

SoBro

Neighborhood Plan



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VISION. KNOWLEDGE. ACTION.

Adopted: 10.26.2007

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Cornerstone 2020 Vision Statement



In our vision of 2020, Louisville and Jefferson County is a community widely recognized for its high quality of life, sense of tradition and competitive spirit. Our children have inherited a livable, vibrant and economically diverse community. We have clearly recognized that the quality of life depends upon continued success in the economic marketplace and an ongoing commitment to the conservation of environmental resources which define our heritage and enhance the livability of our community.

Community residents share a sense of place and take great pride in their established and emerging neighborhoods which are culturally and economically diverse. Residents are proud of their differences in heritage and culture. Economic and educational opportunities are available to all residents, in every neighborhood. Every neighborhood is a safe place to live.

The community enjoys a rich fabric of urban and suburban areas, interwoven with environmental resources, accessible parks, open space and the Ohio River Corridor, all representing a heritage of natural beauty. A multi-modal transportation system serves and ties together the entire community. Unified government services enhance the ability of the community to speak with a single voice in matters related to the investment of human, environmental and capital resources.

The Cornerstone 2020 Vision for Louisville and Jefferson County is nothing less than the best of the past merged with the best of the future, creating a community where all residents can grow and prosper.

Introduction



Background

The SoBro (South of Broadway) neighborhood has a unique position, geographically and historically, within the context of greater Louisville Metro. The general boundaries of SoBro are Broadway on the north, Kentucky Avenue on the south, I-65 on the east and 9th Street on the west. In addition to this “core” of SoBro, there is a slender component of the neighborhood that extends from Kentucky Street southward to Hill Street between 7th and 9th Streets. This neighborhood, as seen on the accompanying map, primarily serves as the linchpin for Downtown Louisville and Old Louisville/Limerick. As such, it has both the opportunity and urban responsibility to serve as a compatible, transitional and bridging neighborhood. It must provide appropriate land uses that serve not only its own resident and business populations but also those of the adjacent areas. Its urban form, in terms of building heights, densities and spatial configurations, must satisfy its desire to become a cohesive mixed-use district that ties together the high-rise character and commercial uses of Louisville’s Downtown with the primarily low-rise, residential districts of Old Louisville and Limerick.

A review of Sanborn maps from 1892, 1905 and even as late as 1941, shows that SoBro was once a vibrant neighborhood, completely covered with residential, institutional and commercial buildings. Land within the district was at a premium with hardly a vacant lot to be found. In the last fifty years that dense, active character has been lost as urban flight, proliferation of commercial land uses and Urban Renewal have left vacant buildings and empty land parcels, most of which now serve as surface parking lots.

Purpose

The SoBro Plan was initiated expressly to consider the current conditions within this district, analyze its strengths and weaknesses and through a series of site visits, demographic analysis, Task Force meetings and design workshops, develop both a future vision of what SoBro should and could become and a group of planning and implementation recommendations to help it reach its potential. Several other planning projects have walked on this same ground over the past four decades with the most recent being the Old Louisville/Limerick Neighborhood Plan Amendments of 2000 and a follow-up SoBro Neighborhood Plan



study generated by a University of Louisville Master of Urban Planning (MUP) Program Capstone Studio class in 2004. Also in 2000, a charrette lead by the Louisville Development Authority (now Louisville Metro Economic Development Department) and the Louisville Community Design Center explored the issues and opportunities presented in the SoBro area. Additionally, the Downtown Development Plan addressed SoBro as a critical subarea in the future vitality of Louisville's downtown. Many of the ideas and recommendations from these previous projects and reports are reflected in this neighborhood plan.

Most recently, summer and fall 2006 design studio classes focusing on urban design analysis conducted at Louisville's Urban Design Studio combined students from both the University of Kentucky's School of Architecture and the University of Louisville's MUP program. Some of the results or their creative thinking are contained within this plan report as well (see Urban Design chapter and Appendix).

Task Force Process

In 2004, Mayor Jerry Abramson appointed a task force of stakeholders to address the diverse issues faced in the SoBro area. The SoBro Neighborhood Plan Task Force generally followed a three-step process of Inventory, Analysis and Synthesis as it progressed towards its goal of creating the plan's framework. Inventory of SoBro's past was conducted through a presentation of historic photos of the neighborhood, investigation of the 1905 Sanborn maps for this area and a narrative look at the evolution of SoBro's land use and form over the past two hundred years. Current conditions were assessed via on-the-ground reconnaissance, photographic documentation of SoBro from both street level and the roof of The 800 Building and a two-hour narrated bus tour of the neighborhood during which current business owners and neighborhood workers participated and added their own narratives about the quality of living and working in SoBro today. In addition, the task force weighed in on the neighborhood's future viability through a SWOT (strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats). Results of this analysis are detailed in the Neighborhood Identity chapter, page 15. Furthermore, Louisville Metro's Planning and Design Services staff provided information and maps to advance everyone's knowledge of SoBro's existing land use, community form and population characteristics.

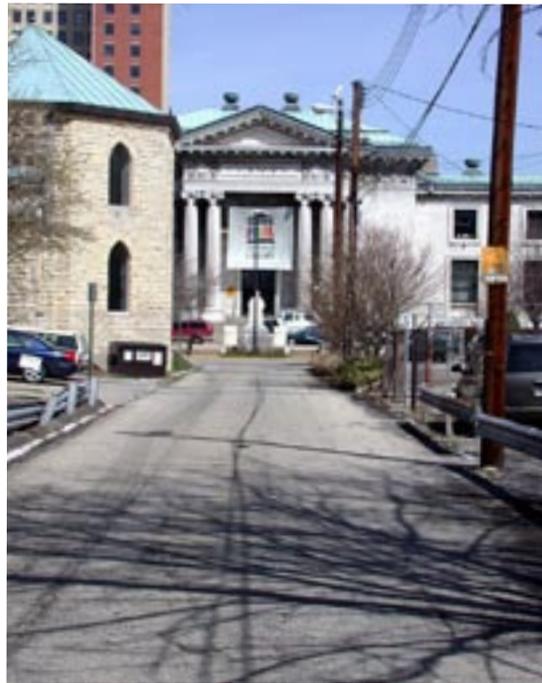
Following this Inventory phase, an analysis of existing conditions provided the groundwork for the eventual formation, or synthesis, of planning and strategy recommendations. The plan was



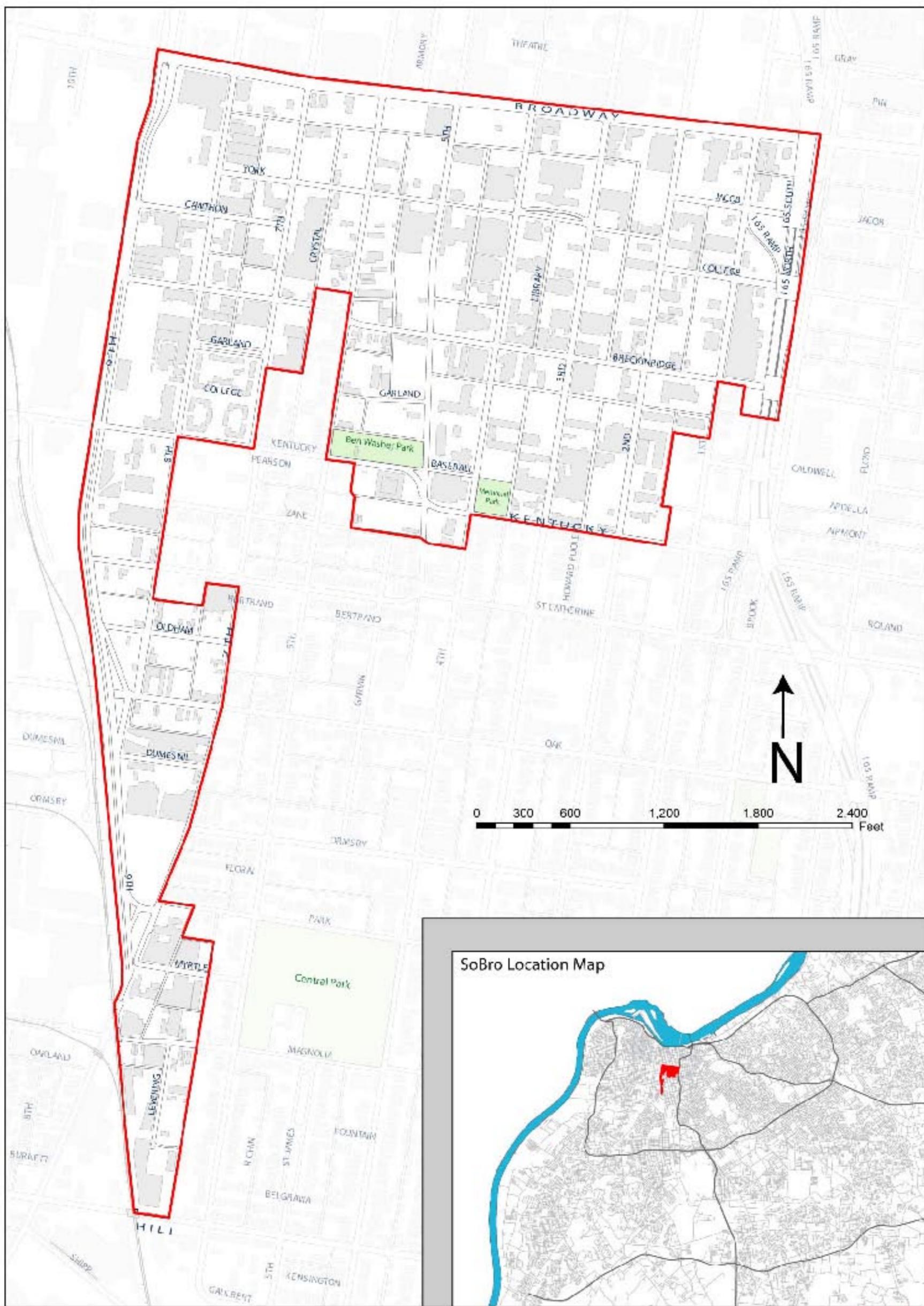
The 2002 Downtown Development Plan recognized SoBro as a sub-area of the downtown core that would serve to strengthen and compliment not only the core, but all other surrounding neighborhoods.



shaped through discussions, visioning, workshop participation and assistance from Metro Planning Staff members and the task force.



While parking lots and alleys in most of SoBro were identified as potential weaknesses, they also provide unique opportunities for redevelopment as building lots or green space and connectors.



SoBro Neighborhood



SoBro Neighborhood Vision Statement

The district South of Broadway (SoBro) is a unique urban neighborhood in the heart of the city.

At the crossroads of downtown and historic Old Louisville, SoBro combines the strengths of both, through a commingling of business, education, cultural institutions, commerce and manufacturing, all set within the context of a vibrant and diverse residential district.

SoBro’s architecture is alternately historic and contemporary, reflecting at once its legacy as one of Louisville’s original residential neighborhoods and the values and lifestyles of new generations. In combination with its distinctive architecture and urban design, SoBro’s “green” network of parks, courtyards, sidewalks, alleys and streetscapes makes the neighborhood exceptionally friendly to pedestrians and street life.

Consequently, SoBro is both an effective bridge between downtown and Old Louisville and a distinctive urban neighborhood in and of itself – “a place you are proud to call home”.



Thierman Condos on Breckinridge Street serve as a great historic reference for future SoBro housing.



The “institutional spine” of SoBro looking down 4th Street.

Neighborhood Identity

SoBro is conveniently positioned between the Downtown Central Business District and the Old Louisville/Limerick neighborhoods. During Louisville's affluent era of cultural and economic prosperity in the decades following the Civil War, SoBro was a hub of activity. The neighborhood's historical legacy tells a familiar story of decline as associated with nationwide trends of Twentieth Century post-war suburbanization. SoBro has fallen victim to real-estate speculation and the encroachment of commercial and industrial land use. Sadly, many of the historical structures have been razed. Additionally, SoBro was bisected by an elevated interstate highway, which has had a devastating impact.

The adjoining Old Louisville/Limerick neighborhoods were defended by successful resident leaders seeking to preserve the unique character and irreplaceable architecture. Unfortunately, few of SoBro's historic buildings were preserved. The structures of antiquity were replaced with modern office buildings and vast expanses of pavement that is used for surface parking lots.

The lack of architectural cohesion and the absence of continuity in urban form create a vortex effect for the SoBro neighborhood. As a result, it has become a "placeless" no-man's-land that interrupts the connection between Downtown and Old Louisville/Limerick.

Luckily, SoBro is the home to a few remaining historic structures that now serve the public as civic institutions. SoBro is home to the main branch of the Louisville Free Public Library, Spalding University, Presentation Academy, Memorial Auditorium and Park, as well as several architecturally significant churches.

The study area has previously been addressed as a subarea of planning efforts in the past few years including the Downtown Development Plan and the Old Louisville/Limerick Neighborhood Plan, but merited further in-depth study of its own. The overall purpose of this neighborhood plan, therefore, is to address connecting the urban fabric between the University of Louisville, the historic neighborhoods of Old Louisville and Limerick and the heart of downtown.



Surface lots take up more than 60% of the total land area of the SoBro Neighborhood



The 800 building was the tallest building in Kentucky for a decade and remains a significant landmark in the city as well as the neighborhood

SoBro History

At the time of Louisville's establishment in 1773, the area south of what is now Broadway was likely a forested plain, interspersed by shallow ponds, sitting atop the glacial outwash deposited throughout the area at the end of the last Ice Age. Until around 1850, there was no real development of the town south of Prather Street (now Broadway). At that time, the newly-formed Louisville and Nashville Railroad established a rail head and yards at Tenth Street on the south side of Broadway.

The real opening of SoBro to development seems to have occurred immediately following the Civil War, with the construction of expansive single family homes along Broadway, and the penetration of the area by the numbered streets, First through Ninth. The subdivision of the area by a street grid corresponded to the subdivision of land holdings, which then led to the development of these holdings as the first postwar residential subdivision for a city rapidly growing in population and prosperity – the result of Louisville's rapid commercial and industrial expansion during the two decades following the end of the Civil War. Fourth Street's dominance over the other north-south streets likely derived from the installation of early modes of public transportation – first the mule car, followed by the electric street car. The dominance of this corridor would only be reinforced by the staging of the Southern Exposition in 1883 at the far end of Fourth Street, and the need to connect this major economic showcase to the core city to the north. Just as Fourth Street, therefore, would emerge as the major commercial boulevard for the transforming central business district North of Broadway, so would Fourth become the defining corridor for the subdivisions developing to the South – initially interspersing the homes of the wealthy with their houses of worship, and later replacing the mansion homes with yet other churches and schools.

