PLANNING DIVISION REPORT to the PLAN COMMISSION
February 16, 2012

Proposed Amendments to the:

City of Madison Comprehensive Plan (Legistar ID 24356 and ID 25098)
Sprecher Neighborhood Development Plan (Legistar ID 24357)

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Introduction and Reason for the Requested Amendments

The proposed amendment to the General Development Plan (GDP) for Grandview Commons and the Preliminary Plat of Town Center Addition to Grandview Commons discussed in an accompanying Planning Division Report to the Plan Commission would require concurrent amendments to both the City of Madison Comprehensive Plan and the Sprecher Neighborhood Development Plan (NDP) for it to be approved because the eastward expansion of the town center and 58,000 square foot grocery store proposed in the amended GDP would not be consistent with the recommendations in either plan as currently adopted. As part of the process established for the 2010-2011 Comprehensive Plan review, the GDP amendment applicant, Veridian, also requested consideration of amendments to the two adopted City plans that would make the amended Grandview Commons GDP consistent with their recommendations.

Because the proposed Comprehensive Plan and Sprecher NDP amendments are entirely driven by the proposed changes to the Grandview Commons planned development and the proposed grocery store, the Plan Commission directed that they be considered concurrently with consideration of the amendment to the Grandview Commons GDP. Accordingly, the ordinance amending the Generalized Future Land Use Plan map in the City of Madison Comprehensive Plan (ID 24356), a Plan Commission resolution recommending adoption of the Comprehensive Plan amendment (ID 25098), and a resolution amending the Sprecher Neighborhood Development Plan (ID 24357) have been scheduled to coincide with consideration of the Grandview Commons General Development Plan rezoning application and preliminary plat (ID 24620 and ID 25091, respectively).

Note: The City has received a large number of public comments regarding the two proposed plan amendments and the proposed grocery store development. Rather than including hard copies of this large volume of correspondence with the Plan Commission materials, Planning staff have created a website where all correspondence received since May 7, 2011 is posted in chronological order. Plan Commission members are encouraged to review these comments online at: http://www.cityofmadison.com/planning/grandview_comments.html.

Summary Description of Current Plan Recommendations and Proposed Amendments

City of Madison Comprehensive Plan

The Comprehensive Plan currently recommends lands within the existing Grandview Commons Neighborhood Center-Mixed Use District (as defined in the present GDP) for Neighborhood Mixed-Use (NMU) development. A potential Transit-Oriented Development node is also identified at the North Star Drive-Cottage Grove Road intersection. East of the existing NMU area, the subject site is recommended for Medium-Density Residential (MDR) development; and east of that, the former Doric Lodge property and the platted single-family area extending east to McLean Drive is recommended for Low-Density Residential (LDR) development.

Neighborhood Mixed Use districts are the recommended locations for clusters of relatively small convenience shopping and service uses that serve as activity centers and gathering places for the surrounding neighborhoods. Recommended commercial land uses are primarily intended to serve the adjacent neighborhoods, but may also include specialty businesses serving wider markets, provided the size and scale of the building is consistent with the character of the district and the surrounding neighborhood. Gross square footage of commercial buildings (including multi-tenant buildings) generally should not exceed 10,000 square feet, except for neighborhood-serving grocery stores, which should not exceed 25,000 square feet. Residential uses in NMU districts generally should not exceed 40 dwelling units per acre. Buildings in NMU districts should generally be between two and four stories in height, although this, as well as intensity of use and residential densities can be modified by the recommendations established in an adopted neighborhood or special area plan. Design characteristics of Neighborhood Mixed Use districts include buildings located close to the sidewalk and street, parking located primarily behind buildings or underground, on street parking, and pedestrian-friendly amenities such as decorative paving and lighting, plazas, benches and landscaping.

The proposed Comprehensive Plan amendment would expand the recommended mixed-use area eastward to encompass the enlarged Town Center defined in the proposed amendment to the Grandview Common GDP under concurrent consideration. The plan amendment would also change the land use designation for the portion of the enlarged mixed-use area located east of the southerly extension of Gemini Drive to Community Mixed-Use (CMU) from Neighborhood Mixed Use (the portion within the current Town Center) and Low Density Residential (the portion on the former Doric Lodge property).

In general, Community Mixed Use districts are the recommended locations for a relatively high-density mix of residential, retail, office, institutional and civic uses in a compact urban setting; and are typically larger than NMU districts and include a wider range of non-residential activities. Unlike NMU districts, there are no fixed limits on the gross square footage of commercial buildings or establishments in CMU districts, except as may be defined in an adopted neighborhood or special area plan. Residential densities in CMU districts generally should not exceed 60 units an acre, but this may also be modified by the recommendations in a neighborhood or special area plan. Design recommendations are similar to those in the NMU district regarding building placement, parking and pedestrian amenities, although the scale of development is typically larger.

