

PART I

INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND INFORMATION

A. INTRODUCTION

COMMUNITY SETTING

The East Rail Corridor planning area is located on the east side of Madison's Isthmus, generally bounded by South Blair Street, East Washington Avenue, the Yahara River and south frontage of East Wilson Street [See Map 1-1]. Currently characterized by a diverse mix of industrial and commercial uses, multi-modal transportation facilities, housing and vacant lands, the East Rail Corridor has long been recognized in City plans both as the home of a wide variety of established successful businesses as well as a location with significant long-term potential for redevelopment with new and more intensive uses. While several plans have been prepared over the past 25 years for the neighborhoods that include or surround the East Rail Corridor, including a special area plan for lands adjacent to the Yahara River, the East Rail Corridor has not been the focus of a comprehensive planning process to consider this potential in more detail – although more-detailed planning for the Corridor is recommended in several of the other plans.

THE PLANNING PROCESS

Catalysts for Renewed Interest in the East Rail Corridor

During 2000, several events led to an increased community interest in developing a more detailed plan for the East Rail Corridor. The expanding market for downtown housing had generated a large number of new downtown residential projects at relatively high densities, and development interest in the Isthmus neighborhoods was also increasing in response to this trend. Projects in the East Isthmus area included several new residential and mixed-use developments along Williamson Street that had either been recently built or were in the process of seeking City approvals. This development pressure was expected to continue and provided opportunities for redevelopment in portions of the East Rail Corridor as well.

In addition to for-profit developers, Common Wealth Development, Inc., a local non-profit housing provider, was planning construction of a 60-unit housing project on property it had acquired east of Thornton Avenue adjacent to the Yahara River Parkway. Madison Gas & Electric was also reviewing their land holdings in the East Rail Corridor and evaluating the potential to create a campus-like facility.

In addition to the increased development interest, several transportation planning projects also focused attention on the East Rail Corridor at that time. The Transport 2020 public transit alternatives analysis process, following on a preliminary study of the feasibility of

regional commuter rail service, was considering alternatives and developing specific recommendations for high-capacity regional transit service. A less-formal parallel process was considering alternative proposals for future high-speed intercity passenger rail service to Madison. Both of these rail initiatives recommended utilizing the existing rail lines through the planning area, and would have important implications for future development in the Corridor.

The most immediate catalyst for more comprehensive East Rail Corridor planning, however, was an ambitious proposal advanced by the Urban Open Space Foundation (UOSF) for a large linear park in the interior of the East Rail Corridor as a major recreational and open space amenity. In partnership with the Marquette Neighborhood Association (MNA), the UOSF presented concept sketches for a 25 to 35-acre park with water features, trails and large amounts of open space for this urban neighborhood that could become a focal point for revitalization and redevelopment.

The UOSF approached the City of Madison with the central park proposal, which encompassed a property on Ingersoll Street that had been acquired by the City for the future expansion of Water Utility and Madison Metro facilities. To help assure that the potential future park development proposal was not precluded prematurely by incompatible development on this key parcel, the City agreed to sell the property to the UOSF, conditioned on its use for open space purposes.

The central park concept proposed by the UOSF and the MNA received considerable coverage in the local media and stimulated renewed interest in the planning area---generating public attention and enthusiasm to complete more detailed plans and begin to plan the physical improvements needed to implement the development concepts.

As a result of these multiple initiatives, at least some East Rail Corridor locations were clearly becoming more attractive for redevelopment and more intensive use, and the East Rail Corridor planning process was established to provide recommendations to guide this future development.

Creation of the East Rail Corridor Plan Advisory Committee

To lead the planning effort for the East Rail Corridor, the Madison Common Council adopted a resolution in September 2000, creating an 18-member East Rail Corridor Plan Advisory Committee (later expanded to 19 members) charged with the responsibility to:

- Promote communication among stakeholder groups and provide opportunities for public input;
- Develop a consensus and advise the Plan Commission and Common Council on recommendations to update the Land Use Plan for the East Rail Corridor; and
- Conduct a comprehensive planning process in two phases.

Phase One was a general update of the Madison Land Use Plan recommendations for the East Rail Corridor planning area. In developing the land use recommendations, the

Committee was directed to consider proposed transportation and infrastructure improvements, approaches to environmental remediation, open space and architectural and design goals, housing and economic development opportunities, and funding and finance options.

Following completion of Phase One, the resolution directed the Advisory Committee to work with staff to make more-detailed recommendations as part of a detailed physical development plan within the Corridor, including securing the necessary commitment of resources to implement the plan.

Advisory Committee Membership

The ERCPAC is a broad and diverse group and includes representatives from the following organizations: the Common Council; the Plan Commission; the Park Commission; the Economic Development Commission; the Pedestrian/Bicycle/Motor Vehicle Commission; the Urban Open Space Foundation; Friends of the Yahara River Parkway; the Marquette Neighborhood Association; Common Wealth Development, Inc.; the Greater Williamson Area Business Association; Downtown Madison, Inc.; the Greater Madison Chamber of Commerce; Madison Gas & Electric; several local businesses (including the Research Products Corporation); and local citizens with technical expertise.

The East Rail Corridor Planning Process

The planning process began in December 2000 with the first meeting of the East Rail Corridor Plan Advisory Committee. During both Phase One and Phase Two, the Advisory Committee met regularly an average of once or twice a month, or over 45 meetings in all. In addition, several well-attended public open house forums were held at the Research Products Tech Center on South Ingersoll Street. Additional opportunities for public communication and participation were provided by an East Rail Corridor website, through extensive email and mailing lists to notify the public of meetings and planning events, an opinion survey of East Rail Corridor businesses, information booths and displays set up at local farmer's markets and the Willy Street Co-op, and through the Urban Open Space Foundation's parallel park planning process.

