

MADISON
DESIGN
PROFESSIONALS
WORKGROUP

April 7, 2014

Members of the SCTOD Planning Committee:

In 2010, the Madison Design Professionals Workgroup proposed a vision that lowered a portion of John Nolen Drive to expand Law Park and connect the Downtown to the lakefront as part of their "Design Visions for the City of Madison Downtown Plan" document. City planning staff subsequently recommended filling the lake to expand Law Park in their final Downtown Plan recommendations but without any changes to John Nolen Drive. The City Council adopted the Downtown Plan in 2012 but removed the recommendation to fill the lake, effectively preserving the status of Law Park as a narrow green space with limited usability.

The plan adoption deferred the questions of how to connect the Downtown to the lakefront and what changes should be made to John Nolen Drive to a future study. In 2013, the City convened the South Capitol District Transit-Oriented Development District (SCTOD) planning process to study John Nolen Drive intersections, potential bridge connections to Law Park and the location of an Intermodal Transit Center but did not include improvements Law Park.

In 2013, the Madison Design Professionals Workgroup refined their vision to expand Law Park without filling the lake. Lowering John Nolen Drive and reclaiming the air rights now appeared to be the best way to expand the park while also connecting the Downtown to the lake and resolving the transportation issues related to the Blair Street/Wilson intersection. In refining their vision as a viable alternative, the Design Professionals researched highway decking projects across the country to address several critical questions:

- * Is lowering and decking over John Nolen Drive technically feasible?
- * What other cities have undertaken similar projects, particularly cities similar in size to Madison?
- * How much would the project cost and what funding sources are available?
- * What is the cost-benefit of a tunnel option?
- * How can you maintain street connectivity with a lowered John Nolen Drive?

The SCTOD committee has now completed its year long study and made several recommendations. One of the recommendations calls for relocating the Blair/Wilson intersection to S. Hancock Street. The Design Professionals reviewed this recommendation and identified several concerns which we summarized in an e-mail to David Trowbridge on March 14. We also prepared the attached white paper to summarize our vision for Law Park and John Nolen Drive as an alternative to the SCTOD S. Hancock recommendation. We asked David Trowbridge for the opportunity to discuss our concerns and present our alternative vision at your May 8 meeting. We hope that you will review the attached white paper as you prepare for this meeting. Please feel free to contact me at tander2126@tds.net if you have any questions before the meeting. Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

The Madison Design Professionals Workgroup

Tim Anderson
Doug Kozel
Arlan Kay
Ed Linville
Dan Williams
Steve Steinhoff

March 14, 2014

The Madison Design Professionals Workgroup
White Paper – An Alternative Vision for Law Park and John Nolen Drive

A community discussion about a big vision for Law Park began 100 years ago with John Nolen’s proposal for the “Great Esplanade” along the Lake Monona shoreline. Many have offered other ideas for expanding and improving Law Park since John Nolen including Frank Lloyd Wright, William Wesley Peters, and Kenton Peters. While their ideas have excited community leaders and residents, the potential of Madison’s lakefront remains unrealized.

More recently, the 2012 Downtown Master Plan offered another opportunity to think big about Law Park but the adopted plan is modest in scope, principally recommending a ped-bike bridge to the lakefront and landscape improvements to the park. In 2013, the city hired a consultant to prepare recommendations for the South Capitol Transit-Oriented Development (SCTOD) district planning study as a follow up to the Downtown Master Plan. The recommendations of the year long planning process are also modest in scope primarily focusing on street and intersection improvements for John Nolen Drive and ped-bike bridge connections to the lakefront.

While the SCTOD study is not focused on improvements to Law Park, the proposed recommendations will impact the park (**Exhibit 6**). The recommended intersection at John Nolen Drive and S. Hancock street and the proposed driveway through the park to Machinery Row will decrease existing park land and effectively eliminate the potential to expand Law Park in the future. Without the ability to expand Law Park as a community and visitor destination, the prospects for revitalizing the southeast quadrant of the Capitol Square as a vibrant commercial, entertainment, residential and employment district may also be limited.

The Madison Design Professionals Workgroup have developed an alternative vision for John Nolen Drive and Law Park that meets the SCTOD objectives while addressing more comprehensive revitalization goals. The SCTOD recommendations will make their way through several committees for review and approval prior to City Council adoption. The window for considering an alternative vision Law Park and John Nolen Drive is still open - but not for long.

The following summary and graphics, entitled “Law Park - Madison’s Millenium Park”, describe our alternative vision. It is our hope that this vision can engage the community in a important discussion about Law Park and its potential to become a centerpiece of a great Downtown.

Law Park – Madison’s Millenium Park

Highway corridors have divided central cities and neighborhoods for decades. Today, cities are decking their highways and reclaiming the air rights over these corridors to create exciting community gathering places as part of community growth and economic revitalization strategies. Reconnecting and restoring the urban fabric, improving multi-modal transportation and stimulating redevelopment are key considerations for cities in implementing highway decking projects. Cities realize that investments in decking projects, while expensive and technically challenging, are good fiscal decisions because the land is generally free, there is a high potential for public and private funding, particularly if the projects offer comprehensive benefits, and these projects can offer greater potential for spin off development, increased tax base, and more significant short-term and long-term

economic impacts than traditional highway improvements.

