



Department of Planning & Community & Economic Development

**Planning Division**

Heather Stouder, Director

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

**To:** Plan Commission

**From:** Hawthorne-Truax Neighborhood Plan Team - Horvath, McAuliffe, Collins, Ekberg and Afifi

**Date:** September 19, 2022

**Subject:** Hawthorne-Truax Neighborhood Plan Mid-Project Update

**Project Overview**

The Planning Division began working on the Hawthorne-Truax Neighborhood Plan in January. It is an update to the 2001 Carpenter-Hawthorne-Ridgeway Sycamore- Truax Neighborhood Plan, and focuses on an area along East Washington Ave between State Highway 30 and Mendota Street. It is timely to work on this project for a number of reasons including that the 2001 plan is now 21 years old and it was based on 30-year-old data, and there are new issues to address like affordable housing needs and opportunities such as Bus Rapid Transit and USH 51 redesign. The area is also eligible to receive Community Development Block Grant funding for planning and implementation given that at least 51 percent of residents live with low to moderate incomes and there are higher percentages of people of color than the City as a whole. Further, there are established community groups and other stakeholders representing this diverse area to help inform the planning process and implement recommendations.

**Phase 1 – Issues, Opportunities and Values**

The first phase of the planning process largely included public engagement focused on defining issues and opportunities, and understanding neighborhood perspectives that would serve as a basis for draft plan recommendations. Staff began this phase with the creation and publication of the [Hawthorne-Truax Map and Data Book](#), a compilation of relevant background data information. In addition to in-person and virtual public and community group meetings, members of the public were also invited to use the [interactive commenting map](#) to highlight issues in the neighborhood and share their ideas on how to make the neighborhood better. The project team also established and regularly met with a Community Partners group to bring together community groups serving the area, school personnel, and neighborhood leaders to better understand their perspectives on issues facing the neighborhood, and to build relationships with them for plan implementation.

**Major themes we most commonly heard:**

- Concerns about housing: maintaining affordability, preventing displacement, need for additional units, and finding appropriate scales (with differing opinions)
- Excitement about redevelopment opportunities and activating underutilized areas
- Traffic and pedestrian conflicts, and the need for better crossings, more sidewalks, signals/flashing beacons and managing speeds
- Need for more frequent and reliable public transit service
- “No there there,” meaning a lack of neighborhood-oriented businesses, no effective neighborhood gathering places, and no community events
- Need for more affordable child care and better access to community services and youth employment

After the initial public engagement period, the project team crafted a draft Shared Values and Key Issues and Opportunities document (attached at the end of this memo) to help guide and inform a draft recommendation framework. This was discussed with the Community Partners group and was met with generally positive feedback.

## **Phase 2 – Initial Draft Recommendations and Concepts**

Phase 2 of the planning process began in the summer and involved developing initial draft recommendations and presenting them for public review and feedback. The draft recommendations mirror the organization of the Comprehensive Plan elements, with the addition of a community building and programs series. Below is a summary of draft recommendations followed by a description of Phase 2 public engagement and feedback themes. A complete list of the initial draft recommendations is attached at the end of this document.

**Land Use and Transportation:** Draft changes to the Comp Plan's future land use maps are largely based on three core ideas: increasing allowable intensity surrounding future BRT stations, allowing more "missing middle" housing by shifting Low Residential (LR) to Low Medium Residential (LMR) in select areas, and transitioning most General Commercial areas to mixed-use categories to allow and encourage residential development. Like the Odana Area and East Towne Area Plans, mixed-use designations allow for a mixture of uses, not a requirement for mixed-use buildings. This is augmented with the "Active Ground Floor" area surrounding BRT stations where the market for commercial spaces will likely be stronger.

Major transportation recommendations include supporting BRT and potential guidance for the upcoming Hwy 51 study. Public comments identified several areas needing pedestrian improvements. Much of the plan area was developed without sidewalks, including heavily used areas around Hawthorne Elementary, which may warrant sidewalk installation before street reconstructions occur. Several intersections were identified as needing pedestrian improvements as well. Fair Oaks Avenue is far wider than necessary, and can be narrowed with either short-term or long-term improvement depending on reconstruction timing.

