

PREPARED FOR THE PLAN COMMISSION



**Project Address:** 3030 Ohmeda Drive (District 16 – Ald. Tierney)  
**Application Type:** Neighborhood Development Plan Amendment  
**Legistar File ID #:** 61479  
**Prepared By:** Brian Grady, Planning Division  
**Reviewed By:** Heather Stouder, Planning Division Director

**Summary**

**Property Owner:** Datex-Ohmeda Inc. (GE Healthcare)  
**Applicants:** Phil Jennings, Next/Partners, Inc., 614 W. Doty, Ste. 108, Madison, WI 53703  
HSA Commercial Real Estate; 100 S. Wacker, Ste. 950; Chicago, IL 60606  
**Contact:** Phil Jennings, Next/Partners, Inc., 614 W. Doty, Ste. 108, Madison, WI 53703

**Request**

The applicant requests approval of an amendment to the [Yahara Hills Neighborhood Development Plan](#) to remove the recommended northerly extension of Ohmeda Drive along the east side of property at 3030 Ohmeda Drive. The applicant proposes to subdivide 28 acres from GE Healthcare’s holdings for a light industrial development with three buildings comprising 428,000 square feet of space and a stormwater management facility. The proposal is located within the Industrial – Limited (IL) zoning district. The City’s Land Subdivision Regulations (Sections 16.23(8) and (9) specifically), require developers to pay for their share of streets shown in adopted Neighborhood Plans. The applicant does not feel the northerly extension of Ohmeda Drive is needed because there are wetlands to the north of this area and therefore the cost of the road is not justified.

**Background information**

The proposal is located within the City’s *Yahara Hills Neighborhood Development Plan* (NDP), which was adopted in 2017 to guide future growth in Madison’s southeast growth area. The NDP envisions the extension of industrial uses along the Femrite Drive corridor, over time, to the east toward CTH AB. Industrial uses are generally compatible with the Dane County Landfill, which has odor impacts on area properties and is anticipated to remain in operation for 10-20 years. This area is also in close proximity to the regional transportation network. The NDP recommends Employment uses for this specific property and Industrial for properties to the east and south. Staff considers the proposed land use consistent with the NDP’s Employment land use recommendation.

The NDP recommends the northerly extension of Ohmeda Drive, generally following an existing north-south driveway on GE Healthcare’s site. This northerly extension would tie into a planned east-west street on the property (owned by Blatterman) to the northeast, making a connection to Meier Road. The NDP recommended these two streets to provide access to potential development areas and to increase connectivity.

**Existing Ohmeda Drive**

An approximately 550-foot segment of Ohmeda Drive currently exists, with driveways to GE Healthcare’s buildings extending from this right-of-way to the north and west. Presumably, the dedication and construction of Ohmeda Drive was required to provide a public connection to Old Meier Road. The Old Meier Road right-of-way has since been vacated. Ohmeda Drive is a four-lane road with curb and gutter, but no sidewalk. It is maintained (pavement repair, snow/ice removal) by the City’s Streets Division.

### **Infrastructure requirements for development**

The City's Land Subdivision Regulations require development projects to incorporate public infrastructure improvements recommended in adopted citywide and neighborhood-specific plans. For this proposal, development review staff noted these transportation-related improvements (among others) would be required:

- Dedicate right-of-way for Femrite Drive for a total of 53 feet from the centerline
- Construct sidewalk along the north side of Femrite Drive
- Dedicate right-of-way (within the subject property) for Ohmeda Drive as shown in the NDP
- Construct sidewalk along Ohmeda Drive from Femrite Drive north to the northern limits of the project (the northern edge of Outlot 1—the proposed stormwater facility).
  - Build the western portion of the Ohmeda Drive cross-section (sidewalk, terrace, curb, gutter, and a pavement width to facilitate two-way traffic). The eastern portion of Ohmeda Drive will be constructed through development along that frontage or through a future City street construction project with costs assessed to adjacent property owners.
  - City reimburses the cost to construct streets along City-owned facilities, such as the stormwater facility.
- Dedicate a 20-foot easement for the planned multi-purpose path, as shown in the NDP, to be constructed in the future, possibly by the City.
- Construct additional segments of Ohmeda Drive north of the project limits (north of Outlot 1) in the future as needed to serve additional development on the GE Healthcare property, or to connect with new development between Ohmeda Drive and Meier Road.

After discussions with Alder Tierney and City staff about these Subdivision Regulations and other development requirements, the applicant proposed that the City defer the requirement to construct Ohmeda Drive within the project limits until a future time. They proposed construction of Ohmeda Drive be required when the planned east-west street through the Blatterman property is constructed.

