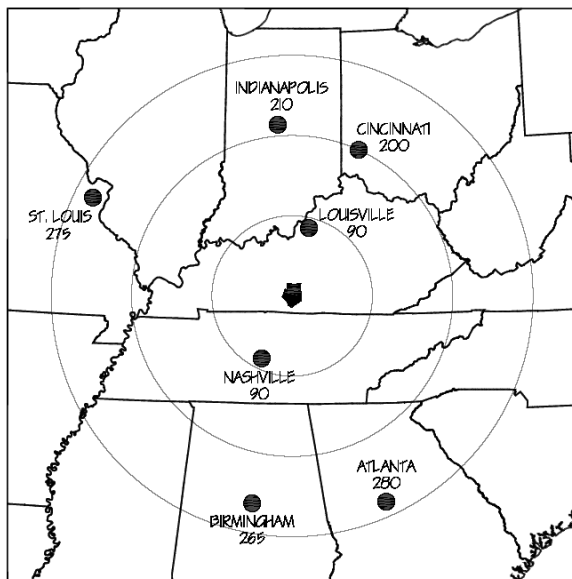


# CHAPTER 1 INTRODUCTION

## GENERAL LOCATION

Barren County is located in the rolling hills and meadows of south-central Kentucky, see Figure 1.1. Covering approximately 500 square miles, Barren County is the Commonwealth's 13<sup>th</sup> largest county. The estimated population of Barren County in 2020 was 44,485. It is one of ten counties, which comprise the Barren River Area Development District (BRADD) region. Barren County is bounded on the west by Allen, Edmonson, and Warren Counties; on the north by Hart County; on the east by Metcalfe and on the south by Monroe County. With the exception of Warren County, it is larger in size and population than the counties on its borders. The County Seat, Glasgow, is the second largest city within the BRADD region. The County, served by Interstate 65 and the Louie B. Nunn Parkway, sits halfway between Louisville, Kentucky (90 miles) and Nashville, Tennessee (90 miles). Its central location provides one-day access to major markets in the Southeast and Midwest.

**Figure 1.1:**  
**General Location Map**



## HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

Perhaps the first settlers to spend an appreciable amount of time in Barren County were the “long hunters” who camped on Beaver Creek in 1769 to trap. This party was led by the wilderness guide, Henry Skaggs, who located his camp about 2 miles north of Glasgow. The practice of such parties of spending considerable periods of time, away from their homes, trapping, hunting, and exploring gave rise to the term “long hunters.”

The name of Barren County, as well as the names of the Little and Big Barren Rivers, was derived from the term applied to treeless plains. These plains have been commonly known in southern Kentucky as the barrens and, more recently, referred to as the karst area. It was named for the barrens, the meadowlands that cover the northern third of Barren County.

The Virginia Convention, in 1789, passed an order declaring that all the lands between the Green and Barren Rivers would be given to the soldiers of the Continental Army. Many of these men were among the first settlers in the area.

Barren County was established on December 20<sup>th</sup>, 1798, from portions of Warren and Green Counties, and was the 37<sup>th</sup> county created in the State. Originally, its boundaries stretched from the Green River to the Big Barren River and the county included all of Metcalfe County, large parts of Hart and Monroe Counties, and part of Allen County.

Glasgow was named County Seat in 1799, just one year after Barren County was formed. 70% of the original settlers came from Virginia; 80% of them were English, Scottish, Welsh, or Irish. Glasgow was named for Glasgow, Virginia in Amherst County where many of the early settlers came from and to honor the early Scottish settlers.

Industrial life flourished in Barren County almost as soon as the County was formed. Taverns and shops, hastily constructed of logs, sprung up almost overnight. By 1806, business houses were so much in demand that incoming merchants, their stocks of goods often brought from Philadelphia, were obliged

to crowd their goods into shacks until they could construct their own buildings. The milling business boomed on every creek. Cotton gins were scattered over the County, and carding factories flourished in Glasgow. Many workers of diverse industrial skills moved to the County before 1810.

The War of 1812 gave new impetus to development of the County. The County flourished with caves in which saltpeter was found, and powdermills were erected. Every large creek had sawmills and gristmills. Trading of produce from the vast back country for manufactured goods was immense.