In Madison, John Nolen Drive-USH 151 and the adjoining railroad corridor have long separated the Downtown from Lake Monona. The wide expanse of streets needed to accommodate the increasing volume of commuter traffic through the Downtown has created barriers between neighborhoods and impediments to building a walkable and bicycle friendly downtown. The Madison Design Professionals Workgroup proposes a vision for Law Park that calls for undergrounding and decking a section of John Nolen Drive to create a 6.5 AC waterfront park and visitor destination for the Downtown (**Exhibits 1 and 2**). The following summary describes this transformative vision and the multiple benefits that it offers.

Transportation Benefits (Exhibit 3)

Transportation improvements drive the Madison Design Professionals Workgroup's vision for Law Park. In addition to expanding Law Park, lowering and decking over John Nolen Drive-USH 151 will improve commuter traffic flow through the Downtown. John Nolen Drive will go into a tunnel just east of Monona Terrace and continue on its present course before resurfacing on Blair Street. There are several options for where the tunnel could exit - north of the Blair Street rail crossing (900'), north of Railroad Street (1300'), or north of Main Street (1600'). A tunnel exit north of Main Street would allow E-W traffic to flow freely over Blair Street and provide easier ped-bike connections between the Downtown and the east side. Traffic through the tunnel will no longer be stopped by the John Nolen-Blair-Wilson-Williamson intersection and rail crossing which has long been a choke point for through Isthmus commuter traffic.

With USH 151 commuter traffic redirected through the tunnel, the Williamson-Wilson intersection can be simplified and Williamson Street and Wilson Street can be narrowed, becoming local travel routes and safer pedestrian and bicycle corridors between the Downtown and the east side (**Exhibit 4**). Blair Street will no longer provide an at grade connection to Wilson Street and Williamson Street from East Washington Avenue but connectivity will be maintained by two other north-south connecting streets, S. Blount Street and S. Butler Street (**Exhibit 5**). There is also an option to construct ramps up from the lowered John Nolen Drive to Wilson Street and Williamson Street. Main Street will continue to supplement Wilson and Williamson as an E-W connecting street. Connections from the Downtown to John Nolen Drive will occur via a two-way Wilson Street to Broom Street.

An Intermodal Transit Center, located on the public land between S. Hancock Street and Blair Street, is an alternative to a west rail corridor transit center. This location, formerly the site of an historic railroad station that once served the Downtown in the early 20th century, is ideally positioned for intercity and intracity busses and future commuter rail with direct access and egress from John Nolen Drive under the rail corridor.

This transit center could be a mixed use public-private venture that accomodates public functions and private office, retail and residential uses with four levels of parking to support building uses and special events in Law Park. The proposed building would include a canopy over the railroad that doubles as a public plaza for viewing the lake. The building could also include a bicycle garage.

Park and Open Space Benefits (Exhibit 3)

Constructing a green deck over John Nolen Drive and a plaza deck over the rail corridor will expand Law Park by 4 AC to create a 6.5 AC multi-use waterfront park. The Intermodal

Transit Center plaza can be accessed from Wilson Street via Hancock Street and from Law Park via a handicap accessible ramp. This plaza will offer another public gathering place for Law Park and a viewing platform for lake activities such as the Rhythm and Booms fireworks display. Parking in the Intermodal Transit Center will support the activities and special events for the expanded park.

The Capital City Bicycle Trail will move along the lakefront as it does today. A wetland edge is proposed to be created along the existing shoreline and enclosed by a boardwalk structure that will offer additional access to the lake. The design of the boardwalk mimics the scalloped design features of Monona Terrace. The historic Frank Lloyd Wright Boathouse will be the focal point for the park serving park users as a visitor and community center, comfort station and transient docking facility. Machinery Row will be accessed from the new Wilson-Williamson intersection and the Machinery Row surface parking lot could be lowered by 4' and covered with a green deck, further expanding lakefront open space.

Environmental Benefits (Exhibit 3)

The Law Park vision will provide several environmental benefits for the Downtown and lakefront. Impervious surfaces will be decreased by reducing hardscape and expanding green space in and around Law Park to promote infiltration and mitigate stormwater run off. A natural wetland edge that is proposed for the existing shoreline will filter and clean stormwater that flows into the lake. Reducing stormwater runoff and increasing infiltration will assist the important community goal of improving Lake Monona water quality. Additionally, decking over John Nolen Drive will reduce noise and improve air quality for the park and the surrounding neighborhood and the park's southerly orientation can facilitate the use of solar and wind as alternative energy sources for public buildings.

Economic Benefits (Exhibits 3 and 5)

As a major focal point and a recreation and special events destination, Law Park will become an economic engine that will stimulate private investment and job creation in the southeast quadrant of the Capitol Square and facilitate the development of a vibrant Wilson-Williamson-Blair residential and entertainment district. The new 6.5 AC waterfront park will implement Madison's long-held dream of connecting the Downtown to the lakefront and complement Monona Terrace, enhancing its potential to attract new events and bring new visitors to Madison.

