

Review of 1999 City Council Goals

- Goal #1: Inter-Governmental Relations: This is a very difficult goal because state laws inherently place cities, townships and counties in conflict with each other. Counties view themselves as protectors of township government. The townships have not been particularly receptive to JEDD's and the General Assembly favors annexation reforms that will inevitably restrict the ability of Kent to use this tool for future development. Portage County is distrustful of efforts by Kent and Ravenna to construct an emergency water interconnection, primarily because of annexation issues. This Council goal can not be resolved at the staff level, it will require active participation of elected officials.
- Goal #2: Communications: In general, there exists very healthy communications between staff and governing board members. The community newsletter has been well received by residents. The City needs to make a commitment to televise Council meetings! The local government access channel needs to be better utilized, but may require financial appropriations.
- Goal #3: User-Friendly Government: The relocation of Community Development Department to the Overholt facility and centralizing permitting processes will enhance customer orientation. Clerical support staff resistance to change remains an obstacle to this objective. Overall, few appeals are reaching top administrative staff members, though problems occasionally still arise. Council's response to citizen complaint system has been successfully at reducing the number of residents coming to meetings for administrative matters.
- Goal #4: KSU Relations: Very successful progress. KSU articles in the community newsletter. Regular administrative meetings. Town/Gown Committee addressing many issues. Efforts of Mayor Fender quite noticeable. Student involvement. May 4th commemoration. Public Safety brochure on ordinance-related issues. Coordination of infrastructure/facilities construction. Working on downtown hotel project. Technology incubator coordination.
- Goal #5: Land Use Planning: Addressing industrial zoning question. Thoroughfare Plan has NOT been updated yet. Discussing service delivery areas with Portage County. Ordinance amendments to assist residential development. Commercial development still remains happenstance/reactive along business corridors.
- Goal #6: Expansion of Economic Base: City needs to expand industrial zoning districts. Redevelopment in West River Neighborhood and downtown remains critical, requiring further commitment. Sewer/water extensions needed for industrial development (5 Year Capital Improvement Plan update). Support for business technology incubator. Need to establish an economic development fund to respond to opportunities. Parking Authority?

- Goal #7: Long Range Financial Planning: 5 Year Capital Improvement Plan in place with financial forecasting has been good, though needs outstrip resources still. Replacing infrastructure deficiencies, but still needs to address water/sewer extensions to support economic development. Council must resolve street financing issue once and for all. Goal setting and budget planning processes in place.
- Goal #8: Council Sets Agenda: Staff still needs clear direction and better decision-making at times. Still too many interruptions/distractions to the preferred course of actions. Need fewer referrals to administration based on audience portion of Council agendas. Only Council can control items being discussed/debated in public meetings. Trying to appease special interests still an issue.
- Goal #9: Update Goals & Strategic Plan: Requires commitment of elected officials. Too many things referred to staff for recommendation (reactionary). If not important, don't refer. Council should define their role in achieving goals. Adoption of ordinances needs to include an acknowledgement that resources must be allocated to enforce/administer new policies.