

Utility Management

The Kenton County Comprehensive Plan is comprised of nine elements. Recommendations and associated tasks for implementation have been developed for each element to implement the Goals and Objectives that serve as the foundation for the plan. The recommendations were derived after extensive public discussions, discourse and dialogue and are based on research which includes local data as well as national trends. They explore different facets of the county's physical development as well as its economic and social well-being and provide a roadmap for implementation. Citizens in Kenton County expect utilities to provide a sufficient level service while keeping costs reasonable. The Utility Management element addresses policies that decision-makers can use to deliver services efficiently.

Utilities, within the context of the Comprehensive Plan, refers to services that are usually funded by taxes and/or fees for the provision and maintenance of infrastructure such as electricity, natural gas, water, sewage, telephone, telecommunications and internet. Utility companies need to maintain and expand their systems in a way that utilizes their resources in the most efficient and responsible manner. Click on the main headings below to learn more about the recommendations for Utility Management.

1. Recommendation:

Improve efficiency in the permitting process to minimize overlapping and/or conflicting regulations and by updating the permitting procedures.

Associated Goals & Objectives:

Goal 3 – Objective A
Goal 3 – Objective C



Goal 9 – Objective C
Goal 9 – Objective D

Tasks:

1. Develop a comprehensive checklist of all the permits required for development. Review the permitting process and determine if and where there are gaps or bottlenecks in the process that can be streamlined.
2. Work in coordination with other agencies and the development community to ensure that all standards are consistent and do not overlap.
3. Research best practices across the country to identify and promote a streamlined process.

Basis:

There is a perception that the number of regulations and permits required by different utilities and agencies result in higher costs and can act as barriers to development. Regulatory processes should be streamlined and coordinated.

➡ 2. Recommendation:

Collaborate with utilities to identify existing infrastructure that needs to be improved.



Associated Goals & Objectives:

Goal 1 – Objective F

Task:

1. All jurisdictions and utility agencies should use a map-based infrastructure coordination program to manage and coordinate projects within public rights-of-way more efficiently and effectively.
2. Improve communication between utilities and local jurisdictions to coordinate improvements.

Basis:

The need for increased coordination between cities paving new roads and a utility needing to make repairs is a recurring comment that is made during planning projects. All jurisdictions and many utilities have an interest in rights-of-way. Many utilities are run underground or over ground in the right-of-way, and taxpayers are ultimately responsible for the maintenance and upkeep of road surfaces. Coordinating projects can reduce the number of utility projects, reduce traffic impacts, reduce costs, and reduce environmental impacts.

3. Recommendation:

Promote increased understanding of the nexus between growth, related cost of services and impact on the local economy.



Associated Goals & Objectives:

Goal 1 – Objective F
Goal 9 – Objective A
Goal 9 – Objective C
Goal 9 – Objective D

Tasks:

1. Explore the use of tools such as a fiscal impact analysis in coordination with stakeholders.
2. In areas where additional services are desired, work with stakeholders to prioritize, assess and determine community need, feasibility and costs.
3. Investigate growth management tools that reduce the cost of delivering services and, therefore, use taxpayer money more efficiently

Basis:

Citizens expect governmental agencies to be efficient stewards of taxpayer money. As the conversation of services in all parts of Kenton County continues to evolve, coordination between citizen groups, utility companies, elected officials, developers and all other stakeholders will need to occur to ensure adequate and desired services are provided in an efficient manner and in a way which does not hinder opportunities for appropriately scaled growth throughout the county.

4. Recommendation:

Promote stormwater management practices to improve the quality and reduce the quantity of stormwater runoff.



Associated Goals & Objectives:

Goal 1 – Objective F
Goal 8 – Objective A
Goal 9 – Objective C

Tasks:

1. Provide or seek out education opportunities to better understand Best Management Practices, when they are or are not feasible, and alternative site design techniques.
2. Encourage at all points through the development process the effective optimization of BMPs.
3. Assist utilities in reducing the impact of development on natural systems.

