The gaps between core values and the current situation can be remedied. We believe the strategies herein can lead the city to a brighter future. It will take leadership and consistent, incremental action steps over time.



# Community Identity

## What is Known About Glasgow

What most people thought they knew about Glasgow when you were telling your story:

- The Scotties and the Highland Games

What they know now when someone else is telling your story (Source: *USA Today*):

- Glasgow - Poorest city in the state

What we want people to know going forward:

- Define and tell your own story!

## Arts, Entertainment and Culture



During the public meetings and individual interviews, the use of "Scottish Heritage" as the brand for Glasgow was frequently denounced as no longer desirable. This was surprising given the Glasgow High School identity of "Scotties" and the annual Highland Games.

As outside consultants, we are not able to make that determination for the community. Therefore, we recommend the development of a community vision, brand and updated logo as well as a joint plan and marketing campaign for all things related to promoting the city's arts, entertainment and local culture. This would encompass tourism-related offerings, organizations, events and partners such as:

- The Plaza
- The Art Guild
- South Central Cultural Center
- Historic Sites
- Public Library
- Community Theatre
- Festival Organizers (Fair, Midway Reunion, Ag Fest, Highland Games)
- Farmers Market
- Barren River Activities
- Any Other Organizations, Events or Activities that Fit this Category

As part of the plan development, include beautification aspects needed within the community. For example, during the planning process, citizens expressed interest in:

- Consistent signage throughout the city
  - Blade signage downtown – may require ordinance updates
- Landscaping and beautifying the exit off the Cumberland Pkwy. on US 31 E
- Welcome signs at the entrances to the city
- Opportunities for public art throughout the community
- Potentially adding new events and other community activities

Another recommendation is for this group to evaluate the need for a conference or community center by conducting a feasibility study. Through the study, determine if a visitor center can and should be constructed. If so, consider where the appropriate location would be, such as:

- On Hwy. 90 before outer loop;
- Downtown at the Cultural Center; or
- Within the proposed downtown redevelopment concept detailed in this plan.



# The Great Outdoors

## Trails and Bike Paths

Several ideas for trails and bike paths were brought forward by citizens during the listening sessions. Some of them included:

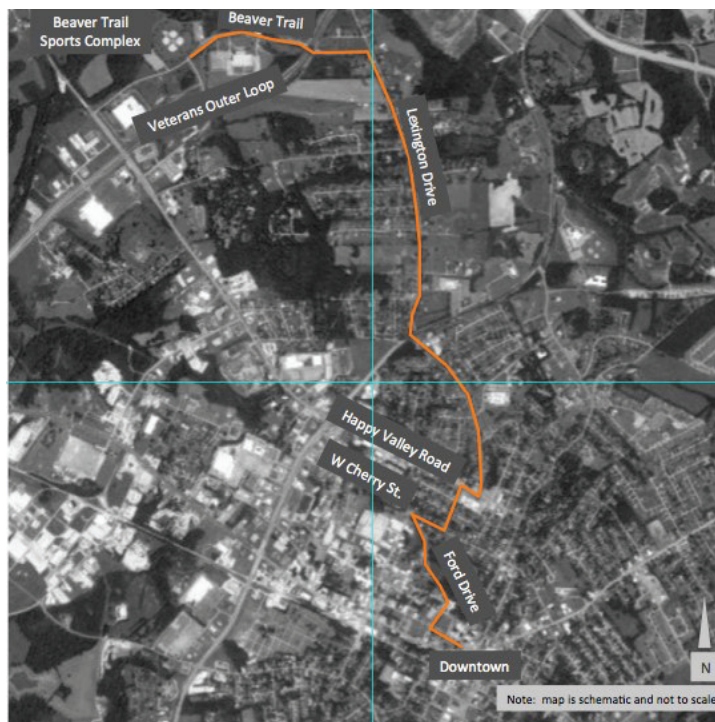
- Move the tennis courts from Gorin Park to new location at the American Legion Park.
- Bike trail connecting Barren River Lake State Park to the downtown Public Square, down Main Street and connecting to Mammoth Cave National Park. Overall, this trail system is like a big circle around downtown, with spokes connecting to Barren River Lake and Mammoth Cave.
- Bike trail connecting to Barren River Lake and Mammoth Cave with beautification along the way.
- Capitalize on the existing Veteran's Loop by connecting to nearby community assets and other trails.
- Meditation area around the pond at Hume Way behind Ideal Park. Walkways should be built around the hillside and connected to the trail along Trojan Trail.

## Linking Glasgow's Northern Residential Areas to the Beaver Trail Sports Complex

See map below.

Glasgow has many great recreational parks. Unfortunately, many are primarily accessible only by car. This limits users who would like to arrive via bicycle or other means. An opportunity exists to link the neighborhoods north of downtown to the Beaver Trail Complex via marked bike paths along existing city streets. This bike route would wind through the northern neighborhoods, avoiding heavily traveled streets, to provide the connection.

This bike path would leave downtown on Ford Drive, connect via Cherry and Preston Streets to Lexington Drive at the intersection with Happy Valley Road. The path would then follow Lexington Drive all the way to the intersection with Beaver Trail, which crosses Veterans Outer Loop. Once on the west side of the Veterans Outer Loop, an off-street trail could be constructed to the sports facilities.



