

# 2019 Comprehensive Plan

## City of Highland Heights, Kentucky

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# 2019 Comprehensive Plan City of Highland Heights, Kentucky



Re-adopted by the Highland Heights Planning Commission February 12, 2019  
Pursuant to KRS 100.197

Original Adoption 2012 Comprehensive Plan - May 14, 2013

Original 2012 Comprehensive Plan prepared by:







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## Chapter 1 Introduction, 2019

**H**ighland Heights commissioned the 2012 Comprehensive Plan update and the 2019 re-adoption of the Plan to move the City forward as a leading Northern Kentucky community. The resulting product provides a long-term vision for community land use and development.

The Highland Heights Planning Commission re-adopted the Comprehensive Plan in 2019 per KRS 100 after finding that neither a comprehensive review of the original data nor amendments were needed to the plan.

Plan recommendations are linked to priority planning issues as defined by a resident-based Steering Committee. The remainder of this chapter summarizes how this Comprehensive Plan was created.

### Previous Plans

The original Comprehensive Plan was prepared in 1990. Updates were prepared in 1995, 2000, 2006, and 2012.

These plans were created based on KRS 100.183 requirements. All communities with Planning Commissions are required to prepare comprehensive plans to guide the development of public and private property.



## Mandatory Updates

KRS 100.197 requires planning commissions to amend or readopt their comprehensive plans every five years. The adoption of the 2012 Comprehensive Plan Update and its readoption in 2019 fulfill this requirement.

## Plan Differences

Differences exist between the 2006 and 2012 Comprehensive Plans. The 2012 Comprehensive Plan was the first update prepared since Northern Kentucky University (NKU) was annexed into Highland Heights.

Extensive policy consideration is provided for joint planning and implementation of mutually beneficial goals with NKU.

Mixed-use development is emphasized beyond the 2006 Plan in recognition of Highland Heights' potential for achieving high-quality, sustainable development.

The 2006 Plan directed new investment in three redevelopment districts. This policy is retained with more detailed policy guidance added for land use, design and circulation.

Redevelopment district boundaries were modified to better reflect current development opportunities and community needs.

The 2012 Plan offered for the first time a detailed Action Plan (see Chapter 5) to guide City led implementation efforts.

## Planning Participants

### Steering Committee

City Council asked for volunteers to serve on a Steering Committee during a televised public

meeting. A similar advertisement was published in a local newspaper.

All individuals that responded to Council's request were granted a position on the Steering Committee.

## Interviews

Over 15 professionals from more than ten organizations were consulted to gain a better understanding of Highland Heights' unique development opportunities and to ensure Plan policies were deemed viable by subject matter experts. Organizations consulted include:

- Campbell County Economic Progress Authority
- Campbell County Planning and Zoning
- Developers
- Kentucky Transportation Cabinet
- Neighborhood Foundations
- Northern Kentucky Area Planning Commission
- Northern Kentucky Tri-County Economic Development Corporation (TRI-ED)
- Northern Kentucky University (NKU)
- Northern Kentucky Chamber of Commerce
- South Bank Partners
- Transit Authority of Northern Kentucky
- Taft Law

## Additional Public Input

Residents were invited to review and comment on draft Comprehensive Plan policy during an informal open house meeting held on March 9, 2012.



## Highland Heights Comprehensive Plan

Summary information boards were displayed for each Comprehensive Plan chapter.



Participants viewed draft Comprehensive Plan materials at their leisure. The City Planner and Steering Committee members were in attendance to listen, record public comments and answer questions.

The Planning Commission held a public hearing on March 12, 2013 to gain public input prior to the Plan's adoption.

A public hearing notice was advertised in the Cincinnati Enquirer and the Campbell County Recorder. Neighboring communities and the Campbell County Fiscal Court received email notification of the public hearing.

Draft Comprehensive Plan chapters were available on-line before the Plan was adopted.

### Policy and Organization

#### Policy Formation

Comprehensive Plan policy was developed, refined and ultimately agreed upon by the Steering Committee. Six Steering Committee meetings were held over a one year period.

Consensus building exercises were used to generate ideas and select preferred courses of action during Steering Committee meetings. The resulting policies included in this Plan represent a broad-based consensus and cover

a range of topics including land use, transportation and redevelopment.

#### Plan Organization

The main body of the Comprehensive Plan is organized around three policy chapters, those being Chapter 2 Land Use, Chapter 3 Transportation and Chapter 4 Redevelopment.

Chapter 5 Action Plan summarizes policy generated throughout Chapters 2, 3 and 4 in concise table format. Chapter 5 is provided to increase the user-friendliness of the document and to assist City-led implementation of the Plan.

#### Policy Precedent

Policy found in Chapter 2 Land Use and Chapter 3 Transportation is generally broad and is applicable city-wide. Policy in Chapter 4 Redevelopment is generally specific and is applicable only to one of three redevelopment districts – Town Center, Gateway East and Gateway West.

The more specific policy established in Chapter 4 builds upon the general policy set in Chapters 2 and 3.

Chapter 4, being more specific, takes precedent. Planning Commission and zoning applicants must consider the Comprehensive Plan in its entirety, especially Chapter 4, when determining project and zoning application compliance.

For example, land planned as “Commercial / Business” on Map LU3 Future Land Use in Chapter 2 accommodates a wide range of commercial uses including fast food restaurants and large retail establishments.



Planned “Commercial/Business” uses are more narrowly defined in Chapter 4 Redevelopment. Fast food restaurants and large retail establishments are not desired in Gateway East and West even though both redevelopment districts have areas planned as “Commercial /Business”.

## Plan Themes

Five main planning themes emerged during the planning process. These themes transcend all plan goals and are universal in their importance. They consequently help to explain the broader vision established for Highland Heights.

### Embrace Redevelopment

Highland Heights has extensive potential for growth given its strategic location and access to I-275, I-471 US 27 and NKU. Unfortunately, the City’s growth potential is hindered by a lack of vacant land suitable for development.

Redevelopment is necessary in strategic locations for Highland Heights to achieve sustainable growth and remain competitive in the greater Cincinnati region. Chapter 4 is devoted to redevelopment.

### Maximize Opportunities

It is important for future land development to provide maximum long-term benefits to the City consistent with Comprehensive Plan goals and policy for land use and the built environment due to a scarcity of readily developable land.

### Be a “College” Town

Highland Heights is embracing its role a “college” town now that NKU is incorporated into the City.

The City must continue to leverage NKU and its numerous resources and benefits for community advancement. The City needs to work with NKU on issues of mutual importance as part of a strategy to improve the status and attractiveness of both parties.

## Planning Issues Shift

It is quite clear that Highland Heights is reaching a level of maturity where new growth will not be the predominate issue.

Instead, redevelopment, land use conversion, collaboration with the Northern Kentucky University, fiscal health, traffic management, pedestrian safety, and quality of the community environment will be the dominate concerns of planning and development for future years.

**Source:** Comprehensive Plan, 2006 Update, City of Highland Heights

The steering committee identified standards and expectations for mixed-use and pedestrian-friendly development as a means to offer residents, faculty and students alike a desirable and attractive off-campus environment.

### Seek Partnerships

Conventional government funding programs are out of money or have been greatly reduced placing pressure on local governments to fund projects locally.

Lacking adequate funds and staff, Highland Heights cannot implement this Plan alone. Seek partner support at a variety of levels to move this Plan and the City forward.



Currently available grants typically go to applicants with high local matches and multi-jurisdictional support.

### **Be Proactive**

Additional planning and hard work is necessary to implement goals after the Plan is adopted.

To assist with implementation, the Comprehensive Plan provides short-term strategies to achieve its long-term vision and goals. See Chapter 5 Action Plan for details.

### **Planning Issues**

Steering committee members were asked to brainstorm a list of planning issues that, due to their community importance, needed to be addressed in the Comprehensive Plan update. Planning Issues defined by the Steering Committee follow:

#### **Diversify our Economy**

- Need more businesses to keep resident tax burden low.

#### **Redevelopment**

- Redevelop strategically located underutilized areas such as Gateway East, Gateway West and Town Center to promote enhanced economic activity and community vibrancy.

#### **Be Pedestrian and Bicycle Friendly**

- Enhance Highland Heights as a pedestrian, “nature friendly” community with a walkable town center and with bike paths and walkways linking the community together.
- Close missing sidewalks gaps.

#### **Preserve Hillside**

- Preserve hillsides and other sensitive natural features, recognizing the positive benefits such areas provide including protecting private property and public health, safety and welfare in addition to enhancing the City’s community image.

#### **Enhance Image / Code Enforcement**

- Clean-up properties, particularly rentals, along major roadway corridors to improve the community image.
- Apply a streetscape on US 27 in Gateway East and its vicinity to create an attractive address that appeals to residents, promotes a stronger identity and encourages mixed use development and social interaction.

#### **Enlarge City Boundary**

- Annex to the northeast and southwest of the city for new residential development.

#### **More Single Family Housing**

- Develop 18 acres behind Lowe’s as residential, park and trails.
- Develop 16 acres near Highland Heights Garden Center as residential, park and trails.
- Seek higher-priced housing units that target officials from Highland Heights’ major employers.

#### **Mitigate Traffic**

- Reduce congestion and backups on US 27 and I-471.
- Explore ways to mitigate NKU event traffic.



### Population

According to the US Census Bureau, the City gained 2,331 new residents between 1990 and 2000 after three decades (1970, 1980 and 1990) of negative population growth.

The growth between 1990 and 2000 represents an approximate 55% increase in population over a ten year period. Population growth over this period is partially supported by new housing units developed from 1990 and 2000. See Tables IN10 and IN11.

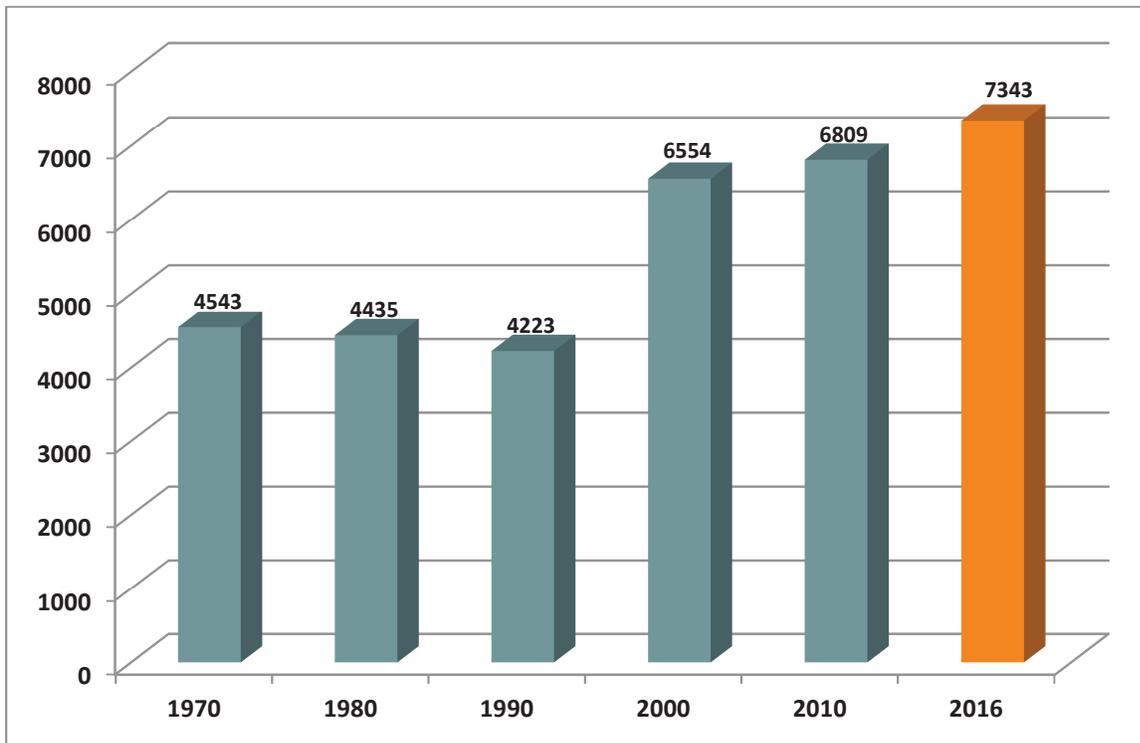
Working with the US Census Bureau, it was determined that some NKU students living on-campus may have been mistakenly counted as Highland Heights' residents during the 2000 US Census. NKU was annexed into Highland Heights in 2008.

This explanation may also account for why the City's population increase from 2000 to 2010 of just 255 residents was lower than expected. NKU was annexed into Highland Heights before the 2010 Census and Highland Heights' population should have increased by the number of on-campus students or over 2,000.

Table IN1 provides Highland Heights' historical population from 1970 to 2010. According to DemographicsNow, Highland Heights' population is estimated to grow to 7,343 persons by 2016 representing a gain of 534 additional people since 2010.

NKU's presence with thousands of students living on- and off-campus lowers Highland Height's median age and median household income relative to Campbell County and the State of Kentucky as Tables IN2 and IN3 on the following page demonstrate.

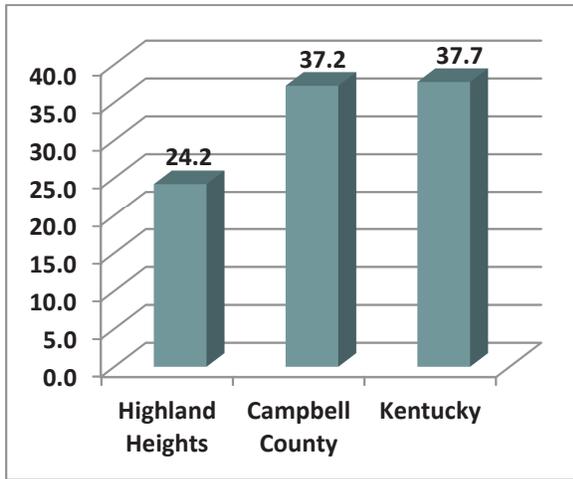
**Table IN1 - Highland Heights Population**



Source: 2006 Highland Heights Comprehensive Plan (1970-2000), NKU Center for Economic Analysis & Development (CEAD) (2010) and DemographicsNow for 2016 population estimate.



### Table IN2 - 2010 Median Age



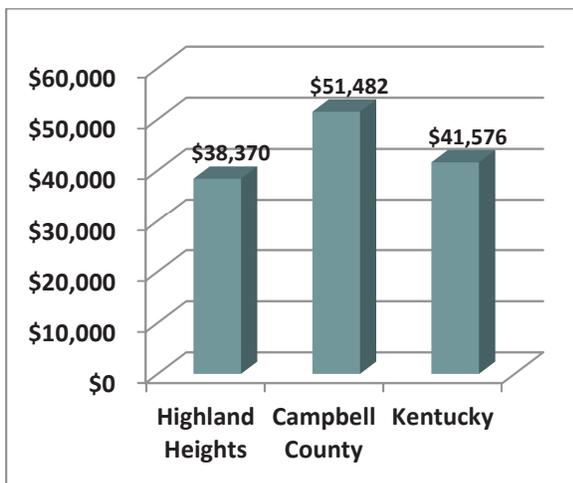
Source: NKU Center for Economic Analysis & Development (CEAD) Demographic Look-Up

On- and off-campus student housing in Highland Heights dramatically lowers the City's 2010 median age compared to Campbell County and the State as Table IN2 shows.

Highland Heights has significantly more residents in the "18 to 21" age bracket as a percentage of its overall population than do Campbell County and the State of Kentucky, as Table IN4 on the next page demonstrates. The same holds true for the "22 to 24" age bracket.

This concentration of young adults in Highland Heights places unique public service and facility needs on the City.

### Table IN3 - 2010 Median Household Income



Source: NKU Center for Economic Analysis & Development (CEAD) Demographic Look-Up

The City is encouraged to work with NKU to determine how the "18 to 21" population group can be best served as residents of Highland Heights. A few recommendations in this regard are made later in this Comprehensive Plan.

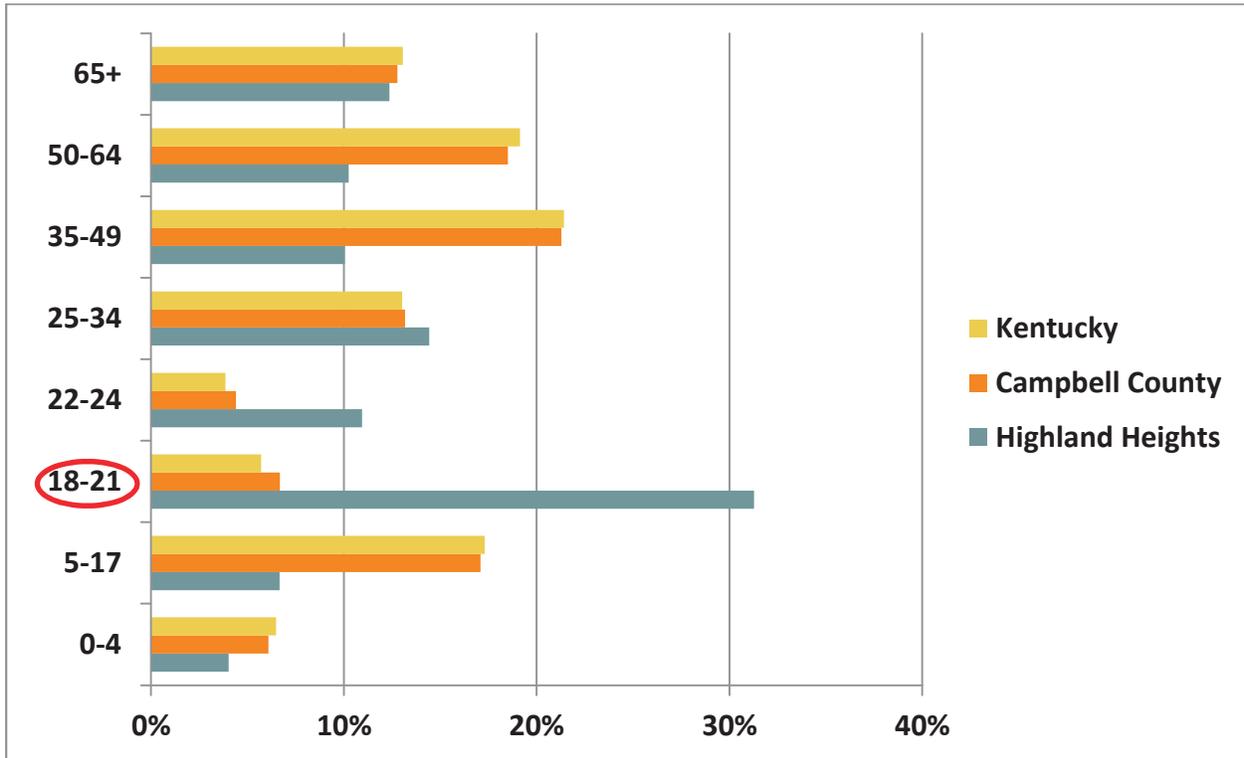
Table IN3 shows Highland Heights' 2010 median household income compared to Campbell County and Kentucky.

As shown in Table IN3, residents at the county and state level enjoy higher median household incomes than found in the City.

This is somewhat misleading because it is the large concentration of young adults living in Highland Heights that lowers the City's median household income. Households collectively headed by older individuals likely enjoy higher median household incomes than reported in Table IN3.



**Table IN4 – 2010 Highland Heights Age Breakdown**



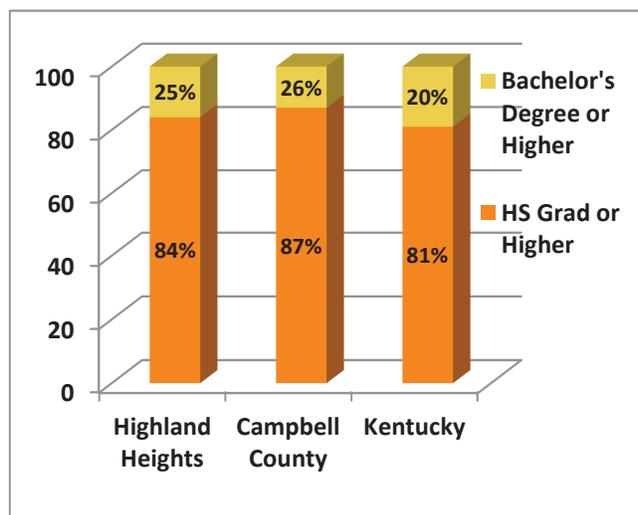
Source: NKU Center for Economic Analysis & Development (CEAD) Demographic Look-Up

Educational attainment of City residents, as shown in Table IN5, is comparable with levels found in Campbell County and Kentucky as a whole.

Due to NKU and its educated workforce, the City is in a unique position to increase the percentage of its population that have obtained a bachelor’s degree or higher.

Achieving this goal will require the provision of additional housing units that provide modern layouts, styles and amenities. As mentioned in the next section, obtaining new housing will be a challenge but can be achieved through strategic redevelopment and annexation.

**Table IN5 - 2010 Educational Attainment**



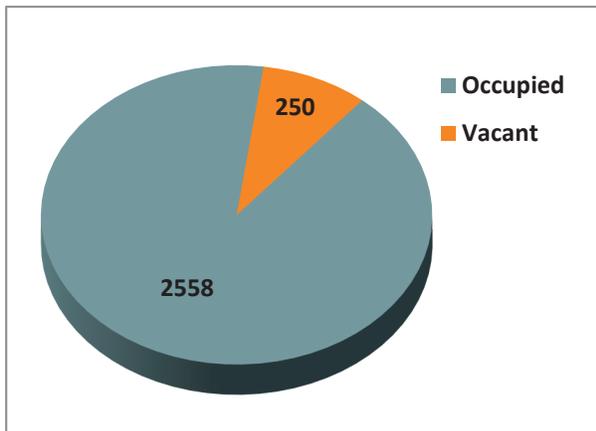
Source: NKU Center for Economic Analysis & Development (CEAD) Demographic Look-Up



## Housing

According to the US Census Bureau’s 2006-2010 American Community Survey, Highland Heights has 2,558 housing units. Of those, 250 or 9.8% were vacant.

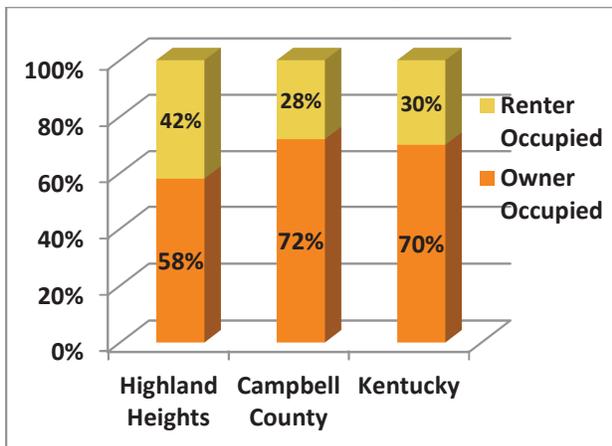
**Table IN6 - 2010 Housing Occupancy**



**Source:** US Census Bureau, 2006-2010 American Community Survey, Table DP04

Highland Heights’ percentage of owner-occupied housing units is lower than the County’s and the State’s as shown in Table IN7 below. This difference is expected due in part to the transient nature of young adults renting in Highland Heights while attending NKU.

