

Plan Commission
Special Meeting of October 29, 2020

Document #8 in the Legistar record is "TOD Overlay Presentation." It seems that this would create an overlay zone along the full BRT corridor, at every BRT stop. Essentially the entire isthmus would either be part of the "primary region" or the "influence region." In the primary region, TOD overlay compliance would be required, and in the influence region TOD overlay compliance would be optional (though it is not clear at whose option).

It is important to remember that the new Comprehensive Plan was adopted just two years ago. BRT was contemplated at that time. As part of the Comprehensive Plan process, the Plan Commission and the Common Council made specific decisions to:

- Remove Williamson Street from the list of corridors named "Growth Priority Areas." A good portion of Williamson went from MR to LMR, and sections were changed from CMU to NMU.
- Downgrade areas in the Atwood area from CMU to NMU (or medium and low residential), and a portion from LMR to LR.

These changes specifically related to height and density. The determination was made that lower height/density was more appropriate for the areas. This determination was made with the Commission/Council knowing that East Washington would be the Phase 1 BRT route. Yet, Document #8 appears to require/permit greater height/density throughout the BRT route, which would contravene specific decisions made two years ago.

The Comprehensive Plan did not envision a one-size-fits-all along the BRT corridor.

"BRT corridors should be among the areas prioritized for the preparation of detailed sub-area plans. Such plans should not only cover building use and design to complement investments in transit, but also improvements to pedestrian and bicycle infrastructure that make it easier for people to get to BRT stations." (Comprehensive Plan, page 32)

Such detailed sub-area plans could take all factors into consideration, not just height, density and parking. For example:

1. Much of the isthmus already has detailed sub-area plans, such as the Capitol Gateway Corridor Plan, which is enshrined in the ordinances as Urban Design District No. 8. Should additional height/density be required/permitted on a wholesale basis?
2. The Comprehensive Plan has a number of strategies – BRT is not the only strategy, and all the strategies need to be balanced. For example, is it wise to reduce setback standards and open space requirements (page 16 of Document #8) in an area prone to flooding? What of recharging the water table? With reduced setbacks, will street trees be able to thrive and support biodiversity as well as help counteract the heat island effect?
3. What is the density level needed to support BRT? Which sections of the BRT route have already achieved that density?
4. How much of existing neighborhood character can be lost without losing the neighborhood? If one looks at how the "primary region" extends into Tenney-Lapham (other than the area between Gorham and the lakeshore), there would be alternating pockets of intense development alternating with pockets of lower density residential.

The Comprehensive Plan often discusses "context-sensitive design and scale." Would these pockets be context-sensitive design?

5. The detailed BRT plans not only need to guide redevelopment, but improve pedestrian and bicycle linkages. (Strategy #2 under Land Use.)
6. The Comprehensive Plan envisioned "transit nodes." In 3 transit nodes totaling 3,914 acres, it was estimated 850 acres would be infilled/redeveloped. In the short-term, that was anticipated to create 7,800 jobs (up to 43,400 jobs) and a population increase of 7,600 residents (up to 20,600 residents). "As a comparison, the isthmus (Park Street to the Yahara River) contained about 40,000 residents and 39,000 jobs on 1,336 acres in 2015." (CP page 145) Should the focus be on creating height/density in the two transit nodes at the BRT ends?

Page 17 of Document #8 discusses reducing/eliminating parking minimums. This only affects NMX and TSS areas. NMX and TSS are only in the "influence region" - Williamson/Atwood area, along with sections of East Johnson. (There is one small section of NMX on East Johnson that seems to be within the "primary region.") Reducing required parking in NMX and TSS would have a negative effect on residential areas without much of an impact on the overall BRT goals.

Instead, what could have a larger impact is looking at required residential parking. For example, in TE (such as the newer developments along the north side of East Washington), one parking place per unit is required for buildings greater than 25,000 square feet of floor area. Residentially zoned areas where large multi-family structures and residential building complexes are permitted also require one parking place per unit. Perhaps cutting down to something like .75 parking units per unit would be appropriate along the BRT route.

