

# Chapter One - Introduction

## Background

In the summer of 2009 the City of Covington requested the Northern Kentucky Area Planning Commission (NKAPC) conduct a detailed study and plan for the Latonia neighborhood of the city. Preparatory data collection efforts for the study began shortly thereafter and included a market analysis, prepared by Market Metric\$, LLC and a property conditions survey prepared by the Center for Great Neighborhoods. This document is a precursor of the plan and describes the existing conditions experienced in Latonia in late 2009 and early 2010. Information found throughout this text will serve as the basis for planning recommendations, which will be provided in the study's final report (anticipated to be published in the fall of 2010).



Figure 1.1 – Winston Avenue in Latonia

## Study Area

The Latonia Small Area Study will examine and make recommendations for the area bounded by Madison Pike (KY 17) to the north, the Licking River to the east, and the cities of Taylor Mill and Fort Wright to the south and west. This area was requested by the City of Covington during initial study discussions in the summer of 2009. A detailed visual representation of the study area can be found in Map 1.1.

## Public Involvement

As with every planning effort, public input is essential to making the best plan possible. NKAPC views the finished plan as belonging to the people and

businesses of Latonia and works diligently to create plans that reflect their wishes. Staff serves as technical advisors and preparers of the plan; however, the plan truly belongs to the aforementioned groups. The *Latonia Small Area Study Existing Conditions Report* has worked to involve the public through numerous methods, as detailed below.

## Task Force

Task Forces comprise the primary citizen involvement in small area studies. They work with NKAPC staff to provide oversight and guidance throughout the study process while representing the interests of the overall community. In the fall of 2009 the City of Covington assembled a 15 member Task Force for the Latonia study comprised of local residents, business owners, and neighborhood group representatives. The group also includes several individuals that serve in an advisory role to the group such as; Covington elected officials, City employees, and advisors from the Center for Great Neighborhoods of Covington (CGN).

The Task Force will guide decisions on a variety of topics throughout the course of the study. Some of these decisions include; the vision and goals of the study, approval of the land use and transportation alternatives, and approval of the final draft of the *Latonia Small Area Study* for submission to city council.

## Key Person Interviews

Key person interviews are important resources that provide staff with invaluable insight into the study area. Over forty interviews were conducted in the initial phases of the *Latonia Small Area Study*. Interviews took place during the data collection phase of the study and included discussions with churches, business owners, utility providers, transportation organizations, city officials, major property owners, representatives of areas outside the study area that potentially influence the area, and neighboring cities to name a few. Information from the interviews was analyzed and serves as a cornerstone for the existing conditions described in this document.

## **Public Meetings**

Public meetings present additional opportunities for members of the public, business owners, and other stakeholders to have their voices heard in the study. Input from these meetings is recorded and presented to the Task Force for their consideration and potential inclusion into the plan.

At the time of publishing of this report no public meetings have occurred, although three meetings are planned. The first meeting is scheduled take place on April 29, 2010. At this meeting NKAPC staff will present the existing conditions described in this document, provide opportunities for the public to describe their thoughts on the report, and give ideas for moving forward into the planning phase of the project. The second public meeting is anticipated for mid to late summer 2010 and will likely present potential future land uses and redevelopment alternatives for public input and review. The final public meeting is tentatively scheduled for early to mid fall 2010 and will likely present the draft of the final plan for public comment and review.

## **Survey**

Throughout February and early March 2010 a survey was conducted for the Latonia Small Area Study that represented yet another level of public input. The survey was designed to collect local resident input as well as the thoughts of people who visit the area for shopping, school, church, or other activities. Questions were wide ranging and related to topics such as the assets and challenges facing the area, local businesses, resident involvement in the community, transportation, and several other topics. The survey was available electronically via the NKAPC website and in paper form for individuals that lacked access to computers or the internet. Overall 110 surveys were received throughout the response window from February 8, 2010 to March 10, 2010. Details of the survey can be found in Chapter 11 of this document.

## **Document Synopsis**

The *Existing Conditions Report* contains a snapshot of the general composition of the Latonia neighborhood as it exists in early 2010. The remainder of this chapter provides a brief synopsis of information found throughout other sections of this document.

## **2-Review of Past Studies**

A thorough review of recent studies in the Latonia area was conducted to become more familiar with planning efforts pertaining to the neighborhood. This information gives valuable insight and allows NKAPC and the Task Force to build upon previous plans and work toward incorporating the ideas of current planning efforts.

## **3-Market Study**

In late 2009 MarketMetric\$, LLC conducted a market study for the Latonia area. This analysis examined existing conditions in the study area and the market for goods and services within drive time rings that centered on the Ritte's Corner intersection. Recommendations for the best land uses within the study area will be generated from this information. A summary of the findings of the market study is included in Chapter Three of this document with the entire document available at [nkapc.org](http://nkapc.org).

## **4-Green Infrastructure**

Green infrastructure refers to raising the natural environment to the same level of importance as constructed infrastructure to provide such benefits as open space and assist in the management of storm water. Chapter Four describes the current status of green infrastructure in the neighborhood and offers considerations for reintroducing natural areas into the built environment as the plan moves forward.

## **5-Community Facilities and Utilities**

Parks, police and fire stations, schools, libraries, and religious institutions are some of the numerous categories that work to make up an area's community facilities. Utilities refer to items such as the electrical grid, storm and sanitary sewer systems, and telecommunication facilities that are located in an area. Information regarding the current services and locations of Latonia's community facilities and utilities can be found in Chapter Five.






## **6-Existing Land Use and Zoning**

Information pertaining to the existing land use and zoning districts found in Latonia is described in Chapter Six.

# Map 1.1 Study Area



## Legend

-  Study Area
-  City boundary
-  US and State Hwy
-  County and Local Roadways
-  Railroad



## **7-Transportation**

Transportation refers to methods of getting into, around and out of an area with a variety of modal choices. Pedestrians, cyclists, automobiles, truck and rail freight, and bus transit represent a key element of the study, which traverses the Latonia neighborhood thousands of times a day. Chapter seven outlines the current state of this important consideration of the study.

## **8-Streetscape and Wayfinding**

Nearly every street and sidewalk in the Latonia area was inspected and rated in the 2009 Covington pavement inventory conducted by NKAPC and the city's engineering department. Chapter eight describes the current condition of street and sidewalk pavement and discusses wayfinding by examining how travelers are directed to attractions within the study area.

## **9-Areas of Influence**

Areas of influence refer to properties or markets outside of the neighborhood that could influence activities in the study area. Several areas of influence were identified in the existing conditions analysis and are described in detail in chapter nine.

## **10-Building Conditions Survey**

Throughout the summer of 2009 staff and interns from the Center for Great Neighborhoods of Covington conducted a Building Conditions Survey in the study area. Approximately 95 percent of buildings within the study area were included in this survey. The survey was based on an examination of the exterior physical conditions of residential, commercial and community buildings and also documented land use, occupancy, number of stories, construction type, and a rating of the structure's general condition. Chapter ten provides a detailed analysis of the survey's methodology and findings from the data collection.

## **11-Latonia Survey**

In February and March 2010 a survey was made available for people to give their thoughts and opinions on the Latonia area. Over 100 responses to the survey were submitted either online or via paper form. Chapter eleven provides a synopsis of the survey methodology and results found in the survey. Numerical data from survey responses can be found in Appendix I - Questionnaire Responses.



*Figure 1.2 – The Latonia Neighborhood*