**Neighborhood and Housing:** These recommendations largely focus on maintaining affordability in the community, with continued use of existing tools like the Affordable Housing Fund and promotion of other City programs like the First Time Buyer Fund.

**Economy and Opportunity:** This section includes support for existing and emerging businesses, and new affordable housing with existing City tools and resources like land banking and Tax Increment Finance, and new initiatives like a business improvement district, business association, and commercial rental assistance or guarantee program. There is also a focus on working with outside partners like Madison College and area employers to raise awareness among youth of job opportunities and programs to prepare them for potential career opportunities.

**Culture and Character:** These recommendations include creation of neighborhood-oriented events that bring people together more regularly, adding public art to the neighborhood and designing public infrastructure that represents the diversity of people living in the area, and exploring the creation of community gathering places.

**Green and Resilient:** Increasing the tree canopy, opening visibility and access to existing parks, increasing recreational opportunities on City and County greenspace, and coordinating with the Starkweather Creek Watershed Study to improve stormwater management are all included in this section.

**Community Building, Programs and Partnerships:** Recommendations in this section focus on building community and enhancing services for people living with low incomes, and include working with City agencies and community partners to better coordinate and target services in the Truax area, diversifying neighborhood groups, increasing access to affordable childcare, and enhancing the Hawthorne Community School programs.

### Phase 2 Public Engagement - Initial Draft Recommendations

Phase 2 public engagement was held in late August and early September and included virtual public meetings, a Neighborhood Plan Night Out at Hawthorne Elementary School, discussions with residents at East Madison Community Center food pantry, a visit to the Reindahl Park splash pad and engagement with students at Madison College.

There was generally positive support for the initial draft recommendations. People feel this area has been overlooked for new development and are excited to see recommendations for more mixed-use with opportunities for new housing and neighborhood serving retail. Other issues that people emphasized included the need for more recreational facilities and programs for kids of all ages, community safety concerns, better transit to Madison College, and affordable housing near the College.

### Next Steps:

Staff is scheduling additional mid-project updates with Boards, Committees and Commissions (BCC's) the Transportation Policy and Planning Board on October 10, Community Development Authority Board on October 13, and the Community Development Block Grant Committee on December 1. We are also planning a Hmong Focus Group and participation at an East Madison Community Center dinner. We will develop a complete draft plan and present it to the public at a series of meetings and other engagement activities in November. Staff will then create a final draft plan for introduction by resolution at a Common Council meeting in January, followed by BCC review and approval and adoption as part of the City's Comprehensive Plan in February or March 2023.

### **Feedback and Questions:**

In addition to general feedback and questions, we seek specific comments and feedback from the Plan Commission on the following questions:

1. General thoughts on transition from General Commercial to mixed use future land use designations. Is the Planning Commission comfortable with the "mixture of uses" approach supplemented with location-specific requirements for active ground floors?
2. Since this plan will be adopted prior to WisDOT presenting alternatives for the Hwy 51 project, do you agree with the approach focusing on goals? Does the Plan Commission have any other thoughts on how the impacted intersections should be designed?

### **ATTACHMENTS**

- Draft Shared Values, Key Issues and Opportunities
- Draft Generalized Future Land Use map
- Draft Transportation Improvements Map
- Complete Draft Recommendations

### Draft - Shared Values

We want to:

- Grow mindfully so that our residents of different incomes, backgrounds and abilities can continue living here and new residents will find housing options to meet their needs
- Welcome new development while respecting and enhancing the existing neighborhood scale and sense of place that people have come to appreciate
- Connect residents with resources that will help them continue to afford their housing, and property owners with support for upgrading and adapting housing to meet changing lifestyles and needs
- Reduce isolation by increasing street connectivity and improving the safety and enjoyment of walking and biking to better connect people with each other and to places they want and need to go
- Improve youth quality of life now and into the future by expanding programming and activities, and helping them find employment and prepare for college, careers and other future endeavors
- Enhance the look, feel and accessibility of our neighborhood by improving aesthetics, wayfinding, and amenities along neighborhood streets and bike paths, and in parks
- Be a green and environmentally friendly place with healthy air, water and native habitats, and ample greenspace with welcoming spaces to gather, play and relax

