



Department of Planning & Community & Economic Development

Planning Division

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To: Members of the City of Madison Economic Development Committee

From: Greater East Towne Planning Team (Rebecca Chare, Linda Horvath, Kirstie Laatsch, Ryan Jonely, Chris Wells, Bill Fruhling)

Date: August 12, 2021

Subject: Greater East Towne Area Plan Project Update

The City of Madison has been concurrently planning for the futures of both the Odana Area and the Greater East Towne Area. As shown in Map A, attached, the Greater East Towne Planning Area (GETAP) is roughly bounded by the railroad tracks on the south, East Washington Avenue on the north, Interstate 39/90 on the east and Mendota Street on the west. Attachment #1 provides draft maps, and Attachment #2 provides a summary of public engagement.

Draft Guiding Principles

The following principles have guided development of concepts, and will continue to guide development of final recommendations as the plan is completed:

- A. Creating a place
 - a. A new complete neighborhood and activity center which has a mix of housing types, retail, service, employment, civic, institutional, and parks or public space.
 - b. Making spaces more welcoming from a design aspect - Art that reflects cultural diversity, welcoming signage, and other aspects of physical design
- B. Focus on mobility
 - a. Having equitable access to transit, bicycle and pedestrian facilities, and increased street connections will improve mobility for residents. Mobility increases access to job options, more services, healthy modes of transportation
- C. Community wealth building
 - a. The type of economic development should:
 - i. generate wealth for residents
 - ii. provide opportunities for community ownership and control, ownership opportunities (housing and businesses) and wealth building for members of Madison's traditionally underrepresented communities.
 - iii. create partnerships with local leaders, nonprofits, and philanthropy organizations
 - iv. Activate existing local assets in the community for the benefit of local residents
 - b. Development should create quality living wage jobs and opportunities
 - i. Look for partnerships with the future imagination center, Madison College
 - ii. Affordability of housing and commercial spaces
- D. Center Nature and Sustainability
 - a. Incorporate trees and open space in developed areas
 - b. Embrace natural areas like Starkweather Creek, etc.

E. Resiliency

- a. Ensure all systems and features are adaptable to change in uncertain economic conditions

Questions for the Economic Development Committee

Economic development strategies and ideas do not always translate well into maps, but other non-map recommendations are still to come in this planning process. Regional growth projections show that 2,500+ units could easily be built in the next 15-25 years. A full build out of the area could accommodate an additional 16,000 people, 9,500 new dwelling units and 27,000 new employees for a total of 18,000 people, 10,000+ dwelling units and potentially up to 28,000 employees.

Planning Division staff believe that this plan will promote a variety of new development that could help East Towne Mall thrive, as it will encourage thousands of new residents and commercial uses in underutilized areas within the planning boundary. In addition, the proposed street network will make it easier for more people to get to the mall from multiple locations. Also, across the country, malls have taken advantage of new retail trends and adjacent developments to re-imagine themselves by redeveloping parts or all of the existing mall structure. This plan allows the mall to be flexible to respond to those trends over time.

A general theme that has emerged from public engagement is the feeling that the City should not wait for private redevelopment to occur based purely on market conditions. Rather, it should be proactive in trying to diversify the area through assisting in the development of local businesses. A strategy that responds to concerns and thoughts raised in multiple Chamber meetings is the potential for supporting efforts to create business incubators and other entrepreneurial spaces. Planning staff will continue to discuss economic development issues with the Economic Development Division.

In addition to general comments and feedback on the draft concept maps, Planning Division staff request that Committee members provide specific comments on the following topics:

1. ***Draft Future Land Use Recommendations - Please refer to Map B Draft Land Uses***

While most area plans provide more specific land use recommendations than the [Comprehensive Plan's Generalized Future Land Use Map](#), uncertainty stemming from market factors and the scale of sites within the Greater East Towne area may make it more appropriate to leave land use recommendations more general and focus on regulating the form of future redevelopment projects. Some areas may benefit from more flexibility than was present in the Comprehensive Plan, such as adding an employment overlay to the general commercial areas east of East Springs Road, and enlarging the potential of mixed-uses in areas between Zeier and East Springs Roads. There are also places where the City may be interested in targeting more specific uses, such as missing middle housing type adjacent to the Starkweather Creek natural area.

