



March 10, 2025

Dear Resident:

Other than the responsibility to my family and employees, serving as Kenton County Judge/Executive is the most significant duty of my life. Each day, I work to make decisions in the best interests of our 170,000+ residents. I take this obligation very seriously.

Citizen involvement, feedback, and exchange of ideas is the bedrock of my approach to County government. I believe in dialogue, respectful disagreement, seeking resolutions after healthy debate, and always learning from one another.

The idea of industrial development in southwestern Kenton County is not new and has been a topic of public discussion for at least two decades. Please take a moment to look over the attached brief history of these efforts.

To take the next step, we recently organized two community engagement sessions. As with all big projects, a vigorous discussion ensued.

First, thank you. Thank you to the 404 residents, including 109 who attended both meetings, for participating. It encourages me to know Kenton Countians are so invested in our collective future. Over the course of these meetings, we collected 615 pieces of feedback, all of which are posted on the project website bit.ly/SiteReadinessInitiative. Some were positive, some were negative, and some pushed us to think differently about the Site Readiness Initiative. Ultimately, the feedback is invaluable in helping shape a plan that aligns with our community's needs.

A comment heard frequently at both meetings was, "Do nothing." I want to be clear – "do nothing" is not an option.

"Do nothing" is not an option for reasons also expressed by attendees of the meetings. Roads are congested; infrastructure is inadequate; warehouses are being built. We cannot ignore these facts. Change of some sort is organically coming to Southwest Kenton County and, if we do nothing, the problems associated with it will only get worse with resulting bad outcomes. By having hard conversations now, we can ensure a better Kenton County for the generations to come.

Our choices include improving roadways and infrastructure and, yes, recruiting businesses that provide high-paying jobs.

So, what comes next?

Focus Area 2 (Generally south of Walton and west of U.S 25)

- We will pause further work in Focus Area 2, including advocacy for a new interchange. BE NKY Growth Partnership and Planning & Development Services of Kenton County believe Focus Area 1 will require work and provide economic opportunities for the next decade. We have time to deliberate about the future of Focus Area 2, and I plan to approach it with this timeline in mind.

Focus Area 1 (Generally south of Maher Road, north of Walton-Nicolson and west of Banklick Road)

- We will press forward on a southern portion of Focus Area 1, almost all of which is already zoned industrial, rather than the 5,200 acres initially studied. The new area encompasses roughly 900 acres. I will soon begin contacting property owners within this area to meet with them one-on-one to answer questions and get further feedback.
- As part of this effort, we will pursue resources, including roadway and infrastructure funding, to execute our vision for these 900 acres. Later this spring, I will present a plan to the Fiscal Court to accomplish this goal. When that date is set, we will share it publicly and widely. If you have not done so already, please sign up for updates at bit.ly/SiteReadinessInitiative.

Agriculture and rural preservation

Kenton County residents value conserving our most important natural areas. To this end, we will continue to explore opportunities to support agriculture and ag-tourism, consider mechanisms to promote land conservation, and provide the necessary infrastructure to support rural lifestyles.

We strive to balance the desire for rural lifestyles with appropriate economic opportunities to support the overall vitality of Kenton County. I look forward to determining how we can accomplish that in the coming months and years.

I believe in Kenton County, and as long as I am in this role, I will never stop working to make it the best it can be.



Kris Knochermann
Kenton County Judge/Executive

SITE READINESS INITIATIVE: HOW WE GOT HERE

In 2023, the Fiscal Court engaged experts to review the areas in Southwest Kenton County most likely to experience industrial development in the future and evaluate the infrastructure enhancements required to support high-quality job growth while minimizing any adverse effects on existing agricultural and residential areas. That analysis was presented to the Fiscal Court in October 2024, and the Fiscal Court subsequently approved a resolution to further explore the next steps.

The Site Readiness Initiative has its roots in decades of community discussions. This initiative reflects a collective effort that has evolved over many years, prior to the current Fiscal Court's involvement.

1998

The South Kenton County Planning Task Force made up of citizens from South Kenton formed to make recommendations to County government regarding Southern Kenton County. The task force adopted a vision statement called "Creating a Path to the Future."

"Creating a Path to the Future" contained six goals, of which Goal 3 stated: *"Suitable land for industrial development should be identified and zoned for this use in southern Kenton County."*

2008

Zoning amendments created industrial use in much of what we refer to as Focus Area 1.

2014

Kenton County updated its comprehensive plan. The South Kenton County Citizens Group (SKCCG), a volunteer community group, formed subsequent to that process.

2015
& 2016

The SKCCG surveyed residents in southern Kenton County regarding the area's future. Those surveys revealed residents were open to light industrial use in the southwestern portion of the County, while highlighting a desire to seek ways to preserve the County's agricultural heritage.

2020

The comprehensive plan update included industrial land use changes. SKCCG supported the change and wrote a letter of support for the land use change.

2023

The Fiscal Court and the Northern Kentucky Port Authority engaged expert consultants to review the areas in Southwest Kenton County most likely to experience industrial development and evaluate the infrastructure improvements necessary to support that development.

2024

Kenton County underwent a comprehensive plan update where no land use changes were pursued but a public meeting was held at Piner Baptist Church to seek feedback.

The Fiscal Court was presented an update on its consultants' efforts, with the Court approving a resolution tasking the consultants to further refine their work to determine actionable next steps.

2025

The Fiscal Court hosted two community engagement sessions at Piner Elementary School and Simon Kenton High School to give residents an overview of the consultants' work and collect their preliminary feedback.

Learn more online at bit.ly/SiteReadinessInitiative