The Advisory Committee completed their Phase One activities in December 2001; and in March 2002, the Madison Common Council adopted the Phase One Recommendations developed by the ERCPAC. The principal recommendations included:

1. Identification of an enhanced Major Employment Center as the predominant recommended land use within the Corridor.
2. Recommend that the City begin a program to shift land uses from surface parking to more intensive uses.
3. Continue to explore the feasibility of a northern realignment of the existing railroad tracks.

4. Recommend that, if the railroad tracks are relocated, segments of Livingston Street should be closed and former rail right-of-way acquired to enhance the greenway linkage through the Corridor.
5. Recommend that the City establish an open space plan and effort to substantially address the existing Downtown/East Isthmus parkland deficiency of 30-40 acres.
6. Explore new partnerships for ongoing maintenance of East Rail Corridor parkland and open space.
7. Identification of a “linked urban squares” concept as the focal point for open space acquisition and development.
8. Recommend that private open spaces within the East Rail Corridor be designed to link with public open spaces to create a unified system.
9. Recommend that greenway links in the area between Baldwin Street and the Yahara River be generally urban and linear in form.
10. New housings should fit in with the neighborhood character, serve a variety of households and families, have a density range of 25-60 units per acre, and seek an affordable housing component of 15 percent of the units.

Supplemental detail and additional supporting recommendations were included with each of the ten principal recommendations summarized above [See Appendix A for the complete Phase One Recommendations].

The resolution adopting the Phase One Recommendations also directed the Advisory Committee to work with City staff during Phase Two to make more detailed recommendations as part of a detailed physical development plan within the Corridor. Issues to be addressed during the Phase Two planning process included:

- How to accommodate business retention and expansion in the area;
- The appropriate types of businesses, and their appropriate scale, character and location within the planning area;
- The recommended density of new housing within identified residential areas;
- The types and designs of new housing that would fit the character of the neighborhood;
- The detailed configuration, functions and features of the park and open space areas;
- Relationships between the park and open space and the adjoining uses;
- Ownership and maintenance responsibilities for the park and open space areas;
- The costs and feasibility of constructing parking structures within the study area; and
- Implementation of the recommended railroad track relocation.

The Advisory Committee considered these issues during the remainder of 2002 and into 2003, and developed recommendations based on a review of the information provided by City staff and others, and through consideration of the public comments and suggestions gathered during special open houses and forums and at their regularly-scheduled meetings. The draft East Rail Corridor Plan recommendations were refined again by the additional comments provided by many participants during the review of the draft Plan.

This Final Report concludes the work of the East Rail Corridor Plan Advisory Committee, and presents the final draft East Rail Corridor Plan and Recommendations to the Common Council and the citizens of Madison for their consideration. The East Rail Corridor Plan includes detailed land use recommendations, recommended development and design standards, and general recommendations in the broad areas of aesthetics and design, employment and business development, housing and residential development, parks and open spaces, transportation and parking, and recommended next steps in the plan implementation process. The proposals include general recommendations applicable to the East Rail Corridor planning area as a whole, and more focused recommendations applied to defined sub-areas within the Corridor. As noted in the introduction to Part II, the East Rail Corridor Plan incorporates the recommendations from both Phase One and Phase Two of the planning process.

ORGANIZATION OF THE FINAL REPORT

The East Rail Corridor Plan Advisory Committee Final Report is presented in three parts:

Part I includes this introduction, a brief historical overview of the East Rail Corridor, a description of other recent planning activities that influence development in the Corridor, and a summary presentation of existing conditions in the Corridor that were considered by the Advisory Committee in developing their recommendations.

Part II is the East Rail Corridor Plan recommended by the Advisory Committee to guide future land use and development within the East Rail Corridor planning area. In general, the basis for a recommendation is summarized with the recommendation and not presented as a separate analysis elsewhere in the report.

Part III is an appendix to the Final Report, and includes additional data and background information that expand upon the information presented in Parts I and II of the report. References to material in the appendix are cited within Parts II and III.

Maps referenced within Parts I and II are found at the end of that section of the report.

B. HISTORICAL OVERVIEW OF THE EAST RAIL CORRIDOR

Most of land within the East Rail Corridor planning area was historically known as the “Great Central Marsh” and consisted largely of wetlands associated with Yahara River, which meandered across the isthmus until it was canalized in the mid-19th Century to harness the waterpower for a sawmill. This large marshy area was eventually filled to provide land for urban development in the early 1900’s, as the East Rail Corridor became Madison’s first factory district.¹ At the height of its industrial prominence, the East Rail Corridor included a 25-track railroad yard and housed many typical industrial uses of the day, including electric power generation and manufacturing plants such as the Gisholt Foundry, Fuller & Johnson, Mautz Paint, and the Northern Electric Company. The Madison Gas & Electric Company, the visible smoke stacks of today, can also trace its presence back to the early 20th Century.

Over time, many of the original manufacturing firms disappeared and their former facilities were taken over by new firms moving to the area---some engaged in similar production activities, others who converted the facilities to serve different types of enterprise. The need for extensive railroad facilities in Madison also diminished with changes in the role of railroads and railroad operations, and the end of the 1950’s had removed nearly all of the former trackage, except for a single main line and several industrial sidings, which still exist.

Today, the East Rail Corridor includes a mix of commercial and industrial uses, vacant lands, and a limited amount of residential development. Electric power generation and several other industrial and production uses remain to represent the Corridor’s former role as a heavy manufacturing center, but the scope of use in the Corridor has expanded to include a broader array of businesses and activities. Yet, while the existing uses within the Corridor include thriving business enterprises and successful residential communities, some of the lands are vacant, and other lands are currently used for relatively low-intensity activities, such as materials storage or surface parking lots. This, in combination with the East Rail Corridor’s prime location close to the Downtown employment center, thriving residential neighborhoods and a broad range of dynamic urban activities and amenities, creates a unique opportunity and potential for eventual redevelopment of portions of these former railroad and industrial lands for additional business development, housing, and recreational open space.