We want our neighbors to:

- Build a sense of community and belonging in the Hawthorne, Truax, Carpenter-Ridgeway, Mayfair Park and Greater Sandburg Neighborhoods
- Embrace and celebrate the unique cultures and ways of living of all residents across different racial, ethnic and international backgrounds
- Realize a high quality of life through accessible and affordable health services, education, childcare, employment training, support for single parents, recreation programs, arts/culture programs, events, and other offerings that support health and well-being
- Encourage neighborhood groups to become more welcoming and inclusive of all residents

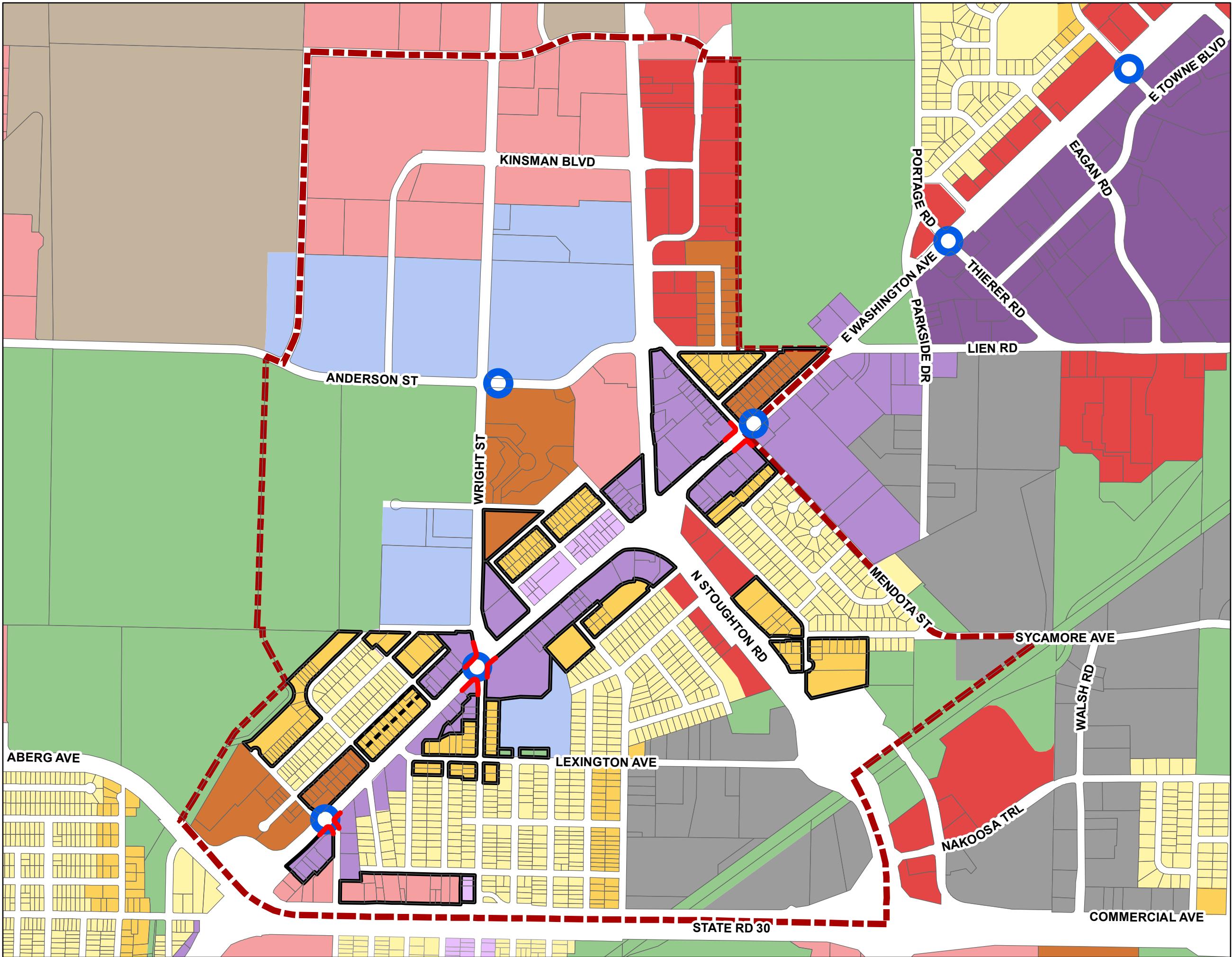
We want to continue to be responsive to future generations who may want new ways of working, living, and playing.

