



Department of Planning & Community & Economic Development

Planning Division

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To: City of Madison Plan Commission, Economic Development Committee

From: Greater East Towne Area Planning Team (Rebecca Cnare, Linda Horvath, Kirstie Laatsch, Ryan Jonely, Chris Wells, Bill Fruhling)

Date: October 4, 2021

Subject: Greater East Towne Area Plan Project Update

The City of Madison has been concurrently planning for the futures of both the Odana Area and the Greater East Towne Area. The *Odana Area Plan* received final approval from the Common Council on September 21, 2021. The Greater East Towne Area Plan (GETAP) focuses on the area roughly bounded by the railroad tracks on the south, East Washington Avenue on the north, Interstate 39/90 on the east and Mendota Street on the west. Attachment #1 provides a summary of public engagement, and Attachment #2 provides a variety of draft land use, transportation, and open space maps.

Guiding Principles

Following a robust public participation process that emphasized building relationships with historically underrepresented communities, the staff team developed several principles that have guided development of concepts, and will continue to guide development of recommendations as our team finalizes the plan:

- a. Creating a Place, Focusing on Mobility, Community Wealth Building, Centering Nature and Sustainability, and Resiliency

Land Use and Transportation Concepts

Regional growth projections show that over the next 15-25 years, the planning area could easily support an additional 2,500+ housing units. Longer term, a full build-out of the area could accommodate an additional 16,000 people, 9,500 new dwelling units and 27,000 new employees or more.

The draft plan provides a framework to help the greater East Towne Mall area thrive. It provides for the establishment of new and complete neighborhoods to support thousands of new residents and commercial uses in underutilized areas within the planning boundary. Across the country, malls have taken advantage of new retail trends and adjacent developments to re-imagine themselves by redeveloping parts or all of the existing mall structure. This plan allows the mall to be flexible to respond to those trends over time. *Staff believes that extensive infill and redevelopment is possible with or without the redevelopment of the East Towne Mall, although redevelopment of some or all of the mall area would facilitate much more additional economic and residential growth.*

This plan builds upon the 2018 *Comprehensive Plan* and proposes flexible land use recommendations as

there is substantial uncertainty stemming from market factors and the scale of sites within the greater East Towne area.

Proposed Land Use changes from the [Comprehensive Plan's Generalized Future Land Use Map](#):

1. An Employment Overlay to the General Commercial areas east of East Springs Drive.
2. Enlarging the potential of mixed-uses in areas between Zeier Road and East Springs Drive.
3. Areas for only Medium-Residential and Low-Medium Residential uses.

The draft plan also accommodates enhanced transit service, including the growth of the Bus Rapid Transit line. The proposed street, bicycle and pedestrian networks will increase connectivity and development opportunities.

Questions for Plan Commission and Economic Development Committee Consideration/Discussion

In addition to general comments and feedback on the draft concept maps, Planning Division staff request that Commission/Committee members provide specific comments on the following topics:

1. Land Use

- a. Should there be Low-Medium residential areas to provide opportunities for small scale, missing middle housing, or should the plan provide smaller scale Neighborhood Mixed Use in these areas?
- b. Is the proposed Employment Overlay on the General Commercial area flexible and resilient enough for an unknown retail/office economy?
- c. Should the plan consider a proactive re-zoning scenario? See Map E.
- d. Building Heights
 - i. How should the plan address the *Comprehensive Plan's* view corridor recommendation, which could impact building heights? How does the Plan Commission view the trade-offs between view preservation and development potential of the impacted areas.
 - ii. Should the Community Mixed Use areas be 8 - 12 stories instead of 6 adjacent to BRT?

2. Transportation

- a. Are there comments on the proposed new street network and the possibility of Officially Mapping new streets?

3. Parks and Open Space (including Stormwater)

- a. Are there any thoughts about an urban plaza space as an organizing feature?
- b. Are there any comments on the revised Parks Map?

4. Economic Development

- a. Public input stressed the importance of affordable business space and wealth building. Are there other economic development plans or innovative ideas (i.e., the Black Business hub and the Community Ownership Assistance Plan) that we should be referencing?
- b. Are there any concerns about the future of employment uses in the area?

5. Affordable Housing –

- a. What are the opportunities and limitations for moving forward with future affordable housing recommendations?

