

Kenton County Governance Committee

December 2016

Management
Partners



Committee History

- An examination of the structure of governance in Kenton County was suggested during a Northern Kentucky Forum at Dixie Heights
- The Kenton County Government Study Group was developed and worked for over two years
- “Kenton County Together, A Call to Action” was published in 2013
- In polling, a clear majority indicated that the current structure of government is not ideal and favored consideration of different governance structures.

Committee History

- A group of elected and appointed officials, business people and others formed the Kenton County Governance Committee (KCGC) to review and develop options for alternative county governance
- KCGC met for 21 months to develop consensus with assistance from Management Partners

Purpose and Guiding Principles

- **Purpose:** *Create a structure, platform, or foundation for making a case for change in the structure of local governance.*
- **Guiding Principles**
 1. *Support retention of the local identity of Kenton County cities and communities*
 2. *Respect local self-determination*
 3. *Include all affected parties in the process of change*
 4. *Recognize the unique attributes and needs of Kenton County's urban, suburban and rural areas.*

Identified Issues

- Difficult to coordinate service sharing across the county; currently only neighboring cities have been successful
- County is trying to govern in 21st Century with 19th Century laws and structure
 - Current system has evolved marginally over time, but has not kept pace with modern demands
- No systematic approach for addressing issues of mutual benefit countywide
 - High number of independent taxing authorities, with a lack of direct control by elected officials
 - Inability to prioritize the allocation of resources across service areas
- Diminished voice in Frankfort

Kenton County Main North South Route, circa 1900



“Dixie Highway” at today’s Kyles Lane



Boone Airlines??



Recommended Change

- Implement/adopt a charter option for the formulation of locally defined county and city governance
- Expand authority to provide regional services, facilitate municipal service sharing, and prioritize resource allocation across service areas
- Assure greater accountability by integrating independent taxing districts, as practical, reducing the number of taxing authorities
- Enable discretionary participation by local governments in shared services by assuring “opt in/opt out” opportunities.

Expected Outcomes

- Flexible, dynamic government
- Regional focus and approach
- Prioritized allocation of resources
- Improved delivery of services
- Amplified voice in Frankfort

Possible Structures

- **Charter for Kenton County**
 - Identify what elements of a charter would be beneficial to the county to improve local governance and services
 - Compare with mechanisms existing in KRS: SWOT analysis
 - If necessary, develop and propose legislation to enact Kenton charter
- **Jefferson County Model**
 - A unification of services with any one or more cities in the county
 - A form of government that is a hybrid by way of a merger of programs and services
 - Simultaneous powers of city and county government functions

Next Steps

- Present report to the Kenton County Mayor's Group and Kenton Fiscal Court.
- Share the report with community groups for feedback.
- Creation of a Charter Commission to further develop this report and to investigate legal options/constraints in existing KRS.
- If necessary, develop and propose legislation to enact a Kenton County charter tailored to our community's goals.

Kenton County Governance Committee

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