



City of Kent
Wednesday, February 7, 2024
City Council Committee Meetings
320 S. Depeyster Street, Kent, OH 44240

MINUTES

At 07:00 PM, Mayor Jerry T. Fiala called the City Council Committee Meetings to order.

Present: Mr. Jack Amrhein, Ms. Melissa Celko, Mr. Jeff Clapper, Mr. Michael DeLeone, Mr. Chris Hook, Ms. Gwen Rosenberg, Ms. Heidi Shaffer Bish, Mr. Roger Sidoti

Also Present: Mr. Jerry T. Fiala, Mayor, and President of Council; Mr. Dave Ruller, City Manager; Ms. Hope Jones, Law Director; Ms. Bridget Susel, Community Development Director; Mr. Jim Bowling, City Engineer; Ms. Joan Seidel, Health Commissioner; Ms. Rhonda Hall, Budget and Finance Director; Mr. Nick Shearer, Chief of Police; Mr. Jamie Samels, Fire Chief; Ms. Dominique Bollenbacher, Community Services Coordinator; Ms. Amy Wilkens, Clerk of Council

Absent: Mr. Robin Turner

Committee of the Whole

Mayor Fiala opened the Committee of the Whole meeting at 7:00 p.m.

Codified Ordinance Book Replacement Pages

Ms. Hope Jones, Law Director, said the replacement pages to the ordinances that were adopted by the Council and state law changes were received from the publisher. In order for them to go into effect, Council needs to approve this action.

Ms. Shaffer Bish asked if this was a housekeeping item. Ms. Jones said that it was.

MOTION TO APPROVE CODIFIED ORDINANCE BOOK REPLACEMENT PAGES MADE BY Ms. Heidi Shaffer Bish, SECONDED by Mr. Roger Sidoti and CARRIED by a voice vote of 8-0-0.

Action Recommended:

1. Approve replacement pages to the Ordinance Books with the emergency clause.

City Hall Construction Update

Ms. Melanie Baker, Service Director, was out due to illness. City Manager, Dave Ruller said Ms. Baker prepared slides and passed out pictures of the progress of the new City Hall. She is hoping to take City Council members on a tour of the facilities in the near future. **(Attachment)**

Action Recommended:

1. None (Staff Report)

Proposed Ward Map Revisions

Ms. Bridget Susel, Community Development Director, was back before Council with the revised ward maps. She said there had been a question regarding whether the proposed ward apportionments would impact the upcoming presidential election. Official confirmation from the Board of Elections is pending. Ms. Susel asked to continue the discussion without a vote, saying she wished to present the completed maps that were finished in August. She explains that the delay is due to waiting for a response from the Board of Elections regarding the impact on the election. Ms. Susel will return with the answer for a vote on the ward maps from Council.

The initial set of maps was not embraced by the Council, leading the Community Development Department to redo five of the six ward maps. Ms. Susel said that the city charter requires a maximum 10% difference in the population of wards. The provided table **(Attachment)** breaks down the 2010 and 2020 census figures for each ward, including the minimum and maximum populations allowed by the charter. The Community Development Department works within a range factor of 235 and utilizes block group blocks based on objective census data.

Ms. Celko asked about the chart Ms. Susel provided and a specific concern about Ward One. She pointed out the information shows the 2020 census and 2010 census and a change of negative 143. She said the current ward map being presented mentions additions, there is no mention of a subtraction and asked for clarification of the discrepancy. Ms. Susel explained that census tracks, which define block group blocks are not consistent over time. Census tracks are configured by the census based on changing population patterns and building permit information. She said it's not just about numbers; there are entirely new census tracks, and the task is to figure out what areas used to be included in the now changed tracks. This process leads to an increase or decrease in population count. These changes may not result in an exact match with the previous configuration. Ms. Celko said she now understands her ward didn't need to be reduced; the changes were due to how the census created block group blocks. She and Ms. Susel agreed it could be confusing to understand.

Mr. Sidoti asked for further clarification on the geographic layout and Ms. Susel clarified that the population in a census track doesn't necessarily correspond directly to geographical boundaries. The layout can change while the population might remain stable or change in a different manner, allowing adjustments to be made to align with the block group blocks defined by the census. She gave an example of how the data from the census led to to creation of new census tracks that could cross wards, introducing a completely new configuration. The focus is on the block group blocks defined by the census, and the adjustments are not solely driven by size, geography or households but specifically by these census-defined blocks.

Mr. Hook thanked Ms. Susel for her work on the maps. He asked for further clarification on how to read the boundaries on the maps she presented. Ms. Susel explained the colored areas represent the boundaries of different wards and the red lines signify separations between the wards. The use of layers in the mapping program helps distinguish between

ward boundaries and major streets. Mr. Hook asked about Ward Four. Ms. Susel said the six colors will fill out the entire city on the ward map, and the red lines will denote the separation between them.

There were no further questions, as a vote will be done once there is an answer from the Board of Elections.

Action Recommended:

1. None; will await information from Board of Elections.

Community Development Committee

Chair Rosenberg opened the Community Development Committee meeting at 7:29 PM.

Future Role and Responsibilities of the Architectural Review Board

Ms. Bridget Susel, Community Development Director, reminded Council of the changes they approved to the Design Guidelines in the Zoning Code. This has created an inherent conflict in the zoning code as amending the zoning code requires a lengthy process involving public hearings and Planning Commission discussions. Ms. Susel expresses concern about the potential delay in current pending cases if they have to wait for the lengthy process.

To address this, she proposes an administrative variance or the ability to approve two cases that already comply with the existing sign code in the zoning code. However, she highlights the inherent conflict due to the change in the status of guidelines from statutory requirements to recommendations. This leads to a discussion on options, including transitioning the Architectural Review Board to an Advisory Board or disbanding it. Ms. Susel asked for guidance and discussion on how to address these conflicts in the zoning code. She mentioned that, with guidance, the staff will make text amendment recommendations, take them through the public hearing Planning Commission process, and then bring them back to council for a public hearing and review before formal adoption.

Mr. Ruller suggested there might be a possible third alternative. This alternative involves reconsidering the previous vote and potentially creating a historic district, a step not taken in the past. He explained that, historically, there haven't been property owners volunteering for a historic district. If the council were to establish a historic district, it would enable the implementation of actual, enforceable design guidelines, including the requirement for a certificate of appropriateness. However, Mr. Ruller noted that this option wasn't initially included because it wasn't part of the previous vote when the design guidelines were approved as recommendations. He presented it as a full disclosure, providing the council with additional information on potential alternatives.

Ms. Celko asked about the potential impact on project timelines if the Architectural Review Board were to be eliminated. Ms. Susel explained that the removal of the Architectural Review Board (ARB) would expedite the process. Currently, the ARB review is a statutory requirement in the zoning code, necessitating the issuance of a certificate of appropriateness for projects located in the overlay district with exterior changes.

Ms. Susel outlined the existing process, where no permitting can occur without the ARB certificate of appropriateness. If the board were eliminated and text amendments were made to the zoning code, this requirement would be removed. Projects would then be reviewed by staff for regulatory compliance with zoning code requirements for the relevant district. The elimination of the ARB layer would shorten the overall project timeline. She notes that the ARB typically meets monthly, and the removal of this step would result in a quicker progression through the regulatory process.

Mr. Sidoti asked about the history of the Architectural Review Board (ARB). He clarifies that the ARB used to be an advisory board, specifically known as the Architectural Advisory Board (AAB). Ms. Susel affirms this, mentioning that the AAB was an ad hoc board, not officially sanctioned by the city but operated out of the Community Development Department. The transition occurred in June 2011 when the city adopted the zoning code, codifying the design guidelines as appendices and making it a statutory requirement for the ARB to issue a certificate of appropriateness for projects in the Overlay District.

Ms. Susel said that by 2011, the downtown area was well-developed, and the transition to a statutory requirement aligned with the city's development phase. She noted that decisions under the statutory requirements were made by the ARB, working with developers during the Downtown Development period.

Ms. Shaffer Bish asked a couple of questions, starting with the fate of the Overlay District. Ms. Susel said that the Overlay District is part of the zoning code, and its existence depends on the decisions made during the discussion. If certain changes are implemented, the Overlay District can remain, but it may not have the statutory requirement for a certificate of appropriateness, depending on the outcomes of the discussion.

Ms. Susel explained that an Overlay District can be established with various parameters and criteria. The decision on whether it exists will be contingent upon the council's choices regarding the certificate of appropriateness recommendations and boards. If an advisory board is established, they would likely make recommendations within the overlay district.

Ms. Shaffer Bish expressed her realization that design guidelines are not enforceable. She raised concerns about who would communicate these guidelines to developers or individuals interested in significant redevelopment if there were no Architectural Review Board (ARB) or Advisory Board.

