ATTACHMENT A

PLANNING DIVISION REPORT
DEPARTMENT OF PLANNING AND COMMUNITY AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT
June 11, 2007

At their March 19, 2007 meeting, the Plan Commission requested that staff provide additional information regarding the transportation-related implications of the East Washington Avenue BUILD Capital Gateway Corridor Plan, as well as additional information regarding the nature of a comprehensive transportation and parking study and plan for the Isthmus and how much such a study would cost. This report addresses the Plan Commission's request and recommends both a near-term and longer-term approach to addressing the transportation implications of development projects which may occur along East Washington Avenue in the future. The report was prepared by Planning Division staff including staff to the Madison Area Transportation Planning Board and Traffic Engineering.

At the Plan Commission meeting, there was some discussion about the ability of the transportation infrastructure to handle the large amount of new development which could potentially be allowed by the Capitol Gateway Corridor Plan (as indicated by the proposed building height limits, for example). Plans for redevelopment within established neighborhoods and corridors are inherently long-range in nature, however, and in this regard, the Capitol Gateway Corridor Plan is no different than other adopted City plans that recommend increased intensity and density of development over time. Plans such as the East Rail Corridor Plan, the Bassett Neighborhood Plan, or the Monroe Street Corridor Plan, often set relatively high upper limits on the amount of additional development recommended, and may provide design guidelines or other planning standards to guide the consideration of future development proposals. But these plans also recognize that redevelopment will occur over a long period of time, and that only a portion of the theoretical development potential may ever be realized.

Recommendations to Address Near-Term Transportation Impacts

The draft Capitol Gateway Corridor Plan recognizes that the scale and intensity of development shown in the plan would, if fully built-out, place significant demands on the existing transportation system, and that extensive analysis and implementation of alternative modes of transportation will be required as the Corridor develops over time. The plan also recognizes that the long-range options to provide alternative modes of transportation to serve the downtown and the Isthmus transcend the East Washington Avenue Corridor and must be addressed on a community-wide basis. However, many of the methods which can be used to encourage the use of alternative modes of transportation and reduce the demand for parking also can be addressed on a project-by-project basis as development occurs. The draft plan identifies the use of shared parking, parking cash-outs, transit opportunities, live-work development, and community cars as incentives to reduce the need for parking from the levels typically provided.

In order to further address the transportation implications of individual development projects, staff recommend that the draft Capitol Gateway Corridor Plan document be amended to include the following additional recommendations:

Project-Specific Traffic Studies

The plan should be amended to recommend that redevelopment projects needing conditional use approval or a zoning map amendment, and which exceed 100 employees, (or as may be required by the Traffic Engineer), must prepare a traffic study for the development for review by the Traffic Engineer.

The traffic study should include a description of the proposed project, an estimate of the projected transportation and vehicle traffic generation from the project, and an analysis and recommendations for addressing any potential traffic congestion or conflicts resulting from the project.

The study should include, for example, recommendations regarding required parking, site ingress and egress, potential traffic circulation diversion into or through the surrounding neighborhoods, traffic on primary access routes and at intersections, and recommended traffic control or traffic calming measures as may be needed to respond to the projected traffic increases. If the project is planned to occur in phases, the traffic study should address the cumulative impacts of each phase of the project. The assumptions and recommendations used in the traffic study should be coordinated and consistent with the assumptions and recommendations used in the transportation demand management plan. In their review of development proposals along the East Washington Avenue corridor, the Plan Commission will consider the information provided by the traffic study regarding the projected transportation impacts, and the adequacy of the measures proposed to address any potential traffic concerns, prior to recommending approval of the project.

Transportation Demand Management Plan

The plan should be amended to recommend that redevelopment projects needing conditional use approval or a zoning map amendment, and which result in 100 or more full-time employees, should provide a transportation demand management plan (TDM), and/or participate in a transportation management association (TMA) if one is available in the area. The transportation demand management plan should generally describe the applicant's commitment to reducing the number of single-occupant automobile trips and list the methods the applicant intends to use. These methods should be based on the transportation choices currently available and it is recommended that they include an agreement to provide all employees with either the full price to purchase a monthly Madison Metro bus pass, or three or more of the following options:

- Ride sharing/carpool matching,
- Preferred parking for ride sharers,
- Secured bicycle parking, showers and lockers,
- Employee commuting subsidies or awards,
- Emergency ride home program,
- Employer subsidized bus passes,
- Provision of real-time transit information,
- Or other options proposed by the employer to discourage the use of single-occupant vehicles and as approved by the City.

The provisions of an employer's TDM plan should be available to all employees. The plan should describe the traffic and parking impacts of the proposed development and should provide specific details on the measures the employer will use to monitor the traffic and parking impacts. Developers are encouraged to seek ways to reduce off-street parking requirements. The TDM plan should be reviewed by the Traffic Engineer in concert with the Planning Division Director, and should be periodically updated at intervals not to exceed every two years. The Traffic Engineer should provide comments and suggestions for how the plan should be improved. In considering individual development proposals, the Plan Commission should consider the proximity to transit routes and bicycle paths, the availability and accessibility of alternative parking, existing and potential shared parking arrangements, the number of residential parking permits issued within the area, and the potential impact of on-site parking or lack thereof on adjacent residential neighborhoods.

Although the long-term development potential along the East Washington Avenue Capitol Gateway Corridor is substantial, the Planning Division staff considers the nearer-term potential for significant amounts of development, and particularly employment development, to be relatively modest. It is expected that interest in the Corridor as an employment and business location will increase over time as successful projects are developed, and as the improvements and amenities recommended in the Capitol Gateway Corridor Plan, the East Rail Corridor Plan and adjacent neighborhood's plans are implemented.