In the subject case, the only reason the requested amendment is necessary is to accommodate the potential development of the proposed 58,000 square grocery store. The mapped mixed-use area would also be enlarged, but the overall potential intensity of use is arguably lower, since essentially the same amount of allowed development is distributed over a greater area. Because its intent is only to allow one large grocery store and not to re-characterize the Grandview Commons town center as a general location for large-scale commercial development, the proposed Comprehensive Plan amendment includes a map note to be placed on the Generalized Future Land Use Plan map specifying that:

> "The Community Mixed Use designation is applied to this area to allow the potential to develop a large grocery store of not more than 60,000 square feet at this location, provided that it is part of an integrated, comprehensively-planned mixed-use center and utilizes shared parking, provides good pedestrian connectivity and amenity, and features unique architectural treatments, durable, high-quality building materials, and extensive landscaping. Development of other types of large-scale retail uses in this area is not intended."

Sprecher Neighborhood Development Plan

The Sprecher Neighborhood Development Plan (NDP) map currently designates the existing Grandview Commons neighborhood mixed-use center on both sides of North Star Drive for Mixed-Use Commercial/Residential land uses. This general location at the southern end of the primary planned north-south collector street through the neighborhood (now North Star Drive) is called the Southwest Neighborhood Commercial Center in the plan narrative; and the mixed-use center defined in the Grandview Commons planned development essentially reflects the neighborhood plan recommendation. Several minor revisions to the size and shape of the designated Mixed-Use district have been made since the neighborhood plan was first adopted in 1998, reflecting incremental revisions to the Grandview Commons general development plan. The Sprecher NDP currently recommends the former Doric Lodge property for Institutional uses; and recommends the platted single-family lots east of this property for Low-Density Residential uses.

The Sprecher NDP does not include quantified or especially detailed recommendations regarding its designated commercial land use areas. However, the plan narrative discussion of the proposed Southwest (Town Center) Neighborhood Commercial Center, which is generally located where the Grandview Commons town center is planned, emphasizes creation of a compact, walkable, "village like" business district characterized by mixed-use development, multi-story buildings located close to the street with parking to the rear or on side streets, high levels of pedestrian amenity, and good linkages to the surrounding neighborhood. The plan also recommends a much smaller scale of development in the Southwest Neighborhood Commercial Center compared to the proposed Northeast Commercial District located north of Milwaukee Street, and offers the specific observation that "it would be difficult for large businesses, or uses requiring extensive parking, for example, to be compatible with the compact, pedestrian-oriented development concept." In general, the land use and design recommendations for this mixed-use area have been well reflected, and in significantly greater detail, in the Grandview Commons General Development Plan for the mixed-use area.

As with the Comprehensive Plan amendment, the proposed amendment to the Sprecher NDP would expand the designated Mixed-Use district eastward to encompass most of the former Doric Lodge property, and change the land use recommendation for the small portion of that property located north of realigned and joined Kilpatrick Lane/Big Dipper Drive from Institutional to Low Density Residential. The City-owned future public library site would be designated Institutional (although the library would also be consistent with the current Mixed-Use designation). A more significant part of the proposed amendment is a revision to the plan narrative to allow the potential development of a large retail grocery store within the Mixed-Use district under specified conditions. The added narrative is similar in intent to the Map Note for the corresponding Comprehensive Plan amendment:

> "Consideration may be given to the development of a large scale grocery store as part of an overall master plan for the southwest town center, however, in order to provide the opportunity to develop a large retail anchor that will help make the center an attractive shopping destination for a wider market area. A large anchor grocery may only be considered as part of an integrated, comprehensively planned mixed use center that utilizes shared parking, provides good pedestrian connectivity and amenity, and features unique architectural treatments, durable, high quality building materials and dense landscaping and screening. This development should occur under design guidelines established to create the southwest town center as a diverse, walkable neighborhood activity center. An anchor grocery store developed as part of the southwest town center should not exceed 60,000 square feet in size, and development of other types of large-scale retail uses is not intended."

The proposed Sprecher Neighborhood Development Plan amendment would also remove narrative regarding the Doric Lodge site that is no longer relevant since the site has been sold and continued institutional use is not intended.

Note: Copies of the proposed Comprehensive Plan and Sprecher Neighborhood Development Plan amendments, and agency comments received to date are attached to this report.

Evaluation of the Proposed Plan Amendments

The proposed amendments to the Comprehensive Plan and the Sprecher Neighborhood Development Plan are essentially similar in substance, with differences primarily reflecting the different structure, context, and level of detail in the two plans. Both amendments are also proposed solely to allow consideration of the proposed expansion of the Grandview Commons town center and the associated development of a 58,000 square foot grocery store on the eastern end of that expanded site; and both will be considered concurrently with the specific General Development Plan amendment that includes the grocery store proposal. Accordingly, this evaluation considers the two plan amendments together, and under the assumption that the potential impacts of the proposed plan amendments are those that might result from future development of the Grandview Commons town center as specifically proposed in the current proposed GDP amendment.