In just twenty-five years – or between 1865 and 1890 – the area south of Broadway to Kentucky would emerge as a fully developed neighborhood from First to Ninth streets. The east side of the neighborhood to Preston Street would become a European Jewish enclave, while the west side along Sixth and Seventh would host Irish Catholics – attracted by the proximity of work at the L&N – settling alongside an early enclave of freed African Americans. Fourth Street would serve as the institutional spine, as the wealthy families who first built homes in the initial blocks south of Broadway began to migrate away to the next new neighborhood, and then the next.

The neighborhood probably enjoyed just a single generation of relative stability between 1890 and 1910. While the physical breadth of Broadway suggested a kind of boundary between



Broadway east of Third Street, 1897



2nd Street



the “downtown” and the neighborhoods to the south, the economic growth and transformation of Louisville was not at the time regulated by any type of land use planning or zoning. During the first three decades of the 20th Century, the central business district grew increasingly down Fourth Street toward Broadway, away from the increasingly obsolescent river-based warehouse district located along Main. The completion of the Brown Hotel in 1923, and of the Heyburn Building in 1927, would together reestablish the center of the “new” downtown as Fourth and Broadway, thereby casting a long shadow over the neighborhood to the south. Seeking to locate near the city’s commercial center, a variety of businesses – particularly Louisville’s first generation of automobile dealers – would begin converting residential properties south of Broadway to commercial use. The migration of commerce south of Broadway, while reflective of Louisville’s prosperity during the early years of the 20th Century, would greatly reduce the attractiveness of adjacent properties and blocks originally developed for single-family residential occupancy, and consequently lead to the rapid conversion of these properties to apartments and rooming houses. Seemingly overnight, the neighborhood south of Broadway would go from being a handsome Victorian-era neighborhood to an amorphous commercial and tenement district.

SoBro Today

The Fourth Street corridor between Broadway and Breckinridge has remained the home of Louisville landmarks and institutions original to SoBro, including the Heyburn Building, Brown Brothers Cadillac, the original Main Branch of the Louisville Free Public Library, The 800 Apartments, First Unitarian Church, Calvary Episcopal Church, Spalding University, Presentation Academy, and Lampton Baptist Church (originally First Christian Church). These structures together constitute a strongly-defined urban corridor which remains SoBro’s urban spine.

The surviving remnant of SoBro’s original urban fabric is found in the 900 block of South Sixth Street – a largely unbroken block of 2½-story, detached masonry homes built in the late 19th Century, and the northernmost section of the Limerick Local Preservation District. A more modest fragment of shotgun-style homes from the same era abuts 900 South Sixth to the west, along the 900 block of South Seventh, immediately across from the ca. 1939 College Court public housing development, now condominiums. Directly south of College Court stands the historic campus of Simmons University, currently being restored by Simmons and by St. Stephens Baptist Church.

North and West of College Court to Ninth, and then South of the Simmons campus to Ormsby, has long been a commercial and industrial zone – a legacy of proximity of this side of

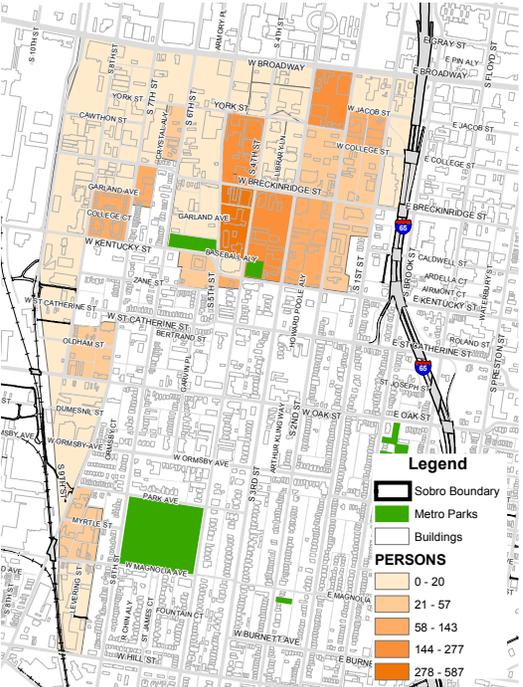


the neighborhood to the L&N yards at Tenth Street.

The eastern side of SoBro – along First and Second streets – has become ill-defined over the decades via the expansion of surface lots supporting the automobile dealerships that once lined Third Street, and the proliferation of a variety of commercial uses and structures built largely without the guidance of a uniform urban design code. A notable exception to this disjointed development pattern can be found in the 900 block of South First Street, where Bridgehaven, the Louisville Deaf Oral School, and a private accounting firm have all developed and occupied new structures designed under the purview of the Louisville Landmarks Commission. In combination with a handful of historic residential structures remaining on the block, the 900 block has recaptured some of SoBro’s original cohesiveness. The manner in which this was accomplished – via design guidelines administered by the local Landmarks agency – suggests a means by which the balance of the neighborhood might benefit from an urban design overlay.

Demographics

Vast sections of SoBro literally represent a “no-man’s land.” As the graphics in the right-hand column and the next page reveal, there really is not a critical mass of residents that define SoBro as a densely populated neighborhood, despite having nearly 8 people per acre. This population consists of literal “pockets” of residential blocks, most comprised of single-person households in institutional housing such as assisted living or college dormitories. The multi-family residential pockets such as College Court along West Kentucky, the 800 building, and the Weissinger-Gaulbert Building on Broadway primarily represent the existing population of Sobro. Overall, U.S. Census data from 2000 presents SoBro as a predominantly poor, aging, but racially diverse neighborhood.



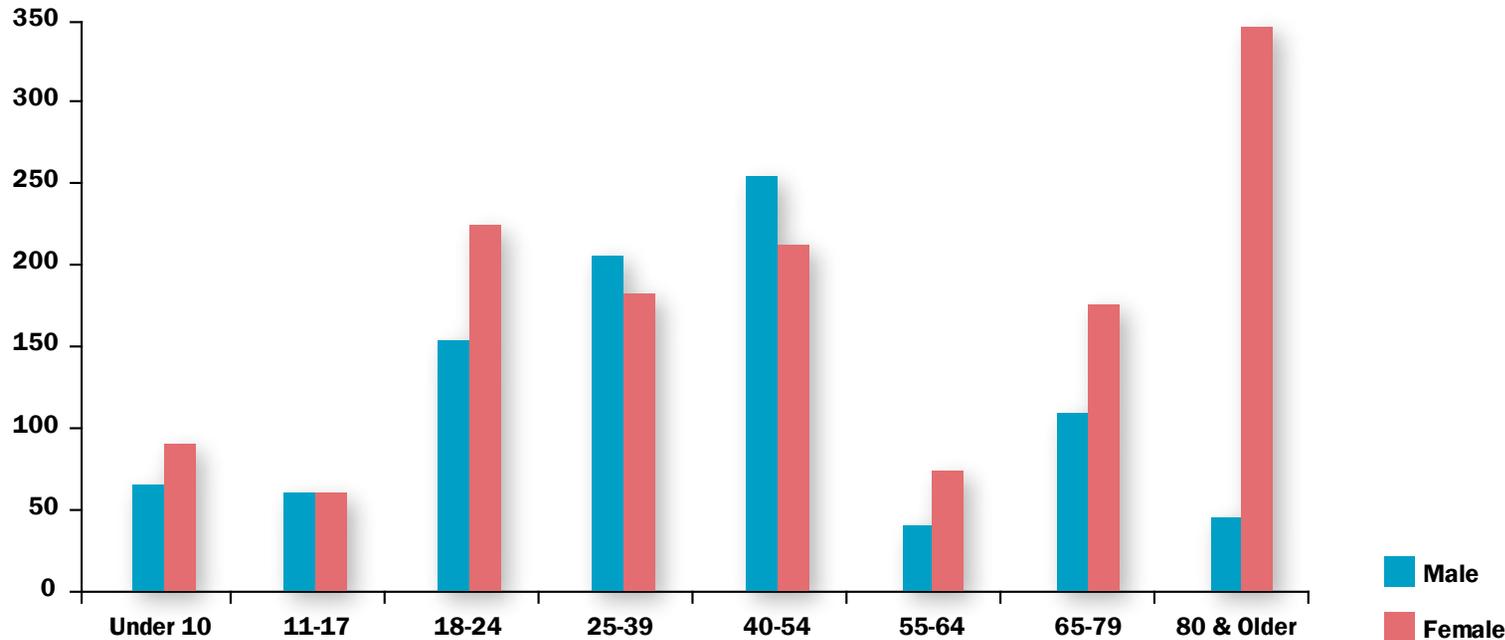
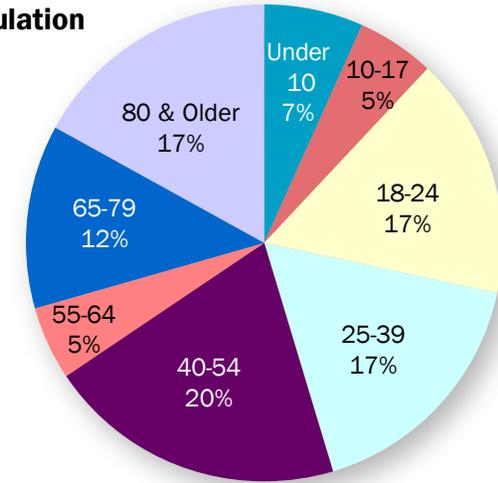
SoBro population by census block. (from 2000 U.S. Census)

SoBro Neighborhood Demographics



Age:	Male	Female	Total
Under 10	65	90	155
10-17	59	60	119
18-24	154	224	378
25-39	206	182	388
40-54	254	212	466
55-64	39	74	113
65-79	108	175	283
80 & Older	45	346	391
Total	930	1363	2293

Total SoBro Population By Age





SWOT Analysis

The SoBro Neighborhood Plan Task Force worked together early in the planning process to evaluate the existing conditions of the study area. A SWOT Analysis, commonly utilized in planning projects, was conducted during one of the monthly task force meetings. Collectively, the group identified as many Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats of SoBro as they could. In order to further clarify their thinking about and evaluation of existing conditions, the group prioritized the entries in each category. The resulting list of neighborhood characteristics, found below, helped focus the collective attention on the task at hand and provided the background food-for-thought in a follow-up workshop session that aimed to devise strategies for neighborhood improvement that would build on existing strengths and hopefully diminish existing weaknesses.

As identified by the planning task force members SoBro can be characterized as follows: (items listed in each category are approximately in order of importance)

Strengths

- Proximity to downtown and Old Louisville
- Abundance of vacant land
- Stability of institutions such as Christian Care Communities, Spalding University, Presentation Academy, Center for Women and Families
- Lots of affordable land
- Potential to become highly “walkable neighborhood”
- Community-wide landmarks such as The Free Public Library and Memorial Auditorium
- Historic and architecturally significant buildings
- Good current zoning and mixed-use

Weaknesses

- Lack of neighborhood identity
- Currently weak public policy – unwillingness to invest in SoBro
- Lack of green space
- Security – vacant land, abandoned properties, perceived lack of public safety
- Lack of retail shopping
- Potential brownfields within a checkerboard of vacant properties
- Lack of self-promotion of the neighborhood
- Homeless street population
- Expressway intrusion, I-65
- Transportation obstacles such as one-way streets and truncated east-west connector streets
- General zoning issues
- Excessive surface parking

Opportunities

- Tax incentives
- Business and retail expansion prospects
- Sports fields or complex for public and institutional use – Spalding University, Presentation Academy, Saint Francis School
- Streetscape upgrades
- Assemblage of publicly-owned properties for redevelopment
- Bicycle and walking/jogging pathway system
- Metro Parks' upgrades and development of greenspace system of small parcels and strips
- Available housing stock for renovation or adaptive reuse
- Increasing student population
- Attractive to the arts community
- Re-zoning



Red areas depict the surface lots throughout SoBro



Threats

- Apathy
- Continuing negative perceptions
- Lack of available government funding/support
- Lack of Metro Louisville strategies for supporting beneficial development
- Lack of a “Plan”
- Pervasive suburban mindset
- Redistricting of Police leading to continued perception of poor public safety
- Plan becomes too strict and inflexible
- Liability of brownfields
- Lack of patience
- Failure to manage growing social service agencies land use
- Potential concentration of single-use areas
- Failure to provide mixed-use development

Land Use / Community Form

Any overview of SoBro's land use and community form would not be complete without an understanding of its historical context. A brief visit today through the area south of Broadway will display glimpses of yesteryear's fabric, particularly as one travels down Fourth or Sixth Streets. Yet, in between, parking lots and underutilized properties dot this urban neighborhood where a thriving mixed-use district once existed. Not one factor has created such a shift over the last century, but rather a myriad of influences including changes in technologies, transportation patterns, regulatory means, and investment strategies amongst others. What is left for the 21st Century is an area complete with investment opportunities, particularly with its unique location between the reinvigorated downtown and the historic neighborhoods of Old Louisville and Limerick.

The following chapter discusses the historic and current factors that define SoBro's land use and community form. Many of the ideas generated in the plan process and reflected in the recommendations arose from the Task Force's efforts for envisioning and thinking creatively of how to revitalize SoBro into a thriving mixed-use neighborhood. The consultant and Louisville Metro Planning and Design Services used a workshop to help produce a significant amount of ideas that serve for the basis of this plan's recommendations. Many of these forward-thinking ideas are reflected in this chapter, with the synthesis of the workshop included in the Appendix. The Task Force recognized that SoBro was not one unified form or land use district. By dividing the neighborhood into three sections for analysis, the stakeholders were able to recognize that the study area presents a mix of block types, forms, and uses, yet should serve to tie the urban fabric together in a manner that develops a sense of place for encouraging investment and redevelopment in SoBro for the future.

Form Districts and Community Character

Located in an area that was one of Louisville's original neighborhoods, Sobro once possessed the character typical of a traditional neighborhood. Archived photos remind us of the once prevalent residential fabric, intertwined with an array of uses, all in close proximity of one another. Following years of technological, economic, and socio-cultural shifts, the character of Sobro has dramatically changed. Form district regulations serve today as the key regulation that determines the ongoing character of Louisville's neighborhoods and can serve as a key tool to restore some of the urban fabric previously in the Sobro area.



“Strategically located between downtown and the Old Louisville and Limerick neighborhoods, SoBro has been called the “missing link” because of its fragmented development pattern and large amount of underused land. Because of its location, SoBro has the potential to help create a continuous attractive urban environment from the Ohio River south to the University of Louisville.”

**-Louisville Downtown
Development Plan, 2002**



SoBro's urban form and character consists of a unique variety of faces including traditional neighborhood and traditional workplace.

