

Planning Commission Staff Report

July 18, 2019



Case No: 19AREAPLAN0002
Project Name: South Floyds Fork Vision Plan
Applicant: Louisville Metro
Jurisdiction: Louisville Metro
Council District: 19 (Piagentini), 20 (Benson), 22 (Engel)
Case Manager: Michael King, Urban Planner

REQUEST

- Approval of the South Floyds Fork Vision Plan
- Adopt the South Floyds Fork Vision Plan Executive Summary as an Amendment to Plan 2040

CASE SUMMARY

Background

The South Floyds Fork Vision Plan is an area plan for a developing portion of southeastern Louisville Metro, Kentucky, which is one of the more significant natural and rural parts of the county remaining. The area is facing tremendous growth pressures and this plan will provide guidance for healthy, sustainable, equitable, well-connected and authentic growth in the South Floyds Fork area over the next 20 years, covering topics such as land use and community form, transportation and connectivity, sustainability and infrastructure. The 60 square mile study area is bounded by I-265 to the west, Shelbyville Road to the north, the Jefferson County line to the east, and Bardstown Road to the south.

The population of the South Floyds Fork study area was 13,499 as of 2015. The study area is somewhat older in age than the Louisville Metropolitan Statistical Area (MSA) and Louisville Metro overall, with only one third of the population under the age of 35. There is less racial and ethnic diversity in the study area than in either the MSA or Louisville Metro with more than 90% of the South Floyds Fork population identifying as white alone. The median household income in the study area is \$96,474, which is 198% of the Louisville Metro median income. In the study area, 42% of households have annual household incomes of greater than \$100k, while only 9% have incomes lower than \$30k, considerably lower than the MSA and county. Nearly 90% of housing in South Floyds Fork is owner-occupied, which is a larger share than either the MSA or county. Detached single family homes make up 80% of housing in the study area, a somewhat higher proportion than in the MSA or Louisville Metro.

The plan lays out a set of coordinated recommendations to guide growth, protect the natural assets, and establish a vision for the South Floyds Fork area. Although the South Floyds Fork area is much larger than a typical neighborhood, this plan will function as other Neighborhood and Area Plans, providing guidance for Metro staff and potential developers about the community's vision for the area. The plan will work in tandem with regulatory measures such as zoning, form districts, and development overlay districts.

Advisory Group/Community Engagement Process

In accordance with the neighborhood planning ordinance, a 14-person advisory group was appointed to lead the planning process. The group was represented by local residents, area developers, subject matter experts and a KY Senator. This group was diligently committed throughout the process and provided critical input that shaped the planning document. Continuous communication with the Fisherville Neighborhood Association, BIA Louisville and 21st Century Parks took place during the process to ensure the plans development considered the multiple concerns associated with the study area.

In addition to the advisory group participation, a robust public engagement strategy was utilized to gather input and feedback from the community. Multiple public open house forums were attended by hundreds of interested stakeholders. The public meetings were interactive and provided significant input that help guide the development of the strategies and recommendations represented in the plan. An inter-agency group of applicable governmental and quasi-governmental agencies was established to coordinate the South Floyds Fork Vision Plan's recommendations with existing plans and projects currently occurring throughout the community. Louisville Metro staff and the project consultants also held specific meetings with the Young Professionals Association of Louisville (YPAL), the Urban Land Institute KY, and the Kentucky Chapter of the American Planning Association. The project had a dedicated website and used multiple digital mediums to reach as wide of an audience as possible.

Vision Statement

A specific advisory group meeting was held with the sole purpose of drafting the South Floyds Fork Vision Plan's Vision Statement. This vision statement reads:

The Floyds Fork watershed is a natural treasure.

The area is defined by rich natural resources, rural landscapes, open spaces, a robust tree canopy, agricultural lands, stream health, parks and recreational areas, scenic roads, dark skies, wildlife habitat, and healthy ecosystems. Protecting, preserving and enhancing these natural, cultural and historic resources while providing sustainable, low-impact and mixed-use developments will reduce environmental impacts.

The preservation of Floyds Fork as a healthy living creek is paramount.

Guiding Principles

The South Floyds Fork Vision Plan established guiding principles early in the planning process. These guiding principles served as the basis for the development of the plan. They were built upon the Connected, Healthy, Authentic, Sustainable, Equitable (CHASE) principles established in Plan 2040.