Without the John Nolen Drive-USH 151 commuter traffic, Wilson Street, Williamson Street and Blair Street can be narrowed and become more desirable locations for employment, residential and retail uses. Narrower streets can also provide additional land to redevelop private properties such as the Gateway Mall. Easier pedestrian and bicycle access across Blair Street will facilitate stronger connections to the east rail corridor and accelerate the development of the East Rail Technology Park.

Conclusion

The Madison Design Professionals Workgroup hopes that this white paper offers a compelling rationale for considering an alternative vision for Law Park and John Nolen Drive. Implementing the SCTOD recommendations will require a major capital investment and it is critical that we understand its cost-benefit and return on investment before we foreclose our options. This white

paper concludes with a summary of benefits and thoughts about funding, technical design and phasing to implement the Law Park vision.

Summary of benefits

The Law Park vision, when implemented, will achieve the following benefits:

- Expand open space and recreation opportunities for the Downtown
- Create a major waterfront and visitor destination for the Downtown
- Connect Downtown to Lake Monona
- Connect Downtown to the Marquette Neighborhood
- Connect Downtown to the East Rail Technology Corridor
- Improve commuter traffic through the Downtown
- Improve ped-bike safety and connections
- Promote a more walkable Downtown
- Improve transit connections
- Improve Lake Monona water quality
- Stimulate redevelopment and job creation
- Increase real estate value and tax base for the Downtown
- Enhance Monona Terrace as a visitor attraction

Funding

In 2001, the City of Sacramento, CA prepared a study entitled “*Inventory of Comparative Decking Projects*”. This study summarizes the scope, costs, funding sources, key results, lessons learned, and project contacts for twenty federal highway decking projects. It is important to note that many of these projects were completed by cities similar in size or smaller than Madison such as Duluth MN, Cincinnati OH and Hartford CT. This valuable resource presents objective information about how cities across the country have implemented their highway decking projects. While cost and funding were common challenges, the majority of the cost to construct these highway decks was provided through Federal and State transportation funds. Funding for other improvements such as park and open space improvements was covered by a variety of other public and private funding sources. You can find this study at www.cityofsacramento/Decking_Inventory.pdf. Since this 2001 study, many other cities have constructed or have planned to undertake highway decking projects.

As a federal highway, John Nolen Drive-USH 151 tunnel is eligible for Federal funding to construct the proposed tunnel. The Law Park vision would also attract other public and private funding based on its comprehensive scope and benefits. Developing a comprehensive funding strategy that identifies multiple funding sources will be a key to successful implementation. An initial list of potential funding sources to implement the Law Park vision includes:

- Federal highway and transit funds
- WisDOT Transportation Enhancement funding
- Tiger grant
- WisDOTped/bike funding
- National Endowment of the Arts (NEA) “Our Town” funding
- WDNR and Dane County water quality improvement funding
- WDNR Recreational Boating funding
- WDNR Stewardship funding

- WDNR and Dane County Parks funding
- Tax Incremental Financing
- WEDC economic development funding
- Madison Clean Lakes Alliance
- Private donations
- Foundations

Technical Design

In March 2000, the US Department of Transportation Federal Highway Administration prepared the *“Technical Manual for the Design and Construction of Road Tunnels”*. Chapter 5 of this manual documents the technical aspects of constructing “cut and cover” tunnels. This manual will be a valuable resource for assessing the engineering feasibility to construct the proposed John Nolen Drive-USH 151 tunnel. This technical manual is available online at www.fhwa.dot.gov/bridge/tunnel.

Phasing

A multi-phased approach will be necessary to implement the full scope of the Law Park vision. Phase One would include the construction of the USH 151 tunnel. A temporary roadway would remain open along John Nolen Drive to the Wilson -Williamson intersection where commuter traffic would be redirected to Broom Street and John Nolen Drive via a two-way Wilson Street and to E. Washington Avenue via Butler Street or Blount Street. Phase Two would include the reconstruction and narrowing of Wilson Street, Williamson Street and Blair Street and the construction of a new driveway access to Machinery Row. Phase Two would also include improvements to the expanded Law Park - creation of wetlands and a boardwalk along the existing shoreline, Frank Lloyd Wright Boathouse, transient boat docking, Capital City Bicycle Trail and landscaping. Phase Three would include the construction of the Intermodal Transit Center with a plaza deck over the railroad and a handicap accessible ramp to connect the plaza deck to Law Park. Redevelopment of private properties surrounding Law Park would be ongoing .

