

COMMONWEALTH OF KENTUCKY  
CITY OF HIGHLAND HEIGHTS  
CAMPBELL, KENTUCKY  
ORDINANCE NO. 02-2025

**AN ORDINANCE AMENDING, UPDATING, AND ADOPTING THE CITY OF  
HIGHLAND HEIGHTS COMPREHENSIVE PLAN**

This ordinance adopts the amended and updated Comprehensive Plan based on the recommendation, reasoning, and findings of fact of the City of Highland Heights Planning & Zoning Commission.

I, Michelle Eviston, an attorney licensed to practice law in the Commonwealth of Kentucky, acting as attorney for the City of Highland Heights, Kentucky, do hereby certify that this summary was prepared by me at the direction of the Council of the City of Highland Heights, and that said summary is a true and accurate summary of the contents of the ordinance.



MICHELLE EVISTON

**COMMONWEALTH OF KENTUCKY  
CITY OF HIGHLAND HEIGHTS  
CAMPBELL, KENTUCKY  
ORDINANCE NO. 02-2025**

**AN ORDINANCE AMENDING, UPDATING, AND ADOPTING CITY OF HIGHLAND HEIGHTS COMPREHENSIVE PLAN.**

**WHEREAS**, the City of Highland Heights has previously adopted a Comprehensive Plan for the City; and

**WHEREAS**, the City of Highland Heights Planning & Zoning Commission has been requested to review and act upon an application by same said commission to adopt the amended and updated Comprehensive Plan (per the attached staff report); and,

**WHEREAS**, the City of Highland Heights Planning & Zoning Commission held a public hearing to review said application, pursuant to due legal notice in accordance with KRS Chapter 100 and 424 at 7:00 P.M. on Tuesday, December 10, 2024, at the City of Highland Heights City Building in Highland Heights, Kentucky; and,

**WHEREAS**, after said public hearing and after due consideration of the evidence and testimony presented, the City of Highland Heights Planning & Zoning Commission voted to approve and adopt the amended and updated comprehensive plan at its regularly scheduled meeting on Tuesday, December 10, 2024;

**WHEREAS**, the City of Highland Heights Planning & Zoning Commission and approved the minutes for the December 10, 2024, meeting at its regularly scheduled meeting on Tuesday, March 11, 2025; and,

**WHEREAS**, the City of Highland Heights of Campbell County, Kentucky, having reviewed the proposed comprehensive plan amendments, hereby concurs in the recommendation, reasoning, and findings of fact of the City of Highland Heights Planning & Zoning Commission.

**NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT ORDAINED BY THE CITY OF HIGHLAND HEIGHTS OF THE COUNTY OF CAMPBELL, COMMONWEALTH OF KENTUCKY, AS FOLLOWS:**

Section I

That the amended and updated Comprehensive Plan be adopted based on the reasoning and findings of fact of the City of Highland Heights Planning & Zoning Commission as attached herein.

Section II

That this Ordinance, shall be signed by the Mayor, attested by the Clerk/Treasurer, recorded and published. Same shall be in effect at the earliest time provided by law.

Read by title and a summary given on the 1<sup>st</sup> day of April, 2025.

Read and adopted after second reading by title and a summary given on the 6th day of May, 2025.

  
\_\_\_\_\_  
GREGORY V. MEYERS  
Mayor

ATTESTED:

  
\_\_\_\_\_  
JEANNE PETTITT  
City Clerk/Treasurer

Attachments

## Staff Report December 10, 2024 Highland Heights Planning Commission

### 2024 Highland Heights Comprehensive Plan Update

Under Kentucky Revised Statutes (KRS), a community that implements land use regulation, such as zoning, must do that under the guidance of an adopted Comprehensive Plan that includes a statement of goals and objectives, data collection and analysis, public involvement, and formal public hearing deliberations. KRS Chapter 100 requires that a review be performed each five-year period.

A full re-write of the Comprehensive Plan had occurred in 2012-2013 replacing the 2006 Comprehensive Plan and yielding a plan widely regarded as an excellent planning document with considerable public involvement. In 2019 the city made little to no changes to the Comprehensive Plan since not much had changed during that period and the data and planning principles were found to be still valid.

Since 2019 more data is now available and some public infrastructure improvements have progressed. The scope of this review for 2024 is somewhere in between the 2013 complete re-write and the 2019 re-adoption. "Update" is a good description for this 2024 review.

### Organization of the Comprehensive Plan

The Highland Heights Comprehensive Plan is comprised of five chapters or Elements: Introduction (including demographics), Land Use and Public Facilities, Transportation, Redevelopment, and Action Plan. The Statement of Goals and Objectives is woven throughout the 5 Elements. This means that they are very detailed and very well thought-out in terms of being closely correlated with land use, transportation and public infrastructure planning. Some of the terminology had changed in the text for 2024 to bring the document up to date and to clarify the planning process – supported by overarching *"Themes and Key Drivers"*.

