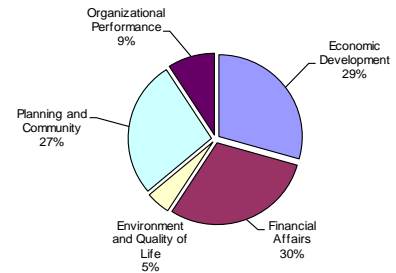


2015 Strategic Achievements

In 2015 the City had a fairly balanced allotment in time across three main strategy areas: Economic Development, Financial Affairs, Planning & Community.



Strategic Goal

Financial Health & Economic Development

“to be a prosperous and livable city for all citizens”

Financial Health Actions & Events

Objectives:

- Ensure that Kent is a fiscally strong and financially well-managed City.
- Maintain superior financial reporting, financial controls, budgeting, financial management, and transparency, and invest in capital infrastructure to support efficient long-term provision of services.
- Maintain reserves, and increase them when appropriate, to ensure financial flexibility, and to assist with difficult economic times, disasters or other emergencies.
- Maintain a high financial credit (bond) rating, maintain debt policies and debt practices that allow the assessment of appropriate debt levels, and periodically review debt and debt service to minimize costs.

2015 Notable Actions and Events

Activity Level 8/10

- Capital Plan 2015
- \$2.2 million Sale of City Admin Buildings
- RFP Issued for Sale of Downtown Courthouse
- Authorized Creation of Stormwater Utility Rate Stabilization Plan
- West Side Fire Levy Passed
- City Ambulance Fees Increased
- Considered AMATS Grant for SR43 Sidewalk Upgrade
- \$625,000 in Supplemental Paving Work
- Parks and Rec Levy Renewal
- Closed City Subsidized Business Incubator
- Debt Issue for New Police Facility Paid from New Levy
- Negotiated Hotel Conf. Center Property Tax Settlement
- Updated City Income Tax Code
- Secured Brady Lake Fire Service Contract
- Initiated Subpoena Program for Back Taxes
- City Notes Rollover
- City Audit With Distinction
- Converted Service Worker Positions to Laborers

Economic Development Actions & Events

Economic Development Objectives:

- Aggressively pursue job expansion, retention and attraction to diversify the jobs & careers available to Kent residents.
- Increase the competitiveness of the Kent business climate to expand the employment base and create jobs.
- Strengthen linkages with the City’s largest employers and support Kent State’s goal to expand its research mission.
- Engage Kent’s economic resources including the Kent Regional Business Alliance (KRBA), Kent State University, the Joint Economic Development Districts (JEDD), Main Street Kent, Downtown Kent Corporation, Portage County and the Chamber of Commerce to foster small business development and entrepreneurship.
- Facilitate sustainable redevelopment throughout the City with a focus on the downtown central business district.
- Develop projects that revitalize aging centers or re-use vacant land for retail, office or industrial redevelopment.

Viable Downtown Objectives:

- Leverage the central business district to support and create economic opportunities.
- To be a pedestrian friendly destination for residents and visitors to Kent.
- Provide alternative and unique shopping, dining and entertainment options.
- Serve as a social and cultural gathering place that accentuates the quality of life and lifestyle opportunities in Kent.

2015 Notable Actions and Events

Activity Level 8/10

- Began Ametek Site Demolition
- Performed the Kent Housing Study
- Hired New Econ Dev Director
- Destination Kent Website Launched
- KSU Fashion Store Opens Downtown
- Destination Kent Visitor Centre Opens
- Main Street Kent Oktoberfest
- Pufferbelly’s 34th Anniversary Week
- City Ride Share Regs Approved
- Dan Smith Community Park Started
- New Kent Marketing Video in Theaters
- Facilitated Dale Adams Property Sale
- Negotiated City to City Ad Network
- Issued RFP for Downtown Courthouse
- Parcel D Groundbreaking
- New Joe Walsh Mural Downtown
- Increased Contribution (\$10,000) for Heritage Fest
- Hosted City of Rock Hill Officials Visit
- New Trex License for CheeseMonger

Strategic Goal

Support for Natural Resources

“to protect and promote the City’s natural resources”

Natural Resource Actions & Events

Objectives:

- Expand the opportunities for Kent residents and visitors to experience & enjoy Kent’s natural resources.
- Serve as a model for conservation and environmental practices.
- Develop and promote eco-tourism, eco-recreation and green based business prospects in Kent.
- Support events that showcase the City’s natural resources as a quality of life amenity.
- Reduce energy and fuel dependency; have a smaller carbon footprint as a City.
- Preserve and expand wetland areas and create conservation easements for environmentally sensitive areas.

