

DRAFT Part 1 of 2
2024 Highland Heights Comprehensive Plan
Goals and Objectives
March 12, 2024

There are two documents – two parts contained herein that are being reviewed during the 2024 Review of the Goals and Objectives of the Highland Heights Comprehensive Plan.

1) The following “Themes”, “Issues”, and “Goals” are currently contained within the text of the 2019 Comprehensive Plan. They have been identified in the Comprehensive Plan and compiled into one document here for ease of review. The gray and underlined text is proposed to be deleted and the bold black underlined text is proposed to be added.

2) The current 2019 Chapter 5, named Action Plan exists at the end of the Comprehensive Plan. It is 19 pages long and contains a leading column named “Goals”. The second column is named “Action Items” which the Plan states can also be thought of as specific objectives. In fact, the recommendation for the 2024 Statement of Goals and Objectives is to change the term “Actions” to “Objectives” to clarify the intent and to recognize that there is participation needed from other organizations for implementation to occur. The gray and underlined text is proposed to be deleted and the bold black underlined text is proposed to be added.

The proposed changes have been drafted by the City Planner based upon the input and notes from two public meetings of the Steering Committee and six open house public review sessions as well as written general public comments that have been received.

*Plan Themes **Vision** Pages IN4 and IN5*

Six 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. **These six themes are unique to Highland Heights and form the overall Vision. This Vision was originally presented by the Comprehensive Plan’s primary author to the 2013 Steering Committee.**

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.

Vision continued:

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. 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 **Key Drivers** Page IN5

Steering Committee members (2013) were asked to brainstorm a list of planning issues that, due to their community importance, needed to be addressed in the Comprehensive Plan update. **These set the stage for the Goals and Actions (Objectives).** Planning Issues defined by the 2013 Steering Committee follow: **The 2024 Steering Committee proposed the term "Key Drivers" to emphasize the foundational relationship to the Goals and Objectives and to be consistent with terminology in the 2020 NKU Master Plan.**

Diversify our Economy

- Need more businesses to keep resident tax burden low.

Key Drivers continued:

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 Hillsides

- 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.

Land Use Strategy Pages LU8 and LU9

- 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.

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.

Single Family Residential Pages LU11 and LU12

Goals

(1) To provide suitable acreage for a wide variety of housing styles at planned locations on Map LU3. (2) To **recognize Highland Heights’ opportune proximity and access to the downtown area and** develop additional high-quality housing to retain and attract residents.

(3) To encourage the **modernization exterior upgrade** 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. **(6) To explore large single-family houses on small lots.** **(7) To provide for innovative types of small housing units as infill development.**

Multi-Family Residential Page LU14

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 **on small lots and within mixed-use buildings.**
- (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.

Public and Semi Public Page LU15

Goals

- (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.

Parks Page LU16

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.
- (5) To ensure safe pedestrian access to parks.**

Open Space / Green Space Page LU17

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.

Commercial / Business Page LU18

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-use 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, **and to propose minimum architectural and site standards in specific zones or locations.** (6) To revitalize or reposition underutilized commercial property.

NKU Campus Page LU19

Goals

(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.

Town Center Mixed Use Page LU22

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 **safe**, 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.

Business Park Page LU23

Goals

(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.

Gateway East Page RD2

Goals

(1) Redevelop Gateway East as a mixed-use neighborhood commercial district that provides a **limited** variety of retail, retail, service, **hotel**, 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.

Gateway West Page RD8

Goals

(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.

Town Center Page RD12

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.