Department of Transportation

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Subject: State Street Campus Garage Mixed Use Development

Background

The State Street Campus garage was constructed 1963 and plays an important role in providing access to the UW campus, lower State Street retail, and numerous community events throughout the year. At 60 years, it is nearing the end of its useful life. The structure, beams, and mechanical equipment are showing signs of distress. Replacement of this roughly 550 space garage would require up to $50 million or more.

With the effects of Covid and the recent construction of the Wilson Street and Livingston garages, the Parking Fund does not have the funds necessary to replace the State Street Campus garage. Coupling this project with a mixed use development allows almost two-thirds of the garage replacement costs to be borne by air rights and Tax Incremental Financing, making the replacement feasible.

The mixed use redevelopment provides the opportunity to construct an inter-city bus terminal, a key service needed by students and community members that don't have access to a vehicle. It is part of Land Use and Transportation Strategy 4 in the Imagine Madison Comprehensive plan. The location of a potential inter-city bus terminal has been studied twice in the last 8 years, with this location showing the most promise and feasibility.

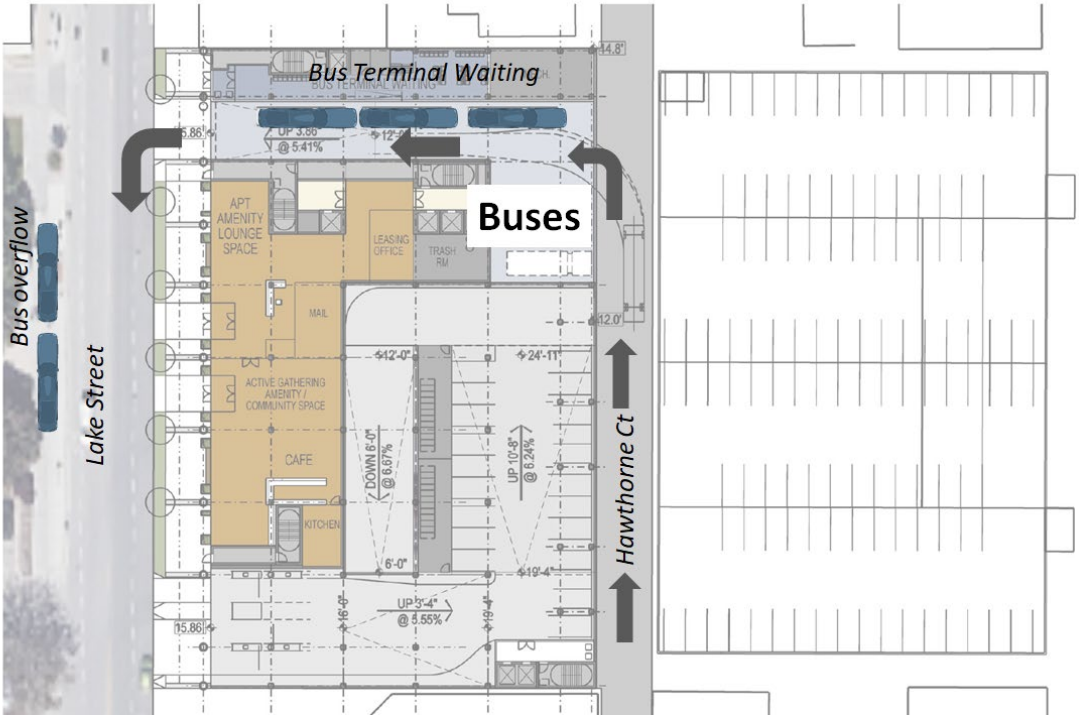
In April of 2021, the Economic Development Division issued a request for proposals for air rights above the State Street Campus garage. Key project goals included:

- Increase the economic potential of the parcel with a mixed use planned development that includes retail, housing, parking, and an intercity bus terminal.
- Attract residents and density to this Central Business District.
- Activate the sidewalk and street through a mix of retail/entertainment uses.
- Create a permanent City-owned intercity bus terminal.
- Replace the State Street Campus garage in a way that is affordable to the City