Please note that a more detailed description of the proposed grocery and other changes to the Town Center is provided in the Planning Division Report on the GDP amendment, and in the application materials submitted by the applicant. In general, this level of detail is not repeated here, except by reference, but the information and analyses in both reports should be considered together since the issues to be considered are substantially similar.

Criteria for Evaluating Proposed Plan Amendments

The February 15, 2011 staff paper titled "Process for Considering Limited Amendments to the Comprehensive Plan" indentified five criteria that could be used as a basis for considering proposed Comprehensive Plan map amendments:

1. The proposed change would correct an inaccuracy in the original Generalized Future Land Use Plan map as adopted in January 2006.

2. The proposed change would be more consistent with the recommendations of an adopted neighborhood plan, special area plan or neighborhood development plan.

3. The proposed change would be more consistent with the Comprehensive Plan's overall goals, objectives and policies as applied in the context of the amendment area.

4. The proposed change would better fit with the predominant uses and development pattern in the surrounding area.

5. Conditions in the area have changed sufficiently to warrant the proposed amendment.

The first two criteria are not applicable to the subject case. The third and fourth criteria are primarily directed at reevaluating mapped Comprehensive Plan land use recommendations in situations where there is no neighborhood plan, although they touch on issues relevant to any plan review. In the subject case, however, the proposed plan amendments are not generated by doubts about whether the Grandview Commons town center as reflected in the current GDP is consistent with the goals, objectives and policies in the Comprehensive Plan, or by a belief that the proposed changes to the

town center development concept in the proposed amendment to the GDP would be more consistent with Comprehensive Plan's overall recommendations, or provide a better fit with the predominant land uses and development pattern in the surrounding area. The plan for the town center in the current GDP, and reflected in the current recommendations for the area in both City plans, is a good plan with a very engaging vision of what the town center could become---and one that fits well with the existing and planned surrounding uses and development pattern.

The principal reason for requesting consideration of the Grandview Commons GDP amendment and the two corresponding City plan amendments is that applicant has concluded that the town center as originally and currently conceived cannot be implemented; and that the requested changes to the GDP development concept (and corresponding changes to the City plans) are necessary if the town center is ever to be successful. The essential basis for the requested amendments is that conditions have changed (the fifth criterion), and that the development potential assumed when the Sprecher NDP was adopted, and when the Grandview Commons town center was approved, will not be realized unless plans for the center are also changed to adapt. So one relevant question to be addressed becomes:

Have conditions in the Grandview Commons town center area changed sufficiently to warrant the proposed plan amendments?

The staff paper cited above notes that "changed conditions" can include changes resulting from recent development trends and physical improvements in the area, as well as changes in public interest, objectives, and expectations regarding the future potential of the area. As described in the application materials, the applicant has concluded after nearly a decade of effort that further development of retail uses in the Grandview Commons town center is not possible unless an anchor use is established that can provide a wide range of convenience goods to neighborhood residents and also help make the center an attractive retail destination for a wider market area. The applicant believes that in the present situation, small businesses are simply not interested in the Grandview Commons location. Approval was received in 2006 for a two-story retail/office development on the east frontage of North Star Drive at the Sharpsburg Drive corner, but this project did not proceed due to inadequate demand for the space.

Recognizing that groceries are one of the primary convenience goods, the applicant has contacted potential food store operators over the past decade to promote Grandview Commons and explore their interest in locating a relatively small-scale store in the town center that would be consistent with current plan recommendations---including major grocery companies, specialty food stores and cooperatives. To date, none have expressed interest. Successful development of the town center would clearly benefit the overall Grandview Commons development, and staff have no reason to doubt the applicant's efforts to locate suitable businesses to locate there.

Experience has also led to increased recognition by planners that implementing the non-residential and mixed-use components of Traditional Neighborhood Development can be more challenging than was perhaps fully realized when TND was first included in City plans as the preferred development concept for new neighborhoods. This experience is not unique to Madison. There are many other benefits from TND development, but creation of a successful mixed-use center may not be possible in every neighborhood---or may be possible only if plans for the center are sensitive to market realities.

It has been suggested that the reason the town center has been unable to attract neighborhood-scale retail uses is that population is still too small---that the town center will happen later when the neighborhood is more fully built-out. This might be at least partially true; but it is also an unknown. While more "rooftops" do create more potential market demand, the expected intensity of development in the Sprecher Neighborhood still might not be sufficient by itself to support the desired uses---and it has always been expected that the town center would offer goods and services to

several surrounding neighborhoods. Many specialty businesses serve community-wide rather than neighborhood-scale market areas; but they still prefer locations near other activities that can provide exposure and potential synergies.