Ms. Susel responds by explaining that staff, particularly during the Planning Commission process, would communicate the compliance or non-compliance with design guidelines for projects within the Overlay District. Ms. Susel said if a project is not aligned with the guidelines, the Planning Commission has the authority to add conditions to the project. These conditions become requirements for the project.

Ms. Susel also mentioned the option of incorporating some design guidelines directly into the zoning code for specific areas like the Overlay District. This way, certain requirements, such as restrictions on internally lit signs, can be explicitly outlined in the zoning code. She gave an example of how the regulation of backlit signs was handled for properties on West College, where a variance was granted by the Council. If the Council or members wanted to specify such requirements, they could include them in the relevant sections of the zoning code.

Mr. Sidoti raised concerns about the aesthetic aspects of downtown Kent and the role of the Architectural Review Board (ARB) or an Advisory Board in shaping the appearance of buildings. He asked whether, without the ARB or Advisory Board, the final decision on the exterior appearance of buildings would fall to the Planning Commission or potentially City Council.

Ms. Susel said that Kent City Council has the authority to issue mandates related to the appearance of buildings. However, she suggested that if such a situation were to arise, the staff would likely be aware of it beforehand, and discussions would take place with the Planning Commission. In the absence of an agreement, the Planning Commission might deny approval for the project to move forward.

She also shares insights into the diversity of approaches in different communities, noting

that not all communities have design guidelines. Some have guidelines for specific areas, while others do not. Kent's design guidelines were initially driven by Main Street Kent's efforts and were codified in 2011 to address concerns related to substantial downtown investments. Ms. Susel mentions that the review meetings for design guidelines could be challenging, with various iterations and adjustments made during the process.

Mr. Ruller commented regarding developers and their approach to building projects in Kent. Mr. Ruller emphasized that most developers, particularly those undertaking significant investments, often engage in early meetings with city officials to discuss their plans and seek guidance. These developers, he notes, are interested in creating assets that are aesthetically pleasing and financially successful.

Additionally, Bridget Susel gave examples of past interactions with developers, emphasizing instances where advice was given regarding design choices, leading to positive outcomes. The mention of a specific project involving black brick that was initially voted down by the Architectural Review Board illustrates how developers can adapt their plans based on early discussions and guidance from city officials.

Mr. Clapper said he has seen potential challenges faced by the Planning Commission when projects not within the Architectural Review Board's overlay district still go through a courtesy review. He suggests that having a set of design guidelines without an additional advisory committee might be more straightforward for the Planning Commission to navigate, especially given the types of developers the city tends to attract in Kent. This perspective highlights the importance of clarity and efficiency in the decision-making process for the Planning Commission.

Ms. Shaffer Bish asked if staff had a recommendation and Ms. Susel said staff's not going to make a recommendation. She said that staff does the work and we'll adjust the code according to what council advises.

Mr. Amrhein asked about establishing an historic district in downtown Kent. Ms. Susel said that if the City Council designates a historic district, specific historic design guidelines would need to be developed. Bridget shares historical details about the previous attempt to establish a historic district in 2012, the challenges faced, and the decision not to impose a district without the consent of property owners. In response to Mr. Amrhein's question, Ms. Susel said that the Historical Society does have the ability to informally refer to an area as a historic district and work with businesses without it being officially codified. She gives an example of a similar situation with the south end, where the community wanted to designate it as the Historic South End. Although it didn't meet the requirements for a historic district, it received local support and acknowledgment.

In response to Mr. Hook's question, Bridget acknowledged the current conflict in the city's zoning code. She explained that the design guidelines are recommendations, while there is still an Architectural Review Board (ARB) in the zoning code that is supposed to issue a certificate of appropriateness based on guidelines that are no longer part of the zoning code. This creates a conflict between the design guidelines and the statutory role of the ARB.

When asked about the potential impact on the Planning Commission, BZA, and Community Development if the ARB were to transition to an advisory role or be disbanded, Ms. Susel said that they already meet with every project and review various aspects, including setbacks, dumpster enclosures, lights, and more. She doesn't foresee any issues, and they would incorporate the design guidelines as part of their existing review process.

In response to Mr. Sidoti's question, Ms. Susel explained that if the Planning Commission were to deny a project, the developer has the option to resubmit the project for another review by the Planning Commission or the Board of Zoning Appeals. If the developer

disagrees with the decision of these boards, they have the right to appeal to the Court of Common Pleas. City Council is not directly involved in the appeal process; it primarily involves the Planning Commission, Board of Zoning Appeals, and the court system.

Ms. Rosenberg concluded council's questioning and went to the audience. Mr. Fuller, a resident and retired registered architect, addressed City Council, expressing frustration over the prolonged process of discussing design guidelines. He questioned why they hadn't considered the need for an Architectural Review Board earlier in the process. Mr. Fuller highlighted the importance of such a board, citing its positive impact on past projects in improving architectural quality. He urged City Council not to rush the decision and proposed revisiting original project concepts with historical drawings to showcase the Architectural Review Board's value. Additionally, he criticized the proposed options, advocating for an advisory board or staff review that respects the architectural profession

Ms. Bridget Tipton, a resident and practicing architect in Kent, expressed disappointment over the potential disbandment of the Architecture Review Board (ARB) after the investment in new design guidelines. She mentioned her continued service on the ARB despite an expired term and emphasized the importance of having a board responsible for stewarding the guidelines. Ms. Tipton dismissed the idea of an advisory board, believing it would be challenging to apply and unlikely to be taken seriously. She suggested that Planning Commission might need to apply the guidelines, but highlighted the lack of design professional requirements on that board. Ms. Tipton expressed her commitment to engaging in discussions related to architecture in Kent

Bridget Susel requested guidance from the Council before proceeding to a vote. She sought clarification on whether they were considering a motion for a variance on two signs and if they were also seeking guidance on the direction for zoning code amendments related to the Architecture Review Board (ARB). Bridget explained that the two signs in the pipeline comply with sign requirements, with one needing a variance and approval for a pre-existing non-conforming use. The signs are unlit and meet regulatory requirements, but she cannot move them forward to Planning Commission without administrative approval

MOTION TO APPROVE TWO SIGN VARIANCES MADE BY Mr. Roger Sidoti,
SECONDED by Mr. Jeff Clapper and CARRIED by a voice vote of 8-0-0

Ms. Shaffer Bish suggested the least complicated approach would be to try operating without an Architectural Review Board (ARB) and instead focus on codifying certain guidelines directly into the zoning code. She mentioned examples like specifying first-floor retail or restricting offices in a downtown district. Ms. Shaffer Bish emphasized that codifying these guidelines through the Planning Commission would allow for more tangible regulations. She acknowledged the subjective nature of color choices and the diversity of opinions within the ARB. Ms. Shaffer proposed that the simplified process would involve not having an ARB at this time

Mr. Sidoti expressed his appreciation for Ms. Susel's efforts and suggested that he leans towards the idea of having an advisory board, including a citizen member. He believes the city is not done evolving, and an advisory board could contribute to the ongoing development. Mr. Sidoti mentioned that he would like to keep them at the table and give it two years, allowing the advisory board to assist in codifying guidelines. While acknowledging the complexity, he emphasized the importance of having diverse voices, including young architects, in the community.

Mr. Clapper expressed a differing opinion, emphasizing the challenges associated with an Advisory Board. He highlighted the potential difficulties in aligning the subjective input from an Advisory Board with the zoning code, guidelines, and the perspectives of the Planning Commission or City Council. Mr. Clapper suggested that the subjective nature of an Advisory Board's input could complicate decision-making.

Mr. Hook expressed a sense of being caught between two options, highlighting the binary nature of the decision: either having an Advisory Board with limited influence or not having an Architecture Review Board at all. He acknowledged the importance of architects' engagement and expertise in the design process, expressing a wish for exploring additional options beyond the current two.

MOTION TO DISBAND THE ARCHITECTURE REVIEW BOARD MADE BY Mr. Jeff Clapper, SECONDED by Ms. Heidi Shaffer Bish and CARRIED by a voice vote of 5-3-0. Mr. Amrhein, Mr. Clapper and Mr. DeLeone voted 'No'. Mr. Clapper said his previous comments explain the motion.

Ms. Shaffer Bish expressed her inclination towards starting anew and trying a different approach, acknowledging the current state of limbo regarding the design guidelines. She considered the possibility of an Advisory Architectural Review Board for a short period but emphasized the need to explore alternative direction.

There were no further actions for Council and the Community Development Committee adjourned at 8:12 p.m.

Actions Recommended:

1. Approve two sign variances, as presented, with an emergency clause.
2. Disband the Architecture Review Board

Streets, Sidewalks & Utilities Committee

Chair Sidoti opened the Streets, Sidewalks and Utilities Committee at 8:12 p.m.

Craft Beer Festival Road Closure

Ms. Bridget Susel was presenting this evening in place of Eric Helmstedter, Economic Development Director.