- **Connected**
 - Create walkable neighborhoods and well-connected mixed-use centers.
 - Provide a mix of housing and jobs to support complete communities.
 - Prioritize the creation of neighborhood trails, multi-use paths and bicycle lanes to connect people to neighborhood and regional parks and green spaces.

- Expand and enhance the existing road network to improve connectivity and support current and future growth in the area.
- Improve multi-modal access to quality housing, jobs, services, amenities and educational opportunities.
- **Healthy**
 - Protect clean air, clean water, and clean soil.
 - Encourage inclusive, safe, resilient and sustainable development that integrates neighborhood parks, recreational opportunities and trail connections
- **Authentic**
 - Preserve and protect agricultural lands and rural lifestyles.
 - Foster and grow the local business community, including farms, markets, workshops, studios, galleries, restaurants, daily needs and services.
 - Incorporate design standards and guidelines that reinforce the character of the community.
- **Sustainable**
 - Preserve and enhance the existing tree canopy.
 - Limit development in environmentally sensitive areas.
 - Encourage environmentally sustainable, energy efficient best practices for new development.
 - Maintain and improve the water quality of Floyds Fork and its tributaries.
- **Equitable**
 - Expand mixed-use and mixed-income neighborhoods, especially near parks and natural amenities.
 - Establish planning and zoning that supports a range of housing types and densities in appropriate areas.
 - Support new economic opportunities for agricultural and recreational businesses.
 - Encourage transit connectivity to the area.

Scenario Planning and Vision Map

The South Floyds Fork Vision process utilizing a technique called scenario planning to help examine the impacts of potential recommendations in the study area. Scenario plans are map-based illustrations that tell potential stories about future growth and help identify and prioritize city investment and policy. Many growth scenarios were designed for the South Floyds Fork area and tested to demonstrate the wide variety of ways the area could grow and change in the next 20 years. The resulting information gathered from these scenarios helped to understand possible outcomes of choosing certain policies and strategies versus others. The lessons learned from the scenarios provided valuable insight during the refinement of the Vision Map (page 34 of the South Floyds Fork Vision Plan) and plan recommendations but are not intended to be used for future decision making.

The South Floyds Fork Vision Plan Vision Map illustrates potential areas for future growth and conservation. The Vision Map is the starting point for developing the South Floyds Fork Vision recommendations, and a guide for future decision-making and planning. It is a conceptual map, with no force of law or regulatory function. Instead it provides ideas, direction and focus for updates to the

city's land use, transportation, infrastructure, and open space planning. Ultimately, it guides zoning ordinance changes, form district changes, infrastructure investments, and other programs required to implement them. The Vision Map shows the major building blocks that structure Louisville's growth at the urban edge along the Floyds Fork. Community input was the driving factor in the development of the Vision Map. Other variables that contributed to its creation were environmental features, parks, neighborhoods, transit hubs, transportation corridors, neighborhoods and land use policies and regulations

Plan Elements

The South Floyds Fork Vision Plan utilizes the plan elements established in Plan 2040. The South Floyds Fork Vision plan provides analysis for each plan element and makes specific recommendations that will implement the plan's vision.

Community Form: This plan element focuses on land use and the built environment. The community form element will be critical in guiding the future growth of the area. Most of the plan's Community Form recommendations would be implanted through individual processes subsequent to the adoption of the South Floyds Fork Vision Plan.

A challenge to the planning process was the applicability of applying the Conservation Form District to parts of the study area. While Plan 2040 created general language that describes the intent of the Conservation Form District, there are currently no regulations associated with it. The plan's technical appendix provides daft language that is intended to provide a general framework for the established of the Conservation Form District and its respective regulations. As a result, the plan offers three alternatives (pages 37-39 of the South Floyds Fork Vision Plan) to where the Conservation Form District could be applied. The implementation of these changes would come through a community-driven process that occurs after the creation of the Conservation Form District regulations. The plan also recommends applying new Town Center, Village Center, Village and Regional Center Form Districts in defined areas. These form districts changes would be implanted through a separate community-driven process.

The plan recommends targeted rezonings for the area that will correspond with the recommended form district changes. These Zoning modifications would correlate with the planning of major infrastructure improvements to the sanitary sewer system and the transportation network (widening, extensions of shared use paths, transit service, new/expanded interchanges and new roads.) All zoning modifications should include coordination with property owners and area residents.

