Department of Planning & Community & Economic Development

Planning Division

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To: City of Madison Plan Commission
From: Rebecca Cnare, Jeff Greger - Southeast Area Plan Project Managers
Date: June 15, 2026
Subject: Southeast Area Plan – Recommendation of Approval, Comprehensive Plan Amendment

Background

The Southeast Area Plan Final Draft was referred to Plan Commission after introduction at Common Council on May 5, 2026. This final draft follows the Public Review of the Draft Southeast Actions and Maps, published in October 2025. Staff provided an update on the Southeast Area Plan to the Plan Commission on December 15, 2025, where public engagement efforts and draft actions and maps were shared for review.

Changes Since the Last Meeting with Plan Commission

Since the December 15, 2025 Plan Commission check-in, staff have made the following additions/revisions based on feedback.

- The Plan advocates for the 35 mph Urban Boulevard design alternative for Stoughton Rd. Added language to the Plan stating that if the Urban Boulevard alternative is selected Stoughton Road could become a future BRT corridor.
- A north-south pedestrian/bicycle path is shown on the Stoughton Road graphics.
- The potential future north-south transit corridor was extended south into the employment area to connect residential to jobs.
- Royster Commons lots added to City-owned land tables.
- Parks Division requested streamlining of actions in Green & Resilient Chapter.

As a reminder: based on feedback and discussion at the August 25, 2025 Plan Commission meeting the Generalized Future Land Use (GFLU) Map includes these changes:

- The Low-Medium Residential "select conditions" footnote (also referred to as 'Escalator Clause') in the Comprehensive Plan would no longer apply to the Southeast Area. As the Southeast GFLU Map was developed, areas were explicitly mapped as either Low-Medium Residential or Medium Residential 1.
- As the Southeast GFLU Map was developed, areas previously recommended for General Commercial and Employment on the GFLU Map were evaluated for appropriateness for residential development. Areas that are suitable for residential development are now recommended for a Mixed-Use or Residential land use category. Areas that remain mapped as General Commercial or Employment are not considered appropriate for residential uses.

Summary of Board/Committee/Commission Recommendations

On May 5, 2026, the Common Council referred the Southeast Area Plan to the following boards/committees/commissions (BCCs), including the Plan Commission (the lead BCC). The Referrals and the recommendations are below:

May 13 – Board of Park Commissioners - Recommended Adoption

May 20 – Urban Design Commission - Recommended Adoption

June 3 – Transportation Commission - Recommended Adoption with the following motion: "Recommend approval with an update to section 4d to specify that after the All Ages and Abilities Plan is completed that staff should update the Southeast Area Plan."

Staff suggest the following changes to help simplify the process since updating the Southeast Area Plan after adoption would require formal amendment to the Southeast Area Plan:

- Replace Action 4d (page 43 – Transportation chapter): "*Upgrade the Cottage Grove Road bike lane to All Ages and Abilities (AAA) standards.*" with the following: "*Support the recommendations of the forthcoming AAA Plan and implementation of those recommendations.*"
- Add language to the Plan text about why the proposed new street connections are important. The Transportation Commission mentioned this would be a helpful addition to the Plan:
    - *Lumberman's Trail to make better multi-modal connections between Lumberman's and Leo Drive.*
    - *Extension of Cottage Court to Dempsey Road to support the creation of a new residential neighborhood if the land is redeveloped into mixed-use or residential uses.*
    - *Dawes Street to Silver Road connection only if a larger residential redevelopment is considered in the future, otherwise a multi-modal connection is sufficient.*

Staff support the above recommended changes to achieve the intent of the Transportation Commission feedback.

June 4 – Community Development Block Grant Committee: Recommended Adoption

June 8 – Landmarks Commission: Recommended Adoption with the following motion: "Recommend approval with the addition of the following wording: "a historic district" to Action 7.

Action 7 - Culture and Character chapter:

"Inform owners of properties of historic interest identified in this Plan of their potential eligibility for having their property listed in the National Register of Historic Places, or as a Madison Landmark, **and/or a local historic district***, and the benefits of those designations. See Historic Resources Review."*

Staff support the recommended change.

Staff- Recommended Edits to the Southeast Area Plan

In addition to the Boards, Committees, and Commissions (BCC) recommended edits above, staff recommend the following minor and technical edits to the draft Plan as introduced:

Culture and Character chapter (page 64)

- Capitalize the word drive in the last paragraph on page 64 (Tompkins **Drive** intersection)
- Change the word "the" to "there" so the sentence reads: ***There*** *are several older Urban Design districts that were based upon vehicular gateways to the City.*

Actions Table (pages 104 & 106)

- Add Neighborhood and Housing Actions 8 and 9 to table.
- Add Green and Resilient Action 6 to table and renumber actions in table to match the chapter text.

Generalized Future Land Use Map (GFLU)

- Staff suggested correction: The Southeast GFLU Map inadvertently showed part of the area west of Marsh Road, north of the McFarland Park as changing from Low-Medium Residential (LMR) to Low Residential (LR). A property owner inquired with staff regarding the land use change, which brought this needed correction to staff's attention. Staff recommend this area continue to be recommended for Low-Medium Residential as it has in the past.
- Staff suggested modification: In this same vicinity, staff are suggesting the remaining area south of the proposed extension of Brandenburg Way be changed from Low Residential (LR) to Low-Medium Residential. The property owner is aware of this modification.

Comprehensive Plan Amendment

The companion amendment to the Comprehensive Plan would update specific maps and text in the Comprehensive Plan to reflect adoption of the Southeast Area Plan. Under state law, Plan Commission approval of Comprehensive Plan amendments must happen by resolution.https://docs.legis.wisconsin.gov/document/statutes/66.1001(4)(b) Consequently, the Commission will be voting on two items:

- Approve the resolution which recommends adoption of an amendment to the Comprehensive Plan;
- Recommend to Common Council to approve the ordinance that adopts both the Southeast Area Plan and the amendment to the Comprehensive Plan. Staff requests any motion to recommend approval of the ordinance include reference to integrating the staff-recommended edits listed above.

Attachments

- Southeast Area Plan Final Draft
- Southeast Area Plan presentation
- Southwest and Southeast Area Plan-Related Comprehensive Plan Amendment