# The Great Outdoors

## Linking Downtown to Barren River Lake State Resort Park

See map below

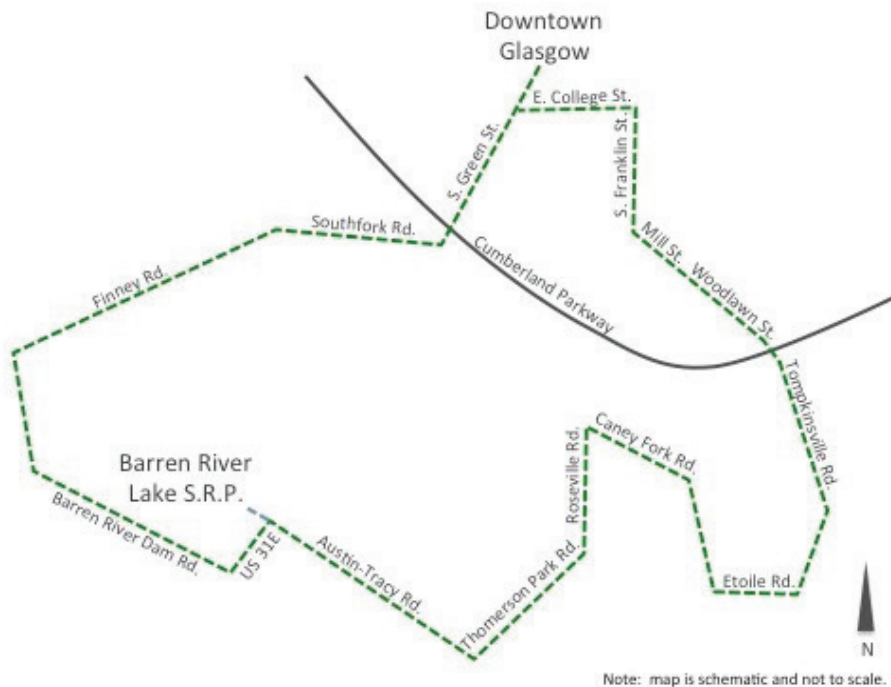
A goal for the community should be the realization that, “No visit to Barren River Lake State Resort is complete without a visit to downtown Glasgow.” Downtown must offer events from late spring to late fall, such as “art walks” at lunch and live music at Glasgow Green in a festival-type atmosphere in the evenings; a minimum of five days a week in the summer. Saturday and Sunday should be set aside for all-day events, such as car and boat shows, food festivals, music, crafts, and cooking classes. Live music could be offered in the evenings. Unique businesses that cater to the RV/

boating/fishing crowd should be encouraged to locate downtown.

It is essential that the community synchronize its forces to place maximum effort on publicizing downtown, not only in the vicinity of the lake, but in all marketing and promotional efforts as well.

The community must also (1) manage a complex set of ongoing events, (2) continue to ensure that downtown is clean, safe, and well-maintained, and (3) constantly seek and encourage appropriate new businesses.

There should also be a push to link downtown to the lake and resort via well marked, on-road bike routes. The map below, developed from rider input on Google maps, shows one such possibility.





# The Great Outdoors

## Linking Glasgow to Mammoth Cave National Park Rail with Trail

Glasgow has a great possibility to link the town to Mammoth Cave National Park along the existing CSXT railroad corridor to Park City. This trail could begin near downtown and connect to the existing trails within the park. This would involve the concept of “rail with trail.”



### From the Rails-to-Trails Conservancy

*“Many people are familiar with the concept of rail-trails, which are multi-use trails developed on former railroad corridors. With the increasing popularity of rail-trails across the country, communities are looking for other innovative ways of securing land for safe, popular and effective trail development. An emerging answer is rails-with-trails, which are trails adjacent to or within an active railroad corridor. The rail-with-trail concept provides even more opportunities for the creation of trail systems that enhance local transportation systems, offering safe and attractive community connections.*

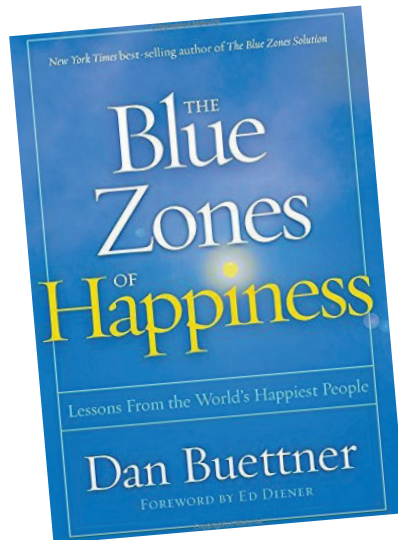
*As of 2019, there are more than 375 rails-with-trails in the United States, with the length located along active railroad corridors totaling more than 930 miles—and more are being built each year.*

*Safety is probably the biggest concern when considering a rail-with-trail project. Both railroads and potential trail managers may be apprehensive about placing a public trail close to an active railroad track, fearing an increased risk of accidents along the corridor. However, many successful rails-with-trails across the country stand as a testament to the ability of trains and trails to coexist.”*

More information is available at the Rails-to-Trails Conservancy website: [www.railstotrails.org](http://www.railstotrails.org).