The neighborhood study area includes three form districts, each complementary of the traditional and historic fabric of diverse uses and their built environment. These include Downtown (DFD), Traditional Workplace (TWFD), and Traditional Neighborhood (TNFD). The northern section, the area generally north of York Street, is currently designated Downtown Form District. The DFD is intended to create a downtown with a compact, walkable core and a lively and active pedestrian environment that fosters and increases the number of people walking and to ensure a more humane downtown environment. DFD design standards are also intended to promote the downtown as a unique and active destination with a variety of land uses, including residential uses, designed in context within the area in which they are located. Buildings such as the Weissinger/Gaulbert Building and the Heyburn Building provide a variety of uses and the inviting street-level characteristics that the DFD is intended to address.

At the core of the Sobro area is the Traditional Neighborhood form district (See map on page 25). The TNFD is intended to promote the establishment of a mixture of uses that effectively integrate retail, office, institutional, and other non-residential uses within traditional neighborhoods in a manner that provides high quality and convenient service to residents while protecting the character of the neighborhood. Currently, only a brief section of the 900 block of South Sixth Street with late 19th Century masonry homes provides a glimpse of the traditional urban fabric once prevalent throughout the area of Sobro. The adjacent traditional neighborhoods, Limerick and Old Louisville, exemplify Sobro's historic context. Structures such as "The Olympia" at the corner of 3rd Street and Breckinridge serve as a good example of corner mixed use within a Traditional Neighborhood.

Finally, the 9th Street corridor (including 7th and 8th Streets) area along Sobro's western edge, is a critical area for the neighborhood's future viability. It is located adjacent to the Station Park/Park Hill area, Louisville's 19th century industrial hot zone and key economic engine of that time. As such, the dominant land use is industrial, intermingling with some residential properties. This area is designated under Louisville Metro's form districts as Traditional Workplace (TWFD). TWFD applies to older established industrial and employment areas that contain primarily small-to-medium scale industrial and employment uses. These uses are often historically integrated with or adjacent to residential neighborhoods, especially traditional neighborhoods. District standards are designed to encourage adaptive reuse and investment in these areas while ensuring compatibility with adjacent uses and form districts, to ensure adequate access and transit service, and to retain



Historic streetscape and vista of Downtown skyline.



"The Olympia" building on the corner of 3rd and Breckinridge exemplifies corner mixed-use.

distinctive land uses and patterns such as connected street grids. The current pattern of investment in Sobro's 9th Street area, particularly medium intensity industrial uses, reflects the essence of the TWFD, despite pockets of vacant parcels and buildings in need of reinvestment. Nevertheless, following the guidelines of the TWFD, opportunities for adaptive reuse of structures such as light industrial and live-work units exists and should be encouraged as long as the uses are compatible with nearby residential areas.

Future Form Districts and Community Character

The stakeholders involved in Sobro's neighborhood planning process recognize that the neighborhood's future success depends on exploiting its existing assets, including the current "commingling of business, education, cultural institutions, commerce and manufacturing, all set within the context of a vibrant and diverse residential district." Form district standards are used to guide this blend, yet must work within the realities of market and property rights forces. One recommendation to achieve this mix as well as the desired outcomes of the future built environment is extending the boundaries of the existing Downtown Form District south from York Street to Kentucky, from 1-65 to Seventh Street; and then from Broadway to Cawthon between Seventh and Ninth Streets. This area's designation as DFD would serve as a catalyst for expanding the Downtown Development Corporation's (DDC) jurisdiction as part of the Downtown Development Review Overlay District (DDRO). SoBro's inclusion in these regulatory tools further strengthens the goals outlined for SoBro in the Downtown Development Plan and echoed in Cornerstone 2020.

Due to the complexity of ownership in this district, any future infill or redevelopment in this area will be incremental. However, the oversight and enabling capabilities of the Downtown Development Corporation and the DDRO process would aim to maintain a coherent form and pattern of mixed-use investment. The Task Force and participating stakeholders from the study considers the DFD designation as the most supportive and enabling of the urban scale and form, implicit in the SoBro vision. In addition, since detached single-family residential in the DFD would still adhere to TNFD standards, the integrity of the existing traditional residential structures in Limerick/Old Louisville would not be compromised.

The "southwest" portion has always had an industrial tinge to its urban fabric and may continue to serve in this capacity for the foreseeable future, albeit at a much smaller scale than



Aerial image depicting the abundance of surface parking



known in past generations. New flexible technologies in manufacturing favor smaller, decentralized production units, often providing specializing services to nearby larger producers or as providers of products for consumer niche markets. The Traditional Workplace Form District serves to accommodate this type of production, yet provides opportunities for the integration of housing and retail. This plan does not recommend changes to the existing TWFD of the study area. However, any future development to this part of SoBro, particularly those commercial or industrial uses, should use creative and flexible site design that protects the nearby residential neighborhoods from incompatible uses and nuisances. The use of creative landscaping for screening and buffering, such as fencing (see pictures in right column on page 23) and the provision of common streetscape elements, such as street trees, signage, street furniture, sidewalks and lighting in a fashion that integrates the area with its adjacent historic neighborhood, Old Louisville.

Current Land Use and Zoning

An understanding of today's land use and current zoning districts within Sobro would not be complete without an analysis of the original zoning in the Sobro area. Beginning in 1931, the year the City of Louisville first adopted zoning district maps, the Sobro area was blanketed with the equivalent of M-2 and M-3 designations. Prior to this designation, the area south of Broadway thrived as a fully developed neighborhood from 1st through 9th streets. As described earlier in the "Sobro History" section, the area saw its heyday during a time prior to any type of zoning regulations. Once the area became industrially zoned, over time the attractiveness as a residential area shifted to the commercial and tenement district described previously.

Today's Sobro represents a full evolution of that change from residential to a complete mix of zoning classes, with no one district being dominant. Table 1 breaks down Sobro's zoning category percentages by class (See Map for locations). The most dominant class is C-2, which is a medium intensity commercial district that is intended to allow a variety of uses including retail, offices, restaurants, and residential. The bulk of the 6th and York Street area, as well as the Breckinridge and 2nd Street area are within the C-2 district. The next highest zoning district is R-7, which is intended to provide for medium density multi-family development, but allows for single family, row houses and multiple family units.

One of the most visible sections of Sobro, the 4th Street corridor, is zoned OR-3, which is intended to allow a greater mix and intensity of office and residential uses. The important

<i>SoBro Zoning Categories</i>	<i>Number of Parcels</i>	<i>Percent of Total</i>
C2	370	38.5%
R7	154	16.0%
M2	135	14.0%
CM	76	7.9%
OR3	66	6.9%
C3	65	6.8%
M1	27	2.8%
M3	17	1.8%
OTF	16	1.7%
OR2	15	1.6%
C1	11	1.1%
EZ1	7	0.7%
UN	2	0.2%
	961	100.0%



distinction for the OR-3 district is the restriction of commercial uses to incidental use, such as a pharmacy inside of a nursing home, or restaurant inside a student center.

Industrial uses are permitted in a majority of the western section of Sobro, which includes a mix of M2, CM, M1, M3, and EZ-1. These uses allow for manufacturing, processing, treatment and storage of various products. The most prominent industrial district for Sobro is M2, which is a medium intensity district that is commonly used for outdoor storage among other uses.

Future Land Use and Zoning

Among the most important dialogues during the planning process related to the future land uses and the question of whether these zoning districts would lead to eventual realization of the Sobro Vision Statement to create a vibrant, mixed-use neighborhood. The plan proposes establishing Planned Development Districts (PDD) as a means to achieve this vision. Two contiguous districts South of Broadway – the main body of SoBro between Ninth and I-65 north of Kentucky, and the so-called SoBro “dogleg,” in the southwest of the study area along Ninth Street south to Ormsby would be the PDDs.

In each case, rezoning the affected district will increase certainty for property owners and prospective developers about the design standards and the mix of forms and uses considered acceptable and mutually compatible within the district. The purpose of establishing each district is to impose a clearly articulated plan for the affected area produced through a process of community dialogue, negotiation and agreement. Louisville Metro Planning and Design Services (LMPDS) will facilitate the process for developing the plan and standards upon which each Planned Development District will be based.

The purpose for recommending two distinct Planned Development Districts represents the unique attributes of each district. The Planned Development District governing the main body of SoBro will likely aim toward creating the kind of mixed residential and commercial district described in the Task Force’s vision statement. Meanwhile, southwest SoBro will likely continue as a mixed industrial and commercial area with a distinct residential component.

While the PDD approach – specifically tailored for mixed-use areas – seems highly appro-



appropriate for both areas of SoBro, the distinctions between the two districts seem significant enough to warrant the establishment of two separate PDDs, each based in a distinct vision and scheme. The PDDs would need to be developed under the Master Plan Option, which requires detailed design guidelines, a detailed permitted use table for that PDD, and maps that detail the location of the permitted uses and their transition areas. Uses that have been expressed by the stakeholders involved in the plan process include general retail, multi-family residential, institutional uses, light industrial, office and service uses that compliment the surrounding residential and mixed use character. The existing industrial properties would not be adversely impacted, but rather would allow them to remain and have flexibility for potential future redevelopment.

Achieving the Master Plan Option recommended in this study would require amending the existing PDD ordinance. Proposed changes to the ordinance would allow a Master Plan to delineate the transitions between uses and their intensity (i.e. height, density, etc.) within and between the differing form districts. For example, even though an area may allow similar uses (i.e. light industry and general retail), the development's intensity would be different based on its surrounding structures.

Summary Recommendations

- Extend Downtown Form District south to Kentucky, east to I-65, west to 9th @ Cawthorn.
- Establish Planned Development District (PDD) south of Broadway within newly extended Downtown Form District.
- Establish Planned Development District (PDD) within SoBro “southwest” as mixed residential/commercial/light industrial district.
- Amend the existing Planned Development District ordinance to allow the master plan option to create an area-specific use table, a specific master plan map that delineates gradations in intensity to promote compatibility, and allowances for specific transition standards.
- In conjunction with recommended expansion of Downtown Form District, consider extending jurisdiction of Downtown Development Review Overlay District

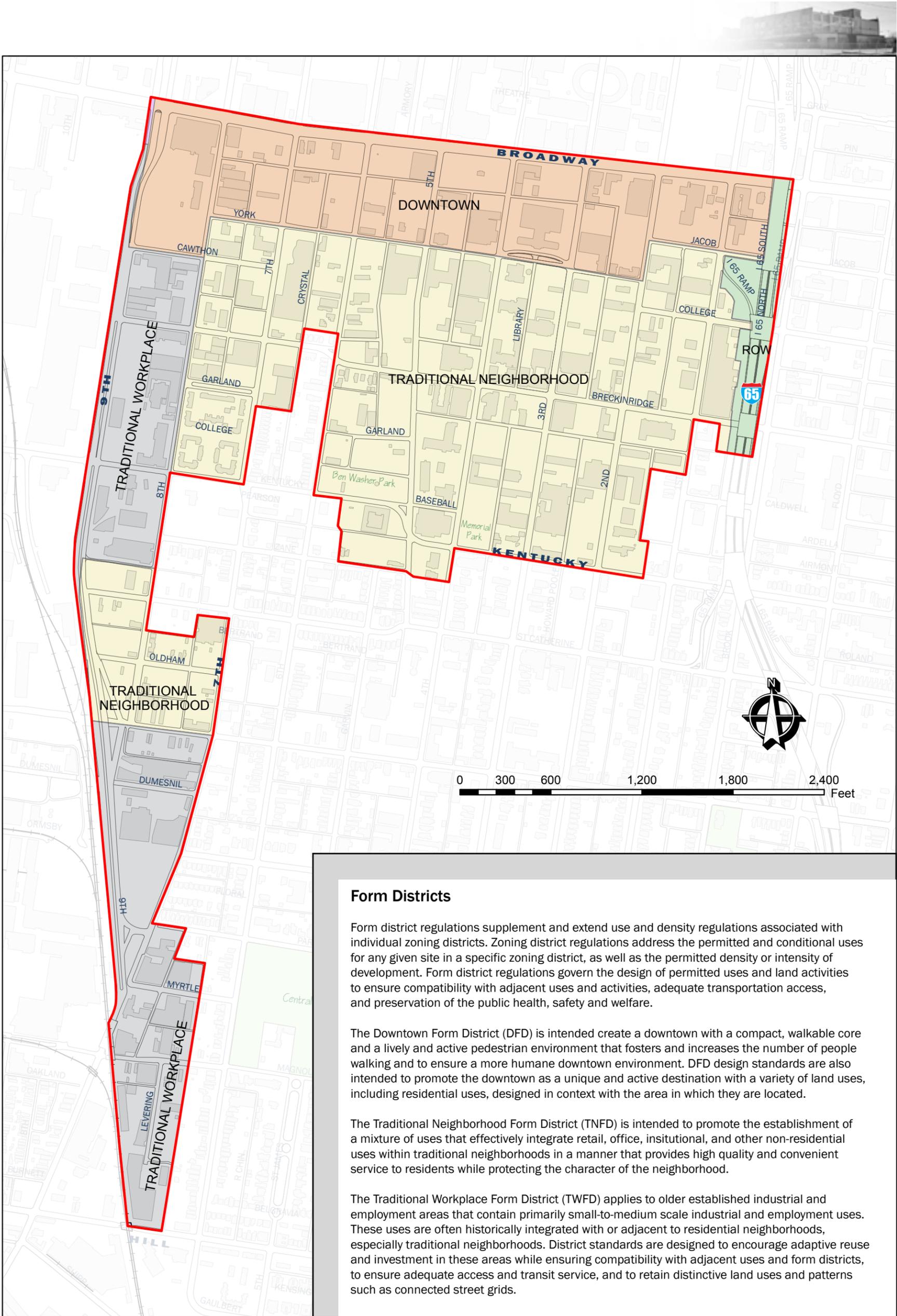


The pictures above provide examples of preferred methods for landscaped screening for industrial properties in the TWFDD, particularly those in close proximity to residential areas.



(DDRO) into SoBro.

- Organize Fourth Street institutions to investigate the feasibility of joint parking arrangements and facilities.
- Establish a single entity dedicated to SoBro planning, advocacy, development, and area improvement.
- Organize SoBro stakeholders around cooperative parking solutions, open space and streetscape master plans, the planning of joint recreational/athletic facilities, and development strategies.



Form Districts

Form district regulations supplement and extend use and density regulations associated with individual zoning districts. Zoning district regulations address the permitted and conditional uses for any given site in a specific zoning district, as well as the permitted density or intensity of development. Form district regulations govern the design of permitted uses and land activities to ensure compatibility with adjacent uses and activities, adequate transportation access, and preservation of the public health, safety and welfare.

