Students complete STEP UP requirements, provide input for new comprehensive plan

Kenton County students enrolled in NKAPC’s STEP UP program (Student Education and Partnership in Urban Planning) over the past 18 months wrapped up their involvement recently with a formal presentation to members of the Northern Kentucky Area Planning Council. Included in their presentation were recommendations for the next update of the Kenton County comprehensive plan.

“The overall theme of the students’ recommendations was choice,” said James Fausz, AICP, principal planner and STEP UP program coordinator. “The students recommended high quality housing options across the board—in urban, suburban, and rural areas so residents have choices in where to live.

“They also recommended pursuing projects to increase safety,” Fausz said. “Their ideas included traffic calming initiatives like lowering speed limits in residential areas and providing sidewalks and bike lanes throughout the community.”

Students also discussed mass transit issues such as introducing more routes and time options for TANK to accommodate people who want or need to ride later into the night. The combination of these two recommendations gives residents safe and attractive options for where to live as well as options on how to get around the community.

The students also highlighted the need to create identifiable places through ideas such as introducing gateways at the front door into each city and using cohesive design.

“They want the community to use aesthetics to build a sense of place through architecture,” Fausz said. “This coordinated design would result in buildings that are planned to complement each other and look like there was some thought given to how the area should look and function overall.”

In addition to their recommendations, the students shared their reasons for joining STEP UP. Most said their reason was because they wanted to be involved in their community while the balance suggested they have future plans to be professionals in the planning/architecture fields.

NKAPC staff will summarize the students’ recommendations in a section that will be included in the new county comprehensive plan. The students’ ideas will also be discussed in upcoming task force meetings and workshops by citizens working on the plan.

“The students enjoyed the program and had a good experience overall,” Fausz concluded.