After 40 years of amendments to its 1972 edition, Kenton County has a brand new comprehensive plan. The Kenton County Planning Commission unanimously approved the new plan titled Direction 2030: Your Voice, Your Choice on September 4. The new plan was created after seven public meetings and over 110 small group meetings over a period of two years.

Direction 2030 is based on a new statement of goals and objectives and is the first web-based plan in the metro region. Adoption of the plan not only paves the way for newer considerations to be taken into account during the development process, it also encourages greater community conversation within each of the plan’s four designated subareas – urban, first-ring, suburban, and rural.

“Direction 2030 includes recommendations that take into consideration the demographic shifts that are happening, the comments we heard from residents, and the processes we need to look at with a fresh perspective,” said Martin Scribner, AICP, Director of Planning and Zoning at PDS. “Now that the plan is adopted, we’re gearing up to focus our efforts on implementation.”

Two primary projects under consideration include implementation by subarea and evaluating zoning changes needed to bring regulations into compliance with the new comprehensive plan.

The subarea process was built into Direction 2030 based on the recognition that each area of the county has unique needs. The focus in the urban area will be to strengthen the vitality of the urban core through historic preservation, infill development on vacant and underutilized properties, and to build upon the strong sense of neighborhood and community.

The goal in the rural area will be to preserve and enhance the viability of the rural heritage, to encourage the preservation of the rural character, and to remove barriers to support local agricultural operations.

“Our subarea processes will be action-oriented within each of the four areas. This effort will allow us to work with residents, cities, and other partners to prioritize the recommendations made in Direction 2030 and focus on implementation.” said Sharmili Reddy, AICP, Planning Manager at PDS.

Direction 2030 also revamped several land use related policies based on community needs. Implementation of these policies will require a re-evaluation of Kenton County’s many zoning ordinances. Land use categories such as mixed use were introduced for the first time in the comprehensive plan to promote the mixture of uses and recognize the flexibility needed to react to market conditions. Each of the 20 cities within Kenton County has their own zoning code which will need to be evaluated for compliance with Direction 2030.

Both projects – subarea implementation and zoning code evaluation, are slated to begin next month.
Independence becomes 17th participant in One Stop Shop program

Independence City Council and Planning and Development Services of Kenton County entered into an interlocal agreement recently that delegates the city’s zoning ordinance and property maintenance code administration to PDS; the agreement becomes effective on Monday, November 3rd. Independence is the 17th Kenton County jurisdiction (out of 20) to be part of PDS’ collaborative One Stop Shop program.

The program is built on PDS’ “critical mass” of professionals, providing economies of scale that are impossible for local jurisdictions to match and levels of service the local jurisdictions can’t afford.

The city is also opting to disband its own board of adjustment and code enforcement board in favor of participation in the Kenton County joint board of adjustment and Kenton County joint code enforcement board. These moves are expected to save the city even more public funds.

"We’re pleased to welcome Independence to the program," said Dennis Gordon, FAICP, executive director. "Mayor Donna Yeager and City Administrator Chris Moriconi have talked with us over the past several weeks about the city’s priorities; we understand them clearly and intend to hit the ground running.”

Filing code enforcement complaints, seeking information about subsequent inspections, and searching for a property’s zoning classification is now one phone call away for Independence residents. PDS can be reached at 331.8980 between 8 and 5 Monday through Friday. A PDS code enforcement official will also be available part-time on Tuesday, Wednesday, and Thursday in the city building for anyone from Independence and southern Kenton County who needs assistance.

Information in this regard is also available on the PDS website and the new One Stop Shop website.

"The One Stop Shop program has helped a number of cities increase service levels for their citizens and reduce costs since 2004. We’re looking forward to providing those benefits to Independence and its citizens,” concluded Gordon.

Building department recertified to pursue state-level building projects

PDS has once again demonstrated to Kentucky’s Department of Housing, Buildings and Construction (DHBC) that it maintains the certification and knowledge to handle larger projects within Kenton County. The agency was granted its renewal recently for the expanded jurisdiction program for all of Kenton County absent Erlanger that has its own program.

To gain expanded jurisdiction, local building departments must demonstrate that they have the manpower, certification, and knowledge to handle larger construction projects. These projects are those with an occupant load of at least 100 or more persons. Office buildings of 10,000 square feet, industrial buildings larger than 20,000 square feet, and residential buildings larger than 20,000 square feet or three stories are some examples of buildings that fall under this criterion.

“I’m proud to acknowledge once again that our building inspection team has earned Frankfort’s trust,” said Dennis Gordon, FAICP, PDS’ executive director. “Our office personnel and field inspectors work hard to justify this trust. They also work closely with building contractors to help them achieve their goals within the parameters set by the state building code.”

PDS first acquired expanded jurisdiction from the state in 1998 and has renewed it every three years since through an audit process. The resulting contract gives DHBC control over how the program is run and the ability to terminate the program if the local department fails to live up to state standards.

DHBC personnel visit the local jurisdictions after the application process and verify in the field that all parameters of KRS 198B.060(5) are met. Once the Department is satisfied that the local jurisdiction is maintaining proper procedures and meeting state standards, it makes sure all local ordinances and agreements are in place lawfully and then signs the contract for the next three years.

With PDS performing these larger projects locally, dollars spent on permits are kept locally and not returned back to Frankfort for dispersion throughout the commonwealth. It also allows for projects to occur quicker. Typically, inspections are provided with 24 hours’ notice and plans are reviewed in seven to eight business days if not sooner where it can be up to a month or more for a plan review at DHBC.
**GIS department provides HBA information on available subdivision lots**

The PDS GIS department worked closely recently with the Homebuilders Association of Northern Kentucky (HBA) on a project to determine the number of “finished” subdivided lots in Kenton County.

