In order to establish a new set of county-wide Goals and Objectives for the Kenton County Comprehensive Plan, more than 18 months was spent collecting public input from stakeholders in Kenton County. Direction 2030: Your Voice, Your Choice will be a plan based heavily on the public input gathered from this Public Input process.

Comprehensive planning is required by state law and the legislature charges each community to prepare a comprehensive plan, which shall serve as a guide for public and private actions and decisions to assure the development of public and private property. The comprehensive plan process requires us to think ahead to improve Kenton County and work to address the challenges of an ever-changing marketplace.

While there is no set formula for creating a comprehensive plan, the legislature provides a guide in the form of required components that must be in each comprehensive plan. Elements such as goals & objectives, land use, transportation, and community facilities (schools, libraries, etc.) must be present in the plan document. Outside of those topics, the contents and the process are determined by the community. In Kenton County, it was decided to craft this plan with substantial public, stakeholder and technical expert input.

To gather this input, three rounds of public meetings were held to begin the planning process. The meetings were designed to provide ways for participants weigh in on the issues that are important. A keypad was used by each participant, so when questions were asked, group results appeared on a large screen. These instant results, combined with small group conversations and recorded comments provided the backbone for creating the comprehensive plan.

This input gathering process consisted of three rounds of meetings, each with their own intent for gathering of input. This process also included targeted small group discussions to ensure some of the more difficult demographic segments to reach we actually hear from throughout this process. In addition to this input gathered, an Elected Officials Forum was held to inform the community’s decision makers of the input gathered at that time as well as to gage their awareness and thoughts about the more heavily discussed issues at that time. The first round of input meetings began in the fall of 2011 and the final set was completed by the summer of 2012. For a better understanding of the time line of this public input process, please refer to Figure 1 below.

Figure 1: Public Input Process for the Direction 2030 planning efforts.

Source: Planning and Development Services of Kenton County
**Round One**

Public meetings are the cornerstone of every planning effort, including Direction 2030. Numerous meetings have been held throughout Kenton County to learn about what is needed and desired in Kenton County directly from the public. Round One of input meetings consisted of four separate meetings held in four different geographic locations throughout the county. While the content presented for discussion at each meeting remained consistent, the varying locations was intended to gather input from residents and stakeholders in the varying types of communities found throughout the county. These community types included urban, first-ring suburban, suburban, and rural.

**Summary**

Kicking off in October 2011, the key discussion and input gathering themes for these meetings was geared towards examining existing and future demographic trends and lifestyle preferences of individuals across the following palate of generations: The Silent generation, The Baby Boomer generation, Generation x, and The Millennial generation. Data from these meetings was used to guide the material for the second round of public meetings, the goals and objectives of the plan, and the content of the plan itself.

This round of meetings was held at different locations throughout the county in order to achieve the perspective of residents living in different types of communities located within Kenton County. Staff identified four distinct types of communities within the county which include urban, first-ring suburban, suburban, and rural areas.

The key intent and purpose of these meetings was to gauge the opportunities and weaknesses attendees felt currently existed within their community in relation to the generational cohort that to which they belonged. This information was used by staff to guide conversations regarding future individual and community needs and desires.

The format and material for each meeting remained static in order to preserve continuity and clarity of the results. Each meeting began with a short introduction about what the comprehensive plan is and the role that it plays in serving the community. Following the introduction, members of the audience were surveyed using an electronic remote keypad system to gather data pertaining to the demographics of those in attendance as well as input regarding several interrelated planning topics. The results of this survey are discussed later in this report.

After the survey was administered, staff gave a short presentation about national trends and lifestyle preferences of different generational cohorts that currently exist in our populations. The presentation was followed by small group discussions to allow those in attendance to converse with one another and provide staff with input regarding the information presented during the meeting as well as any other interrelated topics.

In total, over 200 citizens attended and participated in the first round of public meetings. While there were subtle differences noted in the responses from the attendees there were some common themes in regards to the comprehensive plan that should be noted. They are categorized below.

**Employment**

In a keypad question format, attendees were asked what needed the most improvement locally: shops and amenities, outdoor recreation, employment/jobs, housing options, or education. The overwhelming majority of respondents (55 percent) stated jobs and employment as the most important topic needing the most improvement locally. The desire for better employment was also articulated in the small group discussions. At nearly every meeting location there were strong concerns regarding the provision of quality jobs for younger people in the beginning point of their career in order to increase retention of those already living or being educated in the region.

**Mobility & Connectivity**

At each location, transportation issues arose regarding mass transit, safety, alternate transit options, existing conditions and future infrastructure im-
provements. Attendees indicated a desire for a more comprehensive transit system that would include more bus stops, direct access, and more park and ride facilities, particularly for those residing in southern Kenton County. There was also a desire expressed for alternate modes of transportation, specifically walking and biking. Keypad responses from those surveyed found that almost 90 percent of those in attendance use automobiles as their principal means of transportation. The responses also found that just over 50 percent of attendees said they would use alternative modes of transportation such as bus, biking or walking if the services were improved or more accessible. Respondents also said that the county should prepare for a non-automobile economy; 40 percent were in favor of the idea while 36 percent were opposed.

Walkable Communities

Several discussions were had at each meeting which addressed topics regarding walkable communities and mixed land use areas. Specifically, respondents discussed the need and desire for more amenities closer to their homes. They reported that today there are few middle income walkable communities near lifestyle amenities. Attendees in the older cohorts of the populations stated the need to be closer to hospitals and other health care related uses, particularly noting that this need will become more important as time continues due to the growing elderly composition of the total population in the county.

Our Urban Core

In two of the four first round meetings, attendees stated that the urban core was not strong enough to attract or keep the younger generation. In another, separate meeting attendees thought that Covington and more specifically the riverfront areas, need to be revitalized. This is interrelated with the Retention of Youth in the Future Labor Force (discussed below) which deals with deep concerns of respondents regarding the retention of the younger population currently located in the county and region as a whole.

Retention of Youth in the Future Labor Force

Another topic that transcended the four Round One meetings, was that of youth retention. Respondents were concerned that the current urban areas in the county and region lack the amenities (e.g. night life, transit and mobility, housing choice, etc.) to retain younger residents. Comments were also received at the meeting in southern Kenton County that the urban core should be revitalized before expanding into rural areas for development. Many of the respondents had deep concerns about youth moving to other cities for jobs and stressed the importance of creating more desirable jobs in our area to retain this younger cohort of the populations in the area. Keypad responses found that respondents felt that the issue of employment and youth retention were related to education and opportunities. Comments from the discussion questions along with the tally of keypad responses indicate a strong desire for good schools.

Other Issues

Several other topics were discussed; however, a conclusive community vision was not found in this first round of meetings and these issues would need to be explored in the next round of meetings. Thoughts on open or green space, parks, and recreation were inconclusive. Some respondents wanted more parks and reported that a lot of good parkland had already been lost to development. Others reported that there was enough park and open land already. Responses from southern Kenton County indicated that some people in the area viewed their own larger parcels as their green space and would rather see open areas be reserved for the urban areas in the northern end of the county. While open ended responses showed significant variation, the keypad responses showed a mixed opinion. Close to 50 percent of respondents were satisfied with the current recreational opportunities in the county. However, when asked what types of recreational opportunities they would like to add, close to 60 percent found the number of amenities they desired to see increased.