<p>2015 Notable Actions and Events</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Adopt a Spot Program • Kent Bike Share Agreement • Cuyahoga River Watershed Fest • Kent Elastomer Wins State Gold Award • Greentown Kent Sustainability Conference • Bike & Brainstorm Event • Solid Waste Ordinance Changes • Leaf Collection/Mulching • FEMA Flood Plain Map Updates • Renewed Portage Co. Recycling • Coyote Public Information Meetings 	<p>Activity Level 6/10</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • AMATS Hike and Bike Trail Funds • Ride/Walk to Downtown Kent Event • Who’s Your Mama Earth Day • 29th Tree City USA Designation • Annual River Clean Up • Fracking Letter to Governor • Ametek Demo and Remediation • Feral Cats Information and Outreach • RB&W Site Contamination • Fish Kill in Fishcreek • Letter of Support for Moratorium on Injection wells
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Strategic Goal

Superior Quality of Life

“to enhance lifestyle choices through the physical and social environment”

Quality of Life Actions & Events

Objectives:

- Achieve the goals of the City’s Sustainability Plan.
- Improve the City’s transit, transportation and pedestrian networks to ensure safe access for people of all capabilities.
- Promote projects that diversify the retail base, providing greater shopping, dining and entertainment options in Kent.
- Expand awareness & access to arts, sports and cultural opportunities.
- Offer programs to rehabilitate aging housing stock, preserve property values, and promote a mix of affordable housing.
- Support City beautification programs like the downtown flower pots, the Adopt-a-Spot gardens, street banners, public art.
- Adopt design guidelines and where possible/affordable upgrade City crosswalks, medians, and sidewalks utilizing more landscaping, attractive pavers, bricks, colorized concrete, impressed asphalt, etc.
- Improve effectiveness of rooming house licensing and regulation.
- Continue to financially assist health and social service programs.

<p>2015 Notable Actions and Events</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Kent Public Art Plan • Tree City Turkey Trot Race • Black Squirrel Triathlon • Beatles Fest • Reggae Fest • Kent Blues Festival • Summer Heritage Festival • Kent Folk Festival • International Festival • Downtown Cider Festival • Downtown Ghost Walk • Downtown Kent Sidewalk Sale • Crooked River Adventure Race • Black Squirrel Adventure Race 	<p>Activity Level 6/10</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Bowman Cup Race • Halloween Family Festival • Festival of Lights • Kent Oktoberfest • St. Pets Day • Dog Days of Summer Event • River Day • Art in the Park Event • Chocolate Walk • Sidewalk Cinema • 2015 Celebrate Kent Grant Awards • ‘Round Town Music Festival • Main Street Kent Renewal
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Strategic Goal

Community Safety

"to be an exceptionally safe city"

Public Safety Actions & Events

Objectives:

- Provide state-of-the-art 911 services for fire, police, and emergency medical and management services.
- Aid individuals who are in danger of harm and assist those who are unable to care for themselves.
- Use prevention and suppression programs to deter and reduce incidents of crime, fires and hazards.
- Continue to develop neighborhood relationships to proactively address public safety issues.
- Provide the best available emergency medical response, pre-hospital support and transport system to the residents and visitors in the greater Kent service area.
- Explore collaborative and regional approaches to addressing shared public safety needs.
- Create and maintain a feeling of security in the community.
- Ensure the physical safety of neighborhoods, business and shopping districts, schools and transportation corridors.

