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**5.0**  
**design recommendations**



## 5.0 Design Recommendations

### 5.1. General Recommendations

The character of the City of Independence is the visual impression and personality that defines the City. The historic downtown, the gateway to the north, the retail center located to the south, the fringe area developments and the scenic view corridors mold the character of the City.

As per the recommended land use plan, the recommended policies and implementation procedures are focused on the specific opportunity areas and development models. The desire of the plan is to revive the historic fabric and develop a cultural core for the downtown with appropriate design standards to reverse the trend from underutilized, unkempt structures of the center city. There was a general shifting of activity from historic downtown towards the retail area located in the south. The recommendation of this plan is to create more activity in the downtown with specialty retail to render the “small town” feeling as expressed by majority of stakeholders. The concepts and land use vision reflect the historic preservation of downtown, expansion of south retail areas and residential development in the mold of conservation development. It is the intention of these guidelines to continue to support the immense growth of the City through residential development and create neighborhood oriented retail opportunities to cater to the basic needs of the community.

To achieve the visions of this study, as developed through public involvement process, advisory committee inputs, stakeholder participation and design workshop findings, the following broad-based initiatives are recommended. It has to be noted that the following recommendations are also discussed under the developmental models and opportunity area specific recommendations.

- + A Strategic Action Plan Committee (SAPC) should be instituted by the City Council to assist in the implementation of the visions and recommendations of this study. The SAPC will be responsible to create additional review boards and/or agencies like design review board, business council, tree board etc. as and when needed. All the decisions made by the sub-groups as created by SAPC will be reviewed and approved by the SAPC before being informing the City Council prior to implementation.
- + It is recommended to create a City Manager/Administrator position who will be acting on behalf of the City to implement the recommendations of this plan and long-term sustenance. The position will also act as an interface with the City Council and the Strategic Action Plan Committee (SAPC) and will review all developmental applications, regulations, permits to help the City Council make better informed decisions. This position will have additional responsibility for research regarding various funding sources available to implement the visions of this study and make strategic decisions with SAPC in creation of additional review boards and/or agencies. Economic development initiatives will be a key responsibility for this position.
- + The historic downtown area should be developed as the cultural core of the City with public gathering spaces, small-scale shops to enhance the “small town” feel as expressed by stakeholders, advisory committee members and residents in general. Appropriate context-sensitive infill developments along with facade improvements of existing buildings in the downtown area will help to establish it as a cultural core. Also appropriate tenanting strategies should be put in place to market the potential of the downtown and its existing buildings.

- + Residential development should occur in a conservation development model with higher density in the core residential area within Madison Pike (KY 17) and “New” KY 17 to help support the additional commercial/retail developments as suggested by the market study. Lower density development is encouraged in the fringe areas in a conservation development model to conserve critical natural resource areas to help preserve the “rural feel”.
- + As the market study suggests the need for additional retail and businesses, the south gateway area should be utilized to full potential before large-scale commercial establishments explore other areas for location within the study area.
- + Mixed use and higher density residential developments along the “New” KY 17 should happen in nodal points near the intersection with McCullum Pike and Harris Pike/Shaw Road. Residential development is encouraged in other areas along the “New” KY17 corridor with heavy landscape/tree buffer between the residential developments and “New” KY17.
- + Pedestrian connectivity should be the focal point of design direction for all future developments and physical improvements.
- + Appropriate design and development guidelines should be developed to implement the recommended policies. The existing zoning and subdivision regulations should also be modified based on the recommendations.
- + Extension of infrastructural services are important to support the growth of the City. The City should establish dialog with Transit Authority of Northern Kentucky (TANK) to expand existing transit service within the study area. Also sewer and water service are provided to portions of the study area . The City should work with Sanitation District 1 and Northern Kentucky Water District to acquire additional services.

#### General Transportation Recommendations

The most important transportation recommendation contained in this study is the maintenance of “New” KY 17 as the major north-south arterial serving the City of Independence and southern Kenton County. Controlled access on this route, serving as a bypass around the core of the study area is important to insure that traffic can pass through with minimal delays and not contribute to congestion within the study area. Land use recommendations within this study are intended to minimize conjection along this route.

The intent of the recommended land use plan is to promote more compact development patterns with expansive open space preservation. Recommendations for clustered higher density housing and mixed use development in the downtown district, McCullum Pike/KY 17 development area as well as the north and south gateway areas may consolidate trips in a smaller area but it is assumed that the overall numbers of vehicular trips generated will not vary significantly from current plans. Therefore, traffic along Madison Pike (KY 17) through the study area should not increase significantly. However, the change in land use patterns and use of higher density commercial and residential development will affect traffic patterns, concentrating vehicle activity at different locations within the study area. This shift in traffic patterns will require that ongoing

transportation projects in the study area (e.g. KY 536) be evaluated to ensure that proposed improvements do not need to be adjusted for the proposed changes in land use patterns.

The highest traffic volumes will be concentrated in the south gateway area surrounding the intersection of Madison Pike (KY 17), KY 536 and "New" KY 17. The capacity provided by the planned reconstruction of KY 536 and soon to open "New" KY 17 should be sufficient to accommodate the forecasted traffic volumes during the next 10-20 years. However the concentration of commercial activity near this major intersection presents concerns that should be addressed within the design of the intersection. Balancing access needs to the primary commercial center and maintaining traffic flow on KY 536 and "New" KY 17 is a critical element of this plan. It is recommended that the City begin collaborating with the Kentucky Transportation Cabinet for the KY 536 project to coordinate design and capacity issues.



**"New" KY 17**  
Taken mid May 2007

The study area is proposed to remain predominately residential with the vast majority of residents commuting to work in neighboring cities. Only a small number of commuters travel from their residence outside the City to their place of work located in the study area.

The opening of the "New" KY 17, will result in a shift of through traffic from the existing Madison Pike (KY 17), which will be redesignated as KY 3035, resulting in a reduction in its future volumes on Madison Pike (KY 17) between Summit View Elementary and KY 536. Given the shift in travel patterns it is anticipated that McCullum Pike (KY 2045) will experience some growth in traffic volumes as it becomes a more centrally located gateway from the downtown district to the relocated KY 17. This change is reflected in the recommendations for transition from the current medium and low density residential land use to mixed use and higher density residential uses.

The construction of "New" KY 17 presents an opportunity and a challenge for fostering a community identity for the study area. The construction of "New" KY 17 to the east of the current commercial and institutional land uses along Madison Pike (KY 17) will effectively separate the through traffic from those with local destinations within the proposed study area.

To alleviate confusion between the "Old" 17 or Madison Pike (KY 17) and the "New" 17 consideration should be given to naming the "New" KY 17 in the study area and utilizing the name in maps, community branding efforts, signage etc.

The specific recommendations of the study are divided into the following:

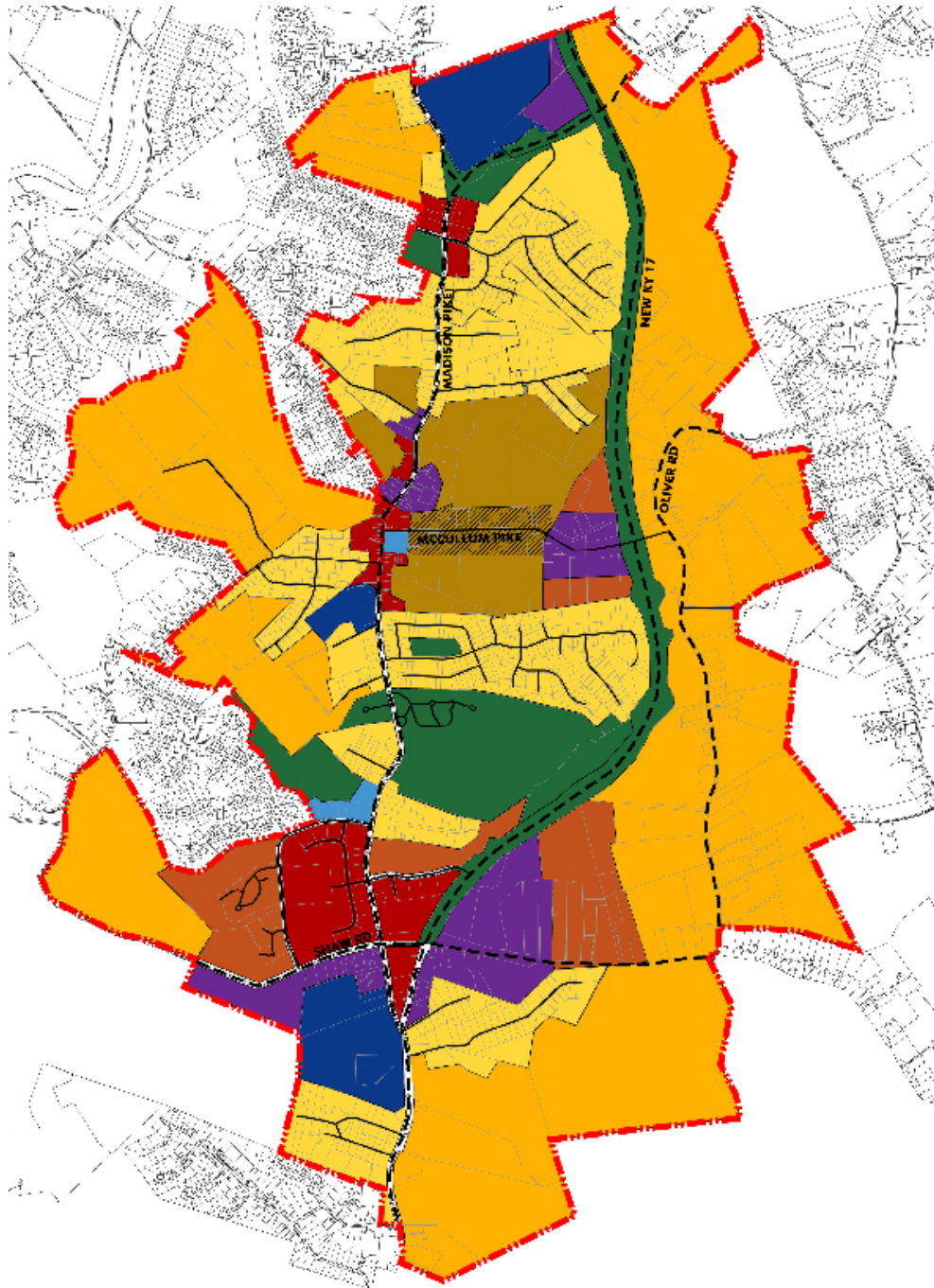
- + Recommended Land Use Plan
- + Land Use Development Models
  - + Conservation Development
  - + Mixed Use Development
  - + Higher Density Residential Development
  - + Open Spaces and Recreational Uses
- + Opportunity Areas
  - + Downtown District
  - + South Gateway Area
  - + North Gateway Area
  - + McCullum Pike and KY 17 Area
- + Specific Transportation Recommendations
  - + Pedestrian
  - + Public Transit
  - + Bicycle Facilities
  - + Access Management
- + Financing Programs
- + Development Review Process