Basis:

Stormwater management refers to the development of effective programs and policies that focus on preventing stormwater pollution and managing the quantity of stormwater runoff. Through research and public input, there is general awareness of the issues surrounding stormwater runoff, the effects of excessive stormwater entering the sanitary sewer pipes, and how the quantity and quality of that runoff affects the areas downstream. Strategies that are implemented should balance the benefits and costs between the public and the property owner/developer.

Effectively managing stormwater runoff can improve the quality and health of local streams and waterways, reduce flooding impacts downstream, prevent stream bed and bank erosion, which in turn protects infrastructure and property along streams and can have a positive impact on the public and environmental health of the region. New policies and regulations have the potential to add complexities and additional cost to new development. However, other factors such as impacts to local infrastructure and additional costs to taxpayers and rate payers to mitigate the impacts must be considered and factored into the overall feasibility of a development project.

5. Recommendation:

Support current and future development by maintaining existing utility infrastructure and developing additional utility infrastructure where appropriate.

Associated Goals & Objectives:

- Goal 1 – Objective F
- Goal 3 – Objective C
- Goal 9 – Objective C
- Goal 9 – Objective D



Tasks:

1. Plan to ensure utility infrastructure capacity is available at prime development locations.
2. Work to create innovative policies to provide economic benefit for the most feasible ways to expand services.
3. Utilize new technology and identify alternative methods to reduce the impact of new and existing development on current water and sewer systems.
4. Sustain a positive economic climate by anticipating infrastructure needs and coordinating city investments with economic development opportunities.
5. Facilitate efforts to implement state-of-the-art technology, including communication technology, throughout the community.
6. Support public and private partnerships to leverage utility investment and share benefits and risks to these utility investments.

Basis:

Sewer capacity drives the density and feasibility of development. Typically, the cost of sewer facilities is the main topic for discussion prior to infrastructure development. Therefore, these facilities need to be located in high growth areas, or areas already experiencing higher population densities. This maximizes the benefits generated per cost incurred and encourages growth in the areas most suitable for development. Land use planning must be done in order to ensure that employment centers are located within proximity to the residential areas containing the employees work in those positions. Public comments indicated the need for high quality development within close proximity to the where they live, work and play.

6. Recommendation:

As the expansion of cellular technology continues, carefully balance the need for new cellular antenna towers with the impacts new towers have on adjacent land uses.

Tasks:

1. When a need for additional telecommunication service has been identified, reasonable effort should be given to locate new equipment based upon the following hierarchy of zones and land uses:



1. Co-locate on an existing antenna or structure whenever possible
 2. Industrial
 3. Commercial
 4. Institutional uses
 5. Public Parks
 6. Multifamily
 7. Agricultural
 8. Large tracts of single-family land
2. Use GIS to assist cellular providers find collocation opportunities for new antenna equipment whenever feasible.
 3. If collocation is not feasible, use GIS to identify optimal sites for new cellular antenna towers, based on the hierarchy established above.
 4. Use a Radio Frequency consultant and GIS tools to provide computer models and analysis for decision makers to determine whether new cellular antenna towers are located in the most optimal areas to meet the provider's needs and have as minimal impact on surrounding land uses.
 5. Review and update regulations and administrative policies as necessary to keep pace with new technology and changes in federal and state rules and regulations.
 6. Encourage small cells to fit into the aesthetic and context of the community and location they are located.
 7. Encourage the distribution of small cell technology in an equal and efficient manner to meet the needs of all citizens.

Basis:

The availability and quality of cellular service in some areas of the county, especially southern Kenton County, needs to be improved to provide the most up-to-date technology to residents. However, based on staff experience, the location and placement of new cellular towers are usually contentious issues that generate significant public interest and concern. Ongoing changes in federal and state cell tower rules and regulations require local regulations to evolve more rapidly. Small cell technology is evolving quickly, and regulations need to reflect these changes.

Consideration must also be given to the aesthetic component of small cell technology and how it is incorporated into communities.

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