

RE: Transit Overlay Development Plan  
December 8<sup>th</sup>, 2021

Dear Plan Commission Members, Alder Benford,

A discussion item you are discussing is the Transit Overlay District for Bus Rapid Transit. The staff presentation lists as item #1: “What geography and which zoning districts should be impacted by the TOD overlay?” Staff proposes that most residential districts be included. Please consider not including TR-U1 and TR-U2 in the zoning categories affected by TOD overlay.

Last June increased density was approved for TR-U1 and TR-U2.

- TR-U1 went from 8 units as a permitted use to 24 units as a permitted use. Height was increased by one story, to 4 stories/52 feet.
- TR-U2 went from 8 units as a permitted use to 60 units as a permitted use – at least that is what the ordinance reflects. The amendment proposed by Alder Evers at the 6/1/21 Council meeting called for changing the threshold in the TR-U2 district from >60 to >36. It seemed to have passed, yet the ordinance reflects 60 units as permitted. TR-U2 was lowered in density due to a number of residents expressing concern about an affordable multi-family building on Merry Street, the only building zoned TR-U2 amongst TR-C4 homes.

Including TR-U2 in the TOD overlay has the potential to reverse the Council’s specific decision which was made to help ensure that the Merry Street property would not be redeveloped in an inappropriate manner for its setting.

TR-U1 has already received the benefit of increased density and increased height.

We, the undersigned, ask that TR-U1 and TR-U2 not be included in the TOD for BRT.

Respectfully,

1. Anne Walker (1704 Winnebago)
2. Jeremy Manheim (209 Merry St)

3. Sonam Yangchen (209 Merry St)
4. Larry J Chapman (208 Merry St)
5. Rebecca Parmentier (222 Merry St. #14)
6. Jasmine Banks (213 Merry St)
7. Leila Belakhdar (217 Merry St)
8. Faisal Belakhdar (217 Merry St)
9. Cassandra Duernberger (208 Merry St)
10. Craig Howering (201 Merry St)
11. Meghan Hawkins (201 Merry St)
12. David Poklinkoski (205 Ramsey Court)
13. Tam (205 Merry St)
14. Karolyn Beebe (220 Merry St)
15. Christopher Burant (212 Merry St.)
16. Rita Ruona (222 Merry St.)
17. Dale Ruona (222 Merry St)
18. Amie Heeter (229 Merry St)
19. Andrew Miller (229 Merry St)

Dear Members of the Planning Commission,

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on the proposed plans regarding the TOD overlay.

As a long time resident of Madison, I have both owned and rented properties in various neighborhoods of the city and have observed the growing traffic congestion especially in the downtown/campus area and on the main commuter paths. I am glad that the city is working on solutions to mitigate these issues.

I do, however, strongly support the exclusion of Madison's historic districts for a variety of reasons:

- 1.) There are many resources that detail the importance of preserving historic districts , including inclusive ones, in various cities. <sup>1</sup> These designations are the result of decades of thoughtwork and community reflection about what is important to the community and to society preserve for the benefit of future generations.
- 2.) Looking at the overlay map, there historic districts are not contiguous, but are small zones within a larger plan. Therefore this exclusion does not obviously have a large negative impact on the overall benefit and strategy of the project. Having a mixture of new and denser construction be intermingled with historic districts will preserve Madison's history and architectural and general vibrancy.
- 3.) Given this plan is still in its nascent stages, it seems prudent to maintain the historic exemption, allow the plan to progress and then evaluate the situation once actual usage and potential issues can actually be addressed. There are many examples of urban planning that did not actually unfold as anticipated.

Consider the Hill Farms neighborhood as an example. Along the corridor of Whitney Way towards University, there are a few blocks of historically designated University Hill Farms single family homes, south of that there is University Research Park land which is not densely utilized and then a large amount of commercially zoned area which is currently mostly surface parking which is largely underutilized. There is also a lot of commercially zoned area along Mineral Point road. If people will be commuting from areas farther out, there is already opportunity to strategically address flow and parking issues. There are also already several multifamily housing units too that are planned or have been built in this area.

Often in a business context the question raised is "what problem are we trying to solve." It appears there is a lot of opportunity to strategically address the congestion issues while preserving Madison's history within the context of larger development. I strongly advocate that a balanced thoughtful approach be applied which preserves Madison's historical designations.