The Floyds Fork Development Review Overlay District (DRO) runs through a large part of the study area. Regulations for the DRO were established over 20 years ago. The planning process made it apparent that the DRO regulations were often ambiguous and difficult to understand. The South Floyds Fork Vision Plan recommends that the DRO regulations be analyzed and potentially revised to provide clear standards and reflect current needs and conditions. After this analysis and potential revision, proper zoning for properties in the DRO should be considered. Any modifications would be made with proper owner consent.

Mobility: The mobility plan element focuses on connectivity to and within the study area and makes recommendations to improve multi-modal transportation for the area. Many of the South Floyds Fork area roadways are underdeveloped, over capacity, or both. Demands on the area's road network are increasing as amenities such as The Parklands, and infrastructure, such as extended and enhanced water and sewer services, generate significant land use changes. Continued growth in the area and in surrounding counties is leading to increased demands on roadways that connect to and through Louisville Metro. The existing road network is a mix of interstates, urban arterials, rural arterials, collector roads, local roads, and a recently constructed park road network in the Parklands; in addition to a robust network of hiking, biking, and horse trails that traverse the study area.

The vision for the transportation network is to provide a multi-modal network that meets future travel demands, is coordinated with other infrastructure improvements, enhances future land uses, and complements the natural topography and setting of the study area. The South Floyds Fork Vision Plan creates a Master Road Plan that is flexible and helps guide future infrastructure investments. The Master Road Plan is conceptual and shows general areas where connectivity for all users should be improved.

The plan makes a number of connectivity recommendations that align with current and planned improvements to the area’s transportation network. The plan recommends that context sensitive design should always take precedence in order to retain the areas current character and environmental resources. The mobility recommendations develop a context-sensitive approach to road design and transportation infrastructure. Encourage continuous and more direct routes. Context-sensitive design is responsive to the unique context and conditions of each project.

The master road plan shows where important connections need to be made. New roads and road improvements provide connectivity to reduce trip length and minimize the need for motor vehicle trips. The road network should include continuous sidewalk connections, and improved multi-modal options, per Complete Streets guidelines.

Community Facilities: The community facilities element examines existing parks, public services and amenities in the study area and makes specific recommendations to accentuate and add to existing facilities. The Parklands of Floyds Fork is a transcendent asset for the study area and the community as a whole. However, there are very few neighborhood parks in the study area. The plan recommends integrating smaller, neighborhood-serving parks into future developments to promote healthier lifestyles and outdoor recreational opportunities.

Other plan recommendations include the police and fire services, libraries and community centers that should be accounted for as the area continue to grow. The plan recommends capitalizing on the area’s abundant natural resources to promote opportunities for environmental education.

Economic Development: While the plan does not make specific recommendations regarding economic development, it does discuss needs and opportunities that will occur as the area continues to grow. The plan suggests the area should strive to keep a jobs to housing ratio between 0.4 and 0.5. As more residents move to the area it will be important to ensure that jobs and commercial areas that will serve the community.

Additionally, the plan suggests the area has an opportunity to capitalize on outdoor recreation and agriculture as means of maximizing some of the area’s unique assets.

Livability: The livability plan element provides guidance and makes recommendations for the provision and maintenance of the resources necessary for the health and well-being of citizens. The health of Floyds Fork and its tributaries is the predominant driving factor that was of the most concern to the community. As such, the South Floyds Fork Vision Plan makes several recommendations intending to maintain and improve the water quality and ecosystems of the area. The most notable is recommendation related to setbacks and buffers along the stream and its tributaries. The recommendation would be adopted as a regulation subsequent to the plan’s approval.

Stream Segment	Building Setback	Landscape Buffer
Floyds Fork (Perennial Stream)	200 ft	150 ft
Other Perennial Streams	125 ft	100 ft
Intermittent Streams	75 ft	50 ft

Tree canopy in the area was another component of the livability section that had strong opinions. While the plan does have a goal of maintaining a minimum 50% tree canopy, the plan makes no specific recommendations for tree canopy regulations. All tree canopy regulations were discussed in LDC amendments through a separate planning process. The plan recommends targeted reforestation, particularly in riparian areas, as a means of maintaining the 50% tree canopy goal.

