



Department of Planning & Community & Economic Development

Planning Division

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November 14, 2018

To: Plan Commission

From: Planning Division Staff

RE: **Comments Received on the draft Milwaukee Street Special Area Plan**

The draft Milwaukee Street Special Area Plan was introduced to Council on October 16, 2018. At that meeting, Council referred the draft to the Transportation Policy and Planning Board, Board of Park Commissions and Plan Commission (lead). At the subsequent October 30, 2018 Council meeting, the draft was also referred to the Madison Food Policy Council. The purpose of this memo is to summarize the recommendations of those bodies and provide a staff response for the Plan Commission to consider as it makes its recommendations on the plan to the Common Council. The Council is scheduled to consider adoption of the plan at its December 4, 2018 meeting.

Transportation Policy and Planning Board – October 29, 2018

A motion was made by Kaysen, seconded by Narayanan, to move adoption. Alder Kemble moved to amend the adoption to include the following recommendations from the board:

1. Special attention should be given to Walter Street connection.
2. Recommended multi-use paths on both sides of Milwaukee Street, if Milwaukee Street is redeveloped.
3. Dedicated transit lanes, not just during peak hours, be considered.
4. Structured parking in any mixed-use transit center that is developed.
5. Paying attention in all cases to the future use and traffic, including pedestrian and bike, on neighboring areas outside of the plan.
6. How the immediate development impacts volume of traffic and pedestrian crossings both nearby and beyond the immediate site.

The motion to amend was seconded by Kaysen. The motion passed by voice vote/other.

The motion to move adoption with recommendations passed by voice vote/other.

Planning Staff Response:

Recommendations 1, 5 and 6 discuss potential impacts on surrounding areas that could occur as a result of new development within the Milwaukee Street plan area. Planning staff does not believe development in the plan area will create significant impacts on surrounding areas. At the beginning of the Milwaukee Street process Planning Staff worked with the MPO to estimate 2050 traffic volumes on Milwaukee Street; those estimates indicated modest growth in volumes over the coming 30 years.

While this analysis was not repeated after the draft concept was created, the high quality transit access should minimize additional volumes, especially during peak hour. Should issues arise in the future, the Department of Transportation has several programs included in annual budgets that could be used to address them, including Pedestrian Improvements to Arterials and Neighborhood Traffic Management.

Recommendations 2 and 3 correspond with an eventual reconstruction of Milwaukee Street. Planning Staff originally did not recommend a multi-use path on the south side of Milwaukee Street due to the number of existing driveways and the increased potential for bike/vehicle conflicts. Dedicated transit lanes may or may not be appropriate on this stretch of Milwaukee Street, depending on traffic volume and transit usage characteristics. However, staff would support further discussion of these items during the design phase of Milwaukee Street.

Staff agrees with recommendation 4. It was assumed that all or a majority of the parking for a mixed-use transit center would be structured, as is the case with the examples discussed.

Madison Food Policy Council – November 7, 2018

The Madison Food Policy recommended adoption of the plan with the following changes:

1. Under the Area Plan draft's "Green & Resilient" group of recommendations, the mention of community gardens in Goal 1, Recommendation 5 (p. 25), should be removed from that recommendation and re-inserted within a new, separate recommendation to "Explore the establishment of market farms and community gardens throughout the plan area."
2. Under the "Culture & Character" group of recommendations, Goal 1, Recommendation 1 (p. 26) should be changed from "Consider reflecting the existing rural/agrarian design of the Voit Farm area in new development patterns" to: "Look to reinforce the site's history and longstanding public perception as an agricultural site through new development patterns reflecting the concept of agrihoods, similar to Troy Gardens on Madison's Northside."
3. Under the "Culture & Character" group of recommendations, Goal 1, Recommendation 4 (p. 26) should be changed from "Support community events, i.e. food carts, farmer's markets, and community gardens" to "To promote local food security and food businesses, encourage opportunities for the direct sale of fresh food grown either within the plan area or from nearby farms and gardens, through an onsite seasonal farmers market or farmstand."
4. Explore the future feasibility of using the city's Urban Agricultural District zoning designation for the facilitation of market farming within parts of the plan area. The stated purpose of the Urban Agricultural District is: to ensure that urban garden and farm areas are appropriately located and protected to meet needs for local food production, and to enhance community health, community education, garden-related job training, natural resources protection, preservation of green space, and community enjoyment. (MGO 28.093)

Planning Staff Response:

Planning staff generally supports the recommendations made by the Food Policy Council when looking at the City of Madison as a whole. However, staff questions the appropriateness of a land-intensive urban agricultural facility within the Milwaukee Street plan area beyond community gardens and farmers market. The recently adopted Comprehensive Plan identified the Milwaukee Street corridor as one of the Growth Priority Areas needed to accommodate some of the anticipated 70,000 new residents coming to Madison over the next 25 years. This is due to the excellent transit access provided by the East Transfer Point, the proximity of the planning area to nearby amenities and the

city's core, and the general preference of residents during the community input process to encourage more intensive growth on infill and redevelopment sites while allowing limited greenfield growth. Excellent transit access is the primary factor for recommending the relatively dense residential development patterns shown in the draft. The draft plan identifies future park land, a portion of which may be an appropriate location for community gardens; however, this plan was not intended to program parks and open spaces at that level of detail.

If the current or future property owners want to pursue more intensive urban agriculture as a component of a development proposal, the draft plan would allow that to occur. In fact, urban agriculture is an allowable use in all zoning districts that could be used to implement the recommendations of this plan. While the Urban Agricultural District was written to allow agricultural uses, it expressly prohibits virtually all other uses, including the much-needed housing opportunities recommended in this draft plan.

The Comprehensive Plan also contains specific language regarding agrihoods discussed by the Food Policy Council:

"Agrihoods could be developed at a variety of scales, but may be most appropriate on the edge of the city where they could serve as a transition to existing rural uses."

In the event an agricultural use is proposed, a more innovative urban facility such as a rooftop or vertical farming operation may be more appropriate than land intensive agricultural operation. If the City of Madison desires to replicate an agricultural facility similar in scale to the 25-acre Troy Gardens farm and community garden site, Planning Staff believes there are more appropriate locations in the City than this transit-oriented site along Milwaukee Street.

Staff would support a change to combine the Madison Food Policy Council's recommendation #3 with the existing recommendation to read: "To promote local food security and food businesses, encourage opportunities for food carts and community gardens, as well as support the direct sale of fresh food from nearby farms and gardens, through an onsite seasonal farmers market or farmstand."

Board of Park Commissioners – November 7, 2018

Parks staff offered the following comment:

RETURN TO LEAD WITH THE RECOMMENDATION FOR APPROVAL TO THE PLAN COMMISSION with the following comments:

1. Public Parks (p. 10) – revise last two sentences in this paragraph to state: "North of Milwaukee Street, the Parks Division owns parkland that was acquired through the Knowles-Nelson Stewardship program. This land is deed-restricted for outdoor recreation purposes only and is currently classified as a conservation park. See Map 9 on page 12."
2. Modify Map 9: Future Land Use and Street Plan (page 12) to differentiate between existing parkland, new parkland, existing open space and potential new open space held by City Engineering. Most of the property held by City Engineering consists of wetlands and floodplain and would not be suitable for urban agriculture.
3. Green & Resilient (p. 25), Recommendation 3, revise as follows: "Uses for new parkland should include both passive and active recreation opportunities and consider the ideas identified on p. 15 when developing plans for future park and open spaces."

Planning Staff Response:

Staff supports the recommended changes.