# Health and Wellness

## Blue Zone of Happiness



T.J. Sampson Regional Health is taking the lead to make Glasgow, Kentucky, the first Blue Zone-designated city in Kentucky. *The Blue Zones of Happiness* is an initiative to improve the quality of life, health and well-being of the people of Glasgow and Barren County.

- The Blue Zone project is an international initiative that seeks to create communities

where the healthy choice is easy, and people live longer with a higher quality of life.

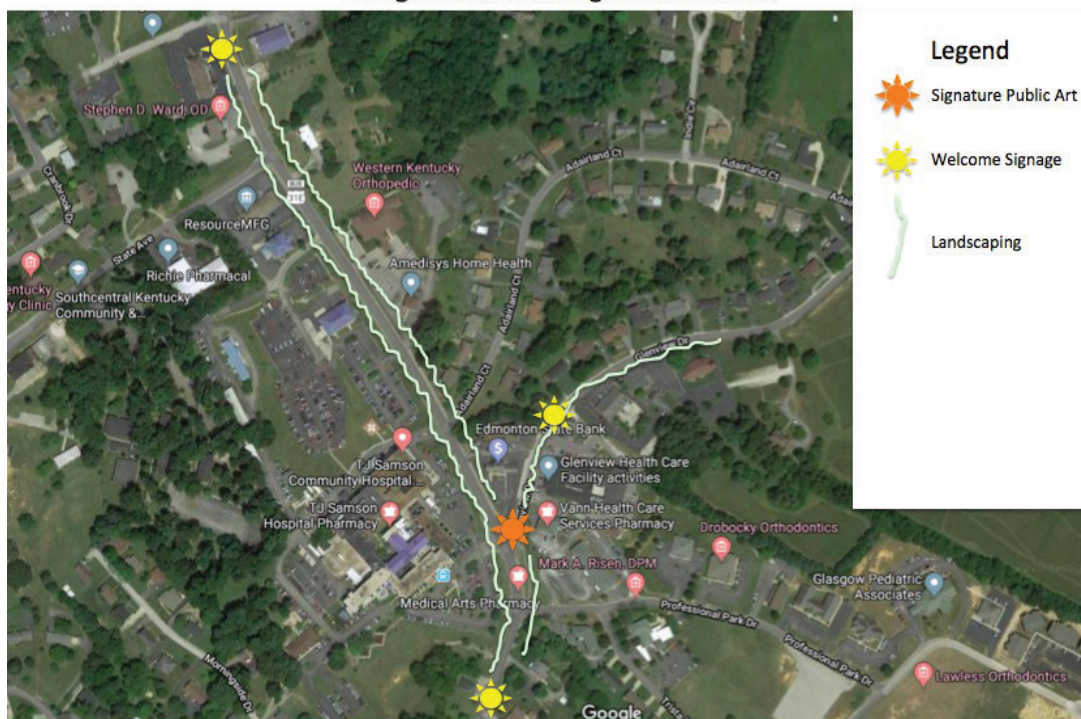
- Glasgow's strategic plan lays the foundation for this exciting initiative.
- Creating a high quality of life will help Glasgow retain its population and attract others to visit and live in this incredible city.

## Glasgow Medical Village Beautification Plan

See map below

The large clustering of medical services in north Glasgow is unique in the city. This area attracts people from around the region. This offers the city a great opportunity to offer a warm welcome to visitors and staffers alike. This concept proposes to make the area more visitor-friendly through welcome signage at the entrances to the area, public art, and new landscaping.

Glasgow Medical Village Beautification





# Economic and Workforce Development

A review of Glasgow and Barren County's economic health indicators provides an indication of the current business and job climate. The 2019 Barren County health rankings show two startling statistics:

- 33% of Barren County children are living in poverty<sup>1</sup>
- 87% of Barren County children are deemed likely for federal nutrition assistance programs<sup>2</sup>

Perhaps these numbers are not so surprising when reviewing Census data which indicates 65% of unemployed females are living in poverty, with 19.2% of working females living in poverty. Further, 36.6% of people without a high school degree are living in poverty compared to 6% of those with a bachelor's degree or higher.

These numbers led us to review other economic statistics in more detail. While there have been some factory closings and cutbacks, the number of production occupations have remained at the same level since 2013. Over that same time, unemployment has remained even with median income also remaining stagnant. The facts show that Glasgow has not gotten worse recently, but rather remained stagnant for many years.

The issues facing Glasgow are not a quick fix and will not be solved by having a factory open within the city. The issues are structural and require a calculated approach to encourage growth in the city.

The economy of Glasgow is at a place the Federal Reserve Bank calls a "low skills equilibrium." This describes the economy of cities that have low educational achievement and a high supply of low-skill jobs. Those with a higher



<sup>1</sup> <https://www.countyhealthrankings.org/app/kentucky/2019/rankings/barren/county/outcomes/overall/snapshot>

<sup>2</sup> [https://public.tableau.com/profile/feeding.america.research#1/vizhome/2017StateWorkbook-Public\\_15568266651950/CountyDetailDataPublic](https://public.tableau.com/profile/feeding.america.research#1/vizhome/2017StateWorkbook-Public_15568266651950/CountyDetailDataPublic)



# Economic and Workforce Development

productivity often go to other cities for jobs that will use their skill sets more effectively and pay a higher wage. The result is higher levels of poverty and lower wages with a workforce that is unable to compete in the 21st Century economy.

