



# *Fairmont-Southside*

*A Community Profile of Current Conditions and Capacity*

**Prepared for the**

**West Virginia Blueprint Communities Initiative**

**April 2007**

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The city of Fairmont is located in North Central West Virginia in Marion County. The town was originally incorporated in 1820 as Middletown. The town's name was changed to Fairmont in 1842 when it was designated the county seat of a newly formed county. In 1852 the Baltimore and Ohio Railroad was extended to Fairmont which contributed significantly to the development of the coal industry in the area. A private school was started in Fairmont in 1865 to train teachers and has since developed into Fairmont State University.

The latest population estimate available (2005) for the city of Fairmont reflects a population of 19,049 people. About eighteen percent (18.5%) of the population is under 18 years of age and about twenty percent (20.3%) is 65 years of age or older. There are 8,436 households in Fairmont and about 4,670 families.

**Introduction:**

This community profile is provided for use by the Blueprint Team in order to provide a general overview of some of the more relevant measures of local conditions and community capacity. It is one of many tools you may find useful. The profile should be reviewed and kept in your community toolbox for future reference. Local Blueprint Teams will undoubtedly wish to examine some of the areas addressed in the profile in more detail once specific priorities are established for local community development. The profile should initially be useful in identifying areas of concern that may require further study and assessment by local citizens and later on it may provide guidance about measures that can be used to monitor progress.

The Fairmont community profile is intended as a resource for community builders. It is a portrait of current conditions and local capacities. Information presented here can be useful to local Blueprint Community Team members and other community residents in considering where to invest time and energy and in establishing both short and long term priorities and goals for community improvements. However, the statistics and other information summarized here are no substitute for local initiative. Objective facts and individual perspectives must be considered in the context of local knowledge, opportunities and desires which can only be gleaned from community members. For example, if the general profile suggests recreational facilities as an area for development, local residents should be asked what types of recreational opportunities they would be most interested in and where any facilities should be located. It is important to know what types of facilities or programs would be used before making plans for development. If people are involved in the planning they will be more likely to be involved in the doing.

## A Few Words about Community Capacity and Capital:

Community Capacity may be defined as the level of resources, assets, human capital, and social capital available to a group of people (a community) to achieve the results they want and care about. "Community capacity, in a general sense, is what makes communities work. It is what makes well-functioning communities function well." (Chaskin, et.al., 2001). Capacity may be found in local people, in the strength of the relationships among people, in civic enterprises, in local institutions, in the value of property and buildings, in financial investment, and in the quality of the environment.

*“Community capacity is what makes well-functioning communities function well” – (Chaskin, 2001)*

Sufficient levels of community capacity are necessary prerequisites for successful community development. Community capacity can be measured and it can be built. The Blueprint Communities Program is focused on increasing community capacity in order to build stronger and more prosperous communities.

The community profile is organized by capacity domains - important areas of influence defined by the *West Virginia Community Development Gathering*. A domain of capacity may be thought of as a significant area of influence that affects the ability of a community to get things done. If capacity is lacking in any particular area it should be built so that available resources and investments can be optimally utilized. Each of the seven domains (areas of influence) of capacity is discussed in the profile based on selected quantitative data and the opinions of Blueprint Team members reflected in their on-line survey responses.

“Capital” is another term that is helpful in organizing information within the profile. We are generally familiar with financial capital, the monetary investment that is made available to build something useful. Other forms of capital discussed in the profile are no less important. Human capital, social capital, cultural capital, and environmental capital are all local resources that can be drawn upon to improve community conditions.

## *Human Capital*

Human Capital includes the health and well being of local residents as well as the knowledge skills and abilities of local people. There is considerable data available that can be used to measure health and well being. Much of the available data related to health and well being is accessible only at the county level. Thus, some of the measures of local health and well-being discussed here are reflective of Marion County while others describe the city of Fairmont when local level information is available.

### *Health and Well Being of Local People*

#### **Healthy People:**

Three key measures of health were compiled for county residents. These measures include health insurance status, adult obesity, and low birth weight. Adult obesity which is defined as significantly exceeding recommended healthy weight is 27.0% in Marion County. This is slightly below the average for West Virginia (27.7%) but above the average for the U. S. (22.8%). The number of adults without health insurance is higher than both the state (22.8%) and national (18.2%) averages at 23.7% of the adult population uninsured in Marion County. The percentage of low birth weight babies (8.0% in Marion County) is close to the national average of 7.8% and less than the WV statewide average of 9.3%.

Obesity and low birth weight are significant risk factors for major health problems and although these measures of health are relatively good as compared to state averages they should still be of concern to residents of the County. Local residents may wish to look closer at this issue by talking to local health care professionals to get a more localized picture of the health status of Fairmont residents. The above average number of adults with no type of health insurance coverage is an issue that may be of concern. Most children are able to qualify for health care insurance through public programs if they are not insured through a parent's employer; however, that is not the case for many adults residing in the state. Again, local health care professionals would have a good sense of the extent of this problem for city residents and they should be consulted.

#### **School Readiness:**

Research studies over extended periods of time (including the Abecedarian, Perry Preschool, and Chicago Parent-Child Centers studies), have documented the link between early childhood development and future success in school and later life. Two key measures of school readiness – that is early childhood development that prepares children for school – were considered. The percentage of kindergarten children enrolled in public preschool programs is a good measure of school readiness as is the rate of retention in preschool and kindergarten programs. Preschool enrollment as a percentage of kindergarten enrollment in Marion County is not particularly good (14.5%). Statewide, this ratio of preschool enrollment to kindergarten enrollment averages 43.2%. Since we know when children are provided with preschool programs their success in later grades will be enhanced, low enrollment in preschool programs is an area that should be reviewed in the Fairmont area. It is possible that local elementary schools serving Fairmont are serving more preschool age children (4 yr. olds) than the county as a whole and local school personnel would be the best source of information about this issue.