Other Useful Resources About Highway Decking Projects

“Urban Parks Take Over Downtown Freeways”, USA Today, March 2010

“Benefitting from a Cover Up”, City Parks Blog – The Trust for Public Land, February 2012

“Reconnect Austin: Cutting and Capping Highways”, www.reconnectaustin.com

“Future Uses of Highway Rights of Way”, Federal Highway Administration, April 2012

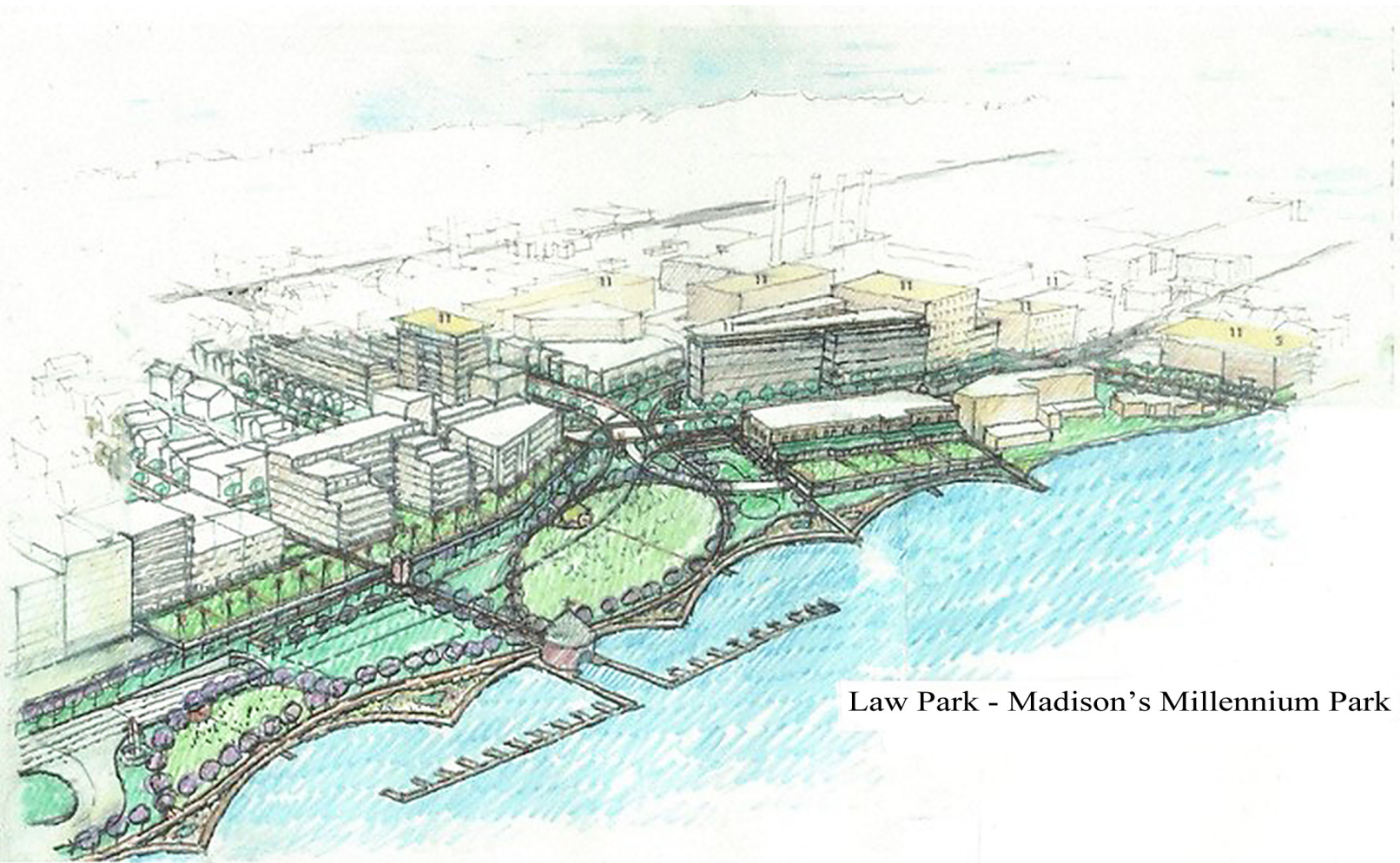
“Inventory of Decking Opportunities Over Transportation Properties”, City of New York, February 2007

“Economic Impact Report: Woodall Rogers Deck Park, Dallas TX”, Insight Research , 2006

MADISON
DESIGN
PROFESSIONALS
WORKGROUP

The Madison Design Professionals Workgroup is a volunteer team of design and planning professionals formed to assist on community projects by offering bold and exciting visions that promote sustainability, place-making, transportation connections, economic development and job creation. The Madison Design Professionals Workgroup developed ideas for creating a vibrant

downtown to assist the City of Madison in the preparation of the new Downtown Master Plan. Their ideas are summarized in the document entitled “Design Visions for the City of Madison Downtown Master Plan”. More recently, the Madison Design Professionals assisted the Capital Area Regional Planning Commission (CARPC) and Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) by developing ideas for how to redevelop our regional transportation corridors as vibrant, sustainable, multi-modal places as part of the Bus Rapid Transit Study. Their ideas are summarized in the document entitled “Design Visions for Regional Transportation Corridors”. You can learn more about the Madison Design Professionals Workgroup and review both documents at www.envisionmadison.org.



Law Park - Madison's Millennium Park

Exhibit 1:
Bird's-eye artist illustration depicting the Madison Design Professionals Workgroup's vision for Law Park for a 6.5 AC waterfront park surrounded by a vibrant Wilson-Williamson residential, retail, entertainment and employment district that will enhance Downtown Madison as a community and visitor destination.