### Draft - Key Issues and Opportunities

- Welcome New Development, while Preserving Neighborhood Scale, Sense of Place and Affordability. The Hawthorne-Truax area is a desirable place to live and locate businesses, balancing a central location with affordability in walkable neighborhoods. As Madison continues growing rapidly and more renters and buyers compete for housing, new housing is urgently needed to maintain affordability in many neighborhoods. Data from the Equitable Development Report found areas with significant housing growth were able to preserve their existing affordable units, with rents increasing well below the citywide average. Welcoming new development in the Hawthorne-Truax area that includes a mix of market-rate and affordable units, coupled with promoting the City's affordable loan and rental assistance programs, will help current residents and business owners remain in the area. Focusing larger-scale mixed-use development along major transit corridors with gradual transitions to existing development, and locating neighborhood mixed-use nodes with compatible building scale and design at primary intersections can help preserve neighborhood scale and sense of place.
- East Washington Avenue as a Neighborhood Mixed-Use Center. This area lacks a central, identifiable neighborhood main street where residents can meet their needs for basic goods and services. East Washington Avenue, particularly at Bus Rapid Transit stations, has the potential to become an interesting neighborhood destination featuring housing and a variety of places to eat, shop, gather with

friends and access services. The look and feel of these spaces will be critically important, and the streetscape, architecture and open space should include design elements that symbolize the diversity of the area's people and cultures, helping to create a unique identity and welcoming place for all.

- Community Cohesion and Connectivity. People feel isolated and want better connectivity within their neighborhoods, and to nearby areas. East Washington Avenue, STH 30 and USH 51 provide efficient access for people and goods, but these major roads also create barriers making it feel less safe and unpleasant to walk and bike to school, shopping and other destinations. Bike and pedestrian safety improvements within and across neighborhoods and to destinations like Madison College, East Madison Community Center, Hawthorne Elementary School, East Washington Avenue commercial corridor, Hyvee and Walmart will help connect people to places they want and need to go.
- Range of Housing Options. This area primarily includes single-family homes and some smaller scale apartments and condominiums. There is very little medium-scale housing such as attached townhomes and multi-unit homes, and there is no housing targeted for seniors or assisted living. Many would like to stay in their neighborhoods as they age, and new residents may want different housing options. Medium-scale housing could develop in key locations of established residential areas, and as part of larger scale mixed-use development along major corridors. Housing for seniors and assisted living should be part of the mix.
- Community Wealth Building for Black and Brown Residents and Business Owners. Black and Brown business owners and entrepreneurs in this planning area and other parts of the City have been left out of economic progress and business opportunities. City programs to support homeownership and business creation should be promoted to Black and Brown individuals and families to help them buy homes, and Black and Brown business owners to buy their buildings. Building and transferring wealth to the next generation of Black and Brown individuals is a way to reinvest in the future.
- Improve Quality of Life for Youth. There is a growing youth population and limited activities and programs for these young people. It is also difficult for them to find jobs that are accessible without a car, and while there are some college preparation resources, youth need additional support. Young adults attending Madison College are also have difficulty getting to and from school by public transit. Further, a growing number of students are struggling to find affordable housing and some are living with homelessness.
- Increase Access to Basic Services. Many residents live with very low incomes and have trouble meeting basic daily needs. Necessities like housing, healthcare and childcare are very difficult to afford, especially for single parents. The planning area could support additional affordable childcare, affordable housing, and more targeted promotion of programs and services to help people afford rent and mortgage payments. Mental health services are also in high demand, and better access to Wi-Fi/ broadband access is a big need.
- Preserve and Enhance Neighborhood Quality of Life. Residents enjoy the relative peacefulness and safety of living in this area. However, there are issues with speeding along major streets, including car racing on East Washington Avenue and unsafe driving on Lexington Avenue in front of Hawthorne Elementary School. People are also concerned about noise and air pollution from F-16 and F-35 jets. New speed enforcement strategies and traffic calming will help, and noise mitigation should be pursued in identified areas for existing and new development.
- Enhance Natural Areas and Increase Greenspace and Recreation Facilities. Efforts should continue to maintain and enhance the water quality, shoreline, and surrounding native habitats of Starkweather Creek. Public access to Madison College's recreation facilities should be promoted in the community, and opportunities could be explored for new facilities and other improvements in the greenspace adjacent to the playfields. There are also opportunities for adding new features to Carpenter-Ridgeway Park, Brigham Park and Hawthorne Elementary School open space, and increasing visibility, accessibility, and possibly expanding one more of these parks