Ms. Rosenberg said there are concerns about road closures affecting businesses, specifically mentioning Bent Tree Coffee. The suggestion is to explore alternative locations for the road closure, such as moving it to Columbus Street or considering other streets like Erie Street or areas near the Farmers Market. The idea is to move the signs closer to the actual closure point, possibly avoiding confusion for drivers and facilitating continued customer traffic for Bent Tree Coffee, to either be part of an event or have traffic access without a road closure sign in front. She mentioned similar to the road closures that occurred for Oktoberfest., suggesting a review of the map for insights into the closure locations and signage. The aim is to make adjustments that consider the impact on local businesses, particularly Bent Tree Coffee, and possibly finding a configuration that accommodates their preferences.

Mr. Dennis Campbell, residing in Stow, shares his experience with hosting an event on Franklin Street a couple of years ago. He explains that the narrow street and heavy alcohol event caused issues for businesses, leading to congestion and negative feedback from attendees. As a result, they decided to relocate the event to the current setup, aiming to avoid similar problems. He agreed with the need for clearer signage and said they are willing to include businesses like Bent Tree in the event. He emphasized their commitment to supporting downtown businesses and ensuring their events have a positive impact. He explained that the only recent change made to the event setup was on Main Street, driven by safety concerns due to the congested nature of the event. He was concerned about emergency access and mentioned the long lines for ticket registration that often spill into the

street. In an effort to address these issues, they made adjustments to the event layout on Main Street.

Mr. Dave Ruller suggested making the message on the road closure signs clearer, indicating how far out the road is open down to Portage. He also mentioned a practice from other cities where specific businesses, such as Bent Tree Coffee, are listed on the signs as open during the event. This way, attendees can easily identify businesses that remain accessible despite the road closure.

Ms. Celko acknowledged the need to revisit the balance between street closures and business accessibility. She emphasized the changing dynamics in the restaurant and retail industry, where drive-by traffic is becoming more crucial. Ms. Celko mentioned the ongoing internal review for all events and suggests adding more detail to the road closure signs, including specific businesses that remain open. Additionally, she supports the idea of relocating the signs closer to the actual closure to avoid confusion about the affected areas.

Ms. Rosenberg asked about the closure of Main Street in a specific section near Hometown Bank. The Kent JayCees explained that they planned to have booths on the bridge but not food vendors or breweries. They need to spread out the event for traffic flow and emergency access. Ms. Rosenberg suggested considering other locations like Erie Street or Dan Smith Park to minimize disruption. The Kent JC's clarified their logistical needs, including space for refrigerated trailers and dumpsters, with Hometown Bank providing crucial support. Chief Shearer said he does not see any safety concerns with the event.

There are ongoing discussions within the CD department about reviewing and potentially revisiting the locations for events in the city. Mr. Ruller and the team are considering factors such as the spread of locations, ownership of the South Water Street lot, and the need to potentially limit the size of events to maintain quality.

MOTION TO APPROVE THE CRAFT BEER FESTIVAL ROAD CLOSURE MADE BY Mr. Michael DeLeone, **SECONDED** by Mr. Jeff Clapper and **CARRIED** by a voice vote of 8-0-0

Action Recommended:

1. Approve the appropriate road closures for the Craft Beer Festival, with the emergency clause.

Lake Rockwell Trail Agreement

Mr. Dave Ruller said he and Mr. Jim Bowling, City Engineer, have been talking about this for years, indicating that it would open up a new corridor. The discussion involved considerations of neighborhood access and strategic locations for trails, especially those aligned with schools.

Mr. Bowling provided additional background information, stating that the plan dates back to 2003-2004 during the bicentennial planning phase. The focus has consistently been on enhancing pedestrian orientation and creating walking pathways to key destinations. This concept transitioned into the bike master plan and aligns with the goal of enabling residents to walk or bike directly from their homes instead of relying on cars. **(Attachment)**

Furthermore, the proposed trail is connected to the climate action plan recently approved. The unique aspect of this corridor is that it follows the city's water supply lines, starting from

Lake Rockwell to the north, running through Kent, and providing an open space without structures or buildings. Mr. Bowling elaborated on the proposed trail, emphasizing its diverse character as both a recreational trail and, in some sections, a wider sidewalk. The path would traverse several neighborhoods west of the Cuyahoga River, passing by Davey Elementary School, Longcoy School, Stanton Middle School, and the high school. It aims to connect existing bike trails on both ends, offering a pedestrian-friendly route through various areas without the need for additional parking lots.

He highlighted key areas such as the connection to the Freedom Trail, the path along Akron Boulevard, adjacent to Longcoy School, Bane Street, Main Street, Major's Lane, Jesse Smith Nature Preserve, Stant Middle School, and the high school campus. The trail would continue along Route 43, passing through Davey's new seed campus and connecting to a future trail that links Hudson Judson to Towners Woods.

Mr. Bowling reviewed the slides in his presentation, showing how the trail would appear in different areas, and emphasizing the utilization of existing open spaces. He also discussed the need for effective measures at major road crossings, such as Fairchild and Major's Lane, to ensure pedestrian safety.

Ms. Rosenberg is excited about the trail, emphasizing that it seems outstanding and has the potential to connect communities, especially in the Middleberry area. She appreciated the plan's inclusion of connections between elementary, middle, and high schools, expressing her excitement about the project.

Ms. Celko seconded the excitement for the project, highlighting the positive impact on students' safety, especially near the intersection of Woodard and Fairchild. However, she expressed concern about potential pushback from homeowners, particularly in areas where the project might require property acquisition. Mr. Bowling clarified that the land involved is owned by the city of Akron, and there is no need to purchase property for the project.

The mayor asked and Mr. Bowling clarified that the funding for the project comes from grant money, alleviating concerns about additional costs for the taxpayers of Kent. He mentioned that the grants, such as Safe Routes to School or Transportation Alternatives, would cover 80% of the expenses, with the remaining 20% being a local contribution. The choice between an asphalt path or a concrete sidewalk will depend on factors like location, proximity to water lines, and Akron's preferences. The responsibility for snow removal on the newly proposed trails will vary based on the specific location. In areas where the trail is akin to a sidewalk, falling under the code for frontage, property owners adjacent to the trail would likely be responsible for shoveling. However, in areas without adjacent property owners or in locations like Fairchild Fields, where the park owns the land, the responsibility for maintenance and snow removal would rest with the city or relevant park authorities.

Mr. Ruller said that generally, bike trails, including those in Summit County and Portage County, may not be plowed in the winter. However, Jim mentioned that some sections of the proposed trail, especially along Major's Lane, might have a different approach to snow removal.

MOTION TO APPROVE LAKE ROCKWELL TRAIL AGREEMENT MADE BY Ms. Gwen Rosenberg, SECONDED by Mr. Chris Hook and CARRIED by a voice vote of 8-0-0.

Ms. Rosenberg said there are many potential benefits of such a trail, including increased property values and improved accessibility for communities in Kent. The emphasis on non-motorized modes of transportation, like walking, jogging, and cycling, aligns with creating a safer and more environmentally friendly community.

Ms. Shaffer Bish highlighted the importance of creating a safer internal network to provide better access to hike and bike trails. This addresses the concern of navigating rough roads

and sharing them with fast-moving cars, making the trails more accessible and safer for the community.

Action Recommended:

1. Approve the Kent/Akron Lake Rockweel Trail agreement, with the emergency clause.

East Main Street Project Right of Way Acquisitions

Mr. Jim Bowling said the East Main Street Project Right of Way Acquisitions is in the final phases before construction starts in 2025. He mentioned the impact on Kent State property, with the road being moved south and certain adjustments made. He said they needed to obtain rights to build the roadway and explained the requirements of the Uniform Relocation Act when federal money is involved. He mentions that 32 properties need rights, with 20 being temporary easements on Kent State property, and 11 having small permanent takes, often at road intersections. Jim seeks approval for two property owners who have agreed to the fair market value.

Secondly, he is seeking approval for any future property owners who agree to the fair market value to bypass the committee session and go directly to the Council. They have done this before on other projects such as Summit Street and the Fairchild Bridge.

MOTION TO APPROVE EAST MAIN STREET PROJECT RIGHT OF WAY ACQUISITIONS MADE BY Ms. Heidi Shaffer Bish, SECONDED by Ms. Gwen Roseberg and CARRIED by a voice vote of 8-0-0.

Ms. Shaffer Bish said she is excited about the project, acknowledging that it is starting to take shape visually. She recognized the time-consuming nature of the process, both for the community and Council, but emphasized the transformative impact the project will have on Main Street.

Actions Recommended:

1. Approve the East Main Street Project Right of Way acquisitions and authorize staff to manage future East Main Street Project Right of Way purchases administratively, with the emergency clause.

Finance Committee

Chair DeLeone opened the Finance Committee meeting at 8:52 p.m.

