

Transportation

Introduction

The movement of people and goods throughout Fayette County is of extreme importance to the economic vitality of the area. Transportation history dates to the early 19th century with the construction of the National Road. This roadway became a boon to agriculture, commerce, and industry as settlers traveled to the western frontier. Prosperity peaked in 1884 when year-round navigation was made possible by the construction of a series of locks and dams on the Monongahela River between Pittsburgh and Brownsville. The area thrived until the mid-1800's when two rail lines were constructed between Pittsburgh and Wheeling, bypassing Fayette County.

The second half of the 1900's has been one of severe economic decline related to the changing economics of coal and steel. In addition to these declining industrial bases, the interstate highway system essentially bypassed Fayette County, leaving the area with limited transportation options. Past studies have indicated that the lack of a strong transportation network in the County has been a major hindrance to economic development. However, several recent transportation initiatives, such as the Mon-Fayette Transportation Project, have given hope for significant change. The completion of this expressway will have a major impact on the existing transportation network and all adjacent land uses.