

Victoria Commons FAQs

Updated May 5, 2021

Overview

Victoria Commons is a mixed-income community developed by the San Antonio Housing Authority (SAHA) on the site of the former Victoria Courts Public Housing property. Built in 1940, Victoria Courts was demolished in 2001 with funding from the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) with the goal of transforming the neighborhood from concentrated public housing to a mixed-income community.

To date, two mixed-income apartment projects have been constructed with an additional mixed-use, mixed-income apartment project starting construction at Labor Street and Cesar Chavez.

Phase IIA, Artisan Park, consists of 22 for-sale townhomes that were built and sold by SAHA in 2007-2008. Three units were originally sold as affordable, but all units are now market rate.

Phase IIB was platted with utilities and streets installed for 100 townhomes but due to economic conditions in 2008, construction of the additional townhomes was put on hold.

Phase IIC includes 26 single-family homes (five affordable) on Leigh Street facing the Lavaca neighborhood. SAHA sold the lots to individuals and residential builders in 2015.

To complete the development of the Victoria Commons neighborhood, SAHA has selected a Master Developer to take the lead on developing the remaining townhome sites, as well as additional sites proposed for apartment projects on the two stormwater drainage basins. Renovation or replacement of the former SAHA administration building was also included in the development package. SAHA has recently added to the development plans the site of the current YMCA Early Learning Child Care facility, which occupies the building owned by SAHA.

After a proposal process beginning in March 2019, Catellus Development Corporation (Catellus) was selected as Master Developer of Victoria Commons and an Exclusive Negotiating Agreement was signed in January 2020. Catellus is currently working with SAHA on finalizing the Master Development Agreement and the rezone application.

Frequently Asked Questions

SAHA and Catellus have included some of the frequently asked questions submitted in past outreach sessions, meetings or via email in regard to the Victoria Commons development.

What are the proposed sites for the new Victoria Commons development?

1. *“Single-Family Homes”* – previously planned for 100 townhome lots, the Phase IIB site is planned to include a mix of for-sale home styles that creates a better streetscape and connectivity to open spaces
2. *“North Stormwater Basin Site”* – Previously a storm water catchment basin, this site is planned for income-restricted apartments.
3. *“South Stormwater Basin Site”* – Previously a storm water catchment basin, this site is planned for mixed-income apartments.
4. *“Child Care Site”* – This SAHA-owned building, which is currently leased to the YMCA Early Learning Child Care Center, will be replaced with townhomes or a multifamily building.
5. *Administration Building Site* – The final use for this site has not yet been determined, but zoning will allow for mixed-income apartments or condos.

To see the current proposed number of units and site plan, view our latest community presentation at www.saha.org/victoriacommons.

What does mixed income mean?

Mixed-income projects include housing for residents with lower income levels, as well as market rate units. Depending on financing and site constraints, affordability level and percentage will vary depending on location and types of products, but the goal is to maintain or exceed the affordability percentage from existing projects in Victoria Commons.

What is the affordability mix proposed for the new development?

The percentage of affordable units in the Victoria Commons area is currently approximately 45%. SAHA and Catellus are continuing to study the proposed projects to determine the appropriate mix of affordable units to be included that will balance the need for affordable homes, the expectations of the community and the financial structures that will support the projects.

How will the new development plans affect traffic in the area?

A preliminary traffic study was provided by the project traffic engineer utilizing projections for changes in traffic behavior during COVID-19. Preliminary traffic study shows existing streets can handle local traffic from the additional planned developments and recommended improved crosswalks, curb ramps and additional sidewalks for the pedestrian experience.

Additionally, Catellus is meeting with TXDoT and the City of San Antonio to explore adding a dedicated bike path/pedestrian trail along I-37 that may ultimately connect Hemisfair Park to Roosevelt Park.

What is going to happen to the old SAHA Administration Building and basketball courts?

Currently any plans for the *Administration Building Site* are on hold as SAHA and Catellus continue to research potential uses. Past architectural studies on the *Administration Building Site* showed the cost of renovation and remediation of hazardous materials exceeded the market value of the building.

Will there be any new trails or open space?