In group discussions, respondents indicated moderate interest in housing affordability and some interest in smaller homes regarding changing lifestyle and demographic trends. Some individuals reported a desire for smaller ranch houses as they grew older so they could age in place. Others suggested having more affordable options for younger first time homebuyers. While these points were recorded in the group discussion segment of the meetings, keypad responses indicate the majority are satisfied with their housing options. More respondents than not, think communities have a responsibility to provide workforce housing; 48 percent were in favor and 44 percent were against.

Another topic that was noted, applies specifically to southern Kenton County. Respondents there indicated a strong desire to keep southern Kenton County rural by focusing on agriculture. Respondents in several discussion groups also discussed the need for better infrastructure including roads, water, natural
gas, sewer service, and telecommunications. If these two elements continue to be expressed as a strong desire by southern Kenton county residents, existing land use policies will have to be explored that would allow for infrastructure improvements while keeping the area rural at the same time.

Throughout the first round meeting process differing viewpoints were expressed by individuals desiring less planning in Kenton County. Comments made included the following: planning is not necessary at all so why is the Direction 2030 process taking place; taxes are too high and are not being spent appropriately; concerns about government entities taking property through eminent domain; and that individuals should have more or total control of their property and that the market should drive development.

The aforementioned points were heard and duly recorded by PDS staff. It should be noted in this report and in general concerning this process that: (1) a majority of attendees at the meetings wanted to look ahead and make Kenton County a better place, and; (2) that comprehensive planning is required by state law, specifically Kentucky Revised Statute 100.183. The state legislative body charges each community to “prepare a comprehensive plan, which shall serve as a guide for public and private actions and decisions to assure the development of public and private property.” The comprehensive plan process requires the community to think ahead to improve Kenton County and work to address the challenges of ever-changing demographics, economic conditions and balancing that with the needs of the community and its residents.

**Meeting Composition**

This section details the time, date, location, and demographic composition of those in attendance at each of first round meetings. Please note this data pertains to those individuals that participated in the survey.

**Public Meeting 1.1**

October 26, 2011 at Dixie Heights High School

Dixie Heights High School is located in Edgewood, Kentucky – a first ring suburban area of the county. The generational composition of those in attendance included 8 from the Silent generation, 7 from the Baby Boomer generation, and 2 from Generation X. Those in attendance felt that the information presented by staff was a little general and that the lines dividing each generation were not as definite but instead more applicable on an individual level.

The primary concerns of those in attendance were the provision of quality employment opportunities, followed by the provision of quality educational opportunities. Some of those present felt that new development should be focused in areas where it currently is through adaptive reuse and incentives. Attendees also indicated a desire to see more services and amenities located closer to where they live. A majority of those present from the Silent and Baby Boomer generations expressed a desire remain in their current housing as they move through their elderly years. Other issues that staff received feedback on include a desire for increased travel options out of the airport, consolidation of public administration and services, improving transportation infrastructure and providing more parks and open spaces for recreation. There was a faction of those present who felt that market conditions should dictate planning and development decisions.

**Public Meeting 1.2**

November 17, 2011 at the Kenton County Agriculture Extension Office

The Kenton County Agriculture Office is located near Independence, Kentucky within the suburban portion of the county. Seventy-two percent of those in attendance were from either the Silent or Baby Boomer generation. Generation X represented 24 percent of meeting attendees and four percent of meeting attendees were from the Millennial generation. There were minimal comments from those present regarding the accuracy of the information presented by staff during the meeting.
The primary concerns of those in attendance were the provision of quality employment opportunities, followed by the provision of quality educational opportunities. Many of those present were also concerned with issues regarding the lack of a vibrant urban area to attract and retain young professionals. One table noted a concern regarding the provision of services and amenities to the growing baby boomer generation moving into their elderly years. Other issues that staff received feedback on includes reducing our reliability on cars, increasing recreation opportunities and green space, provision of better transportation options and public services. There was a faction of those present who felt that government should not be part of the development process which should be left to private property owners and market conditions to dictate.

Public Meeting 1.3

November 29, 2011 at Calvary Baptist Church in Covington, KY

Calvary Baptist Church is located in Covington, Kentucky within the urban portion of the county. The generational composition of those in attendance included 59 percent of participants within the Silent or Baby Boomer generations, while 24 percent identified themselves as part of Generation X. Seventeen percent of individuals in attendance at this meeting indicated they represented the Millennial generation. Many of those present agreed with the information presented by staff. However, it should be noted that many of them associated themselves more closely with the description of a generation other than their own.

The three major concerns of those present at the meeting included provision of more transportation options, affordable housing, and attraction and retention of younger generations in the area. Many of those present who fell into the silent and baby boomer generation were concerned about the provision of medical services and amenities as they move into and through their elderly years. Other issues for which feedback was received included consolidation of government services and functions, as well as providing better access parks and open space.

Public Meeting 1.4

December 6, 2011 at Piner Elementary School in Piner, KY

Piner Elementary School is located in Piner, Kentucky which is a neighborhood of the unincorporated portions of Kenton County and is a rural area of the county. The generational composition of those in attendance included six from the silent cohort, 15 from the baby boomer cohort, eight from the generation x cohort, and two from the Millennial cohort. Approximately half of those present, agreed with the information presented by staff. Those that did not associate with the information presented felt that it was due to their type rural lifestyle.

The major concerns of those present included the preservation of farmland and agricultural lifestyles, better transportation infrastructure, and improvement in the quality of the school system. Other topics that feedback was provided on includes future provision of services which will allow the elderly to age in place, particularly in rural areas of the county, the desire to revitalize the urban areas of the county to attract and retain younger people in the labor force, and to provide better infrastructure and public services to the rural areas of the county.
Electronic Survey Response and Analysis Results (All four Round One meetings)

Below can be found specific information provided by respondents during the electronic survey administered at the beginning of all four of the Round One public meetings. The data has been categorized for analysis.

Demographic Profile

The typical attendee was male, white, middle aged to elderly, well educated, and financially stable. They were married, owned a single-family home and did not have children currently living at home (i.e. empty nesters). They have lived in the county for more than 10 years.

<p>| | |</p>
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Males</td>
<td>56%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Females</td>
<td>35%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Age 45+</td>
<td>59%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>College Degree</td>
<td>79%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Income $65,000+</td>
<td>56% (median Kenton County $54,049)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Married</td>
<td>68%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Single Family Home</td>
<td>85%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Residence Over 10 Years</td>
<td>65%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Transportation

The automotive vehicle is the primary form of transportation for respondents. A number of those surveyed however did indicate that they would use alternate transportation if option were improved. The attendees in favor of planning for a non-automobile community were a little higher than those that did not think we should.

