

Planning Commission

Staff Report

February 18th, 2021



Case No: 20-AREA-0002

Project Name: California & Victory Park Neighborhood Plan

Applicant: Louisville Metro

Jurisdiction: Louisville Metro

Council District: 6 (James)

Case Manager: Allison Smith, Assistant Director of Advanced Planning & Sustainability

REQUEST

- Approval of the California & Victory Park Neighborhood Plan
- Adoption of the California & Victory Park Neighborhood Plan Executive Summary as an Amendment to Plan 2040

CASE SUMMARY

Background

The California & Victory Park Neighborhood Plan was initiated by Council President David James (D-6) and administered by Louisville Metro's Office of Advanced Planning & Sustainability. The study area boundaries are Broadway to the north, Oak Street to the south, 9th Street to the east, and 26th Street to the west. Most of the study area is within the boundaries of District 6, with the remainder in District 4. Gresham Smith, a landscape architecture, planning, and urban design firm, was retained as the consultant, with Center for Neighborhoods acting as a subconsultant.

The planning process began in January 2018 and concluded in February 2020. The goal of the process was to engage the residents and other stakeholders of the California neighborhood and proactively articulate a vision for the future. This represents the first neighborhood planning process for the California neighborhood since 1982, and the resulting plan document offers a roadmap for resident-centered, future decision-making.

The planning process brought together community residents, neighborhood associations/groups, businesses, institutions, and government agencies to create a vision for the future of the California & Victory Park neighborhood. While the process initially began as the California Neighborhood Plan, extensive community engagement and feedback led to an understanding that many residents identify their place in the community with Victory Park, which is reflected in the updated title of the California & Victory Park Neighborhood Plan. Engagement during the planning process also identified areas of importance to the neighborhood, including such things as ensuring compatibility between industrial and residential land uses, creating safer streets, addressing long-standing drainage and flooding issues, and building opportunities for the community to work together towards implementing their shared vision.

Advisory Group/Community Engagement Process

In accordance with Chapter 161 of the Louisville Metro Code of Ordinances (Neighborhood Plans), an Advisory Group was established to help guide the planning team throughout the planning process. Members of the Advisory Group were selected by President James. The 12-person advisory group was comprised of seven residents and representatives from YMCA of Greater Louisville, Brown-Forman, and other organizations. The group convened on three occasions during the planning process, with an additional meeting in February of 2020 to discuss a draft of the plan document. All meetings were open to the public and held at the offices of OneWest at Broadway and Dr. W J Hodge Street.

In addition to the Advisory Group participation, a robust public engagement strategy was utilized to gather input and feedback from the community, including, but not limited to, the following:

- Early engagement in April of 2018 that included a short introductory survey that was executed primarily through on-the-ground canvassing and one-on-one conversations, as well as targeted conversations with community organizations, business owners, and institutions.
- Victory Park Day on August 4, 2018
- Day of stakeholder meetings on August 7, 2018 at the offices of OneWest
- California Day on August 25, 2018
- Walking workshop on September 29, 2018 during which residents, stakeholders, and members of the planning team used a survey to identify issues and opportunities along neighborhood streets.
- Community workshop/open house on November 3, 2018 at the California Community Center
- Community workshop/open house on December 4, 2018 at the Victory Park Lodge
- Public meeting on August 29, 2019 at the Catholic Enrichment Center
- Focus group meetings with representatives of public agencies, such as Metropolitan Sewer District (MSD), and businesses in the neighborhood, including Brown-Forman and Heaven Hill Distillery.

After the initial draft of the plan was presented to the community, there was significant feedback from residents that identified gaps within the plan. The planning team continued to work with the community and the Advisory Group through 2019 and the beginning of 2020 to make changes to the draft plan that would better reflect the needs and desires of the California & Victory Park community. A final Advisory Group meeting was held in February of 2020 to solidify the contents of the draft plan, which is the version that is being presented to the Planning Commission.

Vision Statement

The initial vision statement was created as part of the three-day community workshop in May 2019. It was based on comments and input received from the Advisory Group, focus group discussions, and attendees of the first open house. After presenting the initial statement on the final day of the workshop, the vision statement was further refined with the help of the Advisory Group. The vision statement reads as follows:

The California & Victory Park Neighborhood is an engaged, unified community that creates opportunities for safe and healthy living where everyone thrives.

Plan Components

In accordance with Chapter 161 of the Louisville Metro Code of Ordinances (Neighborhood Plans), 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, according to the needs and desires of the community. The California & Victory Park Neighborhood Plan contains five (5) plan components: Land Use/Community Form, Mobility, Environment, Public Space, and Community Building.

Land Use & Community Form Recommendations

The Land Use & Community Form plan component is focused on evaluating land uses and promoting policies and tasks that are necessary to achieve the desired community character and land uses throughout the neighborhood. Land Use & Community Form recommendations are based on the study and analysis of existing conditions, issues and opportunities, and the public input process from the planning process. The Land Use & Community Form recommendations are as follows:

GOAL LU1

Eliminate vacant and abandoned properties throughout the neighborhood.

