

AGENDA # _____

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City of Madison, Wisconsin

A RESOLUTION _____

Adopting the land use recommendations of the East Rail Corridor Planning Advisory Committee

Drafted By: Ald. Judy Olson, District 6

Date: November 29, 2001

Fiscal Note: Please see attached separate report of the Comptroller

Sponsors: Ald. Judy Olson, District 6

PRESENTED December 4, 2001 (By Title Only)
REFERRED Plan Commission (Lead)
Pedestrian-Bicycle-Motor Vehicle Commission,
Long-Range Transportation Planning Commission,
Economic Development Commission, Park
Commission, Board of Public Works, Landmarks
Commission, Board of Estimates, East Rail
Corridor Planning Advisory Committee,
Comptroller (for fiscal note), Transit/Parking
Commission, Urban Design Commission

REREFERRED _____

REPORTED BACK _____

ADOPTED _____ POF _____

RULES SUSPENDED _____

PUBLIC HEARING _____

APPROVAL OF FISCAL NOTE IS NEEDED
BY THE COMPTROLLER'S OFFICE
Approved By

Comptroller's Office

RESOLUTION NUMBER _____

ID NUMBER 30839

WHEREAS the area bounded by East Washington Avenue, South Blair Street, East Wilson Street, and the Yahara River is known as the East Rail Corridor; and

WHEREAS adopted City plans recommend that more detailed planning be conducted within the East Rail Corridor to identify opportunities and recommend land use changes and implementation activities that will encourage development and redevelopment within the Corridor to advance neighborhood and community objectives regarding housing, open space and economic development; and

WHEREAS a proposal to create a large central park as a key element in the redevelopment of the Corridor has greatly increased community and neighborhood awareness and interest in the area and has gained the support of many residents; and

WHEREAS there has been increasing investment interest in the East Rail Corridor and adjacent neighborhoods as a location for housing and business development; and

WHEREAS the East Rail Corridor will be greatly affected by proposals currently being evaluated to create inter-city passenger rail service and commuter rail transit systems serving the entire community; and

WHEREAS with Resolution I.D. No. 27915 the Common Council established the East Rail Corridor Plan Advisory Committee and planning process to carry out the following tasks:

1. Promote communication among various stakeholder groups within the East Rail Corridor and provide ample opportunity for public input.
2. Develop a consensus and advise the Plan Commission and Common Council on recommendations to update the Land Use Plan for the East Rail Corridor.
3. Conduct a comprehensive planning process in two phases. Phase One will be a general update of the Land Use Plan. In developing the land use recommendations, staff and the committee will be informed by proposed transportation and infrastructure improvements, approaches to environmental remediation, open space and architectural design goals, housing and economic development opportunities, and funding and finance options.

WHEREAS the Advisory Committee was appointed by the Mayor and confirmed by the Common Council in October of 2000 and has been meeting regularly since December 2000; and

WHEREAS the Advisory Committee has studied the existing conditions, planning recommendations and the regulatory framework within the planning area, proposed transportation and infrastructure improvements, approaches to environmental remediation, housing and economic development objectives and opportunities, open space and architectural design goals, and funding and finance option issues and has developed alternatives for land use plan recommendations; and

WHEREAS the Advisory Committee hosted three large community meetings to present planning issues and background information, alternative concepts for the planning area, and the recommended draft land use plan map; and

WHEREAS after reviewing the background information and analysis generated during the planning process, considering the community input and comments at these meetings, and after much discussion and deliberation, the Advisory Committee made the following Phase One recommendations.

NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the Common Council hereby adopts the attached Phase One Recommendations of the East Rail Corridor Planning Advisory Committee dated December 17, 2001.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the City staff will prepare strategies to implement these recommendations, including an analysis by the Comptroller of the fiscal impacts of changes in the area.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that due to the State's timetable for inter-city passenger rail service and the City's support for this project, the railroad relocation issues should be among the first to be addressed. Redevelopment concepts should be encouraged that would examine the parcels most likely to change use in the near term and the City should explore public-private partnerships to plan for their re-use.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that following the completion of Phase One, the Advisory Committee will then work with the staff to make more detailed recommendations as part of a detailed physical development plan within the Corridor. This work will consist of the following tasks:

1. Develop a proposed scope of work and identify outcomes for a more detailed and focused physical development plan to implement the Land Use Plan recommendations.
2. Identify and secure funding commitments to assist in carrying out the physical development plan.

