

## INTRODUCTION

In 2001, the City of Kent conducted a community-visioning process called Destination 2006. The purpose of this process was to identify concrete programs or plans that City Council and the City Administration should pursue. A series of public forums was held over a period of approximately six months. Of the many ideas generated, the topic that received the greatest interest was that the City of Kent should complete a comprehensive-planning process. The City of Kent currently has a Comprehensive Plan that was written in 1985. It was indeed time to revisit and update that document.

In 2002, City Council directed the City Administration to proceed with a community-wide comprehensive planning process. With the leadership and guidance of Kent State University Professor Emeritus Eugene Wenninger, the Community Development Department outlined a program for the Bicentennial Plan based upon principles of Sustainability and building upon the City of Kent's *Goals for Sustainable Development* document (see Appendix D). To implement this process, assistance from the Ohio State University Cooperative Extension Service was sought. Ohio State University is the only public university in Ohio that has a sustainable-communities planning program (see Appendix A). The Ohio State University Cooperative Extension Service responded positively to the inquiry, agreeing to participate in a pilot program that may be utilized as a model for other communities within the State of Ohio.

Kent State University responded in an equally generous manner. Kent State University President Carol Cartwright provided the assistance of a number of academic and staff personnel to serve as the Design Team and assist the City of Kent in preparing and writing of this document. The Design Team provided valuable insights in developing a plan that helps to balance the three elements of sustainability: Environment, Social and Economic.

The Kent State University Urban Design Center provided valuable contributions in the development of conceptual scenarios for the three special planning areas. The Special Planning Areas are West Main Street; Campus Link; and the Southwest Corner of State Routes 261 and 43. These three areas were deemed to merit special consideration as key areas for potential development and redevelopment and will be discussed in greater detail in this report.

The workhorse of the Bicentennial Plan is the citizen's Steering Committee. The Steering Committee was comprised of forty-seven Kent residents who assisted in the organization and formatting of the planning process. Steering Committee members provided the crucial task of facilitating the district meetings.

It is the intent that the Bicentennial Plan will guide the City of Kent's land-use, neighborhood-development and redevelopment decision-making process for years to come. To achieve this end, it is recommended that the plan be revisited every three to five years and that progress on the goals identified in the Bicentennial Plan be measured. An annual report card needs to be presented to the Kent community, illustrating progress on the goals and plans presented in this document.