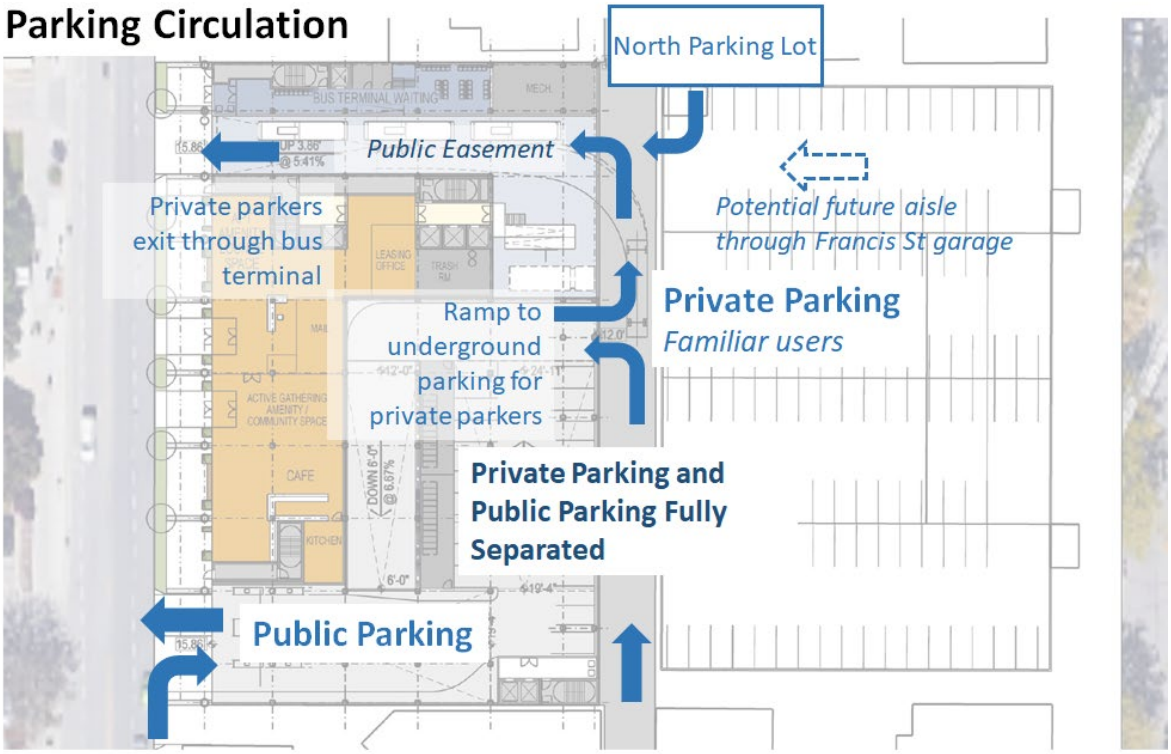
The City received seven responses that were screened to four finalists for evaluation. The Mortenson (Theory) proposal was recommended to the Finance Committee because it provided the best combination of parking, financial terms, street frontage design/activation, increased parcel increment, and affordable housing. From the Parking Division's standpoint, the Mortenson proposal was one of only two proposals that provided standard size aisles, stalls, and reasonable garage circulation.

Description of Circulation

Buses - The Mortenson proposal has buses entering the bus terminal from Hawthorne Ct, with the indoor waiting area being on the north side of the building. For periods when there is high demand, such as Thanksgiving, overflow bus an additional two bus spaces is available on the west side of Lake Street. This circulation pattern has Hawthorne Ct being converted to a one-way northbound street. As Hawthorne Ct is currently a narrow alley, it is desirable to make it one-way even without bus circulation to simplify traffic flow and ease congestion. The bus circulation pattern was developed with input from CoachUSA (Van Galder) and Badger Bus. Combined both companies serve campus with about two dozen bus trips per day.



