



Department of Planning & Community & Economic Development

Planning Division

Heather Stouder, Director

215 Martin Luther King Jr. Blvd. Ste 017
 P.O. Box 2985
 Madison, Wisconsin 53701-2985
 Phone: (608) 266-4635
 Fax (608) 266-6377
www.cityofmadison.com

June 23, 2020

From: Dan McAuliffe, Planning Division;

RE: Oscar Mayer Special Area Plan meeting with Housing Strategy Committee

The Oscar Mayer Special Area Plan was introduced at Council on March 3, 2020. At that meeting, it was referred to Housing Strategy Committee (HSC) to review and provide advisory recommendations to Plan Commission and Council. Since this will be the first time many members of HSC will see the plan, this memo was prepared to provide a bit of background on key issues the plan addresses.

The Oscar Mayer plan is the second of a two-phase planning effort. It was preceded by the [Strategic Assessment](#), which was adopted by Council on February 22, 2019. The Strategic Assessment took a big picture look at what the redevelopment of the site and surrounding areas should achieve, with major emphasis placed on economic development, equity, transit and sustainability. It included an objective specific to housing:

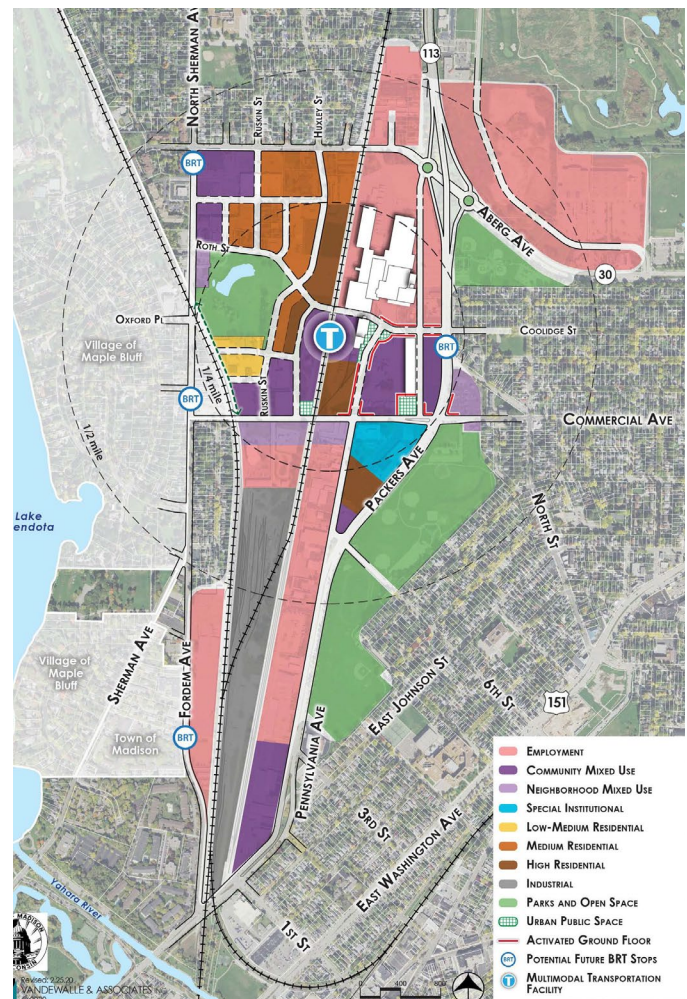
Objective 2. Maintain housing affordability and minimize displacement:

Explore and adopt policies, programs, and overall a comprehensive framework to ensure a variety of housing types, values, and particularly affordable housing, serve all family structures and meet the demand of future employees while consciously avoiding racial, cultural, and elderly displacement in surrounding neighborhoods.

With priorities and visions established and adopted by Council, Planning Division staff and a consultant team drafted and refined a development concept, with extensive public participation efforts throughout the process.

The Plan

The plan recommends a transit-oriented new neighborhood that links together the east and north sides, maintains the Oscar Mayer area as major employment hub, adds much needed housing and reinvents Commercial Avenue as a pedestrian-oriented main street. The Oscar Mayer site is maintained largely as employment with mixed-use development planned for its southern half. Crossing the rail, the uses transition to predominantly residential surrounding a transit center. Approximately 2,000 to 2,500 housing

