

1.0 Introduction

Latonia Small Area Study

SMALL AREA STUDIES

Small area studies are designed to provide detailed analysis and planning for small geographic areas of Kenton County. These plans are intended to be adopted into the Comprehensive Plan Update 2006-2026: An Area-Wide Vision For Kenton County by the Kenton County Planning Commission (KCPC) as a more detailed part of the comprehensive plan for the area covered. It is therefore necessary that the small area study comply with the basic requirements of state law (KRS 100) for updates to the comprehensive plan. The Latonia Small Area Study will first be reviewed and adopted by the City of Covington after which it will be forwarded to the Northern Kentucky Area Planning Commission (NKAPC) for a recommendation to be made to the KCPC for inclusion in the Comprehensive Plan. Once adopted by the Planning Commission, these studies are used as the basis for review by NKAPC staff, the KCPC, and the City for development recommendations in the area.

It should be noted that small area studies and plans are only one of the primary steps needed to begin enacting positive change in an area. For a plan to be truly effective it needs the support of residents and business leaders to carry recommendations forward to fruition. Section three of this document, Forming the Plan, focuses on these implementation steps, which are designed to bring about encouraging rehabilitation of the area, thus increasing aspects of health, safety, and public welfare for residents and visitors of Latonia.

Study Area

The Latonia Small Area Study includes 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 boundary was identified by the City of Covington during initial study discussions in the summer of 2009 (See Figure 1.1).

ABOUT THE STUDY

The following subsections of the plan outline the general process of how the study was conducted. Additional details on processes are available throughout the remainder of the plan.



Map 1.0.1: Study Area Boundary

Pre-planning

The Latonia Small Area Study was identified as a necessary study by City officials based on numerous comments received from citizens. People reported that issues were beginning to yield undesirable characteristics in the neighborhood and requested the City take action to improve the area. The study itself represents a comprehensive analysis of the Latonia neighborhood of Covington, Kentucky conducted throughout 2009 and 2010. Analysis of existing conditions in the area began in the summer of 2009 with an exterior-only survey and analysis of building conditions. This portion of the study reviewed the condition of building characteristics such as windows, roofs, porches, building material and scored a total evaluation for each structure. This survey was conducted by the Center for Great Neighborhoods of Covington (CGN) and can be found in Chapter 10 of the Existing Conditions Report.

Market Study

The building condition analysis was followed by the project’s market study, conducted by MarketMetric\$, LLC. The study, entitled A Market Analysis for the Latonia Small Area in the City of Covington, Kentucky (referred to as market study for this document) determined the range of potential land uses that could be accommodated in Latonia, now and in the

future, based on the needs demonstrated by the marketplace. Quantitative and qualitative market analysis by a third party provider yields a factual data-driven approach to dealing with land use and other programmatic changes. This market study helped to guide land use decisions by revealing what market forces were most likely to be present by offering suggestions for action steps to address market and related deficiencies. The full version of the market study can be found at www.nkpc.org.

Existing Conditions Inventory and Report

Northern Kentucky Area Planning Commission (NKAPC) staff utilized the data and findings of the building conditions and market study, researched other attributes of the neighborhood and drafted the *Existing Conditions Report*. This report was finalized and approved by the Task Force on April 22, 2010. The *Existing Conditions Report* and market study serve as the foundation of the final plan document and are important pieces of the overall vision for Latonia. Please refer to these reports at www.nkpc.org for detailed and specific information on background information used and the basis for this study.

Vision and Goals

With a clear picture of the study area outlined by the *Existing Conditions Report*, staff began working with the Task Force to identify vision and goals for the study. These parts of the plan provide the general direction for research and are more completely addressed by the final study. Details of these tenets of the plan can be found in section two of this document, Guiding Principles of the Plan located on page five.

Concept Diagrams

The concept diagram stage of the plan followed closely behind the study’s vision and goals. This level of planning is similar to that of vision and goals in that it encompasses a broader vision

for an area and provides a general direction for study. Details on the concept diagrams that helped guide the plan can be found in the Forming the Plan section located on page seven.

