



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

To: City of Madison Economic Development Committee

From: Ben Zellers, Odana Area Plan Project Manager

Date: March 10, 2021

Subject: Odana Area Plan Discussion

Project Background

The planning area is bounded by the Beltline on the south, Mineral Point Road on the north, and the edge of University Research Park on the east (see the attached map for the planning area boundary).

Preparation of the Odana Area Plan (OAP) is being undertaken due to many strategies and actions within the 2018 Comprehensive Plan, including:

- Generalized Future Land Use Map Note #1, which states that “West Towne Mall, the Odana Road corridor, and Westgate Mall are shown as future mixed-use areas. However, redevelopment that includes substantial residential components within the area that is generally bounded by Whitney Way (east), Mineral Point Road (north), High Point Road (west) and Schroeder Road (south) should be preceded by adoption of a detailed City plan. Such a plan should address connectivity improvements, more parks and open space, and other amenities and infrastructure necessary to support residential development.”
- LU&T Strategy #5: Concentrate the highest intensity development along transit corridors, downtown, and at Activity Centers.
- LU&T Strategy #6: Facilitate compact growth to reduce the development of farmland.
- LU&T Action #6c: Accommodate a majority of growth through infill and redevelopment.
- N&H Strategy #1: Create complete neighborhoods across the city where residents have access to transportation options and resources needed for daily living.

For those that are interested, a [“Storymap” linked through the project web page](#) covers many of the broader planning issues present in the area, as well as concepts for future street network improvements, bicycle network improvements, changes to planned land use, planned park areas, and planned building heights. The March 17th presentation at EDC will not cover many of those items, and will instead focus on discussion of economic development feedback from our public participation and strategies to address economic development concerns for the area. We are seeking EDC feedback prior to the referral process to better integrate strategies and Committee comments into the Plan.

Public Participation – Economic Development

A variety of public participation has been undertaken as part of the OAP process. Summaries of most participation can be found [on the project web page](#). A short summary of economic development focused outreach is provided below.

Business and Property Owner Outreach occurred through a business roundtable facilitated by project consultant SEH. Attendance was low – only five businesses/property owners participated out of 2,995 invited by postcard,

but a fair amount of feedback was collected. Key takeaways include: retail is over represented; there is a need for more food industry (restaurants/catering/etc); the poor transportation network is a barrier to economic growth, and won't 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. Creating a business incubator and preserving affordable retail space were viewed as important strategies to retain and attract local businesses, as most can't afford ground floor retail space in new mixed use buildings. A full summary of comments from our chamber meetings is included towards the end of the [Plan Commission's packet](#). 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 Area, although the Odana Area could serve as a place to start new efforts and implement new ideas that could grow to citywide efforts. Note that a separate, but similar, planning process is proceeding for the East Towne area – portions of the chamber meetings discussed that area.

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. A strategy that responds to concerns and thoughts raised in multiple Chamber meetings is the potential for land banking that could lead to development, in partnership with other entities, of a business incubator. Such a strategy would address a number of issues that were brought up during the various chamber meetings: needing networking opportunities, a desire for learning/mentorship for business owners, lack of affordable space for startup businesses, and leasing challenges for local businesses when some landlords pursue the perceived higher financial capacity of national chains. Depending on the property, it may be able to accommodate retail space along the front of an existing building, other incubator space behind that, infill development in a parking area, and potentially also start to create a more urban neighborhood feel if the property is part of the planned public street network enhancements in the Odana Area.

Questions for the Economic Development Committee

In addition to your general comments and feedback, Planning Division staff requests the Economic Development Committee provide specific comments on the following issues:

1. Does the Committee feel land banking for a potential future business incubator is an appropriate strategy to pursue for the area? If so, what role should the City play in its creation and operations?
2. Does the Committee have any recommendations to help address the mismatch between landlords seeking tenants with a long business history and new businesses looking to take their first step in to a brick and mortar space?
3. There is the potential for a pilot "small cap TIF" program for startup businesses to be considered in a planned amendment to Tax Increment District #46. Is this something the Committee would support, and if so, are there any recommendations for criteria if staff is able to move forward with development of this pilot?
4. What other economic development strategies – either specific to the Odana Area or as possible pilot programs that could be expanded to the rest of the city – does the Committee feel are appropriate for consideration?

Attachment: Odana Area Plan Boundary Map

Odana Area Plan Boundary

 Planning Area