Private and Apartment Parking – The current Mortenson proposal separates apartment parking from the general public parking through having roughly 80 parking spaces accessed through a separate entrance Hawthorne Court. These spaces would exit their parking stalls by traveling on an internal aisle that passes through the bus terminal. Since these apartment dwellers are repeat users, circulation through Hawthorne Ct will become familiar. Users of the private parking lots to the north and south of the garage (roughly 16 spaces) would also use the public easement traveling through the bus terminal.



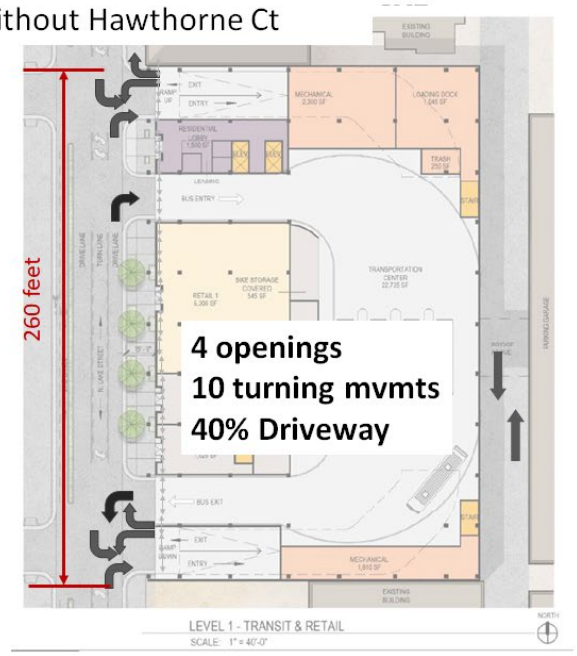
Expressed Concerns and Responses

<u>Preference for non-use of Hawthorne Court</u>

Three of the four final proposals used Hawthorne Ct for bus circulation. A primary reason for Hawthorne Ct's use was minimizing conflicting turning movements on Lake Street. The proposed Mortenson proposal has two openings onto Lake Street, with 5 turning movements. The alternate proposal that did not use Hawthorne Ct had a total of four openings and 10 turning movements.

Alternate Layout

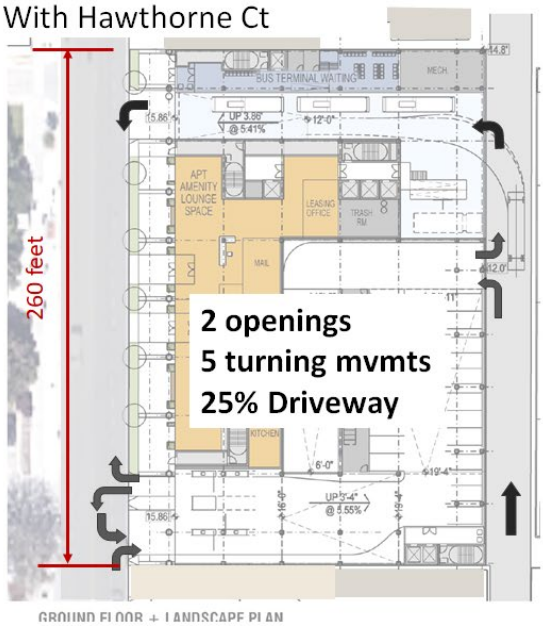
Without Hawthorne Ct



Proposed Layout

Mortenson

With Hawthorne Ct

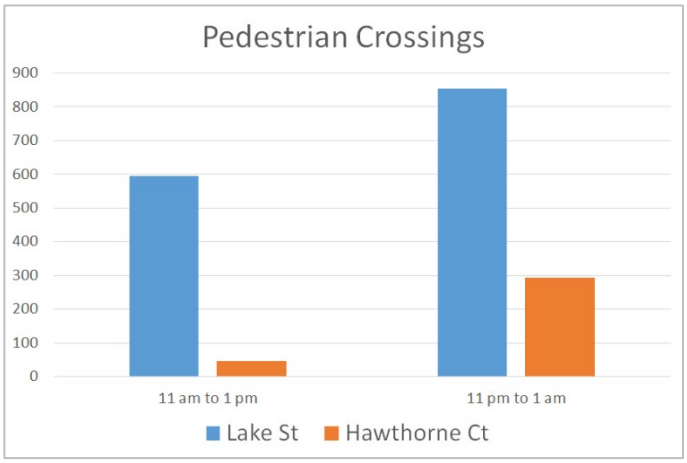


While increased use of Hawthorne poses challenges, it is more desirable to increased usage of Lake Street. The proposed Mortensen layout was preferred because:

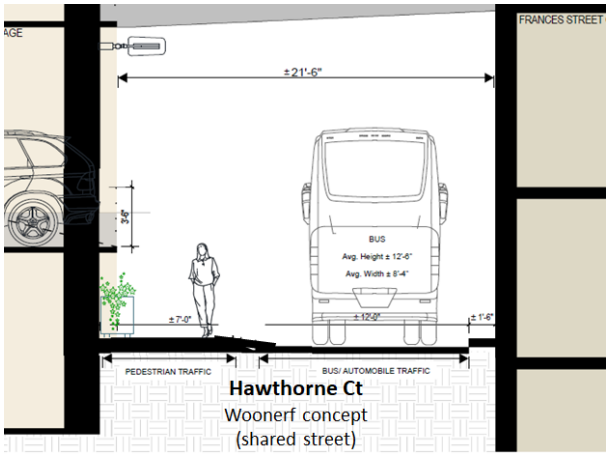
- It provides more frontage on Lake Street for activation, a stated goal of the RFP.
- It reduces the number of turning movements on Lake Street, which is important particularly after events. Inter city buses also interact with Lake Street traffic once, rather than twice.
- It reduces the number of openings onto Lake Street, making it more straightforward for visiting parkers. Alternate layouts with four openings, two of which can be used, which could be confusing to visiting parkers.
- It has fewer opening that pedestrians cross. After an event, multiple exits would create more pedestrian conflicts

<u>Concern regarding Pedestrian Use of Hawthorne Court with Buses.</u>

Pedestrians do use Hawthorne Ct, with greater use on weekend evenings. A greater number of pedestrians use Lake Street, consequently it is preferred to reduce conflicts on Lake Street because of its greater pedestrian use. There will be roughly two dozen buses that travel through Hawthorne Ct throughout the day. About one bus will travel through Hawthorne Ct during bar closing – a stated concern. Historically intercity buses have traveled though high-pedestrian environments. Intercity bus loading occurred on Langdon by the library mall for many years.



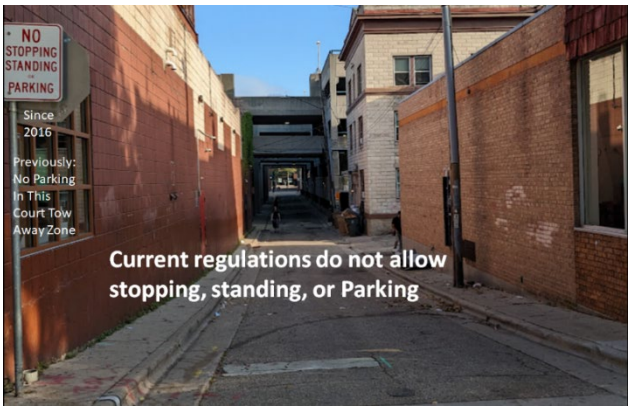
With the conversion of Hawthorne Ct to one-way operation, more space is available for pedestrians. Hawthorne Ct will be reconstructed using a woonerf concept (shared pedestrian/vehicle roadway) where pedestrians can use the full width of the roadway. In the instances where a bus or vehicle passes, there will be a protected 7-foot walkway for pedestrians instead of the 2-feet walkway that currently exists.