<p>| | |</p>
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>&quot;Other&quot; on transport to work (This could reflect retirees)</td>
<td>12%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Use alternative transport (combining timelier, safer and more convenient)</td>
<td>51%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Plan for non-auto community?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>40%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No</td>
<td>36%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Neutral</td>
<td>24%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Employment

A majority of the attendees were employed and a very wide range of professions were represented. Just under half of the attendees were satisfied with career opportunities and employment was the biggest area that needed improvement.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Employment status</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Employed</td>
<td>59%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Retired</td>
<td>12%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Satisfied with career opportunities</td>
<td>49%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Employment opportunities need improvement</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>42%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No</td>
<td>25%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unsure</td>
<td>14%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Residence/Education

Education is important to a majority of the attendees and most are satisfied with the current housing choices on the market. A larger percentage of respondents think a community should provide housing options for everyone. Opinions on the housing choices for the elderly were mixed, perhaps due to a lack of knowledge on the subject.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Residence/Education results</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Good school system important in determining residence</td>
<td>58%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Good advance education system important</td>
<td>46%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Satisfied with housing options</td>
<td>61%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Community responsible for workforce housing</td>
<td>42%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Community not responsible</td>
<td>38%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Good housing options for elderly</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>27%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No</td>
<td>32%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unsure</td>
<td>27%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Recreation/Environment

A slight majority of attendees are satisfied with the recreational opportunities in the county. However, a good majority found items they would like to increase in the recreational arena. Environmental

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Recreation/Environment results</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
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</table>

Figure 6: Demographic Profile

Figure 7: Transportation Preferences

Figure 8: Employment Status

Figure 9: Residence/Education Response Results
issues are important to the attendees. Satisfaction of with awareness and protection is mixed. This also probably reflects a lack of knowledge on the subject.

Figure 10: Recreation/Environment Response Results

| Satisfied with recreational opportunities | 51% |
| Want some kind of additions               | 62% |
| Environmental issues important           | 51% |
| Satisfaction with awareness and protection |     |
| Yes                                       | 26% |
| No                                        | 28% |
| Unsure                                    | 21% |

Shopping/Entertainment

A good majority (64%) are content with the shopping and entertainment opportunities in the county, so nothing needs to be addressed here. It should be noted that over 50% of attendees were male so there may not be a good sample for this particular question. Shopping and entertainment scored between 6 and 12% on what needed to be improved in the county.

Figure 11: Public Meeting 1.4

Important Community Issues

Respondents were presented with six options as to what they felt were the most pressing issues the county currently faces.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Mtg. 1.1</th>
<th>Mtg. 1.2</th>
<th>Mtg. 1.3</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Shops</td>
<td>6%</td>
<td>11%</td>
<td>12%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Recreation</td>
<td>11%</td>
<td>10%</td>
<td>12%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Employment</td>
<td>42%</td>
<td>25%</td>
<td>14%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Housing</td>
<td>6%</td>
<td>13%</td>
<td>18%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Education</td>
<td>12%</td>
<td>20%</td>
<td>20%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No Answer</td>
<td>23%</td>
<td>21%</td>
<td>24%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Small Group Meetings

Following the first round of public meetings it was recognized that the composition of those in attendance and providing input was not representative of the county’s overall demographic composition. Several demographic groups were underrepresented within this public input gathering process. Noticeably, these groups included younger generations, African Americans, Hispanics, low income residents, young professionals, the development community, and those living in the southern portion of the county. In order to ensure the goals and objectives were representative of needs of the entire county, meetings were established with a number of community groups and organizations geared towards gathering and incorporating input from each of the underrepresented cohorts.

The format of these meetings varied. Some of them closely mirroring the format of the first round of public meetings where an electronic survey was done followed by a group discussion, while others were more of a forum for specific groups to have their input heard regarding specific issues and concerns. The input received is summarized below.

African American Community Meeting Summary

Staff conducted a meeting with representatives and individuals form the African American community on April 10th, 2012 at Lloyd High School in the Dietz Auditorium. There were ten (10) individuals present at this meeting with representatives from each of the four generational groups identified in the first round of public meetings.

Many of the inputs received during the meeting re-
volved around those concerns expressed by those in attendance during the first round of public meetings. Input received included the need for better employment opportunities and the provision of job training or education to match those opportunities. Concerns also included provision of more transportation options, maintenance of existing road infrastructure and city services, provision of affordable housing, and expanding then number of areas for recreation and public gathering.

Some of the concerns that were specific to this group included property maintenance and upkeep, ensuring public safety in parks and recreational areas, and provision of services which cater to low income residents such as homeless prevention, assistance to families in need, shelters and transitional living opportunities.

Get Learning And Start Succeeding Group (GLASS) Meeting Summary

This meeting was held on February 23, 2012 at the City Heights housing development in the City of Covington. The GLASS organization aims to mobilize low income residents in the county towards higher education and employment opportunities. There were 16 individual present, representing all but the silent generation. It should be noted that the majority of those present were from the Millennial generation (ten individuals) and Generation X (five individuals).

Similar to many other public meetings the primary concerns expressed were transportation and employment. Many of the individual present used the alternate forms of transportation, particularly bus service, as their primary form of transportation. Many individuals stated a desire to enhance and expand the current bus system to make it more convenient and accessible to those who utilize the service. Education was also a concern among this cohort. A little less than half of those present at the meeting did not have a high school diploma or GED equivalent.

Other concerns among this group included enhancing pedestrian safety, provision of quality educational opportunities for all ages, provision of affordable housing, as well as improving and expanding recreation opportunities.

Younger Generations

In order to capture the thoughts and ideas of those individuals from the county’s younger generation two meetings were conducted with high school students. One was held on March 8, 2012 at Scott High School and the other on March 22, 2012 at Notre Dame Academy. All of those present were from the Millennial generation.

Highlights of discussions with students at both schools provided a view different from that heard during the first round of public meetings as well as from other small group cohorts. Many of those in attendance felt that jobs and employment were not the most important issues faced by the county and instead listed shops and entertainment as their main concerns followed by provision of better and more areas for outdoor recreation.

A little over one-third of attendees did not feel that Northern Kentucky would remain their home when they got older, while one-third were neutral on the question and a little less than one-third of respondents did feel that Northern Kentucky would be their home when they got older.

Some of the other issues and concerns expressed by this group centered on developing more intimate and walkable communities, providing better aesthetics and building architecture, more convenient public transportation options and less automobile reliance to get to the destinations and places that they go to.

Land Development Council of the NKY Home Builders Association

Planning and future development are naturally interlinked and related to one another. As such, it was of great importance to staff to receive input from the development community regarding the creation of the Goals and Objectives. A meeting was held on March 21, 2012 at the Northern Kentucky Homebuilders Association.

During the meeting it was stated that home construction was down by 70 percent. Representatives of the home builders association were not in favor of any regulations which too specifically define what a product is supposed to look like without addressing the costs of those types of designs and development types.

Those present also felt that the Goals and Objectives of the comprehensive plan should be broad, addressing densities rather than land uses. They further stated that there should be a process which would allow for re-alignment of a proposed development plan that is not consistent with the comprehensive plan due to market forces. A great deal of discussion was centered around adjusting the plan to be less of a
rigid document but instead provide flexibility while maintaining the intent and purpose of the ideas and concepts contained within the document.