When looking through the available jobs in Glasgow there are a surplus of entry-level jobs, but a deficit of higher paying mid-level jobs.

It is not a coincidence that high skills employers are not coming to Glasgow when the workforce does not have the educational attainment levels that is necessary for these jobs.

About 11% of the population have less than a ninth grade level of education, which is similar to the population with a bachelor's degree.

About 6% of the population have a graduate/professional degree, but 8.5% of the population have an education attainment level between ninth through twelfth grades with no diploma or equivalent.

With the shift in the economy in the 21st Century from manufacturing to service jobs and a higher demand for educated workers, Glasgow has found itself on the wrong end of the skills gap in the modern economy, and in need of developing its workforce.<sup>3</sup> There is a disconnect between the jobs available and able and willing workers; there are more than 250 jobs currently available and no one to fill them. The community needs to understand why this condition exists.

While economic development is trying to encourage business and job growth, workforce development is the system that ensures workers have the education, skills, and training needed to obtain jobs. When these two systems work together job seekers are getting the same skills and training that employers are looking for leading to

higher wages for workers and a more productive workforce for employers.

Glasgow needs to create an economic development plan that fits into the market conditions that they face and utilizes their comparative advantages.

## Recommendations:

1. With the recent hire of an economic development director, Glasgow now has a convener who must take the lead on implementing strategies on both fronts: economic and workforce development.
2. The community must identify its unique advantages that separate themselves from competitors. For example, Glasgow's location is in close proximity to the cities of Bowling Green, Nashville, Louisville, and Lexington. However, other cities in the area also have this advantage. Bardstown has the bourbon and Bowling Green has the Corvette plant. What does Glasgow have and want to be known for?
3. Review existing jobs to assess what gaps lie within the community.
4. While industrial jobs remain desirable, we suggest the community also seek more advanced manufacturing and high-tech jobs to attract smaller businesses.
5. While Glasgow is looking for a path for future economic development, they should look for entrepreneurs within. Building a strong entrepreneurial spirit can help Glasgow diversify their economy and have more economic balance.

<sup>3</sup> Source: American Community Survey, 2018: ACS 5-year Estimate Subject Tables, Educational Attainment.

# Economic and Workforce Development

6. Seek to grow inward, rather than outward—redevelop vacated land and properties and create incentives to encourage redevelopment of interior spaces.
  7. Convene local educators, business and industry leaders to ascertain what job skills are needed in the community and realign educational programming as needed.
  8. With fresh ideas on the table, reassess infrastructure needs and plan for the future you desire.
  9. Become Kentucky's first Blue Zone City. This will involve building wealth within the community: Wealth = Quality of Life.
  10. Work collaboratively with the agricultural community to build an ag-tech research campus in Glasgow.
- Mud runs
  - Local food/craft beverages
  - Alternative agricultural opportunities—niche markets
  - Hemp
  - Need to exploit the community's agricultural products more
    - Research with UK, WKU and/or MSU as partners
    - Consider connecting ag-tech with high-tech
  - Infill/redevelopment – strip malls and blighted, abandoned and dilapidated buildings: reimagine the empty shopping center storefronts and vacant properties all throughout the town, need to build inward rather than building outward
  - From US 31 E bypass to outer loop at Happy Valley Road – look at the roads for sidewalks, lighting, turn lanes and consider implementing a complete streets policy
  - Adventure park at Beaver Creek Park

## Economic Gardening

Glasgow has a rich history in agriculture and needs to focus that same spirit into developing an economic garden. An economic garden is the practice of growing business and innovation from within, instead of the strategy of “hunting” firms to come into the city. Job growth has primarily come from entrepreneurial ventures, with new and high-growth firms accounting for 70% of job creation across the country. Glasgow has the opportunity to become a regional hub of innovation if they are willing to grow their garden.

As the community develops an economic development plan, seek ways to incorporate the following ideas which came from the public during the listening sessions:

- Airport maintenance hub
- Drone port
- Sizable tract for industrial development—high-tech
- Industry north of Glasgow Regional Landfill
- Shopping center behind Applebee's needs to be re-envisioned



# Economic and Workforce Development

## A variety of programs are available to local businesses:

- **Grow Kentucky**— A partnership between Kentucky and the Community and Economic Development Initiative of Kentucky (CEDIK). This program partners the research team at CEDIK with new business owners to create business models, identify potential sales leads, and work with social media/marketing.
- **The Kentucky Small Business Development Center in Elizabethtown**— Provides free one-on-one consultations to existing or potential entrepreneurs in south central Kentucky. The center also provides low-cost training programs taught by industry experts or qualified SBDC consultants.
- **Barren River Area Development District Revolving Loan Fund**— Gap financing for small businesses either starting up or expanding.
- **Glasgow-Barren County Chamber of Commerce**— The chamber provides different marketing and network opportunities for new and small businesses including ribbon cuttings, business round table discussions, quarterly breakfasts, and golf tournaments.