Downtown/Isthmus Area Transportation and Parking Study/Plan

Some have expressed concerns regarding the potential transportation impacts of substantial redevelopment and increases in intensity along East Washington Avenue as envisioned in the Capitol Gateway Corridor BUILD Plan. But as noted above, many of the City's adopted plans and the existing zoning classifications for properties within the downtown/Isthmus area recommend or would allow significant increases in the intensity and density of development; and a substantial amount of new development has, in fact, taken place within this area over the last 10 to 15 years. The potential long-range traffic and transportation impacts of continued redevelopment within the downtown and Isthmus neighborhoods, including the East Rail Corridor and the East Washington Avenue corridor, is much broader than the potential impacts from the implementation of any one of these individual plans.

Both the City of Madison Comprehensive Plan and the Madison Area Metropolitan Planning Organization's Regional Transportation Plan recommend an update of the Isthmus Area Traffic Redirection Study that was substantially completed in 1979 and followed by subsequent more-detailed studies of particular recommended components. In addition, neighborhood plans, such as the Bassett Plan and the draft Tenney-Lapham Plan, often request traffic studies to address specific traffic concerns and issues within individual neighborhoods. The two cited neighborhood plans have also proposed the possibility of converting several major one-way, multi-lane streets back to two-way operation. However, the Isthmus is geographically constrained and has limited alternative through travel corridors. Implementing conversions of this type would need to be carefully analyzed because of the Isthmus and community-wide impacts that would result. Studies such as this, while including the downtown, would need to be much broader in order to adequately evaluate alternatives and the implications of alternative choices.

In addition, traffic circulation studies for individual neighborhoods, and transportation studies for the downtown/Isthmus area, including an update of the Isthmus Area Traffic Redirection Study, must consider not only the need to move automobile traffic to, through, and within the Isthmus, but also need to evaluate the role of transit and other transportation modes in moving people and goods through and within the Isthmus. The long range implications of traffic on the downtown, the Isthmus neighborhoods, and the larger community would need to be considered together. This expanded scope is reflective of elements commonly included in a comprehensive downtown transportation plan.

To conduct an analysis such as this and prepare an Isthmus Area transportation plan would be a significant multi-year undertaking. Extensive multi-modal travel-demand and travel operational/ intersection modeling would be required. Data requirements to feed/drive, calibrate and validate the travel demand and operations models would be extensive. A major public participation effort would also be required.

Key components or elements of such a study could include:

- Establishing a realistic vision, expectations and strategy for how people and goods will move to, through and around the Isthmus in the future (2030-2040 planning horizon).
- Expanding upon, and incorporating into an updated Isthmus Area Transportation Plan, the recommendations of the City of Madison Comprehensive Plan, the MPO Regional Transportation Plan, and several mode-specific plans currently being prepared, including Transport 2020, the Streetcar Study Committee, the Platinum Biking Planning Committee, and the Madison Metro Planning Initiative.
- Focusing on maximum inter-operability among present and future modes.
- Introducing a fiscal policy perspective to balance investments across all modes.
- Integrating downtown/Isthmus transportation plan recommendations with the various land use recommendations included in adopted plans, including the Comprehensive Plan, the Downtown Plan, corridor plans, neighborhood plans, and special area plans.

The City of Denver, Colorado recently prepared a downtown multi-modal access plan which included some of the components identified above and would be similar in scope to the study required here. The plan was based on extensive public input over a two and one-half year period. The public process consisted of a series of open houses, topic-based workgroups, newsletters, public forums and meetings with individual stakeholder groups and neighborhood organizations. The plan was designed to complement and build upon previous and current planning efforts.

The purpose and need for the Denver project was clearly defined by representatives from the City and County of Denver, the Regional Transportation District, the Colorado Department of Transportation, the Denver Regional Council of Governments, and the Downtown Denver Partnership. A vision statement was prepared along with a series of goals and principles to guide the development and evaluation of future transportation scenarios and to frame complex trade-off decisions.

A set of innovative multi-modal simulation models was created to conduct the transportation analysis for the study area. The models used were sensitive to pedestrian, transit, and vehicular interactions, and included more than 160 downtown intersections. These operational models guided many of the plan recommendations that will be used by the city of Denver on an ongoing basis as tools for future downtown multi-modal analysis.

The total cost of the Denver project was around one million dollars, with one third of the cost used for modeling efforts. It is unknown if extensive data gathering was needed for the operations modeling component.

If the City of Madison wanted to pursue a planning initiative such as the Denver example, staff could research additional examples of comprehensive studies from other cities. A detailed scope of work would eventually be required, as would budget authority from the Common Council.

If the City decides that it wishes to undertake a multi-year, transportation planning study, including an update of the Isthmus Area traffic redirection plan, this study should include all modes of transportation, and must adequately consider the implications for the downtown, Isthmus neighborhoods, existing commercial corridors, and the entire Madison community. Because the vitality of the City's downtown and Isthmus neighborhoods is directly related to the health of the entire city and by extension, the region, significant changes to traffic circulation which affect access to, from, and through the Isthmus must be carefully considered. The costs and time involved in undertaking such a study should not be underestimated.

If it is decided that a comprehensive transportation study as described above should be undertaken, the recommendations of that study would be available to inform the review of proposed developments along the East Washington Avenue corridor long before development along the corridor even begins to approach the theoretical amount implied by the recommended design guidelines. Staff strongly recommend, therefore, that decisions about whether such a study is needed or when it should be scheduled be based on its own merits and the availability of staff and other resources, and not linked to consideration or approval of the East Washington Avenue Capitol Gateway Corridor Plan. Staff believes that project-level transportation traffic studies and transportation demand management approaches can adequately address the potential impacts from proposed developments in this area for the foreseeable future.