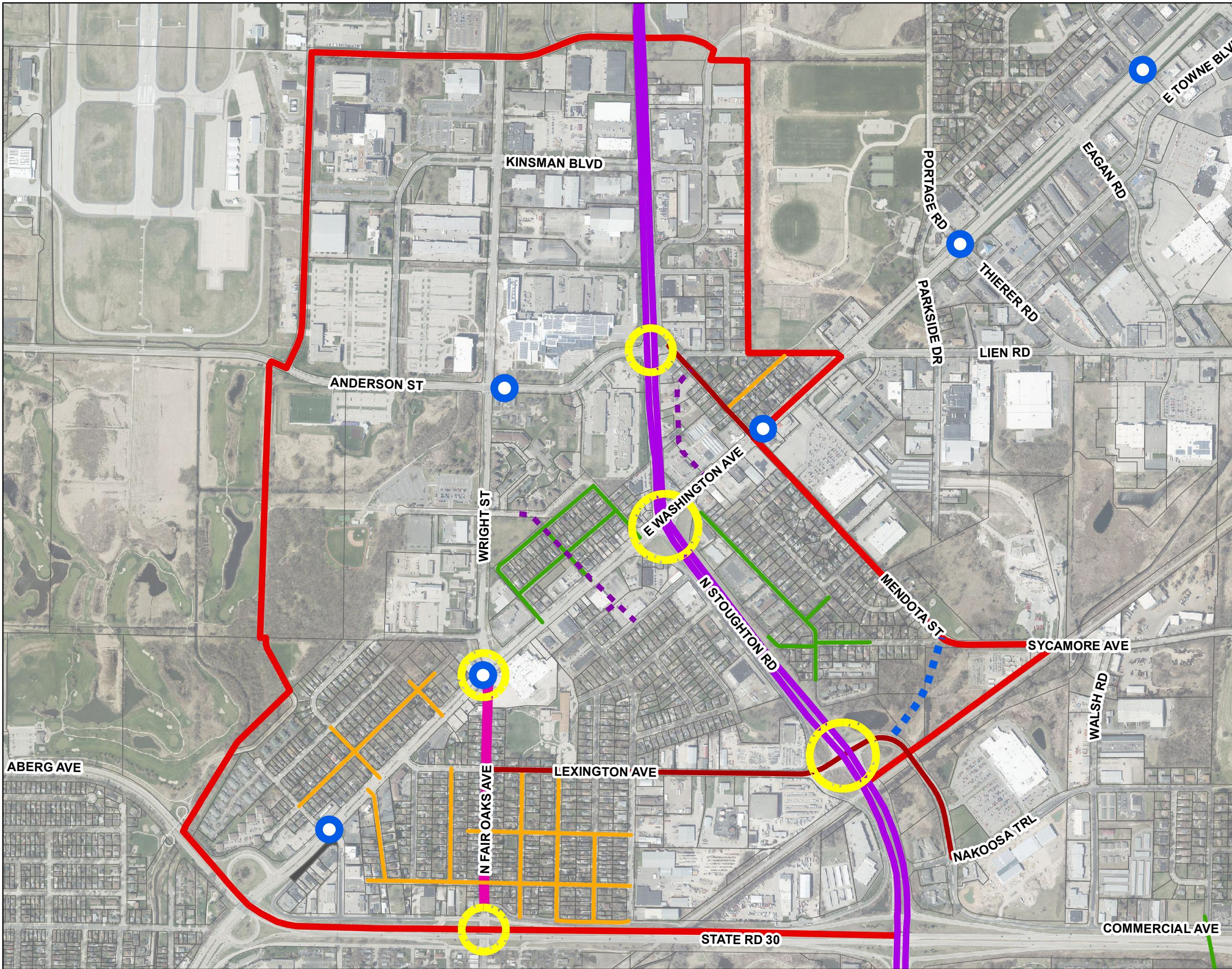


## Generalized Future Land Use - Draft

- Low Residential
- Low-Medium Residential
- Medium Residential
- Neighborhood Mixed Use
- Community Mixed Use
- Regional Mixed Use
- General Commercial
- Employment
- Industrial
- Parks and Open Space
- Special Institutional
- Airport
- Areas of change
- Active ground floor
- BRT Station

Lt | Nh | Eo | Cc | Gr | Eg

Hawthorne-Truax  
Neighborhood Plan  
Draft - August 2022



## Transportation Improvements Draft

- BRT Stations
- Bike/Ped Intersection Improvements
- Potential multi-use path
- Potential street connections
- Hwy 51 redesign (WI DOT)
- High priority sidewalk additions
- Upcoming street reconstructions
- Future rural to urban reconstructions
- Fair Oaks Ave Improvements
- Potential street vacation

Lt Nh Eo Cc Gr Eg

## Hawthorne-Truax – Initial draft recommendations

### Land Use:

- Locate the highest intensity of land use near BRT station areas
- Allow context-sensitive missing middle housing throughout the plan area, including townhomes, duplexes and accessory dwelling units.
- Utilize stepbacks on new development to transition buildings volumes to areas of lower scale.
- Encourage the transition of underutilized commercial areas into active places with a mixture of uses. Encourage active ground floors in appropriate areas while allowing multistory single use redevelopment to occur.

### Transportation:

- Support BRT development and take steps to maximize ridership in the area
  - When redevelopment occurs on sites adjacent to BRT stations, active ground floor uses that provide benefit to transit riders are encouraged. These include uses such as cafes, small grocery stores, child care, etc.
  - Ensure bike and pedestrian connections to stations are comfortable and safe.
- Work with Wisconsin DOT on the Hwy 51 redesign to ensure the future form of the corridor aligns with the City's vision for transportation and land use:
  - Ensure the future design is comfortable, safe and convenient for bikes and pedestrians. Particular needs are at East Washington Ave, Lexington Ave, and Anderson Street.