MSD was a strong partner in the development of the South Floyds Fork Vision Plan. The lack of sewer infrastructure is predominant reason that the area hasn't seen more development over the years. The plan look at the existing and future needs and facilities for sewer infrastructure. MSD currently has two treatment plants with capacity for expansion that should serve the needs of the area for years to come. The plan makes a number of recommendations for utilizing green infrastructure to help offset the burdens placed on the area streams.

Other livability recommendations are related to dark skies, air quality, habitat protection and agricultural uses. The plan lays out specific strategies that could help with the preservation and enhancement of the resources discussed in the livability section of the plan.

Housing: The housing plan element of the South Floyds Fork Vision Plan established flexibility for future residents in the area. As more people move to the area, housing options will need to be expanded. A recurring theme in the planning process was the desire for aging in place. The plan makes specific recommendations that will provide more opportunity as future residents in the area become increasingly diverse in age and life stage, race and ethnicity, housing preference, income, and household size, among other measures. The housing being built will need to respond to a variety of different needs. The plan references specific future housing types such as:

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| <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Small lot single family homes• Cottage Homes• Co-housing• Affordable Housing• Townhomes | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Park-frontage Homes• Low-Impact Subdivisions• Apartments• Residential Villages |
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Plan Recommendations

The South Floyds Fork Vision Plan makes multiple recommendations for each of the plan elements. These recommendations went through several revisions throughout the planning process. The advisory group was asked to provide comments and concerns regarding the language in these recommendations. Two advisory group meetings were held specifically to go through each member's comments and to find consensus in the language that would be presented in the plan. All comments from advisory groups members were openly discussed and the language in the current plan is the result of those efforts.

Technical Appendix

The South Floyds Fork Vision Plan's technical appendix provides outlines for three technical pieces of the plan that serve as complementary components to the plan's recommendations.

Conservation Form District

Plan 2040 created a framework for a Conservation Form District which is a new form district that is yet to have its regulations established. The Conservation Form District is characterized by its natural features and scenic landscapes. Historically, these districts are characterized by agricultural land, woods and fields, creeks and streams, riparian areas, wetlands, forests, wildlife habitat, parklands, steep slopes, floodplains, and dark skies. Future development in Conservation Form Districts should preserve natural and historical resources while providing opportunity for low-impact, sustainable and

mixed-use development that include innovative housing varying in design, type, size and affordability. To conserve natural areas, innovative and clustered developments are encouraged and incentivized. Commercial and other nonresidential buildings that serve community, recreational or tourism needs are located near major roadways and/or recreational areas. Multi-modal transportation opportunities should be extended to the area, including connections to parks, recreational areas and residential areas to enhance connectivity. Innovative and environmentally-friendly methods of development, especially in the areas of waste management, wastewater disposal, stormwater runoff and energy efficiency should be considered to enhance the character of the district and the health of the watershed. Preserving open spaces, greenways, parks and recreational areas, natural vistas, working farms, tree canopy, air quality, watershed health, dark skies and wildlife habitat, while offering a variety of housing opportunities, are goals in the district.

The South Floyds Fork Vision Plan developed an illustrative draft of what the actual Conservation Form District regulations could be. The plan recommends these regulations be established through a separate community-driven process that utilizes the draft language in the South Floyds Fork Vision Plan as a starting point. Upon adoption of the new Conservation Form District regulations it should then be determined where the new form district is most applicable utilizing the three alternatives developed in the South Floyds Fork Vision.

Low Impact Subdivision Incentive

The South Floyds Fork Vision Plan established an illustrative framework for a new type of subdivision development aimed at preserving environmental features while still allowing for a gross density similar to the R-4 zoning that is predominant in the study area. Throughout the planning process it was clear that new regulations on R-4 properties did not have consensus. Incentivizing more environmentally friendly development was widely accepted and is the rationale for the new Low Impact Subdivision Incentive. The purposes of the incentive is to:

- Protect environmentally sensitive features.
- Permit flexibility of design of land that will result in a more efficient and environmentally sensitive use of the land.
- Incentivize clustered development.
- Encourage more functional, well connected open spaces.
- Promote diversity of housing types.

