



Department of Planning & Community & Economic Development

Planning Division

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To: City of Madison Plan Commission

From: West Area Plan Project Team (Ben Zellers, Linda Horvath, Urvashi Martin, Colin Punt, Breana Collins)

Date: May 4, 2023

Subject: West Area Plan Update

Project Background

Planning staff began working on the [West Area Plan](#) in November 2022. The plan area is approximately 5,583 acres (8.72 square miles), and is generally bounded by the West Beltline Highway to the south and west, the City of Middleton boundary and Lake Mendota to the north, and Midvale Boulevard to the east. There are approximately 30,000 residents and 15,000 housing units within the planning area. Of the 30,000 residents approximately 27.5 percent are people of color. Staff has prepared a series of background maps, such as sidewalk network, bicycle network, traffic counts, historic resources, natural features, and more, that [are available](#) for public review.

The West Area and Northeast Area Plans will be the first created under the City's new [Planning Framework](#), which was adopted by the Common Council on August 2, 2022. With the new framework approach, the Planning Division will create 12 Area Plans over the next 8 to 10 years that will cover the entire City. With a timeline for covering the City and a consistent set of topics to be addressed, the Planning Framework will also ensure that people who have traditionally been underrepresented in planning processes will receive services, leading to greater equity in planning across the City.

The plan and process is not starting from scratch - staff is using recently adopted plans and studies, such as the Comprehensive Plan, Complete Green Streets, watershed studies, and other adopted plans and studies to provide guidance for this planning process. Staff is also reviewing [underlying plans](#) (Spring Harbor – 2006, Midvale Heights/Westmorland – 2009, University Hill Farms – 2016, and Odana Area – 2021) for actions and strategies that should be absorbed into the West Area Plan.

The project team has met with an interagency staff team with representatives from Metro Transit, Transportation, Engineering, Parks, and Economic Development to discuss the West Area. Future meetings with those agencies and others will be held as the process progresses. Planning staff is working closely with Parks Division staff during the West Area Plan process – the Parks Division is undertaking [parks development planning](#) for neighborhood and mini parks in the West Area alongside the West Area Plan process. Planning and Parks staff will be updating the Board of Park Commissioners on the planning process at their May 17th meeting.

Public Engagement

Three initial public meetings (two virtual and one in-person) were held to kick off the planning process. People who could not attend any of the meetings could still provide feedback via an interactive commenting map and an online survey. A summary of the public engagement thus far in the planning process is provided below, along with engagement planned for the near future.

An Online Interactive Commenting Map asked people to comment on what people love most about the area, their ideas for improvement and areas that need attention. Approximately 460 people participated. General themes are summarized in the presentation; for those who are interested in the full map, all comments can be [reviewed here](#). Staff will be discussing comments as we review issues and opportunities for the area and begin drafting the plan.

Initial Public Meetings were held virtually on February 6th and 13th and in-person on March 9th. Meetings have had [high representation](#) from single-family homeowners and retirees, with involvement from residents in neighborhood associations across the planning area. Public meeting participation from renters has been lagging, but outreach via Community Partners over the next several months should help address that deficit. Initial meetings discussed the Area Plans and the Planning Framework, Plan boundary, demographics, and trends/issues facing the area, and the plan focus topics and process/timeline. Approximately 75-80 people attended each virtual meeting, with about 15 attending the in-person meeting. All meetings broke in to discussion groups to talk about six major topics, which are outlined below with some themes that emerged during discussions:

1. *What aspects of the West Area people love and why:* greenspace, proximity to Lake Mendota, libraries, grocery stores and other businesses, charming character of neighborhoods, walkability, bikeability, and bus service.
2. *What parts of the West Area are best situated to add new residents through redevelopment:* along transit routes, at West Towne Mall, Odana, Midvale, Hilldale, Market Square, University Research Park, and the UW Digestive Health Clinic area.
3. *Needed bike/sidewalk/road connections* – responses included: north-south bike paths, safe crossings for kids, closing sidewalk gaps, and University Ave. and Mineral Point Rd. being barriers.
4. *Park amenities:* tennis court repairs, accessible bathrooms, mobility accommodations as people age, more native plants, and prairie restorations.
5. *Parts of the West Area that lack amenities and services needed to be considered a complete neighborhood:* smaller groceries, pop-up shops, food carts near BRT stops. breweries like on eastside, nothing is within a 10 minute walk in some areas.
6. *Neighborhood elements people would change/improve:* needing prioritize tree canopy and not wanting the area to become like downtown or have new multifamily / mixed-use buildings that all look the same.

