



Department of Planning & Community & Economic Development  
**Economic Development Division**  
Aaron Olver - Director

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

Madison Municipal Building, Suite 312  
215 Martin Luther King, Jr. Boulevard  
P.O. Box 2983  
Madison, WI 53701-2983

- Office of Business Resources
- Office of Economic Revitalization
- Office of Real Estate Services

FAX 608 261-6126  
PH 608 266 4222

**To:** City of Madison Economic Development Committee

**FROM:** Economic Development Division Staff

**RE:** Staff Report on Hoyt Park Neighborhood Plan

---

The Economic Development Division Staff (Staff) reviewed the Hoyt Park Neighborhood Plan (Plan) and offers the following ideas and suggestions for consideration. The first part of this memo provides four “Overarching Comments” about the Plan as a whole and the second part of the memo provides more specific, page-by-page comments and suggestions. Overall, EDD staff feels the Plan is lacking from an economic development perspective. It offers no proactive strategies and recommendations focused on supporting existing or potential businesses, creating jobs, or providing needed workforce housing. Further, in terms of its approach to development and redevelopment, the Plan limits its recommendations to the “Focus Areas” within the study area and the suggested uses and densities in these areas are often unrealistic and overly restrictive.

**Overarching Comments:**

---

- 1. General Lack of Strategies and Recommendations for Business and Economic Development** – The current draft of the Plan does an excellent job communicating the existing strengths and characteristics of the neighborhood. However, the Plan is lacking in forward-looking strategies and recommendations directly addressing economic development. The Hoyt Park neighborhood includes numerous businesses, several key commercial corridors, major retail destinations, and large employers. Staff’s opinion is that maintaining and supporting businesses, creating jobs, and growing our tax base within the boundaries of the study area should be an important component of the Plan. The current draft of the Plan does not include an economic development chapter and the implementation strategy does not include any recommendations focused on support businesses or creating jobs. Staff recommends an additional chapter focused on business and economic development that addresses how the Hoyt Park Neighborhood can contribute to the City’s economy.
- 2. Density in the University Avenue Corridor** – University Avenue is a major thoroughfare connecting central Madison with the west side and beyond. It is a gateway to the city and a vital commercial corridor with a mix of retail, office, and residential uses. The Plan’s study area includes a large section of the University Corridor that is poised for redevelopment and well-suited to high density commercial and residential uses that can create jobs in Madison and transit-accessible housing opportunities for the city’s workforce. With its high visibility, service by multiple bus lines, proposed BRT service, and proximity to numerous large employers, Staff recommends higher-densities in the University corridor than what is currently recommended in the Plan. In particular, Staff recommends that the suggested height limits in the Plan for areas along University Avenue

should all be increased to at least be consistent with current zoning (see detailed comments below for specifics).

3. **Need to Recognize Trade Offs and Market Realities** – In several instances, Staff feels the Plan neglects to recognize market realities governing development decisions and fails to honestly address the inherent trade-offs that come with making planning and development decisions. For example, the Plan suggests mixed-use development and encourages underground parking in several areas. Simultaneously, the Plan recommends height limits in several of these areas that are far too low to make underground parking or mixed-use development financially viable. Similarly, the Plan’s goals call for a “diversity of housing including opportunities for seniors and people with lower incomes,” but the Plan’s recommendations offer no specifics on how and where such housing could be accommodated. Further, the Plan places a strong emphasis on encouraging transit, walking, and bicycling as transportation options but neglects to address the fact that these modes work best in places with relatively high concentration of residents and employment.
4. **Sustainability** - The Plan offers several sustainability recommendations such as encouraging high performance buildings and energy efficiency measures and it indicates that sustainability is important to the neighborhood. However, the Plan does not discuss the relationship between density and sustainability. Though encouraging energy efficiency and high performance buildings are commendable objectives, fostering greater residential and employment density and diversity in the neighborhood is arguably the most impactful thing the neighborhood could do to support broader sustainability goals including reducing carbon emissions, saving farmland, encouraging transit ridership, etc. EDD staff recommends that the benefits of higher density should be addressed in the Plan’s language on sustainability.

### **Detailed Comments:**

---

1. **Page 3** – In terms of organization, the Plan’s eleven chapters do not include one that specifically addresses strategies to support businesses, create jobs, or maintain/grow the tax base. For audiences interested in these important aspects of a neighborhoods vision for its future, it would be valuable to address economic development in a clearly identifiable section of the Plan.
2. **Page 4/5** – The Planning Area Summary includes useful data on demographics, housing, and physical characteristics of the Neighborhood. Staff suggests including additional information on the size of the workforce in the neighborhood and mix of businesses. Some of this information is in the appendices and a summary of some of that information in chapter one might be helpful to some readers. Specifically, staff recommends including the list of major employers provided Appendix A as part of the Summary in Chapter 1.
3. **Page 12** - Item 10 in the list of policies references, “Encouraging housing affordability through the preservation of existing housing stock and expanded housing choices in Focus Areas.” The housing data in the Plan notes that the neighborhood is 94% single family homes with an average value of \$260,000, so it is unclear how “preserving existing homes” encourages affordability. Staff recommends including more information about the housing stock in the neighborhood including documenting what percentage of the neighborhood’s housing is affordable based on commonly-used affordability benchmarks. As for expanding housing choices through redevelopment, the specific recommendations for the limited areas of the neighborhood where new development is

recommended do not make any reference to housing affordability. EDD staff recommends that the Plan include specific recommendations to encourage affordable housing units as part of redevelopment projects in the Focus Areas.

