Community facilities encompass a wide array of resources dedicated to protecting and enhancing the daily lives of Kenton County residents. These assets range from schools to emergency services or libraries to health care. Each addresses a different need for residents such as education or safety and their presence in the community is vital to the area's strength and economic competitiveness. Community facilities are present in each of the county’s four sub areas, although to a lesser extent in the rural sub area as lower population density necessitates fewer services. This chapter provides an overview of community facilities as of early 2013.

Education

The presence of high quality education facilities are a major contributor to an area’s overall appeal. One of the more direct impacts of quality of education is that it becomes a major consideration for where families with school-aged children or those considering starting a family choose to establish their home. Another important consideration for economic competitiveness in the area is attracting employers to a region. Studies have shown that having an educated workforce is vital to attracting and retaining businesses. If these companies cannot find the well-educated workers they need, they will move to a more competitive region.

Primary and Secondary Schools

Kenton County has a wide array of schools ranging from early education centers to post-secondary colleges and technical schools. Figure 7.1 displays locations of all parochial, private, and public schools in Kenton County along with their respective school districts. The map reveals that most educational facilities are located within the more populated areas of the county.

Figure 7.2 provides more detailed information on the specific school districts and how they perform as ranked by the Commonwealth of Kentucky. The Kentucky Department of Education provides information regarding the performance of each public school district in the state, on an annual basis. Rankings for private and parochial schools are not compiled by the state.

The table reveals that Kenton County has a wide range of recorded academic achievement across the county. Scores show the county has both the highest and lowest performing school districts as determined by the Commonwealth’s standards. Again, this information is important because it can drive everything from where families choose to live to the regions companies choose to locate. The community should strive to keep high achieving schools in high ranking percentiles. Concurrently, the area could focus improvement efforts in cultivating school districts that need improvement.

Recent School Facility Improvement Trends

Over the last few years there have been some facility replacement, additions, and modifications to schools within the county but no new schools have been added. The most significant change across the publicly reported districts was the construction of a new Turkeyfoot Middle School that replaced the old building.

Other improvements across the area focused on renovation of existing facilities and space addition for new classroom facilities. This renovation-centric approach is likely best attributed to the global economic downturn that has affected development across the board. Development overall has been reduced and people have not been moving to new areas as rapidly as pre-2007. Conversations with each public school district indicated no new facilities were planned or anticipated to be needed within the immediate future. As such, potential growth areas should be addressed and identified to analyze the need for new educational facilities in the future. A full list of educational facility improvements since the mid-2000’s can be found in Appendix 2 near the end of this chapter.

Other Education Facilities

Kenton County is also home to several other educational facilities ranging from pre-schools to colleges.
Figure 7.1: Schools in Kenton County

Source: Planning and Development Services of Kenton County
These facilities, illustrated in Figure 7.3, impact the area’s quality of life in different ways. Preschools and learning centers, for instance, are usually desired to be close to either a person’s home or place of employment. Good options in these facilities can help make an area more attractive for people to locate. Colleges and other continuing education institutions can also help bring people to an area in addition to being a catalyst for redevelopment and reinvestment. The following subsections describe existing educational facilities in Kenton County.

**Preschools**

As previously described, preschool childcare options will ideally either be located close to the guardian’s home or work. Locating facilities in this manner aids the guardian in ease of child drop-off and helps reduce the need for the guardian to make a lengthy detour during their daily commute. Having residents that live and work all over the area, it is important that adequate facilities are dispersed throughout the county. Analysis of these education facilities indicates that they are fairly evenly distributed across the urban (10), first ring (12), and suburban (9) sub areas. The rural sub area, however, may be underserved with only one preschool facility. The current and future needs associated with preschool or daycare facilities should be examined and recommendations for new facilities if needed should be made.