  - The design should not divide communities and should maintain a strong visual connection across the corridor
  - Support existing and future redevelopment by limiting right of way expansion and maintaining local street connections
  - The City should work with DOT to acquire parcel remnants and facilitate redevelopment through an RFP process
  - If the Hwy 51 redesign removes access from properties between East Washington and Anderson/Mendota Street, consider adding a local street between Mendota and East Washington to facilitate redevelopment on a connected street network
- Continue to implement Vision Zero activities, particularly in areas highlighted by the High Injury network map including East Washington Avenue.
  - Continue to evaluate options to reduce excessive speeds, particularly at peak and evening hours.
  - Improve pedestrian crossing on the west side of Fair Oaks at East Washington by removing or better controlling right turn slip lanes.
  - Evaluate intersection designs or other options to control speed on Anderson Street east of the airport.
  - Consider intersection and pedestrian improvements at Fair Oaks and Hwy 30.
- Other Street improvements:
  - Consider short and long-term improvements to Fair Oaks Avenue, reducing unneeded street width to slow vehicular traffic, allow for tree plantings, improve bike and pedestrian experience and reduce impervious surface. Short term improvements could include bump-outs to shorten crossing distances and to allow for tree plantings.
  - As redevelopment occurs, vacate frontage road on East Washington between the westbound Hwy 30 ramp intersection and Rethke Avenue.
  - Extend Schmedeman Ave north to Straubel Street and south to Prairie Ave to improve connections between neighborhoods and facilitate redevelopment south of East Washington.
- Sidewalks:
  - Proactively add sidewalks to both sides of streets abutting Hawthorne elementary and other streets leading towards it.