Respectfully Submitted,
Linda Lehnertz

From: Robbie Webber <robbie@robbiewebber.org>
Sent: Thursday, October 29, 2020 4:06 PM
To: Plan Commission Comments <pccomments@cityofmadison.com>
Subject: TDM requirements for developments

Plan Commission members -

I am writing in support of the efforts to enact a TDM ordinance and/or requirement during the development review process. This will move Madison in the right direction on a number of issues facing the city in the next few years.

We need to cut down on the vehicle miles traveled in order to make our transportation system work and not overwhelm the road network we already have -- not only in the Isthmus, but throughout the city. Requiring all new developments to contribute to this effort will make it much easier to achieve a multimodal future and our climate goals.

Encouraging development that is close to existing walking, biking, and transit networks, as well as providing incentives to not drive, will make housing more affordable for all and not force those with limited incomes to own and operate cars they may not be able to afford. It will also support increased use of these non-driving modes.

Limiting parking required in new developments can also make the housing itself more affordable, because the parking does not have to be bundled into the rent or selling price.

Why do this now, when travel demand is already down and the future is uncertain? Because now it will be much less painful for both developers and tenants of the buildings -- both commercial and residential. When travel demand was high, we heard that limited driving and parking were both an impossible option to sell and also not popular with the public. Now that fewer people are driving, it is the perfect time to adjust to lower vehicle miles traveled. It will be much easier than if we allow driving levels to rebound.

A new ordinance or requirement as part of the development process will give developers, management companies, and tenants some certainty as to what to expect both in the development review process and in future years. Instead of negotiating each development separately and having confusion about who just undertake TDM requirements and what will be expected -- and possibly needing to argue over whether the requirements have been met in the future -- everyone will know, because the expectations will be codified.

I urge you to move ahead with this effort. Some of us have been suggesting similar requirements for 15 years.

Robbie Webber

Transportation geek

All opinions are my own, and not necessarily those of any group or organization with which I am affiliated.

Founding member, [Madison Bikes](#)

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From: Bill Connors <bill@smartgrowthgreatermadison.com>

Sent: Thursday, October 29, 2020 11:43 AM

To: William Connors <weconnors07@gmail.com>

Cc: Stouder, Heather <HStouder@cityofmadison.com>; Tucker, Matthew <MTucker@cityofmadison.com>; Lynch, Thomas <TLynch@cityofmadison.com>; Trowbridge, David <DTrowbridge@cityofmadison.com>

Subject: Discussion of New TDM Program This Evening

Plan Commissioners:

I am writing to you in advance of the discussion of a possible new transportation demand management (TDM) program during this evening's work session. City staff's proposal to make the TDM process uniformly applied and predictable, by making the same TDM requirements apply to all development projects and creating a list of TDM measures with points assigned to each from which developers and building owners could pick to create their TDM plans, certainly has some merit.

But at this time, there is great uncertainty about how many employees will work in office spaces and how many will work from home in the post-COVID-19 new normal (see the MPO survey results). It is possible that when we reach the new normal, so many employees will work from home so many days each week that there will be a huge decrease in commuters driving and using parking or riding buses into what used to be congested areas. Consequently, Smart Growth questions why there is a need to implement any new traffic demand management or parking management measures at this time. We could wait and see what the new normal looks like and then come together to address these issues if there still is a need to do so.

However, I understand that some might be concerned with delaying enactment of an ordinance creating the new TDM program and thereby allowing new development projects not to be covered by the new program. I assume some of you share that concern.

I suggest a compromise. If you support the concept of an ordinance to create a new TDM program along the lines that city staff will describe to you this evening, let that the newly enacted ordinance be effective as soon as it is published, so that it applies to any development projects for which land use applications are filed after the immediate effective date. But in the ordinance, make the first TDM plans due by December 31, 2022, and delegate to an agency or body the authority to promulgate the list of eligible TDM measure and the points assigned to each at least 6 months before December 31, 2022 (with drafts circulated for public comment more than 6 months before December 31, 2022).

2021 is likely to be a year of transition from low levels of commuting and other driving as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic toward an emerging new normal. It probably will take years for the new normal to fully emerge, but by early 2022, we

might see some signs of what it will be. Then an effective list of TDM measures and appropriate points could be developed in 2022 and be in place to start impacting behavior as the new normal begins to fully emerge in 2023.

