



CITY OF TOPEKA

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MEMORANDUM

To: Topeka Planning Commission
From: Dan Warner, AICP, Planning Division Director
Date: September 20, 2021
RE: Valley Park Neighborhood Plan

Background

- The Valley Park NIA was awarded the 2021 SORT (Stages of Resources Targeting).
- This is a two-part process with neighborhood planning occurring in 2021 and implementation occurring in 2022 – 2023. The planning stage is coming to completion and is being presented as an update to the Valley Park Neighborhood Plan process.
- The NIA has been working with Planning staff since March 25, 2021 to develop a new neighborhood plan.
- The Plan reflects the targeted approach associated with the SORT process. The most “in-need” areas located outside of the floodplain have been identified for targeting both housing and infrastructure resources.

Process

- Staff notified all property owners in the planning area and held a kickoff meeting on March 25, 2021 to present a “current conditions” analysis.
- Steering committee meetings and sub-committee meetings were held digitally from April to July for more in-depth evaluation of the Plan topics. Major focus areas include Goals and Guiding Principles, Land Use, Revitalization Themes, Neighborhood-Wide Strategies, and Implementation.
- An additional survey and GIS Storymap were utilized prior to the initial public meeting to garner larger public input and invite members of the community to become involved.
- All renters, landlords, and homeowners in the Valley Park neighborhood were mailed a notice advertising the final neighborhood meeting on September 8th, 2021.
- The draft plan was presented with discussion so as to gain feedback and input from the neighborhood.
- Staff incorporated feedback into the final Valley Park Neighborhood Plan document. The draft plan is available online: <https://cot-wp-uploads.s3.amazonaws.com/wp-content/uploads/planning/CPA21-01ValleyParkNHoodPlan/ValleyParkNHoodPlan2021.pdf>

Current Neighborhood Conditions

- The neighborhood, for the first time since 2007, returned to a “Healthy” health rating. Since 2000, the Valley Park Neighborhood has consistently received an “Out Patient” or “Healthy” designation.
- The neighborhood plan boundaries are SW 21st Street, SW Randolph Avenue, SW Shunga Drive, and SW Washburn Avenue.
- 68% of all housing units are single-family or two-family, of which 54% are owner occupied.
- Infrastructure needs include replacement of pavement, curb and gutter, and sidewalks with ADA compliant ramps.

Notable Findings

- The Valley Park Neighborhood developed during the growth period following WWII, with the neighborhood being fully built-out by 1959.
- There has been little to no new development in the last 60 years with the neighborhood retaining much of its original character.
- Due to the Shunganunga Creek, nearly two thirds of the parcels within the neighborhood are impacted by the 100 year floodplain or regulatory floodway. There have been multiple flood events in the history of the neighborhood, which have led to damage of properties.
- Target areas are located north of SW 24th Street, to avoid the 100 year floodplain and regulatory floodway and ensure housing dollars can be spent in target areas.
- Pavement improvements are a priority for the neighborhood.

Staff Recommendation: Staff recommends the Planning Commission:

- 1) Conduct a public hearing on the Plan for action on September 20, 2021.
- 2) Recommend approval to the Governing Body as an element of the City’s Comprehensive Plan.