

**Information Technology Policy – County Web Site**

**I. POLICY:** The County of Kent will create and maintain a web site on the Internet that will provide public access to and information about County services; provide access to forms, documents, and links which may be useful to the public; and provide online access to select services so that they are more widely available and not tied to County facilities and business hours.

**II. PRINCIPLES:**

**1. Statutory References:** The Kent County Board of Commissioners may establish rules and regulations in reference to managing the interests and business of the County under Public Act 156 of 1851 (MCL 46.11 (m)).

**2. County Legislative or Historical References:** This policy supersedes all prior County Web Site policies, including, but not limited to those adopted by the County Board of Commissioners through Resolution 12-14-06-142. .

**3. Operational Guidelines – General:** The County web site will provide information about County government that is useful to the public, will enable the public to communicate with the County’s departments and judiciary, and offer online access to select County services. Information will be factually based and presented without bias, political comment, or editorial position.

**3.a. Operation and Protection:** Operation and protection of the County’s web site, including its information and applications, shall be conducted in compliance with all applicable laws and regulations, County policies and procedures, and industry best practices. The County will look to the Open Web Application Security Project (OWASP) and the National Institute of Standards and Technology (NIST) for standards and practices regarding web site and application security, although other sources may be consulted as well.

**3.b. Content Completeness:** The County web site will include basic information of public interest about all County departments and the judiciary.

- 3.c. **Standard Design:** Standard design criteria will be used for all information presented, and every page will be identified clearly as Kent County property.
4. **Operational Guidelines – Additional:**
- 4.a. **Accessibility:** All web site pages and applications will be reasonably accessible. Particular attention will be paid to consistency among web pages, information, and applications. The recommendations of the World-Wide Web Consortium (W3C) Web Accessibility Initiative will help guide the design standards to which the site adheres. Accessibility of applications may be restricted outside North America due to security concerns.
- 4.b. **Privacy:** Kent County is committed to the security of all information that is located on, transmitted to, or used in providing services through its web site.
- 4.b.1. **Personal Information:** Personal information is not collected and retained unless it is needed to provide specific services or the individual user agrees that the County may use this information at a later time. Any personal information collected and passed on to County agencies will be only that which is necessary to provide the specific requested services, and will be handled in the same manner as on an in-person visit.
- 4.b.2. **Unidentifiable Information:** In order to provide new services, design a better web site, and facilitate access, the County uses statistical analysis of traffic to the site and software that identifies usage trends. Information that is not personal, such as IP (internet protocol) address and browser type is collected and used for this purpose. The site does not attempt to associate this data with any personal information.
- 4.b.3. **Use of “Cookies”:** Some Kent County applications may use "cookies." A cookie is a small data file written to a computer's hard drive upon visiting a website. A cookie file can contain information, such as a user ID, that the site uses to track the pages visited. The only personal information a cookie can contain is information supplied by the user. A cookie is only a text file and cannot read data from a hard disk or read cookie files created by other sites.

Cookies can track user traffic patterns, recognize a specific computer's browser and could provide personalized content without requiring sign in. A user can turn off cookies by using a browser function. The County will attempt to minimize the use of cookies. However, they may be required to use some of the web applications on the County site.

**4.b.4. Use of Email Addresses:** Email addresses obtained as a result of a request to the County site will not be sold or provided to third parties. . There are three exceptions to this. First, email addresses will be provided to any agencies or companies involved in directly supporting the County's website so that we can provide confirmation of an order. Email addresses or other information requests sent to the County web site may be maintained in order to respond to the request or to forward the request to the appropriate department or agency. Second, email addresses may be maintained when an individual user requests newsletters or other information be provided as they are available. Should users subsequently choose not to receive such information via email, they may remove themselves from a mailing list at any time. Third, e-mail addresses will be provided to a third-party when that action is required by law.

**4.b.5. Data Security and Quality:** Kent County is committed to security and accuracy of personal data either available from or collected by the website, and has taken reasonable precautions to protect personal information from loss, misuse or alteration. The County maintains security standards and procedures regarding unauthorized access to personal information to prevent unauthorized removal or alteration of data. The County shall provide its users with a secure online experience by using a variety of security measures to maintain the safety of personal information. All user information shall be contained behind a firewall and shall only be accessible by a limited number of employees who have special access rights to production systems. Password and credit card numbers shall be encrypted in a secure database located behind the firewall. All sensitive/credit information supplied by users shall be transmitted via Secure Socket Layer (SSL) technology and encrypted in the database. Any third parties responsible for this information are committed to the same principles and are required by contract to follow the same policies and guidelines as Kent County in protecting this information. Unless otherwise prohibited by state or federal law, rule or

regulation, an individual user has the right to have inaccurate personal information corrected.

**4.b.6. Passwords and IDs:** In some instances, users may be required to receive or create an ID and password to access or submit personal information to complete certain transactions.

**4.b.7. Non-County Web Sites:** Various web sites may be linked through the Kent County web site. The links that appear on the web page are solely for the information of the user. Kent County does not endorse any particular viewpoint that appears on any web page that appears as a link on this page. Kent County makes every reasonable effort to assure that it does not link directly to web pages that contain obscene, scurrilous, or otherwise objectionable material. If you encounter objectionable material on this page or on any linked page, please notify the site Webmaster immediately and the link will be reviewed to determine if it should be removed.

**4.b.8. Online Profiling:** Online profiling is the practice of aggregating information about users' preferences and interests, gathered primarily by tracking their movements online and using the resulting profiles to create targeted content on web sites. Kent County does not conduct or participate in this practice

- 5. Exceptions:** The County Administrator / Controller is authorized to make exceptions to this policy.
- 6. Implementation Authority:** Upon adoption of this Statement of Policy and Principles, the Kent County Board of Commissioners authorizes the County Administrator/Controller to establish standards and procedures which may be necessary for its implementation.
- 7. Periodic Review:** The County Administrator/Controller will review this policy at least every two years and make any recommendations for changes to it to the Legislative and Human Resources Committee.