INTRODUCTIONS & ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

INTRODUCTION

The intent of this work is to create a foundation for building the next Comprehensive Plan update, Parks and Recreation Plan update, and the City’s first Comprehensive Pedestrian and Bicycle Plan.

The observations and ideas presented in this document were collected during three (3) stakeholder meetings and represent the start of a robust community input processes that will occur during the future comprehensive plan work.

MEETING DATES AND ATTENDEES

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<thead>
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<th>COUNCIL MEMBER MEETING</th>
<th>CITY STAFF MEETING</th>
<th>INVITED STAKEHOLDERS</th>
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<tr>
<td>Sam Shelton</td>
<td>Jamey Gadzala</td>
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TECHNICAL TEAM

Human Nature, Inc.
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Grin Wift
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Frank Twehues
Holly Collinsworth
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Fourth of July Parade (2010)
FORT THOMAS POPULATION GROWTH

Originally named the District of the Highlands, Fort Thomas was incorporated by the Commonwealth of Kentucky on February 27, 1867. In 2017 the City’s will celebrate its sesquicentennial. During its 150 years, Fort Thomas has grown and transformed from a military stronghold to the thriving community it is today.

There are four distinct chapters in the City’s history that starts in the early 1870’s. Each phase is well-defined by clear changes to the character, population, and density of the community. From 1870 to the early 1970’s population growth remained steady as there was room to grow. Since the 1970’s the population of Fort Thomas has remained stable with approximately 16,000 residents.

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<td>1960-Present</td>
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The City of Fort Thomas is rich with historical significance and character defining moments. The Trajectory Mapping Exercise allows us to study those moments and to help us understand each phase of our City’s great story. This knowledge is the foundation of the City and will be an important guide when building a robust vision for the future.
CHARACTERISTICS OF GREAT COMMUNITIES

Great communities are defined by both Quantitative & Qualitative attributes and the intangibles such as wants vs needs are just as important.

In a City with such a strong football history, one way to think of this is in terms of Blocking & Tackling:
Good cities have to get the basics right
Great cities then build upon those.

U.S. News & World Report's inaugural Best Places to Live rankings are intended to help readers make the most informed decision when choosing where to settle down. The metro areas included in the rankings are evaluated using data from trusted sources like the United States Census Bureau, the Federal Bureau of Investigation, the Department of Labor and U.S. News' own internal resources. This data was categorized into the five indexes listed below and then evaluated using a methodology determined by Americans' preferences. The percent weighting for each index follows the answers from a public survey in which people from across the country voted for what they believed was the most important thing to consider when thinking about moving.

Job Market Index .................................................................................................................................................. 20 percent
Unemployment Rate
Median Salary

Value Index .............................................................................................................................................................. 25 percent
Blended Annual Household Income
Blended Annual Cost of Living

Quality of Live Index ............................................................................................................................................... 30 percent
Crime rates
Quality and Availability of Health Care
Quality of Education
Well-being (satisfaction in: purpose, social, financial, community and physical)
Commuter Index

Desirability Index ..................................................................................................................................................... 15 percent
Desirability Survey

Net Migration ............................................................................................................................................................... 10 percent

And the Winner Is?
Denver, CO
CHARACTERISTICS OF GREAT COMMUNITIES

Richard Florida
Renowned Urbanist

Steven Pedigo
Institute for Creativity and Innovation in Cities, NYU School of Professional Studies

Amenities
It’s really in the categories like Amenities that cities begin to differentiate themselves and forge their own unique identities. We examine both physical/natural amenities as well as cultural attractions in this category.

Demographics
Demographics questions can really be summed up by Sesame Street. One of the classic shows most memorable songs got to the heart of a key issue: “Who are the people in your neighborhood?”

Economy
Having a strong economy in a city means it can invest in all of the infrastructure, amenities, schools and health care that we know make a city a livable place.

Education
If you have school-aged kids and your neighborhood schools aren’t up to snuff, very little else matters. We rewarded cities with lifelong learning options and cities that have an educated population. We look at the number of accredited colleges and universities in the city as well as the percent of the population with at least a bachelor’s degree.

Health Care
Livable communities are healthy communities….. We looked at the number of hospitals in the city, number of primary care providers relative to the population and average household spending on health care to see how accessible health care is.

Housing
Our ranking focuses on cities – specifically small to mid-sized cities. Cities are basically the answer to “where are you from.” Flexibility is important, as is affordability.

Social and Civic Capital
Ask any mayor what makes his or her city great, and you’ll get a variation on this theme: The people. Ask a CEO and you’ll get a similar answer culture and great, engaged employees measure community and the level of engagement residents have.

Transportation and Infrastructure
There’s a reason that road rage is a term you hear but never sidewalk rage. Few things can downgrade the quality of day-to-day life in a city or town than traffic.
CHARACTERISTICS OF GREAT COMMUNITIES

Best Places to Live 2016
How MONEY Finds the Best Places to Live in America

Participants
This year’s list included all U.S. towns and cities with populations of 50,000 to 300,000, for a pool of 823 to start.

Ranking Criteria
Rankings derived from 60 data points in the following categories: jobs based on income growth, local unemployment (not seasonally adjusted; county data used when local not available), and projected job growth. Economy based on purchasing power, foreclosure rate, tax burden, and state’s fiscal strength. Housing affordability based on median price-to-income ratio and average property taxes. Education based on test scores, educational interest and attainment, and percentage of kids in public schools. Health based on number of doctors and hospitals in the area and health of residents. Crime based on property and violent crime rates. Arts and leisure based on activities in the town and surrounding area, including movie theaters, museums, and green spaces. Ease of living based on population density, commute times, weather, and other factors.

