

# PART 1: OVERVIEW OF THE VISION FOR FORT THOMAS

Part 1 presents our long-term vision and goals for the future, and provides a general overview of how we arrived at our vision and goals. Topics covered include: an examination of recent trends, an overview of the issues and challenges that are addressed in the plan, a summary of the process and input from public engagement efforts, and a guide for how to use the plan. In essence, Part 1 serves as an executive summary.

## VISION AND GOALS – WHERE WE WANT TO BE

As with any planning endeavor, defining an overall vision and set of goals is an important step to preparing an implementable plan. To develop a vision we must look into the future, think creatively and ask ourselves what we want Fort Thomas to be in 20 years or so. But first, it is important to establish our core principles to help frame our vision.

### Planning with a Vision

The vision guides goal-setting, policies and actions by providing context for understanding community concerns, prioritizing issues and determining action steps. Plans and actions based on clear goals and objectives are more likely to succeed.



## Core Principles

The following core principles form the foundation of our vision for the future of Fort Thomas.

Stay true to our history and who we are as a community:

**Small Town Family Values.** Fort Thomas has been a family-oriented community for years, which has been achieved through walkable neighborhoods and the scale of homes and buildings within the city, and undergirded by our excellent school system and numerous community events that draw us together. All of these features contribute to the small town feeling we all enjoy, where everyone knows each other and generations remain committed to the city's future.

**Sense of place.** This is also established through the scale of development, as well as our history which is still evident through the structures and the iconic features, such as the stone wall, tree lined streets, and water tower that remain.

**Be Sustainable.** Fort Thomas is primarily a residential community. Yet, we need a balance of land uses to help retain an adequate tax base, while at the same time preserving green space and natural resources such as our hillsides and greenbelt along the river.

**Build on our strengths.** Fort Thomas is known for its quality housing, parks, business districts, riverfront corridor and hillside greenbelt. These are all assets that can be leveraged for our future improvement.

**Value collaboration.** We understand our community is one of many in the northern Kentucky area all striving for the same prosperity. We have a shared future, one that is influenced by what happens along and near our borders. We all benefit by working together, collaborating and coordinating our efforts to best leverage our efforts.

**Continue the momentum and quest for continual self-improvement.** Fort Thomas has a history of providing leadership by example, valuing education, and promoting health and wellness.

## Vision and Goals

Through the planning process, we have developed an overall vision and overarching goals for Fort Thomas. In addition, each planning topic has more specific goals and objectives.

## OVERALL VISION FOR FORT THOMAS

To be a sustainable family-friendly bedroom community that is known for its dominate natural environment that creates a “city in a park” atmosphere, with excellent schools, beautiful trees, walkable neighborhoods, safe streets, parks and recreation system, cultural heritage, vibrant business districts, and other amenities that contribute to the high quality of life residents have come to expect.

## OVERARCHING GOALS

**Recognizing the need for both a City-Wide Parks & Recreation Plan Update and a Comprehensive Plan Update, the goals of the planning process are to:**

Create a coordinated Community Plan that addresses in detail topics that are relevant to the city’s current challenges and opportunities.

Engage both City Council and City Staff actively in the process.

Receive community input to help ensure that the plan is reflective of the community’s needs, desires and aspirations.

### VISION

To ensure that Fort Thomas continues to be an attractive, desirable and family-friendly city with a park-like setting where people choose to live, work and play, and where businesses choose to do business and invest in our community.

### GOALS AND OBJECTIVES

#### **Q. Enhance our quality of life.**

Q.1 Continue to be a good place to raise a family, characterized by good schools and safe neighborhoods.

Q.2 Promote neighborhoods and business districts that foster walking, social interaction and sense of community.

Q.3 Foster investments that retain our history and distinct character.

Q.4 Enhance the natural physical beauty of our city provided by the Ohio River, mature trees, wooded hillsides, and scenic views.

#### **N. Protect our natural resources.**

N.1 Continue to protect the greenbelt along the Ohio River by strengthening regulations and building partnerships.

N.2 Ensure that new development is designed in ways that protect and take advantage of the mature trees, hillsides, scenic views, etc. that contribute to Fort Thomas' character.

N.3 Ensure that new development is constructed in ways that conserve natural resources by being energy efficient, reducing storm water runoff, etc.

#### **H. Maintain and improve our housing and neighborhoods.**

H.1 Encourage and facilitate housing maintenance and improvements to ensure our housing stock and neighborhoods retain their viability and desirability.

H.2 Promote investments in existing housing by making it easier to expand, provided expansions are compatible with the neighborhood.