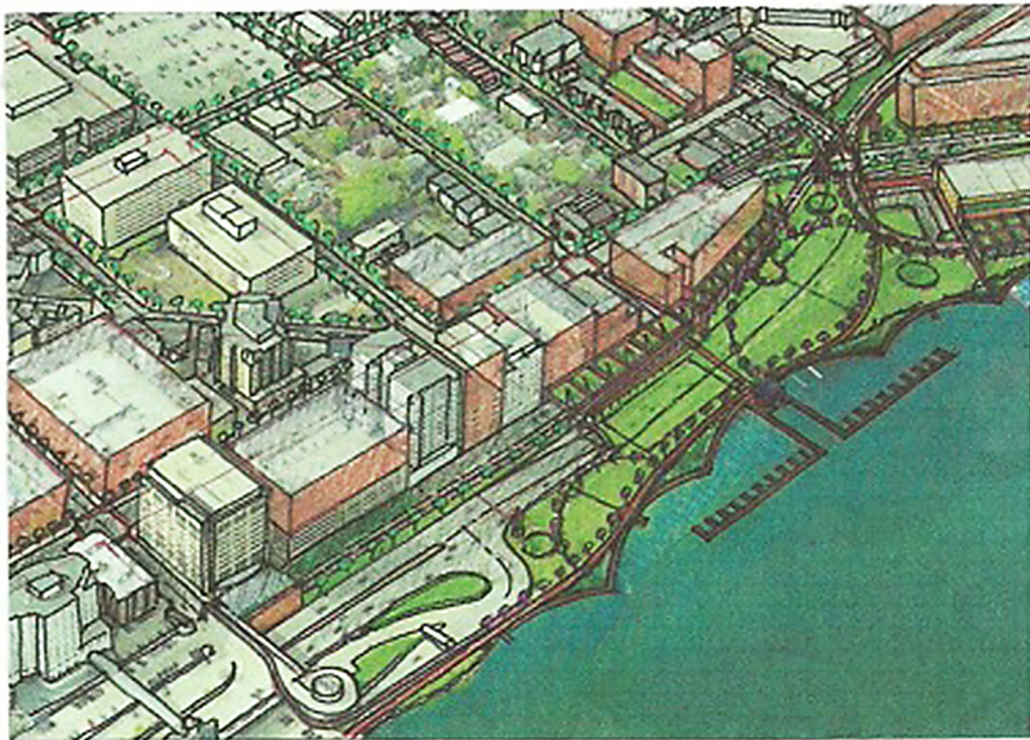


Exhibit 2:

Before and after aerial photo views of John Nolen Drive between Monona Terrace and Blair Street with the top view showing the corridor as it exists today and the bottom view showing the proposed vision for Law Park superimposed over the existing view. Air rights over lowered John Nolen Drive-USH 151 will be reclaimed to create a 6.5 AC waterfront park including a green plaza over the rail corridor as part of a new Intermodal Transit Center. The orange colored buildings depict redevelopment opportunities.