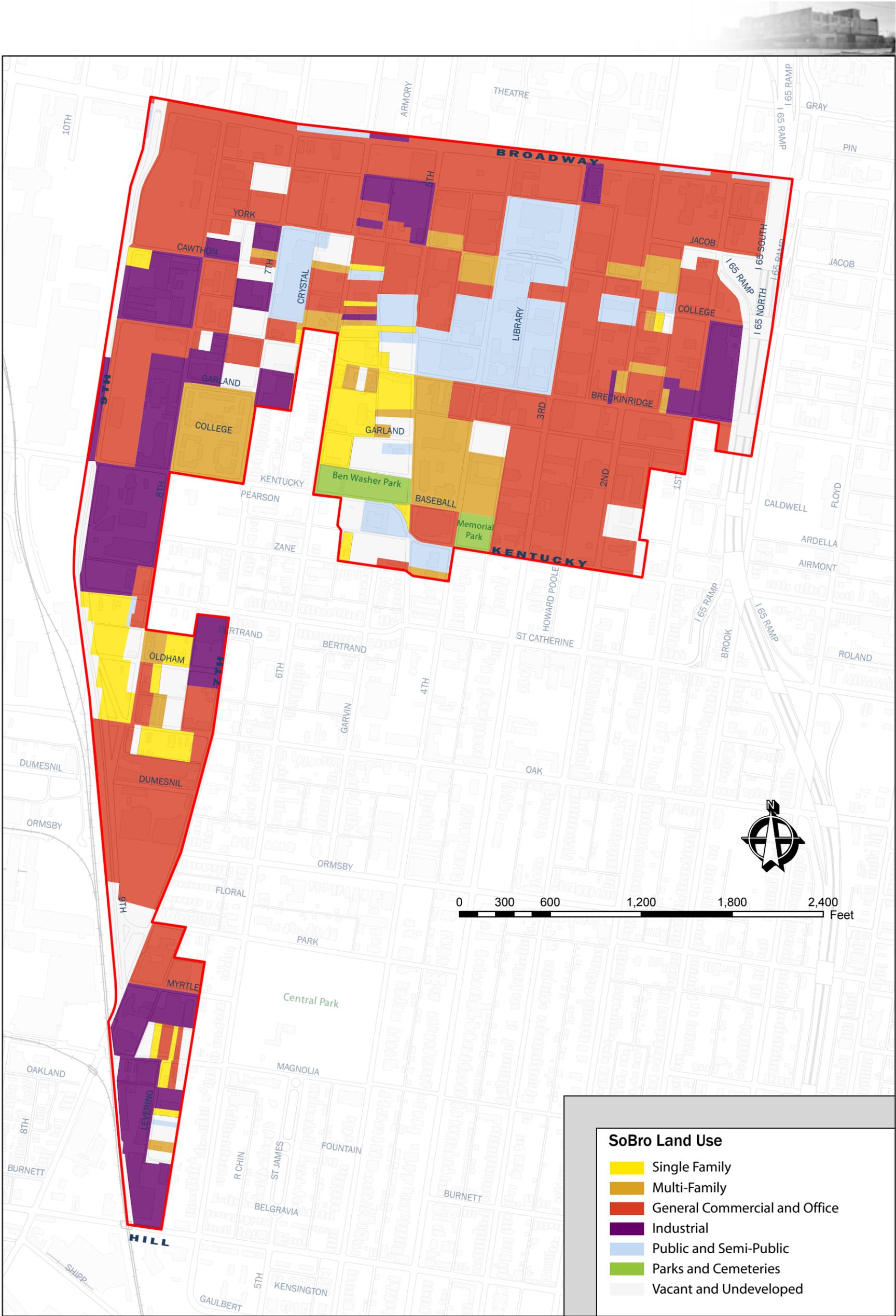
The Downtown Form District (DFD) is intended create a downtown with a compact, walkable core and a lively and active pedestrian environment that fosters and increases the number of people walking and to ensure a more humane downtown environment. DFD design standards are also intended to promote the downtown as a unique and active destination with a variety of land uses, including residential uses, designed in context with the area in which they are located.

The Traditional Neighborhood Form District (TNFD) is intended to promote the establishment of a mixture of uses that effectively integrate retail, office, insitutional, and other non-residential uses within traditional neighborhoods in a manner that provides high quality and convenient service to residents while protecting the character of the neighborhood.

The Traditional Workplace Form District (TWFD) applies to older established industrial and employment areas that contain primarily small-to-medium scale industrial and employment uses. These uses are often historically integrated with or adjacent to residential neighborhoods, especially traditional neighborhoods. District standards are designed to encourage adaptive reuse and investment in these areas while ensuring compatibility with adjacent uses and form districts, to ensure adequate access and transit service, and to retain distinctive land uses and patterns such as connected street grids.

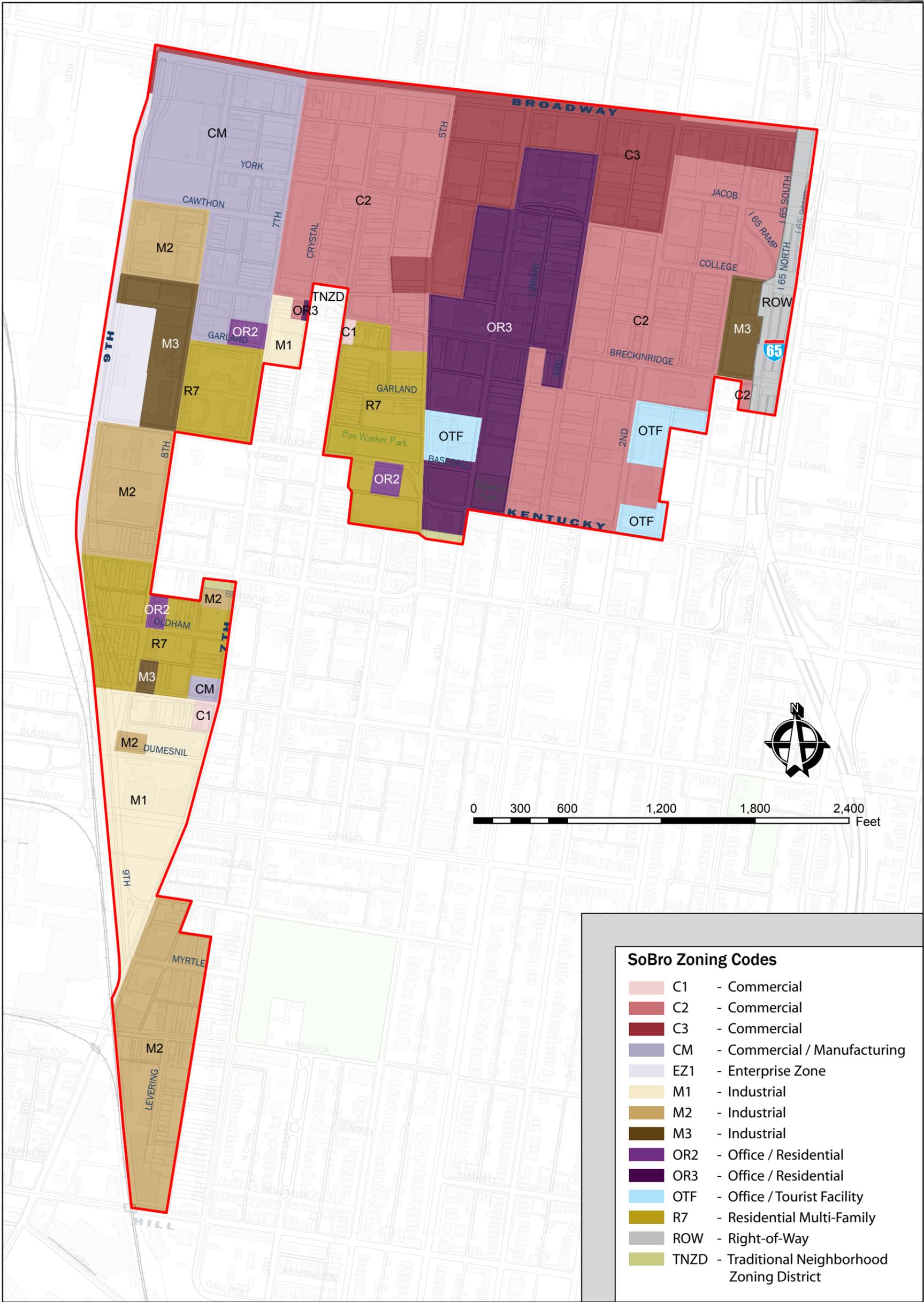
SoBro: Current Form Districts





SoBro: Current Land Use





SoBro: Current Zoning



Mobility

Few areas near the Central Business District of Louisville Metro illustrate our auto-centric society as does the SoBro neighborhood. Massive surface parking lots and one-way streets have decimated the neighborhood creating a system of roadways that facilitates high-volume rapid transit throughout, linking outside neighborhoods to parking lots but little else. SoBro's grid street system extends southward from downtown and flows throughout, yet the streets do not provide the interconnectivity associated with the traditional grid system.

Major vehicular arteries impose physical barriers along three of the four edges of the neighborhood (see map below). West Broadway, to the north, discourages pedestrian access to the neighborhood from the downtown area due to the great width of the street and the lack of pedestrian medians that could otherwise create a more pedestrian-friendly boulevard. Contributing further to this poor pedestrian gateway to SoBro is the fragmented street wall and lack of retail destinations along the southern face of Broadway. Ninth Street, to the west, and Interstate 65, to the east, also create barriers to connectivity by severing nearby neighborhood streets and limiting access to these boundary roadways and adjacent neighborhoods. Although originally designed to



Broadway looking west at Second Street



I-65 disconnect SoBro from the Smoketown Neighborhood.

Pedestrian and Bicyclist Issues

Streetscapes of SoBro suffer greatly from the abundance of surface lots and large setbacks of many of the structures. Although the width of sidewalks in the area provides ample space for pedestrian traffic through the neighborhood, the lack of continuity and interesting street-walls is not conducive to a quality pedestrian environment. The existing stock of pedestrian friendly sidewalks is the result of the traditional neighborhood design prior to urban renewal which left us with a wonderful system of sidewalks but no destinations. The neighborhood blocks running north-south become larger as one moves south from Broadway. These larger blocks should be subdivided into smaller configurations through the introduction of new streets or pedestrian walkways. One positive note is the recent completion of a dedicated bike lane along Third Street from Main Street to the University of Louisville and eventually to Iroquois Park. The neighborhood has a good start on connectivity by bicycle to surrounding neighborhoods to the north and south. Further improvements and extensions of this network will help to solidify the designation of SoBro as an important urban core neighborhood that serves to bridge the downtown with Old Louisville.

Public Transportation

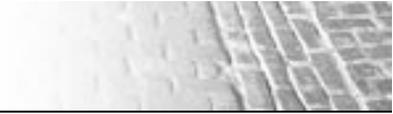
SoBro is well served by the Transit Authority of River City (TARC). Currently, thirty-two (32) of the fifty-seven (57) TARC routes operate within the neighborhood. TARC's services provide a great deal of connectivity for the residents and work force of SoBro to the all of Louisville Metro and parts of southern Indiana.



Surface lot near the corner of Kentucky and Second Street



The SoBro area is well served by TARC's public transportation system.



ACTIVE Louisville

All of the goals of ACTIVE Louisville should apply equally to every neighborhood throughout Louisville Metro.

Increasing opportunities for safe and convenient physical activity, which lead to healthier lifestyles and communities, is on the agenda of every urban designer, project developer, transportation and park planner, neighborhood leader and residents of all ages. As a reminder from the SoBro Neighborhood Planning Task Force, the following active living initiatives should be anticipated and addressed in all aspects of SoBro's redevelopment initiatives:

- Incorporation of active living principles into all physical development projects and neighborhood improvements
- Provision of programming and educational opportunities that promote healthier lifestyles
- Leadership linkage across disciplines and stakeholder groups that institutionalizes an active living approach to planning throughout SoBro and its adjacent urban neighborhoods

Summary Recommendations

- Initiate a transportation study, that would coordinate with current planning efforts in the Park Hill Corridor to the west of 9th Street, for the purpose of improving vehicular access to the many businesses in Southwest SoBro while protecting the residential areas of SoBro and Old Louisville from commercial vehicle intrusions.
- Study and enact restoration of two-way traffic to streets throughout SoBro (See map on page 32).
- Develop a network of neighborhood bike routes that connect with the Louisville Metro Bike System.

SoBro Recommended Potential Street Conversion Map (Illustrative)



Housing

Although most of the housing in the neighborhood is scattered between the vast surface and vacant lots, the SoBro housing stock varies widely from simple shotgun style homes to large three and four-story, 100 year old homes along with an assortment of multi-unit dwellings.

With a seemingly enormous potential for infill development, a housing study was conducted by Zimmerman/Volk Associates, Inc to identify the depth and breadth of the market for newly-introduced market-rate housing units. The Study summarizes the market potential and optimum market position of units created both through the adaptive re-use of existing non-residential buildings as well as through new construction-to-be leased or sold within the SoBro Study Area.

From the perspective of draw area target market propensities and compatibility, and within the context of the new housing marketplace in the Downtown Louisville/SoBro market area, the potential market for new housing units within the study area could include the full range of housing types, from rental multi-family to for-sale single-family detached housing. However, as in the downtown, new construction should concentrate on higher-density housing types, which support civic and commercial urban development and redevelopment most efficiently. The study sited the most appropriate housing types to be:

- Rental lofts and apartments (multi-family for-rent)
- For-sale lofts and apartments (multi-family for-sale)
- Townhouses, rowhouses, live-work (single-family attached for-sale)

The raw space version of a loft, or “hard” loft, is adaptable for a wide range of non-residential uses, from an art or music studio to a small office, as well as residential living areas. The interior of “hard” lofts typically have high ceilings and commercial windows, no interior partitions, and other features that define flexibility and rawness of this type of space. A “soft” loft on the other hand, may or may not have high ceilings and are fully finished, typically with separate rooms. The loft, whether “hard” or “soft” style, is not dependent upon building form, other than that it is almost always with a multi-unit building.

Although lofts can accommodate work space, the live-work units are typically attached buildings, each with only one principal dwelling unit that includes flexible space that can be used as office, retail, or studio space, or as an accessory dwelling unit. Live-work units could



Historic housing stock along Second Street



The Weissinger-Gaulbert Building today

therefore be developed through adaptation of a rowhouse or even the combination of two adjacent rowhouses.