The percentage of pre-K and kindergarten students who are retained in Marion County (not promoted to the next grade) was 15.9% (2003-04 data). This exceeds the state average of 12.2%. The higher than average retention rate at the kindergarten level may reflect a lack of early childhood programs in the area.

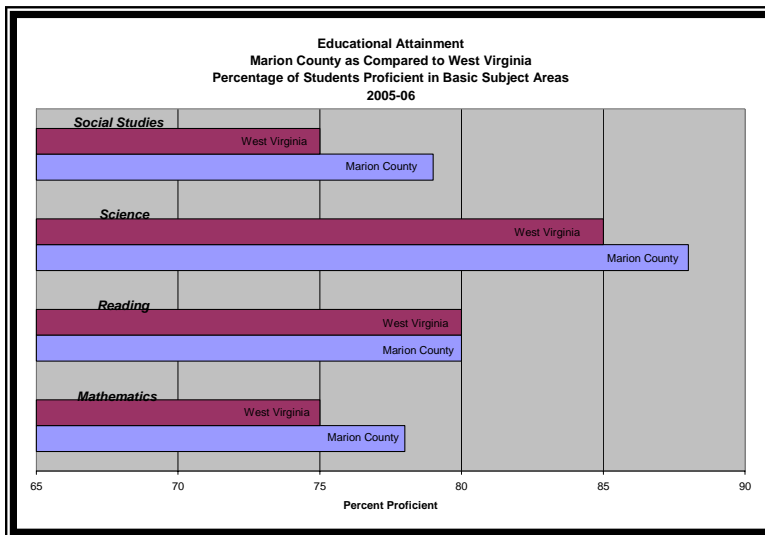
School readiness may be an area of concern for Fairmont. Given the importance of early childhood development as a predictor of future success; the Blueprint Team may wish to examine this area more closely. Preschool and kindergarten teachers at local elementary schools would be the best sources of information about how prepared children are when they enter school.

**Educational Attainment and Access:**

Success in school may be measured by looking at several key indicators of continued education and achievement in the public schools. Measures selected for the profile include education levels of the population, high school graduation rates, students going on to college, and test scores on standardized testing.

20.0% of the residents of Fairmont did not complete high school. This is better than the statewide percentage (24.8%) and about the same as the U. S. population as a whole (19.6%). 20% of Fairmont residents over the age of 25 years hold a college degree. This is a significantly higher

percentage than the statewide average of 14.8% but somewhat lower than the national percentage of 24.4%. The high school graduation rate in Marion County for 2006 was 90.5%. This is higher than the statewide rate (84.6%).



For the 2005-06 school year, students in Marion County met or exceeded state averages for proficiency in all basic subject areas. See Chart.

Young people in Marion County appear to be going on to college at close to the same rate as the state average. One measure of the college

going rate is the percentage of high school graduates who take college entrance exams. In 2006, 61.7% of Marion County high school graduates took the ACT college entrance exam; the percentage of students taking the ACT test statewide is at 64%. The composite ACT score for Marion County students at 21.1 exceeded the state average of 20.6.

Based on the measures considered for *Educational Attainment and Access*, Marion County students appear to be doing reasonably well in this area as compared to the state as a whole.

**Community Safety:**

The overall crime rate for West Virginia as a whole is one of the lowest in the nation at 28.98 crimes per 1,000 population. Crimes reported by all police agencies for Fairmont are at a rate of

56.90 per thousand population which is nearly twice the state average (2005 Uniform Crime Report). The Fairmont Police Department reported 0.79 drug and narcotics offenses per 1,000 population or a total of about 15 such offenses in 2005. Violent crimes are committed in Fairmont at a rate of 2.84 per 1,000 which is close to the state average of 2.73. The national rate of violent crime is 4.69 per 1,000 pop.

There are 50 sex offenders with a Fairmont address listed in the WV Sex Offender Registry. This is a rate of 2.62 per 1,000 population which is nearly twice the state rate of 1.39 per thousand.

Fairmont seems to be a reasonably safe place to live as compared to national statistics; however, the measures reported should raise some level of concern in the context of the overall low crime rate in the state. There may also be safety issues in the city that are unrelated to crime. Local community members are in the best position to assess any safety concerns community residents may have and discussions with local law enforcement could better inform this issue.

### **Family Stability:**

Two measures of family stability were researched for the community profile – domestic violence investigations and the ratio of marriages to divorces. Local statistics for Fairmont indicate a rate of 11.97 investigations related to domestic violence per 1,000 households. This is a lower rate than the statewide rate of 16.39 per thousand households. The ratio of marriages to divorces in Marion County is 1.80 marriages to every divorce. This is higher than the statewide ratio of 1.49 marriages to each divorce.

A third measure of family stability that was selected for review is the rate of confirmed child abuse and neglect; however, reliable data at the county or local community level is not available. Local child protective services workers can provide considerable insight into this issue. If this is an area of concern for the local Blueprint Team it is recommended that local child protective service staff be consulted to obtain information about the extent of this problem in the community. In general, families in the Fairmont area appear to be relatively stable based on the limited measures available.

### **Economic Security:**

Perhaps the most telling component of family and individual well being is economic security. Unemployment, poverty, and a general lack of financial resources places families under severe stress that often leads to other problems and deficient levels of human capital that the community can draw upon. Five measures of economic security are included in the profile.

The most recent (January 2007) unemployment rate for the area is 4.1%. This is lower than the state and federal rates of 4.8% and 5.0% respectively. Additional information about jobs and local industries will be discussed later in the profile in relation to financial and manufactured capital.