## 5.2. Recommended Land Use Plan

The recommended land use plan is based on the visions of the residents and Advisory Committee as expressed through several public meetings, surveys and workshop. The recommended land use plan has been developed through the conceptual land use development process as described in Chapter 4.0, Design Concepts. The following are the land use categories used in the plan:

- + **Commercial**

This category of land use is concentrated at nodes and contains exclusively retail and neighborhood oriented businesses. There are a variety of ways commercial development can occur. It can be in the form of small shops and stores, restaurants, and larger scale department stores, grocery stores and other large scale buildings. Within this plan there are several areas recommended for commercial land use, however the type of commercial development recommended for each area is very different. The South and North Gateway Area areas and Downtown District include areas recommended for commercial use. With the location of the Independence Town Center in the South Gateway Area it is recommended that this area should continue to develop as the primary commercial node capable of handling a higher intensity of use and activity (refer to Section 5.4.2 for detailed explanation). The North Gateway Area includes the area between Sterling Staggs Park and the stop light at Madison Pike and "new" KY 17 near Summit View School. Commercial development in this section of town is recommended for small neighborhood oriented businesses such as a dry cleaner or a florist. For further detail on this area refer to Section 5.4.3. The Downtown District may include commercial development in the form of small locally owned and run businesses, specialty



**Legend**

Study Boundary	Institutional	Conservation Development Residential with Mixed Use (Cluster 2+ Acres?)
Major Roads	Open/Recreational Space	Single Family Residential (Existing)
Minor Roads	High Density Residential (Multi-Family)	Civic
Commercial	Conservation Development Residential (Single Family Low Density)	Mixed Use
Mixed Use	Conservation Development (Single Family-High Density)	

**Recommended Land Use Plan**  
*(refer exhibit C-3 for detailed view)*

shops and restaurants. This area may develop into a social core/destination and cater to more specialized markets. For additional information on the Downtown District refer to section 5.41.

+ **Mixed Use**

This is recommended land use category for transition of commercial category to residential uses. The orientation and layout of mixed use development should present a balanced proportion of commercial, office and residential activity. For detailed explanation refer section 5.3.2.

+ **Institutional**

This type of use is located at both ends of the study area and is recommended to develop in a similar manner as existing institutional uses. Additional areas have been recommended around the existing schools for further development and/or extension of existing facilities.

+ **Open/Recreational Space**

It is recommended to have connectivity of residential and commercial areas with parks and recreational open spaces through sidewalks, shared use path and/or trails. Also, the "New" KY 17, being a limited access highway, should have greenway buffers along the right-of-way. It is important to note that the cemetery is a sacred burial ground and should be maintained as such. It provides a significant amount of preserved land and therefore has been included in the open space land use category. For more information refer section 5.3.4.

+ **High Density Residential (Multi-Family)**

High density residential land uses are located adjacent to or with convenient access to arterial roads that can accommodate the higher traffic generated and avoid the need for this traffic to pass through areas of lower density residential land uses. Residential density within these areas should be within the range of 7.1 to 30.0 dwelling units per net acre. Development within this range requires design sensitive to adjoining land uses (ie. buffering, connectivity, etc.) For further description of design and location refer to section 5.3.3.

+ **Conservation Development Residential (Single Family-Low Density)**

Residential land uses within these areas should maintain the current density identified in existing zoning, with provision for moderate density increases equivalent of no more than 10 percent to encourage the use of the conservation style of subdivision development. For further description refer to section 5.3.1.

+ **Conservation Development (Single Family-High Density)**

Areas identified within this land use category are located near nodes planned for mixed uses and/or commercial land use and arterial roads. The purpose of higher density within these areas is to help create the synergy of population needed to be supportive of nearby commercial land uses. Because of these factors, residential densities within these areas can be increased up to 30 percent above the density of the underlying residential zone. For further description refer to section 5.3.1

- + **Conservation Development Residential with Mixed Use Overlay**  
Areas identified within this land use category are located along McCullum Pike between the nodes of mixed use located at McCullum and Madison Pike (KY 17 and new KY 17). The primary land use is conservation development/single-family high density to match the adjoining land use designation. Alternatively, however, this area may be developed to include clusters of mixed use development designed to provide continuity between the two mixed use nodes on McCullum Pike. Key to this approach is the design of the mixed use areas in coordination with adjoining residential uses. For example, one key consideration is connectivity to residential areas and to existing mixed use nodes. For further description refer to section 5.3.2 and MU1.3.
- + **Single Family Residential (Existing)**  
This category contains the existing single family homes.
- + **Civic**  
This category contains the existing government buildings and facilities such as City Hall, Fire House and the Senior Citizens building.

Please refer the map on opposite page and exhibit C-3 for detailed view.

### **5.3 Land Use Development Models**

The following are development models that should be implemented within the study area in the recommended locations as indicated in the land use map.

#### **5.3.1 Conservation Development Model**

The conservation subdivision model should be provided as an option in addition to the conventional development model in all residential areas including single-family and multi-family, within the study area. The conservation subdivision model allows the same amount of density as a conventional model but requires land to be set aside within a development for open space. Woodlots, stream buffers, floodplains, steep slopes may constitute open space. A density similar to that allowed in conventional subdivisions is achieved in spite of the open space requirement by designing more compact developments with narrower lots. Development based on this model should focus around the principle of preservation of natural lands which will eventually create a network of community-wide open space.

The conservation subdivision model should include incentives such as density bonuses, flexibility in lot sizes and design, quicker approval process and so on to make it a better option for development as compared to the conventional development model.



Economic Advantages

- + Developers should follow site design guidelines and conservation criteria making it a comprehensive review process.
- + As the home sites are clustered, it reduces the cost of infrastructure and construction.
- + Marketing becomes easier as the positive features are highlighted such as benefits of living in a community where wooded lots, farmlands have been preserved.
- + Based on experience elsewhere homes in conservation subdivisions tend to appreciate faster than their counterparts in conventional developments.
- + The natural areas that are preserved and the recreational amenities that are provided help to reduce the demand for public open space, parkland, playing fields and other areas for active and passive recreation.



Conservation Development Examples



Environmental Advantages

- + Conservation development protects the upland buffers alongside waterbodies and watercourses that help to filter stormwater flowing into the ponds, streams, creeks etc.
- + Layout flexibility makes it easier for site designers to locate subsurface septic systems on those parts of the property that are best suited for such facilities.

Social and Recreational Advantages

- + The basic elements of conservation design enhance a pedestrian-friendly neighborhood.
- + More opportunities for community oriented activities thus implementing a stronger sense of community pride and quality of life.

Some of the difficulties in designing a conservation development are procedural modifications in the sense it is more time consuming than a conventional process. More upfront information has to be processed during the initial phases of the design, which might be labor intensive for developers and designers. In the long run the conservation development process helps in evaluation of existing conditions of a site and its surroundings in a pro-active way and avoids incorporation of design elements after the site review process by governmental agencies.

The following is a description of the *four (4) Step Process for Conservation Design as proposed by Randall Arendt*, renowned landscape architect and conservation development proponent:

- + Identifying all potential conservation areas  
The process begins with identifying the conservation land that should potentially be protected. These features include unbuildable wetlands, floodplains, steep slopes, hydric soils, structures that are culturally and historically significant, scenic viewsheds or any other characteristics that are environmentally sensitive. This will identify where the core areas of future development is likely to lie on the property.

- + Locating the House Sites  
The next design step is to identify the potential house site locations. For economic viability and also to increase the “quality of life” for residents, it is advisable to create as many “view lots” as possible and to ensure that usable open space is located within convenient walking distance from other houses in the subdivision. Identifying house site before lot lines and streets allows building locations to be carefully selected so that natural features worth preserving can be avoided, including large trees, prominent rock outcrops, as well as historically and culturally significant features.

- + Designing Street Alignments and Trails  
The third logical step is to determine the best way to access every residence with street system. Areas with relatively level or rolling topography pose few street design challenges from an engineering standpoint, the major considerations being to avoid crossing wetlands and to minimize the cost and length of new streets. Every effort should be made to connect each street with another so that the dead ends will be minimized. Interconnected streets provide easier and safer access for emergency vehicles, school buses, while distributing traffic evenly. Streets serving new developments should, whenever possible, be designed to connect with adjoining properties that are potentially developable in the future. If possible street systems should be designed so that their curvature or alignment produces “terminal vistas” of open space elements, such as village greens, water features, meadows or playing fields.



**Conventional Subdivision Design**



**Same Land with Conservation Subdivision**

- + **Drawing in the Lot Lines**

The fourth and the final step is to delineate the lot lines based on the location of the house sites and streets. The issue of appropriate lot depth is related directly to the presence or absence of open space along rear lot lines. Architects, landscape architects and site designers have for many years recognized that the most efficient use of a house lot occurs when the house is located “off-center and up front”. Placing homes where front porches or stoops are within conversational distance of sidewalks helps create conditions for friendlier neighborhoods.

More information regarding design of conservation subdivisions, its advantages and disadvantages can be referred from Randall Arendt’s book on *Conservation Design for Subdivisions: A Practical Guide to Creating Open Space Networks*.

The following are the design recommendations for single family residential developments:

- + **Conservation Development Residential (Single Family-Low Density)**

Single family development is recommended to develop in a low density design in the fringe areas of the study outside of the prime transportation corridors of Madison Pike (KY 17) and “New” KY 17. This type of development should emphasize the preservation of critical natural resources such as woodlots, streams, floodplains, hydric soils, steep slopes and should develop in a cluster format to protect scenic rural views. The clustering technique can be achieved through the four step approach as described above.
- + **Conservation Development (Single Family-High Density)**

This type of single family development is recommended inside the Madison Pike (KY 17) and “New” KY 17 to cater to the increased growth as reflected by the market study. Preservation of natural resources is recommended with clustering techniques.

Recommendations for conservation development

- CD1. Develop residential design in a conservation subdivision model
  - CD1.1. Local zoning code should be revised to include the parameters of conservation development model, such as clustering techniques and protection of critical natural resource areas, to be implemented for designated areas as indicated in the land use plan.
  - CD1.2. Subdivision regulations to be revised to include the tenets of conservation subdivision model such as protection of critical natural resource areas.
  - CD1.3. The ordinance should include a provision where a certain percentage of the development should be set aside as open space or parkland. In the low-density conservation subdivision areas passive open space should be required while in the higher density conservation areas either open space or parks may be required. A fee-in-lieu mechanism may be instituted for parks wherein the fee can be used to improve existing parks or purchase land for new parks in the vicinity of the development.