- Add sidewalks on all neighborhood streets when rural to urban reconstructions occur.
- Bikes
  - Continue to pursue planned extension of Starkweather creek path along rail corridor.
  - Evaluate the potential for a future bike and pedestrian connection linking Mendota St/Sycamore Ave to Commercial/Lexington Ave.

## Neighborhoods and Housing

- Support continued housing affordability in area
  - Encourage the development of new affordable housing in the area, using tools such as the City's Affordable Housing Fund and supporting workforce housing on Dane County's vacant Wright Street property.
  - Maintain naturally occurring affordable units by ensuring new housing growth keeps up with demand.
- Expand paths to home ownership by promoting existing programs such as the City's First Time Buyer Assistance and other outside programs. Take steps to minimize displacement of lower income residents and aid older residents' age in place by raising awareness of other assistance like property tax assistance and property repair/rehabilitation loans.
- Further assist older residents who would like to continue living in the neighborhood by encouraging the establishment of life-cycle housing where people can transition into different housing layouts and levels of care to meet their changing needs.
- Minimize noise impact from the airport on neighborhood residents by encouraging sound insulation on existing buildings and new construction. Work to ensure eligible households are aware of Part 150 soundproofing programs. Identify sound mitigation options for properties outside sound contours, particularly Hawthorne Elementary.
- Support the development of neighborhood-oriented destinations, like restaurants, cafes, by including ground floor commercial space in new mixed use building at appropriate locations, such as near BRT stations.

## Economy and Opportunity

- Utilize City land banking to purchase properties, particularly along the BRT and other transit corridors, for the purpose of establishing affordable housing, and possibly to support business uses.
- Consider creating a Tax Increment Finance (TIF) District to fund non-assessable infrastructure, such as bicycle network improvements, pedestrian safety improvements, new streets, and stormwater management improvements; affordable housing; creation of a business incubator; land banking; small business assistance; and other economic development initiatives.
- Explore creating a new business/community/neighborhood improvement district, or other tools to help make public spaces more welcoming to all Madison's residents. Maintain amenities, facilitate events, and promote the area to customers.
- Explore a commercial rental assistance or guarantee program to help small and emerging businesses, particularly those owned by BIPOC individuals, afford space in areas where rent increases may occur. Gap assistance could be used to help businesses displaced by redevelopment afford ground-floor space in new mixed-use buildings.
- Explore the creation of an East Washington Avenue Business Association for the purpose of connecting business owners with each other and with the City, and facilitating economic growth and development.
- Encourage and assist in increasing the availability of affordable childcare in the area, including employer provided childcare.
- Work with Madison College and the surrounding community so neighborhood residents have a full understanding of career opportunities available to them through programs offered at the College; also explore branding this area as a higher education neighborhood.

- Increase access to college preparatory resources to ensure that all youth who are interested in pursuing higher education have the opportunity to do so to support of their goals and provide them with the foundation they need for a fulfilling future.
- Work with community partners to identify job opportunities for youth along the BRT corridor, including major employers like the City, County and State government (bus pass).
- Encourage area employers to hire college students, high school students and recent graduates, and help young people find and keep jobs by offering mentorship and guidance during the job search and after they are hired.

## Culture and Character

- Encourage the creation of neighborhood-oriented events, such as block parties, food cart nights or summer concert series, to bring residents together more frequently.
- Explore the feasibility of an urban arts district in the older industrial buildings on Lexington and Mayfair Avenues.
- Explore the possibilities of adding murals to blank facades such as the telecommunications building at the Rowland and East Washington.
- Work with Dane County to identify community-oriented interim uses for Wright street triangle
- Revise Urban Design District (UDD) number 5 (MGO section 33.24(12)) in coordination with transit-oriented development (TOD) overlay zoning to reflect and implement the design recommendations of this Plan.
- Utilize a comprehensive, community-based process to design public gathering spaces; integrate policies, programming, activities and physical design that help ensure these public spaces are welcoming to all.
- Design streets, sidewalks, paths, transit stops, and other public amenities as well as private development so people are comfortable expressing their culture and feel that they are part of a community. This may include multilingual community signage, permanent or temporary art, poetry in sidewalks, murals, and other physical improvements.
- Explore opportunities for the temporary use of vacant or transitional spaces to support emerging artists while adding to the vibrancy of the area. This may include, but is not limited to, artist-in-residency spaces, pop-up galleries, and murals.
- Fully implement the “Art Through City Building” concepts as described in the City’s Public Art Framework, Cultural Plan, and other adopted policies to make the Hawthorne-Truax Area more welcoming to people of every race, ethnicity, gender, age, and ability.