¹ An 1883 Wisconsin State Journal editorial could not have made the point more plainly when it argued, “The [Great Central] marsh is the natural seat for manufacturing industries ... for land is cheap and plenty there for railroad, warehouse, and factory purposes.” From this time forward, there appears to have been a strong consensus--indeed it was almost a foregone conclusion--that this area would become the factory district. Madisonians firmly believed that smokestacks would soon replace the cattails. -- Mollenhoff, David V., Madison: A History of the Formative Years, Kendall/Hunt Publishing Company, 1982.

C. OTHER PLANNING ACTIVITIES

The East Rail Corridor planning area is located within the Marquette Neighborhood, immediately east of Madison's Downtown, and in close proximity to several other active neighborhoods and business districts [See Map 1-2]. The broader East Isthmus area, which includes the Marquette and other near-east side neighborhoods, the Yahara River corridor, East Washington Avenue, and Williamson Street, for example, has been the subject of many planning projects and studies over the years. While until the present planning process, no recent comprehensive study has focused specifically on the East Rail Corridor, all or parts of the planning area have been included within the scope of several other community-wide, neighborhood, and special area plans and planning activities that are directly or indirectly related to the future of the East Rail Corridor.

MADISON LAND USE PLAN

The oldest still-current plan covering the East Rail Corridor is the Madison Land Use Plan, first adopted in 1977 and last comprehensively reviewed in 1986. The Land Use Plan Map recommends four primary land use classifications within the East Rail Corridor planning area [See Map 1-3]:

- Regional Commercial-Mixed Uses (CRx), recommended for the three blocks south of East Washington Avenue between Blair and Paterson Streets;
- Community Commercial (CC), recommended for the balance of the East Washington Avenue south frontage from Paterson Street to the Yahara River;
- Industrial (I), recommended for the area bounded by Blair Street, East Main Street, Ingersoll Street and East Washington Avenue; and
- Neighborhood Design District-Medium Density (NDMH), recommended for an area located generally west of Patterson Street to the Yahara River.

Small areas reflecting existing residential uses in the East Wilson Street/Schley Pass/Dewey Court and East Wilson Street areas were recommended for Residential-Medium Density-Mixed Housing (RM-X).

The Land Use Plan recommends primarily residential redevelopment south of the existing rail corridor and retention of compatible commercial and industrial uses north of the corridor. This plan envisioned these land use changes occurring over an extended time period as a response of the private sector to higher-density residential zoning and market demand. The Neighborhood Design districts are used in the Land Use Plan to identify relatively large parcels of undeveloped or re-developable land where special opportunities for flexible and creative planning exist, but where more-detailed planning is required before making specific land use recommendations. Although primarily a "residential" designation, Neighborhood Design districts may include neighborhood-oriented commercial or mixed-use development, and community and recreational facilities when consistent with City and neighborhood objectives. The medium-high density suggests an average net density in the 25 to 40 units per acre range, but

development in these districts could include a variety of housing types and densities to serve the residents of the district.

MARQUETTE-SCHENK-ATWOOD NEIGHBORHOOD PLAN

The 1994 Marquette-Schenk-Atwood Neighborhood Plan identified the East Rail Corridor as under-utilized and needing environmental and visual improvements. In addition, the Marquette-Schenk-Atwood Plan advocated redevelopment of the East Rail Corridor area, stating, “The competition for future land uses in the corridor, and the delicate balance of land uses to enhance the City and neighborhood, will have to be carefully planned by the neighborhood and the City.” The Plan considered the underutilized Rail Corridor a prime candidate for selective redevelopment, including commercial and industrial uses, housing, open space and recreation. The neighborhood plan calls for the creation of an urban industrial park north of East Wilson Street and west of Dickinson Street that would combine workplaces and green space. The plan also determined a parkland deficiency of about 38 acres for the neighborhood as a whole.

YAHARA RIVER PARKWAY MASTER PLAN

In 1998 the City adopted the Yahara River Parkway and Environs Master Plan. This plan provides detailed recommendations for the development of a linear park along the Yahara River linking Lakes Monona and Mendota. The Yahara River corridor is recognized both on the National Register of Historic Places and as a local landmark, and corridor enhancements and development of pedestrian and bicycle paths along the river are also recommended in other adopted City plans. The Yahara River Parkway Plan is being implemented as resources and opportunities are available, and this will further increase the attractiveness of properties near the river as locations for future residential redevelopment, and will provide additional important linkages to the existing commuter bike path, the proposed central park and other regional open space, trails and facilities.

WILLIAMSON STREET NEIGHBORHOOD CENTER MASTER PLAN (BUILD I)

The Williamson Street Neighborhood Center Master Plan, adopted in 2000, was prepared as part of a Dane County BUILD (Better Urban Infill Development) project to develop proposals for strengthening Williamson Street as a neighborhood business district. The Master Plan focused on redevelopment of a three block radius centered on the Williamson Street/Baldwin Street intersection, and sought ways to “promote the evolution and development of the area while protecting traditional pedestrian-oriented urban patterns, established architectural character, and existing businesses and institutions.” Recommendations included strengthened design guidelines for the Third Lake Ridge Historic District, taking advantage of redevelopment opportunities to increase density and consolidate land uses, addressing parking needs, improvement of the Baldwin Street gateway to the neighborhood, identification of priority redevelopment sites and consideration of changes to the Zoning Code to better-promote mixed land uses within a parcel or along a block.