For the 2024 Comprehensive Plan, the *Goals and Objectives* are more clearly identified throughout the document by the use of *blue bold italic text* and are also titled *Goals and Objectives throughout Chapter 5 Action Plan and its Action Plan tables AP-1 through AP-4*.

This update has included the guidance of a Steering Committee and began with a review of the Statement of Goals and Objectives. The Statement of Goals and Objectives is ultimately required to be adopted by both the planning commission and legislative unit, while the "Elements" (Chapters) of the plan, including the land use plan can be adopted by the Planning Commission. The 2024 Statement of Goals and Objectives was adopted by the Planning Commission April 9, 2024 and the City Council July 2, 2024. The update of the Elements during mid to late 2024 was performed in a manner to carry out the adopted Goals and Objectives.

### Research and Public Involvement

Kentucky Revised Statutes Chapter 100 states specifically that during the preparation of the Goals and Objectives and other Comprehensive Plan elements it shall be the duty of the planning commission to consult with public officials and agencies, boards of health, school boards, public and private utility companies, civic, educational, professional, and other organizations, and with citizens. A summary of planning-related Northern Kentucky organizations and their planning level documents is included in the Land Use and Public Facilities Element. This policy-level research helped form the basis for the material discussed in

the Steering Committee (described below) meetings for this update and for the public comment meetings.

Several rounds of public comment meetings have been conducted. The first two public open house meeting dates were advertised in the city newsletter that was delivered to the city residents during October 2023 and was made available to people attending the Highland Heights City Celebration on October 7, 2023. The purpose of these first few meetings was to make available and discuss the current Goals and Objectives (Actions) of the 2019 Highland Heights Comprehensive Plan, and to receive suggestions for changes or additions for the 2024 Statement of Goals and Objectives.

The City Planner conducted three public open house meetings during the update of the Statement of Goals and Objectives and one such meeting on October 7, 2024 during the update of the Elements. All four public meetings have been held in the Community Room of the Highland Heights City Building. All meetings have been advertised in linkNKY, featured on the city's website, and have been included on the city's calendar. About thirty people attended the public meetings, reviewed materials, asked questions, submitted comments, and became involved in the overall comprehensive planning process. These public meetings have identified citizens who are interested in the future of the city. About a dozen written, email, and phone comments have also been submitted. The comments that were received contributed to amendments proposed in the draft 2024 Statement of Goals and Objectives.

A new tab for the 2024 Update of the Comprehensive Plan was placed on the city's website where the city planner and city clerk have been posting materials to review. Members of the public have been encouraged to submit written comments and to follow the process through to its completion – including public hearings and public meetings. A formal comment form has been provided at the meetings, at the city offices, and on-line. Throughout the process and on-line, substantive proposed revisions in the document have been identified by underlined italic text.

## **Public Comments**

The overall Comprehensive Plan and the Statement of Goals and Objectives have been featured in two city newsletters – Fall of 2023 and Spring of 2024. Written comments received have included the following topics:

- A. Make the discussion of Visions, Goals, Objectives and similar more understandable.
- B. Changes in demographics over the past five, ten years.
- C. New, more dense re-development of sections of the city need to be accompanied by public services, including emergency services based on the building types and street access.
- D. Impacts of encroachment and/or impacts of Alexandria Way corridor commercial development on existing residential subdivisions to the east. Re-evaluate the comprehensive plan maps in the elements in terms of redevelopment boundaries.
- E. Impacts of future roadways and street connections on existing residential subdivisions and existing businesses to the east of US 27. Refinements to previously proposed alignments need to be considered in the overall comprehensive plan.
- F. The likelihood or lack thereof regarding the East/West Gateways connector road being implemented over or under the I-471 ramps.
- G. The need for new, future forms of housing, particularly in the area of single professionals, infill housing units, studio style units, and innovative attached housing.

- H. Safe and connected walking system is needed throughout the city, including bridge(s) or other ways to cross US 27.
- I. Bike lanes had been proposed along US 27 some years ago, a citywide bike system is needed.
- J. Traffic control issues at several intersections including Hidden Valley at US 27.
- K. Current grant-supported reconstruction of Sunset Drive near US 27.
- L. Continue to develop ways to address student rental impacts in neighborhoods.
- M. Continue to plan the grid style street system in the center of Highland Heights and maintain sufficient signalization and intersections with US 27.
- N. Review and conclusions of the NKADD housing study and the rental/owner-occupied housing subject.
- O. Address the appearance of vacant and underutilized properties so that future business development interest is encouraged.
- P. Make sure the city's regulations address potentially unsightly new forms of energy generation and transmission.
- Q. Recognize that commercial development revenue best supports the provision of public services when compared to other land uses.

