



Department of Planning & Community & Economic Development

Planning Division

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November 13, 2023

To: Plan Commission

From: Kirstie Laatsch and Ben Zellers (Planning Division)

RE: 2023 Comprehensive Plan Interim Update

The City is undertaking an interim update to the 2018 Comprehensive Plan. Most updates are within the Growth Framework section of the Plan, including the Generalized Future Land Use (GFLU) Map, associated map notes, and land use category descriptions. This process is similar to an interim update that was completed in 2012.

After receiving initial direction from Plan Commission at their September 7 and September 18 meetings staff compiled a revised draft of the 2023 GFLU Map and a revised list of draft revisions to the Comprehensive Plan. Plan Commission's November 13, 2023 meeting will include a public hearing and formal recommendation to Common Council concerning the final draft Comprehensive Plan amendment.

The materials which have been revised since Plan Commission's review in September are highlighted in **yellow** in the compiled [List of Proposed Revisions to the Comprehensive Plan](#).

The remaining topics for discussion include:

1. **Two new [GFLU Map Notes](#) added in response to Plan Commission direction.** At their September 18 meeting, Plan Commission directed staff to draft additional Map Notes to consider buildings that are taller than the maximum building heights recommended in the [Regent Street - South Campus Neighborhood Plan](#).
2. **[Revised language](#) relating to redevelopment of institutional uses – changes to the land use category text for Special Institutional (SI) and Low Residential (LR).** These two changes are proposed as part of this interim update to the Comprehensive Plan to make it easier for sites with vacant/underutilized institutional uses (such as places of worship) to be fully or partially redeveloped with housing. Plan Commission's direction was for staff to make the SI category description more flexible to allow consideration of redevelopment denser than Low-Medium Residential (LMR) when a site is adjacent to Parks and Open Space. For reference, the table describing the building forms, density ranges, and number of stories for the residential categories is included on page 3 of this memo.

Staff has prepared maps of non-governmental institutional uses mapped as SI and small institutional uses mapped as LR (see Institutional Uses on the GFLU Map attachment). The mapping analysis shows that approximately 80 institutional uses are currently mapped as LR, which is typical for many civic uses. Of those sites, 80% are less than 3 acres in size. Approximately 30 non-governmental institutional uses – usually on larger properties – are currently mapped as SI.

Following this closer look at the relevant sites, staff raises the following tradeoffs/considerations for the Plan Commission to keep in mind when determining the language to open up possibilities for Medium Residential (MR) densities if (re)development is considered on these sites:

- a. *Potential loss of opportunity for future missing middle housing development.* If language is changed to broadly allow MR, it is unlikely that LMR (missing middle) redevelopment will be proposed. Staff

anticipates that instead of considering redevelopment with townhomes and/or small multifamily buildings, many developers and institutional partners may initially assume development intensities at the upper end of the MR range.

- b. *Reduced predictability.* Adding broad possibilities for MR would make it less clear to all parties, including property owners, developers, residents, and other stakeholders, what scale of development is considered appropriate for a given site.
- c. *Less transparency.* A shift from LR to MR intensities is a considerable change, and likely one best addressed through an Area Plan process¹. While comfortable with the incremental increase from LR to LMR intensities citywide for these institutional sites, staff has some concern regarding a broader “boost” from LR to MR, particularly since the surrounding context can vary so much among the 110+ relevant sites.

The previously proposed (9/1/2023) language and revised (10/11/2023) language relating to redevelopment of institutional uses is below. Staff are most comfortable with the revised (10/11/2023) language, which provides more guidance regarding the factors the Plan Commission should consider to determine the instances where MR, rather than LMR intensities may be appropriate.

Draft text to include in the LR category description

- 10/11/2023 version: “Many small institutional uses, such as places of worship, are mapped as Low Residential (LR), consistent with their surroundings. If current institutions embedded in residential areas relocate, cease to exist, or remain as part of a redevelopment, such sites may be redeveloped with more intensive residential uses. Redevelopment with Low-Medium Residential (LMR) uses is appropriate. In limited circumstances, intensities and heights in the Medium Residential (MR) land use category could be appropriate for a portion of the site. Due to site-specific considerations, MR intensities may not be appropriate for all sites. Factors to be considered include relationships between proposed buildings and their surroundings, natural features, lot and block characteristics, and access to urban services, transit, arterial streets, parks, and amenities.”
- 9/01/2023 version: “Many small institutional uses, such as places of worship, are mapped as LR. If current institutions that are embedded in residential areas cease to exist or would otherwise remain as part of a redevelopment, such sites may be redeveloped as Low-Medium Residential uses when surrounded by LR and/or Parks and Open Space (P) planned uses. Institutional sites along arterial streets or that are adjacent to areas mapped for other residential, commercial, employment, or mixed-use uses on the GFLU map could be considered for intensities and heights consistent with the Medium Residential (MR) land use category.”