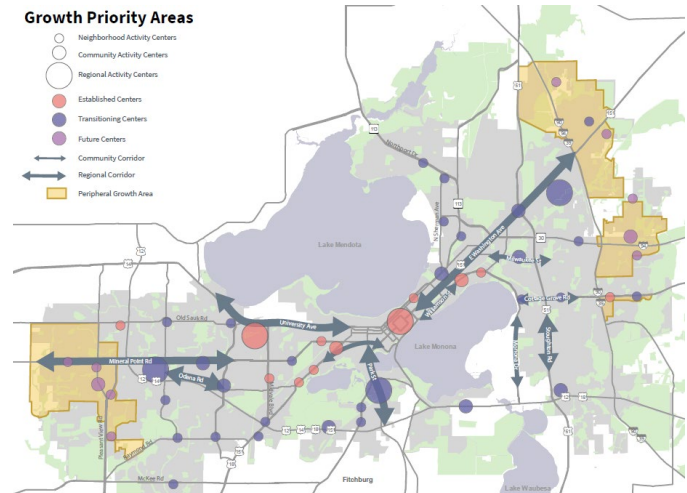


unit could be built in the larger plan area, which would help accommodate the projected 70,000 new residents projected by the City’s Comprehensive Plan by 2040. A new 14 acre public park and open space, consistent with recommendations in the City’s [Parks and Open Space Plan](#), preserves and protects the existing wetland and old growth oak trees on the Hartmeyer property.

The plan recommends a relatively compact block structure that encourages walking and biking, similar to the surrounding Sherman, Eken Park and Emerson East neighborhoods. It also recommends new on- and off-street bike routes through the plan area and connecting to Madison’s larger multi-use path network. The most significant addition is an off street path from the Coolidge Street extension on the Oscar Mayer site to Johnson and First Streets on the east side of the railyard. This is largely contained on MG&E property and easements and will establish a long-awaited off-street connection between the Capital City Trail and northside neighborhoods.

Comprehensive Plan

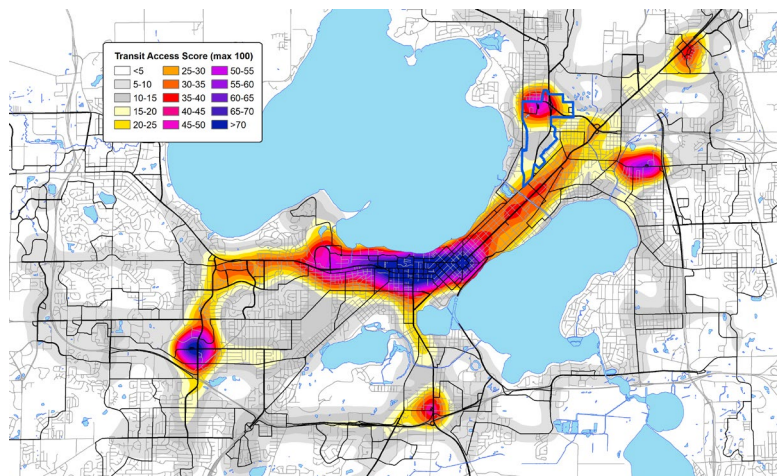
The [Comprehensive Plan](#), adopted in 2018 after a very extensive public process with more than 15,000 engagements, established the City’s overall growth framework and contains broad Citywide policy direction for future development. One of the primary growth strategies is to “Concentrate the highest intensity development along transit corridors, downtown, and at Activity Centers.” This is done through the following recommended actions:



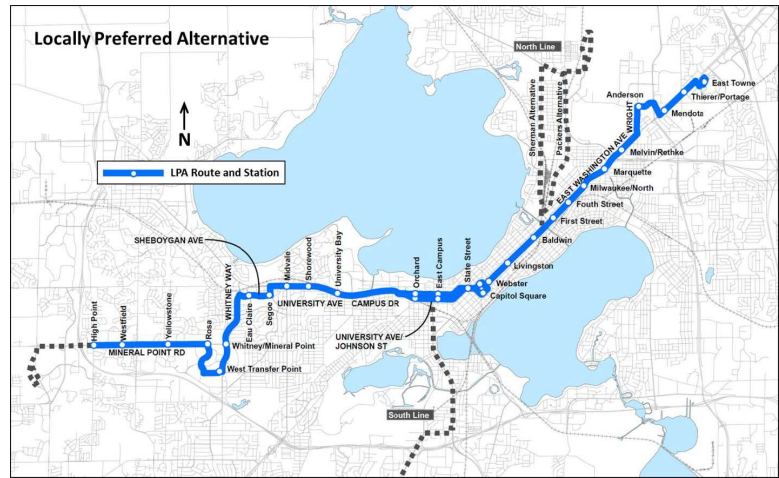
- Implement Transit Oriented Development (TOD) overlay zoning along BRT and other existing and planned high-frequency transit service corridors to create development intensity minimums, reduce parking requirements, and support transit use.
- Prepare plans to transition auto-oriented commercial areas into mixed-use Activity Centers.