Poverty in Marion County is somewhat less than the state as a whole but higher than the national poverty estimates. In 2003, 16.2% of all families in the county were estimated to have household income below the federal poverty level. The poverty rate for all families in West Virginia is 18.5% and for the nation it is at 12.7%. What is more telling is the 2000 census data for families residing in Fairmont. The 2000 census data is more accurate than the estimates for non-census years but it reflects the poverty situation in Fairmont in 1999. The poverty rate in Fairmont for all families

reflected by the 2000 census was 12.6% (nationally it was 9.2%); however, the rate for families with children was 20.5% in poverty and 28.8% of local families with children less than five years of age were below the poverty level in 1999. Nationally, 17% of families with children under age 5 yrs. were in poverty in 1999.

Per capita annual income in Fairmont in 1999 was \$16,062. This is lower than the state average of \$16,477 and much lower than the national average of \$21,587. These figures from the 2000 census are dated yet they provide a basis for comparison of average personal income per resident.

Data from 2000 also indicate that 26.5% of households have a severe burden related to housing costs as defined by the U. S. Department of Housing and Urban Development. Severe cost burden is based on the number of low income families that pay 50% or more of their household income for housing. Severe housing cost burden in Fairmont is at a higher rate than both the statewide percentage (21.3%) and the national figure of 25.8% of households.

A further measure of economic security is the *Universal Living Wage*. This is the hourly wage necessary to afford housing based on “Fair Market Rents” in any particular area assuming that someone works 40 hours per week and 52 weeks per year. For Marion County this wage is \$8.08 per hour for a one bedroom apartment. The current federal minimum wage is \$5.15 per hour although the Congress appears ready to increase it to \$7.25 over a two year period.

Although families in the Fairmont area are economically better than many in West Virginia, the quantitative data tells us that some families in Fairmont do not have an adequate level of household income and that many families with young children (particularly those headed by single mothers) are particularly vulnerable.

### **Survey Responses from Blueprint Team Members Related to Health and Well Being:**

Responses to the survey from eight members of the Blueprint Community Team average +0.45 for the statements related to community capacity in this domain. (See appendix A for an explanation of survey scoring and interpretation of this average score.) This average score would indicate that there is a moderate level of capacity present within this domain when the five components of health and well being discussed above are considered together; however the team’s responses also indicate that the team sees economic security and the health of local people as areas where human capital is at risk. Local education programs and community safety are seen as attributes by the team. These perceptions are generally reflected in the data discussed above with the exception of early childhood education where the quantitative data indicates a relatively low enrollment in pre-kindergarten programs within Marion County.

### **Skills, Knowledge, and Abilities of Local People**

Indicator areas related to using and enhancing skills, knowledge and abilities of local people, citizen engagement, and data driven decision making are included in this domain of capacity. Some information is available in existing data sets that can provide us with measures of citizen engagement; however, measures relating to using and enhancing skills knowledge and abilities will,

at least for the present, need to be identified locally. The perception of Blueprint Team members as reflected in the survey results is one measure of this domain and team members are encouraged to consider relevant local information and knowledge to identify other measures.

There are no current depositories of local information about how local people use and enhance their skills. The Blueprint Communities Training Program is an example of local people (the Blueprint Team) enhancing their skills and the participation of team members in the program is a positive measure of local capacity in this area. The level of participation on local boards, task teams, work teams etc. is another such measure that can be assessed locally. Other useful measures of this domain where information may be known to the Blueprint Team or information could be collected locally might be participation of citizens in community meetings; training programs offered locally in areas of leadership development, group facilitation or planning; number of local community members who have participated in such training, or observations about how local government or town meetings are conducted. Are there local opportunities to gain leadership skills? Are citizens encouraged to participate in local town meetings? Are diverse parts of the community represented and are all opinions welcomed?

### **Citizen Engagement:**

Measures of citizen engagement have been compiled for consideration by the Blueprint Team members. Some information is available in existing data sets related to participation in elections and volunteerism. Participation in elections is often used as a measure of citizen engagement. In 2004 (a Presidential election year), 61.7% of registered voters in Marion County cast a ballot. Voter turnout in Marion County was less than the statewide voter turnout of 65.9%. An additional measure of citizen participation is the percentage of the voting age population that actually registered and exercised their rights as a citizen to vote for their elected officials. In Marion County the percentage of the voting age population that voted in the 2004 election was higher than the state or national turnout. 56.5% of the voting age population voted in Marion County as contrasted to 54.7% in West Virginia and 55.5% across the nation.

Volunteerism is another measure of this domain for which we have some data. Marion County residents participate in the Adopt-A-Highway program at a higher rate than the state average – 15.3 volunteers per 1,000 population in Marion County and 13.2 per 1,000 statewide. Another measure of citizen involvement is the number of persons expressing interest in volunteering through the state registry maintained by the WV Commission on National and Community Service. This registry reflects 5.2 Marion County residents per 1,000 population and a state average of 9.1 per 1,000.

### **Survey Responses from Blueprint Team Members Related to Knowledge and Abilities of Local People:**

The measures reported above related to voting and volunteerism drawn from available data provide some useful county level information; however, we are forced for the most part to rely on the perceptions of Blueprint Team members about the level of capacity in this domain as reflected in their survey responses. Based on the survey responses of the team members, a moderate degree of capacity exists in the Fairmont Community within this domain. The average score for this domain

was +0.53 indicating team members believe local capacity is present that can be tapped. All five variables related to this domain were seen positively by team members.