- CD1.4. A Design Review Board is recommended to review all future proposals for developments designed in conservation residential model. Review process should be streamlined to include applicable technical staff such as civil, transportation, structural and environmental engineers, planning professionals etc. for better and informed decisions by Planning Commission and City Council. Alternatively, consider instituting a “conservation organization” (non-profit) for the area to review the developments.
- CD1.5. Establish with incentives like density bonuses to include workforce housing and other amenities.
- CD1.6. Protection of land can be achieved through “conservation easement” that might be maintained by organizations such as the Kenton Conservancy.
- CD1.7. Preserved lands can also be handled by home owners associations and in such case zoning regulations should state automatic ownership of such land for homeowners and should have a lien authority. It should also be a requirement that the developer submit a detailed management plan for conservation land and other open spaces.

### 5.3.2 Mixed Use Model

Independence is growing at an exceptional rate and outgrowing their existing housing stock. Mixed use development will offer opportunities to create live/work nodes within the city. These buildings will incorporate the essence of downtown livability with retail/office on the first floor and office/housing on the second floor. Young professionals are attracted to this type of development offering entertainment and places of work within walking distance. These areas should create transition from commercial to higher density housing.

Mixed use development can occur in both the horizontal and vertical pattern. A horizontal mixed use occupies larger land area and various uses are incorporated in low rise buildings, maybe not more than 2-3 stories. While retail/commercial uses occupy the first floor, the upper floor/s are occupied by either residential units and/or professional office spaces. Parking spaces for this type of uses are clustered together in a surface parking lot. A vertical mixed use consists of several stories and in typically more than 3 stories. Parking structures are located either in the basement or in a parking deck. Various uses occupy the upper stories and typically retail/commercial uses fill in the lower floor. Vertical mixed use is designed in places where the land area is restrictive to form a horizontal category of mixed use.

As commercial developments in Independence are recommended to portray “small-scale” developments, horizontal mixed use is recommended in most areas with very few vertical mixed use. If it occurs, the vertical mixed use is recommended near the south gateway area, with developmental guidelines restricting high-rise construction and appropriate allocation of commercial, office and residential use. Parking and access requirement guidelines should also be in place for efficient design directions.

Mixed use is also recommended at the intersection of “New” KY 17 and McCullum Pike. The McCullum Pike area is recommended to have an underlying conservation style single family residential with mixed use overlay. If mixed use happens, it should happen in a linear cluster format with an aggregation of two plus acres. Such development should have guidelines for a fair share of residential, small-scale commercial and parking requirements. The scale of the commercial/retail development should be neighborhood oriented businesses with homes/apartments/professional office spaces on the upper floors. The height of the buildings should comply with the surrounding structures. Refer section 5.4.4 for more detailed information.

## Recommendations

### MU1. Establish design and development guidelines

- MU1.1. Establish design guidelines to integrate housing into the retail areas (horizontal mixed use).
- MU1.2. Development guidelines should be in conformance with a coherent plan which stipulates the type and scale of uses, permitted densities and related items (form based code).
- MU1.3. Zoning regulation should be revised to include the design development principles of mixed use development.
- MU1.4. Flexible and/or incentive zoning system should be in place where bonuses are granted to developers for providing certain amenities.
- MU1.5. Guidelines should include phasing plans.
- MU1.6. Building material and color should exhibit quality and help establish a human scale while providing visual interest.

### MU2. Develop identity and wayfinding

- MU2.1. Implement a comprehensive signage plan for identity and wayfinding.
- MU2.2. Revise zoning and sign ordinance to include provisions for mixed use district signage.

### MU3. Pedestrian-oriented development

- MU3.1. Pedestrian connections should be the focal point of design of mixed use developments providing connections from adjoining residential neighborhoods.
- MU3.2. Establish a pedestrian and bicycle plan for designated mixed use areas.
- MU3.3. Establish guidelines for traffic calming design and activities.
- MU3.4. Develop a trails program for pedestrian and bicycle connections from open spaces into these areas.

### MU4. Context Sensitive Design

- MU4.1. Preservation of scenic view corridors should be encouraged.
- MU4.2. Compliment the architectural style and form with existing buildings.

### MU5. Economic Incentives

- MU5.1. Pursue funding mechanisms for development and maintenance of these areas through sources such as federal and state Community Development Block Grant, Tax Increment Financing Districts, Area Development District etc.
- MU5.2. Provide incentives for developers to develop mixed uses. Incentive zoning allows a developer to exceed a zoning ordinance's limitations if the developer agrees to fulfill conditions specified in the ordinance such as the percentage share of uses, parking requirements etc. The developer may be allowed to exceed height limits by a specified amount in exchange for providing open spaces or plazas adjacent to the building.
- MU5.3. Market potential sites for mixed uses to attract tenants, consumers and residents.

### 5.3.3 Higher Density Residential Model (Multi-family)

With its ever-growing population and increased accessibility due to “New” KY 17 within the City of Independence, the need for variety of housing stock is of prime importance. As the market study by GEM Public Sector Services suggests the City does not have variety of housing in sufficient quantity and recommends additional housing for the elderly and young professionals. Higher density housing is meant to be in a multi-family unit design either as a condominium and/or apartment complex. Design should be respectful of critical resource areas and should foster good connectivity within and outside of the neighborhood.

#### Recommendations

#### HD1. Develop transitional residential as high density multi-family developments

- HD1.1. Encourage multi-family development for transitional areas between commercial and single family residential growth.
- HD1.2. Develop design guidelines for higher density housing with preservation of critical resources through clustering techniques.
- HD1.3. Create density bonuses and incentives for development for protection of natural resource areas.
- HD1.4. Develop a pedestrian plan.
- HD1.5. Connect these developments with adjacent areas through sidewalks, trail connections and other alternative methods of transportation, i.e. public transportation.
- HD1.6. Zoning and subdivision ordinances should be modified based on guidelines of development for these areas.
- HD1.7. Pursue financing mechanisms to encourage these types of developments.

### 5.3.4 Open Spaces and Recreational Uses

The City of Independence should continue to invest in varied and ample recreational opportunities to meet the needs of its citizens. The city will always value, preserve and protect much of its rural landscape striving to connect all its open green spaces to all citizens. The city should recognize the connectivity of parks and green space as an important part of a sustainable community. There are a variety of ways to create open space areas even with in residential and commercial developments such as clustering techniques which preserves the critical resource areas and creating parkland buffers.

#### Recommendations

#### OS1. Create a healthy environment through recreational spaces and preservation of open spaces

- OS1.1. Connect existing park systems and open spaces through trail system.
- OS1.2. Develop design standards for trail system with consideration to geometry, materials, amenities, safety, lighting, and maintenance.
- OS1.3. Develop sidewalk connectivity within neighborhoods to connect to adjacent areas.
- OS1.4. Pursue trails and conservation funding for development and maintenance.

- OS1.5. Preserve open spaces through land grants, conservation mechanisms to maintain scenic view corridors.
- OS1.6. Encourage development of small “pocket” parks by City of Independence Parks and Recreation department.
- OS1.7. Connect parks and open spaces with potential regional park system-establish dialogue with Kenton County Parks and Recreation Department.
- OS1.8. Create a hierarchical system of parks catering to different age groups.
- OS1.9. Provide a variety of recreational amenities for the park system such as playscapes, baseball and soccer fields, swimming pools and/or small scale water park etc.
- OS1.10. Create strategic alliance with YMCA and other organizations to explore different recreational opportunities.
- OS1.11. Create a Tree Board to oversee Urban Tree Renewal Program.
- OS1.12. Organize a City Beautification program assisted by the City of Independence Parks and Recreation department to maintain the aesthetic quality of the community.

## 5.4 Opportunity Areas

Four (4) development opportunity areas have been developed. According to American Association of State Highway and Transportation Officials (AASHTO) standards, an average person will walk within a half mile radius for basic amenities. The following areas are highlighted for location of basic amenities from different residential areas based on the walkable strategies:

- + Downtown District
- + South Gateway Area
- + North Gateway Area
- + McCullum Pike and KY 17 Area

### 5.4.1 Downtown District

The downtown of Independence should evolve into a cultural center offering a place for unique entertainment and gathering spaces. The city should value and preserve the existing historical structures showcasing the historical significance of Independence as the county seat. Downtown Independence should be inviting to pedestrians with aesthetically pleasing and walkable sidewalks, quaint storefronts, and pleasurable public spaces. Motorists will be attentive to pedestrians with enhanced intersections and sidewalks. Downtown will transition into a destination offering well-maintained properties, ample parking away from the street, a variety of small shops and businesses, and a sense of community year-round, capitalizing on the historic character of the area.

#### Recommendations

##### DD1. Encourage Historic Preservation

- DD1.1. Collaborate with Kenton County Historical Society and historic preservation groups to provide educational forums in order to discuss the advantages of historic resource

registration. Alternatively, organize a historical society to initiate and oversee proposals for nominations under the National Register of Historic Places.

DD1.2. Register appropriate structures in the Downtown District under the National Register of Historic Places. The National Register of Historic Places is the Nation's official list of cultural resources worthy of preservation. Authorized under the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966,



**Downtown Independence**

the National Register is part of a national program to coordinate and support public and private efforts to identify, evaluate, and protect our historic and archeological resources. Historic places are nominated to the National Register by the State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO), "Kentucky Heritage Council" or by the Federal Preservation Officer (FPO) for properties under Federal ownership or control.

In addition to honorific recognition the listing in the National Register results in the following for historical properties:

- + Consideration in planning for Federal, federally licensed, and federally assisted projects.
- + Eligibility for certain tax provisions (Owners of properties listed in the National Register may be eligible for a 20% investment tax credit for the certified rehabilitation of income-producing certified historic structures such as commercial, industrial, or rental residential buildings. This credit can be combined with a straight-line depreciation period of 27.5 years for residential property and 31.5 years for nonresidential property for the depreciable basis of the rehabilitated building reduced by the amount of the tax credit claimed. Federal tax deductions are also available for charitable contributions for conservation purposes of partial interests in historically important land areas or structures - Source: National Register of Historic Places).

DD1.3. Apply for historic tax credits for maintenance of existing structures. Tax credits can be in the form of "Certified Historic Structures Income Tax Credit" as mentioned in the financing section.

DD1.4. Seek a Determination of Eligibility for the National Register of Historic Places for a historic district within "downtown" Independence. The Kentucky Heritage Council is the State Historic Preservation Office and a site visit should be arranged with Heritage Council staff to evaluate the area for its historic district potential.



DD1.5 Develop educational programs to interpret the history of the community by investigating a school-age education program and a walking/driving tour aimed at an awareness of local history within the Independence area (refer illustration). An example of such an activity is the production of a coloring book of historic architecture within Independence (refer illustration). Installing interpretive devices could highlight important features, vistas, or buildings important to the history of the community. This could include a building plaque program, the installation of free-standing interpretive plaques, or street signage.