Another critical item that was discussed was a growing demand for apartments and condominiums. Those present stated that while there has traditionally been a negative stigma associated with these types of housing, the demand from the elderly and particularly the younger generation is continually growing at increased rates. It was also stated that the idea of concentration and not density should be explored in future development within the county.

Southern Kenton County

A meeting was held with residents of southern Kenton County to capture their input regarding continued development pressures and expansion into the largest existing rural and agriculture area of the county. The meeting was held on April 16, 2012 at the Piner Firehouse.

The major themes and input received centered on improving communication and access to the southern part of the county, promoting agri-business and agritourism, increasing awareness about farming and agricultural lifestyles. One of the major themes discussed revolved around preserving the rural heritage and environment that currently exists in the southern part of the county. Those present felt that development should be clustered where it is currently located in the more urban and suburban areas of the county. Other concerns expressed during the meeting include the need for access to public water and providing adequate fire protection services.

Figure 14: Southern Kenton County Small Group Meeting

Other Groups

Two other groups were targeted during the interim period between Round One and Round Two meetings; however, due to constraints including timing, these meetings were not successfully launched. These groups include the Spanish Speaking population of Kenton County as well as Young Professionals. Continued efforts have been made to reach out to these groups, particularly the Young Professionals, and it is hopeful that the input of these groups can be reached in later planning efforts.

Round Two

Summary

The second round of public meetings consisted of expert panel presentations and discussions featuring experts in different topic areas which were identified in the first round of meetings as important for further examination and discussion. There were two total public meetings held in Round Two.

The first of two meetings, titled Health Communities, focused on topics aligned with changing trends in the housing market and the health of those who live, work and play in Kenton County. This meeting began with a presentation from Michael Dinn, a housing market expert, followed by a discussion with panelists from the Northern Kentucky Home Builders Association (NKHBA), and the Local Initiatives Support Corporation (LISC).

The second Round Two meeting, titled Economic Competitiveness, began with a presentation by Janet Harrah, Senior Director at the Center for Economic Analysis and Development at the Northern Kentucky University and included a moderated discussion by seven panelists with different areas of expertise on the topic of being economically competitive. At both meetings a session for question and answer was opened up between the public and the panelists. A summary of the both meetings can be found below.

Meeting 2.1 - Health Communities

June 14, 2012 in Ludlow Elementary School - Ludlow, Kentucky

The meeting was attended by nearly 40 participants who listened to presentations and were provided an open-microphone opportunity to have their voices heard regarding the future of the county. Overall the meeting was a great success and provided participants, planners, and planning commission members
an opportunity to discuss issues in an effort to begin crafting the plans goals and objectives.

Panelists:

- Dr. Lynn Saddler, District Director of Health, Northern Kentucky Health Department
- Mr. Brian Miller, Executive Vice-President, Home Builders Association of NKY
- Ms. Kathy Schwab, Executive Director, Local Initiatives Support Corporation (LISC)
- Mr. Michael Dinn, Market Analyst, Dinn Focused Marketing

Facilitator:

- Amanda Van Benschoten, The Cincinnati Enquirer

Market Presentation

The Ludlow public forum began with a presentation from the plan’s market advisor, Michael Dinn of Dinn Focused Marketing, Inc. Mr. Dinn began a presentation where he discussed the boom in housing growth in Kenton County of the past few decades, how housing choices and development styles affect the health of an individual followed by a synopsis on current and future trends relating to growth in housing and the impacts on public health. He spoke briefly about the state of housing nationally and then in terms of the Greater Cincinnati market. Mr. Dinn’s research and data indicate local markets were not affected as harshly as the country as a whole. He continued by stating Kenton County homes are roughly valued at the same level as they would have been in 2003 or 2004, before the market sharply increased and then declined. Almost all of the housing stock in Kenton County is detached single-family residential, the current demand for housing is at levels consistent with what was occurring during 2004-2005, and that the current demand for housing types has fluctuated along with changing demographic trends. While demand for rental housing is increasing, Americans still feel a strong need to buy homes as part of the American Dream.

Panel Discussion

Mr. Dinn’s concluded his formal presentation and joined in the panel discussion with other local experts specializing in housing and healthy communities. The panel included Brian Miller of the Home Builder’s Association of Northern Kentucky (HBANKY), Dr. Lynne Sadler of the Northern Kentucky Health Department (NKHD), and Kathy Schwab of the Local Initiatives Support Corporation (LISC). Amanda Van Benschoten from the Cincinnati Enquirer was the guest facilitator for the panel and helped focus the discussion on topics relating to housing and health.

Mr. Miller started the panel conversation by discussing the changing market for housing in Kenton County. He began by stating at the height of the housing boom approximately 800 building permits were issued for single family detached residential units. Last year, only 174 permits were issued for the same type of development. He spoke of an anticipated “new normal” for home construction numbers to be somewhere in the range of the mid-500s each year after the market settled. He also spoke of the indicated national trend of declining amounts of square footage in new construction and revealed that Kenton County was experiencing the opposite of this trend. The HBAs local research is that larger home sizes are attributed to an increase in “move up” buyers rather than first-time homeowners.

Kathy Schwab noted that she has seen an uptick in the number of empty nesters and Millennials with a desire to leave the suburban and rural areas of the county to move into more dense urban areas to live lifestyles which have more convenient access to not only goods and services but which also feature walkable communities with built-in options for shopping, dining, entertainment and recreation. Ms. Schwab also pointed out that she felt that homebuilders were not focusing enough on the urban areas of the county. Ms. Van Benschoten asked the respondents what changing demographics mean for planning.
Ms. Schwab was the first to respond by stating she is seeing more empty nesters wanting to return to urban areas, downtown and Northern Kentucky’s river cities. She elaborated by saying young people are also reinforcing the trend. One example she provided described how 200 condominium units sold out in historically high crime areas such as Over the Rhine in the last few years. She described her experiences with people who want to walk and bike to amenities and how they are moving to areas with these features. She also said she felt the home builders did not focus on the urban core and encouraged planning and reinvestment in these areas.

Dr. Saddler responded to the question regarding changing demographics by stating today’s buyers want a high quality of life experience in terms of their community, not just within the four walls of their home. She continued by saying communities and home builders should work tougher to determine what amenities would attract home buyers from the quality of life perspective. She also asserted that changing marketplaces provide communities an excellent opportunity to step back, examine what trends have been successful, and plan for future growth.

Mr. Dinn concluded the panel discussion by speaking about the importance of senior housing in the local marketplace. He described our community as needing more of the valuable “move-down” housing options that are attractive to seniors or we risk losing the demographic to markets like Florida. He continued by saying the availability of “move-down” housing also helped free up larger homes for younger people looking to have bigger housing units for families. Mr. Dinn stressed the importance of introducing new smaller housing units to the marketplace to help with the housing cycle and provide more choices for younger demographics who might want an alternative to a large single-family home.