**Table IN7 - 2010 Housing Tenure**



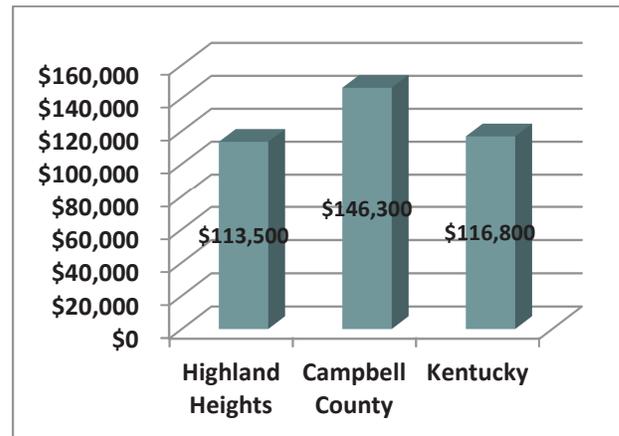
**Source:** US Census Bureau, 2006-2010 American Community Survey, Table DP04

Table IN8 shows the 2010 median housing value in Highland Heights at \$113,500 is slightly less than Kentucky’s and close to \$33,000 less than Campbell County’s.

Table IN9 on the next page indicates that Highland Heights has a greater amount of its overall owner-occupied housing stock valued between \$50,000 and \$149,999 than does the County and State.

Fewer units at higher price points may place Highland Heights at a disadvantage relative to the County and State at attracting and retaining higher income households.

**Table IN8 - 2010 Median Housing Value**



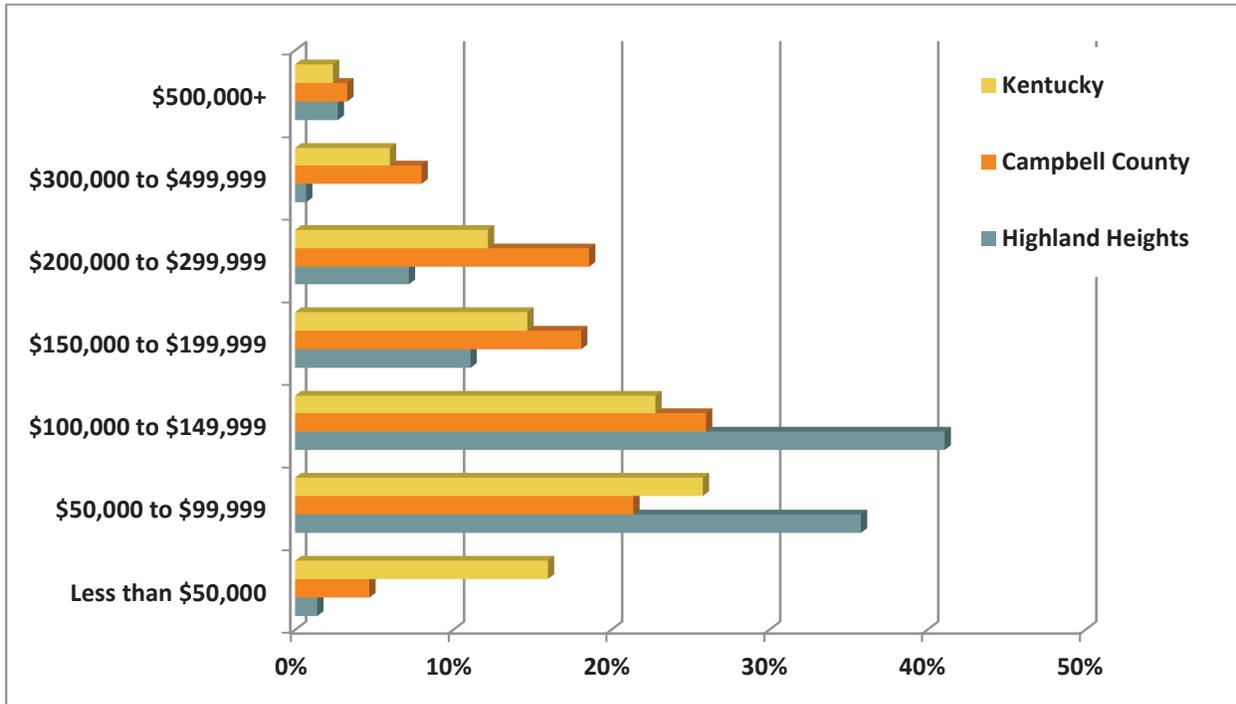
**Source:** US Census Bureau, 2006-2010 American Community Survey, Table DP04

It is important to ensure future housing construction adds new units with values from \$150,000 to \$499,999.

It is a legitimate goal to provide a well-rounded housing inventory that offers broad range of styles and price points.



Table IN9 - 2010 Housing Values of Owner Occupied Housing



Source: US Census Bureau, Table DP04 2006-2010 American Community Survey

More affordable housing relative to the region offers opportunities for first-time homebuyers and young families to buy in Highland Heights.

On the negative side, single-family housing at lower price points can attract investors looking for rental properties.

Some investors have found Highland Heights particularly attractive due to the potential of renting to college students.

Student rental off-campus housing is a growing concern for some longer-term residents. Action is needed by the City and NKU to promptly address negative off-campus student housing issues when they arise.

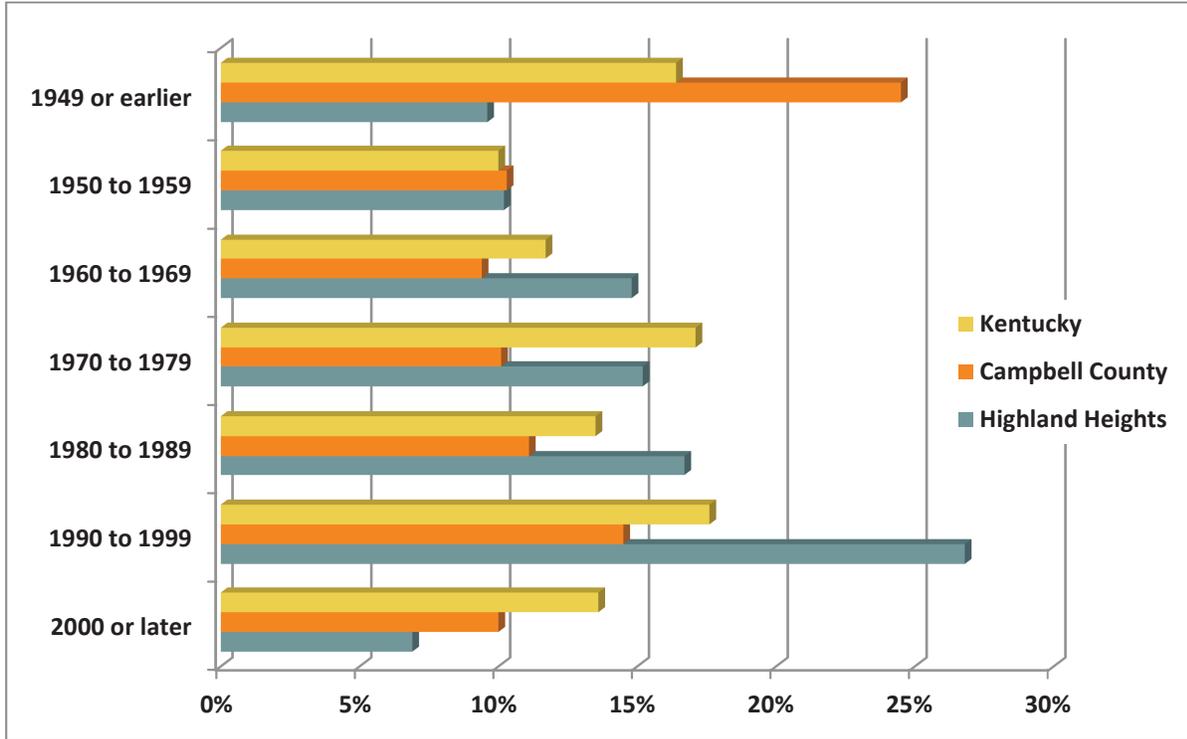
Table IN10 indicates Highland Heights has a greater percentage of housing structures built between 1980 and 1999 and fewer structure built from 2000 on than does Campbell County and Kentucky.

This trend of fewer new housing starts is expected to continue in the future due to limited land availability for new residential development in Highland Heights.

This trend could be countered through annexation and redevelopment. Such actions are encouraged to ensure Highland Heights continues to provide market competitive housing.



**Table IN10 - Year Housing Structure Built**



Source: US Census Bureau, Table DP04, 2007-2011 American Community Survey

**Table IN11 – Highland Heights Housing Permit Trends**

Year	Single Family	Multi-family	Year	Single Family	Multi-family
1991	19	98	2002	2	5
1992	4	84	2003	1	5
1993	9	72	2004	3	5
1994	3	72	2005	4	0
1995	4	74	2006	3	0
1996	2	34	2007	3	0
1997	5	22	2008	3	0
1998	0	33	2009	2	0
1999	3	33	2010	4	0
2000	1	11	2011	5	0
2001	2	0			

Source: 1991-2000 - 2000 Highland Heights Comprehensive Plan, Menelaos & Associates. 2001 – 2011 - censtats.census.gov



It can be inferred from Tables IN10 and IN11 that Highland Heights' population increase was largely driven by multifamily housing development over the 1990 decade.

Multi-family housing developed in practical response to Highland Heights' prime regional location, its excellent transportation infrastructure and NKU's growth coupled with limited on-campus housing opportunities.

Single-family development has remained largely insignificant throughout the 1990s and 2000s due to limited land availability.

Remaining opportunities for single family housing are limited to undeveloped lots scattered across established subdivisions.

As a result, the trend of low number of new single-family housing starts beginning in the early 1990s is expected to continue.

The multi-family development boom of the 1990s has been generally inactive since 2000. This slow growth trend is expected to continue as Highland Heights lacks land to fuel additional multi-family housing development.

The lack of large parcels suitable for housing development has driven new housing construction outside of Highland Heights where land is more plentiful such as in Wilder and Alexandria.

The recent inactivity in new housing development indicates annexations are needed. The data also suggest that redevelopment of older and obsolescent housing is a possible strategy to maintain a viable housing supply.

## Additional Information

Additional economic, housing and population data can be obtained from the US Census Bureau and NKU's Center for Economic Analysis and Development (CEAD) (<http://cead.nku.edu/>).

CEAD's data resources can be accessed at <http://nkybythenumbers.nku.edu/>. This webpage contains several regional economic indicators.





## Chapter 2 Land Use

The Land Use Chapter analyzes existing development patterns and provides city-wide land use and design recommendations to guide growth and redevelopment in Highland Heights.

This chapter also provides policy directives for quality of life enhancements. They include reservation of adequate land for housing, retail amenities, and employment opportunities, protection of natural features and preservation of green space.

The Land Use chapter also considers the long-term needs for public facilities and institutions. As the home of Northern Kentucky University (NKU), Highland Heights has a large amount of public-owned offices, grounds and facilities.

Much of Highland Heights' housing inventory was constructed prior to the construction of I-275, I-471 and NKU. The presence of regionally significant infrastructure will likely drive land use change and redevelopment in Highland Heights.



### Existing Land Use

Land Use distribution is shown on Map LU1: Existing Land Use on page LU3.

**TABLE LU1 - EXISTING LAND USE  
ACREAGE**

Existing Land Use	2012 Acres
Single-Family Residential	460
Multi-Family Residential	66
Commercial	57
Public/Institutional	324
Parks/Recreation	12
Vacant Land	375
Business Park	33

Single Family Residential is the largest land use in Highland Heights followed by Public/Institutional uses. NKU represents the majority of acreage assigned to Public/Institutional uses.

Highland Heights’ suburban development pattern contains cul-de-sac neighborhoods and strip commercial development along major thoroughfares.

As a bedroom-community founded in 1927, Highland Heights lacks a central organizing feature such as a downtown or civic center. However, this Plan supports ongoing efforts to create a town center along US 27 between Johns Hill Road and Nunn Drive.

NKU’s central quad design offers a highly pedestrian environment and serves as an exception to an otherwise suburban land use pattern.

### Single Family

Single Family residential land use is shown as “yellow” on Map LU1 and includes detached houses, duplexes and triplexes. The majority of housing in this category is located in platted neighborhoods.



### Multi-Family Residential

Multi-family use represents attached housing, typically for rent, with at least four dwelling units per structure. Newer, larger multi-family developments are found near NKU providing additional sources of housing for students.

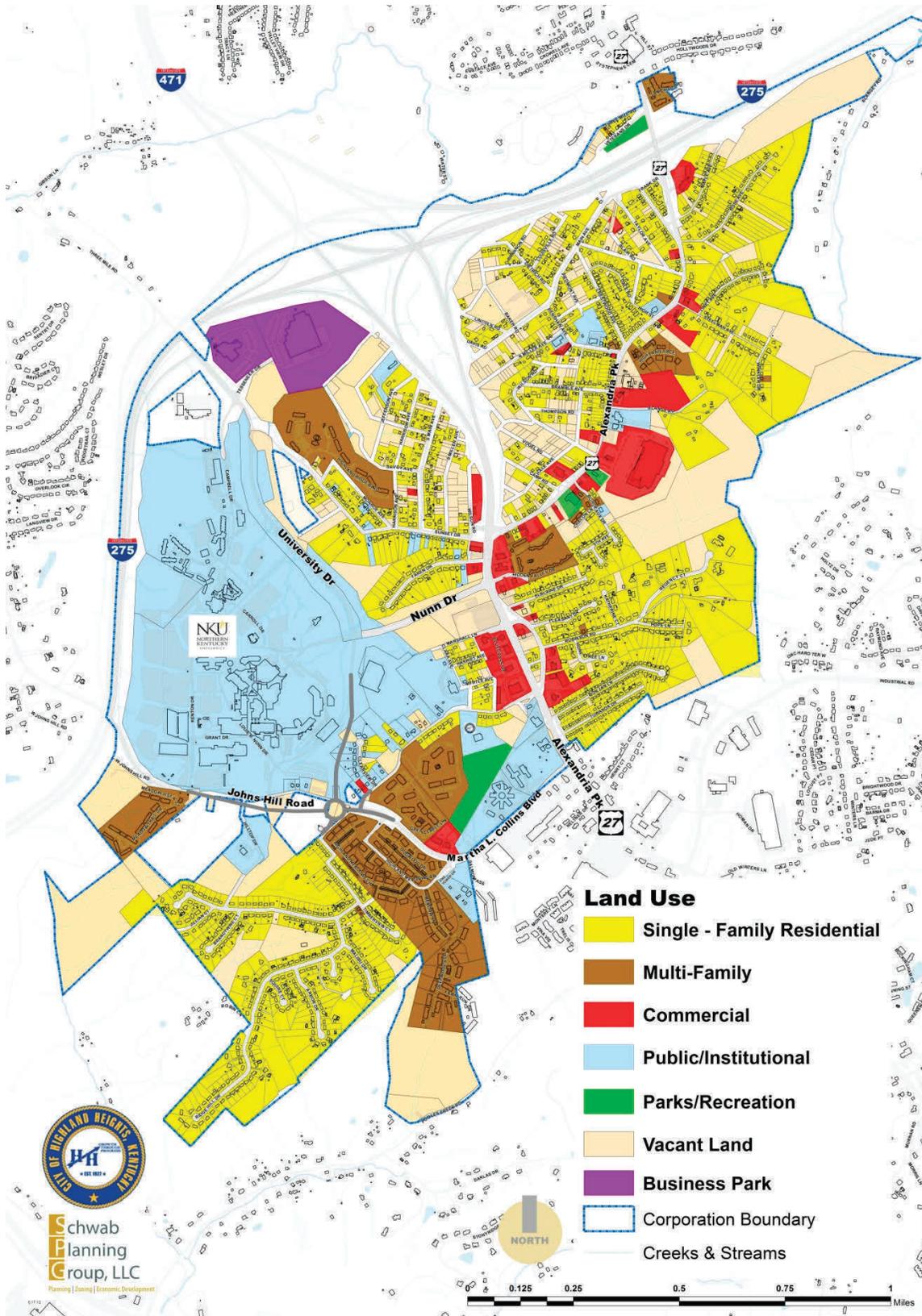


### Commercial

Commercial land uses are dominated by retail sales and services found in shopping centers and stand-alone sites along US 27. A small amount of “general” and “professional” office uses are also designated as Commercial.



### Map LU1 – Existing Land Use



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## Commercial, continued

Three neighborhood scale shopping centers serve surrounding residents, commuters and NKU students. A fourth was approved in 2012 in the “Island” property” adjacent to 5/3 Bank. Convenience-orientated goods and services such as casual fast food are plentiful.



Highland Heights, by design, lacks drive-through restaurants. As a result, the city’s landscape is unique in that it lacks corporate imagery associated with fast-food restaurants.

Regional-scale shopping centers are currently not found within Highland Heights but are located in nearby communities. For example, County Square Shopping Center, anchored with a supermarket on Martha Collins Boulevard, is located next to the City in Cold Spring.

## Public/Institutional

Public/Institutional use, shown as “light blue” on Map LU1, includes the City of Highland Heights offices for police, general administration and maintenance; NKU administrative offices, instructional facilities and dormitories; and private intuitional uses including not-for-profits and places of worship.



Public/Institutional uses are generally scattered throughout Highland Heights, although NKU represents the largest area on the City’s west side.



## Parks/Recreation

Green shaded areas on Map LU1 represent public parks and private recreation uses. Veterans Park, located north of I-275, and Earl Reuscher Park, located next to the City’s offices, serve as the City’s parks. Another source of recreation is the City’s 30-acre nature preserve. The preserve includes a 4-mile nature trail with 18 educational stations.





### **Parks/Recreation, continued**

A bowling alley and dance studio, two private recreation providers, are located on Alexandria Pike in the northern part of the City.

NKU provides its students with a range of athletic facilities at varsity and intermural levels.

### **Business Park**

Business Park use, as seen on Map LU1 immediately north of NKU's campus, presently consists of two large site employers: Global Industrial Labs and General Cable. They presently are Highland Heights' only corporate office and manufacturing uses and are among the largest private employers in the City.



Global Industrial Labs and General Cable are also located in NKU Foundation's Business Park. This business park is currently out of land making business recruitment activities difficult in Highland Heights.

### **Vacant Land**

Vacant land, shown in "cream" on Map LU1, is undeveloped. Steep hill sides and floodplains account for a significant amount of land classified as vacant on Map LU1.

Many undeveloped lots in the northern part of the City are remnants of Highland Baby Farms Subdivision established in the 1920s.

As stated in the following "Development Framework" section, the majority of vacant land is designated for "preservation" in order to maintain Highland Heights' scenic qualities and open space.

Few large vacant lots suitable for development remain available underscoring the need for redevelopment to ensure Highland Heights grows and remains viable.



## Development Framework

An analysis of development opportunities and constraints is useful when undertaking a comprehensive plan update.

### Development Constraints

As Map LU2 Development Framework illustrates, Highland Heights is encumbered with a significant amount of steep hill sides with slopes of 20% or greater. Floodplain and wetlands are also present.

The majority of steep hillsides remain vacant. Developing this vacant acreage will be difficult and costly to overcome environmental constraints. Residents and City officials alike want to preserve steep slopes and the natural terrain that contribute to community sustainability and its resulting benefits.



### Development Opportunities

Vacant land available for development is scarce. Even fewer acres suitable for development exist when environmental constraints are considered.

White areas on Map LU2 identify undeveloped flat land. These lands are suitable for development but are limited in number and area. Some white areas include limited site improvements such as parking lots.

The former Thriftway Supermarket site between Marshall Lane and Nunn Drive is currently the largest development opportunity in Highland Heights. Six acres are available there.

NKU owns this site and is considering a mixed use development to include a hotel with retail to support Bank of Kentucky Center events among others.



Other development opportunities 1 acre or larger include large parking lots associated with NKU and Lowes as well as a few undeveloped, relatively flat ridge/hill tops.

### Conclusion

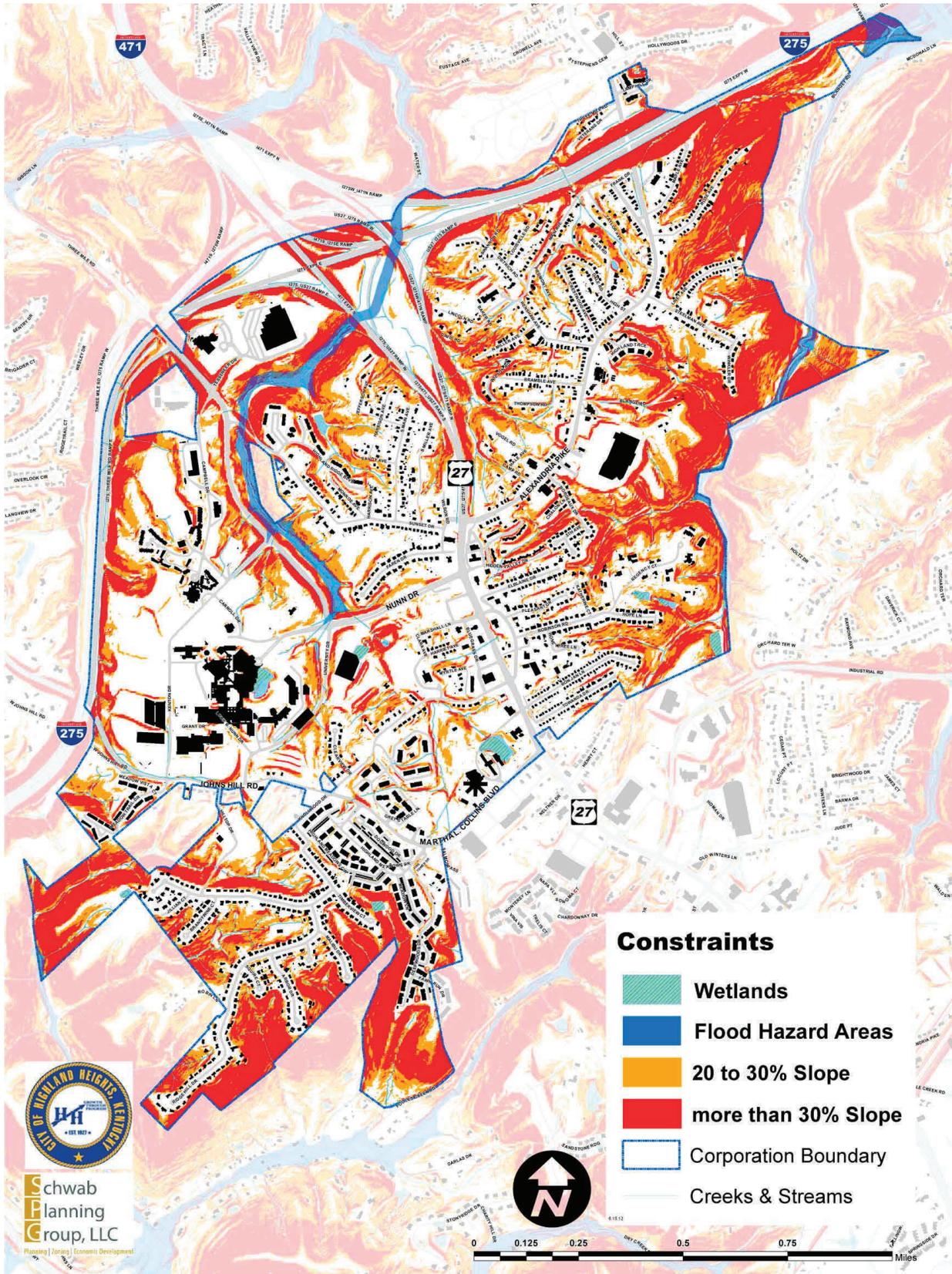
Highland Heights is faced with few development opportunities. Growth can be achieved through one of two primary methods – annexation and redevelopment.