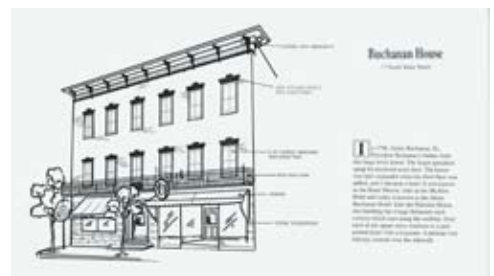
Example of Walking Tour of Historic District

DD2. Develop Brand Identity and Wayfinding  
This will assist in developing a sense of place for downtown Independence as well as rendering a lasting impression of the City through appropriate branding. The theme should preserve the existing rural character of the City.



Example of Coloring Book for Historic Architecture

DD2.1. Develop comprehensive Wayfinding Plan for Downtown with appropriate signage and lighting. Signage should be respectful of the historical character and is recommended to be context sensitive community scale. Lighting in the area should be at a pedestrian scale and foster a safe environment.



DD2.2. Engage professionals to develop brand identity and wayfinding.

DD2.3. Revise the current Sign Ordinance to reflect the recommendations of branding and wayfinding.

DD3. Develop Strategies for Marketing

DD3.1. Market the existing assets of downtown to consumers, potential investors, residents and visitors. The Market Study recommendations by GEM Public Sector Services should be a part of the marketing initiative. This will help in understanding the potential of the market with respect to the need of the community.



Historic Identification Plaque

DD3.2. Encourage consensus building process and cooperation among many groups and/or individuals having a role in the revitalization process. This process can be between interested residents, professionals and representatives from different governmental agencies to brainstorm various ideas of development and economic incentives.



**Historic Preservation and Mixed Use**

DD3.3. Encourage specialty retail businesses as recommended by the Market Study conducted by GEM. Businesses recommended for the downtown district should be neighborhood-oriented business such as small coffee shops and restaurants, antique and floral shops, and professional office spaces.

DD3.4. Coordinate marketing of all cultural activity through newsletters, websites, radio and television

DD3.5. Develop a Downtown Business Council for the management of downtown area businesses. Their responsibility can extend to include other areas of commercial uses and their business owners for recruitment of new businesses, retention of existing ones, maintenance and upkeep.

DD4. Establish Downtown as Cultural Center to revive the character and image of center city.

DD4.1. Promote neighborhood oriented retail businesses (specialty stores) with shop window enhancement and display programs.

DD4.2. Promote resident involvement and community gathering through efforts such as the institution of a Farmer's Market. Promote existing public gathering spaces and create new ones as shown in the downtown concept plan. This will help foster a feeling of togetherness and community feeling.

DD4.3. Build on community festivals such as Independence Day Celebration, Christmas Parade etc.

DD4.4. Establish dialogue with Transit Authority of Northern Kentucky (TANK) to enhance the stop locations for existing routes and to add more trips to the downtown area and improve the transit stop. As the market study suggests Independence is a "commuting community", extension of the bus route and adding more trips during peak hours will help offset the congestion in the roadways and improve the quality of life by reducing personal drive time.

DD5. Pursue Funding Mechanisms for implementation of guidelines and recommendations.

DD5.1. Strengthen the district's existing economic base and pursue ways to expand through different funding mechanisms. Creation of Tax Increment Financing Districts, revitalization through state funds or Area Development District funds are some of the available sources of financing mechanisms.

DD5.2.Pursue public/private partnership for maintenance of existing structures and new infill. As the governmental agencies will be providing for public improvement through right-of-way and streetscape improvement, it is a healthy policy for the private property owners to maintain their real estate thus working in a holistic approach for revitalization.

DD5.3.Promote tax breaks for downtown housing and retail.

DD5.4.Develop a property owner incentive program for rehabilitation.

DD6. Establish Design Guidelines for overall improvement in character

DD6.1.Establish design guidelines for façade improvements of existing buildings.

DD6.2.Create a context-sensitive (rural suburban downtown) streetscape plan to include elements such as sidewalks, street trees, and pedestrian amenities.

DD6.3.Implement a form-based zoning code that will regulate location, size, height, setback, off-street parking, landscaping, and streetscape requirements.

DD6.4.Establish guidelines for infill development with respect to form, materials, massing, colors etc. to compliment the character of the historic downtown.

DD6.5.Explore feasibility and create guidelines for utility relocation underground in this District.

DD7. Maintenance of existing buildings

DD7.1.Employment of City Manager to oversee the implementation process, infill development, redevelopment and maintenance. The City Manager will be able to assist the City Council to make informed decision through prior review of all applications for proposed developments.

DD7.2.Utilize existing buildings to full potential to minimize vacant spaces, which leads to unkempt character.

DD7.3.Establish guidelines with County to ascertain long term use/re-use of the Courthouse and potential county operations in the vicinity.

DD8. Institute Review Boards

DD8.1.Institute a design review board to oversee the development process.

DD8.2.Organize a City Beautification program to help maintain quality of community and recognize opportunities for enhancing aesthetic quality.

DD8.3.Institute a Tree Board to oversee an Urban Tree Renewal Program.



Existing Building Downtown on Madison Pike (KY 17)

**DD9. Pedestrian-Oriented Vision**

With the neighborhood-oriented retail developments, every effort should be given towards development with walkable strategies in mind for sustainable solutions.

DD9.1. Incorporate traffic calming design elements to increase safety and encourage pedestrian use. Use of pavers for pedestrian crossing lanes and extended curb at intersections are encouraged as a design element.

DD9.2. Provide for outdoor seating and pedestrian gathering spaces.

DD9.3. Promote walkable strategies through creation of continuous facades which will render a safe walkable feeling for pedestrians.

DD9.4. Provide safe well-lit environment in a pedestrian scale. The goal of the general lighting should be to achieve uniformity of light coverage, type and color of lighting, location, fixture style, appropriate lighting levels, the correct height and angles of lights.

DD9.5. Establish a Pedestrian and Bicycle Plans and modify the current Kenton County Pedestrian and Bicycle Plan to show the connectivity network and recommend associated design elements.



**Pedestrian Oriented Downtown**

**Downtown District Transportation Recommendations**

In conjunction with the recommendations of the land use plan, the primary recommendations for the downtown district are intended to provide a more cohesive sense of place and provide improved accommodation for pedestrians as well as provide for off-street parking in a more formal arrangement. It is not anticipated that additional roadway capacity will be required in the downtown district beyond that discussed below.

This area is targeted for historic preservation and infill mixed use development. There is limited right of way to expand the current roadway cross section in the downtown area. As noted in the Urban Audit the Kenton County Unscheduled needs list includes a project to create a three lane cross section with curbs and gutters along Madison Pike (KY 17) from Independence Station Road to Locust Lane. The Comprehensive Plan Update 2006-2026: An Area-Wide Vision for Kenton County identifies Madison Pike (KY 17) from the North Gateway Area to the South Gateway Area as a 'congestion management area'. This designation has been used to identify an area where widening of a roadway to manage additional traffic may not be the best solution given existing development patterns and costs. Widening in the Downtown District would endanger the existing character of the district.

Traffic flow along Madison Pike (KY 17) is anticipated to decrease with the opening of “New” KY 17 and the potential negative impact of widening to three lanes per the project currently identified on the unscheduled needs list for Kenton County. Hence this plan recommends that the City investigate alternative solutions and that this project be removed from the unscheduled needs list.

As previously noted, McCullum Pike (KY 2045) is likely to experience some growth in traffic volumes as it becomes a gateway from “New” KY 17 to Madison Pike (KY 17). A portion of McCullum Pike was realigned and modified during the construction of “New” KY 17. From the terminus of this reconstruction west to Madison Pike (KY 17) this corridor contains a land development pattern similar to Madison Pike (KY 17) that constrains widening if the City desires to maintain the current character. Land use recommendations for this area portray future development conducive to generally maintaining this current type of land use form as new development occurs. This plan recommends that this route be modified only slightly. Modification could include minor widening to increase existing lane widths, improve geometry and provide for curb, gutter, sidewalks and bicycle facilities to accommodate non-motorized traffic. It is not recommended that additional travel lanes or a continuous center turn lane be added in the vicinity of the Downtown District.

The existing signalized intersection at McCullum and Madison Pike (KY 17) is currently operating at an acceptable level of service. This intersection currently has a single lane on all approaches with no turn lanes. Significant impacts would be associated with any major improvements capable of increasing capacity at the intersection as the intersection is abutted by buildings close to the right of way on the north and west sides of the intersection. Therefore, primary gateways to the downtown area should be maintained and concentrated at the north and south gateways with McCullum Pike designed to serve local traffic. It is for this reason that widening of McCullum Pike is not recommended in the vicinity of the Downtown District.

Existing sidewalks in the downtown district area are in fair to poor condition and are recommended for replacement to bring uniformity to the sidewalk width, curb height, and patterns. The design of new sidewalks should be in accordance with the applicable regulations and design standards. As the downtown area is envisioned as a pedestrian centered activity area the use of wider sidewalks would provide adequate mobility for pedestrians and present a priority on pedestrian movements in the area. The use of wider sidewalks may also be a design that would attract and accommodate other activities within the streetscape. Sidewalk reconstruction would be done in coordination with the implementation of other streetscape elements recommended including but not limited to street trees, lighting, outdoor seating and wayfinding.

Existing and future parking is a key component of development in the Downtown District. There should be adequate parking available, but not excessive so that sufficient area is maintained for public open spaces and new building development.

It is recommended that parking entrances be consolidated where feasible and that off-street parking be provided behind existing or proposed structures. No formal analysis of existing off-street parking or forecast parking needs has been conducted. On street parking fronting the east curb of Madison Pike (KY 17) and the south Curb of McCullum in front of the Kenton County Courthouse should be

reconstructed with formal permanent markings and signage. The quantity of parking in the area will be dependent on the future intensity of use of the Courthouse and surrounding commercial areas.

A review of the applicable section of the current zoning ordinance is recommended to specifically encourage the use of collective or shared parking arrangements and to potentially reduce ratio based prescriptive off-street parking requirements for individual parcels within the Downtown District. Development of off street parking in the downtown district could be undertaken by the City and/or County to facilitate higher density pedestrian scaled commercial infill development.

#### 5.4.2 South Gateway Area

The south gateway is becoming a one stop destination offering convenient amenities to the residents of Independence. The south gateway should offer multi family housing for those who need and/or want to be close to amenities such as young professionals, low to moderate income, and senior citizens. Streetscape enhancements and buildings brought closer to the road can promote a better pedestrian scale. Outside of the commercial node this area should develop into a mixed use and higher density of housing character thus increasing Independence’s tax base and satisfying pedestrians and motorists while connecting to the rest of the city.



**South Gateway Commercial Area**

#### Recommendations

- SG1. Encourage variety of land uses for sustainability  
This area is recommended to develop as the major commercial node of Independence and should develop at higher commercial density than existing development. It should also have the variation in land uses at the edges of the commercial areas predominantly mixed use and higher density housing. The mixed use will help sustain of the businesses and also to buffer variable densities of land uses.
  - SG1.1. Modify existing zoning and subdivision regulations for this area according to the future land use concept.
  - SG1.2. Encourage mixed use and higher density residential buffer zone from single family residential growth.
  - SG1.3. Encourage strategic collaboration with YMCA and/or organizations and the City for development of potential site for recreational use.
- SG2. Establish design and development guidelines  
To improve the character of the area and overall quality of life of the residents, guidelines of development is of prime importance in this area.