Other than some core areas where ground-floor commercial is necessary to establish the vibrant, pedestrian-oriented character of an activity center, much of the area designated as mixed use would be appropriate as a mixture of single use buildings without ground floor retail. The general land use recommendations are flexible to be adaptable and resilient to changing conditions going forward, as long as development adheres to certain principles and accommodates recommended public improvements.

Staff believe that this plan offers great opportunity for growth along the planned Bus Rapid Transit Line, and could add many thousands of new residents in a new and complete urban neighborhood. Staff also believes that this is possible with or without the redevelopment of the East Towne Mall, although redevelopment of some or all of the mall area would facilitate much more additional economic and residential growth.

- A. This plan aims to support the inclusion of more Missing Middle Housing in the City. The missing middle is defined as a range of smaller multi-unit or clustered housing types compatible in scale with single-family homes. This plan supports that goal with the inclusion of a large Low-Medium Residential area along East Springs Drive. Do you support this residential-specific area? Should we include more of this type of land use in the plan and if so, where?
- B. Employment overlay on the General Commercial area: Is this flexible enough for an unknown economy?
- 2. **Parks and Open Space** (including Stormwater)
 - A. Urban plaza space along a newly extended Independence lane as an organizing neighborhood feature:
 - i. Could this area be managed/maintained by a different entity, but remain a public space? (i.e. a Business or Community Improvement District (BID or CID))
 - ii. How likely could a BID/CID be managed/curated in this area?
- 3. **Economic Development Ideas**
 - A. We have heard extensive input on the need to support affordable business space and community wealth building. Are there other economic development plans/ other innovative ideas (i.e., the Black Business Hub) that we should be referencing?
 - B. What other economic development strategies – either specific to the Greater East Towne Area or as possible pilot programs that could be expanded to the rest of the city – does the Committee feel are appropriate for consideration?
 - C. Resiliency: The Global Market & Food Hall in the former “Babies ‘R Us” on Zeier Road is an example of a successful re-interpretation of an empty big box store. What are the EDC’s thoughts on the balance between trying to re-use existing obsolete buildings vs. demolition and redevelopment? What should our short and long-term economic strategies be in the East Towne Area?
- 4. **Affordable Housing**
 - A. What are the opportunities and limitations for moving forward with future affordable housing recommendations?
 - B. How can this plan use land use recommendations to support missing middle housing?
- 5. **Community Facilities** - What else is needed to serve thousands of new residents, connecting to the planned Reindahl Park Imagination Center/other?
- 6. **What are we missing?**

Next Steps/Timeline

Staff anticipates moving forward with the GETAP process according to the following timeline, which is subject to adjustment based on feedback received from the EDC and other boards, commissions, committees (BCCs), business and property owners, and members of the public.