Annexations are supported in this Plan. However, annexation alone cannot meet the City's long-term sustainability needs. Highland Heights is land locked to the north, south, and west and significant environmental constraints are encountered on adjacent land to the east and southwest.

As such, City leaders must embrace a proactive and long-term redevelopment campaign. While this mindset is not new, emphasis is added on the importance of reinventing strategically located sections of the City in this Comprehensive Plan update.



### Map LU2 – Development Framework



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## Land Use Strategy

The City’s land use strategy embraces four fundamental goals as follows: (1) encourage mixed use development; (2) encourage redevelopment and economic development in strategically targeted areas; and (3) preserve environmentally sensitive open space.

### Goal 1 Mixed use

Mixed use development is emphasized in most commercial land use classifications. This is done to promote sustainable development and to add variety to “single” use districts.

Mixed Use provides land use flexibility in return for greater attention to urban form and enhanced design.

Mixed Use planning improves community image; creates healthy, walkable neighborhoods; and provides residents with additional amenities close to where they live.

Mixed use also strives to create a “community of choice” attribute for the City as a leading and desirable place to reside, operate a business and visit

## Why Mixed Use?

Mixed Use, as its name implies, clusters multiple uses in the same building, development or neighborhood. Mixed use is desired to: (1) maximize benefit of the few remaining development opportunities; (2) break the monotony of single use districts; and (3) create developments that appeal to residents and NKU students and faculty.

Mixed use development often *integrates residential, office, retail, restaurants, parks and public uses* in the same project. Each use is synergistic with the other. For example, residential and office uses support retail. Retail, as it grows, can be used to attract more residents.

Mixed use development *strives to meet the everyday needs of residents within walking distance.*

People living in mixed use developments tend to walk and socialize more which in turn reduces auto trips, pollution and household fuel costs.

Mixed use relies on *interesting architecture and thoughtful urban design* creating community enhancing developments. A mixed use strategy can add vitality along busy corridors and at key intersections improving overall community image.





**Goal 2 Economic Growth and Redevelopment**

Growth in Highland Heights will depend a great deal on property redevelopment in line with uses supported by market needs and extensive regionally-orientated infrastructure including I-275, I-471, US 27 and NKU.

The City’s ability to provide and maintain a high quality of life and community facilities and services is directly linked to its ability to redevelop strategic areas to generate economic growth and jobs (i.e. payroll taxes).

Town Center, Gateway East and West are the City’s primary economic growth and redevelopment areas.

**Goal 3 Preserve Open Space and Natural Features**

The Future Land Use Plan recognizes some land areas should not be developed based on environmental constraints and recreational and historical significance.

Preservation and enhancement of such areas along with stronger connections to each are called for resulting in an interconnected network of greenspace. Preservation provides place-defining natural features and breaks the monotony of the urban built-environment.



**Sustainability**

Highland Heights’ ability to retain and attract residents, visitors, companies, workers and property owners (i.e. tax payers) is directly related to how well the City sustains community, environmental, and social well-being.



The Land Use Strategy coupled with a guiding Future Land Use Plan lays the foundation for economic, environmental and social sustainability in Highland Heights.

**Growth Management**

Redevelopment will displace some residents and remove housing units. To keep displaced populations, Highland Heights is encouraged to annex land for new residential development to the west and southwest.

Outward growth and its impact on public expenditures and ability to provide adequate services (police, fire) and facilities (roads, water, sewer, schools, parks) should be considered before any annexation occurs.



### Future Land Use

The Future Land Use Map and the supporting text collectively form Highland Heights' official land use policy. The Land Use Plan guides where and how the City should grow.

The Future Land Use Plan sets long-term policies that guide City, property owner and developer land use decision-making. Decisions regarding future zoning map and text amendments will be made in compliance with the Future Land Use Plan.

Comprehensive Plan policy guides but does not replace Zoning Ordinance regulations. However, Zoning Map and Text amendments are anticipated after this Comprehensive Plan's adoption to align Zoning regulation with Comprehensive Plan policy.

### Future Land Use Classifications

Ten unique future land use classification are used to plan Highland Heights. Each classification is shown on Map LU3 and is more fully described in this section.

1. Single-Family Residential
2. Multi-Family Residential
3. Public/Semi Public
4. Parks
5. Open Space/Green Space
6. Commercial/Business
7. NKU Campus
8. Town Center Mixed Use
9. Business Park

### Primary Uses

Primary uses are land uses that are desired in specified locations as shown on Map LU3 Future Land Use. Primary uses take precedence over Secondary Uses. Approved Primary Uses must be provided at stated minimum levels before secondary uses can be developed.

Desired primary uses represent a continuation of the established land use pattern in most areas. In some cases, primary uses call for a land use adjustment in recognition of changing community goals, needs and markets.

### Secondary Uses

Secondary uses are land uses permitted in combination with Primary Uses. Secondary uses are subordinate to primary uses and are permitted only when minimum primary land area requirements are satisfied.

Secondary uses are ideally developed as part of an approved mixed use development plan, particularly when the development is three acres or larger. Secondary uses could as be approved as Conditional Uses on smaller projects.

### Public and Institutional Uses

Public and Semi Public uses are generally permitted in all Future Land Use Classifications.

Public and Semi Public uses are desired in all neighborhoods. Public, civic, and intuitional uses are generally viewed as community assets and neighborhood anchors.





## Single Family Residential

### Goals

(1) To provide suitable acreage for a wide variety of housing styles at planned locations on Map LU3. (2) To develop additional high-quality housing to retain and attract residents. (3) To encourage the modernization of older housing units in line with increased demand for more efficient and larger houses. (4) To encourage “infill” development on remaining available lots in existing subdivisions. (5) To maintain the integrity of single family housing neighborhoods as owner occupied.

### Primary Land Uses

Single Family primarily includes detached single-family residential units at densities between 2 and 6 units per acre depending upon site constraints and densities of adjacent developments.

Attached units including duplexes and triplexes are permissible provided adequate steps are taken to ensure such development does not change the character of adjacent neighborhoods. Attached units should not be constructed between detached housing units.



### Secondary Land Use

Parks, places of worship, open spaces and public offices are planned secondary uses.

### Cluster Development

Landowners and developers may choose to “cluster” units on smaller lots to conserve more natural features and create open space.

The resulting open space can be used for active or passive recreation but the primary intent is to preserve natural features.



Developers typically choose cluster development as an option when a density bonus is offered in return for additional open space.

Grading is kept to a minimum to maintain the integrity of existing forms, geologic formations and natural topography. Existing vegetation is preserved to the extent possible. A minimum of 30 % – 40% of open space is reserved in perpetuity.



## Single Family Residential, continued

### Modernization and Revitalization

A portion of Highland Heights' housing supply is outdated. Modernization and expansion of these units is needed to ensure long term neighborhood sustainability is achieved.



Older houses can be modernized as these before and after pictures show.

Modernization projects increase property value and curb appeal keeping neighborhoods sustainable.

Work with NKU and Homebuilders Association to modernize and expand a house of common type in Highland Heights as a demonstration project.

Review zoning requirements for minimum lot size and setbacks and modify standards when warranted to remove regulatory barriers that thwart investment in existing housing.

Provide one public or accessible private open space or park within a quarter mile of each residence. Parks, schools and open space attract residents, provide nearby amenities and boost neighborhood market value and desirability.

Property maintenance is culturally and legally accepted as an owner's responsibility. Utilize code enforcement when residential properties are not maintained to standard. Adopt or

update a property maintenance code to assist enforcement efforts.

### Student Rentals

Develop an off-campus guide with NKU. Include guidance dealing with holding parties, legal occupancy of a building, legal parking of motor vehicles, and city codes and housing policy. Educate students on being considerate of neighbors and of possible consequences of inappropriate behavior.

The City of Clemson's Joint City University Advisory Board published an Off Campus Living Guide. It can be accessed at <http://www.clemson.edu/administration/studentaffairs/dean/documents/OffCampusLivingGuide.pdf>

Several examples exist where universities actively work with Cities to manage off campus student housing. One such example is Colorado University's Off Campus Housing and Neighborhood Relations Department.

### Rental Registry/Inspection

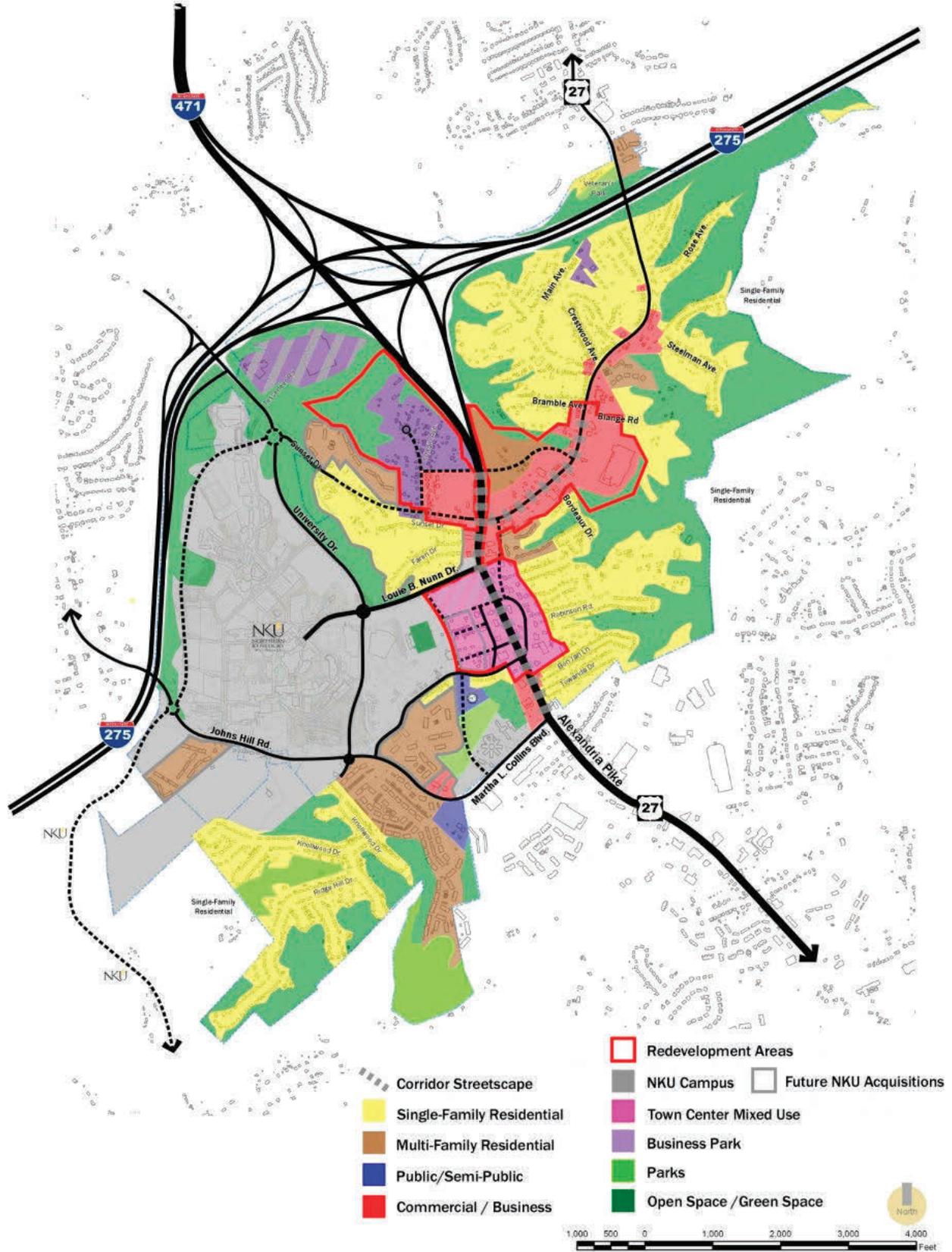
Consider the merits of rental registry and inspection ordinance that require each landlord or property manager to register with the City.

Cities enact such ordinances to maintain contact with landlords. Some communities require annual rental inspections while others inspect rentals each time a property is sold or leased to keep rental units in good condition.

A rental registry will also ensure the City can contact landlords when problems are encountered.



### Map LU3 – Future Land Use





## Multi-Family Residential

### Goals

- (1) To maintain existing stable multi-family residential neighborhoods and allow for additional units as planned on Map LU3. (2) To encourage the development of attached units as part of mixed use projects. (3) To ensure multi-family development is properly located along thoroughfares. (4) To protect planned single family neighborhoods from larger and denser multi-family developments. (5) To encourage on-site amenities are offered as part of multi-family developments.

### Primary Uses

Attached residential developments including apartments and townhomes are planned up to 12 units per acre. This designation supports low-maintenance, senior housing and similar quarters for institutionalized persons. The City supports Neighborhood Foundations' efforts to bring tax credit housing to promote senior living in Highland Heights.

### Secondary Uses

Small scale, convenience retail or service uses are encouraged as part of an approved multi-family development. Examples include day care center, hair salon, and coffee shop not to exceed 10,000 square feet in total.



### Location

Multi-Family is shown as “brown” on Map LU3. Land planned as multi-family reflects existing multifamily uses.

One new Multi-Family area is planned in the Gateway East redevelopment district behind US 27 commercial frontage property. The Town Center Mixed Use District does permit multi-family development as part of a broader mixed use project.

Newer and larger multi-family units are located close to NKU. Older and smaller units are located along Alexandria Pike.

Multi-Family is generally located on arterial and collector streets. The higher traffic, visibility and access of these streets are appropriate for high-density residential uses.

### Development Strategy

Multi-family developments are encouraged to offer resident amenities in effort to reduce the public burden to provide the same including parks/open spaces, athletic fields and courts, club houses and pools, etc.





## Public and Semi Public

### Goal

(1) To maintain and encourage continued investment and growth of public and quasi-public land uses. (2) To maintain the positive influences civic and institutional uses provide the community and its neighborhoods.

### Primary Uses

Offices, facilities and administrative uses associated with hospitals, outpatient clinics, schools, libraries, post-secondary education, government, service organizations and civic uses including worship and assembly.



This designation includes City of Highland Heights offices, the Campbell County Media Center, Campbell County Cooperative Extension, and Campbell County Fire Training Center.

Asbury Methodist Church and First Baptist Church are public uses located on US 27.

These uses are desired at their perspective locations. They are planned “Commercial” given their access and visibility on US 27.

NKU, due to its size and importance, is given its own future land use designation even though it could be included in the “Public / Semi Public” designation.

### Secondary Uses

Small retail shops such as gift center, cafeterias, and guest housing are permissible as part of master planned development secondary to primary uses listed above.

### Location

Public and Semi Public uses are generally permitted in all Future Land Use Classifications which explains why so few areas on Map LU3 are specifically planned as Public and Semi Public.



### Parks

#### Goals

(1) To encourage active lifestyles and healthy activity. (2) To provide an alternative from indoor living environments. (3) To maintain parks in their current locations for long-term community use. (4) To encourage additional parks where needed in neighborhoods.

#### Primary Uses

Public and private parks and recreational facilities including playground equipment, athletic fields, ball courts, maintenance facilities, pavilions, exercise equipment, community centers and other similar uses. Trails and hiker and biker paths are also designated as planned Park land uses.



#### Location

Planned Park locations are designated as “light green” on Map LU3. This designation maintains Veterans Park and Earl Reuscher Park at their existing locations north of I-275 and next to the City Building respectively.

Most neighborhoods are underserved by parks. As a general rule, it is desirable for residents to have access to a public park or open space within a five minute walk.

As the below pictures illustrate, parks located close to housing provide significant benefits including increased property values.

Land for new parks can be assembled by buying vacant lots, tax delinquent property, foreclosed homes, etc. Location and visibility are important factors to consider when purchasing property for new parks.





## Open Space / Green Space

### Goals

(1) To preserve a network of greenspace, stream corridors and sensitive environmental areas such as steep (20% or greater) slopes for sustainable, long-term environmental and community health. (2) To maintain and enhance the natural character and image of Highland Heights. (3) To create an interconnected network of green space and natural areas that provide wildlife habitat, absorbs and cleans stormwater and filters the air. (4) To protect areas unsuitable for development from possible environmental hazards associated with flooding or hillside slippage. (5) To protect property and minimize flooding impact downtown stream.

### Primary Uses

Detached single-family residential at 0.3 units per acre, agriculture, stables, and parks and recreation and similar uses. Open Space/Green Space supports preservation of FEMA designated 100 year floodplains, wetlands, and steep hillsides.



### Secondary Uses

Cemeteries, places of assembly, public office and facilities such as fire stations and schools provided all applicable local, state and federal environmental regulations are met.

### Location

Open Space / Green Space include wetlands, floodplains, and steep slopes (20% or greater) planned in environmentally sensitive areas identified on Map LU2 Development Framework.

### Desired Character

This designation offers a wide range of open spaces, recreational facilities and opportunities, and natural landscapes. Building density in planned Open Space / Green Space areas is the lowest among all future land use classifications. Any permitted use of land including active or passive recreation is planned to have minimal intrusion, thereby maintaining the natural landscape to the greatest extent possible.





## Commercial / Business

### Goals

(1) To concentrate commercial uses in nodes and along major corridors at convenient locations. (2) To provide residents access to needed goods, services and employment. (3) To give the market a broad range of uses to choose from while investing in Highland Heights. (4) To promote mixed used development and support NKU's mission by providing developments that appeal to students and faculty. (5) To achieve high quality development that abides by minimum design standards and effectively integrates uses together. (6) To revitalize or reposition underutilized commercial property.

### Primary Uses

Commercial / Business is a flexible, mixed use classification permitting a broad range of retail, retail services, hospitality, food service and office uses. Ideally, no one use will exceed 80% of gross floor area in a development larger than 3 acres.

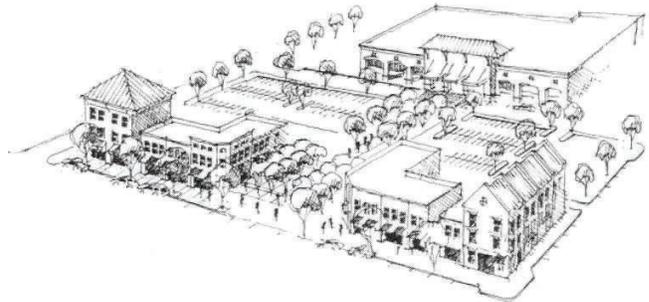


patrickschneider.photoshelter.com

### Secondary Uses

Upper-floor residential lofts are encouraged in developments 3 acres and larger.

Up to 50% of a planned "Commercial/Business development 5 acres or larger can be utilized for stand-alone, attached housing provided primary uses are developed in the first construction phase per an approved development plan.



### Location

Commercial / Business is generally located on parcels with frontage on the City's Arterial streets – mainly US 27/Alexandria Pike and Martha Layne Collins Boulevard. The higher traffic visibility and access on major thoroughfares are appropriate for a mix of commercial and high-density residential uses.

Additional Commercial / Business is planned in Gateway East and West. See the subarea plan for more information.

### Desired Character

Land uses are mixed horizontally across space and/or vertically in buildings. Uses are integrated in a pedestrian-friendly environment and provide pedestrian connections to adjacent neighborhoods and to the City's sidewalk system. Development complements its surroundings and does not overwhelm adjacent buildings.



## NKU Campus



### Goal

(1) To support NKU’s mission and their continued investment and growth in Highland Heights. (2) To coordinate NKU’s growth with City land use policy. (3) To provide NKU and Highland Heights with a well-planned and integrated land use pattern that promotes the flow of pedestrians and vehicles between them.

### Primary Uses

Office, administrative, instructional, and athletic and student housing facilities and uses and others including maintenance typically associated with a large public university.

### Secondary Uses

Retail, food service, hotels, recreation and residential are permissible as part of master planned development secondary to primary uses listed above.

### Location

NKU Campus is shown as grey on Map LU3 and includes NKU’s main campus on the west side of Highland Heights. Smaller areas are planned NKU Campus reflecting property acquisitions located apart from the main campus. In addition, one area is planned both as NKU Campus and Town Center and another area is planned as NKU Campus and Business Park. These two areas are designated with grey diagonal lines. This is done to promote private sector commercial uses in both areas while recognizing NKU’s ownership.



## NKU Campus, continued

### Desired Character

NKU Campus exhibits a master-planned, landscaped setting with a strong central, pedestrian orientation. Campus entrances make a statement with landscaping and attractive entryway signage. Buildings are connected with and oriented toward a cohesive pedestrian network.

Architecture, landscaping and signage are coordinated to create cohesive, attractive brand image.

### Development Strategies

Add an institutional campus zoning district to the City's Zoning Ordinance.

Communities adopt Campus Institutional Zoning Districts to recognize the unique land use needs of major institutions as activity centers and traffic generators. Such zoning districts accommodate campus growth needs and coordinate campus master plans with City plans and zoning.

Typically, the city adopts a campus master plan as a PUD or Phase I Development Plan. Afterwards, the institution builds new facilities with minimal approval oversight by the community as long as such development is consistent with the approved master plan.

Approval of the master plan also sets the district boundary on the City's Zoning Map.





## Future NKU Acquisition

The “Future NKU Acquisition” designation on Map LU3 identifies parcels included on NKU’s Acquisition Plan. Such properties have a “grey” border on Map LU3.

For example, Meadowview, Hampton Farms and Highland Ridge Apartments are all designated for future acquisition by NKU. All three developments are planned as “Multi-Family Residential” on Map LU3 with a grey border indicating their planned use may change contingent on NKU acquisitions.

Property purchased by NKU subsequent to the adoption of this Plan will be automatically included in the “NKU Campus” future land use category.

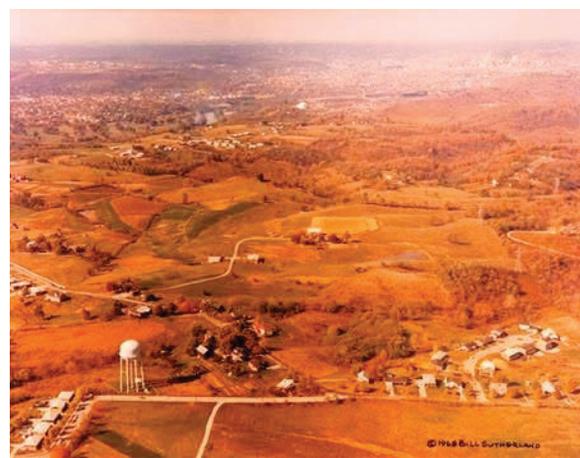
Future NKU Acquisitions are identified on Map LU3 to inform existing and future property owners of NKU’s potential growth path.