WILLIAMSON STREET STANDARDS FOR DESIGN & PRESERVATION (BUILD II)

The Williamson Street Standards for Design and Preservation were developed through another Dane County BUILD project focused on establishing development and design guidelines for the 600 through 1100 blocks of Williamson Street. This project concluded in August of 2003, and City approval of the recommendations is still pending. The East Rail Corridor planning area does not include the Williamson Street frontage, but does include the East Wilson Street frontage of these same blocks. Because the BUILD project considered some of the same issues as the East Rail Corridor planning project, occurred within the same time frame, and produced recommendations for East Wilson Street as well as for Williamson Street, the ERCPCAC carefully considered the recommendations of the Williamson Street BUILD project in developing their own design recommendations---and in particular, maximum building height recommendations. In the end, the maximum building height recommendations of the ERCPCAC and the Williamson Street BUILD Committee are generally similar, but not identical. The BUILD design recommendations are also generally much more detailed than the East Rail Corridor Plan Recommendations, and include recommended amendments to the design guidelines for the Third Lake Ridge Historic District.

TRANSPORT 2020

Transport 2020, a project jointly sponsored by the City of Madison, Dane County, and the Wisconsin Department of Transportation, with the participation of the University of Wisconsin and several area municipalities, was a multi-year evaluation of alternatives for providing enhanced high-capacity transit service to meet regional transportation needs. The preferred alternative recommended by the Transport 2020 Oversight Advisory Committee in Fall 2002, and accepted by the Madison Common Council and Dane County Board, is a multi-modal system which includes numerous regional transportation system improvements with a primary focus on public transit improvements (including supporting park-and-ride facilities). The recommended initial Start-Up System includes commuter rail transit service that would operate through the East Rail Corridor using existing rail lines, and include one or more “station” locations within the planning area.

EAST WASHINGTON AVENUE RECONSTRUCTION PLAN

The East Washington Avenue reconstruction project is a multi-year project to reconstruct the Avenue between Blair Street and Thierer Road. The purpose of the reconstruction is not primarily to increase traffic capacity, but will focus on physical and aesthetic improvements to the East Washington Avenue corridor and incorporate redesign and other enhancements to improve the appearance of the Avenue and better accommodate bicycle and pedestrian travel. Reconstruction of the segment of East Washington Avenue between Blair Street and Thornton Avenue, adjacent to the East Rail Corridor planning area, is scheduled begin in Spring 2004. Most of the construction is scheduled for completion in December, with pavement marking and median landscaping to occur in Spring 2005. Reconstruction of the Thornton Avenue to Second Street segment is scheduled for 2006.

EAST WASHINGTON CAPITOL GATEWAY CORRIDOR BUILD PROJECT

In June 2003, the City of Madison received a matching grant from the Dane County Better Urban Infill Development (BUILD) program for the first phase of the proposed East Washington Capitol Gateway Corridor planning initiative. This project will develop more detailed land use recommendations and urban design guidelines for both the north and south frontages of East Washington Avenue between Blair Street and First Street as a supplement to other planning and development activities that have been, or are, occurring in the East Isthmus area---including the East Rail Corridor Plan. The East Rail Corridor Plan recommends general development and design standards for that portion of East Washington Avenue within the planning area, and also recommends that a more detailed design study be conducted that would consider properties along both sides of East Washington Avenue and prepare more-detailed building and site design standards for future development of those properties [See Part II for additional details]. The Capitol Gateway Corridor BUILD project, scheduled to begin in 2004, will be an important first step in implementing these recommendations.

The East Rail Corridor Plan is recommended for adoption as a supplement to the Madison Land Use Plan and the Marquette-Schenk Atwood Neighborhood Plan, to be used to guide future land use and development within the East Rail Corridor planning area. The East Rail Corridor Plan makes more-specific recommendations for future land uses, including development and design standards for the planning area, than do these earlier plans. In addition, the East Rail Corridor Plan recognizes and supports the planning recommendations and initiatives contained in the Yahara River Parkway and Environs Master Plan, both Williamson Street BUILD Plans (with limited exceptions), and the proposed update to the Third Lake Ridge Historic District standards. The East Rail Corridor Plan is fully consistent with the Transport 2020 recommendations, and considers realignment and improvements to the railroad tracks and the potential for rail-based regional transit through the planning area to be essential components of the Plan recommendations.

D. EXISTING CONDITIONS IN THE EAST RAIL CORRIDOR

NATURAL FEATURES

The topography of the East Rail Corridor planning area is essentially low and flat, although there is a very slight increase in elevation at the western edge. The eastern boundary of the planning area is the Yahara River connecting Lakes Monona and Mendota, and as noted in the historical overview, much of the central portion of the East Isthmus was once a large wetland resource that has since been filled. The planning area remains characterized by water-related soils, and these soils and the high water table create certain constraints on development within the Corridor---particularly for very large, heavy structures [See Map 1-4]. The high water table also limits the potential for underground parking at many East Rail Corridor locations.

The East Rail Corridor has been urbanized with relatively heavy industrial uses for more than a century, and few remnants of the natural environmental features remain, with the exception of the Yahara River Corridor. Although a canalized rather than a natural watercourse, the river in its current configuration has been recognized as a significant environmental amenity since early in the last century. The Yahara River Parkway Master Plan seeks to restore this corridor and significantly enhance the landscaping through reestablishing native plant communities and other means. The UOSF concept plan for the central park also proposes reestablishment of restored naturalized areas as one of the park's amenities.

Due in part to its industrial history, contaminated soils exist at multiple locations within the East Rail Corridor planning area, including contamination from leaking underground storage tanks (LUSTs) and as a result of former railroad and manufacturing activities. As part of the detailed planning for projects within the Corridor, on-site soil conditions will need to be carefully evaluated and appropriate remediation measures taken as needed.

