



October 9, 2009

*(This is the tenth in a series of updates on zoning in Kenton County. The series is intended to brief city and county elected officials on issues being addressed by NKAPC in the **2020 Sourcebook**, a new model zoning ordinance for Kenton County's local jurisdictions. We hope you find it timely and thought provoking and encourage you to contact us using the link below if we can provide more information or answer any questions.)*

Provisions address concerns about “big box” stores

While “big box” retail establishments have become common, serving many shopping needs for local residents, they often prompt forceful opposition from the surrounding community. Arguments against them typically fall into two categories.

- Aesthetics: They're large with long expanses of blank outside walls and, normally, are accompanied by a “sea of asphalt” for parking.
- Economic: They create vigorous competition for small local businesses where they exist.

Large retail establishments, i.e., big box stores, are defined as single retail establishments whose principal building is at least 60,000 square feet. These establishments function as anchors within shopping centers and provide a variety of goods and services in one location for the surrounding community.

The following table illustrates typical store sizes as produced by the New Rules Project, a program of the Minneapolis-based Institute for Local Self Reliance.

STORE	SIZE / SQ FEET
Walmart, Target, Meijer	180,000-250,000
Home Depot, Lowes, Bed Bath & Beyond	60,000-140,000
Walgreens, CVS	11,000-15,000
Full-service neighborhood grocery	10,000
Typical Main Street store	1,000

New Requirements for Stores with over 60,000 Square Feet

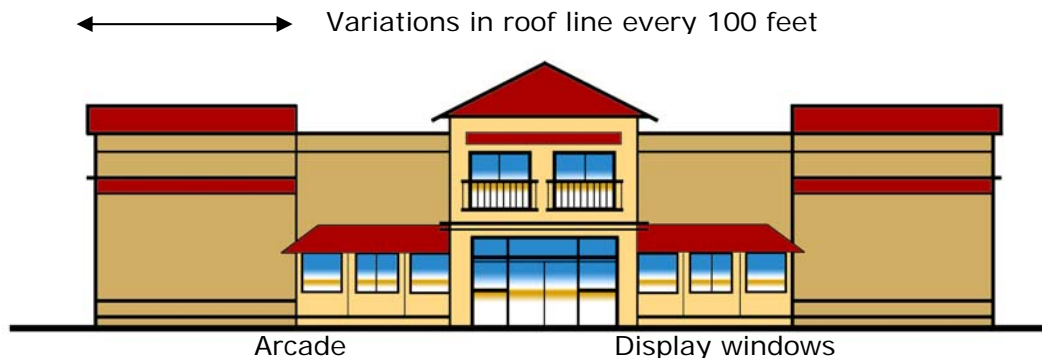
To mitigate some of the impacts large retail establishments have on their surroundings, the *2020 Sourcebook* introduces new regulations for retail establishments with at least 60,000 square feet of interior space. The goals of these provisions are numerous:

- to enhance building and site design so they blend in with the character of the adjoining neighborhood;
- to encourage the use of quality materials and innovative architectural designs that compliment the existing built environment;
- to vary the building façade to both add interest and reduce the massive scale to give the appearance of smaller stores; and
- to break down the building into smaller stores to broaden the scope of future tenants in case of prolonged vacancy.

Playing Down the Big Box Look

In order to address large, unattractive, blank exterior walls, the *2020 Sourcebook* requires both fenestrations (windows and doors) and changes in architectural material and roofline every 100 feet. This breaks up the façade visually and provides the appearance of smaller stores.

They also specify a variety of building materials that, when coordinated with the fabric of the surrounding neighborhood, will help the box store fit in better with the character of the neighborhood as illustrated below.



Encouraging Community Space

Another change within the *2020 Sourcebook* is the requirement for exterior community space areas. The community space is required to be centrally located to serve needs of visitors and employees of the building. A typical community space area may include a gathering place with a plaza or fountain with some seating and landscaping.

Reassessing Parking Lot Requirements

The off-street parking regulations found in the *2020 Sourcebook* include specifications to lessen the impact of the large parking surfaces typically associated with big box developments. These specifications encourage:

- creating a more aesthetically-pleasing parking area rather than the common non-stop asphalt;
- promoting pedestrian-friendly features within the parking areas for both safety and aesthetics; and
- reducing the environmental impact of large impervious surfaces by promoting alternative construction methods.

When combined, these provisions found in the *2020 Sourcebook* will help Kenton County jurisdictions address many of the concerns voiced by their citizens.

To contact a staff member who can answer questions about the issues covered in this update or on the *2020 Sourcebook* in general, click [here](#).

To view past editions of this update series, click on one of the following.

[**A new approach to zoning in Kenton County: Where we've been... Where we're going...**](#)

[**New zoning in Kenton County will simplify way land uses are categorized and regulated**](#)

[**When one zone doesn't fit all... enter specific use regulations**](#)

[**Off-street parking regulations in an age of transportation flux**](#)

[**Planned Unit Developments: modernizing the popular tool**](#)

[**The top ten reasons to love Conservation Subdivisions...**](#)

[**Updated definitions eliminate numerous problems**](#)

[**Streamlining the Zones that make zoning work**](#)

[**Special Development Zones guide unique circumstances**](#)