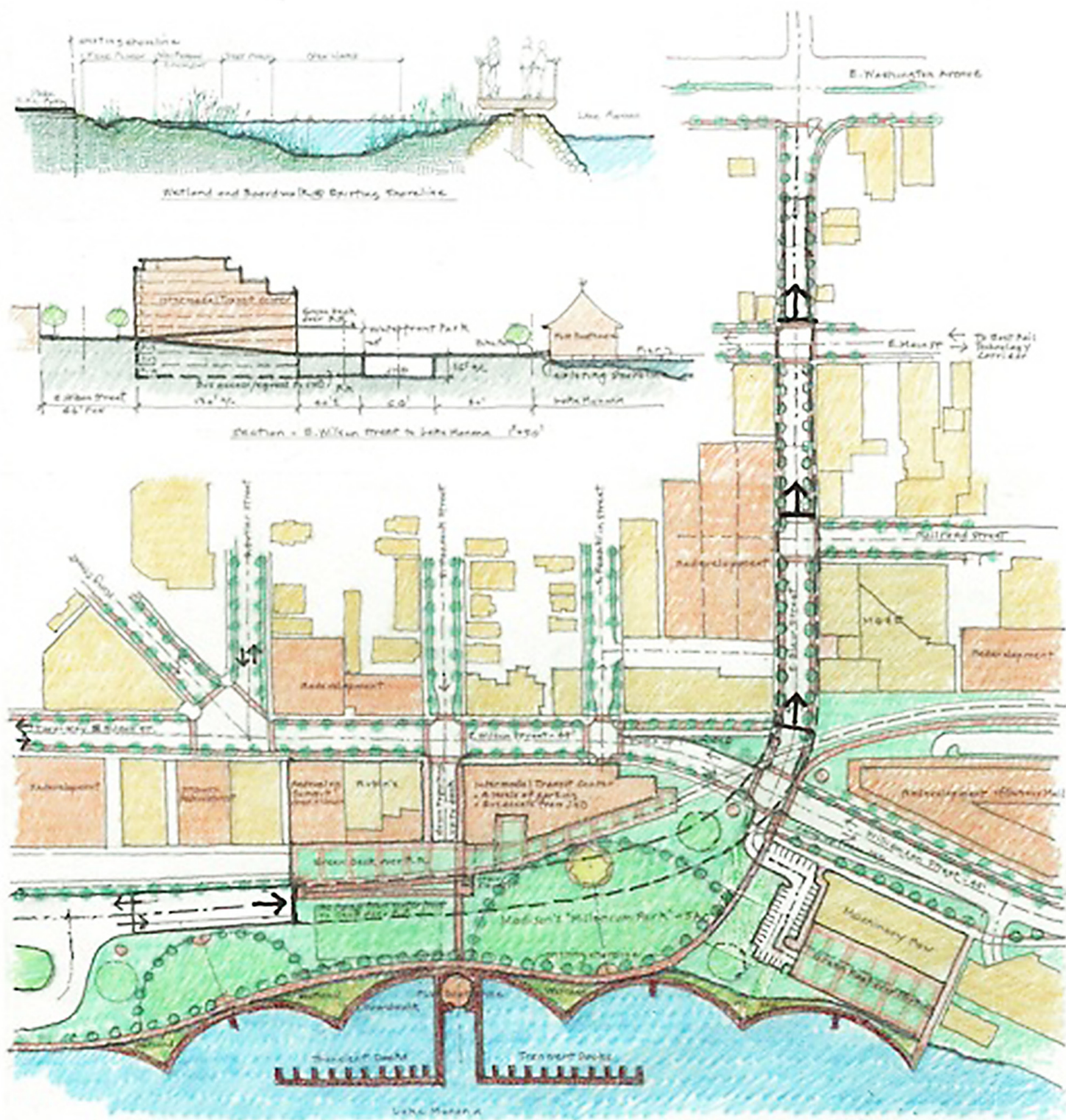


Exhibit 3:

Plan and section views of the Law Park vision. The dashed line in the plan view indicates the route of the proposed John Nolen Drive-USH 151 tunnel. The arrows indicate the entrance to the tunnel east of Monona Terrace and three options for tunnel exits – north of the Blair Street rail crossing, north of Railroad Street and north of Main Street. The top section view shows a wetland and boardwalk at the existing shoreline and the bottom section view shows the expanded park between Wilson Street and Lake Monona including the plaza deck over the rail corridor, the proposed Frank Lloyd Wright Boathouse, and a connection from the lowered John Nolen Drive-USH 151 to the proposed Intermodal Transit Center.

