

# Planning Commission Staff Report

July 6, 2017



**Case No: 17NEIGHPLAN1002 & 17NEIGHPLAN1003**  
**Project Name: Irish Hill Neighborhood Plan Update**  
**Applicant: Louisville Metro Advanced Planning**  
**Jurisdiction: Louisville Metro**  
**Council District: 9 (Bill Hollander)**  
**Case Manager: Ken Baker, AICP, Planning Manager**

## REQUEST

- Review and Approval of Irish Hill Neighborhood Plan Update - 17NEIGHPLAN1002
- Executive Summary of Plan Update to be an Amendment to Cornerstone 2020 - 17NEIGHPLAN1003

## CASE SUMMARY

### Background

The Irish Hill Neighborhood Plan Update/Lexington Road Land Use Study was initiated by an ordinance passed by the Louisville Metro Council. The ordinance set in place a temporary moratorium on rezonings, conditional use permits, major subdivisions, and category 2B and 3 applications within the Lexington Road corridor study area, and it requested that a study be undertaken to “evaluate current and potential land uses under existing zoning designations, and recommend appropriate zoning map amendments to address conflicting and incompatible uses.” The moratorium defined the boundary for the study area as: *lots abutting Lexington Road between and including from Baxter Avenue to the bridge where Beargrass Creek crosses Lexington Road on the eastern most crossing past Quarry and along the Charlton Street right-of-way.* The Ordinance cited a variety of conflicting and potentially incompatible land uses along Lexington Road that may be contrary to a cohesive and well planned neighborhood. It instructed that a study should be undertaken to evaluate current and potential land uses under the existing zoning designations and recommend appropriate zoning map amendments.

The plan update has been managed through the Louisville Metro Office of Advanced Planning. Neel-Schaffer, partnering with Center for Neighborhoods and Vivian Llambi Associates, were hired as consultants to assist with the development of the Plan. Planning and Design Services staff has been engaged throughout this process, as well as staff from other Louisville Metro departments.

The original Irish Hill Neighborhood Plan was completed in 2002 and the Executive Summary was adopted as an amendment to the Cornerstone 2020 Comprehensive Plan in 2011. The original neighborhood plan was prepared under the guidance of an Irish Hill task force with a four-fold purpose:

- To ensure correct and compatible land use and zoning
- To highlight and promote the neighborhood’s historical character
- To identify community needs
- To prepare a plan of action to secure the neighborhood’s future

The Irish Hill neighborhood and the project study area along Lexington Road are located on the eastern edge of downtown. Its residences and businesses are minutes from the center city and in close proximity to the Highlands, Phoenix Hill, Butchertown, Clifton and Crescent Hill neighborhoods. The neighborhood is close to employment centers and is anchored by two parks. Two forks of the Beargrass Creek converge within the study area and have been a recent focus for habitat and water quality restoration as well as for recreation planning efforts.

The project study area has also been touched by a number of recent planning efforts and public infrastructure initiatives, including: the Beargrass Creek Trail Conceptual Shared Use Path and Ecological Restoration Report, the Lexington Road Corridor Transportation Plan, the Irish Hill Park Master Plan and the Breslin Park Master Plan.

### **Advisory Group/Community Engagement Process**

Per ordinance, all Louisville Metro neighborhood plans are guided by a 7-15 member Advisory Group, appointed by the Mayor, in consultation with representatives of the impacted Metro Council districts. The Irish Hill Neighborhood Plan Update had a seven member advisory group made up of neighborhood residents, business owners, major property holders, and nonprofits. The Advisory Group's role included advising Metro Government and the planning team throughout the process, as well as supporting the public engagement process through encouraging additional participants to attend public meetings and work sessions. All members of the Advisory Group helped to share information about the process and brought additional stakeholders into the process.

There were two Advisory Groups meetings held on June 6, 2017 and June 20, 2017; a three-hour public workshop on June 13, 2017; and a final open house forum where the draft plan was presented on June 24, 2017.

In addition to the Advisory Group and neighborhood public meetings, the community engagement process included electronic/online strategies and community canvassing to notify neighborhood residents of meetings and get their input on issues.