3. Make recommendations to the Plan Commission and Common Council in the following areas: open space and architectural design, transportation and infrastructure improvements, housing and economic development, environmental remediation and ecology, and funding and financing.
4. Work with staff to identify the role and manner of selection of any outside consultants whose assistance may be requested and for whose work funds have been raised.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Phase Two recommendations of the East Rail Corridor Plan Advisory Committee will address many issues such as the detailed configurations, functions and features of the park and open space areas, the ownership and maintenance responsibilities of the park and open space areas, relationships between the park and open space and the adjoining uses, the recommended density of new housing developed within the identified sub-areas recommended for housing, the types and designs of new housing that would fit the character of the neighborhood, 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 costs and feasibility of constructing parking structures within the study area, and implementation of the track relocation. The completion of Phase Two of the planning process may result in recommended adjustments to the preliminary land use plan adopted after Phase One.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that each implementation recommendation of Phases One and Two of the East Rail Corridor planning process will be reviewed and acted on by the appropriate commissions and the Common Council.

**Phase One Recommendations
Of the
East Rail Corridor Planning Advisory Committee
December 17, 2001**

Preamble: The East Rail Corridor current land uses developed over more than a century. Many decisions were made over that time span as particular owners and users responded to both their own goals, community desires, outside developments, and market forces that shaped the results. It is possible to imagine that the major transformations that have been discussed in the Advisory Committee are of a magnitude that they will occur over a 50-year horizon. The present plan, recognizing that good practice and now State law suggests that plans should be updated on a ten-year cycle, envisions recommendations for actions that could begin the transformation and generally be accomplished in the current ten-year horizon. It may be expected that future visionaries, users to come, community members and professional planners will all contribute beyond these recommendations.

1. Recommend an enhanced Major Employment Center as the predominant use of the East Rail Corridor. This should be developed through:
 - Support for retention of existing businesses;
 - The development of an MG&E campus as part of transportation and other land use realignments;
 - The encouragement of future uses and structures at higher densities and at multiple-story heights than is presently common in the area;
 - A focus on Main Street corridor redevelopment opportunities presented by the move of the Water Utility and on the street frontages for Main Street;
 - Consideration of Tax Increment Financing (TIF) and other City tools to encourage investment in the area at the desired higher densities, especially Transportation Oriented Development focused on potential commuter rail stop(s).

2. Recommend the City begin in the area a program to shift land use from surface parking to more intense uses:
 - By planning and building parking structures in the area to reduce the need for surface lots as a major land use, without a net loss of parking;
 - By establishing a parking overlay zoning district, such districts focus parking to geographic areas rather than the general zoning code requirements; such a district could provide reduced parking requirements in the area for employers and owners and tenants who participate in the parking district through use of structured parking and participation in a District TDM (Transportation Demand Management) Plan; and
 - That residential parking districts be considered as required to prevent spillover parking into residential areas.

3. Recommend the City continue to explore the feasibility of a northern re-alignment of the railroad tracks as part of inter-city passenger rail service with a review of the engineering and cost considerations. The possible use of the northern alignment should respect the operations and infrastructure of existing businesses and not require the removal of existing buildings in the area. The alignment should provide for potential multiple railroad uses: freight, inter-city, and commuter rail use. A possible commuter rail station near Baldwin Street is envisioned and should relate to new transit oriented development.