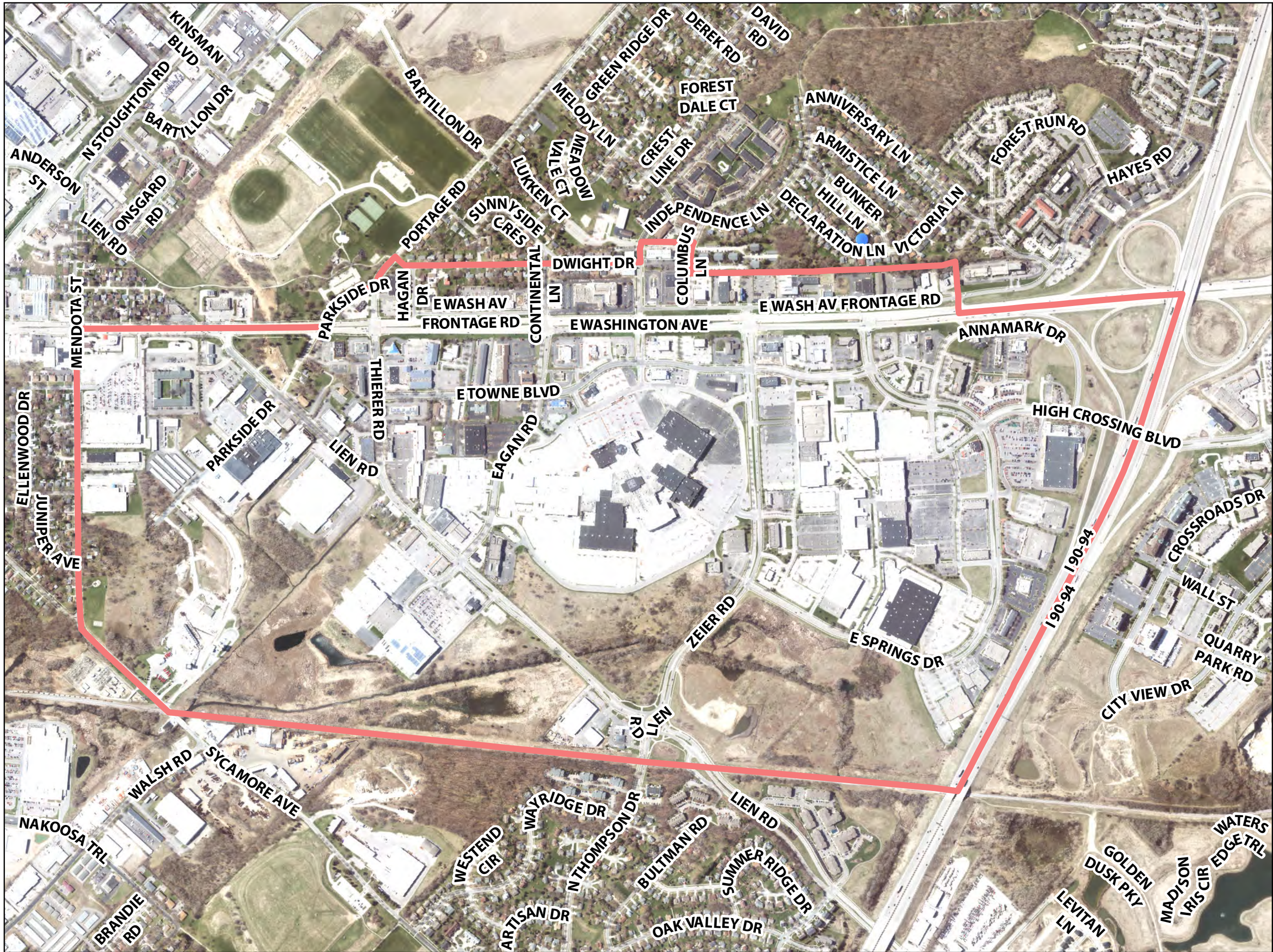
Estimated Timeframe	Activity
August – September 2021	Visiting BCCs for topic-specific GETAP review/discussions
October – November 2021	Revise concepts based on previous public feedback, Plan Commission feedback, and other BCC feedback; draft plan text
December 2021	Plan Commission discussion of draft document with revised concepts/maps
January 2022	Introduce GETAP at Common Council; referral to BCCs for review
February 2022	Common Council – adoption

August 12, 2021

Page 4

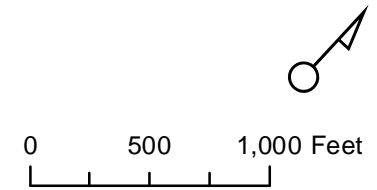
Attachment #1: Map & Image Packet

- Map A: Planning Area Boundary
- Map B: Future Land Use
- Images: conceptual modeling of future recommendations