- SG2.1. Establish development guidelines which relates to location, setback, height, size, color, landscaping, parking requirements. The small scale commercial areas i.e. the outlots should have lesser setback from the main access street along with proper landscape requirements thus providing for a scale of development appropriate to the image of the City. Parking areas should be designed with buffers using landscaped islands and trees.
- SG2.2. Establish streetscape design standards for the area. Pedestrian elements such as benches, trash cans, newspaper stands bike racks etc. should be included.
- SG2.3. Create flexible and incentive/bonus based design and development standards.
- SG2.4. Establish regulations to create buffer areas such as mixed use and higher density residential between single family residential and commercial uses.

SG3. Pedestrian-oriented approach which promotes walkable strategies

- SG3.1. Establish a pedestrian plan for the area and modify the current Kenton County Pedestrian Plan to show the connectivity network and recommend associated design elements.
- SG3.2. Incorporate design elements for traffic calming design and activities such as use of pavers etc.
- SG3.3. Establish a bicycle plan for this area and incorporate the recommendations into Kenton County bicycle plan.
- SG3.4. Develop a trails program for connection of recreational spaces to this area.
- SG3.5. Promote connection to the Simon Kenton High School and Kenton Elementary School with sidewalks and bicycle facilities.



**Pedestrian-Oriented Design**

SG4. Develop comprehensive parking plan

Most often commercial areas tend to develop in a way where the development ends up creating poorly designed parking spaces to comply with the requirements of the local zoning codes. This area has experienced a high number of vehicular accidents in off street parking lots. Guidelines should be developed for commercial areas wherein parking spaces are buffered and landscaped.

- SG4.1. Provide incentives for shared parking between adjacent commercial uses. This helps in alleviating the problem of underutilized parking spaces in a commercial area.
- SG4.2. Use landscaping treatments to create visual buffer and develop guidelines for incorporation of landscape islands and trees in existing and new parking lots. Design of light fixtures should be attentive to the scale of development and downward facing to avoid glare into adjoining areas.
- SG4.3. Incorporate provisions for bicycle parking.

**SG5. Develop Brand Identity and Wayfinding**

This promotes the character of the area as it relates to proper signage for easier access and wayfinding. This instills a sense of community pride and creates a lasting impression of the character of the community.

SG5.1. Develop comprehensive wayfinding and branding program for South Gateway Area through physical improvements and signage standards.

SG5.2. Engage professionals to develop a wayfinding and branding program.

SG5.3. Implement the recommendations of wayfinding and branding program through revisions in sign and zoning ordinances.

**SG6. Further develop identity for South Gateway area through innovative marketing strategies**

SG6.1. Promote new retail businesses and encourage expansion of existing ones with marketing strategy to support the needs as reflected by the market study conducted by GEM. Some effective ways of marketing are:

- + Letter of introduction including compelling reasons why the district makes economic sense for a particular store.
- + General information and photos of the community highlighting its assets.
- + Market position as prepared by GEM and vision statements.
- + Wish list of new businesses supported by market demand and supply data as prepared by GEM.
- + New developments demonstrating investment in the South Gateway Area.
- + Information on past openings and closings of businesses.
- + Trade area geographic definition and demographic and lifestyle data.
- + Trade area economic data including actual and potential sales data (including available sales area).
- + Nonresident consumer data (including daytime population and tourism visitation).
- + Descriptions of target market segments specific for Independence.
- + Significant employers and institutions.
- + Vehicle and pedestrian traffic volume.
- + Mix of existing retail, service, dining, housing, office and lodging in the district and adjoining areas.
- + Press coverage and testimonials highlighting success stories.
- + Summary of incentives and other business assistance available in the business district.

SG6.2. Develop a Business Council to overview the management and development of businesses.



**Commercial District Identity**



- SG6.3. Pursue an aggressive retention and expansion of existing stores and new store development policy. Prepare an incentive based system that can include the following:
- + Technical assistance including market and feasibility analysis (market study prepared by GEM), business plan development, governmental regulations, advertising and physical design. A Business District Manager should be responsible for managing the tenanting opportunities appropriate for the City.
  - + Negotiation and leasing of space if the prospect is not working with a broker not familiar with the area.
  - + Centralized retail management in which business district organization gains the right to lease property from owners and place businesses in locations prescribed by an overall commercial center plan.
  - + Financing of building improvements, facades, displays, fixtures, inventory and start-up costs including a low-interest loan pool.
  - + Counseling with local financial institutions and assistance in completing loan applications.
  - + Financing options and incentives appealing to developers such as low-interest loan, TIF or CDBG funding programs.
  - + District wide image and marketing programs and advertising and promotion assistance for individual firms.
  - + Private development partnerships made up of local investors who might develop, own and operate a needed business.
  - + Business incubator(s) to help establish new businesses at a reasonable cost and provide them with space and common services.
- SG6.4. Organize a City Beautification program to help maintain quality of community and recognize opportunities for enhancing aesthetic quality.
- SG6.5. Institute a Tree Board to oversee an Urban Tree Renewal Program. Trees with green spaces help to soften the image of the extensive paved areas and are also recommended for environmental reasons including quality of runoff.
- SG6.6. Establish dialogue with TANK authorities to add more trips to this area, improve the transit stop and add targeted marketing campaign towards potential riders in the area.
- SG7. Economic development initiatives should be undertaken for marketing, tenanting strategies and assist in implementation of the recommended policies.
- SG7.1. Develop a comprehensive plan for business recruitment and retention.
- SG7.2. Establish a Tax Increment Financing (TIF) District.
- TIF is a tool to use future gains in taxes to finance the current improvements that will create those gains. When a public project such as a road, school, or hazardous waste cleanup is carried out, there is an increase in the value of surrounding real estate, and often new investment (new or rehabilitated buildings, for example). This increased site value and investment creates more taxable property, which increases tax revenues. The increased tax revenues are the "tax increment." Tax Increment Financing dedicates that increased revenue to finance debt issued to pay for public improvement projects (also refer "financing section").

- SG7.3. Pursue the applicable funding mechanisms as mentioned in the financing section.
- SG7.4. Provide incentives for business recruitment.
- SG7.5. Provide development incentives for mixed use, commercial and high density residential.
- SG7.6. Develop marketing package and market the potential of the area to investors, developers and real estate groups.
- SG7.7. Employ a City Manager to oversee implementation process, maintenance of existing buildings and recruitment of new businesses. The City Manager will also assist the City Council in making informed decisions by reviewing any proposed development application.

### South Gateway Area Transportation Recommendations

The South Gateway Area currently experiences the highest traffic volumes in the study area and is anticipated to continue to do so into the future. This plan identifies this area for the largest concentration of commercial land uses within the study area. Additionally, it is the location of major education facilities including Simon Kenton High School and Kenton Elementary School.

The intersection of Shaw Rd/Harris Pike (KY 536)/Madison Pike (KY 17) and "New" KY 17 is being reconstructed as part of the construction of "New" KY 17 and the reconstruction of KY 536 by the Kentucky Transportation Cabinet. KY 536 is being reconstructed from I-75 to the AA Highway (KY 9) in Campbell County over the next 10 to 20 years and will serve as the primary east-west roadway south of I-275. KY 536 will be widened from its current two lane cross-section to a multi-lane divided section with provisions for pedestrian and bicycle transportation. The final geometric details of KY 536 remain to be determined as it proceeds into successive stages of design. As noted previously, it is important that the City begin coordination with the Kentucky Transportation Cabinet to insure that the most efficient design is planned in accord with anticipated land uses within this area.

To the extent possible the roadway reconstruction planned for this area should incorporate wayfinding, street tree plantings and appropriate gateway elements. The widening of KY 536 within the study area will provide a challenge to pedestrians. Incorporation of islands for pedestrian refuge and adequate pedestrian travel time in the intersection signal phasing are recommended.

Based on the recent vehicular accident data (2004-2006), over 100 accidents occurred within the vicinity of Declaration Drive within the Independence Towne Center. It is recommended that a study be undertaken to evaluate the potential to improve internal vehicular circulation. This may result in recommendations for physical channelization of traffic flow, (curbs, islands, etc), improved lighting, signage and pavement markings, refer to SG4 for recommendations to develop a comprehensive parking plan.

Surface parking and pedestrian linkages should be accessible among adjoining developments such that internal vehicular and pedestrian circulation can be accommodated without use of KY 17 and KY 536 or Madison Pike (KY 17) to the extent feasible. Direct access to "New" KY 17 should be discouraged in favor of access from Centennial Boulevard and existing Madison Pike (KY 17).

### 5.4.3 North Gateway Area

The north gateway area is the main entrance into Independence and is also the location of the Summit View Elementary and Middle School. This area has a limited number of commercial uses and is the location of the Sterling Staggs Park. Further commercial uses should be restricted in this area and connectivity of the park system through trails and neighborhood connections through sidewalks is encouraged. A unified theme of branding should be developed for this area which will create a lasting impression of image of Independence.



**North Gateway Area**

#### Recommendations

##### NG1. Establish design and development guidelines

- NG1.1. Establish development guidelines which relates to location, setback, height, size, color, landscaping, parking requirements. This will render a unified image of the district that will attribute to the quality of life of the residents.
- NG1.2. Establish streetscape design standards for the area that includes auto lanes, pedestrian sidewalks, pedestrian amenities etc.
- NG1.3. Create flexible and incentive/bonus based design and development standards.
- NG1.4. Modify zoning and subdivision regulations to reflect the land use concept.
- NG1.5. Promote clustering techniques of residential developments. Refer to the Conservation Development Model for detailed information.
- NG1.6. Provide guidelines to preserve scenic view corridors. The viewshed analysis map will assist in preserving the areas during the physical design phase of development.

##### NG2. Pedestrian-Oriented Approach

- NG2.1. Establish a pedestrian plan for the area and modify the current Kenton County Pedestrian plan accordingly.
- NG2.2. Develop sidewalks along roads to connect to destinations. Although many roads including Madison Pike (KY 17) currently has sidewalks, many local streets need the pedestrian connections to surrounding areas to comply with the walkable community vision of the City.
- NG2.3. Incorporate design elements for traffic calming. Use of pavers for pedestrian crossing lanes and extended curb at intersections are encouraged as design element.
- NG2.4. Establish a bicycle plan for this area and incorporate the recommendations into Kenton County Bicycle Plan.

NG2.5. Develop a trails program for connection of recreational spaces, specifically to Sterling Staggs Park.

NG2.6. Promote connection to the Summit View Elementary School with sidewalks and bicycle facilities.

### NG3. Develop Brand Identity and Wayfinding

NG3.1. Develop comprehensive wayfinding and branding program for North Gateway Area.