Draft text to include in the SI category description

- 10/11/2023 version: “Buildings that include places of worship, schools, and other institutions may be optimal for adaptive reuse or redevelopment with residential uses when the institutional use(s) relocate, cease to exist, or perhaps remain as part of a redevelopment. These sites are often embedded in residential areas, and are typically larger than most surrounding residential lots, making them good candidates for more intensive residential development. Redevelopment with Low-Medium Residential (LMR) uses is appropriate. In limited circumstances, intensities and heights in the Medium Residential (MR) land use category could be appropriate for a portion of

¹ Note that the City will review institutional uses mapped as SI and LR through the Area Plan processes – language in the Comprehensive Plan concerning redevelopment of non-governmental institutional uses in SI and LR areas is a stopgap. Future land uses will be recommended in Area Plans in the event that the institutional uses leave. Revising land use recommendations through the Area Plans will be the most clear and transparent approach to address this issue. For example, the West Area Plan team has reviewed all SI sites and institutional uses mapped as LR. The results of this review include recommending MR for many of the applicable LR sites located along arterial streets, which is an important aspect when determining whether MR could be considered appropriate. Staff is able to get in-depth feedback from residents and other stakeholders about potential land use changes through the area planning process.

the site. Due to site-specific considerations, MR intensities may not be appropriate for all sites. Factors to be considered include relationships between proposed buildings and their surroundings, natural features, lot and block characteristics, and access to urban services, transit, arterial streets, parks, and amenities.”

- 09/01/2023 version: “Buildings that include places of worship, schools, and other institutions may be optimal for adaptive reuse or redevelopment with residential uses, either when the institutional use(s) vacate the site or perhaps remain as part of a new development. These sites are often embedded in residential areas, and are typically larger than most surrounding residential lots, making them good candidates for larger and/or more intensive residential development. Redevelopment sites entirely surrounded by parcels mapped as Low Residential (LR) and/or Parks and Open Space (P) on the Generalized Future Land Use Map (GFLU) may be considered to be recommended for Low Medium Residential (LMR). SI sites bordered by other residential, commercial/employment, or mixed-use areas on the GFLU map that are along arterial streets or streets with transit service every 30 minutes or less could be considered for intensities and heights consistent with the Medium Residential (MR) land use category when such sites have adequate access to residential-supporting features such as parks, schools, and a walkable street network.”

3. **Revised language for the provision for increased intensity relating to LMR.** As staff worked on revising draft language in item 2 above, it was discussed that there is similar ambiguity for the LMR text under the Residential Future Land Use Categories table. See the highlighted text in the table below from page 20 of the Plan. Staff would like to provide more predictability for all stakeholders.

Residential Future Land Use Categories

Residential Building Form	Low Residential (LR)	Low-Medium Residential (LMR)	Medium Residential (MR)	High Residential (HR)
Single-Family Detached Building				
Civic/Institutional Building				
Two-Family, Two-Unit				
Two-Family – Twin				
Three-Unit Building	*			
Single-Family Attached	*			
Small Multifamily Building	*	**		
Large Multifamily Building		**		
Courtyard Multifamily Building		**		
Podium Building				
Number of Stories	1-2'	1-3	2-5	4-12~
General Density Range (DU/acre)	≤15	7-30	20-90	70+

* Permitted in select conditions at up to 30 DU/ac and three stories, generally along arterial streets or where these types of buildings are already present or planned within an adopted sub-area plan as part of a pattern of mixed residential development.

** Permitted in select conditions at up to 70 DU/ac and four stories, generally along arterial streets.

~ Or taller, if specified by an approved sub-area plan or PD zoning.

' Dormers or partial third floors are permitted.

Staff recommends replacing the highlighted language above, with the red text below, which cites factors the City will use to determine instances where 70 DU/acre and four stores may be appropriate. The final sentence is the same language proposed regarding redevelopment of institutional sites (10/11/2023 version).

