Scheduling begins for final review and vote on new subdivision regulations

A document seven years in the making is about to be scheduled for public comment. The Subdivision Regulations Committee of the Kenton County Planning Commission will meet at 5:30 p.m. on February 3 to discuss the final draft document and vote on whether to send it forward to the full planning commission. Action to schedule it for public hearing could come as soon as the commission’s February 5 meeting.

The document may be found here. The meeting will take place in the Commission Chambers of the PDS Building in Fort Mitchell.

"It’s taken a while but in the end we’ve got a good product", said Scott Hiles, CPC, PDS’ director of infrastructure engineering. “This is the first time the subdivision regulations have been updated comprehensively since they were adopted in the 1970s.”

PDS staff began rewriting the regulations in 2008 following a call by the Kenton County Mayors’ Group to update the document’s street construction standards. Mayors and public works officials claimed that subdivision streets were failing prematurely and cited the county’s subdivision regulations as the reason.

The first working draft of the document was released for public review in late 2010. Since that time staff and Planning Commission chair Paul Darpel have worked with various groups to develop consensus on the document’s contents. The commission’s subdivision regulations committee approved that draft a year ago excluding the street design standards and earthwork requirements.

Darpel invited a group of pavement and geotechnical engineers representing developers and the Mayors’ Group to work on those issues and present a recommendation to staff and the committee. After many months of work, that group presented the standards now included in the document. Members assert that streets built to these new standards will last a minimum of 20 years with proper maintenance.

"I recognize the work that the engineers put into providing us their street and earthwork recommendations,” said Darpel. “They did some great work and were able to find common ground on a contentious issue which provides us the last piece of the puzzle to get this project completed.”

“Our hope is that the subdivision regulations committee approves the draft with no changes,” said Hiles. “If that’s the case, the document will then be sent to the full commission for consideration and scheduling the final public hearing.”
Staffers sit for, pass exam for ‘Certified Green Professional’ credential

Today’s explosion of technology almost demands that professionals seize every opportunity presented to stay abreast. That is what prompted Martin Scribner, AICP, PDS’ director of planning and zoning, and Andy Videkovich, AICP, senior planner, to attend a multi-day seminar in Indianapolis that focused on “green building” cosponsored by the National Association of Homebuilders (NAHB).

Scribner and Videkovich were tested on what they learned at the conclusion of the sessions and both passed the exam. This makes them eligible for certification as a Certified Green Professional (CGP), an NAHB program aimed at fostering the construction of green buildings.

The NAHB uses the CGP designation as a way to identify builders, remodelers, manufacturers, and other professionals who are committed to green building philosophies and techniques. The course focused on an understanding that combining good, cost-effective building science with the right products and materials can help create buildings that are healthier and more efficient, while being kind to the environment. This also results in lower long-term utility costs to home owners.

By incorporating the National Green Building Standard into the curriculum, CGPs are trained to incorporate energy, water and resource efficiency, improved indoor environmental quality, and sustainable and locally sourced products into their projects. Preservation of natural contours and water quality of a site is also considered.

Because operating and maintaining a home correctly is the key to the long-term success of a green project, a large focus of the program is home owner education—from designing the space to meet specific needs and choosing the right products to making sure new owners are advised on how to ensure everything works the way it is designed.

CGPs must successfully complete 18 hours of classroom instruction and have at least two years of building industry experience before they earn their designation. They are also required to adhere to the CGP Code of Ethics and complete 12 hours of building industry and green-related continuing education every three years.

According to Scribner, “Andy and I took the opportunity to earn this credential in order to better assist with Direction2030 implementation efforts and to stay in touch with smart and innovative building trends. I feel that over the long run, this kind of information and education will pay out dividends for our community.”

UC planning students begin study work on land uses in KY 536 corridor

A $4,000 grant from the Murray and Agnes Seasongood Good Government Foundation will cover costs associated with an upcoming study of land uses in Kenton County’s KY 536 corridor. Work will be pursued by planning students from a University of Cincinnati studio class in the department of art, architecture, and planning.

The project entitled “Vision Plan for KY 536 Environ” is scheduled to last the entire spring semester (16 weeks) with formal class times twice a week. The final four weeks of the studio will include numerous presentations to the public and to Kenton County planning and legislative bodies.

The class’s report will be used by PDS and the Kenton County Planning Commission as the foundation for future land use and planning studies of the corridor.
“The focus of this studio is on planning and design practices at the regional scale,” said Dr. Vikas Mehta, Associate Professor with the School of Planning and faculty for the studio course. “Its main goal is to expose students to the complexity of working with multiple jurisdictions, regional spatial patterns, land use activities at regional scale, and its impacts on regional resources.”

