

# Chapter One Introduction

## Background

*The Comprehensive Plan Update 2006-2026: An Areawide Vision for Kenton County*, adopted in December 2006, recommended that a small area study be conducted for the Dixie Highway corridor through the City of Park Hills. The intent of this small area study, per the Comprehensive Plan, is to encourage the planning and implementation of the renewal of the Gateway Area along Dixie Highway.

Small area studies are intended to be adopted by the Kenton County Planning Commission (KCPC) as a more detailed part of the comprehensive plan for the area covered. It is therefore necessary that the small area study comply with the basic requirements of state law for updates to the comprehensive plan. The *Park Hills Dixie Study* will first be reviewed and adopted by the City of Park Hills after which it will be forwarded to the Northern Kentucky Area Planning Commission (NKAPC) for a recommendation to be made to the KCPC for inclusion in the Comprehensive Plan. Once adopted by the Planning Commission, these studies are used as the basis for review by NKAPC staff, the KCPC, and the City for development recommendations in the area.

This study will focus its attention on the redevelopment of the Dixie Highway Corridor through the City of Park Hills. The purpose of this study is to encourage practices and develop recommendations which will promote the economic vitality of the corridor.

## Market Analysis

The first step in completing this plan was the preparation of market analysis, conducted by GEM Public Sector Services. This study, entitled *A Market Analysis of the Dixie Highway Corridor in the City of Park Hills, Kentucky* describes the purpose of the study as follows: The purpose of the analysis is to determine the range of potential land uses that can be accommodated in the study corridor in the City of Park Hills, now and in the future, based on the needs demonstrated by the marketplace. The public purposes for conducting market analyses are numerous. Obviously, a market analysis as a prerequisite to a comprehensive planning effort has value. Communities can revise their land use plans on the bases of the needs that are revealed by the market

*This study focuses on the redevelopment of the Dixie Highway corridor through the City of Park Hills. Three public meetings were held during the course of the project and input received was used in addition to the market analysis to draft a preferred redevelopment alternative for the Dixie Highway corridor.*

analysis. Similarly, communities can make zoning decisions on the bases of current market evidence rather than on conjecture or market hearsay. Quantitative and qualitative support from an objective, third party, market analyst is often better than attempting to defend contentious zoning decisions without any factual, current market information. This market analysis will be discussed in further detail in **Chapter 3** of this *Park Hills Dixie Study*. The entire market analysis can be found online at [nkapc.org](http://nkapc.org) or a copy can be obtained at the NKAPC offices.

## Project Process

### *Task Force*

A major component of this small area study was public input and citizen involvement throughout the duration of the project. A task force comprising 14 members representing various interest groups was formed. Some of these groups included the Civic Association, City Council, the City's representative on the Kenton County Planning Commission, the Business Association, local business owners, and neighborhood residents. The Task Force provided oversight and guidance throughout the study process while representing the interests of the community. Their final task in the planning process was approval of the final draft of this report and submission of it to the Park Hills City Council.

### *Study Boundary*

The study area for the project, as approved by the Task Force in December of 2008, includes the length of Dixie Highway from the Park Hills City border with the City of Fort Wright to the Park Hills City border with the City of Covington. Except for a few locations, the study boundary extends primarily only one parcel deep on either side of Dixie Highway. These locations include a portion of St. Joseph Lane and the inclusion of the Park Hills portion of the Gateway Community and Technical College. The study boundary is shown in green in Figure 1.1.

### *Key Person Interviews*

Interviews were conducted with roughly 35 key persons within the community. These key persons included representatives from such groups as City departments,



FIGURE 1.1

### *STUDY BOUNDARY*

local high schools and colleges, local religious groups, the Kentucky Heritage Council, Duke Energy, Transit Authority of Northern Kentucky, Northern Kentucky Water District, Kentucky Transportation Cabinet, Vision 2015, Village Green Committee, Business Association, Civic Association and several more. Interviews were conducted to gather information pertinent to the study and identify any plans the various groups had for the area including any issue or concerns for the area.

All of those interviewed were sent monthly updates to keep them informed of the happenings of this study. Keeping them informed also provided opportunity for those key persons to provide staff and the City with any new information which may become important to the study.