EXISTING LAND USES

The East Rail Corridor contains a wide variety of land uses but is characterized by a predominance of industrial and commercial uses, which together account for about 62 percent of the land within the planning area. This includes industrial uses, such as manufacturing and production, electric power generation and transmission facilities, and transportation facilities other than rights-of-way. Commercial uses include business offices, retail stores, repair shops, artist studios and galleries, restaurants and others. While some of the industrial and commercial uses in the East Rail Corridor are relatively intensive, other industrial-commercial lands are characterized by relatively low-intensity uses, such as materials storage and surface parking. About 30 percent of the land in the planning area consists of public street and railroad rights-of-way; and about five percent of the land is residential. The remaining three percent of the land consists of open space, vacant parcels and miscellaneous City-owned lands not coded to any land use (primarily former rights-of-way). [See Table A and Map 1-5].

TABLE A
East Rail Corridor Existing Land Uses

Land Use	Acres	% of Total
Residential	8.4	4.8
Commercial	44.6	25.1
Industrial	66.2	37.3
Park & Open Space	1.2	0.7
Vacant-Undeveloped	2.4	1.4
Other City Owned	2.2	1.2
RR Right of Way	6.0	3.4
Street ROW	46.4	26.1
TOTAL	177.4	100%

Business Uses and Employment

As noted above, the East Rail Corridor became Madison’s first factory district in the early 1900’s. Today, the area includes a diverse mix of business uses, although power generation and other industrial uses also remain. The area’s mix of businesses includes production manufacturing uses, such as Bock Water Heaters and Research Products--- long-term area employers for over 60 years; business incubators like Main Street Industries and Madison Enterprise Center; power production uses like Madison Gas & Electric and the Capital Heating Plant; retail uses along East Washington Avenue and nearby Williamson Street; and a wide variety of offices scattered throughout the corridor. This diversity makes the East Rail Corridor an interesting and unique business location. The special character of the area, including both the “funky” physical environment and the mix of businesses, was cited many times during the survey of employers as one of the appealing attributes of the location.

The East Rail Corridor includes more than 3,100 employees and 3.2 million square feet of business space. Madison Gas & Electric is the largest employer within the planning area, with a total of over 700 employees. Other major employers include: Madison Metro with over 400 employees based in the Corridor, Research Products with over 200 employees, and Don Warren’s office buildings with over 100 total employees.

Future employment growth will depend upon the retention of viable existing businesses and success in encouraging new business investment within the Corridor, and on the intensity of new business development. In general, the potential for additional employment within the corridor will be greater if much of the new business development consists of multi-story buildings with relatively high floor area ratios than it will if development consists primarily of single-story buildings with relatively low lot coverage.

2002 Business Survey. In the spring of 2002, the staff of the City of Madison Office of Business Assistance surveyed a large sample 35 of businesses within the East Rail Corridor to learn their perspectives on land use planning within the area, as well as their future expansion plans and needs. The survey found that, generally speaking, businesses wanted

to be downtown and in the East Rail Corridor for a variety of inter-related reasons--- citing the central location, proximity to employees and customers, affordable rents, and the eclectic quality of the area as among the attractions of the location. More than one-half the businesses interviewed were planning to expand and grow within the next five years. About one-third owned their current site or building, and most of the rest leased their facilities. Three companies interviewed operated outside the Corridor.

In general, businesses saw future development and redevelopment opportunities in the East Rail Corridor arising from the relatively tight market and high demand for land and buildings with the right combination of attributes, including available parking. They felt that business development should be a City priority, that more businesses should be encouraged in the East Rail Corridor, rather than less, and that the City should promote an expanded mix of business and development of additional creative business spaces. Generally speaking, the businesses interviewed encouraged the City to be creative and work with small business, and also to build on the high level of commitment and interest in the East Rail Corridor. In many cases, their responses also included specific suggestions to improve business conditions in the Corridor.

The majority of business interviewed also noted that a degree of uncertainty had been created by the large proposed park (which few saw a need for), and by East Rail Corridor land use recommendations which appeared to imply a long-term objective for future residential and open space development not only on vacant lands, but also on some lands currently occupied by established business enterprises. They stressed the importance of business retention and that businesses not be encouraged to leave the Corridor to accommodate alternative uses. Businesses wanting to expand sought direction on how to proceed with their plans when the East Rail Corridor Plan proposes conflicting land uses. [See Appendix B for a summary of the Business Survey results.]

HOUSING AND POPULATION

Housing in the East Rail Corridor. Currently, only a relatively modest amount of housing, 144 units, exists within the East Rail Corridor planning area [See Table B]. Nearly all of this housing, 138 units, is located in the East Wilson Street/Schley Pass/Dewey Court area, and consists primarily of a mix of older one and two-unit houses,

TABLE B
Housing in the East Rail Corridor

Land Use	Dwelling Units	
	Number	% of Total
Single-Family Residential	58	40.3
Two-Unit Residential	54	37.5
Three-or-More-Unit Residential	32	22.2
Total	144	100%

together with a few relatively small-scale multi-family buildings. Based on an allocation of 2000 Census information for blocks and partial blocks within the planning area, it is estimated that about 270 persons currently reside within the East Rail Corridor.

Additional locations within the East Rail Corridor planning area are recommended for future housing development, and Common Wealth Development is currently developing a 60-unit multi-family project on Thornton Avenue between Railroad Street and East Main Street, adjacent to the Yahara River. This is the first residential project to be developed within the proposed housing area west of the river recommended in the Yahara River Parkway Master Plan and the Marquette-Schenk-Atwood Neighborhood Plan, as well as in this East Rail Corridor Plan.