6. Community Facilities - What else is needed to serve thousands of new residents, connecting to the Imagination Center and other nearby destinations?

7. What is missing?

Next Steps/Timeline

Staff anticipates moving forward with the GETAP process according to the following approximate timeline, which is subject to adjustment based on feedback received from the Plan Commission, Economic Development Committee, other Boards, Commissions and Committees (BCCs), and members of the public:

Estimated Timeframe	Activity
August – October 2021	Visiting BCCs for topic-specific review/discussions: TPPB, BPC, EDC, PC
October – November 2021	RESJI Analysis, Revise concepts based on previous public feedback, Plan Commission feedback, and other BCC feedback; draft plan text
November - December 2021	Release draft document with revised concepts/maps Hold Phase III public meetings
December 2021	Plan Commission discussion of draft document with revised concepts/maps
December/January 2022	Introduce GETAP at Common Council; referral to BCCs for review
February 2022	Common Council – consider adoption

Attachments

Attachment 1: Plan Background, Public Participation Summary, Guiding Principles and Concept Development

Attachment 2: Map Packet – maps revised from 5/21

- Map A: Planning Area Boundary
- Map B: Future Land Use
- Map C: View Corridors
- Map D: Building Heights
- Map E: Proactive Rezoning and Official Street Mapping Scenario
- Map F: Natural Features Map
- Map G: Parks and Open Space
- Map H: Future Street Network
- Map I: Bicycle & Pedestrian Network
- Map J: Sidewalk Map
- Images A-G: modeling of future recommendations (from 5/21 and does not reflect all land use changes from May.)

Greater East Towne Area Plan

Attachment #1: Public Participation Summary

The Greater East Towne team partnered with the Odana Area Plan for much of the initial public engagement. There is a full and complete listing of public comments from zoom meetings, focus groups and other events [at this link](#). We conducted an online, Mall Madness issue prioritization exercise, where 174 people participated, and top priorities included affordable housing and more natural spaces and stormwater management, with safer pedestrian and bike routes, and more entertainment following close behind. An Issues and Opportunities Zoom Series included 450 participants. A [summary of comments can be found here](#). An online mapping exercise was also used to gather thoughts and feedback for those who were not able to attend.

Traditionally Underrepresented Communities

The public engagement plan included a robust outreach effort to reach and connect with members from several of Madison's traditionally underrepresented communities. Feedback from the ***Black, Latino and Hmong Chambers of Commerce*** focused on making sure the future of the area is welcoming to all area residents and businesses, the necessity of proactive economic development to help grow businesses owned by people of color, and creating a business incubator and preserving affordable retail space. We also reached out to the ***Madison Network of Black Professionals and the East High School Raza United/Black Student Union*** for in depth discussions of the plan.

CityZine Social Practice Art interviews

Social Practice Artist Borealis engaged LGBTQ+, Indigenous and other communities for in depth interviews on the future of creating a new community at both East Towne and the Odana Area.

“I’m sitting here asking myself if I have ever seen a bird in some of these west side areas. I mean, I’m being kind of dramatic, but there is just so much pavement and concrete that it’s hard to even visualize life in some of these areas. I sometimes fantasize about what it would be like for an alien to fly overhead and look down. What would they think all that concrete is for? Especially in the areas with no cars in them?”

Business and Property Owner Outreach occurred through a business roundtable facilitated by project consultant SEH. Key takeaways include: retail is over represented and there is a need for more food industry (restaurants/catering/etc); the poor transportation network is a barrier to economic growth, and won’t support a mixed use, walkable, bikeable character without changes; and the area needs a sense of place, including parks and open spaces.

Neighborhood Resource Team (NRT) Outreach included visits with the Brentwood/Northport and Darbo/Worthington NRTs both in the in the fall of 2020, and again in the spring of 2021 to present information on the GETAP and gather thoughts and feedback from these areas.

Friends of Starkweather Creek input prioritized creating equitable and sustainable access to Starkweather Creek and other high-quality natural areas. They suggested that the city create new parks, natural areas, pedestrian and bicycle amenities on existing impervious surfaces or in ways that minimize impacts on existing natural areas, while appropriately managing the meadows and prairies around the creek.

Concept Presentation Meetings were held on May 24 and 26 ([presentation link](#)) to present and discuss future street and bicycle networks, planned land use, future park space, and planned maximum building heights. About 50+ people attended.