---

<sup>1</sup> <https://ctb.ku.edu/en/table-of-contents/implement/physical-social-environment/historic-preservation/main>,  
<http://www.slcdocs.com/historicpreservation/GuideRes/Section1.pdf>  
<https://forum.savingplaces.org/blogs/special-contributor/2020/09/10/building-an-inclusive-preservation-plan-in-madison>,

Thank you for your work and your time and consideration.

Best regards,  
Stephanie Adamany  
5121 Door Drive

**From:** [Shaun Abshere](#)  
**To:** [Plan Commission Comments](#)  
**Cc:** [Bob Klebba](#); [Vicki Abshere](#)  
**Subject:** BRT and Transit Overlay Districts: Station or Route Radii for Zoning Changes?  
**Date:** Wednesday, December 8, 2021 8:29:42 AM

---

Caution: This email was sent from an external source. Avoid unknown links and attachments.

December 8, 2021

Hello, Plan Commissioners and Staff --

My spouse and I have lived in the Tenney-Lapham Neighborhood for 38 years. We're concerned about the negative effects of zoning changes under discussion as part of the Bus Rapid Transit initiative.

We've learned that Staff now recommends moving forward on zoning changes within a ¼ mile buffer on both sides of the BRT **route**.

This is a change from an earlier version that discussed or recommended a ¼ mile **radius** around **each** BRT stop.

What's the rationale for the change from stop-oriented to entire-route-oriented re-zoning?

Thanks.

.shaun abshere, 1038 E Dayton St

---

**Huzzah !**

shaun abshere | +1 608 320 5229

**From:** [Alexander Harding](#)  
**To:** [Plan Commission Comments](#)  
**Subject:** TOD overlay excluding historic zones is heinous  
**Date:** Monday, December 6, 2021 1:28:19 PM

---

Caution: This email was sent from an external source. Avoid unknown links and attachments.

Good Afternoon members of the Plan Commission,

I strongly oppose excluding historic districts from the TOD overlay. Frankly, a lot of these “historic” districts are just white, upper class, single family homes that exclude upward mobility and worsen our housing crisis.

Historic districts are white moats to keep people out. They work in direct opposition to the prosperity and human-centric development of our city.

When I see a “historic district” marker or zone, I think “you’re not welcome here.” Because I’m not.

Thank you  
Alexander Harding  
3602 Wyota Ave

**From:** [Nicholas Davies](#)  
**To:** [Plan Commission Comments](#)  
**Subject:** Yes on TOD Overlay (but don't stop there!)  
**Date:** Sunday, December 5, 2021 4:09:42 PM

---

Caution: This email was sent from an external source. Avoid unknown links and attachments.

Dear Plan Commissioners,

I am very much in favor of the proposed TOD overlay, agenda item 67554. I especially appreciate that it would abolish parking minimums close to transit. However, there are areas where it doesn't go far enough:

### **Width**

As a brisk walker, I can walk a mile in about 15 minutes. If BRT could quickly/reliably get me to my destination, I would not see a 1 mile walk as an impediment to using it.

I'm originally from Bethesda, MD, where Montgomery County just announced their plan to allow multi-unit residential within 1 mile of mass transit. (We should be outright abolishing single-family residential zoning, which is a relic of racist redlining, but that's a topic for another time.)

1 mile seems reasonable, and 1/4 mile exceedingly narrow. If people 1/2 mile from BRT will benefit from it and use it, which I believe they will, then we should use the TOD overlay to allow more people to live in those areas.

### **Historic Zones**

I attended your last meeting. One topic was an ugly office building on N. Midvale, and the discussion involved this ugly office building being part of a historic district in that area, just because many buildings there were built around the same time, in the 1950's-1960's.

Just because an area was last developed at a particular time, that doesn't seem like an adequate reason to let that section of the BRT corridor stagnate and fail to house people/employ relying on mass transit.

### **Density**

The TOD overlay would only allow one additional unit on areas zoned for single-family residential. Only one! Only a duplex! So for every housing unit that gets torn down and replaced, it can only be replaced with two units. And this is what we're proposing for the areas closest to a mass transit corridor. Who would even bother redeveloping, if that's all they can do with it?

### **Allowed Uses**

Additional residences shouldn't be the only thing we allow along the BRT corridor, because residences are typically only at one end of a transit trip. We should also be allowing more commercial amenities (which are also employment opportunities).

As apartment buildings go up along BRT, there may be some legitimate concern that they're pushing out commercial space, actually making the BRT corridor less vibrant. Allowing a mix of uses within the BRT buffer would alleviate that. Not every place of business has to front on

a vehicular arterial, if their clientele isn't arriving by motor vehicle.