Questions for the Panel

Several questions and comments were brought forward ranging from the rigidity of zoning regulations to infrastructure upgrades needed for increased and varied mobility options. Panelists took time to discuss questions and respond to them as completely as possible in the allotted time. The experts also made themselves available after the meeting to answer questions on a one-on-one basis.

Meeting 2.2 – Economic Competitiveness

July 24, 2012 at Simon Kenton High School – Unincorporated, Kentucky

This meeting was attended by more than 70 people who listened to a presentation and panel discussion about Northern Kentucky’s economic competitiveness. Participants were then provided an opportunity to ask questions of the panel to further the discussion.

Janet Harrah, Senior Director for the Center of Economic Analysis and Development presented information about the status of our metropolitan region and how it compares to that of our rivals across the country. She stated the importance of focusing on bettering the entirety of the region instead of competing internally with one another. This presentation included a description of Northern Kentucky’s primary competitive peer regions for people and jobs as well as an emphasis on the fact that metropolitan areas are important because labor markets do not observe state lines or other governmental boundaries. Some of the other items she discussed were increasing the marketability of our communities to potential employers which includes provision of a highly skilled and educated workforce to fill the demand and needs of potential employers. Harrah argued that one of the key criteria in the jobs competition is talent. Her assessment suggested that if communities cannot provide needed workers, businesses will move to other metro areas that can. She emphasized that an educated workforce was key to attracting and retaining businesses and that quality of life was highly desirable to these educated workers. Harrah her presentation by saying Northern Kentucky is not growing as fast as its competitors and ranks tenth currently out of the noted 12 markets.

Panelists:

- Andrew Aiello, General Manager, Transit Authority of Northern Kentucky
- Adam Caswell, Vice President of Public Affairs, Northern Kentucky Chamber of Commerce
- Douglas Hinger, AIA, President, Great Traditions Homes
- Bill Scheyer, President, Vision 2015
- Jeanne Schroer, Executive Director, Catalytic Development Funding Corp. of Northern Kentucky
- Dan Tobergte, President and CEO, Northern Kentucky Tri-ED
Della Rucker moderated a panel discussion that followed. She began by asking members of the panel for the key factors that impact our ability to compete economically.

Dan Tobergte responded that highway accessibility is a key to attracting new industries and that historically most development has occurred between the Mount Zion and Richwood exits along I-71/75. He continued that those two exits in Boone County affect Kenton County, pointing to the importance of a metro-level approach. Jeanne Schroer responded by stating a high quality of life in a visually-attractive community with a wealth of housing options is critical for the area to compete. Douglas Hinger suggested that if we are planning for the next 20 years, the desires of consumers 20 years out should be a high priority. He described research that shows approximately 75 percent of the Millennial generation desires urban living, a market that is currently underserved in the Cincinnati region. Harrah added “the thing that’s most notable to me is that each panelist touched on something different. We talked about transportation, housing, education, and the cost of doing business; I think that highlights something important. There's a reason we call it a comprehensive plan. You can’t focus on just one or two areas and have an effective economy. It truly is a system. When we think about how we’ll be preparing our communities to compete going forward, we have to think about the full spectrum of things that impact our ability to compete for talent and for jobs. It’s not just one or two things.”

Rucker then asked panelists what communities need to offer to get potential businesses to look at them more closely.

Bill Scheyer responded by saying a community has to be able to attract and retain young professionals who traditionally look for areas with a significant number of amenities including active lifestyle options. He pointed to the Licking River Greenway initiative as a good start and indicated more would be needed to help make the area economically competitive. Adam Caswell agreed and stated young professionals today are choosing where they want to live first and then looking for a job, the direct opposite of the traditional model where jobs are obtained first. He stated these individuals want to live where there is a high quality of life and desire affordable urban housing options. He suggested that million dollar condos downtown are great but we also need affordable options for these young professionals. Andrew Aiello affirmed the sentiments about young professionals and stated that TANK is also noticing changes in preferences. He pointed to a study conducted by the University of Michigan Transportation Institute that reported 46 percent of 16-year-olds in 1983 had their driver’s licenses. The same study reports that only 31 percent of today’s 16-year-olds have obtained their licenses.

He also added, “We’re looking at the younger generation to try and get a feel for what their preferences are because they’re going to dictate the work that we do down the road. The general preference for younger folks to drive is declining. What does that mean for TANK and the larger group when we talk about development?” He suggested that this reduction and the trend it illustrates would be a significant need to be addressed through planning efforts like Direction 2030.

Questions and responses included:

1. Why some businesses that were interested in relocating to the Northern Kentucky region decided to go to another area of the country. Dan Tobergte stated that sometimes such decisions come down to one or two small factors. He also stated that one of the obstacles face by our region is the lack of college
educated individuals within our population, approximately 25 percent of which have a college degree compared to our rivals which feature 30-35 percent with a college level degree or higher. Della Rucker followed up this answer with a statement about talent of a workforce being a significant factor in these decisions. She stated that companies are now looking to locate in areas with a great deal of the type of talent that they are looking for so that they do not have to worry about bringing in their own talent to run their business. Jeanne Schroer further elaborated by stating that housing is an impetus in increasing marketability because a company wants to be able to offer employees a quantity of quality choices. Other items that were discussed pertaining to the question included provision for quality schools as a driver for housing and marketability of an area, increasing opportunities for social interaction and recreation, and provision of walkable neighborhoods.

2. Panelists were asked to address transportation challenges in the region and ways or solutions to improve mobility in the region. Dan Tobergte stated that Northern Kentucky would greatly benefit from better East and West connections. Andrew Aiello stated that cost is a major obstacle to providing service to a changing demographic that will feature a much larger concentration of elderly individuals. Adam Caswell stated that the number transportation priority in the region was the realignment of the Brent Spence Bridge.

3. What can the northern Kentucky region do to improve its cultural or recreation offerings to attract young talent and new employers. Bill Scheyer stated that improving the Licking Greenway and trail system, murals and art in the public realm would be a good start. Jeanne Schroer stated that improving the arts scene and creating concentrated areas for artist and craftsmen would also be a viable way to promote innovation and entrepreneurship.

4. What is the region or should the region be doing to develop or incubate a blue collar workforce, particularly those who feature a specific desired skill set. Bill Scheyer stated that the region is not doing enough to promote trade school or colleges that develop those types of specific skill sets that advanced manufacturing or industrial companies are looking for. He went on to state that the region needs to get individuals to start thinking about strategically about their future at a much younger age.

The public meeting concluded with a ‘final thoughts’ presentation from the panelists about three recommendations they would give to the planning commission. The responses centered on creating better regional partnerships, consolidation services, improving transportation options, creating better communities, and improving quality of life.

**Elected Officials Forum**

July 19, 2012 at the Edgewood Senior Center – Edgewood, Kentucky

One of the major stakeholders in planning and zoning are elected officials who are appointed by the public to make decisions based on the needs of the citizens in the jurisdiction they serve. Elected officials have a great understanding of the issues faced by their community and as such are a great source of input to identify and examine those issues faced by jurisdictions in different areas of the county.