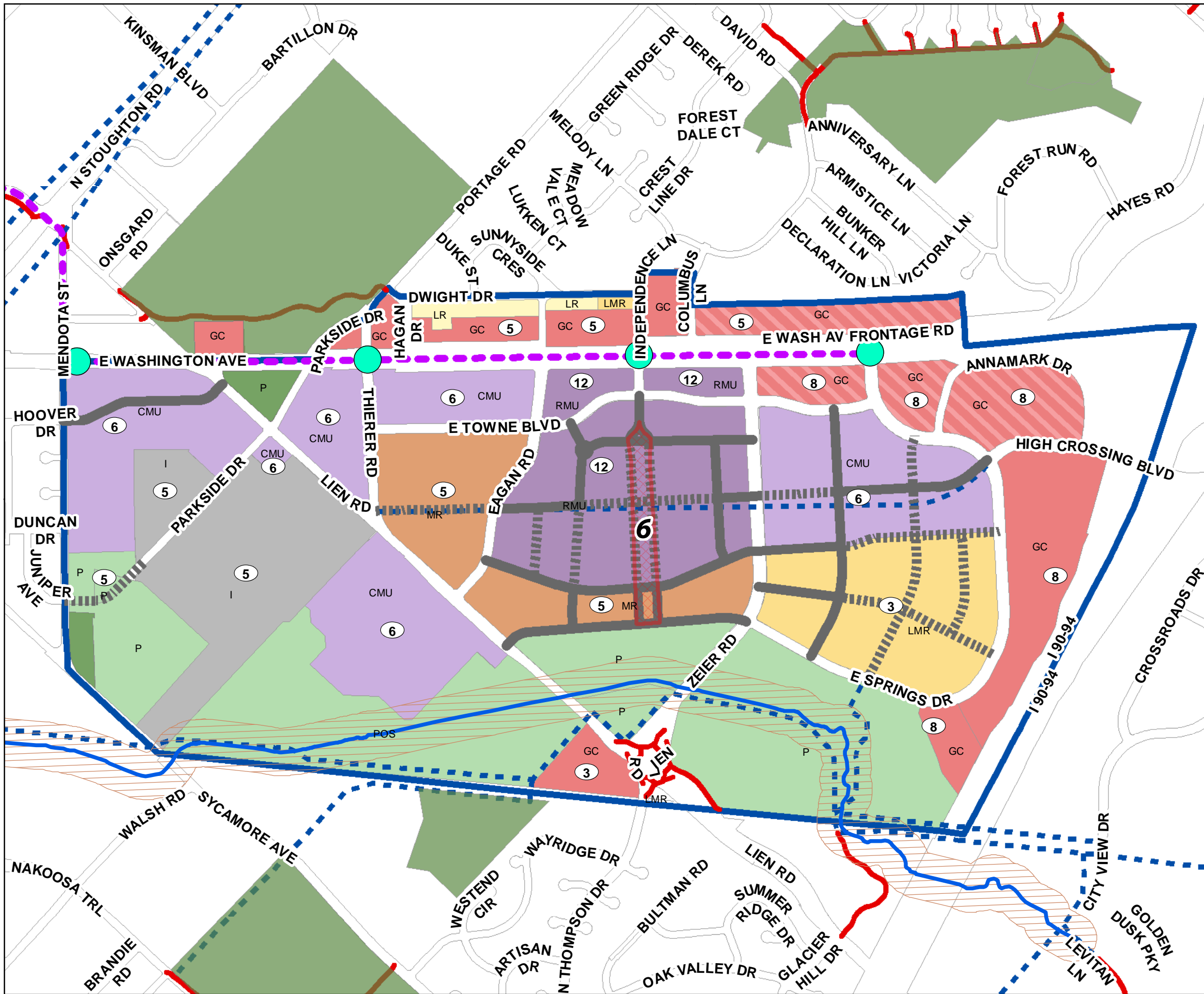


Map A: Planning Area

 Planning Area



MAP B: Draft Land Use Concept



- RMU - Regional Mixed-Use
- CMU - Community Mixed-Use
- E - Employment
- GC - General Commercial
- I - Industrial
- LR - Low Residential
- LMR - Low Medium Residential
- MR - Medium Residential
- P - Parks

Potential Urban Plaza

Building Heights

BRT Stations

BRT Lines

Potential Streets

Phase 1

Phase 2

Bike Path

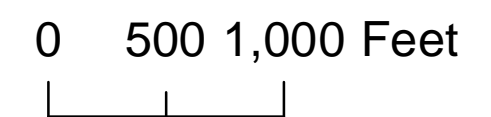
Existing

Planned

Starkweather Creek

200' Buffer of Starkweather Creek

Existing Parks



DRAF Conceptual Development Phasing Model

Existing Condition



Potential Phase 1 BRT and Infill on Existing Lots *from 5/21/2021 public meetings*



Potential Phase 2

New streets and new development
from 5/21/2021 public meetings



Potential Phase 3 Partial Mall Demo, with added Re-development *from 5/21/2021 public meetings*



Potential Phase 4

from 5/21/2021 public meetings



Attachment 2: GETAP Project Public Engagement Summary

Public participation for the Greater East Towne Area Plan (GETAP) and the associated Odana Area Plan (OAP) was getting underway just as COVID-19 struck in mid-March of 2020 (see the summary of participation later in this memo). COVID-19 led to some delays with the planning effort as staff adjusted to the need to undertake participation remotely, along with refocusing some time on other COVID-19 related issues, such as assisting with the City's COVID-19 response and supporting the extended 2020 Census timeframe.

