

**City of Madison**  
**Interdepartmental Correspondence**

Date: July 9, 2009

To: Transit and Parking Commission

From: Jule Stroick, Planning Division

Subject: Midvale Heights-Westmorland Neighborhood Plan

The Midvale Heights and Westmorland Neighborhoods received a planning grant from the Planning Division to prepare a joint neighborhood plan. The Midvale Heights-Westmorland Joint Steering Committee (MHWJSC), comprised of six representatives from the Midvale Heights and Westmorland Neighborhoods, hired Viebicher Associates (local planning consulting firm) to assist them in preparing the mid-range (5-10 years) neighborhood plan.

**Midvale Heights-Westmorland Neighborhood Plan**

The *City of Madison Comprehensive Plan* (adopted 2006) recommends the adoption of neighborhood plans for established residential neighborhoods within the City. The *Midvale Heights-Westmorland Neighborhood Plan* will be adopted as a supplement of the City's Comprehensive Plan.

The *Midvale Heights-Westmorland Neighborhood Plan* is a mid-range (5-10 year) plan that identifies neighborhood issues and proposes recommendations to address them. Plan recommendations are divided into categories consistent with the Comprehensive Plan: Land Use, Transportation, Housing, Economic Development, Parks and Open Space, Cultural and Historic Resources, and Community Facilities & Infrastructure.

**Board and Commission Review**

The *Midvale Heights-Westmorland Neighborhood Plan* was introduced at the July 7<sup>th</sup> Common Council meeting. The Plan is referred to Plan Commission (lead) and Board of Park Commissioners, Board of Estimates, Board of Public Works, Economic Development Commission, Pedestrian/Bicycle/Motor Vehicle Commission, Long Range Transportation Planning Commission, Transit and Parking Commission, and Urban Design Commission.

Boards and Commissions will review the Plan based on their area of expertise. All motions to adopt or adopt with conditions will be forwarded to the Plan Commission. The Plan Commission will compile a *final report* to the Common Council. It is anticipated the Common Council will take action on the Plan at its September 1, 2009 meeting.

**Plan Recommendations: Transportation**

The Plan identifies transit and transportation-related plan recommendations to improve the accessibility and connectivity of the Midvale Heights and Westmorland neighborhoods (See pages 61-66). Below is the specific plan recommendation relating to transit service:

- Work with Madison Transit to add bus routes to better serve the interior and eastern portion of the planning area. Specific neighborhood needs include:

- More express routes from the neighborhood to major destinations including campus, capital square and Hilldale Mall.
- Explore potential of creating an express route along South Whitney Way and Mineral Point Corridor. A dedicated express route would include a diamond bus lane and signal preemption technology to support express bus services.
- Work with Traffic Engineering to provide right-of-way improvements to benefit bus travel. Specific recommendations include creation of diamond bus lanes and traffic signal preemption technology to support express bus service.
- Develop frequent, neighborhood circulator routes to connect the area to the future commuter rail. The location of these circulators will be determined by the route of the rail.
- Increased downtown bus service late at night.
- Increased number of routes that run north/south through the neighborhood east of South Whitney Way.
- Increased frequency of stops in the neighborhoods. This is especially important because of the aging population, and the difficulty some of them have walking three or more blocks to the nearest bus stop.
- More direct campus and downtown routes from the neighborhoods.
- Better service to areas west of the planning area such as the far west side of the City and the City of Madison.

According to Madison Transit, there is no plan at this time to increase frequency of bus routes within the neighborhoods, or add additional north/south routes. This is largely due to the fact that the neighborhoods, in particular Midvale Heights, currently have among the highest frequencies of any neighborhood in the City. Likewise, north/south routes are also fairly abundant if a rider is willing to travel to the West Transfer Point first, and then continue north or south on South Whitney Way.

### **Plan Recommendations: Land Use Concepts**

One of the potential redevelopment sites in the planning area is Westgate Mall area. The City of Madison Comprehensive Plan (adopted 2006) designates the strip mall as a potential TOD (Transit Oriented Development) site. The *Midvale Heights-Westmorland Neighborhood Plan* supports the TOD designation. In addition, the concept plan for the site highlights (page 51):

- The site should be linked to surrounding alternative transportation infrastructure by providing well marked, well lit, high quality bus stops and pedestrian entrances at bus drop off/pick-up locations.
- As redevelopment occurs at this site and the site west of South Whitney Way, the potential for relocating and integrating the Madison Metro West Transfer Point into the new site design should be explored.
- Incorporate bus stop designs into buildings along South Whitney Way, Odana Road, Segoe Road and Tokay Boulevard.

## Public Participation

The preparation of a neighborhood plan requires input from a wide cross-section of the community. The Midvale Heights and Westmorland Neighborhoods solicited input from neighborhood residents and the business community prior and during the planning process.

- *Westmorland Strategic Issue Sessions and Midvale Heights Resident Survey* were conducted prior to the start of the planning process to identify key planning issues to address during the planning process.
- Three *Large-Scale Public Workshops* were held to identify important neighborhood issues and to review draft/final plan and recommendations.
- One-on-one *stakeholder interviews* were conducted with eight individuals that represented organizations or primary property interest throughout the neighborhoods:
- Four *focus groups* with new property owners, young families, the business community, and senior citizens were conducted to solicit input on important issues to address in the Plan.
- Neighborhood planning articles and announcements of Open Houses were published in the *Midvale Messenger and Westmorland Courier Newsletters* beginning in May 2007.
- A planning *website* was created during the planning process (<http://mhwplan.org/>) which houses agendas, minutes, background information, public open house results, and the draft versions on the neighborhood plan.

Neighborhood planning information was also accessible at Sequoya Branch Library.

## Planning Study Area Boundaries

The *Midvale Heights-Westmorland Plan* identifies recommendations for the area bounded by Mineral Point Road on the north, Southwest Bike Path on the east, West Beltline Highway on the south, and South Whitney Way on the west.

c: Ald. Chris Schmidt, Dist. 11  
Ald. Thuy Pham-Remmele, District 20