Once input was gathered through the first two rounds of public meetings, from small group meeting participants, and from local experts; elected officials from each jurisdiction in the county we invited to a forum to provide their input as well as to discuss those issues or concerns currently faced by their communities. The meeting began with a brief presentation of the input received from the public to date followed by a large group discussion. Once the large group discussion was completed each jurisdiction was broken up into individual groups for more specific conversations about those areas that had not yet been addressed or were specific to their community.

**Large Group Discussion**

The large group discussion was centered on four questions dealing with walkable communities, housing, parks and recreation, and southern Kenton County. The questions asked along with the responses received are summarized below.

**Question 1: Walkable Communities**

What does walkability mean in an urban, suburban and rural setting?

The inputs received from this question encompassed the need to provide sidewalks in more densely populated urban and suburban areas of the county yet not require them in rural areas of the county as they are not utilized by enough of the population to justify the expenses of construction and maintenance. Urban areas of the county saw sidewalks as a necessity which connects neighborhoods providing mobility to community residents while first-ring suburban
and new growth suburban areas saw sidewalks as an amenity for recreation and exercise with the primary method of mobility being through the use of automotive vehicles. In these suburban areas a major concern was providing connectivity between cul-de-sac suburban communities. A major part of this conversation was centered around providing sidewalks on many of the main arterial thoroughfares in the county such as KY 16, KY 17, and Madison Pike.

Another issue discussed was provision of transit and options for mobility to those members of the community that do not have the ability or means of access to necessary goods and services to provide and sustain a healthy lifestyle. Also of concern was provision of funding for maintenance and upkeep of existing and future sidewalk and pedestrian infrastructure. Safety was also mentioned by a number of jurisdictions stating that lighting, signage, street crossings, and landscaping and buffering should protect and promote the well-being of those using the pedestrian system as well as those residing in the surrounding areas.

**Question 2: Housing**

Should our policies be configured to adapt to changing market trends?

The City of Independence stated that it would be feasible to adapt to changing market demands and trends and went on to further state that changing demographics and their specific needs will also play a large role in the style and design of new development and construction. They went on to state the need to education for those involved in the development process, including consumers, builders and developers. Crescent Springs felt that the free market and not government should determine what drives development.

**Question 3: Parks and Recreation**

Is a bold vision for a county-wide or regional park system appropriate?

Many of those in attendance were in favor of including the topic in the comprehensive plan and for future discussions, particularly those jurisdictions with existing park infrastructure that attracts a substantial number of visitors from outside of their jurisdiction, such as Covington, Taylor Mill and Ludlow. These jurisdictions, along with others present, felt that it was not fair for one jurisdiction to pay for the cost of upkeep and maintenance on an amenity that is enjoyed by and benefits the entire region. One of the issues with a countywide system for parks and recreation was finding sources of funding and how the budget for such an organization would be structured.

A few jurisdictions felt that those cities that did not have parks may not have them because the residents were not interested in paying for them. Most of those present saw a tremendous value in having areas for parks and recreations and the role they play in attracting and retaining residents in the county, particularly their importance to younger and future generations.

**Question 4: South Kenton**

How do we or should we preserve the rural heritage of Southern Kenton County?

The City of Crescent Springs stated that rural heritage and farming in the southern portion of the county was an important resource which should be preserved. They discussed possible usage of transferable development rights to as a way to combat loss of rural heritage and agricultural areas of the county.

The City of Independence stated that their jurisdiction contains both older farming homesteads and younger families new to the area which creates a rural and suburban conflict. They felt that they staff should work to preserve open space for at least the next five years. One of the issues described by the city of Walton was the decrease in the desire of people to farm their land which opens up the option for prospective buyers such as developers to purchase the unused property. The City of Fairview expressed the desire to keep southern Kenton County as an agricultural area zoned for agricultural uses but with some amenities such as grocery store and other essential retail and service providers.

**Individual Jurisdiction Discussions**

Following the group discussion, each jurisdiction was asked to provide additional, more specific input during a discussion period set aside for each individual jurisdiction in attendance. The input received is summarized below.

**Walton**

Representatives saw a trend of people living in life estates who do not want to leave the Walton area. They did however recognize a growing trend of individuals in the community examining different housing choices. The felt that some of the individuals in their city were rural people who want to be a city and city
people who wanted to be rural. One of the major problems in the area was the transition of farms to estate heirs which would then sell the property for development resulting in the loss of a great deal of rural land.

They felt that the rural lifestyle provided within the city is a healthy and active lifestyle though improvements could be made as to the provision of more information to the public about park locations, facilities, and community activities. They also mentioned the desire to see more pocket parks provided by developers. They saw funding as a major problem with providing the amenities and services that they would like to see.

**Elsmere**

Representatives from Elsmere felt that the city contains a good diversity of ages and races. They saw themselves as both an urban and a suburban community. The assets that they identified include a strong school system, a connected network of sidewalks, an industrial area, convenience to amenities, three small parks, and a good housing stock.

Opportunity areas and current issues include providing better connectivity to Turkeyfoot Road, improving mobility, increasing turnover of housing stock, and reducing the amount of automotive traffic along Garvey Road. Some of the obstacles they identified include a lack of funding and community support.

**Park Hills**

The demographic composition of the City of Park Hills currently features a large cohort of the elderly. The assets listed by city representatives include Devou Park, Trolley Park, the existing college campuses, access to Dixie Highway, the view of downtown Cincinnati, and the form and character provided by the traditional housing styles and architecture currently built in the city.

Opportunity areas and current issues include provision of more housing opportunities for seniors, redevelopment along Dixie Highway, the condition of low-income housing developments and crime, provision of more walkways and greater connectivity, and controlling mudslides. The major obstacles identified were funding shortages and lack of available land to make improvements.

**Ludlow**

The City of Ludlow has a unique built-up area within an established street grid system. Assets listed by city representatives include walkability and connectivity, multi-modal transportation opportunities, access to the river, close proximity to the interstate system and downtown Cincinnati, the existing city park system, older and historic housing stock, and the school system.

Opportunity areas and current issues include street and sidewalk maintenance, reconfiguring the football field which floods, housing maintenance and upkeep, vacancy in the business district, and increasing the number of trails through the city. The major obstacles identified were funding, acquisition of private property, personal property rights, and the current zoning on the specific properties.

**Erlanger**

City Representatives stated that the current trends in the City of Erlanger are an influx of generation X and millennial moving into the city while the aging population in the city remains in their homes. They viewed their city as a dense suburban community with pockets of rural areas within a disconnected development pattern.

Assets listed by the city include a strong and walkable core area, large amount of undeveloped land in prime locations, an interconnected park system, a strong corporate and industrial tax base, access to the airport, and the school system.

Opportunity areas and current issues include lack of access and walkability to disconnected areas of the city, incentives to bring in development or redevelop existing and potential commercial areas of the city, improving the condition of existing multi-family apartments in the core area of the city, property maintenance and upkeep, preserving their existing current industrial and commercial land uses, and provision of greater connectivity and multi-modal transportation options. Major obstacles include lack of funding, privately owned property, lack of available land and built-out areas of the city.

**Independence**

City Representatives stated that the city contained both a rural and suburban feel. The assets listed include the existing industrial park, affordable housing options, the school system, and good connectivity in the west side area of the city.