Housing in the Marquette Neighborhood. While there currently is only a limited amount of housing within the planning area, the East Rail Corridor is part of the Marquette Neighborhood, which provides a diverse range of housing. This diversity is indicated in the following table and is also illustrated in two maps found at the end of this section of the report.

There are about 1,843 housing units within the Marquette Neighborhood. These units are distributed fairly evenly among the range of single-family, two-unit, and multi-unit housing types found within the neighborhood, with less than one-third of the total units found in the most prevalent two-unit building type [See Table C]. Slightly more than one-half of the total units are in single-family and two-unit buildings, and slightly less than one-half are in buildings of three or more units. Only about 12 percent of the units are in buildings with eight or more units. Because the Marquette Neighborhood includes many large older homes that have been subdivided into apartment units, the residential portions of the neighborhood retain a fine-grained, “house” character despite having a significant number of multi-unit dwellings and an average neighborhood density of about 18 units per net acre. Map 1-6 visually illustrates the distribution of different housing types within the neighborhoods surrounding the East Rail Corridor. Note that the map covers parts of several neighborhoods, all of which exhibit a range of different housing types distributed throughout the neighborhood.

TABLE C
Marquette Neighborhood Housing Types and Density

Land Use	Dwelling Units		Acres		Average Net Density DU/Acre
	Number	% of Total	Number	% of Total	
Single-Family Residential	403	21.9	41.1	40.4	9.8
Two-Unit Residential	570	30.9	30.1	29.6	18.9
3-4 Unit Residential	502	27.2	19.5	19.2	25.7
5-7 Unit Residential	148	8.0	4.4	4.3	33.6
8 or More Unit Residential	220	11.9	6.6	6.5	33.3
Total	1843	100.0%	101.7	100.0%	18.1

Note: Percentages may not total to 100% due to rounding

Although only about 52 percent of the neighborhood housing units are in single-family or two-unit buildings, these two housing types account for 70 percent of the total residential acres in the Marquette Neighborhood due to the relatively lower per-acre density of these types. Map 1-7 visually illustrates the distribution of net parcel densities within the neighborhoods surrounding the East Rail Corridor.

NEIGHBORHOOD CHARACTER AND HISTORIC RESOURCES

Preserving Neighborhood Character. Ensuring that new development is compatible with established neighborhood character is an important recommendation in virtually all of the City's community and neighborhood plans, including the other existing plans covering the East Rail Corridor. But, while some plans provide useful discussion and guidelines regarding the essential design elements that define neighborhood character, and which are most important to ensuring compatible redevelopment, different individuals still may have significant differences of opinion on the subject.

In carrying out their charge to recommend the appropriate scale, character and design for future business and residential developments within the East Rail Corridor, the Advisory Committee spent considerable time on the issue of neighborhood character. This included taking walking tours of the planning area and preparation of display boards with photographs of existing buildings and uses in the East Rail Corridor and the surrounding neighborhood. Identified elements of East Rail Corridor and Marquette Neighborhood character include the diverse mix of uses, the average size, height and mass of existing buildings, and typical building materials and architectural details. [See Appendix C and Appendix D for illustrations of East Rail Corridor and Marquette Neighborhood buildings.]

Protection of Historic Buildings. An important East Rail Corridor asset is the stock of older buildings that have historical merit or with aesthetic qualities, which contribute significantly to the overall character of the area. A survey of historic buildings in the East Rail Corridor was prepared for the Madison Landmarks Commission in August 2002 and recently updated in September 2003. This report notes, "The general character of the area is one of substantial brick warehouses and industrial buildings. Several of the enterprises were among the leading businesses in Madison in the 20th century. Many of the buildings remaining were constructed with an appearance of solidity and a high quality of architectural design not often seen in modern warehouse or industrial buildings. This type of building often lends itself to adaptive reuse and appeals to a large segment of people who enjoy living and working in spaces that convey an historic industrial character." The Landmarks Commission report strongly encouraged the East Rail Corridor committee to include preservation and adaptive reuse in its goals and objectives for the area [See Appendix E, "Historic Buildings in the East Rail Corridor"].

Map 1-8 shows the location of potential historic landmarks and other older buildings that contribute to the overall character of the area which have been identified by the Landmarks Commission. Except for the State Heating and Power Plant, the East Rail Corridor buildings potentially eligible for listing in the National Register of Historic Places have either been designated as Madison Landmarks or are in the process of

designation. Some of the buildings determined not eligible for listing in the National Register, but which contribute to the character of the area, are presently located within Madison's Third Lake Ridge Historic District---which requires additional review of proposed exterior changes to the building.

PARKS AND OPEN SPACES

Park and open space resources in the East Isthmus area include a mix of more-urbanized features and facilities, such as Law Park, Breeze Stevens Field, Marquette School and the Capitol Square, and traditional parkland, such as Orton Park, James Madison Park and B.B. Clarke Beach. Some, such as Tenney Park and parkland along the Yahara River and the shores of Lake Monona and Lake Mendota offer particularly scenic view and more natural amenities, in addition to recreational opportunities [See Map 1-9].

While there are a fair number of park resources available, the general Isthmus area has been identified as deficient in parkland, as analyzed on a total park system basis, and on a park service area basis using established parkland to population standards. The Madison Parks Division estimates the Isthmus area to have a park deficiency of about 43 acres, and identifies the Isthmus as particularly deficient in active playfield space. The limited opportunities to secure additional lands for open space uses in a heavily urbanized area suggests that the parkland deficiency may continue to worsen as population living on the Isthmus increases.

Possible opportunities for alleviating Isthmus parkland deficiencies are identified in the Madison Park and Open Space Plan. These include continued expansion of James Madison Park within its master plan boundaries, preservation of the Marquette School playground, acquisition of additional parkland as part of redevelopment activities in the East Rail Corridor, and improved access and linkages to the parks that do exist.

