



Department of Planning & Community & Economic Development

**Planning Division**

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June 19, 2020

From: Dan McAuliffe, Planning Division;

RE: Oscar Mayer Special Area Plan meeting with Sustainable Madison Committee

The Oscar Mayer Special Area Plan was introduced at Council on March 3, 2020. At that meeting, it was referred to Sustainable Madison Committee to review and provide advisory recommendations to Plan Commission and Council. Since this will be the first time many members of SMC will see the plan, this memo was prepared to provide a bit of background on key issues the plan addresses.

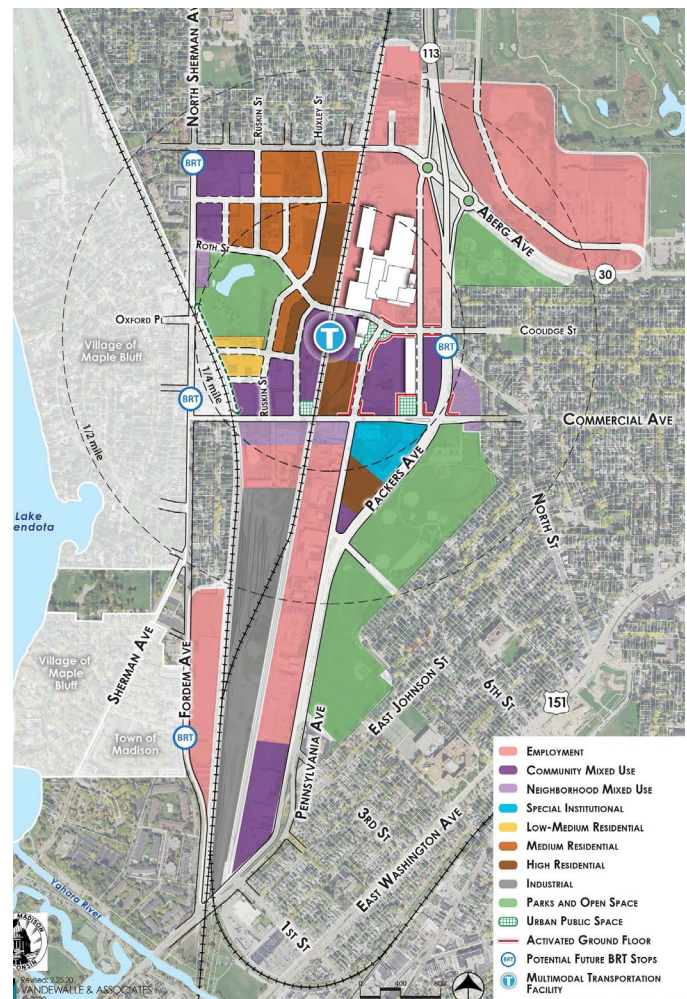
The Oscar Mayer plan is the second of a two-phase planning effort. It was preceded by the [Strategic Assessment](#), which was adopted by Council on February 22, 2019. The Strategic Assessment took a big picture look at what the redevelopment of the site and surrounding areas should achieve, with major emphasis placed on economic development, equity, transit and sustainability.

With priorities and visions established and adopted by Council, Planning Division staff and a consultant team drafted and refined a development concept, with extensive public participation efforts throughout the process.

**The Plan**

The plan recommends a transit-oriented new neighborhood that links together the east and north sides, maintains the Oscar Mayer area as major employment hub, adds much needed housing and reinvents Commercial Avenue as a pedestrian-oriented main street. The Oscar Mayer site is maintained largely as employment with mixed-use development planned for its southern half. Crossing the rail, the uses transition to predominantly residential surrounding a transit center. Approximately 2,000 to 2,500 housing unit could be built in the larger plan area, which would help accommodate the projected 70,000 new residents projected by the City's Comprehensive Plan by 2040. A new 14 acre public park and open space, consistent with recommendations in the City's [Parks and Open Space Plan](#), preserves and protects the existing wetland and old growth oak trees on the Hartmeyer property.

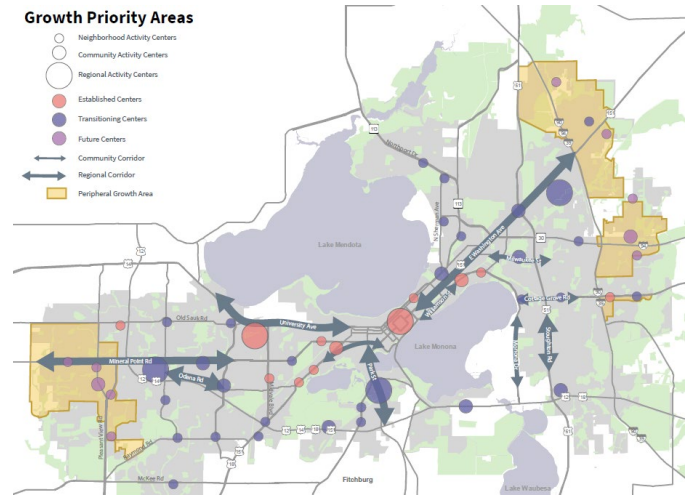
The plan recommends a relatively compact block structure that encourages walking and biking, similar



to the surrounding Sherman, Eken Park and Emerson East neighborhoods. It also recommends new on- and off-street bike routes through the plan area and connecting to Madison's larger multi-use path network. The most significant addition is an off street path from the Coolidge Street extension on the Oscar Mayer site to Johnson and First Streets on the east side of the railyard. This is largely contained on MG&E property and easements and will establish a long-awaited off-street connection between the Capital City Trail and northside neighborhoods.