Opportunity areas and current issues include lack of connectivity in the east side of the city, no housing...
stock which accommodates the elderly, oversaturation of residential land uses, better development quality, a lack of commercial retail/service and office uses, access to emergency services, and provision of urban, suburban and rural areas within a unified community fabric. The obstacles identified include community involvement, sources of funding, and rezoning specific areas of the city.

**Crestview Hills**

City characteristics that representatives identified the city as suburban which includes a substantial number of condo units with a large cohort of empty nesters which features an influx of visitors during the day due to the location of schools, office uses, and commercial retail and service uses. The assets listed include a diversity of housing stock and styles, access to the hospital and parks in neighboring communities, good walkability within pockets of the community, and the Towne Center.

Opportunity areas and current issues include a lack of sidewalks located in the older areas of the City of Crestview Hills, poor access across major roadways, sidewalk maintenance, location of cell towers, and provision of greater multi-modal transportation options. The obstacles identified were sources of funding along with zoning regulations, which would allow for greater density.

**Lakeside Park**

The assets listed by city representatives include a good system of pedestrian infrastructure, quality housing stock and access to the interstate, parks, and good services.

Opportunity areas and current issues include better maintenance of the sidewalk along Turkeyfoot Road, improving pedestrian safety, better access to buses within the cul-de-sacs. The major obstacle identified was funding for desirable projects and improvements.

**Crescent Springs**

City Representatives stated that the current trends in the City of Crescent Springs include an aging population along with an influx of younger families. They view their city as a suburban community. The assets listed a good network of pedestrian infrastructure, existing commercial areas, parks and open spaces, a good mix of housing stock and styles, and access to the interstate and multi-modal transportation options.

Opportunity areas and current issues include improving connectivity along arterial roadways and walkable pockets of the city, improving the condition of aging housing stock, providing bike lanes, reducing the stock of multi-family housing units, and adding amenities to existing parks. Obstacles include lack of funding, topography of specific areas of the city, availability of land, and consensus from property owners.

**Fairview**

City representatives view the city as a rural and agricultural community. Assets listed include a family-oriented lifestyle, current agricultural zoning, availability of land, and close proximity to goods and services.

Opportunity areas and current issues include offering more recreation opportunities, maintenance of city owned property, property maintenance, location within a food desert, and provision of some type of pedestrian infrastructure. Obstacles include funding sources and economics.

**Round Three**

Following the second round of public meetings, a draft of the goals and objectives for the comprehensive plan was crafted based on the input received during meetings with the public, focus groups, elected officials and the steering committee. The draft consisted of ten interrelated goals to be used as a policy guide for future growth and development in Kenton County. Each goal contained a set of measurable objectives to be used as a benchmark to measure progress for each goal.

The intent and purpose of the Round Three of public meetings was to present the draft of the goals and objectives to the public as well as major stakeholders and provide them an opportunity to give input and make comments. A draft was sent to a number of organizations and two public meetings were also held during this round. The format of both public meetings consisted of an open house forum with a short presentation kicking off both meetings. One station was set for each of the goals and objectives. The public was provided with both yellow and blue post-it notepads. The blue post-it notes were to be used to indicate those areas where an individual or entity agreed with or had positive input to provide regarding a goal. The yellow post-it notes were to be used to indicate those areas where an individual or entity disagreed with or had negative feedback to provide regarding a goal. A summary of the input received
from stakeholder as well as the public can be found below. The summary is categorized by each of the ten goals.

**Goal 1: To provide a variety of housing types throughout Kenton County to meet the needs of all generations and income levels.**

**Stakeholders:**

The City of Fort Wright suggested a wording revision for Objective D.

The Homebuilder Association felt that goal one provided an opportunity to add critical language. Regarding the stated objectives, they felt that new development should be encouraged as much as infill and redevelopment. They also stated that new employment centers should also be encouraged, tax regulations should be examined to accommodate new growth, and pointed out a loss in revenue for legislative bodies stemming the recession and a reduction in the possible amount of tax revenue generated from property taxes.

**Public Comments:**

Specific responses included a statement that Objective A was highly appropriate in the river cities and that it would effectively reduce urban sprawl and provide new, walkable communities. It was stated that Objective C would help to save tax dollars and public resources and that Objective E would help provide balance for public and private partnerships.

General comments included allowing the market to determine housing and development, locating residential areas closer to schools, that private and public partnerships are socialism, and to allow for flexible regulations to accommodate innovative development designs.

**Goal 2: Create and maintain places with a unique character to enhance livability**

**Stakeholders:**

The City of Ft. Wright suggested a wording revision of both Objective B and Objective D.

The Home Builders Association of Northern Kentucky stated that all four of the stated objectives in Goal Two should be approached without parity in mind in order to not have a "priced-out" effect for potential homebuyers.

**Public Comments:**

Specific comments from the public included high levels of satisfaction with Objective B and Objective C. It was also stated that Objective C would help eliminate excessive zoning regulations. In reference to Objective D it was stated that places which would attract talent would be free from regulation, allowing talented people to use their property without restriction. Some individuals felt that it was important to recognize arts as a form of economic development which, along with social events and entertainment, is a much needed asset to attract younger generations into the area. Other comments included questions concerning financing of arts and public spaces and statements regarding the role of government should not be to attract jobs or support the arts.

**Goal 3: Strive to attract new jobs and retain existing jobs.**

**Stakeholders:**

Vision 2015 felt that some language could be added to reference the creation of new jobs. They felt that the goal should address job creation, retention/ expansion (retraining), and attraction, all three of which are quintessential to job growth.

The Homebuilders Association believe there needs to be a new goal that addresses the economic results of legislative and regulatory bodies’ decision making upon the economy of Kenton County.

**Public Comments:**

Specific comments from the public included bringing vocational schools back to Kenton County, ques-
tions regarding competitiveness of a business with increasing high taxes and overhead costs, partnering up with schools to offer incentives to help reduce the financial burden on students, and the need to diversify educational opportunities. It was also stated that provision of incentives, as state in the objectives, was a socialist concept.

Other general comments include making sure to evaluate the competitive edge of our neighboring states, reducing government employees, creating deregulated business environment, making Kentucky a right to work state, and ensuring that the county takes advantages of highway improvement incentives.

**Goal 4: Promote and protect the history and culture of agriculture.**

Stakeholders:

The City of Fort Wright suggested a wording revision omitting the word, to protect from the goal.

The Home Builders Association of Northern Kentucky felt that there needs to be an objective that states the need for thoughtful analysis of the economic benefit of agriculture remaining in an agriculture use and the economic benefits of that agriculture being developed. They also stated that it is ultimately the property owner’s right to remain in agriculture or to use their property for development. More specifically they felt that regarding Objective A, an economic analysis should be considered in preserving “rural character”. Regarding Objective B, they felt that in some cases this may be actually beneficial and help agriculture out but not in all cases. They stated that without an economic analysis the goal and stated objectives were operating upon conjecture. Regarding Objective C, they felt that the objective was vague and asked what barriers were being addressed; regulatory, statutory, legislative, taxing?