NKU was founded in 1968 and became a public university in 1970. The original campus was planned for 5,000 students with 730,000 feet of building space. NKU has far surpassed these benchmarks.

Today, NKU enrolls just under 16,000 students and maintains 3 million square feet of gross building area.

NKU is anticipating continued growth over the next ten years. Enrollment of up to 18,000 to 20,000 students is possible within a 10 year timeframe. About 1,800 students currently live in on-campus housing, and this number is expected to grow to about 2,500 to 3,000 beds within a similar time period.

To better manage rapid growth, NKU has prepared five campus Master Plans. The most recent was prepared in 2009. The 2009 Master Plan can be downloaded at <http://campusplan.nku.edu/masterplan.html>.



This photo, provided by NKU, shows land as it existed prior to NKU’s development.

Considering NKU’s past and future success, it is important for the City and its residents to recognize NKU’s enrollment and geographic footprint will continue to grow.

NKU’s property acquisition map can be viewed using the above provided link.



## Town Center Mixed Use

### Goals

(1) To develop a physical center and deeper community identity in Highland Heights. (2) To provide a vibrant, mixed-use gathering place with an emphasis on retail and entertainment uses. (3) To develop a pedestrian-orientated business district. (4) To enable high density residential in the district to support retail uses. (5) To encourage redevelopment consistent with Town Center land use and development policies.

### Primary Uses

Retail – Ground Floor

Office – Upper Floors, six story maximum

Residential – Upper Floors, six story maximum

### Secondary

Hospitality and attached residential such as apartments, lofts, and townhomes up to 18 units per acre developed part of an approved master redevelopment plan 3 acres or larger. Secondary uses are permitted provided ground floor retail is proposed as part of an approved development plan.

### Location

Town Center, shown as “hot pink” on Map LU3, is located on US 27 generally between Nunn Drive to the north and Johns Hill Road to the south.

### Desired Character

Town Center is urban in form with a dense building “street wall” with two story minimum building heights. Buildings are located close to sidewalks with room for two rows of parking and landscaping yards, if desired.

Ground floor vibrancy is accentuated by storefronts with clear vision glass and articulated entrances. Parking is primarily on-street or behind buildings. Wide sidewalks and gathering areas – plazas, squares, greens – create pedestrian comfort zones.





## Business Park

### Goal

(1) To provide land to meet economic growth needs and increase tax revenue at convenient locations. (2) To attract a variety office, research and high tech industrial users. (3) To offer businesses the ability to locate close to NKU. (4) To support NKU’s entrepreneurial programs.

### Primary Uses

Primary uses include corporate offices, research and development facilities, laboratories, high-tech manufacturing and educational facilities.



### Secondary Uses

No secondary uses are proposed due to the limited amount of acreage available.

### Location

Business Park is planned along I-275 and I-471 and is designated as “purple” on Map LU3. This limited location takes advantage of highway visibility and access and close proximity to the intellectual, academic and workforce infrastructure provided by NKU.

### Development Strategies

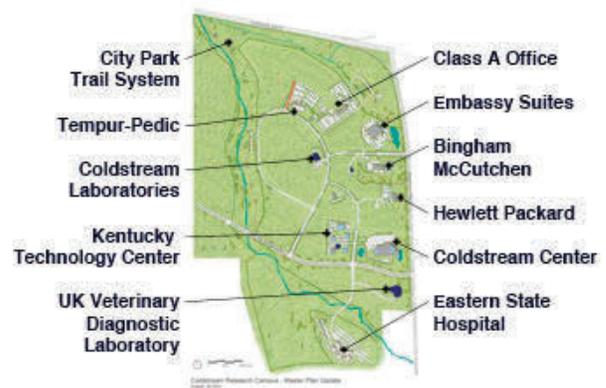
University affiliated science and research parks (business parks) are being developed across the country. Their popularity is driven by businesses that desire a close presence

to major universities and their numerous benefits including:

1. Access to an educated workforce.
2. Ability to collaborate with leading thought leaders in related fields and industry.
3. Potential to use university owned specialized equipment and facilities including labs and sophisticated computer technology.
4. The ability to use university networks to advance business interests.

In addition to the above, universities use business parks to nurture, protect and commercialize their intellectual capital.

Coldstream, the business park affiliated with the University of Kentucky, serves as one example of this. NKU and Highland Heights would benefit similarly by developing a university-affiliated business park in Gateway West.







## Chapter 3 Transportation

This chapter analyzes Highland Heights' existing transportation system and makes recommendations to safely and efficiently move people, services and goods within the community.

Secondary transportation issues such as aesthetics, place making and community image and mode choice are also analyzed.

A well designed transportation system supports commerce and attracts jobs and residents. In fact, few aspects of the built environment impact community vitality and quality of life more than its transportation system.

Mitigating congestion and improving efficiency on US 27 is key goal of this chapter. New bypass and distributor roads are planned to distribute trips and bypass US 27.

Many communities including Highland Heights place value on multi-modal transportation. Multi-modal transportation balances the needs of motorists, transit and non-motorized travel alike.

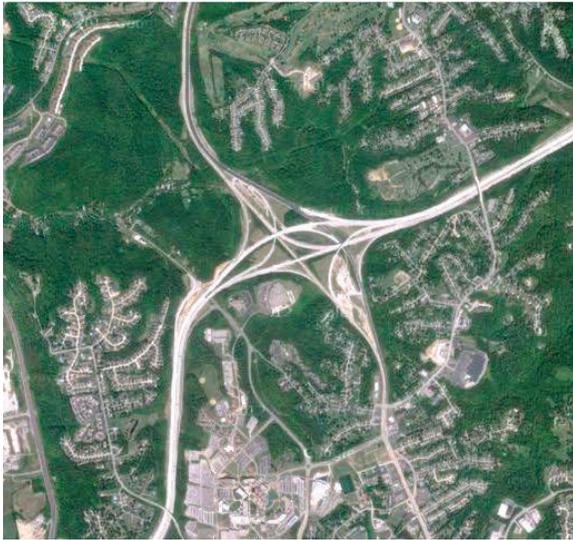
Highland Heights, with trails, walkways and transit, is ideally situated to build on extensive multi-modal transportation working collaboratively with the State, Northern Kentucky University (NKU), and Transit Authority of Northern Kentucky (TANK).



## Roadway Characteristics

The City, its residents and businesses, and NKU all benefit from Highland Heights’ extensive roadway infrastructure.

I-471 and I-275 converge at the community’s front door, providing unparalleled regional access from across the greater Cincinnati metropolitan area.



Over 41,000 trips are taken on US 27 per day linking residents to work, shopping and leisure time pursuits. Conversely, US 27 via I-471 and I-275 bring several thousand nonresidents to Highland Heights daily.

US 27 is a major commuter route. Heavy regional through traffic tends to conflict with traffic wishing to turn off US 27 to adjacent commercial properties. A high accident count is reported each year as a result.

Significant congestion is reported at Nunn Drive and Sunset Drive as drivers stack on US 27 to access NKU and Gateway Shopping Center.

Congestion was a main source of community dissatisfaction raised by Steering Committee members. This issue can threaten Highland Heights’ image and quality of life as a desirable place to live and work.

The quantitative difference between a roadway’s peak hour traffic volume to its actual capacity to handle such traffic is divided into one of six Levels-of-Service (LOS) categories.

A LOS of “A” indicates drive speeds and flow are unimpeded by traffic. A LOS of “F” represents unacceptable congestion and delays. Sitting through two red lights before clearing an intersection is an indicative “F” situation.

Level of Service	Traffic Description
A	Free flow low volume traffic with high speed controlled by driver
B	Reasonably free flow of traffic but with slightly slower speeds restricted by traffic conditions
C	Traffic flow slows, driver speeds are restricted by traffic conditions
D	Approaching unstable traffic flow, drivers have little control to select own speed
E	Unstable, slow traffic with short stoppages and delays
F	Unacceptable congestion, very slow stop and go traffic

According to the Ohio Kentucky Indiana Regional Council of Governments (OKI), US 27 operates at a Level F LOS from Nunn Drive to I-471 during peak flow hours. Nunn Drive to Pooles Creek Road operates a little better at a Level E LOS.

The entire US 27 segment between I-471 and Pooles Creek Road is projected to operate at a Level F by 2030 according to OKI.



Congestion mitigation is treated as both a concern and a high priority public policy to ensure future LOS levels remain at acceptable levels. The City needs to work closely with the Kentucky Transportation Cabinet (KTC) and NKU to meet this goal.

The local street network is organized in a suburban pattern characteristic of many communities established after 1900. Most local streets dead-end, have little lateral access and force traffic out onto collector and arterial streets.

Major east-west running streets – Johns Hill Road, Martha Collins Boulevard and Nunn Drive – all terminate at US 27. The lack of east-west through connectivity forces additional traffic onto US 27.

US 27 is the only north-south route that traverses the entire City. The recent extension of University Drive to Johns Hill Road will provide some relief.

As a matter of policy, additional east-west and north-south connector roads are needed to provide alternative routes, distribute trips, provide secondary access and reduce US 27 congestion.

### **Jurisdiction**

Roadway jurisdiction is often confusing due to multiple public agency involvement in the same community.

This is case in Highland Heights where KTC has roadway ownership and responsibility for I-471, I-271, US 27, Three Mile Road/University Drive, Nunn Drive and Johns Hill Road.

It is important for the City to maintain regular communication with KTC and develop a partnership relationship. Mounting congestion, particularly on US 27, underscores the need for the City to closely work with State officials.

### **Recent Improvements**

Highland Heights is fortunate to receive State roadway improvement funds for such important projects like the realignment of Johns Hill Road and the extension of University Drive to a new roundabout at Johns Hill Road / Martha Collins Boulevard.

Johns Hill Road is an important collector road and its use is expected to increase along with NKU and Town Center growth.

University Drive provides much needed north-south access between Johns Hill Road and Three Mile Road and Nunn Drive.

The below picture shows University Drive still under construction, a new roundabout and a realigned Johns Hill Road.





## Functional Classification

Table TR1 categorizes Highland Heights streets based on the Federal Highway Administration’s Functional Classification System.

Roads are classified based on their characteristics including purpose (mobility versus access), land uses served, and amount of traffic handled.

The functional classification system provides a basis for developing a Thoroughfare Plan and for establishing a logical, efficient roadway system as outlined in the following section.

## Thoroughfare Plan

The Thoroughfare Plan Map (Map TR1) shows planned roadway locations by functional classification. Existing roads are shown in solid lines. New roads or road extensions are shown in dashed lines.

The Thoroughfare Plan is a useful planning tool to ensure adequate right-of-way is maintained for future road extensions and improvements. Thoroughfare Plans also make City actions and future road extension predictable to impacted property owners.

A description of Thoroughfare Plan road improvement projects are provided in the remainder of this section. Most, but not all projects, are shown on Map TR 1 Thoroughfare Plan.

### Clara Street Extension North

Clara Street Extension North is planned to connect Nunn Drive to Johns Hill Road. This extension improves Town Center access and distributes traffic away from US 27.

Access provided by Clara Street Extension North opens the west side of Town Center for planned redevelopment.

Additional analysis is needed before alignment and intersection locations are set. The City needs to work with NKU to ensure alignments are coordinated with NKU plans to develop mixed use dorms and hotel/conference centers in Town Center.

### Marshall and Harriet Grid Connectors

Extend Marshall and Harriet to connect Bluegrass to Clara and to establish a block grid as planned for the Town Center redevelopment district.

The block grid serves as the underlying foundational element for pedestrian-friendly, mixed use development. Marshall and Harriet can be relocated from their current position to best accommodate future development. Their outright elimination is not supported.

### Clara Street Extension South

This road will provide access between two major collectors – Johns Hill Road and Martha Collins Boulevard – and provide an additional route to Town Center separate from US 27.



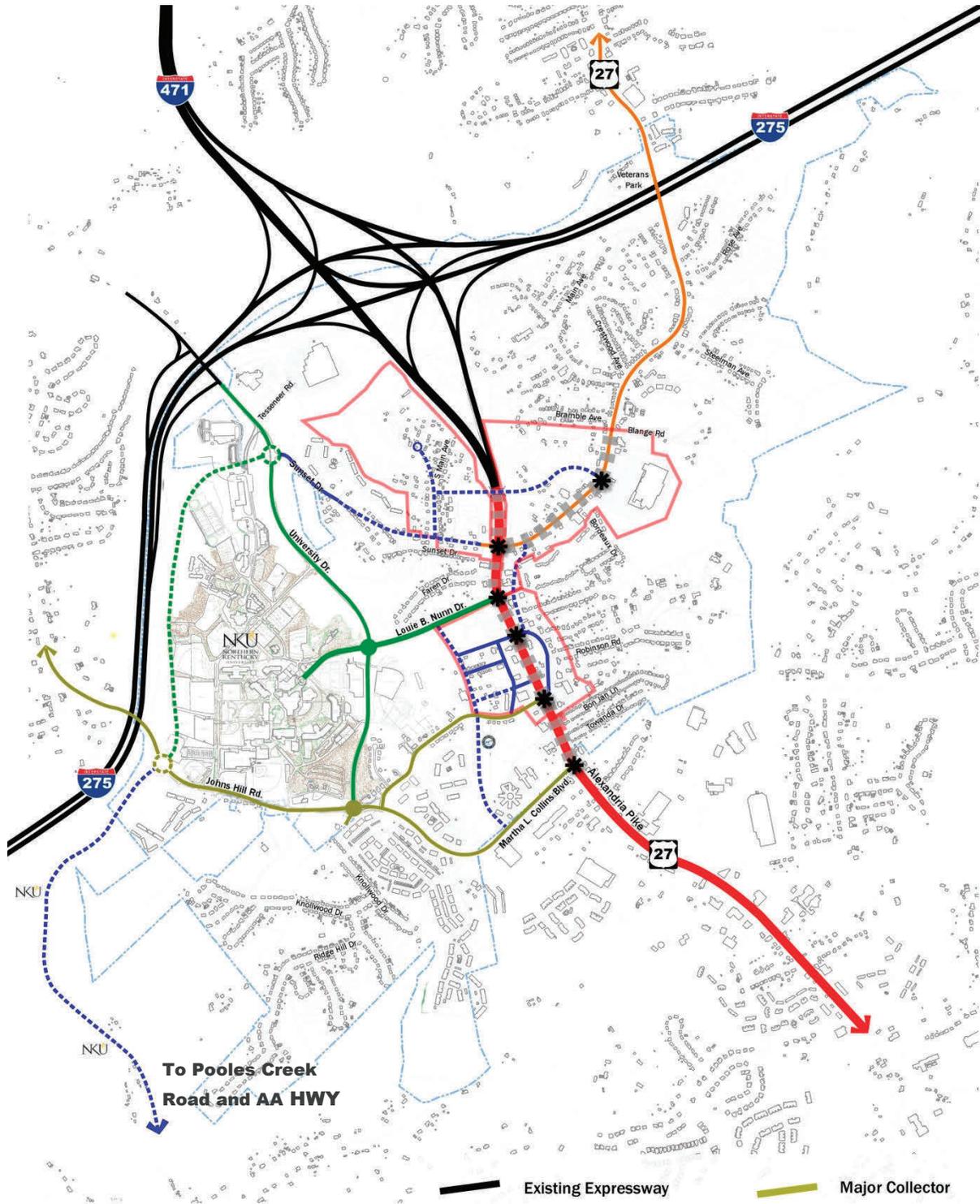
**Table TR1 - Functional Roadway Classifications**

Classification	Function and Characteristics	Examples	Land Use Served
<b>Expressway</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Provides the highest level of mobility at the greatest speed over the longest uninterrupted distance</li> <li>• Carries highest traffic volumes</li> <li>• Complete access control. No direct property access</li> <li>• Bi-directional travel lanes are usually divided</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• I-275</li> <li>• I-471</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Interstate</li> </ul>
<b>Major Arterial-I</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Link and pass through regions and cities and carry regional traffic</li> <li>• Provides high level mobility at moderate speeds over long distance</li> <li>• Direct property access is ideally limited</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• US 27 – Pooles Creek to I-471</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Regional Commercial</li> <li>• Industrial</li> </ul>
<b>Major Arterial-II</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Provides high mobility at low to moderate speed</li> <li>• Carries regional and local traffic</li> <li>• Direct property access is limited</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• US 27 – Sunset Drive to I-275</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Commercial</li> <li>• Apartments</li> </ul>
<b>Major Collector</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Provides low to moderate mobility at low speed</li> <li>• Conveys traffic from local roads to arterials</li> <li>• Direct property access is permitted or limited</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Johns Hill</li> <li>• Martha Collins</li> <li>• Pooles Creek</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Neighborhood Commercial</li> <li>• Apartments</li> <li>• Single Family Residential</li> </ul>
<b>Connector /Access Locals</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Slow traffic with little or no through-movement over short distances</li> <li>• Carries lowest traffic volumes</li> <li>• Provides direct access to individual properties</li> <li>• Includes all roads not defined as arterials or collectors</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Bluegrass</li> <li>• Renshaw</li> <li>• Sunset</li> <li>• Kenton</li> <li>• Hill Top</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Local Commercial</li> <li>• Single Family Residential</li> </ul>
<b>NKU Campus</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Arterial and collector roads specifically designed and maintained to provide regional access to NKU</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 3 Mile</li> <li>• University</li> <li>• Nunn</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• NKU Campus</li> <li>• Bank of Kentucky Center</li> </ul>

Table TR1 is based on the Federal Highway Administration’s Functional Classification System and is modified to more accurately define local roadway characteristics.



### Map TR1-Thoroughfare Plan



- Existing Expressway
- Major Arterial - Priority I
- Major Arterial - Priority II
- Major Signalized Intersection
- Major Collector
- Connector / Access
- NKU System
- Proposed



**Old US 27 Connector**

Old US 27 on the east side of Town Center is planned to connect the “Island” property to US 27, east of Sunset. This planned improvement is a continuation of previous Comprehensive Plan policy.

This connection provides a needed second way in and out of Town Center (east of US 27) and reduces traffic load on US 27. The need for secondary access is heightened now that Highland Pointe, a new commercial center, will soon be completed.

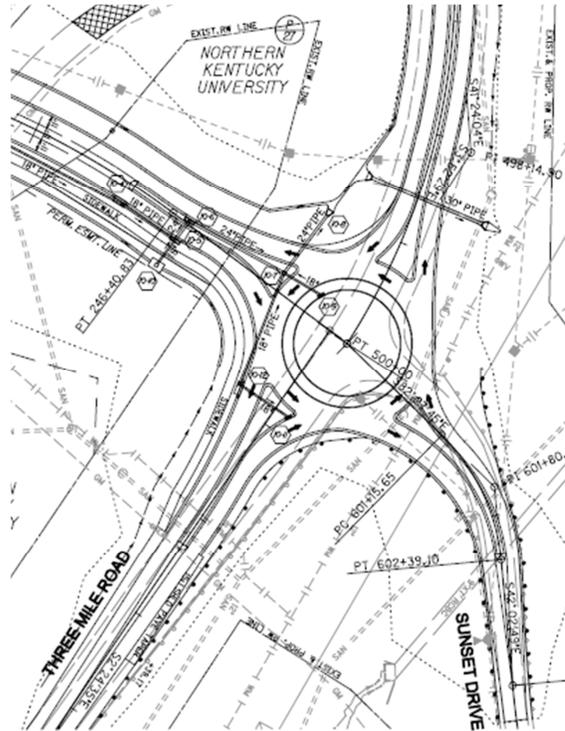
**I-275 Parallel Service Road**

The I-275 Parallel Service Road consists of multiple segments that when complete will provide continuous, crosstown circulation from AA HWY/Pooles Creek Road to I-275, east of I-471. This route provides access to NKU and bypasses US 27 and Nunn Drive.

NKU Connector Road South and NKU Connector Road North are fully funded but are waiting environmental clearance by the Federal Highway Administration. Characteristics of each planned segment follow:

1. **NKU Connector Road South.** NKU Connector Road South links Pooles Creek Road to Johns Hill Road where it is planned to intersect at a future roundabout before continuing north to NKU Connector Road North.
2. **NKU Connector Road North.** NKU Connector Road North begins at a planned roundabout on Johns Hill Road and follows the west side of campus north to where it turns northeast and intersects with another planned roundabout on Three Mile Road.

3. **Relocated Sunset Drive.** Sunset Drive intersects with NKU Connector Road North at a planned roundabout on Three Mile Road and continues east following a new alignment to where it connects with the existing Sunset Drive commercial road stub located off I-471.



Sunset Drive improvements should match NKU Connector Road North’s road design including number of lanes and gutter type, etc. Sunset will carry a mix of commercial and NKU traffic once the I-275 Parallel Service Road is fully established.

4. **Roundabouts.** As mentioned previously new roundabouts are planned where Three Mile, NKU Connector Road North, and Sunset Drive intersect and where Johns Hill Road, NKU Connector Road South and NKU Connector Road North intersect.



### Gateway East Access Road

Access into the north section of Gateway East is planned to intersect with Lowes' signalized intersection located on US 27. This planned road traverses north then heads northwest where it terminates at a temporary cul-de-sac. The cul-de-sac is meant to give way to a planned extension over or under I-471 to connect Gateway East and Gateway West.

### Gateway West Access Road

A new local access road is planned to serve "Business Park" uses in Gateway West. This north-south access road intersects with Sunset Drive's planned realignment. A cul-de-sac turnaround is planned at the north end of the access road. Steep hillsides on the back end of Gateway West prevent a sensible and cost effective connection to NKU Foundation Research Park.

### Gateway Connector Road

The Gateway Connector Road project is carried forward from previous Comprehensive Plans. The Kentucky Transportation Cabinet studied the connector and prepared a document detailing its findings and recommendations. This project is not listed on State or OKI funding lists or long range transportation improvement plans.

This project warrants additional study now that Sunset Drive is planned to connect Three Mile Road to US 27 as a modern commercial service road.

The quality and type of development in Gateway East will also impact whether a Gateway Connector Road is needed.

For example, a connector road is needed particularly if planned Gateway West high-tech business park uses can be duplicated in Gateway East. In such case, a connector road would help to create a unified and connected high-tech employment district.

### Expand the Nunn Drive Roundabout

The single-lane roundabout at Nunn Drive and University Drive accommodates traffic under normal traffic conditions. Backups occur when large events are held at the Bank of Kentucky Center.

While this happens infrequently, major backups disrupt traffic on US 27 and raise safety concerns. NKU is considering, and the City supports, adding a second lane to the existing roundabout as a means to accommodate additional event traffic.

### Aesthetics and Safety

#### Place Branding Streetscapes

Stone walls found along US 27 in Town Center are Highland Heights' signature brand element. This place-defining feature makes the City stand out and provides a memorable brand image.