H.3 Provide a variety of housing types in select locations that meet the needs of residents, including older residents who desire low-maintenance, single-floor living, as well as younger adults who have not yet started a family.

H.4 Ensure that new housing is compatible with the character of the surrounding area.

H.5 Provide neighborhood-focused programming to help build "community" and strengthen ties to the neighborhoods.

#### **B. Strengthen business districts and economic wellbeing.**

B.1 Continue to foster investment, infill development and redevelopment that create and enhance vibrant and resilient mixed-use business districts, each with a unique theme and sense of place, oriented primarily to the needs of residents, and which include a central gathering place.

B.2 Foster new economic development along Alexandria Pike (US 27) that takes advantage of access to the interstate, potential for smart city investments and proximity to major employers such as Northern Kentucky University and St Elizabeth.

B.3 Ensure that new economic development is compatible with and enhances the existing character of the surrounding area and the overall "city in a park" character.

### VISION

To be the most walkable and bike-friendly community in Kentucky, with a well-connected and attractive multi-modal transportation system so that citizens can safely and comfortably travel between all neighborhoods, schools, parks, business districts and other key destinations within the city, whether on foot, bike, car or other form of transportation.

### GOALS AND OBJECTIVES

#### **T1 Improve and maintain our infrastructure so residents of all ages can move safely throughout Fort Thomas.**

T1.1 Ensure that all sidewalks within the city are ADA compliant.

T1.2 Provide safe and highly visible pedestrian and automobile access at all schools and parks in the city.

T1.3 Provide safe and highly visible accommodations at all crosswalks in the city.

T1.4 Monitor speed limits and make modifications when warranted.

T1.5 Continue systematic maintenance of infrastructure.

#### **T2 Make it easy and enticing to move about Fort Thomas.**

T2.1 Create distinctive gateways at key entries into the city.

T2.2 Provide signage throughout the city to indicate directions, distances, destinations, and parking.

T2.3 Beautify major corridors/routes in the city and create a cohesive feel between districts.

#### **T3 Encourage more active forms of travel to foster residents' health and wellbeing.**

T3.1 Formulate a Complete Streets Policy to guide the City's efforts to increase multimodal travel options.

T3.2 Create a complete sidewalk network in the city that provides connection within and between all neighborhoods.

T3.3 Create a "Bike Friendly City" by providing cycling accommodations/routes throughout the city.

T3.4 Collaborate with adjacent communities to create interconnected sidewalk, trail and multi-use path networks.

T3.5 Evaluate key roadways for road diet/multi-use path/bike lane opportunities.

#### **T4 Improve River Road/Route 8 and increase access to river frontage along the corridor.**

T4.1 Celebrate the Route 8 corridor as part of Northern Kentucky Riverfront Commons, a Scenic Byway, and a destination for boaters, cyclists and park/trail users.

## VISION

To preserve and enhance the quality of the environment so that our community embodies a “city within a park”.

## GOALS AND OBJECTIVES

### **P1 Preserve and enhance quality of open space assets.**

P1.1 Preserve and enhance the hillside greenbelt and urban canopy.

P1.2 Enhance connectivity of and accessibility to community assets for all users (pedestrian, bicyclists, vehicles) by developing a Safe Routes to Parks strategy.

P1.3 Enhance community gateways.

### **P2 Continue to enhance the city parks and recreation facilities for all users.**

P2.1 Identify and enhance the unique role each park plays in the total experience of Fort Thomas by identifying recreational uses and facilities that are missing from the current supply and collaborate to meet those needs (such as a splash park, zip lines, camping/glamping, ropes course, climbing wall, skate park, pump track, etc.).

P2.2 Invest in the enhancement and maintenance of existing assets (park infrastructure, structures, etc.)

2.3 Community Gardens

### **P3 Invest in Tower Park as a regional destination**

P3.1 Take advantage of Tower Park’s numerous great assets and leverage its potential as a hub of activity.

P3.2 Maximize the city’s only ball field that is sized for adult recreation leagues and users, recognizing its function as an important community gathering spot.

### **P4 Provide for a high-quality parks and recreation system in an efficient manner**

P4.1 Maximize opportunities to foster partnerships and share investment to enhance parks, trails, and gateways in a cost effective way.

P4.2 Work collectively with the schools and other groups to provide for recreational opportunities in ways that reduce redundancy.

P4.3 Encourage community stewardship through citizen advisory/volunteer groups and a tool to make it easier to volunteer.

