Strategic planning is a way for our community to work together to figure out where we want to go, what paths we think can take us there, and how we'll know when we've arrived. It's a customized process that we use to inventory assets, resources, conditions, opportunities, and integrate them into a winning formula for Kent. There are no right or wrong answers in strategic planning, just different directions unique to our community.

The measure of success is not in the complexity of the plan but in its fit and ability to be put to work. This isn't planning for planning sake; it's planning with the purpose of getting something done. Getting things done depends upon rallying local resources and community leadership for the common purpose of the future of our home town. A good strategic plan does that.

As a result of hundreds of hours of community meetings, Council meetings and survey data, the community has set the following broad strategic priorities for Kent:

- **Financial Health and Economic Development**
  - “to be a prosperous and viable city for all citizens”

- **Natural Resources**
  - “to protect and promote the City’s natural resources”

- **Quality of Life**
  - “to enhance lifestyle choices through physical and social environment”

- **Community Safety**
  - “to be an exceptionally safe city”

- **Communities within the City**
  - “to strengthen the quality and enhance the value of neighborhoods”

- **City / University Synergy**
  - “expand collaborative opportunities that enrich the community experience”

- **Governmental Performance**
  - “to provide the best services at the lowest cost”

Strategic Intent

Being strategic is as much about choosing what not to do as it is choosing what to do. With so many diverse public services, our mission can be a mile wide – which means we have to work extra hard to stay focused, fight against mission creep, and make sure everything we do is aligned with the goals of our community all of the time.

Aiming and sustaining the path towards our true north isn’t easy. Not a day goes by where our alignment isn’t challenged by unforeseen circumstances. We struggle with learning how to say no to good opportunities that may not be the best fit with our immediate strategic objectives.

Most people understand that trying to do everything for everyone is the fastest way to get nothing done but that level of strategic discipline is tough to muster in public service. Who are you going to say no to? To some extent, everything is important to someone, but we have to use our strategic plan as a filter to keep focused only on what’s most important. It’s a tool for us to manage our way towards progress rather than relying on dreaming and hoping for the best.

Planning Ahead

Someday, Tomorrow, and Eventually are the worst times to start planning – and that’s why we make sure planning is a part of what we do everyday.

Everyday planning requires disciplined thought to plan the work and disciplined action to work the plan. Achieving this level of discipline takes practice – it’s not a special session at an annual retreat, it’s a year-round job.

Planning is not about predicting the future; it’s about preparing for the future. It’s having a strategy for all seasons. It’s contingencies, options and back-up plans for when the real world doesn’t follow the script. It’s believing that the best way to survive a crisis is to avoid it altogether. It’s imagining a better future and making it happen.

Our Promise

We promise to be ready for the future and to learn from our past. We promise to focus on our core services to meet whatever needs lie ahead. We promise to be flexible and adjust to changing conditions. We promise to do all we can to improve productivity and position ourselves for sustained excellence. That’s our promise to Kent.

Living up to this promise will not be easy. It means redefining future and present needs, balancing fiscal pressures, and protecting the public welfare – all the while maintaining the public trust. With nothing short of our future at stake we plan to rise to meet these challenges each and everyday.

Dave Ruller, City Manager
2009 ACTIONS & EVENTS

- Rally in the Alley Act on Alley Music Fest
- Who’s Your Mama Event
- 2009 Heritage Festival
- Downtown Holiday Walk
- Downtown Ghost Walk
- Halloween Family Festival
- Festival of Lights
- Clyde lakes exchange visit to Kent

Kent featured in Ohio.com Magazine
- Phoenix Project Grand Opening
- Kent Whitewater Grant $250,000
- $668,000 Site Demolition began
- Celebrate Kent Giants increased by $10,000
- KSU Part Thesis for Center Building
- Downtown Design Guidelines adopted
- Old Kent Motor Lodge Site Demolition
- Finished the downtown Master Plan
- Kent State Park Festival
- Adopt a Spot Program
- Facade Grants Program
- Kent Golf Show
- Recruit in West festival celebration
- Farmers Market with Music (and indoors)
- Downtown By Drive
- Discover downtown Student Orientation
- 3rd Annual Wine and Art Fest
- Retail is detail business assistance
- 2009 Main Street Program Work
- Downtown Parking Study Completed
- Biologically Buildings Demo on SR 43
- Calvin Davis’ Grand Opening