## Agriculture Strategies

Agriculture has changed dramatically over the past 30 years. There is a growing demand for engineers, scientists, and technicians nationwide. Residents of Glasgow and Barren County have the opportunity to grow their economies, particularly if they work together.

## Goal 1

Develop a world-class agricultural technology research campus in Glasgow.

- Identify potential businesses from global agriculture corporations as well as universities with a mission of agriculture research, then partner with local farmers and ag-related agencies and businesses in the area, to create new market opportunities and therefore new jobs.
- Tie this consortium of partners to the local and regional high school and college systems to align curriculum so that students are gaining appropriate skills for jobs within the agriculture technology and research industry.
- Identify current and potential resources, develop new tools and incentives and connect this consortium to local financial advisors.

## Why It Makes Sense

- Barren County already is one of the largest agricultural-producing counties in the state
- Potential to bring in new high-tech jobs as agriculture becomes more automated
- Provides more diversification for Glasgow's economy
- Builds on an existing economic sector with strong roots within the community
- Offers more opportunities for those looking to pursue a career in agriculture
- Potential partnership opportunities exist within Glasgow and Barren County

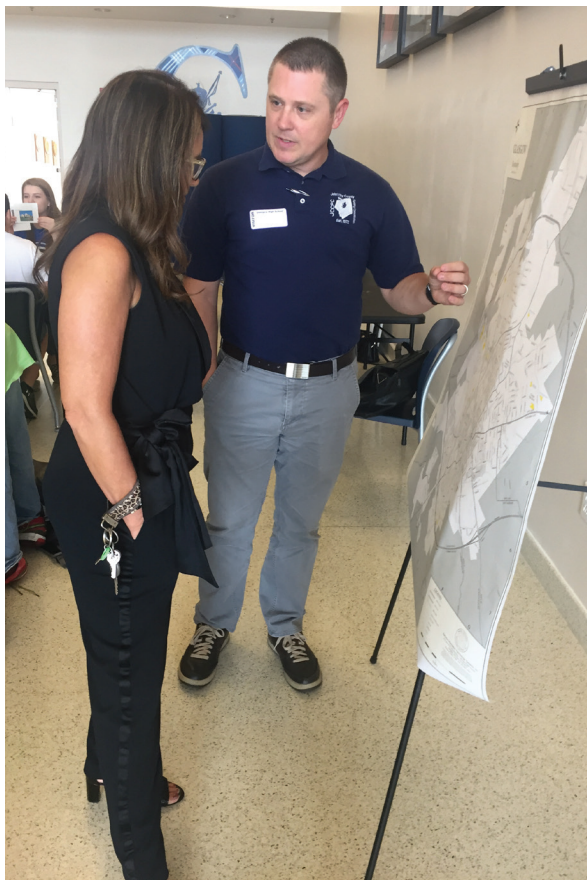
## Goal 2

Expand the farmer's market concept (previously mentioned in this plan) to broaden availability of fresh food. Work with community partners to encourage "farm to table" concepts throughout the community.



# Economic and Workforce Development

- Allows for increased amounts of fresh, healthy food in Glasgow
- Supports current efforts already underway in the community including the Bounty of the Barren Farmers Market and Sustainable Glasgow
- The Kentucky Proud Buy Local program is available to help the food service industry implement more “farm to table” options
- Provides for creating a year-round public market
- Provides an opportunity to remove Glasgow’s food desert



## Facts:

- There are over 300 students involved in Future Farmers of America within the Barren County School District.
- Barren County produced the most milk of any county in the commonwealth, the third most tobacco and hay, and the sixth most cattle and calves in 2017.
- There are already 65 Kentucky Proud producers/growers/breeders in Glasgow/Barren County.
- The Kentucky Proud Buy Local program offers a 15% reimbursement for restaurants and other food service offerings who buy products from Kentucky Proud members.
- Currently, only 4% of Barren County farms sell directly to consumers.

# Building Wealth – Entrepreneurship

## Glasgow Suburban Redevelopment Strategies

Glasgow, like many communities, has many outdated even declining suburban commercial areas. This is due to many factors, including:

- Changing retail trends to online shopping
- Changing demographics as Millennial and Boomer preferences for authentic, place-based activities increase
- The 2008-2012 recession forced out many local, regional and national retailers who have not returned
- Loss of convenience as traffic congestion increases
- Overbuilding – according to the Urban Land Institute, there may be five to six times as much retail space needed in a community like Glasgow
- Unappealing design of many commercial areas, including ugly parking lots

These are fundamental flaws: superficial building and landscaping improvements are not the answer to revitalizing these suburban commercial centers.

So, what to do? Glasgow should be looking for long-term wins, both for the economy and quality of life in the city, but also for commercial landowners and businesspeople.

Initially, the city should promote these commercial centers as valuable assets that provide a pool of affordable retail space for local entrepreneurialism. As a case study, Asheville, North Carolina, has a successful track record in supporting the organic rejuvenation of suburban strip malls into local business incubators.