4. If the northern re-alignment occurs, the Advisory Committee would recommend the closing of Livingston Street between East Wilson and East Main streets for a consolidated MG&E campus. In the event of a northern re-alignment, the existing southern railroad right-of-way between Livingston Street and Baldwin Street should be acquired as open space to broaden the existing bike/pedestrian path greenway. This wider greenspace would provide an improved greenway linkage between Law Park and the Yahara River, or a “To the River Walk” from Downtown. Recommend that cross-Isthmus traffic be focused on Baldwin, Ingersoll, Patterson, Blount and Blair Streets, as is the main current pattern. Pedestrian and bike links should be considered as part of the development of traffic patterns in the area.
5. Recommend the City establish an open space plan and effort that would substantially address the existing Downtown/East Isthmus parkland deficiency of 30 to 40 acres. The effort should also recognize and try to meet the added need for parkland that is occurring using the City guideline of 1-acre for each 60 new units of housing in the Downtown/East Isthmus area. Parkland fees generated in the area should be directed to support the efforts. Many sources of funding also should be explored to acquire parkland and open space, not all of which space needs to be municipally owned. The vision should be of both a central core and a network of open spaces and parkland.
6. Establishing new partnerships for on-going maintenance of East Rail Corridor parkland and open space should be explored and nourished. These should build on the successful pattern of other partnerships already demonstrated in proximate areas like Blair Street Gardens and the Willy Street Park and the Friends of the Yahara Parkway.
7. Recommend acquisition and development be focused on a “linked urban squares” plan. For such a plan the following areas should have priority:
 - An urban square between Baldwin Street and Ingersoll Street from Railroad Street to Wilson Street;
 - An urban square focused on the half blocks of land fronting on both sides of Brearly Street between Railroad Street and Wilson Street;
 - The potential closing of Brearly Street between Railroad Street and Wilson Street for an addition of the street right-of-way to park purposes;
 - The linkage of the urban square centered on Brearly Street to the existing Willy Street Park;
 - The widening of the existing bike path link between downtown and the Yahara River by adding railroad right-of-way made possible through a northern re-alignment of the railroad tracks.
8. Privately owned open space developed in the East Rail Corridor should be designed to link with public open space into one system. This might be accomplished through the landscape design of the normal setback areas so the design links into adjacent open space areas. Planned Unit Development (PUD) and other City reviews for projects in the East Rail Corridor should consider such design standards.
9. Recommend that greenway links in the area between Baldwin Street and the Yahara River should be generally urban and linear in form. One link should continue to be along the present bike/pedestrian path that intersects the Yahara River at Williamson Street. This might be re-configured if the State-owned property is redeveloped in the future, and any redevelopment design of the State-owned property should incorporate private greenspace through a setback to enhance the link. Another link should be developed using City-owned former railroad right-of-way east of Baldwin Street, currently leased for parking. This parcel extends from Baldwin Street to the Main Street and Ingersoll Street intersection. There, it would link with a boulevarded Main Street up to the river. The latter link should contain a bike/pedestrian path that links to the Yahara Parkway and the proposed path along the Yahara River that will link to the north under the rebuilt East Washington Avenue Bridge. These

two connections to the Yahara River would be further enhanced by the planned removal of South Thornton Avenue as incorporated in the approved Yahara River plan.

10. Recommend that new housing units be of a character to fit in the neighborhoods and serve a wide variety of populations, including families. Recommend that for the blocks recommended for new residential development, housing be at a density range of 25 to 60 units per acre with a target for a 15% affordable housing component and a density bonus for a commitment to 20% affordable housing. Affordable housing would have to meet participation levels for current City programs, either rental or ownership. The City should develop a plan to assist developers to make the affordable housing possible as part of developments using TIF and other tools. Partnerships with existing or future neighborhood affordable housing efforts also are encouraged. Housing is recommended as the primary use for the blocks south of East Main Street fronting on the Yahara River, and for the 900, 1000, 1100 and 1200 Blocks of East Wilson Street. Newly developed housing should be an overall mix of both ownership and rental housing, and include co-ops and co-housing as types. Housing may be considered appropriate as part of mixed-use commercial developments in areas not designated on the map for housing, primarily as transitions near existing residential areas. Phase Two will more clearly identify specific parcels for consideration. In a similar manner, some commercial uses may be appropriate as mixed uses in residential areas.