Public Comments:

Specific comments from the public included Objective A and Objective C as being very important to achieving the overall goal. Some individuals felt that the goals was very appropriate and that it was important to preserve farmland and promote agricultural land uses. There were also specific comments regarding partnering with local schools and other organizations to promote local food and to allow for the sale of raw milk to from farm to customer.

Other comments included statements that the market will protect economic development activities that deserve protection, that urban farms are not economically feasible, preservation should be the choice of the private landowner, and that preserving rural areas and woodlands are very important to the overall beauty and attraction to our region.

**Goal 5: Improve the ability of residents to live an healthy lifestyle.**

Stakeholders:

The Northern Kentucky Health District felt that Objective A should either omit the physical activity or make it broader and state “to decrease chronic diseases, and improve air and water quality.” They also felt that Objective E should be broader to “encourage community-design that fosters healthy environments that encourage active living, access to healthy foods, and clean air to decrease chronic disease including obesity.”

The Home Builders Association of Northern Kentucky stated that the objectives in this goal are a “build it and see what happens” model. They stated that there is much study of the issues causing health problems, many of which point to socioeconomic, poverty, and other issues outside of the built environment. Walking trails can cost as much as $1MM to construct and thousands upon thousands of dollars to regularly maintain. The built environment has utilized sidewalks and has created more multimodal opportunities for decades, however, the issues of coronary disease, diabetes and other major health issues have increased in the face of such improvements. They felt that all of the objectives in this goal need to receive a more in depth evaluation as the goals seem to point largely to the built environment as a solution to issues that are not caused by the built environment.

Public Comments:

Specific comments from the public include making Objective A more general and broad to include improving public health. Others also stated that Objective A was critical to mitigate an negative health effects stemming from an auto-dominant culture.

General comments include starting with providing sidewalks and bike lanes, stimulating the interest of people in all age groups, looking at whether the issue is more of a social issue than a built environment issue, that the role of government should not be cater to interests, needs or age needs of individuals, the need for better access to public transit, to im-
prove connectivity to developable land, and to locate schools closer to population centers.

**Goal 6: Enhance and expand the effectiveness of the transportation system by promoting multimodal approaches that address the needs of all users.**

Stakeholders:

The City of Ft. Wright felt that Economy should be added as a goal category to Objective B.

The Home Builders Association of Northern Kentucky felt that a focus on the economy is lacking as it relates to the goal. They suggested that transit needs be met through better analysis of public transit usage. What drives the inability for potential transit users to use the systems is the expense of living in particular areas of Kenton County. If a potential user is pushed out of the county as a matter of cost of living they locate in exurbs which are not able to maintain public transit other than park and rides.

Public Comments:

Specific comments from the public include questions about the strategic locations for transit that are mentioned in Objective C. It was also stated that objective C was critical for promoting business and that Objective D was critical to reduce traffic. Objective B was stated as a much needed objective. Other specific comments included construction of a freight only span through the region to separate traffic, using the existing rail system to reduce freight, upgrading specific roads to increase mobility, and to provide bus service to all libraries and along Decoursey Pike.

General comments include provision of better transportation options for senior citizens, to develop better east and west connections throughout the county, and to ensure that new improvements are used and necessary.

**Goal 7: Provide adequate access to natural systems to encourage outdoor activities for all generations.**

Stakeholders:

The City of Ft. Wright felt that the stated goal should be revised to omit “promote” for the word “provide.” They also felt that Objective A should be revised to omit “secondary” for “local.”

Public Comments:

Specific comments from the public include being more specific as the type of access mentioned in Objective A. Some individuals stated that Objective B supported Health as well as the Mobility goal category. Others had questions regarding the location of amenities listed in Objective B, would they be located on private land, Right-of-Way, etc.

Other comments included leaving these decisions up to individuals, encouraging development around parks, that parks are not necessary and that there are already plenty of them in the county, and there were questions regarding the funding of these areas.

**Goal 8: Strive to achieve a balance between development and preservation**

Stakeholders:

Kenton County Conservation District stated that the goal should include restoration to development and preservation.

Sanitation District 1 stated that the goal should include an alternative term for green infrastructure, integrated stormwater systems.

Home Builders Association of Northern Kentucky stated that with Objectives A through C, the priorities of preservation need to be balanced with the idea of private property rights, which is not saying that anything should be done to harm the environment but that there has been a good balance between private property rights and the environment in the past and that should be fostered into the future. They felt that areas should not be barred from development if the property owner wishes to develop areas because of the wants of individuals who do not own that property. They felt that pertaining to Objectives B and E, there are already numerous regulations created by the Environmental Protection Agency, Army
Corps of Engineers, the US Fish and Wildlife Service and others that protect these systems. Furthermore, they stated that the regulations that are being created by these agencies are accelerating and that any discussion born out of the comprehensive plan regarding these systems needs to include a deep level of understanding regarding these regulations as they already have a damaging effect upon the economy of Kenton County and can only be expected to further impact the economy in the years to come. They felt that there is no need to promote these issues as they are a mandate by the federal government and will be implemented whether they are promoted or not.

Public Comments:

Specific comments from the public include that Objective B, which stated providing flexibility on sites with constraints seems like a contradiction. Other stated that Objective B makes no sense. It was stated that Objective A is unnecessary as there is already a mechanism to protect those areas. Some individuals stated that Objective A was necessary and that those areas called out should be identified as soon as possible.

Other comments include the need to keep government out of development, to allow the individual to decide what to do with their property, questions regarding the budget and financial resources to achieve the goal, and questions regarding the ownership of parks and natural areas.

**Goal 9: Celebrate the unique identity of communities within Kenton County.**

Stakeholders:

The City of Ft. Wright stated that Objective A should include a different term for historic preservation.

The Home Builders Association of Northern Kentucky stated that regarding Objectives A through D it seems that there is written interest to support the older suburbs, urban areas, and rural areas and that growing suburbs seems to be ignored in the goal. The felt that we should encourage growing suburbs and the economic vitality they create.

Public Comments:

Specific comments include support of Objective D, providing more services to the rural and remote areas of the county, to focus on economic sustainability in the urban areas, to promote better communication, to allow the market to determine development, and to promote the rights of individuals. It was also felt that there needs to be a balance between preservation and modernization as too much preservation can be a bad thing.

**Goal 10: Encourage cooperative governance.**

Stakeholders:

Vision 2015 stated that one or more of the objectives could identify cooperation “within and outside” the county boundaries. They felt that while it may be implied, it is important to call out that cooperation does not end with the county.

Home Builders Association of Northern Kentucky stated that while examining the regulatory barriers that slow growth and hamper economic viability is a good thing, legislative barriers as well as financial incentives need to be explored and implemented to keep Kenton County competitive in the face of neighboring states with lower taxes, fewer regulations, and more responsive and accountable government.

Public Comments:

Specific comments include statements that Objectives B thru E were critical to the success of the plan. Other statements included removing legislative barriers, providing taxing tools and incentives and removing the Kentucky Planning Commission so that individuals would only have to deal with the Kenton County Planning Commission.