



Legislation Text

File #: 35697, **Version:** 2

Fiscal Note

No additional appropriation at this time. Future strategies may have impact, subject to Common Council approval.

Title

SUBSTITUTE-Approving the Verona Road/Allied Drive commercial and neighborhood area food retail and economic redevelopment priorities, and directing an interdisciplinary staff team to explore funding strategies, private partners, and other complementary uses to facilitate the location of a full-service affordable grocery store in the immediate commercial area and to prepare a comprehensive economic plan for the entire area.

Body

WHEREAS, the Allied Drive Neighborhood is an eclectic neighborhood on the Southwest side of Madison comprised of a diversity of races, ethnicities, and cultures, and traditionally lower-income when compared to the rest of the city; and

WHEREAS, the Allied Drive Neighborhood has long struggled in properly accessing healthy, affordable, and culturally appropriate food for each resident in the immediate area; and

WHEREAS, at a recent outreach meeting with the Neighborhood Resource Team, the neighborhood identified food retail access as the number one priority for the area; and

WHEREAS, in August 2014, the City was made aware that the neighborhood's only immediate food retailer (Walgreens) would be closing no sooner than January 2015 due to concerns over the Verona Road/Beltline reconstruction and corporate consolidation; and

WHEREAS, despite that the former retailer was not designed to be a full scale grocery, it was shown to be a very important source of food access for the neighborhood; and

WHEREAS, it is critical to replace vacant storefronts in the commercial area with viable, positive uses that add to the neighborhood, create a sense of place, and present affordable, accessible services and utilities for immediate residents; and

WHEREAS, the City has never developed a comprehensive economic plan for the area to plan for and prioritize future development and to capitalize on the diverse, multicultural, and growing neighborhood; and

WHEREAS, a community or neighborhood center was also identified as being important to the Allied neighborhood and should be considered as part of community building, and an economic and food access strategy, including where it may be located and what type of center and services it may provide in order to complement the youth-based Boys and Girls Club; and

WHEREAS, the Verona Road/Beltline reconstruction also presents a unique opportunity to plan for a Transit-Oriented Development project within the area and any short-term goals should complement any long-term TOD plan; and

WHEREAS, after much outreach to food retailers familiar with the area, it is clear that due to the road reconstruction, the location of a full-service affordable food retailer is not imminent and will most likely require City intervention if it is to occur before late 2016 or 2017; and

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Mayor and Common Council establish the following “Priority Areas” for maintaining and increasing food retail access and long-term economic development for the Allied Drive Neighborhood/Verona Road area:

Priority Area 1) Secure a permanent full-service affordable grocery store to replace the exiting retailer at the same location or at an immediate location in an aggressive timeframe to limit the impact on the neighborhood.

Priority Area 2) Establish Explore the feasibility of a neighborhood or community center or additional services, either within the residential or commercial area ~~that will~~ to complement the existence of the food retailer and help provide and complement key services and programming.

Priority Area 3) Develop an economic development plan that includes Transit-Oriented Development for the Verona Road/Beltline corridor that capitalizes on the road reconstruction and looks at ways in which the commercial areas can attract multi-use transit-oriented development in the future, building on short-term efforts, including a specific focus on affordability and avoiding displacement of current residents.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Mayor and Common Council direct the Director of Planning and Community and Economic Development to research and advance each of the priority areas by utilizing additional staff as necessary in the following ways:

- 1) Staff shall research and provide funding strategies to economically support the establishment of a full-service affordable grocery outlet due to the urgency in providing adequate food access for the neighborhood. Strategies should not be site specific, but should consider factors of property availability, TIF assistance (if applicable), loans, grants, and best practices from other cities facing food access issues. Staff should provide the Mayor and Common Council many ranges of options for City intervention for the securing of a food retailer, including, but not limited to, traditional grocery, co-op, large convenience store, and no intervention.
- 2) Staff shall review the Capital Improvement Plan for community centers or additional services and suggest timing, location, and operation of a new neighborhood, or community center, or services for the Allied Drive neighborhood. ~~The recommendation should include other uses of the space in the center, such as food access, childcare, and afterschool programming.~~
- 3) Staff shall develop an economic development plan for the Verona Road/Beltline corridor that complements potential commercial uses of the area and plans for Bus Rapid Transit and other innovative strategies that connect the area to the region, maintaining affordability and avoiding displacement of residents.

BE IT FINALLY RESOLVED that staff will report their findings on “Priority Area 1” to the Mayor and Common Council by December 15, 2014, and will continue to research and develop recommendations and plans for “Priority Area 2, 3” in 2015.