**Postsecondary Education**

Providing residents with high-quality options for continuing education also adds to an area’s overall quality of life. As mentioned in the introduction of this education section, the presence of a highly-trained workforce is a major factor businesses examine when deciding whether to stay in or relocate to an area. Kenton County is served by two postsecondary facilities; Thomas More College and Gateway Community and Technical College.

**Thomas More College**

Thomas More College is a small, liberal arts college located in Crestview Hills, just south of I-275 along Turkeyfoot Road. The facility is home to nearly 2,000 full and part-time students with 75 percent of those students living off campus in the community. Thomas More offers 36 undergraduate, two graduate programs, accelerated adult programs for working professionals, and online educational opportunities. The college attracts students from around the world to the area and research shows that approximately 80 percent of alumni live in the Greater Cincinnati area after receiving their degrees.

Thomas More serves as a good example of how academic institutions can have a positive impact on an area’s quality of life. The college itself attracts talented students both from the community and outside the region. Once they have completed their education a vast majority of these students choose to stay in the area, thus contributing to the local economy in several ways.

**Gateway Community and Technical College**

Gateway Community and Technical College (GCTC) is a part of the Kentucky Community and Technical College System, which is comprised of 16 colleges in more than 70 campuses around the state. The college offers daytime, evening and weekend classes and two-year associate degrees for students wishing to complete a degree program. GCTC operates on three campuses around Northern Kentucky, two of which are in Kenton County (Covington/Park Hills, and Edgewood).

GCTC’s Kenton County locations facilitate a variety of degree programs as well as the administrative offices for the college. The Edgewood campus is located on Thomas More Parkway adjacent to St. Elizabeth Medical Center and specializes in healthcare studies. The Covington/Park Hills campus contains the college administrative offices, bookstore, a variety of degree fields, and general office space. This campus will be phased out as new facilities go online.
Figure 7.3: Other Educational Facilities

The information in this product is accurate for planning purposes only.

Source: Planning and Development Services of Kenton County
Recently, the college began exploring development of a new $80 million urban campus in downtown Covington. A planning study was completed in June 2012, and the college has undertaken a six year capital plan to establish funding for construction. The college expects to serve approximately 5,000 students annually by the year 2020. Again, this postsecondary education option impacts the community, although in a different way than Thomas More. GCTC’s decision to locate in Covington was strategic and is designed to serve as a catalyst for reinvestment in the urban core. The college expects to begin moving operations from the Covington/Park Hills facility to the new Covington campus in late 2013.

**Emergency Services**

Emergency services make up an important part of an area’s community facilities. Police, fire, and even emergency dispatch coverage could mean the difference between life and death for those in need of the respective service. Figures 7.5 and 7.6 display locations of police and fire facilities within the county and their underlying districts.

**Fire Districts**

Kenton County is serviced by 16 fire districts and 24 fire stations. Analysis of Figure 7.5 reveals that most of the fire stations are located within the northern two thirds of the county. Only the Piner-Fiskburg and Kenton & Community fire stations are located south of KY 536.

**Police Districts**

The county is home to 14 police districts, each with its own station. For a majority of the northern half of the county, police services are provided by individual districts such as Elsmere, Ft. Mitchell, or Covington. Two agencies have jurisdiction over the entire county, the Kenton County Police Department stationed on Madison Pike just north of KY 16, and the Kenton County Sheriff which is stationed in the Covington courthouse. The County Police predominantly patrol southern Kenton County but will assist other departments throughout the county when requested. The Sheriff patrols the county and provides administration of taxes, vehicle inspection, and court security. The Kentucky State Police also have jurisdiction to operate within Kenton County and do so as needed.

A significant change in police protection occurred in 2008 when the cities of Crescent Springs and Erlanger merged their police departments. Today police protection is provided to the two cities by a unified department.

**Emergency Dispatch**

Historically the county has been served by three emergency dispatch centers; Covington, Erlanger, and Kenton County. In September 2012, the Covington dispatch center closed and Kenton County assumed responsibility for calls originating in the city. Erlanger’s dispatch center remains in service and facilitates calls for over half of the county. Conversations have recently been held to consolidate the dispatch centers into one; however no decision has yet been reached.