2009 ACTIONS & EVENTS

- $400,000 in Employee Initiated Cuts & Savings
- Phase 1 of Regional Fire Service study Completed
- Distributed 2008 Strategy Brief
- Continued Council Study
- Distributed Park Hill Ave. Bridge Video clip & Brochure
- Kent City Council with Warren County of Aurora
- Leaf Collection Routing Change
- City Citizen Advisory Committee on Sidewalk
- DECA City Community Project

2009 ACTIONS & EVENTS

- Citywide Trash Service initiated to lower costs for residents
- Evaluating Hire Local Incentive Program for Kent Projects
- Distributed Fairchild Ave. Bridge Video Clip and Brochure
- Downtown Design Guidelines Adopted
- Rockin’ in West River Celebration
- Memoral Day Parade & July 4th Events
- 2010 Temporary Budget
- City Incubator Policy Update
- Kent featured in Hunter Real Estate Magazine
- Training Road Bridge Replacement for Kent
- Kent Business Incubator
- Job Corps Center of Excel Kent University
- Chamber Town City Business Awards
- Regional News Coverage for Kent
- Kent featured in Hunter Real Estate Magazine
- Demo Vacant Homes at Depolyment site
- New Comfort Inn & Suites in Belden (BED)
- New $2.25 Million Bridge replacement for Kent
- Snow Street & Sidewalk Operations
- HINS Pandemic Preparedness Plan
- Middlebury Road Bridge Repair
- Smoke Alarm Program
- Emergency Broadcast Repairs
- Public Service Reconversion Action Savings

2009 ACTIONS & EVENTS

- Citywide Trash Service initiated to lower costs for residents
- Evaluating Hire Local Incentive Program for Kent Projects
- Distributed Fairchild Ave. Bridge Video Clip and Brochure
- Downtown Design Guidelines Adopted
- Rockin’ in West River Celebration
- Memoral Day Parade & July 4th Events
- 2010 Temporary Budget
- City Incubator Policy Update
- Kent featured in Hunter Real Estate Magazine
- Training Road Bridge Replacement for Kent
- Kent Business Incubator
- Job Corps Center of Excel Kent University
- Chamber Town City Business Awards
- Regional News Coverage for Kent
- Kent featured in Hunter Real Estate Magazine
- Demo Vacant Homes at Depolyment site
- New Comfort Inn & Suites in Belden (BED)
- New $2.25 Million Bridge replacement for Kent
- Snow Street & Sidewalk Operations
- HINS Pandemic Preparedness Plan
- Middlebury Road Bridge Repair
- Smoke Alarm Program
- Emergency Broadcast Repairs
- Public Service Reconversion Action Savings

2009 ACTIONS & EVENTS

- $400,000 in Employee Initiated Cuts & Savings
- Phase 1 of Regional Fire Service study Completed
- Distributed 2008 Strategy Brief
- Continued Council Study
- Distributed Park Hill Ave. Bridge Video clip & Brochure
- Kent City Council with Warren County of Aurora
- Leaf Collection Routing Change
- City Citizen Advisory Committee on Sidewalk
- DECA City Community Project

2009 ACTIONS & EVENTS

- Citywide Trash Service initiated to lower costs for residents
- Evaluating Hire Local Incentive Program for Kent Projects
- Distributed Fairchild Ave. Bridge Video Clip and Brochure
- Downtown Design Guidelines Adopted
- Rockin’ in West River Celebration
- Memoral Day Parade & July 4th Events
- 2010 Temporary Budget
- City Incubator Policy Update
- Kent featured in Hunter Real Estate Magazine
- Training Road Bridge Replacement for Kent
- Kent Business Incubator
- Job Corps Center of Excel Kent University
- Chamber Town City Business Awards
- Regional News Coverage for Kent
- Kent featured in Hunter Real Estate Magazine
- Demo Vacant Homes at Depolyment site
- New Comfort Inn & Suites in Belden (BED)
- New $2.25 Million Bridge replacement for Kent
- Snow Street & Sidewalk Operations
- HINS Pandemic Preparedness Plan
- Middlebury Road Bridge Repair
- Smoke Alarm Program
- Emergency Broadcast Repairs
- Public Service Reconversion Action Savings

2009 ACTIONS & EVENTS

- $400,000 in Employee Initiated Cuts & Savings
- Phase 1 of Regional Fire Service study Completed
- Distributed 2008 Strategy Brief
- Continued Council Study
- Distributed Park Hill Ave. Bridge Video clip & Brochure
- Kent City Council with Warren County of Aurora
- Leaf Collection Routing Change
- City Citizen Advisory Committee on Sidewalk
- DECA City Community Project