Existing and Future Transit

Within the Oscar Mayer Special Area Plan boundary is the North Transfer Point, which provides a very high level of transit service to the surrounding area. Nearly 500 busses arrive or depart from the North Transfer Point on weekdays during normal scheduling, creating faster and more direct access to more locations and better access to economic opportunities. The transit access score mapping (right) shows transit service at the north transfer point is some of the best in the City and better or comparable to that of many areas on the isthmus and other central areas.



Madison's [Bus Rapid Transit](#) north corridor is planned to serve the area in the future. Routing will be determined based on future study but will be either on Packers or Sherman Avenue. The plan was developed with flexibility to accommodate either scenario but the entire plan area is based on TOD principles. Once operation, the north corridor should only improve transit access and provide a better alternative to driving. The east-west route is currently under development as the first phase of the larger BRT network, and is expected to be operation in 2024.



Housing Goals, Types and Locations:

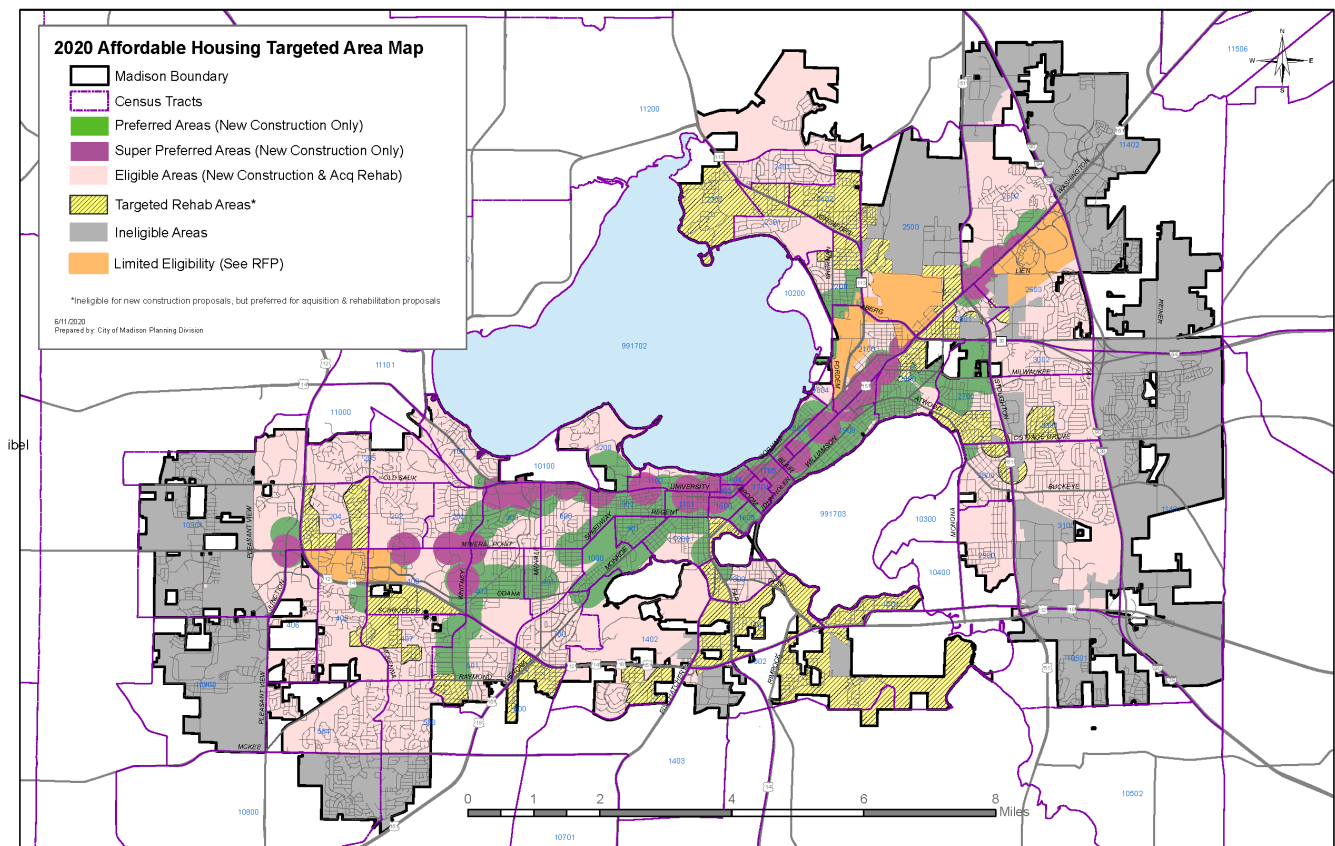
Along with other land use goals, the plan includes specific goals and recommendations for future housing:

Goal 1: Create a neighborhood that offers housing opportunities for all.