### *Existing Conditions*

The study began by conducting an analysis of existing conditions in the area including information regarding outside areas of influence, existing land use and zoning, demographics, community facilities and utilities, green

infrastructure, mobility, and a streetscape inventory. Two additional components of the existing conditions inventory process included a review of past studies affecting the study area and the aforementioned key person interviews.

### ***First Public Meeting – January 22, 2009***

After completion of the existing conditions report, the first public meeting for the study was held on January 22, 2009 at the Generations Church (formerly the Covington First Church of the Nazarene). Over 60 people were in attendance for a brief staff presentation, small group discussions, and a visual preference survey. More information on the first public meeting is provided in **Chapter 5** of the Interim Report which can be found at [nkapc.org](http://nkapc.org).

### ***Mission Statement and Goals***

The Park Hills Dixie Study Task Force worked to create a vision for the study area based on the existing conditions report and public comments received at the first public meeting. The vision statement and goals, as adopted by the task force in February of 2009, can be found in **Chapter 2** of this document.

### ***Interim Report***

An interim report was produced by NKAPC staff in April of 2009. This document included the vision and goals for the study, the existing conditions report, comments received from the first public meeting, and a Dixie Highway Corridor Parking Study. This report and is available online on the project webpage at [nkapc.org](http://nkapc.org).

### ***Concept Diagram***

With vision and goals crafted and relevant information collected about the study area, the Task Force prepared a concept diagram depicting their overall view of how the corridor should be arranged for redevelopment. This conceptual view of the study area was the first step toward preparation of scenarios for redevelopment presented in this plan and a change in the comprehensive plan's recommended land use map. **Chapter 5** of this document describes the concept plan and the specifics about how the Task Force used this diagram throughout the planning process.

### ***Alternative Redevelopment Scenarios***

Through several of the monthly Task Force meetings, Task Force members worked with NKAPC staff to create four different redevelopment scenarios. The study area was broken into three areas – North, Core, and South. The scenarios created by the Task Force and staff present concepts for redevelopment over the three parts of the study area. These alternatives can be reviewed in **Appendix A** of this document.

### ***Second Public Meeting – May 14, 2009***

A second public meeting was held on May 14, 2009, at the Generations Church. At this meeting, attendees were shown the concept diagram and the four redevelopment alternatives created by the Task Force. These redevelopment alternatives were meant to generate discussion with the public and generate input about the preferred way to redevelop the Dixie Highway Corridor through Park Hills. Participants worked with staff and the Task Force to point out both positive and negative attributes of each alternative. A full recap of this meeting can be found on the project web page at [nkapc.org](http://nkapc.org).

### ***Preferred Alternative***

The preferred alternative (as described in **Chapter 6**) was prepared by the Task Force based on comments received at the second public meeting. This preferred alternative helped the City by depicting development styles, transportation improvements and use of public spaces envisioned for the area in the future. Based on the comments received at the first two public meetings, the preferred alternative is comprised of two phases for implementation. The first phase depicts the use of more existing structures and uses that are envisioned to remain for several years, while the second phase depicts the more complete redevelopment of the corridor with replacement of most of the existing structures.

### ***Recommendations/Implementation***

**Chapter 7** compiles and briefly describes recommendations of this study. The table in this chapter is intended to provide easy reference to recommendations made in this study. Included in the table are recommended time frames and suggested parties with primary responsibility or roles in the implementation process.



### ***Third Public Meeting – September 10, 2009***

A third, and final public meeting was held during the planning portion of this project to gather public input and response to the draft report. This meeting was held on September 10, 2009 and provided the community the opportunity to review the preferred redevelopment alternative as well as the recommendations and implementation strategies selected by the Task Force. Comments received from this meeting can be found in **Appendix B** of this document.

### ***Review and Adoption***

The study was reviewed by the Task Force at their September 17, 2009 meeting. The Task Force

recommended the adoption of this study for incorporation into the *Comprehensive Plan Update: 2006 – 2026* to the City of Park Hills. The Park Hills City Council adopted the study and authorized an application to the Kenton County Planning Commission to incorporate the study into the *Comprehensive Plan Update: 2006 – 2026* on October 12, 2009. The Northern Kentucky Area Planning Commission reviewed the study on October 19, 2009 and recommended it to the Kenton County Planning Commission for adoption into the *Comprehensive Plan Update: 2006 – 2026* on December 3, 2009.