The Zimmerman-Volk housing feasibility analysis presents useful insights on how to do so. The study concludes that there is a significant potential market for housing in the area both among “empty nesters” and young adults attracted to urban living and lifestyles. The keys to tapping into either of these markets, however, are product design, sales price or rent, and location. While developers can control design and price, the cost and availability of land at desirable locations are market issues well beyond their control. All of these circumstances suggest creating a significant housing development fund that would be pegged specifically to SoBro. The Zimmerman-Volk study has indicated that there is a potential market for housing in the area, especially at a “price point” that would be affordable to young adults. Drawing from the recent experience of Park DuValle, it seems the greatest inducement to new development in SoBro will need to be subsidy – to offset the initial perceived risk of building, buying, or renting in the area. Once a critical mass of new housing and structures has been established in SoBro, then a market shall have been established and the area can consequently be weaned of further development subsidy.

Experience of similar sized American cities has been that once the downtown residential component has been established and a viable alternative, the percentage of households that will consider downtown housing as an option grows as well. Dramatic shifts in the American household towards an increase in urban living appears to be likely to continue and likely increase in the years to come.

Summary Recommendations

- Establish a SoBro Housing Development Fund to encourage new housing initiatives within SoBro, particularly focused in priority areas immediately east and west of the Fourth Street institutional core.
- Focus public-private housing development strategies in the Fifth/Sixth street corridor, from Ben Washer Park to the 800 Apartments, and including publicly-owned land currently under lease by Downtown Ford.



New homes construction on West Oak Street



College Court Condominiums

Parks, Open Space, and Recreation

If quality of life is a determining factor in real-estate values, economic vitality, and a neighborhood's attractiveness, parks, open space, and recreation spaces play a critical role in this measurement. Besides their obvious benefit of providing active and passive recreation opportunities, public green spaces provide a multitude of social, environmental, and economic benefits. Studies across the United States have repeatedly demonstrated that parks and open spaces within a walkable distance (less than 500 feet) of a residential or commercial property lead to increased property values. In fact, in many incidences, the increased property value of adjacent properties has served beneficial in these park's maintenance and enhancements, without additional supplementary tax increases. SoBro's location adjacent to two of this region's top attractions, Downtown and Old Louisville, serve this area's future viability extremely well and merit significant consideration for future park, open space, and recreation spaces.

Currently, there are two parks managed by Metro Parks in the SoBro study area. Ben Washer Park, established in 1957, is a two-acre park located along Kentucky between Fifth and Sixth streets. The other, Memorial Park, nearly 1 acre and established in 1973, is one block away on Kentucky at 4th Street. Although both parks are integrated into the urban fabric of their immediate surrounding, aerial imagery reveals the abrupt contrast between the verdant streets south of these parks and the predominantly paved land to the north. Years without a vision, a plan, or community demand for a network of open spaces has created a context where the status quo is a virtual blank canvas.

In addition to parks and recreation spaces, streetscapes play an important role in strengthening the identity and cohesion of neighborhoods. A complete streetscape with street trees, landscaping, appropriate lighting and other design features create a pleasant and safe environment for all users of the street. SoBro's public streetscape suffers from existing trees that are sparsely planted and lacking in continuity. Upon crossing Kentucky Street the lush green north-south streets of Old Louisville lose their definition and become uninviting passages until reaching Broadway, save various sections along 4th Street. Broadway itself suffers greatly from a lack of urban trees, with many of the trees that currently line the streets being located on the inside of the sidewalk rather than near the curbs in planting pits or parkways. This planting arrangement negates the potential effect of traffic calming which gives the pedestrian a sense of a true physical barrier between themselves and the seven lanes of passing traffic. Designs for future introductions of street trees and visual buffer plantings should be reviewed to ensure that these streetscape elements be located



Ben Washer Park



Memorial Park

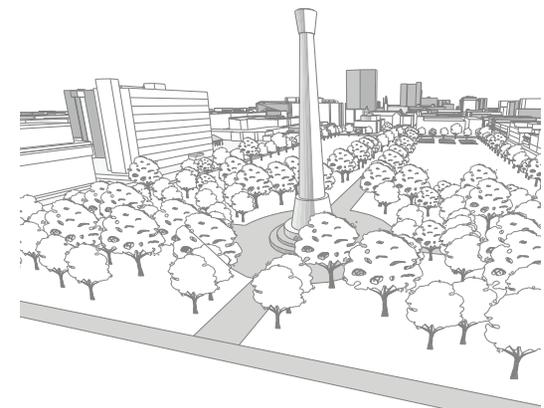


for maximum pedestrian benefit.

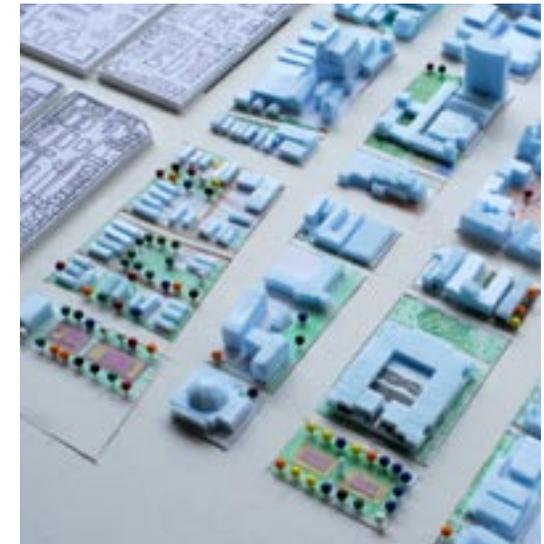
SoBro's extensive acreage of vacant land offers the possibility of creating a large park similar in size to Old Louisville's Central Park (see pg.39). Such a park could spur development along its periphery since parkside real estate has historically been shown to possess heightened aesthetic, psychological and tax-base value. A park of this size could also serve some of the goals of institutional stakeholders in the neighborhood, such as Spalding University and Presentation Academy, who expressed need of athletic facilities while also providing a community recreation and meeting place. Other types of public green space, from pedestrian corridors to small pocket parks, would ultimately be additional components of a coordinated, well-considered SoBro Greenspace System.

Tree lined streets is another method of uniting neighborhoods giving them a sense of place. Canopies of mature trees provide shade and encourage pedestrian use of sidewalks. Likewise, a tree's vegetation performs critical environmental functions such as absorbing carbon dioxide, filtering air and pollutants, and reducing stormwater runoff. Absent a plan over the years, Sobro's pattern reflects areas of piecemeal plantings. A consistent pattern exists around established locations such as the Louisville Free Public Library, Memorial Auditorium, and the public parks previously mentioned. However, the majority of the neighborhood presents a very inconsistent pattern of existing plantings as shown in the diagram on the following page.

The establishment of green and open spaces within SoBro is necessary to fulfill the vision of a pedestrian-friendly environment. Due to the lack of an identifiable network of existing parks and open spaces, a good opportunity exists to create a master plan for the greening of the neighborhood. A task force made up of professional landscape architects, planners and neighborhood residents and business owners should be formed. Their input would be key to identifying the most appropriate layout of the green spaces and their linkage to the neighborhood, a plan to acquire necessary lands to form the green framework, and exploration of collaborative funding mechanisms if public funds are not available for implementation or maintenance. This task force would begin their planning process by identifying and evaluating the numerous opportunities presenting themselves for the configuration of green spaces in the neighborhood.



Concept for a large park between 3rd and 4th Streets north of Kentucky



Park configuration - conceptual model



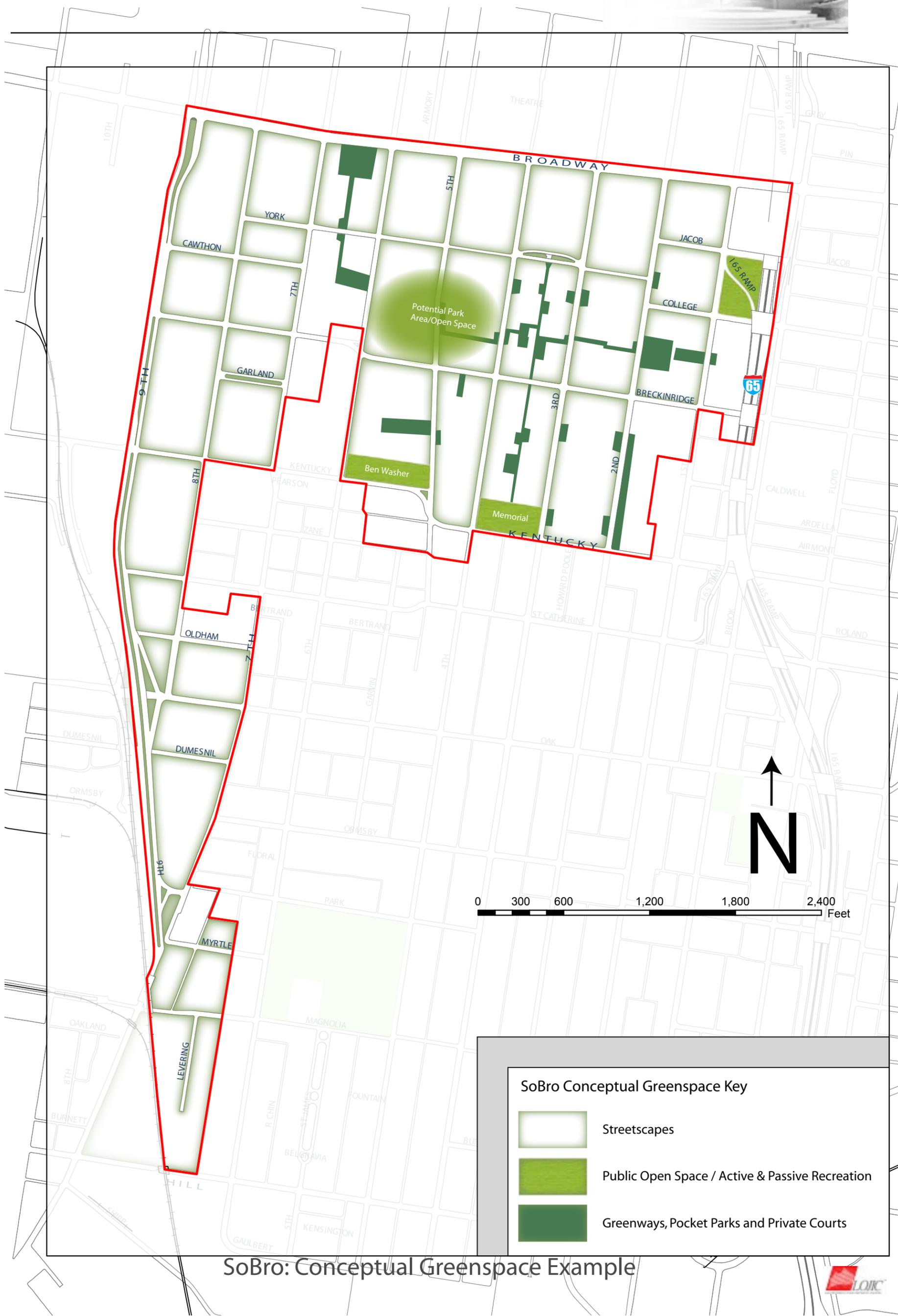
- Uniform plantings, mature canopy
- Regular plantings, without canopy
- Irregular plantings
- No substantial plantings



Summary Recommendations

- Incorporate a streetscape and open space component into the Plan Development District Master Plan for the proposed two sections of SoBro, focusing on connection and consistency throughout all of Sobro. Design guidelines of the PDDs should include a streetscape and open space component, with an emphasis on First through Sixth streets, to create an effective and attractive transition between Downtown and Old Louisville and an inviting environment for pedestrians, cyclists, residents, and businesses. The plans should also establish a neighborhood-wide system of green spaces, ranging from pocket parks to athletic facilities, for use by residents, visitors, and educational institutions and teams.

- For SoBro “southwest,” develop a combination of public initiatives and property owner incentives to improve the quality of green spaces, streetscapes and industrial property perimeter screening. Quality should be in keeping with the character of Old Louisville generally and will provide a transition/connection to similar future efforts in the Park Hill Corridor to the west of 9th Street.



SoBro: Conceptual Greenspace Example



Urban Design

Kevin Lynch, author of *The Image of the City*, offered us an insightful reflection regarding urban design when he said “Nothing is experienced by itself, but always in relation to its surroundings, the sequences of events leading up to it, the memory of past experiences.” This idea of context is the very subject that has inspired several studies and urban design analysis about SoBro. Throughout this document, the consistent theme has centered on SoBro’s rich urban fabric and potential to realize seamless connections to the area’s key amenities. This chapter looks at the potential “image” as well as the prospect for creating sustainable development for SoBro. The discussion centers on ideas developed from this neighborhood planning process, as well as concepts developed from the work of University of Louisville and University of Kentucky architecture and urban planning students.

SoBro’s Morphology

The pattern of development in the SoBro neighborhood has been mostly destroyed by the razing of buildings and implementation of vast surface parking areas. Few buildings remain to lend a hint of any semblance of pattern even along the major corridors of Broadway, Third Street and Fourth Street. Some significant buildings along the periphery such as the Cosmopolitan on Kentucky and Third Street can help to establish a new pattern of urban density and transition from the taller downtown structures along Broadway to the Cosmopolitan and across Kentucky to the Old Louisville Neighborhood.

Many of the buildings within SoBro do not conform to the envisioned urban development of the neighborhood. Beyond the major problems of surface lots, there are many buildings whose setbacks are too far from the street and whose heights are too short to create the prescribed cohesion of street walls conducive for vibrant urban communities.

Although many of the architectural treasures from a previous era no longer stand, the neighborhood retains several structures which merit preservation and a complimenting surrounding. The most prominent and guiding features of the neighborhood are the monumental and historic buildings which exist including the Louisville Free Public Library, Memorial Auditorium, Weissinger-Gaulbert, York Tower, Heyburn Building among others mostly concentrated along Third and Fourth Street and Broadway. These buildings help create a useful guide to determine the original shape and flow of the once flourishing neighborhood. Indicators to heights and setbacks



Continuous streetwalls are an important component of a friendly pedestrian environment



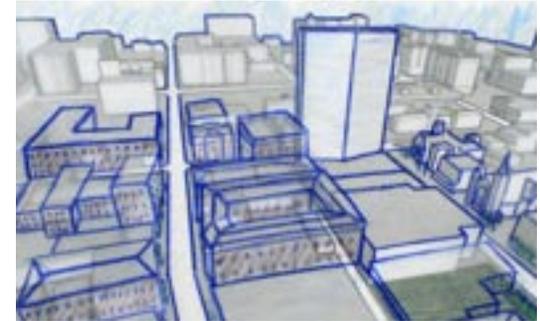
Conceptual views of Broadway looking west

as well as uses can be gleaned from such buildings as the Olympic or the Thierman.