TRANSPORTATION FACILITIES AND ISSUES

Railroad-Related Facilities

A main line railroad track owned by the Union Pacific Railroad passes through the study area within a right-of-way that extends from a point along East Washington Avenue just east of Dickinson Street southeast to the north side East Wilson Street and then west to Blair Street. The Union Pacific leases this track to the Wisconsin & Southern Railroad, and the track currently is only used for freight service. MG&E also has a railroad siding to supply coal to its generating plant, and several other sidings exist serving current or former uses in the East Main Street/East Washington Avenue area [See Map 1-10].

Rail Alignment Issues

During 2001 and into 2002, the City of Madison participated with the Wisconsin Department of Transportation, Amtrak and HNTB Corporation consultants in extensive studies and planning activities related to potential high-speed intercity passenger rail service to Madison as part of the Midwest Regional Rail Initiative. The need to substantially upgrade the existing track to accommodate higher-speed service into the downtown (the City's preferred station location), created a potential opportunity to consider relocating the track at the same time. Relocation of the railroad track had also been proposed by the Urban Open Space Foundation to remove it from the proposed central park.

The Phase One Recommendations of the East Rail Corridor planning process included investigation of relocating the railroad track, and an informal sub-committee was established to coordinate the planning activities for the East Rail Corridor with the Inter-City Passenger Rail studies. This sub-committee identified two alternative alignments for the railroad tracks through the corridor: the current alignment which primarily runs adjacent to East Wilson Street, and a proposed realignment to the north which would run instead within the Railroad Street right-of-way before rejoining the current alignment near Livingston Street.

The sub-committee also identified the following issues to consider:

- Impacts on property and businesses;
- Impacts on existing utilities, such as potential relocation and future maintenance;
- Engineering and design needs for the "s" curves in the track;
- Environmental cleanup issues, such as the need to deal with contaminated soils;
- Costs; and
- Timing of the improvements

The Advisory Committee recommended that the City pursue a relocated rail alignment for a number of land use reasons, including moving rail operations farther from existing and planned residential area along several blocks of East Wilson Street, providing a larger undivided space for future development of a central open space, and freeing up some of the current track right-of-way for new linear park and open space uses. In January 2002, the Madison Common Council adopted a resolution providing for a study of the feasibility of relocating the East Rail Corridor railroad tracks [See Appendix F].

The cost of the site survey, a necessary first step in evaluating the feasibility of potentially relocating the railroad track, was provided by the Urban Open Space Foundation. The survey was completed by Burse Surveying and Engineering in the spring of 2003, and included topographical features, elevations, and utility locations, but at the time the Advisory Committee concluded its work, this information was not yet mapped or available for review, and follow-up steps had not been initiated. The next steps would include sending the proposed track alignments and cross sections to various

utilities for verification, meeting with the affected railroads to review the proposed alignments, and estimating costs and impacts [See Appendix G].

Streets and Roadways

The East Rail Corridor is bounded on the north by East Washington Avenue, one of Madison's primary arterial streets, currently carrying an average of more than 50,000 vehicles per day along that segment. As noted above, this roadway is scheduled for reconstruction in segments over a six-year period beginning in 2004. The reconstruction will create some temporary disruption for businesses along the Avenue, but the project will greatly enhance the attractiveness of this important gateway to both the East Rail Corridor and to Madison's downtown. Blair Street, which forms the western boundary of the planning area, is another major arterial street connecting East Washington Avenue with John Nolen Drive. Recommendations for the East Rail Corridor include enhancing access into the Corridor and seeking ways to reduce the potential barrier these major roadways create for pedestrian and bicycle traffic in particular. Williamson Street lies just outside the southern boundary of the planning area, and this mixed-use neighborhood business street provides an important link between the East Rail Corridor and the neighborhood residential areas to the south.

The network of local streets within the corridor still reflects the original street grid, although many segments have been partially vacated or the roadway closed over the years to accommodate railroad and industrial uses. With the exception of South Few Street, these missing segments are all on east-west streets. The primary north-south streets within the planning area are Paterson, Ingersoll and Baldwin---all of which have traffic signals and full median breaks at East Washington Avenue and also have traffic signals at Williamson Street. Blount Street and Dickinson Street have full median breaks at East Washington, but no traffic signal there or at Williamson Street. At Brearly Street, East Washington Avenue has a left-turn-only median break so Brearly Street traffic cannot continue directly across the Avenue. There is no median break on East Washington Avenue at either Livingston Street or Thornton Avenue; so only right turns in or out of these streets are possible [See Map 1-11]. Segments of Thornton Avenue are also recommended for eventual closure in the Yahara River Parkway Master Plan. Reviewing the role and relative importance of the streets in the local network was important to developing the East Rail Corridor Plan recommendations, which include closing selected segments of several of the less important north-south streets.

Bicycle Facilities

The East Rail Corridor is served by the Isthmus Bike Path, which runs through the southern portion of the planning area within the East Wilson Street right-of-way. The bicycle path is on the street between Ingersoll and Dickinson Streets, where East Wilson remains open to vehicular traffic. Elsewhere within the Corridor, the East Wilson Street right-of-way is used exclusively for the bicycle path, except for some limited parking near the western end. Baldwin Street north of the Isthmus Path is also a signed on-street bicycle route, although improvements are needed [See Map 1-11].

Parking

A significant amount of land within the East Rail Corridor is used for surface parking and vehicle storage. Estimates made from aerial photographs indicate that about 18 acres within the Corridor are used primarily for surface parking lots, providing approximately 1,626 parking spaces. An estimated additional seven acres are used for vehicle storage by automobile dealerships and others. Together, these uses comprise about 20 percent of the net land (exclusive of rights-of-way) within the planning area. On-street parking is also provided on one or both sides of all of the open streets within the planning area, except for a few extremely narrow streets where parking is not feasible [See Map 1-12]. Despite the relatively large area used for parking, about one-half of the businesses interviewed for the 2002 Business Survey experienced some parking problems.