### **Irish Hill Neighborhood Plan Guiding Principles**

The guidelines below outline the principles that served as a framework for the development of three draft scenarios and land use and community form recommendations. Additionally, these guidelines reflect the stakeholder desires and comments received through the public input process.

#### **GUIDING PRINCIPLES**

- Encourage a mix of uses that support the neighborhood and adjacent areas
- Encourage compatibility of light industrial uses with the neighborhood residential core through performance standards
- Encourage neighborhood stability and growth
- Promote single-family and multi-family residential use
- Improve mobility -- bicycle, pedestrian, auto – walkability and connectivity, with a focus on the construction and repair of sidewalks and the reconstruction of the Lexington Road, Liberty Street/Cooper Street intersection
- Preserve and enhance Irish Hill and Breslin parks
- Restore and preserve Beargrass Creek along with the riparian area of the creek
- Promote the development of a shared use path along Bear Grass Creek
- Minimize non-conforming uses
- Promote redevelopment of vacant property.

## Plan Update

In accordance with Chapter 161 (the Louisville Metro Neighborhood Plan Ordinance), a neighborhood plan must contain two mandatory components: Land Use/Community Form and Mobility. Other optional plan components may also be included in a neighborhood plan. For the Irish Hill Neighborhood Plan Update, we are focused solely on the Land Use/Community Form element of the plan. The balance of the original neighborhood plan will remain as the adopted neighborhood plan, with this updated plan document to become an addendum to the original plan. The Executive Summary update will also become an amendment to Cornerstone 2020.

## Irish Hill Neighborhood Plan Update/Land Use and Zoning Recommendations

The recommendations for the Irish Hill Neighborhood Plan Update/Lexington Road Land Use Study were developed from an existing condition analysis and a public input process. The public participation process was structured to gain targeted insight into the Advisory Group's and neighborhood stakeholders' opinions and vision for future development within the study area. Based on this, the following is the consultant's and staff's recommendation for the study area:

### MIXED USE PLANNED DEVELOPMENT DISTRICT

The proposed Lexington Road Mixed Use Planned Development District (PDD) consists of 52 parcels and approximately 57 acres. There is substantial diversity in land use, community form and neighborhood character currently existing within the proposed PDD area. The public process affirmed a desire to retain the varied attributes along the Lexington Road corridor, as they collectively contribute to the overall character of the area, but sought to narrow future uses along the corridor to address uses seen as incompatible with a mixed-use urban neighborhood. As a result, five character sub-areas have been established within the proposed PDD to promote appropriate land uses and development standards. Within this plan, goals are established for each character subarea, along with proposed land use tables. **The five character sub-areas are described below:**

#### 1) MIXED USE CORRIDOR SUB -AREA

The Mixed Use Corridor areas are areas within the proposed PDD that surround the commercial intersections within the corridor. While the characters of the western and eastern ends of the corridor are different, they serve today as commercial nodes within the neighborhood.

#### 2) INDUSTRIAL TRANSITION SUB-AREA

Some industrial uses exist within and behind the residential structures facing the north side of Lexington Road near its intersection with Liberty Street. The Industrial Transition Area is an area within the proposed PDD that is currently used as single family residential, commercial and industrial.

#### 3) COMMERCIAL MIXED USE SUB-AREA

The Commercial Mixed Use Area is an area within the proposed PDD that is currently occupied by a catering company. Should this business decide to relocate, the PDD envisions this area as an opportunity for mixed-use —residential and commercial — development with new development facing Lexington Road.

#### 4) HISTORIC RE-USE SUB-AREA

The Historical Reuse area within the proposed PDD is an area that is typified by large, commercial historic structures at the northwest corner of Payne Street and Lexington Road. Today reuse of these structures is occurring in differing degrees, with offices, an antique mall and a music venue standing out as successful examples of historic reuse.