At present, it is difficult for any TDM measures to cause a reduction in single-occupancy-vehicle miles driven because so few people are riding the buses and miles driven for commuting or other purposes already are so substantially decreased by the COVID-19 pandemic.

Thank you for your consideration. I will register to speak at this evening's meeting so I am available to answer any questions you might have about this proposal for a compromise.

Bill Connors
Executive Director
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From: Kathryn Pensack <katpen7@gmail.com>
Sent: Wednesday, October 28, 2020 5:29 PM
To: Susan Millar <sbmillar@gmail.com>
Cc: Plan Commission Comments <pccomments@cityofmadison.com>
Subject: Re: TDMP topic, Oct 29, 2020 Special Meeting on Transportation

Well said!

On Wed, Oct 28, 2020, 16:35 Susan Millar <sbmillar@gmail.com> wrote:
October 28, 2020
Re: TDMP topic, Oct 29, 2020 Special Meeting on Transportation

Dear members of the Plan Commission,

I urge you to move forward rapidly to implement a strong version of the TDM program proposal under review during your Oct 29 Special Meeting on Transportation. My reasons are:

1. Everything Hayley Tymeson wrote to you on Oct. 27.
2. Behavioral research makes clear that most of us most of the time behave in some ways that we know will eventually harm ourselves, our families, our children, our communities, our Earth. We are creatures of habit and convenience. "Knowing" (that is, in this case, believing scientific information about congestion, CO2 and other harmful emissions from gasoline

engines) how our behavior needs to change in order to avert negative consequences often does *not* lead to change--sometimes even when such change would be to our financial advantage. This same research does indicate, however, that needed behavior change occurs as a result of small yet consistent modifications in our physical environment ("nudges"), effectively implemented incremental policies, and social pressure. Or, when dire circumstances force change. So, building on Hayley's comment, I say,

Before Madison gets to the dire circumstances of intolerable congestion and even greater climate warming due to transportation emissions, let's enact these already-tested TDM environmental nudges and incremental policy changes. And in the process, all of us, including members of the business community, will experience all the ancillary benefits that Hayley identifies in her comment.

Thank you for your hard work and for considering these points.

Susan Millar
2233 Rowley Ave., Madison, 53726
Member, 350 Madison

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I was born when CO2 PPM was 310.5.
When my youngest grandchild was born, PPM was 393.1.
At current rates, when he is 20, PPM will be 423.

See the attached data file from
NASA: <https://data.giss.nasa.gov/modelforce/ghgases/fig1A.ext.txt>

From: Hayley Tymeson <hdtymeson@gmail.com>
Sent: Tuesday, October 27, 2020 11:14 PM
To: Planning <planning@cityofmadison.com>
Subject: Plan Commission: Transportation meeting

Hi PC members,

Thanks for holding this special working session on transportation, and for accepting comments! I really appreciate the opportunity to speak a bit about transportation policy.

First, I'll give some personal context. I'm not from Madison. I grew up outside of Washington, DC (Arlington) and moved here a year ago from Seattle. Both of those cities are actually highlighted in the TDM slides, which is great! I'm glad that in recent years, both places realized their car-centric approaches to transportation were unsustainable and damaging...because traffic was a defining component of life in each city. Seattle and DC ranked 14th and 5th in a [2019 study](https://inrix.com/press-releases/2019-traffic-scorecard-us/) (<https://inrix.com/press-releases/2019-traffic-scorecard-us/>) on US cities with the worst traffic, respectively (DC does seem to be improving, though). I'll highlight two very different examples from my own life.

During college, I got a summer internship in Silver Springs, Maryland, and figured the ~13mile drive would be manageable. Driving those 26 miles per day, mostly on highways, took 1.5 hours *minimum*. It was very frequently more than two hours. By 2013 in DC, "rush hour" no longer existed - if you got on the road anytime between 7am and 6pm, you were in for "rush-hour" levels of congestion. It was stressful, stop-and-go traffic. I hated it, and pretty much swore I would never drive into the city again.

