



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:** City of Madison *Board of Parks Commissioners*  
**From:** Greater East Towne Planning Team  
Rebecca Cnare, Linda Horvath, Kirstie Laatsch, Ryan Jonely, Chris Wells, Bill Fruhling  
**Date:** **December 28, 2021**  
**Subject:** Greater East Towne Area Plan Adoption (Legistar ID #68802)

**Proposed Action:** RETURN TO LEAD WITH THE RECOMMENDATION FOR APPROVAL TO THE PLAN COMMISSION for adoption of the Greater East Towne Area Plan as a supplement to the Comprehensive Plan.

### Background

The City of Madison has been concurrently planning for the futures of both the Greater East Towne Area and the Odana Area. The Odana Area Plan was Adopted by Common Council on September 9, 2021. The Greater East Towne Planning Area (GETAP) is roughly bounded by southern railroad tracks, East Washington Avenue on the north, Interstate 39/90 on the east and Mendota Street on the west.

The Comprehensive Plan had identified the area as one of the City's growth priority areas that should transform from the current auto-oriented character to higher density mixed-use centers along the future Bus Rapid Transit route. Undertaking this planning effort will also help the area adapt to the changes and challenges the retail sector has been experiencing since the 1990s, which have further been exacerbated by the Covid-19 pandemic. There have been many public outreach activities throughout the planning process. These public engagement activities were adapted to seek input and feedback during the pandemic, and to intentionally include communities that traditionally underrepresented in planning processes. A summary of the various public outreach activities are available on the [project website](#).

### [Link to Draft Plan](#)

### Land Use and Transportation Plan Recommendations

*Please refer to the Map on Page 16 for Recommended Land Uses.* The draft development concept proposed in this plan will guide the Greater East Towne Area towards becoming a walkable, transit-oriented activity centered that is better connected to, and integrated with, surrounding areas. A fundamental element of the concept is the need for a plan that accommodates redevelopment over time to achieve a long-term vision; it does not require demolition, but frames how redevelopment should occur when property owners are ready to do so.

The concept plans for important connections as redevelopment occurs. Plans show a future interconnected grid of streets, as well as important street connections like Parkside Drive, and potential High Crossing Boulevard. A network of planned local streets will organize and orient new development while increasing walkability and bikability by providing more direct routes on public streets.

The Plan recommends mixed-use development for a significant amount of land, with the highest future development intensity adjacent to existing and planned transit. The general land use

recommendations are flexible to be adaptable and resilient to changing conditions going forward, as long as development adheres to certain principles and accommodates recommended public improvements. Staff believe that this plan offers great opportunity for growth along the planned Bus Rapid Transit Line, and could add many thousands of new residents in a new and complete urban neighborhood. Growth planning projections show that 2500+ units could easily be built in the next 15-25 years, while still leaving capacity as continued redevelopment occurs for more than 9,500+ dwelling units in the long term. Park space is a critical part of creating vibrant neighborhoods, and the Draft Plan offers a variety of ways that new park space could be built over time in an area that lacks parks due to its history as a predominantly commercial area.

Staff also believes that this is possible with or without the redevelopment of the East Towne Mall, although redevelopment of some or all of the mall area would facilitate much more additional economic and residential growth.

**Green and Resilient Plan Recommendations:** Recommendations start on Page 35.

**Changes made since last BPC input:**

1. Addition of a park overlay map that shows a recommendation for two smaller neighborhood parks in addition to a larger community park.
2. Recommendations noting the importance of the Starkweather Creek, and the importance of protecting the natural habitats, green corridors and headwaters.
3. Tree Canopy recommendations

**Parks and Open Space** - *Please refer to the parks and Open Space Map on Page 38. The Plan recommends a framework for the future expansion and development of a park system within the Greater East Towne Area to serve existing and future residents, employees and visitors. These recommendations include:*

- a. Potential Expansion of Mayfair Park on the west side of the planning area.
- b. Potential Park overlay recommendation for creating one new 10-20 acre Community Park somewhere adjacent to and along the Starkweather Creek natural area to take advantage of pathway and natural areas connections.
- c. The creation of two smaller 3-5 acre neighborhood parks, in areas where the plan expects to see exponential residential growth.
- d. Urban Plaza. This plan allows for the creation of a 6-acre urban plaza space made up of three blocks centered within an extended Independence Lane. This plaza space could have a mixture of hard and soft spaces, designed to accommodate festivals, farmers' markets, small playgrounds and other programming. These types of spaces have become very central to other mall redevelopments across the country and would likely need to be programmed and managed by a separate quasi-public entity, such as a Business Improvement District (BID) or Community Improvement District (CID) to be truly successful.

**Stormwater Recommendations**

- e. Starkweather Creek Watershed Study- the City's Engineering Division is about to start a watershed study for Starkweather Creek. Recommendation from that study will be central to the future open space and stormwater management network along the southern border of this plan. The parks and open space overlay reflects the opportunities and the natural Features map illustrates some of the wetlands and other recreation constraints of the area closest to the Creek. This plan intend to allow a large area to be flexible to meet both recreational and stormwater needs, and envisions a cohesive space along the creek could be co-managed by City Divisions.