## Green and Resilient

- Increase tree canopy coverage in areas that lack trees, possibly including a “free tree” program.
- As part of all street reconstructions, ensure terrace widths are sufficient to support large canopy trees.
- Explore distributed green infrastructure, such as terrace rain gardens, where possible
- Seek a public access easement or dedication along Starkweather Creek from Kriete Truck Center on Commercial Avenue as the property changes over time.
- Improve access to and visibility of City of Madison park spaces through selective property acquisitions, including three single family homes on Lexington Avenue abutting the Hawthorne open space
- Coordinate with the Starkweather Creek Watershed Study to develop stormwater management and watershed protection recommendations for this area. Investigate solutions to flooding at Lexington and Hwy 51, which eliminates a primary neighborhood access point during heavy rain events.
- Preserve native habitats and enhance environmental quality of Starkweather Creek corridor.
- Explore opportunities with Dane County to enhance the greenspace south of Anderson Street and west of Wright Street such as establishing mountain bike trails in collaboration with Capitol Off-road Pathfinders and other area mountain bike groups. Work with these groups to maintain the trails over time, with a special focus on involving youth.

- Work with neighborhood associations, cultural groups, school classes, and other stakeholders to improve and expand the walking trails that connect Carpenter-Ridgeway Park to the west branch of the Starkweather Creek.
- Add one or more canoe and kayak launches along the west branch of the Starkweather Creek.

## Community Building, Programs and Partnerships

- Encourage the development of community spaces in new mixed-use areas and invite youth to help design and program these spaces for artistic expression, gathering with friends, recreation, and other activities.
- Support the establishment, capacity-building, and diversification of groups that work to strengthen neighborhood cohesion and connections:
  - Provide tools, tips, and other resources to neighborhood groups and other community organizations in their efforts to become more inclusive and welcoming to the area's diverse residents.
  - Explore re-activation of Hawthorne Neighborhood Association, a previously long-standing neighborhood group that organized social events and activities, connected residents to resources, addressed issues, and helped people gain a voice in city planning and other processes affecting their neighborhood. Provide technical support and ideas for grants and other resources.
- Support groups that come together to establish community events and activities in publicly accessible spaces. Feature food, music, crafts, artwork and cultural performances that celebrate the diverse racial, ethnic and international backgrounds of residents.
- Consider creating a Neighborhood Resource Team for the Truax area to work together with residents on strengthening their social safety net, and improving access to basic services and programs that will help them thrive.
- Work with community partners to support and expand Hawthorne Community School
  - Consider establishing Open Schoolhouse evenings that offer community programs and resources such as:
    - English as a Second Language and Spanish classes
    - Job search and employee skills training
    - Open computer lab
    - Open gym
    - Zumba, yoga, Tai Chi, and other health and fitness classes; partner with YMCA, MSCR, Access Community Health and other providers
- Explore needs and identify opportunities to expand the Hawthorne Elementary Walking School Bus beyond Truax to serve students from Carpenter-Ridgeway and Hawthorne Neighborhoods.
- Explore hosting community service and health fairs at neighborhood locations such as Access Community Health Center, East Madison Community Center, Hawthorne Elementary School, and others.
- Enhance communication and promotion of community programs and services to area residents through outreach by neighborhood groups, community organizations and other partners.
- Coordinate with area financial institutions such as Dane County Credit Union and Dupaco Community Credit Union to explore creating financial literacy programming for residents including adults, youth and school age kids.
- Partner with Truax neighborhood nurse (if position was filled), Project Babies, RISE Wisconsin, the Lullaby program through Overture Center and other area organizations to provide support for pregnant women, babies, and young children.
- Explore creating a teen loft at the East Madison Community Center and encourage the inclusion of youth services and programming at the Imagination Center.