In Seattle, the traffic was just as bad, with the added stress of hills and rain. But I was happy, because I was whizzing past all this traffic on my bike. I quickly realized in Seattle that biking was the *fastest* way to get around, after frequently making it somewhere faster than my friends who drove. I could usually outpace the buses, too, despite their designated lanes and traffic signals.

Madison has nowhere near the traffic issues of Seattle or DC. Yet. But Madison is growing, and if every new entry brings a car, we're going to run out of road space pretty quickly. If every resident needs a parking spot, that's less area to build the housing that Madison desperately needs. And if every storefront needs a massive parking lot because there's no other way to arrive, that's less space for businesses, too.

My main point is this: Madison can either actively disincentivize driving, or wait until traffic provides its own disincentive.

I would guess that many TDMPs in large cities were spurred by out-of-control levels of congestion, as a weary acknowledgement of a long-worsening problem with traffic. Madison is not yet a gridlocked city, though, and with active transportation policy we can avoid that fate. It will require some serious commitment to policies that reduce the need for single-occupancy vehicles, while also enhancing the appeal and utility of alternative modes of transit. Madison's Comprehensive Plan already lays out most of the mechanisms for reducing dependence on cars, including smart growth, infill development, and stronger public transportation and biking infrastructure. I would also add affordable housing availability as a key component - if people can afford to live near work, no matter where work is, there is less need for and dependence on cars. But I won't harp on them too much, since Madison already has the right plans. It just needs to start *moving* a bit faster on implementation, and do more reporting of progress through data and benchmarking (please do this).

Instead, I'll just re-emphasize all the gains that we could make with a more active transportation management policy. By creating walkable, bikeable neighborhoods within a network of public transportation, we could reap all the benefits of reducing sprawl, including:

- **More space for human things:** With less space allocated to roads and parking, we'd have space for parks, housing, businesses, bike paths, pedestrian paths, and people in general. Added bonus: if we reduce sprawl, we get closer to nature. Imagine taking a bus to the edge of the city and finding yourself on a hiking trail, instead of the endless suburbs surrounding most cities.

- **Public health benefits:** The United States has been spiraling further into an obesity crisis for decades, fueled in part by increasingly sedentary lifestyles. Vehicle usage also leads to air and water pollution. And fewer cars on the road means fewer traffic fatalities, less noise pollution, and a less stressful environment (as a driver, biker, or pedestrian). Providing the means for active transportation is a major public health intervention.
- **A win for the environment:** With fewer vehicles driving shorter distances on fewer roads, we could reduce CO2 emissions and help meet Madison's existing goals for net-zero carbon emissions by 2030 (less than a decade away). Plus, instead of bulldozing wild spaces for roads and far-flung housing developments, we can preserve that land and preserve space for wildlife and biodiversity.
- **Reduced strain on city budgets:** It costs money to connect peripheral developments to the city - through new roads and electrical lines, more public transportation extensions, and increased time/money managing and maintaining wide networks of infrastructure. Infill development is already in the heart of the city, and frequently already connected to existing public transit, utilities, and roads. Myriad other systems, such as stormwater management, would be less costly with reduced paved areas as well.
- **The myriad benefits of not sitting in traffic:** The traffic study that ranked DC so poorly on traffic congestion had other findings as well. Drivers in DC lost an estimated 124 hours and \$1,761 *yearly* from just sitting in traffic. When people are sitting in traffic, they probably *aren't* getting work done, spending time with friends and family, or pursuing a hobby. They're just sitting in traffic.

I know the PC often faces backlash when trying to do the real, hard work of implementing these plans. Many neighbors fight for more parking spaces for their neighborhood, but less thru-traffic. Many developers fight against any added costs from sustainable building or TDMPs. I do understand the difficulties of changing policies, for both the government and citizens. Policy changes are probably always scary. Just please know, there are also people like me in Madison, who can't stay up-to-date on every development or every transportation plan, but *desperately* want the city described above. Many of us are young and overworked. We miss committee meetings and neighborhood presentations. But I believe most people in Madison are willing to sacrifice parking spots or a few road lanes for all the positives of a more connected, affordable, people-centered city.

Thanks for your time,

Hayley Tymeson
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