A summary of comments from virtual meetings can be [found here](#); comments from the in-person meeting are [available here](#).

An Online Resident Survey includes questions that are similar to the public meeting topics above. 42 replies have been received thus far. The survey is still open, so staff has not yet reviewed the full slate of responses.

An Online Business Survey is being coordinated with Economic Development staff to solicit business feedback in targeted areas, with follow-up planned in coordination with Community Partners.

Community Partners to reach residents that have typically been underrepresented in planning processes, like renters and people of color, have been selected and are beginning outreach and engagement this month. Staff is still looking for Partners to connect with the Latinx community within the planning area.

Other outreach, like meetings with UW PEOPLE Program students at Memorial and a neighborhood meeting with Spring Harbor, have also been part of the planning process thus far.

Upcoming Engagement: A West Area Open House is scheduled for May 10 from 6:30-8:00 p.m. at Lussier Community Education Center, 55 S. Gammon Rd., to discuss the variety of projects other City departments are working on in the West Area and answer resident questions. Metro Transit, Engineering, Transportation, Parks, the Water Utility, and Community Development will be present to answer questions, in addition to the Planning Division. West Area Alders and the Mayor have been invited.

Staff will be working with Community Partners through the summer on additional engagement and outreach.

Next Steps/Timeline

Staff anticipates moving forward with the West Area Plan process according to the following approximate timeline, which is subject to adjustment based on feedback received from the Commission, other BCCs, and members of the public:

Estimated Timeframe	Activity
November 2022	Plan Introduction
December-March 2023	Data Collection/Community Input Gathering
March-April 2023	Hiring Community Partners
May-October 2023	Additional public engagement; draft Plan concepts and recommendations
Oct. 2023 –Jan. 2024	Finalize Draft Plan
January 2024	Introduce Draft Plan at Common Council; referral to BCCs
January-March 2024	BCC review
April 2024	Common Council – consider adoption

Questions for the Plan Commission

Planning Division staff requests the Plan Commission provide comments on the following issues:

1. Are there any land use, transportation, parks, or facilities issues the Commission feel need attention within the West Area?
2. Does the Commission have any recommendations on public engagement over the next several months (groups to engage with, area events, etc)?
3. Does the Commission have any general thoughts or feedback on potential retirement of older underlying plans?

Attachments:

Presentation Slides

(Also: see linked material throughout the memo for additional information)