While future neighborhood growth (or a recovering economy) might eventually lead to increased business interest in the town center as a location, staff believe it is at least equally likely that the current undeveloped condition could continue for a long time. While it is to some extent a judgment call, Planning staff can accept that conditions related to the Grandview Commons town center (including changes in perceived market conditions and possibilities) may have changed sufficiently to warrant consideration of amending the recommendations for the center in adopted City plans to better reflect current expectations.

Other Issues to Consider in Evaluating Proposed Plan Amendments

Even if a conclusion is reached that conditions affecting the Grandview Commons town center have changed sufficiently to warrant consideration of amending the Comprehensive Plan and Sprecher NDP recommendations for the area, however, evaluation of the proposed plan amendments must carefully consider other issues related to the proposed changes, including:

- Will adopting the proposed plan amendments, and approving the amendment to the Grandview Commons GDP being considered concurrently, lead to successful development of the town center?

- Will the amended town center development concept retain most of the desirable attributes of a compact, pedestrian-oriented mixed-use center incorporated in the current GDP development concept?

- Will the revised town center concept, and particularly the potential impacts of the proposed 58,000 square foot grocery with its extensive parking field, have unacceptable impacts that would more than offset the potential benefits?

Planning staff believe that the most important considerations in evaluating the proposed changes to the town center, including the proposed grocery, and their potential impacts include:

- ***Will a large full-service grocery story be an effective "anchor" that really does make the town center a more attractive location for the development of additional smaller-scale, commercial uses that will help the center become an engaging, pedestrian-oriented, mixed-use neighborhood activity center as envisioned in the Sprecher Neighborhood Development Plan and Grandview Commons general development plan?***

  This is an important question since the town center is a key component of the neighborhood development plan's recommendations for this area, and a key component of the Grandview Commons planned development. Much of the support for the 58,000 square foot grocery is based on an assumption that it will make the town center a more attractive location for other neighborhood-supporting businesses; but whether or not this will turn out to be true is unknown. At this time, the grocery store is the only project being proposed, except for the library, which is included in the Capital Improvement Program for design in 2014 and construction in 2015.

  The proposed location of the grocery at the eastern edge of the site could make completion of the town center more challenging, since it places more than one-half of the total allowed commercial use a significant distance from other potential town center developments. Staff believe that effectively tying the town center together as a coherent mixed-use district and neighborhood destination will require development of the two proposed retail buildings along the east frontage of

extended Gemini Drive, as well as significant ground floor retail presence in the three proposed buildings along Sharpsburg Drive west of the library. Suitable active uses on the ground floors of the other buildings defining the pedestrian plaza are also important. This is a lot of development for a location that has had limited success to date in attracting suitable businesses. The wide array of goods and services that will be offered by the proposed grocery may also make future development of small businesses offering similar goods services elsewhere in the town center even less likely. It is also understood that Roundy's will require a non-compete deed restriction that prohibits certain businesses elsewhere in the center.

While it is not unreasonable to believe that the proposed grocery may provide increased visibility and potential customers that would make the town center more attractive to other small businesses than presently (particularly businesses that do not compete directly with the grocery), whether this will be sufficient to support full implementation of the town center concept cannot be determined at this time. If this vision is to be realized, however, it is essential that future developments within the town center be consistent with the concept outlined in the proposed amended General Development Plan. The Planning Division Report on the proposed GDP amendment includes several recommended conditions of approval aimed at strengthening the commitment to the amended development concept.

- ***What may happen in the town center if the proposed grocery is not approved?***

  This cannot be predicted with any certainty. The applicant has concluded that the town center cannot be implemented unless a retail anchor is provided to help establish the location as a neighborhood shopping destination, and experience to date tends to support that conclusion. In time, as the neighborhood builds-out and the economy improves, conditions may change again to an extent that the town center can be developed as initially planned---but there is currently nothing to substantiate that view. If the present grocery store proposal is not approved, one possibility is that the property could continue to sit vacant in hopes that a more acceptable anchor proposal, or smaller-scale neighborhood retail development proposals, will eventually come along. Another possibility is that the applicant might propose residential-only development here as an alternative to the town center. In order to develop only residential uses throughout the mixed-use town center, staff believe revisions would be required to the General Development Plan and the two adopted City plans for the area at least as significant as the current proposed amendments, since it would essentially mean abandoning the goal of developing a mixed-use neighborhood activity center.

- ***Does the proposed development plan for the enlarged town center, including the proposed grocery, create the strong building relationships, pedestrian connections, and activity areas needed to tie the grocery and other future developments together as a coherent whole, rather than a collection of individual uses that happen to be in the same general area?***

  Planning staff believe that if all of the provisions in the amended GDP regarding building placements and orientation, enhanced pedestrian corridors and plazas, and shared parking arrangements are implemented; and if sufficient additional neighborhood-serving uses are developed to create the necessary level of pedestrian activity, then the town center could become a coherent and engaging neighborhood destination and gathering place. If these provisions are not implemented, or if other neighborhood-serving uses cannot be attracted, the outcome would likely be different. The importance of implementing the balance of the town center is discussed in more detail in the Planning Division Report on the proposed GDP amendment being considered concurrently.

