Department of Planning & Community & Economic Development

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To: Mayor, Common Council and Boards/Commissions/Committees

From: Ben Zellers and Urvashi Martin, Southwest Area Plan Project Managers

Re: Adopting the Southwest Area Plan

Date: May 5, 2026

Introduction

Attached is the Final Draft Southwest Area Plan submitted for review and approval. Along with the Southeast Area Plan, these are the third and fourth plans prepared under the City's Planning Framework, which established 12 plan areas covering the entire city. While the Planning Division led plan development, its creation was an interagency effort, with collaboration and contributions from numerous City agencies.

Public Participation

There were many opportunities for the public to participate in the planning process. This included an initial phase exploring the public's thoughts about issues and opportunities and a more recent phase, which focused on final public meetings to review draft plan actions and maps. Throughout the planning process, staff used multiple engagement strategies to reach a broad range of participants. These included surveys, traditional public meetings (both in-person and virtual), multi-agency open houses, outdoor plan events, plan pop-ups at community events, focus groups, an arts-focused public meeting, and interactive digital engagement. The Planning Division also contracted with Community Partners to help reach and get feedback from under-represented populations to ensure their voices are reflected in the plan. The City's Office of Business Resources facilitated a business walk, with City staff and partners visiting 135 businesses in the Southwest Area. Public feedback summaries from throughout the process are available on the project website.

In addition to public engagement, the Southwest Area Plan team met with many Boards, Commissions, and Committees likely to see plan referral during the approval process. These mid-process check-ins ensured interim feedback could be considered and incorporated during the planning process instead of the approval process. For links to various meetings and materials please see the project website.

City Board, Commission, and Committee Review

The anticipated review and approval schedule, which includes staff-recommended referrals for the ordinance, is shown below. Public feedback received during this phase will be uploaded to Legistar for review by the boards/commissions/committees reviewing the plan.

May 5 – Common Council introduction
May 13 – Board of Park Commissioners
May 20 – Urban Design Commission
June 3 – Transportation Commission
June 4 – Community Development Block Grant Committee
June 8 – Landmarks Commission
June 15 – Plan Commission (lead BCC)
June 23 – Common Council

Amendment to the Comprehensive Plan

Adoption of the Southwest Area Plan will update relevant maps and text in the City's Comprehensive Plan. State statute requires amendments to the Comprehensive Plan be adopted by ordinance, so adoption of the Southwest Area Plan and the related amendment to the Comprehensive Plan are being handled under one ordinance in Legistar. The document titled "Summary_CompPlanAmend.pdf" in Legistar shows what Comprehensive Plan text and maps would be amended upon adoption of the Southwest and Southeast Area Plans. State statute also specifies that any Plan Commission recommendation to adopt an amendment to the Comprehensive Plan must be done by resolution. A resolution recommending amendment of the Comprehensive Plan will be considered by the Plan Commission on June 15th, per the schedule above.

After plan adoption, staff will incorporate any changes made during the approval process and approved by Council into the Southwest Area Plan and edit the Comprehensive Plan as summarized in the attached document. Minor Southwest Area Plan formatting changes, such as moving/resizing graphics, may also be made to improve the usability of the document.