From City staff's perspective, delaying large components of required public infrastructure is problematic. There are better results when infrastructure costs are tied to a development approval and built concurrently with the development project. Deferring construction of Ohmeda Drive makes it uncertain whether the entity owning the property at a future point in time will have sufficient capital to pay for the project's share of the road. It is then too late to adjust aspects of the project's financials, such as the purchase price of the land, the development program, and the developer's profit. With no feasible mechanisms to fund construction of the street, it unlikely the street would be implemented.

### **Proposed amendment to Future Land Use and Street Plan**

In the absence of an effective deferment mechanism, Alder Tierney has proposed an amendment to the NDP to remove the northerly extension of Ohmeda Drive. Staff has drafted materials illustrating this potential change and corresponding adjustments that may be appropriate under this scenario.

If the northerly extension of Ohmeda Drive is removed from the Plan, there would no longer be a need for a street extending from Meier Road to the western edge of the Blatterman property. Although discouraged in the City's Land Subdivision Regulations, the NDP Amendment illustrates a cul-de-sac extending from Meier Road to provide access to the developable portions of the Blatterman property. Policymakers should consider whether the conditions are met for including a cul-de-sac in this situation (see excerpt below from Section 16.23(8)(a)).

"Cul-de-sacs shall not be used in any street layout, unless the topography or other unique physical feature of a development makes cul-de-sacs the only, or most logical, street layout. Where cul-de-sacs are determined to be necessary, a sidewalk, connecting path or multi-use path shall be provided to connect to another public right of way unless topography or other unique physical features make this connection impossible."

If policymakers determine this situation does not warrant a cul-de-sac, the northerly extension of Ohmeda Drive could remain in the NDP, or the NDP could potentially omit streets on both the GE Healthcare and Blatterman properties.

### **Utilities**

The GE Healthcare facility is served by City water and sanitary sewer. The buildings are served by a private water main off Femrite Drive along Interstate 39-90 and a private sanitary main runs to the northwest of the buildings and connects to sanitary interceptor. These utilities are located on private property in easements, which provide access for monitoring and maintenance. If Ohmeda Drive is extended to the north, the developer would be required to extend water main, sanitary sewer, and storm sewer (if necessary) within the right-of-way to the northern edge of the project limits (Outlot 1). Having utilities located in a street right-of-way is more efficient for maintenance compared to utilities located on private property. Construction of utilities in Ohmeda Drive might also help facilitate additional development on the GE Healthcare property and adjacent properties.

### **Anticipated development areas**

The properties in this area include areas with lower elevations. Areas shown for future development in the NDP are based on publicly available information regarding wetlands, floodplain and hydric soils. The actual area on a property that is suitable for development is often refined when site-specific information is available, such as soil borings and wetland delineations.

The current NDP anticipates additional development on undeveloped or underutilized portions of the GE Healthcare property. Development is likely on the McAllen property along Ohmeda Drive, except for the northwest corner, which contains a delineated wetland. Outlot 1 of the McAllen 120 Business Park subdivision was dedicated to the City's Stormwater Utility and contains a wetland. The Blatterman property appears to contain both developable areas and lower elevations that may not be developable. If the Blatterman property were to develop, the southeast corner of it would likely be dedicated for stormwater management and aggregated with the existing Stormwater Utility-owned parcel.

### **Potential vacation of Ohmeda Drive**

If the northerly extension of Ohmeda Drive is removed from the Plan, the City should vacate the existing segment of Ohmeda Drive right-of-way. At this point, the existing segment would essentially be serving as a continuation of private driveways serving GE Healthcare and this development proposal. This situation would not warrant continuing the City's maintenance obligations. In this situation, Lots 1 and 2 in the McAllen 120 Business Park subdivision would take access off Femrite Drive or obtain a cross-access easement through the former Ohmeda Drive right-of-way.

### **Potential multi-purpose path adjustment**

The NDP's Pedestrian/Bicycle Facilities Map recommends a multi-purpose path connection between the Capital City Trail, which parallels the Union Pacific rail line, and Meier Road. The path is located on the GE Healthcare and Blatterman properties. Adjustments to the planned streets on these two properties may necessitate adjustments to this planned path.

### **Conclusion**

The Planning Division believes careful consideration should be given to impacts on both the subject development site and adjacent properties. In making a recommendation, policymakers should consider whether removing the street would limit opportunities to fully utilize the GE Healthcare, McAllen and Blatterman properties, or negatively affect normal and orderly development in the vicinity of this planned street.