### **2024 Highland Heights Comprehensive Plan Steering Committee**

This is an ad hoc committee that was formed for a specific task with a beginning and an end. The committee has been a working group, generating ideas and suggestions to guide and assist city staff. The Steering Committee members were asked to serve by the city administration in order to add some lay expertise such as resident needs, economy, housing market, utilities, or university topics to the process that is sometimes not sufficient within the Planning Commission or the general public.

The Steering Committee is composed of eleven members and met four times during the overall process. The Steering Committee discussed and commented on the Comprehensive Plan only during these meetings, which were all advertised to the public. Citizens have had the opportunity to attend the meetings and observe all the discussion.

#### **2024 Comprehensive Plan Steering Committee Members:**

John Braun – Chair - *City Council*

John McNabb – P&Z

Christie Fillhardt – P&Z

Michael Giffen – City Administrator

Kati Manning – North 27 Corridor, business owner and Highland Heights resident

Scott Sedmak – St. Elizabeth Director of Community Relations and Highland Heights resident

Jim Kaufman – NKU Director of Real Estate

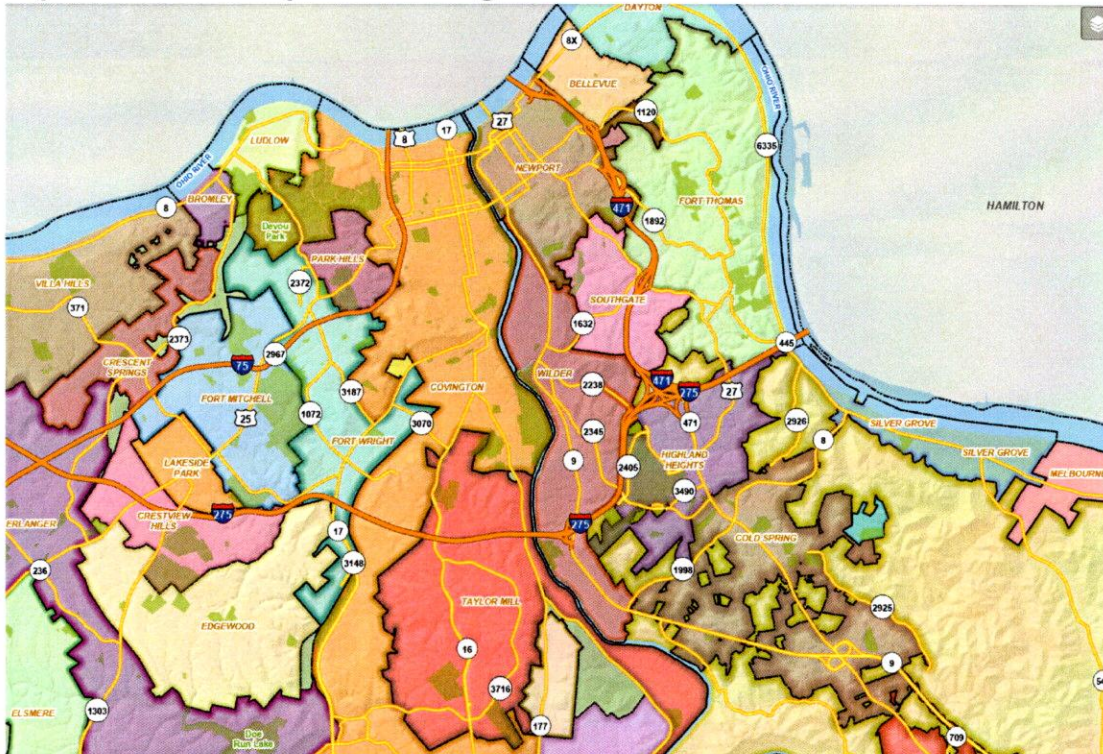
Bob Alston – Highland Heights Resident

Dave Noll - Residential Developer

Jeromy Ehlman - Central Business District

Dave Geohegan – City Planner

## Key topics discussed by the Steering Committee



*A key piece of information that the Steering Committee has considered in its discussions has been the strategic and advantageous location of Highland Heights (purple area to the right of center) with respect to Cincinnati and Northern Kentucky and the major transportation routes.*



*Transportation is a main component of the Comprehensive Plan*



2019 - The northern entry points of Highland Heights are named Gateway East and Gateway West in the 2019 Comprehensive Plan. This map was featured in the fall 2023 city newsletter delivered to all city residents and generated public comments. It has been revised through the public meeting process as shown later in this report.

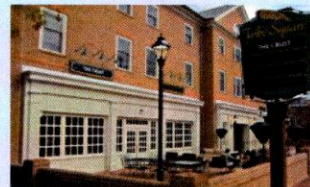
### Why Mixed Use?

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.



Mixed Use, higher density re-development is a theme that is central to the Comprehensive Plan.