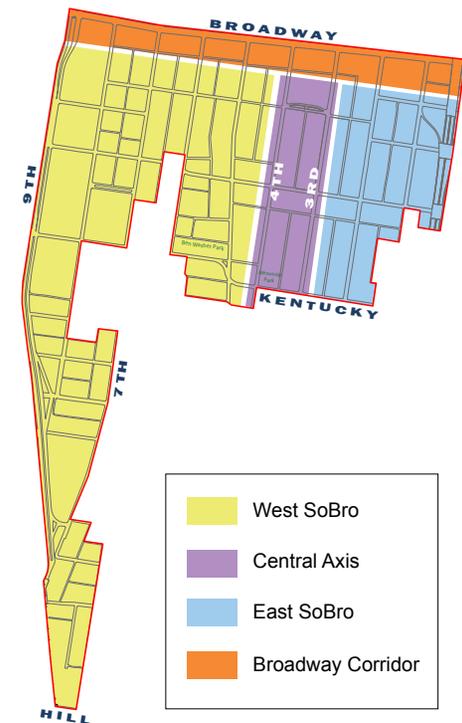
There are several areas within the neighborhood which create great opportunities for grand views and vistas. Although many of the buildings in the neighborhood have been replaced, several of the remaining structures are of significance from architectural, historical and cultural aspects. Alley systems such as Library Lane and Crystal Alley terminate on existing or potential landmarks. Library Lane terminates on the Library to the north and has great potential to the south for creating a vibrant pedestrian corridor. The federal Building between Sixth and Seventh on Broadway is the northern terminus of Crystal Alley. There are also potential views created by the slight diagonal skew of Fifth Street as well as the bends in the grid system along Breckenridge and Sixth, and Kentucky and Fifth. York Street also has the potential to have an east-west terminating vista at York and Second or Third.

Presently, there are no significant civic open spaces except for Memorial Park and Ben Washer Park. There are several opportunities for grand vistas by the creating of plazas and squares along Broadway, in particular in front of the Library between the Weissinger-Gaulbert Building and the Heyburn Building. Other potential sites include the south side of Broadway between Sixth and Seventh across from the Federal Building. There are actually many possibilities for civic spaces within SoBro due to the large amount of underutilized land as surface lots which would offer a great number of configuration possibilities.

Closer analysis of the physical form of the neighborhood displayed graphically to the right shows four areas of distinct development beginning to emerge along the east, west, central and Broadway corridors. Buildings would generally shift from high to mid-rise moving south away from Broadway. Fourth and Third Street make up the central axis of the neighborhood with Fourth Street having the highest concentration of monumental institutional building forms. East SoBro is composed of medium to low density downtown urban forms creating a buffer between the rest of the neighborhood and Interstate 65. West SoBro consists of low-rise to yard buildings of the traditional neighborhood form which transitions to industrial and manufacturing land uses. The land uses of the more industrially-zoned area between 7th and 9th streets are seemingly incompatible with the more residential character of the adjacent Limerick and Old Louisville neighborhoods. However, through the implementation of streetscape design and storage lot screening guidelines a greater cohesion can be achieved. Additionally, innovative



Conceptual infill buildings looking north on 5th Street



Physical form map

residential projects with interior facing courtyards could help integrate new residential land uses within this zone.

Further research needs to be completed to determine the possibility for parking within the neighborhood. Plainly the existence of the large swaths of surface parking has not materialized without a perceived or real need. In order for the neighborhood to be revitalized the surface parking must be mitigated through the construction of multiple parking structures as well as creative parking situations which relegate parking to the interior of blocks or below grade to open the streets to more compatible uses of a lively pedestrian environment.

SoBro is a missing piece of the urban neighborhood landscape surrounding the core of downtown and its ongoing revitalization. One key component of complementing the downtown core and creating a smoother transition to Old Louisville and beyond would be to address its form district. A possible solution to the effort of reconstituting the neighborhood form would be to expand the Downtown Form District from the present boundary at York, down to Kentucky Street. The general character of SoBro, as envisioned by the Task Force, aligns much more clearly with the guiding regulations of the Downtown Form District than with the more purely residential character set forth in its existing Traditional Neighborhood Form District designation. Rebuilding the urban form of the neighborhood is imperative in creating a vibrant and attractive place to live and work between downtown and historic Old Louisville.

Urban Design Studio Project

In the summer and fall of 2006, an urban design analysis conducted at Louisville's Urban Design Studio combined students from both the University of Kentucky's School of Architecture and the University of Louisville's MUP program. The analysis, called "The Pieces of the City, Evolution or Intervention," included investigation of new urban form, urban elements, organization of urban space, the problem of scale, change, growth and culture, relationships between the buildings, urban meaning, use and social planning. Some of the results or their creative thinking are reflected above, in addition to three important principles, that if followed would help create a unique SoBro. The principles include:

1. Define a **street wall** of buildings and characteristic of older historic districts.



Conceptual infill along 5th Street



Conceptual infill at 7th and Breckinridge with a new commercial building with housing or office space above, green space and greenhouses on the roof



2. Group buildings together and design as **ensembles** or cluster sets and subsets.
3. Surprise the viewer through a **variety** of building types and ensembles of buildings.

The conclusions of the Urban Design Studio's work are summarized in the Appendix within this document. These concepts are included in this document to present the great possibilities that exist in SoBro and to offer a framework for any future development for the neighborhood.

Making Sobro Greener

Louisville Metro's Mayor Jerry Abramson, in association with more than 275 mayors across the United States, has signed the US Mayors Climate Protection Agreement. The primary goals of this initiative are to enact policies and programs at all levels of government to address such issues as the reduction of greenhouse gas emissions, the restoration of urban forestry projects, the reduction of urban sprawl and the development of public information campaigns concerning all issues dealing with sustainable climate protection. Louisville's SoBro neighborhood offers a unique opportunity for Louisville Metro to position itself among the progressive leading cities in the United States. With its vast amount of underutilized surface parking and current lack of a strong neighborhood character, SoBro provides a strong prospect of creating a new, completely green neighborhood within the urban core. The city should strongly consider official designation of the area for green development. As such, future and ongoing redevelopment projects would focus on transforming the faceless asphalt expanses into vibrant green living streets not only with trees and vegetation, but through the companion uses of green technologies and policies. With the implementation of the United States Green Building Council's LEED (Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design) standards, the city should offer incentives for developers to build to these standards within the neighborhood. Credits could be offered for the incorporation of environmental and energy sensitive design such as green roofs and increases in the tree canopy.

A more progressive stance must be taken in order for Louisville to compete with cities in the region and the nation. Cities such as Austin, Chicago and Portland are leading the way in creating environmentally friendly environments through investments in sustainable development, from the green roofs of buildings down to the unsealing of impermeable streets. Some cities have developed resources such as websites and technical assistance to help spread the knowledge about green building practices and available materials. Other cities have used incentives such as



The green roof on Chicago's City Hall is one example of a green building practice that has inspired a new generation of innovative building practices which are energy-efficient and aesthetically pleasing.



preferential permit review for LEED certified buildings, utility rebates, and constructed municipal buildings as demonstration projects to encourage green building. Essentially, a strong push to utilize the latest advancements in renewables and energy efficient designs makes cities and urban dwelling more attractive both to the younger generations who already grasp and embrace the need for energy efficiency, and to the highly educated, a sought after commodity as the economy of the United States moves farther away from manufacturing and increasingly towards the service industry sector.

The economic incentives for “greener” development are simple. Cities save money through reduced energy usage. Energy prices continue to rise with no foreseeable trend reversal. As the price of gas and energy affects the financial stability of residents, the overall interest in more energy efficient lifestyles will increase. The improvement of the quality of life through cleaner air, more attractive surroundings and more livable environments benefits residents on multiple levels. In addition, the ability to attract businesses and industries committed to sustainable development should only increase through a community’s propensity for promoting green building. The benefits can help rejuvenate struggling neighborhoods such as SoBro by attracting businesses and injecting new life into residential and social facets of the area. There is already a noticeable rise in awareness of the need to find alternatives to fossil fuels. There will come a time when the country reaches the tipping point where the most sustainable cities win. Louisville can be on the right side of that equation if that day comes.

The designation of SoBro as a green development zone can potentially transform this neighborhood, with its neglected streets and excess of empty surface parking lots, into one of the most vibrant and sought after mixed-use areas of the city. This current state provides a prime foundation which Louisville can establish a standard for redeveloping Louisville’s historic core neighborhoods through investing in practices such as green building and green infrastructure. A green development zone could include public-private partnerships that dedicate human and financial capital to private and non-profit developers willing to use sustainable building practices. Examples of practices to include in the initiative could consist of providing technical assistance, preferential plan review, retrofitting the right-of-way using high-performance natural landscaping to handle stormwater treatment, and other practices which lessen the environmental impact of urban development. While many of these practices have higher initial costs, the long-term “pay-back” through lower operating and maintenance cost must be understood in order for this type of



initiative to succeed. Such an approach could serve as an example to surrounding neighborhoods, provide a blueprint for Metro-wide energy awareness, attract businesses, and establish Louisville Metro as a model learning laboratory for city leaders across the nation.

Another possible idea to help a creative kick-start to the green development initiative would be to offer a housing and/or workplace design competition following LEED standards. Recommendations contained in the Housing Chapter of this neighborhood plan, combined with the visions of leading-edge architectural and environment designers, would generate regional and national attention. Such interest would both accelerate the redevelopment of SoBro and enable Louisville Metro to take a leap forward in its pursuit to be a leader among the top tier of America's most innovative and progressive cities.

Summary Recommendations

- Organize Fourth Street institutions to investigate the feasibility of joint parking arrangements and facilities.
- Establish a Metro-wide Green Development Zone program, with Sobro as the pilot project for the program, where designated areas of the city would be targeted for infill and redevelopment through incentives, guidelines and technical assistance for applying green building practices.
- A Green Development Zone program should be lead by Louisville Metro Government and guided by a community-at-large task force/technical advisory committee consisting of architects, landscape architects, developers, and citizens with a strong interest in sustainable building practices. This program could consist of initiatives such as:
 - Develop a checklist on energy-efficient design to serve architects and builders.
 - Advice policy makers and Metro agencies on developing programs, policy, and incentives that would help establish a Metro-wide initiative dedicated to green and sustainable building practices. Sobro could be an area which to target any pilot programs.
 - Conduct a survey that reviews the economic benefits of green building prac-



tices around the country.

- Convene a Metro interdepartmental team to address opportunities for developing a green building incentive program.. Examples of possible incentives that offer water, stormwater, and energy rebates, fee reductions, preferential building permit review, and technical assistance to any development that uses United States Green Building Council's LEED certification.
- Following national models as a benchmark, establish a website that offers green building resources to help designers, builders, developers, business owners, and homeowners know about current knowledge on the practice and links to local resources.
- Partner with regional architecture and design schools, the Central Kentucky Chapter of the American Institute of Architects, and any interested parties to develop a green housing and/or workplace design competition for a site within the Sobro neighborhood.
- Develop a policy that requires any newly constructed Metro-related facilities, Metro funded projects, and infrastructure projects be constructed, renovated, operated, maintained, and deconstructed using green building, low impact development (LID), waste management, and conservation landscaping principles and practices to fullest extent possible.
- Explore the feasibility of establishing a green building fund and a policy of having site plan developers who do not commit to achieving a LEED rating contribute to the Fund. The fund would be used to provide education and outreach to developers and the community on green building issues.

Plan Implementation



The writer Gertrude Stein is said to have described her native city of Oakland, California, in a manner reminiscent of modern-day SoBro. “There is,” she is said to have quipped, “no there there.” Indeed, the challenge of SoBro has always been not of remembering what it once was, or of imagining what it might become. The challenge is of actually creating a there there.

The creation of a coherent sense of place in SoBro will require a balance of private development incentive and public control, so that developers will be able to create a marketable and profitable housing product and so that the sum total of those products will create a district that is both lively and, in Kevin Lynch’s word, “imageable.” Given the complexity of current uses and ownership throughout the district, the recreation of coherent form will be an incremental process, influenced by a set of interdependent variables whose values will shift from block to block and site to site. For this reason, the establishment of a development review overlay district may be important, to channel private initiative toward a cumulatively coherent and cohesive result while providing for the inventiveness of each development proposal.

The SoBro Neighborhood Plan recommends extending Louisville’s Downtown Form District south of York Street to Kentucky; and establishing two Planned Development Districts within SoBro – for the area north of Kentucky between I-65 and Seventh Street; and for the industrial transition zone west of Seventh (also known as the SoBro “dogleg.” or “panhandle.”)

Extension of the Downtown Form District will require approval both by the Louisville Metro Planning Commission and by the Metro Council. Creation of the Planned Development Districts will each require a public process and adoption by Planning Commission and Metro Council.

Adopting and new zoning districts and devising urban design guidelines for SoBro may prove easier tasks than attracting the substantial new development envisioned by the plan. The area’s lack of identity and corresponding lack of marketability are SoBro’s “chicken-and-egg” dilemma: new development spawns new development, while the absence thereof seems self-perpetuating. Those who have long endeavored to identify “opportunity sites” within SoBro that might serve as a catalyst for new growth have been stymied by the obstacles and risks associated with developing those sites; consequently, those sites – such as the area immediately to the north of Ben Washer Park, or south from Fifth and York – have remained undeveloped, or underdeveloped, for thirty-five years or more.



To accomplish the overall vision of the SoBro neighborhood plan will require an organized entity of stakeholders who both possess and act upon a compelling vested interest in the condition and future of the area – i.e., SoBro’s various institutions, property owners, business owners, and neighborhood and resident associations, and individual residents. The current physical disarray of SoBro is reflective of a similar disorganization within the neighborhood, where there is no single entity that can speak with authority on behalf of the neighborhood general – or a single entity that can work effectively toward a consensus or focused action around any particular issue or concern.

Therefore, a primary recommendation of the SoBro Neighborhood Plan is that members of the SoBro Neighborhood Plan Task Force – as well as those other stakeholders who have played an active role in the planning process – begin immediately to organize themselves as a formal, representative body dedicated to the ongoing purposes of SoBro planning, advocacy, development, and area improvement. For help in organizing such an entity, SoBro might turn to the Downtown Development Corporation via a temporary or permanent affiliation agreement. Alternately, SoBro’s emerging leadership may wish to create an independent neighborhood organization. Regardless, it seems imperative that SoBro become better and more formally organized if the neighborhood hopes to progress toward its vision.