2015 Notable Actions and Events

Activity
Level 9/10

- Smoke Alarm Program
- Participated in Ohio Tornado Drill
- New Trash Compliance Regs
- Kent Police Goals for 2015
- Police Employees-of-the-week Recognition
- Summit Street Improvement Project Design Complete
- First Energy Trimming Trees
- Hydrant Flushing Program
- Review New FEMA Flood Design Requirements
- Training at Allerton Apartments
- Unconscious Bias Training
- Passed City Ride Share Regs
- Downtown Shooting Secret Cellar
- West Side Fire Levy Passed
- AT&T 911 Service Disruption
- West Nile Virus
- Kent Police Awards
- Citizens Police Academy
- Annual Sidewalk Program
- Hoops for Heroes Event
- Police Training Exercises on College Street
- Portage County Emergency App
- Fire Life Saving Training
- SAFERS Fire Personnel Grant
- 2015-16 School Resource Officer Contract Renewal
- Feral Cat Resolution of Support
- New Police Station Design
- Sidewalk Snow Removal Contract
- Countywide 911 Agreement
- Brady Lake Fire Services Contract
- Officer Involved Shooting

Strategic Goal

Communities Within the City

"to strengthen the quality and enhance the value of neighborhoods"

Community Actions & Events

Objectives:

- Strengthen and build partnerships with the City's diverse community; celebrate and capitalize on Kent's diversity.
- Provide services and programs for a multi-cultural audience.
- Increase awareness, participation and compliance with neighborhood code issues.
- Promote rehabilitation and sustainable infill development.
- Develop programs that encourage neighborhood based initiatives and planning.
- Partner with Kent State University to revitalize campus border neighborhoods.
- Seek programs that instill a sense of neighborhood pride.
- Strive to improve the rate of home ownership in Kent.
- Enhance neighborhood identities.

2015 Notable Actions and Events

Activity
Level 7/10

- City Tool Loan Program
- CDBG Action Plan
- Housing Study Completed
- Code Compliance Annual Report
- Joint Meeting with Franklin Township
- 2015 Celebrate Kent Grant Awards
- Inventory of Historical Homes
- White Oaks Subdivision Acceptance
- FEMA Flood Plain Maps Review
- New Sidewalk Snow Removal Pilot
- New Sewer Lateral Repair Pilot
- Approved New Rental Registration
- Parking Petitions (High Street, Beryl)
- Volunteer Snow Shoveling Initiative
- \$625,000 Extra for Neighborhood Street Paving Projects

Strategic Goal

City and University Synergy

"to expand collaborative opportunities that enrich the university community experience"

Collaboration Actions & Events

Objectives:

- Showcase the assets of the City's university community that make Kent a great place to live, work, play and learn.
- Embrace the university-city brand and leverage the social and cultural opportunities for community enrichment and personal growth.
- Promote life long learning opportunities and the value of education at every phase in a person's life.
- Create public spaces that attract diverse populations for engagement and interaction.
- Communicate Kent's town/gown vision to current and potential residents, visitors and members of the media.

2015 Notable Actions and Events

Activity
Level 5/10

- City/KSU Homecoming Parade
- Monthly Meetings with KSU
- 2 Bowman Breakfasts
- International Festival
- Flash Fleet Bike Share
- City/KSU River Clean Up
- Unconscious Bias Training
- National "Our Town" Arts Grant
- New Rental Registration Program
- Dr. Warren Meeting with City Council
- New Bike Share Program MOU
- "Welcome" Speech at Dr. Warren's Official Inauguration

Strategic Goal

Government Performance

"to provide the best service at the lowest possible cost"

Government Actions & Events

Objectives:

- Deliver exceptional public services with a high level of customer service.
- Commit the entire organization to achieve customer satisfaction.
- Utilize the latest technology improvements to improve customer information, communication and interaction.
- Make sound business decisions using data and customer input.
- Develop and institute performance metrics to measure progress towards objectives.
- Create a culture of continuous improvement; provide training in quality improvement techniques.
- Strive to leverage technology to improve productivity and do more with less operational resources.
- Be strategic and market driven in planning and managing public services.
- Work towards full cost accounting of utility services and enterprise funds with rate based user fees.
- Create an atmosphere of innovation, risk taking and tolerance for failure as an occasional price for improvement.
- Benchmark City operations against best practices to ensure the delivery of the best services at the lowest possible cost.
- Create a culture where things are done right the first time, every time.
- Develop innovative ways to make participation in local government activities possible for all residents and foster a sense of engagement among the citizenry by communicating a common identity, actively seeking insight into the needs of the community and aligning City services with customer expectations.