1. Encourage the development of “missing-middle housing” including townhomes, duplexes, fourplexes, apartments, and live-work units that can be both owner or renter-occupied.
2. Encourage high-density housing or larger multifamily buildings in proximity to existing or planned transit and adjacent amenities.
3. Expand ownership opportunities for the broader community through different housing types from townhomes, garden style units, and co-housing.
4. Encourage a mix of affordable and market rate housing that meets the needs of a wide variety of citizens at different stages of life and at different price points.
5. Encourage active senior-oriented development in the area that provides age in place living options for neighborhood residents, walkable to services and transit.

To achieve these goals, the plan recommends a relatively wide range of housing, using three primary residential land uses and mixed-use categories. Low-medium residential (LMR) could be considered the lower end of “missing middle” housing, allowing small lot single family development, two- and three- unit buildings, three-unit buildings, townhouses, small multi-family buildings. This land use allows heights ranging from 2-4 stories and most housing types have a front door facing the adjacent street. Medium Residential (MR) might be considered the upper end of “missing middles”, allowing larger multifamily buildings interspersed with other smaller housing types. These housing types are generally 3-6 stories and are located near mixed-use areas, and or commercial/employment areas. High Residential (HR) includes larger and taller multi-family buildings, with maximum heights between 6 and 10 stories. This housing type is clustered around the planned transit center and the mixed-use area on the Oscar Mayer site. Community Mixed Use (CMU) is higher-intensity land use that integrates residential primarily on upper floors. Located primarily on Commercial Avenue, allowable heights range from 6 to 12 stories.

A common theme throughout the process was the need to incorporate affordable units as a substantial component of the overall housing mix. While the plan encourages affordable housing, it does not recommend a target number or percent of overall units. One of the City's tools to assist the development of affordable housing is the use of the City's [Affordable Housing Fund](#). These funds have primarily been used to leverage other public and private resources such as Wisconsin Housing Economic Development Authority's Low Income Housing Tax Credits. These funds become available through an annual competitive funding process. In the interest of extending support for a fuller range of housing opportunities (e.g., smaller scale development, home ownership opportunities, etc.) Affordable Housing Funds will be released in a separate competitive funding process starting in 2020. Eligibility to receive financing is location-based, with preferred areas near high-quality transit, such as the transfer points and future BRT station areas. Since the Oscar Mayer Special Area Plan is not yet adopted, the plan area is classified as “Limited Eligibility,” though next year it will likely be classified as a “Preferred.”



Action Taken at Previous BCC Review Meetings

Thus far in the review and approval process, the Oscar Mayer Special Area Plan was reviewed by the Transportation Policy and Planning Board (TPPB) and the Board of Park Commissioners (BOPC) and Sustainable Madison Committee (SMC). After Housing Strategy Committee, with will be reviewed by Plan Commission (lead referral) On June 29. It is scheduled to go to the Common Council on July 17.

At the May 4 TPPB meeting, the board voted 6-2 to recommend approval of the plan with following text edits: the intersection of Coolidge and Packers is intended for safe, full pedestrian and bike access for all movements while limiting new cut-through traffic to Eken Park; updating the transportation map to include recommended low-stress bike routes within the area; and include an implementation/timeline for the transportation portion of the plan. Primary topics of debate at TPPB were the balance of development and open space on the Hartmeyer property and reestablishing one the historic street connections between Eken Park and Oscar Mayer at Coolidge Street. As part of the Hwy 113 (Packers Avenue) construction in the late 1950s, several local street connections were removed and many homes and businesses were demolished to create space for the new highway.

BOPC reviewed the plan at their May 13 and June 10 meetings. At the May 13 meeting, BOPC referred the plan to their next meeting to get more information related to the Hartmeyer property, the plan recommendations and illustrations of alternatives submitted by Alder Abbas and by Paul Noeldner, Maple Bluff resident and founder of Friends of the Hartmeyer Natural Area. At the June 10 meeting, the Board of Park Commissioners voted 5-1 to recommend approval of the plan as submitted in the draft.

Recommendations from Sustainable Madison Committee will be available at the HSC meeting.