It would also allow some of these neighborhoods--like around Garner Park which is landlocked residential--to become more self-sufficient and walkable, if someone on Rosa Rd for example were permitted to build a commercial space for a corner store, instead of (or in addition to) a residence.

I hope you will approve the TOD Overlay plan. If there's still an opportunity to improve it and address these concerns, I hope you will. Otherwise, mass transit will be a part of our lives, and we'll have much more motivation to correct these things soon enough.

Thank you,

Nick Davies  
3717 Richard St



**From:** [annewalker@homelandgarden.com](mailto:annewalker@homelandgarden.com)  
**To:** [Plan Commission Comments](#)  
**Cc:** [Benford, Brian](#)  
**Subject:** TOD, item #2  
**Date:** Friday, December 3, 2021 10:05:39 AM

---

Caution: This email was sent from an external source. Avoid unknown links and attachments.

Dear Plan Commission Members,

I am a strong supporter of BRT. Living in the isthmus, on a secondary arterial, Winnebago, I very much appreciate BRT's potential to help prevent congestion, improve the quality of life for isthmus residents and the population as a whole.

BRT is especially important in an isthmus. Not many capitals are built on an isthmus. I think there is wisdom in that, most especially one that is narrow, flat and a former wetland. My understanding is that the BRT's TOD focus is to increase building density within a quarter mile of BRT stops. There is certainly wisdom to that plan. My question is how is flooding potential, mitigating the urban heat island effect and climate change being considered in this formula?

Living in the isthmus, below the Tenney Locks, I have learned to have a great appreciation for flooding. I have experienced several of them starting in the early 90's. The most recent flooding event required the National Guards aid as well as city staff, scores of neighbors and many many sandbags to get us through. I question the wisdom of continuing to build in these flood prone areas.

Roger Bannerman worked for the DNR for many years and is the person the city of Madison has named our rain garden program after. He modeled the increase of urban run-off for Lake Mendota. By 2020, based on our patterns of development, the increase was modeled at 57%. I mention this study because flooding in the isthmus had felt like a freight train coming at us in my neighborhood. What happens when Lake Mendota is at its storage capacity is the locks are opened. As many of you know, opening the locks can be a flooding problem for those of us who live below them.

The tendency in the isthmus for newer developments is to build up. However, that can still leave roads and infrastructure in the flooding zone. This trend is also problematic for existing neighbors. With newer neighbors building higher, existing neighbors potentially become the low spot, and more likely to flood. And in an old neighborhood, that's quite a few of us.

I ask you to please, very carefully consider the implications of continuing to build in flood prone areas and in areas that are prone to urban heat issues. We are flood prone and canopy tree deficient in the isthmus. Often rooftop gardens are heralded as the answer. While I absolutely support rooftop gardens and their beneficial effects, they are **not** a substitute for greenspace on the ground.

Respectfully,

Anne Walker  
District 6  
Professional Landscape Gardener/Rooftop Gardener

**From:** [Kevin Luecke](#)  
**To:** [Plan Commission Comments](#)  
**Cc:** [Heck, Patrick](#); [Benford, Brian](#); [Stouder, Heather](#); [Tyler Lark](#); [Bob Klebba](#)  
**Subject:** TOD Overlay Districts  
**Date:** Friday, December 3, 2021 9:18:57 AM

---

Caution: This email was sent from an external source. Avoid unknown links and attachments.

Members of the Plan Commission,

I am writing today to strongly express my support for the development and implementation of Transit Overlay Districts along the BRT corridor. Madison is growing rapidly and will continue to do so, and we need to ensure that as much of that growth as possible occurs where people can easily walk, bike, and take transit to as many destinations as possible.

I urge you to:

- Establish TOD zones within a *minimum* of 1/4 mile radius (not walking distance) of all BRT stations (and perhaps a wider area).
- Eliminate all parking minimums within the TOD zones.
- Sharply reduce the parking maximums within the TOD zones.
- Disallow the use of TIF funds for any parking structures (other than publicly owned ones) within the TOD zones (and ideally citywide).
- Not provide any exemptions for historic districts (local or national) or locations on the National Register of Historic Places

This is a key opportunity to direct Madison's future growth in a more sustainable direction.

Thank you,  
Kevin Luecke  
121 N Ingersoll St

--

Kevin Luecke  
[kluecke1@gmail.com](mailto:kluecke1@gmail.com)