A long-term option is to encourage the wholesale redevelopment of commercial centers where appropriate. This could involve demolition of existing buildings and the development of multi-story, mixed-use buildings around a common community feature such as a plaza or green space. However, the demand for commercial uses in Glasgow may be insufficient to support this much application of this much new retail.



Liberty Bikes' President Mike Nix pictured with co-owner Claudia Nix. (Photo by Max Cooper ©Mountain Express.)



Mashpee Commons, Massachusetts – suburban strip mall redeveloped into mixed-use center. <http://buildabetterburb.org/aging-well-maspee-commons-one-of-the-nations-first-suburban-retrofits/>



# Building Wealth – Entrepreneurship

If commercial demand is insufficient at many locations, then the community should consider the primary alternative— residential development. Currently, medium density residential development is allowed in highway service business districts in Glasgow. However, much of the current zoning ordinance is not compatible with such redevelopment ideas. The city should work with property owners who desire more profitable possibilities by developing clear redevelopment guidelines to promote livability and community in these new housing centers.



Belmar, Colorado – suburban commercial center remade into residential neighborhood. <http://www.shawconstruction.net/?portfolio=belmar-apartments>

## Housing

Organize a small group of people knowledgeable about real estate and be sure to include real estate agents, developers, health department professionals, school counselors, code enforcement officers, finance professionals (banker, accountant), property owners as well as renters. This could be called the Housing Improvement Team.

- Conduct an audit of existing housing inventory
- Identify abandoned, blighted or dilapidated properties

- Overlay the housing inventory with crime report from the police department to identify areas that may be in need of serious improvements
- Implement more aggressive policies to clean up these properties
- Ask the Housing Improvement Team to develop action steps and incentives that will create positive action to improve or replace housing, as needed
- Evaluate homeless and special needs such as senior and ADA accessible housing
- Evaluate demographic data to advise next steps on what type and price range of housing is needed
- Identify possible incentives to encourage redevelopment of aging housing and other properties
- Mobilize neighborhood cleanup events
- Educate property owners of property maintenance requirements
- Assess current codes and enforcement and revise as needed

### The Cost of Blight

The statistics for blighted properties in Kentucky:

- o Directly adjacent properties can be affected up to 25% in property market value
- o Property separated by one to three other properties can be affected from 5 to 15%
- o Property in same neighborhood can be affected 3 to 8%<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> *An Insider's Look at the Costs and Negative Effects of Blight, Neglect and Abandonment on Real Estate*

# Reimagine Downtown Glasgow



- Tie the downtown Village Green Park concept into a much bigger picture for downtown development
- Leverage downtown city-owned properties for new development around the park – using parks as a tool for economic development, workforce development, housing and business development
- Make downtown Glasgow the go-to place for working, living, entertaining and relaxing
- Make the downtown the trail head and trail end, connecting all the parks in and around Glasgow and Barren County together
- Downtown must be a go-to for lake visitors—think of all the reasons why a lake tourist would want/need to visit downtown and build a marketing campaign around those reasons
- Build on the “Greener Side” brand in downtown food/music/art scene



## Two strategies to preserve Glasgow/Barren County's Identity

Goal: Protect and promote Glasgow's unique identity

Glasgow has a wonderful quality of life, part of which is based on the uniqueness of the community. Situated in the heart of one of the top five agricultural counties in Kentucky, Glasgow's heritage as a distinct community should be preserved. Yet it is at risk due to the rapid growth in the surrounding region. Specifically, the risk is that the roads that link Glasgow to Bowling Green and I-65 could become lined with rural development while the city itself grows westward, such that over time it could become impossible to tell Bowling Green and Glasgow apart. Specific strategies are needed to ensure the continued viability of the agricultural economy of the county by protecting active farmland from detrimental urban uses, and to ensure that Glasgow does not lose its distinct identity because of urban sprawl coming from its west.



# Reimagine Downtown Glasgow



Preserving the community's quality of life is a crucial part of a successful economic development strategy. Fortunately, there are two proven planning methods that can ensure the city's distinctness, while encouraging both economic growth and fairness to landowners.

## **Urban Greenbelt**

The creation of a greenbelt will require the designation of an area on the west side of Glasgow beyond which urban services – primarily sewer, water mains, urban streets – will not be extended.

An excellent case study of a successful greenbelt is in Georgetown, Kentucky. In the early 1990s, Georgetown experienced rapid growth due to the Toyota facility as well as spin-off growth from Lexington. The community created a greenbelt in an effort to ensure that Georgetown retained its physically distinct identity so that it wouldn't physically merge with Lexington.

Planning for the greenbelt restricted continued expansion of sewers, water mains, and urban streets into the key strategic area adjacent to the city limits. Landowners that straddled the greenbelt were allowed reasonable urban development opportunities on a portion of their lands, while the remaining lands were set aside as protected greenbelt. Ownership of the greenbelt land remains in private hands — it is not a park— and the protected land continues to be farmed or can be subdivided into five-acre tracts for rural residences.

Nearly 30 years later, the greenbelt has proven to be a great success. Despite three decades of rapid growth in both the community and the region, Georgetown – one of the fastest growing cities in the U.S. – has remained distinct from Lexington.