Yes. Trail connections are under consideration to Labor Street Park and along the highway connecting to existing walking paths near Hemisview. Additionally, pocket parks or courtyards are planned within the *Single-Family Homes* and Peyton Path is currently planned to be closed as a vehicular street to become open space as a pedestrian-only green spine connecting Labor Street Park to the *North* and *South Stormwater Basin Sites*.

How many phases will Victoria Commons be divided into?

The infrastructure for Victoria Commons is planned to be developed in two or three phases in a continuous manner beginning with the townhome lots. The vertical development (homes and apartments) will be constructed as each parcel developer is identified. The goal will be to build the sites efficiently reducing the length of construction as possible.

What is the project timeline?

After the completion of the Master Development Agreement and rezoning efforts, Catellus will commence design and subdivision work. We expect to break ground on infrastructure first half of 2022. Vertical development for the homes and apartment will be determined by market of the final planned uses.

What are the price points for the townhomes?

The price points for the single-family homes will be determined in the future by the market and homebuilders selected, but the goal in designing multiple product types is to offer a range of price points.

What is the rental price ranges for the apartments?

The rental rates for the apartments will be determined in the future by funding source, the developers selected and by levels of affordability.

Will there be any retail store or restaurants built?

Current proposed zoning will not allow for retail or restaurants. The *North and South Stormwater Basin Sites* and *Administration Building Site* may include community/civic, amenity, educational or daycare uses on their ground floors, but final plans will be determined when a developer is selected for each site. The new 100 Labor development at Chavez and Labor will have retail space.

What is happening with the zoning?

The density, heights and planned uses all remain consistent with what was presented in the March 30, 2021 community meeting. In response to community feedback and staff meetings:

The *Townhomes Site* will now be classified as IDZ-2. The *Child Care Site* will not be included in this rezoning application and will remain IDZ with all current allowable uses.

The *North and South Basin Sites* and *Administration Building Site* will be classified as IDZ-3 with no ground-floor commercial but uses such as daycare, community/civic, educational or amenities are allowed.

While we still do not know the *Administration Building Site's* ultimate use, by including it in this rezone process, it allows greater flexibility for future discussions.

Catellus and SAHA currently plan to submit this rezone application in May. While final dates will be determined, commission and staff review will take place over the next couple of months and the application will likely reach City Council in August.

What are the proposed building heights?

The *Single-Family Homes* are planned to be two to three stories. The *North and South Stormwater Basin Sites* and *Administration Building Site* will range from three to five stories with plans to step down in height as the buildings approach the existing single-family homes on Leigh Street. Plans for the *Child Care Site* is planned for three stories.

Will there be more opportunities for input?

Yes. Catellus and SAHA plan to continue with community engagement opportunities as planning continues. Project updates can be found at www.saha.org/victoriacommons.

What will happen to my taxes with this new development?

The tax appraisal district for Victoria Commons will determine property taxes on January 1st of each year. Currently, the Victoria Commons area is assessed by the Bexar Appraisal District. In the event a property owner disagrees with their assessed value, a protest may be filed with their appraisal district. More information on how property taxes are assessed can be found at www.bexar.org.

What will happen to the YMCA daycare if the *Child Care Site* is redeveloped?

SAHA has met with the YMCA to understand their building needs. The YMCA will have an opportunity to work with the future *North* and *South Basin Sites* and *Administration Building Site* developments for a new daycare facility if they choose to remain in Victoria Commons.

How will the apartments and townhomes accommodate resident parking?

The single-family homes will each have garage parking. The *North Basin Site* is planned for a surface parking lot and the *South Basin Site* is planned for garage parking.

Why is the *North Basin Site* proposed as 100% affordable?

To utilize the 4% tax credit financing tool to maximize affordability options and also minimize funding gaps, the site layout for the North Basin multifamily community will only allow approximately 80-130 units with surface parking and 100% affordable units with incomes ranging from 30%-70% AMI averaging 60% AMI in the building.

If you build on the *Administration Building Site* will that lower the density or affordability on the other planned sites?

If the *Administration Building Site* is redeveloped, the site may include a percentage of affordability. This development, however, would not impact the density or affordability of the *North* and *South Basin Sites*.