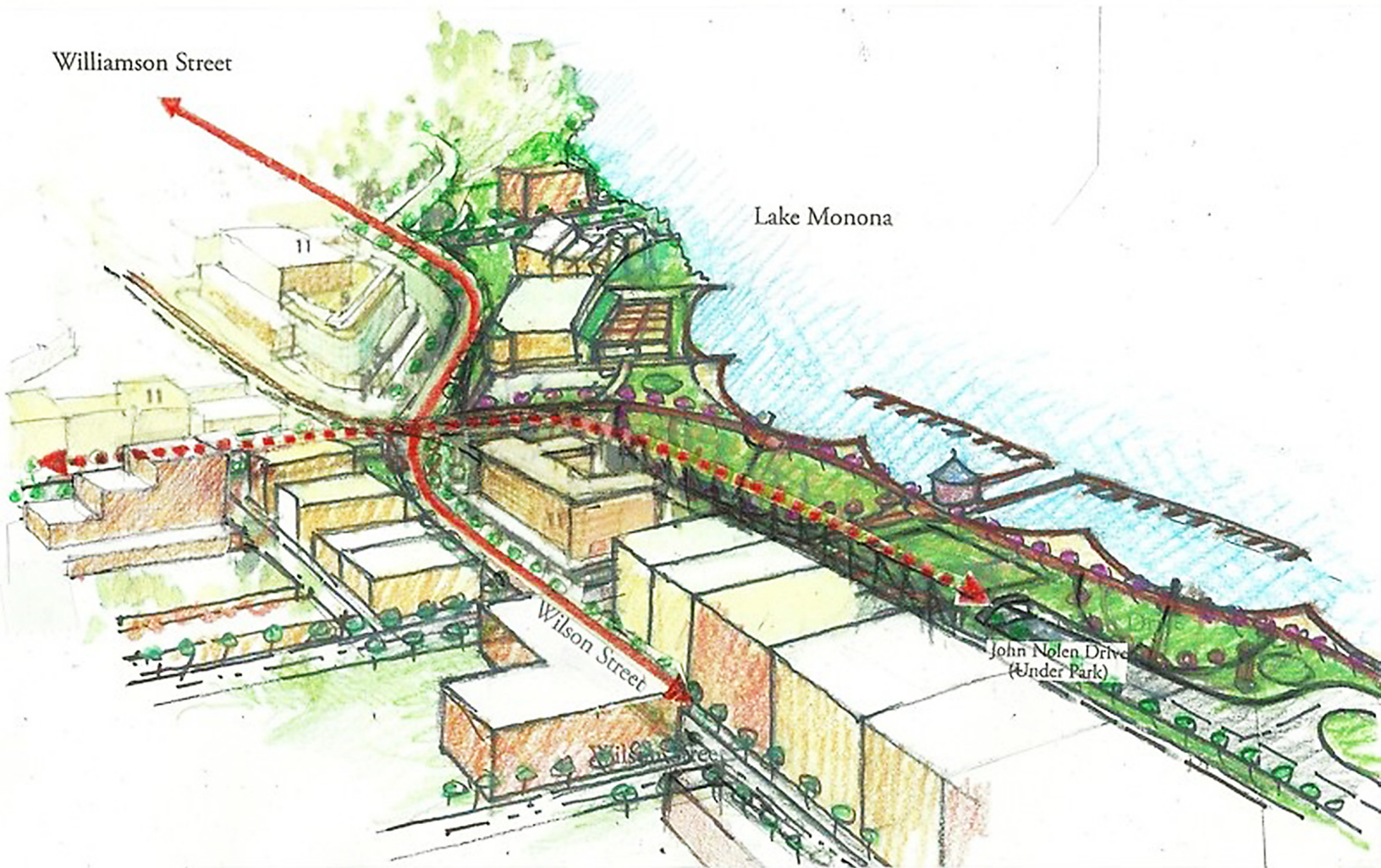


Exhibit 4:

Perspective sketch showing how Williamson Street and Wilson Street can be narrowed and restored to their historic roles as local feeders between the east side and the Downtown when the John Nolen Drive-USH 151 commuter traffic is redirected. Narrower and more pedestrian and bicycle friendly streets will become more desirable locations for new employment, retail and residential uses.

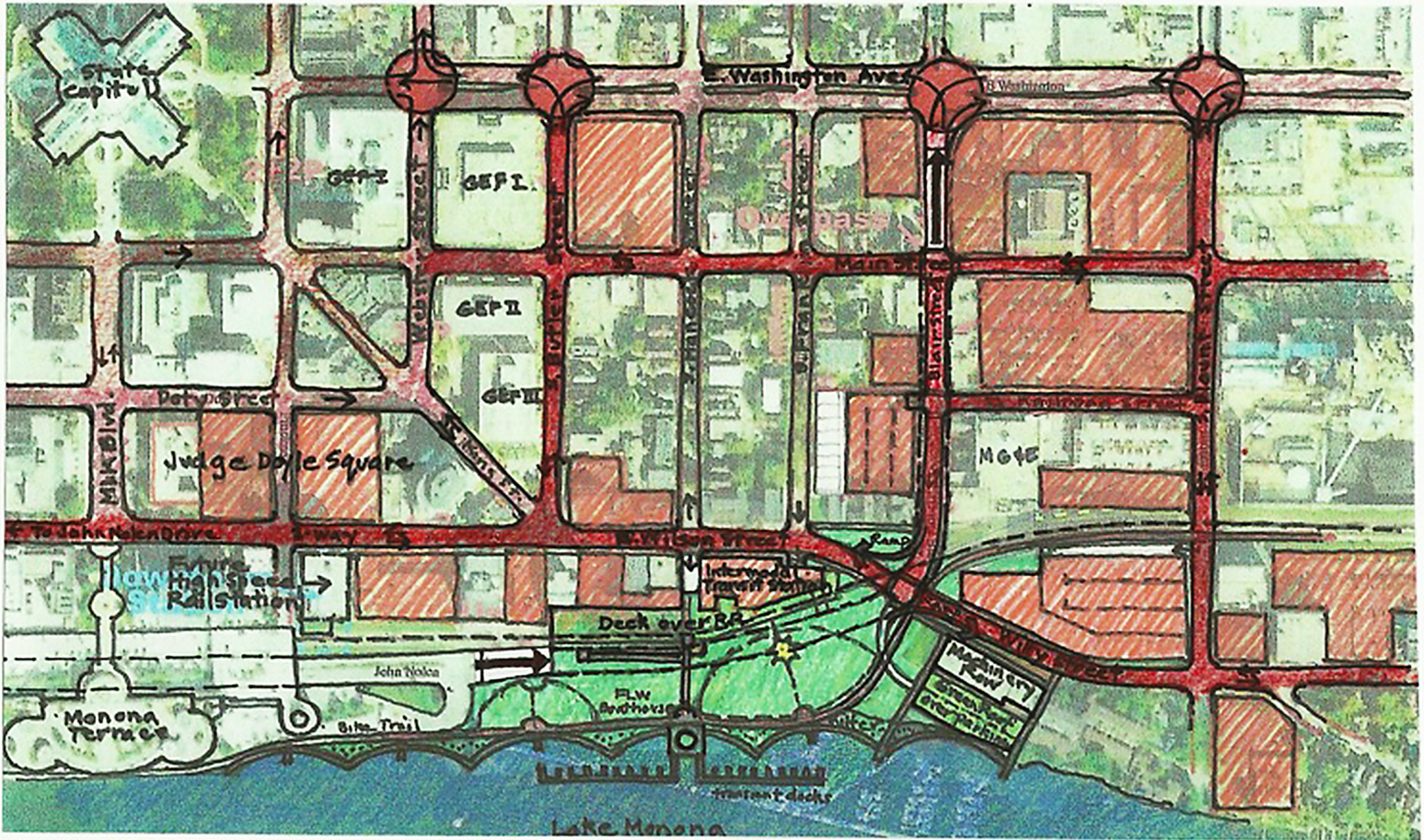


Exhibit 5:

Plan of the southeast quadrant of the Capitol Square showing the pattern of grid streets in red that will provide connections to the Downtown and east side when John Nolen Drive-USH 151 is lowered. S. Blount and S. Butler will be N-S connecting streets to Williamson Street and Wilson Street from E. Washington Avenue. Ramps up from the lowered John Nolen Drive could also be constructed to connect with Wilson and Williamson. Main Street will supplement Wilson-Williamson as an E-W connector between the Downtown and the east side and a two-way Wilson Street will connect the Downtown to John Nolen Drive via Broom Street. The orange areas on the plan depict potential redevelopment sites.