West Area Plan



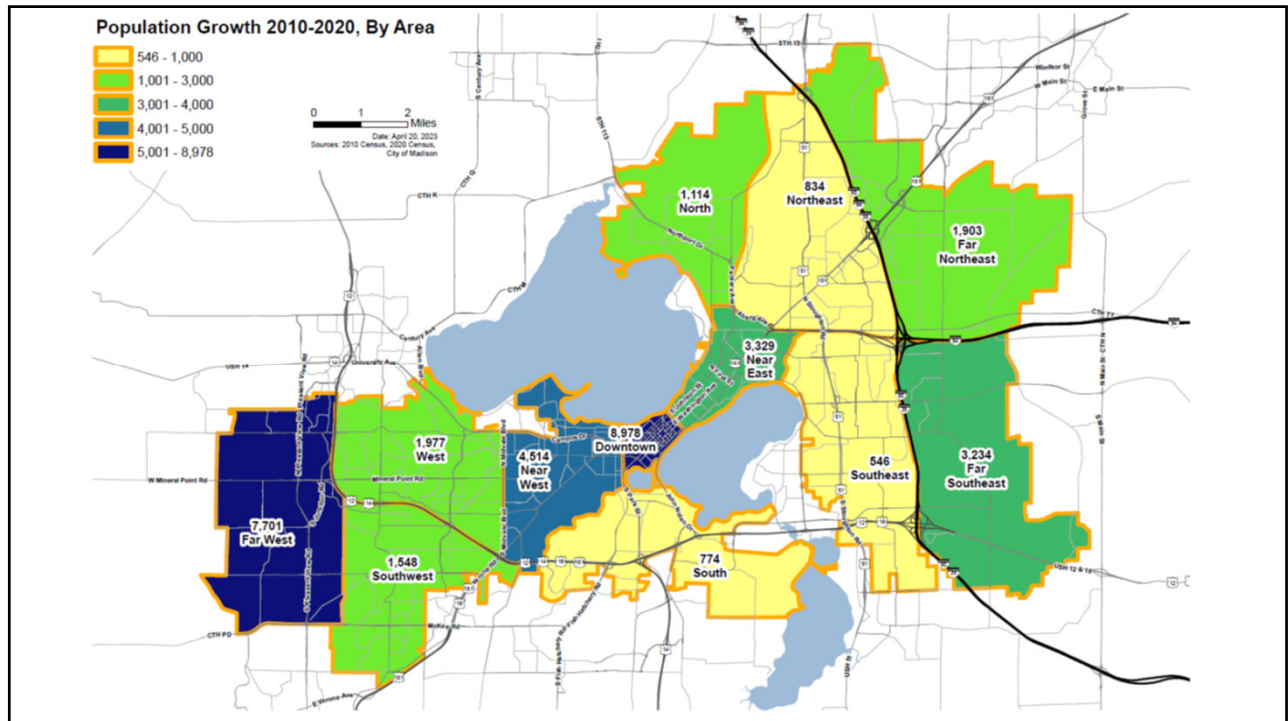
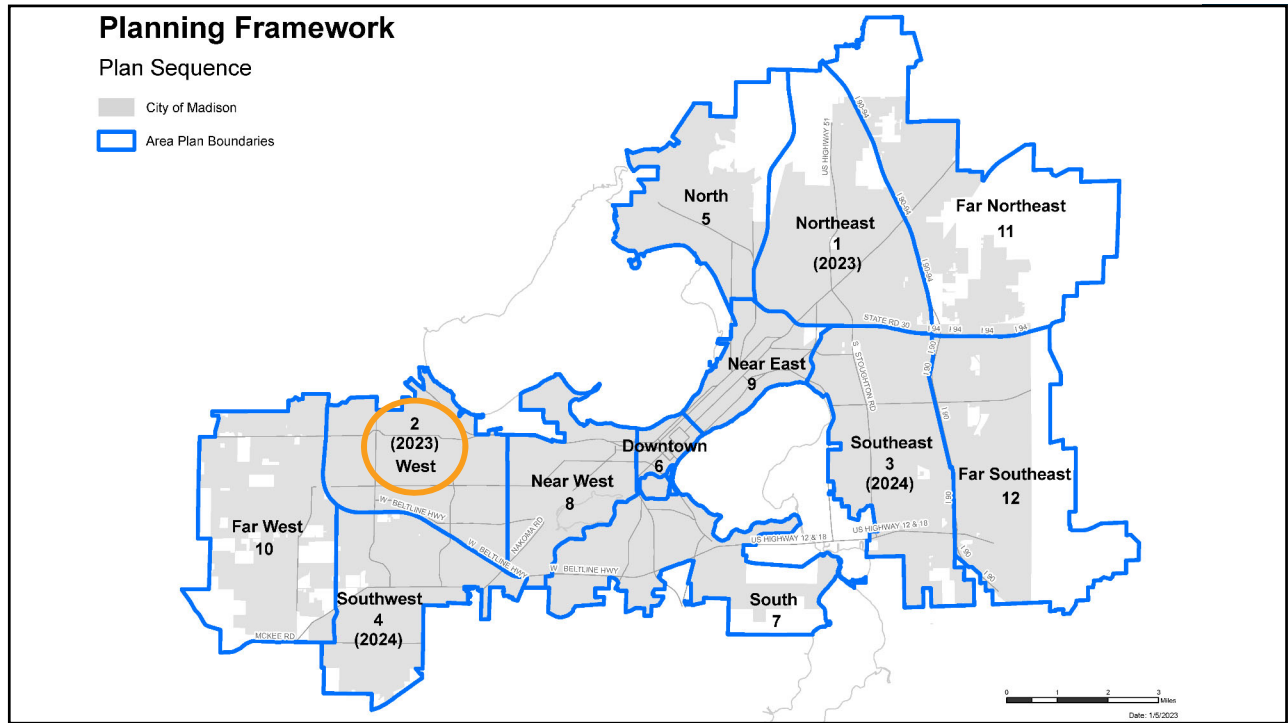
Project Team
 Linda Horvath
 Ben Zellers
 Breana Collins
 Urvashi Martin
 Colin Punt