Portage County Land Bank Subrecipient Grant Agreement

Ms. Bridget Susel provided information about a housekeeping issue related to the Portage County Land Bank accessing demolition funds through the Ohio Department of Development. The City of Kent plans to submit two properties for demolition funding: 331 Elm Street and 266 North Water Street. The former is a residential property, and the latter, owned by the city, has not attracted interest due to structural issues. The funds would be used to address blighted properties, and Ms. Susel asked for approval for the submission of these properties to the land bank and the authorization to enter into a subrecipient agreement for managing the demolition.

MOTION TO APPROVE PORTAGE COUNTY LAND BANK SUBRECIPIENT GRANT AGREEMENT MADE BY Mr. Jack Amrhein, SECONDED by Ms. Melissa Celko and CARRIED by a voice vote of 8-0-0.

Action Recommended:

1. Approve the proposed subrecipient grant agreement and if the grant is approved, authorize the demo of the outdated building located at 331 Elm Street and 266 N. Water Street as presented, with the emergency clause.

Proposed 2024 Budget Appropriations Amendment

Ms. Rhonda Hall, Budget and Finance Director, referenced her memo to council, asking for a budget appropriation amendment. This amendment involves reappropriations from last year's projects where money was set aside but wasn't included in the initial 2024 budget. The funds are intended to be moved toward the current projects.

MOTION TO APPROVE PROPOSED 2024 BUDGET APPROPRIATIONS AMENDMENT MADE BY Mr. Roger Sidoti, SECONDED by Ms. Gwen Rosenberg and CARRIED by a voice vote of 8-0-0.

Action Recommended:

1. Approve the 2024 budget appropriations amendments with the emergency clause.

The committee meetings adjourned at 8:56 p.m.



Amy Wilkens, CMC
Clerk of Council

From: [Melanie Baker](#)
To: [Dave Ruller](#)
Subject: Kent City Hall update
Date: Wednesday, February 7, 2024 12:11:45 PM
Attachments: [image002.png](#)

Dave,

The Kent City Hall continues to move forward.

The glass continues to go up and we are almost done with the atrium.



Weather and temperature has made this installation a bit slow.

The inside continues to have drywall installed.





The entire Council chambers is drywalled and enclosed with plastic to allow drywall to be finished.







The gas line is installed and working. The electric transformer has been set and we are waiting for the manual transfer switch to completely get the power up and running.

We are in the process of looking at the landscaping, final grade and parking. We are also looking at the EV charging stations.

We continue to move forward and get closer to the final moving in.

Melanie A. Baker

Service Director



City of Kent

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Ward Population Data (2020 Census Compared to 2010 Census)						
	2020 Census		2010 Census		Change +/-	
Ward 1	4,615		4,758		(143)	
Ward 2	4,601		4,906		(305)	
Ward 3	4,752		4,709		43	
Ward 4	4,792		5,032		(240)	
Ward 5	4,639		4,808		(169)	
Ward 6	4,804		4,691		113	
	28,203 *		28,904		(701)	
Average per Ward	4,701		4,817		(117)	
Max. 2020 Population per Ward	4,936					
Min. 2020 Population per Ward	4,465					
10% of 2020 Ward Average	470					
Allowed Range Factor (470/2)	235					
* CQR reduced 2020 total population from 28,215 to 28,203 (-12)						



CITY OF KENT, OHIO

DEPARTMENT OF COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT

DATE: January 30, 2024
TO: Dave Ruller, City Manager
FROM: Bridget Susel, Community Development Director *pod.*
RE: UPDATED: Ward Apportionment based on 2020 Census Data

Below in blue text is a copy of the memo submitted by the Community Development Department for Council Committee discussion on September 9, 2023. The discussion of the revised ward apportionment maps did not occur because a motion was made by a member of Council before staff had the opportunity to speak so the memo below and the attached proposed ward maps were not discussed.

I am respectfully requesting time at the February 7, 2024 Council Committee meeting to discuss the revised ward maps included in the August 23, 2023 memo in greater detail and to request Council authorization of the new maps, with emergency, so the updated ward apportionment maps can be submitted to the Portage County Board of Elections.

If you require any additional information in order to add this to the agenda, please let me know.

Thank you.

DATE: August 23, 2023
TO: Dave Ruller, City Manager
FROM: Bridget Susel, Community Development Director
RE: REVISED: Ward Apportionment based on 2020 Census Data

The Community Development Department reviewed the ward apportionment maps, again, and made modifications to five of the six ward maps in order to have Mae Street remain in Ward 4. Mae Street is comprised of three Block Group Blocks and since each ward must be contiguous, a 4th Block Group Block also needed to be included in Ward 4. These changes necessitated additional adjustments to other ward maps in order to comply with Section 12.02 of the City's Charter, which requires there be no more than a 10% differential between population counts for the six wards. Using the 2020 Census data and applying the 10% requirement, all wards must have a population of no less than 4,465 and no more than 4,936.

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The revised ward maps are attached.

I am respectfully requesting time at the September 6, 2023 Council Committee meeting to discuss the revised ward maps in greater detail and to request Council authorization of the new maps, with emergency, which then will be submitted to the Portage County Board of Elections.

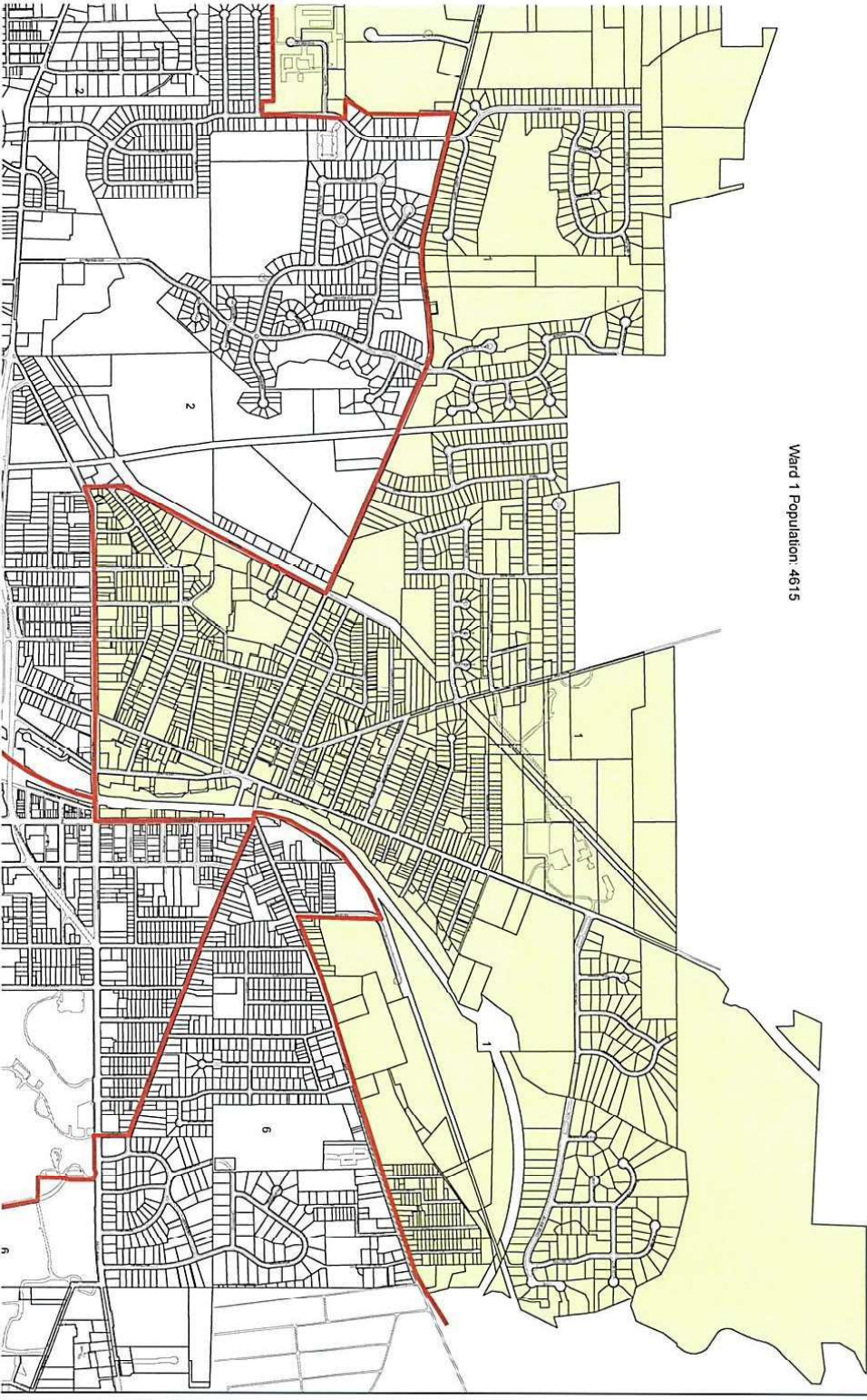
If you require any additional information in order to add this to September 6, 2023 Council agenda, please let me know.