Extend stone veneer wall streetscapes along any part of US 27 up to Bramble Avenue and along Sunset Drive in Gateway West. Require all freestanding commercial signage to have a stone base to match stone wall materials.

The City would benefit from a Streetscape Master Plan that clearly articulates standards for materials and placement of stone walls and landscaping.

Integrate stone knee walls and planters into the streetscape to add visual interest and double as pedestrian seating.





## Gateways

Gateway monuments (City entrance signs) are needed at major entrances to overcome the ambiguous nature of the City’s geographical boundary and the unassuming way Highland Heights ends and Colds Springs begins. Use stone veneer base and support elements in keeping with the City’s signature branding element. Collaborate with NKU for possible co-branding opportunities.



## Wayfinding

Finding ones way in Highland Heights can be difficult because of how US 27 abruptly turns into I-471, how traffic on US 27 seems to push motorists through, and how several streets have the same name.

A concerted wayfinding effort is needed to tie districts together such as NKU Campus, City Building, Town Center, Gateway East and Gateway West. Wayfinding is an effective means to brand the City.

Wayfinding signage must complement the City’s streetscape, incorporating the stone theme, among other elements. Use the same environmental graphics firm to design wayfinding signage and City gateway monuments to ensure compatibility between sign types.



## Access Management

Work with KTC to implement key recommendations made in the *US 27 Corridor Access Management Study*.

Access management significantly improves traffic flow and safety by properly spacing curb cuts and intersections and restricting turning movements. These same measures also improve corridor aesthetics by closing unsightly, continuous curb cuts and by adding curb, gutter and landscaping to set controlled access points.

## Street Names

Take steps to remove duplicative street names in Highland Heights. Current duplications are confusing to new residents and visitors.



### Traffic Calming

Traffic calming is a set of tools and techniques used to make drivers go instinctively slower. One of the benefits attributable to traffic calming is a quieter, safer and more enjoyable pedestrian experience.

Example techniques include reducing lane width, adding street trees, or installing a center median. A center landscape median is recommended in the *US 27 Corridor Access Management Plan*.

This plan was created for KTC. However, State officials believe adding a center median would require additional right-of-way and land making such project unlikely.

According to the Access Management Plan, a non-traversable center median can reduce accidents by 55% and increase road capacity by 30%.



Placing buildings close to the street creates a canyon effect. Drivers perceive enclosure and narrower roads which in turn slows traffic.



Source: [www.placemakers.com](http://www.placemakers.com)

Reducing lane width would reduce speed in Town Center – a welcome improvement as the City and its partners continue to plan a pedestrian-friendly node.

### Pedestrian Circulation

US 27 is a regionally significant, high-volume arterial road. It is designed to convey large amounts of traffic through Highland Heights. Little thought was given to aesthetics or east-west pedestrian connectivity.



Sidewalks are provided on both sides of US 27 but their placement just a few feet off the road create uncomfortable pedestrian environments.

Most streets lack sidewalks in Highland Heights. Require sidewalk installation as a condition of development plan approval.



US 27 divides the City in two distinct pedestrian zones. Large intersections, some up to seven lanes wide, make US 27 a physical and psychological pedestrian barrier, especially for children and elderly populations.

Pedestrian Islands, a solution advocated in the 2006 Plan, would provide protection from automobiles in the center of US 27. Pedestrian Islands protect those who cannot walk across an intersection before oncoming traffic gains a green signal again.

While this strategy is used extensively across the United States, its application is in question here unless the State is willing to give up or add a lane at every intersection on US 27. Neither scenario seems likely.

### **Pedestrian Bridge**

The Steering Committee considered this option and its associated constraints and decided a pedestrian bridge was a safer and more feasible alternative for pedestrians to cross US 27.

To be successful, such bridge must be in a convenient location for pedestrians.

The pedestrian bridge is now planned on the north side of Marshall Lane. Steps are needed to integrate the bridge including its base and connecting walkway infrastructure into NKU plans for a mixed use hotel/conference center on the six acre parcel at Nunn and US 27.

The 2006 Comprehensive Plan placed the bridge on the north side of Applebee's. The Steering Committee, upon closer examination, determined a bridge at this location blocked driver sight lines of on-coming traffic on US 27.

Ensure that the bridge has adequate connecting walkway infrastructure back to the Bank of Kentucky Center and NKU. Likewise, ensure every street in Town Center provides a walkway that ultimately connects to the bridge.

Treat the bridge as a significant gateway opportunity for Town Center and NKU. Co-brand the bridge with "campus" and "Town Center" architecture. Prominently embed NKU and City logos in the structure. Consider adding text across the span such as "Highland Heights – Home of NKU".





### Bus and Air Travel

#### Bus Transit

The City of Highland Heights is accessible by bus transit service provided by Transit Authority of Northern Kentucky (TANK).

TANK, in partnership with NKU, provides free bus fare to NKU students as part of the U-PASS program.

Two Tank Routes – #11 and #25 – stop in Highland Heights. Route #11 connects to Cincinnati, Covington and Ft. Thomas. Route #24 connects to Newport, Fidelity, and Ft. Wright.



The NKU Shuttle provides on-campus transportation 7 days a week. Service to Callahan Hall on Martha Collins Boulevard is during week days only.

Additional transit service is desired in Highland Heights particularly at future employment centers planned at Gateway East and West. Work with TANK to identify suitable locations for future bus stops and pullovers.

#### Trails, Walkways and Bikeways

The Highland Heights Nature Trail is 4 miles long and offers 18 educational stations.

The trail begins on a 30 acre nature preserve located off of Pooles Creek Road and meanders north to Martha Collins Boulevard.

From there, one segment continues north to Highland Heights City Building and NKU and a second segment heads east to Lakeside Manor and the Extension Office.

Additionally, NKU maintains an extensive on-campus walkway system. The City welcomes additional integration of this system into adjacent areas such as Town Center and Gateway West.

Highland Heights is encouraged to build on the existing foundation of paths, trails and walkways that currently exist. No dedicated bicycle facilities currently exist in the City. They need to be planned and constructed wherever possible.

A well-developed trail-walkway-bikeway system would go far to help brand Highland Heights as a leading “college” town. Increased trail, walkway and bikeway use would help to offset traffic congestion and to promote healthy activity.

Commission a Trails and Bicycle Facility Master Plan to ensure a planned and coordinated system is developed. This plan should:

1. Identify possible new trail segments and prioritize their development.
2. Develop an interconnected NKU/ City path and trail system.
3. Identify suitable locations for on-street bicycle facilities.
4. Identify critical sidewalk gaps and extensions.
5. Map and analyze the location of paper streets for possible use as connecting trails and providing trail access to neighborhoods throughout the City.
6. Identify a safe bicycle route from Highland Heights and NKU to the



proposed Licking River Greenway Trail.

7. Link parks together by trails and walkways.

Ideally, a NKU/City partnership would emerge supporting both planning and implementation efforts to extend trails throughout the City.

The Highland Heights Nature Trail currently offers “passive” recreation only. Inclusion of outdoor exercise equipment and circuits would appeal to a wider range of users.

In addition, outdoor recreation equipment would enhance park and recreation opportunities in Highland Heights.



### Air Travel

Cincinnati International Airport (CVG) is located within an easy 20 minute drive from Highland Heights on I-275. This puts the City well within acceptable distances corporations are willing to locate away from an international airport – a strong point supporting business park development at Gateway West.

### Collaboration

A meeting with KTC revealed that Highland Heights’ planned transportation projects are not in State Transportation Plans for future funding.

### Local Advocacy

The old model of the State bringing projects to the City is obsolete due to widespread funding shortages at all levels of government.

Getting projects funded today takes creativity and multi-jurisdictional political support. Projects benefit from multi-jurisdictional support and large local matches. Such projects are typically looked upon more favorably by state and federal officials.

Highland Heights must take an active role in the implementation of its planned transportation projects. Meet with potential partners including Campbell County Fiscal Court, Ohio-Kentucky-Indiana Regional Council of Governments (OKI), KTC, NKU and



Northern Kentucky Economic Development Corporation (Tri-ED) among others to build a coalition of political and financial support.

Seek the support and involvement of developers and property owners in developing the City's transportation plans. This effort will take time and hard work but the potential benefit will be worth it.

Transportation improvements serve as just one example of where the City must be proactive, take the lead and be its own advocate to achieve Plan goals.

### **State and Regional Plans**

Take steps to get locally planned projects on OKI's Long Range Transportation Plan (LRTP) and the State Transportation Plan (STP) to ensure such projects are not overlooked when funding is released.

Meet with State and OKI officials to get local projects included on their plans. Seek guidance on how to elevate local transportation projects to high-priority funding status.

### **Developer Assistance**

The City can also work with developers to extend roads quicker than waiting for state and federal money. This commonly used approach is a form of a public private partnership. Developers contribute to road projects as a means to enhance value and/or market potential of land.

Communities can share costs to incentivize developer participation or when road costs exceed the developers' fair share or benefit. Requiring oversized infrastructure is one example.

### **State Resources**

The State can provide assistance even when City projects are locally let – meaning such projects are not included in State Transportation Plans or capital budgets.

In such cases, the City can secure its own funding outside of the STP and biennial State budget. Such funds could come from Tax Increment Financing (TIF), Industrial Revenue Bonds (IRB), the General Fund, developer contributions and/or one of several federal funds managed by the Kentucky Office of Local Programs (OLP) (see below).

KTC can assist the City on locally let projects as a technical resource by providing contract and construction management services if schedules and available resources allow. A fee is normally charged but these fees can be paid out of TIF, IRB and OLP contributions.

The State also maintains open contracts with consultants to plan and design roads and road improvements. Using these State approved consultants may save time and money.

### **Office of Local Programs Division/ Division of Multi-Modal Programs**

Kentucky maintains the Office of Local Programs to manage federally funded projects using Transportation Alternatives Program (TAP), Safe Routes to School (SRTS), Congestion Mitigation and Air Quality (CMAQ), Scenic Byways, and Transportation Community and Systems Preservation (TCSP) programs.

The City is encouraged to review all planned transportation projects with the Office of Local Programs and the Division of Multi-modal Programs to see if funding is available for trail extensions, pedestrian bridges and missing



sidewalk gaps, particularly on Johns Hill Road and Three Mile Road.

The City needs to present cases for Town Center Service Roads to reduce congestion on US 27.

The City will serve as a Local Public Agency (LPA) if federal funds are used to pay for local transportation projects. LPA approved projects require strict adherence to State mandated usage requirements.

For example, the pedestrian bridge project planned at Marshall Lane may qualify for CMAQ and/or TAP funds.

### **Monitoring**

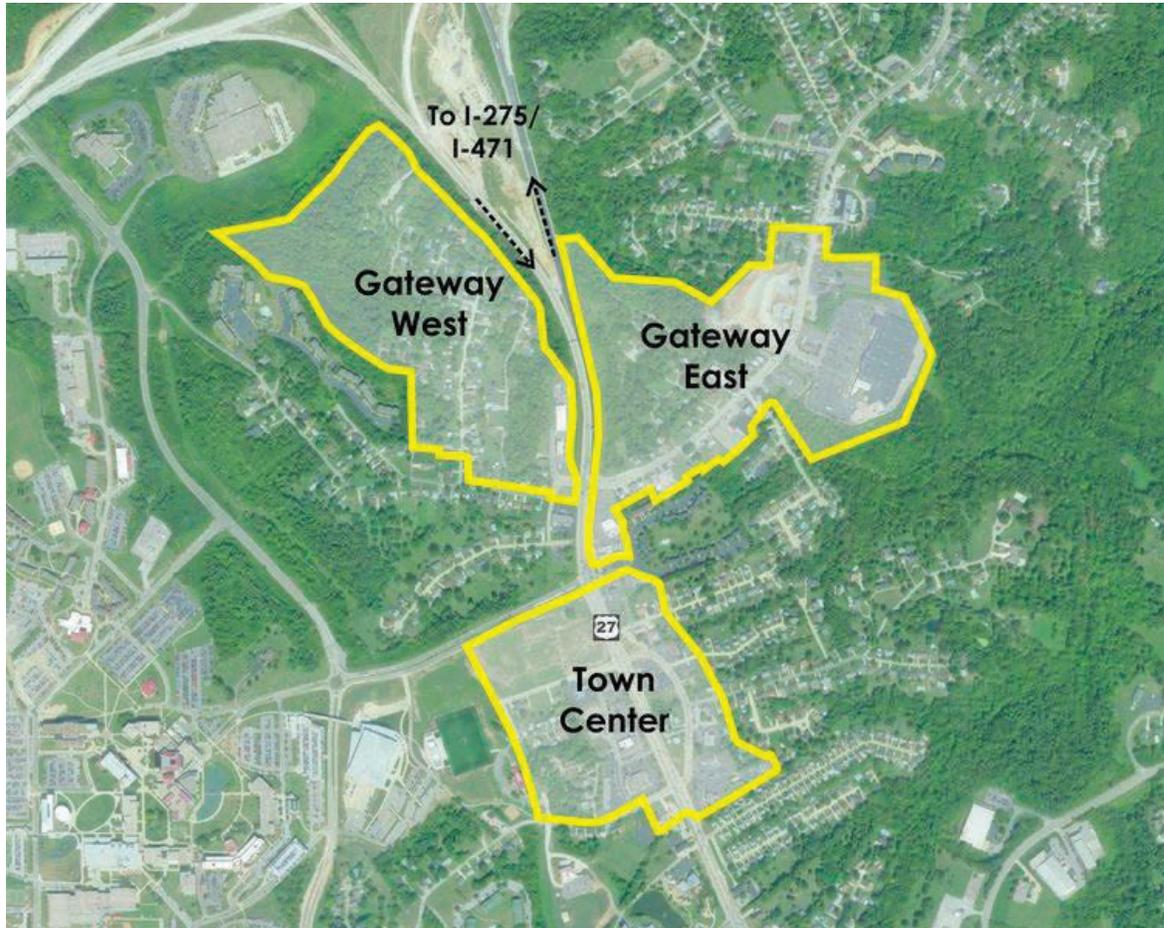
The City must work with KTC and NKU to monitor key traffic indicators in the community to ensure US 27 and other key routes are operating at peak efficiency and safety.

The City should ensure all available steps are taken to improve and maintain acceptable levels of roadway service and safety. Include NKU in the review of data and in meetings with the State.

Monitoring and advocacy is needed most on US 27. KTC reviews and adjusts traffic signal timing and efficacy every year in the US 27 corridor. Ensure City officials are included in such reviews.

As a matter of policy, the City needs to meet with KTC every year to ensure action is taken to keep the corridor running at peak efficiency. Likewise, the City should meet with KTC every four years to review technological advances in the field of traffic synchronization and advocate for infrastructure and synchronization improvements and upgrades.





## Chapter 4 Redevelopment

The ability to improve economically, enhance community image, and ensure Highland Heights remains a desirable place to work, live and even go to college will to some degree depend on the City's ability to manage land use change and redevelopment in three key redevelopment districts – Gateway East, Gateway West and Town Center.

This chapter is a strategic redevelopment guide for the City and its partners to reposition these three redevelopment districts consistent with Comprehensive Plan goals.

Many redevelopment district recommendations found in the 2000 and 2006 Comprehensive Plans are maintained. New policies are provided to advance opportunities identified by the Steering Committee.

Redevelopment district boundary expansions are planned for Gateway East, Gateway West and Town Center. The rationale for each district expansion is provided in the following sections of this chapter.

Policy recommendations for each redevelopment district follow. Strategies that apply to all three redevelopment districts are provided at the end of this Chapter.



## Gateway East

### Goals

(1) Redevelop Gateway East as a mixed-use neighborhood commercial district that provides a limited variety of retail, retail service, and professional office along US 27 with nearby supporting high-density residential use where land areas permit. (2) Transform US 27 into a modern commercial corridor with unified architecture, coordinated access points and efficient circulation. (3) Extend stone streetscape elements along US 27 as place defining enhancements.



### Location

Previous (black dash – 28.3 acres) and planned (solid yellow – 71 acres) boundaries are shown on the above graphic. Gateway East was expanded to the east to include US 27 frontage properties and Lowe's.

Lowe's is desired as a long-term business and land use at its current location. It is included in case Lowe's voluntarily vacates their property.

Property located on the east side of US27 has been added because it is underperforming and its redevelopment is advantageous to create a unified redevelopment district.

Lastly, the northern boundary has been expanded to Bramble Avenue to capture additional road frontage for commercial development.

### Status

Gateway East, with vacant land and low density residential, is underutilized given its location next to regionally significant transportation infrastructure such as I-275, I-471, and US 27.

The majority of Gateway East is currently zoned R-1 Residential One followed by SC Shopping Center and GC General Commercial.



US 27 contain an incompatible mix of residential and commercial uses. US 27, as a primary thoroughfare, carries significant through traffic and is not an ideal location for single-family residential use as a result.



A number of houses along US27 are in comparatively poor condition and bear witness to the market's desire for housing on quieter and less heavily-traveled streets.

Many constraints hinder Gateway East's redevelopment. As a result, few redevelopment plans have been proposed for this area in years past.

Land assemblage of numerous small properties is perhaps the biggest redevelopment obstacle. Limited infrastructure and lack of access north of US 27 also serve as development constraints.

Even if adequate roadway infrastructure was in place, two left-hand turns are required to access property located north and west of US 27. Two left-hand turns make commercial use difficult.

Many residential lots facing US 27 have shallow lot depth relative to modern commercial development standards. This lack of lot depth limits most commercial redevelopment options.

One property owner recently filled in a significant area next to US 27. This leveling added usable lot depth and brought the grade of the property up to that of US 27's street level.



The raised grade at this location will aid efforts to construct a new commercial service road into the area north of US 27 as shown on Map RD1.

### Land Use

A mix of "Commercial / Business" and "Multi-Family Residential" is planned in Gateway East (see Map RD1). Commercial /Business is planned along US 27 including the existing Lowe's property.

Primary land uses desired in areas planned as "Commercial/Business" include healthcare, professional office and limited retail as defined further in the next paragraph.



Retail and retail services uses are planned along US 27 to include neighborhood-orientated beauty and barber shops, tailors and dry cleaners, cafes, carry-outs, and sit down restaurants without drive-thrus, and specialty food stores such as bakeries, ice cream parlors, and produce markets.

These uses generally align with uses permitted in the LSC Limited Service Commercial Zone.



Source: belvedereneighborhood.com



Residential is desired on upper stories of mixed-use commercial buildings or as a standalone secondary use approved as part of a 5-acre or larger mixed-use redevelopment project where at least 50% of a project contains primary land uses as defined in the previous two paragraphs.

Fast food restaurants, large retail (15,000 square feet or larger) and shopping centers (larger than 30,000 square feet) are not planned in order to avoid the proliferation of strip development and congestion.

“Multi-Family Residential” is planned north of US 27 frontage properties up to 12 units per acre or as set on an approved development plan.

New multiple-family residential developments, particularly where abutting single-family residential uses and zoning, are planned to exhibit neighborhood-orientated scale and architecture.



Source: claytonbuildingsolutions.com

New units will ideally offer housing styles and options not currently seen in Highland Heights. While garden apartments are not eliminated as a possibility, such design arrangements are widely available.

Taller, mid-rise apartments, if proposed, should be located closer to I-471 to minimize impact on adjacent neighborhoods.



Source: greendiary.com

### Circulation

A commercial access service road west of US 27 at the Lowe’s intersection, as shown on Map RD1, is needed to service Gateway East redevelopment.

Recent fill activity on the west side of US 27 across from Lowe’s decreased a 20-foot drop in elevation adjacent to the road there.

Improved signalization and adding a fourth leg to the Lowe’s intersection is needed to open land up for redevelopment west of US 27 in Gateway East.

Property with US 27 frontage can gain additional lot depth after the service road is constructed. Ideally, US 27 frontage properties will gain access off of the proposed service road to eliminate curb cuts on US 27.

Previous Comprehensive Plans anticipated an I-471 underpass or overpass to physically connect Gateway East and West. That concept is carried forward in this update.

This recommendation never received funding or priority status even though the Kentucky Transportation Cabinet commissioned a plan to study Gateway East-West connectivity.

Construct a temporary stub or cul-de-sac at the west end of this service road to permit a future extension across I-471. Ensure pedestrian facilities are included in the design of any approved service connector road.



Work with the State to apply access management standards on US 27 to control access points, curb cut widths and turn movements on and from US 27.

Access management improves corridor safety and efficiency by reducing turning movements and accidents.



The *US 27 Alexandria Pike Access Management Plan* calls for specific improvements to make US 27 safer and multi-modal.

These improvements include the consolidation of lanes and incorporating on-street bike lanes, narrowing wide curb cuts, and consolidating driveways. Again, while these recommendations have never received priority-funding status, they are none-the-less desired.

As discussed in Chapter 3 Transportation, the inclusion of additional bus transit service provided by TANK is desired in Gateway East to accommodate higher residential densities associated with planned multi-family development and higher job density associated with commercial redevelopment.

Ensure TANK officials are given all development plans that are submitted in the US 27 Corridor to ensure proper area is maintained for increased service including bus pullovers and shelters.

### Design

Use of durable building materials such as decorative masonry or brick should be required on building walls visible from a public right-of-way.

Use of high quality and long lasting building materials as already established in Town Center will further brand Highland Heights as a high-quality community and advance the streetscape theme already established in Town Center.



One- to two-story buildings are anticipated adjacent to US 27 with articulated facades and interesting roof-lines. Flat uninterrupted wall planes are discouraged.

Use wall plane changes, pilasters, columns, window sills, articulated entrances, arcades, awnings, water tables and decorative cornices – to name just a few architectural features – to make development architecturally interesting.

Incorporate pedestrian walkways between buildings and developments. Internal paths connecting to City sidewalks and paths are essential.

Extend stacked stone veneer wall streetscape elements into Gateway East similar to those found in the Town Center.



Require walls to screen parking lots facing US 27. Require low-profile monument signs with stone veneer bases that match stone streetscape/screen wall materials.



This strategy will further brand Highland Heights's signature element and unify US 27 as the City's primary image corridor.

Encourage new commercial buildings to incorporate amenities such as rooftop patios, outdoor seating, and usable spaces such as plazas or greens to encourage neighborhood socialization.





# Map RD1 - Gateway East and Gateway West Redevelopment District Plan





## Gateway West

### Goal Statements

(1) Transform Gateway West from a lightly-populated residential area to a university-affiliated business park. (2) Build upon the success established by NKU Foundation's adjacent business park. (3) Support NKU's commitment to entrepreneurialism, applied research and cutting edge technology. (4) Provide a suitable location to support regional economic development efforts to attract high-wage, high-tech employment growth.



### Location

As its name implies, Gateway West is located at Highland Heights' front door adjacent to I-471 and US 27. Previous boundaries (black dash – 20.1 acres) and planned boundaries (solid yellow – 61.8 acres) are shown on the above graphic.

Gateway West has been enlarged to support efforts to develop a leading, university-affiliated business park as envisioned herein.

### Status

Existing land use is low density, single family residential. Gateway Shopping Center opened in 2010 near Sunset and US 27.

In many ways Gateway West is underutilized given its location next to regionally significant infrastructure including NKU, I-275, I-471, and US 27.