LU1.1 Locate new development on underused or abandoned sites to restore the value of underutilized land.

GOAL LU2

Use Form Districts and Zoning Districts to encourage appropriate development/redevelopment.

LU2.1 Modify Form Districts within the neighborhood to encourage community-focused uses and development patterns.

LU2.2 Initiate a community-driven detailed zoning analysis to determine properties that should be rezoned to preserve existing uses, such as single-family residential, and promote desired uses.

GOAL LU3

Ensure a variety of housing options for existing and future residents that help prevent displacement of existing neighborhood residents.

LU3.1 Encourage affordable housing strategies, with a focus on maintaining and enhancing existing housing stock to avoid displacement of current residents.

LU3.2 Encourage market-rate housing strategies to strengthen the neighborhood.

LU3.3 Encourage more control over transient housing, including short-term rentals.

LU3.4 Develop and implement strategies that enhance neighborhood cleanliness and maintenance.

GOAL LU4

Provide adequate and appropriate land uses to support neighborhood quality of life.

LU4.1 Encourage specific neighborhood-oriented services and mixed uses within residential districts, especially on corner lots at key intersections.

LU4.2 Encourage neighborhood-oriented mixed-use development along the 18th Street/Dixie Highway transit corridor.

LU4.3 Encourage transit-oriented development at key transition nodes and more intense mixed-use development along Broadway.

LU4.4 Understand and support growth plans for existing businesses and institutions that are consistent with the vision of the neighborhood.

GOAL LU5

Increase employment opportunities.

LU5.1 Partner existing institutions with the California / Victory Park business community to promote local job opportunities and opportunity for economic growth.

Mobility Recommendations

Mobility recommendations contained in the California & Victory Park Neighborhood Plan focus on making the neighborhood's transportation systems accessible, safe, and equitable, with a distinct focus on the needs of residents. Final recommendations are based on the study and analysis of existing conditions, issues and opportunities, and the public input process from the planning process. The Mobility recommendations are as follows:

Goal M1

Apply "Complete Streets" principles to improve the character, functionality and safety of neighborhood streets.

- M1.1 Improve streetscape along Greenwood and Prentice Streets to strengthen connection between Victory Park and California Park, and Wheatley Elementary and 18th Street/Dixie Highway transit corridor.
- M1.2 Help transform Broadway into a safe, convenient, and effective multimodal "Complete Street."
- M1.3 Support plans to develop 18th Street/Dixie Highway as a transit-oriented corridor through appropriate "Complete Streets" measures.

Goal M2

"Calm" traffic within the neighborhood.

- M2.1 Implement traffic calming project on 22nd and Dr. W. J. Hodge Street/21st Street.
- M2.2 Implement general traffic calming measures in both the short- and long-term to improve safety for all users.
- M2.3 Implement traffic calming around Victory and California Parks.

Goal M3

Ensure safe and accessible bicycle and pedestrian travel throughout the neighborhood.

- M3.1 Improve internal neighborhood pedestrian safety and accessibility with a focus on the connectivity/safety priority zone (areas within 1/4 mile of major transit routes 18 and 23).
- M3.2 Improve uncontrolled rail crossings with a focus on bike/pedestrian safety.

Goal M4

Make transit a safe, reliable mobility option.

- M4.1 Increase safe accessibility to public transit routes and bus stops.
- M4.2 Enhance transit ridership experience along 18th Street/Dixie Highway and Broadway.
- M4.3 Make Union Station more of a community space and hub of public transportation.
- M4.4 Update and improve TARC routes for commuting to employment centers and other work locations.

Goal M5

Ensure safe and effective vehicular travel throughout the neighborhood.

- M5.1 Evaluate functionality of the existing roadway network within the neighborhood.

M5.2 Discourage development that includes permanent street closures, dead end streets, or cul-de-sacs.

M5.3 Mitigate the impacts of truck traffic within the neighborhood.

Environment Recommendations

Environmental recommendations contained in the California & Victory Park Neighborhood Plan are intended to identify programs, tasks, and policy recommendations to address long-standing issues with environmental justice, with a distinct focus on air quality, flooding, and urban heat island. These recommendations are based on the study and analysis of existing conditions, issues and opportunities, and the public input process from the planning process. The Environment recommendations are as follows:

Goal E1

Improve air quality and urban heat island effects within the neighborhood.

E1.1 Actively monitor, document, and report air quality and heat island issues, specifically focused around industrial district.

Goal E2

Reduce negative stormwater impacts throughout the neighborhood.

E2.1 Develop and implement strategies to reduce flooding in flood-prone areas.

Goal E3

Improve public health for all neighborhood residents.

E3.1 Promote a healthy food culture by increasing access (i.e., increased access to community gardens).

E3.2 Improve access to public health facilities to enhance the overall health of the community.

E3.3 Develop Science, Technology, Engineering, Art, and Mathematics (STEAM)-related programming focused on issues the neighborhood faces, such as urban heat island, stormwater runoff, tree canopy, and air quality.