Thank you.

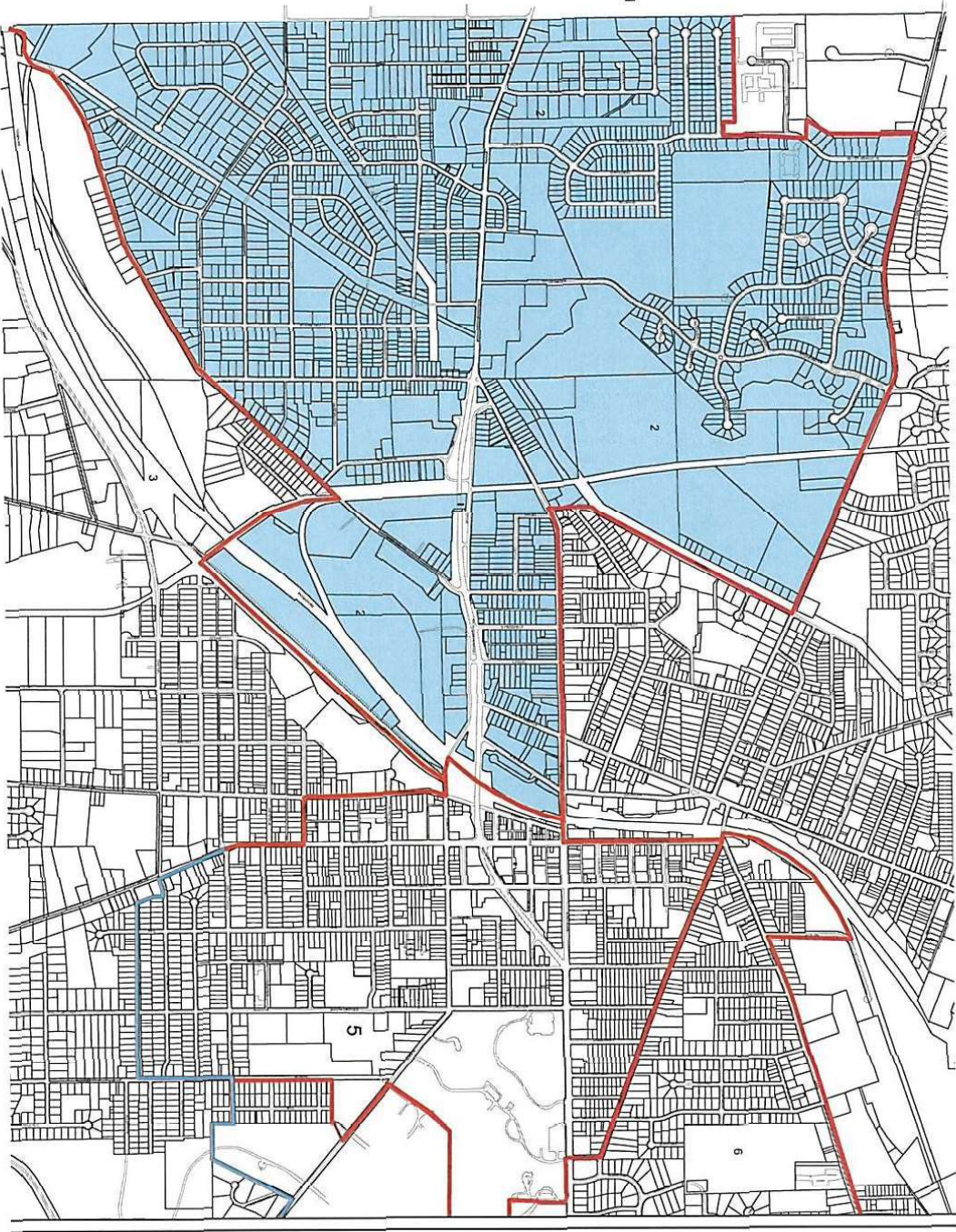
Attachments

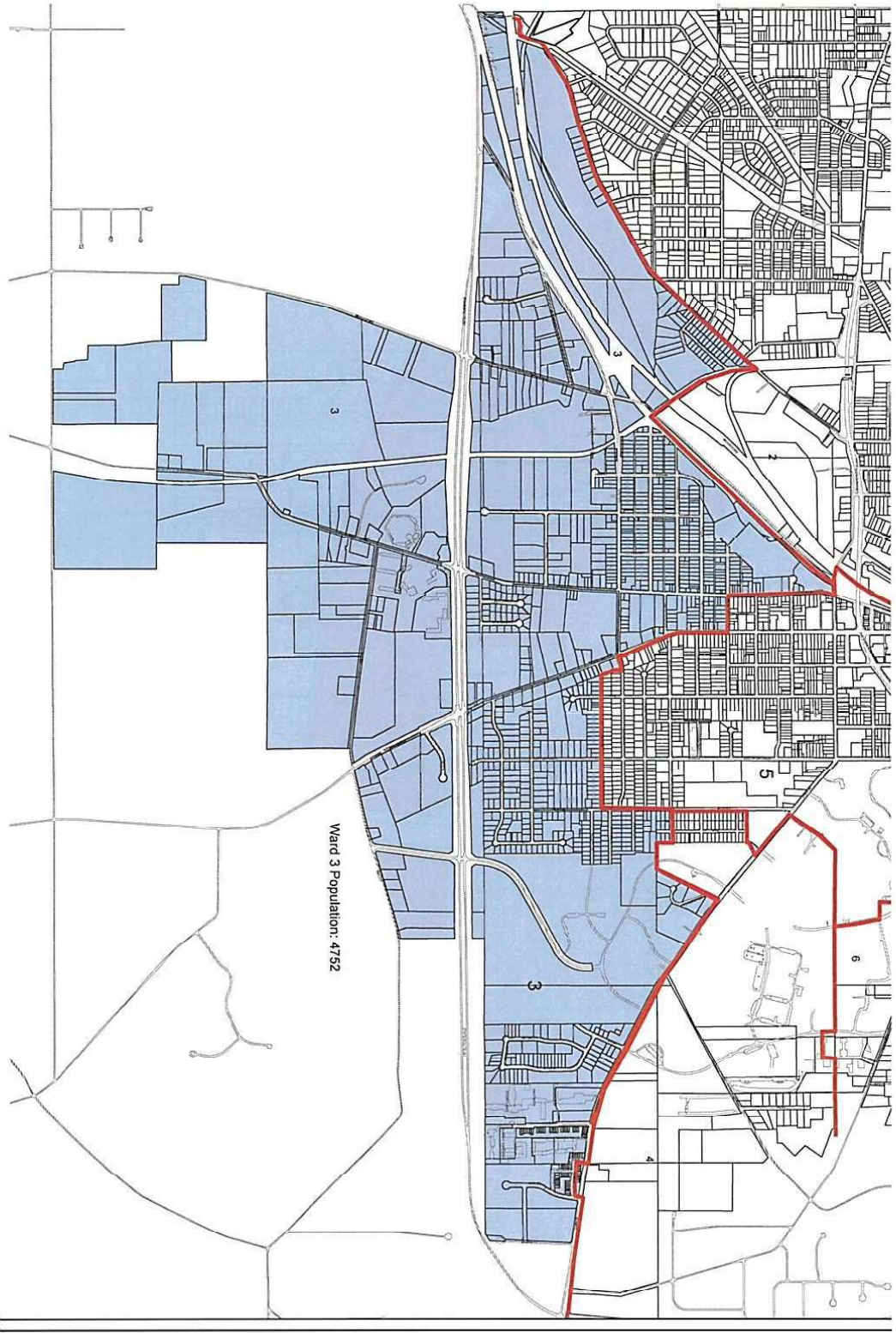
Cc: Hope Jones, Law Director
Amy Wilkens, Clerk of Council