## ***Social Capital***

*“Although some...continue to believe that healthy economies create vibrant communities, in fact, the reverse is more often the case. A strong community is a prerequisite for creating a healthy economy because it alone produces social trust.”*  
(Jeremy Rifkin, 2000)

Two domains of community capacity make up social capital – ***Relationships and Interpersonal Communications*** and ***Community Initiative Responsibility and Adaptability***.

These domains address levels of shared values, trust, connectedness, participation, collective vision, leadership planning, and sense of hope in the community. There are currently few if any sources of local data that effectively measure these important components of community capacity. One measure that may be useful was secured from school survey data. Young people in Marion County were asked if they participate in community activities such as scouts, sports teams, youth clubs, etc. Participation in such activities is one way social capital is built among young residents in the community. For 2004-05, 24.0% of Marion County students reported participation in such activities. This is a little lower than the statewide rate of 26.7%.

With the exception of this one measure of relationship building in the community state and national data sets are of little use. We can gain some insight into this domain of local capacity through the perceptions of Blueprint Team members (survey data). However, the levels of social capital are best considered locally by observing local interactions among people, identifying local leaders, and encouraging a collective vision and plan for the community. Are public issues discussed in local newspapers or community forums? How many adults attend youth activities? Are community gatherings routine events and are new members of the community welcomed at community events? Are local organizations and local government connected to one another and engaged in joint planning to improve the community? Does the community work (and play) well with other communities in Marion County? Do community residents resolve disagreements amicably and trust one another? The Blueprint team can develop its own local measures of social capital by asking themselves these types of questions and then asking: how would we know?

Local information can also be gathered by talking to local government officials or agency directors about their vision for the community and how they plan for the future. Is there a collective vision for local development? How many citizens are engaged in discussions about the future? What is the level of resources dedicated to planning by local organizations and local government?

A strategic plan for the city of Fairmont is posted on the city’s website that addresses many of the domains of community capacity discussed in this profile. What is the status of plan implementation? Are local organizations supporting the plan? Are results being monitored and evaluated? Do local citizens agree with and support the priorities established in the plan and are local citizens engaged in making the strategic plan a reality?

### **Survey Responses from Blueprint Team Members Related to Relationships and Interpersonal Communications:**

The responses of Blueprint Team members related to this domain of community capacity indicate a low to moderate level of existing capacity. The average score for this domain across the five variables is +0.35.

### **Survey Responses from Blueprint Team Members Related to Community Initiative, Responsibility, and Adaptability:**

Team members see this domain in much the same way as they see the other domain relating to social capital. On average, this domain also appears to hold a low to moderate level of capacity as is reflected in an overall average score for this domain is +0.38. Four of the five variables are seen as positives by the team members responding to the survey and one as a negative. All team members did indicate that they believe local people look forward to the future in Fairmont.

Based on the Blueprint Team member responses to survey statements related to social capital, this is an area of capacity that should be further discussed with community members to determine if social capital needs to be built. Specific strategies to build relationships and increase levels of community involvement may be beneficial to the city.

## *Cultural Capital*

### **Cultural Diversity and Quality of Life**

This is another domain where existing databases offer little useful information. The 2000 census data does reflect some limited degree of cultural diversity within the population of Fairmont. 7.3% of the population report themselves as Black or African American and 117 persons are of Asian descent (0.6%). Three percent (2.9%) of the population reported speaking a language other than English in the home (1.6% of the population speak Spanish at home).

Marion County has three museums or art galleries located in the county and three libraries. There are also three performing arts centers. 1.71% of the work force of the county is employed in the Arts, Entertainment, or Recreation sector.

### **Survey Responses from Blueprint Team Members Related to Cultural Diversity and Quality of Life:**

Blueprint Team members believe the quality of life in Fairmont is generally good. All five of the survey statements related to this domain were seen positively by the team. The average score for this domain is +0.60. This score indicates a moderate level of capacity related to cultural diversity and quality of life. Team members may wish to assess how other community members see these issues as plans are developed. Do community residents want more access to live music performances and the arts? How can the positive aspects of good quality of life issues be leveraged to assist with community development? What types of projects or activities could increase the quality of life and cultural diversity within the community?

## *Financial and Manufactured Capital*

### **Investments in Community and Financial Resources**

A significant number of measures have been identified from existing data sets to describe levels of community capacity and current conditions within this domain.

#### **Financial Investments:**

Data obtained from the WV Secretary of State Business Organization Information System indicates that nearly 10.25% of the for-profit businesses in Fairmont have been started within the past year. The statewide percentage of new business start ups is 4.18%; thus, this level of new business activity may be a positive development for the city. This is an area where local knowledge is necessary to interpret this measure in the context of local business activity.

Data from the Home Mortgage Disclosure Act database indicates 29 new home mortgages per 1,000 current housing units in Fairmont during 2005. This is close to the state average of 32 per 1,000 units but below the national figure of 75 per 1,000.

#### **Local Financial Resources:**

One measure of local financial resources is deposits in local banks. Local information for Fairmont residents is not easily available but this measure for Marion County was calculated from available 2004 data at \$10,335 in per capita deposits (average deposits per county resident). The state average per capita deposit is significantly higher at \$12,472. Marion County has eighteen banking locations in the county and a total of \$584 million dollars in total deposits (2004 data).

Another measure of local financial resources is the average wage per job. Marion County residents' earnings are, on average, right at the state average at \$30,887 per job held. The state average is \$30,879 (2005 data).

These measures tend to indicate about the same level or slightly less local financial resources as are available on average throughout the state.