# Reimagine Downtown Glasgow

## Purchase of Development Rights

A purchase of development rights (PDR) program allows landowners who provide a community value – in this case protecting physical identity and agricultural value – to be compensated for voluntarily giving up certain development rights on their property. This is done through a permanent agricultural easement, which allows the owner:

To help preserve Glasgow's unique identity, as well as retain and enhance Barren County's agricultural economy, the community could implement a PDR program. The primary aim of this program could be two-fold:

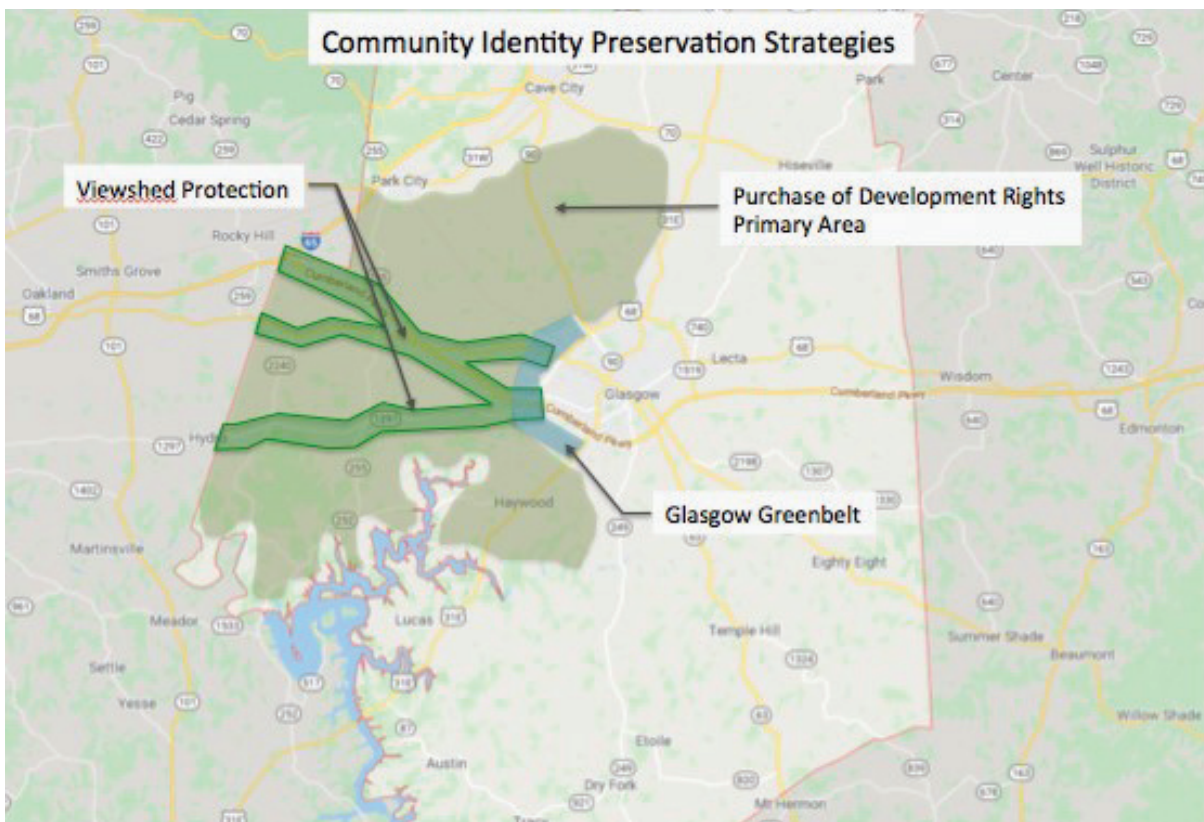
1. Protect the viewsheds of the main roads connecting Glasgow to Bowling Green and I-65, and;
2. Preserve prime farmlands in the areas of the county that face the most growth pressures.

Funding for such a program could come from local and federal sources. Local funding should be considered an economic development investment rather than an expense.

As an ancillary support to a PDR program, the donation of conservation easements could be encouraged for those landowners seeking favorable tax treatment.

Lexington, Kentucky, provides a 20-year history as a successful case study. To date, over 30,000 acres of prime farmland has been preserved and the community remains one of the fastest growing economically in Kentucky while retaining its unique identity and quality of life.

See map below for locations of strategies.



# Reimagine Downtown Glasgow

Conceptual AFTER view of Main Street Redevelopment – Looking East



## **“Glasgow Green and Farmer’s Market”**

There is much momentum in the community to develop an outdoor concert venue and farmer’s market in downtown Glasgow. While a great idea, this effort should be about much more than just the venue and market. Planned properly, this could be the economic catalyst needed for a downtown renaissance, bringing jobs, businesses, and residents to downtown Glasgow.

A project like this is an investment in economic development through growing the community’s quality of life. However, for such a project to achieve its full potential, it should leverage private development around it. Fortunately, the city owns several parcels in the vicinity of the planned venue

and market. These parcels could be marketed and sold for private economic investment for new businesses and residences.

This plan recommends a slight alteration in the original proposal’s location. Currently, the music venue and market is proposed to be located on city-owned property on Main Street. While this certainly would offer great visibility, there are significant drawbacks to this location. For example, the music venue might be hampered by traffic noise from the street. More importantly though, this city-owned parcel would have greater economic impact if it were developed for mixed retail, office, and residential uses in two- to three-story buildings.