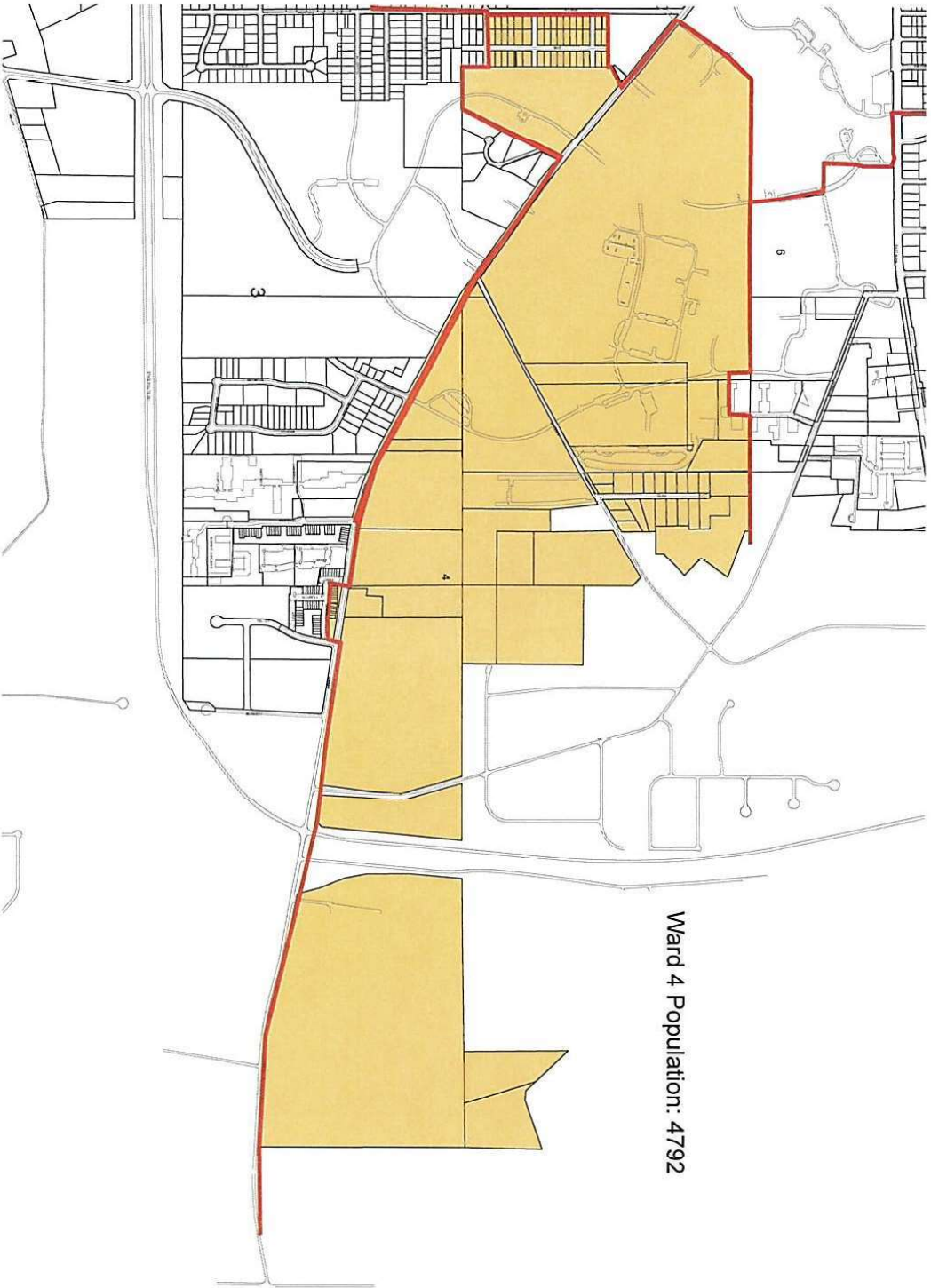
Ward 1 Population: 4615

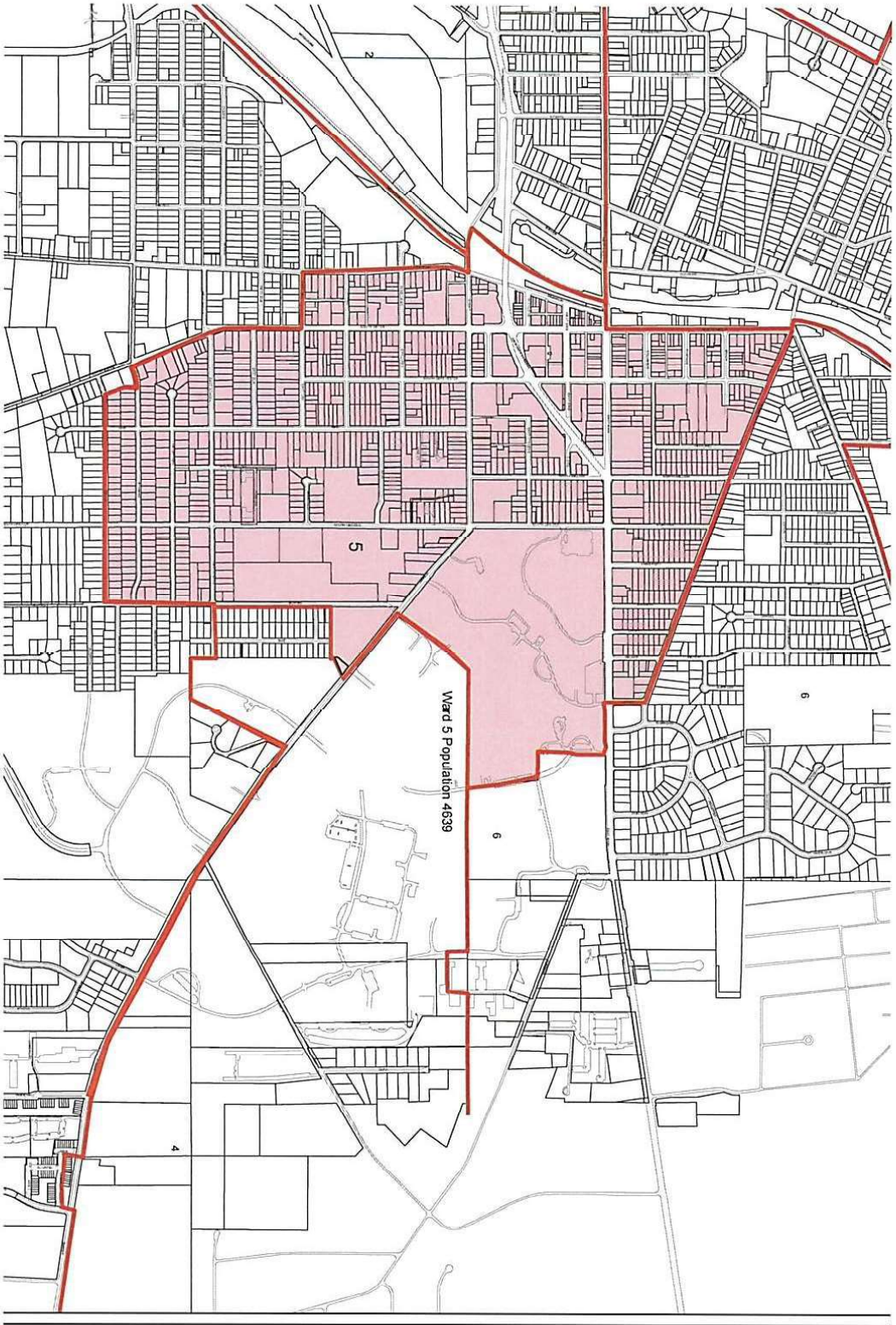


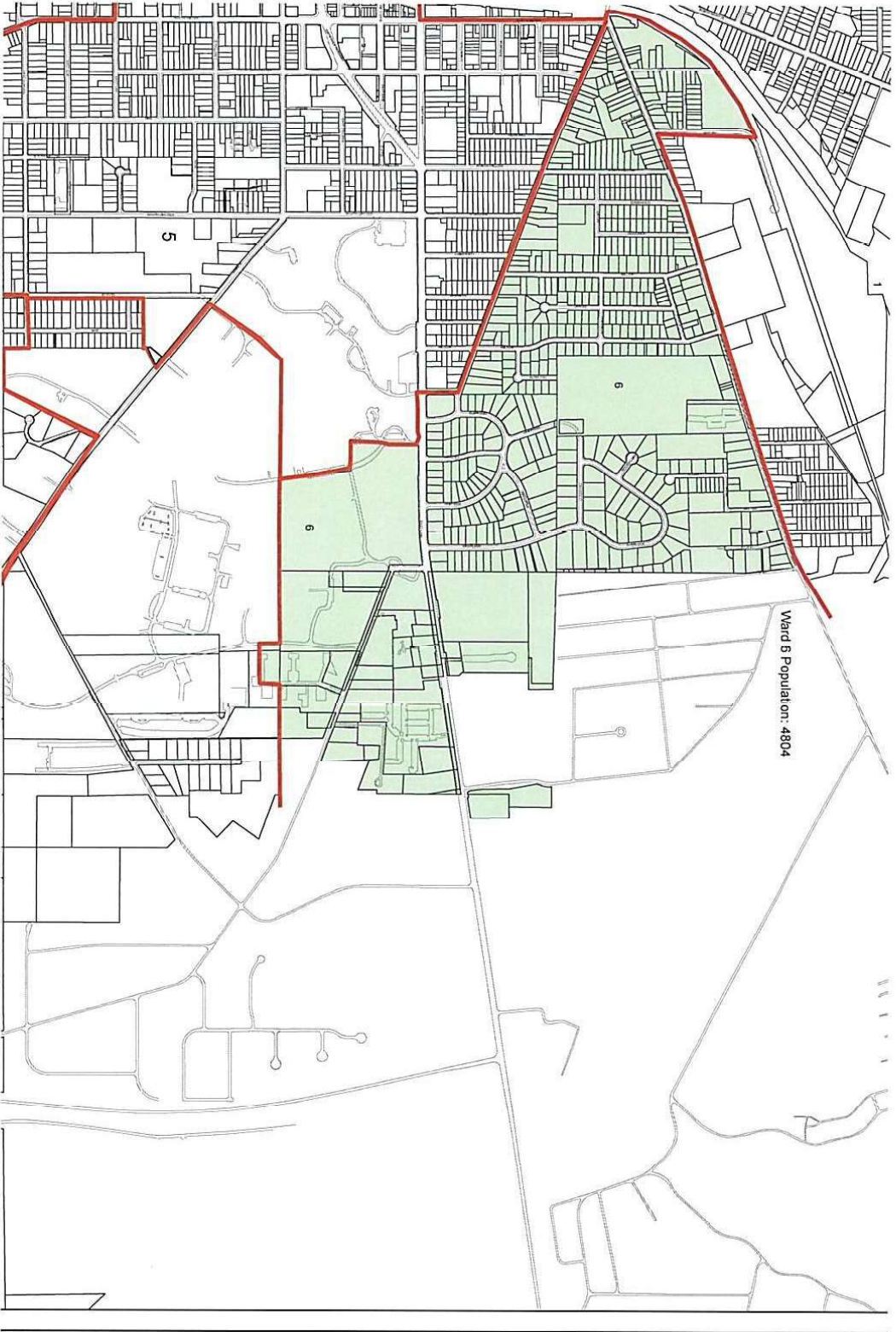
Ward 2 Population: 4601

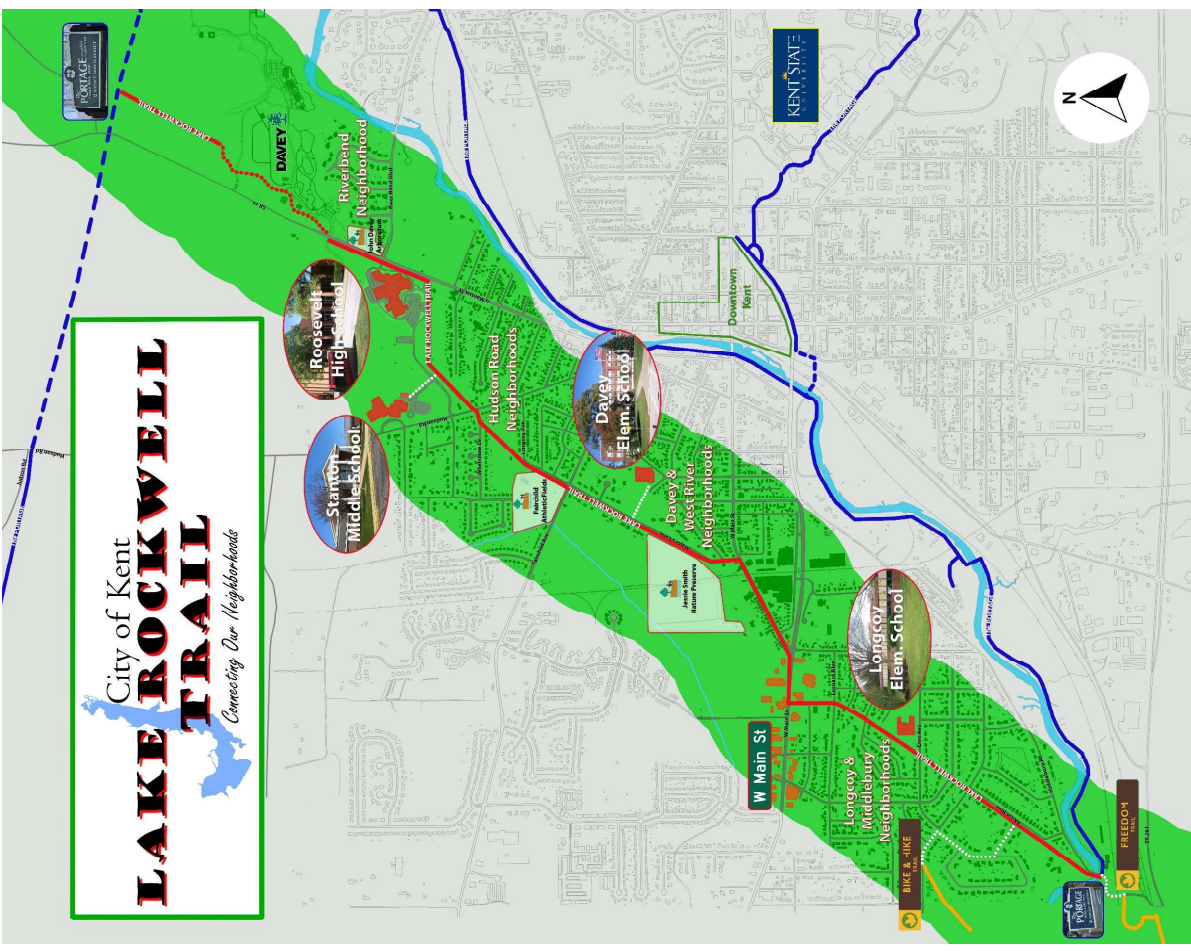


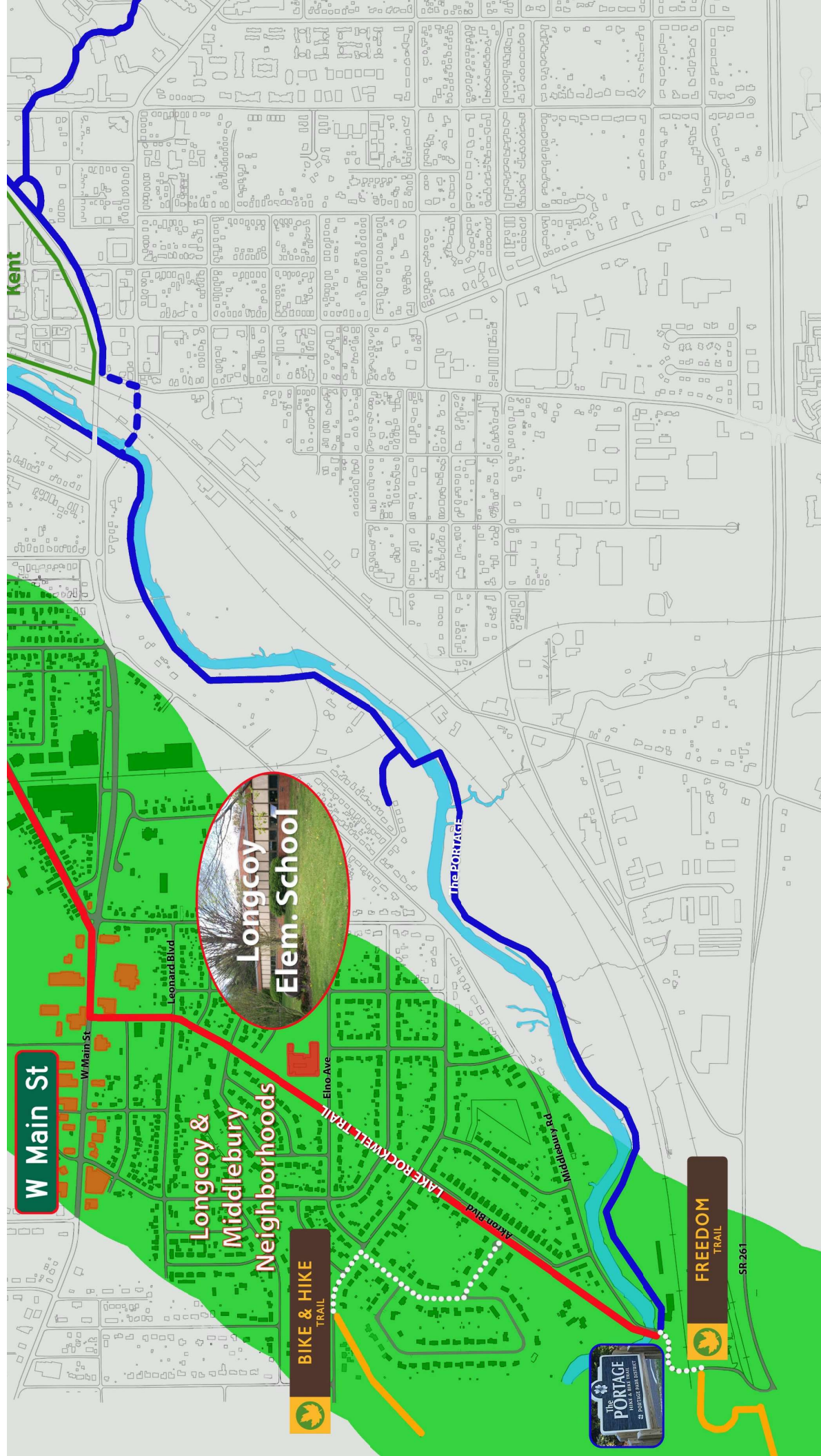


