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*(This is the eleventh 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.)*

Retirement communities require special attention

The United States experienced a huge increase in births between 1946 and 1964. The war was over and great optimism prevailed. Today, the youngest of these "baby boomers" is 45 and beginning to think about "what happens next." For many, the plan may include moving to a retirement community geared to the demands of their age and the interests they've developed over their lives.

No current Kenton County zoning ordinance includes provisions to address retirement communities. Accordingly, retirement communities' development proposals are processed in the same manner as any other residential development application.

This type of review fails to ensure—and may not even allow—the proposed retirement facility to properly include age-specific amenities or accommodate the needs of the people who will live there. The result? Compromised designs and plans which:

- do not properly integrate the facility into the surrounding areas;
- isolate residents; and
- do not provide adequate amounts of open space, recreational amenities, or places for community gathering.

The *2020 Sourcebook* will fill this vacuum by permitting flexibility in the design, location, and siting of the buildings. The desired goal is to provide greater benefits to the retirement community residents as well as the community in which the retirement community is to be located.

Three Types of Retirement Communities

The *2020 Sourcebook* identifies and provides for three types of retirement communities.

An active adult community is defined as a community, or living facility designed specifically for interests of persons 55 years or older, which contains recreational amenities and support services for older adults who are healthy, active, and capable of completely independent living.

An independent living facility is defined as housing that groups seniors for the purpose of social interaction and mutual support in a common interest community. Group facilities may be provided on premises for recreation and social interaction, but only limited support services are provided.

A senior housing facility could be any one of a variety of housing types designed specifically to meet the varied needs of persons 55 years of age or older. Such housing is a blend of the first two and may include active adult facilities *and* independent living facilities.

Classifying retirement communities and the needs of their residents is an important part of updating the review process. Issues such as location and impact of the proposal on the surrounding areas can be evaluated with specific attention paid to retail/service needs of tenants, medical services being provided at the facility, the number of visitors to the site, impacts to the transportation system, etc.

Reviewing retirement community proposals according to the specific functions that will occur on the premises will help promote healthy development and integration into the existing fabric of the surrounding neighborhood.

Given the disproportionately high percent of the population entering their senior years and the inadequate number of retirement facilities currently available, a surge in the construction of retirement communities is imminent. With provisions included in the *2020 Sourcebook*, Kenton County will be prepared when the surge begins to hit.

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...](#)

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