

[View Woodford County Magistrate Candidate Responses](#)

- 1. How long have you lived in your district? Please provide an example of one way that you have contributed to your community to date. Why are you the best candidate for the position you seek? (in order by District)**

[Mary Ann Gill](#)- I have lived in District 7 for about 15 years and in Woodford County since 1983. Bruce and I started our business here after college in 1981. We raised our five children in Versailles. From the beginning of our time here I have been involved in church, school, sports and civic activities. This year will complete my first term as Magistrate on the Woodford County Fiscal Court. My goal was to continue the good work that Bruce did on the Court, but to also bring more to Woodford County that I receive. I did that in my first year. The award for the Huntertown Road Sidewalk Project is far more than I would earn in many terms on Fiscal Court. I am also the best value, as I do not accept the benefit package which can more than double the cost of a Magistrate. I have never missed a court meeting and come prepared, studying all issues and am receptive to the concerns of people in the community. In addition to the ongoing sidewalk project, I've identified needs and sought solutions like getting fire hydrants where there were none near gas stations at Huntertown and Versailles Rd., and working to get a waterline on Shannon Run. I have also worked on the Huntertown Community Park and preserving its history. I stay informed by attending meetings of the Versailles City Council, Planning and Zoning, Conservation District, School Board, Library, EDA, Health Dept. and others. I chair the Ordinance and Finance Committees and serve on the Personnel and Jail Committees.

- 2. What is the biggest challenge, and biggest opportunity you see facing Woodford County and your district?**

[Mary Ann Gill](#)-The biggest challenge facing Woodford County is maintaining our revenue sources through agriculture and smart economic development to provide essential services and improve safety and quality of life, while preserving what makes this community special, namely our farmland, small towns and communities. Even though unemployment is low, our poverty rate is high. We need good paying jobs and available, affordable housing. Woodford County is perfectly situated for business and industry but an adequate workforce is lacking. District 7 consists mainly of farms and residential areas, where safe roads, routes for non-motorized transportation, water, emergency services, police and fire protection are important. Our biggest opportunity is our ability to come together as a community to find solutions to the problems we face.

- 3. What do you believe are the main economic pillars in Woodford County, and what are some specific planning policies that you propose to further economic growth?**

[Mary Ann Gill](#)-I suppose the main "economic pillar" in Woodford County is EMPLOYMENT through business and industry, including agriculture. Good jobs are absolutely essential for a good quality of life. Roughly 40% of county government revenues come from occupational tax while only about 8% come from property tax. For years Woodford County has had excellent, dedicated Planning and Zoning Commissions who have worked tirelessly on the Comprehensive Plan and all plans related to development to control growth and to meet the needs of the

community. I support their efforts and am disappointed by the seemingly endless lawsuits by those who want to stop all development and chip away at this “economic pillar”.

4. Would you support a tax increase, such as Local Investment for Transformation (LIFT), a 1% local sales tax increase, for a specific project? Please explain what capital project(s) you might support as leveraged through additional taxation.

Mary Ann Gill- The implementation of a LIFT tax would be determined by the voters to approve the tax for a specific project. I would support it if the majority of voters did as well.

5. Do you support the study of a merger of the county government with one or more of the city governments?

Mary Ann Gill- I have no problem locally discussing merged county government but I would not support yet another expensive study that produces no results. We only have large metropolitan areas to compare, but it seems that there is really no cost saving. With centralized services and government there are fewer checks and balances to rein in costs. We have inter-local agreements in Woodford County to provide county wide services like Planning and Zoning, Parks and Rec., Police and Emergency Management. Coming to agreements may get heated but we end up with the most cost savings that way. I would not like to see Versailles and Midway cease to be.

6. In your opinion, is our transportation and infrastructure adequate to support our community? If not, where would you like to see improvements made?

Mary Ann Gill- Our roads are some of the best in the state and our ability to get roads cleared during snow and storm events are the envy of other Counties, thanks to our Co. Road Dept. Going forward, keeping our state and county roads maintained will be a challenge with fewer State dollars available. I am very interested in pursuing safe roads and access for non-motorized transportation for health, recreation and necessary travel, such as sidewalks, trails and water access to the Kentucky River. Presently I am involved in that on several fronts. It is concerning that water lines in most of the county outside incorporated areas are only 4 inch, which will not support a fire hydrant. As a county we should work toward larger water lines and fewer houses, especially subdivisions, on septic systems. Adequate storm water control and detention basins are a pressing issue in several areas in my district. I very much support the KY WIRED project and would support anything that local government can do to provide high speed internet access in all areas of Woodford County.

7. What role should regional land use planning play in our local planning & development moving forward?

Mary Ann Gill- Regional planning is a good thing. I have been involved with the Bluegrass Trail Alliance, a multi-county plan for bike, hike, horseback and water trails. We have seen in neighboring counties what excessive and unfettered development looks like and I think we all agree that we don’t want that in Woodford County. That being said, NO development is NOT an option. Land use planning is the job of Planning and Zoning along with the Economic

Development Authority (which are partially funded by Fiscal Court) along with other community resources like CEDIK (Cooperative and Economic Development Initiative of KY), Ag Advisory Review Board and others. Fiscal Court can support their efforts and give input but should not micromanage what they do.

8. What are your plans for improving the environmental sustainability of our county? How would you support investments in more renewable alternative energy development?

Mary Ann Gill- We will always have to try to balance the demands placed on the environment with the need for people to live well. There is no oil, natural gas or coal in Woodford County. Everything we use is brought here. In some places, garbage is incinerated to produce electricity. My late husband Bruce wanted to look into possibly converting an old coal burning plant on the Kentucky River to such an incinerator. It is certainly something to think about. Fiscal Court can support proposals brought before them but it is not the job of Fiscal Court plan for investments in renewable energy.

9. Agriculture is an annual \$565 million-dollar industry that supports 1 in 3 jobs (specifically 2,783 jobs) in Woodford County. Woodford County farmland also anchors a burgeoning travel and agri-tourism industry. To ensure continued viability of our agricultural industries and productive farmland, would you support an annual funding allocation to the Woodford Rural Land Board's Purchase of Development Rights (PDR) Program? Why, or why not?

Mary Ann Gill- I would support a PDR program as long as tax dollars were not used to pay for it. That would look too much like welfare for the rich and would be inappropriate in a county where the poverty rate is high 47% of students pre-k through 12th grade are on free or reduced lunch.

10. What other ideas and specific policies do you have to ensure the continued growth and viability of our agriculture industry?

Mary Ann Gill- Local farmers have voiced interest in a grain elevator on the Edgewood Property. It is quite expensive for farmers to move their grain many miles after harvest. That would be a win for farmers and local business and industry, benefiting the economy in general. Unfortunately any further development of that property is tied up in a lawsuit, which has also stopped plans for a new hospital and new tax revenues that would make building a new high school possible. Supporting agriculture is alive and well in many areas of Woodford County including Fiscal Court, Planning and Zoning, Conservation District, Ag Extension, Ag Review Board, the Fair Board, Farm Bureau and others. I support their efforts.