**Comprehensive Plan**

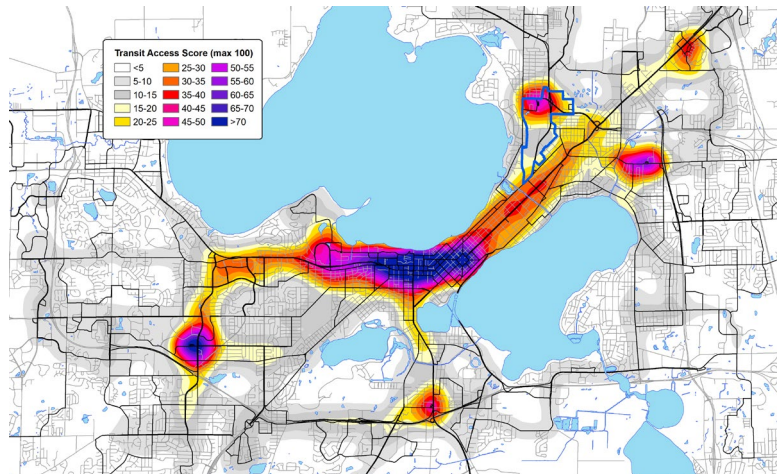
The [Comprehensive Plan](#), adopted in 2018 after a very extensive public process with more than 15,000 engagements, established the City's overall growth framework and contains broad Citywide policy direction for future development. One of the primary growth strategies is to "Concentrate the highest intensity development along transit corridors, downtown, and at Activity Centers." This is done through the following recommended actions:



- Implement Transit Oriented Development (TOD) overlay zoning along BRT and other existing and planned high-frequency transit service corridors to create development intensity minimums, reduce parking requirements, and support transit use.
- Prepare plans to transition auto-oriented commercial areas into mixed-use Activity Centers.

**Existing and Future Transit**

Within the Oscar Mayer Special Area Plan boundary is the North Transfer Point, which provides a very high level of transit service to the surrounding area. Nearly 500 busses arrive or depart from the North Transfer Point on weekdays during normal scheduling, creating faster and more direct access to more locations and better access to economic opportunities. The transit access score mapping (right) shows transit service at the north transfer point is some of the best in the City and better or comparable to that of many areas on the isthmus and other central areas.



Madison's [Bus Rapid Transit](#) north corridor is planned to serve the area in the future. Routing will be determined based on future study but will be either on Packers or Sherman Avenue. The plan was developed with flexibility to accommodate either scenario but the entire plan area is based on TOD principles. Once operation, the north corridor should only improve transit access and provide a better alternative to driving. The east-west route is currently under development as the first phase of the larger BRT network, and is expected to be operation in 2024.