NG3.2. Engage professionals to develop the wayfinding and branding program.

NG3.3. Implement the recommendations of wayfinding and branding program through revisions in sign and zoning ordinances.

### NG4. Enhance the Gateway to Independence

NG4.1. Organize a City Beautification program to help maintain quality of community and recognize opportunities for enhancing aesthetic quality.

NG4.2. Institute a Tree Board to oversee an Urban Tree Renewal Program. This should be encouraged to enhance the image of the City mainly at the entrance gateway.

NG4.3. Establish guidelines for creation of a “rural” gateway to Independence.

NG4.4. Establish dialogue with Transit Authority of Northern Kentucky (TANK) to extend transit service to the study area specifically to intersection of McCullum Pike and “New” KY17 area in addition to its existing route that includes other nodal areas and downtown. More trips during peak hours will help offset congestion in roadways.



**TANK Bus**

### NG5. Economic development initiatives

NG5.1. Provide development incentives for residential conservation development in the area and for limited commercial use.

NG5.2. Pursue applicable funding mechanisms (Refer to the financing programs section).

NG5.3. Employ a City Manager to oversee implementation process, maintenance of existing buildings and assisting the City Council in making informed decisions.

According to Kenton County Jail Site facts ([http://www.kentoncounty.org/kenton\\_county\\_jail\\_site\\_facts/index.html](http://www.kentoncounty.org/kenton_county_jail_site_facts/index.html)) there is a possibility of relocation of the Kenton County Jail to a 25+ acre site near the the intersection of Pelly Road and “New” KY17. If the jail is relocated to this site the following are the recommendations for site development:

- + As it is not a destination-oriented use, the jail-house building should be located as far back as feasible depending on the site constraints.

- + The site should be screened with heavy tree buffers.
- + The entrance drive should be tastefully designed to be in context with the surroundings.
- + Any guard house should also be located as far back as possible. The site frontage should be screened with either tree buffers or landscaped mounds or other ways of aesthetically pleasing environment.
- + Development guidelines should be formulated for the site to address building pad location, buffering and screening from the access road and adjoining properties, access drives, effective ways of screening noise pollution etc.

The recommended land use plan suggests that the area develop as a residential area in a conservation subdivision model. If the County jail is not located in this site, then the site should be a part of the overall development plan and continue to be a part of the residential development. Alternatively, opportunity for development as a nature preserve should be explored considering the physical features of the site. In that case the City of Independence Parks and Recreation department should explore possible ways to develop the park and connecting it with other parks in the area.

#### North Gateway Area Transportation Recommendations

This area currently serves as the primary gateway to the study area from the North. With the opening of the “New” KY 17 it is likely that traffic volumes on Madison Pike (KY 17) will decrease somewhat. It is not envisioned that any significant improvement will be required to the street network in this area in order to accommodate existing or future traffic. As noted previously, this area has been identified in the *Comprehensive Plan Update 2006-2026: An Area-Wide Vision for Kenton County* as a ‘congestion management area’.

The City of Independence has funded construction of a sidewalk on the east side of Madison Pike (KY 17) linking this area with the downtown district to the south. However the older residential streets within the area are lacking sidewalks. As a result, it is important that sidewalk and/or shared use path connections from surrounding residential areas within the North Gateway Area to facilities such as Sterling Staggs Park, Summit View School, the Post Office and commercial land uses be established. Any improvements should also include wayfinding/gateway elements as called for in the land use recommendations. Refer to NG2 for additional recommendations.

#### 5.4.4 McCullum Pike and “New” KY 17 Development Area

As a gateway into the downtown, the McCullum Pike and “New” KY 17 area boasts key opportunities to draw people into Independence. Development should respect the surrounding context with regards to location, critical resource features, pedestrian accessibility, buffer between variety of uses and limited access highway. Connectivity of this area with downtown Independence and adjacent residential areas is of prime importance for long term sustainability.

### Recommendations

MC1. Encourage variety of land uses for sustainability

MC1.1. Modify existing zoning and subdivision regulations for this area according to the future land use concept.

MC1.2. Promote mixed use development at the intersection of McCullum Pike and "New" KY 17 and limit expansion of development.

MC1.3. Encourage a corridor of mixed use as an overlay along McCullum Pike from "New" KY 17 towards downtown. The underlying use shall be higher density residential in a conservation subdivision model. If mixed use development occurs, it should happen in a cluster form with aggregate land area of at least two plus acres. Such development should have guidelines for a fair share of residential, small-scale commercial and parking requirements. The scale of the commercial/retail development should be neighborhood oriented businesses with homes/apartments/professional office spaces on the upper floors. The height of the buildings should be compatible with the surrounding structures.

MC1.4. Encourage higher density residential (multi-family) buffer zone from single family residential growth.

MC1.5. Promote farmland conservation of White Farm through dialogue with the Agricultural Extension, University of Kentucky, and other organizations to provide educational outreach for innovative farming techniques. Alternatively, if residential development occurs, it should be designed in the conservation subdivision model by clustering of home sites and preserving the critical natural resources.

MC2. Establish design and development guidelines

MC2.1. Establish development guidelines which relates to location, setback, height, size, color, landscaping, parking requirements.

MC2.2. Establish standards and to create housing for elderly and for young professionals.

MC2.3. Establish guidelines for creation of mixed use.

MC2.4. Create guidelines for phasing of mixed use development in this area.

MC2.5. Establish streetscape design standards for the area that includes vehicular lanes, pedestrian sidewalks, bicycle facilities, pedestrian amenities etc.

MC2.6. Create flexible and incentive/bonus based design and development standards.



**McCullum Pike and "New" KY 17 Area**

- MC2.7. Promote clustering techniques of residential developments through preservation of critical natural resources (Refer to the Conservation Development Model for further information). Residential development should be of higher density to comply with the vision of additional growth within the Madion Pike and "New" KY17 corridor.
- MC2.8. Provide guidelines to preserve scenic view corridors. The viewshed analysis map (refer exhibit EC-8 and EC-9) will assist in preserving the areas during the physical design phase of development.
- MC2.9. Establish regulations to create buffer areas between residential and commercial uses.
- MC3. Develop comprehensive parking plan for mixed use and multi-family housing
  - MC3.1. Provide incentives for shared parking.
  - MC3.2. Use landscaping treatments to create visual buffer.
  - MC3.3. Develop guidelines to avoid creation of large parking lots in lieu of small pockets of off-street parking in the higher density areas.
- MC4. Pedestrian-Oriented Approach
  - MC4.1. Establish a pedestrian plan for the area and modify the current Kenton County Pedestrian plan accordingly.
  - MC4.2. Incorporate design elements for traffic calming design and activities.
  - MC4.3. Establish a bicycle plan for this area and incorporate the recommendations into Kenton County Bicycle Plan.
  - MC4.4. Develop a trails program for connection of open spaces in this area.
- MC5. Develop Brand Identity and Wayfinding
  - MC5.1. Develop comprehensive wayfinding and branding program for North Gateway Area.
  - MC5.2. Engage professionals to develop the wayfinding and branding program.
  - MC5.3. Implement the recommendations of wayfinding and branding program through revisions in sign and zoning ordinances.
- MC6. Enhance this area as gateway to Historic Downtown
  - MC6.1. Promote retail businesses and housing stock to support the needs as reflected by the Market Study conducted by GEM.
  - MC6.2. Develop a Business Council to overview the management and development of businesses.
  - MC6.3. Organize a City Beautification program to help maintain quality of community and recognize opportunities for enhancing aesthetic quality.
  - MC6.4. Institute a Tree Board to oversee an Urban Tree Renewal Program.
  - MC6.5. Establish dialogue with Transit Authority of Northern Kentucky (TANK) to expand existing service to this area and add transit stops as development proceeds and demand develops.

## MC7. Economic Development Initiatives

- MC7.1. Pursue the applicable funding mechanisms as explained in the financing section.
- MC7.2. Provide incentives for development for businesses and higher density residential.
- MC7.3. Provide development incentives for mixed use and high density residential.
- MC7.4. Identify key tenanting opportunities.
- MC7.5. Develop marketing package and market the potential of the area to investors, developers and real estate groups.
- MC7.6. Employ a City Manager to oversee implementation process, maintenance of existing buildings and recruitment of new businesses. The City Manager will also assist the City Council in making informed decisions by reviewing any proposed development application.

### McCullum Pike And “New” KY17 Area Transportation Recommendations

This area will likely experience significant change from its current land use in the future. The opening of the “New” KY 17 will allow McCullum Pike (KY 2045) to function as a connection to the Downtown District and surrounding residential areas. McCullum Pike has been reconstructed and partially relocated in the vicinity of “New” KY 17. There are currently no sidewalks along McCullum. As mentioned previously, McCullum Pike from this new construction into the Downtown area should only be modified slightly, maintaining its existing capacity as a collector to accommodate local traffic.

This area is envisioned to develop with balance of mixed use commercial and surrounding high density residential development. At this time there is no secondary roadway network to service and link these developments. Vehicular access to this development should not be provided directly from “New” KY 17. Access to McCullum (KY 2045) should be controlled to discourage multiple curb cuts. Vehicular access should be provided through a secondary road network that also includes pedestrian accommodations to allow for community scaled pedestrian oriented development. Surface parking should be distributed in small to moderately sized lots located to the rear of commercial and residential structures as feasible.

All new transportation facilities would incorporate wayfinding, street trees and urban design elements fostering a sense of community identity and to reinforce the area’s gateway status. These details should be incorporated into the infrastructure serving proposed developments in the area and be capable of being phased over time to result in a cohesive environment as the area matures.

## 5.5 Specific Transportation Recommendations and Roadway Hierarchy

### 5.5.1 Public Transit

Public Transit service to the study area is provided by the Transit Authority of Northern Kentucky (TANK). TANK operates an express fixed route bus service (Route 30X) between Independence and its Covington Transit Center and Cincinnati’s central business district. It operates on Madison Pike (KY 17) and portions of Harris Pike (KY 536) and Taylor Mill Road (KY 16). Park and Ride lots served by the route are located near the intersection of Hands Pike and KY 17 north of the Study Area as well in the Independence Towne Center, in the South Gateway Area.



While the use of public transit among residents is modest, the goals of the land use plan are to provide accommodation for alternative modes of transportation. Improved accommodation of public transit is part of this strategy. New development, particularly non-residential development, should provide for access to TANK. Projected population growth within the area will be a catalyst for additional transit service and accommodations should be provided as new development occurs. Stops should be relatively level and ideally would include paved areas, shelter, seating and adequate lighting. Wayfinding, signage and other streetscape elements of the surrounding areas should include bus stops as needed. Recommended improved transit stops are the one near the north gateway area on Madison Pike (KY 17), one at the downtown area preferable on Madison Pike (KY 17), one on Madison Pike (KY 17) near the intersection with Harris Pike/Shaw Road and a new stop on McCullum Pike near the intersection with “New” KY 17. Also a park n’ ride facility should be provided within the study area near one of the transit stops to give access to commuters from outside of the recommended route to the bus transit.

