Planners prepare Direction 2030 plan for final public hearing

Nearly two years in the making and over 150 public meetings later, Kenton County’s new comprehensive plan Direction 2030: Your Voice, Your Choice is in the final stages of completion. Draft policies and recommendations are being finalized, task force comments are being discussed, outreach to legislative bodies is being undertaken, and a web-based plan is in the works.

One final public input session is also currently being discussed prior to submitting an application to the Kenton County Planning Commission for consideration in September.

Draft policies and recommendations cover eight topic areas: economy, housing, mobility, land use, environment, community facilities, utility management, and regional and subarea plans. This is the first major update since the comprehensive plan was first crafted and adopted in 1972. Several major policy changes are being considered based on changing demographics and market conditions.

The recommended land use map will include new categories of mixed use and a more generalized definition of commercial to allow for market conditions to direct land usage. Jobs were indicated as the highest priority for those that provided input throughout the process. Industrial land use policies while always aiming to seek more land for economic development also strives to bring attention to the need for infrastructure in areas reserved for these uses.

In addition, the need to provide community amenities and a wider mix of housing types to attract a talented workforce is discussed.

“This plan represents the varied viewpoints of everyone in this community,” said Paul Darpel, Chairman of the Kenton County Planning Commission. “We heard everything from the need to attract jobs, provide for good housing, protection of property rights, accommodating multi-modal options, consideration of public health, and the environment throughout this process. We have tried to capture everything and present it as a vision for Kenton County.”

The draft policies also recognize the county’s four distinct subareas for the first time and the different needs of these areas. The four subareas include urban, first ring suburbs, suburban, and rural, each contributing differently to the regional and local economy.

The plan recognizes the need to focus urban development north of Walton Nicholson Pike while preserving the heritage to the south by promoting rural development and preservation policies. Increased collaboration across jurisdictional boundaries and the need for regional thinking is also addressed.

“The recommended policies also take into account other planning efforts underway such as OKI’s strategic regional planning effort, the Kenton County transportation plan, and the South Kenton planning effort in addition to the needs and vision that local jurisdictions have for their communities. This planning process brings it all together to represent one voice for Kenton County,” said Sharmili Reddy, AICP, NKAPC’s planning manager.

Draft policies will be presented to the public in late summer and then to the Kenton County Planning Commission in early fall. More information about the project can be found at the Direction 2030 website.