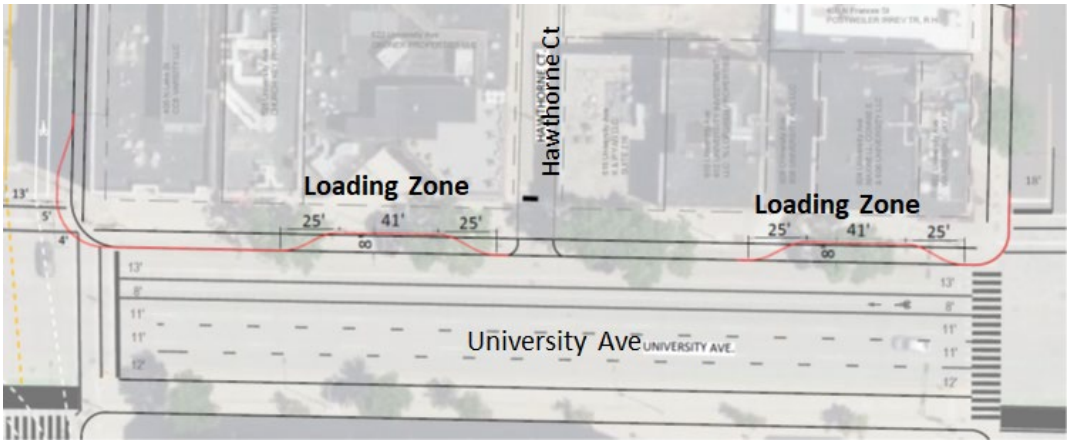
In the past, Madison intercity buses have operated in pedestrian environments

<u>Concern regarding loading and unloading of equipment on Hawthorne Ct</u>

Presently there is no stopping, standing, or parking on Hawthorne Ct. However, event venues (Liquid) often will use Hawthorne Ct to unload equipment near their stage door. This practice cannot continue if Hawthorne Ct is used by intercity buses. There is a correlating problem at Hawthorne Ct's entrance to University Ave. Here delivery vehicles, such as Uber Eats, routinely park in the bus lane. With the initiation of BRT, these delivery vehicles will eliminate the advantage of the bus lane for BRT.



Staff is proposing a solution by providing short term parking pockets along University Ave to keep delivery vehicles out of both Hawthorne Ct and out of the bus lane. The parking pockets could be installed at the existing (soon to be abandoned) bus stop, or in front of Liquid, or both.

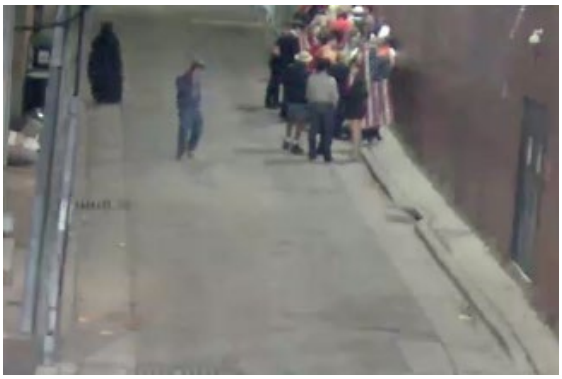


Possible equipment and delivery loading zones on University Ave

Deliveries to the housing associated with this development would occur in a designated loading zone on Lake Street, in front of the parking garage.

<u>Concern regarding pedestrian queuing on Hawthorne Ct for event venues.</u>

Sometimes queuing for events at Liquid extend onto Hawthorne Ct during weekends. Staff believe that use of public right of way for events can continue, but some modifications may be needed. The pedestrian space on Hawthorne Ct will be enlarged. Alternately, queuing may need to be directed along the University Ave. sidewalk.



Example of pedestrian queuing onto Hawthorne Ct during weekends

Conclusion

Staff acknowledge that there are challenges associated with the use of Hawthorne Ct for buses. Yet the disadvantages of directing all parking and bus traffic to Lake Street, which is more heavily used, outweigh the challenges that need to be overcome on Hawthorne Ct. Mitigation measures will help limit the drawbacks, and the proposed development accomplishes two long-time objectives, replacing the State Street Campus garage, and installing an intercity bus terminal.

Sincerely,

Thomas W. Lynch PE PTOE PTP AICP
Director of Transportation, City of Madison