RECOMMENDATION	IMPLEMENTATION RESPONSIBILITY	COST	TIME-FRAME
Cornerstone 2020/LDC			
C1. Extend Downtown Form District south to Kentucky, east to I-65, west to 9th @ Cawthon.	Louisville Metro Planning Commission Downtown Development Corporation	LMPDS staff time	<1 year
C2. Establish Planned Development District (PDD) south of Broadway within newly extended Downtown Form District.	Louisville Metro Planning Commission Downtown Development Corporation	LMPDS staff time	<1 year
C3. Establish Planned Development District (PDD) within SoBro “south-west” as mixed residential/commercial/light industrial district.	Louisville Metro Planning Commission Downtown Development Corporation	LMPDS staff time	<1 year
C4. Amend the existing Planned Development District ordinance to allow the master plan option to create an area-specific use table, a specific master plan map that delineates gradations in intensity to promote compatibility, and allowances for specific transition standards.	Louisville Metro Planning Commission	LMPDS staff time	<1 year
C5. Incorporate a streetscape and open space component into the Plan Development District Master Plan for the proposed two sections of SoBro, focusing on connection and consistency throughout all of Sobro. Design guidelines of the PDDs should include a streetscape and open space component, with an emphasis on First through Sixth streets, to create an effective and attractive transition between Downtown and Old Louisville and an inviting environment for pedestrians, cyclists, residents, and businesses. The plans should also establish a neighborhood-wide system of green spaces, ranging from pocket parks to athletic facilities, for use by residents, visitors, and educational institutions and teams.	Louisville Metro Planning & Design Services Brightside Metro Parks	LMPDS staff	<2 years
Infrastructure/Capital Improvement			
I1. For SoBro “southwest,” develop a combination of public initiatives and property owner initiatives to improve the quality of green spaces, streetscapes and industrial property perimeter screening. Quality should be in keeping with the character of Old Louisville generally and will provide a transition/connection to similar future efforts in the Park Hill Corridor to the west of 9th Street.	Louisville Metro Planning & Design Services Louisville Metro Economic Development Metro Parks	LMPDS staff	1-3 years



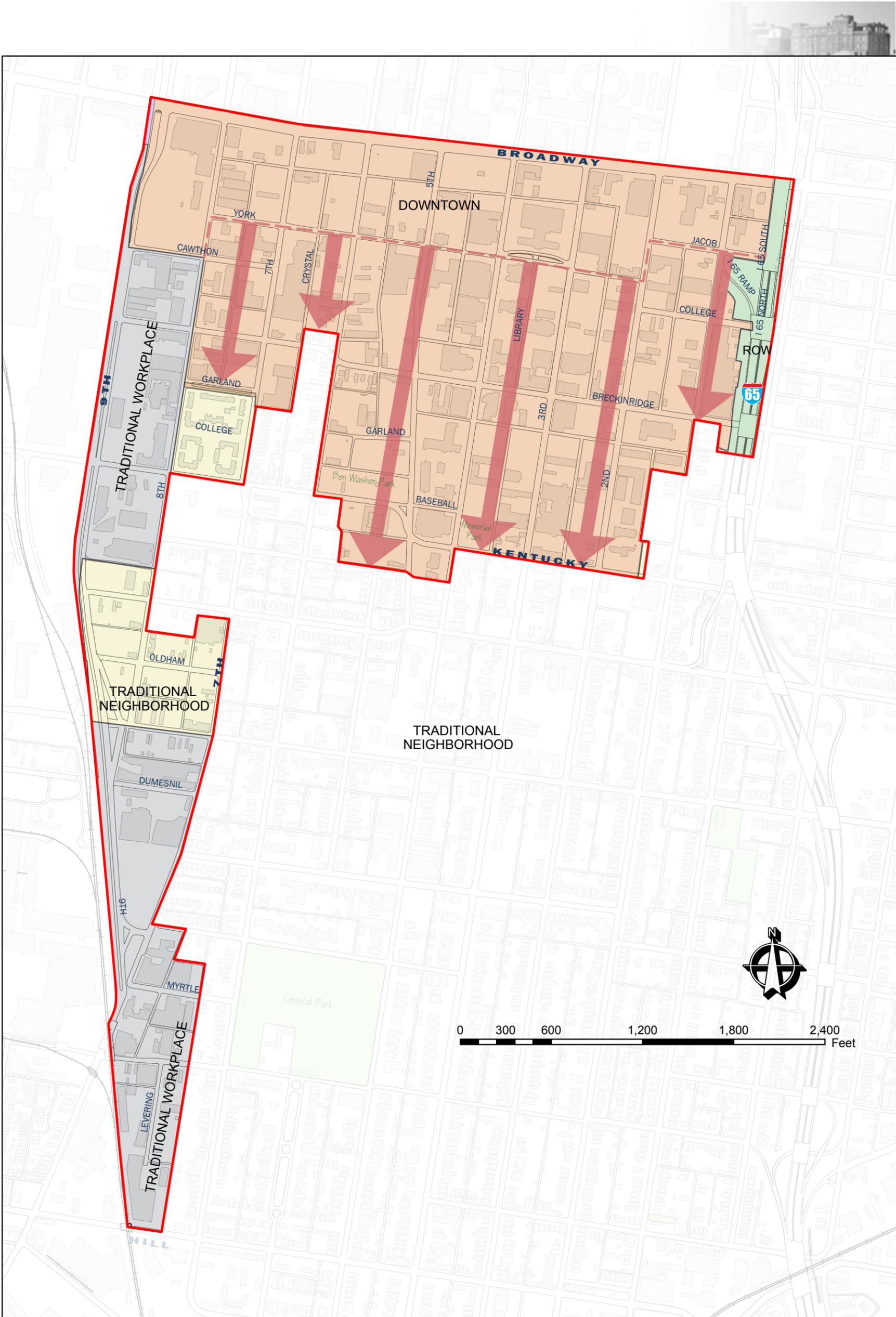
I2. Establish a SoBro Housing Development Fund to encourage new housing initiatives within SoBro, particularly focused in priority areas immediately east and west of the Fourth Street institutional core.	Downtown Development Corporation	\$ 1 million, initially	<1 year
I3. Initiate a transportation study, that would coordinate with current planning efforts in the Park Hill Corridor to the west of 9th Street, for the purpose of improving vehicular access to the many businesses in Southwest SoBro while protecting the residential areas of SoBro and Old Louisville from commercial vehicle intrusions.	Louisville Metro Economic Development Department Louisville Metro Public Works	\$ 100, 000	<1 year
Policy/Programmatic			
P1. In conjunction with recommended expansion of Downtown Form District, consider extending jurisdiction of Downtown Development Review Overlay District (DDRO) into SoBro.	Louisville Metro Planning & Design Services Downtown Development Corporation	LMPDS staff time	<1 year
P2. Organize Fourth Street institutions to investigate the feasibility of joint parking arrangements and facilities.	Parking Authority of River City (PARC) Downtown Development Corporation	DDC and PARC staff leadership, SoBro stakeholders	<1 year
P4. Study and enact restoration of two-way traffic to streets throughout SoBro (see map on page 32)	Planning & Design Services KY Transportation Cabinet Louisville Metro Public Works	LMPDS staff time	<1 year
P5. Develop a network of neighborhood bike routes that connect with the Louisville Metro Bike System	Louisville Metro Planning & Design Services	LMPDS staff time	<1 year
P6. Focus public-private housing development strategies in the Fifth/Sixth Street corridor, from Ben Washer Park to the 800 Apartments (at 800 S. 4th St), and including publicly-owned land currently under lease by Downtown Ford	Louisville Metro Government Downtown Development Corporation		1-3 years



<p>P7. Establish a single entity dedicated to SoBro planning, advocacy, development, and area improvement</p>	<p>SoBro “stakeholders,” including institutions, neighborhood associations, homeowners associations, businesses, property owners, residents</p>	<p>Voluntary leadership of SoBro task force members, plan participants, and other key SoBro stakeholders</p>	<p><1 year</p>
<p>P8. Organize SoBro stakeholders around cooperative parking solutions, open space and streetscape master plans, the planning of joint recreational/athletic facilities, and development strategies.</p>			
<p>P9. Establish a Green Development Zone program where designated areas of the city would be targeted for infill and redevelopment through incentives, guidelines and technical assistance for applying green building practices. Sobro could serve as the pilot project for this program.</p>	<p>Louisville Metro Council Partnership for a Green City L.M. Economic Development Department</p>		
<p>P10. Green Development Zone program should be led by Louisville Metro Government and guided by a community-at-large task force/technical advisory committee consisting of architects, landscape architects, developers, and citizens with a strong interest in sustainable building practices. This program could consist of initiatives such as:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Develop a checklist on energy-efficient design to serve architects and builders. • Advice policy makers and Metro agencies on developing programs, policy, and incentives that would help establish a Metro-wide initiative dedicated to green and sustainable building practices. Sobro could be an area which to target any pilot programs. • Advice policy makers and Metro agencies on developing programs, policy, and incentives that would help establish a Metro-wide initiative dedicated to green and sustainable building practices. Sobro could be an area which to target any pilot programs. <p>(continued on next page)</p>	<p>Louisville Metro Council Partnership for a Green City L.M. Planning and Design Services L.M. Economic Development Department</p>		<p><1 year</p>

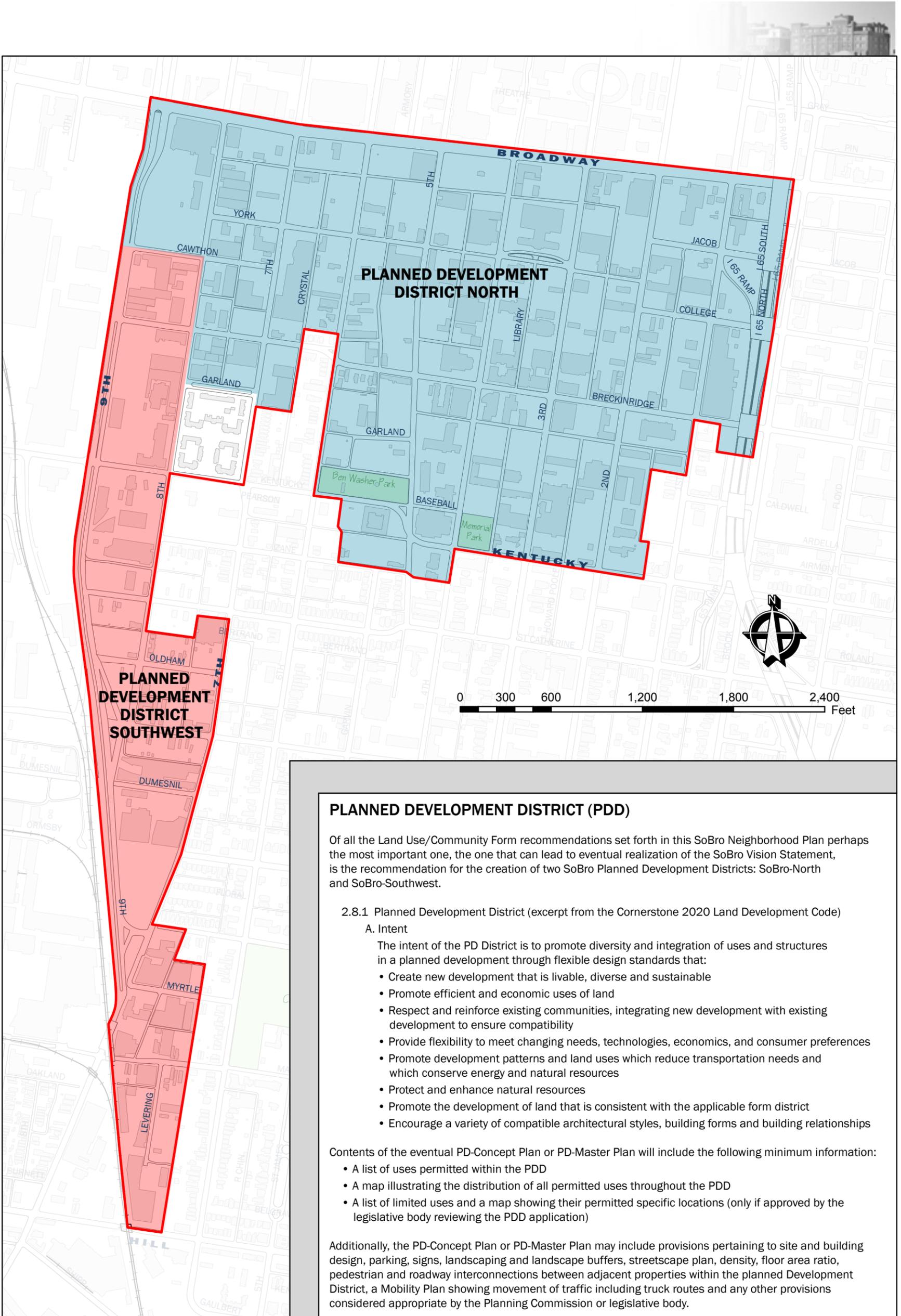


<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Convene a Metro interdepartmental team to address opportunities for developing a green building incentive program.. Examples of possible incentives that offer water, stormwater, and energy rebates, fee reductions, preferential building permit review, and technical assistance to any development that uses United States Green Building Council's LEED certification.• Following national models as a benchmark, establish a website that offers green building resources to help designers, builders, developers, business owners, and homeowners know about current knowledge of the practice and links to local resources.• Partner with regional architecture and design schools, the Central Kentucky Chapter of the American Institute of Architects, and any interested parties to develop a green housing and/or workplace design competition for a site within the Sobro neighborhood.• Develop a policy that requires any newly constructed Metro-related facilities, Metro funded projects, and infrastructure projects be constructed, renovated, operated, maintained, and deconstructed using green building, low impact development (LID), waste management, and conservation landscaping principles and practices to fullest extent possible.• Explore the feasibility of establishing a green building fund and a policy of having site plan developers who do not commit to achieving a LEED rating contribute to the Fund. The fund would be used to provide education and outreach to developers and the community on green building issues.			
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SoBro: Proposed Expansion of Downtown Form District





PLANNED DEVELOPMENT DISTRICT (PDD)

Of all the Land Use/Community Form recommendations set forth in this SoBro Neighborhood Plan perhaps the most important one, the one that can lead to eventual realization of the SoBro Vision Statement, is the recommendation for the creation of two SoBro Planned Development Districts: SoBro-North and SoBro-Southwest.