Economic Development Related Public Engagement

The Greater East Towne and Odana Area Plans shared a public engagement plan. For those interested, there is a full and complete listing of public comments from zoom meetings, focus groups and other events [at this link](#). Since these two planning efforts included such large commercial areas, staff would like to highlight some economic development specific outreach that the plan processes made central to their efforts.

Business and Property Owner Outreach occurred through a business roundtable facilitated by project consultant Short Elliott Henderson. Attendance was low – only a handful of businesses/property owners participated out of 2,995 invited by postcard, but we collected a fair amount of feedback. Key takeaways included: retail is over represented; there is a need for more food industry businesses (restaurants/catering/etc.); the poor transportation network is a barrier to economic growth, and the mall areas won't easily support a mixed use, walkable, bikeable character without changes; and the area needs a sense of place, including parks and open spaces.

Black, Latino and Hmong Chambers of Commerce were part of an outreach strategy to ensure business engagement reached a diverse audience. Much of the feedback from the series of eight meetings focused on making sure the future of the area is welcoming to all area residents and businesses. Another focus was the necessity of proactive economic development to help grow businesses owned by people of color. A significant portion of the feedback could be applied to the entire city, and should be reviewed for potential initiatives and collaborative business development efforts beyond just the Odana and East Towne Areas, although redevelopment of the regional mall areas could serve as a place to start new efforts and implement new ideas that could grow to citywide efforts.

A general theme that emerged from the chamber meetings is that the City should not wait for private redevelopment to occur based purely on market conditions. Rather, it should be proactive in trying to diversify the area through assisting in the development of local businesses.

Other Public Participation

Madison Mall Madness asked people to choose priorities for the planning areas through a bracket style series of head-to-head matchups in four categories: "Things to do," "Places to Live and Work," "Getting Around," and "Design and Character." There were 174 participants. Affordable housing and more natural spaces and stormwater management topped the list, with safer pedestrian and bike routes, and more entertainment and dining a close second. A summary of results is [available on the project web page](#).

Issues and Opportunities Zoom Series discussed [issues facing malls and retail](#), [case studies of mall redevelopments](#) and [an evaluation of the Greater East Towne Plan area](#). 450 participants attended. A [summary of comments can be found here](#). An online mapping exercise was used to gather thoughts and feedback for those who were not able to attend.

Traditionally Underrepresented Communities

The public engagement plan included a robust outreach effort to reach and connect with members from several

of Madison's traditionally underrepresented communities.

Along with the focus group meetings with the ***Black, Latino and Hmong Chambers of Commerce*** staff also reached out to the ***Madison Network of Black Professionals and the East High School Raza United/Black Student Union*** for in depth discussions of the plan.

CityZine Social Practice Art interviews

Social Practice Artist Borealis went into LGBTQ+, Indigenous and other communities for in depth interviews on the future of creating a new community at both East Towne and the Odana Area.

"I'm sitting here asking myself if I have ever seen a bird in some of these west side areas. I mean, I'm being kind of dramatic, but there is just so much pavement and concrete that it's hard to even visualize life in some of these areas. I sometimes fantasize about what it would be like for an alien to fly overhead and look down. What would they think all that concrete is for? Especially in the areas with no cars in them?"

Neighborhood Resource Team (NRT) Outreach included visits with the Brentwood/Northport and Darbo/Worthington NRTs both in the in the fall of 2020, and again in the spring of 2021 to present information on the GETAP and gather thoughts and feedback from these areas.

Concept Presentation Meetings were held on May 24 and 26 ([presentation link](#)) to present and discuss future street and bicycle networks, planned land use, future park space, and planned maximum building heights. About 60 people attended.