May 8, 2023 Plan Commission Update

Agenda



- Area Plans / Planning Framework
- West Area Plan Boundary & Demographics
- Underlying Plans
- Parks Division Partnership
- Planning Process & Timeline
- Questions for Commission



Planning Framework – Area Plans will:

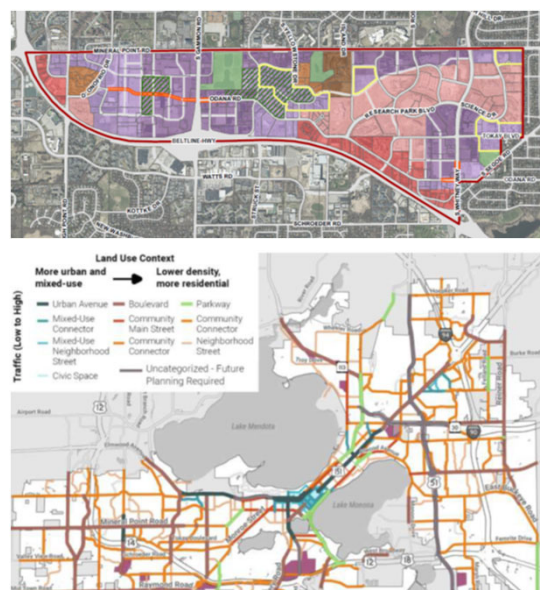


- Cover the entire city
- Be established then updated each decade
- Include an emphasis on reaching residents and communities typically underrepresented in City processes
- Have increased coordination with City initiatives
 - Parks development planning
- Reduce the number of outdated and overlapping sub-area plans

Area Plans



- Area Plans guide physical changes:
 - Land use and growth/redevelopment
 - Transportation (roads, pedestrians, bicycle network, transit)
 - Parks and Open Space
 - Stormwater Management, Utilities, Public Facilities
- Some detailed comments may be passed along to relevant City Departments rather than being included in the Plan document



Area Plans

- Not starting from scratch:
 - 2018 Comprehensive Plan
 - Complete Green Streets
 - Underlying adopted plans
 - Watershed studies
 - Impediments to Fair Housing
 - Metro Network Redesign & BRT
 - Etc.
- Feedback received will inform plan development and various City initiatives

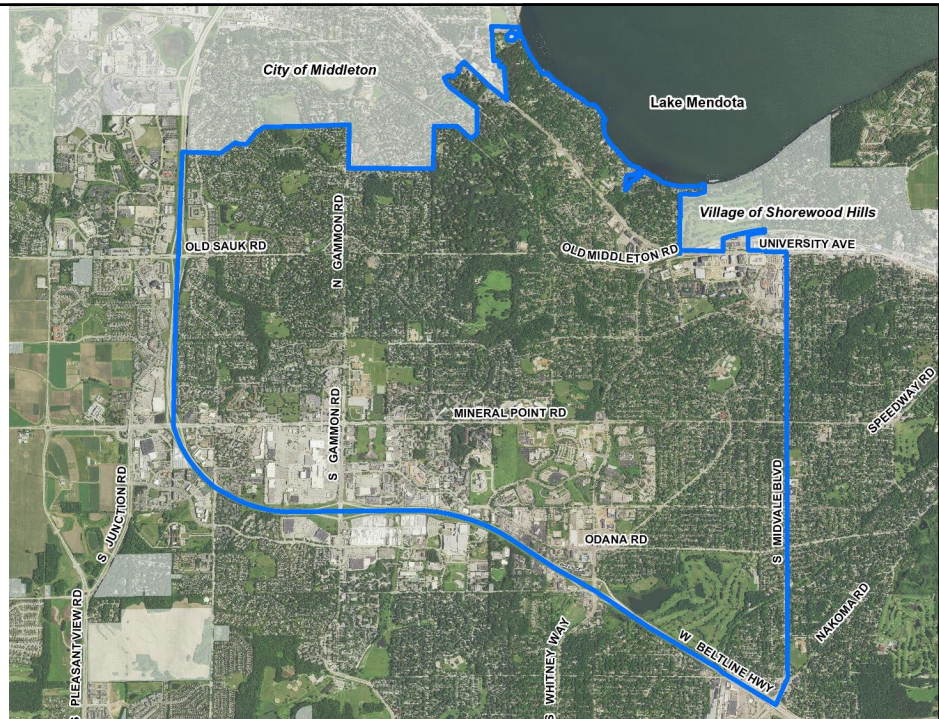
CITY OF MADISON
ANALYSIS OF IMPEDIMENTS TO FAIR HOUSING
CHOICE
ADOPTED OCTOBER 1, 2019