### 5.5.2 Bicycle Facilities

The following is taken from the Kentucky Transportation Cabinet’s Policy on Bicycle and Pedestrian Travel Policy July 2002.

The Commonwealth of Kentucky considers bicycles, by statute, to be legal vehicles and as such are permitted on all roadways within the state, except on those where they are specifically prohibited (e.g., parkways, interstate highways). Bicycles, unlike pedestrian transportation, can safely share the roadways with motor vehicles when appropriate consideration is made during the design and construction of new or reconstructed roadways. Bicycle traffic may be expected on all roadways except interstate highways and other fully controlled access highways, but each location merits a different type of accommodation.



The Kenton County Transportation Plan has designated KY 536 and “New” KY 17 as primary bikeways as well as McCullum Pike/Independence Road (KY 2045) as secondary bikeways within the study area. There are no stand alone designated bike paths or shared use trails within the study area. The portion of “New” KY 17 currently under construction between Pelly Road and KY 536 does include a shoulder bikeway for bicyclists. Additionally, sidewalks will be constructed on both sides of the road south of KY 536 to Nicholson.

Opportunities to create dedicated facilities for bicyclists are limited with the study area due to the confined width of the existing roadway cross sections. On street bike lanes may be feasible along Madison Pike (KY 17), but minor widening and/or restriping would likely be necessary. The reconstruction of KY 536 will provide opportunities for inclusion of dedicated bike lanes. Several of the older arterial streets within the study area present challenges to bicyclist due to the lack of paved shoulders, open drainage ditches and steep side slopes.

Where new roadway construction is undertaken for both publicly dedicated streets as well as private commercial or residential developments, accommodations to assist bicyclists should be included and can include a range of measures from signage, pavement markings, bicycle parking/lockers as well as drainage grates designed to prevent potential entrapment of bicycle wheels. Signage and pavement markings for all bicycle facilities should be in accordance with the applicable sections of the current Manual on Uniform Traffic Control Devices.



It is recommended that a study of the existing street network be undertaken to evaluate the potential for designated bike routes linking community institutions, recreational facilities and residential areas. These designated bike routes should be signed accordingly.

The land use recommendations include provisions for the creation of a separate network of public shared use trails or paths linking residential areas, conservation development reserved areas and recreational facilities. Such paths/trails if developed could also potentially accommodate bicyclist and pedestrians if properly maintained, signed and providing adequate width. The development of this network will require a long term commitment on the part of the City, residents, property owners and users. Such a system could be owned and maintained by the City with fee simple ownership, easements, lease or other joint agreements with property owners. The costs associated with ongoing maintenance of the network and its integration into future developments will require additional study. The facilities included in the trail/path network should be designed in accordance with the proposed connectivity network.

### 5.5.3 Access Management

In general there are no stand alone access management controls on the local street network aside from the Kenton County Subdivision Regulations. Access to state maintained roads are by permit with the exception of the "New" KY 17 which is to be partially controlled access highway. "Partially-controlled access" refers to highways that give preference to through traffic. However, access to selected public roads and streets may be provided and there may be some highway at grade intersections and private driveway connections as shown on the Kentucky Department of Highways' plans.

The development of effective access management regulations and their application to the existing arterials and collectors in the area with specific focus on "New" KY 17 between Pelly Road and KY 536 as well as KY 536 within the study area is an important determinant of the future level of service, safety, and operation of these facilities. Access points to these routes should be controlled and minimized to the extent possible. It is further suggested that the City consider, as an extension of this study, the preparation of conceptual plans for access to land areas where development/redevelopment is anticipated to occur. The intent of this type of study would be to have a strategy available to work with existing and future land owners/developers to create effective access to all properties.

### Kenton Station Road and Independence Road (KY 2045)

Based on analysis of recent vehicular accidents Kenton Station Road and Independence Road (KY 2045) within the study area have higher than average accident rates. Both roads include segments which do not meet current standards for roadway geometry and roadside conditions. In the near term an evaluation of the need for guardrails or other roadside improvements is recommended. In the long term it is recommended that both roadways be reconstructed to improve the existing geometry and roadside conditions. The capacity of the intersection with Madison Pike (KY 17) for both facilities should be evaluated in the future as residential development to the west continues.

#### 5.5.4 Roadway Hierarchy

Based on the connectivity network, a hierarchy of road systems have been generated with specific design guidelines and recommended street cross-sections. Roadways serve a variety of functions, including but not limited to the provision of direct access to properties, pedestrian and bicycle paths, bus routes and in some instances catering for through traffic. A roadway hierarchy is a means of defining each roadway in terms of its function such that appropriate objectives for that roadway can be set and appropriate design criteria can be implemented. These objectives and design criteria are aimed at achieving an efficient road system where conflicts between roadway and the adjacent land uses are minimized.

In general the road way system within the study area should be designed to efficiently move vehicular traffic, bikes and pedestrians and provide accommodations for bus transit. New streets should be so designed to interconnect into a road grid system and careful consideration should be given to minimize roads ending in a cul-de-sac.

The hierarchy of the roads is as follows:

- + Arterial Character
- + Rural Road Character
- + Historic Downtown Roadway Character
- + Commercial/Retail Character

These roadway characteristics along with recommendations for specific sections will assist in developing a unified theme for each district/neighborhood within the study area. The City should plan for and maintain a roadway network that links residents to their destinations within and beyond the boundaries of the study area in a safe and efficient manner and should encourage alternative modes of transportation.

#### Arterial Character

This category of roadway hierarchy includes roads which provide regional connection and continuity of the road system through the study area. The "New" KY17 is included under this hierarchy as it will provide north-south thoroughfare connecting the study area with other areas within the City, adjoining municipalities and the region. Design character of this type of road should include channelized intersections and limited access to adjoining land uses except at nodes such as the north gateway area near the intersection with Pelly Road, intersection at McCullum Pike and south gateway area near the intersection of KY 536. Curb cuts, crossings

and stops should be minimal to help continuous flow of traffic. The roadway as it exists now is a five lane cross-section with a paved center median. Efforts should be made to create a landscaped median, if possible that will provide character and will create a “sense of place” to the study area. Bicycle lanes can be provided which may be integrated with shoulder design. The following graphic illustrates the current roadway character with a recommended cross-section.



**Arterial Character**

While “New” KY 17 is meant to be a arterial, pedestrian connections between properties east and west of the roadway should be provided at signalized intersection such as at the intersection with Mc Cullum Pike and Harris Pike. At these key locations, the median on “New” KY 17 will provide a refuge for pedestrian attempting to cross the divided highway. Hence careful consideration should be given to the design of crosswalks and pedestrian cross-signals at these intersections.

#### Rural Road Character

This character of roadway hierarchy is recommended for most local streets. Local streets guide traffic from homes, offices and businesses into collector streets which in turn provide access to major arterial roads for faster access to destinations. Rural roads should be designed with optional parking on one side of the street, if

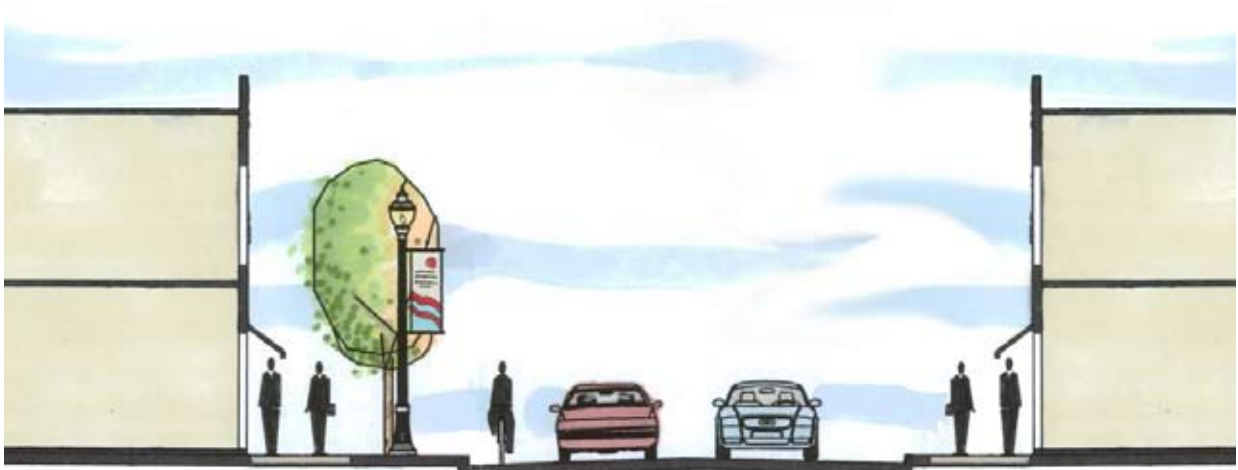


**Rural Road Character**

the right-of-way permits. Efforts should be made to connect this network in a pattern so as to minimize roads ending in a cul-de-sac. Sidewalk connectivity should be provided in this type of roadway within the study area. McMillan Drive, Roselawn Drive, Carrie Drive etc, reflects the character of these kinds of roads.

### Historic Downtown Roadway Character

This character includes Madison Pike (KY 17) and McCullum Pike that connect historic downtown to the rest of the City of Independence. On Madison Pike (KY 17) this character is evident starting from Independence Station Road to the north to intersection of Locust Lane to the south. Streetscape profile should reflect pedestrian friendly design with sidewalks and various amenities such as benches, trashcans, lighting fixtures, planters, news paper kiosks and so on. Streets should be tree-lined to render an aesthetic value to the corridor. Traffic calming activities such as bump-outs at intersections and use of brick pavers at pedestrian crossings should be part of the overall design character. Storm water management along this segment may include innovative practices or curb and gutter design. Bicycling activity is encouraged in this type of road. Building setbacks from the right-of-way should be minimized to create a continuous façade of building with store-front windows to create an engaged street character. Parking should be encouraged to be located at the rear of buildings and should be designed so as to cluster and provide for multiple uses.



**Historic Downtown Roadway Character**

### Commercial/Retail Character

This character corresponds to Madison Pike (KY 17) near the north and south gateway areas. McCullum Pike near the intersection of “New” KY17 also reflects this character. This character is attributable to collector streets which provide connectivity from local roads to major arterials. Although the setbacks of building facades might be more than that in the “historic downtown roadway character”, efforts should be made to minimize setbacks by locating parking lots at the rear of buildings away from the streets. Sidewalks should be

integrated into the roadway. Storm water management may include innovative practices or curb and gutter design. Specific sections of roadway like Madison Pike (KY 17) near Summit View Elementary School have the opportunity for a landscaped median. Pedestrian friendly design integrated with traffic calming measures is encouraged as mentioned in the “historic downtown roadway character”. The illustration reflects the recommended street cross-section for these types of roads.