During the semester, students will explore a number of planning issues that are critical in understanding the cultural, natural, economic, and political structure of the corridor. As an important part of the studio, students will analyze social and physical factors such as the stakeholders’ needs and interests, the natural ecology, urban growth, land use and transportation, public space, and associated patterns in the region. Learning from their analyses, the students are expected to develop a vision for the corridor. Given the significance of current discourse, this studio will emphasize the promotion of planning and design principles, policies and actions that enhance the physical conditions of the region and improve the human experience in it.

The studio will be organized into a five-step structure:

- **SENSING**: information and data collection; mapping - people, places, phenomena;
- **ANALYZING**: organizing, structuring and synthesizing information and data;
- **THEORIZING**: values, goals, objectives, visions;
- **MAKING**: processes, products; and
- **COMMUNICATING**: writing, speaking, graphics.

“The five steps provide a basic structure for the studio. Although these are listed in a sequence, the steps do not suggest a linear process,” states Dr. Mehta.

**Direction 2030 implementation efforts re-engaging citizens and groups**

Work on implementing *Direction 2030*—Kenton County’s new comprehensive plan—is now underway. Four months since its formal adoption, the plan’s vision is providing the driving force for bringing the community together again. The difference is on the focus, with implementation being the goal.

*Direction 2030* identified unique needs within each of Kenton County’s four sub-areas: urban, first ring suburbs, suburban, and rural. The first area of focus for implementation is the rural sub-area. The initiative taken by the residents of southern Kenton County during preparation of the plan offered a natural progression into immediate implementation.

The South Kenton Citizens Group has organized itself around four committees that will each address one of the plan’s topics. These committees were formed in October, immediately following adoption of *Direction 2030*. Their goals are to pursue research and find creative ways for implementation. The topics being addressed by these committees are roads, utilities, zoning, and agricultural education and marketing. Each committee includes seven to ten residents from the area.

“The committees will get together soon to share ideas and then continue to work individually on their assigned issues. By fall every committee will have a good handle on the specific strategies that should be pursued for each of the four topic areas,” said Edward Dietrich, AICP, principal planner with PDS and project manager for rural sub-area efforts.

The zoning committee, for example, is analyzing whether zoning currently in place is effective in preserving the rural heritage of southern Kenton County. Members are also researching ways in which other communities have handled rural zoning. At the end of the process—after input from the larger community—they will focus on implementing a specific strategy that will promote the policies established by *Direction 2030* for the rural sub-area.
“We are a very active group of citizens who care deeply about our rural community. We knew it was important to get involved in the planning phase to make our voices heard. Now we are organizing ourselves around what needs to be accomplished in terms of implementation,” said Kathy Donohoue, a resident of southern Kenton County.

Partner organizations including the Northern Kentucky Water District and the Northern Kentucky Area Development District are working with PDS staff to support the group in its efforts.

Implementation efforts in the urban sub-area are anticipated to begin in late January. These efforts will be tailored specifically towards the topics of interest to urban residents and pursued through a planning process that works for the urban core.

... for whatever it’s worth...

“New study results from the University of Kansas... (presented in November) at the Gerontological Society of America’s annual meeting in Washington, D.C., bolster the adage that “heart healthy is brain healthy.” The investigation shows neighborhoods that motivate walking can stave off cognitive decline in older adults.”

In a recent news release from the University of Kansas, Brendan Lynch writes of study reports showing that intricate community layouts might help to keep cognition sharp, rather than serve as a source of confusion in older adults.

If proven true, this research could provide yet another reason to support walkable communities. As always, we provide this information for whatever it’s worth.

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

Calendar Events

PDS Management Board
Monthly Business Meeting
Monday, January 26 at 5:15 p.m.
Commission Chambers, PDS Building, Fort Mitchell

Pendleton County Joint City-County Planning Commission
Monthly Business Meeting
Monday, January 26 at 7 p.m.
Pendleton County Courthouse in Falmouth

PDS Council
Quarterly Business Meeting
Thursday, January 29 at 5:45p.m.
Commission Chambers, PDS Building, Fort Mitchell

KCPC Subdivision Regulations Committee
Business Meeting
Tuesday, February 3 at 5:30 p.m.
Commission Chambers, PDS Building, Fort Mitchell

Kenton County Planning Commission
Monthly Public Hearing and Business Meeting
Thursday, February 5 at 6:15 p.m.
Presidents’ Day
Monday, February 16
PDS office closed - Visit us online

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

* Banner photo provided by Tri-ED

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