*Impacts of the business district and university on residential neighborhoods are a prevalent comment received from the general public.*

## **Infrastructure**

The Land Use and Public Facilities Element, (“Public Facilities” added to the title for 2024) includes summaries of other organizations’ master plans – five pages of descriptive text are included in the 2024 Comprehensive Plan. This demonstrates the strong planning relationship between development and infrastructure:

- Campbell County Economic Progress Authority Inc. (CCEPA)
- Campbell County Planning and Zoning
- Developer Organizations
- Kentucky Transportation Cabinet and Ohio Kentucky Indiana Regional Council of Governments
- Neighborhood Foundations and non-profit organizations - South Bank Partners
- Planning and Design Services (PDS) formerly Northern Kentucky Area Planning Commission
- BE NKY Growth Partnership, standing (formerly Northern Kentucky Tri-County Economic Development Corporation, TRI-ED).
- Northern Kentucky University (NKU)
- Northern Kentucky Chamber of Commerce
- Transit Authority of Northern Kentucky (TANK)
- Campbell School District
- Central Campbell County Fire District
- SD#1
- Northern Kentucky Water District, Campbell County



- Duke Energy – Electric
- Duke Energy – Gas
- NKADD – Housing Study 2023
- Northern Kentucky Health Department

### **Topics of discussion during review of the Elements**

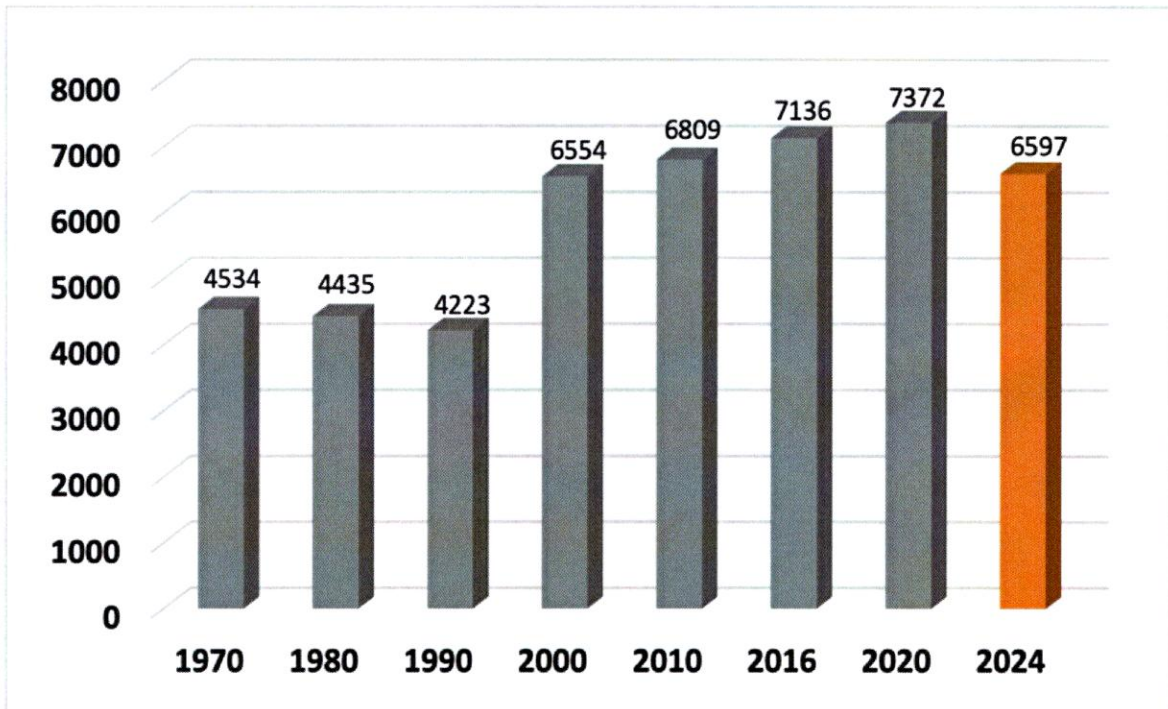
Additional Public and Steering Committee Comments and Discussion in the fall of 2024 included:

- Improved US 27 Pedestrian crossings.
- Bike Pedestrian plan for the entire city.
- Recreation plan for the entire city.
- Traffic calming on residential streets.
- Housing Design, patio homes, townhouses.
- Housing modernization, stable neighborhoods.
- Research new forms of residential construction.
- More affordable housing for young professionals and for instructors and college graduates.
- NKU has scaled back land acquisition efforts significantly in the 2020 Master Plan.
- Monitor and address student rentals.
- Net worth of business district.
- Net worth of residential development in the city.
- Highland Heights has different characteristics and needs than the NKADD Housing Study statistics at the county level.
- Further develop masonry design in the business corridor and connect with local construction degrees.
- Business District needs some decorations and color to the buildings and landscaping.
- Town Center planning strategies - “urban” terminology gives too dense of a connotation.