- ***Do the plans for the grocery provide safe, convenient vehicular access and circulation both for customers and delivery/service vehicles, without creating unacceptable traffic or congestion impacts?***

  Development of the proposed grocery and other elements of the town center will certainly generate additional traffic on some of the streets leading to the town center, as well as increased turning movements into and out of the center. The design of the town center seeks to direct the majority of this traffic to site entrances off Cottage Grove Road and off Gemini Drive from the south. In the case Cottage Grove Road and other major roadways, Planning staff believe the projected traffic volumes are well within the planned capacity of these streets, which is based on the long-term development projections in adopted plans. Because of its size, the proposed grocery will create a sudden jump in local traffic to the town center; but at a community scale, the traffic generated by a town center fully built-out under the proposed amended development concept, including the grocery, is probably not much different than it would be from a town center fully built out under the current town center development concept. Cottage Grove Road has always been planned as a multi-lane divided roadway, and in the long-run, the town center will generate a relatively small proportion of the anticipated total traffic on this arterial highway, with or without the grocery. Delays in implementing planned roadway improvements may create (and have created) less-than-ideal traffic conditions at some locations until they are eventually constructed, but this situation is not unique to this proposal. If this project is approved, near-term improvements needed to handle traffic movements generated by the grocery or address any safety concerns will be required as conditions of approval. Detailed recommendations are found in the Traffic Engineering Division comments included in the Planning Division Report on the proposed amendment to the Grandview Commons GDP.

  Traffic on local streets serving town center will also increase if the grocery is developed, although again, not necessarily more than might occur under the current development concept. The "grid like" street pattern characteristic of Traditional Neighborhood Development is designed to provide multiple routes to most neighborhood destinations and the Grandview Commons town center is planned as an important neighborhood activity center, so traffic increases on the local streets closest to it is an expected consequence as the center builds out. The town center is largely undeveloped and current traffic volumes are relatively low, so it is not surprising that some residents have expressed concern with the expected increases. Although traffic increase is inevitable as the town center develops, measures are available that can help address unacceptable conditions that may develop on local neighborhood streets, such as speeding or excessive non-local "cut through" traffic, for example. The conditions of approval on the Grandview Commons GDP recommended by the Traffic Engineering Division include setting aside funds for potential "traffic calming" improvements if these become needed.

  One of the consequences of the proposed project is that rather than extending west and north to connect with Orion Drive as currently planned, Kilpatrick Lane would become a cul-de-sac, and Big Dipper Drive would be connected with Orion. The resulting street plan provides no potential for access to the town center from the east, although it is not certain that access would have been provided in any case, since no detailed plans for development of the former Doric Lodge property have been approved.

  The traffic report provided by the applicant indicates that the planned street system can accommodate the projected traffic, although specific responses may be needed to address needs along specific street segments or at specific intersections. Vehicular access and circulation plans for the proposed grocery are still being refined and may be modified both in the final GDP and through approval of subsequent Specific Implementation Plans for this project. This is also discussed in the companion Planning Division Report on the proposed GDP amendment, and the City

Engineering and Traffic Engineering Division comments compiled in that report indicate some of the issues being considered. Planning staff believe that subject to modifications recommended by the reviewing agencies, the proposed access and circulation arrangements could be acceptable.

- ***Do the plans for the proposed grocery and the town center provide safe convenient access to and within the site for pedestrians and bicycles?***

  As described in the Planning Division Report on the GDP amendment, the proposed grocery will have direct pedestrian-bicycle access from Sharpsburg Drive and Cottage Grove Road, as well as a pedestrian walkway from the Kilpatrick Lane cul-de-sac. In addition, a major enhanced pedestrian corridor through the town center is planned between the front of the grocery and Gemini Drive, and extending west to a public plaza fronting on North Star Drive. Buildings will be located close to the abutting public streets, and all retail uses will have primary entrances on these streets in addition to secondary entrances that may face the shared parking areas and the pedestrian corridor and plaza. Planning staff believe that the town center development concept proposed in the amended General Development Plan will provide safe and reasonably convenient pedestrian and bicycle access and circulation, although the less-compact site means that everything is more spread out. This issue will also be considered as part of future Specific Implementation Plan approvals and may lead to additional pedestrian-bicycle recommendations.