Finished lots are vacant lots ready to be sold but without an existing structure.

Additional lot definitions utilized in this project fell under several categories: lots with water and sewer access, lots with just water access, lots with only sewer access, and lots without access to either utility. The analysis also took into consideration the zoning of the property; residential, commercial or industrial.

“This analysis is exactly the type that GIS is built to report,” commented Trisha Brush, GISP, Director of GIS at PDS. "We were happy to share these data with the HBA, and look forward to serving the association in the future as needs arise.”

Due to the scale of the project, the PDS team delivered the analyzed data in three maps. The maps were broken down as Urban (the Ohio River to I-275), suburban (I-275 to KY536), and rural (KY536 to the southern Kenton County boundary).

Staff’s goal in moving forward is to have these data and more available on the fly or on an as needed basis. There have been some discussions of building a website just for HBA’s needs with a secure login, but for now that is purely conceptual.

**Senior staffer’s service nets President’s Award at annual KAMP conference**

During the Kentucky Association of Mapping Professionals’ (KAMP) annual conference in Louisville in September, PDS Senior GIS Specialist Tom East, GISP, was awarded KAMP’s first ever President’s Award.

According to the [KAMP website](#), “This award is not presented yearly but at the discretion of the current President. This award recognizes extraordinary service to the KAMP Executive Board and members.”

East has served as the treasurer for KAMP since 2012 and has initiated several efforts improving the record management, membership management, and financial management of the organization. KAMP is an organization of almost 400 professionals involved in the mapping sciences, with the stated purpose of fostering understanding and improved management and use of geospatial information throughout the Commonwealth. It also seeks to provide a mechanism for dialogue and education regarding geospatial information issues by professionals.

Along with East, other PDS staff members also participated in the conference. Senior GIS Programmer/Specialist Christy Powell, GISP, led a workshop on mobile data collection for GIS and, along with Principal GIS Programmer/Specialist Joe Busemeyer, GISP, and Principal Planner James Fausz, AICP, made a presentation about the creation of the new, all-digital, Direction 2030 comprehensive plan website.

Trisha Brush, GISP, Director of GIS Administration presented a session on the marketing of GIS services through social media. East also presented an informational session on Next Generation 9-1-1 and the essential role GIS will play in its operation.

**PDS to provide required continuing education for boards of adjustment**

In an effort to make it as easy as possible for board of adjustment members to stay current with state-mandated continuing education, PDS staff and Louisville area attorney, David Pike, will host a four-hour training session at 8 AM on November 1st. The training will be provided at the PDS offices in Fort Mitchell.
This is part of an ongoing effort to support Kenton County city boards and provide training free of cost to their appointed members.

State law requires that members of planning commissions, boards of adjustment, and professional planners throughout the commonwealth pursue continuing education on an annual basis. This training is being geared toward new board members and as a refresher for members whose boards don’t meet regularly.

“We will be covering the role and responsibilities of the board of adjustment and its members,” said Martin Scribner, AICP, Director of Planning and Zoning Administration for PDS. “We will go over possible legal issues and case studies for each one of the four types of issues the boards are authorized to decide.”

Board of adjustment members typically meet a few times a year when they have applications for conditional use permits, variances, appeals of administrator decisions, and to approve applications for changes from one non-conforming use to another.

The PDS-sponsored training will provide four hours of required orientation credit for new members and half of the required credit existing members need for a two-year term.

TBNK personnel will videotape the training session for any members not in attendance. Scribner stated, ”We usually have a pretty good turnout and plan to provide a DVD of the session to all of the municipalities in Kenton County.”

PDS also hosts regular continuing education webinars on varying subjects that are provided by groups such as the American Planning Association.

In the past, this training has been well attended. ”We do it free of charge,” said Scribner. ”It can be expensive to send board members to training around the region, so we’re happy to serve our communities and do it locally.”

... for whatever it’s worth...

“The new American Dream will transform cities and towns in the 21st Century. To understand it, we have to grasp a few features of the previous American Dream, which created the metropolitan regions that we know today. That dream is still operative — although it has faded a bit since the 2008 housing crash. A Pew study shows the country now evenly split between two visions of the good life.

“There were many good parts to the 20th Century American Dream. It provided shelter for three generations of Americans. It delivered a house, a yard, and a car (later two or three cars) to most households. It also tended to separate society by income, reduce community connections through sprawl, and increase automobile and road costs.”

Read what the author of this blog on the Better Cities and Towns website means when he uses the term ”place-based development” and why he believes it is rivaling the 20th Century American Dream during the current 21st Century... for whatever it’s worth.

Views expressed in this article do not reflect an official position or policy of the PDS. The article is presented here to provide input for those interested in land use planning issues.

Calendar Events

**Kenton County Planning Commission**
Monthly Public Hearing and Business Meeting
Thursday, November 6 at 6:15 p.m.
Commission Chambers, PDS Building, Fort Mitchell

**PDS Council**
Business Meeting
Thursday, November 20 at 5:45 p.m.
Commission Chambers, PDS Building, Fort Mitchell

**PDS Management Board**
Monthly Business Meeting
Monday, November 24 at 5:15 p.m.
Commission Chambers, PDS Building, Fort Mitchell
Pendleton County Joint City-County Planning Commission
Monthly Business Meeting
Monday, November 24 at 7 p.m.
Pendleton County Courthouse in Falmouth

Thanksgiving Holiday
November 27-28
PDS office closed - Visit us online

For more meeting and event information, check out our online calendar.