P4.4 Encourage budget allocation for capital and operation (including maintenance, staffing, programming, and fundraising for capital projects).

### **P5. Increase residents’ use of park/recreation facilities and programs.**

P5.1 Provide a stronger social media presence to inform residents of assets and events and invite visitors to Fort Thomas.

P5.2 Enhance online scheduling tools so park assets (fields, shelters, etc.) can be utilized/scheduled/reserved more easily and efficiently.

### VISION

To maintain a high level of public utilities and community facilities to meet the needs of both residents and businesses within the city, staying abreast of state of the art advances in technology to provide efficient and effective services.

### GOALS AND OBJECTIVES

**U1 Continue to provide and maintain all essential utility services as economically and sustainably as possible.**

U1.1 Coordinate closely with local utility companies on construction and reconstruction projects in order to minimize costs, which in turn will keep service disruptions to a minimum.

U1.2 Ensure all new development/ redevelopment is constructed in an environmentally friendly manner that incorporates the natural environment, reduces the need to construct man-made control measures and does not negatively impact utilization.

U1.3 Maintain and improve storm-water quality and reduce quantity.

**U2 Promote technology within our community so that it parallels the needs of our population.**

U2.1 Work with neighboring communities and other public and private regional entities to form a 5 Year Smart City Plan.

U2.2 Become best-in-class with technology.

U1.3 Evaluate existing city regulations associated with the development of future telecommunication facilities and update as needed.

**F1 Maximize the utilization of city owned facilities.**

F1.1 Identify the priority facilities and the unique features of each facility (City Building, Armory, Mess Hall and Stables Building area).

F1.2 Develop a vision for each facility based on its location, strengths and opportunities.

## REGIONAL PARTNERSHIPS AND COLLABORATION

### VISION

To work proactively and collaboratively with our neighboring communities, the County, the State, and other regional partners on areas of shared interest and mutual benefit that improve the quality of life, health, economy, environment and governance of Fort Thomas and the region.

### GOALS AND OBJECTIVES

#### **R1 Enhance recreational and open space preservation opportunities by working with both public and private sector partners.**

R1.1 Collaborate with potential partners to create destination recreation activities at Tower Park (e.g., zip lines/ropes course, bike park).

R1.2 Partner with local schools and possible private partners to provide upgrades to recreational/sports facilities.

R1.3 Maximize opportunities to foster partnerships and share investment to enhance Sargeant Park.

R1.4 Collaborate with potential partners to re-open trail loops around the reservoirs.

R1.5 Collaborate with potential partners to preserve, enhance and properly manage our forested hillside greenbelt.

#### **R3 Capitalize on gateway improvement projects.**

R3.1 Collaborate with the County and all of our neighboring communities that share a boundary with Fort Thomas to preserve and enhance our border areas and gateways in ways that benefit each other.

R3.2 Collaborate with the County on unincorporated areas around the perimeter of the City, such as the end of Crowell Avenue.

#### **R4 Use all necessary resources to develop economic development opportunities.**

R4.1 Collaborate with potential partners on a Riverfront connection to Tower Park/Midway Historic District.

R4.2 Connect with potential partners to create a shared vision for the US 27 corridor, with emphasis on economic development and Smart City opportunities.

R4.3 Collaborate with public and private sector partners (federal, state and local) on our business districts.

R4.4 Leverage our history and assets to develop cultural tourism.

#### **R2 Improve transportation and access by joining together mutual interest groups.**

R2.1 Collaborate with potential partners to improve the I-471 & the Grand Avenue corridor.

R2.2 Collaborate with potential partners to improve the I-471 & the Memorial Parkway corridor.

R2.3 Work across all levels of government to enhance riverfront connectivity along Route 8, and support rebirth of the Coney Island Ferry.

## VISION

To maximize funding opportunities for needs within the City, while providing a systematic approach to implementing the priority elements of the Community Plan.

## GOALS AND OBJECTIVES

### **Develop strategies to implement the Community Plan.**

Identify the components of the Community Plan that have the highest priorities for implementation, using input from citizens.

Identify, where possible, the specific city department responsible for taking the lead on priority projects.

Identify potential partners that can help carry out the priority components.

Develop an action plan for implementation to help guide City officials, potential partners, and other public and private entities.

### **Seek and identify funding sources that are available for the priority components in the Community Plan for both short and long range projects.**

Identify the various public, private and nonprofit funding sources that are available in order to consider the widest range of options possible, with an emphasis on obtaining funds from areas other than local sources.

Create a detailed matrix by topic and funding mechanism to help identify funding priorities.