  Public comments on the proposed grocery have included statements questioning its consistency with the concept of a "walkable" town center because most customers will drive to the store. Although walking is generally encouraged in City plans, recommendations in the Sprecher NDP for a walkable, pedestrian-oriented town center are principally directed toward creating the town center as a destination that, once there, encourages and enables users to move between the various activities on foot, as contrasted with driving from one relatively-separated activity to the next. As noted above, staff believe that this pedestrian-friendly environment can be created in the town center if the proposed development concept is fully implemented. Walking to the town center is a slightly different issue. It is true that most users of the proposed grocery will drive to it rather than walk. This probably is true as well for many smaller businesses that might locate in the town center (including a smaller grocery). Whether or not one chooses to walk to a destination depends primarily on distance, the quality of the pedestrian connections to the destination, whether the destination itself is pedestrian-friendly, and the purpose of the trip. Because of its larger market area, most customers of the proposed grocery probably will drive to it, but the store would also provide an important convenience shopping opportunity that is not presently available to neighborhood residents who do live within typical walking distance. Trends in the grocery industry strongly suggest that not every neighborhood is likely to have a food store within walking distance, and the proposed grocery would provide this opportunity to much of this neighborhood. For residents who do drive, a full-line grocery in the neighborhood would still offer a shorter-distance alternative.

- ***What effects will the large grocery store have on neighborhood character, and is the visual appearance of the proposed grocery, including building design, site amenities, signage and lighting attractive for that type of use and consistent with the vision of the neighborhood as a whole?***

  As discussed above and in the Planning Division Report on the General Development Plan, the size of the proposed grocery and its location at the eastern end of an enlarged town center represents a significant change to the town center development concept. This is the reason amendments to the Comprehensive Plan and the Sprecher Neighborhood Development Plan, as well as to the Grandview Commons GDP, need to be approved if this project is to proceed.

The amended Grandview Commons development concept plan places the large grocery at the far eastern end of the site, and seeks to partially offset this by shifting more of the other development eastward, toward the grocery---creating the large public plaza on North Star Drive. The resulting town center would be more spread-out, with central shared parking areas that are more visible as a consequence of increased exposure along the Cottage Grove frontage and adjacency to the prominent pedestrian corridor connecting the grocery with the public plaza. However, the amended concept plan continues to require that buildings be oriented to the public streets, and includes provisions intended to encourage development of these streets as active, pedestrian-friendly elements of the town center, not just a means of access. While the amended town center development concept differs in meaningful ways from the original concept, staff does not consider it inherently inconsistent with the neighborhood vision for an engaging center---provided that the amended plan is implemented as proposed, and acknowledging that the proposed "mixed-use" center will include a free-standing, one-story, large format retail use, the grocery store.

The proposed grocery is a large building and would be located on high ground farther east than the town center was expected to extend. As a result, the proposed grocery and its parking area would undoubtedly have a greater visual impact on some adjacent properties than would be the case under the current development concept, which anticipated residential uses on the former Doric Lodge property. This concern has been expressed by many neighborhood residents---including residents of the Richmond Hills neighborhood south of Cottage Grove Road. The new access driveways and traffic movement in and out of the grocery site would also be a significant change from what might have been expected. On the other hand, Cottage Grove Road is an arterial roadway, and the Grandview Commons town center was planned adjacent to it to provide visibility and convenient highway access to this relatively more-intensive mixed-use development.

Staff do not dispute that the expanded town center site and larger grocery will change the character and "look" of the center, or that it will have greater visual and other impacts on some nearby properties, compared to the current development concept. It is also appreciated that there is considerable opposition to the proposed plan amendments because of these impacts. However, staff do not consider the expanded town center location necessarily inherently inappropriate for the proposed grocery development, or the potential impacts incompatible with creating and maintaining the surrounding neighborhoods as attractive and desirable places to live. Based on the site plans included with the General Development Plan, staff believe the visual impact of the proposed grocery probably can largely be mitigated through sensitive site design and visual buffering, particularly on properties to the east and north; perhaps less so directly to the south. At all locations, success in minimizing negative impacts on adjacent properties depends to a large degree on detailed site and building design, lighting and signage, landscaping, and other project details. Review of the current proposed Grandview Commons GDP amendment and subsequent future Specific Implementation Plan applications needs to carefully consider these factors.

Other potential impacts that have been suggested as possible negative consequences of the proposed revisions to the town center and/or the proposed grocery, such as noise, odor, lights, or hours of operation, are very project-specific and depend heavily on design and operational details. Consideration of these issues is more appropriately done as part of the review of the proposed amendment to the Grandview Commons General Development Plan and/or future Specific Implementation Plan applications.

Commission and Committee Recommendations

On November 22, 2011, the Pedestrian/Bicycle/Motor Vehicle Commission passed a motion that the resolution to adopt the proposed amendment to the Sprecher Neighborhood Development Plan be returned to the Plan Commission with a recommendation to **deny approval** of the amendment; but in

the event that the amendment is approved, the PBMVC recommends that the Kilpatrick cul-de-sac be connected to Big Dipper Drive, and that a traffic impact study be completed and reviewed by staff and the PBMVC that specifically addresses median cuts and driveways on Cottage Grove Road, the mitigation and dispersal of neighborhood traffic, and pedestrian and bicycle access and impact.

