



Department of Planning & Community & Economic Development  
**Planning Division**

Website: [www.cityofmadison.com](http://www.cityofmadison.com)

Madison Municipal Building, Suite LL100  
215 Martin Luther King, Jr. Boulevard  
P.O. Box 2985  
Madison, Wisconsin 53701-2985  
TTY/TEXTNET 866 704 2318  
FAX 608 267 8739  
PH 608 266 4635

**TO:** Madison Plan Commission

**FROM:** Bradley J. Murphy, Planning Division Director

**DATE:** February 18, 2009

**SUBJECT:** Legistar I.D. 12771 Substitute Resolution Establishing Sustainability Goals to Guide the Development of the Northeast Neighborhoods

---

The Plan Commission will consider substitute resolution #12771 establishing sustainability goals to guide the development of the northeast neighborhoods at its meeting of February 23, 2009. The substitute resolution is attached to this memorandum. The only addition to the original resolution contained within the substitute is found in the third whereas clause, which further defines the planning area for the northeast neighborhoods.

The resolution has now been reviewed by the Water Utility Board, Long-Range Transportation Planning Commission, and the Sustainable Design and Energy Committee. The recommendations from each of the committees is as follows:

- **Water Utility Board.** The Board recommended approval of the resolution subject to the following addition to number 3 in the “Now Therefore Be It Resolved” clause:  
  
“3. Reducing residential per capita water use by 25% compared to current City-wide per capita levels through the use of low-flow appliances and fixtures, dual-flow and low-flow toilets, rain barrels, low-impact lawn care design, conservation education and outreach, or other water conservation practices, and to strongly encourage the use of EPA water sense-labeled water fixtures, and strongly discouraging the use of outdoor lawn irrigation systems.”
- **Long-Range Transportation Planning Commission.** The Commission recommended adoption of the resolution subject to a few additions. The first addition is to number 1 in the “Now Therefore Be It Resolved” clause as follows:  
  
“1. Capturing 25% of all trips made by persons living in the development area by walking, bicycling or transit and/or reducing household motor vehicle miles of travel (VMT) by 25% (in comparison to a baseline, to be determined by the staff) through the use of transit-oriented development, traditional neighborhood development, mixed-use development, transit access to early neighborhood residents, transportation demand management plans, walkable environments, bike facilities, or other transportation demand management practices.”

The Commission also recommended an additional resolved clause as follows:

“Be It Further Resolved that as part of the northeast neighborhoods planning process, the staff will develop specific implementation strategies to achieve these goals.”

- **Sustainable Design and Energy Committee**. The Sustainable Design and Energy Committee recommended adoption of the resolution subject to the changes recommended by the Water Utility Board, the Long-Range Transportation Planning Commission, and the following:

The Commission recommended adding a phrase to number 1 of the “Now Therefore Be It Resolved” clause to clarify that they wanted the reduction in vehicle miles traveled (VMT) of 25% compared to a baseline, “based on neighborhoods of comparable density.”

The Commission recommended striking the language in number 2 of the “Now Therefore Be It Resolved” clause and recommended the following language:

“The neighborhood will be a zero net energy community, which means energy used by the community will equal the amount generated through renewable and/or carbon neutral applications. This can be accomplished through the use of energy-efficient construction, on-site and/or district renewable and/or carbon neutral energy generation, conservation, education and outreach, utility partnerships, or other energy practices.”

The Committee also recommended changing number 4 of the “Now Therefore Be It Resolved” clause to read as follows:

“Infiltrating 100% (striking 25%) of the stormwater volume on or adjacent to points of generation through the use of rain gardens, green roofs, porous sidewalks and drives, or other on-site stormwater management practices.”

The Committee also recommended adding a final resolved clause as follows:

“Be It Finally Resolved that, the staff will investigate and make recommendations in the final development plan for infrastructure, financial incentives, and recognition for encouraging the achievement of these goals.”

### **Background of the Resolution**

The City of Madison is preparing development plans for the area known as the northeast neighborhoods, which is generally located east of Interstate 39/90, north of Interstate 94 and south of Lien Road extended. The preparation of this plan follows the recommendations included in the adopted Comprehensive Plan which identifies this area as a near-term City of Madison growth and development area. The preparation of this plan is a prerequisite for the extension of urban services and the approval of development within the area.

In order to guide the preparation of the plan, the Mayor and several Council members have indicated a desire to establish sustainability goals to guide the preparation of the plan and the development of the neighborhoods. The City’s adopted Comprehensive Plan includes many goals, objectives and policies including calling for Madison to grow and develop in a sustainable way that will protect the high quality

natural environment, promote energy efficiency and conservation of natural resources and create a built environment that is adaptable to future changes and conditions. The sustainability goals included in the resolution provide more specific quantifiable targets.

Once the resolution is adopted, the staff will work to finalize the neighborhood development plan for the northeast neighborhoods. The plan will then be introduced by resolution and referred to a number of City boards and commissions for review prior to final action by the Plan Commission and Common Council adopting the development plan. The plan itself will include a series of recommendations and implementation strategies which will be needed to achieve the sustainability goals and the other goals included in the City's Comprehensive Plan and the neighborhood development plan. The plan will identify the roles and responsibilities of the City, developers, builders, residents and businesses in carrying out the implementation. The plan will also discuss the process and methods which will be used to measure progress toward achieving the goals including the type and method of data collection and the frequency.