**Commercial/Retail Character**

### 5.6 Financing Programs

The following financing programs are available through the Kentucky Cabinet for Economic Development that is applicable to implement the recommendations of the study.

For more information contact:

Kentucky Cabinet for Economic Development

Old Capitol Annex

300 West Broadway, Frankfort, KY 40601-1975

Ph: 502.564.7140; Fax: 502.564.3256; [www.thinkkentucky.com](http://www.thinkkentucky.com)

Specific information on these programs is available from:

Kentucky Heritage Council

300 Washington Street

Frankfort, KY 40601; e-mail: [scot.walters@kentucky.gov](mailto:scot.walters@kentucky.gov).

+ Renaissance on Main

Rewards communities that take steps to revitalize and maintain vibrant, economically sound development in downtown areas. Eligible cities to receive priority status when applying for funds through state government agencies.

+ Certified Historic Structures Income Tax Credit

Tax credit on income, license or franchise tax for financial institutions for the rehabilitation of a certified historic structure. The credit is 30% of the qualifying expenses for an owner-occupied residential property with a minimum investment of \$20,000, with the total credit not to exceed \$60,000. 20% tax credit is available for all other properties, requiring a minimum investment of \$20,000 or the adjusted basis, whichever is greater.

+ Insurance Coverage Affordability and Relief to Small Employers (ICARE)

Establishes a consumer-driven health plan for small businesses with 2-25 employees. Wages must be less than 300% of the federal poverty level wages and the employer must pay at least 50% of the premium.

+ Kentucky Economic Development Finance Authority (KEDFA)

Encourages economic development, business expansion and job creation by providing business loans to supplement other financing. Loans are below market rates and must be used to finance projects in agribusiness, tourism, industrial ventures or the service industry with retail project not of eligibility.

+ Small Business Direct Loans

Direct loan program specifically for high risk loans to small businesses with 50 or fewer employees. The maximum loan amount is \$100,000 and there must be at least one new full-time job created or maintained to be eligible.

Tax Increment Financing (TIF)

+ Local Revenue Only Development Areas

Available for facilities contributing to economic development as determined by the local government. Eligible costs may be covered by up to 100% of incremental property taxes with some exclusions.

+ Infrastructure Development Areas

Limited to a geographic area of at least 50 acres of undeveloped land or one acre for brownfield sites. Includes real estate acquisition and the construction or improvement of roads or facilities needed for improvements to the real estate including site preparation and utility extensions.

+ Project Specific Development Areas

Must be tied directly to a single project or investment resulting in a unique contribution to or preservation of economic vitality and quality of life of a region in the state that represents new economic activity in the state. Twenty-five percent (25%) of project revenues must originate outside of Kentucky and a minimum capital investment of \$10 million and 25 new full-time jobs must be created for Kentucky residents.

+ Kentucky Enterprise Zone Program (KEZP)

Funding is offered to bring new or renewed development to targeted economic development areas. State and local tax incentives are offered to businesses located in the enterprise zones.

The following financing programs are available through the Governor's Office for Local Development that is applicable to implement the recommendations of the study.

For more information contact:

Governor's Office for Local Development

1024 Capital Center Drive, Suite 340, Frankfort, KY 40601

Ph: 800.346.5606; Fax: 502.573.2939; [www.gold.ky.gov](http://www.gold.ky.gov)

+ Community Development Block Grants

Funds are allocated for a variety of developments including economic revitalization, housing, public facilities and public services.

+ Land and Water Conservation Fund

These funds may be used to acquire land for recreational development, construct new outdoor recreational facilities or the renovation of existing facilities.

+ Recreational Trails Programs

Funds may be used to acquire land for recreational trails and to develop and renovate trails for both motorized and non-motorized use.

+ Area Development Funds

Available to governmental agencies funds may be used infrastructure needs including building construction, property and major equipment purchase and water, gas, sewer, electric and solid waste management.

The following financing program is available through the Division of Conservation, Soil Conservation Districts of Kentucky that is applicable to implement the recommendations of the study.

For more information contact:

Division of Conservation, Soil Conservation Districts of Kentucky

375 Versailles Road, Frankfort, KY 40601

Phone: 502-573-3080; Fax: 502-573-1692; [www.conservation.ky.gov/programs/pace](http://www.conservation.ky.gov/programs/pace)

+ Purchase of Agricultural Conservation Easements (PACE)

Kentucky Division of Conservation provides soil survey, land use and Geographical Information System data to assist the PACE Board with the ranking of landowner applications to offer their land to be eased under the program. The chair of the Kentucky Soil and Water Conservation Commission serves as a member on the PACE Board. Likewise, local conservation districts provide assistance to landowners in making application to the program.



The following financing program is available through the Natural Resource Conservation Service, USDA that is applicable to implement the recommendations of the study.

For more information contact:

Natural Resource Conservation Service, United States Department of Agriculture  
www.nrcs.usda.gov/programs/farmland/2002/

- + Farm and Ranch Lands Protection Program

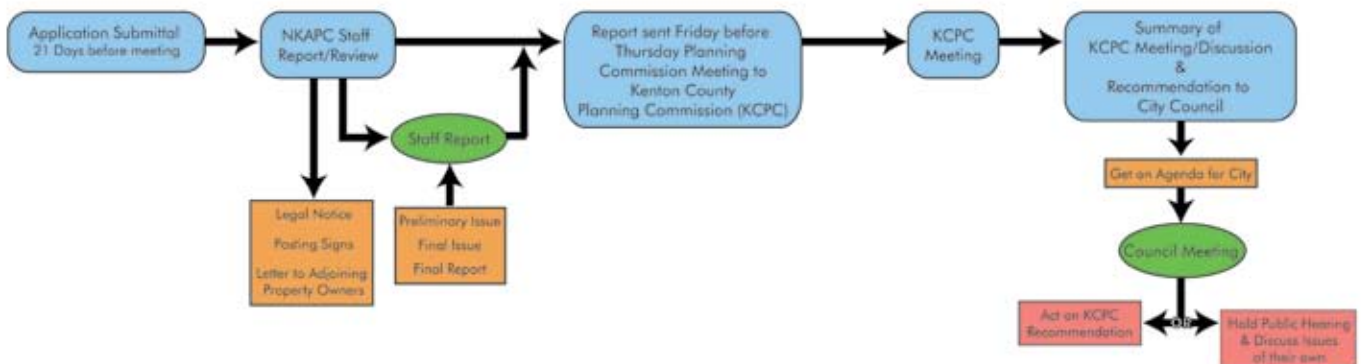
The Farm and Ranch Lands Protection Program (FRPP) is a voluntary program that helps farmers and ranchers keep their land in agriculture. The program provides matching funds to State, Tribal, or local governments and non-governmental organizations with existing farm and ranch land protection programs to purchase conservation easements.

### 5.7 Development Review Process

The development review process for future development, pertaining to zoning review, is important to efficiently implement the visions of this study. Appropriate review process should be carried out by experienced staff of various technical agencies. A thorough report of facts and findings should be presented, for each new development, to the decision making administrative commissions and councils to assist in making better informed decisions. The proposed developments in the study area should be evaluated in the light of the recommendations of this study and applicable plans and regulations. Overall effect of the development should be reviewed carefully with regards to physical design related, environmental, infrastructure and regional impacts.

The current development review process involves submittal of application followed by NKAPC review as shown in the attached graphic. The NKAPC staff is responsible for providing a staff report to Kenton County Planning Commission (KCPC) members after review of the development plan and application. The recommendation of the KCPC is forwarded to the City Council for making the final decision based on KCPC recommendations or through public hearing.

### Current Planning Application Process

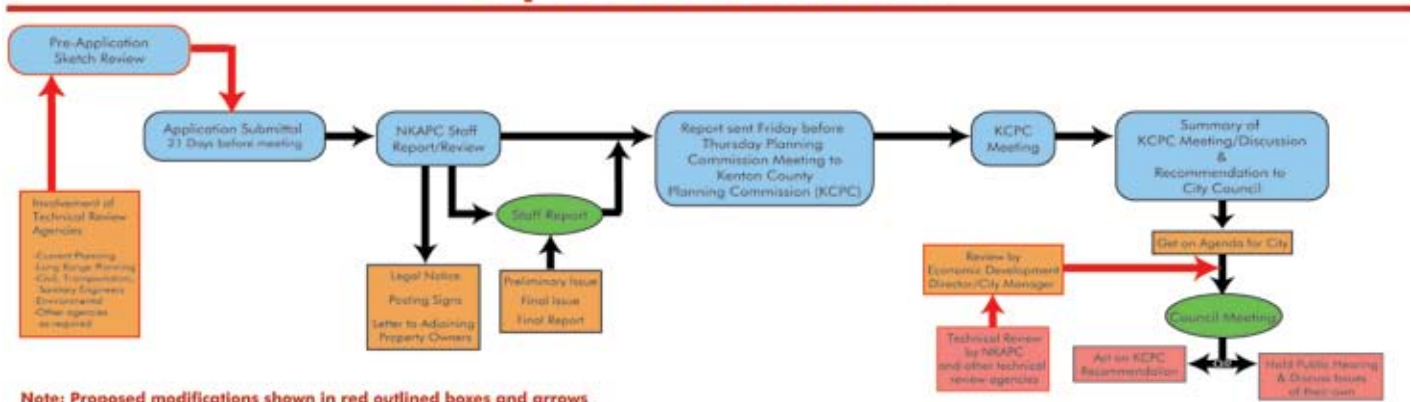


To assist the KCPC and City Council members make better informed decision, more in-depth review of an application is recommended. This can happen at the initiation of the application process through “Pre-Application Sketch Review” by appropriate technical review agencies including but not limited to current and long range planning department, civil, transportation and sanitary engineers, and environmental agencies. This step will be to ensure that the developer understands the requirements of application submittal for a thorough review.

It is also recommended to initiate dialog with the City officials, preferably the City Manager, in order for the City to understand the application in light of the rules/visions, recommendations and implementation policies of this study. This added step will pave the way for a more complete application submittal and following efficient review. Following the inputs from the different technical review agencies, the developer has to submit a comprehensive plan that will incorporate documents, maps, plans and other necessary information as per the review comments and/or suggestions by the technical review committee in the “pre-application sketch review” process. These information can range from thorough traffic analysis, comprehensive architectural guidelines according to the design and development regulations, environmental impacts, economic analysis like the need for a particular use and other requirements to help in the complete review of the development. This holistic approach towards development review will help reduce the review time after the application of the development is submitted for review by NKAPC staff and subsequently by the Kenton County Planning Commission and the City Council, as it will reduce the need for additional information. This additional information would otherwise have been provided during the application submittal per the review comments during the pre-application process.

It is also recommended for review by the appropriate NKAPC staff and City Manager prior to hearing by the City Council for better and thorough review. The current development review process and one with proposed additional review steps are shown in these charts. This is also enclosed in the exhibit section as C-11.

**Proposed Modifications**



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