On December 15, 2011, the Long Range Transportation Planning Committee passed a motion that the ordinance to adopt the proposed amendment the City of Madison Comprehensive Plan and the resolution to adopt the proposed amendment to the Sprecher Neighborhood Development Plan be returned to the Plan Commission with a recommendation of **approval**. The LRTPC motion also included the Traffic Engineering recommendations contained its November 16, 2011 memorandum.

Conclusion

The decision whether or not to approve proposed amendments to the City of Madison Comprehensive Plan and the Sprecher Neighborhood Development Plan to change the land use recommendations applicable to the Grandview Commons town center is essentially a policy decision. Both plan amendments are offered in order to accommodate the development of a 58,000 square foot grocery in an expanded and changed town center, as proposed in an amendment to the Grandview Commons General Development Plan that is being considered concurrently with the two City plan amendments. If these amendments are all approved and the project proceeds, there will be a fairly substantial near-term change in the neighborhood compared to what is envisioned in current adopted plans when the grocery is developed; and a longer-term, but harder to evaluate, change in the long-term development of the balance of the town center.

The current planning recommendations for the town center have been in place for more than a decade, and to date, no development has occurred in the portion of the center east of North Star Drive despite continued effort by the Grandview Commons developer. The developer has concluded that establishment of a anchor retail store is necessary to provide the additional "draw" needed for the town center to become a more attractive location for additional neighborhood-serving businesses and successful development of the town center as an engaging mixed-use activity center. At this time, there is an active proposal for development of a 58,000 square foot grocery store, but no other town center developments are currently proposed. Whether or not the original town center concept might be implemented if more time were allowed is unknown. The developer believes not. Whether or not the anchor grocery will be sufficient to generate additional development proposals and complete the town center is also unknown, but it may be at least as likely as it is in the current situation. Planning staff believe the mixed-use neighborhood commercial center recommended at this location in both the Comprehensive Plan and the Sprecher Neighborhood Development Plan is a very important component of the vision for this neighborhood, and that this should be a key consideration in evaluating the proposed plan amendments.

The development concept for the Grandview Commons town center included in the current General Development Plan is a very appealing concept, fully consistent with the current recommendations for the area in the two adopted City plans. But this concept is not being implemented, and no evidence has been offered to indicate that this situation might change in the foreseeable future. The revised development concept for the town center proposed in the amended Grandview Commons GDP and reflected in the subject amendments to the Comprehensive Plan and Sprecher NDP is a different concept, particularly in including the large single-story, single-use grocery, but much of the original town center concept is otherwise retained. Although it would be different from the original concept, staff feel that If completed as proposed in the amended GDP development concept, the town center could become the engaging neighborhood activity center and gathering place envisioned in the neighborhood plan. However, there are no assurances that this will happen. Partly because little

progress has been made in implementing the original town center concept, it is not unreasonable to think that the revised concept with the large anchor grocery may be more likely to lead to additional development in the town center---although that certainly is not assured either.

While appreciating neighborhood concerns with some aspects of the proposed grocery and changes to the original town center concept, staff feel that most, but not all, potential negative impacts of the amended proposal can be adequately addressed, and that, on balance, the proposed changes may be an appropriate trade-off with the original vision if it leads to eventual development of a successful mixed-use neighborhood center as recommended in both the current and the proposed amended Comprehensive Plan and Sprecher Neighborhood Development Plan.

Recommendation

The Planning Division believes that the Plan Commission should approve the proposed plan amendments if it finds that the proposed changes to the Grandview Commons town center development concept, including the proposed 58,000 square foot grocery store, may significantly increase the likelihood that the town center can and will be successfully implemented, and that the known or likely impacts of the proposed development on adjacent properties and the surrounding neighborhoods are acceptable or could be adequately mitigated. If, after considering the application materials for the related General Development Plan amendment, the evaluation in this Report, the comments from City commissions, committees and reviewing agencies, the extensive public comments, and the input at the public hearing, this finding is made, the Planning Division recommends that the Plan Commission take the following actions:

- The Plan Commission should **adopt** the Plan Commission resolution recommending approval of the proposed amendment to the City of Madison Comprehensive Plan (ID 25098); and

- The Plan Commission should forward the ordinance to amend the City of Madison Comprehensive Plan (ID 24356) to the Common Council with a recommendation of **approval**; and

