Report to the Residents of South Kenton County
April 2014

Analysis by
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The Two Kenton Counties
Charting a Path to the Future

• In 1996, an open public forum was held at which more than 100 residents of South Kenton County participated in a discussion on “Planning for the 21st Century.”
1996 Residents’ Hopes for the Future

• Preserve the green space and rural character of South Kenton County.

• Maintain farming and farm land as integral components of life in South Kenton County.

• Improve key aspects of the infrastructure, in particular, the quality of roads and access to water and sewers in South Kenton County.

• Change how development occurs in order to preserve the rural lifestyle and the rural landscape of South Kenton County.

• Create more opportunities for citizens to influence decisions related to planning for the future of South Kenton County.
The 1998 vision for South Kenton County

The **vision** for the southern portion of Kenton County is one of residential growth centered around existing small communities where public services are currently available or planned for future upgrading, and where existing roads, with appropriate upgrades, can efficiently and safely move traffic. Residential development will be encouraged to occur in a way to minimize impacts on the rural landscape and the functioning of agricultural enterprises..... Finally, the vision includes maintaining a strong and viable agricultural economy in the southern portion of Kenton County.
In 2013, a South Kenton Citizens group was formed to assess how trends over the last 15 years might have modified residents' attitudes and preferences with respect to development patterns.
Where do respondents live?

Nearest Elementary School of Respondents

- Piner
- Whites Tower
- Kenton
- Ryland
- Walton Independent
- Other
Reasons for moving to or staying in South Kenton County

- To be close to family
- To farm for commercial use
- To retain the family farm
- To raise food for my family
- To experience a rural lifestyle
- Easy access to employment
- Other

2013 survey
Uses of Land in South Kenton County

- Commercial agriculture operation: 28.4%
- Subsistence farming for family's own use: 13.4%
- For preservation/conservation purposes: 29.1%
- Other: 29.1%
A quick summary to this point

- A significant proportion of respondents value the rural lifestyle and the opportunities to produce food that is available to them in South Kenton County.
- To this is added the very strong ties to place for the significant number of participants who were born and raised in South Kenton County, sometimes in the same house or on the same property where they now live.
- Furthermore, South Kenton County offers "seclusion from the suburbs" and a place to raise a family with room for kids to play.
When I think of a rural landscape I very much think of:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Wide areas of open land, pastures or wooded tracts</td>
<td>76.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Small operating family farms (Under 50 acres)</td>
<td>70.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Large operating farms (50 acres or more)</td>
<td>54.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Large single home lots (5 acres or more)</td>
<td>35.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stand alone small stores and service businesses</td>
<td>29.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Groupings of small stores and service businesses around small communities</td>
<td>17.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Large supermarkets or discount stores with large illuminated parking lots</td>
<td>2.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Large office buildings; Clustered housing developments with less than one acre lot sizes; Factories or warehouses</td>
<td>2.0% or less</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Attitudes and beliefs

- It is important to keep agriculture a viable part of South Kenton economy." (SA = 68.7%) (A = 23.5%, Total = 92.2%)

- "It is important to maintain the rural character of South Kenton County." (SA = 70.7%) (A = 19.3%, Total = 90.3%)

- "I am satisfied with my access to commercial and retail stores where I live." (SA = 49.3%, A = 37.5%, Total = 86.8%)

- "Subdivisions and other residential development should be directed away from land which is being used for preservation or conservation purposes." (SA = 52.2%) (A = 31.7%, Total = 83.9%)

- "Subdivisions and other residential should be directed away from land which is being used for agriculture." (SA = 49.6%, A = 30.4%, Total = 80.0%)

- "If residential and retail development occurs around these existing communities, it should maintain the small community character of "these places." (SA = 41.8%, A = 38.0%, Total = 79.8%)
Attitudes and beliefs

• "If there is unrestricted residential growth in South Kenton County, I am concerned that my property taxes will have to increase to pay for the cost of new services." (SA = 51.6%) (A = 26.9%, Total = 78.5%)
• "Roads in South Kenton County need significant improvements (e.g., widening, straightening, side ditch maintenance)." (SA = 33.6%, A = 35.3%, Total = 68.9%)
• "Internet access in South Kenton County is sufficient for my needs." (SA = 26.8%, A = 36.1%, Total = 62.9%)
• "Existing regulations that permit a minimum lot size of one acre is appropriate zoning for South Kenton County." (SA = 30.5%, A = 32.2%, Total = 62.7%)
Attitudes and beliefs

• Subdivisions should be allowed in undeveloped areas." (SD = 36.2%, D = 26.3%, Total = 62.5%)
• "South Kenton County needs to have more employment centers (e.g., clusters of large employers)." (SD = 28.5%, D = 32.1%, Total = 60.6%)
• "If the opportunity arose to sell my farm for development, I would take it." (SD = 42.9%, D = 16.0%, Total = 58.9%)
• "If residential and retail development occurs around these existing communities, it should allow these communities to grow more." (Total Agree = 43.2%; Unsure = 33.4%; Total Disagree = 26.4%)

• "Residential and retail development in South Kenton County should only be permitted around the communities of Piner, Morning View, Nicholson and Visalia." (Total Agree = 28.3%; Unsure = 33.3%; Total Disagree = 28.4%)
A Quick Summary

The responses to these attitude statements continue to reinforce the clearly stated and strong value attached to maintaining the rural and agricultural character of South Kenton County.

The only uncertainty is whether residential and retail growth, if and when it occurs, should be clustered around the existing small communities.
Other comments

• The single largest set of other comments related to a desire to "please" keep South Kenton County "just as it is."

• "Keep it rural. When it's gone, it's gone."

• Keep the "country feel"
Other comments

- Public water is a "number one concern" as described by one respondent, while others noted that access to or better cell phone, cable and high speed Internet service is needed, especially for those who have a home businesses.

- In terms of road improvements (e.g., widening, maintaining), respondents identified several roads that need particular attention in order to make them safer, but as one respondent said, "We need roads wide enough and safe enough for school busses."
Other comments

• Many also commented on the desire to see more parks and recreational opportunities.

• Most wanted "a better park system with opportunities for children to play and participate in outdoor activities."

• Indeed, parks with trails, bike and running paths as well as a fishing lake are the key types of recreational choices participants would like to see in South Kenton County.
Summary

- The results of the 2014 survey of South Kenton County households show that the pattern of development since the 1998 plan reflects the strong desires of residents to maintain the rural and agricultural character of this area.
Summary

- South Kenton County is more than a place, it is "home" and where many find they can "enjoy the land with family."

- South Kenton County's rural landscape is a part of the residents' "rural identity."
Summary

• "The main thing is to keep this area rural, yet a close knit community. The rural area is what drew us here. It is already getting "busy" and feels as though we are losing the "country" feeling."

• While those who live in the "other" Kenton County might find such a sentiment difficult to comprehend, a significant majority of the South Kenton County respondents would nod their head in agreement.
For these respondents, there is only ONE South Kenton County.

And it is a rural and agricultural landscape.
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For more information contact