UTILITY INFRASTRUCTURE

Madison Gas & Electric is located on approximately 31.5 acres of property within the East Rail Corridor. Although many of the employees work at the company's administrative and business office, the main power generation facility of the Madison Gas & Electric Company is also located within the study area. MG&E operates a coal burning electric generation plant with associated coal storage areas, railroad sidings, and a large storage yard for miscellaneous equipment.

In addition to the generating plant, substation and associated structures and service storage yards, MG&E has numerous electric and natural gas transmission lines running throughout the study area. These include the major double-circuit 69kV overhead transmission line running generally within the right-of-way along the south side of East Main Street and an underground high-pressure natural gas line. The largest electric transmission lines, including the overhead high-voltage line along East Main Street, have been transferred to the American Transmission Company (ATC), who owns and operates them. Following installation of additional underground conduit that will be coordinated with the East Washington Avenue and First Street reconstruction projects, ATC has agreed to remove the overhead transmission facilities between the Blount Street Substation and Johnson Street, including the steel lattice towers currently located along East Main Street and northerly along the east side of the railroad tracks. This relocation, which is presently anticipated to occur in 2009 or 2010, will greatly improve the appearance of East Main Street and will enable additional street enhancements along this corridor.

In addition to the electric and gas facilities, the East Rail Corridor contains many public water and sewer lines, including a major new interceptor sanitary sewer being constructed generally along the alignment of the existing railroad tracks [See Map 1-13].

PROPERTY OWNERSHIP

Major property owners within the study area include the Madison Gas & Electric Company, which owns about 31.5 acres and has natural gas, electric and railroad facilities within the study area, and the City of Madison and Madison Metro, which

together own about 17.8 acres. Other relatively large properties include Yahara Square Associates LLP, Research Products, the Union Pacific Railroad, and the State of Wisconsin [See Table D and Map 1-14].

**TABLE D
East Rail Corridor Major Property Ownership**

	Acres
Madison Gas & Electric	31.54
City of Madison	20.54
Yahara Square Assoc. LLP	12.80
Research Products Corp.	6.76
Union Pacific Railroad	6.59
State of Wisconsin	5.93
Mullins Joint Rev. Trust	4.35
Archipelago Village LLC	4.03
Donde LLP	2.84

Taxable and Tax Exempt Property. Of the 131 total acres within the East Rail Corridor planning area exclusive of public street right-of-way, only 74 acres are currently taxable. This reflects the large amount of land within the Corridor owned by property tax-exempt entities, including the City of Madison, the State of Wisconsin, Madison Gas & Electric Company, and the railroad companies. While Madison Gas & Electric and the railroads are tax-exempt for City property tax purposes, these entities are taxed as utilities by the Wisconsin Department of Revenue. Tax revenues from railroad utilities go to the Wisconsin Department of Transportation, while tax revenues from power generating utilities go into the general fund and are distributed to communities throughout the state. Property assessments on the 74 taxable acres within the East Rail Corridor totaled \$50.3 million in 2000, generating approximately \$1.2 million in tax revenues.

EXISTING ZONING AND OTHER SPECIAL DISTRICTS

Zoning Districts

The existing zoning in the East Rail Corridor reflects the predominantly industrial past and current land uses within the Corridor [See Table E and Map 1-15]. Approximately 83 percent of the gross land area (including street rights-of-way) within East Rail Corridor is currently zoned M1 Manufacturing District. About five percent of the study area is zoned C2 General Commercial District, although the uses in that portion of the planning area are actually predominantly residential. An irregular area in the East Wilson Street/ Schley Pass/Dewey Court portion of the study area is zoned R4 General Residential District. The R4 District allows multi-family buildings containing up to eight units although the existing housing stock consists primarily of single-family and smaller two- and three-unit dwellings.

Table E
East Rail Corridor Zoning Districts

Zoning		Acres	% of Total
R4	General Residence (Medium-Density Multi-Family)	7.0	3.9
R5	General Residence (Medium High-Density Multi-Family)	3.1	1.8
C2	General Commercial	8.7	4.9
C3	Highway Commercial	4.4	2.5
C3L	Commercial Service & Distribution	1.9	1.1
M1	Limited Manufacturing	148.9	83.9
PUD-SIP	Planned Unit Development-Specific Implementation Plan	0.9	0.5
C	Conservancy	2.5	1.4
Total		177.4	100%

Other Special Districts

Urban Design District No. 4. Urban Design District Number 4 includes the properties along both sides of East Washington Avenue east of Blair Street, including the East Washington frontage of the East Rail Corridor planning area. Several properties with near-term reuse and/or redevelopment potential, such as the former Mautz Paint and Marquip properties, are located within this Urban Design District.

Historic Districts. Third Lake Ridge Historic District encompasses a portion of the East Rail Corridor planning area, including most of the blocks bounded by Blair, East Main and Blount Streets, and several segments of the East Wilson Street south frontage. This City of Madison Historic District contains several of the historically interesting buildings identified in the Landmarks Commission survey of Rail Corridor properties and provides for an additional review of proposed exterior changes to the buildings. The block south of Railroad Street that includes the Madison Gas & Electric offices is also designated as a National Historic District. Other local Historic Districts established in the adjacent neighborhoods also reflect the historic character of the East Isthmus [See Map 1-16].

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Final Report
East Rail Corridor Plan Advisory Committee

PART I
INTRODUCTION and BACKGROUND INFORMATION

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