West Area Plan Demographics & Boundary

- ~5,600 acres
- ~30,000 residents
- ~15,200 housing units
- 27.5% people of color
- ~25,000 jobs

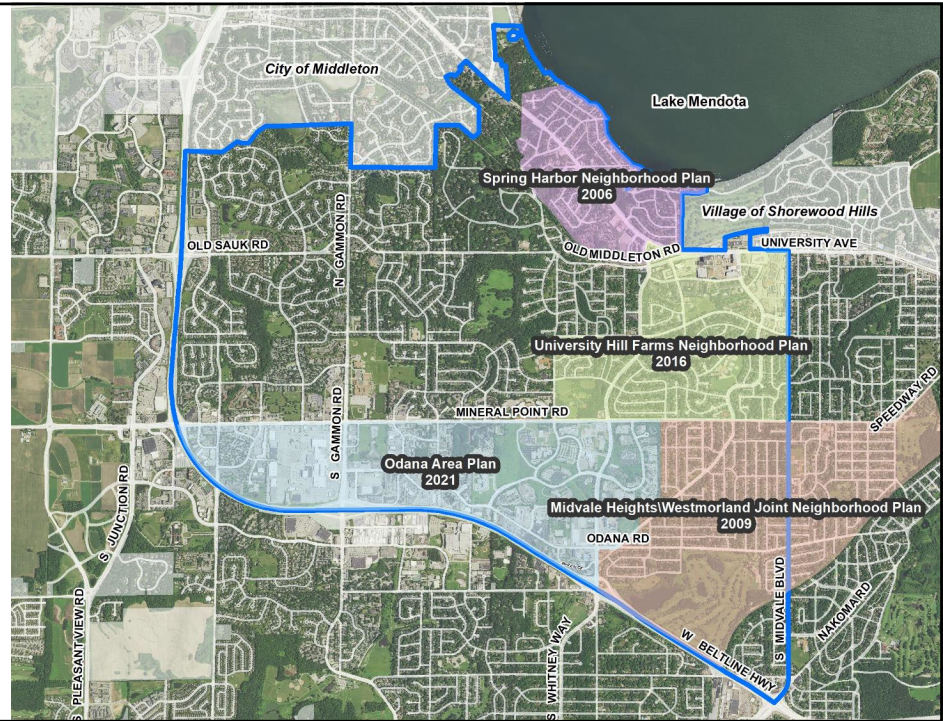
Sources: City of Madison Planning Division, Census Bureau



Existing Sub-Area Plans

- **Odana Area Plan** adopted ~18 months ago – will use to guide that area.
- Review other plans for elements / recommendations applicable to West Area Plan level of detail & that are consistent with City policies and priorities.
- Possible retirement of underlying plans.

Note: does not show 2008 Southwest Neighborhood Plan, which partially overlaps the Odana Area, but focuses on land south of the Beltline.