#### **Access to Outside Financial Resources:**

Several measures of federal spending and investment of federal financial resources in the area have been identified. This data is most recently available for Marion County (2004). One measure of federal investment in the county is federal transfer receipts. These federal payments are made to individuals for unemployment benefits, retirement, social security, disability payments, and other forms of payment not attributable to earnings from work. The "federal personal transfer receipts" for 2004 averaged \$6,887 for each person in the county (per-capita receipts). Statewide this figure is \$6,929. Marion County residents are about at the state average as far as local resident's dependence on federal government programs.

Federal per-capita spending in Marion County for salaries and benefits of federal employees, military personnel, procurement contracts, grants and other forms of investment was \$10,555 per person in 2004. This is more federal investment than the state per capita average of \$8,364. Federal grant funds received in Marion County during 2004 approached one hundred million dollars. Total

federal funds made available through grants were \$98,138,000. These grant funds include grants made directly to local governments or organizations as well as federal grant funds distributed by state government to the county.

**Business Efficiency:**

One measure of business efficiency is retail sales. The Economic Census of 2002 reported per capita retail sales in Marion County as \$8,523. Statewide retail sales were \$9,277 per capita. Marion County does not appear to be a regional center of retail trade but annual sales approach the statewide average on a per capita basis.

Job creation and changes in net employment are other measures that can be used to assess business efficiency within the county. During 2005, Marion County had a net loss of 25 jobs; however there were 1074 new jobs created during that period. Average new hire earnings are reported at \$1,775 per month. These measures indicate a stable job market within the county during 2005. This “hold steady” pattern is further evidenced by essentially no change in the number of county-based jobs from 2000 to 2004 (net increase over the four year period of one job). Data available indicates a stable level of total jobs within Marion County.

**Business Diversity:**

Business diversity within the county is reflected in the number and types of business establishments and in the types of jobs available. Total non-farm business establishments in Marion County in 2004 were 1,299. The 2002 Survey of Business Owners conducted by the Census Bureau included 1,110 businesses with employees. Within the city of Fairmont, the WV Secretary of State Business Organization Data System lists 1,415 for profit businesses and 285 registered non-profit organizations.

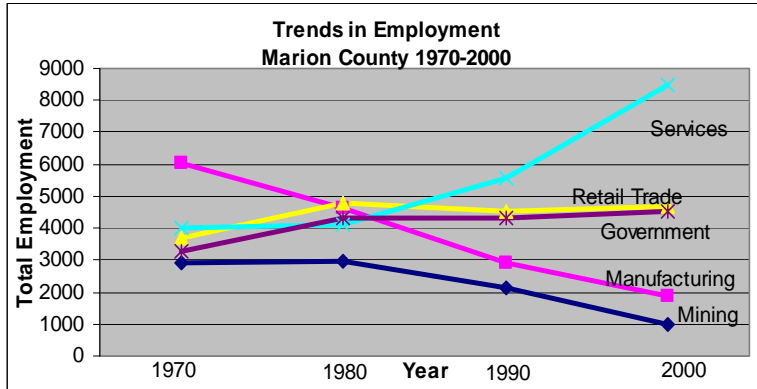
Employment in Marion County for 2004 (the most recent available data) reflects a total employment of 26,789 persons. 82.0% of the employment is in private sector jobs while government employment accounts for 16.6%. The remaining 1.4% is farm employment.

2000 Census data for the city of Fairmont reports 7,978 Fairmont residents (over age 16 yrs.) who are employed. Fairmont residents’ occupations in 2000 were listed as:

- Management and Professional – 32.4%
- Service Occupations – 18.1%
- Sales and Office – 30.2%
- Farming, fishing & forestry – 0.2%
- Construction, Extraction, and Maintenance – 8.4%
- Production, Transportation – 10.8%

**Trends in Employment 1970 to 2000:**

If we look closer at selected industries over the past thirty years the total employment in Marion County within these particular industries shows a modest increase (19,905 jobs in 1970 and 20,541 jobs in 2000) during the period. However, the shift in type of employment has been significant. Employment in service industries has increased dramatically and the number of persons employed in manufacturing and mining has declined. Jobs in retail trade and government show more modest



increases. The rate of increase in service jobs is particularly notable as is the rate of decrease in manufacturing related jobs during the period. See chart showing trends in these selected industries over thirty years.

**Cultivating Entrepreneurship:**

Limited data is available in this area. Some measure of entrepreneurship within the city of Fairmont may be

implied from the 4.6% of residents that owned their own business in 2000. If local centers or programs to promote entrepreneurship are available in the area these programs would likely be a good source of information that could be used to measure local entrepreneurial activity.

**Community Resident Assets:**

Resident assets may be measured to some extent by looking at the value of owner occupied housing. For most home owners their home is the greatest asset they have. In 2000, 62.9% of Fairmont residents owned their homes. This is a lower percentage than the state average of 75.2% and the national home ownership rate of 66.2%. The relatively low home ownership rate in Fairmont is further exacerbated by a relatively low value of owner occupied homes. The average value of the homeowner’s property in Fairmont was \$68,360 in 2000 while the average value of owner occupied housing statewide was \$86,995 and nationally it was \$158,934.

The average value of farm land and buildings in Marion County is also considerably less than state and national averages. The 2000 census of agriculture documents an average value for farm land and buildings in Marion County of \$139,664. The average value of farm land and buildings in West Virginia was \$231,999.

**Community Infrastructure:**

Community infrastructure is an area where local resident knowledge generally exceeds available statistics drawn from large data sets. Blueprint Team members can most likely assess infrastructure issues fairly accurately based on their own local knowledge or by gathering local data related to public buildings, highway repairs, the age of water and sewer systems, new school facilities, etc.

Census data tells us that housing in Fairmont is relatively old with nearly three quarters (72%) of the housing units built prior to 1960 and 37% built in 1939 or earlier. Most occupied houses are heated with natural gas (85%) and 61 housing units lacked complete plumbing facilities in 2000.