Technical Research and Task Force Decisions

With the broad view of the area outlined staff and the Task Force next endeavored to add detail to the plan. Research into technical aspects the plan should address such as housing, commercial, industrial, land use, transportation, community facilities, etc. were issues studied through staff research. Staff would then present their findings and potential solutions, which were then decided upon in regular monthly meetings. Staff provided technical expertise into the topic areas, however, ultimately decisions rested with the Task Force.

Study Area-Wide Recommendations and Redevelopment Scenario

Staff next went to work producing area-wide recommendations for the study. Concurrently they worked with the Task Force to create redevelopment scenarios for the portion of the study area comprising the Latonia Plaza Shopping Center. Section 4.0 of this document represents detailed analysis and findings for this part of the planning process.

PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT

NKAPC strives to create plans that involve the public in numerous capacities throughout the planning process. The final plan should strive to reflect the desires of people and businesses in the community as the final document belongs to them. The *Latonia Small Area Study* process involved the public through multiple avenues as outlined in the following sub sections:

Project Web Page

The study utilized a project website throughout the planning process. This site provided interested parties with information for the study such as; meeting notices, presentations, Task Force meeting notes, market study information, and report drafts. The site is available at www.nkpc.org.

Key Person Interviews

Key person interviews comprise a more targeted avenue for public involvement within the community. Meetings with key persons and groups were conducted in early 2010. Overall, more than forty interviews took place with representatives from churches, businesses, neighborhood and business associations, utility providers, transportation organizations, city officials, major property owners, neighboring cities, and organizations outside the neighborhood that might have an impact Latonia. Information from these interviews was presented in the *Existing Conditions Report* and provided one basis for recommendations found in this plan.

Survey

Another form of public involvement was a survey conducted in early 2010 for the Latonia area. The survey was designed to collect local resident input and the thoughts of people who visit the area for shopping, school, church, or other activities. 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 the *Existing Conditions Report*.

Task Force

Task Forces are the primary form of public involvement utilized for small area studies facilitated by NKAPC. These groups work with staff in an ongoing series of meetings and working sessions to craft the rough outline of the mission statement, vision and goals, existing conditions report, final plan, and provide ongoing input about key details of the study. The Task Force also helps with public information collected outside of official study meetings and works to provide a unified voice for those in the 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 organization representatives. The group also included 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.

The Latonia Task Force has worked with staff throughout the planning process to help establish the study's vision and goals, agreed on key elements of the plan such as transportation and land use, and approved the overall plan document on October 28, 2010. After approving the overall plan the Task Force submitted it to the Covington City Commission to begin the adoption process.

Public Meetings

Public meetings are a vital component of public involvement. These meetings give staff and the Task Force an opportunity to directly interact with the public in an effort to gain their thoughts and aspirations about the future of the neighborhood. Two public meetings were held during the planning phase of the study. The first meeting was held on April 29, 2010, in the cafeteria of Holy Cross High School (See Figure 1.2). Over 120 people attended this meeting where they participated in small group discussions to present ideas and information



Figure 1.0.1: Public Meeting One held at the Holy Cross High School Cafeteria, April 29, 2010

about the Latonia area. Many of the ideas proposed by the final plan were discussed at this meeting.

The final public meeting was held on September 30, 2010, in the Calvary Center of Calvary Baptist Church. This meeting was an open house style meeting, which provided the public the opportunity to see key points the final plan and give their thoughts on what staff and the Task Force generated. As with the first public meeting the open house was well attended. Over 110 participants provided their thoughts and feedback for the Task Force's consideration. The meeting provided participants an opportunity to view information from key sections of the plan some of which included overall concepts, the market study, green infrastructure, and transportation. General reaction to the plan, its concepts, and findings were well received and most of the participants seemed enthusiastic about the plan and moving forward.

Email Updates

Staff also worked to provide electronic updates at key points throughout the study. These updates were provided to KCPC, NKAPC, City officials, and interested members of the public who indicated they wished to receive correspondence from staff.