



Department of Planning & Community & Economic Development

Planning Division

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To: City of Madison *Transportation Policy and Planning Board*
From: Greater East Towne Planning Team
Rebecca Cnare, Linda Horvath, Kirstie Laatsch, Ryan Jonely, Chris Wells, Bill Fruhling
Date: **January 10, 2022**
Subject: Greater East Towne Area Plan Adoption (Legistar ID #68802)

Proposed Action: RETURN TO LEAD WITH THE RECOMMENDATION FOR APPROVAL TO THE PLAN COMMISSION for adoption of the Greater East Towne Area Plan as a supplement to the Comprehensive Plan.

Background

The City of Madison has been concurrently planning for the futures of both the Greater East Towne Area and the Odana Area. The Common Council adopted the Odana Area Plan on September 9, 2021. The planning area in the Greater East Towne Area Plan (GETAP) is roughly bounded by the Wisconsin and Southern railroad tracks on the south, East Washington Avenue on the north, Interstate I-90/94/39 on the east, and Mendota Street on the west.

The Comprehensive Plan identified the area as one of the city's growth priority areas that should transform from the current auto-oriented character to a higher density mixed-use center along the future Bus Rapid Transit route. Undertaking this planning effort will also help the area adapt to the changes and challenges the retail sector has been experiencing since the 1990s, which have further been exacerbated by the COVID-19 pandemic. There have been many public participation activities throughout the planning process. These activities were adapted to seek input and feedback during the pandemic, and to intentionally include communities that are traditionally underrepresented in planning processes. A summary is available on the [project website](#).

Transportation Recommendations

Transportation recommendations begin on page 18 and include a series of draft concept maps: *Proactive Rezoning and Official Mapping on page 20, Potential Future Street Network on page 22, Sidewalk Network on page 23, and Bicycle Network on page 24*. The transportation and land use recommendations are interconnected and will work together with the other recommendations in this Plan to guide the Greater East Towne Area towards becoming a walkable, transit-oriented activity center that is better connected to, and integrated with, surrounding areas.

As a foundational element, the Plan recommends a new interconnected public street system along smaller, more human-scale blocks as shown on the map, *Potential Future Street Network, page 22*. This concept plans for important connections as redevelopment occurs. There are Priority Streets that can be constructed without demolition, and Secondary Streets requiring more intensive redevelopment. This well-planned public street network is critically important to the success of this Plan for numerous reasons, including that public streets are not subject to private owners restricting transit access and station locations, the City can design the street system to benefit the community at large, and public streets reinforce the idea that all are welcome in the space.

The *Potential Future Street Network* will also provide more direct routes for pedestrians and bicyclists. The *Sidewalk Network* on page 23 recommends completing sidewalk connections along existing streets, sidewalks along potential new streets, and off-street shared use paths. The *Bicycle Network* on page 24 recommends various on-street and separated bike facilities and includes the off-street shared use paths from the *Sidewalk Network* to provide better access to the area from other parts of the city and beyond.

To help ensure the street network can move forward as planned, *The Proactive Rezoning and Official Mapping concept* on page 20 recommends official mapping of certain planned future street rights-of-way. Official mapping reserves space for future streets to prevent building permits from being issued in these areas. The concept also recommends proactive rezoning of certain areas. Proactive rezoning and official mapping work together as a system to ensure the area will develop as planned.

There are additional, related recommendations on page 21. A highlight is a recommendation authorizing an East Washington Avenue Corridor Study that focuses on pedestrian, bicyclist, and transit rider safety, and considers a pedestrian bridge or other separated structure. There is also a recommendation to consider adding tabletop crossings, rapid flashing beacons, bump outs, and other pedestrian infrastructure where deemed necessary to improve pedestrian safety and comfort. Additionally, there are transit recommendations supporting the integration of regular Metro service with future Bus Rapid Transit service.

Transportation-related changes made since last TPPB review:

1. Draft Street Network map (*see page 22 of current draft*)
 - Changed map title from “Draft Street Network” to “Potential Future Street Network”
 - Changed legend items from “Early Phases” to “Priority Street Connections” and from “Later Phases” to “Secondary Street Connections”
 - Changed the extension of “Parkside Drive to Mendota Street” to a “Priority Street Connection”
2. The Official Map now includes the extension of Parkside Drive to Mendota Street (*page 20*)
3. The Transportation recommendations (*page 21*) now include the following:
 - 8. Work to address barriers to plan implementation, such as cross access easements, shared driveways, and restrictive covenants.
 - 9b. Extend the planned shared-use paths to and through the Starkweather Creek natural areas to provide longer, continuous linkages along Starkweather Creek to Lake Monona.
 - 11. Prioritize safe pedestrian crossings of East Washington Avenue, and consider a pedestrian bridge or other separated structure across near Reindahl Park or other locations as determined appropriate by the East Washington Avenue corridor study.
 - 12. Prioritize improved service for transit-dependent populations when integrating Madison Metro routes with BRT.
 - 13. Identify a location for a park-and-ride to support transit use and reduce the burden of BRT commuters parking within residential and commercial areas.