## Key Demographic Features in 2024

Table IN 1 Population – the text discusses several contributing reasons for the seemingly low 2024 population estimate, including the recent pandemic, decreased household size, increased housing vacancy throughout the city, increased housing rents, and some university units that have been removed, in need of renovation, or in process of renovation:

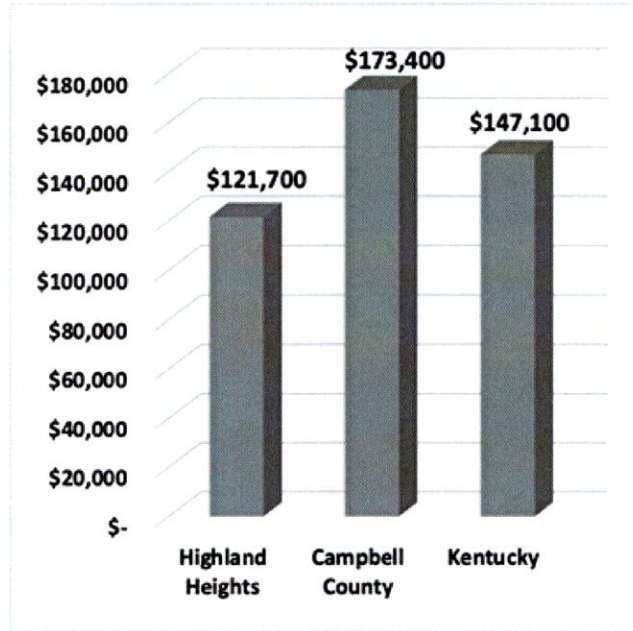
**Table IN1 - Highland Heights Population**



**Source:** 2006 Highland Heights Comprehensive Plan (1970-2000), NKU Center for Economic Analysis & Development (CEAD) (2010), US Census Bureau, 2016, 2020 American Community Survey, Table S0101, and [census.gov/quickfacts](https://www.census.gov/quickfacts) for 2024 estimate, US 2020 Census Bureau

Table IN 8 Median Housing Value – Highland Heights values are typical where student housing is interspersed throughout the community and there is an older housing stock. These values are pre-pandemic, however and the past five years have significantly increased these values:

**Table IN8 - 2020 Median Housing Value**



Source: US Census Bureau, 2020 American Community Survey, Table DPo4

Table IN 11 Permits – Other than the Highland Village which opened in 2018, there are very few new housing units in Highland Heights in recent years:

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

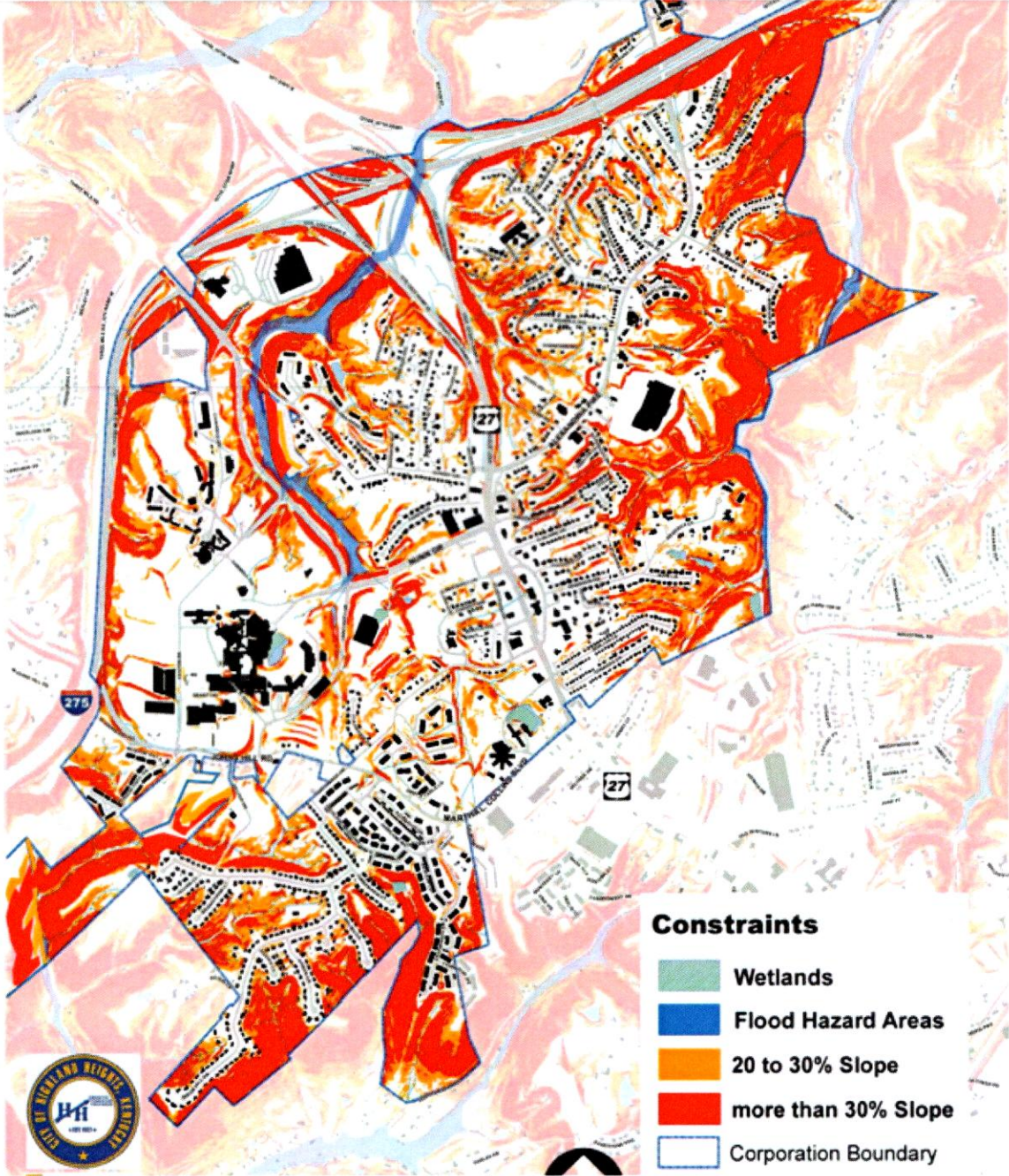
Year	Single Family	Multi-family
1991-1995	39	400
1996-2000	11	133
2001-2005	12	15
2006-2010	15	0
2011-2015	10	0
2016-2020	7	122
2021-present	3	0