Participants
This year’s list included all U.S. towns and cities with populations of 50,000 to 300,000, for a pool of 823 to start.

Demographics
To find the best, we sorted through almost 300,000 demographic data points. For the first cut, we eliminated the 100 places with the lowest predicted job growth, the 200 communities with the most crime, and any place without a strong sense of ethnic diversity (more than 90% of one race).

Economic & Quality of Life
Focusing further on pocketbook factors, we hunted for top home values by comparing median property values with median household incomes. We singled out communities with strong local economies and low taxes (property, income, and sales). We also considered accessibility to health care, culture, strong public schools, and sports.

Geographic
To correct for geographical biases, we limited the list to no more than four places per state and one per county.

Field Research
Reporters spent time in each town, interviewing residents, checking out neighborhoods, and searching for the kinds of intangible factors that aren’t visible in statistics.

And the Winner Is?
Columbia, Md.
ASSET MAPPING

The goal of the asset mapping exercises was to invite members of the community to identify the community assets, identify ways of connecting the assets and maximize synergies, and to discover significant areas of for future opportunities. The process utilized the digital mapping program *ESRI ArcMap Online* to document and georeference the conversation.

To help facilitate the dialogue, a series of base maps were created to highlight known *Gateways* into the City, the three *Major Districts*, the *Arrival Corridors*, and a first pass at the major existing *Assets*. All four of these maps can be see in the pages following this one.

Utilizing the historic background information and base maps as a starting point, the stakeholders where asked the following questions:

- What are our greatest community assets?
- How can we connect our assets and maximize synergies when they are clustered together?
- What are our significant areas of opportunity for the future?

The three (3) *Stakeholder Input* maps captured the stakeholder responses and a complete summary can be found in the *Over-Arching Themes* and *Composite Map*.
IDENTIFYING THE COMMUNITY ASSETS

1. Undeveloped Parcel with views to downtown Cincinnati
2. Re-open the walking loops around the reservoirs
3. Johnson Elementary School Remodel
4. St. Elizabeth Hospital campus redevelopment
5. Trails around Highland Hills Park
6. Sprayground near the volleyball courts
7. Identify best use for land behind the City Building - Program for the vitality of the City Building
8. Identify uses for City property behind the CBD
9. River access with existing marina
10. Study best uses for Fort Thomas Plaza
11. Gateway Opportunity
12. Redevelopment and Southgate coordination opportunity
13. Redevelopment Opportunity
14. Housing redevelopment
15. Study best uses for the Fort Thomas History Museum Building
16. Future uses for the Veterans Hospital Building
17. Potential Greenspace

🌟 Examine the City Building for enhancements that focus on it becoming a community asset
STAKEHOLDER INPUT

CONNECTING OUR ASSETS AND MAXIMIZE SYNERGIES

1. Trail Connection to the Ohio River through City parcels and Duke Energy easements
2. Trail Connection through Highland Hills Park for students and residents
3. Connect HHS and HMS to the Ohio River through the hillside greenbelt
4. Create a new park entry to Highland Hills Park behind the swim club
5. Create a pedestrian connection behind the Central Business District
6. Connect Tower Park to the Ohio River
7. Connect the Midway District to the Ohio River
8. Connect the Midway District to neighborhood pockets
9. Connect the potential Alexandria Pike District with the Ohio River

PEDESTRIAN AND BICYCLE PLAN

Trails and a stronger pedestrian network were common themes at each of the three stakeholder meetings. Because of this focus and the direct impact it has on the safety and health of our community it became clear that the time is right for the City to develop their first comprehensive Pedestrian and Bicycle Plan. The plan should focus on:

- Community Engagement
- Vision/goals for the plan and the performance criteria
- Assessment of current conditions and needs
- Identification of activities required to meet the vision and goals
- Implementation of the bicycle and pedestrian elements in the statewide and MPO transportation plans and transportation improvement programs
- Identify financial resources necessary to implement the plan and programs
STAKEHOLDER INPUT

DEVELOPMENT CORRIDORS AND DISTRICTS

1. Midway District, Tower Park, Reservoir, VA Hospital, Stables Building & Army Reserve
2. Study opportunities for the Grand Avenue Gateway District with St. Elizabeth & the City of Newport
3. Study opportunities along the Alexandria Pike corridor including Fort Thomas Plaza, the I-471 Interchange, office complexes, & the Beverly Hills site in coordination with the City of Southgate.
4. Study connectivity opportunities in the Alexandria Pike Gateway between Woodfill Elementary & NKU in coordination with Highland Heights.
5. Study connectivity and open space opportunities along the Ohio River Corridor
6. Study the feasibility of a Grand Avenue road diet and bicycle facilities

DEVELOPMENT CORRIDORS AND DISTRICTS - MIDWAY ENLARGEMENT

MIDWAY DISTRICT OPPORTUNITY ZONES
- Army Reserve
- Highlands Soccer Complex
- Stables Building
- Stables Building
- Midway Streetscape
- VA Hospital
- Reservoir
- Reservoir
- Tower Park
- Tower Park

Map Aerial: Google Maps
OVER-ARCHING THEMES

CONTINUE THE MOMENTUM AND QUEST FOR CONTINUAL SELF-IMPROVEMENT

- Leadership by example, governance, services
- Schools & education
- A community for all generations
- Health & wellness
- Gathering together for events

STRENGTHEN OUR ASSETS AND CONNECTIVITY

- Business districts
- Gateway districts and entry corridors
- Riverfront corridor
- Hillside greenbelt
- Connect our parks, schools, neighborhoods & business districts
- Connect to the regional trails network

STAY TRUE TO WHO WE ARE

- Scale
- Sense of place
- Balance of land uses
- Preservation of green space