The percentage of workers in Marion County who commute outside the county to work is 29%. This is above the state average (20.2%) and eight times the national average. Average travel time to work is a little less than the state average, however. Net commutation (persons coming into the county to work minus those leaving to work) is -2,859. These figures tell us that significant numbers of Marion County residents work in neighboring counties. This is not surprising since the I-79 corridor provides easy access to Harrison County to the South and Monongalia County to the North.

Other measures of local community infrastructure should be examined by the Blueprint Team. One measure of the increase in local assets is the number and type of building permits sought by local residents. This data should be locally available and is good measure of investment being made to increase the value of homes or business property.

**Survey Responses from Blueprint Team Members Related to Investments in the Community and Financial Resources:**

Survey responses of the Blueprint Team members reflect a moderate level of capacity in this domain. The average score for this domain was +0.55. This score is generally consistent with the quantitative data relevant to this domain and indicates some confidence on the part of team members in the level of financial resources that can be drawn upon in the community. Collectively, the eight team members responding to the survey appear to believe the city is supported financially but they have some reservations about how well local businesses are able to do.

## *Environmental Capital*

### **Sustainable Healthy Ecosystems with Multiple Community Benefits**

Local environmental issues are another area where existing data sets are not particularly useful. Information about the environment is available from the U. S. Environmental Protection Agency and the State Department of Environmental Protection as well as the State Department of Natural Resources.

Recent grant awards from the REAP Office of the State Department of Environmental Protection to address environmental issues includes a small grant of \$8,773 awarded for a project in Fairmont. Grant awards to address environmental issues are one possible measure of capacity within this domain.

The percentage of surface waters with impaired or threatened uses is 35.75% in Marion County. This is the third highest county percentage in the state. The highest percentage of impaired or threatened surface waters for counties in West Virginia is 55.1% and the lowest is 5%.

Some information is available for Marion County from the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency related to toxic releases into the environment. 2,282,248 pounds of toxic substances were released into the environment within the county in 2005. This was 2.34% of total releases in the state. There were no environmental clean up sites listed for the Fairmont area in state and federal databases.

Local environmental issues may be monitored and potential problems identified through local projects to monitor water quality and bio-diversity. Local schools might be encouraged to conduct tests on local streams or conduct wildlife counts as student science projects. Recycling is another area that can be considered to maintain a high quality environment. Any local environmental organizations should be included in visioning and planning for local development.

### **Survey Responses from Blueprint Team Members Related to Sustainable Healthy Ecosystems with Multiple Community Benefits:**

This domain of community capacity is seen by the Blueprint Team members as another area of moderate capacity with an overall score of +0.65. Four of the five variables used to calculate the team perception about this domain were moderately positive. Planning for land use within the community is an area that was not seen as positively as other variables related to this domain by team members and there was some disagreement among the eight team members as to whether or not land use is adequately planned. This may be an area the community wants to consider further if there are concerns about land use planning as community development projects are implemented.

# Appendix A

## Methodology and Technical Information

A Capacity Assessment Framework was used as the basis for constructing a community profile for each of the ten West Virginia Blueprint Communities. The framework is based on a community capitals model and it addresses levels of capacity - that is stores of capital- that might be drawn upon to improve local conditions. Seven domains or “areas of influence” effecting community capacity were defined by a group of stakeholders known as the “Community Development Gathering” in West Virginia during 2006. These domains were adapted from work done by the North Central Regional Center for Rural Development at Iowa State University. To the extent possible, measures for each domain were selected from relevant existing databases and these selected measures are discussed in the profile. The community profile discusses current conditions in the context of five capitals, seven domains and defined indicator areas that say something significant about each of the domains of interest. This framework is included as Appendix B.

Compiled and published information at the level useful for local assessment and planning is very limited for some areas of influence that determine local community capacity. Consequently, domains relating to social capital, cultural capital, and environmental capital are more difficult to measure using existing data sets. Given this lack of good information readily available for some of the defined domains, a survey was developed to assess the opinion of key informants about the levels of capacity within each of the Blueprint Communities. Blueprint Community team members were asked to complete the web-based survey in order to secure information about how the team members see their community and identify (from the perspective of the team members) areas where local capacity appears to be present. Because of the makeup of the Blueprint Teams, the Blueprint Community Team members are considered to be appropriate key informants knowledgeable about the local community.

The information discussed in the community profile was compiled from existing data sets and from analysis of survey results solicited from local Blueprint Team members. The profile is a portrait of current community conditions and existing areas of capacity with some historical trend information related to key indicators when such trends in the data appear helpful in understanding current community conditions.

### **Methodology for Analysis of Survey Responses:**

Blueprint Team members were asked to complete a survey in order to measure beliefs held by each of the team members related to 35 measures of local capacity. The survey is composed of a series of 35 statements. Each of the seven domains of community capacity defined in the framework is measured by five statements contained in the survey. Survey respondents (Blueprint Community Team members) were asked to evaluate each statement based on their personal knowledge of the larger community (county or town designated as a Blueprint Community) and choose the degree to which they agree or disagree with the 35 statements using a five point Likert scale. Responses for each statement can range from “strongly disagree” to strongly agree”.