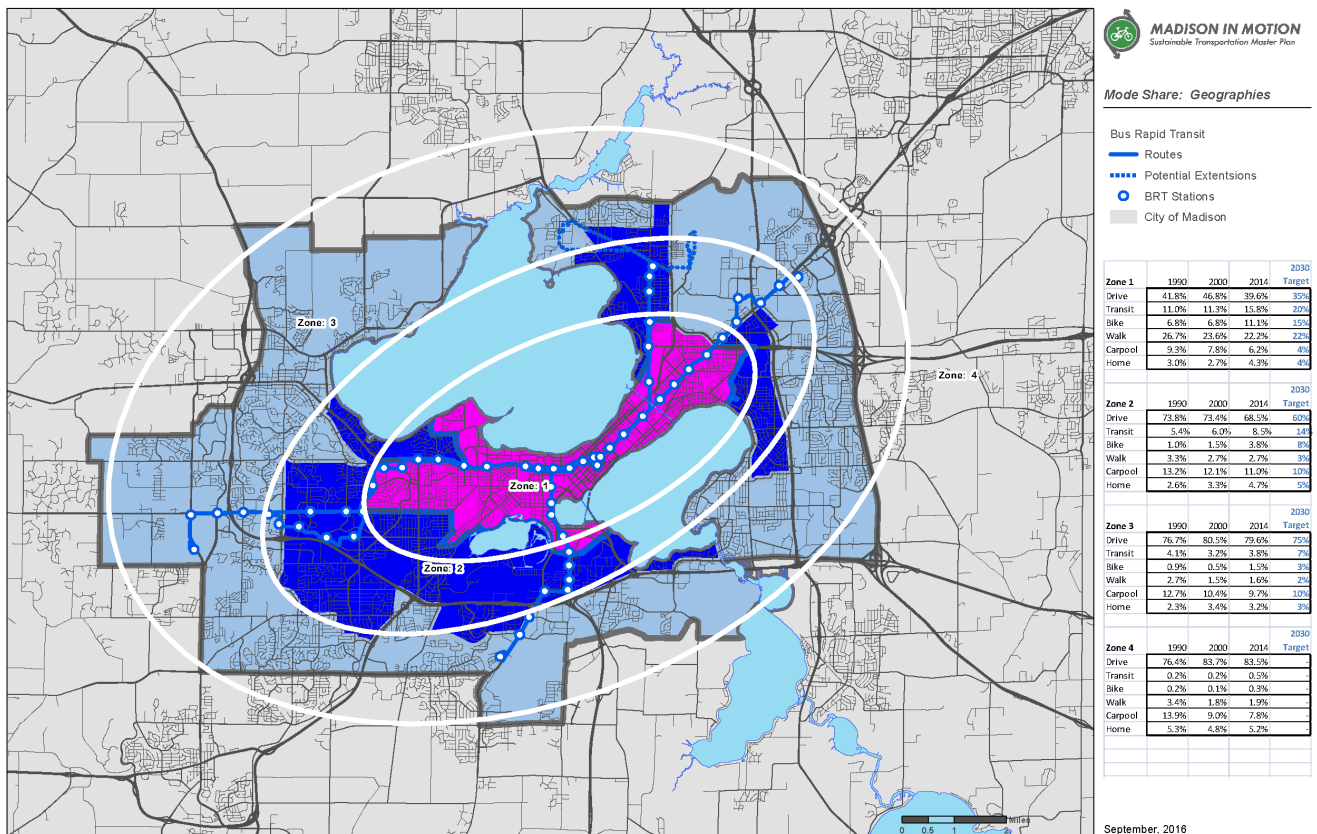




### Mode Share and Carbon Footprint

Where development occurs directly correlates to modes of transportation residents, employees or customers use. [Madison in Motion, the Sustainable Transportation Master Plan](#), evaluated travel patterns throughout the City and Dane County and grouped Census tracts with similar characteristics. That evaluation identified four zones with distinct travel patterns, with driving rates ranging between less than 40% to over 83%. The Oscar Mayer Special Area Plan is contained in Zone 1, the most central area where the distance between destinations is often short, very high level of transit service and bike infrastructure is well established. This results in low levels of driving and high levels of transit and non-motorized modes (bike and walking). Based on this information, we'd expect similar travel patterns with lower levels of driving from future residents and an associated reduction in carbon footprint. In comparison, growing in less central areas, even those just a mile or two further out, can result in travel patterns where the rate of driving is more than doubled.

This mode split is particularly important when we consider the carbon footprint associated with the travel choices of future residents. The more the City can grow in areas where we have high quality transit and bike infrastructure, and the distance between origin and destination makes those reasonable choices, the more we can reduce future emissions and associated negative environmental impact.



### LEED

Obtaining a LEED certification is often considered the benchmark of sustainable development, and while it does have its limitations, it provides a peer-reviewed and objective standard. USGBC established [LEED ND](#) (neighborhood development) in 2009 to provide a rating for larger, district or neighborhood scale projects. Planning Division staff compared known or likely development outcomes of the Oscar Mayer Special Area Plan to better understand how it compared to Certified, Silver, Gold and Platinum ratings. It appears development consistent with plan recommendations would qualify for LEED Certification. While this was not an in-depth evaluation and should not be considered a certainty by any means, it does provide a general scoping of possible future outcomes.

**Action Taken at Previous BCC Review Meetings**

Thus far in the review and approval process, the Oscar Mayer Special Area Plan was reviewed by the Transportation Policy and Planning Board (TPPB) and the Board of Park Commissioners (BOPC). After Sustainable Madison Committee, it will be reviewed by Housing Strategy Committee before going to Plan Commission (lead referral). It is scheduled to go to the Common Council on July 17.

At the May 4 TPPB meeting, the board voted 6-2 to recommend approval of the plan with following text edits: the intersection of Coolidge and Packers is intended for safe, full pedestrian and bike access for all movements while limiting new cut-through traffic to Eken Park; updating the transportation map to include recommended low-stress bike routes within the area; and include an implementation/timeline for the transportation portion of the plan. Primary topics of debate at TPPB were the balance of development and open space on the Hartmeyer property and reestablishing one the historic street connections between Eken Park and Oscar Mayer at Coolidge Street. As part of the Hwy 113 (Packers Avenue) construction in the late 1950s, several local street connections were removed and many homes and businesses were demolished to create space for the new highway.

BOPC reviewed the plan at their May 13 and June 10 meetings. At the May 13 meeting, BOPC referred the plan to their next meeting to get more information related to the Hartmeyer property, the plan recommendations and illustrations of alternatives submitted by Alder Abbas and by Paul Noeldner, Maple Bluff resident and founder of Friends of the Hartmeyer Natural Area. At the June 10 meeting, the Board of Park Commissioners voted 5-1 to recommend approval of the plan as submitted in the draft.