**Libraries**

Kenton County residents are served by three library branches throughout the county. These include the Covington branch in Covington, the Erlanger Branch in Erlanger, and the William E. Durr Branch.
in Independence. The Independence branch was newly constructed in 2007 and replaced the facility that was located near the Cherokee Plaza shopping center. Renovations, such as the addition of over 12,000 square feet of additional space, an enhanced children’s department, an enhanced local history department, new drive-thru, larger public meeting room, and a new computer lab are currently taking place at the Covington branch. Construction of the $9.2M renovation is anticipated to be complete in early 2013.

Healthcare
The trend in healthcare continues to be consolidation of outpatient services, physician specialists, and diagnostic treatment facilities in close proximity to main hospital centers. St. Elizabeth, Northern Kentucky’s largest healthcare provider and only network hospitals, has experienced several changes, both physical and in their overall mission, since the mid-2000’s. In 2008 the healthcare provider merged with St. Luke Hospital, gaining facilities in neighboring Boone and Campbell counties. In 2010 the hospital opened a new Covington campus near 12th Street and I-71/75 and closed their facility on East 20th Street. St. Elizabeth Physicians was also established in 2010 after a merger with Summit Medical Group and Patient First. This merger expands St. Elizabeth’s network to nearly 250 physicians and over 1,100 employees, rendering it one of the region’s largest employers.

Summary
Community facilities will continue to play a vital role in the quality of life of Kenton County residents throughout the timeline of the Direction 2030 plan. Efforts should be taken to strengthen existing amenities and welcome new opportunities when and where appropriate. Providing residents with additional choices and options for these different facilities should be carefully considered.
Endnotes

8. Gateway Community & Technical College. Urban Campus Community Briefing. Presentation. https://docs.google.com/open?id=0B34_k3oW_RkaMXN0QXZTV2EtBE
Appendix 2: School Facility Improvements Since 2005

Kenton County School District

- Turkeyfoot Middle School constructed a new 134,000 sq. ft. facility to replace the former building located on the school campus. The new facility was designed with a goal toward net zero annual energy usage.
- Scott High School reconfigured entry to the school by adding a new front entrance.
- The Scott/Woodland campus school is currently in the process of a major renovation that will include several additions. This project also involves major site improvements for the Woodland Middle School.
- Scott High School developed outdoor athletic facilities which include a new football field, softball field, field house, soccer field bleachers, locker rooms, weight room and concession stand.
- Simon Kenton High School completed renovations to all athletic facilities and major site improvements.

Erlanger-Elsmere Schools

- Howell Elementary school is currently reorienting entrances to the building and reconfiguring interior space for a new office area.
- Lloyd High School is currently on phase 3 of a 5 phase improvement program that started in 2007 and will conclude in approximately 2016.
- Phase 1 of the program added 20,000 square feet of classroom and lab space.
- Phase 2 added just over 11,000 square feet in the form of a commons, kitchen, and cafeteria.
- Phase 3 is currently under construction and will add approximately 19,000 square feet of classrooms and labs.
- Beginning dates for phases 4 and 5 are dependent on financing and are roughly estimated to be complete in 2016.

Beechwood Independent School District

- Acquired and demolished neighboring properties to add more parking.
- Added administrative offices for the entire district and classrooms for the elementary school.
- Demolished part of the existing elementary school to add six more classrooms and a field-house that serves athletics for all grade levels.
- Presently the district is working on adding six more classrooms for the elementary school, a band room for all grade levels, and commons for all levels.
- Beechwood has plans to add a new kitchen facility and six additional classrooms within the next five years.

Parochial Schools

- Covington Catholic High School added the Schott Building athletic facility, soccer field, and acquired the Covington First Church of the Nazarene building.