## 5) LARGE SCALE REDEVELOPMENT SUB-AREA

The Large Scale Redevelopment Area within the proposed PDD is a 23-acre parcel that was formerly a scrap metal processing facility and is an area that is bisected by Beargrass Creek. Due to the property's size and former use, the site has dominated the landscape and character of this edge of the Irish Hill Neighborhood. The property is now vacant, and has been for a number of years.

### REZONING OUTSIDE PDD

The properties on the east side of the street, in the block of Baxter Avenue between Lexington Road and Liberty Street (361-381 Baxter Avenue) are currently zoned EZ-1. These properties are recommended to be rezoned to C-2. These properties are within an area that is also recommended as part of the extension of the Bardstown Road Overlay District.

Additionally, it is recommended that the multi-family property located at 1234 Lexington Road that is currently zoned OR-2 be rezoned to R-7 to fit its current use and intensity.

### LACK OF CONSENSUS

#### **1. Intensity of Industrial Uses**

Many neighborhood residents saw the future of the neighborhood as residential and commercial with all industrial uses phasing out. These residents would initiate this transition by requiring all new M-1 District uses to require a Conditional Use Permit.

Some industrial property owners sought to keep the current industrial zoning and return any vacant industrial property to heavy industrial use.

The recommendation is to phase out heavy industrial uses and move toward CM District uses (allowing all Commercial uses and limited M-1 District uses – these differ by sub area). This recommendation is based on the public input, an analysis of the existing zoning and current uses and additionally was anticipated by the 2002 Irish Hill Neighborhood Plan. Many of the properties in the area are zoned EZ-1, reflecting the meat packing industries that were, but no longer are present in the corridor.

#### **2. North side of Quarry Street**

The north side of Quarry Street has a blend of uses and a blend of zoning. Three properties at the eastern end of the street are owned by the commercial property owner on the south side of the street. The two former residential properties closest to the I-64 ROW are currently zoned M-2, while the next property to the east is zoned R-6 but owned by the commercial property owner. It appears that parts of all three properties are used as outdoor storage.

Neighborhood residents wanted Quarry Street to be the dividing line between commercial and residential uses to serve as a buffer to heavy commercial and industrial uses.

The recommendation was to move the industrially zoned property and the vacant residentially-zoned property into the new Mixed Use PDD and keep commercial uses along I-64 with performance standards to ensure a suitable buffer is in place for residential properties to the west and north.

### **3. Distillery Commons**

Distillery Commons is currently zoned EZ-1. One use that occupies the property today is min-storage. All activity is inside the buildings. The owner would like to continue this use in the future.

The recommendation is for the area to be included in the PDD and that all C-2 uses be allowed with some limitations.

Mini-storage is not a permitted use under C-2, but the neighborhood would like the owners to keep the historic buildings and reuse them if at all possible.

## **IMPLEMENTATION TABLE**

The Land Use/Community Form recommendations are assembled under three sections: **Comprehensive Plan/Land Development Code**; **Policy and Programmatic**; and **Capital Improvements and Infrastructure**. The primary recommendations related to land development and zoning map amendments fall under the zoning recommendations (below).

### **Comprehensive Plan/Land Development Code**

Below are highlighted zoning and transportation strategies and recommendations:

#### **Zoning**

- CP1** Create a Mixed-Use Planned Development District with character sub areas as illustrated in the Proposed Planned Development District Development Map (Chapter 7)
- CP2** Initiate an Area-wide Rezoning to reflect the following zoning changes: 1) within the proposed Mixed-Use PDD [as show in the Map in Chapter 7], 2) rezone 361, 377 and 381 Baxter Avenue from EZ-1 to C-2, and 3) rezone 1234 Lexington Road from OR-2 to R-7 [as proposed in the 2002 Irish Hill Neighborhood Plan
- CP3** Extend the Bardstown Road Overlay District boundaries north to Chestnut Street to include all properties facing Baxter Avenue

#### **Transportation**

- CP5** Promote Cross Connectivity in Future Development

### **Policy and Programmatic**

Below are the major community form strategies and recommendations:

#### **Community Form**

- PP1** Finalize path alignment and negotiate easements or Rights-of-Way agreements for the Beargrass Creek Shared Use Path