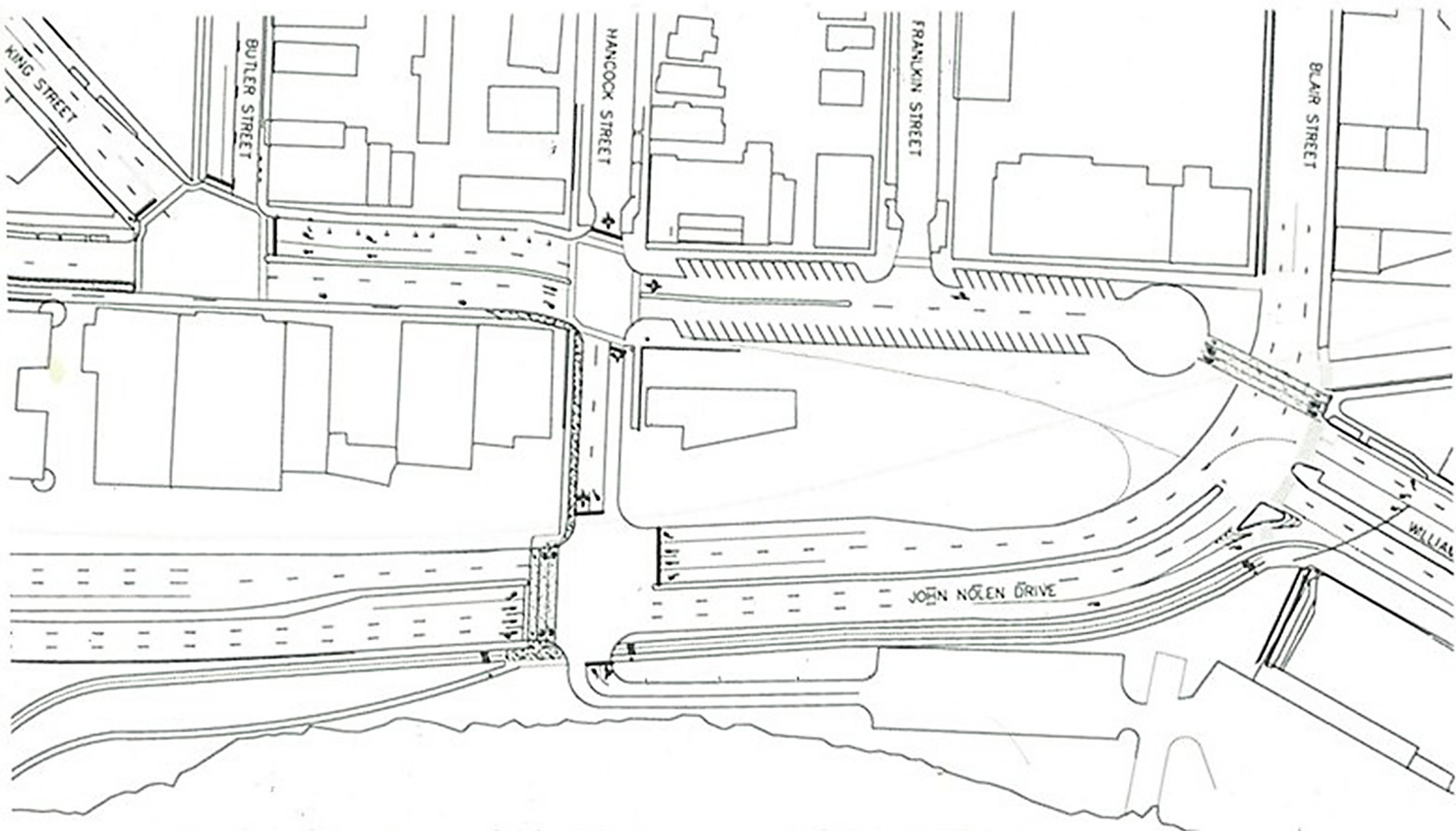


Exhibit 6:

Plan showing the South Capitol Transit-Oriented Development (SCTOD) district planning study recommendation to remove the John Nolen Drive-Blair-Wilson-Williamson intersection and construct a new intersection at John Nolen Drive and S. Hancock Street. This intersection and a proposed driveway through Law Park to Machinery Row will decrease park space and may effectively limit the future expansion of Law Park. The SCTOD recommendation to terminate Wilson Street at Blair Street except for pedestrian and bicycle traffic will reduce the connectivity between the Downtown and the east side.