

East Rail Corridor Plan Advisory Committee July 14th Land Use Planning Forum Report

Orientation:

The July 14th land-use planning forum took place from 9 AM until after 1 PM at the Research Products Tech center meeting room. Research Products also graciously provided refreshments for those who attended. Those who attended were greeted by Dick Wagner, Chair of the Advisory Committee and Susan Schmitz, Vice-chair, who provided an orientation about the Advisory Committee's work to date, where things were at in the process and what people could expect from the information booths. Dick and Susan reviewed aerial photos, other color photos and some historical maps. They presented a 4-panel map with the alternative concepts for discussion and challenged meeting attendees with a trivia game.

After the orientation, people could move freely to the other information booths, looking at the various maps and photos, and talking with members of the Advisory Committee and staff about issues, likes and dislikes.

Base Information:

Ryan Jonely, Planning & Development Department (P&D) staff, was available at the base information booth. A wide variety of maps and information was presented, including: Aerial photos with parcels; a study area map showing 2000 U.S. Census population and housing units by block; a map depicting parking lots, vacant and under-utilized lands; a map showing employment numbers by Traffic Area Zone; a map showing the street network with traffic counts, signals and medians; and other maps showing railroad tracks, the bike path, major utilities, existing parks and open space areas, property ownership, adopted neighborhood plans, urban design and historic districts, zoning of the study area, and existing land uses by parcel with photos.

Transportation/Rail Alignment:

The Transportation/Rail Alignment booth was staffed by Rob Kennedy and David Trowbridge (P&D staff). They led meeting attendees in a commuter rail station exercise. There was a large aerial photo with ¼ mile circles that people used to place commuter rail stations and discover land uses and intensity of uses around the station. Besides the station location exercise, people also had a chance to vote for either the proposed rail alignment or the existing rail alignment and could review and comment on an issues list.

Background information included the existing railroad tracks, the proposed railroad tracks and right-of-way, with the East Washington Avenue improvement schedule; the existing bike path with major utilities shown, a map showing the existing street network with traffic counts, signals and medians; existing railroad operations; Paterson Street Intercity Passenger Rail station schematics and a Peter Calthorpe transit station schematic; Intercity Passenger Rail photos, graphics, etc.; Transport 2020 photos, graphics, etc.; other existing railroad corridor photos. Staff from the Wisconsin Department of Transportation were present and provided a summary of the Environmental Assessment for the Intercity Passenger Rail study and a corridor management plan meeting schedule.

Commercial & Industrial Uses:

The Commercial & Industrial Uses booth was staffed by Vern Hellenbrand, Marianne Morton, Lynn Hobbie from MG&E, Michael Matty, and Michael Gay (P&D staff). There was a comment board where people could post their opinions and perspectives on issues.

Background information included a list of businesses within the study area; employment numbers by TAZ; a building permit information map and summary table; a map showing existing parking lots, vacant and under-utilized lands; photos of MG&E, incubators, Mautz Paint, Research Products, and others; a graphic showing a courtyard open space; and issue and opportunity maps from Vandewalle and Associates with their work for MG&E.

Housing:

The Housing booth was staffed by Brad Mullins, Bill Malkasian and Michael Waidelich (P&D staff). They presented various density boards depicting housing styles and densities. They also presented maps showing the existing residential densities of the surrounding neighborhood; existing residential types of housing within the surrounding neighborhood; photos of existing housing including the Third Lake Lofts, and apartments; photos and graphics showing residential/park and open space concepts including courtyards and urban squares.

Those present reviewed several issues lists and had a chance to discuss the 4-panel alternative concepts with Advisory Committee members and staff.

Park & Open Space:

The Park & Open Space booth was staffed by David Mollenhoff, Heather Mann of the Urban Open Space Foundation, and Si Widstrand (Parks staff). The UOSF provided an artist's sketch of their large central park concept and also asked people to vote for one of the alternative land use concepts.

Background information included maps of the existing park and open space areas, regional park and open space areas and trails, and park and open space service areas. Also, park and open space concepts were shown including: courtyards, linear parks, and urban squares. There were photos of the existing area parks and the Advisory Committee members and staff provided a handout of the City's existing park deficiencies

Feedback:

The Feedback booth was staffed by Alderperson Judy Olson. She presented site analysis maps, and maps showing existing land uses by parcel with photos and parking lots, vacant and under-utilized lands. Each of the four alternative land use concepts were also presented and people had an opportunity to offer feedback at a comment board.

People were given several opportunities to ask questions and express their opinions. First, there were the information booths and comment boards, where people could discuss and/or write down issues, preferences and comments. Also there were feedback sheets that were available to everyone. These feedback sheets asked about likes, dislikes and other comments for each of the information booths and for the four alternative conceptual maps.

Large group discussion:

In addition to these techniques, a large group discussion was held at 12 Noon. People could again express their likes, dislikes and other comments before the Advisory Committee.