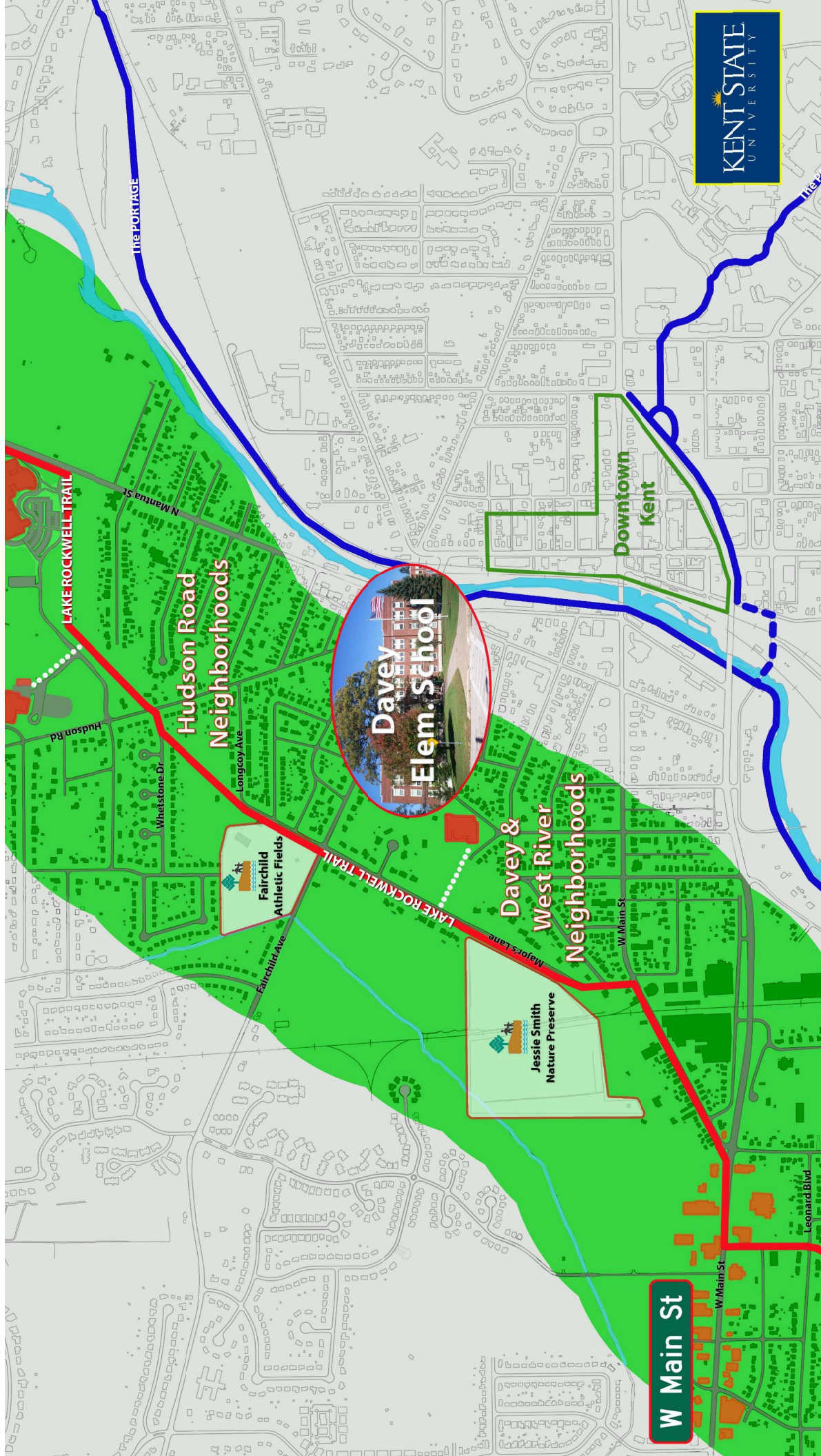












City of Kent **LAKE ROCKWELL TRAIL**

Connecting Our Neighborhoods



LAKE ROCKWELL TRAIL

DAVEY

Riverbend
Neighborhood

John Davey
Arboretum

River Bend Blvd

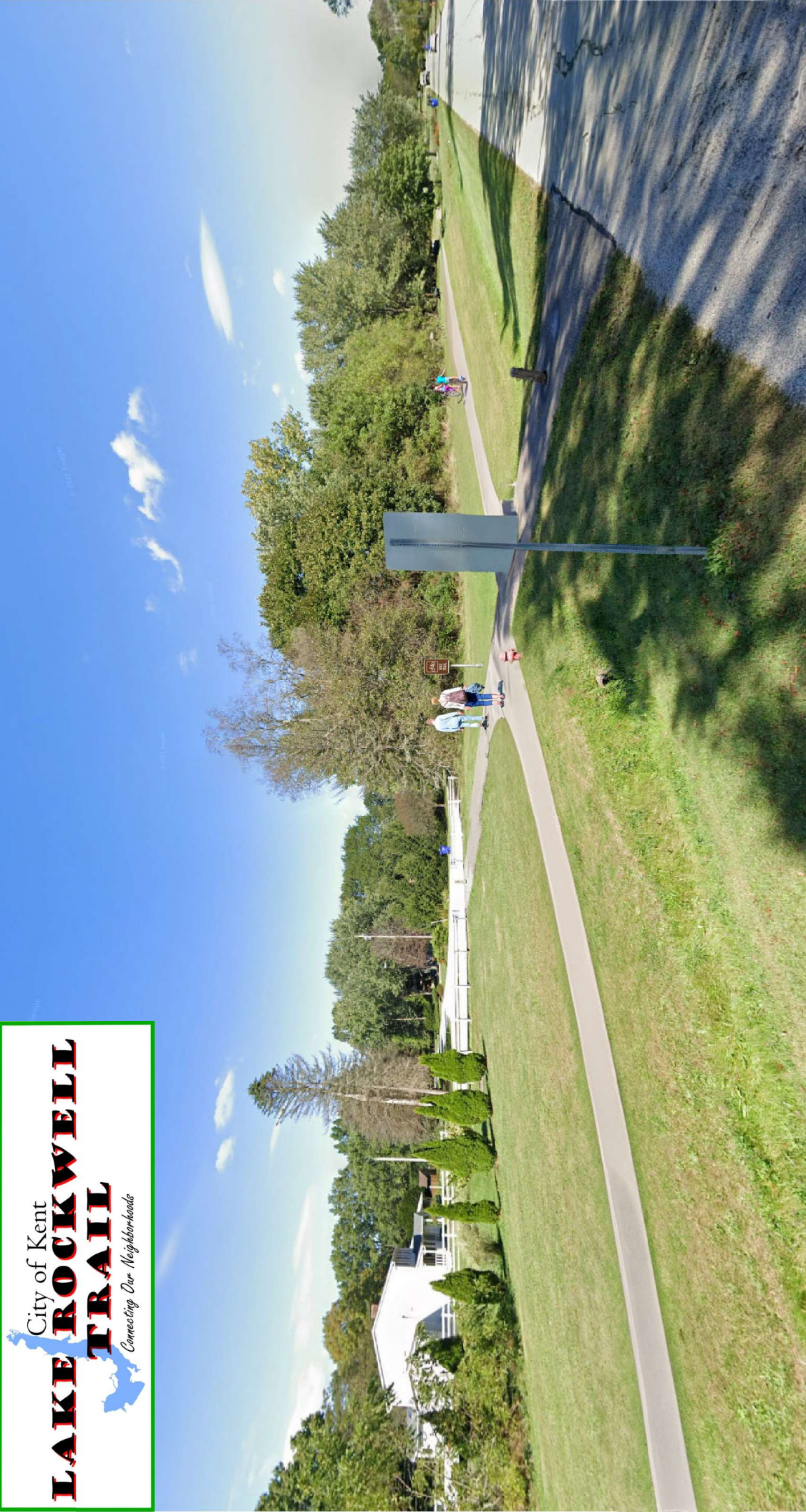
LAKE ROCKWELL TRAIL

Roosevelt
High School

Stanton
Middle School



AKRON BLVD - Near end of Lower Dr



AKRON BLVD - Near end of Lower Dr



ELNO AVE - West of Longcoy Elementary



ELNO AVE - West of Longcoy Elementary



Majors Lane - Fairchild Ave intersection



Majors Lane - Fairchild Ave intersection

