



Department of Planning & Community & Economic Development

Planning Division

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TO: Plan Commission
FROM: Rebecca Cnare, Urban Design Planner
DATE: October 14, 2019
SUBJECT: ID 56838 — Adopting the Mifflandia Neighborhood Plan as a supplement to the Comprehensive Plan and the Downtown Plan and directing staff to implement the recommendations contained in the plan.

Background

This planning effort analyzed opportunities within a small area centered upon the 400-500 blocks of West Mifflin Street and West Washington Avenue. The 2012 Downtown Plan established a vision for the future transformation of the West Mifflin and West Washington Avenue and recommended that a more detailed plan be created for the area.

This plan looks more closely into whether or not the Downtown Plan Goals are still feasible and proposes some alternate recommendations and future land use concepts. The plan also addresses preservation, redevelopment opportunities, building and streetscape design, open space, activity nodes, and connectivity to the abutting neighborhoods, and ties proposed recommendations to the overall goals and strategies of the 2018 Comprehensive Plan.

Plan Summary

Key Plan Recommendations:

1. Land Use “Swap” from Downtown Plan

The Plan recommends allowing mixed-use on West Washington Avenue, and proposes residential uses on West Mifflin Street. Results from the State Street Retail Strategy Report and existing business data as well as public input, suggest that the image of a mixed-use district for Mifflin does not seem economically viable for the area moving forward. Taking cues from existing business locations, traffic counts, and other findings, new mixed-use development seems most likely viable on West Washington Avenue, especially at the intersections at both Bedford and Broom Streets. Staff believes that successful mixed-use is less likely in the middle of the blocks, however, staff would like to leave open the possibility that mixed-use and/or purely residential developments could co-exist in the middle of the blocks.

2. Alternative building heights from Downtown Plan

The Plan recommends building heights of “4 + 2” for the West Washington Ave and Mifflin Street corridors. This envisions a maximum street wall of four stories, plus allows two additional stories if stepped back.

3. Setbacks and Step-backs

This plan clarifies previous recommendations and establishes distinct setbacks and stepbacks for much of the planning area.

4. Design Guidelines

This plan recommends the creation of an Urban Design District. The general guidelines proposed in the plan are a starting point to illustrate the goals of what a district in this area should accomplish. Specific guidelines will need to be established during the creation of the ordinance creating the district. The plan recommendations also suggest that the public-to-private transition, or threshold, is an important character defining aspect of this neighborhood and will need specific emphasis during future discussions. The plan also recommends that sustainability should be added as a new category of guidelines in an Urban Design district.

5. Transportation

The Plan recommends a study to re-stripe and re-configure W Washington Avenue into a more complete street that could provide a safer pedestrian and bicycle experience, potential transit lanes as well as reduce some of the conflicts in regards to the existing non-striped configuration.

The Plan recommends bike and pedestrian amenities and safety enhancements.

6. Historic Preservation:

The Mifflandia plan highlights the previous work of the 1998 Downtown Preservation Plan and includes the consideration that the ongoing Historic Preservation Plan may provide an opportunity to identify other potential historic resources in the area.

7. Parks & Open Space

This plan emphasizes the opportunity for a new park at the current U-Haul site at 602 W Washington. In addition, it supports the rehabilitation and improvement of the Senior Center Plaza Space.

8. Housing

This plan recommends that the Mifflandia area could be an excellent location for affordable housing projects, and specifically a permanent supportive housing project due to its centralized location and adjacency to amenities.

Committee, Commission and Board Review and Approval

The Draft Mifflandia Plan was referred to seven City boards, commissions and committees. Table 1 shows actions taken by each referral body, and Planning Staff Recommendations.

Table 1: Recommendations from Referral Bodies and Staff Recommendations

Governmental Body	Date	Action	Staff Recommendation
Common Council	August 6	INTRODUCTION ONLY	
Madison Arts Commission	August 21	APPROVED	
Sustainability Committee	August 26	APPROVED	
Landmarks Commission	August 26	APPROVED	
Urban Design Commission	September 4	APPROVED	
Board of Park Commissioners	September 4	APPROVED with recommendation: On page 21, 4.b., eliminate the Secondary Park Site option (100 Block of N Bedford St). Instead, include language that states, "The city will remain open to other potential sites as properties become available."	Agree. Planning staff will make recommended change to the Plan.
Downtown Coordinating Committee	September 19	APPROVED	
Transportation Policy and Planning Board	September 20	APPROVED with request that staff change cross-sections from "Recommended" to "example" and to consider improved pedestrian/bike crossings at Bassett and Mifflin.	Agree. Planning staff will make recommended changes to the Plan.

Planning Division Recommendation

Planning Division staff recommends that the Plan Commission adopt Resolution I.D. 56838 adopting the Mifflandia Plan as a supplement to the City of Madison Comprehensive Plan with the changes recommended in Table 1, above. Staff further recommends that Planning Division staff be allowed to make additional editorial changes as necessary to incorporate such changes from Table 1.