2015 Notable Actions and Events

Activity
Level 7/10

- City of Kent Web, Pinterest, Twitter, Facebook, Citizen Sites
- Continued Council Activity Quarterly Reports
- Mayors and Manager's Regional Meetings
- Maintained Citizen Action Center Web Site
- Kent-Munroe Falls Jail MOU
- Proposed Charter Review Committee Recommendations
- Process for New Admin Building Project
- Consent leg. ODOT Bridge Repair Project SR261
- New Equipment Technician Position
- Charter Review Commission
- Charter Review Commission
- City Property Review
- FEMA Flood Plain Map Review
- Updated City Income Tax Ordinance
- Renewed Portage County Recycling Contract
- Brady Lake Fire Services Contract
- Private Laterals Pilot Project (\$50,000)
- Charter Amendments and Citizen Petition
- Police Station Land Use Analysis
- Administrative Building Scope and Study

Top Priority Areas By Year

- 2012: #1. Planning and Community Development** – Fracking, Interior Maintenance Standards, Wells Sherman House Relocation, Veteran Memorial, Rehab Loans, CDBG Program, Summit Street Improvement Project, CHIP Funds for New Senior Housing, Fees Update
- 2013: #1. Economic Development** – Trex License Policy, Trex License requests for Twisted Root and Phoenix Properties, Wells Sherman House historic designation, Consideration of Neighborhood Grant Program, Updates to the Incubator Policy, and Small Business Development funding reallocation.
- 2014: #1. Planning & Community Development** – Consideration of a Dangerous Dog Ordinance, ODOT Agreement for citywide bridge inspection, Police Facility architectural contract and subsequent updates, discussion regarding parking on W. Main Street bridge, and KSU request to close Willow Street
- 2015: #1. Financial Affairs** – Capital Projects update report and annual review, AMATS funding request for SR43 sidewalks, City Ambulance fee increase, sale of City Administration Building and relocation of city services, Stormwater Utility Rate Stabilization Plan, and Replacement Income Tax Ordinance

Looking Ahead in 2016-17

Below is a short list of items that are in the pipeline for activity in 2016.

Planning and Community Development – Evaluate citywide housing study data and begin to develop targeted housing strategies; Support “strategic” housing development options; Implement rental licensing program; Support historic preservation and restoration; Develop small Area Plans, e.g., around the Esplanade/Haymaker/Lincoln corridor, North Water Street; Continue extra focus (time and funding) around street and sidewalk repairs.

Economic Development – Continue downtown grocery analysis; Facilitate West River Corridor (former Dale Adams property) redevelopment; Continue environmental work and final site preparations for the redevelopment of the Ametek property; Transition the convention and visitor’s bureau functions to Kent; Promote Kent businesses and Kent events; Update downtown parking supply and usage rates; Finalize a new JEDD with Rootstown township.

Financial Affairs – Develop a new framework for a stormwater utility rate stabilization plan; Continue to explore inter-jurisdictional/regional cost sharing opportunities -- particularly Health Department, 911 Dispatch, and Fire Services rates in townships and KSU campus; Increase financial transparency and on-line access to City finance data; Develop a downtown parking meter revenue plan.

Organizational Performance – Hire City IT Manager; Increase use of performance measure data and benchmarking of city services; Identify and prioritize staffing needs particularly within the Fire Department; Investigate Police accreditation; Lead a planning process for determining the future City administration building.

Environment and Quality of Life – Implement elements of the public art masterplan; Support community and multi-cultural events; Promote public health priorities and services; Continue to seek to reduce the City’s “carbon footprint” and promote alternative transportation options.