Among the first agricultural experiments in the County was the tending of vineyards, started by the Swiss. There was much demand for the products, but the vineyards were sold to inexperienced parties. Then, they were neglected and this venture died out. Other crops that were tried, with mediocre success, were ginseng, cotton, and flax. Tobacco growing began in 1812, and tobacco became one of the County's main crops, as is prevalent today. Efforts to build a branch railroad in the County started immediately after the Civil War. Once it was built, the branch made possible better and cheaper transportation of products and better marketing conditions. Oil was discovered in the County in the 1840's and has continued to be a steady source of income until recent decades.

## **PLAN PURPOSE**

The Kentucky Revised Statutes, Chapter 100, requires a Planning Commission of each planning unit to prepare and adopt a comprehensive plan. This requirement discourages the arbitrary application of land use regulations (subdivision regulations, zoning ordinances, etc.). Rather, it encourages a local community to devise a vision of its future, and to apply land use regulations as tools to implement that vision.

The Comprehensive Plan for Barren County is predicated on the belief that each community resident should have a suitable living environment that provides the opportunity to achieve his or her potential. In other words, our community must strive to provide the best possible quality of life for all its citizens, not only those here today, but also those who will be added in the future. A significant measure of quality of life is in the form and function of the physical community. Therefore, our overall

vision is a community that has a good form, a logical layout; and a community that functions efficiently, where public service costs are minimized.

The primary purpose of the Comprehensive Plan is to detail the vision described above. To do this, we must discover where we have been and where we are heading. We must evaluate the current status of the community and then devise plans to correct present inadequacies and to prepare for future needs. An important task is the preparation of plans that determine the amounts and locations of new urban land and public facilities that will be needed in the future.

This evaluation and planning process, which creates a detailed vision of our community's future, is documented in the Comprehensive Plan. As a result, our local governments and the private sector gain valuable insight and guidance. We can now take actions that are more logical and coordinated; actions that will help us realize our vision of the community's future.

## **FUNCTIONS OF THE PLAN**

The Comprehensive Plan performs several vital functions:

- Serves as a vision and guide for the community's future.
- Source of information about the community.
- Identifies community goals and objectives.
- Estimate of future development needs.
- Program of correction for inadequate facilities.
- Device for coordination of development actions.
- Incentive to stimulate public interest and responsibility.
- Guide to appropriate ways and means to fulfill the plan.

These functions of the plan are dependent on two important concepts. First, because the Comprehensive Plan is intended to serve as a coordinating device for specific development plans, it must be updated and refined periodically. This includes refining zoning and subdivision regulations so that they are consistent with the objectives of the plan.

The second concept is the flexibility of the plan. This is accomplished by keeping the plan general in its content while at the same time providing a stable, reliable basis for determining public and private development policies.

## **PLAN FORMAT**

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The Comprehensive Plan is designed to display information as concisely as possible. The written text often serves as a summary of a more detailed technical report or data set. The written text includes numerous exhibits ranging from maps, tables, graphs, and figures, which provide the reader with an easy means of comparing different data and trends.

It is important to understand that the Comprehensive Plan is a long range, twenty-year vision. Therefore, many of the recommendations, policies, and implementation strategies need to be viewed in terms of the anticipated timing of their becoming reality. The Future Land Use Maps of this Plan are intended to be general in nature and shall be accompanied by policy recommendations and strategies affecting the location and impact of each land use type. Therefore, the maps should not be viewed as specific graphical representations, but rather in terms of future proposals in conjunction with plan guidelines.

## **METHODOLOGY**

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The method used to update the Comprehensive Plan included a review of existing physical characteristics, demographic analysis, changes which have occurred during the past several years, development plans proposed by the public and private sector, and a general reevaluation of previous plan recommendations. The 2019 Comprehensive Plan Update was evaluated to determine if projections and anticipated events were occurring as expected (e.g., population growth, school enrollment, extension of water and sewer facilities, etc.).

## **PARTICIPATION**

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Throughout the planning process for the development of the Comprehensive Plan update, citizens from every walk of life in Barren County were given an opportunity to voice their opinions, offer suggestions and identify problems/issues. Various ways of reaching the public were considered.