The South Floyds Fork Vision Plan only provides draft language for the potential Low Impact Subdivision Incentive. The technical components of the Low Impact Subdivision Incentive will require greater development. The South Floyds Fork Vision Plan recommends utilizing the draft language in the plan in a separate community-driven process that explores the feasibility and eventual creation of this new incentive.

Conceptual Mobility Cross-Sections

The South Floyds Fork Vision Plan provides conceptual cross-sections for future transportation network investments. These cross-sections are intended to be guides for potential solutions to providing multi-modal options for the study area. Context sensitive design should always be considered and take precedence as improvements are implemented.

Planning Committee

The South Floyds Fork Vision Plan went before the Planning Committee on Monday, August 26th. At the committee meeting Harrel Hurst, an advisory group member and area resident, asked that the Planning Committee consider the following revisions to recommendations in the South Floyds Fork

Vision Plan. The Planning Committee deemed the South Floyds Fork Vision Plan ready for public hearing at the Planning Commission and requested these revisions be considered as part of the public hearing.

4.B. ~~Wherever possible~~ Roadways should be buffered from tree clearing. Rather than prohibit logging practices entirely in the area, this recommendation would maintain a buffer of trees and vegetation between public roadways and logging operations. This would reduce the visual impact of tree clearing on roadways and other scenic areas.

5.A. ~~Consider Establishing “common sense” buffer standards between when a 50-foot natural/vegetative buffer in new development is proposed adjacent to permanently protected land. active agricultural uses. Property owners should work together to develop adequate buffers in these cases.~~

21.A. ~~Maintaining and protecting a minimum of 50% tree canopy within the planning area. protects the numerous benefits that trees provide.~~

27.A. ~~Encourage~~ Require dark-sky-compliant lighting on all new public and private development throughout the area.

Staff Findings – Plan 2040

The South Floyds Fork Vision Plan is in conformance with the Plan 2040 comprehensive plan. More specifically, the recommendations support the following goals, objectives and policies of the comprehensive plan:

Community Form Goal 1

The proposed recommendations in the Plan guide the form and design of development to be responsive to the distinctive physical, historic and cultural qualities of Russell.

Community Form Goal 2

The proposed recommendations in the Plan encourage sustainable growth and density around mixed-use centers and corridors.

Community Form Goal 3

The proposed recommendations in the Plan enhance neighborhoods by protecting and integrating open space, watersheds GOAL and other natural resources.

Community Form Goal 4

The Plan promotes historic and archeological resources that contribute to neighborhood authenticity.

Mobility Goal 1

The plan proposes the implementation of an accessible, system of alternative transportation modes.

Mobility Goal 2

The Plan promotes a safe, accessible and efficient transportation system.

Mobility Goal 3

The Plan encourages land use and transportation patterns that connect the neighborhood and support future growth.

Community Facilities Goal 1

The Plan recommendations ensuring community facilities are accessible.

Community Facilities Goal 2

The Plan recommendations support community facilities to improve quality of life.

Community Facilities Goal 3

The plan recommends community facilities be resilient and compatible with the surrounding neighborhood.

Economic Development Goal

The Plan supports an economic climate that improves growth, innovation, investment and opportunity for for existing and future residents.

Livability Goal 1

The plan recommends protecting and enhancing the natural environment and integrating it with the built environment as development occurs.

Livability Goal 2

The Plan promote equitable health and safety outcomes for all residents and visitors.

Livability Goal 3

The plan ensures equitable access to land use planning and policy-making resources.

Livability Goal 4

The Plan integrates sustainability and resilience in community planning processes.

Housing Goal 1

The Plan promotes a diverse range of housing choices in the area.

Housing Goal 2

The Plan supports the development of connected, mixed-use neighborhoods.

Housing Goal 3

The Plan promotes long-term affordability and livable housing.

STAFF CONCLUSIONS

Staff finds that the proposed South Floyds Fork Vision Plan and the Executive Summary are in conformance with the Neighborhood Plan Ordinance (Chapter 161) and Plan 2040. Based upon the information in the staff report, the testimony and evidence provided at the public hearing, the Planning Commission must determine if the proposal is in conformance with the Comprehensive Plan.

NOTIFICATION

Date	Purpose of Notice	Recipients
September 6, 2019	Public Hearing before PC	Legal Advertisement in the Courier-Journal

ATTACHMENTS

1. South Floyds Fork Vision Plan
2. South Floyds Fork Vision Executive Summary