# Reimagine Downtown Glasgow

Opportunely, the city also owns property on the north side of Water Street where the venue and market could be located. By moving the venue and market slightly, the opportunity exists to plan and

execute the redevelopment of other city-owned properties in this area, forming a hub of mixed uses that will frame and compliment the music venue and market.

## Downtown Glasgow Economic Redevelopment Master Plan



# Reimagine Downtown Glasgow

Careful attention should be paid to the branding of the venue and market. This report suggests consideration of “Glasgow Green and Farmer’s Market.” This branding could then extend to the private redevelopment surrounding it, for example,

“The Shops and Residences at Glasgow Green.” This could also compliment the large community-wide branding building on the “Greener Side” ideas.

Conceptual view of “The Shops and Residences at Glasgow Green”



# Reimagine Downtown Glasgow

While music would be a prime draw at the venue, other events should be programmed such as movie nights and community celebrations. Other

programming should also be included in the farmer's market such as including cooking demonstrations, food carts/trucks, and sales of food-related items.

Conceptual view of Family Movie Night at "Glasgow Green"



This redevelopment concept should also include the enhancement of the pedestrian experience along Water Street, which will become the area's main access. This could include special paving, street trees, ornamental streetlamps, and public art.

Glasgow's zoning ordinance would need to be revised to allow this concept of mixed-use redevelopment to occur. Most of the properties are currently zoned B-2, General Business. If

the city-owned properties were sold to private developers, zoning issues such as residential density, single-building mixed uses, setbacks, parking and lot coverage requirements, and other items would need to be altered to allow true urban redevelopment. Ideally, the city would commission a Small Area Plan in order to maximize the potential of this concept.



# Case Studies

## **Temple, Texas-Santa Fe Plaza Development**

On October 8, 2019, the City of Temple, Texas, hosted the grand opening of a new economic development project, the Santa Fe Plaza. The \$30-\$40 million park began as a vision 50 years ago. Construction got underway in 2016 following an extensive planning process that included public input.

The multi-functional plaza features the number one priority of residents: walkability and trails. The plaza connects a park on one end to festival grounds on the other creating a linear park of greenspace and water features as well as an amphitheater.

The plaza project spurred two additional new building projects, one which houses the Temple Chamber of Commerce, Workforce Development Center and the Temple Economic Development Corporation; the second houses the Temple Independent School District. Known as the Santa Fe Business Center, these new construction projects underscore the importance of the investment made by the city and prove them a success. Since the business centers opening in 2018, over 300 jobs have been added to the payroll in downtown Temple, with over \$15 million in private investment announced.



# Case Studies

## Rock Hill's Downtown Fountain Park

In 2009 the City of Rock Hill, South Carolina, was in discussions with one of their largest businesses, Comporium, who was building a new headquarters on the eastern edge of downtown Rock Hill. The only remarkable feature of the area was one of the oldest churches of the city, but it was surrounded by abandoned buildings and a rarely used, derelict parking lot.

The conversation between Rock Hill and Comporium occurred when unemployment was over 20% in Rock Hill, so the city decided to invest in themselves. The result was a mixed-use development with a hotel, office building, civic center and a 500-seat theater. This reinvestment turned an unsightly parking lot into a brand-new park complete with an outdoor performing venue.

Ten years later the project is credited with creating 377 jobs and 126 residences. However,

the largest impact was the future investment it generated. The city approved the development of a "university center" in a partnership with local Winthrop University and other private companies. They invested \$40 million which directly led to \$142 million in additional investments, 1,000 jobs, and 157 new residences for the city.

The state saw the investments in the area and decided to give the Carolina Panthers \$115 million in tax breaks to build a new 200-acre practice complex that will include restaurants, a hotel, and a state-of-the-art medical facility that will bring hundreds of new jobs to the area.

The investments are still coming. If the county allows the city to expand their debt capacity, the city has plans to invest a total of \$85 million in infrastructure to match a total of \$578 million of private sector investment that will create 4,000 jobs and bring another 1,400 residents to downtown Rock Hill.





# Glasgow's Next Steps

The City of Glasgow has a future to claim for itself. A future that exemplifies the values residents hold dear. To implement this plan:

- Identify, appoint and empower an individual to lead the strategic planning initiative, guided by the Strategic Planning Committee.
- Establish teams to work on each strategy. Develop an accountability structure and identify a leader for each team to report back to the Strategic Planning Committee who will then report to city council.
- Collaborate with community and funding partners to iron out details.
- Deploy these 10 steps and refer to them often:
  1. Respect one another.
  2. Care for one another.
  3. Focus on the one thing you do well. Then take action.
  4. Support others who are trying to make things better.
  5. Appreciate the talents of your young people.
  6. Be proud of your town.
  7. If there are 10 things you disagree on, find the one thing you do agree on. Work on that.
  8. Celebrate your success.
  9. Celebrate the success of others.
  10. When failure hits, figure out another way – together.

Over time, the little things matter. Make sure you celebrate the little things. Neglecting the little things got you to where you are. Focusing on the little things will get you to where you want to be.







**Kentucky League of Cities**

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