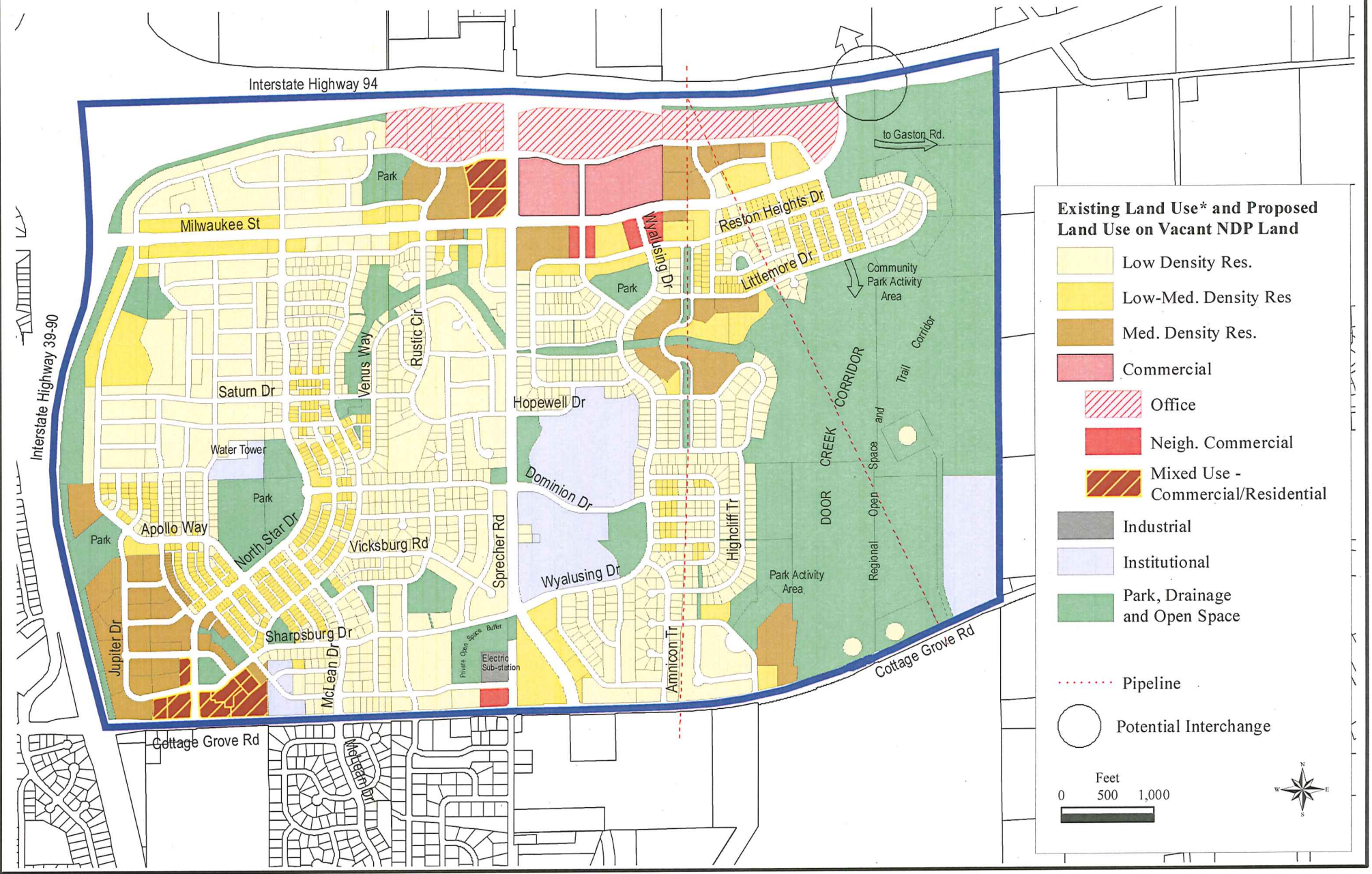
- The Plan Commission should forward the resolution to amend the Sprecher Neighborhood Development Plan (ID 24357) to the Common Council with a recommendation of **approval**.

If, in the alternative, the Plan Commission cannot find that the proposed changes to the Grandview Commons town center development concept will increase the likelihood that the town center can and will be successfully implemented; or finds that the likely impacts of the proposed development on adjacent properties and the surrounding neighborhoods are unacceptable and cannot be adequately mitigated, then the Planning Division recommends that the Plan Commission resolution recommending approval of the ordinance to amend the City of Madison Comprehensive Plan (ID 25098) be **placed on file**; and that the ordinance to amend the City of Madison Comprehensive Plan (ID 24356) and the resolution to amend the Sprecher Neighborhood Development Plan (ID 24357) be forwarded to the Common Council with a recommendation to **deny approval**.

Note: Approval of the amendments to the City of Madison Comprehensive Plan and to the Sprecher Neighborhood Development Plan will allow favorable consideration of the corresponding proposed amendment to the Grandview Commons zoning and the preliminary plat of Town Center Addition to Grandview Commons. If the related GDP amendment and preliminary plat are approved, specific conditions of approval recommended by the Planning Division and other reviewing agencies will be included, as required.

Sprecher Neighborhood Development Plan

As Adopted January 1998, Amended May 1999, May 2001, November 2001 & March 2005
and *implemented through subdivision and zoning approvals



City of Madison Department of Planning & Community & Economic Development, Planning Division