Green & Resilient

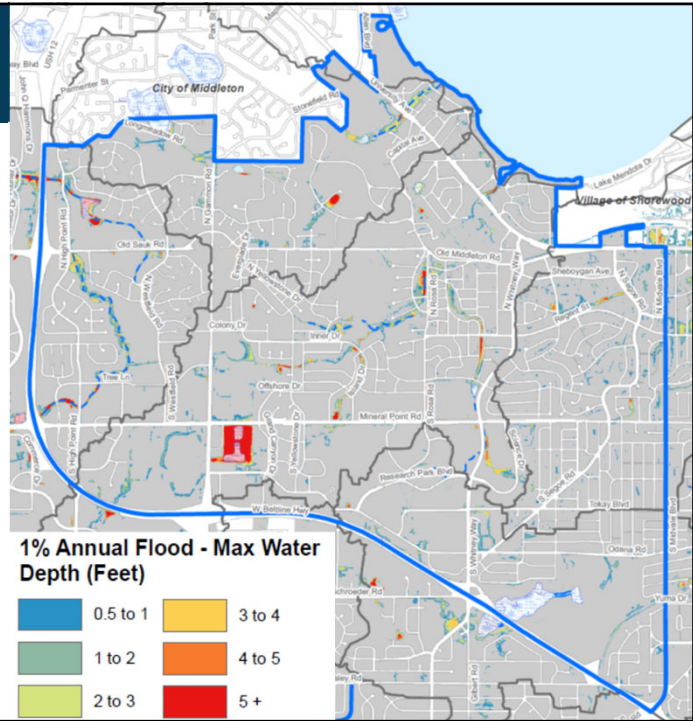
- **Park Classifications:**
 - Conservation Park (like Owen)
 - Community Park (like Garner): >20 ac.
 - **Neighborhood Park: >5 ac.**
 - **Mini Park: <5 ac.**
- **Park Development Plans:** A guide to park improvements planned in the coming 10 to 15 years at **Neighborhood and Mini Parks**
 - Park's existing conditions
 - Recent improvements
 - Planned improvements
 - Planned expansion, if any



<https://www.cityofmadison.com/parks/projects/park-development-plans-west-area>

Green & Resilient

- Watershed studies:
 - Pheasant Branch
 - Strickers/Mendota
 - Spring Harbor
 - Wingra West
 - Willow Creek
- Studies recommend improvements to stormwater management system



This map exists to help you quickly get information about general flood risks. This map doesn't identify all areas that may flood or predict future flooding. Do not use this map to make official flood risk determinations for insurance, lending, or other purposes. This is not an official FEMA federal Flood Insurance Rate Map or the state or local equivalent. The City of Madison assumes no liability for any errors, omissions, or inaccuracies. The City also assumes not liability for any decisions or actions a user might take based on this map.

Public Engagement So Far . . .

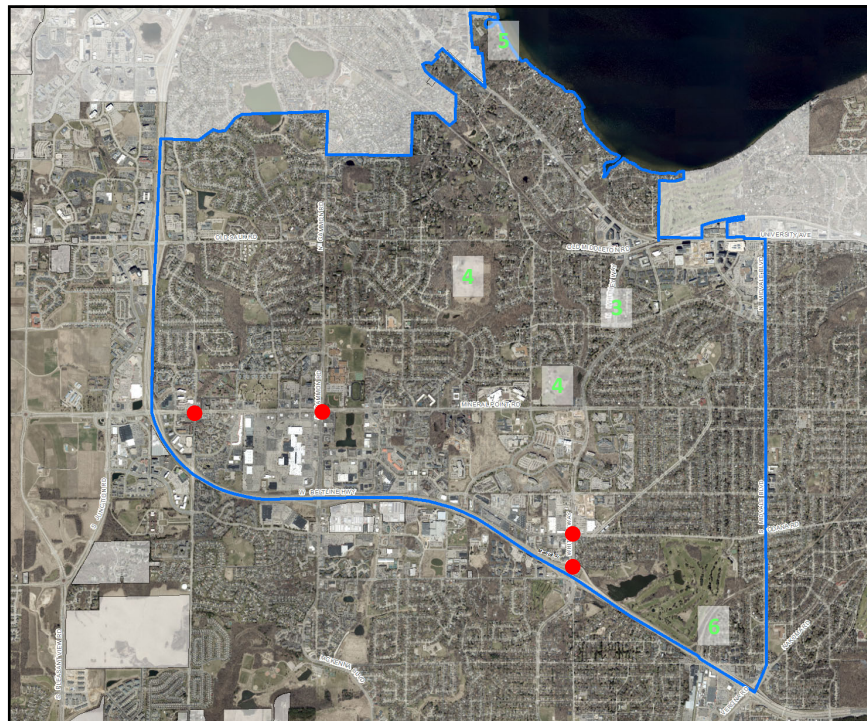


- January – March: Interactive Mapping (455 comments)
- February 6th, Noon: virtual meeting (~75 attendees)
- February 13th, 6 p.m.: virtual meeting (~80 attendees)
- March – May: Survey
- March 9th, 6 p.m.: in-person meeting (~15 attendees)
- April 19th & May 3rd: PEOPLE Program Memorial students