Environmental constraints are present, particularly along the western boundary. Constraints include rolling topography, steep hillsides, ravines and floodplains.



Current zoning is primarily R-1 One Residential. This zoning pre-dates the completion of I-471, I-275, and the more recently widened US 27. NKU, newly established four decades ago, was not then a leading institution it is today.



Gateway Shopping Center, zoned ROD Redevelopment Overlay District, was the first redevelopment project to come to fruition in Gateway West. This successful project consumed about one-third of Gateway West's land area as designated by its 2006 Comprehensive Plan boundaries.



Residual property in Gateway West was never redeveloped. Reasons for this include difficulty assembling numerous small properties, limited infrastructure including poor access and opposition from some property owners.



### Land Use

The land use strategy for Gateway West supports “Business Park” development along with a limited amount of “Commercial / Business”. See Map RD1.

The majority of Gateway West is planned for “Business Park” land use and development. This future land use designation conserves land for economic development efforts aimed at attracting high-wage, high-tech jobs taking advantage of Gateway West’s excellent regional location.

Mid-rise corporate office, research and development, laboratories, healthcare and high-tech uses are planned in a master-planned business park setting. Higher education facilities are also desired.



This land use strategy is inspired by the success of neighboring NKU Foundation’s Research Park and the desire to further develop Northern Kentucky’s high-tech business cluster in Highland Heights.

This strategy has merit given NKU Foundation’s Business Park features two of the region’s leading high-tech, advanced manufacturing companies, General Cable and PPD’s Global Central Lab.

Furthermore, NKU is worldwide leader in the high-tech discipline of “informatics” and applied science. NKU provides extensive support to entrepreneurial programs including its acclaimed UPTECH business accelerator.



This concentration of intellectual capital far surpasses what is typically found in a community the size of Highland Heights. The goal of this plan is to leverage these assets for enhanced economic activity and for high-tech, high-wage job growth on behalf of local and regional residents.

Evidence suggests high-tech companies prefer to locate next to each other and next to universities to take advantage of an educated workforce.



University-affiliated business parks (also referred to as science parks or research and development parks) are seeing growth across the country as a result.

A business park in Gateway West will offer a strategic location for companies that want to be located close to NKU's facilities, leading subject-matter experts and an educated workforce.

A business park at this location may also aid NKU's efforts to protect its intellectual capital and to support current and graduate UPTECH companies.

Planned "Commercial/Business" uses are limited to restaurants and business services for the purposes of attracting and supporting adjacent high-tech corporations and their employees and creating a high-quality and attractive business park location.

"Commercial/Business" is planned next to Sunset Drive and Gateway Shopping Center.

Commercial / Business uses that serve as amenity business support are limited to restaurants and business services. Standard, full-service, sit down restaurants are desired to fulfill business lunch needs immediately adjacent to planned business park uses. Fast-casual restaurants similar to Panera Bread are also acceptable.

Fast-food restaurants, large retail (greater than 15,000 square feet) and shopping centers greater than 20,000 square feet are not planned to avoid additional and unwanted congestion on I-471 and US 27.

### **Circulation**

Access and circulation improvements are needed to improve Gateway West's development potential.

East-west access is largely cut-off by the wedge created by interstate I-471 funneling down to Highway US27. Sunset Drive is a stub

commercial road before it curves south and turns into a two-lane residential street.

Realign Sunset Drive as shown on Map RD1 to provide a modern east-west service road that connects US27 and I-471 to University Drive and to a planned roundabout at NKU's North Connector Road.

This improved alignment will provide connectivity from the AA Highway to I-471 via the planned Pooles Creek and NKU Connectors. As such, this road will effectively bypass the Nunn Drive/US 27 intersection with a consequent reduction in traffic congestion.

A local service road running north off of Sunset is needed to provide access to the enlarged interior of Gateway West. A cul-de-sac at the end of this service road is anticipated due to the steep hillside barrier found on Gateway West's western and northern borders.

Pedestrian connectivity from Gateway West to NKU Foundation's Research Park and NKU's main campus can be made regardless of noted environmental constraints. This can be accomplished by planning and installing interconnected pedestrian walkways and bikeways.

Previous Comprehensive Plan policy anticipated an I-471 underpass or overpass to physically connect Gateway East and West. This alignment is carried forward as part of this update.

The 2006 Comprehensive Plan called for a new off-ramp exiting from southbound I-471 with forced right turn entry onto Nunn Drive.

This project is no longer supported as a viable option to relieve traffic on US 27. An off-ramp would bisect Gateway West and interfere with planned circulation. Such alignment would also significantly reduce total developable acreage.



The Steering Committee contemplated an inside through lane on I-275 starting northeast of 3 Mile Road following the I-471/US 27 off-ramp down to a forced right-hand turn onto Nunn Drive. This recommendation is not on Map RD1 but it is noted here for additional study if traffic conditions warrant.

### Design

Leading high-tech corporations are image conscious and often seek manicured business park locations.

Use durable, long-lasting building materials such as brick, stone and decorative masonry units on all building walls visible from a public street with possible exceptions for buildings deemed to be of otherwise exceptional architectural quality.

Use of decorative trim and large window openings consistent with modern, high-efficiency office buildings is desired to brand the business park.



Due to limited land availability, multi-story buildings are anticipated to reduce land consumption, increase leasable floor area, and to take advantage of highway visibility.



Incorporate pedestrian walkways between buildings and developments. Internal paths connecting to City sidewalks and paths are essential.

As with Gateway East, extend stone streetscape elements into Gateway West similar to those found in the Town Center.

Screen parking lots with low-profile stacked stone veneer walls. Require low-profile monument signs with stone veneer bases that match the stone streetscape/screen wall materials employed elsewhere.

Design and construct a “Business Park” entry sign using stone materials that incorporates planned streetscape elements.

Adherence to this strategy will unify US 27 as the City’s primary image corridor and brand Gateway East, Gateway West and Town Center as the City’s key commercial areas.

Permit signature wall signs – signs that can be seen at the top of multi-story office building from adjacent highways, to reward companies that locate in Highland Heights.



### Town Center

#### Goal Statements

(1) Town Center is to be a vibrant, mixed-use focal point serving as both the real and symbolic center of civic and commercial activity of the City. (2) Planned redevelopment is intended to increase community pride, create a stronger sense of place and drive an identifiable and desirable community image. (3) Town Center should be a pedestrian-friendly node and be accessible from adjacent neighborhoods and from NKU. (5) Town Center needs to contribute to heightened social and economic wellbeing for Highland Heights and NKU.



#### Location

Town Center is centrally located east and west of US 27 between Nunn Drive and Johns Hill Road.

Previous boundaries (black dash – 118.7 acres) and new boundaries (solid yellow – 48.5 acres) are shown in the above graphic. The western boundary has been moved from University Drive to Clara Drive on account of recent NKU land acquisition. The boundary has been expanded southeast to Bon Jan Lane and now includes E-Jay Plaza and Abby’s Child Enrichment Center.

Eastern expansion crosses Old Alexandria Pike and goes three properties deep to gain suitable lot depth needed to support commercial redevelopment.

#### Status

Of the three redevelopment districts, Town Center has seen the most redevelopment activity. Retail establishments, restaurant and offices are currently present.

The Bluegrass Center, located on the west side of US 27 in Town Center, was the City’s first large-scale redevelopment project.

While the Bluegrass Center is a success, its design does not incorporate all of the urban design standards set forth in the 2000 and 2006 Comprehensive Plans, which called for a mixed-use, pedestrian-friendly node.

While actual development does display high-quality building materials and landscaping, it lacks pedestrian connectivity and amenity space. As a result, the Blue Grass Center looks and functions more like a high-quality suburban strip than contributor to a real town center.





A recent redevelopment proposal for Town Center approved in 2012 calls for a 13,000 square foot commercial center called Highland Pointe.



Highland Pointe consumes the remainder of the “Island” property created after US 27 was realigned to connect to I-471. 5/3 Bank anchors the north end of the “Island” and was the first to redevelop there.



Town Center contains one of the largest undeveloped land parcels remaining in Highland Heights. This six acre parcel, located on the southwest corner of Nunn Drive and US 27, is a former supermarket site currently owned by NKU.



Town Center is currently zoned ROD Redevelopment Overlay District, LSC Limited Shopping Center, GC General Commercial and R-1 Residential One.

Several properties zoned R-1 maintain residential use. Housing tenure includes a mix of student rental and owner-occupied units.



Regardless of tenure, land use in this redevelopment district is likely to transition within ten years given NKU’s continued growth and heightened commercial interest in the US 27 corridor.



### Land Use

The “Town Center” Future Land Use Category is applied to the entire Town Center redevelopment district (see Maps LU3/RD2) recognizing that part of Town Center is in NKU’s future acquisition area – see Map LU3.

Vertical, multiple-floor development is planned to maximize remaining redevelopment opportunities and to create a more vibrant town center.

Ground floors are reserved primarily for retail and food service. Upper floors are planned as office and/or residential, including student housing.

Attached residential developments such as dorms and townhomes are planned as secondary uses permitted only when approved as part of a larger mixed-use redevelopment plan.

NKU is planning hospitality and conference center uses at the corner of Nunn Drive and US 27 to support area businesses and numerous events held at NKU.

Suburban style strip development and associated uses are not desired, including food service with drive-thru windows and shopping centers. See Table RD1 on page 18.

New retail establishments over 5,000 square feet are generally not compatible with the pedestrian-friendly, mixed-use environment envisioned for town center.

Larger retail establishments, to be considered, must demonstrate a high degree of urban design and architecture, including among other things compartmentalized store front and window bays framed with glass and decorative columns.

Parking garages, if developed, should include ground floor storefronts or be located behind buildings.



The picture above is of “The Lane” in Columbus, a proposed five-story mixed-use development that features a 109-room hotel, 108 luxury apartment units, 13,000 square feet of retail space and 13,000 square feet of office space.



A proposed mixed-use dorm with 700 beds, 50,000 square feet of ground-floor retail space, underground parking and interior courtyards will strengthen the urban environment next to the University of Louisville on a 4.5 acre block.

### Circulation

Town Center has excellent access from US 27. Internal circulation improvements are needed as planned on Map RD2.

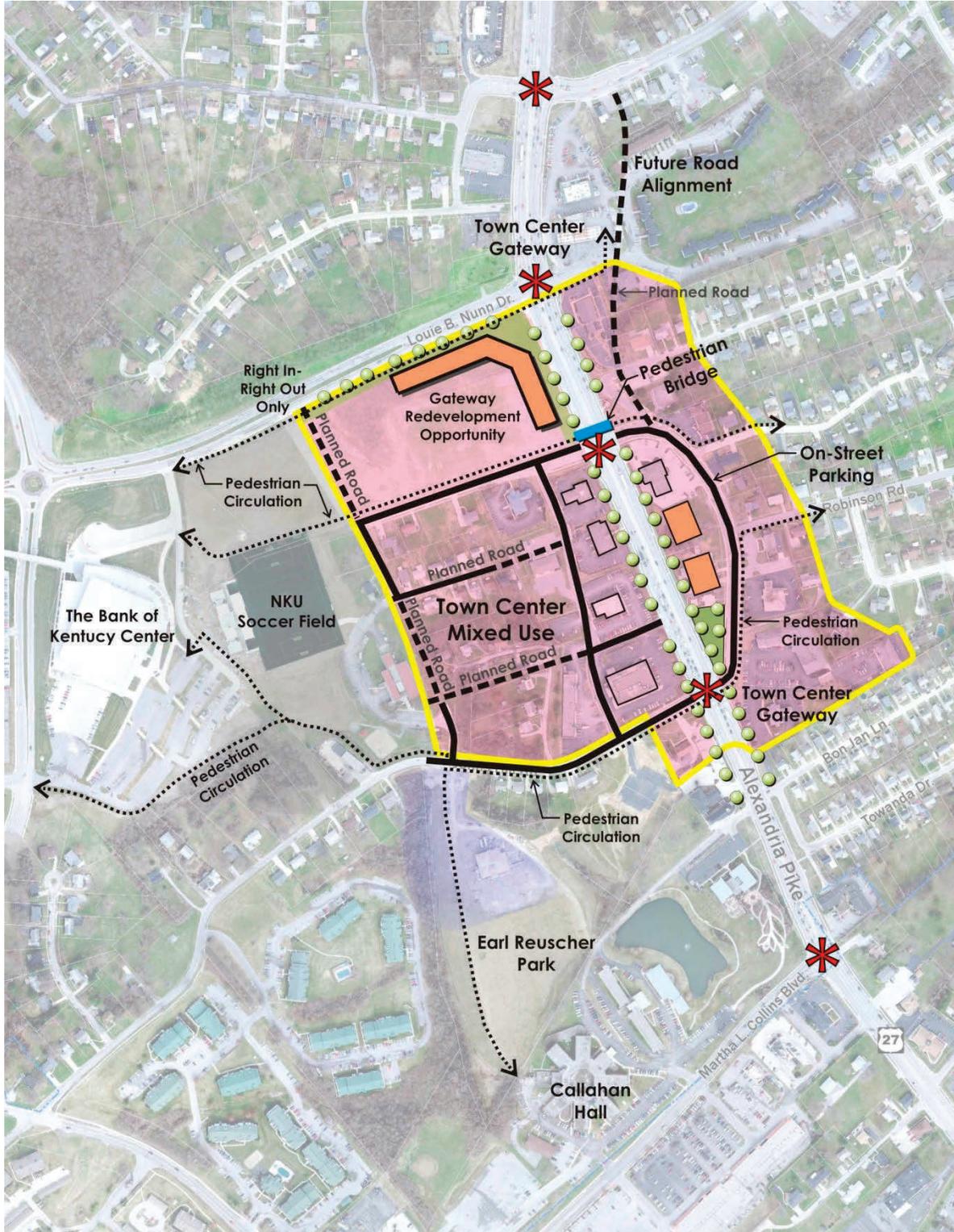
Planned street extensions, shown as black dashed lines, will provide a more integrated transportation system, increase circulation and reduce traffic congestion.

East-west street extensions are planned to create a grid block system that support pedestrian-friendly urban development.

Two parallel service roads are proposed on either side of US 27 as shown on Map RD2. These roads will bypass signalized intersections, improve internal circulation and reduce reliance on using US 27.



### Map RD2 – Town Center Redevelopment District Plan





### Circulation, continued

Right-in and right-out only turning movements onto US 27 and Nunn Drive are planned as shown on Map RD2. Both roads will require additional study to determine proper alignment and intersection configurations at Nunn Drive and US 27.

Road alignments west of US 27 need to consider NKU's development plans for the 6-acre parcel located at Nunn Drive and US 27.

Town Center will benefit from a vibrant street scene. Safe and efficient pedestrian circulation is important to Town Center's overall success.

Pedestrian connectivity from NKU to Town Center will increase Town Center's viability as commercial mixed-use area. Town Center's success will in turn provide a high-quality, off-campus environment for students and faculty.



Require wide sidewalks on both sides of every street. A minimum of 14 feet or more is desired next to retail to allow for benches and outdoor seating.



A pedestrian bridge spanning US 27 close to Marshall Lane is called for to provide students and City residents safe passage across US 27 above grade and removed from traffic.

Use the pedestrian bridge to co-brand the City of Highland Heights and NKU as the graphic below demonstrates.

Construct the bridge with high-quality building materials that match adjacent architecture and stone streetscape elements. The bridge will serve as a defining gateway element in Town Center and provide a stronger sense of arrival.

Work with NKU to integrate the pedestrian bridge into any plan created for a mixed-use hotel/conference center at Nunn Drive and US 27.

Seek joint funding, include CMAQ funding as available to help pay for the bridge's construction.





### Design

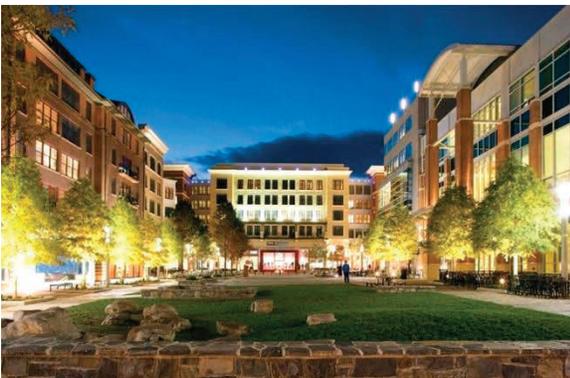
Town Center is an urban place. All future development needs to push building density higher and take on an urban form to create a truly pedestrian-friendly business district.



Locate future buildings adjacent to sidewalks. Ground floor vibrancy is accentuated by storefronts with clear vision glass and articulated entrances.

Pedestrians are accommodated with wide sidewalks between streets and ground floor retail. Outdoor seating is planned in Town Center.

Arrange buildings in a pattern that establish pedestrian amenities such as town squares, plazas or greens throughout Town Center.



A central green or square west of Bluegrass Drive as part of a multi-story complex connected to a planned 20 foot wide, tree-lined promenade (walk) between Applebee's and Huff Realty would provide dedicated pedestrian access to US27.

As a matter of policy, ensure pedestrian amenities are provided as part of all new development in Town Center even if it is limited to a micro-patio with outdoor seating.



Source: schmidt-design.com

Use wide sidewalks and gathering areas to create a pedestrian-centric environment. Encourage private sector investment in outdoor gathering spaces.



Source: urbanspaceandplaces.blogspot.com



### Design, continued

NKU’s vision for a mixed-use hotel /conference center with retail on the six-acre parcel between Nunn Dr. and Marshall Ln. is in the developmental stage. Restaurants in a park-like setting are under consideration with open and green space along Alexandria Pike.

This frontage would be an excellent location for a public plaza that could be used for events such as art shows, small-group musical performances, among other activities. A water fountain located in the plaza near the corner of Alexandria Pike and Nunn Drive would serve as a focal point for the entrance to NKU and for the plaza as well. The plaza would serve well both NKU and the City.

A formal water feature and/or piece of art would ideally be provided in attempt to create a central place and organizing feature in Highland Heights.

Creative use of lighting would ensure public spaces are used extensively day and night.



Source: Texas Tech University Facebook Page

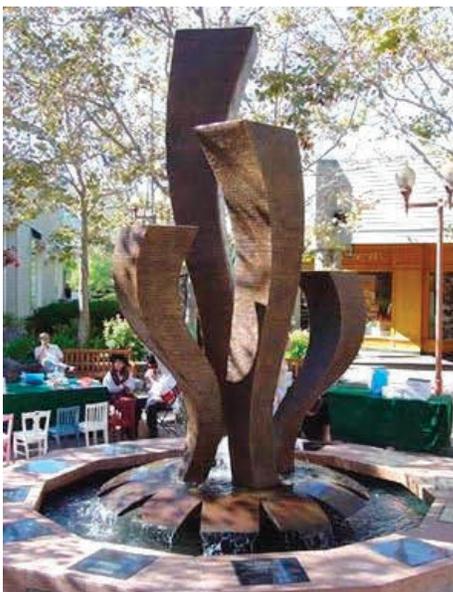
The use of Tax Increment Financing or Kentucky Tourism Act or other program may offset development costs possibly making the cost of water feature or other similar element financially feasible.



Source: ids-placemakers.com



Source: newcomblianheights.blogspot.com



Source: modernsculpture.com



Source: memphisjunction.com



### Design, continued

NKU's proposed Town Center project is highly strategic as development at Nunn Drive and Us 27 will serve as gateways to both NKU's campus and Town Center.

Development plans need to integrate "campus" and "Town Center" architecture to mutually benefit both NKU and Highland Heights.

Continue to require brick and stone building materials in Town Center. New buildings need to complement and pay homage to existing Town Center architecture.

Maintain stacked stone veneer wall streetscape elements along US 27 as the City's signature design element. Wherever feasible, incorporate stone wall elements in streetscapes in Town Center's interior off of US 27.

Parking in Town Center should be on-street or behind buildings. Parking on the side of buildings is less desirable as it breaks the urban street wall.



Source: Strongtowns.org

Parking in front yards between buildings and sidewalks is least preferred. No more than two rows of front yard parking are planned.



## Town Center Development vs. Conventional Strip Commercial

Town Center	Strip-Commercial
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Unified mixed-use development building with coordinated character entrances, parking and loading.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Single, free-standing buildings with no consideration for establishing a unified character</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Dense, tightly space buildings are located close to street and sidewalk with parking along the rear</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Buildings situated away from street with parking along the front</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Pedestrian orientation and connectivity with pedestrian system.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>No consideration for a pedestrian system and its connection with the community</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Development centers on a common pedestrian public space</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>No consideration and/or provision for a common public amenity space</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Site amenities such as fountain, benches, landscaping</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>No site amenities, no green space, token landscaping</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Integration with neighborhood and streetscape.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>No requirement for achieving integration with the adjacent neighborhood</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Emphasis on uses, which do not depend entirely on the automobile.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Emphasis on use that depend entirely on the automobile</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Two-story buildings serviced by shared parking for the town center.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>One-story small footprint buildings with large areas devoted to parking</li> </ul>

The recommended town center urban design guidelines direct commercial redevelopment away from typical strip development toward a higher quality mixed-use development.

The key physical attributes that contribute to the effectiveness of a town center are as follows:

Communities across the nation report that technology-based businesses and industries are attracted to areas, which among other key factors, offer well-planned mixed-use business districts.



Neighborhood-scale town centers with mixed-use development withstand the test of time.

Many planned communities built in the early years of the 20th Century on the basis of the garden city principles of planning serve as a great model for town center development today.

- Complete pedestrian integration with adjacent areas.
- Mixed-use – commercial, office, residential, civic, entertainment, parks.
- No “big-box” users (i.e. large size drug stores, home improvement center, etc.).
- Diversified small retail units no greater than 2,500 square feet.
- Controlled ingress/egress.
- Surface parking behind buildings.
- Convenient short-term parking along building fronts.
- Pedestrian access to retail units from the rear.
- Strong landscape character
- Site amenities – fountain, pedestrian areas, floral spaces, green commons.



### Redevelopment Strategies

Tools, resources and strategies are available to help the City pursue redevelopment in its priority redevelopment areas.

#### Land Assemblage

1. **Lead Land Assembly.** Most developers avoid land assembly when numerous small lots are involved such as the case with property in Highland Baby Farms Subdivision (the 1920's layout precursor to what became the City of Highland Heights).

Land assembly adds time and money and increases risk with no guarantee of success. The City must champion this cause if redevelopment is desired any time in the near future.

Start the land assemblage process as soon as possible. Due to limited resources, the City should focus on one redevelopment area at a time. Land bank property until a redevelopment is proposed.

Gateway West is a high priority due to its potential economic return from planned high-tech office employment.

2. **Hire Additional Help.** The City needs additional human resources to effectively lead land assembly efforts. Legal, real estate brokerage and developer skill sets, among others, will likely be needed.
3. **Meet with Property Owners.** Proactively meet with property owners located in the assembly area. Be transparent, inform property owners of City goals and intent. Sign agreements with property owners interested in selling. Newport used this approach to assemble most of the property needed for to develop Newport on the Levee.

4. **Seek Partners.** The City will benefit by working with other organizations and entities, perhaps even developers, to assemble strategically located property.