\*numbers reflected in above Table IN11 are City of Highland Heights estimates

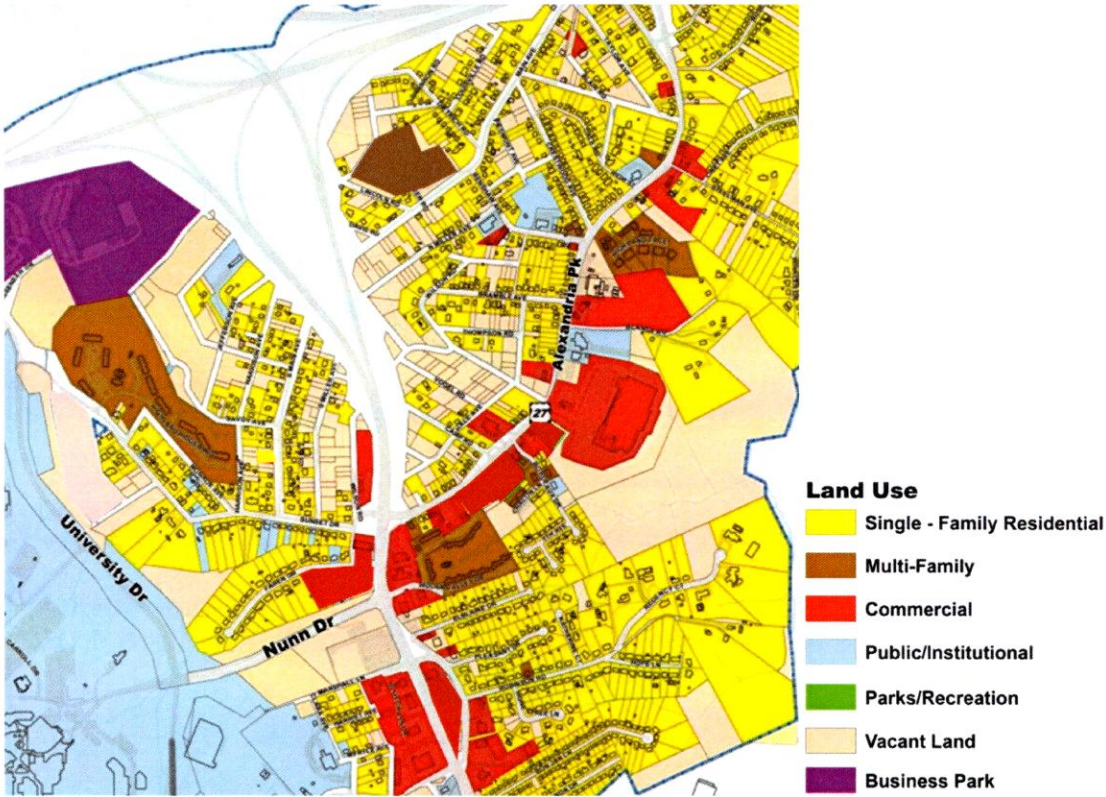
Source: 1991-2000: 2000 Highland Heights Comprehensive Plan, 2001 - 2011: censtats.census.gov, 2016-present: Campbell County Property Valuation Administrator Office, 2019 Comprehensive Plan, Campbell County Building Inspections Dept., 2020 Census.