Public Feedback Themes



- Appreciation for greenspace, tree canopy, bus service.
- Need for bike route improvements, especially north-south routes.
- Fill in sidewalk gaps.
- Focus new development/redevelopment on commercial areas, parking lots.
- Some areas lack amenities (retail/restaurants) within close proximity (Research Park, Old Sauk Road, Whitney Way to Tokay)
- Note: full summary available on project website; feedback reflects engagement thus far via public meetings, which have attracted primarily homeowners. Further engagement of renters to come via Community Partners.



Interactive Mapping Themes

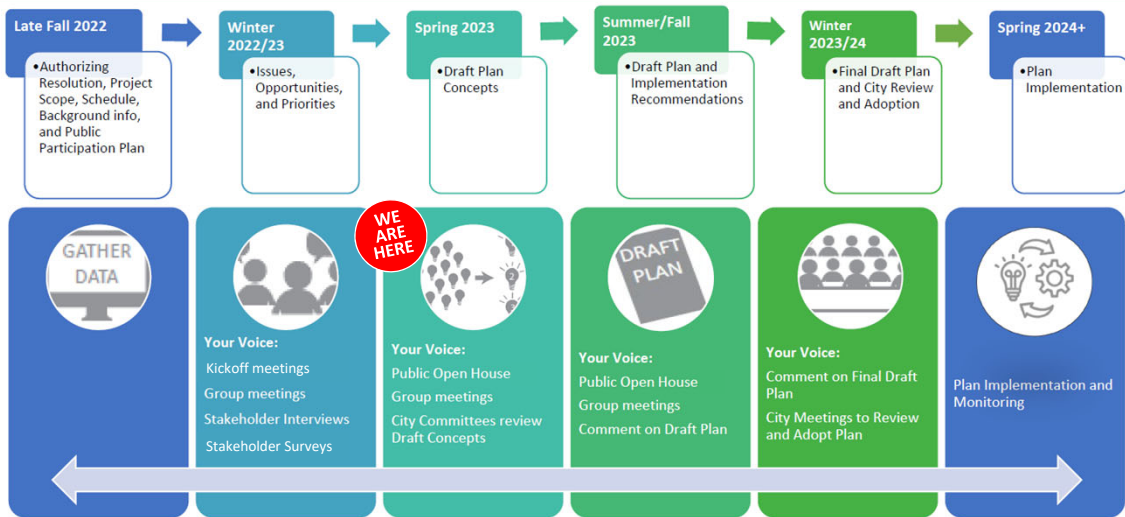
1. Bike infrastructure improvements, especially at intersections and interchanges.
2. New bike connections: West Towne Path, Beltline path to Southwest path, Midvale Blvd, etc.
3. Whitney Way north of Mineral Point: change back to what it was / like the changes / needs businesses
4. Appreciation for parks/wooded areas, like Owen Conservation Park
5. Connectivity to Marshall Park
6. Zook Park connectivity
7. Lakefront mini-park maintenance
8. Problem intersections ●
9. Narrower streets (Odana, Tokay, Old Sauk Road, etc)
10. More (re)development at West Towne, Research Park, other commercial sites

More Engagement to Come . . .



- West Area **OPEN HOUSE May 10th** 6:30-8:00p.m. @ Lussier Community Education Center (featuring Metro, Engineering, Transportation, Parks, Water Utility, Community Development, Planning)
- Community Partners outreach
 - Community Events
 - Door-to-door
 - Social media
 - Etc.
- Business outreach – working with Economic Development Division
- Additional events/open houses/meetings over the summer & into fall as process continues

Plan Process



Questions



1. Are there any land use, transportation, parks, or facilities issues the Commission feel need attention within the West Area?
2. Does the Commission have any recommendations on public engagement over the next several months (groups to engage with, area events, etc)?
3. Does the Commission have any general thoughts or feedback on potential retirement of older underlying plans?