NKU and Tri-ED are obvious examples of organizations that may be willing to support the City in its land-assembly efforts in the Gateway West redevelopment area.

5. **Seek Problem Properties.** Proactively find properties that have problems with clear titles, estate entanglements or are owned by heirs located outside the region, since these problems can take months if not years to solve.
6. **Revisit Urban Renewal.** Look at urban renewal as a possible option to give the City additional tools needed to assemble land, particularly from hold outs.

#### Equity Investment Approach

The "Equity Investment Approach" is a newer and arguably more sophisticated approach to land assembly. This approach makes participating property owners pro-rata shareholders of a larger area being assembled.

Property owners form unified ownership and a legal entity authorized to perform transactions on behalf of joint ownership such as a LLC.

Landowners receive shares of the new entity based on the proportional value of their property. Each owners share price is based on the proportional value of the entire land area as a whole.

This approach may result in higher share values for each property owner, particularly when zoning is changed from residential to commercial. This strategy gives property owners upside participation in a development project.



The City could act as partner in an Equity Investment Approach by offering property owners with technical assistance. The benefit to the City is larger properties self-assemble reducing time and use of resources.

### Financing

The City is advised to meet with competent counsel before implementing any of the strategies outlined in this section.

1. **“Development Area” Tax Increment Financing (TIF) District.** One of three TIF types permitted in Kentucky, it is intended for use in already developed areas – such as the case for all three of Highland Heights’ redevelopment districts.

Assessed property in the TIF may not exceed 20% of the City’s total real property assessment. To qualify, the TIF “Development Area” must meet 2 of 7 tests for blight or include a mixed-use project in a research park. The City could possibly bypass the blight test if NKU/NKU Foundation was willing to expand the NKU Foundation Research Park into Gateway West.

Gateway West plans call for additional retail and office uses meeting the state’s mixed-use requirement.

**Increment Revenue.** Highland Heights may pledge 100% of its incremental revenues from real property taxes and/or occupational taxes for up to 30 years. Other taxing districts in the City may make the same pledge, except school and fire districts are not allowed to pledge their increment by state law. Additional increment can be captured with State participation.

**Tax Increment Bonds.** The City can secure increment bonds backed by pledged TIF revenue. This will provide needed working capital up front. Increment bonds do not have to be secured by the City’s credit rating.

**Use of TIF Proceeds.** Kentucky TIF law permits a broad range of eligible uses to develop, promote, and incentivize residential, industrial, office, recreation, and tourism development.

Eligible uses of TIF generated revenues include land-assemblage and demolition costs, cost to relocate residents, cost to design subdivisions and extend roads and utilities, cost to pay for the provision of lighting and parking; cost to promote development to new tenants; and to help companies construct facilities with grants and loans.

**State TIF Participation.** State participation in a “Development Area” TIF is economically advantageous. Projects that meet Development Area TIF requirements are eligible to receive up to 80% of State incremental revenues up to 20 years and may include sales tax, occupation tax, corporate tax and real property tax. State TIF revenues can be used only for infrastructure and land preparation costs.

**TIF Boundaries.** Weigh the option of placing all three redevelopment districts in one large TIF district or whether three separate TIF districts make more sense. Boundaries can be expertly placed to ensure requirements are met for State participation.



### **Maintain Ability to Use State Incentives.**

Careful construction of TIF legislation is needed to ensure the greatest monetary benefit possible is achieved when establishing TIF districts in Highland Heights.

It is possible to lose potential TIF revenue streams or negate the use of certain state incentive programs for economic development if TIFs are incorrectly structured. It is important to seek competent counsel on this matter before any TIF district is established.

2. **Industrial Revenue Bonds.** As defined by KRS 103.200, Industrial Revenue Bonds (IRB) may be issued by state and local governments in Kentucky to help finance industrial buildings.

### **IRB's fund projects, not developments.**

IRB may not benefit Highland Heights in the early stages of redevelopment or land assembly efforts. IRB requires a job-producing company be interested in building or expanding in a community before bonds are issued.

**Use of Proceeds.** IRB's may be useful after property is assembled and a specific project is proposed. Bond funds may be used to finance total project costs, including engineering, site preparation, land, buildings, machinery and equipment and bond issuance costs.

**Tax Benefits.** KRS 103 permits the bond issuer to hold title to the improvements financed with IRB proceeds. One of its main benefits is that the property owned by the issuer may be exempt from local property taxes during the duration of the bond issue. The same property may also be eligible to be taxed at reduced state rates.

IRB's impact all taxing districts located in the City including the county, school district and fire district.

IRB is the only state incentive program permitted to capture all of a local school district's annual property tax revenues. It will be important for City leaders to meet with all taxing districts, especially school district officials, before bonds are issued to determine if IRB use negatively impacts taxing district revenues and if compensation agreements are needed.

3. **Advocacy.** The City and its partners need to present a unified front supporting Comprehensive Plan initiatives to gain political support and financing. Nowhere is that more apparent than with road improvements.

Several transportation plans and studies produced over the past decades have resulted in numerous transportation improvement recommendations. All but a few of those plans have come to fruition.

Remaining projects have never reached priority status on OKI's Long Range Transportation Plan or on State project funding schedules. These projects are permanently on the shelf and will remain there until the City successfully advocates for their funding.





It is highly recommended that the City builds a coalition of regional partners that support Highland Heights' plans before submitting funding requests to the State legislature.

**Alternative Funding.** Pursue alternative funding, including grants, as a means to leverage local public and private dollars.

**The Congestion Management and Air Quality (CMAQ) program** supports surface transportation projects that contribute to air quality improvements and reduce congestion including bicycle, pedestrian and transit projects.

The **Transportation Alternatives Program (TAP)** provides funding for programs and projects defined as transportation alternatives, including on- and off-road pedestrian and bicycle facilities, infrastructure projects for improving non-driver access to public transportation and enhanced mobility, community improvement activities, and environmental mitigation, recreational trail program projects and safe routes to school projects.

### Partners

The City is advised to assemble a team of partners, trusted advisors and firms with the necessary skill sets needed to skillfully redevelop targeted areas.

1. **Work Collaboratively with Partners.** Enlist the help of the other organizations, entities and agencies that can provide political, technical and/or financial assistance.

NKU is a logical partner as many of the initiatives listed in this plan will ultimately impact the University. For instance, NKU is a major property owner in Town Center and Gateway West.

Campbell County, Tri-ED and the State may be interested in the business park concept proposed for Gateway West as it could advance a high profile development that could be marketed regionally to attract high-tech companies and jobs.

2. **Team Approach.** One approach to area redevelopment is to assemble a team that takes the project from start to finish (concept through construction). This is a public-private partnership. All terms for the entire project are set before work starts to ensure everyone understands their roles and minimum expectations for work product and compensation. Another model is to assemble a different team for each major step – land acquisition, infrastructure planning, design, land deposition and development. This approach recognizes that no one team may be best for every step.

Others models exist. For example, communities can look to the private sector to assemble land, in which case the community can offset land-holding costs to keep developer costs down.

4. **Seek Compensation.** Regardless of the model used, make it apparent that the City will require compensation to recoup its costs associated with land assemblage.
5. **Marketing and Branding.** Work with NKU and Tri-ED to develop a suitable brand and marketing strategy for Gateway East and West.





The primary objectives in developing a Gateway West Business Park are to: (1) promote economic development in Highland Heights and the region; (2) provide additional area for NKU to expand its entrepreneurial and business programs; and (3) provide a location for corporations that desire close proximity to NKU.



It is recognized that success in achieving these objectives will depend in part on aggressive promotion of the location. Such a promotional effort will be more effective if the area being promoted has a unique identifiable image and name.

### Development Plan Requirements

New development within redevelopment districts should be guided by the following urban-environmental design standards and approval procedures:

1. Consistent with previous Comprehensive Plan recommendations, redevelopment should occur according to an approved development plan submitted by an applicant. A development plan is necessary to avoid uncoordinated development and costly mistakes.
2. Any redevelopment requiring rezoning of property must include a development plan.
3. Deny any proposed redevelopment that impedes or adversely affects the overall viability of redevelopment on adjacent properties or districts.
4. Development plans must demonstrate how redevelopment can be planned and

designed without interfering with subsequent redevelopment on adjoining property within the redevelopment district.

5. Development plans must present a cohesive development and building arrangement that considers internal and external traffic access and circulation, landscaping and parking on the subject property and adjacent property within the redevelopment district.
6. All new development within a redevelopment district must be planned and designed to maximize the economic opportunity of the site as expressed in the Comprehensive Plan.
7. The City is encouraged to adopt clearly articulated design guidelines that can be effectively communicated to applicants and enforced by the Planning Commission to ensure unified development is achieved district-wide.
8. Building placement, height, proposed use(s), intensity of uses and architectural features should be consistent with Comprehensive Plan objectives for the redevelopment district under consideration.
9. Matters of internal circulation and street design should conform to Comprehensive Plan recommendations for the site and redevelopment area with regard to its overall circulation pattern.
10. Any new redevelopment requiring a rezoning of property must be of sufficient size and configuration to allow for the appropriate and beneficial use of the property as envisioned in the Comprehensive Plan. This issue is further addressed in the following section.



### Redevelopment Parcel Size

Highland Heights' current zoning ordinances require a developer to assemble 3-acres or more of land to qualify for a ROD rezoning. This requirement is viewed by some as being too restrictive.

Highland Heights' goal is not to stop progress but to ensure that coordinated and cohesive development is achieved. Achieving unified redevelopment is a legitimate public purpose.

As such, the 3-acre minimum ROD land area requirement is envisioned to remain in effect over the life of this Comprehensive Plan.

The current regulation could benefit from flexibility by recognizing that holding to a 3-acre minimum requirement may not benefit the City in all cases.

The following approaches offer additional flexibility without unnecessarily nullifying the intent of the requirement:

1. A rezoning application for less than 3-acres can be considered when the rezoning request enlarges an existing ROD. In such case, the area considered for rezoning shall be no less than one acre.
2. Permit joint rezoning applications of contiguous property as a means to meet the 3-acre minimum requirement and to promote collaboration between multiple property owners and developers. Require a master development plan to control the entire land area.
3. Create a series of development plan and rezoning tests by which to judge whether a rezoning request and development plan furthers Comprehensive Plan goals regardless of parcel size.

4. Waive the 3-acre requirement when hardships and unique situations are presented. One example is the Highland Pointe Shopping Center project which is located on less than three acres on the "Island" in Town Center.
5. The City proactively master plans the entire redevelopment area showing ideal locations for curb cuts, shared drives, new roads, landscaping and screening and building placement, etc. Properties smaller than 3-acres are granted zone change with conditions that the rezoned property develops consistent with the City produced master plan.

Consider asking property owners to participate financially in the development of a master plan on a pro-rata share based on property size or value of the area being planned.

6. Consider reducing the 3-acre requirement when the applicant submits a development plan for the entire redevelopment area that demonstrates that development on less than 3-acres will not impede or create uncoordinated development.

### Redevelopment Plan Uses

The City currently requires confirmation of specific users as part of ROD rezoning and development plan approval. This requirement is considered by some to be restrictive and was a noted point of contention when the Steering Committee discussed enlarging redevelopment area boundaries.

Requiring future tenant names for development plan approval may hinder investment. Developers and corporations often require correct zoning before making



investment decisions. This reality in turn may hinder one's ability to attract and sign tenants.

It is possible to maintain adequate control over future use without knowing actual tenant names.

This can be accomplished by labeling permitted land use by lot or building on an approved plan and then enumerate a mutually agreeable list of specifically permitted and prohibited uses either on the plan or as condition of approval or as an exhibit or signed agreement. Similarly, use restrictions can be recorded as a covenant.

Taking the above approach one additional step, the City may consider adopting legislation that permit negotiations between the Planning Commission and an applicant during rezoning and development plan hearings.

Such negotiations may result in agreed upon parameters for permitted uses, strengthen existing development standards, and add new development standards beyond minimum zoning standards.

This technique would enable applicants to propose, and the City to review and act on, stricter development standards.

The use of conditional zoning should be supported by legislation to amend the Zoning Ordinance. Legislation should be adopted only after the potential benefits and negative impacts of conditional zoning are fully recognized and understood.

A clear and recognizable benefit to the public consistent with defined community land use planning and development goals should be identified before a text amendment is considered.

The City uses this technique to some extent now when reviewing ROD rezoning/development plan applications. Adopting specific legislation enabling negotiated and mutually agreed upon terms is preferred to ad hoc practice and provides greater transparency and predictability.

### **Seek Counsel**

Many recommendations are provided in the Development Strategy section of this chapter. Many of these strategies have financial and legal ramifications.

Planning Commission and City Council are advised to seek competent counsel before implementing any of the recommendations presented in the Development Strategy section of this chapter.





## Chapter 5 Action Plan

Chapter 5 Action Plan is introduced for the first time in a Highland Heights Comprehensive Plan. Its purpose is two-fold – to guide City implementation efforts and to put the Comprehensive Plan to work.

### Action Plan Table

The vast majority of Comprehensive Plan Update goals and recommendations are summarized in table form organized by chapter starting on page 4.

The Action Plan Table provides readers and City leaders a quick policy reference. Use of the Action Plan Table is hoped to minimize the need for tedious and prolonged reading sessions to find specific policy found throughout the Comprehensive Plan.

### Enumeration System

Goals and their associated actions are enumerated throughout the Action Plan Table to help the City and its partners systematically select projects for implementation and to track progress over the next five years.



## Goals and Actions

Goals are broad policy statements that define a desired outcome. The successful achievement of many Plan goals requires additional work by City leaders and their partners after the Comprehensive Plan is adopted.

Steps recommended to implement goals are referred to as “Actions” on the Action Plan Table. Goals and actions listed on the Action Plan Table will be recommended by an Implementation Committee and for Planning Commission and City Council consideration.

## Chapter and Page Numbers

Goals and actions, in numerous cases, are explained in more detail in the text and maps provided in Chapter 2 Land Use, Chapter 3 Transportation and Chapter 4 Redevelopment.

Chapter and page number references are provided for most goals. They direct readers back into the main body of the Plan where additional details regarding specific goals and actions can be found.

## Partners

The City desires to work with partners to overcome potential resource limitations – be it political, technical and/or financial – as a strategy to implement Comprehensive Plan recommendations.

Names of organizations that may be able to assist with the implementation of goals and actions are placed in the “Partner” column found on the Action Plan Table.

Gaining partner support will take a deliberate effort on the City’s part to demonstrate the

benefits of jointly implementing Comprehensive Plan goals.

## Priority

Priorities are not assigned even though a “Priority” column is included on the Action Plan Table.

This was done deliberately. It is intended for the City to select priorities each year and include such selections in annual budgets and work programs. The blank “Priority” column is provided as a reminder that priorities are to be selected on annual basis.

## Implementation

### Implementation Hurdles

Identifying community needs, goals and vision during a comprehensive plan update process is generally straightforward. Achieving community goals after a comprehensive plan’s adoption is always more difficult.

Implementation efforts require time to organize; they add to staff responsibilities and they can increase funding obligations.

Perhaps the biggest hurdle is overcoming cultural resistance to change and the addition of implementation related processes in local government. Plans often “die on the shelf” when the experience or expectation needed to implement plans is missing.

**Note:** Many of the actions in this chapter have been implemented and many others were in process as the Highland Heights Planning Commission re-adopted the 2012 Comprehensive Plan for 2019. The Planning Commission therefore found that the 2012 Comprehensive Plan research is still valid and the goals and objectives do not need to be amended for the 2019 Comprehensive Plan. These actions are documented in the meeting records dated February 12, 2019.



### Common Success Factors

Communities that put their comprehensive plans to work share some common traits. Most notably, City leaders, as a matter of policy, make a deliberate effort to implement comprehensive plan goals.

This is achieved by integrating comprehensive plan goals in annual budgets, department goals and employee performance reviews.

City leaders set comprehensive plan project priorities, timelines and expectations each year.

City leaders receive Comprehensive Plan updates from staff on a regular basis. Finally, leaders support projects and staff on an ongoing basis and remove obstacles when encountered.

### Implementation Policy

Council and Planning Commission persistence is a powerful implementation tool. However, persistence will benefit from the adoption of a Comprehensive Plan implementation system. Some example policies follow:

**Implementation Committee.** Create an Implementation Committee of Council seated with a small group of City Council members along with Planning Commission members and invited strategic partners. Include residents to maintain continued public involvement. Potential partners include NKU, KTC, CC Fiscal Court and Tri-ED.

**Prioritize Projects and Monitor.** The Committee reviews previous year accomplishments and recommends subsequent year project priorities. This is also an ideal time for City officials and

Implementation Committee members to review the effectiveness of City initiatives and programs and recommend modifications, if needed.

Each goal and/or project selected for implementation should include a description of why it was selected as a priority.

**Budget.** Ideally, the Implementation Committee's recommendations would be forwarded to Planning Commission and Council for adoption prior to the adoption of the City's annual budget.

Mayor and Council, working with department heads, assign financial resources to implement recommendations made by the Implementation Committee.

**Reports.** Institute monthly and annual reports to ensure Council, Planning Commission, partners and residents are kept informed of Comprehensive Plan implementation progress.

### Setting Expectations

Adopting an implementation policy does not change the City's current resource availability. It would be unfair for the public or City leaders to believe the entire breadth of Comprehensive Plan policy will be achieved over the next five years.

The Action Plan Table and recommended implementation policy are offered only as a more sophisticated method to achieve Plan goals and monitor progress.

Keeping track of progress will prove beneficial when future comprehensive plan updates are prepared.



# Highland Heights Comprehensive Plan

Goals	Action Items	Chapter/ Page	Partner	Priority
<b>Table AP1 - General</b>				
<b>1. Actively promote Comprehensive Plan vision and goal</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1.1 Prepare a condensed brochure of Comprehensive Plan policy highlighting key recommendations: mail to residents, property owners, partners and stakeholders.</li> <li>1.2 Provide the Comprehensive Plan on City's webpage as a downloadable file.</li> <li>1.3 Present key Plan recommendations to potential partners and seek their assistance with Plan implementation.</li> </ul>		NKU, CC Fiscal Court, KTC, TRI-ED, Vision 2015, Residents, Developers, Bankers, Brokers	
<b>2. Secure human resources needed to implement key plan recommendations</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>2.1 Hire a full-time city manager. Highland Heights would benefit from a full time manager given its strategic location, potential for redevelopment and need maximize communications with CC Fiscal Court Fiscal Court, NKU, TRI-ED and Kentucky Transportation Cabinet.</li> <li>2.2 Annually budget for professional services relevant to Council and Planning &amp; Zoning Commission (P&amp;Z) selection of priority Comprehensive Plan projects.</li> </ul>			
<b>3. Adopt a Comprehensive Plan implementation policy</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>3.1 Develop procedures to ensure Plan projects and actions are selected each year for implementation by being recommended by P&amp;Z Commission and adopted by Council.</li> <li>3.2 Establish a Comprehensive Plan Implementation Committee of Council that each year prioritizes and recommends actions and monitors Comprehensive Plan implementation progress.</li> <li>3.3 Make the City Planner an ex-officio member of the Comprehensive Plan Implementation Committee with the task of assisting the Committee in the prioritizing of Comprehensive Plan actions.</li> <li>3.4 Place projects with funding requirements in the City's capital improvement plan and annual budget.</li> </ul>	AP3		



# Highland Heights Comprehensive Plan

Goals	Actions	Chapter/ Page	Partners	Priority
<b>Table AP2 - Chapter 2 Land Use</b>				
<b>2.1 Enlarge the City's boundary to provide additional land for residential development</b>	<p>2.1.1 Annex property to the east and southwest for future residential development, recognizing newer housing inventory is needed in Highland Heights to maintain a modern/desirable housing stock and to maintain households and populations as a result of planned redevelopment in Gateway East, Gateway West and Town Center.</p>	LU9		
<b>2.2 Update Zoning Ordinance to reflect Comprehensive Plan update policy</b>	<p>2.2.1 Amend SC Shopping Center Zone, NSC Neighborhood Shopping Center Zone and GC General Commercial Zone to permit mixed use development consistent with Comprehensive Plan policy for Gateway East, Gateway West and Town Center.</p> <p>2.2.2 Review options to add flexibility to rezoning process and minimal area requirements associated with the ROD District.</p>	LU8, LU10, LU14, LU18, LU22, RD23, RD24		
<b>2.3 Encourage cluster residential development to protect sensitive natural features and open space</b>	<p>2.3.1 Place the RCD Residential Cluster Development Overlay Zone over future annexed land to ensure open space and natural features are preserved to the greatest extent possible.</p> <p>2.3.2 Amend the RCD Zone to include a density bonus in return for open space set-asides beyond minimum requirements.</p>	LU11, LU17	Developers	
<b>2.4 Encourage modernization of older housing units</b>	<p>2.4.1 Work with Home Builders Association and NKU to modernize an outdated single-family housing unit as a demonstration project.</p> <p>2.4.2 Research and inform property owners of resources available to help property owners update/modernize houses.</p> <p>2.4.3 Analyze Zoning Ordinance setback and lot coverage requirements for all Residential One Zones relative to actual development to determine if zoning regulations hinder expansions in side- and rear-yards, etc.</p>	LU12	Home Builders Association	



# Highland Heights Comprehensive Plan

Goals	Actions	Chapter/ Page	Partners	Priority
<b>Table AP2 - Chapter 2 Land Use</b>				
<b>2.5 Manage student rentals to protect neighborhoods and longer-term residents</b>	<p>2.5.1 Study landlord rental registration legislation and determine if a registration program is warranted for Highland Heights. Annual registration fees can help off-set program costs.</p> <p>2.5.2 Work with NKU to prepare an “off campus living guide”. Inform off-campus students of laws and expectations governing behavior and occupancy of off-campus housing. Communicate that some violations could be criminal offenses.</p> <p>2.5.3 Create a Joint City-University Advisory Board giving residents and students a platform to resolve issues of mutual concern.</p>	LU12	NKU	
<b>2.6 Gain additional senior housing units</b>	<p>2.6.1 Ensure adequate senior housing is available, particularly if Lakeside Terrace transitions to student housing.</p> <p>2.6.2 Support Neighborhood Foundations’ efforts to secure federal tax credits for new senior housing project in Highland Heights.</p>	LU14	Neighborhood Foundations	
<b>2.7 Ensure Multi-Family residential developments offer on-site amenities</b>	<p>2.7.1 Amend the R-3 Zone to include minimum on-site amenity requirements recognizing multi-family places higher density burdens on local government for parks and recreation.</p>	LU14	Developers	
<b>2.8 Develop neighborhood parks in underserved neighborhoods</b>	<p>2.8.1 Inventory parks and accessible open spaces using a GIS. Place a ¼ mile radius centered on each park/open space. Gaps between radii identify underserved neighborhoods.</p> <p>2.8.2 Create accessible and visible neighborhood-scale parks where neighborhoods are underserved to bolster property values and increase housing demand.</p> <p>2.8.3 Work with CC Fiscal Court to identify partnership opportunities for the provision of additional parks in or close to Highland Heights. Support County efforts to develop community- and regional-parks nearby that would benefit City residents and students.</p>	LU16	CC Fiscal Court	