**PP2** Consider expansion of Breslin Park to the east to include the MSD/Metro Signs and Markings facility

**PP3** Create one or more Irish Hill Neighborhood gateways

## **Capital Improvements and Infrastructure**

Below are the major safety/walkability and recreation strategies and recommendations:

### **Safety and Walkability**

**CI1** Improve walkability through the construction of new sidewalks and repair of existing sidewalks

**CI2** Improve the Lexington Road/Liberty Street/Cooper Intersection to address vehicular, bicycle and pedestrian safety

### **Recreation**

**CI3** Implement the proposed Irish Hill Park improvements as outlined in the Irish Hill Park Master Plan

**CI4** Implement the proposed Breslin Park improvements as outlined in the Breslin Park Master Plan

**CI5** Consider development a plan for a residential alley behind the single family homes in the 1200 block on the north side of Lexington Road (Traditional Neighborhood Form District)

## **Executive Summary**

Consistent with the format of all neighborhood/small area plans (and as required in Chapter 161, the Neighborhood Plan Ordinance), the executive summary includes the mission and goals for the Irish Hill Neighborhood Plan Update and a summary of recommendations from the plan.

## **Staff Findings**

The Irish Hill Neighborhood Plan is in conformance with the Cornerstone 2020 comprehensive plan. More specifically, the recommendations support the following plan elements and policies of the comprehensive plan:

### **Guideline 1 Community Form**

The proposed Land Use/Community Form recommendations in the Irish Hill Neighborhood Plan include the creation of a Planned Development District (PDD) to protect and promote the substantial diversity in land use, community form and neighborhood character that currently exists within the proposed PDD. Further recommendations, such as the proposal to extend the Bardstown Road Overlay District, seek to ensure that new development will be designed to be compatible with the scale, rhythm, form and function of existing and trending development.

### **Guideline 2 Centers**

The historic re-use and commercial mixed use sub areas of the PDD ensure that appropriate land uses and development standards will be put in place to foster a mix of uses that are organized around proposed and existing activity centers.

### **Guideline 3 Compatibility**

The proposed PDD and its constituent sub-areas have been designed to ensure that all land uses and transportation facilities will be compatible with nearby land uses while minimizing impacts to sensitive areas in

the community. The proposed recommendations will minimize impacts to existing residences, schools and other sensitive areas in the neighborhood.

**Guideline 4 Open Space**

The plan proposes recommendations for preserving and enhancing the Irish Hill and Breslin neighborhood parks.

**Guideline 5 Natural Areas and Scenic and Historic Resources**

The plan recommends efforts to Preserve and enhance Beargrass Creek and its banks and allow for the future construction of a multi-use path along the creek.

**Guideline 6 Economic Development and Sustainability**

The Mixed Use Corridor sub-area encourages traditional neighborhood commercial development while providing for the flexibility to accommodate the types of businesses and mix of uses that are becoming increasingly common in nearby neighborhoods.

**Guideline 7 Circulation**

The proposed Mobility recommendations in the Irish Hill Neighborhood Plan seek to increase connectivity between developments, improve major intersections, and expand the sidewalk network. Implementation of the mobility recommendations will ensure a balanced and comprehensive multimodal transportation network.

**Guideline 12 Air Quality**

The proposed Irish Hill Neighborhood Plan recommendations improve the cleanliness and air quality of the neighborhood’s residential, commercial and industrial areas.

**STAFF CONCLUSIONS**

Staff finds that the proposed goals, objectives, recommendations in the Irish Hill Neighborhood Plan Update and the Executive Summary are in conformance with the Neighborhood Plan Ordinance (Chapter 161) and Cornerstone 2020. 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
June 29, 2017	Hearing before Planning Committee	Subscribers of Council District 9 Notification of Development Proposals
July 6, 2017	Hearing before PC	Legal Advertisement in the Courier-Journal Subscribers of Council District 9 Notification of Development Proposals

**ATTACHMENTS**

1. Irish Hill Neighborhood Plan Update
2. Executive Summary of the Irish Hill Neighborhood Plan Update