2.8.1 Planned Development District (excerpt from the Cornerstone 2020 Land Development Code)

A. Intent

The intent of the PD District is to promote diversity and integration of uses and structures in a planned development through flexible design standards that:

- Create new development that is livable, diverse and sustainable
- Promote efficient and economic uses of land
- Respect and reinforce existing communities, integrating new development with existing development to ensure compatibility
- Provide flexibility to meet changing needs, technologies, economics, and consumer preferences
- Promote development patterns and land uses which reduce transportation needs and which conserve energy and natural resources
- Protect and enhance natural resources
- Promote the development of land that is consistent with the applicable form district
- Encourage a variety of compatible architectural styles, building forms and building relationships

Contents of the eventual PD-Concept Plan or PD-Master Plan will include the following minimum information:

- A list of uses permitted within the PDD
- A map illustrating the distribution of all permitted uses throughout the PDD
- A list of limited uses and a map showing their permitted specific locations (only if approved by the legislative body reviewing the PDD application)

Additionally, the PD-Concept Plan or PD-Master Plan may include provisions pertaining to site and building design, parking, signs, landscaping and landscape buffers, streetscape plan, density, floor area ratio, pedestrian and roadway interconnections between adjacent properties within the planned Development District, a Mobility Plan showing movement of traffic including truck routes and any other provisions considered appropriate by the Planning Commission or legislative body.



Executive Summary



The SoBro Neighborhood Plan envisions the transformation of the area South of Broadway, Ninth to I-65, into a richly-developed urban district with a strong residential presence, commingled with compatible and appropriate non-residential land uses, and set within an interconnected network of public and private landscapes.

Such transformation from the current condition will require a combination of private development initiatives, public infrastructure improvements, and a high level of collaboration and cooperation between the many stakeholders – property owners, residents, businesses, institutions – who together comprise the area. The first test of the latter will occur through the development of two, contiguous Planned Development Districts to guide future development of the area; at which time differing perspectives and visions for each area will be reconciled to create the regulatory “lens” that can focus private and public developments for an ultimately coherent and powerful effect.

In parallel with establishing the SoBro Planned Development Districts, a SoBro Open Space Master Plan will be developed that envisions and leads to the creation of an interconnected system of public and private landscapes and streetscapes, providing a hospitable and attractive setting for this newly re-created urban neighborhood.

Vision

The district South of Broadway (SoBro) is a unique urban neighborhood in the heart of the city.

At the crossroads of downtown and historic Old Louisville, SoBro combines the strengths of both, through a commingling of business, education, cultural institutions, commerce and manufacturing, all set within the context of a vibrant and diverse residential district.

SoBro’s architecture is alternately historic and contemporary, reflecting at once its legacy as one of Louisville’s original residential neighborhoods and the values and lifestyles of new generations. In combination with its distinctive architecture and urban design, SoBro’s “green” network of parks, courtyards, sidewalks, alleys and streetscapes makes the neighborhood exceptionally friendly to pedestrians and street life.

Consequently, SoBro is both an effective bridge between downtown and Old Louisville and a distinctive urban neighborhood in and of itself – “a place you are proud to call home.”



RECOMMENDATION	IMPLEMENTATION RESPONSIBILITY	COST	TIME-FRAME
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Appendices

Appendix A - Planning Workshop

Following the SWOT analysis exercise, the SoBro Task Force utilized its next monthly meeting to generate ideas and implementation strategies for area-wide redevelopment. The neighborhood was divided into three areas and task force members, planning consulting staff and invited neighborhood residents/stakeholders formed into groups for each area. The following summaries of each group's brainstorming recommendations represent the breadth and depth of not only SoBro's existing neighborhood challenges but also the forward-looking thinking that could improve its quality-of-life in the future. It should be noted that these suggestions, while born of well-considered and thoughtful insights may or may not be included in the final set of recommendations set forth by this plan. However, their inclusion in this "Process" section of the plan report helps to fully document the enormous amount of effort put forth by the task force and range of creative thinking that was taken into consideration as the final list of potential strategic next steps was finalized.

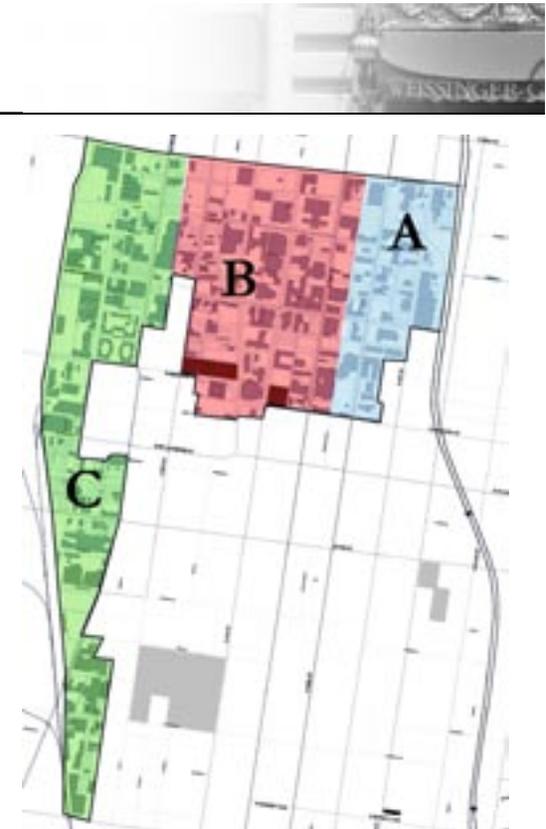
Area A (Broadway on the north, I-65 on the east, Kentucky Street on the south and mid-block between 2nd and 3rd Streets on the west)

Broadway

- Mixed-use with at-grade retail and building-incorporated parking
- Higher-density, high-rise development

Kroger block (2nd Street, 3rd Street, Breckenridge and Kentucky)

- Investigate conversion of all streets to two-way traffic
- Develop mixed-use commercial and residential
- New buildings to be mid-rise, with first-floor commercial, upper-floor residential and off-street parking in rear
- Investigate public-sector investment for land purchase and assembly



SoBro Area Map

I-65 Shoulder

- Develop low-mid rise residential facing College and Jacob Streets
- Develop mixed-use residential/commercial along 1st Street
- Re-zone existing M-3 parcel to C-2 or R-8 when appropriate?
- Investigate the possibility of a parking structure on S. Third Street behind the Weissinger/Gaulbert Building
- Modify parking requirements to recognize that an urban neighborhood requires lower parking ratios
- Introduce pocket parks and the “greening” of rights-of-way

Area B (Broadway on the north, mid-block between 2nd and 3rd Streets on the east, Kentucky on the south and mid-block between 6th and 7th Streets on the west)

Land Use, Zoning and Miscellaneous Recommendations

- Create an atmosphere to encourage residential and mixed-use development
- Appearance of excess surface parking, consider the possibility of a shared-parking strategy with existing major institutions
- Redesign surface parking to mitigate its street deadening effects.
- Provide street liner buildings and street face landscape buffering
- Restore two-way streets for pedestrian safety, mobility and retail support
- Include SoBro in the current Metro Department of Planning and Design Services’ historic structure survey
- Extend the downtown overlay district design guidelines to SoBro, incorporating SoBro-specific guidelines
- Phase the burial of overhead power and communication lines



Area A work group composite sketch



Todd Schmiedeler, Gary Kleier and Jack Trawick discuss Area A

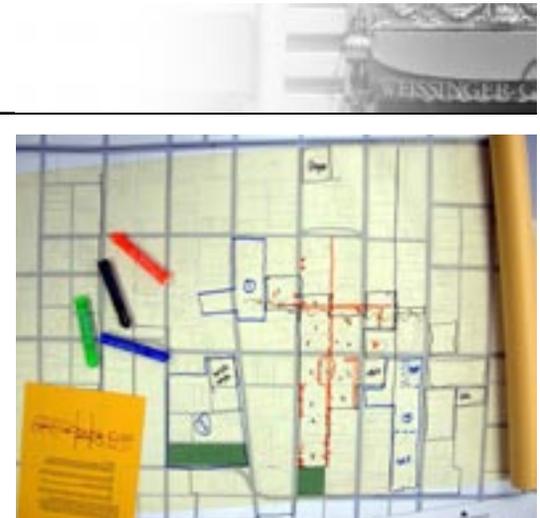
- Consider the implementation of Tax Increment Financing to encourage development
- Recommend rezoning changes to encourage mixed-use development where appropriate and to protect mixed-use development from unsupportive uses. (e.g. current Office zoning should be expanded to include commercial land uses and industrial-zoned parcels should be studied for possible rezoning that would permit residential.)
- All future rezoning in the core of SoBro should permit the greatest mixed-use development opportunities, with all parcels allowing residential use.

Greening

- The “greening” of SoBro should be done in such a way that it can accommodate the needs of SoBro’s educational institutions while at the same time contributing to the public and resident’s needs and the vitalization of street life and neighborhood vitality.
- Extend the 3rd Street tree-lined boulevard character northward through SoBro to Broadway.
- Consider a public-private effort with Presentation Academy and Spalding University to provide an on-campus greenway utilizing Library Lane which runs north-south between 3rd and 4th Streets.

Area C (The western portion of SoBro, sometimes referred to as either the “dogleg” or the “panhandle”, that generally extends from 7th to 9th Streets, and from Broadway all the way south to Hill Street)

- Investigate the appropriateness of designating this area to be a Planned Development District.
- Initiate a transportation study, that would coordinate with current planning efforts in the Park Hill Corridor to the west of 9th Street, for the purpose of improving vehicular access to the many businesses in this area of SoBro while protecting the more residential areas of SoBro and Old Louisville from commercial vehicle intrusions
- Create a program of public/private incentives to assist business owners in the upgrading of their surface storage areas throughout this part of SoBro.



Area B work group composite sketch



Area B work group

-
- Develop a set of enforceable and implementable streetscape design guidelines to encourage compatibility of this area with the residential areas of Old Louisville to the east. Special consideration should be made for making this part of SoBro more pedestrian friendly.



Area C work group composite sketch



Area C work group



Appendix B - Resources

Downtown Development Plan, September 2002

<http://www.downtowndevelopmentcorp.org/>

LDC Zoning and Planned Development District (PDD) Information

http://www.louisvilleky.gov/NR/ronlyres/9FF50744-2393-49D2-A464-FD78EA390BF9/0/LDCjuly04_CH2.pdf

LDC Form District Information

http://www.louisvilleky.gov/NR/ronlyres/EF55095A-D401-4793-8817-D2EEBA0FC9C5/0/LDCjuly04_CH5.pdf

Zimmerman/Volk Study

<http://www.downtowndevelopmentcorp.org/files/Sobro05-05.pdf>

Appendix C - Urban Design Studio Project: “The Pieces of the City, Evolution or Intervention”

In terms of building mass, the SoBro area has become mostly open space and 70% of its land currently used for surface parking. SoBro, therefore, is suffering a certain lack of urban substance in terms of building density and in terms of urban exterior and exterior spaces. This study of SoBro, includes investigation of new urban form, urban elements, organization of urban space, the problem of scale, change, growth and culture, relationships between the buildings, urban meaning, use and social planning.

The SoBro study concluded that the area has significant potential. Its weaknesses could be eliminated through simple design methods. Gateways, stronger corners, and the continuation and connectivity of streets and pedestrian sidewalks are examples of steps to take toward revitalization. There are also possibilities for Green Development zones that could be educational and environmental for the community. Sustainable design relates not only to buildings but to programs which assist neighborhoods and people to become stewards of the area. The study involves the infill or completion of eroded texture, and figural invention within the framework of an intact urban texture.

Principles

The three main principles for creating a strong urban form are simple. First, urban character and density must be created. The street wall must be defined and built in a way that is characteristic of older historic districts. Buildings may exhibit a relationship to the street with well proportioned windows and doorways facing prominently to the street. Buildings should be articulated with tastefully designed patterns and details which delight the viewer.

Secondly, a consistent scale, spacing and massing should be applied for groups of buildings, streets, precincts, and blocks of buildings. Groups of buildings should be gathered together and designed as ensembles or cluster sets and subsets. Landscaping and grounds should be made in a way that enhances the connection of buildings and groups of buildings.

Thirdly, buildings should be situated and composed such that they surprise the viewer. Variety is the spice of life, so variety should exist within each ensemble of urban forms and through-



out SoBro. For example, naming of an ensemble group, a street or block- sets the tone for a neighborhood. Variety in building form should also mean variety in the way buildings are used. Flexibility in zoning encourages a variety of possibilities for the use of building and Variety of uses are encourages in a building with some restrictions as required.

Significant Conclusions

SoBro is centrally located between the downtown business district and historic Old Louisville and should develop as a transitional urban form between these two areas. In general, the SoBro urban form should be this: fill in building mass completely at the corners of each block and along the street as much as possible. The infill condition should compliment the patterns suggested by the local scale of urban contributing building stock. Special attention should be given to architectural details along with the streetscape which together define the urban character of the neighborhood. The long blocks running north south should be broken down into smaller block sizes if possible. Traffic patterns should be made two-way and should be slowed to become safer and more conducive to a pedestrian friendly environment. At least one major public interior open space and a major public building should be proposed in each distinct area of Sobro. Where housing is proposed, it has to be of a highly urban character, with shops and offices on the lower level in a manner common to nineteenth and early twentieth century building type in the area. Parking should be located in the middle of the block or in parking structures with commercial on the street level. Pedestrian alleys with muse garage apartments or carriage house plans should be considered in some locations particularly along Crystal alley and Library Lane. Inwardly focused housing/garden courts similar to Floral Terrace and Ormsby Court should be considered in places adjacent to manufacturing and industrial work places that lack visual appeal. Visual screens should be proposed with streetscape to further soften existing buildings and storage yards that lack urban character. Visual screening will be most beneficial for the blocks between 7th and 9th street in the southern part of SoBro that contain a mixture of residential, industrial and vacant properties. The area along the western edge of the site stretching down to Hill Street is particularly challenging because of its immediate proximity to Old Louisville to the east and to the historic industrial corridor to the west. Readapting old industrial buildings and sites for other uses should be encouraged. Additionally, there are also possibilities for sustainable design integrated into the new development that could be educational and environmental for the community.





Conceptual Drawings

The following images were produced from the students participating in the Urban Design Studio project. The renderings represent conceptual infill projects from various sections of the SoBro. The bottom image is a current condition and the top the conceptual infill development. These images and many other conceptual design images will be incorporated into the “Pieces of the City, Evolution or Intervention” document produced by the Urban Design Studio.

View south from 4th and Broadway



Library Plaza Third and Broadway New Public Plaza



Library Lane looking at 3rd and York



Southwest corner of 2nd and Kentucky



Pedestrian bridge over 9th street at Myrtle



View from 7th and Dumini



Acknowledgements



Meeting Space Provided by:

Spalding University

Holiday Inn Louisville Downtown, 120 West Broadway

Christian Care Communities - Louisville

Downtown Development Corporation

Urban Design Studio

Additional Contributions Provided by:

Mark O'Bryan, AIA

Graham Gordon

Joe Bishof

Hilary Shea

Patrick Piuma

Jessica Tennill

Mike Snowden