Individual survey responses were analyzed to produce a composite score for each of the thirty-five variables. For purposes of analysis individual responses were scored from -2 to +2. Responses were scored as follows: “a response of strongly disagree was assigned a value of -2, disagree was valued at -1, neither agree or disagree received 0 value, a response of agree was valued +1, and strongly agree was assigned a value of +2. The average of the assigned values for each team was then used as the team score for each individual statement (variable). Finally, a score was calculated for each of the seven domains by averaging the team scores of the five variables related to each domain. The score for each domain is based on a total of five variables multiplied by the number of team members responding. Thus, if eight team members completed the survey the score for the domain is based on a total of 40 responses (5 variables X 8 team members). Domain scores can range from minus two (-2.0) if all respondents strongly disagree to plus two (+2.0) if all respondents strongly agree. For any given statement it is highly unlikely that the average response will approach either -2 or +2. In general, positive domain scores indicate capacity is present and negative scores indicate the community lacks capacity in the area defined by the domain. Higher scores are interpreted as indicative of higher levels of capacity.

Since this “capacity score” was derived from the opinion of a small number of key informants, it is reflective only of the collective belief or opinion of the Blueprint Team members about the level of capacity that exists within the designated Blueprint Community. Survey results are used to supplement the more objective quantitative data related to community capacity when such data is available.

## Appendix B - Framework for Assessing Community Capacity

<i>Capacity Domains (Areas of Influence)</i>	<i>Indicator Areas</i>
<b><i>Human Capital</i></b>	
<b>1. Health and Well-Being of Local People</b>	1(a) Healthy People 1(b) School Readiness 1(c) Educational Attainment & Access 1(d) Community Safety 1(e) Family Stability 1(f) Economic Security
<b>2. Skills, Knowledge, and Ability of Local People</b>	2(a) Using Skills, Knowledge, Abilities 2(b) Enhancing Skills, Knowledge, Abilities 2(c) Citizen Engagement 2(d) Data-driven Decision Making
<b><i>Social Capital</i></b>	
<b>3. Relationships and Interpersonal Communication</b>	3(a) Shared Values 3(b) Participation 3(c) Internal Connectedness 3(d) External Connectedness 3(e) Trust 3(f) Ability to Solve Problems
<b>4. Community Initiative, Responsibility, and Adaptability</b>	4(a) Shared Vision 4(b) Leadership 4(c) Planning 4(d) Building on Local Resources 4(e) Seeking alternative ways to improve 4(f) Sense of Hope
<b><i>Cultural Capital</i></b>	
<b>5. Cultural Diversity and Quality of Life</b>	5(a) Heritage 5(b) Arts 5(c) Recreation 5(c) Spirituality
<b><i>Financial and Manufactured Capital</i></b>	
<b>6. Investments in Community and Financial Resources</b>	6(a) Financial Investments 6(b) Local Financial Resources 6(c) Access to Outside Financial Resources 6(d) Resource Mobilization 6(e) Business Efficiency 6(f) Business Diversity 6(g) Cultivating Entrepreneurship 6(h) Community Resident Assets 6(i) Community Infrastructure <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Housing</li> <li>- Facilities</li> <li>- Water/Sewer</li> <li>- Transportation</li> <li>- Communications</li> </ul>
<b><i>Environmental (Natural) Capital</i></b>	
<b>7. Sustainable, Healthy Ecosystems with Multiple Community Benefits</b>	7(a) Air Quality 7(b) Water Resources 7(c) Biodiversity 7(d) Soil 7(e) Landscape (sense of place) 7(f) Ecosystem Knowledge and Appreciation

## Appendix C

### *Data Sources and References*

Data and information used within the community profile has been drawn from a wide range of secondary data sources. For purposes of the Blueprint Community Profiles, secondary data is defined as information and statistics collected by government agencies or private organizations that are useful in describing and measuring the defined domains or areas of influence of local community capacity.

A great deal of data is readily available through internet based websites and documents that are related to the defined domains of community capacity. Some of this data is readily available at the local community (municipality) level, some is available at the county level, and some is only available for regional or statewide areas. Some of the information referenced within the community profile is reported at the county level since that is the geographic unit of analysis that is generally available to the public. Local communities also operate within the larger context of the county in which they are located. Thus, county level data is often useful in providing measures of local capacity and community conditions. In cases where the designated Blueprint Community is a town or city, information is reported for that smaller geographic area when the specific small area measure could be obtained.

Over fifty data sets were reviewed in order to identify relevant measures that would provide local Blueprint Teams with meaningful information about their community. The information compiled within the profile paints a portrait of current community conditions and provides guidance for planning and priority setting. Since the data profile is organized under seven areas of influence (or domains) that collectively define community capacity, the profile also provides some level of insight into specific areas (domains) where local capacity may need to be built.

Much of the information reported in the community profile is drawn from publicly available data sets published on the Internet by federal and state agencies. Local Blueprint Teams may wish to access one or more of these sites for further information or more detailed information about specific local issues determined to be an area of concern or identified as a priority for local planning. The community profile provided for use by the Blueprint Team is designed to provide a general overview of some of the more relevant measures of local conditions and community capacity. Once the Blueprint Team begins to focus on specific areas for community development, additional or more detailed information about that area may be useful. Therefore, the most useful and comprehensive data sites reviewed in developing these profiles are listed on the following pages with web addresses.