# Highland Heights Comprehensive Plan

Goals	Actions	Chapter/ Page	Partners	Priority
<b>Table AP2 - Chapter 2 Land Use</b>				
<b>2.9 Preserve Open Space / Green Space where feasible using the City's authority to protect the public's health, safety and welfare</b>	2.9.1 Rezone all floodplain areas and areas with slopes 20% and greater to RE Residential Rural Estate and Agriculture Zone. 2.9.2 Adopt a natural features ordinance that protects sensitive environmental features and the public's health, safety and welfare while maintaining private property rights. 2.9.3 Use Highland Heights' extensive open spaces, hillsides and floodplains to create an interconnected trail network. The City has potential to become as well known for an extensive urban trail system as for its stone wall streetscape.	LU9, LU17, TR12	NKAPC, CC Fiscal Court, NKU	
	<b>2.10 Encourage mixed-use development</b>	2.10.1 Promote mixed-use development to developers and development plan applicants to maximize limited development opportunities. 2.10.2 Implement Zoning Ordinance amendments to legally permit mixed-use development per Goal 2.2 above.	LU18, LU22	Developers
<b>2.11 Integrate City/NKU planning policy efforts</b>	2.11.1 Place a link on City's webpage to NKU's Master Plan and Land Acquisition Plan. 2.11.2 Coordinate with NKU each month and place campus planning and development news on the Planner's report to Planning Commission.	LU 19	NKU	
<b>2.12 Develop intuitional/campus zoning options with NKU</b>	2.12.1 Prepare a best zoning practice review of how communities zone large institutional facilities and grounds such as NKU working in collaboration with NKU officials. 2.12.2 Work with NKU to develop a new zoning district that is mutually agreeable and beneficial to both parties. 2.12.3 Apply the resulting new zone on NKU's campus and future acquisitions provided such annexation is included on NKU's Master Plan or Phase I Development Plan.	LU20, LU21	NKU	



Goals	Action	Chapter/ Page	Partners	Priority
<b>Table AP3 - Chapter 3 Transportation</b>				
<b>3.1 Support, plan and construct road extensions/improvements called for all three redevelopment districts</b>	3.1.1 Gain support for locally planned road projects for Gateway East and West and Town Center. (See Goals 1 and 3.13)	TR4, TR7, TR8, RD4, RD5, RD10, RD14, RD16	KTC, OKI, NKU, Tri-ED	
<b>3.2 Improve traffic flow for large events held at NKU and mitigate US 27 peak hour traffic congestion</b>	3.2.1 Work with Kentucky Transportation Cabinet and NKU to find ways to mitigate heavy NKU event traffic. 3.2.2 Widen the existing Nunn Drive roundabout to accommodate additional traffic volume. 3.2.3 Study the cost/benefit of adding an additional lane on I-275 from Three Mile Road exiting on I-471 and US 27 South to a forced right-hand turn onto Nunn Drive if traffic conditions on US 27 worsen.	TR8, RD11	KTC, NKU	
<b>3.3 Revisit the planned Gateways Connector Road  (See Action 4.4.4 )</b>	3.3.1 Request a copy of the study prepared by the Kentucky Transportation Cabinet (KTC). 3.3.2 Request KTC to update its findings taking into consideration new Comprehensive Plan policies regarding land use in Gateway East, enlarged Gateway East and West boundaries, and the proposed extension of Sunset Drive to the NKU Connector North Road.	TR8, RD4, RD10	KTC	
<b>3.4 Extend the City's place-brand streetscape  (See Goals 4.9, 4.14 and 4.23)</b>	3.4.1 Prepare a streetscape master plan that articulates standards for materials and proper placement of stonewall and landscape materials. 3.4.2 Require the construction of streetscape elements as part of all redevelopment projects in Gateways East and West and Town Center. 3.4.3 Require stacked stone veneer streetscape walls along US 27 from the City's southern boundary to the northern terminus of Gateway East. 3.4.4 Seek Transportation Alternatives Program (TAP) funds for streetscape improvements.	TR8, RD5, RD11, RD17	KTC, OKI	



# Highland Heights Comprehensive Plan

Goals	Action	Chapter/ Page	Partners	Priority
<b>Table AP3 - Chapter 3 Transportation</b>				
<b>3.5 Welcome motorists to Highland Heights at key City entrances</b>	3.5.1 Commission design plans for major and minor gateway signs.	TR9	KTC	
	3.5.2 Ensure gateway sign design reflects existing stone wall streetscape theme.			
	3.5.3 Work with NKU to co-brand gateway signs.			
	3.5.4 Construct major gateway signs on US 27/I-471 to the north and US 27 to the south close to Cold Springs.			
	3.5.5 Construct minor gateway signs at City entrances at Alexandria Pike north of I-275, Three Mile Road, Johns Hill Road and the future NKU Connector Road.			
<b>3.6 Improve wayfinding to major centers such as NKU, Town Center and future Gateway East and Gateway West development</b>	3.6.1 Commission a wayfinding plan to develop appropriate sign standards for materials, colors, graphics and fonts, etc., and to identify appropriate wayfinding sign placement throughout the city.	TR9	KTC, NKU	
	3.6.2 Ensure wayfinding sign design complements the stone wall streetscape theme.			
<b>3.7 Implement US 27 Corridor Access Management Plan recommendations (See Goal 4.6)</b>	3.7.1 Collaborate with KTC to place agreed upon access management plan recommendations on State funding lists such as the Six-Year Highway Plan.	TR9, RD5	KTC, Property Owners	
	3.7.2 Identify center median alternatives for US 27 (along Town Center and Gateway East) to control turning movements, slow traffic and create attractive streetscape/business district environments.			
	3.7.3 Consolidate curb cuts using shared access points along US 27 in Gateway East.			
	3.7.4 Work with KTC to develop, adopt and enforce access management standards for Highland Heights including US 27.			
<b>3.8 Remove duplicative street names</b>	3.8.1 Rename streets with duplicate street names to avoid confusion and aid proper wayfinding. For example, rename Alexandria Pike east of the "Island" property to avoid confusion with Alexandria Pike on the main-line portion of US 27.	TR9	KTC, Property Owners	



# Highland Heights Comprehensive Plan

Goals	Action	Chapter/ Page	Partners	Priority
<b>Table AP3 - Chapter 3 Transportation</b>				
<b>3.9 Calm traffic on US 27 to promote quieter, slower and safer traffic and more enjoyable pedestrian movements</b>	3.9.1 Collaborate with KTC to implement traffic calming measures on US 27. 3.9.2 Co-develop a traffic calming master plan with KTC and NKU. See related Goal 3.7 above.	TR10	KTC, NKU	
	<b>3.10 Improve east-west pedestrian circulation across US 27 (See Goal 3.12 and 4.20)</b>	3.10.1 Plan a US 27 pedestrian bridge near Marshall Lane working in collaboration with NKU (property owner) and KTC (US 27 jurisdictional control). 3.10.2 Co-brand the pedestrian bridge with NKU. 3.10.3 Ensure bridge design complements Town Center streetscape and building materials and integrates NKU architectural themes.	TR10, TR11, RD16	KTC, NKU
<b>3.11 Expand bus transit service in Highland Heights (See Goal 4.7)</b>	3.11.1 Work with TANK to explore opportunities and options to expand transit service in Highland Heights. 3.11.2 Request TANK's review of master plans or redevelopment plans created or submitted for Gateways East and West and Town Center to ensure adequate area is provided for bus pullovers and shelters.	TR12, RD5	TANK KTC	
<b>3.12 Develop community-wide trails and bikeway system (See Goal 2.9 and 4.15)</b>	3.12.1 Prepare a Trails and Bikeways Facility Master Plan that guides the development of a logical, safe and accessible trail and bikeways system integrated throughout the community. 3.12.2 Jointly plan with NKU to further integrate NKU walkways and bikeways into the City's trails and bikeway system. 3.12.3 Extend the existing Highland Heights Nature Trail north as a city-wide walkway system. 3.12.4 Identify a safe route that links the City with Vision 2015's Licking River Greenway.	TR12, LU9, LU17	NKU, KTC, CC Fiscal Court, Vision 2015	



# Highland Heights Comprehensive Plan

Goals	Action	Chapter/ Page	Partners	Priority
<b>Table AP3 - Chapter 3 Transportation</b>				
<b>3.13 Advocate for local transportation project support and funding</b>	3.13.1 Present Comprehensive Plan land use, development, and transportation policy/projects to potential partners to seek their buy-in, support and technical and financial assistance for planned roadway improvements. 3.13.2 Seek multiple pools of money to surpass local match requirements and to meet project funding requirements.	TR13	CC Fiscal Court, KTC, TANK, NKU, Tri-ED	
<b>3.14 Ensure US 27 operates at peak efficiency and safety</b>	3.14.1 Meet with KTC officials each year regarding their annual study and modification of US 27 signal timing to ensure all practical steps are being taken. 3.14.2 Meet with KTC officials every four years to review technological advances in the field of traffic synchronization and advocate for infrastructure and synchronization improvements and upgrades. 3.14.3. Have City officials and staff monitor US 27 Level of Service, traffic volume and accident reports each year looking for trends and issues to address with State officials.	TR 15	KTC, NKU	



Goals	Action	Chapter/ Page	Partners	Priority
<b>Table AP4 - Chapter 4 Redevelopment (Gateway East)</b>				
<b>4.1 Limit use of US 27 frontage to healthcare, professional office and neighborhood-scale retail and retail services.</b>	4.1.1 Restrict individual building size to 15,000 square feet and shopping centers (attached multi-tenant buildings to 30,000 square feet to attract neighborhood orientated uses. 4.1.2 Ensure limited retail and retail service uses serve the needs of adjacent populations including planned “Multi-family” development north of US 27.	RD3, RD4	Property owners, Developers	
	<b>4.2 Transition multi-family development from high to low density going west to east.</b>	4.2.1 Use transitional zoning techniques to ensure the largest and most dense multi-family units are located next to I-471. 4.2.2 Decrease building bulk and density moving west to east with lowest density housing located next to existing single-family neighborhoods near Bramble Avenue.	RD4	Developers
<b>4.3 Promote diverse multi-family housing styles, designs and arrangements</b>	4.3.1 Work with developers to bring new and diverse multi-family housing styles and configurations to Highland Heights.	RD4	Developers	
<b>4.4 Plan and construct commercial service road north of US 27</b>	4.4.1 Align service road with Lowe’s US 27 entrance and traffic signal.	RD4	KTC, Developer, Property Owners	
	4.4.2 Upgrade traffic signal to include a fourth leg on the north side.			
	4.4.3 Plan and construct road so its alignment enables rear access to US 27 frontage properties reducing the need for curb cuts on US 27.			
	4.4.4 Plan and construct a stub or cul-de-sac at the end of the service road for a possible future continuation as the planned “Gateways Connector Road” would bridge or go underneath I-471.			
<b>4.5 Increase lot depth of US 27 frontage lots</b>	4.5.1 Ensure US27 frontage lots gain additional lot depth suitable to attract and support commercial redevelopment when development plans are submitted for approval. See 4.4.3 above.	RD4	Developer, Property Owners	



# Highland Heights Comprehensive Plan

## Action Plan

Goals	Action	Chapter/ Page	Partners	Priority
<b>Table AP4 - Chapter 4 Redevelopment (Gateway East)</b>				
<p><b>4.6 Implement US 27 Corridor Access Management Plan recommendations</b>  (See Goal 3.7)</p>	<p>4.6.1 In addition to actions listed for Goal 3.7, seek access management tools to improve corridor aesthetics by closing wide curb cuts and replacing with grass strips between streets and sidewalks.</p>	RD5, TR9	KTC, Property Owners	
<p><b>4.7 Promote enhanced bus transit service in Gateway East</b>  (See Goal 3.11)</p>	<p>4.7.1 Ensure a bus stop or multiple stops are provided in Gateway East that provides access to local and regional employment centers including NKU to accommodate planned “Multi-family” See Goal 3.11</p>	RD5, TR12	TANK, KTC	
<p><b>4.8 Ensure redevelopment is achieved consistent with Comprehensive Plan goals for the built environment</b></p>	<p>4.8.1 Develop design guidelines to ensure development is designed and built consistent with Comprehensive Plan policy for the built-environment in Gateway East. 4.8.2 Ensure buildings exhibit durable materials facing public rights-of-way, decorative roof lines, pronounced entrances, windows facing the street, pedestrian connectivity to adjacent neighborhoods, and pedestrian amenities such as rooftop patios and/or plazas to create neighborhood hangouts.</p>	RD5, RD6		
<p><b>4.9 Extend stacked stone veneer wall and sign base theme to Gateway East</b>  (See Goal 3.4, 4.14 and 4.23)</p>	<p>4.9.1 Require low-profile stacked stone veneer screen walls between US 27 and parking lots throughout Gateway East. New wall construction should emulate 5/3 Bank’s stone wall as a standard to best achieve a unified corridor appearance. 4.9.2 Prepare a streetscape master plan that articulates standards for materials and proper placement of stonewall and landscape materials.</p>	RD5	Developers, Property Owners	



# Highland Heights Comprehensive Plan

Goals	Action	Chapter/ Page	Partners	Priority
<b>Table AP4 - Chapter 4 Redevelopment (Gateway West)</b>				
<b>4.10 Develop a university-affiliated business park</b>	<p>4.10.1 Work with NKU, CC Fiscal Court and Tri-ED to implement this goal. Gain understanding of the market and prepare a conceptual master plan.</p> <p>4.10.2 Enter into intergovernmental agreements establishing intent to develop a university-affiliated business park and establish roles and responsibilities of each party.</p> <p>4.10.3 Assemble property.</p> <p>4.10.4 Attract standard, sit-down restaurants with waiter service and business services in planned “Commercial/Business” areas to support corporate office uses and to aid marketing and promotions efforts.</p>	RD9, RD10, LU23	NKU, CC Fiscal Court, Tri-ED	
<b>4.11 Ensure space is made available for NKU’s UPTECH Accelerator</b>	4.11.1 To the extent possible, ensure a physical location is reserved for a permanent space to house UPTECH’s managerial staff and companies enrolled in the accelerator program.	RD10	NKU, CC Fiscal Court, Tri-ED	
<b>4.12 Design and construct Sunset Drive extension</b>	<p>4.12.1 Working with KTC and OKI, place the planned Sunset Drive extension project in the State’s Six-Year Highway Plan and the regional Transportation Improvement Plan (TIP).</p> <p>4.12.2 Ensure Sunset Drive intersects with the planned (and funded) NKU Connector North Road.</p> <p>4.12.3 To the extent practical, emulate the design of the NKU Connector road realizing Sunset Drive improvements will carry through traffic.</p> <p>4.12.4 Ensure Sunset Drive’s alignment create usable lots.</p>	RD10	KTC, OKI, NKU, CC Fiscal Court, Tri-ED	
<b>4.13 Construct an access service road into the interior of the planned business park</b>	<p>4.13.1 Ensure chosen access service road alignment enables the creation of usable lots on both sides taking into account noted environmental constraints on the west side of Gateway West.</p> <p>4.13.2 Establish street rights-of-way to enable a future connection to the planned Gateways Connector Road.</p>	RD10	NKU, KTC, Developers	



Goals	Action	Chapter/ Page	Partners	Priority
<b>Table AP4 - Chapter 4 Redevelopment (Gateway West)</b>				
<p><b>4.14 Extend stacked stone veneer wall and sign base theme to brand Gateway West</b></p> <p>(See Goals 3.4, 4.9 and 4.14)</p>	<p>4.14.1 Require low-profile stacked stone veneer screen walls between US 27 and parking lots throughout Gateway East. New wall construction should emulate 5/3 Bank's stone wall as a standard to best achieve a unified corridor appearance.</p>	RD11	Developers, Property Owners	
<p><b>4.15 Create a campus-orientated environment with connected walkways and trails</b></p> <p>(See Goal 3.12)</p>	<p>4.15.1 Plan walkways and trails that connect NKU Foundation's Research Park to Gateway West and NKU's Campus. Ensure internal paths connect buildings to each other.</p> <p>4.15.2 Use Gateway West's environmental features as business park amenities. Add recreational trails for the use and enjoyment of high-tech workers and employees.</p> <p>4.15.3 Provide pedestrian leisure zones for outdoor recreation, lunch breaks and reflection. Include shelters and benches.</p>	RD10, LU17, TR12	NKU, Developers	
<p><b>4.16 Ensure business park development achieves Comprehensive Plan goals and vision for the built environment</b></p>	<p>4.16.1 Encourage multiple-story office buildings to maximize limited land availability and to take advantage of limited highway visibility.</p> <p>4.16.2 Ensure that high-quality building materials are used and office architecture is achieved to create a strong high-tech, corporate business park image.</p> <p>4.16.3 Prepare commercial design standards for Gateway West's built environment consistent with Comprehensive Plan policy.</p>	RD11	NKU, Developers	



Goals	Action	Chapter/ Page	Partners	Priority
<b>Table AP4 - Chapter 4 Redevelopment (Town Center)</b>				
<b>4.17 Develop a pedestrian-friendly and urban town center</b>	4.17.1 Require multiple-story buildings as a requirement of approved development plans to maximize the use of available land, to increase building density, and to promote a park-once- and-walk environment.	RD14, RD17, RD18	NKU, Developers	
	4.17.2 Require ground floors to have clear vision glass and large bay windows consistent with retail store fronts.			
	4.17.3 Encourage residential and office uses on upper floors.			
	4.17.4 Develop design guidelines to ensure development is designed and built consistent with Comprehensive Plan policy for the built-environment.			
<b>4.18 Develop US 27 parallel service roads</b>	4.18.1 Construct parallel service roads as shown on Map RD2 to provide alternative access and reduce traffic congestion on US 27.	RD14, RD16	KTC, NKU	
	4.18.2 Collaborate with NKU to determine best alignment for Clara Drive extension given NKU's plans for hotel/conference center development at Nunn Drive and US 27.			
	4.18.3 Commission a design study to determine alignment, lane and intersection configurations. Promote right-in and right-out only intersection design unless others are warranted.			
<b>4.19 Create a pedestrian-friendly block grid</b>	4.19.1 Ensure redevelopment west of the Bluegrass Center occurs on a block grid generally consistent with Map RD2 to promote pedestrian-friendly urban development. 4.19.2. Do not approve development that prevents block grid road construction.	RD14	KTC, NKU, Developers	



# Highland Heights Comprehensive Plan

Goals	Action	Chapter/ Page	Partners	Priority	
<b>Table AP4 - Chapter 4 Redevelopment (Town Center)</b>					
<b>4.20 Achieve a high degree of pedestrian connectivity</b>  <b>(See Goal 3.12 and 3.10)</b>	4.20.1 Provide dedicated hard surface walkways connecting NKU to Town Center. 4.20.2 Construct a pedestrian bridge that spans US 27 to effectively connect east and west Town Center. 4.20.3 Brand the pedestrian bridge using existing town center and NKU campus architectural styling as a guide.	RD16	KTC, NKU, OKI		
	<b>4.21 Develop formal pedestrian spaces to promote socialization, congregation and prolonged stays</b>	4.21.1 Provide wide sidewalks next to ground floor retail for provision of outdoor furniture and seating to encourage greater use and socialization. 4.21.2 Ensure a green, urban park or plaza is developed and serves as a central organizing feature for surrounding development west of the Bluegrass Center. This central organizing feature should align with the green pedestrian easement found on the north side of Applebee's.	RD17	NKU, Developers	
	<b>4.22 Place parking on-street and behind buildings to make Town Center urban and pedestrian-friendly</b>	4.22.1 Ensure parallel service roads and block grid connectors are designed to accommodate on-street parking. 4.22.2 Place off-street parking behind buildings. Where otherwise negotiated, limit front-yard parking to a maximum of two rows. 4.22.3 Study the financial feasibility of constructing a public parking garage that could be shared by Town Center businesses and potential future dorms and hotel/conference center development.	RD14	NKU, Developers	
<b>4.23 Extend stacked stone veneer wall and sign base theme to further brand Highland Heights</b>  <b>(See Goals 3.4, 4.9, and 4.14)</b>	4.23.1 Use stacked stone veneer walls to screen parking visible from any street or road – public or private. 4.23.2 Require stone bases/supports for commercial signage.	RD17	Developers, Property Owners		



Goals	Action	Chapter/ Page	Partners	Priority
<b>Table AP4 - Chapter 4 Redevelopment (Strategies applicable to all Redevelopment Districts)</b>				
<p><b>4.24 Proactively assemble land needed to implement planned redevelopment in Gateway East, Gateway West and Town Center</b></p>	<p>4.24.1 Create a strategy working with staff, special counsel and partners.                      4.24.2 Hire professional help as needed to assist with land assemblage efforts.                      4.24.3 Advertise intent to assembly property, be transparent and seek property owner cooperation.                      4.24.4 Educate property owners of Equity Investment Approach for self-assemblage.                      4.24.5 Concentrate on one redevelopment area at a time.                      4.24.6 Proactively search for and resolve problem properties related to out-of-town owners, heirs, clear title issues, and liens, etc.</p>	RD19	NKU, Developers, Property Owners	
<p><b>4.25 Prepare urban renewal studies to assist with land assemblage effort</b></p>	<p>4.25.1 Prepare urban renewal studies to determine if one or more redevelopment districts meet blight tests defined by state statute associated with urban renewal.                      4.25.2 Legislatively apply urban renewal on redevelopment districts where qualified to deal with problem property and hold-outs.</p>	R19		
<p><b>4.26 Create a redevelopment finance strategy</b></p>	<p>4.26.1 Work with economic development professionals, public finance professionals and legal counsel to develop a funding strategy that takes available financing tools to account such as TIF, IRB, bonds, city debt capacity, etc.                      4.26.2 Package financing tools and state/federal grants to achieve Comprehensive Plan goals.</p>	RD19, RD20, R21	NKU, Tri-ED Developers	
<p><b>4.27 Seek partner participation</b></p>	<p>4.27.1 Gain partner support and participation in implementing recommendations for the three redevelopment areas. The City cannot implement the plan alone.</p>	RD22	NKU, KTC, CC Fiscal Court, Tri-ED, Developers	



Goals	Action	Chapter/ Page	Partners	Priority
<b>Table AP4 - Chapter 4 Redevelopment (Strategies applicable to all Redevelopment Districts)</b>				
<b>4.28 Prepare redevelopment plans for each redevelopment area</b>	4.28.1 Proactively prepare redevelopment plans with partners and interested property owners to develop more detailed redevelopment policy regarding land use, circulation, and design. 4.28.2 Develop cost estimates and layout plans to better understand the magnitude of Comprehensive Plan recommendations and to seek appropriate resources. 4.28.3 Enable zone changes smaller than three acres as currently required when development plans comply with City produced redevelopment plans.	RD24	NKU, KTC, CC Fiscal Court, Tri-ED, Developers	
<b>4.29 Review plans and strategies with competent counsel before implementation</b>	4.29.1 Comprehensive Plan recommendations are bold and visionary. Take steps to understand the market, financial and legal ramifications before taking any specific course of action working closely with competent counsel.	RD25	Consultants, Staff, NKU, KTC, OKI, Tri-ED, Developers	