### **Evaluation of the Referral Commission Recommendations**

Planning staff has met with the staff from other agencies who have been participating in the discussions on the establishment of sustainability goals for the northeast neighborhoods. Included as part of the Plan Commission packet, staff has provided background email messages, and the staff reports, which respond to questions that have been asked about the goals. Also included is a document prepared by Brian Munson from Vandewalle and Associates which summarizes an approach to achieving sustainability goals for the northeast neighborhoods and the roles and responsibilities of the City, developers, builders and end users.

In considering the recommendations that have been made by the reviewing commissions, the staff supports all of the recommendations but two. Staff support the changes proposed by the Water Utility Board, the Long-Range Transportation Planning Commission, and the recommendations of the Sustainable Design and Energy Committee with the following two exceptions:

- Infiltrating 100% of the stormwater volume on or adjacent to points of generation, and
- The changes to eliminate the goal of reducing household consumption of natural gas and fossil fuel generated electricity by 25% and substituting the goal which states that the neighborhood will be a zero net energy community.

In addition to these concerns there has been a substantial amount of discussion about the transportation goal to capture 25% of all trips made by persons living in the development area by walking, bicycling or transit and the goal of reducing household motor vehicle miles traveled (VMT) by 25% in comparison to a comparable neighborhood. Attached reports from the staff discuss the difficulties of measuring vehicle miles traveled. However, the staff supports the goal as it is written and as recommended by the Long-Range Transportation Planning Commission.

Concerning the infiltration recommendation from the Sustainable Design and Energy Committee, staff, in consultation with the Engineering Division, cannot support the changes recommended. Given the current compact/dense development planned within our new neighborhoods, including the northeast neighborhoods, and the current knowledge of infiltration practices, it will not be practical to infiltrate 100% of generated water on a site-by-site basis. This would represent a significant increase in regulation over current standards and would be extremely difficult (and in many cases impossible) to accomplish.

The other concern is with the recommendation to make these neighborhoods zero net energy neighborhoods. As the staff understands the goal, it would require that the energy used by these neighborhoods equal the energy generated through renewable and/or carbon neutral applications. While this may be a good long-term vision for the community as a whole, we believe that it is overly ambitious and impractical to apply this goal to the northeast neighborhoods in the short term. The staff believes that the goal in the current resolution moves these neighborhoods in a positive direction and that the energy reduction goal of 25% is achievable, although it will require measures to be taken beyond those currently implemented in most greenfield neighborhoods. To achieve this goal, the City will need the cooperation of property owners, developers, builders, residents and businesses. The staff believes that getting the necessary buy-in and cooperation will be more achievable with a less ambitious goal.

As an alternative to the recommendation of the Sustainable Design and Energy Committee, the staff recommend that the language in the original resolution be maintained and that an additional whereas clause be added which would read as follows:

“Whereas the Sustainable Design and Energy Committee has identified a goal of being a zero net energy community (energy used by a community equals the amount generated through renewable energy applications)” by 2050; and”

This whereas clause acknowledges the long-range vision for the community and maintains a more achievable goal which moves the northeast neighborhoods in a positive direction.

## **Conclusion**

The resolution establishing sustainability goals for the northeast neighborhood will require a significant amount of cooperation on the part of the City, developers, property owners, businesses and residents. This resolution, for the first time, establishes quantifiable sustainability goals for a new edge neighborhood. It will not be a simple task to develop implementation strategies and recommendations which will achieve the goals. While staff respects the comments and recommendations made by the Sustainable Design and Energy Committee, staff also believes that establishing goals that are not achievable in the near term will set the forthcoming neighborhood development plan and its implementation up for failure. In order to have a chance of achieving the goals and implementing the plan recommendations, the cooperation of all the stakeholders will be needed. Without this cooperation and support, the only method which can be used to achieve the goals is for the City to require compliance. Staff does not believe that a top down forced approach will accomplish our objectives. Staff would prefer to utilize, for the most part, education, outreach, cooperative agreements with developers, property owners, the utilities, and other organizations to achieve the objectives.

## **Recommendation**

The Planning Division recommends that the Plan Commission forward a recommendation to the Common Council to adopt an alternate resolution which includes the recommendations of the Water Utility Board, the Long-Range Transportation Planning Commission, and the following:

1. The recommendations from the Sustainable Design and Energy Committee as follows:

- a. “Be It Finally Resolved that, the staff will investigate and make recommendations in the final development plan for infrastructure, financial incentives, and recognition for encouraging the achievement of these goals.
  - b. Adding the following underlined phrase to number 1 of the “Now Therefore Be It Resolved” Clause “(in comparison to a baseline, based on neighborhoods of comparable density to be determined by staff).”
2. The addition of a “whereas” clause which reads as follows:
- “Whereas the Sustainable Design and Energy Committee has identified a goal of being a zero-net energy community (energy used by a community equals the amount generated through renewable energy applications) by 2050.