## ***Federal Data Sites:***

- United States Bureau of the Census <http://www.census.gov>
  - USA Counties – Provides many data sets from decennial census and annual estimates organized by county  
Web address: <http://censtats.census.gov/usa/usa.shtml>
  - American Communities Survey – Provides data from the annual American Communities Survey for larger geographic areas. Data is generally not available from the ACS for rural counties and towns in West Virginia.  
Web address:  
[http://factfinder.census.gov/servlet/DatasetMainPageServlet?\\_program=ACS&\\_submenuId=&\\_lang=en&\\_ts=](http://factfinder.census.gov/servlet/DatasetMainPageServlet?_program=ACS&_submenuId=&_lang=en&_ts=)
  - Consolidated Federal Funds Report – Provides information about a wide range of federal expenditures at state and county levels.  
Web address: <http://harvester.census.gov/cffr/>
  - Quarterly Workforce Indicators – Provides current and recent information about economic indicators and employment by quarter (every three months).  
Web Address: <http://lehd.dsd.census.gov/led/datatools/qwiapp.html>
  
- United States Department of Commerce Bureau of Economic Analysis – Provides detailed information about economic conditions, jobs, employment, labor markets, industry types, etc.  
Web Address: <http://www.bea.gov/>
  
- United States Department of Labor Bureau of Labor Statistics – Provides information about labor markets, employment, occupations, economic conditions, etc.  
Web Address: <http://www.bls.gov/>
  
- United States Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) Toxic Release Inventory – Provides detailed information about reported releases of toxic chemicals into the environment.  
Web Address: <http://www.epa.gov/triexplorer/>
  
- Federal Deposit Insurance Corporation Call Reports and Thrift Financial Reports – Database of information about all FDIC insured Banks and Savings and Loans that contains detailed financial status reports by quarter.  
Web address: [http://www2.fdic.gov/call\\_tfr\\_rpts/search.asp](http://www2.fdic.gov/call_tfr_rpts/search.asp)
  
- United States Department of Agriculture National Agricultural Statistics Service – Data by county about farms and farm products.  
Web address: [http://www.nass.usda.gov/Census/Create\\_Census\\_US\\_CNTY.jsp#top](http://www.nass.usda.gov/Census/Create_Census_US_CNTY.jsp#top)
  
- Federal Bureau of Investigation Uniform Crime Reporting System – Local, state, and national statistics of crime.  
Web address: <http://www.fbi.gov/ucr/05cius/>

## *State Data Sites:*

- WV Department of Health and Human Resources - Bureau for Public Health; Health Statistics Center – Statistics related to births, deaths, marriages, divorces, etc.  
Web Address: <http://www.wvdhhr.org/bph/oehp/vital04/index.htm>
- WV Department of Health and Human Resources – Office of Accountability and Management Reporting – Information related to recipients and expenditures for major social welfare programs.  
Web address: <http://www.wvdhhr.org/oamr/DAMRreports.htm>
- WV Department of Health and Human Resources - Bureau for Public Health; Behavioral Risk Factors Survey Reporting – Results of the Behavioral Risk Factors Survey addressing wide range of health status and health behavior indicators.  
Web address: [http://www.wvdhhr.org/bph/oehp/BRFSS\\_2003/default.htm](http://www.wvdhhr.org/bph/oehp/BRFSS_2003/default.htm)
- WV Coalition Against Domestic Violence – Statistics on prevalence of domestic violence in West Virginia.  
Web Address: <http://www.wvcadv.org/>
- WV State Police Uniform Crime Reports – Statistics on crime in West Virginia.  
Web address: <http://www.wvstatepolice.com/ucr/ucr.htm>
- Sex Offender Registry – Locations of known sex offenders in West Virginia.  
Web address: <http://www.wvstatepolice.com/sexoff/websearchform.cfm>
- WV Department of Education – Wide range of information about educational facilities, performance, accountability, enrollment, expenditures, personnel, etc.
  - Report Card Data – Accountability indicators, testing data, graduation rates, etc. for every school in West Virginia.  
Web address: <http://wveis.k12.wv.us/nclb/pub/rpt0506/pickreportcard.cfm>
  - West Virginia Education Information System – Detailed statistics for every school and county school district related to personnel, expenditures, facilities, enrollment, needy students, etc.  
Web address: <http://wveis.k12.wv.us/>
- West Virginia Secretary of State Business Organization Information System – Searchable database containing information about types and numbers of businesses registered in West Virginia.  
Web address: <http://www.wvsos.com/wvcorporations/>
- WV Department of Environmental Protection – Information about the environment including air quality, watersheds, waste sites, permits, etc. Information is provided on a regional basis.  
Web address: [http://www2.fdic.gov/call\\_tfr\\_rpts/search.asp](http://www2.fdic.gov/call_tfr_rpts/search.asp)

- WVDEP Enviromap Explorer – Interactive geographic information system containing environmental information for West Virginia regions and local areas including aerial maps (large files).  
Web address: <http://gis.wvdep.org/>
- WorkForce West Virginia Labor Market Information – Information drawn from federal and state data sets related to workforce, employment, and economic conditions in West Virginia.  
Web address: <http://www.wvbep.org/bep/LMI/default.htm>

### ***Private Organization Data Sites:***

- Universal Living Wage – Information about Fair Market Rents and household income levels necessary to afford housing.  
Web address: <http://www.universallivingwage.org/>
- Scorecard – This website compiles a wide range of information related to environmental pollution, air and water quality, and other environmental information about counties and local communities in the U.S.  
Web address: <http://www.scorecard.org/>

### ***Compiled Data Sets and Profiles for Counties and/or Local Municipalities:***

#### **Local Area Data Sets:**

- DataPlace - <http://www.dataplace.org/>
- EPodunk - <http://epodunk.com/>
- West Virginia Development Office State Data Center Profiles of WV places from 2000 Census - <http://www.wvdo.org/business/2000CensusProfiles.html>

#### **West Virginia County Data Sets and Profiles:**

- WorkForce West Virginia County Profiles - <http://www.wvbep.org/bep/LMI/CNTYPROF/DEFAULT.HTM>
- West Virginia Development Office State Data Center Profiles of WV counties from 2000 Census - <http://www.wvdo.org/business/2000CensusProfiles.html>
- West Virginia University Bureau for Business and Economic Research – County profiles of business and economic conditions. [http://www.be.wvu.edu/bber/data\\_profiles.htm](http://www.be.wvu.edu/bber/data_profiles.htm)