**** Appropriate ~~Permitted~~** in select conditions at up to 70 DU/ac and four stories, ~~generally along arterial streets~~ except for parts of the city with an Area Plan adopted after the 2023 Comprehensive Plan Interim Update. Factors to be considered include relationships between proposed buildings and their surroundings, natural features, lot and block characteristics, and access to urban services, transit, arterial streets, parks, and amenities.

Along with revising the text, the City will review LMR sites through the Area Plan processes and select either LMR or MR for each site. As a result, the provision for increased intensity for LMR will no longer apply to areas with an Area Plan adopted after the 2023 Comprehensive Plan Interim Update.

4. **GFLU Map amendments proposed by the public that Plan Commission set aside for further discussion at the November 13 public hearing (Applications 1, 4, 7, and 8)**. The sites are shown on a [Far West Side detail map](#) and described below:

a. **Application 1:** Located at 3978 Schewe Road, just south of Old Sauk Road. **Staff recommends no change to GFLU Map, or at most, a change from LR to LMR:**

- i. Site is recommended for LR on the GFLU Map which reflects the Housing Mix 1 recommendation in the Elderberry Neighborhood Development Plan (NDP). Housing Mix 1 recommends single-family, two-units, four-units, and townhouses. The applicant requested a change from LR to LMR and MR.
- ii. The City was aware of the factors cited in the application when the Elderberry NDP was drafted, including the Middleton Cross Plains Elementary and Middle schools and the Eagle Trace subdivision.
- iii. Staff does not recommend changing this site to MR when the Elderberry NDP was updated five years ago. If Plan Commission would like to make a change for this site, LMR would be more appropriate, given the location near Madison's edge.

b. Applications 4, 7, 8: Located near Mineral Point Road at South Point Road.

i. **Application 4 – Staff recommends no change to GFLU Map:**

1. Site is recommended for Employment (E) on the GFLU Map, which reflects the Employment recommendation in the Pioneer NDP. The applicant requested a change to Neighborhood Mixed-Use (NMU), High Residential (HR), and Community Mixed-Use (CMU).
2. The City has an interest in maintaining well-located land for future employment development. Strategy 2 in the Comprehensive Plan's Economy and Opportunity element is "Ensure an adequate supply of sites for a wide variety of employers to operate and grow." Action 2a is "Reserve sites for employment uses in City land use plans."
3. This site is within the Silicon Prairie business park. Its location at the intersection of South Point Road and Mineral Point Road with convenient access to the Beltline makes it a priority location to reserve for employment use.
4. Staff's opinion is that conditions have not sufficiently changed to warrant this amendment when the Pioneer NDP was updated five years ago.

ii. **Application 7 – Staff Recommends no change to GFLU Map:**

1. Site is recommended for Employment (E) on the GFLU Map and is shown for Industrial (I) with E as an alternative use in the Pioneer NDP. The applicant requested a change to MR.
2. When the applicant requested MR for this site during the 2018 Pioneer NDP update, the Plan Commission disagreed and instead stipulated an Employment overlay district for this area, stating if industrial development was not feasible, the site should develop as Employment.
3. See point 2 under application 4 above.

4. City is developing adjoining land to the south into a public works campus, which is not compatible with MR.
 5. Staff's opinion is that conditions have not sufficiently changed to warrant this amendment when the Pioneer NDP was updated five years ago and that allowing MR on the site would likely generate conflicts with the City's developing public works campus.
- iii. **Application 8 – Staff recommends no change to GFLU Map or potentially a change from E to MR:**
1. Site is recommended for Employment (E) on the GFLU Map and E in the Pioneer NDP. The applicant requested a change to NMU.
 2. See point 2 under application 4 above.
 3. In 2013 the City adopted an NDP amendment for the area south of application 8. This amendment changed the recommendation from employment to multi-family residential, which was later built. The 2018 Pioneer NDP then further shrunk the recommended employment area.
 4. Staff's opinion is that conditions have not sufficiently changed to warrant this amendment when the Pioneer NDP was updated five years ago. If Plan Commission would like to make a change for this site, MR could potentially be more appropriate than NMU.

Attachments/materials

- [List of Proposed Revisions to the Comprehensive Plan](#)
- [2023 Draft GFLU Map, detailed map of far west side sites](#)
- [Interactive 2023 Draft GFLU Map](#)
- [Link to interactive, detailed-markup of Comprehensive Plan](#)
- [Institutional Uses on the GFLU Map](#)