4. **Page 15** – Item 4 of the list of Policies states, “Review the City’s Urban Design District #6 and consider adding new guidelines that address land use transition and urban form” Rather than “...adding new guidelines...” We would recommend “...adjusting guidelines...”
5. **Page 16** - In the section on “General Urban Design and Streetscaping” for the Focus Areas, one of the bullets states, “Encourage incorporation of sustainability initiatives throughout the Area including energy efficiency, renewable energy, stormwater management, and green products.” We suggest adding the following to this statement, “...as well as, higher density development and a blend of commercial and residential uses which will encourage more sustainable transportation choices while helping preserve farmland on the fringes of the city.”
6. **Page 26** – For the “West Midvale Boulevard Mixed Use” area, Staff recommends increasing the maximum building height recommendation to five stories to be consistent with existing zoning and we recommend noting in the Plan that higher buildings will be considered as conditional uses.
7. **Page 29** – The recommendations for the East Midvale Boulevard Transition Area recommend maximum building heights of three stories. Later on the page, the “Specific Guidelines” for development state, “encourage underground parking when feasible.” Realistically, it is unlikely that any development will be able to justify the expense of underground parking with a three-story height limit. Staff recommends increasing the maximum and/or deleting the suggestion of underground parking.
8. **Page 31** – Before discussing the specific recommendations for the Focus Areas that include the University Avenue corridor, we’d suggest adding the following intro text,

*“University Avenue is a key commercial Corridor serving the Madison area and providing an important western gateway to the central City. The University Avenue frontage addressed in the Focus Areas is an underutilized section of the corridor with potential to support commercial redevelopment that will serve the neighborhood and the larger city alike. Overall, the approach to the corridor in terms of development and redevelopment should be to remain sensitive to the surrounding neighborhood while recognizing that this is a regionally-important area, proximate to numerous major employers, and located in the central part of the City. As such, redevelopment in the corridor should be dense, multi-use, and focused on supporting business and employment opportunities.”*

9. **Page 32** – For the building heights in the University Avenue Commercial Areas (E), Staff recommends increasing the maximum building height recommendation to five stories to be consistent with existing zoning and we recommend noting in the Plan that higher buildings will be considered as conditional uses.

10. **Page 33** – In the recommended land use for the North Blackhawk Avenue Mixed-use Node, we recommend adding a bullet to the “Recommending Land Uses” section stating, “Large scale commercial and/or residential buildings on the University Avenue frontage including medium size retail operations, large office buildings, and/or high density residential.” As a large, deep, high-visibility site, this is a rare opportunity in the City to pursue a large-scale redevelopment projects while maintaining an appropriate buffer to surrounding areas.
11. **Page 33** - In the building heights section for the North Blackhawk node, Staff recommends increasing the maximum building height recommendation to five stories to be consistent with existing zoning and we recommend noting in the Plan that higher buildings will be considered as conditional uses.
12. **Page 36** –For the Hill Street Mixed Use Area, staff recommends increasing the maximum building height recommendation to five stories to be consistent with existing zoning and we recommend noting in the Plan that higher buildings will be considered as conditional uses.
13. **Page 37** - For the Harvey Street Mixed Use Area, Staff recommends increasing the maximum building height recommendation to five stories to be consistent with existing zoning and we recommend noting in the Plan that higher buildings will be considered as conditional uses.
14. **Page 39** – For the East Harvey area, Staff recommends increasing the maximum building height recommendation to five stories to be consistent with existing zoning and we recommend noting in the Plan that higher buildings will be considered as conditional uses.
15. **Page 45** – Staff recommends increasing the maximum building heights for the entire Mineral Point/Speedway Commercial Area to three stories to be consistent with zoning.
16. **Page 47** – For the “Mineral Point Road Institutional Campus” (Mount Olive site), Staff recommends deleting the final bullet point stating, “Prohibit expansion of this district into adjacent Neighborhood Preservation areas” and replacing with another bullet point stating, “neighborhood-scale commercial, office, or multi-family residential”
17. **Page 59** – In the list of Policies for Bike and Pedestrian Facilities, Staff recommends changing, “require new developments to incorporate bike and pedestrian facilities” to “encourage new developments....”
18. **Page 59** – Staff recommends adding another policy to the list Bike/Ped policies stating, “Encourage a vibrant mix of uses in the neighborhood including businesses and a variety of housing to support a built environment that supports bicycling and walking as transportation option.”
19. **Page 73** – In Policy #5, Staff recommends adding businesses to the list of stakeholders who should be included in communication about road construction. So, the policy would read “Encourage strong communication among city staff, alders, residents, and businesses, on long term street reconstruction projects”
20. **Page 73** – Staff recommends adding a Policy to the list that states, “Work with the City’s Office of Business Resources to support businesses that may be negatively impacted by road construction projects due to limitations of customer access and visibility.”

21. **Page 83** – Staff recommends adding one or more items to the Implementation Strategy that directly address ways to support business and job growth in the neighborhood.
22. **Page 103** – As discussed above, Staff recommends moving some information on businesses and employment in the neighborhood from the appendix to Chapter 1.