E3.4 Develop and implement strategies to mitigate negative effects of local manufacturing.

Public Space Recommendations

The Public Space recommendations contained in the California & Victory Park Neighborhood Plan are intended to build upon strong community assets and identify new opportunities for enhanced public space to improve quality of life throughout the neighborhood. These recommendations are based on the study and analysis of existing conditions, issues and opportunities, and the public input process from the planning process. The Public Space recommendations are as follows:

Goal PS1

Enhance and protect California Park and Victory Park as critical community assets.

PS1.1 Implement interactive/engaging wayfinding elements focused on the history of Victory Park/Olmsted Parks.

PS1.2 Develop new communication strategy for programming at Victory Park Lodge and California Community Center.

PS1.3 Improve California Community Center, with a focus on making the space comfortable and inviting.

PS1.4 Organize team sports at the parks.

Goal PS2

Increase public open space throughout the neighborhood.

PS2.1 Implement pocket park program focused on reduction of vacant property.

PS2.2 Coordinate with Metro partners on creating momentum around publicly-owned lots in the Maple Street area and potential future park opportunities.

Community Building Recommendations

The Community Building recommendations contained in the California & Victory Park Neighborhood Plan are provided to help bring the diverse constituencies of the neighborhood together around common community improvement goals. These recommendations are based on the study and analysis of existing conditions, issues and opportunities, and the public input process from the planning process. The Community Building recommendations are as follows:

Goal CB1

Expand and enhance opportunities to bring the entire community together.

CB1.1 Develop and implement a Historic Neighborhood Tour – an interactive public engagement program that teaches the history of the neighborhood and elevates its sense of place.

CB1.2 Create a collaborative business community.

CB1.3 Create educational programming in partnership with area schools/universities tailored to neighborhood needs and interests.

CB1.4 Provide opportunities for learning and continued engagement for neighborhood improvement.

CB1.5 Strengthen neighborhood character and identity.

Planning Committee

The California & Victory Park Neighborhood Plan went before the Planning Committee of the Planning Commission on Monday, January 25th, 2021. The Planning Committee asked that policies regarding public utility costs on vacant property be researched and subsequently included in the plan, where appropriate. After consulting relevant Metro Agencies, a new recommendation was added:
LU1.1.B *Explore programs and/or policies for utility cost relief on vacant properties.*

Staff Findings – Plan 2040

The California & Victory Park Neighborhood Plan is in conformance with Plan 2040. More specifically, the recommendations support the following goals of the comprehensive plan:

Community Form Goal 1

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

Community Form Goal 2

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

Community Form Goal 3

The proposed recommendations enhance the neighborhood by protecting and integrating open space, watersheds, and other natural resources.

Community Form Goal 4

The proposed recommendations promote and preserve the historic resources that contribute to the neighborhood's authenticity.

Community Form Goal 5

The proposed recommendations integrate art and cultivate creativity.

Mobility Goal 1

The proposed recommendations promote an accessible system of alternative transportation modes.

Mobility Goal 2

The proposed recommendations promote a safe, accessible, and efficient transportation system.

Mobility Goal 3

The proposed recommendations encourage land use and transportation patterns that connect the neighborhood and support future growth.

Community Facilities Goal 1

The proposed recommendations ensure community facilities are accessible.

Community Facilities Goal 2

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

Economic Development Goal 1

The proposed recommendations support an economic climate that improves growth, innovation, investment, and opportunity for existing and future residents.

Livability Goal 1

The proposed recommendations encourage the protection and enhancement of the natural environment and integration with the built environment as development occurs.

Livability Goal 2

The proposed recommendations promote equitable health and safety outcomes for all.

Livability Goal 3

The proposed recommendations promote equitable access to land use planning and policy-making resources.

Livability Goal 4

The proposed recommendations were developed through a community planning process that integrated sustainability and resilience.

Housing Goal 2

The proposed recommendations support the development of a connected, mixed-use neighborhood.

Housing Goal 3

The proposed recommendations promote long-term affordability and livable options in the neighborhood.

STAFF CONCLUSIONS

Staff finds that the proposed goals, objectives, and recommendations contained in the California & Victory Park Neighborhood Plan and Executive Summary are in conformance with the Neighborhood Plan Ordinance (Chapter 161) and Plan 2040. Based upon the information in this staff report, the testimony and evidence provided at the public hearing, the Planning Commission must determine if the proposal is in conformance with Plan 2040.

NOTIFICATION

Date	Purpose of Notice	Recipients
February 9, 2021	Public Hearing before Planning Commission	Legal Advertisement in the Courier-Journal
February 4, 2021	Public Hearing before Planning Commission	Postcards sent to every resident in the California & Victory Park zip codes
February 12, 2021	Public Hearing before Planning Commission	Electronic notice through the neighborhood notification system

ATTACHMENTS

1. California & Victory Park Neighborhood Plan
2. Executive Summary of the California & Victory Park Neighborhood Plan