**Key Map Revisions for 2024:**

2024 Development Framework Map – demonstrates how almost all of the level land is developed already and so new development is by default redevelopment:



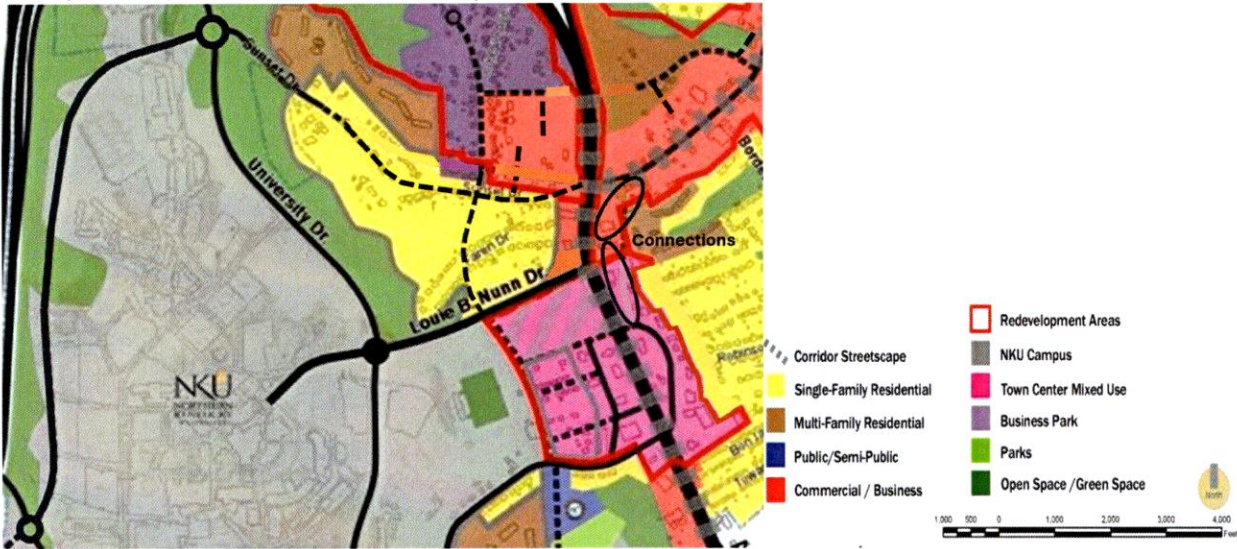
The 2024 Existing Land Use Map showing the Highland Village Independent Living Project, the chiropractic office on North US 27, the Medical Office Building at Nunn and US 27, and the Highland Pointe Commercial center at the "Island" area:



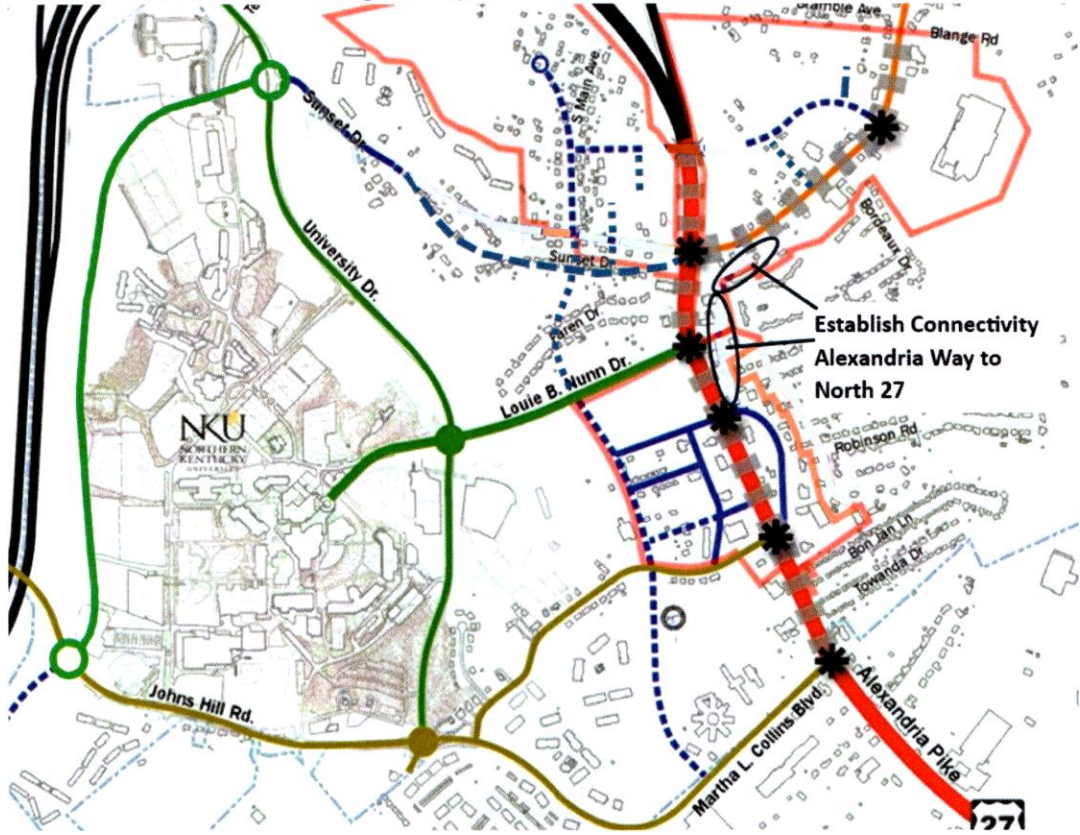
The 2024 East and West Gateway redevelopment map shows revised street planning:



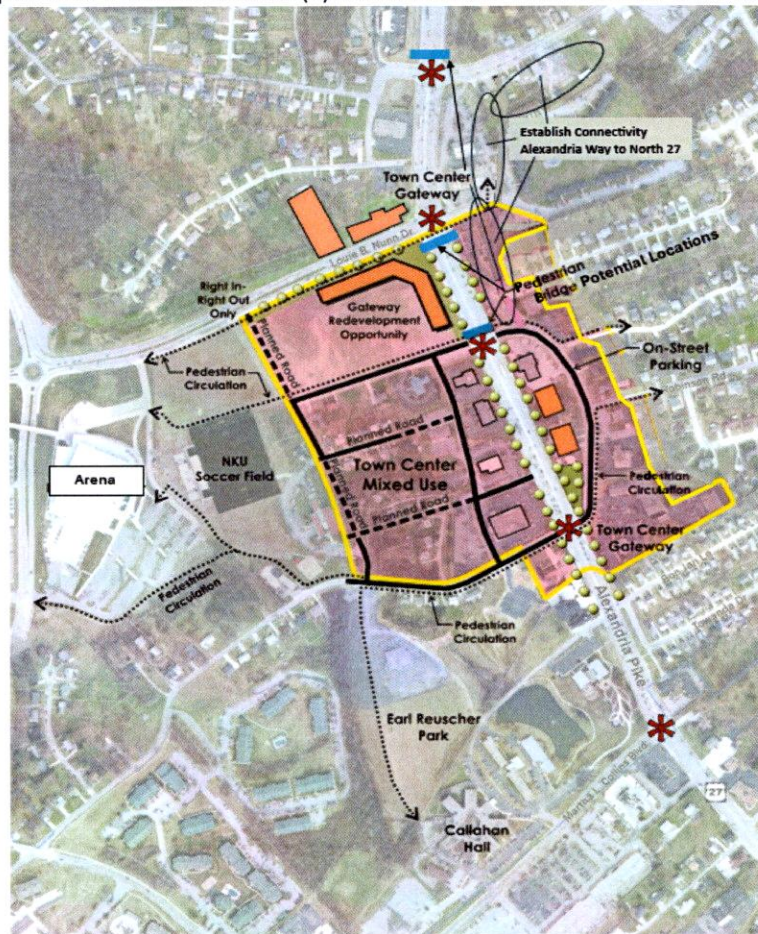
The 2024 Future Land Use Plan shows the revised town center redevelopment area boundary on the east, revised street connection proposals for the North US 27 connection(s) and revised I-471/Sunset/East and West Gateways street circulation pattern:



The 2024 Thoroughfare Plan, updated for recent construction and road connection revisions in the town center, east and west gateways areas:



The 2024 Town Center Redevelopment Map – note the revised eastern boundary of the Town Center Redevelopment area, the multiple pedestrian bridge suggested locations, and the revised description of the connection(s) between the town center and North US 27 areas:



## Conclusion

The Elements as presented at this public hearing and dated 11/12/24 are designed to be consistent with and help implement The 2024 Statement of Goals and Objectives. The draft Comprehensive Plan dated 11/12/24 is incorporated into this report. This fulfills the intent of the applicable sections of Kentucky Revised Statutes Chapter 100 and they contain sufficient public input to properly reflect the current state, needs, and desires of the community. Although technically not required, Staff recommends that the Planning Commission's action be forwarded to the City Council for their review and action as a good community planning and collaborative practice. Staff recommends the approval and adoption of the 2024 Highland Heights Comprehensive Plan subject to comments and adjustments made through this public hearing and adoption.

Respectfully submitted,  
David A. Geohegan