Planners get input on new comprehensive plan


The Kenton County Planning Commission and its NKAPC staff are engaged in an 18-month planning effort designated Direction 2030: Your Voice. Your Choice. The final product will be a new comprehensive plan that will guide Kenton County development over the next 20 years. Direction 2030 provides the framework within which citizens may voice their thoughts and hopes for the plan’s foundation.

Planning Commission and staff began the effort late last year by collecting information from the public regarding their thoughts and visions for the next 20 years. Round 1 included four meetings conducted to garner public input and to get participants thinking about the future; over 200 citizens attended. Information from these meetings is being incorporated now into goals and objectives which will guide the plan’s preparation starting late this year.

For the sake of analysis, information from these initial sessions is being considered within the context of the county’s four main generational groups: the “Silents” (1927 - 1945); the “Baby Boomers” (1946 - 1964); the “Gen Xers” (1965 - 1981); and, the “Millenials” (1982 - ???). This corresponds with data being collected from other parts of the country. The challenge was to begin determining how Kenton County residents’ thoughts compare to national figures.

Meetings were scheduled at various locations throughout the county to get the perspective of people in different community types; urban; older suburban; newer suburban; and rural. Some subtle differences were noted in these different communities.

What attendees said

A few major themes were expressed across the county, the most frequent of which was that of jobs and employment. Citizens used keypads during the meetings to reveal that approximately 55 percent felt that employment / jobs needed the most improvement locally over other options including education (15 percent), outdoor recreation (14 percent), shops and entertainment (8 percent), and housing (8 percent). Attendees stated that having good employment options was critical to the county’s future and that more needed to be done to attract big companies and more jobs. They also suggested that more employment options would help the county retain younger workers who often move elsewhere to find the jobs and lifestyles they seek.

Other suggestions included the need for road and water and sewer service improvements. Better telecommunications in the form of cellular service and broadband Internet was also vocalized. Attendees felt strongly that the airport needs to be improved and revitalized as it is a critical piece of infrastructure that impacts the success of the region directly.

Differing viewpoints were also expressed regarding the need for these services, the use of tax dollars for improvements, and why a new plan is needed. The size and role of government was also questioned.

Planning Commission members and staff received valuable input from those who attended these meetings. Analysis showed that 69 percent of those attending were from the two oldest generations (Silents and Baby Boomers) and 31 percent were Gen Xers and Millennials. This breakdown compares the county’s actual generational breakdowns of 36 percent of Silents and Baby Boomers and 64 percent Gen Xers and Millennials, a fact that planners will have to take into account as the plan is developed.

Future opportunities to be heard

This initial feedback sets the stage for future opportunities to comment and help guide Kenton County’s future development.

The second round of public meetings is set to begin in late February/early March 2012 and will be announced on nkapc.org, facebook.com/#!/Direction2030, and direction2030.org. Visit any of these online resources for results from Round 1 meetings, to stay up to date on future rounds of meetings, and to provide comments on Direction 2030.

Residents discuss their visions for Kenton County’s future during the Round 1 forum at the Cooperative Extension Service office.